

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: “YOUR GARBE MAKES ME I KNOWE YOU NOT”: THE CAVENDISH FAMILY AND THE LITERARY TRANSFORMATION OF MARRIAGE PRACTICES

Christina M. Wells, Doctor of Philosophy, 2004

Dissertation Directed By: Professor Jane Donawerth,
Department of English

In this dissertation, I examine Jane Cavendish, Elizabeth Brackley, and their father, William Cavendish, as a literary coterie, asserting that comparisons between the generations are necessary to a full understanding of their literature and its historical context. Each family member authored texts that examine the role of women in marriage, and each of their analyses places the English Civil War in the forefront. This conjunction between marriage and war preoccupies the Cavendish family with confluences of domestic and state business. I argue that each member of the Cavendish family portrays a war where noblewomen's marital choices influenced who would—and who would not—join the power structure, hoping to regain authority for the monarchy and its followers. Father and daughters address marriage and the nobility in different ways, but in each case, marriage is a device to explain larger social conditions and choices by women. The family was at the center of a dialogue concerning women's marital and martial roles in the English Civil War.

With my introduction, I provide an overview of the Cavendish family's historical circumstances in the war, examining the relationship between Royalism and the aristocratic household. In Chapter 2, I use the *Book of Common Prayer* and sources on monastic community to situate Jane Cavendish's poetic threat to become a nun to avoid marriage, and I place in context the sisters' *Concealed Fancies*, a household drama in which women employ a variety of techniques—including the threat to be a nun—to postpone marital decisions.

Chapters 3 and 4 each concern the family's use of the pastoral to dramatize Civil War nobility. Cavendish and Brackley's *A Pastorall* rewrites pastoral tradition as a feminist endeavor, one that gives shepherdesses a vocal demonstration against marriage during war. William Cavendish's "Parte of a Pastorall" and its supporting texts attempt to recreate history, uplifting the defeated Royalist, while claiming marriage as a way to restore Royalist plentitude.

With each chapter, I maintain that the Cavendish family sought to define home, looking at marriage with a new sense of purpose because of the war surrounding them.

“YOUR GARBE MAKES ME I KNOWE YOU NOT”: THE CAVENDISH
FAMILY AND THE LITERARY TRANSFORMATION OF MARRIAGE
PRACTICES

By

Christina M. Wells

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Advisory Committee:
Professor Jane Donawerth, Chair
Professor Marvin Breslow
Professor Linda Coleman
Professor Theresa Coletti
Professor Laura Rosenthal

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
Table of Contents	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: “Presumption shall never see me out of order”: Marital Control in <i>The Concealed Fancies</i>	28
Chapter 3: Witches, Peasants, Shepherdesses, and “Shee Priests”: <i>A Pastorall and Women’s Community</i>	87
Chapter 4: (Not) Like Father, Like Daughter(s): William Cavendish’s Pastoral Writing	137
Appendix I: Selected Poems Transcribed from the Bodleian Manuscript.....	196
Appendix II: The Antemasques from <i>A Pastorall</i>	199
Bibliography	203

Chapter 1: Introduction

The world, in truth, is a wedding.—Erving Goffman¹

A poem written by Jane Cavendish establishes a larger context for my examination of her family in this dissertation. It provides exigence for analyzing female community in the Cavendish canon, because it is evidence of an alliance between Jane Cavendish and her sister, Elizabeth Brackley. The poem's inclusion in their manuscript suggests Jane Cavendish's role-playing and her desire to present a particular version of herself.² Its historical context draws attention to the importance of marital decisions in the English Civil War period, while its wartime composition unites martial and marital concerns. Finally, its mention of both Cavendish's father and her sister indicates her important relationship to both:

The quinticence of Cordiall

Sister

Wer't not for you I knew not, how to liue

For what content I haue, you doe mee giue

In this my sadd mortification Life

I ----- you make good that strife³

¹ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 36.

² Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach provides a language for studying all human behavior in dramatic terms. Given the Cavendish family's emphasis on dramatic writing and performance, Goffman's theories have multiple applications for this study. See Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. See discussion below, pages 14-15.

³ The word I omit appears either to be "deifieinge" or "difieing," leading to two completely different meanings. Given the religious allusions and puns throughout the manuscript, an equivalent of our modern "deifying" makes sense.

So'e your presence is Balsam to my braine

And Gilberts water, if then soe but name

My Lord retorn'd, & add here you'l retayne.⁴

The poem does not focus on William Cavendish as paramount, but rather, the relationship between the two sisters. Jane Cavendish asserts her sister's medicinal capacity to make their bad circumstances better and act as medicinal "Balsam." More importantly, she alludes to the possibility of her sister leaving her, since the best medicine would be if her father were to return and her sister were to "retayne."

Alongside the medicinal references is a metaphysical one. "Gilbert's water" refers to a compass named for William Gilbert, its inventor; here, Jane Cavendish figures her sister as a magnet that can choose to stay home and that can pull their father home, as well.⁵ Historians speak of Elizabeth Brackley's departure to go live with her husband and his family, but literary critics have only begun to explore the ramifications of that departure—or impending departure—on the collaboration and family alliance of the two sisters.⁶ It is not my intent in this project to examine the

⁴ The manuscript source I use for Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's work contains a collection of poetry, followed by *A Pastorall* and *The Concealed Fancies*. See Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16, in *British Literary Manuscripts from the Bodleian Library, Oxford Series one, The English Renaissance, c. 1500-1700* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Microform, 1988-89), 12. All numeric references to this work are to the manuscript page numbers. This is my own transcription.

⁵ The reference suggests the sisters were exposed to the scientific theories that interested their father and Margaret Lucas Cavendish, who became their stepmother. For more on Gilbert's water, see Ronald E. McFarland, "Jonson's Magnetic Lady and the Reception of Gilbert's *De Magnete*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 11, no. 2 (1971): 283-93 and Edgar Zilsel, "The Origins of William Gilbert's Scientific Method," *Journal of the History of the Ideas* 2, no. 1 (1941): 1-31.

⁶ Betty Travitsky's work on Elizabeth Cavendish Egerton examines her life both prior to, and after, their separation. See Betty Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England: The Case of Elizabeth Cavendish Egerton and Her 'Loose Papers'* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

biographical details of their separation at any length. However, the poem says something of the importance of both father and sister, providing in a few short lines a glimpse of how important the three were to one another. In the context of its composition dates and the English Civil War, the poem's preoccupation is not just with separation, but also with separation for both martial and marital reasons. The short poem exalts the sister, while mourning the absence of the father. Though brief, it captures many of the central threads of this project. War has changed the circumstances under which the sisters operate. Families are separated. Literary works convey Royalism and the power of its proponents—including its female proponents. And for a brief moment, Jane Cavendish paints a picture of a married sister who can choose whether or not to leave her family.

This dissertation, like the short poem, examines Jane Cavendish, Elizabeth Brackley, and William Cavendish together. I look at the works the three created as responses to each other in a coterie literary circle, and I specifically examine the relationship between marriage and war in their works, analyzing how each institution has impacted the other. Though I am primarily concerned with their dramatic works and related poems, I focus on the ways the authors portray Royalism and women's choices within those fictions. Each of the three authors is part of the others' historical context; likewise, the war is an overarching concern to all three.

I confine this study to biological members of the Cavendish family, leaving out the famed Margaret Lucas Cavendish, who became the second wife of William Cavendish in 1646. Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley referred to their father repeatedly in their manuscript, written prior to his marriage to Margaret Lucas, and

his later work shows him to be in dialogue with the same questions and literary traditions that preoccupied them earlier.⁷ All three family members engaged in efforts to define home when war had destroyed the common definitions of it, and all were part of one of England's most prominent families.

The Cavendish family had a central role in the English Civil War, and they experienced many changes because of their family's beliefs. As Royalists, they wanted monarchical rule and aligned themselves with Charles I. Like their king, they were Anglicans; however, the king's wife was Henrietta Maria, a Catholic. The royal marriage had removed some restrictions on Catholicism in England, and the Puritans were enraged.⁸ Religion remained one of several central concerns in the Caroline period, and on a variety of occasions, either Royalists or their Parliamentary opponents faced attack because of it. The Cavendish family was no exception. Religious feuds inform William Cavendish's military career and defense of Royalism: he favored prohibitions on Puritans and insisted, "There should be more praying and less preaching, for much preaching breeds faction, but much praying causes

⁷ Analysis by Travitsky suggests a date for the manuscript of 1644-1645. See Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England* 58-60. Whitaker argues *The Concealed Fancies* is from "late 1643 or early 1644" and *A Pastorall* is "before Elizabeth left Welbeck late in 1645." See Katie Whitaker, *Mad Madge: The Extraordinary Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, the First Woman to Live by Her Pen* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 82; 370, n. 5. In contrast, Lynn Hulse dates Cavendish's pastoral writings as "post-1644" and the dates Katie Whitaker assigns his exile suggest 1648 or later (107). See Lynn Hulse, ed., *Dramatic Works*, by William Cavendish, Published for the Malone Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), xiv.

⁸ See Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), 8.

devotion.”⁹ His opposition was no less fervent. Royalist opponents at times behaved as though the king’s entire army were Catholic, and therefore extremely suspect.¹⁰

Cavendish’s official roles put him in contact with the largest controversies of his era. At different times, he served as governor to different regions in England, and he also became a general of Royalist forces.¹¹ He was responsible for some major victories, and more important for this study, was held responsible for an atrocious defeat at Marston Moor in 1644: “The Marquis of Newcastle, who had fought bravely in the battle itself, could not face the ignominy of such a devastating defeat and took ship at Scarborough for a prolonged life in exile.”¹² This event informs the writings Cavendish did while away from home, as well as the writings his daughters composed in his absence.

The relationship between war and the family’s literature resonates. Nigel Smith says that “because royalism was identified with patronage of the theatres, parliamentary anti-royalist reportage ridiculed Royalists in theatrical terms.”¹³ Cavendish and his daughters appropriated the language of theatre, making it their own. As they created dramatic characters and described the social roles of their

⁹ Qtd. in Hill, *The Century of Revolution*, 69.

¹⁰ For a larger picture of the English Civil War and its controversies, including the religious, see Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism 1628-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 157-192.

¹¹ For details on this time in Cavendish’s life, see Geoffrey Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier: William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1979), 77-113.

¹² Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, 212.

¹³ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 75.

family members, they self-consciously claimed a positive performance for themselves and for Royalists in England and abroad.¹⁴

Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley were at home during their father's absence, protecting family properties. They were in contact with Parliamentary military leaders and performed a distinct role in trying to keep their family's possessions.¹⁵ The daughters' responsibilities also involved working with family finances and sending money to their father.¹⁶ As the two wrote household performances, they literally had the task of trying to keep an aristocratic home together. This history makes it impossible to see their writing as a passive endeavor, detached from the activities and catastrophes of war. The daughters' circumstances also help to explain the conflation between domestic and state affairs that appears throughout the Cavendish canon.

As Royalists, daughters and father lost much in the war. Long after the fact, Margaret Cavendish chronicled the family's economic situation, complaining of the various monetary losses.¹⁷ Her listing of items is its own kind of performance, explaining for readers the suffering of the family, from the point of a view of a family member. Christopher Hill notes that William Cavendish received a "special Act of Parliament to restore his lands, but even so he failed to recover some of them."¹⁸

¹⁴ See Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Early Modern England*.

¹⁵ Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier*, 143.

¹⁶ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 127.

¹⁷ C.H. Firth, ed., *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle to which is Added the True Relation of My Birth Breeding and Life*, by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, 2 ed. (London: George Routledge and Sons, n.d.), 43-81.

¹⁸ Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714*, 172.

For much of the time represented in the Cavendish and Brackley manuscript and in William Cavendish's exiled writings, the family was struggling both to keep its homes in England and establish a concept of the nobleman's home that transcended the physical locations of aristocratic houses. Like the war itself, this struggle provides a background for this dissertation.

No study has treated the literature of the entire biological family. For a number of years, critics have studied the Renaissance poetry of the Sidney family, examining the relationship of one family member's writing to another.¹⁹ Scholars have argued the importance of looking at one generation of the family next to the subsequent generation. No book length study has analyzed the drama or poetry of Cavendish family members in this manner.²⁰ The family wrote during the Late English Renaissance, the English Civil War, and the early years of the Restoration, and each family member reflected, and at times influenced, Royalist perspective during this era.

I examine the father and daughters as their own literary coterie, asserting comparisons between the generations necessary to a full understanding of their literature and its historical context. Critics have applied the term "coterie" to the family, but without anything more than a brief quotation from William Cavendish or

¹⁹ Three recent studies of the Sidney family include Gary F. Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert, and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993); Michael G. Brennan and Noel J. Kinnamon, *A Sidney Chronology, 1554-1654* (Houndmills, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), and Elizabeth Mazzola, *Favorite Sons: The Politics and Poetics of the Sidney Family* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

²⁰ S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies propose a comparison between the Sidney and Cavendish families, but do not explore it. See S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, *The Concealed Fancies*, by Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, in *Renaissance Drama by Women* (London: Routledge, 1996), 127.

a discussion of his influence on his daughters.²¹ Each family member authored texts that examine the role of women in marriage, and their analyses place the English Civil War in the forefront. This conjunction between marriage and war preoccupies the Cavendish family with confluences of domestic and state business. I argue that each member of the Cavendish family portrays a war where noblewomen's marital choices influenced who would—and who would not—join the power structure, hoping to regain authority for the monarchy and its followers. Father and daughters address marriage and the nobility in different ways, but in each case, marriage is a device to explain social conditions and choices by women.

The Cavendish canon's preoccupation with women's marital choices and political maneuvering places them within feminist tradition, even though the ideals the family worked for involved aristocratic agendas and support for monarchical government. Particularly because I emphasize a new way of looking at the literary relationships of father and daughters, this position within feminist literary history resonates. Regardless of the family's preoccupation with the traditions of aristocrats, an overriding reality is the family's thwarting of the tradition of dutiful daughters. Father and daughters each assume responsibility for exalting their background and hopes for the future: daughters do not sit idle, waiting for a war to end and determine their fate.

²¹ For the former, see Margaret J.M. Ezell, "'To be your daughter in your pen': The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish," *Huntington Library Quarterly: A Journal for the History and Interpretation of English and American Civilization* 51, no. 4 (1988): 281-96, and for the latter, see Alison Findlay, "'Upon the World's Stage,'" *Women and Dramatic Production, 1550-1700*, ed. Alison Findlay and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, with Gweno Williams (Harlow, England: Longman, 2000), 68-93.

Previous studies have placed the family within different contexts, also assuming a feminist history. Jane Milling provides a summary of Cavendish and Brackley's *A Pastorall*, increasing the accessibility of the sisters' manuscripts.²² Several other critics compare the sisters' plays to more widely known drama of the period.²³ A related critical method involves examining the educational value of Cavendish and Brackley's best known play, *The Concealed Fancies*, alongside canonical texts.²⁴ Several critics have used a psychoanalytic approach to inform their readings.²⁵ Others have drawn on performance theory and studies of household performance to support their arguments.²⁶ Scholars have also employed various historical methods to look at the context of Cavendish and Brackley's work. For

²² Jane Milling, "Siege and Cipher: The Closet Drama of the Cavendish Sisters," *Women's History Review* 6, no. 3 (1997): 411-26. For a short sample from *A Pastorall*, see Germaine Greer et al., ed., *Kissing the Rod* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1988), 106-118.

²³ For one example, see Sophie Tomlinson, "Too Theatrical? Female Subjectivity in Caroline and Interregnum Drama," *Women's Writing* 6, no. 1 (1999): 65-79.

²⁴ See Lisa Hopkins, "Judith Shakespeare's Reading: Teaching *The Concealed Fancies*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1996): 396-406. For comparison, see Irene Dash, "Single-Sex Retreats in Two Early Modern Dramas: *Love's Labor's Lost* and *The Convent of Pleasure*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1996): 387-95.

²⁵ See Catherine Burroughs, "'Hymen's Monkey Love': *The Concealed Fancies* and Female Sexual Initiation," *Theatre Journal* 51, no. 1 (1999): 21-31, and Dorothy Stephens, "'Who can those vast imaginations feed?': *The Concealed Fancies* and the Price of Hunger," in *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative: Conditional Pleasure from Spenser to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 143-77, for two examples.

²⁶ Alison Findlay has been particularly instrumental in this area. See Alison Findlay, "Elite Fabrications: Staging Seventeenth-Century Drama by Women" (paper presented at Attending to Early Modern Women: Gender, Culture, and Change, College Park, Maryland: November 11, 2000); "Playing the 'Scene Self': Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's *The Concealed Fancies*," in *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*, ed. Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 154-76; "'She Gave You the Civility of the House': Household Performance in *The Concealed Fancies*," in *Readings in Renaissance Drama*, ed. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London: Routledge, 1998), 264; and "'Upon the World's Stage,'" in *Women and Dramatic Production, 1550-1700*, ed. Alison Findlay and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, with Gweno Williams (Harlow, England: Longman 2000), 68-93. Also see Findlay's collaborative work with Gweno Williams and Stephanie J. Hodgson-Wright, "'The Play Is Ready to be Acted': Women and Dramatic Production, 1570-1670," *Women's Writing* 6, no. 1 (1999): 29-48.

instance, Margaret J.M. Ezell examines their manuscript next to Civil War traditions and the sisters' own reception history, while Dorothy Stephens places the sisters' work within Petrarchan history, and Elizabeth Clarke illustrates how religion of the Civil War period appears in Jane Cavendish's poetry.²⁷

While analyzing the works of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, scholars sometimes have denigrated the reputation of the sisters, suggesting they wrote to garner their father's approval.²⁸ Others have portrayed William Cavendish as a more positive mentor.²⁹ There has been no lengthy exploration of their literary influence on him, though several discussions of a dedication by William Cavendish indicate that there should be.³⁰ I assert a more circular, and less linear, literary relationship between father and daughters, one where both father and daughters wrote of the noble country household and the pastoral, working with literary tradition, politics, and gender to create new social norms while continuing to reflect the old. I align my work with that of feminist historicists, and also work toward a broader comparison between William Cavendish and his children.

²⁷ See Ezell, "To be your daughter in your pen," 281-296; Stephens, "Who can those vast imaginations feed?," 143-177; and Clarke, "The Garrisoned Muse: Women's Use of Religious Lyric in the Civil War Period," in *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 130-143.

²⁸ See Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, ed., *The Concealed Fancies*, 127-54. An earlier edition is both less respectful and more dismissive. See Nathan Comfort Starr, ed., "The Concealed Fancies: A Play by Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley," *PMLA* 46 (1931): 802-38.

²⁹ See Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship*, 52-81; and Stephens, "Who can those vast imaginations feed?," 143-77.

³⁰ Hulse, ed., *Dramatic Works*, x. See Ezell, "To be your daughter in your pen," 294, and Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England*, 29-30, for additional discussion.

For all the purported influence of William Cavendish on his daughters, the scholarship on his own literary career is even scantier than on that of his daughters. Several scholars provide long analyses of the art and architecture of Cavendish's homes, examining what these things tell us about his character and his appreciation for various literary, musical, or religious items.³¹ Secondary sources on William Cavendish mention his literary relationships with family members, though generally not in as much detail as sources catalogued under his daughters' or his wife's name. Nick Rowe alludes to the literary relationship of William Cavendish to his wife and daughters, but primarily to support a larger argument about Cavendish's patronage.³² Other references to William Cavendish assert the importance of his role as a literary patron for writers outside his family.³³ These studies provide knowledge about the Cavendish Circle, a group including William Cavendish; his wife, Margaret Cavendish; and a number of people outside the Cavendish family. However, they do not say much about the relationship between Cavendish and his daughters.

³¹ Here I think particularly of Timothy Raylor, "'Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue': William Cavendish, Ben Jonson, and the Decorative Scheme of Bolsover Castle," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (1999): 402-39, and of Lynn Hulse, "Apollo's Whirligig: William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle and His Music Collection," *Seventeenth Century* 9, no. 2 (1994): 213-46.

³² Nick Rowe, "'My Best Patron': William Cavendish and Jonson's Caroline Dramas," *Seventeenth Century* 9, no. 2 (1994): 197.

³³ Anne Barton, "Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia," *ELH* 48, no. 4 (1981): 706-31; Robert C. Evans, "'Making just approaches': Ben Jonson's Poems to the Earl of Newcastle," *Renaissance Papers* (1988): 63-75; James Fitzmaurice, "William Cavendish and Two Entertainments by Ben Jonson," *Ben Jonson Journal: Literary Contexts in the Age of Elizabeth, James and Charles 5* (1998): 63-80; Harold Love, "Shadwell, Flecknoe and the Duke of Newcastle: An Impetus for Mac Flecknoe," *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 2, no. 1 (1985): 19-27; Rowe, "'My Best Patron,'" 197-212.

Using Robert Merton's "Intermarriage and the Social Structure" as a guide, I analyze marriage in the fictional communities created by the Cavendish family.³⁴ Merton defines four distinct categories for what he terms "rules governing choice of spouse," based on whether or not spouses have married appropriately within or outside their social group, as stipulated by their culture's guidelines.³⁵ He also notes a difference between these rules and people's behavior, arguing that "the actual practices are resultants of the norms *and* specifiable conditions of group life."³⁶ The work of Margaret J.M. Ezell suggests that war itself is a "specifiable condition," creating a change in domestic governance, one where women lay claim to a larger number of powers than in peacetime.³⁷ I go a step further by asserting that the Cavendish family plays with this change, creating fictional worlds where women impact the domestic realm, and quite possibly the state. The ability of a noblewoman to deny a potential partner is tantamount to her questioning his participation in a powerful social group, particularly when we consider the elite family's role in maintaining a noble class during the era and in keeping that group select.³⁸ Refusing

³⁴ Robert K. Merton, "Intermarriage and the Social Structure," in *Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), 217-50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 220.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 220-221.

³⁷ See Ezell, "'To be your daughter in your pen,'" 281-296. For a larger discussion of women and power, see Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 9-35.

³⁸ For examples regarding marriage and heirs in the Cavendish family, see Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, especially 134-135, 147, 200-201, 225, and 232-233. For more general sources on the Early Modern family, see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, ca. 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, c. 1977); Ralph Houlbrooke, *English Family Life 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1989); and Peter Laslett, *The World We Lost* (London: Methuen, 1971).

a marriage would also mean refusing to grant money to a man, at a time where the nobility were struggling to gather the assets to back up their claims to social position.³⁹ These changes have potentially far-reaching effects. Merton says that “when, with a changing social structure, the functional significance of certain norms governing choice of a spouse diminishes, the antagonism toward violations and finally the norms themselves will tend to disappear.”⁴⁰ Cavendish family members created literary characters that asked questions of an era on the cusp, a time for looking forward and looking back. For much of this anxious time, no one was certain what roles the monarch and nobility would play. The Cavendish coterie’s characters questioned whether or not any traditional norms would be operational in the future, and whether any definitive rules would govern the selection of a spouse.

Though many of Merton’s examples are contemporary to his writing, his essay serves as a seminal explanation of marriage norms in any culture.⁴¹ His earlier work, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*, indicates his awareness of social change in the seventeenth century, including the English Civil War period.⁴² The latter work provides a larger context for using the former. I also draw on Katie Whitaker’s *Mad Madge*, a recent biography of Margaret Cavendish, to provide information about the Cavendish family’s financial situation and marital

³⁹ See Whitaker, above, and for a more general discussion, see Antonia Frasier, “A Wife Sought for Wealth,” *The Weaker Vessel* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 9-25.

⁴⁰ Merton, “Intermarriage and the Social Structure,” 221.

⁴¹ Ibid., 217-50.

⁴² Merton, *Science, Technology & Society in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970).

negotiations during the period.⁴³ While I do not argue a direct analogue between the lives of the Cavendish family and those of their characters, the family's background reveals social and political circumstances relevant to a complete exploration of their works. It also provides a context for examining marriage practices depicted in their writing.

Erving Goffman provides a complementary language for describing the household drama of the Cavendish family and its authorship by Jane Cavendish, Elizabeth Brackley, and William Cavendish. His *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* describes all human communication as a form of acting in which people seek to influence others to see them in a particular light. He describes norms in dramatic terms, and his theories provide a useful framework for examining Royalists, their characters, and the effort to control their circumstances:

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show "for the benefit of other people." It will be convenient to begin a consideration of performances by turning the question

⁴³ See note 38.

around and looking at the individual's own belief in the impression of reality that he attempts to engender in those among whom he finds himself.⁴⁴

I apply Goffman's dramaturgical approach to the Cavendish family's plays because of the self-conscious role playing of the coterie's characters. They are literary figures who attempt to create specific impressions for one another, often to convey a revamped picture of the aristocracy. Because the Cavendish family itself worked to shape a particular impression of a nobility thriving within disaster, I also examine family members' social performances: as authors, William Cavendish, Jane Cavendish, and Elizabeth Brackley illustrate the Royalists' efforts to perform a reality where the cavalier can win, regain, or maintain prominence. Therefore, when I speak of performance in this dissertation, I mean both the literal performances of characters or actors, as well as the everyday performances of Royalist identity by actual members of the nobility.

In later chapters of this dissertation, I argue that both daughters and father refashion marriage in their texts, and that each family member works to create in marriage a means for establishing a new domestic performance, one where the presence or absence of a female community signals a particular depiction of women's roles. The speaker in Jane Cavendish's poems; the fictional nobility of *The Concealed Fancies*; the witches, lower class women, and shepherdesses of *A Pastorall*; and the speakers and pastoral figures in William Cavendish's writing share a preoccupation with performing interpersonal roles--all at a time when their authors were seeking to determine a Royalist identity and reestablish the nobility's homes.

⁴⁴ Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, 17.

These choices of how to perform or behave would help define marriage norms and their display and would determine how both characters and authors conveyed the options.

Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley allude to monastic community as a possible location for performing a new identity. In order to examine their use of nuns in poetry and in *The Concealed Fancies* (1644-45), I look to works by Claire Walker, Electa Arenal and Stacy Schlau, and Jo Ann McNamara to establish an historical picture of actual early modern nuns.⁴⁵ In Chapter 2, I use these sources to situate Jane Cavendish's poetic threat to become a nun to avoid marriage, and I place in context the sisters' creation of female characters who employ a variety of techniques—including the threat to be a nun—to postpone marital decisions.

In the poetry of their manuscript, Jane Cavendish at times invokes a forceful threat to remain single; likewise, in *The Concealed Fancies*, two communities of noblewomen play the parts of women who contemplate being away from men for longer than the war referred to throughout the play. Both the poetry and the play by the Cavendish sisters are preoccupied with notions of home, and particularly of the noblewoman's home; the authors, poetic speakers, and characters share a fixation with reformulating domestic space while claiming to uphold its basic traditions. This dichotomy offers a rich impression of both actual and fictional women contemplating ways to expand their family through marriage, or to make the family more exclusive

⁴⁵ Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau, "Strategems of the Strong, Strategems of the Weak: Autobiographical Prose of the Seventeenth-Century Hispanic Convent," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 9, no. 1 (1990): 25-42; and Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

by denying various noblemen the right to marry into it. These decisions, I argue, claim an extensive power for women in the domestic arena as they formulate their own ways to perform identity and behave accordingly.

Cavendish and Brackley's Bodleian manuscript begins with a series of poems to known subjects; *A Pastorall* and *The Concealed Fancies* follow them. The collection portrays a complicated notion of the domestic, one where both the real and the imagined aristocratic home is less glorified than the people making marital decisions inside it, or martial decisions outside it. The sisters' work shares with the country-house tradition a strategy of encomia for the nobility who call aristocratic houses their home.⁴⁶ Both the country-house tradition and the traditions explored by Cavendish and Brackley in poetry and in *The Concealed Fancies* bear a relationship to the pastoral mode: all at times glorify the nobility.⁴⁷ Their *Pastorall* rewrites the pastoral tradition as a feminist endeavor.

In *Parte of a Pastorall*, "Songes for a Pastorall" and "A Prolog thatt shoulde haue been spoken before an Intended Pastorall at Antwerpe," William Cavendish engages in the effort to redefine the nobility's experience by recreating pastoral tradition for the Civil War era, illustrating Royalists' education and theatrical savvy at a time when their homes and beliefs were in question.⁴⁸ Like his daughters,

⁴⁶ Compare to Aemilia Lanyer, "The Description of Cookham," in *Major Women Writers of Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. James Fitzmaurice et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1997), 38-43.

⁴⁷ See Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 59-66, for a discussion of how different country-house poems may or may not be pastoral.

⁴⁸ William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle. *Dramatic Works*, ed. Lynn Hulse. Published for the Malone Society (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996).

Cavendish allows his characters to perform the social dilemmas that Royalists faced regarding marriage and the consequences of war.

For chapters 3 and 4, I draw on critics Paul Alpers, Patrick Cullen, Judith Haber, and Nigel Smith to establish a greater context for the pastoral mode, when used by the Cavendish family in the English Civil War.⁴⁹ These scholars, along with the various authors who comment on the “nostalgia” of the family, help historicize the use of this mode in the Cavendish canon.⁵⁰ Alpers, Cullen, and Haber, and Smith write of classical pastoral and of Late English Renaissance and English Civil War pastoral; they, along with Stephens, place authors of the English Civil War era alongside Spenser. Such comparisons speak loudly of the preoccupations of the English Civil War era and sometimes, of the Cavendish family specifically. Tanya Wood indicates that William Cavendish went so far as to write a poem comparing his wife to Spenser and other literary giants, praising her as a superior wit.⁵¹ Given the Cavendish family’s preoccupation with literary traditions and earlier pastoral authors, I assert it necessary to examine how the family reinvents those traditions for their own time and purposes.

While they modernize literary modes, the Cavendish family also reinvents social roles. I argue that in the work of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley and

⁴⁹ Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*; Patrick Cullen, *Spenser, Marvell, and Renaissance Pastoral* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); Judith Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Nigel Smith, *Literature & Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

⁵⁰ Barton, “Harking Back to Elizabeth,” 706-31, discusses nostalgia in William Cavendish, while Findlay, “‘Upon the World’s Stage,’” 68-94, discusses it in Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley.

⁵¹ Tanya Caroline Wood, “Borrowing Raleigh’s Mantle: William Cavendish’s Address ‘To the Lady Newcastle, on Her Booke of Poems,’” *Notes and Queries* 245, no. 2 (2000): 183-85.

in that of their father, marriage is an unstable institution, one that female characters threaten to change—for better or for worse. With their literature, they also challenge the structure that determines marriage norms, threatening at times to reinvent the system that decides who makes marital decisions. The family pastorals illustrate this process by looking forward at change and looking back at tradition.

Both main chapters about Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley are ultimately also about their family, their Royalism, their High Church religion, and their unique marriage of gender and politics in their literary work. Because of the variety of criticism linking their work to their father's, these chapters are also indirectly about him. The chapter more specifically about his work establishes both a similarity and difference from his daughters, and ultimately illustrates the sisters' views on marriage and all three family members' desires to rewrite their roles in contemporary Royalism, playing themselves as traditional and contemporary at the same time. As they perform their social roles for a literary audience, they look to previous and future years, simultaneously.

Primary sources from the seventeenth century illustrate the logic of using Goffman's dramaturgical approach to describe the family's habit of looking forward and looking back while presenting a political self in front of others. Several years before his writings in exile, William Cavendish wrote for an audience of civilians concerned with his military rule. At that time, he explained his duties in the English Civil War, pledged to assume more responsibilities, articulated his position on Catholics, and claimed allegiance to some of the most celebrated rulers in history. His "A Declaration Made by the Earle of New-castle, Governour of the Towne and

Country of New-Castle; and Generall of all His Majesties Forces raised in the Northerne Parts of this Kingdome, etc,” was both a defense of his prior actions and a justification for his future ones:⁵²

I have now by His *Majesties* speciall command and Commission for some Moneths last past, resided in the Towne of *New Castle*. All which time I have proceeded in pursuance of the points of my Commission (which were none else but the preservation of this Town, the County of *Northumberland*, and the *Bishoprick* of *Durham*, and the Liberty of the True Protestant Religion, and of the Laws of this Kingdome established by Parliaments, the Property of the Subjects, Persons, and Goods, and securing of this Port) with that integrity and tendernes of His *Majesties* Honour. . . .⁵³

Cavendish explains his duties, tying them to the monarch, to the Church of England, and to the people. His Royalist position is in unspoken dialogue with the various pamphlets that accused him of allegiance to Catholics and his cause of harming the people.⁵⁴ He supports his righteousness by the claim that “God and His *Majesty*” told

⁵² William Cavendish, “A Declaration made by the Earle of New-castle, Governour of the Town and County of New-Castle: And Generall of all His Majesties forces raised in the Northern parts of this Kingdome, for the Defence of the same. For his Resolution of Marching into Yorkshire. As also a just Vindication of himself from that unjust Aspersions laid upon him, for entertaining some Popish Recusants in his Forces” (Printed at York by Stephen Bulkley, 1642), By Speciall Command.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁴ For an example of such a pamphlet, see *The good and prosperous successe of the Parliaments forces in York-Shire: against the Earle of Newcastle and his popish adherents. As it was sent in a letter from the Right Honourable the Lord Fairefax, and read in both Houses of Parliament, on Monday, Ian. 3. 1642. With some observations of the Lords and Commons upon the said happy proceedings, as so many answers from Heaven, which God hath given to the prayers of his servants. Published, that their mouths and hearts may be as much enlarged in praises, as they have been in prayers. Die Lunae, 30 Ian. 1642. Ordered and published, John Browne, Cler. Parliament.* by Fairfax, Ferdinando Fairfax, Baron, 1584-1648 (London: Printed for Iohn Wright in the Old Bailey, 1643).

him how to behave as general.⁵⁵ He also claims his forces are not responsible for any “plundering and Pillaging” that opponents have accused. The reference to property crimes—like a fictional reference in his daughters’ *A Pastorall*—assumes moral superiority for those under Royalist command.⁵⁶ The declaration provides one context for looking at ownership during the war. Though here he is not speaking of women, property—and control of property—is integral to the position of women in the English Civil War.

Cavendish also justifies his decision to relocate to another area, claiming that he can help the people of Yorkshire who have complained of their treatment. He claims the decision consistent with “His *Majesties* sacred intention.”⁵⁷ In the move, he is to “come free from the least Intention of Pillaging or Plundering any of His Majesties good and loyall Subjects, or of exacting any thing from them which shall be against the priviledges of the Parliament, the known laws of the Land, and Liberty of the Subject.”⁵⁸ While a defense of his righteousness, the statement is also a veiled threat to those not “good and loyall,” and is therefore claiming safety only for those supporting the monarchy. Cavendish’s rhetoric relies exclusively on asserting positive intentions toward allies, and not at all on articulating negative intentions toward enemies.

He also remembers his probable audience: those who oppose his military maneuvers. When Cavendish defends his use of Catholics in his military, he calls

⁵⁵ Cavendish, “A Declaration,” 2.

⁵⁶ Cavendish and Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, 57-60.

⁵⁷ Cavendish, “A Declaration,” 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

them by the same name that his detractors would. He refers to them as the “Popish Recusants.”⁵⁹ He separates himself and the king from the Catholics, asserting that “it was not His Majesties intention, nor the intention (for any thing I know) of any in authority under Him, to admit any of them into this service, if the way had not been chaulked out unto His Majestie, and His ministers, by these very men.”⁶⁰ He cites historical cases when dissidents have voluntarily served to protect their monarchy, including among these cases those who served during Queen Elizabeth’s reign.

He relies heavily on references to Queen Elizabeth. His conclusion implies he most needs to convince the public that his use of Catholic soldiers is acceptable and in keeping with accepted traditions:

To conclude, I wish from my heart there were Recusants of no kinde in this Kingdome; I am resolved, as I have lived, so to die in the profession of the true Reformed Religion, as it now standeth established by the Laws of the Land, and as it was professed, and practiced, in the purest times of peerless Queen Elizabeth, and for these few Recusants under my command, I shall use all possible care, that they do nothing against the Laws of this Kingdome, for I have received them not for their Religion, but for the Allegiance which they professe.⁶¹

The declaration explores a direct tie to the English Civil War that was so frequently addressed directly and indirectly in family members’ works. The dating of the text,

⁵⁹ Cavendish, *A Declaration*, 4.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

1642, gives us information on what William Cavendish was doing early in the 1640s, just a few years prior to the dating conventionally given to his daughters' collaborative manuscript. Cavendish's words also draw a separation between Catholicism, the Church of England, and Protestant factions, all while creating an historical context for using Catholics to support a Protestant monarchy. The slur he uses to refer to Catholics, even as he defends the patriotism of Catholic forces, illustrates a layered context for Catholics in the Cavendish canon. His daughters use nuns as such a commonplace in their work, and in his work as well as theirs, female characters threaten to be single. His terminology and his conflicts over Catholics add a new dimension to these discussions.

Finally, Cavendish invokes what Susan Wiseman would call the "theatre of war."⁶² To use Erving Goffman, he is playing a role for a specific audience, and he is putting on a particular face or demeanor, attempting to present himself in a favorable light to the court of public opinion.⁶³ He is also setting the stage for his family's continuing effort to write themselves into the best part of history. Though he does not mention his family life, writings from home indicate his daughters share a preoccupation with Royalism, proximity to the monarch, and power. In connecting his legacy to Queen Elizabeth, he is connecting his family to a more exalted time for Royalists. Like his effort to connect his family to the best literary traditions of the past, the mention of Queen Elizabeth is a direct effort to connect his Royalism to that

⁶² See Susan Wiseman, "Gender and Status in Dramatic Discourse: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle," in *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1799*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 159-77, esp. 168.

⁶³ Goffman, *A Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, 24.

popular monarch.⁶⁴ This attempt makes it all the more relevant to consider his dramatic writings as indicative of his own role-playing—before his own audience, and before the nobility’s audience. His declaration appeared two years before his public and personal humiliation at the Battle of Marston Moor, but he was already fighting to maintain a specific image.⁶⁵

Primary source documents from the end of Jane Cavendish’s life illustrate a similar role-playing. The author of “An Elegy on the Death of the Thrice Noble and Vertuous Lady the Lady Jane Cheyne, Eldest Daughter to William Duke of Newcastle” paints her as a celebrated, religious writer. He also shows her as a woman deeply defined by both birth and marital family. This effort to characterize her in relation to men creates yet another context for looking back at her life and her collaboration with her sister—for what each shared with their father, and for what each said about marital norms, politics, and themselves.

The elegy by nature looks back, but it also looks forward as it places the family’s reputation in the particular context of its status and values. Specific references to Jane Cavendish Cheyne’s creative work, her virtue, and her nobility abound:

Oh! that I could inherit
One portion of her great *Poetick* Spirit,
Like him who caught *Elijah’s* Mantle, I

⁶⁴ See note 50.

⁶⁵ See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 67-69, for one account.

Of Her and *Heaven* soon would *Prophecy*:
 My *Muse* should learn to bear a noble *Part*,
 And boundless Grief make regular by *Art*:
 An *Art* she knew and practiced so well,
 Her *Modesty* alone could it excel;
 Which by concealing doubles her Esteem:
 'Tis hard to understand and not to seem. . . ⁶⁶

The passage acknowledges Jane Cavendish Cheyne's writing to be on the level of the religious. Bible verses show Elijah parting waters with his mantle, and ascending gloriously to heaven. The reference to Elijah's mantle suggests that there was nothing she could not do, since one who inherited such power would have inherited much.⁶⁷ Yet according to the elegy writer, Cavendish Cheyne also managed to present her writing in a way that exemplified the characteristics deemed appropriate to women and to the nobility; hence she was a female writer of a prophet's status, writing within the context of her time and its conventions.

The elegy expresses this idea further in a later passage:

Wandering abroad small Poets does become,

⁶⁶ "An Elegy on the death of Lady Jane Cheyne," by a person of quality and neighbor in Chelsey, From Adam Littleton, "A sermon at the funeral of the Right Honourable the Lady Jane eldest daughter to His Grace, William, Duke of Newcastle, and wife to the Honourable Charles Cheyne, Esq. at Chelsey, November 1, Being All-saints day" (London: Printed by John Macock, 1669). Wing. L2568. UMI. 767:06. H2v.

⁶⁷ For a Renaissance account of Elijah, Elisha, and their prophecies, see 2 Kings 1-2. Old Testament. King James Bible, 1611. *The Bible in English (990-190)*, Chadwyck (Proquest Learning Company, 1997-2003). All cited biblical texts come from this version. It also bears mentioning that according to an entry in the 2002 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the invoking of "mantle" was "originally used with allusion to the passing of Elijah's mantle to Elisha (2 Kings 2:13), understood allegorically." The entry cites several examples from this period; the 1660 example reads: "Dryden *Epist. Sir R. Howard* in R. Howard *Poems* sig. A8, Yet let me take your Mantle up, and I Will venture in your right to prophesy." See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002 ed., s.v. "mantle."

Great *Wits* (like *Princes*) best are seen at home:
And yet her Name might *Patronize* a *Muse*
Defying strictest Censure to accuse;
For whatsoe're her *Fancies* stamp did own,
Was *Sterling Coin* to be refus'd by none;
Without *allay* and as her self *refin'd*,
High as her *Birth*, yet gentle as her mind;
Where *Female* sweetness manly strength did meet,
At once (like *Samsons* riddle) strong and sweet. . . .⁶⁸

The elegy connects her to the word “fancy,” indicating that she was remembered for the various “fancies” that she created, and quite possibly for her collaborative work, *The Concealed Fancies*. Her literary work is deemed significant because of her nobility and stature, even though she is remembered for her submission and femininity. A portrait of her father appears before the print edition of the elegy and the sermon preceding it, and the elegy writer spends much time discussing Jane Cavendish Cheyne as a wife and mother in the noble class. Her writing is remembered in between discussion of father and husband, with a relationship to both.

Ultimately, the elegy to Jane Cavendish establishes another forum—even in the death of a Cavendish—for celebrating Royalist authorship and connections

⁶⁸ “An Elegy,” H3r. For another position on the funeral sermon/elegy to Jane Cavendish, see Elizabeth Clarke, “The Garrisoned Muse: Women’s Use of the Religious Lyric in the Civil War Period,” in *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination*, 134. For a brief description of the elegies to Jane Cavendish that contrasts opinions of Jane Cavendish’s writing with Margaret Cavendish’s public literary reputation, see Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 335-336.

between birth and married family. Given her focus on the impact of marriage and marital decisions, the elegy is a context for looking back at the family's manuscripts, and at looking both back and forward at the family's attempts to create roles for themselves within English literary history.

Her placement in the poem between two prominent men speaks volumes for the negotiations made between birth and acquired family in an early modern woman's life. Like the military documents her father used to assert his authority, the elegy asserts a specific role, this time a domestic one designed to live on after Jane Cavendish Cheyne's death. Both documents speak to the desire to play and sustain particular roles. The former concretely ties the family to the Royalist cause in the English Civil War, while the latter positions a female writer amid her prominent family members.

The Cavendish family wanted to preserve or invent a particular image for Jane Cavendish's life, even in her death. Her elegy speaks to family connections, literature, and the impact of marriage. Like an elegy to the entire family, the Cavendish family's canon speaks of connections, as well. The writings of father and daughters make it necessary to label the family a coterie. Shared preoccupations with marriage and war give Jane Cavendish, Elizabeth Brackley, and William Cavendish an urgency, exigence, and historical context. The family's exploration of women's roles in marriage show them examining women's political purposes. And collections of poetry and plays dedicated to household performance show a family trying to build a literary foundation for its threatened Royalist homes and for the family's roles in marriage, war, and literature

Chapter 2: “Presumption shall never see me out of order”: Marital Control in *The Concealed Fancies*¹

Jane Cavendish’s and Elizabeth Brackley’s relationship with one another was a vital influence on their manuscript drama, *The Concealed Fancies*, and of equal or greater social and political influence than the relationship the two shared with their father.² We may see this influence especially in the communities of women they created. For a full understanding of the sisters’ work and of its position within the Cavendish coterie, we need to examine their collaboration for its religious, social, and political content.

In their collaborative play, *The Concealed Fancies*, the two sisters create a temporary religious sisterhood for their characters, Luceny and Tattiney, portraying the fictional sisters as nuns. In Act IV, Luceny and Tattiney abandon their newfound fervor to be with the men who wish to marry them. Alison Findlay has called their quick “nun phase” a “shift from withdrawal to betrothal,” while Dorothy Stephens has explained the convent’s presence in the play by noting that the “women have sequestered themselves there to mourn the absence of male relatives during the war.”³

¹ Betty Travitsky proposes 1640s dating for the manuscript, noting that textual references may mean some items are older than others. See Betty Travitsky, “Early Years: Elizabeth Cavendish, #3 Bodleian MS. Rawl. Poet. 16 and Beinecke MS Osborn b. 233,” in *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 58-72. Another scholar believes this play can be placed in 1643 or 1644. See Katie Whitaker, *Mad Madge: The Extraordinary Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, the First Woman to Live by Her Pen* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 82-83.

² S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds., *The Concealed Fancies*, by Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, in *Renaissance Drama by Women* (London: Routledge, 1996), 129, and Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England*, 52-81, are two sources that illustrate the view that William Cavendish’s influence was of paramount importance to the sisters.

³ Alison Findlay, “‘She Gave You the Civility of the House,’” in *Readings in Renaissance Drama*, ed. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London: Routledge, 1998), 264; Dorothy Stephens, “‘Who

Both critics capture the perplexing nature of Luceny's and Tattiney's transformations, acknowledging the paradoxical interconnections of convent and marriage. I propose that a neglected poem by Jane Cavendish in Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16 adds another important element to our understanding of Luceny and Tattiney, especially the nun scenes in *The Concealed Fancies*.⁴ The poem's treatment of sisterhood—both familial and religious—also gives a departure point for looking at the sisters' politics and political awareness.

The Concealed Fancies is a play about several communities of women.⁵

Sisters Luceny and Tattiney discuss the wooing and marriage proposals of Courtley and Presumption; cousins Sh., Is., and Cicilley deal with the isolation of war while redefining their place in a home where they are staying. All conversations among the women and the men in the play take place during the ongoing Civil War that the Cavendish family members themselves were living through. On several occasions in the play, characters invoke the war, an indication that war is not merely an incidental feature in the play. To understand the play fully, we need to take into account the various communities in the play, examining their relationships to war and the interconnections between war and domestic life. This examination moves us beyond

can those vast imaginations feed?": *The Concealed Fancies* and the price of hunger," in *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 153.

⁴ Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16, in *British Literary Manuscripts from the Bodleian Library*, Oxford Series one, The English Renaissance, c. 1500-1700 (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Microform, 1988-89), 49-50. All numeric references to this collection are to manuscript page numbers, and all items from the manuscript are from my transcription. See Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England*, 52-81, for a thorough discussion of attribution of specific works to the two sisters. Travitsky (56, n 105) acknowledges some differences of opinion as to which sister wrote what, but cites multiple sources attributing poetry to Jane.

⁵ When I discuss *The Concealed Fancies*, the text I use is Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *The Concealed Fancies*, 127-54.

the figure of the nun (as the authors present it as an alternative to marriage) and toward a fuller understanding of how Cavendish and Brackley refigure wartime women and wartime marriages.

In this chapter, I propose a new theoretical model for looking at Cavendish, Brackley, and their characters' marital decisions; analyze "The angry Curs" alongside sections from two Civil War era versions of the Book of Common Prayer, tools enlightening for uncovering Jane Cavendish's use of rhetoric; and provide readings of the communities within *The Concealed Fancies* alongside this analysis. My readings focus principally on analyzing how speakers and characters interpret women's marital decisions with the English Civil War in the background.

I.

Using Robert Merton as a guide, we may see the institution of the Royalist aristocratic family group as giving the young women of *The Concealed Fancies* a reason to determine their "in-group," "out-group," and eligible marriage partners carefully.⁶ The father in the play, Lord Calsindow, is an example of an aristocratic man, and his daughters Luceny and Tattiney are daughters of the aristocracy. Likewise, Sh., Is., and Cicilley, three other female characters, are aristocratic women. According to Merton's reasoning, there are logical choices of marriage partners in this fictional work—in other words, respectable members of a character's "in-group."⁷ For an aristocrat, this is another member of the aristocracy, but some members of an "in-group" would naturally be off limits because of incest

⁶ Robert K. Merton, "Intermarriage and the Social Structure," in *Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), 217-50.

⁷ Subplots involving Toy and other servants in the play further illustrate this point.

prohibitions.⁸ In any given culture, members of one's "out-group" include those designated as impossible partners in a marriage union because of class or other social distinctions. Merton's theories offer a fuller explanation for the attributes all cultures share in regard to marriage norms:

No society lacks a system of marriage. In no society is the selection of a marriage partner unregulated and indiscriminate. The choice, whether by the contractants themselves or by other delegated persons or groups, is subject to regulation by diffuse cultural controls and sometimes by specific social agencies. These regulations vary in many respects: in the degree of control—permission, preference, prescription, proscription; in the social statuses that are thus categorized—for example, kinship, race, class, and religion; in the sanctions attached to the regulations; in the machinery for carrying the rules into effect; in the degree to which the rules are effective. All this can be said with some assurance but there still remains the problem of systematizing these types of variation into some comprehensible order. . . .⁹

Thus begins Merton's seminal explanation for how cultures start establishing their definitions of marriage by asking the same questions about making rules for marriage partner selection. Here, regardless of the somewhat traditional outcome of the Cavendish and Brackley play, the female characters of the Cavendish family not only raise some basic questions about marriage but, in the context of the Civil War and

⁸ For an argument about incest in the *The Concealed Fancies*, see Catherine Burroughs, "'Hymen's Monkey Love': *The Concealed Fancies* and Female Sexual Initiation," *Theatre Journal* 51, no. 1 (1999): 21-31. While I disagree with Burroughs's argument that the play involves incest fantasies, I believe the article illustrates the complex relations between birth family and marriage family in the play.

⁹ Merton, "Intermarriage and the Social Structure," 217-218.

Royalist value systems, also dictate an expanded control for the women making these decisions.

In my readings, I situate the various struggles toward—and away—from matrimony—in the context offered by Merton’s theories. The women of the play claim the ability to determine “in-group” and “out-group” eligibility by looking at their own beliefs and those of their family, as well as their own status/class positions. In that regard, each group of women (the sisters and the cousins) has its own very serious political role—that of protecting a threatened aristocratic “in-group” by determining who can socially, financially, and sexually join the group through marriage, and under what terms.¹⁰ In addition, the characters’ continual preoccupations with marriage and men have a purpose beyond what our own contemporary bias would often infer. These dramatic women share alliances in which they talk about marriage norms, and their discussions engage them with a war that will decide who will rule countries—while the women increasingly claim the power to decide who will rule families.

Erving Goffman’s arguments about interpersonal behavior provide a complementary framework for assessing “in groups,” “out groups,” and the Cavendish family’s representations of marriage and social norms. In his theory that all human interaction represents a kind of performance, Goffman asserts:

When the individual does move into a new position in society and obtains a new part to perform, he is not likely to be told in full detail how to conduct himself, nor will the facts of his new situation press sufficiently on him from

¹⁰ Merton, “Intermarriage and the Social Structure,” 217-22.

the start to determine his conduct without his further giving thought to it.

Ordinarily he will be given only a few cues, hints, and stage directions, and it will be assumed that he already has in his repertoire a large number of bits and pieces of performances that will be required in the new setting.¹¹

Cavendish and Brackley, faced with absence of male relatives, had no definite script to follow. In the poetry and plays of their manuscripts, they reflected speakers and characters reinterpreting inherited values and inventing new ways to “perform” courtship and marriage. In a sense, the authors reflect several layers of “performance”: their own “performances” as noblewomen and as authors in a coterie, and the “performances” of characters or actors behaving as characters. The self-conscious, sometimes metatheatrical lines of Cavendish and Brackley’s characters add to the layers of performance.

The findings of historians make this use of Merton and of Goffman all the more pertinent to my argument. Even earlier than the Stuart period, women had assumed economic responsibilities. Barbara Harris’s research indicates that a number of women in the Tudor period exercised control over marriage negotiations and financial exchanges when male family members were absent or deceased.¹² Katie Whitaker’s recent biography of Margaret Cavendish, *Mad Madge*, not only supports the idea that women retained financial control of estates during the Stuart period while male relatives were away, but also that the Cavendish daughters took part in

¹¹ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 72-73.

¹² Barbara Harris, “Women and Politics in Early Tudor England,” *Historical Journal* 33, no. 2 (1990): 259-81. Margaret J.M. Ezell notes “the number of women who would have escaped direct patriarchal control because they were left fatherless.” See *The Patriarch’s Wife* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 17. The Cavendish daughters were not fatherless, but they did live apart from their father for significant periods of time.

this practice. Whitaker's biography describes ways in which the younger women in the Cavendish family had financial responsibilities in the absence of their father. Such responsibilities directly corresponded to family efforts to maintain or regain aristocratic standing:

Jane, always the family's manager, had successfully petitioned Parliament for a fifth of the income from William's lands—the legal entitlement of the families of all royalist delinquents. As part of this portion, Jane had succeeded in including the family's house at Welbeck, and she and her sister Frances continued to live here, supervising the estate business astutely. Servants were laid off to cut down expenses, and the accounts of the steward, Thomas Bamford, who ran the grange farm—supplying meat, butter, and grain to the Welbeck household—were carefully checked. Money was sent to London, to their brothers Charles and Henry, who still had no lands or income. At Welbeck Jane did what she could for her father, ensuring the family portraits and tapestries—of huge sentimental value to William—were maintained in good condition, and selling her own jewels to raise money for his maintenance in exile. . . .¹³

Whitaker's work establishes that William Cavendish was in dangerous financial shape throughout his exile. In the passage cited, Jane Cavendish emerges as a member of the family far more financially reliable than any male relatives—including several brothers who had no material wealth of their own and who lived much closer to the sisters than their father.

¹³ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 127.

Whitaker's biography further shows the impact that this financial arrangement would have had on unmarried daughters in the Cavendish household, describing the oldest and youngest daughter in the family as possessing "no dowries for marriage unless Sir Charles [their uncle] succeeded in settling the family's finances."¹⁴ Still, the Cavendish daughters had their own financial role to play, since it is they—and not their father or their uncle—who saw to it that money from the estates was available to the family prior to the early 1650s. Elsewhere in the biography, Whitaker briefly mentions that, although Jane had been uncertain about marrying, she married in 1654 and wrote that she was happy.¹⁵ This detail is not irrelevant to discussion of marriage and power during the period. Regardless of her—or the others' feelings—about marriage, the women of the family occupied financial roles that had an integral connection to whether or not the women of the family would—or even could—marry in or outside of their station.

By now it is common knowledge that Jane and Elizabeth wrote their manuscript in their father's absence, and Whitaker's observations shed light on their management of family business during the same years. The women wrote their joint manuscript prior to the 1650s, but it is unlikely that William Cavendish was running his estate while fighting the actual war, even though his financial situation might not have been as grim as it would eventually become. Because the sisters' works are preoccupied with whether marriage will or will not occur, and under what conditions, knowing that the women were faced with responsibilities while at home without their father sheds new light on the women's larger roles prior to or concurrent with their

¹⁴ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 135.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

own marriages—and prior to or concurrent with their creation of female, aristocratic characters who claim the desire to exercise control over the selection of marriage partners. Whitaker's findings support research on the amount of time women would have spent alone during the years of the English Civil War and Interregnum—running practical affairs in the absence of a male leader. The women were occupied with maintaining their family in the lifestyle to which it was already or would have liked to be accustomed, an occupation that was interconnected to the family's desire to make sure that family members had dowries that would allow them to marry well.¹⁶

I apply these financial considerations to my discussion of women's community and marriage practices in the wartime play, *The Concealed Fancies*. The Cavendish sisters' time alone together provides an exigence for looking closely at their presentation of marriage. I provide a connection between the poetry in the sisters' collection and their play. In doing so, I argue a context for looking at the two sisters as members of the Cavendish coterie, preoccupied with their own interpretations of women's social and political roles in the domestic sphere. They were not just their father's daughters, answering questions as he asked them. They were asking their own questions, interpreting the answers both in autobiographical poetry and in the fiction of household performance. In addition, in their coterie sharing, the daughters were not always giving the expected responses.

To illuminate these issues, I also examine the role of men within the women's texts, as opposed to the role of men's writing as an influence on the texts. By looking at the discrepant duties of a person both Royalist and female, as Margaret J. M. Ezell

¹⁶ See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 135, 147, and 199, for additional information on the family's dowry arrangements.

does, we gain a starting place for examining a small group of women as representative of a larger political scheme, as I will explore later in this chapter.¹⁷ By looking at the contrast between the position of birth and the selection of marriage partner, as Catherine Burroughs does, we get a starting place for looking at what female authors—and female characters--were doing with their political conversations.¹⁸ If we recognize the psychological power involved in flirtation and marriage negotiations, as Dorothy Stephens does, we gain a starting place for looking at authors—and characters—as having a social and political agenda as they discuss marriage.¹⁹ By recognizing some of the major debates in Cavendish and Brackley studies, as Nathan Comfort Starr and S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies prompt us to do, we gain new insights into the context of the play and possible readings of the family community who created the fictional communities within it.²⁰

II.

My perspective is shaped by my research on Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16. Jane Cavendish's poetry, which appears at the beginning of the manuscript, is perhaps best known for depicting the sisters' loyalty and love for their father.²¹ The presence of these poems lends support to the critical perspectives that examine William Cavendish as a mentor or central influence. However, some of the poetry

¹⁷ Margaret J.M. Ezell, "'To be your daughter in your pen,'" *Huntington Library Quarterly: A Journal for the History and Interpretation of English and American Civilization* 51, no. 4 (1988): 281-96.

¹⁸ Burroughs, "'Hymen's Monkey Love,'" 21-31.

¹⁹ Stephens, "'Who can those vast imaginations feed?'," 143-77.

²⁰ Nathan Comfort Starr, ed. "*The Concealed Fancies: A Play by Lady Jane Cavendish and Lady Elizabeth Brackley.*," *PMLA* 46 (1931): 802-38; Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, eds., *The Concealed Fancies*, 127-54.

²¹ For examples, see note 2.

that Jane Cavendish wrote about Elizabeth can provide scholars with a clearer picture of the sisters' relationship to one another.²² The depiction of this relationship provides a more detailed sense of the sisters' responsibilities to one another and to their larger social situation in Civil War England. It also allows us to question readings of their work that rely heavily on analyzing the sisters' sense of duty to their father at the expense of all else.

Still many questions about how Jane Cavendish related her writing to those around her remain to be answered. In her essay "The Garrisoned Muse," Elizabeth Clarke details Jane Cavendish's use of religion in her writings. She specifically cites poems about Cavendish's father and his military successes, asserting in one instance that Cavendish creates a "blasphemous equation in this poem between her father and God."²³ She later modifies this contention:

the "private way" in which she is marking Newcastle's victory is of course her choice of the manuscript medium, which would allow circulation to an elite Royalist coterie; it is also a rhetorical strategy that turns the celebration of Newcastle's victory into the observation of a religious feast, a more pious and appropriate activity for a young lady.²⁴

Clarke further suggests that "an elite Royalist readership, of the kind that participated in literary culture at Welbeck before the civil war, and in particular her father, whose

²² Cavendish and Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall and a Play*, 11, 19, 22, 28 are all poems to or about Jane Cavendish's sisters. A number of other poems in the collection are dedicated to or about other female family members, friends, and servants.

²³ Elizabeth Clarke, "The Garrisoned Muse: Women's Use of Religious Lyric in the Civil War Period," in *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination*, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 135.

²⁴ Clarke, "The Garrisoned Muse," 135.

poems show the same kind of witty exploitation of religious rhetoric, would have detected the irony.”²⁵ Jane Cavendish made a much more elaborate rhetorical use of religious documents, a use even more complicated than Clarke suggests here. This mixture of religion and politics applied not only to her relationship with her father, but also to her relationships with female family members at home, such as her sister Elizabeth. The religion and politics in poetry about her sister implies that Cavendish considered both topics to be legitimate concerns among women, and not just topics to be discussed with their father or other male relatives. This possibility does not deny the legitimacy of Cavendish’s behavior as a proper Renaissance woman; rather, it offers a partial explanation for how she could be a good woman and a good Royalist, while at the same time recognizing the community of women left at home by war.²⁶ Furthermore, the presence of religion and politics in poetry to her sister and to her father suggests that Jane Cavendish considered both people not only to be members of her family, but also to be members of the same coterie, preoccupied with the same ideas and beliefs.

“The angry Curs” enables us to analyze Jane Cavendish’s use of politics and religion. This poem at times reverses some prayers contained in the *Book of Common Prayer*, opposing the good wishes of prayers and making them negative curses against an enemy.²⁷ This intertextuality of “The angry Curs” and the *Book of*

²⁵ Clarke, “The Garrisoned Muse,” 137.

²⁶ Clarke acknowledges Ezell, ““To Be Your Daughter in Your Pen,””287. She specifically quotes Ezell for arguing the Cavendish and Brackley manuscript was a “significant contribution to the political project to affirm Cavalier identity.” See Clarke, “The Garrisoned Muse,”135.

²⁷ I am grateful to Jane Donawerth for her early suggestion of religious parody in the poem. Her suggestion to look at the *Book of Common Prayer* led me on an exploration of how the *Book of Common Prayer* and

Common Prayer complicates the relationship of the poem to Cavendish's canon. It also leads us back into an examination of Cavendish's relationship to her sister, which in turn is a starting place for looking at the work the two achieved together.

"The angry Curs" illuminates historical details of Cavendish's and Brackley's lives since it refers to family separation and social conflict.²⁸ The poem's title is unusually negative next to others in the same collection. Poems such as "The Greate Example," "On my sweete brother Charles," "On my Lord, my father the Marquess of Newcastle," and "Passions Contemplation" function as encomia to family members, nobility, friends, and servants and illustrate the coterie nature of the Cavendish family writings. "The angry Curs," however, is a long piece without such a positive topic. It begins:

Who is't that darr tell mee they'l haue away
My Sister Brackley, who's my true lifes day
For if hir absence I will bee a Nunn
And speak then nothinge, but when will she come
The Plotters of this damned vgley plott
Let Curs of Egipp euer proue their lott (25).

While the speaker does not provide a complete description of the context for the complaints, the Civil War era poem immediately addresses a specific problem. Within the first six lines, we understand the possibility of separation from her sister.

the Bible inform and intersect with Jane Cavendish's political rhetoric. I use the *Book of Common Prayer* from 1642 because of its English Civil War references.

²⁸ Because the poems in the collection are often dedicated to known subjects, I interchangeably refer to "Cavendish" and "speaker." In the manuscript, the author and speaker are far more conflated than we are accustomed to in contemporary literature. Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, 25.

Other poems in the collection speak to separation from family, but with a decidedly different tone.

Whitaker details an actual separation between the sisters after the manuscript's composition. Elizabeth had married in her mid-teens: "Judged too young to live with her nineteen-year-old husband, she had remained at home at Welbeck. But, while the sisters wrote this drama during 1645, she was preparing to move to Ashridge, the Bridgewaters' family home in Buckinghamshire."²⁹ Jane Cavendish's threat to become a "nunn" becomes all the more complicated, given the possibility that her sister was relocating due to marriage. Regardless of the reasons for the proposed move, Cavendish presents the separation from her sister as a dramatic one, with dire consequences for female family members.

Several of Cavendish's poems to her father complain about his distant location. "Passions Lettre to my Lord my Father" provides a significant contrast to the poem about Elizabeth Brackley³⁰:

My Lord, it is your absence, makes each see,
Your company creates, and makes me free;
For without you, I am dull peece of earth,
And soe contynwes nothings, till you make my birth,
For want of you I can too truly tell,
The seuerall wayes of greife, that makes a Hell. . . (1)

²⁹ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 83. War had first broken out in 1642, and 1645 was approximately four years before Charles I's beheading and the Interregnum.

³⁰ I rely on Betty Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England*, 74, for the transcription of the second word of the title. In the manuscript, the second word is "Lettre," but it appears with each "t" elevated.

While Jane Cavendish further chronicles thoughts that sound desperate and even potentially suicidal, she ends with a proclamation of her hope and with an acceptance of the circumstances surrounding her separation from her father. She has given up her negative thoughts because of the strength provided by the knowledge that he is well:

But then consideringe, that aliue you bee,
I kept my life, which is euen lent from thee;
Thus doth my life both ebb, and flow, with you;
And as I hope for happinesse, tis true. (1)

Given the Civil War context, Cavendish agonizes over the danger to her father and rejoices in the news of his survival. But despite Cavendish's despondency over her father's absence, she also represents herself adoring him in almost religious ways, just as Clarke suggests was sometimes the case. Her life is joined with his, and it seems to provide her either with the hope to go on, or with the filial obligation to do so.³¹

By reading "The angry Curs" alongside a poem about Cavendish's father, we gain a broader view of the Cavendish family as a coterie, as well as the literary connections and social interactions of its members. In "The angry Curs," we see at least the same sense of family community, and a different kind of hopelessness about the dissolution of that community. Cavendish does not just complain about the possibility of being separated from her sister. Nor does she immediately discuss having felt hopeless about her life. But she illustrates the hopelessness—in this poem, her sister appears to be the most important person in her life. She specifically

³¹ See nn. 23-26 above, for Clarke's related readings of some additional poetry.

threatens to “bee a Nunn,” which suggests the same refusal of marriage that we see later in the manuscript in *A Pastorall* and in *The Concealed Fancies*. However, in this poem more so than in the two plays, the choice to “bee a Nunn” is more concretely tied to the behavior or loss of a female family member than it is to the absence of male relatives. Cavendish presents herself as someone who believes that she can negotiate a better outcome for herself if she threatens to exercise control over her chastity and marital status. That expectation challenges the notion that the refusal to marry in her other works occurs strictly out of mourning, or that the coy behavior could be construed as apolitical. In this poem, unlike in *A Pastorall* and *The Concealed Fancies*, we have a direct autobiographical reference with the mention of her sister’s name.³² The idea of separation from her sister makes her not just get mad, but curse to indicate the desire to get even. Within the first six lines, Jane Cavendish not only swears, but also directs her hostility outward instead of inward.

She directs much of this anger toward a group she terms the “Plotters.” The most logical definition of “Plotters” includes those either against her family or against the Royalist cause, if not both. The Church of England’s *Book of Common Prayer* reflects the political affiliations of Royalist followers at the time, and much of Cavendish’s rhetoric illustrates her interpretation of these ideals. She provides us with a series of catastrophes that she hopes will come to her enemies. Whereas Church of England members thanked God for their protection from plagues, Cavendish invokes Exodus, wishing the “Curs of Egipp” be upon the plotters. She

³² Note “Sister Brackley,” in the second line of the poem, Cavendish and Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, 25.

prays her enemies meet the ultimate consequence, to face the curse without God's protection.³³ She continues:

For meate I'de haue them all things trulye want
But fleas, & lice, those plenty & not scant
And for their Beare I'de haue it steeped soote.
Or at the best stamped Henbane vgly roote. (25)

She is wishing her enemies to be continually plagued by disease and discomfort—the very types of disease and disaster that Anglicans talked about in church, while giving thanks for relief from these things in such prayers as “A Thanksgiving for deliverance from the plague.”³⁴ She even wants the plotters' beer to be brewed incorrectly, tasting sweet and undrinkable. Alcohol was often brewed sweetly, but the context establishes that she is wishing them anything but normal beverages. The wish is tantamount to wishing them to have overbrewed liquor.³⁵ More importantly, the drink should be “stamped Henbane vgly roote,” suggesting she wishes them a beer containing the smelly poison of henbane.

In spite of such secular sounding curses, the poem is an interaction with the litany of the Church of England and with Exodus as it appears in the King James Version of the Bible. The lines allude to the references to plague and discomfort that Anglican churchgoers included in their prayers. In “A thanksgiving for deliverance

³³ One key example comes from the *Book of Common Prayer: And Administration of the Sacraments: And Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England* (London: Printed by Robert Barker, and by the Assignes of John Bill, 1642), B5v., Wing B3613; UMI 809:30. My argument is not that Anglicans were alone in the condemnation of others, but that the Anglican rhetoric is the one to which Jane Cavendish had the most immediate context when *she* judged others.

³⁴ *Book of Common Prayer*, B5v.

³⁵ *OED*, 2nd ed., s.v. “soote,” “steeped,” and “beare.”

from the plague,” congregants spoke of relief: “O Lord God, which hast wounded us for our sins & consumed us for our transgressions, by thy late heavy and dreadfull visitation, and now in the midst of judgement remembering mercy, hast redeemed our souls from the jaws of death. . .” (sig. D3r).³⁶ Cavendish asserts that she is not only praying for general types of relief, but also is praying for relief from the bad motives of contemporary people—the Puritan “plotters.”

The 1641 *Book of Common Prayer* gives another idea of the different ways in which churchgoers discussed catastrophe and politics in Church of England services, and its prayers provide a context for Cavendish’s own. Prayers for peace and victory ostensibly go beyond a traditional cry for peace on earth because of the time in which they appear:

A thanksgiving for peace and victory.

O Almighty God, which art a strong tower of defence unto thy servants, against the face of their enemies: we yeeld thee praise and thanksgiving for our deliverance from those great & apparent dangers wherewith we were compassed: we acknowledge it thy goodnesse, that we were not delivered over as prey unto them, beseeching thee stil to continue such thy mercies toward us, that al the world may know that thou art our saviour & mighty deliverer, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. (sig. D3r)

Elsewhere in the *Book of Common Prayer* are other pleas for peace:

³⁶ This example is from *The Book of Common Prayer and administration of the sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, with the Psalter or Psalmes of David*, (London: printed by Robert Barker, printer to the Kings most excellent Majestie: and by the assignes of John Bill, 1641), D3r, Wing (2nd ed., 1994) B3612. UMI 1843: 09. Also see note 33, above. For Biblical readings, I use a version of the Bible that became available earlier in the seventeenth century, the A.V. Bible of 1611. It is available through *The Bible in English (990-1970)*, Chadwyck, (Proquest Learning Company, 1997-2003).

In the time of war.

O Almighty God, King of all kings, and governour of all things, whose power no creature is able to rebel, to whom it belongeth justly to punish sinners, and to be mercifull unto them that truly repent: save and deliver us (we humbly beseech thee) from the hands of our enemies, abate their pride, asswage their malice, and confound their devices, that we being armed with thy defence, may be preserved evermore from all perils, to glorifie thee, which are the onely giver of all victory, through the merits of thy onely son Jesus Christ, &tc. (sig. D2v)

The *Book of Common Prayer* conventionally includes a prayer for the monarch. In the 1641 version, amid the pleas for peace, are prayers for Charles I, Henrietta Maria, and their children. Given this context, Cavendish's curses to an enemy are not simply a parody of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Nor do they blasphemously put her family on a pedestal with God. Rather, they illustrate a Royalist woman applying religion and the *Book of Common Prayer* to the English Civil War, a potential separation from her sister, a betrayal of her family, and the "plotters"/Puritans whom she is cursing.

Cavendish's initial use of the "Curs of Egipp" adds to the context for her cursing and indicates the Church of England is her frame of reference for religious discussion. She does not sustain the use of Anglican rhetoric, though she continues cursing her enemies once she has invoked her beliefs. As she shifts to a more general type of cursing, Cavendish begins cataloging everything that she hopes will go wrong in her enemies' lives:

So'e for their mind I wish it neuer pleased

But alwayses troubled with a high disease

For company Rats squeking their discourse

And then Catts howleing should bee their Carous. (25)

She wishes their bodies to suffer from the bites of diseased creatures and their minds to be driven mad by the worst sounds that she can imagine. But she is still not finished:

Their clothes in winter stiff Buceram thinn

In Summer Pollcat furr lined all within

Thus I would haue ill natures iustly payd

And when they trust I'de haue them sure betray'd. (25)

She wants the plotters always to be dressed uncomfortably and inappropriately, wearing dangerously thin clothes in winter, and the smelly fur of the polecat (English skunk) in summer. Even more telling, she wants them to have no one to trust. The poetry of the manuscript at times directly mentions the English Civil War, providing an additional element to this reading. During a war, the wish that an enemy be physically uncomfortable is bad enough. But the poet's desire to "haue ill natures iustly payd" is a judgment on the prior behavior of the enemies, one that indicates that the plotters have committed a wrong against her. That they should be "iustly payd" implies that they betrayed a trust she invested in them, since her wish for their just payment is that they confide in others, only to be "sure betray'd." These lines point to Cavendish's dislike of a group opposing her family and her politics. In the final analysis, she would have them surrounded by distasteful creatures, suffering from

mental distress and melancholy and unable to confide in anyone without serious repercussions.

Cavendish returns to the language of religious discourse and attempts to convince her audience to listen to what she has said about her enemies. She places herself on the side of righteousness by speaking to “all good people,” giving herself an audience of allies, and placing her enemies on the opposite side of those with “gallant minds”:

Now all good people that haue gallant minds

Shun this foule creature as the worst of kinds

From Plague or pestilence is our Lettany

But from ill natures God deliver mee. (25)

The closing passage is a particularly interesting speech act for Jane Cavendish, since she is offering a kind of prayer for her readers. The enemy is a “foule creature”; with the “lettany,” her readers will pray for their salvation from evil at just the moment when she has finished praying the opposite for a shared enemy. The closing lines are a very vocal attempt by a Royalist woman to state her political situation and to motivate others to adopt her position.

The use of Anglican rhetoric particularly limits Cavendish’s primary audience to a select number of people, all of whom would have shared her Royalist convictions. In the English Civil War, the various dissenting religious groups would have had no political use for the Church of England. As such, they would not have used its rhetoric to exalt themselves and lower enemies. Cavendish effectively places herself alongside the people she holds in highest regard, creating or acknowledging a

community who would have been reading her work and sharing it amongst themselves. Whether because of Elizabeth Brackley's marriage or because of the acts of their political adversaries, the separation between the sisters resonates, and Cavendish expected her original audience to know why. Her words insist a coterie was expected to read her words and to empathize with her views and situation. The piece affirms the strong feelings that one sister had for another, and it affirms that one sister would adopt a powerful position as spokesperson and vocal social critic in order to avoid breaking up the community at home any further. It also confirms that Jane Cavendish was connecting both her father and her sister to religion, politics, and attempts to align the family with the righteous.

By alluding to the King James Version of the Bible, and wishing the "plotters" face the "curs of Egipp," Cavendish is also aligning herself and her cause with Moses, and with God. Moses reestablished Israel after the exile. Likewise, Cavendish's exiled father and other Royalists planned to return home to restore monarchy.³⁷ The comparison between Israel and England undoubtedly uplifted England, but more than that, it uplifted the nobility who felt themselves entitled to run the country. When she talks extensively about the ill will she wishes on the "plotters," then she is effectively positioning herself—and the Royalist cause and monarch—as God's chosen people. The various Puritans, those who oppose them, are to be plagued, without God's intervention. The idea was not unlike the kind found throughout the *Book of*

³⁷ If we conflate shepherds with the nobility they represent, as is often the custom, *A Pastorall* places William Cavendish in France while Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley wrote their manuscript. See Cavendish and Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, 88. According to Katie Whitaker, he first went into exile in 1644 after losing the North of England at Marston Moor. See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 68.

Common Prayer, except in Cavendish's variation, there is a more obviously negative intent, showing no mercy.

Cavendish's appropriation of the term "nunn" and of the *Book of Common Prayer* indicates her willingness to refigure religious terms and their political implications for her own purposes—giving her a voice of domestic power distinct from that of her father and other family members. That, perhaps more than anything, shows the legacy of her threat to become a nun in her sister's absence.

As she invokes the word "nunn," Cavendish is speaking in two ways, one wholly serious and one satirical, with a serious component implied by the nature of the parody. Cavendish effectively addresses two entirely different audiences, using two different tones and different connotations of the term "nunn" with each one. Cavendish's use of multiple audiences rhetorically positions her among both friends and enemies, acknowledging the beliefs of each as she conveys her argument.

As I state earlier, one audience includes the Cavendish family and family friends, many of whom were mentioned in the collection that includes "The angry Curs." Many poems in the manuscript are encomia to the family, their social circle, and their servants. This audience would understand Cavendish's reference to the *Book of Common Prayer*. In these people, Cavendish would have a sympathetic audience, but one who had not heard her specific argument before. She would not need to convince this audience of her family's worth and position; after all, these readers would not only be her audience, but would also be the subject of her other poems. These audience members would serve as both proof of her family's position, and as an audience to it. In the Civil War era, this audience would be uplifted by

Cavendish's encomia and would find a reinforcement of their political ideals in those poems dedicated to the family's Royalist politics and feelings about the war.

For this audience, Cavendish's threat to become a "nunn" did not imply she would become an actual nun. The family was not Catholic, and her reworking of the *Book of Common Prayer* does not signal a departure from her allegiance to the state religion or from its politics. Her interpretation goes a step further than allegiance, cursing those who depart from the Royalist position to fight with her, her family, or other Royalists. The term "nunn" was not a slur to this audience, a group familiar with Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria and her circle. As Royalists, they were unlikely to make slurs against the religion of their king's wife, even though the family did not share the religion.³⁸

Declaring "nunn" status involved a strange possibility for domestic power, not a religious conversion to become a real nun. An initial reading might suggest that the real threat to become a nun was one Cavendish issued to her relatives, not to her enemies. Threatening to remain unmarried could serve as a challenge to relatives who could intervene to prevent the separation of Jane Cavendish and her sister, Elizabeth Brackley, though the possibility of Jane's becoming a nun was nonexistent. The probable composition dates of the poem imply that she was addressing a separation endorsed by family members, signaling a desire to get family approval to

³⁸ Whitaker places the Cavendish daughters' father William and stepmother-to-be, Margaret Cavendish, at the court of Henrietta Maria in France around the time that Cavendish and Brackley would have been composing their manuscript. See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 61-81, for information on some of Margaret and William Cavendish's connections to the royal family. Lynn Hulse, "Apollo's Whirligig: William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle and His Music Collection," *Seventeenth Century* 9, no. 2 (1994): 213-46, is another source for connections between the family and Catholics.

stop an event within their control.³⁹ However, the family profited from Cavendish's unmarried status, since her father did not have to pay a dowry. She could watch the family properties and attempt to protect their seizure from the Parliamentarians.⁴⁰ For the family, her power would be roughly equivalent to a widow's financial power, since she would make financial decisions in the absence of patriarchal authority.⁴¹ This decision-making would make her a necessary family negotiator, not someone likely to threaten her family by formulating a permanent unmarried status for herself, be it for religious reasons or for other reasons entirely.

Regardless of any actual or impending separations within the Cavendish family, Jane Cavendish uses the threat to become a "nunn" as a joke for this primary audience, people aware of Parliamentary opinions of Royalists and of Catholics. Actual nuns had faced several attempts to curb their speech and power, within the Catholic Church and the English government. The Council of Trent had tried to prohibit nuns from living in any place other than a confined enclosure, with little or no religious influence on people outside the convent walls.⁴² Yet nuns continued writing and in some cases demanded contact with the community outside the

³⁹ See note 2, for sources commenting on the sisters' relationship to their father.

⁴⁰ See note 16.

⁴¹ See note 12. Here I am thinking again of Harris, "Women and Politics," and of Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, for each author's exploration of times when women gained some power over marriage negotiations.

⁴² See Electa Arenal and Stacy Schlau, "Strategems of the Strong, Strategems of the Weak: Autobiographical Prose of the Seventeenth-Century Hispanic Convent," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 9, no. 1 (1990), 25. For background on English convents in the generations prior to this period, see Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 422-26.

cloister.⁴³ Convents were prohibited in the current political climate in England, but Catholic families were sending their daughters to English convents outside England, sometimes only intending for them to be educated in convents to return to England to marry and raise Catholic families.⁴⁴ Aware of these prohibitions and of Catholic efforts to maintain their numbers, many Royalists exhibited great animosity toward the Catholic community and convents, seeing Catholics as pervasive and sometimes perverse.⁴⁵ For them, the Catholic was very much an Other, associated with a foreign queen and with the despised monarchy.

Parliamentarians resorted to the same slurs for Royalists that they used for Catholics, signaling the severity of their problems with each group. When Jane Cavendish threatened to become a nun, her family was aware of the implications. She was not threatening to them, an audience aware of how Royalist opponents perceived Catholics and High Church Protestants. They knew that Puritans disputed Anglicans in part because their ceremonies resembled those of Catholics. Cavendish was threatening to an audience of Royalist opponents who despised both groups. By indicating that she could become a nun, she was spoofing Parliamentary slurs by threatening to become the opponents' worst fear. A Royalist woman in charge of family business was already on her way to disturbing enemies. A Royalist household

⁴³ For a discussion of Mary Ward, a well-known example of leadership in convents demanding this contact, see Marie B. Rowlands, "Recusant women: 1560-1640," in *Women in English Society: 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Routledge, 1985), 169-74.. For an overview of Mary Ward's situation and the situation of English nuns, more generally, see Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1-7.

⁴⁴ See Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, 8 42, for a full explanation for who was entering convents at the time, and why.

⁴⁵ For one example of how the nun figure was interpreted in a sexual and dangerous light by Parliamentarians, see Stephens, "Caught in the act at Nun Appleton," in *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative*, 178-209.

run by women was also a likely candidate for association with a spoof on convents— institutions already opposed and prohibited by Parliamentarians who viewed them as ungodly. The convents on the continent carried with them their own financial powers, and like the nuns residing in them, Jane Cavendish was running a household without men. She was also running a household under Royalist political and religious ideals, opposed by Parliamentarians just as convents were. To her family, then, the threat to become a nun was an inside joke making fun of enemies who associated Royalists with Catholics.

It was also a joke that showed awareness of current political events and their impact on her family. Critics of her father's military maneuvers would accuse him and his army of "popery," a term that illustrates the extent to which anti-Royalists used anti-Catholic sentiment in public slurs against Royalist leaders.⁴⁶ Jane Cavendish's use of "nunn" effectively appropriates and subverts the term by making it a threat, while it also indicates that she was aware of what enemies of her family said about them and about other Royalists. She claims no actual conversion and instead adapts the term "nunn" to a meaning that she can use for her own Royalist purposes. While no one expected her to become an actual nun, the threat and its humor are both dependent on her being a single Royalist woman, enforcing the

⁴⁶ See *A confytation of the Earle of Newcastles reasons for taking under his command and conduct divers popish recusants in the northern parts; wherein Is shewed both the unlawfulness, and danger of Arming of Papists: Being a thing of main consequence for all true Protestants to take present and speciall notice of* (London: Printed for Henry Overton, 1643), Wing (2nd ed.) C5813; *The good and prosperous successe of the Parliaments forces in York-Shire: against the Earle of New-castle and his popish adherents. As it was sent in a letter from the Right Honourable the Lord Fairefax, and read in both Houses of Parliament, on Monday, Ian. 3. 1642. With some observations of the Lords and Commons upon the said happy proceedings, as so many answers from Heaven, which God hath given to the prayers of his servants. Published, that their mouths and hearts may be as much enlarged in praises, as they have been in prayers. Die Lunae, 30 Ian. 1642. Ordered and published, John Browne, Cler. Parliament, by Fairfax, Ferdinando Fairfax, Baron, 1584-1648* (London: Printed for Iohn Wright in the Old Bailey, 1643), Wing (2nd ed.) F113.

political and religious agendas of her family in the absence of male leaders. In other words, she must be unmarried in order for the joke to work, and in order to manipulate the meaning of the word so that she is making an actual threat against Parliamentarians.

The other audience to her poem would include the cursed “Plotters,” or enemies of the family. While scholars see the manuscript as being intended for a family member, one of the earliest literary critics to discuss Jane Cavendish and her sister argued that Cavendish daughters corresponded directly with Parliamentary leaders to negotiate for their family.⁴⁷ Whether those leaders read “The angry Curs” or not, their proximity to Cavendish family properties makes them a plausible secondary audience. These Parliamentarians would not have taken Jane Cavendish’s threat to become a nun as a literal threat, but they would have become accustomed to her making decisions apart from male relatives, cloistered with female relatives and with servants. These leaders also would have been familiar with the practice whereby enemies of Royalists labeled them with the same language used to describe Catholics, regardless of whether or not they were among the Parliamentarians who had engaged in the practice of labeling the Cavendish family. For a secondary audience, Jane Cavendish’s willingness to appropriate the term “nunn” would signal that she was not silent about her family’s situation and considered it her responsibility to respond to it. The unmarried woman interacted with family members about their social and political situation during the war, and her threat to take up a religious vocation both acknowledges her actual unmarried status and plays upon opponents’ fears that the

⁴⁷ For a letter from Jane Cavendish and Frances Cavendish (the youngest Cavendish daughter) to Lord Fairfax, see Starr, ed., “*The Concealed Fancies*,” 804.

Royalists and the Royalist women were out of control, and intricately tied to Catholicism and High Church Anglicanism. Significantly, she makes this threat to become a nun as the numbers of women at home are reduced by her sister's departure—be it a departure for marriage or for other reasons. With the departure of one woman, she argues, women will still control the house, and with a more extreme rule than ever before.

In effect, Jane Cavendish developed her own response to the war, and her own argument for the Royalist position and for her family's position against Parliamentarians and Puritans, all enemies of the Royalist cause. She was using both religious and political rhetoric to formulate her own rhetoric, and she was redefining a word that the Parliamentarians considered slanderous, mocking them by acknowledging their worst fears and suggesting that she could become that fear and use the identity to her advantage. She was also suggesting that a larger literary coterie joined with her in mocking the opposition.

III.

"The angry Curs" is unabashedly about an aspect of the Cavendish family's actual situation, and as stated earlier, appears in its manuscript next to poems dedicated to real people. The representation of separation in the poem sits in sharp contrast to the representation that we have within *The Concealed Fancies*.⁴⁸ While I do not argue that this difference cancels out the biographical interpretations that critics have offered of *The Concealed Fancies* in the past, I do emphasize that the difference makes problematic the readings that offer direct relationships between

⁴⁸ I use the Cerasano and Wynne-Davies edition of *The Concealed Fancies*. See *The Concealed Fancies*, in *Renaissance Drama by Women*, 127-54.

characters in the play and people in real life. At the same time, the poem's rhetoric and satire illuminate serious tones underneath the joking banter and relatively good-natured discussions that appear at different times in the wartime play.⁴⁹

Two of the most significant plots in *The Concealed Fancies* are my main concern in the remainder of this chapter. Luceny and Tattiney spend much of their time in the play discussing marriage and both thwarting and inviting the advances of Courtley and Presumption. More comically than Jane Cavendish in "The angry Curs," they sometimes threaten to be nuns. When they do not invoke this possibility, they still threaten to manage their lives apart from the men who wish to marry them. Their father is an important military leader, and they are separated from him during much of the play's action, sometimes thinking of new ways to imagine marriage, and sometimes thinking of what he would imagine for them. Therefore, they manage a household and discuss marriage in elaborate and sometimes subversive ways. Sh., Is., and Cicilley, three cousins, are housebound in the home of Luceny and Tattiney's father, who by prior arrangement is to become the father-in-law of two of the cousins, Sh. and Cicilley, when they marry the Stellow brothers. The men in their lives are fighting a war, but the women's own discussions exist very much apart from military battle. Corpolant, Luceny's rejected suitor, and Colonel Free, a Royalist military leader and a relative of Luceny and Tattiney, discuss war, romantic entanglements, and family separation.⁵⁰ Viewed together, the plots provide a complex outlook on a

⁴⁹ The various dates I include in note 1 would place Royalists on the decline. The play was likely written some five to six years before Charles I was beheaded; as mentioned earlier, William Cavendish was in exile in France, as were a number of Royalists.

⁵⁰ As an aristocratic military leader, Colonel Free is part of Luceny and Tattiney's family, in the general sense of the word. He is labeled as their cousin, a term which could mean relative or friend.

group's views of marriage during war: how its members define or reconstruct views during tumultuous times, and how they resolve marital and martial disputes.

The characters continually discuss marriage and war in *The Concealed Fancies*. Along with the various flirtatious threats to decline marriage, whether to be a nun or to refuse marriage proposals for other reasons, aristocratic women in the play assume a great deal of control by indicating that they consider it their responsibility to make marital decisions and by asserting control over this decision-making. To look back at Merton's sociological terms, the characters—and potentially their authors—are speaking of how to define the “in-groups” and “out-groups” of their culture by assuming the power to determine who can and cannot marry. Claiming the regulatory power to say that a partner is acceptable or unacceptable, or even that a partner is acceptable but cannot be told so just yet, is a very powerful position from the standpoint of class as well as gender. We may safely assume that the female main characters in *The Concealed Fancies* are as aristocratic as their authors; when these characters claim the ability to decide who to marry, they demonstrate aristocratic women assuming the authority to determine their own marital status and their own concept of marital roles and norms. The decision of who to marry creates an opportunity to exercise power within a family, even when the choices are ultimately made in accord with a father's wishes or with prior arrangements in mind. Characters—and their female authors—entertain the possibility of doing the unexpected (say, rejecting a reasonable proposal) and changing the plans of others.

Either way, he is part of their social group. Corporalant fights for the same cause and is on familiar terms with Colonel Free, judging from the dialogue. As such, he is a viable suitor for Luceny, in terms of class/status position and politics.

In *The Concealed Fancies*, a series of scenes depict characters figuring and refiguring community and marriage practices in an English Civil War comedy. The comedy plays with a woman's threat to forego marriage, just as "The angry Curs" does. In a different way from the poem, the play provides examples to illustrate the attempts to define—and redefine—marital norms, or in other words, to determine the social rules described by Merton. The speaker of the poem, the characters in the play, and the authors are "performing" social questions regarding marriage, acting out the different possibilities and challenging social norms in the process—in other words, defining social behavior through dramatic action, as Goffman would argue.

If aristocratic women are determining whether or not to marry, then they are at the same time beginning to police their class. Having power to define marital norms during the English Civil War gave Royalist women the power to constitute an elite group—in other words, who to count as a member of an aristocratic family hoping to reestablish footing close to the country's leaders.⁵¹ *The Concealed Fancies* represents the Cavendish sisters' exploration of this assumption of power.

From the beginning of the play, Luceny and Tattiney examine their ability to control courtship. The two describe romantic pursuit in dramatic terms, as an activity that they perform to achieve particular results. Erving Goffman describes a scenario in which "one finds that the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality."⁵² Luceny's and Tattiney's efforts correspond more to staging a new reality

⁵¹ Merton, "Intermarriage and the Social Structure," 217-22. See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 127, for details on the Cavendish family's situation in regard to women's responsibilities.

⁵² Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 17.

than convincing themselves that an existing version of reality is or is not valid: they seek to invent a new way to interact with suitors. In Act I, Scene iv, Luceny and Tattiney discuss how they have each responded to suitors:

Luceny. Sister, pray tell me in what humour thou wert with thy servant yesterday? Prithee, tell me how you acted your scene?

Tattiney. I beg your excuse, a younger sister cannot have the confidence to teach an elder.

Luceny. Well, then I'll begin first. I dressed myself in a slight way of carelessness which becomes as well, if not better, than a set dress; and when he made his approaches of love, by speaking in a formal way, I answered him: I could not love so dull a brain as he had, always to repeat he loved me. I had rather have him say he hated me, for that would be some variety! (1-13)

Luceny's initial questions indicate she expects her sister to have planned a particular behavior for her meeting with a potential husband. Her response to her own question shows that she deliberately antagonized a suitor, criticizing his advances and questioning their validity. Though somewhat in jest, this dialogue shows Luceny actively responding to a man. Her conversation with Tattiney illustrates that even the methods for questioning a suitor are open to interpretation and reinterpretation—the women can compare their methods and learn from each other's conversations. At no time do they show themselves following a set social rule, orchestrated either by their father or by another man. The only social order immediately referenced is one in which younger women defer to older women.

The questions and answers shared by the sisters illustrate how the sisters work to create their own sense of how romantic relationships should be defined. Tattiney queries her sister's behavior with a suitor: "But what say you, when he expressed himself by oaths and execrations?" (14) Luceny's answer is potentially educational for the younger woman:

Luceny. I told him I wondered he had the confidence, seeing I kept my chamber, to trouble me with his impertinent language, which ever produceth my vexation. For I will tell you sister, it is impossible to answer him to what he speaks, but he will catch some handle to blow up his ambitious wishes. Therefore I put him off with a sharp reply, as I have told you before; and then said, my face could be no ways inevitable for his affection; therefore I did not desire to be his courting-stock to practise with, against he comes to his mistress; and therefore told him, if he would not make an honourable retreat out of the house, I would proclaim him a malignant, or cause Mr. Steward to make him make his retreat with more confusion; so, bid him think of some visit, for here I was resolved he should not stay! (14-20)

Luceny's reference to Tattiney enhances the educational aspect of the conversation, where the women compare notes on their contact with potential suitors. She notes the suitor's arrogance and then provides a series of steps for how to deal with such problems. She also shows her authority over the situation by asserting that it was she—and not a male representative of the family—who threw the suitor out of the home. Even her threat to call a male servant implies her authority; there is no available male relative to handle the situation or to oversee the servants. She has

taken on that responsibility, and with it, the responsibility to throw a man out of the house if she does not plan to speak with him.

The sisters change the subject to speak of financial considerations for marriage, and the conversation continues to place the sisters in control of all decisions:

Tattiney. Pray sister, is he a good fortune?

Luceny. Yes, and a very good title.

Tattiney. Then I perceive your discretion likes him.

Luceny. Aye, and his discretion may very well like me!

For my father intends to give me a great portion.

Therefore, I shall not know whether 'tis his

wisdom or affection that makes choice of me. (34-40)

The sisters' initial remarks about financial arrangements for Luceny and Courtley do not refer to any instructions left by a male relative. Tattiney's question and Luceny's answer are practical and matter-of-fact; both women express concern over the details. Tattiney acknowledges the importance of a suitor's noble standing, since Courtley's title prompts her to tell her sister, "Then I perceive your discretion likes him" (36). Both sisters treat this importance as natural for them, though they immediately express fear that the suitor is motivated by interest in Luceny's dowry. This concern for each party's motivation shows Luceny and Tattiney monitoring the best interests of their family, both in terms of money and rank. They mention their father's money, but they do not mention any orders that go with it. Instead, they themselves question

the suitor's motivation and interpret his possible motives without any obvious male help.

The sisters do see Luceny's marriage as inevitable, however, as indicated by Tattiney's response to Luceny's behavior with the suitor:

Tattiney. And will you continue this way of discretion with him when you're married?

Luceny. Why do you think "I take thee" shall alter me?

Tattiney. I hear their coming! I'll them defeat! [Exit]

Luceny. Leaving me only to their cunning cheat! (41-45)

The sisters' belief in the inevitability of Luceny's marriage in no way undermines their analysis of its financial impact. Neither woman is upset by Luceny's future marriage, nor has either bothered to tell anyone else that the marriage will take place. If anything, both claim the power to analyze its financial and psychological repercussions, and both claim the authority to question suitors while withholding final answers to proposals. This authority to withhold proposals introduces the possibility that the marriages will not take place, or that the sisters will continue having conversations about the repercussions of a marriage until they see fit to allow marriage. Tattiney invokes a military metaphor when she uses the word "defeat," (44) and the women treat the courtship ritual as a domestic war where they control the outcome. They engage almost exclusively in a discussion of marriage, all while a father, brothers, and various other male characters are away at war. The ongoing dialogue of the sisters, while not directly invoking war, at the same time is a wartime conversation showing the preoccupation of women alone during a conflict. In a

hierarchy in which sister educates sister, men do not mention dowries, and women tell each other the best ways to navigate courtship and marriage rituals. With this control, the sisters can change the way they relate to suitors, and they can threaten to change the outcome of a marriage proposal.

Several later scenes of female community in *The Concealed Fancies* reflect some of the emotions in “The angry Curs” and specifically invoke nuns—or the idea of nuns—to note the establishment of community where women are in charge of marriage negotiations and decisions. In Act IV, the two sisters perform a play within a play in which they portray scenes of religious sisterhood and behave as nuns. Luceny and Tattiney create a religious sisterhood as a transient but powerful phase that they experience before marrying. Up to this point in the play, they have been aristocratic women, noted as the children of Lord Calsindow. The primary discussion of the sisters has concerned their courting by Courtley and Presumption, two men who wish to marry them. Even as the women suddenly assume the dress of nuns, their sisterhood is ultimately one concerned with men, and it does not show women drawn to religious sisterhood for exclusively religious reasons. Instead, their performance shows the women compelled to act these parts because of the Civil War, as evidenced by several references to absent friends and by dialogue between men in a scene immediately before we see Luceny and Tattiney acting as religious sisters.

Several male characters participating in the war share a discussion about the domestic ramifications of military action. The two say little about the actual battles but say much about the social impact of them.⁵³ In Act III, scene v, Colonel Free

⁵³ Among other things, Cavendish and Brackley’s family felt the social impact of financial ruin. According to Christopher Hill, the “Duke of Newcastle sold lands worth £56,000 in order to pay

addresses Corpolant, a prior suitor of Luceny who has been rejected. The two exchange news about the people they have left behind because of the war:

Colonel Free. I'll tell you news, Mr Corpolant. Monsieur Calsindow's daughters, my cousins, are become nuns upon the grief of our departure.

Corpolant. Upon the grief of my departure.

Colonel Free. What a self-loved piece of fat you are! Do you not know, nor remember, how angry you were when she scorned you, and do you think she is in love with you? Now you are too partial.

Corpolant. By your leave Colonel Free, absence increaseth like, sometimes.

Colonel Free. I wonder what fancy my wife will be possessed withal, for she can neither be nun, nor vestal, she hath so many children.

Corpolant. But the sweet lady will be in a consumption for your sake.

(III.v.1-15)

Colonel Free announces Luceny and Tattiney's decision to act as nuns, relating the choice to the war and to their sadness. He also gives us a quick reminder of the sisters' proximity and connection to the war, since he can describe their responses familiarly, and since the list of characters describes him as "cousin to Luceny and Tattiney."⁵⁴ Because Corpolant immediately reacts as though Luceny has not rejected him, he shifts the scene from being a dramatic one to being a comic one. His certainty that she mourns his absence, specifically, makes it easy to ignore the

debts" after the wars in order to recover. For some families, debt problems meant that "gentlewomen with meagre dowries could hardly compete in the marriage market with rich merchants' daughters." See Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), 172-73. Such women did not simply turn down suitors or choose not to be courted, as characters in this play do; their circumstances excluded them from participating in courtship, at all.

⁵⁴ Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, eds, *The Concealed Fancies*, 132.

larger impact of the scene. We are reminded both of his ego and of his participation in what seems to be an obviously larger plot: the wooing of the sisters by various men who wish to marry them. However, the scene is ultimately preoccupied both with marital behavior and choices, and also with the war at hand. For single women like Luceny and Tattiney, declaring oneself a nun is a viable option to deal either with absent men or with the war. The absence of men and the war are intertwined, both giving women the opportunity to exercise volition. This decision to become nuns is not treated as a Catholic religious choice, or as a vocational choice. Rather, the women reinterpret both the way they exercise marital choice and the way they interpret religious behavior, choosing to act as a celibate sisterhood.

When Colonel Free says that his wife can “neither be nun, nor vestal, she hath so many children,” he underscores the fact that not all women have these choices (14). Corpolant’s response to Colonel Free dismisses the political gravity of the situation. His acknowledgment that “the sweet lady will be in a consumption for your sake,” denies that she could object to the war itself, and not just her husband’s absence because of it (15). Like his earlier assumption that Luceny behaves as a nun because he is gone, his statement ignores the multitude of factors that could lead the women to change their behavior or lifestyle during the war. His light responses also detract from the women’s situation. Those who are already married have limited options with which to protest or react to the war at hand. Those who are unmarried have made choices that their loved ones view as unconventional.

As their conversation continues, Colonel Free expresses concern about several additional women impacted by the war. Like Luceny, Tattiney, and Colonel Free’s

wife, the women have changed because of the war. Colonel Free worries about them, and about their male relatives. He has been discussing people who are a part of the same family through birth or marriage, since the Stellows that he mentions are the brothers of Luceny and Tattiney and the fiances and future in-laws of the other women he refers to in the conversation:

Did you see our sweet young Stellows today?

Corpolant. Yes, and in my knowledge of conceit they are very melancholy, and they would not let me know the reason, so I doubt they are in love. Are not you in the same opinion?

Colonel Free. They have reason to be sad: their mistresses are captives, and their sisters are nuns in melancholy and, they say, gives blessing to each poor body that comes to be healed of melancholy of the mind.

Corpolant. I wonder people can be so simple to come to be cured of them, that cannot cure themselves. (III.v.16-26)

Both men dismiss the sisters' conduct at this point. Colonel Free declares it is one of the reasons why their brothers feel bad, and he presents the conduct as a consequence of the war that is taking place (3). He also mentions their cousins who are being held prisoner, which connects the situation back to the war. Corpolant dismisses Luceny and Tattiney's actions again, questioning why anyone would want the sisters' help in the first place.

Luceny's and Tattiney's decision to behave as nuns does not challenge, combat, or make fun of the enemy, as the narrator's threat to be a nun does in "The angry Curs." However, Luceny and Tattiney's friends and potential suitors act

disturbed by the women's behavior, as if it is a sickness or a larger social ill.

Corpolant's argument that they "cannot cure themselves," implies that they cannot help anyone else, either (26). Because Luceny has rejected Corpolant and Colonel Free spends much of the scene correcting him, it would be easy to dismiss Corpolant's opinions as an aberration. However, Colonel Free's opinion that the Stellow brothers are despondent because "their sisters are nuns in melancholy," does not indicate whether he believes it is the sisters' behavior as nuns or their melancholy that their brothers find so upsetting (23).

Luceny and Tattiney claim a great deal of authority by becoming nuns, even though the decision would seem to reflect their unhappiness in the war. When the two initially behave as nuns, they talk to a variety of people outside their usual circle, offering them advice. These interactions take them far away from marriage negotiations and into a larger discussions of social problems:

Luceny. Where are the innocent souls?

Tattiney. They're coming.

Enter two poor men and two poor women, kneeling.

Luceny. What's your grief?

First poor man. Love.

Luceny. What kind?

First poor man. One that I loved as my soul rejected me.

Luceny. Take this [she gives him something], and be assured, you shall grow wiser or have your mistress love you. What's yours? (IV.i.1-9)

We see the sisters acting with the authority to comfort the needy. As Jane Cavendish does in “The angry Curs” with the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer*, Luceny and Tattiney refashion religion, in this case by calling themselves nuns, while adapting the practice for the context of the war affecting their community. It is no wonder Corpolant feels threatened. The same rhetorical ability that allows Luceny and Tattiney to appropriate religious convention allows them to live as single women, using the war as a reason to place marriage proposals aside in favor of work.

The war is of paramount concern to Luceny and Tattiney in their new role as nuns. The religious garb and the social responsibility it carries make both sisters actively discuss the war in a way that they never did at home while figuring out how to respond to Courtley and Presumption. Strangers see a new side of Luceny and Tattiney:

First poor woman. Love.

Luceny. In what kind?

First poor woman. My friends, who I held more dear than my life, are in a far country.

Luceny. I have no remedy for that; but take this, it is such as I wear—it is a bow of hope. (IV.i.8-15)

The remarks directly involve separation from loved ones. Amid all of the references to war and separation that have already occurred, it is significant that Luceny takes a leadership role, first noting that nothing can be done but then offering comfort to the woman. The scene self-consciously addresses separation caused by war, and it allows Luceny a specific response in the domestic sphere. In the clothes

of the nobility, Luceny has never expressed such concerns or such straightforward responses to them. As a nun, she has the freedom to express how she copes with the war.

Luceny has very little tolerance for complaints about love, and she dismisses problems that relate to marriage. At the same time, she sympathizes with the lower class people who come to see her about war, and she makes the war her chief concern:

Second poor man. And my grief is I loved a woman and she would not marry me.

Luceny. Take this as a scourge to whip your folly away.

Second poor woman. And I have almost lost my wits by plunder.

Luceny. Take this laurel as a promising hope of conquest.

Tattiney. Now I will grind upon this holy stone:

Your doubts, mixed altogether, not alone,

Your griefs,

Your fears,

Your sighs, and your sad tears.

Luceny. May you all happy be; but I bless and wish

That you your friends again may see.

And pray you, pray that prayer for me. (IV.i.16-29)

Luceny connects their dialogue to the war by noting that she has the same problem as the people she is attempting to help: they are all preoccupied with thoughts of people who are absent. Her speech is a more positive one than the

speaker of “The angry Curs” gives, but like the speaker, Luceny attempts to reconcile religion, politics, and absent family. The passage above shifts from being about love (for the man who could not get a woman to marry him), to being about financial or property loss (for the woman who has been plundered), to being about separation from loved ones. Luceny initially is unsympathetic toward the man who could not get a woman to marry him, telling him to beat himself. In the end, however, when Tattiney is mixing together “griefs,” “fears,” and “sighs,” Luceny refers to the collective group and the two do not single out one person for their help (24-26). The scene combines domestic problems (the man’s love woes) with civic problems (plunder and separation due to war), indicating that Cavendish and Brackley conflate the two types of difficulties and see the war as the catalyst for both.⁵⁵ Luceny makes this conflation all the more noticeable, since she is temporarily garbed as a nun. Her decision to be a nun presents an additional conflation of public and private. With this decision, she denies a marriage proposal, affects the finances of a suitor’s family by refusing him, and makes her marital decisions dependent on what is happening with the war.

Courtley and Presumption engage in much courtly behavior in order to stop Luceny and Tattiney from being nuns, sometimes resorting to the use of religious references. The two men conflate the typical courtly tradition and the language of

⁵⁵ Plundering was a common concern in the English Civil War. William Cavendish addresses it in one of his military declarations. See William Cavendish, “A Declaration made by the Earle of New-castle, Governour of the Town and County of New-Castle: And Generall of all His Majesties forces raised in the Northern parts of this Kingdome, for the Defence of the same. For his Resolution of Marching into Yorkshire. As also a just Vindication of himself from that unjust Aspersion laid upon him, for entertaining some Popish Recusants in his Forces,” (Printed at York by Stephen Bulkley, 1642), By Speciall Command.

religion, adding a new dimension to Luceny and Tattiney's new vocation, and creating a contrast between the women's roles as nuns and as potential wives:

COURTLEY. I swear as you are fair
And chaste as is the air,
Since that I saw you first
Myself could never be;
But still I'm offering at your shrine. . . (IV.i.31-34)

Courtley has changed his behavior while looking for Luceny, and he adopts religious speech to explain his devotion. A similar religious language is also used by Presumption, as he tells Tattiney that he has "found thy most sacred self here" (57). He also refers to her as a "goddess," elevating her from her role as nun to a deified position (64). By elevating her in this way, Presumption offers her the language of secular courting and Petrarchan wooing in exchange for the role she can play without him.

After the speeches, the women promptly give up the religious aspects of their sisterhood, returning to their status as women who can be courted. The women pass through their nun phase rather quickly, and stage/page directions indicate that the men may have been present to observe all of it.⁵⁶ Despite how genuinely faithful they may have been to vows, the women are observed and challenged easily. They continue to appropriate the language of the convent, however. Once Tattiney has abandoned her dress as a nun, she asks Presumption, "How do I in this habit look?"

⁵⁶ See Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, eds., *The Concealed Fancies*, 150. The directions give Courtley and Presumption a very masquelike entrance, where they inexplicably enter "[disguised as gods] and singing coming out of the sky." Presumably, such an entrance would involve some long range planning on their part.

(40) His response that she looks “as love’s divinity of book,” continues this appropriation of religious language, but adapts it to a situation of courtship (42). At this point, the men no longer react as though the women challenge the men’s plans to marry them. Their sisterhood is never one that precludes male-female relations and the possibility of union with men. Rhetorically speaking, the sisters’ speeches about concerns other than men are quite brief, and address qualities like chastity that would have been expected in or outside a closed, unmarried community. However, in the flirtation between the men and women is the presumption of doubt—the women could choose to be nuns, and the men could be denied them. This small area of doubt illustrates the possibility that the women can respond to war and to marriage by exercising their own decisions about who to be with and who to include in their responses. The women can choose to forego marriage, and in doing so, can prevent their aristocratic family from changing or growing during this tumultuous time. For much of the play, the women’s flirtation threatens to leave men out entirely. The women do not plan to form a women’s community as in Margaret Cavendish’s *The Convent of Pleasure*, where women enter lush and potentially romantic surroundings with one another.⁵⁷ In *The Concealed Fancies*, women flirt with the idea of remaining single, and of keeping money and family control in their hands while male relatives are absent.

Sh., Cicilley, and Is., three cousins who are hiding from military forces, constitute another female alliance. The three occupy their time alone, away from the man who owns the home where they are staying and the battles that men are

⁵⁷ Anne Shaver, ed., *The Convent of Pleasure*, by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1999), 217-247.

participating in at the same time. The conversations between them are conducted in a familiar way, but they do not just concern the personal business of the three women. Rather, they focus on the setting the women find themselves in together. The setting is anything but a woman's world as the three women open up a cabinet containing the personal belongings of the home's owner, their uncle and prospective father-in-law:

SH. Come let's open the box; what's this?

CICILLEY. 'Tis quintessence of mint and magisterium of pearl.

SH. Take one of these cakes, and you cousin, they're very good ones.

CICILLEY. We never saw these before, come we'll put them up.

SH. No take another, he'll never want them. (III.iv.36-40)

The three spend some time making the decision not only to go through Lord Calsindow's things, but also to sample the treasures that they find. They think nothing, as the scene goes on, of removing some of his personal belongings and sharing them, sometimes discussing the objects in great detail.

The act of going through Lord Calsindow's things becomes an intimate act of discovery. Any possible sexual innuendo aside, the cousins are embarking on a quest to understand Calsindow and negotiate their own spaces in relation to his:

SH. Why, I'll pick his cabinet locks, and there you shall see his magazine of love. I dare swear you shall see locks of all manner of coloured hairs, and favouring ribbons in as many colours as the rainbow.

CICILLEY. How do you know that?

SH. 'Tis my strong imagination, and if this fancy of mine should prove true, we shall have rarer recreation to look on them. (III.iv.72-80)

The term “magazine of love” connects the martial to the domestic, as Sh. treats pilfering through their host’s things as a military maneuver aimed at discovering more about his personal life and possessions. Women claim the domestic space as their front in the war as they engage in this exploration. Dorothy Stephens argues that “the cordial-box scene is tantamount to an erotic invasion of the host’s mind.”⁵⁸ She also notes the preoccupation the women have with the possibility that he is aware of what they are doing but cannot stop them.⁵⁹ They are a group of women, together in a home owned by an absent man. Yet it is not that they exist in a world apart from that of men. They are engaged in a kind of communication with men, if only because they have claimed Calsindow’s things and chosen to interpret them in their own conversations. He is an absent player in their discussions; the separate worlds of men’s war and women’s domestic spaces are not rhetorically separate. If women can infiltrate the men’s cabinets at home, then there is a question about just how much control the aristocratic men can exercise when sheltering the women. At the same time, however, we can also question the accuracy of the cousins’ interpretations of Calsindow’s things and of the man’s world. After all, the communications between the sexes in this scene are indirect ones, ones where the man’s things speak for themselves. He is silent, not unlike many of the women of his time. But in examining his things, the women control a space that affords them some valuable experience as a community of women, isolated but scheduled to later embark on marriage to Calsindow’s sons. They have learned something of the

⁵⁸ Stephens, ““Who can those vast imaginations feed?””, 145-153, esp. 148, for a discussion of personal cabinets and flirtation.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 149.

aristocratic man and his personal items and have therefore learned much about the man who heads the family that two of them will be joining through marriage. Though they do not connect the search through the “magazine of love” to their upcoming marriages, their investigation leads them to long discussions of a man with whom they will share a family relationship through marriage (72). Both the war and Calsindow’s absence give them a unique opportunity to control a household that would otherwise control them. Their exploration of his things is less a sexual flirtation with him, specifically, and is more a flirtation with the authority designated to a husband’s family. The threat to seize that power is a threat to overturn the usual domestic order, placing women in charge.

The women are cloistered but not contained by the man who owns the home where they are staying, or by any other men in their lives. The three cousins spend little time, if any, preoccupied with the men to whom Sh. and Cicilley are engaged, and they easily make their own sport. The three women never have a conversation that mirrors the one held by Colonel Free and Corpolant, where the two men talk at length about what might be happening with the women. While the men are worried about what happens when the women are left alone, the women do not spend exhaustive passages lamenting their being alone, or lamenting, period.⁶⁰ They do not have the kind of anger over separation that Jane Cavendish presents in “The angry Curs,” and they do not exercise the religious display of Luceny and Tattiney. They also never threaten to become nuns. Yet their situation places them apart from men,

⁶⁰ By Act II, scene iv of *The Convent of Pleasure*, the men are lamenting being apart from women, while the women are happy living in their convent. See Shaver, ed., 226-228.

and they refuse to handle it passively. This refusal allows them an ironic freedom that is as potentially threatening to men as the active decision to become nuns.

From the beginning of the play, the female characters form alliances as they discuss marriage and men. Even in scenes that would seem dated to contemporary students, the female characters in the play speak as though they are abandoning social norms. For instance, the opening prologues in *The Concealed Fancies* at once introduce the play and introduce the controversy of women's speech:

A prologue to the stage

Ladies, I beseech you blush not see

That I speak a prologue, being a she;

For it becomes as well if votes cry, aye,

Why then should I, a petticoat, cry, fie! (1-4)⁶¹

The female introductory voice apologizes to women and men alike for what is about to transpire, and in doing so, shows that she cares about appealing to her audience. The apology itself is standard procedure for the era. However, the voice draws our attention to her femaleness, implying that her gender makes the apology go beyond the traditional.

The second prologue is more matter-of-fact about the gender of the speakers and writers. She warns the audience that female authored texts lack certain things:

The second prologue

Spoken by a woman.

Though a second prologue spoke to our play,

⁶¹ See Lisa Hopkins, "Judith Shakespeare's Reading: Teaching *The Concealed Fancies*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1996), 396-406. On 401, Hopkins discusses Cerasano and Wynne-Davies's idea that the first prologue is "suggestive of the epilogue of *As You Like It*."

I will speak the truth: 'tis woman all the way;
For you'll not see a plot in any act
Nor any rigid, high ignoble fact.
Fearing you'll censure me now, full of tongue,
It's not fit that I should speak too long. (13-18)

One apology by a woman is coupled with another apology by a woman, the second citing the female sex as the reason for the play's inadequacies. A curious thing has happened, however. The women have indeed drawn attention to current gender stereotypes and initially agree with them. Yet in the act of agreeing with the idea that women's speeches should be limited, the two voices join together just as female voices do throughout the play: the women worry over an audience's possible response—but then keep talking. The prologues consistently reference women's larger speech practices, regardless of the extent to which they allow men silently to enter the conversations. Ultimately, the speeches begin a play in which aristocratic women claim the power to leave men waiting for a response—a hint at the power to leave them out entirely.

Perhaps because of fear that this could happen, the men in the play constantly react to what women do. The women's community represented in the play, like those represented in other Cavendish family works, is not one that exists in a bubble, regardless of how much the women change the way the rules operate. The characters produce no consensus about how marital responsibilities—traditional or not—will be defined. Just as the women of *The Concealed Fancies* appear to be fashioning individual responses to marriage, the men do not exercise uniformity in their

representation of the ideal marriage. The lack of a consistent marital norm for either sex further supports the idea that there is more than one role that could be played. In turn, this uncertainty supports the idea that the women of the play—like the Cavendish women themselves—are not simply appeasing or supporting an absent father's responses. Instead, all characters—male and female—are playing with the idea that marital roles can be negotiated or tailored to suit individual desires. Their behavior corresponds to Merton's idea that each social group must recurrently decide the rules regarding marriage, and to Goffman's idea that all social interaction is a form of dramatic action. The characters also represent a culture indecisive about which members of society ultimately will make the decisions.

An early dialogue between Courtley and Presumption indicates that the men are as engaged with figuring out women's roles in marriage as the women are with figuring out men's roles. The men do not share a common goal concerning what this position should be:

Courtley. My mistress truly I would have
A pretty monkey, yet seem grave,
Her face I'd have it plump to kiss
And that is as my heart doth wish,
Her stature I would have each see
A wife or mistress she may well then be,
In private know no matrimony law
In public all should think I did her awe,
Her petulance I'd only have with me

With others stately for to be,
I would not have her think of wife
Nor me as husband to make strife,
But justly have her fraught with wit,

.

Presumption. You have declared your mistress, life of day,
But I'd have mine, me more, for to obey. (I.i.58-73)

Both men have exacting notions of how a woman should behave. On the one hand Courtley has made a fairly lengthy speech on how he would have a woman behave, while at the same time indicating that he would like her to enjoy a certain measure of freedom from his will. He knows exactly how he would like her to behave—in public as if there are no grievances between them, and in private as if they are equal intimates. Presumption, on the other hand, can emphatically and definitely state that he wants his wife to obey him. This disagreement illustrates that the men at least believe themselves to have the power to decide to be more or less regimented with wives. It is therefore not just Luceny and Tattiney who disagree over the appropriateness of more or less autonomy in a marriage. Both men and women in the play raise the question of who has control over marriage practices, implying that there is more than one model for aristocratic couples to follow.

Regardless of the time that the men spend contemplating the marital roles of women, Luceny and Tattiney have an upper hand over the suitors who court them. While Courtley and Presumption discuss the kind of women they want, the women actually tell the men a thing or two, and tell them to their faces:

Luceny. Now, will not your next posture be to stand with folded arms? But that posture now grows much out of fashion. That's altered to a serious look of admiration, as if your face was so terrible as to turn men to statues.

Courtley. I wish damnation, madam, rather than thus to be tormented by your unkind love.

Luceny. Away! Away, with your hypocritical language, for I am not yet so vain as to believe your dissembling romances. (I.iv.65-73)

Her taunting manner suggests that she can predict Courtley's next action, according to the common rules for how people behave in such situations, or based on her upper hand in their interaction. She implies he is bound by the fashion of how to behave, and she succeeds in insulting him. His response acknowledges her authority—he openly admits that she has hurt him and that he wishes she would stop. Yet it is she who then claims to be insulted, and she who claims the power to tell him to be silent.

Courtley claims that he would die for Luceny, making him a continuing participant in courtly tradition, true to his name. However, this martyrdom is in a different context than such traditions sometimes are, since Luceny has previously complained about war and its separations:

Courtley. Well I'm gone, and am resolved to be no more!

Luceny. What, you'll give out you're dead, to try what vanity of love I may be possessed withal? Go, take what resolution you please.

Courtley. Ho! I'll love myself better then to die for one that hates me! But, I could be a willing martyr to her that loves me.

Luceny. Ha, ha, ha! I think so! You would be a willing martyr to her that loves you? And do you think that is a high expression of love? This shows how much you hated her, that would quit her so soon, besides leaving her this legacy: to die of a consumption for your sake! (I.iv.78-90)

Courtley cannot win for losing. But more than that, Luceny has once again thwarted his attempt at courtship. In this example, the two invoke a fairly complicated morbidity. Courtley seems to offer the possibility that he would give everything—even his life—if only she would pledge her love instead of her animosity. Luceny replies that it is no true test to die for love: his leaving her to die means she must also die—of grief. That Luceny would claim to be insulted makes the passage all the more complicated. Particularly in the context of absent men fighting a war, it is noteworthy that a female character denounces the idea of dying for someone else. She speaks frankly about men who view their own deaths as a chivalrous act, placing the courtship rituals undeniably within the framework of war. The rejection of martyrdom becomes a rejection of Courtley's very nature, and the nature of the courtship he proposes.

Luceny's candid speech relates to both "The angry Curs" and the earlier passages of *The Concealed Fancies*. Here, a woman has gone a step beyond isolating herself from men for religious, civic, or political reasons. She has told a man how to conduct himself when he is with her, or even when she is not around. By vetoing the possibility of his finding martyrdom in death, she has taken control of the courtship ritual yet again.

Luceny's preoccupation with authority extends to situations outside her current courtship dilemma. She and Tattiney have a long, sometimes philosophical discussion about who is in charge of their behavior, initially relating their talk to a situation involving the ethics of several men in their lives. While the two relate their discussion to their suitors, they also relate it to their birth family and the nature of its control. The two are interested in the recent embarrassment of Luceny's suitor, Corpolant, by the more viable suitors of the sisters. They also indirectly refer to another woman, Lady Tranquility, whom they have been hoping to pawn off on Corpolant. Courtley has recently proved that he could get Corpolant drunk and take his money, embarrassing him and further demonstrating Corpolant's inadequacy as a suitor and a potential husband. Courtley has done so in a kind of crude sport, fully intending to return the money and illustrate the embarrassment for the sisters. However, the scene is for a moment less centered on Corpolant's embarrassment and more on the sisters' contemplation of authority. Once again, there is a bizarre but subtle connection between marital choice, war, and authority:

Tattiney. Sister, have you heard of Corpolant's folly?

Luceny. Aye, and his indiscretion, besides his over great bounty to Courtley.

Tattiney. No more than Courtley?

Luceny. What, hath he made you for him? Or that twattling lady, that thinks you govern me?

Tattiney. Aye, and Presumption too thinks you do govern me. Do you not mind how his sister courts you? Aye, but I know who governs us both.

Luceny. Who prithee? Let me hear.

Tattiney. Monsieur Calsindow. (II.iii.21-31)

The scene insists on several things. First, each sister has heard other people say that the other sister is in charge. Rightly or wrongly, others think that one of them has authority over both sisters' decisions. In light of "The angry Curs," this depiction of sisterhood and community is another layer in the threat to refuse marriage or contemplate new roles for it. One or both of the sisters may make important decisions for both of them in the absence of a male relative. When the sisters raise the question of who is really in charge, Luceny claims at first to have no idea. This claim raises some additional questions. Are there multiple possibilities? Do the sisters imply that no one is in charge of their behavior, or that authority is subject to question? The dialogue reinforces the idea of uncertainty, even as it closes with an emphasis on their father's role in their lives.

Once the idea of their father's authority is introduced, Luceny immediately agrees that, indeed, their father is in charge. She suggests that the authority of their father is limited, and that male authority itself has a limited duration in her life:

Luceny. Ho! My father, indeed. And that gentleman shall be my alpha and omega of government.

Tattiney. What, shall not Mr. Courtley be your governor when you're married?

Luceny. How often, sister, have you read the Bible over, and have forgotten man and wife should draw equally in a yoke?

Tattiney. I warrant you, sister, I know that text as well as you.

Luceny. How impertinently then dost thou speak? (II.iii.32-41)

While the dialogue establishes the current importance of their absent father in governing his daughters' decisions, at the same time, it offers a time limit. Luceny expects their father's authority to have the usual limitations. When she is married, she will not be answering to him any longer. But the dialogue also indicates that she expects that her husband will not be in charge, either. Significantly, she calls on a higher authority in the Bible, to indicate that she has a religious and therefore a rhetorical basis for her argument. Like Jane Cavendish in her poetry, Luceny claims religion as her proof. The dialogue also supports the sisters' authority with one another. After all, Luceny claims the authority to remind her sister of the Bible, and to assert that her own argument finds its support there. When Tattiney protests to claim that she has as much knowledge of the Bible as her sister, Luceny removes the possibility for further dialogue by questioning the legitimacy of her sister's asking the question in the first place. The sisters are positioning themselves in a variety of attitudes toward authority—alternately claiming the father as ruler, the husband as ruler, a female social order which also designates who is in charge, and a higher authority determining the social order. This brief conversation is one instance where the women talk directly to one another about where they stand—in regard to men, to marriage, and to God. Not unlike the closed community of religious sisters, this isolated community of biological sisters has an alternative authority in place of the absent father.

The play itself is a long series of conversations about where women stand—who is, will be, or should be in charge of marital decisions and behavior. Luceny and Tattiney; Is., Sh., and Cicilley; and Courtley and Presumption—all discuss this issue.

They articulate no uniform answer, but together imply that when women assume the authority to assert decision-making, such decision-making may confirm—and perhaps not confirm—the wishes of the men in the women’s families and communities. When placed next to a more directly autobiographical work like Jane Cavendish’s “The angry Curs,” *The Concealed Fancies* can be understood as providing rhetorical and personal strategies to define aristocratic women’s marital roles during a martial time. More significantly, the play illustrates women contemplating how to determine these norms themselves.

Chapter 3: Witches, Peasants, Shepherdesses, and “Shee Priests”: *A Pastorall* and Women’s Community

In this chapter, I read Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley’s *A Pastorall* and the antemasques that precede it. *A Pastorall* portrays shepherdesses in the usual state of depression, but depicts the women using that depression to comment on status and the factors contributing to it. The female characters constitute a community reconfiguring marriage--what it means, and what role women have in determining its meaning. By giving the female shepherdesses chances to curtail romantic alliance, the authors enable them to operate independently of such unions, choosing to control who may join their family and under what circumstances. The female pastoral characters claim the right to reject marriages that are proposed amid war and family separations, while characters in the antemasques celebrate the larger social roles of aristocratic women. Read from the methodological perspective of Robert Merton, female characters of *A Pastorall* can be seen to make decisions about how families will grow and evolve—a powerful position for a culture in flux, and for a noble audience trying to reclaim its social standing. By creating these characters, Cavendish and Brackley place upper class women at the center of the Cavendish canon, both exalting noblewomen and contributing to the family coterie’s efforts to position the noble birth family prominently.

In contrast to my position, Betty Travitsky gives one of the most detailed accounts of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley’s *A Pastorall*, and her modest assessment of the play captures a central preoccupation of critics: “It takes no great skill to unravel the pastoral. Three shepherdesses (a.k.a. Jane, Elizabeth, and Frances

Cavendish), wooed by three shepherds, are too desolated by the absence of their father and brothers to be able to entertain their would-be lovers' suits."¹ I would agree with this synopsis—the text implicitly conveys family loyalty and refusals to make plans without the men of the family being at home, free from the worries of war. However, the ramifications of these decisions are more political than Travitsky's summary would indicate.

Two antemasques establish the context of the larger work: in the first, a group of witches debate their roles in starting a war, while in the second, a group of peasants discuss their political allegiances and the things they have lost in war. Both antemasques serve to create context for a pastoral in which Cavendish and Brackley place themselves—and their family—within a longstanding pastoral tradition in which shepherds mourn their circumstances. In this pastoral, female characters do much in the absence of male characters. Their mourning is a catalyst for social responsibility.

Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's choice of the pastoral reflects their nobility, and the antemasques appearing before their pastoral share a preoccupation with the intersections of gender and social status.² For their antemasques, Cavendish and Brackley invent two groups of lower class women, witches and peasants. The sisters illustrate their own sense of economic and political social order by creating a fictionalized version of that order, one in which poor women cannot stop talking

¹ Betty Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 72.

² For more information on seventeenth-century masques, see Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 15-44.

about the importance of wealthier women. This dynamic enhances the impact of the women in the pastoral, who very actively make marital decisions in the absence of male characters. All sections of the work challenge women's social roles and opportunities during the English Civil Wars.

As Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach would suggest, Cavendish and Brackley themselves also play roles, asserting social norms and appearances through their authorship.³ The two authors create a feminist pastoral, reshaping the traditions of the mode, asserting unique roles as authors and unique qualities for their characters. The cultural implications of *A Pastorall* have to do with far more than the authors' sadness over their father's absence. With the play, Cavendish and Brackley assert the important connections between separated members of their noble family, as well as the power gained by prioritizing those connections.

I.

In keeping with the seventeenth century masque tradition, the sisters compose an antemasque that genders evil forces as female and lower class, and as in the work of other Renaissance dramatists, this gendering involves witchcraft—decidedly not a representation of the Cavendish sisters, nor any friends, family, or political connections that they might have had.⁴ Early on in the first antemasque of *A Pastorall*, Cavendish and Brackley illustrate discord by creating a negative female community. The two noble sisters create a deviant group of women who plot strategies to provoke disaster and war. As earlier critics have pointed out, there are

³ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

⁴ See Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, 15-44.

references to the most personally divisive manifestations of civil war as the witches in this antemasque exchange information about what is happening around them: in this world, the Hag tells us that “Sister hate Sister” and Bell says that “Wife hate Husband, and all other kindred, hath their deuisions of Hatrid” (52).⁵ The description is of a Civil War conducted at the domestic level, within the family. Cavendish and Brackley present the witches as being strangely excited by these negative social forces and intent to destroy the larger world. In fact, the Hag begins this antemasque by proudly proclaiming, “This is a brave world, for vs now for wee meatemorphise every body” (52). Several major readings look at this passage for its satire of Civil War propaganda; for instance, Jane Milling says “the girls spoof the contemporary pamphlets that invoke supernatural forces as the cause of the war.”⁶

Diane Purkiss argues that English Civil War culture “found an outlet in the manufacture and circulation of stories about witches, so that the figure of the witch was constantly caught up in and reshaped by the swirling, ceaselessly changing discourses of the politics and persons of the Civil War era.”⁷ She describes the

⁵ All citations to *A Pastorall* are from my transcription of a facsimile of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley’s manuscript. Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16, in *British Literary Manuscripts from the Bodleian Library, Oxford Series one, The English Renaissance, c. 1500-1700* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Microform, 1988-89). All numeric references to this collection are to manuscript page numbers.

⁶ Jane Milling, “Siege and Cipher: The Closet Drama of the Cavendish Sisters,” *Women’s History Review* 6, no. 3 (1997), 416. For a related reading, see Alison Findlay, “‘Upon the World’s Stage’: The Civil War and Interregnum,” in *Women and Dramatic Production, 1570-1700*, eds. Alison Findlay, Gweno Williams, and Stephanie J. Hodgson-Wright (Harlow, England: Longman, 2000), 70-71.

⁷ Diane Purkiss, “Desire and Its Deformities: Fantasies of Witchcraft in the English Civil War,” 106. Also see Diane Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden: A Dark History of Fairies, Goblins, and Other Troublesome Things* (New York: New York University Press, 2000) and Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History* (London: Routledge, 1996). Also, see the classic, Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

preoccupation with witches to be a male fixation, held by soldiers and other men searching for explanations for war and its losses. Her reading is consistent with Milling's assertion that Cavendish and Brackley are satirizing elements of Civil War discourse. However, the implications of this antemasque are more complicated than the typical references to the supernatural causes of war. The female authors allow unsavory characters, also female, to be the voice of everything that is wrong with the Civil War. The antemasque also allows Cavendish and Brackley to rewrite old wives' tales to suit their situation. In doing so, they reinvent the witch as a literary figure.

After the antemasques, the writers align themselves with their own rank by redressing themselves in the tradition of the pastoral, with all its sartorial references to nobility in the garb of the peasants. The authors, perhaps truly in fear of losing status, paint a picture of themselves as shepherdesses who have lost greatly but are different from those other women—the mythic witches who discuss their roles as instigators of the Civil War. Unlike the witches of the antemasque, the characters of the pastoral uphold social order and give women the keys to defining a social group. Cavendish and Brackley are among the gatekeepers of the class closest to the monarch, and their pastoral cast of characters illustrates a similar mission. Even if the authors lose everything, they want to separate the community of which they are a part from other groups who lack social position. Hence, they describe witches as an entirely separate group of women, on a different mission from their own.

The witches themselves debate the concepts of blame and war. After the Hag's opening statement ("This is a braue new world, for vs now for wee

meatemorphise euery body”), Prentice says, “But I doubt wee are but the Fly of the Cartwheelee, for wee are but the people that’s taulked on, to serue others designes, and our pride to our selues makes us thinke wee are Actours” (52). The conversation is a self-conscious attempt by the witches to explain how to perform evil: does their own free will create evil, or do they simply behave as instruments of preexisting forces? The witches question their own agency in beginning or sustaining a war that turned families and neighbors against one another. They thus recapitulate the debate on witches’ power over war, causing a philosophical discussion of their own power, or lack thereof.⁸ The passage shows how much Cavendish and Brackley must have been aware of the pamphlets in which different political groups blamed each other for the war.

The witches attempt to place themselves prominently in the social order and assert a great deal of power over others:

Hag. And haue not wee done braue

Pre. Ey fayth, but thinke you tis wee

Bell. Lords wee send beyond Seas at our pleasure

Hag. Others wee keepe still to make us business, and for Colonells and

Lieuetennnant Colonells, & Lower degrees of officers, wee take them so fast, as wee are---thinkeing to let them go without Exchange (53).

This passage notably places the witches above the normal rankings of men. Not only do two of the three women claim responsibility for what is happening, but also they claim to have specific kinds of power over military groups: “Colonells and

⁸ Comically, the scene involves witches debating the ways to be witches or perform witchcraft. Like characters throughout the Cavendish coterie, the witches seek to find the best way to present themselves. See Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*.

Lieutenant Colonells, & Lower degrees of officers.” (53) Prentice doubts their power, but even she participates actively in their conversation about creating a subversive order. Cavendish and Brackley, two aristocratic women, have imagined a lower class of women occupying a space that is threatening to men.

Cavendish and Brackley immediately shift to writing about the experience of women in war. While the witches continue to debate their own roles in causing war, they express a particular interest in bothering other women:

Bell. To haue the sport of gettinge them [the military] againe

Pre. And is this all wee.

Hag. Who the Deuill els should it bee.

Pre. Which of all your power like you best?

Bess. If you meane the grownd of like mischeife

Pre. And what sceane vpon that grownd,

Hag. By my troth, makinge Ladyes Captiues.

Bess. Seeinge how prettily they can Looke wise

Hag. And speake witt soe against vs.

Bess. As wee cannot take the handle against them.

Hag. Unless wee proue ourselues Fooles. (53)

Cavendish and Brackley imagine the witches looking down at aristocratic women.

The “scene upon the ground” that the witches describe serves as a visual reference to the activities of young women, held captive by war. At this point, the authors distinguish themselves from the witches whom they have created by having the witches discuss “Ladyes Captiues” who “speake witt.” They also assert that witches

like torturing women even more than they like torturing the men fighting wars.

Cavendish and Brackley accomplish an important distinction here. They draw a line between the experiences of captive women and those of members of the military.

Like the men whom Purkiss quotes, Cavendish and Brackley imagine blame falling upon the supernatural. However, by making aristocratic women the focal point of the dialogue, Cavendish and Brackley assert a power for women and the domestic sphere. By making aristocratic women such a significant challenge to the witches, the authors claim the importance of both Royalists and Royalist women. The class distinction serves to explain why the decisions of noblewomen are central to the larger work. The formidable aristocratic women of the antemasque support a reading of the shepherdesses as important decision-makers.

In the antemasque, witches imply a direct conflict with very vocal aristocratic women whom they actively try to silence. The witches reflect on their ability to harm women and on their plans to create additional mayhem:

Bell. But that pleaseth mee most, is how handsomely wee tye Ladyes
Tongues.

Hag. Which before tyme would haue beene thought a Maracle.

Bell. Come now, about, about.

Hag. And let this night bee a Battles rout, to whome wee please.

Pre. Let mee then knowe of whome you pitch

Bell. If but a Mischeife wee'le not care to which

Hag. If you a partie have I will you tell

You're but a Prentice Witch, I'l sweare, in Hell.

Bell. Come light your distaffs and wee'le try

Hag. Now Ile bee hang'd If that some do not flye

Bell. Come let vs burne our seuerall horrid peeces. (53)

In these brief speeches, they express a particular joy in making young women silent. It is a curious moment, since such silence was generally not a wicked thing, but an emblem of chastity and goodness.⁹ Cavendish and Brackley invent witches who claim the power to make other women silent (“how handsomely wee tye Ladyes Tongues”), which furthers the distinction between aristocratic women and witches. The authors also have the witches claim that it is difficult to silence the noblewomen (the silence “would [once] haue beene thought a Maracle”). According to this reasoning, the aristocratic women speak often and feel they have a right to speak. The witches’ dialogue serves as a form of propaganda in which the authors imagine aristocratic women exhibiting a great fight against supernatural opponents. The noblewomen claim the right to speak, supporting the prominent place of aristocratic women throughout the work— including in the pastoral, where female characters make marital decisions.

If we argue that Cavendish and Brackley played the parts in *A Pastorall*, as Alison Findlay’s performances assert, then we are left with an image of Cavendish and Brackley playing witches just before they play lower class country wives and shepherdesses.¹⁰ The authors claim the ability to play women of different classes,

⁹ Catherine Belsey, “Silence and Speech,” in *The Subject of Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1985), 149-191, is one source for this perspective.

¹⁰ Alison Findlay has staged performances of Cavendish and Brackley plays with her students. She hypothesizes that Jane Cavendish, Elizabeth Brackley, and their sister Frances Cavendish were performers in the household performance. Alison Findlay, “Elite Fabrications: Staging Seventeenth-

displaying different speaking habits to correspond with each set of women. The two sisters also comment on their own speech practices, since they portray witches who talk about aristocratic women's speech. This creates a metatheatrical moment, where the sisters are several people at once—themselves, commenting on speech, and themselves as lower class women, commenting on silence. Even without actual performance, the speech has much the same effect, because the women create the characters who enjoy torturing young women. The authors write an aristocracy that generates gossip and performs heroically before others.¹¹ The class divisions inherent in the scenes support a separation between the responsibilities given to lower class women and those given to aristocratic women—important to the amount of marital control that the pastoral characters assume in the main text of *A Pastorall*. Aristocratic women, the antemasques tell audiences, talk freely.

The speeches that engage with aristocratic speech also ultimately silence Prentice, the one witch who claims no control over war. The very language of the witches conveys a sense of war—"let this night be a Battles rout" is the evil women's call to arms (53). Hag and Bell, proponents of witch-on-aristocratic women violence, talk with great glee in this section. As they do so, Prentice begins to recognize her inadequacies as a witch:

Hag. Thus is our Mischeife drawne in years of Leases

Pre. If you a Prentice doe call mee

Pray let mee knowe of thee

Century Drama by Women" (paper presented at Attending to Early Modern Women: Gender, Culture, and Change, College Park, Maryland: November 11, 2000).

¹¹ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

What you intend soe hollyly to burne

Hag. To sacrifice unto Loues Devills Vrn

Pre. What's the ingredience of your Perfume

Bess. All horrid things to burne i'th' Roome

Hag. As Childrens heads.

Bess. Mens leggs

Hag. Womens Armes

Bess. And little Barnes

Hag. And these wee will you show

Pre. Noe thanke you, I will take my leggs to goe.

Bess. No stay wee will not you soe fright

Hag. That you the better may us like

Bess. For wee're resolu'd that vs you shall not slight

Hag. For with vs you shall oynt and make a flight

Bess. But wee've forgot our Songe

Hag. Let's singe, but let's not bee too longe. (54)

Prentice is rattled by the violence reflected in the rhymes, and she appears at first to want to defect from this group of witches, moving away from them and from the idea that she, too, can be a witch. But almost immediately, the shocking dialogue of the witches stops so that they can engage in song. They act as though conscious of a need to wrap things up, as if they know their part is ending. They complicate this sense of urgency by invoking the devil's power in their song. The rush to sing is comical, and Cavendish and Brackley leave their audience with witches who are

preoccupied with speech but who cannot talk for very long. In contrast to the pastoral characters who represent the nobility, the witches have only a short scene in which to discuss their responsibilities. This brevity reinforces the supremacy of the aristocratic women, as well as the importance of decisions made by pastoral characters later on in the play.

Given the witches' preoccupation with the power of speech, their communion with a silent devil stands out. As usual, the witches speak at some length. The devil never says a word, though the witches sing as though communicating with him:

Hag. Deuille thou know'st wee're thyne

Bell. And that in a most stright lyne

Hag. Soe beggs that each may feare

Bell. Vs witches euery yeare. (54)

In the last lines, Prentice decides to join the others. The witches emphasize the point of their revelry: "Now oynt make a flight / To see great Lucifer tonight" (55). No longer just seeking communication with the devil, the three want his presence. With that dark thought, the witches' antemasque closes.

In spite of its being a scene dedicated to witches' abilities, the antemasque focuses on the aristocracy, those victimized by the supernatural women. If anything, the aristocratic women are the focal point in the piece, since witches discuss them at such length. The antemasque presents the lower class in relation to the higher, creating or replicating a social order in which the higher classes determine the social roles of everyone else. This power foreshadows the prominence of pastoral women in

the main text, and it elevates the aristocracy for the Cavendish coterie and its Royalist audience.

II.

A second antemasque reinforces the celebration of all things noble. While it is not preoccupied with witchcraft, like the first antemasque, it is preoccupied with women's speech and silence, and with how those topics relate to class and power. In it, two country wives exchange talk. After some salutations, the two women begin a conversation about one woman's trip to see a family of higher status than her own.

The conversation centers on the aristocracy and how titillating they are:

Pratt. Come Naunt Henn I'le tell you a pritty incounter of my selfe now.

Henn. But effeckins I'looke first, whether no souldier or Witch bee crept under my bed or no.

Pratt. I care not for them, Naunt stay; For I am bigg with talke.

Henn. Speake then.

Pratt. Wye I went to my good Lord, & Maisters howse to see his honourable Children, but that was not my occastions. I darr not till you what I went-about.

Henn. Why will you not, I pray you till me Gossop.

Pratt. Ne fayth your tongue's glib, & it will twattle a little too much. (57)

The peasants' fears of soldiers and witches support the idea that people believed their opposition's military to be possessed by supernatural forces.¹² However, once again, the lines mentioning witches come from a female character created by a woman—not

¹² Purkiss details times when one Civil War military or another associated witches with their opposition's forces. See "Desire and Its Deformities," 103-32.

a male directly involved with the war. This authorship implies the presence of war propaganda in the domestic sphere, among aristocratic women as well as among men. The lines also serve as a bridge between the first antemasque and this one, since this antemasque claims people fear witches. Cavendish and Brackley imagine a world where the lower classes sympathize with the aristocracy and experience the same kinds of fears as its “honourable Children.” Instead of making the peasants seem multi-dimensional, this choice keeps the nobility central to the dialogue, providing a sense of self-importance to the Cavendish coterie and its readers.

Pratt’s accusation that Henn might “twattle a little too much” implies that a visit to a higher class person prompts a kind of decorum and secrecy, as well as a sense of awe. Strikingly, it is the younger generation of nobility whom the women discuss meeting, not the older. The generation of William Cavendish is of no interest; rather, the generation who would include the authors is the one that captivates the peasants: Pratt goes to the “good Lord, & Maisters howse” not to see him, but “to see his honourable Children.” This preoccupation makes young aristocratic people the conversation topic, just as they were in the first antemasque. The dialogue does not directly exalt the authors’ father. Instead, the peasants exalt the young women writing the scene, or others like them. The authors are young women who imagine common women agreeing with their politics and with their fears.

Class is ultimately a large consideration of Henn and Pratt as they worry about speech. Henn is ready for Pratt to begin telling her story, and she is restless with having to wait for full details. She wants to know why she cannot hear more immediately, and she begs for the opportunity to engage in more discussion about

Pratt's visit to see the aristocrats. For the Royalist audience of the Cavendish coterie, Henn's deep interest would recreate a central position for the nobility:

Henn. When did you heare mee speake anything again my noble Maister, or
against any of his. (57)

Pratt raises the suspense level, suggesting that she has something serious to report. She either decides that she trusts Henn or decides that she simply cannot contain herself. Henn's part of the conversation has a hurried quality, as though she anticipates hearing something of magnitude:

Pr. Well I'll tell you: first I went to the gate, and there I was examined, and my
Baskett that had the Pigg in it was examined.

He. Then what sayd they to you Gossopp. . . . (57)

What follows is a conversation about the woman's interaction with people of higher status. One woman worries that the other will discount what she has to say, because the woman is not a Royalist sympathizer or because she is feuding with the family in question, specifically. As in the first antemasque, the speech habits of women are paramount. In this antemasque, peasants define themselves based on meetings with aristocrats: a visit to aristocrats gives the peasants a sense of importance. The dialogue also enhances the Royalist audience's sense of entitlement, since Henn and Pratt place the "noble Maister" in such high regard.

The antemasque provides an instance where Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley create a fictional set of characters to reflect, support, or even establish class distinctions among women. Aristocratic women play a central role in the dialogue, collaborating with the common people to establish a positive result. In spite of their

own poverty, the peasants look at the aristocratic women as having hard lives, a belief undoubtedly appealing to Cavendish and Brackley's Royalist readers:

Pratt. They asked mee what I came for. Then I sayd, I came to do my duety,
to present this wreckling Pig, to the Ladies or Gentlewomen. I knowe not
what you call them, but by'th maik I knew them well enough fare cheiue
them. For they have a hard Gamm to play. But when I went vpp I durst not
stay, but sent my Baskett vpp by one I durst trust. Twas one of their Maidens,
and bid hir, bid hir Lady looke into my Pigs Tale, & there they would fynd.

Henn. What Gossopp.

Pratt. My Pigg fatt, would they not, but I haue knowne the day that that word
would haue been held vnciuill, for such a word to haue been sent, or sayd to
any one. (58)

Findlay indicates that "porcine terminology was used to describe penthouses used in siege warfare," raising the possibility that the exchange between Henn and Pratt goes beyond a discussion of household business.¹³ Findlay adds that "Gossip Pratt seems to be using the code to inform the ladies of some impending royalist military action" and says that "although women appear to be confined to the domestic arena of food provision, they perform a vital role in communications, the play suggests."¹⁴

Findlay's reading reveals the politics of the peasants' discussion, since her analysis interprets the country women as conveying messages about war.

The discussion also invokes class division. Pratt claims not to know the precise rank of the women she is meeting and suggests that she does not know them

¹³ Findlay, "Upon the World's Stage," 71.

¹⁴ Ibid., 71.

personally, at all. Yet she feels compelled to see them and to understand what a “hard Gamm” the women “play.” She knows the aristocrats with a “hard Gamm” have a high social rank, and she describes a world where she not only sympathizes with the wealthier women but also actively works with them to combat the enemy. She has even sought out a woman she “durst trust” to pass along her basket. Moreover, Pratt mistrusts Henn enough to think initially that she may not be able to handle the exchange without passing it to the wrong parties. Her initial mistrust of Henn and her trust in the young “Maiden” place her in a position where her politics may align her more with the wealthy gentlewoman than with the common woman from her own class. Presumably, the lower class woman sees the noblewomen as having the political connections to pass along political information. For an audience of nobility, the speech provides aristocratic women with martial responsibilities and the respect of their community: a situation foreshadowing the social importance of the pastoral characters’ marital decisions.

The next scene, with Goodman Rye and Goodman Hay, further asserts class divisions. In the long dialogue between the two men and the country wives, the characters maintain that there are three types of beings—people, witches, and satyrs. The satyrs are to be blamed for the country people’s losses and for their positions in society. Yet little is known of these outsiders, even though they are said to live in the same area as the people who are talking:

Hay. Wye I’le tell you a strange thinge.

I heare there is a strange people to come into

This Land: They call them Sayters.

Henn. What are those

Rye. Whye, they are halfe men, halfe Beasts.

Pratt. Barlakings you may see now Neighbors what learning is to knowe
these kind of Creatures

Henn. But what will they plunder.

Hay. Noe they understand not that phrase: Plunder. (59)¹⁵

Hay first reports on the “strange people to come into This Land” as though he has just heard that satyrs exist. As the conversation closes, he appears to know significantly more about satyrs, enough to assert that “they understand not that phrase: Plunder.” By invoking “satyrs” in this context, Cavendish and Brackley argue that the Royalists are not stealing from the people, a significant maneuver, given accusations to the contrary. As the daughters of a Royalist military general who claimed himself innocent of plundering, the authors composed a scene not only respectful of their father, but also engaged with his politics and military.¹⁶

Cavendish and Brackley also acknowledge people’s trepidation of the satyrs but make them a positive central topic, just as they make aristocrats a focal point throughout the play:

¹⁵ Alison Findlay argues “sayters” to be Royalists. See “‘Upon the World’s Stage,’” 71-72. I find no written reference suggesting that Royalists claimed the identity of “sayters.” Given the various negative associations of satyrs throughout the earlier English Renaissance, it seems unlikely that Royalists would embrace the comparison. However, the Dionysian descriptions of Royalists made by their opponents would make “sayters” a likely slur/slang. Marvin Breslow has informed me that “sayters” make sense as a term referring to Royalists, since at one point, people believed Prince Rupert and his forces appeared out of nowhere, as if led by supernatural forces.

¹⁶ See William Cavendish, “A Declaration made by the Earle of New-castle, Governour of the Town and County of New-Castle: And Generall of all His Majesties forces raised in the Northern parts of this Kingdome, for the Defence of the same. For his Resolution of Marching into Yorkshire. As also a just Vindication of himself from that unjust Aspersion laid upon him, for entertaining some Popish Recusants in his Forces,” by Speciall Command (Printed at York by Stephen Bulkley, 1642).

Rye. But I will tell you, they are very louing people.

Pratt. By my fayth of my body, That's well

For then sure wee shall please them

Henn. If they bee not rude. (59)

In effect, the characters say, if the satyrs are loving, then we will all get along fine, since we are all such fine people. But the people immediately begin to make a comparison between the satyrs and witches, noting which supernatural creatures are tolerable:

Pratt. But these Witches, out upon them they can cunier Our Kine & Sheepe from vs.

Henn. And though wee see them will enough, wee darr not, Nor cannot speake to them.

Pratt. But if these Sayters would come, though they take our kine & sheepe from vs, as longe as they speake vs fare, wee should thinke ourselues happy.
(59)

In a short scene, the country people depict a social order filled not only with people like them, but also with satyrs and witches. None of the creatures who are not like them are to be trusted, but there are degrees of mistrust. The country people make a distinction between the satyrs and witches: if the satyrs harm them but are nice to them, the people will consider themselves lucky and move on with life. But in no way do the country people expect an easy time dealing with those around them. The scene acknowledges the possibility that satyrs may make unpopular decisions. However, if we accept that the satyrs represent Royalists, Henn and Pratt have placed

Royalists and witches in two fundamentally different categories. To go back to Purkiss's ideas about references to writing, Cavendish and Brackley have acknowledged that people associate witchcraft with the military of their opposition, and they have created characters who do not connect witches to Royalists.¹⁷ Ultimately, this authorial decision places Henn and Pratt on the Royalist's side, even though both characters look at satyrs with some fear.

The country people make judgments about witches and satyrs, expressing strong feelings about the motivations behind witches' conduct:

Henn. And I speake truely to you all. I had rather bee amongst the Sayters then the Witches. For the Witches they will say truely, & in trueth, when they plunder, & yet they alwaies thinke of the Deuill.

Pratt. And they say they pray to him.

Hay. But pray you now let's have a songe before wee part. (60)

Henn insists the witches' form of religion is dark and particularly scary. Satirizing the Puritans' insistence on plain speech, the lines suggest that words are not deeds: speaking truly that they plunder does not prevent the witches (Parliamentarians) from plundering. Yet the peasants indicate that they want to move on from such a heavy discussion, preferably to sing a song and be merry. The switch to song is abrupt, just as it is in the first antemasque, marking the scene as a brief diversion from even more serious matters.

¹⁷ See Purkiss, "Desire and Its Deformities," 103-32.

Like the witches' song, the peasants' song really is not that innocent. It has an almost nursery rhyme quality and a sly political content and contains the dialogue of several characters who feel they have lost everything:

Henn. I have lost my melch Cow.

Pratt. And I have lost my Son.

Rye. And for my Corn I cannot keepe.

Hay. Neither can I my pritty sheep.

Henn. And I have lost fowre dozen of Eggs

Pratt. My Pigs are gon. & all their Heads

Rye. Come let us wish for Health

Hay. For we can have noe wealth

Henn. Now I will hope for Joy.

Pratt. And in meane tyme let's bee a Toy

Rye. Since that wee have noe plenty

Hay. And our Purses they are empty

Henn. Since that wee have noe plenty

Pratt. And our Purses they are empty. (61)

Satire is continued in the peasants' song. Traditional pastoral shepherds sing of the plenty of the natural world, while these peasants sing the antithesis—they have lost family, property, and livestock. The song shows the authors imagining poor people negotiating social roles just as the aristocracy negotiate social roles. The despondency of the song intensifies the effect. Cavendish and Brackley allow female and male characters to sing their dismay together, an indication that the two see

women and men reacting to the war together. The presence of both women and men marks the situation as a social and political one shared throughout the larger community. The song is a tribute to keeping wits together in the face of great economic and personal disaster.

III.

When the second antemasque ends and the pastoral itself begins, we do not lose the sense of melancholy initiated in the antemasques. We hear first from a single shepherdess, Chastity. Her opening speech is both an introductory welcome to the audience and an indication of some unhappiness:

Chastity. We're now become a fine coule shady walke
Soe fit to answeare Louers in their talke
And if sad Soules, would mellencholly tell
Let them then come, to visit, where wee dwell
For ne're become a fine thick Groue of thought
Soe frises even our selues with teares full fraught
When vendeducts of wind, our sighes makes Ayre
These are the fruites of passion, restles care
And this our Groto; soe who lookes may haue
A welcome to a sad Shee Hermetts Caue. (65)

The despondency Chastity exhibits is standard for the pastoral, and shepherdesses themselves are nothing unusual. However, in this opening sequence, a woman is the first to speak—not the usual fare in pastoral drama.¹⁸ We also have an immediate

¹⁸ For guides to pastoral tradition, see Patrick Cullen, *Spenser, Marvell, and Renaissance Pastoral* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); Judith Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-*

reference to being a “hermit” and, thus, an immediate sense of women alone. Chastity serves as a sort of tour guide to melancholy in the scene, offering to share what life is like in her pastoral world. She only invites the “sad Soules,” having no apparent desire to open the pastoral world to parties who would not understand it. Her self-introduction places her in control, giving her a primary responsibility to depict despondency to the audience—a group that she suggests would identify with it. The speech is a direct appeal to the Cavendish coterie and their Royalist audience: the lines perform the misery of the aristocratic.

Innocence next speaks by herself. Like Chastity’s speech, this monologue functions to inform the reader/viewer of a negative situation. Her speech also delineates her social position as a shepherdess:

My Sheppardes habits, doe become mee soe
As I could wishe my friends did now mee see
Not that I take a pleasure in this place
But for discourse, of what I them could till
An Innocence of life, to them relate
That so my trueth of virtue they may see
My Garments are pure white because that I
Will haue noe coullour to hide spots of dye
But in my lon Roues [lawn robes] I will keepe
And all my fault shalbee my sleepe.
And if I dreame I shall then speake, O’runn

Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Specifically, Alpers, “Pastoral Speakers,” *What is Pastoral?*, 185-222, discusses various traditional speakers.

Or els my prittie Lambe I doubt is gone
And then before I open my Eye Lidd
Shall dreame that I was feeding of my Kidd. (66)

The words of Innocence illustrate that *A Pastorall* places women within an English Civil War context and longstanding pastoral tradition, at the same time. Her “wische my friends did now mee see” shows her mourning multiple separations. The war poetry of Jane Cavendish provides a context for this emotion: the fictional character, like Jane Cavendish/speaker, misses absent loved ones, but she humorously wishes they could see her in costume. Innocence wants absent people to know that she dedicates herself to innocence and sheep, and perhaps also to happier times. Like those before her in pastoral tradition, she wants to indicate her goodness and her piety.¹⁹ She also places herself in the middle of the pastoral tradition by answering years of male shepherds’ songs with her own.

Alpers summarizes this type of pastoral exchange: “Pastoral poems make explicit the dependence of their conventions on the idea of coming together. Pastoral convenings are characteristically occasions for songs and colloquies that express and thereby seek to redress separation, absence, or loss.”²⁰ He cites “the inaugural poem of Western pastoral, Theocritus’s first Idyll” and gives several specific examples from the Renaissance.²¹ Cavendish and Brackley’s choice of the mode shows their knowledge of, and interaction with, a longstanding literary form. The decision to

¹⁹ See Findlay, ““Upon the World’s Stage,”” 72-73, for a different reading.

²⁰ Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 81.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

write a pastoral was tantamount to writing themselves into a history that an educated, sympathetic audience would understand. This group of people would include the Cavendish literary coterie and their Royalist friends.²² While Innocence answers years of pastoral lamentations, Cavendish and Brackley answer years of pastoral writers. This act places the suffering of Innocence on a par with the greatest suffering depicted in literary history. By extension, readers who identify with her and understand her pastoral message see their own unhappiness as part of something larger than themselves. Despite the benign and low key speech that she delivers, Innocence elevates the Royalists who were made lonely by war; they, a primary audience, see themselves in her literary heritage.

A shepherd named Perseverance sums up Chastity and Innocence's isolation: "Your Fathers absence makes you always owne / Your selfe though hansom, still to bee alone" (66). No one contradicts him for suggesting this, and critics have tended to consider such lines as applying to Cavendish and Brackley and their fictional characters.²³ This proposed conflation provides an additional Civil War context for reading the pastoral: Chastity and Innocence's father, like William Cavendish, has

²² I propose that the people Jane Cavendish wrote to in her poetry give some indication of who was in the primary audience.

²³ For larger discussion of William Cavendish's relationship to his daughters, see Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England*, 21-91; Margaret J.M. Ezell, "'To Be Your Daughter in Your Pen': The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish," *Huntington Library Quarterly: A Journal for the History and Interpretation of English and American Civilization* 51, no. 4 (1988): 281-96; and Findlay, "'Upon the World's Stage,'" 68-94.

responsibilities elsewhere. Chastity and Innocence, like Cavendish and Brackley, must work to maintain their rural estates.²⁴

Despite Perseverance's suggestion that the pastoral daughters are deferential, nothing indicates that their father has imposed this behavior. Chastity and Innocence have exercised the volition to make and enforce rules that prioritize work and loyalty:

Chastity. His absence makes me thinke I am

One that should prepare a Lambe

To sacrifice, that is my selfe to bee

A willing Marter for each one to see

The reason why; his absence makes me sad. (67)

While the song suggests that Chastity feels lost without the authority of her father, at the same time she claims his absence inspires in her the responsibility to act visibly in response to that separation. She has not lost all sense of herself or of what she should do. When she says, "His absence makes me thinke I am," she speaks with volition of her own confused thoughts, mentioning nothing of what he has said. As she speaks of a "Lambe to sacrifice," she clarifies that she is the lamb: "a willing marter for each one to see." Chastity presents herself as unhappy, but at the same time, the image of martyrdom hardly denies her a sense of responsibility or a voice. If anything, her desire to do something—particularly to be a martyr--assigns her greater power. She is willing to sacrifice herself as symbol of an event.

The text's Civil War dating is important to the characters' speeches. Some of Chastity's later lines are as much a commentary on the time of composition as they

²⁴ For discussion of the Cavendish daughters' responsibilities during the English Civil War, see Katie Whitaker, *Mad Madge: The Extraordinary Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, the First Woman to Live by Her Pen* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 127.

are on absent fathers. She is looking for a way to control her expressions and behave without the usual conditions in place, struggling to find the role that she must play.²⁵

And if noe hope, then death to mee makes glad

What am I now sure nothinge but a Butt

And every thought's greifes Arrowes of my luck

Soe neuer but the white untill I trace

Some happy thought to figure soe his face

Then am I happy, but when find him not

I wishe that thought I could haue then forgot

Then sit I downe to make myselfe appeare

The Winter of a Summers coulder yeare. (67)

While very much preoccupied with her absent father, the passage closes with the idea that Chastity can fashion her own expressions or force herself to deal with the separation from her father. She communicates grief, but also her own determination to handle whatever situation comes. Her claim that “greifes Arrowes of my luck / Soe neuer but the white until I trace” indicates that her luck is off target. As long as she has no “happy thought,” her grief controls everything, and the “arrowes” of her luck will not go where they should—they will only hit the white outside the target. Chastity’s final lines imply she has the power to make her situation better. By performing a particular demeanor, she can change to a more optimistic state of mind. She will simply look as though it is “the Winter of a Summers coulder yeare.” Her closing line juxtaposes the present bad times with better days, suggesting that the

²⁵ Chastity and Innocence both attempt to define their behavior in the absence of the usual circumstances. The characters self-consciously work to plan a “performance” of their own identities. See Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, 17.

situation is transient, or even seasonal. Things will eventually right themselves, and her role will be to perform a positive attitude until that happens.

Perseverance has different ideas about how Chastity and Innocence should exhibit positive thinking while separated from their father. He believes that they should enjoy the environment that they have, and that they should focus more on the pleasant aspects of their existence:

Come let vs walke that wee may sweetly heare

The Birds to singe their seuerall noted tunes

As if the yeare was onely made for wee

Where nature courts vs to each finer shade. (67)

In other words, they should try not to think about bad things, but should enjoy the good things that they still have. The reference to time, to “the yeare,” is also significant, here. It does not necessarily imply that melancholy is time specific, or that the shepherdesses need to think about this sad time as transitory. The longer phrase, “as if the yeare was onely made for wee,” gives Perseverance the qualities of a speaker in a carpe diem poem. Chastity has just spoken of positive thinking. True to his name, Perseverance is actively trying to get her suggestion to work to his advantage, but by courting Innocence. Perhaps, he thinks, the shepherdesses could invite him along, as they attempt to find happiness. Specifically, Innocence could go with him where “nature courts.”

Perseverance’s continuing desire for attention falls within the mode that Patrick Cullen calls the “complaint to the reluctant mistress,” since Innocence wants

nothing to do with Perseverance's advances.²⁶ Innocence defends her present activities instead: "O'noe, the innocence of Sheepe, / Shall bee my onely care to keepe" (67). In the tradition of shepherds, "the pastoral lover is often forced to defend his profession," as Cullen says.²⁷ Innocence stands by her occupation and turns down a potential suitor, vocalizing the figure of the beloved in the process.

Instead of exemplifying "innocence" as we conventionally term it, Innocence begins to stand for diligent work and efforts. Perseverance does not pursue the same type of constant duty:

Per. What pleasure is in them [the lamb] to please you soe
That you inuite your selfe onely to heare
The blateings of each Lambe that loues its Pap
And afterward doth lye it downe to sleepe
Inn. The milke of kine Ile huswife for to make
Butter to keepe my thoughts awake. (68)

Perseverance's response to Innocence's work ethic is almost one of awe—it is a comical but dismissive take on how irritating he thinks it must be to be a shepherdess. Just as Innocence perseveres in her pastoral activities, Perseverance perseveres in his pursuit of her. He is incredulous that Innocence exists "onely to heare / The blateings of each Lambe." Innocence answers that her work keeps her awake and alert. The dialogue continues their discussion of work ethics, with Innocence defending her job.

Perseverance wants to have the sort of marriage typical in pastoral:

²⁶ Cullen, *Spenser, Marvell, and Renaissance Pastoral*, 185.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

But I should rather thinke to make a prize
Of Garlands for to crowne our selues with all
And if in loue you did become your vow
You should my Garland haue and mee withal
Inn. I owe myselfe to noe ambitious foe
For all my thoughts are truly humble low. (68)

Perseverance imagines that a floral “crowne” will be a plausible substitute for Innocence’s shepherding activities. The phrase “But I should rather thinke to make a prize” represents a direct argument against the job she intends to continue doing. Like the aristocratic women in the second antemasque, Innocence has assumed responsibilities in the absence of loved ones. Her role necessitates her rejection of Perseverance’s proposal.

Innocence’s response says much about her volition as a shepherdess. She claims, “I owe myselfe to noe ambitious foe,” making his offer sound curiously like a transaction in which he would benefit, and she would lose. Her accusation that he is an “ambitious foe” suggests that she has something to offer him that he does not currently have. Giving it away would elevate him in some way. In Innocence’s estimation, she is not just a shepherdess; her responsibilities matter.

As a dialogue composed by two sisters who were at home, facing dowry issues and trying to protect their family’s houses, the exchange between Innocence and Perseverance makes Innocence sound curiously street smart.²⁸ The scene undeniably has an historical context, particularly for an educated coterie audience

²⁸ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 127, 135, 147, and 199.

accustomed to seeing nobility cloaked in shepherd's garb. The mourning Civil War era audience would have recognized themselves in the pastoral and aristocratic women, in the domestic duties of Innocence.

Perseverance speaks of his own social role.²⁹ Like Courtley in *The Concealed Fancies*, he wants to make his beloved a saint. Unlike the female characters in *The Concealed Fancies*, Innocence does not acquiesce. Perseverance imagines that the only way that he can win is if Innocence—or he—become spiritual beings:

Per. I pray thee bee my Saint and heare my prayer

For certainly I have noe other way

To hope that you will euer graunt to mee

Vnlesse I should my forme of man put of [off]

Inn. I dedicate my selfe to each sweete field

For to your Sex I'm very loth to yield. (68)

Perseverance recognizes Innocence is beyond human achievement; he thinks his only hope is in removing his “forme of man” and making her a “Saint.” He does not offer a proposal for what he can be instead of a mortal man, and his use of the possessive (“my”) before saint both raises and lowers Innocence's status, since it proposes a religious title but says she will belong to him. While a rejection of the male shepherd who courts her, Innocence's answer is an emphatic remark—she speaks her mind, and clearly has made the rules that she expresses to him. Far from being the passive remarks of a depressed shepherdess, the reply is actually an active assertion of how she will receive (and not receive) marriage proposals. Perseverance's offer to make her a saint does not move her, but instead reinforces the duties already a part of her

²⁹ While reading this scene, I think again of Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*.

identity. The dialogue is very much in the tradition of Renaissance courting. Cavendish and Brackley have simply given the beloved a voice that would register with a Royalist audience as a statement of a woman's authority over a man's proposal, authored by Royalist women engaged in conducting their own business in the absence of their father.

Perseverance's desire to change Innocence and change his own nature is a self-conscious attempt to rewrite both their identities and roles. Perseverance knows his own limits with Innocence; the dialogue indicates his willingness to perform in a new way in order to get and keep Innocence's attention. Naturally, nothing changes. He continues playing the role of the one who perseveres, and she continues playing the role of the resister.

Perseverance swears that Innocence can silence him by deciding to speak:

Per. I am resolu'd from you I will not goe

Till that your resolution I doe know

Inn. What in a verse doe you begin to speake

And if then witt ther's none can owne you weak

Per. I sweare as loue you nothinge will I say

If I may knowe, what's your ambitions way.

Inn. I darr not that relate for feare some wynn

Out of my designe, then hate my selfe as sinn. (68)

Again, Innocence exercises control over the situation, speaking the way that she wants, without taking Perseverance up on his offers. He is convinced that he can get more information from her or can sway her, but her refusal is a definitive one. Her

comment, “What in a verse doe you begin to speak / if then witt ther’s none can owne you weak,” is a sarcastic commentary on Perseverance’s futile efforts to woo her through poetry. She is not surprised that he is employing poetry to try to reach her; if his work is witty, no one can call him weak. The unstated conclusion to the line is that she will still not be moved, witty verse or no. The dialogue is a long combination of love complaint and defense of work, where Perseverance never gets anywhere, and both parties keep the opinion that they started with in the discussion.

Innocence only makes a slight change in her behavior, though it is completely under her control. She decides that she will speak, but only under specific conditions. It is significant that she designates the conditions of her speech. She decides to trust him, but only if he will comply with her wishes:

Per. Whisp it in my Eare for further shalt not goe

But to my thoughts for then my selfe a foe

Inn. If that your promise you will keepe

I will then singe, but first you’st bee a sleepe

Per. Well I will appeare like a dead witherd leafe

And soe convert my selfe to a sleepe stupid deafe. (69)

In effect, Perseverance makes an oath to Innocence at her request, and under her stipulations. Her insistence upon his sleep means that he will not be allowed to interrupt her song. She is speaking only on condition of his assuming a passive posture for receiving her words.

Innocence has nothing to confess that Perseverance should not already know, and nothing she says relates directly to him, or to his advances:

Inn. I noe wee're resolued each shall see
 What's don, that's duety which word wee'le bee
 For sadness Earth I hate, should bee my graue
 But passions and cares I'le swim in, to the waue
 Of happines, then thoughts doe clipp
 And chalke the way, to bringe mee to a shipp
 Which will contint mee when all Waters see
 For then shall thinke the Sea is condenst mee. (69)

Her preoccupation with nautical images is very Petrarchan, but unlike many Petrarchan ladies, Innocence is singing her woe rather than responding to someone else's. A dual interest is at work in the passage. She reaches out to greater emotions than the darker ones that persist in her mind at the moment. Yet unhappiness is the overriding presence in her speech. In a pastoral sense, the ship invokes images of travel and homecoming.³⁰ As a scene written by two Royalist women separated from loved ones by war, the image cannot help but remind the authors' original audience of the English Civil War. Cavendish and Brackley placed the circumstances of their era within a longstanding pastoral tradition, one that their original coterie readers would have understood.

Innocence's speech humbles Perseverance, though it does not silence him. For the first time, the two appear to be speaking the same language. He answers her invocation of Petrarchism with his own: "The sad conteynnance of your Teares / Allready makes mee Seasick of my feares." The imagery both continues the water symbolism and shows that he has heard her and the impact of her duty and emotion

³⁰ Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction*, 31.

(70). Gone is the pretense that she is supposed to speak without his response. At the same time, if there is to be a winner of their argument, it is she, since he comes away from the discussion convinced her melancholy, seclusion, and constancy are not something he can control.

Once again, a figure standing for the aristocratic woman possesses the authority to play an influential role. The character exalts both noblewomen, generally, and women of the Cavendish family, specifically.

Another shepherd and shepherdess engage in their own debate and dialogue over silence, speech, and pastoral gender roles. Vertue busies herself with the task of telling Conceit that he should not have spoken. Like Innocence, Vertue is preoccupied with what type of role is appropriate for a shepherd. She does not just want to be morally correct. She wants to exercise an element of control over the conversation's direction.

Conceit cannot imagine that Vertue's emotions have nothing to do with him:

Con. Since that your greife is tourn'd to loue

You will now sure have thought of mee

For thus to you I euer had

An admiration loue to owne

And so I sent my fate to you

Who I have found sadly alone.

Ver. Why doe you take the confidence to speake

After one forme of Louers rate of weake

When that you see mee mallencholly sitt

Thinkeing onely to milke into my kitt. (71)

Vertue effectively admonishes Conceit for thinking himself a legitimate speaker and denies him any role in determining how she feels or in changing her situation. “Why doe you take the confidence to speake / After one forme of Louers rate of weake” implies that the two have just observed the other pastoral pairs. Vertue does not understand why the failures of the other shepherds have not dissuaded Conceit from pursuing her. She suggests he is arrogant, and is selfishly looking for an opportunity to influence her or gain her recognition. This tone again suggests that the shepherdesses are exercising volition in denying men their attention and refusing their proposals. Vertue’s self-conscious, self-aware attack on Conceit’s speech habits implies a desire to determine herself the appropriate social roles for shepherds. If Vertue is indeed “sadly alone,” she does not think that Conceit should do anything about it.

The passage contains a defense of pastoral activity and a defense of solitude, coupled with yet another love complaint and rejection. Vertue’s insistence that Conceit should not have spoken continues the play’s overall concern with who speaks, and with who should. Here, a female character takes control of speech practices, telling a male character that his views are off the mark.

Conceit is not dissuaded, however. He continues talking, trying to persuade Vertue to pay attention to him and to see things his way:

When that you take the paps of Kine

Tell mee what can your fancy make

Is it a pleasing note or tune

Or are they thus your Preisthood knills

Come let vs walke that wee may heare

The ioy of Loue & thin his feare. (71)

It would probably be going too far to suggest that he degrades her profession, at least in the sense that we mean today. However, he does insult her commitment to caring for the cows, in spite of his role as a shepherd, who therefore must be familiar with the conventions of pastoral life. He is not, in other words, a member of another profession who argues against her activities based on the difference in what they do.³¹ Nonetheless, he imagines she must not take pleasure from her job, itself: he thinks that when she “take[s] the paps of Kine,” she must imagine playing a “pleasing note or tune,” or treating the udders as her “Preisthood knills.” Rather than placing her work within religious light, the lines mock her dedication. In another sense, Conceit comically attacks the convention of the desolate pastoral, effectively saying, Vertue, you cannot possibly enjoy being this miserable. The desire to take her away accentuates the conflict in their values. As he concludes with, “Come let vs walke that wee may heare / The ioy of Loue & thin his feare,” he offers her an entirely different life than she currently chooses to live.

Vertue turns the conversation around, however. She intends to find positive emotion in absorbing herself in the work of a shepherdess. Instead of seeing a shepherd’s work as riddled with poetic desolation, she sees it as salvation:

Noe my remorse shalbee the gentle Spring

Where sweetely I may heare the Birdes to singe

³¹ For a description of arguments between shepherds and other pastoral figures, see Cullen, *Spenser, Marvell, and Renaissance Pastoral*, 187.

Which makes my fancy thoughts truly to thinke

I shall noe more with mallencholly winke.

For that I shalbee with my sweeter Sheepe

And thinke which way to make his Lambe to sleepe. (71)

Vertue opts to see her work in the light of her choice and is not persuaded into following Conceit's lead. She will instead "heare the Birdes to singe," making her "remorse. . . the gentle Spring." Since she has the last word, Vertue has effectively silenced Conceit, closing the scene with her argument. A figure standing for female aristocracy has claimed the upper hand, validating the purity of the noblewoman for the upper class audience of the Cavendish coterie.

The discussion between Vertue and Conceit reinforces that the shepherdesses can interpret their own destiny, electing to look at their melancholy in a positive way. The shepherdesses can choose the way they behave and extend beyond the scope of their allegorical names, Chastity, Innocence, and Vertue. The shepherds, however, are Perseverance and Conceit, and neither does much to change, even when admonished.³²

All relationships in the play allude to a happier world, where characters might have behaved differently. Carefree and Chastity indicate that even when marriage has taken place in the pastoral world, it does not work according to the traditional rules—women have established a new way to approach marriage because of changes around them. In this passage, we learn that Chastity has already married but is experiencing a far different marriage than others expected:

³² Here again, I think of Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. All Cavendish and Brackley's pastoral characters consciously role-play with another. The shepherdesses particularly appear to exercise volition, even while being constant.

Carefree. Your garbe makes me I knowe you not

Chastity. Have you already mee forgot

I'm myne wch noe full of greife

And sadness doubts, hath not releif

But if ioyes freinds once would but come.

Accounts I'd make up in mirth's sum. (73)

Carefree has made the curious move of both recognizing Chastity and claiming not to recognize her. After the series of pastoral discussions where shepherds and shepherdesses talk about assuming social roles, and shepherdesses insist on refusing contact with men, Carefree has made a direct reference to Chastity's dress, and to the way she behaves with others. She describes herself as "myne wch [wench]" and thinks he should have remembered the situation: "Have you already mee forgot?" she inquires. More than any of the other dialogues, the one between Chastity and Carefree claims the women have deliberately changed their behavior because of circumstances: Chastity indicates that if "ioyes friends once would but come," she would immediately change.

Chastity's appearance and manner completely perplex Carefree, who sees her behavior as indicative of a paradigm shift:

Car. Now knowe you are a Shee, & sure a wife.

Ch. Yes, and am resolu'd to live a Country life

Since from my freinds I cannot heare

I'm smother'd in sighes, Tortur, feare. (73)

Carefree, like the other shepherds, has not gotten the message the first time. Shepherdesses have adopted new ways of living. Chastity begins to explain her existence as different from the one Carefree expected. He comes close to questioning her identity as a woman, as evidenced by his need to validate his basic assumption: “Now knowe you are a Shee, & sure a wife.” When Chastity answers his statement with an affirmative, she explains she must deal with separation from loved ones.

Carefree does not know how Chastity can manage:

Car. But what's your consolation?

Ch. To keepe pritty sheepe

And to bring upp grass, my Teares shall weepe. (73)

Once again, a shepherdess has espoused the importance of work, this time saying that her grief will nurture the land. Carefree's telling response is one of surprise: “You owne your selfe to bee a wife / And yet you practice not that life” (73). She contradicts him by asserting that she is, indeed, a wife.

Chastity explains more about her pursuits, and the speech gives us a connection between the pastoral and the family of the women writing it:

I'm now become a Bracken, branch & stalke

So sadness then recrutes mee to a walke

Thus ioyed news, did pinsell mee with sweete green

But now not so greife shalbe all my Queen

Yes I'l stay to contynew frish to heare

Each lover thus to contemplate of his feare. (73)

The Bracken is a likely reference to “Brackley,” already Elizabeth’s husband at the time of the work’s writing.³³ Chastity talks about becoming part of a new family and joining herself to it. The character, like Elizabeth Cavendish Brackley, is married and away from her husband, and also in a volatile situation that demands both fidelity and a new way of expressing chastity. Ultimately, these are new obligations for women interacting with their families, and Chastity is expressing her method of seeing to these changes. I would add that her lines—and the shepherd’s response to her—make her a curious relative of Margaret Cavendish’s nuns and the temporary nuns of Luceny and Tattiney in *The Concealed Fancies*. She finds power in illustrating her own chastity and formulating new ways to exercise it. Along with the power to be a nun is the power to temporarily declare a new category—at once married and single.

Chastity asserts that she will “contynew frish to heare / Each lover thus to contemplate of his feare,” (73) placing herself in a leadership role with the unmarried pastoral characters that surround her. She also asserts her religious authority. She describes her relationship to the other shepherdesses by declaring, “I’m their Preist, so they confesse to me, / Untill good news my Habits chang’d to be” (74). The declaration puts a new twist on the religious pastoral by placing a woman in control of observances, and it also overtly indicates a change in social roles by making a wife a priest. Chastity, along with the other women, is largely true to her allegorical name. But she is also adapting to the absence of men by taking on new responsibilities. The lines directly point to a social change of the kind Goffman argues in *The Presentation*

³³ Findlay, ““Upon the World’s Stage,”” 73, offers an extended discussion of this same reading on “Bracken.”

of Self in Everyday Life.³⁴ Chastity performs a new identity before the others. For the Cavendish coterie's audience, Chastity's shift from wife to priest would praise the far ranging capabilities of the aristocratic woman in an extreme situation.

Carefree begs for help from the "shee priest" and the other shepherdesses. The shepherdesses are the authority figures, with the ability to deny the shepherds their requests.³⁵ The three shepherdesses even hold the three shepherds captive. The directions read, "The three sad Sheppardesses goe to a little Table, where they singe this Songe in parts. The Sheppards sadly sitt on the ground. And the Frarer [Friar] wench apart from them. The Shee Preist begins" (77). The three women sing of men who are absent, but more importantly, they do so as a community of voices. They also sit around a table, while men sit on the floor, as if looking up at them and asking for a place at the table alongside them. The suggestion of a "shee preist" implies a greater authority on the part of the women, indicating that they have established their own hierarchy in response to both absent and present males.

Called "Songs Anthome," the dialogic singing begins:

Chastity. When once the presence of a friend is gone

Not knowing when hee'l come or stay how longe

Then greife doth fill it selfe with a reward

That is when passion flowes without regard.

Innocence. His absence makes a Chaos sure of mee

And when each one doth looking looke to see

They speaking say, That I'm not I

³⁴ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

³⁵ Cavendish and Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, 75.

Alas doe not name mee for I desire to dye
Vertue. And I your Sister can not way goe lesse
As by my Face of paleness you may gesse
Then let vs singe in Choros Anthome, pray,
To see our loue'd friends, doth make our day. (77)

The shepherdesses sing their parts with the shepherds largely functioning as an audience. Unlike the stereotypical argument that women be chaste, silent, and obedient, this series of lines makes chastity, innocence, and virtue vocal partners in song. Judith Haber terms one of the earliest pastoral (Theocritus's *Idyll* 7) as having a "song [that] deals with the theme of coming home."³⁶ Cavendish and Brackley's shepherdesses display the same emotion, placing them once again within the legacy of an ancient mode. Their song calls the absent parties home, beckoning them to return everything to order. It also allows the authors to continue adding to, and overturning, pastoral tradition. Alpers has described Virgil as follows: "The poetic limits of Eclogue 1 are determined by the very pastoral convening, the meeting and responsive speech of shepherds, that makes possible its expression of uneasiness and distress in the world of the civil wars."³⁷ Critics of Cavendish and Brackley make excellent points about how the characters and authors mourn absent men in their family.³⁸ To go a step further, we must analyze the conversation between the sister shepherdesses for its political and literary value. Only then can we appropriately

³⁶ Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction*, 31.

³⁷ Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 173.

³⁸ See especially Findlay, "'Upon the World's Stage,'" 73.

address the roles both authors and characters appear to tailor for themselves to address marital norms and war.

The situation is one that in some respects reverses the normal order of things in the late English Renaissance: the women are holding a forum for discussion, while the men repeatedly have been told to remain silent or have been brushed aside. The women have repeatedly spoken of their work obligations, and sometimes of ways they might achieve happiness without the men's consent or interaction. I would not argue that the women are in any way behaving as contemporary feminists, but they are carefully articulating their own situation without the expectation that the present men control their actions.

The speeches invoke a kind of national mourning, as well. As they grieve for absent men, the women are going on without them—a commentary on individual losses and the conditions of war, itself. The pastoral figures who sing their desolation are not too terribly far from the peasants who did the same in the second antemasque. Like those peasants, the shepherdesses exchange a quick series of depressing thoughts:

Chastity. The vniuers mee thinke I see

Innocence. In little moddle is iust wee

Vertue. For wee're as constant to our way

Chastity. As it can bee of night and day

Innocence. Our mallencholly that's the night

Vertue. And when Joy is hope then 'tis daylight

Our Winter is sad thoughts dispare

Innocence. Soe mallencholly sighes makes Ayre
 Vertue. Which whith feares conflicts makes a wind
 Chastity. And after doth raine showers of kind
 Innocence. Our couler hopes of what wee wishe
 Vertue. Can water freize to Ices Dysh.
 Chastity. And passion thoughts of what wee feare
 Innocence. Can thaw Ice Dyshe, though nea're soe deare
 Vertue. Our Springe is onely Joyes of thinke
 Chastity. Yet frosty feare doth make vs shrinke
 Innocence. Our Summer is, if that could bee
 Vertue. Father, Brothers, for to see. (78)

The speeches claim the right to call the absent home, and they exist under the power of Chastity's leadership and guidance. The dialogue is far less occupied with issues of silence and speech than the previous pastoral exchanges; instead, the images are visual and describe the shepherdesses' emotions in relation to the seasons. Vertue previously has made a reference to seasons, and in this passage, the others join her (71). In the final line referring to father and brothers, fiction and reality meet: Cavendish and Brackley's audience would see the Cavendish coterie's nobility and suffering in Vertue's hopes to see family.

The lines are not a simple reflection of Cavendish and Brackley's desire to see their male relatives come safely home. That is certainly a paramount objective, but beyond that, their choice of the pastoral places them and the male relatives within a lofty tradition. Specifically, the efforts of the shepherdesses to call their shepherd

family home rewrite the traditions of Spenser's "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe."³⁹ MacLean and Prescott describe the poem as concerning Raleigh, Spenser, and "their encounter and subsequent journey to the queen's court at Westminster."⁴⁰ They detail critical studies of what they term the poem's "relation to Spenser's struggle to respond appropriately to the conflicting demands of poetry and public life," a common preoccupation of the pastoral.⁴¹ In every sense, *A Pastorall* deals with the same demands, providing noble authors, pastoral characters, and an assortment of lower class individuals who give various Royalist perspectives on separation, war, and despondency. The play conveys the dread of the English Civil War and its consequences. The lines form literature out of disaster and assume a responsibility for the nobility reporting on the situation in the domestic sphere. Likewise, any play about William Cavendish's absence would have to be conscious both of his own literary efforts, and of his inability to return.⁴²

Unlike Spenser, who felt himself to be in exile in Ireland, Cavendish actually was in exile in France. In 1644-45, as his daughters composed *A Pastorall*, he was at the beginning of a long period away from England. He had no court to return to in England, since the court was also in exile. More importantly, the lines of *A Pastorall* chronicle the time before the journey home, not the journey itself. The Petrarchan

³⁹ Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, eds., *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 560-586. In text numeric references to "Colin Clout" refer to line numbers.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 560, n. 1.

⁴¹ Ibid., 560, n. 1.

⁴² See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 61-80.

and pastoral nautical images of *A Pastorall* descend from the tradition of “Colin Clout”:

And is the sea, quoth Coridon, so fearfull?
Fearful much more, quoth he, then hart can fear:
Thousand wyld beasts with deep mouthes gaping direfull
Therin stil wait poor passengers to teare.
Who life doth loath, and longs death to behold,
Before he die, already dead with feare,
And yet would live with heart halfe stonie cold,
Let him to sea, and he shall see it there.
And yet as ghastly dreadfull, as it seemes,
Bold men presuming life for gain to sell,
Dare tempt that gulf, and in those wandring stremes
Seek waies unknowne, waies leading down to hell. (200-211)

A Pastorall depicts such horrible journeys, only from the perspective of women waiting for the poet father’s return. The sisters’ writing in the tradition of pastoral journeys presumes that William Cavendish, too, will return home again. Furthermore, he is an elevated enough figure that the pastoral—in its classical or in its English sense—is a worthwhile forum for discussing that he is indeed somewhere besides England, and that he must, in the tradition of poets and shepherds, return home.

Cavendish and Brackley’s pastoral has no Cynthia/Elizabeth analogue, unlike Spenser’s “Colin Clout,” but it is every bit as preoccupied with the juncture of the

political and the poetic.⁴³ By prioritizing filial love over romantic love, Cavendish and Brackley have placed principal value on the birth family, not the married family or the potential spouse's family. For an English Civil War family, this ironically provides both a power to female authors and characters that exist apart from men, and a power to an absent family and its decisions. Ultimately, instead of denying authors and characters power, this move affirms decision-making within a family clinging to its nobility and to the literary traditions through which they can assert that nobility.

Freedom leads the shepherdesses in a final appeal to absent loved ones to come home. In this passage, there is direct reference to France, where William and Margaret Cavendish were in exile. Only one of the shepherdesses speaks, as Carefree and Freedom alternately provide closing remarks to her and the others:

Fre. If you will dance, wee'l have an Ayr

Shall rhyme as chaste as deuline care

Ch. Our vow will admit no such Toy

For absent freinds gives vs no ioy

Ca. Come Friare wee will have you in

Though I do bow, good nature you'l ne're winn

Fre. How like you now my Country Lasses,

That in Love looks, will bee your Glasses.

Car. Now could we Ladies hav but such a dance

That would but fetch your freinds, now out of Fraunce

You then would well approue of this our mirth

But since not so, you do appear sad Earth.

⁴³ See MacLean and Prescott, eds., *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, 568, n.8, for comparison.

Fre. Come Musick let's have now a Rouwnd,

To prove my Country wenches rightly sound. (87-88)

A shepherdess speaks only once in the last dialogue between shepherds and shepherdesses. In a very real sense, she stands for all shepherdesses—she is Chastity, the leader or spokesperson for the others. From *Carefree* and *Freedom* we see evidence of frivolity, and a direct acknowledgment from *Carefree* that the homeward journey of the shepherdesses' male relatives will bring a change for all parties concerned: he tells them he wants to “hav but such a dance / That would but fetch your friends, now out of Fraunce.” When those friends come home, he asserts the shepherdesses will “approue” of the exuberant behavior, allowing themselves to dance and be merry, and even to marry or behave as married if already married but separated from a husband. Significantly, it is one of the male members of the pastoral who makes this final appeal. Chastity intends to allow no flirtation, no fun, no “Toy.” Rather, she takes for granted the need for a specific reaction. Yet she speaks for the community of shepherdesses as she gives her opinion, and in effect, offers a stern reminder of the way things are. In short, this is a position of power within a powerless situation—it is recognition by female characters—and their female authors—that certain attitudes are the protocol, the norm, and the tradition. But those attitudes are to be enforced, policed, and acknowledged by the women who find themselves apart from loved ones and lost in the circumstances of Civil War.

In her 2000 presentation at “Attending to Women,” Alison Findlay shared her decision to film scenes from *A Pastorall* by envisioning the camera as William

Cavendish's watchful eye.⁴⁴ The directorial decision recorded the women's writings as communication with an absent parent and mentor, an important aspect of the text. Her vision offers an interesting take on the father/daughter relationships and the desire of Cavendish and Brackley to perform with the feeling that William Cavendish can see actions as they are happening. In the next chapter, I argue that the "watchful eye" looks in both directions, both at the older author and back at his daughters. For all William Cavendish's familial and literary influence on his daughters, their pastoral was written while he was in France—several years before the likely composition date of his Antwerp pastoral writings. Each family member's "watchful eye" was on family members' writings, but each was also on the larger literary traditions that shaped family writings on marriage, the noble family, and the social norms of war.

⁴⁴ See Findlay, "Elite Fabrications: Staging Seventeenth-Century Drama by Women."

Chapter 4: (Not) Like Father, Like Daughter(s): William Cavendish's Pastoral Writing

While Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley acknowledge their father at the beginning of *A Pastorall*, their lines hint at a good-natured mentoring relationship that provides them with some freedom and that separates them from their father, even as it asks for his approval:

My Lord

After the deuty, of a Verse,
Give leaue now to rehearse;
A Pastorall then if but giue
Your smile, I sweare I liue,
In happiness; ffor if this may
Your fauour haue, 't will ne're decay
Now let my language speake & say
If you bee pleas'd I haue my pay.

That passionately am

Your Lordships

Most affectionate and obedient

Daughter¹

¹ All quotations from Cavendish and Brackley's play, *A Pastoral*, are from my transcription of their Bodleian MS. See Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16, in *British Literary Manuscripts from the Bodleian Library, Oxford Series one, The English Renaissance, c. 1500-1700* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Microform, 1988-89), 49-50. All numeric references to this collection are to manuscript page numbers.

With “give leave now to rehearse,” Jane Cavendish implies a performance, one before a father who cannot see her because he is in exile. Her words themselves are a theatrical display: she imagines the prior lines in the manuscript as “deuty,” and she uses the dedication to ask her absent father to excuse her and let her act.² As in Goffman’s dramaturgical approach, she chooses a role and plays it before another person, in this case her father. She “give[s] leave now to rehearse” the play he is about to read, implying that her writing itself makes her act before him. This acting gives Cavendish’s words a particular power, even as the request for permission would seem to subordinate her to her father. The deference is something of a formality, since the lines begin *A Pastorall*, a play Cavendish and her sister have already written. In other words, Cavendish is asking her father permission for something she has already done. However, endorsement is indeed of great consequence; she claims that with it, the words will “ne’re decay,” noting either the implications of his approval, or the possibility that he will save the manuscript itself.

Elizabeth Brackley’s dedication adds an additional request for William Cavendish’s approval:

My Lord

This Pastorall could not owne weake

But my intrest which makes mee speake

To begg you’l not condem the best

For thi’ll but chase it, to it rest

² Using the Beinecke manuscript, Betty Travitsky assigns authorship to each poem; I follow her assignments. See Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 71-2.

Where I shall owne the word submit,

Vnto your Judgment of pure witt

Your Lordships most affectionate

and obliged

Daughter

Elizabeth Brackley's poem asks not only for approval, but also for a complete reading of their work. "This Pastorall could not owne weake" likely means "this pastoral could not help but be weak," given the second, third, and fourth lines: "But my intrest which makes me speake / To begg you'l not condem the best / For thi'll but chase it, to the rest." She asks that he forgive the errors and not "condem the best." "Thi'll" presumably refers to the "weak," and with the phrase, "chase it, to the rest," Brackley asks that her father read everything to the end. The tone is deferential, yet when Brackley says she "submit[s]" the text, she actively claims the words and transmission as hers.

The poems share a preoccupation with apologizing and with receiving validation from a specific dedicatee. Dedications of the period were famous for such rhetorical moves, though these dedications show far less political maneuvering than many written in the seventeenth century.³ This difference is largely because of the relationships between the authors and the addressed: they belong to the same family. Critics have a fascination with the literary connections between father and daughters in the Cavendish family, generally arguing the influence of William Cavendish on his

³ For comparison, see Su Fang Ng, "Aemilia Lanyer and the Politics of Praise," *ELH* 67, no. 2 (2000): 433-51.

daughters.⁴ Conversely, I suggest that, while daughters and father wrote within the same literary coterie, they ultimately demonstrated different ideas about gender, marriage, and Royalism.

William Cavendish's own writing further complicates readings of these relationships. While Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley asked for their father's approval of their writing, he also asked for theirs. A poem in Lynn Hulse's edition of William Cavendish's *Dramatic Works* indicates that Cavendish anticipated his daughters would share their opinions of his writing with him:

Sweet Daughters.

To be writt

In my Booke,

& before the

maske booke You knowe, I was nott nice or coye,--

Butt made a Countrie maske, a Christmas toye,--

Att your desiers;, Butt I did nott Looke—

You woulde recorde my follies In a Booke. . . .⁵

⁴ For different perspectives on William Cavendish's mentoring of his daughters, see S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds., *The Concealed Fancies*, by Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, in *Renaissance Drama by Women* (London: Routledge, 1996), 127-54; Margaret J.M. Ezell, "'To be your daughter in your pen': The Social Function of Literature in the Writings of Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish," *Huntington Library Quarterly: A Journal for the History and Interpretation of English and American Civilization* 51, no. 4 (1988): 281-96; Alison Findlay, "'Upon the World's Stage': The Civil War and Interregnum," in *Women and Dramatic Production, 1570-1700*, eds. Alison Findlay, Gweno Williams, and Stephanie J. Hodgson-Wright (Harlow, England: Longman, 2000), 68-94; Nathan Comfort Starr, ed., *The Concealed Fancies: A Play by Lady Jane Cavendish and Lady Elizabeth Brackley*, *PMLA* 46 (1931): 802-38; Dorothy Stephens, "'Who can those vast imaginations feed?': *The Concealed Fancies* and the price of hunger," in *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 143-77; and Betty Travitsky, "Early Years: Elizabeth Cavendish, #3 Bodleian MS. Rawl. Poet. 16 and Beinecke MS Osborn b. 233," in *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 52-81.

The quotation has some qualities of the apologetic dedication as it appeared throughout the Late English Renaissance and English Civil War period: William Cavendish acknowledges mistakes in the play, or “follies,” while also offering the play to the people who requested it, his daughters. The lines indicate that scholars should be looking not at William Cavendish’s influence on his children, but rather at the literary exchange between the father and daughters. Cavendish’s dedication illustrates that he anticipated his daughters’ reaction, or in fact had already received it. The lines indicate that, while William Cavendish provided the occasion for some of his daughters’ writing, they provided the occasion for some of his. Such lines assert a dialogue between family members, not the daughters’ constant deference to him or a desire only to write for his approval. The existence of this dedication affirms a mutual literary relationship, one involving a coterie of family members exploring their own creative writing together.

This literary exchange in the Cavendish coterie does not imply that the daughters imitated their father’s literary style or social ideals, or that he imitated theirs. There are crucial differences between the writings of William Cavendish and that of his daughters. The elder Cavendish provides a very traditional look at women’s community, women’s responses to marriage, and representations of aristocrats in pastorals. His work includes political content but of a kind different from that reflected in his daughters’ manuscript. His work helps illustrate the social context in which the Royalist family was writing, even as it shows that his mentoring

⁵ Lynn Hulse, ed., *Dramatic Works*, by William Cavendish, Published for the Malone Society (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), x. For other readings of this passage, see Ezell, ““To be your daughter,”” 294, and Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England*, 29-30.

of his daughters did not result in their producing work designed strictly to appeal to his values or sensibility.

Father and daughters shared the Royalist discourse of the English Civil War and post-Civil War years. Critics assert that Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's *The Concealed Fancies* and *A Pastorall* were products of the 1640s, while Lynn Hulse dates William Cavendish's "Songes for a Pastorall," "A Prologe thatt shoulde haue been spoken before an Intended Pastorall att Antwerpe," and "Parte off a Pastorall," as "post-1644," or more specifically, "written between Newcastle's flight into exile and the early years of the Restoration."⁶ Katie Whitaker notes that William Cavendish went into exile in France in 1644 and that William and Margaret Cavendish were in Antwerp for the first time in 1648.⁷ These dates make it necessary in particular to assign "A Prologe" a composition date later than that of the poems and plays in Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's manuscripts, because of its direct reference to Antwerp. The dates make it likely that "Songes" and "Parte of a Pastorall" are later, as well, since Cavendish's editor argues a close connection between the three William Cavendish works, asserting that they each "may be connected with the same Antwerp entertainment."⁸ Whitaker suggests an Antwerp performance of William Cavendish's pastoral drama, as well, arguing that "pastorals

⁶ Hulse, ed., *Dramatic Works*, xiv.

⁷ Katie Whitaker, *Mad Madge: The Extraordinary Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, the First Woman to Live by Her Pen* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 69, 107.

⁸ Hulse, ed., *Dramatic Works*, xv.

and masques in the style of prewar court culture—now surviving only in fragments—were intended as after-dinner entertainments for guests at the Rubens House.”⁹

William Cavendish’s years in Antwerp consisted both of mourning and of celebration. Margaret Cavendish answered the criticism of her husband’s decision to go into exile by writing pages to exalt his military career, following them with the assertion that his successes would “save him blameless from what otherwise would be laid to his charge.”¹⁰ Later she stated, “My Lord was sixteen years in banishment, and hath lost and suffered most of any subject, that suffered either by war, or other ways, except those that lost their lives. . . .”¹¹ Several months after hearing of the king’s execution, Cavendish learned that “he himself had been sentenced to death in absence.”¹² Within this largely negative context, Cavendish’s home in Antwerp was a busy place, frequented by guests from all over. Geoffrey Trease indicates the importance of these visits: “Besides his English visitors, people came from France and Spain, Germany, Poland, Sweden and elsewhere. Charles II came, as did the Duke of Oldenburg and the Prince of East Friesland, who both presented horses to their host. Christina came too, fresh from her abdication.”¹³ Royalty and defunct royalty were everywhere, and a theatrical event at his home would have been filled

⁹ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 202.

¹⁰ C.H. Firth, ed., *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle to which is Added the True Relation of My Birth Breeding and Life*, by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, 2 ed. (London: George Routledge and Sons, n.d.), 92.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹² Geoffrey Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier: William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1979), 166.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 174.

with disgruntled nobility, seeking community and celebrating themselves. The joint context of exile and entertainment explains much of the political content of his pastoral writings. It also explains how he could have operated with a much different context from his daughters, but could have shared with them the emotions of Royalists trying to preserve the concept of home.

William Cavendish may have composed his writings in a home away from home, amid guests from all over Europe, but the questions his pastorals ask directly address the responsibilities of an English Royalist's house, anywhere. "A Prologe thatt shoulde haue been spoken before an Intended Pastorall att Antwerpe" conveys his emphatic objection to prohibitions against theatrical performance, and the poem creates a context both for household performance by Royalists and for the roles played by Royalists in their new social circumstances, away from England and from power. "Songes for a Pastorall" offers William Cavendish's interpretation of pastoral love, while "Parte off a Pastorall" illustrates his interaction with earlier pastoral tradition and his creation of a pastoral to reflect his contemporaries' lives.

Cavendish's characterizations of courtship and marriage connect to Robert Merton's theories on marriage in a different way from his daughters' plays, and a reading of him within Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach ultimately diverges from Jane and Elizabeth, as well. In "Parte of a Pastorall," the elder Cavendish endorses marriage as an institution where Royalists perform happiness itself, embracing life and plentitude, rather than dejection and loss. While he and his daughters all sought to redetermine the position of women in marriage, Cavendish offers an answer that redefines the Royalist household by depicting its participants in a pastoral rebirth: he

comically rewrites pastoral traditions to create a particularly luscious happy ending. He does not comment on the Restoration of the monarchy in England, but he does comment on the Restoration of the Royalists' joy by creating a play that celebrates the nobility. Like his daughters' *The Concealed Fancies*, the play alludes to a return to order. Unlike his daughters' *A Pastorall*, Cavendish's play supplies optimism in its conclusion. Ultimately, Cavendish seeks to rebuild the Royalist house, through performance, if nothing else. The questions he shares with his daughters solidify their position in a family literary coterie, though his answers and geography separate the family.

I.

William Cavendish is not apolitical in his writing, despite being political in a different way from his daughters. A short poem entitled "A Prologe thatt shoulde haue been spoken before an Intended Pastorall att Antwerpe" addresses the English Civil War and its social consequences, through the means of nostalgia. Nigel Smith terms the pastoral of the era, while following the Golden Age shepherds' tradition, to be a specifically Royalist form that represented "not so much class struggle as the very immediate fact of regicide, recast as royal sacrifice, as a means of registering a new age."¹⁴ I argue that "A Prologe," while not specifically commenting on regicide, does attempt to define a "new age." Alongside William Cavendish's literary dedication to his daughters and their dedications to him, the "Prologe" helps explain how the Cavendish family wrote for a specific audience. The work also provides an

¹⁴ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 320-21.

introduction to William Cavendish as a member of the family coterie that included his daughters, Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley.

The very title of the piece suggests some controversy.¹⁵ The text itself does not indicate what “shoulde haue been spoken” actually means. The pastoral that Cavendish mentions is also called “an Intended Pastorall,” a phrase that raises some obvious questions. One might ask, was the poem not spoken, but written after a performance had already occurred, or was the pastoral itself never performed, but should have been? Is it possible that Cavendish is asserting a related performance was intended as a pastoral, but might have been taken to be something else? If performed, the pastoral would have had multiple audiences: those in attendance in Antwerp, and those reading the text afterwards.

Both the mention of Antwerp and the possibility of a “household performance” create an historical context for the poem. Whether the poem and the pastoral were or were not performed, the attachment of “Antwerp” to the writing is a significant one. Since William Cavendish lived in exile in Antwerp from 1648 to 1663, the poem reminds readers of his separation from his home country, England.¹⁶ That separation provides a context for Cavendish’s writing. The poem also raises some large questions about what we call “household performance.” At times, contemporary critics have wanted to view the so-called “household performance” as an inferior form, often represented in the work of female writers of the early modern

¹⁵ Hulse, *Dramatic Works*, xiv-xvi, gives historical background into works composed during this period.

¹⁶ Katie Whitaker indicates that Margaret and William Cavendish did not move their home back to England until fifteen years had passed, though William left earlier to try to obtain a position with the new king once Restoration occurred in 1660. See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 227-29.

period. More recent critics have acknowledged that men also participated in theatre that was not public.¹⁷ In this poem, William Cavendish gives us a view of some problems associated with performance, and they are anything but gendered. Instead, they hint at a class specific preoccupation with performance and prohibitions against it, a perspective Nigel Smith argues to be a significant part of the English Civil War pastoral.¹⁸ Cavendish mentions problems of a particular era, and he notes the efforts of the English Royalists to create a performance for one another away from their homeland.

Cavendish focuses both on his poor finances and his desire to captivate his audience in spite of his economic woe.¹⁹ The first half of his first stanza is an invitation to see the speaker, perhaps Cavendish himself, as someone who has fallen on hard times:

Since on vss, are the times, moste fatall Curses,
Nott feaste your taste, Itt is beyonde our Purses,
Butt doe Inuite you, & before you Rise,
Weel feaste your vnderstandinges, Eares, & Eyes,
Your Ladye Snowe white breasts, though frozen weare,
Thawe them, & Each Eye drop a louing Teare. . . . (4-9)

Like his daughter before him, William Cavendish uses the word “curses” to describe the Royalist situation. Instead of wishing a curse on enemies, he uses the

¹⁷ See Findlay, ““Upon the World’s Stage,”” 81.

¹⁸ See footnote 14.

¹⁹ According to Katie Whitaker, his living conditions in exile were downwardly mobile. She says, “The entire house [in Antwerp] would have fitted into a single wing of William’s residences at Welbeck and Bolsover.” See *Mad Madge*, 109.

term to explain why the Royalist exiles are suffering from downward mobility. The speaker indicates that there is not money for a lavish feast. “Butt doe Inuite you” has the implied subject “we,” meaning that the household has no money but has managed to invite company over, anyway. The feast that will occur will be one of knowledge and of the senses, reaching the “vunderstandings, Eares, & Eyes”; in other words, while there are no riches to share, the riches of entertainment will be presented to the guests for their enjoyment. Cavendish uses the Petrarchan imagery of frozen women and frozen breasts to make his audience and his subject one and the same. In doing so, he transforms the women of the audience into the Petrarchan beloved, exalting them with his poetry, and placing them within a longstanding Renaissance poetic tradition. Though the image of the women as “frozen” would seem an insult, Cavendish gives the women and his poetry a great deal of power with this reference. When he uses Petrarchan imagery to describe the women, he makes them larger and greater than their current economic situation would suggest. When he boasts that the performance can “thawe them,” he is asserting the power of poetry to lift the spirits of the audience and move the emotions of the “frozen” women. He is also asserting his own poetic ability to woo the audience and transform their mood. This ability makes him not only a successful host, but also a successful Petrarchan lover, since it places him in the role of the wooer who successfully moves women. By claiming Petrarchan tradition, Cavendish comforts the audience and himself: while at the moment they have no money and no position, they want to be recognized as members of an elite group.

Music is a powerful part of what will lift the audience from their despair and remind them of their connection to high art and literature. The speaker incorporates it into his discussion of Petrarchan imagery:

Att leaste softe smothringe Sighs, wee mean to Rayse,
With Amorus speeches, & sweet Roundelayes,
For musick hath such power youle haue no choyse,
Mouinge all pations, with her warblinge voyse,
Ande softe touch't stringe, Harmoniuslye a Longe,
Takinge your Hartes all Prisnors In a Songe,
Ande to your selues shall softlye whispringe Saye,
Though Came nott louers, louers wente a waye. (10-17)

This pastoral is one with accompanying music; the speaker expects the verse and music to move and transform its listeners. Again there are Petrarchan references; the meter and music will take hearts prisoner, a militaristic image frequently used throughout Petrarchan and post-Petrarchan verse. The speaker also boasts that the poetry and musical performance will draw people together who were not previously united. This boast gives the performance a great degree of power; the speaker is advertising the event as one that could change an audience member's life, or at least reinforce the audience's belief in Royalists as lovers, with a higher social and cultural place than their Puritan critics.

Perhaps because of this boast, the speaker shifts to address people who would attack this form of entertainment. He begins to defend performance itself, addressing

criticism of the theatre by referring to both Royalists and Puritans who speak against performance:

Butt whatt nowe Iff sum supersilius Sir,
Doth shake his Emptye Heade, though light as fir,
Or feathers Is within, sayes these are Crimes,
To sporte In our Condition, & sad Times,
But to bee foxte In priuate, which hee Tries,
Ande a cheape Hoore, with Grauetye Is wise,
Vncontionable fooles, our right by Birth,
We'ue loste, shoulde wee loose too our harmless mirth,
Ande their starchte oute sides, pities, & doth scorne. . . . (18-26)

Cavendish notes that some Royalists attending the event are against performance. All English guests would have had political reasons for being away from home. Cavendish had first gone into exile after losing the battle of Marston Moor.²⁰ Royalists had lost property and sometimes had been executed for their political views. No one in the audience would have had the same prospects as he or she had earlier in life.²¹ Cavendish acknowledges the group for its joint “Condition, & sad Times,” but then insists that they should not allow the political climate to change them (21). Losses have removed their “right by Birth,” as Cavendish terms it, but they will lose everything if they abandon their “harmless mirth” (24-25). They should not let bad times get the better of them; if they refuse to have fun because

²⁰ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 67-69.

²¹ See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 110, for a description of some legal and financial consequences of Royalism.

times are hard, they have lowered themselves to the level of those with “starchte oute sides,” the Puritans (26).

As he admonishes Royalist criticism of performance, he also addresses all Royalists as a collective who must remain united. By using “we” (in lines 25 and 27), he includes himself in the group that he is addressing, uniting all audience members and attempting to raise the spirits of everyone present with his argument as to how they should all behave. The audience is encouraged to honor an aristocratic heritage by first claiming economic loss, and then by claiming a sense of entitlement to enjoy theatre as a luxury of their class:

Weer aboue them, those wreches, wee dispise,
That thinkes by findinge faulte, to bee thought wise,
Maye nott sum Emulators thinke Itt fitt,
That are pretenders to stronge lines, & witt,
With scornfull smiles to Dam all theye doe heare,
Or with a softer whispered, wittles Geer
Thatts dead as soone as Borne, poore Soles so Lowe,
Thatt barks like Currs, att those they doe nott knowe. (27-34)

Cavendish shifts from talking about Royalists to talking about the Puritans he has referred to in previous lines. This passage also attacks the Puritans’ intelligence, or their “wittles Geer” (32). Like dogs, the Puritans condemn (bark at) what they have never experienced (what they do not know) (34). These critics do not have an understanding of the people whom they attack or of the principles that they attack, either one. As such, they are low and ignorant, and incapable of anything better.

The poem responds to more than ostracized social enemies. Moving away from the more political variety of criticism, Cavendish's last few lines first refute criticism of the way the actors play their parts and then endorse the idea that the audience is welcomed and served by the production. The example he uses is one that specifically refers to the staging of a pastoral. He says the critics of staging

Will vrge their malise further to with spight,
Sayenge sum sheaperds buskin was nott right,
Butt stud a wrye, sum Ribun loose vntide
Or that a pin did faule frome our fayre Bride,
These are shrode Crimes, butt none off these wee feare,
Our skies are cleer heer In our hemispheare,
Ande you are Iuste, then sensure less or more,
Tis giuen you, payde nothinge att our Dore,
Ande since such payns we'ue taken to presente-you
Wee are as Confidente, for to Contente-you,

finis. (35-45)

The criticism he mentions here seems motivated less by the desire to stop all staging than by the desire to address how such staging is done. While there is an acknowledgment of this third type of criticism, the language suggesting that listeners "are Iuste," [just] is both a compliment to the audience and also a rhetorical strategy to make them less likely to actively engage in negative commentary about what they are to see.

The final statements also return economic concerns to the audience's attention. While reminding the audience that they have not paid to see the production, the speaker also implies that the performers and the household are paying the audience a service. The lines suggest the nobility or position of those listening, while selling the performance to the audience as one that they did not have to finance. Both the performers and the audience are noble, household performance being an art form of the elite; however, both the performers and the audience have no money. William Cavendish had legendary credit problems, and the situation of other nobility was similar.²² There is also a hint of escape in this performance, since the speaker's mention of "skies [which] are cleer heer In our hemispheare," implies that in this household, watching this performance, there are no worries—even if there are tremendous worries back at home in England. The hosts will take care of everything, which helps to establish the solidarity of performer and audience, and of audience members to one another.

As earlier stated, Lynn Hulse dates "A Prologe" anywhere from 1645 to the early 1660s, and I argue the poem was more than likely a pre-1660 work. At the early end of possible composition dates were one year free of war (1645) followed by six to nine months of the second English Civil War and eleven years of the Interregnum, first under Oliver Cromwell, and then briefly under Richard Cromwell.²³ All the periods in which the poem may have been composed were complicated times for Cavendish and other Royalists living in exile because during

²² See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 134-135, for one example.

²³ For more information on this time period, see Smith and Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1980).

these dates the Royalists would have found their assets to be uncertain or nonexistent. Their properties were often seized, and some Royalists were in exile for reasons of personal safety.²⁴ Any attempt to establish clear skies was undoubtedly a welcome one, and Cavendish's attempt to make the performance a happy one would have been well received, especially since all his attempts to make it happy compliment Royalists and remind them of their better days. Like his daughters a few years earlier, William Cavendish is trying to make sense of the Royalist home and its responsibilities in a volatile political climate.

The poem is political because it raised questions of staging and performance at a time when people questioned what to do with both. In England, the public theatres had closed in 1642, though household performances continued. Cavendish represents this Antwerp pastoral as a household performance, one proclaiming both the importance of theatre and the importance of English nobility. Because his poem is set up as a possible presentation piece or prologue, it asserts either Cavendish or another household member as its speaker. It addresses the politics involved in criticizing or censuring a performance, and it also implies difficulties with people who are not opposed to performance, but who feel the times do not warrant such merriment and display. It addresses the possible criticism of those who would be opposed to this production, alongside the criticism of those who would offer a criticism of staging plays, in general. By mentioning the cost of performance, and by implying that the audience was gathered through invitation only, the poem also implies the select nature of both theatrical participants in the household and those

²⁴ See note 21.

who attend the performance. This tactic makes obvious the political ramifications of a household performance for a gathering of nobility. The only major act of apology to the audience in this prologue is one that acknowledges that the hosts do not have as much money as they once did. By the end of the poem, however, it becomes increasingly evident that the speaker seeks to endorse the idea that both hosts and audience members are still noble. The poem suggests that they claim their own nobility by their celebration of it. The production of a pastoral is intended not only for a relatively private audience, but also as a demonstration of the public importance of those present. Cavendish intends the performance to help the audience overcome its poverty and exalt their value of theatrical performance. The poem references two types of performance: the performance of the pastoral, and the performance of the audience members, who are performing their roles as members of the nobility. "A Prologue" introduces the pastoral performance, telling the audience of the "payns. . . taken to presente-you"(43). The contrast between the audience and the non-audience member illustrates the nobility's performance. The audience is presumed to understand "Amorous speeches, and sweet Roundelayes," while they sit in sharp contrast to "those wrechcs, wee dispise," (11,27), the Puritans who criticize the Royalists' appreciation for theatre. By reminding themselves of this difference between themselves and the Puritans, the audience members reinforce their appreciation for the theatre, as well as their need to behave continually as the social superior to those they contrast.

Both types are in keeping with Erving Goffman's theories that describe public interaction as a form of performance. The prologue implies what Goffman would

term “audience segregation,” where the “individual ensures that those before whom he plays one of his parts will not be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting.”²⁵ In a setting of Royalist exiles, both the performance and the actors’ or hosts’ behavior would evoke the shared values of Royalists away from home. Those actions would not be the same as those conducted away from other Royalists; an audience member would be familiar with negotiating a new role on the basis of his or her exile, and his or her communication with people at home and in Antwerp. The audience would share the desire to recapture Royalism under the terms of the Royalists themselves.

Goffman also argues that “performers tend to foster the impression that their current performance of their routine and their relationship to their current audience have something special and unique about them.”²⁶ The prologue implies that audience members share Royalism and appreciation of theatre as “special and unique” qualities, and that they share the hope of having a peaceful performance, different from their everyday life and concerns. I argue that by conducting a theatrical gathering, the Royalists seek to capture in theatre, and recapture in their social interactions, a Royalism that they can control and perform as they see fit.

The prologue also provides a context for the writing of both William Cavendish his daughters. All family members are preoccupied with asserting the noble spirit, and the dignity of carrying on. His poem gives a commentary on what

²⁵ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 49.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

is—or should be—said in household performance, and of what is—or could be—said to critics of such displays.

II.

William Cavendish's pastoral characters deny sexual and marital union in a more graphic and more playful way than the characters in his daughters' pastoral writing. However, in very martial times, both father and daughters represent a conflict over what is to be done about marital decisions, even as father and daughters do not represent women as having the same role in determining how those decisions will be made.

In his short collection, "Songes for a Pastorall," William Cavendish presents a different view of romance than his daughters. In the songs, he never mentions the English Civil War, making its female speaker preoccupied with love, but not with creating a larger social and political context for that love. If anything, she simply regrets loving and sees it as the source of all that has gone wrong in her life. She never actually addresses marriage as an institution, focusing instead on the mistakes she has made in love.

The first song in William Cavendish's "Songes for a Pastorall" is sung by a shepherdess. In it, the shepherdess briefly recounts her loss of innocence. She begins by looking back on an earlier, simpler time:

When was a simple Sheapherdes,
Whatt loue was then I had no Gess,
Butt all my thoughts, was free as Ayre,
Sunge rurall Songes, & had no Care,

Our Iollye sportes, was nott by chanse,

Ande to the louder Pipe woulde Danse. . . (3-8)

She portrays herself as having once been innocent and playful. Still, like Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's shepherdess, she was a girl with responsibilities:

On worke a dayes, did milke our kine,

On festiualls, with naprye-fine,

As Inosente, as was my Birth,

Ande tripte so lightlye, on the Earth,

soe nimble, Agill, Eurye Lim, e

Nott dansinge, butt I'th Ayre to swim, e. . . (9-14)

She indicates that she did what she was supposed to, and that she possessed qualities important to her station. She was young and strong, or "nimble" and "Agill" in "Eurye Lim" [limb]. Her very life was one of ease and playfulness, even though she describes a life of work. She also represents a common trope: she is a diligent shepherdess, reflecting on the past.

The next stanza provides a turn. Initially, the shepherdess provides no explanation for this new despondency:

Ande nowe like Colde, dull Earth her molde,

My bloud shrunke vpp, withirde, & Colde,

Sick, languishinge, with pantinge breath,

Pale & Consumde to bones, like Death,

With sad complaints, I still Condole,

Poseste with black Dispayre, my Sole. . . (15-20)

Like his daughters' shepherdesses, and like many pastoral figures of the generation before, this shepherdess is depressed and alone, struck with a melodramatic melancholy.

Unlike the shepherdesses created by his daughters, William Cavendish's shepherdess claims love as the main root of her problems. She also claims her gender's naivete is the reason why she cannot piece everything together:

Tis loue, Loue Is nott this, or that,
Oh then Itt Is, I knowe not whatt,
Sumthinge Itt Is, that Is my wowe,
Butt wee poore mortals, doe nott knowe,
A Deyetye thatt troubles sende,
Which maydens, Can nott Comprehende. (21-26)

She claims a lack of understanding of love, and also a lack of knowledge about Cupid, its deity. She claims that misunderstanding is perplexing to all humans, but she blames her femaleness for her ultimate problem, since she asserts that "maydens, Can nott Comprehende" the "troubles" sent by Cupid (26,25). Unlike the shepherdesses of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's work, she is unable to control her impulses, in spite of having acted appropriately to her station in both her work and leisure habits prior to this melancholy. She also does not appear to have larger concerns for the world.

The father's pastoral lacks the female community included in Cavendish and Brackley's plays, and he often uses lengthy descriptions of a shepherdess as a Petrarchan lady who ultimately is won by a pleading shepherd. The dramatic scenes

included in “Parte off a Pastorall” and his poems do not overtly involve the concerns with contemporary politics that permeate his daughters’ work. Furthermore, the shepherdess denies the shepherd for less loaded reasons than those of the shepherdesses in his daughters’ play. Rather than providing the shepherdess with a war as a reason for her independent activities, William Cavendish makes her a coy and reluctant woman when wooed—and a vocal respondent to a shepherd’s flirtation. By noting the difference between the women in his pastoral and his daughters’ pastoral, we can begin to see his daughters’ work as more complicated than a dutiful literary effort to be forwarded to their father. Examining William Cavendish’s pastoral can also help connect the family’s literary contributions to much earlier examinations of the Petrarchan lady or pastoral shepherdess and to the nostalgia cited by Anne Barton and Nick Rowe as a part of William Cavendish’s canon and the culture of English Civil War era Royalists.²⁷ Cavendish’s pastoral can help us ultimately to see the Petrarchan lady/pastoral shepherdess as political tropes for the Cavendish family, even when he does not specifically mention the war or his social circumstances.

III.

In fragmented drama, “Parte of a Pastorall,” Cavendish does not mention any political events of the time and writes a story with few characters who contribute to the action. He creates one love story, that of Coridon and Flora, both conventionally named. The poem includes only one other spoken part, that of an older shepherd. He

²⁷ Anne Barton, “Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia,” *ELH* 48, no. 4 (1981): 706-31; Nick Rowe, ““My Best Patron”: William Cavendish and Jonson’s Caroline Dramas,” *Seventeenth Century* 9, no. 2 (1994): 197-212.

represents the larger pastoral community, and at no time do these shepherds speak for themselves. Flora only refers to a “grandame” who opposes her relationship with Coridon. While the grandame’s opinions are represented, she never speaks, and her ideas about Flora’s marriage are abandoned.

This small number of characters has a profound effect on how Cavendish represents marriage. He silences the one faction who opposes marriage, placing the responsibility for making the decision of who can and cannot marry on an elderly shepherd and the larger community. In Robert Merton’s terms, this social sanctioning of marriage results in what he labels “agathogamy,” or “marriage which conforms to the norms governing selection of a spouse.”²⁸ Cavendish does not explain the role of the one dissident character, the grandmother, effectively allowing the majority to make the decision, and removing the possibility of more than one outcome. Nonetheless, permitting Flora to quote her grandmother establishes that there is a less normative array of options than those that characters actually exercise.

Cavendish has his characters perform courtship and marriage in a manner that his Royalist audience can appreciate. Evoking the pastoral would also invoke nostalgia for Royalists’ happier times, especially the period when Queen Henrietta Maria’s court frequently enjoyed neo-Platonic pastorals as entertainment.²⁹ As his characters appear before the audience, they act, reenact, invent, and reinvent pastoral and Petrarchan tradition, comically alluding to earlier pastoral writing and to

²⁸ Robert K. Merton, “Intermarriage and the Social Structure,” in *Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), 220.

²⁹ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford note, “Queen Henrietta Maria built up a musical establishment, and enjoyed masques and dancing. Her court theatricals were significant beyond the moment of performance, for her participation aroused great contemporary ire.” See Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 376.

Shakespeare. Cavendish depends on having an audience familiar with such traditions and capable of seeing the possible ironies involved in writing it in new ways. He also depends on an audience who will understand the roles that his female lead adopts as she flirts with the idea of declining a love interest. Unlike his daughters, he provides no community in which Flora can discuss what she is doing. However, he, too, challenges marriage norms in English Civil War society, primarily by creating characters who perform flirtation in newly designed ways. Flora reflects power not by offering a serious denial of marriage but by performing its possible rejection in a way that offers the Royalist audience something new with which to define themselves culturally.

An author of a major study covering different types of pastoral tradition and the shifts in pastoral writing from one time period to another, Paul Alpers argues that “the figure of the shepherd comes to represent the situation of the Elizabethan poet, courtier, and churchman.”³⁰ Cavendish engages with this tradition by refashioning it to reflect the English Civil War era. As I note elsewhere, Tanya Wood has argued that Cavendish sought to place his wife on a par with Spenser and other literary greats. Alpers asserts that *The Shepheardes Calendar* was “famous in its time and held its place in literary history as a display piece, showing (in a spirit not foreign to pastoral emulation) that English poetry could match that of the Continental vernaculars.”³¹ I argue that Cavendish’s pastoral not only invokes the nostalgia that Barton and Rowe imply to be a part of his work, but that its household performance is

³⁰ Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 181.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

his own “display piece,” showing foreigners and exiles an English Royalism that claims multiple literary traditions as its own. When he repeatedly alludes to Shakespeare, for instance, he does not refer to the Shakespearean works that Alpers would regard as Shakespearean pastorals.³² Instead, he alludes to the most absurdly unpastoral plays—*Antony and Cleopatra*, for one. In doing so, he depends on an audience to share his sense of humor and his sense of literature, and to share his appreciation for a female and male character who play some of the most dramatic roles in English literature in a comedic way, in the process rewriting the great love affairs and marriages of English literature for an entirely new, privileged audience.

William Cavendish’s “Parte of a Pastoral” provides a lengthy blazon and counterblazon, both placing the play’s romance within pastoral and Petrarchan traditions:

Sweet Flora,
With golden oreniges, thy temples Rounde,
With their perpetuall, green leaues, shall bee Crounde,
And sweeter Iesamonde, a boutte thy waste,
In girdlinge thee, with sweets, thus bee Imbraste,
The asure violets, strewinge, like Maye,
Heer on they neck, pewre as the milkeye waye,
Ande the Cloue Gilleye flowrs, plaste on Each breaste,
--More Aromatick, then the Phenixe Neste,
Sweete smellinge roses to adorne thy feet,

³² Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 185-222.

Which by thy wearinge, makes them much more sweet,
 Pinkes, Cowslips, prim-roses, nott withered Bee,
 Though their pull'de vpp, iff trode on, butt by thee,
 For when thou walkste off them, theye Can nott fade,
 Butt giues newe Birthes, naye flowers thus are made. (5-20)

In keeping with his role as a shepherd, Coridon's entire blazon involves flowers—better known to the common man than the items often catalogued in the blazons of the noble woman.³³ Kim Hall has described such blazons as comparing the elite women to various riches of the world.³⁴ Unlike those Petrarchan blazons, Coridon's implies Flora's temples, waist, neck, breasts, and feet have the qualities of the natural items mentioned with them. He wants to clothe her in the garments of nature. Her name, of course, is Flora, for the goddess of spring—implying perhaps an innate and definite connection to the items he has listed. He also makes her prolific: a creator of nature as well as an actor within it. The tone of this blazon is light; there is no talk of the dark forces in the world. Instead, Flora answers Coridon. If there is anything revolutionary about her speech, it is that she offers a kind of counter-blazon that is highly sexual:

Crowne thee with Clusterde Grapes, on twininge vine,
 Swelde till theye burste, distillinge sweeter wine,
 Ande fresher Bowes, for Eache hande will presente-thee,

³³ See Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 87, for discussion of a pastoral blazon.

³⁴ For discussion of post-Petrarchan blazon in Spenser's *Amoretti*, see Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995), 81-82.

With Globe like Aples, ouall Peares Contente-thee,
The Blushing Aprecott, & wolleye Peache,
In a freshe maunde, Ile offer to thy Reache,
Ande mayden Strawberries, with cherries Ripe,
An Emble off my selfe, A virgins Tipe,
For all a Mayds discourse, & Eurye Dreame,
Should bee butt cherries, strawberries, & Creame. (20-29)

She is offering him all the fruits of highest sexual connotation, even as her closing line is both innocent and suggestive at the same time. She claims a certain sweet innocence for women, suggesting that few things should be on their minds. Yet the close of her speech indicates that one of her central preoccupations is the more complicated offering of herself, or “an emble” therein. In that reading, “cherries, strawberries, & Creame” are a much more complicated preoccupation for a shepherdess than the light tone appears to suggest. She is also offering him the feast that the indebted Royalists cannot afford.

The sexual bantering of the two never directly refers to Cavendish’s era. Coridon addresses Flora with a playful suggestion: “My heauenly flora, reste vss on these Bankes, / Ande kindlye looke our selues In loue till dumbe, / Soe melte our Bodyes all a waye to soles” (30-32). Flora answers with a similar tone: “This Amrus songe, hath heapte loues fire on fire, / And wastes mee with loues Lanquishinge desire” (36-37). Nowhere has politics been mentioned, in spite of the Civil War era

composition.³⁵ Much of the discussion of Coridon and Flora rests in provoking sexual images and mutual flirtation.

Cavendish describes Coridon as a helpless wooer, denied by his beloved who is unwilling to accept his advances. Here, Coridon assumes an identity much like that of the lover in Sidney and Spenser, using metaphors common to the dejected lover of this previous generation of poets:

Sweet Flora,
Howe thou haste wounded mee, thou doste nott knowe,
Thy Browe when bente, that Is God Qupids Bowe,
Ande Eurye Glanse frome thy Eeyes, Is his Arowe,
Which woundes my harte, & wastes, my liuinge marowe,
Loues varius feuers sease mee, by their Turnes,
Nowe shiuringe Colde, then flashinge fires that burnes,
Loue is a Cataloge, of all Diseases,
Is health, or Sicknes, as his mistris pleases. . . (41-49)

The speaker in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* describes a similar emotion: "Not at first shot, nor with a dribbing shot / Love gave the wound, which while I breath will bleede: / But knowne, worth did in tract of time proceede" (1-3). Sidney's second poem in the sequence invokes Cupid in a way similar to Coridon's invocation, which strengthens the comparison between Sidney's and Cavendish's pastorals.³⁶

³⁵ For a discussion of the dates, see Hulse, ed., *Dramatic Works*, xiv.

³⁶ For the Sidney, see Sir Philip Sidney, *The Last Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia, Astrophel and Stella and other Poems, and the Lady of May*, vol. 2 of *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 243.

Spenser's *Amoretti* describes a similar captivity of lover by beloved: "What guyle is this, that those her golden tresses, / She doth attyre vnder a net of gold: / and with sly skill so cunningly them dresses, / That which is gold or heare, may scarce be told? / Is it that mens frayle eyes, which gaze too bold, / She may entangle in that golden snare" (1-6)?³⁷ In the tradition of Petrarch and later poets, Cavendish's lover believes his now unobtainable beloved to be possessed by Cupid, and an agent of his cruelty. She has deeply affected him with an unshaking melancholy, and at the same time is hot and cold, and in control of everything. The power that she has is not the same kind of political power that I suggest is subtle but present in the women of the Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley work. Rather, the power that she possesses is the power that the female characters of poetry had attributed to them by male poets of the Elizabethan Renaissance—the assigned power to deny a lover and effectively assume the role of the unkind, unobtainable woman, cold and desirable at the same time.

Unlike many poetic works of the previous century, this Cavendish play allows a direct voice for the beloved. We hear her rationale for rejecting Coridon, and though her sudden shift from being a willing partner to an unobtainable one is unexplained, it does motivate Coridon's sudden assumption of the role of both Petrarchan and pastoral lover:

Coulde I beleue these Gentle wordes, tis Trewe,
My melting harte, Coulde nott butt pittie you,
My wiser Grandame, sayde ther was no Truth,
In Pastroll Louers, or a sheapherds youth,

³⁷ For the Spenser, see Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, eds. J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 568.

Bid mee bee ware, carefull, & still Afrayde,
Sayde sugerde wordes, weare baytes, to catch a mayde,
Ande though your mournfull wordes bee verye Sadd,
Your secrete thoughts, for aughte I knowe Is Gladd. . . (50-57)

The only hint of female community thus far, the mention of “wiser Grandame” indicates that Flora may have changed her mind about Coridon because of her grandmother’s cynicism about romantic love. Flora feels sorry for him, but she also trusts the woman who has told her to distrust all men. Because of her explanation, the conversation that follows takes the Petrarchan tradition in a somewhat different direction than we often see. Flora claims a portion of her rejection of Coridon to be based in the advice of someone else, which shows that she is operating within a community of family who help her to make decisions. This decision situates her as someone capable of seeking out advice, and also as someone who may pose a threat to Coridon’s romantic plans because she has connections to others.

However, the audience never sees Flora’s grandmother, nor do they ever hear from her directly, since she does not speak in the play. The family that Flora shares with the older woman is completely off stage, unlike the family community in Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley’s plays, *A Pastorall* and *The Concealed Fancies*, in which female characters interact with one another and make decisions together. Flora treats the older woman as an absent authority figure who influences her decisions. The audience does not see Flora actively reinterpreting the grandmother’s words to develop her own philosophy of marriage and merely hears reports to suggest

a conversation. While both the shepherdesses of *A Pastorall* and the noblewomen of *The Concealed Fancies* refer to absent relatives, those women have other women with whom to speak. In both plays, the women talk to relatives who are on stage, using those conversations to formulate their various attitudes toward marriage. The women in Cavendish and Brackley plays do not share the same attitude toward marriage practices; rather, they share a preoccupation with discovering individual attitudes toward courtship and marriage. In comparison, William Cavendish leaves Flora very much alone, and he leaves the audience with no other representation of a shepherdess confronting a shepherd's advances. Cavendish buries the question of Flora's marital choice in layers of flirtation, innuendo, and literary allusion, making her marital decision unique largely because of its delivery, and not because the answer itself represents a change in who determines norms or who carries them out.

Coridon wants very badly to explain his motives and counter the influence of Flora's grandmother:

I sweare by Greate God Pan, that for my parte,
My feruente wishes, you might see my Harte,
Ther you might see your selfe Inthroned Sitt,
Andd not a female by, neare mindinge Itt,
Triumphinge ther Alone, as Is your Dewe,
As all your Sex, transformed was In to you,
My Magasin off Sighs, there you might See. . . (58-64)

He is trying to explain her place in his heart, largely to counter the idea that he might be fickle or might not take a commitment to her seriously. The images of Flora

as a solitary figure in Coridon's heart are curious, because she has only a moment earlier spoken of the influence of an older woman in her family. In his mind, it is as though she is the goddess of all that is female. Yet the images that he uses to express his fidelity erase the influence of other women altogether. While this looks as if it is meant to reassure her of his fidelity, it also removes the possibility of her own community of support. The seclusion that he thinks may reassure her hints at a much more negative isolation. These references to isolation also create a very different courtship ritual than those in Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's plays. In both of their plays, men constantly woo women who are in the company of other women. Coridon directly expresses the opposite intention, while suggesting that he is doing Flora a favor by eliminating her competition.

"My Magasin of Sighs, there you might See. . ." also begins a passage containing militaristic images. However, there is nothing necessarily indicating that these passages allude to the Civil War, or are anything different from the military metaphors that were often used throughout both Petrarchan and pastoral traditions. In keeping with those traditions, the passages identify the woman with military struggle. However, because of the military pursuits that Cavendish himself was involved in, we can read a new layer of meaning in these images, traditional though they appear at first glance:

My Magasin of Sighs, ther you might See,
Ande Grones sad store house, which was made by thee,
Numerus Armies, off sad thoughts, ther Trase,
Like Soles Imortall, takinge vpp no Plase,

Reade black Dispayre, see melencolye Shades,
 Tombes, Graues In church yards, which would frighte softe maydes.
 And funerals, with all their sadder Rights,
 With Tapers burninge In the Darkeste Nights,
 Ande mournfull musicks pation [passion] all a Longe,
 By peeces dienge, In a sad Loue Songe,
 These thoughts thy loue has giuen mee, for truth
 Sake, pitie mee, & saue a Sheapeardes youth. . . (64-75)

Coridon describes his emotions as militaries, and his “armies,” “tombes,” and “graves” convey a preoccupation with the metaphors of death and dirge (66,69). There is nothing unusual about this plea, as far as literary lovers’ pleas go. The lines work to draw a connection between battle, military involvement, and female rejection. Accepting him means that Flora will save his life, at least as far as he is concerned. This both gives her power and negates it at the same time. She has the power to resolve his conflict, but in doing so, is expected to give up herself to him. In other words, she is expected to answer his military conflict with a sexual surrender. This action reinforces the notion that military victory and surrender and sexual conquest are interconnecting ideas.

Flora does not find the proposed arrangement to be advantageous for her, and she urges Coridon to find other women who will believe his words and leave her alone:

Sweet youth forbear, for your designes will fayle,
 My Eares, nott taken with a loue sick Tale,

Trye other sheapherdeses, theye maye yelde,
And plase you Conqueror In Qupids feilde,
Ande followe them, nott mee, Itt Is my Shute [suit]. (76-80)

She advises him to try someone else. Hers is a conventional refusal, in many ways, and it continues the images of martial and romantic pursuit. Flora also shifts the power dynamic of the previous passages. Coridon has behaved as though her decision is an act of power, one that may save him from this continual battle with himself. She, however, presents the outcome of an encounter between them as one where the female “maye yelde,” and where he, the pursuer, will be “Conqueror in Qupids feilde.” In some ways, this is a subtle way of saying that he not only does not convince her, but also that she can read between the lines to see that he—and not she—will win if she surrenders to him.

Coridon’s response presents a dialogic version of a typical Petrarchan work. While such dialogue is common enough in pastoral tradition, his approach owes more to Petrarchism. Here, he claims to be giving up, but has one last appeal to make before leaving:

Sit downe then gentle sheapherdes, bee Bleste,
In hearinge nowe my sad loues laste requeste,
Lett my Eyes firste heer drop a partinge Teare,
Then sett; neare moue more In thy Hemispheare,
Ande since pale death hath struck mee, giue mee roome,
Heer In thy sacred Lapp to begg a Toome,
Thy Apron bee my windinge sheet, with Blissess,

Imbalme mee when I'me dead, with balsum kisses,
I'le praye the Gods, all hapines to send-you,
But my Imortall sole shall still atende-you,
Heer In thy bosum, dansinge on thy Heare,
Or whispringe loue Sighs, In thy softer Eare,
Though I'me loue murderde, nott complayne, or tell,
Flora Adiewe, Flora Farwell, Farewell. (81-94)

His pathetic appeal is a desperate measure, in some ways. He unites sexuality with death, just as he has been doing throughout his speeches. Here, instead of expressing his conflicts in militaristic images, he simply says he will die. Begging for a tomb in her lap is a plea to allow a sexual ending after all. He connects his sexuality to her and her sexuality to his death. He also begs to “drop a partinge Teare” and be “In thy Hemispheare,” suggesting that he move closer to her physical self before he actually dies. The metaphysical image of her as half world, further suggests that, in his estimation, the two of them belong together.

These allusions to militaristic conflict, romantic union, and death are a far cry from the representations of war conveyed by Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley. In *A Pastorall*, female characters invoke war as the reason for their modified courtship rituals and marriage practices, and in *The Concealed Fancies*, characters at times imply war is a reason for their changed behavior. Here, instead of making war a reason to curtail sexual union or exercise caution in choosing spouses, William Cavendish makes militaristic images the reason why Coridon would want to hasten

the courtship process. This reversal places control in the hands of the shepherd, even as it insists that the shepherdess has control over the flirtation and sexual union.

Coridon also says that once he is dead, he will look after Flora constantly, watching over and protecting her. With this promise he blames her for his death, while at the same time brushing off the blame with a promise to be faithful in death. The most loaded line of the passage is its last line, where he claims himself “loue murderde.” His insistence that he will “nott complayne, or tell,” reads a great deal like complaining, since it is the last we hear from him before Flora thinks him dead.

Flora expresses a remorse far removed from the sarcastic disdain of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley’s characters:

Oh Deer hees Gone, speake loue, Oh doe butt moue,
Whisper the leaste breath, to my sole for Ioye,
Butt hee Is dead; fye whye did you beleue mee,
Mayds doe desemble loue, tis Naturall,
Were borne with Itt, Oh Gods hees num & Colde,
Thus woulde I breath life In thee once a gen, (kisses him)
With louinge kisses; Oh, mee-thinkes hee sturrs,
Hopes doe but flater mee; hee does nott, Noe,
Woulde I was all turned Lipps, with maydens Dewe,
So to Imbalme thee; Gods heer my Petition,
I Can nott praye att all; what iff I Could,
Will holye Dieties, heer murderers,
Thayle punishe, for this horide Homiside. (95-107)

The passage provides a significant contrast to those found in Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's *A Pastorall*. William Cavendish's two daughters created female characters who remain constant throughout *A Pastorall*: the women remain "sad shepherdesses" even in the masque's final passages, when Careless and Freedom try to prompt the women to dance. Even in its final scene, *A Pastorall* does not prompt the females to feel guilt over turning the men away. Instead, the text acknowledges the women have a reason for refusing merriment and union with male characters: a war.³⁸ Here, a female character has denied a man, and there is the joking suggestion that her flirtation and denial of him have gone too far. Her self-conscious excuse that "Mayds doe desemble loue, tis Naturall," draws attention to the artifice involved in her denial, and also provides layers of meaning, coming from a male author writing a female character who has rejected a male lover (98). Even as it blames women for dissembling, the line also jokingly attests that he should have known better, since her actions were in line with what is "Naturall." If we work for a moment under the fictional pretense that Coridon is dead, Flora has given him at least a portion of what he claimed to want, since she has kissed him. However, she has refused the frenzied kissing that would presumably revive him, according to his earlier statements. He—and we—also hear her express fear that the gods will not hear her prayers, a sign that she claims responsibility for his death and worries that the gods will punish her for it.

In the scene that follows, Flora expresses a kind of marital choice different from that which Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley provide their characters.

³⁸ Cavendish and Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, 88-89.

Luceny and Tattiney, for instance, carefully orchestrate their flirtations with Courtley and Presumption, seizing control over their eventual engagements to the men. Like Chastity, Innocence, and Vertue, the three main female characters from *A Pastorall*, *The Concealed Fancies*'s Luceny and Tattiney speak directly of their reasons for withholding affection from men. Both plays allow female characters much volition over marital decision-making, and with those choices, some measure of expected or implied power. Flora's response to Coridon's apparent death in William Cavendish's pastoral is much more desperate in nature, though she does exercise a lesser degree of the marital power found in female characters throughout the Cavendish coterie's canon. Since a stage direction suggests that "her heare all loose [she] drawes a knife," we can imagine a performance of the pastoral as she speaks:

I'le followe thee

This steele I'le sheath, heer In my mayden Breste,

Since our twinde Soles maride by Simpathye,

My Imortaletye shall flye to thee,

Swifter then winged Angells, or a thaughte,

Werte thou in Sulphrus, or Eternall flames,

Or purginge, Scorginge, fires, soles midle Region,

Or Glorefied, vnto an Angell bright,

I will bee with thee, presentlye I Coume,

Or In the lisium feildes, Ile walke with thee,

Olde ferry man, why Caron bringe thy Bote,

Ande wafte mee ouer to the silente Nation,

Quicklye, I am prepared for this longe voyage,
Dispayre hath victl'de mee, I'me Rigde & All,
My Sader Sighs, shall fill thy sayles, hoyse, vpp,
Iff water wante, my Eyes, shall weepe an otion,
All's redye then, why Caron Coume a waye. . . (108-124)

Suddenly Flora has declared her constancy, and her desire to be with Coridon, though it may be in Hades that she joins him. She will do whatever the occasion or circumstance calls for her to do. Flora has decided to give her dead lover whatever he needs or wants, all that she admits she denied him in life. Her approach is conventional, and at the same time, so sudden that it could almost be played as comical, were it not for her sudden combination of some of Shakespeare's most serious dramatic characters.

Flora's threat to stab her "mayden Breste" (109) refers to *Romeo and Juliet*.³⁹ In *Romeo and Juliet*'s Act 5.1, it is Romeo who thinks that Juliet is dead. When she awakens in Act 5.3, it is after his long speech about death and slumber, after his kiss, and after his actual death. In other words, Coridon's "suicide" is a playful game in comparison to what happens in the Shakespearean tragedy, and in some ways reads as a comic version of the same emotional exchanges. Juliet's suicidal speech is also much quicker than the one Flora delivers: "Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. [She takes Romeo's dagger] O happy dagger, This is thy sheath! There rust, and let me die. *She stabs herself, falls [and dies]*" (5.3.169). In comparison, Flora's speech

³⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus, eds. *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997); all subsequent citations to Shakespeare are to this edition.

makes it seem that either she—or the audience—is waiting for someone to interrupt and stop her.

Coridon and Flora have already reversed the roles of Antony and Cleopatra, with Coridon feigning death so that he may examine Flora's reaction. Later on in the speech, Flora invokes *Antony and Cleopatra*: "presently I Coume, / Or in the lisium feildes, Ile walke with thee" (115-116). In these lines, Flora connects two scenes in the play. With "presently I Coume," she alludes to Cleopatra's line, "Husband, I come," in which Cleopatra announces she is dying and anticipates joining Antony in death (5.2.278). Flora also reacts as Antony does to the news of Cleopatra's "death," alluding to his lines in Shakespeare's 4.15: "Where souls do couch on flowers we'll hand in hand, / And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze. / Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops, / And all the haunt be ours" (51-54).⁴⁰ The references not only confirm Flora's constancy but also elevate the shepherdess to the level of the state figure and literary giant. While established convention made the nobility appear as shepherds in the pastoral mode, lines 115-116 make a direct reference to the highest figures of classical literature and history. The comparison is consistent with Cavendish's "Prologe," and its efforts to elevate his audience and acknowledge the nobility they retained, even in poor economic and political circumstances. The allusions to *Antony and Cleopatra* also provide a reference to war and to love, although Cavendish does not directly invoke war in the ways that his daughters do in *The Concealed Fancies* and *A Pastorall*. His is an indirect reference, one where his

⁴⁰ Editors gloss the phrase "couch on flowers" as "lie ('couch') in the Elysian fields of the blessed dead in the mythological underworld," making a comparison between *A Pastorall* and this scene in *Antony and Cleopatra* all the more obvious. See Greenblatt et al, eds., *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2690.

audience could see Coridon and Flora wooing one another against the backdrop of references to Antony and Cleopatra, figures who struggled amid battles with Caesar in a Civil War. With this indirect reference comes a more pointed reference to the connections between love's struggles and martial battles, even though Cavendish abandons discussion of martial battle, choosing to focus more overtly on the romantic struggle between his characters.

Coridon's feigned death gives him something in common with Cleopatra, who decides in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (in 4.14) to fake a death to see what Antony will do. However, in Flora's responses in Cavendish's pastoral we may see a desire to prove that she is, as Cleopatra says, "marble-constant" (5.2.236). Flora's desire to be with Coridon has only become completely obvious to him with his "suicide," in spite of what is arguably a longstanding flirtation between the two. The older shepherd and the shepherds he represents have been in favor of the two forming a union, with fewer lines in the play dedicated to why the relationship could be a bad idea. As such, the "suicide," combined with the other allusions, reminds audience members of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, yet offers them something unexpected, since there is nothing final about it, nor anything tragic about what happens next, as there would be in either *Romeo and Juliet* or *Antony and Cleopatra*. Instead, Flora speaks about life, not death, literally making Coridon sit up to take notice. While he claims to be annoyed that someone has awakened him, the turn of events signals to the audience that this is not a plot that will end with a couple dying for one another. Rather, it is a plot where one character will pretend to die in order to get more information about his beloved's true feelings—emotions that are far more

about marriage than they are about death. Based on classical conventions, the play will be a comedy, complete with the marriage of two characters. However, the comedy shows the author's high awareness of tragedy, as well as his desire for a plotline where everything turns out well. Cavendish even ignores the possible conflicts involved in marital choice, looking instead at making the shepherd and shepherdess enter into an engagement as quickly as possible.

Coridon facilitates this engagement by reviving. After only one brief speech, Coridon, taken for dead, stages his entrance back into life, and back into his own and Flora's life:

Whoe hath disturbed mee, frome deathes longer sleepe

Ande Calde mee, frome the Quiett, silente Graue,

Flora: Twas I, --

Coridon: Beshrewe you Flora, for Itt was nott well. (125-128)

This sudden resurrection is not only comical but also continues the flirtatious game of hard to get that the two have been playing. Coridon represents himself as having been bothered by her rousing speech, as if he has really been dead and has been enjoying the peace and quiet. He even takes the occasion of her speech as an occasion for her admonishment.

Flora keeps talking, however, this time repeating some of what she has just said, as if he is still dead but has returned for a moment to consider what role she will have in his life—or his death:

Heer you shall witness, I dare dye for you,

Ande forse a streame, off pewre virgins bloud,

Keepe off, I am resolude, Itt shall be soe. (129-131)

She speaks of offering her life as a sacrifice for Coridon, though not the virginity that he wanted in his life, or the type of union he might have wished for in his “death.” She intends to maintain this chastity upon his sudden return. As Coridon’s earlier speeches suggested, Flora has an element of power in choosing to proceed in this manner. She insists that the action is her own, and that he must allow her to make it by sitting silent as she acts. At the same time, she is asserting her own virginity and her own worth as a mate. She is offering her virgin’s blood, but as a kind of sacrifice, as if the proposal to kill herself will complete his return to life and prove her chastity. She gives of herself, but not through a sexual act. Unlike the female characters created by Cavendish’s daughters, Flora is embroiled in a debate far less romantic or marital than it is strictly sexual. The chastity that she defends is chastity she defends of her own volition, but there is no overt discussion of what her other options might be. Flora has no other woman with whom to discuss those options, so her solitary decision-making separates her both from the characters who exist elsewhere in the Cavendish canon and from the characters alluded to in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Flora’s separation from other women does not stop her from eventually making a powerful speech :

Coridon. Lett mee butt whisper one worde In thy Eare,

Flora: I am Contente, butt lett thatt worde bee shorte,

For thus, I am Impatiente, & doe Linger,

Traytor In loue, to snatch my fame a waye,

Off such a Glorius Acte as this to Robbe mee,
He bee Reuengde.—(132-140)

The relationship between silence and speech in the passage is a complicated one. Flora has felt herself punished or wronged by the death of Coridon, who she feels has died without understanding that she was simply acting as she believes all women act. She has assumed the authority to speak, largely because she thinks him dead and thinks she must prove her love through a virgin suicide. He overpowers her and takes away the instrument that she intends to use for this purpose. As the stage direction indicates: “As he whispers, he snatcheth the knife oute off her hande.”

Coridon is uncomfortable not just with her attempted suicide, but with her speech act, as well. His own speech is metatheatrical, and acknowledge the way their dramatic speeches must change:

Sweet Flora nowe the seane Is changed,
Loues Tragedye, shall Ende In mee,
What sicknes, Coulede nott doe, forse nowe shall finishe. (142-44)

He indicates that he will stop this farce, but what he offers in return is not a comfort. He stops her suicide and refers to his “sicknes,” but he also looks suspiciously as if he is taking her speech when he takes her knife. His assertion that “What sicknes, Coulede nott doe, forse nowe shall finishe” (144) indicates he is taking charge again. He threatens to kill himself, since she awakened him from his sick slumber before he had a chance to die within it. He also takes control by being the one to say that “the seane Is changde” (142) and by threatening to use force.

The other shepherds ultimately choose to help the two make decisions. At this point, a chorus of shepherds appears to sing a while and issue social commentary.

The stage directions indicate that “the reste off the sheapherdes Coumes In & takes a waye his knife.” Their central spokesperson, “an olde Sheapherde,” has had enough of what he regards as foolery, and he issues a patriarchal statement on what the next action should be:

Are these fitt pranks, for pastorall louers no,
Kiss, & Imbrase, paye loue thus, what you owe,
Coridon: Thy Armes bright Sinthia’ bee my Spheare,
Loues orbe, that’s onlye to moue Theare,
Flora: Butt softe tis nott my Loue, my Fayre,
My Armes Imbraste nothinge butt Ayre,
Itt Is a speritt, his Goste, for hee Is Deade. (145-153)

Coridon does exactly what the old shepherd says, and pretty much immediately. His response indicates he has been waiting for someone else to take charge or enforce preexisting rules. His first words to Flora invoke mythology, as he compares her to the moon goddess, Cynthia, claiming Flora’s control over celestial bodies and over him, as well.⁴¹ In her responses, Flora has gone from being flirtatious, then distant and coy, to being almost penitent in her desire to emphasize her virginity and her desire to serve Coridon, to being skeptical of his sudden warmth

⁴¹ To make further comparisons to Virgil’s celestial references, see Judith Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 49.

and charm. In these lines, she embraces the air, questioning whether or not Coridon is actually alive to offer her the power that he claims for her.

The other shepherds hope to assist Coridon in his efforts to express love. It is here that the old shepherd interjects again:

Shee Is distempered therefore Comply with her

In all her wayes, In Laffinge, or to weepe,

Intice her, to her Chamber, for softe sleepe

Muste setle her, poore loue distempered Brayne (154-157).

This intervention is at least partially meant to be a peacemaking effort, designed to make Flora happy. The suggestions also look a lot like a continuation of the game that has been played between the two of them before. The shepherd's argument that Flora "Is distempered" asserts that her unhappiness makes her do strange things, and that Coridon must be careful to respond judiciously (155). Her actions with the knife and her embrace of air have echoed yet another dramatic figure, this time *The Spanish Tragedy*'s Isabella, in Act 4.2.⁴² To Coridon's exaggerated Romeo, Flora has responded by performing Isabella's insanity in a completely different context than the one in *The Spanish Tragedy*. The old shepherd, like Coridon and Flora, is aware of the characters' flirtations with one another, and with tragedy. The shepherd argues that in order to get the response that he wants, Coridon must make sure that he plays himself as being of like mind and emotion to Flora. Stage directions do not make Flora's presence or absence clear, but her responses indicate that she either has not heard the shepherd, or plans to continue responding as

⁴² Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, in *Four Revenge Tragedies*, ed. Katharine Eisaman Maus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1-92.

though she thinks Coridon dead, regardless of what she has or has not heard.

With his continuing allusions to earlier literary works, William Cavendish assumes his audience's intimate knowledge of previous English drama, and likewise their ability to find humor within the tragic references that both Coridon and Flora remove from their original literary contexts. He also creates an elaborate flirtation for the two characters. The scenes with the shepherd make it all the more obvious that neither character has seriously thought the other to be dead. In each character's performances and flirtations in front of the other is a claim to power. The shepherd's advice that Coridon appease Flora indicates that both men are aware that Flora makes her union with Coridon conditional, and that Coridon must respect the conditions in order to woo and marry her. Each character plays with both literary tradition and marital tradition, offering the possibility of rewriting one by rewriting the other.

Flora's preoccupation with Coridon's "death" invokes and revises earlier literary traditions:

Coridon: Sweet flora lett vss Goe,

Flora: The speritt doth Intise Itt bekens mee

Sweet Goste Ile folowe thee,

Weare Itt a hyer Rocks steepe Presipise,

Or hollowe murmringe valtes, buride In Earth,

Or melencolye darke, dispayringe woods,

Or cruell whirlpools, or the fatall flouds,

I'le followe thee,

Sweet Goste Itt bekens mee a gen, I Coume,

Goe on, --Excitt. (158-167)

Several things come out of this exchange. Flora has shifted back to her earlier position, of wanting to offer Coridon the greatest devotion in his death. She has removed herself from any skepticism she might feel over his love and has offered to be extremely cooperative. Significant, also, is her uncertainty over what happens when people die. The possibilities that she lists are varied and include some of the worst endings that she can imagine. This cataloging indicates devotion: she will follow him anywhere, and these examples illustrate just how far she would go to follow him. Her responses also indicate ambivalence about what will happen when he leads her away.

Her fear has a comedic element, given its allusion to, and rewriting of, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Perhaps because the ghost is not in the same situation as Hamlet's father, her sudden declaration is funny. In *Hamlet* 1.4, Hamlet spends some time trying to figure out if the spirit he sees is indeed his father's ghost. The ghost has a message, as evidenced by Horatio's speech at 1.4.39-41: "It beckons you to go away with it / As if it some impartment did desire / To you alone." At 1.4.49, Hamlet first suggests following the ghost: "It waves me forth again. I'll follow it." Before the action continues, however, Horatio questions the spirit's motives, and Marcellus expresses his doubts, as well. Their worries make the scene a dramatic one, filled with contemplations about the possibility that evil is in their midst. In contrast, Flora wants to follow her ghost because she has suddenly recognized his worth. The scene contains a strange mixture of influences: *Hamlet*, *Romeo and*

Juliet, The Spanish Tragedy, and Antony and Cleopatra meet comical pastoral courting rituals.

The pastoral community ultimately provides the strongest authority over Flora, Coridon, and their romance. Flora's unabashed loyalty is tempered by the choral interjection of a shepherd who sums up the social perceptions of what Flora offers Coridon: "Poore sheapherdes, distempered yet shee Is, / Butt since towe louers liues, saude from mischance, / Weel selebrate Itt with a Sheapherdes Danse" (168-170). The ending expresses remorse that all is not well in the pastoral world, but it also dismisses this as a serious problem, since two lives have been saved from suicide—or from being single. This response is one that honestly recognizes the possible problems that might exist in a union between the two, but argues that a celebration is in order because a worse ending has been prevented. Like the speeches of Coridon and Flora, the shepherd's speech openly acknowledges the role playing of the shepherds, since the shepherd effectively plans a party that will ignore the continuing problems of the two by having the entire community emphasize merriment. As the shepherd's celebration was being performed, William Cavendish and the other expatriate Royalists would celebrate extravagant happiness, perform their Royalist identity, accentuate the strength of community, and hope for renewal.

The happiness of the wedding focuses much on the variety of items Coridon and Flora will acquire with their marriage. Coridon has plenty to say about their relationship and about the plans the two are making to be wed:

My sweeter Flora, for our nuptiall feaste,
I will prouide my selfe Each birde, & Beaste,

The Earlye Lambe, new faulen kid; both thaye
 As sacrefises, to our Marige Daye,
 The oute lienge Deer, nowe within our groundes,
 With toyles I'le take, withoute the helpe off houndes,
 Swifte footed Roe, so tim'rus fearfull Hare,
 Those with my netts, for thee I will Insnare,
 Fatt suckinge Rabetts, taken by my ferritt
 All these Ile offer to thy Greater merit. (175-184)

While he talks of hunting these animals, both for sacrifice and for celebration, he does not explain how he and Flora shifted from their role-playing and flirtation to a marriage celebration. Coridon mentions their marriage, but his lines concentrate most on cataloguing items from nature, a common practice in the pastoral. Even though he lists the animals because he is planning the marriage celebration, the convention of celebrating with nature initially detracts from what makes the marriage plans unique.

The classical influences on Cavendish's cataloging sequence suggest exile and loss. Judith Haber's chapter, "Si numquam fallit imago: Virgil's revision of Theocritus," describes Virgil's contributions to pastoral literary history. Haber explains that Virgil is "confronting us with the loss of home and all that it represents," something that I assert Cavendish himself was grappling with in Antwerp.⁴³ Virgil, she argues, is "forced to consider his pastoral songs both as the diminished reflections of a complex and threatening world and as the sophisticated reimaginings of a simpler

⁴³ Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction*, 36.

reality.”⁴⁴ For Cavendish, early models include those of both Virgil and the various English writers whose works he rewrites for his pastoral. Here, however, Virgil is particularly significant. Haber writes of Virgil’s own Corydon and the catalogues that he makes of natural items, describing a Corydon who gives to a lover a very sexual cataloging of gifts in which he “interweave[s] old values with new.”⁴⁵ Virgil’s Corydon is much more obviously grappling with conflict and natural things that he cannot provide because they are from a place he has lost due to war.⁴⁶ In comparison, Cavendish gives Coridon and Flora a much more inevitable positive outcome, where Coridon catalogues items and the greatest conflicts are over. The threats to the union with Flora suggest English history rewritten as comedy. In a sense, Cavendish has followed an earlier pastoral tradition, but has challenged pastoral elegiac song; consequently, he also is denying that the English Civil War audience should be playing the role of victim, far from home and away from its beloved natural setting. The wedding that follows the pastoral offers comfort to the assembled nobility: all will be right in the pastoral world and in the English nobleman’s world. Families and order will be reconciled, and everyone will enjoy the performance and have enough to eat, as well.

Cavendish’s Coridon lists all sorts of food-related items, signifying his abilities as a hunter. Up to this point in the pastoral, he has been hunting Flora. Now, he is indicating what he will provide for her—and for them—on the occasion of their

⁴⁴ Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction*, 42.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 46-47.

marriage. He further catalogues the animals that he intends to provide, and it is a list that is rich with abundance:

The Paynted Pheasante, with the spekelde side,
The tender Patrich, which In payrs Deuide,
The Black birde, feldefayre, & greedy Thrushe,
With stone-bowe shoote, for thee In Eurye Bushe,
Soe the Green Plouer, & the longe Legde Rayle
The Plumpe, & mountinge larke, with the hott Quayle,
These Ile prouide for thee, my Flora Deer,
In theyr Iuste timleye sesons off the yeare. (185-192)

The two characters have achieved wealth in agreeing to the union and in being advised by the old shepherd. The celebration of nature heightens the conventional aspects of marriage. Instead of focusing on the particular attributes of Coridon and Flora's relationship, the lines focus on all the wonderful things that can be acquired in a union.

Like Coridon, Flora participates in this acquisition of plenty. She agrees to everything with a great deal of glee:

Ande what a home-borne, houswifreye can yelde,
Ile Contrebutte to th' plentye off your feilde,
With fresher Bowes, & rushes, trim our Bowers,
Soe all our Bed, & floore, strewde with sweet flowers,
Ande for my mayden heade weepe virgin showers. (193-197)

It is at this point that the sexual connotations of their discussion become all the more obvious: there is something sensual in his having hunted for her, and in his having hunted animals to give in sacrifice to their union. Her own comments are more obviously sexual. If he will be responsible for the food—and for the animal sacrifices to their wedding—she will be responsible for domestic decoration, bringing the fertility of the green world indoors to their new chambers. She offers a more sexualized view of abundance when she references his “feilde” and when she lists the flowers that will cover their marriage bed, though her most obvious statement about her role is in the reminder of her virginity, which she notes when she mentions the “mayden heade” and her “virgin showers.” The “virgin showers” are at once a direct reference to the loss of maidenhead, and perhaps also to the emotion that she attaches to losing her virginity with him.

They do not discuss either of these things—the hunt or the “virgin showers.” Coridon closes the action and the pastoral, as well:

Sweet Flora, harken, marke my fayre,

An other loue songe chimes the Ayre,

A Songe.⁴⁷

The songe finishte.

The hight off wishes, & all loues sweet charmes,

I shall Inioye, when Circlde In thy Armes,

Finis, this parte off the Pastorall (198-205).

⁴⁷ For more information about Cavendish and music, see Lynn Hulse, “Apollo’s Whirligig: William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle and His Music Collection,” *Seventeenth Century* 9, no. 2 (1994): 213-46.

In part, the closing lines simply say, “I look forward to being with you.” The lines also raise some questions, however. William Cavendish provides no direct discussion of what has happened. With this celebration, and any singing, an audience is to assume that Flora and Coridon have married in spite—or perhaps because—of the game that they have played for several scenes.

The shepherd’s intervention is accompanied by the direction that other shepherds are present, singing and participating in taking the knife away, insuring that the potential lovers will not kill themselves. There is an element of *deus ex machina* in Flora’s rescue from death at her own hand, since the appearance of the shepherd provides a conventional reconciliation of marriage. When it looks like the characters will not make it to the altar for marriage or for the sacrifices that celebrate it, the shepherd appears to make sure the ceremony takes place. When he appears, it becomes obvious that the larger pastoral community provides for its young people, insuring communal safety and marriage of the concerned parties. The flirtations of Flora and Coridon include her initial refusal of him and her later regret (or feigned regret), and they precede the inevitable reconciliation of a plan endorsed by the larger community and by its leaders. The old shepherd is able to tell the characters how to play their parts, or how to insure that the marriage will occur to the satisfaction of all.

William Cavendish’s Flora exhibits complicated behavior in both her silence and in her speech. When she rejects Coridon after a highly sexualized flirtation, she immediately feels regret that someone did not realize she was just being coy. Whether this is a larger commentary on women or merely a commentary on Flora as a character, it separates her from the women of Cavendish and Brackley’s *A Pastorall*,

who refuse marriage (or refuse to behave as a married woman, in the case of Chastity). In this play the “grandame” never actually appears on stage or on the page, even though Flora cites this female person as the reason for her sudden rejection of Coridon earlier on in the action. This character also does not appear when the old shepherd does, so her presence in the group that saves Flora and Coridon is unclear. Flora is left without a female advisor, so the audience does not know whether the “grandame” was encouraging Flora to engage in dissembling or to avoid union with Coridon for some other reason. Her role in the work is somehow incomplete; the only vocal advisor in the conclusion is a male one. Any prior female community is completely gone, or goes uncreated. In Cavendish and Brackley’s *A Pastorall*, women constantly appear in scenes together. When the pastoral characters represent their virginity or their chastity, they represent themselves as women with jobs to do in the absence of men. They also work at times to insist upon the silence of men around them while they figure out their plans. Here, in “Parte of a Pastorall,” Coridon acts to win Flora away from rejection of his advances (which she has not meant as dismissal) to embraces. Both parties allow the action to get a little ahead of them, resulting in a situation where the shepherd leader must step in to insure that the end result is as it should be. It seems inevitable that the two should marry, and no social or political circumstance is the reason for their holding back. Ultimately, the men are firmly in charge in Cavendish’s play: the flirtation between the two shepherd lovers is the conventional chase of the beloved by the lover, this time with a third party ensuring that the marriage celebration takes place.

Next to the more distinct images of war that are present for the women of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's *A Pastorall*, these images of flirtation sit in sharp contrast. Coridon's poetic speech gives women more of a militaristic control over a man's heart than the direct involvement in war that Cavendish's daughters provide to their characters, while *A Pastorall* engages much more directly with the English Civil War and its resulting losses. Cavendish does give Coridon some authority to discuss Flora's power, though it is not one with a distinctly political flavor.

What is more political than his characters' speeches is William Cavendish's reworking of the pastoral. After his daughters composed their collaborative works, he wrote a pastoral comedy ending in marriage, merging the modes of Petrarchan poetry and Shakespearean tragedy, and his ideas for a new Royalist literary position. In doing so, he also married the pastoral and the Petrarchan tradition, creating a female character who illustrates a new marital role, precisely because she participates in the usual process of courtship in an unusual way. It is not marriage that Cavendish revolutionizes, but the process of conveying it to a noble audience. Meanwhile, because the "grandame" is so absent from the decisions, Flora is a shepherdess alone, lacking the female companions who influenced the shepherdesses in Cavendish and Brackley's *A Pastorall*. As such, Cavendish's Flora does not go as far toward creating an independent, self-sufficient pastoral community for women negotiating marital norms, and she reflects the changing cultural habits of the once elite nobility more than she does the changing attitudes toward women, marital choice, and the impact of marital choice on the nobility's eventual re-emergence. William Cavendish's "Parte of a Pastorall" reenforces a traditional attitude toward women,

whereas his daughters' work celebrates a new position for women, individuated from their father's traditional ideals. However, by ending the pastoral with a marriage, Cavendish celebrates life and the spirit of plenty, creating a happy ending with lush treasures. For an author with "estates under parliamentary sequestration," and an audience of "impoverished English emigres," the ending would have contained a message of hope and reconciliation.⁴⁸

William Cavendish's "Prolog" both announces a household performance and makes household members and guests performers, themselves. By self consciously drawing attention to the politics and exiled status of attendants, "A Prolog" asks theatre observers not to suspend their disbelief, but to begin to believe they, the Royalists in exile, are performing a new reality by attending, observing, and understanding William Cavendish's production. The solidarity they share with each other is as renewed as the newly styled pastoral, with its new Coridon, new Flora, and new courtship ritual for marriage. Away from his daughters, but culturally alongside them, William Cavendish sought to create a new concept of home and culture for the defeated Royalist elite.

⁴⁸ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 127, 128.

Appendix I: Selected Poems Transcribed from the Bodleian Manuscript

1. The quinticence of Cordiall¹

Sister, Wer't not for you I know not how to liue
For what content I have, you doe mee giue
In this my sadd mortification life
I _____ you make good that strife²
So'e your presence is Balsam to my braine
And Gilberts water, if then soe but name
My Lord's retorn'd, & add here you'l retayne. (12)

2. Passions Lettre to my Lord my Father³

My Lord, it is your absence, makes each see,
Your company creates, and makes mee free,
For without you I am dull peece of earth,
And soe contynnes nothinge, till you make my birth⁴
For want of you I can too truly tell,
The seuerall wayes of greife that makes a Hell;
Soe in the middest of passions greife 'twas such,
As I did thinke my life, was much, too much;
Soe went loues resolution to make way,
Quitinge sad life, which I call'd Holy day

¹ All quotations from Cavendish and Brackley's poetry are from my transcription of their Bodleian MS. See Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16, in *British Literary Manuscripts from the Bodleian Library, Oxford Series one, The English Renaissance, c. 1500-1700* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Microform, 1988-89). All numeric references to this collection are to manuscript page numbers. The Bodleian manuscript is written in secretary hand. I have elected to preserve spelling, punctuation, and line breaks from the manuscript, to the best of my ability.

² The passage I omit appears either to be "deifieinge" or "difieing," leading to two completely different meanings. Given the religious allusions and puns throughout the manuscript, an equivalent of our modern "deifying" makes sense.

³ I rely on Betty Travitsky, *Subordination and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999) 74, for the transcription of the second word of the title. In the manuscript, the second word is "Lettre," but it appears with each "t" elevated.

⁴ Punctuation at the end of this line is uncertain.

But then consideringe, that aliue you bee,
I kept my life, which is euen lent from thee;
Thus doth my life both ebb, and flow, with you;
And as I hope for happinesse, tis true. (1)

3. The angry Curs

Who is't that darr tell mee they'l haue away
My Sister Brackley, who's my true lifes day
For if hir absence I will bee a Nunn
And speak then nothinge, but when will shee come
The Plotters of this damned vgley plott
Let Curs of Egipp euer proue their lott
For meate I'de haue them all things truly want
But fleas, & lice, those plenty & not scant
And for their Beare I'de haue it steeped soote
Or at the best stamped Henbane vgly roote
S'oe for their mind I wish it neuer pleased
But alwayes troubled with a high disease⁵
For Company Rats squeking their discourse
And then Catts howling should bee their Carous
Their clothes in winter stiff Buckeram thinn
In Summer Pollcat furr lined all within⁶
Thus I would haue ill natures iustly payd
And when they trust I'de haue them sure betray'd
Now all good people that haue gallant minds
Shun this foule creature, as the worst of kinds
From Plague or pestilence is our Lettany
But from ill natures God deliuer mee. (25)

4.

My Lord

After the deuty of a Verse,
Giue leaue now to rehearse;
A Pastorall, then if but giue
Your smile I sweare I liue,
In happynesse; ffor if this may
Your fauour haue, 'twill ne're decay
Now let my language speake & say
If you bee pleas'd I haue my pay

⁵ Because of modern type, I have transcribed "w" with an elevated "th" as with.

⁶ See note 5, above.

That passionately am

Your Lordships⁷
Most affectionate and obedient
Daughter (49)

5.

My Lord

This Pastorall could not owne weake
But my intrest which makes mee speake
To begg you'l not condem the best
For thi'll but chase it, to it rest
Where I shall owne the word submit,
Vnto your Judgment of pure witt.

Your Lordships most affectionate
and obliged

Daughter (50)

⁷ The writing of "Lordship" as it is in the manuscript is impossible to replicate; I have transcribed it into contemporary English and type for this reason.

Appendix II: The Antemasques from *A Pastorall*¹

The Antemasque.

Witches the nomber beinge fiue.

*The Hagg being first.*²

Hag. This is a braue world for vs now for wee meatamorphise euery body

Pre. But I doubt wee are but the Fly of the Cartwheele, for wee are but the people that's taulked on, to serue others designes, and our pride to our selues makes vs thinke wee are Actours.

Bell. Thou'rt a foole hath not our mischeife made warr, and that a miserable one to make Brother hate brother.

Hag. Sister hate Sister.

Bell. Wife hate Husband, and all other kindred, hath their deuisions of hatred.

Hag. And haue not wee done braue.

Pre. Ey fath, but thinke you 'tis wee

Bell. Lords wee send beyond Seas at our pleasure

Hag. Others wee keepe still to make vs business, and for Colonells and Lieutennant Colonells, & lower degrees of officers, wee take them soe fast, as wee are thinkinge to let them goe without Exchange. (52)

Bell. To haue the sport of gettinge them againe

Pre. And is this all wee.

Hag. Who the Deuill else should it bee.

Pre. Which of all your power like you best?

Bell. If you meane the grownd of like mischeife

Pre. And what Secane vpon that grownd

Hag. By my troth, makeinge Ladyes Captiues.

Bell. Seeinge how prettily they can Looke wise

Hag. And speake witt soe against vs.

Bell. As wee cannot take the handle against them.

Hag. Vnlesse wee proue our selues Fooles.

Bell. But that pleaseth mee most, is, how handsomely wee tye Ladyes Tongues.

Hag. Which before tyme would haue beene thought a Maracle.

Bell. Come now, about, about.

Hag. And let this night bee a Battles rout, to whom wee please.

Pre. Let mee then knowe of whome you pitch

Bell. If but a Mischeife wee'le not care to which

¹ All quotations from Cavendish and Brackley's play, *A Pastorall*, are from my transcription of their Bodleian MS. See Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *Poems, Songs, a Pastorall, and a Play*, Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 16, in *British Literary Manuscripts from the Bodleian Library*, Oxford Series one, The English Renaissance, c. 1500 -1700 (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Microform, 1988-89). All numeric references to this collection are to manuscript page numbers.

² For this transcription, I use the abbreviations for names that Cavendish and Brackley used in their original copies.

Hag. If you a partie haue I will you tell
 You're but a Prentice Witch, I'le sweare, in Hell
Bell. Come light your distaffs and wee'le try
Hag. Now I'le bee hang'd If that some doe not flye
Bell. Come let vs burne our seuerall horride peeces. (53)
Hag. Thus is our Mischeife drawne in yeares of Leases
Pre. If you a Prentice doe call mee
 Pray let mee knowe of thee
 What you intend soe hollyly to burne
Hag. To sacrifice vnot Loues Devills Vrne
Pre. What's the ingredience of your Perfume
Bell. All horrid things to burne ith Roome
Hag. As Childrens heads
Bell. Mens leggs
Hag. Weomens Armes
Bell. And little Barnes
Hag. And these wee will you show
Pre. Noe thanke you, I will take my leggs to goe.
Bell. Noe stay wee will not you soe fright
Hag. That you the better may vs like
Bell. For wee're resolu'd that vs you shall not slight
Hag. For with vs you shall oynt and make a flight
Pre. And must all this bee done to night
Bell. But wee'ue forgot our Songe
Hag. Let's singe, but let's not bee too longe.

The Songe.

Hag. Deuille thou know'st wee're thyne
Bell. And that in a most stright lyne
Hag. Soe beggs that each may feare
Bell. Vs witches euery yeare. (54)

The 2 Antemasque.
Two Country Wives.

Pr Come Naunt Henn I'll tell you a pritty incounter of my selfe now.

Hen. But effeckins I'llooke first, whether noe souldier or Witch bee crept vnder my bed or noe.

Pr I care not for them, Naunt stay; For I am bigg with talke

He. Speake then.

Pr. Wye I went to my good Lord & Maisters howse to see his honourable Children, but that was not my occastions, I dare not tell you what I went about.

He. Why will you not; I pray you tell mee Gossop

Pr Ne fayth your tongue's glib, & it will twattle a little too much.

He. When did you heare mee speake anythinge against my noble Maister, or against any of his.

Pr Well I'll tell you; first I went to the gates, and there I was examined, and my Baskett that had the Pigg in it was examined.

He. Then what sayd they to you Gossop. (57)

Pr They asked mee what I came for. Then I sayd, I came to doe my duety, to present this wreckling Pig, to the Ladies or Gentlewomen, I knowe not what you call them, but by'th maik I knew them well enough fare cheiue them. For they haue a hard Gamm to play. But when I went vpp I durst not stay, but sent my Baskett vpp by one I durst trust. 'Twas one of their Maidens, and bid hir, bid hir Lady looke into my Pigs Tale, & there they would fynd.

He. What Gossop.

Pr My Pigg fatt, would they not, but I haue knowne the day, that that word would haue beene held vnciuill, for such a word to haue beene sent, or sayd to any one.

Well Naunt Henn, I sayd it, & I repeated not, but wishe I were to say it againe. (58)

Enter Goodman Rye & Goodman Hay

He. You'r welcome Goodman Hay.

Pr And soe are you Goodman Rye

Ha. I hope your well Naunt Henn.

Ry. And how doe you Gossopp Pratt

Pr Come let's cha tt some Newes

Ha. Whye I'll tell you a strange thinge. I heare there is a strange people to come into this Land; The call them sayters.

He. What are those.

Ry. Wye, they are halfe men, halfe Beasts.

Pr Barlakeings you may see now Neighbors what learn ing is to knowe these kind of Creatures.

He. But what will they plunder.

Ha. Noe they vnderstand not that phrase; Plunder.

Ry. But I will tell you, they are very louing people.

Pr By my fayth of my body, that's well. Ffor then sure wee shall please t hem.

He. If they bee not rude.

Pr But these Witches, out vpon them they can cunier our Kine & sheepe from vs.
He. And though wee see them well enough, wee darr not, nor cannot speake to them.
Pr But if these Sayters would come, though they take our k ine & sheepe from vs, as longe as they speake vs fare wee should thinke our selues happy. (59)
He. And I speake truly to you all, I had rather bee amongst the Sayters then the Witches. For the Witches they will say truly, & in trueth, when they plunder & yet they alwaies thinke of the Deuill.
Pr And they say they pray to him.
Ha. But pray you now let's haue a songe before wee part.
He. Ey pray, for I loue songs withal my hart.
Ry. Fayth lets singe a songe of all our losses
Pr Come who shall begin .
Ha. Wye my Naunt Henn.
Ry. Well content and soe wee'le follow.
Pr For what should wee doe, though wee dye to morrow
He. Or be beggers to morrow
Pr Come Naunt Henn, hum & begin. (60)

The Songe.

He. I haue lost my melch Cow.
Pr And I haue lost my Sow
Ry. And for my Corne I cannot keepe.
Ha. Nether can I my pritty sheepe.
He. And I haue lost fowre dozen of Eggs
Pr My Pigs are gone, & all their Heads
Ry. Come let vs wishe for Health
Ha. For wee can haue noe wealth
He. Now I will hoep for Joy
Pr And in meane tyme let's bee a Toy
Ry. Since that wee haue noe plenty
Ha. And our Purses, they are empty
He. Since that wee haue noe plenty
Pr And our Purses they are empty. (61)

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