

“PRINCELY FEMININE GRACES”: VIRTUE AND POWER IN EARLY MODERN
ENGLISH AND SPANISH LITERATURE

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This project analyzes the intersections between representations of female sovereignty used to promote and rethink feminine virtue in both early modern English and Spanish advice literature and literary texts published in the decade after Queen Elizabeth I’s death. I suggest that the question of women’s sovereignty prompted by the rise of ruling queens in Spain and England influences the prominence of regal women as models of feminine virtue in advice literature and reconceptualizes feminine virtue as a political discourse, forming a new category I term “princely feminine virtue.”

Scholarship analyzing the relationship between advice literature and literary works has not recognized England and Spain’s shared indebtedness to princely models to advise and represent feminine virtue. By examining the interplay between feminine virtue, tropes of sovereignty, and the advisory mode in both types of texts, this project emphasizes the widespread potential for women’s exemplary virtue across the social spectrum. In addition to recasting feminine virtue through a princely lens, these texts reveal a shared vision of how performances of feminine virtue are invested with agency and power.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the reigns of Isabel I of Castile, Mary Tudor, and Elizabeth I, the once-limited discourse of feminine virtue in Spain and England expanded beyond a strict concern with domestic, moral virtues to include theories about women's ethical capacities in the political realm.¹ The question of women's sovereignty prompted by the rule of female princes and biographies of exemplary regal women reoriented popular perceptions and rearticulated feminine virtues in advice literature influencing feminine behavior. As English and Spanish writers reconceptualized the virtuous ruler and the virtuous woman, they often framed the performance of political virtues within the set parameters of virtuous feminine conduct.² Drawing on this tradition, my project investigates the impact of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century debates about the virtues of queens on English and Spanish advice literature and literary texts. I argue that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this literature reconceptualizes feminine virtue as a political discourse, forming a new category that I term "princely feminine virtue," in which moral, domestic virtues (chastity, silence, obedience) are infused with princely— that is, political—virtues

¹ The sixteenth century witnessed many powerful Spanish women take the throne, all descendants of Isabel I. For example, Isabel I willed Castile to her daughter Juana of Castile, who, though deemed mentally unfit to rule remained queen *de jure* until she died in 1555. In 1526, Isabel's granddaughter Isabel of Portugal married Charles V, son of Juana of Castile, making her Empress of the Holy Roman Empire. And from 1554 until 1559, Juana of Austria, Isabel of Castile's great-granddaughter, served as regent of Spain while her brother Phillip II was in England as King (Cruz 103-104).

² For an overview of the extensive body of scholarship on the European debate about women's virtue and women's right to political rule, see Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman: The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England* (1992); Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (1980); Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (1990); and Julio Vélez-Sáinz, *La Defensa De La Mujer En La Literatura Hispánica: Siglos XV-XVII* (2015). For recent studies on English and Spanish queens, see Anne J. Cruz and Mihoko Suzuki, *The Rule of Women in Early Modern Europe* (2009); Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (2005); Carole Levin and R. O. Bucholz, *Queens & Power in Medieval and Early Modern England* (2009).

(wisdom, prudence, judgment, and courage).³ This dissertation examines how advice literature, which I define as any cultural text that promotes a didactic message, stages a scene of advice, or works within the advisory mode, represents and engages with princely women as models of virtuous femininity. The proliferation of documents debating women's rule or offering biographies of virtuous queens as *exempla* led to a broader understanding and imagining of what queens, and the "good women"⁴ for whom they were archetypes, should be like—brave like Deborah, pious like Esther, and chaste like Penelope. Shedding light on the variety of texts that can be considered advice literature in early modern English and Spanish literature, this project emphasizes their instructional mode and their surprising promotion of princely models of feminine virtue. In the chapters that follow, I trace advice literature and how its tropes lead to varied and productive representations of princely feminine virtue in Shakespeare's dramatic romance *Cymbeline*, Cervantes's romance novela *La española inglesa*, Aemilia Lanyer's

³ In England, the rise of queens regnant in the sixteenth century necessitated a new perspective on the question of female rule. John Knox's negative attack on Queen Mary, *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* (1558), and John Aylmer's apologetic response written the next year when Elizabeth succeeded Mary as queen, *An harborowe for faithful and trewe subjects against the late blown blast*, are perhaps the most famous examples of this resulting conversation in print. Other examples of texts that expound on the righteousness of female monarchy after the debate are John Prime's *A Sermon Briefly Comparing the Estate of King Salomon and his Subjects together with the condition of Queene Elizabeth and her people* (1585), Thomas Bentley's treatise *The monument of matrones* (1582), and John Case's *Sphaera Civitatis* (1588).

⁴ Sir Thomas Elyot's *The defence of good women* (1540), dedicated to Queen Anne of Cleves, presents the life of Queen Zenobia as a pattern of virtue who affirms women's capacity for virtuous rule. For a detailed analysis of Elyot's text, see Constance Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists: The Case of Sir Thomas Elyot's *Defence of Good Women*" in *Renaissance Quarterly* 36.2 (1983), pp. 181–201. The Spanish conversation about women's virtues began earlier, but similarly offered biographies of exemplary women to demonstrate their goodness. Some texts praising women and advocating for their virtue and intelligence are: *El triunfo de las donas* [*The Triumph of Women*] by Juan Rodríguez de la Cámara (1443) which was dedicated to Queen María of Aragón, Juan II's first wife; *El libro de las virtuosas y claras mugeres* [*The Book of Virtuous and Famous Women*] by Alvaro de Luna (1446); *Tratado en defensa de virtuosas mujeres* [*A Treatise in Defense of Virtuous Women*] by Mosén Diego de Valera (1440) also dedicated to Queen María; and *Jardín de las nobles doncellas* [*The Garden of Noble Maidens*] by Fray Martín Alonso de Córdoba (1468) written for the Infanta Isabel, defending her claim to the Castilian throne.

passion poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, and the epistolary correspondence of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza.

This project examines advice literature that establishes a particular discursive tradition that defines, delimits, and extols models of virtuous feminine behavior. Rather than a set of texts strictly categorized as “conduct manuals,” this advice literature is an extensive network of texts that effect social ends through “didactic intention” (St. Clair and Maassen I.xvii). Jessica Murphy’s recent study of early modern English conduct literature and its promotion of feminine virtue, *Virtuous Necessity*, examines how conduct manuals reveal “the multiplicity and the constructedness of codes of conduct” for ideal feminine virtue (1). Murphy’s work contributes to an existing body of scholarship that considers how conduct literature fashions virtuous women and how women perform feminine virtue and “negotiate rules of behavior” prescribed by advice literature to achieve agency (6). As conduct manuals were not the only sources of advice that sought to instruct women in proper performances, Murphy points out that “it is important to reconstruct the dialogue between conduct manuals and works of literature that show women receiving, acting on, and even subverting advice” (7). This reconstructed dialogue contributes to a clearer understanding of patriarchal prescriptions for women’s behavior and the literary explorations that represent women acting in accordance with this advice as well as creatively negotiating their performances of feminine virtue.

Building on Murphy’s careful analysis of what she terms “feminine virtue’s network of influence” (36), this comparative project analyzes the promotion of feminine virtue through princely models in the English and Spanish traditions. I suggest that the debates about the legitimacy and virtuous rule of English and Spanish queens in the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries lead to models and theories of women's governance in advice literature and literature with "didactic intentions" that borrow from both the regal and domestic spheres. For example, Juan Luis Vives's *De institutione feminae christianae* [*The Instruction of a Christian Woman*], written at the behest of the Spanish-English Queen Catherine of Aragón for the virtuous education of her daughter, Princess Mary, England's first queen regnant, was not only *the* definitive early modern European text on women's virtue, but also established a Spanish-English textual tradition significant to English, Spanish, and broader European conceptions of feminine virtue in the period.

The texts analyzed in this dissertation emphasize the productive fissures and similarities in English and Spanish understandings of feminine virtue's princely power. This is evidenced in the divergent representations of Queen Elizabeth I as either negative or positive *exemplum* and is instructive for considering how princely feminine virtue may be fashioned in imitation or in opposition to a queen. Though scholars of early modern English and Spanish literature are attentive to how advice literature like conduct manuals, mirrors for princes, scripture, and homilies promotes ideas of normative gender behavior, the extent to which these texts rely on models and tropes of feminine sovereignty to promote proper performances of feminine virtue has been overlooked. By examining the interplay between virtue, tropes of sovereignty, and the advisory mode in both advisory and literary texts, this project emphasizes the widespread potential for exemplary feminine virtue across the social spectrum. Additionally, the omnipresence of female sovereignty reveals a shared vision of influential female power central to English and Spanish culture.

I argue that these models and tropes produce the category of princely feminine virtue and trace the development of this category in debates over female rule, which promote domestic virtues for queens, and conversely, in feminine conduct guides, which represent housewifery as domestic governance and depict queens as virtuous domestic exemplars. The examples of living and historical queens in advice literature expanded the ways in which women might imagine and perform feminine virtues in a princely manner. The example, a staple argumentative device and rubric for comprehension in political treatises, mirrors for princes, sermons, and eventually, feminine conduct guides also evidences how feminine models promoted or unraveled women's theoretical potential for political virtue. Susan Wiseman explains that certain examples of virtuous women, such as Lucrece and Esther, directly place feminine virtue in conversation with politics, not always to make "women political agents, but by using them as indices of political virtue" (132). In this way, although exemplary women are used for specific rhetorical purposes, these texts nevertheless proliferate the use of exemplary women to say something about women's capacity for political virtue.

In turn, it is the reader or the audience member who interprets the *exempla* to fashion her own virtuous performance. Feminist scholarship on women's virtue and access to personal and political power has increasingly revealed the performative nature of feminine virtue as it is assessed and creatively rethought in life and fiction. In *Fashioning Femininity*, Karen Newman writes, "Though there is no question that Renaissance discourses of femininity advanced social controls and the policing of female behavior, they also enabled opposing discourses, which though they often speak with the same vocabulary and from the same categories, were nevertheless tactically productive"

(30). My research supports this claim and suggests that for every queen offered as a negative example of female rule, like Circe or Cleopatra, there was a positive example, like Deborah, who promoted women's sovereignty. Although it imposed strict limitations on women's behavior, advice literature promoting proper feminine conduct also offered a theoretical rubric for achieving power—political or domestic—to women who implemented the advice in the prescribed manner. In addition, the near-constant promotion and redefinition of proper feminine conduct invariably delimited the boundaries of patriarchal expectations within which women could potentially negotiate. This project focuses on women's representation and self-representation in texts that test the durability of those boundaries and negotiate the possibilities for agency alongside princely models.

The relationship between gender and sovereignty demonstrates how feminine virtue becomes aligned with princeliness in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century advice literature. The queen is advised to balance her performance of political virtues, traditionally gendered masculine, in addition to virtues long deemed feminine. In *The Rule of Women in Early Modern Europe*, Anne Cruz and Mihoko Suzuki observe that male authors addressing women's political capacities wrote “for the most part, to allay male anxieties about female sovereignty by exhorting women to behave ‘as women’ even while lauding them for acting in a virile manner” (3). Where earlier writers about political virtue assumed that the performers of such virtue must be men, the ascents of Isabel I of Castile, Mary Tudor, and Elizabeth I to the throne challenged this discourse of unilaterally male access to power. Responding directly to that prior discourse of masculine political virtue, my usage of the term “princely” refers to representations of

sovereign power that were necessarily reconfigured with the rise of ruling queens, rather than assuming that political virtue connotes masculinity. I argue that this reconfiguration in the debates about women's sovereignty, which allowed for the successful performance of feminine and political virtues in tandem and qualified political virtues through the lens of femininity, effectively *politicized* feminine virtues and thereby enabled broader understandings of femininity and new forms of feminine agency, including political agency.

The politicization of feminine virtue is most often theorized through marriage or in its absence. Queens regnant were a minority compared to the countless other political women who loomed in the cultural imagination—duchesses, countesses, governors, regents, and princesses—and Queen Elizabeth I's solitary reign may have provided poetic avenues for figuring women's independent rule, but it was anomalous among other models of governance that depended on marriage alliances. As Theresa Earenfight reminds us, married queens “exemplify a form of queenship that can best be described as a political partnership” (xiv).⁵ I address the importance of marriage for solidifying women's sovereignty in my first chapter, which focuses on Shakespeare's *Innogen*, who uses her marriage to a man beneath her station to leverage her way out of the responsibilities of rule, yet paradoxically defines her princeliness in relation to her husband.

Besides marriage, the other way early modern women accessed power was by performing religious piety. The promotion of biblical queens and other noteworthy

⁵ For example, Mary Tudor modeled her marriage to Philip II of Spain on her grandmother Isabel of Castile's marriage agreement with Ferdinand, effectively limiting Philip's power over England as a kind of “king consort” (Richards 34)

religious women as virtuous examples in scripture, homilies, advice literature, and mirrors for princes contributes to the politicization of feminine virtue's religious dimensions as well. Early modern women's educations most often involved reading religious texts, such as scripture, hagiographies, and books of hours, which meant their model of public and private agency was often informed by religious models, such as the Virgin Mary or female martyrs, and supported by institutions like convents. Although convents were dissolved in England in the mid-1500s, in Spain convents provided women access to institutional power that was often linked with the court through familial ties and patronage.⁶ Contributing to the work of feminist scholars of English and Spanish history and literature who draw our focus to the power dynamics of royal women's religious, political, and interpersonal roles Magdalena Sánchez's study of Philip III's relatives, the Empress María, Margaret of the Cross, and Margaret of Austria, who wielded considerable influence over Philip's political policy, reveals that "[r]oyal women did not calmly accept their proscribed political roles but instead found ways to voice their opinions in a fashion that was more acceptable to the male hierarchy" (5). In other words, by using acceptable modes of feminine influence to affect policy, royal religious women negotiated access to governing power to rule themselves and sway others within accepted modes and networks, such as by offering personal, political, and spiritual counsel to friends and relatives. Although Catholicism and Protestantism alike restricted women's agencies through misogynistic anxiety stemming from Eve's transgression, religion also offered women models of power and ways of negotiating within set paradigms to fashion

⁶ For an analysis of the political and patronage networks of Spanish convents, see Elizabeth Leffeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (2005). For a discussion of the convent as an extension of the court, see Magdalena Sánchez, "Where Palace and Convent Met: The Descalzas Reales in Madrid" in *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 46.1 (2015), pp. 53-82.

their princely feminine virtues. In my two final chapters, I examine two examples of the virtuous possibilities afforded by religious models of women's alliances and hierarchies. Lanyer's passion poem forms a convent-like gathering of her readers and dedicatees under the sovereign authority of Christ and uses princely biblical women, like the Queen of Sheba and Pilate's Wife, to argue for women's knowledge and speech in the public sphere. In her letters, the aristocratic missionary, Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, though not a nun, draws on her familiarity with the royal convent, Descalzas Reales, and her noble alliances formed there, especially with the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, to fashion her personal sovereignty in London where she desired to earn the "glorious crown" of martyrdom.

Since advice literature frequently draws on regal models to promote ideal feminine virtue, it in turn shapes how early modern culture thought of feminine virtue alongside princeliness. In her study of women's political sovereignty, Louise Olga Fradenburg focuses on sovereignty's ability to define gender and be defined by it, which she proposes reveals "the plasticity of gender in the field of sovereignty" (2). This formula suggests that definitions of femininity and notions of ideal feminine conduct become malleable when women wield political power. Likewise, the performative and "plastic" nature of gender in turn exposes how sovereignty is a performance codified by political virtues, traditionally coded masculine, but reshaped by the emergence of ruling queens.⁷ By incorporating princely virtues into her performance of femininity, a queen

⁷ As Judith Butler helps us understand, all gender is performative in that it is not "a stable identity or locus of agency," but "a *stylized repetition of acts*" (191, original emphasis). True agency, Butler asserts, "is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition" (198).

expands the frame of feminine virtues to include capacities for power normally reserved for men.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century advice literature increasingly used tropes of sovereignty to figure women's performances of feminine virtue as princely, and in turn, playwrights, novelists, poets, and religious missionaries adopted these tropes to reimagine how women might access power and agency through feminine virtue. The tropes elaborated on in these pages and in the chapters that follow include: poetic personifications of virtues as queens; the image of the crown (either a marker of queenliness in marriage or of self-governance achieved in martyrdom); advice given to female princes and regal women giving advice; the rhetoric of rule and governance (both household and self-governance); and queens establishing hierarchy and promoting alliances between women. These tropes signifying feminine sovereignty are often employed to figure princely feminine virtue through women's political, familial, religious, and friendship alliances with other women in the advisory texts and literary examples that comprise this introduction and the following chapters. Although men were often the authors of these texts, this dynamic of women's exemplarity being enhanced through alliances with other women or against negative feminine examples suggests that it was understood that women were women's best models and instructors of virtue.

The instructive, virtuous dynamic between exemplary women contributed to the increasingly pervasive movement of feminine sovereignty from politics to other spheres. Charles Butler's 1606 instructional manual for apiarists, *The feminine monarchie*, exemplifies the politicized discourse of feminine virtue proliferating in unexpected advice literature throughout the seventeenth century. Butler's manual reveals that the

king of insects, long regarded as emblematic of monarchy and the ideal human system of governance, was in fact a *she*. Butler explains that while most authors follow Aristotle in translating “Rex” as “king,” he must deviate and refer to the bees’ “governor” appropriate to her true gender: “So that I am enforced... to straine the common signification of the word *Rex*...to translate it *Queene*, sith the males heer beare no sway at al, this being an Amazonian, or feminine kingdome” (a3v). This revelation of bees’ “feminine kingdome” postdated Elizabeth I’s feminine monarchy by only three years, yet Butler verifies, through scientific data that the regiment of women is in fact natural and divine.⁸ Perhaps drawing on Elizabeth I’s chaste model of governance, Butler identifies the Queene-bee and her kingdom as sovereignly “Amazonian,” noting that males “beare no sway at al.” In the 1634 edition, Butler identifies and praises his royal dedicatee, Queen Henrietta Maria, the queen consort to Charles I, as both feminine and *princely*. The dedication is worth quoting in full:

Madame, The moste ancient and invincible Monarch of the Earth saluteth You: Who though she bee, by divine right, of entire and absolute power, commanding many Myriads of bothe sexes; yet dooeth she humbly subject hir state unto a subject Princesse. By whome, in beawtie, majestie, temperance, chastite, prudence, taciturnitie, and other Princely feminine graces, shee marveileth to see herself surpassed, that erst woont therein to surpass, all other Creatur’s of hir sex. This Excellencie and Preeminencie, though it may seem somewhat to derogate from hir digniti; yet is she so far from envying it, that, in Admiration and honor thereof, she freely

⁸ “For the Bees abhorre as well polyarchie, as anarchie, God having shewed in them unto men an expresse pattern of a perfect monarchie, the most natural & absolute form of government” (Butler A3r). Butler also hints at a biblical model of feminine governance by including the Hebrew word for bee, בדורה [*devorah*], in the margin to demonstrate its usage in “the first language” as a feminine noun. The word *devorah*, is the name of the Biblical prophet from Judges, Deborah, who served as a model of female rule for the early moderns because of her role in the book of Judges in which she is variously understood to be Barak’s wife, and an independent woman in her own right. In the 1634 edition, the marginal note offering an example of the gendering of bees in ancient languages is moved into a footnote detailing the Latin, Greek and Hebrew words for bees. The only marginal notation remaining is the English word “Deborah,” which conflates Butler’s evidence for properly gendered words for bees with the exemplary figure of female rule. See Michelle Osherow’s analysis of Deborah’s significance as a model of women’s righteous speech in *Biblical Women’s Voices in Early Modern England* (2009).

yieldeth himself and hir Subjects, their labour and the sweet' fruits thereof (most' necessary for the helth and delight, as wel of Princes as People) to Your Graces pleasure and command. Thus much the Writer heereof (who knoweth moste of hir minde and hath, for the publik good, published these more than admirable Secrets) is bolde in hir behalf to testifie: hir self (as best becometh her) useth few words, beeing more reddy to preform, than to promise hir benefits to the thankful Receivers. (A2r-A2v)

Butler's catalogue of Henrietta Maria's "princely feminine graces," which surpasses the Queene-bee's, marks the English Queen as sovereign over the world's most "ancient and invincible Monarch," and consequently, "all other Creatur's of hir sex." Like advice literature that offers queens as virtuous exemplars for women readers, this description of Henrietta Maria and Queene-bee's mutual and exclusive exemplarity offers many meanings. Henrietta Maria's status as a queen consort, not a queen regnant, may have contributed to Butler's emphasis on her virtues as both princely *and* feminine; however, the word "princely" acts as an adjective describing the queens' feminine graces to indicate their feminine virtues are those suitable to a prince,⁹ and it also serves as an adverb describing the *way* each queen performs her feminine virtues.¹⁰

Though Butler's list of the two queens' graces includes standard feminine ideals such as chastity, beauty, and temperance, his pairing of these with majesty, prudence, and taciturnity provides an example of the broader conception of feminine virtue as it is reshaped by the discourse of sovereignty. Henrietta Maria's majesty is conferred both by her noble blood and status as queen consort. Prudence manifests in the practice of good judgment and proper behavior—in other words, "the wisdom to see what is virtuous" (OED 1a)—and thus requires the correct action. On the other hand, taciturnity permits

⁹ "Of, belonging to, or relating to a prince or princes; held, exercised, or governed by a prince; befitting a prince" (OED 1a).

¹⁰ "In the manner of or befitting a prince; royally" (OED).

more variation and negotiation within its performance than either majesty or prudence.¹¹ Instead of praising the Queen of England for her silence, a feminine virtue inadequate for rule, taciturnity is a posture that allows a woman to moderate her practice of silence through habit, disinclination, or reservation.¹² Providing a final virtuous lesson for Henrietta Maria and the reader, Butler highlights the prudent performativity of this virtue by emphasizing that the Queene-bee's taciturnity is linked to her performance of "labour and the sweet' fruits thereof" which effect more virtue than wordy promises.

Butler's manual also offers evidence of my claim that early modern thinkers came to conceptualize virtue as a theoretical term imbued with political power. While my project's title is indebted to Butler's term, my focus shifts away from his "princely feminine graces" to examine princely feminine *virtues* in order to emphasize the period's more frequently used term and the intertwined political and moral nature of virtue itself.¹³ Butler's discussion of bees' political and moral virtues (fortitude, prudence, knowledge, temperance, justice, chastity, and cleanliness) demonstrates his didactic aims, and the virtues of their honey demonstrates how my project imagines virtue as a word invested with performative and material power. The English word "virtue" and the Spanish "virtud" both possessed two distinct but related meanings: one moral, one material. In its primary meaning, "virtue" signified both a lauded moral trait and its proper performance. Simultaneously, the word had a physical dimension meaning something's power, worth,

¹¹ "habitual silence or disinclination to conversation; reservedness in speech" (OED 1).

¹² See Christina Luckyj's excellent discussion of how the virtue of silence offered women agentive ways of not speaking in *"A Moving Rhetoricke": Gender and Silence in Early Modern England* (2002).

¹³ While the word "virtue" is more commonly used in period texts and modern scholarship, "grace" had many of the same meanings virtue and at times in my discussions that follow I may use the terms interchangeably. "In a thing: inherent beneficial power or efficacy" (OED 4a), "In a person: virtue, goodness; sense of duty and propriety; (also) an instance of this; a virtue" (4b).

efficacy, or ability to materially affect the body.¹⁴ I locate the mixture of these two meanings in my textual examples and in the power afforded women by embodied performance of princely feminine virtue. In the remainder of the introduction, I offer examples of how certain Spanish and English texts debating women's rule and offering guidance on women's conduct incorporate princely models to advise the proper performance of feminine virtue, thus establishing the category I term "princely feminine virtue" that I will trace in specific case studies of early seventeenth-century literature in subsequent chapters.

Illustrative Examples in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Advice Literature

“será la Princesa como el abeja que van entre las flores & coje las buenas & dexa las malas & assí haze su dulce miel” “the Princess will be like the bee that goes among the flowers and takes the good and leaves the bad & makes its sweet honey”¹⁵
—Fray Martín Alonso de Córdoba, *Jardín de las nobles donzellas* (208)

In this section I curate a small sample of English and Spanish texts that chart how I see the conversation about female rule shaping subsequent advice literature aimed at guiding feminine conduct. Some are famous mirrors for princes and defenses of women's rule, collections detailing the merits of exemplary women, and feminine conduct manuals, while others offer key insights to my larger analysis. In texts that advise or

¹⁴ The Oxford English Dictionary defines “virtue” as “A moral quality regarded (esp. in religious contexts) as good or desirable in a person, such as patience, kindness, etc.; a particular form of moral excellence” (1a), “Conformity to moral law or accepted moral standards, the possession of morally good qualities; behaviour arising from such standards, abstention on moral grounds from any form of wrongdoing or vice” (2a), “Physical strength, force, or energy” (5a), “Power, efficacy, worth” (8), “A power inherent in a thing; a capacity for producing a certain effect; an active property or principle; a faculty” (10a), and “a property which affects the body in a beneficial manner” (10b). The *Diccionario de Autoridades* provides similar definitions for “virtud”: “El hábito, que se adquiere para obrar bien, independiente de los preceptos de la Ley, por sola la bondad de la operación, y conformidad con la razón natural; Se toma singularmente por el hábito, y disposición del alma para las acciones conformes à la Ley Christiana, y que se ordenan à la Bienaventuranza; La facultad, potencia, ù actividad de las cosas, para producir, ò causar sus efectos; “Significa también fuerza, vigor, ù valor.”

¹⁵ All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

debate female rule, like Fray Martín de Córdoba's *Jardín de las nobles donzellas* [*The Garden of Noblewomen*] and John Aylmer's *An harborowe for faithful and trewe subjects*, royal women's performances of political virtues are often limited by patriarchal norms of domestic feminine conduct, qualified by queens' reliance on husbands or counselors, or held in tension between a prince's masculine spirit and a woman's intrinsic weakness. In feminine conduct guides like Juan Luis Vives's *De Institutione Christianae Feminae* [*The Education of a Christian Woman*], Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* [*The Perfect Wife*], and Robert Greene's *Penelopes web*, women's domestic virtues are explicitly promoted through tropes of sovereignty and alongside regal models, which blur the distinction between the performance of domestic and political virtues and broaden, if only slightly, women's spheres of influence. Significantly, these conduct guides promote compliance with patriarchal instruction even as they introduce methods of subverting it. For example, where Fray Luis uses the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 to endorse women's domestic *valor*, Greene's Penelope of Ithaca advises "politick" performances of feminine virtue to achieve power through agentive compliance.

With the reign of Isabel I of Castile, pre-modern Europe's first queen regnant, the long standing debate about women's capacity for virtue collided with newly prompted debate about women's political rule.¹⁶ Fray Martín Alonso de Córdoba's defense of Isabel's right to the throne, *Jardín de las nobles donzellas* (1468)—part mirror for princes, part feminine conduct manual—is an example of how the two discourses mixed.

¹⁶ For recent scholarship on Isabel's influence, reign, and discourses promoting her rule, see Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, *Legitimizing the Queen: Propaganda and Ideology in the Reign of Isabel I of Castile* (2011), Peggy Liss, *Isabel the Queen: Life and Times* (2004); and Barbara F Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (2004); and Barbara F Weissberger, "Tanto monta: The Catholic Monarch's Nuptial Fiction and the Power of Isabel I of Castile" in *The Rule of Women in Early Modern Europe* (2009).

Fray Martín composed *Jardín* for Isabel when she was sixteen years old and still deciding between suitors, one year before she married Fernando, and six years before she was crowned Castile's first queen regnant. Fray Martín advises Isabel to perform both feminine virtues, such as modesty (*vergüenza*), chastity, humility, deep piety for God, and prudent speech alongside princely ones like justice, generosity, courtesy, and courage, often blurring the boundaries between the two. This asserts that Isabel's conformity with traditional feminine virtues was not incompatible with her future performance of queenship. In fact, a successful performance of power in her royal station would require her compliance with the moral virtues demanded of women at the time. For Fray Martín, Isabel's gender requires her to perform feminine virtues, but her royal blood necessitates princely virtues as well: "la princesa que es más que muger & en cuerpo mugeril, deue traer ánimo varonil" "the princess that is more than a woman & in a feminine body, should carry a masculine spirit" (251). By defining Isabela as "más que muger" and in need of equipping herself with a masculine spirit, Fray Martín suggests a princess must strive past her embodied feminine weakness to perform the requisite princely virtues, which he implicitly genders masculine.

Fray Martín also considers the reality of Isabel's marriage to a king and, although he advises her to "traer ánimo varonil" in matters of the state, he qualifies Isabel's sovereignty in relation to her future husband. Notably, Fray Martín does not advise Isabel to act as a ruler in marriage, but he does not advise her to serve either. Advocating for marital equality, he asserts God created Eve to be Adam's "compañera en matrimonio" 'partner in marriage,' "no por ser señora ni servienta suya" 'not to be his superior or his servant' (148). He advises Isabel to regard her husband as her equal through Eve's

example, but balances Eve's potentially problematic model with that of the Virgin Mary. He defines Mary, the Queen of Heaven, as the virtuous model for the earthly princess, in part due to their shared traits, like royal lineage, their age, and desire to rule: "la señora Princesa, por que es de linaje real, como la Virgen que fue fija de reys, & por que es doncella como hera la Virgen quando concibio al fijo de Dios, & por que espera de ser reyna, como la Virgen que es Reyna delos cielos" "The lady princess, because she is of royal lineage, like the Virgin who was the daughter of kings, & because she is a young lady like the Virgin was when she conceived the Son of God, & because she wants to be queen, like the Virgin who is Queen of the Heavens' (164).¹⁷ Although Fray Martín compares Isabel's sovereignty to the Virgin Mary's, he also restricts her rule by advising her to be an intercessor to the king her husband on behalf of her people. She should perform this role, he suggests, as a mother would intervene on behalf of her children and, through the examples of the Virgin Mary and Esther, as a lawyer (*abogada*) would advocate for her people: "[a]ssí Hester conel rey Assuero que abogó por el pueblo de Ysrael & lo libró de muerte" "As Esther with the King Ahasuerus, who pled for the people of Israel and saved them from death' (201). As we can see, Fray Martín defines Isabela's rule through domestic and political comparisons, and primarily religious *exempla*, to advise Isabel in her role as queen.

Jardín de las nobles donzellas is divided into three books, and the final book reviews the feminine and princely virtues Isabel has been instructed to perform through virtuous feminine *exempla*. Fray Martín advises her in wisdom through the examples of the sibyls, Minerva, and Saint Catherine (241-244); he promotes strength and courage

¹⁷ According to Luke 3:23-38, Mary is the descendant of Nathan, Bathsheba and David's third son.

with the stories of Semiramis and Judith (245-249); he instructs constancy in a queen's faith through the lives of Santa Inés and Thecla (250-254); and through the examples of Portia and Penelope he advises wifely fidelity (265-268). Nearly all of the exemplars Fray Martín describes are princely women, either by birth, marriage, or bestowed with pious sovereignty through martyrdom. Clearly, for Fray Martín, the best examples of princely feminine virtue for Princess Isabel are other princely women. Fray Martín also acknowledges that other women may look to his text for guidance and suggests that ordinary women perform their virtues in imitation of princesses: "aun que todas no puedan ser reynas ni princesas, pero todas han de trabajar assí conponer su vida que sean dignas de ser reynas & princesas" 'although they all cannot be princesses and queens, they all must work to compose their lives to be worthy of being queens and princesses' (213). Fray Martín's *Jardín* implies ordinary women may access similar powers afforded to princesses and queens by performing the princely feminine virtues he advises.

In England, the rise of queens regnant, Mary Queen of Scots and Mary Tudor, as well as influential European queens consort, like Catherine de' Medici, prompted an outcry about the monstrosity of female rule. Unlike Fray Martín who supported Isabel I's rule but restricted her power through marriage, John Knox's attack on women's rule, *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* (1558), argues that all women's sovereignty is against God and nature. Though defenders of women's sovereignty often qualified women's rule within the boundaries of marriage, for Knox, a "regiment of women" meant women ruling independently of men's influence and actively subverting male prerogatives. For example, Knox offers Circe as a negative example of feminine rule, declaring that anyone who encountered a female king would

think himself transported to Circe's court "and that suche a metamorphosis and change was made of all the men of that countrie, as poets do feyn was made of the companions of Ulisses" (Br2). Knox cites the contemporaneous example of Scotland under the rule of Queen Mary as a further example of women's disorienting, toxic reign akin to Circe's metamorphoses of Ulysses' men: "Scotland hath dronken also the enchantment and venom of Circes, let it be so to their owne shame and confusion" (D5r). Unlike Charles Butler's happy fantasy of a feminine monarchy where men "beare no sway at al," Knox's terror at women's rule leaves England and Scotland's men in "shame and confusion," potentially forever changed by feminine sovereignty. Although Knox's "blast" reeks of misogyny, it also provides a compelling example of how the reign of queens had the virtue—the power, efficacy, or force—to *change* men's minds and test the conventional boundaries of feminine graces.

John Aylmer's response to Knox the following year, *An harborowe for faithful and trewe subjects against the late blown blast*, defends Elizabeth I's right to rule in a similar manner as Fray Martín's *Jardín*. For example, one of the chief issues Aylmer tackles is whether or not a woman's domestic "office" as wife conflicts with her political role as queen. Aylmer resolved this question by asserting that "so farre as pertaineth to the bandes of marriage, and the office of a wife, she must be a subject: but as a Magistrate she maye be her husbands head" (C4v). Aylmer's designation of the wife's "office" within marriage emphasizes her duty as political, and he relies on women's household rule to justify their rule of the state: "No man I am sure, will deny but that the government in the house is a kinde of superioritie and that over men...and an houshold is a litle common welth...Then I can not see howe you can debarre them of all rule" (D1r).

Aylmer's paradoxical insistence on women's subjection to their husbands and rule over men in the home is exactly the kind of productive tension the debate about women's rule generated.

Aylmer furthers his argument for women's rule by participating in the tradition of offering historical female rulers as instructive models of princely feminine virtue. He claims that Deborah is the paragon of princely rule and wifely obedience, but he only notes Deborah's political virtues and power to command her husband: "She judged saith the scripture and she sent Barake to the warre, who being of lesse courage or lesse zeale than she was, refused to goe onles she went with him" (D2v). Moreover, the tensions between command and obedience explicit in Aylmer's treatise are implied on the title page, which declares its textual intent as an "exhortation to OBEDIENCE" followed by a quote from Proverbs 31: "Many daughters there be, that gather riches together: but thou goest above them all. As for favour it is deceitfull, and bewtie is a vaine thing: but a woman that feareth the Lord: she is worthie to be prayseed. Geve her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works prayse her in the gate."¹⁸ By framing his defense of Elizabeth's right to rule with these verses, Aylmer (or the publisher) mixes the defense of women's rule with the promotion of their feminine virtue. Aylmer designates the virtuous wife of Proverbs as an exemplar of the dually feminine and regal virtue that Elizabeth has achieved through her reign. He also praises Elizabeth as more virtuous than other women ("thou goest above them all") and emphasizes how "her owne works prayse her" sovereignty. Importantly, these verses frame the entire text and thus represent Elizabeth,

¹⁸ The title page cites this as Proverbs 32, but these verses are actually Proverbs 31:29-31 and the passage seems to be from the Miles Coverdale Bible (1535), but perhaps Aylmer quoted from memory as the "32" may convey.

“a woman that feareth the Lord,” as an obedient servant of God. Like the good woman of Proverbs, Elizabeth obeys God and her husband (her country). As an “exhortation to obedience” Aylmer’s treatise theoretically offers the wife of Proverbs, and Elizabeth through correlation, as an example that all her “faithfull and trewe subjects” should imitate.

While polemical texts about gender and political theory like Fray Martín’s, Knox’s, and Aylmer’s debated women’s political rule of states, conduct manuals often used models of feminine sovereignty and the language of governance to promote the proper performance of feminine virtues within the home. For example, early modern were advised women to be chaste, silent, and obedient through the examples of famous historical queens. Authors throughout the latter sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries represented historical, biblical, and mythological queens, like Esther or Penelope, as models of domestic virtues. I suggest that the practical tension between how women were advised to behave and the regal, exemplary models of feminine conduct through which they were instructed ultimately represents feminine domestic virtues as princely. Additionally, I suggest these conduct manuals greatly impact future works by knitting together the discourses of feminine virtue, sovereignty, and advice in ways that the literary examples I explore in the body of my project either seek to unravel or creatively reimagine.

While not a straightforward conduct manual, Christine de Pisan’s intervention into the *querelle des femmes*, *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* [*The Book of the City of Ladies*] (1405), actively promotes women’s virtue by employing tropes of sovereignty that would become commonplace in the sixteenth century. Although de Pisan’s *Livre*

only existed at first in French manuscripts, Brian Anslay translated it into English in 1521, titling his translation, *The boke of the cyte of ladyes*. Anslay's translation made de Pisan's defense of women available to English readers and, I suggest, provided a rhetorical technique of advising feminine conduct by commending and valorizing women through tropes of sovereignty, especially by personifying virtues as noble women who carry scepters and instruct the reader. De Pisan models her defense of women on Giovanni Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* [*On Famous Women*] (1374), but intervenes in Boccaccio's exclusion of religious women (save Eve) in favor of pagan exemplars by populating her book with the examples of noble pious women from Eve to medieval saints, as well as illustrious pagans from Thamiris, the Amazonian queen, to Dido. De Pisan's *Livre* contains many features I identify in advice literature promoting feminine virtue through princely models. She participates in the *querelle des femmes* and represents traditional political virtues embodied in noble feminine form to dispel misogynistic myths about women's vice and argue for women's virtuous worth. De Pisan also offers goddesses, queens, princesses, prophets, and saints as virtuous exemplars, including more ambiguous figures, such as Eve, Medea, and Circe, that provoked masculine anxiety in misogynistic discourse. Though de Pisan's *Livre* does explicitly argue for women's rule, her numerous defenses and examples of virtuous queens and princesses throughout history imply that women's virtue is linked to their princeliness and in turn that virtue confers nobility through access to the "city of ladies."

In de Pisan's *Livre*, the narrator, Christine, finds herself distressed by the rampant misogyny in books written by men, which cause her to think of herself as "a foule thyng" (Bb2v). Men, she complains, "speketh as it were by one mouth and accordeth all

in semble conclusyon on determynyng that the condycyons of women ben fully enclnyed to all vyces” (Bb1v). Christine asks God, “why haddest thou not made me to be borne in to this worlde in ye masculyne kynde” (Bb3r), when suddenly, three feminine *prosopopoeias*, Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, appear to her armed with princely scepters. As if summoned to speak with unique voices in response to patriarchy’s “one mouth,” the three “ladies” instruct Christine and the reader in history’s wealth of virtuous feminine exemplars. Strikingly, de Pisan’s *Livre* stages the scene of advice through dialogue between a learned woman and embodiments of princely feminine virtues, implying women’s discourse is integral to affirming their virtue. The three ladies instruct Christine and the reader in women’s virtuous potential by answering Christine’s questions about feminine virtue and by offering hundreds of examples of virtuous women from history to argue for women’s intellectual and moral graces. De Pisan directly advises royal women, noblewomen, and all “ladies” through Reason, Rectitude, Justice, and her textual avatar, Christine.¹⁹

For example, Lady Reason assures Christine (and the reader) that the three personified virtues arrived to construct a city in which “these ladyes and all worshypfull women myght have from hens forthe some manere of a place to come to or a cloystre of defence agaynst all those that wolde assayle them” (Bb4v). Anslay’s use of the word

¹⁹ Aemilia Lanyer employs many strikingly similar techniques in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Though no solid evidence confirms that de Pisan as a direct influence on Lanyer’s work, Cristina Malcolmson argues that the presence of a French manuscript of *Livre de la cite des dames* (though without Christine’s signature) in the English royal library (Royal MS. 19A.XIX), suggests the possibility Lanyer may have had access to it through her relationships to people at Elizabeth’s court, and possibly through Elizabeth herself. In any case, it is more likely that Lanyer could have read Anslay’s translation, though she may not have realized to what extent her poetic argument for recognition of women’s knowledge was indebted to another woman’s model of authorship and dissemination of feminine knowledge since Anslay’s *Boke* doesn’t credit de Pisan as author. See Cristina Malcolmson “Christine de Pizan’s City of ladies in early modern England” in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (2002). For a detailed study of the “city of Ladies” tapestries held at the Tudor court, see Susan Groag Bell, *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies: Christine De Pizan’s Renaissance Legacy* (2004).

“cloyster” suggests the safe, convent-like nature of de Pisan’s city, even as Reason, Rectitude, and Justice insist that the city’s walls bar women lacking in virtue, establishing clear criteria for women’s access to virtue’s rewards and a hierarchy among women. Just as Fray Martín offered special praise of the Virgin Mary as a princely model for feminine virtue, Justice crowns Mary the Empress and Queen of the City, and textually manifests Mary to accept her authority: ““So I ame and shall be evermore the heede of the kynde of women”” (R3r). As Christine closes her *Livre*, she addresses all the assembled ladies and readers of all classes (“great, meane & lytel” [Z3r]), advising them to model their lives on Mary’s humility, patience, kindness, and chastity to endure the daily struggles they face, like difficult marriages and misogynistic attacks, with princely strength. Reason, Rectitude, and Justice construct a city out of virtue and populate it with worthy women, and close their advice with a nod to God’s command as he expels Eve and Adam from Eden that suggests the beginnings of change: “drawe to the vertues and flee vyces to encrease and multeplie our Cyte” (Z3v). Anslay’s translation of de Pisan’s *Livre* provided English readers a timely “image of a history in which women were both authoritative and powerful” (Jordan *Renaissance* 106) when Queen Catherine of Aragón’s status in the English court was increasingly tenuous and the reality of a solitary female heir was on the horizon.

In 1523, at Catherine’s request, Juan Luis Vives wrote *De Institutione Christianae Feminae* as a pedagogical guide for her daughter Mary, the young prince of England.²⁰

²⁰ *De Institutione*’s widespread popularity in Europe is evidenced by its numerous translations. In 1528, Juan Justiano translated Vives’s guide into Castilian, entitled *Instrucción de la muger cristiana*. Justiano removes Vives’s dedication to the English Queen and replaces it with a dedication to Doña Germana de Foix, the wife of Don Fernando, viceroy of Valencia. *Instrucción* was republished in several editions and at times reads as an original work more than a translation due to its excision of certain information and addition of proverbs and examples to appeal to Spanish readers. That same year, Richard Hyrde published an English translation, entitled *The Instruction of a Christen Woman*. Hyrde’s *Instruction* went through

Mary was not only the daughter of one of Spain's most illustrious princesses; she was also the granddaughter of Isabel I of Castile. Vives's *De Institutione* is largely modeled on Erasmus' *Institutio principis christiani* [*The Education of a Christian Prince*], written in 1516 for the instruction of the Spanish Prince Charles, Mary's cousin, to whom she was briefly betrothed, but it may have also been influenced by Fray Martín's *Jardín de las nobles doncellas* written for Catherine's mother, Isabel (Fantazzi 24).²¹ In imitating Erasmus and perhaps Fray Martín, Vives establishes a Spanish genealogy for the promotion of princely feminine virtues in England and implies the education of a Christian princess should be approached in a similar manner to educating a prince. However, his disapproval of women's autonomous public roles means that he prepares Mary to be a good consort, not a sovereign ruler. The text instructs Mary and all women ("I think all of the books should be read by every class of woman" [46]) about how they should conduct themselves in public and private, champions women's chastity at all stages in their life (virgin, wife, widow), and advises them in their domestic roles as obedient wives and instructing mothers.

De Institutione was instrumental in Catherine's cause to promote the education of her daughter and other women. Additionally, it was the first manual of its kind that specifically argued for the education of all women, a claim that reverberated in the political and domestic spheres. Referring to Aristotle's *Oeconomica*, Vives writes: "With

nine printings from its initial publication until 1592. In his dedication to Catherine of Aragon, following Vives's, he credits Sir Thomas More, the English humanist and recipient of Catherine's patronage, with assisting his translation. More was a strong advocate of women's learning and Vives mentions More's daughters Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecilia, and his adopted daughter Margaret Giggs as contemporary exemplars of feminine learning (Fantazzi 70).

²¹ Charles was the son of Spanish monarchs Philip the Handsome and Queen Juana, and the grandson of Isabel I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon.

good reason Aristotle says that those states that do not provide for the proper education of women deprive themselves of a great part of their prosperity...all the more justly can it be said of the individual household” (45). Unlike men who have purpose and influence “both within the home and outside it, in public and in private,” he reasons, women should be confined to the home and thus have no need for broader education beyond maintaining their chastity: “[a] woman’s only care is chastity; therefore when this has been thoroughly elucidated, she may be considered to have received sufficient instruction” (47). Despite Vives’s predictable conservatism about women’s chastity, however, his princely figurations of feminine virtue have agentive potential.

Vives’s anxiety about women’s chastity provides an example of how I see sixteenth-century authors defining feminine virtue in the language of sovereignty. “I think it is,” he writes, “abundantly clear that chastity is, so to speak, the queen of female virtues” (118). Vives personifies chastity as queen in an attempt to elevate its status among other virtues he promotes. Perhaps he does this because he instructs a future queen, but the effect for “ordinary women,” whom he places alongside exemplary queens at certain points in his text (70), is to designate their performance of chastity as princely. Though Vives actively restricts women’s virtue to the home and confines their virtuous potential to their chastity, by promoting their education as a social benefit and crowning chastity “the queen of female virtues,” he effectively blurs the distinction between the performance of domestic and political virtues, which in turn broadens the kinds of power women could potentially wield.

Vives contributes to the development of the concept of princely feminine virtue throughout the sixteenth century by championing Queen Catherine of Aragon as a living

princely archetype of domestic feminine virtues. In his preface addressed to Catherine, Vives reveals he modeled his conduct manual on the stages of her life as a virgin, widow, and wife to the extent that her exemplary model becomes indistinguishable from his text.²² Vives's dedication contains dizzying layers of advice strategies that rely on the promotion of Catherine's exemplarity above other women through the conflation of her life and "mind" with the text itself: "in these books you will see the image of your mind... these various states of life that whatever you did is a model of an exemplary life to others" (50). He also asserts that while other exemplary women may be offered as patterns of virtue, they are only figures for Catherine: "under the rubric of excellent and outstanding virtues other women similar to you may be mentioned by name, but it is you always, even if tacitly, who are spoken of" (50). Queen Catherine is therefore elevated as sovereign above all virtuous women in history and becomes the singular model of feminine perfection and the "rubric" for virtuous instruction.

Catherine's exemplary biographical model as virgin, wife, and widow serves as the template for *De institutione* and thus for her daughter's, and all women's, educations based on the narrow "precepts and rules" he offers women "for the conduct of their lives" (50). By declaring that Queen Catherine is the sole ideal of virtue and her life is a didactic model for the proper performance of feminine virtue, Vives implies his book is an instructional manual in how to act like a queen. However, by designating Catherine as the model of strictly *domestic* feminine virtues that Mary and the reader will recreate in "her

²² "Beginning with the Basel edition of 1538, Vives changed his description of Catherine's marital status with Arthur, Prince of Wales, from *uxor* (wife) to *sponsa* (promised spouse), thus supporting the Queen's cause" (Fantazzi 50, n.17). Judith Richards argues that this can be read as a strategic political move as well as praise of the queen's feminine virtues. To accept divorce would be to bastardize (and remove from the line of inheritance) Mary, their only surviving heir (28-29). By embracing the role of the loving, virtuous, rejected wife, Catherine secured Mary's inheritance of the throne.

own home,” Vives firmly relocates queenship to the domestic sphere (50). Like centuries of authors before him, Vives finds women’s ineptitude for governance in the weakness of their minds and bodies: “Nature herself has declared this by making the man more fit for governing than the woman” (194). Although Vives asserts women’s “natural” weakness and requisite obedience to men, he contributes to the textual tradition of mixing princely and feminine virtues by championing the education of all women, by promoting Queen Catherine of Aragón as *exempla* of domestic feminine virtues, and by arguing that true nobility derives from the performance of virtue. For example, he asks, “But why must we confine nobility to lineage and riches? They are noble who are illustrious in virtue and noble deeds” (203). Vives’s influence on the ideology of feminine virtue strategically reorients nobility to the proper performance of prescribed feminine virtues that *all* women, not just queens, can potentially achieve.

In *La perfecta casada* [*The Perfect Wife*] (1583), Fray Luis de León marshals the good wife of Proverbs 31 as an exemplar for early modern wifely virtue. Fray Luis constructs his conduct guide for new brides as part biblical exegesis, part epistolary address, to provide an explanation of the verses that describe “a woman of worth” (Prov. 31:10-31) to his newly married relative and dedicatee, Doña María Varela Osorio.²³ *La perfecta casada* was published in six editions by 1632 and was widely read in Spain.²⁴ As we saw in Aylmer’s defense of Elizabeth I’s rule, the virtuous wife of Proverbs 31 was an early modern touchstone for shaping and representing feminine virtue. Proverbs 31 is also a significant text for my purposes because it combines a queen’s instruction about

²³ English translations are from John A. Jones and Javier San José Lera, *A Bilingual Edition of Fray Luis De León's La Perfecta Casada: The Role of Married Women in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (1999).

²⁴ Jones and Lera suspect that the high volume of printings may be due to the book’s popularity as a gift for new brides (lviii).

regal and feminine virtues. Proverbs 31 begins with “The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.” In early modern Spain and England, the common exegetical consensus about the identity of the mysterious “king Lemuel” mentioned in here was that “Lemuel” was a diminutive form of “Solomon,” thereby revealing the instructive mother to be Queen Bathsheba. The entire book of Proverbs 31 provides King Solomon with queenly maternal instruction on which virtues define a good king (verses 1-9) and which define a good wife (verses 10-31). At the outset, then, Fray Luis’s *La perfecta casada* is steeped in promoting to women the combined discourse of political and domestic virtues.

Like Vives’s *De institutione*, *La perfecta casada* uses a queen-mother as a virtuous instructor and exemplar. In the dedicatory address, Fray Luis explains that Proverbs’ description of the perfect wife is provided by God through “la persona de una mujer,” but translated into written text through the words of a man:

...el último capítulo de los Proverbios, donde Dios, por boca de Salomón, rey y profeta suyo, y como debajo de la persona de una mujer, madre del mismo Salomón, cuyas palabras él pone y refiere, con gran hermosura de razones pinta acabadamente una virtuosa casada, con todas sus colores y partes, para que las que pretenden ser, y débenlo pretender todas las que se casan, se miren en ella como en un espejo clarísimo, y se avisen mirándose allí, de aquello que les conviene para hacer lo que deben. (de León 10)

...the last chapter of Proverbs, where, through the lips of Solomon, His king and prophet, and through the person of a woman, the mother of Solomon himself, whose words He provides and quotes, with beautiful arguments God paints a complete picture of a virtuous wife in full color and detail; so that those women who seek to be like her (and all those who marry should seek this) may look at themselves in her as if in a very clear mirror, and may take note, as they look at themselves there, of that which will help them accomplish what they should do. (Jones and Lera 11)

This moment echoes Vives’s dedication to Queen Catherine of Aragon in *De Institutione* through similar imagery figuring the text as a mirror and its representation of a virtuous

woman as a painting. As Fray Luis describes, the “debajo de la persona de una mujer” that God paints fashions the book into an “espejo” in which women readers can view themselves and measure their virtues alongside those extolled by Bathsheba and explained by Fray Luis. Therefore, Fray Luis’s exposition of Proverbs 31 serves as a “mirror for wives” as advised by Solomon’s queen mother, Bathsheba, promoting the role of queens as wifely exemplars in two important ways. First, Bathsheba acts as an exemplary mother (and implied wife) by advising her son about his future wife’s ideal virtues. Second, Bathsheba’s role as queen mother strengthens her authority as an advisor for her son about his new wife who will be the future queen.

In addition to Bathsheba and the virtuous woman of Proverbs, Fray Luis marshals four women from ancient and recent history as *exempla* for new brides, and significantly, the women he names are princesses or queens: Isabel la Católica, Helen of Troy, Penelope, and Esther. All these royal women serve as paragons of the *mujer varonil*, or “masculine woman,” who performs their domestic duties with industriousness and strength. Fray Luis’s *La perfecta casada* diverges from conduct guides like Vives’s in its promotion of feminine fortitude through household labor and its focus on how women should regard their *estados* in the home more explicitly as governance. As I will explore further in my second chapter, Fray Luis’s engagement with Proverbs 31 prioritizes the *mujer de valor*, or woman of worth. Like the word “virtud,” *valor* simultaneously denotes worth or value and the strength of virtuous action.²⁵ Therefore, the fiscal metaphor

²⁵ “La calidad, que constituye una cosa digna de estimación, ú aprecio; Se toma también por el precio, que se regula correspondiente, è igual à la estimación de alguna cosa; Se toma assimismo por ánimo, y aliento, que desprecia el miedo, y temor en las empresas, ò resoluciones; Significa assimismo subsistencia, y firmeza de algun acto; Significa también fuerza, actividad, eficacia, ò virtud de las cosas, para producir sus efectos; Se llama también la equivalencia de una cosa à otra, especialmente hablando de las monedas” “The quality that constitutes a thing as worthy of estimation or appreciation; Also taken for something’s price which is regulated as corresponding or equal to its estimation; Also taken for spirit, or force that lessens

Proverbs uses to describe the *mujer de valor*'s rare and costly "worth" also reveals the quality that makes her so exceptional: the strength of her virtue.

Penelope, one of Fray Luis's princely exemplars of *valor*, serves as Robert Greene's primary didactic figure in *Penelopes web* (1587). Like *La perfecta casada*, Greene's guide emphasizes the political nature of women's domestic duties by emphasizing prudent household governance. Like Anslay's *Boke*, *Penelopes web* vividly stages a scene of virtuous instruction in which a queen advises her ladies and readers in the proper performance of traditional domestic feminine virtues. The prose romance represents Queen Penelope of Ithaca unweaving her "web" on three consecutive nights while she instructs her maids in "the three speciall poynts that are requisite in every woman, Obedience, Chastitie, and Silence" (B4v). Not only do the narrative frame and the stories construct a behavior manual for women that join the regal and domestic realms as well as their virtues, but Greene's dedicatory address to Lady Margaret Countess of Cumberland²⁶ and Lady Anne Countess of Warwick uses the rhetoric of domestic governance to describe Penelope's clever stratagem to deceive her suitors as "pollicie": "this *pollicie* put in practice, (for that the night the friend to sweete and golden sleepes grudged that her benefites should bee despysed by the restlesse labour of such a *pollitick huswife*)" (B1v, my emphases). Greene's use of the words "pollicie" and "pollitick" join the discourses of the political governance practiced by queens with the governance extolled to and practiced by housewives, while emphasizing the performative nature of

one's fear and hesitation to perform certain undertakings or decisions; Also signifies the force or firmness of an act; Also means the strength, activity, efficacy or virtue of things in order to produce their effects; It can also refer to the equivalence of one thing to another, especially when discussing money' (*Diccionario Autoridades*)

²⁶ Lady Margaret Countess of Cumberland is the primary dedicatee of Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, the subject of my fourth chapter.

virtue.²⁷ By cleverly devising “a shift to make her work endlesse,” Penelope practices employs “prudent conduct” to protect her chastity. Greene situates, Penelope, a “pollitick huswife,” as an icon of princely feminine virtue.²⁸ Greene’s use of “pollitick” to describe Penelope as a housewife also calls to mind Aristotle’s use of the word *politiké* to describe the husband’s rule in the household (Jordan “The Household and the State” 311), which suggests Penelope’s rule replaces her husband-king’s authority when he is absent.

Penelopes web serves as an instruction manual for women who seek to rule their husbands and households with “pollicie” by frequently staging women’s compliance with patriarchal demands to achieve political ends. Penelope, a queen advising would-be domestic queens, extolls obedience, chastity, and silence as necessary virtues for the woman who wants to rule her home with “honest government,” reclassifying traditional feminine virtues as princely in their capacity to govern, “refourme,” and “reclayne” their husbands (B4v-C1r). However, in many ways, *Penelopes web*, like Penelope’s “pollicie” of weaving and unweaving, shows how “the display of feminine virtue requires performance, even fraudulent performance” (Murphy 38). In addition to demonstrating the performative nature of obedience, chastity, and silence, Greene’s Penelope uses the advisory mode to weave a web between feminine virtue and women’s sovereignty. For example, in her “obedience tale,” Penelope declares that housewives can achieve wisdom and sovereign rule over their husbands by practicing obedience: “the chiefest point of

²⁷ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “pollicie” as used here has several senses which resonate with political and domestic governance, as well as deception: “The art, study, or practice of government or administration; the conduct of public affairs; political science. *Obs.*” (I.1.a), “A device, a contrivance, an expedient; a stratagem, a trick. *Obs.*” (I.3), “Prudent conduct; politic or expedient behaviour; prudence, shrewdness, sagacity” (5.a.), and “Political prudence; skill or shrewdness in public affairs; statecraft, diplomacy” (5.b.).

²⁸ Like “pollicie,” the adjective “pollitick” resonated with political and domestic governance, describing both a “prudent, shrewd, sagacious” person (A.2.b.) or “a politician” (B.2.b.)

wisdom in a good wife is to make a conquest of her husband by obedience” (C1r). By advocating for rule through obedience, *Penelopes web* persuades the housewife to act obediently by promising a reversal in the power dynamic of the household, however temporary or imperceptible.

Like de Pisan’s Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, and Catherine of Aragón in Vives’s *De Institutione*, Greene’s Penelope is a sovereign who personifies the feminine virtues she advises. But unlike Vives’s *De Institutione*, which uses Catherine’s princely model to confine women’s sovereignty to the home, Penelope’s lessons involve women being *elevated* in social station and political potential through their “pollitick” performances of feminine virtue.²⁹ For example, advising obedience, Penelope tells of queen Barmenissa who loses her crown after the Sultan of Egypt divorces her to marry his concubine.³⁰ By practicing political and wifely obedience Barmenissa retains her princely virtues and reclaims the throne, “bearing as princely a mind in adversitie, as she did in prosperitie” (D1r). Although Barmenissa loses her crown, she retains her princely virtues and learns industriousness and patience through adversity, leading Penelope to moralize: “it is princely as wel to be faithfull as patient” (D3v). Penelope reframes obedience as princely by showing how Barmenissa’s performance of wifely fidelity and patience, and political obedience to the Sultan, her king and husband, restores her political power.

²⁹ Additionally, although like Fray Luis’s *La perfecta casada Penelopes Web* is written by a male author, it ostensibly displays a scene of feminine instruction unmediated by masculine influence. *Penelopes Web* shares this feature with Pisan’s *Livre*, though Pisan’s text is of course more authentically uncorrupted by a masculine perspective.

³⁰ The tale’s initial plot is reminiscent of Henry VIII’s divorce of Catherine of Aragón to marry Anne Boleyn and may be a veiled critique of the king’s actions. This makes it an interesting text to read alongside Vives’s educational treatise, especially considering how Vives frets about authenticity while Greene promotes performance.

Penelope's third tale rewards a prince's wife with a queenly crown for her performance of silence, suggesting it is a requisite princely feminine virtue for domestic princesses. In the story, the king of Delphos chooses his heir by testing the virtue of each of his sons' wives because "a vertuous wife is a great stay to a Prince" (G4v). When the king asks each of his son's wives to testify to their virtue, two wives brag about their virtues too heartily, but the third wife remains silent, by which the king reads "in her face the very portraiture of vertue" (H2r). When prompted, she responds as disinterestedly as Shakespeare's *Innocent* might: "He that gaineth a Crowne getteth care, is it not follie then to hunt after losse" (H2r). She nevertheless wins the crown by proclaiming her silence: "This (quoth she) that when others talke, yet being a woman I can hold my peace" (H2r). Her quip questions her competitors' femininity while her silence displays the kind of prudent taciturnity Charles Butler praises as princely. In other words, she performs disinterested silence in order to "gaine[] a Crowne," thereby instructing women how they may leverage proper feminine conduct into political gains.

Chapter Summaries

Though operating in the same universe as the practical advice literature above, the literary texts that serve as case studies in my chapters complicate and creatively expand on their theories of princely feminine virtue as well as theories advanced by other contemporary texts I place in direct conversation with the case studies. One aspect of advice literature my chosen case studies improve upon is the advancement of women into the public sphere as well as the revision of the kinds of virtues women perform in order to achieve agency outside the home. In these chapters, I select English and Spanish texts from a variety of genres—drama, novela, lyric poetry, epistolary correspondence—to

demonstrate the diverse ways women's virtues were represented alongside sovereign models in public literary texts and private texts with public aims.

I restrict my chapters to texts written in the first decade and a half of the seventeenth-century because this moment marks the transition from Elizabeth's forty-five year reign as queen regnant into the reign of James I and his consort Anne of Denmark. This shift was felt not just in England, but in Spain as well as my two Spanish chapters demonstrate. In addition to changes in political policy, Elizabeth's death marked a real and representational shift in women's political power. A solitary woman no longer ruled England, but English and Spanish writers continued to draw on living and dead, historical and fictional exemplars to theorize and represent feminine models of political virtue.

My first two literary case studies, one a dramatic romance and the other a romance novela, demonstrate how romance's trajectory toward marriage enables princely ends for women. In my first chapter, I show how Shakespeare's dramatic romance, *Cymbeline*, reconsiders the mixture of princely and feminine virtues promoted in conduct guides and defenses of women's rule. In many ways, Innogen alters Aylmer's declaration that a woman can rule as a prince but obey as a wife by asserting instead that a woman may rule as a wife, but perform service as a prince. Innogen, sharing her name with Britain's first queen, embodies the mixture of sovereignty and service that feminine conduct manuals often promoted while demonstrating how the two modes can be surprisingly interchangeable. For example, Innogen defines her sovereignty via her wifely status, not her princely blood. Though it is often argued that *Cymbeline's* conclusion removes Innogen's power by representing her as refusing to act on her own queenship, I stress that the play represents Innogen's claim to the throne as requiring her

obedience, a virtue she cannot reconcile with her noble nature. For example, when she is advised to “change command to obedience” to pass as a male servant, she improves upon this advice by performing her role with “a prince’s courage.” I suggest that by performing service—a blend of obedience and courage— Innogen as Fidele, and later, as the returned British prince, embodies the political virtue *fides*, a constancy in words and deeds, which affirms both her wifely sovereignty and her political power.

After the first chapter, which analyzes how *Cymbeline* figures a princess as an example of the mixture of political and domestic virtue for wives, the three subsequent chapters analyze texts that rework this dynamic to position ordinary women as advisors, exemplars, and mirrors for female sovereigns while drawing on the tropes of sovereignty common to advice literature. In my second chapter, I examine how Cervantes’s romance novela, *La española inglesa*, rethinks the trope of using exemplary queens to advise women to represent Isabela, a Gaditano merchant’s daughter, as a virtuous and reformatory mirror for Queen Elizabeth I. Though scholars often regard Cervantes’s positive representation of Elizabeth, a hated enemy of Spain, as a curious puzzle, I demonstrate that Cervantes’s English queen is not inherently magnanimous; instead, she is transformed by Isabela’s marvelous *valor*. I suggest Fray Luis’s advice in *La perfecta casada* that wives be *mujeres de valor* and his explication of Proverbs 31’s extensive material metaphors to advise feminine virtue help us understand the novela’s investment in similar material metaphors to describe Isabela and her *valor*. Because Isabela’s *valor* transforms Queen Elizabeth from a tyrant into a benevolent monarch, I argue, the novela makes a powerful assertion about the miraculous power of common Spanish-Catholic virtue to improve upon and supplant previous regal models of feminine virtue.

My two final chapters turn away from representations of women by male authors to investigate how early modern women represented their feminine virtues by drawing on regal religious models and tropes. In my third chapter, I examine how Aemilia Lanyer grapples with the problem of feminine silence by using *prosopopoeia*, a poetic device that physically embodies and gives voice to abstract concepts, to wage a poetic argument for women's rights to share their knowledge in speech and publication. Like Christine de Pisan, Lanyer manifests Virtue, a personification of feminine sovereignty, in concert with her own authorial voice to advise her reader and numerous noble female dedicatees and to assemble a convent-like gathering of virtuous women. However, Lanyer's use of the trope to manifest Pilate's Wife and the Queen of Sheba makes an important intervention into the tradition of representing noble feminine *prosopopoeias*. In addition to the trope's ability to physically manifest abstract concepts, some early modern theorists also noted *prosopopoeia*'s ability to work poetic necromancy (or prophecy by the dead) to conjure persons to deliver an argument or reveal hidden knowledge. I argue that by poetically conjuring the Queen of Sheba and Pilate's Wife, Lanyer accesses the full range of *prosopopoeia*'s necromantic powers to establish feminine virtue as an eternally sovereign force and to foretell the return of women's originary sovereignty through their access to divine knowledge, virtuous speech, and poetic expression.

In my final chapter, I move from Lanyer's public poetic manifestations of a convent of virtuous women to the private correspondence of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, Spain's first female missionary to London, who wrote of her desire to earn "una gloriosa corona" of martyrdom. I focus specifically on Luisa's letters to her friend, Magdalena de San Jerónimo, a religious woman living at the Flemish court of the

Spanish Infanta and Austrian Archduchess, Isabel Clara Eugenia, to examine how early modern religious women used friendship alliances to achieve political and spiritual ends. Isabel Clara Eugenia's court was strikingly similar to a convent, and though neither Magdalena nor Luisa were technically nuns, they lived in the interstices of religion and politics. Luisa's letters relay her carefully crafted political advice and spiritual counsel to the Infanta, while simultaneously deflecting Magdalena and the Infanta's persistent demands that she return to Spanish territory by representing her agency as compliance with God's will. Like Innogen, Luisa's correspondence demonstrates how she cleverly negotiates within advised performances of obedience to fashion her self-governed authority.

In addition to recasting feminine virtue through a princely lens, these texts reveal a shared vision of how performances of feminine virtue are invested with agency and power. This method of reading "princely feminine virtue," then, helps us better understand how the culture may have imagined women's domestic lives as filled with regal, agentive potential and their performance of feminine virtues as contributing to the empowerment of their public selves.

CHAPTER II

“THE TRUEST PRINCESS THAT EVER SWORE HER FAITH”:

INNOGEN’S WIFELY SOVEREIGNTY AND POLITICAL SERVICE IN

SHAKESPEARE’S *CYMBELINE*

Rock on, ancient queen
Follow those who pale in your shadow
Rulers make bad lovers
You better put your kingdom up for sale
—Fleetwood Mac “Gold Dust Woman”

To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it
than it is pleasant to them that bear it.
—Queen Elizabeth I “The Golden Speech”

In my introduction, I examined how early modern advice literature promotes regal women as models for feminine virtue, which generates what I term princely feminine virtue, a mixture of domestic and political virtues, as a category of conduct for women that enabled agency. I described how in the English tradition texts like Juan Luis Vives’s *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* and Robert Greene’s *Penelopes Web* offered historical queens Catherine of Aragón and Penelope as models of the traditional domestic feminine virtues, thereby designating those virtues as princely through their performance and advisement by queens. These texts suggest that certain kinds of advice literature played a role in carving out a space for women’s sovereignty in realms not traditionally invested with political virtues, like the home. For example, in his English translation of Vives’s *De Institutione* (1524), *The Instruction of a christen woman* (1540), Richard Hyrde champions wives’ governance of their homes and commends wives who “have skylle to rule an house” (i2v). The dynamic between women’s domestic sovereignty and service promoted in advice literature is creatively reimaged in early seventeenth-century literary works, including drama. In William Shakespeare’s romance, *Cymbeline*

King of Britain, Prince Innogen compellingly demonstrates how a woman may rule as a wife, but negotiate the demands of obedience to serve as a prince.

Cymbeline offers an interesting example of domestic rule on stage by representing Innogen as a reluctant prince and heir to the throne, who desires not to govern because it paradoxically conflicts with her power to choose a husband.³¹ Innogen, like many princely women in advice literature, reconsiders the relationship between domestic and political virtues by choosing domestic sovereignty over political rule. Innogen's independent "election" (1.1.53) of her own husband is an act of disobedience against her father and king, Cymbeline. Consequently, the play explores how a prince might exploit a performance of required obedience to facilitate agency. When Prince Innogen flees court disguised as a male servant to reunite with her banished husband, Posthumus, she adopts the name "Fidele" to embody her wifely fidelity, but also I suggest, to denote her *fides*, the princely virtue of faithfulness and constancy.

Innogen's story charts the infusion of princely virtue into the domestic realm using many of the same tropes found in advice literature promoting feminine virtues in a princely register. Innogen's words are instructive in showing how obedience may be performed in a princely manner: "This attempt/ I am soldier to, and will abide it with/ A prince's courage" (3.4.184-186). Because Innogen disguises herself as Fidele to reunite with her husband, her performance of service is in pursuit of her marital happiness. Generally, however, Innogen's relationship with Posthumus is marked by her sovereignty over him. By embracing virtuous disobedience and learning service as Fidele, Innogen demonstrates that service can be a virtue appropriate to sovereigns. Innogen fuses the

³¹ I use the gender-neutral term "prince" to refer to Innogen in line with common period usage and how she refers to herself.

political and the domestic, courage and obedience, to fashion service into a princely feminine virtue.

Like other princely paragons of virtue, Innogen's name recalls a historical queen. Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* records that Innogen was the wife of Britain's first king, the Trojan Brutus, or Brute, a descendant of Aeneas. Though Holinshed mentions her only twice, Innogen's role in Britain's foundation is significant. She is the Greek King Pandrasus' daughter given to Brute as his wife as part of the peace treaty between Pandrasus and the surviving Trojans after the Trojan War, allowing Brute to sail to what would become Britain. According to the first term of the "perfect peace" between Brute and Pandrasus: "Fyrst that Pandrasus shuld giue his daughter named Innogen vnto Brute in mariage, with a competent summe of golde and siluer for hir dower" (1.12). *Cymbeline*'s Innogen, therefore, has cultural resonances with Britain's first queen and mother of succeeding kings.³² Fitting with Shakespeare's Innogen's desire to marry freely rather than rule, both Innogens' marital destinies are aligned with the "westering of empire" and both marry men who are crucial to the "peace" of their nations.³³ However, Shakespeare maintains the historical Innogen's importance to the future of Britain by frequently aligning his Innogen's identity with her

³² Innogen is not the play's only ancient queen. See Jodi Mikalachki's analysis of how the Queen's patriotism recalls the historical British queen Boadicea, and how her elimination in the play's ending is crucial to the play's "masculine romance." Jodi Mikalachki, *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England* (1998).

³³ There is a vast amount of scholarship on *Cymbeline*'s engagement with British history, burgeoning ideas of nationhood, and English identity, though these criticisms generally sublimate Innogen's significance. See John E Curran, "Royalty Unlearned, Honor Untaught: British Savages and Historiographical Change in *Cymbeline*" in *Comparative Drama*. 31.2 (1997) pp. 277-303; Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (2003); Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (1997); Ros King, *Cymbeline: Constructions of Britain* (2005); George W. Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (1948); Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (1988); and Patricia Parker, "Romance and Empire: Anachronistic *Cymbeline*" in *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance* (1989) pp. 189-207.

nation.³⁴

In *The Booke of Plaies and Notes therof p formans for Common Pollicie*, the astrologer Simon Forman records seeing “Cimbalin king of England,” and his description of the play, though lacking details of date and theater, offers scholars a glimpse of a contemporary audience member’s response to seeing a play not published until the 1623 Folio. Forman’s description mainly relates Innogen’s plotline.³⁵ Forman leaves Posthumus unnamed and only refers to him as “her loue,” prioritizing Innogen in their relationship as the play and Posthumus consistently emphasize (Chambers 2.338-339). Curiously, although Forman states his description of plays he has seen is “for Common Pollicie,” his description of *Cymbeline* neglects his usual mention of what lessons the play provides its audience. In my analysis of the play I would like to draw out the “pollicie” *Cymbeline* offers, which is the promotion of women’s “rule” in marriage and service as a princely virtue.

By marrying Posthumus and not wanting to rule, Innogen disrupts the royal lineage and security of succession, which *Cymbeline* frames as “disobedience.” Royal succession is a frequent concern in Shakespeare’s romances in part because of the genre’s investment in the union of patriarchal families and the security of succession. The comparison between *Cymbeline*’s familial and political concerns with James I’s has

³⁴ Innogen is poetically aligned with her nation on numerous occasions throughout the text, including by herself when she worries that her recently banished husband “Has forgot Britain” (1.6.111). Patricia Parker notes that Innogen’s metonymic association with Britain is reinforced through her representation as an “involute isle, yet vulnerable to invasion” (191), which is reinforced through the Second Lord’s prayer that asks “The heavens hold firm/ The walls of [her] dear honour, keep unshak’d/ That temple, [her] kfair mind, that [she] mayst stand,/ T’ enjoy [her] banish’d lord and this great land!” (2.1.64-67).

³⁵ Though there has been some scholarly debate about rendering Innogen’s name as “Innogen” or “Imogen,” Valerie Wayne has championed the return of the extra “n” in Innogen’s orthography in her new 2017 Arden edition of the play and I follow her spelling. All quotations of *Cymbeline* are from this edition.

prompted a generous body of topical scholarship.³⁶ David Bergeron argues that the very issues that lie at the heart of *Cymbeline* and the other romances were issues for James I during his first decade of rule: “deliverance, peaceful succession, royal lineage, union of the kingdom, expectations that rest with the younger generation, and concern for the marriage of the eligible royal children” (10). Constance Jordan argues that in *Cymbeline*, “elements of romance—the reuniting of lovers, the return of lost children—cohere in a final prospect of a westering empire that will gather together its people, British and Roman, in generative unions rather than by violent conquest” (Jordan 69). Jordan’s approach to the romances takes their political dynamic—“the political duo” of “superior and subordinate” (3)—as essential to understanding their place in the first decade of James I’s reign: “like the histories, the romances speak the language of politics” (12). And the “language of politics” that the romances most strikingly invest in, according to Jordan, interrogates “a subject’s obedience to authority and a ruler’s obligation to his people” (2). The dynamic Jordan observes is the very one I hope to examine through the lens of “service,” the play’s guiding ethic of princeliness, focusing specifically on Innogen’s cultivation and performance of the virtue of service as a negotiated form of obedience.

In analyses of virtue in *Cymbeline*, scholars typically examine Innogen’s slandered and imperiled chastity,³⁷ but my own interest is in the representation of

³⁶ For another topical analysis of *Cymbeline* focusing on Jacobean politics and the parallel between Cymbeline’s royal family and James I’s family, see Emrys Jones, “Stuart Cymbeline” in *Essays in Criticism* 11 (1961).

³⁷ Feminist scholars identify Iachimo’s inventory of Imogen’s body and bedchamber as a form of rape, informed in part by the Italian Iachimo’s identification with “Our Tarquin” (2.2.11) and his comment about Innogen’s choice of Ovid’s tale of Philomel from *Metamorphoses* as bedtime reading: “She hath been reading late./ The tale of Tereus, here the leaf’s turn’d down/ Where Philomel gave up” (2.2.44-46). For scholarship on the significance of Innogen’s chastity for the wager between Iachimo and Posthumus, as

Innogen's obedience and its relation to the play's concern with service, nobility, and reconciliation. I will examine how Innogen exemplifies many of the princely feminine virtues promoted to wives in advice literature by exploring how the play's theory of princely service intersects with contemporary ideas about political and domestic service. Innogen's particular identity as a reluctant prince and devoted wife who learns the virtues of political and domestic service is an important intersection of identities early modern women may have welcomed onstage. Judith Weil reminds us that many wives and servants and in some cases, "former servants who had become wives," comprised part of Shakespearean audience (51). In romance plots where heroines cross-dressed as servants, audiences saw an overlap in identities that may have resonated with them more than we imagine. Furthermore, Weil explains, "these dramatic fusions of wife and servant roles have a significance which may not be visible from an authoritarian perspective...the play is asking what happens when the potentially creative agencies of wives and servants converge (51). Innogen performs service as Fidele in the pursuit of her ambition to live happily as Posthumus's wife, unfettered by the crown's subjugating yoke. Therefore, as Weil suggests, Innogen's "creative agencies" converge in her performance of service as a wife, but her identity as a servant-wife is further complicated by her status as a prince and designated heir. Innogen's performance of service as Fidele affords her more "creative agency" than her political role as prince.

The designation of "service" in the early modern world had political as well as

well as Iachimo's inspection of her body, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (1992); Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (2010); Marie H. Loughlin, *Hymeneutics: Interpreting Virginitly on the Early Modern Stage* (1997); Patricia Parker, "Romance and Empire: Anachronistic Cymbeline" in *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance* (1989) pp.189-207; and Valerie Wayne, "The woman's parts of *Cymbeline*" in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (2002) pp. 288-315.

domestic applications. Service encapsulated an entire range of behaviors of political subjects, which included everyone except the reigning monarch, and of those who served as a profession. In his study of how service can be a politically radical position, Richard Strier describes *Cymbeline* as a play that prioritizes performances of service. In Strier's words, "the theme of virtuous disobedience is almost obsessive" in *Cymbeline* ("Faithful Servants" 125). Though Strier only briefly considers the ethics of servitude voiced by Cloten, Pisanio, and Posthumus in a larger discussion of service in *King Lear*, his point is well taken. Political subjects were often aligned with servants in advice literature promoting obedience, which adds to the variety of ways servants were used as figures of domestic and political subjection and agency.

As Weil explains, service in the early modern period was a broadly conceptualized category that could encompass varying levels of service: occupational and political, public and private, familial and formal. Weil echoes Strier's sentiments about the play's sustained interest in virtuous disobedience by describing *Cymbeline* as "one of the most idealistic plays in its representation of service" (43). What makes the play so exceptional, she argues, is how it represents Innogen as seemingly stripped of her power while promoting her ability to save and be saved by posing as Fidele: "The fact that her disguise also involves areas of experience relatively alien to current audiences or readers accounts for [scholarly] neglect. We do not expect to be rescued by servants or to use service as a means of saving our lives" (43). Innogen strategically adopts a posture of service to survive and realizes that she can endear herself to others perhaps more effectively as a servant than as a prince. In the play's conclusion, Cymbeline will finally offer Innogen, disguised as Fidele, his "love" and "grace," where he has chastised her as

a daughter. Likewise, praising her performance of service as Fidele, the Roman Lucius calls Innogen the model of the Roman political virtue, *fides*.

“My Supreme Crown of Grief”: Articulating Wifely Sovereignty

Scholarship on *Cymbeline* tends to rebuke Innogen’s refusal of the crown and submissiveness as Fidele. Janet Adelman, Innogen’s harshest critic, reads her adoption of a masculine identity on her journey through Wales as her “settling into helpless androgyny,” arguing that by becoming Fidele, “she gives up her own powerful femininity, entering willingly into the realm from which other women have been displaced” (210). Ann Thompson agrees that Innogen is unique among cross-dressing Shakespearean heroines because her change in appearance does not give her freedom or depth, but rather she is “characterized rather by silence and timidity...her increasing feebleness and passivity turn into illness and apparent death” (84). She summarizes: “there is a level on which Imogen has to die as an heiress in order to be re-born as a wife” (84). Adelman’s and Thompson’s points are valuable in charting Innogen’s changing identity performances, but I suggest that they miss the complex dynamism of Innogen’s identity. According to Judith Butler, variations within iterative performances are precisely where agency lies (198). By suggesting that Innogen “gives up her own powerful femininity” as Fidele and that Innogen must “die as an heiress in order to be re-born as a wife,” these scholars overlook the agentive opportunities that the simultaneity of these seemingly disparate identities affords. Innogen’s hybrid, though not always harmonious, embodiment of sovereignty and service makes her character dynamic and worthy of feminist scholarship’s serious consideration because she reveals how early

modern women's identities were complexly balanced between performances of obedience and rule as shaped by theories of feminine virtue.

It cannot be overstated how significantly Valerie Wayne's generous feminist scholarship reshaped interpretations of Innogen's character and the play as a whole. Wayne, unlike many feminist scholars, emphasizes the union between Innogen and Posthumus at the play's end rather than Posthumus's subordination of Innogen as his wife: "Innogen's loss of her kingdom is presented as far less important than her union with Posthumus, and the social status of the partners is altered to make each more equal to the other" (Wayne "Woman's Part" 301). Innogen is repeatedly demoted in status throughout the play and she finally loses her claim to the kingdom at the end. "Yet she places little value on social position or even royal inheritance," Wayne argues, "and throughout the play she seems remarkably uninterested in exercising any kind of influence over the kingdom" ("Woman's Part" 296). Wayne's intervention paved the way for analyzing Innogen's character as a woman shaped by her station yet actively struggling against it to forge a self-governed identity for herself. What previous feminist scholars formerly read as "helpless androgyny" or "timidity" is increasingly being reconsidered to account for Innogen's complex self-fashioning.

Innogen's deployment of obedience to serve a sovereign disposition is crucial to her performance of service as Fidele. The variability with which Innogen performs obedience and sovereignty is instructive for examining how representations of women can expose the fissures between advice and performance, between exemplary models and characters that challenge those models. Innogen is unique among Shakespeare's heroines in part because as Fidele she is aesthetically emblematic of the mixture of princeliness

and service and dramatically representative of the tension between the two roles and their eventual synthesis.

One manner this tension works is through the language of subjection, which is alternately mixed with figurative language and material symbols signifying sovereignty. After Posthumus is banished, Innogen summarizes her situation with a regal metaphor and a wish not to be a prince:

A father cruel, and a step-dame false,
A foolish suitor to a wedded lady,
That hath her husband banish'd:--O, that husband,
My supreme crown of grief!
Had I been thief-stolen,
As my two brothers, happy: but most miserable
Is the desire that's glorious. (1.7.1-7)

By describing Posthumus as her “supreme crown of grief,” Innogen illuminates the tension in her role as heir to the throne and as a woman who seeks self-governance by, contrary to royal custom, “electing” her own husband. Innogen’s “crown” is one of “grief” because she is constrained by her “holy duty” (1.2.18) to be doubly obedient to Cymbeline as her king and her father. Innogen’s “crown of grief,” then, is twofold: Posthumus’s banishment reinforces her royal station, crowns her with grief, and underlines her lack of autonomy within the patriarchal political realm. Significantly, she defines her sovereignty in relation to her husband. In this way, Innogen’s definition of sovereignty, marked by the crown, is conjugal happiness, *not* political power. Innogen’s short soliloquy also provides the audience an important insight into the nature of her desire to live as a potential captive (“thief-stolen”), which she more readily equates with freedom than royalty. Innogen inverts the common assumption that to be a prince is “glorious” by declaring she is actually prevented from attaining her glorious desire to be

a self-governed woman. Cloten affirms this by reminding her that although choosing one's own spouse is "allow'd in meaner parties" able "to knit their souls/...in self-figur'd knot" (2.3.115, 116, 118), she is "curb'd from that enlargement, by/ The consequence o' th' crown" (2.3.119-120). The British crown's "consequences" place Innogen in subjection to the patriarchal system of blood royalty that seeks heirs rather than self-governed rulers who courageously serve.

When Innogen calls Posthumus her "supreme crown of grief," she evokes and inverts a common early modern notion of the virtuous wife's function as a "crown" for her husband. Proverbs 12:4 states: "A virtuous woman *is* a crown to her husband" (KJV). The topos of the wife as her husband's crown reinforces his authority as ruler of the "commonwealth" of the home. The crown represents both the glory the virtuous wife brings the husband and the mark of his sovereignty over her—further establishing the connection between the husband/king and the home/state in the analogy of the patriarchal body politic. Accordingly, the wife's relation to her husband as a crown to a prince is symbolic of her subjection. By inverting the analogy to figure Posthumus as her "supreme crown of grief," Innogen, like the proverbial husband, is crowned by her husband's subjection. Significantly, though, his subjection reinforces the reality of her regal blood and destiny to rule.

Innogen's status as prince *and* wife disrupts the patriarchal home/state analogy and demands she prioritize obedience to the crown before fidelity to her husband. As I will explore further below, Innogen's rejection of the princely crown in favor of the "crown conjugal" (Newman 15) is an act of political and filial disobedience. Karen Newman stresses the importance of Proverbs 12:4 for providing a model of early modern

wifely submission. As Newman argues, early modern women's subjectivity was imagined and represented differently from other subject positions since in many aspects of their daily lives women wielded authority over men and other women, such as servants, children, and those of lower classes. As Newman explains further:

A woman, then, is doubly a subject: subjected to her husband in obedience, according to God's ordinance in Genesis and thus modeling the relation of subject to sovereign, but also, and more importantly, constructed as a subject by a system of relations—textual, social, institutional—that fashioned her very subjectivity and the shape and kind of available perceptions of her. (18)

If a woman is enculturated as “doubly a subject,” then the various discourses—scripture, homilies, conduct manuals, treatises, even plays— that shape women's subjectivities work a regulatory effect whereby women are constructed as political *and* domestic subjects. As Newman observes, “patriarchalism requires and produces an other: femininity, childhood, or servitude—wives, children or servants, whose obedience in the family figures the obedience of subjects to Prince” (Newman 25).

Innogen's situation is triply, even quadruply, subject, according to the rubric of familial and political subjection Newman sketches out here. Innogen's gender and marital status requires that she perform traditional feminine virtues, such as chastity, but her filial relation to her father, the king, requires her perform obedience in compliance with her “holy duty” (1.2.18) as his daughter, but also as heir to his throne. As the British heir, however, she is also doubly a sovereign. She is simultaneously the current prince and future sovereign who may place others under subjection, while also being a wife far above her husband's station. When she disguises herself as Fidele to be reunited with her husband, Innogen's subject position becomes further complicated by the expectations of performing obedience as a male servant. Both wives and servants, Newman reminds us,

underwent varying degrees of subjection, and wives generally ruled over servants. Therefore, Innogen is both the embodiment of subjection—as a wife and a servant—and emblematic of rule as an heir to the throne and her husband’s political superior. Innogen’s case becomes especially interesting for an examination of how early modern women’s identities are shaped by discourses theorizing feminine and political virtues because, like her royal male family members, she adamantly rejects obedience as a princely virtue, but learns to practice service as Fidele.

When considered within the debate about women’s political rule and domestic obedience, theories of hierarchy, rule, and service are revealed to be fraught with the tension between diverse, simultaneously occupied subject positions. Advice literature reasoned through the problem of female rule by confusingly presenting obedience as a critical part of a sovereign disposition. For example, John Knox’s *The First Blast of the Trumpet* asserts that women are unfit for rule because by nature they are “unconstant, variable, cruell, and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment” (B2r). However, John Aylmer’s response to Knox, *An Harborowe for Faithfull Subjectes* (1559), asserts:

I graunte that so farre as pertaineth to the bandes of marriage, and the office of a wife, she must be a subject: but as a Magistrate she maye be her husbands head. For the Scripture saith not. Thine eye must be to the man, but *ad virum tuum* to thy husband. Neither oweth woman obedience to every man, but to her owne husbände. Well, if she be her husbandes subject she can be no ruler...Whie may not the woman be the husbandes inferior in matters of wedlock, and his head in the guiding of the common welth. (C4v)

Although Aylmer argues in favor of the married female monarch ruling over her husband as the governor of the commonwealth, he makes quite plain her secondary status to her husband in domestic matters. To remain within the patriarchal analogy of man as head of the family as the monarch is head of the state, allowance was made for the female

monarch to rule her husband in matters of politics, but be ruled by him in matters of the family.

For early modern women who were not rulers, obedience was championed as *the* way to rule in the home. For example, in Johannes Brenz's *A Right Godly and learned discourse upon the booke of Ester* (1584), Brenz argues that wifely obedience is the only "lawfull" way women may rule their husbands: "For thus women by serving and obeing do rule, by which waye onely the rule bearing of women is lawfull" (K2r). Brenz's exposition of Esther illustrates how advice literature promoted women's domestic sovereignty as though commensurate with the political rule modeled by ruling queens. In "An Homily of the State of Matrimony," the homilist intervenes in the wife's potential rule over her husband to advise that "[t]o obey is another thing than to control or command; which yet [wives] may do to their children and to their family; but as for their husbands, them must they obey, and cease from commanding, and perform subjection" (504). He continues, drawing on Erasmian authority, by affirming, "A good wife by obeying her husband shall bear the rule" (504). When wives "relinquish the liberty of their own rule," they may fully "feel the griefs and pains of their matrimony" (505). The homilist's formulation makes wives' relinquishing their sovereignty the precondition of the "griefs" of marriage.³⁸ Innogen's situation, as she expresses it in the metaphor of her "supreme crown of grief," is the opposite: her status as prince and heir demands she "relinquish the liberty of her own rule," which crowns her with "grief." Instead of a marker of her subjection in marriage, Innogen's "grief" stems from her princely crown.

³⁸ "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (KJV Gen 3:16)

While still at court, Innogen acts as an especially disobedient daughter and subject to her father/king. Not long after Lucius leaves after declaring war on Britain, Cymbeline inquires about Innogen's absence, framing her wished-for presence as "duty": "She hath not appear'd/ Before the Roman, nor to us hath tender'd/ The duty of the day. She looks us like/ A thing more made of malice than of duty" (3.5.30-33). Cymbeline does not seem to care whether Innogen loves him or not, but whether she is dutiful. In this context, duty means behaving in compliance with his station and hers, in addition to their relationship as father and daughter. Earlier, Innogen assessed how marrying Posthumus impacts her "father's wrath," but contended that she always maintained her "holy duty" (1.1.87, 88). When Cymbeline interrupts her and Posthumus's amorous farewells, Cymbeline calls her "O disloyal thing" (1.1.132), maligning her loyalty as daughter and heir. Innogen's flippant response displays her self-assurance and commitment to her desire for self-rule: "I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare/ Subdues all pangs, and fears" (1.1.136-137). Here she seems to anticipate her expression of miserable sovereignty in the symbol of her "supreme crown of grief" by asserting that her heartache over losing Posthumus rules her senses.

This shocks Cymbeline, who can only stutter: "Past grace? obedience?" (1.1.137).³⁹ When she replies, "Past hope and in despair: that way past grace" (1.1.138), Innogen supplants her "grace," or duty, and obedience due to Cymbeline with her lack of

³⁹ Innogen's "duty" to Cymbeline is double: as her father and her king; his demand for obedience recalls James' Oath of Allegiance (1606), which was extended to women in 1610. Cloten echoes Cymbeline's sentiment when he chastises Innogen for marrying Posthumus instead of himself: "You sin against/ Obedience, which you owe your father" (2.3.111-112)

divine “grace” caused by her desperate grief over Posthumus’s banishment.⁴⁰ Innogen refuses to perform obedience by marrying Cloten as Cymbeline demands, and therefore is “that way past grace.” Her refusal to ask for “grace” (mercy) implies she considers her disobedience a prudent action, as does her continued justification of her choice as a prudent alternative to her pastoral fantasy: “Would I were/ A neatherd’s daughter, and my Leonatus/ Our neighbour shepherd’s son” (1.1.159-151).⁴¹ She rightly assumes, based on Cymbeline’s words and actions, that her lack of obedience negates Cymbeline’s grace conditionally owed her as a subject. By rejecting her father’s demand for political obedience coded as filial duty, Innogen formulates their relationship as one structured politically, not domestically.

“Both a seruant, and a mistresse”

Though much of the play’s tension is based on the separation of Innogen and Posthumus, the two characters do not share much time together on stage, nor much dialogue. The dialogue they do share, however, is marked by morbidity and metaphors of sovereignty and servitude. Innogen’s unauthorized marriage to Posthumus allegorizes the home-state analogy by mixing the political and the domestic realms. A striking example of this is how Innogen pointedly critiques her royal family for actively disrupting her autonomous choice of husband by describing both her parents as “tyrants.” The insults come across as simultaneously treasonous, because her parents are Britain’s rulers, and casually hyperbolic since they are the understandable reactions of a daughter whose

⁴⁰ Grace: “In a person: virtue, goodness; sense of duty and propriety” (OED 4b); “As something received from God by the individual: benevolent divine influence acting upon humanity to impart spiritual enrichment or purity, to inspire virtue, or to give strength to endure trial and resist temptation” (OED 1b)

⁴¹ Angrily subverting Innogen’s wish to live as a shepherdess instead of a prince, Cymbeline commands his servants to “pen her up” (1.1.154). Like Posthumus and Innogen, Cymbeline and Innogen will not see each other again until the play’s final scene.

autonomy has been thwarted by her controlling parents. Innogen identifies the Queen's insincere pretense of being Innogen's benevolent "jailer" (1.1.74) and Posthumus's "advocate" (1.1.77) as the "dissembling" rhetoric of a "tyrant." Indeed, Innogen's first words in the play offer a directed critique of her stepmother's insidious manner of domestic and political governance: "O dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant/ Can tickle where she wounds!" (1.1.85-86).⁴² Later, after Cymbeline forces Posthumus to leave court before he and Innogen have proper goodbyes, she rails: "ere I could/ Give him that parting kiss...comes in my father,/ And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,/ Shakes all our buds from growing" (1.3.33-37). Innogen's likening of her father to "the tyrannous breath of the north" that chills and kills newly emerging life echoes the play's interest in subjugation and rule articulated in morbid language.

Innogen and Posthumus's first and only conversation until they are reunited in the final scene is infused with the rhetoric of subjugation and sovereignty. Significantly, Posthumus acknowledges Innogen's use of the word "tyrant" to criticize the Queen's interference in their marriage, and adoringly refers to Innogen as "[his] queen" twice during their farewell and, as Pisanio relates to her later, twice more as his ship sails toward Italy (1.1.93, 100, 1.3.5). Posthumus crowns Innogen as his sovereign in their marriage and as the rightful Queen of Britain instead of her tyrannical stepmother. In his initial utterance of regal praise, he amplifies "queen" with an unambiguous acknowledgement of her station above him: "My queen, my mistress!"⁴³ The word

⁴² According to early modern political theories, tyranny characterized more than just the despotic rule of an absolute sovereign. The tyrant's inconstancy, unpredictability, and susceptibility to their passions and private will—traits commonly associated with women—made them dangerously effeminate (Shannon 57).

⁴³ In the final scene, Pisanio refers to Innogen as "Mine and your mistress" (5.5.230) when telling Posthumus that he has just struck his wife, not a "scornful page" (5.5.228). Significantly, Pisanio speaks as a servant, dutifully reminding Posthumus, and everyone present, that they owe Innogen their service.

“mistress” signifies her actual office more directly than “queen,” placing Posthumus as doubly subject, which inverts the traditional patriarchal marriage dynamic. In a later text, *Of Domesticall Duties*, William Gouge corrects the misapprehension that true “fellowship” between a wife and her husband is impossible due to a wife’s “inferiority and subiection” (Aa3r) by affirming that hierarchy does not prohibit fellowship, but actually sustains it:

There may not only be a fellowship, but also an equality in some things betwixt those that in other things are one of them inferiour and subiect: as betwixt man and wife in the power of one another bodies: for *the wife* (as well as the husband) is therein *both a seruant, and a mistresse, a seruant to yeeld her body, a mistresse to haue the power of his* (Aa3r)

Gouge’s explication is applicable to Innogen and Posthumus’s situation, shedding light on how “fellowship” between married partners could be imagined as a shared engagement in service and mastery. Innogen’s role as prince (mistress) and a servant (or prisoner in “manacles”) is strongly evoked in her and Posthumus’s farewells, but it is also her character’s dominant motif: “both a seruant, and a mistresse.” As Fidele, Innogen embodies the duality between service and rule that Gouge finds essential to marriage’s reflection of the commonwealth.

As they say their farewells, Innogen and Posthumus exchange material markers of their fidelity that they invest with values alternatingly suggestive of sovereignty and service. As Innogen encourages Posthumus to leave, she laments that she will not be “comforted to live,/ But that there is this jewel in the world/ That I may see again” (1.2.21-23). In doing so, Innogen inverts the common amorous trope of representing the feminine beloved as a jewel by figuring Posthumus as a rare object that will sustain her life until they meet again. Before Innogen gives Posthumus her dead mother’s diamond

ring as a token of her fidelity, she has already metonymically aligned him with the “jewel” set in it. When she gives him the ring, Innogen infuses the gift with morbid, sovereign significance, saying:

Look here, love;
This diamond was my mother’s; take it, heart;
But keep it till you woo another wife,
When Innogen is dead. (1.1.112-114)

Although Innogen’s language often marks her as the more melancholy of the pair, her token of fidelity is cut with surprisingly gruesome significance. The rhetorical and syntactical parallelism between “Look here, love” and “take it, heart” emphasizes the semantic connection between her words, forcing the audience to consider the diamond’s future instead of Innogen’s. In doing so, she emphasizes, somewhat brutally, her impermanent material state against the diamond’s material hardness and durability. The ring Innogen gives to Posthumus is “the only trace of her natural mother” (Wayne “Woman’s Part” 288). Indeed, by giving Posthumus her dead mother’s diamond ring to “woo another wife/ When Innogen is dead,” she evokes her dead queen mother’s fate and the fate of her father who wooed “another wife” after his “queen” died. Innogen’s morbid articulation curiously aligns herself and Posthumus with her mother and father. In doing so, Innogen crowns herself as Posthumus’s true “queen,” and marks his potential future wife as a “tyrant.”

Innogen gives Posthumus her mother’s ring as a material symbol of her love, which is bound with her princeliness: her fidelity, courage, and constant virtue. The ring’s circular shape represents constancy, unity, and an unbreakable bond while the diamond, according to sixteenth-century Italian humanist, Piero Valeriano, signifies “[a] courage always unwavering...[it] is the image of that virtue of courage by which one

surmounts adversities while suffering them” (quoted in Simonds 285).⁴⁴ Although Simonds reads Innogen’s ring as an expression of her fidelity excluding Posthumus’s bondage, he proclaims their joint bondage verbally and with the “manacle.” According to Wayne, for Posthumus the manacle is “a sign of Innogen’s enclaved sexuality” while the ring serves as “confirmation of her maternal lineage” (295).

Posthumus answers Innogen’s rationale and her gift by wishing for his own death instead of a new wife, and in doing so, emphasizes their mutual bondage:

Another?
You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
And sear up my embracements from a next
With bonds of death! (1.1.115-118)

Posthumus interlaces the language of death and dismemberment with images of bondage in his plea to the “gentle gods” that they “sear up” his “embracements” with “bonds of death” to prevent his marriage to “another wife.”⁴⁵ Posthumus’s “embracements,” (the circular enfolding of arms [OED 1a.]), evoke the round, unyielding shapes of the ring, the manacle, and the crown, which lends his “embrace” an autonomous, binding power to exclude “a next” wife by death’s “bonds.”⁴⁶ Following Innogen’s lead, Posthumus’s imagery implies that although their bonds of marriage may be ruptured by the

⁴⁴ Similarly, in *Batman Upon Bartholome* (1582), Stephen Batman similarly describes the diamond’s impervious virtue: “Nothing overcommeth it, neither iron nor fire, and also it heateth never: for of the Greeks it is called, a vertue that maye not be daunted” (quoted in Simonds 280).

⁴⁵ The Oxford English Dictionary cites this line as an example of the word’s figurative usage (OED “cere” 2d.). The phrase “sear up” means to close a wound or amputated limb by cauterizing it (OED “sear” 3a, 3c), but it also denotes common death rituals, such as “to wrap in a [wax] cerecloth” (OED “cere” 2a.), “to anoint with spices, etc.; also (app.) to embalm” (OED “cere” 2b.), and “to shut up (a corpse in a coffin); to seal up (in lead, or the like)” (OED 2c).

⁴⁶ The word “bond” signifies both a physical restraint, like “a shackle, chain, fetter, manacle” (OED I.1.a.), and a symbolic restraint, such as “any circumstance that trammels or takes away freedom of action” (OED II.5.) or a “uniting or cementing force or influence by which a union of any kind is maintained” (OED II.7.a.).

“consequence” of her “crown,” the “bonds of death” will constrain him from recreating their marital union with someone else.

Posthumus materializes the unbreakable “bonds of death” by giving Innogen a “manacle” that, along with her ring, encodes their conjugal bondage. When he says, “For my sake wear this,/ It is a manacle of love, I’ll place it/ Upon this fairest prisoner”

(1.1.122-54), Posthumus perceptively shifts the reciprocal conceit of the “bond” to mark Innogen unilaterally as his “prisoner.” As Wayne explains, “Posthumus’s form of instantiating his desire through marriage as ownership, his impulse to enclave Innogen’s sexuality as figured in the manacle, intensifies that containment” (301).⁴⁷ When Iachimo steals Innogen’s “manacle” as proof of her infidelity, Posthumus is easily deceived and laments, “The vows of women/ Of no more bondage be to where they are made/ Than they are to their virtues, which is nothing” (2.4.110-112). For Posthumus, Innogen’s forfeiture of her manacle means she has been emancipated from the “vows” sustaining their marital “bondage.” Like the manacle, Posthumus imagines Innogen’s “bond of chastity quite cracked” (5.5.207), and orders Pisanio, his servant, to murder her.

Posthumus’s misguided belief that Innogen has been unfaithful prompt her transformation into “both a seruant and a mistresse,” Fidele, the emblem of wifely faithfulness and rule, and princely service.

As Innogen sets out for Milford Haven to supposedly meet Posthumus with his servant Pisanio’s help, Pisanio reveals that Posthumus’s letter requesting Innogen meet him in Wales was a ruse. In fact, Pisanio faithfully informs her, he has been ordered to

⁴⁷ “Since the structures of kingship and nation depend upon women’s fidelity, Posthumous’s doubts expose men’s fragile dependence in patriarchy on the disposition of women’s sexuality, and show that the threat to women’s physical bodies posed through seduction and rape can also become a threat to personal and national identity, especially when the heir to the throne is a woman” (Wayne 295)

kill Innogen per Posthumus's command. Pisanio's disbelief praises Innogen's virtue and prompts him to articulate his ethic of virtuous disobedience: "Disloyal? No./ She's punish'd for her truth; and undergoes,/ More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults/ As would take in some virtue" (3.2.6-9). In defense of Innogen's marital chastity, which he frames as "loyalty," Pisanio praises her ability to adhere to "her truth," or fidelity, in a quasi-supernatural manner that exceeds a normal wife's ability to maintain her "virtue." The qualities he praises in Innogen—her loyalty and her truth—are the components of *fides*, which Cicero describes as "a constancy and truth of words and covenants" (Kerrigan 260). When Innogen adopts the moniker, Fidele, to encapsulate her faithful performance of service in pursuit of her husband, in Lucius's words, she adopts a name that "well fits [her] faith; [her] faith [her] name" (4.2.381), but *fides* is more than faith. When Pisanio considers Posthumus's horrific command that he murder Innogen, he asks himself, "I, her? Her blood?/ If it be so to do good service, never/ Let me be counted serviceable" (3.2.13-15). Richard Strier argues that Pisanio's articulation of "the distinction between the good servant who disobeys immoral commands and the wicked who will do anything" is a radical ethic of "active resistance" to misguided rule common to the romances (*Resistant* 199-202). It is also the ethic underpinning *fides*: a steadfast commitment to truth regardless of consequences. Posthumus utters this sentiment nearly verbatim when, wracked with guilt over ordering Pisanio murder Innogen, he laments: "Every good servant does not all commands:/ No bond, but to do just ones" (5.1.6-7).

In *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, John Kerrigan examines how the service of political counsel required the counselor to be "bound" in faith to their sovereign not just in trust (*fides*) but also because counselors were "sworn" to service (458). The Roman

virtue *fides*, Kerrigan explains, would have been a familiar concept from grammar school translations of Cicero's *De Officiis*, which defines *fides* as "'fides, id est dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas.' 'Faithfulness,' in Nicholas Grimald's translation, 'is in words, and couenaunt, a trowth, and stedfastnesse'" (423). Marked by "stedfastness" in speech acts and deeds, *fides* is further clarified as crucial to the practice of the princely virtue of justice. Cicero explains further: "'Fundamentum autem est iustitiae fides, id est dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas.'" This was translated by schoolboys: 'But the foundation of Iustice is faithfulness: that is to say, a constancy and truth of words and couenants' (Kerrigan 260). *Fides*, then, is the political virtue par excellence for counselors in service to their sovereign.

Posthumus's familiarity with Ciceronian ethics is not just an interpolation from Shakespeare's school days, but fitting with Posthumus's courtly education shaped by Roman texts. As Mary Floyd-Wilson observes, Posthumus is a prime example of Britain's Romanized culture: "[R]ather than merely celebrating his ancestors' 'natural bravery,' Posthumus emphasizes the civilizing effects of the Roman conquest" (Floyd-Wilson 180). Similar to Innogen's bedroom filled with the narrative texts and textiles of the Roman Empire, Posthumus himself is an *exemplum* of Roman virtue.⁴⁸ As the First Gentleman points out in the opening act, Posthumus's banishment is a shock for everyone at court because Posthumus, he explains, was adopted, reared, and educated by the King himself (1.1.40-47). The First Gentleman also emphasizes Posthumus's status as a perfectly educated courtier whose role at court is an example for everyone: "A *sample* to

⁴⁸ For an analysis of Innogen's bedroom tapestries, texts, see Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (2010); Rebecca Olson, "Before the Arras: Textile Description and Innogen's Translation in *Cymbeline*" in *Modern Philology* 108.1 (2010) pp. 45-64; and Peggy Muñoz Simonds, *Myth, Emblem, and Music in Shakespeare's Cymbeline: An Iconographic Reconstruction* (1992).

the youngest, to th' more mature/ A *glass* that feated them, and to the graver/ A child that *guided* dotards" (1.1.48-50, my emphasis).⁴⁹ We assume that before his banishment Posthumus held a role at court in service to King Cymbeline. As I will explore below, the resolution between Posthumus and Cymbeline is made possible by Posthumus serving as a "glass" wherein Cymbeline learns "freeness of a son-in-law" (5.5.420).

When Pisanio reveals the contents of Posthumus's letter suggesting that she "hath played the/ strumpet in [his] bed" (3.4.21-22), Innogen objects and articulates her love and fidelity to Posthumus in the language of subjection:

A little witness my obedience. Look,
I draw the sword myself, take it, and hit
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart:
Fear not, 'tis empty of all things but grief:
Thy master is not there, who was indeed
The riches of it. (3.4.67-72)

To demonstrate her wifely obedience, Innogen embraces physical chastisement, even death, to prove her submission to Pisanio's "master's" command. Again, she pleads: "Come, here's my heart,/...Obedient as the scabbard" (3.4.79, 81). Though obedience was promoted as *the* primary mode by which wives related to their husbands, for Innogen, prince and heir to the British throne, subjection to her husband is incommensurate with her political status. She prioritizes her relation to him as a wife, not a prince, by emphasizing her obedience to him. Innogen locates her heart, the organ associated with courage and royalty (Mueller 52), as the "mansion" vacated by Posthumus and "empty of all things but grief," in a similar way as she metaphorically rendered Posthumus her "supreme crown of grief."

⁴⁹ Though the First Lord depicts Posthumus as the perfect courtier, his virtue is best read in the mirror of Innogen's princeliness ("price") and her love ("esteem") for him: "To his mistress,/ (For whom he now is banish'd) her own price/ Proclaims how she esteem'd him; and his virtue/ By her election may be truly read/ What kind of man he is" (1.1.40-54).

Innogen's self-sacrificing obedience to Posthumus resounds as a challenge to her obedience to Cymbeline. Indeed, she seems to comprehend her division between two allegiances when she rebukes Posthumus's lack of faith in her fidelity by blaming her husband for her political and filial disobedience to Cymbeline:

And thou, Posthumus,
That didst set up my disobedience 'gainst the King,
My father, and makes me put into contempt the suits
Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find
It is no act of common passage, but
A strain of rareness; (3.4.87-92)

Although she first proclaimed her "obedience" by commanding Pisanio to kill her, Innogen now affirms her princely identity in defiance of the adultery she believes Posthumus has committed with "some jay of Italy" (3.4.49).⁵⁰ Innogen's allegiances to her princely blood and her wifely ambitions waver and we see her struggle to resolve the duality of her identity as she grapples with the reality that she committed "disobedience 'gainst the King." She realizes that her marriage to Posthumus and consequent disobedience of her father/king is a demonstration of her princely nature, "[a] strain of rareness," not an "act of common passage." Finally recognizing her disobedience as both a political and a filial offense allows her to synthesize her desire for marital happiness with her princely nature.

A Faithful Translation: Innogen's Princely Negotiation of Obedience

When Pisanio instructs Imogen to disguise herself as a male servant in order to ingratiate herself into the Roman Lucius' service to hear news of Posthumus, he tutors her to make herself less like a female prince and more like a male servant. Interestingly,

⁵⁰ It is important to recall that although Posthumus receives the most scholarly attention for his misogynistic rant when he believes Innogen has committed adultery, Innogen jumps to the same conclusion about her husband when Pisanio reveals the letter's contents and slanders him accordingly (3.4.46-97).

the advice he gives her exposes the performativity of gender as much as the performativity of service:

You must forget to be a woman: change
Command into obedience: fear, and niceness
(The handmaids of all women, or more truly,
Woman it pretty self) into a waggish courage,
Ready in gibes, quick-answer'd, saucy, and
As quarrelous as the weasel: (3.4.154-159)

Pisanio associates her gender with the rhetorical markers of her station, “command,” whereas her performance as a male servant is tellingly caught between obedient behavior and rebellious speech. If her appearance and demeanor are meant to code an emblem of ideal service (gendered masculine) then Pisanio’s advice to “change/ Command into obedience” seems contrary to the “waggish courage” he suggests she adopt. Perhaps Pisanio, an experienced servant instructing a novice, presents Innogen with a model of service he thinks she can imitate by attempting to accommodate her preference for “command.” As I have examined above, in many ways Innogen’s speech *already* conforms to Pisanio’s idea of how male servants speak. In her interactions with her father, step-mother, and step-brother she certainly has a tendency to be “[r]eady in gibes, quick-answer’d, saucy, and/ As quarrelous as the weasel.” Pisanio advises her to become obedient, yet undercuts that guidance by offering her creative agency within a performance of service that still maintains the “quick-answer’d” “gibes” for which she is known.

By repeating that Innogen must “forget” to be a woman, he reveals the extent to which early modern gender, at least on stage, was understood as a performance. The aesthetics (her white skin, her “dainty trims”) and demeanor (“command,” “fear, and niceness”) of “Woman it pretty self” are laid aside as she visually “translates” her identity

from prince to servant.⁵¹ Simon Forman’s description of this moment signals the degree to which appearance was integral to identity then as it is now: “[she] turned her self into mans apparrell” (Chambers 2.339). As Jones and Stallybrass argue, such “translations” in clothing “materialize conflicts of status and gender” and “enact the power of clothes to shape and to resist social identities” (220-221). That boy actors typically played women on stage contributes to a palimpsest of possible creative performances of identities and their attendant agencies.⁵² Elizabeth Rivlin suggests that when male actors, typically apprentices, portrayed women, the overlapping subjectivities of the actor, the character, and the disguise “generates control from a submissive, imitative position” (47). According to Stephen Orgel, “[f]or a female audience...to see the youth in skirts might be...to see him not as a possessor or master, but as companionable and pliable and one of them” (81). Similarly, Judith Weil observes that plays representing a fusion of the roles of servant and wife “unsettle preconceptions about subordinate roles” (51). The notion that representations of service could promote an idea of submission as an authoritative mode is not unlike the virtuous “rule through obedience” promoted for early modern wives.

Significantly, when Pisanio advises Innogen to fashion herself into a servant, he repeats language from “An Homily of the State of Matrimony” nearly verbatim, thereby

⁵¹ Early modern English usage, the word “translate” applied not only to changes between languages, but could also mean the transformation of a material or appearance into another use or guise: “To change in form, appearance, or substance; to transmute; to transform, alter; *spec.* in industrial use: of a tailor, to renovate, turn, or cut down (a garment); of a cobbler, to make new boots from the remains of (old ones)” (OED III.4). For a discussion of “material translations” see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (2000). For an analysis of Innogen’s “translation” into Fidele in concert with Innogen’s fashioning of identity through her bedroom textiles, see Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women’s Textualities in Early Modern England* (2010); and Rebecca Olson, “Before the Arras: Textile Description and Innogen’s Translation in *Cymbeline*” in *Modern Philology* 108.1 (2010), pp. 45–64.

⁵² Richard Madelaine suggests that “apprentices in their early years might have been given roles that allowed or encouraged self-conscious imitation of theatrical female gait and gesture” (229).

fusing her performance of service with her princely ambition to be a wife. The homilist advises that wives must “*cease* from commanding, and *perform* subjection” to their husbands, marking a transition from command to subjection coded in their successful performance of their conjugal role. By prefacing his advice with Innogen’s need to “forget to be a woman,” Pisanio implies, along with the homilist, that “command” comes more naturally to women than “obedience.” Therefore, while Pisanio directs Innogen to abandon her femininity and princely authority to become Fidele, he implies that performance is key: women are not naturally obedient, but must cultivate the virtue through performance, even imitation. By changing her mannerisms, her clothing, and her fair skin, to code herself as more masculine and lower in station, Innogen’s disguise emphasizes the theatricality of her servitude, and by extension, the theatricality of all identity performances. Importantly, Pisanio’s advice for Innogen to “change/ Command to obedience” joins the theory of obedience as a servant with that of a wife. By playing the “part” of a servant, the play asserts, she can become a wife in the way she desires.

Amid Pisanio’s instructions concerning her outward appearance and verbal utterances, Innogen impatiently declares she is “almost/ A man already” (3.4.168-169), by which she means both performatively male *and* a servant.⁵³ Elizabeth Rivlin’s premise is that “service is fundamentally a representational practice” involving “imitative performances” in which servants imitate their masters, servants imitate other servants, and masters imitate servants (3). Like all performances, she argues, service hinges on the humanist concepts of *mimesis* and *imitatio*. When Pisanio instructs Innogen in how to be a servant, he diverges from the model Rivlin provides because, although Pisanio is a male

⁵³ “A male personal attendant; a manservant” (OED 7a)

servant, we never see him behave in the “waggish” manner he advises Innogen to adopt. And perhaps even more significantly, her princely prerogative leads her to reject his advice. Though Imogen accepts his practical advice concerning her gendered appearance, she amends his advice that she embrace a “waggish courage” with her own martial, royal bravery: “This attempt/ I am soldier to, and will abide it with/ A *prince*’s courage” (3.4.184-186, my emphasis).⁵⁴ Innogen displays difficulty in reconciling obedience with “waggish courage” and reframes it instead as a sovereign disposition through a “prince’s courage.”⁵⁵ Tellingly, as Fidele, Innogen performs an *imitatio* of service but expands on Pisanio’s instructive model through variation. By infusing her performance of obedience with “a prince’s courage,” Innogen fashions a way of negotiating obedience to suit her nobility and desire for self-governance. The princely virtue of courage allows her to perform service as a prince would: shaped by *fides*—faithfulness, constancy, and truth.

In her uneasy change from a royal heir without autonomy to a servant invested with courageous service, Innogen embodies the complex, and often problematic, mode of domestic sovereignty promoted to early modern wives. Rivlin asserts that when female characters disguised themselves as male pages to move more easily through dangerous spaces, “the servant boy also models for elite women the successful use of the mimetic faculty or, to put it another way, a site where a frustrated desire for productive action can

⁵⁴ When we see her arrive in Wales, she’s armed with a sword as she reveals before she enters the cave with “Best draw my sword” (3.6.25). This suggests that in addition to putting on boy’s clothes, she arms herself with a sword—perhaps the sword she demanded Pisanio stab her with. By donning a sword, she marks herself as more than just a servant, but as a “soldier,” a “prince,” and a prince of Britain, too.

⁵⁵ In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt describes courage as an essential political virtue for living the *vita activa* outside the home: “To leave the household, originally in order to embark on some adventure and glorious enterprise...demanded courage because only in the household was one primarily concerned with one’s own life and survival. Whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom...Courage therefore became the political virtue par excellence” (36)

be activated” (48). Recalling Innogen’s statement that “most miserable/ Is the desire that’s glorious” (1.7.6-7), we can see how becoming Fidele allows Innogen to achieve her “desire” of living “[a]s [her] two brothers, happy” (1.7.5-6). Ironically, it is the performance of “obedience” that affords her more sovereignty as a servant than she had as a prince at court. Rivlin’s premise also exposes how “mimetic” performances can allow for agentic variations within already established modes of identity. By infusing her practice of “obedience” with “a prince’s courage,” Innogen demonstrates as a servant the kind of agency she attempted to fashion for herself as a wife and a prince. Though, as Cloten rudely reminds her, “[t]he consequence o’ th’ crown” (2.3.120) prohibits her freedom to be Posthumus’s wife, she attempts to resolve her seemingly discordant identities through service.

Innogen’s “translation” into the young male page, Fidele, emblematically represents the tension between sovereignty and service inherent to her development over the course of the play. Though Innogen excels at being a servant we watch her struggle to fully commit to a servile or sovereign disposition while pursuing Posthumus and she often seems torn between the two performances. Innogen’s learning of political service takes a domestic detour in Wales, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the two modes. In many ways, her service in Wales prepares her for service to Lucius, which effects her reunion with her father/king and husband in the play’s conclusion.

Innogen in Wales: Learning Service

What is especially interesting about Innogen is how she seems instinctively, like

her brothers, to resist being fully servile.⁵⁶ After she is sartorially and performatively “translated” into Fidele, she still displays moments in which her “noble blood” breaks through. Though *Cymbeline* advances a theory that nobility is located in the blood, it demonstrates that service can be learned through instruction and performance. While a theory of natural nobility is conservative and maintains the claim to royal succession through lineage, by demonstrating that princes can learn and perform service, the play makes an argument for service as a princely virtue.

We learn that the young princes, though Belarius knows their true lineage, are educated as wild men. Part of their instruction is the performance of service. As Belarius explains, their lives involve a constant revolution of who is “master” and who is “servant,” thereby unsettling the common hierarchy: “You, Polydore, have proved best woodman and/ Are master of the feast. Cadwal and I/ Will play the cook and servant, ‘tis our match” (3.6.28-30). The young princes learn the sovereignty of service and the impermanence of mastery through daily activities that prioritize merit over blood. However, the effort Belarius made to raise the young princes away from court is in vain. As he notes with amazement, their natural nobility “prompts them/ In simple and low things to *prince* it, much/ Beyond the trick of others” (3.4.84-86, my emphasis).⁵⁷ Similarly, although Pisanio advised Innogen to perform “obedience” with a “waggish courage,” she “princes” her performance and performs service in a hyper-faithful way,

⁵⁶ Guiderius murders Cloten, the Queen’s son, for threatening him with subjection: “why should we be tender/ To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us” (4.2.125-126), while Arviragus bemoans their sylvan “bondage” (3.3.44).

⁵⁷ Mary Floyd-Wilson summarizes the paradoxical nature of their British nobility: “[u]nlike those with continental courtly manners, which signify artifice or portend degeneracy, the princes possess an innately wild civility that is ‘untaught,’ ‘unlearned’ and resistant to decay. They are paradoxically hardy and gentle, civil and barbaric” (168).

“[b]eyond the trick of others.” When Innogen infuses her performance of “obedience” with “a prince’s courage” she cultivates a way of obeying without losing her princely prerogative. Hence, service is a way of performing obedience in a princely manner.

When Innogen (disguised as Fidele) accidentally reunites with her princely brothers in Wales, she enters into a veritable school for rugged virtue under the tutelage of Belarius and her brothers. On her way, she receives experiential instruction from “two beggars” she meets about the corruption of kingship: “To lapse in fullness/ Is sorer than to lie for need, and falsehood/ Is worse in kings than beggars” (3.6.12-14). At the cave, she learns from her brothers’ examples about life outside of court, and fitting with her humble desires, finds that it surpasses a royal existence. Perhaps sensing their natural nobility, she falls in with her brothers, trusting them by instinct and living as their “housewife” (4.2.44). Innogen’s life of service in Wales fuses the various identities she seeks to resolve. She is able to be “wife-like” and performs service as a prince, for princes. I would like to further emphasize the degree to which she becomes, in Pisanio’s words, simultaneously “more goddess-like” *and* “wife-like” in Wales.

The men describe Fidele, literally, as a domestic goddess. When Belarius and the princes first see her in their cave, they describe her with divine imagery: “fairy,” “angel,” “earthly paragon,” “Behold divineness/ No elder than a boy!” (3.7.14-17). She responds with “Good masters, harm me not” (3.7.18), fully embracing her performance as a servant. When Fidele is “heart-sick” (4.2.37), they commend his domestic virtues. Arviragus praises his singing as “angel-like” (4.2.48) while Guiderius praises his cooking: “But his neat cookery! He cut our roots in characters,/ And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick,/ And he her dieter” (4.2.49-51). As a companion to Ganymede as

Jove's cupbearer, Fidele could be Juno's "dieter." The first time Innogen names herself "Fidele" occurs in this meeting, which reveals the extent to which she commits to her servile role by naming herself after the virtue (fidelity) Posthumus accuses her of breaching. Moreover, by becoming Fidele she emphatically rejects the "supreme crown of grief" she associates with her role as heir and its result: her loss of Posthumus.

Ironically, it is only through her adoption of her new role as Fidele, the male page, that Innogen performs domestic service, coded feminine in the cave as elsewhere. Innogen's dual performance as servant and wife is instructive for understanding what identities she fuses and with what facets of her tri-part identity (prince, servant, wife) early modern women audience members may have identified. As evidenced by their "burial" of Fidele in the same location where they buried Euriphile, their "mother" and Belarius's wife, Fidele becomes complexly figured as a new mother figure for her brothers and a wife for Belarius (4.2.232-237).⁵⁸ Simultaneously, Innogen's princely presence in Belarius's cave, her excellence at cooking, and her conflation with Euriphile, all suggest that a woman who "princes" domestic service makes the best wife and mother.

After Fidele "dies" and Guiderius beheads Cloten for threatening their lives, Belarius remarks about the princes' natural nobility: "'Tis wonder/ That an invisible instinct should frame them/ To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught" (4.2.175-177).

Converting Belarius's "wonder" into a question, we might ask: *can* "royalty" be

⁵⁸ Arviragus: "sing him to th' ground/ As once to our mother: use like note and words,/ Save that Euriphile must be Fidele" (4.2.232-237). For an analysis of the play's removal of mothers and femininity, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (1992); and Jodi Mikalachki, *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England* (1998).

“unlearn’d, honour untaught”? As we have seen, Innogen presents a complex case: she fluctuates between service and sovereignty, first wanting to be “common,” then asserting her “rareness.” Innogen’s uneasy struggle to reconcile both sides of her identity epitomizes the process of self-definition through which early modern women cultivated their performances of feminine virtue alongside sovereign models represented in advice literature. Indeed, Innogen’s sojourn in Wales as Fidele recalls the princely performance of lowly domesticity represented in *Penelopes Web* that tells of Queen Barmenissa who maintained “as princely a mind in adversitie, as she did in prosperitie” (D1r) and regains her crown through obedience.⁵⁹

While the princes adore Fidele’s housekeeping, they also recognize his princeliness. Fidele possesses “royal blood enchafed” (4.2.173), like their own, that presents itself to discerning viewers.⁶⁰ Observing Fidele’s melancholy, Arviragus notes how “[n]obly he yokes/ A smiling with a sigh” (4.2.51-52), reading Fidele’s nobility as marked by his ability to manage his grief through patience. For Arviragus who was trained in service, the yoke signals nobility, not subjection, or nobility *in spite of* subjection. When Guiderius responds with “I do note/ That grief and patience, rooted in them,/ Mingle their spurs together”(4.2.56-58), and Arviragus chimes in with, “Grow, patience!/ And let the stinking-elder, grief, untwine/ His perishing root, with the increasing vine” (4.2.58-60), the princes prefigure through inversion the marriage topos of the more lasting botanic dyad of elm and vine that will join Innogen and Posthumus in

⁵⁹ See Introduction, section 2 for a discussion of this text.

⁶⁰ For a psychoanalytical reading of the play’s blood imagery, see James W Stone, *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within* (2010).

a reconciliatory embrace in the play's final scene. Arviragus's verbal emblem implies that Innogen's patience must "grow" before her "grief," thematically aligned with her role as heir, will "untwine" and let her flourish. As Penelope reminds her reader to instruct her in obedience, "it is princely as wel to be faithfull as patient" (D3v). The emblem of the elder and vine suggests Innogen's princely faithfulness will require more patience before she is reunited with her husband, and their reconciliation will put an end to her "grief" by integrating her disparate identities.

Innogen's adaptation of service to suit her needs is at first approached prudently as a way to maintain her safety and then out of desperation after she believes she and Posthumus have been betrayed by Pisanio, and that Posthumus has been murdered by the "mountaineers" (4.2.369). After Innogen believes her husband is dead, she embraces her servile identity as Fidele through an abject demonstration of her grief, temporarily losing her princely identity.⁶¹ When Lucius finds her, lying on Cloten's "bloody pillow" (4.2.362), Innogen articulates a grief-filled, self-effacing complaint:

I am nothing; or if not,
Nothing to be were better. This was my master,
A very valiant Briton and a good,
That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas,
There is no more such masters. I may wander
From east to occident, cry out for service,
Try many, all good; serve truly; never
Find such another master. (4.2.366-373)

Before Lucius finds her, Innogen refers to Posthumus as her "lord," but here immediately switches to calling him her "master" in a more faithful performance of her role as Fidele. Innogen's shift in persona with Lucius in one way reveals that "she is remarkably quick

⁶¹ I am using the term "abject" in Julia Kristeva's sense of the word to define the collapse of boundaries between self and other, and loss of identity, in an encounter with a corpse. See *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982).

at translating her grief into terms suitable for a devoted page” (Weil 43), but it also points toward her loss of princely identity when faced with the loss of her husband. Innogen’s “supreme crown of grief” looms over her abjection, revealing the extent to which Posthumus actually sustained her sense of princely identity.

As Weil points out, in Shakespeare’s plays “subsumption can rarely be taken for granted as an instrument of control. Whether subordinate roles are repressive or enabling will often depend on how they interact with one another” (4). Innogen’s interaction with Lucius, the Roman General leading the military attack on her nation, exposes the contingent nature of “subsumption” Weil describes. After she tells Lucius her name is “Fidele,” he replies with kindness, while recognizing her excellence in service:

Thy name well fits thy faith; thy faith thy name:
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say
Thou shalt be so well master’d but be sure
No less belov’d. The Roman emperor’s letters
Sent by a consul to me should not sooner
Than thine own worth prefer thee. (4.2.381-386)

Lucius identifies and praises Fidele’s *fides* encapsulated in his name by offering him a continuation of his service as Lucius’s page. Importantly, he identifies with Fidele servant-to-servant by stating the recommendation of Augustus Caesar (whom he earlier called his “master” [3.5.4]) could not be a better assurance of Fidele’s virtuous “worth.” Invoking the mimetic nature of service, Fidele agrees to “follow” Lucius after burying his “master’s” body (“I’ll weep and sigh,/ And leaving so his service, follow you” [4.2.391-392]), which prompts Lucius to amend his relation to Fidele, saying “rather father thee than master thee” (4.2.394). As Jodi Mikalachki observes, when Innogen agrees to serve Lucius, she also replaces her husband, wherein “something of the difficulties of defining wifely subordination between the poles of love and mastery emerges” (Mikalachki 111).

Lucius's reply that he will "rather father thee than master thee" replaces her father as well. In the midst of waging war on Britain, Lucius acknowledges Fidele's devotion to his dead "master" and praises him for it, thereby correcting Cymbeline's angry dismissal of Innogen's self-governed choice of husband. Furthermore, Lucius reads Fidele's virtuous devotion as a demonstration of Roman virtues. Lucius praises Fidele's *fides* and his ability to offer virtuous instruction: "My friends,/ The boy hath taught us manly duties" (4.2.394-395). Fidele's proper burial of his "master" is a demonstration of his *virtus*, a "manly duty," which supplants Innogen's "holy duty" to Cymbeline and incorporates her into the service of a fatherly master who recognizes her princely virtues.

Tellingly, Innogen has more of a certain kind freedom, if not power, as a servant than she does as a prince. In the play's finale, she is aesthetically and performatively emblematic of domestic and political service. The play's conclusion seems to argue, then, that "service" is not an inherently subjugated position, but one that potentially wields a demonstrable power to achieve one's desires aims and, through creative agency, effect "peace" (5.5.484), the play's final word. Nevertheless, Innogen's grief-stricken rejection of the crown and her uneasy negotiation of sovereignty within a life of service is important for thinking through how representations of royal women as exemplary models of feminine virtue can display an anxious tension between performances of rule and subjection.

"This most constant wife": Affirming Innogen's Sovereignty

Scholars and playgoers tend to have mixed reactions to *Cymbeline's* lengthy final scene full of the dénouements, reunions, and anagnorisis characteristic of romance. Surprisingly, Simon Foreman's 1610 account of *Cymbeline* neglects mention of the final

scene save Innogen and Posthumus's recognition of one another in disguise and their reunion: "[Posthumus was] after Reveled to Innogen, Who had turned her self into mans apparrell" (Chambers 2.339). Conversely, George Bernard Shaw found the final scene so problematic that he "refinished" it, making significant changes to the dynamic between Innogen and her "loue." In his 1936 play, *Cymbeline Refinished*, Shaw truncates the final scene and modernizes much of the language, but his most significant change is the characterization of "Imogen." Instead of the prince eager to live as Posthumus's wife and relinquish her claim to the throne, Imogen is angry and reluctant to return home with a husband who has struck her. In the end, she unhappily resigns to being the wife of a man who ordered her death, hit her, and "is not even sorry," finally stating: "I must go home and make the best of it/ As other women must" (198-199). Shaw's early twentieth-century feminist refinishing seems to leave a lot unfinished, though. For example, the designated heirs Guiderius and Arviragus, echoing Shakespeare's Innogen, moan about not wanting to be kings and unequivocally reject rule. In fact, Guiderius explicitly voices Shakespeare's Innogen's distaste for the crown: "Not free to wed the woman of my choice" (197). Under Shaw's pen, their distaste for rule marks Guiderius and Arviragus as authentically princely, though they leave Cymbeline's court just as we find it when Shakespeare's play begins: potentially heirless. Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, however, attempts to reconcile Innogen's status as an heir with her role as a wife.

Cymbeline's finale prioritizes happy reunions and reconciliations, but it also demonstrates the potential difficulty in reconciling two sides of one's identity. Prince Innogen's return to court disguised as Fidele, in the service of Lucius, is emblematic of this tension. Fidele's fidelity to Posthumus displaces her *fides* to Lucius when she is

compelled to discover why Iachimo has her mother's diamond ring, a symbol of she and Posthumus's conjugal bondage and her pledge of faith. Lucius praises her exceptional service, pleading that Cymbeline spare her life before his own:

my boy, a Briton born,
Let him be ransomed. Never master had
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,
So tender over his occasions, true,
So feat, so nurse-like; let his virtue join
With my request (5.5.84-89)

Lucius's catalogue of Fidele's virtues reveals how her service demonstrates qualities of domestic service as well as *fides*. Fidele, however, rejects Lucius's plea to "beg" his life, demonstrating her alliance to Posthumus's memory, symbolized by the ring, instead: "Your life, good master,/ Must shuffle for itself" (104-105).

Innogen's allegiance shifts toward Cymbeline as her new master, displacing her commitment to serve Lucius. Innogen's performance of obedience as Fidele endears her to Cymbeline affording her his royal "grace" that he previously withheld: "Boy,/ Thou hast looked thyself into my grace,/ And art mine own" (93-95). Cymbeline echoes Lucius's "mastery" of her after she tells him her name: "Thou'rt my good youth, my page;/ I'll be thy master" (118-119). Cymbeline uses his regal authority to force Iachimo to reveal to Fidele why he has the diamond ring, leading to Posthumus's confession, and most significantly, to the return of Innogen's princely identity.

As I discussed above, when Innogen believes Posthumus is dead and herself betrayed, she fully sublimates her princely identity to perform service as Lucius's page. Posthumus's revelation of his true identity and confession of his "villainy" (225) has the unexpected effect of returning Innogen's princely tendency to command rather than obey. Thinking her dead, Posthumus praises her virtue in divine and sovereign terms, echoing

their conversation before he departed. He praises her as the pinnacle of virtue, “[t]he temple/ Of Virtue was she: yea, and she herself” (220-221), collapsing the distinction between the virtue Innogen contains, as a temple would hold a statue of Virtue, and the incarnation of Virtue “herself.” He also revives the sovereign language he used previously marking her as his “queen”: “O Imogen!/ My queen, my life, my wife, O Imogen,/ Imogen, Imogen!” (225-227). When she approaches to comfort him, he strikes her: “Shall’s have a *play* of this? Thou scornful page,/ There lie thy *part*” (228-229, my emphasis). Posthumus’s angry reaction emphasizes Innogen’s performance as Fidele, implying further that service is a role that is comprised of acting *like* a servant.

Interestingly, it is Innogen’s rough physical treatment as a servant that provokes her strongest assertion of princeliness after she dons Fidele’s garments. After Posthumus strikes her, Pisanio rushes to help and reveals her true identity. Pisanio reasserts her political power over him, and Posthumus, as their prince: “Mine and *your* mistress!” (230, my emphasis). As he approaches her, she commands: “O, get thee from my sight!/ Thou gav’st me poison. Dangerous fellow, hence./ Breathe not where princes are” (236-238). Innogen refers only to herself and Cymbeline since Guiderius and Arviragus have not yet been revealed to be princes. Her realization that Posthumus is actually alive, as well as Pisanio’s treasonous threat to princes, prompts Innogen to reassert her princely identity, which compels her to abandon “obedience” for “command.” Cymbeline’s immediate response to Innogen’s stern reprimand—“The tune of Imogen!” (239)—confirms the return of Innogen, Prince of Britain, and the dissolution of Fidele. This moment attests that Innogen’s princely identity, one that can accommodate command and service, is her true identity whereas Fidele, a persona that only served, was merely a

“part.”

As charted thus far, Innogen’s relationship with Posthumus is linked with her sovereign identity. She does not perform service for Posthumus, who continually emphasizes their disparity in power and station, but in *pursuit* of him. Accordingly, their reunion dissolves her performance as Fidele and prompts the return of Innogen’s princely self. For example, Innogen no longer refers to Posthumus as her “master,” but her “lord” (227, 299). After they reunite, Posthumus and Innogen return to their usual register of voicing their amorous fidelity in morbid expressions of service and rule. Though Pisanio emphasized Innogen’s status above Posthumus, Innogen softens the hierarchy to reflect the “more equal ballasting” (3.6.75) she desires in their dynamic, referring to herself as “[his] wedded lady” (5.5.260). Posthumus responds, predictably, by reinforcing her status above him even as they embrace: “Hang there like fruit, *my soul*,/ Till the tree die” (262, my emphasis). Not only does his image suggest the marriage topos of the union of the elm and vine explored by Simonds and Wayne,⁶² but by calling Innogen his “soul,” Posthumus inverts the traditional marital hierarchy of the husband ruling the wife “[a]s the soule therefore ruleth ouer the body, by a mutuall and louing consent and agreement, so must a man ouer his wife” (Gouge Aa3v). Posthumus positions himself as the “body” overruled by Innogen’s “soul” “by a mutuall and louing consent.” Still working with the awareness that Innogen is his literal and figurative “queen,” and more so since the Queen

⁶²Simonds writes, “I want to suggest that Shakespeare may have arranged his visual image very deliberately in order to say something new about marriage itself. The emblem [Shakespeare] gives us onstage is no longer that of woman as a clinging vine, no matter how fruitful, but of woman as an *equal* who has the strength and fortitude to sustain the elm after it dies, even as the tree now supports the vine” (256, her emphasis). Similarly, Valerie Wayne argues, “His reward is a reunion with Innogen in a long embrace...his revision of the marriage topos of the elm and the vine figures her as the dearest and best part, even the soul, of their union. The passage claims a full incorporation of husband and wife at this moment, one that achieves its intensity as a resolution of the earlier fragmentation of both persons, their union, even their bodies” (“Woman’s Part” 302).

has just died, Posthumus reminds Innogen, and the group, of her supremacy over him. Significantly, neither Posthumus nor Innogen attempt to renegotiate the hierarchy of their relationship after they learn she is no longer heir, suggesting her sovereignty over him is a crucial aspect of their marriage.

Cymbeline and Innogen's reunion begins when he is charmed by her performance as Fidele, but their true reconciliation is effected when Cymbeline wonders if she will acknowledge him, "How now, my flesh, my child?/...Wilt thou not speak to me?" (265), and she requests his "blessing" (265). Cymbeline seizes on Posthumus's image of Innogen as his "soul" and claims Innogen as his "flesh." Their true understanding occurs, however, when Cymbeline wrests the kingdom from her upon the revelation that Guiderius and Arviragus are alive: "O Innogen,/ Thou hast lost by this a kingdom" (371-372). Cymbeline seems to anticipate her grief, emphasizing the extent to which he still seems not to understand her. She replies with gratitude and relief: "No, my lord,/ I have got two worlds by't" (372-373). Because she immediately turns to acknowledge her brothers, the most available meaning of her words implies the young princes are her newly found "worlds," extending Cymbeline's earlier conceit of the boys being displaced from their "orbs," but now able to "reign in them" (370-371). However, considering that Innogen is a prince returned to her kingdom, but relieved of the "consequence of th' crown," we may also understand her words to mean that by losing the throne she has gained access to two "worlds": domestic and political.

Though she learns domestic service in Wales, and political and domestic service with Lucius, the play's final scene distinguishes Innogen's service as political in nature, and her princeliness as domestic. As her inheritance of the throne is stripped away by her

brothers' reemergence, Innogen is left a "wedded lady" who is nevertheless reigns over her husband as his "queen" and "soul." As Posthumus's "queen," Innogen emerges in the play's conclusion as a woman liberated from her "supreme crown of grief." Innogen's wifely identity is therefore commensurate with her princely one, and only by being freed from the throne's yoke is she truly sovereign.

The final scene suggests Innogen and Posthumus's futures as possible princely counselors to Cymbeline and her brothers. When Iachimo offers Posthumus his life as apology, Posthumus replies "The power I have on you is to spare you,/ The malice towards you to forgive you" (417-418). Cymbeline takes note and, like Posthumus's previous role as a "glass" (1.1.49) for the elders at court, Cymbeline takes a reflexive posture and mimics his courtly "guide" (1.1.50): "Nobly doomed./ We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law:/ Pardon's the word to all" (5.5.419-421). Cymbeline finally recognizes Posthumus as both "noble" and as his "son-in-law," allowing their rift to be repaired by virtuous counsel.

Similarly, the scene implies Innogen's potential skill at political counsel based on her *fides*. Iachimo's surrender of the ring and the manacle recognizes Innogen's fidelity, but also her *fides*. He states: "your ring first,/ And here the bracelet of the truest princess/ That ever swore her faith" (414-416). Iachimo emphasizes Innogen's truth and her swearing of "faith" in fidelity to her husband, but to swear one's faith was also a gesture of political service, and often required of counselors.⁶³ Iachimo's words describe her

⁶³ Privy counselors were invested into service by being sworn in, and their oath of office reveals how crucial the practice of *fides* was for those in service to the ruler. King James I's counselors took this oath: "You shall swear, To be a true and faithfull Servant unto the *Kings Majestie*,...you shall in all things to be moved, treated, and debated in Councell faithfully and truly declare your minde and opinion according to your heart and conscience" (Garnet 143-145).

political virtue as well because before Iachimo returns the lovers' material symbols of mutual bondage and fidelity, Innogen utters to Lucius her last words in the play: "My good master,/ I will yet do you service" (402-403). Innogen, a British prince, offers her former "master," an agent of Rome, her political "service" as a potential counselor or ambassador, a role some early modern women performed. For example, before her marriage to Henry VIII, Catherine of Aragón acted as her father Ferdinand's ambassador to England. In *The Counsellor*, Goslicius describes the importance of *fides* or fidelity, "a constant and true performing of word and promise," for political counselors:

A just Counsellor therefore both affirme things true, not doubtfull, observeth his promises, standeth to compactes, restoreth what he borroweth, and to the performing his faith is not compelled by law, by witnesse, or oath, but by his own willing consent freewill and word, which he accounteth as a lawe. (101)

Goslicius prioritizes many of the traits Innogen embodies in her tri-part role as prince, wife, and political servant. She is, as she tells her brothers, the "truest speaker" (375), she maintains her "compactes" with Belarius ("You are my father too, and did relieve me/ To see this gracious season" [399-400]) and her brothers, she restores her duty to her father, and the Soothsayer's etymology marks her as "constant."

Indeed, as evidenced by the Soothsayer's reading of the oracle, Innogen's destiny is to be Posthumus's "most constant wife" (448) and Cymbeline's "virtuous daughter" (445), not the future ruler of Britain. Nevertheless, her potential as *heir* to the throne curiously still lingers in the "air" surrounding the discussion of her status as "a piece of tender *air*" (436), derived, according to the Soothsayer, from the Latin *mollis aer* ("tender air"). Valerie Wayne argues that the Soothsayer's etymology, long regarded as specious, actually reflects early modern philological revisions of the classical etymology

correlating *mulier* as a derivative of *mollis aer*, perhaps punning on the sound of “air” (*Cymbeline* 85). Wayne explains that homilists as recent as 1610 began using the etymologies of *mollis aer* and *mulier* to promote feminine constancy, instead of weakness. For example, Thomas Myriell’s homily on 14 January 1610 at Paul’s Cross uses the etymology to promote feminine strength using the *exempla* of Mary Magdalene and Salome: “[they] were not daunted at their owne weakenesse, the stoutest of them being but a woman, *mulier*, *mollis aer*, a soft and tender breath” (quoted in Wayne *Cymbeline* 85). Though the homilist emphasizes feminine weakness, he promotes feminine strength as well. Likewise, the Soothsayer’s interpretation of Jupiter’s oracle uses the etymology to promote Innogen’s wifely constancy.

Innogen’s constancy as Posthumus’s wife correlates with her constancy and truth as a prince. As discussed above, Knox found fault with women’s governance due to their weakness, arguing that “to governe others,” women would need to be “constant, stable, prudent...whiche vertues women can not have in equalitie with men” (C8r). The Soothsayer’s etymology lesson affirms Innogen’s constancy as a wife, which further confirms her fitness for governance within or outside of the home. And although Aylmer concedes that in the “office of a wife” wives “must be a subject: but as a Magistrate she maye be her husbands head,” Innogen inverts this dynamic to rule as Posthumus’s wife and perform service as a prince, and potential counselor, of Britain. By demonstrating how Innogen refashions obedience into service while maintaining her political and domestic sovereignty over her husband, *Cymbeline* accommodates Innogen’s resistance to obedience by presenting a self-governing woman who gets exactly what she wants by performing political “service”: the husband of her choice and an auxiliary role at court.

In the next chapter, I examine Miguel de Cervantes's novela, *La española inglesa*, to trace how Cervantes uses romance for exemplary ends by representing a Spanish merchant's daughter, Isabela, as a virtuous exemplar for the English Queen, Elizabeth I. Unlike *Cymbeline*, which shows an actual princess acting like a servant to represent how women might refashion their performance of obedience into service, Cervantes's novela represents Isabela as a virtual princess and an actual servant in Elizabeth I's court to promote *valor*, a virtue denoting strength, power, and worth, popularized by Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada*. The term *valor*'s material connotation of "value or worth" is amplified through Cervantes's novela as it describes Isabela with material metaphors signaling the power and value of her virtue. Resembling Innogen's sartorial and performative translation into Fidele to reunite with Posthumus, Isabela's identity and allegiances are signified through changing material markers, but ultimately conclude with her self-styled appearance symbolizing her *valor* as she reunites with her love in accordance with romance's marital goals. Unlike traditional romance, however, *La española inglesa* works as advice literature, alongside but distinctive from *Cymbeline*, to rethink how ordinary wives can be considered virtuous exemplars as well, especially, the novela suggests, in their capacity to serve as mirrors for queens.

CHAPTER III

A GOOD WOMAN IS HARD TO FIND: THE MARVELOUS EXEMPLARITY OF

VALOR IN CERVANTES'S *LA ESPAÑOLA INGLESA*

Mujer de valor, ¿quien la hallará? Raro y estremado es su precio.
A woman of worth who can find her? Rare and high in the extreme is her price.
—Proverbs 31:10, Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada*

In *La española inglesa*, the sixth novela in *Novelas ejemplares* (1613), Miguel de Cervantes reverses the familiar trope of sixteenth-century feminine conduct guides which offer sovereigns as exemplars for all women, by marshaling an ordinary woman, Isabela, to serve as a virtuous mirror for the reviled English Queen, Elizabeth I. Though scholars often regard Cervantes's positive representation of Elizabeth, a hated enemy of Spain, as a curious puzzle, I demonstrate that Cervantes's English queen is not inherently magnanimous; instead, she is transformed by Isabela's marvelous *valor*. As I will demonstrate, Cervantes draws on a popular sixteenth-century conduct manual for new brides, Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada*, that figures ideal feminine virtue as *valor*, a word that simultaneously defines a material object's value and a person's virtuous worth. Furthermore, Cervantes uses what Anthony Cascardi refers to in romance as "the moral functions of the marvelous" (310) to represent a quasi-historical world shaped by realistic political, religious, and economic circumstances to instruct the reader in exemplarity. Isabela's marvelous *valor* has the power to enchant and soften the "duro corazón" of the notoriously tyrannical Queen of England, which reveals that Spanish Catholic merchants' daughters are virtuous exemplars as well. By making Isabela a model of virtue for the reader and Elizabeth I, Cervantes reverses the trajectory of virtue represented in women's conduct guides to privilege a merchant's daughter as a conduit of

princely feminine virtue.

The novela's mirror-like paralleling of the Spanish Isabela with the English Elizabeth is only one facet of the references to other important English and Spanish royal women named "Isabel." Isabela's name, her Spanishness, her incomparable virtue, and her association with the court immediately recall Isabel la Católica. The name Isabela also conjures up images of the countless other royal women who share her name: Isabel de Valois (Felipe II's wife after Mary Tudor died), the Spanish infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia (Felipe II's daughter with Isabel de Valois), and the Princess Elizabeth Stuart (James I's daughter, named after Elizabeth I). Isabel Clara Eugenia and Elizabeth Stuart were well-known, important political figures at the time *Novelas ejemplares* was published. After Elizabeth's death in 1603, there were Spanish political talks proposing that Isabel Clara Eugenia attempt to succeed to the English throne, talks that were later abandoned. By 1613, Isabel Clara Eugenia had already been co-regent of the Spanish Netherlands for fifteen years, and Princess Elizabeth married Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Holy Roman Empire, on Saint Valentine's Day 1613, just six months before Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares* was published. Additionally, the name of Isabela's adoptive English mother, Catalina, recalls Catalina de Aragón, the Spanish-English queen, and daughter of Isabel la Católica. By naming the two central women characters after English and Spanish royal women, Cervantes reminds the reader how many Isabels populate the landscape of Spanish-English politics and proposes another worthy addition to their exemplary ranks: Isabela *la española inglesa*.

In *La española inglesa*, Cervantes redirects our gaze to the girl beside the sovereign. Fray Luis's material metaphors for feminine virtue help Cervantes redirect the

gaze because Fray Luis does something similar in *La perfecta casada*. Although he encourages women to look to royal women as exemplars, he dedicates his guide to Doña María Varela Osorio, his newly married niece, instead of a princess, queen, or duchess, and also argues that wives are the sovereigns of the domestic sphere. For example, through astrological metaphors similar to those Cervantes later uses to represent Isabela's marvelous effect on Queen Elizabeth, Fray Luis describes how the *perfecta casada* reigns resplendently in her home like the full moon in the night's sky: "Y como la luna llena en las noches serenas se goza rodeada y como acompañada de clarísimas lumbres, las cuales todas parece que avivan sus luces en ella, y que la remiran y reverencian, así la buena en su casa reina y resplandece, y convierte a si juntamente los ojos y los corazones de todos" 'And as the full moon rejoices on calm nights, surrounded, as it were, and accompanied by very brilliant stars, all of which seem to make their own light brighter through it and look at it again and again in reverence, so the good wife reigns and shines in her home and draws to herself at the same time the eyes and hearts of all' (de León 20; Jones and Lera 21). I suggest Fray Luis's advice in *La perfecta casada* that wives be *mujeres de valor* and his explication of Proverbs 31's extensive material metaphors to advise feminine virtue help us understand the novela's investment in similar material metaphors to represent Isabela and her *valor*. By using language popularized in *La perfecta casada* and romance's ability to morally instruct the reader, Cervantes asserts that, like Isabela, wives and merchant's daughters can be virtuous exemplars. I argue that because Isabela's *valor* transforms Queen Elizabeth from a tyrant into a benevolent monarch, the romance novela makes a powerful assertion about the marvelous power of common Spanish-Catholic virtue to improve upon and supplant previous regal models of feminine virtue.

Exemplary Romance: Virtue in Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*

In 1613, Miguel de Cervantes brought the Italian *novella* tradition to Spain with the publication of his *Novelas ejemplares*. In his *Prólogo al lector*, Cervantes states that while existing novellas are all translated from foreign languages or borrow from other sources, he is the first to write his own: “yo soy el primero que he novelado en lengua castellana” ‘I am the first that has novelized in the Castilian language’ (my translation; 52).¹ Cervantes’s declaration that his stories are exemplary in part because they are his own creation, and not imitated or stolen from other sources, is significant for the promotion of his *novelas* as unprecedented Spanish literary works. Stephen Boyd observes that Cervantes’s chosen title for his collection, *Novelas ejemplares*, is perhaps intentionally oxymoronic because by describing his novelas as “exemplary,” he invokes the meaning of “offering a model or pattern of excellence worthy of imitation,” applied to a genre typically regarded as offering *nothing* “worthy of imitation” (11). As Boyd explains, “in the climate prevailing in Spain in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, stories of the novella kind would have been regarded in some sectors with a certain suspicion, as being, at best, frivolous, and, at worst, a source of serious moral and spiritual damage” (11). This common assessment of novelas as potentially morally injurious to the reader was influenced in part by the classical debate about literature’s purpose and the Council of Trent’s (1545-1563) emphasis that Catholic writers should “promote the truths of the Catholic faith” and thus instruct, rather than merely entertain, their readers (Boyd 10).

A similar sentiment can be found earlier, however, in advice literature concerned with the correlation between what women read and how it shaped their virtue, suggesting

¹ All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

a material correlation between the text and the virtue of the reader. In *De Institutione Christianae Feminae* [*The Education of a Christian Woman*] (1523), Juan Luis Vives advises that when a woman is taught to read, “let her peruse books that impart instruction in morals” (Fantazzi 71). He goes on to rant at length against the moral dangers of women reading romance specifically, arguing that romances in particular are so corrupting to a young woman’s virtue that it is better that she forget how to read altogether to avoid their noxious influence:

And if a woman is so enthralled by the reading of these books that she will not put them down, they should not only be wrested from her hands, but if she shows unwillingness to peruse better books, her parents or friends should see to it that she read no books at all and become unaccustomed to the reading of literature—and, if possible, unlearn it altogether...A good woman will not take such books into her hands...as far as she can, she will bring it about by her good actions and admonitions that others be like her, and, I should add, by direction and instruction, if that is possible. (78)

In his admonition against romance, Vives asserts an interesting correlation between reading, virtue, and moral instruction, arguing that a woman should read books that provide virtuous instruction so she in turn may become a virtuous exemplar for others. In his *Prólogo*, Cervantes anticipates this potential criticism of his novelas’ moral influence on his reader: “quiero decir que los requiebros amorosos que en algunas hallarás, son tan honestos y tan medidos con la razón y discurso cristiano, que no podrán mover a mal pensamiento al descuidado o cuidadoso que las leyere” ‘I want to say that the amorous intrigues that you will find in some of them, are so honest and measured with reason and Christian discourse, that they cannot excite any impure thoughts in whoever reads them, regardless of whether they are careless or cautious’ (Cervantes 51-52). In an inversion of Vives’s belief in romance’s enthralling effect on the reader regardless of her interpretative engagement with the text, Cervantes suggests his novelas work their own

exemplary effects, regardless of whether the reader is “descuidado o cuidadoso.”

Further on in the *Prólogo*, however, Cervantes revises his claim that his novelas’ morals do not depend on the reader’s engagement, implying instead that a reader must interpret the exemplary tale he has provided her. Cervantes explains that his novelas are not only the product of his “ingenio” (52), but also *exemplary*, and thus invested, to varying degrees, in morally instructing the reader. As Cervantes tells his reader, his *Novelas* have exemplary potential if the reader knows where to look:

[h]eles dado nombre de *ejemplares*, y si bien lo miras, no hay ninguna de quien no *se pueda* sacar algun ejemplo provechoso; y si no fuera por no alargar este sujeto, *quizá* te mostrara el sabroso y honesto fruto que se *podría* sacar, así de todas juntas como de cada una de por sí (52, my emphasis)

I have given them the name ‘*exemplary*,’ and if you examine them well, there is not one of them from which *you could not* extract some useful example; and if it didn’t draw out the point, *perhaps* I would show you the tasty and honest fruit that *could be* extracted from all of them together or each one on its own

Cervantes’s playful explanation replete with conditional language of his choice of the word “ejemplar” to describe his novelas implies that while some stories may offer “algun ejemplo provechoso” it does not necessarily mean the *ejemplo* is virtuous, but merely useful. Cervantes toys with his reader by dangling the possibility of his explanation of the *novelas*’ individual or unified *ejemplos* like “sabroso y honesto fruto” that must be extracted (*sacar*) from the novela. In other words, Cervantes’ *Novelas ejemplares* self-consciously works in the didactic mode, but the *ejemplo* is not always obvious and it is the reader’s duty to extract the lesson from the tale.

La española inglesa is an exception in this regard. It concludes with an *ejemplo* for the reader, clarifying what virtuous instruction she should glean from the novela and retroactively framing the romance as instructive: “Esta novela nos podría enseñar cuánto

puede la virtud y cuánto la hermosura, pues son bastante juntas y cada una de por sí a enamorar aun hasta los mismos enemigos, y de cómo sabe el cielo sacar de las mayores adversidades nuestras, nuestros mayores provechos” “This novela can teach us how valuable virtue and beauty can be, since they are sufficient together or by themselves to win the love of one’s enemies, and how Heaven knows how to extract from our greatest trials, our greatest profits’ (283).² Significantly, Cervantes uses the same verb “sacar” to describe the process of extracting instruction from his novelas as the marvelous work “el cielo” performs in extracting from “las mayores adversidades nuestras, nuestros mayores provechos.” As I will explore further below, the novela’s conclusion suggests that our heroine, Isabela, may be its author, which further complicates the relationships between virtuous exemplar, text, author, and *ejemplo*.

I suggest that *La española inglesa*’s exemplarity is rooted in its status as a romance. Typically, as I explored with *Cymbeline*, romance incorporates stock characteristics: idealized protagonists, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering (often from court into the wilderness or a pastoral setting), obscured and revealed identities, anagnorisis, reunion, class and gender cross-dressing, and pseudo-historicity. E.C. Riley suggests that Cervantes’s novelas can be divided between “predominantly romance” and “predominantly novelistic,” noting that of the twelve novelas published in *Novelas*

² *La española inglesa* is one of only two novelas in the collection offering an explicit didactic message in its conclusion. The other is *El celoso extremeño*, which is not regarded as a romance. This further suggests Cervantes’s use of romance for didactic means in *La española inglesa*.

As with “provechos”/ “profits here, throughout my translations of *La española inglesa*, I draw out the economic metaphors Cervantes uses throughout the *novela* to emphasize the dual meaning Isabela’s *valor*: her material value and the strength of her virtue. For example, James Mabbe’s 1640 translation reads: “This Novell may teach us, what great power vertue, and beautie have, since that both of them together, and each of them by themselves are of force, to make even their enemies in love with them. As likewise how that heaven knowes from the greatest adversities and afflictions, to draw the greatest benefits, and comforts” (Mm2r).

ejemplares, five correspond with the hallmarks of romance, including *La española inglesa* (69-85).³ Barbara Fuchs suggests that romance can be regarded as a genre or a mode, but also as “a literary and textual strategy” (9) employed to accomplish certain narrative goals. In *La española inglesa*, Cervantes works with the strategies of romance to instruct his reader in the exemplarity of *valor*. In doing so, Cervantes undermines Vives’s assessment of romance’s effect on women by revealing that romance can be capable of virtuous instruction. I suggest that Cervantes develops the exemplarity of his romance, *La española inglesa*, by drawing on tropes common to hagiography, one ancestor of the novela. Although women were generally discouraged from reading romance, as Vives demonstrates, they were highly encouraged to read hagiographies for their moral instruction through numerous examples of women’s willing deaths to defend their faith and virtue.

Originating in the early centuries of Christianity and popularized throughout the medieval period, hagiographies are short, prose, linear narratives that provide accounts of saints’ lives and martyrdoms. The protagonist’s performance of miracles, a test of the protagonist’s virtue, and the mortification of the flesh often resulting in martyrdom are all common to most hagiographies. In Jacobus de Voraigne’s *Legenda aurea* [*The Golden Legend*] (1275), many of the most popular hagiographies recounted the lives and martyrdoms of women saints. Although the hagiographies of women saints often portray the saint’s physical beauty as a fatal trap leading her to misfortune, these trials are often

³ Riley hypothesizes that while certain “novelistic” novelas, such as *El coloquio de los perros*, are more popular among modern readers early moderns were drawn more to the romance genre. He notes that James Mabbe’s 1640 English translation, *Exemplarie Novells*, only includes six novelas, five of which Riley classifies as romances: *Las dos doncellas*, *La señora Coronelia*, *El Amante liberal*, *La fuerza de la sangre*, and *La española inglesa* (78-79). The sixth, *El celoso extremeño*, is “novelistic” but, along with *La española inglesa*, it is the only novela to include a moralizing conclusion.

met with miraculous events that protect the saint and prove her unyielding virtue. And while the narratives often end with the saint's achieving the glorious crown of martyrdom, a vast amount of narrative space is devoted to the saint's voice. Although hagiography and romance use similar strategies to offer exemplary content, Fuchs suggests that the primary influence hagiography has on romance is the proliferation of virtuous women protagonists in active narrative roles (Fuchs 59). For example, not only does dialogue make up almost the entirety of the text in the hagiographies of Saints Agnes, Lucy, and Cecilia, but each saint's virtuous speech dominates all other conversation.

Cervantes is well known for granting his female characters both the narrative space to speak and prudent, often clever, dialogue.⁴ Isabela is no different. She is afforded significant amounts of dialogue throughout the novela, and when she speaks, she speaks with prudence and *valor*. Moreover, at the end of the novela she is granted narrative control by translating and transcribing her and Ricaredo's adventures in England. When the Spanish priests ask Isabela to write the whole story so people can read it, she promises to do so, which suggests that the exemplary narrative we are reading is authored by Isabela (282). And although she does not suffer martyrdom at the hands of Elizabeth, the notoriously anti-Catholic queen, Isabela endures bodily disfigurement that results in a greater testament to her virtue. Additionally, Isabela's *valor* has the marvelous power to enchant Queen Elizabeth—a true Spanish-English miracle.

Like hagiography, romance employs strategies, such as threat of bodily harm or narrative dilation, to test the protagonist's virtue. In *La española inglesa*, Isabela

⁴ Among others, these characters include Preciosa from *La gitana*, who displays clever wit in her speech, and Marcela and Dorotea from *Don Quijote*.

undergoes several tests of her virtue, but unlike those in hagiography or other romances, the virtue in question is not her chastity or faith. Isabela's *valor* is twice proven unshakeable when confronted with mortal danger. Isabela undergoes the first test when she is summoned to Elizabeth's court, a potentially deadly challenge she meets with exceptional courage and prudent speech. The second test Isabela endures is when she is nearly killed by poisoning, but saved in the nick of time by the English queen. The common denominator besides Isabela in each of these instances is Queen Elizabeth, revealing that not only Isabela's virtue is being tested, but Elizabeth's as well. By employing tropes common to hagiography alongside sovereign tropes from advice literature, Cervantes uses literary techniques familiar to women readers to provide them a relatable exemplar of *valor* in his romance novela. In turn, Cervantes uses the strategies of romance to counter criticism of the genre and to prove through Isabela and Elizabeth's miraculous relationship that even the most far-fetched fiction can be morally instructive. Meanwhile, unlike popular conduct guides for women that champion queens, royal, or noblewomen as virtuous exemplars, Cervantes asserts that merchant women can be powerfully transformative models of princely feminine virtue as well. In *La española inglesa*, the reader witnesses a Spanish merchant's daughter transform the notoriously tyrannical English queen with her *valor*, proving that the power of virtue is indeed marvelous.

Fitting with the aims of romance, a happy marriage between Isabela and Ricaredo is the novela's trajectory, but the narrative dilation occurs through the English Queen's intervention in the relationship between Isabela and Ricaredo, requiring Ricaredo to prove himself worthy of Isabela's virtue. As David Cluff observes, the novela's

momentum leads toward Ricaredo and Isabela's eventual marriage, while nearly all plot "obstacles" occur to forestall this conclusion and heighten the reader's sense of anticipation (261-267). Likewise, Thomas Pabón argues that the narrative dilation and labyrinthine plot structure is crucial for laying the "moral framework" for the novela's ending, "a conclusion that indicates that the natural consequence of a mutual love between two virtuous individuals is marriage" (Pabón 61). The dilation of narrative, facilitated by Elizabeth or events at her court, makes readers wait for the marriage of virtuous equals we know will conclude the novela. For this reason, Fray Luis's *La perfecta casada*, a conduct guide for wives, is an important text to help explicate the novela's guiding material metaphors.

Valor and Material Metaphors in Fray Luis's La perfecta casada

In Fray Luis de León *La perfecta casada* [*The Perfect Wife*] (1583), Bathsheba's first bit of advice to her son Lemuel about *la perfecta casada* provides an important material metaphor that shapes the rest of Fray Luis's exegesis of Proverbs, and will influence how Cervantes represents Isabela's virtue in *La española inglesa*. Again, Bathsheba's status as queen mother frames the feminine virtues she promotes as princely, especially since she advises her son about his future wife and queen. As Fray Luis explains, what Proverbs conveys through the word *valor* is the perfect wife's moral worth *and* her strength of virtue, two attributes typically regarded as inherently masculine qualities he suggests should be esteemed in wives:

Lo que aquí decimos *mujer de valor* (y pudiéramos decir *mujer varonil*, como Sócrates acerca de Jenofón, llama a las casadas perfectas), así *que esto que decimos varonil o valor, en el original es una palabra de grande significación y fuerza*, y tal, que apenas con muchas nuestras se alcanza todo lo que significa. Quiere decir virtud de ánimo y fortaleza de corazón, industria y riquezas, y poder y aventajamiento, y finalmente, un ser

perfecto y cabal en aquellas cosas a quien esta palabra se aplica. Y todo esto atesora en si la que es buena mujer, y no lo es si no lo atesora. (de León 30, my emphasis)

A *woman of worth* we call her and we could well call her a *masculine woman*, as Socrates, in *Xenophon*, calls perfect wives, so that *what we describe as masculine or of worth, is in the original a word of great significance and force*, so much so that even with many of our own words we can hardly capture its full meaning. It means a virtuous spirit and a strong heart; industry and riches and power and advantage, and finally, perfection and completeness with regard to these things in the person to whom this word is applied. All this treasure the good wife stores within herself, and she cannot be thought good if she does not thus treasure it (Jones and Lera 31, my emphasis)

As Fray Luis explains, the original word חַיִל (*chayil*) is “una palabra de grande significación y fuerza” and we cannot capture or express the complexity of its meaning with a single word in Spanish (or English, for that matter). The closest we can get to the original in translation, Fray Luis suggests, is the word *valor* and the word’s correlation with “varonil” reveals that a woman’s *valor* encompasses typically masculine qualities like “virtud de ánimo,” courage, industriousness, wealth, and power. In this way, *valor* encompasses the range of princely femininity promoted in *La perfecta casada* and other advice literature that advises women to perform domestic, feminine virtues with *fortaleza*, particularly through the instructive examples of queens like Esther, Penelope, and Isabel I of Castile. Although Fray Luis writes to advise wives about their duties in the home, he continually stresses that *valor* is part and parcel of what makes a woman a “worthy” wife.

Fray Luis’s elucidation of the qualities of the virtuous wife of Proverbs is important for an analysis of Cervantes’s *La española inglesa* because Cervantes incorporates similar material metaphors to describe Isabela’s *valor*—her “value” and the strength of her virtue—throughout his novela. Since the trajectory of *La española inglesa*

almost immediately leads Isabela and Ricaredo toward marriage, Cervantes's elucidation of Isabela's exemplary *valor* through metaphors comparing her to jewels, treasure, and wealth draws on Fray Luis's discussion about the "value" of feminine virtue, especially what he refers to as "virtud conyugal," which is comprised of the "riquezas... del alma, como son el valor, la fortaleza, la industria, el cumplir con su oficio, con todo lo demás que pertenece a lo perfecto desta virtud" 'riches...of the soul, such as valour, fortitude, industriousness, fulfilling one's role, with everything else that pertains to the perfection of this virtue' (240; 241).

In *La gitanilla*, the first novela in *Novelas ejemplares*, the titular character, Preciosa, is consistently compared to a "joya," "tesoro," and "piedra preciosa" in ways nearly identical to Isabela in *La española inglesa*. However, these material metaphors refer to exclusively to Preciosa's chastity, while the same figurative language in *La española inglesa* values Isabela's "infinitas virtudes." Joaquín Casaldueiro argues that Cervantes draws explicitly on Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* to inform his representation of Preciosa (55-56). Alison Weber agrees with Casaldueiro's assessment, but argues that by adapting Fray Luis's biblical metaphors of women as precious stones, Cervantes parodies popular books on feminine conduct. She writes: "we might characterize the principal targets of Cervantes's parody as the *codification* of feminine virtue; the *rhetoric* that equates speech (and public presence) with wantonness; and the *simplification* of women's economic destiny implicit in feminine conduct books" (72, original emphasis). I suggest that in *La española inglesa* Cervantes reprises the material metaphors he uses in *La gitanilla* for slightly different purposes than those Weber outlines.

Although Isabela's original purpose in London is not to be Ricaredo's bride, but a *despojo* Clotaldo has stolen from Cádiz who becomes his family's *prisionera*, Ricaredo's love for Isabela and her virtue translates her *estado* from servant to future bride early in the novela. Ricaredo, appropriately to his role as Isabela's future husband, unfailingly recognizes Isabela's *valor*. Fray Luis explains that by declaring the *mujer de valor* as "raro y estremado" in price, Proverbs suggests that "el hombre que acertare con una mujer de valor, se puede desde luego tener por rico y dichoso, entendiendo que ha hallado una perla oriental, o un diamante finísimo, o una esmeralda, o otra alguna piedra preciosa de inestimable valor" 'the man who manages to find a woman of worth can truly consider himself rich and fortunate, knowing that he has acquired an oriental pearl, or a very fine diamond, or an emerald, or some other precious stone of priceless value' (30; 31). Fittingly, Isabela is represented consistently as a "piedra preciosa de inestimable valor" throughout the novela, which reveals the value and power of her exemplary virtue.

In *La española inglesa*, Cervantes draws on Fray Luis's prioritization of *valor* for proper wifely conduct and translates it from the domestic to the political sphere. In his representation of Isabela as a *joya* of infinite and marvelous virtue, Cervantes imagines a situation in which feminine virtue takes on all the material, gendered, political, and spiritual properties inhered in the word *valor*. Cervantes represents Isabela as a *mujer de valor* whose value and strength are measured, tested, and refined in a truly dangerous arena: Queen Elizabeth's court. By translating the space of women's *valor* from the home to the public sphere, Cervantes adapts the linguistic vehicle of material virtue in Fray Luis's conduct book for his own exemplary purposes. Additionally, he follows Fray Luis's example of championing women in all *oficios* as potentially exemplary, but goes

one crucial step further by making a Gaditano merchant's daughter an exemplary guide for a notoriously unvirtuous queen. In doing so, Cervantes reroutes the standard flow of virtue represented in feminine conduct books as moving from sovereign to subject to prioritize merchants daughters as the true virtuous exemplars. Although Ricaredo identifies Isabela's *valor* early in the novela, her relationship with Elizabeth and the trials she endures at the Queen's court develop Isabela's *valor* alongside Elizabeth's princely model while simultaneously invoking the princely models of other "Isabels" in recent English-Spanish history.

Romancing the English Queen

Cervantes's representation of the notoriously anti-Catholic, anti-Spanish Queen Elizabeth as a tolerant ruler of her crypto-Catholic subjects, Spanish visitors, and especially of the novela's virtuous protagonist, Isabela, has long fascinated critics and has led to a variety of interpretations.⁵ In general, scholarship tends to read Cervantes's Elizabeth as an inherently just, magnanimous, and virtuous sovereign who serves various ends in the romance. For example, Américo Castro asserts that *La española inglesa's*

⁵ Some scholars suggest Cervantes's personal feelings about Elizabeth or Anglo-Spanish politics may have influenced his supposedly benevolent representation of Elizabeth. For example, Edgar Alison Peers attempts to solve the Elizabethan riddle by proposing that through her character Cervantes promotes peace between the two countries: "Queen Elizabeth, so recently the Spaniard's *bête noire*, is idealized to such a degree that one might suppose the author to have been deliberately working for an Anglo-Spanish understanding" (227). Thomas Hanrahan, assuming a 1605 composition date based on the renewal of friendly Anglo-Spanish relations in 1604, also connects Elizabeth's representation with the novela's internal/external history to suggest Cervantes developed affection for English Catholics he met in Valladolid in 1605, which he fictionally transferred to the novela's English queen (268). Likewise, Geoffrey Stagg contends that Cervantes's optimistic representation of Queen Elizabeth requires the novela's composition date to occur between 1558 and 1568—well before an English attack on Cádiz—and claims that Cervantes's novela "presents the England of Elizabeth *as seen through the eyes of her loving subjects*," Spanish-speaking English merchants Cervantes may have met in Sevilla (Stagg 317, original emphasis). Perhaps the most creative interpretation is Rosa María Stoops's that attempts to solve the scholarly quandary about Cervantes's Queen Elizabeth by arguing it derives from the novela's larger narrative significance as an extended metaphor for alchemy, assigning Elizabeth the role of Mercury (177-97).

didactic lesson is one of religious tolerance and that Cervantes's Elizabeth is significant to the novela because she is an unexpected voice of Catholic tolerance, regardless of the historical inaccuracy involved: "No nos importa la irrealidad histórica de la reina que Cervantes forja...pero sí el hecho de que el autor haya proyectado sobre la reina la idea de la comprensiva y señorial tolerancia" "The historical unreality of the queen that Cervantes forges does not concern us...but rather the fact that the author has projected onto the queen the idea of sympathetic and lordly tolerance" (my trans.; 288). While Castro's reading is convincing, he too takes Elizabeth's "comprensiva y señorial tolerancia" as qualities inherent to her character rather than virtues extracted through marvelous means. Like Castro, Joseph V. Rikapito argues that the novela's setting and its treatment of *católicos secretos* reveals that it is a commentary on the Spanish oppression of Jews and *conversos*. Curiously, and seemingly in conflict with the romance's didactic mirroring of Spain's problems, Rikapito takes Cervantes's positive representation of Elizabeth at face value. He claims her "strength lies in her equanimity and balance" (57) and that her representation is "part of an historical wish fulfillment" (58). When Cervantes published *Novelas ejemplares* Elizabeth had been dead for ten years, which instead suggests that her legacy in Spain as a vicious queen was still culturally significant. Additionally, as I will argue below, Cervantes's Queen is not represented as inherently magnanimous in her authority. In fact, Elizabeth is only truly tolerant of Isabela and those Isabela loves, revealing the extent to which Isabela's exemplary virtue sways the queen toward tolerance.

Since the novela begins with an English military raid on Cádiz, which could refer to the 1587 or 1596 attack, many scholars look to textual clues to reason through

Cervantes's rendering of a specific historical moment and his curious representation of *la reina*.⁶ Mack Singleton identifies what seems to be at the heart of scholarship's attempts to locate the historical Elizabeth in Cervantes's fictional queen:

It has usually been observed that the portrait of Elizabeth seems particularly artificial. By 1603, the year of her death, she was a good seventy years old. Cervantes could not help knowing that, for she had been Queen ever since Cervantes was a child; yet the portrait we have of her—vague as it is—seems to be that of a woman in her prime. The objection may again be made that Cervantes is writing a story. The odd thing is that this is one of the most carefully-documented stories—if indeed not the most carefully-documented story—of the whole collection. (332)

According to Singleton, Cervantes's Elizabeth is bewildering. She is both “artificial” and “vague”; “seventy years old” and “in her prime.” And while Singleton acknowledges that her confusing characterization results from her being a work of fiction, he nevertheless historicizes her in concert with the novela's obsession with documentation (dates, names, places, time intervals, finances, etc.).⁷ As he aptly puts it: “[the novela] does its best not to sound like fiction” (332). This is especially true of its inclusion of names like Leste⁸

⁶ The English queen, referred to only as “la reina,” is never named in the novela. However, scholarship concurs that she is a fictional Elizabeth I based on the initial drama of the English attack on Cádiz and other textual references, such as Isabela's name which the Queen compliments and distinguishes from her own by calling her “Isabela ‘la Española’” (250).

⁷ Singleton argues that the English attack on Cádiz the novela refers to is the 1587 attack, not the 1596: “In 1587, just before the year of the Armada, occurred the very famous attack by Drake, who sailed into Cádiz and sank or burned thirty-three vessels then being outfitted for the expedition of the following year. This is the episode that Drake referred to as the singeing of the King of Spain's beard. Leicester was in command of all English preparations against the Armada. It was therefore perfectly proper for Cervantes to assume that since Leicester was in general command he was therefore responsible for the attack by Drake. Leicester died the following year. If Cervantes meant Leicester—and there is no reason to suppose he did not—then the “perdida de Cádiz” (the only description Cervantes makes of the attack) must be the attack of 1587” (333). However, the novela's interior timeline tracked alongside Isabela's age depends on the 1596 date for the attack on Cádiz in the opening scene.

⁸ Harry Sieber, the Catedra editor, notes that Cervantes's mention of “el conde de Leste” at the sack of Cádiz in the novela's first sentence must refer to Essex, not Leicester, who was actually present at the 1596 attack (243, n.1-2). However, Singleton's theory above reasonably affirms that Leicester is correct, especially if read the novela's opening attack as referring to *both* the 1587 and 1596 attacks to demonstrate a general era of Post-Armada English military aggression.

and Arnaute Mamí.⁹ However, because *La española inglesa* is romance, it relies on pseudo-history to draw the reader in to a stable environment even as it unsettles and works against her expectations. *La española inglesa* suggests that dates, places, names and numbers do not matter as stable facts and yet constantly directs our attention to temporal markers, like an English military attack on Cádiz, and numerous material details ranging from clothing to currency. According to Marsha Collins, “the narrative virtually commands the reading public to reconcile the tale’s historical referentiality and factual specificity with its idyllic enactment of dreamlike romance” (56). In this way, Cervantes’s romance uses historical referents and material markers to situate the reader in Queen Elizabeth’s court in the early 17th century, a time of intense Spanish-English animosity, so that Isabela’s marvelous effect on the monstrous English queen is recognized as exemplary.

Late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spanish-English politics and poetics are essential to comprehending the novela’s didactic aims figured through the strategies of romance. As Eduardo Olid Guerrero observes, Cervantes’s representation of Elizabeth in *La española inglesa* is “the first positive version of Queen Elizabeth I in Spanish literature” (45). Indeed, in his 1588 canción, “De la armada que fue a Inglaterra” Luis de Góngora writes about Elizabeth: “oh reina torpe, reina no, mas loba/ libidinosa y fiera” ‘Oh stupid queen, not a queen, but a lascivious wolf and a beast’ (vv. 49-50; quoted in Guerrero 46). Ten years later, Lope de Vega’s epic verse about Si Francis Drake’s naval expedition to the Americas from 1595-1596, *La Dragontea*, articulates similar sentiments about the English queen, calling her “sangrienta Jezabel” ‘bloody Jezebel’ and

⁹ Arnaute Mamí was an Albanian renegade and high commander of Islamic vessels around Algiers. In 1575, Cervantes was aboard a ship taken captive by Mamí and was enslaved for five years until ransomed.

“incestuoso parto de la Harpía” ‘the harpy’s incestuous birth’ (vv.129, 133; quoted in Guerrero 46). As Lope de Vega and Góngora’s verses demonstrate, Spanish literary representation maligned the English Queen by describing her with gruesome, monstrous imagery. These vivid examples emphasize my point that Cervantes’s representation of Elizabeth as a tolerant, benevolent, and even maternally affectionate monarch is not a departure from typical Spanish sentiment of the time.¹⁰ Rather, Cervantes depicts Elizabeth’s historically monstrous nature marvelously transformed into compassion and magnanimity by Isabela’s exemplary *valor*.

The “Material Mnemonics” of Isabela’s *Valor*

Carroll Johnson’s study of *La española inglesa* offers the most comprehensive analysis of how the novela engages with religious, political, and economic tensions between England and Spain during the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. Johnson’s analysis primarily focuses on the novela’s interest in representing the economic fortunes of the various characters as well as its investment in fiscal metaphors, such as the repeated description of Isabela as a *despojo*, *prenda*, *tesoro*, and *joya*. According to Johnson, through the focus on the trials and successes of Isabela’s family (Gaditano merchants of possible *converso* heritage), the novela uses the language of commerce to support the emergence of merchants as an important social rank and in doing so “affirms that the bourgeoisie need not attempt to assimilate into the aristocracy, that the bourgeoisie qua bourgeoisie can come forward with honor as a protagonist of history” (191). Cervantes directs our attention to the possibility that a merchant’s

¹⁰ Guerrero’s analysis primarily focuses on what he detects as the mixture of Machiavellian and anti-Machiavellian sentiments in the novela, which for him represents “a princess trying to find a space in a masculine political scenario” (46). He comes closer than other scholars to recognizing that Isabela elicits an “unexpected royal compassion” from a historically “insensitive prince” (48), but he does not draw the causal connection I do here to argue that Isabela’s exemplary virtue reforms the otherwise tyrannical queen.

daughter from Cádiz can become a virtuous exemplar for the reader and the Queen of England.

Although not the first to do so, Johnson notes that the novela's title is based on a theory of reversibility, one culture (or one woman) substituting for another to the extent that *española* and *inglesa* become unmoored as signifiers of national identity or historical specificity.¹¹ The two women—the Queen and Isabela—become identical in their representation through “a kind of fictional algebra in which the women are interchangeable, as the title suggests” (Johnson 176). The notion that Elizabeth and Isabela are two sides of the same coin is difficult to buy outright, considering their disparity in power. Additionally, Johnson's estimation of a “fictional algebra” that makes both women variables in an economic equation privileges what Johnson reads as the novela's reification of a universalizing “catholic” economy over the novela's stated focus on the value of beauty and virtue.¹² This is not to say that we should take Cervantes's concluding *ejemplo* for the reader strictly at face value, but rather to take into account how Cervantes uses financial metaphors to value feminine virtue.

Johnson offers extensive analysis of the historical and economic worlds woven into Cervantes's story, but he neglects the significance of feminine virtue to the novela's “economy.” The one feminine virtue he alludes to is chastity when he suggests that “[f]eminist critics might want to ponder this presentation of an infecund economic order, presided by a sterile woman, which systematically reduced women to the status of

¹¹ For formalist scholarship on the novela's “doubling” in plot and structure, see E. T. Aylward, *The Crucible Concept: Thematic and Narrative Patterns in Cervantes's Novelas Ejemplares* (1999); Joaquín Casaldueño, *Sentido Y Forma De Las Novelas Ejemplares* (1943); and Jennifer Lowe, “The Structure of Cervantes' *La española inglesa*” in *Romance Notes* (1968), pp.287-290.

¹² “an advanced system of exchange based on credit, on mediation, on charity (that is, love of one's fellow man), and on universality, and here at least involving the direct participation of the Roman Catholic Church” (Johnson 184).

(infecund) commodities” (180). I would like to respond to this call and complicate Johnson’s argument by proposing that although his analysis reveals the extent of the novela’s interest in transnational exchanges of money and people, Cervantes does not represent Isabela as a mere commodity nor is Elizabeth figured as a sterile tyrant who controls her subjects without clemency. Instead of reading the relationship between Elizabeth and Isabela as either Janus-like or materialistic, I propose we shift our perspective to consider the extent to which Cervantes provides Isabela as an exemplar of *valor*, the blend of virtue and value popularized by Fray Luis de León’s *La perfecta casada*.

La española inglesa’s exploration of the economic and virtuous entanglements of royal, aristocratic, and merchant characters leads toward the predictable goal of romance: the marriage of two virtuous protagonists. Ricaredo and Isabela’s marriage at the end of the novela results in the blending of nationalities, languages, and status. When Isabela, the daughter of a Spanish merchant, marries Ricaredo, the English aristocrat, we witness a change in the value of Spanish social rank. As Johnson explains, “one way to consider the paradoxical joining of the idealistic love story and the detailed descriptions of financial operations would be to consider how *La española inglesa* is a reflection of the dialectic of history” (408). In other words, while romances typically tell love stories between virtuous aristocratic characters, “Cervantes eliminates aristocratic protagonists in favor of the bourgeoisie” by insisting that Ricaredo prove he deserves Isabela and that he assimilate to her Spanish merchant family (408).

In *Ideologies of History in the Spanish Golden Age*, Anthony Cascardi considers how an awareness of historical change, and the emergence of a new social status, is

integral to Cervantes's use of romance "to establish the symbolic basis for a new moral discourse" (288). Cascardi's analysis focuses on the *Persiles*, but he also regards the romances in *Novelas ejemplares* as part of Cervantes's project "to adapt the response of wonder associated with the ancient romance to new social conditions and, in the wondrous moment, to recover the moral function of the truly efficacious sign" (Cascardi 288). These "efficacious" and "nearly miraculous" signs, he explains, narratively intervene to fashion "the truly moral community" and "reestablish the grounds of belief" within it (Cascardi 318). At the novela's conclusion in Sevilla, this new community consists of Isabela, her parents, and Ricaredo, the English Catholic who transcends national allegiance and aristocratic values to prove himself different from his materially motivated parents. Throughout *La española inglesa*, we witness how Isabela functions as what Cascardi terms an "efficacious sign" through her "nearly miraculous" power over the English Queen. Isabela's influence on Elizabeth is a testament to Isabela's exemplary virtue and she is the miraculous sign around which "the truly moral community" of transnational Catholics forms.

Although Fray Luis offers a fairly progressive approach by categorizing women's domestic virtues as *valor*, his two primary strictures against feminine conduct rehearse the Pauline dyad of advice that seeks to control women's speech and material adornment:

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. (1 Tim 2:9-12)

Saint Paul's advisements take aim at women's adornment, speech, and authority.

Cervantes seizes each of these markers of supposedly bad feminine conduct and

reimagines them in the context of an exemplary romance that reveals how prudent speech, valorous adornment, and feminine authority and instruction are marvelous. Against Fray Luis's general advisement that women speak sparingly, Cervantes champions women's prudent, virtuous speech as necessary and effective. Additionally, although Fray Luis spends a substantial amount of space harshly condemning women's material adornment, Cervantes reveals how clothing can aid in enchanting one's enemies.

In fact, Cervantes's interest in sartorial virtue draws on an important moment often overlooked in Fray Luis's discussion of feminine adornment. Separate from Fray Luis's misogynistic tirade against feminine clothing, cosmetics, and jewelry gleaned from Proverbs 31:22, he ponders clothing's virtuous potential in his explanation of Proverbs 31:25 "Fortaleza y buena gracia su vestido, reirá hasta el día postrero" 'Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she will laugh until her last day' (200; 201). Fray Luis reconsiders how modest clothing can denote *valor*, writing: "como el vestido cine y roda todo el cuerpo, así ella toda y por todas partes ha de andar cercada y como vestida de un valor agraciado y de una gracia valerosa" 'in the same way that a dress girds and surrounds the whole body, so must she be completely surrounded everywhere and as it were dressed in a gracious valour and a valorous grace' (200; 201). Fray Luis's advice that women clothe themselves with "un valor agraciado y de una gracia valerosa" is significant for understanding how Cervantes represents how Isabela's sartorial splendor impacts the hard-hearted queen when she first arrives at court. Through his close attention to Isabela's dress and adornment, Cervantes emphasizes Isabela's *valor* through what Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass term "material mnemonics," which define how bodily adornment can signify something crucial to a person's identity (13). Isabela

and her counterpart, the Queen of England, reveal how feminine speech, adornment, and instruction reveal the power of *valor*, which has exemplary effects on even the hardest hearts.

In *La española inglesa*, Isabela's marvelous beauty has value that some characters recognize, but do not always fully appreciate. For example, when Clotaldo kidnaps Isabel from Cádiz, the narrator implies it was because she was "la más hermosa criatura que había en toda la ciudad" 'the most beautiful creature there was in the whole city' (243).¹³ As Johnson points out, "The first noun in Cervantes's text is *despojo*, and its referent is Isabela... It is also worth noting that this *despojo* is presumed to have value in and of itself" (177). Throughout the novela, the value of Isabela's beauty is variably appreciated by nearly all the English characters, especially Ricaredo's English Catholic parents. For example, when Catalina and Clotaldo evaluate their options for Ricaredo's wife, they initially estimate Isabela's *valor* to be worth more than the Scottish Clisterna's dowry: "teniéndose por prudentes y dichosísimos, de haber escogido a su prisionera por su hija, teniendo en más la dote de sus virtudes que la mucha riqueza que con la escocesa se les ofrecía" 'they considered themselves prudent and most blessed in having chosen their prisoner to be their daughter, taking her virtues as a better dowry than the great wealth the Scottish lady offered them' (247). After Isabela is poisoned and loses her beauty, however, Clotaldo and Catalina misguidedly decide to renew Ricaredo's betrothal to Clisterna, reasoning that Isabela's disfigurement has rendered her worthless. Ricaredo's parents consider beauty and virtue to be the qualities of *la perfecta casada*, but as the

¹³ At the beginning of the novela, her name is Isabel. Clotaldo and Catalina change it to Isabela (245).

novela reveals, while beauty and virtue together are a supernatural force, a woman's true worth derives from her *valor*.

Throughout the novela, Isabela is described through material metaphors that value her as a *joya*, *despojo*, *tesoro*, *prenda*, and *dádiva*. Isabela's *valor* becomes a type of currency against which others' virtues are weighed, and Ricaredo and Queen Elizabeth are the only two English characters truly able to appreciate her *valor*. For example, when Queen Elizabeth demands that Ricaredo must perform trials in order to merit Isabela instead of relying on his ancestors' "credit," she measures his *valor* against Isabela's. Unlike the other English characters, who only appreciate (or envy) Isabela for her beauty, Elizabeth and Ricaredo recognize that while Isabela's beauty is the currency that affords her social and transnational mobility, her real value is her inestimable *valor*. Ricaredo's near-immediate recognition and valuation of Isabela's virtue marks him as her virtuous equal early on in the novela. The barrier to their happy union, however, is the queen's permission to marry. In line with romance tropes, Cervantes's Queen Elizabeth facilitates the time dilation until the lovers marry in the anticipated conclusion by demanding that Ricaredo prove himself equal to Isabela in *valor*—virtue and value. When Ricaredo returns from his adventure, he brings Elizabeth masses of treasure to trade for Isabela—*joya for joya*—that Elizabeth later gives Isabela as wedding gifts. The benevolence that Elizabeth extends to Ricaredo arouses jealousy in the English courtiers who comment that Ricaredo's gifts have impacted the Queen in unexpected ways: "Ahora se verifica lo que comúnmente se dice, que dádivas quebrantan peñas, pues las que ha traído Ricaredo han ablandado el duro corazón de nuestra reina" "Now this verifies the common saying, that gifts break stones, because those Ricaredo has brought have softened the hard heart

of our queen' (262). The courtiers' claim that the *tesoro* Ricaredo delivered to Queen Elizabeth has softened her hard heart mirrors the marvelous workings of Isabela's *valor* on the English queen. Isabela is the "dádiva" of "inestimable valor" that melts the queen's "duro corazón."

Isabela's ability to use her words powerfully and prudently is one of the principal facets of her *valor*. In praising Isabela's command of language, the narrator emphasizes Catalina's maternal instruction of Isabela and her virtuous maintenance of Isabela's Catholic faith and fluency in Spanish by bringing Spaniards secretly to the house to converse with her: "Destá manera, sin olvidar la suya, como esta dicho, hablaba la lengua inglesa como si hubiese nacido en Londres" 'In this way, without forgetting Spanish, she spoke the English language as though she had been born in London' (244). In addition to prioritizing Isabela's bilingualism through contact with Spaniards, Catalina teaches her to read, write, and perform musically, which cultivates her marvelous voice: "pero en lo que tuvo extreme fue en tañer los instrumentos que a una mujer son lícitos, y esto con toda perfección de música, acompañándola con una voz que le dio el Cielo tan extremada, que encantaba cuando cantaba" 'but what she did best was play all the instruments that for a woman are proper, with complete musical perfection, accompanied by a such an exquisite voice which Heaven had given her, that when she chanted, she enchanted' (244). When she chanted, she *enchanted*, and as the next sentence reveals, her virtues "adqueridas y puestas sobre la natural suya" 'acquired and natural to her' cause Ricaredo to fall hopelessly in love with her.

Although Isabela possesses manifold virtues and is Catholic, her status as Ricaredo's family's captive initially marks her as an "esclava—si este nombre se podía

dar a Isabela” ‘slave—if this name could be applied to Isabela’ (245), not Ricaredo’s potential wife. While suffering lover’s melancholy, Ricaredo decides to declare his love to Isabela, but before he verbally praises her for her *valor*, virtue, and beauty, the narrator reveals that everyone in the house admired similar qualities in Ricaredo: “su mucha virtud y su gran valor y entendimiento” ‘his great virtue, *valor*, and understanding’ (245). In their initial conversation, the first moment in the text in which Isabela speaks, Ricaredo identifies and expresses appreciation for her *valor*: “‘Hermosa Isabela, tu valor, tu mucha virtud y grande hermosura me tienen como me ves’” ‘Beautiful Isabela, your *valor*, your great virtue, and exceeding beauty have affected me as you see’ (245). The narrator emphasizes that Isabela’s *valor* is equal to Ricaredo’s and that Ricaredo is able to properly identify and value her as virtuous, recalling Fray Luis’s message to husbands that only virtuous men deserve the *joya* of a *mujer de valor*.¹⁴

Isabela’s prudent reply to Ricaredo’s profession of love confirms the authenticity of her *valor*. While Ricaredo speaks, Isabela stands quietly listening, demonstrating her virtue: “los ojos bajos, mostrando en aquel punto que su honestidad se igualaba a su hermosura, y a su mucho discreción su recato” ‘her eyes lowered, displaying that her honesty equaled her beauty, and her great discretion equaled her modesty’ (246). And when Isabela replies, she does so in a lengthy, measured explanation of her obedience to his parents, wherein she reinforces her chastity and places her will in the hands of her adoptive parents, Clotaldo and Catalina (246). Afterwards, she falls silent demonstrating

¹⁴ “no hay joya ni posesión tan preciada ni envidiada como la buena mujer; y otro, por haber merecido que le cupiese; porque, así como este bien es bien precioso y raro, y don propiamente dado de Dios, así no le alcanzan de Dios sino los que, temiéndole y sirviéndole se lo merecen son señalada virtud” ‘there is no jewel or any other possession which is so prized or envied as the good wife, and, on the other hand, for having deserved it, because, just as this is a precious and rare gift, and a gift properly granted by God, so it is only obtained from God by those who, fearing Him and serving Him, deserve it through their marked virtue’ (196; 197).

her prudent employment of silence: “Aquí puso silencio Isabela a sus honestas y discretas razones” ‘Here Isabela put silence to her honest and discreet reasoning’ (246). Isabela demonstrates the virtues of silence, chastity (*honestidad*), obedience, and prudence in her private interactions with Ricaredo, prioritizing the will of his parents over her own.

As I discussed above, scholarship on *La española inglesa* frequently wrestles with the seeming conundrum posed by the novela’s representation of the English Queen Elizabeth as a benevolent ruler over her crypto-Catholic subjects (Clotaldo, Catalina, Ricaredo) and a welcoming patron to Spanish Catholic citizens (Isabela and her parents). The tendency to read Cervantes’s Elizabeth as an exceptionally magnanimous monarch is missing the point. Rather than representing the English queen as inherently kindhearted to her disobedient subjects and Spanish nationals alike, Cervantes displays the supernatural effect of the Spanish Isabela’s virtue, her *valor*, on the English Elizabeth. Through her prudent speech and “milagrosa belleza” ‘miraculous beauty,’ Isabela is able to transform Elizabeth into a virtuous monarch. Isabela’s prudent speech is an integral facet of her *valor*. By speaking courageously and prudently in crucial situations, particularly at Elizabeth’s court, Isabela is able to protect herself and Clotaldo’s family from persecution for being *católicos secretos*. Additionally, Isabela’s supernatural beauty, which is a Neoplatonic visual signifier of her virtue, has the ability to soften Elizabeth’s “duro corazón.”

When Elizabeth learns of Clotaldo’s plans to marry his son, Ricaredo, to “su prisionera, la española de Cádiz” ‘his prisoner, the Spanish girl from Cádiz,’ she summons Clotaldo and Isabela to her court, prompting Isabela’s demonstration of her

valor through prudent speech. Catalina immediately becomes distraught, fearing that by interrogating Isabela, the queen will discover they are all *católicos secretos*:

“si sabe la reina que yo he criado a esta niña a la católica, y de aquí viene a inferir que todos los desta casa somos cristianos!; pues si la reina le pregunta qué es lo que ha aprendido en ocho años que ha que es prisionera, ¿qué ha de responder la cuitada que no nos condene por más discreción que tenga?” (247)

“what if the queen finds out that I have raised this girl as a Catholic, which leads her to infer that all of us in the house are Christians? Because if the queen asks her what she has learned over these eight years that she’s been our prisoner, what response can this timid girl give, with all her discretion, that doesn’t condemn us all?”

Catalina’s panicked response to the royal summons reveals how anxiously aware she is of her role in Isabela’s Catholic education after Isabela was abducted to London. Catalina’s panic and estimation of Isabela as “cuitada” are immediately refuted, however, by Isabela’s confident, prudent response: “No le dé pena alguna, señora mía, ese temor, que yo confío en el cielo que me ha de dar palabras en aquel instante, por su divina misericordia, que no sólo no os condenen, sino que redunden en provecho vuestro” ‘Don’t let fear give you sorrow, my lady, for I believe that heaven, by its divine mercy, will grant me words in that moment that will not condemn you but will result in your benefit’ (247). Isabela’s *valor* is revealed through her faith in God to grant her the judicious words to deceive Queen Elizabeth and thereby protect herself and her adoptive family from execution. Additionally, based on Catalina’s panicked reaction to the summons, we can conclude that the extreme tolerance, and admiration, Elizabeth displays towards her Catholic subjects and Isabela’s Spanish parents later in the novela is a newly emergent characteristic of the queen.

Although Clotaldo and his family resolve to rely on “mucha confianza que en Dios tenía[n] y en la prudencia de Isabela” ‘the great faith he [they] had in God and in

Isabela's prudence' (247), they nevertheless display great anxiety about going to court the next day, further indicating their dread of Elizabeth's wrath. Even amid Isabela's constant reassurances that she would respond prudently to the Elizabeth's questions, the narrator represents Clotaldo and Catalina frantically reasoning through their situation, initially consoling themselves that the queen must not know they are Catholics since the summons was so polite, and that surely she just wants to meet Isabela, "cuya sin igual hermosura y habilidades habría llegado a sus oídos" 'whose incomparable beauty and abilities must have reached her ears' (248). However, acknowledging their error in not presenting Isabela at court years ago, they devise the explanation that they had no intent to deceive Elizabeth because "desde el punto que entró en su poder la escogieron y señalaron para esposa de su hijo Ricaredo" 'from the moment she entered their possession, they elected her and marked her as the wife of their son, Ricaredo' (248). Anticipating their punishment for not gaining Elizabeth's approval of the marriage, they decide to preemptively accept their guilt by presenting Isabela at court dressed luxuriously "como esposa, pues ya lo era de tan principal esposo como su hijo" 'like a bride, such as would become an important groom as their son' (248).

When explicating Proverbs 31:22, "Hizo para si aderezos de cama, holanda y purpura es su vestido" 'She made herself bed-coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple' (136; 137), Fray Luis vehemently criticizes women's material adornment, often drawing on Tertullian and other early Christian theologians. He harshly condemns women who dress "deceitfully" and praises women who dress "chastely" in accordance with their *estado* and God's will. Interestingly, in his rebuke of feminine material adornment, Fray Luis invokes Queen Esther as an exception to his protracted

condemnation of cosmetics, opulent dress, and ornamentation of any kind. Summarizing Cyprian, he writes: “Sola es Esther la que hallamos haberse aderezado sin culpa, porque se hermosteó con misterio y para el rey su marido; demás de que aquella su hermosura fue rescate de toda una gente condenada a la muerte” ‘Esther is the only one we can find who made herself up blamelessly for she made herself attractive with a certain mystery for the King her husband; apart from the fact that her beauty rescued a whole people condemned to death’ (168; 169). Just as Esther seduces the formidable King Ahasuerus, Isabela’s beauty and extravagant adornment enchant Queen Elizabeth. Through her beauty, prudence, and virtue Esther was able to charm King Ahasuerus and save her Jewish people from murder. In a similar manner, Isabela enters Elizabeth’s court with the dire awareness that she must protect the persecuted community of *católicos secretos*.

While Clotaldo and Catalina intend to dress Isabela as a bride and not “como prisionera,” her dress marks (*señala*) Isabela as both.

...vistieron a Isabela a la española, con una saya entera de raso verde, acuchillada y forrada en rica tela de oro, tomadas las cuchilladas con unas eses de perlas, y toda ella bordada de riquísimas perlas; collar y cintura de diamantes, y con abanico a modo de las señoras damas españolas; sus mismos cabellos, que eran muchos, rubios y largos, entretejidos y sembrados de diamantes y perlas, le servían de tocado...Toda esta honra quiso hacer Clotaldo a su prisionera, por obligar a la reina la tratase como a esposa de su hijo. (248)

they dressed Isabela in the Spanish style, with a green satin gown, all cut and lined with sumptuous gold cloth, the gold slashes adorned with S’s made out of pearls, and the entire dress embroidered with the richest pearls; necklace and girdle of diamonds, and with a fan in the style of Spanish ladies; her hair, which was thick, long, and blonde, was woven and sown with a headdress of diamonds and pearls...Clotaldo wanted to do this honor to his prisoner in order to obligate the queen to treat her as his son’s wife.

Isabela is dressed *a la española* to signal her national difference from their English family, the English citizens in the streets, the English courtiers, and the English queen

while her status as Clotaldo's *esclava* is reinforced through the S's embroidered on her dress.¹⁵ As Isabel Torres argues, "[h]er prominence in the procession is a sham, a hollow inversion of the social reality, exposed by the pearl letters embroidered on her dress" (124). The "sham" is further sustained by Clotaldo's plan to manipulate the queen into regarding Isabela as a wife fit for Ricaredo, which we soon discover reveals Clotaldo's flawed understanding about appearances and how Queen Elizabeth values *valor*. As we will see, Queen Elizabeth, like Ricaredo, sees beyond Isabela's marvelous beauty, and her deceitful appearance, to recognize her virtue (Collins 64). Though not modestly dressed, Isabela's sartorial styling evokes Fray Luis's advice that women dress themselves "de un valor agraciado y de una gracia valerosa" (200).

Clotaldo styles Isabela as a Spanish slave and his son's future bride in order to deceive the queen, but while Elizabeth is enchanted with Isabela's beauty, she also recognizes her virtuous worth. When Isabela arrives at the queen's court, her impact on Queen Elizabeth is represented as a heavenly, cosmological event that reveals the marvelous power of Isabela's *gracia valerosa*:

[Isabela] pareció lo mismo que parece la estrella o exalación que por la región del fuego en serena y sosegada noche suele moverse, o bien así como rayo del sol que al salir del día por entre dos montanas se descubre. Todo esto pareció, y aun cometa que pronosticó el incendio de más de un alma de los que allí estaban, a quien Amor abrasó con los rayos de los hermosos soles de Isabela, la cual, llena de humildad y cortesía, se fue a poner de hinojos ante la reina (249)

[Isabela] appeared in the same way that the star or exhalation, that by the fiery region usually moves on a serene and peaceful night, or else like the

¹⁵ Covarrubias defines "Esclavo" as: "El siervo, el cautivo. Algunos quieren se haya dicho el hierro que les ponen a los fugitivos y díscolos en ambos carrillos, de la *S* y del clavo; pero yo entiendo ser dos letras *S* y *I*, que parece clavo, y cada una es iniciativa de dicción, y vale tanto, como *sine iure*; porque el esclavo no es suyo, sino de su señor y así le es prohibido cualquier acto libre" 'The servant, the captive. Some want to have said the brand they put on both cheeks of fugitives and the disobedient, the *S* and the nail; but I understand there are two letters, *S* and *I*, that look like a nail, and each one is an initiative of diction, and worth so much, as *sine iure*; because the slave is not their own person, but their master's and thus is prohibited any free action' (811).

sun's ray that reveals itself between two mountains at daybreak. All of this she seemed, and even like a comet that foretells the setting on fire of more than one soul of all those present, who Love burned with the rays of the beautiful suns belonging to Isabela, who, full of humility and courtesy, approached the queen on bended knee

Isabela appears in Elizabeth's court like a constellation of heavenly bodies portending a miraculous event. Frederick de Armas argues that in this moment Cervantes directly references important astrological events that occurred between 1603 (Queen Elizabeth's death) and 1605 (Felipe IV's birth), which "signaled to astrologers throughout Europe that a new era was at hand" (89). Francisco Navarro, writing in 1604 about the astrological events of 1603, notes that "[l]os efectos destas máximas conjunciones son mudar, y alterar la universal compleción del mundo, los imperios, sectas, gobiernos, costumbres" "The effects of these great conjunctions are to change and alter the complexion of the world, its empires, sects, governments and customs" (7, quoted in de Armas 89 n.4; de Armas 89-90). Astrologers interpreted Elizabeth's death in 1603 as a global change of the magnitude described. If we follow the novela's implied timeline, Isabela is seven years old when she is stolen from Cádiz (presumably in 1596), meaning that the first time she meets Queen Elizabeth is in 1603, coinciding perfectly with the first celestial event Navarro describes. Therefore, Isabela is the "estrella," "exalación," and "cometa que pronosticó el incendio" of Queen Elizabeth's "alma." Isabela's marvelous impact on Elizabeth, then, signals a new era of universal change.

Elizabeth is not only moved by Isabela's celestial appearance and her *gracia valerosa*, but her virtuous speech as well. When Isabela bravely approaches the fearsome queen, she does so with deference that demonstrates her virtue: "y en lengua inglesa le dijo. – Dé Vuestra Majestad las manos a esta su sierva, que desde hoy más se tendrá por

señora, pues ha sido tan venturosa que ha llegado a ver la grandeza vuestra” ‘And, in English, she said, “Grant, Your Majesty, your hands to your servant, that from now on will be considered a lady, since she has been so fortunate that she has arrived to see your greatness”’ (249). Isabela’s rhetorical humility and prostration before the queen, combined with her marvelous appearance strike Elizabeth dumb:

Estúvola la reina mirando por un buen espacio, sin hablarle palabra, pareciéndole, como después dijo a su camarera, que tenía delante un cielo estrellado, cuyas estrellas eran las muchas perlas y diamantes que Isabela traía, su bello rostro, y sus ojos el sol y la luna, y toda ella una nueva maravilla de hermosura (249)

The queen remained staring for a while, without speaking a word, it seeming to her, as she later told her *camarera*, that she had a starry sky before her, whose stars were the many pearls and diamonds that Isabela wore, her beautiful face, and her eyes the sun and the moon, and her entire person was a new marvel of beauty

The narrator heightens the reader’s sense of Elizabeth’s shock at seeing Isabela by temporally distancing the description of what the queen thought in the moment, from the moment itself by writing “como después dijo a su camarera.” This narrative technique reveals the exemplary impact Isabela has on the English Queen while introducing the *camarera mayor*, who, as we learn later, will betray her sovereign by poisoning Isabela. Through this after-the-fact confession, the reader is granted access to an intimate conversation between a sovereign and her confidante where she candidly articulates Isabela’s power as “una nueva maravilla de hermosura.”

In the triangulated conversation that ensues between the queen, Isabela, and Clotaldo, the narrator reveals the magnitude of Isabela’s exemplary presence in the English court. After the queen collects herself, she requests that Isabela speak to her in Spanish: “Habladme en español, doncella, que yo le entiendo bien, y gustare dello” ‘Speak to me in Spanish, *doncella*, because I understand it well and would like it’ (249).

The notion of a quasi-historical, post-Armada Queen Elizabeth in a romance plot asking a Spanish character (who is also secretly Catholic) to speak to her in Spanish because she *enjoys* it would strike any reader as bordering on the absurd. And truly, this is where Cervantes's clever sense of humor and adeptness at romance works exemplary magic on his readers. Although we are encouraged to laugh at this moment as preposterous, at the same time we are, like Cervantes's Queen, struck dumb by the miraculous benevolence Isabela can extract from Elizabeth's *duro corazón*.

In the first narrative instance of Elizabeth's selective magnanimity, she sternly reprimands Clotaldo for keeping Isabela, "este tesoro," from her, but does not punish him. Rather, she echoes and elaborates the material metaphors previously used to describe Isabela's *valor*. She chastises him, saying "Clotaldo, agravio me habéis hecho en tenerme este tesoro tantos años ha encubierto...obligado estáis a restituírmele, porque de derecho es mío" 'Clotaldo, you have offended me in keeping this treasure hidden from me so many years...you are obliged to return it to me, because it is mine by right' (249). Elizabeth calls Isabela a *tesoro*, but unlike Clotaldo's illegal seizure of her as *un despojo*, the English queen sees Isabela as innately hers by sovereign right to stolen treasure. Furthermore, although Elizabeth is represented, like Ricaredo, as virtuously able to see past Isabela's surface beauty to her interior *valor*, that sentiment is not yet expressed here. The novela's use of doubling to draw comparisons between characters, events, and themes is heightened in this moment as the reader realizes that part of Elizabeth's attraction to Isabela is her perception that Isabela is a reflection of herself.

As Clotaldo and Elizabeth continue their discourse, the reader is immersed in a tension-filled moment between a sovereign and her disobedient subject that could end

tragically, but for the moment revolves around the question of feminine perfection. Clotaldo acknowledges his transgression and tries to compensate by explaining that he only kept Isabela hidden this long to *perfect* her before presenting her to the queen: “confieso mi culpa, si lo es haber guardado este tesoro a que estuviese en la perfección que convenía para parecer ante los ojos de Vuestra Majestad, y ahora que lo esta, pensaba traerle mejorado pidiendo licencia a Vuestra Majestad para que Isabela fuese esposa de mi hijo Ricaredo” ‘I confess my sin, if it was a sin to have guarded this treasure until it arrived at the perfection suitable to appear before Your Majesty’s eyes, and now that it has, I thought to improve it further by asking Your Majesty’s permission for Isabela to be my son Ricaredo’s wife’ (250). The education Isabela received in Clotaldo’s house is the first way she is perfected, and Clotaldo hopes to perfect her further by marrying her to Ricaredo, implying that a woman is only truly perfected when she is married. Elizabeth does not immediately acknowledge his apology or his request that she grant Isabela and Ricaredo permission to marry. Rather, she ponders Isabela’s similarity to herself, noting that Isabela is already perfect, save “la Espanola” being added to her name: “Hasta el nombre me contenta—respondió la reina—no le faltaba más sino llamarse Isabela ‘la Española,’ para que no me quedase nada de perfección que desear en ella” ““Even her name pleases me,” the Queen replied. “Nothing more was lacking in the fullness of her perfection but calling her Isabela ‘the Spaniard’” (250). Fittingly, the Virgin Queen recognizes that Isabela does not need marriage to be perfect, and, as though looking in a mirror, only distinguishes herself from the young lady in nationality. It is in this instance that the reader becomes more fully aware of the exemplary game Cervantes is playing by making a young Spanish Catholic girl a “mirror” for an English queen.

Elizabeth refuses Ricaredo permission to marry Isabela, who is now firmly marked as her *tesoro*, until he has earned Isabela himself: “Ni lo estará—dijo la reina— con Isabela hasta que por sí mismo lo merezca...él por sí mismo se ha de disponer a servirme y a merecer por sí esta prenda, que yo la estimo como si fuese mi hija” “Nor will he be,” said the Queen, “with Isabela until he has merited it himself... Ricaredo must prepare to serve me himself and by his own merit deserve this prize that I value as if she were my own daughter” (250). By calling Isabela a *prenda*, a word meaning both a gift and a pledge, Elizabeth perpetuates the material mnemonics that refer to Isabela as a valued thing.¹⁶ However, Elizabeth does not objectify Isabela in the same way as Clotaldo, who translates her from *despojo* to *prisionera*. By valuing (*estimar*) her like a daughter, Elizabeth makes Isabela a virtual princess. Isabela prudently seizes this opportunity to further ingratiate herself to the queen by falling to her knees and, “en lengua castellana,” saying: “Las desgracias que tales descuentos traen, serenísima señora, antes se han de tener por dichas que por desventuras; ya Vuestra Majestad me ha dado nombre de hija: sobre tal prenda, ¿qué males podré temer o qué bienes no podré esperar?” “Misfortunes such as these, most serene lady, should be taken for good fortune than for bad; Your Majesty has given me the name of daughter: with such a pledge, what harm should I fear, or for what benefit should I not hope?” (250). Isabela repeats the word *prenda*, here with the connotation of “pledge,” to secure the Queen’s promise to value her and protect her like a daughter.

¹⁶ In *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611), Covarrubias defines *prender* as “Sacar prenda al que debe alguna cosa o al que ha hecho algún daño” ‘To take a pledge for something or for some damage done’; and *prenda* as “lo que se toma al que es prendado” ‘what is taken for what is pledged’; meanwhile noting that *prendas* “son partes, como hombre de prendas, hombre de buenas partes” ‘are parts, like man of gifts, man of good parts’

It is especially important to note that while the queen continues, and expands on, the objectification of Isabela, Elizabeth expresses her affection for Isabela with a word that will be repeated later by Isabela's birth mother when she and Isabela reunite. When Ricaredo rescues and brings Isabela's parents to the English court, Isabela's mother recognizes her by "un lunar negro" 'a dark mole' on her right ear and exclaims, "Oh, hija de mi corazón! ¡Oh, prenda cara del alma mía!" "Oh daughter of my heart! Oh, precious gift of my soul!" (264). Echoing her first meeting with Elizabeth, Isabela describes her reunion with her mother as "hallazgo desta amada prenda" 'discovering this beloved gift' (264). This retroactively authenticates Elizabeth's use of the material metaphor as a term of maternal endearment, and sheds more light on Isabela's previous use of the word to express her acceptance of her role as Elizabeth's "hija." When Isabela responds to Elizabeth's promise to treat her "como si fuese [su] hija," Isabela prudently uses *prenda* to transform Elizabeth's benevolent gesture into a bond, while in her interaction with her mother Isabela reciprocates with an expression of equal value.

Isabela's prudently deferential response successfully endears her to Queen Elizabeth, but only in a degree commensurate with courtly patronage and not in the authentic, reciprocal manner demonstrated between Isabela and her birth mother. Isabela's acceptance of her role as Elizabeth's adoptive daughter (Isabela's second adoptive mother in the novela) leads the queen to recognize her grace and to keep her at court in her service, where she will be educated in courtly life by Elizabeth's *camarera mayor*: "Con tanta gracia y donaire decía cuanto decía Isabela, que la reina se le aficionó en extremo y mandó que se quedase en su servicio, y se la entregó a una gran señora, su camarera mayor, para que la enseñase el modo de vivir suyo" 'Isabela said what she said

with so much grace and finesse that the queen developed an extreme affection for her and ordered that she remain in her service, and she entrusted her to a great lady, her *camarera mayor*, to instruct her in her way of life' (250). Again, we see Isabela acquire yet another adoptive mother whom, like Catalina, will re-*enseñar* Isabela in courtly conduct (Torres 124). The queen embraces Isabela as a daughter, but she consigns her to her *camarera mayor*'s care, making her a virtual princess and an actual servant.

The controlling tenor of the scene continues as Elizabeth figures her relationship with Isabela as one of regal and maternal guardianship in her promise to Ricaredo that she will "guard" Isabela while he is away: "Yo misma os seré guarda de Isabela, aunque ella da muestras que su honestidad será su más verdadera guarda" 'I will be Isabela's guard, although she shows her integrity to be her best guardian' (251). In another demonstration of the material mnemonics used to value Isabela's virtue, the queen values both Isabela and her chastity (*honestidad*) as prizes. The Queen claims Isabela as a daughter, but also as a possession, a piece of collateral (*prenda*) to ensure Ricaredo's return with more spoils to fill English treasuries. And although Isabela has been welcomed into Elizabeth's court as a kind of daughter, when Ricaredo and his parents leave she considers herself an orphan: "Quedó Isabela como huérfana que acaba de enterrar sus padres, y con temor que la nueva señora quisiese que mudase las costumbres en que la primera la había criado" 'Isabela was left like an orphan whose parents were just buried, and with dread that her new mistress would want her to change the customs with which she had been raised' (252). Understandably, Isabela does not consider her relocation to the English court a reward, but a punishment. She reacts with *temor* to being placed into the care of yet another English maternal figure, and rightly so. As we will see,

instead of sustaining her Catholic faith, Elizabeth's *camarera mayor* will work to expose it.

Throughout the novela, the narrator privileges Isabela's perspective and in this moment her emotions are crucial to the reader's empathetic understanding that her incorporation into Elizabeth's court is not a boon, but an anxiety-ridden dilemma. As Ricaredo leaves, she is paralyzed with sadness and fear: "no entendió lo que la reina le mandaba, antes comenzó a derramar lágrimas, tan sin pensar lo que hacía y tan sesga y tan sin movimiento alguno, que no parecía sino que lloraba una estatua de alabastro" "she didn't understand what the queen commanded, before she began to shed tears, so without thinking about what she did, so shocked, and so without movement, that she only seemed to be a weeping alabaster statue" (251-252). She momentarily loses her ability to comprehend and use language, one of her most potent markers of *valor*, and like a statue, is unable to act. In this moment, Isabela's appearance is similar to *La Vulnerata*—a wounded statue emblematic of English violence to Spanish Catholicism. And just as the desecration of the *Vulnerata* was collateral damage from the 1596 attack on Cádiz, Isabela's heartbreak, and eventual disfigurement, is also the collateral damage of a mission ordered by the English Queen and executed by a soldier in her service, Ricaredo.¹⁷ Although Isabela's wounds are emotional, it is not until Ricaredo returns from his expedition that her wounds become material markers of her *valor*.

When Ricaredo returns to England with the Portuguese ship filled with spices, pearls, diamonds, and other treasures for Queen Elizabeth, he asks for his own *joya* in return: "la cual joya ya Vuestra Majestad me la tiene prometida, que es a mi buena

¹⁷ For analysis of the *Vulnerata*'s enduring significance, see Anne J. Cruz, "Vindicating the *Vulnerata*: Cádiz and the Circulation of Religious Imagery as Weapons of War" in *Material and Symbolic Circulation between Spain and England, 1554-1604* (2008), pp. 39-60.

Isabela” ‘the jewel that Your Majesty already promised me, which is my good Isabela’ (260). The Queen’s response, worth quoting in full, continues the novela’s material mnemonics that equate Isabela with a jewel:

creedme que si por precio os hubiera de dar a Isabela, según yo la estimo, no la pudiérades pagar ni con lo que trae esa nave ni con lo que queda en las Indias. Dóyosla porque os la prometí y porque ella es digna de vos y vos lo sois della; vuestro valor solo la merece. Si vos habéis guardado las joyas de la nave para mí, yo os guardado la joya vuestra para vos. Y aunque os parezca que no hago mucho en volveros lo que es vuestro, yo sé que os hago mucha merced en ello: que las prendas que se compran a deseos y tienen su estimación en el alma del comprador, aquello valen que vale una alma, que no hay precio en la tierra con que aprecialla. Isabela es vuestra, véisla allí cuando quisiéredes podéis tomar su entera posesión, y creo será con su gusto, porque es discreta, y sabrá ponderar la amistad que le hacéis, que no la quiero llamar merced, sino amistad, porque me quiero alzar con el nombre de que yo sola puedo hacerle mercedes. (260)

Believe me that for the price I would have given Isabela to you, according to how I value her, you couldn’t have paid for her with what you brought in this ship or with all that is left in the Indies. I give her to you because I promised her to you and because she is worthy of you and you are worthy of her; your *valor* alone merits her. If you have guarded the ship’s jewels for me, I have guarded your jewel for you. And although it seems to you that I don’t do much in returning what is yours, I know that I do a lot for you in granting it: for those prizes that are bought by desire and have their value in the soul of the buyer, that are worth what the soul values them, there is no price in the world that can compensate for it. Isabela is yours, she is there when you want to be able to take her into your possession, and I believe that it will be with her pleasure, because she is prudent, and she will know to weigh the friendship you have for her, which I would not call kindness, but friendship, because I want to be raised up with the name that I alone can grant favors.

Along with Ricaredo, Elizabeth recognizes that a *mujer de valor* is a “piedra preciosa de inestimable valor” (de León 30) and is only willing to relinquish her into Ricaredo’s possession after he has demonstrated his *valor* is equal to Isabela’s: “vuestro valor solo la merece.” Elizabeth stresses her absolute authority when she insists that the *mercedes* she demonstrates in giving Isabela to Ricaredo belong solely to her as sovereign to bestow on her subjects according to their merit. In a revelatory admission, however, Elizabeth

prioritizes Isabela's consent to Ricaredo's *posesión*, which indicates that although Elizabeth is an absolutist monarch, she is conscientious of Isabela's desires and trusts in her prudent discretion, treating her "como si fuese [su] hija" (250).

Elizabeth values Isabela like a *joya* and expresses her affection for her through material gifts. As demonstrated in her procession to court, Isabela's sartorial styling "de un valor agraciado y de una gracia valerosa" provides the reader a way of tracking the changes in her transnational valuation and custody throughout the novela. For example, when Ricaredo returns to London, Isabela appears on a court balcony with the queen, dressed in the English style: "Estaba con la reina y con las otras damas Isabela, vestida a la inglesa, y parecía tan bien como a la castellana" 'Isabela was with the queen and the other ladies, dressed in the English style, which suited her as well as the Spanish style' (259). Isabela's *vestido* "a la inglesa" functions as livery to signal her incorporation into Elizabeth's court. In a similar manner, Elizabeth uses Isabela's dress to signal her Spanishness when Ricaredo brings Isabela's parents to the palace to stage their reunion. Oddly, Isabela's parents are "vestidos de nuevo a la inglesa" 'newly dressed in the English style' (262) while Isabela is "vestida con aquel mismo vestido que llevó la vez primera, mostrándose no menos hermosa ahora que entonces" 'dressed in the same outfit as when she arrived the first time, appearing no less beautiful now than she did then' (262). And on the day Ricaredo and Isabela are supposed to be married, Isabela is dressed so extravagantly "por orden de la reina" that the narrator cannot properly describe it ("no se atreve la pluma a contarlo" 'my pen does not dare to recount it'): "habiéndole echado la misma reina al cuello una sarta de perlas de las mejores que traía la nave, que las apreciaron en veinte mil ducados, y puéstole un anillo de un diamante, que se apreció en

seis mil ducados” ‘the queen herself had draped a string of the richest pearls the ship brought, that were valued at twenty thousand *ducados*, and gave her a diamond ring, that was valued at six thousand *ducados*’ (266). Elizabeth continues to fashion Isabela with expensive sartorial markers of princeliness, which in turn emphasize the Queen’s sovereign right to seized *joyas*, including Isabela.

As I have explored, Isabela’s clothing and jewelry function as material mnemonics of her nationality, whose custody she is in, and most importantly, her *valor agraciado* and *gracia valerosa*. Similarly, we have seen how Isabela’s beauty moves onlookers to consider her “una nueva maravilla de hermosura.” When Elizabeth’s *camarera mayor* poisons Isabela, Cervantes undermines the common Neoplatonic assumption that Isabela’s beauty is a marker of her virtue and reveals that Isabela’s true *valor* exists beyond appearances. When Elizabeth learns of Isabela’s poisoning, she hastens to treat Isabela and acts as a doctor until her royal physicians arrive: “Mandó llamar la reina con prisa a sus médicos, y en tanto que tardaban la hizo dar cantidad de polvos de unicornio, con otros muchos antídotos que los grandes príncipes suelen tener prevenidos para semejantes necesidades” ‘The queen quickly sent for her physicians, and while they were delayed, the queen gave her a quantity of unicorn horn, along with many other antidotes with which great princes tend to be prepared for such instances’ (268-269). Although the narrative provides no information about the poison itself other than its malevolent effects, the Queen treats Isabela like “los grandes príncipes” with *polvos de unicornio*.¹⁸ When the Queen’s physicians finally arrive, the Queen forces her *camarera mayor* to reveal the poison she gave Isabela, and the doctors, “con la ayuda de Dios,” are

¹⁸ The incident involving Rodrigo Lopes, Queen Elizabeth’s physician, may be alluded to here. Lopes, a Portuguese Jew, was accused of poisoning the queen and was executed in 1594.

able to save Isabela's life (269). Martínez-Góngora argues that masculine anxieties about a female sovereign are evoked in Elizabeth's "conexión con el mundo de la magia y la brujería" 'connection to the world of magic and witchcraft' through her use of unicorn's horn, a phallic symbol of virginity, to cure Isabela (35). The result of this connection is that when Elizabeth uses *polvos de unicornio* to cure Isabela, the novela consciously leads the reader into the realm of the marvelous.

Isabela's exemplary influence on the Queen of England, I argue, is key to *La española inglesa*'s central didactic message. The novela's romance conventions, which involve the use of the marvelous as a tool for moral instruction, encourage us to read the pivotal moment of the recourse to *polvos de unicornio*, a moment most scholars agree is the novela's center, as infused with the marvelous beyond the use of magic or *brujería*. Indeed, Martínez-Góngora proposes that Elizabeth's use of *polvos de unicornio* metonymically associates her with the mythological creature and contributes to her representation as an androgynous (or even hermaphroditic) queen (34). According to Covarrubias, the *unicornio* is:

un animal feroz, de la forma y grandor de un caballo, el cual tiene en medio de la frente un gran cuerno, de longitud de dos codos. Esta recebido en el vulgo que los demás animales, en las partes desiertas de África, no osan beber en las fuentes, por temor de la ponzoña que causan en las aguas las serpientes y animales ponzoñosos, esperando hasta que venga el unicornio y meta dentro dellas el cuerno, con que las purifica... El vulgo también recebido del que si ve una doncella, se le domestica y se recuesta sobre sus faldas y, adormeciéndose en ellas, los cazadores llegan y le prenden, y por esto es símbolo de la castidad. (1500-1501)

[It] is a ferocious animal, of the shape and size of a horse, which has a great horn in the middle of its forehead, two cubits in length. It is received from the common people that the other animals, in the desert areas of Africa, do not dare drink from the fountains, for fear of the venom in the water caused by the serpents and poisonous animals, waiting until the unicorn comes and puts its horn in the water, with which it purifies the fountains...It is also received from the common people that if it sees a

virgin, she tames it and it lays down in her skirt, and falls asleep in them, hunters may arrive and capture it, which is why it is the symbol of chastity.

If Martínez-Góngora aligns Queen Elizabeth with the unicorn through her reputation for chastity and her ferocity, we should note that according to Covarrubias, the unicorn is only symbolic of chastity because of the power chaste women have over it.

Early moderns believed unicorns could be real, though rare, creatures based on the amount of documentation about them and the theoretically medicinal virtues of their horns. For example, Covarrubias's *Tesoro*, published in 1611, two years before Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*, treats the unicorn as a real creature, but relies mostly on lore ("Esta recebido en el vulgo") to provide the reader a definition of the animal. Similarly, in *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* (1612), Edward Topsell describes the unicorn as "a beast whereof divers people in every age of the worlde have made great question, because of the rare Vertues thereof" (711). And although Topsell declares that "whether there bee a Unicorne...is the maine question to be resolved," throughout his extensive documentation of unicorn lore he never provides an answer. His documentation overlaps with Covarrubias's in several key areas, however, providing us with a clearer picture of how this animal and its virtues were understood by early moderns. Like Covarrubias, Topsell describes how the unicorn can purge venom by placing its horn in water infected with it and how unicorns can be tamed by virgins, allowing for hunters to seize them (716-719). The lore surrounding the unicorn, a solitary and powerful animal, helps us understand the marvelous impact Isabela has on Queen Elizabeth. If Elizabeth is the unicorn, then Isabela is the virtuous virgin who tames the ferocious quasi-mythological beast.

The Queen and her royal physicians save Isabela's life but the poison's material effects leave her horribly disfigured: "Finalmente quedó tan fea, que como hasta allí había parecido un milagro de hermosura, entonces parecía un monstruo de fealdad" 'Ultimately, she was left extremely ugly; what once had seemed a miracle of beauty, now seemed a monster of hideousness' (269). Isabela's significance as "un milagro de hermosura" or "una nueva maravilla de hermosura" has been translated into a state of hideous monstrosity. Nevertheless, Ricaredo still loves her and wants to take her away from the court to his family's house to convalesce, as he explains to the queen, "porque el amor que la tenía pasaba el cuerpo al alma, y que si Isabela había perdido su belleza, no podía haber perdido sus infinitas virtudes" 'because the love that he felt for her surpassed her body and reached her soul; and that if Isabela had lost her beauty, she could not have lost her infinite virtues' (269). Ricaredo recognizes that while Isabela's beauty may be gone her virtue is unspoiled, proving himself more virtuous and deserving of Isabela than he did by bringing treasure to the queen. His distinction that virtue is not dependent on beauty is an important moral lesson for the reader, and it is a distinction Queen Elizabeth makes as well. She shares Ricaredo's sentiment, and identifies the true extent of the value of Isabela's *valor* by calling her "una riquísima joya encerrada en una caja de madera tosca" 'a most precious jewel encased in a coarse, wooden box' (269). Elizabeth voices the truly exemplary influence of Isabela's virtue as the reader is reminded that the material metaphors the queen uses throughout the novela to describe Isabela (*joya*, *tesoro*, *prenda*) are about the value of Isabela's true self, her *valor*, not her beauty. Elizabeth's valuation of Isabela's virtue over her beauty has the unanticipated effect of aligning her with Ricaredo and Isabela's parents, the only characters who still value

Isabela after she is disfigured.

Many scholars interpret Elizabeth's sending Isabela back to Spain as an indication that the materialistic English Queen is no longer interested in her devalued Spanish *tesoro*. For example, Ruth El Saffar argues "the poison renders Isabela ugly and no longer of interest to the Queen. If her stay with the Queen represented the peak of her worldly fortunes, it also exposed her to the depths of worldly degradation" (158). Actually, Elizabeth sends Isabela away from court at Ricaredo's request while voicing an important moral lesson for the reader: beauty does not denote virtue. In Clotaldo's estimation, the poison's malevolent effects rendered Isabela worthless and to compensate for his losses he renews Ricaredo's betrothal to Clisterna and sends Isabela and her parents back to Spain. However, her disfigurement does not degrade her in the opinions of anyone who can recognize and appreciate her *valor*. Elizabeth compensates Isabela for her suffering with material goods that play a crucial role in releasing Isabela from Clotaldo's debt and providing she and her parents with "the biggest compensation possible: freedom" (Guerrero 49).

When Isabela and her parents leave court, the queen sends Isabela away with the pearls and diamond ring she gave her for her wedding as well as more material goods, further demonstrating her affection: "A las ricas perlas y al diamante añadió otras joyas la reina y otros vestidos, tales, que descubrieron el mucho amor que a Isabela tenía" "To the rich pearls and to the diamond the queen added other jewels and other dresses, such that revealed the great love she had for Isabela" (270). Isabela's departure from Spain offers Elizabeth the opportunity to punish her *camarera mayor* for poisoning Isabela, a punishment she offered Ricaredo to decide, but he rejected in favor of mercy (269). In yet

another example of her potentially tyrannical style of justice, Elizabeth deals with her *camarera mayor* punitively without recourse to trial: “sin acuerdo de letrados y sin poner a su camarera en tela de juicio, la condenó en que no sirviese más su oficio y en diez mil escudos de oro para Isabela” ‘without the agreement of lawyers and without bringing her *camarera* in for questioning, she condemned her to never serve in her position again and give ten thousand gold *escudos* to Isabela’ (272). Elizabeth, like an absolutist monarch, metes out justice against her servant without lawyers or judges. However, the Queen’s harsh punishment secures material wealth for Isabela, who has been Clotaldo’s *prisionera* for years and whose parents Elizabeth impoverished in the attack on Cádiz.

As the novela details in extensive detail, Elizabeth sends the *camarera mayor*’s ten thousand *escudos* through an intricate transnational network of intermediaries to Seville where Isabela can claim them. Elizabeth also arranges Isabela and her family’s travel, circumnavigating her own naval blockades through the Netherlands and France in order for Isabela and her family to land safely in Spain (272). In Seville, Isabela acquires ten thousand *ducados* through the French merchant and immediately gives it to her parents. With the *camarera mayor*’s penalty and the sale of some of Isabela’s jewels Isabela’s father is able to revive his business, which is represented as materially linked with Isabela’s beauty: “En fin, en pocos meses fue restaurado su perdido crédito y la belleza de Isabela volvió a su ser primero, de tal manera que en hablando de hermosas todos daban el lauro a la española inglesa” ‘After a few months his lost credit was restored and Isabela’s beauty returned to its former state, in such a way that when discussing the subject of beauty, everyone one granted the laurel to the English-Spanish girl’ (274). As the narrator finally reveals, the novela’s title derives from the affectionate

nickname the Sevillanos attribute to Isabela: “la española inglesa.” The moniker honors her transnational identity, but it also serves as a badge of her exemplary *valor*. By granting “el lauro a la española inglesa,” the Sevillanos crown Isabela with victorious sovereignty over the trials she endured in a hostile land.

As I have discussed above, Elizabeth gave Isabela many dresses when she left England, but Isabela visually and materially reenacts her procession to the English court by wearing the same outfit she wore to first meet Elizabeth in her procession to the convent in Sevilla. In her first procession through London, the narrator privileges the Spanishness of Isabela’s dress and its markers of Isabela’s difference in status, such as “unas eses de perlas” and “a modo de las señoras damas españolas.” At the same time, the narrator directs the reader’s attention to how the dress serves to simultaneously mark Isabela as Clotaldo’s *prisionera* and Ricaredo’s bride in the queen’s eyes. Elizabeth thwarts Clotaldo’s plans by claiming Isabela for her own, makes Ricaredo endure trials to merit Isabela, saves Isabela’s life, and extracts large sums of money from her servant to compensate for Isabela’s illness. Perhaps most significant of all, Elizabeth subtly arranges for Isabela’s access to economic power by providing her a sizeable dowry. For a Spanish merchant’s daughter who hopes to marry an English aristocrat, a lack of dowry would pose an enormous financial problem.

Although the narrator does not explicitly stress this problem, the one thing neither Ricaredo’s parents nor Isabela’s parents can provide her is a dowry. If anything, the elaborate gown, headdress, and jewelry given to her by Clotaldo and Catalina could be considered a “counter-dowry.” Jones and Stallybrass explain that sometimes in dowry arrangements a husband’s family, to offset the potential financial imbalance, would give

the bride clothing, jewelry, and other material items appreciated at half her dowry's worth. While this sounds like a way to negotiate and balance the pre-marital financial valuations of both parties, the gifts "actually established further rights of property over the wife, who typically found, after the wedding, that the sumptuous dress and rings she had worn for the public exchange of vows were not gifts but loans" (233). The narrator marks Clotaldo as a mercenary in the novela's first sentence and this sentiment is reiterated by Ricaredo and the queen when they warn Clotaldo not to take from Isabela any of the gifts the queen had given her, "así de joyas como de vestidos" 'neither jewels nor clothing' as she leaves London (272). Although the narrative offers no explanation about how Isabela kept the jewelry and the dress *a la española* Clotaldo and Catalina dressed her in for her procession to court, we might assume that the dress and jewels are secretly part of the *dádivas* the queen sends her away with, but hidden from Clotaldo. Therefore, beyond the *camarera mayor*'s ten thousand *ducados* and the many *joyas*, Elizabeth facilitates the pilfering of a gown and jewels from her mercenary Catholic subject, Clotaldo. Clotaldo stole Isabela as a *despojo* from Cadiz and hid her from the queen, but Elizabeth cleverly reverses the theft by swapping the girl for the dress. As Elizabeth well knows, Isabela's "infinitas virtudes" far outweigh the worth of any *vestido* or *joya*, and exchange leaves Clotaldo and Catalina truly impoverished.

Isabela's choice to wear the same outfit in her procession to the convent that she first wore to Elizabeth's court is significant. As the narrator explains, it was customary for novices to wear something "bizarría" (valiant) the day they took their vows to demonstrate their renunciation of the secular world's materiality. Although she is wearing the exact same ensemble in her procession to the convent, the narrator describes it

completely differently:

Isabela ponerse lo más bizarría que le fue posible; y así, se vistió con aquel vestido mismo que llevó cuando fue a ver a la reina de Inglaterra, que ya se ha dicho cuán rico y cuán vistoso era. Salieron a luz las perlas y el famoso diamante, con el collar y cintura, que asimismo era de mucho valor. Con este adorno y con su gallardía, dando ocasión para que todos alabasen a Dios en ella, salió Isabela de su casa a pie, que el estar tan cerca el monasterio excusó los coches y carrozas. (277)
Isabela put on the most valiant one possible: she dressed herself in the same dress she wore when she went to meet the Queen of England, and it has already been described how rich and appealing it was. The pearls and the famous diamond, along with the necklace and girdle that were also of great value, came out to be seen by everyone. With such adornment and valor, giving everyone a reason to praise God, Isabela left her house on foot since the monastery was so close coaches and carriages were unnecessary.

Here, as before, Isabela's clothing and adornment serve as material mnemonics for her virtue. However, her outfit's symbolic tenor shifts to fully incorporate the second meaning of *valor*—courage or bravery—that Fray Luis stressed in his advice to wives. The words *bizarría* and *gallardía* are synonymous of *valor* and their meanings prioritize the valiant, *varonil* connotation of the word. In her procession through Sevilla, among her fellow Spaniards who lovingly term her “la española inglesa,” Isabela's *vestido* and *joyas* display her “infinitas virtudes,” chief of which is her *valor*: her virtuous worth and her courage. Isabela's *vestido a la española* is translated into a material mnemonic of her former servitude, her present freedom, and her “infinitas virtudes.” In this way, it is a material record of the dangers and pains she endured and overcame in the English court. Isabela, like the virtuous *doncella* from unicorn folklore, faced Queen Elizabeth, “un animal feroz,” and tamed her with her marvelous *valor*.

The repeated performance of the procession and its accompanying visual imagery reinforce the mirroring structure of the novela noted by Lowe and others, which

emphasizes a connection between the intended and successful teleologies of both processions: Isabela and Ricaredo's marriage. Isabela's public profession of love for Ricaredo at their reunion on the convent steps, after the nearly identical procession to the convent as to Elizabeth's court, demonstrates Isabela's agency in ways not represented previously. She confidently articulates her love for Ricaredo, and ends her speech with a strong command, the first she utters in the novela, that they be married in the Catholic Church, sanctifying the union of English and Spanish in their shared faith: "Venid, señor, a la casa de mis padres, que es vuestra, y allí os entregaré mi posesión por los términos que pide nuestra santa fe católica" 'Come, señor, to my parent's house, which is yours, and there I will give myself to you as a possession in the way our Holy Catholic faith demands' (278). Their successful union in marriage incorporates Ricaredo, the English aristocrat, into the Spanish merchant class, which the novela suggests has the most *valor*. Indeed, at the novela's conclusion, a virtuous community is formed between Isabela, her parents, and Ricaredo—the only four characters in the novela to whom the word *valor* is applied.¹⁹

As discussed above, *La española inglesa* offers the reader a clear moralizing conclusion. According to David Cluff, most scholars err in reading any seriousness into the novela's *ejemplo* because, like the rest of the novela, it is merely entertainment (280-281). I argue that by overlooking the final lesson we miss key information for analyzing how Cervantes positions Isabela as a virtuous exemplar. The novela concludes with this short paragraph:

Esta novela nos podría enseñar cuánto puede la virtud y cuánto la hermosura, pues son bastante juntas y cada una de por sí a enamorar aun

¹⁹ Ricaredo describes Isabela's parents as "gente principal y de valor" when he introduces them to the queen (263).

hasta los mismos enemigos, y de cómo sabe el cielo sacar de las mayores adversidades nuestras, nuestros mayores provechos. (283)

This novela can teach us how valuable virtue and beauty can be, since they are sufficient together or by themselves to win the love of one's enemies, and how Heaven knows how to extract from our greatest trials, our greatest profits.

The moral's communal tone, through the pronoun "nos," fashions a virtuous community populated by the narrator, the characters, and the reader (Collins 71). However, it also distinguishes a separate group, "enemigos," apart from the "the truly moral community" the narrative creates internally and externally (Cascardi 318). Casalduero proposes that Clotaldo, "un católico tibio" 'a lukewarm Catholic,' who steals Isabela away from Spain and her parents is the *enemigo* to whom the conclusion refers (102). I suggest the universalizing gesture of the *ejemplo* points instead toward an *enemiga* that the imagined seventeenth-century Spanish reader can relate to: Queen Elizabeth. We should remember that when the priests ask Isabela to compose the entire story of her and Ricaredo's adventures in England, she promises to do so, which further integrates Isabela as an agent in the transmission and translation of her own story (El Saffar 161). Isabela's incorporation into the romance as its author demonstrates that her "power to charm is equaled only by her power to narrate" (Taddeo 191). This final conclusion to the tale suggests the *ejemplo* is actually Isabela's message to the reader, breaking the narrative frame, to offer us a final guiding instruction in exemplarity. Isabela's *ejemplo* further affirms romance's capacity for instructing women in virtue, especially when the instructor is a paragon of *valor*. The lesson of Isabela's story is the miraculous results of her marvelous influence on the notoriously anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish Queen Elizabeth. Indeed, Isabela's *valor* enchanted Elizabeth, a monstrous enemy of Spanish Catholics, to such exemplary degrees that the English Queen was moved to translate

Isabela's adversity into material and spiritual fortune.

In the next chapter, I examine how the English poet, Aemilia Lanyer, appeals to royal and noblewomen as patrons and exemplars of spiritual, political, and feminine virtues to fashion a convent-like gathering of worthy women in her passion poem, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. If for Cervantes's Isabela, the convent is a conciliatory alternative to marriage after her trials and rewards at Elizabeth's court, for Lanyer, the convent-like space of her text is a redemptive alternative to James I's court (now that Elizabeth I "is ascended to that rest") where her readers can meet their bridegroom, Christ. While Cervantes celebrates the English queen's death as he manifests her living image, Lanyer mourns Elizabeth's absence by poetically replacing her with Margaret Russell, her main dedicatee, an early modern Queen of Sheba. Specifically, Lanyer uses the poetic device *prosopopoeia*, or personification, to manifest princely embodiments of feminine virtue and harness the power of vatic poetry to assert women's access to divine knowledge. Lanyer's poetry, like Cervantes's novela, praises women's "infinitas virtudes" through sovereign tropes that emphasize women's prudent speech and feminine solidarity. As she gathers her poetic "convent" of virtuous dedicatees, Lanyer advises her readers to speak wisely and virtuously to reclaim their originary liberty from men's tyranny.

CHAPTER IV

“SIMPLE DOVES, AND SUBTILL SERPENTS”: AEMILIA LANYER’S DEFENSE OF WOMEN’S KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUOUS SPEECH IN *SALVE DEUS REX JUDAEORUM*

In the previous chapter I examined how Miguel de Cervantes’s *La española inglesa* figures a Spanish merchant’s daughter, Isabela, as an exemplary model of princely feminine virtue for the English Queen Elizabeth I. When Cervantes published *Novelas ejemplares* in 1613, Queen Elizabeth had been dead for ten years, meaning that readers would have witnessed a kind of poetic necromancy by which Cervantes revived the dead queen to serve his exemplary purposes. According to many early modern rhetoricians, a poetic representation of a character, especially a dead historical personage, was considered a type of *prosopopoeia*, which we now generally refer to as personification, or in the trope’s more extended uses, personification allegory. Many early modern rhetoricians theorized *prosopopoeia* as a poetic device that, in addition to giving a human shape and voice to an abstract idea or affect, has the uncanny ability to conjure persons and even bring the dead to life, if only rhetorically, to deliver an argument or reveal a hidden truth. According Henry Peacham, *prosopopoeia* “raiseth againe as it were the dead to life, and bringeth them forth complaining or witnessing what they knew” (136). For Peacham, as for seventeenth-century poet Aemilia Lanyer, the poet uses *prosopopoeia* to raise the dead to serve as witnesses in an argument for an important, urgent cause.

In *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), the first published book of poetry written by a woman in England, Aemilia Lanyer “raises” Pilate’s Wife, a woman who advised

against Christ's crucifixion, to voice a defense of Eve and all women's sovereignty, entitled "Eves Apologie." Lanyer also uses *prosopopoeia* to "raise" the Queen of Sheba, and to create *Virtue*, a *prosopopoeia* of all feminine virtues. More broadly, she uses *prosopopoeia*, a poetic device that attributes embodied agency and voice to things or ideas without power to act or speak, to respond to patriarchal strictures against women's speech and power in the public sphere. Lanyer's poetry exposes, through "Eves Apologie," how the patriarchal removal of women's right to knowledge and speech directly causes their loss of "Sov'raintie" (*SD* 826). By raising Pilate's Wife to offer an argument on behalf of Eve for all women's liberty, Lanyer reveals that the recognition of women's princeliness is at the heart of the patriarchal debate about women's knowledge and speech. Specifically, Lanyer harnesses *prosopopoeia*'s ability to provide voice and agency to the disempowered to grant Pilate's Wife, a woman whose speech was unheeded, a lengthy argument defending women's claims to power, speech, and knowledge. Lanyer's attempt to revive women's originary "Libertie againe" (825) through *prosopopoeia* is crucial to an analysis of how her poetry asserts women's speech should be considered a princely feminine virtue. Likewise, Lanyer's use of *prosopopoeia* to raise princely feminine witnesses and exemplars proclaims the undying power of women's virtuous sovereignty.

Throughout her text Lanyer grapples with the problem of feminine silence by using *prosopopoeia* to wage a poetic argument for women's rights to divine knowledge and their ability to share their knowledge virtuously in speech and publication. Lanyer's poetry is remarkable in its frequent use of *prosopopoeia*, including in her representation

of Christ.¹ By offering a sustained analysis of how the poem's presiding rhetorical device, my argument offers insight into how she uses the trope to wage an argument for the return of women's power and for her status as a vatic poet. Significantly, Lanyer uses *prosopopoeia*, a device imagined as a type of poetic necromancy, to lay claim to the kind of knowledge necromancy was believed to afford its practitioner: prophecy.² Lanyer's use of *prosopopoeia*, then, is directly tied to her claim to vatic, or prophetic poetry, a genre Phillip Sidney praised as the transmitter of "hart-ravishing knowledge" (86).

Lanyer's book actively defends women's right to various types of knowledge through *prosopopoeia*. Pilate's Wife correlates women's loss of "Libertie" and "Sov'raintie" with Eve's innocent and "undiscerning Ignorance" (*SD* ln. 765). According to Pilate's Wife, if Eve's vulnerability to the serpent's cunning was due to her lack of knowledge, the return of women's sovereignty hinges on their access to divine and learned knowledge, and its virtuous dissemination through spoken and written word. Pilate's Wife, Eve, and the Queen of Sheba all serve as exemplars of different types of knowledge in feminine form: Eve embodies originary, forbidden knowledge; Pilate's Wife personifies prophetic knowledge; and the Queen of Sheba epitomizes wisdom, learned knowledge, and, according to some sources, prophetic knowledge as well. By "raising" biblical women who represent diverse types of women's knowledge, Lanyer makes an impassioned poetic argument for the acceptance of women's knowledge

¹ Wendy Wall argues that Lanyer's entire book is a personification of Christ through her alliance of the book and its central narrative of Christ's passion. See Wendy Wall, "Our Bodies/Our Texts? Renaissance Women and the Trials of Authorship" in *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women* (1993), pp. 51-71.

² See Elizabeth Hodgson's analysis of Lanyer's use of grief, a historically feminine gendered emotion, to claim her place as a prophet-poet. Elizabeth M. A. Hodgson, "Prophecy and Gendered Mourning in Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*" in *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 43.1 (2003), pp. 101-16.

without aspersion and for the virtuous worth of her own poetic production, “A Womans writing of divinest things” (4).

Like Cervantes’s portrayal of Isabela as a virtuous model for Queen Elizabeth, Lanyer’s dedication to “all vertuous Ladies” placed immediately after the poems to Queen Anne and Princess Elizabeth suggests that by this moment in time princely feminine virtues were increasingly imagined as virtues accessible to non-royal women. Janel Mueller argues that this generalizing gesture provides a new way of representing femininity and the virtues associated with it: “Lanyer considered it necessary not just to contradict standing portrayals or to celebrate actual living women but to develop a new poetic ontology for figuring femininity as worthy, true, and good” (105). I agree and suggest that Lanyer’s “new poetic ontology” especially depends on her use of *prosopopoeia*, the rhetorical figure that manifests abstract virtues as embodied persons within a poetic world and is linked to vatic poetry.³ As I will explore further, though the three feminine figures I have selected are certainly not the only examples of *prosopopoeia* in Lanyer’s text, they demonstrate a variety of ways *prosopopoeia* can function in literature according to rhetoricians: Virtue is something abstract brought to life in a human figure; the Queen of Sheba is the poetic representation of a dead historical person who embodies an abstract virtue (wisdom); and Pilate’s Wife is the dead brought “forth complaining or witnessing what [she] knew” to defend women’s virtue against women’s “powers of ill speaking” (Lanyer 48) and men’s condemnations of women based on Eve’s transgression, ostensibly figuring the specific point of view of an historical personage. Most importantly, Lanyer uses a variety of ways *prosopopoeia*

³ For scholarship examining the routine gendering of personifications as feminine, see James J. Paxson, “Personification’s Gender” in *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 16.2 (1998), pp. 149-79; and Maureen Quilligan, *The language of allegory: Defining the genre* (1979).

could function poetically to revive vatic poetry as a powerful feminine poetic mode integrally tied to sustaining princely feminine virtue.

In his recent study of *prosopopoeia*, Gavin Alexander argues that the figure's poetic power stems from its ability to grant a voice to otherwise silent things. Voice, he explains, is crucial to the trope's capacity to *make persons* in literature, thereby revealing the extent to which personhood depends on expression:

Prosopopoeia helps us to see how rhetorically complex the literary representation of self and voice is, because that representation is seen to operate within a network of rhetorical agendas (author's, character's) in which there are many kinds and degrees of person-making, from the author's creation of a protagonist down to a simple trick of grammar that personifies something inanimate (105)

Alexander summarizes the broad-ranging functions of the trope from creating any fictional character to the application of a reasoning verb to a non-reasoning noun, but his emphasis on how the trope represents "self" and "voice" are particularly instructive. Lanyer "raises" Pilate's Wife to deliver a rhetorical defense of Eve, and all women, linking the mode of argument (speech) with one of her main poetic concerns: women's rights to divine knowledge and poetic expression.

James Paxson argues that granting agency to the disenfranchised or underrepresented members of society has been a longstanding characteristic of the trope (*Poetics* 50). This stems in part, he theorizes, from one of the earliest sources defining it. In Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria* personification is defined as a rhetorical strategy necessary for successfully arguing a legal case on behalf of another person. Quintillian writes: "Further, it is not merely true that the variety required in impersonation will be in proportion to the variety presented by the case, for impersonation demands even greater variety, since it involves the portrayal of the emotions of children, women, nations, and

even voiceless things, all of which require to be represented in character' [11.1.41]" (Paxson *Poetics* 49). In *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012), Elizabeth Fowler defines "personification" as "[a] device that brings to life, in a human figure, something abstract, collective, inanimate, dead, nonreasoning, or epitomizing" (1025). Fowler observes that personification's multiplicity of functions, its "abstraction," is the very characteristic that makes it "capable of considering personhood over the scope of the entire fiction, past the bounds of character...distributing agency, emotion, cognition, gender, and the like" (1026). Because personification "brings to life, in a human figure, something abstract," it possesses a dual character. It functions "as a figure of speech and as a form of social or political acknowledgement" (1026). This "social or political acknowledgement" is made possible by the trope's ability to give voice and agency to silenced individuals, creatures, or the dead. Lanyer's use of *prosopopoeia* demonstrates how attributing speech and agency to feminine figures is a radical poetic endeavor that seeks to garner "political acknowledgement" of women's knowledge, speech, and more broadly, of "all vertuous Ladies in generall" who have been historically silenced.

A brief outline of how some early modern rhetoricians theorized *prosopopoeia* as raising the dead is helpful for temporally situating Lanyer's varied use of *prosopopoeia* within already existing ways of thinking about the trope. In *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550), Richard Sherry defines "prosopopey" as a type of *prosographia*, or "the fainyng of a person" (66). The first type of *prosographia* is the "description of a fained person, as Vyrgyl in the syxt of Eneid, faineth Sibil to be mad" whereas the second, "prosopopey," is:

when we fayne person, comunicacion, or affecte of a man or of a beaste, to a dumme thyng, or that hath no bodye, or to a dead man: as to the Harpies, furies, devils, slepe, hongar, enuie, fame, virtue, iustice, and such lyke (66-67)

Therefore, for Sherry, the difference between *prosographia* and *prosopopoeia* is that the former describes a “fained person,” [define] whereas the latter equips the “fained” figure with body, voice, and affect, elements essential to creating a person, thereby personifying an idea (virtue, sleep) or creature (furies, devils) with qualities that we understand to define personhood (physical body, ability to express oneself, emotions). Sherry also states that *prosopopoeia* means attributing these qualities “to a dead man,” indicating that the trope could metaphorically materialize the dead by granting them “person, comunicacion, or affecte.”

In *Directions for Speech and Style* (1599) John Hoskins compares the trope of *apostrophe* with *prosopopoeia* to argue that the one may lead to another. “Sometimes,” Hoskins writes, “the occasion is to some quality, or thing, that yourself gives show of life to” by addressing a personified idea directly through *apostrophe*, but “to animate and give life is PROSOPOPOEIA, as, to make dead men speak” (48). Hoskins’ brief but dense definition of the trope incorporates the senses of creation (“animate and give life”) as well as necromancy (“to make dead men speak”).

Henry Peacham provides the most extensive definition of *prosopopoeia* in *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593), emphasizing the figure’s use by poets and orators to raise the dead to assist in argumentative speech. He defines *prosopopoeia* as follows:

the faining of a person, that is, when to a thing sencelesse and dumbe we faine a fit person, or attribute a person to a commonwelth or multitude: This figure Orators do use as wel as Poets: the Orator by this figure maketh the commonwelth to speake, to commend, to dispraise, to aske, to complaine, also life and death, vertue and pleasure, honesty and profite,

wealth and poverty, envy and charity: to contend and plead one against another, and sometime he raiseth againe as it were the dead to life, and bringeth them forth complaining or witnessing what they knew. (136)

Peacham incorporates the now familiar language to define *prosopopoeia*, such as “faining of a person” and the mention of things “sencelesse and dumbe.” However, in his examination of *prosopopoeia* and its efficacy in oration, he carves out new importance for it, which is the elaboration of *how* it might be made to express itself rhetorically: “to speake, to commend, to dispraise, to aske, to complaine,” which he continues further by defining *prosopopoeia* as “an apt forme of speech to complaine, to accuse, to reprehend, to confirme, and to commend” (137). By providing a broader description of how the figure may speak, Peacham grants readers, poets, and orators a more complex way of imagining what the figure can rhetorically perform. Peacham also revives from earlier definitions of the trope *prosopopoeia*’s ability to “raiseth againe as it were the dead to life.” In line with his more expansive definition of *prosopopoeia* and its speaking functions, he details that the purpose of raising the dead is to “bringeth them forth complaining or witnessing what they knew.” *Prosopopoeia*, then, is the rhetorical “bringing forth,” conjuring, or summoning of “a thing sencelesse and dumbe,” a formless entity or person, which the poet or orator gives body and voice. Notably, he cautions his readers that the use of *prosopopoeia* should be employed sparingly, and with specific purpose: “It is not convenient that the Orator should use *the helpe of fained persons* without *some urgent cause* compelling him thereunto” (137, my emphasis).

I will return to a longer analysis of “Eves Apologie” below, but take the opportunity here to point out that Lanyer’s use of *prosopopoeia* in “Eves Apologie” observes Peacham’s caution that the true making of speakers (not simply the attributing

of person-like characteristics to ideas or affects) should be used with the compulsion of “some urgent cause.” By employing the trope *prosopopoeia* to summon Pilate’s Wife, and through her, the voice of Eve, Lanyer is able to argue urgently, with “the helpe of fained persons,” for women’s liberation from men’s tyranny. It is significant to note that Lanyer invests in the necromantic powers of poetry to raise Pilate’s Wife to come “forth complaining” and “witnessing what [she] knew” to act as a witness to the past and a virtuous prophet for women’s future.

“Spurres to vertue”: Defending Women’s Speech

In *Biblical Women’s Voices in Early Modern England*, Michele Osherow argues that while Saint Paul’s advice for women’s silence guided cultural ideals about feminine speech, “[b]iblical stories featuring rhetorically powerful women complicated the cultural requirement for female silence and facilitated early modern women’s words” (4).

Lanyer’s *prosopopoeia* of Pilate’s Wife is an important intervention in the discourse of prescribed feminine speech in part because she offers an unconventional example of a “rhetorically powerful woman” from the Christian Bible. As Osherow notes, most biblical exempla of virtuous female speakers were from the Hebrew tradition, such as Hannah, Deborah, and Miriam, who provided models “to justify and encourage women’s speech” (10).⁴ Lanyer seems to be critiquing the Christian, Pauline legacy of strictures against women’s speech by representing a key moment in Christ’s drama, thereby fusing Christ’s fate with that of virtuous women. Under Lanyer’s pen, Pilate’s Wife becomes an embodiment of knowing women whose unheeded speech is emblematic of men’s misrule,

⁴ One of the best examples of how the Hebrew Bible promotes feminine speech as a virtue is in Proverbs 31. Lemuel’s mother asserts that wise speech is a trait of the virtuous woman “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness” (*KJV* Prov 31:26)

and thus illustrative of men's unjust claim to sovereignty. Lanyer challenges the cultural mandate for women's silence by poetically elaborating the pivotal moment when Christ's execution could have been prevented by offering a prophetic warning of her own about the need for recognition of women's knowledge and speech in the political sphere.

For Lanyer, a defense of women's sovereignty needs to start at the beginning. The biblical narrative of Eve's deception significantly shaped early modern ideas about feminine speech and the rationale against women's access to intellectual advancement and expression. As mentioned above, most patriarchal injunctions of women's silence draws on Pauline theology, which advocated for women's silence particularly with regard to the acquisition and dissemination of divine knowledge. For example, in 1 Timothy, St.

Paul advises:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But 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. (1 Timothy 2:11-14)

Paul advises that women should learn silently and not teach because to do so would "usurp authority over the man," which was divinely granted by God in his creation of Adam before Eve. Notably, Paul's parallel constructions in the last two verses implies a causal relationship between the person who was created first and the person who was "deceived," arguing that because Eve was "formed" second, she was the more easily deceived. In Genesis, the serpent's speech is defined as "subtle," or cunning, and it is the deceptiveness of the serpent's speech that transfers to Eve and womankind when she is infected by the serpent's rhetoric and adapts his cunning to her own designs when convincing Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Lanyer will take umbrage with this patriarchal dogma in her defense of Eve, arguing that although Eve "by cunning was

deceav'd" (ln. 773), Adam was formed first and the first to learn the divine edict against eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and thus "hee was most too blame" (ln. 778).

In his English translation of Juan Luis Vives's *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* (1524), *The Instruction of a christen woman* (1540), Richard Hyrde summarizes at length the double bind in which early modern women were caught with regard to both how they spoke and how others perceived their speech:

If thou talke littell in company folkes thynke thou canst but littell good: if thou speake muche, they reckon the lyght: if thou speak uncunningly, they count the dul witted; if thou speake cunningly thou shalt be called a shrewe; if thou answer not quickly thou shalt be called proude or yl brought up; if thou answer, they shall saie thou wylte be sone over comen, if thou sitte with demure countenance, thou arte called a dissembler; if thou make muche movynge, they will call the foolyshe: if thou loke on any syde, than will they saie, thy mynde is there: if thou laugh whan any man laugheth though thou do it not a purpose, streyght they will say thou haste a fantasy unto the man and his sayng, and that it were no great maistry to wynne the. (38r-v)

In his laundry list of expectations for and judgments upon women's speech, Hyrde addresses various ways women could be judged for their speech or their behavior during conversation: quantity, quality, speed, movement, laughter, etc. Notably, a distinct characteristic of feminine speech listed here, "cunning," marks the speaker as either ignorant in its absence or shrewish in its presence. The word "shrewe" is the etymological mother of the word "shrewd," which in relation to speech means "cunning, artful" language (OED 13b). However, in a sense not referring to qualities of speech, the word's main sense in the period, "shrewd" characterizes a "Depraved, wicked; evil-disposed, malignant" person (OED 1a). Therefore, we can detect a correlation between women's use of artful language, or rhetoric, and their wickedness. Both are causally linked with Eve's so-called "transgression" of being deceived by the serpent's cunning

speech, the same speech women now wield wickedly against men.

An English precursor to Lanyer's *Salve Deus* is the anonymously written *Jane Anger her Protection for Women* (1589), which represents Anger, a feminine *prosopopoeia*, that rhetorically challenges men's claims to natural virtue and originary sovereignty in similar ways as Pilate's Wife. Like Lanyer, Anger rewrites the critique of Eve to praise her for her faith, not condemn her for being deceived. But unlike Lanyer, who will ultimately argue against women's secondary role in "Eves Apologie," Anger accepts their secondary role as originary. However, Anger advances an interesting theory about why men were ordained to rule over women, a theory that belittles masculine authority. Anger reasons that "The Gods" "bestowed the supremacy over [women] to man," in order to *protect* women, "inriched" with "wonderfull vertues," from the vice of pride men consequently perform in their constant boasting of authority (A3). Mihoko Suzuki argues that Anger's *Protection* informs Lanyer's treatment of feminine virtue and her defense of women in *Salve Deus*, but she observes that "Lanyer's aim appears to be more ambitious than Anger's: she seeks to subject to renewed scrutiny the biblical stories of the Fall and Christ's Passion to question the misogynist ascription of blame to women, which justified their present subordination" ("Elizabeth, Gender" 237). Anger short-circuits God's curse on Eve ("thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" [3:16]) and rewrites the biblical rationale for women's subjugation as *protection* from the masculine vice of pride rather than punishment for prideful transgression. Anger also advances a hypothesis about why virtues are so frequently represented via *prosopopoeia* as women: "I marvell that the Gods made not Fidelitie as well a man, as they created her a woman, and all the morall vertues of their masculine sex, as of the

feminine kinde, except their Deities *knewe that there was some sovereignty in us women*, which could not be in them men” (A3, my emphasis). Anger’s ontological explanation is rooted in her broader argument for feminine political agency in the world, thereby joining the feminization of “morall vertues” and *prosopopoeias* with claims to inherent feminine sovereignty.

In *Salve Deus*, Lanyer stages a series of poetic replies to the patriarchal claim that Eve’s error justifies women’s subjection. Lanyer asserts that instead of displaying their fallen nature, women’s ability to argue for their virtuous worth is necessary to reclaim their originary sovereignty from men’s “tyranny” (*SD* 830). In her dedication “To the Vertuous Reader,” the address immediately preceding *Salve Deus*, Lanyer implies she has rhetorically summoned Pilate’s Wife to serve as Eve’s witness against the pervasive misogynistic rhetoric blaming all women for Eve’s mistake. Both “evill disposed men” and “some women,” Lanyer argues, are guilty of speaking badly about women and she seeks to rectify this situation with her own poetic composition (pg. 48). Specifically, she condemns women’s “powers of ill speaking” against each other and reveals that she has written her “little booke”

to make knowne to the world, that all women deserve not to be blamed though some forgetting they are women themselves, and in danger to be condemned by the words of their owne mouthes, fall into so great an error, as to speake unadvisedly against the rest of their sexe; (pg. 48)

Referring to the two “flare-ups” of antifeminist publications between 1588-1597 and 1615-1637 and the “relatively quiescent phase” during which Lanyer published, Mueller argues that “Lanyer had no immediately pressing motive to engage head-on in prose controversy from a feminist position,” and that her prose dedication to the virtuous reader “shows her much more exercised about the bad effects of *both* sexes’ speaking ill of

women, which undermines not merely women's reputations for virtue but their very capacity and incentive to be virtuous" (104, original emphasis). If speaking ill of women derives from blaming Eve for the Fall, Lanyer insists that women's speech against other women is unwarranted, since it was men who doubled Eve's sin and "dishonoured Christ his Apostles and Prophets, putting them to shamefull deaths" (pgs. 48-49). Additionally, Lanyer sets out to speak *advisedly* in favor of the "rest of [her] sexe."

Lanyer asserts here and more fully in "Eves Apologie" that men's sin of unjustly executing Christ deprives them of the right of speaking ill of women for Eve's mistake. Because men killed Christ, against feminine advisements to the contrary, women should disregard all men's evil aspersions against them:

Therefore we are not to regard any imputations, that they undeservedly lay upon us, no otherwise than to make use of them to our owne benefits, as spurres to vertue, making us flie all occasions that may colour their unjust speeches to passe currant. (pg. 49)

Lanyer advises her readers to use men's slurs against them "as spurres to vertue," to prompt them to act all the more virtuously to supersede the invented rationale for such vilification. To support her claim that men's malicious speech against women will be met with divine punishment if continued, she provides the examples of "wise and virtuous women" from the Hebrew Bible to whom God gave "power...to bring downe [men's] pride and arrogancie" (49). She lists Deborah, Jael, Esther, Judith, and Susanna as examples of women who righteously subdue men and demands "all good Christians and honourable minded men to speake reverently of our sexe, and especially of all virtuous and good women" (50) to avoid divine censure at the hands of women.

"Hart-ravishing knowledge": Vatic Poetry and *Prosopopoeia*

Eve's ability to be deceived and deceive Adam also fueled patriarchal paranoia

about the dangers of feminine speech and women's access to "forbidden" knowledge in the discourse surrounding witchcraft and associated magic. In his *Daemonologie* (1597), James VI of Scotland designates Eve's error as the reason that women are more prone than men to practicing witchcraft, necromancy, and other forms of magic. In their dialogue, Philomathes asks Epistemon, "What can be the cause that there are twentie women given to that craft, where ther is one man?" to which he answers:

The reason is easie, for as that sexe is frailer then man is, so is it easier to be intrapped in these grosse snares of the Devill, as was over well proved to be true, by the Serpents deceiving of Eva at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sexe sensine. (*Daemonologie* II.V.28)

Epistemon reasons the devil has been "homelier with that sexe" ever since Eve's easy deception by the serpent in Genesis. Eve's deception becomes the marker of her weak will and transgression, as well as that of all other women, leading men to control their speech and pursuit of "forbidden" knowledge. James considered sorcery and witchcraft types of knowledge rooted in the devil's lies and in women's tendency to deceive and be deceived. Interestingly, James distinguished necromancy as a craft that required a significant amount of knowledge and mastery, reasoning that "Witches ar servantes onelie, and slaves to the Devil; but the Necromanciers are his maisters and commanders" (I.3.9). Furthermore, one was drawn by the desire to learn while the other was unwittingly seduced: "[c]uriosity draws is onelie the inticement of Magiciens, or Necromanciers" while "the allureres of the Sorcerers, or Witches" is "that olde and craftie Serpent" (I.2.8). According to James VI's theories, necromancy was reserved for curious and knowledgeable men, not women (and effeminate men) who were easily seduced by deception.

Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (1595) ironically plays with magical language to defend poetry against its association with falseness, deception, and lies, but most significantly, Sidney distances Poetry from anxieties about feminine deception by re-gendering Poetry masculine.⁵ Although Poetry is nearly always represented as feminine—in Latin, *poetica* and *poesis* are feminine—Sidney uses *prosopopoeia* to embody Poetry as a princely *masculine* art form by distinguishing it from negative stereotypes about women's speech. He asserts that Poetry is the most virtuous type of knowledge, personified as a masculine monarch who leads readers to Virtue, gendered feminine. Throughout the *Defence*, Sidney personifies Poetry as masculine: Sidney refers to him with the masculine pronoun exclusively; he promotes his masculine generation “of most fatherly antiquitie” (107); and he designates him as “our Poet the Monarch” over all the Sciences (101). Sidney's *prosopopoeia* marks Poetry as a teacher, a “workman,” and a prince, guiding the world toward virtue: “as vertue is the most excellent resting place for all worldlie learning to make his end of, so Poetrie, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princelie to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman” (103). Sidney's representation of Poetry as a king supports his argument that poetry be considered a “princely” art. Furthermore, his representation of (masculine) Poetry's ability to incite virtue accordingly genders virtue feminine: “Poetrie ever settech vertue so out in her best cullours, making Fortune her wel-wayting hand-mayd, that one must needs be enamored of her” (99). In order for everyone to be “enamored” of Virtue,

⁵ In her analysis of Sidney's “instrumental aesthetics,” Genevieve Guenther observes that sixteenth-century theories about the linguistic powers invested in magic have much in common with poetry: “[t]he power to use language as a metaphysical instrument was the goal of both early modern magical practice and the early modern literature that attempted to fashion the ideological orientation of its readers” (4-5). See Genevieve Juliette Guenther, *Magical Imaginations: Instrumental Aesthetics in the English Renaissance* (2012).

Poetry uses poetic devices to make virtue most attractive, in “her best cullours,” to endear her to even “heard-hearted evil men” who if they “could see Vertue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty” (106-107). Sidney not only personifies Virtue as feminine, but implies that Virtue’s power lies in her ability to seduce readers via the rhetorical trappings Poetry provides, which seemingly unravels his argument that Poetry is ingenuous.

In order to prove that Poetry knows no cunning, Sidney rehearses and then refutes negative cultural stereotypes about women’s knowledge and speech to differentiate Poetry as a masculine craft. He rehearses the critique that “[poetry] is the mother of lyes...the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires; with a *Syren*’s sweetness, drawing the mind to the Serpent’s taylor of sinfull fancy” (110), which connects poetry’s bad reputation for rhetorical deceit with negative stereotypes about women’s harmful speech. Here he briefly personifies Poetry as a lying mother and abusive nurse, whose “*Syren*’s sweetness” draws men’s minds, like ships to rocks, to the wrack and ruin embodied in Eve’s weak deception by the “Serpent’s taylor.” Sidney corrects these misperceptions by insisting that Poetry is “not being an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine; not of effeminate, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing mans witte, but of strengthening mans wit” (118). Sidney extricates Poetry from its association with falseness through anaphora that sets negative against positive, injurious against beneficial, feminine against masculine. On the negative side we see “lyes,” “effeminate,” and “abusing mans witte”—all negative stereotypes about women’s speech’s impact on men—corrected by the positive masculine values of “true doctrine,” “stirring of courage,” and “strengthening mans wit.”

By gendering Poetry masculine, Sidney implies, like James VI, that serious explorations of knowledge and art are reserved for men. Nevertheless, Sidney does represent one type of poetry as accessible to women: vatic poetry. Sidney begins his *Defence of Poesie* by considering poetry's ancient genealogy, which he divides between prophecies and "making," each rooted in etymology. He describes poetry's Roman origins as vatic, but it is difficult to discern whether he finds true merit in poetry's prophetic past:

Among the Romans a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much a Diviner, Fore-seer, or Prophet, as by his conjoynd wordes *Vaticinum* and *Vaticinari* is manifest: so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this hart-ravishing knowledge. And so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chaunceable hitting, uppon any such verses great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed...which although it were a very vaine and godles superstition, as also it was to think that spirits were commanded by such verses, whereupon this word Charmes, derived of *Carmina*, commeth. (86)

Here Sidney simultaneously describes prophecy, spoken in verses, as the expression of "hart-ravishing knowledge" and "a very vaine and godles superstition" akin to thinking that "spirits were commanded by such verses," or charms. As Sidney indicates, ideas of poetry, prophecy, and incantation are etymologically linked through the word "charm," which meant "song, verse, oracular response, incantation" (OED), derived from the Latin word "*carmina*."⁶ Sidney declares the belief in poetry's vatic powers "a very vaine and godles superstition," but nevertheless acknowledges the link between poetry and prophecy is impossible to ignore since the Delphic oracles and the Sibyls spoke in poetry: "For that same exquisite observing of number and measure in words, and that high flying

⁶ In early modern English usage, the word "charm" was still very much linked with efficacious speech and magic: "The chanting or recitation of a verse supposed to possess magic power or occult influence; incantation, enchantment; hence, any action, process, verse, sentence, word, or material thing, credited with such properties; a magic spell" (OED 1a.)

liberty of conceit proper to the Poet, did seeme to have some divine force in it” (87).

Desiring to demonstrate the “reasonableness of this word *Vates*” to describe poets who are divinely inspired, Sidney offers the Hebrew prophet David’s *Psalms* as an example of “a divine Poem” since the word “psalm” means “nothing but songes,” they are “fully written in meter,” and most importantly:

his handling his prophecy, which is meerly poetical. For what els is the awaking his musical instruments; the often and free changing of persons; his notable *Prosopopeias*, when he maketh you, as it were, see God comming in his Majestie; his telling of the beastes’ joyfulness, and hills leaping, but in a heavenlie poesie (87)

Sidney connects poetry’s prophetic powers with its creative force to summon and give shape to God, animals, and the landscape by asserting that David uses *prosopopeia* “in a heavenlie poesie” to “maketh you, as it were, see God.” The divine or vatic poet “imitate[s] the inconceivable excellencies of GOD” (89) while the “right Poets...doo meere make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach” (90). Notably, Sidney marks vatic poetry, not poetry that “makes,” as the only sort accessible to women. Throughout his *Defence*, Sidney only mentions three female poets (Delphic oracles, Sibyls, and Deborah), all prophets. This is not to say that he sees vatic poetry as the domain of women, because as discussed above he declares David a *Vates* and in a longer list of vatic poets he mentions Solomon, Moses, Job’s author, Emanuell Tremelius, Franciscus Junius, Orpheus, Amphion, and Homer. Rather, it seems that women’s only access to poetic expression is through divine poetry that “imitate[s] the inconceivable excellencies of GOD” (89) through the “hart-ravishing knowledge” prophecy provides.

In her dedication to Lucy, Countess of Bedford, though Lanyer does not offer Virtue a speaking voice, her figuration charts and complicates much of the terrain we have explored thus far. She writes:

Me thinks I see faire Virtue readie stand,
T'unlocke the closet of your lovely breast,
Holding the key of Knowledge in her hand,
Key of that Cabinne where your self doth rest,
To let him in, by whom her youth was blest (lns. 1-5)

Lanyer personifies Virtue, already crowned queen by this point in the sequence of dedicatory poems, as the “unlocker” of Lucy’s breast, the location of “self” with the “key of Knowledge,” to allow Christ to enter. As Jonathan Goldberg rightly observes, “Lanyer’s figuration insistently sexualizes the scene of Virtue’s entrance” (31). I would also add that her sexualization of Virtue’s encounter with Lucy does more than articulate Lanyer’s mediated female-female desire, which is certainly present. In this address, Lanyer seems to directly, or unwittingly, engage with Sidney’s idea of how Poetry uses rhetorical figures to dress Virtue “her best cullors” so anyone will be “wonderfully ravished” by the sight of her (106-107). Lanyer marshals Virtue to “unlock” Lucy’s breast with the kind of “hart ravishing knowledge”—here materialized by the “key of Knowledge”—that Sidney claims vatic poetry reveals. She fuses Sidney’s idea of masculine Poetry’s ability to lead the reader to Virtue with his theory of vatic poetry as a craft women can practice. In doing so, Lanyer stakes a claim to divine knowledge, vatic Poetry (now gendered feminine), and princely Virtue with the rhetorical device capable of attributing agency and “self.”

As Sidney describes above, vatic poetry often employs *prosopopoeia* to “maketh you, as it were, see” God or another divine personage rhetorically embodied. Other early

modern rhetoricians theorized that *prosopopoeia* could work a poetic magic, similar to necromancy, to summon the dead to offer arguments or “witness what they knew” (Peacham 136). In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century usage, “necromancy” was understood to be “The art of predicting the future by supposed communication with the dead” (OED 1a), although, in some uses the word could generally mean “divination, sorcery, witchcraft, enchantment” (OED 1a). As discussed above, James VI’s *Daemonologie* differentiates necromancy from witchcraft. The difference rests not only on the curiosity that drives the practitioner to pursue the craft, but on its purpose: “Necromancie is a Greek word, compounded of (necron) and (manteia), which is to say, the Prophecie by the dead” (I.3.8). Raising the dead is not without purpose for the necromancer: she calls up a witness of the past to assist in predicting the future. *Prosopopoeia* is a fundamental rhetorical device in vatic poetry and thus crucial to Lanyer’s attempt to claim her place as a vatic poet. She uses her vatic skills to raise witnesses to argue her case for women’s access to knowledge and the recognition of speech as a princely feminine virtue.

Virtue’s Convent: Figuring Feminine Power and Gathering

Lanyer employs the advisory mode to promote women’s speech as a princely feminine virtue. In many ways, Lanyer’s publication serves as an advice manual and “map” (ln. 1609) for her readers, instructing them and guiding them toward the performance of true princely feminine virtue under Christ’s rule, which is frequently contrasted with examples of masculine misrule. More generally, in her dedicatory poems, Lanyer’s creation of Virtue in her dedicatory poems is meant to awaken in her readers an awareness of their own princely virtue. Lanyer diverges from orthodox seventeenth-

century ideas about feminine virtue by not promoting standard feminine virtues such as silence, chastity, or obedience as noteworthy modes of feminine conduct. Instead, Virtue personifies *all* virtues (“the Naturall, the Morall, and Divine” [ln.68]) to demonstrate the rich array of virtues women can possess. Virtue acts as their leader and queen, guiding them to form a feminine group serving the divine sovereignty of Christ.⁷ To accomplish this, Lanyer contrasts the deceptiveness and ephemerality of the earthly court with the stability of women’s communities outside the court under the sovereign rule of Christ. Ultimately, she argues that in order for feminine virtue to be truly princely, it must ultimately define itself through and in relation to Christ’s majesty.

Lanyer’s interest in forging a textual gathering of virtuous women takes precedence in her publication over its titular subject matter, Christ’s passion.⁸ Lanyer prefaces her main passion poem, *Salve Deus*, with eleven dedicatory addresses, six in verse addressed to royal and aristocratic women, one to “All vertuous Ladies in generall,” and two in prose addressed to Lady Margaret Countess of Cumberland and “To the Vertuous Reader.”⁹ Lanyer’s eleven dedicatory addresses begin with Queen Anne, end

⁷ In *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) George Puttenham does not suggest that *prosopopoeia* has necromantic powers. He defines the figure broadly as any “way of fiction” by which “ye will feign any person with such features, qualities, and conditions, or if ye will *attribute any human quality, as reason or speech, to dumb creatures or other insensible things, and do study (as one may say) to give them a human person*” (324, original emphasis). Key to creating *prosopopoeia*, Puttenham explains, is the attribution of human qualities, such as “reason or speech,” to “insensible things...to give them a human person.” Although Puttenham does not explicitly grant *prosopopoeia* the ability to figuratively raise the dead, he nevertheless maintains its qualities that define humanness (“reason or speech”) to “dumbe creatures,” “insensible things,” or emotions and conditions such as “Avarice, Envy, Old Age” (324). Lanyer will use this strategy of attributing human qualities to “insensible things” in her figuration of Virtue as queen and leader of her poetic assembly of women in the dedicatory addresses and the passion poem.

⁸ As Michele Osherow notes, Lanyer’s dedications comprise more than one third of the book’s pages, while less than one third are devoted to Christ’s passion, the supposed primary focus of the publication (104).

⁹ There are technically twelve poetic addresses in Lanyer’s book, but three of the addresses are prose, not verse: to Lady Margaret, “the Vertuous Reader,” and “the doubtfull Reader.” The twelfth, “To the doubtfull Reader,” is placed after *The description of Cooke-ham*, which follows immediately after the titular poem.

with “the Vertuous Reader,” and initially appear to order their addresses to women according to status. Her descending hierarchy of virtuous noblewomen is interrupted after two poems (one to Queen Anne and one to Princess Elizabeth) by the lengthy dedication to “To all vertuous Ladies in generall” after which the dedications to specific noble women continue.¹⁰ Lanyer’s poetic assembly of a group of virtuous women associates women’s acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, through spoken or written language, with princely feminine virtue through *prosopopoeia*. For example, the three main *prosopopoeias* Lanyer uses to argue for women’s knowledge, speech, and sovereignty are represented as princely: Virtue is crowned queen; Pilate’s unnamed wife acquires princely power much as Eve does (through the monarchical power of their husbands, against whose oppressive styles of rule they both rebel), while asserting women’s sovereignty; and the Queen of Sheba’s journey to meet and test King Solomon provides a model of princely partnership between men and women, which Lanyer uses to prefigure the spiritual union of Margaret Russell, Dowager Countess of Cumberland, and Christ.

Lanyer’s dedicatory addresses gather virtuous women to the “feast” of her passion poem, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Various critics have seen this collocation as reflecting different potential agendas and desired figuration of the female assembly on Lanyer’s

¹⁰ As Susanne Woods details in her edited volume, five of the nine extant copies of Lanyer’s book maintain the following order for the dedicatory poems: 1) Queen Anne, 2) Princess Elizabeth, 3) “all vertuous Ladies in generall,” 4) Lady Arabella, 5) Lady Susan Dowager Countess of Kent, 6) Mary Sidney, 7) Lady Lucy Countess of Bedford, 8) Lady Margaret Dowager Countess of Cumberland, 9) Lady Katherine of Suffolk, 10) Lady Anne of Dorset, and 11) “the Vertuous Reader.” In a presentation copy to Prince Henry, housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the only dedications present are to Queen Anne, Princess Elizabeth, “To all vertuous Ladies in generall,” Lucy of Bedford, Margaret of Cumberland, Anne of Dorset, and “To the Vertuous Reader.” The Chapin Library copy housed at Williams College in Massachusetts only has the poems to Queen Anne, Princess Elizabeth, “To all vertuous Ladies in generall,” Lady Margaret, and her daughter Anne. The British Library copy is missing the poems to Lady Arabella, Lady Susan, Mary Sidney, Lady Katherine, “the Vertuous Reader,” and the first seven lines of the poem to Lady Anne of Dorset. The Bodleian Library copy retains all the extant dedicatory poems but is missing the final section (Cooke-ham and “To the doubfull Reader”) (Woods xlvii-1).

part. Barbara Lewalski argues that Lanyer's dedicatory poems assimilate the various nobles named, creating a "community of good women": "[Lanyer] comprehends all the dedications within the thematic unity of her volume, addressing these ladies as a contemporary community of good women who are spiritual heirs to the biblical and historical good women her title poem celebrates" (220). While Lanyer's poem praises Biblical heroines for their undaunted virtues, it also positions them as *exempla* in a nontraditional sense. The exemplary women of the Bible, such as Susanna, Esther, and Deborah, serve as spiritual mothers to the good women of Lanyer's poem, as Lewalski observes, and as models of pious virtue that Margaret the Countess of Cumberland and the other dedicatees exceed with their virtuous lives. Similarly, Wendy Wall asserts that "[t]hrough her interwoven claims of past and present female virtue, Lanyer makes her biblical subject matter inextricable from the preliminary addresses that situate the text for her community of readers" (322). As in Pilate's Wife's delivery of "Eve's Apologie," Lanyer's dedicatory addresses join exemplary biblical women with their contemporary counterparts, expanding her gathering of virtuous women to potentially include all virtuous women from history and the present.

Jonathan Goldberg questions the assertion that Lanyer's textual grouping of noblewomen and others ("all vertuous Ladies in generall," "the Vertuous Reader") is an establishment of "community," noting: "Lanyer seizes upon male prerogative both to vehiculate her desire (for patronage, etc.) and to imagine her place in the company of aristocratic women. To this extent, and in this highly mediated fashion, one could call this 'community'" (37). For Goldberg, Lanyer's employment of "male prerogative" to accomplish her poetic task of representing Christ's crucifixion disrupts the possibility of

her establishing a true “community” of virtuous women, unless Lanyer succeeds in using the poetics of patron-seeking to join the group. Meanwhile, Michael Morgan Holmes argues that by working in the poetics of homoeroticism to construct her “community,” Lanyer is able to “negotiate the complex relations between social hierarchies and gender identities” which allows her to move “beyond a mere rebuttal of patriarchal ideology to envision the psychological groundwork for a classless, affective community between women” (104). To support this claim, Holmes draws on the presence of “imagery associated with convent life” in Lanyer’s dedicatory poems that “offered a way to imagine happiness with other women devoted to Christ” (97).

Drawing on Goldberg and Holmes’s rubrics for Lanyer’s grouping of noblewomen, readers, and “all vertuous Ladies in generall,” I would argue that Lanyer’s poetic work provides examples of and arguments for establishing something akin to a *convent* of virtuous women: an alternative realm of feminine sovereignty in contrast to the court and court culture. Though Lanyer structures her dedications under the rule of Virtue, a queenly figure, it does not quite make sense to describe her collective as a “monarchy” considering the emphasis she places on the ephemerality of the court and the virtue of the country. Though Lanyer never uses the word “convent,” or any other phrase to define her grouping of princely women, following Goldberg and Holmes, I suggest that the term is more fitting than a term like “community” to describe Lanyer’s vision of a group of princely women under the authority of Virtue, a queenly superior, who all serve their heavenly King.

By using the term “convent” I intend to invoke its various meanings simultaneously. In early modern usage, the word “convent” possessed several meanings

in addition to “A company of men or women living together in the discipline of a religious order and under one superior” (OED 3a). The primary meaning was “An assemblage or gathering of persons; a number met together for some common purpose” and could apply to any “assembly, meeting, convention, congregation” of individuals (OED 1a.). Other meanings of the word signify “A company”, specifically “the company of the twelve apostles” (OED 2) and “A company of twelve (or, including the superior, thirteen) ‘religious’ persons, whether constituting a separate community or a section of a larger one” (3b). Numerically, Lanyer’s dedicatory poems total eleven, which coupled with her self-consciously authorial address, “To the doubtfull Reader,” form a “convent” of their own, with the *Salve Deus* acting as “superior,” thereby marking Lanyer’s feminized Christ as their eternal monarch and leader. Though *The Description of Cookeham* counts as yet another poem, and therefore a potential member of the “company of twelve,” I would argue that Lanyer’s emphasis on *space* in this poem marks it differently than the others that strategically represent people and personifications. Rather, *Cookeham* functions as the spatial “convent” where all women may gather under Christ’s authority. Lanyer represents various groupings of women—muses, brides, virtues, virgins—and emphasizes the harmony found in assemblies of women as contrasted with masculine groupings and patriarchal structures of power. Through *prosopopoeia*, Lanyer conjures Virtue, a feminine leader for her convent that will place “all vertuous women” under the leadership of one central figure, thus simultaneously removing and reinforcing some of the class and hierarchical barriers between her dedicatees, herself, and women “in generall.”

The language of gathering in the dedicatory addresses is integral to Lanyer’s

poetic assembly of a convent of virtuous women. Lanyer uses both imperative commands and indirect requests that act like charms to rhetorically summon, gather, and lead her convent of virtuous women to *Salve Deus*. Tiffany Beechy's scholarship on the power of intentionally repeated words or phrases, often in verse, to work desired effects in the world sheds light on how Lanyer's dedicatory poems act as charms on her readers and dedicatees to assemble a convent of noblewomen, "vertuous Ladies in generall," and the "Vertuous Reader." As Beechy observes, "[f]or many if not most charms, it is not the great power or poetry of the verse that carries the effect, but sheer repetition" that creates "binding forces" in the world (55). Lanyer's repetition of gathering ("come") and binding ("vouchsafe") language throughout her dedicatory addresses work a binding effect on the reader, leading her and inducting her into Virtue's convent. For example, in her dedication to "To the Ladie Susan, Countesse Dowager of Kent," she repeats both direct imperatives and indirect requests to summon Lady Susan to the "holy feast" of *Salve Deus*:

Come you that were the Mistris of my youth,
 The noble guide of my ungovern'd dayes;
Come you that have delighted in Gods truth,
Help now your handmaid to sound foorth his praise:
 You that are pleas'd in his pure excellencie,
Vouchsafe to grace this holy feast, and me. (1-6, my emphasis)

And, in her dedication "To the Ladie *Arabella*" she commands: "*Come* like the morning Sunne new out of bed,/ And *cast* your eyes upon this little Book," (8-9, my emphasis). Conversely, in her dedications to Queen Anne and Princess Elizabeth, Lanyer demonstrates her deference to their princely authority by avoiding direct imperative commands to gather, such as "come," but rather uses "vouchsafe," a word imbued with awareness of sovereign authority: "To receive (a thing) graciously or condescendingly; to

deign to accept” (OED 3b). “Vouchsafe” is a compound word comprised of “vouch,” meaning, “to call, summon, invoke, claim,” and “safe,” meaning “Delivered from sin or condemnation, saved; in a state of salvation” (OED). Therefore, although Lanyer uses the imperative “vouchsafe” when requesting the acceptance of her poem, the word’s meaning recasts the act of summoning as a deferential request. Moreover, the word also means “[t]o give, grant, or bestow in a gracious or condescending manner” (OED 2). John Kerrigan argues that the “audible overlap between vouch and vow, reinforced by *safe* [securely], edges vouchsafing into binding” (110, original emphasis). By repeating a word used over ten times in the dedicatory poems that means to both *give* and to *receive*, Lanyer signals the hopeful possibility of binding, reciprocal power between poet and patron and binds her convent together through repeated poetic language.

Lanyer uses “vouchsafe” almost exclusively in the dedicatory poems to frame her poetic work as the “mean” product of a woman’s poetic composition, to call attention to her gendered position as a female poet, and to emphasize the binding exchange of virtuous power between women.¹¹ For example, in the first four lines of her dedication to Queen Anne, and of the entire publication, Lanyer writes:

Renowned Empresse, and great Britaines Queene,
Most gracious Mother of succeeding Kings;
Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene,
A Womans writing of divinest things: (1-4)

As the dedication proceeds, Lanyer acknowledges Anne’s patronage of poetry and art

(“The Muses doe attend upon your Throne,/ With all the Artists at your becke and call”

¹¹ Lanyer uses “vouchsafe” conclude her dedication to Anne with a final request that the queen excuse any flaws in the poem: “So peerlesse Princesse humbly I desire,/ That your great wisdom would vouchsafe t’omit/ All faults; and pardon if my spirits retire” (157-159). Similarly, in her dedication to Princess Elizabeth, Lanyer deferentially requests Elizabeth’s approval of her poem, marking it specifically as a product of feminine “wit”: “Though your faire eyes farre better Bookes have seene;/ Yet being the first fruits of a womans wit,/ Vouchsafe you favor in accepting it” (12-14).

[19-20]) and requests that Anne “[v]ouchsafe” the light of sovereign approval on “virtue” in Lanyer’s poem to compensate for her “meannesse” in social station and poetic skill.¹²

From your bright spheare of greatnes where you sit,
Reflecting light to all those glorious stars
That wait upon your Throane; To virtue yet
Vouchsafe that splendor which my meannesse bars (25-27)

Here “virtue” is presented as a latent force in the poem, awaiting Anne’s sovereign splendor to fully activate it into Virtue: a powerful, effective *prosopopoeia*.

Several lines later, Lanyer’s request is fulfilled and Virtue fully manifests as a narrative actor within the poem to present Lanyer’s book to the Queen:

accept most gracious Queene
This holy worke, Virtue presents to you,
In poore apparel, shaming to be seene,
Or once t’appeare in your judicicall view:
But that faire Virtue, though in meane attire,
All princes of the world doe most desire.
And sith all royal virtues are in you,
The Naturall, the Morall, and Divine,
I hope how plaine soever, beeing true,
You will accept even of the meanest line
Faire Virtue yeelds; by whose rare gifts you are
So highly grac’d, t’exceed the fairest faire (61-72)

Initially, Virtue seems to present Lanyer’s poetry “[i]n poore apparel” but the following lines clarify that it is actually Virtue herself that stands before the Queen’s “judicicall view” in “meane attire,” “shaming to be seene.” This calls to mind Sidney’s representation of masculine Poetry decking “vertue” out “in her best cullours...that one must needs be enamored of her” (99). Lanyer appropriately represents Virtue in “meane attire” and “poore apparel” to emphasize her own “meannesse” as a poet, but her Virtue is nevertheless desired by “All the princes of the world.” Instead of personifying “virtue”

¹² “Meannesse”: “Weakness, inferiority, smallness” (OED 1a); “Lowliness; insignificance; lowness of birth, social status” (OED 2)

generally, Virtue is a *prosopopoeia* of all the princely virtues Anne possesses (“sith all royal virtues are in you”). Lanyer reasons that because Anne possesses all princely virtue (“The Naturall, the Morall, and Divine”) she is best poised to accept Lanyer’s poem that “Faire Virtue yeelds.” Lanyer represents Queen Anne’s princely virtue as empowering a more active *prosopopoeia* of Virtue that in turn will lead Anne, the other dedicatees, and the reader to witness arguments in favor of women’s autonomy in *Salve Deus*.

Lanyer’s use of “vouchsafe,” a command posed as a deferential request, throughout the dedicatory poems maintains her awareness of her dedicatee’s station relative to her “meanness” and urges the dedicatee to acknowledge her “holy worke,” while ushering the reader toward the *Salve Deus* where Lanyer provides an argument for feminine sovereignty not being confined to the court.

In her dedication “To all vertuous Ladies in generall,” Lanyer makes her strongest argument for establishing a convent of virtuous women by drawing on Biblical formulas for women’s gatherings as well as repurposing masculine convents, such as Christ’s twelve disciples, as models for women’s gatherings, bound by virtue. Notably, Lanyer begins this dedicatory poem by crowning Virtue queen of her assembly, marking the “princely favour” Queen Anne bestowed on Virtue in a previous poem as still potent and active as the reader progresses through her book (ln.129). Lanyer uses imperative commands to continue assembling and binding her convent and to crown Virtue as their leader:

Each blessed Lady that in Virtue spends
Your pretious time to beautifie your soules;
Come wait on hir whom winged Fame attends
And in her hand the Booke where she inroules
Those high deserts that Majestie commends:
Let this faire Queene not unattended bee,

When in my Glasse she daines her selfe to see. (1-7)

In the opening stanza of this poem, Lanyer begins with a spatial metaphor that designates “Each blessed Lady” as inhabiting the space of Virtue provides “to beautifie [their] soules,” but then transitions to a political metaphor naming Virtue “this faire Queene” who is accompanied by “winged Fame.” Fame stands as a female courtier beside Virtue, holding a “Booke where she inroules” the merits of virtuous women that “Majestie,” here a further metonymic personification of Virtue, “commends” as worthy. Fame’s book, licensed by Virtue, is a poetic manifestation of Lanyer’s own publication, in which Virtue “inroules” the names of virtuous women. Returning to her poetic voice, Lanyer commands her readers to wait on Virtue as their queen, and accompany her in examining her reflection in the “Glasse” of *Salve Deus* where “she daines” to look. Lanyer amplifies Virtue’s superiority over the convent and herself as poet by acknowledging that Virtue “daines” to see her “meane” poetic work.

Lanyer’s political metaphor of Virtue as queen morphs further into a religious one in which Virtue becomes a feminine guide for “all vertuous ladies” as they prepare to encounter Christ in the *Salve Deus*:

Put on your wedding garments every one,
The Bridegroome stays to entertaine you all;
Let Virtue be your guide, for she alone
Can leade you right that you can never fall;
And make no stay for feare he should be gone:
But fill your Lamps with oyle of burning zeale,
That to your Faith he may his Truth reveale. (8-14)

Alluding to the Parable of the Ten Virgins in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 25), Lanyer commands “all vertuous Ladies” to be like the wise virgins who properly prepared to meet their bridegroom by bringing extra oil for their lamps. By commanding

virtuous women to “Put on [their] wedding garments” and follow Virtue, their “guide,” to meet their bridegroom, Christ, in the main poem, Lanyer continues to usher her dedicatees/readers toward the *Salve Deus* while preparing them for the “feast.” Lanyer commands her readers to dress appropriately to encounter their bridegroom, Christ, in the main poem, dressed in “colours purest Virtue wore” (16), “deckt with Lillies” (17), wearing “Daphnes crowne” of “never changing Laurel” (22-23). Here, presaging the manifestation of Christ in the *Salve Deus* as an exemplar of feminine virtue, Lanyer names Christ “purest Virtue,” calling his followers to dress themselves in “Those perfit colours” he wore going to his death: “purple scarlet white.” They are further instructed to “With Esop crosse the posts of every doore,/ Where Sinne would riot, making Virtue poore” (27-28). Lanyer mixes Biblical and classical allusions to advise her readers to protect themselves and Virtue against “Sinne,” by marking “the posts of every doore” with “Esop,” or hyssop. Hyssop is associated with ritual purification in the Bible, such as in Psalms, when David asks: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (KJV 51:7). This resonates with Lanyer’s call for “all vertuous Ladies” who seek to view and follow Christ to act as brides, purifying themselves before meeting their bridegroom.

The allusion also reveals the significance of Lanyer’s creation of a safe space for virtuous women and Virtue, their queen. By advising her readers to cross the doorposts where Virtue resides with “Esop” to protect her from Sinne, Lanyer alludes to the Passover ritual described in Exodus in which Moses advises, as he has been instructed by God, the elders to

take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the

bason... For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. (*KJV* Exodus 12:22-23)

Marking their doorposts with hyssop dipped in blood of the passover lamb allowed Moses and Aaron's people to flee Egypt unscathed, and in Christian typology, the Hebrews' first Passover figures the paschal sacrifice of Christ's crucifixion, which Lanyer names the focal point of her publication in her dedication to Queen Anne: "For here I have prepar'd my Paschal Lambe,/ The figure of that living Sacrifice:.../This pretious Passeover feed upon, O Queen" (85-86, 89). Lanyer develops this connection further by bidding her readers to "Annoynt your haire with *Aarons* pretious oyle" (36). As Moses's anointing of Aaron with oil ordained him Israel's first priest, so Lanyer asks her dedicatees and readers to become priestesses in their own right (McGrath 228). The members of Virtue's convent, then, take on priestly identities that align them with Christ's first twelve disciples.

As the poem proceeds, Lanyer directly compares her burgeoning convent of virtuous women with Christ's twelve disciples.¹³ As I have explored thus far, Lanyer's invocation to her readers to form a convent that follows Queen Virtue in the righteous path toward Christ, "that King who di'd for your offence" (42), deals in allusions to Biblical and Classical models for women's organized gatherings. Lanyer's mixing of allusions continues throughout her dedication to "all vertuous Ladies in generall" when she declares: "Behold, bright *Titans* shining chariot staires,/... This golden chariot where you must ride,/ Let simple Doves, and subtill serpents guide" (lms. 43, 48-49). As Christ

¹³ As discussed above, early modern definitions of the word "convent" meant "the company of the twelve apostles" (OED 2) and "A company of twelve (or, including the superior, thirteen) 'religious' persons, whether constituting a separate community or a section of a larger one" (OED 3b).

prepares his disciples to go out into the world to proselytize and drive out demons he advises: “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore *wise as serpents* and *harmless as doves*” (Matt. 10:16, my emphasis). Lanyer simultaneously alludes to Christ’s advice to his disciples and to perceptions about women in general when she asks her convent to be guided by “subtill serpents” and “simple Doves.” As discussed above, strictures against women’s acquisition and dissemination of knowledge were judged by patriarchal ideologies to vacillate between extremes: “if thou speak uncunningly, they count the dul witted; if thou speake cunningly thou shalte be called a shrewe” (38r). In Christ’s advice to his disciples, he asks them to be wise *and* harmless so as to best protect themselves against the oppositions they will face from institutions of governance:

But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Matt. 10:17-20)

Christ’s advice to his disciples informs Lanyer’s advice to her readers that they should “beware of men” because they will encounter scenarios in which they have to defend themselves from self-condemning women and “evill disposed men” who lay “imputations” on undeserving virtuous women (pgs. 48-49). By declaring that her readers “must ride” in a “golden chariot” led by “subtill serpents” and “simple Doves,” Lanyer extends her poetic reference beyond the scope of Matthew 10:16 to include the rest of Christ’s advice and warning, that, like Lanyer’s poetry, functions as prophecy. Christ’s words prophetically anticipate his disciples’ arrest and their testimonies before

“governors and kings for [His] sake.” He comforts them by focusing exclusively on the source and nature of their speech, advising them that they should “take no thought how or what [they] shall speak” because God will speak through them. The vatic nature of Christ’s words warning his disciples of their impending accountability to religious and governmental institutions will be echoed in Lanyer’s poem in the circumstances demanding Pilate’s Wife’s delivery of “Eves Apologie.” Like Christ’s disciples, Pilate’s Wife will be brought before “governors and kings” to offer joint divine testimony on behalf of Christ and womankind.

In Lanyer’s *Salve Deus*, contemporary women’s roles and the roles of Christ’s male disciples form a palimpsest in which “all vertuous Ladies in generall” face a trial in which they must give “testimony,” like the original twelve disciples, witnessing their devotion to Christ. When Pilate’s Wife is conjured to articulate a joint defense of Christ’s life and women’s virtue, Christ’s advice to his disciples becomes all the more relevant to Lanyer’s broader argument for the recognition of women’s knowledge and speech as worthy and divinely inspired: “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Matt. 10:19-20). Therefore, by alluding to Christ’s advice that his disciples be as “wise as serpents and harmless as doves,” Lanyer asserts the validity of women’s speech as a virtuous weapon against men’s political and religious subjugation of them, reasoning, along with Christ, that women should “take no thought how or what [they] shall speak...For it is not [they] that speak, but the Spirit of [their] Father which speaketh in [them].” Sidney’s notion of poetry as an art that reveals prophetic, “hart-ravishing knowledge” (86)

corresponds with Lanyer's harnessing of poetry's vatic powers to represent Pilate's Wife in a scenario nearly exactly as Christ describes to his apostles above. With Christ's advice guarding her speech, Pilate's Wife is brought before her husband the governor to offer prophetic, divine "testimony" to try to forestall Christ's death, and to defend virtuous women who are unjustly blamed for Eve's transgression.¹⁴

"Eve's Apologie": Reclaiming Women's Sovereignty through Prophecy

In "Eve's Apologie," Lanyer uses *prosopopoeia* to summon Pilate's Wife to voice a defense of Eve and all women against men's blame for the Fall and succeeding arguments for men's sovereignty over women. Feminist scholars Wendy Wall, Mihoko Suzuki, and Janel Mueller recognize the significance of Pilate's Wife's personification of proto-feminist values for women's resistance to patriarchal subjugation. According to Wall, Pilate's Wife's attempt to prevent Christ's execution makes her "one of the text's *central emblems* of spiritual virtue" (320, my emphasis) and Suzuki argues that "Pilate's wife *exemplifies* those women who resist and critique the hegemony of males as historical agents" (*Subordinate Subjects* 119, my emphasis). Both scholars frame Pilate's Wife's poetic power as a result of her ability to personify ideas central to proto-feminist critique: women's access to spiritual virtue and awareness that male power is not originary. Mueller directly addresses Pilate's Wife's personification, but classifies her defense of women's sovereignty as a strategic blend of values attributed to women and men: "Lanyer lines up the fundamental binaries of culture/nature and reason/passion in this fourfold *apologia* so that Pilate's wife personifies femininity triumphant in masculine

¹⁴ Additionally, by figuring Virtue's disciples as driving a golden chariot led by doves and serpents, Lanyer alludes to the goddesses Venus and Ceres who, respectively, drove chariots led by these seemingly antagonistic creatures, reinforcing her representation of feminine discipleship headed by powerful feminine divines from antiquity and thus furthering her combination of both ancient and biblical models for women's sovereignty.

terms” (120). Pilate’s Wife’s ability to “personif[y] femininity triumphant in masculine terms,” I argue, is not only linked to the content of her argument, but also to the biblical narrative from which she derives. Matthew 27 narrates the judgement and crucifixion of Jesus under Pontius Pilate’s authority and consequently thematizes the bad governance of masculine human authority in contrast with Christ’s divine rule.

It is not surprising that Lanyer chose this biblical moment as the primary focus of her main poem, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Indeed, the title she chose for her poem (“All Hail, King of the Jews”) encapsulates, and corrects, men’s misrecognition of divine authority by adding “Deus” (“All Hail *God*, King of the Jews”). What is surprising is that Lanyer isolates the verse in which Pilate’s unnamed wife warns her husband against crucifying Christ: “Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him” (Mat. 27:19). This pivotal moment displays men’s imprudent rule and disregard for women’s advice. Lanyer poetically reimagines Pilate’s Wife’s prophetic warning as a quasi-legal defense (as Quintilian describes) of all women who are routinely blamed for the sins of Eve. Because Pilate’s Wife is represented in the Gospel of Matthew and by Lanyer as a prophet, her words have the force of revealing truth and making a new world for women. Not the world created by Nature, which men use as justification for women’s subservience and as Sidney claims is “brasen,” but a “golden” one where her prophecy negating men’s claims to sovereignty has come to pass (Sidney 88). Additionally, by using *prosopopoeia* to raise Pilate’s Wife to argue for women’s liberty, Lanyer further claims her place as a vatic poet. Indeed, after “Eves Apologie,” Lanyer asserts access to the vatic, divinely inspired nature of poetry when she tells the Countess of Cumberland: “And knowe, when first into the world I

came,/ This charge was giv'n me by th'Eternall powres,/ Th'everlasting Trophie of thy fame,/ To build and decke it with the sweetest flowres/ That virtue yeelds" (1457-1461). Lanyer designates herself, alongside Pilate's Wife, as a divinely ordained vatic witness to women's virtue whose poetic skill is integral to performing her "charge."

Pilate's Wife's argument in defense of Eve begins with a plea to her husband, the governor of Jerusalem, to spare Jesus's life on the grounds that by condemning his Savior to death, he will nullify men's originary claim to authority over women: "Let not us Women glory in Mens fall,/ Who had power given to over-rule us all" (759-760). Pilate's Wife identifies "the fall" in Eden as the moment when women lost their autonomy and offers it as a warning against men's impending "fall" by arguing that if Pilate continues in his misgoverned execution of Christ, his "indiscretion sets us free,/ And makes our former fault much less appeare" (761-762). She reasons that since Eve had no prophetic warning, as Pilate does, to avoid eating from the Tree of Knowledge, she "Was simply good, and *had no powre to see*" (765, my emphasis) the after-effects of eating from the tree because "The subtile Serpent that our Sex betraide,/ Before our fall so sure a plot had laide" (lms. 767-768). As Shannon Miller observes, "[Lanyer] depicts Eve's fall such that Eve's culpability is offset by aspects of her goodness, casting Eve as less culpable because of her ignorance" (63). Eve is not only marked as less guilty for being ignorant, but she is crucially lacking the "powre to see" the serpent's "guile, or craft" (769-770), a lack the eating of the forbidden fruit will rectify by opening her eyes to the nature of good and evil: "And the eyes of them both were opened" (Gen. 3:7). The inability to decipher deceptive speech becomes the mark of women's sin, which Pilate's Wife defends by arguing that Eve's originary state prevented her from such discernment. Both

her inherent virtue and her lack of knowledge mark Eve's actions as pardonable, reasoning that if Eve had not yet eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, how could she knowingly discern "the Serpents craft" as deceitful, evil speech?

According to Pilate's Wife, Adam "was most too blame" (778) for The Fall due to his sovereign position in Eden and primary relationship with God. This argument feeds into Lanyer's (and Pilate's wife's) larger argument about men's misrule, reasoning that

Being Lord of all, the greater was his shame:
Although the Serpents craft had her abuse,
Gods holy word ought all his actions frame,
For he was Lord and King of all the earth,
Before poore Eve had either life or breath. (780-784)

Traditional patriarchal logic long offered God creating Adam first as justification of men's social superiority over women, but Pilate's Wife turns men's arguments against them and contends that their initial creation and sovereignty is the very reason Adam "can not be excused" (777). Since he was the world's first monarch, "And from Gods mouth receiv'd that strait command" (787), Adam is emblematic of men's misrule and lack of prudence: "We know right well he did *discretion* lacke" (795, my emphasis). Lacking the necessary princely virtue prudence, Adam, and men after him, are ill poised to rule and should not be the gatekeepers of knowledge, divine or otherwise. According to Pilate's wife, Adam's first knowledge of "Gods holy word" convicts him while Eve's desire for knowledge excuses her sin. As Pilate's Wife reasons: "If *Eve* did erre, it was for knowledge sake/...Yet Men will boast of Knowledge which he tooke/ From *Eves* faire hand, as from a learned Booke" (797, 807-808). If the original sin was Adam and Eve's mutual desire for prohibited knowledge, Pilate's Wife contends, men cannot deny women access to knowledge or its distribution on the basis of Eve's sin. Lanyer's metaphor

equating the forbidden fruit with “Knowledge” designates Eve as the first possessor of knowledge, which she shared with her spouse out of “too much love” (801), “Whereby his knowledge might become more cleare” (804). Crucially, Pilate’s Wife’s argument rests on the fact that Adam, the only hearer of God’s command, never attempted to persuade Eve against sin: “He never sought her weakness to reprove,/ With those sharp words, which he of God did heare” (805-806). In an attempt to undo Adam’s initial fault, Pilate’s Wife’s warning to her husband performs the work Adam should have done by reproving Eve, reasoning that if Eve through “weakenesse did the Serpents words obey,” Pilate, and other men by implication, act out of “malice” by unjustly condemning Jesus to death (815-816).

Pilate’s Wife’s argument moves from a defense of Eve’s “undiscerning Ignorance” and Adam’s imprudent misgovernment as the “Lord and King of all the earth” (783), to a direct plea for all women’s “Libertie” based on Pilate’s parallel but graver misgovernment in his impending decision to crucify Christ against her prophetic warning. She argues:

Then let us have our Libertie againe,
 And challenge to your selves no Sov’raintie;
 You came not in the world without our paine,
 Make that a barre against your crueltie;
 Your fault beeing greater, why should you disdain
 Our beeing your equals, free from tyranny?
 If one weake woman simply did offend,
 This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end. (825-832)

This stanza encompasses Pilate’s Wife’s entire argument, spanning from feminine generation as the reason to “barre” men against “crueltie” (an argument Lanyer initiates in her dedication “To the Vertuous Reader”) to the logic that because men, represented metonymically through Pilate, commit a far graver sin in executing Christ than the

ignorant transgression committed by “one weake woman,” women should be compensated with their “Libertie againe.” Her rank as a governor’s wife grants princely authority to her plea for men to grant women “Libertie” and “Sov’raigtie,” essential markers of women’s virtue and worth in the political sphere.

The “political consequences” of Lanyer’s apology for Eve, according to Miller, are evident in Lanyer’s “rejection of women’s need to concede sovereignty to men [that] undermines the very analogy supporting patriarchal theory” (65-66). Likewise, Suzuki argues: “Though unable to avert the violence done to Christ, Pilate’s wife’s feminine perspective represents a redemptive alternative, rather than an obstacle, to the historical process understood as masculine” (Suzuki *Subordinate* 119). The “redemptive alternative” in Lanyer’s poetic representation, through *prosopopoeia*, of an argument for women’s sovereignty is perhaps more significant than questioning patriarchal history that erases women’s worth, or only offers up handfuls of exemplary women (Lucretia, Esther, Judith) as proof of virtuous femininity. Pilate’s wife’s bid for women’s “Libertie” and “Sov’raigtie” demands that all women since Eve inhabit a political realm free from patriarchal control over their political and social agency (Miller 68). Like men’s use of Genesis to explain women’s subjugation, Pilate’s Wife uses the narrative of Christ’s crucifixion to explain why men are depraved rulers who govern “[w]ith blood, and wrong, with tyrannie, and might” (844). Accordingly, she argues, men have no just claim to sovereignty over women in domestic or public governance.

The prophetic force of Pilate’s Wife’s argument for a return to women’s “Libertie” as men’s “equals” in a state “free from tyranny” works retroactively on Lanyer’s readers as an etiological explanation for men’s misrule. Pilate’s Wife’s vatic

speech reassures the reader that women's refusal to give "consent" (833) for Christ's unjust execution nullifies patriarchal reliance on The Fall to disparage women's speech, access to knowledge, and virtuous accomplishment. Now, emboldened by the vatic power to authenticate women's claims to sovereignty and equality, Lanyer's readers can move forward, through the poem and the world, knowing that the only man who they owe obedience, service, and love is Christ, figured as both the feminized "Monarke of heav'n, earth, and seas" (1711) and their only worthy "Bridegroom that appears so faire" (1305). Lanyer will cement her representation of Christ as both a bridegroom and a king in her typological representation of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon as biblical prefigurations of Margaret, Countess of Cumberland and Christ. The turn to typology assists Lanyer's project of positioning herself as a vatic poet in fulfillment of the "charge...giv'n [her] by th'Eternall powres" (1457).

The Queen of Sheba: Prefiguring Princely Feminine Virtue

As numerous critics have argued, one important way that Lanyer argues against patriarchal suppression of women's agency is through her representation of Christ as an exemplar of feminine virtue. Lanyer's dedications lead the reader toward the *prosopopoeia* of a feminized Christ in the main poem. In Lanyer's figuration, Christ embodies princely feminine virtue: he is the monarch of heaven and earth;¹⁵ described with feminine imagery recalling the descriptions of the feminine beloved in Song of Songs;¹⁶ he embodies myriad feminine virtues; and he is even attended by personified

¹⁵ "And that Imperiall Crowne of Thornes he wore,/ Was much more pretious than the Diadem/ Of any King that ever liv'd before,/...He plainly shewed that his own profession/ Was virtue, patience, grace, love, piety:/ And how by suffering he could conquer more/ Than all the Kings that ever liv'd before." (897-899, 957-960)

¹⁶ lines 1305-1320

feminine virtues.¹⁷ Wall points out that the feminine virtues embodied and perfectly performed by Christ are those same feminine moral and domestic virtues prescribed in contemporary conduct books (329). Furthermore, Mueller observes that throughout Lanyer's dedicatory addresses and in her representation of a feminized Christ, she "trace[s] the impact of feminine or feminized virtue on the masculine side of a range of standing dichotomies that mark conceptions of social and political relations: public/private, mind/body, culture/nature, reason/passion" (117). By offering her readers a model of righteous masculine rule that is both divine and feminine, Lanyer rails against biblical, historical, and contemporary patriarchal claims to men's supreme authority based on women's lack of princely virtue. "As narrated," Mueller argues, "the superiority of feminine virtue is constantly confirmed as it makes its impact in the masculine domain" (117). One such masculine domain is King James I's court, which Lanyer hopes to benefit from through dedications to royal and aristocratic women and simultaneously critiques by encouraging Margaret, her main dedicatee, to leave the court for the country, figured as a space of feminine intellectual liberty in *The Description of Cooke-ham*.

Lanyer's advice and encouragement about Margaret's marginalized social standing is integral to Lanyer's dedication of the titular poem to her. Although different in status, Lanyer, a middle-class woman, and the Countess of Cumberland, an aristocrat, are united in solidarity by their shared acute experiences with patriarchal subjugation. Suzuki explains that "[Lanyer's] plight as the cast-off and pregnant mistress of Lord Hunsdon...and Cumberland's lawsuits against her husband's will designating his brother

¹⁷ "Here faire Obedience shined in his breast, And did suppress all feare of future paine;/ Love was his Leader unto his unrest,/ Whil'st Righteousnesse doth carry up his Traine;/ Mercy made way to make us highly blest,/ When Patience beat down Sorrow, Feare and Paine;/ Justice sate looking with an angry brow,/ On blessed misery appeering now" (529-536).

rather than his daughter [Anne Clifford] as heir, do place these women in equivalent subject positions opposed to those of patriarchal males” (Suzuki *Subordinate* 113). Margaret, too, was “cast off” by her husband George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, who had “impoverished both his own and his wife’s estates,” leaving neither her nor her daughter Anne with any option but the “forced exodus from [their] temporary home at Cookham” (McGrath 220). Lanyer stayed for a period of time at Cookham with Margaret and Anne before 1609, indicating that *The Description of Cooke-ham*, the first published English country house poem, was probably written between early 1609 and its publication late the following year (Woods xxv). Woods speculates that Anne’s marriage to Richard Sackville, making her Countess of Dorset, on February 25, 1609 marked the end of Lanyer’s stay at Cookham. In *Salve Deus*, Lanyer anticipates her nostalgic commemoration of Cookham where Margaret will reside by praising Margaret’s supposedly autonomous decision to leave the court for the country by describing the latter as a space where Margaret can reside with Christ “[t]o serve and honour him continually” (1700).

Lanyer begins *Salve Deus*, addressed to her primary dedicatee, Lady Margaret the Dowager Countess of Cumberland, with a reference to Queen Elizabeth’s absence from earth and the court. As Suzuki argues, the influence of Elizabeth’s forty-five year reign on seventeenth-century women is one of “salient historical precedent to validate their position as political subjects...because it marks a moment when a woman was acknowledged as a legitimate agent in public and political history” (*Subordinate Subjects* 16). Elizabeth not only serves as an important precedent and model for feminine princely power, but for Lanyer, she is also an archetype for virtuous women whose sovereignty

lies *beyond* the court, as Margaret's does. In Lanyer's verse, Margaret becomes a poetic replacement for the deceased Elizabeth I: "Sith *Cynthia* is ascended to that rest.../ That glorious place that cannot be exprest/ By any wight clad in mortalitie,/ To thee great Countesse now I will applie/ My Pen, to write thy never dying fame" (1, 3-4, 9-10). As Elizabeth I has left the "world" in death, Lanyer reasons, so Margaret will leave the "world" of the "Court." Margaret's typological comparison with the Queen of Sheba, who Lanyer describes as "this rare Phoenix of that worn out age" (1689), connects the wise biblical queen with England's phoenix as well. The tri-form correlation between Elizabeth, Margaret, and the Queen of Sheba asserts that Margaret joins these worthy sovereigns with her "never dying fame." By figuring Margaret as a princely substitute for Queen Elizabeth, and for the Queen of Sheba, Lanyer asserts that their sovereign models of feminine virtue are poetically immortal and eternally available for emulation by virtuous women.

Lanyer's dedication of the titular poem to Margaret, and her direct addresses within it, demonstrates the movement of princely virtue out of the court and into the country, a space she represents in the *Salve Deus* as marked by Christ's rule in contrast to the misrule of the court. She writes: "Thou from the Court to the Countrie art retir'd,/ Leaving the world, before the world leaves thee" (161-162). Lanyer's formula pairs the "Court" and the "world" as equal and distinct from the "Countrie," which according to what Lanyer represents in *Cooke-ham*, is a feminine space of support and poetic creation.¹⁸ Though Lanyer's book is structured by rhetorical invitations that gather her "convent" of women readers and dedicatees together for the "feast" of the *Salve Deus*,

¹⁸ In *Cooke-ham*, Lanyer credits the estate as instrumental to spurring her own poetic endeavors: "And where the Muses gave their full consent,/ I should have powre the virtuous to content" (3-4).

Lanyer encourages the Countess of Cumberland to recognize and embrace her princely virtue by *leaving* the ephemeral pleasures of the court “to serve a heav’nly King” (170). The contrast between “Court” and “Countrie” gestures toward the pastoral space of Cookham as a possible refuge for princely feminine virtue to thrive under the virtuous authority of Christ and ushers the other guests at the “feast” away from the court toward *Cooke-ham*, the succeeding poem, along with the Countess.

In *Salve Deus*, Lanyer represents the Queen of Sheba, an embodiment of learned knowledge and wisdom, as a typological figure for Margaret. Like the Queen of Sheba, Margaret is praised for being “wise” and “sage” and each woman journeys forth from (her) court in search of a wise and virtuous King. To encourage Margaret’s prudent journey away from James I’s court and toward Christ, Lanyer aligns her with modes of knowledge she will later associate with the Queen of Sheba:

Who is more wise? or who can be more sage,
Than she that doth Affection subject bring;
Not forcing for the world, or Satans rage,
But shrowding under the Almightyes wing; (171-174)

Lanyer poses this rhetorical question to assert that Margaret is “wise” and “sage” for not “forcing” (caring about) the “world” of the court and the ephemeral “Affection” it provides.

The Queen of Sheba’s significance as a poetic prefiguration of Margaret lies in her potent signification as an exemplar of feminine wisdom and worthy assayer of masculine monarchical wisdom and authority in her meeting with King Solomon. According to Christine de Pisan, the Queen of Sheba should be recognized as a prophet,

like Pilate's Wife, who foretells the crucifixion of Christ.¹⁹ Consequently, the Queen of Sheba, according to scripture and cultural sources, embodies both wisdom *and* prophecy. Compared to Pilate's Wife, a prophetess who delivers an impassioned oration for women's sovereignty, Lanyer's Queen of Sheba appears as a shadowy prototype of the "real" the Countess of Cumberland. Nevertheless, the Queen of Sheba is the poetic representation of a dead historical person who embodies wisdom, an abstract virtue, and thus serves as a clear example of another type of *prosopopoeia*, by which the poet "feign[s] any person with such features, qualities, and conditions... and do study (as one may say) to give them a human person (Puttenham 324). Although Lanyer's Queen of Sheba does not speak, a departure from the biblical narrative, she personifies Margaret's princely feminine virtues.

After relating the poetic narrative of Christ's crucifixion, Lanyer returns to the issue with which she began the titular poem: Margaret's journey away from court. Lanyer summons the *prosopopoeia* of the Queen of Sheba, and that of Solomon, to forge a typological connection between the biblical monarchs and Margaret and Christ. Like Margaret's "wise" and "sage" decision to leave court "to serve a heav'nly King" (170), Lanyer describes the Queen of Sheba's journey to meet King Solomon as a quest "To heare the Wisdom of this worthy King;/ To trie if Wonder did agree with Fame" (1577-1578). When the Queen arrives at Solomon's court where "many strange hard questions

¹⁹ "Of ye wisdom of this lady & of her prophecy speaketh many dyvers scryptures ye sayth ye as she was in Jerusalem & that Salamon ledd her for to se ye noblesse of the temple ye he had made to buylde. She sawe a longe borde ye was couched attracers of a myre & made as a planke to passe over the depnesse. Then the body rested in beholdynge ye planke & worshypped it & sayd this planke whiche is nowe holden in grete foulnesse and put under ye feet shall be yet worshypped above all ye trees of the worlde & garnyshed with precyous stones & treasure of prynces & upon this same planke he shall dye ye shal brynge the Jewes lawe to nought. They held this worde but for a scorne or a Jape but put hym away & hydde hym in ye erthe... For as well as they coude hyde it yet it was founde at the last in the tyme of ye passyon of our lord Jhesu Cryst & of this planke was the crosse on ye which our savyoure suffred his passyon & then was the prophecy made true of this lady" (3.A5v)

did shee frame” (1581), Lanyer represents his responses to the Queen of Sheba’s questions with satisfactory answers as a meeting of equals, mirroring one another’s princely virtues:

Heere Majestie with Majestie did meete,
Wisdome to Wisdome yeelded true content,
One Beauty did another Beauty greet,
Bounty to Bountie never could repent;
...
In virtuous exercises of the minde,
In which this Queene did much contentment finde. (1585-1588, 1591-1592)

Lanyer figures both Solomon and the Queen as *prosopopoeias* of their princely virtues, simultaneously reducing them to these virtues and elevating them beyond their original biblical characters so that they personify multifaceted princely virtue as they become Majesty, Wisdom, Beauty, and Bounty. Through *prosopopoeia*, the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon are marked as equals, unfettered by gender or other markers of difference to the extent that the reader has difficulty discerning which animated quality belongs to which monarch. However, Lanyer soon clarifies this lack of distinction between the two virtuous princes when she describes the Queen of Sheba as the primary agent in their relationship:

Spirits affect where they doe sympathize,
Wisdom desires Wisdome to embrace,
Virtue covets her like, and doth devize,
How she her friends may entertaine with grace; (1593-1596)

Here the Queen of Sheba is not only Wisdom, a type of virtue, but Virtue herself who “covets her like” to the extent that she leaves the comfort of her court to seek out “How she her friends may entertaine with grace.” By using *prosopopoeia* and the rhetoric of friendship to describe the Queen of Sheba as Virtue, Lanyer builds on her previous representations of Virtue as a queen and ruler of a convent of virtuous women in her

dedicatory poems, which leads the reader to assume the two are one and the same. By representing Virtue as a *prosopopoeia* of the Queen of Sheba, Lanyer draws a correlation between the Queen of Sheba (a poetic figure for Margaret), Virtue, and the Countess of Cumberland. In other words, the Countess of Cumberland becomes an embodiment of Virtue, in a similar way that the Queen of Sheba embodies wisdom, and thus she is queen and ruler of the convent of “all vertuous Ladies in generall.”

In order to persuasively advise the Countess of Cumberland, her principal dedicatee, that she should leave the court “to serve a heav’nly King” (170), Lanyer represents the relationship between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon as prefiguring the relationship between Margaret and Christ. The Queen of Sheba’s “Desire” to be with her “like,” Lanyer argues:

did worke a strange effect,
To drawe a Queene forth of her native Land,
Not yeelding to the nicenesse and respect
Of woman-kind; shee past both sea and land,
All feare of dangers shee did quite neglect,
Onely to see, to heare, to understand (1601-1606)

It is this same “effect” that Lanyer seeks to inspire in the Countess of Cumberland. By offering the Queen of Sheba as an example of a powerful, sovereign, wise woman who sojourned from the comfort of the court, “Not yeelding to the nicenesse and respect/ Of woman-kind,” Lanyer emboldens Margaret to “neglect” “All feare of dangers” and to virtuously seek Wisdom in the virtuous sovereignty of Christ. She advises her to act similarly to the Queen of Sheba and seek out her “like,” disregarding any concern for luxury (“niceness”) or social rank (“respect”) associated with “woman-kind.” Lanyer reveals her goal of offering the relationship between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon to Margaret as an analogy of advice when she states that Solomon, “this faire map of

majestie and might,/ Was but a figure of thy deerest Love” (1609-1610). The Queen of Sheba becomes “this rare Phoenix of that worn out age” (1689) who falls short in comparison with the princely Countess of Cumberland: “This great majesticke Queene comes short of thee,/ Who to an earthly Prince did then ingage/ Her hearts desires, her love, her libertie” (1690-1692).

Lanyer links the pursuit of desire with the effects of *affect* throughout her stanzas advising Margaret’s journey away from the court to argue that true affect and desire are directed toward virtue, and thus toward Christ. When Lanyer praises Margaret above with the rhetorical question, “Who is more wise? or who can be more sage,/ Than she that doth Affection subject bring,” she honors Margaret’s ability to surpass the transient pleasures of the court and the weak “Affection” offered there in search of something more substantial. She reminds Margaret of the mutuality of true “Affection” when she offers the Queen of Sheba as a figure for Margaret’s search for virtue, writing: “Spirits affect where they doe sympathize.” Finally, Lanyer praises Margaret’s retreat from the court by asserting that she exceeds the Queen of Sheba in her choice of Christ over an earthly monarch and she does so by recalling to Margaret the presence of true, virtuous affect in Christ’s court:

To this great Lord, thou onley art *affected*,
Yet came he not in pompe or royaltie,
But in an humble habit, base, dejected;
A King, a God, clad in mortalitie, (1705-1708, my emphasis)

By using the Queen of Sheba as a figure for the Countess of Cumberland, Lanyer promotes a space of feminine sovereignty beyond the space of James I’s court. In Lanyer’s representation, King Solomon’s court is not marked by misrule or gendered imbalance. As she describes it, Solomon’s court, prefiguring Christ’s court, is a space

where feminine Virtue can flourish in friendship through mutual support and where women can find happiness “In virtuous exercises of the minde”:

Here all distaste is troden under feet,
No losse of time, where time was so well spent
In virtuous exercises of the minde,
In which this Queene did much contentment finde. (1589-1592)

In this space, the Queen of Sheba, an embodiment of learned wisdom, can safely “trie” the virtue and wisdom of a “worthy King” (1579, 1578) without punishment or censure. Lanyer marks the Queen of Sheba’s visit to Solomon’s court as a moment when a woman’s wisdom is the agent of discernment, and elicits contentment rather than men’s suspicion, thus providing the Countess of Cumberland a powerful alternative vision of masculine monarchy and women’s wise sovereignty achieved through Christ.

As I have explored, the three main sovereign *prosopopoeias* Lanyer conjures, Virtue, Pilate’s Wife, and the Queen of Sheba, shift and become figures for one another— Sheba aligns with Virtue as Pilate’s Wife shadows Lanyer—to demonstrate the generative, eternal, and prophetic natures of princely feminine virtue. In Lanyer’s final dedicatory address, “To the doubtfull Reader,” she lays full claim to her role as a vatic poet, and in Wendy Wall’s words, “a public religious visionary” (322), by divulging the “hart-ravishing knowledge” of the book’s cryptic title to her potentially skeptical reader:

Gentle Reader, if thou desire to be resolved, why I give this Title, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, know for certaine; that it was delivered unto me in sleepe many yeares before I had any intent to write in this maner, and it was quite out of my memory, untill I had written the Passion of Christ, when immediately it came into my remembrance, what I had dreamed long before; and thinking it a significant token, that I was appointed to performe this Worke, I gave the very same words I received in sleepe as the fittest Title I could devise for this Booke. (139)

Like Pilate’s Wife, Lanyer’s vatic powers first manifest in a dream and then through

carefully articulated poetic expression. And like Pilate's Wife's, her dream portends Christ's death and, along with it, the dissolution of men's sovereignty over women. Lanyer's final address to her "doubtful," "gentle reader" also engages in a careful performance of humility, reminding us of the poetic "meanness" she often touts throughout her book. Lanyer claims that her delayed remembrance of being "delivered" the poem's title in a dream *after* she composed it led her to *reconsider* her dream "a significant token, that [she] was appointed to performe this Worke." In doing so, she invests in the subtle rhetoric of assertive submission to divine authority that the Spanish noblewoman, Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, will use to proclaim her self-governance in her letters. While Lanyer was writing *Salve Deus* to rally virtuous women in the joint registers of advice and sovereignty, Luisa was writing letters to her friend, Magdalena de San Jerónimo, to direct political and spiritual advice to the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, and deflect their constraints on her autonomy and goal of martyrdom in London. Lanyer and Luisa lived in London at the same time, and though worlds apart, each uses the tropes of sovereignty common to advice literature and the rhetoric of friendship to advance other women's and their own princely feminine virtues.

CHAPTER V

“UNA GLORIOSA CORONA”: LUISA DE CARVAJAL Y MENDOZA’S NEGOTIATION OF OBEDIENCE AND PERSONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Friendship is never a given in the present; it belongs to the experience of waiting, of promise, or of commitment. Its discourse is that of prayer and at issue there is that which responsibility opens to the future.
–Jacques Derrida “The Politics of Friendship”

In 1534, ten years after he wrote *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, Juan Luis Vives published *De Conscribendis Epistolis* [*On The Writing of Letters*]. In this short text, Vives instructs the reader in how to compose letters according to their function and general good habits for epistolary communication. The “true, genuine letter,” Vives explains, “is that by which we signify to someone what it is important for him or for us to know in the conduct of one’s affairs” (25). The act of offering advice is woven into the fabric of the letter genre itself. Interestingly, he dedicates the text to “Señor Idiáquez, Secretary of Charles V,” his friend with personal and bureaucratic ties to the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain. In the dedicatory address, Vives explains that he dedicates it to his friend because “this treatise seems ideally suited to one who must daily write a great number of Latin epistles (both in your own name and in that of the Emperor Charles) on matters of great importance. Finally, in view of our friendship and mutual good will, whatever comes from one of us cannot fail to bring great pleasure to the other” (23). Aside from the practicality of dedicating the treatise to a prolific letter writer, Vives notes both Idiáquez’s occupational connection to Charles V and their shared friendship as motivators for his dedication. In doing so, Vives fuses the realms of political service, advice, and personal friendship.

For Vives, the letter's form as a mode of communication between two individuals is entwined with the virtues of friendship:

A letter is a conversation by means of the written word between persons separated from each other. It was invented to convey the mental concepts and thoughts of one person to another as a faithful intermediary and bearer of a commission. 'The purpose of a letter,' said Saint Ambrose to Sabinus, 'is that though physically separated we may be united in spirit. In a letter the image of the living presence emits its glow between persons distant from each other, and conversation committed to writing unites those who are separated. In it we also share our feelings with a friend and communicate our thoughts to him.' (23)

The unity of spirit Vives describes references a popular early modern maxim from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that theorizes a friend is "another self"; a soul is shared between them (Schollmeier 61; *Eth.9.4.1166a32*).¹ For Vives the letter's role as a "faithful intermediary" between friends is so powerful that he declares, "the image of the living presence" of the writer "emits its glow" on the written page. In place of the writer's body, the letter serves as representative and proxy, uniting friends across time and space.

Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza's nearly two hundred extant letters to friends, family, confessors, and politicians instantiate Vives's claims about friendship and letters, still providing for readers the glowing image of her living presence. While Luisa's letters vary in tone and style depending on the subject and the recipient, her letters to her most frequent interlocutor, Magdalena de San Jerónimo, reveal an intense and often tense friendship between women engaged in Spanish politics at the turn of the seventeenth

¹ All Aristotle quotations are Paul Schollmeier's revisions of Aristoteles *Ethica Nicomachea*, edited by I. Bywater (1894).

century.² Magdalena and Luisa exchanged prolific and frequent correspondence dating from 1600, before Luisa's 1605 journey to London, until 1607 when their communication ended. Luisa sojourned in London for another seven years until her death in 1614 without any known contact with Magdalena. Luisa's friendship with Magdalena allowed her epistolary access to the Spanish Infanta and Archduchess of Austria, Isabel Clara Eugenia at whose court Magdalena lived in Brussels. In her letters to Magdalena, Luisa frequently directs and at times commands Magdalena to relay her carefully crafted political advice and spiritual counsel to the Infanta. Her letters also reveal the rhetorical strategies by which Luisa combatted Magdalena's persistent demands that she return to Spanish territory. Luisa's letters, therefore, demonstrate how she uses the language of friendship to simultaneously offer advice and deflect it, demand her reader's obedience, and cleverly negotiate her compliance with human authority by representing her agency as obedience to God's will. Advice, an essential component of the classical and early modern friendship dynamic, relies on relationships of influence, power, and affection to effect desired, often virtuous, action. Luisa works within and against the advisorial mode common to friendship in fascinating ways that reveal the complexities in her cultivation of an identity that was both obedient and self-governed when she styles obedience as a princely feminine virtue.

Luisa was a fascinating person. She rejected the cloister and marriage to work publicly as a Catholic activist in London; she fiercely promoted her own agency as well as that of other women; she lived in poverty and worked with the poor, yet benefitted greatly from her noble lineage, wealth, and privilege; she pursued relationships with

² Magdalena de San Jerónimo was the religious name of Beatriz Zamudio, though no extant documentation proves she belonged to any religious order (Cruz *The Life and Writings* 50).

powerful religious and political figures, but her activism in London caused frequent political annoyances for Spain.³ The fate of Catholicism was her constant concern and she sought to knit the recusant English Catholic community abroad and in London together through her letters to friends, family, and coreligionists. Luisa was not alone in this endeavor. The international network of correspondence between expatriate Catholic women was a fundamental way of interacting in the political and religious discourses of the day (Pando-Canteli “Expatriates” 90). Through their letters, religious women exchanged information about daily life with families, friends, Church authorities, nuns in other convents, *beatas*, and exiled priests. As the years passed in London far from many of these figures, Luisa depended more and more on letters to learn and communicate information with her coreligionists in Spain and Flanders.

Luisa’s writings convey personal struggles related to her identity in a number of ways. Although she always fervently identified as a Spanish Catholic woman allied with the Spanish Society of Jesus, over time Luisa began to sympathize more and more with English Catholics and the Jesuit community in London as she advocated for and ministered to their spiritual needs. In part, Luisa’s tension of identity is interwoven with her ongoing negotiation between what Anne Cruz terms her “aristocratic ideology” and her “will” (*The Life and Writings* 93). Cruz defines Luisa’s “will” as “her internalized acceptance of the class privileges that granted her special entitlement” (93). In other words, Luisa’s privileged status afforded by her wealth, aristocratic prerogative, and

³ For studies of the diplomatic issues surrounding Carvajal’s presence and activism in London as well as more information on the political negotiations surrounding her arrest, imprisonment, and release, see Charles H. Carter, “Gondomar: Ambassador to James I” in *The Historical Journal* 7.2 (1964). See also Calvin F. Senning, “The Carvajal Affair: Gondomar and James I” in *The Catholic Historical Review* 56.1 (1970).

relationships with influential women and men in the Spanish court allowed her to achieve a type of autonomy few other women during the period could access. Yet, Cruz explains, Luisa in fact fought against an “aristocratic ideology” to assert her independence. As with all expressions of agency, Luisa’s does not exist in a vacuum, but is influenced by a network of other examples of authority, including that of Isabel Clara Eugenia.

To date, scholarship has tended to focus on Luisa’s biography or her relationship with men (her uncle Don Francisco Hurtado de Mendoza, Rodrigo de Calderón, Michael Walpole, etc.). As yet, no critics have addressed Luisa’s written relationship with the Infanta as it was mediated by Magdalena.⁴ Nor have scholars closely examined Luisa’s tense friendship with Magdalena. In fact, Luisa’s written expression of friendship with Magdalena, and the Infanta by proxy, is crucial to understanding how she advances advice and articulates her agency. I will primarily focus on Luisa’s epistolary correspondence with Magdalena, examining two methods through which Luisa asserts her agency in her letters: how she acts as a political advisor and spiritual counselor to Isabel Clara Eugenia, and the ways in which she firmly and defiantly asserts to Magdalena her choice to remain in London and earn “una gloriosa corona” of martyrdom.

In influential work, Laurie Shannon has explored cultural ties that underpinned Luisa’s leverage of the freedoms of friendship to influence the monarch. She writes:

Insofar as friendship arrived from classical models as a fully consensual image of participation, it offered Renaissance readers a world in which there are, so to speak, *two sovereigns*. As a sharp counterpoint to the terms understood to hold within the hierarchical relations of monarchical society, friendship tropes comprise the era’s most poetically powerful

⁴ For examples, see Elena Levy-Navarro, “Religious Warrior” in *Women’s Letters across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion* (2005); Elizabeth Rhodes, “Luisa de Carvajal’s Counter-Reformation Journey to Selfhood (1566-1614)” in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 51.3 (1998); Jorge Aladro, “Luisa de Carvajal: Religión y Erotismo” in *Luisa de Carvajal en Sus Contextos* (2008).

imagining of parity within a social form that is consensual. (7)

Although Shannon's book is concerned with English examples, her theories about how discourses about friendship created a dynamic of "two sovereigns" is nevertheless helpful in examining early modern women's friendships, and the relationships of Luisa, Magdalena, and the Infanta. One important concept Shannon advances is her theory of "private sovereignty" in representations of friendships of the period. She writes that "[r]epresentations of friendship rarely fail to include a monarch in the wings...Strewed across friendship materials one finds countless juxtapositionings of the befriended subject and sovereign" (8). According to Shannon, "private sovereignty" is "a fantasy of agency" an individual expresses in a friendship dynamic, which is modeled on and contrasts with the "public sovereignty" of a monarch. In being fashioned through "a figure of regal political power," "private sovereignty" is a type of "[s]elf-rule, self-possession, and consensual self-disposition...that is first calibrated in affective terms" (9-11). Therefore, the emotions expressed between friends depends on this dynamic, an interplay of each individual accessing their own "private sovereignty" through which they represent their own best interests while meeting the responsibilities of amity.

When friendship is between a ruler and a subject, the dynamic becomes more complicated, especially in instances where counsel is sought or delivered. "In these instances," Shannon writes, "instead of a pair of affectively linked twinned souls, one finds, contrarily, a cautious mode of address to a superior power, a mode in which the 'private' register of friendship voices the 'public' issue of the prince's need of counsel" (11). I will explore this dynamic at work in Luisa's letters to the Infanta Isabel below, emphasizing how Luisa employs affective and nostalgic rhetoric to advise the Infanta in

political and spiritual matters, which for Luisa are inextricably linked. This emotive, reminiscing mode of address is particularly useful because Luisa and Isabel were raised together for several years as children at the royal palace. Luisa and Isabel's childhood friendship, and their ongoing contact through Magdalena and other women in the Brussels court, serves as an exceptional mode through which Luisa can communicate with the Infanta in the "private" register Shannon mentions above. Shannon's work on early modern friendship dynamics helps analyze Luisa's letters to Magdalena in which she advises Isabel and she negotiates her own self-rule against Magdalena's demands for her obedience.

Throughout her writings and those about her, Luisa continually confronts and negotiates the virtue of obedience. The tension between her desire for autonomy and social and religious expectations that she obey friends, superiors, confessors, and the state is what leads her to cultivate and express her virtuous agency by deflecting direct orders and instead position herself rhetorically as obeying the will of God. Drawing on Shannon's theories about "private sovereignty" in friendship dynamics, I term Luisa's particular brand of self-rule, "personal sovereignty." While for Shannon the distinction is made between public and private, for Luisa in her friendship with Magdalena and her mediated relationship with the Infanta it is about negotiating her personal ambition to die for God with the communal expectations and demands of her friends in the Flemish court. I suggest that in her letters to Magdalena, Luisa draws on several available models of feminine sovereignty, often simultaneously, to offer the Infanta advice, to justify her decision to travel to London and serve God and the English Catholic community, and to assert her self-governance. Luisa uses her letters as "a faithful intermediary" between

friends to offer political counsel to the Infanta by drawing on early modern friendship theories that prioritize affective, frank rhetoric and allow for “two sovereigns” as Shannon describes. At the same time, Luisa draws on the powerful discourse of the sovereignty martyrdom affords to advise Isabel in bold political stances, such as rejecting a treaty with England to demonstrate her spiritual fortitude, and also to assert her own personal sovereignty through willing obedience to God’s divine will.

The Crown of Martyrdom

In 1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot, Luisa traveled to London as the first woman Spanish missionary to England to become a martyr for the Spanish Catholic cause. Her nobility and wealth provided her with different circumstances than many unmarried women in Spain at this time. One way she negotiated the various expectations about virtuous feminine behavior was by cultivating a type of virtuous agency that allowed her to pursue her own religious and political goals outside of the home and the convent. However, we should not confuse Luisa’s life and work in London with a destiny any tenacious woman could achieve. Her tenacity and desire for an active life led her to London to assist the Catholic community for whom she felt a special affection, but her *vita activa* at home and abroad was made possible by the privileges of her aristocratic station and financial wealth. In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt describes how the pre-modern period, beginning with Machiavelli, was the first since the postclassical period to articulate the significance of the virtue of courage for living an active life in the political realm outside the home:

To leave the household, originally in order to embark on some adventure and glorious enterprise and later simply to devote one’s life to the affairs of the city, demanded courage because only in the household was one primarily concerned with one’s own life and survival. Whoever entered

the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom...Courage therefore became the political virtue par excellence (36)

Luisa left her home in Spain for the wilderness of London and embodied the political virtue of courage in her efforts and writings there. Although her biographers, homilists, and beatification petitioners champion her as *una mujer de fortaleza* filled with courage and the desire for martyrdom, these same sources often praise her obedience to earthly and divine patriarchal authorities as well, as I will explore in my conclusion. For Luisa, like Shakespeare's Innogen, the virtues of obedience and courage could be reworked and woven together to fashion a way of achieving self-governance through service. Luisa's obedience and courageous service to God, His Holy Catholic Church, the English Catholics, and Spain were all essential to achieving the sovereign crown of martyrdom.

As she shaped her sense of spiritual purpose and agency, Luisa wrote several vows (obedience, martyrdom, poverty, and greater perfection), which voice an ethic of humility to higher earthly and divine authorities, while still asserting her own will. In her "Voto de Obediencia" [Vow of Obedience], written in 1595 and revised in 1600, Luisa negotiates to whom and to what degrees she is obedient.⁵ As Rhodes notes: "Carvajal declares her obedience at the same time she pries the door open to remarkable freedom" (*Tight Embrace* 115, n13). In Luisa's stipulations of the conditions of her obedience, she declares she will choose her own confessor yearly, on Pentecost, and that the chosen confessor is prohibited from asking her to renounce her other vows. Jesuits did not typically accept vows of obedience, so her conditions addressed this by stating that she vowed to "obedecer, todos los días de mi vida, a los mandatos y ordenaciones de la

⁵ Vow of Poverty (1593), Vow of Greater Perfection (1595), and Vow of Martyrdom (1598).

persona que en su lugar y nombre santísimo yo eligiere por mi superior y guía” ‘to obey, all the days of my life, the directives and ordinances of the person in His holy place and name whom I choose as my superior and guide’ regardless of whether her confessor accepted it (“sin que mi superior lo admita, en caso que él no lo admites”) (Rhodes 112-113). Strikingly, Luisa also provided clear provisions for her own self-rule if there were delays in her correspondence or in the receipt of correspondence from her confessor: “podré, en el ínterin, gobernarme conforme a lo que yo entendiere ser de mayor servicio y contentamiento de Nuestro Señor” ‘I may, in the interim, govern myself according to that which I understand to be the greatest service and delight of Our Lord’ (Rhodes 114-115). Luisa’s vow of obedience, like her vow of martyrdom, provides her with the self-governance to perform “mayor servicio” to God according to her own understanding of His will. In this way, Luisa negotiates within the traditional dynamic between a religious woman and her male confessor to allow for her personal sovereignty.

Luisa’s “Voto de Martirio” [Vow of Martyrdom] (1598), is rhetorically structured, like many of her writings, to allow her personal freedom within the confines of external authority. Luisa writes:

Yo, Luisa de Carvajal, lo más firmemente que puedo, con estrecho voto prometo a Dios Nuestro Señor que procuraré, cuanto me sea posible, buscar todas aquellas ocasiones de martirio que no sean repugnantes a la ley de Dios, y que siempre que yo hallare oportunidad semejante, haré rostro a todo género de muerte, tormentos y riguridad, sin volver las espaldas en ningún modo, ni rehusarlo por ninguna vía, y que cada y cuando me viere en ocasión tan venturosa, me ofreceré, sin ser buscada. El haber hecho este voto ha sido para mí de gran gusto y contentamiento, cuanto espero lo será la posibilidad de ejecutarle. Y, en el ínterin, me consuelo con él entrañablemente, deseando, aunque tan miserable, sobre todas las cosas, que en ésta y en las demás se cumpla en mí perfectamente la inestimable voluntad de Dios (Rhodes 118, 120)

I, Luisa de Carvajal, as firmly as I am able, with a strict vow, promise God Our Lord that I will procure, to the extent possible, to seek out all those

opportunities of martyrdom which are not repugnant to the law of God, and that whenever I find such opportunity, will face all manner of death, torments, and rigors, without turning my back on them in any way or refusing them in any way, and that when and if I should find myself in such a fortunate situation, I shall offer myself without having to be sought out. Taking this vow has been a great pleasure and happiness to me, as I hope will be the possibility to carry it out, and in the interim, I am deeply consoled by it, desiring above all things, though despicable as I am, that in this and in all else the inestimable will of God be accomplished in me (Rhodes 119, 121)

As in her Voto de Obediencia, Luisa rhetorically structures her Voto de Martirio to assert her agency (“procurar”) to procure her martyrdom, while couching her articulations of personal desire and planned action in the service of “la inestimable voluntad de Dios.” As Rhodes observes, “[t]his extraordinary vow freed Carvajal’s destiny from the hands of her superiors and placed it squarely in God’s, whose will was indistinguishable from her own” (Rhodes 119, n16). In doing so, Luisa continues to style her advancement of self-governance as obedience to God’s sovereign authority.

María J. Pando Canteli designates Luisa’s desires for martyrdom as part of her complex subjectivity made up of “an undifferentiated continuum between her spiritual longings and her political concerns, which may help us to explore the idea of martyrdom as an expression of resistance and as a means of re-affirmation of the self” (“Tentando Vados” 122). To a great degree, Luisa achieved a “re-affirmation of the self” through the spiritual and political activism she hoped would ultimately lead to her martyrdom. This mode of “re-affirmation of the self,” which I am terming “personal sovereignty,” however, does not entirely derive from Luisa’s own sense of power and authority, but is shaped by many factors. Throughout her writings, Luisa displays her complexly represented personal sovereignty as a strategic response to and negotiation with demands on her behavior from those seeking to exert power over her. As Cruz points out, Luisa’s

“aristocratic ideology” shaped her sense of privilege (*The Life and Writings* 93), but her cultivation of a personal sovereignty was made possible by the proximity of exemplars of feminine authority her aristocratic station provided, especially the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia. The networks of feminine power and authority within the court and convents consequently shaped Luisa’s representations and assertions of personal power and authority throughout her life and writings. In each assertion of her personal sovereignty she confronts expectations of gendered behavior while seeking to assert her autonomy in acceptable ways, namely by describing her pursuit of an active life and martyrdom as the will of God.

Luisa traveled to London with the goal of providing succor to English Catholics and becoming a martyr for God and Spain. In London she ministered to English Catholics, proselytized publicly in the streets to convert Protestants, and visited priests and other soon-to-be martyrs in prison. The longer she stayed in London, the more involved she became in the dangerous work of rescuing and transporting the bodies of the executed. Her letters describe in beautifully gruesome detail how she, her companions in her Society of the Sovereign Virgin Mary, and some servants unearthed, cleaned, and shipped the martyrs’ relics back to waiting devotees in Spain. Twice English authorities arrested her. In 1608, she was arrested for asserting the pope’s authority.⁶ Her second arrest came on 28 October 1613 on the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury on the charges of converting Protestants to the Catholic faith and establishing a convent in London. After three days in jail, she was released into the custody of the Spanish Ambassador to London, Diego de Sarmiento, who negotiated her release with King

⁶ She was held for three nights in the relatively nice conditions of the Counter Prison in which she negotiated (paid more) to stay near the jailer and his family.

James I.

Less than a month later, on 20 November 1613, in her last extant letter, Luisa wrote to the Duke of Lerma petitioning that he not remove her from London and thereby prevent her from achieving her crown of martyrdom. She complains about Sarmiento's intervention into her imprisonment writing that "Los bríos y valor de don Diego me han desbaratado una gloriosa corona que me parece llegué a ver desde muy cerca" 'The spirit and valor of Don Diego have spoiled for me a glorious crown that I believe I actually saw up close' (Rhodes *This Tight Embrace* 292-293). The crown as a significant symbol of sovereignty and the crown of martyrdom, or immortality, represents the tension Luisa negotiated between obedience and self-governance throughout her life and writings.⁷

This crown has a long history in religious writing. The Christian idea of the crown of immortality first appears in the Christian Bible in three places: 1 Corinthians 9:25, James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10.⁸ In each instance, the crown rewards a victor for enduring a trial. In their study of Christian and Jewish martyrdom in antiquity, *A Noble Death*, Arthur Droge and James Tabor observe that martyrdom is a mimetic event that seeks to recreate and reaffirm Jesus' willing death in obedience to God: "Behind every description of martyrdom lay the example of Jesus. Martyrdom was believed by many to be a necessary reenactment of his death and to hold out the prospect of a similar reward:

⁷Although she did not die in prison, her followers and petitioners for her beatification would argue that the illness she contracted in prison satisfied the requirements for a martyr's death.

⁸ "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a *corruptible crown*; but we an *incorruptible*." (1 Corinthians 9:24-25 KJV, my emphasis); "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive *the crown of life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12 KJV, my emphasis); "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee *a crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10 KJV, my emphasis).

‘the crown of immortality’” (156). Just as the martyr seeks *imitatio Christi*, the “crown of immortality” emulates Christ’s sovereign crown as the King of Heaven. In the act of martyrdom, then, the martyr (or “witness”) reenacts sovereign obedience to divine authority. Luisa’s ambition for “una gloriosa corona” of martyrdom combines a self-sacrificing ethic in imitation of Christ by rhetorically sublimation her will within God’s. Luisa’s desire for martyrdom symbolized by “una gloriosa corona” also draws on the rich history of feminine sovereignty afforded by virtuous obedience in biblical models, religious writings, and the hagiographic tradition.

The Hebrew Bible offers an earlier precedent of a crown bridging qualities of women’s sovereignty and the ethics of martyrdom. In the Book of Esther, the “disobedient” Queen Vashti rejects her husband, the Persian King Ahasuerus’ authority when he commands that she appear before him and his friends wearing her crown to display her beauty. King Ahasuerus punishes Vashti’s disobedience by divorcing her and replacing her with a new wife, Esther. The transfer of the queenly crown to Esther marks not only a transfer of sovereignty, but a reward for her obedience.⁹ Unlike Vashti, Esther proves herself obedient to King Ahasuerus, to God, and to the Jewish people. Queen Esther’s crown, therefore, like the martyr’s crown, denotes obedience and sovereignty simultaneously.

In medieval hagiographies, the crown becomes a reward for enduring worldly tests and temptations and a symbol of the agency sacrificial death afforded the martyr. For example, in the “Life of the Blessed Virgin Lucy” in Jacobus de Voraigne’s *Legenda aurea* [*The Golden Legend*], Lucy references the “crown of glory” as the heavenly

⁹ “And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal *crown* upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti” (KJV Esther 2:17, my emphasis).

reward she will receive for enduring a test to her chastity: “if thou make my body to be defouled without mine assent, and against my will, my chastity shall increase double to the merit of the crown of glory” (2:59). Throughout *Legenda aurea*, martyrs exemplify the triumph of heavenly authority over earthly rule while the “crown of martyrdom” marks the sovereignty of their triumphs. The martyr is freed from submitting to the rules human government enforces by remaining obedient to God and His divine authority. By being crowned with the glorious crown of martyrdom, the martyr dons a symbol of the earthly authority they rejected through their violent death at its hands. In this way, the martyr’s crown denotes the feebleness of human authority while simultaneously championing the power of human obedience to God’s sovereignty. And unlike earthly crowns that signal the divine investment of the wearer’s authority over their subjects, the martyr’s crown symbolizes personal sovereignty among a community of other worthy sovereigns.

Gender shaped the ethics of martyrdom and sacrificial aesthetics, as Elizabeth Castelli argues in *Martyrdom and Memory*. Although hagiographies since the early Christian era often represent women’s capacity to acquire “manliness” and be manly (*varonil*) in the act of martyrdom, the gender dynamics are not exactly clear-cut, with only traditional masculinity affirmed. “Within the interpretive framework of sacrifice,” Castelli writes, “martyrdom draws upon and generates ideals of ‘masculinity.’” Martyrdom figured as sacrifice, however, also generates a value-inverting understanding of victimhood as virtue. Hence, passivity and submission—quintessentially feminine values in the dominant culture—are elevated from their lowly status and given a privileged status by Christian theorists” (61). Therefore, in the discourse and

representations of martyrdom, absolute obedience and deference to divine authority were understood as a powerful, or “masculine,” mode of being. Although martyrdom was a glory both men and women could achieve, hagiographies especially praised women who proved their exceptional moral and physical strength by enduring trials to their virtue, providing a model of feminine sovereignty within courageous, sacrificial death.¹⁰

In Luisa’s time, Juan de la Cerda’s [*Libro intitulado vida política de todos los estados de mugeres* [*Book Entitled the Political Life of All Stations of Women*] (1599) provided ample evidence of the vehement promotion of obedience among women, religious women in particular. Reflected in the book’s title, de la Cerda advises women to live *politically* as well as virtuously. Throughout his book, he instructs all women in the virtues expected of their “estados,” whether they be *doncellas*, *casadas*, *viudas*, or *monjas*: “para vivir en el [su estado] con policia, buenas costumbres, y virtuosamente” ‘to live in it (their life station) with policy, good habits, and virtuously’ (my trans.). It is significant that de la Cerda chooses the phrase “vida política” to describe what performance of virtue he advises. The meaning of the word “política” in de la Cerda’s book describes things pertaining to politics or social governance, similar to Fray Luis’s use of the word *oficio* to refer to women’s social roles.¹¹ De la Cerda’s *Libro intitulado vida politica* is quite similar in many ways to Vives’s *De Institutione Feminae*

¹⁰ Santa Teresa de Ávila’s *Vida* demonstrates the allure of martyrdom for young girls and the desire to achieve glory through willing sacrifice. Recounting how she and her siblings desired martyrdom, Teresa writes: “parecime compravan muy barato el ir a gozar a Dios, y deseava yo mucho morir así, no por amor que yo entendiese tenerle, sino por gozar tan en breve de los grandes bienes que leía haver en el cielo...Concertavamos irnos a tierra de moros, pidiendo por amor de Dios, para que allá nos descabezasen. Y pareceme que nos dava el Señor ánimo en tan tierna edad” ‘me thought the martyrs got heaven verie good cheap, & I desired much to dy their death, not for the love of God, which I understood not, but to enjoy the sooner that great happiness, which I perceived was prepared in heaven...wee agreed to goe into the country of Mores, that we might be beheaded there, & our Lord seemed to geve us sufficient courage in that tender age’ (Teresa 98; Walpole A2r)

¹¹ “Lo que toca o pertenece a la Política” (Diccionario de Autoridades)

Christianae. Both texts promote chastity as the supreme feminine virtue, for example, and prioritize how women's virtue impacts society. De la Cerda's guide is unique in its devotion of a section to nuns and a section to women in general. Interestingly, the section "de las monjas" is the longest in the book, over one hundred and eighty pages in a book over six hundred pages long, which far surpasses the typical priority reserved for advising *doncellas* (eighty eight pages) and *casadas* (one hundred fifty pages). In doing so, de la Cerda implies women's religious lives are more politically charged than other *estados* ordered through their sexual relationships to men. This is further suggested by his dedication to "la Infanta Doña Margarita de Austria, Monja en el santo Monasterio de las Descalças de Madrid," both a royal woman and a nun.

The chapter "De las Monjas" is primarily addressed to *maestras*—prioresses—advising them on how they should govern their novices, but also advises novices on how they should behave in their chosen life with obedience. Like Santa Teresa's *El camino de perfección* [*The Way of Perfection*], which I will examine below, de la Cerda's *Libro* emphasizes hierarchy and obedience in the convent among the novices:

Entre las virtudes, no ay virtud mas segura para elegir, ni ay consejo mas sano para tomar, ni camino mas seguro para yr, ni escala mas derecha para subir a la bienaventurança, que es el merito de la obediencia: el privilegio de la qual es, que estando nosotros descuydados, negocia ella con Dios nuestros hechos...Si negamos nuestra voluntad, y nos damos a obedecer, estando solos y acompañados, tristes y alegres, hablando y callando, sanos y enfermos, y aun prósperos y abatidos: negocia con Dios la obediencia, y suple, si ay en nosotros alguna falta: porque no ay cosa que no sea meritoria a la hora que entreviene en ella la obediencia. (123r-123v)

Among the virtues, there is no virtue more certain to elect, nor is there advice more wholesome to take, nor path more certain to travel, nor ladder more straight to climb toward eternal bliss, than the merit of obedience: the privilege of which is, that we being careless, it [obedience] negotiates our works with God...If we reject our will, and we surrender ourselves to obedience, we are alone and together, sad and joyful, talkative and quiet, healthy and ill, and even prosperous and dejected: negotiate obedience

with God, and deliver, if there is some lack in us: because there is nothing that is not worthy when it involves obedience. (my trans.)

Interestingly, although de la Cerda is not himself a nun or religious, he advises his reader with the inclusive “we” to normalize his advice by incorporating himself into the community of those he is advising. De la Cerda also uses an interesting turn of phrase twice in this passage when referring to how the novice should perform the virtue of obedience: “negocia con Dios.” Hence, the virtue of obedience is framed as a negotiation of one’s will within the will of God. In the broader context of the *Libro*, de la Cerda implies that by negotiating her obedience with God, the novice can more fully perform obedience to the maestra. In her letters to Magdalena, Luisa will shift this paradigm by representing herself as fully compliant with the will of God, but in constant negotiation with the demands for her obedience expressed by the Infanta and Magdalena.

Additionally, de la Cerda advises nuns that the most effective way of negotiating obedience and the will is through mortification of the flesh. He offers examples of powerful rulers from the Bible, such as David and Samuel, prostrating and mortifying themselves before God, championing the power of complete submission and obedience as well as promoting the primacy of hierarchy in the lives of nuns. Like King David’s soldiers crying and prostrating themselves like David, he argues, nuns should act like soldiers following and obeying their heavenly king.¹² Significantly, he provides examples of virtuous biblical women, such as Judith and Esther, who achieved desired political outcomes through physical mortification:

¹² “quanto más por imitar a Christo, Rey de los cielos, y Capitan de la vida: es muy justo que nos mortifiquemos, negando a nuestros desordenados apetitos, las cosas de que gustan: y exercitando nuestra carne subjeta a pecado, en sufrir las penas que tiene bien merecidas?” ‘the more to imitate Christ, King of Heaven, and Life’s Captain: is it very right that we mortify ourselves, denying our messy appetites, things we enjoy: and exercising our flesh subject to sin, to suffer well deserved punishments?’ (my trans.; 223r)

La noble Judith, y toda la ciudad de Bethulia con ella, queriendo alcançar de Dios quien los amparasse y defendiesse y diesse victoria de sus enemigos, juntamente con la oracion ayunaron, y se vistieron de cilicios, y se cubrieron las cabeças con ceniza, y afligieron sus cuerpos: y ansi alcançaron lo que pedían. La Reyna Esther con las varones de Israel que estavan en la ciudad de Susan, para alcançar orando de Dios, que los librasse de la muerte injusta a que estavan condenados, lo que hizieron por orden de la sabia Esther, que alunbrada de Dios los exortó a ello, fue: que estuvieron tres días sin comer ni beber, y se acostaron en ciclicos, y afligiendo sus carnes clamaron a Dios: y con este medio alcançaron lo que pedian (224v)

The noble Judith, and the whole city of Bethulia with her, desiring to reach God to protect them, defend them, and grant them victory over their enemies, together with prayer, they fasted, and wore hair shirts, and covered their heads with ash, and flagellated their bodies: and in this way they achieved what they requested. Queen Esther along with the elders of Israel that were in the city of Susa, in order to reach God with prayer, to liberate them from the wrongful death to which they were condemned, they did on the wise Esther's order, that God's light prompted them to, was: they went three days without eating or drinking and lied down in ashes, and flagellating themselves cried out to God: and by these means they achieved what they asked for (my trans.)

In the examples of Judith and Esther, de la Cerda participates in the tradition common to advice literature of offering exemplary queens or female rulers as models of virtue. In this particular instance, Esther and Judith demonstrate the power afforded by self-mortification and submission to God's will. Through these holy, sovereign *exempla*, de la Cerda champions physical mortification as a means toward political goals and authorizes nuns to embrace their own physical and moral strength in the struggle to obey God. His promotion of physical suffering also leads to another conclusion: the act of martyrdom is the ultimate demonstration of compliance to God's will. In combining the ethics and aesthetics of martyrdom with examples of positive political outcomes wrought by physical mortification and self-sacrifice, de la Cerda paves the way for Catholic women activists such as Luisa to abandon a life of enclosure in the convent in search of a *vita activa* in which they will fight and die for God to effect political and religious change.

“The chiefest offices of friendship”: Advice and Religious Noblewomen’s Friendships

In early modern Europe, beliefs about friendship were influenced by classical sources, but were generally conceptualized as exclusively the domain of men. As mentioned above, Aristotle’s theory in *Nicomachean Ethics* that friends were other selves still greatly influenced early modern ideas about the nature of friendship as an intimate relationship between two men, so alike in nature and virtue that it could be said their souls inhabited each other’s bodies: “Perfect friendship is the friendship of good men and of men who are similar according to their virtue” (*Eth.*8.3.1156b7-9).¹³ Cicero did not believe women capable of friendship due to their physical and moral weakness. In *De Amicitia*, referring to other thinkers on friendship and friendship’s purpose, Cicero writes: “They affirm that friendships should be sought solely for the sake of the assistance they give, and not at all from the motives and feelings of affection; and that therefore just in proportion as a man’s power and means of support are lowest, he is most eager to gain friendships: thence it comes that weak women seek the support of friendship more than men” (13). In the only mention of women in the text, Cicero theorizes that weakness is what propels women toward friendship, although their friendships are substandard because they are based on weakness, not on individual strength, desire, or agency. Although Santa Teresa echoes Cicero’s sentiments in her concern for nuns’ weakness in friendship dynamics, Luisa’s letters provide readers with a clear refutation of this theory. Luisa frequently uses emotive rhetoric in her letters to friends, but she also relies on frank, forceful language to promote her ideals, defend her

¹³ For scholarship on Aristotelian theories of friendship, see Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (2003); and Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship* (1994).

decisions, and offer advice, as Cicero recommends. Cicero stressed that goodness was a mutual endeavor, dependent on open and honest guidance of a true friend, and the other's obedience:

Let this, then, be laid down as the first law of friendship, that we should ask from friends, and do for friends, only what is good. But do not let us wait to be asked either: let there be ever an eager and readiness, and an absence of hesitation. Let us have the courage to give advice with candour. In friendship, let the influence of friends who give good advice be paramount; and let this influence be used to enforce advice not only in plainspoken terms, but sometimes, if the case demands it, with sharpness; and when so used, let it be obeyed. (13)

Cicero's claim that the primary duty of true friends is to give one another "plainspoken" advice with "candor" and "sharpness" delimits the nature of true, virtuous friendship as a symbiotic relationship based around the giving and obedience to advice, as long as it is good. Moreover, his call for a specific type of language between true friends based on clarity, truth, and even potential injury prioritizes the role of advice in friendship above personal feeling and even the fate of the friendship itself. Luisa's letters to Magdalena advising the Infanta often follow the formula Cicero prescribes here. As I will discuss further in Luisa's letters grappling with Magdalena's demands for her to return to Spanish territory, Luisa responds to what we may assume is Magdalena's plainspoken candor with sharp self-justification and deflection of advice.

In *Education of a Christian Prince*, Erasmus elevated the stakes of friendship advice by orienting it toward the important business of cultivating of a Christian prince. The mirror for princes' second chapter, "The Prince Must Avoid Flatterers," is essentially Plutarch's essay "How to distinguish a friend from a flatterer," which Erasmus translated and dedicated to King Henry VIII of England and included in the text's first edition in 1516. The entire text is dedicated to Prince Charles, the Hapsburg prince and future Holy

Roman Emperor Charles V. Like Cicero, Plutarch advised friends to offer plainspoken advice based on candor that did not pander to the feelings of the recipient. Instead of merely serving as general advice to avoid false friends who only seek their own interests through obsequiousness, the stakes were raised to ensure the safety of the entire realm by protection from flatterers. According to Erasmus, flattery from a friend bred tyranny in a prince: “Nowhere do we read of a state oppressed by implacable tyranny without a flatterer playing a leading part in the tragedy” (54). In the case of a prince, it becomes crucial to distinguish a counselor from a friend, and a friend from a flatterer. A true friend could act as a prince’s counselor, but a true friend or counselor would never flatter. Erasmus stresses that the prince must “accustom his friends to the knowledge that they find favour by giving frank advice. It is indeed the job of those who keep the prince company to advise him opportunely, advantageously, and amicably” (65).

Women, however, were not included in Erasmus’s theory of proper friends and counselors for a Christian prince. Erasmus argues instead that women are especially suspicious because “their very sex tends to make them especially vulnerable to this evil [flattery]...this whole group should be kept away from the future prince as far as possible, since they have inherited more or less in their very nature the two great faults of foolishness and flattery” (55).¹⁴ Yet while Luisa writes both sentimentally and affectionately in her counsel to the Infanta Isabel (mediated through Magdalena), she never falls prey to what Erasmus calls “foolishness or flattery.” Instead, her letters guide the Infanta toward virtuous spiritual and political action by offering “frank advice” as Erasmus advises. Certainly Luisa’s letters serve as a strong refutation of Erasmus’s

¹⁴ As Lisa Jardine, editor of *The Education of a Christian Prince*, notes: “This is virtually all Erasmus has to say about women’s role in raising the future prince” (55, n.94).

claims about women acting as counselors for princes, especially when the prince in question is a woman.

In his essay, “Of Friendship,” Montaigne agrees with previous thinkers in claiming that women do not have access to true, virtuous friendship by blaming their mental and general insufficiencies (199). What Montaigne does provide that is useful in thinking about Luisa’s friendship dynamic with Magdalena and the Infanta is his assertion that “[a]dmonitions and corrections” are “the chiefest offices of friendship” (197). Like Cicero, Montaigne categorizes the duties of friendship as similar to the duties of a counselor to a prince. However, as Erasmus implies, the duties of a prince are not to obey advice offered as in the relationship between friends. Therefore, while friends may be bound in a mutually beneficial relationship of reciprocal advice and obedience, the prince, or even the prince-friend, is excluded from the obligation to obey. In this respect, the ability for true friendship to “possesse[] the soule, and swai[e] it in all soveraigntie” (205), seems to fall short in the cases of the Infanta, Magdalena, and Luisa. Both the Infanta and Luisa receive and communicate advice through Magdalena as an intermediary, but neither experiences the sovereign sway of friendship over her soul. Although both Luisa and Magdalena offer and receive the other’s frank advice, each remains sovereign rulers of their own souls, and their own destinies, eschewing the Ciceronian requirement to obey.

Luisa’s writings provide an important window into how early modern women cultivated “personal sovereignty” in relation to performances of authority modeled by royal religious women. The Spanish Hapsburg courts, replete with religious royal women who acted as advisors and sovereigns, provided important models for women’s religious

and political power.¹⁵ As Cruz argues, Luisa's letters provide "an ideal opportunity to comprehend how she both constitutes herself as a female subject and is constituted by the dominant cultural systems of Hapsburg Spain" ("Willing Desire" 178). I focus on how Luisa's letters advising the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia draw on the sovereign tropes common to advice literature and friendship, such as offering Queen Elizabeth as a contemporary negative *exemplum* and using she and the Infanta's shared upbringing in the royal convent as an affective and nostalgic space from which to offer advice.

In her search for influence in the world, Luisa became an important member of an interpretive community of transnational Catholic women that drew on models of holy feminine friendship.¹⁶ In the 1560s, Santa Teresa de Ávila composed *El camino de perfección* [*The Way of Perfection*], an advisory text layered with ethics of humility, obeisance, authority, and feminine friendship.¹⁷ Teresa composed *El Camino* with the permission of her confessor, Friar Domingo Báñez, as a guide for the members of her Discalced Carmelite order, specifically the nuns at San Jose's monastery in Ávila, instructing them in the contemplative life of enclosure. In the prologue, Teresa frames her text as an obedient response to her nuns' request, working in her well-known rhetorical

¹⁵ See Magdalena Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (1998).

¹⁶ Though Teresa died in 1582, she was a well-known member of the Spanish Catholic community whose works reached many countries, including England. For example, the English Jesuit and good friend of Luisa, Michael Walpole, was the first to translate Teresa's *Vida* into English, *The lyf of the mother Teresa of Iesus* (1611).

¹⁷ The Escorial manuscript was written between 1562 and 1566, the Valladolid manuscript is a re-copied and revised version of the original composed between 1566 and 1569, and the Toledo manuscript was published in Évora in 1583 aimed at the general public (Weber *Rhetoric* 78-79). Weber summarizes each manuscript's intended audiences: "The principal addressees of *E* are a group of intimate friends; those of *V* include the nuns in recently founded and projected reformed convents, and possibly more male readers; *T*, published posthumously, is addressed to the invisible public. It should be stressed that Teresa's basic strategy is unchanged—she continues to use a low-register, affiliative language as a means of accommodation to a dual audience" (Weber 80).

mode of extreme humility.¹⁸ This rhetorical mode complicates her implied advisory and authoritative stance as the writer. Alison Weber's scholarship on Teresa's "rhetoric of femininity" illuminates her strategic use of "low-register language" or "a woman's language" (specifically irony) in *El camino*, to alleviate a male audience's fear of women's homilizing and "appropriating the male apostolic privilege" while simultaneously serving as a "gesture of solidarity" toward her main audience, her subordinate sisters (*Rhetoric* 78). Weber defends Teresa's rhetoric against centuries of scholarship that regarded her style as emblematic of her gender. Rather, Weber argues, "Teresa consciously adopted as a rhetorical strategy, linguistic features that were associated with women, in the sense that women's discourse coincided with the realm of low-prestige, nonpublic discourse...Teresa's rhetoric for women was an ironic rhetoric, used, first of all, to gain access to her audience, and, secondly, to reinforce the bonds of a small interpretive community" (97). As with other advice literature, regardless of purpose, the text shapes its "interpretive community," but the community also responds with its own acts, seeking influence in the world.

The themes of friendship, power, and obedience are prominent throughout *El camino*. Through these lenses we can trace the impact of this kind of advice to religious women on Luisa's words and works. Although Teresa's reforms advocate for an enclosed, contemplative life for religious women, the idea that women must retreat from the world in order to be seen as powerful, in her opinion, is ridiculous. Teresa condemns men for their prejudice against women by arguing that since Christ loved women, men's suspicions of women's words and power are a sin against God:

¹⁸ For a detailed analysis of Teresa's rhetorical strategies in *El camino de perfección* and her other works, see Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (1990).

no hagamos cosa que valga nada por vos en público, ni osemos hablar algunas verdades que lloramos en secreto (f.12) sino que no nos habiades de oír petición tan justa. No lo creo yo, Señor, de vuestra bondad y justicia, que sois justo juez y no como los jueces del mundo que—como son hijos de Adán, y, en fin, todos varones—no hay virtud de mujer que no tengan por sospechosa. Sí, que algún día ha de haber, rey mío, que se conozcan todos. No hablo por mí, que ya tiene conocido el mundo mi ruindad y yo holgado que sea pública; sino porque veo los tiempos de manera que no es razón desechar ánimos virtuosos y fuertes, aunque sean de mujeres. (Aguado 34)¹⁹

we may not do anything worthwhile for You in public or dare speak some truths that we lament over in secret, without You also failing to hear so just a petition? I do not believe, Lord, that this could be true of Your goodness and justice, for You are a just judge and not like those of the world. Since the world's judges are sons of Adam and all of them men, there is no virtue in women that they do not hold suspect. Yes, indeed, the day will come, my King, when everyone else will be known for what he is. I do not speak for myself, because the world already knows my wickedness—and I have rejoiced that this wickedness is known publicly—but because I see that these are times in which it would be wrong to undervalue virtuous and strong souls, even though they are women. (Kavanaugh 50-51)

Voicing an opinion that English poet Aemilia Lanyer will later lyricize in her poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, Teresa declares that although Jesus loved women and incorporated them actively into discipleship,²⁰ “hijos de Adán” do nothing but find fault with women and “no hay virtud de mujer que no tengan por sospechosa.” Teresa diagnoses her culture’s ailment and seeks to remedy the negative perception of women by encouraging her nuns’ strength and virtue for God, noting that the times they live in are significant for the future of the Church.

Along with advice on attaining perfection through prayer, Teresa offers her nuns advice about how they should conduct relationships with one another while in the

¹⁹ Weber argues that Teresa most likely removed these lines from the Valladolid manuscript herself (82).

²⁰ Ni aborrecistes, señor de mi alma, cuando andábades por el mundo las mujeres, antes las favorecistes siempre con mucha piedad, y hallastes en éllas tanto amor y más fe que en los hombres” ‘Nor did You, when You walked in the world, despise women; rather, You always, with great compassion, helped them. And You found as much love and more faith in them than You did in men’ (Aguado 34; Kavanaugh 50).

convent. In her advice about virtuous friendship, Teresa warns her nuns not to use pet names for one another such as “my life,” or “my soul,” but rather to reserve those for the heavenly spouse, Christ. Although she cautions her nuns against using overly feminine behavior and language in their friendships, it is only to reiterate her fear that her nuns’ efficacy and power will be rendered futile if they use such affectionate language (Aguado 78-79). As Weber argues, Teresa’s assertions about the causative relationship between language and power are instructive for understanding the rhetorical modes she adopts in her writings to influence her readers. Likewise, the linguistic tension between obedience and authority is a crucial part of Luisa’s advancement of her own will in her letters.

Teresa stresses that her nuns must love one another equally, not isolate favorites to dote on, and practice detachment in their relationships with family and friends. For Teresa, detachment is virtuous because it asks the practitioner to abandon concern for the world and focus on God alone, surrendering her will and desires to God’s authority. In this way, detachment and humility are essential virtues for religious women desiring to achieve spiritual perfection. Abandoning earthly desires and relationships facilitates the cultivation of obedience through the negation of the will, allowing one to remain focused on fulfilling the will of God. Teresa advises her nuns to embrace humility and detachment, through which, she writes, they will achieve power to conquer any evil:

Gran remedio es para ésto traer muy contino cuidado de la vanidad que es todo y cuán presto se acaba...Aquí puede entrar la verdadera humildad, porque ésto y estotro paréceme que todo anda siempre juntas. Son dos hermanas que no hay para qué las apartar. No son éstos los deudos de que yo digo se aparten, sino que los abracen, y las amen y nunca se vean sin éllas. ¡Oh soberana virtudes, señoras de todo lo criado, emperadoras del mundo, libradoras de todos los lazos y enriedos que pone el demonio, tan amadas de nuestro enseñador que nunca un punto se vió sin ellas! Quien las tuviere bien puede salir y pelear con todo el infierno junto, y contra

todo el mundo y sus ocasiones, y contra la carne. No haya miedo de nadie, que suyo es el reino de los cielos. (Aguado 92-93)

A great aid to going against your will is to bear in mind continually how all is vanity and how quickly everything comes to an end...Here true humility can enter the picture because this virtue and the virtue of detachment it seems to me always go together. They are two inseparable sisters. There are not the relatives I advise you to withdraw from; rather, you should embrace them and love them and never be seen without them. O sovereign virtues, rulers over all creation, emperors of the world, deliverers from all snares and entanglements laid by the devil, virtues so loved by our teacher Christ who never for a moment was seen without them! Whoever has them can easily go out and fight with all hell together and against the whole world and all its occasions of sin. Such a person has no fear of anyone, for his is the kingdom of heaven. (Kavanaugh 76-77)

Teresa personifies the virtues of detachment and humility, representing them to her nuns as “dos hermanas que no hay para qué las apartar,” advising them to embrace them and rely on their strength.²¹ Her *prosopopoeia* of the two virtues becomes an extended apostrophe praising their sovereignty, not only over the other virtues, but also over all of creation. Humility and detachment ironically become rulers, empresses, and liberators. Returning to the sentiments of her critique of men for their treatment of women, Teresa argues that these “soberana virtudes,” like women, were fully embraced by Christ, whom they should strive to emulate. By feminizing humility and detachment through *prosopopoeia* while simultaneously associating them with power and sovereignty as well as with Christ who is a sovereign and liberator himself, Teresa redefines what may be considered passive virtues as powerful forces to defeat evil in the world.

Humility, detachment, and obedience were essential virtues for religious women who lived in a convent or in the world. And in either way of life, as Teresa describes, an active desire for martyrdom is the best demonstration of one’s relinquishing of their will

²¹ In Christine de Pizan’s *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* [*The Book of the City of Ladies*], three virtues, Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, are personified as ladies who instruct the author, Christine, about feminine virtue through exemplary historical women.

to God: “Paréceme a mí que quien de veras comienza a servir a Dios, lo menos que le puede ofrecer—después de dada la voluntad, es la vida nonada. Claro está que si es verdadero religioso, u verdadero orador y pretende gozar regalos de Dios, que no ha volver las espaldas a desear morir por él y pasar martirio” ‘It seems to me that whoever has truly begun to serve God, the least they can offer him—after the granting of our will, is our worthless life. It is clear that if one is a true religious or a true person of prayer and expects to enjoy God’s gifts, that they have not turned their backs on their desire to die for Him and suffer martyrdom’ (my trans.; Aguado 106).

In a clever display of the irony Weber identifies, Teresa teasingly chastises her nuns repeating the word “verdadero” to prompt the readers to defend themselves by agreeing with her that a true demonstration of obedience and service is offering God “la vida nonada” in martyrdom. As much as willing martyrdom is simultaneously an active and passive gesture of obedience to the will of God, Teresa advises that all one’s choices and actions must lack will. Writing with heavy ironic tones, Teresa writes:

No digo yo que quede por vosotras, sino que lo probéis todo; porque no está ésto en vuestro escoger sino en el del Señor. Mas si después de muchos años quiere a cada una para su oficio, gentil humildad será andar vosotras escoger. Dejad hacer al Señor de la casa: Sabio es, poderoso es, entiende lo que os conviene y lo que le conviene a él también (Aguado 150).

What I am saying is that this is not a matter of your choosing but of the Lord’s. If after many years He should give to each a certain task, it would be a nice kind of humility for you to want to choose for yourselves. Leave it up to the Lord of the house; He is wise, He is mighty, He understands what is suitable for you and what is suitable for Him as well (Kavanaugh 101)

Teresa’s counsel uses domestic patriarchal metaphors, representing God simultaneously as spouse and ruler of the home and divine ruler of the world. The tension Teresa weaves between the authoritative natures of humility, detachment, and obedience as sovereign

virtues that bestow inestimable power on the subject and the seemingly inverse valuation of these same virtues can also be found in Luisa's writings. Not only could humility, detachment, and obedience serve a woman living the contemplative life in a convent, but the strict adherence to these virtues while living an active life in the world could prove most beneficial. As Luisa would soon discover, performing humility and detachment and styling one's agency as obedience to the will of God often provided her a powerful defense against Magdalena's and the Infanta's demands. Certainly no one could, or should, argue against the will of God.

“Buenas Indias son Flandes para el espíritu”: Advising the Infanta

Recently, scholars have sought to redress the relative dearth of discourse about the reign of the Spanish Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia (1566-1633), who ruled with her husband and co-regent Albert VII, as sovereign of the Spanish Netherlands from 1599-1621. In 1555, Felipe II inherited the Low Countries from his father, Charles V, but was unable to establish peace in the region. In 1595 he named his nephew, Albert, the son of his sister the Empress María and the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, governor-general. In 1599, the Archduke Albert married Felipe's favorite daughter, Isabel, and they became co-sovereigns of the Netherlands. They would rule jointly until Albert's death in 1621 when Isabel became the sole ruler with the title Albert once possessed, “governor-general,” meaning her sovereign status was revoked and she and the Netherlands returned wholly to Spanish rule. Interestingly, Isabel was formally considered the regnant partner since she was granted the Netherlands as her marriage dowry. However, she shared her power with Albert in accordance with her marriage contract with Felipe II's desires that they be co-rulers (Sánchez “Sword and Wimple” 65). Magdalena Sánchez argues that

Isabel Clara Eugenia followed the path of other married female sovereigns, which meant leaving most issues of policy and government to her husband while she pursued other interests. Most notably, she promoted her identity as an intensely devout Catholic woman and Hapsburg ruler (“Sword and Wimple” 64).

In many ways representations of Luisa and Luisa’s self-representations emulate the identity and authority of a figure like Isabel Clara Eugenia. Luisa’s relationship with Isabel predated Isabel’s reign as Archduchess and co-sovereign of the Netherlands. They were raised together for four years (1572-1576) in the royal Franciscan convent, the Descalzas Reales, founded by Princess Juana of Portugal the Infanta’s aunt, and in the royal palace governed by Luisa’s great-aunt María Chacón.²² In her spiritual autobiography, Luisa describes her childhood living in Juana’s residence adjacent to the royal palace and playing in the cloisters with the Infantas, “haciendo harto ruido a las religiosas, entre las cuales yo tenía tías y otras deudas” ‘making plenty of noise for the nuns, among whom there were aunts and relatives of mine’ (Rhodes 52-53). Luisa’s privileged upbringing with the Infantas was not as coincidental as her autobiography at times implies, since she had familial ties to the royal palace and convent. Nevertheless, her years spent at the royal palace with the Infantas Isabel and Catalina influenced her formulations of virtuous self-rule. It was here that she learned to read and write alongside the Infantas:

Deprendía a leer y hacía alguna labor, pero muy poca, porque la mayor parte del día pasaba jugando con las Infantas a las muñecas o a las señoras. Y si mi aya me detenía, ellas venían por mí, sin embargo de

²² When Chacón died, Luisa was sent to live with her uncle, Don Francisco Hurtado de Mendoza, an abusive religious zealot. See Elizabeth Rhodes’s *This Tight Embrace* and her essay, “Luisa de Carvajal’s Counter-Reformation Journey to Selfhood,” for a sensitive analysis of Luisa’s childhood abuse suffered at the hands of her uncle, Don Francisco Hurtado de Mendoza, and her governess, Isabel de Ayllón.

aquella grandeza y autoridad con que las criaban...mi tía en persona me iba a buscar muchas veces, porque con menos diligencia, no había sacarme de sus manos; y algunas me escondían de manera que mi tía no me podía hallar. (Rhodes 56)

I learned to read and did some handwork, but very little, because the greatest part of the day I would spend playing dolls or dress-up with the Princesses. And if my governess detained me, they would come for me, in spite of that greatness and authority with which they were raised...my aunt came in person to get me many times because with less diligence there was no way to get me out of their hands. And sometimes they would hide me so my aunt couldn't find me. (Rhodes 57)

Luisa's description of her childhood with the Infantas represents their relationship as one aware of hierarchy even from an early age. In order to maintain the narrative of preternatural virtue required by the spiritual autobiographical genre, Luisa portrays the Infantas as the instigators of disobedient childhood games, noting their behavior was "sin embargo de aquella grandeza y autoridad con que las criaban." Luisa's description of their antics paints an emotionally rich picture of how much the Infantas loved Luisa, and lends significant sentimental weight to the established friendship Luisa draws on in her correspondence with the Infanta through Magdalena. Luisa would have also acquired feminine virtues belonging to the educated elite, including proper letter writing: "Isabel and her younger sister Catalina Micaela learned the art of letter writing at the Spanish court, practicing their handwriting with their ladies-in-waiting...Letter writing was an essential part of the education of young girls at court, and during her youth Isabel must have learned the art primarily in the queen's household" (Sánchez 204). Luisa's early education in feminine conduct and skills at the royal palace equipped her to correspond with her childhood playmate Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia once the latter was the co-regent of the Netherlands.

Luisa's letters to Rodrigo Calderón from London reveal how peripheral networks

influence politics at court. It is tempting to think of an advisor-ruler relationship as a one-to-one exchange of ideas, policies, and communication between two individuals, but in reality the advisor-ruler relationship is only one facet of a larger network of interlocutors and advisors advocating for their own causes and interests with the ruler. For example, the influence of Felipe III's infamous advisor and royal favorite, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, the Duke of Lerma, has been well documented by scholars, yet the Duke was merely one among many advisors to the king.²³ And indeed the Duke of Lerma had his own network of advisors as well. One of his trusted advisors was Rodrigo de Calderón, the husband of one of Luisa's cousins. After ending her correspondence with Magdalena, Luisa began a close correspondence with Rodrigo Calderón, and eventually wrote to the Duke of Lerma, revealing her continued interest in effecting Spanish politics. Luisa's correspondence with Calderón lasts from 1609 until right before her death in 1614, with the purpose of influencing the Duke of Lerma and through him, the political decisions of Felipe III. In her letters to Calderón, Luisa uses similarly persuasive strategies as with Magdalena, but is more combative and zealous in her advice to Calderón about how he should affect political policy to advance Spanish Catholic interests and serve the international Catholic community abroad. "Her avid support for the king and the Catholic cause might, of course, excuse her boldness," Elena Levy-Navarro writes, "but it also simultaneously underscores the zeal which authorizes her to speak so boldly on topics usually outside the domain of women...[her letters] also serve as 'performatives' or speech acts, which seal their mutual commitment to an imperialist religio-political

²³ Other well-known advisors to the king were his wife, Margaret of Austria, the Empress María (his aunt/grandmother), and her daughter Margaret of the Cross. For analysis of the influence of the Duke of Lerma and favoritism in the court of Phillip III, see Antonio Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598-1621* (2000).

agenda” (268). Cruz writes that communicating with the Infanta through women close to her was “probably due to her respect for hierarchy; yet ironically, Carvajal had no fear in writing often to several important male personages, including Rodrigo de Calderón...and to the Jesuit leader Joseph Creswell” (*Life and Writings* 51-52). Perhaps the reason why Luisa wrote to Calderón directly instead of writing directly to the Infanta was not based as much on gendered power, as on what Cruz identifies as respect for hierarchy and the realistic expectations of access.

Like Luisa, Isabel demonstrated an apt awareness of the privileges friendship could afford when advising in correspondence.²⁴ For example, Isabel wrote frequently to the Spanish court from 1599-1612, primarily to the Duke of Lerma.²⁵ While Isabel’s letters focused on personal matters, such as her relationship with her husband and family concerns, and contain ample moments of tender affection expressed between friends, “her letters were also part of a larger strategy (no doubt decided upon by Albert and herself) for gaining and maintaining the duke’s favour” (Sánchez “Memories and Affection” 217). Isabel wrote to Phillip III directly, but she could not address certain political matters with the candor and sharpness appropriate to conversations between friends, and thus established a friendship with Philip III’s closest confidant in order to effect political policy. Through frequent epistolary correspondence filled with sentiments and gestures of

²⁴ Isabel’s friendship with the Duke began to sour in part due to his relationship with Calderón, whom she did not trust. Sánchez writes that Isabel’s correspondence with the Marquess of Velada, who served as *mayordomo mayor* for Isabela and Phillip from 1587-1598, and was one of Lerma’s rivals at court, displays her distaste for Lerma in letter from 1612 onward (Sánchez “Memories and Affection” 219). Consequently, her expressed disapproval of the Duke and Calderón from 1612 onward gives us reason to doubt whether she ever approved of the Duke’s relationship with Philip III or was truly friends with the Duke at all (Sánchez 222).

²⁵ For the correspondence between Isabel Clara Eugenia and the Duke of Lerma see Isabel Clara Eugenia and Rodríguez Villa Antonio, *Correspondencia De La Infanta Archiduquesa Doña Isabel Clara Eugenia De Austria Con El Duque De Lerma Y Otros Personajes* (1906).

friendship to Felipe III's *privado*, Isabel devised a strategy to stay connected to the royal family in Spain and keep her and Albert's political interests on the king's mind (Sánchez 217).

Among women at court, "political power-brokering" was essential to fostering relationships among subjects and clients (Houben and Raeymaekers 25). Like men's, women's participation in political patronage worked within the typical patron-broker-client dynamic. However, their transactions and communication occurred more often within private spaces (Akkerman and Houben 5). As Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben explain, the patron "helped and protected clients, gave them material benefits, career opportunities and protection against the demands of others. Clientelism was the loyalty and service that a client owed to his or her patron in exchange for his or her protection and support" (4). When there was an intermediary, or a broker, the broker "was mediator in an indirect exchange...who influenced the quality of the exchange" (4). However, the broker's role was divided between acting as a patron and a client, because they were in fact both: "a patron for the client to whom he or she promised various favours and a client of the patron because he or she guaranteed the loyalty and service of those who desired such favours" (4). Guided by hierarchical propriety, and a savvy awareness of how political influence accrued, Luisa became the client of both Magdalena and Isabel, as she sought uncritical support of her secretly planned mission to London. Meanwhile, Luisa assigned Magdalena the role of "broker" to mediate Luisa's advice to the Infanta on political and spiritual matters of grave importance to the future of the Catholic faith and of Spain. In doing so, Luisa devised a strategy similar to the Infanta's

letters to the Duke of Lerma, which use the sentiments and rhetoric of friendship to achieve personal and political ends.

In her first extant letter to Magdalena, dated 16 March 1600 from Madrid, Luisa uses Queen Elizabeth, “ese monstruo de esa mujer,” as a model of feminine misrule to advise the Infanta to reject the possible peace treaty between England and Spain. She writes:

no quiero dejar de decir de vuestra merced lo que por acá se he empezado a divulgar públicamente: y es, que la reina de Inglaterra y nuestros reyes y príncipes (digo ésos de allá y éste de acá), hacen paces. Y cierto, señora, aunque por el estado en que están las cosas, sea tan conveniente, temo las raposerías y ardidés que ese monstruo de esa mujer suele tener, para solapadamente hacer guerra a Dios y a su Iglesia y a las almas de sus súbditos...y una de las que me parece que la veo ya pedir con instancia, como si la estuviese oyendo es, que echen nuestros reyes de sus Estados de Flandes y España a sus enemigos della, ‘los traidores y alevosos seminaristas que le arrevuelven el reino suyo y la quieren y desean matar’ (Carvajal *Epistolario* 100-101).

I must not forget to tell you what is being openly discussed over here, that the queen of England, and our kings and princes (I mean those over there, and the one here) are negotiating a treaty. Of course, my lady, given the state that things are in, this would seem a good thing, but I fear the cunning stratagems that that monster of a woman usually employs in order to make war covertly upon God and His Church and the souls of His subjects...One of the things I can see her insisting upon, as if I were hearing her now, is for our monarchs to expel, from their states in Flanders and Spain, her enemies, “the treacherous, malign seminarians who disrupt her realm, and who wish to try and kill her.” (Redworth 1.6)

Her criticism of the Anglo-Spanish treaty, which Luisa believes is a sneaky attempt by Elizabeth to further her war on Catholic Church and its followers, rests on Elizabeth’s well-known distrust of English Catholics at home and abroad. It is unclear who or what Luisa is quoting here, or if it is merely an imaginary snippet of Elizabeth’s speech, but her point is that Elizabeth is so bent on persecuting English Catholics her peace treaty would go so far as to require their expulsion from the Catholic lands where they have

found refuge. While Luisa's consistent hatred amply motivates her rhetoric here, it is notable that she follows a tradition in advice literature, including mirrors for princes, of offering vicious queens as negative *exemplum* to instruct virtuous rule. For example, in *The Education of a Christian Prince*, Erasmus suggests that, when applicable, the advisor-friend should offer the prince examples of tyrants and other morally corrupt rulers as negative examples of princely virtue: "Indeed the examples of the worst princes are sometimes more of an incentive to virtue than are those of the best or average rulers" (63). Luisa acts accordingly in offering Isabel the negative example of Elizabeth, while her candor acts in accordance with the Ciceronian edict, "Let us have the courage to give advice with candour." In contrast to Elizabeth, Luisa represents the Archdukes, especially Isabel (who, like Cervantes's Isabela in *La española inglesa*, becomes the virtuous mirror image to the wayward English Queen) as essential bastions against English Protestantism and protectors of the faith.

As her letter continues, Luisa's discussion of Anglo-Spanish politics is further directed at shaping Magdalena's political opinion and guiding her to influence the Infanta. Luisa declares the Archdukes Isabel and Albert and brother King Felipe III as the only viable "columnas" against Elizabeth, "ese monstruo de esa mujer," who seeks to corrupt all of Europe through her disobedient rejection of Catholicism and the Pope's authority. Luisa juxtaposes the Spanish Catholic rulers and the English Protestant Queen to drive a wedge between them and prevent positive comparison or compromise, the very thing the treaty seeks to achieve. Her rhetoric becomes coercive as she suggests that if Elizabeth proposed such terms in the treaty, surely the Spanish princes would reject it. She asserts her certainty by using declarative phrases about her and the princes'

knowledge (“Yo no puedo persuadirme” ‘I cannot believe,’ “tengo por cierto que” ‘I am certain that,’ “pues saben que” ‘since they know that’) and offers the Spanish rulers’ well-cultivated and well-known “valor y gran religión y celo” ‘valor and great faith and zeal’ as evidence of her confidence that they will avoid conceding to the treaty. These rhetorical strategies and the register of intimate advice allow Luisa to ground her argument in a conditional reality that allows for only one outcome: the rejection of the treaty and the safeguarding of the international Catholic community.

As Luisa concludes her letter, she returns to her impassioned argument that the Archdukes must reject the terms of the treaty discussed above, this time focusing on one prince in particular: the Infanta. She implores Magdalena to tell Isabel what an error it would be to trust Elizabeth:

Y en cuanto en vuestra merced fuere, advierta y diga a su Alteza, que no permita que se admitan condiciones de la de Inglaterra semejantes a lo que está dicho...Deberíase contentar esta mujer perversísima con la sangre que ha bebido de mártires y con la que bebe y podrá beber (si vive en su pertinacia) cada y cuando que cogiere en su reino algún sacerdote o religioso, o otro de estos sus enemigos los católicos, sin pasar tan adelante y querer mañosamente y con dorada hipocresía inducir a tales, y tan cristianísimos y religiosísimos príncipes como los nuestros a que vengan en cosa tan ajena dellos cuanto propia y muy natural de su malicia y miseria della. Y el mal es que, si se pone en ello, tendrá muchos ayudadores, y por ventura no faltarán hartos que lo aconsejen allá y acá al rey y a sus hermanos...Querría se considerase, sin mirar a que soy yo la que trato della y más las palabras con que se explica, que, dejando esto a una parte, todo lo demás es verdaderamente en todo extremo sustancial e importantísimo cuanto ser puede. (Carvajal 101-102)

As soon as you go, madam, and say to her highness not to give way to any conditions put forward by England of the type mentioned above...This most perverse woman ought to content herself with the blood of martyrs she has drunk, does drink and could still drink (if she persists in her obstinacy) each and every time she captures some priest or religious person or any other Catholic enemy, inside her kingdom. All the while she is careful not to go too far, and by subterfuge and gilded hypocrisy induces such Christian and religious princes as ours to agree to something that is as alien to them as it is proper and natural to her malice and wretchedness.

The bad thing is that, if she is bent on this, she will have many helpers, and it could well be that there will be no shortage of those who offer such counsel both here and there to the king and his siblings...I would like it to be taken into consideration, overlooking the fact that the discussion is mine, explained in my own words. Leaving that aside, all the rest really is absolutely fundamental and of the utmost importance. (Redworth 1.7-8)

In the letter's conclusion, Elizabeth, "esta mujer perversísima," becomes a lamia, half-woman, half-beast, feasting on the blood of Catholics, instead of the righteous blood of Christ. Luisa again positions Elizabeth as the antithesis to the virtuous Infanta and describes their disparities as the result of natural inclination; the vice of agreeing to the treaty is as ("ajena") alien to Isabel as it is natural to Elizabeth. Ultimately, Luisa uses this lesson in differences to advance her role as the Infanta's intimate advisor: she cautions Magdalena against heretical advisors and positions herself as a virtuous and trustworthy counselor. Finally, by telling Magdalena to ignore the fact that her letter expresses her own opinion, Luisa frames what she considers political truth in the more easily received language of friendly counsel.

Luisa moves from the rhetoric of friendly political counsel to appealing to she and the Infanta's shared childhood to offer spiritual advice. In a letter dated about six months later, on 1 September 1600, Luisa muses about Isabel Clara Eugenia's situation in the Netherlands, which she enthusiastically compares to a wilderness full of temptation and strife. Luisa articulates an ethic that she will come to preach throughout her letters to Magdalena: true virtue is cultivated and honed through spiritual struggle and one must place themselves in direct danger to be truly worthy of God's blessings. She writes:

Algunas veces me paro a considerar las trazas de Nuestro Señor y el modo con que ha su Divina Majestad ordenado las cosas de esta gran princesa y reina, desde niña; y cómo la ha traído y puesto entre ocasiones tan extrañas y diferentes de en las que se crió y, a mi parecer, mucho más dichosas. Porque si acá dio al mundo muestras de su gran ser y cordura,

allá, juntamente con éstas mismas, las da y puede dar de la magnanimidad de su ánimo, de la constante y fidelísima fe con su Dios y con su santa y católica Iglesia, y ser asombro y terror de la infidelidad y herejía. Y es cosa cierta que, en tales pechos y corazones, con las dificultades se aumenta el ánimo y valor. Y Dios le da y se le dará a sus Altezas invencible, y pondrá sus enemigos debajo de sus pies; pero querrá les cueste trabajo y cuidados mil, para hacerlos más gloriosos ante sus divinos ojos y del mundo todo...Son, en fin, ocasiones para hacerse verdaderamente santos; y tales que los puedan canonizar, y unos valerosos monarcas de la Iglesia; y como esto vale mucho, ha de costar mucho...y yo le prometo, que está acá todo más para irse a los yerros quien quisiere dar gusto a Dios, que para otra cosa. (Carvajal 103-104)

Sometimes I stop to consider Our Lord's designs and the way in which His Divine Majesty has ordered the affairs of our great princess and queen since she was a child, and how he has taken her there and placed her in a set of circumstances so strange to her and so different from those in which she grew up. In my opinion, these are much more fortunate—for if here she gave the world evidence of her great spirit and prudence, over there, these qualities combine to allow her to demonstrate her magnanimity of spirit, and constant, loyal faith in her God and the holy Catholic Church, and thus become the bane and terror of heresy and infidelity. It is certain that in such breasts and hearts, spirit and courage increase with the difficulties. God does give this invincible quality to their highnesses and always will. He will place their enemies beneath their feet, but He will also want this to cost endless cares and travails, in order to make them more glorious to His divine eyes and in the eyes of the whole world...In sum, these are the opportunities for them to become true saints, fit for canonization, and brave monarchs of the Church. As this is worth a great deal, it comes at a high price...I promise you that the situation here [in Spain] is such that, rather than anything else, whoever wants to please God must go into the wilderness. (Redworth 1.11-12)

The reader can sense the tones of deep compassion and fervor with which Luisa writes concerning the Infanta. Although Luisa never writes directly to Isabel, the recipient of her address is quite clear. By beginning her contemplation with reference to Isabel's childhood, Luisa provides Magdalena (and thence Isabel) with a powerful emotional anchor that depends on nostalgia and Luisa and Isabel's shared childhood experiences in the Royal Palace. Moreover, Luisa seeks to strengthen the resolve of the Infanta by tapping into the inestimable cultural value afforded martyrs and their sanctity. Luisa

champions the Archdukes' struggles in the Low Countries as opportunities for saintliness by reminding Magdalena that in order to become "verdaderamente santos," the archdukes must endure difficult trials. Luisa ends this bit of spiritual advice the way she began: by circuitously gesturing toward herself with "quien quisiere" 'whoever wants.' We see here the first early expressions in her letters of her desire to be spiritually and physically tested, a test she encourages the Archduchess to withstand with courage. In about five years Luisa's life would become similar to the Infanta's in her own struggle against religious persecution in "los yermos" of London and her founding of her quasi-convent, the Society of the Sovereign Virgin Mary.

Because she advises the Infanta through Magdalena, Luisa often integrates Magdalena into her cause to support the political interests of exiled English Catholics and forcefully reminds Magdalena that her privileged position at Isabel's court entails advocating on Luisa's behalf. In a letter dated 26 October 1600 written from Valladolid, Luisa casually asks Magdalena: "si se siente con ánimo de dar consigo en Inglaterra cuando menos nos catemos, que tiene vuestra merced muy buenos bríos y aceros para dar sobre la mísera reina y sus ministerios" 'whether you feel inspired to head for England when we least expect it. You have the steel and strength, madam, to overcome that wretched queen and her ministers' (Carvajal 106; Redworth 1.16). Reading backwards from Luisa's later course of action which entails doing exactly what she suggests Magdalena may "se siente con ánimo" to do ("dar consigo en Inglaterra cuando menos nos catemos"), we may assume that this expresses Luisa's own hopes rather than Magdalena's at this time. As in her reference to English Catholics in her March 1600 letter, Luisa again presses Magdalena to plead the cases of the English Catholics and

seminarians in danger of persecution by Elizabeth to the Archdukes Albert and Isabel, this time positioning her friend as a lobbyist for her cause, and that of the English Catholics and seminarians: “Muy cierta estoy de que ayudará vuestra merced cuanto pudiere y hará cualquier buen oficio con sus Altezas en favor de los católicos ingleses y seminarios” ‘I am sure that you will help as much as you are able to in lobbying their highness on behalf of the English Catholics and seminarians’ (Carvajal 106; Redworth 1.16). Significantly, Luisa also reveals her wish, and the wish of the broader Catholic community in the region, that Isabel become queen of England after Elizabeth’s death: “Y si aquella mujer acabase sus días anubladísimos, bien se puede esperar que querría la divina Majestad hacer a Inglaterra tanto favor y bien como será darles por señores y reyes a sus Altezas” ‘If the dark days of that woman were to draw to a close, we can easily expect that His Divine Majesty would wish to grant England such favor and bounty as to give them their highnesses as their lords and monarchs’ (Carvajal 107; Redworth 1.18). Although neither Isabel nor Albert expressed outward interest in becoming monarchs of England, exiled English Catholics as well as some English, Spanish, Italian, and Flemish diplomats eagerly championed Isabel as Elizabeth’s successor.²⁶

Luisa’s advice to the Infanta also incorporates martyrdom ethics to bolster Isabel’s political and spiritual strength and remind her that she is doing God’s will as a Spanish ruler. In a letter from Valladolid dated 24 August 1602, Luisa writes to

²⁶ For example, in 1595 the English Jesuit Robert Persons published *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of England* in Antwerp under the name “R. Doleman.” In it he argues that the Infanta had more of a claim to the throne than James VI because her lineage could be traced to “Philippa, the eldest child of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster and his first wife Blanche,” but James’s only claim to the Lancastrian line was through Catherine Swynford’s bastard offspring (Doran 29). For more information on Isabel Clara Eugenia’s proposed succession of the English throne, and the involvement of Robert Cecil, see: Pauline Croft, “Brussels and London: the Archdukes, Robert Cecil and James I” in *Albert & Isabella 1598-1621* (1998), pp. 79-86.

Magdalena and the Infanta praising their opportunities for spiritual advancement in Flanders as a result of the push for conformity to Catholicism in the Dutch territories under their reign.²⁷ As with other letters, Luisa describes the Spanish women's political and religious struggles as beneficial for cultivating holiness, confessing her envy for Magdalena's lucky position in Isabel's court:

Y lo fino es, que sean de tal calidad, que parece obligan a las personas sean santas, y que anden tan dependientes y colgadas de la voluntad de Dios como vuestra merced muestra, confesando que, después que está ahí, se halla con grandes acrecentamientos en esa parte; y según esto, buenas Indias son Flandes para el espíritu. Dése vuestra merced prisa a amontonar merecimientos, y traiga vuestra merced a la memoria de su Alteza muchas veces la gran ocasión en que está de lo mesmo, para que no se le vaya ni una pequeña parte de las manos...Y es cierto que pienso que, por querer Dios bien a su Alteza, la ha querido sacar de mantillas,²⁸ y ponerla a do pueda ser de raro ejemplo a todos, cosa de que tan necesitado está el mundo. (Carvajal 120)

The beauty of it lies in the fact that these opportunities are of such quality that it seems they force people to become holy, and act according to, and hanging upon, God's will, as your honour demonstrates. You confess that since you arrived there you have found yourself to have grown so much in this regard and that, therefore, Flanders is like a great Indies for the spirit. May you quickly gain credit at court, madam, and remind her highness often of the great opportunity she likewise has, so that not even the smallest part of it can slip through her hands...Indeed I think that because God loves her highness so much, He no longer wants to keep her hidden away but place her where she can become a rare example to all, something the world needs so much. (Redworth 1.41)

Luisa here seems to quote a previous letter from Magdalena, and by referring to Flanders as "buenas Indias...para el espíritu," Magdalena may mean two possible things simultaneously. She seems to rehearse familiar Spanish colonialist ideology that framed the native inhabitants of "los yermos" of the Americas as fortunate recipients of divine

²⁷ Most pressingy Isabel and Albert were confronting public military failures during the Siege of Ostend, which began in 1601 and would not conclude until 1604 with Spain's victory over the Dutch and massive casualties on both sides.

²⁸ Literally, "to remove her swaddling clothes"

salvation. She also may imply that like the “Indias” contained countless riches awaiting excavation, so too does Flanders offer spiritual riches for those “que anden tan dependientes y colgadas de la voluntad de Dios.” Consequently, Magdalena and the Infanta are figured as virtuous missionaries, and potential saints, enduring a worthy battle to save the souls of the Dutch while refining their own virtues by conforming to “la voluntad de Dios.” Luisa’s mixed sentiments of envy and praise recall those in her letter from September 1600 in which she claims that “irse a los yermos quien quisiere dar gusto a Dios.” She not only expresses her desire to leave Spain to please God in the dangerous wilderness of London, but also takes the opportunity to encourage Magdalena and the Infanta in the great spiritual work that many Spaniards believed necessary for the advancement of the Spanish Catholic mission. When Luisa tells Magdalena to remind Isabel of her opportunities for spiritual perfection, it is also a call to action, demanding that the Infanta not waste the opportunities God is providing in the guise of religious and political unrest. When Luisa flatteringly describes Isabel Clara Eugenia as a “raro ejemplo a todos,” she forcefully ushers Isabel Clara Eugenia into the role of a virtuous exemplar of obedience to God’s divine authority, a role Luisa herself wished to match in her mission to London.

A remarkably different tone and a varied set of advice tactics characterize Luisa’s letter dated 4 May 1603 in which she more directly addresses political and spiritual advice to the Archdukes, specifically advising Isabel in spiritual strength through images of martyrdom.²⁹ Luisa departs from previous letters concerning Anglo-Spanish-Dutch

²⁹ In this letter Luisa also celebrates the recent death of Queen Elizabeth, which she contrasts with the death of Empress María of Austria, who died about a month earlier. Although cruel in sentiment, her final comment on the two sovereigns’ differing heavenly judgments is somewhat amusing: “Acá se había dicho, algunos días ha, la muerte de la reina de Inglaterra y elección del de Escocia...¡Qué poco que le habrá

politics in that her advice reads as target to the Infanta directly from an intimate friend, who writes in supportive, inclusive language. Luisa encourages the Infanta to remain strong in her struggle, offers spiritual comfort, and steels her for tests that lie ahead:

Y ya sabe vuestra merced y lo habrá oído muchas veces, que es uso de su divina Majestad probar hasta el postrer punto a aquellos a quien quiere hacer muy suyos y llegarlos muy a sí...Y cierto, señora, que si Su Alteza, la serenísima infanta, se sabe dar buena maña a corresponder a Nuestro Señor, que se haga una reina santa, que la puedan canonizar, como a otras gloriosísimas que ha habido...Y yéndose gobernando una persona en todo cuanto se le ofrece lo mejor que sabe y con los más cristianos y prudentes medios y modos de proceder que le es posible, acudiendo para ello a la oración y sacramentos, ¿qué hay que temer? Y si los temores nos cercaran, hacer los oídos a sus bramidos y los ojos a su fiero aspecto, y acostumbrar el corazón a que no los tema, con el desmayo y flaqueza que los pueden temer los que no tienen a Dios ni confían en El...Y, volviendo a lo primero, para acabarlo digo; que, como ya se sabe, nunca la Iglesia floreció más en santidad y grandeza que cuando fue en sus principios afligida y se hallaba metida entre millares de enemigos; y en nuestros tiempos, en las provincias a do más estrechada y perseguida está, allí hay, por la mayor parte, mayores santos y almas más fieles a Dios y que guardan más perfectamente su santa ley. Y adonde hay mucha paz y más descanso, es cierto no faltar luego descuido y amor propio muy en su punto, y olvido de Nuestro Señor y relación grandísima en su amor; enemigos más cueles y ponzoñosos que los del tiempo de la adversidad. (Carvajal 133-135)

You know already, madam, and will have heard many times how it is His Divine Majesty's habit to test to breaking point those He wishes to bring close and make His own...Indeed, my lady, if her most highness the most serene *infanta* can rise to the demands of Our Lord, she may become a holy queen and they might canonise her, as they have done other glorious queens throughout history...And if one conducts oneself in all circumstances as best one can according to the most Christian and prudent

parecido, señora, a aquella mísera mujer el tiempo de su reinado y de su prosperidad, y qué de años le parecerá que dura su tormento! Infelicísima alma, por cierto, fue la suya, como lo será para siempre jamás. Y estupendo juicio, y muy particular, debió de ser el suyo ante el divino tribunal: y pienso que lo fue sobre todos los que de su sexo ha habido muchos años ha...Ya habrá vuestra merced sabido cómo la Emperatriz nuestra señora murió casi cuando la reina de Inglaterra. Bien diferentes juicios debieron ser los suyos y bien contrarias suertes los harán ahora” ‘Here, the death of the queen of England was announced a few days ago, together with the choice of the king of Scotland...How short the span of her reign and her prosperity will have seemed to that wretched woman, madam, and how many years her torments will seem to last! Hers was a most unhappy soul—as indeed it will now be forever. And her judgment before the divine tribunal must have been singularly terrible and worse, I imagine, than any given to others of her sex for many years now...You will already have heard news of how our lady the empress died almost at the same time as the queen of England, madam. Very different judgments must have been passed upon them, and they will be enjoying very different fates now’ (Carvajal 131-133; Redworth 61-63).

ways and means possible, having recourse to prayer and the sacraments, what is there to fear? And if our fears surround us, we must listen to their roars, gaze upon their ferocious looks and accustom our hearts not to be afraid of them, unlike the faint and the weak, who do not have God or trust in Him, and so may fear them...And to return to the first point, in order to finish it, I mean that, as is already known, the Church never flourished with so much holiness and greatness as when at the beginning it was afflicted and it found itself surrounded by thousands of enemies. In our own times, in those parts of the world where it is most cornered and persecuted, one will be more likely to find there greater saints and souls more faithful to God, keeping His holy law more perfectly. In fact, where there is great peace and even greater tranquility, carelessness and self-love will certainly flourish to a high degree, with Our Lord forgotten and love for Him greatly neglected—these being enemies more cruel and poisonous than those faced in times of adversity. (Redworth 1.65-67)

Luisa's tone and rhetorical strategies adhere closely to the discourse of plainspoken, but affectionate counsel among friends recommended by classical and early modern thinkers. Though Luisa does not abandon the rhetoric of humility and detachment with her friends as advised by Santa Teresa (which she will later adopt in her tense letters to Magdalena), she nevertheless adheres to Teresa's sentiment that self-sacrifice is essential to performing God's will. Most notably, Luisa uses the conditional tense to push Isabel toward virtuous action, furthering her point from previous correspondence that Isabel must respond accordingly to the opportunities God provides to prove her spiritual worth as ruler of a Spanish Catholic territory and achieve, like other virtuous queens, canonization. At present, Luisa argues, Isabel has not yet reached the level of spiritual perfection required of her: "*si* Su Alteza, la serenísima infanta, se sabe dar buena maña a corresponder a Nuestro Señor, que se haga una reina santa, que la *puedan canonizar*, como a otras gloriosísimas que ha habido" (my emphasis). By using the conditional tense, Luisa forcefully implies that the Infanta has not yet fully risen to the occasion and she should put in more effort.

After prompting the Infanta to action by reminding her that her work is not to the level expected of virtuous Catholic queens and emphasizing the reward of canonization, Luisa switches to a different rhetorical mode that both maintains the familiarity of friends offering frank advice, yet incorporates the formality and authority of homiletic rhetoric. Her words initially adopt a didactic tone exemplified by her use of a rhetorical question (rare in her writings), but then promptly switch to a register of solidarity as she advises Isabel with the inclusive “we”: “Y si los temores nos cercaran, hacer los oídos a sus bramidos y los ojos a su fiero aspecto, y acostumar el corazón a que no los tema.” Her familiar expression of solidarity throughout the passage is strikingly severe in its fervent focus on images, sentiments, aesthetics, and desires for martyrdom. In this letter, Luisa transforms mundane fears into fierce, roaring animals in the gladiatorial ring surrounding and threatening would-be martyrs with dismemberment. As Luisa advises the Infanta, the wild beasts of persecution are the pathways to the crown of immortality for those willing to sacrifice themselves for God. Voicing a sentiment she will frequently express throughout her letters to various recipients, Luisa likens the struggles the Church is undergoing in the early seventeenth century against rampant Protestantism to the struggles endured by early Christians in the formative years of the Church. As in her advice to Magdalena and the Infanta that provides opportunities for virtuous action, she argues that the struggles the Church faces, now as in the beginning, are more conducive to creating worthy “witnesses” to God’s glory. In doing so, Luisa represents the Infanta as a metaphor for the Catholic Church in her historical moment: “nunca la Iglesia floreció más en santidad y grandeza que cuando fue en sus principios afligida y se hallaba metida entre millares de enemigos.” In closing, Luisa steels Isabela against her struggles,

reassuring her that times of peace allows the flourishing of *amor proprio*, the scourge of spiritual advancement and the enemy of obedient submission to divine authority. If she can rise to the occasion, Luisa advises, Isabel will become the successful bastion of the holy faith she is destined to be.

After Luisa arrived in London, her letters directing advice to the Infanta gradually ceased as she became involved with the English Catholic community and her mission in England. In her first extant letter from London, dated 14 December 1605, Luisa writes to Magdalena expressing remorse for not being able to go to Flanders on her way to London. Based on Luisa's defenses of her voyage in later letters, we can guess that Magdalena's letters may have offered firm invitations that Luisa come to the Infanta's court on her way to London, perhaps with the intention that she never reach her destination. Redworth notes that in order to protect the success of her mission, Luisa "pointedly refused to contact either the Infanta or Doña Juana Jacincurt," Isabel's *camarera mayor* (105).³⁰ Nevertheless, Luisa closes her letter with the hope that Isabel will still accept her presence at court in the future, praising the Infanta's "real ánimo": "De Su Alteza creo yo muy bien cuanto fuere de piedad...sé que no me faltaría su real ánimo en cualquier ocasión que llegase a sus pies. Quiérola entrañablemente, cierto, y me vencí harto en no verla; y a la señora doña Juana" "I readily believe any level of piety from her highness...I know that her royal spirit will not fail me whenever I throw myself at her feet. Indeed, I love her most dearly and it was a great effort of will not to see her or

³⁰ Jeanne de Chassinourt ("Juana de Jacincurt") was Isabel Clara Eugenia's first *camarera mayor*, or "first lady of the bedchamber." She used to be a lady-in-waiting of Isabel de Valois, Isabel's mother, accompanying her from France to the Spanish court in 1559 to marry King Phillip II. In 1580, Jeanne went to live with the Infantas Isabel and Catalina Micaela and in 1589 Phillip II promoted her to *camarera mayor* of Isabel's household in Brussels (Houben and Raeymaekers 126-127).

my lady Doña Juana' (Carvajal 150; Redworth 1.106). Luisa would never see her childhood friend again, but perhaps maintained a true hope that she would. I close this study of Luisa's letters advising Isabel Clara Eugenia with a few lines from Luisa's letter to Magdalena from London in 1606 that beautifully capture a moment of nostalgic sentiment for the Infanta: "A Su Alteza vi el otro día en una calle, retratada; que no sabría decir lo que me alegré, y estuve un rato mirándola junto a la tienda. Guárdela Dios, amén, como es menester" 'I saw a likeness of her highness the other day in a street, and I cannot tell you how happy I was, and I stood for a while next to the shop looking at her. May God preserve her as is necessary' (Carvajal 179; Redworth 1.171).

"Con llaneza, como se usa entre amigas": Negotiating Obedience with Magdalena

In her letters to Magdalena from Spain, Luisa offers a plentitude of spiritual and political advice to Isabel Clara Eugenia. Once she arrives in London, however, her mode of correspondence with Magdalena changes. From 1605 until 1608, much of her energy is devoted to defending herself against Magdalena's criticism and demands that she return to Spanish territory. While Luisa has garnered much well deserved scholarly interest in the last two decades, Magdalena is a fascinating figure in her own right, especially in the context of early modern women's lives and power. Magdalena was a devoutly religious woman with an expressed interest in governing women. In the 1590s she founded the Casa Pía de la Aprobación in Valladolid to reform prostitutes (whether they were admitted independently or by someone else) and eventually place them in convents. In 1608, after Luisa and Magdalena ended their correspondence, Magdalena composed a small but influential book about the need for and design of women's prisons, entitled *Razón y Forma de la Galera y casa Real*. In her dedication of *Razón y Forma* to

Felipe III, Magdalena declares that the severity of the women's prison is all the more significant because it is "inventada por muger, contra mugeres" 'invented by a woman, against women' (my trans.; 6). Her tone throughout the text is harsh and unforgiving of women's moral failings, including the ruin of men and the spread of cohabitation, which, she argues affect all of society (42-44). Although she denies calling for cruelty in dealing with fallen women, she advocates it all the same: "Yo absolutamente no quiero el rigor; pero supuesta la herida, es menester cura que duela" 'I absolutely do not want cruelty; but in the case of a wound, a painful cure is necessary' (my trans.; 53).³¹ Since none of Magdalena's letters to Luisa survive, we can only guess at their content based on the latter's replies and what we know about Magdalena. Perhaps unsurprisingly, drawn from Luisa's frequently defensive rhetorical posture, Magdalena's legacy is one of influence and control of women's conduct.

Luisa and Magdalena's social status was similar in that they were both unmarried religious women who were not affiliated with a convent. Luisa's decision neither to marry nor enter a convent was made possible by her privilege and her manipulation of the aristocratic system of inheritance. Her father's will provided her with a generous dowry to be used for entrance into a convent or for her marriage, but it also stipulated that the dowry be determined by whether or not she entered a convent—2,000 ducats if she took the habit or 20,000 if she married. Prudently and ingeniously, Luisa argued that if she decided not to join a convent, she should be owed the sum promised if she married, thus securing the 20,000 ducats for herself (Cruz *The Life and Writings* 14). Luisa's brother,

³¹ The word *rigor* has punitive implications in both the physical and legal senses, which is instructive about how the two were intertwined in the discourse of behavioral reform. The *Diccionario de Autoridades*, defines *rigor* as "la crueldad o exceso en el castigo, pena o reprehensión."

Alonso de Carvajal, challenged this settlement. The resultant court battle kept her in Spain until 1605, when she secured the sum she was owed. Her pursuit of her inheritance and her rationale serve as reminders that religious women's motivations to enter the convent or seek spiritual perfection outside of it could be motivated by varying, and often quite practical, factors.

Living outside the convent as a woman religious designated Luisa, like Magdalena, as a *beata*.³² Typically, Alison Weber explains, *beatas* were women who take vows of poverty and chastity and continue to live active spiritual lives in their own homes or lives of enclosure in *beaterios* with other women. What is unusual about Luisa and Magdalena's circumstances is that *beatas* were usually poor or lower-class women who contributed to their communities by "[providing] important charitable services by collecting and distributing alms to the destitute" ("Locating holiness" 61). As laywomen, *beatas* were under pressure from their peers and social superiors to join cloistered orders as part of the *Circa pastoralis* edict of 1566 which mandated enclosure for nuns (61-66). The *beatas'* pursuit of economic compensation for spiritual services, which brought them into the private spaces of social superiors, also drew scrutiny from Church officials and others (62-63).³³ This suggests that the dynamic between Magdalena and Luisa was structured hierarchically as much as any other spiritual or political relationship at this time. Although the content of Luisa's letters suggest that they were certainly close friends, Magdalena's position in the Infanta's court in Brussels no doubt endowed her with a superior rank to Luisa who, during their years of correspondence, was living as a

³² No documentation exists that Magdalena was a professed nun or part of any formal religious order (Cruz *The Life and Writings* 50).

³³ We should not conclude that their only motivations were economic, Weber cautions, since "they were imitating received models of holiness predicated on charity, self-denial, and voluntary suffering" (65)

beata in Spain awaiting the resolution of her dowry suit and then in Protestant London away from the enclosure Magdalena enjoyed at Isabel's strictly religious court.

When Luisa was still on Spanish soil, Magdalena seemed to accept and communicate Luisa's advice to Isabel. But once Luisa moved to London and began a spiritual and political journey of her own, Magdalena's focus seems to have turned to criticizing Luisa, which prompted Luisa to defend her mission to achieve "una gloriosa corona." Instead of continuing to offer advice to Isabel through Magdalena, Luisa's focus in her London letters is on her daily life, political and religious struggles, her faith, going on in the recusant Catholic community in London and abroad, and defending her decision to stay. Based on Luisa's increasingly frequent explanations of and justifications for her *vita activa* in London, we can assume Luisa's life there must have concerned her friend greatly. Toward the final years of their correspondence, Luisa's tone displays annoyance with Magdalena for not writing enough or more promptly, while Luisa offers extensive defenses of her choices, citing God's will. Distinctively, Luisa begins to craft a narrative of independence and self-rule protected by the sovereign authority of God. Luisa's attitude draws on rhetoric generally used to characterize the sovereign disposition of all rulers, who rule by the divine authority of God. By arguing that her actions in London perform obedience to God's will, Luisa's personal sovereignty resonates with the status of all earthly rulers.

Luisa's journey to London in 1605 was a momentous step in her cultivation of personal sovereignty, and years previously her secretive preparations for her trip sewed the seeds of her independence. In a letter from Valladolid dated 16 November 1603, Luisa writes excitedly to Magdalena about how now that her humours have improved,

she is feeling well enough to embark on her planned journey. Though Luisa never offers concrete details about her plans, which were kept closely guarded until she departed in 1605, she carefully articulates three things to ensure Magdalena's cooperation and support. First, she states that her journey is part of God's plan for her: "Háse encomendado harto a Nuestro Señor y parece que, con evidencia, se ve ser su santísima voluntad ésta" 'It has been commended to Our Lord, and it seems that on this evidence one can see this to be His most holy will' (Carvajal 138; Redworth 1.74). This anticipates any objection to her plans by disclosing the command of an irrefutable authority. Second, she asks Magdalena to destroy the letter, but does so in a way that places Magdalena in an authoritative role above Luisa: "Esta carta se queme luego suplico a vuestra merced, a quien en confesión y sumo secreto fío este negocio, que está escondido en mi corazón, y no me conviene lo sepa criatura viviente hasta estar allá; y así, mi partida ha de ser muy encubierta" 'I beg you to burn this letter, immediately, madam, as I entrust this information to you with the utmost secrecy to the confessional. It is hidden deep within my heart, and I do not want a living creature to know anything of it until I arrive, so my departure must be kept very secret' (Carvajal 138; Redworth 1.74). By phrasing her request as though she were confessing, Luisa makes Magdalena her confessor, soothing Magdalena's ego, emphasizing the hierarchy between them, and ensuring Magdalena's responsibility to keep her secret. She also appeals to their friendship by entrusting her secret to Magdalena in the vulnerable medium of a letter that could be read by anyone.

Luisa also obliquely invokes their shared identities as women who have resisted marriage and led independent religious lives in the world as *beatas* by stating "cada día tantas mujeres, con menos fuerzas que yo o pocas más, siguiendo a sus maridos, padres o

amos, cuya providencia es tan flaca y incierta” ‘Every day so many women with less strength than I, or only a little more, do this and more to follow mortal and perishable creatures such as their husbands, fathers or masters, whose providence is so weak and uncertain’ (Carvajal 138; Redworth 1.75). Here Luisa indirectly refers to the potential of mortal danger in her journey, but couches it through the logical reasoning that if women follow their husbands or fathers into uncertain danger, what does she have to fear in following God? By contrasting God with an earthly husband, father, or master Luisa subsumes her will under God’s own, protecting herself from criticism. In her brusque conclusion, Luisa returns to invoking her own agency and her need for Magdalena’s complete support: “En fin, señora, mi resolución es grande. No me falta sino que vuestra merced quiera ayudarme e ejecutarla para mayor gloria de Nuestro Señor” ‘Anyway, my lady, my resolution is firm. All that I now need is for you, madam, to decide to help me carry it out to the greater glory of Our Lord’ (Carvajal 138; Redworth 1.75). When Luisa finally arrived in London two years later, she has already begun the work of guarding herself against criticisms of her residence and activities there.

In her first extant letter from London, dated 14 December 1605—a little over a month after the Gunpowder Plot’s execution—Luisa writes to Magdalena, perhaps in response to Magdalena’s letters of concern for her health and new situation. Summarizing her commitment to her decision, Luisa excuses herself for not going to Flanders instead, as Magdalena no doubt desired:

Y en cuanto a mí, señora, digo que el designo que me sacó de España principalmente, me metió en esta selva espesa de fieras; y, hasta haber satisfecho a lo que aquello pide, no hallo camino para la vuelta. Procuro ir abreviando cuanto puedo por las turbulencias del tiempo; y si Nuestro Señor se sirve de que yo salga de aquí, ahí iré derecha; y quiero tener tomada a vuestra merced la palabra que me da en su carta de amistad y

merced, y de que hallaré abiertas sus puertas. (Carvajal 150)

As for me, my lady, I can tell you that the plan that first and foremost took me out of Spain also placed me in this dense wilderness full of savage beasts. Until I have satisfied its demands, I shall find no path by which I may return. Because these are turbulent times, I am to be here for as brief a time as possible, and if Our Lord is served by my leaving here, I will go straight there. I want to take you at your word as it is in your letters, madam, that you will receive me with friendship and kindness and that I will find your door open to me. (Redworth 1.106)

Luisa seems to acknowledge that Magdalena and as she mentions further on in the letter the Infanta and her camarera mayor Juana Jacincurt, are disappointed in her decision to remain in London. However, she girds herself against potential criticism by communicating the dangerous nature of her journey as though if she had a choice to go against God's will, she would safely be in Flanders with Magdalena and the Infanta. Luisa refers to London as a "selva espesa de fieras," thereby representing herself in a similar danger she commended Magdalena and the Infanta for enduring in previous letters. In doing so Luisa evokes her letters aimed at the Infanta and groups herself among the Infanta's court in spirit. To her, they are all sojourners in the wilderness filled with threats to Catholicism, after all.

Luisa frequently resisted Magdalena's demands to leave London to join the Infanta's court in Brussels by articulating her work there as compliance with God's will. In the established ethics of self-sacrifice, humility, detachment, and piety, this strategy characterized Luisa's mission as a task she could not abandon for the worldly comforts of friendship or political safety, though she would express her longing for these luxuries. About a year and a half after arriving in London, on 31 May 1606, Luisa responds in a lengthy postscript to Magdalena's request that she leave London for Flanders: "No sé, señora, si he de ver a Su Alteza antes que me muera; y a vuestra merced allá o acá. Cierto

que me sería de muy raro contento. Hágase sobre todo la voluntad de nuestro dulcísimo Señor, Amén” ‘I do not know, my lady, if I shall be able to see her highness before I die, or your honour, either over there or here. To do so would indeed make me extremely happy. May the will of Our most sweet Lord be done in all things. Amen’ (Carvajal 175; Redworth 1.160-161). The reader may detect a tone of exhaustion in Luisa’s words no doubt due to her illness (which she cites as the reason for not responding sooner) compounded with her growing weariness at kindly refusing requests to go to the Infanta’s court. As with other expressions of her resolve to stay in London, Luisa invokes God’s will as a would-be final word on the matter. However, Luisa’s authority soon eclipses God’s authority when she forcefully scolds Magdalena:

Y no me diga vuestra merced, señora, más, cuando trata de mi vida, que sea para donde yo quisiere, o España o Flandes; que sepa me pesa mucho; y, si fuera cosa prolija para carta, yo le diera a vuestra merced satisfacción de eso; y crea que habrá pocas personas que lleguen a estimar a vuestra merced en más que yo, ni en tanto como yo lo hago. (Carvajal 175-176)
Also, madam, please do not say anything else, my lady, when talking about my life. Let it be where I decide to lead it, whether in Spain or Flanders. You should know that it grieves me when you discuss it. If it were not too lengthy a matter to go into in a letter, I would explain matters to your satisfaction, madam. Please believe that there can be few people who regard you as highly as I do, madam, nor as much as I do. (Redworth 1.160-161)

As if she cannot help herself, Luisa admonishes Magdalena for her comments and criticisms about Luisa’s decision to live and work in London with the English Catholics. Based on Luisa’s sharp response, we can assume that Magdalena’s previous letter must have struck a nerve causing Luisa to assert her autonomy. This point in Luisa’s letters to Magdalena is when her personal sovereignty and virtuous agency are most firmly expressed. In short clauses, she defends herself while clearly refusing any of Magdalena’s advice if it concerns her leaving London. As per her closing request, Luisa represents

their friendship as tenuously balanced on Magdalena's ability to hold her pen (keep quiet), thereby rejecting any previous notion of her obedience to Magdalena and instead demanding Magdalena's tacit endorsement of all her decisions. And as promised, but much delayed, Luisa's long letter dated 3 March 1607 explains her choices in eloquent detail.

Before examining that important letter, I will examine two other crucial letters in Luisa's assertion of her ability to govern herself through steadfast obedience. In the first, dated 24 July 1606, Luisa cloaks herself in God's will to deflect Magdalena's instructions to leave London and embraces the rhetoric of extreme humility common to religious women's language and writings. In it Luisa denies Magdalena's criticism that she "goes deaf" anytime Magdalena mentions leaving London and professes her love for Magdalena. However, Luisa concedes, if Magdalena calls Luisa's refusing to leave London ignoring her advice, then Luisa is forced to defend herself:

Y eso, crea vuestra merced que no está en mi mano; porque, teniendo tantas conjeturas de la voluntad de Dios, no puedo volver las espaldas, sin hallar las otras de tanto peso que las deshagan; y cierto que ni me trujo a Inglaterra designio de lucidos sucesos, ni pensar de mí alguna cosa grande, ni querer que una sola persona se acordase de mí en este mundo; y en este estado permanezco, gracias a Nuestro Señor, deseando sólo el perfecto cumplimiento de su voluntad, aunque sea muriendo cada momento, como puedo decir que muero, todos los que me acuerdo que estoy en esta Isla. Si Él se sirviere que salga della, no habrá mejor vía para el amor propio, ni para alma le podrá haber en el cielo ni en la tierra tal como el cumplimiento de su gusto en cualquier género de suceso, aunque sea el más amargo que se pueda imaginar. Vuestra merced me ayude siempre con Su Majestad, por su santísimo amor, para que me corrobore y tenga de su mano en tantas ocasiones y dificultades. (Carvajal 182-183)

Believe me, madam, this is out of my hands, because I cannot turn back on what clearly appears to be God's will unless I encounter a strong feeling to the contrary. I was certainly not brought to England by the quest for glory, or by thinking any great thing of myself, or by wanting anyone in this world to remember me at all, and this remains my position, thanks be to Our Lord. I desire only the perfect fulfillment of His will, even if that

means I would be dying every moment, and I can say that I do die every time that I realise that I am on this island. If He saw fit to have me leave, there could be no greater opening for self-love, nor could there be anything in heaven or earth for my soul to equal the sense of fulfillment that comes from pleasing Him, whatever the circumstance, even the bitterest imaginable. Please help me always to attain His Majesty's most holy-love, madam, so that He might support me and guide me through so many trials and tribulations. (Redworth 1.179)

Luisa's invocation of God's "voluntad" as the supreme arbiter of her fate is not without precedent in her writings, nor unusual in typical accounts of martyr logic. As Droge and Tabor observe: "Both the martyrs themselves and even some of their critics emphasized the importance and necessity of a divine signal or command. Only when such a sign had been given could martyrdom be justified" (156). Indeed, Luisa's assertion that her mission has been blessed with signs and feelings assures her of God's plans for her mission and martyrdom. Luisa also employs the rhetoric of humility and self-effacement common to religious women's writings. By figuring her time "en esta Isla" as an eternal death ("sea muriendo cada momento"), she figuratively implies she is already suffering a kind of martyrdom by being in London, and thus achieving spiritual rewards, though her work is not finished as evidenced by God's keeping her there. Significantly, Luisa professes here that she is gleaning God's will according to her own interpretive framework, thereby positioning herself as direct conduit of God's sovereign authority made possible by her obedience to His will. In doing so, she disclaims any desires for glory or self-promotion (a response perhaps targeted at Magdalena's accusation of the same) and declares that the pathway to *amor proprio*, reprehensible in any context, would be leaving London for the safety of the Infanta's court or the familiarity of Spain. Luisa declares her spiritual struggle is greater than Magdalena's (and Isabel's) and thus provides herself a greater opportunity to obediently serve God.

Luisa's letter dated 18 January 1607 marks what scholars typically agree is the true point of rupture between Luisa's friendships with Magdalena and consequently with Isabel. The letter, marked with her most extreme condemnation of peace treaties between the Archdukes and the Dutch, offers some of her most passionate cries for war instead of peace.³⁴ In it she voices concern for the general safety of her letters, repeating her request that Magdalena burn them and not share their contents with anyone for fear of spies who will report to Sir Robert Cecil, who if he found out, would "eat her alive." What is most unusual, and perhaps the last straw for Magdalena and the Infanta, is Luisa's implication that the English ambassador from Brussels could be responsible for leaking information about her to Cecil or others:

Quemando vuestra merced las cartas, ni las podrán leer en su bufete, ni en los pedazos dellas si se rompen; que nos dicen trae el embajador inglés de ahí extraordinario cuidado de saber cualquier delgada materia que se escribe de acá en cosas que les tocan a sólo el zapato, y levantan luego unas baraúndas y pesadumbres terribles. Y por la religión puramente o casos de gloria o servicio de Nuestro Señor estimaré el padecellos; y, en lo demás, estorbarélo cuanto pueda. (Carvajal 205)

By burning the letter, madam, it means they will not be able to read them on your desk, nor in pieces if they are torn up. They tell us that the English ambassador over there makes every effort to know the slightest detail written from here about even the most trivial thing, and they then kick up a fuss. If this were purely a question of religion or to the glory or service of Our Lord, I would be happy to suffer for this, but when it touches on all other matters I shall avoid this as much as I can. (Redworth 1.222)

³⁴ "Ahora se dice asá que los holandeses tratan de paces, nombre intolerable delante de cualquier corazón honrado; y más, si fuere celoso de la honra y gloria de Dios. Y aun cuando fueran ellos los vencedores, paces, o paces infames, tanto más cuanto es mayor la honra y grandeza de España y alta sangre de nuestros amos de allá y de ahí" "They are now saying here that the Dutch are calling for peace, which word is intolerable to the ears of anyone who has an honourable heart, and more so to anyone zealous for the honour and glory of God. And even on the victor's terms, peace treaties, shameful peace treaties, are even more tolerable when one considers how superior the honour and grandeur of Spain is and the highborn blood of our masters, both over there and where you are" (Carvajal 204; Redworth 1.221). Abad defends her vitriol, stating: "Doña Luisa habla con el corazón, mirando casi solamente a la honra de España y al bien de la religión católica" 'Doña Luisa speaks with her heart, looking almost exclusively at Spain's honor and the good of the Catholic religion' (my trans.; Carvajal 203, n.2).

Luisa's request that Magdalena burn her letters insinuated that there was a spy for the English government in the Infanta's retinue. Miguel Iglesias argues that this accusation, combined with Luisa's relentless criticisms of the Archdukes' plans for peace with England and the Dutch and her continued advocacy for Isabel Clara Eugenia's succession of the English throne, led to the dissolution of Magdalena's and Luisa's correspondence (65-66). Since Magdalena's letters are not extant, this is hard to prove definitively.

Luisa's responses suggest their friendship ended for a variety of reasons. Perhaps due to Magdalena's demands, likely relayed from the Infanta, that Luisa return to Spanish territory. It may also have been because Magdalena became increasingly annoyed by Luisa's dismissive tone, and her irresponsible and dangerous actions in London, or their disagreement about Anglo-Spanish politics and the best methods to support the Catholic community. Magdalena may have also received direct orders from Isabel to end their correspondence to maintain diplomacy. As her letter proceeds, she boasts about her plans to move out of the Ambassador's house: "Y de verme de nuevo desasida de sombras y arrimos de mi nación y tan dispuesta a ser admitida en el santo y desabrigado portalico de Belén, me hallo con la que no sabría decir" 'To see myself once again living away from the help of my nation, eager to be admitted to the holy and unsheltered entrance to Bethlehem, I feel a happiness I cannot express' (Carvajal 205; Redworth 1.222). Luisa proudly asserts her resolution to remain in London by framing her move to her own house as being set adrift from Spain's assistance. She implies that in order to achieve martyrdom, she must replace her too-watchful nation with Bethlehem, which welcomes worthy martyrs into its embrace.

Luisa's articulation of personal sovereignty increased exponentially when she moved out of the Ambassador Zuniga's house and into one of her own. A residence under her own governance and the recent arrival of Ana de Jesús to the Infanta's court in Brussels, in whom she probably believed she had an advocate to support her mission in London, granted her a sense of autonomy which no doubt adds to her bold refutation of Magdalena's criticisms in this letter.³⁵ In a letter dated 3 March 1607, Luisa writes triumphantly to Magdalena about her recent move (sometime before her letter in January) into her own "casita," inviting Magdalena to come visit her in London and stay with her. Luisa's invitation flaunts her independence from the watchful eye of the Ambassador, but also from his protection, and strategically emphasizes her sovereignty over her house and her life.³⁶ Throughout the letter, Luisa engages in the "llaneza" (frankness) of early modern friendship rhetoric to support her decision to remain in London and her right to personal sovereignty. In the interim between Luisa's previous letter and this one, Magdalena must have written expressing extreme displeasure about Luisa's request to burn her letters with a firm demand that Luisa come to Brussels or return to Spain immediately. Arming herself with *llaneza*, Luisa responds:

Y, respondiendole a algunos puntos de la de vuestra merced, digo, señora, que con llaneza, como se usa entre amigas, le supliqué quemase mis cartas, sin pensar podía serle a vuestra merced de disgusto...Y advirtiendole a vuestra merced de que allá hay quien vive con cuidado de coger lo mucho y lo poco y pintarlo acá muy bien, donde de un mosquito se hace un caso muy grave, quedan sin trabajo prevenidas pesadumbres muy

³⁵ See letter 73 to Madre Ana de Jesus dated 31 June 1607 (Carvajal 218-219).

³⁶ "Sólo por el gusto de mi dulcísimo Señor se puede carecer de tales consuelos; con el cual le tengo, cierto, en estos eriales, y ya en mi casita habrá más de un mes; en la cual será recibida vuestra merced con toda estima y amor, cada y cuando que quisiera darme ese contento" 'Only to please my most sweet Lord can one forgo such comforts. I do so in this wilderness and now in my little house, where I have been for more than a month, and where your honour will be received with the utmost esteem and love as when you might choose to make me so happy' (Carvajal 205-206; Redworth 1.225).

grandes; y en todo lo que la prudencia y espíritu a enseñan a temer, es bien temer. (Carvajal 206)

In response to some points your honour makes in your letters, I will tell you, my lady, with the frankness that is used between friends, that I begged you to burn my letters without thinking that this could offend you, madam...By warning your honour that over there there are there people who are bent on digging up anything great or small and then dressing it up here and making a mountain out of a molehill, a little caution can save a lot of trouble. Whenever prudence or instinct teaches one to be fearful, then fearful we should be. (Redworth 1.225)

Luisa's invocation of "*llaneza*, como se usa entre amigas" with Magdalena in her strongest push for independence and personal sovereignty structures her argument simultaneously as an explanation for her decision to remain in London and as advice, since *llaneza* was the mode of counsel between friends as advocated by classical and early modern theorists. Cicero instructed that the influence of friends should "be used to enforce advice not only in plainspoken terms, but sometimes, if the case demands it, with sharpness; and when so used, let it be obeyed." If Magdalena adhered to Cicero's suggestion to use plainspoken or sharp terms to give advice, we may safely assume Luisa would have viewed poorly the requisite obedience to her friend's advice. In her response, Luisa counters Magdalena's possible "*llaneza*" by manipulating the language of self-justification into advice, thereby deflecting obedience to Magdalena and proffering her own demand for obedience instead. In doing so, she uses the rhetoric of amity and *llaneza* to distance herself from Magdalena and Magdalena's criticism, thereby employing Teresa's advised detachment for holy women's friendships. Furthermore, in Luisa's declaration that "en todo lo que la prudencia y espíritu a enseñan a temer, es bien temer," she names Prudencia a better teacher than Magdalena, disqualifying her friend from making any pronouncements about her life in London.

As she continues to defend her decisions, Luisa replaces "la humana prudencia"

with God as the ultimate counselor in her affairs, thereby detaching herself further from Magdalena and her advice. Luisa relies on God's authority to bolster her defense of moving into her own house, an action strikingly demonstrative of the evolution of her agency in London:

En cuanto a mi mudanza, pienso, señora, que se ha ido en ella por sus pasos contados, como se fue en el salir de España; y si disuena al oído de la humana prudencia, con la voluntad de Dios parece cierto concuerda con toda la probabilidad que se suele tener en esta vida en materias de espíritu...Y si como fue una miseria, fuera un opulentísimo reino lo que estuvo en mi posibilidad...no pienso hay de mi imaginación cosa más lejos que lo está quejarme de la pobreza; y mucho más, quererla remediar con tornar a tomar lo que ya con tanta felicidad mía se sacrificó y dió al poderoso y soberano Dios, en cumplimiento y ejecución de su divina palabra y santísimo consejo (Carvajal 206-207)

As regards my moving house, I think, my lady, that He has gone about this step by step, as was the case when I left Spain. If this sounds odd to the ear of human prudence, it definitely seems to accord with God's will, with all the certainty that one can muster in this life in matters of the spirit...And if what I was able to do counts as destitution, then it was also a most opulent kingdom as well...I do not think anything is further from my mind than complaining about my poverty. I am even more loath to remedy it by taking back up that which I so happily sacrificed and gave to almighty and sovereign God, executing compliance with His divine word and most holy counsel (Redworth 1.226)

She maintains that her actions in London are in accordance with "la voluntad de Dios" by declaring that to abandon her spiritual work and newly acquired home would mean disobeying God, to whom she relinquished her will and any desires for *amor proprio*. She writes proudly of her *casita*, defining it simultaneously as "una miseria" and "un opulentísimo reino." In doing so, Luisa argues that, like Magdalena in the Infanta's court, she finds herself in a beautiful kingdom. The difference in their two circumstances, however, is crucial. Luisa's *reino* is under her own sovereign governance, an authority and freedom only attained through her obedience to God's will, whereas Magdalena is under the Infanta's rule. Fittingly, Luisa reasons, the "santísimo consejo" of God is the

only counsel she now requires.

As the letter proceeds, Luisa continues to defend her ability to make her own decisions, describing her journey to London and *vita activa* there as evidence “para confiar en Dios.” By reiterating her claim that her actions have God’s sovereign seal of approval, she delimits the extent to which she will entertain any human criticism in her decision-making. In her final push to silence Magdalena’s criticisms and demands, Luisa stages a faux-request for Magdalena’s advice on whether she should really leave considering how much the English Catholic community needs her:

Y pienso que mi caso es uno de los fuertes motivos que puede haber para confiar en Dios. Y antes de salir de esta materia, me diga vuestra merced, por su santísimo amor, y así El se le dé, como deseo: ¿Aconsejáme vuestra merced, si yo le pidiera consejo, que volviera a tomar de lo que dejé, aun cuando los pobrecitos de Cristo que lo tienen no estuvieran tan sumamente necesitados dello? No lo creo yo, por cierto, de su espíritu de vuestra merced...Y de aquí, que es escalón, quiero pasar a lo que dice vuestra merced que culpan a quien me detiene. Y paréceme, señora, que si vuestra merced hace alguna reflexión, claramente verá que no es posible que sea fuerza humana la que detenga, adonde naturalmente se está con no menos violencia, a mi parecer, que se puede en la violenta más cosa de la tierra considerar, y con firmeza y contento. Mire vuestra merced que es todo vislumbres divinas (Carvajal 207)

I think that my case is one of the strongest reasons there can be to trust in God. Yet, before I move on, please tell me, madam, through a most holy love for Him, which He might then reciprocate as I desire, [¿] whether your honour’s advice—that is, if I were to seek your counsel—would be for me to return and take back all that I left behind, irrespective of whether Christ’s little poor ones, who have it now, were not so utterly in need of it. [?] I could not believe this of your honour’s spirit...From here, which is but a step, I wish to go on to what your honour says about the blame that gets attached to whoever keeps me here. It seems to me, my lady, that if your honour reflects on this, you will clearly see that it cannot possibly be any human force keeping me here, where one is by nature surrounded by as much violence, so it seems to me, as one might imagine there to be in the most violent place in the world, yet here I am, resolute and content. So your honour sees how these are all glimpses of the divine (Redworth 1.227)

Similar to her 4 May 1603 letter to Magdalena advising the Infanta, Luisa uses a

rhetorical question to stage a problem that has a determined outcome. However, unlike her letter from 1603, Luisa's use of the rhetorical question here serves her goal of reinforcing her authority to make judgments *without* Magdalena (or the Infanta's) input. By framing her question as a theoretical one, Luisa makes it clear that she is *not* asking Magdalena's advice, thereby foreclosing her duties as Luisa's friend to offer counsel. Moreover, Luisa officially resigns her own duties to be obedient to her friend's straightforward (*llaneza*) advice by providing a suitable answer to her own question ("No lo creo yo, por cierto, de su espíritu de vuestra merced"). Luisa concludes her argument for personal sovereignty by disputing one other assertion made by Magdalena: that someone else is responsible for detaining Luisa in London. Her refutation is craftily articulated to remove blame from others, and most significantly, from herself by arguing that "no es posible que sea fuerza humana la que detenga." By reasoning that her continued presence in the wilderness of London is proof of God's divine authority over her life ("vislumbres divinas"), Luisa settles the argument about her life in England. Recalling the caveat Luisa set out for herself in her Voto de Obediencia, Magdalena has become the confessor and counselor Luisa has decided she no longer needs and is merely a friend whose advice Luisa considers, but ultimately rejects in favor of God's counsel and supreme authority.

According Luisa's letters written to Magdalena in the interim between her final one and the above, Magdalena has stopped writing to her, which perhaps causes Luisa to recognize that their friendship and correspondence has come to an end.³⁷ In her last extant letter to Magdalena, dated 20 August 1607, Luisa officially relinquishes her duty

³⁷ See letters 81 and 82 (Carvajal 221-223).

to offer Magdalena advice as a friend:

Yo no me puedo ofrecer en nada de la tierra, como tan pobrecilla y de poca importancia, ni en las de espíritu, tengo sino sola la pobreza de mis oraciones: en éstas serviré a vuestra merced siempre como muy sierva suya; y vuestra merced no nos olvide en las suyas. (Carvajal 225)

Poverty-stricken and insignificant as I am, I cannot presume to advise on any earthly or spiritual consideration. All I have are my poor prayers, with which I shall always serve your honour as very much your servant. Please, madam, do not forget us in your prayers. (Redworth 1.266-267)

In this final missive, Luisa signs off on her duties as Magdalena's (and the Infanta's) friend and advisor, declaring that she cannot offer her "en nada de la tierra... ni en las de espíritu." And coded in Luisa's farewell, and her final statement to Magdalena about her divinely guided self-rule and personal sovereignty, is a declaration that she now considers herself part of the Catholic community in London ("no nos olvide"). In a letter to Inés de la Asunción in Valladolid, dated 22 November 1609, Luisa makes a brief, sad, final mention of Magdalena: "No oigo cosa de Magdalena de San Hierónimo, ni si vive" 'I hear nothing of Magdalena de San Jerónimo, not even whether she is still among the living' (Carvajal 295; Redworth 2.96). Although their communication ended, perhaps due to political pressure or the natural entropy of intense friendships, Magdalena would see Luisa again, though not in life.

Ultimately, Luisa was never crowned with "una gloriosa corona" of martyrdom. Luisa died in 1614 at the Spanish Ambassador Gondomar's home of an illness she contracted after her second stint in prison, which her supporters would later argue met the qualifications for martyrdom. The fate of her body was not resolved for two years, and even then it was ultimately against her expressed wishes. In her will (1604), she requested that she be buried in a Jesuit church: "Y suplico humildemente...a los superiores de la Compañía de Jesús, y prepósito de la casa profesa, que, en su iglesia, me

sea concedido algún humilde lugar donde mi cuerpo sea enterrado” “And I humbly beg...the superiors of the Company of Jesus, and the house superior, that in their church, I be granted some humble place where my body will be buried’ (my trans.; Carvajal *Escritos* 246). But in a letter to Rodrigo Calderón from July 1612, she makes a different request in anticipation of her martyrdom:

Si yo fuere mártir y se pudiere recoger mi cuerpo, vuestra señoría le ponga do fuere servido, dando alguna parte al Noviciado de la Compañía de Jesús inglés, que está en Lovaina. Fundóse de la pobre renta que les dejé, y es el primera que jamás ha habido en esta nación. No siendo mártir, no merezco entierro (Carvajal *Epistolarios* 351)

Should I be martyred, once my body has been recovered please do place it wherever you wish, sir, giving one part of it to the novitiate of the English Society of Jesus which is in Louvain. This was founded with the meagre income I left them, and it is the first of its kind in that nation. If I am not a martyr, I do not deserve burial (Redworth 2.217)

The Jesuits never claimed her body and after her death the Ambassador Gondomar retained possession of her corpse, encased in a lead casket for preservation, until 1615 when it entered the custody of the Monasterio de la Encarnación in Madrid by King Felipe III’s mandate. Mariana de San José prompted the king’s royal dispensation in a letter requesting that Luisa’s body be transferred from Gondomar’s possession into that of the Monasterio de la Encarnación in Madrid.³⁸ Luisa’s corpse is still housed in the monastery’s reliquary, preserved as an intact relic in a lead box covered in red and gold embroidered fabric, beneath cabinets containing the skin, blood, and bone fragments of

³⁸ “Mariana de Sant Joseph Priora de Vro. Real Convento de la encarnacion de Recoletas Agustinas deesta Villa de mdigo; que por Vro mandado se truxo al Relicario de la dcho convento el cuerpo de la venerable Doña Luysa de Carbajal y Mendoça de cuya Beatificación a Instancia de V A se trata y haze información ante el ordinario en la qual han dicho de sus excelencias, virtud y santidad las personas y ministros mas graves de esta Corte q la conocieron y saben como el Rey nro S^{or} y santa gloria R[e]y[n]ja, le hizo' traer al dicho su Real convento y le trujo el conde de Gondomar Vuestro embaxador desde Inglaterra; ha dicho en esta Información sumaria Don Fran^{co} de Contreras comendador mayor de León vuestro Presidente en el Real Consejo de Castilla; y para jurar su dicho: ha depredecer la licencia de V A para que lo pueda hazer Supp^{es} ^{co} a V A que pues es servicio de Dios y honra de esta sancta, se sirva de mandarsela dar. en que Recivira de V A todo el Convento La mas q espera. [signed] Mariana De s. Joseph st” (Caja 1)

other believers who died disobedient to the state and virtuously obedient to God.

Although Luisa's corpse did not receive the afterlife she requested, her life and works are nevertheless memorialized in her body's fate as a powerful material testament to her lifelong negotiation of human authority, her performance of personal sovereignty, and her steadfast obedience to God's will.

Luisa's posthumous route back to Spanish soil was circuitous. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, her return necessitated the involvement of friends thought long lost alongside those who were witnesses to her death. In her only traceable gesture of friendship after Luisa's correspondence with Magdalena ended in 1607, Isabel Clara Eugenia sent her chaplain, Simón de Ariza, to escort Luisa's body back to Spain where he would transfer it into Rodrigo Calderón's custody at the port of San Sebastián per Felipe III's mandate (*Cruz Life and Writings* 98).³⁹ Calderón, perhaps in a misguided effort to do something virtuous, absconded with Luisa's corpse to Portacoeli and hid it in the chapel's wall (101). Another mandate from Felipe III was required for Luisa's disinterment, and in May 1616 her corpse once again changed hands. Ironically, Luisa did indeed return to her old friend Magdalena when her corpse was released into Magdalena's custody by Felipe III's command.⁴⁰ When Luisa's body finally arrived, Magdalena de San Jerónimo was there to claim her and serve, alongside Michael Walpole, as a witness to Luisa's reluctant return to Spain as Magdalena had so persistently advised (Jessopp 270-271).

In 1614, Juan de Piñeda of the Society of Jesus delivered Luisa's funeral sermon at

³⁹ Although Isabel Clara Eugenia never provided testimony for Luisa's beatification, Simón de Ariza offered testimony to Luisa's sanctity in her beatification proceedings in 1627.

⁴⁰ *Escritura de la entrega formal de su cuerpo que en virtud de la Real Orden se hizo en Valladolid del cadáver de la Sra. Da. Luisa de Carvajal*. May 28, 1616 (ARMEN, 212; 206).

the English Seminary of San Gregorio in Sevilla, entitled “En las Honras de Doña Luysa de Carvaial, Defunta en Londres por Enero de 1614.” Piñeda structures his sermon around the acrostic of Proverbs 31:10-31, using the *mujer de fortaleza* an archetype for the feminine virtues Luisa embodied in her life’s work in Spain and England in the service of English Catholics, Spain, and international Catholicism. Piñeda’s sermon works doubly as advice literature by describing Luisa’s life as exemplary and as multifaceted as Fray Luis’s description of the *piedra preciosa* (precious jewel) that the virtuous wife of Proverbs reflects: “por ser en todo peregrina muger, en el ánimo más que varonil, en la fortaleza y determinación más que humana, en la santidad y pureza de vida un Ángel, en el zelo de la Fee un Apóstol... viviendo en un perpetuo tormento y martyrio con el deseo de padecerlo” ‘by being an entirely pilgrim woman, more than masculine in spirit, more than human in strength and determination, an angel in saintliness and purity, an apostle in zeal and faith, living in a perpetual torment and martyrdom with the desire to suffer it’ (my trans.; A3). Like the virtuous woman of Proverbs to whom she is compared, Luisa becomes an exemplary *peregrina* who excels her gender and her humanity in virtuous pursuit of martyrdom.

Interestingly, Luisa’s funeral sermon is bound in a codex at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid with the funeral sermon of Margarita de Austria, Felipe III’s wife who died three years before Luisa, as well as the funeral sermons of other royal personages.⁴¹

While there are several funeral sermons for Margarita bound in the volume, Padre Pedro

⁴¹ Other funeral sermons included in the codex are for Felipe II, Catalina Duquesa de Savoy, Catalina de Austria, Felipe III, María da Austria, the Archbishop of Toledo, and Fray Gerónimo Gracián.

Gonzalez de Mendoza's is striking in its similarity to Piñeda's for Luisa.⁴² Like Piñeda, Mendoza uses the strong, virtuous woman of Proverbs as a literary device to structure his eulogy. He commemorates Margarita's performance of essential Christian feminine virtues such as charity, humility, and especially obedience as facets of her noble virtue, using rhetorical devices similar to Peña's eulogy for Luisa to orient obedience as a demonstration of strength. This suggests that the virtuous woman of Proverbs became a touchstone for evoking and commemorating virtuous princely femininity.⁴³

In addition to using the virtuous woman of Proverbs as an exemplary figure, Piñeda organizes his sermon around four political virtues Luisa exemplified in her life (*fortaleza, prudencia, templanza, and justicia*). Significantly, Piñeda argues that by acting obediently to God, her confessors, and others, Luisa performed *justicia*:

Siempre hizo nuestra Luysa lo que no quiso, porque nunca quiso hazer su voluntad, o por mejor dezir, siempre la hizo, la que siempre quiso nunca hazerla. Obediencia a los mayores es justicia, mas obediencia a los menores es encarecimiento admirable de justicia, pues da lo que se deve, y mucho mas a quien lo devia (D4v)¹

Our Luisa always did what she did not want, because she never wanted to perform her will, or rather, she always did that which she did not want to do. Obedience to superiors is justice, but obedience to inferiors is a praiseworthy increase in justice, since it gives what is due, and gives much more to who gave it (my trans.)

Piñeda memorializes the self-effacement and humility Luisa demonstrated in her

⁴² Magdalena Sánchez examines two eulogies for Margarita de Austria delivered by Jerónimo de Florencia and Fray Andrés de Espinosa at the University of Salamanca. She argues that as indicated by their sermons and other texts memorializing Margarita's death, "The predominant image of Margaret of Austria fostered by male observers was that of a devout and humble queen who was submissive to males around her" (94). Sánchez does not discuss Padre Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza's funeral sermon, but many of the same themes she identifies in the others are present throughout Mendoza's, indicating further that religious officials valued and promoted queens as exemplars of pious submission. See "Pious and Political Images of a Hapsburg Woman at the Court of Philip III (1598-1621)" in *Spanish women in the golden age: images and realities* (1996).

⁴³ This trope for royal women's eulogies is still active in the 21st century. For example, in his 2002 funeral sermon for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, the Archbishop of Canterbury used Proverbs 31:25 as the guiding conceit.

obedience as a performance of justice, thereby recalibrating her pious denial of her *voluntad* as a political virtue. However, Piñeda's sermon also reveals the extent to which exemplary women's lives were memorialized in line with patriarchal ideologies about what actions and virtues were appropriate for religious women, or women in general. By designating Luisa's obedience to her confessor and other male spiritual superiors as justice, which he defines as giving one what is properly due, Piñeda domesticates Luisa's "espíritu valiente" (B3v) by adorning it with approved markers of feminine submission to masculine authority. Nevertheless, after reading Luisa's letters and vows, we can better understand how Luisa worked within the established discourse of martyrdom, and its available models of feminine regal power figured through sacrifice and submission, to cultivate her own personal sovereignty through obedience to God's will, and by advising the Spanish Infanta to do the same.

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