

‘A Discourse on Friendship’ by Mary Beale and ‘The Woman’s Right’ by Mary More: The Political Culture of Early Modern Women’s Writing on Friendship and Equality in Marriage.

PhD

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Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of two Restoration manuscript, non-fiction prose texts: 'A Discourse on Friendship' (1666) by Mary Beale (1633-1699) and 'The Women's Right' (c. 1670) by Mary More (1633-1716). Both texts are treatises that discuss marriage, and which advocate for types of equality between women and men. They do this through application of the argument about the offices of friendship and through the use of biblical exegesis that interrogates falsely claimed scriptural authority.

This thesis draws together strands of early modern scholarship regarding the political role of the family, the use of religious discourses in political statements, the role of ideas of friendship in early modern understandings of familial, social and civic relationships, and the ubiquity of manuscript circulation as a means of publication and intellectual discourse. In doing so, this thesis argues that early modern women were active participants in political discourses and were fully cognisant of the political implications of their work.

Mary Beale and Mary More were two "middling-sort" women, and this thesis adds to the evidence that intellectual exchange and cultural production was not restricted to elite women. By connecting 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' with other non-fiction prose texts which argue for women's equality with men, this thesis advocates for a discontinuous feminist heritage. While use of the word 'feminist' is not unproblematic, this thesis argues that feminism is a continually evolving movement and thus it is appropriate to describe these texts as feminist, to encapsulate their political functions.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis explores two Restoration, female-authored, manuscript texts: ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ (1666) by Mary Beale (1633-1699) and ‘The Women’s Right’ (c. 1670) by Mary More (1633-1716).¹ Both texts address women’s rights and spiritual parity with men. More does this primarily through an examination of marriage and Beale through a discussion of the offices of friendship.

Both women are of the “middling-sort”, a ‘literate [...] but neglected social group’, and as female authors with little extant work, which only exists in manuscript, Beale and More have received limited critical attention.² Beale is well-known in the art world as the first English professional female portrait artist, but her literary work has received far less attention, while More remains relatively obscure.³ Both texts are prose manuscripts of roughly similar length: ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ is just over five thousand words and ‘The Woman’s Right’ is a little under six thousand. There is evidence that they were circulated, to a limited extent, during the authors’ lifetimes but the preference given to print has meant that these texts have, until recently, been overlooked as important contributions to the debate about women.⁴

Existing research on these texts provides solid grounding for further exploration of Beale and More, not only in recognising their contributions to the debate about women but also to interrogate

¹ Mary Beale, ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, London, British Library, MS Harley 6828, ff. 510r-523v. The British Library copy is in Beale’s hand; there is also a copy of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ held by the Folger Library, Washington (V.a. 220), in the hand of the miscellany’s owner Charles Crompton. All subsequent references will be from the British Library copy; Mary More, ‘The Woman’s Right’, London, British Library, MS Harley 3918, f. 52r-63r.

² <https://middlingculture.com/about/> [accessed 11 April 2022]. The social status calculator (<https://middlingculture.com/status-calculator/>) places Beale in the sub-category ‘Professional middling’ and More in ‘Upper middling’.

³ In a recent (Oct 21-Jan 22) exhibition of Beale’s work, ‘Observations’, at the Moyes Hall Museum, Bury St. Edmunds, Beale was described as ‘one of the first’ professional female portrait artists, indicating she was not the first internationally, as she had previously been described or had been implied. It is still possible she was the first in England, specifically the first to support her family and be the main source of income. Whether she was the first or not, she is still a highly regarded artist today, whose literary work has been under-represented in studies about her.

⁴ The texts first appeared in print in 1975 (More) and 1999 (Beale).

their texts more thoroughly. However, research on Beale and More has tended to present a summary overview of their work, alongside thorough biographical information, and in-depth interrogation of the texts has been limited. Beale and More have typically been read as additions to the ever-growing list of educated, female authors, to strengthen broader arguments about the participation of women in political debate. There is thus relatively little criticism available specifically about their literary works and this thesis provides more thorough literary and critical analysis.

Understandably, the research on Mary Beale has focused on her portraiture, with 'A Discourse on Friendship' mentioned only in passing, if at all. Beale's full extant literary canon includes the two witnesses of 'A Discourse on Friendship', which contain minor variations between them.⁵ The British Library copy also includes a letter addressed to Elizabeth Tillotson, the recipient of 'A Discourse on Friendship'. Beale also translated psalms 13, 52, 70 and 52 which were published in *A Paraphrase Upon the Psalms of David* (1667) alongside the works of her friend Samuel Woodford (1636-1700).⁶ Mary More had also been primarily considered as a minor artist and it was only with Margaret Ezell's pioneering work on the family power dynamic in *The Patriarch's Wife* (1987), which presents 'The Woman's Right' as a case study, that More was recognised for her literary work.⁷ More's full extant literary canon contains nothing in her own hand, but has been preserved by her interlocutor and antagonist, Robert Whitehall (bp. 1624-1685). Whitehall's miscellany, BL Harley 3918, includes the only copy of 'The Woman's Right' and the poem 'An Answer by Mrs More to the ingenious Mr Robert Whitehall'.

⁵ There are 147 paintings (all portraits) connected to Beale on www.artuk.org, keyword search "Mary Beale" [accessed 4th May 2022]. Of these 147, 112 are 'by' or 'attributed to' Beale, with a further 14 'after' or 'possibly by' Beale and the remaining 21 'in the style of' or connected to the 'circle of' Beale.

⁶ Sam[uel] Woodford, *A Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David* (London: Printed by R. White, 1667).

⁷ Both Beale and More are mentioned in *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1765-71) compiled by Sir Horace Walpole (1717-1797) from the manuscript notes of Mr George Vertue (1684-1756), an indication that both were recognised as artists by their contemporaries. Beale is also mentioned in Sir William Sanderson's (1586?-1676) *Graphice: or the use of the Pen and Pencil; In the most excellent art of painting* (1658); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

Sarah Gwyneth Ross provides an excellent summary account of both 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Women's Right' in *The Birth of Feminism* (2009) and includes both works in her definition of a feminist tradition dating from as early as the fifteenth century.⁸ Calling 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right', or any early modern text, 'feminist' is not without its issues. The anachronistic use of the word 'feminism' is not unproblematic, but I use it consciously, as the one which best describes women's intentions in their arguments for types of equality. I interrogate Ross' definition of early modern feminism and apply broader limits to my own usage, which does not require an objective, fixed standard of political engagement to be met. Feminism is an evolving political movement, which can be judged by criteria appropriate to the era.

Both Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and Mary Astell (1666-1731) have been called the mother of feminism, but the substance of their arguments can be seen in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts, written by women. These texts argued for greater equality between the sexes or defend women's intellectual abilities and spiritual strength. By examining how these treatises fit into an established framework of women writing about being women, we find a feminist heritage traceable before the commonly accepted early feminists such as Wollstonecraft and Astell. While the arguments of Beale, More and other seventeenth-century writers may not look like twentieth- and twenty-first-century feminism, the core points of debate underpinning the arguments are recognisable.

We also see that this heritage has always crossed the boundaries between the domestic and the public as issues of marriage and family are governed by political rules and social mores. Ignoring the interplay between the public/political and private/domestic realms and categorising female-authored texts about marriage as domestic, while categorizing male authored texts on the same topics as political, obscures women's contributions to socio-political discourses.

⁸ Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Women as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Both 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' interrogate a specific aspect of the domestic realm: marriage. My thesis seeks to understand them as political texts, in two senses of 'political'. Firstly, they address issues in the public realm: matters of state, legal questions and discussion on the rule of law. In these instances, the domestic realm may be used as a metaphor for political matters, but the issues at hand are those of broader constitutional or legislative affairs. Secondly, by understanding the domestic as a political realm in its own right, where discussion on domestic life is necessarily a comment on the social mores and lived experiences of an individual within a particular nation state. The domestic realm is not a metaphor in this second definition; rather it directly reflects the tenets by which a society is governed. Thus, commentary on the domestic is a commentary on the practical effects of political ideologies.⁹ Each text examines the domestic situation of women and interrogates the social norms underpinning a woman's status in marriage and under the law. This thesis will demonstrate these texts' engagement with ideal notions of friendship to assert types of domestic and political equality. They also take on larger political arguments by using commonplace metaphors of marriage and friendship in, albeit limited, discussions on state, the rule of law and constitutional monarchy.

As well as interrogating marriage, both texts and their authors engage with early modern notions of friendship. Friendship was highly politicised and founded on classical principles, including Aristotle's study of three types of friendship in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's discussion of *amicitia*. Aristotle saw friendship as a virtue, a necessity to the human condition of living in society. Friendship was far more broadly defined and encapsulated any social relationship, both personal and

⁹ The distinction between public and private is considered one of the 'grand dichotomies of western thought' and is still at the heart of much modern political theory. It has more recently embraced 'feminist moves [...] to reconceive the public and the private, indicat[ing] that it is helpful to retain and rework the concepts, but that they are better understood as different modes of interaction rather than as separate spheres.' See Judith Squires, 'Public and private' in *Political Concepts* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2018) <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526137562.00015> [accessed 1 May 2022]. It is in this vein that this thesis attempts to draw together the fields of public and private, as distinct spheres which interact. Whilst acknowledging there is no single definition of 'public' or 'private', this thesis leans towards classical definitions, pertaining to physical locale and concepts of family vs state, rather than economic ones about the marketplace.

political. While each sub-set of friendship functioned in slightly different ways, they all partook of ‘philia’, which Aristotle defined as a reciprocity of goodwill.¹⁰ Philia allowed the rich to show charity to the poor, allowed the poor to take solace in their friends, aided both old and young in ministering to their needs and tempering judgments. It ‘seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than justice.’¹¹ Friendship was the foundation of all interactions and was integral to good government.

Approximately 300 years later, Cicero also described friendship as ‘nothing else than entire fellow feeling as to all things human and divine with mutual good-will and affection’ which ‘can exist only between good men.’¹² For Cicero it is the embodiment of spiritual equality: ‘for he, indeed, who looks into the face of a friend beholds, as it were, a copy of himself.’¹³ This type of friendship is predicated on the service owed to one another, based in actions rather than abstract relationships or those solely reliant on ‘kindly feeling’. Cicero illustrates the offices of friendship, how friendships are made, its limits, and significantly, the necessity that friends do not observe any disparity in social rank:

as among persons bound by ties of friendship and intimacy those who hold the higher place ought to bring themselves down to the same plane with their inferiors, so ought these last not to feel aggrieved because they are surpassed in ability, or fortune, or rank by their friend.¹⁴

These classical ideas permeated through history, forming the foundations of early modern friendship, which was predicated on notions of exclusivity. True friendship was rare and belonged only to men, but was a necessary part of a functioning society.

Beale engages directly with the rules and offices of male friendship by considering a wife’s role as a counsellor to her husband. I read ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ in dialogue with other texts on

¹⁰ Aristotle, ‘Book VIII’ in *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by W. D. Ross (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech, 2001), pp. 94 – 108 (pp. 95-6) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/reading/detail.action?docID=3314407> [accessed 4 September 2022].

¹¹ Aristotle, ‘Book VIII’, p. 95.

¹² Marcus Tullius Cicero, ‘De Amicitia’ in *De Amicitia, Scipio’s Dream*, trans. by Andrew P. Peabody (Project Gutenberg, 2005) <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7491/pg7491.html> [accessed 4 September 2022]; Cicero, ‘De Amicitia’, section 5.

¹³ Cicero, ‘De Amicitia’, section 7.

¹⁴ Cicero, ‘De Amicitia’, section 20.

the political role of friendship, namely Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) *Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (1625), which Beale alludes to in a marginal note, and Jeremy Taylor's (1613-1667) work *Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship* (1657) which understands friendship in terms of Christian duty. Taylor is, in turn, responding to Katherine Philip's work on female friendship and I address this intertextuality as a way to evidence women's involvement in contemporary political discourse.

Mary More does not use the language of friendship in 'The Woman's Right' but I argue that she demonstrates female engagement with the offices of friendship, through the recognition that social and informal networks were governed by the offices of friendship. Furthermore, these networks functioned as de facto formal arenas of debate and her conversations (which may not always be amiable exchanges) with Oxford don Robert Whitehall (1624-1685) and scientist Robert Hooke (1635-1703) demonstrate women were actively engaged in political discourse and were vocal about their position in society.

Beale and More contributed to contemporary intellectual networks, but they are also part of a continuum of women throughout the early modern period and beyond, writing about being women in early modern society. Within Beale and More's works, key themes recur through these and other early modern women's texts, which debate women's social and spiritual status. The topics of marriage, friendship, women's education and women's participation in religious ceremonies are frequently discussed by women writers and this thesis recognises the political status of these texts. Subsequently, they can be considered feminist by virtue of their positioning of women's social, spiritual or intellectual status as equal to men's. In recognising an evolution of arguments about women, the heritage of feminist thought can be extended further back, although it is a non-linear heritage that does not follow a direct path from the past to the modern day. This thesis seeks to include Beale and More in a discontinuous feminist heritage, which is founded on women's advocacy of 'a greater

equality than is currently allowed.¹⁵ While this definition may be used flexibly, it does not automatically include any text written by a woman and instead aims to highlight the existence of female-authored texts that specifically address women's social status, whilst acknowledging that each author may have been writing in isolation to varying degrees. The texts do not directly borrow from each other but nevertheless exist as part of a feminist discourse. This is not a rejection of any female-authored text being considered as feminist in a broader sense, whilst also recognising that there are female-authored texts which are not feminist in any sense, but maintains that women write politically motivated texts. It is thus not always necessary to tease out meaning or strain texts in order to find examples of women's self-advocacy. Definitions of feminism have evolved over time but through this discontinuous tradition, the tendrils of modern feminist thought can be recognised.

Mary Beale

Mary Beale's 'A Discourse on Friendship' has been appraised by both Tabitha Barber in *Mary Beale: Portrait of a seventeenth-century painter, her family and her studio* (1999) and Penelope Hunting in *My Dearest Heart: The Artist Mary Beale* (2019).¹⁶ Both accounts provide comprehensive summaries of her literary works, but are understandably more concerned with Beale's portraiture, which was her main artistic output and the medium by which is she best known.

Tabitha Barber briefly discusses 'A Discourse on Friendship' in the exhibition catalogue *Portrait of a seventeenth-century painter, her family and her studio* which accompanied the 1999-2000 exhibition of Beale's work at the Geffrye Museum.¹⁷ Barber succinctly summarises 'A Discourse on Friendship'

¹⁵ More, 'The Woman's Right', f. 52r.

¹⁶ Tabitha Barber, *Mary Beale: Portrait of a seventeenth-century painter, her family and her studio* (Peterborough: Geffrye Museum Trust Ltd, 1999). A catalogue to coincide with the exhibition of Beale's work at the Geffrye Museum, London, 21 September 1999 to 30 January 2000; Penelope Hunting, *My Dearest Heart: The Artist Mary Beale* (London: Unicorn Publishing Group, 2019).

¹⁷ The catalogue for a previous exhibition of Beale's at the Geffrye Museum in 1975, and later at the Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne in 1976 states that 'Mary also wrote a fifteen-page MS *Discourse upon [sic] Friendship* (formerly among the Bunbury MSS) but this can no longer be traced.' Elizabeth Walsh and Richard Jeffree, *The Excellent Mrs Mary Beale* (London: Inner London Education Authority, 1975).

as a text about marriage and the ‘possibility of female redemption’, from Eve’s sin, noting that Beale ‘constructs an argument for equality.’¹⁸ Barber states that Beale drew directly from Jeremy Taylor’s work *Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship* (1657), but does not acknowledge the originality of Beale’s work and her assessment overlooks Taylor’s treatise as a response to Katherine Phillip’s (1632-1664) work on female friendship. Beale, Taylor and Philips all draw on commonplace arguments about friendship and the role of friendship in politically and legally defined relationships. While Beale may in essence be responding to Taylor’s views, it seems likely that his work, which was published in print approximately ten years prior to ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, would be just one of many being discussed by Beale’s social circle.

Barber also discusses the language of friendship within ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ to contextualise Beale’s artwork, declaring that Beale’s portraits are ‘not idealised images but are firmly the product of close observation.’¹⁹ Beale was commended for her ability in producing a great likeness of her subjects and Barber sees this as an extension of friendship’s offices, quoting Beale: ‘Flattery and dissimulation is a kind of mock friendship.’²⁰ The rest of the catalogue discusses the many merits and the technical ability of Beale’s portraits.

Helen Draper’s recent unpublished thesis ‘Mary Beale (1633-1699) and her “paynting roome” in Restoration London’ also addresses the role of Beale’s social circle in her success as an artist by ‘trac[ing] the evolution of Mary’s ostensibly amateur painting studio and its role as a physical and emblematic entity, an artistic space at the very centre of friendship and patronage within Beale’s circle.’²¹ Draper argues that through the blurring of public and private spaces, and the overlap

¹⁸ Barber, *Mary Beale*, p. 30.

¹⁹ Barber, *Mary Beale*, p. 35.

²⁰ Barber, *Mary Beale*, p. 35.

²¹ Draper also writes about Beale’s only other known prose work ‘Observations by MB in her painting of Apricots’ – the first known description of the act of painting by a woman in English. See Helen Draper, “Her Painting of Apricots’: The Invisibility of Mary Beale (1633-1699)’, *Modern Language Studies*, 48 (2012), pp. 389-405. See also Helen Draper, ‘Mary Beale and Art’s Lost Laborers: Women Painter Stainers’, *Early Modern Women*, 10.1 (2015), pp. 141-151, a fascinating study of Beale’s background, rise to prominence as an artist and account of other contemporary female artists recorded by the Painter Stainers’ Company, but makes only a passing reference to ‘A Discourse on Friendship’; Helen Draper, ‘Mary Beale (1633-1699) and her “paynting

between friendship, patronage and reputation, Beale was able to manoeuvre successfully from amateur to professional artist without too much difficulty. Friendship protected Beale's reputation and brought commissions through recommendations.

Draper typifies 'A Discourse on Friendship' as an 'expression of doubt and the need to distinguish 'true friendship' from shifting, unstable alliances' in a post-civil war era, and argues that Beale believed

true friendship is a synonym for all social alliances [...] Within marriage, friendship even has the power to restore a wife to the position of 'equal dignity and honour' with her husband which was lost after the Fall. As well as attending to both Christian and classical ideas on friendship.²²

Sociability, friendship and Beale's coterie is an important thread that runs through Draper's thesis, which makes compelling reading and provides useful understanding about Beale's social circumstances. However, 'A Discourse on Friendship' is still understood in the main as an extension of Beale's artistry with a focus on the imagery used, and also as supplementary evidence to biographical information by using 'A Discourse on Friendship' as an autobiographical construction. There still lacks a critical or literary analysis of the text.

The full text of 'A Discourse on Friendship' appears in print for the first time in Penelope Hunting's *My Dearest Heart*, which provides a great level of biographical detail, an excellent account of Beale's art and like Draper reads 'A Discourse on Friendship' as a somewhat autobiographical text, with Beale nurtured and encouraged to write by her circle of friends. *My Dearest Heart* provides a comprehensive and detailed account of Beale's family and builds on the research of Richard Jeffree and Elizabeth Walsh, who inspired the original revival of Beale's work in the 1970s. Information on 'A Discourse on Friendship' itself is limited, although Hunting's summary is by no means inaccurate and deftly contextualises 'A Discourse on Friendship's' discussion on the role of friendship within marriage,

roome" in Restoration London' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 2020); Draper, 'Mary Beale (1633-1699) and her "paynting roome"', p. 21.

²² Draper, 'Mary Beale (1633-1699) and her "paynting roome"', p. 106.

and like Barber, suggests an echo of Taylor's work in Beale's. However, Hunting states that it was 'unprecedented for an Englishwoman to set forth such a treatise' and while the compulsion to hold Beale's work up as unique is understandable, I argue that it is not unprecedented, as the third chapter of this thesis will demonstrate with a lineage of middling-sort, Englishwomen who wrote similar treatises.²³

Barber, Draper and Hunting's work provides a valuable basis for studies on 'A Discourse on Friendship' particularly in regard to biographical information and Beale's artistic life. As with 'The Woman's Right', this thesis provides a literary analysis of 'A Discourse on Friendship' as a political treatise in its own right and not just as a quasi-autobiographical text.

Mary More

Margaret Ezell's *The Patriarch's Wife* (1987) is a foundational text for studies in early modern women's political writing and More's 'The Woman's Right' features as one of the core texts to support Ezell's arguments that early modern domestic patriarchy was not as authoritarian as had been believed by scholars in the 1970s and early 1980s. There has been little additional work on More's text beyond discussion in *The Patriarch's Wife*. A facsimile and transcription of the title page appears in *Reading Early Modern Women* (2004), with a short commentary by Ezell on More's family background, mainly noting that there is little information.²⁴ The commentary also provides two key points of 'The Woman's Right': that it concerns a mistranslation of Scripture concerning the nature of wives' subjection to their husbands and that this situation has been precipitated by a lack of education provided for girls. The extract appears in Chapter 2: The Status of Women, section B 'Education and Philosophy' indicating that More can be considered a political thinker.²⁵ A recent modern edition of

²³ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 86.

²⁴ *Reading Early Modern Women*, eds. Helen Ostovich and Elizabeth Sauer (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). More, 'The Woman's Right' extract on pp. 86-8

²⁵ Other sections in *Reading Early Modern Women* include: 'Mothers' Legacies and Medical Manuals', 'Religion, Prophecy, and Persecution', 'Letters' and 'Life-Writing: Non-fiction and Fiction' among others. With the

‘The Woman’s Right’ has been published in *Educating English Daughters* (2016), with far more detailed biographical information about More and her family.²⁶ ‘The Woman’s Right’ is presented alongside Bathsua Makin’s (c.1600-c.1675) *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts and Tongues, with an Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education* (1673) as examples of marginalised women’s voices on the subject of women’s education. It should be noted however, that More does not directly address women’s education except in one brief sentence towards the end of ‘The Woman’s Right’:

I shall conclude that it is the want of learning, and the same education in women, that men have, which makes them loose their right. Men always held the Parliament and enacted their own wills, without hearing them speak, and then how easy it is to conclude them guilty. Were this error in Parents amended in their not bringing up their Daughters learned, then I doubt not but they would as much excel men in that as they do now in Virtue.²⁷

This association of More’s work with educational arguments is explained by Ezell’s assessment in *The Patriarch’s Wife*, which states that More ‘seems to be defining education as practical knowledge of law and finances relating to a woman’s social circumstances and also as the classical university training available to men.’²⁸ While this evaluation of More’s work reflects scholarship on Rachel Speght’s (c.1597-c.1661) *A Mouzell for Melastomas* (1617) as evidence of women’s education, as much as arguments for women’s education are contained within them, I believe it is reductive to categorise ‘The Woman’s Right’ as a text solely “about” education. Indeed, the main body of *The Patriarch’s Wife* is concerned with the writings of seventeenth-century women which ‘consider the role of the patriarch’s wife and, indirectly, suggesting feminist alternatives.’²⁹

inclusion of More’s letter to her daughter Elizabeth Waller, ‘The Woman’s Right’ could conceivably have featured in one of these other sections if More were not thought to be writing politically. ‘Education and Philosophy’ is undoubtedly the most appropriate.

²⁶ Bathsua Makin and Mary More, *Educating English Daughters: Late Seventeenth-Century Debates*, eds. Frances Teague and Margaret J. M. Ezell (Toronto, Ontario: Iter Academic Press, 2016).

²⁷ More, ‘The Woman’s Right’, ff. 62v-63r.

²⁸ Ezell, *The Patriarch’s Wife*, p. 154.

²⁹ See Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women’s Writing* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001) and Christina Luckyj, ‘A Mouzell for Melastomas in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 40 (2010), pp. 113-131; Ezell, *The Patriarch’s Wife*, p. 101.

In the presentation of 'The Woman's Right' as a case study, alongside Sir Robert Filmer's (c.1588-1653) *Patriarchia* (c.1630) and More's respondent Richard Whitehall's 'The Woman's Right Proved False' (c.1675?), Ezell brings together these three diverse voices in order to highlight the 'plurality of perspectives they provide' regarding the different ways early modern authors wrote about women, while nevertheless sharing 'underlying assumptions about both the nature of society and women.' This assumption, Ezell states, is the belief that the 'natural condition of adult life' is to be married. Once a woman was married she was subsumed into her husband's legal identity, so to discuss marriage is to discuss women's social status and thus 'these essayists are concerned with the question of a wife's duties and rights.'³⁰ The circumstances of More's life as a rich widow from a merchant family, and an executrix on a number of wills, is demonstrative of a woman cognisant of the legal ramifications of women's social status (particularly the principle of *femme couvert* in Common Law). More recognised the importance of women understanding their own rights but was also aware of the limited pathways open to them for financial manoeuvrability and independence. This thesis builds on the foundational work of Ezell by delving further into the mechanics of More's argument and presenting additional readings of More's work, bringing More into a wider context beyond women's education but still connecting it to a scholarly sphere. Ezell's work on manuscript circulation within *The Patriarch's Wife* and beyond is also fundamental to our understanding of how women's writing would have been received and understood, not as isolated interventions, but as part of social interactions and conversations.³¹ Ezell does not use 'The Woman's Right' as one of her examples in the relevant chapter on manuscript circulation and this thesis reconnects Ezell's work in a new way, by bringing in the formal aspects of friendship used in intellectual discourse, alongside the knowledge

³⁰ Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 128.

³¹ See also: Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'Editing Early Modern Women's Manuscripts: Theory, Electronic Editions, and the Accidental Copy-Texts', *Literature Compass* (2010), www.literature-compass.com), among others; Ezell, 'Patterns of Manuscript Circulation and Publication', *The Patriarch's Wife*, pp. 62-100.

of More's interaction with Whitehall and Hooke, and includes 'The Woman's Right' as part of a more formalised intellectual network.

Key aims

There are two key aims in this thesis. The first is to provide a greater understanding of Beale and More; the second is to demonstrate a feminist heritage extending back through the seventeenth century. The first aim will be achieved through close readings of 'A Discourse of Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' and a reconstruction of their authors' social, political and cultural networks through biographical research. The second aim will be achieved through the demonstration of a discontinuous tradition of women writing about women's status and the recognition of the political function of apparently domestic texts. I demonstrate that we can read female-authored texts which address women's status in early modern society as recognisably feminist in practice, even if they do not meet twenty-first-century feminist standards.

Scope and structure

There are five key ideas that will be followed through the thesis: marriage, friendship, networks, politics and religion. In particular the thesis will explore the intersection between marriage, friendship and informal intellectual networks or the 'Circulation of Ideas', as well as the relationship between politics and religion. I will survey the field in Chapter 2 – Studies of Early Modern Women's Writing by tracing a path through studies on the five key ideas outlined above, to demonstrate their interconnection. In doing so, this thesis contends that these are feminist texts, due to their engagement with contemporary political discourses.

I am chiefly concerned with the core texts 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Women's Right' and the women who wrote them. It is important to note that I do not claim their work to be

unprecedented: quite the opposite, they operate within well-established discourses. They undoubtedly had distinct styles, 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Women's Right' are very different in tone and focus from each other, and each one makes unique arguments, but this is not to the exclusion of any other woman writing something similar. Nor can Beale and More be regarded in any way as 'fringe' writers. Their words are radical at the heart, but the themes are sensitively expressed, to different degrees so as not to invite open hostility, and they maintain their middling-sort positions and respectability.

Therefore, before getting into the literary analysis, I consider Beale and More alongside contemporary writers in Chapter 3 – Women About Women, and draw comparisons with other middling sort women who also wrote non-fictional prose. I seek to establish a non-linear tradition of women who write about women's position in the society in which they live. Through a closer look at four exemplars, I will demonstrate the recurrence of themes: marriage, education and religious expression, with which women used to debate their status and situate Beale and More within this. Chapter 4 – Biographies, provides detailed information on the lives of Beale and More and situates them within contemporary formal and social intellectual networks. It will demonstrate the arguments I make regarding women's engagement with political discourse, including evidence that both 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' were circulated beyond their addressees and read by people outside Beale and More's immediate circles. Establishing the importance of these networks is vital to understanding that women were active members of society, and that they contributed to the debates which concerned them as women and their position in social hierarchies, even though they were excluded from formal institutions.

My argument about the intellectual networks to which More and Beale contributed is supported by my archival findings on both texts. Firstly, I present evidence regarding the provenance of the copybook owned by Charles Crompton (c.1646-?), which contains one of the extant copies of 'A Discourse on Friendship', held by the Folger Library. I present new research on the probable

connection between Beale and Crompton, through Beale's brother, John (1643-1712) and a brief explanation of V.a.200's journey from Crompton to the Folger. I also present a new reading of an exchange of verses between More and Whitehall. There are three verses in question: an attack by Whitehall, a reply by More, and a defence of More by an anonymous author. The verses tell us that Whitehall and More engaged on a personal and academic level, and that significantly, these 'spheres' overlap in much the same way that private and public ones do.³² I also present an entirely new finding which demonstrates that Robert Hooke read 'The Woman's Right'. Margaret Ezell previously reported a connection between More and Hooke, whose protégée was More's son, Richard Waller, noting that Hooke's 'diary records discussing dreams with Mrs More' but I have found a reference in Hooke's diary to the key argument of 'The Woman's Right', indicating his reading of it.³³

Chapter 5 – The Politics of Marriage, part 1 offers a close reading of Mary Beale's 'A Discourse on Friendship', to explore Beale's use of early modern offices of friendship as a way to overcome the imbalance of power between husband and wife. Beale appropriates the ideals of male friendship, used by Francis Bacon to argue for a kind of parity between counsellors and the king that allows honest advice without disrupting the hierarchy. Beale extends this idea to the role of counsellor that a wife plays, suggesting that a type of equality exists between husband and wife without disrupting the more general hierarchy of men and women.

Chapter 6 – The Politics of Marriage, part 2 continues the discussion of the politics of marriage, with a reading of Mary More's 'The Women's Right' and the practical implications of coverture on the day to day lives of women. More argues that through a mistranslation of Scripture, women are falsely subject to greater oppression than is intended by God's word, and she examines closely the differences between the verbs 'submit' and 'obey', and the implicit assumptions those words have about who

³² The three verses in question were published separately in 1674.

³³ Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'Mary More (1633-1716), writer and artist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-68257> [Accessed 2 May 2022].

holds the power in a relationship. I provide commentary on More's experience of the law courts, along with a previously untranscribed copy of More's answer in the case brought against her regarding the settlement of debts on her first husband's estate. Finally, I consider Whitehall's response 'The Women's Right Proved False' not as a dismissal of More's arguments, although it is, but as evidence of More's acceptance into an intellectual arena of debate.

The arguments that Beale and More make existed as part of mainstream culture in their time; their works are developed from the religious and political debates of the day, and they use commonplace religious tropes to advocate for a greater equality in marriage. To discuss religion in early modern society is to discuss politics. In some sense they are reversing the typical direction of the family/state metaphor by highlighting the practical effect abstract religious and political concepts had on women and their lives. As non-fiction prose texts, they cannot be mistaken for devotional works, but each makes reference to Scripture. Beale begins 'A Discourse on Friendship' with a very brief synopsis of pre-lapsarian equality between Adam and Eve, while More undertakes a significant biblical exegesis in 'The Woman's Right' which forms a substantive part of her argument. Christian doctrine was the foundation of English early modern society; it was the authority from which all earthly claims to power were made, and was so ingrained in early modern society that it is impossible to separate it from political debates of the day. Scripture touched all aspects of life, in the home and in government. Beale's passing reference to Adam and Eve demonstrates that to omit them from a treatise on marriage was unthinkable.

The use of Scripture was integral to political and social discourses and women used commonplace religious tropes in their work in much the same way as men did. Women's examinations of the marriage contract cross the boundaries between the public and private spheres, using or interrogating claims to religiously sanctioned modes of authority in the domestic sphere, by applying the same defences of or attacks on authoritarian rule, to the household. While the boundaries between the two are blurred at times, this does not mean the boundary has collapsed entirely. Texts

about marriage can be read both as a metaphor for the early modern state and also as a reflection on the lived experience, which is itself governed by the public realm. The interplay between public and private is also important for understanding the way in which women engaged in the debate. They did not have access to formal institutions but were active participants in discussions through social networks, which functioned both as friendship circles and as arenas of debate, which were governed by the formal rules of friendship.

Chapter 7 forms my conclusion, and it draws together all the threads of marriage and political writing. The way in which women engaged in debates through manuscript circulation and the function of discussions with friends is demonstrative of women's political discourse. And finally, that these discussions about women's status ultimately constitute a feminist heritage that should be recognised.

Chapter 2 – Studies of Early Modern Women’s Writing: The Politics of the Family

As addressed in Chapter 1, the current scholarship on Mary Beale and Mary More recognises both authors as one of several women writers who engaged in the debate about women’s status. Margaret Ezell’s work on More in *The Patriarch’s Wife* presents ‘The Woman’s Right’ as a political text, but while the arguments in *The Patriarch’s Wife* based on More’s work have been wide-reaching, ‘The Woman’s Right’ itself remains somewhat isolated from texts produced by other middling-sort women who also wrote in prose. The presentation of ‘The Woman’s Right’ in conjunction with Bathsua Makin’s *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen* in the recent publication *Educating English Daughters* (2016) focuses on ‘The Woman’s Right’ as primarily an educational text, which may unintentionally lead those less familiar with More’s work to overestimate the extent to which More directly addresses this subject. Meanwhile, the literary criticism of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ presents mainly autobiographical readings, with limited critical analysis of the text.

Sarah Gwyneth Ross’ *The Birth of Feminism* includes both ‘The Woman’s Right’ and ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ in her work on the ‘Discourses of Equality and Rights’ within marriage, emphasising the role that texts in the later part of the seventeenth century had in shaping the subsequent discourse of rights in the eighteenth century.³⁴ Ross divides *The Birth of Feminism* into two sections: ‘The Household Academy, 1400-1580’ and ‘The Household Salon, 1580-1680’. The former is predicated on a ‘father-patron’ model, in which girls were reliant on their father’s or a male patron’s munificence in granting them an education in the sixteenth century. The latter section examines collaborations between husbands and wives through the ‘Italian and English women humanists’ of the seventeenth century, when the ‘the father or father-patron became less crucial as a means to secure legitimacy,’ which shifted focus from learning at a young age and instead accepted

³⁴ Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Women as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 276.

educated women who were 'embraced by contemporary culture as learned wives, mothers, and equal partners in their household salons.'³⁵

The discussion of 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' is included in the 'Household Salon' section, which encapsulates what these texts are 'about': women's discussion on rights within the confines of marriage. Developing this understanding of Beale and More's work by drawing together elements of how we read and understand religio-political arguments, alongside the use of marriage and friendship as metaphors in political writing, allows us to recognise that these texts are not solely concerned with the relationship between husband and wife within the domestic sphere. Understanding the role of manuscript publication as a political medium further blurs boundaries between public and domestic, or 'private', spheres. Manuscript circulation and its use in debating ideas created formal and informal intellectual networks, in which both women and men participated. I hope to demonstrate that Beale and More were just two of the many women engaged in broader political discussions who used these material networks as arenas of intellectual exchange. Moreover, these political discussions were significant as more than just the precursor to eighteenth-century rights discourse; they were part of a longer, historic albeit discontinuous feminist tradition, which stands as a political discourse in its own right. It has been long recognised that the boundaries between public and private are not straightforwardly delineated, allowing us to read women writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as participating in politically motivated discourse. This thesis extends this work by examining how writers like Beale and More discuss the domestic realm as a political sphere, or how abstract ideologies about governance affected the day-to-day lives of women.

Close readings of 'The Woman's Right' and 'A Discourse on Friendship' elucidate how women's writing was engaging with commonplace political discourse, recognising that texts about marriage and friendship were not apolitical. However, I have never lost sight of the fact that these are texts about women, by women, which led me to read these texts as women's political commentary, that engage

³⁵ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 2.

in the discourse using marriage and friendship metaphorically, as well as interrogating the real-life consequences of these metaphors in their practical application.

As Chapter 3 will attest, Beale's and More's writings were not isolated incidents of women's political intervention. Beale and More were far from being the only women writing texts about women's social status; they were also actively engaging with others with their writing. Both 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' are addressed to other women. The letter from Mary Beale to Elizabeth Tillotson, which accompanies the British Library copy of 'A Discourse on Friendship', makes it clear that this is something they have discussed before, and regularly. More's letter to her daughter, Elizabeth Waller, to whom 'The Woman's Right' is addressed is a one-way communication, but Margaret Ezell's work on Mary More shows a woman surrounded by merchants and intellectuals. There is material evidence that both 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' were read by at least one other person than the addressee, and this in turn substantiates the claim that women's texts were circulated as part of the general political discourse. Although women did not enjoy unfettered access to these discourses, recent studies show that it was relatively commonplace for women to participate.

This thesis relies on understanding the interplay between strands of early modern scholarship: the way in which manuscript texts circulated ideas; the political role religion played in early modern society; women's participation in analysing marriage and marriage metaphors; and, how ideals of friendship functioned politically. It becomes clear that 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' are undeniably texts arguing for 'a greater equality than is currently allowed' within an existing framework of an exchange of ideas. These are not isolated moments of resistance, but an ongoing, albeit discontinuous, tradition of women advocating for themselves.³⁶

This literature review draws on the connected threads from scholarship on women's writing more broadly, considering how religion as political writing, the role of marriage in early modern

³⁶ Mary More, 'The Woman's Right', f. 46r.

society, the role of friendship in early modern society, manuscript publication and the circulation of ideas, facilitate an identification of these writings as feminist texts.

Categorising women's writing

Paul Salzman wrote in 2006 'early modern women's writing [...] has grown from a small group of obscure writings [...] to an ever-expanding body of work', and notes that although the field of scholarship regarding women's writing was 'prolific', there was nevertheless 'considerable fragmentation in the presentation and representation of early modern women's writing' due to the wide range of forms in which women wrote.³⁷ The early 2000s signalled a shift in scholarship of early modern women's writing, whereby such literature was not considered rare nor confined to a few genres, nor limited to topics of virtue or religious expression. The volume of female-authored works studied over the following twenty years means that it is now possible to draw meaningful conclusions across works which share forms and genres, and not limit them to readings which are solely concerned with their status as works-by-women. Nonetheless, the unique perspectives that each author brings, as a woman are still an important part of expanding our understanding of early modern society.

There is an inherent tension in identifying texts as 'women's writing', which the scholarship has explored. Danielle Clarke, Margaret Ezell and Paul Salzman, among many others, have recognised this contradiction: in order to find space within early modern scholarship, texts written by women were necessarily grouped together as 'women's writing', but this in turn isolated women's writing and unavoidably perpetuated a default male-author as a neutral observer, against which women were writing. Across the chapters in *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing* there is a sense of frustration felt by academics engaging with women's literary history.³⁸ Patricia Phillippy writes in her

³⁷ Paul Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 11; Salzman, p. 2.

³⁸ *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

introduction that the essays within the volume are responding to ‘two challenges posed by early modern women’s writing to the genre of literary history as it has traditionally been conceived.’³⁹ The first challenge was to overcome rigidly defined notions of literary value, to accommodate the variety and range of women’s writing. This gave rise to the second challenge: a lack of agreement among scholars about a specifically female tradition or canon. A tension arose between the need to provide a succinct framework and cohesive definitions of women’s writing, to enable its inclusion in mainstream literature, and the desire to avoid reinforcing preconceived definitions, which may ultimately be detrimental to the recognition of women’s writing as being worthy of literary merit.

Studies on the range of forms and genres women used has had a paradoxically marginalising effect on women’s writing scholarship. By looking outside traditional literary forms and rightly presenting them as equally valid expressions of religious and political ideologies alongside male-authored works, there has been less recognition of female-authored works which are explicitly political prose, a partial lacuna that this thesis hopes to help fill. While carving out women’s writing as a distinct area of study was historically necessary, Ezell considers it may now be damaging, and this thesis aims to contribute to the ‘sparkling multiplicity’ that women’s writing fosters by ‘disrupting traditional models’ which neither ‘bulk up traditional lists’ nor ‘gracefully yield to traditional models.’⁴⁰

Subsequently, my thesis narrows the scope to women who use commonplace, domestic-based metaphors to make political arguments about their status, but who also interrogate the impact of metaphorical ideals upon the day-to-day lives of women. Furthermore, I am concerned with prose writers who undertake essay-style discussions, perhaps best categorised as prose discourses, which share commonalities with tracts, sermons and even defence narratives, but do not fall neatly into any one of these. They do commonly resemble philosophical works such as Francis Bacon’s (1561–1626) *Essays* (1612) or political treatises such as William Gouge’s (1578–1653) *Of domesticall duties* (1622).

³⁹ Phillippy, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Margaret Ezell, ‘Invisibility Optics’ in *A History of Early Modern Women’s Writing*, ed. Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp. 27–45, p. 45.

‘A Discourse on Friendship’ and ‘The Woman’s Right’ are two such texts, which I situate alongside texts by Rachel Speght, Bathsua Makin, Margaret Fell and Mary Astell. This sub-section of women writers has been curated with the recognition that ‘women’ is not a homogenous category that can be read in a universal way, but these authors are fellow middling-sort, Englishwomen who write in non-fiction prose, particularly prose discourses. Any comparisons drawn between these authors is therefore not an assertion of universality applicable to all women.⁴¹

While the texts themselves are read as engaging with commonplace discourses, it is nevertheless crucial to this thesis to recognise these texts as female-authored, because the authors view themselves as women and are writing about their lived experience as women.⁴² As Danielle Clarke writes, while women in the early modern period were not a homogenous category, they largely shared a ‘sense of their social positioning in relation to men, and the common aspects of their work are a consequence of shared material conditions and assumptions about their social roles *relative to men*.⁴³ Similarly, Mary Ellen Lamb warns that although categorizing works as women’s writing may ‘ghettoize’ it, to ‘discount the formative role of gender is to ignore the condition under which women wrote and lived.’⁴⁴ Chapter 3 of this thesis situates ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ and ‘The Woman’s Right’ alongside other female, prose authors, while Chapters 4, 5 and 6 consist of biographies and close readings of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ and ‘The Woman’s Right’. This thesis will thus demonstrate that not only are Beale and More are writing about being women, they are engaging in the most socially appropriate ‘forms of circulation and exchange, and modes of articulation.’⁴⁵ Indeed,

⁴¹ Although there is disparity in social status between these women, they do all fall into one of the ‘middling sort’ categories, as defined by Middling Culture <https://middlingculture.com/about/> [accessed 11 April 2022].

⁴² This thesis follows a broadly New historicist approach and ‘seeks to interpret literary works amid the complexities of their own historical moment[s].’ Duncan Salkeld, ‘New Historicism’ in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 9: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. by Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 59–70 (p. 59). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521300148.006> [accessed 5 September 2022].

⁴³ Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women’s Writing* (Essex: Pearson, 2001), p. 3. Original emphasis.

⁴⁴ Mary Ellen Lamb, ‘Out of the Archives: Mary Wroth’s *Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*’, in *Editing Early Modern Women*, ed. by Sarah C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 197–214, p. 204.

⁴⁵ Clarke, p. 1.

it is the use of commonplace arguments which mark Beale and More's work as worthy of note. They each undertake an interpretation of a commonly held belief or tenet to express their positions on equality with men, and in turn, their positions are radical but not extreme or unusual.

Political Writing

Ezell writes that women's writing is still fighting against exclusion and lack of visibility and a cycle of 'loss-recovery-loss' is emblematic of women's exclusion from the literary world. Not only is each (re-)discovery treated as something anomalous but the subsequent 'loss' of women's voices changes our perceptions of what life was like and reinforces biased assumptions about female authors who 'shunned public display and were veiled by layers of modesty tropes when they appeared at all.'⁴⁶ Assumptions about women's 'protestations of inferiority as sincere autobiographical utterances' have meant that female-authored texts have been used not only as evidence of women's historical oppression, but also as their acceptance of it, instead of their being active and vocal opponents to inequalities.⁴⁷ It is notable that while both Beale and More make some protestations about the quality of their work, there is no sense that they are reluctant for their work to be read and they do not engage with traditional modesty tropes. In some regards this thesis pushes back against the necessity of expanding genres to include female-authored works that 'fall outside literary tradition, no matter how widely read they were' and instead recognises 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' as politically motivated texts.

Susan Wiseman's work in *Conspiracy and Virtue* highlights the language that surrounds women's apparent exclusion from the political spheres. She argues that far from women accepting a position of silence, their exclusion 'shaped the ways in which that connection [to the political sphere]

⁴⁶ Ezell, 'Invisibility Optics', p. 29. See also Janet Todd, *The Critical Fortunes of Aphra Behn* (Martlesham: Camden House, 1998); Ezell, 'Invisibility Optics', p. 33.

⁴⁷ Ezell, 'Invisibility Optics', p. 33.

was registered in writing.⁴⁸ Ideological inconsistencies arose when women were subsumed into their husband's legal identities but were independent participants in political activities. The need to describe the precise nature of a woman's legal transgressions adequately and accurately 'consistently influenced discourse on and of politics.'⁴⁹ Furthermore, Wiseman argues, the notion of exclusion generates a 'rich source' of literary and figurative language, used by both men and women in political expressions.⁵⁰ Women not only engaged with the political language of the era, they were instrumental in shaping its evolution into a 'highly developed linguistic and often figurative response.'⁵¹ By untangling the language which excluded them from political life, Wiseman highlights the political analysis that women undertook as a way to understand their own status. Writers such as Brilliana Harley and Anne Clifford may have been read with a focus on their own personal campaigns, but their interventions engage in complex contract theory discussions.

In *Women's Political Writing's, 1610–1725*, Hilda L. Smith, Mihoko Suzuki and Susan Wiseman curate a range of political texts, which demonstrates the plethora of activity by women in the political arena.⁵² Having been largely overlooked as political texts, either because they were not designated as such or because 'political matters [were] consistently considered as secondary to other concerns,' the works all nevertheless 'address specific political concepts.'⁵³ As Suzuki writes, the collection 'trouble[s] the public/private divide' and thoroughly quells the belief that "“women couldn't” or “women didn't” involve themselves in politics or engage in political writing,' through the sheer volume of texts presented as evidence.⁵⁴ The increased activity of women's petitions during the English Revolution marked an inevitable change in the visibility of women's political action. Although their demands were

⁴⁸ Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue: Women, Writing and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 2.

⁴⁹ Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, p.9.

⁵⁰ Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, p.9.

⁵¹ Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, p.34.

⁵² *Women's Political Writings, 1610-1725*, ed. by Hilda L. Smith, Mihoko Suzuki and Susan Wiseman, 4 vols, (Cambridge: Pickering & Chatto, 2007).

⁵³ Smith et al., *Women's Political Writings*, I, p. xx; Smith et al., *Women's Political Writings*, I, p. xviii.

⁵⁴ Mihoko Suzuki, 'What's Political in Seventeenth-Century Women's Political Writing?', *Literature Compass* 6:4 (2009), 927-941 (p. 928).

routinely ignored by Parliament, the petition texts were circulated to a larger audience, including the ‘general reading public’, which in turn broadened the acceptance of ‘women’s right to participate in the political public sphere.’⁵⁵ This increased activity paved the way for women’s continued political engagement in the latter part of the seventeenth-century, which should be regarded as ‘a continuation of the Civil War years, rather than as a period following the widely accepted historiographical dividing line of 1660.’⁵⁶

Although Beale and More used different forms, by looking at the work of political extremists, such as Quaker women’s prophecy, the same arguments and debates are clearly present in the works of these two moderate, middling-sort, Protestant women. Hilary Hinds’ work in *God’s Englishwomen* regarding the radical sectarian women of the seventeenth century notes that these women have conventionally been considered for their historical significance, rather than on any literary merit. Hinds argues that even though the texts produced by these women merit critical attention and explore ‘enduring issues...[of] universal significance’, as Ezell notes they are overlooked as ‘being too topical, too ephemeral, and too female’ and disrupt the ‘boundaries which have been erected around the canonical literary genres.’⁵⁷ The interplay between religion and politics has frequently been downplayed in female-authored works, and have been viewed as women tentatively engaging with politics through an acceptable route of religious writing, while similar works by men are considered as ‘theology’, ‘political thought’ or ‘philosophy’. This thesis recognises ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ and ‘The Woman’s Right’ as intentional political treatises, and not as texts from which modern scholars have to tease out unconscious political readings.

While poetry and drama written by women has long been acknowledged as a way for women to express their political ideologies, religious texts by women were read as confirmation of women’s

⁵⁵ Smith et al., *Women’s Political Writings*, II, p. 1-2.

⁵⁶ Smith et al., *Women’s Political Writings*, III, p. ix.

⁵⁷ Hilary Hinds, *God’s Englishwomen: Seventeenth-century radical sectarian writing and feminist criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 4-5; Ezell, ‘Invisibility Optics’, p. 34.

desire to merely demonstrate Christian ideals and virtues. However, the religious debates of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were political debates, and thus it is a double standard to assess women's religious writing as quiet reflections or mediums through which they can tentatively express an opinion and men's religious texts as full-throated political diatribes. Margaret Hannay's work set in motion the exploration of religious writing and translation not only as evidence of aristocratic women's previously overlooked education, but also explored the possibility that for some women, these were transgressive acts, using religious writings and translation to address personal and political topics.⁵⁸ While works such as *Women in Early Modern England, Sex and Subjection*, and in particular *Half Humankind* demonstrate women's political engagement through defences in 'the woman question' or *querelle des femmes*, there is still a reticence by early modern scholars outside the field of women's writing to recognise female-authored texts as political.⁵⁹ While I do not claim that women had exactly the same access and opportunities to contribute to the debate, texts about women nevertheless used a number of common tropes and women were participants in these conventions both using them, being constrained by them and adapting them. Understanding female-authored works of religious prose as political texts, highlights women's agency in political debate. As Christina Luckyj argues about Rachel Speght: 'if we assume that a woman using religious language must be using it against and differently from men, we are replicating the notion that female authors were both isolated and defined entirely by their gender.'⁶⁰

Recognising the interplay between religion, politics and the family is a key foundational principle for this thesis, which examines this through the distinction and overlap between public and private spaces, namely the use of the family as a political metaphor. Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green

⁵⁸ Margaret P. Hannay, *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985).

⁵⁹ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Margaret R. Sommerville, *Sex and Subjections: Attitudes to Women in Early-Modern Society* (London: Arnold, 1995), Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

⁶⁰ Christina Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomus" in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate', *English Literary Renaissance*, 40.1 (2010), 113-131 (p. 130).

ask the question: 'what constitutes political thought and what counts as a political text?' They answer that

Theorists concentrate on questions concerning power, the foundations and limits of political authority, the nature of political obligation, and the tensions between liberty and distributive justice [...] the key concepts – to put it rather simply – are *rights* and *obligations* [...] Political texts are those that discuss sovereign power [...] and the relations between sovereigns and subjects.⁶¹

In the early modern period, this means understanding the role religious ideology fundamentally plays in the basis of claims to monarchical and political authority.

At the very end of the sixteenth century, James VI and I (1566-1625) wrote two treatises on government, *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron* or 'Royal Gift' (1599) which used theological arguments and the language of family to defend the divine right of kings and explain the Christian duties of a patriarchal ruler. He reasserted the family metaphor of a king as a father or husband to his subjects in his announcement to Parliament in 1604: 'I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife'. By 1622, when William Gouge (1575-1653) wrote in *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) 'a familie is a little Church, and a little commonwealth,' the relationship between authority, religion and a man's right as the head of the household were firmly fixed.⁶² Theologically-based patriarchal authority was present at all levels of social structures: from the right of the king to rule his people, to the authority of the believed divinely appointed magistrates to 'protect the welfare of the community' and finally the right of husbands to rule their wives and families.⁶³ But claims to authority have always included the recognition that a right to rule does not necessarily entail a tyrannical regime. Tyranny was to be avoided by ruler, although tyrannical rule was not a justification for disobedience from the subjects.

⁶¹ Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, *A History of Political Thought in Europe, 1400-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 4.

⁶² William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), p. 18.

⁶³ Broad and Green, *A History of Political Thought in Europe*, p. 141.

This question of how far a ruler can rule and under what authority became one of the central tenets of the English Civil War, alongside issues of religious freedom. During the English civil war, Broad and Green note that 'English women writers start to appropriate the popular terminology of political debates of their time – the language of "tyranny", "slavery", "passive obedience", and "liberty"' to talk about their own situations.⁶⁴ Arguments by women about the political role of the family and the position women hold, both metaphorically and in reality, become more explicit. Women argued against the tyrannical rule of the husband with as much fervour as the tyrannical rule of a king, and it is into this version of the debate about women that More and Beale were born, growing up with the language of the family implicitly associated with questions of religion and authority. Quaker women's writing often engaged with this kind of religio-political writing, and the doctrines of Quakerism, which emphasises individual religious experiences within a shared community, enabled women to write in types of 'prophetic mode...defending each other against the overbearing state, uniting to press for political and religious change.'⁶⁵ Margaret Fell, the 'mother of Quakerism', is renowned for her political activism and, like many Quaker women, wrote on the ability for women to preach, against the generally accepted doctrine 'Let your women keep silent in the churches' [1 Corinthians 14. 34-35]. Fell forms part of the discontinuous tradition discussed in Chapter 3, and although she is generally considered extreme, her work in fact qualifies and limits the realm in which women may have autonomy, in comparison with Beale and More's more moderate words with greater reach.

More recent scholarship, such as Harris' and Scott-Baumann's edited collection *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*, recognises the importance of 'intellectual contributions (in literary, educational, artistic, political, theological and scientific contexts) of several

⁶⁴ Broad and Green, *A History of Political Thought in Europe*, p. 141.

⁶⁵ Catie Gill, *Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community: A literary Study of Political Identities, 1650-1700* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 184.

early modern women.⁶⁶ Harris and Scott-Baumann argue that scholarship of the 1990s, which focused on the 'extremes of royalist gentlewomen and sectarian radicals', while fascinating nevertheless 'contributed to an unnecessary binary which ignores crucial middle ground.'⁶⁷ It is within this middle ground that Beale and More can be placed, which does not lessen the impact of their political contribution. They are comparable with many of the women included in the collection, but in particular the work of Lucy Hutchinson, which demonstrates her abilities as a 'consummate classical translat[or]' but also a 'political polemicist,' as through her Biblical exegesis we can read out her 'critique of the Restoration regime.'⁶⁸ Mary More's own critique of a mistranslation in the Geneva Bible can be similarly read as criticism of an over-reaching government, although it is the over-reach of husbands that More is concerned about. At the root of both arguments however, is women's concern with the religio-political paradigm, women's literary criticism of Scripture and biblical exegesis were political matters and not solely matters of faith. The political power of the church and the use of religious doctrine as fundamental societal truths make religion and politics inexorably linked which can be most clearly seen in matters of dissent, for example, the political role of the Quakers and in reinterpretations of Scripture, as seen in, for example, the work of those who reinterpret the Fall.

Marriage

The political role of marriage is a recurrent theme throughout early modern political texts. As Hannah Crawforth and Sarah Lewis write in their introduction to *Family Politics in Early Modern Literature*

early modern writers repeatedly return to the analogy between family and state [...] the idea that political hierarchies and identities might usefully be evoked within

⁶⁶ *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*, eds. Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁷ Harris and Scott-Baumann, *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, 'Lucy Hutchinson, the Bible and *Order and Disorder*', in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*, pp. 176-7.

discourses of the family is almost ubiquitous in the period, in which the metaphor is deployed in a wide variety of contexts and genres.⁶⁹

Patriarchalism was the foundation of early modern society and is derived from scriptural authority of the divine right of kings, a claim to political legitimacy which asserts a monarch's absolute rule inherited from Adam's supremacy in Eden. This assertion of Adam's superiority was used as proof of men's authority over their wives and an early modern tenet was the symbiosis between a man as the head of the household, as a king is the head of the state, as Christ is the head of the Church. On the other hand, women, and male political commentators seeking to dispute absolutism, questioned the extent to which inequality existed in Eden before the Fall and found arguments for increased equality between a ruler and their subjects, and thus between a husband and wife.

In *Subordinate Subjects*, Mihoko Suzuki draws comparisons between the positions and political activities of women and apprentices. Like wives and their husbands, apprentices were also subject to the patriarchal rule of their master.⁷⁰ Both groups were politically disenfranchised, apprentices because 'they were neither householders nor citizens', whereas wives were 'incorporated in the political and legal person of their husbands.'⁷¹ The legal and social similarities involved in marriage and apprenticeships meant that the marriage contract was comparable to an apprenticeship contract and with neither group accepting their 'subordinate position and their exclusion from the political participation,' they could have made political allies.⁷² However, apprentices had far more freedoms than wives, as their contracts were negotiable and finite and they sought to 'construct their political identity in opposition to women' as a way to leverage greater freedoms, by asserting what patriarchal power they had over women.⁷³ However, as Suzuki notes, the marriage contract 'became

⁶⁹ *Family Politics in Early Modern Literature*, eds. Hannah Crawforth and Sarah Lewis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 1.

⁷⁰ Mihoko Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects: gender, the political nation, and literary form in England, 1588-1688* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 18.

⁷¹ Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, p. 2.

⁷² Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, p. 2.

⁷³ Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, p. 21.

the basis of theorizing the contract between the sovereign and his subjects' which garnered far more political manoeuvrability for women to 'refuse obedience to a despotic husbands.'⁷⁴

In *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, Gordon J. Schochet recognises the significance of the role family played in political thought throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by studying the relationship between paternal and political authority.⁷⁵ Schochet draws out the tensions between Robert Filmer's work *Patriarchia* and contract theory treatises such as Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Locke's *Treatise* which underpinned much of the political upheaval of the seventeenth century. While discussion on the role of the family and patriarchal doctrines were not unique to the seventeenth century, there was nevertheless a shift in using the family as a justification for political obedience, based on scriptural doctrine. However, in *The Patriarch's Wife* Margaret Ezell explores the notion that the family was rigidly authoritarian and instead brings to light the manuscript networks of women who did not silently accept their subjection, including that of one of this thesis' subjects: Mary More. Thanks to Ezell's work, later scholars can confidently assert that women were by no means silent on political issues, both the broader issues affecting the country and the personal-political affecting their own status. Ezell examines what it meant to be a 'Good Wife', amassing evidence which states that besides chastity and modest demeanour, a wife should share in the domestic labour which although was 'presented as different in kind from her husband's, [was] not less valued.'⁷⁶ This idea that marriage is built upon a partnership that was equal, at least to some extent, is prevalent throughout women's writing. Although a woman was legally subsumed into her husband, her duty to him was not always considered absolute. The extent to which it was absolute was subject to discussion, because of the political ramification. Furthermore, while her duty was expected in at least some degree and she was

⁷⁴ Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, p. 19.

⁷⁵ Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes Especially in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).

⁷⁶ Margaret J. Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 38.

expected to devote herself to 'furthering [her husband's] fortunes', characterisations of the Good Wife '[do] not represent her as feeble, incapable, or servile.'⁷⁷

The foundation for the marital dynamic was Adam and Eve, with interpretations of the book of Genesis 'at the heart of patriarchal theory'.⁷⁸ Interpretations of the Fall and prelapsarian equality were plentiful and addressed not only women's equality with men but also necessarily spoke to matters of state. Thus, women's interpretations of equality within the domestic sphere cannot be overlooked as commentary on matters of governance. However, although the treatise written by Beale, More and others undoubtedly engage with matters of state through analogous readings, it is important to recognise these texts as valid political texts about the domestic. To this day our private lives are governed by politics, domestic matters which are regulated and administered by government; state regulated marriage, in particular, is an issue that has never been confined purely to the domestic sphere, and debates about who should be allowed to marry, in what institutions, and the legal status that union has, is one that is still being debated today.

The 'state-family homily [...] governed conceptions of domestic life', and while some female writers, like Lucy Hutchinson and Amelia Lanyer, used the language of marriage and interpretations of the Fall to address political matters, some, like More, were concerned with the impact of these political arguments on their own lives.⁷⁹ As I examine in Chapter 3, Rachel Speght begins *A Mouzell for Melastomas* with a reinterpretation of creation and the Fall, which 'supports her position not through the repetitions of an anonymous tradition, as does Swetnam, but through the unimpeachable authority of Scripture'.⁸⁰ As Michelle M. Dowd and Thomas Festa write in the introduction of their anthology *Early Modern Women on the Fall*: 'the myth of Adam, Eve, and the Fall of mankind...was the most formative story of their [Early Modern Women's] culture'.⁸¹ In early modern society biblical

⁷⁷ Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 55.

⁷⁹ Michelle M. Dowd and Thomas Festa, *Early Modern Women on the Fall: An Anthology* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), p. 13.

⁸⁰ James Purkiss, 'Rachel Speght as "Critical Reader"' *English Studies in Canada*, 40.4 (2014), 107-126. (p. 119).

⁸¹ Dowd and Festa, p. 2.

stories were 'key to understanding their past, present and future. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that biblical history provided the dominant means of interpreting individual, familial, and political identity in early modern society.'⁸² By understanding the relationship between Adam and Eve, the roles they had in Eden and the subsequent Fall, as an allegory of the ideal marriage, and society, the need for female authors to address interpretations that presuppose prelapsarian inequality is clear.

Women's subjection to their husbands was seen as due punishment for Eve's role in the Fall, and while it was commonly accepted by both men and women that husbands were the head of the family, the extent to which Eve was Adam's equal was an important question. The description of Eve as Adam's 'help-meet' (Genesis 2:18) gave rise to the language of wives and husbands as yokefellows, each pulling their own share of the familial burden. The supposed proper division of labour was such that women took charge of the family home, meaning that women were confined to the domestic realm. Women's subjection was distilled and formalised into the creation of distinct public and private realms. However, these realms constantly collapsed into one another, and women used political analogies to gain greater equality in the domestic sphere.

Julie Crawford writes about the political role of wives in relation to their function as counsellors to their husbands, arguing that Margaret Cavendish models her role as wife on the relationship between a counsellor and their ruler, Cavendish's role is a more active one: 'essential and conciliary, rather than silent and subordinate.'⁸³ This use of counsel as a wife's proper duty is one that is extensively covered by Mary Beale in 'A Discourse on Friendship'. While Crawford does not mention friendship, she does reference Francis Bacon's *Of counsel*, which describes the role friendship plays between a counsellor and ruler, and thus counsel in marriage as a form of equality between husband

⁸² Dowd and Festa, pp. 2-3.

⁸³ Julie Crawford, 'Margaret Cavendish, Wife' in *Family Politics in Early Modern Literature*, p. 22.

and wife. A wife is not only supporting her husband in taking care of domestic chores, but she must also have sufficient intellect to usefully provide advice.

Friendship

Studies on the classical ideal of friendship, *amicitia*, read the ‘absolute loyalty of the friends to one another as exemplary of and foundational to civic virtue.’⁸⁴ The connection between male friendship, an ‘other self’, and politics is embedded in early modern discourses on loyalty and statehood. Both Aristotelian and Ciceronian ideals stress the importance of ties between two men, that go beyond mere kinship and the ‘repetition of friendship language across texts and centuries indicates the efficacy of the rhetoric [of idealised friendship] itself’ as a political model.⁸⁵ The transgressional nature of friendship allows women to contravene the limits imposed upon them by typical models of society which rely on family harmony. Classical models of friendship recognise the tension between private relationships and duty to the state and seek to overcome any conflicting loyalties.

In *Friendship's Shadows*, Penelope Anderson reads female friendship through the ‘double-edged valance’ of betrayal to demonstrate the conflicting political, social and familial obligations that friendship demands from each relationship.⁸⁶ Through the works of Katherine Philips and Lucy Hutchinson, Anderson details the way each author appropriates models of friendship to discuss conflicting loyalties between state and family, even though they are writing from opposite ends of the political spectrum. Anderson’s argument is hugely important for demonstrating that women not only

⁸⁴ Penelope Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows: Women's Friendship and the Politics of Betrayal in England, 1640-1705* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 2.

⁸⁵ Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows*, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁶ Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows*, p. 2.

wrote about politics but inserted themselves into the ‘civic realm’ by ‘assert[ing] a continuity between volitional association and civic life.’⁸⁷

The family’s analogous relationship to the state, and the ‘subordination of women encoded in the sexual contract [of marriage]’, allows Philips and Hutchinson to reframe marriage as a civically encoded relationship. Marriage answers Anderson’s rhetorical question of how and why women ‘manage[d] to appropriate [the language of friendship].’⁸⁸ As Anderson states, a husband was legally responsible for his wife in all cases, except in matters of treason, where it was recognised that a woman could be a legal entity in her own right. Thus, there is a recognition that, like friendship which is in conflict in acts of treason, so too is a marriage. A marriage and a friendship operate under similar principles in relation to the state. Hutchinson’s two great epics *De rerum natura* and *Order and Disorder* use the ‘classical language of friendship to recast marriage as a relation with a greater focus on emotional intimacy and conversation.’⁸⁹ It is in this co-operative vein, rather than Anderson’s reading of betrayal, that I will continue the friendship/marriage paradigm throughout the course of this thesis. Mary Beale’s ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ details a partnership, rather than needing to find a resolution to conflicting loyalties. What Anderson does demonstrate is that women were employing offices of friendship, either by using the political connotations of friendship to manoeuvre themselves into political discourses, or modelling friendships between themselves in politically motivated ways.

Recognising the inherently political nature of friendship means that scholars now try to understand friendship between women ‘in the same political terms we grant to men’s relationships of the same period.’⁹⁰ Amanda E. Herbert’s *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Britain* establishes female friendship as a co-operative model, one in which women bond together for a common cause, thus overcoming social and political exclusion through collective

⁸⁷ Anderson, *Friendship’s Shadows*, p. 16.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Friendship’s Shadows*, p. 16; Anderson, *Friendship’s Shadows*, p. 12.

⁸⁹ Anderson, *Friendship’s Shadows*, p. 124.

⁹⁰ *The Politics of Female Alliance in Early Modern England*, eds. Christina Luckyj and Niamh J. O’Leary (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), p. 4.

behaviour. Herbert's work demonstrates the power that women were able to wield, and the complexity of social networks women engaged with. Herbert gives compelling insights into overlooked parts of society, namely female-dominated spaces, which operated on the principles of so-called 'male friendship' in practice, even if not formally recognised as such. *Female Alliances* demonstrates the lived experiences of women existing in the early modern world, through their own words and not those of men who wrote about them, and also recognises the ideals of friendship in the actual relationships women had with each other. Herbert's work on the co-operative model recognises the power and role of friendship in women's relationships, which women used 'to enrich and empower their lives' and demonstrates women's participation in friendship roles, by forming political alliances, banding together to enact justice.⁹¹

When discussing female friendship in England in the seventeenth century, Katherine Philips provides a wealth of material to analyse. Her poetry is filled with declarations of friendship and love for her female companions, and her 'Poetic speaker clearly celebrates and proclaims her female friendships and alliances', but her letters in particular 'show her using affective language to jettison female friendships for political reasons'.⁹² Elizabeth Hodgson reads the '[ubiquity of] political analogies drawn between the marriage and state' to draw out the political machinations of Philips' sacrificing her friendship with 'Lucasia, Anne Owens, in order to protect her alliance with [her patron] Sir Charles Cotterell'.⁹³ Cotterell's failed betrothal to Owens is marked by Philips' letters to Owens, in which Philips politicises Owen's marriage and Cotterell's letters to Philips which '[mask] Philips' patronage problem with affective language and her affective problems with political language'.⁹⁴ The fact that Cotterell responds with politicised language demonstrates that although women were not thought capable of idealised friendships, the pervasiveness of politics in friendship meant that in practice, men

⁹¹ Amanda E. Herbert, *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 13.

⁹² Elizabeth Hodgson, 'Failed Alliances and Miserable Marriages in Katherine Philips's Letters', in *The Politics of Female Alliance in Early Modern England*, p. 91; Hodgson, 'Failed Alliances and Miserable Marriages', p. 86.

⁹³ Hodgson, 'Failed Alliances and Miserable Marriages', p. 92.

⁹⁴ Hodgson, 'Failed Alliances and Miserable Marriages', p. 94.

and women did indeed use the language of friendship and alliances on the same terms with each other. Friendship itself is a complex series of relationships, with multiple, unstable definitions that nevertheless govern many interactions, which included idealised male friendships, but also marriages and social relationships between men and women.

Indeed, Philips' poetic coterie, her 'Society of Friends, cultivated and sustained through the circulation of her manuscript poetry among her social and literary associates,' is governed by the complex interactions of friendship and politics.⁹⁵ Sarah C. E. Ross compares the coteries of Philips and Margaret Cavendish. While Cavendish's motivations were primarily based on seeking fame and recognition, Ross writes that 'the "material condition" of the literary circle is not only essential to Philips' writing but to the image the female author that it enabled.'⁹⁶ Furthermore, that 'even in mid-seventeenth-century England, authorship in manuscript circles and networks remained more acceptable for women than Margaret Cavendish's brand of printed self-promotion.'⁹⁷ While print culture is not of concern in this thesis, what both the Philips' and Cavendish coterie show, is that elite households were 'a nucleus of rich and elaborate poetic and dramatic production, including that of women.'⁹⁸ Coteries and circles of family and friends made up important literary networks in which women's cultural production was rife. Although the motivations of Philips' and Cavendish was very different, they each demonstrate the 'centrality of marital and familial circles, of household coteries and extended social networks, to elite women's literary production.'⁹⁹ However, literary networks were not limited to the upper echelons, as Beale and More show; middling-sort women also freely operated within these networks and shared ideas. While friendship provided the base from which a coterie grew, the political nature of friendship meant women were active part of the resulting political

⁹⁵ Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Coteries, Circles, Networks: The Cavendish Circle and Civil War Women's Writing', in *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 345.

⁹⁶ Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Coteries, Circles, Networks', p. 347.

⁹⁷ Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Coteries, Circles, Networks', p. 347.

⁹⁸ Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Coteries, Circles, Networks', p. 348.

⁹⁹ Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Coteries, Circles, Networks', p. 334.

discourses, of which manuscript culture played an important role: not hiding women's participation but instead choosing the most appropriate medium for intellectual exchange.

Manuscript Culture and the Circulation of Ideas

Katherine Philips is the central figure in Chapter 5 of Peter Beal's seminal *In Praise of Scribes*, in which Beal calls her the 'foremost women writer of the seventeenth century to flourish in the context of a manuscript culture.'¹⁰⁰ While much of the chapter is centred on Philips' reaction to the publication of her work in print, and the subsequent negative reactions she received, it nevertheless recognises that writing in manuscript was a conscious choice and despite potential limitations of the medium. Manuscripts afforded a 'social, even political purpose: they were a means of access to the *beau monde* itself.'¹⁰¹ Beal provided one of the foundational studies of the importance of manuscript in seventeenth-century culture, recognising the immense amount of public activity undertaken in manuscript: legal documents, business affairs, correspondence on matters of state were all circulated in manuscript. There was an established culture of manuscript circulation, and engaging in this culture was not necessarily indicative of an avoidance of print or fear of censorship.¹⁰²

Harold Love's work on scribal publication had begun the process of breaking down the association of manuscripts as purely private texts, and, as Margaret Ezell writes, 'the concept of "public" and "private" literary forms is based on a nineteenth-century commercial literary environment.'¹⁰³ The assertion that women were confined to private modes of writing was predicated on an assumption that literary genres like letters and diaries had the same function in the seventeenth century as they

¹⁰⁰ Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscript and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 147.

¹⁰¹ Beal, *In Praise of Scribes*, p. 149.

¹⁰² Beal, *In Praise of Scribes*, p. 19.

¹⁰³ Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1998). Originally published in 1993 by the Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press as *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*; Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 34.

did in the nineteenth century. However, as Love, Beal and Ezell established, letters were frequently circulated publicly and were 'highly conventional forms of public address.'¹⁰⁴ Ezell in particular has been instrumental in understanding how women's writing functioned within this tradition, circulating their work within manuscript networks, in the full understanding that these were not private modes of writing. The apparent decline of women's political activity in the immediate period following the Restoration, is in the main due to the misapprehension of so-called 'private' texts, such as personal correspondence, as women were largely seen as 'inhabiting a private space.'¹⁰⁵ While men's letters have been mined for their political content, the letters and other literary outputs of female authors have been considered 'as simply an expression of their domestic interests.'¹⁰⁶

Women's manuscript coteries were populated by both women and men, and Victoria Burke demonstrated that women were participants in 'manuscript circulation of verse [which is] most often associated with the Inns of Court and the two universities.'¹⁰⁷ Although Burke's work focuses on collaborative elements of verse miscellanies and women as readers, rather than writers, it nevertheless demonstrates that women were participants in cultural spheres that it had long been thought closed to them. Additionally, Burke's evidence regarding the circulation of manuscript verse that was thought 'copied mainly by undergraduates or law students,' that women gained access to through male relatives is an interesting point, with regard to the verse exchange between Mary More and Oxford don Robert Whitehall. Although More and Whitehall were not related, their exchange is further indication of women's participation in these intellectual circles.¹⁰⁸ Whitehall responds to More's 'The Woman's Right' in prose with 'The Woman's Right Proved False', but their brief verse

¹⁰⁴ Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History*, p. 34

¹⁰⁵ Smith et al., *Women's Political Writings*, I, p. xxii.

¹⁰⁶ Smith et al., *Women's Political Writings*, I, p. xxii.

¹⁰⁷ Victoria E. Burke, 'Reading Friends: Women's Participation in 'Masculine' Literary Culture' in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, ed. Victoria E. Burke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 77.

¹⁰⁸ Burke, 'Reading Friends', p. 77.

exchange provides insight into this otherwise seemingly inexplicable relationship. In fact, their exchange was less unusual than has been previously thought.

The reasons behind women's authorship and collaborations were multi-faceted and we should therefore recognise that women were contributing to political, religious and intellectual debates. This is not to reject the idea that More and Beale were writing about inequality, but to assert that women were not writing in a vacuum about issues that only concerned them. As Ezell puts it:

If women's works [...] are to be kept viable in scholarly conversations and visible in the classroom, it must be because of what we see and value in them: neither their anomalous nature nor their female uniformity, but their sparkling multiplicity; not the way they bulk up traditional lists and gracefully yield to traditional models, but the dazzling ways in which they disrupt both and challenge us to see our own assumptions, aesthetic as well as historical.¹⁰⁹

While Ezell is specifically referring to the way in which early modern women's texts are presented in modern print and digital editions, she also reminds us that we should be mindful of the 'sparkling multiplicity' of early modern women's texts when reading them. Although this thesis follows in the tradition of categorising these texts as texts-by-women, the intention is to demonstrate that a text written from the unique perspective of the author, as a woman, about the society in which she lives, is not less complex simply because the author is a woman. Therefore, understanding the function of manuscript and the rules that governed intellectual debate allows us to see that women were operating within an existing system of cultural exchange.

In *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas*, George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker curate a collection of essays which extend the work of Ezell in recognising how the privileging of print technology has influenced readings of early modern women's writing. As Justice explains, scholarship has 'assumed that women published their writings in manuscript rather than print as a direct and simple result of social prohibitions placed upon women writers', whereas the essays 'operate from the working premise that the decision to use manuscript rather than print publication resulted from a

¹⁰⁹ Ezell, 'Invisibility Optics', p. 45.

set of choices, made in the positive terms for the most part.¹¹⁰ It is this access to the intellectual exchange of ideas that causes women to choose manuscript as the most appropriate form of writing, and partaking in these cultural exchanges in the same ways that men do, both with men and other women.

Similarly, in *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England*, Julie Crawford rejects the idea that women wrote solely in resistance to patriarchal rule and recognises women as agents of cultural production.¹¹¹ While Crawford's argument regarding the political and cultural power of women is demonstrated through the patronage of elite women, it provides important evidence of the expectation of women's participation. It is increasingly rare to think of women's interventions in any cultural exchange as 'exceptional'. Although women were still excluded from formal institutions and were undoubtedly more likely to be targets of criticism and disdain, they were nevertheless agents within cultural and political collaborations. By focusing on elite women such as Mary Sidney Herbert and Lucy Harington Russell, the direct access to political power is apparent, through familial alliances in which both women 'served, at various points, as the leaders and spokespeople for the alliance.'¹¹² The recognition that women were not apolitical, and that their work can be read with the same political intent as men writing within the same sphere, is an important part of this thesis in recognising the significance of Beale and More's work, as well as acknowledging that these political collaborations were not exclusive to elite women.

The social aspect of these political spheres of manuscript exchange is also important in understanding the extent to which Beale and More's work can be thought of as political. James Daybell's work on early modern women's letter writing recognised women's power in early modern networks. In *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England*, Daybell differentiates between 'power' and

¹¹⁰ George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker, *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 5.

¹¹¹ Julie Crawford, *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹¹² Crawford, *Mediatrix*, p. 10.

‘authority’, the latter being enshrined into social structures of state while the former acknowledges the impact women had and the influence they wielded. Daybell’s work on epistolary culture is rooted in understanding of the importance of letter-writing as a political activity, not only as a means of undertaking state business, but also in the private sphere, like the family and friendship. Letters may discuss personal matters, but they often necessarily include political connotations.¹¹³

The conclusions Daybell draws about the nature of letter-writing, alongside the work by Margaret Ezell, Harold Love and Peter Beal on manuscript circulation and scribal publication, give greater significance to women’s writing and greater recognition of the agency of the women writers. For this thesis, their work is also useful in understanding the interplay between public and private. Not only is the interplay between the domestic and political important for understanding the content of More and Beale’s work, it is also important in recognising that More and Beale’s manuscripts were to some extent public documents that were read and responded to by women and men within their social circle. These intellectual exchanges were governed by the rules and offices of friendship and I operate from the premise that More and Beale chose manuscript as the most convenient form of publication, rather than because of an avoidance of print. Furthermore, the use of manuscript as the natural, most appropriate medium becomes more apparent when we further recognise the role that letters play in the dissemination of intellectual ideas.

David Norbrook’s work on the ‘republic of letters’ demonstrates women’s participation in a cross-European intellectual network, in which women debated their right to education, religious ideologies and political sympathies. Norbrook argues that ‘the political sympathies of the republic of letters...did not fall into any simple divisions on gender grounds.’¹¹⁴ Through Maria van Schurman and Margaret Cavendish, he shows that although there was naturally tension around women’s

¹¹³ James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006); see also: James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practises of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

¹¹⁴ David Norbrook, ‘Women, the Republic of Letters, and the Public Sphere in the Mid-Seventeenth Century’, *Criticism*, 46.2 (2004), 223-240 (p. 234).

participation and their pronouncements of women's greater social equality, they nevertheless were cognizant of the norms of participation. Indeed, Cavendish appears to deliberately buck a particular trend when asserting her intellectual credentials; she has particular 'ideological inflections' which celebrate an 'individual pursuit of glory', shunning the more humanist which 'values [...] communal and collective work characteristic of the republic of letters.'¹¹⁵ The omission of 'celebrated contemporary women writers' may mean that the mixed reception *Poems and Fancies* (1653) received may not entirely be down to 'patriarchal hostility' and should, according to Norbrook, 'take into account her radical departure from the expected conventions of religious discourse.'¹¹⁶ The expectation that women would conform to the appropriate conventions is not, in and of itself, evidence of the acceptance of women into the republic of letters, but it does allow the notion that women were conversant in mores of discourse.

Furthermore, when examining the circulation of ideas within the scientific community, in the early modern period across Europe and into the Age of Enlightenment, the offices of friendship are integral to the 'ways in which collaborative effort was conceived in the natural and political sciences, philosophy, and the creative arts.'¹¹⁷ Friendship was a 'crucial aspect' of intellectual exchange and allowed for friendly disagreement to take place, without causing offence.¹¹⁸ Using the aspects of counsel and being a good friend, which necessarily require honesty tempered with respect, hypotheses can be proposed and cross-examined in what might otherwise be a 'fraught conduit for cultural exchange.'¹¹⁹ Smith and Yeo recognise the shift away from stringent adherence to classical notions of friendship, but still retaining a sense of equality between two like-minded people, who nevertheless may disagree with one another. While the founding of institutions like the Royal Society

¹¹⁵ Norbrook, 'Women, the Republic of Letters', p. 230.

¹¹⁶ Norbrook, 'Women, the Republic of Letters', p. 230.

¹¹⁷ Vanessa Smith and Richard Yeo, 'Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science', *Parergon*, 26.2 (2009), pp. 1-9 (p. 1).

¹¹⁸ Smith and Yeo, 'Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science', p. 1.

¹¹⁹ Smith and Yeo, 'Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science', p. 1.

excluded women from these new, formalised spaces of discourse, the principles that governed exchanges still existed within the walls of the society and the pages of manuscript circulation.

Thus, women participating in manuscript circulation, governed by the formal rules of friendship, and who wrote about their social status and duties as wives, within the political contexts of the family and friendship, should have the political and feminist implications of their arguments considered by modern scholars.

Conclusion – Early Modern Feminism

It is apparent that women were engaging in debates about duties in marriage, using commonplace tropes with political meanings, but to what extent can these contributions be labelled as feminist? Not only is the word ‘feminist’ anachronistic, there is also a perception that feminist readings of early modern texts have in some way ‘damaged’ them. In viewing women’s writing solely as writing-by-women there was an isolation of women’s writing, separated from the male-centric early modern literary canon. Danielle Clarke has written about the need to move away from sexing writing, as with the high rate of anonymously authored texts and use of pseudonyms, the gender of an author cannot be assumed. Initially this was a necessary critical intervention, to create space for women’s voices, but Clarke argued that it limited ‘any attempt to examine the ways in which texts themselves contribute to the networks of meaning hovering around the gendering of authorship.’¹²⁰

However, now that we recognise the validity of female-authored texts in their own right, it seems important to affirm that these authors are consciously writing as women, and the political legitimacy of their texts should by no means be limited. Necessarily, this thesis relies on an understanding of ‘woman writer’ as a concept and although ‘this apparently transparent concept

¹²⁰ Danielle Clarke, ‘Introduction’ in *This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, eds. Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 2.

carries with it both methodological problems and ideological baggage,' it seems relatively uncontroversial to assert that the authors in question are women, writing about what it means to be a married woman in the 1660s.¹²¹

It may well be true that labelling a work as 'feminist' relegates a text, as being of lesser concern to literary critics. However, modern scholarship has undoubtedly replicated patriarchal notions of significance that privilege male-authored texts, in terms of the volume and frequency in which they are studied, and this hierarchy of reading is precisely why feminist readings, and indeed feminism itself, is still needed. When writing about friendship, women understood that the ideal model was centred around men; not only did they engage with the political aspects of friendship in the same way that male-writers did, but they also interrogated how modes of friendship affected them as women.

Admittedly, by opening up readings of such material, we may run the risk of imposing twenty-first century standards upon historical texts, but we must also be open to the evidence in front of us. Beale, More and others were writing about what it means to be a woman in the society in which they lived and advocated for more rights than they currently held. This should not render these texts less important, nor should we be overly stringent in our requirements for seventeenth-century feminism. Broad and Green warn against over-stating the feminist intentions of treatise littered with the 'popular terminology' that looks like the rights discourses of the eighteenth century; these calls for toleration and 'freedom of conscience' do not 'amount to [an] argument for resistance.'¹²² I would argue that there is an implicit call for change within the argument for women's equality, and to demand extreme resistance from oppressed people or to insist on proof that they were unhappy with their oppression through unambiguous declarations, that might be politically or personally difficult at the time, is problematic.

¹²¹ Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001), p. 3.

¹²² Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe 1400-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 141.

Nonetheless, the feminism contained within early modern texts is necessarily limited, and, as Broad and Green rightly say, 'can be surprisingly conservative.'¹²³ This impression of conservatism is itself an imposed modern value, and there were certainly moments of radicalism within these seventeenth century texts. As such, the term 'feminist' here should be understood within the social conditions of the time, avoiding the 'lamentable tendency to judge the "feminism" of earlier generations as it meets our standards.'¹²⁴ It is a false equivalency to hold up twenty-first-, twentieth- or even nineteenth-century feminism as a yardstick by which to measure all possible feminist engagement. Not only does this wrongly suggest that modern feminism is somehow the epitome of the movement, which has no work left to do, it also erases the steps taken by early feminists arguing for equality in the way that was an appropriate focus for them.

I am invoking the definitions of a feminist movement given by Hilda Smith and Joan Kelly, as outlined in Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus' *Half Humankind*, which state that there are distinct social patterns which 'determines the differing lifestyles of men and women' that restrict women to a greater extent than men. Feminist responses to this conditioning arise directly from the inequality that exists and seeks to dispel 'defective notions of womanhood fostered by the misogynists' and is focused on both the cultural and biological shaping of women.¹²⁵ Constance Jordan makes a similar statement in the opening line of *Renaissance Feminism*, stating: 'Feminist scholarship is predicated on the assumption that women have experienced life differently from men and that this is worth studying.'¹²⁶ Henderson and McManus critiqued the view of Linda Woodbridge, who argued that the feminist movement may have in fact been hindered by early modern women's focus on 'moral and religious issues rather than social and economic ones' by acknowledging that this demanded a 'sweeping and activist feminism quite foreign to the time and the nature of the defense [sic] genre.'¹²⁷

¹²³ Broad and Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe*, p. 142.

¹²⁴ Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's History*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 27.

¹²⁵ Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind*, pp. 25 and 45.

¹²⁶ Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 1.

¹²⁷ Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the nature of womankind 1540-1620* (Brighton: Harvester, 1984), p. 133; Henderson and McManus, p. 45.

Furthermore, Woodbridge's objection not only ignores writers like Mary More who did argue about the day-to-day legal realities of being a woman, but seemingly fails to account for the interdependence of religion and politics in the early modern period.

In Ross' *The Birth of Feminism*, there is acknowledgement that scholarship has recognised that pro-woman arguments were a substantive part of literary culture in Europe from the fifteenth century onwards. These tracts explicitly defended women against attacks, and it has been long demonstrated that women participated in the *querelle des femme*. Ross recognises a further two types of feminist argument, as she argues that any text that is not unambiguously entering into the debate risks being overlooked. Alongside 'explicit' feminism, which is the type of feminism that would be recognizable by modern reader, politically active and demanding social change, she advocates 'celebratory' feminism and 'participatory' feminism, which are expressions of feminist belief through demonstration of a woman's education, either consciously showcasing it, 'celebratory', or merely by its tangible existence independent of the content, 'participatory'.¹²⁸

The use of education as a feminist trope means that Ross limits feminism to the home by concentrating on a tradition of 'Household Salons' across Italy and England, which in turn limits possible readings of women's political texts to the domestic realm. Ross states that women, such as Anna Maria van Schurman and Bathsua Makin 'did not yet argue for women's political equality, but they represented and often advocated women's intellectual equality as they contributed to the central debate of the era, especially the debate on women'.¹²⁹ By 'political equality' I take Ross to mean the demand for suffrage and recognition of statehood. However, although these women were not demanding these types of political rights and freedoms, their assertion of spiritual and intellectual equality is itself a political debate, and as such is an advocacy for a different kind of political equality.

¹²⁸ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 132.

¹²⁹ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 3.

Dymphna Callaghan states that 'Women's exercise of agency is not to be found in the precepts of patriarchy itself [...] but rather in the contradiction gaps, and "wiggle room" of patriarchal order,' which is what both More and Beale do.¹³⁰ They find the gaps in contradictions and exploit them for their own ends. As I have hopefully demonstrated, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, issues of religion were symbiotically political ones and thus by taking on the 'inherited tradition' of biblical commonplace arguments, women are necessarily debating their political and social status.¹³¹ I read these texts as consciously feminist, within the boundaries stated above, in that they discuss the social status of women and assert a type of equality. They are texts that are concerned with the lived experience of women rather than a discussion of abstract notions of value or worth. Beale and More both recognise that as women, the society in which they live treats them differently from their male counterparts; by considering their response as women to the social impact of their being treated as women, we allow for agency in women's writing that sees them as consciously political.

¹³⁰ Dymphna Callaghan, 'Introduction', in *The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), ed. Dymphna Callaghan, p. 10.

¹³¹ Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 4.

Chapter 3 – Women About Women: establishing a feminist tradition

In ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ and ‘The Woman’s Right’ both Beale and More address the structural inequality that women faced in early modern society, through an exploration of marriage by means of a consideration of friendship and an exercise in biblical exegesis respectively. They were not alone in doing so and the purpose of this chapter is to connect their work with thematically similar texts, firstly, to situate them within common frame of reference, and secondly, to investigate whether a feminist tradition through the seventeenth century is credibly evident. Through the texts of four female authors who wrote non-fiction prose, I demonstrate how women writers, forced to address repeated misogynistic attacks, responded differently to the same fundamental issue, and how they co-opted and adapted commonplace arguments to their purposes. Although none of the authors drew directly from one another, they were nonetheless part of a discontinuous tradition that engaged in a debate which used common tropes about women. Women were participants in these conventions, in using them, being constrained by them, and adapting them. By ascertaining how female-authored works of prose function as political texts within the debate about women, we can add to the evidence of a feminist heritage which exists not only in theory as a subject of treatises, but also practically through women’s agency in political debate. This is not to say that ‘female-authored’ is being presented here as a discreet sub-category of writing, nor do I assume a cohesive set of values than can be applied to all texts; the works of Beale, More and the other authors included here are texts written by women and they are specifically addressing what it means to be a woman at the time they are writing. Women are both the author and subject of the work and having the perspectives of women is a vital part of the debate about women, as well as any broader political debates about early modern society of which women are, of course, a part.

In the compilation of *Women’s Political Writings*, Hilda Smith, Mihoko Suzuki and Susan Wiseman ‘decided to exclude works that focus solely on what might be characterized as “feminist” arguments,’ as they were focused on drawing attention to the ways women engaged with ‘general

political theory,’ while still examining how women specifically employed different forms in politicised ways.¹³² In much the same way, I want to examine how women immersed themselves in generalised political arguments, but use those arguments to make defences of women. I have been mindful that as female-authored texts, they should not be afforded any special status, but undeniably, writing from a different social position means that women may use these arguments differently to advocate for themselves. Women’s writing should be neither marginalised nor revered; female authors are simply a part of the debate that needs to be acknowledged. It is not by denying their gender that we reintegrate women into the debate but rather, by examining the interplay between gender, religion and politics as debated by women, we can evidence the extent and limits of social autonomy women experienced and argued for. There are pitfalls in searching for a tradition which may at best be anachronistic, at worst, non-existent. As Hilary Hinds warns, ‘the desire for feminist foremothers is beguiling but fraught with untenable premises, of unsubstantiated continuities.’¹³³ The dangers of retroactively placing a feminist agenda on early modern authors are undeniable, but nor did the feminism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries appear from nowhere, so while the word ‘feminist’ may be an anachronism, the sentiment is not.

As well as establishing a tradition of women arguing for intellectual equality from at least the fifteenth century, Sarah Ross also recognises that women ‘were active contributors to culture’ and the perception that women were marginalised within early modern society is false.¹³⁴ Educated, literary women were far from being the exception, women ‘played authoritative roles in contemporary “salons” and “literary circles” – a defining characteristic of which was the collaboration of male and female colleagues.’¹³⁵ While Ross more than successfully establishes a tradition of the learned, intellectual woman, there is still a hesitation on Ross’ part to recognise these texts as political. Though

¹³² *Women’s Political Writings, 1610-1725*, ed. by Hilda L. Smith, Mihoko Suzuki and Susan Wiseman, 4 vols, (Cambridge: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), I, p. xxi.

¹³³ Hilary Hinds, *God’s Englishwomen: Seventeenth-century radical sectarian writing and feminist criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 14.

¹³⁴ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 1.

¹³⁵ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 1.

she rejects the idea that the ‘domestic paradigm’ should be read as ‘female containment’, she nevertheless states that the use of domestic vocabulary was a ‘subversive strategy for making the unusual seem acceptable and even praiseworthy,’ implying that women were still forced to make political arguments covertly, or were not making political arguments at all.¹³⁶ However, I argue that texts which use domestic language were not subversive because of the use of domestic language, but rather because of the radical arguments they make within the common discourse of the domestic. Domestic language was a common tool of political discourse, which women used to make unique arguments about their social status; they were not forced to hide political argument within domestic texts. I do not claim that women were completely free to speak, or that they received little-to-no criticism for their views, but women were nevertheless active participants in the conversation about their social status.

As examples of interventions in this discourse I present a chronological study of four canonical female authors to demonstrate the evolution of a feminist argument over the course of the seventeenth century. Not only were More and Beale part of this discourse, but we can see that arguments which are already accepted as evidence for feminist thought in the early eighteenth century, are present throughout these seventeenth-century texts as well. This chapter will focus on prose works, by English women of a similar social class to Beale and More, published within the authors’ lifetimes. Their status as familiar works within modern criticism means that they are useful in tethering Beale and More to a common frame of reference. The chapter starts with Rachel Speght (1597?–1661?) who lays the groundwork in *A Mouzell for Melastomas* (1617) for the tradition presented here. It then moves onto a contemporary of Beale and More, Margaret Fell (1614–1702) and her advocacy of women’s public speaking in *Women’s Speaking Justified* (1666), this sub-section also includes discussion on fellow Quaker writers Priscilla Cotton (d. 1664) and Mary Cole (dates unknown) whose political ‘extremism’ in *To the Priests and People of England* (1655) contains many

¹³⁶ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 7.

of the same arguments and techniques that later writers used.¹³⁷ Next, another contemporary with Beale and More, Bathsua Makin (1600–1675?), who addresses the same fundamental criticisms of women's education in *The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen* (1673) that appear in Speght and Astell. The chapter concludes with *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694) and *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (first published 1700) by Mary Astell (1666–1731), who is often described as (one of) the 'first English feminist(s)' and who serves as a conduit between the early modern period and later, more commonly accepted feminist authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1797–1851).¹³⁸

Although these authors are presented chronologically, to aid an understanding of my process of selection, it is prudent to begin at the end. Mary Astell is often referred to as 'the first English Feminist', but an understanding of her hinterland and context leads us to acknowledge that she is perhaps not as obviously the 'first' feminist as one might think. As one of the most well-known feminist author(s) of the eighteenth century, Astell is an ideal candidate for examining how the arguments that developed through early modern writers such as Speght, Makin, Beale, More and Fell, evolved into the eighteenth century and beyond. This is not to suggest that this, or any, particular historical group is a homogenous one. Astell is also an obvious end point to my discussion of early modern feminist female writers. Born 1666, Astell's life starts during the Restoration, the beginning of the long eighteenth century, but within a year of Beale's 'A Discourse on Friendship'. She is a different

¹³⁷ Although she later re-married and is also known as Margaret Fox or Fell Fox, I will refer to her as Margaret Fell as this was her name at the time of *Women's Speaking Justified*'s publication in 1666; Cotton and Cole's dates are given as fl. 1650s/1660s in *Early Modern Women's Writing: An Anthology 1560-1700*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2000).

¹³⁸ While it is true Astell's status as 'first' has been acknowledged as problematic, she is always credited with being at the vanguard of feminist thought. The anxiety was not in recognising possible earlier feminists but was instead about whether Astell was feminist enough to be the first. Bridget Hill's book, *The First English Feminist* (1986) clearly places her at the forefront, while Ruth Perry's *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (1986), qualifies Astell's feminism, but with this qualification calls her 'the first' (p. 17). Subsequently, reference to her as 'the first English feminist' passed into common usage, for example Rachel Weil's *Political Passions* (1999). Jacqueline Broad later calls her 'one of' the earliest English feminists in *Early Modern Women on Metaphysics* (2018, p. 142), but it is not clear if this is a qualification of Astell's feminism or an acknowledgement of possible predecessors.

generation to More, Beale and Fell, although similarly upper middle class and obviously intelligent with access to some kind of informal education.

Criticisms of Astell's work has evolved, with a focus on her advocacy of higher education for women in *Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, as well as 'her criticisms of the injustices of married life' in *Some Reflections upon Marriage* discussed in the 1980s, and then investigations into her wider political thought in the 1990s.¹³⁹ While feminist readings may be reductive and '[leave] too much unexplained,' Astell is an important contributor to the moral and religious debates of the early eighteenth century.¹⁴⁰ Her comprehensive body of work is extensive, she has been described as

a rhetorician, an eloquent and skilled defender of women in print [...] a metaphysician, an epistemologist, and a philosopher of the mind [...] a political theorist, a Tory pamphleteer [...] an Anglican apologist, a devout Protestant, a metaphysician, a Cartesian rationalist, and a dualist.¹⁴¹

By understanding that Astell's works are complex and engage with the political-domestic, we can not only trace her feminist lineage, but also recognise similar traits in earlier texts, providing reassurance in assessing them as political or philosophical treatise. While her work extends beyond feminism, that does not lessen the value of her feminist ideas and should not allow us to think that feminism is not a valuable or valid part of political, philosophical and spiritual debate.

Astell's complete body of work may well worry the initial feminist readings of *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* and *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, but for the purposes of this thesis they are the most relevant. With Astell as the end point, arguments about education and marriage can be traced through the period spanning from Speght to Astell, as there are areas of commonality among the arguments. Speght and Makin in particular make very similar arguments to Astell about the need for women's education. The danger with placing Astell at the end of a journey is that it suggests she is the

¹³⁹ Jacqueline Broad, *The Philosophy of Mary Astell: An Early Modern Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Mary Astell, *The First English Feminist: Reflections Upon Marriage and other writings by Mary Astell*, ed. Bridget Hill (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing), 1986. p. 2.

¹⁴¹ Broad, *The Philosophy of Mary Astell: An Early Modern Theory of Virtue*, p. 5.

pinnacle of early modern feminist thought, presupposing that the movement is a linear one, progressing from a time of total oppression of women to a future where all issues are resolved, and it is not my intent to suggest this.

Nor is this chapter intended to frame Speght, Cotton, Cole, Fell, Makin, Beale and More solely as precursors to Astell and her work. Astell scholarship is already mindful of the historical background to her work, recognising women's increased engagement with political activity during the English Civil War and Restoration, meaning that she is writing after a perceived 'great step [forward] in the emancipation of women.'¹⁴² The criteria supplied for Astell's work to be considered feminist, albeit tentatively applied at times, are present in earlier texts. If we comfortably, if not unproblematically, read Astell as a feminist, political writer, a philosopher and theologian then we may confidently apply these descriptors to Speght et al too.

Indeed, Speght is already recognised as an important theologian thinker and marks a change in how women were debated, in part due to the influence of *A Mouzell for Melastomas*. In beginning with Speght, it is prudent to acknowledge that while she is the start of this particular exploration into a feminist heritage, she was writing within an established tradition of debate. The pamphlet wars of the seventeenth century were by no means limited to debating women; however, they are the backdrop against which she writes *A Mouzell for Melastomas*, the 'first and only definitely female-authored' response to Joseph Swetnam's misogynistic pamphlet *The arraignment of lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women* (1615).¹⁴³ Not only is Speght responding directly to Swetnam, but she is also responding to and adapting the way in which women debate and are debated.

As much as Astell is not the apex of feminist thought, neither is Speght the genesis, but as bookends to Beale and More, they provide useful limits to this particular study.¹⁴⁴ Contained within

¹⁴² Hill, *The First English Feminist*, p. 20.

¹⁴³ Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomas" in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate', p. 113.

¹⁴⁴ Christine de Pizan (c. 1364 – c. 1430) wrote a number of prose texts defending women against misogynist attacks and advocating for their education, in particular *The Tale of the Rose* (1402), *The Book of the City of Ladies* and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (both finished by 1405). The start of the European Renaissance in

the seventy-seven-year period between *A Mouzell for Melastomas* and *A Serious Proposal*, Cotton and Cole, Fell Fox, Makin, Beale and More demonstrate how issues of education, spiritual equality, subjection of wives in marriage and the political role of preaching, all interplay to provide feminist treatises.

Rachel Speght – *A Mouzell for Melastomas* (1617)

The formulation of Speght's argument in response to Swetnam 'shifts the ground slightly' as the tone of *A Mouzell for Melastomas* is serious and its style is learned, rather than confirming to the bawdy, jesting tone typical of pamphlets debating women published at this time.¹⁴⁵ Speght seems to have set a new standard that female writers after her follow, by constructing their treatises about women in formal academic style. *A Mouzell for Melastomas* and 'The Woman's Right' are works of deliberate construction, undertaking analytical assessment of their subject matter. Although the prose is well constructed, its purpose is functional, providing logical arguments. Speght deconstructs Swetnam's arguments perfectly seriously and gains authority through the deployment of academic discourse. Speght is able to refute Swetnam's arguments not only by addressing each of his points, but also by formulating a better constructed argument, thus implying that 'Swetnam can be outdone intellectually *even though* Speght is female.'¹⁴⁶ As a spiritual and intellectual treatise, *A Mouzell for Melastomas* demonstrates Speght's knowledge of Scripture, and her ability to understand and construct logical debate; this technique 'is indebted to one particular branch of the woman debate,

Italy included the acceptance of 'exceptional women', such as Isotta Nogarla (1418 – 1466), Cassandra Fedele (1465 – 1558) and Laura Cereta (1469 – 1499) pursuing a 'male' education (see Broad and Green, 'Women of the Italian Renaissance'), and Englishwomen such as Margery Kempe (c. 1373 – c.1458) and Julian of Norwich (1343 – 1416) have become of interest to scholars of early women's writing as some of the earliest examples of women's writing in English. Their autobiography and mysticism have been recognised for their social and political implications.

¹⁴⁵ Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2001), p. 67.

¹⁴⁶ Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing*, p. 68.

namely, the serious theological debate.¹⁴⁷ This recognition of Speght as a theologian is important, as it confers a political element to her work.

It is likely that Speght was invited to write *A Mouzell for Melastomas* by Thomas Archer, the publisher of both this and Swetnam's pamphlet.¹⁴⁸ Speght may well have responded to Swetnam without invitation, but it does demonstrate an explicit recognition and acknowledgement, by a specific man, of the contribution women had to make to the debate. Archer's motivations were likely financial rather than moral, but women's contributions were, at the very least, provocative enough to print.

Despite appearing in print, Speght's work was not read widely nor instantly recognised as proof of women's political capabilities, but Luckyj reminds us that Swetnam 'has rarely been considered as a *political* writer with an ideological agenda aimed at a defined readership' either.¹⁴⁹ Luckyj reads *Araignment* in light of Swetnam's political allegiances, the recent Overbury scandal and Swetnam's Protestant anxieties about a Catholic match for James' son Charles, arguing that the political element of writings about marriage are tied up with arguments about religion and national identity.¹⁵⁰ Thus, when Speght writes *A Mouzell for Melastomas* as a theological treatise, examining and reinterpreting the religious foundations of wifely duties, it necessarily invokes the same questions of hierarchy, statehood, and women's place within the societal structure.

While her use of formal debate techniques aligns Speght with a 'community of writers, preachers, and publishers defined not by gender but by religious politics,' the gendered aspects of the political debate underpinned by scriptural authority is precisely of concern here.¹⁵¹ The form of *A*

¹⁴⁷ Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing*, p. 69.

¹⁴⁸ See Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomas" in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate'.

¹⁴⁹ Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomas" in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate', p. 116.

¹⁵⁰ Specifically, the supposed inconstancy of Frances Howard, as a wife. The Howard family used their considerable political influence to obtain an annulment from Robert Devereaux, 3rd Earl of Essex, so that Frances could marry Robert Carr – favourite of James I and VI. Carr's friend, Thomas Overbury strongly disapproved of the affair, annulment and subsequent marriage and was manoeuvred by the Howards into rejecting an ambassadorship, causing offence to James and resulting in Overbury's imprisonment in the Tower of London, where he was murdered. The uncovered conspiracy and proximity to the crown caused one of the biggest scandals in seventeenth-century London.

¹⁵¹ Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomas" in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate', p. 144.

Mouzell for Melastomas is an important part of Speght's argument but the content must not be overlooked. It is not just a question of defining the relationship between a husband and wife in a purely domestic realm, although this is still a vital element, but a question of how defining that marital relationship defines the state and, conversely, how changes in the structure of society can affect the way in which women can view their roles as wives. Beale similarly uses existing structures to assess the marital relationship.

Speght's re-interpretation of Scripture as a comment on political and social matters was a common tactic. Biblical exegesis served all kinds of arguments made by 'virtually all polemicists throughout the [early modern] period' and such was the prolificacy of the technique, debating the meaning of a single verse could fill shelves 'arguing over the social and political implications.'¹⁵² Indeed a large proportion of Mary More's work is centred on the social and political implications of just two words: 'submit' and 'obey'. What Dowd and Festa show is that although religion and Scripture were the tools used as justification for women's oppression, they were also the means with which women could argue for their rights. Women were seen to hold 'more responsibilities than men' in the domestic sphere.¹⁵³ This combined with the family as an 'extension of the Church' meant that discussions about the piety of women and the home as a sphere of religious instruction, necessarily opened up possibilities for women to 'pursue forms of expression that were culturally and religiously sanctioned.'¹⁵⁴ This in turn enabled women to enter into 'public discourse by writing on religious subjects.'¹⁵⁵ While Dowd and Festa focus on works that deal with Eve and the Fall narrative, which is a crucial topic in many women's texts, women used all of Scripture as grounds for their spiritual equality and to enable them to enter into the public arena.

¹⁵² *Early Modern Women on the Fall: An Anthology*, ed. by Michelle M. Dowd and Thomas Festa (Tempe, Arizona: ACMRS, 2012), pp. 6-7.

¹⁵³ Dowd and Festa, *Early Modern Women on the Fall*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁴ Dowd and Festa, *Early Modern Women on the Fall*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁵ Dowd and Festa, *Early Modern Women on the Fall*, p. 13.

Speght's characterisation of Eve was viewed by Henderson and McManus in the 1980s as problematic. They criticise her defences as 'rather weak,' but this fails to recognise that the very act of this biblical exegesis was itself remarkable.¹⁵⁶ Typically the 'male preserve,' Speght undertakes biblical interpretation of scriptural passages 'so as to make them yield a more expansive and equitable concept of gender.'¹⁵⁷ In the main, Speght characterises Eve as Adam's equal. Eve was created 'to be a solace unto [Adam], to participate in his sorrows, partake of his pleasures, and as a good yolk-fellow, bear part of his burden.'¹⁵⁸ Although Adam was already chosen by God to rule, the ability of Eve to be a companion and equal raises mankind above the beasts, as their partnership is based on something more than a need to reproduce. The insinuation is that on his own, Adam would fail to rule adequately. Without Eve, Adam is incomplete. Henderson and McManus argued that Speght's interpretation fundamentally accepts Adam's authority over Eve and was thus too constrained by religious doctrine to be truly feminist.¹⁵⁹

If we do not insist that early modern feminist works stand up against modern criteria, then the acceptance of a husband's authority does not render Speght's feminist arguments invalid. She is not advocating an unlimited authority of the husband over the wife. Women are meant to be a helper and companion to their husbands, but they should not be expected to shoulder the whole burden of domestic duties; any husband who fails to support his wife is in dereliction of his duty. If 'two Oxen be put in one yoke, the one being bigger than the other, the greater bears most weight: so the Husband being the stronger vessel is to bear a greater burthen then his wife.'¹⁶⁰ Authority comes with a burden of responsibility to not abuse that authority, and to shoulder a duty of care to those for whom they are responsible. The idea that authority is respected, but is also subject to its subjects' consent, would

¹⁵⁶ Henderson and McManus, *Half-Humankind*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁷ Barbara K. Lewalski, 'Speght [married name Procter], Rachel.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45825>> [accessed 6 June 2020].

¹⁵⁸ Rachel Speght, 'A Mouzell for Melastomas' in *The Women's Sharp Revenge*, ed. by Simon Shepherd (London: Fourth Estate Ltd, 1985), p. 65.

¹⁵⁹ Henderson and McManus, p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ Speght, 'A Mouzell for Melastomas', p. 70.

become a key argument for political reform in both the home and parliament. However, for all the political implications of her arguments drawn out through the state-as-family metaphor, she does not consider the domestic as a political realm in its own right, something later writers such as Beale and particularly More, do. Speght does not mount any kind of argument to deconstruct women's legal status, nor does she propose ways of overcoming the inequalities inherent in societal structure, as this does not conflict with her religious, and therefore political, beliefs. Speght's acceptance of the hierarchy necessarily limits women, because they will never be the ones who hold the superior position in society, but she does not accept that there is an innate, spiritual superiority in men. Speght repeatedly undermines the assertion of men's authority throughout *Mouzell*, by the continued emphasis of the partnership between men and women, as ordained by God.

Furthermore, she exploits the hypocrisy within accounts of the Fall, in order to demonstrate that men cannot claim a spiritual superiority and also hold Eve solely responsible for the transgression. As she says: 'woman sinned, it is true, by her infidelity in not believing the word of God...but so did the man too.'¹⁶¹ As Eve's 'head', Adam could not have been compelled to commit the original sin if he did not desire to, if, as the 'weaker vessel,' Eve was the morally inferior being.¹⁶² Speght is often criticised for her acceptance of Eve's lesser status, but this depiction of Eve is perhaps not to be taken at face value. The notes to Simon Shepherd's edition of *Mouzell* indicates that the phrase 'weaker vessel' was a 'famous phrase from 1 Peter 3.7 [...] often used in plays by female characters who are patently not weak.'¹⁶³ Indeed, Speght goes on to determine that feminine weakness is 'like as a crystal glass sooner receives a crack than a strong stone pot.'¹⁶⁴ It is perhaps implied that Eve's vulnerability is an indication of her greater refinement and quality, but Speght does not expand on this image any

¹⁶¹ Speght, 'A Mouzell for Melastomas', p. 66.

¹⁶² Speght, 'A Mouzell for Melastomas', p. 66.

¹⁶³ The full verse is: 'Likewise the husbands, dwell with them as men of knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, even as they which are heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not interrupted.' Husbands and wives are equal in the promise of eternal life – their souls are both valid for redemption. It is only in earthly matters that the husband is the superior, and that superiority is one of a duty of care.

¹⁶⁴ Speght, 'A Mouzell for Melastomas', p. 66.

further. She does however draw out the double standard: either Eve was the spiritually inferior being, in which case Adam should have been able to resist her temptations and Eve cannot be held responsible for his downfall, or she was spiritually superior because her punishment was the greater, and thus should be acknowledged as such. Fundamentally, she asserts, the subsequent inequality between the sexes has no basis in Scripture because it rests on this contradiction.

She further undermines men's authority by stating that mankind's rule over the earth was, in accordance with Calvinist doctrine, only at the mercy of God and not because of man's inherent worth: 'man's worthiness not meriting this great favour at God's hands but His mercy only moving Him thereunto.'¹⁶⁵ It is by God's grace that authority is granted, but that authority does not necessitate a view of an earthly authority as innately superior. The hierarchy is predetermined and is not as a result of any action or spiritual greatness on the part of men, or indeed, monarchs. It simply exists.

Speght is an important author in acknowledging an evolution of feminist debate. By asserting an intellectual capability in women, she is arguing for their spiritual equality. This paves the way for later writers to extend women's spiritual equality to a more overtly to the political realm. Although Speght's own contributions to the political landscape should not be underrated, it is precisely because she 'elevates the personal and domestic as metaphors for the state of the nation' that differentiates Speght from Swetnam and gives Speght greater intellectual integrity.¹⁶⁶ The form of *Mouzell* itself copied existing academic practice, but it also represented a new convention in the debate about women by giving women a scholarly emissary to imitate. Not only did Speght influence the tone of debate about women, but as a visible example of women's intellectual skill she undoubtedly enabled later contributions by women to become more accepted as the norm.

Recognising the limitations of her work also enables us to see how later writers expanded the debate. While she undeniably argues for the intellectual and spiritual equality of women, and rejects

¹⁶⁵ Speght, 'A Mouzell for Melastomas', p. 65.

¹⁶⁶ Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomas" in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate', p. 131.

the premise of an innate superior quality in an authority, she accepts societal hierarchy as God's will. However, her work engendered a culture of women's political writing which allowed authors like Beale and More to examine how the structures of society do not directly proceed from the word of God and consider ways that it can be overcome. Beale, More and others further build on the groundwork laid by Speght by considering the politics of the domestic and arguing that gender inequality within the home is consequence of man-made laws and not divine authority. Paradoxically, Speght's consideration of the political and domestic blurs the two spheres together by conflating the rules that govern them through the family/state metaphor, and yet she keeps them as separate realms by not contemplating the practical applications of women's political status. It is fair to say that the progression made by later writers would not have been possible without Speght's contribution, and we next turn to Margaret Fell and Quaker women writers who use issues of public and private spaces to afford women greater political freedoms.

[*Margaret Fell – Women's Speaking Justified \(1667\) and other Quaker women writers*](#)

Reading the treatise *Women's Speaking Justified* by Margaret Fell, a contemporary of Beale and More, displays not only further examples of how Scripture is reinterpreted but also how these reinterpretations make broader political statements. Here, public and private spheres overlap and influence not only the role of wives in a marriage but also women's rights to preach publicly. However, *Women's Speaking Justified* is not a straightforward text and there are contradictions with Fell's work that worry an automatic interpretive reading of a symbiotic, two-way relationship between the public and private spheres. This in turn highlights the limitations of assuming that all early modern authors are writing analogously about the family. It is important to question this analogy because it shows that when women use it, they are using it consciously. Furthermore, the need for delineation between the public and private demonstrates that women were aware of the consequences of their arguments, further proving a political agency previously denied to readings of their work.

The overtly political nature of *Women's Speaking Justified* allows us to identify the political aspects of More and Beale's works, which are justifiably open to a reading of family as 'a little commonwealth' as 'it is now a truism that religion and politics cannot be separated in the early modern period.'¹⁶⁷ Exclusion of women from the pulpit was an exclusion of women from political life, and the justification for their exclusion was based on Scripture. By comparing the three treatises, the political aspects of More and Beale's works become clearer and are more firmly established as part of a lineage of women's political writing about marriage and equality.

Fell sits both inside and outside of the network of women I have created here. As a Quaker she would have been considered a radical sectarian and her imprisonment compounds the view of her as a vocal revolutionary, which is a very different picture to the one we have of More and Beale as modest, 'proper' virtuous women.¹⁶⁸ She was of slightly elevated social status compared with More and Beale, but was not in the upper echelons of society, and the education she received was along broadly similar lines. As a property-holder, one of the punishments handed down after her arrest, under *praemunire*, would have seen her forfeit her estate to the crown, had not George Fox intervened to protect it, which suggests an affinity with More, who was also frustrated by her lack of property rights.¹⁶⁹

Fell was active in the Quaker movement and is credited as the driving force behind the increase of women's participation within the Quaker church, earning her the moniker 'The Mother of Quakerism'.¹⁷⁰ She is not, however, the epitome of radical feminist thinkers; Fell does not sit at one

¹⁶⁷ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties eight treatises* (London: John Haviland for William Bladen, 1622), p.19; Paul Salzman, *Literature and Politics in the 1620s 'Whisper'd Counsells'*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 121.

¹⁶⁸ See Hilary Hinds, *God's Englishwomen*, Chapter 1 for discussion on Quaker radicalism.

¹⁶⁹ See ODNB, *Margaret Fell (née Askew)*.

¹⁷⁰ Bonnelyn Young Kunze writes in *Margaret Fell and the rise of Quakerism* (1994) that she was 'designated "mother of Quakerism" by those who remembered her. This label has been given to Fell in much of the secondary literature on the formative phase of Quakerism' (Kunze, xviii). Isabel Ross used this term as the title of her biography of Fell, *Margaret Fell: The mother of Quakerism* (1949) and most articles, books and references to Fell still include this appellation, including Marjon Ames. *Margaret Fell, Letters, and the Making of Quakerism*; Teresa Feroli. *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution*; Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green. "Quaker women" in *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400-1700*.

end of the feminist spectrum that the works of More and Beale aspire to but fail to reach. Although her arguments were bold, she imposed limits upon them by restricting the categories of women to whom those arguments applied. Fell never questions the authority of husbands over wives and her early work even criticises female preachers. However, *Women's Speaking Justified* represents 'an evolving theology and not [... an] unwavering position on female preaching.'¹⁷¹ Like More and Beale, Fell is a woman advocating for a form of equality for other women and more significantly, reinterprets Scripture as the foundation of her argument. She includes a number of passages and verses, but relevant to the work of More and Beale are her discussions on 1 Corinthians 14. 34, prelapsarian equality, the Fall, and the subsequent spiritual equality of men and women in the eyes of Christ.¹⁷² Reinterpretation of Scripture was a conventional technique and commonplace passages were routinely cited and debated. Quakers looked to the Bible for continued confirmation that their way of worship, still in its infancy, was authorised. Fell was not only part of the new Quaker movement, spreading its message, but can also be considered part of a network and lineage of Quaker women, active in the advocacy of women's equality that arose out of Quakerism, a key part of which is women's authority as preachers.

There was political significance in public preaching. Churches were important public spaces which social and economic communities centred around and the pulpit was a 'great disseminator of news and opinion.'¹⁷³ By advocating for women's right to speak in their meeting houses, Quakers were 'calling for a tremendous amount of political authority for women.'¹⁷⁴ Fell was not the first Quaker to examine the status of women with the Church, although *Women's Speaking Justified* is hailed as the

¹⁷¹ Marjon Ames, *Margaret Fell, Letters, and the Making of Quakerism* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017), p. 85.

¹⁷² 1 Corinthians 14. 34: 'Let your women keep silence in the Churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but they ought to be subject, as also the Law saith.'

¹⁷³ Margaret James, 'The Political Importance of the Tithes Controversy in the English Revolution, 1640-60', *History*, 26.1 (1941), pp. 1-18, p. 5. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24401760>. [Accessed 19 Jul. 2022]. See also: Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, 'Quaker women', *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400-1700*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 176.

¹⁷⁴ Broad and Green, 'Quaker women', p. 177.

most influential of its time. However, many other Quaker women wrote in advocacy of women's rights to preach based on the Quaker principle that 'all human beings were equal in the eyes of Christ [because] we are all one both male and female in Christ Jesus.'¹⁷⁵ This premise was a key part of Quaker women's arguments for equality.

Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole are two authors that Fell's work built upon, and in their treatise *To the Priests and People of England, we discharge our consciences and give them warning* (1655), argues that argue that references to male and female in scripture do not refer to the individual sexes but instead represent different qualities and attributes that are contained within every individual. For example, 1 Corinthians 11. 4-5: 'Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head' seemingly creates a distinction between the way men and women should behave in Church and was traditionally used to suppress women's participation in worship.

Cotton and Cole asserted that as all are male and female in Christ, this passage does not refer to a literal head-covering. They argue that anyone speaking in church is to be 'covered with the covering of the Spirit,' and that 'if they are not in the Light, then they speak as "women" regardless of their actual sex: they speak, that is, with a lack of authority or with "weakness" rather than strength.'¹⁷⁶ Thus 'every woman' is not all biological women, but means those speaking without the light of the Spirit and thus without the grace of God, i.e. with a lack of authority. Those who have felt the Spirit move them to speak, do so with authority, as men.

Cotton and Cole shift the focus away from physical sex and open up reference to men and women in Scripture. Men and women are spiritually equal, and it is the male- and female-ness within each individual that is referred to. The idea that men and women are of equal spiritual worth is an important argument that recurs throughout the works of More, Beale and the other female authors

¹⁷⁵ Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole, 'To the Priests and People of England', *Early Modern Women's Writing: An Anthology 1560-1700*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 146-7.

¹⁷⁶ Cotton and Cole, 'To the Priests and People of England', p. 147; Broad and Green, 'Quaker women', p. 174.

in this chapter as woman's inherent flaws and moral inferiority was a commonly used tool of their oppression. By drawing on Scripture to prove that fundamentally women are the spiritual equal of men, More, Beale, Fell, Cotton, Cole and others are using the founding principles upon which early modern society is built to affect change and question the status quo.

The Quakers' treatises are useful here because they help us to read More and Beale in a broader political context through the analogy of the private family household and the public political state, as articulated by James VI and I:

By the law of nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation. And as the father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education and vertuous government of his children: even so is the King bound to care for all his subjects.¹⁷⁷

However, the analogy is not one that can be applied unproblematically in all instances. Although she argues strongly for women's rights to speak publicly, Fell delineates the public and private spheres and accepts the authority of the husband and father over the wife and children. This thesis will argue that Beale and More's works on the family can be read as their proposed models for societal change, but *Women Speaking Justified* does not allow for this kind of reading, or at least not to the same extent. While the marriage/church/state metaphor is a compelling way to read and interpret texts about women and equality, *Women Speaking Justified* suggests caution is needed when making claims about the views of an author extrapolated from the text. A statement regarding in/equality in marriage does not necessarily imply a corresponding view of the state or women's role in the public sphere, nor vice versa.

Fell reinterprets key passages of Scripture to further the argument for women's spiritual equality. Her primary focus is to justify women's participation in church, but by addressing the Fall, it is necessary to consider how mutually compatible her arguments are when thinking about both the

¹⁷⁷ James [VI and] I, King of England, *The true lawe of free monarchies: or The reciprock and mutuall dutie betwixt a free king, and his naturall subjectes*, (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, printer to the Kings majestie), 1598, n.p. (page 8 of pdf, STC (2nd ed.) / 14409.) <https://www.proquest.com/books/true-lawe-free-monarchies-reciprock-mutuall-dutie/docview/2240945310/se-2> [accessed 19th July 2022].

domestic reality of marriage and the equality between husband and wife, as well as the equality this could engender between men and women in society. Like Cotton and Cole, Fell argues that men and women were both created in the image of God making 'no such distinctions and differences as men do,' allowing Eve and Adam to enjoy the gifts of the Garden of Eden equally.¹⁷⁸ Fell does not hold Eve more accountable than Adam for the Fall itself, as 'they were both tempted into the transgression and disobedience' but instead lays blame with the Serpent.¹⁷⁹ For her, it is the punishment God meets out which demonstrates God's sanction of women's involvement in the church. After the Fall God 'put enmity between the Woman and the Serpent; and if the Seed of the Woman speak not, the Seed of the Serpent Speaks; for God hath put enmity between the two Seeds.'¹⁸⁰ By silencing women, the serpent is given voice. However, while Fell does not hold Eve solely accountable for the Fall, she does accept a postlapsarian inequality between men and women, and it is only through God's mercy that women are able to attain unity with a husband. However, the inequality between husband and wife in the private sphere does not translate to the public one.

To the standards of modern feminist thought, there is tension between the equality Fell argues for in church and her views on the relationship between men and women in marriage. Fell accepts that a woman should be subject to her husband; through the blessing of God's mercy, women are made as one with their husbands in marriage but are not equal to them. However, she does not see that this inequality extends to public speaking. She argues that, although Paul said, 'I suffer not a Woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the Man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the Woman being deceived was in the transgression,' he is only speaking about women in relation to her husband.¹⁸¹ The reference to Adam and Eve limits Paul's testimony to marriage and does not extend to spiritual inequality. Those who deny women the

¹⁷⁸ Margaret Fell, *Womens speaking justified, proved and allowed of by the scriptures all such as speak by the spirit and power of the lord jesus...* (London: s.n., 1667), p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Margaret Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p 4.

¹⁸⁰ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 4.

¹⁸¹ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 9.

right to speak are ‘straining’ Paul’s words, when ‘there is nothing here’ (in his teachings) to prevent them from doing so.¹⁸²

To prevent women from speaking publicly ‘perverts’ the Apostles word and ‘corrupts his intent.’¹⁸³ So while in the private family sphere a man may have authority over his wife, within the public sphere of the church men and women should be considered spiritual equals. However, Fell acknowledges there are circumstances which preclude women from speaking, such as not wearing modest apparel or approaching worship without due reverence. In these circumstances that women need ‘to learn in silence with all subjection, as it becometh Women professing Godliness with good works.’¹⁸⁴ In excluding some women from public testimony, Fell can assert that the scripturally mandated default position is for women to have spiritual equality in the pulpit. Not only this, but by differentiating between different types of women she is also able to differentiate between different types of men.

For Quakers, the Bible is not the sole source of doctrine, and the Word of God speaks through individual believers. So when ‘Paul “commands silence” in women, his may not be the last word on the topic.’¹⁸⁵ Fell states that certain types of men are also prohibited from speaking by asserting that Paul’s command to silence is not applicable at all times, but only in specific instances:

for the Apostle is their exhorting the Corinthians unto charity, and to desire Spiritual gifts, and not to speak in an unknown tongue, and not to be Children in understanding, but to be Children in malice, but in understanding to be men.¹⁸⁶

Fell argues, firstly, that Paul’s message is directed to both Corinthian women and men in the crowd, and secondly, it is practical advice on the proper way to worship. When people try to speak at the same time in multiple languages, Paul advises that an ‘unknown Tongue’ should be allowed to speak with an

¹⁸² Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 9.

¹⁸³ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 10.

¹⁸⁴ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 9.

¹⁸⁵ Teresa Feroli, *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 2006, p. 159.

¹⁸⁶ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 9.

interpreter, but if there is not interpreter 'let him keep silence in the Church.'¹⁸⁷ As Fell points out 'Here the Man is commanded to keep silence as well as the woman, when they are in confusion and out of order.'¹⁸⁸ Silence is not the exclusive domain of women and the right to speak is not a universal right, and any exceptions are not drawn along purely gender-based lines.¹⁸⁹ All who are moved by the Spirit of the Lord should be allowed to preach in principle and it is only in certain instances, which apply to both men and women, that silence is required. Fell's activism in enabling women to testify publicly, opened the door for writers like More and Beale to bridge a gap between the Church and both the domestic and political realms.

Although it is problematic to assert that the arguments in *Women's Speaking Justified* can be applied domestically, it does not follow that the family/state metaphor no longer holds true for any text. Unlike Fell, More and Beale do not separate the domestic and public realms. Within their work, the role women have as spiritual advisors within a marriage is absolutely one that can be explored as relevant to corresponding arguments about the rule of law and social contract theory, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Women's Speaking Justified may seem contradictory in places, for example, with regards to why equality only applies in one sphere and not another, but this only demonstrates the complexity of the issue surrounding the tensions of family and state structures and does not undermine readings in other texts. Once we accept that Fell delineates the public and private realms but More and Beale do not, then we have a greater understanding of how the political aspects of More and Beale's works can be drawn out confidently. It is not necessary for all female authors to agree about the type of equality they want and where it applies but rather it is vital that we acknowledge that these women-

¹⁸⁷ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ Fell, *Womens speaking justified*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁹ See: Hilary Hinds, *God's Englishwomen* for a detailed discussion on the role of silence in Quaker worship, especially Chapters 3 and 7 – the latter of which uses Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole's *The Priests and People of England* as a case study.

writing-as-women are engaging with political philosophy that interrogates the broader political impacts of domestic concerns.

Bathsua Makin – *The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen* (1673)

Bathsua Makin's treatise has education at its forefront but through the course of the work it is possible to draw out other themes. Makin touches on marriage, equality and women acting as advisors or speaking publicly, whether literally speaking or voicing opinions through the written word. These themes are also evident in the works of Mary Beale, Mary More and other female authors who write about the role of women in early modern society. She addresses women's spiritual capacity for intellect and their capability to be a help-meet or yokfellow to their husbands, thus indicating a spiritual and intellectual equality.

As self-styled *tutoress* to Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I, Makin was in an unusual position as an instructor of Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Mathematics, among other subjects. The distinction between her role, from that of governess, is an important one. A governess was typically responsible for 'attending ... to behaviour' whereas a tutor 'taught specific academic subjects'.¹⁹⁰ In calling herself a *tutoress*, Makin is deliberately highlighting her academic credentials. Although elite young girls may have had multiple tutors who taught them in their homes, 'most tutors were male and more highly paid than any governess'.¹⁹¹

Makin was part of a network of learned women, including Anna Marie van Schurman, whom More references in 'The Woman's Right' and Teague argues that as girl, she probably knew Rachel Speght.¹⁹² It is conceivable Makin and More at least knew of each other, while there is no evidence that they met, they both lived in London around the same time in the 1670s, and had mutual

¹⁹⁰ Francis Teague, *Educating English Daughters*, eds. Francis Teague and Margaret Ezell (Toronto, Ontario: Iter Academic Press, 2016), p. 31.

¹⁹¹ Teague, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 31.

¹⁹² Teague, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 31

connections to the Royal Society.¹⁹³ A connection to Beale is less tenable; although Makin, Beale and More all had their work circulated in scribal publication, they were also artists and all three made excellent use of their ‘household salons’ as a base for developing and publicizing their interdisciplinary creativity.¹⁹⁴ While their common endeavors as artists and matriarchs of intellectual development is not directly the issue here, it is nevertheless important that More and Beale are writing within an established network of intellectual women.

The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen was not published until 1673, although Teague posits that it may have been written in the 1640s at the request of the Hartlib circle, a group of like-minded friends, centred around the polymath and educationalist Samuel Hartlib, to contribute to the ‘pamphlet war on education’ in advocacy of educational reform, including that of the education of women.¹⁹⁵ The text is far more extensive than both ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ and ‘The Woman’s Right’. Makin states, ‘I shall speak distinctly to your questions and then answer your objections,’ which she does in some detail.¹⁹⁶ She starts by listing many examples of women who were educated and proved themselves proficient in academic areas: arts and tongues, linguistics, oratory, logic, philosophy, mathematics, and poetics. In ‘The Woman’s Right’ More provides a similar, albeit significantly shorter list of academically gifted women and it is possible that More was inspired by Makin’s comprehensive list.¹⁹⁷

After this catalogue of women, Makin then addresses the specific objections raised against the education of women. While there are more obvious parallels to be drawn with More’s work, there are interesting points of comparisons with Beale’s as well. Makin states her main objective, that ‘care ought to be taken by us to educate women in learning.’¹⁹⁸ The foundation of Makin’s argument is that

¹⁹³ See *Educating English Daughters*, eds. Francis Teague and Margaret Ezell.

¹⁹⁴ See Sarah Gwyneth Ross. *The Birth of Feminism*. Ross defines a “household salon” as a domestic base of intellectual and creative pursuits, p. 14.

¹⁹⁵ Teague, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 33.

¹⁹⁶ Makin, ‘The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen’, in *Educating English Daughters*, p. 57.

¹⁹⁷ Makin, ‘The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen’, pp. 57-73.

¹⁹⁸ Makin, ‘The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen’, p. 75.

while it is not essential for the salvation of women to be educated, it is nevertheless to the benefit of women's souls that they should be so. As Sara L. Uckelman argues 'the very features of women that [an] objector attempts to appeal to, to dismiss women from the status of educated are the same features that Makin implicitly argues support their claim to that status.'¹⁹⁹ While Uckelman is referring specifically to objections raised around women speaking, which Makin reframes from prattling to philosophising, this reformulation of criticisms can be seen throughout the texts in this chapter.²⁰⁰

Rather than being detrimental to women's moral fortitude, Makin argues the current education teaches girls to 'frisk and dance, to paint their faces, to curl their hair, to put on a whisk, to wear gay clothes is not to truly adorn, but to adulterate their bodies – yea, what is worse to defile their souls.'²⁰¹ She goes on to say that had God not intended women to be equal to men in the respect of education, then he would not have created them capable of such intellect, the existence of which her catalogue of women clearly demonstrates. Furthermore, she argues that 'God intended women as a help-meet to man in his constant conversation and in the concerns of his family and estate when he should most need' and it is 'ungrateful' to God to neglect this duty.²⁰²

As with Speght, this argument of helpmeets or yokelfellows is present in both More's and Beale's work. While More addresses the religious argument that a wife's duty is to be by her husband as a constant companion, Beale tackles it from the secular view of friendship, although she does call friendship a 'Divine relation' when it exists perfectly.²⁰³ Makin and More draw from Scripture, while Beale draws from secular sources, but the premise is clear in all three examples, four if we include Speght's: women are intended to be, and are capable of being, equals to men in their relationships together. Makin argues for intellectual equality, More argues for legal equality, and Beale argues for

¹⁹⁹ Sara L. Uckelman, 'Bathsua Makin and Anna Maria van Schurman: Education and the Metaphysics of Being a Woman.' in *Early Modern Women on Metaphysics*, ed. Emily Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 104.

²⁰⁰ Uckelman, p. 104.

²⁰¹ Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', p. 76.

²⁰² Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', p. 76

²⁰³ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', ff. 516v.

moral equality, although all three branches of equality obviously come from the same tree and share common roots. The nature of women's subjection or rather their ability to overcome their subjection, is to have their mental acuity acknowledged, whether in academic subjects, legal understanding or spiritual support in the form of advice and counsel. Makin uses the shared terminology of 'help-meet' or 'yokefellow' to argue that women need to be educated in order to be good wives, for

had God intended women only as a finer sort of cattle, he would not have made them reasonable. ... God intended women as a help-meet to man in his constant conversation and in the concerns of his family and estate when he should most need, in sickness, weakness, absence, death, etc. Whilst we neglect to fit them for these things we renounce God's blessing [that] He hath appointed women for, are ungrateful to Him, cruel to them, and injurious to ourselves.²⁰⁴

Like More, Makin makes practical-based arguments for women's education, namely that they are of use to their husbands in business matters. Mary Beale was the first professional female portrait artist and while the only records we have of her business were kept by her husband Charles, it is unlikely that she had no understanding of the fiscal side of affairs. Additionally, Mary More was evidently well-versed in legal matters and administered her first husband's estate after his death. While neither writes directly about these experiences, these principles were obviously put into practice, as far as was possible and we can ascertain. Makin asserts that any involvement with industry requires a certain amount of education, as she puts it

To buy wool and flax, to dye scarlet and purple requires skill in natural philosophy. To consider a field, the quantity and quality, requires knowledge in geometry. To plant a vineyard requires understanding in husbandry. She could not merchandise with knowledge in arithmetic. She could not govern so great a family well without knowledge in politics and economics. She could not look well to the ways of her household, except she understood physic and chirurgery [medicine and surgery]. She could not open her mouth with wisdom and her in her tongue the law of kindness, unless she understood grammar, rhetoric, and logic.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', p. 76.

²⁰⁵ Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', p. 89.

Makin's point is to redefine what 'counts' as education, perhaps the first, or at least an early example of acknowledging the work that women do, as being of equal merit to any that a man does, even though it is not formally recognised.

The above paragraph refers to duties done by a Dutchwoman in the past and is addressed to aristocratic women, who may no longer need to undertake this kind of manual labour. Not only does it guide them to appreciate the more refined educational elements of such work, it is apparent that contemporary English women were involved in industry and managed household and Makin can hardly have been unaware of the many women who worked in London and beyond, in any number of industries. Thus then, this passage can be read in two ways: firstly, at face value as its argument for aristocratic women to not be satisfied with idleness, but secondly, as a tacit acknowledgement of the capabilities of women working in roles that, on the whole, only recognised men's labour. So, for example, the widows who would take over printing houses are evidence that they knew enough about the business to take over its running, even if they subsequently took on an apprentice to assist.²⁰⁶

Makin goes on to state that in the works for Erasmus, an abbot and a learned woman debate the education of women, with the learned woman giving 'many good reasons why women should be learned,' the abbot responds with only one reason against her arguments: 'that women would never be kept in subjection if they were learned.'²⁰⁷ The deliberate subjugation of women through the withholding of education is again addressed by all three authors, through the advocacy of a wife's duty to be a help-meet and partner to her husband. Mary Beale critiques this apparent subjugation by expressly stating that through the counsel of friendship inequality can be overcome. While she does not overtly state that education is the catalyst that allows this counsel to take place, it is clear that the type of counsel she describes relies on the counsellor having a certain amount of formal learning and intellectual capacity. Mary More, meanwhile, explicitly differentiates between various kinds of

²⁰⁶ See: Helen Smith, *Grossly Material Things: Women in Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

²⁰⁷ Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', pp. 76-7.

relationships where there is a power imbalance, and firmly concludes that wives are not slaves to their husbands.

As stated, Makin answers fifteen objections in total, but there are two that are particularly relevant in regard to More and Beale. Firstly, the effect education will have on a woman's desirability as a wife. This objection is addressed as two separate points: that no man will want to marry an educated woman, and that women will abuse their education and use it as an excuse to ignore their husbands. Makin's answer is a simple one: in order to be a good wife, it is necessary that she be an equal to her husband so that she may be a help to him. Makin addresses the point that women may abuse their learning, by stating that men do and that there is no reason to believe that the kind of education which makes men morally better, will make women worse. More and Beale also stress that equality is necessary between husband and wife and that there is no reason to believe that women are not capable of such endeavours that men are. Indeed, More explicitly states in her title 'the equality of their souls is also proved in that women have done whatever is of value that men have done.'²⁰⁸ Both Makin and More use the phrase 'The woman is the glory of the man' in their arguments. For Makin, a woman being learned reflects well upon her husband, but More goes further by analysing the whole phrase 'The man is the glory of God and the woman is the glory of the man' to argue that logically this means that the woman is also the glory of God.²⁰⁹

The role women played in church and preaching the word of God is addressed by both Makin and More, and Beale to some extent, and the second relevant objection Makin responds to is that 'the end [purpose] of learning is public business, which women are not capable of. They must not speak in the church, and it is more proper for men to act the commonwealth than they.'²¹⁰ Makin addresses this by acknowledging that although 'Englishwomen could not preach or serve as lay readers in the

²⁰⁸ More, 'The Woman's Right', f. 46.

²⁰⁹ More's respondent Robert Whitehall objects to this reasoning of More's, by stating that this cannot be the case, because otherwise Paul would have expressly stated it. Whitehall will be discussed further in Chapters 4 and 6.

²¹⁰ Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', p. 86.

established church,' they could engage with 'private instruction' at home and that public speaking is not the only reason for education.²¹¹ More has a more developed argument by stating that it a wife's duty to play a role in their husband's spiritual development: this forms the crux of her treatise, dealing with a mistranslation of Scripture resulting in a rendering of 'putting away' and 'leaving' a non-believing spouse. Although More's argument rests on the assumption of ownership in the above terms, the foundation of the argument is that a believing husband or wife is duty-bound to remain with a non-believing spouse to assist them in their spiritual development. It is a wife's duty to do this just as much as a husband's and she must therefore be able to instruct him in the word of God if necessary.

By considering the role of wives as spiritual advisors, we can see how Beale's assertion that a marriage based on friendship is necessary, if a wife is to be a counsellor; she muddies the waters of counsel and friendship and spousal duty, so that marriage must necessarily involve equality between men and women.

Mary Astell – A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I (1694) and Some Reflections Upon Marriage (1700)

Mary Astell uses many of the same arguments and techniques her predecessors did, advocating for women's education, but she makes a significant break from traditional early modern thinking by separating marriage from the political sphere, breaking the analogy that had been central to many seventeenth-century treatises. This is not a reversal of the progress made by women entering into the political debate, Astell is not shying away from political controversy and limiting her writing to domestic matters; indeed, she was more politically overt than any of her predecessors. The freedom to query the marriage analogy is demonstrative of the greater acceptance of women in the political

²¹¹ Teague, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 86, footnote 228; Makin, 'The Ancient Education of Gentlewomen', p. 86.

sphere; she does not need to hide her political arguments within the domestic. Astell's freedoms were far from unlimited: her work was still published anonymously and was subject to increased criticism once her identity was known, although her work was also received positively after she was recognised as the author and *A Serious Proposal* was reprinted four times. Nonetheless she built on the political movement during the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration which had seen 'unprecedented involvement in political activity' by women.²¹²

In *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* and *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* Astell's arguments about education, marriage and women's status in society are very similar to those made over the course of the seventeenth century, but she transforms the debate by appealing directly to women. She appeals to women to demand education, instead of debating the principle with men: significantly her treatise is titled *A Serious Proposal To Ladies*, not 'A Serious Proposal About Ladies'. She addresses her peers directly, imploring them to contemplate their own positions and worth, arguing 'your glass will not do you half so much service as a serious reflection on your own Minds.'²¹³ She also applies the concept of friendship not to marriage, as Beale does, but to other women, arguing that friendship is an important tool in personal development and spiritual growth, which redefines the husband-wife dynamic away from one that restores or creates equality. She sums up her argument by stating: 'And therefore nothing is more likely to improve us in Virtue, and advance us to the very highest pitch of Goodness than unfeigned Friendship, which is the most beneficial, as well as the most pleasant thing in the world,' the 'us' being the 'Ladies' to whom she addressed *A Serious Proposal*.²¹⁴

Furthermore, in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*, Astell critiques the marriage/social contract analogy which allows her to protest the claims made by men from either side of the political spectrum, such as Filmer and Locke, which asserted men's freedoms, but necessarily entailed women's

²¹² Bridget Hill, *The First English Feminist: Reflections Upon Marriage and other writings by Mary Astell* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing, 1986), p. 19.

²¹³ Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Ontario: Broadview literary texts, 2002), p. 52.

²¹⁴ Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, p. 100.

subjection. Her argument does not end with liberation for women, but the ‘rather more dismal prospect of obedience to authority as a duty for everyone.’²¹⁵ But her interrogation of the arbitrary application of scripture is an important act of political and philosophical criticism. It also leads her to conclude that as marriage is a contract which is entered into freely, women should be ‘taught to know the World’ and recognise the false charms and compliments of men so that they may ‘marry more discreetly’ thus avoiding scandal, when a marriage breaks down.²¹⁶

Astell’s arguments for women’s education are a natural development of those made by Speght, Makin and other before her. In *A Serious Proposal, Part I* she uses many of the same premises, insisting that women are capable and spiritually equal to the task of academic endeavours: they will not become wild and unruly, and there is no reason to think they will fall to intellectual vanity and become too proud or boastful.²¹⁷ Where Astell perhaps differs is her ‘innovative’ appeal directly to women.²¹⁸ Rather than making general defences of women’s education to a wider audience, she addresses the same arguments, but her purpose is to persuade women of the merits of education rather than asking for permission from men. Astell argues that education is central to a feeling of self-worth, so that women might value themselves for more than their looks. Crucially, training in classical academic subjects is also necessary to fully comprehend her religious and spiritual duties to God. Women should be able to fully comprehend moral philosophical arguments and the word of God, so their souls may no longer be ‘unadorn’d and neglected.’²¹⁹ She goes on to argue that since God gave women ‘intelligent souls’ there is no reason to prevent women from improving them.²²⁰

²¹⁵ Patricia Springborg, ‘Note on the Text’ in Mary Astell, *Political Writings*, ed. by Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.

²¹⁶ Mary Astell, ‘Reflections Upon Marriage’, in *Political Writings*, ed. by Patricia Springborg, p. 75.

²¹⁷ Although Astell extends her argument in *Part II*, the main concern here will be with *Part I*. *Part II* is more concerned with specific ontological and epistemological questions, in which Astell can be more obviously categorised as a moral philosopher than feminist writer – which is not to undermine the link between these two descriptors.

²¹⁸ Hill, *The First English Feminist*, p. 19.

²¹⁹ Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, p. 77.

²²⁰ Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, p. 80.

Like her predecessors, Astell is chiefly concerned with spiritual growth and religious fulfilment, but unlike them she only alludes to Scripture, she does not make it a central part of her argument in the way that More and Speght do. She rarely quotes chapter and verse, although her work is littered with allusions to specific passages of Scripture; instead, she looks to contemporary religious treatises for inspiration more than her predecessors did.²²¹ Astell is asking for individual spiritual autonomy: the right to independently understand Scripture. While she doesn't argue for women to have any religious authority, she does extend this ability and freedom to develop a personal relationship with God through the academic study of Scripture, and to argue that women should improve their French to study the Philosophy of Decartes and Malebranche. Although these statements are separate clauses, their proximity to one another tie the notions of spiritual growth and secular academic pursuit together:

And let us also acquire a true Practical Knowledge such as will convince us of the absolute necessity of *Holy Living* as well as of *Right Believing*, and that no Heresy is more dangerous than that of an ungodly and wicked Life. And since the *French Tongue* is understood by most Ladies, methinks they may much better improve it by the study of Philosophy (as I hear the *French Ladies* do) *Des Cartes, Malebranche* and others, than by reading idle *Novels* and *Romances*.²²²

The transition from religious to secular is instant and the two are inexorably linked. If a person needs to have a fully realised comprehension of God's word, so that they may lead a good life then they should also be allowed to engage with other teachings outside of religious texts. In this way, Astell does arguably move the debate on from earlier works on women's education by insinuating that academic pursuits have a moral value in their own right, which do not necessarily need to result in spiritual enlightenment, although the association with religious understanding is what allows her to make this assertion. In comparison, the lack of direct engagement with Scripture in *A Serious Proposal*

²²¹ In the main she refers to John Norris' *Reflections Upon the Conduct of Human Life* (1690) and William Wotton's *Reflections Upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) making marginal notes to passages she draws from.

²²² Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, pp. 82-3.

is striking. Astell makes only one reference to Eve, when extolling the virtues of her proposed retreat, in which she does tacitly accept Eve as responsible for the Fall.

Astell does not discuss the Fall, or query why Eve should be held solely accountable for mankind's eviction from paradise. Her predecessors nearly all analysed the creation story and offered alternative narratives in which Eve was either not solely responsible for the Fall and/or was at least equal to Adam before the Fall and therefore, women are equals to their husbands as helpmeets or yokefellows. These arguments are often coupled with the idea that education is needed for women to overcome perceived or actual imbalances between men and women. More and Beale make an argument for education, formal and informal respectively, from the premise of the benefits for men for women to be educated and the part that women play as wives is to necessarily be an equal to her husband. They do not exclude the necessity of women's education for its own sake, and More in particular stresses the injustice of women lacking the autonomy over their financial affairs. However, because Astell is less concerned with the benefits for men that women's education provides, she does not prioritise the argument regarding wives' roles as a yokefellow. Instead, she accepts a husband's absolute authority over his wife and an education enables a woman to ensure that the man she marries is worthy of such obedience.

Astell develops her thought on the hierarchy between wife and husband in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*. As well as providing Christian understanding, a good education for women was essential for even a chance at happiness in marriage. She argues that because women are necessarily required to obey their husbands, then it was important for women to find the right partner and in order to do so and tolerate them, they must have the good sense to recognize the desired qualities of a virtuous mind in a man. In order to 'survive the trials of marriage' women needed not only a strong sense of Christian duty, intelligence and a good temperament, but also 'all the Assistance the best Education can give her.'²²³

²²³ Hill, *The First English Feminist*, p. 35.

Some Reflections Upon Marriage asserts that no, or very few, marriages are ever happy ones, but that the consequences must be borne by women, who do not escape Astell's censure on the matter. Astell composed *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* in response to the infamous scandal surrounding the Duke and Duchess of Mazarin, where the Duchess escaped an abusive arranged marriage but shocked Europe by leaving her husband.²²⁴ Astell acknowledged that this situation is faced by many women, who were trapped in a union with a husband who abuses his authority to 'tyrannize over wives who were clearly their intellectual equals or superiors'.²²⁵ She did not forgive the Duchess her actions however, instead she condemned it as a dereliction of duty, arguing that the Duchess disobeyed her husband, who holds authority over her. Astell was adamant that the social hierarchy be maintained, and that due deference and respect is owed to those in power. This is a similar sentiment expressed by Beale, who does not want her brand of equality to overthrow the social order. Beale does not make a claim about whether the hierarchies that exist within society are moral or not, only that they exist, with no intention to suggest things should be otherwise. Beale asserts that power imbalances can be overcome through the offices of friendship and since marriage is a type of friendship, equality can be achieved between husband and wife, and although the wife may nominally need to obey her husband, the husband will never ask anything of her that she would have cause to refuse.

Astell too considered the notion of friendship in *A Serious Proposal, Part I*, but rather than applying it to marriage as Beale does, Astell instead advocates for female friendship and so arguably progresses the feminist cause, whilst paradoxically upholding the social, if not intellectual or spiritual, superiority of men. The idea of unequal friendships will be discussed in Chapter 5: The Politics of Marriage, part 1: 'A Discourse on Friendship' and the work of Francis Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Katherine

²²⁴ See Rachel Weil, *Political Passions: Gender, Family and Political Argument in England 1680–1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) and Bridget Hill, *The First English Feminist: Reflections Upon Marriage and other writings by Mary Astell* (Aldershot: Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1986).

²²⁵ Weil, *Political Passions*, pp. 142-3.

Philips and Mary Beale all address this imbalance and the role that friendship can play in overcoming the inequality – but Astell does not use friendship in this way.

She does use the Christian idea of friendship as a form of charity, as did Taylor in *A discourse of the nature, offices, and measures of friendship* (1657) and describes friendship as

nothing else but Charity contracted; it is (in the words of an admired Author) a kind of revenging our selves on the narrowness of our Faculties, by exemplifying that extraordinary charity on one or two, which we are willing but not able to exercise towards all.²²⁶

The admired author is John Norris, with whom Astell exchanged many letters on the topic of friendship. Norris acknowledges that his work is heavily indebted to Taylor's *Discourse* and both Taylor and Norris 'are noteworthy for the fact that they highlight the question of a woman's (and not just a man's) capacity for friendship.'²²⁷ Taylor believed that women and men could only have a lesser type of friendship, not based on Ciceronian ideals of spiritual equality, while Beale and subsequently Norris argue that the offices of friendship can be fulfilled by marriage and this allows a type of equality.²²⁸

Even as Astell accepts the authority of a husband, she considers the possibilities of female friendship. Much like her stance on education, friendship is not about achieving equality with men, but is a 'source of moral strength for women,' modelled on the doctrine of friendship put forth by Philips, for whom Astell displays great admiration and has cited as an important role model.²²⁹

Astell's view on friendship displays a Ciceronian ideal of admonition as a means of spiritual growth and a central part of Beale's discussion in 'A Discourse on Friendship' is the proper manner in which to give advice and reproof. She uses many of the same principles discussed by Beale, of emulation, kindly advice, moderated yet sincere praise, but Astell looks to achieve a pure Aristotelian friendship between women, who are of equal status and by emulating virtues and thus demonstrating

²²⁶ Taylor's *A discourse of the nature, offices, and measures of friendship* (1657) is a treatise addressed to Katherine Philips in response to her work on friendship; Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, p. 98.

²²⁷ Jacqueline Broad. 'Mary Astell on Virtuous Friendship.' *Parergon* 26.2 (2009): 65-86. <doi:10.1353/pgn.0.0169.> [accessed 26 April 2020], p. 74.

²²⁸ I have found no evidence that Norris read Beale's 'A Discourse on Friendship'.

²²⁹ Broad, 'Mary Astell on Virtuous Friendship', p. 79.

their own intellectual and spiritual capacity, women can be each other's role models. Through these demonstrable capabilities, other women will come to recognise their own potential and value themselves accordingly. This kind of shift in women's own understanding of their potential would not be 'widespread or revolutionary in the modern political sense, but it would nevertheless be social change to the extent that it would involve a transformation in social attitudes, norms, and practises toward women.'²³⁰

Astell does not believe that there is any inherent superiority in men, but she rather accepts the status quo and seeks to maintain it. Much like Fell who limited her type of equality to within the realm of the church, via preaching and testimony, Astell also sets boundaries which gives women a place for spiritual growth: literally within a retreat where women can step outside of societal norms, and on their return create a small change in attitude by other women. Women can achieve spiritual growth in a marriage, but it must be obtained through enduring their submissive obedience to their husbands.

Astell is not attacking women, although she certainly does not grant them leave to defy their obligations. Rather, she undermines 'men's pretensions to inherent superiority,' which in turn demonstrates a paradox that a wife's duty to obey does not come from an innate justification that men deserve to be in power, only that they are.²³¹ Much like 'A Discourse on Friendship', Astell claims she does not seek to upset the status quo, but she does appear to question the way that power is used or abused, which is strongly reminiscent of 'The Woman's Right'. Astell's strong monarchist beliefs are often used as arguments against regarding her as feminist, but she operates within the bounds of her political beliefs and critiques the 'analogue between the marriage contract and the social contract on which early modern natural rights theories so heavily depended.'²³²

²³⁰ Broad, 'Mary Astell on Virtuous Friendship', pp. 84-5.

²³¹ Weil, *Political Passions*, p. 143.

²³² Springborg, *Political Writings*, p. 4.

Astell's oft quoted statement from *Some Reflections on Marriage* that 'If Men are born free, how is it that women are born slaves' is at the heart of Astell's feminism, but when understood in political terms, can reconcile her advocacy for women's education and advancement with her insistence that wives are subject to their husbands.²³³ Similarly, her statement that 'Women shou'd [not] teach in the Church, or usurp Authority where it is not allow'd them,' seems like a step back from the arguments made by Fell, Cotton and Cole women's rights to preach and Astell's own views on spiritual self-determination.²³⁴ However, both these statements are in fact consistent with Astell's political views, which consists of an adherence to passive obedience and respect for the rule of law. As Weil states, 'Astell's strongest political commitment was to the Church of England' and she strives to maintain its authority, as she perceives it to be under attack from non-conformists.²³⁵

In *Political Writings*, Patricia Springborg states that Astell is directly referencing John Locke's arguments on hereditary monarchy in his *Two Treatise on Government* (1689) and in *A Serious Proposal* Springborg states that 'Astell cut[s] a swathe through natural rights, like Filmer denying the possibility of such freedoms in an imperfectly and hierarchically ordered world.'²³⁶ For Locke, government does not necessarily entail an absolute monarchy and because 'men are born free' then any system of governance must be entered into freely as a contract between ruler and ruled. However, Locke only denied hereditary obligations when it came to fulfilling duties as a loyal subject of the crown; he retained 'hereditable obligations as regards one's property, [which] was standard Scholastic doctrine.'²³⁷ Astell correctly perceived this argument as one which continued the disenfranchisement of women, who could not own property and 'points to the arbitrariness of views which ascribe

²³³ Mary Astell, 'Reflections Upon Marriage', *Political Writings*, ed. Patricia Springborg, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 18.

²³⁴ Mary Astell, 'A Serious Proposal to the Ladies. Parts I and II', ed. by Patricia Springborg (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press 2002), p. 81.

²³⁵ Weil, *Political Passions*, p. 143.

²³⁶ Sir Robert Filmer (c. 1588 – 26 May 1653) was an English political theorist who defended the divine right of kings, author of *Patriarcha* (1680). Margaret Ezell reads 'The Woman's Right' and its response 'The Woman's Right Proved False' alongside *Patriarchia* in *The Patriarch's Wife* (1987); Springborg, *Political Writings*, p. 27.

²³⁷ Springborg, *Political Writings*, p. 27.

freedom as a birthright for men and subjection as natural for women.²³⁸ Like Filmer, Astell does not subscribe to the notion that an individual can choose to enter into a contract within the society to which they are born. They have no choice; they are a citizen of that society and are immediately bound by its conventions and laws. Filmer argued against the notion that men are born free by claiming that freedoms have their limits, that classical references to freedom denoted specific, defined and limited instances. Ultimately citizens were bound by duty and obligation to their ruler, and the law. From this, Astell then argues that servitude must have its limits too.

Astell allows for a different kind a dynamic to exist with the home and outside it: obligatory obedience to one's monarch and contractual obedience to a spouse. Arguably, highlighting the difference between the ability to choose a worthy husband, however limited the choice was in practice, and the inability to choose one's government allowed the injustice of women's situation to be thrown into relief. It is significant that Astell is able to discuss the separate realms – she does not need to disguise political and domestic within each other. This move tallies with the shift in economic pressures of the time and a sociological shift towards individualism. Sadly, this move may have had an adverse effect on the status of women in English society, as it was becoming increasingly reliant on property ownership to confer status.

Conclusion

Paradoxically, Astell's freedom to write is greater than her predecessors, but within growing constraints. She is able to more plainly state her intent than either Beale or More were, although this is not to say she is without misinterpretation, and more obviously and actively engages with political and philosophical debate. That said, the tone of Astell's and Speght's treatise read side-by-side does not feel overly dissimilar. They are not worlds apart and in this way it is possible to see that Astell is

²³⁸ Springborg, *Political Writings*, p. 4.

far from the first woman to consider the position of women and how their education and marital status affects their agency.

Astell's engagement with debate is often described in terms of her interactions with Norris, Locke and indirectly with Lady Damaris Masham. Patricia Springborg notes the 'hiatus' in composition between the first and second parts of *A Serious Proposal*. After the publication of what is now called Part I in 1694, *A Serious Proposal* naturally generated criticisms, one of which was from Masham, correspondent of John Locke and likely influence on a later edition of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, first published in 1689. These two women were educated and free enough to publish philosophical and political treatise, which although initially published anonymously were widely known to be the work of Astell and Masham respectively, within their lifetimes. Whether adversaries or unwitting allies, Astell and Masham are the final step in this exploration of women's writing, but arguably, along with their contemporaries, represent the beginning of the next stage of women's political writing, and from whom later prominent authors were able to develop.

While it is tempting to consider Astell and Masham solely in terms of their relation to more prominent philosophers, such as Descartes and Locke, it is important to recognize that these two women engaged each other directly in logical and moral debate, even if neither explicitly acknowledged that they were doing so in their answers. Without their critiques, neither would have written the works they eventually went on to compose. Astell responded to Masham's criticism and answers the points raised by Masham's challenge in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part II*, which is markedly different from Part I and represents a development in maturity of her arguments.

Although the tone of their responses is too scathing for Astell and Masham to be considered anything like the ideal friends that Astell outlines as necessary for women's self-improvement, they did nevertheless each develop their respective works due to the permissibility for them to each publicly express their ideas. Ascribing intended audience is problematic, but there is perceptible shift over the years from Speght to Astell, that women begin to write about their subjection for each other,

more than they are answering criticisms from men. All the treatises engage both men and women, so it is not true to say that Speght speaks to men, whereas Astell speaks to women. Both More and Beale address their works to women, but the kind of recorded debate that exists between Astell and Masham is indicative of greater public acceptance of women's engagement with questions of their own agency. Finally, what the literature around Astell can also help us realise is that at least some of the many descriptors that apply to Astell could also be applied to women authors writing earlier. These women are political theorists, theologists, philosophers and educators, and should be recognised as such.

Chapter 4 – Biographies

This chapter gives an account of the personal and social situations of Mary Beale and Mary More. Through an examination of their familial and extended networks, I will demonstrate that these two authors were part of the culture of intellectual, social and political debate that I have set out in Chapters 2 and 3, as a way to reaffirm their connection to the discontinuous tradition of feminist writing that existed in the early modern period. It is a vital part of this thesis to recognise the importance that Beale and More's social networks play in this reading 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' as political texts. Chapter 2 outlined the theory that intellectual and social networks overlapped, allowing an organised yet informal exchange of ideas, which functioned as political arenas of debate. Chapter 3 provided examples of female authors throughout the seventeenth century, who used existing tropes and strategies to defend themselves and the status of women. Over the course of this chapter, I will demonstrate that both Beale and More were part of such networks, that used personal, social connections to engage in public, political debates and as such, the readings of 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' in Chapters 4 and 5 can be read with overtly political implications in mind.

Beale and More are similar in a number of ways. They were contemporaries, both born in 1633 into middling-sort families. They were both based in London in the latter part of their lives; More was born there, possibly moving away for a time, while Beale was born in Suffolk but moved to London in her twenties, leaving during the plague epidemic and returning in the 1680s. They were born into a time of civil, religious and political unrest in England: they were children during the English Civil Wars and at the start of the Interregnum in 1642, were just nine years old. They lived under the Commonwealth during their formative years and were twenty-seven when Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660. Their treatises appeared in their thirties, Beale wrote 'A Discourse on Friendship' in 1666 when she was thirty-three and More wrote 'The Woman's Right' sometime in the 1670s, in her late thirties.

They were both from Protestant families, but it is not possible to say definitively what side of the civil war they were on, although both are described as coming from Puritan families.²³⁹ Beale's family, like many, were divided between Royalists and Parliamentarians but, as with More, no documentation exists to conclusively determine where their sensibilities lay.²⁴⁰ The political readings I provide in Chapters 5 and 6 argue that they were both advocates of a constitutional monarchy: they believed in a rigidly defined hierarchy but one that allowed for some balance of power between ruler and ruled.

They were both notable artists; Beale is considered the first professional, English, female portrait artist and set up her studio in Pall Mall in 1670.²⁴¹ Her husband's account books leave a record of her success, as do the extant works which hang in public galleries, including the National Portrait Gallery in London, as well as in private collections across the country.²⁴² A Mary More is recorded as taking apprentices in 1684/5 in the Painter-Stainers' records and while the records are somewhat ambiguous, leaving open the possibility there was another Mary More working in London at the same time, it is certain that More donated a copy of Holbein's portrait of Thomas Cromwell, done 'of her owne drawing' to the Bodleian Library in 1674, where it is still displayed today.²⁴³

Although they lived in London at the same time, within a few miles of each other, there is no documentary evidence to definitively say that Beale and More met, but it is reasonable to assume that they were at least aware of each other. More would know of Beale through the renown of her studio,

²³⁹ See: Christopher Reeve, 'Beale [nee Cradock], Mary (bap. 1633, d. 1699)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1803> [accessed: 22 Jun 2022]; Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'More, Mary (1633–1716)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/68257> [accessed: 22 Jun 2022].

²⁴⁰ Penelope Hunting, *My Dearest Heart: The Artist Mary Beale* (London: Unicorn Publishing, 2019), pp. 34-37

²⁴¹ See Chapter 1 regarding Beale's status as 'first'.

²⁴² Charles Beale used an almanack to keep a monthly record of Mary's activities. There are two extant diaries 1676-77 and 1680-81: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. D152, Charles Beale Almanack and London, National Portrait Gallery, CB (was MS 18), Charles Beale, diary 1680-81; 72 venues are listed as having works by, or attributed to Mary Beale on ArtUK.org <https://artuk.org/visit/venues/search/actor:beale-mary-16331699> [accessed 21 June 2022]

²⁴³ Margaret Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 111; Robert Whitehall, 'To The No Less Virtuous then Ingenious Mrs Mary More', Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawl. D. 912; Account book for 1674-75 records 'Item to Mr Whitehall for portage of Sr Thomas Moore's Picture to the Gallery £0, 2s, 4d'. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Library Records e.8, f.183v.

and More was sufficiently connected socially to make it plausible that Beale would also be aware of this wealthy, independently minded, fellow artist. Beale's studio was in Pall Mall, where eminent scientist Robert Boyle (1627-1691), also lived and More's son, Richard Waller (c.1660-1715), knew Boyle through his membership of the Royal Society. Lisa Jardine writes that Boyle was likely introduced to Beale by another Royal Society member, Robert Hooke (1635-1703), who in turn was Waller's mentor. Waller posthumously published Hooke's research and memoirs, and Hooke mentions both Beale and More in his diaries. Hooke recounts that he sat for Beale and Jardine presented a good case for identifying the portrait of Hooke, which was thought to be lost, although this unfortunately turned out to be a misattribution of a portrait by Beale of Flemish alchemist Jan Baptist van Helmont.²⁴⁴ Hooke also recounts visits with 'Mrs Moore', his protege's mother, where they discussed dreams and he also records reading the central thesis of 'The Woman's Right'.²⁴⁵ While the mutual links to Boyle and Hooke are not sufficient evidence for Beale and More meeting, it is nevertheless indicative that they moved in roughly the same circles and through their relationships to these eminent scientists, Beale and More were by degrees, connected.

Both wrote and published in manuscript, with neither work appearing in print in the author's lifetime. Both addressed their works to women, and it is known that their work was circulated through their networks beyond the respective addressee, although the full extent of their reach is unknown. The British Library copy of 'A Discourse on Friendship' is in Beale's own hand and includes a letter addressed to Elizabeth Tillotson (1630-1702), wife of Archbishop John Tillotson (1630-1694). The Folger Library copy is the manuscript miscellany of Charles Crompton (1646?-1676), which omits the letter to Tillotson and contains a number of small variants, with one significant omission.²⁴⁶ I provide

²⁴⁴ Attribution in Lisa Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke: The Man Who Measured London* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p. 18. Correction in 'Mistaken Identities', *The Guardian*, 19 June 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/jun/19/close-examination-national-gallery-lisa-jardine> [accessed 22 June 2022].

²⁴⁵ R. T. Gunther, *Early Science in Oxford: Vol. X, The Life and Works of Robert Hooke (Part IV)* (London: Printed for the author, 1935).

²⁴⁶ London, British Library, Mary Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', Harley MS 6828, ff. 510-523; Washington D.C., Folger Library, 'A Discourse on Friendship', MS V.a. 220, ff. 99-108 (numbered 3-21).

a discussion on the provenance of the Crompton copy and the variants later in the thesis. The only copy of 'The Woman's Right', held in the British Library, is in the miscellany of Robert Whitehall (1624-1685), an Oxford don, which contains not only his reply to More, 'The Woman's Right Proved False' but also a number of verses, including the other known exchange between Whitehall and More 'To the no less virtuous than ingenious Mrs Mary More' and 'An Answer by Mrs More to the ingenious Mr Robert Whitehall'.²⁴⁷

While their respective treatises use very different language and focus on different aspects of women's lives and the inequalities they face, the mechanisms they use to make their arguments are fundamentally similar. They use existing discourses to underpin their arguments and then manipulate the commonplace arguments for their own ends, overlapping the religious and secular elements to explore women's status. Beale uses secular models of friendship to explore the religious and political definitions of marriage, while More uses biblical exegesis to argue for social and legal equality. They each participate in differing aspects of friendship. Mary Beale's coterie was a meeting of like-minded people who discussed issues, and through which she made professional connections. Mary More's exchange with Robert Whitehall reflects the formal role of friendship in enabling polite debate, as a friendly exchange of ideas where disagreement may be had but a mutual respect is demonstrated, although the exchange may be neither friendly nor polite. These variations of friendship are instrumental in enabling differing kinds of political discourses.

Mary Beale

Mary Beale, née Cradock, was born 26th March 1633 in Barrow, near Bury St. Edmund's, Suffolk.²⁴⁸ Her father, John Cradock (1595-1652) was rector of All Saints, Barrow, taking over the position and accompanying lands and responsibilities from his father, Richard Craddock (1562-1630)

²⁴⁷ London, British Library, Mary More, 'The Woman's Right', Harley MS 3918, ff. 46-58.

²⁴⁸ Reeve, 'Beale [nee Cradock], Mary', *DNB*.

who had become rector of All Saints in 1608, after being ordained Deacon and Priest at Peterborough Cathedral. Richard had been ‘presented with the living of All Saints, Barrow by Sir John Heigham and Sir Clement Heigham MP, of Barrow Hall.’²⁴⁹ Although descended from staunchly Roman Catholic families, Sir John and Sir Clement were themselves ‘zealous Protestants, determined to propagate their faith in west Suffolk.’²⁵⁰ The appointment of Richard Craddock was part of this vision and one that John took over on Richard’s demise. John Craddock remained in post at All Saints Church, until his own death in 1652. John went to school in Cambridge before matriculating at Gonville and Caius College in 1612 as a sizar, where he ‘formed an enduring friendship with Sir Edmund Bacon, 2nd Baronet of Redgrave (c. 1570-1649).’²⁵¹ John was ordained deacon 17th October 1623 at Peterborough Cathedral and then as a priest 21st September 1628 in Norwich Cathedral, almost immediately becoming rector of Rickinghall Superior in Suffolk.²⁵² John remained there until his father’s death in 1630, when he took over the parish of Barrow. Sir Edmund Bacon may have been instrumental in introducing John to his future wife, Dorothy Brunton (d.1644?), they married in Redgrave, Suffolk on 3rd August 1630.²⁵³ John and Dorothy had two living children, Mary (1633-1699) and John (c. 1643-1712).

There are no further records of Dorothy, but John’s will of 2nd April 1644 indicates that she had already died, possibly around this time, perhaps due to complications due to childbirth with John, although there are no records indicating cause of death.²⁵⁴ This means that from the age of eleven, Mary grew

²⁴⁹ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 21.

²⁵⁰ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 21.

²⁵¹ John Craddock (Unique Identifier: CRDK612J), *A Cambridge Alumni Database*, <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/> [accessed: 24 June 2022]; A sizar was ‘a student originally financing his studies by undertaking more or less menial tasks within his college and, as time went on, increasingly likely to receive small grants from the college without being “on the foundation.”’ – on the foundation refers to a scholarship which is ‘part of the the endowment to the College’. Cambridge University Library, *Glossary of Cambridge-related terminology*, <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/university-archives/glossary/sizar> and <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/university-archives/glossary/foundation> [accessed 24 June 2022]; Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 22.

²⁵² John Craddock (Unique Identifier: CRDK612J), *A Cambridge Alumni Database*, <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/> [accessed: 24 June 2022].

²⁵³ Boyd’s marriage index, 1538-1850, https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=R_847632881/2 [accessed 24 June 2022].

²⁵⁴ Kew, The National Archive, ‘Will of John Cradocke, Bachelor in Divinity of Barrow, Suffolk. 27 July 1654’, PROB 11/242/555.

up without a mother and was raised by her father, as there is no indication that John re-married. John seems to have treated his children equally, not preferring his son over his elder child, Mary. His will states that all the lands he owns as well as 'whatsoever other Worldly goods God of his goodnes hath bestowed upon mee [should be given] unto my deare and sweete Chilldren John Cradocke my sonne and Mary Cradocke my daughter; to be equally devided betwixt them.'²⁵⁵ John was a 'man of intelligence, integrity and Puritan sympathies; he ensured that his daughter received a thorough education and, an amateur artist himself, he nurtured her talent.'²⁵⁶

While growing up, Mary Cradock would have been surrounded by her father's 'coterie of early seventeenth-century Suffolk artists.'²⁵⁷ As well as offering John his living, Sir Edmund Bacon, himself an amateur artist, was John's patron and bequeathed John his 'great grinding-stonne of purfure with the muller to it, and the little grinding-stonne of purfere with the muller to it. I give him alsoe my two perspectives of Saint Marke, hanging in the chamber of my laboritary.'²⁵⁸ Part of the Bacon dynasty, Sir Edmund was the elder brother of Sir Nathaniel Bacon of Culford (1585-1627), another amateur artist and 'the most talented of this group of Suffolk artists' who is still noted for his extensive knowledge about pigments.²⁵⁹ Sir Edmund and Sir Nathaniel were also the nephews of Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), philosopher and statesman, who Mary references in a marginal note in 'A Discourse on Friendship' concerning the role of friendship in counsel. Mary's education clearly included study of Francis Bacon's essays, while Francis died about seven years before Mary was born, the Craddocks' had a close connection with the Suffolk branch of the Bacon family and Mary was brought up in an arena of artistic and intellectual discourse. Mary did not read *Essays* in a vacuum; she was connected to an artistic and political circle which included family members of the author and something she replicated in her own social circle in her studio on Pall Mall. Mary's views on friendship

²⁵⁵ Will of John Cradocke, PROB 11/242/555.

²⁵⁶ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 19.

²⁵⁷ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 28.

²⁵⁸ Samuel Tymms, 'Sir Edmund Bacon, Bart. – 1648', in *Wills and inventories from the registers of the commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the archdeacon of Sudbury* (London: Printed for the Camden society, 1850), p. 217. Full will can be read on pp. 211-19.

²⁵⁹ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 28.

as a leveller of social inequality may have been in part inspired by her upbringing, where artists of differing social rank came together to discuss art and politics. Sir Edmund turned this small area of Suffolk into 'virtually a Philosophical cell' and the Cradock family were sufficiently connected to have been a part of this discourse.²⁶⁰

Other artists in the Cradock circle included Nathaniel Thatch (1617 – c.1659), John's nephew and Mary's cousin, who was bequeathed John's art materials and described as a 'picture drawer' in his will, as well as some members of other prominent Suffolk families, such as Matthew Snelling (1621-1678), who may have influenced Mary.²⁶¹ The circle also includes Robert Walker (1599-1658), portraitist to 'Oliver Cromwell and [other] parliamentarians of the 1640s' and the famous Sir Peter Lely, who are both 'identified as the most likely drawing masters to the young Mary Beale.'²⁶²

Alongside these artistic influences, were varied political allegiances. The outbreak of civil war in 1642 divided the county of Suffolk, in the main it supported Cromwell with Bury St Edmunds 'established as the centre of parliamentarian [support]' and John Craddock was given the title of Elder 'with license to raise troops and supplies locally if required.'²⁶³ The Suffolk landowners remained mainly Royalists; Matthew Snelling's stepfather was Ambrose Blagge, owner of Little Horringer Hall, near Barrow, where Matthew had lived since the age of four.²⁶⁴ Blagge was also a relative of the Hervey family of Ickworth House, Bury St Edmunds, whose family home was defended by Penelope, Lady Hervey when it was attacked by parliamentarian soldiers.²⁶⁵ Mary Beale painted Lady Hervey 'in her widow's weeds' in around 1660.²⁶⁶ Another significant local figure she painted was Isabella Fitzroy, first duchess of Grafton (c. 1668 – 1723), whose first husband, Henry Fitzroy, first duke of Grafton (1663 – 1690) was

²⁶⁰ 'Bacon, Edmund (?c.1570-1649), of Redgrave, Suff.', *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1558-1603*, ed. P.W. Hasler, 1981. <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/bacon-edmund-1570-1649> [accessed 27 June 2022].

²⁶¹ Will of John Cradock; Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 30.

²⁶² Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 29.

²⁶³ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, pp. 31-2.

²⁶⁴ John Murdoch, 'Snelling, Matthew (bap. 1621, d. 1678)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/66391> [accessed 27 June 2022].

²⁶⁵ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p.32.

²⁶⁶ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 32, copy of portrait on p. 56.

the illegitimate son of King Charles II and Barbara Villiers. Isabella's second husband was another Suffolk denizen, Sir Thomas Hanmer, fourth baronet (1677 – 1746), a significant figure in the survival of the Folger Library copy of 'A Discourse on Friendship'.

Mary's own family were 'divided by personal loyalties to the King or Lord Protector,' with her aunts, John's two sisters Mary and Abigail, taking opposing sides, alongside other relations.²⁶⁷ In Chapter 4, I examine the political implications of 'A Discourse on Friendship'; I do not rely on a biographical reading of her work, but understanding the tensions and dynamics of Mary's childhood is useful in recognising 'A Discourse on Friendship' as a response to the contemporary political discourse, as well as a discussion on marital equality. Because of the political role of friendship and the family/state analogy, Beale's argument for a kind of equality between husband and wife can be read as a contribution to social contract theory. Although her work is not explicitly political, she cannot have been insensible to its implications.

As well as allowing us potential insights into her political inclinations, 'A Discourse on Friendship' also reflects Mary's domestic situation. Her advocacy for equality in marriage is demonstrated through the relationship Mary had with her husband, Charles Beale (1631-1705). Charles was the great-nephew of the eminent Elizabethan diplomat, Robert Beale (1541-1601), an integral part of Elizabeth's diplomatic core, alongside Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, who was a neighbour of Robert's. Robert's nephew, Bartholomew Beale (1583-1660) was a clerk of the Signet's office and married Katherine Beale in 1611. The shared surname was a coincidence, they were not closely related and have been established as being from 'Different Houses, though bearing the same name.'²⁶⁸ Katherine's parents were from Boxford, Suffolk but Katherine and Bartholomew married in St. Dunstan in the East, London. They then resided in Walton, Buckinghamshire and had three sons, only one of which survived to adulthood: Charles. Like the Cradocks, the Beales were well

²⁶⁷ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 34.

²⁶⁸ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 26.

connected to prominent Suffolk families and it is likely that Mary and Charles met at Geesings, Wickhambrook, Suffolk, the ancestral home of the Craddock family patriarch, Walter Craddock.²⁶⁹ They were certainly courting by July 1651, when Charles wrote a letter to Mary addressed to the ‘Quintessence of Goodnesse’ and they married in March 1652 at All Saints, Barrow.²⁷⁰ They moved to the Beale estate at Walton until 1655 when they moved to London and took up residence in the artists’ quarters in Covent Garden before moving to Hind Court, Fleet Street in accommodation that was provided with Charles’ position as Deputy Clerk of the Patents Office.²⁷¹ Charles held this post until he was dismissed in 1664, whereupon they moved to Allbrook, Hampshire in 1665, where Mary wrote ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ in 1666/7. They stayed at Allbrook until 1670 after which they returned to London and set up Mary’s studio on Pall Mall.

It is thanks to Charles’ meticulous records, detailing the financial side of Mary’s career, that we have any kind of sense of the scope of Mary’s success. Charles used the blank pages of an almanack each year to list Mary’s activities: who she was painting, what size of portrait, the cost and when it was finished. The ledger indicates that by 1677 Mary’s schedule was full, with sittings most days, and touching and finishing the rest of the time. He also noted the materials used, the amount they were bought for, and the ‘experiments [...] and techniques’ employed.²⁷² Charles managed the accounts for the whole household, not just Mary’s business and he catalogues all expenditures and debts, owing and owed. Through his records we know that Mary worked with a variety of cloth materials, from coarse sacking to canvas and bed ticking. Charles was also a member of the Painter-Stainers’ guild and the almanacks record his own experiments in colour mixing. The studio at Pall Mall was a joint effort in making it a successful business that could support the Beale family financially. This success was due

²⁶⁹ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 39.

²⁷⁰ Oxford, Bodleian Library, ‘Letter to Mary Cradock 25th July 1651’, Charles Beale, MS Rawl. H 104, f. 133; Christopher Reeve, ‘Beale [nee Cradock], Mary. DNB.

²⁷¹ Charles is mentioned twice in the diary of Samuel Pepys, on Thursday 12th and Friday 13th July 1660, where Pepys encounters a disgruntled Charles in the course of obtaining a docket. See: Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1893) <https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1660/07/12/> and <https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1660/07/13/> [accessed 27 June 2022].

²⁷² Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 142.

to the combination of Mary's talent and Charles' support, demonstrative of the kind of marriage she advocates in 'A Discourse on Friendship'.

The Beale Coterie

The success of the studio was also down to family and personal connections that Mary and Charles cultivated over the years. The Beales were known for their sociability and Mary's clientele were initially drawn from their circle of friends but was soon to include members of the gentry and aristocracy who had been either introduced to Mary's work by mutual acquaintances or had been sought out as patrons by Charles. The Beale's social circle included fellows of the Royal Society such as Robert Hooke (1635 – 1703) and Robert Boyle (1627 – 1691) as well as puritan clergy, notably the future bishops Edward Stillingfleet (1635 – 1699) and John Tillotson (1630 – 1694). Mary's earliest formal portrait was of Alderman Mark Hildesley, a close friend of Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell who was a key player in securing the success of Cromwell's army in the City, this was a 'prestigious commission' for a then twenty-year-old Mary.²⁷³ In these early years Mary practised by painting herself and her family, as well as 'personal friends, many of whom were clergymen.'²⁷⁴ She was particularly encouraged by the poet Samuel Woodford (1636-1700) who lived with the Beales for some time and would eventually marry Charles' cousin Alice. He provided a literary outlet for Mary by publishing four psalm translations alongside his own collection and introduced potential clients to Mary.

Mary's eventual studio was the drawing room of their Pall Mall residence, the professional and personal were intermingled as friends, patrons and clients visited to sit for portraits and talk amicably. The Beales had first lived in Hinds Court, Fleet Street in the 1650s, which had space for a separate painting room for Mary to work and reception room where they entertained their friends,

²⁷³ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 54.

²⁷⁴ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 56.

which included Thomas Flatman, Samuel Woodford, the poet Abraham Cowley and Dr. and Mrs Tillotson. This would have been about the time when Mary may have discussed her ideas about friendship with the addressee of 'A Discourse on Friendship', Elizabeth Tillotson. John Tillotson was a latitudinarian who abandoned his Calvinist upbringing for a more moderate form of Anglicanism but retained a strong tolerance for nonconformists and Catholics. He became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1691. Elizabeth was the niece of Oliver Cromwell; her mother, Robina, was Cromwell's youngest sister.²⁷⁵ It is significant that her circle includes prominent religious and political figures of moderate, parliamentarian temperaments, for not only can we more confidently infer Beale's own political sympathies, it also lends weight to the composition of 'A Discourse on Friendship' as questioning any claims to an authoritarian right to rule. The congenial atmosphere of Hind Court allowed Mary to contemplate and nurture her views on friendship. This group of like-minded friends shared a 'belief in the sanctity of Christian fellowship.'²⁷⁶ Acknowledging this coterie of friends as an arena of political discourse, populated by artists and theologians alike lends credibility to 'A Discourse on Friendship' as a multi-layered treatise on equality, theology and politics, recognising that women were actively engaging in political and theological discussions, in spaces that are both public and private spheres.

Mary was seemingly conversant in classical ideas of friendship and marriage, and she engaged with contemporary texts such as Jeremy Taylor's *Discourse on the Nature and Offices of Friendship* which may have been a source of inspiration.²⁷⁷ While the body of 'A Discourse on Friendship' is framed as a discussion on the unequal balance that exists between a wife and husband, Beale's letter to Elizabeth is a clear demonstration of classical notions of friendship existing between two women. Beale does not explicitly argue for this aspect of women's equality, but her letter to Elizabeth is evidence of a formalised friendship, which is beyond simple amicability. She refers to their discussions

²⁷⁵ Isabel Rivers, 'Tillotson, John (1630 – 1694)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27449 [accessed: 14 September 2022].

²⁷⁶ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 86.

²⁷⁷ Jeremy Taylor, *A discourse of the nature, offices, and measures of friendship with rules of conducting it / written in answer to a letter from the most ingenious and vertuous M.K.P. by J.T.* (London: Printed for R. Royston at the Angel in Ivie-Lane, 1657).

on the topic and asks that the ‘errors I have here committed may turn thus farr to your advantage, that they will afford you the opportunity to exercise towards mee all those allowances which I have hinted must be indulg’d in a friend.’²⁷⁸ Friendship between women and men was a topic of debate that evolved. While Francis Bacon insisted in 1612 that women were not capable of true friendship, Jeremy Taylor reluctantly admitted in 1657 that while most women were not capable of true friendship, some women might, in certain circumstances undertake the offices of friendship, and John Evelyn celebrated his friendship with Margaret, Lady Godolphin in 1672. These male authors were concerned with women’s ability to be friends with a man, whereas Mary Beale and Elizabeth Tillotson validate the argument that women were able to partake in a kind of formalised friendship, which adhered to set of coded principles, with each other. This was something Katherine Philips certainly believed in and Mary Astell wrote about in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*.

Beale’s body of literary work

While the bulk of Beale’s creative works are her portraits, there are six literary works attributable to her: ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, four psalm translations and a paragraph titled ‘On the painting of Apricots, Observations by MB’.²⁷⁹ Her translations of psalms 13, 52, 70 and 130, in Samuel Woodforde’s *Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David* (1667), wherein Woodford sought to ‘recapture the poetic quality,’ appear alongside Woodford’s own and are denoted with ‘another of the same by M.M.B.’ or ‘Mm.M.B.’.²⁸⁰ In the preface, Woodforde reveals that the

author of these psalms is that absolutely compleat Gentlewoman [...] the truly virtuous Mrs. Mary Beale, amongst whose least accomplishments it is, that she has made Painting and Poesy which in the Fancies of others had only before a kind of

²⁷⁸ Mary Beale, ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, f. 510.

²⁷⁹ Over 140 portraits are still extant, with approximately 100 definitely by her hand or attributed to her. The remaining portraits are ‘after’, ‘copies of’ or ‘in her circle’. See:

<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/actor:beale-mary-16331699> [accessed 24 June 2022].

²⁸⁰ Hunting, *My Dearest Heart*, p. 74.

likeness, in her own to be really the same. The Reader I hope will pardon this publick acknowledgement which I make to so deserving a person.²⁸¹

The translations themselves are not of particular note; they are mostly laments and supplication. They are certainly well written and display a competent use of multiple verse forms and rhyming schemes.

Helen Draper argues that this foray into print is indicative of Beale's efforts to set up a professional studio and was 'part of a strategy calculated to create a public persona.'²⁸² The timing of this publication certainly bears out Draper's supposition: Beale was already an artist of good repute and including her work in Woodforde's *Psalms* reflected well on him, as well as providing a respectable outlet for her publication. Beale had been named as an artist of note in William Sanderson's (1586? – 1676) *Graphice, the use of the pen and pensil, or, The most excellent art of painting: in two parts* (1658), erroneously listed as 'Mr. Beale' but among a list of four other female artists of 'virtuous example' in 'Oyl colours.'²⁸³ When 'Woodforde included Beale's verses with his own, it was in the knowledge that her name and talent had already been commended in print by Sir William Sanderson.'²⁸⁴ While it's apparent that Beale was deliberately creating a public persona, I would caution against imbuing her with the sense of Machiavellian cunning question which Draper implies.

Undoubtedly Beale would have been concerned with reputation whilst attempting to formalise her painting salon, and she may well have been proceeding tentatively so as to avoid negative reactions, but I would argue that behaving in moderation was simply in character. Draper's suggestion that Beale was motivated purely by pragmatism, because she was unable to burst dramatically onto the art scene due to patriarchal values of good womanly conduct, paradoxically removes some agency and autonomy from her actions. She was bound by the social norms of her

²⁸¹ Samuel Woodforde, *Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David* (London: Printed by R. White for Octavian Pullein, neer the Pump in Little-Brittain, 1667), f. (c).

²⁸² Helen Draper, "Her Painting of Apricots': The Invisibility of Mary Beale (1633 – 1699)", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 48.4, 2012, pp. 389-405. doi: 10.1093/fmls/cqs023 [accessed 08 November 2017], p. 398.

²⁸³ William Sanderson, *Graphice, the use of the pen and pensil, or, The most excellent art of painting: in two parts*, (London: Printed for Robert Crofts, at the signe of the Crown in Chancery Lane, under Serjeant's Inne, 1658), p. 20.

²⁸⁴ Draper, 'Her Painting of Apricots', p. 398.

time, and it is sufficient for us to acknowledge that Beale worked comfortably within those norms, whilst still stretching the limitations of them. Much like the feminists of Chapter 3, we should not hold Beale's actions to modern standards. It is perhaps an overstatement that her careful appearance in print is a sign of discontent and frustration at her social standing, and should not assume that the development of her studio and public persona progressed in a manner not of her choosing. It seems more plausible that as a noted artist, although not at their height of her fame, with connections to reputable families and other noted artists, poets and clergy, it would have been perfectly natural for her to venture into print. Beale understood the environment into which she was emerging and acted accordingly; she believed in the spiritual equality of women and men, but there is no reason to believe that she was extraordinarily frustrated by the limitations imposed upon her.

Beale's other extant work directly relates to her art, titled 'Observations by MB in her painting of Apricots in August 1663.'²⁸⁵ It is a short paragraph in a notebook of Charles', which includes his studies and experiments in the mixing of pigment, including 'My father Cradocks pink.'²⁸⁶ 'Observations', although short, is an authoritative guide on the mechanics of painting, which details the material aspects of artistic creation: the time taken to process paint, the precise mix of hues and the practical lessons Beale has learned from her own experiences and attempts. Draper cites 'Observations' as further evidence of Beale's public persona building. It is, she states, 'clearly intended for consumption by an unknown public readership' and represents her 'implicit acceptance of her place in a shared artistic inheritance and a stake in her own legacy for the future,' although it is perhaps just as possible that she and her practically minded husband, were keen to record their findings for their own benefit.²⁸⁷ How far 'Observations' circulated is impossible to determine, both her sons, Bartholomew (1656 – 1709) and Charles (1660 – 1726), trained as artists; Bartholomew

²⁸⁵ Glasgow, University of Glasgow Special Collections, 'Observations by MB in her painting of Apricots in August 1663', in *Experimental Secrets found out in the way of my owne painting* by Charles Beale, MS Ferguson 134, f. 31 (unnumbered). A transcription is provided in the appendices.

²⁸⁶ i.e., Mary's father, John. N.b. 'pink' was a name for a shade of yellow hue.

²⁸⁷ Draper, 'Her Painting of Apricots', p. 391.

eventually made a living from his work as a physician but Charles continued his training as a miniaturist in his mother's studio and under Thomas Flatman, who had previously studied under Mary.²⁸⁸ She also took on a number of apprentices, who would no doubt have been schooled in the techniques outlined in 'Observations'. Thus, Beale was not inexperienced as an instructor and would be aware that she had significant knowledge to impart. Draper argues that the implied audience of an anonymous third party suggests that 'that she valued her own expertise highly enough to presume to guide others and, through her influence, to promote herself.'²⁸⁹

The analysis of 'Observations' as a tool for creating a public persona is an interesting and valid one, and understanding it as a reflection on the mechanics of 'observation and experiment, refinement and distillation' may be helpful in our understanding of Beale's process in 'A Discourse on Friendship'.²⁹⁰ Readings of 'A Discourse on Friendship' may in turn reflect back on 'Observations', particularly when keeping in mind the central tenets of advice and counsel that Beale holds in high regard. 'Observations' is a work of advice, but rather than one of self-promotion, she may have regarded it as part of her Christian duty to share her expertise as a guide to others, when acting in the broadest sense of friendship.

As well as an element of Beale's public persona campaign, Draper reads 'Observations' in part as an act of memory, but as a literary text, 'Observations' helps us to understand the mind behind 'A Discourse on Friendship'.²⁹¹ They are both to differing degrees, self-reflective texts, and are in some way about Beale herself and the manner in which she approaches the world. 'Observations' is not consciously a self-examination of ability, but much like Speght's education was evident in the construction of *A Mouzell of Melastomas*, so too is Beale's expertise apparent through the authority of the instruction given. Tellingly, she begins 'A Discourse on Friendship' with 'an impartial censure on myself' so that she can fully understand her own abilities in undertaking the task of examining

²⁸⁸ Reeve, 'Mary Beale'.

²⁸⁹ Draper, 'Her Painting of Apricots', p. 392.

²⁹⁰ Draper, 'Her Painting of Apricots', p. 392.

²⁹¹ Draper, 'Her Painting of Apricots', p. 392.

Friendship.²⁹² Although she is demonstrably more confident in her skills as an artist than as a writer or philosopher, she sets about both in a methodical manner, questioning and experimenting as necessary to achieve her desired outcome. Each element or process is documented and her conclusions are recorded. ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ is a considered account of Beale’s discussions with her coterie, her own deductions and opinions in much the same way that her ‘Observations’ are a result of her work as an artist.

‘A Discourse on Friendship’, the material text

Beale’s longest literary work is ‘A Discourse on Friendship’; it is approximately 6500 words and there are two extant copies: one in the British Library (Harley MS 6828), in Beale’s own hand and inclusive of a letter to Elizabeth Tillotson, and one in the Folger Library (V.a. 220) in the copybook of Charles Crompton. There are some slight variants between the two, including a paragraph in MS 6828 which does not appear in V.a. 220, although there is no significant differences overall in meaning.

The principal text I use is MS 6828, described in *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum* as ‘A Quarto, containing various Theological Tracts.’²⁹³ Misnumbered as number thirty seven in a list of thirty six tracts, ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ is described as ‘Thoughts on Friendship, by Mrs. Mary Beale, 9 March 1666, address’d to her dear Friend Mrs. Eliz . Tillotson.’²⁹⁴ MS 6828 likely arrived at the library as a bound volume when it was received in 1753, and its description as a theological tract is not insignificant.²⁹⁵ Other manuscripts in the volume include ‘Sir Fra. Bacon’s Confession of his Faith’, various sermons, observations on Quakers catechism, ‘A Discourse of the Power and Policy of the Church of Rome’, a prayer, and other thoughts and reflections on politico-

²⁹² Beale, ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, f. 511r.

²⁹³ *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum. With indexes of persons, places and matters*, 4 volumes (London: British Museum, 1808-12), volume 3 (1808), p. 421.

²⁹⁴ Number thirty-six is omitted in MS 6828; *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, volume 3 (1808), p. 421.

²⁹⁵ With thanks to Sandra Tuppen from the British Library for her help with this information.

religious and spiritual matters. It is unknown exactly when the volume was bound together, but it suggests that in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, 'A Discourse on Friendship' was understood as being comparable with such texts, either as thoughts on Christian ideals of friendship or as a political commentary.

Beyond what is known generally about the Harley collection, there is no further information about how Beale's work survived or passed into the collection. Robert Harley (1661–1724) founded the collection in October 1704, when for the sum of £450 he purchased the library of antiquary Sir Simonds d'Ewes, first baronet (1602–1650), sold to Harley by d'Ewes's namesake and grandson, Simonds, third baronet (c. 1670 – 1722).²⁹⁶ Although 'A Discourse on Friendship' could not have been part of the original d'Ewes collection, as it was written after the first Baronet's death, d'Ewes and his family were from Suffolk, and lived within ten miles of where Mary grew up. He also worked on legal documentation relating to St Edmundsbury Abbey, then owned by Sir Edmund Bacon of Redgrave, who had formed a friendship with Mary's father, John Craddock. Despite the local connection, it may be that 'A Discourse on Friendship' was added to the collection by Harley, or his son Edward who 'was most active in augmenting the collection'.²⁹⁷ This does suggest that the preservation of 'A Discourse on Friendship' was not mere happenstance: either the d'Ewes expanded the collection after the first baronet's death and took interest in the literary work of a talented artist known to them, or once Beale's reputation had grown, her work passed into the collection through the Harley family. Whether the text was preserved on account of its contents or for the notability of the author, it cannot be said.

The existence of V.a. 220 means we can be confident that within Beale's lifetime 'A Discourse on Friendship' was circulated beyond its addressee, Elizabeth Tillotson. During the course of this project I have traced the provenance of this object, filling the existing lacuna. V.a. 220 is a manuscript copybook, owned by Charles Crompton. It is mainly a collection of plays and poetry

²⁹⁶ See: J. M. Blatchly, 'D'Ewes, Sir Simonds, first baronet (1602-1650), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008 <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7577> [accessed 27 June 2022]; British Library, 'Harley Manuscripts', <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/harley-manuscripts> [accessed 27 June 2022].

²⁹⁷ 'Harley Manuscripts', <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/harley-manuscripts>.

including two plays by Roger Boyle, first earl of Orrery (1621 – 1679): ‘Mustapha’ and ‘Henry the Fifth’, and poems by Abraham Cowley (1618 – 1667), Thomas Flatman (1635 – 1688) and Sir John Denham (1614/15 – 1669). Flatman was friends with the Beales and was a miniaturist who took instruction from Mary, another suggestion that Crompton was part of the Beale/Craddock social circle. The owners of V.a. 220 are listed in the Folger’s records as Charles Crompton, Thomas Hanmer and Henry Edward Bunbury, the front pastedown carries the bookplate of Henry Edward Bunbury and a previously unidentified sales catalogue entry.²⁹⁸ Helen Draper argues that the Charles Crompton in question:

was probably the son of Frances Crofts, daughter of Sir John Crofts of Little Saxham, in Suffolk, and her husband Sir John Crompton, Chirographer of the Fines. Charles was born at Little Saxham [in 1618], less than two miles from Mary’s childhood home.²⁹⁹

I believe that the Charles to which Draper is referring is the uncle of the owner of the copybook. V.a.220 Charles is more likely the son of Robert Crompton, also son of Frances Crofts and Sir John Crompton, and Katherine Hollande, daughter of Sir Thomas Hollande and Mary Knyvett. This branch of the Crompton family also lived in Suffolk, and Robert and Katherine lived in Bradley, where Charles was born in 1646, 15 miles from where Mary was born. It is not impossible that the owner of V.a.220 was the elder Charles, it seems likely that the Beales, Craddocks and Cromptons all knew each other but I posit that younger Charles had a direct link to Mary through her younger brother, John. Younger Charles and John Craddock were about the same age, and both attended Bury St Edmunds School at the same time, before going up to Cambridge.³⁰⁰ Furthermore, Charles’ will indicates that he lived and died in London, a far more likely candidate, as a young man in his twenties, to be friendly with Beale around the time she was writing ‘A Discourse on Friendship’.³⁰¹ Furthermore, V.a. 220 contains a

²⁹⁸ With thanks to Abbie Weinberg from the Folger Library for her help, including her suggestion regarding the sales catalogue.

²⁹⁹ Draper, ‘Her Painting of Apricots’, p. 400.

³⁰⁰ See: Charles Crompton (unique identifier CRMN635C); Charles Crompton (unique identifier CRMN662C); Robert Crompton (unique identifier CRMN629R), John Craddock (unique identifier CRDK661J) all in *A Cambridge Alumni Database*, <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/> [accessed: 24 June 2022].

³⁰¹ Kew, The National Archive, ‘Will of Charles Crompton of Saint Andrew Holborn, Middlesex, 05 February 1677’, PROB 11/353/131.

number of verses, which potentially connect Crompton to Beale through members of her coterie, Thomas Flatman and Abraham Cowley. At the back of the notebook, there is a copy of 'The second advice to the painter' which is 'written for the company of drunken poets, 1666', as is 'The third advice to the painter' which appears a few pages later.³⁰² Between these two verses are 'The Garden' by Abraham Cowley and 'A Retirement: A Pindarick Ode made in the time of the last plague, 1665' by Thomas Flatman. It is possible that Crompton, Flatman and Cowley were all part of this company together, and as such a connection to Beale can be made, but I have been unable to find any reference to a Company of Drunken Poets active in the late 1660s.

V.a.220 next passed to Sir Thomas Hanmer, fourth baronet (1677–1746), speaker of the House of Commons and best known as one of the earliest editors of the works of Shakespeare.³⁰³ Hanmer was also educated at Bury St Edmunds and the subject of some scandal when his second wife eloped with Hanmer's cousin – Thomas Hervey, both of whom were from Suffolk and the area from which Beale originated. Although there is a 30-year age gap between younger Charles and Hanmer, elder Charles died the year that Hanmer was born, and it seems unlikely that V.a.200 would have passed to Hanmer without some personal connection. There may be unknown intermediaries between either Charles and Hanmer, and we can only conjecture about what, if any, the links there were. However, it got there, once V.a.220 passed to Hanmer, its journey to the Folger Library becomes marginally more easy to trace. Hanmer died without issue and his detailed will leaves a number of bequests regarding land and small items, but the bulk of his estate goes to his sister's son, William Bunbury (1709 – 1764)

³⁰² Print version: Anonymous, 'The second advice to a painter, for drawing the history of our navall business; in imitation of Mr. Waller. Being the last work of Sir John Denham.' ([London]: [s.n.], printed in the year 1667). Usually attributed to Andrew Marvell. Nigel Smith makes mention of the Company of Drunken Poets in both *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 446 and *Andrew Marvell: the chameleon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 187 and p. 190 – but only to note the attribution and provides no information about who the company might consist of; Appears in print with the second advice: Anonymous, 'The second and third advice to a painter, for drawing the history of our navall actions, the two last years, 1665 and 1666 in answer to Mr. Waller.' (Breda: [s.n.], 1667).

³⁰³ D. W. Hayton, 'Hanmer, Sir Thomas, fourth baronet (1677-1746)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12205> [accessed 27 June 2022].

who was later Rev Sir William Bunbury, fifth baronet.³⁰⁴ V.a.200 is then passed down through the Bunbury family and William's grandson – Sir Henry Edward Bunbury, seventh baronet (1778 – 1860) is known for being collector of manuscripts and having an impressive library.³⁰⁵

V.a. 220 was sold by Sotheby's on 2nd July 1896, following the death of Sir Edward Herbert Bunbury, ninth baronet (1811 – 1895), who was the third son of Henry Edward.³⁰⁶ The Sotheby's catalogue advertised the sale as that of the 'library of Sir Henry Bunbury'.³⁰⁷ It was bought by Bernard Quaritch for £1-2s-0 on the second day of the sale and then resold by Bernard Quaritch in October 1896 for £3-0-0.³⁰⁸ Some 45 years pass before V.a. 220 next turns up as item 348 in a sales catalogue of Dobell's Antiquarian Bookstore, Tunbridge Wells in December 1941, with an asking price of £8-0-0 (\$32).³⁰⁹ This sale resulted in V.a. 220 being gifted to the Folger on 27th January 1942, where it currently resides.³¹⁰

Mary More

Born in London, More likely spent most of her life in the City. Her father, Anthony Tyther (d.1670) was a merchant and elected master of the Grocers' Company in 1665. Little is known about Mary's mother Elizabeth (née Williamson) (1610 – 1670), her will indicates she was from a reasonably wealthy family, and she made financial provisions for both Mary and her sister Elizabeth.³¹¹ More

³⁰⁴ Kew, The National Archive, 'Will of Sir Thomas Hanmer of Hanmer, Flintshire, 15 May 1746, PROB 11/747/144.

³⁰⁵ John Sweetman, 'Bunbury, Sir Henry Edward, seventh baronet (1778 – 1860)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2005 <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3936> [accessed 27 June 2022]; London, Principal Registry, 'Sir Henry Edward Bart. Bunbury', COW246645.

³⁰⁶ Richard J. A. Talbert, 'Bunbury, Sir Edward Herbert, ninth baronet (1811–1895)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008 <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45514> [accessed 27 June 2022].

³⁰⁷ British Library, S.C.S. Sotheby, 2nd July 1896.

³⁰⁸ British Library, S.C. Quaritch, 1896. Rough list 164, item 53, p. 14.

³⁰⁹ In 1941 the US was fighting hyperinflation in the dollar. Americans were trying to buy goods in sterling, but through an agreement with the US, they are made to use dollars, hence the dual pricing.

³¹⁰ Folger Library, *A Catalogue of Autograph Letters and Manuscripts*, no.68, 1941. Information about this catalogue and subsequent gifting to the Folger provided by Abbie Weinberg at the Folger Library.

³¹¹ Kew, The National Archive, 'Will of Elizabeth Tyther, Widow of Northaw, Hertfordshire. 03 December 1670', PROB 11/334/462.

married her first husband Richard Waller (d.1662) in the 1650s; they had two children – Richard (1660 – 1715) who later became Secretary of the Royal Society and Robert Hooke's biographer, and Elizabeth (1663 – c. 1700) who eventually married MP Alexander Pitfield (1659 – 1728) and to whom More's 'The Woman's Right' is addressed. After her first husband's death, Mary married Francis More (d. 1698) in 1663, after Elizabeth was born. In later life she lived in the parishes of St Mary-le-Bow and St. Andrew Undershaft; her grown-up children also lived in nearby areas with their families. Although information about More and either of her husbands is scarce, it seems likely that they were both merchants and More 'went from being the daughter of a wealthy, prosperous London merchant to being the wife of a man with the same characteristics.'³¹²

More was likely a more than averagely wealthy person, with money coming from her parents and her first husband.³¹³ More was well versed in inheritance law: certainly her family made comprehensive wills and Mary, along with her sister Elizabeth, are well provided for in both her mother and father's wills.³¹⁴ In both wills, the estate is left equally between Mary and Elizabeth, although Mary inherited her mother's family estate, Northaw, which Mary subsequently passed to her son before her death.³¹⁵ Provision is made for Mary's children in her father's will, compelling their step-father and aunt to ensure they are cared for in the event of Mary's death and in Mary's own will, there is no mention of her own children.³¹⁶ She leaves the bulk of her considerable estate, amassed from the wealth of her parents and both husbands, and which includes a number of properties in London and Essex, to her unmarried granddaughters Winifred and Anne Pitfield.³¹⁷ It is clear that More had an understanding of the law, particularly in regard to inheritance and would be well-versed in matters of business and trade. However, despite careful management of inheritance in the Tyther

³¹² Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 101.

³¹³ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 100.

³¹⁴ Kew, The National Archive, 'Will of Anthony Tyther, Grocer of London. 01 March 1670', PROB 11/332/346.

³¹⁵ Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'Mary More (1633-1716)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/68257> [accessed 24 June 2022].

³¹⁶ Anthony Tyther had left Elizabeth a considerable sum in his own will.

³¹⁷ Kew, The National Archive, 'Will of Mary More, Widow of London. 12 September 1716', PROB 11/554/64.

family, in 1663 More is brought to court, as administratrix of Richard Waller's estate, regarding an outstanding debt. More's designation as 'admix', indicates that Waller died without leaving a will, leaving More open to legal challenges.³¹⁸ This experience is likely to have contributed to More's motivation for composing 'The Woman's Right', which is as concerned with a woman's right to control her own wealth, as it is a treatise on spiritual equality.

More was brought to court by Thomas Boone and James Gurdon, in a case heard in the courts of Chancery. There is no copy of the original complaint, but as Waller died intestate the 'well-known (and litigious) West Country merchant' Thomas Boone seemingly takes advantage of the situation.³¹⁹ The answer to the Bill of Complaint consists of an inventory of Waller's estate and testimony from Mary and her other co-defendants regarding the settling of outstanding debts on the estate. The debt was owed to the second named claimant, James Gurdon, but was originally that of Thomas Goodyear. This debt was bought, but it is not clear from the context if Waller or Gurdon bought the debt, i.e., whether Goodyear owed Gurdon, bought by Waller so that Waller owes Gurdon; or Waller owed Goodyear, bought by Gurdon, so that again Waller owes Gurdon. Mary settled a number of bonds, including one to another Gurdon – possibly James' mother, possibly called Joyce. Bonds were a typical, common type of loan and the inventory and other administrative tasks More testifies to having undertaken are clearly in line with typical business practices of the time.³²⁰

In *Domestic Dangers*, Laura Gowing's work looks at cases that are specifically about being a woman, as well as how biases in the practice of the law affected women. Gowing focuses on defamation cases, but her conclusions can be extrapolated to the kind of bias More may have faced in her case. Gowing argues that the narrative of many cases involving women is different to that of those involving men. She cites many examples of women's testimony being prefaced and qualified

³¹⁸ Kew, The National Archive, 'Boone v Moore. 1663', C 6/21/16. A partial transcription is provided in the appendices.

³¹⁹ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 101.

³²⁰ See Craig Muldrew, *The economy of obligation: the culture of credit and social relations in early modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

with statements about 'merely' being wives and women were 'questioned particularly closely about their truthfulness and about perjury.'³²¹ One of the central issues is precisely the reliability of More's testimony and truthfulness regarding the unpaid debt. More is treated in practice as the principal defendant in the case, but her second husband: Francis More, father: Anthony Tyther and brother-in-law: John Phipps are also named as co-defendants. Francis More is listed first on the answer, and he and Anthony also give accounts, but they seem to have acted more as witnesses attesting to the truthfulness of Mary's testimony, than giving additional relevant information. They also confirmed that the contents of the inventory that More has provided are accurate. Her brother-in-law appears not to have said anything at all, if the record is complete.

More is in effect the principal defendant, so despite married women being unable to legally own real property in common law, in practice it seems that there was a recognition of proprietorship of her first husband's estate, through her role as administrator. There were numerous legal complications around women who married multiple times: a widow had full legal status but on remarrying was once again subject to coverture, thus the ownership of property from previous marriages wasn't always straight forward. Suffice to say that More appears to be the person who understood the administration of the Waller estate the most comprehensively. It seems hard to argue that it was anything other than practical to question the person who actually managed the estate after Waller's death, especially as he left no instructions. More's husband, father and brother-in-law seem to have had little information to impart, other than to confirm her testimony, although their presence is important, and both Francis and Anthony make significant length statements. However, it seems plausible to assume that More took issue with a system that allowed her to administer an estate but required three men to be named co-defendants. Without seeing the original Bill of Complaint, it is hard to know precisely what role Francis, Anthony and John played in Richard Waller's estate but as More gave the lion's share of the response, and their role was seemingly secondary to hers. The court

³²¹ Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: women, words and sex in early modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 239.

of Chancery supposedly allowed a more equitable treatment of women than other courts. In these 'equity courts', judges could

allow exceptions to the doctrine of coverture. These men recognised the injustices that could flow from the common law fiction that a married women had virtually no legal identity separate from her husband, and they oversaw the development of measures that allowed women to circumvent some of the restrictions that coverture imposed upon them.³²²

What must be frustrating for More is that, even in this court that supposedly allows a degree more freedom and recognition to women and wives as independent property holders, their status of legal entities in their own right, was still lacking; and her case is not unusual.

A great many cases were brought against widows: women who had been named as executors or needed to act as administrators, had accepted legal responsibility for the husbands' estates and had to 'prove wills and enter inventories in the ecclesiastical probate courts' as well as collect money from debtors to satisfy creditors and argue ownership of disputed assets. This often led them into the secular courts, as well as having to 'defend themselves in suits brought by...impatient creditors'.³²³ In cases brought by men, it was much more common for women to be the defendants in suits regarding wills and estates, whereas other cases regarding business, land, debts and bonds, reflected approximately similar percentages of men and women being sued.³²⁴ Furthermore, the trustworthiness of widows was far more likely to be called into question and the 'logic of coverture' meant it was possible for 'litigants to argue that widows remained unaware of their husbands' every legal and financial move,' meaning that a widow may not know of a debt that is owed.³²⁵ Conversely the 'logic of marriage' meant it was plausible for 'litigants to argue [...] that widows *had been* aware of their husbands' activities.'³²⁶ It was unlikely in practice that a woman, particularly one in trade, would be ignorant of business transactions carried out, or indeed any woman would not naturally

³²² Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 26.

³²³ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 110-1.

³²⁴ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 102.

³²⁵ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 114.

³²⁶ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 114.

know details of her husband's loans, debts and assets by virtue of their shared life together. Therefore, if a widow denied a debt existed or had been paid, the implication could be that she was deliberately deceiving the court in order to commit fraud and widows were often accused of 'this kind of illicit double dealing.'³²⁷ This seems likely to be the situation in More's case: she testified that all bonds have been paid and there were no outstanding debts on the estate. The complainants, Boone and Gurdon, clearly disagree. There is no record of any evidence provided by Boone and Gurdon for the outstanding debt, nor is it known if More demanded that evidence be provided, as many widows did either to call the bluff of their accusers, or finally 'discover the truth about their late husbands' activities.'³²⁸

Whether or not these allegations of misconduct were true, More's situation was further complicated by her remarrying. She would have been the sole defendant on a case had she remained a widow, but on her marriage to Francis, he becomes the principal defendant of the case. However, coming from a family such as a Tythers, Mary would more than likely to be savvy about ensuring her own rights and the rights of their children. Widows often took steps to ensure they were protected and would be more confident in negotiating the terms of their marriage settlement. Although still subject to coverture, they could preserve 'property or rights to disposition during marriage, they could do so only by relying on trustees, family members or other allies.'³²⁹ This seems to explain More's father and brother-in-law being named in the suit. Because of the lack of will, we cannot be sure what Mary received from her first husband, nor what settlements would have been in place on their marriage. It seems likely that More would have had a dower and that such a business savvy family would have had protections put in place for More's interests, and the interests of her children by her first husband in the form of settlements, whereby Real Property from the Tyther estate could be protected from coverture but would 'make provision for the bride's jointure and pin-money.'³³⁰

³²⁷ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 115.

³²⁸ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 115.

³²⁹ Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p. 121.

³³⁰ Dower: A provision made 'at the church door' for lands to be assigned to a bride, so that if her husband predeceased her, she could 'claim a life estate' of up to one third. See: J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to English*

More's father, Anthony Tyther, seems to have had some responsibility for her children's inheritance, as his will makes a number of provisions for all his grandchildren: both More's son and daughter, and the children of More's sister, Elizabeth Phipps. While the precise details of More's financial arrangements are not known, what is clear, is that Mary's legal position is restricted by Common Law practice, and she needed the support of male members of her family to support her own interests in the case brought against her as administrrix of her first husband's estate.

Her experiences at court and concerns that her children are well provided for in any circumstances, are likely to have influenced the composition of 'The Woman's Right'. While it is only speculation, it seems likely that More felt that much of the possible confusion caused by her marital status would be resolved if she were simply allowed to own property and inherit estates in the same way men do. Her advice is directed to her daughter, Elizabeth, who had inherited large sums from her grandfather. Mary is highly cognisant of the need to choose a husband who is not only kind, but also possesses sufficient intellect to manage affairs properly. She may also resent the implicit mistrust levelled at her during the case and she argues for the spiritual equality of women. Her intentions to advocate for equal treatment under the law are particularly apparent when we consider the full title of 'The Woman's Right'

The Womans Right, or Her Power in a Greater Equality to Her Husband proved than is allowed or practised in England. From misunderstanding some Scriptures, and false rendring others from the Originall, plainly shewing an equality in Man and Woman before the Fall, and not much difference after. The Equality of their Souls is also proved in that Women have done whatever is of Value that men have done, What hath been done may be done.³³¹

It is not just about theoretical principles, More undertakes a dissection of what happens in practice.

Legal History. Fourth edition (London: Butterworths LexisNexis, 2002), pp. 269-70; Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, p. 293. Pin-money was 'an annuity for [the bride's] personal use during the marriage', p. 293.

³³¹ London, British Library, Mary More, 'The Woman's Right', MS 3918, f. 51r.

That said, More is quick to clarify that she has 'never had had any Reason as to my self to complain of the least Ill Cariage of my Husbands to me...nor hath any occasion or action in my whole life ever offered anything, wherein the Power and Will of my husband hath been disputed on mee.'³³² It nevertheless must have rankled to have to be accompanied to court by her co-defendants, and although all three fully supported her, she must have been painfully aware how much at the mercy of their support she would be. More's experience at court not only helps explain a motivation for 'The Woman's Right', but also demonstrates the paradox that More is trying to highlight and discuss. As a woman, she is not given the same legal status as her male relatives and yet she undeniably undertook complex administrative and legal tasks as administratrix of Waller's estate. The existence of her testimony shows that women were of course expected, able and allowed to speak on their own behalf in formal circumstances. More's case is not unusual, nor would it have been thought so, and she interrogates why the law does not reflect what happens in practice.

Robert Hooke

While More was excluded from formal institutions and legal systems on account of her sex, she was part of the intellectual society that was growing in London in the 1660s. The More/Waller/Pitfield household was an entrepreneurial merchant family but soon became prominent in the new 'philosophical and scientific circles' of London.³³³ More's son, Richard Waller and son-in-law, Alexander Pitfield, were members of the Royal Society and served as secretary and treasurer respectively. Waller joined the Royal Society in 1680, became Secretary in 1687 and was actively involved until his death in 1715. Waller was the protege of a founding core member, the eminent scientist Robert Hooke, and he edited Hooke's work published posthumously. Waller was close to Hooke and features prominently in his diary, and he 'belonged to a group of London fellows [of the

³³² More, 'The Woman's Right', p. 52r.

³³³ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, pp. 105-8.

Royal Society] – including James Petiver [and] Abraham Hill' as well as Waller's brother-in-law, Pitfield, who all had business and professional backgrounds.³³⁴

Waller may have picked up a creative talent from his mother: he was known as a skilled artist and engraver 'producing the frontispiece engravings for several publications of the Royal Society.'³³⁵ The most famous of Waller's engravings is Hooke's drawing of a flea, printed in *Micrographia* as a record of Hooke's work with optics. While Hooke undertook the principal drawing, Waller's meticulousness as a skilled engraver allowed the work to be reproduced. Waller was described by diarist John Evelyn (1620 – 1706) as a talented young man in the arts and sciences, and in particular was 'an excellent Botanist.'³³⁶ Evelyn goes on to say, 'his house is an Academy of itself,' perhaps reflecting the scholarly family from which Waller came.³³⁷

Robert Hooke may form a connection between Beale and More. Beale is known to have painted Hooke and he records visiting for sittings on a number of occasions, although this may have been a strictly professional relationship. He was a frequent visitor to More's house, and she is also mentioned several times in Hooke's diary along with Waller and Pitfield. Unfortunately, it is not possible to speculate too much further about the kind of relationship More and Hooke had, whether it was just a casual acquaintance through Waller or a more meaningful friendship. A 'Mrs More' is mentioned in Robert Hooke's 1692/3 diary on nearly thirty occasions and several of the entries are definitely attributable to our Mrs More. Hooke 'records in his diary paying visits to Mary More in Crosby Square, once discussing dreams with her.'³³⁸ For a long time this has been the only documented interaction of significance between More and Hooke but through the course of my research, I have discovered that Robert Hooke read 'The Woman's Right' in some form.

³³⁴ Lotte Mulligan, 'Waller, Richard (c.1660–1715)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/48707> [accessed Nov 2017].

³³⁵ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 109.

³³⁶ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 109.

³³⁷ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 109.

³³⁸ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 108.

Hooke's 1688 -1693 diary was published in 1935, as part of a collection of about Hooke's life and works, edited by Robert T. Gunther.³³⁹ On 6 March 1692/3 Hooke writes 'At Mrs Mores read her θύποταττω ἐκ θύπακουω' a reference to the main argument in 'The Woman's Right'.³⁴⁰ The accompanying footnote reads: 'This has been read by Mr. H. Milne, of the British Museum, who explains it as "I lay down the law instead of receiving it.'" There is no other allusion made to 'The Woman's Right' in the diary, nor is there any indication that Gunther was aware that Mrs More was the mother of Richard Waller. The translation by Mr Milne is an approximate one: 'θύποταττω ἐκ θύπακουω' (transliteration: ypotássō et ypakoúo) are more accurately translated as 'submit' and 'obey'. The distinction between these two terms is at the heart of More's treatise, which argues that the greater obligation that is inferred with 'obey' has been rendered incorrectly in the instance of wives, discussion on the implications of this, is the subject of Chapter 6. Hooke makes no note of his view on treatise, but this is not unusual: Hooke's diary is perfunctory notes about people, places and meals, there is very little in the way of commentary or Hooke's thoughts and feelings. The inclusion of More's treatise is not insignificant however, and Hooke clearly felt her work was worthy of record. The entry surrounding his reading of her paper is very similar in style and tone to other papers he read. There is no further information available about their interaction, but the fact Hooke at least read the main argument of 'The Woman's Right', demonstrates More's academic and intellectual engagement with notable thinkers of the day.

³³⁹ Robert Hooke. 'Diary, 1688 to 1693.', *Early Science in Oxford*. Vol. X, ed. R. T. Gunther (Oxford: Printed for the author, 1935), pp. 69 – 265. In the same year Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams published *The Diary of Robert Hooke M.A., M.D., F.R.S. 1672 – 1680* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1935). As the title attests, this diary stops in 1680. More's son, Richard Waller was not elected to the Royal Society until 1681, and there is no connection between More and Hooke prior to this date. These two editions are the only printed versions of Hooke's diaries.

³⁴⁰ Hooke. 'Diary, 1688 to 1693', p. 219.

Robert Whitehall

Hooke was not the only academic man who read 'The Woman's Right'; Oxford don, Robert Whitehall read and responded to 'The Woman's Right' with his treatise 'The Woman's Right Proved False'. Whitehall is the only known respondent to More's work and in Chapter 6 I explore 'The Woman's Right Proved False' to investigate the dialectics she was part of during her lifetime and further confirm More's work as a political statement. Whitehall's response to More can be read as a patronising lecture from a teacher to a student. It may well have been intended this way and the introduction of a teacher/student dynamic also implies a particular intellectual hierarchy that Whitehall may have been keen to establish. However, the response is nevertheless demonstrative of the ways women engaged with academic discourse. As outlined in Chapter 2, manuscript circulation and the republic of letters were cultural and intellectual exchanges in which women participated. Furthermore, these exchanges were governed by the offices of friendship, which means that although the exchange between More and Whitehall was not 'friendly', there is an underlying precept of intellectual respect. However, I will first present the broader relationship between More and Whitehall and consider their other literary exchange.

The only extant copy of 'The Woman's Right' is held in the British Library, Harley MS 3918, the commonplace book of Robert Whitehall, which also contains his reply to More, 'The Woman's Right Proved False'. Whitehall's manuscript miscellany also includes number of verses, including 'To the no less virtuous than ingenious Mrs Mary More' written by Whitehall in response to More's donation of a portrait to Merton College, Oxford in 1674 and her reply 'An Answer by Mrs More to the ingenious Mr Robert Whitehall'.³⁴¹ There is still a relative lack of information about both More and Whitehall and nothing to confirm 'how these two individuals met and became familiar enough acquaintances to

³⁴¹ There exists a third poem in this exchange 'A reproof to R. W. for his late address to Mrs Mary More' which as the title suggests admonishes Whitehall for this attack on More. All three verses can be found in Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawls D. 912, ff. 196-8. Only Whitehall and More's verses are in MS 3918.

exchanges verses and polemical essays on the equality of the sexes.³⁴² By considering More's exchanges with Whitehall, we can be confident that 'The Woman's Right' was not a mere reflexive response to her encounter in the law courts but is evidence of More's broader undertaking to argue for women's equality. More was an educated woman who defended herself and her sex capably when unfairly maligned; while the exact mechanism of their acquaintance is unknown, it is prudent to note that More and Whitehall's exchange is only odd if we consider women's writing in isolation from the society in which women existed. Classical and Renaissance notions of ideal friendship were limited to male relationships, but women were arguing that friendship models could include them, either with men or between themselves, as Beale does in 'A Discourse on Friendship'. Women were also clearly part of social relationships which partook of idealised concepts of friendship, these relationships may not have been recognised as meeting formal ideals of friendship, but they were certainly friendships by any commonplace, or modern, definition. Furthermore, the role of friendship within academic and intellectual discourse is a critical aspect of women's inclusion in modes of friendship.

There are numerous documented examples of friendships existing between men and women in early modern society: John Evelyn and Elizabeth Cary/Mordaunt, Alexander Pope and Lady Mary Wortley-Montague, Jeremy Taylor and Katherine Philips, Mary Astell and John Locke, as well as Mary Beale and Samuel Woodforde. They are all ongoing relationships in which women and men engage in a variety of debates and discussions. While these relationships were not formally recognised as idealised friendships, they demonstrate an intellectual and spiritual equality and they thus partake in one of the formal notions of friendship: one which requires counsel and advice between parties and friendship can be used as a tool to overcome social inequality.³⁴³ While personal critique does not automatically entail a friendship, in recognising the role of formal aspects of friendship in intellectual discourse, we can view these exchanges as part of the Republic of Letters which dominated late

³⁴² Bathsua Makin and Mary More, *Educating English Daughters: Late Seventeenth-Century Debates*, eds. Frances Teague and Margaret Ezell (Toronto: Iter Academic Press, 2016), p. 99.

³⁴³ Francis Bacon argues for this role of friendship in his *Essays*, which Mary Beale builds on in 'A Discourse on Friendship', this development is discussed further in Chapter 5.

seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century scientific and intellectual discourse. Vanessa Smith and Richard Yeo highlight the connection between friendship and scientific pursuit, and Carol Pal's work demonstrates that the Republic of Letters was not 'confined to an elite cadre of erudite men.'³⁴⁴ Pal focuses on exchanges between women, but More and Whitehall demonstrate an intellectual exchange between women and men. By recognising the culture of letter writing in both friendship and academic discourse, More and Whitehall can be situated within early modern practices governing intellectual discourse.

[Robert Whitehall: a background](#)

Approximately ten years More's senior, Whitehall was baptized in 1624 at Amersham parish church, Buckinghamshire. He was the only son of a clergyman and grew up around Addington, Buckinghamshire. A King's Scholar at Westminster School, Whitehall became a member of Christ Church, Oxford receiving his BA in 1647 and became a fellow of Merton College in 1650. Prior to his appointment as Fellow, Whitehall was one of the many Oxford scholars to be expelled from the University for refusing to submit to the Parliamentary Visitation in 1648. He records this, punning on his name in the couplet: My name's Whitehall, God bless the Poet | If I submit, the King shall know it³⁴⁵ and in his statement: 'as I am summoned a Student of Christ Church, my name itself speaks for me, that I can acknowledge no Visitation but K. Charles.'³⁴⁶ His Royalist beliefs are evident in 'The Woman's Right Proved False', which argues that the premise of domestic equality in 'The Woman's Right' will result in social disorder. He eventually did concede to the Parliamentary authority and was awarded his MA in 1652 and became a Bachelor of Medicine in 1657. There is no evidence he actually practised medicine after receiving a licence in 1665 and instead he seems to have devoted his efforts

³⁴⁴ Vanessa Smith and Richard Yeo, 'Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science', *Parergon*, 26.2 (2009); Carol Pal, *Republic of women: rethinking the republic of letters in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁴⁵ Anthony Wood, *The history and antiquities of the university of Oxford*, ed. J. Gutch, Vol 2, part 2 (Oxford: Printed for the editor, 1796) p. 583.

³⁴⁶ Wood, *The history and antiquities of the university of Oxford*, p. 583.

to his literary works and academic duties. Whitehall is perhaps best known not for his own work, but as tutor to the Earl of Rochester on whom Whitehall is said to have ‘absolutely doted.’³⁴⁷ The works Whitehall produced over his lifetime were not insubstantial, however, despite varying greatly in tone and quality. Whitehall was appointed *terrae filius* in 1655, who was an ‘orator who made a humorous and satirical speech during the public defence of candidates’ theses’ and he perhaps applying this practice to More, thus affording her the same respect and status of a scholar in attempting to interrogate her work, albeit with misplaced and condescending humour, which merely displays his misogyny.³⁴⁸

Although dismissed as a ‘pot poet’ by his Merton contemporary Anthony á Wood, Nicholas Fisher characterises Whitehall’s poems as ‘well crafted verse addresses in Latin or English’ to notable Royal and Parliamentarian figures.³⁴⁹ Fisher goes on to note that his local reputation was sufficiently good to give his verses ‘a prestigious position at the end of the collections’ by the university printer, suggesting that not everyone agreed with Wood’s assessment of Whitehall’s talent. However, despite four ‘well paced and engagingly boisterous’ poems, that are filled with ‘learned references,’ Fisher notes that both of his exchanges with More reveal a ‘less deft touch [... where] his tone is patronizing and misjudged.’³⁵⁰

Whitehall may have had a reputation for drink; in 1667 Whitehall sent Rochester a mock-heroic satirical poem describing his own ‘florid appearance,’ which Wood had described as a consequence of Whitehall’s ‘trade of drinking’.³⁵¹ The anonymous author of ‘A Reproof to R.W. for his late address to Mrs Mary More,’ which defends More against Whitehall’s verse criticising her portrait, also make reference to Whitehall’s drinking habits: ‘Robin, when mother Louse thou didst disgrace /

³⁴⁷ Nicholas Fisher, ‘Whitehall, Robert (bap. 1624, d. 1685)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29284> [accessed 24 June 2022].

³⁴⁸ Jennifer Speake and Mark LaFlaur, *The Oxford Essential Dictionary of Foreign Terms in English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁴⁹ Wood, *The history and antiquities of the university of Oxford*, p. 583.

³⁵⁰ Fisher, ‘Robert Whitehall’, *DNB*.

³⁵¹ Fisher, ‘Robert Whitehall’, *DNB*.

with lines as ill as any in her face,' suggesting that the author was familiar with Whitehall and his habits.³⁵² Louse Hall was a well-known alehouse in Oxford and its proprietor, Mother Louse, was depicted in an engraving by David Loggan (c. 1635 – 1692). According to legend, Mother Louse was the last English woman to wear a ruff, and the verse printed below the portrait refers to that, as well as her haggard appearance.³⁵³ The verse may have been written more as an attack on Whitehall than as a defence of More, but it does nevertheless include More in the Oxford world. More's own response to Whitehall also indicates she is familiar with Oxford, referencing the 'Oxford I Knew before,' though in what capacity it is impossible to say.³⁵⁴ Whitehall died a bachelor in 1685 and was buried in the south part of his college chapel.³⁵⁵

More and Whitehall: verse exchanges³⁵⁶

While it is not clear precisely how More and Whitehall became acquainted, we know that between 21 October 1674 and 19 October 1675, 2s., 6d. were paid to Whitehall from the University accounts for 'portage of Sr Thomas Moore's Picture to the Gallery' which was painted by Mary More and donated to the University.³⁵⁷ We can narrow the date of the donation even further, as Whitehall's criticism of this painting titled 'To: the No less Vertuous then Ingenious Mrs Mary More; Upon her sending Sir Tho: More's Picture of her owne drawing to the Publique Scholes In: Oxon' is dated 16 December 1674 and published in print a few weeks later, which suggests the donation was made between October and December 1674.³⁵⁸ More's response and the anonymous defence of More were

³⁵² Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawls D. 912, f. 198.

³⁵³ David Loggan, *Mother Louse*, late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, line engraving, 9 5/8 in. x 7 1/8 in. (244 mm x 181 mm) paper size, The National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG D30708.

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw140401/Mother-Louse> [accessed 25 June 2022].

³⁵⁴ British Library, MS 3918, f. 60r.

³⁵⁵ Fisher, 'Robert Whitehall', *DNB*.

³⁵⁶ Transcriptions provided in the appendices.

³⁵⁷ Oxford, Bodleian, Library Records, e. 8, f. 183v; The portrait was misidentified, it is a copy of Holbein's Thomas Cromwell, not More.

³⁵⁸ British Library, MS 3918, f. 59r; Robert Whitehall, 'To the no less virtuous then ingenious Mrs Mary More..' (Oxford: the Sheldonian Theatre, 1674), Wing (2nd ed.) W1877.

likely written in early 1675, shortly after the print publication of Whitehall's verse. The position of the verse exchange and 'The Woman's Right' together at the end of Whitehall's miscellany suggest that 'The Woman's Right Proved False' was written after the verse exchange. His transcription of 'The Woman's Right' and the verses written by himself and More appear at the end of his miscellany, while 'The Woman's Right Proved False' is the very first entry. This doesn't necessarily help us with dating 'The Woman's Right' any more exactly, which must have been written after 1663, the year More's daughter, Elizabeth Waller, was born and the year that Mary wed Francis More, but before 1680 when Waller married Alexander Pitfield. The exact chronology of 'The Woman's Right' itself in relation to the verses, is not clear.

However, other verses in MS 3918 are evidence that 'The Woman's Right Proved False' is not Whitehall's only word on the matter of wives and husbands. MS 3918 also includes 'A Satyr Against Marriage Directed to that Inconsiderable Animal, called Husband' and 'The Wives Gasping Reputation revived or A reply to An Inconsiderate Pen satyrizing against Marriage' which responds to the previous verse. The former is the work of Whitehall's protégé, Earl of Rochester, while the latter may be Whitehall's own work, it is certainly the one towards which he has the greater sympathy.³⁵⁹ BL 3918 also contains some devotional poems: 'The Ambitious Lover', 'On a Young Gentlewoman' and the cryptically titled 'A.D.P.L. OR M.L.' – all of which address an unrequited love. There is no record of these poems in EEBO or ESTC but it is possible they circulated through scribal publication. It is not clear if the poems are Whitehall's own work, or the works of others he has copied.³⁶⁰ Other poems include more prosaic topics such as 'The Black Coats Pre-eminence' about life in Oxford and 'On the Frozen Thames' detailing life in one of the seventeenth-century frost fairs.³⁶¹ It does seem, however, that Whitehall was particularly concerned with relationships between the sexes, either portraying those relationships as antagonistic or the presumed male speaker suffering from unrequited love. His

³⁵⁹ Printed version: (London: s.n., 1680?), Wing S710A/ESTC R26228.

³⁶⁰ There are a number of other hands in BL3918, all the verses mentioned and 'The Woman's Right Proved False' are in the same hand.

³⁶¹ 'Black Coats' is a reference to Scholars' gowns.

inclination towards a distrust of women and a presumption that they are manipulative is apparent in his poetry, as much as it is in 'The Woman's Right Proved False'.

The fact that More entrusted her painting to Whitehall for transportation suggests that their relationship was more than casual acquaintance or purely intellectual adversaries. It is possible that Whitehall intended his verse light-heartedly with the expectation that More would respond in kind, although his less-than-dexterous touch means his words are more scathing than witty. However, as Ezell notes, the exchange 'demonstrates the writers' familiarity with the conventions of friendly social literary exchanges and also the popular performative repartee of the satiric lampoons that were widely circulated in the 1660s and '70s.'³⁶² More and Whitehall were clearly engaging in a common form of literary conversation, and although not an overtly political exchange, it evidences the normality of women's participation in literary conventions.

Whitehall's verse 'To the no less Virtuous than Ingenious Mrs Mary More' begins seemingly to praise More for her generosity and skill as an artist, comparing her work to a portrait of the artist Plubius' spoiled dog, Issa, where the portrait was of such quality that it was not possible to tell it apart from the animal. However, Whitehall implies that as the subject of the portrait, 'Issa (the Bitch)', is responsible for the deception.³⁶³ He argues that women's artistic skill comes from their ability to 'draw Man in', suggesting that all women are thus subjects of art as well as the artists, and by implication must be bitches.³⁶⁴ As Ezell argues, the rest of the verse carries an 'undercurrent of sexual innuendo'.³⁶⁵ Whitehall's scholarly tone and classical allusions are designed to denigrate More's work and the entire female sex under the guise of witty satire.

More's response indicates she took it in this light; she rejoinders by not only dismissing his misogyny: 'But why noe woman must / An Artist be in Painting; cause you see / I'me none, make the whole sex suffer for me,' but also matching his innuendo by highlighting that Martial is not entirely

³⁶² Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 118.

³⁶³ BL Harley 3918, Whitehall, 'To the No Less Virtuous than Ingenious Mrs Mary More', f. 59r.

³⁶⁴ Whitehall, f. 59r.

³⁶⁵ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 119.

highbrow.³⁶⁶ His epigrams were mostly satires on Roman life, ranging from scathing commentary on the brutality of slavery to witty and comedic putdowns, but there were also sexually explicit tales of scandal and it is in Martial's 'baudy steps' that Whitehall has followed, rather than his more intellectual lambasts. More equals Whitehall's classical references; she feigns defeat: 'The Holbein Coppyer [More] yields lett's pencils fall / Scarce knows her Poet from's originall' indicating she is unable to tell Whitehall from Martial himself, but the marginal reference to Martial 5.60 – titled 'To a Detractor' – indicates that More is more than capable of matching Whitehall's insinuations.³⁶⁷ The epigram in question lambasts a critic who 'bark[s] at me for ever and ever', accusing the critic of being attention-seeking, not providing true critique but making a noise merely for the sake of it, in an attempt to gain fame for themselves. Not only does she mirror Whitehall's reference to canines, but the narrator of the epigram refuses to acknowledge the critic and thus will prevent the critic from gaining fame and repute through their criticism: More is suggesting that Whitehall cannot find regard by criticising her and that his criticism is false, done simply for an audience. Whitehall tacitly acknowledges More's rebuke in the opening passages of 'The Woman's Right Proved False', by admitting that his work may provoke a reaction from a wider audience.

While Margaret Ezell and Sarah Ross disagree about the extent to which the exchange is evidence of More's acceptance as a[n intellectual] peer by Whitehall, there is agreement that there was a respect of sorts and an 'ongoing and robust correspondence' and at the very least, Whitehall found More compelling enough to respond to her work and, fortunately for us, preserve it.³⁶⁸ It is somewhat ironic that the preservation of More's work is due to her critic, as no other extant copies of 'The Woman's Right' are known, but it is interesting that Whitehall also transcribed the epistolary dedication 'To my little daughter Elizabeth Waller' which strongly suggests that this is part of More's treatise intended for public consumption and not a private letter to her daughter. This is in contrast

³⁶⁶ British Library, MS 3918, f. 60r.

³⁶⁷ See appendices for copies of relevant Martial epigrams.

³⁶⁸ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 120.

with 'A Discourse on Friendship' which includes a letter to Elizabeth Tillotson, from which Beale's thoughts on female friendship can certainly be inferred, but it does not appear in the Folger Library copy, the miscellany book of Charles Crompton. It suggests that Whitehall may only have seen the letter to Waller because More herself showed it to him as a trusted friend. Whitehall does not directly address the letter to Waller, but its inclusion suggests More intended the work to be circulated. While the letter to Waller contains advice about the qualities to look for in a husband, 'The Woman's Right' is not an advice text in the strictest sense; a conduct or advice book is concerned with social mores and More is not concerned with behaviour, but rather the founding principles upon which these mores are based.

Conclusion

It is thanks to scholars like Helen Draper, Penelope Hunting and Margaret Ezell that we know as much as we do about the family and social circles of Beale and More. As two educated, middling-sort women their social circumstances are a key element in understanding the broader implications of 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right'. This thesis expands on this knowledge adding further detail on the networks of associates and friends that Beale and More build around them during their lives. It also seeks to add to our understanding of how these relationships not only influenced Beale and More's work, but how social networks functioned as arenas of political and intellectual debate.

Beale's coterie of friends were a source of business for her, with art commissions obtained through personal recommendations, but this group also exchanged literary works and clearly discussed political issues. Through these informal, social networks we see Beale's participation in intellectual and political discourse, using commonplace arguments about friendship to advocate for a type of equality. Beale's network of friends demonstrates that the political and social overlapped, and women were fully conversant in the tropes that surrounded popular issues of the day, which included

women's social status. The evidence of Beale's connection to Charles Crompton is further testimony to women's participation in public debate, if we understand public through the medium of manuscript circulation.

Mary More was also part of an extended arena of discourse, outside her immediate circle of family and friends, through the practice of manuscript publication. Her connection to prominent learned men reminds us that although women's participation in intellectual discourse was not formally recognised, it nevertheless existed and was accepted to some degree. Her experience in the courts, coupled with her obvious business acumen and classical education which allow her to rebut Whitehall's attack in verse, shows that women were in practice functioning members of early modern society, even if they lacked legal status.

Formal and informal offices of friendship govern Beale and More's interactions, but the formal and informal cannot be strictly delineated between academic debate in a public sphere and social relationships that exist in private. By operating within and across these blurred boundaries, women like Beale and More are able to interrogate the foundations upon which these boundaries are put in place.

Chapter 5 – The Politics of Marriage, part 1: Mary Beale and ‘A Discourse on Friendship’

Mary Beale was part of a lively social circle, whose activities demonstrate the blurred lines between public and private relationships. Her studio was an arena of work but was also where the Beales gathered with friends and family socially. ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ shows very clearly that Beale was engaged with political discussions with her friends, namely Elizabeth Tillotson, the addressee of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’.³⁶⁹ Throughout this chapter I will provide analysis of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, based on a close reading, drawing out the role of friendship in marriage. Beale argues for a kind of equality between a wife and her husband by using the language of friendship, which allowed for a limited type of equality between a ruler and their advisors, and also partook of a universal Christian duty. Although models of friendship assert equality between friends, the role of friendship in the state necessarily includes overcoming social differences. It is this navigation of the social hierarchy that Beale takes into her work. The political role of friendship, which she has applied to the domestic sphere, means that ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ can also be read as a commentary on the structure of early modern society and as an insight into Beale’s views of Restoration governance.

We can infer from the title ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ that this is a work intended to function as a dialogue, whether directly with Tillotson, with their circle more generally, or with the subject in broader terms. Beale was clearly educated and ‘aware of the theological and philosophical debates of the day and, not surprisingly, her views were in accord with the moral, tolerant outlook of the “latitudinarian” churchmen of her circle,’ which included Elizabeth and John Tillotson.³⁷⁰ Although she does not explicitly discuss female friendship within the main body of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, her

³⁶⁹ London, British Library, Mary Beale, ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, Harley MS 6828, ff. 510-523.

³⁷⁰ Tabitha Barber, *Portrait of a seventeenth-century painter, her family and her studio: a catalogue to coincide with the exhibition at the Geffrye Museum, 21 September 1999 to 30 January 2000* (London: Geffrye Museum Trust Ltd, 1999), p. 24.

letter to Tillotson clearly indicates that her treatise should also apply to friendships between women; this is not a letter of patronage but is rather a window onto a discursive mode between the two women. ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ is thus also a statement on the practice of women engaging with political rhetoric and debate, and Ross argues, ‘Beale establishes her authority in several ways’ using the ‘genre of formal treatise [...] and substantiates her argument with relevant passages from the venerable ancient canon.’³⁷¹ Significantly, she positions herself as the potential friend, undertaking an ‘impartial censure’ on herself so that she might ‘better understand how far [she is] qualified, for so sacred a bond,’ she intends to investigate the extent to which women are capable of friendship and must understand the significance of doing so.³⁷² ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ does not specifically discuss female friendship, but it is perhaps not necessary for her to do so: it seems unreasonable to believe she would write a discourse on the subject and address it to a woman if she did not consider women capable of it.

Although there is no evidence that Beale engaged directly with Katherine Philips (1632–1664), the renown of this poet must have been of some inspiration. ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ was written just two years after the unauthorised print publication of Philips’ *Poems* (1664), in which ‘about half’ of the included poems are ‘concerned with love and friendship.’³⁷³ The deepest affection and declarations of friendship are addressed to women, but ‘To my Dearest Antenor on his Parting’, is ‘couched in much the same terms as other poems by Philips in praise of an idealized friendship.’³⁷⁴ It is concerned with separation of friends, but there are flecks of familiarity with ‘A Discourse on Friendship’: ‘Each of our Souls did in its temper fit’ is not dissimilar to Beale’s discussion on complementary temperaments and Philips’ assertion that ‘[...] thou shalt in me survey | Thy self

³⁷¹ Sarah Gwynneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 302.

³⁷² Beale, ‘A Discourse on Friendship’, f. 511.

³⁷³ Katherine Philips, *Poems. By the incomparable Mrs. K.P.* (London: Printed by J. G. for Rich. Marriott..., 1664); Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women’s Writing 1649–88* (London: Virago Press, 1988), p. 135.

³⁷⁴ Katherine Philips, *Poems*, p. 135.

reflected while thou art away' is indicative of her engagement with classical ideals of friendship as an other self.³⁷⁵

This thesis is focused on prose work, so there is not further space to devote to the extensive research on Philips' verse demonstrating her views on friendship, nor her 'society of friends' which serves as a model for the Beale's own coterie. Although Andrew Shifflett's reading of her body of work as one 'which presents friendship, not as a single experience or "philosophy," but as a relationship passing through several moods or phases' serves as an excellent reminder that not only were women engaging in multiple discourses about friendship, but friendship itself was not an entirely stable concept.³⁷⁶ Philips' and Beale's work together can also evidence that women worked within and appropriated modes of writing to address women and women's issues. Elaine Hobby writes that Philips uses the conventions of courtly love poetry traditionally 'used to glorify friendships between men' in her poems addressed to her female friends; so too does Beale use non-fiction prose and the political language of friendship in her own examination.³⁷⁷

As well as engaging in discussion about friendship with those in her social network, it is apparent that Beale had read contemporary literature on the subject and understood the political history of the language of friendship. While Beale's opening letter to Elizabeth Tillotson allows us to see how women were actively engaged in these discussions about the role of friendship, 'A Discourse on Friendship' has hitherto been viewed as a treatise on the possibility of equality between men and women, by applying the office of friendship to the institution of marriage.³⁷⁸ Beale opens 'A Discourse on Friendship' with a statement on Adam and Eve:

³⁷⁵ Philips, 'To my Dearest Antenor on his Parting', in *Poems* (1664), p. 155, l. 13; Philips, 'To my Dearest Antenor on his Parting', in *Poems* (1664), p. 156, ll. 13-4.

³⁷⁶ Andrew Shifflett, "'Subdu'd by You": States of Friendship and Friends of the State in Katherine Philips's Poetry', in *Write or Be Written: Early Modern Women Poets and Cultural Constraints*, eds. Ursula Appelt and Barbara Smith (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2001), p. 178.

³⁷⁷ Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity*, p. 136.

³⁷⁸ See for example: Tabitha Barber, *Mary Beale: Portrait of a seventeenth-century painter, her family and her studio* (Peterborough: Geffrye Museum Trust Ltd, 1999) and Penelope Hunting, *My Dearest Heart: The Artist Mary Beale* (London: Unicorn Publishing Group, 2019).

For when God had as first created him, It is not fitt, said hee, that Man should be alone, and then, he gave Him Eve to be a meet helpe: And what can that imply; but that God gave her for a Friend as well as for a Wife? A Wife, and Friend, but not a slave; For we find her not in the begining, made subject to Adam, but alwayes of equal dignity and honour with him.³⁷⁹

This reference to Eve as a help-meet and friend is a clear statement of intent that her discussion on friendship is about the role it has within marriage, to restore equality between men and women. Although she does not say more about Adam and Eve, this paragraph is sufficient to frame her work as about marriage. As Chapter 2 attests, discussions on Adam and Eve and pre-lapsarian equality were commonly understood as a political statement.

A detailed examination of her work also reveals more about Beale's own political views than has previously been established. The covering letter addressing her friend opens up 'A Discourse on Friendship' for a reading on female friendship, similarly her opening paragraph on Adam and Eve allows us to read 'A Discourse on Friendship' as a statement on sex equality in marriage. This means that the following statement, concerning the need for rules to govern friendship can be read as political commentary, as it makes friendship analogous with systems of government:

Now, Friendship, which is so excellent in its nature, can not be without order, and must be governed by Laws proper to it selfe: For as Kingdoms and Commonwealths, without a due administration of Justice, and an awfull observance of Statutes, become barbarous, and savage; So Friendship without a right Rule, soone degenerates into vice, and becomes most destructive to the good of mankind; which it was designed cheifly to sustaine.³⁸⁰

She makes this connection between friendship and governance in her second paragraph, suggesting that this is a considered, intentional part of her discourse. Additionally, her observation that a society without rules becomes 'barbarous, and savage' resonates with Thomas Hobbes' (1588 – 1679) description in *Leviathan* of the life of man in the state of nature (1651) as 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.'³⁸¹ Even without this statement, the political role of friendship and reference to the first

³⁷⁹ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 510v.

³⁸⁰ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', ff. 510v-511r.

³⁸¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London: Printed for Andrew Crooke, 1651), p. 62. This quotation appears in the first part 'Of Man', Chapter 13

marriage would be sufficiently political in nature, but by acknowledging the political role of friendship, Beale shows herself to be cognisant of classical models of friendship as necessary to a functioning society.

The office of friendship is often assumed to have had a stable definition in the early modern period: a Ciceronian ideal of *amicitia*, the perfect friendship between two equals. However, two texts that Beale almost certainly engaged with, Francis Bacon's (1617 – 1621) *The Essays of Counsels, Civill and Morall* and Jeremy Taylor's (1613 – 1667) *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship* (1657), provide evidence that ideas about friendship were fluid in nature and different types of friendship were applied in different circumstances.³⁸² This is fundamental to understanding Beale's 'A Discourse on Friendship'. Beale uses the ill-defined nature of friendship to explore women's places in this relationship, in marriage and as friends to each other, working within a tradition of using friendship as a vehicle to discuss political matters. 'A Discourse on Friendship' suggests Beale is sympathetic to a constitutional monarchy, which is consistent with what we know about her upbringing, religious convictions and the attitudes of her social circle.

The Politics of Friendship: Francis Bacon and Jeremy Taylor

The marginal note 'Ld. Bacon' in 'A Discourse on Friendship' indicates that Beale is familiar with Francis Bacon's *The Essays of Counsels, Civill and Morall*.³⁸³ Tabitha Barber argues in *Mary Beale: Portrait of a seventeenth-century painter* that Beale would have likely read Jeremy Taylor's *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship*. The intent is not to reframe the works solely as

'Of the natural condition of mankind, as concerning their Felicity and Misery.' *Leviathan* as a whole argues that humankind needs governance and laws, but that that governance should be at the collective will of the people.

³⁸² Francis Bacon, *The essayes or counsels, civill and morall, of Francis Lo. Verulam, Viscount St. Alban* (London: Printed by John Haviland for Hanna Barret, 1625). There were three editions: 1597, 1612 and 1625, plus reprints of the second and third editions. It is unknown which edition Beale may have read; Jeremy Taylor, *A discourse of the nature, offices, and measures of friendship with rules of conducting it / written in answer to a letter from the most ingenious and vertuous M.K.P. by J.T.* (London: Printed for R. Royston at the Angel in Ivie-Lane, 1657).

³⁸³ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 522v.

precursors to Beale, nor to limit the validity of 'A Discourse on Friendship' by conferring value only through comparison with men's works, but rather to bring to the fore the shared elements of selected *Essays* and *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship*. Although each handled friendship differently they use similar tropes and commonplace arguments with which Beale also engages in 'A Discourse on Friendship'.

Beale makes her marginal note referencing Bacon next to a passage concerning contentment, which asks 'where can it [contentment] be found if not among Friends; all other judgements are like great shadows without any substance if Friendship be wanting.'³⁸⁴ This not only mirrors her opening statement that 'Friendship is the nearest Union distinct Soules are capable of [...so] excellent in its qualityes [...that] man seems to be made for nothing more' but also reflects Bacon's, albeit shifting, views on friendship that '[t]here is no greater Desert or Wildernes then to bee without true Friends.'³⁸⁵ While there are no other notations indicating a reference to Bacon, the language Beale uses bears similarities, particularly with regard to counsel and advice. Bacon advises that friendship allows rulers to ensure their counsellors are serving them well. Friendship overcomes social inequality and allows advisors to give honest opinions, in the manner of a friend. Advice is neither sycophantic nor insubordinate. We can infer that Beale applies this view of friendship to the duties of a wife as counsellor to her husband, overcoming their inequality.

Barber believes that 'A Discourse on Friendship' is a guidebook of Beale's own Christian moral code, inspired by Taylor, who undertakes a discussion of friendship from Christian principles. The moral virtues of friendship allow Beale to position herself as fulfilling her Christian duty by undertaking the offices of friendship, which stem from Christian principles of charity. Tabitha Barber states that 'just as the Church expected her to exercise the moral values of self-examination and self-discipline in

³⁸⁴ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 522v.

³⁸⁵ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 510v; Bacon, 'Of Friendship' (1613), D3v-D4r. Bacon's views on friendship vary throughout his essays. The equality of friends is dependent on the pre-existing social equality present. In 'Of Friendship', friends are social and spiritual equals. In 'Of Followers and friends' and 'Of Counsell', political advisors to a ruler partake in elements of friendship, allowing a type of equality to exist and assuring the monarch that the advice given can be trusted, but the social hierarchy is maintained.

the question for personal salvation, so friendship was organised by moral precepts, its aim the attainment of virtue.³⁸⁶ Beale subscribed to a view of friendship that goes 'beyond mere amicability' to one of a quasi-sacred bond between the most trusted of confidants.³⁸⁷ Pragmatism prevents unlimited friendship, but this view of friendship is predicated on a principle of universality: that anyone might be shown the charitable acts which are its foundation. This notion of universality allows Beale to apply the principles of friendship to woman and wives. She does not directly address the relationship between women and men and uses the male pronoun when discussing hypothetical examples, but the statement on Adam and Eve strongly suggests she is merely using the 'default male' pronoun and that friendship between women and men in marriage is possible.

Bacon, Taylor and Beale all, to varying extents, discuss the role of advice and counsel between friends but it is the inclusion of women into the office of friendship that marks Beale's work as distinctive. Bacon does not consider women as friends at all, while Taylor seems to include some women, but believes they are by no means consistently equal to men. His discussion on women appears almost as an afterthought towards the end of *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship*. The main themes that are relevant to understanding friendship by Bacon, Taylor and Beale are the importance of secrecy, the role of counsel, family relationships, and equality, whether between social ranks or the sexes. These four themes feature in all three works, comparing the interplay between them and the development of the arguments set out by Bacon, Taylor and Beale respectively, highlights Beale's alternative position on sex equality. I will also consider the positional relationship of friendship as situated by each author, in terms of 'being' or 'having' a friend. For Bacon, the perspective is about having a friend, whereas for Taylor it is about being a friend. Beale, interestingly, makes arguments from both 'being' and 'having' a friend, and while not all her arguments engage with both positions, she nevertheless brings a balance to these two states, making

³⁸⁶ Barber, *Mary Beale*, p. 25.

³⁸⁷ Barber, *Mary Beale*, p. 24.

her argument suggestive that one must engage with both 'being' and 'having', to make a successful friendship, which further underscores her argument of reciprocity and thus, equality.

Each author has differing criteria regarding who is eligible for friendship. Bacon starts from a very narrow definition, rejecting outright solitude but limiting friendship to a chosen few. Taylor starts from the broadest possible definition, which states that it is a Christian duty to consider everyone as a friend where possible; he imposes practical limits and eventually narrows the eligibility further for ideological reasons regarding spiritual worth. Beale's discussion of friendship in the context of marriage, begins with the possibility of friendship mitigating inequality in certain circumstances. It is this assertion that makes Beale's writing an important part of the debate: the arguments she sets out about counsel, advice, secrecy and overcoming a social imbalance are Baconian in their style, strongly advocating for importance of secrecy and counsel. Where she differs from Bacon is by taking on Taylor's arguments of universality and applying them to matrimonial relationships, and thus bringing about an argument for equality between the sexes, which permeates her discussion.

The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall – Francis Bacon

Bacon's views on friendship evolve across the three editions of his collection of essays: *Essays. Religious Meditations* (1597), *The Essaies of Sr Francis Bacon Knight. . .His Religious Meditations* (1613) and *The Essays or Counsels Civill and Morall* (1625).³⁸⁸ The interplay between the language he uses regarding counsel, friendship and families, which includes some inconsistencies in

³⁸⁸ Francis Bacon, *Essays Religious meditations. Places of perswasion and dissuasion. Seene and allowed*, (London: Printed [by John Windet] for Humfrey Hooper, and are to be sold at the blacke Beare in Chauncery Lane, 1597); Francis Bacon, *The essaies of Sr. Francis Bacon knight, the Kings attorney generall his religious meditations, places of perswasion and dissuasion.* (Printed at London: For Iohn laggard dwelling at the Hand and Starre betweene the two Temple Gates, 1613). The second edition was first published in 1612, but I will be using a 1613 for clarity of text; Francis Bacon, *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (London: Printed by John Haviland for Hanna Barret, 1625).

his account of friendship, demonstrates how Beale is able to use friendship to argue for equality, and allows us to see the political elements of her work.

Bacon's attempt at defining friendship, family roles and political counsel are often contradicted or qualified across different essays and in different revisions of the essays. There are strands of continuity through Bacon's writing, there are recurring themes and anxieties regarding friendship: he seems insistent on the inherent risks of associating with or trusting the wrong person, and he is also concerned with the way in which relationships play out between people of different social status or rank. There are differing types of friendship explored the essays, which result in different relationship dependant on the parties involved. While Beale models much of 'A Discourse on Friendship' on Baconian ideas, she is able to exploit gaps left by the impossibility of succinctly defining complex social interactions and the imperfect application of broad principles to specific scenarios.

Bacon's first word on friendship was in 'Of Followers and friends' (1597) and it is immediately apparent that he is talking about having followers and friends, rather than being a follower or friend. The advice is directed at those higher up the social scale from Bacon and relates the difference between a loyal subject: a follower, and a counsellor who may give advice: a friend. His advice is that 'In government it is good to use men of one rancke equally' but when it comes to 'favour' it is acceptable to 'use men with much difference and election is good.'³⁸⁹ In formal situations, favouritism can cause resentment and disharmony, but in personal matters it 'maketh the persons preferred more thankefull, and the rest more officious.'³⁹⁰ So then, a type of equality is both advocated for and also dismissed: Bacon is concerned that peers be treated equally where advice on government is sought, but advocates for a sovereign to take one or two into a personal confidence. It is of course tempting to see his advice as politically motivated, and while that is unquestionably an important part of a wider

³⁸⁹ Bacon, 'Of Followers' (1597), B5r-v.

³⁹⁰ Bacon, 'Of Followers' (1597), B5v.

discussion about his work, the only observation I wish to draw for now, is that Bacon draws a distinction between the types of friendship. Friendship is not a universal constant.

The final statement in the first edition ‘Of followers and friends’ jars dramatically with his later essay on friendship: ‘There is little friendship in the worlde, and leaste of all betweene equals, which was wont to bee magnified. That that is, is between superior and inferior, whose fortunes may comprehend the one the other.’³⁹¹ This sentiment is completely altered in later essays on friendship, which reflects classical ideals of friendship between equals, whereas here, friendship allows a relationship to form between monarch and subject. From later essays, we can extrapolate that the type of ‘friendship’ Bacon is discussing here, is more akin to the role of counsellors that he describes in his 1612 and 1625 works.

‘Of Friendship’ (1613) opens with the statement: ‘There is no greater Desert or Wildernes then to bee without true Friends.’³⁹² Bacon values friendship as an important part of society ‘for without friendship society is but meeting.’³⁹³ Bacon’s definition of friendship in 1597 is only possible between superior and inferior, whereas the final lines in ‘Of Friendship’ (1613) state:

It is friendship, when a man can say to himselfe, I love this man, without respect of utility. I am open hearted to him, I single him from the generality of those with whom I live; I make him a portion of my owne wishes.³⁹⁴

This is more in-line with Ciceronian ideals of friendship, something rare and special between equals, rather than an alliance with something to gain. In this way ‘Of Friendship’ is different from the advice in ‘Of Followers and friends’, which tells a sovereign to use his subjects to gain the best advantage. This type of friendship is not available to everyone, and the perfect friend is almost impossible to find. Furthermore, the higher up the social rank one ascends ‘the fewer true Friends’ there are to be had.³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ Bacon, ‘Of Followers’ (1597), B5v.

³⁹² Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1613), D3v-D4r.

³⁹³ Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1613), D4r.

³⁹⁴ Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1613), D4v.

³⁹⁵ Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1613), D4v.

A positive and necessary aspect of friendship is having a confidant, someone who 'multiplieth joyes and divided griefes' through discourse, to further one's own understanding.³⁹⁶ This bears a striking resemblance to his essay on the importance of counsel, which in the second edition is given almost as much space than 'Of Marriage and single life', 'Of Love' and 'Of Parents and children' combined, suggesting that Bacon was primarily concerned with political relationships over familial ones. These three topics are dealt with succinctly and are clearly not valued highly by Bacon. Famously, he opens his essay 'Of Marriage and single life' with the declaration that

He that hath Wife and Children hath given hostages to Fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprise either of virtue or mischiefe. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the publike, have proceeded from the unmarried, or childlesse Men.³⁹⁷

While acknowledging that single men are sometimes too inward looking, their 'thoughts doe end with themselves,' it seems that wives and children are a necessary burden, who create needed limitations on men so that they are more compassionate.³⁹⁸ Without being too reductive, Bacon's argument is that wives and children are necessary for some men, but not all. Interestingly, he is again writing from a position of having a wife or children, rather than being a husband or father. Wives are to serve their husbands as 'young mens mistresses; Companions for middle age; and old mens nurses.'³⁹⁹ The word 'companion' may give some hope that a kind of friendship or partnership is available between spouses, but it seems unlikely that Bacon intended for it to mean as such, indeed, 'companion' here may mean something like a hired assistant who is there to wait upon their master, undoubtedly the companion holds some status in the general household, but is not equal to their employer.

Bacon is concerned with secrecy and trust, which is most apparent in 'Of Counsel' (1613). The proportional amount of space given over to counsel highlights the comparative lack of value placed on familial relationships, even 'Of Friendship' is about a quarter of the length of 'Of Counsel', and a

³⁹⁶ Bacon, 'Of Friendship' (1613), D4r.

³⁹⁷ Bacon, 'Of Marriage' (1613), B3v.

³⁹⁸ Bacon, 'Of Marriage' (1613), B4r.

³⁹⁹ Bacon, 'Of Marriage' (1613), B4v-B5r.

significant proportion of the advice in ‘Of Counsel’ is about who to trust. It starts from the premise that giving counsel is the greatest demonstration of trust between men, but ‘Of Counsel’ is not written as advice to counsellors, but as advice to Sovereigns; thus this argument of giving counsel is actually about having counsellors and is a recommendation that a ruler bestow the highest honour upon an advisor, by taking them into their trust. Bacon argues that even God had a counsellor in Jesus, so Princes need not think it diminishes their stature to have a quasi-equal. This evokes the idea of Jesus as the perfect friend and evidences that counsel and friendship are linked for Bacon.⁴⁰⁰ ‘Of counsel’ is exclusively for Princes and their advisors, and the essay serve a dual purpose: advising sovereigns in the manner of taking counsellors into their confidence and also recommending Bacon for this position.

He argues that counsellors provide stability by allowing rulers to test out ideas before implementing them, similar to the recommendation made in ‘Of Friendship’ to further one’s own understanding by discussing thoughts with a friend. Counsellors should not be sycophants but should provide a valuable service by interrogating the authority’s judgements. Bacon uses marriage and parenthood metaphors to explore two differing interactions by Kings with counsel, through the legend of Jupiter. Firstly, a sovereign may be wedded to counsel, as Jupiter weds Matis. Secondly, he likens counsel to producing off-spring: as Jupiter ‘birthed’ Pallas by consuming a pregnant Metis, whom Jupiter had inseminated, so a sovereign plants the seed of an idea in his counsellors, who nurture it in ‘the Wombe of their Counsell’ after which the sovereign takes back the idea and delivers it up to the world as their own.⁴⁰¹ Using the language of family as a metaphor underscores the symbiotic relationship between the domestic and public. Bacon’s advice is about negotiating unequal relationships and although he does not apply it to the domestic realm, these inveterate uses of familial

⁴⁰⁰ Aemelia Lanyer (1569 – 1645) presents an ungendered or feminine Christ figure in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1615) who epitomises the friendship virtue of sacrifice and offers unconditional love to all people. Lanyer presents many points of similarity with both Beale and More, although I have chosen not to discuss her at length, because her work is in verse. However, the disruption of the male ideal of friendship is another data point of women’s intellectual and feminist networks. See Allison Johnson, “‘Virtue’s Friends’: The Politics of Friendship in Early Modern English Women’s Writing” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Miami, 2010), pp. 98-113.

⁴⁰¹ Bacon, ‘Of Counsel’ (1613), C6v.

language are what allows writers like Beale, and More, to explore how politicised language affects domestic life.

In his 1625 edition 'Of Friendship', the only essay to be completely reworked, Bacon expands on his starting premise that solitude is an undesirable state of being, rejecting the notion that a preference for solitude 'should have any Character, at all, of the Divine Nature.'⁴⁰² In order to truly connect with people, he references and extends Paul's letter to the Corinthians [1 Corinthians 13. 1] which states the importance of love for meaningful interaction. Thus in the third edition, friendship is offered up as the antidote to solitude, and Bacon provides three 'fruits of friendship' which explain the benefits of having friends, the first two fruits deal with the familiar topic of counsel. His advice on the role of friendship to relieve emotional burdens, the first fruit, and offer understanding through discourse and debate, the second fruit, is again directed at 'Great Kings and Monarchs' rather than private individuals.⁴⁰³ Rulers are so set apart from their subjects that they place a high value on this function of friendship. He believes that 'Favorites, or Privadoes', who are individuals are raised up socially and have friendship bestowed upon them, should be more rightly considered akin to the Roman 'Participes Curarum', literally: sharer of cares, which is a more accurate description of their role, and cements the bond of friendship. Being a trusted counsellor to the sovereign is like an act of friendship.⁴⁰⁴ The symbiotic relationship between friendship and counsel is further underscored by Bacon's assertion that the counsel received from a friend provides a purer understanding than can be achieved through one's own judgement. He observes that errors in judgement committed by those, 'especially of the greater Sort,' can be accounted for by the lack a friend to tell them the truth, perhaps underscoring the necessity for counsellors to act as friends.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² Bacon, Francis. 'Of Friendship' in *The essays or counsels, civill and morall, of Francis Lo. Verulam, Viscount St. Alban* (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for Hanna Barret, 1625), p. 149.

⁴⁰³ Bacon, 'Of Friendship' (1625), pp. 151-7.

⁴⁰⁴ Although he details many examples where this relationship has been abused by the 'friend' and matters have ended badly for the ruler he places blame firmly at the rulers' feet. These friendships failed because they were based on a self-serving foundation of the ruler and had these leaders acted more nobly, then they would have been rewarded with an 'abundant Goodnesse of Nature.' Bacon, 'Of Friendship' (1625), p. 154.

⁴⁰⁵ Bacon, 'Of Friendship' (1625), p.159.

It is important to note that Bacon specifically states that friends provide something additional that cannot be given by family, for though men had ‘Wives, Sonnes, Nephews. . .[they] could not supply the Comfort of Frendship.’⁴⁰⁶ He further states that the ancients believe ‘*That a Frend is another Himselfe*’ [sic] and Bacon extends this to argue that ‘*a Frend is farre more then Himselfe*,’ as they will continue a man’s life beyond his death.⁴⁰⁷ The last fruit of friendship is the provision of ‘Aid, and Bearing a Part, in all Actions, and Occasions.’⁴⁰⁸ In particular the reliance on a friend to look after his affairs after death, in this way is a friend more than the self, because a man’s creations will continue on after his death, through the protection of his friend. He further adds that you can only converse with your relations as a father, husband etc., but a friend can enter into discourse in whatever manner is needed. Within these two or three sentences about family in ‘Of Friendship’ Bacon implies that the husband-and-wife dynamic is incapable of being judged a friendship. He does not expand on his meaning, but in reading his other essays, he clearly values friendship over any other relationship.

A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship – Jeremy Taylor

In contrast to Bacon, Jeremy Taylor offers up the broadest possible definition of friendship: that in accordance with Christian principles, everyone should be considered as a friend. Friendship is not the antithesis of solitude, but rather a catch-all biblical definition in which a friend is ‘whosoever is not enemy.’ (p. 5) Taylor is concerned with what it means to be a friend. It is self-reflective prose which Beale emulates in her work.

Taylor is responding to a letter from Katherine Philips on friendship and he states that a true friend can only act in the best interests of another which at an initial glance appears to be flattering

⁴⁰⁶ Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1625), p. 155.

⁴⁰⁷ Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1625), p. 162.

⁴⁰⁸ Bacon, ‘Of Friendship’ (1625), p. 155.

overtones Taylor makes to Philips regarding her own expertise on the subject.⁴⁰⁹ Philips has posed three questions regarding friendship: how far friendship is governed by Christian principles, how far friendship should extend and finally, what the duties and conduct of a friend should be. Although Taylor addresses all three questions separately, there is a considerable overlap between his answers and so all three shall be considered here as one homogenous answer to the implied question 'what is friendship?' While Taylor's work is considerably longer than Bacon's, a number of similar themes are addressed: the role of counsel and trust, i.e. secrecy, and the connection friendship has with family relationships. In addition to these he also explicitly addresses the possibility of friendship between women and men, as well as giving a detailed description of how we can exercise the office of friendship. The idea of friendship as a Christian duty allows Beale to claim friendship in marriage as a moral imperative. There are 'types' or degrees of friendship at play and Taylor reconciles the broadest sense of friendship as a Christian duty with the classical ideals of friendship between equals.

The majority of Taylor's treatise is given over to answering Philips' first query: 'how far a Dear and a perfect friendship is authoriz'd by the principles of Christianity?' (p. 3) The kind of friendship that Taylor supposes Philips to be referring to is defined in Christianity as charity:

The greatest love, and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest sufferings and the most exemplar faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest Union of minds, of which brave men and women are capable. (p. 5)

There is no-one in the world to whom a true Christian should not show charity, and thus charity is not the opposition of an enemy, as 'friend' is, but rather expresses a universal love and duty to all. But mankind has placed limits upon it, making it 'proper to [only] two or three' (p. 7) and Taylor argues that Christianity has restored friendship to its natural order. Friendship should be universal, and Taylor argues that 'the more we love, the better we are, and the greater our friendships are, the dearer we are to God.' (p. 8) Although Taylor advocates the broadest possible application of friendship, he

⁴⁰⁹ Although the reasons for Taylor and Phillips' correspondence lies outside the scope of this dissertation, it does provide us with another example of men and women conversing about ideological and theological matters.

acknowledges limits, both geographical and spiritual. It is not enough to believe in the values of friendship: it must be demonstrated and if these qualities of friendship are not displayed 'they will not be friends.' (p. 10) The impossibility of demonstrating friendship universally reveals that Taylor believes friendship is not a fixed state and can be adjusted to suit the circumstances. Ultimately, he has (re-)set the very limits he argued against initially, and although he continues to stress the importance of charity, he reasons that we instinctively preference friendship with those we meet, know and love.

Taylor distinguishes between being friendly and acts of true friendship. The imperative is on doing good where good can be achieved, for 'if we can do no more to all, we must shew our readiness to do more good to all by actually doing more good to all them to whom we can,' (p. 16) i.e. by doing good to those physically nearest to us, we prove that our intentions to do good to all are genuine. Therefore, 'this special friendship,' (p. 17) which concerns only those nearest to us and not the whole world, can still be extended to any that is worthy of the office. The demonstration of friendship in the particular is evidence of friendship in the general. Although Beale does not make this inference herself, the demonstration of friendship between herself and Charles, and herself and Tillotson means we can see evidence of women's participation in friendship and spiritual equality.

Acts of friendship are key to being a friend but while any virtuous man is worthy of friendship, friendship itself is 'something more than that [i.e. virtuous behaviour]: Friendship is the nearest love and the nearest society of which the persons are capable,' (p. 19). This sentiment is echoed nearly a decade later by Beale's opening line 'Friendship is the nearest Union, which distinct Soules are capable of.'⁴¹⁰ For Taylor, virtue is not something external, but is instead found internally, in a temperament which is

sweetly disposed, ready to doe acts of goodness and to oblige others, to do things useful and profitable, for a loving man, a beneficent, bountiful man, one who

⁴¹⁰ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 510r.

delights is doing good to his friend, such a man may have highest friendship. (pp. 20-1)

The act of friendship is not one way and must consist of a 'mutual love' (p. 22) that has value and purpose. Usefulness is a marker of a good man, because friendships are not 'metaphysical nothings, created for contemplation' (p. 23); they have a practical function, a channel by which we can unburden ourselves. Friendship is a kind of active, reciprocal charity. The act of reciprocity is what makes this type of friendship so useful for Beale. It is more than a service done by one person to another, it is an equal exchange which is in turn a necessary condition for establishing the friendship and it is one that can exist in marriage. While acts of kindness are not limited to true friends, they are not sufficient in themselves to consistut friendship unless 'it be fed by pure materials, by worthinesses which are the food of friendship.' (p. 37) Without these 'worthinesses', men and women may live together and be companionable, but this does not merit this name of 'friendship'.

Like Bacon, Taylor claims that 'friendship is the greatest bond in the world: '[...it] is transcendent and signifies as much as Unity can mean,' (p. 55) and states that every relationship in some way partakes of friendship, although these are not necessarily as strong as friendship itself, particularly familial ones. The bond between parent and child, for example, is the 'greatest, which indeed is begun in nature, but is actuated by society and mutual endearments.' (p. 57) The pseudo-friendship of the parent/child relationship breaks down when they are no longer living under the same roof, and although each are dear to one another, the relationship is not an equal one, with 'too much authority on one side, and too much fear on the other.' (p. 59) Furthermore, the kind of free and open conversation that can be had between friends is not possible between father and son, although the duty bound on them by religion cannot be annulled by friendship, which is further suggestive that their relationship is a pre-existing formality, which is not in itself true friendship. The existence of a type of friendship within a familial relationship further demonstrates that the definitions of friendship shifted and not only refer to the idealised 'true' friendship, while each participates in the principles of this ideal.

Taylor states that the greatest expression of friendship, a 'precept of Christian charity, [is] to lay down our lives for our Brethren...Greater love then this hath no man, then that he lay down his life for his friends.' (p. 43) Although Taylor makes it very plain that this ultimate sacrifice is not one to be undertaken lightly and should only be when the reward is sufficient to justify it, the obligation that comes with friendship compels one to do what one can and more. This sacrifice comes with a proviso that one's 'Natural relations' (p. 55) are cared for, the inference being that it is not your family for whom you are laying down your life in an act of friendship. Between siblings, friendship is to be welcomed but it is not a necessary condition of their relationship. Interestingly, Taylor specifically mentions both brothers and sisters, so this advice is not exclusively directed at men. A friendship may naturally arise between siblings, but it by no means persists through to adulthood and fraternal duty includes actions that to a non-brother may indicate friendship but is an obligation to a family member. The intent behind the action is a critical component and the duty to one's family negates the equality and balance in friendship:

for though a friend-Brother is better than a friend-stranger, where the friend is equal, but the Brother is not: yet a Brother is not better than a friend...though it be very pleasing and usefull that a Brother should be a friend, yet it is no great addition to a friend that he also is a Brother.' (p. 67)

When deciding between a friend and a brother one must determine who is the better friend, for a brotherhood based on the love and mutual respect of friendship is to be preferred over loving a brother simply because they are your brother. Brotherhood is a duty 'but friendship is a Union of souls.' (p. 71)

Taylor addresses friendship between husband and wife and believes that marriage is superior to friendship, as everything that is present in friendship is embodied by the vows and laws governing marriage, and there is 'no abatement' (p. 72) from marriages, except in death. Taylor calls marriage the 'Queen of Friendships' as it is the 'principal [sic] in the kind of friendship, and the measure of all the rest.' (p. 72). However, he states that men and women cannot, even within the office of marriage, be either equal or friends, for

men and women may be placed with one another's company, and lie under the same roof, and make themselves companions of equal prosperities, and humour their friend; but if you call this friendship, you give a sacred name to humour or fancy. (p. 73)

So, although husband and wife may be a partnership, working towards the same purpose, Taylor avoids an outright claim to equality. He frames marriage as superior to 'ordinary' friendship, but in doing so sets marriage apart; for while friendship is embodied by the vows and laws governing marriage he recognises that spouses 'cannot always signify all that to each other which their friendships would.' (p. 73) Although the moniker 'Queen of Friendships' suggests that friendship is implicit in marriage, it seems that marriage is the 'Queen' if and only if friendship already exists. 'Queen' implies 'best' or 'ideal', but Taylor is actually setting out different criteria for friendship in marriage which ultimately means that a wife cannot expect to be treated as a friend.

Taylor qualifies almost every statement throughout *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship*, but it is particularly prevalent in this section. Taylor seems anxious not to suggest that a marriage may be dissolved if it no longer bears resemblance to the tenets of friendship, whilst upholding his assertion that marriage holds moral superiority to friendship, insisting that where one person is 'unapt to the braveries of the princely friendship' the other 'must love ever, and pray ever, and long till the other be perfected and made fit.' (p. 73) Thus wife and husband are 'the best friends,' but they may not always be able to display the properties of friendship, and although wife and husband may not always seem to be friends, it is a stronger relationship than familial ones. Furthermore, friendships are types of marriages and are also a kind of brotherhood. (p. 75) Taylor does not expand on his meaning here, and it is unclear exactly how his hierarchy of marriage > friendship > brotherhood is working, with each element also partaking of the other, in idealised forms. Although in instances when a relationship is not a perfect example, he does not believe the relationship to have failed or should be dissolved. Thus, the criteria for a successful relationship are less reliant on the fulfilment of theoretical ideals and are anterior to friendship. Beale and More work

to understand the impact of these theoretical ideals on these existing relationships and the effect they have on women's social status.

Almost as an aside, Taylor addresses the issue of female friendship, asking that Philips 'see how much I differ from the morosity of those Cynics who would not admit your sex into the communities of a noble friendship.' (p. 86) Taylor recounts examples of individual women who have proved their worth and ability to keep counsel, but immediately qualifies this by stating that he 'cannot say that Women are capable of all those excellencies by which men can oblige the world; and therefore a female friend in some cases is not so good a counsellor as a wise man.' (p. 88) He does not exclude women from friendship entirely, but he believes that in times of difficulty, or when honour may need to be defended, a woman is incapable of the task. Thus a 'man is the best friend in trouble, but a woman may be equal to him in the dayes of joy: a woman can as well increase our comforts, but cannot so well lessen our sorrows.' (p. 89) He attempts a conciliatory tone in his final words on the matter, stating that although women have their flaws they should not be rejected outright as friends, for imperfect men are accepted as friends and so women should not be held to a higher standard. This is a small concession, but Taylor does at least not hold women to a double standard. More addresses this type of criticism in 'The Woman's Right', as Speght did in *A Mouzell for Melastomas*, in which women are deemed to be spiritually inferior but are held to a higher moral standard.

Taylor's assessment of friendship rests on broad principles of Christian duty, but it still necessitates at its core an equality of souls that is not available to everyone. However, by stipulating that other relationships can partake of friendship, the definition of friendship becomes malleable. It is this malleability that Beale explores, taking elements of both Bacon and Taylor in her advocacy for equality.

‘A Discourse on Friendship’ – Mary Beale

As an educated woman, Beale was able to draw on a wide variety of sources for her discourse on friendship. By the third edition of *Essays* (1625) counsel and friendship are inexorably linked for Bacon; his use of domestic-based metaphors affirms the ubiquity of the family/state analogy and his use of friendship to overcome social inequality allows Beale to apply the same principles to overcome inequality between wife and husband. Taylor’s definition of friendship as a universal act of Christian charity allows Beale to claim women’s participation in friendship as a moral virtue and Christian duty.

She takes these principles and applies them to the role of a wife as counsellor or help-meet. The unequivocal basis of women’s subjection was Eve’s transgression in Eden, but an argument for prelapsarian equality was based on Eve’s creation ‘*after Adam, for Adam and from Adam*.’⁴¹¹ The second of these conditions was contested by writers like Speght in *A Mouzell for Melastomas*, Cotton and Cole in *To the Priests and People of England* and Makin in *An Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*, and established women’s role as an assistant to their husbands as a kind of equality.⁴¹² While there was still an acknowledgement of a wife’s secondary role to her husband, ‘Protestant divines did insist upon the mutual duty of love within marriage and that wives were not servants, still less slaves.’⁴¹³ Furthermore, wives were recognised as advisors to their husbands:

Beside a yokefellow she is called a Helper, to help him in his labours, to help him in his troubles, to help him in his sickness, like a woman physician; sometime with her strength, and sometime with her counsell. For as sometime as God confoundeth the wise by the foolish, and the strong by the weak; so sometimes he teacheth the wise by the foolish, and helpeth the strong by the weak. Therefore *Peter saith Husbands are won by the conversation of their wives.* [1 Peter 3. 1]⁴¹⁴

⁴¹¹ See Margaret R. Sommerville, *Sex and Subjection: Attitudes to Women in Early Modern Society* (London: Arnold, 1995), p. 25.

⁴¹² See Chapter 3 of this thesis.

⁴¹³ *The Cultural Identity of Seventeenth-Century Woman: A Reader*, ed. N. H. Keeble (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 144.

⁴¹⁴ John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Household Government* (London: Printed by Felix Kingston, for Thomas Man, 1600), <https://www.proquest.com/books/godlie-forme-householde-gouernment-ordering/docview/2240925404/se-2> [accessed 11 September 2022], p. 222.

Although not universally accepted as having the necessary mental or spiritual capacity to fulfil this role, Julie Crawford argues for the political role of women in counsel, both in Margaret Cavendish's 'self-conscious' position as a wife, and in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* which has been read as 'coded political commentary [...] associated with an aristocratic critique of monarchical absolutism.'⁴¹⁵ Crawford argues that the two central female figures in *Arcadia* as representations of constancy were understood by early modern readers to be 'an allegory for aristocratic power, resilience, and critique.'⁴¹⁶

Beale addresses ideas of secrecy and trust, but also of the importance of advice and counsel. The family/state analogy enables Beale to take Bacon and Taylor's views of friendship, alongside classical ideals and then apply these concepts to the role of a wife as counsellor, when she considers the topic of friendship between wives and husbands. Where Beale differs, as expressed right at the start of her treatise, is with the claim that friendship, within marriage, can restore the equality between men and women. 'A Discourse on Friendship' debates hierarchy and relationships between those of different social standing just as Bacon's essay 'Of Friendship' is about negotiating power relationships. We can therefore consider Beale's work as a commentary on the necessity for a reciprocal arrangement between the monarch and state. Hitherto 'A Discourse on Friendship' has only been understood in terms of a domestic setting between husband and wife, but her reference to systems of government should surely indicate her intent to speak to matters of state, as much as her reference to Adam and Eve pertains to a statement on marriage.

'A Discourse on Friendship' offers a persuasive case for sex equality through the institute of marriage by using the offices of friendship to overcome Eve's transgressions, which caused her and all women subsequently to lose their parity with Adam. Sarah Ross states that while Beale 'does not obliterate inequalities,' she does nevertheless 'minimise them.'⁴¹⁷ Beale acknowledges that

⁴¹⁵ Julie Crawford, 'Margaret Cavendish, Wife' in *Family Politics in Early Modern Literature*, eds. Hannah Crawford and Sarah Lewis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 19; Julie Crawford, *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 30.

⁴¹⁶ Crawford, *Mediatrix*, p. 32.

⁴¹⁷ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 301

inequalities exist and does not seek to eradicate them all, but rather to reduce their impact when they interfere with friendship, but also to extend friendship further to be more inclusive. Complete equality is not a pre-existing requirement for friendship, but it is a necessary condition of friendship, occurring at the start of, and during friendship's existence:

For the begining therefore, and carrying on of Friendship how different so ever the conditions and outward estates of the persons are; it is necessary that their minds, beare a like proportion to each other. For if this be wanting, it will be impossible to maintain that freedome in converse, without which this relation would be insignificant, and incapable of exercising its most noble acts; This being the perfection of Friendship, that it suposes its professours equall, laying aside all distance, and so levelling the ground, that neither hath therin the advantage of the other. (f. 514v)

For Beale, equality and friendship exist concurrently; those of equal social rank do not have to be friends and friends do not need to be of the same social status, but she is suggesting that friendship traverses social boundaries and either creates or pre-supposes equality on an intellectual level. Paradoxically, this means that Beale is suggesting that a kind of equality, an equality of minds, exists prior to friendship but that through friendship, social and structural inequality can be overcome, or at least ignored within the remit of conversation-that-takes-place-between-friends. As Ross states, Beale acknowledges that husbands have 'an authority the wife does not' because of Eve's transgression in the garden of Eden.⁴¹⁸ Although she had originally been Adam's equal, she

lost her share in that rule, which before they had in common, and as a just reward of her transgression; had both her desires, and person, subjected to him [Adam]. A curse, which she not only procured to her self, but intail'd upon all her female posterity. (f. 510v)

It would be impossible for Beale to overlook or deny Eve's offense, but the crux of her argument is that the resultant inequality can be overcome by 'a small number [of women], who by Friendship's interposition; have restor'd the marriage bond to its first institution.' (f. 510v) This stance is in complete opposition to both Bacon and Taylor's views on marriage.

⁴¹⁸ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 301.

Bacon's goal was not to eliminate structural inequality but rather to bridge an otherwise impossible gap, whereas for Beale, friendship is a way to overcome social disparity. His concern is with finding favour at court, whilst still respecting the monarch's role as absolute ruler, whereas Beale expects these hierarchies to be set aside within the bounds of friendship. While Bacon states that the benefits of friendship are endless, he does not envisage friendship being available to everyone. The fact then that Beale believes marriage to necessarily contain a meeting of minds and disposition, which lays 'aside all distance, and so levelling the ground, that neither hath therin the advantage of the other' (f. 514v) is in stark contrast to the held Baconian view of marriage and female/male relationships.

Similarly, despite Taylor's argument that marriage is the 'Queen of Friendships', he nevertheless allows the duties of marriage and the offices of friendship to be mutually exclusive. Marriage merely partakes of some elements of friendship in some circumstances, but friendships are also 'marriages too' but lesser than marriage because they 'cannot, must not be all that endearment.' (p. 74) His statement that while 'some Wives have been the best friends in the world' (p. 86) suggests that it is unlikely he believes a woman can offer good counsel or retain a secret as well as a man. Friendship is not a necessary condition of marriage.

Beale, however, does include the functions and conditions of friendship as a part of marriage. She does not deny the legal and structural authority husbands had over their wives, but Beale's view of friendship-as-marriage requires that the husband not exercise his authority. Beale realises that social hierarchies will not be overturned by friendship and the 'levelling the ground', does not

take away that respect, which Inferiours though Friends, on to those whom providence hath placed in an higher rank. For true Friendship will be alwayes tender of withdrawing from those they love, that which as their birthright they may lay claim to, rather urging it upon them, as that, wherin they count themselves honoured. But by this, I meane only a removall only of that awe which any such inequalitie may be apt, and not seldom is wont to produce. A thing very necessary and material in Friendship. (ff. 514v-515r)

Rank should be set aside or else true friendship cannot be truly realised. She argues that any awe felt, brought about by inequality, should be dispelled, as otherwise those of higher rank might think their

word is law and will be dissatisfied if not obeyed, and those of lower rank might be too frightened to tell the truth:

For till this be effected, there will unavoidably be on the one part too great a propensity to exercise that authority which the advantage of Birth and Condition, hath given them, whereby insensibly they become forward in imposing their owne opinions as Laws, esteeming themselves injured, if not punctually obey'd, and looking on those favours which they ambitiously dispence, as too great and impossible to be requited, because done to those whom they account so much below them. Or on the other side, They whose apprehensions make them too scrupulously sensible of their distance, become exceeding timerous in the discharge of such offices, as the Laws of Friendship both expect and comand from them. (f. 515r)

Thus for Beale, counsel and advice between friends is a statement of equality. Bacon tailored his work on friendship as a guide for giving advice to superiors where friendship allows a bridge between social superior and inferior, but it does not confer equality. Beale, on the other hand, argues that friendship necessarily entails equality within the remit of itself, as she goes on to say:

In administering councell and advice, such will be divided between what is good, and pleasant; fearing least the one should not please, and the other, not profit; and how inconsistent both these tempers are with the nature of true Friendship, I leave to their judgments, in whose breasts this generous flame has been once kindled. (ff. 515r-v)

One cannot be a good counsellor and therefore cannot be a good friend if one is only giving advice that is designed to please the recipient, and thus the exclusion of power and threat of retribution in a friendship is paramount. In this statement on overcoming inequality, Beale is talking about relationships beyond just marriage; authority which is gained through accident of birth should always be set aside for friendship and because she is not explicit about who this applies to, she is able to make the inference that men and women can be equal. Furthermore, her argument could be applied to wider issues of equality, specifically that women are capable of undertaking the offices of friendship outside of marriage, because they can set aside rank and have a meeting of minds.

Women and Debate

Beale's essay reflects the nature of political discourse in the 1660s, whereby treatises and tracts were authored by and circulated among friends. A member of this circle was Elizabeth Tillotson (d.1702) niece of Oliver Cromwell and wife of John Tillotson (1630-1694) who would become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1691. John Tillotson was famed for his renouncement of Presbyterianism in favour of a more moderate outlook, but which still allowed him to maintain sympathy for his non-conformist friends; this 'latitudinarian' perspective was important to his success as archbishop.⁴¹⁹ 'A Discourse on Friendship' follows the letter Beale writes to Elizabeth Tillotson, which she sends as she knows of Tillotson's interest in the subject of friendship. In just over 200 words, Beale demonstrates that not only were women discussing friendship, but they were also participating in the Ciceronian ideal of friendship, *amicitia*, traditionally the preserve of men. As Sarah Ross argues in *The Birth of Feminism*, the importance of recognising *amicitia* between two women, 'cannot be overstated.'⁴²⁰ In much the same way that Speght proved her intellectual superiority in *A Mouzell for Melastomas* through her words and the very construction of her argument, so too do Beale and Tillotson establish their spiritual equality, with each other and with men, through Beale's expression of the friendship that they share, and the nature that friendship takes.

It is not Beale that Tillotson respects, but friendship. This should not be taken as a dislike of Beale on Tillotson's behalf, but rather that the formal aspects of friendship require certain offices to be fulfilled, which is honesty and kindness, free from false flattery or sycophancy. Beale's final statement to Tillotson further underlines that this is a relationship, whether already established or being built, that is functioning within the offices of friendship. By endeavouring 'to lay before [Tillotson her] heart,' she asks that Tillotson help Beale to improve it. This alludes to the notion of advice and counsel, in which a true friend offers constructive critique to steer the advisee onto the right path.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Isabel Rivers, *John Tillotson*. DNB entry: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27449>

⁴²⁰ Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p.302

⁴²¹ Unfortunately, no known response to Beale survives.

The manner in which Beale addresses Tillotson makes it plain that this is a topic they have previously discussed and she hopes that Tillotson excuse the faults found within her work, 'considering oft times wee esteem a Picture done by very unskilfull hand, out of that great affection wee may have for the person whome, it was design'd to represent,' (f. 510r). This indicates that Tillotson should read her work with the eye of a friend, rather than a critic. Beale is nevertheless co-opting Tillotson to undertake the offices of friendship as laid out by 'A Discourse on Friendship', which include similar ideas on advice, counsel and secrecy that Bacon and Taylor address in their works but which they excluded women from participating in. Not only does Beale invite Tillotson into the discussion, she also represents her as 'the ideal friend, [while] Beale is the treatises' subject...who must be examined.'⁴²² Beale's self-identity through 'A Discourse on Friendship' is important to acknowledge and she states that her first course of action before setting out her examination of friendship is to 'to make a serious enquiry and pass an impartial censure on myself' (f. 511r) so that she can understand her own qualifications to enter into friendship. The purpose of Beale's self-censure is to ensure she understands 'how farr I am qualified, for so sacred a bond: and by learning thence my owne imperfections, may be able to strive against and restraine them.' (f. 510r) There are two things at play here. Firstly, the necessity for friends to be on an equal footing is a crucial part of her argument regarding advice; unlike Bacon, she believes counsel should be given between equals which then implicitly includes Beale and Tillotson in the masculine mode of friendship. Secondly, by locating herself as a participant in friendship, Beale not only undergoes a self-examination within the limits of 'A Discourse on Friendship', but also necessarily presents herself through 'A Discourse on Friendship' for public scrutiny.

As discussed earlier, Helen Draper has argued that 'A Discourse on Friendship' can be read as deliberately autobiographical in an effort or intent to move into the public eye.⁴²³ 'A Discourse on

⁴²² Ross, *The Birth of Feminism*, p. 303.

⁴²³ Helen Draper. "Her Painting of Apricots": The Invisibility of Mary Beale (1633-1699), *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 48.4 (2012): 389-405. [Date accessed: 23 May 2016].

'Friendship' therefore performs a dual function: as well as a tract on the importance of equality, it is also a safe presentation of Beale in public allowing her to become more widely known. Draper acknowledges a certain amount of 'quiet subversion' in Beale's family portrait, which suggests it is not improper to also read 'A Discourse on Friendship' with similar intent.⁴²⁴ 'A Discourse on Friendship' is not a bland repetition of others' opinions and undeniably showcases Beale's own voice. Much like her art, Beale takes established frameworks and puts her own stamp on them and, to paraphrase Draper, she uses the established masculine structure to create her own identity.

Creation of identity has significance within 'A Discourse on Friendship' too, as she argues anyone must start with the self in order to achieve the best union. To have the best friends, you must be the best person you can be, although this does not necessarily mean choosing a friend like yourself. Friendship requires self-reflection and an understanding of personal temperament and that of your prospective friend, but she also argues that anyone 'who would bee admitted members of this society, ought to [make] a sober inquiry into the nature of it, what it is, and wherein Friendship consists.' (f. 512r) Beale's starting place (the 'self') is a precursor to her advice on how to choose a friend, which presupposes that the friend has been through a similar self-examination – a spirit of reciprocity is implied. Like Bacon and Taylor, Beale advocates the need for reciprocity in the key themes of advice, counsel and particularly, secrecy. Unlike Bacon and Taylor, it is the manner in which secrets are told and kept which matters to Beale.

The language that Beale uses to discuss counsel and secrets evokes ideal male friendship in the work of Bacon and Taylor. She advocates the same need for discretion surrounding secrets and offers the same warnings regarding mis-placed trust. Beale emphasises the need to be open with friends, showing them that they are trusted to keep secrets; however, she warns against being too free with your own secrets, lest your friend fear that you will be too free with theirs. Beale seems to

⁴²⁴ Draper, p. 399. Draper argues that *Self-portrait of Mary Beale with her husband Charles and son Bartholomew*, c. 1660; oil on canvas; Geffreye Museum, London is concurrently an advert for Beale's skill as an artist and a 'conclusive example' of 'motherhood and creativity co-existing'. It presents Beale as an authoritative artistic figure, 'wrapped up in a suitably maternal and reassuring image'.

be suggesting that because both friends have undergone self-critique, have understand the duties of friendship and have set aside social inequalities, there is a mutual respect and trust between them. Beale does not believe that friends should only seek out people of similar temperaments: she advocates diversity and, unlike Bacon, she is not concerned with finding an 'other self'. Instead, she advises friends to look for complimentary characteristics, as the same temperament predominant in two people may be compounded to a detrimental effect. For example, two melancholy people will feed each other's worst traits, whereas the cheerful friend will act as an antidote to the melancholic one. What arises from the mutual respect brought about by trust is the assistance that friendship affords in times of trouble. Like her predecessors, Beale argues that counsel and advice are the main, but not sole, product of friendship and sharing your own secrets with your friend is a key part of this tenet. It is notable that the way Beale talks of secrets is the opposite to Bacon. For Beale it is the very act of sharing a secret, whilst still in confidence, which garners respect and trust, whereas for Bacon it is the keeping of secrets which is paramount. Presumably Bacon must understand that paradoxically to keep a secret one must first be told it, and Beale of course stresses that secrets should not be shared, but Beale's emphasis on the act of communication is quite different from Bacon's stress on the importance of reticence.

All three authors are aware of human imperfections, but Beale is unique in believing that this is not a barrier to friendship. Bacon and Taylor seem to create almost impossible standards for anyone to live up to, and yet they still seem to insist that the ideal is possible, whereas Beale seems to believe that the flaws of human nature are a part of what makes friendship so necessary:

for when I praise a man I would be thought his friend, but if I reprove with such candour as I ought, I testify my self to be so indeed. I am encouraged to that office, because I think he is such to me. (f. 520r)

Beale makes far more of the fact that the requisite need for counsel between friends necessarily requires that something will have gone astray. Without a problem to confide in a friend, no subsequent advice can be proffered.

Bacon fears that false friends are the cause of problems and is concerned with ascertaining how to trust the right people, the implication is that there are two categories of people 'trustworthy' and 'untrustworthy' and an individual will inherently fall into one of these categories. Beale is also concerned with the problem of trust, but she offers instruction on how to give advice to flawed people, which is implied to be anyone. Beale stresses that the manner in which advice is given, is what is of paramount importance as

without consideration what the effects may be, all the advice that is tendered may by accident, prove like the overhasty healing an old wound, which though skind over for the present, is in continuall danger, upon the least accident; to break out with worse circumstances. (ff. 516v-517r)

She reasons that advice should be offered in a dispassionate way, or else it may create the opportunity for someone to take advantage of you. Her argument is to act as an example, counsel should be tempered and then delivered pleasantly if possible, although the ideal situation is a combination of the two. It should always be 'free, and candid' and given in a 'wholesome and considerate' manner. (f. 517r) Passionate entreaty may mean that the advice is taken as the result of good persuasive skills, rather than 'interest of my Friendship,' (f. 517r) and in the end does harm. Beale's advice seems to be that in being kind to others we bring kindness upon ourselves, whereas forcing opinions onto people will make them distrust you and allow the 'opening of my mind to [them], who is more willing (it may be) to know my disease then to prescribe a remedy for its cure.' (f. 517v) Her qualification suggests that she does not believe everyone will automatically act this way, but she is keen to stress that

there must not only be a sympathizing between friends, but a deliberate consultation, which he of the two is fittest to promot, who only beares that share of the present trouble, which his concernment for his friend, layes upon him. (f. 518r)

Advice can then be given without bias, and lets the recipient of the advice feel in control. It must be a genuine request as 'empty wishes are too effeminate, and become not that masculine spirit that should be in friends.' (f. 518r). The language that Beale uses to talk about trust is specifically gendered here; throughout 'A Discourse on Friendship' she exclusively refers to examples of male friendships and the virtuosity of her work is by inferring the possibility of women being included and opening up

friendship to a broader range of people. The only other time she uses specifically female nomenclature is to extend counsel to include encouragement and reproof as advantages of friendship: 'An other advantage of ffriendship is incouragment, to which, I shall joyn reproofe, being both of them legitimate and twin Daughters of counsell, though of different complexions, and contrary aspects.' (f. 519r). By positioning encouragement and reproof as 'daughters of counsel', Beale is able to situate them as a natural evolution of masculine friendship and thus opening a space for a female driven aspect of friendship.

The State

If we accept the premise that Beale is modelling her work on those of male authors, then we should also consider the possibility that she is tackling the same topics within 'A Discourse on Friendship', namely matters of state. To suggest that issues of 'public' and 'private' are necessarily gendered is problematic and it is not the intent to impose a hierarchy upon Beale's work, nor to suggest her work is only important because she strays beyond the domestic. However, to ignore the possibility that she addresses broader codes of society or systems of government would be disingenuous as Beale's work covers all of the main topics and themes that Taylor and Bacon address in their respective tracts on friendship. While ideas of Christian morals and charity are more closely associated with Taylor, it is the association of 'A Discourse on Friendship' with Bacon's 'Of Friendship' that strongly suggests that Beale is also commenting on the relationship between a ruler and their subjects.

Carol Barash writes about the women's contributions to politically charged literature between the execution of Charles I and the death of Queen Anne in *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community and Linguistic Authority*, and discusses the 'ways in which public and private spheres are framed in relation to discourses of monarchy and political community' through the poems of Katherine Philips, by moving away from eroticised reading of Philip's friendship poetry and restoring

the political meanings inherent within her work.⁴²⁵ Barash states that 'women's friendship provided a model of political loyalty (friendship could, in this sense, transcend marriage)' and thus the discourse 'emphasized women's capacity for friendship—especially friendships between women and the ways they complicated relationships between women and men.'⁴²⁶ Within the poems written during the Interregnum, the longing and anxiety shared by Orinda and Lucasia, can be read as a yearning for monarchy, with the king as an 'absent third party.'⁴²⁷ This symbolism 'crumbles [...] in *Poems* (1664)' after the Restoration and 'without the king as an absent lover' their relationship becomes as though a 'literal marriage,' which then becomes a 'sexual threat.'⁴²⁸

Barash uses 'A Discourse on Friendship' to emphasise the connection between friendship and marriage, and friendship's role in allowing a wife and husband to be 'more equal than Adam and Eve after the Fall.'⁴²⁹ Barash notes that Beale uses 'language that links proper friendship with monarchy and improper friendship with unauthorized government or "confederacy"' and reads 'A Discourse on Friendship' as 'Beale reveal[ing] considerable anxiety about the relationship between friendship and marriage: the spiritual equality of friendship is always in danger of transgressing the same laws of marriage that it claims to strengthen and uphold.'⁴³⁰ Barash is contextualising Beale in comparison to Phillips as a political, royalist writer but as non-fiction prose work falls outside the scope of *English Women's Poetry*, Beale is not afforded the same status as a political writer and 'A Discourse on Friendship' is presented as a text about the 'spiritually sacrosanct' role of friendship.⁴³¹

Works on the institution of marriage in the Restoration are often viewed as an analogy for state, as Sid Ray in his monograph *Holy Estates* points out the 'abundance of loosely edited metaphors

⁴²⁵ Carol Barash, *English women's poetry, 1649-1714 : politics, community, and linguistic authority*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 55.

⁴²⁶ Barash, *English women's poetry*, p. 56.

⁴²⁷ Barash, *English women's poetry*, p. 92.

⁴²⁸ Barash, *English women's poetry*, p. 93.

⁴²⁹ Barash, *English women's poetry*, p. 94.

⁴³⁰ Barash, *English women's poetry*, p. 95.

⁴³¹ This is not a criticism of Barash's work but is perhaps indicative of the lacuna in studies on women's political non-fiction prose at the time of her writing, but is something Barash's work enables. It should be noted that Barash also introduces Taylor and does not provide in-depth political analysis for his work either.

and references to the misleading family/state analogy that saturated the marriage tracts, [meant] such writers could shield their political commentary in the less incendiary realm of domesticity.⁴³² If we accept that marriage conduct books are camouflages for wider political discourse, then it seems negligent not to consider Beale's work as such. The language linking 'proper friendship with monarchy' is perhaps more rightly viewed as Beale's commentary on the rule of law. Beale states that friendship 'cannot be without order, and must be governed by Laws proper to it selfe: For as Kingdoms and Commonwealths, without a due administration of Justice, and an awfull observance of Statutes, become barbarous, and savage.' (f. 510v)

Beale's starting place in 'A Discourse on Friendship' is that 'Friendship is the nearest Union.' (f. 510v) As well as friendship restoring the equality between individuals, it also speaks to a concern to bring order to society. We are in a state of unnatural disorder and friendship restores that harmony. However, that harmony and order needs rules and Beale is clearly advocating for strict guidelines and structures surrounding friendship and is keen for this framework to allow free and frank discussion, as she makes clear that not only counsel and advice, but also reproof, are necessary parts of friendship. She does not want to shut down debate, but rather needs to ensure that change is not permitted to run away untethered. As much as friendship brings order, it also requires order, and in the same way that Bacon does not think that a collection of people are a society, Beale too thinks that a code of conduct is needed to bring peace.

Governance and rule of law are being hailed as necessary to curtail the excesses of unlimited power. While Beale's political ideology cannot be ascertained for certain, it seems likely that she was not in favour of an absolute monarchy. She critiques power, by stating that unregulated friendship could be 'most destructive to the good of mankind; which it was designed chiefly to sustaine.' (f. 511r) Beale displays an Aristotelean frame of mind, a 'reason free from passion' approach to friendship and thus governance. Anything done in the name of friendship but governed by the senses 'is no longer

⁴³² Sid Ray, 'Introductions: Political Marriage and Marital Politics in Early Modern England.' in *Holy Estates: Marriage and Monarchy in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press: Cranbury, 2004), 13-25, p. 15.

friendship, but a confederacy of evil doing,' and it seems she feels that a government based on strong ideologies, rather than a rational course of action can 'degenerate into vice' and have the opposite effect of its purpose. (f. 511r) For Beale then, friendship arguably creates peace and unity, an understandable post-war desire.

Furthermore, friendship is an equaliser that requires power relationships to be set aside, so that constructive advice and counsel can pass between true friends. However, Beale does not suggest dismantling the hierarchy outside of friendship. While it is plausible to assume that Beale was simply not in a position to recommend a society without any structural systems, it is doing her a disservice to suggest that she was ignorant of the possibility that these structures could work differently, for the benefit of a greater number of people rather than the elite few. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that she would want to entirely dismantle society because, as already shown, she holds the belief that it is through these structures that order is restored; therefore the hierarchy does need to be maintained and respected. In the 'relationship' hierarchy friendship sits at the top of the pyramid above family (and presumably marriages which do not display the offices of friendship), so too does the monarchy sit at the top of society and thus both are understood as needing to be governed by rules, which nevertheless does not 'demote' them from their highest status.

This does create somewhat of a paradox if Beale is to be read this way: while friendship creates society as a whole by giving it order, friendship also creates a special bond between two individuals that isolates them from the structural inequalities of society and allows them to converse on equal footing. While Bacon's treatise 'Of Friendship' allows two people of different status to interact more meaningfully, 'A Discourse on Friendship's' very uniqueness comes from its assertion that friendship overcomes these inequalities. However, 'A Discourse on Friendship' does consider friendship in a wider context and in more detail; as she says 'So much for Friendship in the generall; I shall now treat of it a little more particularly' and so friendship in the broader meaning might be read as a comment on society, rather than the specifics of being a friend. (f. 514v)

Beale specifically states that criticism is an important part of societal life and if we accept that 'A Discourse on Friendship' is a statement about how society should function then an advocacy for reproof (which, like friendship, is also governed by rules) is significant in this period. She is not advocating a single authority figure to rule without question, but a co-operative system that requires corrective feedback as necessary. The office of friendship must include counsel and advice; truth is neither easy to say, nor easy to hear, and thus there must be a mutual respect for honesty; this could hold with regard to counsellors truthfully advising their sovereigns.

Beale similarly offers advice not just on how to counsel sovereigns, but also how to give reproof and encouragement under the mantle of friendship, which suggests an evolution of the role of counsellors since Bacon's time. Beale argues that because we feel that our friends have an unbiased perspective of us, whereas we are subject to passions concerning ourselves, our friends can make better reasoned judgements about a given situation. Arguably then, Beale advocates that subjects have a duty to support their rulers, but rulers have a responsibility to listen to their subjects' guidance regarding governance. Indeed, even though Beale starts with the self, she states that 'the love of my self is swallowed up in the love of my friend [...] on all occasions preferring him, and contenting my self like Jonathan with the second place of authority in that Kingdom of Friendship where hee absolutely rules.' (f. 513v)

Finally, Beale notes that reproof must be undertaken in private, which diverges from the public criticism monarchs received in the past. While Beale's argument is that by criticising your friend in public you may draw attention to a flaw that only you have noticed, again it seems possible to apply this sentiment to a general feeling about having respect for someone as a person, despite their status. Private critique also allows a person to rectify the flaw, without the thought they must do so because others think them at fault. Beale quotes Solomon 'Thy friend in private chide, in publicque prays.' (f. 521r) While it is impossible for a society as a whole to offer reproof in private to a sovereign, Beale's philosophy could easily be applied to those at court who may want to find the right way to give advice.

A final argument for a political reading of 'A Discourse on Friendship' is that despite Beale's prior statement that friendship is not desirable between two people of similar temperament, she does advocate emulation as a further benefit of friendship. Taken with the understanding that hierarchies will not be torn down, this could be another way in which she advocates the value of understanding and compassion throughout society. Rather than simply trying to copy the other person, she claims that we try and be better through emulation, not because we want to outdo another, but because our example is an inspiration to others; we learn from those who are different to ourselves, and this difference is not something to be overcome but rather to be celebrated. Beale argues that emulation between friends is the inspiration caused by observing virtue in another and without emulation virtue is rarely found: although virtue tells us how to behave, emulation calls us to action. Our words and actions are more visible in the eyes of our friends than others, they can compare them with our intentions, whilst others only have the result to go on. This is a very similar argument to Taylor's, where he states that we must demonstrate our intent to be kind to everyone, by being kind to those nearest us. Beale adds that friends should try to match each other in acts of kindness, but both Beale and Taylor argue that true friendship is expressed through deeds not words, which need to be genuine and not token gestures. Beale further states that these acts are to be done without performance: the deed itself is enough, and it should not be done for the praise. This obviously applies to friendship in with respect to private individuals, but it may have more general implications. She may also believe that statesmen should not simply make speeches and use rhetoric to gain support but act in the best interests of the people they govern by understanding their circumstances and taking on the ideologies of others' that have different viewpoints. This more co-operative, tolerant way of governing seems to tie in with her views on equality and Christian ideology of fairness and compassion.

Conclusion

It is prudent to note that friendship is the most important relationship for all three authors: none of these treatises think friendship should be ignored, and they are all concerned with what friendship is and how it can be the best type of friendship, for however they define it. For Bacon it is risky and rare, for Taylor it is universal, however impractical that may be, and for Beale it is an equaliser. Not only that, but Bacon and Taylor each describe a number of different types of friendship within their own works, as well as from each other. Although their writing styles are very different, each author is careful to qualify any statement to prevent it from being a categorical imperative.

There are common themes between the three tracts, and the interplay between friendship and family is an interesting dynamic, whereby everyone argued that friendship is superior to family. They do not deny the need for family loyalty, but no-one makes the case for family being preferred over friends except where necessary out of duty. Secrecy and secret-keeping are paramount, although treated in different ways, in terms of where important part of the secret sharing lies by each author: for Bacon and Taylor it is about keeping secrets, whereas for Beale it is about showing you trust someone by revealing a secret. Advice and counsel also have important roles to play, and these two traits also require the ability to trust a friend: either not to reveal a secret nor to offer bad advice.

Beale and Bacon are also concerned with the friend as a reflection of an 'other self', although Beale complicates this by advocating for emulation and arguing against the possibility of having the same temperament as your friend. This also makes her argument for equality more complex, as she appears to be proposing a distinction between equality and equity – where the former would be synonymous with equivalency and the latter with parity – while redressing the balance between two things that are not identical but have the same value.

The differences between the works are numerable however: Bacon is concerned with having a friend, Taylor with being a friend, whereas Beale discusses both having and being. Despite these differing inflections, it does seem that friendship is always about overcoming some kind of inequality,

as each author describes socially unequal relationships. Their conclusions about who can partake of these relationships and how successfully the balance is redressed varies across the three arguments. Bacon's 'Of Friendship' (1625) seems to indicate that friendship necessarily entails a meeting of minds and can only be a connection between two socially equal people, although his description of counsellors and his 1597 statement that friendship can only be between superiors and inferiors worries this conclusion. Taylor also appears to claim that friendship can only be between equals, but he relaxes the definition so that women, who are not equal, could be included as friends in some instances. Paradoxically, he also claims that a man can have a female friend, but a woman cannot be a friend to a man, as she cannot fulfil all the offices of friendship. Beale seems to be arguing that not only is friendship available to all, but that it can provide a levelling of inequalities. Rather than starting with Taylor's work and arguing that women can also provide comfort in times of trouble, she seems to start with Bacon's work and use the ambiguity of the relationship between monarch and subject with regard to friendship and counsel as a mirror for the relationship between men and women.

Beale is making 'A Discourse on Friendship' work hard: she is talking about marriage, female friendship and monarch/state relations, all of which partake of the office of friendship, within the same discursive space. She is also using 'A Discourse on Friendship' as part of her step into public life. The ideas pulled out in her creation of 'A Discourse on Friendship', speak to an ideology of tolerance, moderation, inclusivity and dialogue. Everyone within friendship should be equal and should be possible between any two people. This is, then, much more inclusive than even Taylor. Her treatise on friendship is not abstract but could nevertheless be applied to any 'type' of relationship that might be called a friendship or at least might be described as such.

These multiple readings are not without problems. Contradictions are created when comparing 'A Discourse on Friendship' through the three lenses of marriage, female friendship and state. However, it is important not to dismiss the possible readings simply because they seem more relevant to particular passages than across the work as a whole, or because they create potential

conflicts in meaning. The text is a complex, multi-faceted work than can nevertheless engage with different modes. Beale is indubitably developing her own voice and opinions, and she is able to express these by actively engaged with the literature and philosophy historically and of the day. Beale must have understood the role she had been placed in society and is not afraid to add her own opinions to the existing framework to manipulate that framework to bring about the best possible advantages for her family using her artistic and literary talents. She must have been highly aware of the impact of religion and religious ideologies and has navigated the varying issues and conflicts.

Rightly, 'A Discourse on Friendship' is in the main considered an advocacy of women's equality through a discussion on the institution of marriage. However, this does not undermine 'A Discourse on Friendship' as a political text and in fact gives weight to considering Beale as a political author. Marriage is not a politically neutral institution and reading her work as purely within the domestic realm would be to deny the way in which early modern readers would have understood texts about marriage and friendship.

Furthermore, the implication that a work classified 'domestic' is somehow less important than one which deals with matters of state is also problematic, but this does not pertain specifically to Beale and rather speaks to wider issues about how modern scholars categorise texts. That said, it is reductive to read Beale as solely addressing marriage issues, when she is clearly a competent scholar of literature and philosophical ideologies who likely debated broader issues of religion and politics. It may never be possible to say for certain how calculated her campaign to enter into the public eye was, but for a woman to become the economic powerhouse of the family would have undoubtedly required some consideration. What 'A Discourse on Friendship' shows us is that she was not afraid to take on the existing masculine structures of art, literature or society and was thus able to manoeuvre herself into a stronger position than her sex may otherwise have allowed.

Chapter 6 – The Politics of Marriage, part 2: Mary More and ‘The Woman’s Right’

‘The Woman’s Right’ did not receive any critical attention until Margaret Ezell’s work in *The Patriarch’s Wife* (1987) as a discussion on the family, but subsequently there has been little additional work. It has been read as a proto-feminist text, which is limited to the domestic sphere, in Sarah Ross’ *The Birth of Feminism* (2009), and Ezell produced a second critical reading in *Educating English Daughters* (2016), which also included Bathsua Makin’s *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*. At the core of these analyses is a representation of ‘The Woman’s Right’ as a treatise on women’s education. Ezell uses More as an example of a learned women in *The Patriarch’s Wife*, as evidence for women’s autonomy and as early modern women’s writing as a valid contribution to early modern studies. Understanding that women had access to education was a vital part of demonstrating their participation in early modern society, but ‘The Woman’s Right’ has been somewhat pigeonholed into being ‘about’ education. Ross builds on this view of More by including her in a tradition of the ‘Household Academy’. While More is undoubtedly educated, as demonstrated by the translation work she undertakes which is at the heart of her argument, I present a complementary reading of ‘The Woman’s Right’ which broadens the scope of analysis.

I also provide a discussion on the translation section of her argument, but place it alongside discussion of the rest of ‘The Woman’s Right’, to provide a holistic reading of her argument. I extend the discussion on her translation work by connecting it to similar, contemporary discourses about the rights and authority of magistrates. By interrogating translations of Scripture, More fundamentally challenges assumptions that underscore societal structures, which not only address her concerns with how women are treated under the law, but also open up wider implications for arguments about equality more generally.

It is also important to consider the domestic implications of her arguments. It is possible to get tangled up in definitions of public and private, but a key part of understanding the significance of More's work is the acknowledgement of the interplay between these two realms. 'The Woman's Right' does not present the domestic realm as a metaphor for the political, but rather that the domestic is political, and that the laws of the land affect the everyday life of a household. As Laura Gowing argues in *Domestic Dangers*

the idea of natural hierarchy illustrated by the patriarchy was extremely powerful...but the application of that idea to ordinary household relations was also deeply problematic ... 'Public' and 'private', 'outside' and 'inside' the house were, in fact, no more easily separable than 'domestic' and 'political'.⁴³³

Specifically, More addresses the (in)equality between husband and wife, but not merely as metaphorical or conceptual tropes; instead she appears to be concerned with the practical and very real impact this inequality has on women's and wives' ability to manage their own affairs, especially when it comes to matters of property and inheritance. As Tim Stretton notes 'while statutes and commentaries are revealing of attitudes to women and shifts in women's legal status, they say little about the effects that laws had on women's lives.'⁴³⁴ More provides this commentary by examining the impact that false inequalities, integrated into the law, have had on women

The domestic and political readings of More's work exist concurrently without contradiction, and neither can be said to be the sole purpose of More's work. Both, along with the other possible readings, form the rich tapestry of More's treatise. This chapter undertakes an examination of 'The Woman's Right', starting with More's letter to her daughter Elizabeth Waller, using this as a catalyst for brief discussion on the possibilities of classifying 'The Woman's Right' as an advice text. It will then move on to an assessment of the main body of 'The Woman's Right' and its interaction with tropes and commonplace arguments in the *querelle des femme*, including a reinterpretation of the Fall

⁴³³ Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 26.

⁴³⁴ Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 1.

narrative. This chapter also examines More's translation work, which not only assesses the foundations of inequality between the sexes, but engages with rights discourses and language of the latter part of the seventeenth century. The chapter ends with a discussion of 'The Woman's Right Proved False' by Robert Whitehall, which vehemently opposes the premise of 'The Woman's Right', but paradoxically lends it political validation through the nature of the response.

['To my little Daughter Elizabeth Waller'](#)

'The Woman's Right' is preceded by a letter to More's 'little Daughter Elizabeth Waller' (f. 47r). More was born Mary Tyther in 1633, and had married Richard Waller by 1660, when her son Richard was also born. The elder Waller died in late 1662 and their daughter Elizabeth was likely born in early 1663. Mary then remarried Francis More in late 1663. This means 'The Woman's Right' can be dated between 1663 and 1680, between Waller's birth and her marriage to Alexander Pitfield. More seems to be addressing a young daughter, with the prospect of marriage approaching imminently, suggesting that 'The Woman's Right' was written sometime in the 1670s. More opens her epistle by addressing any surprise there may be at her writing 'The Woman's Right', as both her marriages have been successful and underpinned by a premise of equality, they 'so ordered our affairs and actions to the utmost of our Power and skill, to tend to the comfort and good liking of both' (f. 47r). But it is from her observations of 'sad consequences and events that have fallen on men and their Wives, through this mistake of mens pretending a Power over their wives, that neither God nor nature doe allow' (f. 47r) which compels her to act.

In this brief epistle of some 850 words, More offers four pieces of advice to her daughter when choosing her husband. Firstly, to ask God for guidance and to choose a God-fearing man. Secondly, that she choose a 'wise and understanding man,' (f. 47r) else the laws that allow a husband power over their estate may be exercised by him. This can be prevented by a wife choosing a wise husband, the implication here is that although the law allows a husband greater authority, it is not always the

case in practice, as not every husband exercises that legal right. Thirdly, More advises Elizabeth to choose a husband of ‘a good naturall disposition and temper’ (f. 47r) and lastly, More urges Waller to marry someone she loves and who loves her: More advocates that Waller marry more for the latter ‘for I seldome find the Wife fail on this part if the Husband love her’ (f. 48r).

More goes on to advise that ‘if God shall see fitt to cross thee in all or any of these’ (f. 48r) then Waller should bear her lot patiently, ‘for in marriage you are joined as it were in a Yolk’ (f. 48r) and straining to free oneself from your companion or pull in a different direction is tiring to both. There is no relief in complaining about your spouse. More goes so far as to advise that Waller should be more virtuous for any fault her husband displays as God will take care of any retaliation if ‘we bear afflictions patiently’ (f. 48r). For More, it seems, the importance lies in choosing the right husband in the first place, for once married, there is no recourse; unsurprisingly, divorce is not an option. More ends her letter by stating that she prays Waller will be blessed with a ‘Religious, Wise good tempered and loving husband’ (f. 48r).

Ezell uses this letter, along with the closing line of ‘The Woman’s Right’ that ‘it is the want of learning, and the same education in women, that men have, which makes them loose their right’ (f. 57v) to argue that More is defining ‘education as practical knowledge of the law and finances relating to women’s social circumstances’ alongside the ‘classical education’ that men receive.⁴³⁵ More also includes a short list of learned women within the opening pages of ‘The Woman’s Right’ to demonstrate that ‘Women have done whatever is of value men have done’ (f. 46r). However, as Ezell notes, More does not provide further discussion on ‘the responsiveness of society to the reforming powers of education.’⁴³⁶ ‘The Woman’s Right’ is not a defence of women’s education, albeit a treatise which implicitly supports it; rather, her list of learned women is a demonstration of women’s intellectual capabilities, evidencing women’s capacity for managing their own affairs.

⁴³⁵ Ezell, *The Patriarch’s Wife*, p. 154.

⁴³⁶ Ezell, *The Patriarch’s Wife*, pp. 153-4.

The epistolary preface to 'The Woman's Right' is suggestive of an advice text. To consider 'The Woman's Right' as a mother's advice lends further evidence to its status as an educational text, as the education of children, and particularly daughters, fell within the purview of mothers. The letter to Waller is the only overt evidence that 'The Woman's Right' was composed as a mother's advice to her child, but the inclusion of the letter in the only extant witness of 'The Woman's Right', is suggestive. That Whitehall thought to include a transcription of More's letter to Elizabeth Waller frames this otherwise religious and political treatise as a tract of maternal advice. Arguably Whitehall saw the importance of this epistolary paratext to Waller as an integral part of the argument itself. Dedications to children often preface legacy writing, either in place of, or as well as, more typical dedications to patrons, focussing on specific hopes for their offspring whilst the main body of the work tends to focus on the author's general advice and guidance, which would be applicable to a wider audience.

Whitehall's inclusion of the letter may simply underscore how intrinsic the idea of 'The Woman's Right' as mother's advice was to any contemporary reading of More's text. While Whitehall responds to the political and spiritual claims that More makes in 'The Woman's Right', perhaps there was a necessity for More to disguise broader political claims in the relatively safety of domesticity. While 'A Discourse on Friendship' may have been circulated amongst a coterie of like-minded friends, 'The Woman's Right' was more likely intended for public consumption and entered into a different field, the intellectual discourse of the republic of ideas.

'The Woman's Right' only partly engages with legacy writing. While More identifies both herself and Waller within the letter as mother and daughter, calling Waller 'my little Daughter,' addressing her as 'my child' and calling herself 'I thy mother' or 'thy faithful and affectionate Mother,' within the main body of 'The Woman's Right' she does not adopt a maternal voice. Nor does the advice contained within in 'The Woman's Right' align with the manner of a conduct book, which did not necessarily limit the advice contained within to the author's own children, although the work would have been addressed as such. Jennifer Heller notes in *The Mother's Legacy in Early Modern England*

that while the addressed recipients of said advice can include other relatives including grandchildren and daughters-in-law, the advice is not solely directed at women or the young, and writers would 'often envision a larger readership that can benefit from their advice.'⁴³⁷ 'The Woman's Right' certainly seems to be intended for a dual audience, as a conduct book was, but this merely suggests that More could have written in the manner of a conduct book, but chose not to. The dedicatory letter to Elizabeth Waller makes it clear that More has specific advice for her daughter, but the body of 'The Woman's Right' demonstrates that her concern is for all daughters faced with the possibility of an unsuitable marriage. While the letter to Waller entreats her to act with caution, 'The Woman's Right' is arguably also addressed to men and urges them to reflect on their own behaviour and to question the legitimacy of the authority they claim. Although she does refer to the practice of girls being wed too young as a means of controlling their estates, this is not advice targeted at girls but is instead criticism levelled at the men who marry them and at those who allow the match to take place.

While More addresses the practicalities of women's legal status, she does not offer practical advice on how women or wives should manage their affairs, nor does she claim authority as a pious mother. There is a frame available to More, that of the mother's advice, which she chooses not to use. She does not include any sign that she is writing as a mother within the main body of 'The Woman's Right' and makes no reference or 'claim to a mother's supposedly natural obligations to care for her child's body and soul.'⁴³⁸ This is an important omission to acknowledge, because it emphasises the autonomous choice by More to write a philosophical, political tract. It is not my intent to suggest that no other scholarship has recognised More's work as political: the anthology *Reading Early Modern Women*, for example, includes 'The Woman's Right' in the 'Philosophical Treatise' section, in the subcategory 'The Status of Women: Education and Philosophy', reflecting the political role of

⁴³⁷ Jennifer Heller, *The Mother's Legacy in Early Modern England* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 5.

⁴³⁸ Heller, *The Mother's Legacy*, p. 4.

education treatises.⁴³⁹ Nor do I deny that the issue of women's education is absent from 'The Woman's Right': it permeates through it and predicates the arguments she makes. I simply offer a new viewpoint which more confidently reads 'The Woman's Right' as engaging with rights discourse and political philosophy.

The Woman's Right – The Argument

As Chapter 3 demonstrated, More is part of a discontinuous tradition of women writing about their social status. In *Half Humankind*, Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus bring together texts and contexts of 'the woman question' between 1540-1640, which include women writing their own defences.⁴⁴⁰ 'The Woman's Right' came after this period, but More also draws on the tradition that Henderson and McManus outline, which arose out of classical debate and the pamphlet wars of the early seventeenth-century. Henderson and McManus argue that the Renaissance marked a formalisation of the debate and 'differed from previous writings on the topic [of women] in various ways,' stemming from the increase in print activity which allowed more treatise to be written and circulated more widely and moving away from the courtly style of writing of the medieval era.⁴⁴¹ Even though More's work circulated in manuscript, the increased print circulation raised the number of interventions in the debate and included the middling-sort population of London. By the time More was writing around the 1670s, it was already well-established for those in the middling-sort to be engaged with the debate and for women to be participants. While there has been doubt expressed about women's involvement, due to the difficulty in assigning gender to works authored anonymously or under a pseudonym, Henderson and McManus advocate taking texts published under female names

⁴³⁹ Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550-1700, eds. Helen Ostovich, Elizabeth Sauer (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). The title page of 'The Woman's Right', alongside an introduction from Ezell, appears on pp. 86-88.

⁴⁴⁰ Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540-1640* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

⁴⁴¹ Henderson and McManus, p. 11.

'at their word' and acknowledging the contribution that female authors were making.⁴⁴² It is important to recognise this involvement of women in the debate, prior to More's own, as not only would she have been familiar with the arguments, but may have seen herself as part of the next step of the evolution of the debate.

More uses commonplace arguments from the debate, including women's intellectual capacity, biblical exegesis and a translation element, in her treatise. Women's involvement in the act of translation is well-documented and long acknowledged as an acceptable way for women to engage in textual production, but More is not participating in an act of worship; rather, she is undertaking a critical analysis, explicitly critiquing the render done by male translators.⁴⁴³ This analytical eye is applied to 'The Woman's Right' as a whole: More's opening paragraph briefly addresses the purpose of writing and the nature of truth. Writing either states what is already known 'as to the thing' (f. 49r) or presents something 'new and not commonly known' (f. 49r). That which is so uncommonly known is, claims More, the truth; for lies told so often are eventually believed even by those who created the lie. This is the case between husband and wives: the laws which allow husbands greater power were written by these self-same husbands. More argues that these man-made laws make claim to a 'Right [...] which I do not find allowed neither by the Laws of God nor Nature' (f. 49r). Thus her 'princip[le] aim [...] in this discourse shall be to prove a greater equality between Husbands and Wives then is allowed and practised in England' (f. 46r).

Although I have argued that 'The Woman's Right' is not 'about' education, I certainly do not deny the elements which address women's intellect. She is clear that when women apply themselves to education they prove just as capable as men, if not more so. More gives a number of examples of learned women: Anna Maria [van] Schurman; Lady Jane Grey; 'Valient' Deborah; Boadicea and Queen

⁴⁴² Henderson and McManus, p. 24.

⁴⁴³ See Margaret P. Hannay, *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985); Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-88* (London: Virago Press, 1988).

Elizabeth (f. 50r). She particularly praises Elizabeth's fluency in 'Tongues and languages, that she heard and gave Answer to all Embassadours herself and had the Greek and Latine so fluent that she frequently spake verses in those languages extempore' (f. 57r-v). Elizabeth's ability to negotiate and rule on her own behalf, without any interference from translators, was of utmost important to her, and is apparently an inspiration to More. The list of women is nowhere near as extensive as Makin's, and it is interesting that More draws attention to Elizabeth's adeptness at languages, as she gives no particulars of the other women. We know from her criticism of the translation of the King James Bible that More must have also been adept at Greek and Latin and seems to be tacitly justifying her own skills. None of the example texts in *Half Humankind* engage with the kind of linguistic argument that More employs, suggesting at least that this was not a commonplace argument of defence tracts during the period that *Half Humankind* examines. It seems plausible that More admired and possibly envied Elizabeth's ability and freedom to advocate for herself without interference from her husband.

More briefly comments on Salic Law, which prevents succession to the throne by the female line, which was 'onely to debar the English Kings from the claime of the French Crown, tho the French Kings themselves derive their Rights often from the heirs female' (f. 50v). She also addresses inheritance more broadly by stating that God's laws allow daughters to inherit, after sons but before brethren. Thus, women here come in the middle of a hierarchy, whereas Sheshome's daughter (Ahlai) was 'sole heir to her farthers Patrimony tho she married an Egyptian' (f. 50v). Ahlai inherited in her own right and the estate did not pass to her husband. More was well-versed in legal matters regarding assets and inheritance. She served as executrix for her mother's and second husband's wills, is named as executrix for her son's will, although she predeceases him, and is 'heavily involved' in her sister's will.⁴⁴⁴ In her own will, she leaves the bulk of her estate to her two unmarried granddaughters Anne

⁴⁴⁴ Bathsua Makin and Mary More. *Educating English Daughters: Late Seventeenth-Century Debates*, eds. Frances Teague and Margaret Ezell (Toronto: Iter Academic Press, 2016), p. 102.

and Winnifred Pitfield who are also executors to Mary's will; as Sarah Ross states in *The Birth of Feminism*, she 'provide[d] her female descendants with financial independence.'⁴⁴⁵

Margaret Sommerville argues in *Sex and Subjection* that the English objection to French Salic Law was based on their belief that the French only executed the law so that the 'rightful' English heir could not take his French throne.⁴⁴⁶ Thus, Mary and Elizabeth were allowed to succeed to the English throne. Sommerville also states that this raised questions about subjection to women: while all women were subject to their husbands, not all women were subject to any man. Elizabeth had of course demonstrated, again, not unproblematically, that a woman did not have to be subject to any husband. Arguments about women's inferiority applied as a general tendency, and that most men accepted there were exceptions. However, what More appears to be doing is simultaneously aligning her own exceptionality with Elizabeth, whilst asserting that these are traits that could be possessed by any woman with the right education.

Sommerville also argues that the supposed mental and spiritual inferiority of women, meant that they should not be engaging with any kind of debate about doctrine. Thus, for More to openly critique the officially sanctioned Bible of the reigning monarch would undoubtedly have left her open to a lot of criticism herself, which 'The Woman's Right Proved False' certainly provides. However, she was nevertheless able to do undertake this criticism openly, and there is no evidence that she suffered any particular social repercussions.

⁴⁴⁵ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 103, see also: Kew, The National Archive, 'Will of Mary More, Widow of London. 12 September 1716', PROB 11/554/64; Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 274.

⁴⁴⁶ Margaret Sommerville, *Sex and Subjection: attitudes to women in early modern society* (London: Arnold, 1995).

Eve and the Fall

The basis of women's subjection was founded in Adam's authority over all creation. As such, More starts with Genesis and the creation of the Earth, the beasts and mankind, and mankind's dominion over all the creatures of the Earth. Her interpretation is that Adam and Eve were created equal as 'the word man here comprehends both sexes, or mankind, for in the next verse we read God created him, male and female created he them' (f. 49v). The only difference between Adam and Eve is that Adam was created first and named the creatures, but as More argues 'neither of which seems to me to be a signe of superiority in Adam' (f. 49v). More addresses the hierarchy of creation arguing that instead of any superiority being assigned to men, because Adam was created first, the reverse is true; namely that, because the 'beasts were made before Adam ... [so] God in the work of Creation went on Gradually higher and higher, creating the choisets and best last' (f. 49r). More uses another common argument, that Eve's being made out of Adam's rib, indicates equality: 'Eve was made of Adams Rib, not his head, nor foot, but middle, his equall and meet helper' (f. 57r). Pre- and post-lapsarian inequality were the bedrock of patriarchal domestic rule. Robert Filmer 'urged the institution of the nuclear family as an unblemished paradigm of sovereignty' and this was a commonly accepted truism, which women needed to address.⁴⁴⁷

Establishing equality in Eden is an important part of More's argument, and she does this by addressing responsibility for the Fall itself, stating that Adam and Eve were 'equally concernd in the Command and in the Penalty for the breach of it' (f.51r). Her argument rests on the plurality of 'Thou' to include both Adam and Eve: 'for Eve tells the Serpent, Wee may not eat of the fruit of the trees of the Garden,' (f. 51r) so then 'Thou shalt not eat of the fruit' applies to both Adam and Eve equally, and both were in breach of this commandment. More also advocates equality after the Fall, claiming that Eve's temptation was a mark of her 'most high and strong soul' (f. 51r). More's assertion is that the

⁴⁴⁷ 'Introduction', *Early Modern Women on the Fall: An Anthology*, eds., Michelle M. Dowd and Thomas Festa (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), p. 12.

devil tempted the stronger of Adam and Eve, knowing that Adam would follow easily if Eve had already fallen; for if Adam were the stronger he could not have been persuaded by Eve, whereas it took the devil himself to tempt Eve. This is a reversal of the position used by Rachel Speght in *A Mouzell for Melastomas*. Speght states that if Eve is the weaker sex, then she cannot be held fully responsible for her actions and should not should the full burden of responsibility when it comes to punishment, whereas More argues that Eve must have been the stronger sex because it took the Devil himself to tempt Eve, whereas Adam was tempted by another human (f. 57r-v).

Another commonplace argument for women's subjection is the perceived difference in punishment that Eve and Adam received. Eve's 'Sentence of Sorrow' (f. 51v) was that God would 'greatly multiply thy sorrows in conception, in sorrow shall thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy Husband and he shall rule over thee' (f. 51v). More argues should still not result in the complete subjection of women to men: these 'words do shew something of a subjection to her husband after the fall, tho not much, for I find the sence of these words mistaken by most readers' (f. 52r). She goes on to state that in the original text, the words used to 'subject' Eve to Adam are the same as those 'which God said to Cain when God saw Cains countenance fallen at his Brothers being better accepted than he ... so that I make it (at most) but a superiority of Eldership' (f. 52r). More argues that while both Cain and Eve were subject to another, Eve is nevertheless considered inferior to Adam on a fundamental level, in a way that Cain is not. More respects certain hierarchies and accepts that due deference is necessary in certain instances, such as respecting your elders, but she does not accept the arguments so frequently used in attacks on women, that women are intellectually or spiritually inferior. Establishing that different kinds of duty can be owed is key for More to establish, as she argues that a greater duty has been imposed upon wives than is prescribed by Scripture. Without recognising that there are 'types' of obligation, it would be impossible to More to argue that women have been incorrectly subjugated.

Crucially, More also believes that men and women are ‘more equall after the fall, then is believed and practised,’ (f. 51v) and the order of transgression has little significance. While Eve ate the fruit first, Adam also disobeyed God and ate too. The order of God’s punishment follows the order of transgression: the serpent, Eve, then Adam, and is not an order of severity. In More’s eyes, Eve’s punishment through childbirth is a less severe penalty than the removal of God’s favour from Adam, for a woman was still able to conceive Christ without a man, and this honour was not much of a punishment. She states that the punishment that God gave Adam was a greater curse than Eve’s, as God ‘curseth the ground with barrenness, that hereby [Adam] with the harder labour should make it bear fruit, or else he must have none.’ Thus is it the husband’s duty to provide for his family, through some kind of labour, as much as it is a woman’s duty to bear children. A man that cannot provide for his family is ‘worse than an Infidell.’ More lays a moral and religious criticism at the feet of men. Lack of provision is a sin and the hardship they face to fulfil their duty of care is their due punishment.

Marriage

Thus, God has laid out the duties for both men and women with ‘neither hav[ing] cause to brag,’ (f. 53r) about their respective responsibilities, instead More insists that God surely intended for husband and wife to help each other and ‘ease each others burdens,’ (f. 53r) for they are called Yokefellows from a Yoke of Oxen drawing equally through the cloddy troubles of this life. The man carefully providing a maintenance for his Wife and family the best he can leaving no Carefull way untried, and with all tender affections comfort and cherish his wife. And the wife on the other part with all love and affection to her husband patiently submitt to the decree of God In her sorrowful childbearing, and frugally use the estate her husband so carefully gets, they both endeavouring the promotion of Gods Glory and their own salvation, forsaking salvation, forsaking all other Persons and Interests. This I conceive is their whole duty. (ff. 53r-v)

Marriage is a partnership, with each taking on their own obligations, but working with the other, pulling in the same direction. More does not disagree that marriage subsumes man and woman into one entity: 'Thou'. She further argues that the Ten Commandments given to Moses

are given in the singular number, Thou shalt; yet there God commands a man and his Wife equally, they being one as appears by the 4th Command, Thou and Thy Son and thy Daughter; not thou and thy wife, or thou and thy husband (f. 51r).

This is not necessarily contradictory to her philosophy through 'The Woman's Right'; she is not advocating for equality between two separate entities, 'husband' and 'wife', but rather that 'husband and wife' are one entity, so that each constituent part, 'man' and 'woman', have equal share and authority in the relationship. In a very brief segue, More states that a 'happy man and wife each doing their duty' (f. 53v) is the most honourable marriage, which is in turn 'the emblem of Christ and his Church, for whom he laid down his life' (f. 53v). Christ had one wife, the Church, which compels More to 'take notice of Polygamy' (f. 53v). She states that marriage is the 'indivisible conjunction of one man and woman onely' (f. 54r) and a man must 'cleave to his wife, and they twaine shall be one flesh, not they 3 or they 4' (f. 54r). More's disapproval of polygamy and her subsequent disapproval of divorce is apparent; her arguments about both these related topics are underpinned by her belief that husband and wife are 'one flesh' (f. 54r) which echoes her earlier sentiment that 'Thou' be read in the singular.

More does not deny that a wife should submit to her husband, but only so far as the 'decree of God In her sorrowful childbearing' (f. 53r). Otherwise, while each has different duties to the other, they must both endeavour to promote God's glory. Notably, the husband's duties are emotional ones: he must 'with all tender affections comfort and cherish his wife' (f. 53r) while the wife's duties, aside from bearing children, are financial 'frugally us[ing] the estate her husband so carefully gets' (f. 53r). These responsibilities seem to outline elements each sex lacks, rather than extolling their virtues: the husband needs reminding to be tender to his wife and the wife cannot hold her own economic interests and so must demonstrate her economic sense with her husband's estate.

Indeed, More next tackles the issue of economic power and the abuse of that power by men by addressing the 'Practice of men in our time, who make it their business to raise themselves by estates with Wives' (f. 53v) which, she claims 'seems to cross the command and curse of God laid on fallen man' (f. 53v). These men are not providing for their families through their own labour but rather by taking the fortunes of their wives. More scathingly argues that 'if men...would take half the pains and Industry in lawfull callings as they do betray women (and children sometimes) to be their Wives, they would find it thrive better then now it doth' (f. 53v). A lot of effort goes into taking property from women, More seems to be saying, which morally should go into the hard labour which was the duty laid upon 'fallen man' by God for his transgression.

She also criticises the law in this respect, calling it 'cruel...it being lawfull in England for a girle of 12 years of age to marry, thereby giving her husband all her estate' (f. 53v). She goes on to argue that it seems impossible to believe anyone would marry a child this young for any other reason than to gain control of her estate. For the law to sanction a marriage in this way can be for no other reason 'but to empower the Man and enslave the Woman' (f. 53v). Marriage is a sacred institution for More; each party must enter into it with honourable purpose and furthermore, and the law should not allow the possibility for that purpose to be undermined. Her own experiences with the law are not unconnected to this experience. Although More argues for an extreme case, her own lack of autonomy in the courts and inability to retain property on her remarriage is part of the same restrictions placed upon women. While Scripture states that Eve's 'desire shall be to thy Husband and he shall rule over thee' (f. 51v), More dismisses any subjection that exists after the Fall as 'not much' (f. 52r). Here, she claims, most readers misinterpret the 'sence of these words' (f. 52r) and any preference given to Adam is '(at most) but a superiority of Eldership' (f. 52r), this notion of different types of superiority is a key part of her argument regarding mistranslation.

Translation

More tackles some of the most problematic passages regarding women's social and religious equality head-on, discussing in particular passages where the Apostle Paul seems to advocate explicitly against allowing women authority in the church. In particular she looks at Titus 2. 5, which the King James Bible renders: '[aged women' to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed', and 1 Corinthians 14. 34, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law'. There is a problem, according to More, with the contemporary translation of the Apostle's [Paul's] word in these places. When examining the original Greek, it becomes clear that the same word is used for both men and women, but in the English translation the same word is rendered differently when it refers to men and women.

More is specifically critiquing the King James Bible. She favours the Geneva Bible as having a more accurate translation of the words in question. The Geneva Bible was produced by Protestant exiles and first printed in 1560. This new vernacular bible provided marginal apparatus and was 'marked by a Calvinism distasteful to ecclesiastical authority even in Elizabeth's reign.'⁴⁴⁸ The Geneva Bible was widely popular and 'helped to popularize private reading,' particularly with women.⁴⁴⁹ It was not well received by Elizabeth I 'who was resistant to Puritan demands for further ecclesiastical reform,' but the popularity of the Geneva Bible ensured it was a marketplace success.⁴⁵⁰ However, this ongoing popularity was such, that its use should not automatically be read as an affinity with dissenting ideology, as it was a commonly used household Bible. That said, she is clearly tackling head-on the current state-approved version of Scripture, when the Geneva Bible was viewed with some

⁴⁴⁸ S. L. Greenslade, *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Volume 3, The West from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 155.

⁴⁴⁹ Femke Molekamp, *Women and the Bible in Early Modern England: Religious Reading and Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 19.

⁴⁵⁰ Femke Molekamp, 'Genevan Legacies: The Making of the English Geneva Bible', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*, ed. by Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 51.

political suspicion as representative of the Puritan era. As Christina Luckyj notes, the King James Bible was published 'to supersede the Geneva Bible, which had been loaded with marginal commentaries on the rights of subjects to overthrow unjust magistrates.'⁴⁵¹ She does not question the monarchy as an institution, but More's criticism of a husband's abuse of power could be read as a criticism of the monarchy's recent, similar abuse, particularly as she is specifically criticising King James' version of the Bible, with her claim that 'our Translators [of King James Version] do render severall places falsely' (f. 55r). Whereas, the Geneva Bible translation

done thus carefully and thus approved, hath not translated the word ὑποτάσσω obedient or obey, through the whole Bible, but rendred it to wives submitt, not obey, they not finding Gods Authority for it but our modern Writers will have the Geneva translation read with the spectacles of their marginal notes, where they make that which they render subject, to be obedient and this onely to wives. (f. 55r).

More might be walking a fine line between literary criticism and dissent.

This issue of 'submit' versus 'obey' makes up a significant part of her argument, but she first addresses the use of ἀφίέτω, which is used with regards to a believing spouse dwelling with a non-believing spouse in 2 Corinthians. 22.⁴⁵² The believing spouse is encouraged to remain with the non-believing, but the variations are rendered differently according to the gender of the spouse. The believing husband is urged by Paul to 'not put her away' (f. 55v) whereas the believing wife is told to 'not leave him' (f. 55v). More's argument is more than one of semantics, as she focusses on the wider impact by arguing that both versions imply that possession of the wife remains with the husband: 'surely the difference of putting away or leaving is very considerable leaving implies leaving him in possession, put away to keep possession' (f. 55v). It is perhaps a question of agency as in both instances, the husband has the power. A modern reading may muddy the issue; 'leaving', as a transitive verb, does not necessarily imply that ownership of the object leaving remains with the object being

⁴⁵¹ Christina Luckyj, 'Not Sparing Kings: Aemilia Lanyer and the Religious Politics of Female Alliance', *The Politics of Female Alliance in Early Modern England*, eds. Christina Luckyj and Niamh J. O'Leary (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), p. 167.

⁴⁵² ἀφίέτω, pronounced: ah-fi-et-ohw.

left. Agency is placed on the object acting, i.e. the leaver, implying a ‘stayer’ or other who is left. However, More seems to be reading ‘let her not leave him’ as do not *allow* her to leave (my emphasis), which then tallies with her reading of possession remaining with the husband. What is undoubtedly true is that ἀφίέτω has been translated differently in the case of the husband or wife. Rhetorical flair may account for a translator’s desire to not repeat a phrase, but without imposing modern concepts of unconscious bias, it is nevertheless interesting to note the difference introduced between Paul’s words and the implied reader, by a third party who, deliberately or not, treated two people in the same situation differently, based simply on their gender.

Her second example is more complex, as she examines the use of ὑπάκούω and ὑποτάτσω, which are used to signify obedience or service.⁴⁵³ More acknowledges that ‘both bear a double interpretation, to obey, or to be subject’ (f. 56r) but her issue lies with the occurrence of each word relative to men and women. Her reasoning seems a little confused at times, but her point rests on ὑποτάτσω being rendered as ‘obey’ rather than ‘submit’. The subtlety of her point is dependent on her claim that:

the Holy Ghost God himself the first and great Author of all Languages and Tongues hath thought fit to use the word ὑπάκούω wherever he requires the greater duty as in obedience to himself and his commands, and of Children to Parents, and Servants to Masters but the word ὑποτάτσω in scripture we find still used when the lesser duty is required as from the younger to the elder etc (f. 56r).

Here we see More calling on the highest authority, God, as the ultimate dictator of language and meaning, More’s issue is with the human intervention, and the questions of status implied. ὑπάκούω (literally: I hearken, listen, obey) implies that the recipient of the command is compelled to act, without autonomy over their actions. Whereas ὑποτάτσω (literally: I subject, place under [authority]) is suggestive of a request that is willingly carried out, albeit with due respect given. ὑποτάτσω is the first person singular verse form, meaning the ‘I’ subject is the person giving the command. This may

⁴⁵³ ὑπάκούω, pronounced: hu-pa-koo-wl; ὑποτάτσω, pronounced: hu-po-tass-ohw.

seem contradictory, but More seems to be alluding to an individual acting from sense of duty or loyalty, but still with autonomous control over their own actions. She is adamant that ὑποτάσσω should not be read as unquestioningly obeying a command out of blind servitude, and underlines her assertion that marriage is a partnership of mutual respect and service.

More goes on to make further points about the nuanced difference between 'submit' (or 'subject', i.e. ὑποτάτοσω) and obey (ὑπακούω). For to love someone and submit to them does not necessarily entail that they should be obeyed, for

as I am commanded to obey God, I am commanded to love God, I am also commanded to love my neighbour, shall I therefore argue, that because I am to love God and to love my neighbour, that therefore I must obey my neighbour (f. 57r).

She argues that this is fallacious reasoning, that the lesser duty may be contained in the greater but not the other way round: 'I can carry one hundred pound, I can carry one, but I may carry one and not one hundred.' The lesser and greater here being the difference between submit or love and obey. As Ezell argues, this distinction between 'obey' and 'submit' may seem trifling to a modern ear, but

it is the critical difference of being in a child/parent, servant/master relationship of absolute authority versus being a subject, a willing political participant who yields power, and has the power to consent, not just to obey. It is also a critical distinction in determining who can own and dispose of property, literally to have the authority to be able to make a gift to the future.⁴⁵⁴

Her premise is that the foundations of women's supposed subjection to men is based on the teaching of the Bible, from which other arguments may follow. In the hierarchy of rhetoric, the Bible is the highest authority, so what More seeks to do is understand, interrogate and influence one of the cornerstone arguments that are employed.

Establishing a hierarchy of obey and submit as greater and lesser duties is key to More's argument, because that distinction underpins implicit assumptions about who falls into which category, and 'The Woman's Right' challenges these assumptions. An examination of contemporary

⁴⁵⁴ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 102.

texts that also discuss these terms highlights that they are so often used interchangeably. Most dictionary definitions, use the word ‘submit’ in the definition of ‘obey’, they are inextricably linked. Why then does it matter? If the terms can be used synonymously, then surely there is no great difference between the duties expected of husbands and wives? Of course, we know this is not the case, and it matters because there is a difference, even if that difference is sometimes hard itself to define. Submit and obey can be used interchangeably, and most often are. However, when a distinction is made, it is invariably to argue that one group should have dominance over another: that they should be obeyed. Who or what should be obeyed varies, depending on the position of the author; but caught up in this debate, that mostly centres around issues of rule of law and governance, is the status of wives and women. In order to understand the extent to which ‘The Woman’s Right’ is distinct from other writings that discuss submit/obey, it is important to establish how submit and obey were understood and used in contemporary texts.

Contemporary uses of ‘submit’ and ‘obey’

A proximity search on EEBO of ‘submit NEAR obey’, between 1660-1680, returns over 300 records.⁴⁵⁵ The most frequent occurrence of proximity was the use of Hebrews 13:17 ‘obey them that rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.’ In most cases, this was the only hit in a record and although the quotation framed part of an argument, it was not in itself interrogated. Out of the 363 records the search produced, the vast majority of them had just one or two hits: typically a single quotation, usually Hebrews 13.17, 1 Thessalonians 5.12 or 1 Peter 2.13.⁴⁵⁶ Just twenty-seven texts had at least three or more hits of ‘submit near obey’, about

⁴⁵⁵ I am cognisant of the issues with proximity searches within OCR texts to provide quantitative data. However, these results are intended to be demonstrative of a general background for More’s work, and I highlight examples of interest. They are not presented as a definitive set. Searches undertaken January – April 2019.

⁴⁵⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5. 12 ‘And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you’ [here ‘over you’ is taken as the authority to which one must submit or obey]; 1 Peter 2. 13 ‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme’.

7%, such results are more likely to undertake a meaningful discussion. However, even within these texts the terms are mostly used synonymously; there is an implied difference in some cases, which enables More to draw out the bias, whether conscious or not, of language used regarding wives.

Ideas of hierarchical types of duty, and discussions on passive and active forms of obedience are a precursor to the rights discourses of the 1680s: for example, Edward Boteler (d. 1670) preached ‘Submit to the Sceptre, obey the Commands’ in his sermon discussing the nature of service and rule to those who are rulers, arguing that all rulers on earth are still subject to God.⁴⁵⁷ Other texts indicate a variance between the application of actively obeying and passively submitting when discussing lower- and higher-order concepts. By lower-order concepts I mean the distinction between tangible man-made laws, physical representations or embodiments of concepts, or practical manifestations that citizens directly engage with. By higher-order concept I mean intangible ideas of ‘governance’, ‘law’ or broader theoretical or philosophical ideas that effect day to day life but are perhaps ambiguous until crystallised by practical applications. But ‘submit’ and ‘obey’ are not consistently applied to these notions, even though there is a general consensus that there is some kind of difference.

Henry Hesketh (1636/7 – 1710?) writes ‘men boast that they obey the law if they submit to the penalty and pay the forfeiture’ which seems to suggest that ‘the law’ – a broader, higher-order concept is something to be obeyed, while the consequences of breaking the law, penalties, are something to be submitted to.⁴⁵⁸ Similarly, John Sharp (1645 – 1714) also writes that the ‘laws of kingdom’ are to be obeyed and we should ‘submit to Governors,’ which differs slightly from Thomas Lodington (1621 – 1692), who states that citizens should ‘obey their [Magistrate’s] commands [...] and] submit to their sentence.’⁴⁵⁹ Here, it is the manifestation of the law, the commands of magistrates,

⁴⁵⁷ Edward Boteler, *The Servant’s Audit: A Sermon* (London: Printed for G. Bedell and T. Collins, 1660.), p. 33.

⁴⁵⁸ Henry Hesketh, *A sermon preached before the Right Honorable Lord Mayor and alderman of the city of London at Guild-Hall Chappel, on January 30th, 1677/78* (London, Printed for Will. Leach..., 1678), p. 10.

⁴⁵⁹ John Sharp, *A sermon preached at the second general meeting of the gentlemen and others...February 17 1679/80* (London, Printed for Walter Kettiley..., 1680), p. 18. Although in other sermons, Sharp preaches on ‘obedience’ to governors; Thomas Lodington, *The honour of the magistrate asserted In a sermon preached at*

which seems to be a less intangible concept than ‘the law’, which must be obeyed. But still the application or consequences of breaking the law, is that which must be submitted to. Magistrates are obeyed, and Governors submitted to, so there is not consistency when discussing the human embodiments of law. Thomas Willis (1619? – 1692) discusses the obedience shown to Christ, saying we must ‘obey his gospel and submit to his Government,’ both of which are arguably higher-order concepts of Christ’s dominion over us.⁴⁶⁰ Joseph Glanvill’s (1636 – 1680) use of 1 Peter 2:13 ‘obey that have rule over us; submit to every ordinance of man’ further demonstrates the ambiguity around obey and submit in terms of lower- and higher-order concepts. Glanvill preached that ‘we should obey those that have the rule over us; submit to every ordinance of man; pray for Kings and all in authority; submit to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates.’⁴⁶¹ He also stated we should show obedience to people who ‘rule over us’ including magistrates, but not ‘Principalities and Powers’ which are submitted to. These two statements appear inconsistent, as in the second, obedience refers to specific tangible objects while submit applied general, broader notions of ‘Principalities and Powers,’ but this in turn is not consistent with his assertion to submit to man-made laws.

William Gould (d. 1686) preached about a difference of active ‘obey’ and passive ‘submit’ compliance in 1674, again referencing Hebrews 13. 17 ‘That we ought to obey such orderly Canons is included under *obedite praepositis*, Heb. 13.17. There are two words in that Text...*Obey and submit your selves*; The one relating to active and the other to passive Obedience.⁴⁶² Unfortunately, Gould does not investigate this claim any further beyond this statement, which serves as part of his argument

the assizes holden at Lincoln on Monday, March the 23. 1673/4 (London: printed for Robert Clavel, 1674), p. 18. Lodington also discusses obeying god not men (p. 16) and of passive / active obedience.

⁴⁶⁰ Thomas Willis, *The excellency of wisdom, disclosing it self in The Virtues of a good Life...*, (London: Printed by J. M. for Abel Roper, at the Sun over against St Dunstan’s Church in Fleet Street, 1676), p 24. For the avoidance of doubt, Willis is not referring to an earthly government as Christ’s representative.

⁴⁶¹ Joseph Glanvill, *A loyal tear dropt on the vault of our late martyred Sovreign* (London: Printed by E. Cotes., 1667), p. 8.

⁴⁶² William Gould, *Conformity according to canon justified, and the new way of moderation reproved...* (London: Printed by A. Maxwell, for R. Royston, Bookseller..., 1674), p. 12.

that power does and should rest with 'Bishops and Governors of the Church,' and he reverts to using submit and obey as synonyms.⁴⁶³

John Stileman (d. 1685) had previously noted a difference between submit and obey in Hebrews 13:17, in his work *Kalos proestotes, or, A view of church-government* (1663), where he urges Bishops and Priests to be leaders at a time when the Church is emerging from a crisis. Stileman states that Hebrews 13:17 contains 'A *Command*, or exhortation to a duty' with a double intent, firstly to 'Obey, be perswaded by, and assent to their Words, Doctrins, and Commands' and secondly to 'Yeeld, Submit, to Obey from the heart ... be moulded, or framed by it; it is a spirituall obedience to a spiritual word.'⁴⁶⁴ Unfortunately, he also does not go on to say any more on the topic and his definition of 'submit' as different from 'obey' is perhaps not all that useful, by the use of the word 'obey' in the definition of 'submit'. Furthermore, Stileman's definition does not seem to tally with More's, nor Gould's above. Additionally, Stileman's tract goes on to mostly examine the function of 'obey' and seems to revert to using 'submit' almost as a synonym, and does not really address 'submit' in its own right, focussing much more attention on the role and function of obedience.

Thus, an examination of texts with submit/obey in proximity to each other at this time, reveals that although the issue of obedience and submission are the forefront of discussion, the terms are used interchangeably without consistent application of the type of power (im)balance that is being described. Broadly speaking, when advocating a particular body as the one who should rightfully rule, then submit is used, whereas a general acknowledgement of a greater power, such as God, is obeyed. Again, this is not hard and fast, and therein lies the rub: it is difficult to position More as being 'in line with' or 'against' anything as there are no clear definitions. What is apparent though, is that there is, when it is considered, a general consensus or 'understanding' that they are different. Submit and obey are in almost constant usage and what does emerge, when a difference is noted, is a pattern of

⁴⁶³ Gould, *Conformity according to canon*, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁴ John Stileman, *Kalos proestotes, or, A view of church-government...* (London: Printed for T. R. for Thomas Peirpont..., 1663), p. 2.

using biblical passage that contain submit/obey, in texts which discuss constitutional or governance issues.

There are thus two separate issues at play here, which arguably More brings together: firstly, the use of submit/obey as a hierarchical argument regarding object/subject relationship and secondly, a discussion of the difference between 'submit' and 'obey' and the effect it has on the relationship which is described. Furthermore, More applies this specifically to the issue of marriage. Although there are marriage texts which discuss submit/obey, most often using Hebrews 13:17, More seems to be unique in discussing the translation of the original text into 'submit' and 'obey' in the passages she has selected. She is not, however, wholly unique in critiquing the translation of Scripture relating to marriage more generally, but texts on this subject are limited. William Lawrence's (1613? – 1681) *Marriage by the morall law of God* (1680), which does not examine submit and obey, does nonetheless highlight what he believes are errors in translation of certain words regarding marriage from the original Greek into English. His concern is regarding legitimacy of children but he does address a number of passages where the supposed wrongly translated words have negative connotations, particularly in regard to women.⁴⁶⁵ It should be noted, however, that his concern is not with making sure women are given a better status in society, but is instead part of his critique of bishops and ecclesiastical involvement in the law, which he distrusted.⁴⁶⁶ Lawrence's main concern is with the law and so his criticism is focussed on his perception of where law has been corrupted. He does not address issues of equality in marriage between women and men, although he does go on to state that some neutral signifiers of women have been translated negatively.⁴⁶⁷ Other examples of false

⁴⁶⁵ This was a topic of interest to those hoping the Duke of Monmouth would succeed Charles II to the throne, meaning that Lawrence's treatise garnered significant interest.

⁴⁶⁶ See William Lawrence, *Marriage by the morall law of God* (1680), p. 142.

⁴⁶⁷ Such as the Hebrew *Zona*, which he states means nothing more salacious than a proprietor or hostess, has become 'prostitute'. He also argues that *Kadesh* are holy-nuns or priestesses and should be called as such, instead of 'harlots' as they are called in translation. He does go on to say that they did indeed behave like harlots, but that nevertheless, translation should be literal. (pp. 142-3).

translation in the section on marriage mainly pertain to questions of legitimacy in children and is not to do with the legal status of wives or women themselves.

'The Woman's Right' and discourse of obedience in politics and marriage

For clarity, it is necessary to address precisely what issue is at stake here and restate the issue. Many texts discuss a difference between submit and obey; they also posit what it means to do these things or rather what it 'looks like' to either submit or obey. A great many examples are offered, such as 'obey them that have rule over you', and the topics in almost all the texts address at least one, some, or all of governance, rule of law, religious authority or monarchical power and the relationships therein. Like these male authors, More is also addressing ideas of power and governance and law, and could be taking a political 'big picture' stance, but she is primarily concerned with the impact of the law on the realities of domestic life by breaking down the boundaries between the abstract legal sphere and tangible day-to-day life.

By acknowledging the difference between submit and obey and not using them synonymously, she is able to argue that the kind of deference expected of wives is of the wrong order. By clarifying the two types of relationship and defining the different power balance in submit and obey, she can use the unconsciously understood general 'feeling' and usage of the words, and then point out that different words should not be used for husbands and wives respectively. Either both should submit or obey, and she argues it should be the lesser 'submit' in both instances. Because it is generally understood there is at least sometimes a difference, and certainly one of the times there is a difference is in relation to husbands and wives, More can clarify that difference and then close it. She is able to clarify that difference by virtue of the fact that no-one else has. She is not arguing black is white: instead, she critically examines two definitions that have been used unconsciously and without active thoughts or analysis, thus far, as the majority of contemporary texts do not define submit/obey as More does, or quickly revert to using them interchangeably. Thus we can argue that

even though the usage of submit and obey are not consistent, the unifying factor that More can respond to is an absence and it is this absent of clarity that More can exploit. Some texts do acknowledge there is a difference, even if only implicitly, but they don't critically assess them in the way that More does. Therefore, she is able to make a case for greater equality for women by claiming that this is something that has already been approved by Scripture.

Furthermore, if we presume that 'The Woman's Right' is written in part as a response to her experiences in Chancery, then we can try to draw together the two strands of More's argument. It is necessary for More to show that the Bible does not exclude women from obtaining a form of equality with their husbands, so that it is wrong for man-made laws to do so. It is not just a question of the rendering of submit and obey: all of 'The Woman's Right' addresses the fundamental arguments that were used to keep women in a position of subjection. It should be noted that More does not argue for absolute equality in the way we would mean today, but she continually reasserts that more equality is due to women than is given. Her reinterpretation of the Bible is not a critique of religious doctrine, but rather of the interpretation of that doctrine which has been, in her opinion, twisted and abused. Because More makes her argument from first principles, by looking at the source of law, and Scripture, she is able to extrapolate a new understanding of how these principles should be put into action in everyday life. Her concern is not with broad philosophical concepts, but with the practicalities of their consequence. Littered throughout 'The Woman's Right' are references to how women's lives are adversely affected by these mistranslations.

In her advice to her daughter regarding the kind of man she should marry, the second thing she mentions, after finding a man who is God-fearing, is to chose a 'wise and understanding Man' (f. 47r) because 'the Laws of our Country giving a Man after marriage a greater Power of their Estate than the Wife, unless the Wife take care before hand to prevent it (which I advise thee to doe)' (f. 47r). In a later passage, More specifically criticises men who 'make it their business to raise themselves by estates with Wives' (f. 53v) as we have already seen, completely condemning the practises of those

who marry girls as young as 12, entirely legally, it ‘being lawfull in England’ (f. 53v) to do so. For there can be no other reason, she argues, for this ‘cruel[ty] to Women’ (f. 53v) than for a man to take advantage of the law in this way, as ‘none can beleive anyone marrys that child but for her Estate’ (f. 53v).

More argues and reasons that in any number of instances, claims that women are to be held as inferior to men are unjustified and these are not only limited to property ownership. Like Margaret Fell/Fox, she advocates for women speaking in church, highlighting the many examples of female Prophets and the ‘women that laboured with [Saint Paul] in the Gospell, whose names are in the book of life’ (f. 55r), perhaps indicating a frustration that women cannot testify on their own behalf, but must be validated by male counterparts. The implications of More’s arguments and the purpose of her deconstruction of these mistranslations is to establish a framework that allows women their own agency within the law. The ‘types’ of obedience that commentators are engaging with at this time allow More to establish that this is not a fixed, objective concept. The difference between the servant/master and child/parent dynamics is an important one, and one that is relevant when political and religious leaders discuss wives’ subjection to their husbands. While all agree that husbands rule over their wives, the precise extent of this rule is contested and what may be preached and what is practiced might be quite different, wives seemingly having more freedoms than are asserted and that modern assumption may presume. Undeniably, there are certain legalities that constrain women which do not constrain men.

More is doing something unusual within an established framework. There has been little discussion about the usage of submit versus obey, and where it is explicitly acknowledged, there is limited discussion of the significance of preferring one over the other. Although she is not alone in questioning the hierarchical nature of marriage, she seems to be undertaking her analysis in a manner that is more typically used to examine the roles of rulers. There are contemporary texts which were returned in a proximity search for ‘marriage NEAR equality’, although only five between 1660-1680,

and none of these contain a discussion on submit/obey. So, while More is certainly contributing to an existing debate and using broader rhetorical devices and structures, she is the one of very few, or perhaps the only one, who is doing so in precisely the way that she is. While male authors discuss constitutional or governance issues, More uses the discussion to debate domestic rule: 'The Woman's Right' is about women, equality and marriage. More is using the language of the political, religious debate to discuss the domestic, which is, of course, also political but it seems naïve to think More was insensible to the political implications of her argument.

'The Woman's Right Proved False'

This next section will examine 'The Woman's Right Proved False' by Robert Whitehall, the response to 'The Woman's Right', in which I use 'The Woman's Right Proved False' to investigate the dialectics More was part of during her lifetime and further confirm her work as a political statement. I will also continue to question the boundaries of public and private spheres and reassert that a discussion of the household is not less political or less worthy of attention than a discussion about state matters. Whitehall's response to More, although condescending, is nevertheless demonstrative of More's, and by extension, women's, engagement in the public intellectual sphere. There is an irony that her work on equality only exists today because of her engagement with Whitehall: we only know of More because she actively engaged with the debate and the only works that are saved are those which her critic had a hand in preserving.

Whitehall is elusive about his reasons for writing 'The Woman's Right Proved False', but he clearly reacts to More's disruption of social hierarchy; this response provides greater evidence for the political reading of 'The Woman's Right'. He pre-empted a certain amount of criticism that 'the very title therefore of my book' (f. 1r) will provoke but sets himself up as a devil's advocate, testing the validity of her arguments. His concern is not with the household per se, although he does not accept even limited equality, but rather that domestic equality will inevitably lead women to seek 'an equal

Authority in State' (f. 4r). Whitehall's anxiety about the inevitability of women's public equality if domestic equality is achieved highlights the status of 'The Woman's Right' as a political text. While More's political focus is on the lived experiences of women and the practical applications of the law, which constrains women economically, the ease with which Whitehall can infer a public message in More's domestic one strengthens the claim that More's text can be read more broadly.

His concern is a commonplace one and More would not be oblivious to the inferences possible from 'The Woman's Right'; her claim to be restoring the natural order by demonstrating that greater equality is already owed is a natural pre-emptive response to this anxiety about the effect of the domestic sphere on the public one. Margaret Fell in *Women's Speaking Justified* clearly delineates the public and domestic spheres, stating that the husband has authority over the wife, and she does not seek to disrupt this. Similarly, Mary Beale in 'A Discourse on Friendship' states that she does not seek to remove the social hierarchy, only that in certain circumstances, through the offices of friendship, a kind of equality can be achieved; but More makes no such qualification about her work, contending that domestic and political equality are one and the same. Whitehall responds as though she is insensible to the possible consequences, but this assertion of More's naivety cannot be genuine because he anticipates the criticisms that will be levelled at him by women: he knows that women are aware of the symbiotic relationship between the public and private.

He sets up a straw (wo)man based on domestic concerns, so he can reveal his true concern with the public ones. Whitehall collapses the public and private distinction while maintaining that they are two separate, albeit interdependent, entities. A change in the domestic sphere will have a corresponding but exponentially bigger change in the public sphere. The pre-emptive defence Whitehall mounts demonstrates an awareness of a wider support for More's position. He thus demonstrates the fluidity of the boundary between the domestic and political, between public and private. Whitehall is aware that his response will be read more broadly, by a wider audience than More herself, but he nevertheless keeps in mind his potential audience of one: More. He is writing

both personally and generally; the issues are both domestic and political. Whitehall's awareness of the range of possible responses to his work highlight the interconnectedness of works about marriage with matters of state and Whitehall's anxiety about the possible repercussions on the state should women achieve domestic equality is palpable.

The argument

In the main body of 'The Woman's Right Proved False', Whitehall addresses each of More's arguments in a point-by-point fashion, dealing with each as they appear in 'The Woman's Right'. He does not engage with the details of More's argument, instead critiquing the mechanics, attacking 'More's use of logical argumentation and [he] attempts to trump her linguistic knowledge by his display not only of Greek and Latin, but also of Hebrew.'⁴⁶⁸ The style and tone of 'The Woman's Right Proved False' varies between 'bullying schoolmaster' and clumsy overtures made by an 'Amorous Batchelor [...] attempt[ing] to court by Ironies.'⁴⁶⁹ Whitehall never questions the underlying foundations of a patriarchal society, both by refusing to acknowledge More's arguments that address these foundational inequalities and by repeatedly advocating for the status quo. He is 'much more concerned by what he sees as being the social consequences of More's argument for equality of sexes' and it is in this vein that I will draw out some of the key points about the way Whitehall's structures 'The Woman's Right Proved False' and addresses his points.⁴⁷⁰ I want to consider the mechanics of Whitehall's treatise through three successive levels of state: the individual, the domestic and the public or political.

At the first level, Whitehall argues for the inherent shortcomings of womankind, their spiritual and intellectual inferiority. He treats women as a homogenous group and the flaws within any individual are considered universal. The second level details the impossibility of women achieving

⁴⁶⁸ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 123.

⁴⁶⁹ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 123.

⁴⁷⁰ Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 123.

equality with their husbands, because of the faults of 'woman', the natural order necessitates a wife's subjection to her husband. The third level is concerned with the inevitable crisis in the political sphere that domestic equality would cause. Whitehall advocates an absolute monarchy but stresses the inability of women to fulfil the offices of government. As this passage from the opening of 'The Woman's Right Proved False' states:

That many Women are more than ready to snatch at the Reins of Government, and surrogate a Power allowed neither by the Laws of God or Nature, is so certain, that to prove it would be to suspect the Sunshine at Noon day; to whom Should an Inch be given they would presently take more than an Ell whose Brains being intoxicated with proud desire and ambition after Rule, **were they admitted to co-equal sway in a Domestic Kingdome, would presently begin to aspire at Absolute Monarchy then to challenge an equal Authority in state, to make Laws, bear Offices, vote as Members in Parliament, and afterwards presume to sit in Moses' his Chair pretending they have power to Teach as well as Rule:** and then what can we expect but to see those things which our Fathers dreaded to see, but saw not: and to hear those things which they dreaded to hear but heard not: viz., to see all things post to Confusion, Princes {Men, Husbands} running on foot, Servants {Women, Wives} riding on Horseback, and to hear such Doctrines as never Heretic taught and so the last Errors and Age would be infinitely worse than all the former (f. 4r-v, my emphasis).

This extract demonstrates the relationship between the three levels. Women's inferior mental faculties, 'whose Brains being intoxicated', is detrimental to any equality in the 'Domestic Kingdom' and the subsequent aspiration to equality in 'state, to make Laws, bear Offices, vote as Members in Parliament' is a matter of 'dread'. Notably, the ultimate concern is that women would think themselves able to '*Teach as well as Rule.*' The idea of female pedagogues is explored not only by Bathsua Makin and Mary Astell, but it also forms part of Mary Beale's argument about the role of counsel in friendship. More's engagement with academic discourse, within a Republic of Letters, demonstrates women's participation in education even though Whitehall does not formally recognise it as such. Furthermore, More tackles the fundamentals upon which the intellectual and spiritual inferiority argument is based and while she also progresses into the domestic and political spheres she does so differently by discussing the lived experience of women while Whitehall responds with tropes. I will now outline the main elements of 'The Woman's Right Proved False' in relation to the

three categories of argument: 1. Characteristics of women; 2. The natural hierarchy of the household; 3. The crisis of social disorder.

The characteristics of women

The foundation of Whitehall's response is predicated on women's unsuitability and inability to cope with the intellectual rigours required for equality. He claims that if equality were permitted, women's 'Brains [would be] intoxicated with Proud desire and ambition' (f. 4v). Whitehall's focus is on the mental acuity of women and argues, in response to More's assertion that women have already proven themselves to be educated, that while this achievement is 'admirable [...] it must be with the conjunction, tuition or conduct [guidance] of a Man' (f. 6v) denying any possibility of women's self-determination or ability to teach others. The significance of teaching is something that Makin, Beale and Astell all address as evidence of women's intellectual and spiritual equality with men, and this refusal by Whitehall to accept women as teachers is not a benign one.

He concedes More's point that 'submit' and 'obey' are not synonymous in Greek, and also accepts that there is a difference in the duty owed through submission or obedience, the latter being a greater duty which implies an imbalance of power. However, he says it does not matter that obey is never actually used to describe the duty owed by wives, as Paul uses the word submit in reference to wives because women are either incapable of understanding their proper duty or are too rebellious to obey. He is claiming that Scripture should not be taken literally, that there is scope for interpretation. Such a statement may not be controversial in itself, but is applied arbitrarily by Whitehall.

Whitehall later criticises More's use of the syllogism: Man is the Glory of God, Woman is the Glory of Man, Ergo Woman in the Glory of God, by arguing that there is no room for interpretation outside of the written word. Whitehall may be accurate in his assessment that this is not a true syllogism, because 'the Glory of God' is not a necessary condition of 'the Glory of Man' but Whitehall

has changed the scope of interpretation of Scripture by stating that only man is the Glory of God and if Paul had meant for women to be the Glory of God as well, he would have written this. He reasons that 'Had the Apostle's Pen been too nimble for his dictating understanding and wrote Man for God, surely upon a reflexive view thereof he would have corrected so considerable an Error' (f. 14r). On the one hand Scripture should be interpreted, and on the other it must be taken literally.

He then goes on to argue that 'logomachy' (f. 22v), nit-picking over precise meaning, 'belongs not to men but women' (f. 22v) and that the authority of husbands can never be questioned. Whitehall essentially agrees with More's point regarding the putting away or leaving of a non-believing spouse, but argues that since divorce is not permissible then the husband will always retain authority, so the point is moot. Critically, he has not addressed the fundamental point of her argument about the misrendering, thus not providing the academically rigorous response he claimed. Whitehall's conclusion, albeit unintentionally, exemplifies this double standard and also highlights a paradox contained within his misogynistic view of women's intellect. He boasts of avoiding More's linguistic traps, asking 'Could you imagine men would be baffled with such Sophistry' (f. 11v) but nevertheless quips that 'although they [men] cannot find out all the Cunning of Women, yet some they can and subvert it too' (f. 22r). Whitehall is both asserting his intellectual superiority, but also implies an intellectual dexterity on the part of women in their 'cunning' deceit. Nonetheless, Whitehall is not really concerned with women's intellect *per se*, but rather uses these tropes to reinforce his beliefs about the inherent hierarchy of domestic life, maintaining that domestic harmony is predicated on the natural authority of the husband.

The natural hierarchy of the household

By undermining women's intellectual abilities and dismissing interpretations of Scripture that seem to confer equality, Whitehall is able to reinforce the man's role as head of the household and warns of the crisis caused within the home should equality be achieved. Notions of (in)equality

between husband and wife are rooted in the story of Adam and Eve and Whitehall dismisses More's reinterpretations of this relationship.

Whitehall agrees with More that there are different types of authority but disputes the extent to which various forms of authority can be extended. 'The Woman's Right' is rooted in conventional concepts and ideas of the household which forces Whitehall to argue the minutia about 'types' of authority. He acknowledges some form of authority held by women within the household over children and servants, but he does not equate this with equality between the sexes; a wife's authority is derived from and conferred by her husband. He tacitly accepts the *de facto* existence of women's ability to conduct business and run a household by acknowledging that unmarried women and widows manage their own affairs. He also recognises that some husbands may have granted their wives a greater authority within the household and concludes that the 'weaker vessel had not much better rely on their Husbands' Good nature', and be content with their allotment, than to lean on so short and broken staff for Equality' (f. 10v). Women can gain all the authority they should need or desire through their husbands and the best way for a wife to achieve this is to keep her husband happy so that he might generously bestow said authority upon her.

Whitehall remains aloof and removed from the practicalities of women's social status, whereas a key part of More's work is her discussion of the realities of being a woman: this can be clearly seen in the discussion regarding marriage and inheritance. More rails against the practice of 'marrying girls as young as twelve' for money and husbands 'raising themselves by estates' to which Whitehall suggests that, not only do women applaud the law that allows girls to marry so young, but also that 'should a Parliament of Women be Assembled they would be so far from nullifying it, that in the first place they would call for the Statute Book, and for twelve write down Seven or eight' (f. 18r).

Whitehall does condemn abusive husbands, but offers no legal recourse for victims, whereas More seeks greater security for women and girls. This lack of understanding about the economic restrictions, the traumas faced by young girls forced into marriage and the lack of autonomy over their

own wellbeing, underscores the importance of More's testimony as a voice of women's experiences of marriage, rather than as a metaphorical argument about state. It is too simplistic to say that women were always unhappily married, More states that both her marriages were happy ones and arranged marriages or betrothals were typically made between two underage children. However, it was nevertheless more likely for a girl to be forced into an unfavourable marriage and, once married, coverture stripped her of any financial independence.

The question of a wife's wealth and inheritance is one that More is particularly concerned with; she cites scriptural precedence for women retain an inheritance on marriage, but Whitehall counters that the value of a daughter's inheritance is only of relevance for the better marital prospects it brings, or the contribution she can make to her husband and be a better wife. He again pits his assumptions about women against More's experience of being a woman. She draws on her own experiences as the daughter and widow of wealthy merchants, evidently the person managing the estate of her late husband, but unable to legally own that estate on her second marriage. More asserts that an economic basis is not the proper foundation of a marriage, with which Whitehall in fact agrees, dismissing such marriages as a 'Smithfield Bargain,'⁴⁷¹ (f. 17v) but he resists More's attempts to highlight women's disenfranchisement. He acknowledges that husbands may overstep their bounds but persists with the commonplace view that the domestic hierarchy has a natural order where women are best placed in a subservient role to their husbands. More is questioning the foundations that underpin this view and while the text is firmly based in the domestic, the legal ramifications take it into the political sphere; More is concerned with how women are 'governed' in marriage, and the extent of their freedoms. This a source of great anxiety for Whitehall, as his concern about the political ramifications of a domestic change is palpably evident.

⁴⁷¹ 'A marriage contracted for financial reasons, named thus after the Smithfield cattle market.' Ezell, *Educating English Daughters*, p. 163, n. 284.

The crisis of social disorder

Whitehall's Royalist allegiance is evident in 'The Woman's Right Proved False'; he directly addresses the political ramifications of More's treatise and, while his language is overtly political, it is worth remembering that More's is not. More cannot have been oblivious to the political implications, and neither does she consciously avoid them, but 'The Woman's Right' it is a political treatise *about* the domestic rather than a political treatise which uses the domestic as a metaphor. But such was the strength of the domestic/state metaphor that its use should not be overlooked in our own understanding of More's work. Furthermore, 'The Woman's Right Proved False' reacts to 'The Woman's Right' as though it is a political treatise.

Whitehall worries about domestic equality resulting in women 'snatch[ing] at the Reins of Government' (f.4r) and a change in the domestic hierarchy would cause be an unjust usurpation. More make no comment about women's roles in the political realm, but Whitehall makes the connection between the household and state. He argues that 'co-equal sway in [the] Domestic Kingdom' (f. 4v) would be an 'aspiration of Absolute Monarchy,' (f. 4v) linking the domestic and political realms through the notion of a Kingdom, suggesting a state ruled by a single head. Whitehall, perhaps correctly, foresees a dissatisfaction on the part of women with equality remaining in the domestic sphere. Therefore, he concludes that women's ambition would necessarily mean domestic equality would ultimately not satisfy women. Whitehall's refusal to acknowledge a Parliamentary Visitation and declaration of loyalty to Charles I suggests that he does not object to an absolute monarchy in principle when under the rule of a king; it is specifically the ambition of women which he opposes.

In his arguments about the characteristics of women, Whitehall uses political language to critique More's assessment of Eve's temptation. He rejects her notion that Eve was tempted first because she 'had the most high and strong Soul' and categorically dismisses this by stating that 'I ever imagined Women to be better Politicians than to think the Subtest Creatures would set upon the most Sagacious and Reasonable Being to foil the weakest and most indiscreet' (f. 11r). A Politician was

not an MP, in the way we understand the role now, it mainly alluded to someone who was a plotter or schemer, but a plotter in a political sense and it did refer to someone interested in state or polity. Whitehall use of the word 'politician' reveals an implicit political message within 'The Woman's Right'.

Whitehall concedes that some women have matched men's intellect, but only through a natural tendency to be more receptive. Women's intellectual achievements are a demonstration of men's ability to teach rather than women's ability to learn; men are the creators of knowledge, while women receive and mimic it. Whitehall restricts this limited acceptance of women's education to the minority of women, within the private (domestic) realm and warns that More's 'Philosophical Maxime [...] What hath been done may be done' (f. 5v) i.e., that because some women have proved themselves capable of learning, all women are capable of learning, should not be applied more broadly. He states:

But of the things viewed in a Political Sphere it's most erroneous. For then everyone might challenge a Right to Dominion (the essentials of all men being alike perfect and alike receptive naturally although not perhaps accidentally [i.e., individually]) and so everyone would be a titular Lord, and none a real Moderator or Governor, there being none to be ruled but Bruits, Insects, etc. a Tenet horridly Whiggish and pernicious to all Kind of Government, Monarchical, Aristocratical, Democratical, Domestical, Paternal, Despotical etc. (f. 6r).

Whitehall's argument against domestic equality is essentially that it would lead to political equality and his reading of 'The Woman's Right' allows for an even greater equality than simply between the sexes. His application of More's argument in this way overcomes a class-based hierarchy that allows anyone to gain political power and not just the social elite.

Whitehall's Royalist sensibilities explain his resistance to a constitutional monarchy or a republic. But if we consider the supposition that Whitehall and More were reasonably well acquainted beyond their surviving literary exchanges, Whitehall's Royalist response to an inferred Whiggish sensibility may indicate that Whitehall knows More to be sympathetic to Whiggish politics. There is no direct evidence of More's political leanings, but the collective evidence of her will, which leaves provisions for two unmarried female relations to be financially independent; her rejection of patriarchal inheritance mores; and her criticism specifically of the King James Version regarding the

mistranslation of submit and obey and endorsement of the Geneva Bible, is certainly suggestive that More was generally critical of social, religious and political hierarchies. It is not possible to ascertain this by evaluating More's work in isolation; such issues are only apparent through a reading of Whitehall's response, which frames 'The Woman's Right' as a political text far more assertively than 'The Woman's Right' itself does.

Conclusion

While More heavily engaged with the commonplace arguments of the *querelle des femmes* debate, she nevertheless does appear to be doing something slightly different from both other writers defending women and writers debating the rule of law. By implicitly breaking down the marriage/state metaphor, whereby the family should be a 'little Church' with a man at the head, she is able to interrogate the impact of authorial state rule on the household. More specifically, the political shift away from absolute monarchy in the Restoration period means that More can argue for a domestic shift away from absolute patriarchy in the household.

'The Woman's Right' is a domestic text, concerned with the lived experiences of women, subjugated to men. However, it is also a brilliant example of how the public and private spheres overlap and unpicking the multi-faceted readings of 'The Woman's Right' highlights the interconnectedness of education, politics, marriage and women's social status. Although I have attempted to provide a reading that moves 'The Woman's Right' away from an argument for education, no reading should be considered mutually exclusive. It is the way that More engages with so many of the tropes of early modern women's defence writing, and brings it alongside discussions on governance and law in order to reflect how women are unfairly treated that make it a fascinating and important text.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

This thesis has argued that these two texts, written by women, when situated within a discourse of literature on women's equality, can be read as feminist texts. While at the time Mary Beale and Mary More were writing, women were expected to be 'silent, chaste and obedient', what my thesis shows, in line with current scholarship, is that women were certainly not entirely silent on matters of their equality with men.

The key aims of this thesis were to provide a greater understanding of Beale and More, and to demonstrate a feminist heritage extending back through the seventeenth century. Alongside these key aims I intended to show that women of the middling-sort, who had traditionally been overlooked in the field of early modern women's writing, were also active participants in political debates. I also wanted to focus the discussion onto non-fiction prose texts that can be indisputably recognised as political treatises which discuss women's equality.

There have been a number of exciting discoveries made over the course of this project and this new information not only enriches our understanding of Beale and More, but also sheds light on the way women navigated the public and private spheres with regard to their political status by adding to the ever-growing body of evidence of women's writing in the latter part of the seventeenth century. By building on the knowledge of manuscript circulation and focusing on the role of informal networks and the formal 'rules' of friendship, it has been possible to situate these texts within a common discourse and demonstrate how women developed arguments in favour of equality with men.

This thesis has addressed similarities between 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right', as well as between Beale and More respectively. It has also demonstrated the differences and unique arguments each treatise makes, recognising that women were active participants in contemporary debates who consciously selected appropriate frameworks and genres for their work, before entering into the conversation with their own ideas. They engaged with contemporary and

classical texts, and are part of a discontinuous tradition of women writing about women's equality, who all approach the subject with their own unique perspectives. Establishing a discontinuous tradition is vital to the ongoing work on early modern women writers, as it allows us to recognise feminist authors as a collective, each intervening in the debate about women without necessarily needing to directly borrow from one another in order to participate. A discontinuous tradition allows meaningful discussion about feminist texts which tackle common themes, while still recognising that these interventions were made by each woman as a solitary act, unable to access a canon of literature. They did not directly borrow from each other, but the argument evolved collectively, albeit slowly. By grouping together middling-sort, non-fiction prose writers, it becomes less credible to categorise these works as unusual. The relatively slow progress of the argument's evolution, by which Mary Astell is making broadly similar comments about education and marriage about 100 years after Rachel Speght, is only noticeable when individual works are collated in this way and serve as a reminder of the importance of accessibility to early modern texts by women writers and their inclusion in mainstream scholarship.⁴⁷² It is vital to study early modern women's writing as part of mainstream literature, had early modern women's writing been included more comprehensively into early modern scholarship, we would perhaps have different notions of the ebb and flow of debate, of women's roles in society, and, crucially, a better understanding of how women themselves perceived their own lives.

Material text and networks

The nature of manuscript publication, letter writing, the tension between public and private correspondence, and the republic of ideas, are fundamental to the inclusion of women in the early modern literary canon. Historical notions of manuscript texts belonging solely to the private realm, and of print as the medium of the public, coloured perceptions and re-enforced pre-existing

⁴⁷² Indeed, another 98 years after Astell first published *A Serious Proposal* in 1694, Mary Woolstonecraft was making similar arguments about women's rationality and need for education in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792.

assumptions about women's textual activity. While the phenomenon of scribal publication cannot be automatically conferred upon any manuscript text, the evidence of the Crompton witness of 'A Discourse on Friendship' and Whitehall's copy of 'The Woman's Right' and his response, is highly suggestive of two texts that were not wholly private. In particular, the republic of ideas, where seventeenth-century intelligentsia exchanged and debated theories, provides a paradigm for More and Whitehall's exchange.

Using friendship as a framework has enabled a new understanding of women's participation in matters of women's equality. This thesis has attempted to model examples of women's social commentary through both 'friendly' informal networks and relationships that follow the formal rules of ideal friendship, which allow for societal inequalities to be overcome. Like the republic of ideas, the More/Whitehall exchange was governed by formal notions of friendship, whereby civilized disagreement could take place. Although Whitehall was perhaps less than civil, the exchange nevertheless partakes of this tradition. Meanwhile, Beale's discussion of friendship as a mechanism for equality is not only reflected in her own marriage, but also brings her argument into the political realm by reflecting on the uses of friendship in socio-political situations.

The evidence of Beale's egalitarian marriage and the public and private nature of their coterie of friends, socialising and debating within her home studio, is a clear indication of women's involvement in conventional philosophical discussions between peers. The provenance work on the Folger Library copy of 'A Discourse on Friendship' shows not only a material history previously unknown but also that 'A Discourse on Friendship' circulated beyond Beale's immediate family and circle of friends.⁴⁷³ This is not a private text, but a public statement which would have been seen and read as such.

⁴⁷³ Washington D.C., Folger Library, V.a.220, ff. 99r-108r.

By examining the material text, I was able to connect Beale's marginal note 'Ld Bacon' to the works of Sir Francis Bacon and his discussion on the role of friendship in counsel.⁴⁷⁴ Bacon's influence has been previously unrecognised in modern discussion on Beale and *A Discourse of Friendship* but acknowledging the impact of Bacon's work is vital to reading Beale's text as something beyond a discussion about the relationship between peers. While I do not claim that this is a treatise written with the sole purpose of providing a commentary on the political state of the country, there is undoubtedly a strong argument for recognising Beale's opinions regarding governance and her views on a constitutional monarchy. Because Bacon uses friendship as a way for advisors to overcome social inequality, so they may provide honest counsel to their monarch, we cannot ignore the political implications of Beale's work. Marriage was a commonly used metaphor for the state and my reading suggests that this metaphor can be examined both ways with Beale interrogating the implications of the metaphor within both the domestic and political spheres.

More's exchange with Whitehall has been either overlooked in discussions on More or thought unusual. The growing number of examples of letter exchanges between men and women discussing philosophy, politics and religion demonstrates that while More and Whitehall's correspondence may not yet be considered commonplace, it was certainly not unusual. The republic of ideas, in which intellectuals exchanged and debated theories, indicates a common practice that More and Whitehall are participating in, and establishes their exchanges as part of an existing intellectual discourse rather than an anomalous event. My work on More builds on the work done by Margaret Ezell, by considering 'The Women's Right' in conjunction with 'A Discourse on Friendship' and in light of ideas around the formal aspects of friendship and the role this plays in these intellectual arenas. Whitehall professes his superiority, but his response ironically demonstrates the point he is trying to disprove – that is, More's assertion that the day-to-day lived experiences of women contain more elements of equality than are granted under law. While Whitehall vigorously defends men's

⁴⁷⁴ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 522v.

superiority in the abstract and patronises More's arguments, his engagement with More testifies to a kind of equality between them.

Furthermore, by analysing the poetry exchanges in more depth and using them to flesh out the relationship More and Whitehall had, Whitehall's recognition of More's intellectual ability becomes more apparent and plausible. Their barbed exchanges can be understood as a lively discussion between sparring partners rather than purely antagonistic, as they have heretofore been presented. Reading 'The Woman's Right' alongside 'The Woman's Right Proved False', their verse exchange and the evidence of More entrusting a painting to Whitehall, all contribute to the broader dialogue of women's rights. Their conversation is not a wholly private one, they are each grandstanding to an unseen audience in the verse exchange particularly, and this elicited a defence of More from an anonymous source.

The evidence of 'Boone v Moore' sheds further light on More's motivations for writing 'The Woman's Right'. Whilst she states that she has not had any cause for complaint at the hands of either of her husbands, her experience in court highlighted her dependence on male relatives. More argues for women's spiritual and intellectual equality, rather than specific rights regarding property ownership, but she undertakes interpretive work with legal implications. Her concern is to protect women from men who would do them harm and she is supremely cognizant of the lived experiences of women, rather than abstract ideals. She identifies a difference between the principles a law is founded on, the way it is interpreted and the reality that interpretations manifests, usually to the detriment of women.

Furthermore, the discovery that eminent scientist Robert Hooke read More's thesis on equality aids our understanding how women engaged in educated political debate. More could not be a member nor attend meetings of the Royal Society, but outside the building which housed the institution she could, and did, converse with male thinkers who held prominent social and institutional positions.

Political discourses

As well as understanding how these texts circulated and were part of intellectual conversations, literary analysis of 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' has moved them from the domestic sphere into the realm of political discourse. An examination of the language employed situates these texts within a field other politically driven works. In recognising the inherent political meanings contained within these treatises, both Beale and More deal with broader concepts of friendship and sovereignty than a narrow reading limited solely to domestic marriage might initially suggest. Both authors exploit ambiguities of language to debate women's socio-political status, as well as advocating for smaller equalities in day-to-day domestic life.

By understanding the political role of friendship, I have presented Beale's work as not only a comment on marriage, but also as an indication of her views on women's position in social structures and the rule of law. Helen Draper reads 'A Discourse on Friendship' as part of Beale's attempt to create a public persona, which my reading of 'A Discourse on Friendship' complements by recognising the dual role that marriage plays in discussions on public and private life. In much the same way that Beale's artist studio in the Beales's Pall Mall home is a public space in a domestic setting, 'A Discourse on Friendship' uses domestic metaphors to debate social mores.

While the political commentary is an exciting and important element of 'A Discourse on Friendship', the domestic reading is just as valuable and is a crucial part of understanding how early modern women navigated their social positions and sought to enact change, or at least mitigate their disadvantages. She does not specifically address nor counter women's supposed spiritual inequality; she acknowledges that Eve's transgression subsequently made women subject to their husbands but it is the transgression, rather than an inherent inferiority, that needs to be overcome through the offices of friendship. By taking Bacon's argument regarding counsellors to kings and applying it to the role that wives play as counsellors to their husbands, Beale deftly reverses the marriage/state metaphor and applies political rules to the domestic sphere. The equality she argues for is limited and

applies only between husbands and wives rather than between men and women more generally, but the significance of this assertion should not be underestimated; it is an important step along the evolution of feminist thought. While Rachel Speght, Margaret Fell Fox and others had previously argued for the spiritual and intellectual equality of women with men through Biblical exegesis and practical demonstration of academic prowess, Beale's use of the political role of friendship within marriage is a significant development in the argument for women's equality.

A *prima facie* reading of 'A Discourse on Friendship' which reveals Beale's views on friendship, should not be overlooked. A significant portion of 'A Discourse on Friendship' is a self-reflection to 'better understand how farr I am qualified, for so sacred a bond [and] be enabled to direct my choice [of friend], to such a person as will best suit with me.'⁴⁷⁵ The significance of a woman stating that she has the capacity to be a friend should not be understated; she is not merely asking if she can be a friend. Instead, she seeks to understand the particular characteristics unique to her so that she may be best possible type of friend, as a friendship should be a balance of two differing but complementary temperaments. Beale's letter to Elizabeth Tillotson indicates that they both believe ideal friendship is not limited to marriage but is also possible between women, something denied by both Bacon and Taylor.

More's strategy of biblical exegesis is not a unique one, but her approach is relatively unusual. The principle she is debating regarding women's subjection and the verses she uses to demonstrate the mistranslation are commonly discussed, but her strategy of drawing out the differences between 'submit' and 'obey' is an unusual technique. Although the principles of obedience were widely debated religious topics, the nuances of terminology were not rigorously adhered to or examined. At the time that More was probably writing 'The Woman's Right', there was widespread discussion about different types of authority, who could hold that authority and the limits to which it extended. It was commonly understood that there was a difference between divine authority and a legal man-made

⁴⁷⁵ Beale, 'A Discourse on Friendship', f. 511r.

authority; but determining how these different authorities functioned was a source of conflict. While no man, except royalty, could be imbued with divine authority, magistrates claimed a kind of higher-order authority, which demanded the subjection of those under their rule, whilst others sought to limit their power to a lower order authority which only required obedience. Understanding that there is a difference between these near synonymous terms was a key element in religo-political debates in England through the seventeenth century. However, many commentators used these terms interchangeably, relying on the body of their argument to make their position clear, while More drills down into the minutiae of the words' origins. Women's subjection within the social hierarchy was assumed, based on a similar distinction around the level of duty required by wives' submission, rather than obedience, to their husbands. More queries the foundation upon which the principle is based, blaming not the word of God but man's mistranslation of it. She argues that translators have added in a level of subjection owed by wives that is not present in the original Greek.

More's argument is about how the society she lives in functions, where she differs from contemporary male commentators is that she specifically addresses women's experiences, as an advocate for greater legal recognition and autonomy for women. Arguably 'The Woman's Right' is not a text that needs its feminist credentials teasing out. While the word 'feminist' itself may be anachronistic, the definition outlined in this thesis is that a text need only be feminist enough in its historical context. 'The Woman's Right' is best described as a political treatise on the rights of women, but More does not debate abstract political theory, rather she deals with the lived reality of being a woman, from her own experiences and her observations. Her argument for women's equality had social implications for social change and Whitehall's response demonstrates that her work was read with the full political repercussions in mind.

A discontinuous tradition

Understanding how these texts circulated and reading 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' as political texts which use the domestic realm to discuss women's social and legal status also enables a further contribution to the field of early modern women's writing. Drawing together existing scholarship in manuscript studies and women's writing in this way, provides evidence of women's participation in political debates. By devoting an entire chapter early on in my thesis to other female, middling-sort, non-fiction prose writers, I have engaged with a literary canon of sorts. The texts I chose in Chapter 3 are still not mainstream within English language literature, or even early modern studies outside the field of women's writing, but within early modern women's writing, these are some of the canonical works. By collating texts in meaningful ways like this, the mainstream canon can be more robustly disrupted and can evolve to encompass female and male voices equally.

Demonstrating this discontinuous tradition is an important way of keeping women's contributions visible to us now, by acknowledging that political texts by women were not uncommon and cannot be ignored. By celebrating a text's uniqueness, we risk rendering it anomalous and thus irrelevant. Conversely, an insistence on direct influences from one author to another in order to build up a canon ignores the additional barriers women faced in cultural and textual exchange, which prevented women building up a collective literary heritage. Instead, by considering the general issues raised and arguments used by women writers, such as: equality in marriage, access to education, their legal status, recognising the work of women as equal to that of men, defending their intellectual abilities, defending their spiritual equality and inherent worth, it is possible to chart the evolution of feminist thought. Modern scholarship has struggled with anachronistically using the term 'feminist' and I am not insensible to these concerns, but an evolution necessarily implies a non-static state, what counts as feminism has always changed and is constantly re-defined. It is not requisite for historical feminism to meet modern standards in order to be recognised as feminist thought, but the benefit of having an established lineage of female thinkers has an impact beyond the field of early modern

women's writing by providing clear evidence that women have always argued for their equality. The alternative is to dismiss anything that does not meet our current standards of feminism and inadvertently suppress the legacy of these political writers.

The discontinuous tradition has an impact within the field, when considering the number of non-fiction prose works we now know to be extant. Poetry and drama are often considered by modern scholarship to have been the acceptable literary forms for women, but writing non-fiction prose was a conscious choice by authors like Beale and More. This may have been a prosaic, practical choice arising from their modelling their work on similar treatise. The number of examples of other non-fiction prose works and the evidence of the circulation of these works suggests that prose was not restricted to men only. Thus, if prose was a non-transgressive form for women or at least, less transgressive than previously thought, then conversely, women's use of poetry and drama were also conscious choices, which in turn impacts our readings of women's writing as secretive, subversive acts. This is not to deny the impediments faced by women; rather it is intended to inspire a greater sense of autonomy in our readings of early modern women's writing.

In recognising the value of a discontinuous tradition, modern scholarship can investigate further the intersection of 'political texts' with 'women authors' which may further disrupt ideas about the lives of both early modern women and men. While early modern men as a collective excluded women through institutional patriarchy, on a personal level they discussed politics, business, life, marriage, religion and the law with the women they were related to and were friends with. 'A Discourse on Friendship' and 'The Woman's Right' have added to the evidence of women and men corresponding on political, religious, philosophical, and social issues in an informally formal way, distorting the boundaries between the formal rules of friendship and 'friendly' discourse. There is also a disruption between the boundaries of the public and private spheres by acknowledging the symbiotic relationship between the political and domestic language and metaphor used, a relationship that becomes two-way only through the works of authors such as Beale and More. The marriage

metaphor was applied to the state as a means of keeping the citizenry and women as subordinate. By interrogating the political applications in Beale's work and the domestic applications in More's work, they can be used to call into question all texts that use this metaphor and expand our understanding, or at least recognise the limitations of a powerful, ubiquitous image that upheld early modern patriarchal society.

Beale advances the work of both Bacon and Taylor; not only does she argue for women's equality, but she engages with the aspects of Christian duty, charity and counsel which she evolves beyond Taylor's limited scope to a clearer, more meaningful definition. We can only speculate about More's conversations with Robert Hooke, but through an awareness of the probability that their conversation would turn to philosophical and political matters we give women a literary and pedagogical heritage. We can also re-evaluate the idea of a great thinker, which may typically be imagined as a secluded male, working solitarily or perhaps in competition with other learned men, whereas it may be more accurate to recognise that all kinds of collaboration occurred frequently, and no great thinker existed in isolation.

At the start of this project, Mary Beale was well-known within art history scholarship; her studio in Pall Mall has received some analysis, and she is widely recognised in the art world as an important historical figure. However, her literary endeavours had received markedly less attention. 'A Discourse on Friendship' was frequently mentioned and summarised in texts about Beale and her work, but until this thesis there has been no comprehensive literary analysis of Beale's treatise, nor sufficient discussion of its broader political implications. Similarly, despite previous comprehensive study, More and her work remain largely overlooked beyond the celebration of her existence as a case study of a lone female voice arguing for equality. 'The Woman's Right' is an unapologetic treatise about the rights of women in the 1670s. This thesis provides a new focus for More's work by taking a closer look at her arguments on legal interpretations and ambiguity of normative terminology and

situating them in contemporary discussions about authority. Appreciating the significance of More's interaction with Whitehall is also crucial in understanding how women engaged in political debate.

In the case of both authors, it is not their exceptionality which marks them out for attention. Rather, it is the evidence they provide of engagement in broader political and intellectual arena of the 1660s and 1670s which makes these two texts, and their authors, important contributions to the legacy and heritage of philosophical and feminist thought.

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Appendices

Mary Beale

‘A Discourse on Friendship’ by Mary Beale

Note on the text

The transcription below is of British Library, London, MS Harley 6828 ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ by Mary Beale, ff. 510r-523v.

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

Reference is made to the copy of ‘A Discourse on Friendship’ held by the Folger Library, Washington V.a. 220, which was accessed via *Perdita Manuscripts*, Adam Matthew Digital 2021.

<https://www.perditamanuscripts.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Detail/discourse-of-friendship/373571>

Variants found in the Folger copy are given as footnotes as ‘FL: variant’, with the exception of the final paragraph which is given in full, after the end of the BL transcription.

My Deare Friend,

Though I might bee truly ashamed to send you this my very imperfect draught after that immortall Beauty Friendship; yet considering that ofttimes wee esteem a Picture done by very unskilfull hand, out of that great affection wee may haue for the person whome, it was design'd to represent the work it self being very wretched and inconsiderable; So though you may call these my conceptions rather the Pourtraiture of my own inabilityes, then any true Image of that Divine thing which I haue endeavour'd to describe, yet that which bears mee up if not in the beleife of your acceptance, yet in the hopes of your pardon is that high esteeme which I am assur'd you have for this subject. What I have further to say shall bee only this, That all the errors I have here committed may turn thus farr to your advantage, that they will afford you the opportunity to exercise towards mee all those allowances which I have hinted must be indulg'd in a Friend. And so I may shorten the trouble of any further apology by telling you that in the following discourse I have endeavour'd to lay before you my heart, if not what it is, yet what I desire it should bee, and do hope that your Friendship may help to make it; since you have beene pleas'd to admitt mee to the honour of being

Deare Madam

Your truly affectionate, Faithfull

Friend and Servant

Mary Beale

Albrook 9 March 1666

[f. 510v]

Friendship is the nearest Union, which distinct Soules are capable of; (and is as rare to be found in sincerity, as it is excellent in its qualities) though next to the glorifying of our Creator; man seems to be made for nothing more. For when God had at first created him, It is not fitt, said hee, that Man should be alone, and then, he gave him Eve to be a meet help, and what can that imply but that God gave her for a Friend, as well as for a wife? A wife, and Friend, but not a slave; For we find her not in the begining made subject to Adam, but alwaies of equall dignity and honour with him, till by her own great credulity, sinning her selfe, and then seducing her husband, she lost her share in that rule which before they had in common, and as a just reward of her transgression had both her desires, and person subjected to him. A curse which she not only procured to her self, but intaild vpon all her female posterity; Except a small number, who by Friendship's interposition; haue restored the marriage bond to its first institution.

Now, Friendship, which is so excellent in its nature, cannot be without order, and must be governed by Lawes proper to it selfe. For as Kingdomes and Commonweals, without a due administration of Justice, and an awfull observance of Statutes become barbarous, and [f. 511r] salvage; So Friendship without a right Rule soone degenerates into vice, and becomes most destructive to the good of Mankind, which it was designed chiefly to sustaine. For, if instead of Religion and Moralitie, sense shall there command, and if in place of reason, the passions shall direct, and solely bear sway, it is no longer Friendship, but a confederacy in evil doing; and though the name may still remain, yet its operations shall instead of yeilding the wholesom fruits of peace, bring forth nothing but mischief and confusion.

That Friendship therefore be established, and its Lawes inviolably kept, it is necessary, that my self, or any who are industrious to enter into this alliance, consider both my own temper, and theirs in whom I choose to repose this trust.

And first I ought to make a serious enquiry and pass an impartiall censure on my self; that so I may the better understand how farr I am qualified for so sacred a bond: and learning thence my owne imperfections, may be able to strive against and restraine them, both by Religion, and reason. Effectuall meanes both, but especially the former. For if Socrates [f. 511v] could by the improvement of his reason only in the mysteries of Philosophy, change the badd inclination of his mind, into a temper perfectly agreeable; How much better may we be able to regulate ours by Religion, which is the highest reason, and a more unerring Guide, then Philosophy.

After a severe judgment past vpon my self in this particular, I shall be inable to direct my choice, to such a person as will best suit with me. I meane not that I should choose a friend always of my owne humour, and constitution, such a choice being many times attended with very ill consequences. For, where any one passion is predominant in a man, the like proportion of it in another, seemes >oft times< very distastfull, and frequently a grain or two of the contrary proves very agreeable; For example, Two melancholique persons can never be desirable friends, supposing their melancholy runns in the same chanell, for if there be not upon all occassions distrusts, and jealousies, with a taking those things in evil part which were never intended so; there will be >at< best but a feeding one an other with [f. 512r] such disconsolate conversation as shall at once impaire their strength and encrease their burthen; two things then which, nothing can be more contrary to the nature of true friendship. Whereas to a melancholique person, a che>a<rfull friend who has a truly good nature is certainly in my opinion most consonant; For the chearfullness of the one, if prudently managed, will be the best antidote, against the dejection of the other.

An other care of those who would bee admitted members of this society, ought to be a sober inquiry into the nature of it, what it is, and wherin Friendship consists, least through ignorance hereof, they give this sacred name to that which tru Friendship most of all abhores; Flattery, and dissimulacon, which is but a kind of mock Friendship, though for the same reason, that the appearances of vertues have always had more followers then the reall vertues themselves, it hath found best acceptance in the world.

Betweene Friends, words, and actions, must always be allowed the best and most candid construction. For if we give our selves once the liberty of harsh [f. 512v] and unkind thoughts, twice doing so will beget an habit, and evil habits usher in badd affections, which oft times end in disunion. Or if the breach be made vp againe, it seldom becomes so firm, or lookes so beautifull, as before. A mutuall bearing therfore with one anothers infirmities and conforming to those dispositions, which beare sway in such we love, as it is a great part of wisdome; so it is one of the surest tyes >and clearest evidences< of Friendship. For if we seriously consider our selves, we shall find even by what occurs there, the necessity of some allowance to be made, for the constitution, and temper, of those with whom we converse. Not that this should encourage any to indulg themselves, in those unpleasant humours, and inclinacons, with which, many times their lives are chequered, vpon presumption that true Friendship, can, and must, beare with them. But let such know, that if there

be not a striveling on their part as well as a forbearance on the other, their Friendship is by no meanes reciprocall, and amounts to little more then an half and most imperfect Friendship.

The name of Friend has certainly in it more charmes then that of any other relation in the world. Soloman sayes, there [f. 513r] is a Friend that is nearer than a Brother; and sure it is, the nearest relations of bloud, and affinity, without this comon are easily disjoyned, and becom very indifferent, and almost insignificant. If I should add that such have turned greatest Enemies each to other, I could easily be furnisht with authorities to confirm my assertion. For how oft has the dividing of an Estate seperated Brethren; and the selling of a Jointure alienated the loue of a husband or wife; Whereas true Friendship on all >such< occasions sayes as Mephibosheth in an other case to David; Let him take all. For that Friendship which has only consanguinity, or self interest for its Foundation, will assured run to ruin, if there be once an unsuitableness of thoughts in the one, and a fayling of the expectations in the other.⁴⁷⁶

Now that Friendship which is truly noble in it self, can not be base in its endes; for then it ceases to be friendship, and is changed into some deformed, and ugly passion, unworthy of so excellent a name; For as the best things corrupted become most loathsome, so Friendship vitiated degenerates into the worst of evils. [f. 513v] As touching the ends of Friendship, self love must not be wholly excluded from being one, though but sparingly to be used; For that seemes to be the center from which all the lines of Friendship are drawn. For did I not love my self first, I could scarce be capable of loving my friend; and were it not that I propounded a great satisfaction to my self by gaining an interest in him, and in his vertues, I could never heartely desire it.

This is >requisite< therefore for the beginning of Friendship, but as that grows more perfect, the love of my self is swallowed vp in the loue of my Friend. I then becom more sollicitous for his good then for my owne; and am more delightd with the good things he enjoyes; than disturb with the evils my self suffer; on all occassions preferring him, and contenting my self like Jonathan with the second place of authority in that Kingdom of Friendship where hee absolutely rules.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ 2 Samuel 9: Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, the son of King Saul. King Saul wanted to kill king David, but Jonathan defended him. Upon Jonathan's death in battle, King David made a vow that he would care for the needs of Jonathan's family in thanks for his friendship. Mephibosheth surrenders to King David, who treats him as an equal. 2 Samuel 19. 24-30: Animosity has grown up between Mephibosheth and his servant Ziba, who had been awarded half of Mephibosheth's lands. But Mephibosheth renounces them in recognition of the service done to him by King David.

⁴⁷⁷ 1 Samuel 18. 1 'And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.' David and Jonathan represent idealised male friendship.

True Friendship hates envy, yet always abounds with Emulation, and friends are ever striving who shall out do other in offices of kindness; It looks on expression, as an insipid kind of Fruit unless joyned with actions which speake more effectually.

[f. 514r] It satisfies not it selfe with the superficies of a slight courtesy; but is best pleased when employ'd in such affaires, where the difficulty of accomplishing, as well as the advantage, render them most acceptable; and this it performes without ostentation, rightly esteeming the exercise of Friendship more worthy then the prayse: Neither is it discouraged with that danger, or disgrace which it often meets with; and as the occasions which present themselves, are the greater, so are its effects more extraordinary. Tis then it appeares most beautifull, as being in its most proper season. Since tis an easy thing for Friendship to beare vp when it hath a quiet Sea, and full sayles, when all the wind that is stirring do's but serve to drive it forwards to its desired haven; but then is the truth and power of it seen, when it is able to make its way through working Deepes, and tempestuous stormes, neither can be swallowed vp by the impetuousness of the one, or driven back by the violence of the other. And that person who is not willing to share with his friend in all conditions, and loues not at all times, is unworthy to be admitted into this society, and to be honoured with so illustrious a Title.

[f. 514v] So much for Friendship in the gener[al]; I shall now treat of it a little more particular[ly]; For the begining therefore, and carrying on o[f] Friendship, how different so ever the condico[ns] and outward estates of the persons are; it is necessary that their minds, beare a like proportion to each other. For if this be wanting, it will be impossible to maintain that freedome in converse, without which this relation would[d] be insignificant, and incapable of exercising its most noble acts; This being the perfeccon of Friendship, that it supposes its professors equall, laying a side all distance, and so levelling the ground, that neither hath therein the advantage of other. Not that this either do[es] or should take away that respect, which Inferio[rs] though Friends, on to those whom Providence hath placed in an higher rank⁴⁷⁸. For true Friendship will be always tender of withdrawing from those they love, that which as their birthright they may lay claim to, rather urging it upon them, as that wherin they count themselves honoured. But by this I meane <only> a removall only of that awe which any such inequalitie may be apt, and not seldome is wont, to produce. A thing very [f. 515r] necessary and materiall in Friendship. For till this be effected, there will vnavoydably be on the one part too great a propensity to exercise that authority which the

⁴⁷⁸ FL: sphere

advantage of <Fortune> > Birth< and Condition, haue given them, whereby insensibly they become forward in imposing their owne opinions as Laws, esteeming themselves injured if not punctually obey'd, and looking on those favours which they ambitiously dispence, as too great and impossible to be requited, because done to those whom they account so much below them. Or on the other side, They whose apprehensions make them too scrupulously sensible of their distance, become exceeding timerous in discharge of such offices, as the Laws of Friendship both expect and comand from them. To instance in one for all; In administering councell and advice, such will be divided between what is good, and pleasant; fearing least the one should not please, and the other, not profit; and how inconsistent both these tempers are with the nature of true Friendship, I [f. 515v] leave to their judgments, in whose breasts this generous flame has been once kindled.

Beside, where there is this distance, there can never be a freedom in <comma> communicating thoughts, and weightiest concernments; This being the product of a more then ordinary familiarity, and an argument where it is freely used of the intirest Friendship, as that wherin Friends giue their hearts mutualy in hostage for the truth of their affections.

My discoverys therfore to my Friend, should be free and open without any veile drawn over them; suddain, and unconstraind, not concealing them so long till my countenance betrays them; and never thinking any concernment of my own lesse a secret, because communicated to him. Thus must I do in all things which relate to my self, but in the affaires of a third person, I must use a great deale more caution, and be always very tender of revealing them, (for as one very well sais, The secrets of my Friend, are not my owne) [f. 516r] least whilst I thereby think to oblige the one, I betray the other, and give him to whom I imparted the secret, occasion to distrust, that in some like circumstance, I will do the same by him. Neither must I only beware of an open and absolute discovery of them, but in things wherewith I am intrusted, take heed also of giving the least occasion of suspicon, by any doubtfull word or action, either inconsiderately, or on purpose, thrown out, and imediatly wrested to the divulging of that, which I would either still indeed haue kept as a secret, or was bigg with till well delivered. Many there are who take a pride in the latter, and out of an ambition which they have to be taken notice of as persons intrusted with no small matters, baulk not the opportunity of discovering by circumstances, and dark speeches, that which by their open discourse they would persuade you they would not tell for all the world. But if a wise man, can from the glance of an eye, or an unusuall demenour of the body draw probable [f. 516v] conjectures of the occasion, how much more may such indiscreet hints giue light to those things, which were never intended for <the> subjects of publique discourse. Now, it matters not, whether the things intrusted

to me be of great, or less, importance; For I am not to measure my fidelity by the greatness of the thing, but my faithfull performance of the charge. And as I must endeavor by all care, and silence, to manifest my sincerity in such particulars as are deposited in my breast, under the seale of secrecy; so, where I am left at liberty, I must be sure not to betray my owne discretion, and love, in the fond discovery of such affaires; the concealment of which may make for my Friends greater advantage.

Now, the admirable effects that arise from this Divine relation, and are inseperable, and as it were, conaturall with it, are infinite, because they interpose on all occasions that either are, >or< can be offered. For not only when any thing that is extraordinary and unusuall >be<falls us, but also [f. 517r] in our most common affaires, the assistance of Friends is truly necessary; though where the circumstances offer'd are greater, its actings likewise appear more illustrious. I shall only mention a few particulars, and those such as are most familiar to us, by which the excellency of this relation may from surer consequence be deduced, then the <length> >proportion⁴⁷⁹ of Hercules his body was from the length of his foote. I shall in the first place, treat of Counsell and faithfull advice, which must be lookt vpon if not as the only, yet as the main result of that which before I hinted; The revealing my most secret thoughts to my Friend, and communicating to him those concernments, which are lockt up to all the world besids. Counsell therfore and advice when they are to be giuen, should be suited not only to the person, but to his condition; For if in counsell respect be had only to the person requiring it, without consideration what the effects may be, all the advice that is tendred may by accident prove like the over⁴⁸⁰ hasty [f. 517v] healing an old wound, which though skin'd over for the present, is in continual danger, vpon the least accident, to break out with worse circumstances. Counsell therfore should be rather safe, then pleasant, though where they may be joyned it becomes more acceptable; Beside, it should be always free, and candid, as to the manner, wholsome and considerate, as to the occasion. For if in obtaining it, I am forced to use passionate intreatys, the advice that is so gained, will seem rather an effect of my persuasion, then interest of my Friendship, and will imediately beget a distrust, that I have pitched vpon an unfitting person for the opening of my mind to, who is more willing (it may be) to know my disease, then to prescribe a remedy for its cure. Wherfore it is an infallible discovery of the vertue of Friendship, imediately to interpose with sutable counsell, according to the present juncture of [f. 518r] affaires that shall be offered. For⁴⁸¹ there must not only be a sympathizing between friends, but a deliberate consultation; which he of the two is fittest to promote, who only beares⁴⁸² that share of the present trouble which

⁴⁷⁹ FL: Height

⁴⁸⁰ FL: [omitted]

⁴⁸¹ FL: [omitted]

⁴⁸² The word 'bearing' has been overwritten to form 'beares'.

his concernment for his friend, layes on him. For a nearer sense of trouble, and to be the party especialy engaged, renders a man less capable of directing himself, then otherwise he would be. So that nothing can be more gratefull at such a season, then a suddain closing with the opportunity, tendring such proposalls as true Friendship, acted by a sober judgment, and proceeding from an unbyass'd principle, shall vpon good ground approve of as ⁴⁸³ most likely for the attaining its ends. For in this case, empty wishes are too effeminate, and become not that masculine spirit that should be in Friends, and great souls hate pitty, as being a kind of Medium that only represents their griefs more formidable. Job indeed calls for pitty from his friends⁴⁸⁴, but it seemes in that place oppos'd to the harsh usage he received from them; and where he saith, that to him that is afflicted pitty should be shew'd from his friend, it may rationaly (in my poore opinion) bee understood of such a pitty as is joyn'd with endeavours to comfort and assist him. This therfore is one and none of the smallest advantages of Friendship; which will the better appeare, if we consider the grand obstruction [f. 518v] of it in its course, is when those who profess [it,] cannot beare one an others faithfull advice if contrary to their particular designes. And this is the defect of many excellent persons, who though they desire counsell, yet are impatient, and reject it, if it runns not in the same streame with their present apprehensions[.] Now in this they seeme not so much to seeke advice, as confirmation in their owne opinions, and where this unruly humour reignes, it <shuts> shutts out the most generous office of Friendship. For so prone is the mind of man to make returns in kind, that it is not likely, that they who will heare no counsell from others, should be heard themselves, though they proffer it with the greatest sincerity, and affection; by which meanes this bulwarke of friendship is blockt vp on both sides; and of how great⁴⁸⁵ concernment this is, none can so well judg as those who have experienced the advantages that come by faithfull council and advice. This being one of the greatest supports of life, and which in all states <of> and conditions, we shall have more or less occasion to repaire to. By this, we are instructed how to avoid dangers, or else couragiously to meet them if they are inevitable; How to secure our persons, or highten our reputation, Attain our designes, and prudently to use them, or at least contentedly to beare vp vnder the disappointment⁴⁸⁶. By counsell, we are vpheld vnder the greatest afflictions, and [f. 519r] tempered in the chiefest of our enjoyments For in embracing it, we doe not only see with other eyes, besides our owne, but as through a Telescope behold things at further distance, and become enabled to make better

⁴⁸³ FL: [additional] the

⁴⁸⁴ Job 19. 21. Job is tested by God, but resolved to remain devout. Job debates his position with his three friends who offer counsel, but he rejects it. Although later God rebukes the friends and restores Job to his good fortunes (Job 42. 10-17).

⁴⁸⁵ FL: much

⁴⁸⁶ FL: [omitted: or at least...disappointment]

discoverys then otherwise we could haue done; things by this meanes appearing distinct, which otherwise seemd formless and confused.

An other advantage of Friendship is incouragment, to which, I shall joyn reproofe, being both of them the legitimate and twin Daughters of counsell, though of different complexions, and contrary aspects.

Incouragment therefore of Friends, has a great influence vpon ingenuous⁴⁸⁷ minds; It raiseth a person aboue himself; lessens difficulties, heightens expectacons, encreases hope, depresses feare, and putteth him many times into a fore-possession of the things he seeks after, by making them appeare possible <and> to be attain'd, and with in his reach. For in things which we either extreamly desire, or feare, we can with more satisfaction build vpon the opinion of⁴⁸⁸ our friends, then our owne apprehensions. The reason of which I conceive to be, Because we look on them as persons unprejudiced by those passions which govern vs on such occasions, and therfore being less concernd, suppose they may make a better judgment of our undertakings or⁴⁸⁹ conditions; whereas our being so nearly engaged, and having our thoughts so strongly <bent> fixt vpon the [f. 519v] thing desired, or dreaded, must necessarily stirr vp in vs many passions, <which> with disorder, and subjecting vs to some one or more of them, which oppose our designs, entayle on⁴⁹⁰ vs a greater debility then nature it self has. Tis this causes vs to looke on all opposition as invincible, and vpon all advantages as deceitfull; But the judicious incouragement of Friends answers both these, reconciling vs first to our selves (wherby at once⁴⁹¹ our strength, is encreas'd, and opponents rendred inconsiderable) and then by solid arguments, and not airy fancies; seting before vs the probability of our successe and likelyhood of attaining our endes, if we be not our owne greatest hinderance. But as true⁴⁹² Friends should never be backward to encourag those they love, to such things as are prayse-worthy and benificiall, so on the other side, they must be carefull not to spurr them on to such hazardous adventures, where either ruin seems to be the most certain reward, or disgrace the likelyest crowne of all their labours; though where these eminently threaten vs, or⁴⁹³ are already become vnavoydable, encouragments to beare them nobly, must necessarily be the best cordiall to

⁴⁸⁷ FL: generous

⁴⁸⁸ FL: [omitted: the opinion of]

⁴⁸⁹ FL: &

⁴⁹⁰ FL: upon

⁴⁹¹ FL: [omitted: at once]

⁴⁹² FL: [omitted: true]

⁴⁹³ FL: &

keep vp our sinking spirits; For, tis often seen a man needs as much encouragement to dy⁴⁹⁴ well, as to fight⁴⁹⁵ well, to suffer courageously, as to overcome bravely.

Nor, is reprooфе in its place either less beautifull, or necessary, then encouragement and when performed in love, and so received, there is not a more excellent and generous fruit of Friendship; But here is the mischief, as [f. 520r] there are few that can give it after a right manner, and duely⁴⁹⁶ time it, So there are few⁴⁹⁷ that will as they ought receive it. Now those who would be rightly qualifed for so great a work, must lay aside feare, and anger; For by the one, they are deterr'd from doing it at all, by the other, wont⁴⁹⁸ to over do it.⁴⁹⁹ For Reprooфе being >a thing< naturally vnpleasant to the mind of man, it ought to be managed with all imaginable⁵⁰⁰ sweetnes and prudence. Blunt reproofoes may possibly sometimes reform, but they seldom oblig, this being a fauour, which we may receive from an enemy. Wherfore in this affaire, it is requisite to be throughly acquainted with the temper of the person, before we adventure on this too often thankless part of Friendship. Tis true,⁵⁰¹ there are some, who may be dealt with in a free and open way, who can hear their actions condemned without being displeased with any but themselves, for giving the occasion; and can receive the reprimends of a friend with the same affection that they are dispensed, esteeming such wounds as given in faithfulness, and looking on them as the noblest badges of this relation. For when I praise a man I would be thought his friend, but if I reprove with such candour as I ought, I testify my self to be so indeed, and I am encouraged to that office, because I think he is such to me.⁵⁰² But there are others that must be treated in a quite different way⁵⁰³, and ere they can swallow this bitter pill, must haue it well gilt. Their good deeds must be extoll'd, and their accomplishments magnified, ere you can speake a word of their [f. 520v] infirmities; which it may be if they are brought vp in the reare, will not be taken so much amiss. For hence they will be convinced that you mention them not from any meane thoughts you had entertaind of them, but only from a desire of their further advance in those things that might render them more⁵⁰⁴ excellent. An other sort of men there are, who though like foward Children they can never be perswaded to drink the

⁴⁹⁴ FL: fight

⁴⁹⁵ FL: dye

⁴⁹⁶ FL: discreetly

⁴⁹⁷ FL: not many

⁴⁹⁸ FL: are wont

⁴⁹⁹ FL: [additional sentence follows] Neither are All Persons, whose wills are good, fitt to be reprovers of Others

⁵⁰⁰ FL: imaginary

⁵⁰¹ FL: [additional] where

⁵⁰² FL: [omitted: For when I...to me]

⁵⁰³ FL: Others there are who must be dealt with after a quite differt way

⁵⁰⁴ FL: truely

potion, though⁵⁰⁵ the brims of the cupp be never so well sweetened, esteeming⁵⁰⁶ it a thing intollerable to beare reproofs in their owne persons: yet without offence, they can hear the vices which themselves are guilty of, condemned in the person of an other. Now⁵⁰⁷ why reproof is so distastfull both to these, and the greatest part of mankind, (if I mistake not) the reason may easily be drawne from that pride, which abounds in their natures For though they can be content to owne a generall defection, yet they are vnwilling to be charg'd with particular miscarriages, esteeming that more to their disparagement which imediatly points at them, though of less concernment; then the universall imperfection in which all are involved. And though they cannot but be conscious of their own frailties, yet they are impatient to find such witnesses of them, as will thereupon take the confidence severely, but most friendly to reprove them. But before we leave this subject of reprooфе one thing must not be forgot. That when 'tis directed to any one in his owne person, as it should be performed in love and meekness, so it must be done with the [f. 521r] greatest secrecy; least otherwise while you think to wipe off the blot, you only spread it, by making others take notice of that which possibly might be only seen by your self before. Besides we lay a disobligation vpon a man to reform, by letting the world know the reason of it, which other wise might have been thought to have proceeded from his owne prudence. Wherfore I think that saying of Solon⁵⁰⁸ may be here fully applyed.

Thy friend in private chide, in Publique prays.

Ile conclude this paragraph with a pleasant encounter betwist Socrates, and Plato, which I think will not be much from my purpose. Socrates as he one day at dinner reproved one of his Friends somthing harshly, Plato said to him, had not this been better told in private? Socrates imediatly answered, and had not you done better if you had told me so in private?⁵⁰⁹

An other advantage of Friendship is a generous aemulation, which it provokes and stirrs vp; an affection as different from envy as love is from hatred, and true Friendship from a Combination in evils. Tis this excites vs to out do our selves, as well as others, not from a desire to be the alone excellent; but that others by <their> >our< example may be excited to pursue⁵¹⁰ those things that

⁵⁰⁵ FL: notwithstanding

⁵⁰⁶ FL: looking upon

⁵⁰⁷ FL: [omitted: Now]

⁵⁰⁸ Solon (c. 630 BCE— c. 560 BCE) 'Athenian statesman, known as one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. Solon ended exclusive aristocratic control of the government, substituted a system of control by the wealthy, and introduced a new and more humane law code. He was also a noted poet.' Theodore John Cadoux, 'Solon', *Encyclopedia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Solon> [Accessed 20 September 2022].

⁵⁰⁹ FL: [omitted: But before we leave...so in private]

⁵¹⁰ FL: use

are truly worthy a noble spirit. Besides this emulation is so farr from repining at those advantages which nature or education has bestowed vpon others, whereby they proceed with great facility, and speed, to the exercise of generous and virtuous actions, securing their names from [f. 521v] the rough usage of time; that it feeles in it self a true joy to see vertue embraced and improved to such performances as may be serviceable to the glorifying their Creatour; and advancing the interest of Friendship; and the common good of mankind. For none can be tru friends, who haue not first espoused vertue, and become as firmly united to that, as to the persons of those they love: and where this happy conjunction is once made, 'tis as great a pleasure to see it enthron'd in our friend, as to find it rooted in our selves; And it will be equally desirable to have a friend worthy our imitation, as that our selves should be examples fitt for others to follow. Vertue is a Jewell to be admired in an Enemy, prized in a friend, and desired by our selves; and it is impossible we should envy others vertue⁵¹¹ and be virtuous our selves; for that envy canot proceed from a love of virtue, but of those advantages it brings, which hereby we are apt to think fall amiss, when they light not on vs. Emulation betweene friends I take to be this, when from beholding their vertues and the beauties of their minds, we are awakened from that sluggishness, which confines our desires and endeavours, within the narrow limits of <empty> >unprofitable< wishes and provoked to an eager pursuit of such things, as may not only render vs like those we love, but fitt patterns to be imitated by them: and without this emulation I think I may boldly say, it is as rare to find vertue, as to see a river without streames, or the sun divested of its⁵¹² rays. Tis' this, putteth life and spirit into all our actions, and makes vs carfull to performe them well. 'Tis the excellence of vertue it self that makes vs love it; but 'tis the consideracon, of what others [f. 522r] therin have done, and the many eyes which are vpon vs, that make us jealous of our selves in the exercise of it; that so we may not by our imprudence, as by an uncomly dresse, deform so divine a Beauty. And if such reflections in the generall are so prevalent with vs, what influence then, must this additionall consideration haue, that whatever we do, or say, and I had almost said think, is more visible to the eyes of our Friend, then they possibly can be to others. For they only can compare our actions with our intentions, whilst others from what they see can only form ends of their owne, according to what them selves would design from such performances. And how tender must this make every generous spirit, who has contracted Friendship with >vertue and< virtuous persons, not to do any thing which may make them less worthy of that sacred union; like that Souldier, who being overcome by his Enemy, entreated him to give his life a passage through his breast; least his Friend seeing a wound on his back; should be ashamed of him.

⁵¹¹ FL: [omitted: vertue]

⁵¹² FL: His

Now, reall Friendship as it is the greatest promoter of vertue in its followers; so it is a powerfull motive to perswade others to the love of it. For though vertue may be admired by some, when found in a single person, yet it becomes more splendid when united in an excellent >and numerous< Society of Friends, where their severall vertues make vp one perfect consort, and beget in others an admiration, if not [f. 522v] a desire of so noble an alliance. The Theban, Or Holy Band, mentioned by Plutarch, were not so famous for their valour, (though even that was without any example) as for their love. For it was their Friendship which animated their courage, and made them worthy King Phillips teares: and had not that given a kind of Eternity to their memory, they, like many other excellent Warriours, might at once⁵¹³ haue slept in the dust, and <haue> been buried in oblivion.⁵¹⁴ Of Examples in this kind, History is prodigall; but I briefly hint, what would be argument for a mighty volume.

Then for contentment, where can it be found if not among Friends; all other enjoyments are like great shaddows without any substance if Friendship bee wanting. For no man can be truly said to enjoy either it himself or what ever the world has put any value on, who has not a Friend to partake with him; who may assist him in his undertaking and be a witness of his felicities. This being the necessary fate of all, that we borrow the apprehensions of others to think our selves happy, and looke further then our owne breasts if we would ever hope to find tru contentment.

Ld Bacon

Lastly, Friendship is the most genuine light to discover vertue by, as being that by which it is neither discoloured nor obscured; whereas when vertue is taken vp and made subservient [f. 523r] to politick accounts, arising from a too much love of our selves, which stirrs up in us imoderat desires either after profit, greatness, or fame, it then appeares as through coloured mediums, which are so farr from beautifying it, that at best they unhansomly shaddow it, or which is wors, make it suffer a totoll eclips; whereas Friendship displayes it like the Sun in its brightness; makes vs like the Deity love vertue for it self, and endeavour the propagating it in others; is the principall support of this life, and the happiness of the next.

⁵¹³ FL: once have

⁵¹⁴ Sacred Band of Thebes, a troop of 300 soldiers, made up of 150 male couples. They were defeated by Philip II of Macedon. Beale seems to be suggesting that their bonds of friendship is what made them notable. Modern scholarship suggests these were sexual couples, but David Leitao notes that this was not a straightforward distinction in Ancient Greece. Beale here seems to be suggesting something like 'brotherhood'. See: David Leitao, 'Sacred Band of Thebes', in *Global Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) History*, Volume 3 (Gale, 2019) pp. 1405–8. Permanent link: <https://go.exlibris.link/GZvk2Xqt> [accessed 21 September 2022].

[The following extract appears in the Folger Library copy and replaces the above paragraphs from "Then for contentment" until the end.]

Then, Lastly, for Contentmt; Where can it be found, if not among Friends? all Other enjoyments are like Great Shadowes, without any substance; if Freindship be wanting: For there is no Man, can truly be said to enjoy either Himselfe, or whatever the World has put any value on, who has not a Friend to partake with Him: who may assist Him in His undertakings; and be a witnes of His Felicityes: this being the necessary Fate of All, that Wee must borrow our Aprehensions of Others to thinke our selves hapy; and looke farther than our owne breasts, if Wee would hope to finde true Contentment. Friendship is the most genuine Light to see Contentment by; wheras Other things mak it apeare, as Objects through discolour'd Mediums: Virtue it selfe in the generall, without this; has noe lustre. For Example; the Love of our selves, a desire of profitt and Greatnes, also a designe to raise our Fame, with our Authority, makes us embrace it as agreeable: but all these in stead of inlighnting, cast their severall shadowes upon it, which are soe farre from adding any Grace to it, that They comonly obscure, or which is worse, many times make it suffer a totall Eclipse. Wheras Friendship displayes it like the Sun at High-Noon, makes us like the Deity love Virtue, for Virtues sake; and endeavour the propagating of it in others: which is the maine suport of this Life, and happinesse of the Next.

[f. 523v]

For her Honourd Friend Mris

Elizabeth Tillotson

this

‘Observations by MB in her painting of Apricots in August 1663’ by Mary Beale

Note on the text

The transcription below is of University of Glasgow, MS Ferguson 143 ‘Observations by MB in her painting of Apricots in August 1663’ by Mary Beale, f. 29r-v, in *Experimental Seacrets* by Charles Beale.

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

[f. 29r]

Observations by MB in her painting of Apricots in August 1663.

your dead Colour being perfectly dry, temper your severall sorts of Masticots⁵¹⁵ with nut oyle and let them ly for half an hour, and when you are ready to use them temp them againe, this giveth a fatness to the Colour which is of great advantage in the covering, <of them>. For the greenish Coloring mingle whitelead, middle masticot, Bury oker, pinke, and a very little faire Ultramarine together, without the Bury Oker the Colour will bee raw and fierce; in the pale yellow places leave out the Ultramarine; where it inclineth more to redness let the composition bee white lead, red Lead, red masticot and a little pinke. Let your heigtenings in your very ripe apricots bee white lead, pale Mast: and a little red lead, in less ripe ones less or none of the red lead. Let your shadowes bee pinke and Lake and Bury oker and in some places <ar> according as the life requireth it, a little fine Ultramarine: in some [f. 29v] other places where the shadowes are glowing and faint as they are sometimes in the Crowne and there touch upon your generall rendering with pinke and Vermilion mixed together: 14th Augустe 1663.

Mit. Bury oker is by no means to bee left out in the painting of apricots, because it adds a naturallnes to the complexion of the fruite, and makes the rest of the Colour worke abundantly better. Those apricots I painted before I made use of Bury oker were muche harsher colored and nothing so soft.

⁵¹⁵ Earlier form of ‘massicot’ a yellow oxide of lead. T. F. Hoad (ed.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192830982.001.0001/acref-9780192830982-e-9293> [accessed 21 September 2022].

Translations of psalms 13, 52, 70 and 130, by Mary Beale.

Note on the text

The transcription below is of psalms 13, 52, 70 and 130 by Mary Beale, in *Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David* by Samuel Woodford (London: Printed by R. White, 1667). Original spelling and punctuation have been retained.

Psalm 13

A Paraphrase upon the XIII Psalm.

Another Version of the same.

By M. M. B.

I

How long, O God, shall I forgotten ly,
As one cast from Thy memory?
Wilt Thou from me Thy face for ever hide?
For so that time, which nothing is to Thee,
Seems an Eternity to mee,
Who only on Thy favour have rely'd.

II

Wilt Thou no period to my griefs allow,
But fresh afflictions on me throw,
Which I as little as Thy wrath can bear?
To see my Enemies triumphing stand,
And my self stoop to their command,
Who only Thee, and Thy command should fear;

III

In mercy, Lord, again remember mee,
And from Oppressors set me free!
Unto Thy servants prayers attention give,
Revive his hopes, and let Thy glorious light
His joys renew, that in Thy fight,
Though now cast out, he may for ever live!

IV

Why should my Enemy encrease his pride,
With Thee, and conquest on his side?
And those, who trouble me, in this rejoice,
That I am exil'd from Thy resting place,
The sacred presence of Thy grace,
Who oft have glori'd that I was Thy choice?

V

But I have trusted in Thy powers, and love,
That Thou wilt all my fears remove:
And this sure hope with joy so fill my mind,
That I will now Thy mighty praises sing,
From whom my happiness shall spring,
Whose bounty, like Thy self, is unconfin'd.

Psalm 52

A Paraphrase upon the LII Psalm

Another Version of the same:

By M. M. B.

I.

Monster of Men, who canst such mischiefs act,
And proudly triumph in the bloody fact,
Must this thy power declare,
That they, who at Jehovahs Altar stood,
The Priests themselves, all stain'd with their own blood,
The guiltless Victims of thy Fury were?
Yet not even this was able to asswage
Thy own curst malice, or thy wicked Masters rage.

II.

But though my ruine thou didst most design,
And that no blood should quench thy thirst but mine,
Know, wretch, that God is good
And has been alwayes so in ages past,
Nor shall Eternity His love exhaust;
Wherefore 'tis not thy force, though like a flood,
Nor all thy secret Plots, which shall avayl,
Unless thou canst against th'Almighty first prevail.

III.

Within thy heart ly hid those poysinous seeds
Of treason, which thy tongue provokes to deeds:
So piercing are thy words
They seem the Razours dulness to upbraid,
As if unfit for action, or afraid,
And have more edge than all my Enemies Swords:
By these thou dost the just ensare, and slay,

And low as earth, their hopes, and lives together lay.

IV.

But who, think'st thou, these actions will admire,
Since thou 'rt inspir'd by an infernal fire?
A flame, which strongly moves
To lying mischiefs, and unjust deceit,
And all the false delights, which on them wait,
Or sin presents to excite and raise new loves!
Hence 'tis that Justice seems so mean, and low,
Nor longer fit for great men, than to make them so.

V.

Devouring words do thy best love command,
And to them thou hast joyn'd a bloody hand:
But the Almighty God
In thy destruction shall His Power make known,
Which in eternall torments thou shalt own,
When he makes bare His Arm, and shakes His Rod,
Removing thee from thy beloved place,
And from the Earth roots out thy trayterous name and race.

VI.

The Righteous, when they see the overthrow,
Shall fear His Power, who has brought thee so low,
And shouting at thy fall,
Cry out, "Lo, where's the man, who fixt his trust,
" Not in our God, but his own glittering dust,
" Which, useless now, can yield no help at all:
" Look how that strength, which he in fraud once plac'd,
" Is by the breath of the Eternall Word defac'd!

VII.

But whil'st this wretch deplores his dolorous state,
My God, who on him threw the mighty weight,
Will me assign a place,
Within His Courts, where, like an Olive-tree,
With fruit and blossoms I shall loaded bee,
And feel the kindest Influence of His Grace:
'Tis in His Mercies I'll for ever trust,
Whose Love, and Wrath thus shown, declare that He is just.

VIII.

Then will I of some nobler subject sing,
And to exalt my God fresh praises bring;

Then, like my Sacrifice,
In flames of purest Love I'll mount on high,
To Him, who sav'd me from my Enemy,
And in my passage perfume all the Skies
To Heav'n; nor short of His dread Presence stay,
Whil'st the admiring Saints rise up to make me way.

Psalm 70

A Paraphrase upon the LXX Psalm.
Another Version of the same, by M. M. B.

I.

Almighty God, whose Pow'r is infinite,
Who with a Word did'st all things make;
So great, that when Thou speak'st, the Mountains quake
Let my deliverance also shew Thy might
And by its certain speed make that appear more bright!

II.

The Proud, when he is from his greatness thrown,
And do's with shame, and horror find
Nothing of all his glory left behind,
Who when Thou, Lord, in wrath do'st on him frown;
His very Soul is with the heavy weight press'd down:

III.

Make his the Portion of my Enemies,
(Who in their cursed rage contrive
To slay my Soul, when Thou wouldst have it live)
That they may see by this their sad surprise,
It was not only me, but Thee they did despise!

IV.

Let those, who with my hurt, and would rejoice,
As senseless of my misery,
Be like to conquer'd troops, which scatt'red fly,
And with confusion tremble at the noise,
That's rais'd by their own fear, and mighty Enemies Voice!

V.

For a reward let such be driven away;
And quite astonish'd, may they find
No hopes of comfort to relieve their mind,

Who at my griefs in sport triumphing say,
" This is as we would have it be, Aha! Aha!

VI.

But on Thy People make Thy Face to shine!
Let them from fears be alwayes free,
(Except it be fears of offending Thee)
The shared Flame their heart shall so refine,
That now their joy shall only be that they are Thine!

VII.

Such as to Thy Salvation burn in love,
Let them perpetual praises sing!
And with rejoicing this their Off'ring bring,
With such Expressions let them forward move,
" Our God be magnify'd on Earth, and Heav'n above!

VIII.

But I am poor, and needy, much distress'd;
Wherefore, O Lord, make haste to me!
For all the Springs of Mercy are in Thee;
And can I Want, while I upon Thee rest,
Whose Word alone commands deliv'rance to th'Opprest?

IX.

Thou, in whom all my confidence do's lye,
My help anti hope in my distress,
Let not my Misery make Thy Pow'r be less!
On Thee I wait, to Thee, O God, I fly,
Make haste, and be Thou on the Wing as well as I!

Psalm 130

A Paraphrase upon the Psalm CXXX
Another Version of the same, by M. M. B.

I.

Plung'd in the depths of sin and misery,
Where I could nothing see but Death
Ready to stifle my complaining breath,
With which to Thee my God I sent my Cry,
Hoping at length to reach Thine ear,
Hear me, I said, let not my Cries be vain,

Lest I no strength should have to Cry again.

II.

Eternall God, should Thy all-seeing eye
Severely marke Our often strayes;
Our wandrings i'th' forbidden dangerous wayes,
Or basest sin, and fond Iniquity,
Who then could in Thy pretence stand,
Or bear the weight of Thy enraged hand?
But Thou art mighty in Thy Pardoning love,
O let us fear that we may grateful prove.

III.

Wherefore I'll wait for Thee, my gracious Lord,
Till Thou Thy Favours shalt dispence,
And make me feel their powerful influence,
My Soul for this shall hope in Thy sure word:
For Thee I'll wait with more desire
Than they, who for the Morning light enquire,
That from their weary watch they may be freed;
Yea more than they, wherefore my God make speed!

IV.

Let Israel on the Lord repose His trust,
With whom both Mercie is and love,
The constant streames that flow from Him above:
Like whom there's none so good, yet none so just:
For though He did a ransom find,
'Twas such as through't His Justice brighter shin'd:
From Him Redemption shall to Israel come,
Which to their land and Him shall bring them home.

Mary More

‘The Woman’s Right’ by Mary More

Note on the Text

The transcription below is of British Library, MS Harley 3918, ‘The Woman’s Right’ by Mary More, ff. 46r-58r.

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. Greek has been rendered using modern characters. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

[f. 46r]

The Womans Right

or

Her Power in a Greater Equality to Her Husband proved than is allowed or practised in

England

From misunderstanding Some Scriptures, and false rendring others from the Originall, plainly shewing an equality in Man and Woman before the Fall, and not much difference after.

The Equality of their Souls is also proved in that Women have done whatever is of Value that men have done, What hath been done may be done.

Written by M. M.

To

My little Daughter Elizabeth Waller.

At first view of this following discourse it may seem strange To thee that I thy mother of all Women should concern my self in a subject of this Nature, having never had any Reason as to my self to complain of the least Ill Cariage of my Husbands to me, nor hath any occasion or action in my whole life ever offered any thing, wherein the Power and Will of my husband hath been disputed on mee, for we finding it our Interests to be embarked in one bottom, and so must be guided and steered one way, have (I hope I may say it without Vanity) so ordered our affairs and actions to the utmost of our Power and Skill, to tend to the comfort and good liking of both.

So then that which made me more then ordinary to consider this Subject, hath been from a trouble in me observing the sad consequences and events that have fallen on men and Their Wives, through this mistake of mens pretending a Power over their *wive* wives, that neither God nor nature doe allow, and I dare be confident that if any unbiassed person observe it, they must conclude this to bee the first and great cause of most breaches between men and their Wives.

If thou my Child shall live to years fitt, and then purpose to marry.

1. First I advise thee to seek God by earnest and frequent prayers, for direction and a blessing on this so great a work, as the choice of a Husband which is as the hinges whereon hangs and turns all worldly Comfort to thee. And first in thy Choice (as far as it is possible for thee to know) choose a man that fears and serveth God, tis usually the want of grace and the not knowing the Scriptures, that is the principall cause of the Ill carriage of men to their wives.

2. Secondly choose a wise and understanding Man, for as Solomon saith of a Foolish Wife, she is as rottenness in a mans bones which will soon destroy and ruine him,⁵¹⁶ I am sure may be truly said of a foolish Husband, for the Laws of our Country giving a Man after mariage a greater Power of their Estate than the Wife, unless the Wife take care before hand to prevent it (which I advise thee to doe) I say an unwise husband doth for the most part destroy and bring to nought what is in his power.

⁵¹⁶ Proverbs 12. 4: 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.'

3. Thirdly (so far as thou canst discover it) choose one of a good naturall disposition and temper, I mean one that is free from that harshness and morosity that is sometimes naturally in men. Like Ishmael against all and all against him, a wife will find hard work and against the grain to live comfortably with such an Husband.

[f. 48r] 4. Lastly choose a Person whom thou dost love and affect and that loves thee, (for love hides at multitude of faults) but rather marry a man for his love to thee, than thine to him, for I seldom find the Wife fail on this part if the Husband love her.

But my Child if God shall see fitt to cross thee in all or any of these, in thy choice of a Husband, then I advise thee

To a patient Submission to the hand of God on thee, take up thy Cross and bear it for in Mariage you are joyned, as it were in a Yoke, and if either strive to get free, or loosed from their unruly <fellow> yokefellow, they do but Gall and tire themselves. Prudently hide it from the World, for I do not beleive that ever Husband or Wife that complained of each other found comfort or releif in it, it being a complaint against ones self.

Nor do thou ever study to requite him in his kind, if he be vicious be thou the more Virtuous, if he be a Spend-thrift, be thou the more frugall. And remember to bear thee up, that God will take thy part sooner or later: it being Gods usuall manner when we bear afflictions patiently (and leave him to revenge) to doe it for us, and retaliate it on the offender in some answerable punishment, we often reading the Sin by the Punishment.

That thou my Child maist be blest with a Religious, Wise good tempered and loving husband is the earnest and constant prayers of thy faithfull and affectionate Mother.

M: M:

The Womans Right

The Argument

It is one end (among others) in writing to doe something either as to the thing or manner that is new and not commonly known; of this I am sure not to miss in this little treatise, for the truth that I shall here endeavour, and doubt not to prove, is so unknown at this time in England that I find they do, as is said of the Inventors of untruths, that they tell them so long until they bring themselves into the belieif of their truth; so is it grown between husbands and their Wifes in our time, by a long practising of Power towards Wives, (impowered to it by laws of their own making) I say they by practise grown into a belieif of their Right to that, which I do not find allowed neither by the Laws of God nor Nature.

That which I shall principally aim at <then> this in this discourse shall be to prove a greater equality between Husbands and Wives then is allowed and practised in England.

Gen 1: And God said let us make man in our own Image after our likeness, and let them bear dominion over
v26 the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the Air, and over all the Earth.

27 So God created man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him, male and female created
he them.

v28 [f. 49r] And God blessed them and God said unto them, be fruitfull, and multiply, and replenish the
earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the Air, and
over Every living thing that moveth upon the Earth.

Let us make man: the word man here comprehends both sexes, or mankind, for in the next verse we
v29 read God created him, male and female created he them.

v30 And God blessed them and gave them dominion over all the Creatures in the earth, to subdue them,
from where I lay down this as a Truth, that before the fall Man and Woman, Adam and Eve had
equally power over each other and over the Creatures; finding noe difference: onely Adams being
created first in order of time, and his naming the Creatures, and not Eve; neither of which seems to
me to be a signe of superiority in Adam.

For first Adams being made before Eve, is but as beasts were made before Adam, for the Evening
and the Morning were the first day, none will from thence think the night the better, which rather
shows the contrary for God in the work of Creation went on Gradually higher and higher, creating

the choisest and best last; so that if I would be criticall I might say that Eve was the most curious peice of nature in the whole creation being left till last, untill all things were fitted to receive and entertain her, besides she was made of the most refined part of the Creation, Adam. Adam was made [f. 50r] of the earth refined Eve of Adam.

1 Cor 11. v8 For the man is not of the Woman (but of the earth) but the women is of the Man; but all things of God. So that doubtless Eve was, and all (or most) women ever since >are< of a finer mould and mettall than most men are: nor do I see any Reason why we may not on good Grounds argue from thence; that the bodys of women being more fine, which body is the Organ that Acts and declares the soul, the souls of Women are acted more serene and agile then mens are: our common experience showing us then when ever Women <and> give themselves to study etc they prove as learned, and good proficients, and with as much (or more) ease then men, there having nothing of value ever been done by men, but the same hath beene done by Women: What hath been done may be done is a rule in Philosophy.

2 King 22 A Prophetess and scholar bred up in the Colledges, Hulda⁵¹⁷, and Eusebius⁵¹⁸ quotes out of Philo, that the Women had their studys and confereness severally from the Men.

A Schollar Anna Maria a Shurman⁵¹⁹, and the Lady Jane Grey⁵²⁰ both great Scholars.

Jud Valiant Deborah⁵²¹, and Boadicea⁵²² in England etc. Prudence to rule and courage to maintain it: Queen Elizabeth of England⁵²³, who was also so expert in Tongues and languages, that she heard and gave Answer to all Embassadours herself and had the Greek and Latine so [f. 50v] fluent that she frequently spake verses in those languages extempore.

As for the Salique Law in France it is known to be made at first, onely as to a particular place Sala; for the faults of some dishonest Women who lived there, but after was falsely expounded to be for the whole nation of France, onely to debar the English Kings from the claime of the French Crown, tho the French Kings themselves derive their Rights often from the heirs female. By the Law made by God the Lawgiver the Daughters are to inherit their Fathers Inheritance allotted to them in the tribe

⁵¹⁷ 'Hulda', not only a prophet but also a teacher.

⁵¹⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/65 – 339), theologian of Christianity.

⁵¹⁹ Anna Maria van Schurman (1607 – 1678), author of *The Learned Maid or, Whether a Maid may be a Scholar* (1659).

⁵²⁰ Lady Jane Grey (c. 1537 – 1554), the 'nine day Queen of England'.

⁵²¹ Prophetess and only female judge mentioned in the Bible. Judges 4. 4-5.

⁵²² Queen of the Iceni tribe, who led an uprising against the invading forces of the Roman Empire, c. AD 60.

⁵²³ Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603).

of Manasses, God telling them that if a man had not Sons then the Daughters should inherit, and if he hath no Daughters, then the inheritance should go to his Bretheren.

1 Cron
2.54 And Sheshomes⁵²⁴ daughter was sole heir to her farthers Patrimony tho she married an Egyptian, and her Posterity had their possessions among the tribes of Judah to the Captivity of Babylon.

The second seeming difference between Adam and Eve before the fall is that Adam named the creatures, it appears to me that Adam named them before Eve was created (tho they were both created in one day) but if Adam did name the beasts when Eve was there Eve her Children when Adam was there, and gave them as significant names as Adam did her, or the rest [f. 51r] of the Creatures, it being the practise of the Women in the Scriptures to name their Children significantly.

Gen
2.22 Eve was made of Adams Rib, not his head, nor foot, but middle, his equall and meet helper, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.

Gen
3.2 This equall and happy man and his Wife envied by the Devil came in the Serpents shape, who was the most subtle of all the beasts, and assaulted Eve to break the Command, that God had newly enjoyned Adam and her, Thou in the singular number includes both, for Eve tells the Serpent, Wee may <not> eat of the fruit of the trees of the Garden, but this God hath said yee shall not eat >of< etc so then as they were equall partners in the Power that God first gave them so were they equally concernd in the Command and in the Penalty for the breach of it, so I find the 10 Commandments afterward given by <Moses> God to Moses for the people, are given in the singular number, Thou shalt; yet there God commands a man and his Wife equally, they being one as appears by the 4th Command, Thou and Thy Son and thy Daughter; not thou and thy wife, or thou and thy husband?

By the Devils assaulting Eve and not Adam, it seems clear to me that she had the most high and strong soul, and so hardest to be overcome else would the Devil (the subtlest of three) have fallen upon Adam, and not have left Adam the stronger to have been tempted by Eve the weaker, the interests [f. 51v] of each others affections being (no doubt) of equall prevailence, Eve being as ready to have been perswaded by Adam, As Adam was by Eve.

But unhappy were those her better parts, and that she was the first in the transgression, for she being first in Sin, was in some respect higher in the punishment though I shall prove man and Woman more equall after the fall, then is beleived and practised.

⁵²⁴ 'Sheshan', 1 Chronicles 2. 34. (possibly Whitehall mistranscribed More's reference).

Eve being first tempted to sin, and perswading her husband, Gods just hand of punishment (who is ever most just) took the transgressours to task, according to their order in offending, first the serpent, then the Woman, then the Man.

Gen 3.15 The seed of the Woman shall bruise the serpents head, from whence I observe, that before the Woman had her Sentence of Sorrow, she hath a promise (the greatest that was ever made to mankind) to support her, where I cannot but take notice of the high and unparalel Honour that God hath done to Woman above men: that Christ God-man should be born of a Woman without a man, Christ having no mans flesh.

Gen 3.16 Then comes Eves Sentence of Sorrow (though not till the Support to bear her up) I will greatly multiply thy sorrows in conception, in sorrow shall thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy Husband and he shall rule over thee: [f. 52r] which words do shew something of a subjection to her husband after the fall, tho not much, for I find the sence of these words mistaken by most readers, they being the very same in the Originall, and are rendred in the very words in our Bibles; which God said to Cain when God saw Cains countenance fallen at his Brothers being better accepted than he. God comes to him as it were to expostulate the case with Cain, if thou dost well shalt thou not be accepted, and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt Rule over him,⁵²⁵ which are the very same words that God said to the Woman, so that I make it (at most) but a superiority of Eldership, which God seems to tell Cain was his due, if he did well.

So then tho there were no superiority in Adam before the fall by being made first, yet after the fall because the Woman first sind she lost that perfect equality.

1 Cor. 11 Therefore the Apostle (after the fall) argues a difference between man and woman from his being first made.

v7 The Man is the glory of God, and the Woman the glory of the man, which indeed is a syllogysticall proof that the woman is the glory of God.

Man is the Glory of God

The Woman of the Man

Ergo The Woman is the Glory of God.

⁵²⁵ Genesis 4. 7: 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.' Marginal reference to v16, likely an error ('And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.')

Gen [f. 52v] Wee find indeed after the fall that when the thoughts of men grew altogether evil,⁵²⁶ they
6. v5 found out many inventions, as to take many Wives, and to abuse them for which hardness of their
Mar. 10 hearts Moses was forct to write them bills of divorce so to part them,⁵²⁷ but our saviour saith from
the beginning it was not soe: I say we do find that the most wicked thus sind yet the good men and
Prov 31. 11 their Wives ruled equally. Which is plain in the whole story of the Shunamite⁵²⁸ and divers others
16 that were holy, and Solomons Mother tells us, the good wife considereth a feild and buyeth it etc.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good, and we read Luke 8. v3 that the beleeving Women
(when their husbands were alive) ministred to Christ of their substances, the holy Ghost calling it
theirs as well as their husbands, nor surely would Christ have taken it, had it not been their right to
have disposed of it.

v3 And Joanne the Wife of Chuza Herods steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered to
him of their substance.

Last of all God comes to Adam, and to make his curse the Greater, curseth the ground with
barrenness, that hereby he with the harder labour should make it bear fruit, or else he must have
none [f. 53r] In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread,⁵²⁹ which reacheth to all men, plainly
shewing it their duty in some calling or employment that they ought to labour, whereby to provide
for their family, and is as really their duty, as it is the Womans to bear children, he being worse than
Cor. an Infidell that provideth not for his family.⁵³⁰ He in the Masculine Gender, which cannot include the
Woman.

Well then we find after the fall, the works different that God hath laid out for men and Women,
neither have cause to brag, nor I am sure to oppress each other, by adding that to either which I am
sure God never intended, but to help and each <ease> each others burdens: Therefore are they
called Yokefellows from a Yoke of Oxen drawing equally through the cloddy troubles of this life. The
man carefully providing a maintenance for his Wife and family the best he can leaving no Lawfull
way untried, and with all tender affections comfort and cherish his wife. And the wife on the other
part with all love and affection to her husband patiently submitt to the decree of God In her

⁵²⁶ Genesis 6. 5: 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'

⁵²⁷ Mark 10. 4: 'And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away.'

⁵²⁸ 2 Kings 4. 1-38.

⁵²⁹ Genesis 3. 19: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'

⁵³⁰ 1 Timothy 5. 8: 'But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'

sorrowful childbearing, and frugally use the estate her husband so carefully gets, they both endeavouring the promotion of Gods Glory and their own [f. 53v] salvation, forsaking salvation, forsaking all other Persons and Interests. This I conceive is their whole duty.

And here I cannot but take notice of the Practice of men in our time, who make it their business to raise themselves by estates with Wives, which seems to cross the command and curse of God laid on fallen man: whereas if men while they are young would take half the pains and Industry in lawfull callings as they do betray women (and children sometimes) to be their Wives, they would find it thrive better then now it doth: And sure our Laws are cruel to Women in this case (as many others more than in other countrys) it being lawfull in England for a girle of 12 years of age to marry, thereby giving her husband all her estate, it being often very considerable, none can beleive any one marrys that child but for her Estate, nor can any Reason be given for that Law, but to empower the Man and enslave the Woman.

To return to our happy man and wife each doing their duty, which is the true honourable mariage this is the emblem of Christ and his Church, for whom he laid down his life. Christ hath but one wife, one spouse, which leads me to take notice of Polygamy:

[f. 54r] Marriage is the indivisible conjunction of one man and woman onely, God created one man and one woman, And we find our Saviour tells his descpiles, therefore must a man cleave to his wife, and they twaine shall be one flesh,⁵³¹ not they 3 or they 4. And in this Christ makes no new Law, but revives the first made by God, Poligamy doubtless was a Sin in the Patriarchs yet not a known sin, because we do not read of their particular repentance for it. The World wanted replenishing, besides their great desire that the Messias might descend on their Line.

Lamech was the first that so sind,⁵³² Abram the first holy man, but sure in Abram it was Sarahs fault tho her end was good, for she knowing the promise was made to Abram, considered not that tho the promise was made to Abram alone, that he then having a wife, it could not be fulfil'd but by being her Sonn too, the Command and the promises (as I proved before) being made to one, includes both. I say Sarah knowing the promise not the full meaning of God in it, thought that if <Adam> Abram had a Son it was enough, so after she had waited till she was past children herself she

⁵³¹ Matthew 19. 5.

⁵³² Genesis 4. 19: 'And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.'

propounds her maid: but this would not do, it must be Sarahs and Abrams Son that must fulfill Gods promise made to Abraham.⁵³³

[f. 54v] Let us now look into the New Testament and see what that declares concerning Men and their Wives. First from our Saviour who when he was asked about this matter, makes no difference in the Power of man and wife.

And he said unto them whosoever shall put away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery

Mark 10. 12 and if a Woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another she committeth adultery; now Christ using the same words in the Womans care as in the Mans sheweth their equal power over each other, nor do we read in any of the Evangelists (who wrote of what Christ did and said) that ever Christ commanded a subjection from the wife to the Husband, or gave power to the Husband over the wife, but shewed them as much love and honourd them as high as he did men, both before he was crucified, and after he was risen he first appearing to Women etc.

1 Cor: 11 And it seems to me that women did preach the Gospell after Christs death. Saint Paul writing to the Corinthians saith every man prophesiing or preaching ought not to have his head covered, and every woman prophesiing should be covered.

<Rom 16 v.5> Indeed I find the same Apostle advises Women to be in the Churches.⁵³⁴

Rom 16 v.5 [f. 55r] When he sent his Epistles to the Romans by Phœbe he calls her his Assistant.⁵³⁵

Phil. 4. v.13 Saint Paul there speaks of the Women that laboured with him in the Gospell, whose names are in the book of life.⁵³⁶

Acts 18. We read of Priscilla that she taught the eloquent Apollos, and expounded the ways of God to him more perfectly.⁵³⁷

And Anna the Prophetess continued in the Temple prophesiing.⁵³⁸

⁵³³ Genesis 16. 1-16.

⁵³⁴ Correctly Romans 16. 5, although marginal note is crossed through.

⁵³⁵ Should be Romans 16. 1-3.

⁵³⁶ Should be Philippians 4. 3: 'And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.'

⁵³⁷ Acts 18. 26: 'And he [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.'

⁵³⁸ Luke 2: 36-38.

I confess the Apostles in their Epistles to the severall Churches leave not any argument untryed to perswade the holy Women to endeavour the promotion of the Gospell, pressing it hard on them to submit to their husbands, to that end.

The Apostle in the first of Peter cap 2 urging men to a patient bearing with, and submitting to each others, saith it was thank worthy if a man for conscience <sake> towards God endured greif, suffering wrongfully instancing in Christ who did no sin, yet when he was reviled, reviled not again etc.⁵³⁹ The Apostle goes on in the next verse (though it be divided into another Chapter so to break the sence) saith likewise the wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word they also without the word may be wonn by the conversation of the wife which word Likewise joynts the sence.

[f. 55v] So that I find the Apostle seeing more Women brought over to the faith (and I believe are more still) perswades the women (thereby to winn their husbands) to a greater subjection to them, then I find commanded by God in the old Testament, or by our Saviour in the new.

And here I cannot but take notice of our Translatours who are not contented with our Apostles advice to women which is hard enough on them, and (I doubt not) was endited by the holy Ghost, I say our Translators do render severall places falsly.

1 Cor. 12 The Apostle there perswading the beleiving husband to dwell with the unbelieving wife, saith let him not put her away: and in the next verse perswading the beleiving wife to dwell with the unbelieving husband,⁵⁴⁰ we read it let her not leave him, when the word is the same in both places in the original viz ἀφίέτω,⁵⁴¹ surely the difference of putting away or leaving is very considerable, leaving implies leaving him in possession, put away to keep possession.

The 2d Titus 5⁵⁴² and 1 Cor. 14. v34. there we read it obedience speaking to the Wives, which is there false rendered the word in the original being ὑποτάτσω⁵⁴³ not ὑπακούω,⁵⁴⁴ the first signifiing

⁵³⁹ 1 Peter 2. 19: 'For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.'

⁵⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 7. 12-13.

⁵⁴¹ Transliteration: aphietō. Strong's Concordance: 863: From apo and hiemi; to send away, leave alone, permit. <https://biblehub.com/greek/863.htm> [accessed 22 September 2022].

⁵⁴² Titus 2. 5: 'To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.'

⁵⁴³ Transliteration: hypotassó. Strong's Concordance 5293: From hupo and tassó; to place or rank under, to subject, mid. to obey. I place under, subject to; mid, pass: I submit, put myself into subjection.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/5293.htm> [accessed 22 September 2022].

⁵⁴⁴ Transliteration: hupakouó. Strong's Concordance: 5219: From hupo and akouó; to listen, attend to. I listen, hearken to, obey, answer. <https://biblehub.com/greek/5219.htm> [accessed 22 September 2022].

submission, the last obedience, the word ὑποτάτσω comes from ὑπό and τάτσω certo add ordine [f. 56r] subjicio⁵⁴⁵: that is to be a degree lower and cannot be rendred to be obedient to a Command.

The word ὑπακούω comes from ὑπό and ακούω audio to hear, and so to do what we hear is commanded us, which word the holy Ghost useth where ever this obedience is required as from children to parents, servants to masters etc. but is not any where used to wives thro out the whole bible.

Objection ὑπακούω and ὑποτάτσω will both bear a double interpretation, to obey, or to be subject, and we find them in Greek Authors so used.

I answer that the Holy Ghost God himself the first and great Author of all Languages and Tongues hath thought fit to use the word ὑπακούω wherever he requires the greater duty as in obedience to himself and his commands, and of Children to Parents, and Servants to Masters but the word ὑποτάτσω in scripture we find still used when the lesser duty is required as from the younger to the elder etc. and tho the word ὑποτάτσω be often used to wives in scripture yet it is but twice rendred obey 1 Cor. 14. 34. 2 Tit. 5⁵⁴⁶ and pray observe that in 1 Cor. where the word ὑποτάτσω they render to obey to the Wife, in the verse but one before that the same word ὑποτάτσω is rendred subject or submit speaking of the Prophets.

1 Pet. 3. [f. 56v] The Apostles there encouraging Women to an humility or submissiveness⁵⁴⁷ (still aiming at what I said before, to draw their husbands to an holyness like theirs) instancing in the holy Women of Old, as he calls them and in particular Sarah, telling them that she obeyed Abram calling him Lord, which saying of the Apostle is an hyperbolical expression he well knowing that Sarahs calling him Lord was a small sign of her obedience, Lord being Abrams title, as Sarah was Lady or Empress, being the true signification of both their names, after God had equally blest them, so that we must beleeve this expression of Saint Peter as an earnest desiring to have good Women do more than their duty (as is plain in the verses before it being thankworthy) that so they may win their husbands to the faith; nor <he> can he mean in instancing in Sarahs obedience further then what he speaks, for in a serious examination of the Story we shall find that Abram obeyed Sarah far higher then Sarah did

⁵⁴⁵ Ezell: 'to rank hierarchically in a fixed order', *Educating English Daughters*, p. 140, fn.

⁵⁴⁶ Titus 2. 5

⁵⁴⁷ 1 Peter 3. 1: 'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'

Abram, she said turn him out the bond woman and her Son, and tho the thing greived Abram, yet he did it with nothing but a bottle and a bag.⁵⁴⁸

2 Luke [f. 57r] Objection, It may be objected in Luke we read the word ὑποτάτσω and is there rendred subject, and yet spoken of Christ to his Parents, and do you not think Christ obeyed his Parents?⁵⁴⁹

Answer, yes I do beleive Christ obeyed his earthly Parents, else had he not fulfilled the whole Law, but because Christ submitted to his Parents, whom he also obeyed, must I therefore argue that a wife who must submitt must obey, arguing from the lesser to the greater here is incongruous, as for example, I am commanded to obey God, I am commanded to love God, I am also commanded to love my neighbour, shall I therefore argue, that because I am to love God and to love my neighbour, that therefore I must obey my neighbour.

Just so it is in the case of the Wife, I am commanded to obey my Parents, I am also to submit to my Parents, and I am also to submitt to my husband shall I therefore argue that because I am to submit to my Parents and to my Husband that therefore I must obey my husband?

Indeed had I been commanded to obey my husband I must have submitted, the greater would have encluded the less, but being onely to submit the less cannot include the Greater, if I can carry one hundred pound, I can carry one, but I may carry one and not one hundred.

[f. 57v] Besides the word which we read subject in Luke, speaking of Christ is the same in the Originall that is used to wives and to Wives is twice rendred obey, as if they would adventure here to stretch the sence to Wives, which they durst not do to Christ.

Pray observe that the Translacon of the Bible which was made by the Protestants in Queen Marys days was done at the city of Geneva by the most holy and laborious divines of England,⁵⁵⁰ flying to that city for Refuge, where they were labouring more then two whole year day and night to translate the Bible into English, and it was not finished in the year 1560 and afterward presented to Queen Elizabeth and was received with the approbation of her and her people, and that translation hath been printed by her and her rightfull successors above thirty times. Now this translation done thus carefully and thus approved, hath not translated the word ὑποτάτσω obedient or obey, through the whole Bible, but rendred it to wives submitt, not obey, they not finding Gods Autority for it but

⁵⁴⁸ Genesis 21. 10-14.

⁵⁴⁹ Luke 2. 51 'And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.'

⁵⁵⁰ The Geneva Bible.

our modern Writers will have the Geneva translation read with the spectacles of their marginal notes, where they make that which they render subject, to be obedient, and this onely to wives.

I shall conclude that it is the want of learning, and the same education in women, that men have, which makes them loose their right. Men always held the Parliament and enacted their own wills, without hearing [f. 58r] them speak, and then how easy it is to conclude them *<gul>* guilty. Were this errore in Parents amended in their not bringing up their Daughters learned, then I doubt not but they would as much excel men in that as they do now in Virtue. And of bad Women, of whom I know but a few, I say *Optima corrupta, pessima.*⁵⁵¹

Finis.

⁵⁵¹ The corruption of the best is the worst.

Note on the text

The transcription below is of British Library, MS Harley 3918, 'The Woman's Right Proved False' by Robert Whitehall, ff. 1r-25r.

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. Greek and Hebrew words have been rendered using modern characters. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

[f. 1r]

To the Reader

My Intention is not to tell you a long story about a cock and a bull the Meum and Tuum⁵⁵² of husbands and Wifes, or to envite you with a fair-promising preface to read the ensuing lines, nor yet to half-Proselyte your Judgments to what is written, for it may be my Reason and Pen are of far different Opinions: but onely to read my own Doom which I know will be attended with a Generall Amen, and to acquaint you with the Cause of this work.

It being an Age wherein the Art of Courtship is infinitely refined, and advanced to that perfection that every Rustick Swain will presume to accost and court a Gentlewoman with as graceful deportment, eloquent Rhetorick and fine-spun complements as the Greatest al a mode Courtier in the Primitive days <of single and unfeigned affection>: yea it being so devoted so honouring, serving, and adorning the female sex that whoever ranks them in common discourse but one degree inferiour to Goddesses or at least Angels, is ready to be dubd an impenetrable and Stupid Stoick, enrolled in the Catalogue of Clowns, and suspected as tainted with Geneva Austerity.

The very title therefore of my Book, I am confident, <therefore> will create me an army of severell Censures an hundred thousand Anathema's with bell, book, and Candle: and in the opinion of many

⁵⁵² 'The principle that a person has sole rights to his or her own property, and no rights to another's. Chiefly in the phrase *meum and tuum* n. (the distinction between) what is mine or one's own and what is yours or another's'. 'meum, n.2', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/117740 [Date accessed 22 September 2022].

merit me excommunication from the smiles, favour, and affection of all Ladies and Gentlewomen, which is a Purgatory next door to Hell itself. I know those that are not acquainted with the Author will unanimously vote him an Imperious, old, Doting Fop, one that hath been plagued with a wife he was not able to please, and therefore prompted by Revenge hath compiled this little Treatise to enthrall the most delicate Sex into foreign servitude and bondage: but to undecieve your Judgments in this particular be pleased to know the Author as [f. 1v] yet lives in Batchelours row <att> the sign of hope in the land of Love. And now I am certain I shall conjure up a thousand conjectures as well Interrogatories in your minds about it: an the generall >query< will be what motive should be so powerfull as to perswade an Amorous Batchelor to plead so strenuously for what grates so harshly on feminine ears much more on their spirits, and the readiest method to provoke them to entertain him with frowns and contempt.

To satsfie any inquisitive mind and yet make them no wiser then more before. perhaps the Author has been crost in Love and so <was> >being< acted by malice has dipt his pen in Wormwood and Gall perhaps his passion has been resented with a contrary fire which has feverd has blood and brains and made him write he knows not what himself. May>be< he is overwhelmed in a Love he dares not reveal and was minded to obviate and remove all Suspicion by palliating it with a contrary guise. may be he hath a mind to encounter against the humour of the age, to court by Ironies and discover his passion in a Masquerade. perhaps he hath an Art to rail at Women with his tongue to their faces, and in the mean time assure them with his Eyes he most passionately admires them, and that all his expressions are to be read in a contrary Dialect and are attended with a far greater tenderness of mind than all the formalities and flattering Complements of the most accomplisht Parasite or elpquent Lover. may be was onely to gratifie my own Phancy and see what I could say. perhaps he had a mind to play the fool with the rest of his Neighbours and say somewhat as well as they. perhaps was purely to provoke some ingenious feminine Pen to make a reply. perhaps was to find out the temper of a particular Gentlewoman, perhaps was all these reasons in conspiracy and perhaps more may >be< was some what you may think of which the Author never did. and so adieu my paper not permitting me to say any more.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵³ The last few lines are written closer together and the last (from 'and so') is squashed onto the end of the page.

The Womans Right proved False
 in which the True Right is
 easily discerned

Madam,

If the entire body of your Ingenious Discourse had been drawn with as apparent and legible Features of Truth, as your Argument, my Pen had never moved but in Justification of the Womans Right. I must confess the Virtue, Prudence, Ingenuity, Sweet Disposition, Meekness, Affableness etc this Constellation of Perfections, characterized with Sun-beams in some of your Sex, force me to entertain so great an Honour, Service and Respect for them, that sometimes I dispute sharply with my self and others, whether the Right Hand be theirs onely by Virtue of a Modish Complement or due uncontroulable Right. Tis one Article of my Beleif, that many Imperious Preists and Fathers in Ancient times made the Pulpit emitt a corrupt [f. 2v] and passionate Sound (especially when Women were the Subjects of their discourse) whereby the gratified Ears of their Audits have bribed their Judgments to Inconsiderate Embracing Painted Error. I scorn that Baseness of Spirit, which prompts but to the least though[t] of robbing a Woman of Her Right, that acted by a Generous Principle, I could readily grant all your Ladiships Reason and Ingenuity plead for, add some grains of Redundan[ce] to your Treatise, and increase the Number of your Arguments to fortifie your Assertion. But beleeving my Opinion is single (tho I never met with strong Reason >to< oppose it) because most preach a Contrary Doctrine, I chuse rather to abett an Ancient Faith, than introduce a New Creed. Moreover, suppose your Maxime not unsound, your Topicks most proper, your aruguing not Sophisticall, yet if any Brave Virago will enter the Feild, sound a Defiance, make the first Assault to releasd the Womens Right prisoned by Ancient Tradition, let Her fight every Inch of Ground [f. 3r] she advances, and by force of Arms deliver it out of the hands of Usurping Autority, that so regaining it by strength of Reason, they may assure the World they know how to manage it with highest Prudence: and that if the Victory after a sharp Contest be won by their hands, they may with Greatest Triumph were a Crown of Immortall Praise on their Heads: Or that if this New Generation can keep still in their Possession this Patrimony, which their Fathers took with their Sword and with their Bow, with their craft and their Cunning, and to which they are born Heirs; yet being convinced of Injustice in detaining what was got by subtle Usurpation, tho conveyed by unquestioned Succession, may Gallantly restore the Daughters of Zelophehad⁵⁵⁴ to their rightfull Inheritance to

⁵⁵⁴ Numbers 27. 7: 'The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.' See also Numbers 26. 33 and 27. 1.

their content, and their own Honour, that Women may be constraint to beleeve, Every Age grows more Generous as well as Wise. Again because your Treatise boasts of demonstrating [f. 3v] a Truth New and not commonly known, and Novelty is commonly pregnant with Errour, non[e] can be reputed blame-worthy for bringing it to the Test, weighing it in the Balance of Discretion, and propounding his objections, that these vanishing by an Additionall Light, it may shi[ne] with such Meridian Splendour, that every one that runs may read it and acknowledg it most Legitimate. These and some other Incentives not here nor now to be revealed, provoke me to resist <your exist> your Charge that so famous a Conquest may not be gained by one Single Stroke of a Womans Hand: and to play the Defendant that the Plaintiff may not carry so momentous to a Cause with a Nemine contradicente.⁵⁵⁵

[f. 4r] What Power Husbands practice over their Wifes I am an utter Alien to by experience, (having never practiced any over mine own) therefore can form my Conceptions of it onely by Reason, Observation, and Report. That some of them exceed the Bounds of their Empire, is undeniable; but where their Province terminates is rightly questionable: and He must be as famous in Metaphisicks as those 7000 Archers, who could direct an Arrow to a hairs bredth, were in the Art of Shooting, who can exactly determine this Controversy, and prescribe the Limits of the Husbands economy: for such an one must be sure to remember, its dangerous to remove Ancient Landmarks: and that when Evil Spirits have once got possession its not every Exorcist can cast them out.

That many Women are more than ready to snatch at the Reins of Government, and surrogate a Power allowed neither by the Laws of God or Nature, is so certain, that to prove it would be to suspect the Sunshine at Noon day; to whome should an Inch [f. 4v] be given they would presently take more than an Ell whose Brains being intoxicated with proud desire and ambition after Rule, were they admitted to co-equal sway in a Domestick Kingdome, would presently begin to aspire at Absolute Monarchy then to challenge an equal Authority in state, to make Laws, bear Offices, vote as Members in Parliament, and afterwards presume to sit in Moses his Chair pretending they have power to teach as well <h>as rule: and than what can we expect but to see those things which our Fathers dreaded to see, but saw not: and to hear those things which they dreaded to hear but heard not: viz to see all things post to Confusion, Princes {Men, Husbands} running on foot, Servants {Women, Wives} riding on Horseback, and to hear such Doctrines as never Heretick taught and so the last Errours and Age would be infinitely worse than all the former.

⁵⁵⁵ 'Esp. with reference to a motion carried: (with) no one speaking (or voting) against' 'nemine contradicente, adv. (and adj.).' *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/125994 [Date accessed 22 September 2022].

As for that Position you lay down as a Truth that before the Fall Man and Woman had equall Power and Autority over each others and the Creatures. I shall endeavour [f. 5r] to refute it with that contemptible Argument the order of Creation and proceed afterwards in answering your Treatise as it lies in order. The order of Creation if we respect the various species produced out of Nothing amounts not to a valid Argument for Superiority and Excellency of one thing above another, because then Bruits themselves would, and Inanimate Creatures might contend with Man for the Dignity of Nature, and so consequently for the Right of Government, than which Nothing more absurd. But as it regards the Individualls of every Kind its a like a threefold Cord not easily broken, a firm Basis on which to build the Right of Rule and Government: for doubtless those Individualls first of all formed by the Almighty and Best of beings, were the most perfect of that Kind, and therefore fitter to exercise Autority over others and who is so blind with Ignorance as not to know Adam was first formed than Eve.

That she was made out of Adam, what Reason can be imagined for it (may a License be granted to guess at the lower ends of Divine and Unsearchable Wisdome) but to let her understand [f. 5v] she was not her own, not In her own power the Mans, under his Absolute Autority as being His own Bone and Flesh. that she was made as you affirm of dust refined what Account can be alledged for it but this (viz) that Man being Lord of the entire Creation might not look on Her >as< an Animall too much Inferior to himself but might be enamoured on Her knowing she was invested with such Excellencies as rendred her worthy of his highest Estee, and most loving Embraces, which perfections she drew from Himself every Atome of whome was most precious.

You argue the equality of the Female Sex by an Induction of a Few Particular Women who arrived to no small Pitch in masculine perfections, and strengthen your Argument by two Philosophical Maxims (that we may know Women can Philosophise) viz what hath been done maybe done the other Subjects receptive of the same qualities are endowed with equall perfections and power. To this I reply

1. The last maxim is true of things considered as cloathd onely with the endowments and gifts of Nature provided they be Susceptive of the most essentiall and in the same degree but of things viewed in a [f. 6r] Politicall Sphere its most erroneous for then every one might challenge a Right to Dominion (the essentials of all men being alike perfect and alike receptive naturally tho not perhaps accidentally) and so every one would be a titular Lord, and none a real Moderatour or Governour there being none to be ruled but Bruits Insects etc a Tenent horridly Whiggish and pernicious to all

Kind of Government, Monarchicall, Aristocraticall, Democraticall, Domesticall, Paternall, Despoticall etc.

2. What hath been done may be done is true but not cogent here. Suppose Chronicles furnish us with a Deborah we must not presently style her Valiant, and arrogate Baraks due to Her out of a meer Complement, for it was Barak went down from Mount Tabor and ten thousand Men after him but no mention of her descent Judg. 4. v. 14⁵⁵⁶ and when she celebrates the Triumphant Victor with an Anthem of Praise cap 5. v. 14⁵⁵⁷ she is so just as to ascribe no part of the conquest to her self, but only rouzes herself to sing the Valour of Barak. Awake, Awake Deborah, awake, awake, utter a Song. Arise Barak and lead thy captivity captive. Tho Barak refused to goe, unless she would accompany him [f. 6v] evidences no fear or Cowardise of spirit but a Prudentiall incredulity of mind not too easily beleeving Her (as most do Women now a days) that he might discover by her Constancy or Timerousness whether she did not prompt him to destruction with Thus saith the Lord.

And tho Priscilla of whom you glory instructed Eloquent Apollos, yet Scripture records (tho you overlook it) Aquila was both Present, and President when he was tutor'd. So that the genuine consequence, from your Induction is this; If Women arrive to, any Admirable degree in any Excellencies above the needle, it must be with the conjunction, tuition, or conduct of a Man.

3. What tho some Women have arrived to such heights of Perfection as with Aristotle and Des Cartes to stand on the Mountains of Metaphisicks and Philosophy and veiw the Glories of both; with Tully and Demosthenes have Charmed the Ear with their ravishing Oratory, and with Kings and Potentates have swayed the Scepter of Government. yet have any attained to the same pitch with Men? and whence drew they these Waters? out of their own Wells? no these are to shallow, therefore Rebeckah like they bring [f. 7r] their Pitchers to the Wells the men had dug. They learnt to Philosophise, to play, the Orator, to Govern in State by viewing, reading, and observing the Actions, Works, and Politicks of Men and is this such an Argument to be doted o[n?] cannot any Fop or Novice, yea or Parrot either speak as they are taught? do not the most Mimicall Ceatures imitate some Actions of Men and must they therefore >be< presently dubd their Equals and Superiours to with a may be or I might say.

The Imposition of Names is an Appendix onely to Autority and Superiority. none is empowered to bestow them but by Virtue of these, as might easily be evinct by Argument without alledging an

⁵⁵⁶ Judges 4. 14: 'And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.'

⁵⁵⁷ Should be Judges 5. 12: 'Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.'

Assembly of Divines and Commentators to justifie it. And yet behold Feminine insinuation to enfringe the strength thereof, feminine evasion to escape the dint of its force, and feminine Craft to wrest Womens equality with men from that, which most certainly proves their subjection and Inferiority? hath any man a rightfull Liberty to impose any Name whatever on any thing but by virtue of his Right to it, or dominion over it?

[f. 7v] Hence the Supream Lord of Heaven and Earth named man (after he had created him) with his own lips, his being under the Dominion of none but Him who is God over all: and after he had substituted Adam his Vicegerent⁵⁵⁸; made him Prince of the Lower <of the> Creation, enstamped on Him the Marks of Royalty arrayed him with Robes of Majesty, placed the Crown on his head the Scepter in his hand, and subjected all things under his Feet Gen. 1. Then and not till then Gen. 2. he presents all Creation before Him to receive their Names from him their Lord and Owner, to signifie his Dominion over them, their Subjection and obligation to pay that Tributes of Homage and Obedience to him. Hence when God had created the Mother of all Living he brings Her also to Adam her Earthly Lord to pay her Subjection to him, and acknowledge his Dominion over herself, by receiving Her Name from his mouth that he might be Supream Monarch next under Him who subjected all things and all Women in Eve to him viz Man, who discerning some Rays of more than common Excellency about her presently knew his own Bone and Flesh and therefore called her <[נָאִשָּׁה]> Isha⁵⁵⁹ Woman because {נָאִישׁ}⁵⁶⁰ of Man. No question but Adam was a little sur- [f. 8r] prised at first with the lustre of her Beauty, and the Endowments of her mind visible in the Liveliness of her Air, but as soon as he seriously considered this amiable Object, he found it was but a reflexion or rather a Particle {נָאִישׁ} somewhat of Man, which leads me to the Refutation of your next proof, onely I must first answer that about Eves naming her Children urged to enervate this Reason, tho it doth nothing less. For if we consult the History of the best Historian as well as Meekest of men, and do but open our First Parents, ere Mankind began to multiply, the first born where of Eve <called> Called Cain, and his younger Brother Seth, Significant Names indeed but signifie nothing to the matter in hand: for she having overwhelmed all the Sons of Adam in a Gulf of misery, it comports best with Reason, Scripture, and the Analogy of faith to give this ensuing Account why Eve not Adam named these their mentioned children: viz God and Adam permitted her this priviledge, that men in future Generations might acknowledge a filial & obedience [f. 8v] to their

⁵⁵⁸ Ezell notes that Vicegerent 'was most commonly used to describe rulers and magistrates as representatives of God.' *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 210, fn.

⁵⁵⁹ Transliteration: ishshah. Strong's Hebrew: 802. 'Woman, wife, female.'

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/802.htm> [accessed 22 September 2022].

⁵⁶⁰ Transliteration: ish. Strong's Hebrew: 376. 'man'. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/376.htm> [accessed 22 September 2022].

Mothers, and not (being exasperated at her folly and indiscretion in listening to the Fathers of lies) renounce their duty to them, but that notwithstanding she was the Prime Cause of their Ruine, they should continue the Reverence, Honour, Duty, and Affection of children, and that Mothers might have a right to and Power to maintain their maternall Authority: which Right and Power were granted to eve (and all Women in her) by God and Adam which Licence the Imposition of Names was a Witness of, that she might not be upbraided as a Usurpress, and a token of due Subordination, Homage, and obedience in those that received them, so that her giving Names argues superiority and Authority as well as Adams, onely with this difference, His was more extensive and absolute, Hers can be interpreted onely of Maternall, for to introduce any other Species would be >to< make the text speak in a Paraphrase words but one degree better than non-sence or very insignificant from hence may probably arise the Custom of Womens changing their Names, when they enter into a Matrimoniall state, and receiving their Husbands, acknowledging thereby they disclaim [f. 9r] all Power over themselves, freely resign themselves up to the pleasure of their Husbands, to be governed by them, be at their dispose, and to conform entirely to their Wills; they having nothing now they can properly stile their own, no not so much as themselves, who are known by no other names than that of their husbands.

As for Womens inheriting Land in sacred Writt its argumentative force is very weak, it being a dispensation peculiar to the Jewish Nation, which as it received numerous commands oblidging none but the 12 Tribes of Israel and their Proselites, so they were honoured with a train of eminent Priveledges which none could challenge a Right to but themselves; among the number of which This is to be enrolled: now as many of their Precepts were not extensive as the Civil Law in their obligations but concerned the Jews onely embodied into a People, this with other rituall Institutions, Ceremonies, and Canons purely Judaick is fallen asleep ever since the abolition and death of the Old Mosaick Law, wherein many things may be imitated tho they bind not, now are not Women very ambitious, yea do they not mightily long after Authority, who conjure up [f. 9v] Aged Moses buried many Centuries agoe and make him like well fee'd Baristers or rather Common Barretors stretch the sence of his own Injunctions, and deduce such conclusions from his own <Principles> statutes which the learnedst Civilian or acutest Logician could never have imagined? What Artists in Sophistry but those that are next to the serpent in subtilty would ever have attempted to deceive men into a belief of Womens equality with themselves, because the 5 Politick or Wise Sisters in Numbers⁵⁶¹ pleaded earnestly for an Inheritance and co-habitation with the men and obtained it to their great

⁵⁶¹ The Daughters of Zelophehad. Numbers 26. 33: 'And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.'

Joy and Satisfaction being married presently into the Families of the Sons of Manasseh. And now I less wonder than ever why Women plead so ardently for inheritances for viewing Critically the story of Zelophehads Daughters I find they do it only to hasten their ripeness for felicity, and necessitate themselves to do what their inclinations prompt them to, and what many of them passionately desire to do viz marry for its said expressly every daughter that hath an inheritance shall be a wife. Moreover these Daughters of Zelophehad obtained inheritances not for their own sakes but the Mens. *<an> I would >not* therefore be thought to plead against their Inheritances or Portions, but only against [f. 10r] the equality of Power and Authority they would extort from them.

Your next Argument is formd out of that text Gen. 2. 22. Thus Eve was made of Adams Rib, not his head, nor foot, but middle, His equal and meet helper.

Here I cannot but observe that Equall is apocryphall and not Authentick, not found in the Originall or Translation and therefore may justly be rejected as fictitious. Neither can Reason conclude (tho Feminine subtilty may) because Woman was ordained a Meet help therfore a Meet Helper. Surely Logick is too strong for Feminine brains or else they would not thus conclude with Additions and Substractions at their pleasure, with an Inference no nearer allied to the premises than East to West or black to white: as if Help and Helper were terms synonymous when any impartiall Eye, that looks not thro a deceitfull Optick, may see a vast disparity between the one and the other; for who knows not that Help is far inferiour to an Helper. She was not made of his Head, nothing more certain, and therefore nothing more [f. 10v] presumptive than for a Crooked Rib to pretend equality to an Intelligent Head. nor of his Foot that she might not be so low in his Esteem, nor treated with such rigour as the bruits. But of his Rib, that part of Man under his Arm intimating as he should protect and defend her from Evil and Dangers, so He should keep her in due Obedience to him. But Middle. This is ushered in Hercules like for what Reason I cannot imagine unless to tell the World Women love the Middle of a Man with a passionate and Superlative Affection.

As for the Commandments enforced in the singular number (thou), its not argumentative of any thing, but what weakens the weaker Vessel, Man and Wife being both one flesh, and that all the Husbands to, in a more eminent way than children are Parents: and it being the universall Suffrage of all nations the masculine Gender is more worthy than the feminine, there was no necessity the Precept should run in the Plural it being without all Controversy the less is included in the Greater.

[f. 11r] As for the Devils assaulting Eve first because she had the most high and strong Soul. had a Man reasoned on this manner he would certainly have been ranked among the Generation of Fools.

I ever imagined Women to be better Politicians than to think the Subtlelest of Creatures would set upon the most Sagacious and Reasonable Being to foil the weakest and most indiscreet. Certainly the old Deceiver was a better Master of Arts then So, better skild in Politicks than to betray so little Craft in such >a< Grand Plot and design. and the Confirmation is as weak as the Position is false, for Suppose (at least for disputation sake) Eve not to perspicacious and acute as Adam, certainly the Wisest and most probably effectuall Method hath been for Satan first to allure the Woman by his Wiles as being Confident Adam, tho he might have suspected the Serpents Oratory, yet he could never have imagined Guile, deceit, and a Snare in the perswasions of his Own Bone and Flesh.

[f. 11v] As for our Saviours being born of a Woman, it was an unparalel Honour to the Woman, that the Son of God should lodge in her Womb, and be teemed out into the World by her. but Where was the paralel Honour to Woman more then Man? was in taking the nature common to both? or in being conceived in and born of Her? if this latter (for former it cannot be) how could it be otherwise when its impossible for men to bring faith? Supposing then the decree and Promise of a Messiah to be born, He must be born of a Woman or both must be frustrated. Now if this hypothetick or conditionate necessity diminishes not somewhat of the Honour that redounds to Women <by> more then Men, by our Saviours being born of a Woman, in opposition to being born of a Man let the Woman judge? Moreover its but just and rationall that she, who travailed with and brought forth our Ruine, should travel with and bring forth the Remedy of our Salvation, the equity of which still obscures their Glory in this behalf, not to urge that Woman being the Mother of the former should suppress their insulting again and over the Men because Woman was the Mother of the latter.

[f. 12r] That our Saviour had no Mans flesh but Womans is a proof as able to confirm what its brought for as parched Flax is to resist devouring Flames to take away that Honour Women would extort from this by considering the Ordination of Heaven about his Extraordinary Birth, that he might be free from Originall Guilt in the utmost latitude of it, would be to wade into the Depths of Divinity and to spend a great deal of Time, Strength, & Study in pursuing, catching, and overcoming a fly or a Moth, which who would not vote most ridiculous? I might rather urge the Super abundant Excellency of a Man, because our Saviour was a Man & not a Woman, then Women might contend for an equality with Men because our Saviour was born of the Female not the Male Sex: I say I might rather press this especially if we consider the Womans flesh, which our Saviours Body was made of,

was first converted, rarified, and Exalld into mans flesh, before it could be meet for that Famous Design for which it was assumed, and was capable of being exalted to Honour and Dignity above all the Angels in Heaven.

[f. 12v] Thy desire to thy Husband. your Pen assures us from these words that Husbands since the Fall have onely the Superiority of Eldership. Are the Men then onely fallen and not the Woman? To give this sence (viz a Superiority of Eldership) of the words would seem in a Paraphrase most ridiculous. Her desire toward her husband: this is a Curse from the Almighty upon her, therefore to be too critall in comparing the Phrase with the like expression used concerning Abel His desire shall be towards thee, would make us beleeve that Abel was curst for offering a better Sacrifice than Cain. Strange Divinity indeed! or that Infinite Wisdom spake Words without sence q.d. Abels desire shall be towards Cain i.e. Cain shall be the Elder Brother because he was first made, and Woman the younger because made after him. Is the Anathema on the Woman soe light? Let not Wives think to escape the Curse of Heaven by evading their Alleigance to their Husbands. To inspect the words therefore a little more narrowly. Her desire towards her Husband if by it be meant legitimate desire its no Curse. if exorbitant lust after him, [f. 13r] your exposition is nothing to the text if it denotes Inferiority (as you concede) either Husbands must be all Ruling (tho perhaps some of them not sufficiently gifted) Elders whose discipline is severest of all or it must be the subjection of subjects to Magistrates, especially if what God hath joined together we do not put asunder but take in the immediate consequent clause, and He shall rule over thee. The Hebrew word (מַשָּׁל mashal)⁵⁶² signifies not a Superiority by way of Eldership, but by way of Proper and formal Dominion and Government strictly taken, even such as Kings exercise over their Subjects in which sence the word is frequently used as Dut: 15. 6⁵⁶³ there God promiseth Israel he should reign over many nations, but they should not reign over him. The same word is used by Moses in both places, translated there Rule in this place Reign the more proper signification of the two, so that should we be critall to argue from the signifiancy of words and their use, its such a ruling a Husband should exercise over his <Subjects> Wife, as equals the Dominion and Reign of a King over his Subjects, which should it be practised here in England the Women [f. 13v] many of them would have their Proper Right as some have in other Climates as Spain etc. and if this be the Dominion here meant (which is most probable because the word is so often used in this sence) the inferior specified in the precedent words must

⁵⁶² Transliteration: mashal. Strong's Hebrew: 4910. 'To rule, have dominion, reign.'

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4910.htm> [Date accessed: 22 September 2022].

⁵⁶³ Deuteronomy 15. 6: 'For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.'

be correspondent and not an Idle notion of Eldership invented by a Spirit tainted with Independency and affecting a Grandeur more than is allowed or becomes it. And now is the Subordination of Wives to husbands so small and Inconsiderable? What ever perfect equality might be imagined in Paradise, since their banishment thence there is Proper Subjection and obedience due from the Woman to the Man.

Now to compare your Logick and the Apostles 1 Cor. 11 v.7.⁵⁶⁴ You assert the Apostles argument is a Sylogisticall proof that the Woman is the glory of God and you mould it after this form.

Man is the Glory of God
The woman is the Glory of Man
Ergo The Woman is the Glory of God.

which is no true Syllogism but a sophism where in are four terms the Subject of the Major [f. 14r] changing its case in the Predicate of the Minor and so altering the Sense, for its one thing to be a Man and another thing to be but the Glory of a man, and one excels the other as much as a Prince excels his Subjects who are the Glory of a Prince. To supersede your Syllogism and come to the Apostles reasoning. Paul about to prove Man should pray or prophesie with his >head< uncovered, Woman with hers covered, proceeds on this Medium Mans being the Glory of God, Woman the Glory of the Man now if the Apostle proves onely that Woman is the Glory of God, why must man Pray with his head uncovered because the Glory of God, & woman with her head covered because the Glory of God. Surely a Man, a Man instructed at the feet of Gamaliel, an Apostle, an inspired Apostle never syllogised in this Manner,

Man is the Glory of God
Woman of the Man
Ergo Woman is the Glory of God

Ergo one must pray covered the other uncovered because both are the Glory of God. Had the Apostles Pen been too nimble for his dictating understanding and wrote Man for God, surely upon a reflex view thereof he would have corrected so considerable an Error. [f. 14v] Let us substitute your words in the room of the Apostles and take a prospect of the Sence. Man indeed ought to cover his head for as much as he is the Glory of God but Woman is the Glory of God. Arguing so profoundly Rationall that the sence and strength of it is past finding out.

⁵⁶⁴ 1 Corinthians 11. 7: 'For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.'

That some had many Wives and the most wicked thus erred is to plain a truth to be excepted aga[inst] yet that Good men and their Wives ruled equally is an assertion staggering for want of a proof tho Good men might wink at the assigning ambition of such Wives, yet that such Wives should remain Good who affected an Equally with their heads Lords and Husbands is a Paradox I cannot understand: For a Proud Imperious Spirit, where Pride is the predominant Humour the very complex on as it were of the Soul, is certainly as many miles distant from the true denomination of good, as an openly Profane and Debaucht, notwithstanding many that creep into Houses, and many **Silly** Women their Captives are of a different Opinion.

[f. 15r] That believing Women ministred to Christ of their Substances, and because the Holy Ghost stiles it their substances, therefore there is equall Autority between Wives and their Husbands this is your next Argument.

But who ever seriously meditates these following particulars will be inductd to give a Bill of Divorce to this Sentiment and opinion.

1. To abridge them of all Power and Autority and that over small matters is to deal too rigidly with the Weaker vessels, and that which ought not to be done, least they be swallowed up with too much greif.
2. That their Power is co-extensive with their Husbands is as false as the other is severe as if Subjects who are Magistrates because they have a Right by the Laws of Nature to govern their families which are under the Power and Dominion of the King, and another derived Power from their Prince the Fountain of Autority to the lower Administrations of Publick Justice, should pretend an equality in the Throne, and plead for as firm a Title to the Scepter as the Hand that holds it. What is this but to affect the Regalia, Treason and Rebellion in the highest degree? and what is it but a spice of that Crime which is as the Sin [f. 15v] of Witchcraft, when Women because they have a subordinate and Inferiour Power over many things imagine therefore, & plead for a Co-ordinate and collaterall over all things.
3. Its clear they have some kind of Dominion over their family, Servants, Goods etc but its by virtue of their Husbands, as Inferiour Magistrates have a derived Power from the Supream, by virtue of which they consult not always with them in their acting, tho they are obliged not to counter-act their Placita's and Decrees, and may be summond to an account for all their good and mal-administrations.

4. Tis as clear from what hath been already said that the Power of a Wife is limited and circumscribed by the Autority of the husband her Lord and King, so that tho she enjoys a derived and communicated Power from him (which many times she abuseth) yet His Empire is far larger then her Province and ever in the Throne He is or at least should be Greater than she.

5. Therefore to infer because Women by Custom and an act of Kind Indulgence from their Husbands have Power and liberty to order household affairs and dispose of some small matters without the [f. 16r] Pre-knowledge of their husbands, and that by Virtue of their License empowering them thus to act I say, therefore to conclude they are as absolute as their Husbands (unless it be in the Kitchin) at first sight differs so much from a rationall conclusion, that great Violence must be offered to the premises to make them speak in a <Great> >strange< Language to gratifie an itching Humour after the domestick Crown and Scepter.

6. Our Saviour and the Apostles well understood what they did when they received their Administrations, and knew that either an explicit or implicit Leave from their Husbands did legitimate their donations and communications.

7. and lastly some of them its very probable were unmarried and Widows, and then the Prime & ultimate Right of Possession >was< in their own hands others its undeniable were married , but who knows whether their kind and Indulgent Husbands did not onely provide things necessary and Decent for them but allow them over and above a Competency to dispose of at their own Pleasure, I say who knows whether it was not thus, and that then they ministred to Christ and his Apostles of this their substance by ungainsayed tho you see Derivative Right.

[f. 16v] Now let any unbyassed Judgment speak whether there be such argumentative force in that little Pronoun their, provided they put not on Old Wifes Spectacles which are of the nature of Magnifiing glasses to help them in discerning it. Or whether Weakest Vessels had not much better rely on their Husbands Good nature, and be content with their allotment, than to lean on so short and broken a staff for Equality.

As for Adams curse I cant apprehend how the Woman can suck so great a blessing thence He was doomd to hard toil and labour to eat the bread of carefulness got by the sweat of his brows : the Woman was sentenct to subjection to her husband, to sharp agonies in child bearing which sorrow was alleviated by a gracious unexpected promise: will this prove a parity? what tho neither have cause to boast, brag or oppress each other? Hath the Woman therefore any Reason to pretend to an equality.

[f. 17r] To infringe your Argument from that to pick Yokefellows I have these particulars to appose.

1. Its Metaphoricall therefore feeble and infirm for if Metaphore be leaned on too much they will prove so heavy that Woe indeed will be to the female Sex, and Matrimony will be as intollerable to them as it is pleasant.

2. Its a Rustick expression and savours too much of the clownishness of a Plow-jogger.⁵⁶⁵

3. Its of malignant importance if we strain the first part of the word Yoke as you do the latter Fellow and seems to intimate a Matrimoniall state is a state of Bondage.

4. It's a false Reddition of the Authentick Copy for σύζυγος⁵⁶⁶ signifies onely one joined or coupled with another, not a Yoke Fellow especially if by fellow be meant Equal for many things may be coupled together which are neither fellows much less Equalls and why then should it import an Equall in this Place? what reason can be produced but feminine Will? It must be so because they will have it so.

Sic Volo, sic Jubeo, stat pro Ratione Voluntas.⁵⁶⁷

As you cannot but take notice of the practice of men on our times, who make it their business to raise themselves by estates with Wives. So I cannot pass by your [f. 17v] observation without some small advertency. I cannot but commend those that seek to advance themselves this method: for seeing you except the Woman from work, and affirm the Man onely was doomd to service and sweat, She onely to pleasure and to bring forth the fruit thereof with a little Sorrow; and seeing the Apostle expressly saith (and I know you will interpret it onely of Men) if any would not work not ther should he eat: moreover because you press men with such zeal and Importunity to industry and diligence in their respective Callings: is it equitable if Woman should eat, drink, and devour the fruit of the husbands pains, and bring nothing with her for a Compensation? must the Man love her, cherish her, defend her, maintain her (and that Gentilely to or all the fat is in the fire) work for her, sweat for her and all for her Person without a Portion? For a Man to make a Smithfield Bargain, and aim principally at Riches argues gross avarice and meanness of soul, so to be regardless of her fortune while he dotes on her Beauty and endowments evidences puerile fondness not rational and Heroick

⁵⁶⁵ Derogatory term for ploughman. 'plough-jogger | plow-jogger, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/145965 [Date accessed 22 September 2022].

⁵⁶⁶ Transliteration: suzugos. Strong's Greek: 4805. 'A yokefellow' <https://biblehub.com/greek/4805.htm> [accessed 22 September 2022].

⁵⁶⁷ "Thus I will, thus I order, my will stands in place of my reason." Juvenal, *Satire* 6, "The Ways of Women" Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 219, fn.

affection, and >may< cause the Woman justly to suspect the weakness of such an ones Intellectuals: yea I could argue and I think prove to, it reflects an high affront, and pours [f.18r] great contempt on the Person courted and seemingly adored. I will be more Loyall than to repine at any Laws of Authority, and I should wonder you murmur (did not I know you and a Woman) at that Law that makes it Lawfull (to use your own words) for a girl of 12 years old to marry, when I dare be confident there is not one Woman in a thousand but highly applaud and approve of that deces of the higher Powers, and would miserably repine at the repeal of so gratefull an Act. yea I believe should a Parliament of Women be Assembled they would be so far from nullifying it, that in the first place they would call for the Statute Book, and for twelve write down Seven or eight.

Your next plea for equal Autority is grounded on Mark 10 where our Saviour speaking of Divorce saith, if a Man putteth away his Wife etc, and if a Woman putteth away her husband etc where because our Saviour useth the same word you argue the Same Autority belongs to both. Here I might quarrel with the Translators as you do else where. to put away seems to argue Autority but the original word ἀπολύσῃ⁵⁶⁸ the word of our Saviour [f. 18v] doth not it signifies no more that to loose from; so that the sense is if a man shall loose his wife from her conjugall obligations i.e. signifie to her he will no longer discharge the office of a Husband to her, and expects no more the obedience or submission of a Wife from her; or if a Woman shall loose her Husband from his conjugall obligation i.e. signifie to Him she will no longer yeild the Obedience of a Wife to Him, & expects not he should perform the Office of a Husband to Her, then He or she that thus loosen the other if they were married to another committed adultery. and what doth this amount to? will you say because a Master may signifie to his servant he shall no longer be his Servant, and the Servant again may signifie to his Master he shall no longer be his Master, I say will you therefore affirm they are equal? further Consider this was a dispensation granted to the Israelites onely, and that both Israelitish Husbands and Wives not to equal them or empower them alike, but for the mutuall quiet of their lives onely, as is apparent to our Saviour v.5. where saith he for the hardness of your heart, he {viz Moses} wrote [f. 19r] unto you {viz the Jews so called} this precept. The Jews were a kind of a Morose and churlish people (I speak in respect of both Sexes of them) very rebellious and frequently murmuring against Heaven and therefore probably not very oblidging and courteous towards one another, so that for the hardness of their hearts viz their cruel savage and morose dispositions, prone heinously to resent final offences, and very averse to forget the least injuries till Revenge was gratified; now that they might not embitter one anothers lives by this hardness of their hearts but

⁵⁶⁸ Transliteration: apoluó. Strong's Greek: 630. 'To set free, release. I release, let go, send away, divorce, am rid; mid: I depart.' <https://biblehub.com/greek/630.htm> [Date accessed: 22 September 2022].

might live comfortably, it was permitted them in some cases to loose the bonds of Wedlock by which they were bound, and to oblige themselves with new ones, that their lives might not be filled with bitterness and vexation. And will you argue a Generall Equality of Husbands & Wifes Men and Women from an equall Indulgence granted to a particular People?

To proceed if Christ himself did not command Wives to be subject to their Husbands, yet if he Authorised his Apostles to do it, it binds with equall force and Autority.

[f. 19v] You say it seems to you that Women did preach the Gospell after Christs death. Did not I <find> tell you you would pretent to teach as well as to rule must we have now a >New< Generation (I had almost said of Vipers) of Gifted Sisters to be meet helps to their Gifted Brethren. To defend which you might have alledged 1 Tim c.2 v10.11.⁵⁶⁹ Let the Woman learn with All subjection. But I suffer not a Woman to teach or usurp Autority over the man or as it may be read to usurp the Autority of the man. I say you might have as well produced this for a proof as made our Sister Phoebe Mount the Pulpit and turn Evangelist; for you to presently instance in Phoebe as an Assistant to Paul whereas had you been Criticall here as about Obey, you would never have put our Sister Phoebe thus the blush. Rom. 16 v. 1. 2.⁵⁷⁰ I commend etc and that in whatsoever business she hath need of you, for she hath been (not an Assistant, But) a προστάτος⁵⁷¹ i.e. one that courteously received & entertained many Christians and myself also. In the next place you acquaint us Paul speaks of Women that laboured with him in the Gospell Phil. 4.3.⁵⁷² You are for critisizing, and how much advantage do the Women gain by a narrow inspection into mens words? once more let [f. 20r] us see what a tribe of goodly She Preachers we have crowded into one verse, for it runs in the Plurall number Women. I entreat thee also true Yokefellow help those Women which laboured with me in the Gospell, συνήλθησάν⁵⁷³ μοι quæ mihi collectatæ sunt, which strove together against me in the Gospell (like those Women that did persecute Paul and Barnabas) that did resist his preaching at first, but at last being converted Paul exhorts his Yokefellow to help them i.e. to strengthen, confirm,

⁵⁶⁹ 1 Timothy 2. 10-11: 'But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.'

⁵⁷⁰ Romans 16. 1-2: 'I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.'

⁵⁷¹ Transliteration: prostatis. Strong's Greek: 4368. 'A patroness, protectress. A female guardian, protector, patroness.' <https://biblehub.com/greek/4368.htm> [Date accessed: 22 September 2022]. Whitehall is referring to Romans 16. 2 'she hath been a **succourer** of many'.

⁵⁷² Philippians 4. 3: 'And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.'

⁵⁷³ This is the spelling Whitehall uses, but Strong's gives συνήθησάν, 'laboured together'. Transliteration: sunathleó. Strong's Greek: 4866. 'To strive with. I compete together with others, cooperate vigorously with.'

and comfort them; or else to succour and relieve them: or to help them to receive and entertain Christians as Phoebe did. Let not the Novelty of the interpretation offend, since you are of Athenian blood, principles, and practice delighted in hearing and spreading Tenents New and not commonly Known. Concerning Priscilla enough hath been said before. Your next Instance is Anna a Prophetess, who you say continued in the Temple prophesiing. True the Scripture stiles her Prophetess, probably the surviving Wife of some deceased Prophet for she was a Husband Widdow, but my bible mentions nothing of Prophesiing, unless you will call fasting and praying so, for thus runs the entire story in my Book Luke 2 your quoted place [f. 20v] and there was one Anna a Prophetess the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser, she was of great Age, and lived with an Husband 7 years from her Virginity, and she was a Widow of about 84 years,⁵⁷⁴ which departed not from the Temple but served God with fasting and prayers night and day, and she coming at that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all that looked for Redemption in Israel. where is Prophesiing now? is fasting and praying so? is Serving God day and night propesiing? is giving thanks propesiing? is speaking of one propesiing? then propesiing as yet is not ceast, but there are troops of Propetesses that >are< ever and anon tatling of one <an> >or< other.

<[?]>

Your Likewise is like old wifes reasoning, as near to the matter in hand as Heaven is to the Centre of the Earth. Certainly Women understand Conjunction better than division, and are more expert at the former than the latter: for if the Analysis of Peters Epistle be drawn far otherwise then it should. Your division of the 2^d & 3^d cap, at first blush de- [f.21r] monstres it was done by one that is accustomed to divide onely with a pair of scissors it being so undeniably plain, that the Apostle preaching to every one there duty exhorteth subjects cap 2. From v12 to the 18.⁵⁷⁵ quietly to obey their Magistrates: then Servants to obey their Masters and that with the most powerful Argument imaginable drawn from the meek carriage of our >Saviour< Lord of Heaven & Earth; and this from v18 inclusively to the end of the 2^d cap in the beginning of the 3^d (for the division need not be blamed) he commences a fresh Subject whering it in with a Likewise viz as subjects should submit to

⁵⁷⁴ Luke 2. 36: 'And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity.'

⁵⁷⁵ 1 Peter 2. 12-18: 'Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.'

their Masters, so (hard words, I know you will say, and who can bear them) women should Likewise submitt to their own husbands⁵⁷⁶ viz yeild the same submission which is strict and formall obedience, as shall be shewed by and by, it being the same word used concerning them all.

I cannot but wonder what strange Doctrine the Pulpits would bring forth had women power to teach, and what Government >there would be< had they Power to rule in the Church: What wresting of scripture? what perverting of texts, what subverting of Reason & Faith, [f. 21v] what Anathema's, what censures, what excommunications would there be? seeing not onely the Translators are censured by you, but the Apostle to as an Egyptian Taskmaster imposing too heavy a burthen on your tender shoulders. for you say you cannot but take notice our translators are not contented with the Apostles advise to Women, which is hard enough on them. o peevious and perverse Generation!

As for the word ἀφίέτω I will not justifie the translation of it with two severall words that seem to import two different significations, the most proper is, let him leave her, and let her leave him; concerning which enough was said about the word ἀπολύσῃ rendered put away, to cut off all hopes of all hopes of Womens mounting to an Equality by putting away their Husbands.

[f. 22r] As I draw nearer the Conclusion I encounter with a (seeming) greater force, a formidable Criticism that threatens Death and Destruction, that is flourisht out two entire Pages, and renders all Objections speechless. But they were accounted never Politick Exorcists who would conjure up a Devil <[th]> they could not lay: Therefore I highly commend you for urging your Objections no farther then you were able to Answer them. What! could you Imagine men would be baffled with such Sophistry! no, tho they cannot find out all the Cunning of Women, yet some they can and subvert it to, which shall be done in these breif particulars.

1. I grant ὑπάκούω comes from a word that signifies to hear, and so denotes obedience viz that is rational and comes by hearing, obedience that is wrought by perswasion as when one man reasons another into the performance of a duty from the equity, necessity, congruity, advantage of it etc.
2. ὑποτάτσω is a Compound and signifies certo ordine subjicio, which whether you will permitt me to render or obedience I matter not, this is the English of it, to subject or to bring things under [f. 20v] to their due order and place. Logomachy belongs not to men but Women therefore call it submission or Subjection or what else you please, it denotes that those persons that are or should be thus subject or submissive are prone to be excentricall and irregular, to run out of their place and

⁵⁷⁶ 1 Peter 3. 1: 'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'

way, therefore they should ὑποτάσσεται to be kept in subjection or order, be made not υπάκοειν to obey by perswasion (that you say the word doth not signifie) but be reduct by force (for there is no medium between these two) into their proper place & order.

3. You affirm ὑπάκούω is never spoken of the Women. what is the consequence then? they are not bound to obey? and pay that subjection which is due from the less to the greater? no but rather this they were either so senseless or stupid, that they could not hear or comprehend Reason, and be perswaded to their duty by it, or so *<selfish and w>* self-wild and perverse they would not, (either part of which Dilemma is at their service) which the Apostles knowing always (according to your affirmation) use υποτάσσω when they frame any discourse either to them or of them from hence.

[f. 23r] 4. tis clear seeing the word υποτάσσω and none else is used of them they are most propense to be irregular and run out of their way and place, therefore it behoveth their husbands ὑποτάπτεω to keep them in subjection their due order & place: which how it can be done without force and compulsion seeing they know not or will not υπάκοειν obey i.e. hearken to reason, let any evince, et erit mihi magnus Apollo. Now let the Women boast at their pleasure that they are not υπάκοειν to obey, but υποτάσσω to be subject or in submission to their Husbands.

5. You affirm the word ὑπάκούω is always used whereever the greater duty is required viz obedience, which is from the less to the greater, and υποτάσσω where the lesser duty viz submission is exacted which is the duty of the younger to the Elder.

And wives then obliged to submitt no more to their husbands than younger Bretheren are to the Elder, or younger Sisters are to their Elder Sisters? surely those that plead for such liberty of conscience must needs be great dissenters from the truth. could you imagine none but yourself had a Greek Testament? or that no eyes but your [f. 23v] own could read in it? Let any one turn to Pet. 2. and they will quickly be informed of the truth of your positive Assertion. the Apostle pressing Inferiours to their Respective duties saith cap. 2. v. 12. speaking to subjects. Submitt yourselves to every ordinance of the Lords sake. the originall word is ὑποτάγητε v18 exhorting servants to their duty saith ὑποτασσόμεαι be the subject to your Masters.⁵⁷⁷ now is it not proper and strict obedience not barely submission that is required from Servants to their Masters and Subject to their Magistrates? the affirmative is clear from your own words because required from the less *<from>* to the Greater read on then v.1. cap 3^d. Likewise the Wives ὑποτασσόμεαι be the in subjection to your own husbands to omitt laying any force on the word Likewise, which might be thus urge As subjects should submitt to their Magistrates and servants to their Masters, So viz with the same submission should Wives submitt or be subject to their husbands, which submission would they be content to

⁵⁷⁷ The forms Whitehall uses are different participles of ὑποτάσσω (hupotassó; Strong: 5293) and ὑπάκούω (hupakouó; Strong: 5219).

yeild, we would take away the Scandalous word obey, and substitute submitt: giving them leave to call it by what name they will, so they do by perform the thing. [f. 24r] I say omitting arguing from the Particle, the very word requires the same kind of subjection an equal submission, it being your own way of Reasoning to infer an equality from the same words. hence then

6. Its a necessary and undeniable consequence if Women must yeild that subjection to their Husbands that Subjects do to their Magistrates, and Servants to their Masters, then the Husband is bound in duty to Exercise a correspondent Power. I mean such Authority as Magistrates exercise over their Subjects and Masters over their Servants, which to tell in plain English would be to endanger my Eyes. Now I beleieve you have critisized to purpose and would willingly barter ὑπακοσει to obey for ὑποτανελαι as to submitt.

Your last argument is wrapt up in a Latin dress, as if you were either ashamed or afraid to pursent it in an English garb. Corrupta optima pessima which is nothing else but to tell the Women they were the Best because they are now the Worst optima consolatio! an excellent cordiall! the question is not what they were but what they are. the Devils themselves were once good. if they are [f. 24v] the worst as you tacitly concede, the best because the best are fitter to rule, tho the worst because the worst are never the fitter to submitt. surely the worst which is the superlative in the lowest degree can never pretend to equally with the best <in> the <highest de> superlative in the highest degree, unless it be in this, as the best is certainly the best, so the worst is certainly the worst. Totum concedo.

To conclude for Wives to aspire after and plead for equall Authority with their Husbands is none of the best prudence, nor none of the most plausible medium to obtain it: rather let them learn to be meek, humble, loving, affable, Courteous, not to aspire after Principality, Power, and Dominion, but to win the affection of their Husbands, which is easily engrosed by an oblidging Cariage and unfeighned kindness (unless their Fate <to> be to be wedded to churlish Nabals) and when once they have made themselves Empresses of their Husbands hearts, they may easily obtain what power, they can in reason desire, and may command as they please. so that by rendering to their husbands what is [f. 25r] their Husbands, they may gain as great an Ascendant over their Husbands themselves, and as ample and free dominion over all that is his, as they can in conscience desire. Thus both husband and wife, Man and Woman will have their due right, which is infinitely better then for one onely to the theirs.

Finis

More and Whitehall Verse Exchange

'To the no less virtuous than ingenious Mrs Mary More' by Robert Whitehall

Note on the text

The transcription below is of British Library, MS Harley 3918, 'To the no less virtuous than ingenious Mrs Mary More' by Robert Whitehall, f. 59r.⁵⁷⁸

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

To the no less Virtuous than Ingenious Mrs Mary More, upon Her sending Sir Thomas More's Picture
(of her own drawing) to the Long Gallery at the Publick Schools in Oxon.

Madam,
Your Benefaction has been such,
That few can think it is a Womans touch
Martiall epigr So to the Life was Issa drawn (the Bitch)
Lib. 1, 110⁵⁷⁹ That the beholder doubted which was which
Seldom so Rare an Artist hath there bin,
Yet every Lady knows to draw Man In.
Since then your Pencil far exceeds your⁵⁸⁰ Pen,
Let it be said I was the first of Men
Could stop in Scribbling --- know we study thrift,
And fancy this a Richer new years-Gift.
When one in Shadows, the other deals in Rime,
Painters and Poets should knock off in Time
Janus will knit both Brows too, if I trouble you
Longer, or interrupt him.

yours R: W:

⁵⁷⁸ Also: Bodleian, MS Rawls D. 912, f.196r, and a typescript of MS Rawls D. 912 is available from Nottingham, University of Nottingham, Pw V 504/2

⁵⁷⁹ Martial's Epigram, Book 1, number 109 (not 110) 'On a Pet Dog and the Painter', see below.

⁵⁸⁰ Ms Rawls D. 912 has 'our'

‘An Answer by Mrs More to the ingenious Mr Robert Whitehall’ by Mary More

Note on the text

The transcription below is of British Library, MS Harley 3918, An Answer by Mrs More to the ingenious Mr Robert Whitehall’ by Mary More, f. 60r.⁵⁸¹

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

An Answer By Mary More, To the most Ingenious Mr Robert Whitehall Fellow of Merton Colledge in Oxon: upon a Copy of verses Sent her by him on sending a Picture of her own drawing to Oxon.

Sr

Jear your Benefactress, that's but Just
And I can bear't; But why noe woman must
An Artist bee in Painting, cause you see
I'm none, make the whole Sex suffer for me,
It made me Dogged Martials Bitch to read
Besides I find his baudy steps you tread
Fellow and Batchelor, it must be soe
Hide your sixt line, sure't speaks more then you know
The Holbin Copyer yields, lets Pencils fall,

Martials, 60v⁵⁸²

Scarce knows her poet from's Originall.

* soe ordered in
a letter from
the Author⁵⁸⁵

* Three for ourselves and six for friends beside
Nine ways at once, what sir [your]⁵⁸³ muse squint eyde
Ile close them [upp]⁵⁸⁴ then, for the view I fear
May prove catching, I wish you'd do so there:
Just what I thought, Oxford I knew before
How ere take Jear for Jear from

Mary More

⁵⁸¹ Also: Bodleian, MS Rawls D. 912, f.197r, and a typescript of MS Rawls D. 912 is available from Nottingham, University of Nottingham, Pw V 504/4

⁵⁸² Book 5, Epigram 60: ‘To a Detractor’, marginal note in MS Rawls only. See below.

⁵⁸³ Addition in MS Rawls.

⁵⁸⁴ Addition in MS Rawls.

⁵⁸⁵ Marginal note in reference to lines 11-3, but unclear what this may mean.

‘A Reproof to R.W. for his late address to Mrs Mary More’ by Anon.

Note on the text

The transcription below is of University of Nottingham Special Collections, ‘A Reproof to R. W. For his late addresse to Mrs Mary More’, Pw V 504.

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Contractions and abbreviations have been silently expanded. All other editorial corrections and insertions are noted with [xx]. Authorial deletions are indicated with <xx>, authorial insertions are indicated with >xx<.

A Reproof to R: W: For his late addresse
to Mrs Mary More, upon her sending
Sr Tho: More's picture of her
owne drawing, to the
School's Gallery
x = : = : x

Stranger to euery Muse! that onely knows
The mighty art clinching in the close.
And vses in thy verses to dispence,
For want of Poetry, with want of songs.

Robin, when mother Louse thou didst disgrace,
With lines as ill as any in her face,
Wee laugh'd indeed, but could not then be vexed,
Because, thy comment was such as thy Text,
But when thou'rt so foole hardy as to chuse
A Theme, which if thou praise, thou must abuse,
Then know wee'l knit our brows too, and you'le feele
Our⁵⁸⁶ pens as sharp as other peoples steels.

⁵⁸⁶ There is no attribution for this verse, but ‘our’ suggests it may be a female author.

[Written on the same page as the above.]

“ Deare Friend!

Thy Poetry is such,
“ That all will swear it is thy touch;
“ So to the life thou’st drawne thy self,
“ That none can doubt who is the Elfe,
When once wee see thee at a pinch,
Labouring for a Pun or clinch.
Could’st thou not out of all thy reading,
By better simile prove thy breeding?
“ But to a Bitch thou must compare,
“ The work of Artist; thou call’st rare :
And shew by drawn in quille thy braine
Out weighs thy manners, not half a graine
“ Since then her Pencil far transcends
“ Thy pen, in vaine thy inke thou spends,
Endeavoring only to relate,
The symmetry, that did create;
Nor could thy witt, Rival her hand,
Tho’t ware inspir’d by her comand.
Thou couldst not say enough by quibling
“ Tho thou shouldst neuer stop in scribbling.
“ Prethee hence forward study thrift,
“ Let’s have no more such New-years gift:
Bee not so prodigal of thy Time
“ Knock of, and deal no more in Rime

If this advice thou will oppose
Lett thy next subject be thy Nose:

Martial's Epigrams

Note on text

As an aide to the above verses, the two epigrams by Martial are given as reference. They are transcribed exactly from the sources given below.

Book 1, CIX. On a Pet Dog and the Painter.

Issa is more playful than the sparrow of Catullus. Issa is more pure than the kiss of a dove. Issa is more loving than any maiden. Issa is dearer than Indian gems. The little dog Issa is the pet of Publius. If she complains, you will think she speaks. She feels both the sorrow and the gladness of her master. She lies reclined upon his neck, and sleeps, so that not a respiration is heard from her. And, however pressed, she has never sullied the coverlet with a single spot; but rouses her master with a gentle touch of her foot, and begs to be set down from the bed and relieved. Such modesty resides in this chaste little animal; she knows not the pleasures of love; nor do we find a mate worthy of so tender a damsel. That her last hour may not carry her off wholly, Publius has her limned in a picture, in which you will see an Issa so like, that not even herself is so like herself. In a word, place Issa and the picture side by side, and you will imagine either both real, or both painted.

Open source, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/martial_epigrams_book01.htm [accessed 25 June 2022]

Book 5, LX. To a Detractor.

Although you bark at me for ever and ever, and weary me with your shameless invectives, I am determined to persist in denying you that fame which you have been so long seeking, namely, that you, such as you are, may be read of in my works throughout the whole world. For why should any one know that you ever existed? You must perish unknown, wretched man; it must be so. Still there will not be wanting in this town perhaps one or two, or three or four, who may like to gnaw a dog's hide. For myself I keep my hands away from such corruption.

Snarl on; you never shall your purpose gain:
What long you seek, you still shall seek in vain,
Who aim at any, rather than no fame:
I will not, to abuse you, use your name.
It never in my writings shall be seen,
Or the world know that such a wretch hath been.
Try to make others angry when you bellow,
I scorn to meddle with a dirty fellow.

Hay.

Open source, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/martial_epigrams_book05.htm [accessed 25 June 2022]

‘Boone v Moore (1663)’

Note on the text

The transcription below is of The National Archive, ‘Boone v Moore (1663)’, C 6/21/16.

All original spelling, punctuation, contractions and abbreviations have been retained. Where a word is unclear, editorial queries have been denoted with [?]. Illegible words are denoted with [??].

This is a delicate document with a fair amount of damage, including a hole in the middle third, to the right of the page, and significant parts of the right margin missing. Folds and fading make much of the text hard to read or illegible.

Attached to the Answer is a creased and badly damaged Inventory, taken in September 1662. The headings indicate details of the following rooms, with the subtotal given:

In the Hall	£14 2s. 6d.
[In] the Deceased’s Study	£7 0s. 0d.
[In] the Greene Chamber	£20 10s. 0d.
[In the ??] Chamber	£5 2s. 0d.
In the purple Chamber	£16 15s. 0d.
[??]	£10 0s. 0d.
In the parlour	£20 0s. 0d.
In the kitchin	£3 10s. 0d.

Along with sundry other items the Inventory total is £473 19s. 2d.

Anno[?] ti[?] Don[?] 15 Fb^{ry} 1663. The joynt and severall answers of Francis Moore Gent and Mary his wife (Admix of Richard Waller) Anthony Tyther EsqE[?] and John Phipps Meret[?] foure of the Defendts to the Bill of Complainte of Thomas Boone and James Gurdon Esq^{es} Complts

The said defendts and every of them saveing & reservering to themselves now & att all times hereafter all & all manner of, advantage of a preproc[?] to the manifold [...vere]tamities[?] & insuff[...][?] in the Complts said Bill of complaint conteyned[?] For [??] & pf[?] [??] Answer[?] [??] soe much thereof as[?] anyway materially con...eth[?] them these defdts or any of them to make[?] Answerd[?] unto say Ande every[?] of them for him[?] & herself sayth And first the said Mary for herself sayth that she believes it to bee true that the said[?] Richard Waller her late husband [??] bound unto the said complts respectively in such manner and for the payment of such respective Sumes as they they said complts by their Bill have severally sett forth But hath heard that the Debt due & oweing to the complt James Gurdon was originally the debt of one Thomas Goodyear of London Merchant for ...ome[?] her[?] late husband became bound unto him the said James as a Surety but she the Defdt doth not knowe whether there was any pte⁵⁸⁷[?] of the monyes oweing unto the said Complts as aforesaid paid unto them or either of them in the Lifetime of her said – late husband But she saith that about the time in the complts Bill mentioned her said late husband died intestate After whose death she this defdt had Administracoud[?!] of her said late husbands Estate duely (as she takes it) granted to her And by vertue thereof possessed[?] herself of soe [??] of his Estate as she could comeby & that to or for the end & purpose to satisfie & pay the [j]ust debts of her said late husband as farr as the same should extend And to that interest[?] did cause all & singular the goods & chattels of her said late husband that came to her hands - custody or possession to bee appraised by Henry Griffith & Thomas Marbeland[?] citizens of London usuall & indifferent Appraisers And an Inventory thereof [j]ustly & truely to bee made (And the same Inventory comp[r?]hends[?] all her said late Husbands Estate that she can Discover except the two Debts hereafter mentioned) Which said Inventory these Defdts have here & unto annexed And pray the same may bee taken as pte[?] of their Answere In the makeing[?] of which said Inventory she this Defdt tooke greate care & was very vegernt⁵⁸⁸[?] & solicitous to have the said Appraisers putt a true & full estimate & value upon eny thing therein contained And this Defdt believes they did the same accordingly for that they have often soe told her this Defdt And believes that they will bee ready & willing & being thereunto called to bee sworne to the said Appraisal[?] as the same is

⁵⁸⁷ Pte = 'payment'

⁵⁸⁸ Vigilant?

sett downe in the said Inventory subscribed by the same Appraisers After the takeinge[?] of which said Inventory & valuacioid[?] being made of the Estate of her said late husband as aforesaid And her said late husband being indebted by Bond unto severall other[?] p[er]sons besides the complts She this Defd did cause notice to be given as well unto to the said Complts as the other Creditors[?] of her said late husband (being equall capacity[?] with the said complts in[?] referrence to the nature of their Serveitie[?] of her Condic...[?] And what estate she had come to her hands And thereupon did desire that a [j]ust & equall distribu[tion?] of the same Estate might bee made amongst them according to the propos[?] of each[?] Creditors[?] Debt Which was by them unanimously (as she [??]) accepted of And accordingly she the Defdt did cause to bee paid unto or for the severall & respective[?] p[er]sons (to whom[?] her said late Husband stood indebeted by bond) the severall Sumes hereafter mentioned (that is to say) unto Thomas Smith the Sume of Thirty one pounds & five shillings in pte of a Bond wherein[?] her said late husband stood bound to him in the penall[?] Sume of foure[?] hundred pounds Condi[ti]oned[?] for the paymt of the Sume of Two hundred fifty-seaven[?] pounds & ten shillings And to one Mary Box[?] Executrix of Henry Box Esq her late husband the Sume of Sixty two[?] pounds ten shillings in pte[?] of Bond wherein her said late husband stood bound to the said Henry Box of the penalty[?] of one Thousand pounds Conditioned[?] for the paymt of five hundred & fifteen pounds Alsoe[?] >to< one Ralph Hough[?] the Sume of fifty pounds in pte of a Bond wherein her said late husband stood bound to him in the penalty[?] of eight hundred pounds Conditioned[?] for the paym[en]t of foure hundred & twelve pounds Alsoe to one [?] Mol[?] the Sume of Twelve[?] pounds & ten shillings in pte[?] of a Bond [??] her said late husband stood bound to give[?] in the penalty[?] of two hundred pounds [?] for the[?] paymet of [?] Sume of one hundred & three pounds Alsoe to one [?] Smith[?] the[?] Sume of Twelve pounds & ten shillings in [?] of a Bond [?] her late husband stood bound to her in Two hundred pounds [?] for her payment of One hundred & three pounds Alsoe to one Philipp Gurdon for the use of his[?] Sisters[?] Anne & Amy Gurdon the Sume of Twelve pounds & ten shillings in pte[?] of a Bond to them[?] of Two hundred pounds for payment of One hundred & three pounds Alsoe to one Anne [?] Widow[?] the Sume of[?] thirty seaven pounds ten shillings in [?] of a Bond wherein[?] for said late husband stood bound to her[?] in sixe hundred pounds condiconed[?] for the payment of Three hundred & nine pounds Alsoe to one [?] [?] the Sume of Sixty two pounds in pte[?] of a Judgement by him obtained against this Defdt [?] a Bond wherein[?] her said late husband stood bound to [?] on One Thousand pounds Alsoe to one Thomas Stronge the Sume of Seaventy-five pounds for the [?] by the order of the complt Thomas Boone his Brother[?] in [?] of a Bond wherein[?] her said late husband stood bound to [?] [?] said Thomas Boone in[?] Twelve hundred pounds [?] for the payment of Sixe-hundred and eighteen pounds Alsoe to the complt[?]

James Gurdon the Sume of Thirty seaven pounds ten shillings upon a Bond of Six hundred pounds
Alsoe to one Joyce Gurdon the Sume of Six pounds five shillings on a Bond of onehundred[?] pounds
Also to the same Joyce the Sume of Twelve[?] pounds ten shillings on a Bond of One hundred &
Fifty[?] pounds Also to the same Joyce the sume of Twelve pounds & ten shillings more[?] on a Bond
of Twon hundred pounds Also to the same Joyce Gurdon the Sume of eighteen pounds fifteen
shillings more on a Bond of Two hundred & Fifty pounds Alsoe to the same Joyce Gurdon the Sume
of Twelve pounds ten shillings more on a Bond of Two hundred pounds In all [??] Bonds[?] her sayd
late husband stood bound unto her the sayd Joyce Gurdon (the Complt James Gurdons Mother) I
As[?] by >[??]< Accquittances[?] of & from the severall psons[?] before named under their hands &
Seales for the psimler[?] Sumes aforesaid[?] ready[?] to bee [??] to this honorable[?] [??] [??] being
[??] had more plainly [??] & may appeare to[?] the [??] the [??] Defdt for more Plainety[?] herein
do[?] [??][??][??] Wh[??] Sa[??] soe paid as aforesaid together with the Funeral expenses[?] of her
said late husband burial & charges of [??] of Sellers[?] of [??][??] (which by reason of some Caveats
she the Defdt was informed were [??] to obstruct her Administinge was extraordinary) doe[?]
amount [??][??] then the Sume of Foure hundred seaventy[?] three[?][??] shillings & two pence (the
Sume shall[?][??] the said Inventory being all the[?] Estate of her said late husband ([??] before [??])
that [??][??][??][??][??] hands [??] or knowledge & all that she[?] ever expects[?] will come[?] And
this Defdt dothutterly deny that she knoweth of any other Estate by[?] ther[?] reallor[?] psonall[?]
with[?] [??] Debts[?][??][??][??][??] And this Defdt doth alsoe deny[?] that she or any other for her
use or by [??] with[?] her privity[?][??] or appointment hath [??] of the said Isaac Blackwell[?] (one
of the [??] defdts in the Bill names) the Sume of Two[?] thousand six hundred pounds or any other[?]
Sume of money whatsoever But [??] that[?] if she had or shall [??] any Sume or Sumes[?] of money
of her said late husbands Estate as she hath[?][??][??][??][??] any pte[?] herself[?] [??] she will
not[?][??][??]future keepe[?] private or [??][??][??] But pay the[?] same towards the[?] [??][??][??]
of her said late husbands Debts in such[?] manner & [??][??] she shall [??] fit or bee advised to pay
the same accordinge to Law And she the[?] Defdt[?] further saith that she knoweth not of any Debt
of Sume of money that was due unto her said late Husband in [??] att[?] the time[?] of his[?] Death
saveing only the Sume of Three pounds ten shillings or thereabouts due & oweing to her said late
h[usband] by one Thomas [??] And[?] the Sume of Ten pounds or thereabouts due & owing to the
said late (Husband by one [space left for name] White (as she [??] it) of which said Debts she this
Defdt hath not heitherto received[?] one penny nor known [page damaged] ever she[?] shall receive
any in regard [?] (as she [??]) [??] poore[?] But the[?] Defdt saith that [?] it is that her said lae
husband was partner with the said Isaac Blackwell[?] And hath heard[?] doth[?] believe she[?] [page
damaged] Debts due unto[?] her said late husband & the said Isaac Blackwell in their Coop[?]ship &

trade together att the time of her late husbands Death And[?] [??] alsoe[?] believe that there were goods withe[?] custody[?] of her said late husband [page damaged] of his Death with[?] belongs & appteine unto her said late husband & the said Isaac Blackwell on their joyn Trade And knoweth that there were severall Debts [??] by them in the said joyn trade or [??] [page damaged] whereof were oweing by them[?] att the time of the Death of her said late husband unto divers[?] persons with whom[?] they Dealt for goods bought for the [??] [??] [??] [??] joyn Trade as aforesaid Where[?] Debts soe ow[?] [page damaged] & THE SAID Isaac Blackwell as aforesaid goods soe in his[?] custody att the time of his Death did (as the[?] [??] Defdt is advised) by the Law fall & belong unto the said Isaac Blackwell as Survivor of her said husband who a[?] [page damaged] & had them on the same were made use of towards the payments of their joyn Debts to the which[?] hee the said Isaac Blackwell became alsoe subject[?] & liable ([x] she is informed) by reason of the Death of her said late husband [page damaged] heard that hee or someon on his behalf or by his appointment hath given some of the creditors to whome they stood soe jointly indebted as aforesaid uppon the [x] of their said joyn not now supposes herself con..ted therein She having applyed herself solely to the payment of her Bond Debts of her said late husband wherein the sayd [x] as in the Bill is sett forth ..th [?] knows of [??] Moore for himselfe saith that hee[?] denyeth all & all manner of unlawfull[?] com[?] confederacy[?] or untrue practi[?] with any of the other Defdts [??] [??] [x] as in the Bill is [?][?][?] know of [?][?] [page damaged] the said Richard Waller in his hands or [?] the same of knows [?] is any estate of the sayd Richard Waller att the time of his Death or any S[x] [x] Summe[?] [x] [page damaged] ever export[?] or desire to have any or bel[?] that the said Richard Waller died possessed[?] of any other[?] good or [?] estate then[?] what is [?]zed in the Inventory[?] [page damaged] his[?] wife (late wife of the said Richard Waller) hath[?] sooner Amountinge[?] in [??] to the Summe of foure hundred [??] seventy[?] three pounds Nineteen shillings [??] as aforesaid [PAGE DAMAGED] or that any [??] whatsoever hath or had[?] att the time of the Death of the said Richard Waller any [page damaged] [??] & [??] [??] [?] And his[?] Defd doth alsoe deny that hee [??] Defd did ever Assigne [?] or ronn[?]ge[?] [??] the said Richard Waller [??] the [page damaged] John Palmer[??] or any [??] [??] [?] or that this[?] Defdt did ever hold or enjoy the same or was [??] [?] by [??] [?] this Defdt sayth that hee had & purchased long before the Marriage of his said Daughter to the said [Richard Waller] [?] thereof. And this Defdt doth att[?] knowledge that upon the Marriage of the said Richard Waller to the said Mary his this[?] Defdts Daughter this Defdt did [?] or agree to give the sayd Messauage with the App[?] in Marriage with his Daughter as [??] [??] should bee [??] [??] or conveyed in manner or to the ups[?] following (that is to say) to be use & behoof of the said Richard Waller for & during the T[?] of his natural Life & after his Decease to the use and behoof of the said Mary Waller for the [??] & [??] [??] [X] [??] of the [??] of the body of the

said Mary by the said Richard Wallerto bee begotten And for want of any yssue to the[?] Right [??] of this Defdt for ever or to that or like effort But this Defdt sayth these[?] reason[?] was any [??] or any other conveyance or [??] [??] [X] Defdt of the said Messuage unto or upon the said Richard Waller nor if such settlement had been made would or could it have [??] any be[?] unfitt[?] of advantage to be [?] after her decease of the said Richard Waller in regard his Estate & interest therein would [??] [x]determined And this Defdt denys that there was any other agreement or any Agreement at all in positeing[?] but only by paroll And this Defdt dith deny that hee had in his hands knowlegde[?] of the Receite[?] of any Summe or Summes of mony since [??] said Richard Wallers Death [??] [x] & apptaine to him the said Richard Waller att the time of his Death [??] or in any other manner [??] as aforesaid And this Defdt John Phipps for himself sayth that hee hath not nor renceabely[?] or ever had or concealed any Estate of [??] belonging to the said Ri[chard] [x] Waller att the time of his Death nor ever received[?] [??] from the said Isaac Bridewell or any other pson or psons whatsoever any Summe or Summes of monet whatsoever of the Estate of which belone or apptiene[?] unto the said Richard Waller atttime of his Death or att any time since [??] [??] [??] knowe that any psons whatsoever defenied[?] any of the said Richard Wallers Estate from the said Mary his Adminix or that she hath any Estate of his the said LRichard Waller in her hand [??]afministered but properly [inserted line->] And that her [??] [??] unto[?] [??][??] all the Estate [??] [??] the said Richard Waller [??] & [??] [??] to the said Marys hands beleeves that she hath rightly & truely paid all that came to her hands towards the pay[?] & satidfacion[?] of his Debts or on his funerall or in taking out Administracow[?] And this Defdt knows [??] [??] [??] that the said Richard Waller good[?] & true[?] [??] [??] [??] [??] losse[?] [??] [??] were worth And every of thesse[?] Defdts for themselves severally doe utterly deny all all and all manner of unlawful [??] or [??] every [??] [??] they or any of them are charged or chargeable in & by the said Bill of Comlt Without that that any [??] matter cause or thinge whatsoever in the complts said Bill of Compt contained material or effectuall in the Law for [??] [??] Defdts or either[?] of them to make Answere unto And not herein or hereby well & sufficiently Answered unto cause[?] [??] or avoid [??] & [??] denied is true All which[?] matters this [??] [??] Defdtd will bee [??] [??] [??] [??] mainetaine & put [??] Honorable (or shall [??] And pray [??] to be dissmissed with their [?]sts & charges by them in this behalfe most wrongfully sustayned

John Amherst