

The culture and rhetoric of the answer-poem, 1485-1625
With a supplementary 'Select Catalogue of Answer-Poetry in Print and
Manuscript, 1485-1625'

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that
appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the
works of others

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Abstract

This thesis examines the culture and rhetoric of the answer-poem during the Tudor and early-Stuart periods, charting the phenomena that led answer-poetry to become a prominent mode of social interaction in Renaissance literature. The answer-poem is symptomatic of a culture fixated with codes and theories of social dialogue. In this climate verse answering was a literary skill cultivated as a means of establishing oneself as a well-rounded gentleman of letters or a lady of sound judgement and integrity, and a means by which gentlemen and ladies might promote and defend their reputations. It is both a performative display of rhetorical accomplishment and of ideological orthodoxy, and its appeal stretched throughout the literate classes, from the monarchy down to the lower merchant classes. For the answer-poet the verse exchange represents a means of imposing an alternate outlook upon a contending poetic statement, and in the case of women's participation and female-voiced responses this competition for the subject position involves attempting to assert an authoritative literary subjectivity which, arguably, exerted an enabling influence upon women's freedom of literary expression.

As Cicero writes in *De Oratore*, "to retort is human" ("humanitatis est responsio", II. lvi. 230). The poetics of response was also cultivated, however, under the influence of extensive education in the arts of debate at the grammar schools, Inns and Universities, and under that of the growing culture of civil conduct, which prescribed formulas for propriety social interaction. The religious divides brought about by the Reformation, and the growing epidemic of defamation both provided arenas in which these skills could be exercised. Simultaneously, verse answering was ideally suited to the discursive articulation of amicable relationships such as friendship, courtship and marriage, the language of which was equally governed by codes of social interaction originating, respectively, in moral philosophy, conduct books such as Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* and Reformation marriage ideology.

Contents

Abbreviations.....	3
Orthographic Conventions.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
PART I. THE ART OF POLEMICAL RESPONSE: WIT, REPUTATION AND PATRIOTISM IN FLYTINGS AND VERSE ANSWERS TO LIBEL AND SATIRE	20
Introduction.....	20
CHAPTER 1: “WHAT LYFE MAY LYUE, LONG VNDEFAMDE”: PERSONAL AND PROPAGANDIST RESPONSES TO LIBEL AND SATIRE	23
The Verse Libel	23
A Sociological Perspective.....	23
Honour, Reputation and the Verbal Duel	32
The Verse Answer as Proclamation.....	44
The Verse Satire	63
Verse Answering and the Provocative Satirical Outlook of some Tudor Self- Publicists.....	63
John Skelton’s Satirical Idiom.....	68
John Marston and the late-Elizabethan Satirists.....	75
CHAPTER 2: ROYALISM, RAILLERY AND RITUAL: DOMESTIC AND CROSS-CULTURAL FLYTING	88
Cross-Cultural Flyting	91
Anglo-French Flyting	95
Anglo-Scots Flyting.....	102
Domestic Flyting	109
John Skelton and Christopher Garnish	113
Thomas Smyth and William Gray	121
Thomas Churchyard and Thomas Camel	129
John Taylor and William Fennor.....	141
PART II: THE “SOCIALY DIALOGIC” ANSWER-POEM: MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP AND COURTSHIP/ COURTIERSHIP	152

Introduction.....	152
CHAPTER 3: REFORMING PROPAGANDA IN ANSWER-POETRY UPON MARRIAGE, 1550-1570	156
Debates for and against Marriage	160
Debating the Duties of Husbands and Wives	170
CHAPTER 4: COLLABORATION AND CHOREOGRAPHY IN AMICABLE VERSE EXCHANGES OF THE LATER TUDOR PERIOD	183
The Choreography of Friendship in the Verse Exchanges of Barnabe Googe's <i>Eclogues, Epitaphs and Sonnets</i>	186
The Redemptive Pattern of Isabella Whitney's Familiar and Friendly Verse Epistles.....	196
John Donne's Provocative RSVPs and his Philosophy of Friendship in his Familiar Verse Epistles.....	207
CHAPTER 5: THE RHETORIC OF COURTSHIP AND COURTiership IN WOMEN'S ANSWER-POETRY AND IN THE FEMALE-VOICED RESPONSE.....	221
Female-Voiced Responses to Courtship: The Circumspect Lover versus the Plain-Speaking Suitor of Henrician Court Answer-Poetry	225
Late-Elizabethan and Jacobean Women's Verse Answering	241
The Subjective Petrarchan Heroine in the Verse Answers of Elizabeth Tudor and Frances Prannell Seymour, Countess of Hertford	247
Elizabeth Tudor	247
Frances Prannell Seymour, Countess of Hertford	255
Two Misogynist Satirists and their Female Respondents: Lady Mary Cheke and Lady Mary Wroth	262
Lady Mary Cheke	263
Lady Mary Wroth	268
CONCLUSION	277
APPENDIX I: SELECT CATALOGUE OF ANSWER-POETRY IN PRINT AND MANUSCRIPT, 1485-1625	286
Format and Methodology of the Catalogue	286
MS Abbreviations	288
Catalogue	289
BIBLIOGRAPHY	346

Abbreviations

Anal. Ind.: *An Analytical Index to the Ballad-Entries (1557-1709) in the Stationers' Registers of the Company of Stationers of London*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Hatboro, PA: Tradition, 1967)

Ant: *Antichthon*

CERES: *Cambridge English Renaissance Electronic Service*

CL: *Comparative Literature*

Collmann: *Ballads and Broad-sides Chiefly of the Elizabethan Period and Printed in Black Letter Most of Which were Formerly in the Heber Collection and are Now in the Library at Britwell Court Buckinghamshire*, ed. Herbert L. Collmann (Oxford: Printed for presentation to the members of the Roxburghe Club, 1912)

Co: *Contretemps*

Cr: *Criticism*

Crum: *First-Line Index of English Poetry, 1500-1800 in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, ed. Margaret Crum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)

CUP: Cambridge University Press

EETS: Early English Text Society

EHR: *English Historical Review*

ELH: *English Literary History*

ELN: *English Language Notes*

ELR: *English Literary Renaissance*

EMLS: *Early Modern Literary Studies*

ES: *Essays and Studies*

Film: Microfilm. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1953 (Early English Books, 1475-1640)

Fo: *Folklore*

HLQ: *Huntington Library Quarterly*

HUP: Harvard University Press

HMC: *Historical Manuscripts Commission*

HR: *Historical Research*

HSc: *History of Science*

HSt: *Humanistic Studies*

Ind. Brit. Scrip.: John Bale, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, ed. Reginald Lane Poole and Mary Bateson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902)

JEGP: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*

JHP: *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*

JMRS: *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*

JSH: *Journal of Sport History*

LCL: Loeb Classical Library

LIT: *Literature, Interpretation, Theory*

Livingston: Carole Rose Livingston, *British Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century: A Catalogue of the Extant Sheets and an Essay* (London and NY: Garland, 1991)

MH: *Medievalia et Humanistica*

MLN: *Modern Language Notes*

MLR: *Modern Language Review*

MLQ: *Modern Language Quarterly*

MP: *Modern Philology*

NQ: *Notes and Queries*

OUP: Oxford University Press

PMLA: *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*

PLPLS: *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society: Literary and Historical Section*

PQ: *Philological Quarterly*

Qu: *Quidditas*

Rh: *Rhetorica*

RES: *Review of English Studies*

RS: *Renaissance Studies*

SN: *Studia Neophilologica*

SLJ: *Scottish Literary Journal*

SLR: *Stanford Law Review*

SP: *Studies in Philology*

SR: *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London. 1554-1640 AD*, ed. Edward Arbor, 5 vols (privately printed, 1875-94)

STC: *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, First Compiled by A.W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, 2nd edn. Revised and Enlarged. Begun by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, Compiled by Katherine F. Pantzer*, 3 vols (Bibliographical Society, 1976-91)

STS: Scottish Text Society

Tilley: *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period*, ed. Morris Palmer Tilley, (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan UP, 1950)

TLS: *Times Literary Supplement*

TRHS: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

Verse in MS: *Bibliography and Index of English Verse in MS 1501-1558, Prepared and Completed by Michael Rudick and Susan J. Ringler*, ed. William A. Ringler Jr. (London and NY: Mansell, 1992)

Verse Printed: *Bibliography and Index of English Verse Printed 1476-1558*, ed. William A. Ringler Jr. (London and NY: Mansell, 1988)

Wing: *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641-1700*, ed. Donald Wing, 3 vols (NY: Columbia UP, 1951)

YAJ: *Yorkshire Archæological Journal*

YES: *Yearbook of English Studies*

Orthographic Conventions

The following orthographic conventions have been observed. Long “s” ligatures, thorn and other non-standard characters have been normalised. Contractions have been expanded and are indicated by italics. Doubled letters (commonly “vv” and “ff”) have been normalised. Digraphs are maintained. Titles of Early Modern texts are capitalised. Irregular usages of italics and blocks of capitalised text are normalised. Other typographical irregularities are normalised and given in italics or removed silently.

In citations London is silently accepted as the place of publication except in cases where multiple locations are given. Where provided, online references follow the conventions for citation given by the resource consulted. Biblical quotations are taken from the King James version.

Introduction

In both recent and more distant studies of the sociological characteristics of Renaissance verse several claims have been made for the centrality of answer-poetry to Renaissance poetics, although a full-length study of the genre has not been forthcoming. Lauro Martines notices that “when combined with politics, the fashion for occasional verse goes to help explain the mid-seventeenth-century vogue for mocking answer poems”, and E. F. Hart describes answer-poetry as, “one of the most characteristic poetic productions of the first forty years of the seventeenth century”.¹ More recently a few critics have become attuned to the presence of the genre in the sixteenth century. While Steven W. May observes that, “a good deal of poetic interchange took place among certain Elizabethan aristocrats”, Arthur F. Marotti, in his wider examination of answer-poetry in print and manuscript, writes that,

Given the socially dialogic context of the manuscript miscellanies and poetic anthologies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is no surprise to discover in such an environment various forms of verse exchange, including large numbers of answer poems.²

Margaret Downs-Gamble recognises a lack of critical attention to these “large numbers of answer poems”. She notices that, while the influence of the Renaissance education in dialectic upon drama and prose has received considerable attention, “argumentative disputation, the ultimate goal in Renaissance education, the ultimate joy in Renaissance entertainment, has been excluded from our consideration of Renaissance poetic”.³ In her short study of answer-poetry

¹ Lauro Martines, *Society and History in English Renaissance Verse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p.57; E. F. Hart, ‘The Answer-Poem of the Early Seventeenth Century’, *RES*, n.s. 7 (1956), 19-29 (p.19).

² Steven W. May, ‘Companion Poems in the Raleigh Canon’, *ELR*, 13 (1983), 260-73 (pp.260-1); Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (London and Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995), p.159.

³ Margaret Downs-Gamble, ‘New Pleasures Prove: Evidence of Dialectical *Disputatio* in Early Modern Manuscript Culture’, *EMLS*, 2:2 (1996), 33 pars (32), <<http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/02-2/downonn.html>>.

she identifies the influence of humanist and grammar school educations upon the impulse to answer in verse and writes that, “mastery of poetic, like mastery of prose or oratory, was the purview of philosophy, learned through dedicated exercise and mastery of dialectic or logic”.⁴

The profile of the genre has indeed fallen into neglect. Since the work of editors and cataloguers such as Hyder Edward Rollins, Herbert L. Collmann and a few others in the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, awareness of the pervasiveness of answer-poetry seems to have diminished among Renaissance scholars, and even its generic status has not been enshrined fully in the collective academic conscious. There is, it must be admitted, also a lack of formal accounts of the genre in the Renaissance. Answer-poetry falls outside Sir Philip Sidney’s definition of poesy, for instance. The typical answer-poet affirms emphatically, trading in certainties and using the epideictic rhetoric of praise or blame, unlike Sidney’s notion of a poet who “nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth”.⁵

The affirmatory nature of the answer-poem is perhaps also partly responsible for its being excluded from the consideration of Renaissance poetics more recently. Mary Ann Radzinowicz suggests that paired poems (including verse answers) are in need of critical and theoretical exploration primarily because the certainties in which they often trade appear ostensibly to fall outside the purview of recent trends in Renaissance criticism:

The present critical climate is more interested in unresolved than resolved tensions, asymmetries than symmetries, gaps than unity, the social force of poetry than the unique voice, irrationality than transcendence, and complex than simple models of explanation.

Radzinowicz describes verse answering as “link[ing] an impulse to form paired poems with an impulse to best a companion poet and overgo a forerunner”, and she makes a case for an

⁴ Downs-Gamble (1996), 2.12.

⁵ *An Apology for Poetry*, in *English Critical Essays (Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)*, ed. Edmund D. Jones (OUP, 1961), pp.1-54 (p.33).

examination of such poems that is sensitive to their discursiveness and complexity, the richness of their social context and their variety of purpose, characteristics which ought to render these poems attractive subjects of study for “the present critical climate”.⁶ She is right, moreover, that the animus of verse composition in the Renaissance, and especially verse answering, is competitiveness; a view that appears to be shared by the Renaissance scholar, Julius Caesar Scaliger, who thought modern poetry to be derived ultimately from the eclogues of classical pastoral among which the singing contest or *amœbæan* was prominent.⁷

While all these scholars point to the need for the development of a better comprehension of the poetics of response in the Renaissance, it must be stated at the outset that it is not the purpose of this thesis to establish a definitive poetics of response but rather to contribute towards the development of such through a process of selective sampling. The full scope of the Renaissance answer-poem is far too broad to tackle comprehensively within the confines of a doctoral dissertation. Moreover, although the ‘Select Catalogue of Answer-Poetry in Print and Manuscript, 1485-1625’ provided in Appendix One is representative of a broad range of verse answers (including many that are not examined during the course of the thesis), it is not comprehensive.⁸ Hopefully, the resource succeeds in providing access to the practice of verse answering in its wider generic context and draws attention to potential avenues of further investigation.

It is also necessary to state clearly here that an examination of the linguistic rhetoric of the answer-poem, of its formal tropes and schemes, does not belong to the remit of this

⁶ Mary Ann Radzinowicz. ‘Reading Paired Poems Nowadays’, *LIT*, 1:4 (1990), 275-90 (p.275 and p.283).

⁷ *Select Translations from Scaliger’s Poetics*, trans. Frederick Morgan Padelford, ed. Albert S. Cook (NY: Holt, 1905), pp.21-2.

⁸ References to Appendix A are given as “Cat.” followed by the unique alpha-numeric identifier for the citation referenced.

doctoral dissertation. I am concerned primarily with what is perhaps best described as the social rhetoricity of verse answering. While the influence of formal rhetorical techniques, learnt at the Inns of Court, Universities and grammar schools, is frequently apparent in the material I examine, I have elected to look primarily at the relationship between the answer-poem and actual social practices and Renaissance social theories. In terms of rhetoricity this involves partly the means by which poets orchestrate, initiate, elicit or provoke verse conversations and the means by which, and reasons why, answer-poems situate themselves in relation to the poems they answer in certain ways. It also involves partly the ways in which the practice of verse answering is influenced by, and identifies itself with, certain social rituals and ideologies. Among those rituals impinging upon the rhetoricity of verse exchanges, for instance, would be the formal arrangements of duelling in the case of libellous exchanges, the tournament and chivalric single combat in the case of flyting, courtly and courtship rituals in the case of Petrarchan verse exchanges and Reformation marriage ideology in verse exchanges upon the subject of marriage. This said, it is nonetheless necessary to give a brief account of how formal rhetorical education found applicability to daily life through the practice of verse answering.

Answer-poetry is in many ways at the heart of Renaissance poetics and reflects well the competitive discursiveness of the Renaissance literary mind. The intellectual and social climate of the period was highly conducive to a proliferation of verse answering. This is the pathological outcome of the emphasis placed upon rhetorical exercises in disputation across the breadth of educational institutions. It is due to the importance attributed to what Downs-Gamble terms “dialectical *disputatio*” in the Renaissance that verse answering became a literary skill that was cultivated as a means of establishing oneself as an educated, accomplished gentleman of letters. The heightened interest in classicism fostered by humanist scholarship and antiquarianism brought into prominence numerous precedents

for verse answering such as the singing contests of Virgil's *Eclogues* (I, VII, IX) and Angelus Sabinus's epistolary answers to Ovid's *Heroides* (XVII, XIX and XXI). Classical texts also provided instruction in the art of riposte, including Cicero's *De Oratore* (II. liii-lxxi) and Quintilian's *De Institutione Oratoria* (V. 13).⁹ While these sources probably lent respectability to the practice of verse answering and provided young scholars with reservoirs of witty answers and advice upon how to use them, selections of drolleries found in the perennially popular jestbooks brought an aspect of less socially prestigious camaraderie to the genre while offering further examples of pithy epithets suitable for response.¹⁰

Inculcated in Tudor and early-Stuart writers of all literate groups of society was the utility and social prestige of being able to gain the upper hand in any social scenario from the alehouse to the courtroom or the court with a well-turned, preferably impromptu, witty rejoinder. The mootings or legal debate was a staple of education at the Inns and taught

⁹ *The Eclogues, Bucolics, or Pastorals of Virgil: A Revised Translation, with Introduction, Text and Notes*, trans. and ed. Thomas Fletcher Royds (Oxford: Blackwell, 1922); *The Heroicall Epistles of the Learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso, In Englishe Verse: Set Out and Translated by George Turberuile ... with Aulus Sabinus Aunsweres to Certaine of the Same* (printed by Henry Denham, 1567), *STC* 18940; Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton, completed by H. Rackham, *LCL*, 2 vols (Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1942); Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory: Or, Education of an Orator in Twelve Books*, trans. John Selby Watson, 2 vols (Bell, 1882). Subsequent references for these texts are given in parentheses following quotations.

¹⁰ The first of these, and also the first book printed in English, was William Caxton's publication of a translation of Mubashshir ibn Fatik's *The Dictes and Sayengis of the Philosophers* (1477), containing "quick answers" (see Curt F. Bühler, 'New Manuscripts of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers', *MLN*, 63 (1948), 26-30 (pp.28-30)). Jestbooks featuring witty rejoinders attributed to classical philosophers remained a staple part of the press's output throughout the period. William Baldwin's *Treatise of Morall Phylosophie Contaynyng the Sayinges of the Wyse. Gathered and Englyshed by Wylliam Baldwyn* (printed by Edwarde Whitchurche, 1547) went through twenty-two editions before 1625 and contains 'The First Book of Lives and Answers' (*STC* 1253). Another was John Florio's *Florio his Firste Fruites: which Yeelde Familiar Speech, Merie Proverbs, Wittie Sentences, and Golden Sayings* (printed for Thomas Woodcocke, 1578), which contains 'Pretty Demands with their Ready Answers' (*STC* 11096). For other examples see F. P. Wilson, 'The English Jestbooks of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *HLQ*, 2 (1938), 121-58.

rigorously, and the art of debate also featured prominently in the grammar schools.¹¹ Courtesy books, many deriving from Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528), taught aspiring gentlemen that one of the most important accomplishments of civil life was a well-rounded aptitude for debate.¹² Under the influence of such forms of education, answer-poetry became representative of a literary mindset in which writers took pride in getting the better of their peers. As Downs-Gamble observes, "if the first objective of the Renaissance writer was the successful imitation of a master, the second was mastery", and perhaps in no mode of verse is this objective so pronounced as it is in answer-poetry.¹³ Such competitiveness even filtered down to printers and balladeers. According to Rollins,

When one press turned out a ballad that met with popular approval, rival printers, eager to share in the profits, at once imitated, moralized, answered, or attacked it. [...] Printers often contented themselves with ordering balladists to write replies, devoid of piety or moralizing, to some ballad issued by a rival.¹⁴

There is a distinctly mercantile aspect to such verse exchanges, and ballad mongers were particularly adept at recognising and manufacturing demand for their ballads. As Rollins points

¹¹ Formal disputation was a conspicuous and rigorously practised component of the legal training received at the Inns. This included daily disputations after dinner and supper, and mock disputations which took place "every night during Grand Vacation and twice a week in term", Philip J. Finkelpearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple: An Elizabethan Dramatist in his Social Setting* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1969), p.9. Among the rhetorical tropes taught at the grammar schools was the *destructio* or *subversio*, using which the student learnt how to "overthrow any argument based on probability with one of his own, based on a counter-probability", Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: California UP, 1978), p.46. A significant number of poets who passed through the Inns apply their debating skills through verse answering, including Laurence Blundeston, John Donne, Barnabe Googe, John Grange, Edward Guilpin, Sir John Harington, the younger, John Marston, Alexander Neville, Benjamin Rudyerd, George Turberville and Sir Henry Wotton. Finkelpearl (1969) lists several of them as resident students of the Middle Temple (Appendix A, pp.261-4).

¹² *The Book of the Courtier by Count Baldassare Castiglione, Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby: Anno 1561*, ed. Ernest Rhys (London and Toronto: Dent; NY: Dutton, 1928). Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

¹³ Downs-Gamble (1996), 2.10.

¹⁴ Hyder Edward Rollins, 'The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad', *PMLA*, 34 (1919), 258-339 (pp.292-3).

out, “Occasionally a wide-awake stationer would print both a ballad and its answer, as when on the same day Hugh Singleton licensed “Though Fondly Men write their Minds, Women be of Gentle Kind” and “I will Saye as I do Find, my Wife to me is nothing Kind””.¹⁵ Similarly, Richard Jones licensed a ballad condemning the murder of George Turberville’s brother, Nicholas, and an answer in defence of the murderer, John Morgaine, with the *Stationers’ Register* on the same day.¹⁶

Further up the social ladder, poets, scribes and manuscript compilers were also scrupulous to emphasise the discursive nature of verse composition, suggesting that the dialogue form was a highly marketable commodity and, whether for private circulation or public consumption, held considerable fascination for the reading public. Answer-poems in manuscript and print are often signposted clearly by titles such as ‘Answer’, ‘Responsio’, ‘Rejoinder’, ‘Replication’ or ‘Reply’, and whole sections of miscellanies and entire collections of verse are devoted to verse answering.¹⁷

It is initially surprising then that modern scholarship has not inherited a satisfactory terminology with which to describe the relationship between answer-poems and the poems they answer in Early Modern England whereas, among others, Scottish literary culture has the flyting, hymns and songs, the antiphon, classical pastoral, the *amæbæan*, Troubadour verse, the *tenson*, *sirvente* and *partimen* and Japanese verse, the *tanka* and *renku*.¹⁸ This is

¹⁵ Rollins (1919), p.293.

¹⁶ These poems are discussed and transcribed by Norma H. Hodgson, ‘The Murder of Nicholas Turberville. Two Elizabethan Ballads’, *MLR*, 33 (1938), 520-7. See also Cat. W 294 and W 296.

¹⁷ See Cat. Anon 17, Anon 19, Anon 41, C 83, E 120-1, H 145, R 231, R 236-9 and W 299-302.

¹⁸ George Puttenham makes only a fleeting analysis of verse answering, although he does use several answer-poems to illustrate his rhetorical tropes and schemes. He uses the term *Antipophora* to describe a pair of poems in which a poet preempts and forestalls a competitive or aggressive response to his first poem by answering it himself. He also uses a classical rather than a contemporary example, although there was an abundance of homegrown material from which he might have chosen, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. R. C. Alston (printed by Richard

probably attributable to the diversity of verse answering in Renaissance England, which counted many of these verse types (obviously excluding the *tanka* and *renku*) among its influences. As Steven Marx points out, moreover, the “babel” of technical terms for various types of debate poems in different literary and oral cultures is itself a hindrance to establishing a consensual terminology.¹⁹

In this study I have steered as closely as possible to considering direct answers exclusively and excluded examination of related verse types such as companion poems, echo poems, parodies, imitations or dialogues between personified entities such as Love, Virtue, Temperance and so forth. As for the material accepted as verse answering proper, I have stuck generally to verses where there is fairly clear evidence (often provided in the title) that the Renaissance perception of them was as direct responses, rather than imitations, parodies or any other sort of reworking or formal pairing. I have also included verses where such an answering poem-answered poem relationship is postulated by recent scholarship.

This said, answer-poetry is nearly as generically, formally and socially heterogeneous as the corpus of Renaissance verse itself, and this obviously presents a challenge controlling and organising primary materials. The abundance of available material has necessitated the imposition of firm limits upon the scope of this study. The bias has been strongly towards those verse exchanges where their social context is either most readily apparent or self-consciously displayed and away from those in which the act of answering appears foremostly a literary exercise. Emphasis has also been placed upon answers that,

Field, 1589; repr. Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar, 1968), pp.170-2.

¹⁹ Steven Marx, *Youth Against Age: Generational Strife in Renaissance Poetry with Special Reference to Edmund Spenser's 'The Shepheardes Calender'* (NY and Bern: Lang, 1985), p.154. An electronic edition is available at: <http://cla.calpoly.edu/~smarx/Publications/Youth>

within the scope of the material collected, can be grouped together convincingly by theme, subject matter and genre.

The availability of primary material also determines which groups or categories of verse answering might be approached, and over what timescale. Indeed, there are occasions when answers related by type, subject matter and influence are separated by a substantial chronological hiatus. This is often attributable to one man, John Skelton, whose preoccupation with the dialogic context of verse anticipated and provided a source of inspiration for the self-conscious dialogism of answer-poets well into the seventeenth century. Limits are, of course, imposed by the tantalising and substantial number of answer-poems known to have existed from the *Stationers' Register* that have perished. Owing to the occasional nature of conversational verse this is inevitable.

The reader is referred to the 'Select Catalogue of Answer-Poetry in Manuscript and Print, 1485-1625' provided in Appendix One for what is hopefully a useful mapping of the wider genre. The process of compiling this catalogue has furnished much of the raw material that enabled this thesis to be written, allowing the referencing and cross-referencing of poems and the sorting of them into generic and chronological groupings. Without this resource it would have been a much more formidable task to establish perspectives upon the nature of the genre and its social functions. It is hoped that the catalogue might continue to be of use in future studies of answer-poetry.

While the forms and functions of answering verses are extensive, they can be broken down into the basic types of political, religious and social relationships that they articulate. From the examination of these groups it is then possible to ascertain the roles played by answer-poetry as one of the most pronounced manifestations of dialectical poetics in the

Tudor and early-Stuart periods. Marotti attributes the vogue for answer-poetry to the “socially dialogic context of the manuscript miscellanies and poetry anthologies”, and observes that answer-poetry is “less [...] the product of isolated artistic geniuses than [...] continuous with other forms of communication”.²⁰ Although my material might have been arranged in a variety of other ways, it seemed helpful to break down Marotti’s definition into the categories of socially and antisocially dialogic verse which make up the two parts of this thesis. Socially dialogic exchanges are then divided into courtship verses, ones between married couples or about marriage and familiar verse epistles. What I term antisocially dialogic exchanges are divided into flyting and responses to libel and satire. The lines of division are decided primarily by subject matter, but the role of subjectivity and the way poets situate themselves within particular subjective frameworks is also important. Whereas hostile verse exchanges tend towards presenting their personas in the guise of individualistic, independent voices, dependant upon no external authority excepting that of their monarch or church, there is a corresponding tendency in socially dialogic verses towards intersubjectivity and the fostering of the impression that social theories are being formulated or confirmed through a process of collaborative reasoning.

The two chapters of Part One concentrate on antisocially dialogic verse exchanges. The sixteenth-century social climate was ripe for cultivating a dialectically fractious culture. Despite the civilising, courteous sort of debate propagated by the conduct book, the religious divides precipitated by the Reformation, the surge of defamation and the inadequacy of libel laws, among other influences, ensured that the debate orientated schooling of the literate classes would be employed to make verse answering one of the most conspicuous forms of agonistic poetic expression during the period.

²⁰ Marotti (1995), p.159 and p.160.

In Chapter One I focus upon verse exchanges that trade in libel and satire. I look particularly at two specific influences upon the language of libellous exchanges, verse libels airing personal differences that borrow their language from the code of duelling (focussing upon libellous verse exchanges associated with Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh), and propagandist verse responses to antigovernment libels and pseudo-seditious verses based upon the language of the royal proclamation (focussing upon verse conversations involving John Skelton, Thomas Knell, Elizabeth I, Sir Henry Goodyer, Thomas Norton and James I).

In my examination of hostile exchanges between satirists I look at the sort of self-publicists and controversialists who model their personas upon the classical satirists, and who perceive that the fulfillment of this role involves attracting detractors with whom to spar. This includes a selection of verse controversies precipitated by Skelton at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and an examination of the provocative strategies employed in the War of the Satirists at the turn of the seventeenth century, involving John Marston and Joseph Hall initially and later escalating into an exchange of verse pamphlets attributed to Edward Guilpin, Nicholas Breton and John Weever.

In Chapter Two I focus upon a related but distinctly different form of hostile verse exchange, the verse flyting. The flyting is an intensely patriotic affair which centres characteristically upon the court and envisages the person of the king as its primary audience. These have been divided into cross-cultural flytings and domestic flytings.

Cross-cultural flytings appear to serve a similar purpose to the nationalist polemics of the troubadour *sirvente* of medieval Europe, in which official or pseudo-official representatives of rival nations exchange abuse during times of war or when diplomacy has broken down. These arise during periods of hostility with France and Scotland. The first Anglo-French flyting considered centres around the court of Henry VII and involves

responses by Henry's courtiers to a verse libel made against him by the French diplomat, Robert Gaguin. The second involves Sir Thomas More and the French humanist, Germain Brice (known as Germanus Brixius), who dispute in verse the details of an Anglo-French sea battle of 1514. The Anglo-Scottish flytings considered involve an exchange between John Skelton and one Dundas, and flyting answers of Alexander Montgomerie, Sir Robert Sempill and an anonymous Scottish verse answer. The latter three of these date from around the time of the Northern Rebellion (1569).

The four domestic flytings examined are spread out over a century and take place between John Skelton and Christopher Garnish (1513), Thomas Smyth and William Gray (1540), Thomas Churchyard and Thomas Camel (c.1552) and John Taylor and William Fennor (1614). Originally such flytings seem to have been court entertainments, although they often voice rivalries that have their basis in personal, religious or political differences. When considered together they reveal a progressive movement away from the physical location of the court in flyting, though they all envisage the king as audience and adjudicator of the dispute.

In the three shorter chapters of Part Two I examine selections of verse answering that are grouped together under the heading of socially dialogic exchanges, and divided into the themes of marriage, friendship, and courtship/courtiership. These are not always amicable, but they do articulate, negotiate and dispute the dynamics of social relationships, and the rules that in practice, and probably more often in theory, govern them.

Chapter Three considers a selection of verses exchanges from the mid-sixteenth century debating the subject of marriage. These are arguments against and for marriage in which the latter takes precedence, and ones negotiating or debating the respective duties of husbands and wives. The poems explore some of the major concerns and anxieties found in the literature of the mid-sixteenth century regarding the status of marriage and the nature of

the proper relationship between husbands and wives. They are examined here in their context as Reformation propaganda. To simplify, in these exchanges the answering poems, whether advocating marriage or emphasising the paternal duties of husbands, serve as metonyms for the values of the Reformation, while the poems answered serve as metonyms for Catholicism. As pairs they exploit the social dialogism of the answer-poem in order to confirm normative reforming values in favour of marriage over the single life.

In Chapter Four familiar, amicable verse conversations between friends are considered; specifically ones centred around Barnabe Googe, Isabella Whitney and John Donne. The participants in these exchanges trade in mutual assumptions that confirm and support the cohesion and coalescence of their social groups. Such mutual assumptions might be mundane clichés that provide a straightforward means of establishing common ground, but they might also be developed more subtly through the course of an exchange. What is remarkable about these verse conversations is the extent to which they might be choreographed by one central member who imposes an agenda upon the group.

Chapter Five explores the extent to which conventions of courtly and/or amorous discourse in verse simultaneously enabled and inhibited women's literary creativity. In the first section a selection of female-voiced answers from manuscripts and printed miscellanies associated with court poets of the 1530s are examined with particular attention to the ways in which such answers serve as thermometers for the adherence of the poem answered to codes of courtly decorum. In the second section the verse responses of three Elizabethan women poets (Elizabeth I, Frances Prannell Seymour, Countess of Hertford and Lady Mary Cheke) and one Jacobean (Lady Mary Wroth) are examined for their capacity to undermine, manipulate or resist conventions of courtly or amorous discourse in order to cultivate personal voices. The constraints under which they work are considerable even when these conventions are challenged. Thus, while the answer-poem might provide

women with a legitimate literary role, it is simultaneously a cultural symptom of the restrictions placed upon female speech.

Finally, the study includes a 'Select Catalogue of Answer-Poetry in Print and Manuscript, 1485-1625' (Appendix A). Although this resource is not exhaustive, the poems referenced supply the want of any comparable reference guide available from which to formulate a critical and theoretical approach to the genre. The format of the catalogue allows for the presentation of primary material in a more logical format than could be achieved in a conventional bibliography and facilitates the signposting of the literary, bibliographical and authorial relationships between answering verses and the verses answered. The resource is also intended to provide insight into the research underlying this doctoral dissertation. It offers a graphic illustration of the need for the scope of this study and for the reasoning behind the limitations imposed upon it. It is further intended to assist readers in evaluating my synthesis of available primary material.

Part I. The Art of Polemical Response: Wit, Reputation and Patriotism in Flytings and Verse Answers to Libel and Satire

Introduction

In *De Oratore*, Cicero describes riposte, or raillery, as an innate faculty of wit rather than as an art: “tum vero in hoc altero dicacitatis quid habet ars loci, cum ante illud facete dictum emissum haerere debeat, quam cogitari potuisse videatur?” (“What room, pray, is there for Art in raillery, that other sort, wherein the shaft of wit has to be sped and hit its mark, with no palpable pause for thought?”, II. liv. 219-20). Such artless, impromptu wit was a cherished faculty in the sixteenth century, and although considered the product of a native aptitude, as a highly prized accomplishment, it was also nurtured through rehearsal, practice and education. The ability to retort, reply or rejoin effectively to defamation was, in effect, the art of simulating artlessness and, while skills in raillery and acrimonious retorts did not form part of a formal education, they might be acquired and enhanced by reference to their opposite number, namely the civilising art of debate taught at the grammar schools, Inns and Universities, and propagated by the conduct book.

In Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* Touchstone has the following to say about the art of polemical response at court:

Jaques: Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?

Touchstone: O, sir, we quarrel in print by the book, as you have books for good manners. I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. (V.iv.84-91)²¹

Touchstone, who appears to have considered the art of literary quarreling in detail, explains to Jaques an imaginative formal taxonomy of it based roughly upon the etiquette of duelling,

²¹ All quotations of Shakespeare’s plays are from the Alexander text unless otherwise stated.

whereby “giving the lie”, or casting a slur upon someone’s honour, is responded to by a formal challenge to combat. What is significant about this is that Touchstone is aware that there exists a formal methodology of literary quarrelling and that this represents a counter-culture to the sort of civil discourse propagated by the conduct book.²² One source of the social rhetoric of this counter-culture is the fencing manual, and it is perhaps not coincidental that Touchstone’s taxonomy is reminiscent of the divisions of the first book of a fencing manual attributed to Sir William Segar, *The Booke of Honor and Armes* (1590), which includes definitions of lies “certeine”, “conditionall”, “generall” and “speciall” among others. Disputative answer-poems mostly fall into the category of “lies certeine”, whereby ill words are “spoken and affirmed” plainly and directly against another.²³ This is a poetics that is engaged immediately with the social world and which appears in stark contrast to Sidney’s gentle, non-affirmatory and comparatively disengaged poesy.

The language of duelling is only one among many idioms of polemical verse answering which together represent, as Touchstone’s statement suggests, a poetics of polemical response. These other idioms tend to derive from more official sources such as the language of legal disputation taught at the Inns of Court and the language of the royal proclamation. The employment of such skills for exchanges of abuse was nonetheless associated in the Renaissance mind with incivility and sedition.

Conduct books often attempt to dissuade their readers from being seduced into

²² David Lampe describes this counter-culture as using an “inverted rhetoric of abuse” whereby Ciceronian rhetorical techniques of civil oratory are turned to purely abusive or defamatory ends, “‘Flyting no Reason Hath,’ The Inverted Rhetoric of Abuse”, in *The Early Renaissance, Acta*, ed. Aldo S. Bernardo [Proceedings of SUNY Regional Conferences in Medieval Studies], (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1978), V. pp.101-20 (p.101).

²³ [Sir William Segar(?)], *The Booke of Honor and Armes* (printed by Richard Jones, 1590), sigs Biii^r-Ci^v, STC 22163. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

exchanges of abuse. Poetry manuals are equally dismissive of the practical value of vituperative riposte, and such verses appear to have been regarded as unworthy of serious consideration. Puttenham, for instance, although he gives some consideration to nipping epigrams and biting satires, is particularly keen to dissociate what he calls “*Diræ*” from his repertory of verse forms. “*Diræ*”, which in Puttenham’s description sounds like something between a response to libel and participation in a flyting, is relegated to “A certaine auncient forme of poesie by which men did vse to reproch their enemies”. It is a pagan practice that ought not to be emulated and therefore is proscribed from what he considers a courtly and poetical education. He writes of those ancients who

seeke reuenge against them that malice [them], or practise [their] harmes [...]. This made the auncient Poetes to inuent a meane to rid the gall of all such Vindicatiue men [...]. And this was done by a maner of imprecation, or as we call it by cursing and banning of the parties, and wishing all euill to a light vpon them, and though it neuer the sooner happened, yet was it great easment to the boiling stomacke [...]. We Christians are forbidden to vse such vncharitable fashions, and willed to referre all our reuenges to God alone.

No wonder that he dismisses John Skelton, one of the most influential vituperative answer-poets during the Tudor and early-Stuart periods, as “a rude rayling rimer & [in] all his doings ridiculous”.²⁴ Contrary to Puttenham’s appraisal, there is ample evidence to suggest that an aptitude for heated riposte might carry considerable social prestige and that in practice satirists, flyters and victims of libel had recourse to a wide-ranging repertoire of literary conventions, and a set of rhetorical strategies and techniques that amount to a vibrant and sometimes prestigious art of response. In this first section I examine this mode of discourse by taking a broad historical and chronological perspective of responses to libel, satire and flyting, placing individual answer-poems and their antecedents in their immediate political, religious, sociological and biographical contexts, and attempting to establish the role of the hostile response in Renaissance poetics.

²⁴ Puttenham, (repr. 1968), p.46 and p.69.

Chapter 1: “What lyfe may lyue, long vndefamde”: Personal and Propagandist Responses to Libel and Satire

The Verse Libel

A Sociological Perspective

The foremost influence upon the sharp increase in hostile verse answering in the sixteenth century was the corresponding and well-documented epidemic of defamation; as Thomas Churchyard complained during his verse war with Thomas Camel (1551-2), “What lyfe may lyue, long vndefamde”.²⁵ Invective is dialogic in nature and thereby any increase in libellous verse might be accompanied predictably by a corresponding increase in verse answering. As M. Lindsay Kaplan observes, “defamation is not only reversible, it is also reflexive, since each party in effect counter-accuses the other”. Kaplan also remarks that “poetry was considered an excellent medium for defamation by its malicious practitioners”.²⁶ During the century then the conditions were highly favourable for a proliferation of hostile verse answering.

Numerous factors contributed towards this impulse to respond to libels in kind specifically among the nobility, gentry and clergy. In summary, these included ineffectual legal reactions to prohibited literature, the duration and expense of litigation against libels and the spasmodic and inconsistent suppression of opposition literature through censorship and licensing laws.²⁷ The theological controversies of the Reformation in particular were a fertile influence upon the proliferation of acrimonious verse exchanges as well as

²⁵ *The Contention betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell, vpon Dauid Dycers Dreame* (printed for Mychell Loble, 1560), sig. Bii^v, STC 5225.

²⁶ M. Lindsay Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England* (Cambridge and NY: CUP, 1997), p.15 and p.11.

²⁷ See, for instance, Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp.240-2; Philip Hamburger, ‘The Development of the Law of Seditious Libel and the Control of the Press’, *SLR*, 37 (1985), 661-765 (p.663) and Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in the Elizabethan Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp.4-5.

generating a multitude of more formal, scholarly disputations in prose.²⁸ Since the Reformation took shape in dialectical opposition to Catholicism and reformers often favoured setting the ‘truth’ of their own works in contrast to the erroneous arguments of other religious groups, it is unsurprising that generalised reforming principles filtered through into popular culture through the answer-poetry of the ballad press. As John Huntington suggests in his anti-Protestant poem ‘The Genealogy of Heresy’, which was subsequently answered in prose by John Bale, “Heresye [the Reformation] begate Stryfe and debate”.²⁹ Pre-Reformation examples of ecclesiastical verse disputes are comparatively rare; one of the few examples being the Upland poems (*Jack Upland, Friar Daw’s Reply* and *Upland’s Rejoinder*), which engage in a verse dispute fuelled by the Wycliffian controversy.³⁰ No post-Reformation verse answers appear to have attained the notoriety of the Martin Marprelate prose pamphlets and the official responses they provoked, but personal, official and quasi-official responses in kind to controversial and polemical verse are nonetheless prolific throughout this period.³¹ As such, it seems that answering in kind was perhaps the most utilitarian defence available against abusive or subversive verses.

There are understandable reasons why literary and historical attention to libel has focused predominantly upon official and legal reactions, and upon the threat libelling was considered to pose to individual reputations and to social stability, rather than upon answers in kind specifically. Pauline Croft writes, for instance, that libellers were perceived

²⁸ See Cat. Anon 6, Anon 30, A 62, A 67, H 155, K 192, K 193a-b, L 197, M 216, P 226, R 229, R 232-3 and W 310.

²⁹ *A Mysterye of Inyquyte Contayned within the Heretycall Genealogye of Ponce Pantolabus is Here Both Dyclosed & Confuted by Johan Bale* (printed at Geneva by Michael Wood, 1548), p.4. STC 1303.

³⁰ See *Jack Upland, Friar Daw’s Reply and Upland’s Rejoinder*, ed. P. L. Heyworth (OUP, 1968).

³¹ A few contributions to the Marprelate controversy did appear in the form of exchanged

to “disgrace those in authority, cause disobedience and sedition, and bring all to confusion”. In the terms of the threat that libels posed to personal reputations Kaplan claims, “it is clear that the desire to preserve reputation in Early Modern England positioned defamation as a central consideration of the period”. Similarly, Lawrence Stone observes, “One of the most characteristic features of the age was its hyper-sensitive insistence upon the overriding importance of reputation”.³²

The notion that abusive words might be capable of inflicting actual physical harm upon their recipients also deserves mentioning as a potential source of anxiety since many of the verses I have selected boast of, or imply, their intentions to achieve such maledictory ends.³³ The Romans endeavoured purposely to deflect curses by responses in kind, and it would be mistaken to dismiss such motives out of hand in sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century England.³⁴ Puttenham is sceptical of the efficacy of pagan curses that “neuer the

verses, although these are self-conscious about their divergence from prose (see Cat. Anon 22).

³² Pauline Croft, ‘Libels, Popular Literacy and Public Opinion in Early Modern England’, *HR*, 68 (1995), 266-85 (p.271); Kaplan (1997), p.2 and Stone (1965), p.25.

³³ Robert C. Elliott discusses beliefs regarding the potency of words as curses in the Early Modern period in his *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1966). See also Jacqueline Simpson, “‘The Weird Sisters Wandering’: Burlesque Witchery in Montgomerie’s *Flying*’, *Fo*, 106 (1995), 9-20. Among the most explicit instances in which maledictory curses are used in English verse answering is an example that occurs slightly outside the historical scope of this study. In his answer-poem, ‘A Charme for a Libeller’, the dramatist, Philip Massinger, portrays his anonymous detractor as a demon whom he will incarnate and trap in a magic circle (implicitly in-the-round) in order to exact his “coniuracon” upon him (l.19):

I’me in my Circle & I haue thee here,
ragg of a Rime &, if thou dar’st, appeare,
son of the people, thinge *without* a name.
How shall I raise thee or *with* what arte frame
an answeare to thy nothinge? (ll.1-5)

Quoted from Peter Beal, ‘Massinger at Bay: Unpublished Verses in a War of the Theatres’, *YES*, 10 (1980), 190-203 (p.196).

³⁴ See, for instance, H. D. Jocelyn, ‘The Poet Cn. Naevius, P. Cornelius Scipio and Q. Caecilius Metellus’, *Ant*, 3 (1969), 32-47 (p.47).

sooner happened” for all their venom; however, both Sir Philip Sidney and Thomas Campion accept that others give credence to such beliefs, although they are noticeably non-committal when it comes to subscribing to them themselves.³⁵

Neuroses about the dangers posed by satire and libel were deeply ingrained in Reformation and Renaissance society at all levels. From an official point of view the propensity of libel and rumour to seduce the populace into tumult and disobedience is a stock theme of official reactions to the spread of proscribed literature.³⁶ This concern with the effects of subversive literature is particularly evident in royal proclamations. Twelve proclamations were issued specifically against seditious literature and rumour during the reign of Elizabeth. During the reigns of her predecessors the issuing of such proclamations seems to escalate gradually: Henry VII (one), Henry VIII (four), and during the shorter reigns of Elizabeth’s siblings, Edward VI (two) and Mary I (five).³⁷ Legislation included the tightening of libel laws during the Marian years, the Bishops’ Ban on satire (1st June,

³⁵ When considering the possibility that his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602) might be met with detraction, Campion writes of “those very expert and ready at their weapon, that can if need be extempore (as they say) rhyme a man to death”. Although he associates a hostile poetics of response with rhetorical accomplishment here, he consigns the incantatory magical powers of such verse to hearsay. At the close of his *Apology for Poetry*, Sidney threatens jokingly to satirise to death those readers inappreciative of the value and power of poetry in terms which suggest his attitude towards such beliefs is equally non-committal:

Though I will not wish unto you the ass’s ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a poet’s verses (as Bubonax was) to hang himself, nor to be rhymed to death, as is said to be done in Ireland; yet thus much curse I must send you.

Both quoted from Jones ed. (1961), p.56 and p.54.

³⁶ One of the numerous examples is provided by a proclamation of 1536, ‘Pardoning Pilgrimage of Grace’, in which supporters of the protest are absolved upon the grounds of their credulity towards antigovernment propaganda. Their offences

proceeded of ignorance and by cause of sundry false tales never minded or intended by his highness or any of his council, but most craftily, untruly, and most spitefully set abroad amongst you by certain malicious and seditious persons.

Tudor Royal Proclamations, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols (London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1961-9), I. (1964), p.246.

1599), and new laws in response to the posthumous libelling of the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift (1605).³⁸ A comprehensive understanding of reactions to abusive and/or illicit verse and opposition literature, however, requires that verse answers in kind also be taken into account as a strategy of response in their own right. In fact, it is characteristic of the majority of the answer-poets I examine that they compete to project the most orthodox and conspicuously royalist argument for the social good against the supposedly seditious opinions and antisocial activities of their rivals. Some of them even emulate, second or act as substitutes for royal proclamations against subversive literature.

Proclamations against opposition literature and seditious speech tend not to enforce the law, although they serve as reminders to those responsible for enforcing it, and the public in general, to remember their duty. One such example is a proclamation from 1559 for ‘Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes and Plays, Especially on Religion or Policy’ in which “officers that have authority [are charged] to see common peace kept in commandment to arrest and imprison the parties so offending for the space of 14 days”.³⁹ Officers are simply being reminded strongly to act upon their authority here. The legal efficacy of proclamations against seditious words was even more questionable during the later reign of James I. It was conspicuous in a proclamation from 1620, for instance, that the multitude of offenders discoursing upon matters of state rendered prosecution impractical and, in 1621, a proclamation to the same purpose simply created confusion among London’s citizens.⁴⁰

³⁷ These can all be found in Hughes and Larkin eds (1961-9).

³⁸ See Croft (1995), pp.267-8 and Alastair Bellany, ‘Raylinge Rymes and Vaunting Verse’: Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England, 1603-1628’, in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp.285-310 (p.287).

³⁹ Hughes and Larkin eds (1961), II. p.116.

⁴⁰ See F. J. Levy, ‘Staging the News’, in *Print, Manuscript and Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol

Frequently, such proclamations also provide evidence that outlawed literature was not always dealt with to the satisfaction of the authorities. One from 1573 rebukes the “negligence of bishops and other magistrates, who should cause the good laws and acts of parliament made in this behalf to be better executed, and not so dissembled and winked at as hitherto (it may appear) that they have been”. The proclamation complains that, because of such laxity, religious non-conformists have been allowed the freedom to disseminate their propaganda “both by open preachings and writings”.⁴¹ Such anxieties about the influence of oppositional discourses helped to create a niche for pot-poets, courtier poets and zealous statesmen alike hoping to advance their careers or reputations by answering in kind such propagators of heterodox opinions.

In the case of personal defamation, opting for litigation against detractors, although common among the merchant classes, was a course of action that seems to have been less appealing to members of the nobility, gentry and clergy. In J. A. Sharpe’s survey of sexual slander, for instance, it is indicated, within the narrow scope of his research, that they rarely brought cases to court in comparison with their social inferiors who exhibited significantly more litigious tendencies.⁴² Thus, while the importance attributed to reputation transcends

(Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2000), pp.252-78 (pp.252-3). These proclamations are discussed pp.51-6.

⁴¹ ‘Enforcing Act for Uniformity of Common Prayer’, Hughes and Larkin eds (1961), II. p.380 and p.379.

⁴² Sharpe writes that the “eagerness to defend reputation [...] was something which ran from the top to very near the bottom of English society” and accounts for “the explosion in litigation over defamation which occurred from the mid sixteenth century onwards”. The social status of those exhibiting enthusiasm for litigation against insult was, however, “usually inferior to that of the gentry [and of] the middling sort; tradesmen, shopkeepers, yeomen, artisans, and the wives of members of these occupational groups”. Noticeably, one of Sharpe’s few examples of slander against the gentry was responded to personally. He cites the example of William Vaughan, “a Welsh gentleman who wrote a lengthy book against slander as an answer to those who alleged that his wife’s death through being struck by lightning was a divine punishment for sinful living”. *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts*

social stratification, attitudes towards what might be the appropriate form of response to defamation seem to be particularly class determined, and those belonging to the lower gentry and above often appear to prefer defending their reputations personally rather than resorting to law. In fact, in the domestic flytings that I examine in Chapter Two, a common accusation levelled by the protagonists is that their adversaries' inability to defend their reputations without outside help is a symptom of their lack of dignity and social standing. This sociological phenomenon of individual responsibility may be attributable, in part, to the existence of some sort of unspoken legal amnesty upon defamation among these groups, such as existed in classical Rome and in the case of courtly flyting in Scotland.⁴³ Such an arrangement would seem to corroborate that a considerable degree of

at York, Borthwick Papers, no. 58 (York: Borthwick Papers of Historical Research, [1980(?)]), p.3 and p.17.

There are exceptions whereby those from the artisan and merchant classes opted for exchanges of libel. The balladeer, William Elderton, found himself drawn into an exchange of invective with both a hosier and merchant tailor, for instance (see Cat. F 132). Even at this lower end of the literary marketplace, however, balladeers, printers and their employees and apprentices fought many of their disputes verbally rather than on paper and sought recourse to the legal authority vested in the Company of Stationers to hear defamation cases. The Stationers imposed numerous fines for "vnseemly wordes" exchanged between those involved in the printing trade, and these are recorded in the *Stationers' Register* (SR, I. 217). In one example the entry reads,

Receved of nycholas cleston for his fyne for that [he] Ded brawle and chyde with thomas [sturroppe] and also havynge vndecent Wordes therwithall iijj^s.

Sturroppe received the smaller fine of ij^s (SR, I. 276).

⁴³ According to Niall Rudd, while street flyting was prohibited and could incur harsh penalties including imprisonment and death, "political enemies paid each other[s' libels] back in kind instead of going to law [and] the same applied to proceedings in the senate", *Themes in Roman Satire* (Duckworth, 1986), p.43. Freedom of speech was permitted to the Roman lower classes, so it seems, during the ritualised exchanges of insult that took place at the Saturnalian festivals. See, for instance, John Dryden, *A Discourse Concerning Satire*, in *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, ed. George Watson, 2 vols (Dent; NY: Dutton, 1968), II. p.107 (subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations). Courtly flytings in Scotland enjoyed a similar sort of amnesty whereas, according to Priscilla Bawcutt, street flyting might be severely punished, *Dunbar the Makar* (OUP, 1992), pp.223-4. Andrew McRae also notices that the libel appears to be "situated in a peculiarly licensed discursive space" in the early-Stuart period owing to the tastes of consumers of manuscript miscellanies,

responsibility rested with individuals when it came to preserving their good name.

A cultivated aptitude for riposte could prove a highly advantageous personal accomplishment. It was an admired faculty that could sometimes prove essential to survival in a culture of defamation. When defending himself against accusations of treasonous speech brought against him by his enemies, a quick-witted rejoinder actually saved Sir Thomas Wyatt's life as well as his reputation. Upon being accused that he had wished a thief's death upon the king, or that he be "caste owte" of a cart's arse, Wyatt countered with the rejoinder that his statement had been misconstrued and that he had actually said that he hoped the king would not be "lefte owte of the cartes ars"; that he hoped Henry's interests were not being passed over.⁴⁴ Wyatt's pithy defence, which secured his acquittal, follows succinctly Cicero's recommendation for effective retorts whereby a defendant ought to apply the same commonplaces or *topoi* turned to a difference sense than that intended by the plaintiff.⁴⁵ This is, in fact, a general principle of verse responses to libel which characteristically turn the libeller's words back upon him in the most economical fashion possible, paying like for like.

'The Literary Culture of Early Stuart Libeling', *MP*, 97 (2000), 364-92 (p.375).

⁴⁴ 'Wyatt's Defence to the Iudges after the Indictment and the Evidence', in *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1963), p.197 and p.198 (for a fuller account of this episode see pp.196-9).

⁴⁵

Iam illud perspicuum est, omnium rerum in contrarias partes facultatem ex eisdem suppeditari locis. Sed argumento resistendum est aut eis, quae comprobandi eius causa sumuntur, reprehendendis, aut demonstrando, id, quod concludere illi velint, non effici ex propositis nec esse consequens.

By this time it is plain that the power to argue both sides of every question is abundantly furnished from the same commonplaces. But your opponents' proof must be countered, either by contradicting the arguments chosen to establish it, or by showing that their desired conclusion is not supported by their premisses and does not follow therefrom. (*De Oratore*, II. liii., 215-16)

Castiglione was later to make the same point (see II. p.150), and see also Quintilian (V.

The emphasis placed upon defending one's honour personally was also an indirect consequence of ineffectual legal provision and enforcement of the law, as well as of deliberate or conscious social practice where the libelling of private individuals, public figures and antigovernment polemics are concerned. In the case of prosecuting seditious literature through the courts, extensive evidence was necessary in order to secure a conviction.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as Philip Hamburger points out, while "grand juries were sometimes reluctant to indict gentlemen for paper crimes if mutilation or hanging were likely to follow", failure to prosecute was often also due to the inadequacy of libel laws.⁴⁷ At the beginning of the century, in his *Ware the Hawk*, Skelton claims to have resorted to using a verse complaint as an alternative to legal proceedings once recourse to the ecclesiastical court failed.⁴⁸ Stanley Eugene Fish comments that the "speaker regards his poem as a second opportunity to plead his case; although he has lost in the courts he turns to his audience for a second hearing".⁴⁹ Similarly, a number of hostile verse exchanges are presented as informal substitutes for legal proceedings and use legal terminology such as 'Replication', 'Rejoinder' and 'Surrejoinder' in their titles to draw attention to this.⁵⁰

13).

⁴⁶ Clegg (1997), p.33.

⁴⁷ Hamburger (1985), p.676. Hamburger analyses the various legal alternatives available to the authorities to punish and suppress illicit literature and finds their common feature, from at least the 1550s onwards, to be their general weakness and ineffectuality (see pp.666-92).

⁴⁸ *The Poetical Works of John Skelton: With Notes and Some Account of the Author and his Writings*, ed. Alexander Dyce, 2 vols (Rodd, 1843), I. pp.155-67. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

⁴⁹ Stanley Eugene Fish, *John Skelton's Poetry* (London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1965), p.89.

⁵⁰ See Cat. C 83-4, C 91-2 and S 268. In his *Boke Named the Governour* (1531) Sir Thomas Elyot describes the parts that make up legal disputations as "Narrations, Partitions, Confirmations and Confutations, named of some Reprehensions, they haue Declarations, Barres, Replications and Reioyndres", and suggests that the mastery of these should be accomplished by all gentlemen irrespective of whether they are practicing lawyers, ed. Foster Watson (Dent; NY: Dutton, 1907), I. xiv. Subsequent references for this text are given in

Hamburger, whose study stretches from 1550 to beyond the end of our period, also illustrates that while libel laws, and other available legal remedies for seditious literature, were subject to considerable change, their ineffectuality remained relatively consistent.⁵¹ Thus, answers in kind remained important weapons of counter-attack for both individuals and the government so long as this situation persisted. Where slander is concerned, Stone concurs and observes that, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, although “litigation [was] the most popular of indoor sports” among the nobility this was “mostly about property” rather than in response to defamation. He goes on to explain that duelling offered an alternative to litigation and that “one of the causes of the spread of duelling was by general consent the absence of adequate legal remedies for slander”.⁵²

Honour, Reputation and the Verbal Duel

As well as borrowing from the legalese of the Inns, the formal language of the duel was also suited to the purpose of airing differences in answer-poetry. Wit-combat and duelling are both intertwined closely with codes of honour, and there are a few notable occasions upon which they become linked to one another in the late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart periods, by which time the evil of duelling had become, in the words of one recent commentator, “dangerously fashionable” among the upper classes.⁵³ It was expected that members of the nobility and gentry would be equipped to defend their reputations in person with either wit or violence, depending upon the occasion. Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, while reeling off a list of sententious advice for

parentheses following quotations.

⁵¹ Hamburger (1985), pp.663-4.

⁵² Stone (1965), p.242 and p.249.

⁵³ David Harris Willson, *James VI and I* (Cape, 1963), p.305. Stone (1965) notices a sharp rise in mentions of duelling in newsletters of the 1590s and again in the first two decades of the

civil conduct in his autobiography, makes a direct comparison between the two:

It is a generall Note That a mans witt is best shewed in his answer and his valour in his defence, that therefore as men learne in Fencing how to ward all blowes and thrusts which are or can bee made against him, Soe it will bee fitting to debate and resolute before hand what you are to say or doe vpon any Affront giuen you.

Although Cherbury had a reputation for pursuing violent quarrels, his consideration of strategies of riposte has impeccable pedagogic credentials. He cites his authorities as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Cicero's *De Oratore* and Quintilian's *De Institutione Oratoria*; clear evidence that the defence of one's reputation through rebuttal was a skill associated closely with rhetorical accomplishment and might indicate a well-rounded education.⁵⁴ That he cites three of the most influential classical authorities upon legal oratory throughout the Renaissance perhaps also indicates that for him, and for his contemporaries, the use of both wit and violence to defend one's good name were deemed sciences that offered alternatives to legal proceedings.⁵⁵

Swordsmanship and rhetorical dexterity are similarly linked together as components of a cultivated urbanity in the criminal underworld of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610). In this play the would-be gentleman, Kastril, who appears in the *dramatis personæ* as 'the angry boy', is particularly keen to learn how to "manage a quarrel, fairly,/ Upon fit terms"; or as Face puts it, the "rules to give and take the lie by" (III.iv. 18-19 and 36-7).⁵⁶ The importance attributed to acquiring such skills suggests the existence of a poetics of

seventeenth century compared to those found in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, p.245.

⁵⁴ *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury Written by Himself*, ed. J. M. Shuttleworth (OUP, 1976), p.28. On Cherbury's reputation see Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), p.80.

⁵⁵ See, for instance, Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1978), p.21. Lodowick Bryskett complains of precisely this phenomenon: "But yet these goodly defenders of this abuse [duelling] say, that a man, both by order of nature, and by the opinion of Philosophers, may well repulse any iniury by his owne vertue, and not by law", *A Discovrse of Civill Life* (printed for Edward Blovnt, 1606; repr. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; NY: De Capo, 1971), p.77. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

response that by the early-seventeenth century, and probably long before, had become a formal accomplishment. It was a skill that needed to be mastered in preparation for wit-combat, just as fencing schools, tournaments and military exercises provided training for single combat and war.

Jonson is even reputed by Thomas Fuller to have engaged in such rehearsals of verbal duelling with William Shakespeare.⁵⁷ The following playful epigrammatic exchange appears to be the only surviving example attributed to them:

Jonson
If, but stage actors, all the world displays,
Where shall we find spectators of their plays?

Shakespeare
Little, or much, of what we see, we do;
We are all both actors and spectators too.⁵⁸

Fuller, who provides a rich, but questionably reliable, source of anecdotes about verse exchanges, describes the putative wit-combats between these men in naval terminology that reflects the pseudo-martial purpose that such exercises in wit might be supposed to fulfil, and in a way suggestive of the Catholic-Protestant hostilities often expressed in such exchanges: “Many were the wit combates betwixt” them, he says, in which Jonson played the part of a (Catholic) “Spanish great Gallion” and Shakespeare that of an (Protestant) “English man of war”. Jonson

was built far higher in Learning; Solid, but Slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English-man of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his Wit and Invention.⁵⁹

The martial terminology employed in verse answering is usually uses language deriving more

⁵⁶ Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*, ed. F. H. Mares (Methuen, 1982).

⁵⁷ See also I. A. Shapiro, ‘The “Mermaid Club”’, *MLR*, 45 (1950), 6-17 (p.6).

⁵⁸ *The Poems of Ben Jonson*, ed. Bernard H. Newdigate (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), p.339.

⁵⁹ Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England, Who for Parts and Learning Have Been Eminent in the Several Counties* (printed for Thomas Williams, 1662), sig. Qqqii^v(2), Wing F2241. Fuller, of course, unlike many earlier commentators had available to him the

from terrestrial combat and the legalese of the Inns of Court. It forms part of a poetics that predictably threatens varying degrees of violence and retribution, and often presents private rivalries as public prosecutions by putting an adversary on trial and condemning him to hanging.⁶⁰ Like classical oratory, it is a “sublimated form of warfare”.⁶¹

Such concerns reflect that these exchanges of abuse are often not only displays of wit, but also declarations in defence of personal honour that might otherwise be settled through the courts or by physical combat. Donald Weinstein believes that there emerged a shift in Italy in the second half of the sixteenth century from duelling to paper quarrels whereby gentlemen increasingly aired their differences by libelling one another rather than resorting to bloodshed.⁶² Such a practice might well have gained popularity in England alongside the growing fascination for Italianate duelling. Although there may be no conscious attempt to imitate evasions of duelling in Italy, the ritual of duelling was highly prone to descend into a protracted paper quarrel owing to the practice of issuing written challenges before the drawing of swords.⁶³ Avoiding physical combat by prolonging the disagreement on paper would be a reasonable strategy of self-preservation without losing face.⁶⁴ The author of *The Booke of Honor and Armes* complains of those who use such evasive tactics, saying that

analogy of ships of the line firing broadsides at one another.

⁶⁰ This scenario appears in many of the examples selected for the first part of this thesis and is proverbial. See Tilley G42.

⁶¹ Javitch (1978), p.25.

⁶² Donald Weinstein, ‘Fighting or Flyting? Verbal Duelling in mid-Sixteenth-Century Italy’, in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp.204-20 (p.205).

⁶³ One duel theorist writes that “he who challengeth doth send some Letter to that effect [...] thereby to expresse in short and proper words the effect of the quarrell and iniurie”, *The Booke of Honor and Armes* (1590), sig. Di^r.

⁶⁴ The introduction of the rapier and dagger into England increased the danger of duelling since they caused injury more easily than the broadsword, the blows from which could be avoided with less difficulty. See, for instance, Stone (1965), pp.242-3 and Peltonen (2003), p.62.

when they ought to be making good their challenges to combat, instead fall into exchanges of “superfluous words” in order to “shewe the dexteritie of their wits, [rather] than the valour of their mindes” (sig. Bii^r). Weinstein examines the Italian example of Captain Lanfredino Cellesi and Piero Gatteschi who, having both failed to receive satisfaction through the courts over a disagreement involving a debt owed by Gatteschi’s cousin to Cellesi, resorted to exchanging libels for a period of three years over the arrangements of a duel that was never to happen. The following two wit combats are associated with prominent Elizabethan courtiers and both are similarly contextualised by the formal arrangements of duelling.

In Sir Walter Raleigh’s court satire, ‘The Lie’, he embarks his satirical persona on a mission to confront corrupt institutions with their abuses and conceives of this happening within the context of provoking a formal challenge to settle the matter with a duel:

Say to the Court it glowes,
and shines like rotten wood,
Say to the Church it showes
whats good, and doth no good.
If Church and Court reply,
then giue them both the lie.

Tell Potentates they liue
acting by others action,
Not loued vnlesse they giue,
not strong but by affection.
If Potentates reply,
giue Potentates the lie. (ll.7-18)⁶⁵

In this slur upon the body politic Raleigh envisages something very like what Weinstein describes as

the typical scenario [...] of the Renaissance duel [whereby] Cavalier A calls Cavalier B a cheat or poltroon, and Cavalier B, resenting the attack on his honour,

⁶⁵ *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. Agnes M. C. Latham (Constable, 1929), pp.45-7. For a discussion of Raleigh’s authorship of ‘The Lie’ see Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and his Roles* (London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1973), pp.171-6.

tells Cavalier A that he lies in his throat [...]. According to the duel theorists, Cavalier A, having been given the lie, is 'charged' (*caricato*), and becomes the challenger (*attore*), summoning Cavalier B, the defendant (*reo*), to fight.⁶⁶

In terms of the poem issuing a formal accusation against the body politic it is an open invitation for anyone wanting to pick a fight with Raleigh and, as in the case of the Italian captain and his adversary, the satire announces a spate of abusive accusations and counter-accusations rather than physical combat, of which the following extracts form a part:

'The Answre to the Lye'
Courts scorne, states disgracinge
Potentates scoffe, Goverments defacinge
Princes touth, churches vnhallowinge [...]
such is the songe, such is the Author
worthy to be rewarded with a halter.
(ll.1-3 and ll.11-12)

'Erroris Responsio'
Courts Comender, states maintayner,
Potentates defender, goverments Joyner
Princes prayser, churches Preacher [...]
such is the Author, such is the songe
Retorninge the halter, Contemning the wrong.
Sr Wa: Ra.:
(ll.1-3 and ll.11-12)⁶⁷

These poems illustrate in miniature the reciprocated and paralleled rebuttals and insults that characterise libellous exchanges of verse. Such exchanges tend to blur the distinction between Weinstein's Cavalier A (the challenger) and Cavalier B (the charger), reflecting Kaplan's observation about the reflexivity of defamation whereby each party gives the other the lie. It has been suggested that Raleigh's adversary Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, may be the respondent here and that the exchange represents the airing of court rivalries between them.⁶⁸ It appears not to have been recognised previously that Raleigh is the provocateur, however, and that he is using conventions which show that he expects a response to his poem.

A moderating counter-thesis, also attributed to Essex, actually attacks Raleigh for using the combative language of Italianate duelling, and uses this as evidence that such

⁶⁶ Weinstein (1994), p.205.

⁶⁷ Latham ed. (1929), pp.160-1. Raleigh's satire provoked more responses than those discussed here, or those catalogued in Appendix A. Some of these are listed by Latham, pp.152-8.

⁶⁸ Latham ed. (1929), p.155; Steven W. May, 'The Poems of Edward De Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, the Second Earl of Essex: An Edition and Commentary', *SP*, 77 (1980), 1-132 (text pp.60-1, commentary pp.106-8).

combative effrontery is not only antisocial but also morally bankrupt.⁶⁹

Go, Eccho of the minde,
a careles troth protest;
make answere that rude Rawly
no stomack can digest.

for why? the lies discent
is over base to tell;
to vs it came from Italy,
to them it came from hell.

What reason proues, confesse,
What slander saith, denye;
Let no vntruth with triumph passe,
but never giue the lye. (ll.1-12)⁷⁰

In his pun upon Raleigh's name here the poet denounces the attack upon the body politic as contrary to civil behaviour, and imagines Raleigh's expulsion from civilised society. Raleigh's raillery threatens to give the body politic food poisoning and needs to be spewed out quickly to prevent him from causing a lasting illness: "as quarrels once begun/ ar not so quickly ended,/ so many faultes may soone be founde,/ But not so soone amended" (ll.57-60). The notion that such quarrelsomeness leads to self-perpetuating disputes that might escalate into something worse, such as inciting physical violence or civil unrest, although a standard concern of the authorities, is not borne out by quarrels such as that between Cellesi and Gatteschi.

Alternatively, the complaint of the author of *The Booke of Honor and Armes* that such wit-combats might be prolonged as an alternative to physical aggression (as Weinstein supposes to happen in Italy), is more probable. One verse exchange, in which it is tempting to suppose that a wit-combat may have been substituted for physical aggression, has been attributed to another pair of well-known rivals at the Elizabethan court. An answer-poem ascribed to Sidney, beginning "Wearte thou a king, yet not command contente", that

⁶⁹ The insult is especially pertinent since Raleigh was patron of the first Italian fencing school in the city (see Peltonen (2003), pp.61-2).

answers Edward De Vere, the Earl of Oxford's poem "Weare I a kinge I could commande content", might be construed as having been written in lieu of physical combat if the details of their infamous tennis court quarrel of August 1579 are allowed to contextualise the debate. Marotti associates this incident with the answer-poem and notices that "class antagonism surfaces [here] as it did in their famous Tennis Court quarrel".⁷¹ Even if the poem is not actually Sidney's it is easy to see why it has been attributed to him since it lends itself readily to being construed as continuing the dispute.⁷²

In his biography of his friend, Fulke Greville recounts how Sidney followed the protocol for inaugurating a duel exactly; having been called a puppy by Oxford, Sidney gave him "a lie impossible", retorting that "puppies are gotten by dogs and children by men". In response to being given the lie Oxford failed to take up the opportunity to issue a challenge, and Sidney was forced to send "a gentleman of worth" to remind him of his obligation to respond which "stirred a resolution in his lordship to send Sir Philip a challenge".⁷³ At this point the Queen intervened and Greville recollects her displeasure at Sidney's coercing Oxford to issue a challenge to duel and the way she exploited their different social status in order to defuse the situation. He writes,

The Queen, who saw that by the loss or disgrace of either she could gain nothing, presently undertakes Sir Philip, and [...] lays before him the difference in degree

⁷⁰ Latham (1929), pp.159-60.

⁷¹ Marotti (1995), p.163.

⁷² Authorship of the answer is attributed to Sidney in *The Dr. Farmer Chetham MS.*, ed. A. B. Grosart (Manchester: Printed for the Chetham Society, 1873), pt. 1, pp.93-4. Marotti (1995) appears to accept the attribution, pp.162-3. William A. Ringler Jr., however, includes the answer among works wrongly attributed to Sidney, *Poems of Sir Philip Sidney* (OUP, 1962), pp.352-3. May keeps an open mind, although he points out that Folger Library MS. V.a.89 (f. 6) ascribes both pieces to Oxford, 'The Authorship of 'My Mind to me a Kingdom is'', *RES*, n.s. 26 (1975), 385-94 (p.388, n.3).

⁷³ *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp.39-40. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

between earls and gentlemen [and] the respect inferiors ought to their superiors.
(p.40)

Elizabeth imposes a class distinction here that Stone claims to have become blurred by the code of duelling by the 1590s, and therefore one that had become conspicuous roughly within a decade of when the incident took place. According to Stone, the emergence of the code of duelling curbed lords' freedom to behave with disregard for their inferiors, since single combat deprived them of the advantage of being able to back themselves up with superior numbers of retainers.⁷⁴ Sidney's haughtiness towards Oxford perhaps reflects this emergent softening of class differentiation, whereas Elizabeth assumes a conservative attitude as a strategy meant to defuse the argument when she reminds Sidney of "how the gentleman's neglect of the nobility taught the peasant to insult upon both" (p.40).

It could even be supposed that the enforcement of class distinction to end this quarrel led Sidney to turn to an alternate means of redress by engaging Oxford in a wit-combat. Greville considers Sir Philip to have had a legitimate grievance and maintains that although Oxford was a "peer of this realm" and Sidney only a gentleman, in ordering Sidney off the court, Oxford "forgot to entreat that which he could not legally command" (p.38). From Greville's point of view Sidney, as a soldier and a gentleman, had good reason to find an alternate way of repaying this slur upon his honour. Oxford's verse is turned back upon him as a statement of ill will as follows:

⁷⁴ Stone (1965), p.245.

Weare I a kinge I coulde commande content,
 Weare I obscure unknowne shoulde be my cares,
 And weare I ded no thought should me torment,
 Nor wordes, nor wronges, nor loves, nor hopes, nor
 feares;
 A dowtefull choyce of these thinges one to crave,
 A Kingdom or a cottage or a grave.

[Answer]

Wearte thou a king, yet not commaund contente;
 Wher empire none thy mynd could yet suffice.
 Were thou obscure, still cares would the tormente,
 But wearte thou dead all care and sorrowe dyes.
 An easye choise of three things the to crave,
 Noe kingdome nor a cottage, but a grave.⁷⁵

Although there is some doubt over the authorship of the answer it is interesting that it has been ascribed to Sidney since it steers so closely to the violently expressed class grievances arising from the tennis court incident. Oxford's poem elides consideration of his own social status and imagines fluid social boundaries; he might migrate between the status of king and commoner and even meet with death, the leveller, in his pursuit of happiness, but there is no consideration of what it means to be a peer. This allows the answer-poet to pass over the fact that he is denigrating a social superior. The answer also contemplates class migration that excludes the peerage, and does so in order to suggest the possibility that Oxford will meet with ill fortune in each of his imagined occupations. By attacking Oxford throughout the course of his hypothesised social migration the answer certainly crystallises the potentially antisocial aspect of quarrelling and exacting retribution in terms of upturning social hierarchy.

The antisocial nature of such disputes is also stressed repeatedly in conduct books throughout this period, which contend that vituperative retaliation is beneath the dignity of an educated, civil or courtly man. Since the same books simultaneously promote skills in disputation they expose the problematic status of the art of riposte as a valued social accomplishment that is also perceived as antisocial and a threat to civil order. In his *Boke Named the Governour* (1531) Sir Thomas Elyot suggests that "the best waye to be aduenged is so to contemne Iniurie and rebuke" (III.xii.), and abstaining from retributive action continues to be an important trait of civil behaviour throughout the Tudor and early

⁷⁵ These poems are quoted from May (1975), pp.388-9.

Stuart periods. Lodowick Bryskett claims in his *Discovrse of Civill Life*, published in 1606 but perhaps written two decades earlier, that by answering slander a man “doth not onely not purchase any honor to himselfe thereby, but also heapeth on his owne head Gods wrath and indignation” (p.77).⁷⁶ Bryskett’s *Discovrse*, like the vast majority of such texts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, borrows heavily from the most influential of conduct books, Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* (1528); translated by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, but available in Italian and Latin considerably earlier. Since the *Courtier* overflows with enthusiasm for debate, it is simultaneously unsurprising and enlightening to find that responding to insults in kind is represented as an anathema to civil behaviour. In one of his most frequently quoted recommendations for good living Castiglione writes that,

The surest way in the world is, for a man in his living and conversation to governe himselfe alwaies with a certaine honest meane, which (no doubt) is a great and most sure shield against envie. (II. p.133)

Castiglione’s insistence upon the propriety of moderate speech and behaviour suggests both the impropriety of angry reprisals and, implausibly, that the exercise of temperance is a sure way to prevent slurs upon one’s reputation.

The high estimation in which the quality of temperance was held is obviously at odds with the urgent impulse to rebut detractors in kind, and the number of extant responses to polemical verse provides a clear indication that a moderate or polite reaction was a high-minded ideal that might be put into practice infrequently. This is reflected by Bryskett’s *Discovrse* in which he contradicts himself noticeably upon the subject of reprisal. Contrary to what he claims about the dishonour and wickedness of retaliation, he also argues that it is imperative to be aggressively proactive in defence of one’s good name:

It is reputed so great a shame to be accounted a lyer, that any other iniury is

⁷⁶ See Peltonen (2003), p.85.

cancelled by giuing the lie; and he that receiueth it, standeth so charged in his honor and reputation, that he cannot disburden himself of that imputation, but by striking of him that hath so giuen it, or by challenging him the combat. (pp.64-5)

Following the duel theorists, Bryskett claims that the only honourable and practical response to traducement is counter-attack. Moderation might be an admirable quality but “striking back” is the only sure way to “disburden” oneself of the stigma of being defamed.⁷⁷ At this point Bryskett’s interlocutor becomes understandably confused as to whether such a reaction “concerne[s] honor or no? and whether it appertaine to ciuill life, and that felicitie which we are discoursing vpon or no?” (p.65). Civility and utilitarian defences of one’s reputation appear particularly difficult to reconcile upon this matter.

In some respects, this analysis glosses over changing trends in the theory of civil conduct between the time of Elyot and Bryskett. Elyot is writing before the rise of Italianate courtesy in England and the concomitant heightening of sensitivity towards reputation which, for gentlemen and courtiers, made resorting to bloodshed to defend their honour increasingly obligatory. Bryskett, in contrast, is writing in the midst of this culture. However, what the conduct books and duel manuals agree upon consistently throughout this period is that a gentleman ought to refrain from answering discourtesy with discourtesy even when combat is unavoidable.⁷⁸

A readymade justification for such a response was available due to the commonly held

⁷⁷ John Dryden perceived a similar dilemma in the late-seventeenth century in his *Discourse Concerning Satire*. He argues that responding in kind ought to be a last resort when recourse to law or other remedies are unavailable, and even in such circumstances he is reluctant to give this his full approval:

We have no moral right on the reputation of other men, 'Tis taking from them what we cannot restore to them. There are only two reasons for which we may be permitted to write lampoons; and I will not promise that they can always justify us. The first is revenge, when we have been affronted in the same nature, or have been any ways notoriously abused, and can make ourselves no other reparation. (Watson ed. (1968), pp.125-6)

conviction that libelling and satirising were fractious and antisocial activities responsible for inciting violence and sedition. Thus, respondents could justify vitriolic attacks upon their detractors by depicting them as posing such threats and thereby represent themselves as acting out of civic responsibility. The answer-poet might also undertake such civic duty by responding to anti-government literature on behalf of the authorities.

The Verse Answer as Proclamation

The story of verse answering in the Tudor period begins in many ways with one of the most versatile of answer-poets, John Skelton. His work encompasses the entire range of flyting, libel and satire examined in this first section and anticipates many later examples of verse answering. He appears to have been claimed periodically as a spokesperson for Protestantism and as an exemplary patriot, and he was imitated by several Protestant propagandists, including John Bale and Luke Shepherd, who chose answer-poetry as one of their literary mediums.⁷⁹ He also provided an archetype for combining licentious scurrility with fervent patriotism, a blend well suited to dressing down enemies of the state and personal rivals alike. Ben Jonson, a prolific answer-poet himself, described him as “The worshipful Poet Laureate to King Harry,/ And the *Tityre Tu* of those times”.⁸⁰ *Tityre Tu* refers to the members of clubs or fraternities reputed for riotous behaviour. One of the social activities of such clubs seems to have been the waging of

⁷⁸ Peltonen (2003), p.48 and p.73.

⁷⁹ See Andrew Hadfield, ‘John Skelton’s Influence on John Bale’, *NQ*, 239 (n.s. 41), (1994a), 19-20 and Cathleen Hayhurst Wheat, ‘Luke Shepherd’s *Antipi Amicus*’, *PQ*, 30 (1951), 58-68 (p.67). See also Bernard Capp’s discussion of his influence upon John Taylor, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet, 1578-1653* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p.88 and Dyce ed. (1843), cxxiii-cxxviii.

⁸⁰ *The Fortunate Isles, and their Union Celebrated in a Masque Designed for the Court on the Twelfth Night, 1624*, ll.188-9. in *The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1969).

wit-combats, including the composing of competitive verses and answers to them.⁸¹ Jonson perceives Skelton as the king's champion who employs his combative verse in Henry's service, and this is perhaps due to what was an implicit association of wit combats with cavalier verse. This association continued during the Civil War, and an interest in Skelton remains perceptible among Interregnum Royalists. James Smith, a member of the Order of the Fancy and a combatant in the Civil War, remembered Skelton alongside another patriotic flyter and boisterous answer-poet, William Elderton, in a verse beginning "Skelton some rimes; good Elderton a ballett".⁸² Thus Puttenham's dismissal of Skelton as "a rude rayling rimer" is certainly an inaccurate reflection of his enduring influence upon the poetics of response. He provided a model for those who found hostile verse answering suited to their literary personas and personal interests, and showed that fervent loyalty to the Church and Crown need not be at odds with indulging in boisterous bouts of socially abusive behaviour. As Henry VIII's *orator regius*, moreover, Skelton was ideally placed to present himself as the king's mouthpiece and to adopt a proclamatory tone in his private verse quarrels.

In his 'Against Venemous Tongues Enpoysoned with Sclaunder and False Detractions' (c.1515), Skelton portrays an unknown detractor's defamation of him as potentially damaging to the commonwealth as well as to his own reputation, and responds in the guise of the government's agent and mouthpiece rather than as a fractious and quarrelsome individual. From this pseudo-official position Skelton asserts with confidence

⁸¹ Timothy Raylor examines one of these groups in *Cavaliers, Clubs, and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith, and the Order of the Fancy* (Newark: Delaware UP; London and Toronto: Associated UPs, 1994). Several of the scurrilous yet affable verses exchanged between Sir John Mennes and John Smith have been preserved in *Wit Restor'd in Severall Select Poems not Formerly Publish't* (printed for R. Pollard, N. Brooks and T. Dring, 1658), pp.3-9 and pp.43-8, Wing M719. Earlier clubs such as the Mermaid Club have also been associated with men such as Jonson who were well known for their verbal sparing. The club's possible membership is interrogated by Shapiro (1950), 6-17.

⁸² 'Mr. I Smith of Christ Church vpon the Same'. Raylor (1994), pp.245-6.

his ability to refute his assailant and repay him effectively if only his identity were known:

But if that I knewe what his name hight,
 For clatering of me I would him sone quight;
 For his false lying, of that I spake neuer,
 I could make him shortly repent him for euer.
 ('De more vulpino, gannientes ad aurem, fictas fabellas fabricant, li. ille.
 Inauspicatum, male ominatum, infortunatum se fateatur habuisse horoscopum,
 quicumque maledixerit vati Pierio, S[keltonidi] L[aureato], & c.')

Skelton claims to have been accused unjustly of using sophistry in order to mislead his betters, or to "Controlle the cognisaunce of noble men/ Either by language or with my pen" ('Hic notat purpuraria arte intextas literas Romanas in amictibus post ambulonum ante et retro'). He counters these allegations about his misuse of rhetorical persuasion by appealing to the notorious reputation of libellers for upsetting the social order:

Such tunges vnhappy hath made great diuision
 In realmes, in cities, by suche fals abusion;
 Of fals fickil tunges suche cloked collusion
 Hath brought nobil princes to extreme confusion.
 ('Quid peregrinis egemus exemplis? ad domestica recurramus & c. li. ille.')

Skelton suggests that the attack upon him constitutes a threat to the king's authority and to the whole social fabric, and does so in order to better absorb the impact of his detractor's accusations. Both sides claim to be speaking on behalf of the state, and to be exposing the threat that their adversary poses to the establishment. Their rhetorical stance is that they act not out of personal interest but for the public good. Skelton's response echoes the persistent anxiety of the government that even personal libels might have damaging consequences that reach beyond the reputation of the individual libelled and that they therefore needed to be suppressed no less rigorously than antigovernment literature.

Like much later verse answering Skelton's language here is comparable to that found in royal proclamations against subversive literature, which characteristically condemn libellous discourse for its proclivity to incite civil disobedience. In fact, verse answers to libel are sometimes related closely to proclamations. On a very basic level proclamations,

like Skelton's response to his unknown assailant, provided a means of threatening publicly detractors who evaded identification. Writers, printers, publishers and disseminators of anti-government literature were particularly likely to make an effort to conceal their identities and this meant countering their influence without having any recourse to prosecution. Where such pieces appeared en masse the typical official response was the issuing of a proclamation, and these were occasionally seconded or substituted by verse answers in which respondents presented themselves as the agents of the government. In other instances monarchs themselves saw fit to issue proclamatory verses to their subjects rather than commissioning more formal or official statements of their displeasure. Skelton's proclamatory poem is slightly different in that he appears to make his own quarrel the king's, rather than the king's quarrel his own, a trait that has more in common with the flytings examined in Chapter Two than with the proclamatory answers examined here. The following examples from the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I are part of an enduring relationship between proclamations and verse responses to subversive literature.

Wilfred Holme's *Fulle and Evill Successe of Rebellion* (1536) is in many ways a progenitor of such substitutes and seconds. Written in response to the Five Articles of the Pilgrimage of Grace and other anti-government propaganda in ballads and prophecies challenging Henry's right to dissolve the Roman Catholic Church, the poem lifts verbatim parts of Henry's proclamations against the rebels.⁸³ It is not a true answer-poem in the sense of addressing a particular poetic statement or statements but addresses disseminators of seditious literature generally. It might, however, be seen as representing the emergence

⁸³ See, for instance, Madeleine Hope Dodds and Ruth Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536-1537: and the Exeter Conspiracy, 1538*, 2 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 1915), I. pp.63-88 and A. G. Dickens, 'Wilfred Holme of Huntington: Yorkshire's First Protestant Poet', *YAJ*, 39 (1956-8), 119-35 (p.124).

of verse answering as a substitute for, or complement to, proclamations. Andrew Hadfield has speculated that the poem was written “at the government’s behest” and, although this is difficult to substantiate, the poem certainly assumes the role of a proclamation self-consciously since it legitimises itself by identifying itself with the official reaction to the subject it addresses.⁸⁴

It was the events surrounding a subsequent rebellion in the north during the reign of Elizabeth that verse answers began to be produced en masse as seconds and substitutes for royal proclamations. Among these is Thomas Knell’s *An Answer to a Papisticall Byll Cast in the Streetes of Northampton, and Brought Before the Iudges at the Last Syses. 1570*.⁸⁵ It appeared in the year that Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth, and although it has been speculated that the Papal Bull had negligible effect in England,⁸⁶ it seems to have been responsible for emboldening Catholic propagandists and supporters of Mary Queen of Scots and the Northern Rebellion. There is a rash of antigovernment literature from the late 1560s and early 1570s concerning these events and this coincides with a spate of ballads

⁸⁴ See Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994b), p.6. Not only did Holme’s poem appear without royal license (*‘cum privilegio’*), it was not even printed until it was recycled in 1572 as propaganda against the recent Northern Rebellion. In contrast, the early-fifteenth-century Wycliffian poem, *Jack Upland*, did appear with royal privilege when it was first printed in 1536. P. L. Heyworth writes that the “*Cum privilegio Regali* [in *Jack Upland*] is not a perfunctory and permissive formula but constitutes the royal assent to what is essentially an act of policy”, ‘The Earliest Black-letter Editions of *Jack Upland*’, *HLQ*, 30 (1967), 307-14 (p.313). *Jack Upland* was recycled purposely as state-sponsored propaganda against the friars, whereas the argument that Holme’s poem was commissioned by the government, or even Henry himself, is much more difficult to sustain owing to its unprinted status and its proto-Protestantism, which Dickens notices to be “often [...] well to the left of the King’s position” (1956-8), p.124.

⁸⁵ *An Answer to a Papisticall Byll Cast in the Streetes of Northampton, and Brought Before the Iudges at the Last Syses. 1570* (printed by John Awdely, 1570), *STC* 15030. The attribution to Knell is made in *STC* (see also *SR*, I. 438).

⁸⁶ See, for instance, Thomas H. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572-1615* (Chicago, IL: Loyola UP, 1964), p.47.

acting as substitute proclamations against the rebels.⁸⁷ If only for this and for no other reason, Mary's accolade of "the daughter of debate", given her by Elizabeth, is well deserved.⁸⁸

In 1570 two proclamations were issued in response to a glut of seditious literature from pens and presses both on the continent and in the British Isles. The first appeared on the 1st of July and complains of the "boldness of certain wicked and seditious persons that, envying and malicing the good universal quiet of this her realm and subjects, do by secret manner contrive and scatter certain infamous scrolls and bills in some parts of her realm", such as this example which was supposedly distributed surreptitiously around public places in Northampton.⁸⁹ A second proclamation followed on the 14th of November. As Cyndia Susan Clegg observes, no provision is made in either of these to "censor specific texts", and she notes of the second that it is "coercive in language alone".⁹⁰ Thus, as she acknowledges, if they were to counter the influence of proscribed literature effectively then these proclamations depended upon loyal subjects taking the queen's part by handing in seditious literature to the authorities and reporting those associated with it. A further patriotic reaction was to answer outlawed literature directly and in kind.

⁸⁷ In 1570 Elderton penned several ballads belonging to this ilk, including *A Ballat Intituled Northumberland Newes* and *A Ballad Intituled, a Newe Well Aday, As Playne Maister Papist as Donstable Waye* (STC 7554 and STC 7553). A number of proclamatory answer-poems produced by his fellow balladeers are also concerned with the Rebellion and its aftermath (see Cat. A 62, K 193a-b, P 226 and S 242). The Scottish poet, Sir Robert Sempill, even appears to have been paid by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, for his services in disseminating counter-propaganda in the form of flyting ballads responding to Mary's supporters. See Carole Rose Livingston, *British Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century: A Catalogue of the Extant Sheets and an Essay* (London and NY: Garland, 1991), p.812 and my discussion of Sempill, pp.106-7.

⁸⁸ From Elizabeth's poem beginning "The doubt of future foes, exiles my present ioy", Cat. E 122.

⁸⁹ 'Ordering Arrest for Circulating Seditious Books and Bulls' and 'Ordering Discovery of Persons Bringing in Seditious Books and Writings', Hughes and Larkin eds (1961), II. p.341.

Knell is keen to point out in his answer (beginning “How now my maisters/ popish Priestes”), that the libel in question has been treated according to the demands of the proclamation, having been brought before local magistrates at the assizes. In the, albeit modest, capacity of humorous backbiting he seconds Elizabeth’s proclamation by rebutting the satire against Protestant priests point for point on its own artistic level, and in its own scurrilous tenor:

2. The Papisticall Byll.
 What neede our women now take care,
 What life they now do leade?
 Since euery preaching knaue must haue
 A whoore in house to treade.

2. The Protestant.
 What neede our men now to take care,
 What way they go or treade,
 For those Priests which wer whormongers
 Now must marry wife or maide.

The answer does not attempt to raise the tone or subject matter of the argument to a higher level, but answers the criticism of clergymen marrying with equally clichéd accusations of Catholic priests’ addiction to whoring, and suggests they conform to Protestant standards of morality by getting married themselves. The scurrilous response, by answering in the same tone of ribaldry, appeals to the same literary tastes as the antecedent and thereby, theoretically, disseminates a counter-argument to the same sort of audience. The propaganda war is waged at a low level of sophistication, and the poems culminate predictably with proverbial warnings of retribution to come. According to the Catholic, the Protestant should be wary “Least halter be your share” (Stanza 9, l.4). The Protestant rejoins that his opponent is “tyborne fare” (Stanza 9, l.4).

Although the Protestant poem simply turns the power of laughter back upon this outlawed poem and thereby might be expected to fulfil a useful satirical function from an official viewpoint, Knell’s project fits imperfectly with the official attitude towards libelling and, although the ballad was licensed, it does not claim to be printed with royal

⁹⁰ Clegg (1997), p.68 and p.69.

privilege (*cum privilegio*).⁹¹ The proclamation from July is concerned explicitly with silencing rather than rebuking libels; they should be brought before the authorities “immediately without showing or report or speech thereof to any person”.⁹² By publishing the antecedent poem to provide a context for his answer, Knell is contributing towards the spread of prohibited literature. Bearing this in mind, it is worth noting that it was perhaps as difficult for the authorities to wield effective control over the poetics of response as it was for them to suppress libels in the first place. Even when subversive literature was responded to directly from a position of authority the poetics is highly susceptible to abuse and mismanagement over even its most fundamental points of protocol. Perhaps the most notable example of such botched statecraft in a proclamatory answer-poem is James I’s response to a libel complaining of his assumption of personal rule in the early 1620s.

On the 24th of December 1620 a proclamation drafted by Sir Francis Bacon was issued ‘against Excesse of Lavish and Licentious Speech of Matters of State’ warning against meddling in state affairs, and more specifically against criticising royal policy openly.⁹³ Such proclamations against, usually anonymous or pseudonymous, oppositional literature allowed disapproval to be registered while allowing those officials whom libellous comments touched upon to maintain dignified aloofness from the source of complaint. Similarly, poets might be given, or take upon themselves, the official capacity of deflecting slurs upon the reputation of king and country; such as in many of the flytings I examine in Chapter Two. The consequences of such distance not being upheld becomes apparent in the

⁹¹ A second augmented answer by Knell was perhaps included under the same license (see Cat. K 193b).

⁹² Hughes and Larkin eds (1961), II. p.342.

⁹³ ‘A Proclamation against Excesse of Lavish and Licentious Speech of Matters of State’, in *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973-83), I. (1973), pp.495-6.

following year when James responds personally to a libel (now perished) that interferes with matters of state (“The Answere to the Libell Called the Comons Teares: “The wiper of the peoples teares The dryer vp of doubts and feares”).⁹⁴

Although we do not know the tone established by the antecedent, the gravity of James’s response, the monotony of his rhyming couplets and lugubrious meter seem particularly out of place when compared to the more upbeat verbal pyrotechnics of ballad libels and their answers. This is perhaps unavoidable bearing in mind the imperative of maintaining some degree of regal decorum and dignity; however, this approach also seems to reflect a misjudgement on James’s part since successful responses in kind generally enter into the ribald spirit of the verses they answer so that they can be pitched at, and sway the opinion of, the same target audience.

The government sponsored responses to the Marprelate tracts provide a clear example of this, and it is an idea of which Bacon, who drafted the above proclamation, appears particularly conscious in his *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*. He describes the propriety of Henry’s reaction to a libel cast in his face by the French ambassador Robert Gaguin, writing that the king “was content to cause an answer to be made in like verse; and that as speaking in his own person, but in a style of scorn and sport”.⁹⁵ The success of such a strategy, if Henry did solicit his mediators, is evident from the sheer volume of responses from his courtiers which was sufficient to effectively run Gaguin out of court (this episode is discussed pp.95-9). In his account of this event Bacon makes it

⁹⁴ *The Poems of King James VI of Scotland*, ed. James Craigie, STS, 2 vols (London and Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by Blackwood, 1955-8), II. (1958), pp.182-91. My quotations are taken from Craigie’s transcription of MS. Harley 367, fols 151^r-2^v. Craigie dates James’s answer between late 1622 and early 1623.

⁹⁵ *The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*, ed. F. J. Levy (Indianapolis and NY: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972), p.138.

clear that there is a distinction between the princely decorum of the king's "own person" and the incivility of responding "in a style of scorn and sport" and implies that the two can be bridged by a mediator delivering a response in the king's behalf and affecting the king's voice and authority. Interpreted in these terms then, it becomes apparent that since James responds in his own behalf his answer cannot sustain princely decorum and execute an efficacious riposte simultaneously.

It is perhaps also the libeller's facelessness that caused James not to find the right tone since he appears to find this particularly problematic. He attempts to circumvent the matter of identity by rebutting the libel with a satire, and admonishes his subjects in general as "Purblind people" rather than addressing the individual libeller (l.3). The commons are reprimanded as a potentially unruly mob whose criticism of James is liable to threaten the stability of the body politic if they fail to accept their allotted place in it:

Looke on the ground whereon you goe
 higher aspects will bringe *your* woe
 Take heed *your* places all be true
 & doe not discontentes renue. (ll.92-5, Craigie's italics)

James also sidesteps the matter of being unable to bring the offender to account by attributing his inaction to magnanimity, and offers his subjects the opportunity to reform:

If I once bend my angry browe
your ruine comes though not as now.
 For slowe I am reuenge to take
 and *your* amendment wrath will slake
 Then hold *your* pratlinge, spare *your* penne
 be honest and obedient men. (ll.165-70)

The slippage between the singular "penne" used by the individual libeller and the plurality of "men" that James addresses perhaps reflects his inability to remove his attention fully from the individual perpetrator.⁹⁶ It might be argued that this mitigates the effectiveness of his satirical

⁹⁶ The slippage is consistent with other manuscript variations (see Craigie ed. (1958), II. p.264).

strategy but, more importantly, by failing to distinguish properly between the good subject and the bad, the poem seems more likely to generate antipathy than empathy. It simply ignores the essential task of proclamations to enlist the help of good subjects to root out the bad. James threatens his people with being “puld vp like stinkinge weeds” if they fail to comply with his wishes, but by putting the onus of responsibility for identifying them and punishing them solely upon himself, he appears more arrogant and condescending than threatening (l.28). Thus, a few lines later, when he reflects of kings that, “The good they cherishe and advance/ and many things may come by chance”, the emphasis on the word “chance” smacks of absolutist arbitrariness, and the effect is compounded when he declares that “the choice doth rest in kings” of whom to reward and whom to punish (ll.31-2 and l.39). This seems more like the whimsy and fallibility of a mere mortal than the irreproachable judgement of God’s elected representative on earth and it is unsurprising that this answer is contemporary with what has been perceived as a decline in James’s state of mind.⁹⁷

James’s identification of himself as legislator, judge and executioner is perhaps understandable since this is the period over which he made a concerted effort to subjugate Parliament to his personal rule; the January parliament of 1621 had been prorogued for a week by a proclamation on the 28th of December and was then dissolved, again by proclamation, on the 6th of January.⁹⁸ At this time considerable sway over policy-making rested with the influential but unpopular favorites, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham and Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador at Court, both of whom exerted influence upon James to dissolve Parliament upon a number of

⁹⁷ See, for instance, Willson (1963), pp.428-9.

⁹⁸ ‘A Proclamation for the Prorogation of the Parliament, from the Sixteenth of Januarie Next Comming, to the Three and Twentieth of the Same Moneth’ and ‘A Proclamation Declaring his Majesties Pleasure Concerning the Dissolving of the Present Convention of Parliament’,

occasions.⁹⁹ By fostering the impression that he wields royal prerogative independently James disassociates himself from those thought to have excessive control over policy-making, although, as Alastair Bellany notices, he does defend his right to choose such advisors.¹⁰⁰

It is notable that the proclamation announcing the dissolution of Parliament, unlike James's poem, is particularly scrupulous in its discernment between good members of the House and bad ones, whom it claims were responsible for the decision being taken to dissolve Parliament.¹⁰¹ The comparison highlights further the shortcomings of James's rhetoric; especially when seen in light of the obvious analogy between his gardening metaphor for his subjects as "stinking weeds" and the gardening scene in Shakespeare's *Richard II* in which the gardener delegates responsibility to his man to "Go thou, and like an executioner/ Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays/ That look too lofty in our commonwealth" (III.iv.33-5). Shakespeare implies that prudent kingship rests in the art of such delegation as James appears to avoid in his hands-on attitude to government.

The metaphor derives from the parable of Matthew XIII. 24-30 in which the householder instructs his servant to harvest the good seed and burn the tares (weeds) in an analogy relating to the treatment that good and bad Christians might expect respectively. The parable provided a commonplace biblical example of prudent delegation and

Hughes and Larkin eds (1973), I. pp.497-8 and pp.527-34.

⁹⁹ See Willson (1963), p.416, p.419 and p.423.

¹⁰⁰ Bellany (1994), p.294.

¹⁰¹ The January proclamation states that,

In the generall proceedings of that House, there are many footsteppes of loving and well affected duetie to Us: yet some ill tempered spirits, have sowed tares among the corne, and thereby frustrated the hope of that plentiful and good harvest, which might have multiplied the wealth and welfare of this whole land.

Hughes and Larkin eds (1973), I. p.533.

discernment in matters of statecraft and is a common trope in proclamations. In this substitute proclamation, James's employment of the gardening metaphor while failing to opt for such mediation seems more than simply an oversight and suggests a stubborn and intentional disregard for the more prudent and effective poetics of response available to him. As Bacon recognised, it was much more effective and appropriate to recruit a courtier, or some other loyal subject, to stand in and respond to libels upon their monarch's behalf, just as the man/executioner mediates between the gardener/king and the weeds/traitorous subject. Theoretically, this might prevent the collapse of order and degree implicit in monarchs meeting their detractors on even ground. Notably, there exists a counter-response to James's poem that not only ignores his exhortation to silence and to "Keepe eury man his ranke and place" by answering back, but perhaps undermines order and degree even further since it has been attributed to a woman (l.109).¹⁰² The libeller singles out the undue stress that James places upon punishing treacherous subjects at the expense of considering those faithful to him, and accuses him of cultivating a culture of loyalty to the crown born out of fear, telling him, "Our heartes for ransome of our heades yow haue" (l.14). The ability to deal effectively with libels was an enduringly admired faculty of statecraft that James mismanages badly here.¹⁰³

His predecessor, Elizabeth's answer-poem, 'Doubt of Future Foes' (1569-70) provides a particularly striking example of a scrupulous and canny proclamatory answer which, in contrast, appears to adhere closely to the proclamatory conventions associated with

¹⁰² The poem is found in Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Poet. MS. 26 (henceforth Rawl. Poet. 26), f. 20^r. It begins "Condemne not gracious king, our playntes and teares" and is headed "These are sayd to be done by a Lady".

¹⁰³ Later in the century Dryden pays homage to Augustus Caesar who "was not afraid of libels [...] yet he took all care imaginable to have them answered; and then decreed that for the time to come the authors of them should be punished", Watson ed., (1968), p.134.

Mathew XIII, both in its distinguishing clearly between loyal and disloyal subjects and in the strategy of mediation used to disseminate the verse.¹⁰⁴ Although Elizabeth responds in person, moreover, she is addressing a fellow monarch whose verse she construes deliberately as threatening to the commonwealth, and therefore she does not face the problem of exposing herself to the indignity of meeting a social inferior upon even ground. The poem had drastically more favourable repercussions than James's verse epistle to his people and, like much of her other answer-poetry (some of which is discussed in Chapter 5), reveals Elizabeth to be a canny manipulator of the poetics of response. Whereas James attracts further criticism by way of an answer in kind, Elizabeth's poem provides inspiration for two further answering verses that declare their loyalty to her emphatically. Seen in the light of this eventuality, it seems especially illuminating that Puttenham selected this poem and, so it turns out, an answer-poem, as an example of English verse at its best.¹⁰⁵

Jennifer Summit argues convincingly that Elizabeth's poem is a "direct rebuke" to Mary Queen of Scots' verse petition for sanctuary in England (beginning "Une seul penser qui me profficte et nuit": "A longing haunts my spirit, day and night").¹⁰⁶ Mary's French verse epistle of 1568 is one among many letters that she wrote to Elizabeth pleading for refuge following the hostile reaction of her subjects to her suspected complicity in the

¹⁰⁴ *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (London and Chicago, IL: Chicago UP, 2000), pp.133-4. See, for instance, Jennifer Summit's discussion of Elizabeth's use of the gardening conceit in "'The Arte of a Ladies Penne": Elizabeth I and the Poetics of Queenship', *ELR*, 26 (1996), 395-422 (p.417).

¹⁰⁵ Puttenham (repr. 1968), p.207.

¹⁰⁶ Summit (1996), p.414. The poem is quoted from *The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance*, ed. Betty Travitsky (London and Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981), pp.259-60 (text) and p.198 (trans.).

murder of her husband, Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley.¹⁰⁷ The first line of Elizabeth's poem crystallises and dismisses many of the sentiments found in Mary's in which she expresses doubts about her future safety if Elizabeth refuses her sanctuary in England. The first two stanzas of Mary's poem, as translated by Betty Travitsky, are as follows:

A longing haunts my spirit, day and night,
 Bitter and sweet, torments my aching heart;
 'Twi'x't doubt and fear, it holds its wayward part,
 And, while it lingers, rest and peace take flight.

Dear sister, if these lines too boldly speak
 Of my fond wish to see you, 'tis for this –
 That I repine and sin, in bitterness,
 If still denied the favour that I seek. (ll.1-8)

By claiming that her “doubt of future foes” prevents her present peace of mind Elizabeth echoes Mary's sentiments of dismay, but whereas Mary claims that Elizabeth is her sole hope of salvation, Elizabeth rejoins that Mary is the root cause of her own distress and a threat to the commonwealth. She argues that Mary would become a cause of strife and “annoy” in England were she to be given the safe haven for which she pleads, and interprets her offer of friendship as time serving expediency (l.4). Mary has only become amicable, so Elizabeth maintains, because of her altered circumstances, or “By changèd course of winds”, and she is the “daughter of debate” who might incite her subjects to rebellion (l.12 and l.21).

The Scottish queen was not the only audience that Elizabeth Tudor had in mind. Steven W. May notices rightly that Elizabeth's poem also “functioned as a royal proclamation”.¹⁰⁸ It is meant both as a rebuke to Mary and as a warning to the people of England not to conspire with or abet the queen's enemies, which, as Puttenham recollects

¹⁰⁷ See Neville Williams, *Elizabeth I, Queen of England* (Sphere, 1971), pp.149-50.

¹⁰⁸ Steven W. May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts* (Asheville, NC: Pegasus, 1999), p.48. See also Summit (1996) who likewise discusses the effectiveness of Elizabeth's poem as an alternative to “open proclamation” (pp.407-8).

in his discussion of this poem, “fell out most truly by th’ exemplary chastisement of sundry persons, who in fauour of the sayd Sc. Q. [...] sought to interrupt the quiet of the Realme”.¹⁰⁹ Like James, Elizabeth suggests she possesses perception, reason and wisdom superior to that of her subjects but manages this in a way that does not alienate them. Unlike James she does not address her subjects directly and the verse takes the form of an introspective soliloquy in which she enlists empathy by reflecting upon her vulnerability, as much as upon her heightened insight into her subjects’ minds as God’s elected representative on earth: “And wit me warns to shun such snares/ As threatens mine annoy./ For falsehood now doth flow/ And subjects’ faith doth ebb” (ll.3-6). She is also careful to distinguish between the “aspiring minds” of her bad subjects, and loyal “worthy wights”, thereby allowing readers to identify themselves with the good (l.10 and l.19).

The means by which the poem apparently reached circulation also reveals Elizabeth to be a competent manipulator of her own propaganda. It is supposed to have been copied and circulated illicitly by Elizabeth’s attendant and intimate, Lady Willoughby. May interprets Willoughby’s actions as having been stage-managed deliberately by the queen:

The “unauthorized” circulation of her verses on the rebellion constitutes a ruse [that was] carefully orchestrated. [...] Patriotism was encouraged and Mary condemned in a way Elizabeth could not officially attempt without risking serious diplomatic repercussions.¹¹⁰

If this scenario was indeed staged, then it seems that Elizabeth avoided purposely the exposure of addressing dissenters directly, as well as the reason May mentions of avoiding antagonising Catholic nations on the continent by condemning Mary publicly. Rather than arranging for, or encouraging, one of her subjects to answer upon her behalf, she distances herself from this poetic statement by disowning responsibility for its dissemination from the private to the public

¹⁰⁹ Puttenham (repr. 1968), p.207.

sphere. The effectiveness of this ruse, if such it is, is evident from the extent of the poem's subsequent circulation both in manuscript and in Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*.¹¹¹

The two poems that extend and rework this verse conversation exhibit a similar dynamic relationship to that existing between the poems exchanged between Elizabeth and Mary, whereby the second poem argues that the first is a wilfully insincere protestation of loyalty to Elizabeth. They appear in the Arundel Harington Manuscript and the first is by Sir Henry Goodyer, beginning "If fortune good could awnswer present ill" (1572), which like Elizabeth's verse opens by making a comparison between a present predicament and future well-being.¹¹² It is a petition written from the Tower following Goodyer's imprisonment for smuggling correspondence between Mary, who was incarcerated at Coventry, and Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, the man that the northern rebels had hoped she would marry, who was himself in the Tower at that time.¹¹³ Ruth Hughey suggests that Goodyer's verses "were very likely intended for Queen Elizabeth herself", and this seems especially likely since the poem almost certainly answers 'Doubt of Future Foes', and at the very least gestures towards its awareness of the context in which it was written.¹¹⁴ Since Goodyer had privileged knowledge of Mary's correspondence, it seems probable that he would have recognised Elizabeth's verse as a direct response to her fellow monarch. Goodyer's acquaintance with Mary during her imprisonment meant that he had privileged access to information regarding the context of Elizabeth's verse as a direct

¹¹⁰ May (1999), p.48.

¹¹¹ On the poem's manuscript circulation see May (1999), p.47 (n.10) and Summit (1996), p.408.

¹¹² *Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry*, ed. Ruth Hughey, 2 vols (Colorado: Ohio State UP, 1960), I. no. 147.

¹¹³ See, for instance, Hughey ed. (1960), II. p.196.

¹¹⁴ Hughey ed. (1960), II. p.199.

answer to that of Mary and, now Elizabeth's prisoner himself, he attempted to dispel Elizabeth's reservations about those who befriended Mary by continuing the dialogue.

By appropriating the themes of Elizabeth's poem in his petition Goodyer possibly hopes to manoeuvre her into following the conventions of a ballad duet, beginning "Fortune, my Foe, why dost thou frown on me?", in which the lover receives a "comfortable and pleasant answer" to his suit from his beloved, even though he believes he has lost her favour and consequently that of a personified fortune.¹¹⁵ This possibility becomes even more seductive when it is remembered that the tune to which the ballad is sung (known simply as 'Fortune my Foe') was also used for ballads in which convicted criminals make their last farewells to the world.¹¹⁶ Elizabeth may have had this "hanging tune" in mind when she warns seditious subjects that she will "polle their toppes", as Puttenham's version of her answer to Mary reads (l.16).¹¹⁷ It makes perfect sense for Elizabeth to take advantage of the popular appeal of this ballad in her substitute proclamation, just as it is logical that Goodyer should follow suit in the hope of a "comfortable and pleasant answer".

In his first line Goodyer inverts his queen's opening premise and applies it to his own circumstances. Whereas Elizabeth can have no present joy due to her prudent consideration of the future dangers posed by Mary and her rebellious English supporters, Goodyer, as

¹¹⁵ Cat. Anon 2 (see also Cat. A 59). Claude M. Simpson points to "ample evidence that ['Fortune my Foe'] was in existence before 1590", and possibly prior to Elizabeth's poem: "In 1565-1566, John Cherlewood was granted a license to print a ballad "of one complaynyng of ye mutabilitie of fortune"; this may or may not be 'Fortune my Foe'", *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1966), p.225 (SR, I. 310).

¹¹⁶ See, for instance, *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. W. M. Chappell, 8 vols (Hertford: Reprinted for the Ballad Society by S. Austin, 1888), VI. p.73. This anthology provides numerous examples, although the earliest of these is dated 1591 and thus considerably later than Henry Goodyer's verse petition to Elizabeth of 1572 (see I. p.555). See also I. p.144, p.147 and p.155; II. p.491.

Elizabeth's prisoner, exists in a state of present woe that might be alleviated were he to be pardoned. He professes loyalty to Elizabeth and seeks to disassociate himself from the potential foes of whom she writes. The figurative threat Elizabeth issues that she will "polle their toppes", or behead, those who would conspire against her, is picked up by Goodyer in his plea for forgiveness: "If my good Queene have mercie on her man/ the tree shall live though wounded in the sappe" (ll.35-6).

The gardening metaphor from *Richard II* is again analogous here, and it becomes yet more pertinent in Thomas Norton's point for point rebuttal of Goodyer's poem, beginning "Good ever due distroyed *with* present yll".¹¹⁸ To extend the analogy slightly, by intercepting Goodyer's poem, Norton situates himself as his queen's man who mediates between Elizabeth/ the gardener and a treacherous subject. Norton was a zealous Puritan who took on the role of a spokesperson and propagandist for the faith with considerable enthusiasm; having translated Calvin's *Institutes* (1559) and Alexander Nowell's catechism (1570), and also collaborating in *Gorbudoc* (1561). This poem might be regarded as part of the counter-propaganda war that he waged against Catholicism and its sympathisers. Norton accuses Goodyer of conspiring against Elizabeth and the commonwealth:

Yow did a perilous queene to fortunat
 more then advyse agaynst yowr princes heere
 by cyphringe sleighte to daunger the estate
 of frend by kynde of queene of neyboure neere. (ll.19-22)

The poem is as unsympathetic towards, and as suspicious of, Goodyer as Elizabeth's answer is of Mary, the "queene of neyboure neere", and recalls Puttenham's estimation of 'Doubt of Future Foes' as a reprimand to supporters of Mary who "sought to interrupt the quiet of the Realme". Like Elizabeth, Norton accuses his addressee of repenting purely from the motive of

¹¹⁷ Puttenham, (repr. 1968), p.208.

self-preservation, “*with fayn’d teares before my god & queene*” (l.14). While he claims to speak in the interests of the queen, and sets out to expose the true nature of Goodyer’s character, he is careful not to take his mandate too far. He avoids appearing to make executive decisions on Elizabeth’s behalf about Goodyer’s fate and seeming to take the law into his own hands: “Yf now our queene pyttye her swarved man/ the tree may live thoughe never sound the sappe” (ll.35-6). Through his appropriation of the gardening metaphor, Norton indicates that although he can penetrate Goodyer’s concealed corruption, he must, as Elizabeth’s loyal servant, leave the choice of exercising either mercy or retribution to her.

The Verse Satire

Verse Answering and the Provocative Satirical Outlook of some Tudor Self-Publicists

Although satire has played an important part in the polemical verse exchanges considered so far, it also deserves some consideration for its modest contribution towards the outpouring of hostile answer-poetry in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries in its own right. I am concerned here with the portion of satirists’ repertoires devoted to the subject of detraction and specifically with the satirical temperaments they cultivate, and the ways in which they employ their combative idioms to propagate verse disputes. Unlike those clandestine libellers and satirists who strive deliberately to elude direct confrontation, a number of writers were particularly keen to draw attention to their identity and to attach their names to controversy. These writers are occupational satirists who, rather than necessarily being roused to write satire out of a sense of social responsibility, choose a satirical temperament as their literary idiom, and who, as well as

¹¹⁸ Hughey ed. (1960), I. no. 148.

castigating society in general, single out or seek to attract individuals upon whom they might vent their spleen through the medium of verse controversies. They draw attention to the controversial aspects of their work deliberately (often through preemptive defences or dedications to detraction) in order to lure others into literary debate in a way not dissimilar to Raleigh's using the model of formal duelling to attract controversy in his satire 'The Lie'. Furthermore, whereas several of the answer-poets considered so far might be seen as state propagandists, these are freelance self-propagandists who, like the Roman satirists, present themselves as obtrusive personalities in their own work. Such writers are conspicuous in sixteenth century literature, although they are unfortunately scarce. Skelton, who fits into the categories of both state and self-propagandist, is one among these provocateurs and at the other end of the century a number of the late-Elizabethan satirists, including John Marston and Joseph Hall, are also keen self-publicists. What these writers share, that intermediary verse satirists such as William Baldwin and Robert Crowley do not, is their neoclassicism and irascibly rebellious spirits. From the precedent of the classical satirists' combative temperaments they conceive of their satirical personas as dialectically engaged and draw their understanding that a legitimate and successful satirist needs detractors with whom to fight.

Both Skelton and the late-Elizabethan satirists became victims of their own success at generating controversy. The formal verse satirists manufactured a series of defamatory controversies so conspicuous that it contributed towards the outlawing of satire in 1599. Similarly, Skelton suffered for his outspokenness and achieved a notoriety for controversy that in at least one instance became a threat to his personal safety. Maurice Pollet, in an examination of Skelton's audacious independence from temporal authority in his later work, observes that he is "bold to the point of rashness" and suggests that shortly after writing his most explicit attack upon Cardinal Wolsey, *Why Come Ye nat to Courte?* (1522), he rusticated himself at Sherriff Hutton in Yorkshire in order to escape the

Cardinal's wrath.¹¹⁹

Combative, provocative and confrontational, these satirists court such hostility towards themselves actively. They are particularly cognisant of their roles as provocateurs and of their consequent responsibility to fortify themselves against detraction. Marston, for instance, in a prefatory verse for *The Scourge of Villainy* ('To Detraction I present my Poesie'), asserts boldly that his "spirit scornes Detractions spight"¹²⁰ and Skelton declares in 'Against Venemous Tongues', "For though some be lidded, and list for to rayle,/ Yet to lie vpon me they can not preuayle", 'Laxent ergo antennam elationis suæ inflatum vento vanitatis. li. Ille, &c.'. The invulnerability they affect registers their indebtedness to the indefatigability of the classical satirists. Horace declares defiantly, "at ille,/ qui me commorit (melius non tangere, clamo),/ flebit et insignis tota cantabitur urbe": "But if one stir me up ("Better not touch me!" I shout), he shall smart for it and have his name sung up and down the town" (*Satires*, II.i. ll.44-6).¹²¹ Persius is also aware of being prone to detraction and begins his first satire by dispelling the censure of an imagined critic who

¹¹⁹ Maurice Pollet, *John Skelton, Poet of Tudor England*, trans. John Warrington (Dent, 1971), p.187 and p.135. The poem is not given by Dyce. See instead, *John Skelton: The Complete English Poems*, ed. John Scattergood (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1983), pp.278-311.

¹²⁰ *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1961), p.95. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

¹²¹ Here Horace chooses retaliation in kind as an alternative to the litigious tendencies of his peers:

Cervius iratus leges minitatur et urnam,
Canidia Albuci quibus est inimica venenum,
grande malum Turius, si quid se iudice certes.

Cervius, when angry, threatens his foes with laws and the judge's urn; Canidia with the poison of Albucius; Turius with a big fine, if you go to court when he is judge.
(II.i. ll.47-9)

Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. G. P. Goold, LCL (London and Cambridge MA: HUP, 1999), pp.130-1. *Satires* I.iv. and I.x. are also written in retaliation against detractors.

accuses him of declaiming satires for which there is no demand. Juvenal, the principal classical model for the late-Elizabethan satirists, conceives of himself as engaging in an antipathetic dialectic with his fellow artists: “Semper ego auditor tantum? numquamne reponam[?]” (“Must I be always a listener only, never hit back[?]”), he asks in his opening satire.¹²² His stance is antagonistic and confrontational, and he appears ready both to attack and to defend his corner against all comers. In order to fashion their personas upon the models of their classical avatars these satirists must not only pay homage to their form, style and content, they are also dependent upon attracting hostile commentators upon their work with whom they might engage in exchanges of abuse.

The dialogic aspect of satire (especially that of the late-Elizabethan satirists) also seems to owe something to the festive influence of the Roman Saturnalia, as described by Horace (‘Satires’, II.vii. and ‘Epistles’, II.i.), combined with the viciousness of the Greek Fescennines from which they derived (these are also described by Horace, ‘Epistles’, II.i. ll.139-55). During such periods of holiday license at the Roman festivals freedom of speech was permitted and high offices were assumed by the lowborn. During the Fescennines insulting verses are supposed to have been exchanged with such unrestrained savageness that they descended into violence and bloodshed, forcing the authorities to intervene and to impose libel laws. The satirists employ *mutatis mutandis* all these key elements of the ancient holidays, launching unrestrained invectives against vice, usurping the offices of beadle, schoolmaster, surgeon and even hangman in order to castigate the sinful and, most importantly for our purposes, engaging one another in hostile exchanges of insult. Such an

¹²² *Satires of Persius: The Latin Text with a Verse Translation*, trans. Guy Lee, ed. William Barr (Wolfeboro, NH and Liverpool: Cairns, 1987), p.14 (text), p.15 (trans.); Juvenal, ‘Satire One’, *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturae XIV: Fourteen Satires of Juvenal*, ed. J. D. Duff (Cambridge: CUP, 1909), p.1 (text) and *Juvenal: The Satires*, trans. Niall Rudd, ed. William Barr (Oxford: OUP, 1992), p.3 (trans.).

interpretation of the influences upon late-Elizabethan satire goes a long way towards explaining away many of the reservations raised concerning satirists' hypocritical immorality, their infection by the sins they castigate and their salacious language.¹²³ The saturnalian festival was a time of permissiveness, of freedom from moral and legal restraints and responsibilities, and the temporary license afforded to the plebian classes allowed both the opportunity to castigate the vices of others and to indulge in vice oneself. The only saturnalian element that the satirists lack is the official sanction of a state holiday.

The indebtedness of the late-Elizabethan satirists to Roman satire and the saturnalia would seem to indicate that the personas they adopt are contrived out of their interpretation of the behaviour appropriate to such activities. Alvin Kernan puts forward a similar case. He argues that the outraged, combative temperament of satirists' personas is distinct from the personalities of the authors themselves, and that in their satires they adopt satirical masks or personas that should not be confused with their personal identities.¹²⁴ This theory of satire is true to the extent that the satirists assume those character traits most likely to lead them into dispute, but it also rests uneasily with the animosity that they cultivate through the personal abuse that permeates their work. They provoke attacks against themselves quite deliberately and to this extent their personas must be identifiable with their personal identities since they are writers seeking to achieve fame through controversy. As R. B. Gill comments, one valid interpretation of the work of the late-Elizabethan

¹²³ Alvin Kernan, who is one critic that raises all these points, writes,

There is an old saying that "he who sups with the devil needs a long spoon", and it appears that the satirist has never had a long enough spoon. Inevitably when he dips into the devil's broth in order, he says, to show us how filthy it really is, he gets splattered.

The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1959), p.24. See also Dryden's appraisal of Horace, Watson ed. (1968), p.135.

¹²⁴ Kernan (1959), p.16, pp.38-9 and p.57.

satirists is that “the literary quarrels and student contentiousness in [...] satires written by young authors at the Universities and Inns of Court indicate a personal voice”.¹²⁵ They are fledgling authors, cutting their teeth by turning skills of disputation learnt at the Inns and Universities to vituperative ends in order to make names for themselves, and their usurpation of rather menial official roles such as beadles, schoolmasters, surgeons, hangmen and so forth most probably registers in some form their reflection upon the struggle to find positions in the competitive climate of late-Elizabethan society.

John Skelton’s Satirical Idiom

Skelton was subject to considerably different influences than the late-Elizabethan satirists which held saturnalian license in check, although its spirit strives regularly to push to the surface in his writing. In his role as *orator regius* he cannot present himself as being independent of temporal authority but, like Horace, he figures himself as an emphatically loyal servant of the crown.¹²⁶ By styling himself as Henry’s laureate or *orator regius*, however, Skelton does attempt to legitimise an independent satirical outlook and cultivates a literary space that enjoys some degree of independence from external authority. He seems to have a similar notion to that held by his late-Elizabethan counterparts of what it meant to be a saturnalian satirist and one outcome of this is what William Nelson terms “his inability to modulate his voice to the gentle tones required of a court poet”.¹²⁷

Like Horace, he exhibits the utmost confidence in his aptitude for retaliatory invective and his cultivation of an aggressive satirical persona in his work is generally sufficient to

¹²⁵ R. B. Gill, ‘A Purchase of Glory: The Persona of Late Elizabethan Satire’, *SP*, 72 (1975), 408-18 (p.409).

¹²⁶ See Watson ed. (1968), pp.134-5.

explain the hostile attention that he attracted. He is, as Carlson comments, “a man who made his name out of rude remarks uttered in public about other people”.¹²⁸ Even towards the end of his career when he attempts to pacify his old enemy, Wolsey, Skelton cannot resist angling for a detractor. He takes the Cardinal’s part against two preachers, Thomas Bilney and Thomas Arthur, who had recently recanted their Lutheranism following their arrest and interrogation (‘A Replycacion agaynst Certayne Yong Scolers Abiured of Late’, 1527). The poem is framed as part of a legal debate or “replication”, whereby Skelton assumes the role of prosecutor of the sectarians, and it concludes with a preemptive answer to the criticism he expects to attract even for this piece of pro-government propaganda (‘A Confutacion Responsyue, or an Ineuityably Prepensed Answere to all Waywarde or Frowarde Altercacyons that Can or May Be Made or Obiected agaynst Skelton Laureate, Deuyser of this Replycacyon, &c.’). He is certain that his discussion of theological matters in verse will be construed as irreverent and identifies himself with the Psalmist by way of justification, declaring that he is unrepentant and willing to fight his case, and thus paves the way for heated debate.

Although Skelton seems to have failed to initiate a quarrel here, past experience had no doubt taught him that potential detractors were usually in ready supply and he had successfully provoked a quasi-ecclesiastical controversy earlier in his career. In *Phyllp Sparowe* (c.1509) he closes with a more courteous invitation to his critics, offering judicious readers the opportunity to censor his work and excise offending matter:

And where my pen hath offendyd,
I pray you it may be amendyd
By discrete consyderacyon

¹²⁷ William Nelson, *John Skelton, Laureate* (NY: Russell & Russell, 1964), p.67.

¹²⁸ David R. Carlson, ‘Skelton and Barclay, Medieval and Modern’, *EMLS*, 1:1 (1995), 17 pars (2), <<http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/01-1/carlskel.html>>.

Of your wyse reformacyon. (ll.1245-8)

The rhetorical strategy of promising to amend or retract a contentious or controversial literary statement upon the receipt of a critical response appears to be a stock strategy for initiating literary discourse in the sixteenth century.¹²⁹ Skelton is being disingenuous however. Perhaps the only aspect of the poem open to serious moral criticism is its parody of the liturgy.¹³⁰ Since Jane's lamentation over the death of her beloved pet sparrow at the hands of Gib the cat is the poem's central theme, Skelton is offering his readership the opportunity to amend something that cannot really be "amendyd". If his poem is attacked upon this front he will not be able to back down, and can only continue the discourse by way of a counter-offensive.

The poem attracted the attention of Skelton's rival poet, Alexander Barclay, who did indeed construe it as irreverent. Barclay appended to his translation of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1509) a sideswipe against Skelton in which he dissociates himself from the supposed impiousness of the laureate's mock lamentation.¹³¹ In his addition Barclay adds to Brant's catalogue of folly that of heresy. His jibe at Skelton then, is more than mere ribaldry. He goes on to echo Skelton's disclaimer in *Phyllp Sparowe*: "But if the reder wyse [...] and discrete be/ He shall it mende laynge no faut to me". Since Barclay's theme

¹²⁹ See, for instance, Cat. Anon 52 and my discussion of John Donne's 'To Mr T. W.' ("All haile sweet Poët, more full of more strong fire"), p.220.

¹³⁰ In his examination of pre-Reformation mock epitaphs by John Skelton and Andrew Kennedy, Gregory Kratzmann concludes that, "In none of these poems which exploit the comic potential of a discrepancy between form and subject matter is there ever any attempt to question the authority of the devotional forms themselves", *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations: 1430-1550* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), p.151. Similarly, in Rosemond Tuve's examination of the relationship between secular and divine verse forms she describes "a long history of formal imitation and exchange, unselfconscious and ordinary, provocative neither of ambiguities nor ironies", 'Sacred "Parody" of Love Poetry, and Herbert', in *Essays by Rosemond Tuve: Spenser, Herbert, Milton*, ed. Thomas P. Roche Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1970), pp.207-49 (p.230). While this may be the case, such parodies were nevertheless susceptible to accusations of irreverence, as this incident demonstrates.

¹³¹ Carlson (1995) first identified the relationship between these narrative poems and the reader is directed to his discussion of the rivalry between these two poets for further detail (see n.128).

is a moral one this serves to highlight the good intentions of his project when he turns to compare himself with his adversary's irreverence:

Holde me excusyd for why my wyll is gode
 Men to induce vnto vertue and goodnes
 I wryte ne Jest ne tale of Robyn hode
 Nor sawe no sparcles ne sede of vyciousnes;
 Wyse men loue vertue, wylde people wantones;
 It longeth nat to my scyence nor cunnyng
 For Phyllyp the Sparowe the (Dirige) to synge. (sig. Yyii^r)¹³²

Phyllyp Sparowe is grouped together here with the doggerel ballads of Robin Hood which contained obvious connotations of social dissent and of independence from royal authority and which were criticised for spreading secularism at the expense of godly texts.¹³³ It seems an outrageous insult to associate Skelton, who had held the temporal roles of the king's tutor and laureate and the spiritual one as rector of Diss, with such dissidence. The association of such outlawry with Skelton's poem does contribute towards fostering a more or less accurate impression, however, of the intransigent, self-opinionated imperiousness of which he is capable.

Skelton appears to have rejoined in an appendage to *Phyllyp Sparowe* ('Thus Endeth the Boke of Philip Sparow, and Here Foloweth an Adicyon made by Maister Skelton'):

The gyse now a dayes
 Of some ianglynge jayes
 Is to discommende
 That they cannot amend,
 Though they wold spend
 All the wyttes they haue. (ll.1268-73)

Barclay has been set up here. Skelton reneges upon his earlier promise to be receptive to

¹³² *The Ship of Fooles, Wherin is Shewed the Folly of all States ... Translated out of Latin into Englishe by Alexander Barclay Priest* (printed for Richard Pynson, 1509), sig. Yyii^r, STC 3545 (this edition lacks a colophon, the title is taken from the 1570 edition, STC 3546).

¹³³ Barclay is perhaps alluding to a proverb cited by Fuller in the next century: "Many talk of Robin Hood, who never shot his Bow", in which case his inference would be that, unlike Skelton, he avoids discoursing of "matters wherein [he has] no skill or experience", Fuller (1662), sig. Sssi^r(2). See also Tilley R148. On complaints against the secularism of the Robin Hood ballads see John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1982), pp.213-14.

criticism of his work and make amendments accordingly, suggests that anyone attempting to censure him will end up tying himself in rhetorical knots.¹³⁴

In an answer that likewise suggests Skelton's irreverence, this time through an allusion to the condemnation of serpent-tongued slanderers in Psalm 140, the schoolmaster and grammarian, John Lily, is much more awake to the laureate's satirical temperament than Barclay. It is Skelton's satirical viciousness specifically that Lily finds offensive in his attack upon him in return for a slur he claims that Skelton made upon some of his verses: "Quid me Sceltone, fronte sic aperta/ Carpis, vipereo potens veneno?" ("With face so bold, and teeth so sharp/ Of Vipers venome, why dost carp?", ll.1-2).¹³⁵ Lily attacks Skelton for the sort of brazenfaced, unrestrained vindictiveness indicative of a provocative satirical temperament, rather than focusing upon points of contention in the Grammarians' War in which this poem participates. Skelton had taken the side of Lily's rival grammarian Robert Whittinton in the controversy and in this poem Lily repays him for getting involved.¹³⁶

In his *Index Britanniae Scriptorum* Bale cites the first line of a lost response by Skelton that appears to continue the quarrel by answering Lily's question of why he presents himself as such a venomous, fanged satirist: "Vrgeor impulsus tibi Lille retundere* dentes" ("Spurred on by you Lily with the blunt teeth").¹³⁷ The literary quarrel between the grammarians over pedagogic methodology has been transformed into a dispute

¹³⁴ The debate perhaps extended even further. Bale cites a lost poem of Barclay's that appears to retaliate against Skelton's rejoinder ('Contra Skeltonum'), *Ind. Brit. Scrip.*, p.19 (Cat. B 68).

¹³⁵ Fuller (1662), sig. Kkkiii^r(2).

¹³⁶ On the Grammarians' War see Carlson, 'The "Grammarians' War" 1519-1521, Humanist Careerism in Early Tudor England, and Printing', *MH*, n.s. 18 (1992), 157-81. See Cat. H 156, L 199-200, S 260 and W 304.

* The "ere" declension is irregular. The expected orthography would have been "retunsus" from "retundo", to blunt or dull.

¹³⁷ 'Carmen inuectium in Guilhelmum Liliam poetam laureatum', *Ind. Brit. Scrip.*, p.253.

over satirical methodology here. Lily's depiction of Skelton as a snarling satyr and Skelton's rejoinder that Lily is an impotent, blunt toothed aggressor anticipate the dispute between the late-Elizabethan satirists John Marston and Joseph Hall suggesting that they shared not only the notion that satire should be antisocially dialogic but also an understanding of what the points of contention ought to be (see p.79).

Lily complains that Skelton has dismissed his attacks upon Whittinton as lacking satirical spirit and invective punch, and rejoins that the ability to project such satirical maliciousness is an unreliable measure of disputative aptitude: "Quid me Sceltone fronte sic aperta/ Carpis, vipereo potens veneno?/ Quid versus trutina meas iniqua/ Libras?" (With face so bold, and teeth so sharp/ Of vipers venom, why dost carp?/ Why are my verses by thee weigh'd/ in a false scale?", ll.1-4). His unrestrained vituperation reveals that "Doctrinan nec habes, nec es Poeta" (he is "Neither learned, nor a Poet"), Lily contends (l.8).

Skelton's freelance satirical persona achieves its most pronounced manifestation in his highly controversial postscript to his satirical flyting 'Skelton Laureate against the Scottes' (1513) in which he defends himself against "Diuers People that Remord This Rymynge agaynst the Scot Jemmy" and continues unrepentantly to malign James IV of Scotland as an "vntrue rebell", "heretyke" and "excomunycate" (l.19, l.28 and l.30). 'Against the Scottes' is a more vitriolic version of his *Ballade of the Scottysse Kynge* that appears to have been redrafted when news reached him of James's death and of the full extent of the victory at Flodden under the leadership of Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey.¹³⁸ The initial poem had been composed while Skelton was accompanying Henry's army in France in

¹³⁸ *A Ballade of the Scottysse Kynge* (R. Faques, 1513), *STC* 22593. Details relating to the background of these poems are given by Nelson (1964), pp.127-35 and Pollet (1971), pp.66-76.

1513, and the *orator regius* may have been there in the capacity of a court propagandist or patriotic flyter. As Nelson has noticed, the *Ballade of the Scottysse Kynge* “corresponds closely” in places with Henry’s indignant answer to James IV’s messenger who summoned him to leave France under threat of attack from the Scots, as it is recorded in BL Harleian MS. 2252.¹³⁹ Thus far Skelton presents himself as Henry’s royally-appointed flyter and mouthpiece who has official sanction to reiterate and proclaim Henry’s words.

Presumably, Skelton’s official role would have ended with the termination of military hostilities and in ‘Against the Scottes’ he is clinging to a defunct office. Moreover, his heightened malevolence in this poem runs contrary to the changed feeling towards James at court where there was much sympathy for him following his death on the battlefield, and he expresses inappropriate satisfaction at the death of an anointed king. In a section reflecting upon “When the Scotte Lyued”, Skelton even seems to imagine James being driven to Hell by the banging of pots and pans in a sort of divine skimmington when he issues the curse, “Chryst sence you with a frying pan!” (l.62). Thomas More, in an epitaph upon the Scottish king, gauges more accurately the attitude toward James at the English court, describing him as “regno hostis amico/ Fortis et infelix” (“brave and ill-starred enemy of a friendly power”, Epigram 166, ll.1-2). More’s James is a sympathetic, repentant figure who offers himself as a moral exemplum against betrayal: “Quanta animi fuerat fidei uis tanta fuisset,/ Caetera contigerant non inhonesta mihi” (“Had my loyalty been equal to my courage, the sequel with its shame for me would not have happened”, ll.3-4). In fact, when More’s James addresses “chattering Infamy”, hoping that “you may be willing to keep silent” (“Garrulaque O utinam fama tacere uelis”, l.6), it is tempting to believe that he

¹³⁹ Nelson (1964), pp.129-30. Nelson also observes correspondences between Skelton’s poem and Henry’s formal epistolary response to James’s summons, pp.132-3.

had Skelton's diatribe in mind, and that the humanist may even be one of the "Diuers People" Skelton railed upon in his postscript for criticising his invective.¹⁴⁰ By continuing to defend a position that was no longer palatable to the court, and perhaps to the king himself, Skelton demonstrates an astonishing degree of intransigence here, especially when it is remembered that in his original slurs upon James he was acting as a conduit of the king's voice.

John Marston and the late-Elizabethan Satirists

Perhaps with the exception of the balladmaker William Elderton, much of whose work is lost, England appears not to have produced another such provocative, self-publicising satirical temperament again until the late 1590s when there arose what Davenport terms an almost "free-for-all 'flyting'" between the prominent formal verse satirists of the time.¹⁴¹ Aside from the strong probability that intermediary examples might no longer be extant, the hiatus is best explained by the absence of any writers since Skelton who immersed themselves in the dialogic spirit and intransigence of classical satire. The fraternal competitiveness of the Inns of Court was no doubt responsible for cultivating the right climate for a revival of neoclassical satire and its dialogic tendencies. Although it was Joseph Hall, a recent M.A. graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who was the progenitor of neoclassical satire and the initiator of the dispute, it was mostly men associated with the Inns who followed his lead. Hall conceived of himself as the first to have attempted to write in the strain of classical satire and, following his entrance into

¹⁴⁰ *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More*, trans. and ed. Leicester Bradner and Charles Arthur Lynch (Chicago, IL: Chicago UP, 1953). Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations. Skelton had also been attacked once more by Barclay for his attitude towards James (see Pollet (1971), p.74).

¹⁴¹ Arnold Davenport, 'The Quarrel of the Satirists', *MLR*, 37 (1942), 123-30 (p.123).

this mode of writing, a literary quarrel arose between himself and Marston which was later to involve the poets, John Weever, Nicholas Breton and Edward (or Everard) Guilpin when the dispute mutated into a pamphlet war.

Of these satirists Marston put himself at risk of deprecation in the most reckless fashion by presenting himself as a freelance writer. In a much more pronounced and explicit manner than Skelton ever had the opportunity to achieve, he exhibits a subversive independence from authority, remaining aloof from patronage and neglecting to identify himself with jurisdiction that originates anywhere other than with himself. In the *Scourge of Villainie* (Sept, 1598), for instance, he breaks demonstratively with the system of literary patronage by dedicating it “To his most esteemed, and best beloued Selfe”.¹⁴² He portrays himself as being masterless as well as malcontented; exactly the sort of person characteristically represented as sowing the seeds of sedition in late-Renaissance society. His intention in doing this is, in part at least, to court detraction and in *The Scourge* he even goes so far as to invite it openly: “Then doe but raile at me,/ No greater honor craues my poesie” (‘In Lectores prorsus indignos’, ll.79-80).

Such self-justifying, preemptive strikes against detractors were a hallmark of formal verse satire in the 1590s.¹⁴³ Hall opens his *Virgidemiarum* with ‘His Defiance to Enuie’, and in his postscript he writes, “I well forsee in the timely publication of these my

¹⁴² It is worth noting that Marston goes to greater lengths than some of his contemporaries to stress his independence here. William Rankins, for instance, dedicates his *Seven Satires* “To his noble minded friend Iohn Salisbury of Llewenni, Esquire of the body to the Queenes most excellent Maiesty”, *Seven Satires (1598)*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1948), p.3. In using Marston as an example of the autonomy of the satirical voice here I follow Kernan (1959) who points out that he epitomises the disposition of the late-Elizabethan satirist, whereas some traits are either less pronounced or absent in his contemporaries, p.82.

¹⁴³ Among these is T. M.’s [Thomas Middleton(?)] *Micro-Cynicon* (1599) which opens with ‘His Defiance to Envy’ and the equally combative ‘Author’s Prologue’, *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. A. H. Bullen, 8 vols (Nimmo, 1885-6), VIII. pp.114-16.

concealed Satyres, I am set vpon the racke of many mercilesse and preemptorie censures” (‘A Post-script to the Reader’, ll.6-8).¹⁴⁴ By styling himself as the first of the English satirists Hall presents himself as someone having no recent precedent upon which to base the assumption that his work will be attacked, but since he advertised openly for an *adversarius* he was only foreseeing circumstances for which he himself was responsible partly for manufacturing. In his prologue to the first book Hall even goes so far as to imply that his role as a satirist is incomplete without a fellow with whom to spar and he advertises for someone to fill the position:

I first adventure, with fool-hardie might
To tread the steps of perilous despight:
I am the first: follow me who list,
And be the second English Satyrist.
Enuie waits on my backe, Truth on my side:
Enuie will be my Page, and Truth my Guide.
Enuie the margent holds, and Truth the line. (‘Lib. I. Prologue’, ll.1-7)

Just as a page consists of both lines and margins, a satire requires both a satirist and his detractors in order to be complete, so it is implied.

Marston obliged Hall with a response in the third book of his *Certaine Satyres* (May, 1598). He claims to have been roused to anger by Hall’s attack upon his fellow writers in *Virgidemiarum*: “What cold Saturnian/ Can hold, and heare such vile detraction?” (‘Reactio’, ll.3-4). It is much more likely, however, that Marston understood the rules of the game as he perceived them to have been established by the classical satirists, and welcomed the opportunity to attack Hall as a means of attracting the sort of controversy that would promulgate his own satires. As T. F. Wharton comments, “Marston created in the public mind the idea of a direct controversy between himself and Hall, thus at one

¹⁴⁴*The Poems of Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter and Norwich*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1969), pp.7-10 and pp.97-9. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

economical stroke creating an equivalency between the two writers' reputations".¹⁴⁵

Marston begins his satirical career by claiming to take similar precautions to those taken by Hall. His *Certain Satyres* open with a reflection upon the criticism that he expects his salacious pastoral, *Pigmilions Image*, to attract and sets out a preemptive defence. He will "Censure myself, fore others me deride/ And scoff at mee" ('The Authour in Prayse of his Precedent Poem', ll.39-40).¹⁴⁶ His subsequent book of satires (*The Scourge of Villainie*) likewise opens with a defiant dedication 'To Detraction':

I heare expose, to thy all-taynting breath
The issue of my braine, snarle, raile, barke, bite,
Know that my spirit scornes Detractions spight. (ll.4-6)

It is clear from these lines that Marston was bracing himself for an attack by another snarling satirist such as himself, and in all probability a counter-attack from Hall. Hall's sole contribution to the quarrel, however, appears to be the retaliatory epigram pasted surreptitiously into copies of *Pigmilions Image* due for sale in Cambridge. Hall's counterblast could only have a limited circulation and Marston was left to hype up the profile of the dispute himself by publishing Hall's epigram in a second edition of *The Scourge* within a counterattack of his own: "Smart ierke of wit, did euer such a straine/ Rise from an Apish schoole-boyes braine?" ('Satira Nova', ll.1-2).¹⁴⁷ This failed to elicit further response, although the dispute aroused the interest of other fledgling satirists keen to follow Marston and enhance their satirical credentials by denigrating those of their rivals.

¹⁴⁵ T. F. Wharton, *The Critical Fall and Rise of John Marston* (Columbia, SC: Camden, 1994), p.5.

¹⁴⁶ For an examination of such preemptive rhetorical strategies of self-defence elsewhere in the literature of this period see Debra Belt, 'The Poetics of Hostile Response, 1575-1610', *Cr*, 33 (1991), 419-59. It will be noticed that the title of this first section of my thesis is indebted partly to Belt's title.

¹⁴⁷ Davenport ed. (1961), p.165. For an explanation of the ordering of this sequence of publications see E. A. Beckwith, 'On the Hall-Marston Controversy', *JEGP*, 25 (1926), 84-9.

The dispute between Marston and Hall centres upon disagreement over the best way to write satire and the subject is elaborated upon in the *Whipper Pamphlets* by the time of which it has evolved into debating the function and rectitude of satire as well. Marston's opening gambit, 'Reactio', also recalls the quarrel between Skelton and Lily when he casts doubt upon Hall's credentials as a satirical purger of vice:

Thy wit God comfort mad Chirurgion
 What, make so dangerous an Incision?
 At first dash whip away the instrument
 Of Poets Procreation? fie ignorant! (ll.93-6)

Marston pokes fun at the toothless satires in the first three books of Hall's *Virgidemiarum* here; making a point that Milton was later to reiterate much more explicitly, that a satirist without teeth to bite is not a satirist.¹⁴⁸ By depriving himself of the sharpened tools of his trade Hall has, so Marston suggests, turned them upon himself unwittingly, and the witty insult implied by Marston's describing Hall as a surgeon satirist is, "physician heal thyself" with your own fangs.

He also seems to play upon the idea that controversy between satirists depends upon some degree of mutual understanding about the function of satire as an exercise in antisocial dialogism conducted between the initiated. Marston concludes, "Lets not maligne our kin. Then Satyrist/ I doe salute thee with an open fist" (ll.169-70). He is probably punning upon his *nom de guerre*, Kinsayder, here and using it to suggest the uneasy symbiotic relationship that should exist between satirists whereby part of their repertoire

148

But that such a Poem should be toothlesse I still affirme it to be a bull, taking away the essence of that which it calls it selfe. For if it bite neither the persons nor the vices, how is it a Satyr, and if it bite either, how is it toothlesse[?]

An Apology Against a Pamphlet Call'd a Modest Confutation of the Animadversions upon the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus (printed for Iohn Rothwell, 1642), in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Dan M. Wolfe *et al*, 8 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale UP; London, Cumberlege; OUP, 1953-82), I. ed. Dan M. Wolfe (1953), pp.862-953 (p.916).

involves them attacking one another in order to court publicity. On the one hand, Marston belongs to the same satirical fraternity as Hall. He suggests that there exists a brotherhood of satirists who ought to respect one another and stick together, and his open fist suggests an offer of peace. On the other hand, by saluting Hall with the open fist of the rhetorician rather than the closed fist of the logician, Marston implies that Hall's criticism of himself and other writers is the product of the rhetorician's sophistry, rather than the logician's rigorous pursuit of truth. Marston's insult is in fact more backhanded than open-handed and is doubly effective and witty since it employs dexterous verbal prestidigitation in a pun upon gesticulation. This complements the notion that he is saluting a mountebank rather than a credible physician. The brotherhood of satirists is one built upon backbiting and, since Marston is using mountebank tricks himself, upon hypocrisy.

Hall's retaliation likewise focuses upon medicinal remedies. He answers Marston's accusation that he is a satirical quack in a poem which describes his scrupulous research into finding the right cure for Marston's bestial disposition:

I Ask't Phisitions what their councell was
 For a mad dogge, or for a mankind Asse?
 They told me though there were confections store
 Of Poppie-seede, and soueraigne Hellebore,
 The dog was best cured by cutting and kinsing,
 The Asse must be kindly whipped for winsing.
 Now then S. K. I little passe
 Whether thou be a mad dog, or a mankind Asse.¹⁴⁹

Hall's pun upon Marston's pen name, in his suggestion that the dog ought to be healed by castration, provides the diagnostic solution. Kinsayder (castration singer), the lascivious satyr, needs a taste of his own medicine (castration) in order to cure him. Whereas Marston suggests that Hall turns his satires upon himself unwittingly, Hall claims that Marston's satires are in desperate need of being turned upon their master.

The Hall-Marston controversy was the progenitor of a complex sequence of disputes between their fellow satirists that is difficult to unravel, and I confine myself here to the quarrel of the satirists that emerged in the *Whipper Pamphlets* and leave aside that which emerged on the stage following the Bishops' Ban. Guilpin appears to provide the main link of continuation between the Marston-Hall controversy and the pamphlet war, although it is not immediately apparent where he stands in relation to the progenitors of the quarrel. It has been thought that Guilpin entered the fray on Marston's side due to Marston's dedication 'To his very friend, Maister E. G.' in his final assault upon Hall in 'Satira Nova'.¹⁵⁰ I suspect that this evidence is misleading, however, and that it is more likely that Guilpin actually targets both men, and that he understood the brotherhood of satirists to be founded upon backbiting. He joins in the fray in the sixth satire of his *Skialetheia* with lines that lend themselves most immediately to the interpretation that he is attacking Marston. Among his examples of respected writers (including Chaucer, Sidney, Spenser and Michael Drayton) who have been subjected to detraction unfairly he includes Hall who, although praised by many, "Yet other-some, who would his credite crack/ Haue clap'd *Reactioes* Action on his back" ('Satire VI', ll.95-6).¹⁵¹ These lines are clearly not intended to cast Marston in a favourable light since his attack on Hall is used as an example of censoriousness in a satire against censoriousness. Guilpin also attacks Hall, however. His mention of Hall's satires at the end of a list of literary heavyweights in *Skialetheia* is emphatically ironic and his observation that Hall is "liked of diuers for his rods in pisse" is probably a pejorative description of Hall's satiric whip, although it was conventional for

¹⁴⁹ Davenport ed. (1969), p.101 and also printed in Davenport ed. (1961), pp.163-6.

¹⁵⁰ See, for instance, Wharton (1994), pp.5-6 and Davenport ed. (1969), xxxiii.

¹⁵¹ *Skialetheia, Or a Shadowe of Truth, in Certaine Epigrams and Satyres*, ed. D. Allen Carroll (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1974), pp.88-93.

the satirist to point out that his scourging whip had been soaked in urine to make it sting all the more (l.94).¹⁵² Hall's satire is no less censorious than Marston's and, as such, he is no less the target of Guilpin's criticism. In my opinion Guilpin placed himself in the crossfire between Hall and Marston in order to increase his chances of engaging in combat. He was not to get the opportunity, however, until he found himself attacked alongside Marston at the outbreak of the Whipper Pamphlet controversy.

Following the Bishops' Ban on satire, satirists explored alternate means of continuing their debate (although some satire continued to be written), and as an indirect consequence the dialogic aspect of their work became even more pronounced. Some turned to drama and cultivated a war of the theatres as an outlet for their satirical energy.¹⁵³ Others (with whom I am concerned here) entered into a pamphlet war that used the prohibition upon satire to provide them with rhetorical ammunition against one another. The ban provided an ideal moral justification for satirists to attack one another for writing satire and for debating the function of satire and, in this respect, the injunction played straight into their hands.

The first piece, John Weever's *The Whippinge of the Satyre* (1601), reverses Marston's satirical project of sniping at individuals while carpet bombing society in general. It turns the tables by attacking satire in general and singling out three particular satirists for criticism; the Satirist (Marston), the Epigrammatist (Guilpin) and the Humorist (Jonson). This pamphlet was answered first by Nicholas Breton's *No Whippinge, Nor Trippinge But a Kinde Friendly Snippinge*, which takes a similar stance against satire, but claims that Weever is equally as guilty of antisocial obloquy as those he attacks. A second answer, Guilpin's *The Whipper of the Satyre his Pennance in a White Sheete: Or, the*

¹⁵² The phrase is proverbial (see Tilley R157). Urine was used to soften leather in the process of tanning due to its alkaline properties.

Beadles Confutation, counters with an outright defence of satire.¹⁵⁴ In the opening pamphlet

Weever claims that satire is simply libel writ large:

Was not one hang'd of late for libelling?
 Yes questionlesse. And you deserue the same:
 For you before whole volumes foorth did bring,
 And whome you pleas'd, did liberally defame.
 For shall we his by right a Libell call,
 That toutcht but some? not yours, that aym'd at all? (ll.331-6)

Weever charges satirists with the subversiveness usually accorded to libellers. They are guilty of “setting at strife [their] quyet countrey men” and of breeding “ciuill iarres” (l.328 and l.658). In his prologue he suggests that satire poses a threat to the commonwealth that is potentially “as mischieuous to the Inhabitants of England, as Tyrone hath bene to the Frontiers of Ireland” (“To the Vayne-Glorious, the Satyrist, Epigrammatist, and Humorist”, ll.14-16). Probably, the association of the Irish with sedition has significance beyond the comparison with Tyrone’s uprising. The ancient Irish bards or *filid* were notorious for their ability to inflict bodily harm and even cause death with their satires. They tyrannised over the country and could even hold kings to ransom with threats of satirising them, and beliefs in their powers persisted during Elizabeth’s reign. Robert C. Elliott writes that “the injurious effects of their verse constituted a serious social problem”, and Weever accuses the English satirists of being a comparable nuisance to the commonwealth.¹⁵⁵ By association their self-aggrandisement and their freelance, hubristic arrogant posture of invulnerable autonomy becomes a subversive act of defiance against authority.

He challenges the pseudo-official capacity of law enforcement that satirical writers

¹⁵³ See, for instance, Wharton (1994), pp.11-17.

¹⁵⁴ These pamphlets are collected together in *The Whipper Pamphlets*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1951). I have followed Davenport’s suggested authorship for these poems and his suggestions for the identities of the Satirist, Epigrammatist and Humorist.

¹⁵⁵ Elliott (1972), p.24 (see Elliott’s discussion of the Irish bards, pp.18-48).

claim for themselves as champions of and spokespersons for the national good:

Our noble Princesse (Lord preserue her Grace)
 Made godly lawes to guide this Common-weale,
 And hath appointed Officers in place,
 By those her Lawes with each offence to deale:
 Well looke the rowles, no office ouerskippe,
 And see if you can finde the Satyrshippe. (ll.577-82)

The formal verse satirists do indeed present themselves as private individuals usurping the function of public officials. They purport to wield legislative power over degenerates and wrongdoers and to apply correctives such as the schoolmaster's or beadle's whip, the surgeon's knife and hangman's noose. Weever suggests that their usurpation of these offices, "Without the licence of her Maiestie", constitutes a transgression of the social order and an affront "Against the Law of all Ciuilitie" (l.584 and l.586). In fact, they are guilty of propagating an antisocial counter-culture. The Epigrammatist, for instance, has penned a conduct book that instructs its readers in immoral behaviour by "Disclosing things that neuer Bawd could teach" (l.706).

Although *The Whippinge* challenges the moral function of satire, in a dedication by one I. F. ('To his Friend') a distinctly satirical role is claimed for the pamphlet. Weever will show his detractors a mirror image of themselves that will reveal to them the errors of their ways and lead them to reform. In *The Whippinge* "as in a glasse, those men may see/ The true proportion of their vanitie" (ll.11-12). In fact, Weever's pamphlet and its respondents are spun on the loom of satire and simply resume the satirists' quarrel on a new front. Marston had offered his readers a Juvenalian guided tour of the city of London during which he draws attention to points of satirical interest. In contrast, *The Whippinge* and its responses adapt the Juvenalian tour in order to circumvent the ban on satire. Their pamphlets bring new flourishes to the signature of formal verse satire in order to avoid falling foul of the law, while keeping within the spirit of the motto from Juvenal's first satire, "Difficile est Satyram non scribere" ("It is difficult not to write satire"), that is the

title of Marston's second satire in *The Scourge*.

Weever's exhortation, "Well looke the rowles, no office ouerskippe,/ And see if you can finde the Satyrshippe", for instance, is an instance of satirical hypocrisy since this is the very office he has assumed in order to protract the quarrel. In order to make his position appear more legitimate, however, he presents himself as a royally-appointed flyter who, as an agent of the Bishops' Ban on satire, is sanctioned to rail at these enemies of the commonwealth. *The Whippinge* opens with the description of a pilgrimage through a Helicon-like England during which the author encounters two maiden twin sisters who are both muses and emanations of a deified Elizabeth ("Eliza[s]" rather than Ave Marias are sung in their honour, l.40). Weever conceals himself and listens to their discussion in which one sister bewails the havoc wreaked by three satirists to whom she has given birth: "I haue brought up three" she complains, "That viperlike would eate my bowels out" (ll.92-3). The other sister advises that they need correction and that a champion ought to be employed to undertake the job. By now Weever recognises the sisters as "The sacred Church and [the] Common wealth" (l.135), overcomes his shyness and offers them his services, eager to exact revenge on those guilty of profaning these venerable institutions. At one strike Weever turns the satirists' weapons back upon them. He has been appointed the anti-"satyrshippe" by his "Princesse" and his commission as the queen's laureate and henchman is the mirror image of the official status that he later attacks the satirists for usurping. It takes a satirist to catch a satirist so it seems.

Of the three pamphlets, the second, Breton's *No Whipping*, distances itself most completely from satire and its tone is more one of gentle reproof rather than of outraged indignation. It does not eradicate fully the vestiges of the genre however. Not only does satirical self-righteousness persist, we are also presented with a two part alternative to the Juvenalian tour. In 'The Epistle to the Reader' Breton informs us that he finds his subject

matter while browsing through the wares of the booksellers at St Paul's Churchyard (ll.5-11). He takes us on a librarian's tour, pointing out the faults of the Satirist, Humourist and Epigrammatist presumably while running his finger over the spines of their satires. He also adds Weever, the whipper of satire, to his hall of defamers. Although Weever writes in a "new founde vaine" by chastising the triumvirate for their maliciousness, he is also grouped with these backbiters since he writes in a "scoffing chiding straine" (l.15 and l.17). Breton's advocacy of pacifism disguises his membership of the satirists' combative oeuvre. Like the other protagonists he is both self-righteous and censorious, and by joining in the quarrel while speaking out against backbiting he shares their hypocrisy.

He argues that satirists become infected by what they write against, and ruin their reputations by making themselves vulnerable to detraction:

Spend not your thoughts in spilling of your wits:
 Nor spoile your eies, in spying of offences.
 For howsoeuer you excuse your fittes,
 They carry shreud suspect of ill pretences:
 And when you seeke to make your best defences,
 How euer priuate friends will poorly purse ye,
 If one doe blesse yee, fiue to one will curse ye. (ll.64-70)

Such are the consequences of exposing oneself to wickedness and of broadcasting sin to the world. Breton advises exercising stoic imperturbability rather than cynical indignation when confronted with the degenerate spectacles of the wencher, miser, spendthrift, plotter, swaggerer and numerous others. Rather than publishing their misdoings and thereby setting a precedent of behaviour for others to follow, and also becoming infected by vice by writing about it, the wencher should be advised discreetly to "sinne no more", and for the miser he recommends "Rather praie for him, then so raile vpon him" (l.140 and l.160).

In the second part of the tour, presumably while still perusing the booksellers' shelves, Breton takes his reader on a second sort of journey, this time through the animal kingdom, as he presents a bestiary in which the animals themselves give advice based upon their own

shortcomings: “Be gracious, sayes the Kite: gentle, the waspe:/ Be liberall, the Moile: sober, the Hare:/ Swifte, sayes the Tortoise: vertuous the Ape”, and so forth (ll.260-2). These innocuous examples of degenerate behaviour serve as substitutes for those more immediate social stereotypes found on the Juvenalian city tour with which readers might be tempted to identify themselves, thereby avoiding one of the primary dangers of satire.

Guilpin’s contribution to the quarrel, *The Whipper of the Satyre*, accuses Weever of neglecting his social responsibility to identify and castigate vice as a good satirist ought. Although Guilpin argues that satire fulfils an essential social function, he nonetheless finds a means to circumvent the injunction upon satire. The individuals he encounters on his city tour have already been scourged of their vices, or dissuaded from succumbing to them, by the potency of the satires to which they have been exposed. We are first introduced to an individual who “since the Satyrist so playd on mee,/ [...] can not brooke to heare of letcherie. & c.” (ll.131-2), and subsequently Guilpin’s persona meets others who have been saved from gambling and from pride by satirical intervention (ll.157-68 and ll.211-16). Thus, he avoids satirising by showing a world purged of sin by satire. As Weever has already shown, however, the most effective way for satirical writers to justify their work is to relinquish their self-sufficiency and present themselves as agents of the government, or as royally-appointed flyters, rather than independent satirists.

Chapter 2: Royalism, Raillery and Ritual: Domestic and Cross-Cultural Flyting

Although the sorts of verse examined thus far, libel and satire, have a strong tendency towards dialogism and possess their own characteristic formalities they are less ritualised affairs than flyting. Flyting is a highly ritualised war of words conducted between two main competitors in which there is often consensus from the outset that this is primarily a two-player game.¹⁵⁶ This distinction is apparent in what Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen term the intended “perlocutionary effect” of abusive utterances.¹⁵⁷ Whereas the goal of libel and satire is often to provoke verse controversies, there is frequently some element of prearrangement in flyting and the business of the flyter, rather than to instigate or initiate the dispute, is to make an adversary reel with the force of the insult hurled. Jucker and Taavitsainen make a similar distinction between personal abuse and ritual flyting, writing that, “A personal insult requires a denial or an excuse, while a ritual insult requires a response in kind”.¹⁵⁸ Their distinction, although useful, is slightly too rigid to account fully for the vagaries of Early Modern libel and flyting, since both are reflexive and frequently just as concerned with returning an insult as they are with defending personal honour. Flyting is less likely to offer “a denial or an excuse” than a respondent to libel, but there are plenty of exceptions here as well. Actually, the ritualistic element that separates

¹⁵⁶ This is most apparent in the domestic flytings considered. The flyting between John Skelton and Christopher Garnish, for instance, takes place at the command of Henry VIII, whereas John Taylor and William Fennor argue over the arrangements for an aborted verse contest which was to meant to have taken place between them. The flyting between William Gray and Thomas Smyth also seems to be signposted as an exchange of abuse between two main rivals from the outset, this time through the repetition of various forms of the word “troll” from the opening libel against Thomas Cromwell onwards. *OED* II. 2 defines “trolling” as “singing in the manner of a round, or a jovial style [...] applied contemptuously to antiphonal singing”, and gives the first usage as 1575 (see also n.214).

¹⁵⁷ Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen, ‘Diachronic Speech Act Analysis: Insults from Flaming to Flyting’, *JHP*, 1:1 (2000), 67-95 (p.72).

¹⁵⁸ Jucker and Taavitsainen (2000), p.76.

flyting from libel most clearly is its self-conscious and fervent display of patriotism and loyalty to the royal household.¹⁵⁹

This element of flyting also informs its relationship with satire. Whereas satirists, when at their most recalcitrant, demonstrate independence from external authority, flyters present themselves emphatically as agents of the crown. Such rampant patriotism is expressed by Weever when he presents himself as a royally-appointed spokesman against his fellow satirists and he attempts to execute a transition between satire and flyting, and this sets him apart from Marston who asserts his personal autonomy in his role as satirist. The distinction is less clear in Skelton's work since he fits into the category of both occupational satirist and patriotic flyter, and demonstrates an independence of attitude combined with staunch patriotism and loyalty to the king. Whereas satire is preoccupied with the curative effects of invective, moreover, flyting boasts of its capacity to inflict harm upon its recipients, and rather than purporting to scourge them of vice in order to make them decent members of society, seeks to expel them from civilised society.

Flytings are ubiquitous and have a long history in the British Isles and on the continent. They transcend distinctions between popular and elite culture, enjoying both courtly credentials and popular appeal. The sheer volume of poems that might be involved in any single flyting is remarkable. Around two hundred pieces are recorded as having been produced in a flyting between the French ambassador, Robert Gaguin, and the courtiers of Henry VII in 1489, although the dispute essentially remains a two-player game between Henry and Gaguin since Henry's voice proliferates and reverberates through the mouths of his courtiers. There are also sixteen extant contributions in a flyting between Thomas

¹⁵⁹ The contrast is perhaps evident in that some duel theorists went so far as to recommend ways of managing personal quarrels that circumvented royal injunctions against duelling and that therefore flouted royal authority (see Peltonen (2003), pp.75-8).

Churchyard and Thomas Camel during 1551-2 and nine in one between Thomas Smyth and William Gray in 1540.

Priscilla Bawcutt, in one of her studies of flyting in Scotland, describes the word as “a useful but slippery term” owing in part to its “non-literary uses and contexts”, such as “noisy quarrels and arguments, carried on chiefly by the lower orders, and – so it was insinuated – by women”.¹⁶⁰ The sort of flyting with which this study is concerned is an exclusively literary, masculine activity participated in most usually by members of the gentry, and also by socially aspirant town wits such as John Taylor, the Water-Poet and the balladeer, William Elderton.¹⁶¹ It is a dialogic verse tournament conducted usually between individuals of relatively near social standing whereby the protagonists strive to present themselves as the most loyal and patriotic servants of the crown and to expose their adversaries as its enemies, whether they represent rival nations, or are fellow subjects.

OED 1 describes “fliting” or “flyting” as an invective competition “in which two persons assailed each other alternately with tirades of abusive verse”. This definition draws attention to the oral, ephemeral aspect of flyting; however not all these verse combats find their way into manuscript and print incidentally, and several of those extant appear to have been conceived either initially or exclusively as literary rather than verbal disputes. In this section I will examine two distinct but closely related types of verse flyting; one of which is a cross-cultural war of words voicing national rivalries, and the other of which is a domestic affair in which the protagonists express real or feigned animosity for one another as a form of entertainment and a display of wit in which political or theological differences

¹⁶⁰ Bawcutt (1992), p.222.

¹⁶¹ Rollins finds evidence that Elderton was an attorney and suggests that “his social position and education must have been better than is usually thought”, ‘William Elderton: Elizabethan Actor and Ballad-Writer’. *SP*, 17 (1920), 199-245 (p.206).

might also be voiced. Both are highly patriotic in sentiment, as poets purport to single out their literary rivals as foreign or domestic enemies, and seek to identify themselves fervently with the interests of their king and country. One of the most distinguishing features of flyting is the emphasis placed upon the writers' relationship with patrons and their competition for royal favour. Among those flyters featured here, for instance, are John Skelton and Bernard André or Andreas, both of whom claimed the title of Poet Laureate, and both of whom were tutors to the princes during the reign of Henry VII; Henry and Arthur respectively.

Cross-Cultural Flyting

The Scots were famed for flyting, although the leading authority upon flyting in Scotland, Priscilla Bawcutt, notices on more than one occasion that the perception that it is a “peculiarly Scottish” occupation needs revision.¹⁶² In the case of English flyting specifically, it has received comparatively little attention, and such claims for the Scottishness of flyting have diminished somewhat the appreciation of it as an important and prominent pastime below the border. Although flyting was practiced widely in Scotland throughout the Middle Ages, its context was often cross-cultural as invectives were sallied back at forth between the Scots and the English during times of conflict such as during the Wars of Independence.¹⁶³ The impression that flyting

¹⁶² Bawcutt, ‘The Art of Flyting’, *SLJ*, 10:2 (1983), 5-24 (p.7) and Bawcutt (1992), p.222. *OED* bears some responsibility for fostering this impression since it describes flyting as “chiefly a kind of contest practised by the Scottish poets of the 16th c.” (*OED*, 1 b.).

¹⁶³ Bawcutt has discovered the following brief example:

I was ane hund and syne an hair,
Anys I fled, I fle no mair.
Rocht-futtit Scot, quhat says thow?

[Answer]
Thoue was ane hund, and hair salbe,
Anys thoue fled yett sall fle.
Taylt tyk, haue at thee now!

‘A Miniature Anglo-Scottish flyting’, *NQ*, 233 (n.s. 35), (1988), 441-4 (p.441). Another

is distinctly Scottish has also been fostered by the influence of *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy* (fought between William Dunbar and Walter Kennedy at the court of James IV (c.1495)) upon that between John Skelton and Christopher Garnish at the court of Henry VIII.¹⁶⁴

The Scots had considerable enthusiasm for flyting, and their reputation for exchanges of colourful invective maybe even contributed to the perception that flyting in sixteenth-century England originated in Scotland. In his ‘Against the Scottes’ Skelton opens with an epigraph complaining that they remain verbally combative even following their defeat on the battlefield. He writes indignantly,

Agaynst the prowde Scottes clatterynge,
That neuer wyll leaue theyr tratlynge:
Wan they the felde, and loste theyr kynge? (ll.1-3)

The Scots are so obsessed with flyting obloquy that they are even oblivious to utter defeat and “wyll not know/ Theyr ouerthrow”, Skelton argues (ll.9-10).

England also had a vibrant flyting tradition, and one in which Skelton participates. During the early centuries of the first millennium England was a central focus for flyting with both of its traditional enemies, France and Scotland, and continued to be so during the

example appears in *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, ed. Celia and Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), ‘The Scots in Berwick (1296)’ (“Wenes King Edward with his longe shankes”) and ‘The English Retort’ (“Pikes him/ And dikes him”), no. 52. See also R. M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (Methuen, 1970), pp.201-8. Such exchanges probably originated on the battlefield. One such exchange of abuse occurs between the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes in the Old English poem, ‘The Battle of Maldon’. See N. F. Blake, ‘The Flyting in *The Battle of Maldon*’, *ELN*, 13 (1976), 242-5. Ritualised exchanges of abuse exist in a diversity of other literary and oral cultures. See Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1966), pp.70-3 and pp.62-4 and Douglas Gray, ‘Rough Music: Some Early Invectives and Flytings’, *YES*, 14 (1984), 21-43 (pp.27-8).

¹⁶⁴ See Nan Cooke Carpenter, *John Skelton* (NY: Twayne, 1967), p.73; Kratzmann (1980), p.153; Victor I. Scherb, ‘John Skelton’s ‘Agenst Garnesche’: Poetic Territorialism at the Court of Henry VIII’, *Qu*, 19 (1998), 123-42 (p.126 and p.137) and Greg Walker, *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), p.47. Henry Orion St. Onge also postulates a Scottish connection in Churchyard and Camel’s flyting. ‘Thomas Churchyard: A Study of his Prose and Poetry’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1966), p.38.

sixteenth century. Since such cross-cultural skirmishes arise primarily during times of international hostility it is again to be expected that extant examples will be spread across a wide historical period with substantial hiatuses between. I concentrate here upon Anglo-Scots flytings from the 1513 war with Scotland and the Northern rebellion of 1570, and two Anglo-French exchanges from the reigns of Henry VII and VIII.

Several remote Anglo-French exchanges of invective from the Middle Ages have survived including ones from the reigns of the Plantagenets, Richard I and Edward III.¹⁶⁵ These are abusive, cross-cultural versions of troubadour debate poems such as the *sirvente* and *tenson*; described by A. R. Heiserman as poems that, like their Tudor equivalents, “attacked the enemies of the poet and his patron”.¹⁶⁶ Like the Anglo-Scots invectives exchanged during the Wars of Independence, Troubadour bardic traditions are, as Bawcutt acknowledges, too remote to have exerted direct influence upon sixteenth-century invectives, and Heiserman discovered the same in his assessment of the numerous correspondences between the *sirvente* and Skelton’s satirical poems.¹⁶⁷ Such cross-cultural

¹⁶⁵ See, for instance, H. J. Chaytor’s discussion of an exchange of *sirventes* between Richard I and the Dauphin of Auvergne (c.1198) in *The Troubadours and England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1923), p.61. A text and translation of Richard’s contribution to this war of words appears in John Harvey, *The Plantagenets* (Glasgow: Fontana/ Collins, 1983), pp.214-16. Richard is also known to have exchanged *sirventes* with Henry of Burgundy and Hugh of Burgundy. See Harvey (1983), p.71 and Wilson (1970), p.188 respectively. In an appendix to their edition of Laurence Minot’s poetry, Thomas Beaumont James and John Simons provide a translation of a highly abusive Anglo-French exchange from the fourteenth century, *The Poems of Laurence Minot, 1333-1352* (Exeter: Exeter UP, 1989), pp.97-9.

¹⁶⁶ A. R. Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire* (Chicago, IL: Chicago UP, 1961), p.247. *OED*, which has little to say on the subject of the *sirvente*, notices that the word has an unclear connection with the verb *servir*, to serve. Janet M. Smith describes “the *sirvente* (Provençal) or *serventois* (Old French) [as] a short personal invective, not a dialogue. With its jibes and insults, it contained just the same matter as flyting, but was often more seriously meant and might even lead to bloodshed. The *tenso* (Provençal) or *tenson* or *débat* (Old French), on the other hand, was a dialogue originating in Provence”, *The French Background of Middle Scots Literature* (London and Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1934), pp.53-4.

¹⁶⁷ Bawcutt (1992), p.236; Heiserman (1961), p.246.

skirmishes are part of a literary tradition that most usually arises only at particular historical moments under conditions of international conflict and it is therefore problematic to speak of them as part of cohesive literary or historical trends. They are occasional poems that recycle the conventions of their avatars in response to the immediate circumstances of international conflict.

At first examination, the contrast between the language used in sixteenth-century Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French flytings would seem to suggest that Anglo-French exchanges were relatively more upmarket and sophisticated affairs than their Anglo-Scottish equivalents which appear significantly cruder. The Anglo-French disputes I consider are conducted in Latin between humanists and debate specific details of war and diplomacy. Anglo-Scottish examples are more often vernacular and use more direct and forceful insults, derogating their adversaries' stereotyped national characteristics in stronger terms, although they are also engaged politically. They use language that is hyperbolically obscene and aggressive, including threats of violence, gallows humour and scatological insults. Nonetheless, while the surviving Anglo-French examples are conducted between humanist courtiers and high ranking officials, the Anglo-Scots exchanges also involve important men and are equally competent, and arguably even superior, examples of stingingly insulting verse.

Anglo-French Flyting

The earliest example of cross-cultural flyting within the Tudor period is also the one that generated the most prolific outpouring of responses among all the verse exchanges I have examined. This occurred in 1489 and took place between courtiers resident at the court of Henry VII and the French ambassador to England. When Robert Gaguin made a libel against Henry, his courtiers rushed to his defence by counter-attacking the French diplomat with a tirade of Latin invectives in what amounts to an upmarket skimmington or charivari, calculated to drive him from the court. What is particularly remarkable about this event is that, as David R. Carlson points out, all the known poets connected to Henry's court appear to have contributed.¹⁶⁸

Gaguin became exasperated when his embassy to Henry was dismissed with open hostility. He had been sent to gain the English king's approval of Charles VIII's claim to Naples, and especially to secure his acknowledgement of the French king's right as guardian to declare void the dynastic marriage between his ward, Anne, Duchess of Brittany and the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian. Met with the curt response that Henry had as sound a claim to sovereignty over France as Charles had over Naples, Gaguin hit back with a short invective in two parts. The first satirises the English as a "sly people" with whom it is impossible to reach agreement, and the second is addressed directly to Henry and accuses him of ingratitude and of causing a rift between Charles and his father-in-law Maximilian.¹⁶⁹ The prolific responses Gaguin's insult generated illustrate some of

¹⁶⁸ In his *Vita Henrici VII* Bernard André recalls that nearly two hundred verses were composed against Gaguin on this occasion, *The Life of Henry VII According to Bernard Andreas*, trans. Dale Edward Casper (University of Minnesota, unpublished MA thesis, 1972), p.101. David R. Carlson, 'Politicizing Tudor Court Literature: Gaguin's Embassy and Henry VIII's Humanists' Response', *SP*, 85 (1988), 279-304 (p.284). All subsequent Latin quotations and English translations from this flyting are quoted from Carlson.

¹⁶⁹ These events are discussed by both Carlson (1988) and H. L. R. Edwards, 'Robert Gaguin and the English Poets', *MLR*, 32 (1937), 430-4.

the potential advantages for monarchs of surrounding themselves with competent orators who might respond on their behalves to libellous and seditious attacks. Most of these responses have perished, others are known only from their first lines as recorded by Bernard André who cites the first two lines of an answer by Cornelio Vitelli and the opening words of four of what are possibly his own contributions in his *Vita Henrici VII.*¹⁷⁰ André is one among several laureates and would-be laureates who assumed the role of their monarch's mouthpiece through the medium of verse answering.

Answers by two of the resident Italians at Henry's court, Giovanni Giglis and Pietro Carmeliano, have been preserved and they both identify themselves specifically as Englishmen rather than as foreign guests. Giglis's response is a point for point, line for line rebuttal of Gaguin's poem. He deflects Gaguin's satire upon the English back at the French in his first part ('Egidius Anglicus contra prefatum Gallum': 'Egidius the Englishman against the Aforementioned Frenchman') and answers the libel against Henry in the king's name in the second ('Rex Anglie ad Gallum': 'The King of England to the Frenchman'). According to Giglis it is the French rather than the English who are the aggressors and it is impossible to come to terms with them because of their deceitfulness:

Siccine tam crebra per te mendacia fiunt,
Galle, tibi quare credere nemo potest?
Credimus ut sanctam tendis disolvere pacem,
Cum nos Gallorum nullus amavit avus. (ll.1-4)¹⁷¹

Then, speaking in the voice of the king, Giglis, as Henry, stresses his probity and claims that he has always adhered to the terms of the treaties into which he has entered. Rather, it is his allies who have turned away from him, and broken the accord: "Abcessi nunquam sum quos amplexus

¹⁷⁰ See Cat. A 60a-d and V 290.

¹⁷¹ "Why is no one able to trust you, Frenchman, so often are lies thus put forth by you? We believe that your intention was to undo holy peace, since no ancestor of the French has loved us", Carlson (1988), p.298. Carlson appears not to have translated the first line of this poem.

amore,/ Sed semper socios federe suos meos” (“Never have I abandoned those whom I embrace in love, my allies rather forever by their own consent”, ll.10-11).

Carmeliano, who like André considered himself Henry’s laureate, argues similarly that the French are warmongers and greedy for power.¹⁷² They are duplicitous and not to be trusted, and his poem (‘Petri Carmeliani scribe Angli Carmen Responsum’: ‘The Poem in Response of Pietro Carmeliano the English Writer’) is a call to arms justified by the argument that the only way to bring about peace with such people is to defeat them first: “Angle, petis pacem frustra; nil amplius instes:/ Bella geras! pacem Gallia victa dabit” (“Englishman, in vain do you seek peace: ask after it no longer. Wage war! France will yield peace only when conquered”, ll.21-2).¹⁷³

In this flyting the role that patronage plays in the respondents’ motivation is not straightforward due to their foreign nationality and humanist profession. Carlson describes this flyting as being among

the court literature that [emerged] in concert with a court at the centre of English politics late in the fifteenth century [that] had as its main purpose not entertainment or even edification so much as promotion of the political goals of the Tudor state.¹⁷⁴

As Carlson goes some way towards suggesting, such flytings were political and utilitarian gestures, designed to curry favour with patrons, to rally support for royal policy and to make a show of solidarity against enemies of the state. This early example of international flyting anticipates a lineage of answer-poets throughout the Tudor period who fashioned themselves as royal propagandists and patriotic champions, and who purported to advance the political objectives of their respective governments. Flyting, however, also strikes a balance between its

¹⁷² Nelson (1964), p.40 (n.2).

¹⁷³ André was unable to obtain a copy of this poem but it has been recovered by Carlson (1988), pp.299-300. See Cat. C 86.

utilitarian objective and its role as a form of entertainment, and this flyting is no exception.

Carlson casts doubt upon the protagonists' earnestness. According to him, their reaction "has no more to do, apparently, with any of the poets' personal animus against Robert Gaguin than it does with the poets' personal stakes in English nationalism".¹⁷⁵ By this he means that as foreigners at Henry's court, these men had no real personal investment in the reputation and prosperity of England, and were concerned purely with mercenary preferment seeking through this gesture of support for Henry's policy. Carlson calls attention to the history of amity between Gaguin and several of his respondents, and attributes to careerist opportunism the discrepancy between their cordial personal relationships with the French statesman and the hostility of their responses to his libel upon Henry.¹⁷⁶ Before the English Reformation and during the emergence of humanism in England the court had a more international flavour and the nationality of the protagonists in this flyting ought not to be seen as clear evidence of their insincerity. Although a native of Toulouse, André was a fervent patriot who, as the royal chronographer, Henry's laureate and Tutor to prince Arthur, was a naturalised member of the English court. He respects Gaguin as a fellow humanist and as a competent orator, but when conflicts of national interest arise between himself and Gaguin his loyalty is not in question.¹⁷⁷

It is also important to note that, whatever mercenary motives may have been involved in generating these responses, the protagonists were also writing within a well-established and somewhat festive literary tradition of exchanging insult between rival nations during times of hostility. Humanists are notorious for their enthusiasm for such disputes, and for

¹⁷⁴ Carlson (1988), p.279.

¹⁷⁵ Carlson (1988), p.289.

¹⁷⁶ Carlson (1988), pp.289-90.

¹⁷⁷ Casper trans. (1972), p.98.

their love of debate and, as Nan Cooke Carpenter has commented, flytings were “much cultivated in Italy”, the country of origin of a number of the protagonists.¹⁷⁸ They would have been unlikely to miss this particularly fertile opportunity to lampoon Gaguin. It is also unrealistic to assume that every participant in this prolific outpouring of responses expected some form of advancement. There must, in fact, have existed a strong sense of the fun in indulging in the opportunity to pillory the French diplomat.

Conflicts of interest arise much more palpably in a second instance of Anglo-French flyting, and similarly between the airing of nationalistic grievances and the maintenance of good relations within the international humanist community. In Sir Thomas More’s exchange with the Frenchman, Germain de Brie (known under his Latinate humanist name, Germanus Brixius) they levelled sallies of abuse at one another in disagreement over the details of an Anglo-French sea battle of 1512 about which Brixius had written in his poem *Herveus, sive Chordigera Flagrans* (1513). More challenged the veracity of Brixius’s historical account in a small series of abusive epigrams and Brixius rejoined with his *AntiMorus*, which was met with further defamatory epigrams from More.¹⁷⁹ In More’s attack upon Brixius he brings him to task both upon points of humanist pedagogy and nationalist rivalry, and he selects passages from the *Chordigera* and the *AntiMorus* to furnish material for his claims.

More seems to have intended to strike some sort of balance between acting as a patriotic champion by attacking the national enemy in verse and avoiding antagonising a fellow humanist scholar. He attempted to restrict the circulation of his epigrams against Brixius and beseeched Erasmus to prevent them going through the press alongside his other

¹⁷⁸ Cooke Carpenter (1967), p.73.

¹⁷⁹ Nos 170-9, no. 193 and nos 250-3.

work. His attempt failed and when his epigrams reached Brixius's attention it took Erasmus several years to defuse the animosity that arose between his mutual friends.¹⁸⁰

Brixius delivers his account of the sea battle as an epic, memorialising the heroism of the French sea captain, Hervé, who died when his ship, the *Cordelière*, was sunk during battle. More responded to Brixius's implicit undermining of English courage with accusations of historical inaccuracy and exaggeration, as well as poking fun at his inept artistry. In one epigram he writes that "Brixius immerita quod sustulit Heruea laude,/ Quod merito aduersum fraudat honore ducem" ("I am not at all surprised that Brixius has conferred upon Hervé praise which he did not earn, and has deprived the opposing captain of his due honor").¹⁸¹ In another epigram More subjects the veracity of Brixius's historical account to a forensic analysis in order to undermine his credibility. He quotes lines 106-111 of the *Chordigera* in which Brixius writes of the captain's martial vigour in fighting simultaneously with javelin, sword, axe, shield and other weapons that he disarmed from his assailants (no. 173, 'Postea de Eadem "Chordigera"': 'A later Incident from the Same Poem, "Chordigera"'). In response, More writes: "sed debuit ante moneri/ Lector tunc Herueo quinque fuisse manus" ("but your reader ought to have been informed in advance that Hervé had five hands").¹⁸² Wilfully misrepresenting Brixius's epic rendition of the event as a flawed historical document, More suggests that he is a shameless liar. In order to

¹⁸⁰ Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, *The Epigram in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1947), p.50. Apparently, Erasmus also failed to prevent Brixius publishing his counter-attack and was further belated in his attempt to prevent More publishing a set of epigrams responding to the *AntiMorus* although only five copies had been sold before More recalled them (see pp.50-5).

¹⁸¹ 'In Evndem de Eodem Herveo et Eadem Nave Qvae in Pvgna Navali Conflagavit' ('On the Same Author Dealing with the Same Hervé and the Same Ship (Which was Burned Up in a Naval Battle)'), no. 171, ll.1-2.

¹⁸² 'Epigramma Mori Allvdens ad Versvs Svrperiores' ('More's Epigram Mocking the Verses Above'), no. 174, ll.13-14.

show that Brixius is ineloquent and his metre is cumbersome, moreover, he includes an epigram ‘In Hvnc Hendecasyllabvm, imo Tredecim Syllabarvm, Versum Germani Brixii Galli ex “Antimoro” Svmpsvm: “Excussisse hominumque in ora protulisse”’ (‘On the Following Hendecasyllabic Verse, Rather the Following Thirteen-Syllable Verse from the “Antimorus” of the Frenchman Germanus Brixius: “To discover and to offer to the gaze of men”’, no. 252).

The presence of competent flyters at court to represent the nation against its rivals was perhaps a matter of some prestige, and not much less important than having competent orators and diplomats well-versed in the arts of rhetoric and eloquence to represent the nation as ambassadors and spokesmen more cordially.¹⁸³ No wonder then that More should single out Brixius’s humanist accomplishments for criticism. More, however, was a much better diplomat than patriotic antagonist, and his efforts here are rather lame and unimaginative. In this counter-response to the *AntiMorus* he explains Brixius’s long lines by the suggestion that they have been measured by the yard, rather than by feet and in other attacks he resorts to equally banal puns. In Epigram 193 (‘In Brixivm Poetam’: ‘To the Poet, Brixius’) he argues that the *Chordigera* is lacking in its own first syllable, cor (heart). The same accusation might be justifiably levelled at More whose timidity of insult registers a lack of such satirical courage upon which successful flyting depends. He does not seem to have entered fully into the vituperative spirit of flyting, and this is perhaps owing to his lack of conviction in his assaults upon a fellow humanist. He did not lack the irascible temperament necessary for coarse wit and abuse and used ridicule with panache against

¹⁸³ As Scherb (1998) argues, one of the purposes of domestic flytings between fellow courtiers was to “determine who was most worthy of being the court’s poetic spokesman”, and this would almost certainly involve the pseudo-diplomatic role of castigating the nation’s enemies, p.125.

Martin Luther's challenge to the established church in 1523. In his *Responsio ad Lutherum* he executes a sustained feat of, occasionally scatological, *reductio ad absurdum* against the theology proposed by that "most foolish of bipeds" ("neget bipedum stultissimus") "Father Tossopot" ("pater potator").¹⁸⁴

Anglo-Scots Flyting

Anglo-Scottish exchanges generally tend to be significantly more vituperative and colourful than their Anglo-French counterparts. Skelton, More's contemporary, exhibits exactly the right temperament and enthusiasm for invective necessary for pyrotechnic exchanges of abuse. As Henry VIII's self-appointed *orator regius* he took on the role of the king's spokesperson and that of defender of the nation against its detractors with considerable relish. He claims to have been involved in the anti-French skimmington that drove Gaguin from the court of Henry's father,¹⁸⁵ and acted as a crusader repeatedly during his career against those he saw as threatening his nation's reputation. In his *Ballade of the Scottyshe Kynge* and 'Against Dundas' he takes up the gauntlet against England's other traditional enemy, Scotland, much as Laurence Minot had done as Edward III's unofficial laureate,¹⁸⁶ and towards the end of his career he also targets those he perceives as domestic enemies of the commonwealth such as Cardinal Wolsey and the Lutherans. As Hadfield claims, Skelton "set himself up as the poet of national harmony and

¹⁸⁴ *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. John M. Headley *et al*, 15 vols (London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1963-97), V.i.: *Responsio ad Lutherum*, ed. John M. Headley, trans. Scholastica Mandeville (1969), p.334 and p.350 (text); p.335 and p.351 (trans.).

¹⁸⁵ Among the catalogue of his works that he provides in *The Garland of Laurel* is 'The Recule ageinst Gaguyne' (l.1187). Carlson (1988) believes that this poem is more likely to be an answer to Gaguin's *Compendium gestis francorum* (1495), pp.287-8 (n.29).

¹⁸⁶ Aside from one Anglo-French exchange that appears to be associated with Minot, his invectives against the Scottish and French have been preserved as one-sided affairs. See James and Simons eds (1989), pp.97-8.

unity” and this drew him into fierce literary attacks upon those he perceived to threaten the reputation or dignity of his nation.¹⁸⁷

In his ‘*Vilitissimus Scotus Dundas Allegat Caudas Contra Angligenas*’ he responds to a Latin anti-English satire in which the unidentified Scottish poet, Dundas, likens his southern neighbours to grotesque dogs: “*Anglicus a tergo/ Caudam gerit;/ Est canis ergo*” (“The Englishman carries a tail behind him; he is, therefore, a dog”, ll.1-3).¹⁸⁸ Dundas draws from the legend of St. Augustine’s attempt to preach to the villagers of Muglington who vented their revilement of the missionary by pinning fish tails to his clothes. According to the anecdote Divine Retribution was exacted upon the Muglingtonions’ descendants who were subsequently born endowed with tails. In Dundas’s poem the English have tails simply because they are mangy curs.

Skelton rejoins with a macaronic poem defending his countrymen: “*Skelton laureat/ After this rate/ Defendeth with his pen/ All Englysh men/ Agayn Dundas/ That Scottishe asse*” (ll.29-34). Skelton’s liking for macaronics has been attributed frequently to his participation in a characteristically medieval literary tradition.¹⁸⁹ In this instance, however, it may be that his style is meant to contribute purposely to his point. Skelton’s accusation that Dundas is “*bilinguis*” (“deceitful”, l.6) calls attention to the double meaning of the word and that in contrast, rather than being mendacious, Skelton’s answer is bilingual. By responding with a poem written in both Latin and English, Skelton flaunts his versatility

¹⁸⁷ Hadfield (1994b), p.34.

¹⁸⁸ The translation here is from Scattergood ed. (1983), p.430 (other translations from this poem are my own). The accusation that Englishmen have tails is a typical feature of Scottish anti-English invectives (see n.163).

¹⁸⁹ Elizabeth Archibald points out, for instance, that Skelton writes in “a well-established and already sophisticated medieval literary form”, but that he also put macaronics to “new and idiosyncratic uses”, such as he does here, ‘Tradition and Innovation in the Macaronic Poetry of Dunbar and Skelton’, *MLQ*, 53 (1992), 126-49 (p.129).

and implicitly makes the point that an able rhetorician might also be a virtuous man.¹⁹⁰ In turn, it is the clumsy poet representing the Scots who is completely lacking in grace (“Undique notum”, l.26) and corrupt (“Vapide potum”, l.28), and it is Scotsmen rather than Englishmen who are beggars and the wearers of obscene tails:

Shake thy tayle, Scot, lyke a cur,
For thou beggest at euery mannes dur.
Tut, Scot, I sey,
Go shake thy, dog hey! (ll.35-8)

Skelton’s bilingual response to Dundas’s Latin invective is an assertion of Englishness and “an act of nationalist one-upmanship” whereby his competent use of concise vernacular insult seems meant to contrast favourably with the Latin “pentameter” that he accuses Dundas of mishandling (l.16). As Valerie Allen points out Skelton uses Latin to mimic Dundas and English to surpass him.¹⁹¹ The pride that Skelton, as a “champion of the vernacular”,¹⁹² and later answer-poets, exhibit in using their native tongue suggests that there was a certain degree of prestige attached to using the vernacular for abuse; a prestige more usually accorded to Latin.

In the late-Tudor period cross-cultural flytings are again generated during a period of war and insurrection; and once again hostile verse answering is concentrated particularly upon the controversy surrounding Mary Queen of Scots and the Northern Rebellion. In the three exchanges I examine it is the Scots, rather than the English, who are the respondents and their attitudes towards the rebellion vary considerably. Alexander Montgomerie’s anti-English poem suggests support for Mary and the rebels, whereas that by Sir Robert Sempill

¹⁹⁰ On the relationship between rhetorical virtuosity and virtue see Arthur F. Kinney’s analysis of the decline of faith in a humanist education to cultivate good men in the sixteenth century in *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric, and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century England* (Amherst, MA: Massachusetts UP, 1986).

¹⁹¹ Valerie Allen, ““Scot” as a Term of Abuse in Skelton’s *Against Dundas*”, *SN*, 59:1 (1987), 19-23 (p.20 and p.21).

¹⁹² Pollet (1971), p.198.

reflects his loyalty to the new English-supported regime under the protectorate of James Stewart, Earl of Moray. The third poem is an anonymous conciliatory answer to English accusations of Scottish treachery against the rebel leaders.

Montgomerie's answer-poem ('Ane *Anser* to ane Ingliss Railar Praying his Awin Genalogy', Ritchie's italics), like Skelton's attack upon Dundas, focuses upon undermining the prestige of the enemy's national identity. The poem is one of George Bannatyne's final additions to the Bannatyne Manuscript, and believed to have been inserted "possibly several years later" than the manuscript's terminating date for completion in 1568.¹⁹³ Thus it was most likely added during the aftermath of the Northern Rebellion and in the midst of heightened anti-English feeling brought about by the rebellion's failure and Mary's imprisonment in England. Bannatyne's manuscript is conspicuously Catholic in sentiment and, as a supporter of Mary, the compiler had good reason to supplement the poem in order to reflect his antipathy towards England.

Montgomerie's satire responds to an unidentified poem that celebrates English ancestry by portraying the nation's subjects as an inherently heroic and god fearing people. From the evidence of Montgomerie's answer, the English poem appears to have employed the popular myth that Englishmen are descended from Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, who was reputed to have founded London, or New Troy, on the banks of the Thames. Montgomerie rejoins that they are more likely to be descended from the regicide Brutus, "Quha slew his fader [Julius Caesar] howping to succeed" (l.12). Such accusations of betrayals of dynastic and familial loyalty are a recurrent feature of cross-cultural flyting.

¹⁹³ *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest, 1568*, ed. W. Tod Ritchie, STS, 4 vols (London and Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by Blackwood, 1928-33), III. (1928), pp.85-6. See the introduction to the facsimile edition of the manuscript, *The Bannatyne Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS. 1.1.6*, ed. Denton Fox and William A. Ringler Jr. (1568; repr. Scolar, 1980), xvi and xxxi.

Skelton makes similar accusations against James IV, as does Gaguin against Henry VII.

A second claim made by the English poem derives from Pope Gregory I's reputed remark about a group of young English slave boys whom he saw for sale at a marketplace in Rome, that they were as beautiful as angels, and that therefore the Angles (Englishmen) must be descended from angels. The English poem, according to Montgomerie, applies such an observation to the nation's genealogy, and he points out that the assertion is based upon a false etymology. With disdainful incredulity he remarks that the Englishman's claims are made "As [if] Angelus and Anglus bayth war ane", and observes cannily, although with audacious disregard for biblical authority, that the only angels ever seen on earth were fallen ones: "Angellis in erth yit hard I few or Nane/ Except *the feyndis with lucifer that fell*" (l.4 and ll.5-6). Therefore, it must be these angels from whom the English are descended, he concludes.

The remaining flytings from around this time involve themselves directly with the political situation in Scotland arising from Mary's downfall. Sir Robert Sempill's 'Ane Answer Maid to *the Sklanderaris that Blasphemis the Regent and the Rest of the Lordis*', for instance, rains scorn upon a libeller of James Stewart who acted as regent at the beginning of James's minority (1567-70).¹⁹⁴ The libeller belongs to the camp of Mary and her husband, the unpopular, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. Mary was coerced into abdicating in 1567, and her six-month-old son made king in her place following suspicion of her connivance in her previous husband, Darnley's, murder.¹⁹⁵ Sempill, who was in William Cecil, Lord Burghley's pay for disseminating such propaganda,¹⁹⁶ defends James's

¹⁹⁴ *Satirical Poems of the Time of the Reformation*, ed. James Cranstoun, STS, 2 vols (London and Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by Blackwood, 1889-91), I. (1891), pp.65-7.

¹⁹⁵ For these details see Willson (1963), p.19.

¹⁹⁶ Livingston (1991), pp.812-13.

right to the throne and presents himself as the champion of the king and his regent. Their detractor, presumably one of Mary's supporters, is "ane papist loun" and a "Blasphemus baird and beggeris get!" whom Sempill will flush out of hiding with his rhyming and drive onto the gallows in retribution for his treachery and heresy (l.6 and l.11):

To flyt *with thee* and fyle my lippis, [...]
 Thay hound *thee* to *the* hangmanis grippis,
 Quhair mony better man hes bene. (ll.26-30)

By way of contrast to the criminal caricature he paints of his adversary, Sempill stresses his own probity and straightforwardness. The libeller hides his identity to avoid punishment ("Bot, knew I the, thow sould recant", l.54), whereas Sempill stresses with righteous conviction that he faces his adversary in the open ("Mark weill my name", l.58), and challenges him to open combat.

There are numerous broadsides attributed to Sempill (or Symple) that speak out fervently on the behalf of the regent.¹⁹⁷ Although this is the poet's real name, it sounds akin to the sort of pastoral pseudonyms that Kernan argues are used to suggest simple, ingenuous critics of society in satire prior to the 1590s.¹⁹⁸ His name functions conveniently as a *nom de guerre*, complementing his insistence upon his openness, honesty and plain speaking, and provides him with a doubly apt means of defining himself against his opponent's surreptitious scurrility.

A third exchange, this time from the Sir Richard Maitland Manuscript, is much less characteristic of the sort of vituperation that might be expected from flyting. It consists of two pro-Northern Rebellion poems, one written from an English perspective ('Ane Exclamatioun Maid in England vpon the Delyuerance of the Erle of Northumberland furth of Lochlevin quho Immediatly Thairefter wes Execute in Yorke'), and the answering verse

¹⁹⁷ These are collected together in *The Sempill Balletes*, ed. Thomas George Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1872).

from a Scottish one ('The Answeir to the Englisch Ballad').¹⁹⁹ The English poem reprehends the Scots in general for selling the rebel leader, Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland into captivity, claiming that the key malefactors are typical representatives of Scottish treachery: "Murray, Mortoun, and Ruthvenis", so it is asserted, are "Of that vngracious natioun bred" (l.47 and l.50).²⁰⁰

The representative of the Scots rejoins in complaint against the blanket condemnation of the Scots which he argues should have rather singled out specific enemies of Mary and the Northern rebels responsible for Northumberland's arrest. His answer is atypical of flyting. Since he is also a supporter of the rebellion his answer lacks the animosity and aggression that would be expected in a Scotsman's answer to an Englishman's polemic against his countrymen and he acts as a mediator between the Scottish and English factions:

Thocht sum have playit Judas pairt
In selling gud Northumberland,
Quhy sould the hoill, for thair desert,
That faine wald haue that fact withstand,
Or yit the countrey beir the blame?
Let thame that sauld him haue the schame. (ll.7-12)

The answer-poet assumes a tenor of levelheaded rationality here, and reproves the English poem mildly for its satirical generalisation rather than returning the insult. The conciliatory tone once again reflects the influence that it was feared ballad propaganda might exert upon public opinion and anticipates that the English libel might provoke unwarranted reprisals against the Scots: "I yow advyise, call in your scroll,/ Yow wait not quho will it controll" (ll.5-6). The poet attempts to

¹⁹⁸ Kernan (1959), pp.40-52 (see especially p.43).

¹⁹⁹ Cranstoun ed. (1891), I. pp.240-7.

²⁰⁰ James Stewart, Earl of Moray (regent until 1572), James Douglas, Fourth Earl of Morton (regent 1572-80), and Lord Patrick Ruthven all sided with the Protestant party against Mary, and had conspired together in 1565 to prevent her marrying Darnley.

bring a sense of proportion to the situation pointing out that France and England also have their own share of traitors, and therefore that the Scottish should not be punished disproportionately for theirs (ll.43-5).

By drawing together these three nations the poet calls attention to something significant about the English perception of flyting with its close neighbours. England had laid claims to sovereignty over Scotland and parts of France for several centuries, and the temptation existed to represent waging war with these countries as military operations to suppress traitorous subjects rather than sovereign enemy states. In this sense at least, cross-cultural flyting possesses an intrinsically domestic element whereby poets act as royal champions against traitors rather than subjects of other nations. This perhaps explains why there exists no comparably enduring tradition in England of flyting with nations other than these two.

Domestic Flyting

Domestic flytings have been preserved as much more elaborate affairs than their cross-cultural counterparts and in many ways they are libels writ large, in terms of their physical length, the number of protagonists involved and the lavishness of abuse employed. In fact, just as there is an analogy between the libel and the duel, there is also one between domestic flyting and the tournament which might be said to operate on a similar scale of extravagance. Like the tournament, the flyting is a feat of aggressive display before royal authority, envisaging the king as witness to the contest and appealing to him to adjudicate in the dispute and the competitors fight for the poetic crown or laureateship symbolising royal favour. The origins of flyting can be found both in court festivities and, more seriously, in the formal process of bringing charges of treason against a personal rival before the king. In Raphael Holinshed's account of a quarrel in

1397 between Thomas Mowbray, First Duke of Norfolk, and Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford (later Henry IV), adapted by Shakespeare in *Richard II*, is found an archetypal scenario of domestic courtly flyting in England:

Henrie, duke of Hereford, accused Thomas Mowbraie duke of Norfolke of certeine words [...] sounding highlie to the kings dishonor. And for further prooffe thereof, he presented a supplication to the king, wherein he appealed the duke of Norfolke in field of battell, for a traitor, false and disloiall to the king, and enimie vnto the realme. This supplication was red before both the dukes, in presence of the king; which doone, the duke of Norfolke tooke vpon him to answer it, declaring that whatsoever the duke of Hereford had said [...] he lied falslie like an vntrue knight as he was. And, when the king asked of the duke of Hereford [he replied] “that Thomas Mowbraie, duke of Norfolke, is a traitour, false and disloiall to your roiall maiestie, your crowne, and to all the states of your realme”.

Then the duke of Norfolke being asked what he said to this, he answered [...] “that Henrie of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, like a false and disloiall traitor as he is, dooth lie.”²⁰¹

Here Holinshed describes the protagonists’ reciprocated accusations of treason as happening in a very similar scenario to that of returning the lie, found in the verbal duels examined in Chapter One. What distinguishes this episode and domestic courtly flyting from libel is the invitation for the king to adjudicate the dispute, and the appeals made by the protagonists in which they attempt to prove their loyalty to the king by exposing their adversary as a traitor, or at the least, unworthy of royal patronage. Bolingbroke and Mowbray appeal to Richard to undertake the sort of “trial by combat” that emerged in the mid-fourteenth century as a form of trial for treason,²⁰² and the retention of the formalities of this trial in the domestic flyting is perhaps meant to confer a degree of legitimacy, by way of an indigenous historical precedent, upon what is otherwise a highly fractious and antisocial exchange of abuse. Of all the types of antagonistic verse exchange the flyting is the most elaborate, accomplished and prestigious display of verbal aggression and the most intimately connected with the court since the protagonists’ objective is

²⁰¹ *Holinshed’s Chronicle as Used in Shakespeare’s Plays*, ed. Allardyce and Josephine Nicoll (London and Toronto: Dent; NY: Dutton, 1927), pp.20-1.

²⁰² Peltonen (2003), p.97 (Peltonen discusses Shakespeare’s representation of this incident as a

to gain the king's recognition of their mastery of vituperative rhetoric.

Beyond these few perfunctory formalities domestic flytings, like their cross-cultural equivalents, are highly heterogeneous. They do not recognise formal or generic boundaries and protagonists employ all available techniques to bring their adversaries to their knees. Whereas nipping epigrams and biting satires generally abide by certain formal rules, the flyting, for which there is no equivalent epithet to encapsulate its function, is a display of mastery in a variety of themes, forms, meters and genres and uses an elaborate array of invective weaponry. The four flytings I examine all employ different forms of variety. In Skelton's *Poems Against Garnesche* (c.1514) he attacks Christopher Garnish upon the grounds of, among other things, his social status, physical appearance, ancestry, personal hygiene and profane sexual habits. The flyting between William Gray and Thomas Smyth (1540) is more uniform, although Smyth's attacks upon Gray do feature a glaring contradiction as he seems to accuse him of a religious nonconformity that is simultaneously papistical and sectarian. In contrast, the exchange between Thomas Churchyard and Thomas Camel (1551-2) is marked by its generic variety and the protagonists employ dream allegory, pastoral and invectives derived from formal legal disputation against one another. Finally, in the flyting between John Taylor and William Fennor (1614), the formal variety employed is one of the exchange's most noticeable features and includes epigrams, anagrams, epitaphs, proems, dedications and epilogues as well as the main invectives.²⁰³

Domestic courtly flytings also appear intermittently in Scotland, including those

trial by combat, pp.98-9).

²⁰³ The hiatus between the two latter flytings here is best explained by England's being ruled by female monarchs between 1553 and 1603. Courtly flyting appears to be a distinctly masculine pastime and such uncouth exchanges of insult would be unlikely to be perceived as effective means of currying favour at the courts of either Mary or Elizabeth, which perhaps explains Puttenham's apparent distaste for the practice.

between Dunbar and Kennedy (c.1495), James V and Sir David Lindsay (1555) and Alexander Montgomerie and Sir Patrick Hume, Baron of Polwarth (c.1580). Although flyting has been seen as a characteristically Scottish genre, it appears with near equal frequency south of the border and the extent of the influence of Scottish flytings upon their English counterparts is unclear. The contexts of each do appear distinct. Enmity appears to run much deeper in the English flytings whereas Scottish ones seem to be more festive in nature. George Bannatyne describes the Dunbar-Kennedy exchange as “Iocound and mirrie” and, as Bawcutt has pointed out, the flyting between Montgomerie and Polwart was probably conceived of in a similar way.²⁰⁴ At least two English flytings (that between Churchyard and Camel, and between Smyth and Gray) are almost certainly conducted more in earnest than in play and are contextualised by specific theological and political controversies. Also, whereas the Scottish examples consistently take place at court and usually draw readers’ attention to the immediate presence of the king, there is a progressive trend in English examples of movement away from the physical location of the court and the king, although appeals for royal adjudication persist and the king and court are never far from their focus.

Flyting in England does not appear to have enjoyed the same degree of licence as was accorded to it across the border, perhaps due to its gradual disassociation from the court and its politicisation in exchanges between Camel and Churchyard, and Smyth and Gray. While one objective of flyting was to curry favour with the king, it could also provoke the displeasure of the authorities especially if it was unsanctioned or occurred at times when the court was politically polarised. Smyth, Gray and their printer Richard Grafton found themselves in the Fleet following their exchange, and Henry Orion St. Onge points out that

²⁰⁴ Ritchie ed. (1928), III. p.44; Bawcutt (1983), p.10.

in his dedication to ‘A Fortunate Farewell to the Earl of Essex’ (1599), Churchyard recalls being brought “before the lords of the council, for writing some of my first verses” which may be those exchanged with Camel.²⁰⁵ While literary reputations, material rewards and royal favour might be gained from flyting, it is also a potentially hazardous activity.

John Skelton and Christopher Garnish

Skelton’s flyting with Christopher Garnish, of which Garnish’s contribution has been lost, abounds with enthusiasm for invective and demonstrates a level of satirical confidence that suggests the laureate feared no official reprisals or repercussions. Written, as he claims at the end of each of his four flytings, “Be the kynges most noble commandement”, this royal command flyting serves the purpose primarily of an entertainment that enjoyed royal approval and licence. The stakes are nowhere near so high as in the Bolingbroke-Mowbray exchange or in the two subsequent flytings I examine between Smyth and Gray and Churchyard and Camel where accusations of treason are exchanged in invectives contextualised by contemporary political turmoil. Instead, the protagonists exchange imputations of knavery and ignoble origins that, although they may have their basis in real personal animosity, are delivered in a controlled, ritualised context in which heated feelings might be vented and diffused safely rather than exacerbated.

Skelton’s participation in this flyting has been dismissed by Greg Walker as an instance of him “wasting his pyrotechnic invective on a courtier with no proven academic or literary ability” in a contest notable for its “essential triviality”, thereby revealing “the opinion held of Skelton by the King at whose ‘commaundment’ it was instigated”. In

²⁰⁵ Ernest W. Dormer, *Gray of Reading, a Sixteenth-Century Controversialist and Ballad-Writer* (Reading: Bradley, 1923), p.33 and St. Onge (1966), p.33.

contrast, Ian A. Gordon thinks Skelton's flyting poems "reveal a man who is highly favoured by his monarch" and, to my mind, Henry's "commaundment" seems to bestow upon Skelton and Garnish the responsibility for something more than a minor court entertainment.²⁰⁶

It has often been speculated that *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie* (c.1495) provided inspiration for this event, although little has been said about why this Scottish flyting might have been deemed worthy of emulation at this particular time rather than at any other.²⁰⁷ The demise of the Scottish court at Flodden Field in 1513 may have provided motivation for channeling the dispute into the format of a flyting. The appropriation of the courtly ritual by Skelton and Garnish in the following year may have been regarded as the spoils of war, as the plundering of a courtly entertainment for which the Scots became renowned following the publication of the Dunbar-Kennedy exchange in 1508. Alternatively, it is more likely (taking into account the mourning for James IV at Henry's court) that the exchange might represent an attempt by Henry to preserve part of the culture of his brother-in-law's eclipsed court that might otherwise have been threatened with extinction. This may, in fact, be an instance of Henry commanding Skelton to redirect his proven pyrotechnic virtuosity away from attacking the Scottish court posthumously, as he had in 'Against the Scottes', and towards (after a fashion) its memorialisation. These alternative cultural and political functions that the exchange might have served appear to have been overlooked, as does the considerable depth of hostility that appears to have gone into its making.

²⁰⁶ Walker, (1988), p.47 and p.48; Ian A. Gordon, *Skelton: Poet Laureate* (Melbourne UP; OUP, 1943), p.191.

²⁰⁷ Cooke Carpenter (1967), p.73; Walker (1988), p.47 and H. L. R. Edwards, *Skelton: The Life and Times of an Early Tudor Poet* (Cape, 1949), p.150.

Skelton's contribution fits neatly with Priscilla Bawcutt's definition of flyting as "a collaborative game [that] also voices strong animosities" and appears to strike a balance between setting out to entertain and expressing genuine hostility. Bawcutt describes flyting as a form of "aggressive play" comparable with the tournament; another aggressive sport into which court rivals might channel their animosity. Like the tournament this courtly flyting might be construed as a display of national prowess. Skelton certainly has pretensions to being his king's champion. He portrays himself as the defending titleholder and Garnish as an unworthy challenger for that title, but the flyting also arises out of circumstances that suggest a grudge match that has been regulated and diffused by royal intervention. The scenario Skelton establishes appears to be that Garnish has slandered him and that the king has commanded that they should make an entertainment out of settling their differences. Skelton begins,

Sithe ye haue me chalyngyd, M[aster] Garnesche,
 Ruduly revilyng me in the kynges noble hall,
 Soche an odyr chalyngyr cowde me no man wysch,
 But yf yt war Syr Tyrmagant that tyrnyd with out nall;
 For Syr Frolo de Franko was neuer halfe so talle.
 But sey me now, Syr Satrapas, what autoryte ye haue
 In your chalenge, Syr Chystyn, to cale me knaue? (I. ll.1-7)

Garnish had been knighted in 1513 and here Skelton snipes at his adversary's upstart class pretensions, portraying him as a comic knight and buffoon who is not up to the heroic task of engaging him in a verse tournament.²⁰⁸ In his second response, Skelton makes a direct comparison between the flyting and the tournament: "To turney or to tante with me ye ar to fare to seke" (II. l.37). Like the competitor in the tiltyard Skelton seems conscious that he might be called upon to direct his invective energy towards more serious matters, as he felt himself to be upon numerous occasions, regardless of his not being commissioned officially to write anything

²⁰⁸ See, for instance, Helen Stearns, 'John Skelton and Christopher Garnesche', *MLN*, 43

else for considerable time to come.²⁰⁹ Indeed, in his fourth and final flyting Skelton complains that his time might be better occupied in the king's service than in spending his vituperative energy upon Garnish (IV. ll.176-8).

Gordon suggests that Skelton's attacks on Garnish are "so abusive, one suspects the quarrel was mainly on paper. The whole affair has the appearance of an elaborate court jest".²¹⁰ I suspect, however, that the dispute began verbally with Garnish's "revilyng" Skelton in the king's hall and, following Henry's intervention, was turned into a ritualised paper quarrel for either performance or manuscript circulation. Whereas in the first flyting Skelton responds to a presumably verbal insult, in the third and fourth he is responding to written invectives: "I haue your lewde letter receyuyd" (III. l.1), "Garnyshe, gargone, gastly, gryme,/ I haue receyuyd your secunde ryme" (IV. ll.1-2). Only by the time of his fourth response does Skelton acknowledge receipt of a second libellous epistle from his adversary, so it is reasonable to suggest that Garnish's first attacks were instances of spoken slander, and that only his last two were put onto paper. It is, moreover, not until his third and fourth flytings that Skelton begins to criticise Garnish's literary talent.

When, in his second response to Garnish, Skelton mentions that his rival has enlisted the help of one "gorbellyd Godfrey" it has often been assumed that Garnish must have employed Godfrey as an amanuensis or ghostwriter in order to compensate for his lack of wit (II. l.36).²¹¹ Since Garnish's insults seem to have been verbal up to this point, and Skelton does not mention his adversary's use of a scribe until his third invective, it is

(1928), 518-23 (p.522) and Pollet (1971), p.76.

²⁰⁹ Walker (1988), p.49.

²¹⁰ Gordon (1943), p.32.

²¹¹ See, for instance, Gordon (1943), p.189; Cooke Carpenter (1967), p.74 and Scherb (1998), p.135.

unlikely that Garnish employed a scribe before his third attack. It seems more plausible that Godfrey initially joined Garnish in something like the capacity of a retainer, thereby adding the weight of physical intimidation to the exchange of verbal insult. From what little is known of Garnish's challenge it is certainly suggestive of a provocation to settle the disagreement with violence, whether in the tiltyard or at a place chosen for private combat. In the argument between Mowbray and Bolingbroke they had requested of Richard II that they might settle their differences with a duel, and if it was similarly Henry's intervention that influenced the way in which this quarrel was decided (as Elizabeth intervened in the dispute between Sidney and Oxford), then his decision was both novel and humane, since it took the advantage away from Garnish, as a knight and therefore Skelton's social superior, of being able to use the might of superior numbers of supporters to his unfair advantage.

With Henry's approval Skelton had the opportunity to respond in the medium in which he was best suited to compete, and the physical threat that the pair pose becomes neutralised once it has been decided that their differences ought to be settled with words. Thus Skelton retaliates with the challenge: "Cum Garnyche, cum Godfrey, with as many as ye may!/ I advyse yow be ware of thys war, ranngge yow in aray" (II. ll.32-3). Skelton might have boasted of his ability "To turney or to tante" against the pair, but it is to be suspected that he felt much more comfortable settling the matter on paper.

The accusations exchanged suggest a sort of reciprocated bullying since they are bereft of any concrete subject of debate or contention. Whereas all my later examples revolve around disagreement over one central contextualising issue, there is none specified here. Skelton's invectives consist almost wholly of ridicule designed to make a laughing stock out of Garnish and rebuttals of his accusations, and they are devoid of explicit contextual background information regarding any personal, political or religious differences between the protagonists. In the third flying Skelton switches from Rime Royal to Skeltonics and,

as the alliterated pace quickens, the bare insults become more compact and intense:

Your brethe ys stronge and quike;
 Ye ar an eldyr steke;
 Ye wot what I thynke;
 At bothe endes ye stynke;
 Gret daunger for the kyng;
 Whan hys grace ys fastyng,
 Hys presens to aproche. (III. ll.78-84)

Eighty lines later the assault finally reaches a crescendo, punctuated by the occasional breath-catching caesura:

Thou tode, thow scorpyone,
 Thow bawdy babyone,
 Thow bere, thow brystlyd bore,
 Thou Moryshe mantycore,
 Thou rammysche stynkyng gote,
 Thou fowle chorlyshe parote,
 Thou gresly gargone glaymy,
 Thou swety slouen seymy,
 Thou murrionn, thow mawment,
 Thou fals stynkyng serpent,
 Thou mokkyshe marmoset,
 I wyll nat dy in they det.
 Tyburne thou me assynyd,
 Where thou xulddst haue bene shrynyd;
 The nexte halter ther xall be,
 I bequeth yt hole to thee. (III. ll.162-77)

In this galloping stint of succinct abuse Skelton appears to relish the cathartic exuberance of venting his spleen at Garnish. This emotional release has been manufactured, however, in a controlled build up to this tour de force vituperation throughout the first three sections, and Skelton reveals his artistic control when he brings his fantastical blazon of Garnish and death threat finale crashing back down into the quotidian world of the court just a few lines later when he reminds Garnish “Pay Stokys hys fyue pownd” (III. l.185). The transition from outrageous excess of insult to a direct and, by comparison, mundane and possibly factual accusation of unpaid debt presents the recipient with the challenge of managing a considerable feat of wit to respond efficaciously. Garnish would need to reciprocate the insult, return the halter and explain his arrears in a comparable space for his response to be competitive.

Having demonstrated his rhetorical virtuosity in the third flyting, Skelton turns to attacking Garnish's lack of literary talent in the fourth and attributes this primarily to his wanting the sort of rhetorical education needed for invective proficiency:

Ye, syr, rayle all in deformite:
 Ye haue nat red the properte
 Of naturys workys, how they be
 Myxte with sum incommodite,
 As prouithe well, in hys Rethorikys olde,
 Cicero with hys tong of golde. (IV. ll.7-12)

Skelton also claims that his adversary is ignorant of the classical satirists and that this is why Garnish has claimed that his exuberant invectives lack decorum. In response to Garnish he argues that he is simply using the register appropriate to his addressee and that the precedent for this has been set by classical avatars who would do no less to taunt Garnish were they alive:

Thow demyst my raylyng ouyrthwarthe;
 I rayle to thee soche as thow art.
 If thow war aquentyd with alle
 The famous poettes saturicall,
 As Percius and Iuuyndall,
 Horace and noble Marciall,
 If they wer lyueyng thys day,
 Of thee wote I what they wolde say;
 They wolde thee wryght, all with one steuyn,
 The follest slouen ondyr heuen. (IV. ll.136-45)

There is an obvious discrepancy in these two passages between the attributes Skelton suggests are necessary for raillery. The mellifluous eloquence of the rhetorician rests uneasily with the sharp, venomous tongue of the satirist. Moreover, the typical satirist claims to enjoy freedom of speech, and has utmost confidence in the power of unrestrained vituperation to achieve his objectives. The rhetorician, in contrast, is aware that he is confined by the context of his speech environment and is at liberty to say only what is appropriate to circumstance and with a mind to convincing his audience of the veracity of his argument.

Unbridled raillery is ostensibly out of keeping with controlled Ciceronian eloquence, but, as argued in the introduction to this section, antisocial dialogism might be understood

as a counter-culture to civil conversation and its mastery demands no lesser degree of rhetorical virtuosity. Rhetorical control is exactly what Skelton exhibits, and he changes the course of his insult with such a deftness as Fuller admired in his appraisal of Shakespeare's performance in wit combats with Jonson in which he "could turn all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his Wit and Invention".²¹²

Skelton may not have intended this conclusion to be drawn, or even necessarily have been aware of it, but these contradictory ingredients of his flyting are reconciled in the figure of *parrhesia* (Latin, *licentia*). David Colclough describes the Renaissance perception of the figure as purportedly "frank speech [...] mitigated" by the context in which it is spoken".²¹³ In this instance, Skelton has license to vent his spleen in the safe context of a courtly flyting sanctioned by the King, and without this context it might be surmised that his response would be considerably different in tone. Consequently, Skelton underplays the fact that he is writing as appropriate to circumstance, and that he would be unable to get away with the same variety of linguistic and vituperative excess in a different speech environment. Notably, the passages about Cicero and the classical satirists are kept sufficiently far apart to avoid attracting scrutiny of the discrepancy they suggest between the exquisitely hewn, context bound argument of one and the unbounded, rough-hewn vituperation of the other. In the next two flytings I consider, neither of which enjoy royal sanction, they signpost the circumscribed boundaries between permitted and proscribed speech in order to manipulate them. While Skelton affects a freedom of speech that he does not actually have, these flyters wrest the opportunity to speak their minds by manipulating permitted language in order to say what they claim not to be saying.

²¹² See n.59.

²¹³ David Colclough, 'Parrhesia: The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Early Modern England', *Rh*,

Thomas Smyth and William Gray

Chronologically, the next flyting to consider is also conducted between courtiers, although the debate appears in the more public medium of printed broadside ballads. In these invectives from 1540 Thomas Smyth, “seruaunte to the kynges royall maiestie/ And clerke to the Quenes graces counsell” and William Gray, favorite of the capricious Henry VIII and protégé of Thomas Cromwell, level accusations of sectarianism and Romanism against one another respectively, while taking considerable trouble to emphasise that they cannot substantiate their claims. Poems from the controversy began to appear in print within a month of Cromwell’s execution (28th July, 1540), instigated by disagreement over the rectitude of his sentence. Hence, they are situated in the midst of suspicion and uncertainty brought about by a complex juncture in the Reformation in which the ongoing witch-hunt for Papist recusants was concurrent with the execution for treason of the Vicar General of the reformed Church. It might, in fact, be the case that the two men alternately affect the roles of inquisitor and defendant as a means of deflecting suspicion from one another.

The controversy arises out of an exchange of broadside ballads beginning with an anonymous libel attacking Cromwell posthumously (‘A Newe Ballade Made of Thomas Crumwel, Called “Trolle on Away”’).²¹⁴ This is the only explicitly pro-Catholic poem in

17:1 (1999), 177-212 (p.185).

²¹⁴ The ballad is reprinted by Dormer (1923), pp.76-8. The original appears to be lost (see Livingston (1991), p.821).

The word troll recurs frequently throughout the flyting. *OED* cites numerous definitions of the verb. To troll is to allure or entice, to angle, to perform an antiphonal song, or “to move nimbly” from one place to the next. The word might also denote a knave:

OED, Troll, IV. 15

b. Troll and troll by, Troll hazard, Troll with, as sbs., names for various ‘orders of

the sequence, and it has been suggested both that Gray may have been responsible for this poem or, alternatively, for rebutting it.²¹⁵ It appears much more likely that he would defend his erstwhile patron against this Catholic attack. In the poem Cromwell seems to be pilloried as a Protestant heretic by a conservative libeller who interprets the reformed Church as simply Catholicism without the Pope:

Thou dyd not remembre, false heretyke,
One God, one fayth, and one kynge catholyke,
For thou hast bene so long a scysmatyke. (St. 7)

This poem is rebutted by *A Balade agaynst Malycyous Sclaunderers*, and followed by one or more lost invectives.²¹⁶ In the next extant contribution Smyth attempts ostensibly to defuse the debate: “I entende not to trolle, to take any parte/ Diuisyon to encrease, it nedeth nothyng” (*A Lytell Treatyse agaynst Sedicyous Persons*, ll.22-3).²¹⁷ Smyth’s attempt at peacemaking and encouraging religious uniformity seems to have provoked further controversy, and the next extant broadside is an angry rejoinder by himself against Gray.²¹⁸ By now the poems have moved into the familiar territory of disputing which of the protagonists is the most loyal servant of the king. Gray finishes his reply to Smyth’s treatise with an envoi insisting that he “wolde be the kynges seruante as fayne as you”.²¹⁹

knaves’: see quot. and cf. sense 1. Obs. Cant.

1561 J. Awdelay Frat. Vacab. (E.E.T.S.) 12 Troll and Trol by, is he that setteth naught by no man nor no man by him. Troll with is he that no man shall know the seruaunt from ye Maister... Troll hazard of trace is he that goeth behynde his Maister as far as he may see hym... Troll hazard of tritrace, is he that goeth gaping after his Master.

²¹⁵ See Dormer (1923), pp.26-7 and Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp.322-3.

²¹⁶ *STC* 1325.5. See Livingston (1991), pp.822-3.

²¹⁷ *STC* 22880.4.

²¹⁸ *A Treatyse Declarynge the Despyte of a Secrete Sedycyous Person, that Dareth not Shewe Hym Selfe* (printed by John Redman, 1540), *STC* 22880.6.

²¹⁹ *An Answer to Maister Smyth Seruaunt to the Kynges Most Royall Maiestye. And Clerke of*

Ernest W. Dormer observes of such sycophantic outbursts by the combatants that “their repetitive servility discounts very largely the sincerity of their motives”.²²⁰ The sincerity of both protagonists is suspect, but in terms of their accusations against one another, rather than in respect to their declarations of loyalty. The allegations of both men appear contrived. In *A Treatyse Declarynge the Despyte of a Secrete Sedycyous Person, that Dareth not Shewe Hym Selfe* Smyth claims that he is writing “for the truths sake”, and to dispel the lies that have been told about him by Gray (l.7). The truth is, however, exactly what both he and Gray appear to be concerned with evading. In this respect the poems are unusual instances of flyting in that both protagonists give the impression of inhibiting the full force of their animosity by signposting the flaws in their arguments. This is a reckless exercise in reverse psychology. The opponents avoid outright accusations of heresy and treason, which other flyters use without reservation, and they fail deliberately, so it seems, to rebut one another’s allegations effectively thus leaving considerable margin for the suspicion of heterodoxy.

In his *An Aunswere to Maister Smyth* Gray claims that Smyth’s rhetorical incompetence and intellectual weakness have led him to make an erroneous accusation against him, but he neglects to provide any particular evidence in his own defence:

Whether ye trolle in or els trolle out
 Ye trolle vntruly; loke better about. [...]
 But blyndly haue ye sclaudred me, good maister Thomas Smyth
 Scraping together scriptures, your madnesse to mayntayne
 Truly your rude rowsty reason, being so farre from the pyth
 Had nede of suche a cloke, to kepe it from the rayne
 For all the worlde may perceyue, how falsly ye forge and fayne
 Yet styll you affyrme your falshed, as though ye knew thinges presysely. (proem and ll.36-41)

the Quenes Graces Counsell, though Most Vnworthy (printed by Rychard Bankes, 1540), *STC* 12206a.3.

²²⁰ Dormer (1923), p.30.

Gray highlights the spuriousness of his adversary's affirmation, the limitations of his perspective ("loke better about") and, by implication, the necessity for more reasoned inquiry. Nevertheless, he argues that Smyth accuses him unjustly without providing evidence in his own defence. Thus, he draws attention to the shortcomings of the perspective of his own poem. Similarly, Smyth neglects to offer any evidence for his case, and his rhetorical stance is that he will leave Gray to incriminate himself, and thereby avoid slandering him directly: "I could say some what more, but I mynde not to contend/ As the tree by her fruytes, is alwayes chyefely knowen" (*A Treatyse Declarynge the Despyte*, ll.64-5).²²¹

The poets reciprocate accusations of papistry and sectarianism based not on knowledge, evidence or reasoned argument, but upon affected intuition and speculation. Both men claim to be certain of their adversary's nonconformity, but are careful to point out that they cannot substantiate what they affect to know. In his counter-attack (*An Enuoye from Thomas Smyth*), Smyth claims to possess insight into Gray's character, while simultaneously being ignorant of his reputation or conduct: "For that I spake but of lykelyhod and wente but by gesse/ Of the treson in your herte, you knowynge there no lesse" (ll.13-14). In turn, Gray is explicit about his lack of evidence for what he claims to know in his *Returne of M. Smythes Enuoy*: "Nother layed I popery to your charge, but thought ye dyd it loue/ For yf by you, popery I coulde proue, then a traytour I wolde you call" (ll.59-61).²²²

Even more telling is the inconsistency present in the aspersions Smyth casts upon Gray's faith, which undermines considerably the credibility of his attack. Incredibly, as

²²¹ *STC* 22880.6.

²²² *An Enuoye from Thomas Smyth vpon the Aunswer of One W. G. Lurkyng in Lortells Denne, for Feare Men Shulde Hym See*, *STC* 22880.2 and *The Returne of M. Smythes Enuoy Seruaunt to the Kynges Royall Maiestye and Clerke of the Quenes Graces Counsell (though Most*

well as accusing his adversary of sectarianism, he also implies, on one occasion at least, that Gray has papist sympathies, although he claims to be unaware of how they might become manifest: “Tyme shall trye your colour, be it russet, blacke, or graye” (*An Enuoye*, l.42). He might become known as a cardinal by his russet habit or he might reveal himself by donning that of a friar belonging to one of the mendicant orders (either a Dominican in black or a Franciscan in grey).²²³ Smyth claims to have insufficient knowledge of W. G. for him to be able to assemble a papist caricature and therefore, although he affects certainty of his religious heterodoxy, he is forced to speculate as to its nature.

Smyth’s consternation at his rival for concealing his identity also appears to be pure affectation. The identities of both protagonists seem to have been well known. Gray is not named explicitly, however, until one Richard Smyth intervenes ostensibly upon Thomas’s behalf. In *An Artificiall Apologie, Articulerye Answerynge to the Obstreperous Obgannynges* of One W. G.* he is finally identified as “Wyllyam Graye” (l.120).²²⁴ Previously Thomas has expressed indignation at W. G. for concealing his identity in *An Enuoye* (“Come forth and shew your face”, l.45), while providing clues that he is the grey

Vnworthy) (printed by Rycharde Bankes, 1540), ll.59-60, *STC* 12206a.7.

²²³ Smyth’s accusation seems even less credible when it is remembered that Gray’s patron, Cromwell, had been responsible for hunting down members of these religious orders in the late 1530s (see, for instance, Dodds and Dodds (1915), p.65). Yet more bewildering is the accusation made in the third and final part of another ecclesiastical verse controversy involving the Protestant balladeer, Luke Shepherd, from around 1548 that groups men named Gray and Smyth together among the Catholic enemies of Antipus, the anti-Papist: “A Mason, a Smyth, and a Paynter fine/ Wyth a Mugge, and a Gray, and a Perkins grosse/ Be foes to Antipus, at whom thei repine”, ‘Apologia Antipi’, sig. Bi^v (see Cat. Anon 6 and Anon 30). Smyth might be the Catholic Richard Smyth, and perhaps the same Richard who later intervenes in this dispute upon Thomas’s behalf.

* Under “Obfu·sk” *OED* gives the verb “obganiate” as “to yelp or growl at” or “to trouble one with often repeating of one thing” (first usage 1623).

²²⁴ *An Artificiall Apologie, Articulerye Answerynge to the Obstreperous Obgannynges of One W. G.* (printed by Rycharde Bankes, 1540), *STC* 228776.

friar; such as in the claim that he is “an ydell vagabounde” (l.28). His accusations are rendered innocuous, moreover, by punning upon Gray’s name as tongue-in-cheek evidence of his papist sympathies, thereby reducing the basis of his evidence to a contrived etymology. By doing so he draws attention purposely to the fact that his claims are fanciful.

The bibliographical information available about Gray suggests strongly that the accusations made against him are outrageous. He appears to have adapted to the new faith zealously and, as Cromwell’s agent, contributed actively towards its early formation. He was involved in the printing of a vernacular edition of the Bible in 1538, and brought forth his anti-Catholic *A Booke Intituled the Fantassie of Idolatrie* in the same year.²²⁵ I have been unable to identify Smyth but, whatever his identity, the titles and honours with which he attributes himself in his poems suggest a courtier and gentleman unlikely to be suspected of harbouring any deep sympathy for Roman Catholicism. From the evidence of his poems he appears to have enjoyed an intimate relationship with the royal household and is keen to draw attention to this by listing his offices.²²⁶ He undersigns his *Lytell Treatyse agaynst Sedicyous Persons*, “seruaunt to the kynges royall maiestye. And clerke of the Quenes graces counsell”. Smyth means Henry’s fifth wife, Catherine Howard, whom he married on 28th July, the same day Cromwell was executed and less than a month after the

²²⁵ Dormer ed. (1923), p.22 and p.23.

²²⁶ Sir Thomas Smith is an attractive candidate, but unfortunately an unlikely one. He was an active force behind the Reformation who, in 1559, was one of the high commissioners charged by Elizabeth to enforce censorship laws upon mongers of “singular heretical opinions, seditious books, comtempments, conspiracies, false rumours” and so forth, and in 1540 he was a controversialist known for his superciliousness and eclecticism (a temperamental makeup shared with Skelton and Taylor and, occasionally, Churchyard). However, this Smith had left England a month before Cromwell’s execution, and did not return until 1542 and therefore could not have appeared before the Council to answer for his part in the flyting. See *Select Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I.* ed. G. W. Prothero (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Milford, 1944), p.228; Mary Dewar. *Sir Thomas Smith: A Tudor Intellectual in Office* (Althone, 1964), pp.17-18 and pp.20-1 and Dormer (1923), p.34.

annulment of his marriage to Anne of Cleves.²²⁷ As such his office as Catherine's clerk suggests strongly his affinity with Henrician policy and sentiment at this political juncture.

The unsubstantiated accusations threaten to spiral out into an *ad infinitum* reciprocation of accusation and rebuttal, since neither protagonist appears willing or able to provide the evidence necessary to bring about closure. Because their rhetoric is bereft of substance so conspicuously it might be suspected that the two adversaries become engaged in a flyting game of brinkmanship in which they compete over who can deliver the most scathing insults without resorting to libellous accusations that would theoretically be prosecutable. In terms of putting their rhetorical efficacy to the trial against one another this is a futile exercise because the rules of the debate ensure that neither party can win.

The ostensible pointlessness of this debating game suggests that there might have existed an ulterior motive for it. The protagonists' misrepresentations of one another emphasise repeatedly that no known evidence exists by which either party might be suspected of Roman Catholicism, sectarianism or treason, and thus by traducing each other conspicuously they are perhaps manufacturing preemptive affidavits of innocence. This would make the exchange a sort of mock mooting in which the two men make ineffectual legal cases against one another as a deliberately contrived means of demonstrating their adherence to Henry's religious policy.²²⁸

²²⁷ Cromwell's promotion of the match with Anne of Cleves was largely responsible for his political downfall. As such, the lines of division in these invectives are drawn between Smyth, as an intimate of Catherine, and Gray, who is associated with Anne through the policy of his old patron. There is little evidence in the flyting, apart from Smyth's repeatedly stressing his role as Catherine's clerk, however, as to whether or not support for these rival queens is actually the ground upon which the dispute is fought. Gray makes a point of referring to Catherine as Henry's "most Lauffull Wyfe" in the envoi of his *Returne of M. Smythes Enuoy* and, whether or not this is meant sincerely, it is unlikely that he would allow himself to be drawn into open debate over such a sensitive issue.

²²⁸ The legalistic element of these poems is another reason to suspect Sir Thomas who was made Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge early in 1540, Dewar (1964), p.20.

Whatever the actual purpose of the poems, the exasperating lack of substance in their accusations prompted one G. C. to make a judicial intervention:

The stryfe I speake of, is betwyxt
 One master Smyth & Wyllyam G.
 Theyr wrytynges are confusely myxt
 With bytynge wordes, and vylany
 In eche of them, a wyll is fyxt
 To maynteyne styll his vanyte
 Which hath a very feble grounde
 Wherwith his enemy to confounde. (ll.17-24)²²⁹

Thankfully, G. C. brings closure to the debate by pointing out that neither party can be victorious, and that their misanthropic preoccupation with obloquy renders them both suspect and culpable, and he was right, since (as already mentioned) their game did misfire and landed them in the Fleet. Their arguments are based on “feble grounde” and, having no foundation or basis, the only explanation for their attitudes towards one another that G. C. can envisage is that they are both misanthropically disposed. He is also readily able to identify W. G. as “Wyllyam G.”, and through his familiarity he implies that he knows them both well enough to be sure that their accusations are groundless. A misanthropic disposition does not, however, explain satisfactorily why they would become engrossed in such a seemingly futile literary game.

²²⁹ *A Paumflet Compyled by G. C. To Master Smyth and Wyllyam G. Prayenge Them Both, for the Loue of our Lorde, to Growe at Last to an Honest Accorde* (printed by Rycharde Bankes, 1540), STC 4268.5.

Thomas Churchyard and Thomas Camel

An equally politically sensitive, but substantially more radical, complex and convoluted flyting is that between Thomas Camel and Thomas Churchyard (c.1551-2). The sequence likewise opens with a poem that, while professing loyalty to the king, engages in court factionalism, and which is succeeded by contributions that often evade the contentious subject raised. Fifteen of the sixteen surviving poems that make up the controversy were collected and printed for Mychell Loblee in 1560 having been originally published individually during 1551 and 1552.²³⁰

In Loblee's edition the shots fired in the controversy appeared in the following order:

- 1) Churchyard, 'Dauy Dycars Dreame' (sig. Ai)
- 2) Camel, 'To Daud Dycars When' (sigs Ai^v-Aii^r)
- 3) Churchyard, 'A Replication vnto Camels Obiection' (sigs Aii^v-Aiv^r)
- 4) Camel, 'Camels Reioindre, to Churchyarde' (sigs Aiv^r-Bii^v)
- 5) Churchyard, 'The Surreioindre vnto Camels Reioindre' (sigs Bii^v-Ci^r)
- 6) William Elderton, 'A Decree betwene Churchyarde and Camell' (sigs Ci^r-Ciii^r)
- 7) Anon, 'Westerne Wyll, vpon the Debate betuyxte Churchyarde and Camell' (sigs Ciii^r-Div^r)
- 8) T[homas] Hedley (trans.), 'Of Such as on Fantesye Decree and Discus on Other Mens Workes, lo Ouides Tale Thus' (sigs Div^r-Ei^r)
- 9) Gefferay Chappell [Churchyard(?)], 'A Supplicacion vnto Mast Camell' (sig. Ei)
- 10) Camel, 'To Goodman Chappels Supplication' (sigs Ei^v-Eii^r)
- 11) Steuen Steple [Churchyard(?)], 'Steuen Steple to Mast Camell' (sig. Eii)
- 12) Camel, 'Camelles Conclusion, and Last Farewell, then, to Churchyarde and Those, that Defende his When' (sigs Eii^v-Fii^r)
- 13) W. Watreman [Churchyard(?)], 'Westerne Will to Camell and for Hym Selfe Alone' (sigs Fii^r-Gi^r)
- 14) Anon, [Churchyard(?)], 'A Plain and Fynall Confutation of Camelles Corlyke Oblatracion' (sigs Gi^r-Hi^v)
- 15) Richard Beard, 'Camelles Crosse Rowe' (sigs Hi^v-Hii^v)

This flyting is distanced further from the court than the Smyth-Gray exchange. The protagonists and their personas straddle social, regional and professional stratifications; represented by the minor courtier Churchyard, Churchyard's persona Dycar (a Piers Plowman figure), other

²³⁰ *The Contention betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell, vpon Daud Dycers Dreame* (printed for Mychell Loblee, 1560), STC 5225. All quotations are from this edition.

personas including mariners or watermen, a printer, two putative clergymen and finally Churchyard's rival, Thomas Camel, who in one instance purports to be a cattle farmer. Most central to the controversy's socio-political makeup is the convergence of the Piers Plowman tradition of social satire with patriotic flyting whereby the ploughman's social discontent is combined with the staunch royalism of courtly flyting.²³¹ The controversy is a hybrid, the generic and political temperature of which is set by Churchyard's liminal position as an emphatically loyal servant and champion of the young Edward VI who is simultaneously a malcontent and outsider under the regime of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (later Duke of Northumberland), and his allies.

Both Henry Orion St. Onge, Churchyard's biographer, and Herbert L. Collmann, the only person to print in full any of these flyting verses in the last century, agree that the subject matter of Churchyard's opening satire, 'Dauy Dycars Dreame', is innocuous. Consequently, they are unable to explain why it generated such a prolific flyting. John N. King, while recognising that Churchyard's appropriation of the Piers tradition immediately announces it as a political satire, considers that the ballads "lack the urgency of [contemporary] commonwealth complaints", and fails to ground the poem within the context of the contemporary political climate.²³² In fact, 'Dauy Dycars Dreame' is a radical

²³¹ *Piers Plowman* was printed in 1550 by Robert Crowley who, as Daniel Knauss kindly pointed out to me, singles out Daw the Dikker (ditcher), the namesake of Churchyard's persona Davy, in his prologue. This probably explains Churchyard's appropriation of him for the dream since Dikker only appears occasionally in *Piers*, most pertinently when he is threatened with starvation, for which is blamed the misrule of the king and his council. See William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt, 2 vols (London and NY: Longman, 1995), I. B VI. ll.314-29. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

²³² King, (1982), p.249. Herbert L. Collmann thinks the poem "so little provocative in matter as scarcely to justify the appearance of others so numerous and lengthy", *Ballads and Broadsides Chiefly of the Elizabethan Period and Printed in Black-Letter, Most of Which Were Formerly in the Heber Collection and Are now in the Library at Britwell Court, Buckinghamshire*, ed. Herbert L. Collmann (Oxford: Printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1912), p.58. St. Onge (1966)

anti-government satire, presented as a pastoral dream vision presumably to distance the author from its inflammatory content. Written during the minority of Edward VI (d. 6 July, 1553), Churchyard's dreamer looks forward to a time when "Rex doth raigne and rule the rost, and weedes out wicked men", and catalogues a list of the clichéd vices that will pervade society until Edward comes of age and an end is brought to Dudley's tyranny (sig. A^r). Although, as St. Onge argues, the poem "criticizes a number of abuses common to almost any society", it is doubtful that it would have been interpreted as anything other than a controversially topical political satire in the early 1550s.²³³

The poems first began to appear in print within a year of when Dudley conspired successfully to depose Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, from his office as Protector. Churchyard had some reason to be discontented with the protectorate under Somerset,²³⁴ but it is definitely Dudley's, rather than Somerset's, supremacy against which he complains here. It is also possible that the poem reflects some level of disaffection resulting from Churchyard's general lack of recognition at court, something from which he suffered for almost the entirety of his career.²³⁵

The dream exhibits distinct affinities with Somerset's liberal attitude towards complainants against enclosure in 1549; especially with his taxation of sheep, intended to

calls it "fairly innocuous" (p.38). Livingston (1991) follows suit and terms the ballad an "inoffensive little piece of moralizing" and "a slight piece of social satire so gentle and inoffensive it seems hardly credible that it could have aroused any reaction at all", p.122 and p.830.

²³³ St. Onge (1966), p.36.

²³⁴ According to St. Onge (1966), Churchyard was pressed into military service and captured by the enemy in 1548 during the Western Rebellion and, similar to Gray at the time of his flyting with Smyth, had recently lost his patron, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, to the gallows (p.30). See also, Merrill Harvey Goldwyn, 'Notes on the Biography of Thomas Churchyard', *RES*, n.s. 17 (1966), 1-15 (p.7).

²³⁵ A verse dispute in which he became involved in 1566 focuses precisely upon this issue (see Cat. C 93a-b, G 139, J 187, R 234 and W 318).

curtail further enclosure by landlords and to raise badly needed revenue for the treasury.²³⁶

Dudley was among those who fell foul of Somerset's commission investigating illegal enclosure, and when the opportunity arose he was instrumental in bringing about the Protector's deposition using the justification that his leniency towards the commons had incited their insurrection as one tactic to discredit him.²³⁷

While Churchyard/Dycar is opposed to enclosure he also seems to suggest that the commons have no right to rise up against the government; exactly Somerset's attitude towards the anti-enclosure rioters:²³⁸

When fraud flieth far from towne, & loytrers leaue *the* fieldes,
And rude shall runne a right full race, & all men be wel wilde
When gropers after gayne, shall carpe for comon welth. (sig. Ai^r)

Here, the "loytrers" are possibly the rebel army that had encamped at Mousehold Heath near Norwich under the leadership of Robert Kett until they were routed by government forces led by Dudley (August, 1549), and the "gropers after gayne" might be the greedy landlords. As such, the inference would be that the commons ought to return to work and that landlords should stop forcing tenants off common land to make way for sheep farming. Churchyard/Dycar makes this latter point clearly when he states that one of his conditions for the return to an envisaged

²³⁶ See, for instance, David Loades, *John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, 1504-1553* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.118-19 and p.170.

²³⁷ Loades (1996), p.106 and p.132.

²³⁸ Loades (1996), pp.119-20 and p.125. Popular support of Somerset and hatred of Dudley was divided exactly along the lines of Somerset's disapproval of enclosure and Dudley's participation in suppressing the enclosure rioters. The political temperature in London during October 1549, for instance, is effectively gauged in

a handwritten pamphlet circulated in the capital, denouncing the lords, by whom the authors seems (*sic*) to have meant mainly Warwick, as murderers of the king's subjects, who were now conspiring the death of the Protector because he 'according to his promise would have redressed things in parliament to the ease of the commons'.

Loades (1996), p.134. Loades quotes 'Henry A to all true Englishmen', State Papers Domestic, Edward VI, 10/9, no. 11.

pastoral golden age is when “lordes shall sell no sheepe” (sig. Ai’).

Having expressed opposition to Dudley and his allies, it is remarkable that Churchyard and his printer, Richard Lant, escaped serious legal repercussions. It is yet more bewildering that he went on to engage in a prolonged flyting with Camel over the rectitude of his satire (often publishing under his own name) and still escaped more or less unscathed excepting, as he later recollects, being once called “before the lords of the council, for writing some of my first verses”, which may or may not be poems belonging to this flyting. Significantly, it was Somerset who intervened to help him out of this difficulty.²³⁹

The sensitivity of the debate explains the protagonists’ equivocation in several subsequent poems. Even Camel’s attacks upon Churchyard are often wilfully obscure, although both men touch occasionally upon the issues more or less directly. ‘Dauby Dycars Dreame’ must have been well enough known to their readership for their subsequent poems to sustain marketable topicality, and it would have been remarkable for their political sensitivity to go unnoticed by the authorities. There appears to have been some concern about the spread of antigovernment literature attacking “the King’s majesty’s most honorable council” towards the middle of 1551. A proclamation dated the 20th of May ‘Ordering Destruction of Seditious Bills against [the] Privy Council’ issues the stern threat that anyone failing to destroy such libels will be “punished as the author, maker, and deviser of the same [and] shall suffer imprisonment and make fine at the King’s majesty’s pleasure”.²⁴⁰ It must have been obvious to anyone aware of the flyting that Churchyard’s

²³⁹ ‘A Fortunate Farewell to the Earl of Essex’ (1599), sig. Aii (quoted from St. Onge (1966), p.33). The lords of the council would be those of the Privy Council, lead by Dudley, and running the country in Edward’s name.

²⁴⁰ Hughes and Larkin eds (1964), I. p.523. It is suggested in ‘Western Will to Camell’ (sig. Gi’f) that perhaps at least one of Camel’s contributions was displayed publicly, either strewn in the street or pinned to doors, in the manner objected to by the authorities.

contribution fell firmly into this category, but the protagonists nonetheless managed to continue their argument publicly for a considerable time.

Camel's first response, 'To Daud Dicars When', picks up on the gratuitous repetition of 'when' in Churchyard's poem, using it as a synonym for "dream" and this is sustained throughout the flyting. Churchyard is attacked for looking hubristically into the affairs of the government: "Jupiters seate standes some what to hye/ for vs to iudge it, that come it not nye" (sig. Ai^v). In response Churchyard is ingenuous about the subversive content of his dream, rather than attempting to defend his position: "In faith you mistake, Dauy Dicars when,/ you take chauke for chese, and day for darke night" ('A Replication vnto Camels Obiection', sig. Aiii^r). It is Camel, so he claims, who has evaded addressing his argument: "You touche not one poynt [...] of that I wrate" (sig. Aii^v). From here on the flyting addresses the substance of Churchyard's political complaint infrequently, and descends into reciprocated accusations of such failure to address the points of debate. In the next poem, 'Camels Reioindre, to Churchyarde', Camel writes,

So you annswer not me, but rayle out and romble.
And yet had you markte, my then to your when:
I no more falted you, then I dyd other men. (sig. Bi^r)²⁴¹

This is reminiscent of the evasiveness of Smyth and Gray, as the combatants move into the, by now familiar, territory of traducing each other without addressing the actual points of contention.

One interesting occasion of such evasion in 'Camels Reioindre' takes place in a digression upon Camel's failure to return a borrowed coat, to which he rejoins: "And so wantinge matter, you brynge in my coate./ In faithe master dreamer, I borowed it not" (sig. Bi^v). In these apparently unremarkable lines, the traditions of pastoral quarreling and patriotic flyting converge with notable succinctness. Stigmatising one's opponent with the

²⁴¹ See also Bi^r and Biv^r.

dishonour of debt or borrowing in bad faith is a common scenario in flyting and defamatory literature generally (Skelton, for instance, reminds Garnish to “Pay Stokys hys fiue pownd”). The borrowed or stolen cloak or coat, however, is a motif more peculiar to pastoral quarreling; including works as diverse as Theocritus’s fifth idyll, the ‘The Wakefield Second Shepherds’ Pageant’ (l.200) and *Piers Plowman* itself.²⁴²

There is evidence then of a conscious manipulation on both sides of the loose generic relationship between flyting and pastoral through the Piers tradition of social complaint. Piers features as a prominent figure throughout the flyting and appears to have enjoyed something of a surge of popularity during the Edwardian Reformation following Robert Crowley’s publication of three editions of *Piers Plowman* in 1550.²⁴³ Since the issue under debate is the rectitude of the hegemony enjoyed by a group of recently created peers now dominating the Privy Council, Piers offers a particularly suitable figure owing to the readily available Piers/peers wordplay.²⁴⁴ This establishes a convenient contrast by allusion between the honest ploughman and corrupt members of the peerage (implicitly Dudley and his cohorts in the Privy Council). It also lends itself readily to interpretive manipulation

²⁴² See ‘The Townley Cycle: The Wakefield Second Shepherds’ Pageant’, in *Everyman and the Medieval Miracle Plays*, ed. A. C. Cawley (Dent; Vermont: Tuttle, 1997), pp.77-104; Theocritus, *The Idylls*, trans. and ed. Robert Wells (Penguin, 1989), V and *Piers Plowman*, I. B. V. ll.109-14 and ll.320-36. On one occasion in the seventeenth century such a dispute over ownership of a cloak perhaps straddles the boundaries between pastoral fiction and suburban reality. In an answer-poem known as ‘An Answer to the Letter of the Cloake’ one William Bond responds to a prose letter in which the plaintiff, one Mr. Roberts, accuses him of failing to return a cloak lent to him to wear at a funeral. The answer appears in Abraham Wright’s *Parnassus Biceps, Or, Several Choice Pieces of Poetry, 1656*, ed. G. Thorn-Drury (Etchells and Macdonald, 1927), pp.134-5 (the prose letter from BL. Add. MS. 15227, f. 19 is given in Thorn-Drury’s notes, pp.186-7).

²⁴³ See Daniel Knauss, ‘Piers and Other Plowmen: Notes on the History of an Early Modern Social Text’ (2001-), <<http://home.earthlink.net/~faerspel/dknauss/piers.htm#Edwardian>>.

²⁴⁴ Henry had left instructions for the revitalisation of the peerage following his death owing to his fears that it was in decline. A second set of titles were bestowed a few days before Somerset’s arrest for treason (October, 1551); most notably Dudley attained the title, Duke of Northumberland. See, for instance, Loades (1996), pp.89-90 and p.180.

since it is straightforward to read honest peers for honest Piers; a conveniently evasive pun which may or may not have saved the protagonists a deal of additional trouble with the authorities.

In his next response, ‘The Surreioindre vnto Camels Reioindre’, Churchyard seems keen to distract attention from his original criticism of the protectorate:

Yet with the iust, I am content, to learne to suffre wrong
Synce Princes peares, and Kyngs themselues, their Acts and godly lawes
Are sclaudred oft, through euyl tonges, and blamed without cawes”. (sig. Biii^v)

These are odd sentiments for someone defending his own criticism of those running the country in the young king’s name, and perhaps only explicable if Churchyard had become more concerned with avoiding the attention of the authorities. Notably, all the subsequent invectives that might be Churchyard’s work appear under pseudonyms.

In the following two poems interlopers in Churchyard’s behalf offer informative insight into contemporary perceptions of flyting in its more general sense. The first is William Elderton’s ‘A Decree betwene Churchyarde and Camell’, subtitled ‘A Decree vpon the Dreame Made by Dauy Dicare, with Answer to Camel, whose Tauntes be More Quicker’. As the subtitle suggests, Elderton interprets the debate as pure flyting, as a competition to decide who is the more proficient and witty mudslinger. He defends Churchyard’s social satire, but discommends the debate as socially ignominious street flyting devoid of courtly credentials. In praise of the dream, he makes an implicit analogy between the power of the law and the scourging of a satirist, asking, “If all men do ryght, what nedeth the lawe,/ what nede any iustice to hange and to drawe[?]” (sig. Ci^v). By analogy between legal action and satirical intervention, the syllogism “Social ills exist. Therefore it is necessary to satirise social ills” is proposed. Social satire might be justifiable but, according to Elderton, who had a predilection for downmarket flyting himself, the antisocial obloquy, into which the debate has digressed, is not. By drifting from satire into

flyting he argues (probably ingenuously), “Ye passe from your purpose in such vnworthi sorte/ Ye make of your doinges a very laughing sporte” (sig. Cii^r).

The subsequent contribution, ‘Westerne Wyll, vpon the Debate betuyxte Churchyarde and Camell’, also passes commentary upon the flyting, which it associates emphatically with street culture rather than courtly culture. It is a narrative poem in which three mariners visit a book stall at St. Paul’s where the details of the flyting thus far are explained by a printer who reads the dream to them. Again this poem seconds Churchyard, and the poet is perhaps Churchyard himself writing anonymously so as venture into direct social complaint surreptitiously. Dycar, now a well-established emanation of Piers, is described by the printer as: “a thryuing ladde, brought vp in pieres scole./ The plowman stoute, of whom I thynke ye haue full often harde/ A swynkyng swaine, that handleth wel his spade and other toole”, and he is set in contrast to the greedy landlords: He “bragges not of rentes fees ne of entayled landes” (sig. Civ^v).

Again, while social satire is accepted as righteous, flyting is presented as being somewhat suspect. The mariners pick up on the legal jargon (rejoinder, surrejoinder and so forth) used by the protagonists and, rather than interpreting it as a signifier of middle-class education at the Inns, they identify it with the litigious tendencies of scolds or gossips: “it sounded of the lawe, as though somme case it warre/ Of ioyncture right for waywarde wyues, to pleaden at the barre” (sig. Civ^r). They suspect the protagonists of subjecting their betters to crude street flyting, and of effeminacy into the bargain. The printer comes to the defence of Churchyard/Dycar here by recouping the social status of flyting. Again country and court, and social satire and courtly flyting, converge. The printer explains to the mariners that the rustic, Dycar, has a friend at court (Churchyard) who wrote down his dream for him (sig. Dii^v); perhaps an allusion to the friendship between the courtier, Alexis, and Corydon, the rustic, in Virgil’s second eclogue. This, so they learn, is a dispute that has

elitist, courtly credentials as well as pastoral/agrarian sympathies.

The next shot fired, Thomas Hedley's 'Of Such as on Fantesye Decree and Discus on Other Mens Workes, lo Ouides Tale Thus', engages with the debate allegorically (sig. Div^f-Ei^f). It is a translation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of the singing contest, or *amæbæan*, between Pan and Apollo adjudicated by Midas.²⁴⁵ Obviously, Pan represents Churchyard/Dycar since his goatish features suggest the (false) etymology of satire from satyr, thus associating him with the satirical persona of the dream. Midas/Hedley declares Pan the winner and, indignant at being declared the loser, Apollo gives him ass's ears in revenge. The translation is only really of interest here as an allegorical warning to the protagonists about the risks of flyting over such sensitive political matters, and its implicit suggestion that they might perhaps end up having their ears cropped for their trouble. Admittedly, Midas's sprouting of ass's ears corresponds only roughly to a penalty usually awarded to forgers rather than libellers, but the intended equivalence between Ovid's pastoral singing contest and this quarrel is sufficient in itself to render this interpretation plausible.

The next few poems in the debate which, as Carole Rose Livingston notices, are "written in an approximation of peasant dialect", involve seconds who use the names Steuen Steple and Gefferay Chappell to reflect their support of Churchyard, and who might again be Churchyard himself.²⁴⁶ In the following poem, 'Camelles Conclusion', Camel complains understandably of being unfairly outnumbered by Churchyard's supporters (sig. Eiii^f), and attempts to lure them into stating their subversive opinions more explicitly. His schoolmaster, so he claims, taught him to be loyal to both the king and those running the

²⁴⁵ *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville, ed. E. J. Kenney (Oxford: OUP, 1998), XI. 149-94.

²⁴⁶ Livingston (1991), p.136.

country in his name, or “To serue the king, and pray for hym, and all his counsell ryght” (sig. Eiii^v), and he asks indignantly, “If Rex reigne not? who reigneth then?” (sig. Fi^r). To prove his point he comes right out into the open: “I trowe I haue a byll for cattall that I solde/ That saies howe Rex hath reigned vi. yeare almost” (sig. Fi^r). Possibly he means here that the king’s advisors embody his political authority, and therefore that the king actually rules to all intents and purposes. Most importantly, he states that his interests are with the cattle farmers (implicitly the rich landowners) rather than the agrarians (ploughmen such as Dycar represents). This shows that Camel, like Churchyard, is aware that this contest is both an actual flyting between supporters of rival court factions and, figuratively, a fictional *amœbæan* between representatives of opposed sections of the rural community. This is Camel’s final counterblast, although his enemies fire three more attacks at him before they tire of the game.

One of these picks up the nautical theme begun in ‘Westerne Wyll, vpon the Debate betuyxte Churchyarde and Camell’. In ‘Westerne Will to Camell and for Hym Selfe Alone’ one W. Watreman takes over the job of lampooning the unfortunate Camel. He informs his adversary that “My self to helme am comen” in order to steer the debate back upon the right course (sig. Fii^v). He asks Camell why, if he found Churchyard’s poem so subversive, did he not report him to the authorities rather than becoming embroiled in an unseemly dispute with him. (sig. Fiii^v). Watreman also takes up the case against enclosure:

A wicked ploughe it is, that forowes vp a fielde
To marre a pleasaurt path and no goode fruite to yelde. [...]
And roteth vp good herbes to plante in stynkyng wies. (sig. Fii^v)

Watreman recognises that the lines of battle are drawn between the support of the commons on one side and of the landowners on the other and, although he hails from the city rather than the country and belongs to a very different occupational group to Piers or Dycar, there are good reasons why someone from such a background might be recruited to support the interests of the

agrarian community in this way. Firstly, when placed alongside the stereotypical scold, and the pastoral figure of Piers, it becomes apparent that watermen represent another group of humble social status that are represented due to their being renowned for complaint, invective and low life flyting.²⁴⁷ Secondly, the flyting took place before the creation of the Watermens' Guild by statute in 1555 and therefore before the watermen attained the respectability of belonging to a profession. Like the agrarian community, watermen were perhaps suffering some financial hardship before 1555, since the reasoning for their elevation to professional status appears to have had something to do with the setting of fair prices for their services.²⁴⁸ Both the agrarian commons and the urban watermen were perhaps in need of reforming employment legislation to protect their interests at the time of the Churchyard-Camel flyting. The representative waterman, as an outspoken but honest physical labourer whose livelihood is threatened, shares at least this with Piers/ Dycar.

²⁴⁷ Watermen were reputed to be the sort of outspoken, vitriolic individuals readily associable with flyting. One seventeenth-century commentator recounts "gentlemen being baited by 'whole kennels of yelping watermen'", quoted by Joan Parkes, *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century* (OUP, 1925), p.99 (source not given). Similarly, Walter Besant has the following to say about the profession in the sixteenth century: "They were notorious for their riotous conduct among themselves, their horrible language, and the foul abuse with which they pelted each other and the passengers in other boats", *The Thames* (Adam and Charles Black, 1903), pp.5-6. This reputation possibly extended to mariners of all sorts. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare's Boatswain is pilloried by Anthony as a "whoreson, insolent noise-maker!" during a brief exchange of insult between them (I.i.41).

²⁴⁸ Various bills disseminated around London in 1555 proclaiming the new status of the profession, each detailing the fixing of fares for journeys between different locations in the city. One of these sets *The Prices of Fares and Passages to be Paide vnto Watermen from London to Grauesende, and likewise from Grauesende to London, and to Euery Common Place betwene, And also betwene London Bridge and Windesoure, and so to Euery Common Place of Landyng betwene London Bridge and Wyndesoure* (printed by John Cawood, 1555), STC 16787.2.

John Taylor and William Fennor

It is perhaps no more than coincidence that the next extant, full-blown domestic flyting is conducted between rivals who seem on one level to be reincarnations of the allies Dycar and Watreman. In this verse pamphlet war John Taylor, the poet and waterman, and William Fennor (whose name like Dycar's - derived from Daw the ditcher or ditch digger in *Piers Plowman*²⁴⁹ - coincidentally also suggests a profession involving drainage) argue about the arrangements for an aborted public flyting or competitive verse performance that had been meant to take place at the Hope Theatre supposedly on October 14th 1614.²⁵⁰

The combatants are conscious that they are engaging in a practice that has close associations with the court. By undersigning himself "his Maiesties Riming Poet", Fennor portrays Taylor as an outsider and challenger like Garnish and, like Skelton, he presents himself as laureate to, and defending champion of, the king.²⁵¹ Fennor probably responds here to a similar claim that Taylor had made recently while attempting to provoke a literary feud with Thomas Coryate.²⁵² Appealing for James to intervene upon his behalf in the dispute, he identified himself as his "Majesty's poor Water-Poet".²⁵³ The poets may also have had in mind the flyting between Polwart and Montgomerie, singled out as an example

²⁴⁹ See n.231.

²⁵⁰ Taylor's credentials as an all-round flyter reach beyond the reputation of his occupation. He exhibits the typical characteristics of a flyter as someone who, as his biographer Capp (1994) points out, was "patriotic [and] intensely loyal to both king and church" and highly vocal about his patriotism, p.1.

²⁵¹ *Fennors Defence: Or, I Am your First Man* (printed for Roger Barnes, 1615), sig. Bvi^v, STC 10783. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

²⁵² Taylor was persistent in his attempts to draw Coryate into a literary feud, beginning with his scurrilous 'To Tom Coryat' followed by several other attacks and ending with *Odcombs Complaint*. Coryate was reportedly infuriated, but neglected to repay Taylor in kind, and he even continued to suffer Taylor's abuse after his death in 1617. See Noel Malcolm, *The Origins of English Nonsense* (HarperCollins, 1997), pp.18-19.

²⁵³ Capp (1994), p.13.

of flyting by James VI in his 'Schort Treatise' on the art of poetry.²⁵⁴ Their competing to prove their loyalty to James certainly suggests they were not beyond trying to appeal to his literary tastes.

The main point of contention, however, is their disagreement over the details of the supposedly aborted verse contest. In the first pamphlet in the controversy, *Taylor's Revenge*, Taylor voices his indignation at Fennor's failure to attend, owing to which he claims to have incurred financial loss and suffered humiliation at the hands of a disappointed audience. In his dedication, 'To Any that Can Read', he claims that,

I lost my Reputation amongst many, and gaind disgrace in stead of my better expectations. In Reuenge of which wrongs done vnto me by the said Ryming Rascal, I haue written this Inuectiue against him, cheifly because the ill looking Hound doth not confesse he hath iniur'd me, [...] but on the contrary part, he Railes and Abuses me with his callumnious tongue.²⁵⁵

Although Taylor's biographer accepts such information provided about the event, the background details recounted by both poets may well be a fiction in which they participate in order to furnish them with a topic for their printed and, doubtlessly, commercially driven exchange of insult.²⁵⁶ The actual performance of any such formal verse exchanges is difficult to establish. They may well have been common, but the only evidence I have uncovered relating to their performance resides in fictional accounts of them or of abandoned events such as this one.

Skelton had stressed the literary nature of his third and fourth responses to Garnish, and such epistolary acknowledgements of familiarity with an adversary's attack by having

²⁵⁴ 'Ane Schort Treatise, Containing Some Revlis and Cautelis to be Oseruit and Eschewit in Scottis Poesie', Craigie ed. (1955), I. p.76 and p.81.

²⁵⁵ *Taylor's Revenge: Or, The Rymer William Fennor Firkt, Ferritted, and Finely Fetcht Ouer the Coales* (Rotterdam, 1615), sig. Aiii^v, STC 23804. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

²⁵⁶ Capp (1994), pp.14-15.

read it are a typical feature of flyting.²⁵⁷ In the case of this flyting, according to Fennor, one of his conditions of attendance was that he be allowed access to Taylor's part in the competition beforehand so that he could prepare a relevant response, and this might have been the custom at such events (sig. Aiii^v). It seems reasonable that competitors would require access to their adversary's accusations beforehand in order to be able to compose pertinent answers. As it is doubtful that the Taylor-Fennor flyting was ever really intended to take place, however, this point of debate may well be a literary convention suggested to them by other flytings with which they were familiar. In his answer to Taylor, *Fennors Defence: Or, I Am your First Man*, Fennor mentions a further public verse competition that had been arranged between himself and one Kendal at the Fortune, but apparently this was also aborted when Kendal failed to arrive on the appointed day (sig. Biii). The appeal of the idea of such organised verse competitions persists well into the seventeenth century, but there is little evidence to suggest that they ever really took place.²⁵⁸

While there is no concrete evidence to suggest that such flytings were actually performed publicly, there are numerous precedents for commercially driven paper quarrels between poets, and as Capp comments, "one way for a newcomer to attract attention was

²⁵⁷ See, for instance, Bawcutt (1992), pp.233-4. See also 'The Answer quhilk Schir David Lindsay maid to the Kingis Flyting', beginning "Redoutit Roy, your ragment I haue red", *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, 1490-1555*, ed. Douglas Hamer, STS, 4 vols (London and Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by Blackwood, 1931-6), I. (1931), pp.101-4. Thomas Smyth and William Gray similarly stress the literary aspect of their quarrel. In *An Enuoy* Smyth writes "I have recyued, your lewde lybell" (l.4) and in Gray's answer, *The Returne of M. Smythes Enuoy*, he writes, "I haue receyued your enuyous and proude enterpryse" (l.4). For other examples see Cat. Anon 52-3 and S 253.

²⁵⁸ See, for instance, Sir John Suckling's 'The Sessions of the Poets' and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester's (?) 'A Session of the Poets'. In these fictional competitions Suckling and Rochester pit their respective contemporary town wits against one another in verse competitions for the title of laureate. See *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, ed. L. A. Beaurline and Thomas Clayton, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), I. *The Non-Dramatic Works*, ed. Thomas Clayton (1971), pp.71-6 and *The Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. Keith Walker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.133-5.

by feuding in public with a writer already well-known”, as Marston had done in his dispute with Hall and as Taylor had done by lampooning Coryate.²⁵⁹ Commercially driven flytings, while often expressing genuine hostility, use the debate as a more or less collaborative entrepreneurial venture in which the insults and accusations exchanged fuel public interest in the writers involved, quickly establishing their literary reputations and manufacturing a demand in the marketplace for the next shot fired.²⁶⁰

The idea that Taylor and Fennor contrived the scenario of a dispute over an aborted flyting purely as some sort of business arrangement also poses problems, since the evidence for this also resides mostly in their pamphlet war itself. Taylor’s unusual obsession with discussing the financial rewards he expects from his writing certainly suggests a compelling motivation for the exchange. While claiming that he writes simply to set the matter straight, he mentions his disappointed financial interest in the original staged flyting repeatedly. To give credibility to the idea that Taylor attacks Fennor in print as a means of recouping his losses requires also accepting to his intention to hold the event at the Hope in the first place. The actual circumstances behind the debate are highly ambiguous. He claims to have gone to the trouble of printing a thousand bills to advertise

²⁵⁹ Capp (1994), p.57.

²⁶⁰ A further instance of such an entrepreneurial war of words occurs almost exclusively in prose between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe (see Kenneth Friedenreich, ‘Nashe’s *Strange Newes* and the Case for Professional Writers’, *SP*, 71 (1974), 451-72). Another example is the Grammarians’ War of 1518-21 in which the adversaries Robert Whittinton and William Horman and their respective supporters denigrate one another’s academic credentials (see Cat. H 156, L 199-200, S 260 and W 304). As Carlson (1992) observes the dispute evolves from disagreement over various points of humanist pedagogy into what becomes, more or less, a publicity stunt as the protagonists use the debate to popularise and generate markets for their pedagogic methodologies for teaching Latin in their rival textbooks, p.157. A slightly more contemporary example of such mercantile flyting occurred at the bottom end of the literary market place between competing balladeers who appear to have taunted one another while vying for trade as well as answering each other’s ballads (see n.42 and Rollins (1919), p.315). The best-known instance is probably the War of the Printers ensuing from the printer and balladmaker, Richard Jones’s, publication of ‘Green Sleeves’ (1580), which attracted several

the contest and even the possibility of recouping this expense seems doubtful (sig. Aiii^f).²⁶¹ Taylor and Fennor, so we are told, were to share the venue with players who were to perform afterwards. They would probably have to split the evening's takings with this company and there would surely have been little left over.

In his later pamphlets Taylor complains frequently about debts owed to him by subscribers to his work who have failed to honour their promise to pay him for his published accounts of the outlandish journeys and feats that he undertook. Alexandra Halasz, who refers to this as a “subscription scenario”, points out that there is insufficient evidence to prove that Taylor sold his published writings through subscription.²⁶² The accusation of debt may have been a strategy Taylor used to add spice to his publications. He was an adept publiciser of his own work and in 1630 saw his collected works into print

competitive answers from his rivals (see Cat. E 115 and W 294-5).

²⁶¹ Such bills of challenge would have been a familiar sight after the return of plebian fencing contests to the theatres in 1606 since they were posted around London by English fencing masters advertising for qualified challengers to take on their students in completion of their degrees. There appear to have been strict rules for the provision of sufficient notice and fencers who failed to attend risked incurring fines. Mary McElroy and Kent Cartwright write that

The prizor for the degree of “free scholler” gave two weeks notice to challengers, the provost’s degree required four weeks notice, and the master’s degree required eight weeks. A bill of challenge such as the following was sent to all the qualified contestants:

Be it Known to all who profess arms that we Masters of the Noble Science of Defence, do give license to our [...] to play a prize against all [...] in their subtile misteries at the four weapons viz:

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

Challengers sometimes travelled many miles to compete, since declining a formal invitation violated the association’s rules.

Quoted from Mary McElroy and Kent Cartwright, ‘Public Fencing Contests on the Elizabethan Stage’, *JSH*, 13:3 (1986), 193-211 (p.199), <<http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/JSH/JSH1986/JSH1303/jsh1303b.pdf>>.

²⁶² Alexandra Halasz, ‘Pamphlet Surplus: John Taylor and Subscription Publication’, in Marotti and Bristol eds (2000), pp.90-102 (pp.90-1).

when only Jonson had done so during his own life previously.²⁶³ Accusations of unpaid debt and mercenary conduct in general are well-established themes in flyting and need not be any more genuine than more serious imputations of treason and heresy. It simply serves as another rhetorical means to discredit an adversary.

The protagonists are also keen to stress their own veracity and freedom from avarice. Taylor emphasises that it was never his intention to cozen his audience, but that they have lost out because Fennor has cheated him:

So that when as the pur-blinde worlde shall see
How vildley thou hast playd the Rogue with mee,
They shall perceiue I wrong'd them not for pelfe,
And thou shalt (like a Rascall) hang thy selfe. (sig. Av^r)

Taylor's insistence that it is Fennor, rather than himself, who has cheated the audience is combined in this passage with the most conventional of flyting maledictions. Taylor's poem is littered with other conventional flyting motifs that contribute towards his criminalisation of Fennor. He is both traitor and heretic: "Thy seruice to the King is such/ As Atheists vnto God, and scarce so much" (sig. Av^v). He is also lampooned variously as a Turk, Jew, coward, rascal and knave, among other insults (sig. Aiv^r, sig. Aviii^v, sig. Biii^r and sig. Biv^v). Taylor even imagines standing in for the hangman at Fennor's execution and threatens scurrilously to seduce his wife once he has been hanged (sig. Aviii^r).²⁶⁴ This is hardly the accusation of someone genuinely seeking the moral high ground. He is much more concerned with the sensational effect of the insult.

²⁶³ *All the Workes of Iohn Taylor the Water-Poet* (printed for Iames Boler, 1630), STC 23725.

²⁶⁴ Perhaps Taylor had in mind Marston's Cocledemoy from *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605) here. In the subplot the satirical rogue, Cocledemoy, who is disguised as a sargeant, completes his persecution of the vintner Mulligrub, who is due to be executed, by boasting that he will seduce his wife once he has gone to the gallows, ed. M. L. Wine (Arnold, 1965), V.iii. Eventually, Cocledemoy reveals his identity to Mulligrub and confesses all, claiming it was all done for the love of wit rather than out of animosity. Similarly, the opportunity for such an amoral display of wit surely accounts some of the appeal of the flyting for Taylor.

Although this dispute between town wits is removed historically and socially from earlier courtly flytings, it draws heavily from earlier flyting conventions, including the emphasis placed upon the protagonists' relationship with the king and the court. Like his flyting predecessors Taylor quips at his adversary's upstart pretensions to courtiership, remarking for instance that "An Asse in Cloath of Gold is but an Asse" (sig. Avi^v).²⁶⁵ He also looks forward to witnessing Fennor being "soundly whip'd from out the Court" when his fraudulence is exposed (sig. Avii^v). Fennor's response also exhibits some interesting points of correspondence with earlier flytings, both domestic and cross-cultural, and even claims a curious affinity with the troubadour *sirvente* or *tenson*. In the first proem of his counter-offensive, 'An Apologie to the Anagram of my Name, Made by no Scholler, but a Sculler', Fennor adopts the unidentified poet, "le Fogniere", as his implicit ancestor who defended the realm of William the Conqueror against the invasion of foreign libels (sig. Av^r). The analogy here is that, just as le Fogniere warded off foreign flyters from the cliffs of Dover, Fennor, who claims the "Name and Title of Defender" of his king, intends to guard the banks of the Thames against the Water-Poet's libels. Like Skelton, and following the precedent of le Fogniere, Fennor identifies himself as the king's laureate, and he exploits the idea that an attack upon the king's servant is no different to slighting the king personally. Whereas Taylor imagines rhyming Fennor to death for his dishonesty towards him, Fennor envisages rhyming Taylor out of existence for the treason that he predicts his adversary will commit against James: "And take thou heed of this enchanted Spell,/ Iohn Taylor ended like Achitophel" (sig. Avii^r). Just as the biblical rebel was punished for waging war against the Psalmist, Fennor wishes a similar fate upon Taylor for the treason

²⁶⁵ Camel portrays Churchyard as a court fool, for instance, "Dyd you neuer here tell of the asse trapt in golde?/ And with a bell tied to its tail". 'Camels Reioindre' (sig. Bii^r).

that he envisages him committing.

Although both men claim that their verse possesses the potency to rhyme the other to death, or at the very least to murder one another's reputations, they exhibit modesty about their own talent as poets, and accuse one another of failing to know their limitations. Taylor writes, "Yet dare I not put on a Poets name" and stresses that he is simply a rhymer (i.e. somewhere beneath the capacity of aureate court poets but better than a mere balladeer) and not presuming to compete with the most accomplished poets of the day who hail from the nation's centres of learning and the playhouses (sig. Avii^r).²⁶⁶ In this respect he distinguishes himself from Fennor whose presumption is an affront to the poets of the age who ought to take revenge upon him for his pretensions, just as Skelton claims that the classical satirists would vent their fury upon Garnish, were they alive:

And you braue Moderne Poets whose sweet lines
 All Heau'nly, earthly Harmony combines,
 Can you, O can your Sences be stupidious
 And see your selues abused thus perfidious.
 Oh if the Case were mine, as it is yours
 I would Raine vengeance in reuengefull showres, [...]
 And dash to peices these base Groomes in verse. (sig. Avi^v)

In turn Fennor affects modesty about his own laureateship: "It hath pleasd the King to call mee

²⁶⁶ Reputedly, Taylor was once audacious enough to cross wits with Ben Jonson in the following epigrammatic exchange:

I am told, by my Boy, thou art Jonson the Poet;
 If true, an Epigram, quickly, to shew it:
 I tell thee I'm Taylor that plies near the Strand,
 A Poet by Water, as thou art by Land.

Ben's Answer, Without Hesitation.

A Poet by Water can never be fired;
 By the Juice of the Grape the Muse is inspired:
 Yet thy aiming at Wit deserveth some Praise;
 But Water ne'er nourish'd the Laurel or Bays.

Newdigate ed. (1936), pp.342-3. The exchange can be dated prior to 1618 since an answer to Jonson by Henry Fitzgeffrey, which takes Taylor's part in this miniature wit combat, is printed

his Ryming Poet/ Although too farre vnworthy, I confesse,/ To merit it, the Title I possesse” (sig. Aviii^v). While he purports to be aware of his limitations, he claims that Taylor’s imperviousness to his own mediocrity has caused him to abuse the craft of poetry and brought the name of poet into disrepute: “What Coxcombe foole would proffer such abuses/ As thou hast done to Poets and the Muses?” (sig. Bi^v).

As well as the more outrageous accusations and insults that the protagonists level at one another, they also set out to convince their readers of their adversary’s knavery through more persuasive exhibitions of legalistic disputation. Taylor, for instance, subjects Fennor’s excuses for failing to attend to a forensic analysis in order to prove him a liar:

How is’t possible thou couldst devise
At once to slap me and the world i’t^h mouth
That thou wast Rid, East, West, and North, & South
That day thou shouldst haue met me on the Stage
Thou wentst three wayes at once on pilgrimage. (sig. Biv^v)

Fennor cannot be telling the truth about the reason for his absence because his various excuses conflict with one another and cancel each other out, so Taylor contends. In return, Fennor attempts to expose the irrelevance of Taylor’s argument by claiming that it fails to account for the fact that Taylor had broken the conditions of his attendance. In consequence of this breach of verbal contract Fennor claims to have sent word that he would not be participating in the competition well in advance. In his dedication, ‘To All that Can Iudge, of What Degree soeuer’, he writes that it had been agreed that “I should see the Manner of his Challenge before it was published, and set my Answere to it with my owne hand”. However,

This Water-Taylor [...] presuming he had bound me with his Earnest-money, printed his Challenge-Bill, and my Answere annexed thereunto, without my Hand, Knowledge, or Consent: Nay more; My Answere was by him set vp so meane and insufficient to so brauing a Challenge, that I altogether disliked thereof [...] and thereupon sent my Man [...] fiue dayes before the Play, to certifie them. That I was otherwise employed, and would not come, in regard of the Wrong done vnto

in his *Satyres and Satirical Epigrams* (1617) (see Cat. F 128).

mee. (sigs Aiii^v-Aiv^r)

In Fennor's version of events his whereabouts on the day of the competition are irrelevant because he had already informed Taylor of his intention not to participate.

Taylor's counter-response, *A Cast Over the Water*, equals Skelton in its satirical fury and accretion of harsh insult.²⁶⁷ Even the title suggests Fennor has had his fill of abuse, but that much more will be piled on top. "To cast water into the Thames" features among Fuller's list of London proverbs and is defined as "to give to them who had plenty before", and Taylor certainly lives up to such a promise.²⁶⁸ The spirit of excess pervades his counter-response and he seems to have rhymed his rival into submission successfully. This poem, even more than his last, is peppered with the language of the late-Elizabethan satirists. His answer is an "inuectiue Scourge" and he intends to lash Fennor with his "Satyres whip" and set his "sharp fang'd Muse" upon him (sig. Bi^v and sig. Cv^v). He even displays his awareness of classical precedents for the maledictory power of satire and flyting when he threatens, "Like Bubonax, ile rime the vnto death" (sig. Bii^r).²⁶⁹

By the time of this counter-response Fennor appears to have provided Taylor with irresistible ammunition by collaborating with the infamous Richard Vennar. Vennar, to whom Fennor may have been related, had gained notoriety for cozening his audience out of the money they paid to attend his performance of *Englands Ioy* at the Swan in 1602, an event that, with Fennor's assistance, regained topicality in 1615.²⁷⁰ The scandal surrounding

²⁶⁷ *A Cast Over the Water*, by John Taylor. *Giuen Gratis to William Fennor, the Rimer, from London to the Kings Bench. Or a Replication to Fennors Answer* (printed for William Butler, 1615), STC 23741.

²⁶⁸ Fuller (1662), sig. Cccii^r(2). See also Tilley W106.

²⁶⁹ See n.35.

²⁷⁰ Vennar's autobiography is described by Herbert Berry who provides the information surrounding the association between Vennar and Fennor used here, 'Richard Vennar, *England's Joy*', *ELR*, 31 (2001), 240-65.

the 1602 performance has obvious pertinence to Taylor's accusations against Fennor. Vennar was reputed to have failed to reimburse his audience the sum of one shilling each, after being arrested for debt during the delivery of his prologue at the Swan, just as Fennor supposedly cozened his audience by failing to show up at the Hope.

It is unlikely that Fennor and Vennar were fraternising when Taylor wrote his first attack upon Fennor since Vennar was out of London during the first part of that year, and this explains why Taylor did not exploit Fennor's association with this ignominious character earlier. In the later part of the year, while imprisoned in Wood Street Compter, Vennar enlisted Fennor's help to make copies of his autobiography, *An Apology*, which recounts among other episodes in his life, the debacle at the Swan.²⁷¹ Fennor has, so Taylor claims, been involved in a performance of *Englands Ioy* earlier in 1615, when he acted so badly "that euery Man/ Did iudge it worse then that was done at Swan" (sig. Bv^v). He has also claimed some of Vennar's dedicatory works as his own, thus cozening the old cony catcher out of the takings:

This matter came from out a learned braine:
And poor old Vennor, that plaine dealing man,
Who acted *Englands Ioy* first at the Swan,
Paid eight crowns for the writing of these things, [...]
Which money backe he neuer yet recieue'd
So the deceiuer is by thee deceiu'd. (sig. Ciii^r)

No wonder Fennor failed to muster up a further invective, since his association with Vennor depleted considerably the rhetorical arsenal he had left at his disposal and effectively sealed his defeat.

²⁷¹ Berry (2001), pp.263-5.

Part II: The “socially dialogic” Answer-Poem: Marriage, Friendship and Courtship/ Courtiership

Introduction

The antisocially dialogic verses examined in Part One only tell half of the story of answer-poetry’s literary presence during the Tudor and early-Stuart periods. Answer-poetry also played a significant role in consolidating the bonds between members of a diverse range of literary and social communities and provided a means of exploring and representing relationships between the sexes and between groups of friends. In this section I will examine some of the means by which social identities, relationships and cultural practices are constructed, affirmed and/or contested in answer-poems and the poems they answer covering the broad themes of courtship/ courtiership, marriage and friendship.

Following Marotti’s epithet I have grouped these poems roughly under the heading of “socially dialogic” verses. What sets them apart most noticeably from the antisocial answers of Part One (the clandestine anonymity of libel, the brazenfaced animosity of flyting and the antisocial, self-sufficient cynicism of formal verse satire) is their treatment of intimate social relationships. The distinction is not perfect. Most noticeably, the last pair of poems I examine in Chapter Five (although they draw together the themes of courtship, Petrarchanism and gender relationships with which this section is concerned) are libels. They are of relevance for what they show about male-female literary relationships and the extent of women’s freedom to participate in exchanges of verse, and also draw together neatly some of the main themes of the two parts of this thesis.

It is often a nexus between or meeting of minds that is the defining characteristic of socially dialogic verse exchanges; perhaps best illustrated by the contrast between the aggressive intellectual independence of the antisocial satirist and the fraternal, communicative reasoning evident frequently in verse epistles exchanged between friends.

Such exchanges often self-consciously share a mediating influence that acts as a nexus between them. This might be an intertext (often Ovid's *Heroides*, *Metamorphoses* or *Art of Love*, or Petrarch's *Canzoniere*), a subtext (such as when a second level of communication is exchanged via acrostics) or even what might be deemed a metatext or paratext in the familiar verse epistles exchanged between John Donne and his correspondents, where there exists a conceit that correspondents' respective muses mediate between them, and imbue them with creative energy derived from the transaction. Such mediating influences provide a point of orientation from which members of social groups might display their like-mindedness and performatively demonstrate their intellectual and ethical solidarity.

What further distinguishes this group of verses from the vituperative and exuberant excesses of antisocial verse is the stress which they place upon moderation and temperance as means of maintaining good social relations, whether between husband and wife, groups of friends, or in discourses where the context is courtly and/or amorous. In Castiglione's courtly dialogue, *The Book of the Courtier*, the participants in the conversation guide one another towards moderate speech and behaviour and by common assent agree that such an equilibrium of temperament is both knowable and attainable. This has a defensive purpose as well as offering a model for good living. To repeat an earlier quotation:

The surest way in the world is, for a man in his living and conversation to governe himselfe alwaies with a certaine honest meane, which (no doubt) is a great and most sure shield against envie. (II. p.133)

And in the case of the courtly lady Castiglione's Lord Julian stipulates that,

Accompanying with sober and quiet manners, and with the honestie that must alwaies be a stay to her deedes, a readie livelinese of wit, whereby she may declare her selfe far wide from all dulnesse: but with such a kinde of goodnesse, that she may bee esteemed no lesse chaste, wise and courteous, than pleasant, feate conceited and sober: and therefore muste she keepe a certaine meane verie hard, and (in a manner) derived of contrary matters, and come just to certaine limittes, but not to passe them. (III. pp.190-1)

In these exchanges the subject of the mean is particularly prominent whether in verses

rebuking their correspondents for deviating from moderation in perspective and behaviour or in those privileging a stoic attitude over the cynical outlook promoted by the poem answered. As in *The Book of the Courtier* these exchanges often display performatively the cohesion and integrity of social groups as they work towards positions of like-mindedness that revolve around the mean. They are frequently set pieces, whether written by separate authors, as in the case of the Henrician courtship exchanges examined in Chapter 5, or single authored, as in the pairs debating the preferability of married and single life in Chapter 3. Whilst these verses dramatise the management of socially harmonious relationships they are also concerned self-consciously with contemporary social philosophies which inform the ideologies of marriage, friendship, courtship and courtiership, and they provide benchmarks of decorum for the sorts of social interaction with which they are involved.

The mean represents a locus of assent or consensus that might be arrived at through collaborative reasoning, or a rhetoric of shared subjectivity. A recurring feature of socially dialogic verses is their display of intersubjectivity, what Jürgen Habermas describes as a form of communicative reasoning whereby interlocutors, through a process of negotiation, migrate towards, or demonstrate that they have already found, a ground of mutual understanding and an intellectual rapport, in this instance based upon moderation of speech and conduct. Habermas defines such processes as “the performative attitude of participants in interaction, who coordinate their plans for action by coming to an understanding about something in the world”.²⁷² Such shared subjectivities, as seen in the Renaissance answer-poem, are highly affected in nature and cultivated to display the coherence and integrity of

²⁷² Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), p.296.

social units, sometimes as a defence mechanism against the rival subjectivities of hostile outsiders, or to demonstrate the suitability of partnerships between individuals through the fostering of coalitions founded upon likemindedness. Examples of collaborative reasoning are most commonly found in verses exchanged between friends (examined in Chapter Four), but such intersubjectivity is also present in a fictional exchange between a husband and wife (Chapter 3, pp.174-8) and several of the courtship verses discussed in Chapter 5 (pp.226-30).

Socially dialogic verses are equally likely to contest the rhetorical positions of their correspondents and some even dramatise struggles for occupation of the subject position; such as in courtly exchanges between Queen Elizabeth and Paul Schede or between Frances Seymour and Sir George Rodney (Chapter 5, pp.248-50 and pp.255-61). Alternately, in the first group of verse exchanges I examine in this section the intersubjectivity of social dialogue in verse is exploited in fictional marriage debates whereby the dominant discourse of Reformation marriage propaganda is given precedence over alternate theological positions in order to dramatise the correction of heterodox opinion through a process of dialogic reasoning. Whichever model of reasoning is present these socially dialogic verses negotiate social roles and relationships based upon the premise of a knowable and attainable mean of conduct and speech. Notably, the competitive animus of the verse answering is retained in these poems even where the subject position is not fought for so openly and, rather than striving to deliver the most efficacious invective, correspondents compete for a rhetorical position that most closely inheres in a mean of behaviour and speech that suggests socially appropriate conduct and psychological well-being.

Chapter 3: Reforming Propaganda in Answer-Poetry upon Marriage, 1550-1570

In the 1550s and 1560s there appears a small cluster of answer-poems that respond to misogynist *contemptus mundi* verses upon the subject of marriage by dismissing their disdain for married life. These are lighthearted set pieces simulating the social dialogism of interpersonal verse exchanges in order to fulfil the serious purpose of disseminating the commonplaces of Reformation marriage guidance to their readership through the medium of fictional debates. Frequently, they are derivative of pieces by prominent reformers upon the subject of marriage, including Latin answer-poems by the Protestant theologian and educator, Theodore de Beze and Erasmus's Latin translations and adaptations of poems from the *Planudean Anthology*.²⁷³

These poems, which supplemented a wealth of reforming literature upon the subject of marriage, provided an additional, entertaining medium through which basic marriage guidance could be disseminated, and a ground upon which the literary war between reformers and conservatives or Catholics could be staged. As such, these answers do not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of actual social practices, but they do reflect closely the concerns about the status of marriage that began to be circulated zealously from

²⁷³ Erasmus, of course, was reclaimed as a harbinger of Protestantism whose argument that marriage provided an antidote to fornication, and whose attacks upon clerical abuses, played a significant role in rendering his work acceptable to later generations. He writes in the *Encomium Matrimonii*,

Let the swarms of monks and nuns [...] boast and brag their bellies full of their ceremonies and church service, wherein they chiefly pass all other: yet is wedlock, being well and truly kept, a most holy kind of life. Again, would to God they were gelded in very deed, whatsoever they be, that color their naughty living with such a jolly name of gelding, living in much more filthy lust under the cloak and pretense of chastity.

Quoted from Thomas Wilson's translation, 'An Epistle to Persuade a Young Gentleman to Marriage, Devised by Erasmus, in the Behalf of his Friend', in *The Arte of Rhetoric (1560)*, ed. Peter E. Medine (Pennsylvania State UP, 1994), pp.79-100 (pp.89-90). Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

the time of the Edwardian Reformation. They fall into two basic types: Verses arguing for and against marrying, and dialogues providing commonplace instruction upon cultivating a successful partnership. They played only a peripheral part in the reforming drive to rehabilitate the status of marriage. Nonetheless, many of them reached a wide audience and, as a group, they are of interest since they crystallise and reflect in miniature many central concerns about, and approaches towards, the subject of marriage as they were presented in marriage literature and in church.

By the early 1550s a crusade was well under way to impress upon the populace the sacred and social importance of marriage. The nuclear family was venerated as a reflection in microcosm of the relationship between the Church and Christ and depicted as the cornerstone of social order and stability.²⁷⁴ When, for instance, wives rebelled against their husbands all tended towards chaos and disorder in society at large, so the argument went.²⁷⁵ Such beliefs were current long before the Edwardian Reformation. What was new was the vigour with which they were peddled. When Henry VIII died he left behind him a strong contingent of zealous reformers in the Privy Council whose influence far outweighed those who were more conservatively inclined. During Edward's minority this provided reformers with the opportunity to promote marriage and to compensate for the perceived undermining of its importance that had taken place during Henry's reign when wedlock had been

²⁷⁴ The *Book of Common Prayer* stipulated that during the marriage service the congregation should be informed that God "hast consecrated the state of matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church", *The Book of Common Prayer, 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. John E. Booty (London and Toronto: Associated UPs; Washington D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1982), p.296. The passage remained unrevised from the 1552 version.

²⁷⁵ See, for instance, David E. Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), pp.116-36 (pp.117-18).

deprived of its sacramental status following its exclusion from Cromwell's Ten Articles of 1536. Although nobody went so far as to reinstate the sacramental status of matrimony several measures were taken to compensate for this situation. The Act of Six Articles that outlawed clerical marriages was revoked in the first parliament of Edward's reign. In 1549 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, a driving force for reform following Henry's death, standardised the marriage service and purged it of vestiges of secularism thereby "appropriating marriage from first to last for the church". Then, in a Protestantised revision of the new Prayer Book (1552), Cranmer set out the respective duties of husbands and wives. In the same year it was stipulated in the thirty second of the forty two Articles of Religion, for which Cranmer was also largely responsible, that single life, unlike marriage, was not a fiat of divine will.²⁷⁶

Alison Wall points out that, although there was a torrent of reforming texts promoting marriage, they may not have been disseminated widely because

the book market was small and centred on London, where most of these books were published: books were expensive and few could afford them. Most Englishwomen and a majority of men were illiterate.²⁷⁷

The reforming crusade to rehabilitate marriage nonetheless reached an extensive audience and was communicated to various sections of the populace from the pulpit, in the classroom and during leisure time, thus ensuring that the illiterate, and provincial members of society, as well as the literate, urban community were exposed. A translation of Erasmus's *Encomium Matrimonii* was included in what was probably the most widely read textbook of its day, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553). Another was the sermon, 'An Homily of the State of Matrimony', which appeared in *The Second Tome of Homilies* in 1563 and, like the 1549 and 1552 prayer

²⁷⁶ See Eric Joseph Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), p.52.

²⁷⁷ Alison Wall, *Power and Protest in England 1525-1640* (Arnold, 2000), p.85.

books, was intended to be read in church services throughout the country. Finally, Edmund Tilney's *A Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage Called the Flower of Friendship* first appeared in 1568 and went through a further two editions within the year.²⁷⁸

To these can be added several translations of Erasmus's colloquies upon the subject.²⁷⁹

With the exception of the *Encomium Matrimonii* and 'An Homily of the State of Matrimony' all the above were dialogues proposing arguments for and against marriage in which the case for marriage takes precedence.²⁸⁰ The topic of marriage was highly biased towards dialogue. Not only did many pre-Reformation texts on the theme appear in dialogue format under the dialectical influence of Humanism. Since the Reformation itself emerged out of opposition to Catholic doctrine, Protestant ideas about marriage were concerned frequently with confuting the Catholic veneration of celibacy, and other notions about marriage associated with Catholicism.

²⁷⁸ *The Flower of Friendship: A Renaissance Discourse Contesting Marriage*, ed. Valerie Wayne (London and Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1992); 'An Homily of the State of Matrimony' from *The Second Book of Homilies* (1563), in *Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men About Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Larsen Klein (Urbana and Chicago: Illinois UP, 1992), pp.11-25 (subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations). On the publication history of *The Flower of Friendship* see Wayne ed. (1992), p.5.

²⁷⁹ Among these were his 'Coniugium' which was published as *A Mery Dialogue, Declaringe the Propertyes of Shrowde Shrewes, and Honest Wyues* (printed for Antony Kytson, 1557), STC 10455 and his 'Proci et puellae' ('Courtship', 1523) and 'Adolescentis et scorti' ('The Young Man and the Harlot', 1523) which appear together as *A Modest Meane to Mariage*, trans. N[icholas] L[eigh] (Henry Denham, 1568), STC 10499.

²⁸⁰ In addition to those works already mentioned can be included his *Vidua christiana* (1526), and other dialogues from his *Colloquies* such as 'Virgo μισόγαμος' ('The Girl with no Interest in Marriage', 1523), 'Virgo poenitens' ('The Repentant Girl', 1523) and 'Αγαμος γάμος, sive Coniugium impar' ('Marriage in Name Only, or the Unequal Match', 1529). See *Collected Works of Erasmus*, [86 vols] (London and Toronto: Toronto UP, 1974-), LXVI-LXX (LXVI): *Spiritualia*, trans. Jennifer Tolbert Roberts (1988), pp.177-257 and XXXIX-XL: *Colloquies*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (1997), pp.279-301, pp.302-5 and pp.842-59.

Debates for and against Marriage

Predictably, answer-poetry was one of the means by which the reforming project of propagating the exaltation of marriage to the reading public saturated the literature of the mid-Tudor period. These poems appeared even during the Marian years as *sotto voce* expressions of dissatisfaction with the Counter-Reformation. Several of the verses and answers that I examine appear in *Tottel's Miscellany*, first published in 1557; a compilation described by Paul A. Marquis as being close “to qualifying for what in 1557 could be considered objectionable or even seditious” in its Protestant leanings.²⁸¹

In each of these examples from Tottel the answer advocates either marriage or married life in response to an antifeminist satire against the same. The poems would have been palatable enough to the Marian regime to evade censorship since, although Catholic doctrine privileged celibacy over marriage, married life was also held in high esteem. Nonetheless the poems were effective as subtle statements of Protestant opposition owing to their belonging to a tradition that, following Erasmus and earlier medieval complaints against clerical abuses, presented marriage as an antidote to the sexual extravagances in which supposedly celibate nuns and mendicant priests were reputed to indulge. The poems also pose a degree of resistance to the Marian Counter-Reformation in that they might be considered substitutes for the sermons on the respective duties of husbands and wives that had been removed from church services when Mary ditched the 1552 new Prayer Book.²⁸² Two of the Tottel answers that I discuss in detail later stress in particular the importance of husbands fulfilling their conjugal responsibility to manage their wives competently. ‘An

²⁸¹ *Tottel's Miscellany (1557-1587)*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: HUP; OUP, 1928-9). Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations. Paul A. Marquis, ‘Politics and Print: The Curious Revisions to Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes*’, *SP*, 97 (2000), 145-64 (p.149).

Aunswere' (no. 256), blames an unhappy marriage upon an overbearing husband's excessive and intemperate chiding of his wife, while no. 258, 'An Answere', insists that since women lack moral agency they are dependent upon husbands' exercising "force and skyl" in their paternal duty (l.17). Both these verses respond to ones that offer unappealing portraits of married life in which there occurs an abnegation of responsibility for the moral welfare and behaviour of wives. As a group these four poems convey the message that good paternal governance within marriage is a matter of temperance and degree, of finding a mean between the conduct of the overly zealous husband of no. 255 and the husband of no. 257 who has renounced responsibility for women's moral welfare since both "bad and good/ Wives bring mischief" (ll.11-12). In this way these poems reflect the reformers' tempering of the paternalism of Peter's epistle to the Ephesians with the moderation of Paul's first Epistle in matters of matrimonial authority.²⁸³ In these verses, and in the others I examine, the wide-ranging Catholic-Protestant controversies become subsumed into the subject of marriage. As a supposedly Catholic ideal, the single life becomes a metonym for the Catholic faith and, as a Protestant ideal, married life becomes a metonym for Protestantism.

The commonplace macrocosmic *contemptus mundi* debate waged between cynic and

²⁸² Carlson (1994), p.47.

²⁸³ St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians enjoins "wives [to] submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord./ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (5:22-3). Peter makes a similar recommendation in his first Epistle (3:1-5). This is tempered, however, by a depiction of marriage in which responsibility for maintaining an equilibrium of tranquility falls upon both parties. He follows his injunction to wives with the following dictum for husbands:

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. (3:7)

The importance accorded to these two scriptural sources is reflected by the marriage service as set out in the *Book of Common Prayer* in which they are reiterated as injunctions setting out the

stoic epistemologies, in which the worth of life in all its variations are disputed, is also shorn down to the topic of marriage alone in several of these exchanges.²⁸⁴ Several answer-poems concerning marriage derive from companion poems that Erasmus transcribed from the *Planudean Anthology* in his adage ‘Optimum non nasci’ in which it is contested whether life promises any pleasure for men, and thus whether it is worthwhile to have been born.²⁸⁵ The Scottish humanist, George Buchanan, is responsible for another Latin rendering of these verses. His reputation during the Reformation was commensurable with, albeit less prominent than, that of Erasmus. He not only shared the Rotterdam scholar’s distaste for monastic life and for clerical abuses, he was similarly perceived as a pioneer of proto-Protestant values.²⁸⁶ An English version of this *contemptus mundi* debate that shows traits of Buchanan’s influence appears in *Tottel’s Miscellany* among the pieces attributed to Nicholas Grimald.²⁸⁷ The companion poems dispute the fulfillment to be found at court, at work, abroad and at sea before settling finally upon the pleasures and pitfalls of marriage:

Strife, with a wife, without, your thrift full hard to see:
 Yong brats, a trouble: none at all, a maym it seems to bee:
 Youth, fond: age hath no hert, and pincheth all to nye.
 Choose then the leefer of these twoo, no life, or soon to dye.
 (no. 151, ‘Mans Life after Possidonius, or Crates’, ll.7-10)

[Answer]

A wyfe will trym thy house: no wife? then art thou free.
 Brood is a louely thing: without, thy life is loose to thee.

duties of the married couples towards one another.

²⁸⁴ The scope that such poems typically attempt to encompass is reflected adequately by the title of Sir Francis Bacon’s cynical poem, ‘The World’; a verse likewise derived from the *Planudean Anthology* verses and met with a stoical palinode (see Cat. Anon 36).

²⁸⁵ *Collected Works of Erasmus*, [86 vols] (London and Toronto: Toronto UP, 1974-), XXX-XXXIII (XXXIII): *Adages*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors (1991), pp.160-2 (p.161).

²⁸⁶ D. Macmillan, *George Buchanan: A Biography* (Simpkin; Edinburgh: Morton, Marshall, 1906), pp.57-61.

²⁸⁷ Rollins ed. (1928-9) observes that the titles of Buchanan’s ‘E Graeco Possidippi, seu Cratetis’ and ‘Contraria sentential verisimilis, ex Metrodoro’ from his *Poemata* (1566) bear a close resemblance to the titles chosen by Grimald, II. p.236.

Yong bloods be strong: old sires in double honour dwell.
 Doo waye that choys, no life, or soon to dye: for all is well.
 (no. 152, 'Metrodorus Minde to the Contrarie', ll.7-10)²⁸⁸

These poems, which essentially debate the sanctity and worth of life, are no doubt chosen by Tottel's editor for their compatibility with the reformers' promotion of marriage for the purpose of reproduction. According to 'An Homily of the State of Matrimony', for instance, it is a marital responsibility "to bring forth fruit" in order that "the knowledge of God and true religion, might be delivered by succession from one to another, that finally many might enjoy that everlasting immortality" (p.13 and p.14). Similarly, in the *Encomium Matrimonii*, Erasmus argues that those who lead a single life are to be condemned for "living only to themselves [and failing to] increase the world with any issue" (*Arte of Rhetorique*, p.83).

The format of the Greek epigrams is applied to several verse debates upon marriage whereby the answer-poet's persona responds to his adversary's interpretation of married life – rather than life in *totalis* – as being uniformly unpleasant with the argument that all eventualities of married life are agreeable. Erasmus is also responsible for the first instance I know of these poems being adapted specifically for a discourse upon marriage. In his colloquy, 'Proci et puellae', Maria's suitor Pamphilus justifies their marriage in terms of their duty to replenish the earth with children, insisting "We'll reproduce for the state; we'll reproduce for Christ".²⁸⁹ Then, in a passage in which the couple debate the implications of parenthood, Erasmus adapts the poems from the *Planudean Anthology* as follows:

Maria Children bring countless cares with them.

Pamphilus But they bring countless delights and often repay the parents' devotion with interest many times over.

Maria Loss of children is a miserable experience.

Pamphilus Aren't you childless now? But why expect the worst in every uncertainty? Tell me, which would you prefer, never to be born or to be born to

²⁸⁸ Other possible classical authors for these epigrams are discussed by Rollins ed. (1928-9), II. pp.236-8.

²⁸⁹ Thompson trans. (1997), XXIX. pp.256-78 (p.265).

die?

Maria I'd rather be born to die, of course.

Pamphilus As those who have lived are more fortunate than those who never were born and never will be born, so is childlessness the more miserable in never having had and never expecting to have offspring. (p.266)

In his correction of Maria, Pamphilus assumes the formulaic stoical position of seeing the best in life and he manoeuvres Maria into the cynic's role, accusing her of perceiving "the worst in every uncertainty". Erasmus's dialogue is perfectly attuned to a society in which "childlessness was regarded as an affliction".²⁹⁰ However, childlessness represents much more than a personal failing and is presented here (as it is in the *Encomium Matrimonii*) as the negligence of both social and spiritual obligations. When Pamphilus tells Maria that they will procreate for the state and for Christ he shows himself to be a potentially responsible husband, and an adept at husbandly counselling when he brings Maria round to this way of thinking.

Just as Tottel's editor follows Erasmus in his inclusion of a translation of the *Planudean Anthology* poems, he also includes adaptations of them that debate the pros and cons of marriage specifically. These likewise appear in the section attributed to Grimald (no. 131, 'N. Vincent to G. Blackwood, agaynst Wedding' and no. 132, 'G. Blackwood to N. Vincent, with Weddyng').²⁹¹ They are not derived immediately from the *Planudean Anthology* but, according to Rollins, translated from Beze's Latin epigrams, 'Ponticus Cornelio de uxore non ducenda' and 'Cornelius Pontico de uxore ducenda'.²⁹² Here

²⁹⁰ Anne Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760, A Social History* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994), p.42.

²⁹¹ Although these poems appear in the section of the miscellany attributed to Grimald it may be that they were composed by the gentlemen mentioned in the titles of the poems. In which case Tottel's editor would be solely responsible for following Erasmus by including both vernacular adaptations and straight translations of the *Planudean Anthology* pair. To complicate matters further a case has been made that Grimald and Tottel's editor are the same person. See H. J. Byrom, 'The Case for Nicholas Grimald as Editor of *Tottell's Miscellany*', *MLR*, 27 (1932), 125-43. Paul A. Marquis (2000) seems sceptical of the possibility that Grimald played an editorial role in the production of the miscellany, p.148.

²⁹² Rollins ed. (1928-9), II. pp.226-7.

Grimald is popularising reforming values by aligning himself with the reformers' identification of their principles with Beze, Erasmus, and possibly Buchanan also.²⁹³ Nevertheless, these exchanges retain a distinctly antiquarian flavour since they originated in the *Planudean Anthology*, a collection of poems from the *Greek Anthology* compiled by the fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar Maximus Planudes.

Following Grimald a few others also used adaptations of the *Planudean Anthology* poems for debates for and against marriage. Another "ardent Reformer", Dr. Walter Haddon, sometime president of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and translator of the *Book of Common Prayer* into Latin (1560), made renderings of these poems in Latin for his *Pöemata* of 1567 ('Vxor Non Est Dvcenda' and its answer, 'Vxor Est Dvcenda').²⁹⁴ In the same year George Turbervile published a vernacular version of the pair in his *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets* ('To a Yong Gentleman of Taking a Wyfe' and 'The Aunswere for Taking a Wyfe').²⁹⁵ In the case of Grimald's rendering of the poems they assume the following positions for and against taking a wife:

A sort of brats she bringes, and troubles new:
Or frutelesse will so passe long yeres with thee,
That scant one day shall voyd of brawlyng bee.
(no. 131, 'N. Vincent to G. Blackwood, agaynst Wedding', ll.12-14)

[Answer]
Frute if she bring, of frute is ioyfull sight:

²⁹³ Additional supporting evidence for Erasmus's influence can be found in the ascription of the *Planudean Anthology* epigrams to Possidonium, or Crates, and Metrodorus in Tottel. In 'Optimum non nasci' Erasmus writes that the epigrams were written by "Poseidippus [Possidonium] or, as others hold, by Crates the Cynic philosopher [and] by Metrodorus", *Adages*, trans. Mynors, XXXIII (1991), pp.160-2 (p.161). See, however, n.287.

²⁹⁴ Hughey ed. (1960), II. p.31. From Haddon's *Pöemata* (William Seres, 1567), pp.70-2, *STC* 12596.

²⁹⁵ *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets with a Discourse of the Friendly Affections of Tymetes to Pyndara his Ladie. Newly Corrected with Additions, and Set Out by George Turbervile Gentleman. Anno Domini 1567* (printed by Henry Denham, 1567), pp.73-4, *STC* 24326. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

If none, what then? our burden is but light.
(no. 132, 'G. Blackwood to N. Vincent, With Weddyng', ll.9-10)

These poems appear ostensibly to have more to do with humanistic enthusiasm for deliberative rhetoric in which the alternatives are considered in *utramque partem* (on either side of the question) rather than with giving precedence to one over the other.²⁹⁶ They play out a dialectical argument between basic cynic and stoic philosophy in which the stoic's "religion of not only accepting the universe but adoring all its works and ways" in the answer is contrasted to the cynic's interpretation of every conceivable scenario of married life as being disagreeable.²⁹⁷ As in Erasmus's colloquy, however, the stoic's epistemological position is meant as a corrective, rather than as a counterbalance, to that of the cynic. The stoic-cynic debate provided a convenient and simple rhetorical format for conveying Protestant ideals and for asserting their superiority over Catholic or conservative ones. Todd even goes so far as to say that, "Christian humanists' dependence on the Roman Stoics was second only to their deference to the Bible".²⁹⁸ Notably, Erasmus applies the stoic perspective to marriage explicitly and sees it as contributive to marital harmony, and he was perhaps thinking of Metrodorus's stoic answer when he commented in the *Encomium Matrimonii* that, "if to live well (as the Stoics wittily do dispute) is to follow the course of nature, what thing is so agreeing with nature as matrimony?" (*Arte of Rhetoric*, p.86). Such acceptance of "the course of nature" not only promotes marital

²⁹⁶ Altman (1978) notes that among the disputative exercises set at the Tudor grammar schools "one of the most seminal [...] examples [of disputation in *utramque partem*] is the practical *thesis*, *An ducenda uxor* (should a man take a wife?)", p.49. The moral precedence awarded to marriage over bachelordom in these poems suggests a political/religious, rather than academic, purpose. Notably, it is an academic exercise that William Cecil, Lord Burghley manipulated for politically expedient ends when he presented to Elizabeth two equally weighted lists of the hazards and benefits that marriage to Henri De Valois, Duke of Anjou, might entail for her in October 1579, thereby prudently leaving the actual decision-making to his queen (Altman, pp.39-40).

²⁹⁷ George Boas and Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (NY: Octagon, 1965), p.261.

²⁹⁸ Todd (1987), p.29.

contentment, but also implies that natural, married sexual activity might be preferable to imposed celibacy.

Turbervile's versions of these poems introduce a hotchpotch of motifs that lead him to deviate from the Reformation message of other derivatives. His answer is more in keeping with the pagan stoicism of the original than with the Christian stoic context of other sixteenth-century versions, and it also gestures more strongly towards actual social practices such as that of wife selling. Moreover, his pair of poems test out different rhetorical positions on the subject of marriage without establishing a clear moral position.²⁹⁹ The answer for marriage takes a rather mercenary attitude towards the benefits available from married life and since both poems express preference for procreation within wedlock over celibacy, they really can not be read as playing theoretical Catholic and Protestant arguments against one another. Upon the subject of childbirth the cynical fatalism of the antecedent poem is commensurable with the stoic's expedient materialism in the answer:

A bearing Wyfe with brats will cloy thee sore,
 A greater carcke than childrens care is none,
 A barraine beast will greeue thee ten times more,
 No ioy remaines when hope of fruite is gone. (ll.9-12)

[Answer]

A bearing Wyfe doth make the husband glad,
 A greater ioye than Childrens may not bee:
 A barraine wench sometime must needes be had
 There doth not fruite spring out of euery tree. (ll.21-4)

Again the stoic persona in the answer refutes the cynic by perceiving the best in every marital scenario; however, the two poems agree in one significant aspect. Both poems declare their

²⁹⁹ The poem preceding the exchange is a humorous antifeminist satire relating the tribulations of an unfortunate scholar who chose a shrew for his wife, which casts further doubt upon whether the answering poem for marriage actually enjoys complete moral precedence, 'A Pretie Epigram of a Schollar, that Hauing Read Vergils *Aeneidos*, Married a Curst Wyfe', p.73.

exaltation of procreation over celibacy; insisting alternately that there is no worse condition than infertility, and then that there is no better state than fertility. The bleakness of the cynic's outlook escalates throughout the quatrain, culminating in the claim that "No ioy remaines when hope of fruite is gone". The stoic rejoins "A greater ioye than Childrens may not bee".

In both poems this involves a commodification of women whereby they are valued in proportion to their capacity to produce children. The answer even applies such venality to the estimation of women's financial worth:

Put case an aged Trot be somewhat tough?
If coyne shee bring the care will be the lesse,
If shee haue store of muck and goods ynough
Thou needste not force so much of handsomnesse. (ll.17-20)

The pursuit of marriage for wealth appears to have been fairly commonplace and transcended class boundaries, and it was a practice generally frowned on by commentators upon the subject.³⁰⁰ Todd points out that it was "a practice that Erasmus deplored", and Thomas Paynell, in the introduction to his translation of Vives's *De Officio Mariti*, similarly criticises those who "choose not their wiues for their honestie and vertue, [...] but for theyr possessions and ryches".³⁰¹ Financial circumstances did need to be considered when choosing a spouse, however, and marriages lacking financial security were disparaged. Couples would often delay marriage until they could afford and "young people made betrothals conditional on a change in economic circumstances, usually on obtaining a house or a farm".³⁰²

Marriage to the contemptuously named "aged Trot" is certainly not portrayed as

³⁰⁰ See, for instance, Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family: 1450-1700* (London and NY: Longman, 1984), pp.11-12; Wayne ed. (1992), p.11 and pp.55-6; Carlson (1994), pp.107-8 and Mendelson and Crawford (1998), p.133 and p.142.

³⁰¹ Todd (1987), p.186; *The Office and Duetie of an Husband, Made by the Excellent Philosopher Lodouicus Viues, and Translated into Englyshe by Thomas Paynell* (printed by John Cawood, [1553(?)]), sig. Aii^v, STC 24855. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

³⁰² Carlson (1994), p.116.

matrimony born out of a combination of mutual affection and pragmatic consideration here. The advocating of mercenary marriage in these lines departs from the spirit of Reformation marriage propaganda, while their mutual acceptance that procreation is a blessing remains in keeping with the Protestant message. The answer continues to commodify women in the lines, “For sure though some be shrewes as some there be,/ (As of the sheepe are some that beare no wull)” (ll.29-30). This echoes such a commodifying attitude as that which condoned the rare practice of wife selling whereby an unwanted spouse could be presented “in the public market-place in the guise of a beast for sale”.³⁰³ While this commodification of women reflects actual social attitudes,³⁰⁴ it also weaves in a classical marriage motif. His metaphor of woman as sheep is not found in any other reworkings of the *Greek Anthology* poems. Possibly it reflects his awareness of qualities admired in women in the classical world that would have been familiar to him from other verses collected by Planudes.³⁰⁵ The production of wool was a much praised activity of wives in the classical world, and is often mentioned in Greek and Roman funerary inscriptions; something that I discuss in more detail below. Turberville’s metaphor merely refashions this classical estimation of women’s

³⁰³ Mendelson and Crawford (1998), p.141. See also Carlson (1994), p.131 and Laurence (1994), p.54.

³⁰⁴ In his *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, for instance, Juan Luis Vives reminds wives that their bodies are the property of their husbands and that to commit adultery is “to gyve away that thyng, whiche is an other bodies, without the owners licence”, *The Instruction of a Christen Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (printed by Thomas Berthelet, ca. 1529), ed. Virginia Walcott Beauchamp, Elizabeth H. Hageman, and Margaret Mikesell *et al* (Chicago: Illinois UP, 2001), Bk. 2, III. xci. An electronic edition is available at: <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/epub/books/vives/toc.html>. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

³⁰⁵ See, for instance, *The Greek Anthology*, ed. W. R. Paton, 5 vols (Heinemann; NY: Putnam, 1916), I. no. 247, no. 250, nos 283-4 and nos 288-9. As John Erskine Hankins observes, many of Turberville’s epigrams are translated from the *Greek Anthology*, ‘The Life and Works of George Turberville’. *HSt*, 25 (1940), p.74. Turberville was a prolific writer of epitaphs and, even if he did not know of the motif through the *Greek Anthology*, his miscellany indicates that he was sufficiently familiar with classical poetry to have encountered it elsewhere (see Erskine Hankins, p.76).

material value by shifting the focus from what women produce to what they possess; thereby overcoming the anachronism of a middle-class lady passing her time in the production of wool. By doing so he diverges from the reforming spirit of the poems upon which he innovates in this attempt to display his classical learning.

Significantly, in the penultimate couplet, Turbervile realigns himself with the conventional doctrine preached about the purpose of matrimony. Procreation is figured as an altruistic act which is both beneficial to the commonwealth and a Christian obligation: “Yet must we praise the match whereby we see/ The earth maintaine with men, and stored full” (ll.31-2). This argument marks the point at which the answer and its antecedent truly depart from one another. Although women’s value continues to be determined by their capacity for childbearing and the material benefits they might bring, the introduction of the rhetoric of Christian duty into the debate exposes its absence in the previous poem. This lends an additional sense of condemnation to the answer-poet’s closing couplet: “But if you thinke so yll to take a Wyfe,/ Let others wed, leade you the single lyfe” (ll.33-4).

Debating the Duties of Husbands and Wives

Another of husbands’ duties, according to the Christian humanists and Protestant reformers alike, is to mould their wives into ideal partners: “The husband may the woman make or marre”, as Turbervile phrases this precept in his answer (l.16). Such echoes of Erasmus’s claim in the *Encomium Matrimonii* that “none have evil wives but such as are evil men” must be seen in context alongside the emphasis placed upon the agency allowed to women within marriage (*Art of Rhetoric*, p.95). Following Paul, women were exhorted to be obedient to their husbands, but such dogma was tempered with a dose of Peter’s emphasis upon husbands’ responsibilities and obligations towards their wives, and his allowance of a degree of authority to wives within the

domestic sphere.³⁰⁶ When pushed to their furthest limits these two precepts expose the double standard of equality within inequality that permeates much Renaissance writing upon marriage.

The double standard is evident in the writings of Vives who in one place praises women as instructors and counselors of their husbands and in another deprecates women's aptitude for teaching. In *De Officio Mariti*, as translated by Paynell, he describes the ideal wife "as a most faythful secretary of thy cares & thoughtes, & in doubtfull matters a wise & a harty counseler" (sig. Svi^v). In Richard Hyrde's translation of his *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* this argument is contradicted when it is claimed that,

a woman shulde nat teache, leste whan she hath taken a false opinion and beleve of any thyng, she spred hit into the herars, by the autorite of maistershyp, and lightly bringe other into the same errour, for the lerners commenly do after the teacher with good wyll. (Bk 1, IV. xix)

The discrepancy is perhaps explained by the gender of his imagined audiences. The two views are more reconcilable when seen in their context as two discrete pieces of advice pitched at two separate readerships, the former at husbands and the latter at wives; just as Peter addresses his two injunctions separately; firstly to husbands and secondly to wives. As such, their respective objectives might be to persuade men to allow their wives a degree of agency and sound judgement, and to persuade women to accept their husbands' authority and superior judgement.

The next two pairs of answer-poems that I discuss engage with such precepts regarding the respective duties and obligations of husband and wife and their different attitudes towards the balance of power and the division of labour within marriage might be explained similarly by the gender of the audiences that they envisage. In the first pair from

³⁰⁶ See n.283. Houlbrooke (1984) writes, "A number of writers, especially after the Reformation, reminded husbands that they should never insist upon the utmost extent of their authority. Especial care was needed in criticism or reproof, which was only to be given privately and when the wife was in a suitable frame of mind", p.97.

Tottel's Miscellany ('Against Women either Good or Badde', no. 257 and 'An Answere', no. 258) it is argued in the answer that women lack responsibility for their own conduct, and therefore that paternal authority must be exercised over them to the utmost extent. In contrast, John Harington's translations, "If dutie wyf leade the to deeme" and its answer, beginning "Husband, yf you will be my deare" from the Arundel Harington Manuscript, depict a process of bargaining between a husband and wife as they formulate a marital covenant which establishes their respective obligations and responsibilities within the relationship.³⁰⁷ It was perhaps the liberality and balance of these poems that motivated Harington to translate them for the attention of his wife, Isabell Markham.³⁰⁸ In contrast, the Tottel poems offer an exclusively male perspective, appear to envisage a male audience and debate the efficacy of husbands' supervision of their wives.

In their formal structuring these two pairs follow similar, but inverse, trajectories and the contrasting emphases they place upon classical and biblical authority are used in each case to determine the stringency with which women require paternal supervision. The antecedent of the Tottel pair opens with a classical authority for women's inherent wickedness, while the answer closes with a prayer to God, asking for the fortitude and strength necessary to manage wives' spiritual welfare and supervise their conduct. In contrast, the first of Harington's poems opens by paraphrasing Paul's paternalistic injunction while his answer closes with a classical precedent suggestive of a greater degree of mutual assistance and reciprocal governance inhering within the relationship. The contrasting emphases in these two pairs reflect the theoretical range of liberties and

³⁰⁷ Hughey ed. (1960), I. pp.95-6 and II. pp.30-1.

³⁰⁸ Harington had previously explored his relationship with Isabell in another verse dialogue; a question and answer sequence in which he depicts Isabell answering in kind his declarations of love and affection for her (see H 148).

restrictions imposed upon women in contemporary writings upon marriage, and how they might be justified by the same scriptural authorities and classical exemplars and, as in the above passages from Vives, they are suggestive of the varying degrees of independence that might be extended to married women depending on the intended readership.

In the opening poem in *Tottel's Miscellany* ('Against Women either Good or Badde') it is contended that: "A Man may liue thrise Nestors life,/ Thrise wander out Vlisses race:/ Yet neuer finde Vlisses wife" (ll.1-3). Then, using the example of Helen of Troy, the poet (possibly Thomas Norton) suggests the commonness of female wickedness: "Lesse age will serue than Paris had,/ Small peyn (if none be small inough)/ To finde good store of Helenes trade" (ll.5-7).³⁰⁹ Finally, he shifts his position somewhat by insisting upon the inconsequence of female morality and concludes that both a "good wife" and an "yll wife" "Bring mischiefe" (l.9, l.11 and l.13).

The rebuttal of this argument in 'An Answere' is achieved initially through a straightforward assertion of the contemporary existence of female goodness. It is argued that "The vertue of Vlisses wife/ Dothe liue" (ll.1-2), and then that blame for both Penelope's death and Troy's fall belongs not to these women but to Ulysses and Paris respectively for their failure to exert effective paternal control (ll.9-12). The answer-poet then echoes the turn in the first poem by arguing that these men must be culpable because their women lack agency and therefore are harmless irrespective of their moral condition:

Thus sithe ne good, ne bad do yll:

³⁰⁹ The poem has been attributed to Thomas Norton on the basis that his signature appears below the poem in Cotton Titus A. xxi, fol. 80^v, Rollins ed. (1928-9), II. p.309. Dormer (1923) ascribes the poem to William Gray (p.130), as Rollins points out, "arbitrarily" (II. p.309). As another active reformer it seems reasonable that Norton might have also penned the answer if he were responsible for the poem answered.

Them all, O Lord, maintain my will,
To serue with all my force and skylle. (ll.15-17)

The poet moves, from what initially appears to be an appreciation of female virtue, to the conclusion that it is causally irrelevant. He ends the poem by abandoning classical precedents and seeks a divine vindication for his viewpoint as he invokes God's help to "serue" women by "force". Management of women is figured as a service to them because they are incapable of attending to their own moral and social welfare. He shows thereby that his purpose, rather than being to defend women, is to criticise men's mismanagement of them such as he says is exemplified by the failures of Ulysses and Paris.

Harington's poems, "If dutie wyf leade the to deeme" and its answer, "Husband, yf you will be my deare", are English versions of Latin poems that appeared in Haddon's *Pöemata* (1567), 'Præcepta Conivgii Mariti Postvlata' and its answer, 'Præcepta Conivgii Vxoris Responsa'.³¹⁰ They exhibit a more liberal attitude towards the role of women in marriage and achieve this through their progression from Pauline dogmatism to the latitude that they associate with the classicism of Homer. The poems set out the archetypal pattern of an ideal marriage contract in which are negotiated the division of labour between, and various obligations of, a husband and wife. Their bargaining is replete with echoes of reforming discourses upon marriage, and they confront and attempt to reconcile the contrary theological precepts that governed women's roles within marriage. The first poem establishes the parameters within which negotiations can take place and introduces a Pauline pattern of order and degree into the relationship:

³¹⁰ Haddon (1567), sigs Gv^y-Gvii^r (Cat. H 144). Hughey (1960) speculates that Harington's verses were written earlier than 1567 (c.1564) and that he had access to Haddon's poems from either an earlier edition or manuscript version of the *Pöemata*, II. p.15. Another complicating factor is that folio 25, upon which Harington's antecedent poem almost certainly appeared in the *Arundel Harington Manuscript*, is missing. Hughey transcribes a version from David F. Markham, *A History of the Markham Family* (Nichols, 1854), pp.258-9.

If dutie wyf leade the to deeme
 That trade moost fytt I hold moost deere
 First god regarde next me esteme
 Thy chirdrene [*sic*] then respecte thow neere. (ll.1-4)

Although a rigid hierarchical structure is established through this biblical allusion, it is implied that, so long as the wife does not attempt to transgress her proper position within the relationship, there remains some scope for independence. After establishing a few of his wife's duties, the husband entreats her to see that, "thye mirth with meane well myxed be" (l.7). This domestic echo of Lord Julian's advice to courtly ladies in *The Book of the Courtier* suggests that, so long as the wife's behaviour does not exceed certain limits, a degree of freedom and authority is available to her.

In this instance, the restrictions placed upon the wife's liberty are essentially spatial ones, and the husband and wife's respective realms of influence are split between the public and private domains respectively. The husband defines her duty in terms of her remaining within the bounds, and managing the affairs, of the domestic sphere. She is told, "To seke straunge soyles be not to bold [...] / nor much spech spende / In open place" (l.19 and ll.23-4), and she must concern herself with overseeing the proper maintenance of the household: "Our howse both Sweete and clenlye see / Ordre our fare thy maides kepe short" (ll.5-6). Her role as the arbiter of domestic affairs and upholder of household order means that she must keep within the confines of the home and ensure that the maids do the same. It is within these limits that her jurisdiction is restricted, and it is upon the basis of this condition that her negotiations must be tendered.

By bargaining with her husband the wife submits to what Crawford and Mendelson identify as a patriarchal ideal of marriage during the period in which, "At least in theory, women acknowledged that the powers granted them by their husbands were privileges to be

negotiated, not rights to be defended”.³¹¹ She is tractable to her husband’s conventionally reasonable requirements and her provisos keep within the bounds of the mean she is expected to occupy, and while she rejoins with a set of rules by which her husband should also abide, she avoids contesting the superior degree of spatial freedom he enjoys. He also has responsibilities to fulfil in order to satisfy her expectations. She enjoins him to “See needfull thinges, be never sckarce/ Provide your men, vnyd’lye live/ Vse Curtes Speache, shew frendlie face” (ll.6-8). As the couple share responsibility for the running of the household they both deserve leisure time: “As you may at your pleasure play/ So, when I sporte, be not seveare” (ll.15-16).

Predictably, this egalitarianism collapses when it comes to the husband’s freedom of movement and the wife’s confinement to the home. She can only wish that he “longe frome home, stayd in no wise”, and exerts no control over his mobility such as he holds over hers (l.20). While a wife’s responsibilities and jurisdiction remained strictly within the domestic sphere, those of the husband stretched further afield and could require extended periods of absence.³¹² The wife, nevertheless, makes the best deal she can without transgressing the bounds of convention, and she figures their marriage as a contractual arrangement in which she expects her husband to abide by her conditions so long as she abides by his:

What so a wooer, you me behight
 Nowe husband good, performe as due
 Penelopes pathe, if I hold right
 Vlixes Steppes, see you tread trew. (ll.25-8)

The wife stretches the extent of her liberty to the greatest possible degree without violating her husband’s rules. His opening biblical precedent for husbands’ pre-eminence over their wives is met by the wife’s closing with a classical example of an ideal model of marital behaviour in

³¹¹ Mendelson and Crawford (1998), p.135.

³¹² See, for instance, Houlbrooke (1984), p.106 and Mendelson and Crawford (1998), p.204.

which both husband and wife share responsibility within their relationship. In doing this, she manufactures an approximate equality between them without contesting the Pauline precept that situates husbands as the heads of their households. Nor does she contest her duty to remain at home or challenge her husband's freedom of movement. The response is calculated purposely to arbitrate for as much latitude as possible without doing this, because the provisos that she describes them as exchanging with each other incorporate their respective spatial freedoms. The husband's conditions, or "Penelopes pathe", indicate the properness of the wife's confinement to the homestead through the association of this with Homer's exemplary wife, Penelope, who remained faithfully at home for the duration of her husband's twenty year absence. In the wife's conditions for her husband, or "Vlixes Steppes", her resignation to her husband's relative freedom of movement is implied in a title that, by association with Ulysses's peripateticism, condones her husband's itinerancy.

By including within her demands that which she does not want, but which she is powerless to change, the wife conveys a sense of the couple's paradoxically coterminous equality and inequality within the arrangement. This *modus vivendi* of the contradiction between women's roles as near equal helpmates and as social inferiors exemplifies that marital harmony, like successful courtship/courtiership, is enabled by "keep[ing] a certaine meane verie hard" between seemingly incompatible expectations of them. This philosophy of moderation enables the poems to contain those contradictions that threaten to undermine the rhetoric of marital harmony propagated by reforming marriage literature.

While these poems articulate an idealistic marital scenario, they are informed by the common perception that marriages tended towards discord and unhappiness if not properly managed. Concern regarding the aggressiveness of marital disputes leads the wife in Harington's answer to request that "Your stormes, for stubburne Servants stay/ and gent'lye warne me in myne eare" (ll.13-14). Similarly, according to 'An Homily of the

State of Matrimony’, the husband can nurture concord with his wife if he “will use measurableness and not tyranny, and if he yield some things to the woman”. Thus, he “ought to wink at some things and must gently expound all things and [should] forbear” (p.16). This advice is informed by a belief in the turbulence of married life if husbands fail to adopt such behaviour: “How few matrimonies there be without chidings, brawlings, tauntings, repentings, bitter cursings, and fightings” (p.15). Erasmus’s ‘Conjugium’ also works upon the assumption that couples have a tendency to commit acts of violence upon one another, and the dialogue offers banal guidance for avoiding such disputes. Eulalia counsels her friend Xanthippe, the spouse of Socrates, upon how to defuse the spirited brawls in which she and her husband engage, and thereby to bring their relationship towards understanding and accord. One strategy she advises, for instance, is for wives to indiscriminately show “submissiveness and courtesy” to their husbands.³¹³

Socrates’s marriage to Xanthippe provided reformers with a model for persevering with discordant marriages at a time when divorce was only granted in exceptional cases, and when annulment or separation of bed and board were often difficult to secure or impractical.³¹⁴ ‘An Homily of the State of Matrimony’, for instance, describes how the philosopher turned his wife’s raillery and drunkenness to his advantage by treating her behaviour as a means to put his tolerance to the test (pp.23-4).³¹⁵ When presenting himself in a similarly unhappy marriage, William Gray, the adversary of Thomas Smyth encountered in Chapter Two, extracts no such compensation for suffering under his wife’s tyranny. His ‘An Epitaphe Written by W. G. to be Set vpon his Owne Graue’ (Tottel, no. 255) describes how his irascible wife drove him to an untimely end.

³¹³ Thompson trans. (1997), XXXIX. pp.306-27 (p.312).

³¹⁴ Houlbrooke (1984), pp.114-16.

There is a manuscript version of the poem in two parts.³¹⁶ The first is a four-stanza denunciation of his wife. The second part is a sixteen-stanza denunciation of popery. If this was Tottel's editor's source then he prudently excised the second part, and he supplements an answer to the first four stanzas, which is more subtly aligned with reforming ideology and dismisses the conservative attitudes towards matrimony discernable in Gray's poem. Once again Cromwell's prodigy is attacked for religious heterodoxy. Unlike in the flyting with Thomas Smyth, however, Gray concedes that his invective potency is outclassed by that of his adversary (in this instance, his wife). It should be remembered here that it was Gray's conservative old patron, Cromwell, who had been responsible for revoking the sacramental status of marriage in 1536 and that the Edwardian reformers had attempted to compensate for the detrimental effect that they perceived this to have upon the image of married life. As an erstwhile follower of Cromwell, Gray provides a convenient target for attack by putting his name to this antifeminist piece about his irreconcilably acrimonious relationship with his wife, and thereby undermining the status of marriage.

Gray's poem certainly does nothing to promote marriage. He claims that his shrewish wife was the cause of his death, and that she – being typical of “wicked wiues” – possesses the flyting power “To kill with spitefull tong” (l.11 and l.12). His mock epitaph parodies recent innovations in funerary inscriptions that, following classical precedents, began to celebrate marital relationships in the mid-sixteenth century rather than merely recording the name of the deceased's spouse.³¹⁷ The novelty of funerary brasses eulogising marriages

³¹⁵ See also, *The Art of Rhetoric* (p.88).

³¹⁶ British Library Sloane MS. 1207, fols 9-10. The poem is given by Dormer (1923), pp.125-8.

³¹⁷ Houlbrooke (1984) writes,

After the mid-sixteenth century, classical and humanist influences made it possible to use funeral inscriptions to express grief and celebrate the personal qualities of the deceased, purposes to which late medieval funerary art had allowed relatively little

provided Gray with the opportunity for a cutting edge satire of them and, according to Dormer, a version of the poem has even been discovered on an actual gravestone in Sonning, Berkshire.³¹⁸ The appearance of inscriptions celebrating marriage in the mid-sixteenth century is probably another manifestation of the wide-ranging crusade to exalt marriage. By satirising this practice, whether motivated by personal experience of an unhappy marriage, or the appeal of parody as a literary exercise,³¹⁹ Gray exposes himself to the charge of religious conservatism. He may even have appended his anti-papal satire to avoid suspicion of being a reactionary or worse.

Tottel's editor, of course, was compelled by the Marian persecution of Protestants to

scope. Epitaphs now stressed the length of time which husband and wife had spent together, celebrated their mutual love and catalogued the conjugal virtues. (p.105)

One example, given by John Weever, celebrates the marriage between one "Nicholas Borne, and Elizabeth his wyf", whom the epitaph tells us "somtym wer knytt in bond of Maryage/ For term of lyff, too bodys in on", *Ancient Funeral Monvments within the Vnited Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Islands Adiacent, with the Dissolued Monasteries therein Contained: Their Founders, and what Eminent Persons Haue Beene in the Same Interrred* (printed by Thomas Harper, 1631), *STC* 25223, p.525 (Henceforth, *Ancient Funeral Monvments*). A classical example is found on a monument at the British Museum (c.78 BC) upon which the husband's praise of his wife appears on the right of a relief depicting the couple, on the left side of which can be found the wife's praise of her husband. See John Edwin Sandys, *Latin Epigraphy: An Introduction to the Study of Latin Inscriptions* (Cambridge: CUP, 1927), pp.71-2.

³¹⁸ Dormer (1923), pp.55-6.

³¹⁹ Dormer (1923) assumes Gray's portrait of his wife's character to be based upon fact (p.57). Rollins ed. (1928-9) is sceptical about the poem's autobiographical content however (II. p.308). There is a possibility that Gray's source of inspiration for this antifeminist mock-epitaph was wholly literary, and that he is following the example of Roman epitaphs and their sixteenth-century derivatives denouncing wayward wives (see, for instance, Sandys (1927), p.16). The epitaph is certainly not a pure parody of contemporary funerary inscriptions. English epitaphs sometimes take unusual turns in their representation of marital relationships, and are occasionally peculiarly light-hearted. One inscription, found in Weever's *Ancient Funeral Monvments*, is written in the form of a doggerel ballad and, rather whimsically, pays nearly as much attention to the deceased's wife's remarriage as to the deceased:

The fyve and twentyth day of this monyth of Septembyr,
And of owre Lord God the fifteenth hundryd and fowrty yeere,
Master Nicholas Gibson dyde as this tombe doth remembyr,
Whose wyff aftyr maryed the worschypful Esquier,

excise the anti-Catholic matter from the poem, but he nonetheless appropriates the remaining four stanzas for a nifty bit of resistance to the Counter-Reformation. By using Gray's poem as a foil to an answer that attributes Gray's misfortune to his mismanagement of the marriage, he is making available for the reader a light-hearted sermon on marital responsibility in what may well be a mild gesture of defiance against the erasure of such counsel from church services when Mary abandoned the 1552 Book of Common Prayer.

The opening lines of the response ('An Aunswere', no. 256) also betray consciousness of the themes of marriage eulogies in classical funerary inscriptions, which not only lauded wives' modesty (*pudici*) and cheerful acceptance of domiciled life (*domiseda*), but also often celebrated their productivity at making wool (*lanifica*).³²⁰ Just as the modest Renaissance gentlewoman was supposed to occupy her time with embroidery, her Roman counterpart produced wool. The incredulous lines, "If that thy wicked wife had spon the thred/ And were the weauer of thy wo", introduce this theme of female virtue and combine it ambiguously with an allusive comparison between Gray's wife and the Fate, or Weird Sister, Atropos, whose job it was to cut the threads that ended men's lives.³²¹ A further allusion to Penelope bridges the gap between these two antithetical models of behaviour, and is suggestive of the poet's ambivalence towards the moral condition of Gray's wife. Promising her suitors that she would be receptive to their courtship when her weaving was complete, Penelope worked at it during the day, and unpicked it again at night. In this intertextual reworking of the story the wife represents both the virtuous wife who weaves

Master William Kneuet, on of the kings privy chamber. (p.541)

³²⁰ Sandys (1927), pp.64-5. See also Richmond Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana: Illinois UP, 1942), p.297.

³²¹ Compare the following excerpt from a translation of a Spartan funerary inscription: "Since *Moir*a* so spun his thread that he must leave life", Lattimore (1942), p.317. See also, pp.159-60. *Fate.

and the dreaded Fate who kills, thereby planting in the reader's mind some incredulity towards Gray's depiction of his wife. The answer-poet does not commit himself to the portrait that Gray provides of his wife nor does he dismiss it outright, because the weight of his argument depends upon the irrelevance of the wife's moral status. He uses this ambiguity to shift the focus of attention towards Gray's responsibility to manage his wife effectively.

He moves on to consider the possibility of Gray's misconduct within the relationship. He was perhaps prone to excesses of anger: "If rage did causelesse cause thee to complaine", and ruled his wife unreasonably: "she [...] liues no lenger bounde to beare/ The rule of such a frowarde hed" (l.5 and ll.13-14). Thus far the answer-poet seems to take the middle line between praise and blame of the two parties, and finally attributes the failure of their relationship to its simply being a bad match: "A badder match can not betide" (l.20). By mentioning that Gray bears responsibility for his wife's behaviour, however, the answer attributes culpability for the marriage's failure to him. Irrespective of his wife's temperament it is his duty to bring their relationship into accord. In this way the answer reiterates the point that happy marriages are dependent upon husbands exercising temperance and reason and, through their competent management of their wives, a good husband ought to be capable of reforming a rebellious wife and directing her towards fulfilling her own marital obligations.

Chapter 4: Collaboration and Choreography in Amicable Verse Exchanges of the later Tudor Period

In the previous chapters we have seen how verse answering provided an important means of articulating rivalries, animosity and differences of opinion in the Tudor and early-Stuart period. In such exchanges convivial relationships usually only emerge when a poet intervenes to take the side of one of the combatants in a verse controversy. From the 1560s onwards, however, verse answering also emerges as a conspicuous means of expressing friendship in the amicable verse epistles found in the miscellanies of poets such as Barnabe Googe and Isabella Whitney and, around the turn of the century, friendship is again a predominant theme in the exchanged verse epistles of John Donne.³²²

Although one-upmanship continues to be the animus of these verse answers and efficacious riposte continues to be a gauge of personal accomplishment, the context for this is deferential communication based around shared assumptions and commonly held storehouses of general knowledge. These areas of consensus facilitate rhetorical manoeuvrability for correspondents as they situate themselves in relation to these mutually assumed truths by either adherence to, or departure from, them in order to negotiate their place in the relationships they cultivate. In the case of Googe and Donne, they sometimes depart from normative saws of wisdom in order to offer their correspondents the opportunity to assume superior rhetorical positions as deliberate strategies for securing answers from them. The dialectical position Isabella Whitney assumes in her short sequence of ‘Certain Familier Epistles and Friendly Letters by the Auctor with Replies’ is

³²² My analysis of such rhetorical conceits here is far from comprehensive. Equally worthy of consideration, for instance, would have been Thomas Howell’s verse conversations, the verses exchanged between William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, and Sir Benjamin Rudyerd and numerous other verses exchanged between friends (see Cat. A 56, A 65, C 81, F 126, H 159-60, H 163-5, H 168-9a-b, H 173a-b, H 177-8, K 191, L 194, L 198, M 204, R 236-9, S 266 and T

not unrelated. She places herself at the centre of a sequence of verse exchanges in which each contributor is shown to be progressively more perceptive than the last, and thereby she situates herself as a foil for the arguments of her respondents.

These poets also represent verse answering as a discursive act that creates a spiritual and intellectual nexus between like-minded friends; perhaps such as that Sidney imagines when describes his intimate literary circle as a “blessed Trinitie”.³²³ What such attitudes towards authorship evince is an affected spiritual and intellectual affinity between poets that is so closely knit that their respective thoughts, beliefs and ways of expressing themselves seem to strive towards becoming epistemologically attuned to one another.³²⁴

These poems are characterised by their quest for engagement with good society and the rejection of *contemptus mundi* epistemology, and the poets’ objective is to transcend the solitude of living in their own minds and to achieve a socially discursive identity for their verse that prevents it becoming an isolated literary artifact. Simultaneously, this manufactured communion is meant to create the impression of one self-sufficient soul inhering in two or more bodies that are joined and mediated by the congress of the poets’ respective muses in the case of Donne, and mediated by the shared frames of reference provided by classical intertexts in the case of Googe and Whitney.³²⁵ As well as being a

273-5).

³²³ ‘Upon his Meeting with his Two Worthy Friends and Fellow-Poets, Sir Edward Dier, and Maister Fulke Grevill’ (l.20), Ringler ed. (1962), pp.260-1.

³²⁴ As compared, for instance, to the warfare between the muses of literary rivals, such as when Fennor warns Taylor, “To halter vp your muse, my muse beginnes” (sig. Aiv^v).

³²⁵ An idea that Donne takes up explicitly in his epistle to Rowland Woodward, ‘To Mr. R. W.’ (“Zealously my muse”). According to Cecilia Infante, in his invitation to Woodward “to join his “Muse with myne,/ For myne is barren thus devorc’d from thyne,” the inference appears to be that a little lesbian frolicking will refresh the muses, who would then return to their poets with restored inspiration”, ‘Donne’s Incarnate Muse and his Claim to Poetic Control in “Sapho to Philaenis”’, in *Representing Women in Renaissance England*, ed. Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers (Columbia: Missouri UP, 1997). pp.93-106 (p.96). See also Elizabeth D.

literary conceit used to demonstrate the profundity of personal friendship, the affectation of multiple bodies sharing one soul serves an important utilitarian purpose for these poets.

Lynne Magnusson argues that one of the primary functions of the familiar epistle is the “repair and maintenance” of social relationships, of preserving and mending social bonds and erasing differences of opinion as a strategy of self-preservation in a competitive and factious society. She writes,

If the concept of repair work in epistolary interaction provides a crucial perspective on the rhetoricity of the letter, the related understanding of repair as conditioned jointly by the relative positioning of the correspondents and the risk level of the business at hand enables us to negotiate the complex dynamics of the letter’s flexible decorum.³²⁶

In the verse miscellanies of Googe and Whitney, the epistolary exchanges they include display publicly this process of repair and maintenance as they present themselves as part of cohesive social groups their membership of which presents a united front against social rivals and acts as a deterrent against potential detractors. In the case of Donne’s verse letters he occasionally departs from epistolary decorum in verse letters that seem to threaten to disrupt and undermine the harmony of his social ties with his correspondents. He does this with the intention of generating a reconciliatory outcome for the exchange by subsequently mending the rift he has created and thereby demonstrating performatively his aptitude for the diplomatic repair and maintenance of his social relationships. Thus it can be seen that the intersubjectivity displayed in these formations of verse dialogue is manufactured and choreographed by their central members Googe, Whitney and Donne, probably with the willing collusion of their correspondents. Moreover, all three writers invest in a moral philosophy which stipulates that such interaction with friends promotes psychological well-being.

Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London and NY: Routledge, 1992), pp.134-5.

³²⁶ Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan*

**The Choreography of Friendship in the Verse Exchanges of Barnabe
Googe's *Eclogues, Epitaphs and Sonnets***

Amicable verse exchanges with friends are conspicuous in the sonnets section of Googe's miscellany, *Eclogues, Epitaphs and Sonnets*, and fourteen of the thirty seven verses present are either answer-poems or verses that are answered. The practice of including the verses of friends and supporters was fairly common in the late-Tudor miscellany, although it is more usual for these to be dedications praising the author and acting as advocates for his work.³²⁷ They serve as advertising for the book, make claims for its legitimacy, and are intended to show the author in the context of his larger social circle, thereby displaying a united front against possible detractors.

As well as including the answers of his friends, Alexander Neville and Laurence Blundeston, the collection also features such dedicatory material by them. The opening dedication by Googe's cousin, Neville, for instance, is presented as a fortification built to repel Googe's enemies and prevent them from entering the book.³²⁸ Such strategies stand in sharp contrast to satirists' assertions of independence, their tendency to affect

Letters (Cambridge and NY: CUP, 1999), p.92.

³²⁷ For examples of such dedicatory verse conversations see Cat. A 56, A 65, L 198 and T 273-5.

³²⁸ Neville begins,

The mountains high the blust'ring winds,
the floods the rocks withstand,
The cities strong the cannon's shot
and threat'ning chieftain's hand. (ll.1-4)

A few lines later he adapts the conceit of fortification so that it is now Googe's muse laying siege to his enemies, and "With fervent broiling furious rage/ [beating their] long defencèd walls by force" (ll.9-11). He then advises Googe to instead ignore such "vile/ Defaming minds" and to "submit thyself to persons grave" who will make a more reliable estimation of his verse and prove worthy patrons and well-wishers (ll.16-17 and l.19), *Eclogues, Epitaphs and Sonnets*, ed. Judith M. Kennedy (London, Toronto and Buffalo, WI: Toronto UP, 1989), pp.35-8.

imperviousness to backbiters and alacrity for open combat. Googe's friends play an integral role, and participate actively, in the production of the miscellany and their collaboration in a collection appearing under Googe's name suggests that he viewed their contributions as contiguous with his own (as Blundeston recollects in 'The Preface of L. Blundeston', Googe even left him in charge of seeing the miscellany through the press).³²⁹ The effect aimed for is precisely that of displaying the cohesiveness of this fraternity. Googe seems to be responsible for choreographing the responses he receives, and the sentiments they express suggest their participation in a poetic game contrived by him.

Googe orchestrates his friends' answers in order that the miscellany will come out in favour of proverbial *topoi* upon the subjects of friendship, reason and love, and he deploys his poems as either sententious 'truths' to be endorsed or contentious 'falsehoods' in need of rebuttal. He lades his verse heavily with allusions to, and translations from, prominent classical authorities in order to direct his respondents towards conclusions that are compatible with the outlook he wants his miscellany to register. The texts that he chooses provide familiar points of reference for his interlocutors since they are both standard components of the Universities' curricula and favoured recreational texts, and possibly also known to them from their time together at the Inns. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (VIII and IX) furnishes him frequently with material for discussing friendship and Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* is often his authority for discussing love.³³⁰ By using concepts and ideas that were common currency among his peers as points of orientation for his poems, Googe is able to choreograph responses to them and thereby maintain artistic control over, and regulate the tone of, the miscellany.

³²⁹ Googe asked him to "put in print these works of worthy skill" (l.55).

³³⁰ See, for instance, Charles B. Schmitt, 'Towards a Reassessment of Renaissance

amicable accord between the poets. The contrived intimacy of their relationship inheres in a store of shared knowledge and wisdom, and the effect is that the poets' creativeness and outlooks appear to become interrelated.

The theme of subduing excesses of passion recurs with similar effect in 'To Alexander Neville of the Blessed State of Him that Feels not the Force of Cupid's Flames' and 'Alexander Neville's Answer to the Same'. As in his previous answer Neville uses an alternate rhetorical approach in order to corroborate and consolidate Googe's argument. Whereas Googe outlines the deified causes of affection, Neville's complementary didactic verse focuses upon the symptoms of affection, and whereas Googe suggests the application of reason as an antidote to this malady (l.11), Neville suggests the remedy is to be learned from experience; or "taught by tract of time" (l.23):

To Alexander Neville of the Blessed State of
Him that Feels not the Force of Cupid's Flames

As oft as I remember with myself
The fancies fond that flame by foolish love,
And mark the Furies fell, the blinded elf
And Venus, she that reigns so sore above,
As oft as I do see the woeful state
Of lovers all, and eke their misery,
The one's desiring mind, the other's hate,
Troth with the one, with the other treachery,
So oft say I, that blessèd is the wight,
Yea, Neville, blessed, and double blessed again,
That can by reason rule his mind aright,
And take such foolish fading toys for vain.

Alexander Neville's Answer to the Same

The plungèd mind in floods of griefs,
the senses drownèd quite,
The heart oppressed, the flesh consumed,
the changèd state outright,
The body dried by broiling blaze
of privy scorching flame,
The doleful face, the countenance sad,
the drooping courage tame,
The scalding sighs, the grievous groans,
the burning rage of fire,
The earnest suit, the fruitless toil,
the deep and hot desire, [...]
Which wounded hearts enflamed with love
with grief do overflow,
And works their endless plague and spite
till death from thence do grow:
All these conclude him blessed (my Googe)
and treble blessed again,
That taught by tract of time can take
such fading toys for vain.

In this instance, the answer subordinates the antecedent by vying to be the most courteous and weighty of the two statements as Neville amplifies the implicit compliment he has received from

Doubtlessly he is aware that bluntly contentious statements are likely to provoke corrective palinodes, while ones concurring with his intertexts might be responded to tautologically. It is a straightforward principle and theoretically its orchestration is unproblematic. This regulating principle, however, necessitates some degree of deferral to his friends on Googe's part. Not only must he allow them to correct him when he affects an unethical outlook, he also risks being surpassed stylistically and rhetorically by tautologous answers to his verse. As such, his poetic game is one that requires and expresses trust, and that depends upon faithfulness and solidarity within the group in order to work. Arguably, it also operates within the Aristotelian principle that the good man shows his nobility by sacrificing self-interest in favour of his friends.³³¹ The effect is, of course, highly artificial and contrived, and Googe, or Blundeston in his editorial role, would have no real reason to expect, or for that matter include, unpalatable or unfitting responses. In fact, Googe's display of deferral to his familiar correspondents perhaps suggests his awareness that he can promote his good name by following the Aristotelian model of deferential friendship. Here then, the ethos of dialogic friendship functions to maintain, consolidate or improve reputation through self-effacement just as, inversely, in the culture of reflexive slander, self-promoting attack is used to defend reputation. It is significant, moreover, that when Googe exposes himself to hostile responses through publication, he presents a broad front by putting his allies on display as well.

One tautologous exchange begins with Googe's 'To Alexander Neville' in which he assumes the role of a counselor, advising his cousin how Petrarchan excess might be

Aristotelianism', *HSc*, 11 (1973), pp.159-93 (p.163).

³³¹ Or, alternately, it might demonstrate that for the good man there is no distinction between his self-interest and the interests of his friends. On this point see Sandra Lynch, 'Aristotle and Derrida on Friendship', *Co*, 3 (2002), 98-108 (pp.98-100), <www.usyd.edu.au/contretemps/

avoided. Predictably, Neville responds with a poem endorsing his argument. In his answer he concurs with Googe's sentiments but adopts a different rhetorical approach. He echoes Googe's premise that "If thou canst banish idleness/ Cupido's bow is broke" (ll.1-2) with the like-minded rejoinder, "The lack of labour maims the mind" (l.1). Both poems draw from the commonplace that inactivity leaves men vulnerable to "vile excess[es]" of emotion and irrational behaviour (l.6 in both poems), and they complement one another by reaching similar conclusions through applying different rhetorical approaches to their shared topic. Googe supports his argument by selecting the classical exemplum of Aegisthus; a non-combatant in the Trojan War who, during his unemployment, fell in love with Agamemnon's wife with disastrous consequences. Neville rejoins with generalised proverbial wisdom for the same case, which is manifested through the character of Fancy and set out in a graduated, sententious argument. By adding a generalised argument to Googe's particular example, Neville lends rhetorical diversity thereby fortifying Googe's argument in a declaration of filial solidarity:

To Alexander Neville

If thou canst banish idleness
 Cupido's bow is broke,
 And well thou mayest despise his brands
 clean void of flame and smoke.
 What moved the king Aegisthus once
 to love with vile excess?
 The cause at hand doth straight appear:
 he lived in idleness.

The Answer of A. Neville to the Same

The lack of labour maims the mind,
 And wit and reason quite exiles,
 And reason fled, flames fancy blind,
 And fancy she forthwith beguiles
 The senseless wight, that swiftly sails
 Through deepest floods of vile excess.
 Thus vice abounds, thus virtue quails,
 By means of drowsy idleness.

Googe's opening couplet is translated from Ovid's guide to bridling passion in the *Remedia Amoris* (l.140).³³² Thus, he assumes an authoritative position upon the subject of alleviating lovesickness. Neville concurs obligingly with Googe and by doing so creates the effect of an

3July2002/ lynch.pdf>.

³³² See Kennedy ed. (1989), p.172 (n.29).

Googe and returns it to him. In the antecedent Neville seems to be “blessed, and double blessed again” (l.11) and it is similarly implicit in the answer that Googe is “blessed (my Googe)/ and treble blessed again” (ll.21-2). The import of the subject matter is also heightened stylistically as Neville replaces Googe’s pentameter with a more majestic heptameter. Combined with his anaphoric cataloguing of symptoms, this helps to build up his answer to a didactic climax by the time he pays his compliment to Googe. Thus, he surpasses his friend in terms of, albeit unsophisticated, rhetorical ostentation while simultaneously clamouring to concur with him and compliment him as fervently as possible.

A strikingly similar blend of accord and subordination exists between Googe’s ‘To L. Blundeston’ and ‘The Answer of L. Blundeston to the Same’. The theme is again that of self-control through the mastery of reason and, as in the previous exchange between Googe and Neville, the poets reciprocate compliments upon one another’s ability to behave decorously:

To L. Blundeston

Some men be counted wise that well can talk,
 And some because they can each man beguile,
 Some for because they know well cheese from
 chalk,
 And can be sure, weep whoso list, to smile.
 But, Blund’ston, him I call the wisest wight,
 Whom God gives grace to rule affections right.

The Answer of L. Blundeston to the Same

Affections seeks high honour’s frail estate,
 Affections doth the golden mean reprove,
 Affections turns the friendly heart to hate,
 Affections breed without discretion love;
 Both wise and happy, Googe, he may be hight,
 Whom God gives grace to rule affections right.

While Blundeston’s tautologous reply creates the effect that they share one voice, he expresses himself more fervently than Googe and thereby engages in amicable one-upmanship. In his first four lines Blundeston’s anaphoric deployment of the word “affections” amplifies the repetition used by Googe (Some/ And/ Some/ And), as his string of adages build up to the reciprocation of flattery. In this way the additional stress placed upon the vices of affection proportionally increases the intensity of his compliment to Googe (“Whom God gives grace to rule affections right”). This effect is enhanced by Blundeston’s congratulating Googe upon his possession of

the two fortunate states of mind, wisdom and happiness, in contrast to Googe's only commending Blundeston for his wisdom (l.5 in both poems).

The parallels between the answers by Blundeston and Neville illustrate how is Googe placed at the centre of a poetic trinity. No verses are exchanged between Blundeston and Neville in the miscellany and, consequently, Googe is situated as the group's creative nexus, thereby creating the impression that he facilitates artistic and intellectual cross-fertilisation between them. Since Googe's correspondents are both represented as independently employing the same rhetorical scheme (anaphora) for the purpose of amplified compliment, they appear creatively and ideationally attuned to one another through the medium of Googe and this reflects the harmony and concord within the group.

Googe probably also envisaged affable corrective answers to his verse. In the following epigram he expresses a complete inability to subdue his emotions, and the lack of self-control he expresses furnished George Turbervile with ideal material from which to fashion a sententious response exhorting the restraint of passion through the exercise of reason:

Maister Googe his Sonet of the Paines of Loue
Two lynes shall tell the grieffe
that I by Loue sustaine:
I burne, I flame, I faint, I freeze,
of hell I feele the paine.

Turberuiles Aunswere and Distich to the Same
Two lynes shall teach you how
to purchase ease anewe:
Let Reason rule where Loue did raigne,
and yvle thoughts eschewe.³³³

Googe's use of antiphrasis here is possibly a manifestation of the Ramism he would have been exposed to at "Ramist infected Cambridge" and later through his acquaintances at Gray's Inn. Although he does not particularly endorse Peter Ramus's motto "Bene disserere est finis logices" (translated by Marlowe as "to dispute well [is] logic's chiefest end"), he does exhibit a

³³³ *Epitaphes. Epigrams. Songs and Sonets*. p.7.

Ramist preoccupation with manipulating his audience's/correspondents' responses.³³⁴ By placing himself in the hopeless situation of the Petrarchan lover resigned to the extremities of his emotions he paves the way for a corrective response that offers a means to "purchase ease anewe" (l.2). In return for his facilitating an epigram that affects to usurp his own wisdom, Googe receives a sympathetic corrective that arguably compensates him for this sacrifice.

Corrective answers to Googe's verse are solely the work of Turbervile whose poems are not integrated within the miscellany. Nor are Googe's antecedents addressed directly to Turbervile, unlike his other answered verses, which are consistently addressed to the person who responds to them. This opens up an area of interesting speculation as to how the miscellany was compiled. It may be the case that Turbervile returned his responses too late for Blundeston to include them, that Blundeston excised them, or even that Turbervile withheld them for inclusion in his own miscellany in which they were later published. It may, of course, be that Googe did not envisage responses to his contentious poems and that Turbervile composed his answers independently, but this raises the question of why Googe would bother to include such antiphrastic verses if he did not intend their correction. His poems that assume conventional attitudes receive endorsing answers and, as such, without the inclusion of rebuttals to his antiphrastic verse, the dialogism of his collected sonnets appears somewhat incomplete and lacking in balance.

Although Turbervile's answers were not published in *Eclogues, Epitaphs, and Sonnets*, he remains fairly faithful to the rules of Googe's coterie game of verse answering in his own miscellany. He does this by providing corrective answers to Googe's

³³⁴ See, for instance, Kinney (1986), p.296. Googe was actually resident at Staple Inn; however, his closest known associates in the early 1560s all appear to have been members of Gray's (see Kennedy ed. (1989), pp.9-10). *Faustus* (I.i.8), in *Christopher Marlowe: Complete Plays and Poems*, ed. E. D. Pendry and J. C. Maxwell (London and Melbourne: Dent, 1988).

antiphrastic verses and by supplying tautologous answers to a few of his other verses. There are also signs of his following part of Googe's recipe for compilation by deploying his own contentious poems as foils for his own answers,³³⁵ and by exploring alternative variations upon Googe's Aristotelian themes. One example is his 'An Aunswere to his Ladie, that willed him that Absense should not Breede Forgetfulnesse' which adapts the adage of "Out of Sight Out of Mind" used by Googe in his poem of the same name.³³⁶ Turbervile's miscellany might be regarded as being contiguous with Googe's, and the closeness of their relationship is further reflected by the poets' shared interest in the works of Aristotle and Ovid and by the similarity between the titles of their miscellanies (Turbervile's miscellany is entitled *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets*).³³⁷ While there are also significant differences between the miscellanies, such as Turbervile's inclusion of a sequence of quasi-pastoral amorous dialogues between Tymetes and Pyndara interspersed throughout his miscellany, for which there exists no equivalent in Googe's collection, there remain enough correspondences between them for their relationship to be striking.

Googe's 'Of Money' – this time a verse upon the subject of friendship – is another provocative verse to which Turbervile responds in his 'To Maister Googes Fansie that

³³⁵ For instance, 'The Epicures Counsell, Eate, Drinke, and Plaie' and 'The Aunswere to the Vile and Canckred Councell of the Outragious Epicure', *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonnets*, pp.68-9.

³³⁶ 'Oculi augent dolorem. Out of Sight, Out of Mind', Kennedy ed. (1989), p.97 and *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets*, pp.107-9.

In the *Ethics* it is stated that,

Distance does not break off [...] friendship absolutely, but only the activity of it. But if the absence is lasting, it seems actually to make men forget their friendship; hence the saying 'Out of sight, out of mind'.

Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross, rev. J. L. Ackrill and J. O. Urmson (Oxford and NY: OUP, 1998), VIII. 5. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

³³⁷ Erskine Hankins (1940), pp.73-4.

Begins “Giue monie mee take friendship who so list” (p.115). In this instance Googe affects a deliberately misanthropic standpoint by engaging in an argument that is the antithesis of that with which Aristotle opens his first book on friendship:

For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods; even rich men and those in possession of office and of dominating power are thought to need friends most of all; for what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence, which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends. (*Ethics*, VIII. 1)

Whereas Aristotle claims that cultivating friendship is more pragmatic than amassing wealth, Googe takes the misanthropic and unethical line (in the Aristotelian sense) that wealth can be relied upon more than friends: “For friends are gone come once adversity,/ When money yet remaineth safe in chest” (ll.2-3). The insincerity of his statement is all the more obvious since it is contextualised by its inclusion in a miscellany compiled, in part, from verses exchanged between implicitly faithful and trustworthy friends whose relationship is defined by Aristotelian principles.³³⁸

Turbervile’s answer draws attention to the discrepancy between Googe’s portrayal of perfidious friendship and the probity of his actual friends. He adopts Aristotle’s model of beneficent friendship founded upon equality, whereas Googe, as provocateur, suggests that friendship is motivated by expediency (Aristotle’s inferior model of friendship). Thus Turbervile responds:

Friend Googe, giue me ye faithfull friend to trust,
And take the fickle Coine for mee that lust.
For friends in time of trouble and distresse
With help and sound aduise will soone redresse
Eche growing griefe that gripes the pensiue brest,
When Monie lies lockt vp in couert Chest.
Thy Coine will cause a thousand cares to grow,

³³⁸ Alternately Googe’s position might be indebted to a paradox which according to Sandra Lynch (2002) is attributed to Aristotle by both Laertes Diogenes and Michel de Montaigne, “O my friends, there is no friend” (p.98). For other possible sources of this theme see Kennedy ed. (1989), p.177.

Which if thou hadst no Coine ye couldst not know. (ll.1-8)

Turbervile's line for line rebuttal is predictable, within the terms of Googe's game, for its apparent reliance upon Aristotle.³³⁹ His use of the salutation "friend", however, adds a further dimension to the force of his argument. Although the greeting is commonplace in Turbervile's answers, and in familiar epistles generally, here the nomenclature emphasises the empirical disapproval of Googe's argument. Presumably Turbervile is presenting himself as a model friend and in doing so challenges Googe implicitly with the discrepancy between the sort of friendship in which he affects to believe and that which he might perceive from his experience of his relationship with Turbervile.

The Redemptive Pattern of Isabella Whitney's Familiar and Friendly Verse Epistles

Like Turbervile's miscellany, Isabella Whitney's 'Certain Familier Epistles and Friendly Letters by the Auctor with Replies' exhibits contiguous intertextuality with earlier collections of epistolary verse exchanges. The 'Friendly Letters' span sigs Cvi^r-Eii^v of her verse miscellany *A Sweet Nosgay* (1573) within which there is a sequence of verses exchanged between Whitney and acquaintances real and imaginary (sigs Diii^r-Eii^v).³⁴⁰ Both Ovid's *Heroides* and her own *Copy of a Letter* serve as intertextual reference points, and the short collection incorporates a wide spectrum of intertextual narrative layers.³⁴¹ Ovid's abandoned heroine, Dido, is addressed in the first epistle by Whitney and, in turn, Whitney is answered by her friends T. B. (Thomas

³³⁹ Aristotle writes that the good man, "will throw away wealth [...] on condition that their friends will gain more; for while a man's friend gains wealth he himself achieves nobility" (IX. 8).

³⁴⁰ *A Sweet Nosgay; Or Pleasant Posye Contayning a Hundred and Ten Philosophicall Flowers* (printed by R[ichard] Jones, 1573). STC 25440.

³⁴¹ *The Copy of a Letter, Lately Written in Meeter, by a Yonge Gentilwoman to her Vnconstant Louer. With an Admonition to Al Yonge Gentilwomen, and to All Other Mayds in General to*

Berrie), one C. B. and finally her cousin George Whitney. These exchanged verses comprise of a series of answer-poems in which successive speakers claim to endure more hardship than the person they answer. As the sequence progresses, however, the dialectical position shifts towards recognition of the Aristotelian values of egalitarian friendship and moderation, which contribute towards tempering the correspondents' outlook. This pagan stoic perspective is then refined by C. B. who supplants it with Christian stoicism. Just as Aristotle's discourse on friendship serves Googe's friends as a source of reference and orientation for their dialogue with Googe, the hundred and ten philosophical epigrams found in Whitney's miscellany provide maxims on the themes of friendship and patience in adversity that furnish her correspondents with subject matter for their replies.

At the outset of the miscellany Whitney explains that she has been cast off from service by an outraged mistress due to some unspecified malicious gossip or scandal surrounding her, maybe relating to a failed love affair or broken engagement.³⁴² Her friends and supporters are gathered around her in the letters section not only to offer advice but to display a united front against her detractors (C. B., in his response to her, promises that "Thy friends *that* haue thee knowne of long,/ Will not regard thy enemies tong", 'In Answer by C. B. to Is. W.', sig. Dvii'). Strangely, however, this section of the 'Friendly Letters' begins with an address to an imaginary friend and ends with Whitney's retreat into solitude in which she turns away from dialogue and towards the individualism of satire. One suspects from the arrangement of the poems that they are as much about the function of epistolary friendship as they are instances of friends rallying to Whitney's defence.

In the opening epistle Whitney responds to Dido's epistolary protest against Æneas's

Beware of Mennes Flattery (printed by Richarde Jhones, 1567), *STC* 25439.

³⁴² 'The Auctor to the Reader', sig. Av^v.

abandonment of her from *Heroides* VII. Dido's complaint is aligned with Whitney's earlier work, *The Copy of a Letter*, in which she also complains of a faithless man who has jilted her and warns other women not to fall for the same arts of seduction.³⁴³ The equivalence that Whitney finds between Dido and herself allows her to turn her attention away from her own plight and towards Dido's predicament by way of a conciliatory response to the classical heroine.

The complaint answer-poem can be traced back to the male-voiced answers in the *Heroides* and to Angelus Sabinus's responses to Ovid's verse epistles. Heroidean complaint poems, with or without answers, became increasingly fashionable among poets, often associated with the Inns, following Turbervile's translation of Ovid's verse letters along with Sabinus's three responses in 1567.³⁴⁴ Although the complaint genre (female or otherwise) has received much critical attention (as has Whitney's rendering of a female complaint in her *Copy of A Letter*), the dialogism of this type of writing and Whitney's engagement with it have been largely overlooked.³⁴⁵

In her address to Dido, 'A Carefull Complaynt by the Vnfortunate Auctor', Whitney consoles the classical heroine by assuring her that the plight she endures in sixteenth-century London is more intense than that caused by Æneas's abandonment of her in

³⁴³ See 'I. W. To her Vnconstant Louer' and 'The Admonition by the Auctor, to all Yong Gentilwomen and to al Other Maids Being in Loue' in which she warns her readers to "Be ware of fayre and painted talke" such as that taught to lover's by "Ovid within his Arte of loue", sigs Aii^r-Aviii^v (Avi^r).

³⁴⁴ See n.9. Such complaints include Cat. Anon 23, T 281 and T 286. For more such complaints see *Motives of Woe: Shakespeare and 'Female Complaint': A Critical Anthology*, ed. John Kerrigan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

³⁴⁵ See, for instance, Wendy Wall, 'Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy', *ELH*, 58:1 (1991), 35-62 and Paul A. Marquis, 'Oppositional Ideologies of Gender in Isabella Whitney's *Copy of a Letter*', *MLR*, 90 (1995), 314-24. Louise Schleiner, however, is particularly alert to the socially dialogic context of Whitney's writing in her *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers: With Verse Translations from Latin by Connie McQuillen, from Greek by Lynn E. Roller*

Carthage:

Good Dido stint thy teares,
 and sorrowes all resigne
 To mee that borne was to augment,
 misfortunes lucklesse line. [...]
 For though thy Troyan mate, [...]
 from Carthage tooke his flight,
 And fowly brake his oth,
 and promise made before :
 Whose falshode finisht thy delight,
 before thy baires were bore.
 Yet greater cause of grieffe
 compells mee to complayne. (ll.1-4, 1.9 and ll.12-18)

Through the use of analepsis Whitney reverses the usual pattern whereby classical exempla are used to illuminate contemporary phenomena as she transports herself back into Carthage to offer advice to Dido. She presents a teleologically determined condition of humanity in which the afflictions that must be endured intensify throughout history. Thus, by presenting herself as occupying the opposite chronological end of “misfortunes lucklesse line” in relation to Dido, she offers her situation as an exemplum that might enable Dido to place her own situation in perspective.

The answer to this poem might be regarded as an extension of Ovid’s friend’s male-voiced answers to the *Heroides*. Just as Sabinus answers the complaints of Ovid’s heroines, Whitney is admonished by Thomas Berrie who performs that favour for her that she has previously done for Dido by writing ‘In Answer to Comfort Her, by the Wayng his Haps to be Harder’.³⁴⁶ The miscellany opens with a dedication by Berrie who situates the collection

(Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), see pp.1-14.

³⁴⁶ Ovid’s friend answers the complaints of Phyllis, Penelope and Oenone. Whitney’s choice of answering Dido’s complaint in *Heroides* VII might well reflect a wider interest in this particular epistle. Raphael Lyne suggests that she may be the author of a translation of Dido’s complaint and an original version of a response in the persona of Æneas which appear in F. L.’s translation of the *Remedia Amoris* (1600), sigs Eiv-Hiii, *STC* 18939 in ‘The Aeneas and Isabella Project’, CERES (1999), <<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk.ceres/Alhome.htm>>.

in relation to the *Heroides*,³⁴⁷ and in this answer he keeps the focus of attention upon *Heroides* VII and Carthage, grouping Whitney and Dido together as fellow sufferers who should temper their complaints in order to take account of their predicaments more realistically:

But once ere many dayes, my care that lurks,
 shall blowne be, and thou the same shall know.
 Till then, with silly Dido be content,
 and rit no more, thy wronges in such excesse:
 Thy Fortvne rather, wills thee to lament,
 with speedy wit, til hope may haue redresse. (ll.23-8)

The exhortation to “lament,/ with speedy wit” acknowledges the actuality of Whitney’s plight but also encourages her to examine her situation in more depth. A quick wit will enable her to temper her perception that she exists at the extremities of adversity by allowing her to make rational judgements about the relativity and finiteness of her situation. This will also prevent her from indulging in excessive lamentation by equipping her with a more moderate outlook.

The next poem, Whitney’s response to Berrie (‘A Replie to the Same’), also engages in an analysis of misfortune. She echoes Berrie’s admonishment of herself by lamenting his unfortunate situation while suggesting simultaneously that it appears more enduring than it is actually, owing the limitations of his comprehension. She advises Berrie that when his perspective is widened through experience then an end to his troubles will be in sight. In an apostrophe to Fortune she declares by way of example for Berrie’s benefit, “then may you rightly be *compard* with those/ whose painted spech, professeth frindship stil/ but time bewrayes the meaning to be yll”. She continues, “For time *yt* shewes, what erst I could not see” (ll.19-22). Berrie has already made a similar point about the finiteness of both Whitney’s present perspective and, more importantly, his own. In terms of practical advice this information is superfluous as well as banal. Whitney’s purpose in ventriloquising

³⁴⁷ ‘T. B. in Commendation of the Authour’, sigs Aviii^v-Bi^v.

Berrie is perhaps to demonstrate that he has influenced her outlook and, by extension, her creativity as well. By modifying her position and aligning herself with the mean her friend advocates, Whitney strives towards achieving the impression that she belongs to a coalition of good sense formed between like-minded, virtuous individuals.

This marks a turning point in her perspective and in the ontological and chronological structuring of the sequence. From the initial poem, 'A Carefull Complaynt by the Vnfortunate Auctor', onwards we see that successive complainants suffer more than their avatars because suffering is amplified throughout the course of time. Hereby, Whitney claims that her grief outranks Dido's because she is at the end of "misfortunes lucklesse line". Likewise, in his response 'In Answer to Comfort Her, by the Wayng his Haps to be Harder', Berrie situates himself in a similar position in relation to Whitney by placing her alongside Dido in Carthage, thereby transporting her back in time so that his hurt surpasses hers within the terms of the chronological rules of suffering that have been established. In Berrie's poem, however, the normal passage of time leads to revelation and understanding, and offers the possibility of relief.

In her second complaint in the sequence ('Is. W. to C. B. in Bewaylynge her Mishappes') Whitney continues to lament her situation, but having learnt the value of receptivity to other perspectives, and of intellectual inquiry facilitated by multiple subjectivities, she now acknowledges the insufficiency of her solitary outlook to comprehend her dilemma fully and thereby come to terms with it. By now she has been exposed to three different versions of personal suffering, Dido's, her own and Berrie's, and she beseeches C. B. for yet further insight. Her exposure to this diversity of opinion leads her to acknowledge, "For that two wittes may compasse more/ then one, you must confesse" and she is now willing to embark upon a broader range of inquiry into her own dilemma (ll.27-8). The tone has progressed from one of incremented complaint, to one

tempered by awareness that there might be alternate ways of interpreting her problems that would ameliorate her anguish. This relative improvement in the rationality of her outlook is reflected by her reversion to regular fourteeners, as opposed to the anguish ridden hexameters (divided into jerky pairs of trimeters) that she has employed previously in her answer to Dido or the flavourless pentameters (relieved infrequently by caesuras) used in her reply to Berrie:³⁴⁸

Therefore, in this perplexitie,
 To you deare frende I write:
 You know mine endlesse miserie,
 you know how some me spite:
 With counsell cure, for feare of wracke,
 And helpe to beare, that breakes my backe. (ll.31-6)

By now this pagan stoic perspective upon suffering has been plumbed to its full potential as a means of facilitating hope and understanding, and Whitney beseeches God for the patience in adversity that has thus far eluded her: “Wherfore (my God) geue me that gyfte,/ As he dyd Iob vntyll:/ That I may take with quietnesse,/ what soeuer is his wyll” (ll.19-22). In order to finalise the pattern of redemptive, communal reasoning, C. B. enters into the dialogue with a continuation of the Christian perspective and lends a sense of ontological and chronological proportion to the discourse. In his ‘In Answer by C. B. to Is. W.’ he informs her, “Those fretting fyts, that thou art in,/ Offends the Lord, augmenteth sin”, and he suggests that she should frame herself instead to “modest mirth” (ll.11-12 and l.28). Whitney’s participation in this discourse has encouraged her to interrogate her plight, and led her to elicit this most crucial piece of

³⁴⁸ Whitney’s reverting to fourteeners here perhaps reflects that this passage marks the turning point of her moral theme from the secular to the divine, or at least that she has attained a happier state of mind. As Elaine V. Beilin writes,

Almost all Whitney’s verse is in ballad measure, a version of the native fourteeners favored alike by Sternhold for his Psalms and by countless other sixteenth-century practitioners of a plain style suitable for conveying basic doctrine to a wide audience.

Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987), pp.90-1.

information that secluded self-pity is not only counter-productive, it is also sinful. C. B. also emphasises that it is a misunderstanding of the nature of friendship that has led her to reason erroneously: “Thy friends *that* have thee knowne of long,/ Wil not regard thy enemies tong”, thus she should “make accompt for friendship” (ll.35-6 and l.45).³⁴⁹ Hereby, C. B. suggests that Whitney’s present circumstances are, in fact, more favourable than she has previously assumed, and by supplanting pagan stoicism with Christian stoicism he sets the movement of historical progression back in the right direction effectively, as the reader’s attention, and Whitney’s, is now drawn towards the prospect of future salvation.

The competitive aspect of answer-poetry has been manipulated here in order to create the impression that none of the individual perspectives offered, excepting the final one, is sufficient without their integration in a framework of complementary outlooks that provide a broader, even holistic, picture of events. The successive affirmation of respondents that they suffer more than their predecessor has drawn attention to the fact that each sufferer can only experience their own situation and is thereby ill-equipped to place it in perspective by themselves. Thus, Whitney represents her heuristic experience as being facilitated by her membership of a collaborative literary group, without the contributions of which she cannot attain a true sense of judgement.

This estimation also appears to be borne out by examining this sequence of verses within their wider context among the group of verse letters of which they form a part and of their place within the miscellany as a whole. C. B.’s letter is followed by an epistle by Whitney ‘(To my Friend Master T. L. whose Good Nature I See Abuse’, sigs Dvi^r-Dvii^v), and then by a further advisory response from her cousin, George Whitney, who has

³⁴⁹ This is a precept deriving from Aristotle’s discourse upon friendship in the *Ethics*: “The friendship of the good too, and this alone, is proof against slander; for it is not easy to trust anyone’s talk about a man who has been long tested by oneself” (VIII. 4).

received another complaint epistle from her ('In Other Letter Sent to Is. W. by One to Whom She Had Written her Infortunate State', sigs Dviii^v-Ei – Whitney's letter is not included). To this answer Whitney proffers a counter-response thanking her cousin for his consideration and apologising for the brevity of her reply ('Is. W. Beyng Wery of Wrytyng, Sendeth This for Answere', sigs Ei^v-Eii^f). She has decided, she says, to opt for a period of private contemplation of her problems and requests to be left in solitude: "Good cousin write not nor any more repleye,/ But geve mee leaue, more quietnes to trye" (l.14).

Here the sequence of verse letters ends, but the inference is that, rather than becoming reconciled with her mistreatment, this isolation causes her anger to boil and the "extreame rage", from which Berrie, C. B. and George attempted to save her, has gained control over her as she engages in a satirical project that bears some resemblance to the sort of ignominious street flyting from which the entire miscellany seems designed to divert her up until this point (Berrie, 'In Answer to Comfort Her, by the Waying his Haps to be Harder', l.2). Immediately following this last epistle is the final piece in the miscellany, a London satire that takes the reader on a street tour of the capital in order to catalogue its vices and social ills.³⁵⁰ It is written in the form of Whitney's 'Wyll and Testament' in which she leaves a legacy to the corrupt, pitiless city of things already in its possession. That this piece progresses thematically and sequentially from the verse letters is evident in that it is a satire of London. Æneas, the source of Dido's strife, was of course the great grandfather of Brutus, founder of London, the source of Whitney's strife, and thus Æneas is also implicated as the progenitor of her misfortune as well as of Dido's. In this reading London becomes a synecdoche for the treachery of men.

³⁵⁰ 'The Aucthour (Though Loth to Leaue the Citie) vpon her Friendes Procurement, is Constrained to Depart: Wherfore (She Fayneth as She Would Die) and Maketh her Wyll and Testament, as Foloweth', sigs Eii^f-Eviii^v.

This is not the coarse street flyting of a scold that might be expected of a woman taking her readers on a Juvenalian tour of the city. Whitney's bitterness is contained in her parody of a polite formal legacy. The satire of the piece is to be found in the ironic incongruity between Whitney's ingenuously generous bequests and the cupidity of the city and its citizens. For instance, of town gallants she reasons, "Because their keeping craueth cost,/ I yet wil leaue him more" (sig. Eiii^v). Thus, although we are told in the title that she leaves the city by "her friendes procurement", what we witness is Whitney abandoning the advice of C. B. to "make accompt for friendship" and becoming an isolated malcontent once epistolary communication with her friends is severed. Whitney has had independence and lack of patronage thrust upon her by her diminished circumstances following her claimed expulsion from service, but her rejection of her friends also indicates that this is a path she has chosen herself.

Claudio Guillén observes that the verse epistle is "the countergenre of satire" and that they therefore "imply and involve each other".³⁵¹ The juxtaposition of the two genres here illustrates clearly the psychological transition that occurs when the communicative reasoning between friends, that promises moderate speech and behaviour, is replaced by the single-mindedness of a satirist, which goes together with excess and, in this instance, the moral decay that is concomitant with exacting revenge. The backward looking conversation with the pagan heroine, Dido, and forward looking Christian epistemology, moreover, are now supplanted by the narrowed epistemological framework of her immediate, secular "comunication" with contemporary London (sig. Eiiⁱ). It must be observed here that Whitney manufactures this departure in order to finally assert an

³⁵¹ Claudio Guillén, 'Notes Toward the Study of the Renaissance Letter', in *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History and Interpretation*, ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (London and Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1986), 70-101 (p.88).

independent, female authorial presence which has been subdued throughout the miscellany. The lyrics in her miscellany draw attention to their imitation of Hugh Plat's *Floures of Philosophie* (1572) and therefore stand as a disclaimer against originality, and in these epistles her point of view is regulated by that of the men corresponding with her.³⁵² Only when she shuts herself off from them and envisages her impending death does she attempt to find an independent female voice able to carp about gender inequality on her own terms (as Wendy Wall observes, her legacy to London of nothing highlights, among other grievances, the injustice of the patrilineal transmission of property).³⁵³ Whitney takes a highly roundabout route here in order to manufacture a space in which she can express a distinctly independent female subjectivity and she achieves this by casting off the male dominated narratives that permeate and cascade through the miscellany under the influence of her borrowing from Plat's moral philosophy. In Chapter Five I will explore some equally forthright, although less circumlocutionary, instances of women using the answer-poem as a vehicle through which to contest the preponderance of the masculine subject position.

³⁵² See sigs Aiv^v and Avi-Aviii, for instance. These two texts are reprinted together from the original editions in *The Floures of Philosophie (1572) by Hugh Plat and A Sweet Nosgay (1573); and The Copy of a Letter (1567) by Isabella Whitney: Photoreproductions, with an Introduction by Richard J. Panofsky* (H. Bynneman and F. Coldocke, 1572 and printed by Richard Jones, 1573 and 1567; repr. Delmar, NY: Scholar, 1982).

³⁵³ Wall (1991), p.51.

John Donne's Provocative RSVPs and his Philosophy of Friendship in his Familiar Verse Epistles

That the sharing of knowledge and advice, and that the attainment of consensus, are psychologically beneficial to epistolary correspondents is the central thesis of John Donne's familiar verse letters. In exchanges with Sir Henry Wotton and Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, he, like Whitney, appears to employ a combination of epistolary decorum and satiric writing in order to harvest such mental ease. The dating of many of Donne's epistles is a matter of some conjecture; although there is a general agreement that the majority of them were written at some time during the 1590s and the first few years of the following century.³⁵⁴ An examination of their relationship to the axioms of amicable verse exchanges, such as those evident in the work of Googe and Whitney, offers illuminating insight into Donne's philosophy of friendship as it dramatised and celebrated in these familiar verse epistles. Donne's dramatisation of the relationship between himself and his friends seems related to Whitney's representation of herself rethinking her attitude in order to align herself with T. B. The Aristotelian themes of friendship and moderation similarly recur together in Donne's epistles and form the mutually understood language of amicable verse answering. It is also highly probable that Donne, like Googe, engineers some of the exchanges in which he participates through the strategic deployment of provocative verses.

Wit, virtue and temperance, the trinity of qualities thought necessary for good living and civil conduct in the Renaissance, are all, according to Donne, enhanced by the reciprocity of friendship as it is expressed and confirmed in exchanged verses. This intercourse enables friends to meet on an intimate spiritual level that is divorced from the impurity of the physical world. As he says in the opening of a verse addressed to Henry

³⁵⁴ See R. C. Bald, 'Donne's Early Verse Letters', *HLQ*, 15 (1952), 283-9.

Wotton that will be discussed in detail shortly, “Sir, more then kisses, letters mingle Soules;/ For, thus friends absent speake” (ll.1-2).³⁵⁵ He also claims that both his creative aptitude and soundness of judgement are enhanced by, and even dependent upon, communication with friends in verse. He continues, “But for these/ I could ideate nothing, which could please,/ But I should wither in one day” (ll.3-5). Comparable sentiments regarding the positive influence of friendship are expressed in ‘The Storme’, a poem addressed to Christopher Brooke, in which Donne claims “’Tis the preheminance/ Of friendship onely to’impute excellence” (ll.7-8). Alternately, in his response ‘To M^r T. W.’ (“Pregnant again with th’old twins Hope and Feare”) he describes his satisfaction at receiving a verse letter from Thomas Woodward in terms of the spiritual nourishment with which it provides him: “After this banquet my Soule doth say grace,/ And praise thee for’it” (ll.10-11). Donne simply reverses the conceit that abusive verses are capable of inflicting actual physical harm upon their recipients by stating that amicable epistles are beneficial to his well-being. In these epistles Donne situates himself as his correspondents’ patient, debtor and dependant. The emphasis upon this beneficiary-benefactor dynamic is a point of epistolary decorum through which he demonstrates that he has considered the nature of the relationship between himself and his addressee and pitched his verse accordingly.³⁵⁶ In ‘To Mr. R. W.’ (“Kindly I enuy thy songs perfection”), Donne claims that receiving a verse epistle from Rowland Woodward has been responsible for resuscitating him: “Oh, I was dead; but since thy song new Life did give,/ I recreated, even by thy creature, live” (ll.13-14). Ingratiatingly, Donne feigns an absolute reliance upon

³⁵⁵ ‘To S[ir] Henry Wotton’, *Poems of John Donne Edited from the Old Editions and Numerous Manuscripts with Introductions and Commentary*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson, 2 vols (OUP, 1963), I. pp.180-2. Subsequent quotations of Donne’s verse are from this edition.

³⁵⁶ See, for instance, D. J. Palmer, ‘The Verse Epistle’, in *Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Malcolm

Woodward's generosity towards him, makes clear that he has contemplated the dynamics of their relationship, and implies that this relationship realises its purest and most potent manifestation in the verses they exchange.

It is such affected dependency upon his correspondents for his rehabilitation that explains Donne's persistence in attempting to exact responses. In 'To Mr T. W.' he recounts imploring Woodward for them on a regular basis: "Oft have I askt thee, both how and where/ Thou wert, and what my hopes of letters were" (ll.2-3). In 'H. W. in Hiber belligeranti' he even instructs Wotton as to what sort of response would be most satisfactory to him:

I aske not labored letters which should weare
Long papers out: nor letters which should feare
Dishonest carriage: or a seers art:
Nor such as from the brayne come, but the hart. (ll.17-20)

It is a verse exchange between Donne and Wotton with which I am primarily concerned. I would like to suggest that in a verse addressed 'To S[ir] Henry Wotton' ("Here's no more newes then virtue"), and maybe even in one meant for the attention of his patroness Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford ('Elegie on M[istress] Boulstred'), he takes this urge for social discourse one stage further by proffering verse letters that are deliberately controversial and antagonistic.³⁵⁷ In these verses he adopts a guise of well-meaning misguidedness gauged to elicit a pedagogic corrective. Once he has secured the intended rebuke, Donne retracts his initial statement and smoothes over the controversy he has started. In doing this he assimilates himself with his correspondent's perspective and judgement thereby manufacturing the impression of his rehabilitation and that an idealised state of communication and mutual understanding between them has been reached. This is a clear example of *dissimulatio*, the rhetorical strategy of pretending ignorance in order to

Bradbury and D. J. Palmer (Arnold, 1970), pp.73-100 (p.77).

³⁵⁷ Bedford's poem is cited from Grierson ed. (1963), I. Appendix B. pp.422-3.

defer politely to the superior wisdom of another, praised by Cicero in *De Oratore* (II. lxii.).

The ordering of the exchange with Wotton has been suggested by Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers who argue that Donne's verse epistle to Wotton is answered by Wotton's 'To J[ohn] D[onne] from Mr H[enry W[otton] ('Tis not a coat of gray or shepherd's life'), and that Donne rejoins with his verse 'To S[ir] Henry Wotton' ("Sir, more then kisses, letters mingle Soules").³⁵⁸ The theme of the exchange is that of how Wotton might avoid becoming implicated in a dispute between his employer, the Earl of Essex, and the Queen during the middle of 1598.

According to Pebworth and Summers Donne's epistolary advice to Wotton in the first verse represents an accidental miscalculation on Donne's part, and they argue that Wotton

must have found Donne's blanket condemnation of the court naive and extreme. Surely Donne's pose of world-weariness must have struck Wotton as dubious at best. After-all, in 1598 Donne is a twenty-six-year-old court neophyte writing to a thirty-year-old friend who has had considerably more experience than he in the corridors of intrigue and power. [...] The advice that Wotton abandon his political hopes rings false and perhaps hypocritical, coming as it does from someone currently immersed in the life of the court.³⁵⁹

Their suggestion that Donne antagonises his correspondent unintentionally, and that this misjudgement is what stimulates Wotton's response, is plausible. Wotton's response to Donne's presumptuous didacticism warns that "men do often learn when they do teach" (l.30). He implies that Donne's attempt at offering learned advice is misdirected, and that it will eventuate in his own enlightenment rather than Wotton's. In his counter-response, "Sir, more then kisses", Donne acknowledges Wotton's pedagogic role and now claims that he is reiterating what he has

³⁵⁸ Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers, "Thus Friends Absent Speak": The Exchange of Verse Letters between John Donne and Henry Wotton', *MP*, 81 (1984), 361-77 (p.361). Wotton's epistle is cited here from *The New Oxford Book of Seventeenth-Century Verse*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Oxford: OUP, 1991), pp.74-5. On the debate surrounding the ordering of these poems see Joshua Scodel, 'The Medium is the Message: Donne's 'Satire 3', 'To Sir Henry Wotton' ("Sir more than kisses"), and the Ideologies of the Mean', *MP*, 90 (1993), 479-511 (p.503, n.76).

learnt from his friend: “But, Sir, I advise not you, I rather doe/ Say o’er those lessons, which I learn’d of you” (ll.63-4). On the basis of this it is easy to imagine that Donne misjudges his opening poem and that no premeditation is involved.

“Here’s no more newes” contains an impressive array of deliberately provocative artillery, however, and it must be asked why this is so. The verse incorporates elements of satire, cynicism and popular journalism, three modes of writing predisposed to cultivating debate and disagreement, and especially so in the 1590s. Admittedly, these genres typically exceed Donne’s poem greatly in terms of their polemical outlook and factiousness, and often presume the existence of detracting opinion and fervent rivalry. Donne is obviously not making a personal attack, and by alluding to experiences shared by Wotton and himself during the Cadiz (1596) and Azores (1597) expeditions in the poem he makes clear that, to his mind, they are on the same side. He has chosen genres liable to cause dispute or rebuke, but deployed them in such a way that will avoid causing resentment. He simply presents himself as well intentioned but as having a misguided, splenetic outlook on life.

From the examples of his contemporary formal verse satirists, such as Marston, Hall and their followers, or from the classical satirists themselves, it is unlikely that Donne would be unaware of the potentially contentious nature of using such a mixed satirical persona that combines his own voice with the cynic satyr’s rough music.³⁶⁰ This combination of voices obscures partially his familiar deferential voice, and thereby distances him, just a little, from the persona of the poem. His satirical persona or mask blends amicable familiarity with impertinent satirical abruptness. He begins,

Here’s no more newes, then vertue, ’I may as well

³⁵⁹ Pebworth and Summers (1984), p.368.

³⁶⁰ Marston’s first satires had appeared in May of that year and the first three books of Hall’s *Virgidemiarum* had been published as early as March 1597 (see Beckwith (1926), p.84).

Tell you Cales or St Michaels tale for newes, as tell
That vice doth here habitually dwell. (ll.1-3)

Donne does not need to take his friend upon a Juvenalian tour of the court to show him points of satirical interest because their existence is not news. Nonetheless, he attacks the court in an authoritative and confident, albeit exasperated, satirical voice:

For here no one is from the'extremitie
Of vice, by any other reason free,
But that the next to'him, still, is worse than hee. (ll.7-9)

By posing as a frank, plain-dealing malcontent denouncing the general vices of his contemporary society Donne neglects to address the relationship between sender and recipient in the usual terms of Donne as beneficiary, and his correspondent as benefactor. Instead, he imagines a new relationship between himself and Wotton, and attempts to recruit him as a fellow malcontent who might join him at taunting the behaviour they witness: "Then let us at these mimicke antiques jeast" (ll.22). Donne's invitation to Wotton to join this brotherhood of satirists seems particularly unattractive coming from one who usually attempts to cultivate idyllic friendships through his correspondence. Donne suggests a model of acquaintance that is impaired by immoderate outbursts of scoffing and ridicule and, being based upon ungoverned passion, at odds with the Aristotelian ideal. He presents himself as being desperately in need of a corrective from his friend to prevent him succumbing to the satirist's professional hazard of being infected by the degenerate social milieu he interrogates.

Donne also attempts to replicate the format of the popular cynic-stoic debate known from ubiquitous innovations upon the pair of companion poems from the *Planudean Anthology* encountered in Chapter Three ('Mans Life after Possidonius, or Crates' and 'Metrodorus Minde to the Contrarie', pp.162-3).³⁶¹ In such poems the stoic typically

³⁶¹ Donne's reliance upon the *Planudean Anthology* in these poems is discussed by Peabworth and Summers (1984), pp.363-4 and Herbert J. C. Grierson, 'Bacon's Poem, 'The World': Its Date and Relation to Certain Other Poems', *MLR*, 6 (1911), 145-56 (pp.151-5).

answers and refutes the cynic, and it is probable that Donne envisages such a dynamic here. In the classical world stoic philosophy takes social, intellectual and professional precedence over its cynical counterpart, thus Donne's cynical arrogance offers Wotton the opportunity for a display of stoical condescension. He takes the cynic's part by depicting a world in which any attempt to remain innocent is futile and even reckless:

If they stand arm'd with seely honesty,
With wishing prayers, and neat integritie,
Like Indians 'gainst Spanish hosts they bee. (ll.13-15)

With the cynic's characteristic pose of claiming that it is impossible to resist being detrimentally affected by one's environment, Donne suggests the potent attraction of courtly corruption for those exposed to it. Such a stance is an open invitation for a stoical response.

Wotton obliges with affected stoic imperturbability in his answer and fulfils the role set out for him by Donne. He claims that it is possible to retreat into the mind as a way of remaining aloof from worldly corruption, while still coming into contact with it: "It is the mind that makes the man's estate/ For ever happy or unfortunate" (ll.5-6). Wotton goes on to explain how such a state of existence might be attainable:

Then first the mind of passions must be free,
Of him that would to happiness aspire,
Whether in princes' palaces he be
Or whether to his cottage he retire;
For our desires that on extremes are bent
Are friends to care and traitors to content. (ll.7-12)

Wotton suggests that virtue is a quality that comes from within the self, and that the exercise of temperance is what will enable this self-mastery.

Perhaps more novel is the possibility that Donne's poem gestures deliberately towards the notorious hyperbole of black-letter pamphlet journalism as a further strategy of weakening his rhetorical position. His emphatic presentation of the poem as a piece of, albeit un-newsworthy, news seems to signpost its relationship to the fledging journalism of the 1590s. Donne's pose as a journalist is fitting as his poem concerns an important

national event (the feud between Essex and the Queen), but his use of this voice also provides a further source of antagonism. Black-letter journalism was suspect due to its sensationalism in reporting spectacular events such as the appearance of monstrous fish (like Donne's remoras perhaps; see overleaf) and abnormal births.³⁶² Donne is certainly guilty of exaggeration in his generalised, blanket condemnation of the court, which fails to distinguish between its good and bad elements. His breathless tone of urgency, moreover, gives the impression that his news that there is no news is so hot off the press that there has been insufficient time for him to consider his subject in any depth and to effectively rationalise it. Thus, it is left to Wotton to supply the balance and moderation missing in Donne's news story.

The use of the term "newes" in the title also suggests a further means by which Donne signposts for Wotton his expectation of a contradictory answer. The game of 'News' was a dialogic parlour game played between groups of friends at social gatherings in which the first player would formulate a proposition (usually in prose) based around a predetermined theme. The second player then had to compose an antithetical proposition. Like Donne's poem these compositions often contained the word news in the title or opening line and gestured towards events at court. Louise Schleiner observes that these games probably served "as a practice ground for Donne's famous conceited witticizing". Since both his patroness, Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford and her kinswoman, Cecelia Bulstrode, are known to have been enthusiastic players, it would be surprising if another of his acquaintances were unable to readily interpret Donne's "Here's no more newes" as

³⁶² See, for instance, H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1558-1603: Being a Study in the History of the Book Trade in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (CUP, 1965), pp.221-2 and Edwin Haviland Miller, *The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England: A Study of Nondramatic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1959), p.205.

initiating a round of this game.³⁶³ Here is further evidence then that Donne is assuming a rhetorical position that does not necessarily reflect his own point of view and one that is being offered up for rebuttal.

Donne's retraction in "Sir, more then kisses" contrasts sharply with "Here's no more newes" as his usual authorial voice, stoicism and characteristic deferral to his correspondent all reemerge in response to Wotton's corrective. The satirical spirit and journalistic urgency of "Here's no more newes" have been exorcised, although a little of his cynicism persists, and is now extended to incorporate an attack upon nations as well as upon the court and town:

Countries, Courts, Towns are Rockes, or Remoraes;*
They breake or stop all ships, yet our state's such,
That though then (*sic.*) pitch they staine worse, wee must touch. (ll.8-10)

He tempers this cynicism, however, by acknowledging Wotton's ability to remain unaffected by these corrupting influences. During his sojourn in Europe Wotton has managed to remain "free from German schismes, and lightnesse/ Of France, and faire Italies faithlesnesse,/ [...] And [to bring] home that faith, which you carried forth" (ll.65-8). Donne is simply reapplying Wotton's observation here that the mind might become one's own kingdom, and he adheres even more closely to his friend's stoicism when he accepts his claim of imperturbability in the lines: "Be then thine owne home, and in thy selfe dwell/ [...] Bee thine owne Palace, or the world's thy gaile" (l.47 and l.52). It sounds like Donne is offering original advice, but he is simply regurgitating that he has received from Wotton and allowed himself to be taught that there is a viable way of resisting the temptations presented by a vice-ridden world.

As such, the sequence has worked towards a resolution whereby reciprocal friendship

³⁶³ Schleiner (1994), pp.113-16 (quotation, p.115).

* *OED* 1: "The sucking-fish (*Echeneis remora*), believed by the ancients to have the power of staying the course of any ship to which it attached itself".

is expressed through shared ideas and a mutual understanding of the virtue of temperance and, therefore, an Aristotelian equilibrium is restored to the friendship.³⁶⁴ Simultaneously, Donne has reestablished the dynamic of dependency upon his correspondent, and now adheres to epistolary decorum by speaking in his familiar authorial voice. In fact, in the closing lines of the poem Donne's trademark pun upon his surname is suggestive of his confirming for Wotton that he is once again speaking in his own voice and that their usual epistolary relationship has been restored: "But if my selfe I have wonne/ To know my rules, I have, and you have/ Donne" (ll.69-70). The intimacy and interrelationship between the two poets becomes yet stronger here if we read "wonne" as truncation of, and pun upon, Wotton's name. Donne's intact identity has been "wonne" back through the verse dialogue with Wotton, and his friendship with Wotton becomes the means by which he defines his identity.

The ordering of the second sequence has been put forward by Margaret Downs-Gamble. She speculates upon the possibility of an exchange beginning with Donne's 'Elegie on M[istress] Boulstred' ("Death I recant, and say, unsaid by mee"), which is subsequently answered by Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford's 'Elegie' ("Death be not proud, thy hand gave not this blow"), and followed in turn by Donne's 'Holy Sonnet X' ("Death be not proud, though some have called thee").³⁶⁵ Here I can follow the course of

³⁶⁴ Pebworth and Summers (1984) remark of the poem that, by making Wotton's rules his rules Donne "identifies completely with his friend. Now sharing the same moral stance, the two men have become that ideal of classical friendship, 'one soul in bodies twain'", p.373.

³⁶⁵ Downs-Gamble (1996), 2.23-8. Downs-Gamble's hypothetical ordering of the first two poems is based upon their presentation in the Harvard University, O'Flaherty MS. She argues that,

If we consider a manuscript version of Donne's 'Elegie on Mrs. Boulstred,' "Death I recant ...," from the O'Flaherty MS, we note that Bedford's verse, "Death be not proud ...," much like other answer poems appended to provocative verses in manuscript, is appended – and should at least be considered as a corrective. (2.24)

Downs-Gamble's hypothesis since it fits neatly with my own up until, that is, the point where she (like Pebworth and Summers in the case of the Wotton exchange) argues that Donne's opening verse "is not intentionally provocative", although she does recognise provocation as one among the primary rhetorical strategies of Renaissance poetic. In brief, she suggests that Bedford's dismissal of Death's potency and finality is meant as a lesson to Donne; she has "Taught [him] thus, our after stay's but a short night" (l.36).³⁶⁶ Finally, Donne defers to this corrective by echoing the Countess's sentiments in Holy Sonnet X. As he says, "One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally" (HS X. l.13).

If Downs-Gamble's hypothetical ordering and interpretation of these poems is correct then the possibility arises that the exchange consists of a choreographed sequence of provocation followed by conciliation similar to that which Donne apparently orchestrated in his verse conversation with Wotton. Although Donne's client-patron relationship with Bedford is distinctly different from that he shared with Wotton, he conceives of it in similar terms and it is likewise predicated upon a nexus of dependency between benefactor and beneficiary. In his epistle, 'To the Countesse of Bedford', he describes her improving influence upon him as pedagogic and inspirational: "Madame,/ You have refin'd mee, and to worthyest things /(Vertue, Art, Beauty, Fortune)" (ll.1-2). She exerts a similar influence to that of his absent friends and through the same medium. In a prose letter to her he also reiterates the emotional and spiritual qualities of friendship that are transmitted through

Alternately, Schleiner (1994) suggests that both elegies might be written in response to HS X (pp.164-5).

³⁶⁶ Downs-Gamble (1996), 2.25. She writes,

"Death I recant ..." quite simply dwelled too long – for the first 36 lines – on the ultimate power of a personified Death. [...] Bedford's corrective response in "Death be not proud ..." disputes Donne's construction of a ravenous all-powerful Death gobbling up his victims. [...] She quickly refocuses the poetic discussion on the real subject at hand: the virtues of her cousin, Cecelia Boulstred. (2.25)

epistles; letters are the means “by which we deliver over our affections, and assurances of friendship, and the best faculties of our souls”.³⁶⁷

As in Donne’s “Here’s no more newes” there is a lack of decorum in his ‘Elegie on M[istress] Boulstred’ and we might begin to suspect that he is sounding a note that is off key deliberately. As Downs-Gamble notices, his elegy for the fifteen-year-old kinswoman of his patroness defers to the power, pervasiveness and finality of a personified death and barely focuses upon poor Mistress Boulstred at all. This is hardly a manifestation of his usual ingratiating epistolary or elegiac persona. Donne’s opening line might be even read as reflecting the absence of his familiar voice: (“Death I recant, and say, unsaid by mee”). In the poem Death is omnipotent and omniscient; he is the prime mover: “In all this All, nothing else is, but thou” Donne tells Death, and the reader is only briefly reminded of the divergence of soul and body and that the everlasting soul lies outside Death’s jurisdiction (l.26):

Her Soule is gone to usher up her corse,
Which shall be’almost another Soule, for there
Bodies are purer, then best Soules are here. (ll.46-8)

The soul, salvation and so forth are given remarkably short shrift for a poet usually so preoccupied with souls and their mingling and meeting through the medium of verse letters. Whereas Death’s domain is presented vividly, Heaven is off-stage (“there”), gestured towards but not brought into focus or to the fore of our consideration. Thus, Death appears to win by a trick of perspective.

This seems a highly inappropriate focus for an elegy, which we might expect to concentrate on celebrating life, mourning the life lost, and conquering death in the afterlife.

³⁶⁷ ‘To the Countesse of Bedford’, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651): A Facsimile Reproduction with an Introduction by M. Thomas Hester* (printed for R. Marriot, 1651; repr. Delmar, NY: Scholar, 1977), pp.22-4 (p.23).

It is an especially unfitting and insensitive memorial to the life of the kinswoman of his patroness. However, when Bulstrode's participation in the game 'News' is remembered, it might even be speculated that Donne initiates such a game with his patroness as a means of paying tribute to her kinswoman. I suggest again the possibility that Donne might be adopting a stance of well-intentioned misguidedness and that he leaves Bedford to put Death back in his place intentionally. Thus, Donne can defer to Bedford in his counter-response and so, in the words of the poem next to be considered, he becomes her "foyle" in his first poem, and her "eccho" and "Ape" in his counter-response, 'Holy Sonnet X'. The question remains as to whether or not this pattern was premeditated by Donne.

If the postulated ordering of both groups is accepted, however, then it seems plausible that Donne may have used similarly provocative rhetorical strategies in both opening poems in order to elicit corrective responses from his correspondents. The similarities between the dynamics of these two groups are in keeping with the poetic identity Donne cultivates for himself as being dependent upon his correspondents' intervention for the rectification of his own well-intentioned misguidedness. In both, Donne initiates the discourse with what appears ostensibly to be an unintentionally provocative and naïve verse that is answered by a sagacious, corrective verse. In turn, he aligns himself with his auditor in a counter-response, implying that he has been enlightened and that this heuristic experience has brought him closer to his addressee. It may seem like an audacious, even rude, strategy of writing, but Donne turns it to complimentary, deferential ends and it can be speculated that there existed some degree of mutual understanding with his correspondents as to his final objective.

If the evidence offered thus far is not fully convincing, Donne, on at least one occasion, does conceive explicitly of a three-part sequence of poetic discourse that might be construed as beginning with his own defective verse, followed by his correspondent's

corrective verse and then by his own subsequent retraction by aligning himself with the answer received. In 'To Mr T. W.' ("All haile sweet Poët, more full of more strong fire") he writes,

Then write, that I may follow, and so bee
 Thy debter, thy'eccho, thy foyle, thy zanee.
 I shall be thought, if mine like thine I shape,
 All the worlds Lyon, though I be thy Ape. (ll.29-32)

One way of interpreting this passage is that Donne is requesting an answer to this poem (the first of the projected sequence) which displays his correspondent's superior reasoning and/ or artistic accomplishment, thereby rendering Donne's initiating verse the clumsy "foyle" to Woodward's competent response. In turn, it seems that he intends to respond to this answer by aligning himself with Woodward's reasoning and/or by emulating his style, and playing "eccho" to Woodward's response. Donne envisages returning to his accommodating persona in which he is the receptive and grateful beneficiary of life giving, intellect enhancing verse. He will become his correspondent's "Ape", and it is this act of imitation that allows him to manufacture the impression of a finally achieved Aristotelian ideal of egalitarianism and reciprocity inhering in the friendship. Most importantly, the fact that Donne appears to envisage such a relationship, and requests Woodward's assistance directly in manufacturing it, suggests strongly the possibility that he may have also resorted to more subtle rhetorical strategies of provocation in order to cultivate similar relationships with his correspondents.

Chapter 5: The Rhetoric of Courtship and Courtiership in Women's Answer-Poetry and in the Female-Voiced Response

In this final chapter I argue that an understanding of an emergent women's poetics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries might depend considerably upon the recognition of the role played by answer-poetry in facilitating the cultivation of authoritative female literary voices. I pay particular attention to the influence of female-voiced verse answers found in the court manuscripts of the 1530s, and later in printed verse miscellanies such as Tottel's. These provided women with a readymade mode of writing freed greatly from the implicit association between textual activity and sexual promiscuity through which they might begin to challenge and redefine a female literary identity and become the authors of themselves.

Simultaneously, they were constrained by their adoption of the literary stereotype of the courtly female respondent and by the formal linguistic parallelisms characteristic of verse answering which limited their potential to cultivate original voices. Extant women's answer-poetry often articulates a struggle, and even at times an inability or reluctance, to reposition themselves in relation to their male interlocutors in the face of the dialectically restricting dilemma posed by men leading with the opening verse and women following in response. This pattern of dialogue reinforces the hierarchical notion of male attributes as primary and female ones as secondary, even while it subverts the gender dichotomy of reason/rationality (male) and emotion/irrationality (female). Frequently, these women answer-poets are also situated cripplingly by their addressee's objectification of them even though, as respondents, they are given the dialectical upper hand as judges and critics of the verses addressed to them. As I try to show in the second part of this chapter, a few late-Elizabethan and Jacobean aristocratic and courtly ladies resist actively such objectification using the trope of mirroring in order to deflect the male gaze and rearrange the subject-object positions, while others that I examine use the trope as a deliberate means of effacing

their intellectual and creative presences from their answers.

With the exception of works of translation, it is difficult to imagine another literary activity in which there is evidence for such a wide range of women having participated. In fact, answer-poetry represents an important juncture and a significant point of departure in the history of women's writing. The status of translations and religious writings of Renaissance women have been considered extensively elsewhere, as have their roles as literary patronesses.³⁶⁸ In comparison, although individual studies have been made of verse answers by women, their answer-poems have not been considered collectively as a mode of female literary expression in their own right. If, as Marotti claims, "feminist scholarship has drastically underestimated the literary activities of Renaissance women", then it should be recognised that this is one area in which the participation of women is in need of attention.³⁶⁹ In fact, women were presented, almost doubtlessly, with many more opportunities for private verse answering than they were with more involved and lengthy public literary exertions. A poem that addresses a woman as either courtly lady or patroness, or even satirically as a moral and intellectual inferior, expects an answer and is an injunction to break silence that might provide an opportunity to challenge the strong

³⁶⁸ Margaret Patterson Hannay, for instance, describes women's roles as patrons and translators of religious texts as the "one exception to the silence required of women" in *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay (OH: Kent State UP, 1985), p.5. Hannay's statement does require some qualification, however, as she herself has done much to highlight the secular writing undertaken by women. See, for instance, her *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford and NY: OUP, 1990), pp.107-9. See also Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London and NY: Routledge, 1992), pp.63-101 (see particularly, pp.69-78). Jonathan Goldberg accuses these two writers of underestimating the importance of translation to the Renaissance humanist project, and therefore the significance of women's translations. Although Goldberg's point is valid, his polemical stance leads him to underplay the significance of women's exclusion from other areas of literary production, *Desiring Women Writing: English Renaissance Examples* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1997), pp.75-83.

³⁶⁹ Marotti (1995), p.49.

association between female textual and sexual activity at a time when “women’s secular writings were received, described and understood in sexual terms”.³⁷⁰ Schleiner, for instance, argues that the alternative depictions of women as either idealised Petrarchan heroines, for the purposes of seduction, or as sexually wanton viragos, for the purpose of defamation, “offer women only one unproblematic subject position, the superior chastity one”.³⁷¹ It should be noted, however, that through the medium of the verse answer women might cultivate more sophisticated and problematic literary identities, and this chapter will deal with some of these as well.

The number of women answer-poets whose work has survived is perhaps greater than expected. Lady Mary Cheke’s only known literary production is an answer-poem as is that of Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford, cousin of the infamous Frances Howard. Much of the extant verse of Queen Elizabeth is also answer-poetry. From the court of Henry VIII can be added the names of Ann Boleyn, Mary Shelton and Lady Margaret Douglas, and from the aristocratic women during the reign of James I, Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, and Lady Mary Wroth. At the opposite end of the literary marketplace, Isabella Whitney’s publications engage closely with the genre and, representing middle-class women’s involvement in private verse exchanges, we have Thomas Whythorne’s autobiographical account of engaging in amorous verse dialogues with one of his patronesses and with female servants at houses where he was employed.³⁷² There is also evidence that a few anonymous answers were written by women.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Mary B. Moore, *Desiring Voices: Women Sonneteers and Petrarchism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2000), p.130.

³⁷¹ Schleiner (1994), p.17.

³⁷² See Cat. B 76, C 88, D 109, E 117-22, R 240, S 243, S 245, W 300-3, W 305-7 and W 315-16.

³⁷³ See Cat. Anon 9, Anon 27 (see also n.399) and Anon 53 (see also pp.228-30).

Women's participation in verse answering becomes even more conspicuous in the increasingly public literary exertions of female writers later in the seventeenth century and answer-poetry constituted a part of the repertoires some of the most prominent women poets.³⁷⁴ It is also significant that some of the earliest instances in which laywomen venture directly into political commentary employ the medium of answer-poetry. It will be recalled that the answer to James I's 'The Answer to the Libell Called the Comons Teares' (see p.56) is ascribed to a woman and begins, remarkably, with an imperative injunction to an anointed monarch: "Condemne not gracious king our playntes and teares/ Wee are noe babyes" (Rawl. Poet. 26, f.20^r, ll.1-2). It was around three decades later when Katherine Philips published, openly and in her own name, an answer-poem engaging directly with the most famous and catastrophic political event of the day, 'Upon the Double Murther of K. Charles, in Answer to a Libellous Rime Made by V. P.'³⁷⁵ It is given pride of place in the miscellany as the first poem after the dedications and prefatory verse and as the first verse listed in the index. It seems that that the bigger or more dramatic the world turned upside down scenario that is manifested, the more licence there is afforded to women writers. These tentative forays into a masculine literary sphere of public and political verse answering required a considerable degree of indignation or moral outrage for women to throw caution to the wind and speak out. They are motivated to write by exceptional circumstances and usually only in such circumstances, it seems, were they bold enough to

³⁷⁴ Among these are Aphra Behn, Katherine Philips, Elizabeth Singer Rowe and Elizabeth Wilmot, Countess of Rochester. See *The Works of Aphra Behn*, ed. Janet Todd, 7 vols (Pickering and Chatto, 1992-6), I. pp.272-3 and p.432; *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*, ed. Patrick Thomas, 3 vols (Stump Cross, Essex: Stump Cross, 1990), I. no. 1 and no. 108; Singer Rowe's *Poems on Several Occasions Written by Philomela* (printed for John Dunton, 1696), sigs Bvi^r-Bviii^v, sigs Ci^r-Cii^r, sigs Aai^r-Aaiii^r, sigs Ccii^r-Cciv^r, sigs Ddvi^r-Ddvii^r, Wing R2062 and *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford: OUP, 1999), pp.18-19.

³⁷⁵ Thomas ed. (1990), I. no. 1.

attempt incursions into the most public of male-dominated spheres of interest. The more private realm of courtship, although a less acceptable topic of discourse than the subject of religion, offers a more fertile source of women's verse answering. It is here, moreover, that a process of growth and development in women's incursions into the territory of literary subjectivity might be traced.

Female-Voiced Responses to Courtship: The Circumspect Lover versus the Plain-Speaking Suitor of Henrician Court Answer-Poetry

One of the origins of women's adoption of the answer-poem as an appropriately feminine literary endeavour is doubtlessly the female-voiced answer-poem found in numerous amorous verse dialogues in which the woman's part is ventriloquised. The most usual context in which such answers appear is in response to amorous or courtly verses that, for our purposes, can be divided into two basic types: the plain speaking Petrarchan *sprezzatura* and the ambiguous courtship poem in which the lover's meaning is encoded shallowly within the poem so that its import is allusive rather than explicit. The two types tend to elicit distinctly different responses since, in a cultural environment where women's sexual activity was regulated strictly, discretion was essential in the ritual of courtship and a rash admirer might be discounted quickly.

Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* is among the literature offering insight into why bluntness might be regarded as both an ungraceful and unprofitable strategy of courtship. A courtier should approach his beloved

with such sober moode, and so warily, that the wordes may first attempt the minde, and so doubtfully touch her entent and will, that they may leave her a way and a certain issue to faine the understanding that those wordes containe love, to the entent if he finde any daunger, hee may draw backe and make wise to have spoken or written it to another ende. (III. p.246)

Such caution is evident in numerous amorous verse exchanges both real and fictional, and they indicate that poems initiating amorous dialogues by speaking darkly or obscurely of their

intention are more likely to elicit favourable responses. At the very least they attract answers that give the impression that the correspondents are on a fairly even standing intellectually and socially, and that aren't condescendingly tetchy about the suitor's unsophisticated approach. Ilona Bell describes the "poetics of courtship" as also being an "erotics of secrecy". She writes, "for the Elizabethans, poetry was the preferred language of courtship and seduction precisely because both poetry and seduction are, by their very nature, enigmatic and ambiguous".³⁷⁶ And Catherine Bates concurs that "wooing a member of the opposite sex came to be regarded as a highly complex, tactical, and strategic rhetorical procedure".³⁷⁷

The propriety of ambiguity is also apparent in numerous amorous verse exchanges, clear evidence that this sort of verse exchange was favoured in practice as well as in theory. Puttenham includes an amorous verse exchange among his examples of *Allegoria* which he describes as the "figure of false semblant or dissimulation":

Louely Lady I long full sore to heare,
If ye remaine the same, I left you the last yeare.

To whom she answered in *allegorie* other two verses:

My louing Lorde I will well that ye wist,
The thred is spon, that neuer shall vntwist.³⁷⁸

The ambiguity of the petitioning poem leads Bell to ask, "Is the writer inquiring about the lady's health, or seeking patronage? Or is he a clandestine suitor?"³⁷⁹ Regardless of the poet's intention, it is his guarded ambivalence that facilitates a favourable response and, although this answer is not definitely in the affirmative, it participates in the conceit without condescension in a way that

³⁷⁶ Ilona Bell, 'Women in the Lyric Dialogue of Courtship: Whitney's *Admonition to al yong Gentilwomen* and Donne's "The Legacie"', in Pebworth and Summers eds (1997), pp.76-92 (p.79).

³⁷⁷ Catherine Bates, *The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p.11.

³⁷⁸ Puttenham (repr. 1968), p.155 and p.156.

³⁷⁹ Ilona Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), p.67.

implies mutual understanding and an established intellectual rapport. Even the casual reader suspects immediately that the context of the exchange is amorous since the lover's poem discloses its meaning through the suggestiveness of the opening epithet: "Louely Lady". In this way the opening poem conforms to the standard of courtly decorum prescribed by Castiglione and to that of poetic decorum set out by Puttenham. Daniel Javitch's work on the relationship between these two texts highlights the importance of suggestive dissimulation to both courtly and poetic display. As he points out, both writers stipulate that the decorous courtier and accomplished poet respectively ought to display their duplicity and thus avoid making their meaning impenetrable.³⁸⁰ For Puttenham the standards of courtly and poetic excellence, as measured by the ability to dissimulate, are inseparable. Poetic propriety is the direct consequence of courtly decorum, or as Javitch phrases it, for Puttenham, "to be a good poet entails being a proper courtier".³⁸¹ It is the role of the female-voiced courtly or amorous response to evaluate the courtier/suitor's effort against this standard. This, and other female-voiced answers, serve a metapoetic function as poetry that appraises and comments upon their interlocutors' adherence to courtly decorum as it is manifested in their verse addresses. In this respect the female-voiced answer is poetry about the function of conversational poetry.

Ringler cites another instance of such cautionary ambiguity in which the lover's meaning is embedded in acrostics. The opening poem (beginning "When shall thie cruell scornes be past") is presented as a meteorological allegory and is met with an equally circumspect extended weather metaphor from his lady (beginning "When stormes be past then caumes be nexte"). Their meaning is clarified in a secondary exchange deployed in

³⁸⁰ As Javitch (1978) points out Puttenham's figures of *Emphasis* and *Liptote* are both described as being obliquely suggestive. In the former meaning is implied and in the latter the context is purported rather than expressed, pp.58-9.

³⁸¹ Javitch (1978), p.50.

acrostics. The lover's blunt question, "When shall I meddle with the", is met by the lady with equally brash candour in her response, "When tyme doth serue thou shall".³⁸² By answering acrostic with acrostic this lady participates willingly in the rhetorical game established by the lover in her postponement of their assignation until a convenient opportunity arises. Just as Castiglione and Puttenham recommend, the lover's verse has a primary, surface context that he can fall back on if his suit is not met with a favourable response. Moreover, it is surely this guarded approach that ensures a favorable answer.

Ringler's coarse example is related closely to another sort of verse exchange suggestive of a mutuality and equality of social and intellectual status, the amorous flyting. The best known instance of this sort of wit-combat occurs between Benedick and Beatrice in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. As Frank J. Warnke recognises, their equality of wit suggests a good match, and he points out that Beatrice and Benedick are expected to make good partners because they make good opponents.³⁸³ This would also be a reasonable estimation of one amorous mock flyting from Rawl. Poet. 26 which presents a vigorous exchange of brutal sexual chemistry as the lady responds to the tongue-in-cheek flyting curse of her admirer in kind and with equal force, reciprocating his threat of genital mutilation:

Mr Lawson of St John's Colledge his Verses to his Mistress

³⁸² Ringler, *Verse in MS*, TM1893 and TM1895 (Cat. Anon 43).

³⁸³ Frank J. Warnke, 'Amorous Agon, Erotic Flyting: Some Play-Motifs in the Literature of Love', in *Auctor Ludens: Essays on Play in Literature*, ed. Gerald Guinness and Andrew Hurley (Philadelphia, PA: Benjamins, 1986), pp.99-112 (p.106). Benedick contemplates courting Beatrice with Petrarchan openness when he begins a rendition of William Elderton's Petrarchan 'The Gods of Love' only to break off before Beatrice has the chance to overhear him. He reflects, "I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms" (V.ii.36-7). His rejection of this approach signals the success of his courtship since Beatrice would surely reject him were he to woo her in such a fashion. Elderton's ballad is answered by Cat. G 138.

Regard my strange mishapp
 Jove father of the thunder
 Send downe thy thunder-clapp
 And rend her smock a sunder. (St. 12)

The lady rejoins:

If ever I returne
 Great Queene of lightning flashes
 Sende downe thy fyre & burne
 His cod-piece into ashes. (St. 5)

The lady adds a guarded, bawdy coda that can be read either as an invitation to kiss her arse or as the setting up of a tryst in Church, or even both; while obviously glancing at the prospect of a church marriage:

I can by no means misse thee
 But I must haue thee one day
 Sweet heart come home and kisse
 Where I did sett on Sunday. (St. 6)

The multiple interpretations available from the lady's answer (promising the humiliation of arse kissing, the prospect of marriage or a tryst) create an ambiguity that, although she assumes the coarse language of a scold, allow her to protect her modesty, or conceal her immodesty, depending upon how the poem is read. Just as importantly, the male persona's bawdy address is equally polysemic courtship rhetoric rendered in the guise of sexual slander. The uninitiated reader is left asking whether he expresses illicit love, contempt or has more serious intentions.

Since these poems became detached from the context of their original composition they have been attributed variously to a Lady Jacob and Master Polden, a "Mr Lawson of St John's Colledge" (answer only) and John Hoskins (answer only).³⁸⁴ It is notable that whereas three male authors have attributions, only one woman is given credit for the answer. It is reasonable to assume that such ambiguous reciprocations of emotion in verse,

³⁸⁴ See Marotti (1994), p.165 (n.68). John Wardroper (ed.) suggests Lawson might be "Peter Lawson of St. John's, Oxford (died 1619)", *Lovers, Rakes and Rogues: Amatory, Merry and Bawdy Verse from 1580 to 1830* (Shelfmark, 1995), p.344. For other versions of the poems see Cat. Anon 53.

when exchanged between actual or prospective lovers, were predominantly private affairs and afforded little opportunity for women to assert their socio-literary presence in a wider arena. Of course there is also the matter of such verses being mediums through which illicit liaisons might be arranged, a considerable incentive for secrecy. The opportunity for women to assert their literary presence depended to a considerable degree upon them having opportunities to demonstrate assertively their moral probity as well. This explains why, as Elizabeth Heale suggests, “unsympathetic replies may be part of the conventional exchange of courtly verse”.³⁸⁵ The ideal correspondent for a lady wishing to risk her poems circulating beyond the private arena of trusted friends would be an indiscreet admirer, inept seducer and flawed rhetorician whom she might reject.

One precedent for such verses is found in those Petrarchan lyrics and answers circulating in manuscripts of the 1530s such as the Blage MS. (Trinity College Dublin MS. 160) and British Library Egerton MS. 2711. Both are associated with the court of Henry VIII and with the circle of Sir Thomas Wyatt. Many of these verses appear to have circulated quite widely and a considerable number of them were printed by Tottel’s editor. A substantial number of the female-voiced answers appearing in these manuscripts were probably written by female impersonators ventriloquising a response from a courtly lady usually based roughly upon Petrarch’s Laura. Some were also contrived by women.³⁸⁶ Once removed from their original context through manuscript circulation and dissemination in print, however, the predominant assumption appears to have been that they were male-

³⁸⁵ Elizabeth Heale, ‘Women and the Courtly Love Lyric: The Devonshire MS (BL Additional 17492)’, *MLR*, 90 (1995), 296-313 (p.301).

³⁸⁶ In the Devonshire Manuscript, for instance, is a brief answer, signed by Mary Shelton, to a poem attributed to Wyatt in which his admission that he is controlled by passion is met by a curt one-line rejection, “Ondesyrd sarwes/ reqwer no hyar/ <may> mary shelton” (Cat. S 245).

authored.³⁸⁷ At this juncture the actual gender of the respondents is of little consequence since I am interested predominantly in the influence these poems might have exerted over later generations of women poets.

These exchanges offer the reverse side of the lesson provided by the ambiguous verses considered above, and show that plain speaking or *sprezzatura* is met with the beloved's disapproval of her admirer's failure to adhere to poetic and courtly decorum. As Ann Rosalind Jones points out, one of the roles of ladies at court was "prompting men to [...] eloquence in conversation".³⁸⁸ From the evidence of these poems it appears that this probably included chastising male courtiers when their attempts at eloquence failed.

The usual interpretation of the use of plain style or *sprezzatura* in Renaissance verse is that it conceals subterfuge in order to facilitate the success of the speaker's rhetorical objective. Richard A. Lanham writes that,

The real deceiver is the plain stylist who pretends to put all his cards on the table. Clarity, then, is a cheat, an illusion. To rhetorical man at least, the world *is* not clear, it is *made* clear. The stylist does it with a conjuring trick.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ Incredulity towards the possibility of female authorship of amorous female-voiced verse may have been pervasive. In the revised second edition of *Tottel's Miscellany* Tottel's editor entitles a female-voiced answer to Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's "Wrapt in my Carelesse cloke" (Tottel, no. 26), 'An Answer in the Behalfes of a Woman by an Vncertain Aucthor' (Tottel, no. 243). Thomas Whythorne found himself in doubt as to the gender of his addresser upon receiving an amorous verse, suspecting that it may have been written "in moking by sum man". The author, so it turns out, was actually a female admirer. *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne*, ed. James M. Osborn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p.31. Evidence for women's exclusion from rendering the female part in verse conversations is also evident in the antiphonal songs and ayres found in songbooks of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Pamela Coren comments that just as "the stage presents boys and men as women; the songbooks offer [...] lyrics written in the female voice for boys and men to sing. The majority are solo complaints, defences, and replies to courtship, but there are also dialogue songs, usually between pastoral lovers", 'Singing and Silence: Female Personae in the English Ayre', *RS*, 16 (2002), 525-47 (p.527).

³⁸⁸ Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Nets and Bridles: Early Modern Conduct Books and Sixteenth-Century Women's Lyrics', in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London and NY: Methuen, 1987), pp.39-72 (p.43).

³⁸⁹ Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance*

In the hands of the court poets of the 1530s, however, the Petrarchan lover becomes a figure of bathos rather than pathos, and their use of the plain style indicates an inability to dissemble. In fact, rather than being concealed, the speaker's intentions are writ large through the use of brash techniques such as hyperbole and *epizéúxis* so as to give full expression to his despair.³⁹⁰ Since discretion was considered an essential component of the art of seduction, such poems signal the failure to persuade, and in doing so exemplify a lack of artistic and courtly decorum. That dissimulation is an overriding criterion of courtly conduct obviously makes it essential to distinguish clearly between the author and his persona of these poems. These poets are surely being disingenuous when they get it wrong, and dissimulating ineptitude and Petrarchan lovesickness when they leave their personae prone to chastisement by female-voiced correctives, just as Googe was later to employ similar tactics by offering up his Petrarchan and Ovidian verses to his friends' remedial responses. The persona of the Petrarchan lover is an imaginary figure, a literary convention used to exemplify poor courtly conduct and a lack of rhetorical control.

The dynamic for these gender debates had already been established in the Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, such as in sonnet CXL ("Amor, che nel penser mio vive et regna": "Love, who in my thought both lives and reigns"),³⁹¹ in which is expressed both Petrarch's subjection to uncontrolled passion, and Laura's criticism of the lack of reason and self-control that such behaviour indicates. This is especially clear in Sir Thomas Wyatt's translation of the poem found in Egerton MS. 2711 (beginning, "The longe love, that in my thought doeth harbor"):

(London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1976), p.22.

³⁹⁰ Puttenham (repr. 1968) describes *epizéúxis* as the repetition of a word without a break in between (p.168).

³⁹¹ Francesco Petrarch, *Canzoniere (rerum vulgariarum fragmenta)*, trans. and ed. Frederic J. Jones, 2 vols (Market Harborough, Leicestershire: Troubadour, 2000-1), I. p.174 (text) and p.175 (trans.).

She that me lerneth to love and suffre
 And will that my trust, and lustes negligence
 Be rayned by reason, shame, and reverence
 With his [Love's] hardines taketh displeasure. (ll.5-8)³⁹²

Although Laura serves an important pedagogic role here, urging Petrarch to curb his indiscreet “lustes negligence” and guiding him towards self-knowledge, this is reported speech, and Laura is characterised by her absence and silence as well as her inaccessibility. The female-voiced courtly answer-poem, however, by playing Laura to the Petrarch of the poem answered, undermines this idealistic association between women’s continence and their silence and invisibility, and introduces a direct female response that is pedagogic and condescending in its chaste deflection of the lover’s advances.³⁹³

Through their evasion of the connection between sexual prolificacy and garrulity these articulate, female-voiced respondents call attention immediately to the sexualisation of female speech in the Renaissance as antitypes of the usual stereotype. The connection between female eloquence and concupiscence was rooted firmly in Early Modern thought, and classical and contemporary literature provided a wealth of examples.³⁹⁴ As literary antitypes, these answers are endowed with the virtue of Laura and the intellectual competence of female rhetoricians while often maintaining the abrasive humour of the

³⁹² *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1969), no. 4.

³⁹³ In his *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* Juan Luis Vives writes of his ideal model of feminine virtue that, “if she be good, hit were better to be at home within, and unknowen to other folkes. And in company to holde her tonge demurely. And let fewe se her, and none at al here her”, Hyrde trans. (2001), Bk 1, IV. xxiii.

³⁹⁴ Plutarch’s *Lives*, for instance, contains several examples, such as that of Aspasia, who claimed Socrates as one of her pupils, and was the mistress of Pericles, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, ed. E. Capps, T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse, LCL, 11 vols (Heinemann; NY: Putnam’s Sons, 1914-26), III. (1916), ‘Life of Pericles’, 24. 1-7. Even Vives, who dismisses the connection between learnedness and wantonness in women, nonetheless recognises that excessive learning might pose a threat to their reputations: “lerned women be suspected of many: as who sayth, the subtyltie of lernynge shulde be a norishment for the malitiousnes of their nature”, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, Bk 1, IV. xix.

scold as another means of self-defence. The answer-poets of the mid-Tudor court then, fostered an archetype for a credible female literary voice whose artistic and social judgement prescribed a standard of courteous behaviour.

There was nothing radical about such apotheoses of women in ventriloquised answer-poems so far as this constituted a new variation of Petrarchan adoration for the female subject. Gary F. Waller writes that “The Petrarchan love poem is a theater of desire – one in which men have the active roles and the women are assigned silent, iconic functions, and are notable primarily from their absence in the script”.³⁹⁵ These answer-poems facilitate the entry of women into active, articulate literary roles by reversing the subject-object positions of the typical Petrarchan love poem. Whereas women are usually assigned negative attributes in dichotomies such as absence/presence, silent/articulate, passive/active and irrational/rational, here they are endowed with those positive qualities that are usually represented as male attributes. Most importantly, this ameliorative representation occurs without much suggestion of the world being turned upside down because of the orthodox framework from within which this is achieved. These representations found their most appropriate application at court because of the expectation that courtly ladies – as in *The Courtier*, in which conversation centres around the Lady Emelia – would participate in and enrich civil conversation and witty dialogue, whereas there was generally no such encouragement given to their provincial counterparts. As Ann Rosalind Jones puts it, “The court lady was required to speak [whereas] the bourgeois wife was enjoined to silence”.³⁹⁶

Rather than simply speaking on the behalf of women, the courtier answer-poets impersonated women speaking for themselves. They put rational, temperate sentiments into

³⁹⁵ Gary F. Waller, ‘Struggling into Discourse: The Emergence of Renaissance Women’s Writing’, in Hannay ed. (1985), pp.238-56 (p.242).

the mouths of fictional contemporary women and figured them as the guardians of morality, discretion and commonsense against the hotheaded excesses of the Petrarchan lover. They also serve a pedagogic function as advocates of reason and of the mean who counsel their male counterparts in courtly conduct by criticising their ineptness at the rhetorical art of persuasion, and pointing out their want of temperance, reason and eloquence. Nevertheless, the ways in which these fictional courtly ladies articulate themselves is governed by stringent codes of etiquette, and they tread a fine line between executing eloquent rebuttals civilly and indecent garrulity. Unlike their male counterparts who were more or less free to speak for themselves and indulge in the excesses of libel, satire and flyting, ladies of the court could only be represented as answer-poets because women of this class were to some extent, and only ever provisionally, exempted from defamation providing that they abided by certain provisos and fulfilled certain obligations.

These are set out by Castiglione in an extract already quoted at the beginning of this section. In order to protect her virtue and reputation the courtly lady must, so Lord Julian argues, be a paragon of moderation and find a balance between worldly knowledge and innocent conduct, and between asceticism and latitude in her conversation:

Accompanying with sober and quiet manners, and with the honestie that must alwaies be a stay to her deedes, a readie livenessse of wit, whereby she may declare her selfe far wide from all dulnesse, but with such a kinde of goodnesse, that she may bee esteemed no lesse chaste, wise and courteous, than pleasant, feate conceited and sober: and therefore muste she keepe a certaine meane verie hard, and (in a manner) derived of contrary matters, and come just to certaine limittes, but not to passe them. (III. pp.190-1)

According to Lord Julian, in order to be virtuous, and to be seen to be virtuous, ladies of the court must “keepe a certaine meane verie hard” and especially between “wit”, or eloquent repartee, and their reputation for chaste conduct. It is also more urgent for them to do this than

³⁹⁶ Jones (1987), p.40.

for their male counterparts. As Lord Julian claims, it is necessary for the lady “to take better heed [than male courtiers] that she give no occasion to be ill-reported of, and so behave her selfe, that she be not onely not spotted with any fault, but not so much as with suspition” (p.190).

By combining witty repartee with an assertion of her steadfast virtue the female persona of the answer-poet, like Lord Julian’s ideal lady, almost invariably occupies the valorised mean, and usually observes with alacrity that her male counterpart does not. In *Tottel’s Miscellany* no. 290 (‘The Answere’), for instance, the female persona complains that her suitor exhibits “No minde of meane, but heat of braine/ [which] Bred light loue: like heate, hate againe”, and asks “What hurld your hart in so great heat?” (ll.5-6 and l.7). He is consumed by excesses of emotion that override his reason and cause him to lose his self-control and, as the lady emphasises, he oscillates wildly between love and hatred without ever finding a happy medium: “Whom fansy forced first to loue,/ Now frensy forceth for to hate” (ll.1-2). His behaviour is objectionable within the terms of the courtly ideal of temperance brought about by the exercise of reason. By calling attention to his solecism the female persona assumes the role of a mentor, educating her wayward admirer in the appropriate forms of discreet courtly behaviour.

Similarly, in an answer-poem beginning “Evyn when you lust ye may refrayne” (Blage MS. f. 105, ‘The Answere’), the female persona scolds her suitor for his “fowlyshe fayned fantasy” (l.16).³⁹⁷ Even though the lady is not interested in his offer of service regardless of how it is presented to her, she finds his inability to dissemble eloquently unimpressive: “Youre proffered seruice ys nothing Swete,/ Yet wold you fayne yt properly” (ll.5-6).

The themes of the courtier’s foolishness and indiscretion are developed further through

³⁹⁷ *Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Circle: Unpublished Poems Edited from the Blage Manuscript*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1961), no. 20. The antecedent of this poem has not been identified.

the image of him capering eccentrically, stretching his body without its normal limits like a grotesque jester or tethered dancing bear: “Youre chaine ys long, thow you be bound,/ For ye leppe far and Diversly” (ll.21-2). He is beastly, uncivil and the product of nature rather than being restrained through the civilising influence of a courtly education. By reversing Petrarchan subject-object positions in this way the lady figures the lover’s self-abandonment as an entertaining spectacle situated under the glare of an unsympathetic audience. She directs the audience to perceive him as a figure of fun, thereby becoming a sort of mistress of revels who controls both what her audience sees and the way in which they perceive it. She returns the objectifying gaze that he has cast upon her and makes him a spectacle for consumption by her coterie of readers. As such, the empowering potential of such rationalistic perspectives upon the representation of women’s literary roles is demonstrated clearly through this image, and the relatively less stringent restrictions upon the conduct of male courtiers is actually figured as disempowering.

A similarly Petrarchan dynamic is established between an answer-poem beginning “Your folyshe fayned hast/ Full small effecte shall tak” (“The Aunswere”) and its antecedent, beginning “Madame, I you requyere/ No longer tyme detrack” (Blage MS. f. 127).³⁹⁸ The courtier uses a crude *carpe diem* argument as the limed branch or bait with which to catch his lady, but unfortunately it is this impatience for relief from the “fervent paygnes” of unrequited love itself that threatens indiscretion (l.10). The courtier draws attention to his Petrarchan insufficiency by stating his desire for only what is out of his reach: “Nothyng, Alas, I crave,/ But onlye that I lak” (ll.11-12). His frank, reckless admission that he is suffering from this Tantalus complex indicates his want of rhetorical control and creates the expectation of the lady’s steadfastly rejecting his plea.

Predictably, the lady retorts by pointing out that his impatience incapacitates his rhetoric and leads to his failure to convince or move her. She also struggles to sustain her integrity and continence, however, as her honesty paradoxically threatens to dissolve the mean between courtly wit and courtly virtue. She confesses that she has previously committed herself to reciprocate the courtier's affection by acknowledging "The promys I dyd mak" (l.6), but she must now retract this promise in order to maintain her reputation: "No promys shall me bynd" (l.7). She continues,

Tho tyme and place I haue
To slyd yf truthe wer slacke,
Tho styll ye crye and crave,
Ye get not that ye lacke. (ll.9-12)

The lady shifts her position from the one of witty levity in which she made her promise to one of ascetic sincerity in order to re-establish the mean that has been thrown off balance by the courtier's inability to restrain his crying and dissemble his craving.

Another rejection of plain speaking, this time responding a suitor who, although urgent in his appeal, demonstrates a deficiency of passion rather than an excess, is found in the Egerton manuscript in an anonymous answer (beginning "Of few wourdes sir you seme to be") to Wyatt's "Madame, withouten many wordes" (a translation of Dragonetto Bonifacio's, "Madonna non so dir tante parole"). In the opening poem, Wyatt's persona harries his beloved brusquely for an answer to his petition:

Madame, withouten many wordes,
Ons I am sure ye will or no:
And if ye will, then leve your bordes,
And vse your wit and shew it so. (ll.1-4)³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Muir ed. (1961), nos 30-1.

³⁹⁹ Muir and Thomson, eds (1969), no. 34 and commentary, p.297. The answer appears in an italic hand in BL MS. Egerton 2711 which, as Marotti comments, may indicate that it was written by a women. In respect of this evidence for female authorship it is interesting that it has been suggested that the answer-poem was added to the manuscript in the "late sixteenth or early seventeenth century", since this would appear to be the time around when women began to

The courtier might only engage the lady's "wit" through a display of wit of his own, and his directness does not allow for this. His frankness gives the lie to the notion that courtly love is governed by desire untempered by pragmatism. He will only pursue his claim to her affection once he knows that there is reciprocation ("Ons I am sure ye will or no") and, if the lady does not chose him, he recognises that "Ye shall an othre man obtain" (l.11). It appears a rather innocuous poem to elicit the pique that it provokes, but it does violate the courtly code of discretion. It is his bluntness specifically that leads the lady to criticise his want of rhetorical control and reject his advances. Her first line ("Of few wourdes sir you seme to be") sardonically attacks his succinct plain speaking in her parody of his opening declaration of brevity, and implies his incapacity for sustained eloquence. The lady associates the courtier's "haste sute" with his "Lyght desier" (l.6), and she informs him that his ineffectual rhetoric has led to the failure of his wooing:

And wher I doutyd what I woulde doo
Your quik request hath causyd me
Quikly to tell you what you shawl trust too. (ll.2-4)

What the courtier "shawl trust too" is the certainty that his monosyllabic plain speaking and blunt decoding of courtly conduct render his argument unpersuasive.

A more explicit advocating of the power of education to bring about moderate, rational and decorous behaviour is found in the gendered dialectic between Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's poem beginning "Wrapt in my carelesse cloke, as I walke to and fro" (Tottel, no. 26) and its anonymous answer beginning "Girt in my giltlesse gowne as I sit here and sow" (Tottel, no. 243). The Petrarchan lady respondent purports to be a competent advocate of education and temperance while her admirer is subjected to the power of a personified love and exists in a state of perplexity. He expresses wonder at "what force there reigneth in

become bolder with their poetic responses, Marotti (1995), pp.25-6.

[Love's] bow" and is confounded by his mistress's self-control: "wonder thinketh me:/ Howe he can strike the one so sore, and leaue the other fre" (l.2 and ll.7-8). As an advocate of self-improvement through education, the female persona provides the answer. She implies that learning nurtures temperance, and such temperance is presumably what fortifies her against the "flamyng fire" that her would-be lover attempts to rouse in her (l.16):

And some I see agayne sit styll and saye but small,
That could do ten tymes more than they that saye they can do all.
Whose goodly giftes are such the more they vnderstande,
The more they seke to learne and knowe & take lesse charge in hand. (ll.9-12)

The restless male persona, who as he says "walke[s] to and fro" (l.1), is in the throes of a futile passion, whereas the unspecified other – either the lady herself or a potential rival to the courtier – "sit[s] styll" and derives temperance from quiet contemplative study and deliberation which leads to steady self-improvement. This gradual process of learning is juxtaposed with the impetuous behaviour of the courtier whose restlessness and wild temperament suggest his impatient desire for immediate gratification. Unlike his beloved and/or rival, whose learning has brought both peace of mind and soundness of intellect, he has not been subject to nurture. The spurned lover can neither attain nor even comprehend these two qualities and, as such, the lady presents him with an ideal of conduct, which is a suitable and a necessary model for imitation.

The empowering potential of reverse objectification, and the concomitant anxiety that male poets might find themselves the focus of such role reversal, is played out in the courtly mid-Tudor answer-poem. While registering this anxiety the male-authored, female-voiced answer is also a defence mechanism that colonises the subject position. The Petrarchan lover might be disempowered before the presence of his Laura, but she only exists within the confines of his delineations of her identity even when he gives her a voice. These answer-poems represent a weak point in the defences of a male-dominated poetics.

since they are constantly sealing up and repairing openings for the intervention of female subjectivity either through supplying female-voiced answers or by assigning responses of uncertain provenance to a man writing the women's part in the dialogue, such as the above answer which, in Tottel's second edition, was entitled 'An Answer in the Behalfes of a Woman by an Vncertain Aucthor'. It is unsurprising then to find Petrarchan verse dialogues in which women can be found exploiting this point of vulnerability and making aggressive incursions into the male dominated subject position.

Late-Elizabethan and Jacobean Women's Verse Answering

Examined through the lens of the female-voiced courtly answers of the 1530s it seems predictable that women's roles as poets would frequently be ones in which they were the respondents rather than the initiators. The effect of the poems considered so far is to close down the gap between the Petrarchan lover and the apotheosised beloved, and thereby to create the potential for a literary space that women were eventually able to exploit. The question remains as to why this appears not to have happened until the second half of the sixteenth century. It is a phenomenon explained, in part, by the respectability conferred upon those women whose answer-poetry is extant by their advanced age and/or high social status, combined with the likelihood of their exposure to the verse exchanges in circulation that originated in the Henrician court.⁴⁰⁰ Of the four women I examine in detail in this section, Elizabeth I was in the final

⁴⁰⁰ Where the licence afforded by age is concerned it is reasonable that once women passed childbearing age they might no longer feel the association between loose speech and wanton sexuality to apply to themselves quite so rigorously. In Stefano Guazzo's *Civile Conuersation* Annabell disparages the loquaciousness of those "good elderly women [who] use themselues like young wanton gyrles, & being women, behaue themselues as boldly as men: whereby they muche diminish their credite and reputation". *The Civile Conuersation of M. Steeuen Guazzo*:

decades of her life when she wrote most of her answers, Lady Mary Cheke was likewise advanced in age, having first married around half a century earlier.⁴⁰¹ Frances Seymour had enjoyed a meteoric rise in social status, while Lady Mary Wroth, although young, enjoyed the social status and literary prestige of being a member of the Sidney family. While age and social status conferred sufficient autonomy upon these women to allow them to situate themselves socially in interactive, discursive and not wholly private contexts that might be regarded as enabling, the extent to which male poets can be seen to devise for them their roles as critics of courtly and poetic performance is noteworthy. Just as Donne and Googe manipulate their respondents through the deferential technique of *dissimulatio*, the male role in these poems is often that of choreographing the verse conversation.

Answer-poetry might seem biased towards complaint, protest and contention, and a form of expression that allows the female respondent to assert intellectual superiority, and to triumph over her male interlocutor. This dynamic relationship, however, is often facilitated by male poets in their initiating verses and, even disregarding this, women's literary voices had already been constructed to a significant extent by those advocates of Castiglione who defined and policed the boundaries of appropriate female discourse. Even where women answer-poets enter into aggressive conflict with their male interlocutors their verses are notable for their adherence to the bounds prescribed by the stereotype of the courtly female respondent. This said, in answers by Elizabeth and Frances Seymour they wrest the subject position from their correspondents in order to appropriate control of their own representation.

Written First in Italian, and Nowe Translated Out of French by George Pettie, Deuided into Foure Bookes (printed by Richard Watkins, 1581), sig. Pv^r, STC 12422. Subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations.

⁴⁰¹ May (1999), p.245.

Social dynamics were a significant determining factor behind many women authors' freedom to respond. Assertive female respondents tend to be of markedly higher social status than their male correspondents. This is not only the case for Elizabeth as queen, but also the case for female poets such as Lucy Russell and a patroness of Thomas Whythorne in which there exists a client-patron relationship between these women and their correspondents.⁴⁰² In exclusively amatory exchanges it is sometimes also the case that social superiority is a contributing factor to women's confidence to participate in verse conversation, irrespective of social barriers or the disparity of affection that might prevent an actual match. This is so when in 1601 Sir George Rodney, a mere gentleman, is presumptuous enough to court Seymour in verse. She had recently married into the aristocracy and her response makes much of her social superiority; his courtship is all the more "unfit considering who and whose I am" she informs him. Disparity of rank was also worthy of mention in 1536 when Sir Thomas Howard, who was at least successful in his pursuit of Lady Margaret Douglas, the niece of Henry VIII, acknowledges to her that in reciprocating his affection, "ye desende from your degre". Lastly, Ann Boleyn was putatively answering Wyatt's love poems with encouraging one-liners while married to Henry VIII.⁴⁰³

Whereas the female-voiced Petrarchan answers of the 1530s convey no sense that the speakers are transgressing their assigned gender roles, when real women write answer-

⁴⁰² See Cat. R 240 and W 306-7.

⁴⁰³ 'The Answer of the Countess of Hertford to Sir George Rodney's Elegy' (l.93). The poem is printed for the first time, along with Rodney's initial poem and his counter-response, by Donald W. Foster, "'Against the perjured falsehood of your tongues": Frances Howard on the Course of Love', *ELR*, 24 (1994), 72-103 (pp.88-100). Rodney himself admits that he is "mean in rank" compared to Seymour (l.53). 'Unpublished Poems in the 'Devonshire Manuscript'', ed. Kenneth Muir, *PLPLS*, VI.iv. (May, 1947), pp.253-82 (p.265). *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1950), no. 114 and Muir and Thomson eds (1969), no. 50 and commentary, p.307.

poetry they often occupy a discursive space that is licensed by some sort of world turned upside down scenario, or by a perceived disruption in the fabric of social order or of gender difference. We have seen Whitney manufacture such a scenario in her sequence of verse epistles in which she transports herself back in time in order to converse with Dido in Carthage before chronological order is restored finally by her Christian-stoic respondent, C.B.. It should also be remembered here that the lyrics in her miscellany draw attention to their imitation of Hugh Plat and therefore stand as a disclaimer against originality, and that in the epistles her point of view is regulated by that of the men corresponding with her. Only when she shuts herself off from these male friends and envisages her impending death does she attempt to find an independent voice as a satirist depicting an upturned, dystopian London. At the other end of the social scale, Elizabeth Tudor, as a female head of state, embodied a gender ambiguity as both woman and Prince/Princess that surely suggested to her the compatibility of the female-voiced, male-authored courtly responses of her father's court with her own role as verse respondent to her courtiers. Alternately, it was an accusation of gender ambiguity, of being a monstrous hermaphrodite, that offered Lady Mary Wroth an opening to write socially engaged verse. Some other instances of women's verse answering are facilitated by perceived disruptions in the body politic, such as the answer from Rawl. Poet. MS. 26 complaining about James's assumption of personal rule or, slightly outside our period, Katherine Philips's response to the libel upon the execution of Charles I (see p.56 and p.224). Such inversions of order appear to be rare but significantly enabling influences upon women's freedom to participate in literary activities that reach beyond their immediate social sphere.

There are other occasions when women's answer-poetry furnishes some of the biographical data in stories of illicit courtship that conclude with the punishment of the protagonists and the forcible re-establishment of the social hierarchies that have been upset.

These might also be regarded as world turned upside down scenarios. One example is provided by the verses exchanged between Douglas and Howard that appear in the Devonshire Manuscript (c.1536). Douglas's reputation was damaged seriously by her love affair with Howard since she was in line for the throne and, as Elizabeth Heale points out, among the ladies who were "at Henry VIII's disposal as suitable counters in marriage negotiations". She describes their verse conversation as expressing a "rhetoric of mutuality and shared passion", whereby the "woman behaves 'rightly' by the rules of romantic love", but violates the rules of court politics.⁴⁰⁴ Bearing this in mind, it is notable that the couple choose Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* as a model for discussing their illicit relationship rather than the archetypes of Petrarch and Laura.⁴⁰⁵ Criseyde's abandonment of Troilus for Antenor and her subsequent descent from courtesan to leper in Robert Henryson's continuation of the story, *The Testament of Cresseid* (accepted at the time to be by Chaucer himself), made her the antitype of the chaste, inviolable Petrarchan heroine.⁴⁰⁶ By opting for this model Howard and Douglas acknowledge implicitly their violation of sexual politics at court.

Lower down the social scale, Thomas Whythorne recounts in his autobiography an incident in which a maid at a house where he was employed as music master was dismissed for initiating an amorous verse exchange with him. When her actions became household

⁴⁰⁴ Heale (1995), p.305 and p.298.

⁴⁰⁵ In one of Howard's verses ("And now my pen, alas, wyth wyche I wryte", no. 14), found among his exchanges with Douglas, he lifts Bk IV. ll.288-308 and ll.323-9 directly from Chaucer and simply omits Criseyde's name. On the extracts taken from *Troilus and Criseyde* in the manuscript see Ethel Seaton, "The Devonshire Manuscript' and its Medieval Fragments', *RES*, n.s. 7 (1956), 55-6 (p.55). On the use of Troilus and Criseyde as models for illicit courtly love at Henry's court see Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997). For Lerer's discussion of Howard and Douglas see pp.153-7.

⁴⁰⁶ See, for instance. Lerer (1997), p.136.

knowledge he recalls that the master and mistress of the house “finding *that* she waz so loving withowt provoking or entysing *thervnto*, shee waz discharged owt of that hows and servys”.⁴⁰⁷ Whythorne’s account is illuminating since he attributes the maid’s dismissal to her initiation of the amorous exchange, rather than because she participated in it. Privately accepting an unsanctioned suitor might carry hazards, but actually precipitating amorous discourse was considered even less acceptable, at least in this instance.

These examples illustrate the dangers for women writers across the social spectrum of attempting to become authors of themselves and the sole arbiters of their desires. Other women who participate in verse exchanges exhibit considerably more caution, and are usually the respondents rather than the initiators of verse dialogue. One strategy employed to avoid censure is to mimic men’s impersonations of women as Petrarchan heroines. Characteristically, women writing as Petrarchan heroines resort to reflexive re-utterances of what has been said on behalf of women by men and/or conform to the Petrarchan paradigm of the inaccessible beloved as it is manifested in mid-Tudor court answer-poetry. As Elizabeth Harvey writes,

Ventriloquizations of women in the Renaissance achieved the power they did partly because so few women actually wrote and spoke, but the representations of feminine speech that were current in literary and popular accounts, as well as in ventriloquizations, fostered a vision that tended to reinforce women’s silence or to marginalize their voices when they did speak or write.

A few late-Elizabethan and Jacobean ladies also began to break free of the limitations imposed by male representations of a female literary identity. Harvey continues:

As women struggle to repossess a power taken from them, as they challenge patriarchal institutions that have deformed them and limited their potential, the synecdochic expression of that liberation is often localized in the voice.⁴⁰⁸

These literary voices are anomalies, drops in the ocean of a literary environment otherwise

⁴⁰⁷ Osborn ed. (1961), p.32.

⁴⁰⁸ Harvey (1992), p.5.

peopled with male-authored ventriloquisms of the female voice. Bell claims of this minority of women writers that “the few secular love lyrics written and translated by [them] all strive in one way or another to construct an alternative to the male voice of Ovidian or Petrarchan poetry”.⁴⁰⁹

The Subjective Petrarchan Heroine in the Verse Answers of Elizabeth Tudor and Frances Prannell Seymour, Countess of Hertford

Elizabeth Tudor and Frances Seymour are two women who use critiques of Petrarchan love as a means to avoid their objectification under the male gaze and to take command of their subjectivity and self-representation. Their roles as pedagogic mistresses recall the Petrarchan heroine as she is represented in the Henrician answer-poems responding to Wyatt, Surrey and their peers whereby the verse exchange juxtaposes the rationality of the female respondent with the irrationality of her male suitor. Their answers might be regarded as representing a further stage in the development of a female literary identity that is self-defining rather than defined. Like their fictional counterparts in the courtly, female-voiced answers of the 1530s they serve the function of private counsellors exhorting their interlocutors to amend their perspectives, to embrace reason and a mean of conduct. However, whereas in these earlier poems male poets colonise both the subject and object positions (both that of the Petrarchan persona and the female-voiced respondent), these women wrest subjectivity from correspondents who attempt conspicuously to monopolise the subject position.

Elizabeth Tudor

The combined attributes of chastity, desirability and intellectual superiority associated typically with the sort of Petrarchan heroine that we have encountered presented a role of obvious utility

⁴⁰⁹ Bell (1998), p.100.

for Elizabeth. Moreover, since these verse answers are male ventriloquisations of a female voice, they naturally offered a courtly context for the synthesis of her natural, frail feminine body with her symbolic, inviolable masculine body as a prince. The suitability of answer-poetry as a medium with which Elizabeth could discourse with her courtiers is reflected by its prevalence among her extant verse.⁴¹⁰ The precedent of the ventriloquised Petrarchan heroine in Henrician court answer-poetry may have been known to her directly and, as such, would have also presented a means of demonstrating affinity with her Tudor heritage.

The role of the Petrarchan heroine may be one that her courtiers often contrived for her but, as May recognises, it was a role that she was often able to turn to her own advantage.⁴¹¹ We have already seen how she used an answer-poem as a formidable rhetorical tool in a verse response to Mary Queen of Scots. Even she, however, appears to have felt restricted by the protocol of courtly discourse between the sexes. She is sensitive to the constraints imposed upon her through the process of objectification, and seems aware that the answer-poem provides a particularly useful means of redressing the balance. This is apparent in a response ascribed to her ('Reginae Responsvm') that answers a Latin verse by the German humanist Paul Schede (known as Paulus Melissus Schedius). In his 'Ad Elisabetham Angliae, Franciae, Hiberniae Reginam' ('To Elizabeth, Queen of England, France and Ireland') Schede, like the Petrarchan lover, figures himself as her slave, and places Elizabeth on a pedestal, at once both apotheosised, above him, and objectified under his gaze. He appears to have enjoyed a fair amount of success at eliciting patronage from Elizabeth through numerous verses dedicated to her.⁴¹² In this instance, however, it is the

⁴¹⁰ Of her, less than twenty, extant verses seven form part of verse exchanges (see Cat. E 117-22 and H 153).

⁴¹¹ May (1999), p.135.

⁴¹² See, for instance, J. A. Van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors: Sir Philip Sidney*,

social efficacy of Elizabeth's response that most stands out. Schede had written,

Regia me dedo sub juga servitii.
Vtere me servo domina; ingenuoque ministro
Sis hera, qui laudes incinat usque tuas. (ll.8-10)

I place myself beneath your royal yoke.
Make me your bondsman, lady and be mistress
To a freeborn slave who ever sings your praises. (ll.9-11)⁴¹³

In her answer Elizabeth suggests how such addresses might be uncomfortably constraining upon her freedom of expression and self-representation. Her answer can be read as both a return of Schede's compliment and, more pertinently, a complaint against her objectification. When she writes "Haud nostrum est arctis vates includere septis" ("It is by no means our custom to keep poets within narrow confines", l.5), she makes her reader conspicuously aware that it is instead the tendency of poets to create their idealised subjects within the "narrow confines" of the pedestal upon which they place them.⁴¹⁴

Although Elizabeth's verse is a well-executed courtly compliment thanking Schede for his verse, she also realises the threat posed to her ability to manoeuvre by such apotheosising verses, and she is aware of the way they attempt to manipulate the power dynamics of service. She writes,

Sed vatum es princeps; ego vati subdita, dum me
Materiam celsi carminis ipse legis,
Quem regum pudeat tantum coluisse poetam,
Nos ex semideis qui facit esse deos? (ll.9-12)

But you are prince of poets, I a subject to a poet when you choose me as the theme of your lofty verse. What king would it shame to cherish such a poet, who makes us from demigods to be gods?

Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists (Leiden: Leiden UP; OUP, 1962), pp.96-7.

⁴¹³ The Latin text is quoted from Janel Mueller and Leah S. Marcus eds, *Elizabeth I: Autograph Compositions and Foreign Language Originals* (London and Chicago, IL: Chicago UP, 2003), p.150. The translation is from Marcus, Mueller and Rose eds (2000), p.301.

⁴¹⁴ *Poems of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. Leicester Bradner (Providence, RI: Brown UP, 1964), p.10 (text) and pp.77-8 (trans.).

Elizabeth draws attention here to the disempowering limitations imposed by being fixed under the male gaze. In the act of making her a “god” Schede becomes her “prince”, and the author of her identity. Elizabeth becomes a manifestation of the Petrarchan heroine, objectified and apotheosised as the embodiment of the poet’s idea of her, over which she herself exerts little or no control. In recognising Schede’s privileged position as divinely inspired poet (*vates*) and prince over (and implicitly father of) his “subject”, however, Elizabeth’s answer-poem cleverly turns the tables by idolising him as he had idolised her, thereby re/establishing herself adroitly as prince and poet, and consigning Schede to the limitations of the iconic role that he had originally devised for her. That she manages this without faltering in the reciprocation of courteous compliment provides some justification for Puttenham’s estimation of her poetical talent.

One courtier who apotheosised Elizabeth habitually in his verse addresses to her was Sir Walter Raleigh. He was more shrewd than Schede in the way he accounted for and accommodated the complexity and sophistication of his queen, however, and in the following poem he dutifully signposts and leaves vacant a space for Elizabeth’s subjectivity. His verse address to her, beginning “Fortune hath taken the away my love”, strikes a balance between abasing himself before Elizabeth as an iconic Petrarchan heroine, and leaving ample scope for her to re-seize control of her self-representation. Like the poets of the Henrician court, Raleigh presents himself as the antitype of masculine courtly virtue; in this instance as a coward lacking in valour and stoicism. By doing so he prepares a pedagogic role for Elizabeth in which she counsels him in how to recoup his courtly masculinity. Elizabeth adopts the condescending role of the articulate, as opposed to inaccessibly iconised Petrarchan heroine, and assumes command of her self-representation beyond the limits of Petrarchanism.

Although they express quite conventional sentiments, Raleigh’s verse and Elizabeth’s response (beginning “Ah silly pugge wert thou so afraid”) can be read as a *précis* of

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. The poems were written at least four years earlier than Elizabeth's translation of the *Consolation* (1593), but it seems plausible that she took an interest in the work for much of her adult life.⁴¹⁵ By offering Elizabeth the opportunity to play the character of Philosophy to his Boethius, Raleigh attempts to appeal to his Queen intellectually as well as emotionally.

Briefly, the five books of the *Consolation* comprise the following story: Boethius tells of how he fell into disrepute with the Senate, without justification and despite his good services to Rome, and despairs that Fortune has departed from him. Philosophy appears to him and counsels that Fortune has not changed since she has always been fickle and consoles him by reminding him that there is a higher, more reliable authority to whom he should look for solace. Fortune's influence is merely terrestrial and rather than being the prime mover she occupies one of the lower rungs of the metaphysical chain of being. God, who is the prime mover and omnipresent, can override Fortune and ensure that the worthy are rewarded. Boethius, realising that he has subjugated himself to a false mistress, now looks to God for consolation.

The Raleigh-Elizabeth exchange correlates well with Boethius. In his address to Elizabeth, Raleigh complains that the mutable witch, Fortune, has brought him into disfavour with Elizabeth and deprived him of access to her, and his resolve not to be affected by the vagaries of Fortune is suggestive of a distinctly Boethian epistemology as

⁴¹⁵ Both poems are quoted from L. G. Black, 'A Lost Poem by Queen Elizabeth I', *TLS*, 23 May 1968, p.535. *Queen Elizabeth's Englishing of Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae, A.D. 1593, Plutarch, De Curiositate, Horace, De Arte Poetica (part), A.D. 1598*, ed. Caroline Pemberton, EETS (Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1899). The rapidity of Elizabeth's translation suggests that she already knew the text well, and Leicester Bradner (1964) speculates that she was familiar with it before her accession, xv. The poems date to some time around the late 1580s, and no later than 1589 since Puttenham published an excerpt from Raleigh's poem in that year (repr. 1968), p.165.

he substitutes subjugation to blind Cupid for a struggle against slavery to Fortune personified. In turn, this provides Elizabeth with the opportunity to play the role of Philosophy to Raleigh's Boethius, schooling him in a true understanding of the limitations of Fortune's influence, and consoling him with maternal affection and advice. As in the *Consolation*, "Philosophy's [Elizabeth's] primary purpose in coming to Boethius [Raleigh] in his adversity is to counsel patient acceptance of his fortunes".⁴¹⁶ Raleigh's poem then, offers Elizabeth the opportunity to fashion herself upon Boethius's Philosophy and thereby to display "insight about the common worth of men" (I.i. 4). He begins,

Fortune hath taken thee away my love
 My liues soule and my soules heaven above
 Fortune hath taken the away my princes
 My only light and my true fancies mistres. (ll.1-4)

Thus far, Raleigh adopts the persona of the hopelessly insufficient Petrarchan lover, whose unworthiness and cowardliness lead to his failure, leaving Elizabeth in the position of the typically inaccessible and apotheosised Petrarchan heroine. He seeks hopelessly for his epiphany:

In vaine you eyes you eyes do waste your teares
 In vaine you sighes do smoke forth my dispears
 In vaine you search the earth and heaven above
 In vaine you search for fortune rules in love. (ll.9-12)

Here Raleigh emblazons himself using the usual Petrarchan motifs of sensory deprivation to register his mistress's absence. His despair pours forth in the form of "smoke" and "tears", insubstantial substances that suggest his failure to invoke Elizabeth as a tangible presence, mirrored in his eyes and echoing his affection. Raleigh's use of *plöce* ("you search [...] / you search") and *epizéúxis* ("you eyes you eyes") accentuate the sense of absence, creating the impression that, as he strives to glimpse Elizabeth, all he sees is actually a reflection of himself.

⁴¹⁶ Lysbeth Benkert, 'Translation as Image-Making: Elizabeth I's Translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*', *EMLS*, 6:3 (2001), 20 pars (18), <<http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/06->

In the fifth stanza Raleigh adopts another Petrarchan motif, portraying blind Cupid as the loser in a battle for Elizabeth's heart against blind Fortune:

I ioy in this that fortune conquers kinges
 fortune that rules on earth and earthly thinges
 hath taken my loue in spight of Cupids might
 so blinde a dame did never cupid right. (ll.17-20)

In substituting subjugation to Cupid for a struggle for freedom against indomitable Fortune Raleigh executes a transition from Petrarchanism to Boethian philosophy that encourages Elizabeth to reestablish contact with him within a context that offers the opportunity for a response that goes beyond Petrarchan cliché. Thus, he fulfils the Petrarchan objective of gaining audience with his beloved in a rather roundabout way. He writes,

With wisdoms eyes had but blind Cupid seene
 Then had my love my love for ever bene
 But love farewell though fortune conquer the
 No fortune base shal ever alter me. (ll.21-4)

The echoing "my love my love" construction reminds the reader that we are still in the territory of Narcissistic self-love and Petrarchan deprivation. We also discover that his failure to see through Wisdom's eyes, instead of through those of the Petrarchan lover, has led him to become divorced from Elizabeth. Thus, it is such a sagacious perspective that she is led to provide as a corrective to Raleigh's point of view.

It is worth noting that the verse exchange contains a faint echo of a line from the beginning of Elizabeth's *Consolation* that encapsulates the theme of right and wrong ways of perceiving around which both conversations revolve. When Philosophy first diagnoses Boethius's malady the cure she prescribes is to "wipe his yees overdimd *with* Cloude of earthely things" (*Consolation*, I.ii.14, Pemberton's italics). Similarly, Elizabeth accepts and echoes Raleigh's complaint that "Fortune rules on earth and earthly thinges", confirming that she indeed "rules & raignes on earth and earthly thinges" (l.10). Then, in the next two

lines, she translates the secular, earthly perspective of Raleigh's Wisdom into the vigilance of Christian "vertue" for whom she claims mere Fortune is no match: "But neuer thinke fortune can beare the sway,/ if vertue watche & will her not obey" (ll.11-12, Black's italics). Thus Raleigh should wipe away the tears that cloud his vision: "Pull vp thy harte suppressse thy brakishe teares" (l.16).

Elizabeth leads Raleigh towards enlightenment much more succinctly than Philosophy. It takes Philosophy the space of another two books to move from telling Boethius that he needs to amend his perspective to directing him away from "erthely things" and towards God. In the third book Philosophy leads Boethius to the realisation that God, "the father of all", rather than Fortune is the prime mover (III.viii. 82). In joy at the opening of Boethius's eyes she breaks into jubilant hymn:

Graunt that the mind, O father! Clime to thy hiest seat,
And on thy vew the clirest Sigh[t] may Set.
Away Cast erthely Cloude and Waight of this mold
Do thou with lustar then them Grace. (*Consolation*, III.ix. 25-8)

Similarly, Elizabeth reminds Raleigh that the exercise of "vertue" is an appeal to a higher authority than Fortune, and it is only by looking above and beyond earthly Fortune to this power, that a true perspective of the less than omnipotent role of Fortune in the grand metaphysical scheme can be appreciated.

Elizabeth plays a dual role in her answer, both as Philosophy and as the divinity towards whom Raleigh/Boethius is taught by Philosophy to direct his attention. She places herself on the "hiest seat" where "the clirest Sight may Set", above and beyond the terrestrial limitations of Fortune's influence, when she reassures Raleigh of her imperviousness to Fortune: "it passeth fickle fortunes powere and skill,/ to force my harte to thinke thee any ill" (ll.2-3). Thus she reminds him that she is in absolute control of Fortune, and particularly his. It is implicit, moreover, that she is a divinity in the form of

God's elected representative on earth, rather than in that of a stellular Petrarchan beloved. She politely ignores Raleigh's references to "blind cupid" thereby, for all her maternal sympathy towards her courtier, directs the context of the discourse towards that of client-patron.

Frances Prannell Seymour, Countess of Hertford

In 1601 Frances Prannell Seymour, Countess of Hertford and cousin of the infamous Frances Howard, found herself faced with a much more desperate and insidious attempt to assign her the role of Petrarchan heroine than Schede's, and in her response she reordered the Petrarchan dynamic robustly. Although Frances was newly married to the ageing Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, another of her prospective suitors, Sir George Rodney, refused to back down gracefully and petitioned her with a lengthy Petrarchan verse replete with the usual oxymorons emblazoning the paradox of his "fair and cruel" object of devotion as "Sweet poison, precious woe, infectious jewel" (l.34 and l.33).⁴¹⁷

Rodney styles himself as a melodramatic caricature of the Petrarchan lover, casting Seymour in the role of the implacable Petrarchan heroine. Mistaking the fictional role of the desperate Petrarchan lover for reality, he appears to have succumbed fully to the belief that self-extermination was the inevitable outcome of unrequited love and fell upon his sword shortly after receiving Seymour's rejection. Here is one Petrarchan lover who did indeed die for love. His verse exhibits awareness that the Petrarchan lover is a straw man when faced with the reality of a living, breathing, articulate mistress, yet he proceeds

⁴¹⁷ These events are recorded by Arthur Wilson in *The History of Great Britain, Being the Life and Reign of King James the First* (printed for Richard Lownds, 1653), p.258, Wing 2888. They are recounted and expanded by Foster (1994) who provides a biography of Seymour and the transcriptions of the poems used here (see n.403).

regardless:

For too too well my fortunes make me know
 My hapless love must work my overthrow;
 Wherein [not] death itself can come with pain,
 (Were not my death made woeful by disdain). (ll.17-20)

This is not serious courtship but the swansong of a man who knows he is defeated; an extravagant histrionic gesture of self-pity designed to invoke guilt rather than love. Putting aside, so far as it is possible, the severe psychological distress which Rodney must have suffered in order to lead him to this desperate act, when interpreted within the context of this poem, his suicide seems calculated to prove that the Petrarchan heroine really does have the power of life or death over her lover. In his attempt to introduce the causality insisted upon by this literary convention into his lived experience Rodney seeks to define Seymour's identity in a way that can only be sustained by her silence. By eliciting a response from her, and thereby provoking her to represent herself, he finds himself forced to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to prove his point and wrest the power of definition from her once more. Rodney sets out to prove the veracity of the Petrarchan viewpoint against Seymour's refusal to be objectified in what is essentially a struggle for occupation of the subject position.

In her answer Seymour steps gracefully out of the Petrarchan bind into which Rodney attempts to ensnare her thereby ensuring that his suicide will be a farce. She warns him that he is mistaking fiction for reality: "I never yet could hear one prove/ That there was ever any died for love" (ll.139-40). Although what Rodney seeks is pity, his threat to take Petrarchan suffering to its logical conclusion will only induce bathos, he is warned. The intrusion of the fictional Petrarchan lover into social reality will quickly become subsumed by fiction again:

The earnest dare to such a sportive sin –
 For that would prove a laughter for an age,
 Stuff for a play, fit matter for a stage. (ll.142-4)

Like the lady of 'The Answere' ("Evyn when you lust ye may refrayne", discussed pp.236-7) and like Elizabeth in her answer to Schede, Seymour turns the focus of attention back upon Rodney as a spectacle for consumption and, in this instance, substitutes the pathos of the emblazoned, inaccessible beloved for the bathos of a ridiculous histrionic lover. She recognises, just as Elizabeth does in her answer to Schede, the constraints placed upon her freedom of self-representation by being cast in the role of the Petrarchan heroine, and declines the opportunity to be "fair, in thralldom" (l.22). She refuses to internalise Rodney's projection upon her of his idea of her or to become his Narcissistic reflection: "But this I need not plead, since beauty's mirror/ Occasions not your suit, but your own error!" (ll.23-4). Alluding to Ovid's tale of Narcissus from the *Metamorphoses* (III. 343-513), she attempts to re-/position herself as an heuristic agent who might lead him to the realisation that what he has become enamoured of is a projection of himself rather than a distinct other. She also insists that Rodney is deluded to think that she is free to choose a lover. Unlike Elizabeth, Seymour defers to a greater authority than herself, insisting that she "cannot take free passage in my choice", thus he should "impute the fault to destiny, not me" (l.12 and l.8). She exchanges her role as fictional heroine for that of poetess and social realist, the doer rather than the done to. This is achieved by dislodging Rodney from his position as a poet and the manufacturer of the social context of their relationship, and recasting him as both fictional character and fiction-maker whose misrepresentation of the context of their relationship is a self-annihilating act that reduces him to a literary or stage convention.

Whereas Seymour's arsenal comes from *The Metamorphoses*, she accuses Rodney of resorting to the *Art of Love*:

Success and custom (to weak women, foes)
 Have made men wanton in our overthrows –
 Because the worser of our sex have granted.
 What is't in their attempts men have not vaunted?
 To weep, to threaten. flatter, beg, protest
 Is in but earnest, lust – and love in jest. (ll.49-54)

The cony-catching of women into succumbing to ingenuous persuasions to love was a recurring theme of female complaint literature (see p.198, for instance). Because Rodney subscribes to the fiction of the Petrarchan lover wholesale, it is understandable that Seymour misreads his protestations of love as dissimulation. She claims to suspect Ovidian subterfuge, that the dissembling “Art of love” is being practised upon her, and in doing so construes Petrarchan plain speaking as Ovidian cunning:

Poorly, methinks, you strive to play the poet –
 And poets, I have heard, in such a case,
 Hold flattery and lying the best grace;
 For they are men, forsooth, have words to pierce
 And wound a stony heart with softening verse.
 They can work wonders, and do tricks will move
 A marble heart. They teach the Art of love. (ll.122-8)

As in the case of the Petrarchan courtly exchanges of the 1530s, Seymour thinks that the quality of Rodney’s verse correlates to the quality of his courtship. She grades his poetic endeavour as being rendered “poorly”, however, not because he violates the social etiquette of discretion and dissimulation, but because she thinks he practises it. Thus she dismisses the “flattery and lying” of the courtly lover as nonsense, as well as repulsing the Petrarchan objectification of herself. This is not to say that Seymour necessarily rejects the decorum of properly executed courtly love; both Puttenham and Castiglione warn against the misuse of courtly dissimulation. She is simply shrewd enough to turn it to her own purpose.

Seymour also stays firmly within the territory of the courtly etiquette of the female response. While dismissing the role of the Petrarchan lover as fictive, she assumes, and breathes life into, the role of implacable Petrarchan heroine pointing out, for instance, that Rodney is not governed by “reason’s temperate fire” (l.39). This paradox, that the Petrarchan heroine emerges into the real world while the Petrarchan lover and his fate are consigned to the territory of literary convention, can perhaps be best explained in terms of the available social uses of the two roles. A woman might represent herself as a Petrarchan

heroine in order to display her chastity and conformity to sexual mores, even while she rejects her objectification as an emanation of Laura, as Seymour manages to do. The persona of the Petrarchan lover, however, is used typically to present circumstances in which insurmountable obstacles frustrate the speaker realising his desires. This is precisely why to identify oneself fully with such a persona usually goes against the grain of self-interest. Thus, Petrarchan poets' tendency to keep the relationship between their autobiographical selves and their persona ambivalent, and to employ Petrarchanism as an abstraction of their emotional state.

By showing the Petrarchan condition to be a fiction, Seymour's response erases Rodney's persona. In turn, Rodney's suicide is an attempt to prove the reality of his Petrarchan condition empirically and thereby to breathe life into his own character and to return his Petrarchan heroine to the realm of idealised objectification. The foremost purpose of her epistolary response is to put an end to the matter, insisting "that you dare not to attempt the passage/ Of more replies, by letters or by message" (ll.153-4). Rodney, who waited at a local inn for this response, clung onto his Petrarchan fantasy until the bitter end in despite of Seymour's attempt to write it out of existence in her declaration that nobody ever really died for love. Unable to wait for the psychosomatic effects of unrequited love to take hold, he penned his suicide note by way of a counter-response since entitled, 'Sir George Rodney before He Killed Himself', and ran upon his sword:

In starry letters I behold
My death [is] in the heavens enrolled
There find I writ in skies above
That I (poor I!) must die for love. (ll.5-8)

Rodney apotheosises Seymour's response as "starry letters [...] writ in skies above", thus reasserting the hierarchical relationship between himself as sublunary suitor and Seymour as the unattainable stellified beloved in order to manipulate the import of her answer and translate it

into his death sentence. Seymour had written,

I believe with ease
That you can die for love if so you please –
But die as poets do, in sighs (false fees
To corrupt trust!), in sonneting ay-mes. (ll.133-6)

Here Seymour initiates a gendered struggle for subjectivity, warning Rodney not to allow Petrarchan pretensions to seep beyond the realm of literary conceit and into a social arena where he might use them to manipulate the context of their relationship.

In retaliation Rodney sonnets an “aye-me” purposely to disprove the accusation of being a fake, responding “[Ay] me, myself my self must kill” (l.3). Donald W. Foster writes of such constructions that ““ay me!” was a conventional sigh of lamentation (often spelled “I me,” as if to anticipate a psychoanalytic reading of the sigh as a charm against nullification of the self)”.⁴¹⁸ Foster is right to notice the importance of this construction as an assertion of self. Without needing to go so far as imposing a psychoanalytic interpretation upon it, it is obvious that the doubled first person pronoun represents an attempt to monopolise the subject position and to exclude rival subjectivities; an endeavour reflected by Arthur Wilson’s account of Rodney writing his poems in his own blood, literally infusing himself into, and reifying himself as, the verses he sent to Seymour.⁴¹⁹

As a Petrarchan motif this assertion of a coherent self might be traced to the threat posed to self-integrity by exposure to the contraries of the “fair and cruel” beloved, whose bewitchingly oxymoronic, and therefore fragmented identity, infects and threatens to disintegrate the onlooker’s own coherence of identity as he simultaneously burns and freezes with desire. In this sense, the struggle for subjectivity preexists in Petrarchan literary conventions and provides conditions highly favorable for such a struggle to emerge

⁴¹⁸ Foster (1994), pp.98-9 (n.50).

⁴¹⁹ Wilson (1653), p.258.

in a real socially dialogic exchange in which these conventions might be played out. Although the story of this exchange of verses perhaps serves as little more than a footnote to the history of Petrarchan courtship verse in the Renaissance and as an interesting anecdote from contemporary court gossip, Seymour's assertion of her subjectivity against Petrarchan objectification, like Elizabeth's answer to Schede, might be seen as part of a paradigmatic shift in which there emerges a transition in women's literary presence from representation to self-representation. That Seymour picks up specifically on the use of doubled personal pronouns as a construction predisposed to male monopoly of the subject position, and the violence with which this territory is contested, suggests the suitability of reading this exchange as representing a point at which the tension between the roles of the definer and the defined, the subject and object, reached critical mass. Rodney's overburdened double personal pronouns, as Eric Langley has suggested in his recent Ph.D thesis, suggest both an assertion of self and a negation of self.⁴²⁰ His subjectivity constantly teeters on the edge of disintegration, and it only took a small push for Seymour to make way for her own subjectivity. Perhaps these poems should even be read as representing the very epicentre of a paradigmatic shift towards female self-representation.

⁴²⁰ Eric Langley, 'Self-Love and Self-Slaughter in the Works of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Leeds University, 2003), p.8.

Two Misogynist Satirists and their Female Respondents: Lady Mary Cheke and Lady Mary Wroth

The literary objectification of women in the Renaissance was twofold. The limitations placed upon the literary and intellectual roles available to them were also compounded by misogynist satires and invectives that degraded and denounced women as moral and intellectual inferiors. As we have seen, Petrarchan idealisation of the female subject offered a space from which to challenge male hegemony of the subject position by proffering to women a morally sound position from which to write. Antifeminist satire, however, appears to present less scope for successful self-representation through response, due to its tendency to affirm the impropriety, and associated promiscuity, of women who attempt to broadcast their voices publicly. Specifically, answers by Lady Mary Cheke and Lady Mary Wroth respond respectively to satirical verses by Sir John Harington, the younger, and Lord Denny, Baron of Waltham, by employing the technique of mirroring in ways that evade self-representation conspicuously. Both are deprived of inventiveness and their answers become vacant mirrors reflecting back at their adversaries the image of their own text.

Both Harington and Denny attest that the female writer or wit is a contradiction in terms. The responses of Cheke and Wroth, while contesting this position, employ tropes of echoing and mirroring in ways that verify the antifeminist viewpoints they attack by abnegating their own presence from their otherwise lively rebuttals. Rather than being caught in the objectifying, narcissistic mirror of the male gaze, these two women place themselves in this position and render themselves Echoes to the Narcissi of the poems they answer. Nothing could be further removed from the Petrarchan or courtly love poem than

the anti-feminist satires of Denny and Harington and yet their respondents seem to situate themselves as if they were under an objectifying male gaze.

Rather than challenging the implicit connection between sexual and textual activity Wroth's response to Denny actually confirms this; a tendency that Cherbury appears to acknowledge in his 'Merry Rime Sent to the Lady Wroth'. In this poem he congratulates her upon the birth of an illegitimate child, fathered by her first cousin, William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, and reminds her of her reputation for adorning her "dainty toes" with lascivious satyr's nails (ll.5-6).⁴²¹ In her answer to Denny she treads a very fine line between self-assertion and self-effacement in her deflection of his abuse and this makes for a highly multivalent poem, several interpretations of which also allow her to proliferate her literary and intellectual presence. By comparison Cheke is the victim of being duped into responding by Harington in order to prove his antifeminist thesis, and her answer only serves to confirm his assertion that women are not suited to enjoy direct access to the Bible.

Lady Mary Cheke

Ostensibly a lighthearted piece of misogyny, Sir John Harington, the younger's verse beginning 'Thear was, not serten when, a certayn preacher' (c.1590s), is actually a piece of tour de force satirical virtuosity. It is designed insidiously to beguile any prospective respondent into proving unwittingly his poem's central thesis of women's intellectual inferiority as he deploys craftily the technique of *dissimulatio* in order to determine and shape the answer he receives to his deliberately and conspicuously erroneous argument.⁴²² Harington presents his verse as a

⁴²¹ 'A Merry Rime Sent to the Lady Wroth upon the Birth of my L. of Pembroke's Child, Born in the Spring', in *The English and Latin Poems of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.42.

⁴²² Both poems are printed by May (1999), pp.245-6.

purposely flawed exercise in biblical exegesis that offers ample opportunity for a corrective response to his antifeminist argument. As May points out, Harington's satirical persona admits that he is uncertain of his ground and provides his respondent, Lady Mary Cheke, with a straw man.⁴²³ May is not attuned fully, however, to the degree of control that Harington exercises over this ostensible wit combat; for him Cheke's response is "spirited" while Harington's poem is merely "mildly anti-feminist".⁴²⁴ Actually, Harington uses the persona of an incompetent preacher in order to set Cheke a patronising test to put him right. The preacher is only the bait and, by situating any prospective respondent as his student answering the question he has set, Harington choreographs the exchange in order to perpetuate the notion of women's intellectual inferiority while simultaneously offering the opportunity to refute his inept, misogynist preacher.

He begins: "Thear was, not serten when, a certayn preacher/ That never learnt and yet became a teacher" (ll.1-2). This poorly educated clergyman, with his small "latten" (l.3), focuses upon one of the most unremarkable biblical phrases, "Erat quidam homo" ("there was a certain man", l.4). His attempt to extract theological significance from the passage leads him to the tenuous conclusion, "But yet I think in all the bible no man/ Can finde this text: thear was a certain woman" (ll.13-14). Harington knows this proposition to be untrue, and he employs the preacher as a foil in order to set a patronising and simple pedagogic test to spot the deliberate error, and to "finde this text: thear was a certain woman".

Women's absence from some parts of the Bible, such as in the patrilineal genealogies of the Old Testament, is conspicuous, but Harington has something more specific in mind, and he has made sure that his prospective respondent (he may or may not have been addressing Cheke specifically) is not short of evidence with which to refute the preacher's

⁴²³ May (1999), p.149.

⁴²⁴ May (1999), p.245.

claim.⁴²⁵ Cheke responds, “That no man yet could in the bible finde/ A certayne woeman argues men are blinde” (ll.1-2). She elaborates:

A certayne woeman of the multitude
 Sayde, “Blest be the paps that gave oure Savioure foode.”
 A certayne woeman too a milstone threw
 And from the wall Abimelecke she slew.
 There likewise was as holie writ doth say
 A certayne woeman named Lydia. (ll.5-10)

A glance at Acts 16:14-15 and Judges 9:53 reveals just how aware Harington must have been of his preacher’s error, and suggests strongly that he anticipated the poem would be corrected:

Acts 16

14: And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15: And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Judges 9

53: And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech’s head, and all to brake his skull.

Cheke’s answer fulfils the role set out for it by Harington, the specificity of whose challenge to find particular passages indicates the degree of control he exerts over the debate and the content of her answer. She answers his sonnet line by line and her six additional lines contain nothing other than the answer to the question he has set her. Her verse response is simply the mirror of Harington’s verse and the echo of his thoughts.

⁴²⁵ The possibility that Cheke was the poem’s intended audience and dupe is made more tantalising by another of Harington’s epigrams in which he is probably also baiting her, this time for eccentricities of toilette and etiquette. In his ‘Of Kissing the Cheeke’, he writes, “Is’t for a grace? or is’t for some dislike,/ When others kisse with lip, you giue the cheeke”. Rather than come into physical contact with her over-painted face, he decides kissing her glove to be preferable because, “Your glou’s perfum’d, your lip and cheeke are painted” (ll.1-2 and l.8), *Epigrams both Pleasant and Seriovs. Written by that All-Worthy Knight, Sir John Harington and Neuer before Printed* (printed for Iohn Budge, 1615), sig. Biii, STC 12775.5 (subsequent references for this text are given in parentheses following quotations). In the 1618 edition the title reads ‘Of a Lady that Gives the Cheeke’, *The Most Elegant and Witty Epigrams of Sir John Harington, Knight* (printed for John Budge, 1618), sig. Hiv’, STC 12776.

On a more general level, Cheke also keeps within acceptable thematic parameters, adopting a dialectical position that was already well established in literary debates between men over women's intellectual and moral status. She manages little other here than to perpetuate such objectification of women as the focus of moral debate. In doing so she defers to male intellectual interests, and to patriarchal control over the dissemination of knowledge. She even colludes willingly in her intellectual disempowerment with her self-deprecating claim that the preacher ought to be ashamed of being outwitted by a woman:

Your preacher then may well stand much perplext
 To see how grossely he belied the text
 And blush his sermon was no better suted
 Then by a woeman thus to be confuted. (ll.15-18)

Neither is Harington's arrangement of the circumstances in which his female respondent is permitted to flaunt her knowledge particularly flattering. When mentioning his preacher's "latten" Bible, he is surely aware that any female respondent will probably be forced to pass silently over the language in which her text is written.⁴²⁶ In this way he orchestrates the outcome of a debate that implicitly pits a case for the restriction of direct access to Scripture against one for making vernacular translations available to the lay community. Cheke's use of a vernacular Bible as opposed to a Latin one, such as that used by the preacher, allows her to refute him, but the conclusion she is led to draw opens up a theological can of worms, or even a Diet of Worms of sorts. Harington's patronising test calls for a literal rather than an exegetical reading of the Bible and one that provokes a pretty mundane conclusion. This challenge to extract a literal interpretation is the bait he uses to dupe Cheke into completing his satirical project. At this point it becomes apparent just what a satirical tour de force he has choreographed.

⁴²⁶ Notably, the argument of an epigram appearing shortly before this piece in the 1615 edition is that women ought to avoid Latin and confine themselves to their native tongue alone, although even "One Language may be tongue too much", 'Of Women Learned in the Tongues' (l.4), sig. Bⁱ.

Harington's satire against clerical ineptitude follows the tenets of the most vehement critic of bumbling clergymen of the century, William Tyndale. It also might be suspected, however, that men such as Tyndale were also his target. The satire, when complemented by its answer, highlights the risks not only of knowing Scripture only through the mediation of bumbling clergymen, but also those of putting the onus of interpretation upon lay folk, of whom Cheke serves him as an unwitting example. If Cheke was Harington's intended respondent then this was a particularly impertinent address to her since her first husband, Sir John Cheke, whose name she kept following the death of her second husband, had been a distinguished Cambridge theologian, and like Tyndale had begun a translation of the *New Testament*.⁴²⁷ Tyndale, the first translator of the Bible into English, advocated the accessibility of scripture for all and derided the quiddities of biblical exegesis fostered by Church fathers such as Augustine and Origen, asserting that "scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense".⁴²⁸ He had boasted famously that because of his translation the lay community could become as familiar with, and as understanding of, scripture as the inept clergy, or "popish doctors of dunce's dark learning" who, through their sophistry, had deprived people of access to the word of God.⁴²⁹ No doubt he would have approved of Harington's making his uneducated preacher a figure of fun, but the humdrum literal

⁴²⁷ It is not difficult to believe that Harington conceived of these two men as readily associable with one another since both went to great lengths to stipulate the way that the meaning of words ought to be rendered transparently in vernacular language accessible to the common man. Whereas Tyndale sought to bring the literal meaning of the Bible to the masses, Cheke taught that inhorn terms should be avoided, as should anglicising words from foreign languages, and he applied this principle to his translation of Matthew. See Hugh Sykes Davies, 'Sir John Cheke and the Translation of the Bible', *ES*, n.s. 5 (1952), 1-12 (pp.3-5 and p.7).

⁴²⁸ 'The Obedience of a Christen Man', in *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures by William Tyndale*, ed. Henry Walter (Cambridge: CUP, 1848), pp.127-344 (p.304).

⁴²⁹ *Tyndale's 'New Testament', Translated from the Greek by William Tyndale*, ed. David Daniell (London and New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1989), p.3.

interpretation he provokes from Cheke is meant to highlight equally the absurdity of entrusting interpretation to the lay community, and especially women.

Lady Mary Wroth

Shee frameth her iestures so discretely, that in speakyng, shee seemeth to holde her peace, and in holding her peace, to speake. (*Civile Conuersation*, II. sig. Pv^v)

In his *Civile Conuersation* Stefano Guazzo's interpretation of Castiglione's version of the golden mean prescribes a formula for women's social interaction which, through its paradoxical and circular logic, enables him to narrow and problematise ad infinitum the limits of the mean from within which female speech maintains its propriety. Lady Mary Wroth, in a response to a libel from Edward Denny, Baron of Waltham, appropriates and exploits precisely the rhetorical dilemma posed for female self-representation by this edict and presents a strategy for re-seizing autonomy of self-expression from within the margins of the mean. Late in 1621 Wroth, niece of Sir Philip Sidney, became involved in a heated exchange of libel with Denny. Her caustic rebuke to his libellous attack is hardly what Guazzo had in mind, but she nonetheless crafts a response that manipulates the tensions between the impropriety of assertive social interaction and the propriety of social passivity that are inherent in the paradoxical courtly mean of female conduct, and fashions out of them a stinging rebuttal that simultaneously abnegates its stake in original literary creativity. Testimony to her achievement in doing this are the numerous and slippery readings to which her poem lends itself, which show her to be both self-effacing and unrepentantly unleashing an aggressively forthright rebuke simultaneously.

In his libel Denny accused Wroth of having satirised his family in a section of her controversial prose romance, *The Countesse of Montgomerie's Urania*, that he considered with justification to allude to his brutal treatment of his daughter, Honoria, following a supposed act of adultery, committed against her Scottish husband, James Hay, Earl of

Carlisle. Wroth appeared to infer that Denny's cruelty was the cause of his daughter's premature death and, writing under the name of the character representing him in the *Urania*, "the father-in-law of Seralius", Denny retaliated with vehemently misogynist accusations that leave the reader in little doubt about his feelings regarding unrestrained female sexuality. Wroth returned Denny's allegations in kind, matching them point for point and employing linguistic parallelism in a fashion that proximates Denny's verse so closely that it is conspicuous even for an answer-poem.⁴³⁰ Wroth's answer mimics him line for line, echoing his verse lexically, metrically and stylistically. In this respect, using the conventional echoing of exchanged verse libels she minimises her authorial presence in her response. Although her answer is a scathing retort to Denny's attack, she mitigates her creative contribution to the exchange to the greatest possible degree, simply turning the accusations of sexual misconduct and hermaphroditism back upon her aggressor.

As we saw in Chapter One, the preservation of reputation is of equal importance to the humiliation of a rival in libellous exchanges of verse, and for a woman engaged in such pastimes the stakes are obviously higher. Wroth finds herself in a double bind, defending her reputation in a medium her association with which might itself threaten to tarnish her name. Her alacrity to respond in kind is perhaps owing to Denny's offering her a readymade rhetorical strategy to circumvent this problem.

In his libel he claims to be denouncing Wroth in the same terms with which she has denounced him:

How easy wer't to pay thee with thine owne
 Returning that which thou thy self hast throwne
 And write a thousand lies of thee at least

⁴³⁰ For elaboration upon these details see Josephine A. Roberts who also provides complete transcriptions of these poems in *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (London and Baton Rouge, Louisiana State UP, 1983), pp.32-5.

And by thy lines describe a drunken beast
 This were no more to thee then thou hast donne
 A Thrid but of thine owne which thou hast spunn
 By which thou plainly seest in thine owne glass
 How easy tis to bring a ly to pass. (ll.15-22)

Denny's conceit of returning the lie provides Wroth with an opening whereby she might capitalise upon the reflexive formalities of libelling through the trope of mirroring and thereby situate herself as anterior to the process of creative literary production. She reciprocates economically, making minimal changes to Denny's sentence structure and the form of verbs and adverbs, and a few more substantive alterations to pronouns and other word classes:

How easily now do you receave your owne
 Turnd on your self from whence the squibb was throwne
 When these few lines not thousands writt at least
 Mainly thus prove your self the drunken beast
 This is far less to you then you have donne
 A T[h]rid but of your owne all wordes worse spunn
 By which you lively see in your owne glasse
 How hard it is for you to ly and pass. (ll.15-22)

The allegations of bacchanal debauchery may be exaggerated but the insults exchanged are pertinent to the reputations of both protagonists (Wroth's affair with her cousin William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, and Denny's mistreatment of his daughter, Honoria). Essentially, they level the same accusations at one another, as applied to their respective scandalous reputations.

Denny begins:

Hermophradite in show, in deed a monster
 As by thy words and works all men may conster
 Thy wrathfull spite conceived an Idell book
 Brought forth a foole which like the damme doth look. (ll.1-4)

The image of the hermaphrodite is a particularly fertile one when applied to Wroth. Firstly, it alludes to her status as a writer, suggesting that a woman involved in textual production loses her femininity, becoming a third, monstrous sex, and implicitly connects women's publishing with unnatural, parthenogenetic child birth by reference to the commonplace of contemporary

antifeminist literature that “publication was directly linked to aggressive sexuality”.⁴³¹ By assigning her to a third sex, he implies that a woman involved in secular intellectual pursuits is no longer a woman. Denny sees the antidote to such monstrous transgression in the composition of religious writings. In a later prose epistle to Wroth he advises her to write “as large a volume of heavenly lays and holy love as you have of lascivious tales and amorous toys”. He envisages a career path for her reminiscent of that regularly attributed to Donne, beginning with lascivious juvenilia and, in maturity, turning to focus upon God. She can, he promises, “redeeme the tym” by emulating “the rare, and pious example of your vertuous and learned Aunt”, the Countess of Pembroke, or as he puts it in his verse libel, “Work o th’ Workes leave idle books alone/ For wise and worthy women have writte none” (ll.25-6).⁴³²

Secondly, the hermaphroditical accusation refers, almost certainly, to Wroth’s illegitimate child, fathered supposedly by her cousin William Herbert and alludes to their biological consanguinity through the image of male and female genitalia attached to the same body. He no doubt had in mind the story from the *Metamorphoses* in which Hermaphroditus becomes permanently ensconced with the nymph, Salmacis, during the course of being raped by her (IV. 285-388). Doubtless, the Narcissism of Wroth’s affair with Pembroke did not escape his attention either. After all, she had fallen in love with another writer and poet who was closely related to her. In other words, Pembroke was a near enough relation for their affair to smack of self-love.

Continuing the theme of androgyny, Denny attacks Wroth in terms that suggest she has recourse to both masculine and feminine means of communicating scandalously; the

⁴³¹ Krontiris (1992), p.17.

⁴³² The letters exchanged by Wroth and Denny following the libels are printed by Roberts (1992), pp.237-41 (for this letter see pp.238-9).

libellous writings of the rake and the libidinous, licentious speech of the gossip or scold.⁴³³ An equivalence between pen and phallus is implicit in his accusation that she is a deviant male impersonator and exhibitionist who ventures into the male world of literary publication as an “Hermophradite in show”. There is also equivalence between vagina and mouth apparent in Denny’s twofold metaphor, “Yet common oysters such as thine gape wide” (l.9). The accusation is that Wroth is a common scold and prostitute, who broadcasts her opinion and her sexual availability to the world. He describes her as voraciously consuming liquor, rumour and sex and then spewing the same back out in her “idel book”. She is a sluttish, abusive sot; “gap[ing] wide”, “slanderous” and “potted” (l.9, l.13 and l.14). It is worth pausing to note here that, although Denny employs the trope of reflexive libel in order to emphasise that this is retaliation and not unprovoked abuse, his oyster metaphor is all he borrowed from the offending section of the *Urania*, and that he is probably flaunting his originality in order to set it off against his accusation that Wroth’s book is “A Thrid but of [her] owne”.⁴³⁴

Although Wroth’s response is scathing, it is self-conscious mimicry rather than inventive wit, and, in humanist terms, aligns itself with the imitation of the student rather than the mastery of the accomplished rhetorician: “How easily now do you receive your owne/ Turnd on your self from whence the squibb was throwne” (ll.15-16). Her verse acts as a mirror deflecting the curse back at Denny, and her couplets are “Railing Rimes

⁴³³ On the gendering of abusive language in the seventeenth century see Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.108-9.

⁴³⁴ Wroth’s narrator reflects upon a misogynist society in which female chastity is considered “as rarely found, as Pearles in ordinary Oysters”, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery’s Urania by Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), p.516.

Returned”, as we are informed in the title of one manuscript version.⁴³⁵ Thus she limits her role and responsibility in the parenting of the answer. She neglects to defend herself from Denny’s charges explicitly, beyond mentioning his “spitefull words against a harmless booke” (l.2), and makes only economical changes to his libel. Returning the accusations of drunkenness, indiscriminate libelling and sexual promiscuity, she holds up to him “your owne glasse” (l.21). Her self-abnegation represents a line of resistance to Denny’s accusation of androgyny since it repulses his imprecations by mirroring and balances feminine self-effacement, (which counters the accusation of un-ladylike self-display through creative exertion) with a simultaneous acceptance of the charge of androgyny (which provides her with licence to write). The poem’s armour is tightly packed so as to leave exposed as few traces as possible of Wroth’s imaginative contribution to it.⁴³⁶ Thus, she evades objectification without endowing herself with subjectivity, or displaying unjustified presumptions to masculine creative accomplishment.

Her keenness to avoid the implications of original authorship here might well be linked to her efforts to suppress the *Urania*. Her attempt to placate the king through writing to Buckingham and through recalling copies of her book may have as much to do with avoiding allegations of penning seditious literature as with appeasing those she had slighted personally.⁴³⁷ In fact, an anti-Stuart interpretation of the section of the *Urania* in question becomes available immediately upon recognition that it alludes to the failed marriage of

⁴³⁵ See Cat. W 315.

⁴³⁶ This perhaps explains why so much of what has been written about these poems is descriptive and biographical rather than interpretive. See, for instance, Paul Salzman, ‘Contemporary References in Mary Wroth’s *Urania*’, *RES*, n.s. 29 (1978), 178-81; Roberts ed. (1983), pp.31-5; Gary F. Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Lady Mary Wroth, William Herbert and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State UP, 1993), pp.129-30 and Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (London and Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1993), pp.249-51.

Earl James Hay and Honoria. Their marriage had taken place in 1607 and was portrayed by Thomas Campion, in a masque performed for the festivities, as symbolising the unification of England and Scotland.⁴³⁸ Thus, Wroth's portrayal of the marriage's failure in 1621 was open to the interpretation of being veiled anti-Stuart propaganda. James I was the addressee of one anti-government libel penned supposedly by a woman in 1621-2, and it would certainly have been unfortunate for Wroth should it have been thought that she was responsible for penning another. No wonder she capitalises so eagerly on Denny's suggestion that the *Urania* is plagiarised by so conspicuously imitating his verse in her answer.

Such imitation, however, can also be read as a defiant continuation of the *Urania*. Not only does it protract the abuse of Denny begun in the *Urania*, the verse is contiguous with the prose romance in several other ways. Denny initiates this contiguity by continuing the themes of echoing and parenthood used by Wroth to explore female subjectivity. By confronting Wroth on her own literary territory he creates the circumstances for her to perpetuate that which he is attempting to silence, since in her answer she simply but ingenuously provides him with a glass in which to explore, like *Urania*, his own self-identity. Moreover, since Wroth opens her romance by using tropes of echoing and mirroring to explore the female identity of her eponymous heroine, she is no doubt self-conscious about the way in which she deploys the same tropes in order to abnegate her own

⁴³⁷ The letter is given by Roberts (1992), p.236.

⁴³⁸ See *The Description of a Maske, Presented before the Kinges Majestie at White-Hall, on Twelfth Night Last, in Honour of the Lord Hayes, and his Bride, Daughter and Heire to the Honourable Lord Denny*, in *The Works of Thomas Campion: Complete Songs, Masques, and Treatises with a Selection of the Latin Verse*, ed. Walter R. Davis (Faber and Faber, 1969), pp.203-30. Denny was also connected personally with the symbolism of union having welcomed James on his progression into England in 1603 in his capacity of Sheriff of Herefordshire. Fuller (1662), sig. Eeiv^v(2).

presence from her response to Denny's attack upon the book.⁴³⁹ She begins the *Urania* by invoking Ovid's Echo in order to explore "a kind of female subjectivity" whereby Urania grapples with her loss of self-identity upon discovering that she is adopted.⁴⁴⁰ Through her echoed dialogue with herself Urania develops a sense of an autonomous identity, and in effect becomes the parent and author of herself. As Moore writes, "She can know herself by hearing her own speech, linking voice and self-knowledge in ways that parallel the meanings implicit in the trope of mirroring".⁴⁴¹ In the *Urania* then, the trope of mirroring is predisposed to the pursuit of female intellectual inquiry and self-assertion and, by extension, Wroth's use of the same tropes to abnegate her creative presence in her quarrel with Denny recalls this fact.

A further way in which Wroth manufactures contiguity is also achieved through her echoing of Denny. In the *Urania* she had deployed sonnets as companions of, or answers to, ones in her uncle's *Astrophil and Stella* conspicuously, by substituting the male subjectivity of the Petrarchan lover, Astrophil, for that of the female Petrarchan lover, Urania. In effect, in the *Urania* she replaces the Petrarchan objectification of the idealised lady with a female counter-perspective, and in her response to Denny does likewise with his antifeminist representation of her. Thus she completes what might be regarded as a

⁴³⁹ She begins,

Unseene, unknowne, I here alone complaine
 To Rocks, to Hills, to Meadowes, and to Springs,
 Which can no helpe returne to ease my paine,
 But back my sorrowes the sad Eccho brings.
 Thus still encreasing are my woes to me,
 Doubly resounded by that monefull voice,
 Which seemes to seconde me in miserie,
 And answere gives like friend of mine owne choice. (U1, ll.1-8)

From Roberts ed. (1983), p.146.

⁴⁴⁰ Moore (2000), p.137.

⁴⁴¹ Moore (2000), p.138.

feminist project of providing an antidote to the limitations imposed upon female self-representation by both idealised and misogynistic representations of women.

It is also noteworthy that Wroth appropriates from Denny the theme of coitus as combat that originated in the *Metamorphoses*. She conjoins her verse with Denny's just as Salmacis wraps herself around, and becomes one with, Hermaphroditus. As mentioned already, there are advantages for her in accepting the charge of hermaphroditism. By imagining Denny as a fellow hermaphrodite she can wage her war on equal terms; he possesses the female quality of sensuality rather than the masculine one of reason and is therefore an "hermaphrodite in sense". This is a neat, economical means of overcoming the impropriety of a woman libelling a man. Furthermore, just as masculine traits remain predominant in Ovid's Narcissus, the gender specificity of the abuse exchanged here means that both protagonists remain fixed within their original gender categories. Thus, Wroth can not escape the fact that her equivalent in the Narcissus story is Salmacis, and that she has chosen to identify herself with a female rapist. As in the case of Margaret Douglas and Thomas Howard's modelling of their exchange upon Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (see p.245), or that of Whitney's abandoning reliance upon her friends in order to assume the mantle of an independent female satirist, Wroth is only able to find discursive space for herself by identification with a lascivious or deviant archetype. It might be said, however, by way of analogy with the fate of Narcissus at the hands of Salmacis that, figuratively speaking, Denny's libel becomes sandwiched or folded voluminously between the *Urania* and Wroth's answer-poem. His masculine aggression becomes walled in on both sides and imprisoned by Wroth's initial objectification of him as the "father-in-law of Seralius" and her subsequent reflected objectification of him as hermaphrodite.

Conclusion

I began this study with quotations from a few commentators upon answer-poetry who suggest the need for further study of the genre. Critical attention is still as sparse now as it was when the work for this thesis commenced. The discursive aspect of Renaissance verse and the importance of the art of conversation to Renaissance poetics have been largely effaced by several centuries of author-centred criticism and a significant task of reconstruction of the literary relationships between such poems is still necessary in order to reinstate the social dialogism of Renaissance verse. These relationships are far from being “as dead as butterflies in a cabinet”, as E. F. Hart referred to them in what appears to be the earliest study of the genre.⁴⁴² In fact, because they register so clearly the social engagement of Renaissance poets, they could be argued to bring the verse of this period to life for the modern reader. Whereas Marotti has shown the dialogism of Renaissance verse generally, this thesis has categorised and attempted to show some of the distinct ways in which specific cultural contexts, social environments and rhetorical strategies pertain to different types of socially dialogic verse exchanges. What I have tried to reflect adequately here is the richness and diversity of the answer-poem without losing sight of those characteristics of verse answering that lend generic coherence to it.

Answer-poetry reflects well the liveliness and dynamism of Renaissance poetics and promises an intellectually valuable resource that can also be highly entertaining. To repeat an earlier quotation from Margaret Downs-Gamble: “argumentative disputation, the ultimate goal in Renaissance education, the ultimate joy in Renaissance entertainment, has been excluded from our consideration of Renaissance poetic”.⁴⁴³ Downs-Gamble is surely right to highlight this want of attention to the poetics of disputation and its cultural

⁴⁴² Hart (1956), p.22.

⁴⁴³ Downs-Gamble (1996), 2.32.

influences in the Renaissance, and it should be added that the theory and practice of civil conduct also played a significant role in shaping the dynamics of conversational poetry. Any critical approach to Renaissance poetics ought to be as mindful of the interactive, conversational tendencies of Renaissance writers as they were themselves. Awareness of their anticipation and provocation of answers and of poets' compulsion to respond to the work of others is fundamental to an understanding of their mindset, of how they perceive themselves in relation to their audience and their wider culture.

Conversational poetry appeared in a diversity of spaces in the Renaissance, from print to manuscript, from graffiti on walls and the sides of houses (see Cat. W 308-9) to wit combats attributed to some of the most respected English poets of the day, from ballads papering tavern walls⁴⁴⁴ to verse exchanges etched into windows at court (see Cat. E 118), and from verses sallied back and forth between balladeers to ones involving masters and pupils in places of education (see Cat. Anon 29, C 96-7, H 156, J 182, L 199-201, P 228, S 268, W 304, W 310). At court, the Inns and Universities it is even possible to imagine that verse exchanges formed part of the common currency of educational life. Perhaps the strongest argument then, that the answer-poem should enjoy an important place in Renaissance Studies, is the importance attributed to it by men and women of the Renaissance themselves.

Verse exchanges provide opportunities for self-display, as poets situate themselves performatively in relation to particular moral, philosophical, theological or factional outlooks as either displays of patriotism or personal accomplishment, thereby singling themselves out as right-thinking and valuable members of society. Whether examining antisocial exchanges of abuse, courtship exchanges or verses exchanged between friends it

is apparent that the answer-poem is a pronounced medium through which personas of good repute are cultivated and advertised in Tudor and early-Stuart society. The successful cultivation of a positive self-image requires keeping within parameters appropriate to circumstance and conventional wisdom. It is, in essence, a display of orthodoxy. This is perhaps most obvious when poets get it wrong; such as when James I fails to follow the conventions of proclamations against sedition or when Skelton neglects to toe the line of royal policy in his 'Against the Scottes'.

This impulse for self-display should be understood not only in terms of the response, but also in terms of the urge of poets to secure responses to their work, whether, like Donne, they make direct requests through epistolary communication, or use strategies of provocation intended to incite responses, as in the case of Raleigh's 'The Lie'. There might also be an element of prearrangement; as seems to be the case for Googe's verse exchanges with his friends or in some domestic, courtly flytings. In fact, it is probable that the successful solicitation of an answer and the cultivation of poetic dialogue between peers were both seen as being just as indicative of poetic accomplishment as efficacious riposte. The extent to which such skills might be cultivated is perhaps reflected by several of the initiating poems I have examined which show evidence of a highly attuned ability to gauge accurately what Taavitsainen and Jucker refer to as the "perlocutionary effect" of their verses or, in other words, the control they manage to exert over the sort of poetic reactions they provoke.⁴⁴⁵ As I have shown, there is evidence that Harington's 'Of a Certain Preacher' and Donne's 'Here's no more newes' are pronounced examples of such aptitude.

Simultaneously, exchanged verses often exhibit some degree of collaboration between

⁴⁴⁴ See, for instance, Livingston (1991), p.796.

⁴⁴⁵ Taavitsainen and Jucker (2000), p.72.

the protagonists, whether it is the fraternity of backbiting late-Elizabethan satirists or a collaborative exchange of amicable sentiment between friends based upon assumptions of like-mindedness and shared reasoning. Googe, Blundeston and Neville define their solidarity through displays of such shared learning in moral philosophy and through their claims to share the ability to reason correctly. They do not attempt to critique the concept of reason. Such enquiry would undermine their conceit that reason is a fixed, homogenous entity attainable by the rational, who are consequently able to achieve accord and consensus between themselves. Alternately, in hostile exchanges a lack of reason is frequently the evidence by which outsiders are identified and denounced. Smyth attempts to exclude Gray from court favour partly because his “rude rowsty reason, [is] so farre from the pyth” and Lily also attacks Skelton for his lack of judgement: “Quid versus trutina meas iniqua/ Libras” (Why are my verses by thee weigh’d/ in a false scale?). Similarly, in the Petrarchan courtship verses from the court of Henry VIII, it is the irrationality and emotional excesses of suitors that singles them out as behaving in an uncourtly fashion.

In the verse exchanges involving aristocratic and courtly ladies the themes of perceiving and interpreting correctly persist, whether the point for debate is the impossibility of love (Seymour and Rodney), the nature of gendered power relations (Elizabeth’s exchanges with Schede and Raleigh), the correct way to interpret scripture (Harington and Cheke), or the identification of socially deviant behaviour (Wroth and Denny). Excepting Cheke’s contribution, all these exchanges suggest the possibility of a female-centred epistemology set in opposition to its male opposite number. The verse answers of Elizabeth, Frances Seymour, and to some extent Mary Wroth, show that the answer-poem can be a site of struggle for female subjectivity and, when examined against the background of the female-voiced answer-poetry from the Henrician court, a potential vehicle for women to begin to explore their literary subjectivity that might sometimes be

detached from the association between female speech and concupiscence. Whereas answers exchanged between male groups are concerned with self-display and the promotion of self-image, these women answer-poets and their female-voiced predecessors at the Henrician court often strike a balance between self-effacement and self-fashioning as they negotiate literary identities for themselves that avoid transgressing sexual mores and the rules governing appropriate female speech.

While the genre can be viewed as a site of paradigmatic shift towards women's exploration of literary subjectivities it is also notable for its servility to normative cultural and social values. The answer-poem tends not to be oppositional, radical or heterodox, except perhaps during the Marian years by which time its Protestantism was well established. The genre is marked by its conservatism and its pro-establishment stance. Even the counter-culture of antisocial verse exchanges is the immediate product of a normative culture of civility that prescribes the boundaries and standards of acceptable behaviour for gentlemen and courtiers and the codes of honour and reputation to which they should adhere. As the etiquette of civil conduct or politeness became more systemised in the sixteenth century, the more prone were the rules of social interaction to being perceived to be breeched and the more likely were offended parties were to pursue reparation. Markku Peltonen is one historian who identifies this phenomenon and he posits a direct link between the growth of theories of civil conduct and the rise of duel theory and duelling in late-Elizabethan society, noticing that "the duel of honour [...] emerged as an integral part of the Italian Renaissance theory of courtesy".⁴⁴⁶ The relationship between duelling and civil conduct provides a good model for understanding the relationship

⁴⁴⁶ As Stone (1965) writes, "a gentleman of quality found himself under obligation to challenge an opponent for the most trivial of verbal slips", p.246. Peltonen (2003), p.18.

between socially and antisocially dialogic verse exchanges. Both are the effects of a preoccupation with the active cultivation of a positive self-image, and a hyper-sensitivity towards words or deeds that might potentially enhance or damage one's good name. Such sensitivity to the "perlocutionary effect" of one's words no doubt explains why poets might cultivate an aptitude for anticipating and even manipulating the sort of answers that their verses could potentially elicit. This could be what equipped poets such as Donne and Harington to gauge the effect of their verses upon their respondents, Wotton and Cheke, so astutely.

There is a tendency for verse quarrels preceding the rise of Italianate courtesy and duelling in England to present themselves as being more concerned with national honour and patriotism rather than with personal honour. Thus, in the middle of the century, Churchyard and Camel and Smyth and Gray go to some lengths to claim that they are protecting their Kings' names against their adversaries rather than engaging in personal quarrels. Questions of personal honour play even less prominent roles in the earlier humanist flytings of the courts of Henry VII and VIII. Humanists versed in the arts of diplomatic courtesy and etiquette were, it seems, equipped equally to exchange flyting discourtesies when diplomacy broke down and hostilities ensued, and this was done out of a sense of patriotic duty rather than personal animosity. As we have seen in the case of Sir Thomas More's encounter with Germanus Brixius and that of Henry VII's courtiers with Robert Gaguin, the protagonists placed nationalism before friendship and solidarity within the humanist community, or at least appear to have attempted to keep their personal relationships with humanist colleagues apart from their professional role of vitriolically defending the nation's integrity. It is notable that in none of the exchanges examined, subsequent to those involving Gaguin and More, do conflicts of interest arise between national loyalty and personal friendship. In personal exchanges rivals continue to be

singled out as enemies of the state, though this accusation is now often used as a justification by presenting expressions of personal animosity as ones of patriotic duty.

There is then a perceivable shift away from official forms of quarrelling and towards the management of personal quarrels. Noticeably, in the early-seventeenth-century flyting between Taylor and Fennor, the question of having been dishonoured personally is much more prominent and the details of the rivalry between the protagonists is given in much more detail, although disingenuous accusations of treason are still exchanged. Similarly, Lord Denny and Mary Wroth level their differences at one another directly, and the dispute only ventures beyond the personal when Wroth, fearing that she had angered the king by offending a noble family, attempted to protect herself by recalling the book which had been the original cause of offence.⁴⁴⁷

It is often quite apparent why certain sorts of answer-poetry are found in clusters at particular times and not at others. For instance, the coincidence of the outpouring of marriage propaganda following the Edwardian reformation and the verse exchanges appearing on this theme around the same time or, alternatively, the absence of courtly flytings during the more refined female courts of Mary and Elizabeth. Other clusters of answer-poems appear in reaction to isolated historical events (such as the Northern Rebellion) or are largely the product of the individual personalities of the protagonists, so that it is often difficult to view them as part of larger historical trends.

The causes behind the appearance of answer-poetry concerned specifically with the subject of friendship from the 1560s onwards, however, perhaps warrants some further consideration. Such exaggerated expressions of fraternal bonding may be acting as antidotes to the artifice of the growing culture of courtesy in the late-sixteenth century. It is

perhaps the case that the terms used to express and discuss friendship needed to be accentuated in order to distinguish them from dissembling flattery, and that amicable answer-poetry is one manifestation of this phenomenon. Notably, in a number of verses exchanged between friends the correspondents dissociate themselves explicitly from affectation and go to some lengths to stress the genuine nature of their friendship (see, for instance, Googe's 'To L. Blundeston' and 'The Answer of L. Blundeston to the Same', discussed pp.191-2). Expressions of friendship, such as those indulged in by Googe and his correspondents, may also have a strong element of affectation about them, as they compete to deliver the most pronounced declarations of fraternal solidarity, but such exaggeration is perhaps necessary in order to go beyond the language of politeness that infects everyday conversation among gentlemen and courtiers.

Similarly, the affected independence and self-sufficiency of the late-Elizabethan satirists, such as Marston, from the dissembling of courteous sentiment might be seen as the consequence of exasperation with the sensitivity to reputation and the concomitant politeness which it demands. In this case it would provide a cathartic release from Italianate courtesy by cultivating a fraternity built upon exaggerated insult rather than exaggerated compliment. This would certainly explain some of the correspondences between Marston and Skelton's notion of what it means to be a socially engaged satirist, since Skelton, in his role as *orator regius*, often departs from the niceties of diplomatic courtesy to which his contemporaries at court, such as Sir Thomas More, seem to have felt more bound (see pp.74-5).

The manifestation in the Reformation of a culture of civil conduct, a concomitant culture of defamation, a philosophy of friendship, a poetics of courtship and the

⁴⁴⁷ Roberts (1992), p.35.

Renaissance education in dialectic all contributed towards the formation of a society in which verse conversations flourished. Whether conducted between friends or rivals there is a competitive aspect to answer-poetry, and this is perhaps its most pronounced characteristic, and symptomatic of the rise of social mobility during the sixteenth century. Thus answer-poets' tendency to stress how well they fit into their rightful place in the social hierarchy, while simultaneously representing their rivals as less well-adjusted individuals, undeserving of their rank. Their ambition works within the constraints of a world in which they must present themselves as advocates of a stable social hierarchy, while simultaneously seeking preferment and social advancement, and protecting their social status by safeguarding their reputations as gentlemen, noblemen or courtiers.

Appendix I: Select Catalogue of Answer-Poetry in Print and Manuscript, 1485-1625

Format and Methodology of the Catalogue

The catalogue is set out firstly by ascription, short title and then first line of the answering verse, then by ascription, short title and first line of the verse answered (antecedent). A selection of available sources are given with the catalogued verses. Physical details given are from the source in the 'Text cited' field. Variants between sources have not been examined. Details provided include selected versions in print and manuscript, and selected references to citations in other indices and catalogues of verse in print and manuscript (these are not comprehensive and where they are not given the field is silently elided). Where a cited poem is untraced reference is made either to its entry in the *Stationers' Register* or other bibliographical source. Where sources differ between the answer and the antecedent (as in Anon 26) that of the antecedent is given first (this applies to the 'Text cited' and 'Printed versions' fields). Entries in the 'Manuscript versions' and 'Citations' fields are given in alphabetical order. In instances where the order of a verse exchange is uncertain that given by the source cited is used. Names of musical settings are not given and no claim is made for the comprehensiveness of this resource.

Questions of date and authorship are not addressed comprehensively and many ascriptions are putative. Ascribed authors are cited in alphabetical order. Where the author's name is unknown that of the licensee is given (as in C 95). Otherwise the answer is listed among the anonymous authors at the beginning of the Catalogue, which are arranged alphabetically by the first line given in bold text (as in Anon 1), or, if the answer is not extant, alphabetically by title. First lines are not given for lengthy verse pamphlets or in instances where the antecedent is a prose work (as in F 124). Latin translations are usually given only in instances where they appear alongside the original text in the cited source. Where manuscripts are unseen information is given from the source text and

bibliographical resources cited. The reader is referred to these for further information. If the answer cited is a response to a poem that is itself an answer to another poem then the reader is referred to the initial poem and answer set for details about the exchange including the text cited, first line of the first answer and so forth (as in Anon 9). Where needed, additional information about the second answer (counter-response) is given within its own citation. Where the same author is responsible for more than one answer to a single verse these are given together in the same citation as Answer a, Answer b and so forth (as in A 60a-d). Similarly, where a poem answers more than one other poem these are given together as Antecedent a, Antecedent b and so forth (as in Anon 22). Two line epigrams are given in full.

All seen texts are given abbreviated titles (usually the name of the author or editor of the work) and cross-referenced with the bibliography. Abbreviated titles are also given for catalogues and indices of verse and manuscript citations (see Abbreviations, pp.3-4 and Manuscript Abbreviations, overleaf). Unseen printed sources are given their full titles in the relevant fields or, in the case of *STC* entries, they are given their *STC* reference number and Early English Books reference number.

Catalogue

- Anon 1** (alphabetically by first line/title)
- | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--|
| Answer | Ascription: | Anon |
| | Title: | 'On B. Johnsons Book in fol.' |
| | First line: | "A friend of his this for the Author says:/ His plays are works when thy best works are lays" |
| Antecedent | Ascription: | Anon |
| | First line: | "Methinks, in this a mystery there lurks,/ Why Johnson's Plays are now called Johnson's works" |
| Sources | Text cited: | Crum, M344 and A143a |
| | Printed versions: | Marotti, p.168 |
| | Manuscript versions: | BL E2421, f. 29 ^r ; CCC 328, f. 25 ^v and f. 43 ^v |
| 2 | | |
| Answer | Ascription: | Anon |
| | Title: | 'The Ladies Comfortable and Pleasant Answer' |
| | First line: | "Ah, silly Soul! Art thou so sore afraid?" |
| Antecedent | Ascription: | Anon |
| | Title: | 'Fortune my Foe' or 'The Louers Complaint for the Loss of his Loue' |
| | First line: | "Fortune, my Foe, why dost thou frown on me?" |
| Sources | Text cited: | Woodfall Ebsworth, I. pp.961-3 |
| 3 | | |
| Answer | Ascription: | Anon |
| | Title: | 'Alder-Mary Churches Answer' |
| | First line: | "Alas! my innocence excuse" |
| Antecedent | Ascription: | Anon |
| | Title: | 'The Author to Alder-Mary Church' |
| | First line: | "Ungrateful Church, orerun with rust" |
| Sources | Text cited: | Fuller, sig. Fi ^r |
| 4 | | |
| Answer | Ascription: | Anon |
| | Title: | 'The Aunswer' |
| | First line: | "Alas your fondnes makys me smylle" |
| Antecedent | Ascription: | Anon |
| | First line: | "Love why so wyll whyt bread, I best do love browne" |
| Sources | Text cited: | Wyatt b, p.403 |
| | Manuscript versions: | Blage MS. (TCD 160), f. 121 |
| | Citations: | <i>Verse in MS</i> , TM112 and TM960.7 |
| 5 | | |
| Answer | Ascription: | Anon |
| | First line: | "A man that hath a good wife love her love her" (answered by Anon 41, see also H 154) |
| Antecedent | Ascription: | Raleigh, Sir Walter |
| | Title: | 'A Quip for Cupide' |
| | First line: | "Farewell fallse love the oracle of lyes" |
| Sources | Text cited: | Hughey, I. nos 235 and 235a |
| 6 | | |
| Answer | Ascription: | Anon |

- Title: 'Antigraphium' (answered by Anon 30)
 First line: **"As verely as Adam was create by God"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Shepherd, Luke
 Title: 'Antipus'
 First line: "As verily as Adam created firste his God"
 Sources Text cited: Shepherd and Anon, sigs Ai^r-Aii^v
 Citations: *Ind. Brit. Scrip.*, p.283; Livingston, pp.94-5; *Verse Printed*, TP187-8
- 7**
 Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **"Bushes have tops, but the Cedar greater"** (see also Anon 8)
 Antecedent Ascription: Dyer, Sir Edward
 First line: "The lowest trees haue tops, the Ante her gall"
 Sources Text cited: Rollins c, I. no. 128 and II. p.167
 Printed versions: Hughey, I. no. 190
 Manuscript versions: Harl. 6910, f. 153^r
 Citations: A selection of other answers are given in Rollins c, II. p.169
- 8**
 Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'An Answere to the First Staffe, that Loue is Vnlike in Beggars and in Kings' (see also Anon 7)
 First line: **"Compare the Bramble with the Cedar tree"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Dyer, Sir Edward
 First line: "The lowest Trees haue tops, the Ante her gall"
 Sources Text cited: Rollins c, I. nos. 128-9
 Printed versions: Hughey, I. no. 190
 Citations: Crum, T974 and T2370
- 9**
 Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: "These are sayd to be done by a Lady"
 First line: **"Condemne not gracious king, our playntes and teares"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to J 181
 Sources Text cited: Rawl. Poet. 26, f. 20^r
 Manuscript versions: Ash. 37, f. 59; Eng. Poet. C.50., f. 25^v; Rawl. Poet. 152, f. 4^r
 Citations: Crum, C700
- 10**
 Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **"Dryuyn to Desyre, a drad also to Dare"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 First line: "Dryven by Desire I Dyd this Dede"
 Sources Text cited: Muir b, nos 14-15
 Manuscript versions: Blage MS. (TCD 160), fols 87-8
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP356
- 11**
 Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'The Answere'
 First line: **"Evyn when you lust ye may refrayne"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
 Title: According to Muir b several of Wyatt's poems are candidates for

- the antecedent (p.67). *Verse in MS* (TM2042) suggests, "Your lokes so often cast", Blage MS. (TCD 160), f. 104 (see *Verse Printed*, TP2342)
- Sources Text cited: Muir b, no. 20
 Manuscript versions: Blage MS. (TCD 160), f. 105
- 12**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Of the Dissembling Louer'
 First line: **"Girt in my giltlesse gowne as I sit here and sow"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Howard, Henry, Earl of Surrey
 Title: 'A Carelesse Man, Scorning and Describing, the Suttle Vusage of Women towarde their Louers'
 First line: "Wrapt in my carelesse cloke, as I walke to and fro"
- Sources Text cited: Rollins c, nos 26 and 243
 Manuscript versions: AH, f. 37
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP2317 and TP457
- 13**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'The Mayden's Answere'
 First line: **"If I might intreat yow to alter your minde"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'The Second Part of Jeamyne'
 First line: "My hart is impure my body within"
- Sources Text cited: Clark, pp.189-91
 Manuscript versions: Shir. 119 D44, fols 189-91
- 14**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'An Aunswere'
 First line: **"If that thy wicked wife had spon the thred"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Gray, William
 Title: 'An Epitaphe Written by W. G. to be Set vpon his Owne Graue'
 First line: "Lo here lieth G. vnder the grounde"
- Sources Text cited: Tottel, nos 255-6
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.125-9
 Manuscript versions: Lans. 98, f. 206; Slo. 1207, fols 9-10
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP855 and TP1057
- 15**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Her Answere, in the Same Rimes'
 First line: **"If your fond Loue want worth and great desarte"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Vpon her Acknowledging his Desarte, yet Reiecting his Affection'
 First line: "If Loue conioyn'd with worth and great desarte"
- Sources Text cited: Rollins c, I. nos 28-9
- 16**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **"I meane what I wot Sir, your best is to hie,/ And carrie a knaue with you for companie"**
- Antecedent: Ascription: Anon

First line: "I wot what I meane Iohn, it is for to stay/ And company the knaue
Carrier, for loosing my way"
Sources Text cited: Puttenham, p.143. Conducted, according to Puttenham, between a
yeoman of London (antecedent) and his Sargeant of the Mace
(answer)

17

Answer Ascription: Anon
Title: 'The Lover's Replye to the Maiden's Fye Fye'
First line: **"In the mery month of Maye"**
Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
Sources Text cited: Clark, pp.29-31
Manuscript versions: Shir. 119 D44, fols 29-31

18

Answer Ascription: Anon
Title: 'Verses Underneath an Answer to a Challenge Made by the Earl of
Bothwell, Offering to Prove by the Law of Armes that He was the
Chief and Author of the Foul and Horrible Murder of the King'
First line: **"It is not aneuch ye pure King is deid"**
Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
Sources Text cited: Cranstoun, I. p.30

19

Answer Ascription: Anon
Title: 'Respontio'
First line: **"It's strange to se a face soe highe in birth"**
Antecedent Ascription: Anon
Title: 'Petitio'
First line: "Looke, and lament, behould a face of Earth"
Sources Text cited: Marotti, pp.103-4
Manuscript versions: Skipworth Family Anthology (Add. 25707), f. 46^r

20

Answer Ascription: Anon
First line: **"Love thou hast which thou dost lacke"**
Antecedent Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
First line: "What thing is that, that I both have and lack"
Sources Text cited: Wyatt b, no. 235 and p.429
Manuscript versions: Harl. 78, f. 29^v
Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM1834 and TM957; *Verse Printed*, TP2136

21

Answer Ascription: Anon
First line: **"Many would write but see mens witts soe rare/ That of their
owne they instantly dispayre"**
Antecedent Ascription: Anon
First line: "Hang him he's fit for nothing butt his hearse/ That in this wittye
age can scorne verse"
Sources Text cited: Downs-Gamble, 10
Manuscript versions: Eg. 2230, f. 47

22

Answer Ascription: Anon
Title: *Marre Mar-Martin: Or Marre-Martins Medling in a Manner*

- Misliked*
- Antecedent a First line: **“Martins vaine prose, Marre-Martin doth mislike”**
 Ascription: Anon
 Title: *Mar-Martine* ([1589(?)])
- Antecedent b First line: “I know not why a trueth in rime set out”
 Ascription: Anon
 Title: *Mar-Martin* ([1589(?)])
- Sources First line: “I Knowe not why a frutelesse lye in Print”
 Text cited: Mar Martin a and b; Marre Mar-Martin
- 23**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘The Lady Penelope Rich to Sir Phillipe Sidney’ (Roberts’s italics)
 First line: **“Martyrd in thought but martyr’d more in soule”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘Sir Philip Sidney to the Lady Penelope Rich’
 First line: “If yet a choyce more worthy, cause more new”
- Sources Text cited: Roberts, pp.67-75
 Manuscript versions: Eng. Poet. Mf. 9, pp.224-36
- 24**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **“My frend I see the pale and wan”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to C 95
- Sources Text cited: Hughey, I. no. 271
- 25**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **“My louing Lorde I will well that ye wist,/ The thred is spon,
 that neuer shall vntwist”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 First line: “Louely Lady I long full sore to heare,/ If ye remaine the same, I
 left you the last year”
- Sources Text cited: Puttenham, p.156
- 26**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘Northamptonshire’
 First line: **“Neighbor Lester, by your Leave, your Peace Keepers we
 conceyue”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘Leicestershire Libel’
 First line: “Of Beaumont Sir Harry swears by St. Mary”
- Sources Text cited: Harl. 6383, fols 71^v-3^r; Add. 5832, fols 203^r-4^v. Thanks are due to
 Andrew McRae for permission to use his transcription of these
 libels. He dates the answer between 1606 and 1615
 Citations: Crum, N104
- 27**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **“Of few wourdes sir you seme to be”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
 First line: “Madame, withouten many wordes”
- Sources Text cited: Wyatt b, no. 34 and p.298

- Printed versions: Rollins a, no. 53
 Manuscript versions: Eg. 2711, f. 24^v
 Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM969 and TM1268; *Verse Printed*, TP1102
- 28**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Ane Answer Maid to *the Sklanderaris that Blasphemis the Regent and the Rest of the Lordis*'
 First line: **"Reingat rapfow! Thocht thow raif"**
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
 Sources Text cited: Cranstoun, I. pp.65-7
- 29**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Dulman the Clarke to John a Styles of Grey's Inne Sendeth Greeting' (answered by S 268)
 First line: **"Reverend John Stiles, for stile wee will not iarre"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon (in the persona of John a Stiles)
 Title: 'Vnto the Comedieans of Cambridg ... John-a-Stiles Student in ye Comon Law Wisheth a Sounder Iudgment, and a More Reverent Opinion of ther Betters'
 First line: "Faith Gentlemen I doe not blame *your* witt"
- Sources Text cited: Rawl. Poet. 26, fols 31^v-2^v
 Manuscript versions: Don. C. 54, f. 26^v æ; Haslewood Kingsborough MS. (Hunt. HM 198, pt. 1, pp.46-51); Mal. 19, p.127; Rawl. Poet. 153, f. 11; Tan. 465, f. 79^v
 Citations: Crum, F117 and R181
- 30**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Apologia Antipi'
 First line: **"Right rougheli and rashli, and wel ouer sene"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to Anon 6
 Text cited: Shepherd and Anon, sigs Aii^v-Bii^r
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP1533
- 31**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Westerne Wyll, vpon the Debate betuyxte Churchyarde and Camell'
 First line: **"Rowe thy bote thou ioli ioli mariner"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-5, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Ciii^r-Di^v
 Printed versions: *STC* 25668.5 (film 1861)
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP1885
- 32**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Her Answere'
 First line: **"Sweet Lord, your flame still burning"**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'A Dialogue betwixt the Louer and his Lady'
 First line: "Lady, my flame still burning"

Sources	Text cited:	Rollins c, I. nos 155-6
33		
Answer	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	'Dieing Louer pro et contra'
	First line:	"That man whose breast no fiery pasions proue"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Ayton, Sir Robert
	Title:	'Vpon Love'
	First line:	"There is no worldly pleasure here below"
Sources	Text cited:	Ayton, no. 43 and pp.297-8
	Manuscript versions:	Harl. 3991, fols 3 ^v -4
34		
Answer	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	'Another, of Another Mind' [2] (see also Anon 38, M 202 and S 248)
	First line:	"The greatest kings do least command content"
Antecedent	Ascription:	De Vere, Edward, Earl of Oxford or Sir Edward Dyer
	Title:	'Epigram'
	First line:	"Were I a king I coulde commande content"
Sources	Text cited:	Hopewell Hudson and Hebel, p.196
35		
Answer	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	'Answer'
	First line:	"The reasons which you here propound"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	'Trust no Woman'
	First line:	"Crede ratem ventis; animum ne crede puellis" ['[Englisht]' "Trust thy shipp vnto the winds,/ But doe not trust a woeman kinde"]
Sources	Text cited:	Furnivall, nos 32-3
36		
Answer	Ascription:	Anon
	First line:	"The World's a Globe of State, our Life a Raigne,/ Man Soueraigne"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Bacon, Sir Francis
	Title:	'The World'
	First line:	"The World's a bubble and the life of man/ less than a span"
Sources	Text cited:	Grierson, pp.148-9
	Manuscript versions:	Add. B. 106, f. 14; CCC 318, f. 42
	Citations:	Crum, T1595
37		
Answer	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	'Amantium iræ Amoris redintegratio est' ['The Falling Out of Louers, is the Renewing of Loue']: 'The Maydes Answer'
	First line:	"Though falling out of faithfull friends/ renewing be of loue"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Anon
	First line:	"Come my best and dearest/ come sit thee downe by me"
Sources	Text cited:	Hindley, I. pp.21-8
38		
Answer	Ascription:	Anon
	First line:	"To be a king thy care would much augment" (see also Anon 34,

- Title: 'The Answere'
 First line: **"Whom fansy forced first to loue"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon
- Title: 'Against a Gentlewoman by Whom He was Refused'
 First line: "To false report and flying flame"
 Sources Text cited: Rollins b, I. nos 254 and 290
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP2019 and TP2248
- 45**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'A Ballet'
 First line: **"Wyll ye complayne witout a cavsse"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'A Ballet'
 First line: "The man ys blest that lyves in rest"
 Sources Text cited: Seng, nos 18-19
 Manuscript versions: Vesp. A-25, fols 137^v-9^r
 Citations: *Anal. Ind.*, 3006-7
- 46**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'An Answer by the Galantes'
 First line: **"Ye pop holy pristes full of presumcion"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'Tempore R[ex] E[wardus] iiiijth Made by Prestes agenst Galantes'
 First line: "This prowde Galantis thriftles"
 Sources Text cited: *Verse in MS*, TM1641 and TM2028
 Manuscript versions: Trin. 0.2.53, f. 27
- 47**
- Answer Ascription: Anon [Thomas Churchyard(?)]
 Title: 'A Plain and Fynall Confutation of Camelles Corlyke Oblatracion'
 First line: **"Ye vprighte men Whiche loues thee light, whose heartes be voyd of gyle"**
 Antecedent Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving Anon 31, B 71-2, C 82-5, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291
 Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Gi^r-Hi^v
 Printed versions: *STC* 5246 (film 1511)
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP2331
- 48**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'The Ladye's Replie to the Answere Made to her Lamentation'
 First line: **"Your answere to my sad laments"**
 Antecedent a Ascription: Anon (The answer indicates that it is the third in a sequence of
 and b epitaphs, consisting of a lamentation, an answer to the lamentation and this counter-response)
- Sources Text cited: Clark, pp.145-8
 Manuscript versions: Shir. 119 D44, fols 145-8
- 49**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'A Gracious Answere from the Blessed Elizabeth to her Whilome Subjects with a Divine Admonition and a Propheticke Conclusion'

- Antecedent a First line: **“Your bold Peticion (Mortalls) I have seenē”**
 Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘To the Blessed St. Elizabeth of Famous Memorye, the Humble Petition of her now Most Wretched and Most Contemptible the Commons of England’
- Antecedent b First line: “If Saints in Heaven can eyther see or heare”
 Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘To the Most High and Mightye Jehovah ... The Most Humble Peticon of the Nowe Most Miserable, the Commons of Long Afflicted England’
- Sources First line: “If Bleeding harts, dejected soules fynde Grace”
 Text cited: Farmer Jr., pp.146-71
 Printed versions: Morfill, I. pt. 2, pp.130-1 and pp.137-41
 Manuscript versions: Ash. 37, f. 303
 Citations: Crum, I697, I937 and Y444
- 50**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘The Answer’
 First line: **“Your Borrowd meane to moue your mone, of fume withouten flame”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘The Complaint of a Hot Woer, Delayed with Doutfull Cold Answers’
- Sources First line: “A Kinde of coale is as men say”
 Text cited: Rollins a, nos 287-8
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP21 and TP2339
- 51**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘The Aunswere’
 First line: **“Your folyshe fayned hast/ Full small effecte shall tak”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 First line: “Madame, I you requyere/ No longer tyme detrack”
- Sources Text cited: Muir b, nos 30-1
 Manuscript versions: Blage MS. (TCD 160), f. 127
 Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM968 and TM2040
- 52**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘Answer of the Candlewick Crew’
 First line: **“Your letter large of lewde effecte we longe synns have receyvdyd”**
- Antecedent a Ascription: Pereson, Paul
 Title: ‘Hauynge Opportunytie of Tyme to Cawlle to Memorye your Jentell Commendacyons Lattelye by Vs Receyved’
 First line: “So Lycke as your Commendacyons, by vs in *all* points hathe byn vzyd”
- Antecedent b Ascription: Mawd, Arthur
 Title: ‘Moste Trustye and welbe Louyd Frenedes, with [Loue] Vnfaynnd We Commend vss vnto You, Wyshynge [all] Hellthes’
 First line: “And fyrste we wilbe gyn with ower moste welbe Louyd”

- Sources Text cited: Morfill, I. pp.144-56 (“*ll*” my italics, others Morfill)
 Manuscript Versions: Tan. 306, fols 177-9
- 53**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘Her Answere’
 First line: **“Your letters I receaued”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Lawson
 Title: ‘Mr Lawson of St John’s Colledge his Verses to his Mistresse’
 First line: “Love, whose power & might”
- Sources Text cited: Rawl. Poet. 26, f. 5^r
 Printed Versions: Furnivall, pp.7-10; Wardroper, pp.188-90
 Manuscript versions: Add. 25303, fols 70^v-1^r; Eng. Poet. F. 9, p.18; Jo. 58, f. 65^v
 Citations: Crum, O669 and Y471
- 54**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 First line: **“Yowre ferefull hope cannot prevayle”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 First line: “My ferefull hope from me ys fledd”
- Sources Text cited: Muir a, pp.258-9
 Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), fols 7-8
 Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM1034 and TM2039.28
- 55**
- Answer Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘The Answeir to the Englisch Ballad’
 First line: **“Yow that doe wryte aganis the Scottis”**
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: ‘Ane Exclamatioun Maid in England vpon the Delyuerance of the Erle of Northumberland furth of Lochlevin quho Immediatly Thairefter wes Execute in Yorke’
 First line: “Quho list to mark the Scottisch gyse”
- Sources Text cited: Cranstoun, I. pp.240-7
 Manuscript versions: Sir Richard Maitland MS., 1555-86 (PLM), f. 89b and f. 91a
- A56** (henceforth alphabetically by ascription)
- Answer Ascription: A., R. (R. A.)
 Title: ‘An Answer’
 First line: “Everterpe, nor the Muses (her sweet Mates)”
- Antecedent Ascription: Tofte, Robert
 Title: ‘The Author to Master R. A.’
 First line: “Deare friend, in whom Euterpe doth Instill”
- Sources Text cited: Tofte, sigs Avii^v-Aviii^f
- 57**
- Answer Ascription: A., T. (T. A.)
 Title: ‘Aunswere’
 First line: “Though doubtfull dread cause Malard wise”
- Antecedent Ascription: Howell, Thomas
 Title: ‘To T. A.’
 First line: “Like as the mased Malarde lyes”
- Sources Text cited: Howell a, pp.35-6

- Sources Text cited: Ayton, nos 50-1
 Manuscript versions: Bro. Lt. Q. 11, 16; Mal. 13, p.61; Rawl. Poet. 116, f. 47
 Citations: Crum, T2273
- 64**
- Answer Title: 'A Song'
 First line: "There is none, noe none but I"
- Antecedent Ascription: Campion, Thomas
 First line: "There is none, O none but you"
- Sources Text cited: Ayton, no. 36; Campion, p.102
 Manuscript versions: Add. B. 83, f. 4; 10308, f. 5; 28622, f. 20; 29396, f. 81^v; Adv. 5. 2. 14., f. 6; Eg. 2013, fols 32^v-33
 Citations: Crum, T1728
- 65**
- Answer Title: 'Aethon Cragio Svo'
 First line: "Fane wold I sing, if songs my thoghts culd ease"
- Antecedent Ascription: Craig, Alexander
 Title: 'To his Dear Friend, and Fellow Student Mr. Robert Aeton'
 First line: "Sing swift hoof'd Æthon to thy matchles selfe"
- Sources Text cited: Craig a, sig. Biv
- B66**
- Answer Ascription: B., C. (C. B.)
 Title: 'In Answer by C. B. to Is. W.' (see also B 73, W 299-302)
 First line: "Your lamentable letter red"
- Antecedent Ascription: Whitney, Isabella
 Title: 'Is. W. to C. B. in Bewaylynge her Mishappes'
 First line: "Yf heauie hartes might serue to be"
- Sources Text cited: Whitney, sigs Dv^v-Dvii^v
- 67**
- Answer Ascription: Bale, John
 Title: *An Answere to a Papystycall Exhortacyon, Pretendynge to Auoyde False Doctrine, vnder that Colour to Maynteyne the Same*
 First line: "Your penne and your mynde/ Are both of one kynde"
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 First line: "My mynde can not perfughtelye endyte"
- Sources Text cited: Bale
 Printed versions: Antecedent: *STC* 1274 (film 1194)
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP1170 and TP379
- 68**
- Answer Ascription: Barclay, Alexander
 Title: 'Contra Skeltonum' (not extant)
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to S 259
- Sources Text cited: *Ind. Brit. Scrip.*, p.19
- 69**
- Answer Ascription: Barnam, Thomas
 First line: "The dint of spear, and prik of thorn, ar sharp vndowtedly"
- Antecedent Ascription: Whythorne, Thomas
 First line: "The point of launs, the end of horn, or prik of thorn to tuch"
 (continued by W 311)
- Sources Text cited: Whythorne, pp.213-14

- 70**
 Answer Ascription: Barnes, Master
 Title: *The Treatyse Answerynge 'the Boke of Berdes'. Compyled by Collyn Clowte, Dedycatyd to Barnarde Barber Dwellynge in Banbery*
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
 Sources Text cited: Barnes
 Printed versions: *Verse in Print*, TP2018 (see also TP175.5 and TP205)
- 71**
 Answer Ascription: Beard, Richard
 Title: 'M. Harry Whobals Mon to M. Camel Greetes, Him Wyshing Hally Bread, to Feare all Ragyng Sweetes'
 First line: "Hoe bin nod yo mast Cammell sur, by gys I trow ye byn"
- Antecedent Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving Anon 31, Anon 47, B 72, C 82-5, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291
- Sources Text cited: Livingston, pp.139-40
 Printed versions: *STC* 1656 (no film available)
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP622
- 72**
 Answer Title: 'Camelles Crosse Rowe'
 First line: "A Wycked man doth set his mynde, his heart, & hole intent"
- Antecedent Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71, C 82-5, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Hi^v-Hii^v
 Printed versions: *STC* 1654 (no film available)
 Citations: Livingston, pp.141-2; *Verse Printed*, TP51
- 73**
 Answer Ascription: Berrie, Thomas
 Title: 'In Answer to Comfort Her, by the Wayng his Haps to be Harder' (see also B 66, W 299, W 301-3)
 First line: "Friend Is. be now content, & let my sorowes"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to W 300
- Sources Text cited: Whitney, sig. Div
- 74**
 Answer Ascription: Blundeston, Laurence
 Title: 'The Answer of L. Blundeston to the Same'
 First line: "Affections seeks high honour's frail estate"
- Antecedent Ascription: Googe, Barnabe
 Title: 'To L. Blundeston'
 First line: "Some men be counted wise that well can talk"
- Sources Text cited: Googe, pp.86-7
- 75**
 Answer Title: 'The Answer of L. Blundeston to the Same'
 First line: "This mirror left of this thy bird, I find"
- Antecedent Ascription: Googe, Barnabe
 Title: 'To L. Blundeston of Ingratitude'
 First line: "The little bird, the tender marlion"
- Sources Text cited: Googe, pp.101-3
- 76**

- Answer Ascription: Boleyn, Anne
 First line: "I ama yowres An"
- Antecedent Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
 First line: "That tyme that myrthe dyd stere my shypp"
- Sources Text cited: Wyatt a, no. 114
 Manuscript versions: Blage MS. (TCD 160), f. 175; Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), f. 17
- 77**
- Answer First line: "am el men/ an em e/ as I have dese/ I ama yours an"
- Antecedent Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
 First line: "What wourde is that that chaungeth not"
- Sources Text cited: Wyatt b, no. 50 and p.307
 Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), f. 67'
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP2145
- 78**
- Answer Ascription: Breton, Nicholas
 Title: 'A Dialogue Betweene a Louer, and his Beloued': 'Her Aunswear'
 First line: "Desartes (be sure) will reape desire", followed by a further eight stanzas of verse dialogue
- Antecedent Ascription: Breton, Nicholas
 Title: 'The Louer to his Lady'
 First line: "If due desartes may reape desires"
- Sources Text cited: Breton b, pp.51-3
 Printed versions: Breton a, pp.27-8
- 79**
- Answer Title: *No Whippinge, nor Trippinge but a Kinde Friendly Snippinge*
 (answering by G 142)
- Antecedent Ascription: Weever, John
 Title: *The Whipping of the Satyre*
- Sources Text cited: Davenport
 Printed versions: *STC* 14071 (film 891) and *STC* 3672 (film 1340)
- C80**
- Answer Ascription: C., G. (G. C.)
 Title: *A Paumflet Compyled by G. C. to Master Smyth and Wyllyam G. Prayenge Them Both, for the Loue of our Lorde, to Growe at Last to an Honest Accorde*
 First line: "The fynest wyt that is alyue"
- Antecedent Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving G 136-7 and S 261-4
- Sources Text cited: C., G.
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.108-13
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP1714
- 81**
- Answer Ascription: C., R. (R. C.)
 Title: 'R. C. Answere to G. W. Opinion of Trades'
 First line: "I thought (my George) thy Muse would fully fit"
- Antecedent Ascription: Whetstone, George
 Title: 'G. W. Opinion of Trades (as Touching Gaine) Written to his Especiall Friend, Maister R. C.'
 First line: "Mine owne good friend, since thou so faine wouldst know"
- Sources Text cited: Whetstone, pt 4, pp.31-6

- 82**
- Answer Ascription: Camel, Thomas
 Title: 'To Daud Dycars When' (answered by C 91, see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 83-5, C 92, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291)
 First line: "From when vnto when, to come to this when"
- Antecedent Ascription: Churchyard, Thomas
 Title: 'Dauy Dycars Dreame'
 First line: "When faith in freres bere frutt and folysh francies fade"
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Ai^r-Aii^r
 Printed versions: *STC* 5225.5 (film 1861); *STC* 4527.6 (film 1861); Collmann, nos 19-20
 Citations: Livingston, pp.121-4; *Verse Printed*, TP2161
- 83**
- Answer Title: 'Camels Reioindre, to Churchyarde' (answered by C 92, see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82, C 84-5, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291)
 First line: "To Churchiard or Mannarig, or for lak of a name"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to C 91
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Aiv^r-Bii^r
 Printed versions: *STC* 4527.4 (film 1861); Collmann, no. 22
 Citations: Livingston, pp.127-8
- 84**
- Answer Title: 'To Goodman Chappels Supplication' (see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-3, C 85, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291)
 First line: "Harry whobal harke, Mast Camell hathe yseene"
- Antecedent Ascription: Chappell, Gefferay (pseud.)
 Title: 'A Supplicacion vnto Mast Camell'
 First line: "Please it your maship, good mast Camell"
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Ei^r-Eii^r
 Printed versions: *STC* 4999.5 and *STC* 4527.8 (film 1861)
 Citations: Livingston, pp.133-6; *Verse Printed*, TP1470 and TP539
- 85**
- Answer Title: 'Camelles Conclusion, and Last Farewell, then, to Churchyarde and Those, that Defende his When' (see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-4, E 112, W 291)
 First line: "A man that hath mo thynges then two, to put him vnto paines"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to C 84 (antecedent), C 91-2, H 152, S 267
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Eii^v-Fii^r
 Printed versions: *STC* 4527.2 (film 1861)
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP34
- 86**
- Answer Ascription: Carmeliano, Pietro
 Title: 'Petri Carmeliani scribe Angli Carmen Responsum' ['The Poem in Response of Pietro Carmeliano the English Writer'] (see also A 60a-d, G 133, S 258, V 290)
 First line: "Conueniunt Gallos crebris conventibus Angli" ["The English petition the French with repeated embassies"]
- Antecedent Ascription: Gaguin, Robert
 Title: 'Gaguinus Orator Gallus contra Anglos' ['The French Orator Gaguin against the English']

- Sources First line: "Siccine tam crebris frustra conventibus Anglos" ["Do we thus in vain petition the English"]
 Text cited: Carlson, p.297 and p.299
 Printed versions: Edwards, p.432
 Manuscript versions: Add. 33534, f. 3^r; Trin. O 2. 53, f. 65^v
- 87**
- Answer Ascription: Carr, Henry (licensed to, 20 Aug 1584)
 Title: 'The Answere of O Sweete Olyver' (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: Jones, Richard (licensed to, 6 Aug 1584)
 First line: "O Swete Olyuer Leauē me not behind the" (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 76 and 1995
 Citations: *SR*, II. 434 and 435
- 88**
- Answer Ascription: Cheke, Lady Mary
 First line: "That no man yet could in the bible finde"
- Antecedent Ascription: John Harington, the younger
 Title: 'Of a Certayn Man'
 First line: "Thear was, not serten when, a certayn preacher"
- Sources Text cited: May b, pp.245-6
 Printed versions: Antecedent: Harington, sigs Biii^v-Biv^r
 Manuscript versions: Add. 12049, pp.192-3; Dyce 44, f. 72^v
- 89**
- Answer Ascription: Cherlewood, John (licensed to, 15 Jan 1582)
 Title: 'A Replie to the Lokinge Glass' (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 2272
 Citations: *SR*, II. 406
- 90**
- Answer Title: 'Twincle Downe Davie Made Touchinge the Former Frivolous Ballade that Goeth vnder the Same Tyle' (licensed to, 10 Aug 1583) (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 2754
 Citations: *SR*, II. 427
- 91**
- Answer Ascription: Churchyard, Thomas
 Title: 'A Replication vnto Camels Obiection' (answered by C 83, see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 84-5, C 92, E 112, S 267, W 291)
 First line: "If right or reason, might/ moue you to speake"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to C 82
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Aii^r-Aiv^r
 Printed versions: *STC* 5252 (film 1511); Collmann, no. 21
 Citations: Livingston, pp.125-6; *Verse Printed*, TP847
- 92**
- Answer Title: 'The Surreioindre vnto Camels Reioindre'
 First line: "What lyfe may lyue, long vndefamde" (see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82, C 84-5, C 91, E 112, S 267, W 291)
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to C 83
- Sources Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Bii^v-Ci^r

Antecedent	First line:	“Come be my Loue, and liue with mee”
	Ascription:	Craig, Alexander
	Title:	‘Lesbia her Answer to Alexis’
Sources	First line:	“If all were thine that there I see”
99	Text cited:	Craig c, pp.151-4
Answer	Title:	‘Lesbia her Answer’
Antecedent	First line:	“Driue not deare hart, in dooll the day”
	Ascription:	Craig, Alexander
	Title:	‘Sonet to Lesbia’
Sources	First line:	“Time and my thoughts Together spurr the Post”
100	Text cited:	Craig c, pp.159-60
Answer	Title:	‘Reply to a Dilatorie Answere, Sent by Sir Gedeon, &c. to the Author’
Antecedent	First line:	“Your Sub-Receiver shew`d mee, you were sorie”
Sources	Ascription:	Anon (untraced)
D101	Text cited:	Craig b, sig. Di ^r
Answer	Ascription:	Danter, John (licensed to, 19 Oct 1593)
	Title:	‘The Maydens Wittye Answere to ye Same’ (untraced)
Antecedent	Ascription:	Danter, John (licensed to, 1593)
	Title:	‘The Louers Lamentacon’ (untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	<i>Anal. Ind.</i> , 1592 and 1651
	Citations:	<i>SR</i> , II. 638
102a-b		
Answer a	Ascription:	Davies, John
	Title:	‘The Authors Reply being a Welsh-Man’
Answer b	First line:	“If Freeze and Sheese were wanting, wanting were”
	Title:	‘Corollary’
	First line:	“Bvt like it is, he playeth thus on Cheese”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	‘A Welshe Ivstice of Peace (Call`d Iustice Griffith) Comming vp against a Tearme to London, Dyed by the Way in Oxford; a Poore Welsh Scholler Sued to the Executors for a Mourning Freeze-Gowne, Who Being Neglected by them, Made this Libellous Epitaph on Iustice Griffith, and Fixt it on St. Maries Church Gate in Oxford, as Followeth’
Sources	First line:	“Here lies Shustice Griffith vnder a Stone”
103	Text cited:	Davies, nos 121-3
Answer	Ascription:	Davison, Francis
	Title:	‘Vraniaes Answer in Inuerted Rimes, Staffe for Staffe’
	First line:	“Since true pennance hath suspended/ Fained yre”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Davison, Francis
	Title:	‘Strephons Palinode’
	First line:	“Sweete, I doe not pardone craue”
Sources	Text cited:	Rollins c, I. nos 6-7
104		

- 110**
 Answer First line: "My hart is set nat to remoue" (see also D 109, H 157)
 Antecedent Ascription: Howard, Lord Thomas
 First line: "Yff reason govern fantasye"
 Sources Text cited: Muir a, pp.269-70 and p.276
 Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), f. 45 and f. 65
 Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM732 and TM1042
- 111**
 Answer Ascription: Drant, Thomas
 Title: 'An Epitaphe vpon the Death of Cuthbert Scotte ... Replied Against by Thomas Drant': 'A Reply by Thomas Drant'
 First line: "Whilst raging Rome that ruthfull rocke, ye rent & sunk ye sales"
 Antecedent Ascription: Shacklock, Richard
 First line: "Whilst herasy the hound of hell, the Englyshe harts did teare"
 Sources Text cited: Drant, sig. Di
- E112**
 Answer Ascription: Elderton, William
 Title: 'A Decree betwene Churchyarde and Camell: A Decree vpon the Dreame of Dauy Dicare, with Answer to Camel whose Tauntes be More Quicker'
 First line: "Wher Dicar hath dremed of thinges out of frame"
 Antecedent Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-5, C 91-2, S 267, W 291)
 Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Ci^r-Ciii^r
 Sources Citations: Livingston, pp.131-2; *Verse Printed*, TP2207
- 113**
 Answer Title: 'Eldertons Answere for his Mery Toyes &c' (untraced)
 Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to A 58
 Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 667
 Citations: *SR*, I. 185
- 114**
 Answer Title: 'An Answere to the Whippinge of the Catt by W. Elderton' (untraced)
 Antecedent Ascription: Elderton, William
 Title: 'The Gryndinge of the Hatchet and Whippinge the Cat' (untraced)
 Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 86 and 1054
 Citations: *SR*, II. 303 and 311
- 115**
 Answer Title: 'A Reprehension againste Greene Sleves by William Elderton' (untraced) (see also W 294-5)
 Antecedent Ascription: Jones, Rich[ard] (licensed to, 14 Dec 1580)
 Title: 'A Merry Newe Northen Songe of Greensleves Begynninge the boniest lasse in all the land'
 First line: The original is not extant; however, a later version is printed in Rollins a, beginning "Alas my loue, ye do me wrong"
 Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 2276 and 1742; Rollins a, pp.19-31
 Citations: *SR*, II. 384 and 388
- 116**
 Answer Title: 'Eldertons Answere to F. W. Apprint' (untraced)

Antecedent	Ascription:	Mary, Queen of Scots
	First line:	“Une seul penser qui me profficte et nuit” [“A longing haunts my spirit, day and night”]
Sources	Text cited:	Travitsky, pp.259-60 (text), p.198 (trans.); Elizabeth b, pp.133-4
	Printed versions:	Puttenham, p.208
	Manuscript versions:	Eg. 2642, f. 237 ^v ; Folg. V.b.317, f. 20 ^v ; Pet. 538.10, f. 3 ^v ; Rawl. Poet. 108, f. 44 ^v

F₁₂₃

Answer	Ascription:	Fairfax, William
	Title:	‘Answer to Certain Verses begining with “Were I but a goulden showre”’
	First line:	“Hadst thow but bin as ritch as wise/ Although no wiser then thow’rt ritch”

Antecedent	Ascription:	Anon
	First line:	“Were I but a golden showre”

Sources	Text cited:	Bro. Lt. Q. 22 (488), f. 12 ^v
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124

Answer	Ascription:	Fennor, William
	Title:	<i>Fennors Defence: Or, I Am your First Man</i> (answered by T 269)

Antecedent	Ascription:	Taylor, John
	Title:	<i>Taylor's Revenge: Or, The Rymer William Fennor Firkt, Ferritted, and Finely Fetcht Ouer the Coales</i>

Sources	Text cited:	Taylor a; Fennor
	Printed versions:	Taylor d, pp.142-54

125

Answer	Ascription:	Fitzgeffrey, Henry
	Title:	‘An Answer to the Same’
	First line:	“Yes: If thy Haires fall, as thy Sinnes increase,/ Both will ere long proue æquall, Numberlesse”

Antecedent	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	‘Incerti Authoris Of a Bald-man’
	First line:	“Thy Haires, and sinnes, no man may æquall call”

Sources	Text cited:	Fitzgeffrey, sig. Dvii ^v
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126

Answer	Title:	‘The Author’s Answer’
	First line:	“Of what is Heere I forbid any Write”

Antecedent	Ascription:	Gvrllyn, Nath.
	Title:	‘Of his Deare Friend the Author, H. F.’
	First line:	“Of what is heere thou’lt not haue any Write”

Sources	Text cited:	Fitzgeffrey, sigs Aiii ^v -Aiv ^r
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127

Answer	Title:	‘The Womans Answer’
	First line:	“If Halfe a woman best your Humour fit:/ Twere best to marry an Hermophrodite”

Antecedent	Ascription:	Fitzgeffrey, Henry
	Title:	‘A Manly Woman the Best Wife’
	First line:	“Faire! Manly! Wise! Imagine which of these”

Sources	Text cited:	Fitzgeffrey, sig. Di ^r
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128

- Answer Title: 'Of the Riming Sculler'
First line: "Horace the Poet, in his Book rehearses"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to J 189
Sources Text cited: Fitzgeffrey, sig. Dii^v
- 129**
- Answer Ascription: Flamock, Sir Andrew
First line: "Within this hower, she will & c."
- Antecedent Ascription: Henry VIII
First line: "Within this towre,/ There leith a flowre,/ That hath my hart"
- Sources Text cited: Puttenham, p.225
- 130**
- Answer Ascription: Fowler, William
Title: 'Ane Answer to his Vnknown Friend, Whom He Wisheth all his Hart to Knowe'
First line: "Although that Vertue soverane, and Love been most conding"
- Antecedent Ascription: Cargill, Thomas
Title: 'A Coniecture of this his Vnknowin Freind Takin Out of his Awin Wordes'
First line: "As everie man doth vse the termes belonging to his art"
- Sources Text cited: Fowler b, I. pp.395-6
Manuscript versions: Haw. Xi, f. 37^r
- 131**
- Answer Title: 'Ansuer'
First line: "Gif that my thoughts in loving yow"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Fowler b, I. p.248
Manuscript versions: Haw. Xi, f. 47^r
- 132**
- Answer Ascription: Fulwood, William
Title: *A Supplication to Eldertonne, for Leaches Vnlewdnes: Desiring Him to Pardone, his Manifest Vnrudenes*
First line: "Good gentle maister Eldertonne"
- Antecedent Ascription: Elderton, William
Title: (untraced) According to Collmann (no. 49) Elderton's lost ballad is itself an answer to another lost poem by a hosier named Leach who had attacked Elderton for writing lewd ballads
- Sources Text cited: Fulwood
Printed versions: Collmann, no. 49
- G133**
- Answer Ascription: Gigli, Giovanni (or de Giglis)
Title: 'Egidius Anglicus contra prefatum Gallum' ['Egidius the Englishman against the Aforementioned Frenchman'] (see also A 60a-d, C 86, S 258, V 290)
First line: "Siccine tam crebra per te mendacia fiunt"
- Antecedent Ascription: Gaguin, Robert

* Carlson's translation begins at line 2.

- Title: 'Gaguinus Orator Gallus contra Anglos' ['The French Orator Gaguin against the English']
 First line: "Siccine tam crebris frustra conventibus Anglos" ["Do we thus in vain petition the English"]
 Sources Text cited: Carlson, p.297 and p.298
 Printed versions: *Memorials of Henry VII*, pp.56-7; Edwards, pp.432-3
 Manuscript versions: Add. 33534, f. 3^r; Trin. O 2. 53, f. 65^v
- 134**
- Answer Ascription: Gosynhyll, Edward
 Title: *The Prayse of all Women, Called Mulierum Pean* (see also V 289)
 Antecedent Ascription: Gosynhyll, Edward
 Title: *The Scole House of Women*
 Sources Text cited: Gosynhyll b and a
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP1823 and TP2142
- 135**
- Answer Ascription: Grange, John
 Title: 'An Answere to a Letter Written vnto him by a Curtyzan'
 First line: "A bottome for your silke it seemes my letters are become"
 Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
 Sources Text cited: Grange, sigs Qiii^v-Qiv^v
- 136**
- Answer Ascription: Gray, William
 Title: *An Answere to Maister Smyth Seruaunt to the Kynges Most Royall Maiesty. And Clerke of the Quenes Graces Counsell, though Most Vnworthy* (see also C 80, G 137, S 261, S 264)
 First line: "Where as of late two things ye parused"
 Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to S 262 and/or S 263
 Sources Text cited: Gray b
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.91-4
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP2216
- 137**
- Answer Title: *The Returne of M. Smythes Enuoy Seruaunt to the Kynges Royall Maiesty and Clerke of the Quenes Graces Counsell (though Most Vnworthy)* (see also C 80, G 136, S 261-3)
 First line: "Euen with the same commendacion that to you dothe pertayne"
 Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to S 264
 Sources Text cited: Gray c
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.99-102
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP373
- 138**
- Answer Ascription: Griffith, William (licensed to, 1562-3)
 Title: 'The Answere to the iijth Ballett made to the Godes of Loue' (untraced)
 Antecedent Ascription: Elderton, W[illia]m
 Title: 'The Godes of Love'
 First line: "The God of love that sits above"
 Sources Text cited: Osborn: *Anal. Ind.*, 83
 Citations: *Anal. Ind.*, 987; *SR*, I. 205 and 355
- 139**

- Answer First line: "Comme Treppe yt Thom from Courte to Carte" (licensed to, 1565-6) (untraced) (answered by W 318, see also J 187, R 234)
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to C 93a and/or C 93b
Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 329
Citations: Livingston, p.834; *SR*, I. 338
- 140**
- Answer Title: 'A Seconde Dystruction agaynste Malborne Hylles Sett Fourth by Vs Wyves Consente of our Wylles' (licensed to, 1565-6) (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to L 196
Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 2396
Citations: *SR*, I. 293
- 141**
- Answer Ascription: Grimald, Nicholas
Title: 'G. Blackwood to N. Vincent, with Weddyng'
First line: "Sythe, Vincent, I haue minde to wed a wife"
- Antecedent Ascription: Grimald, Nicholas
Title: 'N. Vincent to G. Blackwood, agaynst Wedding'
First line: "Sythe, Blackwood, you haue mynde to wed a wife"
- Sources Text cited: Rollins b, nos 131-2
Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP1585 and TP1593
- 142**
- Answer Ascription: Guilpin, Edward (or Everard)
Title: *The Whipper of the Satyre his Pennance in a White Sheet: Or, The Beadles Confutation*
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to B 79
Sources Text cited: Davenport
Printed versions: *STC* 12504.5 (no film available)
- H143**
- Answer Ascription: Haddon, Walter
Title: 'Vxor est Dvcenda'
First line: "Omnis ætatis comitem perennem"
- Antecedent Ascription: Haddon, Walter
Title: 'Vxor non est Dvcenda'
First line: "Omnis ætatis comitem proteruam"
- Sources Text cited: Haddon, pp.70-2
- 144**
- Answer Title: 'Præcepta Conivgii Vxoris Responsa' ['The Wiues Answere']
First line: "Mi vir, si mihi charus esse curas" ["Husband if thou wilt pure appeare"]
- Antecedent Ascription: Haddon, Walter
Title: 'Præcepta Conivgii Mariti Postvlata' ['The Husbands Requests']
First line: "Vxor, si cupias mihi placere" ["My Wife, if thou regard mine ease"]
- Sources Text cited: Haddon, pp.72-75 (text), Kendall, sigs Mii^v-Miv^v (trans.)
Printed versions: Hughey, II. pp.32-3
- 145**
- Answer Title: 'Responsio'
First line: "Vt sim curarum requies. & meta laborum"
- Antecedent Ascription: Haddon, Walter

- Sources
146
- Title: 'Ad Lectvm'
First line: "Lectule curarum requies, & meta laborum"
Text cited: Haddon, pp.116-17
- Answer
Ascription: Hall, Joseph
Title: 'An Epigram which the Authour *Vergidemairum*, Caused to Bee Pasted to the Latter Page of Euey *Pigmilion* that Came to the Stacioners of Cambridge' (answered by M 203)
- Antecedent
First line: "I Ask'd Phisitions what theyr counsell was"
Ascription: Marston, John
Title: 'Reactio'
- Sources
First line: "Now doth Ramnusia Adrastian"
Text cited: *The Metamorphoses of Pigmilions Image and Certayne Satyres* (1598) and *The Scourge of Villanie* (1598) in Marston, pp.81-6 and pp.164-5
Printed versions: *STC* 17482 and *STC* 17485 (film 433)
- 147**
- Answer
Ascription: Halley, Edmund (licensed to, 1562-3)
Title: 'Eldertons Parratt Answered &c' (untraced)
- Antecedent
Ascription: Elderton, William (untraced)
- Sources
Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 671
Citations: *SR*, I. 199
- 148**
- Answer
Ascription: Harington, John, the elder
Title: 'John Haryngton to Isabella Markham, 1549': 'Answer'
First line: "If present peryll reason fynde" (followed by one more question and two more answers)
- Antecedent
Ascription: Harington, John
Title: 'Question'
First line: "Alas! I love yow overwell"
- Sources
Text cited: Hughey, I. pp.389-90
- 149**
- Antecedent
First line: "Husband, yf you will be my deare" (see also H 144)
Ascription: Harington, John, the elder
First line: "If dutie wyf leade the to deeme"
- Sources
Text cited: Hughey, I. no. 21 and II. pp.14-15
Manuscript versions: Add. 36529, f. 69^r
- 150**
- Answer
Ascription: Haryson, Lucas (licensed to, 1565-6)
Title: 'The Blynde Harpers with the Answere' (untraced)
- Antecedent
Ascription: Rogers, Owen (licensed to, 1564-5)
Title: 'The Blende Harper &c' (untraced)
- Sources
Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 213-14
Citations: *SR*, I. 260 and 294
- 151**
- Answer
Ascription: Heath, John
Title: 'Answere'
First line: "Na. Na, he that shall at our affections grutch"
- Antecedent
Ascription: Heath, John

- Sources
152
 Answer
- Title: 'Ad Amicam'
 First line: "I I am the happiest ere inioy'd a Loue"
 Text cited: Heath, sig. Biv^r
- Answer
 Ascription: Hedley, Thomas
 Title: 'Of Such as on Fantesye Decree and Discus on Other Mens Workes, lo Ouides Tale Thus'
 First line: "Rude Pan woulde needs one day in companye"
 Antecedent
 Ascription: Intervening in the flyting involving Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-5, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267, W 291
 Sources
 Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Civ^r-Ei^r, *STC* 5225 (film 526)
 Printed versions: *STC* 18969.5 (film 1861)
- 153**
 Answer
 Ascription: Heneage, Sir Thomas
 First line: "Madam, but marke the labors of our lyfe"
 Antecedent
 Ascription: Elizabeth I
 First line: "Genus infoelix vitae" ["A haples kynde of lyfe, is this I weare"]
 Sources
 Text cited: May b, pp.342-3
 Printed versions: Bühler, pp.248-9
- 154**
 Answer
 First line: "Most welcome love, thow mortall foe to lies" (see also Anon 5 and Anon 41)
 Antecedent
 Ascription: Raleigh, Sir Walter
 First line: "Farewell false love, thow oracle of lyes"
 Sources
 Text cited: May b, pp.339-40
 Printed versions: Byrd, sig. Eiv^r; Hughey, I. no. 235
 Manuscript versions: Eng. 1285, f. 72^v; Folg. V.a.89, f. 7; Harl. f. 37^v; Hou. f 1285, fols 72-3
- 155**
 Answer
 Ascription: Hogarde, Myles
 Title: 'The Answer' (the prose counter-response by Robert Crowley called 'The Confutation' is also printed here)
 First line: "What this man dothe meane is here straunge to me"
 Antecedent
 Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'The Ballad'
 First line: "What meaneth this gyse, I would faine here"
 Sources
 Text cited: Crowley, Hogarde and Anon
 Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP2125 and TP514
- 156**
 Answer
 Ascription: Horman, William
 Title: *Anti-bossicon Guil. Hormani ad Guilielmum Liliū* (against Whittinton and also addressed to Horman's ally William Lily) (see L 199-201, S 260 and W 302)
 Antecedent a
 Ascription: Whittinton, Robert
 Title: *Antilycon, in defensione Roberti Whitintoni i floretissima oxoniensi Achademia Laureati, contra quendam Zoilum suægrammaticæ oblatratem sub lyci prosopopeia* (Wynkyn de Worde, 1521), *STC* 25443.2 (the text does not appear on film 1590, as given in the Early English Books cross-reference catalogue) (counter-response

Sources	Text cited:	to L 199) Horman
157		
Answer	Ascription:	Howard, Lord Thomas
	First line:	"To yowr gentyll letters an answere to resyte" (see also D 110)
Antecedent	Ascription:	Perhaps a counter-response to D 109
Sources	Text cited:	Muir a, p.265
	Manuscript versions:	Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), f. 29'
	Citations:	<i>Verse in MS</i> , TM1765
158		
Answer	Ascription:	Howe, William (licensed to, 1565-6)
	Title:	'An Answere vnto the New Reply Consernyng Master Stantons Pye' (untraced)
Antecedent	Ascription:	The 'New Reply' does not appear in <i>SR</i> . The poem which the 'New Reply' answers is probably 'A Monsterous Pye which was Made by a Sargente of London' (licensed to Rich[ard] Serle, 1565-6) (untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	<i>Anal. Ind.</i> , 1793 and 87
	Citations:	<i>SR</i> , I. 305 and 306
159		
Answer	Ascription:	Howell, Thomas
	Title:	'To a Friend Requesting his Opinion of Marriage, He Answereth thus'
	First line:	"When ryped years in wisdomes schoole"
Antecedent	Ascription:	(untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	Howell a, pp.13-15
160		
Answer	Title:	'An Aunswere'
	First line:	"Not floing floudes, the feeble banck that frets"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Anon
	Title:	'To his Friend Tho. Howell'
	First line:	"Where oft the flouds doe floe"
Sources	Text cited:	Howell a, pp.15-16
161		
Answer	Title:	'Answere'
	First line:	"Why men such strife doe sowe"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Howell, Thomas
	Title:	'Of Death'
	First line:	"Since death doth leade to lyfe"
Sources	Text cited:	Howell a, pp.18-19
162		
Answer	Title:	'Aunswere'
	First line:	"But nowe we feele and finde"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Howell, Thomas
	Title:	'Gold Corrupteth'
	First line:	"Though most where welth doth flowe"
Sources	Text cited:	Howell a, p.21
163		
Answer	Title:	'Aunswere H.'

	First line:	“Such fonde affects declares thee plaine,/ Of feeble force or foolish braine”
Antecedent	Ascription:	P., E. (E. P.)
	Title:	‘E. P.’
	First line:	“By fancies force loe here my gaine,/ Untimely death prouokt my paine”
Sources	Text cited:	Howell a, p.35
164		
Answer	Title:	‘H. his Aunswere to his Friend K.’
	First line:	“Perforce though Pilate bee”
Antecedent	Ascription:	K., I. (I. K.)
	Title:	‘I. K. at his Friends Departure’
	First line:	“Against necessitie,/ there is no lawe they say”
Sources	Text cited:	Howell a, pp.38-9
165		
Answer	Title:	‘H. his Reply to his Friend A. M.’
	First line:	“The helthfull wight, with pleasure well may sing”
Antecedent	Ascription:	M., A. (A. M.)
	Title:	(untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	Howell b, p.43
166		
Answer	Title:	‘Aunswere’
	First line:	“You loue belike to freese amid the flame”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Howell, Thomas
	Title:	‘Of Fancie’
	First line:	“The kindled sparkes of fyre, that Fancies motions moue”
Sources	Text cited:	Howell b, p.48
167		
Answer	Title:	‘Aunswere’
	First line:	“But wary wightes, by wisdome shunne the snare,/ When venterous minds through hast, are wrapt in care”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Howell, Thomas
	Title:	‘A Poesie’
	First line:	“The valiant minde, by venture gaines the Goale,/ Whyles fearefull wightes in doubt doe blow the coale”
Sources	Text cited:	Howell b, p.49
168		
Answer	Title:	‘Aunswere. H.’
	First line:	“If nipping neede <i>Legittimvs</i> constraynde”
Antecedent	Ascription:	W., A. (A. W.)
	Title:	‘A. W.’
	First line:	“The wante of Coyne so grypes my brest”
Sources	Text cited:	Howell b, p.55
169a-b		
Answer a	Title:	‘Reply to the Same’
	First line:	“That longer tyme the Friend than Golde should trye”
Answer b	Title:	‘Another Way’
	First line:	“When once you haue false fortunes fickle wheele”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Counter-responses to L 194
Sources	Text cited:	Howell b, pp.56-7 and p.58

- 170**
- Answer a Title: 'Aunswere'
 First line: "The mounting minde that hasts to climbe"
- Answer b Title: 'Another Waye'
 First line: "To climbe to high must needes be nought"
- Antecedent Ascription: Howell, Thomas
 Title: 'That Valliant Hartes are desyrous to Aspyre'
 First line: "Eche valiaunt harte and Noble minde"
- Sources Text cited: Howell b, p.59
- 171**
- Answer Title: 'Being Burdened to Fayne his Good Will, He Aunswereth Thus'
 First line: "If mine thy little care"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Howell b, p.67
- 172**
- Answer Title: 'Being Charged with Finenesse, He Answereth Thus'
 First line: "Not fine good Lady mine"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Howell b, p.73
- 173a-b**
- Answer a Title: 'Aunswere'
 First line: "Though streaming stormes, force ship to harbor haste"
- Answer b Title: 'Another Waye'
 First line: "Let none mislike a man for his mishap"
- Antecedent Ascription: T., R. (R. T.)
 Title: 'R. T.'
 First line: "The shyp that late I sawe beare loftie sayle"
- Sources Text cited: Howell b, pp.85-6
 Printed versions: Howell a, pp.33-4
- 174**
- Answer Title: 'His Aunswere to One that Wrote, "Faynte hartes that feare to synne, fayre ladyes syldome winne"
 First line: "He much more valiaunt is"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Howell b, pp.86-7
- 175**
- Answer Title: 'Aunswere'
 First line: "Where reason rules, affections fonde doe flye"
- Antecedent a Ascription: Howell, Thomas
 Title: 'A Poesie'
 First line: "The streaming stormes, that fast on me doe flowe"
- Antecedent b Ascription: Howell, Thomas
 Title: 'The Lover to his L.'
 First line: "The fierie flames, that fast on me doe flowe"
- Sources Text cited: Antecedent b: Howell a, pp.20-1; Antecedent a and answer: Howell b, p.90
- 176**
- Answer Title: 'Aunswere'
 First line: "The losse of Friends by bringing home againe"
- Antecedent Ascription: Howell Thomas

- Sources
177
- Title: 'Of One that Came to Borrow Money'
First line: "In loane what losse, I want and would"
Text cited: Howell b, p.92
- Answer
Title: 'Aunswere H.'
- Antecedent
First line: "The plunged state wherein I restlesse lay"
Ascription: K., I. (I. K.)
- Sources
178
- Title: 'I. K. to H. being Sicke'
First line: "The sickly state, thou griped art withall"
Text cited: Howell b, pp.97-9
- Answer
Title: 'Aunswere. G. H.' [T. H.(?)]
First line: "Giue me the equall friend, for greater state"
- Antecedent
Ascription: Howell, Thomas
Title: 'Of Friendship'
First line: "Who holds himselfe most deare, and hath his wante"
- Sources
179
- Title: 'Aunswere'
First line: "Calme Seas least feared bee"
Ascription: Howell, Thomas
- Antecedent
Title: 'To a Flatterer'
First line: "As soundes from hollow things"
- Sources
180
- Title: 'Of Friendship'
First line: "Who holds himselfe most deare, and hath his wante"
Text cited: Howell b, p.101
- Answer
Ascription: I., A. (A. I. or A. J.)
First line: "And sure I thynke yt ys best way"
- Antecedent
Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
First line: "In faythe methynkes yt ys no Ryght"
- Sources
Text cited: Wyatt a, no. 119; Muir a, p.261
Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), fols 21-2
- J181**
- Answer
Ascription: James I
Title: 'The Answere to the Libell Called the Comons Teares: "The wiper of the peoples teares the dryer vp of doubts and feares"' (answered by Anon 9)
First line: "O stay *your* teares you who complaine" (Craigie's italics)
- Antecedent
Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources
Text cited: James I, II. pp.183-91 (from Harl. 367, f. 151^r)
Printed versions: Morfill, II. pp.132-6
Manuscript versions: Add. 28640, fols 123^v-6^r; 29303, f. 5; Eg. 023, fols 32-3^v; Eng. Poet. CII, fols 15-19; Lans. 498, fols 32-4
Citations: Crum, O803 and C700
- 182**
- Answer
Ascription: Jegon, John
First line: "Knew I but the Wagg that writ these verses in a Bravery,/ I would commend him for his Wit, but whip him for his Knavery"
- Antecedent
Ascription: Anon (unidentified student at Corpus Cristi College, Cambridge)

- Antecedent First line: "Il may Ben Johnson slander so his feete"
Ascription: Craven
Title: 'To Mr Ben Johnson in his Journey by Mr Crauen'
- Sources First line: "When witt, and learninge are so hardly sett"
Text cited: Jonson b, VIII. p.418
189
- Answer Title: 'Ben's Answer, Without Hesitation' (answered by F 128)
First line: "A Poet by Water can never be fired"
- Antecedent Ascription: Taylor, John, the Water-Poet
First line: "I am told, by my Boy, thou art Jonson the Poet"
- Sources Text cited: Jonson a, pp.342-3
190
- Answer Title: 'An Epistle Answering to One that Asked to be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben'
First line: "Men that are safe, and sure, in all they doe"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Jonson b, pp.218-20
K191
- Answer Ascription: K. I. (I. K.)
Title: 'I. K. to his Friend H.'
First line: "What needst thou thus to crie and care"
- Antecedent Ascription: Howell, Thomas
Title: 'H. to K. his Friend'
First line: "O friend in truth to trie"
- Sources Text cited: Howell a, pp.27-9
192
- Answer Ascription: K., T. (T. K.)
Title: 'Hendecasyllabon T. K. in Cygneam Cantionem Chidiochi Tychborne'
First line: "Thy prime of youth is frozen with thy faults"
- Antecedent Ascription: Tichbourne, Chidiock
Title: 'Tychbornes Elegie, Written with his Owne Hand in the Tower Before his Execution'
First Line: "My prime of youth is but a frost of cares"
Text cited: T. K., sigs Aii^v-Bi^r
Printed versions: Hopewell Hudson and Hebel, pp.196-7; Kyd, pp.340-1
193a-b
- Answer a Ascription: Knell, Thomas, Jr.
Title: *An Answer to a Papisticall Byll Cast in the Streetes of Northampton*
First line: "How now my maisters/ popish Priestes"
- Answer b Title: *An Answer at Large, to a Most Hereticall, Trayterous, and Papisticall Byll*
First line: "Such thoughtes, such wordes, such men/ such faith, such fruites appeare"
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
First line: "How now my maisters/ maryed Priesties"
- Sources Text cited: Antecedent and Answer a: Knell a; Answer b: Knell b
Printed versions: Collmann, no. 57
Citations: Livingston, pp.375-6; SR, I. 438

L194

Answer	Ascription:	L., E. (E. L.)
	Title:	'Aunswere. E. L.' (answered by H 169a-b)
	First line:	"If perfite tryall might as soone be had"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Howell, Thomas
	Title:	'Of Friends'
	First line:	"As fyre doth fine and seperate Golde from drosse"
Sources	Text cited:	Howell b, pp.55-6

195

Answer	Ascription:	Lacy, Alexander (licensed to, 1563-4)
	Title:	'The Answere of the Mistress agaynste the Causeles Complaynt of the Prentes and Mayde Sarvant' (untraced)
Antecedent a	Ascription:	Colwell, Tho[mas] (licensed to, 1563-4)
	Title:	'The Complaynte of a Mayde in London Declarynge hyr Trubles to Over Pass the Pryntes lyfe and Affyrmyng the Same by hyr Vngentle Rewardes' (untraced)
Antecedent b	Ascription:	Lacy, Alex[ander] (licensed to, 1563-4)
	Title:	'The Complaynte of an Appretyce which Dayly was Shente &c', (untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	<i>Anal. Ind.</i> , 77, 353 and 359
	Citations:	SR, I. 234 and 235

196

Answer	Title:	'An Answere to the Dystruction yat Men agaynste thayre Willes Beynge Answered by thayr Wyves Muste Digge Downe Malbroue Hilles' (licensed to, 1564-5) (untraced) (answered by G 140)
Antecedent	Ascription:	Griffith, W[illia]m (licensed to, 1564-5)
	Title:	'An Newe Instruction to Men of Such Willes that are so Redy to Dygge vp Malbron Hilles &c' (untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	<i>Anal. Ind.</i> , 82 and 1875
	Citations:	SR, I. 270 and 273

197

Answer	Title:	'A Replye agaynste that Sedicious and Papesticall Wretten Ballet Late Caste Abrode in the Stretes of the Cctie of London' (licensed to, 1565-6) (untraced)
Antecedent	Ascription:	(untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	<i>Anal. Ind.</i> , 2271
	Citations:	SR, I. 311

198

Answer	Ascription:	Landaven, T.
	Title:	'The Lord Bishops Answere'
	First line:	"I view'd your Childe, and I dare sweare 'tis yours"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Stradling, Sir John
	Title:	'To the Reuerend Father in God, Theophilvs, Lord Bishop of Landaffe, my Worthy Diocesan'
	First Line:	"Loe, here a Childe of mine in Sacred Font"
Sources	Text cited:	Stradling, sig. Aiv ^f

199

Answer	Ascription:	Lily, William
	Title:	<i>Antibossicon</i> (containing Lily's three <i>Antibossicon's</i> against

Antecedent	Ascription:	Whittinton and also addressed to his ally William Horman) (see also L 200-1, H 156, S 260, W 304)
	Title:	Whittinton, Robert
		(untraced: sections of the poem are reprinted by Lily) A verse dialogue supposed to have been pasted by Whittinton against Lily outside St. Paul's School, London*
Sources	Text cited:	Lily
	Citations:	Wood, I. p.34
200		
Answer	First line:	"Quid me Sceltone, fronte sic aperta" ("With face so bold, and teeth so sharp") (answered by S 260, see also H 156, L 199, L 201, W 304)
Antecedent	Ascription:	Skelton, John (untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	Fuller, sig. Kkkiii ^f (2)
	Printed versions:	Weever, p.427
	Manuscript versions:	Harl. 540, fols 57 ^v -9 ^r
201		
Answer	Title:	'Apologia ad { Joh. Skeltonum Rob. Whittington'
		A further contribution to the above controversy (untraced)
Antecedent	Ascription:	(untraced) (see also L 199-200, H 156, S 260, W 304)
Sources	Text cited:	Wood, I. p.34
M202		
Answer	Ascription:	M., F. (F. M.)
	Title:	'Another, of Another Mind' [1] (see also Anon 34, Anon 38 and S 248)
	First line:	"A king, oh boon for my aspiring mind!"
Antecedent	Ascription:	De Vere, Edward, Earl of Oxford or Sir Edward Dyer
	Title:	'Epigram'
	First line:	"Were I a king, I could command content"
Sources	Text cited:	Hopewell Hudson and Hebel, pp.195-6
203		
Answer	Ascription:	Marston, John
	Title:	'Satira Nova: Stultorum plena sunt omnia. To his Very Friend, Maister E. G.' (addressed to Edward Guilpin and answering Joseph Hall)
	First line:	"From out the sadness of my discontent"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Counter-response to H 146
Sources	Text cited:	Marston, pp.163-6
	Printed versions:	STC 17485 (film 433)
204		
Answer	Ascription:	Martyn, Joseph
	Title:	'The Author in Answere to his Friend'
	First line:	"Were I the fowle whom thou wold'st haue transformd"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Cooke, Rob

* For the more details about this exchange and the other shots fired see Carlson (1992), 157-81.

	Title:	'To his Deare Friend the Author'
	First line:	"The Martin is turnd Nightingale, strange newes!"
Sources	Text cited:	Martyn, sig. Div
205		
Answer	Ascription:	Montgomerie, Alexander
	Title:	'Ane Anser to ane Ingliss Railar Praysing his Awin Genalogy' (Ritchie's italics)
	First line:	"Ye Inglische hursone suntyme will avant"
Antecedent	Ascription:	(untraced)
Sources	Text cited:	Ritchie, III. pp.85-6
	Printed versions:	Montgomerie, pp.219-20
206		
Answer	Ascription:	More, Sir Thomas
	Title:	'In Brixivm Germanvm Falsa Scribentem de "Chordigera" Nave Gallorvm et Herveo eivs Dvce' ['On Germanus Brixius, Who Recorded Falsehoods on the Subject of the French Ship "Cordelière" and her Captain Hervé']
	First line:	"Heruea dum celebras, Bixi, tua carmina damnas" ["Brixius, while you try to win fame for Hervé, you defeat the purpose of your poetry"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	<i>Chordigera</i> , 1513
Sources	Text cited:	More, no. 170
	Printed versions:	<i>Chordigerae navis conflagratio</i> , Bibliothèque Nationale microfilm ID ERMMFRBN019545566-B
207		
Answer	Title:	'In Evndem de Eodem Herveo et Eadem Nave Qvae in Pvgna Navali Conflagavit' ['On the Same Author Dealing with the Same Hervé and the Same Ship (Which was Burned Up in a Naval Battle)']
	First line:	"Brixius immerita quod sustulit Heruea laude" ["I am not at all surprised that Brixius has conferred upon Hervé praise which he did not earn"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	<i>Chordigera</i> , 1513
Sources	Text cited:	More, no. 171
208a-b		
Answer a	Title:	'Epigramma Mori Allvdens ad Versus Svperiores' ['More's Epigram Mocking the Verses Above']
	First line:	"Quod ferit hos Herueus misso per tempora telo" ["As for the statements that Hervé struck some enemies down with javelins"]
Answer b	Title:	'Alivd de Eodum' ['Another on the Same Subject']
	First line:	"Miraris clypeum, gladium, hastam, tela, bipennem" ["You wonder how Hervé could carry shield, sword, spear, javelins, and ax"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	More answers a passage from <i>Chordigera</i> beginning, "Left and right the British surrounded Hervé as he stood alone" ('Verses from Brixius' "Chordigera" Reproduced Here Because Some of the Following Epigrams Make Fun of Them', and also 'A Later Incident from the Same Poem, "Chordigera"')

Sources 209	Text cited:	More, nos 172-5
Answer	Title:	'Phoebvs Brixivm Alloqvitr' ['Phoebus Addresses Brixius']
	First line:	"Vis de grandisono quid sentio scire libello[?]" ["Do you want to know what I think of that overgrown little poem[?]"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	'Hic Primvs Versvs Brixii est qvo Hervea iam Moritvrvm de se Facit Vaticinantem' ['Herein is Brixius' Opening Verse in Which He Presents a Prophecy About Himself Made by Hervé, Who was Soon to Die']
	First line:	More answers Brixius's passage from the <i>Chordigera</i> beginning "Inter Phoebeos non aspernandus alumnos" ["One who will not be ignored among the disciples of Phoebus"]
Sources 210	Text cited:	More, nos 176 and 179
Answer	Title:	'In Evndem Versvs Poetarvm Svffrantem' ['On the Same Poet as Plagiarist']
	First line:	"Priscos poetas nemo te colit magis/ Legitue diligentius" ["No one cultivates the ancient poets more than you or more assiduously reaps their harvest"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	<i>Chordigera</i> , 1513
Sources 211	Text cited:	More, no. 177
Answer	Title:	'Allvsio ad Cenotaphivm Hervei' ['A Mocking Comment on the Cenotaph of Hervé']
	First line:	"Heruea cum Deciis unum conferre duobus/ Aetas te, Bixi, iudice nostra potest" ["According to your judgement, Brixius, our age has only Hervé to compare with the two Decii"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	More's answer to the <i>centoaphium</i> at the end of <i>Chordigera</i>
	First line:	"Prisca duos aetas Decios miratur, at unum/ Quem conferre queat nostra duobus habet"
Sources 212	Text cited:	More, no. 178
Answer	Title:	'In Brixivm Poetam' ['To the Poet, Brixius']
	First line:	"Bixi, tale tuo natum est aenigma libello" ["Brixius, such an enigma arises in your book"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	<i>Chordigera</i> (1513)
Sources 213	Text cited:	More, no. 193
Answer	Title:	'Morus' ['More']
	First line:	"Brixius audiuit postquam id reprehendere multos" ["After Brixius heard that many readers had complained"]
Antecedent	Ascription:	Brice, Germain
	Title:	<i>Antimorus</i> , 1519: 'Versvs Svmpti ex "Antimoro" Brixii ad Qvos Allvdit Epigramma Qvod Svbiungitvr' ['Verses Quoted from Brixius' "Anti-Morus" Because They are the Subject of the Epigram Below']

- Sources First line: "Haec mihi dictanti adstabant dirae auribus omnes" ["About my ears as I made these statements there hovered all the goddesses of vengeance"]
 Text cited: More, no. 250
 Printed versions: *Germani Brixii Antissiodorensis Antimorus. Venundatur sub scuto Basiliensi.*, Yale Microfilm ID CTYG83-B39599 (unseen)
- 214**
- Answer Title: 'In "Chordigeram" Navem et "Antimorum" Sylvam Germani Brixii Galli' ['On the Ship "Cordelière" and the "Antimorus," A Poem (Sylva) by Germanus Brixius of France']
 First line: "Brixius en Germanus habet sylvanque ratemque/ Diues opum terra, diues opum pelago" ["Behold, Germanus Brixius, rich in resources on both land and sea"]
- Antecedent Ascription: Brice, Germain
 Title: *Antimorus*, 1519
- Sources Text cited: More, no. 251
- 215a-b**
- Answer a Title: 'In Hvnc Hendecasyllabvm, imo Tredecim Syllabarvm, Versvm Germani Brixii Galli ex "Antimoro" Svmpsvm: "Excussisse hominumque in ora protulisse"' ['On the Following Hendecasyllabic Verse, Rather the Following Thirteen-Syllable Verse from the "Antimorus" of the Frenchman Germanus Brixius: "To discover and to offer to the gaze of men"']
 First line: "Quod uersus adeo faceres enormiter amplos" ["After being puzzled on frequent occasions over a long period at your writing verses so immoderately long"]
- Answer b Title: 'In Idem' ['On the Same Topic']
 First line: "Carmina Germani quod in hendecasyllaba, lector,/ Syllaba coniecta est terna super decimam,/ Da ueniam" ["Reader, forgive Germanus his having put thirteen syllables into his eleven-syllable poem"]
- Antecedent Ascription: Brice, Germain
 Title: *Antimorus*, 1519
- Sources Text cited: More, nos 252-3
- 216**
- Answer Ascription: Munday, Anthony
 Title: 'Verses in the Libell Made in Prayse of the Death of Maister Campion'
 First line: "Why doo I vse my paper, inke and pen"
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: *The True Reporte of the Death & Martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite*
- Sources Text cited: Anon b; Munday
 Printed versions: Answer *STC* 18262 (film 324); Morfill, II. nos 170 and 183
- N217**
- Answer Ascription: Neville, Alexander
 Title: 'Alexander Neville's Answer to the Same'
 First line: "It is not curséd Cupid's dart"
- Antecedent Ascription: Googe, Barnabe

- Sources Text cited: 122)
 Manuscript versions: Hughey, I. nos 147-8
 Gou. 43, f. 53^v
- 223**
- Answer Ascription: ...or William Gray
 Title: 'An Answere'
 First line: "The vertue of Vlisses wife"
- Antecedent Ascription: Norton, Thomas or William Gray
 Title: 'Against Women either Good or Badde'
 First line: "A Man may liue thrise Nestors life"
- Sources Text cited: Rollins b, nos 257-8
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.130-1
 Manuscript versions: Titus A.24, f. 80^v
 Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM26; *Verse Printed*, TP30 and TP1853
- O224**
- Answer Ascription: Owen, John (trans. John Vicars)
 Title: 'Answere to Cynthiaes Epistle'
 First line: "Thy Paper white, thy Letter blacke came to me"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Owen, no. 128
- P225**
- Answer Ascription: P., I. (I. P.) [Pitt, Iohn(?)]
 Title: 'Dame Beauties Replie to the Louer Late at Libertie: and Now
 Complaineth Himselfe to be her Captiue, Intituled: "Where is the
 life that late I led"'
 First line: "The life that erst thou ledst my friend"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced). Rollins a identifies the antecedent as "that registered by
 Richard Jones about March, 1566 ([SR], I. 308), as "a newe ballet
 of one who myslykeng his lybertie soughte his owne bondage
 through his owne folly"', p.88
- Sources Text cited: Rollins a, pp.15-19
- 226**
- Answer Ascription: Peele, Stephen
 Title: *The Pope in his Fury Doth Answer Returne, To a Letter ye which to
 Rome is Late Come*
 First line: "I Doe esteme your kyndnes much"
- Antecedent Ascription: Peele, Stephen
 Title: *A Letter to Rome, to Declare to ye Pope, Iohn Felton his Freend is
 Hangd in a Rope: And Farther, a Right his Grace to Enforme, He
 Dyed a Papist, and Seemd not to Turne*
 First line: "Who keepes Saint Angell gates?"
- Sources Text cited: Peele a and b
 Printed versions: Collmann, no. 70
 Citations: *Anal. Ind.*, 1494; Livingston, pp.371-4; *SR*, I. 437
- 227**
- Answer Ascription: Picks, Peter
 Title: 'An Answer as Pretie to the Scof of his Lady, by the Yongman that
 Came a Wooing. Wherin he Doth Flout Her, Being Glad He Went

- Without Her, Misliking Both Her and Her Dooing`
- Antecedent First line: "Alas Loue, why chase ye?"
Ascription: Anon
Title: 'The Scoffe of a Ladie, as Pretie as May be, to a Yong Man that Went a Wooing: He Went Stil About Her, & Yet He Went Without, because He was so Long a Dooing`
- Sources First line: "Attend thee, go play thee"
Text cited: Rollins a, pp.12-15
Citations: SR, I. 308
- 228**
- Answer Ascription: Price, Daniel
Title: ['The Authors Answer'] (answered by C 96)
First line: "So to dead Hector boyes may doe disgrace"
- Antecedent Ascription: Corbett, Richard
Title: 'In Quendam Anniversariorum Scriptorum`
First line: "Even soe dead Hector thrice was triumph`d on"
- Sources Text cited: Corbett, pp.8-10
- R229**
- Answer Ascription: R., J. (J. R.)
Title: 'An Answere to A Popishe Ryme Lately Prynted and Intituled "A Proper Newe Ballad" Wherein are Contained Catholycke Questions to the Protestant` (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 2928
Citations: SR, III. 206
- 230**
- Answer Ascription: Raleigh, Sir Walter
Title: 'The Nimphs Reply to the Sheepheard`
First line: "If all the world and loue were young"
- Antecedent Ascription: Marlowe, Christopher
Title: 'The Passionate Sheepheard to his Loue`
First line: "Come liue with mee, and be my loue"
- Sources Text cited: Rollins d, I. nos 137-8
Manuscript versions: Rawl. Poet. 148, f. 96^v
Citations: Crum, C530 and I660
- 231**
- Answer Title: 'Erroris Responsio` (see also D 106b)
First line: "Courts Comender, states maintayner"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to D 106a
- Sources Text cited: Raleigh, p.161
Manuscript versions: Ash. 781, p.164; Rawl. Poet. 172, f. 13; 212, f. 91^v
- 232**
- Answer Ascription: Rhodes, John, minister of Enborne
Title: *A Pretty Fine Answere to a Romish Rime Lately Printed and Entituled, 'A Proper Newe Ballad'. &c*
First line: "I am content, Sir Catholike"
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
First line: "I pray thee, Protestant beare with me"
- Sources Text cited: Rhodes a

- 233**
- Answer Title: 'The Preface of the Answere to the Romish Rime and Rayling Libell'
- Antecedent First line: "How now my Maisters of the Popish crue?"
Ascription: Anon
Title: 'The True Coppye of the Rayling Libell, Left or Cast into the Church of Enborne *in* Barkshire, as I Receiued the Same'
- Sources First line: "Hould Crosse for an outward token & signe"
Text cited: Rhodes b
- 234**
- Answer Ascription: Robinson, Clement
Title: 'Churchyardes Wellcome Home' (untraced) (answered by J 187, see also C 93a-b, G 139, W 318)
- Antecedent a Ascription: Churchyard, Thomas
Title: *A Farewell Cauld, Churchyardes, Rounde. From the Courte to the Cuntry Grownd*
First line: "In courte yf Largies be"
- Antecedent b Ascription: Churchyard, Thomas
Title: *Churchyardes Farewell*
First line: "As witte is neuer good"
Text cited: Churchyard a and b; *Anal. Ind.*, 307
Printed versions: Collmann, nos 26 and 30
Citations: *Anal. Ind.*, 306 and 865; Livingston, pp.272-5 and p.834; *SR*, I. 308 and 309
- 235**
- Answer Ascription: Rodney, Sir George
Title: 'Sir George Rodney before He Killed Himself'
First line: "What shall I do that am undone"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to S 243
Text cited: Foster, p.100
- 236**
- Answer Ascription: Rudyerd, Sir Benjamin
Title: 'R.'
First line: "'Tis love breeds love in me and cold disdain"
- Antecedent Ascription: Herbert, William, third Earl of Pembroke
Title: 'P.'
First line: "If her disdain least change in you can move"
- Sources Text cited: Krueger, pp.2-3
Printed versions: *Poems Written by the Right Honorable William Earl of Pembroke, ... Whereof Many of Which are Answered by way of Repartee, by Sr Benjamin Ruddier* (1660), BL Microfilm, ID UKBXM9607A212-B (unseen)
Manuscript versions: Haslewood Kingsborough MS. (Hunt. HM 198, pt. 1., pp.138-47)
- 237**
- Answer Title: "R."
First line: "No praise it is that him who Python slew"
- Antecedent Ascription: Herbert, William, third Earl of Pembroke
Title: 'P'
First line: "Shall love, that gave Latona's heir the foil" (counter-response to R

Sources	Text cited:	236) Krueger, pp.4-9
238		
Answer	Title:	“R.’
	First line:	“Not like a sceptic equally distract”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Herbert, William, third Earl of Pembroke
	Title:	‘P’
	First line:	“It is enough a master you grant Love” (counter-response to R 237)
Sources	Text cited:	Krueger, pp.9-19
239		
Answer	Title:	‘R.’
	First line:	“Nor will I now your wound exulcerate”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Herbert, William, third Earl of Pembroke
	Title:	‘P’
	First line:	“Men sad and settled love not to contend” (counter-response to R 238)
Sources	Text cited:	Krueger, pp.19-21
240		
Answer	Ascription:	Russell, Lucy, Countess of Bedford*
	Title:	‘Elegie’ (answered by D 108)
	First line:	“Death be not proud, thy hand gave not this blow”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Donne, John
	Title:	‘Elegie on M[istress] Boulstred’
	First line:	“Death I recant, and say, unsaid by mee”
Sources	Text cited:	Donne, I. p.282 and pp.422-3
	Manuscript versions:	Rawl. Poet. 31, f. 39
S241		
Answer	Ascription:	S., H. (H. S.)
	First line:	“Your dedes in effecte, that made your lyfe braue”
Antecedent	Ascription:	Wynton, Stephen
	First line:	“Theyr dedes in effecte, my lyfe wolde haue”
Sources	Text cited:	H. S. and Wynton (printed together as a double broadside)
	Citations:	Livingston, pp.92-3, <i>Verse Printed</i> , TP1869 and TP2340
242		
Answer	Ascription:	Seres, William (licensed to, 1569-70)
	Title:	<i>The Aunswere to the Proclamation of the Rebels in the North. 1569</i>
	First line:	“O Lorde stretch out thy mightie hand”
Antecedent	Ascription:	An extract from the proclamation is given by Reid
Sources	Text cited:	Anon c
	Manuscript versions:	Lans. 52, f. 2
	Citations:	<i>Anal. Ind.</i> , 84; <i>SR</i> , I. 404
243		
Answer	Ascription:	Seymour, Frances, Duchess of Hertford (née Howard. née Prannell)
	Title:	‘The Answer of the Countess of Hertford to Sir George Rodney’s

* The ordering of these poems is suggested by Downs-Gamble (1996), 2.23-28.

- Elegy' (answered by R 235)
- Antecedent First line: "Divided in your sorrows have I strove"
Ascription: Rodney, Sir George
Title: 'Sir George Rodney to the Countess of Hertford: Elegia'
- Sources First line: "From one that languisheth in discontent"
Text cited: Foster, pp.88-99
Manuscript versions: Ash. 38, p.34; Rawl. Poet. 160, f. 118^v; Slo. 1446, fols 30^r-4^v
Citations: Crum, D344
- 244**
- Answer Ascription: Shakespeare, William
Title: 'Verses by Ben Jonson and Shakespeare Occasioned by the Motto to the Globe Theatre - *Totus mundus agit histrionem*': 'Shakespeare'
First line: "Little, or much, of what we see, we do;/ We are all both actors and spectators too"
- Antecedent Ascription: Jonson, Ben
Title: 'Jonson'
First line: "If, but stage actors, all the world displays,/ Where shall we find spectators of their plays?"
- Sources Text cited: Jonson a, p.339
- 245**
- Answer Ascription: Shelton, Mary
First line: "Ondesyrd sarwes/ reqwer no hyar/ <may> mary shelton"
- Antecedent Ascription: [Wyatt, Sir Thomas(?)]
First line: "Suffryng in sorrowe in hope to Attayne"
- Sources Text cited: Wyatt b, no. 165 (see also p.410); Baron, p.331
Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), fols 6^v-7^r
- 246**
- Answer First line: "And thys be thys ye may"
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon
First line: "What nedythe lyff when I requyer"
- Sources Text cited: Muir a, p.268
Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), fols 43-4
- 247**
- Answer Ascription: Sidney, Sir Philip
Title: 'Certain Sonnets', 16
First line: "A satyre once did runne away for dread"
- Antecedent Ascription: Dyer, Sir Edward
Title: 'Certain Sonnets', 16a
First line: "Prometheus when first from heaven hie"
- Sources Text cited: Sidney, 16a and 16
- 248**
- Answer First line: "Wearte thou a king, yet not commaund contente" (see also Anon 34, Anon 38 and M 202)
- Antecedent Ascription: De Vere, Edward, Earl of Oxford or Sir Edward Dyer
First line: "Weare I a kinge I coulde commande content"
- Sources Text cited: May a, pp.388-9
Manuscript versions: Add. 22583, f. 95^v; Folg. V.a.89. f. 6
- 249**

- Antecedent a First line: "Kynge Jamy Jomy your Joye is all gone"
Ascription: Responds to James IV's command to Henry VIII to return to England
- Answer b Title: 'Vnto Diuers People that Remord This Rymynge agaynst the Scot Jemmy' (appended to a later draft of the above ('Skelton Laureate against the Scottes'), this time responding to criticism of his attacks upon James)
- Antecedent b First line: "I am now constrayned"
Sources Ascription: (untraced)
Text cited: Skelton c; Skelton a, I. pp.188-9
- 257**
- Answer Title: 'Vilitissimus Scotus Dundas Allegat Caudas Contra Angligenas' ['The Most Vile Scot Dundas Mentions that Englishmen Have Tails']
- Antecedent First line: "Diffamas patriam, qua non/ est melior usquam" ["You malign this country, than which there is not a better one anywhere"]
Ascription: Dundas, [George(?)]
First line: "Anglicus a tergo/ Caudam gerit;/ Est canis ergo" ["The Englishman carries a tail behind him; he is, therefore, a dog"]
- Sources Text cited: Skelton a, I. pp.192-4 (text); Skelton b, p.430 (trans.)
- 258**
- Answer Title: 'The Recule ageinst Gaguyne of the Frenshe Nacion' (untraced) (see also A 60a-d, C 86, G 133, V 290)
- Antecedent Ascription: Gaguin, Robert
Title: 'Gaguinus Orator Gallus contra Anglos' ['The French Orator Gaguin against the English']
First line: "Siccine tam crebris frustra conventibus Anglos" ["Do we thus in vain petition the English"]
- Sources Text cited: Carlson, pp.297-8; Skelton, I. *Garland of Laurel* (l.1887)
Manuscript versions: Add. 33534, f. 3^r; Trin. O 2. 53, f. 65^v
- 259**
- Answer Title: 'Thus Endeth the Boke of Philip Sparow, and Here Foloweth an Adicyon Made by Maister Skelton'* (answered by B 68)
- Antecedent First line: "The gyse now a dayes"
Ascription: Barclay, Alexander
Title: 'A Breffe Addicion of the Syngularyte of some Newe Folys'
First line: "Here maketh the autor a specyall mencion"
- Sources Text cited: Brant, sigs Yi^r-Yiii^r; Skelton, I. pp.90-4
Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP467 and TP1468
- 260**
- Answer Title: 'Carmen inuectium in Guilhelmum Liliam poetam laureatum' (untraced) (see also L 199-200, H 156, W 304)
- Antecedent First line: "Vrgeor impulsus tibi Lille retundere dentes"
Ascription: Counter-response to L 201
- Sources Text cited: *Ind. Brit. Scrip.*, pp.252-3
- 261**

* This relationship is identified by Carlson (1995), 2.1-17.

- Answer Ascription: Smyth, R[ichard(?)]
 Title: *An Artificiall Apologie, Articulerlye Answerynge to the
 Obstreperous Obgannynges of One W. G.* (intervening in the flyting
 involving also C 80, G 136, S 262-4)
 First line: "Moued wyth mercy, by pytye prouoked"
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to G 137
 Sources Text cited: Smyth, R.
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.103-7
 Citations: Livingston, pp.82-4; *Verse Printed*, TP1147
- 262**
- Answer Ascription: Smyth, Thomas
 Title: *A Lytell Treatyse agaynst Sedicyous Persons* (answered by G 136.
 see also C 80, G 137, S 261, S 263-4)
 First line: "Of late, I perused two purposes seuerall"
- Antecedent a Ascription: Anon (Gray, William [?])
 Title: 'A Newe Ballade Made of Thomas Crumwel, Called "Trolle on
 Away"' (no original copy exists for this poem, which is printed by
 Dormer)
 First line: "Both man and chylde is glad here to tell"
- Antecedent b Title: *A Balade agaynst Malycyous Sclaunderers* (there are possibly one
 or two lost poems between antecedents a and b)
 First line: "Trolle into the way, trolle in and retrolle"
- Sources Text cited: Dormer, pp.76-8; Gray a; Smyth, T. a
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.79-86
 Citations: Livingston, pp.70-3; *Verse Printed*, TP2059 and TP1415
- 263**
- Answer Title: *A Treatyse Declarynge the Despyte of a Secrete Sedicyous Person,
 that Dareth not Shewe Hym Selfe* (answered by G 136, see also C
 80, G 137, S 261-2, S 264)
 First line: "Why I thus do wryte, is greatlye to be mused"
- Antecedent Ascription: Probably in response to a lost libel written against Smyth by
 William Gray
- Sources Text cited: Smyth, T. b
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.87-90
 Citations: Livingston, pp.74-5; *Verse Printed*, TP2276
- 264**
- Answer Title: *An Enuoie from Thomas Smyth vpon the Aunswer of One W. G.*
 First line: "Nowe with no lesse salutacyon, that to such doth pertayne" (see
 also C 80, G 136, S 261-3)
- Antecedent Ascription: Counter-response to G 137
 Sources Text cited: Smyth, T. c
 Printed versions: Dormer, pp.95-8
 Citations: Livingston, pp.78-9; *Verse Printed*, TP1244
- 265**
- Answer Ascription: Stafford, Simon (licensed to 22 Sept. 1604)
 Title: 'An Answer to a Fond Lasciuious Songe Intituled "And arte thou
 comme againe and saidst th[ou w]ould come ne more"' (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon (untraced)
 Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 78

- Citations: | *SR*, III. 271
- 266**
- Answer Ascription: | Stephens, John
 Title: | 'To his Worthy Friend, H. F. vpon his Notes from Black-Fryers'
 First line: | "Had the Black-Fryers beene still vn-suppressd"
- Antecedent: Ascription: | Fitzgeffrey, Henry
 Title: | 'Notes from Black-Fryers'
 First line: | "What (friend Philemo) let me thy corpes Imbrace!"
 Text cited: | Fitzgeffrey, sigs Evii^r-Fviii^v
- 267**
- Answer Ascription: | Steple, Steuen (pseud.)
 Title: | 'Steuen Steple to Mast Camell' (answered by C 85, see also Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-3, C 85, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, W 291)
 First line: | "Rest ye mery vayre syr I trow ye be mast Camell"
- Antecedent Ascription: | Camel, Thomas
 Title: | Counter-response to C 84
 Text cited: | Churchyard and Camel, sig. Eii
 Printed versions: | *STC* 23251.5 (film 1861)
 Citations: | Livingston, pp.137-8; *Verse Printed*, TP1521
- 268**
- Answer Ascription: | Stiles, John a (pseud.)
 Title: | 'The Replication of John A Stile, unto the Comedians Answere After whose Rejoinder He Will Demurr in Lawe for the Insufficiency of the Plea'
 First line: | "Wee are your betters in A better sense"
- Antecedent Ascription: | Counter-response to Anon 29
 Text cited: | Cited by Marotti, p.170
 Manuscript versions: | Haslewood Kingsborough MS. (Hunt. MS. HM 198, pt. 1, pp.46-51)
- T**₂₆₉
- Answer Ascription: | Taylor, John, the Water-Poet
 Title: | *A Cast Over the Water*
- Antecedent Ascription: | Counter-response to F 124
 Text cited: | Taylor b
 Printed versions: | Taylor d, pp.155-63
- 270**
- Answer Title: | *Taylor's Motto: Et habeo, Et Careo, Et Curo* [*I Haue, I Want, I Care*]
 First line: | "Is any man offended?"
- Antecedent Ascription: | Wither, George
 Title: | *Withers Motto. Nec habeo, Nec Careo, Nec Curo* [*Nor Have I, Nor Want I, Nor Care I*]
 First line: | "Hah! will they storne? Why let them; who needs care?"
- Sources Text cited: | Withers; Taylor c
 Printed versions: | Taylor d. pp.44-58
- 271**
- Answer Title: | 'Johannes Hoskins. Cabalisticall, or Horse Verse'
 First line: | "Hold, holla holla, weehee, stand I say"
- Antecedent Ascription: | Hoskyns, John

- Sources Title: 'In laudem Authoris'
 First line: "Even as the waves of brainlesse butter'd fish"
 Text cited: Malcolm, pp.127-8 and pp.137-8
 Printed versions: Antecedent: Coryate, sig. Fvi^v
- 272**
- Answer Title: 'The Utopian Tongue'
 First line: "Thoytom Asse Coria Tushrump codsheadirustie"
 Antecedent Ascription: Peacham, Henry
 Title: 'In the Utopian Tongue'
 First line: "Ny thalonin ythsi Coryate lachmah babowans"
 Sources Text cited: Malcolm, p.129 and p.139
 Printed versions: Antecedent: Coryate, sig. Li^v
- 273**
- Answer Ascription: Tofte, Robert
 Title: 'An Answer to his Kinde Friend Richard Day. Gent.'
 First line: "No louely, nor beloued Redbrest I"
 Antecedent Ascription: Day, Richard
 Title: 'Richard Day to the Author'
 First line: "Whilst louely Robin Redbrest thou dost sing"
 Sources Text cited: Tofte, sig. Av
- 274**
- Answer Title: 'An Answer'
 First line: "Bound by Desert (thy Merits, but not mine)"
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 Title: 'A Friend, though a Stranger to the Author'
 First line: "When I by chance do reade thy dulcet Verse"
 Sources Text cited: Tofte, sig. Avi
- 275**
- Answer Title: 'The Answer of the Author'
 First line: "Tis thou, not I, that singst so sweet a Song"
 Antecedent Ascription: M., I. (I. M.)
 Title: 'I. M.: To my Deare Friend R. T. Gent'
 First line: "Sweet Cignet that so sweetly dost deplore"
 Sources Text cited: Tofte, sig. Avii^r
- 276**
- Answer Ascription: Turbervile, George
 Title: 'Turberuiles Aunswere and Distich to the Same'
 First line: "Two lynes shall teach you how"
 Antecedent Ascription: Googe, Barnabe
 Title: 'Maister Googe his Sonet of the Paines of Loue'
 First line: "Two lynes shall tell the grieffe"
 Sources Text cited: Turbervile, p.7
 Printed versions: Antecedent: Googe, p.98
- 277**
- Answer Title: 'Piero to Turberuile'
 First line: "Good is the counsell (Turberuile) you giue"
 Antecedent Ascription: Turbervile, George
 Title: 'To Piero of Pride'
 First line: "Friend Piero, pride infects a friendly minde"
 Sources Text cited: Turbervile, p.8

- 278**
- Answer Title: 'Turberuiles Aunswere'
First line: "Not God (friend Googe) ye Louer blames"
- Antecedent Ascription: Googe, Barnabe
Title: 'Mayster Googe his Sonet'
First line: "Accuse not God if fansie fonde"
- Sources Text cited: Turbervile, p.11
Printed versions: Googe, p.97
- 279**
- Answer Title: 'Counsell Returned by Pyndara to Tymetes, of Constancie'
First line: "What made the Troyan Duke"
- Antecedent Ascription: Turbervile, George
Title: 'To his Friende to be Constant after Choise Made'
First line: "What made Vlysses Wife/ to be renowned so?"
- Sources Text cited: Turbervile, pp.20-1
- 280**
- Answer Title: 'Pyndaras Aunswere to the Letter which Tymetes Sent Hir at the Time of his Departure'
First line: "When first thy Letters came"
- Antecedent Ascription: Turbervile, George
Title: 'A Letter Sent by Tymetes to his Ladie Pyndara at the Time of his Departure'
First line: "Of pennes I had good store"
- Sources Text cited: Turbervile, pp.23-9
- 281**
- Answer Title: 'The Aunswere of a Woman to hir Louer, Supposing his Complaint to be but Fayned'
First line: "You want no skill to paint"
- Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: Turbervile, pp.31-2
- 282**
- Answer Title: 'The Aunswere to the Same'
First line: "Perdie I neede no balme"
- Antecedent Ascription: Turbervile, George
Title: 'Of Certaine Flowers Sent Him by his Loue vpon Suspicion of Chaunge'
First line: "Your flowers for their hue"
- Sources Text cited: Turbervile, pp.42-3
- 283**
- Answer Title: 'An Aunswere in Dispraise of Wit'
First line: "The Wit you so commend"
- Antecedent Ascription: Turbervile, George
Title: 'In Commendation of Wit'
First line: "Wit far exceedeth wealth"
- Sources Text cited: Turbervile, pp.44-5
- 284**
- Answer Title: 'The Aunswere to the Vile and Canckred Counsell of the Outragious Epicure'
First line: "My friend, for that I see my selfe"
- Antecedent Ascription: Turbervile, George

- Sources
285
- Title: 'The Epicures Counsell, Eate, Drinke, and Plaie'
First line: "My friend, where as thou seest thy selfe"
Text cited: Turbervile, pp.68-9
- Answer
- Antecedent
- Title: 'The Aunswere for Taking a Wyfe'
First line: "Long you with greedie minde to bleare mine eie[?]"
Ascription: Turbervile, George
- Sources
286
- Title: 'To a Yong Gentleman of Taking a Wyfe'
First line: "Long you with greedie minde to leade a lyfe[?]"
Text cited: Turbervile, pp.73-4
- Answer
- Antecedent
- Title: 'An Aunswere to his Ladie, that Willed Him that Absence should not Breede Forgetfulnesse'
First line: "Though noble Surrey sayde"
Ascription: (untraced)
- Sources
287
- Title: 'To Maister Googes Fansie that Begins "Giue monie mee take friendship who so list"'
First line: "Friend Googe, giue me ye faithfull friend to trust"
Ascription: Googe, Barnabe
- Answer
- Antecedent
- Title: 'Of Money'
First line: "Give money me, take friendship whoso list"
Text cited: Googe, p.100; Turbervile, p.115
Printed Versions: Googe, p.177
- Sources
288
- Title: 'To Maister Googe his Sonet "Out of sight out of thought"'
First line: "The lesse I see, the more my teene"
Ascription: Googe, Barnabe
- Answer
- Antecedent
- Title: 'Oculi augent dolorem. Out of Sight, out of Mind'
First line: "The oftener seen, the more I lust"
Text cited: Turbervile, p.124
Printed versions: Googe, p.97
- Sources
V289
- Ascription: Vaughan, Robert or Robert Burdet
Title: *A Dyalogue Defensyue for Women, agaynst Malycyous Detractoures* (see also G 134)
- Answer
- Antecedent
- Ascription: Gosynhyll, Edward
Title: *The Scolle House of Women*
- Sources
- Text cited: Gosynhyll b; Vaughan
Citations: *Verse Printed*, TP925
- Sources
290
- Ascription: Vitelli, Cornelio
First line: "Siccine purpureos incessis carmine reges?" ["For thus have not kings in shining purple been criticized in songs?"] (see also A 60a-d, C 86, G 133, S 258)
- Answer
- Antecedent
- Ascription: Gaguin, Robert
Title: 'Gaguinus Orator Gallus contra Anglos' ['The French Orator Gaguin against the English']

First line: "Siccine tam crebris frustra conventibus Anglos" ["Do we thus in
vain petition the English with our repeated embassies"]
Sources Text cited: Carlson, p.297; Edwards, p.431 (text), Andreas, p.100 (trans.)
Manuscript versions: Add. 33534, f. 3^r; Trin. O 2. 53, f. 65^v

W₂₉₁

Answer Ascription: Watreman, W. (pseud.)
Title: "Westerne Will to Camell and for Hym Selfe Alone" (see also
Anon 31, Anon 47, B 71-2, C 82-4, C 91-2, E 112, H 152, S 267)
First line: "When calmely blowes the winde, and seas but lytle moue"
Antecedent Ascription: Camel, Thomas
Title: Counter-response to C 85
Text cited: Churchyard and Camel, sigs Fii^r-Fiv^v
Printed versions: *STC* 5225 (film 526)

292

Answer Ascription: Whetstone, George
Title: 'Her Aunswear'
First line: "The prouerbe saith, whilst grasse doth growe"
Antecedent Ascription: Whetstone, George
Title: 'The Louer to his Ladie in Durance'
First line: "Abandon care, from daintie breast"
Sources Text cited: Whetstone, pt. 2, pp.96-7

293

Answer Title: 'An Aunswere to a Gentlewoman by Loue Constrained to Sue to
Him Whom of Late She Scorned'
First line: "Nie driuen to death by raging loue, reuiu'de by happie meanes"
Antecedent Ascription: (untraced)
Sources Text cited: Whetstone, pt. 2, p.100

294

Answer Ascription: White, Edward (licensed to, 3 Sept 1580)
Title: 'Ye Ladie Greene Sleeves Answere to Donkyn hir Frende'
(untraced) (see also E 115, W 295)
Antecedent Ascription: Jones, Rich[ard] (licensed to, 3 Sept 1580)
Title: 'A Newe Northen Dittye of the Ladye Greene Sleves'
First line: The original is not extant; however, a later version is printed in
Rollins a, beginning "Alas my loue, ye do me wrong"
Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 1892 and 1390; Rollins a, pp.19-31
Citations: *SR*, II. 376

295

Answer First line: "Greene Sleeves is worne awaie, Yellowe Sleeves Comme to
decaie" (untraced) (licensed to, 24 Aug 1581) (see also E 115, W
294)
Antecedent Ascription: Jones, Rich[ard] (licensed to, 14 Dec 1580)
Title: 'A Merry Newe Northen Songe of Greensleves Begynninge "The
boniest lasse in all the land"'. This ballad was probably a
republished version of the above
First line: "The bonniest lass in all the land". The original is not extant;
however, a later version is printed in Rollins a, beginning "Alas my
loue, ye do me wrong"
Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 1742 and 1050; Rollins a, pp.19-31

- Citations: | *SR*, II. 384 and 400
- 296**
- Answer Title: | 'An Answere to Goo to Bed Swete Harte' (licensed to, 1 Aug 1586) (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: | White, Ed[ward] (licensed to, 1 Aug 1586)
Title: | 'An Exhortation for Goinge to Bed' (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: | *Anal. Ind.*, 80 and 802
Citations: | *SR*, II. 451
- 297**
- Answer Title: | 'Jocky A Slaydon his Answere to Blanche A Broome' (licensed to, 11 Nov 1580) (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: | White, Ed[ward]
Title: | 'Blanche A Broome' (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: | *Anal. Ind.*, 206 and 1292
Citations: | *SR*, II. 381 and 382
- 298**
- Answer Ascription: | White, William (licensed to, 1600)
Title: | 'The Fayre Mayde of Londons Answere to the Same' (untraced)
- Antecedent Ascription: | (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: | *Anal. Ind.*, 827
Citations: | *SR*, III. 157
- 299**
- Answer Ascription: | Whitney, George
Title: | 'In Other Letter Sent to Is. W. by One to Whom She had Written her Infortunate State' (answered by W 302, see also B 66, B 73, W 300-1)
- Antecedent First line: | **"Your Letters (Cosin) scarsley seene"**
Ascription: | Whitney, Isabella (untraced)
- Sources Text cited: | Whitney, sigs Dviii^v-Ei^v
- 300**
- Answer Ascription: | Whitney, Isabella
Title: | 'A Carefull Complaynt by the Vnfortunate Auctor' (answered by B 73, see also B 66, W 299, W 301-3)
- Antecedent First line: | "Good Dido stint thy teares"
Ascription: | Dido's complaint from Ovid's *Heroides* VII
- Sources Text cited: | Whitney, sig. Diii
- 301**
- Answer Title: | 'A Replye to the Same' (see also B 66, W 299-300, W 302)
First line: | "The bitter force of Fortunes frowardnesse"
- Antecedent Ascription: | Counter-response to B 73
- Sources Text cited: | Whitney, sigs Div^v-Dv^v
- 302**
- Answer Title: | 'Is. W. Beyng Wery of Wrytyng, Sendeth this for Answere' (see also B 66, B 73, W 300-1)
- Antecedent First line: | "No lesse then thankes, I render vnto you"
Ascription: | Counter-response to W 299
- Sources Text cited: | Whitney, sigs Ei^v-Eii^r

- 303**
 Answer Title: 'Aeneas to Dido'*
 First line: "When my deare *Countrey* once most stately Troy"
 Antecedent Ascription: [Whitney, Isabella (trans.)(?)]
 Title: 'Dido to Æneas'
 First line: "So at Meanders streames"
 Sources Text cited: Ovid, sigs Eiv^r-Hiii^v
- 304**
 Answer Ascription: Whittinton, Robert
 Title: *Epistola respons. ad Hormani Invecticas & Dialogus cum eodem* (1521) (counter-response to H 156, see also L 199-201, S 260)
 Sources Text cited: Not in *STC* (see Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, *The Epigram in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1947), p.84)
- 305**
 Answer Ascription: Whythorne, Thomas
 First line: "Thoz wurdz I hau reherst"
 Antecedent Ascription: According to Whythorne the verse was written by female servant at the house where he was employed (late 1540s/ early 1550s)
 First line: "wurdz *that* yee hau rehersed"
 Sources Text cited: Whythorne, pp.30-1
- 306**
 Answer First line: "When oportunitie of tym sarueth"
 Antecedent a Ascription: Anon (an unnamed female employer of Whythorne)
 First line: "For your goodwill look for no meed"
 Source Text cited: Whythorne, p.44
- 307**
 Answer First line: "When Cupid had kompelled mee"
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon (see W 306)
 First line: "*The* sudds of sop/ Shall wash your hop"
 Sources Text cited: Whythorne, pp.52-4
- 308**
 Answer First line: "Costui chi quel scrit'ha fatto,/ certamente'e vno matto" ["Hee *that* mad *that* wryting, certainly is A fooll"]
 Antecedent Ascription: Anon
 First line: "Io sono la carta di carbona,/ chi mi legera sara vna coiona" ["I am *the* paper of <*the*> koll, hee *that* shall read mee shalbe a kollion"]. A couplet Whythorne found written upon a wall in Italy (answered by the antecedent of W 309)
 Sources Text cited: Whythorne, p.63
- 309**
 Answer First line: "In publik plas nothing wryt *thou*/ Exsept good skill *therin thou* show"
 Antecedent Ascription: Whythorne, Thomas
 First line: "Io sono la tauola di punta,/ Con ragione scriuete congiunta" ["I am *the* tabull of *the* point/ With reason do *thow* wryt konjoint"]

* The attribution to Whitney is suggested by Raphael Lyne (1999). <<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/ceres/AIhome.htm>>.

Sources	Text cited:	(counter-response to antecedent of W 308) Whythorne, p.63 (see also p.120)
310		
Answer	First line:	"Er Vulcan with hiz Fiery bank, konsiomed Bucerz chest"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Whythornes answer participates in a communal response by Cambridge students in 1560 to numerous posthumous libels (now perished) against Martin Bucer by Catholic students in 1557, including Robert Firbank, Richard Shakelock, Thomas Talbot, Thomas Redman and others (see Whythorne, p.121 and p.123)
Source	Text cited:	Whythorne, pp.122-3
311		
Answer:	First line:	"Not all for nowht <i>the fatherz old gav nam</i> to evri thing"
Antecedent:	Ascription:	Barnam, Thomas
	First line:	"What ech thing iz in evri kynd, <i>the nam</i> doth well diskry" (a continuation of B 69)
Sources:	Text cited:	Whythorne, pp.214-15
312		
Answer	Ascription:	Wilson, Thomas
	First line:	"To come to honour worldly, with authoritie much, and greate richnesse"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Wilson, Thomas
	First line:	"Worthinesse, not wilines, godlines, not goodes, brought the hereunto"
Sources	Text cited:	<i>Verse Printed</i> , TP2016 and TP2314
313		
Answer	Ascription:	Woodward, Thomas
	Title:	'To M[r] J[ohn] D[onne]'
	First line:	"Thou sendst me prose and rimes, I send for those"
Antecedent	Ascription:	Donne, John
	Title:	'To Mr T. W.'
	First line:	"All haile sweet Poet, more full of more strong fire"
Sources	Text cited:	Donne, I. pp.203-4 and II. pp.166-7
314		
Answer	Ascription:	Wotton, Sir Henry*
	First line:	"'Tis not a coate of gray or shepherd's life" (answered by D 107)
Antecedent	Ascription:	Donne, John
	Title:	'To Sir Henry Wootton'
	First line:	"Here's no more newes, then vertue, I may as well"
Sources	Text cited:	Fowler a, pp.74-5; Donne, I. pp.187-8
Manuscript versions:		Bridgewater MS. (Hunt. EL 6893), f. 74; Phillipps MS. (Eng. Poet. F. 9, pp.10-11); Winchelsea MS. (Rosen. 243/4), pp.112-13
315		
Answer	Ascription:	Wroth, Lady Mary
	Title:	'Railing Rimes Returned upon the Author by Mistress Mary Wrothe'
	First line:	"Hirmophradite in sense in Art a monster"

* The ordering of these poems is the suggestion of Pebworth and Summers (1984).

- Antecedent Ascription: Denny, Edward, Baron of Waltham
 Title: 'To Pamphilia from the Father-In-Law of Seralius'
 First line: "Hermophradite in show, in deed a monster"
- Sources Text cited: Wroth, pp.32-5
 Manuscript versions: *HMC*, Series 55, pt. 7: Manuscripts of Sir Hervey Jukes Lloyd Bruce, Clifton Hall MSS. (Nott., item CI LM 85/ 1-5)
- 316**
- Answer Ascription: Wyat, Hester
 Title: 'A Poem Made by a Friend of mine in Answere to One Who Askt
 Why She Wrotte' (Greer's italic)
 First line: "What makes me write my dearest Friend you aske"
- Antecedent Ascription: Anon (untraced)
 Title: Greer *et al*, p.5
 First line: Rawl. D. 36, f. 53
- Sources Text cited: Greer *et al*, p.5
 Manuscript versions: Rawl. D. 36, f. 53
- 317**
- Answer Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
 First line: "Paciens for my devise"
- Antecedent Ascription: Wyatt, Sir Thomas
 First line: "Patience, though I have not"
- Sources Text cited: Wyatt a, nos 39-40
 Manuscript versions: Devonshire MS. (Add. 17492), f. 13^v and f. 71^r; Eg. 2711, f. 28^v
 Citations: *Verse in MS*, TM1316 and TM1314
- 318**
- Answer Ascription: Wyer, Nicholas (licensed to, 1566)
 Title: 'The Courtiour and the Carter' (untraced) (counter-response to G
 139, see also C 93a-b, J 187, R 234)
- Sources Text cited: *Anal. Ind.*, 420
 Citations: Livingston, p.834; *SR*, I. 310
- Y319**
- Answer Ascription: Yong, Bartholomew
 Title: 'His Last Replie'
 First line: "Since thou to me wert so vnkinde"
- Antecedent a Title: 'Her Present Aunswere Againe to Him'
 First line: "Me thinks thou tak'st the worser way"
- Antecedent b Title: 'His Aunswere to the Nimphs Song'
 First line: "If to be lou'd it thee offend"
- Antecedent c Title: 'Melisea, her Song, in Scorne of her Sheepherd Narcissus'
 First line: "Young Sheepherd turne a-side, and moue"
- Sources Text cited: Rollins d, I. nos.114-16

Bibliography

Texts appearing in Appendix A are accompanied by abbreviated titles and marked with an asterisk. Short titles for catalogues and indices of verse are given in the abbreviations (pp.3-4).

- Allen, Valerie, "'Scot' as a Term of Abuse in Skelton's *Against Dundas*", *SN*, 59:1 (1987), 19-23
- Altman, Joel B., *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: California UP, 1978)
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