

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9426325

**Engendering authority in Aemilia Lanyer's *salve deus rex
judaeorum***

McBride, Kari Boyd, Ph.D.

The University of Arizona, 1994

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

ENGENDERING AUTHORITY IN
AEMILIA LANYER'S SALVE DEUS REX JUDAEORUM

by
Kari Boyd McBride

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1 9 9 4

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have
read the dissertation prepared by Kari Boyd McBride

entitled Engendering Authority in Aemilia Lanyer's

Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum

and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation
requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy/English

John C. Ulreich, Jr.
John C. Ulreich, Jr.

1 MARCH 1994
Date
3-1-94

Meg Lota Brown
Meg Lota Brown

Date

Naomi J. Miller
Naomi Miller

3/1/94
Date

Herbert N. Schneidau
Herbert N. Schneidau

3/1/94
Date

Date

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon
the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the
Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my
direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation
requirement.

John C. Ulreich, Jr.
Dissertation Director
John C. Ulreich, Jr.

1 MARCH 1994
Date

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Kari B. McBride

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The members of my dissertation committee have proven to be ideal readers of my work by virtue of their varying fields of expertise. A point that might be accepted as a commonplace by one reader would be challenged by another. Again and again, I had to sharpen my argument where it relied on easy assumptions, to struggle for le mot juste where I might have resorted to jargon. In addition, all four members of my committee are rigorous and consummate stylists. They have been hard taskmasters, holding me to a standard of rhetoric that I can only dream of reaching.

Their influence is apparent throughout my dissertation. I was introduced to the works Renaissance women writers by Naomi Miller; her articulation of Mary Wroth's struggle to make genres like the romance narrative and the sonnet sequence work to express her purposes inspired much of my initial inquiry into Lanyer's methods.

My understanding of the Bible is heavily indebted to Herb Schneidau. He has taught me much, both in the classroom and in our ongoing dialogue about biblical scholarship. Anyone who knows his Sacred Discontent or The Burial of Mark will recognize the extent to which his work informs my reading of Lanyer's use of the Bible. Herb has also shared his own work with me in various stages of process, thereby teaching me much by example.

Meg Lota Brown has supported me at every step in my struggle to understand Lanyer. I blush to think how many versions of how many false starts she has slogged through, always encouraging my work yet always pushing me to strengthen my argument where it was weak. Her unflagging devotion to scholarly inquiry, her knowledge of the literature of and on the Renaissance, and her ability to see to the heart of an issue have improved my study of Lanyer everywhere and always.

I have studied with John Ulreich for eight years now, and he has influenced my thinking about Lanyer and other authors more than I will ever know. He believed in my ability from the beginning and often gave my ideas more credence than they deserved, thereby inspiring me to be and do more than I thought possible. More than anybody, he has helped me to clarify my ideas when they were muddled, often providing me with the vocabulary to pull disconnected insights together into a coherent and cogent explication.

To all of them I offer loving thanks.

For Gordon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	7
INTRODUCTION.....	8
REDEEMING THE DAUGHTERS OF EVE.....	28
SELF-FASHIONING IN THE PATRONAGE POEM.....	73
PROFESSING POETRY.....	106
ENGENDERING SPACE IN "THE DESCRIPTION OF COOKE-HAM".....	144
APPENDIX: LANYER'S BIBLE	192
WORKS CITED.....	201

ABSTRACT

Aemilia Lanyer subverted traditional understandings of poetic subjectivity and altered received generic forms in order to construct herself as poet in a culture that reserved that vocation to men. She did so by creating in her poems a tradition of female poetic subjectivity through the imaginative construction of a community of empowered women. Lanyer fashioned herself a poet within this community and claimed a premier place by virtue of her alliance with the paradoxically humbled yet omnipotent Christ. She announced her poetic vocation through a remaking of the initiatory pastoral poem, transforming the position of women in the orphic genres of lament and epithalamium. In the country house poem, as well, Lanyer altered generic material that served to objectify and silence women in classical precedents and seventeenth-century models. (An appendix discusses Lanyer's use of the Geneva Bible and material from the Book of Common Prayer.)

INTRODUCTION

As the works of previously "undiscovered" women writers are brought into more or less canonical status, it becomes increasingly apparent that, while we can fit their works into existing categories of discourse, women often use those forms in ways that challenge our understanding of mode and kind. Many recent studies have discussed the ways in which genres themselves form part of the cultural codes that construct gender, typically fashioning male subjectivity on the objectified body of the female.¹ For women who wanted to challenge their culture's prohibitions--often merely by writing--genre posed both a means and a barrier to expression and empowerment. And while one cannot move outside the "prison house of language," many women writers found that they could bricoler, could use language and its modes against the cultural assumptions they otherwise reaffirmed.²

¹See, for instance, Laurie A. Finke's illuminating discussion in Feminist Theory, Women's Writing, as well as more particular generic analyses such as Nancy Vickers's work on Petrarchism.

²A bricoleur or bricoleuse is a potterer, a jack/jane-of-all trades, one who makes use of the means available to create something eclectically new. It is Claude Lévy-Strauss's term for the way all speakers (not only women) must use language against itself, conscious of its inherent implications and limitations, but forced

This study of Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum explores the ways in which she faced the challenge of authorizing herself in a cultural and generic context--a "tradition"--that, instead of providing models for female poetic subjectivity, denounced women writers and silenced them in discourse.³ Lanyer, like other female would-be writers, faced two stumbling blocks: problems of vocation and problems of genre. As Wendy Wall puts it, "How could she become an author if she was the Other against which "authors" differentiated themselves? If she was the body of the text?" (52). How does she construct herself as a speaking

to use it as the only means available to challenge the status quo. Or, as Jacques Derrida puts it in another context,

There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to shake metaphysics. We have no language--no syntax and no lexicon--which is foreign to this history; we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest. (85)

Fredric Jameson's "prison house of language" repeats the concept. One can analyze or critique one's culture only from the inside, with the tool produced by--and perhaps synonymous with--that culture.

³The cultural proscription of women's voices--both written and spoken--is well documented. See especially Margaret W. Ferguson's "A Room Not Their Own," Margaret Patterson Hannay's "Introduction" to Silent But for the Word, Suzanne W. Hull's Chaste, Silent, & Obedient, and Wendy Wall's "Our Bodies/Our Texts?"

subject, when her culture vigorously and openly denounces her writing at all, and the rhetorical means available to her--the genres and discourse modes--tacitly and more insidiously reinscribe her status as object? Only by finding answers to these questions could a woman profess poetry.

I use the terms "subject" and "object" here as they have been invested with significance by neo-Freudian critics who posit that to be subject in language, to say "I . . . ," is to be subject to language, to submit to the law of the Father in a way that negates the existence of "woman" altogether. But while I rely on the assumptions behind this terminology, my study is not ultimately psychoanalytical in orientation. I prefer rather to trace these terms to the studies that preceded the Lacanian revolution, beginning my inquiry with the insights and terminology of linguistics. I find especially helpful as a starting point the work of Emile Benveniste, who speculated on the way that pronouns, which according to him constitute "a class of words . . . that escape the status of all other signs of language" (730), produce subjectivity and objectivity in discourse:

Consciousness of self is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use I only when I am speaking to someone who will be a you in my address. (729)

Thus, he continues,

Language is accordingly the possibility of subjectivity because it always contains the linguistic forms appropriate to the expression of subjectivity, and discourse provokes the emergence of subjectivity because it consists of discrete instances. In some way language puts forth "empty" forms which each speaker, in the exercise of discourse, appropriates to himself and which he relates to his "person," at the same time defining himself as I and a partner as you. (731)

But Benveniste's use of the (theoretically) gender neutral "he" to describe the ephemeral subject that repeatedly and evanescently enters and exits language points to the fact that even pronouns, theoretically arbitrary and in a special class, cannot escape the culture that uses them. For rather than being gender neutral, these pronouns I and you have tended to become fixed, so that Woman becomes culturally synonymous with object, with you, the one always spoken to and never speaking.

So, while linguistics provides terminology and insights that are essential to my study, I find the cultural contexts for language and discourse a necessary corrective to the limitations that characterize the study of linguistics by virtue of its situation in the theoretical and abstract. Rather than limiting my critical tools to the terminology of "pure" language, I

am more inclined to what Stephen Greenblatt, in his Renaissance Self-Fashioning, calls a "poetics of culture" (5), one that situates language and its forms in the social and historical context. Such an approach assumes that

[l]iterature functions within [a cultural] system in three interlocking ways: as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes. (4)

In my study of Lanyer, I am most interested in the "codes" of behavior that functioned as deterrents to female authorship, and in analyzing how Lanyer contrived to subvert those codes as articulated in literature and, thereby, fashion herself as poet.

Lanyer's response to and alteration of generic material that would otherwise inscribe her silence incidentally provide keys to better understanding the genres in which she wrote. That is, one better understands how genres function to replicate a given culture when they are manipulated by an outsider--and all women were outsiders to the profession of poetry. The features that Lanyer rejects or alters become then tears in the cultural fabric that provide a window into the dominant culture that would otherwise remain obscured or even invisible because of its very pervasiveness.

In my exploration of Lanyer's construction of her poetic vocation, I take as a starting point Greenblatt's argument that two poles of authority drive the process of self-fashioning in literature: submission to an "absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self" and resistance to a "threatening Other," something "perceived as alien, strange, or hostile." Self-fashioning occurs, always in language, "at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien" (9). But since women have often been constructed as the absolute Others or aliens in western culture--as evil Eve, witch, whore of Babylon--a woman's challenge would seem to be the postulation an other other. For, as Benveniste noted, to say I at all necessitates the construction of a you. One solution to this problem of self-construction might be to "kick the dog," to focus on a group lower in the existing cultural hierarchy against whom she might aggrandize herself.

But Lanyer does not choose this option, one that would only reaffirm her subjection to men and to title. Rather she begins by turning the hierarchy upside-down, casting evil men (including figures as disparate as Adam, Holofernes, and the Earl of Dorset, Anne Clifford's husband) as the "threatening Other" of her poetic self.

But the problem is more complicated than this mere reversal implies, for Lanyer also constructs her own subjectivity over and against women. In this she mimics the traditional economy of male self-fashioning represented by many genres and modes, notably Petrarchism, in which the poetic speaking subject is unified through the fragmentation of the (female) love object. The generic fact is, however, that the male self is constructed in contrast not only to the female beloved, but also--and perhaps at the same time--against the feared and hated female Other, a poetic trope that would be at odds with Lanyer's presentation of a world of virtuous women and that is, thus, an impossibility in her poetic.

Here it is interesting that Greenblatt's catalogue of possible threatening Others includes two stock figures of feminine monstrousness--witch and adulteress--while his other examples (with the exception of the Antichrist) are gender neutral: heretic, savage, and traitor (9). Lanyer cannot make use of the cultural misogyny reflected in this list--indeed, I will argue that the poetic construction of virtuous female community is the first step in her poetic self-fashioning. But within that female community, Lanyer fashions herself as poet by

using material that traditionally had silenced women, manipulating features of Petrarchism, the pastoral, and the country house genre to construct her poetic vocation. So while men are an Other in Lanyer's poems, it is, paradoxically, in relationship to other women, themselves constructed elsewhere in her poems not as objects but as speaking subjects, that Lanyer fashions herself. Lanyer articulates subjectivity by realizing the potential in the ephemeral nature that Benveniste postulates in the pronoun, allowing women to inhabit both subject and object positions in her poetic.

The work of Theresa de Lauretis may be helpful in this instance, as she postulates that women have learned to occupy a double position, to hold the world and themselves in a double gaze, engaging in cultural transactions while occupying two spaces. De Lauretis, in her critique of film theories that ignore gender difference, writes,

The analogy that links identification-with-the-look to masculinity and identification-with-the-image to femininity breaks down precisely when we think of a spectator alternating between the two. . . . The female spectator identifies with both the subject and the space of the narrative movement, with the figure of movement and the figure of its closure, the narrative image. Both are figural identifications and both are possible at once . . . (143)

If, as de Lauretis argues, a woman is acculturated to be both looker and looked-at, a writer like Lanyer may find herself solving problems of self-fashioning by assuming two poetic spaces at once, alternating between "male" and "female," between subject and object positions. But such a conflicted subjectivity is necessary if Lanyer is to both redeem women as a category from a theological tradition of condemnation and insinuate criticism of the most noted of those she redeems to empower herself. For Lanyer cannot wholly reject the means for articulating subjectivity (which are, after all, imbedded in the very pronouns of language as well as in more complex generic forms), but must, as consummate bricoleuse, both make use of the traditional means of self-fashioning and alter the moral valence of genre's gender categories, constructing men and women, both potential subjects, as others to her poetic self.

If it is difficult to make Lanyer's poetic fit Greenblatt's model of the "absolute Other" necessary to self-fashioning, the problem becomes even more complicated when one attempts to identify the "absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self" that justifies Lanyer's work, for very little "outside" a woman could have served to authorize the

revolutionary stance that Lanyer takes in her work. Here again Lanyer's gaze is double. She bows to authority in her patronage poems and at the same time condemns social privilege by invoking the greater authority of Christ. She both decries the weakness of her social position and makes use of it by allying herself to Christ, occupying both positions of authority, that of holy poverty and that of holy power. She uses the Petrarchan conventions that objectify women in describing not women but Christ, reaffirming her alliance with him at the same time that she defuses the power of those forms to objectify and silence her own voice. She presents Christ as the bridegroom and the ultimate lover and at the same time feminizes him utterly.

As becomes obvious in such a listing of Lanyer's poetic transactions, the fulcrum for each of these contradictory moves is Lanyer's construction of the figure of Christ who, like Lanyer, assumes a double position in her poetic. In her self-fashioning Lanyer relies on a long-standing tradition of Christian interpretation that revels in paradox, for at the heart of the Christian story is the notion that the king of

kings was born in a stable.⁴ Lanyer uses the contradictions at the heart of the Christian narrative--one her culture accepted as embodying the highest truth--to empower herself. She, like Christ, assumes a double position in a world in which the meek inherit the earth and a little child can be a leader. "In Salve Deus," says Wendy Wall,

subject and object blend so that the speaker does not merely derive power by differentiation--by gazing upon the reified body of Christ--but also encodes that position as female. In this way, the positions of Other and Self, encoded male and female, are deconstructed. (66)

Lanyer "does not merely reverse the dynamics of the blazon--female dissecting male--but also deconstructs its relationship between subject and object" (67).

Understanding the importance of the figure of Christ to Lanyer's subversive project of self-fashioning explains the title she chose for her work, for it recalls the centrality of paradox in the Christian story. In the

⁴Of course, it is only in Luke's gospel that Jesus is born in a manger, and it is to Luke that Christianity owes this central paradox (one that has strong affinities with Isaiah's figure of the messiah as the suffering servant). But Luke's story with its paradoxical Jesus so utterly captured the imagination of Christians as to overshadow other gospel narratives that include no birth account (Mark and John) and to be combined uncritically with Matthew's very different "Christmas" story. Thus crèches include both the manger and the shepherds (from Luke) and the wise men (from Matthew).

passion narrative, it is the taunting Roman soldiers and Jews who, in a wonderful moment of dramatic irony, hail Jesus as "King of the Jews" thinking to taunt him while, in the gospel narratives, they unknowingly speak the truth.⁵ Understanding the way the figure of Christ functions in Lanyer's poetic also explains why the entire volume takes its title from the Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, though that poem makes up only seventy-nine of the book's 139 pages.

So, to return to Greenblatt's model, it would seem to be Christ who functions as the absolute authority in Lanyer's self-fashioning. But to argue that she submits to that authority in constructing her vocation would be to misunderstand her work. It would be more accurate to say rather that Lanyer's culture submits to the authority of Christ and that by allying herself with him in paradoxical and transgressive ways, Lanyer demands the

⁵In Luke, Jesus is called "King of the Jews" while he is on the cross; in the other gospels he is taunted while wearing a caricature of royal garb, a purple cloak and crown of thorns. In all four accounts, Pilate's interrogation centers on whether or not Jesus is (or claims to be) the King of the Jews, and that title, in varying forms, is posted above his head when he is crucified.

Lanyer adds Deus, "God," to the title, though it appears neither in the English Bible translations, nor in the Vulgate, nor in the original Greek. This ascription reinforces the irony of the title by making Jesus not only King, but God.

submission of her culture to her own authority as poet. Thus Greenblatt's model of self-fashioning proves, at least in the context of Lanyer's work, to be a model that explains male-fashioning only, much as the genres available to Lanyer served to fashion only the male self.⁶ As Lanyer was obliged to subvert the traditional functioning of genre in order to fashion herself, so Lanyer's reader must subvert the terms Greenblatt postulates as constructing the self, proving as much a bricoleuse as Lanyer.

Lanyer's identification of her own position with Christ's is only one way that she draws on his cultural power. Equally important is the way she identifies her book--her words, her theology, her poetic--with the Christ and with the eucharist. As Wendy Wall says, Lanyer's "published text becomes Christ" (63). Repeatedly Lanyer promises to "present" or "deliver" Christ to her reader so that to "cast [one's] eyes" on Lanyer's book is the equivalent of "spar[ing] one looke / Upon this humbled King" ("To the Ladie Arabella" 9, 11-12). Reading

⁶Marguerite Waller's critique, in "Academic Tootsie," of Greenblatt's analysis of Wyatt argues that Greenblatt postulates an exclusively male gaze and, thus, analyzes an exclusively male form of self-fashioning. As is clear, both Waller's and Greenblatt's ideas have been important sources for my understanding of Lanyer's poetic.

Lanyer's book will, further, "recompence [Christ] of all his paine" ("To the Ladie Anne" 139). And in a claim that borders on heresy, Lanyer merges the act of writing her book with preparation of "My Paschal Lambe," inviting her readers to consume her eucharist, "this pretious Passeover" ("To the Queenes" 85, 89). Here Lanyer has claimed not only the office of priesthood, but a godlike creative capacity that goes beyond an apologia equating the poet with the vates. Thus, at the heart of Lanyer's poetic is a radically transgressive understanding of her poetic power, one that challenges fundamentally the assumption of the culture she addresses.

Lanyer's use of the Bible is at the heart, then, of her self-fashioning through poetry, placing her in the company of many an obscure Hebrew poet and prophet.⁷ Yet while the Bible has proven repeatedly to be a text hostile to the status quo and a source of radically subversive power for oppressed peoples of many eras, that formative text has nonetheless been (and continues to be) used primarily in the service of conservative dogma, both religious and political. Certainly the bulk of the argument calling for women's silence and their

⁷See Appendix A for an investigation of Lanyer's biblical sources and method.

subordination to men relied on reference to the authority of the Bible. Lanyer answers these arguments by realizing the Bible's subversive potential to express "sacred discontent," to attack societal norms of privilege, honor, and rank.

My analysis of Lanyer's self-fashioning begins where I will argue that she begins, with her creation of a world of women. The need to imagine female community where none existed is not unique to Lanyer; Christine de Pisan's *City of Ladies* provides another example of such an imaginative construction preceding--and perhaps effecting--vocation. Lanyer's writing is filled with women (and is almost without men), so, in a sense, her entire work constructs female community. But she does so most pointedly in the opening patronage poems where she invites a group of powerful women to a heavenly banquet that draws on the rich imagery of the "New Jerusalem." My first chapter looks at how Lanyer both constructs that world of women and questions power relationships based on rank and title. That community of aristocratic women patrons is supplanted by images of biblical heroines: first Eve, whom Lanyer redeems as a model for women, and then even stronger images of female empowerment and subjectivity in a catalogue of Old Testament women of

untraditional authority.

The second chapter shows how Lanyer positions herself within this New Jerusalem vis-à-vis the noblewomen whom she had invited to her feast. Lanyer draws on the authority of the powerful women who "introduce" her book, both deferring to and displacing them, while paradoxically claiming even greater empowerment by virtue of her citizenship in the kingdom of heaven and her alliance with the weakness of the dispossessed Jesus. At the same time, she calls into question all social hierarchy in the poetic "lecture" delivered to Anne Clifford, reserving to herself the position of authority within her poetic world. So the first two chapters show Lanyer constructing a world of subject women and taking the premier place within that world.

The third chapter looks at the way Lanyer announces poetic vocation through her use of the initiatory pastoral poem, deploying pastoral tropes to claim a place in the lineage of poets that includes Virgil and Spenser. Here especially, in the generic context of elegy and epithalamium, Lanyer must subvert the way women and marriage are traditionally figured in order to make the pastoral empower rather than silence her. Where marriage

traditionally functioned to restore order to a world of loss, not co-incidentally silencing the woman of the poem (as in, for instance, Spenser's "Epithalamion") in Lanyer's poem marriage disorders, and it is only the power of the poet--here, the female poet--that can restore harmony to a world of grief. Here again, Lanyer must construct poetically her own tradition of female mentor poets, creating a poetic lineage where none (or little) existed.

The final chapter shows again how this self-proclaimed poet remakes genre, examining her transgressive use of the generic features of the country house poem. I first survey the social and architectural history of the country house, suggesting how and why that architectural object was found useful to some seventeenth-century poets and why it posed particular problems to a woman trying to write about the country house. Next I review the features of the country house genre and those classical models that seem to have been of greatest interest to the English country house poets. Finally I show how Lanyer used both the setting and the poetic form to her advantage by transforming a genre and a space that had silenced women into a context for female poetic self-fashioning.

I am thus suggesting that, within Lanyer's little book, one can discern a program for constructing and voicing female subjectivity. Lanyer envisions a redeemed world of women and empowers herself within that world. She claims the vocation of poet through the initiatory pastoral, and then exercises that vocation in the generic landscape of the country house poem. At every step along the way, Lanyer must transgress cultural and literary norms, repeatedly claiming subjectivity in contexts that had traditionally objectified and fragmented women.

This study of Lanyer's work falls in the lineage (albeit distantly, one hopes) of that recuperative form of feminist criticism that earnestly and enthusiastically proclaims the happy fact of women writers' existence. As part of that family of criticism, my study presents an "author" and assumes some level of intention (or, at any rate, finesses the issue). Recently Donald W. Foster, in an article on Elizabeth Cary, has gone so far as to argue for the return of biography to the recuperative critical project:

I do [not] wish to invoke biography as the cause and origin of the literary work. I wish only to set aside our anxieties about proprietorship of the text, and our conventionalized fear of the intentional fallacy. (144)

I firmly reject the intrusion of biographical criticism

in the study of Lanyer, mainly because that approach dominated early work on Lanyer (much of which was inspired by A. L. Rowse's The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady, a book that very nearly succeeded in returning Lanyer to obscurity under the guise of reissuing her book). But Foster's caution that "to efface the author . . . is a typically masculine (and today, one can almost say, a traditional) critical posture that should be reexamined" (145), seems to me to articulate the problem for the student of Lanyer. Rather, from the beginning of my study of Lanyer, I asked myself, "How would I read this passage if it were written by [insert canonical author]?" I think the result of this approach has been fruitful. It seems to me that only by assuming--initially, at least--authority and intention can we construct a literary context in which criticism is worth doing.

Thus, while I have struggled to avoid the ingenuousness that characterizes some early feminist criticism, I have equally assiduously rejected a deconstructive approach to Lanyer's work--though at some level I argue her poetic is deconstructive of traditional forms. Applying the deconstructive hammer to the well-wrought urn of canonical works may be a useful approach,

providing new openings for critical approaches to those otherwise impenetrable unities. But to argue for lack of authority and intentionality in the work of an obscure Renaissance woman is simply to fragment what has never been seen as whole, to erase what is already invisible. Thus I would argue that the first scholarly project to be accomplished with such authors must be one of reconstruction--and must continue to be so until a critical mass of commentary serves to make those works visible to the larger scholarly community.

REDEEMING THE DAUGHTERS OF EVE

All of the poems in Lanyer's book model a kind of proto-feminism, for throughout she presents the reader with examples of powerful and virtuous women. Lanyer's intent, however, is not simply the creation of a City of Ladies, but the articulation of a space in which she can construct her own subjectivity. So while her prefatory poems draw together a community of contemporary female luminaries, that community is ultimately displaced by a catalog of biblical heroines, including Eve, whose virtuous power could not pose a real threat to Lanyer's authority (as many of her patrons certainly did). Rather, Lanyer realizes the potential for a community of biblical women to provide her with a greater empowerment. So while the patrons Lanyer addresses are important to her own program of self-fashioning, their superior status in Lanyer's world made them, at the same time, threats to her authority. Thus Lanyer's contemporaries are both empowered and then displaced in her poems--first by figures whose power was less immediate but transcendent, and ultimately by Lanyer herself.

The nine pieces in poetry and prose that open Lanyer's book have prompted much comment on the part of her early critics. Charlotte Kohler saw them as part of a project of

"art for lucre's sake" (qtd. in Travitsky 29). A. L. Rowse called them "sycophantic," and chastised Lanyer for advocating a meritocracy based on virtue while writing dedications to "grandeess" (20-24). Later readers, while acknowledging their "obsequiousness" (Travitsky 92) and commenting on their "hyperbole" (Lewalski, "God" 206), have seen them as integral, not secondary, to Lanyer's poetic. Barbara Lewalski argues that "these dedications as a group portray a contemporary community of learned and virtuous women with the poet Aemilia their associate and celebrant" ("God" 212). She further suggests that the dedications "rewrite the institution of patronage in female terms, transforming the relationships assumed in the male patronage system into an ideal community" (Writing Women 221).¹ Lanyer, says Lewalski,

comprehends all the dedications within the thematic unity of her volume, addressing these ladies as a contemporary community of good women who are spiritual heirs to the biblical and historical good women her title poem celebrates. (Writing Women 220)

Elaine V. Beilin, acknowledging that the dedications "may seem at first to be the most dubious part of Lanyer's work," also links them to "the poem's central purpose." She argues that, "In the dedications, Lanyer concentrates on the spiritual gifts of women, expressing her intention

¹This is also the theme of Lewalski's earlier article, "Rewriting Patriarchy and Patronage."

most clearly in the image of the wise virgins prepared for the bridegroom" (183).²

Mary Ellen Lamb provides a corrective to both poles of response represented here: to the chastisement of Lanyer's effusiveness and the equally extreme postulation of Lanyer's "sisterhood." First, Lamb points out that "the language of Lanyer's dedications to women was not unusually celebratory by early modern conventions" (4). On the other hand, she argues that

[t]he dedications do not create a stable vision of a "community" or "family" of women patrons; even textually, membership in such a group fluctuated among copies according to marketplace considerations as dedications were added or dropped. (3-4)

Rather, Lamb sees the patronage poems, and the patronage system behind them, as forming the agon in which Lanyer wrestles with gender and class issues.

I wish to articulate here an understanding of Lanyer's patronage poems that draws on these insights. Like Lamb, I find Lanyer's construction of female community problematized by her positioning within that community.

²This revisionist assessment of the dedications is now so widely accepted as to be repeated in the introduction to Lanyer's work in the most recent Norton Anthology of English Literature, where the editor (presumably Lewalski) comments that "[a] series of dedicatory poems to patronesses praises them as a community of contemporary good women" (Abrams 1059).

Like Beilin, I find the source for Lanyer's community of women in the Bible.³ But I would go further than either of them to argue that the prominence of those initial poems--their sheer weight in Lanyer's little book--signifies their centrality to her poetic project. Their preeminence implies that it was difficult, if not impossible, for Lanyer to write outside a lineage of female poetic subjectivity. If, as John Mills suggests, women must live in a country of their own in order to have a literature (qtd. in Showalter 3), then Lanyer has created just such a country as a prelude to her Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum. I would further suggest that the heavenly city of prophetic and apocalyptic literature--the New Jerusalem--serves as the model for Lanyer's community wherein women are empowered to speak and write. It is only after she has envisioned such a world that she seems able to construct a poetic self.

As Beilin has noted, Lanyer does indeed draw on the parable of the bridegroom in her construction of female community. But the allusion to that spiritualized marriage calls to mind other biblical passages involving marriage

³As Barbara Lewalski points out, "Lanyer may or may not have known or known about" Boccaccio's, Chaucer's and Christine de Pisan's communities of worthy women ("Rewriting" 7, n. 51). Lanyer's community of women, however, is overwhelmingly biblical in its population and imagery.

whose imagery and import have merged with the Matthean story cited by Beilin. Lanyer's invocation of community draws, in addition, on Luke's images of feasting in the presence of the bridegroom, on the imagery of the Song of Songs, and on an Old Testament tradition that figures the sun (and, by implication, God) as bridegroom. But most important to Lanyer's conception of female community is the imagery of the eschatological vision of a renewed Jerusalem from the Book of Revelation, itself a re-visioning of Isaiah's messianic prophecies. Lanyer alters these images and merges them into a prophetic vision of her own, one that displaces men (who had traditionally modeled the community of saints) and places women at the center.

The wedding banquet parables told by Matthew and Luke, though derived from a common source, are used for different purposes by the two gossellers. Both compare the kingdom of heaven to a wedding feast, so that the imagery surrounding the marriage trope figures the redeemed community of the faithful. It is this metaphoric potential that informs Lanyer's redeemed community of women. The first parable (Matt 22.1-14 and Luke 14.16-24) emphasizes the nature of the guest list. In Matthew, the king's servants "went out into the hie wayes and gathered together all that ever they founde, boothe good and bad:

so the wedding was furnished with ghestes" (Geneva Bible 22.10).⁴ However, one guest who neglects to wear a wedding garment is "cast . . . into utter darkenes" where there is "weping and gnasshinge of teeth" (22.13). Luke's gospel emphasizes rather the inclusiveness of the kingdom of heaven, for in his version "the poore, & the maimed, and the halt, and the blinde" (14.21) are invited and no one is thrown out who is willing to come. Lanyer takes from Matthew the image of the wedding garment, but not the judgment that accompanies that image in Matthew's narrative. Rather she draws on the inclusiveness of Luke's version and the emphasis on feasting.

The second parable comparing the kingdom of heaven to a marriage in Matthew's version (25.1-13) figures the faithful as brides to the bridegroom, the wise virgins who had their lamps filled with oil so that they were ready to leave when the bridegroom came for them. Here again the purpose of the parable is judgment--those who do not have their lamps filled are left knocking on the bridegroom's door. The parable is told in Luke (12.35-38) as well, but there the faithful are the servants of the bridegroom:

Let your loines be girde about, and your lights
burning, And ye your selves like unto men that wait
for their master, when he wil returne from the
wedding, that when he commeth and knocketh, they

⁴See the Appendix for a survey of Lanyer's use of particular Bible translations.

maye open unto him immediatly. (12.35-36)

As is typical in Luke, the reward for those servants is a feast, for the master "will girde him self about, and make them to sit downe at table" (37). Lanyer has taken from Matthew the equation of the faithful with brides, and from Luke the emphasis on feasting and reward.

The Song of Songs or, as Lanyer calls it, the Canticles, was the ur-text for figuring the relationship of human to God in erotic terms, for that love poem had been interpreted "spiritually" by Jewish scholars long before the Common Era. The divine-human relationship had been figured as male-female by other biblical writers as well, but more often negatively. The apostasy of Israel is repeatedly articulated in terms of female unfaithfulness--"whoring after other gods"--but the bulk of those prophetic writers do not provide the complementary positive image of faithful womanhood. The Song of Songs, however, glories in the beauty and pleasure of both lover and beloved, both "male" and "female" participants. When the poem is read as an allegory of Christ's love for the Church (as it is, most emphatically, by the marginal notes in the Geneva Bible), it has the potential to redeem women by providing metaphoric material for affirmation rather than degradation. Isaiah, an exception to other prophetic writers, provides similarly positive images of marriage

(61.10, 62.5) that openly equate God and his anointed with the bridegroom, and the messianic hope with a marriage feast.

Those eschatological wedding images were used by John of Patmos in his Revelation, but in a way that fuses them with the misogyny more common to prophetic texts. Like those Old Testament texts, the Book of Revelation uses women to figure the extremes of evil and goodness--the whore of Babylon and the faithful church--a dichotomy common to patriarchal writings and usually fatal to female autonomy and subjectivity. Two passages in Revelation picture the marriage of the church to the Lamb of God, and they have traditionally been fused with another scene, of the 144,000 virgins following the Lamb, to produce a set of images that many writers have drawn upon.⁵ In the first passage that figures the eschaton as a marriage, the church is pictured as a wife clothed in white linen (representing the righteousness of the saints), and the faithful are called to the supper of the Lamb.⁶ The second

⁵Notably, the Pearl Poet in that late medieval dream vision.

⁶Let us be glad and rejoyce, and give glorie to [God]: for the marriage of the Lambe is come, and his wife hath made her selfe readie. And to her was granted, that she shulde be araied with pure and fyne linens and shining. for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saintes. Then [the voice] said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the Lambes supper. (19.7-9a)

passage names the eschatological city envisioned by the prophets as the "New Jerusalem," fusing the wedding imagery with the messianic hope by describing that city as appearing like a bride adorned for her husband.⁷ These passages have been commonly allied to the passage that figures those saints following the Lamb. But significantly, the saints are entirely male, virgins undefiled by contact with women.⁸

Lanyer takes the imagery for her eschatological vision of a redeemed community of women from all these sources to create, in opposition to the world pictured by John of Patmos, a vision of a New Jerusalem populated by female

⁷And I sawe a new heaven, & a new earth: for the first heaven, and the first earth were passed away, & there was no more sea. And I John sawe the holie citie newe Jerusalem come downe from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride trimmed for her housband. . . . And there came unto mee one of the seven Angels . . . and talked with me, saying, Come: I will shewe thee the bride, the Lambes wife. And he caryed me away in the spirit to a great and hie mountaine, & shewed me that great citie, holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. (21. 1-2, 9-10)

⁸Then I looked, and lo, a Lambe stode on the mount Sion, and with him an hundreth, fortie & foure thousand, having his Fathers name written in their foreheads. . . . And they sung as it were a newe song before the throne, & before the foure beasts, and the Elders, and no man could learne that song but the hundreth, fortie and foure thousand, which were boght from the earth. These are they, which are not defiled with women: for they are virgins: these followe the Lambe whither soever he goeth: these are boght from men, being the first fruts unto God, and to the Lambe. And in their mouths was found no guile: for they are without spot before the throne of God. (14.1, 3-5)

saints. The result is a reassessment of the eschatological imagery of centuries of biblical writers and, in a sense, a literalization of the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem as brides adorned for the heavenly banquet. It is to this redeemed "city of ladies" that Lanyer invites the women she addresses in the poems that introduce her book.

The nine poems and prose pieces that begin Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum do in part function as dedications in the tradition of the patronage poem. However, it is only the poem "To the Ladie Anne, Countesse of Dorcet," that actually dedicates the book to its addressee: Lanyer begins that poem, "To you I dedicate this worke of Grace" (1).⁹ More significantly, this poem, and the other six poems addressed to women, function as invitations rather than dedications.¹⁰ By calling on the

⁹Reference to Lanyer's poems is by line number.

¹⁰The central purpose of the two prose pieces that precede the Salve Deus--addressed to Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and "To the Vertuous Reader"--is not so clearly to invite them to Lanyer's feast as is so with the poems. However, Margaret of Cumberland, while not overtly invited, is addressed in a compliment that invokes the heavenly landscape of the New Jerusalem in the person of Christ:

I present unto you even our Lord Jesus himself . . .
 . I deliver you the health of the soule; which is
 this most pretious pearle of all perfection, this
 rich diamond of devotion, this perfect gold growing
 in the veines of that excellent earth of the most
 blessed Paradice, wherein our second Adam had his
 restlesse habitation. (6-7, 9-14)

Lanyer's conflation of Christ and her book, the two items to be consumed, as "the inestimable treasure of all

imagery of the New Jerusalem, Lanyer claims that the book functions as the eschatological marriage feast. It is to this eucharistic wedding banquet that Lanyer invites the various women, where they may feast on Christ and take him as lover, both consuming the Paschal Lamb and consummating their love for him.

Queen Anne, wife of James I, is the "welcom'st guest" at the feast for which the poet has "prepar'd my Paschal Lambe" (84, 85). Next in honor to the queen is the Lady Elizabeth, her daughter, whom Lanyer "invite[s] unto this wholesome feast" (9). "All vertuous Ladies in generall" are invited to "Come wait on" (3) the queen, and are counselled to "Put on your wedding garments every one" (8) and to "fill your Lamps with oyle of burning zeale" (13) for "The Bridegroome stayes to entertain you all" (8). Her book offers them access to heaven where they will experience "a second berth" (66). "The Ladie Arabella" is invited to "Come like the morning Sunne new out of bed" that her "beauteous Soule" might be embraced by "this humbled King" (12-14). The poem addressed to "the Ladie Susan" repeats three times the invitation to attend Lanyer's feast:

Come you that were the Mistris of my youth, . . .
Come you that have delighted in Gods truth, . . .

elected soules" (29) again recalls the 144,000 elect who follow the Lamb.

Come you that ever since hath followed . . .
 In these sweet paths of faire Humilitie. . . .
(1, 3, 31-32)

She is invited both to "grace this holy feast" (6) and to "[t]ake this faire Bridegroom in your soules pure bed" (42). In the poem to Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Lanyer "invite[s] her Honour to my feast" (206). Lucy, Countess of Bedford, is asked to "Vouchsafe to entertaine this dying lover," and counselled to let her thoughts "Give true attendance on this lovely guest" (16, 22-23). Katherine, Countess of Suffolk, is asked to allow her "noble daughters" to feed "On heavenly food" and to know in Christ "a Lover much more true / Than ever was since first the world began" (51-53). The dedicatory poem to Anne Clifford recalls the parable of the bridegroom again:

One sparke of grace sufficient if to fill
 Our Lampes with oyle, ready when he doth call
 To enter with the Bridegroom to the feast
(13-16)

It is fitting that, having invited these women to the marriage banquet in the New Jerusalem, Lanyer ends her Salve Deus with an extended section replete with the imagery of that heavenly city. Using descriptions from the visions of Isaiah and of John of Patmos, Lanyer presents her reader guests with a vision of Christ "whose everlasting throne / Is plac'd in heaven, above the starrie skies" (1633-34). Recalling Isaiah's vision (6.1-4), Lanyer describes

. . . those winged beasts so full of eies,
 That never cease to glorifie his Name,
 Who was, and will be, and is now the same.
 (1637-40)

This praise of the enthroned Christ, repeated again a few stanzas later when "all creatures glorifi'd his name" (1651), is echoed by Lanyer's description of the praise for Margaret of Cumberland:

Pure thoughted Lady, blessed be thy choyce
 Of this Almightye, everlasting King;
 In thee his Saints and Angels doe rejoyce,
 And to their Heav'nly Lord doe daily sing
 Thy perfect praises in their lowest voyce;
 And all their harpes and golden vials bring
 Full of sweet odours, even thy holy prayers
 Unto that spotlesse Lambe, that all repaires.
 (1673-80)

Here the praise for God merges with praise for the Lady. The stanza first seems to praise Cumberland, but that praise is deflected to the object of her praise, the "everlasting King." The next line refocuses the praise on Cumberland in whom the "Saints and Angels" rejoice. The following line initially seems to return to the "Heav'nly Lord" unto whom they "daily sing," but the next line changes the sense of that line by providing the content of those songs, the "perfect praises" of Cumberland--itself an ambiguous phrase that could mean praise of or by her. The result of this confusion is to merge praise of Cumberland with praise for God within the New Jerusalem, placing at the center of that visionary world an image of female virtue.

So Lanyer has constructed the basis for a redeemed community where it might be possible for a woman to function as a speaking subject. The introductory poems serve as a means for articulating an image of female community based on untraditional readings of eschatological texts, some of which had traditionally excluded women from the elect. And Lanyer's final address to the most honored woman in this New Jerusalem places her at the center of that heavenly landscape.

But this gesture is merely the first step in Lanyer's positioning of herself in the community of redeemed women. While the patronage poems and their imaginative construction of a New Jerusalem created a world of empowered women, those women were at the same time dispossessed by their status as guests at Lanyer's feast. Lanyer further diminishes the status of those powerful women by displacing them with biblical models of female heroism so that the archetypes of female heroism are not Lanyer's contemporaries who had real power over her life, but distant, semi-mythical figures of the Bible who could model female subjectivity without threatening Lanyer's self-fashioning.

The foremost of the biblical women whom Lanyer invokes is Eve; her "redemption" receives the most weight in Lanyer's book, no doubt because her narrative was the most

notorious of those that justified the subjection of women. To redeem Eve, Lanyer remakes the terms of the querelles des femmes--both the authoritative text (the Bible) and the discursive mode (the logic of theology) that had traditionally combined to condemn women--turning both the form of argument and the source of authority into support for the equality of women. Lanyer rereads this ur-text of women's subjection, questioning both its interpretive history and the logic of arguments that had been derived from the raw material of the narrative. Logic was itself a sign of that which distinguished man from woman, the rational from the hysterical--a sign of women's inferiority; it was this combination of unimpeachable source and unquestioned modes of thinking that had argued women's inferiority so emphatically.

Here I think it important to note that the terms of the debate about women's status were fixed. Neither Lanyer nor anybody else could ignore the biblical text when discussing women, so the source material was as much a prison house as the discourse that had developed around that source. But Lanyer deconstructs the seeming unity of the source by offering alternative readings of the very texts that had been used to condemn women. As Michael Schoenfeldt has pointed out, her approach here is remarkably similar to that used by present-day feminist

biblical scholars (Schoenfeldt 1). By offering alternative understandings of the same source material, Lanyer (and scholars such as Phyllis Tribble, Susan Ackerman, and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza) distinguishes between interpretation and text. The result is to point up the constructedness of biblical readings that had been used in the debate as if they were some kind of "authorized version" arising organically from the texts themselves, and to liberate the Bible for women's empowerment.

The context for Lanyer's "redemption" of the category "woman" is the portion of the Salve Deus entitled "Eves Apologie." While in some ways this most well-known and frequently-anthologized of Lanyer's work might seem to need little in the way of hermeneutics brought to it, I would argue that one would miss much of the force of Lanyer's poetic and her argument if one failed to pay attention to the way in which she remakes the terms of the debate of the woman question. For the form of Lanyer's defense of women is consonant with her message. That is, the discourse itself of "Eves Apologie," wherein Lanyer asks the reader to reconsider both the Bible and argument by the way she uses them, constitutes a "message" at least as important as her overt defense of women.

"Eves Apologie" is an extended digression on Eve's "tast[ing] of the Tree," in the course of which Pilate's

wife articulates an argument for women's equality. By putting the defense of Eve in the mouth of Pilate's wife, Lanyer allies herself to another woman who was given divine wisdom from God in a dream (Matt 27.19), as Lanyer had claimed that the title for her work--and thus, authority to write--came to her in a dream. And perhaps most importantly, Pilate's wife is the one person in the passion narrative who calls for Jesus's release: the male disciples have disappeared from the scene, except Peter, who has denied even knowing Christ. Lanyer's choice of Pilate's wife as apologist for Eve is thus consonant with the argument Lanyer will make for women's goodness--women are good especially in comparison to men who are stained with the most heinous crime of all, the crucifixion of the Christ.¹¹

Pilate's wife is also one of a host of strong biblical women who are known only by reference to "their men"--Manoah's wife, Jephthah's daughter, or that twice effaced Mother of the sons of Zebedee. Significantly, the various narratives in which they figure show these women to be

¹¹Mary Ellen Lamb points out that the cultural and religious assumptions of the day saw Adam's sin as arising from his "uxorious attention to his wife's words," a "fact" that argued for the strict control of all women's speech. Lanyer's use of Pilate's wife's speech as a (potential) corrective to Pilate's sinful actions argues against such a justification for the silencing of women (20).

more righteous than the men whose names they carry, an illustration of the way the biblical text can be made to overcome or subvert its mantle of patriarchalism. As Manoah's wife is the one addressed by the angel of the Lord, as Jephthah's daughter is the faithful one who keeps his rash vow, as the Mother of the sons of Zebedee shows up at Jesus's tomb though neither her sons nor her husband do, it is Pilate's wife who recognizes divinity when confronted by it in the person of Jesus. Lanyer has chosen her spokeswoman carefully, capitalizing on the subversive quality of the source that exalts the lowly, even the nameless. Significantly, in "Eves Apologie," the poet speaker merges with Pilate's wife: the narrator seems to begin addressing Pilate as "thou," yet Pilate's wife never formally takes her farewell. Thus the subversive power represented by that nameless woman inheres in the voice of the poet, further authorizing Lanyer.

"Eves Apologie" interrupts the passion narrative of Lanyer's Salve Deus at the moment where Pilate's wife is pleading with him to spare the life of Christ. To entreat Pilate, she uses a Moses-like argument that relies on the vanity of men for its success--though vanity was traditionally seen as a woman's sin. Pilate should spare Jesus, argues Pilate's wife, so that women won't be able to take pleasure in men's undoing. She says:

Let not us Women glory in Mens fall,
Who had power given to over-rule us all.

Till now your indiscretion sets us free
And makes our former fault much less appeare.
(759-62)

The source for this kind of argument is found in those passages where Moses intervenes with God on behalf of the Israelites after God has threatened to abandon the chosen people in the wilderness. Moses says to God,

Wherefore shal the Egyptians speake, and say, He
hathe brought them out maliciously for to slay them
in the mountaines, and to consume them from the
earth? turne from thy fearce wrath, and change thy
minde from this evil toward thy people. (Ex 32.12)

Or again,

Moses said unto the Lord, When the Egyptians shal
heare . . . [t]hat thou wilt kil this people as one
man . . . [they] shal thus say, Because the Lord was
not able to bring this people into the land, which
he sware unto them, therefore hathe he slain them in
the wildernes. (Num 14.13, 15-16)

Milton rehearsed this form of argument in The Debate in
Heaven in Paradise Lost where the Son entreats God the
Father on behalf of the human race:

For should Man finally be lost, should Man
Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest Son
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd
With his own folly? that be from thee far,
That far be from thee, Father, who art Judge
Of all things made, and judgest only right.

* * *

So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be question'd and blasphem'd without defense.
(3.150-55, 165-66)

This form of argument is itself highly questionable: it
imputes less than honorable motives to the supposedly

greater authority being sued for mercy, thus reserving the higher moral ground for the suppliant. Most readers recognize that God the Father is here being made to play straight man to the Son, is being made to reveal his (the Father's) flaws. When Lanyer has Pilate's wife use this form of argument from the source for women's condemnation, it has the effect of deconstructing the source and calling into question all argument.

The "Apologie" is structured on the same logical principle that had been used to condemn women, the argument of the universal from the particular, a false deduction or faulty syllogism that runs "all women are inferior because Eve proved inferior." This kind of reasoning supported many tirades against women, and thus it is no accident that Pilate's wife blurs or merges her condemnation of Pilate's treatment of Jesus with all men's sinfulness, arguing the sinfulness of all from the sinfulness of one. Thus the "you" Pilate's wife uses to address to her husband slips easily into the "you" that identifies the larger group "men" and often merges with "they" (men), while Pilate's wife singles out Eve as "she." Lanyer is using to her purposes the (il)logical forms that had been used against women, forcing men to inhabit a category in which individual members are indistinguishable, while liberating women to be unique and

particular (104). (Indeed, this distinction is her declared purpose in the dedication "To The Vertuous Reader" where she says she has written the book "to make knowne to the world, that all women deserve not to be blamed . . ." [11-12]).

The body of the argument in the "Apologie" is a dismantling of specific arguments of women's inferiority whose source of authority was the Genesis text--arguments that posited women's inherent sinfulness, their stupidity, and their vanity--by remaking those charges into feminist arguments that elevate women above men. In Lanyer's defence, men's "superiority"--that is, their political power, not their inherent goodness--becomes the justification for their greater condemnation. Lanyer argues that Eve is "simply good" and that her ignorance--her socially constructed inferiority--prevented her from knowing the consequence of eating the fruit. That is, within the society of Eden, Eve is constructed inferior before the fall when God does not speak directly to her to explain the prohibition. So Eve's error is based on her constructed ignorance (not her essential ignorance) and Lanyer avers that

. . . had she knowne of what we were bereav'd,
To [the serpent's] request she had not condescended.
(771-72)

Adam, on the other hand, "can not be excusde" because he

should have known better, having received the prohibition
 "from Gods mouth." Man was

Lord and King of all the earth,
 Before poore Eve had either life or breath.

(783-84)

Thus Lanyer condemns men and vindicates women using the same argumentative material and form that had traditionally been used to condemn women--or, rather, she argues it backwards, for the proposition is not "women are inferior; therefore they are dominated by men," but "women are dominated by men; therefore they are excused and, thus, morally superior."

Meg Lota Brown rightly points out the problem of distinguishing essential from constructed gender traits in a world whose essence has been constructed by God. Nonetheless, Lanyer seems to make such a distinction in her reading of biblical events. Unlike Milton, who uses the same material to justify God's ways to man, Lanyer's purpose seems to be rather the explication and justification of women's actions within a context whose conditions of existence are unquestioned facts. Or, as Wendy Wall puts it, a biblical scene like Eden or the crucifixion is "the site of a contest between the sexes, an agonistic moment in history that makes woman's virtue visible" (60). God's actions in creating the conditions of existence, on the other hand, are not of interest to

Lanyer so she is able to overlook the contradictions in her theodicy.

Lanyer twists another traditional element in the querelle des femmes to her advantage when she raises the issue of women's desire for beauty. Women had been criticized since the time of the Hebrew prophets for this sin, but in "Eves Apologie" men are condemned for this lust, while women are portrayed as desiring knowledge. Eve ate the fruit "for knowledge sake," while "the fruit beeing faire perswaded [Adam] to fall" (797-98). Thus Lanyer creates a hierarchy of desire in which women come out on top and men are condemned for choosing wrongly, the charge that had been laid to women in misogynistic readings of the Eden narrative.

Lanyer's argument here involves an interesting rewriting of the Genesis text. In the biblical narrative, three reasons are given for Eve's eating the fruit:

So the woman (seing that the tre was good for meat, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, & a tre to be desired to get knowledge) toke of the frute thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her housband with her, and he did eat. (Gen 3.6)

Lanyer has obscured the text's claim that Eve found the tree "pleasant to the eyes," the reason often given as proof of woman's inherent sinfulness, and has instead focused on Eve's desire for knowledge, a piece of the text

usually ignored.¹² Lanyer's selective reading calls into question other equally selective readings that ignore Eve's desire for wisdom.

Lanyer follows up on her claim of women's desire for knowledge by further undermining men's traditional association with learning. Adam is faulted for his failure to reprimand Eve, especially as he heard the interdiction directly from God. "Yet Men will boast of Knowledge," says the narrator sarcastically, though Adam mistook "Eves faire hand" for "a learned Booke" (807-08). Here men's pseudo-knowledge is what makes them objectify women, the reference to the "faire hand" recalling the dismemberment of the blazon. Again it is implied that men's desire (perhaps even their objectification of women) misleads them, while women's actions are prompted by love, and love of learning.

At this point, Lanyer returns to her condemnation of men for crucifying Christ, an action that makes "many worlds" worth of sins pale in comparison, and demands, "Then let us have our Libertie againe, / And challendge to

¹²Except by Milton, of course. Here and elsewhere, Lanyer often teases from the biblical text the very threads that will interest Milton sixty years later in Paradise Lost. When Milton takes pains to show that Eve's overweening desire for knowledge was part of the grievousness of her sin, he almost seems to be answering Lanyer. Yet there is no evidence outside these tantalizing connections to suggest that he had seen her work.

your selves no Sov'raigntie," adding, "why should you disdaine / Our beeing your equals, free from tyranny?" considering that "This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end" (825-26, 829-30, 833). This argument is unusual in that it historicizes the biblical events that theological tradition had absolutized, showing gender traits arising from cultural situations rather than essential qualities. While women may have put themselves under men's "tyranny" because of Eve's actions, men's later actions (at the crucifixion) change the balance of power and argue for a shift in gender relations. But while Lanyer claims that men are "Till now," that is, since the crucifixion, inferior to women, she argues not for men's subjection to women, but for equality--in this context, a magnanimous gesture, and one that doubly condemns those who continue to call for women's subjection because of their supposed inferiority.¹³

Lanyer ends this section with a return to the logical

¹³Mary Ellen Lamb argues, alternatively, that Lanyer's "version of the passion is a static narrative; there is no change or redemption. In its gender arrangements, the present day remains frozen in the events of Christ's passion. The cruelty of men is unredeemed because male tyranny continues to dominate women" (20). I think that this understanding ignores both the condemnation of women based on Eve's sin that "historically" preceded Christ's crucifixion, and the historic fact that "male tyranny continues to dominate women." I think, rather, that Lanyer's theological history holds out the possibility for change in gender valuation.

form that had opened the "Apologie" (that is, arguing the universal from the particular). Here Pilate's wife claims that she (rather than Eve) "speakes for all [women]" (834), showing them to be right and righteous, just as Pilate and the men who crucified the Christ "speak" for or represent all men, condemning them. Thus Lanyer frames the "Apologie" with this faulty logic, the pattern of arguments traditionally used to condemn women, beginning the episode by turning the false syllogism around so that she can use it against men, and ending by using the now questionable form to affirm women.

Lanyer then proceeds to offer other, more powerful, models of biblical heroism. "Eves Apologie" chastised the male heroes of the Passion narrative and Lanyer puts in their place religious heroines, allowing for women the kind of religious authorization that had traditionally been modeled only by male saints. Instead, Lanyer populates her poem with female figures of the Old Testament; those male characters that are mentioned in Lanyer's work appear merely long enough for their powers to be co-opted for Lanyer's heroines. So Moses and David appear in "The Description of Cooke-ham," but their characteristics devolve to the Lady of the poem. She, like Moses, ascends God's "holy Hill, / to know his pleasure, and performe his Will." "With lovely David" (here,

appropriately, feminized), the Lady sings "holy Hymnes to Heavens Eternall King" (85-88). Stephen, first deacon and protomartyr, St. Laurence, and the apostles Peter and John are portrayed as saints at the end of the Salve Deus, yet even this positive picture of the apostles is undercut by their condemnation in "Eves Apologie."

The apostles are again displaced when they appear in an extended section as tasters of the "sweetnesse" of the body of Christ. They are thus narratively subordinated to a feminized Christ who is at the poetic center of the premier poem of Lanyer's book, at once the bridegroom and the feast to which Lanyer has invited her guests. Lanyer's co-option of Christ's virtues for women is effected by her "spiritually feminist" reading of the "Canticles."¹⁴

Traditional exegesis had read the poem as telling of Christ's love for the church; Lanyer plays out the implications of that allegorical reading by imagining Christ as a lover and describing him erotically.¹⁵ The

¹⁴Lanyer also figures Christ as St. Sebastian "all stucke with pale deaths arrows" ("Lucie" 12), that most feminine of male saints who is traditionally pictured swooning most erotically, having been pricked repeatedly by arrows.

¹⁵This kind of eroticized meditation on Christ was more common to medieval than to Reformation spirituality. The twelfth-century "Katherine Group" of religious poems, for instance, depends almost wholly on such imagery. Of course, poets like John Donne and George Herbert made use of that tradition as well, albeit in a less comfortable manner than did writers of the Middle Ages--or Lanyer.

effect of Lanyer's use of this material is to call into question the way Petrarchan conventions of love poetry had appropriated the descriptive material of the Canticles, for the Old Testament poem revels in sensual description of both lover and beloved, while the sonnet tradition describes only the woman.

While Christ is described in terms common to the Canticles as he is dying on the cross--his "alabaster breast" together with the "bloody side" (1162) recall the "white and ruddy" (5.10) that define the beloved--it is the body of the resurrected Christ, the bridegroom inhabiting the New Jerusalem, that most resembles the beloved of the Canticles. Significantly, he is in the scene attended by "his faithfull Wife / The holy Church" (1291-92). Recalling the Matthean parable of the wise virgins, the church nurses Christ's wounds with "The oyles of Mercie, Charitie, and Faith," which "pretious balmes doe heale his grevous wounds" (1295, 97). (The scene additionally recalls the faithful women who bring "ointments" and "odours" to Jesus's tomb, only to find the stone rolled away [Luke 23.56-24.2].) Healed by his wife,

Crashaw, whose poetry drips with the bodily fluids generated by the sacred erotic encounter, certainly writes in the tradition of the Song of Songs. But his poetic intention seems to include shock value, indicating an awareness of the disjunction between the sacred and the erotic that is not in a work like, say, Bernard's Sermon in the Song of Songs.

Christ takes on the characteristics of the beloved of the Canticles. His face is like "Snowe," his "cheekes like skarlet" (1307, 08). His "eyes so bright / As purest Doves that in the rivers are / Washed with milke, to give the more delight" (1308-10) recall the description from the Canticles "His eyes are like dooves upon the rivers of waters, which are washt with milke" (5.12). His "lips like skarlet threeds" (1314) and his "cheekes [like] beds of spices, flowers sweet" (1318) recall the "lips . . . like a threde of skarlet" (4.3) and the "chekes [like] a bed of spices, and as swete flowres" (5.13a), while Lanyer's description of "his lips, like Lillies, dropping downe pure mirrhe" (1319) repeats word for word the description in the Canticles (5.13b). Significantly, Lanyer provides here a conflation of the characteristics that describe the male and female lovers in the biblical text. By assigning to Christ the traits and characteristics of both lovers of the Canticles, she merges male and female. For readers of both the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries schooled in the Petrarchan tradition of love poetry that blazons the female, not the male, body, the effect is to make Lanyer's Christ seem more female than male.

In contrast to the feminized Christ and the men whose saintliness--and gender--are called into question, the biblical women whom Lanyer names are both models of

empowerment and of traditional femininity: they have traditionally feminine characteristics such as beauty and chastity, but they play non-traditional roles in the biblical narratives. The much-anthologized poem "To the Vertuous Reader" and an extended section of the Salve Deus (1465-1616) present six Hebrew women as models of female virtue and power: Deborah and Jael of the book of Judges, the Queen of Sheba of the first book of Kings, Esther and Judith of the books bearing their names, and Susanna, whose story formed one of the additions to the book of Daniel in the Vulgate and stood as a separate book in the Apocrypha of the Elizabethan Bibles.¹⁶

Lanyer's choice of female figures here is telling. She could have chosen women who modelled obedience or patience, the traditional female virtues, for the Bible offers many examples of such women. Instead Lanyer has chosen women whose lives signify independence and power. Susanna is the most "traditional" female character, one willing to defend her chastity to the death; the Queen of Sheba is unique to the biblical narrative as a woman equal in status to that greatest of kings, Solomon; the other

¹⁶Jael, a character in the Song of Deborah, appears only in the dedication, while the Queen of Sheba appears only in the Salve Deus, but there twice. The other four women are mentioned in both places.

Part of the book of Esther is included in the canon of the Old Testament, while other sections, later additions, are Apocryphal.

women play central roles in the military and strategic defense of Israel.

Further, these women, though occupying varying periods and purposes in the biblical narrative, share one negative quality: their purpose is unconnected to generation and lineage. Lanyer has chosen five women who are not valued for their procreative ability (as are other strong biblical women like Tamar, Hannah, and Ruth). Instead, Lanyer's biblical heroines are narratively independent of the genealogical concerns of much of the Old Testament text. When the biblical narratives introduce Deborah, Jael, and Susanna, they are linked to their husbands--Deborah is the wife of Lappidoth, Jael is the wife of Heber the Kenite, and Susanna is the wife of Joachim--but the men then disappear from the text, never to be named again, and we never hear whether the women have children or not. The Queen of Sheba is utterly independent of men and children, and she enters and exits the narrative attended only by her great retinue. Esther is an orphan being raised by her uncle, is groomed as a concubine, and becomes a queen; children are never mentioned. Judith's widowhood is important to the narrative, as is Susanna's chastity, but their (apparent) childlessness is not. The presence of these childless women in a narrative in which a major theme is the barren woman (and God's merciful

ending of her affliction) is remarkable, and Lanyer's singling out of these women cannot be accidental.

Rather than being defined by their subservient relationship to men or the patriarchal concerns, these women are either equal to the male figures in the text, as in the case of the Queen of Sheba, or superior: the other women are significant for their undoing of evil men's machinations. In a twist on the biblical pattern of introducing women by reference to their fathers or husbands or children, Lanyer instead introduces women by the names of the men they destroyed, linking the women to the exercise of the will of God "who gave power to wise and virtuous women, to bring downe [men's] pride and arrogancie" ("Vertuous Reader" 31-33). Likewise, in the Salve Deus, Lanyer introduces her heroines as

Those famous women elder times have knowne,
Whose glorious actions did appeare so bright,
That powrefull men by them were overthrowne
(1465-67)

Further, these lines mimic the language of the passage in Ecclesiasticus that praises "famous men":

Let us now comende the famous men, and our fathers,
of whome we are begotten. The Lord hathe gotten
great glorie by them, and that through his great
power from the beginning. (44.1-2)

In addition, the qualities that the biblical author associates with famous men are those Lanyer ascribes to her pantheon of heroines:

Thei have borne rule in their kingdomes, and were renoumed for their power, and were wise in counsel, and declared prophecies. They governed the people by counsel & by the knowledge of learning mete for the people, in whose doctrine were wise sentences.
(44.3-4)

So Lanyer praises "the discreet counsell" ("Vertuous Reader" 34) of "wise Deborah, that judged Israel" (Salve Deus 1481), and "the rare wisdom" of Judith ("Vertuous Reader" 38), qualities that more closely follow the catalogue of "famous men."

While Lanyer ascribes to women the qualities equated with the masculine in Wisdom literature, she alters fundamentally the quality this literature had identified with women. Virtue, the quality that appears most often in Lanyer's work in association with women, is the mark of a good woman in Ecclesiasticus, but her virtue exists only insofar as she is connected to a husband, to whom the pleasure and power of that quality devolves:

Blessed is the man that hathe a verteous wife: for the nomber of his yeares shalbe double. An honest woman rejoyceth her housband, and she shal fill the yeres of his life with peace. A verteous woman is a good portion which shalbe given for a gift unto suche as feare the Lord. (26.1-3)

And again:

The beautie of a woman chereth the face, and a man loveth nothing better. If there be in her tongue gentlenes, mekenes, and wholesome talke, then is not her housband like other men. He that hache [sic] gotten a vertuous woman, hathe begone to get a possession: she is an helpe like unto him self, and a piller to rest upon. (36.22-24)

In this context, it is important to recall that Lanyer's heroines (both biblical and contemporary) possess virtue unto themselves, and that their connection to husbands is either incidental or negative. The other central qualities ascribed to good women by Wisdom literature, her silence and chastity, are not consonant with Lanyer's picture of the biblical heroine. Further, the biblical text cautions against women's freedom:

If thy daughter be not shamefast, holdde her straitly, lest she abuse her seelf thorowe over muche libertie. . . . As one that goeth by the way, and is thirstie, so shal she open her mouth, and drinke of everie next water: by everie hedge shal she sitte downe, & open her quiver against everie arowe. (Ecclus 26.10, 12)

But Lanyer argues in favor of freedom: "Then let us have our libertie againe" (Salve Deus 825). Finally, while the biblical author avers that "The wickednes of a man is better then the good intreatie of a woman, to wit, of a woman that is in shame, and reproche" (42.14), Lanyer's women are known rather for their shaming and reproaching of men in the name of God.

However, while the women co-opt many of the strong characteristics of men, they do not seem either male or androgynous, for many of the women Lanyer has chosen as models are noted for their beauty and their adornment of themselves. While the Queen of Sheba and Deborah are powerful national leaders, their appearance is not

mentioned by the biblical text. But the beauty of Judith, Esther, and Susanna are integral parts of the narrative. Judith and Esther use make up and heighten their beauty to serve God's purpose by overthrowing men. Susanna, on the other hand, is persecuted because of her beauty. In none of the narratives are women condemned for being attractive, an omission that is, in itself, an anomaly in a patriarchal religious text. By highlighting these stories, Lanyer presents a complex commentary on women's desirability. Being desired by men can bring women power over men, but can also result in abuse by men. But, either way, it is the men, not the women, who are condemned both by the biblical texts and by Lanyer's allusion to this groups of texts. As in "Eves Apologie" where Adam is condemned for being seduced to sin by Eve's beauty, it is men who are wrong if they objectify and abuse women for their beauty. That beauty is, in itself, good, and can be an instrument of God's will, though it doesn't ultimately define a woman's virtue.

In Deborah and Jael, Lanyer has invoked characters in a biblical story that, of itself, overturns gender hierarchies and privileges women. Deborah is the only female Judge (that is, ruler) in Israel's history, and Jael is one of a handful of Old Testament women who receive both a name and a narrative. The biblical text

revels in the irony of these two women being the instruments of Yahweh for the destruction of the great Canaanite army under its general, Sisera.¹⁷ Deborah's "discreet counsell" ("Vertuous Reader" 33-34) is not the quiet discretion usually demanded of women, but her instructions to the army's commander, Barak. She proposes to him that she will draw out Sisera in order to "deliver him into [Barak's] hand." She counsels him, however, that "this journey that thou takest, shal not be for thine honour: for the Lord shal sel Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Judges 4.7,9).

That woman was Jael, whose "resolution" ("Vertuous Reader" 35) was, again, not the kind of fortitude that bears all quietly, but her resolve in seducing Sisera into her tent and then calmly driving a tent peg through his temple. In the poetic version of the story, Jael may be functioning as a priestess when she offers Sisera

¹⁷The book of Judges presents parallel accounts of this tale: chapter 4 is a prose account, while chapter 5 is the much earlier poetic account of the battle (the oldest extant Hebrew passage of significant length). Deborah and Jael are the central players in the older version, while Barak, though still secondary, is given a larger role in the prose account. This progressive deletion of women from the text is made more evident in a much later reference to the battle (in a Deuteronimic section of Samuel), where Deborah and Jael are effaced entirely (12.11).

sanctuary in her tent.¹⁸ His presence within her tent may further imply her seduction of the exhausted warrior. In the prose version, she kills him while he is sleeping, driving the tent peg through his skull and into the ground. In the poetic version, she shows even more "resolve," killing him as he stands before her. His falling between her feet may comment ironically on their sexual relationship; feet are a euphemism for genitalia, and the repetition of the biblical line evokes both the hammer blow and the rhythm of orgasm:

She put her hande to the naile, and her right hand
to the workemans hammer: with the hammer smote she
Sisera: she smote of his head, after she had
wounded, & pearsed his temples. He bowed him downe
at her feete, he fel downe, & lay stil: at her feete
he bowed him downe, and fel: and when he had sonke
downe, he lay there dead. (Judges 5.26-27)

So the text of Judges 4-5 itself calls into question the traditional relationship between men and women, putting women on top. When Lanyer invokes these women, she is using the subversive potential of the Bible to empower contemporary women.

The book of Judith presents another equally fierce woman, one whom Lanyer admires for her "invincible courage, rare wisdom, and confident carriage ("Vertuous Reader" 37-38). Judith resembles in some ways those

¹⁸My reading of this passage is heavily indebted to Susan Ackerman's 1989 lecture series on the women of the book of Judges, "One Woman, Many Women."

independent widows of early modern England (like Bess of Shrewsbury and, ultimately, Anne Clifford), for "her housband Manasses had left her golde & silver, and men servants, and maide servants, and cattel, and possessions" (8.7). Rather like Deborah, she calls together the leaders of her people and counsels them to stand up to the Assyrian army. It is she who rightly interprets God's will to the male rulers who had intended to surrender the city under siege.

Judith is also noted in the biblical text for her beauty. "She was of a goodlie countenance & very beautiful to beholde" (8.7)--unusual praise in the midst of prophetic tirades against women's vanity. But Judith's beauty is at the heart of the action. Rather than condemning women for beautifying themselves and attracting men, the story of Judith shows a proud man being undone because of his lust for a woman's beauty. In addition, the narrative throughout comments on women's position vis-à-vis men. Judith's prayer to God (Judith 9.2-19) begins with a preamble that recalls the rape of Dinah and the righteous revenge that God worked through the hands of Levi and Simeon.¹⁹ There is a wonderful irony to Judith's

¹⁹Formal prayers are traditionally formed of three parts: the preamble (or address, or invocation), the petition, and the conclusion (or mediation). The preamble often includes "a descriptive phrase or attribution which states the grounds on which the petition" that follows is

prayer that characterizes God as the revenger of a woman's rape, when Judith is praying for help in seducing and then murdering Holofernes--praying that God will

give unto mine hand which am a widow, the strength
that I have conceived. Smite by the deceit of my
lippes the servant with the prince . . . : abate
their height by the hand of a woman. (9.9-10)

Judith, who had obediently lived in sackcloth and ashes since the death of her husband, uses beautiful clothing, jewelry, and make-up--precisely what the prophets of both ancient Israel and seventeenth-century England had condemned--to work the will of God. Her beauty calls forth a kind of phallic competitive anxiety from Holofernes, who postulates that "it were a shame for us, if we shulde let suche a woman alone, & not talk with her, & if we do not allure her" (12.11). Judith so ravished Holofernes that he "dranke mucche more wine then he had drunke at anie time in one day since he was borne" (12.20). Judith, however, kept her wits about her and arranged to be left alone with Holofernes. In a scene reminiscent of Jael's "resolution," Judith kills Holofernes with his own sword, severing his head--in the context of this seduction scene, a kind of castration of male power. Like the Song of Deborah, the Song of Judith emphasizes the irony that Israel's enemies

made (Hatchett 164). A prayer asking for seasonable weather, for instance, might recount in the preamble God's merciful ending of the flood.

were brought down by a woman:

[Holofernes] said that he wolde burne up my borders
& kill my yong men with the sworde, and dash the
sucking children against the grounde, & make mine
infants as a pray, and my virgines a spoile. But the
almightie Lord hath brought them to naught by the
hand of a woman. For the mightie did not fall by the
yong men, . . . but Judeth the daughter of Merari
did discomfite him by the beautie of her
countenance. (16.6-8)

The song goes on to link Judith's beautifying with her
resolute killing of Holofernes in a horrifying series of
clauses that makes both beauty and the sword weapons
appropriate to women for the undoing of evil men by the
will of God: "Her slippers ravished his eyes: her beautie
toke his mind prisoner, and the fauchin [sword] passed
through his necke" (16.9-11). Lanyer, too, equates
Judith's beauty with weapons, while accusing Holofernes
(not Judith, as might be expected) of vanity:

. . . Judeth had the powre likewise to queale
Proud Holifernes, that the just might see
What small defence vaine pride, and greatnesse
hath
Against the weapons of Gods word and faith.
(Salve Deus 1485-88)

It is interesting to compare Lanyer's characterization
of Judith with a very popular contemporary account, Thomas
Hudson's translation of Du Bartas's History of Judith
(1641). There, Judith is pathologically lacrimose. She is
"wofull Judith, with her weeping eyes (369); her "eyes
(like fountains two) / Were never dry" (368). The author
focuses on her fear and indecision at the contemplation of

her deed:

. . . her feeble kinde
Empeached oft the purpose of her minde:
Proposing oft the horreur of the deed,
The fear of death, the danger to succeed,
With hazzard of her name (368)

Neither the biblical text nor Lanyer's poem present Judith as fearful or concerned with her reputation. Also interesting is that the "History of Judith" pauses twice in the midst of the tale for an extended blazons on Judith's parts, cataloguing her hair that "with recklesse art / With many a curling ring decor'd her face," her cheeks "With mixed rose and lillies sweet and faint," her "dulcet mouth," her "yv'ry neck," etc., etc. (372). Here Judith becomes merely a sister of Laura, Stella, Celia, and Julia, rather than the icon of female power she represents in Lanyer's work.

Esther, like Judith, is noted for her beauty and adornment, but Lanyer calls her "virtuous" (Salve Deus 1505) and praises her "divine prayers and prudent proceedings" ("Vertuous" 36). Significantly, the entire story of Esther takes place in the narrative context of a woman's "disobedience" of a tyrannical man, and it is ultimately that man's determination to punish the woman that results in his downfall. In the midst of a week-long orgy of luxury, King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), "mery with wine," asks his servants "To bring quene Vasthi before the

King with the crowne royal, that he might shewe the people and the princes her beautie: for she was faire to loke upon" (1.10, 11)--in other words, so that she might might be publicly objectified for his glory. But she refuses, prompting him to send a proclamation throughout his empire that "all women shal give their husbandes honour, bothe great and small," and that "everie man shulde bear rule in his owne house" (1.20, 22). He also begins to send for the "yong virgins" of the kingdom, seeking a more compliant queen.

What he gets, instead, is Esther, a beautiful woman and a Jew, who will prove his undoing. Taken by her beauty, King Ahasuerus "set the crowne of the kingdome upon her head, & made her Quene in steade of Vasthi" (2.17). In response to the king's order of a pogrom of all Jews, Esther first prepares herself by expressions of grief. After three days of prayer, she, like Judith, prepares to seduce Ahasuerus in order to overthrow him. She "laid away the mourning garmentes, and put on her glorious apparel" (15.4) and (in a reversal of Queen Vasthi's action) goes unbidden into the king's presence, where her beauty gains the king's favor once again and she is able to intercede on behalf of the Jews. Lanyer's allusion to the story of Esther, like her recalling of Judith's deeds, suggests both models of untraditional female empowerment and the

redemption of traits for which women were traditionally castigated.

Susanna is the most traditionally feminine of the heroines Lanyer mentions, yet even she holds an unusual place in the Bible, as she is identified by her maternal lineage, as "daughter of Helcias, a verie faire woman, and one that feared God" (1.2). Like her mother, she, too, is beautiful, and her beauty arouses the attentions of two elders who spied on her daily, "their lust . . . inflamed towarde her" (10). They surprise her while she is bathing and demand that she "lye with [them]" or they will accuse her of fornicating with a "yong man" (19). She chooses death rather than sin in the sight of the Lord (23). Even at her trial, her beauty is noted and she is abused by those called to judge the matter:

Now Susanna was very tender, and faire of face. And
the wicked men commanded to uncover her face (for
she was covered) that thei might so be satisfied
with her beautie. (31-32)

The story, however, does not condone this delectation of Susanna, for the Lord hears her prayer and, in an ironic reference to the "yong man" she was accused of sleeping with, God sends "a yong childe, whose name was Daniel" to rescue her (44-45). Lanyer reads the passage as fundamentally subversive of hierarchy:

[Susanna's] Innocencie bare away the blame,
Untill th'Almighty Lord had heard her crie;
And rais'd the spirit of a Child to speake,

Making the powrefull judged of the weake.
 (Salve Deus 1533-36)

Again, a woman, though persecuted by men on account of her beauty, is avenged by God, who punishes those who objectify women.

The Queen of Sheba is unique in the biblical narrative as a powerful ruler who meets Solomon, the most magnificent king of Israel, as an equal. While the biblical text does not comment on her beauty, Lanyer pictures both her and Solomon as beautiful. More important, Lanyer stresses to the point of tedium her equality with Solomon, even her equality in wisdom, the trait for which Solomon is most noted.

Here Majestie with Majestie did meete,
 Wisdome to Wisdome yeelded true content,
 One Beauty did another Beauty greet,
 Bounty to Bountie never could repent.

* * *

Spirits affect where they doe sympathize,
 Wisdom desires Wisdome to embrace,
 Virtue covets her like, and doth devize
 How she her friends may entertaine with grace;
 Beauty sometimes is pleas'd to feed her eyes,
 With viewing Beautie in anothers face:

Both good and bad in this point do agree,
 That each desireth with his like to be.

(Salve Deus 1585-88, 1593-1600)

Lanyer also comments favorably on the "unwomanly" behavior of the Queen of Sheba who, "not yeelding to the nicenesse and respect / Of woman-kind . . . past both sea and land," without "feare of dangers" (Salve Deus 1603-05). Thus, while the biblical narrative uses the Queen of Sheba

merely as a mouthpiece to proclaim the praises of Solomon, in Lanyer's poem Solomon recedes into the background, functioning merely as a standard of grandeur and power for measuring the greatness of this rare woman.

These six women, then, model femaleness in Lanyer's visionary world. They function independently of men: their purpose is not to breed children but rather to lead nations and armies, to confer about matters of theological and political importance, to enjoy their beauty and to use it to their empowerment and for God's will, often for the shaming or destruction of abusive men. In them Lanyer has presented an alternative to the usual models of the female religious life based on submission to God in men. In Lanyer's world, women are rather the leaders to whom God speaks directly and through whom God effects justice. It is in this New Jerusalem, this redeemed community of holy women, that Lanyer will position herself as a powerful woman equal to the greatest of the women she addresses in her poems.

SELF-FASHIONING IN THE PATRONAGE POEM

In the previous chapter, I argued that Aemilia Lanyer invoked a community of women as the first, and necessary, step in her self-fashioning as a poet. Lanyer's vision of virtuous and powerful women inhabiting a New Jerusalem has the effect of creating a poetic space in which all women can, potentially, be poets, can be speaking subjects. But Lanyer also uses the same material that constructed community to define herself within that community. Paradoxically, the patronage poems that introduce Lanyer's volume serve both to empower all women and then to limit all other women's power in relationship to Lanyer; her voice is finally the only one authorized to speak within her poetic world. Both steps, seemingly contradictory, function dynamically and dialectically to construct poetic subjectivity for Lanyer.

The patronage poem is, of course, a genre designed to construct and empower the poet at the expense of the more powerful patron. Traditionally, the male author had employed the language of love as the framework for defining the client-patron relationship when addressing patronage poems to women, a relationship that would otherwise invert the social realities too radically.

Without the language of love as a pretext, the image of a man suing a woman for advancement would be unthinkable.¹ Here, for once, Lanyer--neither noble nor male--may have an "advantage" over the male poet in that her relationship to both male and female patrons is one of seeming submission. It is from that position of powerlessness that Lanyer draws on the authority of the most exalted of those she constructs as patrons, constructing her own empowerment in the process.² At the same time, she calls into question all earthly honors and titles by placing them against the figure of Christ, that paradoxically most humble and most noble figure of all,

¹See, for example, Arthur F. Marotti's discussion of John Donne's use of Petrarchan conventions in his verse and prose correspondence with the Countess of Bedford.

As Maureen Quilligan points out in her article "The Constant Subject," "Petrarchism had of course become an overtly political language, developing into a substitute political discourse, especially during the reign of Elizabeth" (325). But where Mary Wroth (the subject of Quilligan's article) redefines the female position in the Petrarchan economy vis-à-vis the male, Lanyer, in some sense, deletes the male from the exchange.

²While Lanyer's relationship to some of those addressed in her poems is documentable--for instance, to Susan Bertie, Countess of Kent, and to the Cliffords--her relationship to the others she addresses is clearly "constructed." There is no evidence that Lanyer knew either the queen or her daughter, or Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke. And Lanyer begins her poem to Katherine, Countess of Suffolk, with the apology
 Although great Lady, it may seeme right strange
 That I a stranger should presume thus farre,
 To write to you (1-3)

allying herself, through her humble social position, with his ultimate power.

Lanyer's revolutionary program here is perfectly consonant with the Pauline gospel and rehearses, as Herb Schneidau points out, the arguments of 1 Corinthians. There Paul condemns the divisions that plague the Christian community at Corinth--a kind of aristocracy of baptismal lineage--by recalling how the disjunction between Christ's worldly position and his heavenly authority. The disparity between the two, argues Paul, has the effect of subverting all earthly authority:

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weake things of the world to confound the mightie things; And vile things of the world & things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, That no flesh should rejoyce in his presence.

(1.27-29)

Likewise in place of the hierarchy of title and power that her patrons represent, Lanyer substitutes a quasi-religious hierarchy in which the untitled--"All Vertuous Ladies in generall"--can be priests, and where Lanyer functions as high priest and redeemer.

The language of feasting that plays a part in the imagery of the New Jerusalem assists Lanyer in this project of self-fashioning. As Michael C. Schoenfeldt has noted (and as I argue at length in my chapter on the

country house poem), practicing hospitality "announces prestige in the political arena, for the ability to feed others is an index of social status" (63). When Lanyer invites a handful of noblewomen and "all vertuous ladies in generall" to a feast, she is taking a position of authority, for "the giving of a feast is a sign of power . . . [and] the acceptance of another's fare is a mark of submission." Her entertainment of noblewomen implies her equality and perhaps superiority to them, for by her actions she co-opts "a mode of behavior through which the aristocracy parades its power over others" (Schoenfeldt 64). In other words, she has used the very social means by which the noblewomen to whom she addresses her poem might (and probably did) express their superiority to her, and turns that social form into a poetic trope that articulates her equality with them--and all in a manner that seems to offer service rather than challenge.³

Lanyer augments this power by merging the heavenly marriage banquet with her book, as she does particularly

³In his discussion of Ben Jonson's "Inviting a Friend to Supper," Schoenfeldt also argues that "By entreating the guest to compensate for the host's lack of prestige, Jonson emphasizes the political component of the occasion even as he attempts to palliate it" (65). Likewise, Lanyer repeatedly asks Queen Anne to compensate for the deficiencies of her feast/book:

Read it faire Queene, though it defective be,
Your Excellence can grace both It and Mee. (5-6)

in the poem "To the Lady Elizabeths Grace":

Even you faire Princesse next our famous Queene,
 I doe invite unto this wholesome feast,
 Whose goodly wisdom, though your yeares be
 greene,
 By such good workes may daily be increast,
 Though your faire eyes farre better Bookes have
 seene. (8-12)

Lanyer's authority is further strengthened in this passage by the implication that the consumption of the feast/book is the equivalent of a good work that can lead to salvation. That notion is underscored by Lanyer's claim in the poem to Queen Anne to have "prepar'd my Paschal Lambe" (85), the "figure of that living Sacrifice" (86) and the means of salvation. Her invitation to Anne--"This pretious Passeover feed upon" (89)--figures the queen as a common Christian while Lanyer assumes a multiple role that recalls Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, Moses and Aaron's creation of the first Passover, and the more contemporary image of a priest celebrating eucharist.

Lanyer lays out her program of subversive self-fashioning in the prose address "To the Vertuous Reader" that precedes the title poem, but that does not otherwise function as a dedicatory or patronage piece. She begins,

Often have I heard, that it is the property of some women, not only to emulate the virtues and perfections of the rest, but also by all their powers of ill speaking, to ecclipse the brightnes

of their deserved fame: now contrary to this custome, which men I hope unjustly lay to their charge, I have written this small volume, or little booke, for the generall use of all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of this kingdome (1-7)

Lanyer seems initially to set up a parallel construction in which the actions of "some women" will be balanced against Lanyer's actions "contrary to this custome." But instead of the expected disclaimer--"contrary to this custom I will not eclipse the brightness of their fame"--Lanyer slips deftly to a generalization that does not follow in either sense or syntax from the first clause: "contrary to this custom, I have written a book for all virtuous women." For the fact is, that Lanyer will attempt to eclipse the fame of her titled patrons, by first presenting them as powerful, and then by demeaning them through an insidious rhetoric that repeatedly constructs Lanyer's empowerment and fame, not theirs.

The phrase that follows demonstrates this rhetoric:

I have written this small volume, or little booke, for the generall use of all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of this kingdome; and in commendation of some particular persons of our owne sexe, such as for the most part, are so well knowne to my selfe, and others, that I dare undertake Fame dares not to call any better. (5-10)

These "particular persons of our owne sexe" are here ironically constructed as less important than "all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of this kingdome": the

(unnamed) famous subsumed under the general category "our owne sexe," while Lanyer's peers are styled doubly and linked to royalty. Further, Lanyer in this construction becomes the one who controls and constructs the status of these women: it is Lanyer's (and others') knowledge of these women that prompts Fame to call them "famous."

The next sentence seems to provide the missing conclusion to the initial statement that was never finished. Some may attempt to eclipse the fame of those they emulate, but Lanyer has written her book

to make knowne to the world, that all women deserve
not to be blamed though some forgetting they are
women themselves, and in danger to be condemned by
the words of their owne mouthes, fall into so great
an errour, as to speak unadvisedly against the rest
of their sexe (11-15)

Here again the famous have been replaced by "all women," and it becomes clear that the purpose of the patronage poems that precede this address is not to increase the fame of the eponymous women of those poems, but to redeem the category woman and to advance Lanyer's authority. For here again it is Lanyer who functions as Fame, "make[ing] knowne to the world" the goodness of women.

This slippery transaction of invoking the authority of others merely to co-opt it for herself is apparent in the patronage poems that precede the Salve Deus. In the poems to Queen Anne and the Princess Elizabeth, the most

exalted of the patrons she addresses, Lanyer is at her most audacious, employing what I will call a "rhetoric of deferral" that repeatedly denies authority to the queen (and, secondarily, her daughter) while Lanyer claims all power for herself. The poems addressed to those whom Lanyer knew personally also exhibit a paradoxical action of alternate exalting and subordinating. The dedication to Anne Clifford addresses the patron whom (with her mother, Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland) Lanyer knew best. She also seems to be someone with whom Lanyer felt herself to be competing, for both as she is figured in "The Description of Cooke-ham" and in the dedicatory poem, Clifford is the target of Lanyer's energetic (if camouflaged) criticism. But Susan Bertie also receives similar treatment in Lanyer's poem to her, if to a lesser degree, and even Margaret Clifford, the epitome of virtue in Lanyer's work, is constructed poetically in such a way that her power devolves to Lanyer.

In developing this concept of deferral, I draw on the etymology of defer, "to submit to another's wishes, opinion, or governance," which is derived from Latin deferre, "to bring down." Thus both meanings I imply are in the history of the word: the apparent gesture of respect and submission actually incorporates a "bringing

down." I also imply the meaning "delay," as signification in Lanyer's rhetoric is often deflected from point to point, ultimately resulting in an ambiguity that frustrates the author's promise--and the reader's expectation--of fixed meaning. In the extended process of exchange, the meaning earns "interest," and the increased significance devolves to Lanyer, the "maker" of the rhetorical transaction.

Lanyer's poems to Queen Anne and the Princess Elizabeth can be seen as a whole, partly because the boundaries between the two are blurred in their respective poems. Princess Elizabeth is merged into Queen Anne as "[t]he very modell of your Majestie" ("To the Queenes . . ." 92) and Elizabeth is merged with "that deare Mother of our Common-weale" ("To the Lady Elizabeths Grace 7); both represent the highest female authority in Lanyer's world. But in both poems Lanyer employs a rhetoric of deferral that undercuts or refutes the very nod to this exalted authority she seems to make, resulting in a levelling of social distinctions, which in turn empowers her. Lanyer seems to acknowledge the authority and legitimacy of the social power--embodied in the queen and princess--that she invokes, but her rhetoric of deferral co-opts that power for her own use.

The Queen is invoked in the first dedication as "Renowned Empresse" and "great Brittaines Queene," titles more appropriate to, because reminiscent of the greater imperial authority of, the deified Elizabeth--an initial deferral that displaces the praise seemingly directed towards Anne. This questionable empowering of Queen Anne is immediately deferred again, as the third title bestowed on her by Lanyer is "Mother of succeeding Kings." The ironic nature of this compliment is underscored by Lanyer's characterization of Princess Elizabeth, who is also compared to the dead and semi-divine queen, as "next our famous Queene" ("To the Ladie Elizabeths Grace" 8). The couplet

Even you faire Princesse next our famous Queene,
I doe invite unto this wholesome feast

says that only Anne precedes Elizabeth on Lanyer's guest list, but it also is a sore reminder that Elizabeth will not be the "next" queen, as neither she nor her mother can be queens in their own right.⁴ Thus the power and authority of both queen and princess is subsumed in their mothering of kings; their authority was derived

⁴Queen Anne was, of course, merely queen consort to James I. The existence of Elizabeth's brothers, Henry and Charles, made it unlikely that she would succeed to the throne. And, indeed, in spite of Henry's early death, Charles became Charles I.

ultimately from their ability to produce heirs. This praise of a woman for her childbearing abilities is particularly suspect, given Lanyer's choice of non-mothering women as Old Testament heroines, and the way in which she excludes from the country house poem the genre's obsession with female fertility. Thus the pairing with Elizabeth subverts the authority of both Anne and Elizabeth and functions ultimately not as a gesture to authority at all. This rhetorical move shows Lanyer to be a consummate bricoleuse, for she has made use here even of women's powerlessness: women's inability (in all but the most unusual cases) to inherit titles and property in a patrilineal system becomes a tool for Lanyer's building of her own authority.

Also important here and later is the fact that Queen Anne is asked to "view" and "read"--asked to practice an act of authority normally reserved for men. Again this gesture seems at first to empower Anne, and it does, but as she is asked to

Vouchsafe to view that which is seldom seene,
A Womans writing of divinest things, (3-4)

it is ultimately Lanyer's authority that is strengthened here: it is she who is empowered to write "of divinest things," while the Queen is merely the observer of Lanyer's actions.

Succeeding stanzas delineating the queen's virtues remain under the shadow of the deferral to kingship and Lanyer's questioning of all royal authority. For instance, the third that seems to credit Anne with goddess-like virtues ends abruptly with a cryptic couplet that, again, questions her standing:

From Juno you have State and Dignities,
 From warlike Pallas, Wisdome, Fortitude;
 And from faire Venus all her Excellencies,
 With their best parts your Highness is indu'd:
 How much are we to honour those that springs
 From such rare beauty, in the blood of Kings?

(13-18)⁵

Again there is confusion created by the shift from queen to king. Further, it isn't clear here who or what is being honored--the virtues? the queen? the king? their successors? And, perhaps most importantly, it isn't clear whether the construction of the couplet is rhetorical question or dead serious: should we, in fact, honor the authority of "blood" at all? Parallel tirades against inequality (in, for instance, the dedication to Anne Clifford) suggest that Lanyer is here calling into question the entire social hierarchy rather than praising the female representative of its highest level.

⁵This passage shows Lanyer combining a plural subject ("those") with a singular verb ("springs"). This construction is so common throughout her work as to form a feature of her diction.

This rhetorical gesture of deferral and subversion is repeated in the fifth and sixth stanzas. First Queen Anne is likened to "faire Phoebe," a figuring again reminiscent of Elizabeth and, thus, depreciative to Anne. But immediately "Apollo's beames" appear that

. . . doe comfort every creature,
 And shines upon the meanest things that be;
 Since in Estate and Virtue none is greater,
 I humbly wish that yours may light on me:
 That so these rude unpollisht lines of mine,
 Graced by you, may seeme the more divine.
(31-36)

Anne seems again to be given power, by being likened to the moon and its mythic parallels, only to have that power deferred--to Queen Elizabeth--and then dimmed by a greater light. Even this compliment is devalued when "Apollo's beames" shine on Lanyer, for she then becomes equal to the moon, by implication the equal of Anne and, more importantly, Elizabeth. Further, it is once again not clear what is being compared in "Virtue and Estate"--Phoebe and Apollo? The queen and the king? Lanyer and everyone else? The queen and Lanyer? All comparisons seem implied in the rhetorical construction, resulting in a deferral of meaning that leaves Lanyer, the maker of the verse, the only one empowered.⁶

⁶John Ulreich points out that this reading is supported by the preceding stanza where Lanyer claims virtue for herself as if it were conferred by Anne--a

Moreover, while on the surface that stanza asks for the queen's gaze again--the result of the queen's "shining" on Lanyer's work is that "graced by you, [it] may seem the more divine"--the encoded message empowers Lanyer rather than the Queen. The subtle construction seems to invoke the queen's power to make things divine, but the sentence really implies that Lanyer's work is already divine; the queen's gaze can only make it "seem the more" so.

The next stanza invokes the traditional association between poetry and the act of mirroring as Anne is told to

Looke in this Mirrour of a worthy Mind,
Where some of your faire Virtues will appeare.
(37-38)

But, again, this seeming deference to Anne's virtue is subverted by syntax, for it is unclear whether the "worthy Mind" is Lanyer's, the maker of the poem/mirror, or the queen's, which the poem is a mirror of. Lanyer's apology that her mirror cannot reflect the whole of Anne's virtues, being "dym steele" rather than "chrystall," is hedged by the claim that the poem/mirror

"spendor" owing (and owed) to Anne's virtue that would otherwise seem to be denied by the "meannesse" of Lanyer's social position. In spite of this seeming deference to Anne, the stanza equates Lanyer with virtue itself.

is, nonetheless "full of spotlesse truth" (40-41). While Lanyer's poem seems unable to reflect Anne, it can contain all of a truth that the term "spotlesse" associates with both the sinless Christ and the immaculate Virgin Mary. The poet able to mirror the central figures of the Christian narrative, whose poem at the same time cannot express all of Anne, either communicates a disinclination to "mirror" Anne or implies that "all" of Anne contains "some" that is not Christ- or Mary-like.⁷ Thus, as John Ulreich puts it,

when Queen Anne looks in the glass [of Lanyer's poem], she sees . . . not herself, but the image of her Lord. Since she cannot be the source of that reflection, it must derive from the power of the maker of that mirror In other words, the displacement of Queen Anne reinformces the dissolution of her authority.

Lanyer drives home her point in the eighth stanza where Anne is again asked to "behold," an act of royal power that is at once subverted by the subject of her gaze, "He that all Nations of the world controld" (45)-- and, one is tempted to add, all sovereigns. For Christ is "Crowne and Crowner of all Kings" (49), the monarch of monarchs who is both the basis of and the challenge to

⁷Lanyer later confesses that Christ's "worth is more than can be shew'd by Art," but in a similarly slippery construction that seems to merge her book with Christ ("To the Ladie Anne" 144).

all monarchy. For the authority of God had traditionally been the source of the divine right of kings ("No bishop, no king," said James I, astutely). But here, rather than supporting the earthly sovereign in her place on the Great Chain, the presence of Christ the King dissolves the Queen's claim to authority.

So while this and the previous stanza seem to speak of the power of rule, Anne is displaced by an authority higher in the Great Chain, and all hierarchy is called into question by this subversive king who "tooke our flesh in base and meanest berth" and who is "The hopefull haven of the meaner sort" (46, 50). When Lanyer says in stanza 10 that "my wealth within [Christ's] Region stands, . . . [and] in his kingdome onely rests my lands" (55, 57) she has divested herself of all allegiance to Queen Anne's or any other human authority, yet taken even greater authority for herself in a more powerful realm where, she says, she hopes for "honour" (58). As Mary Ellen Lamb puts it, "The poem appeals to language of class which simultaneously reifies worldly status (for those who have it) and subverts it (for those who don't)" (9).

Lanyer's seemingly humble offer to the Queen of her book is placed in the context of this subversive

portrait. Comparing her state on earth to what she expects in heaven, Lanyer says,

though I on earth doe live unfortunate,
Yet there I may attaine a better state.

In the meane time, accept most gracious Queene
This holy work, Virtue presents to you,
In poore apparrell, shaming to be seene,
Or once t'appeare in your judiciall view:
But that faire Virtue, though in meane attire,
All Princes of the world doe most desire. (59-66)

Lanyer's presentation to the queen happens "In the meane time," this brief moment before eternity while Lanyer is temporarily the queen's inferior. Further, the one presenting the "holy work" is, once again, Virtue itself. Lanyer/Virtue "In the meane time" appear "In poor apparrell," but even in this "mean time," she is what "All Princes of the world doe most desire." Again, while seeming to defer to the queen, Lanyer has, in fact, used the realities of social position and power to construct her own authority. The next stanza reiterates the association between Lanyer and Virtue. While "all royall virtues" (67) may reside in the queen, Lanyer is one with the quality itself. Further, the seemingly deferential offer, "I hope . . . / You will accept even the meanest line / Faire Virtue yeelds," inscribes instead the queen's subjection to Lanyer. For both Lanyer and Virtue construct the poetic portrait of Queen Anne: it is "by

[Virtue's] rare gifts you are / So highly grac'd,
t'exceed the fairest faire" (70-72). Thus Lanyer claims
already to possess that which Queen Anne might merely
discover in Lanyer's work.

After this series of three parallel rhetorical moves,
Lanyer continues her self-authorization by asking the
Queen to "behold . . . faire Eves Apologie" and to
"judge" if it agree not with the Text. The queen (who by
now may be seen as no more nor less exalted than Lanyer
or any other woman) is asked to judge, a loaded word in a
religious context that recalls, the authority not of
divine right and lineage, but the separation of sheep
from goats at judgment day and, those chosen by God, like
Deborah of the book of Judges. Even that association of
the Queen with Deborah might be empowering, but here
again the authority granted to Anne is immediately
deferred--she is asked merely to confirm Lanyer's right
reading of the Bible, not to judge in any way signifying
the Queen's special power.

Lanyer next co-opts priestly authority by conflating
her feast/book with the Paschal/Passover lamb. She then
moves to another vision of priesthood, the Sidneian
notion of the poet as vates, returning to the notion of
mirroring as she claims a mimetic power to show the queen

first who she is, and then to show her a true picture of her daughter,

. . . she that is the patterne of all Beautie,
The very modell of your Majestie,
Whose rarest parts enforceth Love and Duty,
The perfect patterne of all Pietie. (91-94)

Here the Princess Elizabeth is at the same time the pattern of Beauty and the model of the queen. And who is the pattern of piety? The queen or her daughter? Whatever they may be, both are to be seen only, it is implied, in Lanyer's poetic mirror:

Then shall I thinke my Glasse a glorious Skie,
When two such glittering Suns at once appeare.
(97-98)

Rounding out the confusion of reflector and reflected is the final couplet that moves Lanyer to a new stanza and a new metaphor:

And both [Suns] reflecting comfort to my
spirits,
To find their grace so much above my merits
Whose untun'd voyce the dolefull notes doth sing
Of sad Affliction in an humble straine. . . .
(100-04)

The queen and the princess have been made to inhabit a funhouse of mirrored virtues and selves, one created and controlled by Lanyer, the sole purpose of which seems to be Lanyer's "comfort." The mind reels.

The final stanza caps this vertiginous rhetorical thrust and parry with a final power play:

To write your worth, which no pen can expresse,
 Were but t'ecclipse your Fame, and make it
 lesse.

Again, in a move that at first seems to flatter the queen, Lanyer has actually claimed that if she were to write about the queen Lanyer's "pen" would eclipse the queen's fame. Thus, while seeming to place the real queen above any representation of her, Lanyer has actually elevated her own poetry and its ability to represent above all royal power.

Lanyer's self-fashioning in the dedication "To the Ladie Anne, Countesse of Dorcet," relies on similar techniques of deferral wherein praise of Anne is repeatedly deflected in such a way as substantially to negate that praise. This technique, combined with an extended rant against the class system in which Lanyer distinguishes between true nobility and inherited title, produces a poem that serves to bury rather than praise Anne Clifford. Lanyer's authority here derives significantly from her audacity in lecturing Clifford, and from her position as a commoner vis-à-vis Clifford's nobility, for in Lanyer's work, Christ is always identified as enfleshed in a poor and unhonored body. Finally, Lanyer fixes her construction as author by identifying her poetry with Christ--both are seemingly

poor and without honor, but in reality, they both are a means to salvation. Lanyer's praise of Clifford is thus a lecture on the vanity--the nothingness--of earthly honors. Lanyer and her poetry are the ones truly deserving of honor, for they exist in the world of true reward in which Christ is not crucified, but enthroned.

The initial stanza of the poem, which contains the actual dedication, initially seems to honor Anne Clifford:

To you I dedicate this worke of Grace,
This frame of Glory which I have erected,
For your faire mind I hold the fittest place,
Where virtue should bee settled & protected. (1-4)

But a closer examination of Lanyer's rhetoric shows that Lanyer has "erected" an undoubted "worke of Grace" and "frame of Glory," while Clifford's mind is merely the place where virtue "should" reside, not necessarily where it, in fact, does live. At the same time, this passage again identifies Lanyer's work with Virtue.

The stanzas that follow reiterate the disjunction between what should be in Clifford's "faire mind" and what is actually there, as Lanyer repeatedly distinguishes between inherited honor and "real" (that is, heavenly) honor, tacitly allying herself with the dispossessed--and thus truly honorable--Christ, and implying Clifford's lack of virtue because of her title:

Titles of honour which the world bestowes,
To none but to the virtuous doth belong.

* * *

But when they are bestow'd upon her foes,
Poore virtues friends indure the greatest wrong:
For they must suffer all indignity,
Untill in heav'n they better graced be.

(25-26, 29-32)

The implication here is that Lanyer, Virtue's friend, will gain her reward in heaven while Clifford has the "title of honour" perhaps unconnected to true virtue, to be enjoyed only in this life. This subversive tactic is even more audacious in light of the "hierarchical and extremely class conscious view of the world" that Anne Clifford expressed in her diaries" (Lamb 16). Indeed, it may be the historical fact of Anne's views that prompts this particular response from Lanyer (both here and in "The Description of Cooke-ham").

The distinction between earthly and heavenly virtue is part of a larger attack on privilege that recalls the time "When Adam delved and Eve span":

What difference was there when the world began,
Was it not Virtue that distinguisht all?
All sprang but from one woman and one man,
Then how doth Gentry come to rise and fall?

(33-36)⁸

Later, Lanyer will argue for the insubstantiality of this

⁸Many readers, including Susanne Woods, have pointed out the similarity between Lanyer's lines and the popular rhyme.

world that falsely privileges one person over another,
comparing this life to play-acting:

For well you knowe, this world is but a Stage
Where all doe play their parts, and must be gone.
Here's no respect of persons, youth, nor age,
Death seizeth all, he never spareth one. . . .
(121-24)

Death is the ultimate leveller here, but the true hierarchy, based on virtue, will be instituted by "Jesus Christ the Just" (126). Further, she argues, even if one's ancestor, the original recipient of the title, deserved it, who's to say his offspring are equally virtuous:

Whose successors, although they beare his name,
Possessing not the riches of his minde,
How doe we know they spring out of the same
True stocke of honour, beeing not of that kind?
(41-44)

The significance of the suggestion that successors do not always inherit their ancestor's virtue becomes apparent in the following stanzas when Anne Clifford is markedly distinguished from her mother, Margaret. While Margaret is figured as virtuous, Anne is repeatedly admonished to imitate her mother, implying that Anne does not yet possess virtue, and suggesting the possibility that she may never be like her mother in that respect.⁹

⁹The stanzas that follow--lines 57-144 of this poem--are absent in the version of Lanyer's book (STC 15227) that omits three of the dedications as well. The second

Anne is merely one

In whom the seeds of virtue have bin sowne,
By your most worthy mother, in whose right,
All her faire parts you challenge as your owne.
(58-60)

It is here only by the "right" of her "most worthy mother" that Anne might have "faire parts," but not in her own "right." A later stanza repeats this distinction: Anne is pictured as "Heire apparant" of a "Crowne / Of goodnesse, bountie, grace, love, pietie" (65-66). It is hers "By birth" (67), says Lanyer, but "The right your Mother hath to it, is knowne / Best unto you" (69-70). It is only by imitating the Messiah (as figured in Isaiah) that Anne can possess virtue unto herself:

And as your Ancestors at first possest
Their honours, for their honourable deeds,
Let their faire virtues never be transgrest,
Bind up the broken, stop the wounds that bleeds,
Succour the poore, comfort the comfortlesse,
Cherish faire plants, suppressse unwholsom weeds.
(73-78)¹⁰

version (STC 15227) also resets a portion of the Salve Deus that contained an error of indentation (on D4 verso) in the original version. The two versions of the Salve Deus show many differences in orthography, but the introductory poems are constant, implying that they were not actually reset, but simply expanded.

¹⁰The passage is from Isaiah 61.1:
The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, therefore
hathe the Lord anointed me: he hathe sent me to
preache good tidings unto the poore, to binde up
the broken hearted, to preache libertie to the
captives, and to them that are bounde, the opening
of the prison.

The catch here is that it is Lanyer's poetry--and, thus, Lanyer--who are identified with Virtue and with Christ. Anne Clifford can see her virtues not in herself, but in Lanyer's verse:

. . . in this Mirrour let your faire eyes looke,
To view your virtues in this blessed Booke. (7-8)

Lanyer's book is additionally figured as a Diadem, merged with the "Crowne / Of goodness" (65-66) to which Anne is heir, and, by association, with the crown of Jesus--both the crown of thorns of the false dishonor of this world, and the crown of Lordship of the New Jerusalem pictured in the Book of Revelation. It is only by wearing this multi-valent crown--that is, by reading Lanyer's verse--that Anne can become like her mother:

If you, sweet Lady, will appeare as bright
As ever creature did that time hath knowne,
Then weare this Diadem I present to thee,
Which I have fram'd for her Eternitie. (61-64)

Finally, in a subtle figuration, Anne Clifford's support of Lanyer's poetry is linked to Clifford's attainment of the virtue she lacks. For the sign of her virtue is the support of Lanyer's book; to be like the Messiah is to be Lanyer's patron. If Anne engages in

The admonishment to "Cherish faire plants" while "supress[ing] unwholsome weeds" recalls the scene of judgment in Matthew 13 where the wheat is distinguished from the tares--also an action of the Messiah.

messianic acts of mercy, she will show her true lineage (be truly descended from her mother). A slippery parallel construction links the resulting (true) fame to Lanyer's success:

So shal you shew from whence you are descended,
And leave to all posterities your fame,
So will your virtues alwaies be commended,
And every one will reverence your name;
So this poore worke of mine shalbe defended
From any scandall that the world can frame:
And you a glorious Actor will appeare
Lovely to all, but unto God most dear. (81-88)

Anne's primacy in this passage is subverted by her characterization as an "Actor," which recalls the previous metaphor comparing life to a play. It is the "actors" who find the world a place with "no respect of persons" and whom Death will finally cut down. A final admonition suggests that Anne's gratefulness for her redemption can (only?) be expressed by reading Lanyer's book:

Therefore in recompence of all his paine,
Bestowe your paines to reade (139-40)

Thus the subversion of Anne's authority serves once again to promote Lanyer's project of self-authorization.

This dis-praise of Anne is repeated in a less vituperative and less cosmological form in the poem to Susan Bertie, Countess of Kent. Bertie is "The noble guide of my ungovern'd dayes," implying a hierarchyless

relationship rather than the servant-master one that certainly existed. In those days, says Lanyer,

. . . your rare Perfections shew'd the Glasse
Wherein I saw each wrinckle of a fault. (7-8)

The image of the older Bertie's face as a wrinkled glass overwhelms the sense of the passage and is underscored by the following line that figures Lanyer as the "faire greene grasse, / That flourisht fresh by your cleere virtues taught" (9-10). Bertie is also effaced by reference to her "most famous Mother" (23) and is pictured as one "that . . . hath followed her, / In these sweet paths of faire Humilitie" (31-32). Nonetheless, Bertie's possession of virtue is less troublesome than either the royal women's or Anne Clifford's.

In contrast to these subversive patronage poems is the poem addressed "To all vertuous Ladies in generall," by implication, all those who hold title to virtue rather than earthly honors. The first couplet that addresses these women removes them from the world of the Petrarchan economy that objectifies women through the praise of their beauty. The poem is addressed to

Each blessed Lady that in Virtue spends
Your pretious time to beautifie your soules. (1-2)

These women are figured instead as the brides of Christ, wearing the colors that Petrarchism had borrowed from the

Song of Songs, but here transplanted to another realm by their apocalyptic association with Christ:

Let all your roabes be purple scarlet white,
Those perfit colours purest Virtue wore,
Come deckt with Lillies that did so delight
To be preferr'd in Beauty, farre before
Wise Salomon in all his glory dight (15-19)

They are told to imitate a host of classical goddesses, the Muses, and even Aesop, but more significant here is Lanyer's admonition to "Annoynt your haire with Aarons pretious oyle" (36) and to present Christ with "Sweet odours, mirrhe, gum, aloes, frankincense" (41), for these actions co-opt the biblical power of the Aaronic priesthood of the Old Testament and of the Magi of the New. The imagery also recalls the words of Isaiah in a passage wherein the prophet announces God's forgiveness of Israel's sins (1.18).¹¹ This empowerment of women by co-option of male religious roles reaches its apogee when Lanyer calls women "To be transfigur'd with [not by] our loving Lord" (51), figuring them here as participants with or even equals to Jesus at his transfiguration.¹²

None of the noblewomen Lanyer addresses receives such

¹¹Thanks to John Ulreich for help unpacking this complex passage. Lanyer also alludes to Matthew's "lilies of the field" (6.28-29).

¹²The account of the transfiguration, a synoptic narrative, appears in Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9.

exalted praise, a fact that is underscored by the final stanza of the poem "To All Vertuous Ladies" where Lanyer seems to apologize for not naming these women individually as she did the noblewomen:

Yet some of you me thinkes I heare to call
Me by my name, and bid me better looke,
Lest unawares I in an error fall:
In generall tearmes, to place you with the rest,
Whom Fame commends to be the very best. (73-77)

But this seeming confession of an error must be placed against the undermining of earthly fame in deference to the true honor of heaven in Lanyer's other patronage poems. Such a distinction is made in this poem as well, where the women are advised that they should "Of heav'nly riches make your greatest hoord," for "In Christ all honour, wealth, and beautie's wonne" (53-54). Even Lanyer's promise that she will "bid some of those, / That in true Honors seate have long bin placed" (85-86) is, typically, subverted by the statement that their presence is to insure that "my Muse may be the better graced" (88).

This elevating of "Vertuous Ladies" in relationship to titled women is not the end of Lanyer's rhetorical play. For in the address to the Countess of Cumberland, Lanyer constructs herself as superior to this and all women at every pass. Her elevation of herself in this poem figures

her above even this (clearly) beloved woman in the world of her poem, claiming for herself the authority of poetic construction in the face of the one who functioned most as patroness of Lanyer's work.

Thus if all women are like the Magi, Lanyer is greater than those three kings. In the poem to the Countess of Cumberland, their presentation of "rich treasures, Arramaticall Gums, incense, and sweet odours" is eclipsed by Lanyer's ability to "present unto you even our Lord Jesus himself" (4-5, 7). If all women can be like the apostles at the transfiguration, like "Saint Peter [who] gave health to the body", Lanyer claims to be able to "deliver you the health of the soule" (9-10). Implied in that promise is her ability to deliver "The sweet incense, balsums, odours, and gummes that flowes from that beautifull tree of Life" (14-15), the tree in Eden that Adam and Eve never touched even in their sin, but that Lanyer seems to be able to harvest with impunity and even appropriately.¹³ On the contrary, in opposition to the Genesis tradition, Lanyer claims that the fruit of this tree "giveth grace to the meanest & most unworthy

¹³It was for fear that man would "put forthe his hand, and take also of the tre of life and eat and liue for euer" that Adam and Eve were banished from the garden (Gen 3.22).

hand that will undertake to write thereof" (16-18).

Further, however "unworthy" her own "hand writing," the presence of this Tree of Life in her work will assure its perfection:

[It] will with the Sunne retaine his owne
brightnesse and most glorious lustre, though never
so many blind eyes looke upon him. (25-27)

Thus Lanyer cajoles and flatters her patron into seeing the divinity within her work:

Therefore good Madame, to the most perfect eyes of
your understanding, I deliver the inestimable
treasure of all elected soules (27-29)

Eyes of perfect understanding will see the true worth of Lanyer's work; only flawed vision will detect flaws.

Finally, all this self-construction in relationship to other women must always be seen in the context of Lanyer's poetic construction. Her repeated merging of herself with Virtue and of her book with Christ, and most particularly her claim to "have prepar'd my Paschal Lambe" ("To the Queenes" 85) makes Lanyer the one who possesses all virtues and dispenses all honors, controlling here even the ultimate sacrifice of the Christian narrative.

One final note on the whole question of dedication: the title, Lanyer avers in an afterword "To the doubtfull Reader," "was delivered unto me in sleepe many yeares

before I had any intent to write in this maner." She had forgotten about the dream until she finished the poem "when immediately it came into my remembrance . . . and thinking it a significant token, that I was appointed to performe this Worke," she used the phrase as a title. This footnote to the work in some sense subverts the deference to all Lanyer's patrons (especially to Margaret Clifford, the Countess of Cumberland) in the poems that preface the work: the real commissioner of the book is not any woman but God, who spoke to her in a dream. This gesture to divine commissioning is yet another way that Lanyer subverts her gestures to earthly authority.

While, as Barbara Lewalski has pointed out, "Lanyer's statement at once claims a divine sanction for her work, and at the same time asserts complete responsibility for it since she remembered the dream only after she finished the book" (Writing Women 218), Lanyer's claim of prophetic call serves nonetheless to silence any objection to or disagreement with the work, for who can argue with what has been commissioned by--and, by implication, approved by--God. This appeal to divine authority was used by many women before Lanyer; it was often the only way to get around the patriarchal dismissal and discouragement of women's writing--by

appeal to a higher authority. Here, in the context of Lanyer's complex strategies in the patronage poems, it functions as the ultimate self-authorization.

PROFESSING POETRY

Lanyer's self-construction and authorization in the world of the New Jerusalem functions as a prelude to her practicing the poetic art. Lanyer further authorizes herself, not just as speaking subject, but as poet, through her use of the initiatory pastoral poem.¹ Lanyer signals her use of pastoral conventions by addressing Anne Clifford as a "Faire Shepheardesse" ("To the Ladie Anne" 133), by proposing to present Christ "in a Shepherds weed" in her poem to Mary Sidney (218), and by figuring him so three times in the Salve Deus itself (560, 1345, 1714-21), in the third passage, at some length.² But these references are only hints of a larger

¹My inquiry into Lanyer's use of the pastoral has benefitted from the encouraging and challenging comments of Meg Lota Brown, Naomi Miller, Michael Schoenfeldt, and John C. Ulreich, Jr. A shorter version of this chapter will appear as "Professing Poetry: Pastoral Elegy and Orphic Voice in the Poems of Aemilia Lanyer" in The Thread in the Labyrinth, ed. Margaret Arnold and R L Widmann.

²The pastoral motif is, of course, a biblical theme unconnected to the classical tradition of pastoral, but that poetic tradition had early co-opted Christ as shepherd for poetic use. Thus the conflation of Arcadian shepherds with the Good Shepherd is not unique to Lanyer's work, but was an established part of the pastoral tradition by the seventeenth century. Indeed, early Christian iconography often figured Christ as one of the gods (like Orpheus, Pan, or Apollo) whose story involved poetry and/or shepherds.

program of poetic profession. It is "The Authors Dreame to the Ladie Marie, the Countesse Dowager of Pembroke" and the final poem of the book, "The Description of Cooke-ham," that Lanyer constructs as initiatory pastoral poems, that is, poems that, in Celeste Schenck's words, "pronounce epitaphs on literary apprenticeship and articulate . . . successful passage to mature vocation" (2). Poems such as "ceremonial poems, even occasional pieces composed under patronage," Schenck argues, "often bear a vocational subtext, an obsessive concern with the conditions that occasioned them. . . ." Schenck's postulation of the "vocational subtext" of such poems might help to explain Lanyer's "obsessive concern" in "Cooke-ham" with the poem's commissioning by Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, as well as Lanyer's efforts to establish her connection to female patrons such as Mary

For a discussion of the association between Christ and Orpheus and its importance in the Renaissance, see Don Cameron Allen's The Harmonious Vision (62-63), James H. Hanford's "The Pastoral Elegy and Milton's Lycidas" (45-53), and Caroline W. Mayerson's "The Orpheus Image in Lycidas" (116-21).

Joseph Wittreich, in "From Pastoral to Prophecy," discusses Milton's grafting of Christian prophetic models of pastoral onto the classical tradition, but oddly makes no reference to Orpheus, whom medieval writers associated with Moses and biblical prophecy, and who was identified with Christ as a type of psychopomp (Schenck 59), who is figured in "Lycidas" as a foil for King, and who appears prominently in Milton's other works.

Sidney, and points the reader to the poems' reliance on features of the orphic narrative that are conventionalized in the pastoral.³

Lanyer's use of the pastoral garners for her a place in a poetic lineage that stretches from Theocritus through Virgil and Spenser, and beyond Lanyer to Milton. Her audacity in placing herself in such exalted company is camouflaged by her subtlety and skill in implementing the features of the genre she used to claim for herself the name of poet. In these two poems Lanyer shows her familiarity with the genre and insight about how it worked to initiate poetic vocation, and she is particularly sensitive to the features of the orphic narrative that lie behind the initiatory pastoral. She further demonstrates an understanding that, if the pastoral were to serve to authorize female poetic voice, the cultural assumptions upon which the genre rested

³In fact, it is unclear which part of Lanyer's work was commissioned by the Countess of Cumberland. The third stanza of the Salve Deus refers to "Those praisefull lines of that delightfull place" that the Countess "commaunded" her to write on a particular night "When shining Phoebe gave so great a grace" (79). In "The Description of Cooke-ham," Lanyer claims that "princely Palace will'd me to indite, / The sacred Storie of the Soules delight" (137). This waffling on Margaret Clifford's actual instructions has the effect of diminishing the part she plays in the construction of the poems, and undergirds Lanyer's role as maker of the works.

would have to be challenged from within the genre itself. Thus her use of the pastoral reworks its features from the inside out, calling into question the way pastoral had traditionally figured male and female as active poet and inspirational matrix. The result is a new articulation of the genre that rethinks the way subjectivity and, thus, poetic voice are constructed.

For the purpose of this inquiry, I am not interested in pastoral generic conventions as realized in dramatized conversations between artificial shepherds in an Arcadian landscape. Rather I want to focus on the way the motifs of pastoral derived from the Orpheus myth have been traditionally used as a context for claiming a poetic vocation.⁴ The features most important to my argument are

⁴Ovid tells the story of Orpheus in Book 10 of the Metamorphoses; Virgil relates the tale in the Georgics, Book 4, and Virgil's Eclogue 5 mirrors the movement of the Orphic narrative from lament to consolation when the elegiac mood is reversed as Menalcas sings a hymn to the gods.

The literature on pastoral poetry is extensive. Germinal studies include Paul Alpers's "The Eclogue Tradition and the Nature of Pastoral Poetry," William Empson's Some Versions of Pastoral, W. W. Greg's Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama, S. K. Heninger's "The Renaissance Perversion of Pastoral," Richard Mallette's Spenser, Milton, and Renaissance Pastoral, George Norlin's "The Conventions of Pastoral Elegy," C. A. Patrides's Milton's "Lycidas," and Celeste Schenck's Mourning and Panegyric.

More general works that set pastoral into the larger generic context include Heather Dubrow's Genre, Alastair Fowler's Kinds of Literature, and Claudio Guillén's

Orpheus's poetic lineage, the context of love and loss that engender his poetry, the fragmentation necessary to poetic expression, the power of poetry to charm nature, and the stellification of the poet.⁵

While the story of Orpheus itself suggests the two kinds of poetry that mark initiatory pastoral poems, epithalamium and elegy, it is the mythic figuring of

Literature as System.

⁵The association of Orpheus with pastoral poetry derives from the mythic construction of Orpheus as ur-poet and from his association with the natural world. Orpheus was either the son of Apollo or was given a lyre by the god. His mother was Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, herself daughter of Memnosyne (Memory), and it was the Muses who taught him to sing. Both Ovid and Virgil tell the story of his short-lived marriage to Eurydice and of his unsuccessful attempt to retrieve her from the underworld where Persephone (among other inhabitants) is moved by Orpheus's poetry to persuade Hades to release Eurydice. He does so with the stipulation that Orpheus not look at Eurydice until they reach the light, a condition Orpheus does not fulfill.

Significantly, it is only after Eurydice's death that Orpheus's ability to charm nature with his poetry is realized. That is, Eurydice in death functions as Orpheus's imagination and as inspiration for his poetry. Eurydice the live woman plays a notably brief role in the narrative--indeed, Ovid says that Orpheus's desire inclined to "boys of tender years" after his journey to Hades (227). In response to her death, Orpheus made poetry that could charm all nature, from rocks and trees to tigers and nightingales. His song attracted the attention of the Bacchantes, who tore Orpheus to shreds in their frenzy. His head and lyre were thrown into the river Hebrus and drifted--the head still singing--to Lesbos. The lyre was laid in a temple of Apollo who, with the Muses, had it "stellified," that is, made into a constellation.

Orpheus as ur-poet that makes orphic narrative the stuff of poetic profession. Thus Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion" is more significant to my discussion than his "Shepherds Calendar" (though the latter work is indeed a vocational poem), for it is in the wedding song that he models himself on Orpheus (the poet whom the woods answer) and professes poetry within a genre whose origins are linked to the Orpheus story. By writing in that genre and by alluding to Orpheus, Spenser claims for himself the status of poet, only secondarily immortalizing his love for his wife. John Milton's "Lycidas" is a fuller expression of the initiatory pastoral form in that it draws generically on both epithalamium and elegy, lamenting the death of the poet's friend, a type of Orpheus, and seeming to find consolation in a vision of the marriage scene in the heavenly Jerusalem. What makes Edward King worth a poem of this caliber is not his existence as Milton's sometime friend, but his figuring as poet corpse on whose body Milton can construct his own poetic vocation.⁶ Thus the

⁶I would argue that the strangely corpse-like figure of the bride in Spenser's "Epithalamion" functions in a similar manner to fashion the male self and to construct poetic vocation. So Celeste Schenck notes that

[t]he English epithalamic flower catalogue is thus a transformation of elaborate bier-strewing rituals, received by Spenser as a feature of elegy,

subject of pastoral elegy is neither marriage nor death, but the poetic self. Schenck goes so far as to suggest that "a lyric meditation proceeding from the thought of death . . . signals the readiness of the pastoral apprentice for transcendence of the mode. . . ." Further, "The writing of an elegy, even in the absence of a corpse, is a literary gesture signifying admittance of the poet-initiate to the sacred company" (15-16).

The pastoral's combination of the seemingly incompatible public celebration of epithalamium and the more private grief of elegy has been variously explained. Its origins are to be found in the orphic material transmitted by Ovid and Virgil as well as in pastoral poetry from the earliest times.⁷ Schenck suggests that the two genres are merely apparently contradictory, that they in fact have "unexpected similarities." Both genres,

which he appropriates for the erotic purpose of
decking a very lifelike lady. (63)
"Lifelike," perhaps, but not quite alive.

⁷Morton W. Bloomfield has remarked that the Greek elegiac couplet "became for some surprising reason a popular form for love poetry," that praise for one's beloved came to imitate praise for the dead (149, 155). Alastair Fowler has noted that Scaliger (and others) resolved the tension of the two kinds by reading marriage as the lover's death. Fowler argues that Elizabethan and Jacobean critics recognized both "mourning elegies" and "love elegies" (136). And Heather Dubrow notes "the Renaissance wordplay on 'die'" that linked sex and death for the era (A Happier Eden 119.)

she says, are "designed to defer closure by ritually marking passage from one state to another," elegy by "ensuring the corpse's resuscitation" through "apotheosis and stellification," and epithalamium by its concern with "insemination of the bride and imagined future of her issue" (11).⁸

I would argue that love poetry imitates elegy because some kind of death is the necessary precondition of both: the obvious precursor to lament, but also necessary to the love poem that traditionally constructed male self at the expense of female subjectivity. For the object of male desire is, as object, silent and nonliving (if not dead). Studies of love poetry like Nancy Vickers's "Diana Described" delineate the dismemberment of the female love

⁸Dubrow also notes the "intimate generic relationship" between the country house poem and epithalamium. Both exhibit a

drive to recover a lost Edenic world. In the epithalamium the recuperated world is associated with the events of a single day, the occasion of the wedding, whereas in the country-house poem that world is delimited not temporally but spatially: the country house in question is contrasted with others. But this difference is minor--far more important is the social conservatism that links the two genres and emerges most clearly in their vision, at once nostalgic and recuperative, of the lost Eden. (*A Happier Eden* 124)

Dubrow's characterization of the country house poem as "conservative" better fits Ben Jonson's, Thomas Carew's, and Andrew Marvell's poems than Lanyer's--unless one includes in the meaning of "conserve" mere memorializing.

object in the blazon of the Petrarchan tradition. Vickers quotes Josette Feral that "Woman remains the instrument by which man obtains unity, and she pays for it at the price of her own dispersion" (qtd. in Vickers 272). Or, as Vickers puts it, "bodies fetishized do not have a voice, do not make poetry" (277). Marguerite Waller has also suggested that the self engendered by the Renaissance lyric is always gendered, always male, that "the political economy of sovereign male selfhood is . . . dependent upon reducing woman to the status of an object" (12). Thus both the celebration of love and lament for the dead destroy the object of love. In both genres, identity is constructed at the expense of affection.

This confluence of genres is perhaps felicitous for a poet like Spenser, but problematizes the question of vocation for a woman poet like Lanyer who must contrive to silence the beloved without silencing herself, to construct a self in a tradition that fragments the woman. Mary Wroth solved the problem by writing a sonnet sequence that gives voice to silence and refuses to objectify the beloved. Lanyer chose instead to work within the pastoral world, rewriting orphic material to construct female poetic vocation. Only when she had

imagined the possibility of female mentor poets could she, using the materials of the initiatory pastoral poem, figure the death of her mentors, silencing them to create a space for her own poetic voice to be heard.

Indeed, the generic context for articulating poetic vocation is a narrative that assumes death as the precondition of poetic vocation--first the death of Eurydice, and then that of the poet himself, Orpheus. As Orpheus's poetry arises out of his grief for Eurydice and requires her death, so it is on the symbolic body of the dead Orpheus that the poet constructs a new poetic identity through pastoral elegy. Poet-initiates are often faced with the problem of constructing a requisite corpse, a poetic gesture that amounts to killing off one's (supposedly greater) predecessor in order to create a space for one's own voice. Thus Milton constructs Edward King as Orpheus, great poet and Christian shepherd, when historical data show him to have been neither.⁹

Lanyer, like Milton, needed to create a poetic occasion for elegy and had the additional problem of constructing, for the purpose of claiming vocation, a

⁹Likewise, the young Milton may have felt the need to write a poem memorializing Shakespeare, suggests John Ulreich, because he was "perhaps not quite dead enough."

female poetic predecessor. To figure herself overtly as the heir to Virgil or even Spenser--if only in the golden world of poetry--would have been impossible, even laughable. Moreover, that lineage of male poets functioned more as a barrier than a portal to female subjectivity and poetic vocation. Lanyer's task, then, was two-fold. Paradoxically, she needed both to construct a world of women mentor poets and to enact the death and silencing of her mentors, creating a space within which she could speak. While the effect of Lanyer's use of pastoral is ultimately to challenge the primacy of male poets and, thus, to place herself within that lineage, only by first figuring a world of women poets can she figure herself as poet who happens to be a woman.

Within that world of women, Lanyer evokes the requisite deaths not by lamenting the loss of dead women, but by, as it were, eulogizing the living, by figuring loss where none existed. She enacts three symbolic deaths within her poetry or, to be more precise, she fragments the ritual death and scatters the action throughout her poems, much as Orpheus's corpse and the female body are scattered in the poetic tradition. Lanyer first presents Mary Sidney as Orpheus (a given, perhaps, in a world that equated the Sidney name with poetry) and intimates her

death by placing her in a heavenly landscape. Lanyer also figures the "death" and silencing of Margaret Clifford, the Countess of Cumberland, and her daughter, Anne Clifford, mourning the loss of them in "The Description of Cooke-ham." While these women were not noted poets as Mary Sidney was, Margaret is said to have written "some beautiful verses in the stile of Spencer" (DNB 4.524), and Anne, who was tutored by Samuel Daniel, certainly would have tried her hand at poetry. More important, within the world of "Cooke-ham," Lanyer characterizes the women as poets by associating Cumberland with orphic actions and characteristics, and by figuring the women as Demeter and Persephone, thereby drawing Anne into the orphic narrative by way of Hades. In this way, both mother and daughter are associated with features of the orphic narrative, with poetry and death. Thus, as Orpheus's fragmented corpse serves as the inspiration for all poetry, within Lanyer's work it is the scattered "deaths" of three women that allow Lanyer to articulate a voice and profess poetry.

So, while some readers of Lanyer's dedications and "Cooke-ham" have commented on the dubiousness of the poem's presentation of Lanyer's close relationship with the Countess of Cumberland and her daughter, Anne

Clifford--when neither Clifford's diary nor the Countess's correspondence mention Lanyer¹⁰--such observations must be paired with Dr. Johnson's complaint that "Lycidas" is flawed because "We know that [Milton and King] never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten" (164). Both Johnson and Lanyer's critics are objecting that the pastoral relationship is a poetic construct when, of course, that is the very point--as W. C. Douglas implies, the more constructed, the better: "Any suggestion of the poet's real personality breaks the charm; once raise the question of the poet's personal sincerity and the pastoral poem may at once be thrown aside." For the pastoral poem "is not only about a poetic wreath woven for a dead brother-poet, it is the poet's bid for the laurel wreath for himself" (18). The purpose of the poem is to articulate poetic voice through poetic construction, to profess vocation through elegy. Lanyer's creation of a relationship with these women should not necessarily drive us to biographical research (any more than we should scour the records for references to Milton's--or Spenser's, or Virgil's--lost years as shepherds). The evidence of such imaginative construction

¹⁰See Barbara Lewalski's "Rewriting Patriarchy and Patronage" (100, 105) and her Writing Women (219-21) for recent discussions.

should rather lead us to examine generic conventions surrounding poetic vocation.

Further, as S. K. Heninger, Jr., notes, the pastoral is also artificial in that it "depends upon [a] distinction between ideal and reality." "It is art as compensation for what a culture lacks, rather than art as expression of what a culture has achieved" (256). Claudio Guillén suggests that part of the purpose of pastoral is to restore harmony to a world in which disharmony is the norm, in which such disharmony "threatens not only individuals but entire political or religious communities" (195). Thus the death figured in pastoral is also the loss of community--an association that recalls Heather Dubrow's comment about "Lycidas" that it is "concerned with types of community or the violation of them. The speaker mourns the loss not only of Lycidas but also of the pastoral community in which the two of them participated . . ." (Genre 41). So Lanyer constructs communities of women in both her "pastoral" poems: in the poem to Mary Sidney, she presents an image of goddesses in a heavenly landscape, in "Cooke-ham," a community of women in an earthly landscape. Both are visions of what should be, but is not, and function to show her culture where it falls short in its maintenance of gendered

hierarchies.

Pastoral elegy traditionally ends with consolation for loss and a restoration of harmony. In a movement of descent and ascent, the genre mirrors the shape of the orphic narrative: such poems "praise, lament, and console" (Bloomfield 147). This consolation is variously figured in the history of the genre. Virgil's fifth eclogue ends with a joyful ode to the dead Daphnis. In scenes reminiscent of Orpheus's poetic power, the woods and countryside rejoice at the presence of Daphnis, another shepherd-poet-god: "the very mountains, with woods unshorn, joyously fling their voices starward; the very rocks, the very groves ring out the song" (39). Such an image is, of course, the refrain of Spenser's "Epithalamion." Christian versions of the pastoral add the hope of resurrection to the consolation of the poet's stellification and the endurance of poetry.

In Lanyer's poems, however, where human marriage and the romantic tradition are causes of disorder rather than order, of separation rather than union, it is ultimately only poetry and the poet that have the power to unify. In this action, Lanyer shows herself to be in some ways more true to the origins of pastoral than her brother poets. For in the orphic narrative itself, poetry alone is the

consolation for Orpheus's loss. In place of his wife, Orpheus is given the ability to evoke her memory in poetry that charms all nature. Lanyer, though her subject is in some ways more Christianized than that of other Renaissance pastoral poets (the avowed topic of her work is, after all, the Passion), finds consolation for death and loss almost exclusively in orphic terms, in the ability of poetry to memorialize. As it is the poet who effects this consolation, her focus on a less Christianized orphism serves to empower her poetic voice more fully and unequivocally by claiming for her poetry the sole power to console.

In sum, the initiatory pastoral poem is a complex and multifaceted form that provides generic material for discussion of a breadth of human and social issues at the same time that it sanctions the ritual death of the mentor poet whose voice must be expunged in order to create a space in which the poet initiate can profess poetry. Lanyer, like her male predecessors, drew on mythic conventions, and her work alludes to many features of the orphic myth. Like them, she used the genre to silence her greater predecessors and to claim a voice. Unlike male poets, she was writing in an arena (public) and in genres that had been reserved to men and had to

remake the generic material in order to speak at all.

Further, while her use of this traditional means of poetic profession might seem to affirm the dominant discourse that produced the genres in which she wrote, she reworked the features of the pastoral so as to call into question assumptions about the value of marriage and about women's place within the culture. So, for instance, while epithalamium traditionally restores the order broken by the loss that elegy mourns, in Lanyer's "Cookeham," marriage is the cause of loss, the disordering force that occasions elegy and makes possible her poetic voice. Thus Lanyer's use of pastoral conventions is fundamentally transgressive, representing a bold move that empowers her to speak in a culture that silenced women, to profess poetry in a world that reserved that office to men, and, as poet, to remake generic conventions that reaffirmed the structures and assumptions of the culture that produced them.

Lanyer's use of the features of the orphic narrative is most visible in her poem to Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, where she proposes to figure the "Saviour in a Shepherds weed." Indeed, it is here that one expects Lanyer to use such conventions, for Mary Sidney--whose psalm translations were circulating in manuscript when

Lanyer wrote her book, and whose name signified Poetry to those who idolized her brother, Philip--represented perhaps better than any other Englishwoman the ideal female poet. If Spenser constructs his poetic vocation on the corpus of Virgil and Chaucer, and Milton on Spenser's, Virgil's, and Edward King's, it would be logical for Lanyer to announce her poetic vocation through an elegy on a female poet. However, Mary Sidney was, most inconveniently, not dead. Rather than fictionalizing a female mentor poet on the body of a dead woman in the manner of Milton's *Lycidas*/Edward King, Lanyer accomplishes Mary Sidney's poetic death, silencing the live Mary Sidney, by placing her in a mythic heavenly landscape--the realm of the happy dead, but dead nonetheless--and by fusing her poetic person to that of her dead brother.

The setting for "the Authors Dreame" is "th'Edalyan Groves," a mythic landscape where all the Graces and select goddesses dwell. Lanyer seems to refer here to Mount Ida, the setting for the Judgment of Paris (a scene that Lanyer recalls in the poem to Queen Anne, as well).¹¹ When Zeus declined to reward the Apple of

¹¹Susanne Woods suggests that the allusion is to "Idalia, a mountain city in Cyprus, sacred to Venus" or to "Mt. Ida, home of the muses" (21). The reference in

Discord (marked "For the Fairest") to either Aphrodite, Hera, or Pallas Athene, he sent the goddesses instead to Mount Ida where Paris was living as a shepherd. His choosing Aphrodite as the fairest led to the Trojan War. By setting her dream in this landscape, Lanyer both invokes the pastoral and recalls a story that impugns women for their supposedly inherent vanity.

Significantly, in Lanyer's poem only Pallas Athene, goddess of wisdom, appears--not Hera, the jealous wife of Zeus, nor Venus, goddess associated with lust and beauty--and she appears twice, once styled Minerva and once, Pallas.¹² Envy, usually the cause of dissension among the goddesses, shrinks to nothingness, "Her venime purifi'd by virtues raies" (100-04). Thus Bellona (who is here goddess of wisdom as well as war) carries not only a spear and shield, but olive branches (37-39); Dictina

line 9 of Lanyer's poem to the muses, and the absence of Venus from the poem, suggest to me that Mount Ida is the more likely referent (though the graces, part of Venus's retinue, are mentioned). Either location is potentially pastoral.

The unusual orthography and metric construction of "Edalyan Groves" also recalls "Elysian Fields," the habitation of the spirits of the blessed dead. Thus sonority underscores the Lanyer's silencing of Sidney through pastoral conventions.

¹²In the poem "To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie," Juno cedes to Queen Anne "State and Dignities," Pallas gives "Wisdom [and] Fortitude," and Venus gives up "all her Excellencies" (13-15).

(Diana) gives away her "bowe and silver shaftes" (49-50); and the suggestion of rivalry between her and Aurora, and the possibility of a beauty contest is dispelled by the presence of "great Messias, Lord of unitie," the only male figure in the dream (120).¹³ Lanyer has replaced the mythic Mount Ida of female objectification with a landscape where women are empowered to be warriors and even poets. Here, women are neither the passive recipients of men's evaluation ("the fairest"), nor are they seen as motivated primarily by vanity.

Rather Lanyer has created a poetic space in which both women and poetry are valued. For in place of the beauty contest, there is a singing contest, enacted by the river Pergusa (a Sicilian, and thus appropriately pastoral, river) results in the triumph of Mary Sidney's Psalm versifications. This scene recalls the singing contests particular to pastoral wherein two rustic swains attempt to out-sing each other in praise of a woman. Here the

¹³Dictina, whom Lanyer's marginal note calls "The Moone" and whom Robert Graves identifies as a disguise practiced by Artemis (Diana) against Britomartis (299), probably represents Queen Elizabeth here. Aurora would then be Queen Anne, who is initially jealous of "faire Phoeb[es] light," and attempts to outshine her. She is "receiv'd in bright Cynthiaes place" (57-58). (The text reads "faire Phoebus light," but it is the moon, not the sun, whom Aurora might outshine and who is identified with Cynthia. "Phoebes," then, must be the intended meaning.)

contest is to discover which woman can devise the finest "holy hymnes"--actually, no contest, for the goddesses immediately fix on Mary Sidney's psalms, the "holy Sonnets" set to "her noble breasts sweet harmony" (121, 123). Three points are significant here. First, praise of women's physical beauty, the subject of the Judgment of Paris and the singing contest, is replaced by praise of their virtue and poetic ability. Second, romantic love, a traditional subject of eclogue, is replaced by divine love, and women, rather than being the object of poetry, are its makers; any hint of the marriage that follows romantic love is banished from the scene. Indeed, the stream Pergusa is associated with Hades and Persephone.¹⁴ Its presence suggests the extreme objectification of women and may comment on romantic love as traditionally figured in poetry. Finally, Mary Sidney is silenced as poet at the same time that she seems to be praised excessively. Her great work, her translation of the Psalms, is finished and, as an inhabitant of heaven (or of the author's dream, or of the author's poem), she can produce nothing more--nothing that could challenge the

¹⁴According to the Dictionarium Historicum, Geographicum, Poeticum, "ubi a plutone proserpinam rapta fuisse fabulantur" (Estienne "Pergus"). Lanyer may be underscoring her affirmation of women here by gendering the river feminine.

primacy of Lanyer, the poet who bids to replace Sidney even as she writes in praise of her. Mary Sidney's praises are written "in th'eternall booke / Of endlesse honour, true fames memorie" (127-28), but her poetry is not to be written in the world of living poets.

Lanyer further displaces Mary Sidney by linking her to Philip Sidney, here figured as an Orpheus.¹⁵ As the mythic poet's lyre became a constellation after his death, so Sidney has become a "light to all that tread true paths of Fame," one "Who in the globe of heav'n doth shine so bright" (139-40). The statement that Philip Sidney's "fame doth him survive" (141) repeats a commonplace of elegy that poetry has the power to kill death and soften the pain of loss. But this memorializing is extended to Mary Sidney when Lanyer compares her

¹⁵This pairing of the Sidney siblings seems to have been a commonplace fostered, at least in part, by Mary Sidney herself. In her dedication of the completed psalm translations to her brother, she repeatedly hides her own part in the translations behind his, masks her poetic ambition by reference to his, and intimates her death in his:

I can no more: Deare Soule I take my leaue;
Sorrow still striues, would mount thy highest
sphere
presuming so just cause might meet thee there,
Oh happy change! could I so take my leave.

(Sidney 95)

See Michael Brennan's Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance, especially 63-67, for a discussion of this tradition.

favorably to Philip:

. . . a Sister well shee may be deemd,
 To him that liv'd and di'd so nobly;
 And farre before him is to be esteemed
 For virtue, wisdom, learning, dignity. (149-52)

With that coupling, it becomes Mary Sidney whose stellification Lanyer celebrates, "Whose beauteous soule hath gain'd a double life, / Both here on earth, and in the heav'ns above." Until the end of time--"Till dissolution end all worldly strife"--Mary Sidney's "blessed spirit [not living body] remaines . . . / Directing all by her immortall light" (153-57). Like Milton's Lycidas, heavenly inhabitant and "Genius of the shore" who protects "all that wander in that perilous flood" (184-85), Mary Sidney is safely removed from the world of the budding poet. The "after-comming ages" may "reade / Her love, her zeale, her faith and pietie," but the present age will listen to a new poetic voice (161-62).

Lanyer's claim at the end of the poem to present Mary Sidney with the Salve Deus shows Sidney to be appropriately silenced and Lanyer to be in control of poetic construction. Lanyer recalls her dream and reiterates that her "clear reason sees her [Sidney] by that streame"--that is, still silenced--and claims to present a true picture of Mary Sidney's virtues: "My

Glasse beeing steele, declares them to be true" (207, 212).¹⁶ In a final move of self-authorization, Lanyer claims the power to present the good shepherd, "your Saviour in a Shepherds weed," to Mary Sidney's view. Lanyer makes the obligatory claim of unworthiness, but this self-deprecation is linked to Jesus's "worthinesse," her humility linked to his (218).

Thus Lanyer articulates a poetic voice in her poem to Mary Sidney by building on the conventions of pastoral poetic initiation. She begins by constructing a world where women are subjects and poets, a world where Lanyer can figure a female poet mentor whose praise seems to be the occasion of the poem. But by the end of the poem, praise has turned to eulogy and Mary Sidney is a corpse/corpus, a fixed and finished work, a closed book, whose silencing creates the space in which Lanyer can speak. In all these features, Lanyer shows herself to be conscious of the tradition that she invoked in pastoral, elegy, and stellification.

Like the poem to Mary Sidney, Lanyer's "Description of Cooke-ham" also draws on pastoral material to authorize

¹⁶Lynette McGrath discusses Lanyer's use of the steel mirror image in the Salve Deus where such a glass seems to be inferior ("dim steele") (106-07). Yet Susanne Woods argues that steel mirrors were traditionally truer than glass ones (Lanyer 5 n. 41).

her poetry, presenting a rich complex of generic elements wherein lament, elegy, and epithalamium are used to articulate consolation through poetry's power to resurrect and make immortal, and to construct poetic voice. But "Cooke-ham," while making use of generic material from both elegy and epithalamium, blurs distinctions between the two modes in such a way as to form a radical reassessment of the meaning of marriage and women's place in society.

The loss upon which Lanyer constructs pastoral elegy and poetic vocation is the loss of place, of person, and of community. "Farewell (sweet Cooke-ham)," the poet laments, but place soon merges with person so that it is at times impossible to tell whether Lanyer addresses the place or the Lady of the poem, Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland:

Farewell (sweet Place) where Virtue then did rest,
And all delights did harbour in her breast.
Never shall my sad eies againe behold
Those pleasures which my thoughts did then unfold.
(7-10)

There is some distinction here between the "her" and the "sweet Place," but both are linked here in relationship to the poet--together they represent the loss that occasions lament. Further, Anne Clifford is figured as the house itself, something constructed. She is the one

"in whose faire breast true virtue then was hous'd." The poet continues:

Oh what delight did my weake spirits find
In those pure parts of her well framed mind.
(96-98)

So Lanyer initially merges the women with the landscape and the house, expanding the loss of Cooke-ham to figure a kind of death of the women.

In another sense, the death that occasions the poem seems to be a death of immediate vision, like the death of the woman Eurydice that Orpheus can touch. But, as Orpheus's experience of Eurydice was mediated by language (he names her) and is itself constructed, Lanyer acknowledges that even at Cooke-ham her experience was mediated by her thoughts: the "pleasures" of Cooke-ham were ones that the poet's "thoughts did then unfold" (10). Lanyer's awareness that she constructs experience allies her with Orpheus and other poets, both the makers and memorializers of common, cultural awareness. Thus the "Mistris of that Place" and the place itself combine here to figure Eurydice, the construct of the poet's imagination that is the inspiration for poetic song. Cooke-ham and the Lady are both inspirations for Lanyer's "worke of Grace" (12).

While experience may be a construct, it is nonetheless

the loss of experience that necessitates the poet's vocation: the recreation of experience through memory, the re-mem-bering of what has been scattered. In "Cooke-ham," this loss is not opposed to the joy of epithalamium but is rather occasioned by the marriage of Anne Clifford to Richard Sackville, soon to be Earl of Dorset. Thus marriage, in the world of Cooke-ham, does not represent a contrast to the pain of death, but is rather the cause of loss, inextricably linked to elegiac grief. Marriage here is what destroys the trinity of women that Lanyer constructs at Cooke-ham. This negative figuring of marriage distinguishes Lanyer's work from other poems of vocation and shows how she reworks received generic conventions that objectify women, creating a space for her voice.

Lanyer further reworks orphic features when, having associated woman with place, showing both to be creatures of poetic construction, she then distinguishes between the two. In Lanyer's poetic, Eurydice, the woman who inspires poetry, does not remain separate from the orphic voice but becomes herself the maker of poetry. So in "Cooke-ham," it is in response to the arrival of the Lady, not the poet-bridegroom, that the woods answer and echo. Thus, though women are linked to nature, the pair

distinguishes the women, that is dismembered: it is nature, not Diana, that is described. (Thus, the title: "The Description of Cooke-ham.") The women, rather, are judged for their inner qualities, their Grace and Virtue, qualities indistinguishable from self, and perhaps even generative of self, in Lanyer's meritocracy. Here again, Lanyer has used the features of both blazon and lament to authorize herself at the same time that she refigures the place of woman within the generic material.

Having associated Margaret and Anne Clifford with loss and having constructed them as subjects in one poetic gesture, Lanyer moves to silence the women, figuring each as a character in the orphic narrative. Lanyer underscores Margaret Clifford's characterization as Orpheus when she is described as standing with a "Bowe in [her] faire Hand," momentarily frightening the "little creatures in the Burrough" (51, 49). While this puzzling passage certainly evokes the hunting motif common to the country house genre (and evokes, additionally, the figure of Diana/Elizabeth), in the context of orphic narrative, the image of the bow also signifies the orphic lyre that accompanied the poet's seductive song. The bow and the lyre were closely allied in ancient mythology, so that Apollo (Orpheus's father, poet, and shepherd) is called

by Ovid (in his story of Orpheus) "the god who strings both lyre and bow" (228).¹⁷ By her allusion to the father and son patrons of poetry, Lanyer figures Margaret Clifford once again as poet in this passage. However, it is the one passage in which the creatures of nature do not respond to the Lady. Thus Lanyer credits Cumberland with poetic power and silences her voice in two lines. The poetic power, the female subjectivity, devolve to Lanyer instead, the maker of the poem in which this world of poet women has been constructed.

Lanyer accomplishes the construction and silencing of Anne Clifford by first figuring her as a pastoral

¹⁷Charles Estienne (1596) notes Apollo's triple power as symbolized by lyre, shield, and arrow (because he asked for a bow when he was four days old) ("Triplex est eius potestas, ut fit Sol in caelo, Liber pater in terris, Apollo apud inferis: eius simulachro tria appingebantur, lyra, clypeus, & sagittae") ("Apollo"). Natale Conti (1616) provides two pictures of Apollo, one showing the god holding the graces in his right hand and a bow in his left (181), and another showing him with a lute, surrounded by the muses (183). The association between these two implements of very different purpose no doubt comes from their physical resemblance: both are made from gut strung across bent wood.

Orpheus and Apollo are often indistinguishable in late Renaissance depictions, and even those that are clearly of Orpheus are more likely to show the god playing a stringed instrument with a bow rather than a lyre. (The Renaissance bow looked like the weapon from which it was derived: curved wood strung with gut.) See Guiseppe Scavizzi's "Orpheus in Italian Renaissance Art" for a discussion of the Orpheus-Apollo conflation and copious illustrations of Renaissance depictions.

shepherdess. She is called "Shepheardesse" in the poem dedicating the book to her (133)¹⁸ and also appears as a kind of shepherdess playmate to the poet in "Cooke-ham." Lanyer recounts their "former sports . . . Wherein my selfe did alwaies beare a part" (119, 121). The real Anne Clifford was a writer, if not a published poet, and Lanyer may have seen her as some sort of rival for poetic subjectivity, if only within the world of pastoral.¹⁹ In a scenario reminiscent of Persephone's "fall" to Hades, Anne Clifford's marriage causes the death of all nature that "Cooke-ham" recounts. And like Persephone, Clifford seems to suffer by association with a disreputable husband to the loss of her reputation and, perhaps, virtue. Lanyer says that "virtue then was hous'd" in Clifford's "faire breast" before her marriage (96), that she was "then a virgin faire" (160). The repetition of "then" in these two references to Anne Clifford serves to

¹⁸This passage also recalls the command of the resurrected Christ (in the epilogue to the Gospel of John) that Peter feed and tend Christ's sheep. The dedication to Anne Clifford reads:

Faire Shepheardesse, 'tis you that he will use
To feed his flock (133-34)

¹⁹There is an undercurrent of hostility in the dedicatory poem to Anne Clifford as well, which is little more than an extended tirade against class equality--not an innocent topic in an address to a countess. See Chapter 2 for a fuller analysis of this phenomenon.

delineate the world of experience from the world of poetry, but, more importantly, it calls into question the current state of Clifford's virtue. Further, among the "pleasures past, which will not turne againe" is the memory of Clifford's "former sports, / So farre from beeing toucht by ill reports" (119-20). Here the mention of the absence of ill reports in the past suggests their existence in the present.

Indeed, Anne Clifford was infamous in her lifetime for her adamant refusal to sign over any portion of her inheritance, though even James I attempted to persuade her. However, such stubbornness would hardly constitute "ill reports," and would not have been an issue in 1610 when the book was being written. Clifford's husbands, on the other hand--including Richard Sackville, Earl of Dorset, her first husband--were notorious debauchees. Whether his reputation would have besmirched Anne by the time Lanyer was writing her poem is open to speculation, but Lanyer's hints here suggest some sort of notoriety.²⁰ More importantly, the repeated effacing of Anne Clifford

²⁰For a description of Clifford's husbands, see Lewalski, Writing Women (128-130). It is important to note that Clifford's reputation in her later years was beyond reproach. She supported poets, friends, even "Dorset's bastard daughters," and provided two almshouses for poor women (Lewalski, Writing 130).

from the "now" of the poem, combined with intimations of her loss of virtue, effectively silence her, creating of her the requisite corpse upon which poetic vocation can be constructed.

Further, the association of Anne Clifford with Persephone makes Margaret Clifford a figure of Demeter. The death of the landscape at Cooke-ham is the loss of fertility throughout the world that results in winter, as Demeter withdraws her life-giving power to mourn her daughter's absence. At Cooke-ham, "the floures that on the banks and walkes did grow, / Crept in the ground" (179-80) and

Each arbour, banke, each seate, each stately tree,
Lookes bare and desolate now for want of thee;
Turning greene tresses into frostie gray,
While in cold griefe they wither all away.
The Sunne grew weake, his beames no comfort gave,
While all greene things did make the earth their
grave. (191-96)

This passage also recalls Orpheus, for all nature mourned with him when he, for a time, ceased to make music following the death of Eurydice. So, while the nature of Margaret Clifford's role in the orphic narrative fluctuates (now Orpheus, now Demeter), her association with pastoral and with poetry is only underscored by the multiplicity of allusion. She represents both poetic subjectivity and death in all her associations, and

serves to allow the construction of Lanyer's vocation as poet.

This passage further reinforces Lanyer's vocational claim by use of a mirroring structure, recalling the poet's ability to mirror, to represent.²¹ Death comes in a reversal of the enlivening of nature that the poet catalogued at the beginning of the poem. The line, "The House receiv'd all ornaments to grace it" (19) is mirrored by "The house cast off each garment that might grace it" (201). And the lines, "Each arbour, banke, each seate, each stately tree / Thought themselves honor'd in supporting thee" (45-46) are mirrored by "Each arbour, banke, each seate, each stately tree, / Lookes bare and desolate now for want of thee" (191-92). Again, as in the dedication to Mary Sidney, Lanyer is claiming the power, though poetry, to reflect the truth.

Yet the mirror of the poet does more than simply a reduplicate an image. Lanyer recounts the death of "Eccho" at the end of the poem who, wont to reply to the women's words, "did now for sorrow die" (200). As Vickers has argued, Echo "reduc[es] speech to repetition [and]

²¹Lynette McGrath's "Metaphoric Subversions" provides a helpful catalog of the medieval and Renaissance images of mirroring that Lanyer may have drawn on. The mirror may have been part of the iconography of Orpheus (Scavizzi 153-54 n. 38).

eliminates its generative capacity" (278).²² Rather than mere repetition, the function of poetry in the face of death and loss is re-membering that which has been dismembered. So Lanyer exiles Echo and, instead, invokes Memory, the mother of the Muses (and, thus, Orpheus's grandmother), as the sign of her poetic power. Lanyer writes, "Therefore sweet Memorie do thou retaine / Those pleasures past, which will not turne againe" (117-18). The Lady, too, places the memories of Cooke-ham in her heart, "Giving great charge to noble Memory, / There to preserve their love continually" (155-56). The Lady, though possessing the ability to "get things by heart," as it were, cannot preserve the joys of Cooke-ham, but can only, echo-like, "repeat the pleasures which had past" (163). Memory, it turns out, is not a goddess to be succored by just anybody, but only by the poet.

As Lanyer opens the poem with the claim that Cooke-ham is the place where "the Muses gave their full consent, / I should have the powre the virtuous to content" (3-4), and that she was commissioned to memorialize the place, she has by the end of the poem claimed the sole ability to re-member the place. In her words alone can Cooke-ham

²²Vickers's comment on Echo is part of a discussion about Petrarch's use of mythic representations of women's silencing.

live.

This last farewell to Cooke-ham here I give,
When I am dead thy name in this may live. (205-06)

While it is a commonplace that poetry alone--and thus the poet--has the power to resurrect the dead, to memorialize, it is not part of the poetic tradition that women have this power. What is a commonplace becomes a transgressive statement as Lanyer claims poetic power for herself in a genre that had used women as objects upon which to build male vocation.

Thus, both in her poem to Mary Sidney and in the memorial to Cooke-ham, Lanyer announces her vocation as poet, claiming the power to create for her culture visions of an ideal world in which women are both subjects of--and subject to--poetry. She does so by drawing on generic conventions that poets had traditionally used to claim poetic vocation, poetically enacting deaths in order to fashion herself a poet. She removes Mary Sidney to a pastoral and other-worldly landscape and then pairs her with her dead brother to effect her silence. Likewise, by blurring the distinctions between Margaret of Cumberland and the landscape, between Anne Clifford and the house, Lanyer figures the requisite death of the very figures whose existence she seems to laud. The Lady is the poet whose

presence enlivens nature, yet she is also merged with that nature so that its death also figures her death. She is empowered as Orpheus, but immediately silenced. Anne Clifford is the poet's shepherdess companion and is also the house. Her reputation is killed by innuendo, the house dies, and she is exiled from the world of the poem, a triple death that insures Lanyer's primacy as poet.

At the same time Lanyer calls into question both the poetic form and the social occasion that had traditionally provided consolation for the loss mourned in elegy. Romantic love and epithalamium do not symbolize wholeness in a world of brokenness, but rather romantic love is called into question by the intrusion of the story of Hades's rape of Persephone. And marriage, rather than unifying and consoling, destroys the idealized world of Cooke-ham. For it was only by reworking the cultural and poetic material that had served to objectify women that Lanyer could break the silence imposed on women and become subject poet rather than love object. And although she, like her male counterparts, enacts ritual poetic murders in order to usurp authority, she constructs the mentor poets as female rather than male, creating a space--a tradition--in which the female poet can speak.

Lanyer's work also serves to figure an idealized

world, one that models for the real--and broken--world a vision of equality. Her world shows women in positions of power, as religious models, as poetic mentors, as friends. It is not, however, in this world that Lanyer claimed her poetic voice, but rather in the real world wherein her book was published and read. In that world, a woman could not profess poetry on her own terms, but had to make use of the generic material already developed by the masculine tradition. She had to speak in a voice that could be heard, which meant using the forms that already existed, but had to find a way to keep that poetic voice from reinscribing her silence. It is an irony of history that the cultural proscriptions of women's voices succeeded in silencing Lanyer for almost four hundred years in spite of her effort, that her success in claiming poetic vocation has awaited an audience perhaps more attuned to the voice of Eurydice and eager to hear her sing.

ENGENDERING SPACE IN "THE DESCRIPTION OF COOKE-HAM"

Aemilia Lanyer is perhaps best known for her country house poem, "The Description of Cooke-ham," because its publication date of 1611 makes it the first poem of that genre to be published in English, preceding by five years Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst." Ironically, its relatively recent "discovery" has kept the poem from influencing germinal studies and definitions of the genre. Consequently, much of what we "know" about the country house poem in English is challenged by the way Lanyer uses the features of the poem as received from Horace, Martial, Juvenal, and others. While Lanyer is clearly aware of the poetic tradition of which "Cooke-ham" forms a part, her use of--her alteration of--generic features illuminates, once again, the gendered nature of language and its forms. Where tropes like sponte sua and dapes inemptae serve in the works of Martial and Jonson to inscribe the authority of the aristocracy and of men within that social group, Lanyer's remaking of those generic features works instead to subvert the privilege of gender and nobility. Additionally, her poem deconstructs the economy of the country house itself, pointing up the way architectural and artistic artifact

conspired to shore up cultural assumptions about privilege that were beginning to be attacked in the early seventeenth century. A study of Lanyer's "Description of Cooke-ham" thus throws light on the long history of the country estate in English poetry, its presence in the generic corpus providing new ways of seeing poems as disparate as Martial's Epigram 58, Beowulf, and that archetypal English model, "To Penshurst."

The Beowulf poet has given us one picture of life in the country: the assembly in the great hall Heorot, that architectural ancestor of the country house:

Then a bench was cleared in the beer-hall
for the Geatish troop all together;
there the stouthearted men, proud and strong,
went to sit. A servant with ale-cup
richly adorned did his duty, poured
the shining drink.

* * *

Wealhtheow stepped forth;
Hrothgar's good queen, mindful of custom,
gold-adorned, greeted men in the hall.
The courteous lady offered the cup
first of all to the East-Danes' ruler,
bade him, beloved of his people, have
joy of that feasting; the famous king
drained the hall-cup, partook heartily.
The woman of the Helmings went then
among both tried and young retainers.
proffered precious cups to each of them,
until in time that virtuous queen,
rich with rings, bore the cup to Beowulf;

* * *

The Geat's brave words, his boasting speech,
pleased
the lady well; the courteous queen,
gold-adorned, sat down beside her lord.
Then once again the great hall echoed

with the brave speech of bold conquerors.
 (Greenfield 491-96, 612-29, 639-43)

Here we are given a vision of society in which all men feast together in the great hall, not unmindful of rank, but sharing a meal in the space that represents a vertical alignment binding class to class--here binding servants to both tried and young retainers, themselves bound to rulers--in a system of kinship and vassalage.¹ Women are outsiders in this space; they have a role to play, but are outnumbered by the men in the hall (we are encouraged to believe) by many hundreds to one.

At the other end of the continuum is the world of the country house (this one in Ireland) at the moment of its demise, just before the Great War, as described by the architectural historian Mark Girouard:

Tea--not just a cup of tea, but a meal--is being

¹William A. McClung uses the image of "vertical" and "horizontal" alignment to describe the changes in social structuring that occurred between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (92). Vertical alignment is based on a "great chain of being" or a "feudal" model, wherein one is allied up and down the social scale to members of all other classes. McClung points to the Paston family who were "allied 'vertically' through a system of patronage and vassalage to greater and lesser families in Norfolk, London, and across the country" (92). In the horizontal model, one defines oneself by one's belonging to a more-or-less self-sufficient class as did the middle class in early modern England. For a helpful discussion of the changes in class alliance during this period, see Lawrence Stone's chapter on "The Decline of Kinship, Clientage and Community" in his Family, Sex and Marriage.

served in eleven different places. The gentry are in the drawing room, the younger children, nannies and nurserymaids in the nursery and the elder children with their governess in the schoolroom. The upper servants, including the ladies' maids, are in the housekeeper's room, the laundrymaids in the laundry, the kitchen maids in the kitchen, the housemaids in the little housemaids' sitting-room, the charwomen in the still-room, the footmen in the servants' hall and the grooms in the harness-room. A riding master who comes weekly from Dublin for the children, being too grand for the grooms and servants but not grand enough for the gentry, is having tea off a tray on his own. (Town 148)

Two features distinguish this account from the one in Beowulf. First, commensality (societal stricture defining with whom one shares a meal) has altered radically, the result of changes in class alliances that are now structured along horizontal rather than vertical lines--here with an exquisiteness that would thrill Miss Manners. Second, women are more visible than men in this account, comprising here well over half of the servant population and, by the odds, at least half of the gentry population. The great hall, showcase for warriors and warrior values, is not mentioned at all; even the gentry, heirs of Hrothgar's band, have withdrawn to the withdrawing room.

At about the centerpoint between the composition of Beowulf and World War I falls the English country house poem. Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" (1616), the poem that provided the model for a handful of imitations in the

seventeenth century, presents a picture of commensality that Beowulf himself would have recognized.² In Penshurst's famed great hall the "open table" (27) represents that same vertical alignment among classes one sees at Heorot,

[Here] comes no guest, but is allow'd to eate,
Without his feare, and of the lords owne meate:
Where the same beere, and bread, and self-same
 wine,
That is his Lordships, shall be also mine.
And I not faine to sit (as some, this day,
At great mens tables) and yet dine away. (61-66)

The women of Penshurst are even less visible than those at Heorot, for Barbara Gamage Sidney is made present only by the invocation of her absence: her virtue rests in the readiness of her house to serve guests even when she is away. And while Wealhtheow is given speeches of some significance in *Beowulf*, at Penshurst the lady of the hall is silent. Jonson's country house poem "To Sir Robert Wroth" depicts the same "open hall" (49) into which "The rout of rurall folke come thronging in" (53). In that poem, the lady is present, though silent. She

²In addition to Lanyer's and Jonson's, country house poems of seventeenth-century England include Thomas Carew's "To Saxham" and "To my friend G. N. from Wrest"; Charles Cotton's "The Wonders of the Peake"; John Denham's "Cooper's Hill"; Robert Herrick's "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton" and "A Country Life: To His Brother, Mr. Thomas Herrick"; Richard Lovelace's "Amyntor's Grove, His Chloris, Arigo, and Gratiana"; and Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House."

personifies vertical social alliances and their attendant commensality by sitting among the commoners (56-58).

Aemilia Lanyer's "Description of Cooke-ham" (1611) depicts vertical social alliances, but only to attack them, and does so outside the venue of the great hall--indeed, the entire "action" of the poem takes place outdoors, away from the country house altogether, as if her world of women could not exist in that male-defined space. And while Jonson's poem recalls nostalgically a bygone era, Lanyer constructs an unhistorical vision of female equality wherein "diffrence . . . in degree" cannot separate us from "our great friends" (106, 105). In Lanyer's poem, women dominate the scene, while the only "men" present are biblical figures. It is men who are silenced here, performing symbolic functions as the women do in Jonson's poem. Neither the Beowulf poet nor Lanyer's contemporaries would have recognized this portrait of country life.

That Lanyer and Jonson wrote their poems independent of each other's work seems certain, but they both wrote in a generic tradition informed by the country house poems of Horace and Martial. Lanyer and Jonson also shared a historical context in which the country houses of the aristocracy were salient features on the cultural

horizon, symbols of both the traditions of the past and the changes of the revolutionary present. Given the increased availability of and interest in classical authors, and given the importance of the country house in Early Modern English culture, it might seem at first glance not surprising that two such different authors would compose country house poems within a few years of each other.

Their common inspiration came, at least in part, from changes in the structure of English society that found expression in the English country house. These "power houses" built by the Tudor monarchs' new men were visible reminders of the social and economic changes taking place in Early Modern England--a revolution that changed the ways men and women played out their roles within those houses.³ Yet both Jonson and Lanyer wrote their poems about country houses constructed before the Great Rebuilding of England that followed the Dissolution of the monasteries.⁴ Certainly necessity and circumstance

³The felicitous phrase "power house" is Mark Girouard's, the title of the first chapter of his Life in the English Country House.

⁴William Harrison's Description of England provides a contemporary account of the households and lives of these novi homines (esp. 114-15, 197-203, 224-28). For a survey of the revolution in English housing, see W. G. Hoskins, "The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640"; E.

determined the two poets' architectural subjects to a great extent, and a generic tradition that criticized new ways by reference to more ancient ones no doubt directed Jonson's choice. But in each case, the "prodigy house" of Elizabethan extravagance looms over the eponymous house of the poem, its absent presence engendering the ideal world presented by the poet.⁵

The societal changes that rocked England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were reflected in a revolution in domestic architecture. Long before Jonson wrote his poem, the great hall had ceased to be the place where all ranks of society joined together for a common meal.⁶ The medieval manor house would have been

Mercer, "The Houses of the Gentry"; and John Martin Robinson, The English Country Estate. For information about specific houses, see especially Mark Girouard's Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House. John Summerson's Architecture in Britain 1530-1830 remains the authority on the larger subject.

⁵"Prodigy house" is Sir John Summerson's term (from his chapter "The Prodigy Houses of Queen Elizabeth's Reign") for architectural extravaganzas like Wollaton Hall and Hardwick Hall that were designed to impress, by their size and artifice, both the country inhabitants and the visiting sovereign on her progresses around the realm.

⁶Many social and architectural historians have commented on this phenomenon. See especially Girouard (Life 51-53, 88-94, 110).

Writing about Longleat (built in the 1560s), Mark Girouard says that

The family had by now given up the hall as an

dominated, like Heorot, by the great hall, with a collection of smaller buildings grouped around it. By the late middle ages, those buildings had become rooms clustered around the hall, the overall design displaying, initially, little concern for symmetry or aesthetics. The house at Penshurst reflects this very kind of building.⁷ While the great hall at Penshurst survives today essentially true to its fourteenth-century origins, the noble family had withdrawn to private chambers soon after the hall was built (and long before the Sidney family first occupied the estate in the mid-sixteenth century). Rather than providing the focus for playing out the cultural myth, the hall was in the process of becoming what we now call a hall: "simply an entrance vestibule leading to other parts of the house" (Summerson 94).

eating place, except on rare occasions; it remained the dining-hall and place of assembly for the servants, and in a great house the senior members of the household (which could number from fifty to a hundred or more) sat at the high table at the dais end. The family and their guests ate on formal occasions in the great chamber It, rather than the hall, was now the ceremonial centre of the house, and it was accordingly decorated with suitable splendour. (Robert Smythson 59)

⁷For a description of the possible grouping of rooms around the hall, see Summerson (105). Penshurst, in Summerson's schema, is a "No. 2" design, in which additions to the hall form an L-shape or T-shape (106-07).

Though the great hall, symbol of the masculine warrior world, had ceased to function at these houses as the gathering place for all ranks of society, it continued to dominate the architecture of the country house, even in those houses that were newly built, well into the sixteenth century. At Wollaton Hall (built in the 1580s), the great hall determines the architectural scheme, though its functions have been supplanted by the great chamber and the prospect room. Sir Francis Willoughby built next to the hall a suite of rooms for his library and for conducting the business of the estate, as if aware of the role the hall played in the maintenance of masculine and aristocratic power. Willoughby, says Friedman,

saw his new house as a place in which the values of the Court and the city were carried into the country: estate administration, record-keeping, and private study would take the place of agricultural activities (which continued in the manor house next to the town) while dinners, music, and other entertainments could be held in large and handsomely furnished rooms set aside for the purpose. The professionalization of estate management and of the business world encouraged the separation of public and private life; women, excluded from the public world by lack of education and by social pressure, would find their place in the now more isolated domestic realm of family and social life. (Friedman 69)⁸

⁸A glance at the lives of the Willoughbys shows the disjunction between policy and practice. Lady Elizabeth Willoughby, says Friedman,

Thus the ground floor remained the domain of male activity. Other domestic spaces--more private and less accessible--would ultimately replace the hall as arenas for enacting personal dramas (Friedman 147-148). Nonetheless, though an increasing desire for privacy and changes in social structure led the noble family to withdraw from the hubbub of the great hall, older cultural values, in conflict with cultural reality, continued to be reflected in the architecture (and the poetry) of the period.⁹

was not content to remain at home, silent and submissive as the moralists advised. Among her many reasons for this was certainly a desire for greater freedom than her husband would allow. . . . The atmosphere in her husband's house was clearly stifling to Lady Elizabeth, and she refused to remain there under conditions she was powerless to change. (65)

Lady Willoughby was able to live apart from her husband for a brief period, but in the end she returned to Wollaton Hall, though she wrote to her husband that she feared he would "lock and pynn [her] up in a chamber, and that [she] should not go so muche as into the garden to take the ayre, without [his] leave and lycense" (qtd. in Friedman 63).

⁹Nostalgia for the great hall continued well into the seventeenth century. Writing in 1681, Thomas Shadwell said,

For my part, I think 'twas never good days, but when great Tables were kept in large Halls, the Buttery-hatch always open, Black Jacks, and a good smell of Meat and March-beer, with Dogs turds and mary-bones as Ornaments in the Hall: these were signs of good Housekeeping, I hate to see Italian fine Buildings with no Meat or Drink in 'em. (qtd. in McClung 34)

Central to contemporary understanding of country house life was the practice of hospitality or "housekeeping," a concept that included charity to the poor as well as generosity to the members of one's extended network of kinship and clientage. Hospitality was the social form that expressed the mythic power of the great hall, both in the poetry of Jonson and his followers and in the chorus of contemporary household statutes that repeated the theme. In early cultures, hospitality was not simply "a private form of behaviour, exercised as a matter of personal preference within a limited circle of friendship and connection," but a phenomenon of "cultural significance" (Heal 1). Hospitality was the social expression of the hierarchical world view that linked one social class to another. The practice of hospitality, thus, both marked one's social position and was a sign of one's virtuous fulfillment of the responsibilities of one's rank, of the obligations of nobility. As Felicity Heal argues, hospitality

rested on fundamental beliefs about the nature of relationships, and about the effective functioning of the social universe, beliefs that enjoined certain patterns of behaviour, which could only be neglected at the cost of humiliation and perhaps loss of power. [Hospitality was] integrated into a matrix of beliefs that were shared and articulated publicly. (2)

Given the relationship of hospitality to the maintenance

of aristocratic power, and given that the primary locus for the enactment of the nostalgic rituals of hospitality was the hall, it is not surprising that Ben Jonson, whose interest was conservative, would reassert the importance of the hall and structure the outdoors as a domestic space. One also begins to understand why Lanyer's poem, which includes a call to revolution, would need to abandon the house, reinventing both the hall and the ceremonies it nurtured.¹⁰

The fundamentally masculine character of the country house is underscored by the ratio of men to women that inhabited these households. Throughout this period, women of all social positions were outnumbered in aristocratic houses by as much as twenty to one. In the early sixteenth century, all of the servants in the house, with few exceptions, were male, for service represented employment and preferment for men of all ranks until that medieval system was superseded by the clientage and

¹⁰Don E. Wayne's book on Penshurst articulates the ideology encoded in the architecture that reveals "the conflict of ideologies" of Jonson's poem (16). Wayne's book argues that the conservative values on the surface of Jonson's poem are undermined by values antithetical to "feudal" ways (e.g., new ideas that empower a middle class poet like Jonson). Lanyer's poem, on the other hand, rejects the social models of the country house and the country house poem, moving her social critique to the surface of the poem.

patronage of the seventeenth century. The only women in the country house would have been the lord's wife and daughters, their gentlewomen companions, female "chamberers" (and some chamberers were male), nurses to the children, and laundresses. And in the Northumberland household, where men outnumbered women 166 to 9, the washing was sent out to laundresses in town, further reducing women's numbers in the household (Girouard, Life 27).

Another household account book for the period (R. B.'s) mentions 12 women in a list of 200 persons (Friedman 46).¹¹ This inequity does not merely reflect the social and economic realities of the day, but represents a history of hostility to women's presence in the country house that is articulated most baldly in the fifteenth-century "Household Statutes" of Robert Grosseteste, where a caution against women--"Streytly for-bede Ye that no wyfe be at Youre mete"--is,

¹¹Some of the difference between numbers of men and women in the household may be due to a greater tendency to record the names of men. In a 1478-9 household, for instance, though the lady of the house had both a gentlewoman and a chambermaid to serve her, neither are mentioned in her husband's account books (Mertes 43). These two women still represent a small percentage of the whole, however, and the fact that they do not appear on the books tells us more, perhaps, about contemporary attitudes towards women servants than their inclusion would.

significantly, linked to an admonition not to abandon the great hall--"Make Ye Youre owne howseholde to sytte in the alle" (Furnivall 329).¹² The work ends with a further caution about the importance of the great hall that links its use to the maintenance of aristocratic power:

[C]ommaunde Ye that dineris and sopers priuely in hid plase be not had, & be thay forbeden that there be no suche dyners nother sopers oute of the halle, For of such comethe grete destruccion, and no worshippe therby growythe to the lorde. (Furnivall 321)

Sixteenth-century courtesy books also discouraged the employment of women, and all household statutes of the period specified male servants (Mertes 58). Even those few women who inhabited the noble household were restricted in their access to many areas of the house, forming "an island of womanhood" in a "masculine world" (Girouard, Life 28). The gentlewomen were perhaps most restricted of all.¹³ Their lives in the country houses

¹²Grosseteste lived in the thirteenth century; the "Statutes" survive in a fifteenth-century copy. His household was, of course, an episcopal one, a fact that made little difference to either the composition or the functioning of its inhabitants in an era that did not make the kinds of distinctions we do between secular and sacred office. That someone felt it necessary to condemn the presence of women in a bishop's household merely speaks to the possibility, if undesirability, of their presence there.

¹³ Gentlewomen made up a greater percentage of the women in the household than noblemen did of the total men, as a significant number of the women were "gentle"

were "private and sheltered," says Alice T. Friedman, limited to "the great chamber, dining chamber, parlor, and nursery" (47, 49). She argues that, while women may have had more spaces in the prodigy houses, they were more isolated within that space (8). During the sixteenth century,

the lives of women, and of gentlewomen in particular, appear to have been more circumscribed, both spatially and in terms of the activities in which they participated. . . . Women's world was primarily private and sheltered . . . while men's lives were more directly concerned with public and official activities. Thus, upper class women's lives ordinarily included contact with very few people and they moved about in groups of two or three; throughout the lives of men, on the other hand, there were opportunities to interact with dozens of people through a clearly defined hierarchical network. (47)¹⁴

companions to the lady of the house.

¹⁴As Naomi Miller notes, women often managed their households and even estates in spite of the prejudice against such a state of affairs, a phenomenon well documented by Antonia Fraser in her account of the lives of seventeenth-century women (The Weaker Vessel). It is important to note, first, that the disruptions of the civil wars provided "opportunities" (if war can be seen in such a light) for women in the absence of their husbands and other able-bodied men of the estate, and many of Fraser's examples come from this period. She also draws her anecdotes from middle class as well as aristocratic households, while the noble household defines the scope of this study as it alone is the object of the country house poem.

That said, it must be admitted that the courtier politics of the Tudor and Stuart eras preceding the civil war also kept men away from their estates and expanded the responsibilities and authority of many individual women. However, for every Barbara Gamage Sidney (who, it

Women's duties in the household were circumscribed as well and recall *Wealhtheow's* symbolic and limited role in *Heorot*. Writing in 1609, the ninth Earl of Northumberland warned his son not to allow women to have control over the estate or the servants, but to have them supervise the upbringing of children and care for linens and household stuffs,¹⁵ and to be present only at social occasions "when great personages shall visit, to sit at an end of a table, and carve handsomely" (qtd. in Friedman 50). The Elizabethan or Jacobean country house, like its ancestor *Heorot*, remained an essentially male establishment. Ben Jonson's praise for Robert Sidney's practice of feeding all comers in the great hall, and the absence of women from the poem (or their strictly controlled presence), takes its place in a long tradition of preserving masculine power by means of limiting

must be remembered, provided the capital that financed the household) or Elizabeth of Shrewsbury, one can cite, at the other end of the spectrum, an Elizabeth Cary or Arbella Stuart, victims of religious and dynastic politics. The great bulk of aristocratic women fell, no doubt, in the middle ground where the inability to choose freely one's marriage partner and the lack of control over one's capital decreed a life of dependence and limitation.

¹⁵This comment makes Barbara Gamage Sidney's care for "linnen" and "plate" (86) less a compliment to her particular abilities and more a commonplace that forms part of the subjection of women to very limited tasks within the household.

absence of women from the poem (or their strictly controlled presence), takes its place in a long tradition of preserving masculine power by means of limiting women's numbers within the noble household and controlling the space that they inhabited.¹⁶

Lanyer's and Jonson's different responses to the features of architecture and genre point to the cultural changes of the period that put all traditional forms

¹⁶Given this relationship between country house life, gender, and art, it is interesting to investigate what happens when a woman builds her own house. How does she use the architectural grammar offered by the country house to construct a language of female empowerment? Bess of Shrewsbury shows us how one (very remarkable) woman made the country house speak her language. First, if the ground floor with its obligatory great hall is the bastion of male values and male power, it is, at Hardwick Hall, the least important and least impressive floor of the house, "isolated from the more important ceremonial rooms of the house" (Heal 159). Rather than running along the entrance front ("the normal Elizabethan arrangement, inherited from the Middle Ages"), it runs perpendicular to the facade (Girouard, Hardwick Hall 18). More architecturally significant is Bess's extensive and elegant suite of rooms that dominate the second floor, bespeaking the center of power in the household. While the hall was "given over to the yeoman servants and the like visitors" (accommodations for whom, apart from the hall, were "negligible") alterations made during the building of Hardwick provided a small paved dining room on that second floor where women could dine apart from the chaos of the hall (Durant 180-81, 199). Thus Bess kept the historic allocations of gendered space, but aggrandized those that were female spaces. Similarly, while the majority of her servants were male, as was traditional, the highest paid member of Bess's household was her lady-in-waiting, Mrs. Digby, who received the astonishing sum of £30 per year.

under attack. The sixteenth century was a period of great change in social and economic structures, change that affected profoundly the way nobles acquired and maintained political power. Perhaps more importantly, society was seen by contemporaries to be undergoing some kind of revolution, to be, among other things, "exceptionally mobile" (Stone, "Social Mobility" 31).¹⁷ It is in this period that one sees changes in agricultural practice and estate management beginning to alter the significance of the country house in the rural landscape. And service in the noble household begins to lose its status and to become the province of women and other disempowered groups. Kate Mertes notes that

[b]etween 1550 and 1600, one begins to note a general tendency for households to employ a greater percentage of women, whose roles could seldom have been more than wholly domestic. . . . Once a stubborn enclave of men devoted to the furtherance of their master's political authority, the group of household members had become by the later seventeenth century an almost entirely female and largely privately employed staff of servants. The household was as politically impotent as were the women who staffed it. (191)

The household books, the edicts, and much of the poetry

¹⁷Paul S. Seaver's Society in an Age of Revolution provides a useful collection of articles on the social and economic changes of the period. See especially Lawrence Stone's "Social Mobility in England," which he calls "a more sophisticated" analysis of the problems addressed in his The Crisis of the Aristocracy.

of the period, however, do not acknowledge patently the revolution incipient in country house life, but rather insist on the unchanging nature of social interaction. While these records, in spite of themselves, point to the social and economic changes taking place in English life (after all, why rail against a practice that doesn't exist?), they also reveal the fervor with which the changes were resisted.

In fact, though Jonson praises Robert Sidney for "dwelling" at Penshurst, the business of the lord of the country house took him away from the country to the court frequently (as the English monarchs consolidated their power at the expense of both great and small landowners). Yet the country house remained as a symbol on the landscape of earlier and seemingly unchanging values, or perhaps more accurately, a symbol of values under attack, the last stronghold of traditional ways. As the lives of the men became increasingly peripatetic, women played a central role in maintaining this fiction, in preserving the virtue symbolized by the country house, a particularly male kind of virtu that redounds exclusively to the male's benefit.¹⁸ The women did not participate in

¹⁸Thanks to Meg Lota Brown for the connection here between virtue and virtu. I am also grateful to my student, Jackie Jones, for first suggesting to me the

that virtue, but served merely as keepers of the penates that blessed the dying way of life, increasingly closeted in an increasingly remote estate.¹⁹

Though the ratio of women to men would continue to shift over the course of the seventeenth century, women would gain access to the serving quarters of aristocratic households only as service lost its status and power. Women would become more visible in all parts of the

idea that, in the country house poem, virtue was seen to reside in women. Similarly, Hugh Jenkins argues that the "unity [of "Penshurst"], formal and ideological, comes only through its female figures (1).

¹⁹Mark Girouard discusses the alienation of the country house from the countryside in his chapter "Country-House Pictures," arguing that the decline in popularity of the bird's-eye view of the country house in the late seventeenth century represents an abandonment of the ideals voiced in "To Penshurst." The bird's-eye view of an estate surrounded by a park in which are pictured "complex communities organised in hierarchies and spreading out from the family and the many grades of servants in the house itself to gardeners, grooms lodge-keepers, estate workers and tenantry" (Town and Country 221) serves the function of "project[ing] country houses as the hospitable centres of a fruitful countryside" (224). Such pictures "give an impression of ordered security that can be comforting to those who feel they are living in a troubled world" (221).

In the eighteenth century, the "empty ground-level" view supersedes the earlier depictions. Here the park "set[s] off the house," isolating it from the surrounding countryside, the noble inhabitants from the commoners (224). (Here again, widespread sentiment as expressed in art lags behind changes already realized in social and economic life.) Girouard suggests that the transformation depicted by this change in aesthetics represents a social revolution (224).

country house, but few would design and build to their convenience, or as a reflection of their power within the household, as did Elizabeth of Shrewsbury or Anne Clifford. The country house remained a context for the exercise of masculine power, its symbols pointing to a mythologized era of warrior values and camaraderie, even as the estate ceased to perform traditional functions in the economy of the country and in the structuring of society. The country house came to represent tradition under attack; as such, it provided poets like Jonson, intent on preserving privilege and their place within the system of patronage, with a rallying cry in the country house poem whose "idealized vision [provided] an attractive alternative to [the] troubled society" of Jacobean England (Dubrow, "Country-House" 159). At the same time, the country house poem provided Lanyer with an arena to challenge privilege, to envision a social order outside the bounds of the great hall, outside the bounds of tradition. So Jonson's poem, more backward looking, rejects the societal changes represented by the prodigy house, offering in response an anachronistic portrait of country house life. Lanyer's poem, as if looking to the possibilities for cultural change latent in the historic moment, produces a portrait of country house life that

had never existed.

The English country house or estate poem represents a resuscitation of a poetic form practiced (most notably) by Horace and Martial. The two most important models were Horace's second epode, Beatus ille, and Martial's epigram Baiana nostri villa.²⁰ The features of the genre were first catalogued by G. R. Hibbard, whose work was developed by William A. McClung. Barbara Lewalski who points out that a "normative approach [to defining the genre] discounts generic changes through the century," nonetheless provides a comprehensive and useful list of the genre's topoi. They include:

- (1) description of the house and the topographical features of the estate as some kind of locus amoenus [pleasant place] . . . ; (2) use of a negative formula contrasting the civility and good order of the house and life of the estate with what is outside; (3) praise of the landholder's values and virtues as these are manifested in the estate; (4) concern with family history and continuity; (5) examination of the human relation to nature . . . ; (6) some description of familial and social roles. . . . ("Lady" 262)

In addition, such poems usually include generic features

²⁰Statius and Juvenal also wrote what we now call country house poems. Portraits of country houses also appear in larger works, most notably in Homer's description of the palace of Alcinoös in the Odyssey. The works of Martial and Horace include many other references to country estates and the virtues of rural living. I have chosen to confine my discussion to the poems that most influenced the genre as it developed in English.

present in classical models, including dapes inemptae ("unbought goods" or agricultural self-sufficiency), sponte sua ("by their own will" or the willing self-sacrifice of flora and fauna for human consumption), and praise for the virtuous wife. Fertility and hospitality are also features of classical models.²¹

Each feature described has a moral valence; as McClung says, "the object of praise and criticism in the English country-house poems is evaluated ethically, not esthetically" (46). It is for this reason that the house is often explicitly or implicitly compared to larger or newer or more grandiose houses--the prodigy houses--to demonstrate its virtuous simplicity. A generic feature such as dapes inemptae that describes the agricultural system of the estate assumes the moral superiority of self-sufficiency.²² Sponte sua describes the secure

²¹See also Heather Dubrow's insightful and witty "The Country-House Poem: A Study in Generic Development" in which she ties its brief flourishing to the economic and social changes of the day.

²²The myth of self-sufficiency was as removed from reality as any other feature of the genre by the time Jonson was writing. So Mark Girouard comments that

In the early Middle Ages great landowners had also been great farmers. From the fourteenth century onwards, for reasons which are still debated, there was a tendency for them to lease off more and more land. In the early sixteenth century almost all the food consumed by the household of the Earl of Northumberland was bought at local markets rather

placement of every inhabitant of the estate (plants, animals, and humans) in a "natural" and divinely-ordained hierarchy, and the willing sacrifice of all creatures to that economic and social system--to vertical social alignment and its attendant values. Insofar as women are represented in the genre by the traditional praise of the "virtuous wife" and of her fecundity, they are allied with the other "productive" elements of the estate (including fruit trees, domestic animals, and those hunted for sport) who exist for the maintenance of a way of life symbolized in the great hall--that maintenance only possible through the continuation of the family line, dependent on the woman's fertility and chastity. To a certain extent, hospitality or "housekeeping" subsumes all the other categories. As the rule of social interaction that preserves ancient ways, it is both the ultimate expression and the seeming purpose of life on the estate that the country house poem celebrates.

Most definitions of the country house poem rely primarily on Jonson's models, with occasional reference to features of other poems that fit the description. Like Jonson's poem itself, some descriptions of the genre have

than grown on the earl's demesne land. (Life 26)
So much for dapes inemptae.

tended to mask the cultural changes of the era by romanticizing the portrait of country house life Jonson and his followers presented. Hibbard, taking his history from Jonson, argues that

The great hall was the common meeting ground for members of the family and their servants and, very often, their tenants as well. It was in fact the heart of a self-contained community and, as such, it continued to dictate the design of the house so long as the relation of the lord to his dependents was that of the father to a family, and so long as the sixteenth-century custom of "housekeeping" continued. (160)

Thus, for Hibbard, the world presented by Jonson of masculine rituals of hospitality enacted in the great hall represents what was, and what was good--for social and economic relationships here are figured as fatherly love. Hibbard also agrees with Jonson that the newly built houses were morally corrupt because many of the rooms existed for "state functions" and because "the family lived in what was left over, while the servants were banished to the basement or to a detached wing" (161). Here Hibbard, with Jonson, condemns the changes in Early Modern English society (as reflected in domestic architecture) that separated class from class.

William McClung corrects Hibbard's reading of Jonson's historicity, pointing out that "the quasi-communal manorial society" depicted in Jonson's poem was, by the

seventeenth century, "remote enough to become a subject of romance" (33). Don E. Wayne, in his study of Penshurst (the house and the poem), argues that there is a disjunction not only between Jonson's poem and contemporary social and economic forms, but that, further, there is "a general contradiction in the Sidneys' architectural scheme between a mythic and a historical representation of their own relation to the past, between the representation of continuity and the need to rationalize discontinuity" (6).²³ In the house as in Jonson's poem, he maintains, we see "the conflict of ideologies adumbrated" (16).

However, even in Wayne's sophisticated and complex analysis of the mechanics of "Penshurst," Jonson's presentation of the women of the poem is not subjected to the same critical acuity as other features of the genre. An extended biographical digression on the marriage of Barbara Gamage and Robert Sidney fails to produce anything more interesting than the comment that "Jonson's praise of Barbara Gamage is not unfounded" (72). This, in

²³That is, the Sidneys, social arrivistes who were granted Penshurst only under Henry VIII, needed both to link themselves to the history of the house and to discount the unique valorization implicit in the estate. They needed both to pretend they had always lived there and pretend it didn't matter that they hadn't.

spite of the fact that Wayne sees the sinister connection between the "ripe daughters" of the estate and the baskets of fruit they bear, and between these daughters and Barbara Gamage Sidney's "fruitfulness" (67-69). Thus, while Wayne's book exposes the idealizing tendencies of Jonson's poem vis-à-vis social and economic relationships between men, it preserves the fiction of women's lives that Jonson had presented.

Taking account of Aemilia Lanyer's "Description of Cooke-ham" in definitions of the genre forces the reader to confront the idealized portrayal of women in the country house poem, and helps to point out how the genre functioned traditionally to silence and objectify women.²⁴ By examining Lanyer's eccentric use of various generic features, one sees how Lanyer remade the genre so that it would serve as a vehicle for female self-fashioning, creating a poetic space in which women could function as speaking subjects and Lanyer could speak as poet.

²⁴On Lanyer's version of the country house poem, see especially Barbara Keifer Lewalski's "The Lady of the Country House Poem" and her chapter "Imagining Female Community in Writing Women. Lewalski focuses on Lanyer's creation of an ideal community of women rather than on what I see as the subversive effects of Lanyer's poem (both within the world of "Cooke-ham" and in the culture of seventeenth-century England).

Thus Lanyer makes the genre work for her first by making the object of the poem's praise a woman rather than a man and by detaching the architecture of the house and the management of the estate from the object of her praise. Lanyer's poem further subverts the tendency of the genre to silence women by moving the action of the poem away from the house and its great hall into an outdoor space. And while other country house poets such as Jonson and Marvell had also written of the outdoors, Lanyer's description uniquely allows women to be empowered in that space. In the landscape of Cooke-ham, freed from the social and generic confines of the great hall, Lanyer can rewrite hospitality by connecting it to another cultural and literary tradition, the Bible. She also reworks sponte sua, the generic feature most directly implicated in the maintenance of the fictions of aristocratic hospitality. All these alterations serve to produce a genre that empowers women as subjects, and Lanyer as poet.

Lanyer's choice of Cooke-ham (and, thus, Margaret, Countess of Cumberland) as subject of her poem no doubt had much to do with circumstance, but no one assumes that Jonson wrote "To Penshurst" because it was the only place he'd ever been served dinner. Likewise, Lanyer, too, had

other choices--homes of the other women to whom she wrote introductory poems might have served as models for a country house poem. But Cooke-ham provides particular features that help Lanyer to reform the genre to her needs. First, it had a history of association with women, as it had been "part of the dowry of the Queens of England from the reign of Edward I, who assigned the manor in 1281 to his mother Eleanor, until the end of the reign of Henry VIII" (Page 3.125). What of this history Lanyer might have known is impossible to guess, but the facts are intriguing, to say the least.

What Lanyer must have known is that the house did not belong to Cumberland, but was where she and her retinue (of which Lanyer was a part) were staying by the generosity of Cumberland's brother, Sir William Russell of Thornhaugh, during her estrangement from her husband (Lewalski, "Lady" 265). In writing a country house poem in praise of non-owners, Lanyer may have been imitating Martial's epigram 4.64, "Iuli iugera pauca Martialis" ("The Modest Poles of J. Martial"),²⁵ wherein Martial uses the conventions of the country house genre in a poem about lending his little villa to a friend--that is, a

²⁵The translated title and the "Englised" fragment that follows are by Peter Whigham from Sullivan and Whigham, Epigrams of Martial Englised by Divers Hands.

poem where inhabitant and owner are not one, as was more customary. Martial's poem includes descriptions very like some in "Cooke-ham," further suggesting a connection between the two poems. His lines

Remote heights command the foothills,
And the top, rolling & smooth lies
Open to serener heavens

and

From here the Seven Peerless Hills,
Here all of Rome herself--appraise . . .
(Sullivan and Whigham 177)²⁶

suggest Lanyer's description of the Lady in the grove:

Where beeing seated, you might plainely see,
Hills, vales, and woods, as if on bended knee
They had appeared, your honour to salute,
Or to preferre some strange unlook'd for sute:
All interlac'd with brookes and christall springs,
A Prospect fit to please the eyes of Kings:
And thirteene shires appear'd all in your sight,
Europe could not affoord much more delight. (67-74)

This passage has puzzled Lanyer's readers because of its disagreement with the facts (one cannot see thirteen shires from anywhere in the area), but its connection may be to genre rather than geography.

More important than any possible connection to another

²⁶The Latin reads:

Lati collibus eminent recessus,
Et planus modico tumore vertex
Caelo perfruitur serenior . . .

* * *

Hinc septem dominos videre montis
Et totam licet aestimare Romam . . .

poem is the way Lanyer uses the disjunction between ownership and virtue to praise the Lady of the poem. In this sense, the house represents women's lack of legal rights and political power, their inability to engage in the same kind of moral architecture and estate management that reflects the virtue and authority of celebrated country house lords. Yet out of this acknowledged powerlessness Lanyer constructs in Cumberland a figure of female power who orders any landscape she inhabits, regardless of her right--or lack of right--to property. As Lewalski puts it,

Lanyer deals with Margaret Clifford's anomalous situation as estranged wife or widow (rather than lady of her husband's estate) by celebrating her as "mistress" of a manor belonging to the crown, a place which she--like anyone else--could only possess on a temporary basis. ("Lady" 267)

The Lady's virtue, her authority, is, within the world of the poem, ultimately independent of property rights, transcendent of the facts of cultural disempowerment that are represented by Cooke-ham.

Accordingly, the house at Cooke-ham goes nearly without description in the poem that claims to provide just that. Though the house no longer exists (Lewalski, "Lady" 265), we can be certain that, as a pre-Elizabethan--indeed, medieval--building, it would have found its architectural focus in the great hall. However,

the house's brief portrayal in Lanyer's poem serves to detach it from any connection to the great hall or to the culture represented by domestic architecture; rather, the house is associated with images of womanhood. In the first few lines of the poem, Lanyer addresses Cumberland as "princely Palace" (5), associating house and Lady as, traditionally, the country house poem had linked house and lord. This connection is emphasized when, upon the arrival of the Lady of the poem, "The House receiv'd all ornaments to grace it, / And would indure no foulness to deface it" (19-20). In contrast to the rather moralized simplicity that orders the house at Penshurst (and other country houses) and marks it as virtuous, here ornamentation--commonly condemned as a female vice--is the virtuous and ordered response of the house to the (likewise) virtuous Lady. That the house "cast off each garment that might grace it, / Putting on Dust and Cobwebs to deface it" (201-02) on the Lady's departure reiterates the power she has over the house. Like the virtue of country house lords, Cumberland's virtue is reflected in the house she inhabits. But unlike Barbara Gamage Sidney, who is notable in Jonson's poem in that her virtue resides at Penshurst in her absence, in "Cooke-ham," virtue resides in the woman herself, coming

represents the lineage of the Cliffords (the "house" of Clifford). She is

. . . that sweet Lady sprung from Cliffords race,
Of noble Bedfords blood, faire st[r]eame of Grace;
To honourable Dorset now espows'd,
In whose faire breast true virtue then was hous'd:
Oh what delight did my weake spirits find
In those pure parts of her well framed mind.
(93-98)²⁷

Again, virtue is "hous'd" in the woman, not the woman (or her qualities) in the house. And it is her mind that is "well framed," not the architecture. Further, though Anne Clifford is linked to "race" and "blood," she is praised not for her (potential) fertility (as is, for instance, Maria Fairfax in a parallel passage in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House"), but for the quality of her mind. Here it is not marriage that orders the woman's fertility (as lordship by a man orders both her and the landscape in Jonson's poem), but rather the virtue of women who order both house and landscape. Indeed, marriage, the cause of the women's leaving Cooke-ham, disorders rather than orders. Thus, by linking the two women to the house, Lanyer severs the traditional connection between lord, house, and virtue in order to empower the women.

Here Lanyer has not merely substituted a woman for a

²⁷Woods's edition and the original read "faire steame," which Rowse has corrected (without comment) to "faire streame"--no doubt the correct reading.

man in the generic equation that grants virtue and authority to the owner of the estate, but has altered the nature of those qualities. Penshurst is a reification of Sidney's qualities, which reside in the estate regardless of his presence. Barbara Gamage Sidney, while seeming to possess virtue, is actually another member of the household or feature of the landscape, ordered by Robert Sidney's true nobility. Virtue does not reside in her at all, but is merely a sign of Robert Sidney's authority. In "Cooke-ham," however, virtue resides in the women, not in the estate. And while the ordered response and obeisance of the flora and fauna in that poem recall similar scenes in Penshurst, the ordering at "Cooke-ham" is a sign not of a fixed and "natural" hierarchy that sacrifices one creature to another, but a response of the landscape to the presence of virtue, here a virtue that resides in the women themselves. At Penshurst, all nature is ordered for use (the use of the lord) while at Cooke-ham, ordering is a transitory phenomenon more resembling a sensory response, the turning of a flower to the sun rather than its harvesting to adorn a silk doublet. Similarity of generic feature points, then, not to identity of purpose but to a radical challenge of the tradition. Lanyer once again invokes a generic feature

merely to alter its valence.

Lanyer's poem also attacks the social myths that preserved privilege and that found their architectural expression in the country house. Immediately following the passage that links Anne Clifford to the house comes a scathing attack on class difference:

Unconstant Fortune, thou art most too blame,
Who casts us downe into so lowe a frame:
Where our great friends we cannot dayly see,
So great a diffrence is there in degree.
Many are placed in those Orbes of state,
Parters in honour, so ordain'd by Fate;
Neerer in show, yet farther off in love,
In which, the lowest alwayes are above. (103-10)

While the passage seems to express devotion for one's betters--"the lower born are more devoted to the high than the reverse," according to Susanne Woods's paraphrase of the final line (Lanyer 134)--the force of the sentence and line structure is to place "the lowest . . . above."²⁸ Thus the vertical alignment upon which a poem like "Penshurst" depends for the construction of virtue is here attacked. Lanyer does not call for horizontal class alliances (which would, after all, continue to support class privilege), but seems to suggest a revolution in which true virtue conforms to

²⁸Lanyer's dedication to Anne Clifford takes this theme further, arguing that virtue is not inherent in noble blood. See Chapter 2 for an elaboration on Lanyer's use of this theme.

earthly honor.

Hospitality, the virtue traditionally expressed in the great hall of the country house poem, is here transformed as well. First, charity to the poor is removed from its traditional place in the poem by Lanyer's calling into question the class system that makes such charity necessary. The Lady of the poem is said to feed her "pined brethren, when they stood in need" (91-92). Where the poor here are brothers to the Lady, in Marvell's poem, by contrast, the hospitality of the lord is represented by a "stately Frontispiece of Poor" (65), the needy there dehumanized as a piece of the architecture, their purpose merely to demonstrate the lord's hospitality. Further subverting the generic feature is Lanyer's linking Cumberland's practice of hospitality to "blessed Joseph." While hospitality had traditionally been validated by its Christian overtones, here Lanyer bypasses cultural associations, going directly to the biblical source. The story of Joseph's feeding his brothers (told in Genesis 42-49) is part of an intricate narrative wherein, during a protracted famine, Joseph provides his brothers with grain in spite of the fact that they had, years ago, sold him into slavery. Thus Lanyer's hospitality is based on a generosity unconcerned

with title and hierarchy, one that models, rather, charity and forgiveness. And while the cultural context of hospitality proscribed women's roles in the country house economy, here hospitality as a Christian virtue has the ability to empower Cumberland by linking her to a Biblical patriarch.

Hospitality is further transformed by Lanyer's remaking of sponte sua, the willing subjection of all creatures of the estate to the productivity upon which the "liberal board" depends. The concept is part of the vision of a Golden Age where the fruits of nature yield their plenty seemingly without cultivation or labor. In Martial's epigram to the Baian villa, Bassus, as in Jonson's imitative "To Penshurst," this self-sacrifice is extended to include the tenants and servants of the estate, whose support of the landowner's "lifestyle" is offered generously and cheerfully. As such, sponte sua functions in both poets' work to mask the exploitation necessary to any social structure that accords wealth to the privileged few and sacrifices the lives of the many in the service of maintaining that wealth. This arrangement is further masked by subsuming sponte sua into hospitality, making the consumption of the estate a kind of selflessness, rather than selfishness.

The economy of "To Penshurst" is one of consumption, and sponte sua plays a central role in the construction of this economy. Images of eating and feasting dominate the poem. Jonson presents a vertiginous image of deer, sheep, cattle, pheasants, partridges, carps, pikes, eels, cherries, figs, grapes, quinces, apricots, peaches, capons, cakes, nuts, apples, cheeses, plums, pears, beer, bread, wine, tenants, and their daughters funneling into Penshurst as into a great maw, to be enjoyed by the Lord and his guests (foremost among whom, of course, are the poet and the king). The estate is ordered--or rather orders itself sponte sua--for consumption in a great hierarchy that encompasses the geography of the estate (the lower land, the middle grounds, and the mounts) and all creatures from carps to kings. This ordering takes in the women of the poem, who appear only as they are ordered in the consummation of marriage. The "ripe daughters" (54) ready to be plucked and consumed by husbands are sent (sponte sua) by the Lord's tenants for the use of the household. Martial's poem had included in this context a reference to "strapping daughters of honest farmers offer[ing] . . . their mother's gifts" (3.58.39-40), a locution that, like Jonson's, encompasses--and merges--the women's bodies with other

comestibles of the estate. More important for this ordering function of marriage in Jonson's poem is the depiction of Barbara Gamage Sidney, whose commendable care of the plate and linen combines with her chastity to make her a fit commodity for consumption by the Lord. A passage at the beginning of the poem mentions her fecundity in association with the "Ladies oke" (18), where legend held that she had gone into labor with one of her children. The second and final mention serves to damn by faint praise her chastity--

Thy lady's noble, fruitfull, chaste withall.
His children thy great lord may call his owne,

says the poet (90-91). Thus marriage orders the lady, and her potentially chaotic fertility, as nature and its chaos are ordered, putting all at the service of the estate and its Lord.

Related to the theme of consumption in Jonson's poem is--indeed, must be--the references in the poem to hunting. The first mention of hunting links the two themes of killing and eating: Penshurst's forest "never failes to serve thee season'd deere, / When thou would'st feast, or exercise thy friends" (20-21). And the hospitality accorded to King James and Prince Henry follows their "hunting late" (76). These references to hunting might seem an insignificant part of the poem, but

they point out the reality that underlies sponte sua--it invokes not only life, but also death. Sponte sua's function is to relieve the consumer of responsibility for the death of what is consumed--and in the larger world of the poem, for the attendant exploitation of other social classes implicated in that conspicuous consumption. If all willingly give of themselves--from the fish to the tenants to the women--there is no need to question the social order that supports the economy of consumption and consummation.

It follows that if Martial's and Jonson's use of sponte sua commodifies women, Lanyer must alter the convention to fit her different purposes if she is to speak as poet. Cooke-ham is a place where women, rather than being objectified and consumed, are empowered to function in roles of authority from which they were traditionally excluded. Marriage, that cultural device that orders the women of "Penshurst" for use, does not inhabit the poetic space of "Cooke-ham"; indeed, the prospective marriage of the young Anne Clifford is the undoing of the paradisal world of the poem. Rather, Lanyer characterizes Cooke-ham as the place

. . . where the Muses gave their full consent,
I should have powre the virtuous to content:
Where princely Palace will'd me to indite,
The sacred Storie of the Soules delight. (3-6)

And though male privilege--"princely Palace"--seems here to be the source of Lanyer's poetic authority, once again the matter of her poetry, the "sacred Storie," serves to subvert the absoluteness of aristocratic and male privilege. Lanyer, is empowered to be subject poet by her biblical material, not exploited as object commodity.

In Lanyer's poem, sponte sua is most visible in a passage that identifies the Lady of the poem (Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland) with the messiah figure of Deutero Isaiah (as traditionally read by Christian exegetes) for whom "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low" (40.4a). That is, the world of the estate orders itself virtuously and "naturally" in response to the virtue of the lady. (The poet is describing the response of the estate to the arrival of the Lady):

The very Hills right humbly did descend,
When you to tread upon them did intend.
And as you set your feete, they still did rise,
Glad that they could receive so rich a prize.

(35-38)

In a later parallel passage, the "Hills, vales, and woods, as if on bended knee" pay homage to the Lady (68). Thus sponte sua, rather than objectifying the Lady (as it does in Jonson's work), is used to raise her to autonomous, subject status.

Furthermore, though fauna and flora appear in profusion, none of it exists for consumption by the three women of the poem. None of the natural life is cultivated or herded, as all is in "Penshurst." Significantly, though images of feasting are prevalent elsewhere in Lanyer's poems, it is entirely absent here where one expects it most. Rather, at the Lady's arrival, says the poet, "each plant, each floure, each tree / Set forth their beauties then to welcome thee" (33-34). Even potentially edible birds and "little creatures" appear timidly merely to "attend" and "sport" before the Lady. They are frightened away when, Diana-like, the Lady "make[s] a stand" with a "Bowe in [her] faire Hand" (49-52), but the arrow is never loosed.²⁹ As Meg Lota Brown points out, the Lady's "standing" here represents her social position, her power to exploit, commodify, and victimize, but, as a virtuous agent, she chooses not to exercise that power. Thus this passage serves merely to invoke, and then deny within the world of the poem, the bloody-mindedness that is masked by the sponte sua trope in "Penshurst." So, while we must imagine that the women of Cooke-ham must have eaten something while in residence at the estate, that necessary consumption is not

²⁹See Chapter 3 for another reading of this scene.

glorified as a mark of nobility--a kind of droit de seigneur that has the right to sample everything within its purview--but rather recedes, like other animal functions, into the invisible realm of realism, unarticulated in the world of the poem.

And, while there is no mention of chastity within the poem, there is, on the contrary, a sense that the chaos of female fecundity, so strictly controlled within the world of "Penshurst," does not threaten the world of Cooke-ham. The poet displays no anxiety to order that fertility into a hierarchy or into marriage; rather, marriage cannot exist within the poem. And the related fertility of nature is not ordered for man's use, either. So, for instance, while the poem seems to move through the seasons, from the birth of spring to the death of winter, descriptions within the poem merge the seasons. Mention of spring (30) follows the mention of summer (21). And the trees of summer are "with leaves, with fruits, with flowers clad" (23), all at once.³⁰ The emphasis is on plenty and beauty, rather than on order and use.

In place of the ordering for use of the fruits of

³⁰John Ulreich cites a similar phenomenon in Paradise Lost Book 4) as suggesting that such lack of "seasonality" defines paradise.

nature that represents the good of Penshurst, and that one would expect as part of sponte sua, one finds the presentation of nature not as something for consumption but as sumptuous, a distinction that makes a virtue out of what was commonly ascribed to women as a vice. Both the house and the surrounding estate of Cooke-ham are described as dressing up in anticipation of the Lady's arrival. Further, even the natural world seems to be granted subject status in Cooke-ham, where trees embrace each other (24) and the sun embraces the "cristall streames" (28)--personifications that picture nature taking pleasure in itself rather than, sponte sua, sacrificing itself for aristocratic use. In other words, the Lady may be the occasion of nature's beautification, but nature itself joys in the resulting beauty as well.

Perhaps the scene that best shows Lanyer's abandonment of the traditional use of sponte sua is the one in which she describes the "Hills, vales, and woods" coming before the Lady "her honour to salute, / Or to preferre some strange unlook'd for sute" (69-70). In this scene both the Lady and the natural world are empowered: nature (in this case the earth itself) is not for the Lady's use but is a subject (in both senses of the word) entreating her wisdom. The Lady sits as judge (which in Lanyer's poetic

suggests exalted allusions to Deborah, the heroine of the Book of Judges), ruling in response to nature's petitions. One need only compare this to Jonson's handling of the same image to see the significance of this scene to Lanyer's understanding of the potential of the genre for empowering women. (Curiously, both poets employ here a couplet that rhymes "salute" with "sute.") In Penshurst, all the tenants present themselves to the house, bearing gifts, but not bringing petitions:

. . . all come in, the farmer, and the clowne:
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord, and lady, though they have no sute.

(48-50)

These lines follow on the claim that the walls of Penshurst are "rear'd with no mans ruine, no mans grone," and that "There's none, that dwell about them, wish them down" (46-47). In other words, the scene in "Penshurst" serves to reaffirm the social system that maintains vertical social alignment (and its attendant unequal distribution of wealth) by negating all opposition to such a system, while Lanyer uses the same image to exalt the Lady of the poem, at the same time allowing for the possibility of disagreement (strange unlook'd for sutes) within the hierarchy of virtue that characterizes "Cookeham."

Thus Lanyer has taken the conventions of the country

house genre that had served most to objectify and, thereby, silence women and made them into vehicles for women's empowerment. Those generic conventions are the very ones that express the cultural myths enacted in the great hall. That architectural feature and those myths so completely defined the country house that Lanyer found it necessary to efface reference to the house almost entirely from her poem. Nonetheless, she shows herself aware of the convention and sensitive to its gendered potential when she transfers the virtue traditionally inherent in the house to the women themselves, constructing them as the loci for housing virtue.

Her rewriting of hospitality also sidesteps cultural value systems that privilege men by allying women, vis-à-vis the story of Joseph, with biblical narratives of virtue that supersede cultural norms. Lanyer further transforms notions of hospitality by her reworking of sponte sua, the generic convention that had most effectively served to mask the exploitation of all inhabitants of the estate for the empowerment of the lord. In Lanyer's poem, men are silenced by their absence and women are empowered. Women order the natural world by their virtuous presence. Unlike the virtue of women in a poem like "Penshurst," that authority is not transferred

to the estate and, thus, to the lord, but rests in the women, leaving with them when they leave the estate. In this world of women whose authority resides in their virtue, Lanyer can claim the voice of a poet, as it is she who has constructed the locus amoenus that empowers her sex.

APPENDIX: LANYER'S BIBLE

As I argue that Lanyer's use of biblical material is at the center of her discourse, it seems important to explain briefly how she understood and made use of that resource. Lanyer's knowledge of the Bible is extensive. Her deployment of its wording and imagery suggests that she had both liturgical experience with the Psalms and Bible-based prayers of the Book of Common Prayer and that she also made careful use of the Geneva Bible. In the former, Lanyer resembles those medieval scholars whose intimate experience with the Bible was aural and oral rather than visual: her writing is permeated with the language of the prayers and psalter of Anglican ritual, used not with precise accuracy of quotation, but often in eclectic groupings that suit her poetic and theological needs. The fact that her quotations from the Psalms use the wording of the Prayer Book versions (the Miles Coverdale translations of the authorized Bishops' Bible), argues both for her regular participation in the Office, that is, Morning and Evening Prayer, where the entire Psalter was recited every month, and also for her

attendance at communion.¹ Her quotation of The Great Litany (at least twice) and the Prayer of St. Chrysostom further argues for her regular attendance at public services--precisely what one would expect of a woman fostered in noble households and at the court of Elizabeth. Her use of the Geneva Bible, on the other hand, suggests an interest in biblical study beyond the religio-political requirements of the day.

During Lanyer's youth and until the publication of her book, the Bible authorized by the Church of England for lectionary readings, including the recitation of the Psalms, was the Bishops' Bible (1568). It had replaced the Great Bible (1539), the large lectern Bible that was the first to be authorized for liturgical use (under

¹Morning and Evening Prayer were recited daily in cathedrals, small chapels, and in homes. The Preface to the Elizabethan Prayer Books assumed that "men" would "say Morning and Evening Prayer privately" and made provision for recitation "in any language that they themselves do understand." However, it was assumed that "all priests and deacons shall be bound to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly," (in English) and that

the curate . . . shall say the same in the parish church or chapel where he ministereth and shall toll a bell thereto a convenient time before he begin, that such as be disposed may come to hear God's Word and to pray with him. (Booty 16)

In sixteenth-century England, the expectation was that "all must attend [Holy Communion] weekly, but need communicate only once a year" (Cuming 58).

Henry VIII).² The Bishops' Bible was a revision of Matthew's Bible (1537), which itself combined William Tyndale's translations from the original languages (of the Old Testament from Genesis through 2 Chronicles and all of the New Testament) with Miles Coverdale's version from the Vulgate and contemporary German translations (of the rest of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha). Coverdale's translations of the Psalms became such an integral part of Anglican liturgy that they were retained even after the authorization of the new version in 1611.³

The Great Litany was the first liturgical document of the English Church (and the first ritual form to be published in English), produced by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1544 (before the first Edwardian Prayer Book). It was to be used "Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and

²The King James Bible, the authorized version that replaced the Bishops' Bible--and that ultimately eclipsed the popularity of the Geneva Bible--could not have been Lanyer's source as it was published in the same year as her book.

³The Bishops' Bible is accessible through microfilm; its various printings comprise STC 2068-2072. Genesis and the New Testament are also to be found in Luther A. Weigle's Octaplas where the text of the Bishops' Bible appears with other translations in the Tyndale-King James lineage. See Weigle's "Introduction" to either work for a history of English Reformation translations.

Coverdale's Psalm translations are preserved relatively intact in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, widely available.

at other times, when it shall be commanded by the ordinary [the bishop]," according to the rubrics of the Elizabethan Prayer Books (Booty 68), so Lanyer would have heard it recited regularly. While Cranmer used other liturgical sources to construct the Great Litany, these are of a sort that Lanyer would have been unlikely to know (Cuming 35-38; Hatchett 154-55). Lanyer's lines:

Christs bloody sweat, the Vineger, and Gall,
The Speare, Sponge, Nailes, his buffeting with
Fists,
His bitter Passion, Agony, and Death,
Did gaine us Heaven when He did loose his
breath. (Salve Deus 261-64)

recall this obsecration from the Great Litany:

By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and
passion, by thy precious death and burial, by thy
glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the
coming of the Holy Ghost.
Good Lord deliver us. (Booty 69)

And Lanyer's description of human beings

Toss'd to and fro with every wicked wind,
The world, the flesh, or Devill gives to blind.
(Salve Deus 1119-20)

recalls not only Ephesians (4.14) but also the deprecation

From fornication and all other deadly sin, and from
all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the
devil.
Good Lord deliver us. (Booty 69)⁴

The Prayer of St. Chrysostom was said following the

⁴"The world, the flesh, and the devil" are a proverbial trio, but not necessarily in that order.

Litany. The final sentence of Lanyer's dedicatory epistle to the Countess of Cumberland:

So wishing you in this world all increase of health
and honour, and in the world to come life
everlasting, I rest,

quotes from the final phrase of the Prayer:

fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of
thy servants as may be most expedient for them,
granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth,
and in the world to come life everlasting. (Booty
75)

Lanyer's quotation of Psalms is especially instructive of how she used biblical material. As Susanne Woods has noted, "Direct echoes of the Psalms are peppered throughout [Lanyer's] poem," especially in the initial section of the Salve Deus that follows the salutation to Margaret, Countess of Cumberland (Lanyer 54). In this part of the poem, Lanyer presents an extended description of God, the details of which come mostly from the Psalms, though there are many echoes of the Magnificat from Luke, as well as echoes of other biblical books. The Magnificat itself was recited daily as part of Evening Prayer, following the Old Testament lesson. Here, too, Lanyer's quotation resembles more closely the Prayer Book version than the translation of the Geneva Bible:

He joyes the Meeke, and Makes, the Mightie sad,
Pulls downe the Prowd, and doth the Humble reare.
(Salve Deus 75-76)

Here she follows more closely the Prayer Book:

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and
hath exalted the humble and meek, (Booby 62)

than the Geneva Bible's

He hath put downe the mightie from their seates,
and exalted them of lowe degree. (Luke 1.52)

Likewise, the diction of Lanyer's allusions to the Psalms, though not precise quotations, strongly support the speculation that Lanyer's source was significantly liturgical, for the wording of Lanyer's Psalm quotations matches more closely the Prayer Book Psalms (that is, the Bishops' Bible/Coverdale translation) than it does those of the Geneva Bible. So in Lanyer's version of Psalm 104.1, she writes,

With Majestie and Honour is He clad,
And deck'd with light, as with a garment faire.
(73-74)

The Prayer Book reads,

[T]hou art clothed with majesty and honor.
Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a
garment,

while the Geneva Bible praises the God

clothed with glorie & honour.
Which covereth himself with light as with a
garment.

Likewise, in quoting Psalm 104.4, Lanyer says that God "makes his blessed Angels powrefull Spirits" (90). The Prayer Book reads, "He maketh his angels spirits," while

the Geneva Bible says that God "maketh the spirits his messengers." The similarity between Lanyer's wording and the Prayer Book Psalms in these key phrases, the very ones that stick in the mind of a hearer, argue strongly for Lanyer's regular participation in Anglican liturgy.

A closer look at this section of the Salve Deus illustrates, in addition, how such liturgical experience informs her work. The four stanzas that comprise lines 73-104 include quotations from at least six Psalms, with some individual verses of those Psalms divided into two or three pieces to suit Lanyer's line. The following annotations to lines 73-88 show Lanyer's style:

With majestie and Honour is He clad,
 And deck'd with light, as with a garment faire;
[Ps 104.1-2a]
 He joyes the Meeke, and makes the Mightie sad,
 Pulls downe the Prowd, and doth the Humble reare:
[Magnificat, Luke 1.52]
 Who sees this Bridegroome, never can be sad;
 None lives that can his wondrous workes declare:⁵
 Yea, looke how farre the Est is from the West,
 So farre he sets our sinnes that have
 transgrest.
[Ps 103.12]
 He rides upon the wings of all the windes,

⁵These two lines "quote" from many sources. See Chapter 1 for a summary of the tradition that figures Christ as the bridegroom, especially in the synoptic gospels and in the Book of Revelation. While many psalms mention the works of God, Lanyer is unusual here in declaring them ineffable. She may recall here Psalm 19, in which it is the speechless, voiceless heavens and firmament (not human beings) that declare God's glory and show his handiwork.

[Ps 18.10b]

And spreads the heav'ns with his all powrefull
hand;

[Ps 104.2b]

Oh! who can loose when the Almighty bindes?

[Matt 16.19, 18.18]

Or in his angry presence dares to stand? [Ps 76.7]

He searcheth out the secrets of all mindes;

[Ps 139.1a]

All those that feare him, shall possesse the Land:
He is exceeding glorious to behold,
Antient of Times; so faire, and yet so old.⁶

Lanyer's thinking and language here are inseparable from the scriptural imagery and wording that she has internalized through the daily round of liturgy and Bible reading common to religious households.

The salient exception to Lanyer's style of reference by memory is in passages where she is clearly quoting directly from the written text, and then she uses the Geneva Bible, the enduring translation first published in 1560, and the household Bible of English Protestants. In the extended passage that compares Christ to the beloved of the Song of Songs, for instance, she sometimes quotes the Geneva translation word for word, providing us with a picture of Lanyer writing the Salve Deus with that

⁶That "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom" is central to the theology of the psalms especially, and to much of the Old Testament generally. "Possessing the land" and the glory of God (and the danger in experiencing that glory firsthand) are also so common throughout the Old Testament that it is impossible to pin down Lanyer's source. "Ancient of days" is the title given God in the Book of Daniel.

version open beside her for reference. So, for instance, Lanyer's description of Christ as having "lips, like Lillies, dropping downe pure mirrhe" (Salve Deus 1319) repeats exactly the Geneva Bible passage from the Song of Songs that describes "his lippes like lilies dropping downe pure myrrhe" (5.13).⁷

I have tried to reflect Lanyer's two sources for scriptural quotation by using the Prayer Book as my reference for Psalms and liturgical renderings of biblical material (such as the Magnificat), and the Geneva translation in all other cases.

⁷The spelling, of course, was dependent not on Lanyer but on the typesetter.

WORKS CITED

- Abrams, M. H., et al., eds. The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 6th ed. Vol. 1. New York: Norton, 1993.
- Ackerman, Susan. "One Woman, Many Women." Lecture Series.
- Allen, Don Cameron. The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry. 1954. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins P, 1970.
- Alpers, Paul. "The Eclogue Tradition and the Nature of Pastoral." College English 34 (1972): 352-71.
- Beilin, Elaine V. Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987.
- Benveniste, Emile. "Subjectivity in Language." 1958. Problems in General Linguistics. Trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek. 1971.
- Bloomfield, Morton W. "The Elegy and the Elegaic Mode: Praise and Alienation." Renaissance Genres. Ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986. 147-57.
- Booty, John E., ed. The Elizabethan Prayer Book. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1976.
- Brennan, Michael. Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance: The Pembroke Family. London: Routledge, 1988.
- Conti, Natale (Comes). Mythologiae. 1581. New York: Garland, 1979.
- Cuming, G. J. A History of Anglican Liturgy. 2nd ed. London: MacMillan, 1982.
- De Lauretis, Theresa. Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984.
- Derrida, Jacques. Margins of Philosophy. 1972. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982.

- Douglas, W. C. The Pastoral Elegy in English. Bombay: Oxford UP, 1934.
- Dubrow, Heather. A Happier Eden: the Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
- . "The Country-House Poem: A Study in Generic Development." Genre 12 (1979): 153-79.
- . Genre. London: Methuen, 1982.
- Durant, David N. Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977.
- Empson, William. Some Versions of Pastoral. 1935. New York: New Directions, 1968.
- Estienne, Charles (Carolus Stephanus). Dictionarium Historicum, Geographicum, Poeticum. 1596. New York: Garland, 1976.
- Ferguson, Margaret. "A Room Not Their Own: Renaissance Women as Readers and Writers." The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice. Ed. Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988. 93-116.
- Finke, Laurie A. Feminist Theory, Women's Writing. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992.
- Foster, Donald W. "Resurrecting the Author: Elizabeth Tanfield Cary." Privileging Gender in Early Modern England. Ed. Jean R. Brink. Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 23 (1993): 141-73.
- Fowler, Alastair. Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Fraser, Antonia. the Weaker Vessel: Woman's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England. London: Mandarin, 1984.
- Friedman, Alice T. House and Household in Elizabethan England: Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.

- Furnivall, Frederick J. The Babees Book. London: EETS, 1868.
- Girouard, Mark. Hardwick Hall. London: National Trust, 1989.
- . Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History. New Haven: Yale UP, 1978.
- . Robert Smythson & The Elizabethan Country House. New Haven: Yale UP, 1983.
- . Town and Country. New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Greenfield, Stanley B. A Readable Beowulf: The Old English Epic Newly Translated. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1982.
- Greg, W. W. Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama: A Literary Inquiry with Special Reference to the Pre-Restoration Stage in England. New York: Russell and Russell, 1959.
- Guillén, Claudio. Literature as System: Essays Toward the Theory of Literary History. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1971.
- Hanford, James H. "The Pastoral Elegy and Milton's Lycidas." Milton's "Lycidas". Ed. C. A. Patrides. 31-59.
- Hannay, Margaret Patterson. Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 1985.
- Harrison, William. The Description of England. 1577. Ed. Georges Edelen. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1968.
- Hatchett, Marion J. Commentary on the American Prayer Book. New York: Seabury P, 1981.
- Heal, Felicity. Hospitality in Early Modern England. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1990.

- Heninger, S. K., Jr. "The Renaissance Perversion of Pastoral." Journal of the History of Ideas 22 (1961): 254-61.
- Hibbard, G. R. "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century." Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute 19 (1956): 159-74.
- Hoskins, W. G. "The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640." Past and Present 4 (November 1953): 44-59.
- Hudson, Thomas. The History of Judith, in Forme of a Poeme. Penned in French by That Noble Poet, G. Salust Lord of Bartas. 1641. STC 21650.
- Hull, Suzanne W. Chaste, Silent, & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1982.
- Jenkins, Hugh David. "A Fragile Ideal: Representations of the English Country Estate from Jonson to Defoe." Diss. Cornell U, 1992
- Johnson, Samuel. Lives of the English Poets. 1783. Ed. George Birbeck Hill. New York: Octagon Books, 1967.
- Jones, Jackie. "The Country House Poem." Unpublished essay, 1992.
- Jonson, Ben. Ben Jonson. Ed. C. H. Hereford Percy and Evelyn Simpson. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1954.
- Lamb, Mary Ellen. "Patronage and Class in Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum." Unpublished essay, 1993.
- Lanyer, Aemilia. The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum." Ed. Susanne Woods. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.
- Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. "Of God and Good Women: The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer." Silent But for the Word. Ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay. 203-24.
- . "The Lady of the Country House Poem." The Fashioning and Functioning of the British Country House. Ed. Gervase Jackson-Stops et al. Hanover: National Gallery of Art, 1989. 261-75.

- . "Rewriting Patriarchy and Patronage: Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford, and Aemilia Lanyer." The Yearbook of English Studies 21 (1991): 87-106.
- . Writing Women in Jacobean England. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Mallette, Richard. Spenser, Milton, and Renaissance Pastoral. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1981.
- Marotti, Arthur F. "John Donne and the Rewards of Patronage." Patronage in the Renaissance. Ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981. 207-34.
- Marvell, Andrew. The Complete Works of Andrew Marvell. 1872. New York: AMS P, 1966.
- Mayerson, Caroline W. "The Orpheus Image in Lycidas." Milton's "Lycidas". Ed. C. A. Patrides. 116-28.
- McClung, William A. The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry. Berkeley: U of California P, 1977.
- McGrath, Lynette. "Metaphoric Subversions: Feasts and Mirrors in Amelia Lanier's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum." LIT 3 (1991): 101-13.
- Mercer, E. "The Houses of the Gentry." Past and Present 5 (May 1954) 11-32.
- Mertes, Kate. The English Noble Household 1250-1600: Good Governance and Politic Rule. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Milton, John. Complete Poems and Major Prose. Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. New York: MacMillan, 1957.
- Norlin, George. "The Conventions of Pastoral Elegy." American Journal of Philology 32 (1911): 294-312.
- Ovid. The "Metamorphoses" of Ovid. Trans. Mary M. Innes. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955.
- Page, William, et al. The Victoria History of the County of Berkshire. London: St. Catherine P, 1923.

Patrides, C. A. Milton's "Lydicas": The Tradition and the Poem. Rev. ed. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1983.

Quilligan, Maureen. "The Constant Subject: Instability and Female Authority in Wroth's Urania Poems." Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry. Ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990. 307-35.

Robinson, John Martin. The English Country Estate. London: The National Trust, 1988.

Rowse, A. L. The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady: "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum" by Emilia Lanier. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1978.

Scavizzi, Giuseppe. "The Myth of Orpheus in Italian Renaissance Art, 1400-1600." Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth. Ed. John Warden. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982. 111-62.

Schenck, Celeste Marguerite. Mourning and Panegyric: The Poetics of Pastoral Ceremony. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1988.

Schoenfeldt, Michael. "The Gender of Religious Devotion: Aemelia Lanyer and John Donne." Sess. on "Platonick" Love, Puritanism, Libertinism. MLA Convention. New York, 29 Dec. 1992.

---. "'The Mysteries of Manners, Armes, and Arts': 'Inviting a Friend to Supper' and 'To Penshurst.'" "The Muses Common-Weale": Poetry and Politics in the Seventeenth Century. Ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1988. 62-79.

Seaver, Paul S., ed. Society in an Age of Revolution. New York: New Viewpoints, 1976.

Showalter, Elaine. "The Female Tradition." Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1991. 269-88.

Sidney, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. The Triumph of Death and Other Unpublished and Uncollected Poems by Mary

- Sidney, Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621). Ed. G. F. Waller. Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literature, 1977.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition. Ed. E. Greenlaw, et al. Baltimore, 1932-49.
- Stone, Lawrence. The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1965.
- . The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- . "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700." Society in an Age of Revolution. Ed. Paul S. Seaver. 23-70.
- Sullivan, J. P., and Peter Whigham, eds. Epigrams of Martial Englished by Diverse Hands. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987.
- Summerson, John. Architecture in Britain 1530-1830. 7th ed. London: Penguin, 1983.
- Travitsky, Betty. The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance. Westport, CN: Greenwood P, 1981.
- Vickers, Nancy. "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme." Critical Inquiry 7 (1981): 265-79.
- Virgil. Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI. Rev. ed. Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1956.
- Wall, Wendy. "Our Bodies/Our Texts?: Renaissance Women and the Trials of Authorship." Anxious Power: Reading, Writing and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women. Ed. Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney. Albany: State U of New York P, 1993. 51-71.
- Waller, Marguerite. "Academic Tootsie: The Denial of Difference and the Difference It Makes." Diacritics 17 (1987): 2-20.
- Wayne, Don E. Penshurst: The Semiotics of Place and the Poetics of History. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984.

Weigle, Luther A., ed. The Genesis Octapla: Eight English Versions of Genesis in the Tyndale-King James Lineage. New York: Thomas Nelson, n.d.

---. The New Testament Octapla: Eight English Versions of the New Testament in the Tyndale-King James Tradition. New York: Thomas Nelson, n.d.

Wittreich, Joseph. "From Pastoral to Prophecy: The Genres of Lycidas." Milton Studies 13 (1979): 59-80.

Woods, Susanne. "Introduction." The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum. New York: Oxford UP, 1993. xv-xlii.