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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Miranda's Daughters: Women's Ecological Thinking in Seventeenth-Century
English Literature

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Kailey Nicole Giordano

Committee in charge:

Professor Seth Lerer, Co-Chair
Professor Daniel Vitkus, Co-Chair
Professor John Blanco
Professor Todd Kontje
Professor Janet Smarr
Professor Robert Watson

2020

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The dissertation of Kailey Nicole Giordano is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California San Diego

2020

DEDICATION

To my parents, Jeff and Trish; my sister, Brenna; and my closest friends — Carolin, Christine, Frances, Geoff, Kalli, Kelli, Matt, Tatiana, and Waverly

“If you press me to say why I loved him, I feel that it cannot be expressed except by replying: ‘Because it was him: because it was me.’”

— Michel de Montaigne

EPIGRAPH

*All important ideas must include
the trees, the mountains, and the rivers.*

— Mary Oliver

*I know,
you don't always understand,
but let me point to the first
wet drops landing on the stones,
the noise like fingers drumming
the skin. I can't help it. I will
never get over making everything
such a big deal.*

— Ada Limón

*It just so happens that I write lines that men leave well alone
This flat blaze of fury simplifies me*

•

*I'll leave tomorrow traversing the side roads
Let everyone see no one paid my way*

— Jenny Xie

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To put simply, this dissertation would not exist if not for the efforts of Seth Lerer and Daniel Vitkus, the chairs of my committee. I owe a world of gratitude to them for their unwavering belief in my project and the care they put into its development. Their scholarly work and their pedagogy exhibit an impressive level of intellectual rigor, bold risk-taking, and unmistakable passion, to which I have aspired in my own writing and teaching. I am a considerably more scrupulous and self-assured scholar because of their continued guidance, support, and patience, and I am extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with them.

The remaining members of my committee also deserve credit for inspiring this project. John Blanco's course on "Transnational Literary Studies: Geopolitics and Poetics of the Free Sea" refined my at-the-time vague understanding of the field of ecocriticism. This course and his insight shaped much of my thinking on *The Tempest* and laid the groundwork for what would become Chapter 1 of this dissertation. In his course "Problems in Contemporary Literary Theory," Todd Kontje demonstrated how feminist theory can be used to uncover new, or previously unearthed, meaning in literary texts, thereby providing the theoretical grounding for much of this project. Janet Smarr's course on "Madness in Renaissance Culture and Drama" deepened my understanding of early modern drama, and the insight she offered on my ecofeminist approach to *King Lear* was truly invaluable. Last but certainly not least, Robert Watson not only planted the first seeds of my interest in early modern literature and ecocriticism, but also cultivated my much deeper love for teaching. My decision to devote my life to this work can be distilled down to a single memory: during a lecture on *King Lear*, he climbed atop a desk to reenact the moment in which Lear searches for signs that Cordelia lives, desperately hoping

that the mirror will fog with her breath or that the feather he thinks has stirred has actually done so. I had never been so moved by a lecture. In my teaching, I have strived to emulate Watson's passion, but, in comparison, mine is a mere shadow on the wall. I am immensely grateful for these individuals' continued encouragement and support and am honored to have worked with them.

I would also like to thank William Stockton and the members of the Editorial Board at *Early Modern Culture* for their diligence and patience in helping me prepare my article, "A Cooke-ham of One's Own: Constructing Poetic Persona at Nature's Expense in Aemilia Lanyer's 'The Description of Cooke-ham' and Ben Jonson's 'To Penshurst,'" for publication. Chapter Two is, in part, a reprint of this material as it appears in *Early Modern Culture* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1-17.

Next, I would like to acknowledge the curators, librarians, and staff at The Huntington Library in San Marino, California, without whose guidance and support my research on Anne Bradstreet, Mary Cary, and Anna Trapnel would not be nearly as thorough or compelling. I am also thankful for the stimulating conversations I had with colleagues at the annual meetings of the Shakespeare Association of America; their encouragement and insight were instrumental to the drafting of Chapter 4 on Mary Cary's, Anna Trapnel's, and Margaret Cavendish's utopian writings. I should also thank the UCSD Institute of the Arts and Humanities for providing the financial support and intellectual space necessary to fine-tune my thinking on Chapter 1.

Most importantly, I could not ask for a more supporting and loving family or group of friends, and I struggle to find the right words to adequately express what they mean to me. This has been a long, and admittedly trying, process, and each of them had a hand in ensuring the completion of this project. My sister, Brenna, has been a constant source of inspiration to me. I

admire her in so many ways, but most of all for the ambition, empathy, and compassion that drives her own work in pursuit of a Ph.D. in Forensic Psychology. More than anyone, she has reminded me that my work is most meaningful when pressed into the service of the public. Credit for anything I have achieved should also go to my parents, Jeff and Trish, who have worked more hours and lost more sleep than anyone ever should to ensure that I led an easy and enjoyable life. I admire my parents, like my sister, for so many reasons, but most of all for their ingenuity, courage, and compassion. While writing a dissertation is certainly nothing like running a business, I have aspired to be as creative, as hard-working, and as brave in the pursuit of my doctorate as my parents have been in their own endeavors. I most admire my parents for their compassion, however; no matter how busy they are, they will always take time to help someone in need, even at their own expense. My parents and my sister daily teach me what it means to love others and to continually put good into the world in what small ways we can. In truth, I think of them each time I return to that pure and self-forgetful love of St. Kevin, which Seamus Heaney captures in his gorgeous poem: “Alone and mirrored clear in love’s deep river, / ‘To labour and not to seek reward.’” I could not be prouder of my family, or more grateful for their unswerving love and support.

I also consider myself incredibly lucky that the decisions I have made over the course of my life led me to the Revelle Humanities Program. Working in this program has been one of the true joys of my life for many reasons, but primarily because I have found a second family there in Carolin, Frances, Geoff, Kalli, Matt, Tatiana, and Waverly. Michel de Montaigne once wrote the following of his best friend, Étienne de la Boétie: “In the friendship which I came talking about, souls are mingled and confounded in so universal a blending that they efface the seam which joins them together so that it cannot be found.” I am unable to put our friendship into

words in a more beautiful way. Each of these individuals brings so much joy and laughter into my life, and each has taught me, in unique ways, to be a better scholar, teacher, friend, and human being. What has been most arresting to me about the time I have spent with each of them is the seamless way in which each of their unique threads have been woven into the universal tapestry of our friendship. Our souls have mingled, in Montaigne's words, and from that has come the universal blending that is the sign of true friendship: the celebration of differences mixed with the simple enjoyment of each other's company and loving concern for one another. Antony's friendship has become equally special to me over the years, and his passion for teaching is downright inspiring. I am deeply grateful to him and Stephen not only for their guidance and support throughout this process, but also for the trust they have often placed in me to take on more responsibility in the program.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Miranda's Daughters: Women's Ecological Thinking in Seventeenth-Century English Literature

by

Kailey Nicole Giordano

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Seth Lerer, Co-Chair
Professor Daniel Vitkus, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines women's ecological thinking in seventeenth-century English literature as England transitioned to an agrarian-capitalist economy built on the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world. More specifically, the women examined here raise serious concerns about the ways in which economic change and intellectual discourse together encouraged the more intensive use of the nonhuman world for humankind's gain during this period. The Introduction explains how property law, agricultural practices, and environmental

policies shifted in seventeenth-century England, and details the project's methodology, Marxist ecofeminism. Chapter 1 contends that the female figures in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) and John Milton's *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634) repurpose the Early Stuart court masque, which was designed to legitimize royal power by representing it in an idealized way, to instead criticize the ruling classes for asserting and sustaining their power by dominating the nonhuman world. Chapter 2 builds on the former by arguing that Lucy Hutchinson, Aemelia Lanyer, and Margaret Cavendish appropriate the country-house poetic genre to condemn estate lords for similar behavior. Chapter 3 demonstrates how Anne Bradstreet's verse re-energizes the New England Puritan model of stewardship, which viewed agricultural labor as an expression of love for God and his creation, as a way of resisting the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world in colonial New England. Chapter 4 compares Fifth Monarchists Mary Cary's and Anna Trapnel's prophetic writings with Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666): While Cary and Trapnel portray the prophesied New Jerusalem as a refuge in which the nonhuman world will no longer be "abused by men that are unreasonable," as Cary says, Cavendish both fantasizes about the Empress of the Blazing World's scientific and technological control of nature and warns against the tremendous harm this power can inflict on other human beings and nature itself. Last, the *Coda* examines Eve's earnest, if imperfect, efforts to steward Eden with care in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667-1674). Taken together, Miranda and Eve serve as bookends of a longer story about humankind's failed stewardship of, and active efforts to turn a profit on, the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England.

INTRODUCTION

Miranda's Daughters: Women's Ecological Thinking in Seventeenth-Century English

Literature

Introduction

Midway through Margaret Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies* (1653), the sequence "Moral Discourses" argues that humankind must use nature in a less exploitative and "cruel" way. In the poem "Earth's Complaint," in particular, Cavendish fashions nature as a mother injured by her children:

O Nature! Nature! Hearken to my cry;
I'm wounded sore, but yet I cannot die.
My children, which I from my womb did bear,
Do dig my sides, and all my bowels tear.
They plow deep furrows in my very face;
From torment, I have neither time nor place.
No other element is so abused,
Or, by mankind, so cruelly used.¹

As Cavendish presents it, at the hands of humankind, Earth suffers from a life of relentless "torment" and "abuse," as her children dig into her sides, tear at her bowels, and carve up her face for their exclusive benefit. In this dissertation, I read seventeenth-century English history and literature as a story about women, like Cavendish, who were steeped in an ecological mode of thinking while the world around them doubled down on the exploitation of the nonhuman world.² More specifically, I argue that women writing in seventeenth-century England, along

¹ Margaret Cavendish, "Earth's Complaint," in *Poems and Fancies with The Animal Parliament*, edited by Brandie R. Siegfried, 207-8 (Toronto: Iter Press, 2018), lines 1-8. This edited collection is based on the Huntington Library's copy of the third edition of Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*, which was printed in London in 1668 by Anne Maxwell. For the poem in the original manuscript, see Margaret Cavendish, *Poems and Fancies* (London, 1653), 106.

² All future uses of the terms "nature," "natural world," or "nonhuman world" in this dissertation will refer to animals, plants, the land, and natural resources. For the purposes of my argument, divine beings will not be included in this category.

with female characters presented on the Jacobean and Caroline court-masque stage, crafted an ecological sensibility that challenged the capitalist imperative to exploit the nonhuman world for profit—a driving force behind the changes made to the English economy, system of property rights, and relationship to the land during this period. By and large, the texts examined in this dissertation argue that nature is not something to be improved upon or exploited for the gain of the few, at the expense of the land itself and of the communities whose livelihood had long depended on it. Rather, the nonhuman world should be treated with care for a host of reasons: to fulfill humankind’s moral and religious responsibility to steward the earth, to address growing problems about resource scarcity and depletion, to allow for a more just distribution of resources and land among the English public, and, in some rare cases, to preserve nature for its own sake.

Cavendish’s poem “Of the Ant” formulates an alternative to the exploitative logic captured in “Earth’s Complaint,” which undergirded emergent forms of capitalism during this period. In doing so, “Of the Ant” offers a view into the ecological ethos that many women writers helped to craft in seventeenth-century England. In this poem, ant behavior is presented as a model for the proper ordering of “all the world’s affairs.”³ The titular ant is industrious and demonstrates a deep concern for others. Not only does she bear “one small straw” on her back with the utmost care, but she also stops to help a “stranger ant” in need along the way. More importantly, the ant performs these labors without complaint or expectation of reward. She is, as

³ All future quotations from “Of the Ant” range from lines 3-23 (Cavendish, “Of the Ant,” in Siegfried *Poems and Fancies*, 203-4). To read the poem in the original manuscript, see Cavendish, *Poems and Fancies* (London, 1653), 103-4. Ants had long been admired for their industriousness and are often used in early modern texts as symbols of industry and diligence. They are praised, for example, in Proverbs 30:25 (KJV) and Aristotle’s *History of Animals* 8.326-37 (edited and translated by D.M. Balme [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965]). In Aphorism 95 of his *New Organon*, Bacon uses ants, spiders, and bees to explain the best method of acquiring knowledge about the natural world (edited by Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004]). Michel de Montaigne also uses ant imagery throughout “An Apologie of Raymond Sebond” (*The Essayes of Montaigne*, translated by John Florio, 252-351 [London, 1603]). All future quotations from Bacon’s *New Organon* and Montaigne’s *Essayes* will be taken from these editions.

the poem states, “well pleased / T’ have labor for her pains, so they be eased.” One possible reading of these lines is that the pain the ant undergoes is eased through her labor, but a more compelling reading is that the ant gladly shoulders the burden of painful labor in order to ease the pain of others. This same effort extends to the ant colony itself, as the ants work together to carry a dead fly to their hill. In both the single ant’s desire to help another and the collaborative efforts of the colony, the poem finds a model of generosity and reciprocity that is altogether absent from the description of what human beings do in “Earth’s Complaint.” While the ants’ labor is charitable and geared towards communal well-being, humankind’s labor is self-serving and demonstrates a total lack of concern for the harm inflicted on the earth.

The ants are also distinguished from humankind by their practice of living in “common.” The poem states that they do not have “private feast[s],” do not concern themselves with class hierarchy, and build “no palaces for pride.” It is worth stopping here to note that the 1668 manuscript held by the Huntington Library and on which the most recent modern edition of *Poems and Fancies* (2018) is based describes the ant colony’s lifestyle as follows: “All is common.” However, in Cavendish’s original manuscript, published in 1653, the same line reads, “All is in common.” The difference is small, but important: the 1668 edition dilutes what is, in Cavendish’s first iteration, a thinly veiled attack on the practice of enclosure, or the privatization of lands previously held in common. In broad strokes, this practice involved exploiting nature in new ways for profit and dispossessing communities of common lands they depended on for their livelihood. By praising the ants for living “in common,” Cavendish suggests that the practice of enclosure, and the exploitation that came with it, could not be counted among the proper ways of ordering “the world’s affairs.”

The ant colony in Cavendish’s poem also keeps no “markets” and has “no special

workmen.” Here, Cavendish again seems to reference and criticize the society of seventeenth-century England—one characterized by an emerging market economy, regional specialization, and a rise in demand for “special workmen” like land surveyors, whose profession emerged as a specialized field around the time of the enclosure movement. While the world of seventeenth-century England was increasingly being driven by the desire to accumulate land and wealth, the ant colony in this poem is praised for building a self-sufficient community through the shared and equal labor performed by each ant. The colony is also praised for its commitment to a life of moderation and the well-being of the whole community. In this regard, Cavendish’s poem is a conservative one—as the speaker yearns for a bygone age, however real, in which life was lived moderately, each was committed to the well-being of all, and all lived “in common,” rather than selfishly pursuing profit at the expense of others.

Of course, these two little poems do not tell the full story of how women writers participated in a discourse about human relationships to the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England. “Earth’s Complaint” and “Of the Ant” do, however, provide a useful blueprint for understanding the general direction in which this story goes. By and large, the texts discussed in this dissertation demonstrate a deep concern about the immediate and downstream effects of an economic system designed to exploit the nonhuman world in new ways for profit. More often than not, this concern was conservative in nature, as women writers looked back to an idealized version of the past—that of the feudal manorial economy, in which humankind and nature were imagined as having a less exploitative relationship—for a model of ecological stewardship, even if that model was no longer put into action in seventeenth-century England. In making this argument, I do not wish to suggest that the cultivation of an ecological sensibility grounded in empathy and care followed a neat and straight path during this period. In some cases, these texts

appear to buy into the exploitative logic that undergirded emergent forms of capitalism in seventeenth-century England. In other cases, these texts merely seem to exchange one form of exploitation for another. The alternative to the early capitalist “improvement” discourse was also not coherent or articulated in a fully visible or culturally organized manner during the seventeenth century. By considering women’s contributions to this discussion, a fuller picture of the response to England’s changing economy, system of property rights, and relationship to the land over the course of the seventeenth century can be drawn.

The operative story told in early modern scholarship on the seventeenth-century English economy and attitudes towards nature is that literary and cultural production during this period played a crucial role in legitimizing the exploitative imperatives of early capitalism. During the same period, however, women writing about humankind’s relationship to the nonhuman world responded to these economic changes in different, generally more critical ways. To tell a truly comprehensive narrative, then, about emergent capitalism in seventeenth-century England—how it shaped human relationships to the nonhuman world, and what people thought of its exploitative logic—requires us to consider how women were engaging in this discourse. This dissertation not only folds women’s ecological concerns into contemporaneous debates about the destructive effects of exploiting nature for profit, but also situates these women within a wider network of resistance to these economic changes—a network that included the Diggers and the Levellers, for example, and that manifested in the form of enclosure riots and protests over fen reclamation. In doing so, I demonstrate that the fields of ecocriticism and ecofeminism are not presentist frameworks that literary scholars impose on the past, but methods of drawing out a meaning that is already there, waiting for us to unearth it. In the process, I also argue that the body of texts historically used by scholars of the early modern period to draw conclusions about

cultural responses to economic changes in seventeenth-century England must be made more inclusive.

To make this argument, I devote the first section of this Introduction to a discussion of the ways in which the English economy, system of property rights, and relationship to the land changed over the course of the seventeenth century. More specifically, I explain the transition from a medieval feudal economy to an agrarian-capitalist economy, giving particular attention to the ways in which the functions, perceived and real, of the country estate and the estate lord changed during this period. In addition, I discuss how the system of property rights and, with it, human relationships to the land changed in the transition from feudalism to agrarian capitalism. In the second section, I provide an overview of women's work and relationship to property in the emergent market and agrarian economies of early modern England. In the third section, I survey the environmental policies and practices implemented in seventeenth-century England and examine how and why these were resisted. In this section, I also explain how the modes of discourse that emerged during this period responded to and shaped these policies. In the fourth section, I will explain the theoretical underpinning of this project, Marxist ecofeminism, and why this framework is the best available analytical tool for approaching this topic—as opposed to ecocriticism, ecofeminism proper, new materialism, or posthumanism. In the Introduction's final section, I will provide a general overview and chapter outline of the dissertation.

I. The Seventeenth-Century Country Estate: From Feudalism to Agrarian Capitalism

In *Das Kapital* (1867), Karl Marx argues that “primitive accumulation,” or the process by which the feudal mode of production transformed into the capitalist mode of production, began in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century England as the commons were gradually enclosed

and the English peasantry were, in turn, forcibly stripped of their rights to use this land and thus deprived of their traditional means of subsistence.⁴ Although common lands were legally part of feudal manorial estates owned by individual estate lords in feudal England, peasants employed in the service of these lords enjoyed customary rights to the use of this land for pasture, animal husbandry, and food production. These customary use rights thus ensured that this class of laboring peasant-proprietors remained in possession of the means of production—that is, the land on the estate. For Marx, “primitive accumulation” describes the process by which the means of production were privatized and expropriated from the peasant-proprietors on a manorial estate, whose customary rights of access to the commons were thereby abolished. Having been “robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements,” Marx adds, these peasant-proprietors were then “hurled as free and ‘unattached’ proletarians on the labour-market.”⁵ As Marx sees it, for the private benefit of the landed few, a mass of people who had long depended on the commons for their survival were forced, because of land enclosure, to sell their labor for a wage.

Of course, in capitalism’s earliest stages, the wage-laboring proletariat of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism was still a long way off. As Marxist historian Ellen Meiksins Wood has noted, wage laborers were a minority in seventeenth-century England. Deprived of their customary use rights, the newly unattached peasant-proprietors of feudal England migrated, in some cases, to the city, where they formed the basis of a new class of laborers and consumers for an emerging market economy; in other cases, these peasant-proprietors remained in the

⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1887), 510. Legal justifications for enclosure date as far back as the Statute of Merton, the result of an agreement between Henry III and English barons in 1235.

⁵ Marx, *Capital*, 508. The transition from feudalism to capitalism was not, of course, a sudden and solitary break, which Marx’s language here risks implying, even though Marx himself understood that this transition was gradual.

countryside to work the land on country estates, but they now had to pay rent, which was often determined by market conditions, in exchange for the right to use the land.⁶ According to Wood, it is this change in property relations in the English countryside—from a class of peasant-proprietors with customary rights to access common lands to a class of tenant-producers dependent on the market for their survival—that was the driving force behind the transition from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist one.⁷ While foreign trade, imperial expansion, and the emergence of a competitive, national market were undoubtedly essential factors in the development of capitalism, in Wood's view capitalism was primarily “advanced by the assertion of the landlords' powers against the peasants' claims to customary rights.”⁸ In short, for both Marx and Wood, the origins of capitalism were more agrarian than urban.

By depriving the English peasantry of its customary use rights, the agrarian-capitalist economy of early modern England did not provide the “guarantees of existence” once granted in the feudal manorial economy. However, the shift from feudalism to agrarian capitalism was not actually the loss of or “fall” from a wonderful paradise of social and economic justice. Although early modern writers often nostalgically idealized feudalism, this retroactive model, cloaked as it often was in fantasies about the past, does not match the harsh reality inflicted on the laborers working on a feudal estate and the system of serfdom in feudal Europe generally.⁹ Agrarian

⁶ For more on the development of a consumer society during this period, see Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

⁷ Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origins of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999), 70. Wood argues for the importance of describing enclosure not just as the physical practice of fencing in land, but as the wresting of customary use rights from the peasant class (83).

⁸ Wood, *The Origins of Capitalism*, 92. This view was proposed most famously by Robert Brenner and became the subject of much debate among Marxist historians, known as the Brenner debate, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For Brenner's view, see “Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe,” *Past and Present*, no. 70 (1976): 30-75. Wood adds that the increasing centralization of the English state created the conditions for capitalism to develop earlier in England than in France, a monarchical nation that was still burdened by “post-feudal military powers, fragmented legal systems, and corporate privileges” (74).

⁹ As I will show in this dissertation, one way in which early modern writers nostalgically idealized feudalism was by romanticizing the estate lord as a model of perfect stewardship, and they did so for a host of reasons: to legitimize the authority of newly-made estate lords, whose claims to the land were not rooted in the

capitalism simply exchanged that form of exploitative labor for another, more nakedly exploitative one, in which a small class of estate lords deprived a class of tenant-producers of their customary rights to the use of the commons, then appropriated their labor for profit. In place of an estate built on the relationship between a feudal lord and his peasant-proprietors was an estate now built on the “agrarian triad,” which consisted of “landlords living on ground rent, capitalist tenants living on profit, and laborers living on wages.”¹⁰ Additionally, in place of the relative security provided by customary use rights under feudalism was the insecurity produced by growing pressure to increase productivity on the estate. While landlords and capitalist tenants now depended on increasing their laborers’ productivity for profit, the laborers themselves needed to meet these demands to pay rent and retain access to the land.

As English agrarian society moved away from the feudal manorial economy, the terms of property ownership and human relationships to the land thus changed considerably. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, power increasingly began to pass from the English Crown, nobility, and peers to the gentry.¹¹ Many of the families who belonged to the gentry lacked

peerage; to conceal the exploitative practices of emergent capitalism on the estate; and even to imagine less destructive ways of engaging with the physical environment.

¹⁰ Wood, *The Origins of Capitalism*, 94-5. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was still a long way off in agrarian England in the seventeenth century. As Andy Wood has observed, class conflict during this period was, in actuality, a “three-way conflict between an aggressive lordly class, an entrepreneurial group of wealthy yeoman farmers and a body of semi-proletarianised labourers” (*The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 16).

¹¹ As a general rule, the gentry consisted of members of the landowning class who did not hold a peerage, though some wealthier families who belonged to the gentry were admitted to the peerage. This included baronets, knights, esquires, and gentlemen. J.T. Cliffe estimates that approximately 15,000 families belonged to the English gentry by the middle of the seventeenth century, based on family estate papers, family correspondence and diaries, and the records of the Court of Chancery in the Public Records Office available from the period (*The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999], vii). For more extensive information on how the English gentry have historically been defined and how they viewed themselves, see Jan Broadway, ‘No historie so meete’: *Gentry Culture and the Development of Local History in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Jeffrey Howard Denton, *Orders and Hierarchies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Henry French, “The ‘Remembered Family’ and Dynastic Senses of Identity Among the English Gentry, c. 1600-1800,” *Historical Research* 92, no. 257 (2019): 529-46; Hannah Kaemmer, “Social Meaning in the English Lesser Gentry House: A West Yorkshire Study,” *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 52, no. 2 (2018): 193-209; Pamela Nightingale, “Knights and Merchants: Trade, Politics and the Gentry in Late Medieval England,” *Past and Present*, no. 169 (2000): 36-62;

ancient claims to the land they had acquired, only recently having acquired their wealth and landholdings. In fact, about one-third of the country houses in the early sixteenth century were obtained through inheritance, whereas nearly two-fifths were acquired from the Crown as gifts or grant-purchases.¹² With wealth generated primarily from domestic and foreign commerce and industry, the gentry purchased country houses on monastery lands that had been dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1530s and built “prodigy houses,” overly lavish country houses which were initially designed for the reception of Elizabeth and her court in the last three decades of the sixteenth century.¹³ These *parvenu* estate lords then leased out property on their estate to tenants, who could farm the land or seek employment in the country house. Beneath the landed gentry and the tenants who obtained proprietary rights to the land on the gentry’s estates were the unpropertied poor, consisting mainly of servants and wage laborers.

During this period, a complex system of land tenure developed to determine and regulate the terms of tenants’ proprietary rights and responsibilities on the early modern English manor. Land tenure took three main forms: freehold, copyhold, and leasehold.¹⁴ Of the three forms of

Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove, eds., *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); and Jennifer Ward, *Women of the English Nobility and Gentry, 1066-1500* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

¹² Kari Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), 49.

¹³ G. R. Hibbard, “The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 19, no 1/2 (1956): 160. Records indicate that at least 1389 country houses were built during the seventeenth century, 50% of which were built before the Civil War and 64% of which were built before 1660 (Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*, 4). Regarding the gentry’s sources of wealth, it has been estimated that one in thirty gentry of early modern England invested in overseas enterprises (T.K. Rabb, “Investment in English Overseas Enterprise, 1575-1603,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 19, no. 1 [1966]: 77).

¹⁴ The section on “Manorial Culture” in Mark Netzloff’s introduction to John Norden’s *The Surveyor’s Dialogue* (1618) (*John Norden’s The Surveyor’s Dialogue [1618]: A Critical Edition* [Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010], xxi-xxix) provides an excellent overview of the system of land tenure in seventeenth-century England. All future references to Norden’s text come from this edition. The following information on land tenure and agrarian property relations is drawn in large part from this introduction. For more on the system of land tenure during this period, see Richard Lachmann, *Capitalist in Spite of Themselves: Elite Conflict and Economic Transitions in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Lachmann, *From Manor to Market: Structural Change in England, 1536-1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); John E. Martin, *Feudalism to Capitalism: Peasant and Landlord in English Agrarian Development* (London: Macmillan, 1983); Charles J. Reid, “The Seventeenth-Century Revolution in the English Land Law,” *Cleveland State Law Review* 43 (1995): 221-302; R.H.

tenure, freehold tenure provided the most security for several reasons: According to Mark Netzloff, it “granted tenants the full right to sell or transfer holdings as well as confer property to stipulated heirs” and “fell under the jurisdiction of the common law, thereby providing tenants with a legal foundation to title outside the manorial system.”¹⁵ In terms of social rank, freeholders, also known as “yeomen” (during the period) or “capitalist farmers,” generally ranked beneath the landed gentry but above copyhold tenants, leasehold tenants, and the property-less poor.

After freehold tenure, the next most secure form of tenure was copyhold. As a general rule, tenants who held the land by copyhold enjoyed fixed rents and protection from fines and eviction, and these terms were fixed in the written deed, or copy, that was entered into the manorial court roll. Copyhold also went by the name of “customary tenure” during the period since the terms of copyhold were often determined by the customary practices of each individual manor. According to Netzloff, landlords were given “greater latitude” to overrule the protections supposedly guaranteed by copyhold tenure: they could do this by raising rents to respond to the market, for instance, or by fining and evicting tenants. In this way, the relative security copyhold tenure was intended to provide became merely theoretical, because the landlords’ ability to change these protections led to insecurity. Copyhold tenure had first emerged as an effort on the part of laborers to leverage the scarcity of labor caused by the Black Death for better working conditions—such as fixed rent which could be paid in cash, rather than in the form of feudal duties like military service.¹⁶ Of the three forms of tenure, copyholders comprised roughly two-

Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1912; New York: Harper & Row, 1967); and E.P. Thompson, “Custom, Law, and Common Right,” in *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York, 1993), 97-184.

¹⁵ Netzloff, “Introduction,” xxi.

¹⁶ Lachmann, *From Manor to Market*, 38-9. In 1645, the practice of knight tenure ended, which required tenants who rented the land to perform military service for their lord. Knight tenure was replaced by socage, or the payment of rent in money only (McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 139-41).

thirds of the landholding class in England, and were roughly three to four times the size of the freeholder class, at the start of the early modern period.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, however, copyhold tenure declined and began to be overtaken by leasehold tenure, which was much more dependent on market conditions and, therefore, less stable.¹⁷ While leasehold tenure freed former peasant-proprietors from more coercive methods of surplus extraction, like the imposition of taxes, leasehold tenure denied tenant-producers the relative stability that came with both customary use rights inherited from the feudal manorial economy and freehold and copyhold tenure established in the early modern period. Instead of this relative security, this class of tenant-producers had rights to their holdings only until the expiration of the lease, and the terms of these holdings fluctuated with the demands of the emerging market. Leasehold tenure therefore lacked the security afforded by freehold and copyhold tenure and, in turn, forced a class of tenant-producers, who lacked secure rights to their holdings, to sell their labor on the market.

Even as property relations on the country estate became increasingly market-driven and the drive to increase productivity for profit came to define the practices of estate management, the country estate remained, in theory, the “symbol of good housekeeping: a moral economy wherein all classes and all peoples lived in right relationship with each other and with the rest of creation.”¹⁸ This economy was ordered and held together by the estate’s lord, who was supposed to act, in Andrew McRae’s words, as “steward of the land and its dependants rather than an owner with absolute proprietorial rights. Under him the manor [operated] with the goal of

¹⁷ In fact, the class of copyholder tenants was roughly three to four times the size of the class of freeholders during this period, and roughly two-thirds of all landholders in England were copyholders at the beginning of this period (Netzloff, “Introduction,” xxiv).

¹⁸ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 1.

comfortable self-sufficiency.”¹⁹ In short, the estate lord was responsible for ordering the estate so that, ideally, it functioned like an organic whole. As was the case in the feudal manorial economy, the country house in agrarian-capitalist England was intended to function as a space in which the estate lord’s power to do so was idealized, even if these “right relationships” were only an illusion. In this regard, the country estate was not just the physical symbol of its lord’s economic and social power, but a performative space in which the lord could be actively constructed as an ideal steward of a moral economy—by providing charity to the poor, extending hospitality to the estate’s inhabitants and guests, and managing the physical environment with care.²⁰

The highly structured design of the seventeenth-century English country estate and the nature of the labor performed on it contributed substantially to the illusion of the estate as a self-sufficient, symbiotic manorial community. To explain how, it is first necessary to illustrate what the country estate looked like and detail the kinds of labor performed on it.²¹ The country estate consisted of a country house, outbuildings, and land designated for parks, pasture, and farming. Residents and guests typically entered the house through a gatehouse and would immediately proceed to the great hall. During Elizabeth I’s reign, the lord’s family and his guests dined in the ceremonial state room, otherwise known as the great chamber. Beginning in James I’s reign, however, the gentry began to place less importance on the ceremony of dining, so the lord’s

¹⁹ Andrew McRae, “Husbandry Manuals and the Language of Agrarian Improvement,” in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, edited by Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, 35-62 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 35.

²⁰ In *Reliquiae Wottonianae* (London, 1672), Sir Henry Wotton refers to the country estate as a “theatre” of the lord’s hospitality as well as “an Epitomie of the whole World” (49). The obligations of estate lords were laid out in guidebooks such as Robert Cleaver’s *A Godlie Form of Householde Government* (London, 1598) and William Gouge’s *Of Domesticall Duties* (London, 1622).

²¹ The following information on the structure and design of the country house, in addition to the type of labor performed on it, is best consolidated in Cliffe’s work *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (1999).

family and guests began to take their meals, instead, in the more modest parlour or dining-room. An estate's bedrooms and dormitories varied in size and number, depending on the size of the house itself, the family, and the staff. Some, but not all, estates contained a cabinet of curiosities, which testified to the lord's intellectual interests and pursuits, as well as a long gallery—used before the Restoration for additional sleeping accommodations, storage, or physical exercise, and after the Restoration for the display of the lord's art collection. Records also indicate that quite a few country houses included both an armory and a domestic chapel, though many of these chapels were not actively in use.

In the estate's outbuildings, known during the period as "houses of office," the day-to-day operations necessary for the functioning of the estate were carried out. These "houses of office" traditionally included a kitchen, pantry, bakehouse, slaughterhouse, boulting-house for winnowing corn, still-room, buttery, brewhouse, and laundry. Many estates also had stables for horses, parklands, farmland, pasture, and a stock of coal on site, even though wood was hardly scarce on most estates. Trees on the estate were used most often for shade, fuel, construction and repair, and the beautification of the estate. Parklands were used to hunt and to maintain a steady supply of game, usually venison and rabbits, for the estate's residents and staff. These parks were enclosed with fences or hedges, which served the practical purpose of keeping deer within estate grounds and the symbolic purpose of asserting and reinforcing the estate lord's proprietary rights.

The laboring class on the country estate was also highly systematized. First, and perhaps most importantly, was the estate steward. Although some estate lords acted as their own steward, the majority of estate lords in seventeenth-century England brought on as steward someone from the freeholding class who had been raised on their estate or on one of the nearby estates. The

estate steward had a wide range of responsibilities, which included drawing up and negotiating the terms of leases; collecting rents and fines; keeping records of estate revenue and expenditure; supervising and paying servants; overseeing farming activities; buying livestock and selling timber and other goods produced on the estate. Each of these duties was geared towards ensuring that the estate was run in the most efficient way possible. In carrying out his duties, the estate steward was expected to seek his master's counsel, whether the master was in residence or away on business or for pleasure. When the lord himself could not be consulted, either because he was away or was incapacitated, the estate lord's wife often undertook a more active role in the management of the estate.²² The majority of estate stewards served their lords until they were no longer physically able to fulfill their duties, either because they fell sick or died. In addition to managing the estate in the most efficient manner possible, estate stewards also needed to have a reputation on the estate and in the community as someone whose every effort was directed at enriching his lord, not himself. In sum, the estate steward's wide-ranging duties reveal the dual nature of the country estate: on the one hand, he played a crucial role in sustaining the illusion that the estate lord was a responsible steward of the estate; on the other hand, he had an active hand in implementing the exploitative practices of an agrarian-capitalist economy on the country estate.

The remainder of the estate's labor force consisted of the house steward, the clerk, the bailiff, the butler, the cook, the brewer, the coachman, the groom, the porter, other domestic servants, the gardener, the park-keeper, the warrener, the huntsman, the falconer, and of course those who worked the land. In large part, this labor force was drawn from families who lived in the county to which the estate belonged or in adjacent counties, and the vast majority of the

²² For more on women's labor and relationship to property in the emergent market and agrarian economies of early modern England, refer to Section II of this Introduction.

positions available were filled by men. Women seeking employment on the country estate served primarily as maidservants in different sectors of the home. In exchange for their work on the estate, servants were provided by the estate lord with a wage and basic necessities, such as food, drink, clothing, and sleeping accommodations. Although the ways in which estate lords treated their staff are known to have varied widely, ranging anywhere from benevolence to brutality, the relationship was, at its core, deeply exploitative. Any efforts made by early modern writers to idealize this relationship and to look back nostalgically to an imagined version of feudalism in which lord and servant lived in perfect harmony only served to disguise the exploitative nature of the labor performed on the estate.²³

In addition to overseeing the affairs of the estate and providing for their staff, estate lords were expected to adhere to longstanding customs of hospitality and charity—duties once carried out by the Church before monasteries were disbanded under Henry VIII in the 1530s, but which thereafter passed to estate lords and local parish officials. While some *parvenu* estate lords made extensive efforts to fulfill these traditional obligations, the fact that many of the gentry had purchased former ecclesiastical properties with wealth acquired through business and trade heightened concerns that the gentry might be uninterested, or at least less interested than their feudal counterparts were believed to have been, in adhering to traditional customs of hospitality or poor relief.²⁴ Of course, institutional mechanisms were already in place in the form of the

²³ The work of Raymond Williams and Don Wayne is invaluable on this topic. See Don Wayne, *Penshurst: The Semiotics of Place and the Poetics of History* (London: Methuen, 1984); and Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁴ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 146. Andrew McRae has argued that concerns about the problem of poverty did not decline during this period so much as change form, as the conversation was directed towards encouraging the poor to adopt the capitalist values that were enabling yeomen and the gentry to succeed in the changing English economy. McRae adds that cultural representations of the poor became harsher during the seventeenth century on the whole: the poor were often depicted as idle and inferior to those who had adapted to the changing economic landscape (*God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 167). For an example of such a representation, see Adam Moore's *Bread for the Poor. And Advancement of the English Nation. Promised by the Enclosure of the Wastes and Common*

Elizabethan poor laws, based on early Tudor law but supplemented and codified in 1597-1598, to prevent a decline in poor relief in the English countryside.²⁵ Nevertheless, these concerns illustrate that the seventeenth-century estate lord was a transitional figure in English agrarian society. On the one hand, he needed to lay claim to an idealized vision of stewardship from the feudal past to legitimize his authority by fashioning himself as a judicious, responsible, and attentive steward of the estate. The meticulous organization of the estate, from the design of the house and its outbuildings to the labor performed on the estate, all contributed to this image. At the same time, this vision of responsible stewardship stood in stark contrast to the actual practices of the estate lord; over the course of the seventeenth century, he introduced new ways of exploiting laborers, the land, and its resources for his own gain, thereby facilitating the shift to agrarian capitalism in rural England.

While the gentry's new sources of wealth intensified concerns that the gentry's respect for customs of hospitality and charity was declining, these sources of wealth proved uniquely

Grounds of England (London, 1653).

²⁵ The Elizabethan poor laws were primarily created not only to restore institutional mechanisms for the relief of the poor after the Dissolution, but also to deal with the rise in poverty that was caused by the threat of famine in the 1590s—a result of consecutively poor harvests, and the failure of wage increases to keep pace with price increases in grain and other commodities. In the immediate aftermath of the Dissolution, poor relief was largely provided on a voluntary basis or imposed by local parishes in the form of a compulsory tax. Earlier poor laws had been enacted as well, such as the 1536 act which required local parishes to take weekly collections for the relief of the poor. The Elizabethan poor laws were, therefore, a large-scale effort to codify and systematize similar efforts that had been made throughout the Tudor period, and even before, to mitigate the effects of poverty in early modern England. The Elizabethan poor laws required parish officials to find employment for the able-bodied, seek out apprenticeships for poor children, and provide money to those who were unable to work. These efforts to provide relief for the poor were often accompanied by acts designed to regulate and criminalize vagrancy, such as those passed in 1495, 1531, and 1547. For more information on customs of hospitality and charity, the Elizabethan poor laws, and vagrancy laws in early modern England, see the following: A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560-1640* (New York: Methuen, 1985); Ilana Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); L.A. Botelho, *Old Age and the English Poor Law, 1500-1700* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2004); Paul Fideler, *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Marjorie McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Claire Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1599-1620* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); and Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990).

advantageous to the gentry, as changing economic conditions demanded new methods of estate management that favored those who had capital to expend and whose power depended more on the money economy of agrarian capitalism than the traditional feudal economy of manorialism. A significant drop in grain and wool prices during this period, for example, favored landowners who could invest their capital to develop more efficient and productive agricultural practices. As the demand for larger tracts of land increased to meet this demand for grain and wool, forest land was converted into arable land, which lacked the same link to aristocratic privilege and power as forest land. Changes in the form of rent payment also favored landowners whose power did not reside in the class-based feudal relationship between lord and tenant, but instead derived, at least initially, from the landlord's participation in the market economy, including domestic or foreign trade and overseas enterprise.²⁶ In other words, the legitimacy of the estate lord began to depend less on land ownership and his careful stewardship of a self-sufficient, organic community on the estate than on the capital he had and how he used it to adapt to the changing economy.

Estate parklands, for instance, underwent a number of changes during the seventeenth century, which illustrate how capitalist imperatives had begun to shape practices on the country estate. Many of these changes were initiated by the enclosing of land, which often led to depopulation, as local cottages were demolished and cottagers driven from their homes. While some lords embarked on projects to expand their parklands, others deforested their parklands to meet the estate's demand for timber or to convert them to agricultural or industrial uses, such as crop production and the construction of iron forges, in an effort to maximize profits. As symbols of aristocratic privilege and power, which was too often built on the backs of the poor by dispossessing them of their means of livelihood, these parks were to become the target of a

²⁶ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 142.

number of attacks during the Civil War: parks were despoiled, their fences and hedges were pulled down or dismantled, and deer in the parks were set free or killed.²⁷

Over the course of the seventeenth century, substantial changes were also made to farming techniques on the country estate, which were geared towards increasing productivity for profit. Before the early modern period, crop production and livestock grazing typically occurred on separate plots of land, and most farmland lay fallow when not being tilled. With the introduction of convertible, or “up and down,” husbandry in the early modern period, however, strips of arable land were temporarily—sometimes for years at a time—converted to pasture, enabling more sheep and cattle to be kept during periods when land would have simply lain fallow. Enclosure, crop rotation, and the draining of marshlands were several other techniques used to increase productivity for profit. As Wood has observed, these advancements enabled England to become the leading exporter of grain and cereal by the end of the seventeenth century with a relatively small labor force compared to, say, France, whose total output was similar during the same period but with a much larger labor force. These improvements also made it possible to sustain a rapidly growing population, a substantial portion of which was no longer employed in agricultural production.²⁸ Although these practices were economically advantageous and socially beneficial to the nation in this respect, these benefits came at the cost of exploiting laborers, the land, and its resources in new ways. While the estate lord of seventeenth-century England thus fashioned himself as a steward of a moral economy in which human beings lived harmoniously with each other and with nature, in reality he focused his energies on efficiency

²⁷ The estates of royalist gentry and parliamentary gentry alike were targeted. At least eighty country houses are known to have been destroyed during the Civil War; numerous others were plundered, and construction of new country houses was by and large suspended during this period (Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*, 12).

²⁸ England’s urban population more than doubled between 1500 and 1700. During this same period of time, London’s population alone grew from approximately 60,000 to 575,000 (Wood, *The Origins of Capitalism*, 97-8).

and on turning the land to profit, at the expense of the laborers he employed, the land, and its resources.

This being said, country estates were not bastions of economic success during the seventeenth century, not least because the early seventeenth century was a time of general economic *malaise* that lasted for several decades. The gentry also faced a number of financial difficulties over the course of the seventeenth century that further undercut the country estate's idealized reputation for self-sufficiency. Some estates suffered from extravagant spending and poor; some were mortgaged or purchased on credit. Some landowners were even outlawed or imprisoned for not paying debts they had incurred. Furthermore, over the course of the century, the country houses themselves suffered from "damage or despoliation in the Civil War, accidental fires, [and] lack of proper maintenance which contributed to their decay and virtual abandonment in the case of families which spent much of their time in London."²⁹ In other words, the actual conditions of the country estate of seventeenth-century England often were not as perfect as they appeared to be in the early modern imagination. The gentry's affinity for London and the Court over estate management, coupled with the growth of urban centers, also threatened to diminish the social function of the country estate and its lord that had obtained through much of Elizabeth I's reign. After all, if the landlord spent most of his time away from the estate and if the source of his legitimacy was now based in capital, then the lord was essentially no more than "an owner with absolute proprietorial rights," rather than a "steward of the land and its dependants" who was the creative force of the community on the estate.³⁰

²⁹ Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*, 193-4.

³⁰ McRae, "Husbandry Manuals," 35. It was to combat this trend, McBride argues, that James issued and then continued to renew his policy ordering the gentry to return to their country estates throughout his reign. The same might be said of the exorbitant expenditure on these estates and the revival of the country-house genre that occurred near the end of Elizabeth I's reign and in the early part of James I's reign (*Country House Discourse*, 93).

Looking at the long-term economic situation, we can see that the country estate was in a state of flux in seventeenth-century England, as the gentry clung to tradition and adapted their methods of estate management to the changing conditions of the agrarian economy. Put another way, the country estate was, ideally, the center of a moral economy in which humankind lived harmoniously with each other and with nature. However, this ideal was increasingly incompatible with the money economy of agrarian capitalism, which the estate itself was bearing the signs of—in the forms of land tenure, labor, and land management. More and more, practices on the country estate were geared towards increasing productivity for profit, which led to the exploitation of the unpropertied poor, the land, and its resources in new and more brutal ways. Moreover, these practices simply became par for the course as the English economy moved towards a value system that more explicitly privileged the most efficient, productive, profitable—and which often meant more exploitative—use of land over its right use, which was one of the imagined obligations of the lord of the country estate since feudal England. To reiterate, this shift from feudalism to agrarian capitalism was not a kind of fall from a paradise of social or ecological justice, and the notion that nature existed for humankind's gain was certainly not a new one. Agrarian capitalism simply doubled down on this notion, developing new ways to exploit the labor of the unpropertied poor, the land, and its resources in the name of profit.

II. Women's Labor and Relationship to Property in Early Modern England

A discussion of women's ecological thinking in agrarian capitalist England owes much to the rigorous and extensive work done by historians and literary scholars on early modern women's work and relationship to property. John Archer and Richard Burt's edited collection *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England* (1994) explores how

policies of enclosure and the emergent market economy shaped conceptions of sexuality and the female body. Of the essays anthologized, John Rogers's essay on Milton's *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* stands out. In this essay, Rogers specifically argues that the portrayal of virginity as "self-contained and self-enclosed" in Milton's masque provided a rhetorical model for the Levellers' theorization of liberty during the English Revolution, most notably during the Putney Debates of 1647.³¹ Peter Stallybrass has also examined the relationship between women and enclosure, illustrating that early modern Englishwomen were perceived and treated in common law as the "fenced-in enclosure" of landlords, fathers, and husbands.³² Michelle Dowd's *Women's Work in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (2009) brings together women's writing, economic criticism, and early modern drama to examine various iterations of the female servant in a range of seventeenth-century drama. In doing so, she aims to "construe and define the limits of female subjectivity within a shifting and contested labor market."³³

Scholarship on women's work in England's emergent market economy began with Alice Clark's pioneering work *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (1919). In her monograph, Clark argues that the nature and organization of work shifted from "domestic industry" to "capitalistic industry" between the late medieval period and the seventeenth century. She ultimately asserts that women's roles within the home declined over this period as production increasingly took place outside the home and, in turn, launched a "golden age" of

³¹ John Rogers, "The Enclosure of Virginity: The Poetics of Sexual Abstinence during the English Revolution," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, edited by John Michael Archer and Richard Burt, 229-69 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 238. The full collection is an invaluable resource to consult for those interested in this topic.

³² Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: the body enclosed," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers, 123-44 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 127.

³³ Michelle M. Dowd, *Women's Work in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2. Natasha Korda's *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) investigates a similar topic.

laboring women.³⁴ Susan Amussen's and Clare Crowston's work on this topic modifies Clark's claim, while conceding that women did enjoy more opportunities to work outside the home in the seventeenth century than scholars had previously suggested. Amussen's *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (1994) demonstrates that the home was still the primary economic unit during this period and that Clark's conclusions would be more accurately applied to the eighteenth century. In her work on early modern women and guilds, Crowston claims that "capitalistic industry" ultimately had the effect of reducing the number and variety of skilled trades available to women during this period. More specifically, Crowston shows that women were gradually squeezed out of the guilds during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as guilds began to wield more power over the urban economy and exert more control over the labor market. Nevertheless, Crowston concludes that work available to women in the market economy expanded in considerable ways in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as "girls, women, and their families took advantage of loopholes, interstices, and tacit or overt authorization to obtain training, employment, partnership, and even autonomous guild membership."³⁵

In *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (2005), Marjorie McIntosh also qualifies Clark's claim by suggesting, like Crowston, that women's situation was not "rosy even in the best of periods," even though work opportunities expanded through the late medieval and early modern periods.³⁶ Drawing on equity court petitions from five market centers, McIntosh demonstrates that women of varying socioeconomic status engaged in small-scale moneylending

³⁴ Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1919).

³⁵ Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Clare Crowston, "Women, Gender, and Guilds in Early Modern Europe: An Overview of Recent Research," *International Review of Social History* 53 (2008): 44. For more information on women's participation in the market economy, see Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).

³⁶ Marjorie McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 30. Her research is based on the following five market centers: Tamworth in Staffordshire, Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, Northallerton in North Yorkshire, Romford in Essex, and Minehead in Somerset.

and pawnbroking. While widows with more access to capital set up shops and even rented property in London as a form of financial security for their children, McIntosh emphasizes that most women working outside the home engaged in petty commerce as small-time producers, consumers, and retailers who sold goods in the street or from makeshift stalls. McIntosh also explains how a woman's marital status, reputation, and occupational identity shaped her creditworthiness during this period, adding that married women's commercial activities primarily depended on their husbands' financial support. Because women mostly engaged in "non-professional lending" and credit transactions became more complex over time, McIntosh argues that "large commercial lenders" came to dominate credit relations by the early 1600s.³⁷

More recently, Alexandra Shepard has shown that single-women played a uniquely formative role in shaping credit relations and the urban economy of early modern England. Her work is the result of the careful study of 13,500 witness responses to "questions of [women's] worth and how [women] maintained themselves" from six dioceses, two archdeaconries, and the Cambridge University courts between 1550 and 1728.³⁸ Drawing on this data, Shepard demonstrates that many single-women and, despite the constraints of "coverture," a sizeable portion of married women increasingly conceived of themselves in terms of their work, even if they did not have professional occupational titles. In common law, "coverture" stipulated that a woman's moveable property and legal rights passed to her husband upon marriage. A *femme couverte* could not make contracts in her own name and could not sue or be sued. Unlike a *femme couverte*, a *femme sole*, or single-woman, had the right to own property and make

³⁷ Marjorie McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620*, 99.

³⁸ Alexandra Shepard, "Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy," *History Workshop Journal* 79, no. 1 (2015): 4. The six dioceses included Canterbury, Chester, Ely, London, Salisbury, and York, and the archdeaconries in question were those of Lewes and Richmond. For a more extended discussion of married women's worth, see Shepard, "The Worth of Married Women in the English Church Courts, c. 1550-1730," in *Married Women and the Law in Premodern Northwest Europe*, edited by Cordelia Beattie and Matthew Frank Stevens, 191-211 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2013).

contracts. In response to historians who have primarily focused on the restrictive nature of coverture, Shepard argues that this legal convention “also granted single-women relative autonomy over their assets, which they appear to have used with increasing frequency and skill to generate interest from loans.”³⁹ She also illustrates that married women took advantage of work opportunities while obeying the strictures of coverture. Maria Agren’s more recent edited collection *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society* (2017) breaks new ground in early modern women’s history and digital humanities by using data collection to shed light on the nature of women’s work in early modern European society, with a focus on early modern Sweden.⁴⁰

Women also performed a considerable amount of agricultural labor during this period. Pamela Sharpe’s work on seventeenth-century Cornwall, Alfred Hassell Smith’s work on the village of Stiffkey in late-sixteenth-century Norfolk, and Amanda Flather’s work on early modern Essex demonstrates that women’s agricultural labor was, in fact, “complementary” to men’s labor.⁴¹ In *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (1996), Sharpe explains that women on the Antony estate in Torpoint in Cornwall primarily engaged in the winnowing of barley and the threshing of oats. Hassell-Smith’s study of the wage books and accounting records of gentleman farmer Nathaniel Bacon reveals that women mainly engaged in weeding, haymaking, and the shearing and binding of wheat.⁴² Amanda Flather explains that women’s domestic work in Essex included cooking, tending the kitchen garden, baking bread, brewing beer, spinning and making clothes, and purchasing goods from town

³⁹ Shepard, “Crediting Women,” 3.

⁴⁰ Maria Agren, ed., *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴¹ Pamela Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 74.

⁴² Alfred Hassell-Smith, “Labourers in Late-Sixteenth-Century England: A Case Study from North Norfolk [Part I],” *Continuity and Change* 4, no. 1 (1989): 11-52.

markets or itinerant traders. Some women even became itinerant traders themselves by selling produce and dairy from door to door. According to Flather, women's labor in the field consisted of planting and weeding in spring; haymaking in June; harvesting, binding, and transporting grain to barns in July and August; and gleaning fields of leftover corn, wheat, barley, and oats in early autumn.⁴³

Jane Whittle has also contributed a great deal to our understanding of women's agricultural labor during this period. Her work with Mark Hailwood on 4,300 work tasks documented in coroners' reports, church court depositions, and quarter session examinations from Cornwall, Devon, Hampshire, Somerset, and Wiltshire between 1500 and 1700 has yielded valuable results. Based on their assessment of these work tasks, Whittle and Hailwood draw two main conclusions: first, women mainly engaged in winnowing and, to a lesser extent, the threshing of oats in these counties; second, women in these regions spent approximately as much time on agricultural work as they did on housework. Whittle and Hailwood also add that female servants were commonly employed on small farms because they were a cheap source of labor.⁴⁴ Whittle's examination of probate accounts from Durham, Cheshire, Chesterfield in Devonshire, Stratford-upon-Avon, east Kent, Devon, and Cornwall between 1534 and 1699 has shed much light on the nature of married women and widows' work on estates in these regions. In particular, Whittle illustrates that married women and widows generated income for their husbands' or late-husbands' estates in a number of ways, primarily through unpaid agricultural labor, food processing, and textile production. Based on this data, Whittle gathers that "some women who

⁴³ Amanda Flather, "The Spatial Division of Labour," in *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*, 75-93 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007). On spinning, Flather notes that nearly 25,000 women worked as spinners in Essex in 1700. For more on women's spinning work, see Craig Muldrew, "'Th'ancient Distaff' and 'Whirling Spindle': Measuring the Contribution of Spinning to Household Earnings and the National Economy in England, 1550-1770," *The Economic History* 65, no. 2 (2012): 498-526.

⁴⁴ Jane Whittle and Mark Hailwood, "The Gender Division of Labour in Early Modern England," *The Economic History Review* 73, no. 1 (2020): 3-32.

had worked alongside their yeomen farmer husbands during marriage continued to work as yeomen farmers, managing large farms, during widowhood.”⁴⁵

Robert Allen’s analysis of estate surveys and estimates of crop yields between 1600 and 1800 reveals that agricultural employment opportunities for women and boys declined during this period, as large-scale farming overtook small-scale farming and family farming. Allen argues that this downward trend occurred because total employment size did not keep pace with the expansion of farm size. As an example, Allen cites the reduced demand for milkmaids in the eighteenth century; because dairy cows were not terribly profitable, large-scale farmers did not have substantially more cows than small farmers, meaning that the employment of milkmaids per farm acre declined as farm size increased.⁴⁶ Sharpe has drawn similar conclusions about the agricultural work available to women between 1700 and 1850, and she attributes this decline to the combined effects of women’s migration to towns and cities and, like Allen, the reduced demand for female labor on large farms.⁴⁷ When viewed together, these scholars’ work shows how difficult it is to draw unified conclusions about women’s agricultural work in early modern England, as women’s work varied not only between counties, but also regions of a single county.

Early modern Englishwomen also contributed to the urban and rural economies by asserting themselves as owners and managers of property during this period. Amanda Capern, Patricia Crawford, Anastasia Crosswhite, Pamela Hammons, and Barbara Harris have shown that

⁴⁵ Jane Whittle, “Enterprising Widows and Active Wives: Women’s Unpaid Work in the Household Economy of Early Modern England,” *The History of the Family* 19, no. 3 (2014): 294. Whittle examines how work was organized within the home in “The House as a Place of Work in Early Modern Rural England,” *Home Cultures* 8, no. 2 (2011): 133-50. For information on how women’s housework evolved between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries in the British Isles, see Caroline Davidson, *A Woman’s Work is Never Done: A History of Housework in the British Isles, 1650-1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982).

⁴⁶ Robert C. Allen, “The Growth of Labor Productivity in Early Modern English Agriculture,” *Explorations in Economic History* 25, no. 2 (1988): 117-146. Allen explains that dairy cows were kept primarily because they provided a relatively steady source of income compared to corn (135).

⁴⁷ Pamela Sharpe, “The Female Labour Market in English Agriculture during the Industrial Revolution: Expansion or Contraction?” *The Agricultural History Review*, 47, no. 2 (1999): 161-81.

early modern Englishwomen, married and single, sought legal recourse outside common law—in equity, ecclesiastical, and manorial law—to protect property or assert rights to property. As Crawford observes, to a great extent “a woman’s property rights” was “influenced by her own willingness to assert her claims.”⁴⁸ Capern’s work on landed women in early modern England reinforces Crawford’s claims by discussing women who mounted legal challenges to defend their property rights. In a similar way, Crosswhite’s work on the property disputes in which the Manners and Talbot families, two of the wealthiest families in early modern England, were embroiled proves that the women in these families “managed to own, control, and bequeath significant amounts of property.”⁴⁹ Building on these arguments, Hammons and Harris have argued that aristocratic women could, in Hammons’s words, “mobilize a network of support” and “appeal, often successfully, to the king and his courtiers” because of their rank.⁵⁰

Amy Erickson has emerged as one of the leading authorities on gender and property in recent years. Her research has drawn on sample marriage settlement forms, bills of complaint and other records in the Court of Chancery, and probate accounts to clear up a number of misconceptions about early modern Englishwomen’s relationship to property. For example, Erickson has demonstrated that marriage settlements were not only more common than previous scholarship has suggested, but also primarily designed to “preserve the wife’s property rights.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Patricia Crawford, “Women and Property: Women as Property,” *Parergon* 19, no. 1 (2002): 167. For more, see Amanda L. Capern, “The Landed Woman in Early Modern England,” *Parergon* 19, no. 1, (2002): 185-214.

⁴⁹ Anastasia B. Crosswhite, “Women and Land: Aristocratic Ownership of Property in Early Modern England,” *New York University Law Review* 77, no. 4 (2002): 1121.

⁵⁰ Pamela Hammons, “Rethinking Women and Property in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England,” *Literature Compass* 3, no. 6 (2006): 1396. For Harris’s text, see Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵¹ Amy Louise Erickson, “Common Law versus Common Practice: The Use of Marriage Settlements in Early Modern England Author(s),” *The Economic History Review* 43, no. 1 (1990): 22. Erickson’s *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2002) examines probate accounts to demonstrate how widows inherited property and spent money on their children’s upbringing.

She attributes this misconception to three causes: an overly narrow definition of what marriage settlements entailed, which assumed that settlements were exclusively used by the wealthy and primogenitary in nature; a conflation of property with land, which excluded other forms of property, such as household goods; and an over-reliance on common law, which has caused scholars to overlook the many legal avenues women took to assert property claims. On this final cause, Erickson has convincingly argued that the “draconian” nature and application of coverture drove many women to make use of alternative legal tools to secure their property rights, such as bonds, contracts, settlements, and trusts.⁵² Like Capern, Crawford, Crosswhite, and Hammons, Erickson ultimately contends that early modern Englishwomen took active measures to assert and preserve their property in a number of ways.

Each of the scholars I have discussed illuminates how early modern Englishwomen asserted property rights, engaged in credit relations, and sought work on the urban and rural labor markets. While the early modern period was certainly not a “golden age” for laboring women, work opportunities expanded considerably in the early modern period for women, and many women actively contributed to England’s economic growth. This dissertation partly builds on the thorough, comprehensive work of these scholars by examining women’s concerns about the ecological impact of shifting to a system of property that granted landholders exclusive rights to the land. My argument thus broadens our understanding of women’s relationship to property in seventeenth-century England, not by addressing how women asserted or were denied property rights, but by investigating how they cast into relief the costs of this property system on the

⁵² Amy Erickson, “Coverture and Capitalism,” *History Workshop Journal* 59, no. 1 (2005): 5. For more information on the relationship between women and property in early modern England, see John Brewer and Susan Staves, eds., *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds., *Gloriana’s Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); and Ian Doolittle, “Property Law and Practice in Seventeenth-Century London,” *Urban History* 42, no. 2 (2015): 204-24.

nonhuman world. To put another way, the women examined here attend to the diverse ways in which the property system in agrarian-capitalist England provided fodder for the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world.

III. Adopting and Resisting the “Discourse of Improvement” in Seventeenth-Century England

Cultural and literary discourse did not simply record the changing conditions of the seventeenth-century English economy; rather, these modes of discourse had an active hand in entrenching the exploitative logic of agrarian capitalism in English society. After all, the men and women of early modern England certainly did not invent the idea that nature exists for humankind’s pleasure and gain. The imperatives of agrarian capitalism simply took this logic to new extremes by introducing more exploitative and extractive methods of engaging with nature. The practices, modes of production, and structures of social relations that agrarian capitalism introduced were also accompanied by new cultural forms and modes of discourse that responded to and shaped these economic and social changes. The culture and literature of seventeenth-century England therefore helped to intensify the prevailing belief that nature existed for humankind’s gain and, moreover, that methods of harnessing nature for our gain should be improved to maximize profit. In this section, I show how the Judeo-Christian mandate to dominate nature, the New Science, the discursive subordination of uncultivated wilderness and waste to cultivated land, and a shift towards a georgic ethos together provided the intellectual backing for policies such as disafforestation, enclosure, and fen reclamation. In short, these developments made the exploitation of the nonhuman world more palatable.

In scholarship on early modern England, this discourse is often referred to as the “discourse of improvement,” since “improvement” became the primary buzz-word in writings and discussions about land use during this period. A derivative of Old French, the verb “to improve,” in its seventeenth-century usage, means “to enclose and cultivate wasteland or unoccupied land in order to make it profitable; to undertake or carry out the improvement of land or property.”⁵³ In fact, in seventeenth-century England an “improver” specifically referred to someone who enclosed land or reclaimed wasteland in order to increase productivity and thus turn the land to profit. In his work *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (1996), for example, Andrew McRae argues that the belief that land was something to be “revitalized by restless ingenuity and specifically masculinized endeavor” firmly took hold in the seventeenth century, replacing Christian ideals of “good husbandry” or responsible stewardship, which were exalted in Elizabethan England in genres like the agrarian complaint.⁵⁴ According to McRae, in seventeenth-century English literature, the Christian ideal of stewardship became less important than the values of the “industrious freeholder,” whose primary goal was not to cultivate the imagined moral economy of feudal manorialism but to turn the land to profit.⁵⁵ Anthony Low has made a related claim in his work on the seventeenth-century georgic tradition in England. More specifically, Low contends that a wide array of English writings from the seventeenth century, especially husbandry manuals and scientific writings by the period’s natural philosophers, crafted a “georgic sensibility” that worked to counter “the age’s prejudices against farming and manual labor.”⁵⁶ Mark Netzloff’s work on the

⁵³ The word derives from a combination of *eu* (into) and *preu* (profit). See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s. v. “improve, v.2a” March 2016, Oxford University Press (Accessed October 13, 2019).

⁵⁴ McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 161.

⁵⁵ McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 164.

⁵⁶ Anthony Low, “New Science and the Georgic Revolution in Seventeenth-Century English Literature,” *English Literary Renaissance* 13, no. 3 (1983): 259.

seventeenth-century surveying manual, especially on John Norden's *The Surveyor's Dialogue* (1618), also reveals how the "market-driven ethos of agricultural improvement" began to overtake arguments for stewarding the land with care during this period.⁵⁷

This discourse was first and foremost fueled by the belief that the nonhuman world's "raison d'être was to nourish and enrich human life," as Todd Borlik observes in *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (2011).⁵⁸ How humankind should exercise its sovereignty over the nonhuman world was less clear. As Carolyn Merchant argues in *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (2003), opinions largely fell into two camps, "aided by the Christian doctrine of redemption and the inventions of science, technology, and capitalism." First were those who viewed the recovery of humankind's prelapsarian dominion over nature as a fulfillment of God's command to "replenish the earth and subdue it" in Genesis 1:28. By this logic, humankind had a moral duty to control, dominate, and improve nature so that, in Merchant's words, "the entire earth" could be transformed "into a vast cultivated garden."⁵⁹

The philosophy and practices of the New Science also enabled the logic of agrarian capitalism to take hold in English society by providing the intellectual backing for this model. For early modern natural philosophers, the primary purpose of scientific inquiry was utilitarian: in other words, the secrets of nature should be uncovered not because the pursuit of knowledge was valuable in and of itself, but because the human condition must be improved. For example, in his *Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon writes that nature is "a rich Store-House, for the

⁵⁷ Netzloff, "Introduction," xxxix.

⁵⁸ Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1.

⁵⁹ Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 19.

glorie of the Creator and the reliefe of Mans estate.” He even argues that the “greatest error” human beings can make in the pursuit of knowledge is to forget that this pursuit must be geared towards “the benefit and use of men.”⁶⁰ To further legitimize this logic, these same natural philosophers looked to scriptural passages like Genesis 1:26-28 for justification, in which God gives Adam absolute dominion over the earth.⁶¹ In Aphorism 129 of *Novum Organum* (1620), for instance, Francis Bacon argues that the primary goal of scientific inquiry is to recover the knowledge humankind lost after the Fall and to “the right over nature which belongs to him by God’s gift, and give it scope.”⁶² Like the language of Genesis 1:26, the language Bacon uses here does little to clarify exactly how this “right over nature” should be exercised and given “scope.” In fact, his language is just ambiguous enough that it could be used to justify both responsible stewardship and outright exploitation.

Although Bacon does build out this idea elsewhere in the text, he does little to clarify his final position. On the one hand, he hopes that “right reason and sound religion will govern” our use of nature.⁶³ On the other hand, he urges us to “conquer nature by action” in the text’s preface.⁶⁴ Taken together, Bacon seems perfectly comfortable with the domination of nature, yet concerned with the destructive effects of that domination. This tension builds through Aphorism 129, in which Bacon argues that there are three kinds of ambition:

The first is the ambition of those who are greedy to increase their personal power in their own country; which is common and base. The second is the ambition of those who strive to extend the power and empire of their country among the

⁶⁰ Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (London, 1605), 25-26.

⁶¹ This dominion is expansive: Specifically, God gives human beings “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (KJV). Husbandry and surveying manuals regularly used scriptural passages to insist on the importance of maintaining country estates. For example, Norden’s preface, “To the Benevolent Readers,” urges estate lords to take up the burden of labor and toil placed upon them by the curse of original sin (7). In this preface, Norden also references Ecclesiastes 5:8, which reads, “The King consisteth by the field that is tilled” (8).

⁶² Bacon, *New Organon*, 101.

⁶³ Bacon, *New Organon*, 101.

⁶⁴ Bacon, *New Organon*, 30.

human race; this surely has more dignity, but no less greed. But if anyone attempts to renew and extend the power and empire of the human race itself over the universe of things, his ambition (if it should so be called) is without a doubt both more sensible and more majestic than the others. And the empire of man over things lies solely in the arts and sciences. For one does not have empire over nature except by obeying her.⁶⁵

Although he believes that it is both “sensible” and “majestic” to conquer nature, he almost immediately qualifies that statement by stating that we must “obey” nature, without clarifying what that obedience consists of. This ambiguity opens up a few possibilities. In one sense, the capitalist mode of production obeys nature by understanding how its resources can most effectively be harnessed and extracted for profit. At the same time, however, these practices squeeze nature of all it has, destroying the thing Bacon tells us to obey.

In fact, the exploitative logic of the capitalist mode of production might be best captured by the mission statement of Salomon’s House, the scientific body that governs the city of Bensalem, in Bacon’s *New Atlantis*: “The End of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible.”⁶⁶ In short, knowledge matters insofar as it enables humankind to expand its empire over the globe. Robert Boyle deploys similar language in *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature* (1686), writing that “the veneration wherewith men are imbued for what they call nature has been a discouraging impediment to the empire of man over the inferior creatures of God.”⁶⁷ The Aristotelian theory of souls and the Great Chain of Being worked to reinforce these natural philosophers’ logic by framing humankind as alone capable of rational action and feeling. Hobbesian mechanism, Descartes’s concept of the *bête-machine*, and

⁶⁵ Bacon, *New Organon*, 100.

⁶⁶ Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*, in *Three Early Modern Utopian texts*, edited by Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 176-77.

⁶⁷ Robert Boyle, *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature* (1686), edited by Edward B. Davis and Michael Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15.

forms of animal experimentation, such as vivisection, effectively reduced nature to an unfeeling machine, unable to suffer at the hands of humankind. Representations of nature as a nurturing yet uncontrollable woman whom man must bring under his control further legitimated this attitude, as Merchant explains at length in *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980).⁶⁸ In *Cogitata et Visa* (1607), for instance, Bacon asserts that humankind must not merely exert a “gentle guidance over nature’s course” because human beings have “the power to conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundation.”⁶⁹ In these ways, the scientific thinkers of early modern England made the culture more amenable to the logic of improvement, or turning nature to profit.

In *Reinventing Eden*, Merchant persuasively argues that this model, which she terms the “Recovery project,” overtook a second, less exploitative model during the early modern period. In Merchant’s view, this second model turned to Genesis 2:15, in which God instructs Adam to “dress” and “keep” the Garden of Eden, as “an ethical alternative to the domination of nature.”⁷⁰ As examples, she cites William Derham’s *Physico-Theology* (1713), and the Boyle lectures Derham preached from 1711-1712, as texts which use Christian theology to ground their exhortations to steward nature with care. Aware of the temptation to project modern ecological sensibilities onto the past, Merchant emphasizes that this model did not go so far as to suggest nature had “intrinsic” value outside of its use to humankind. As a result, most efforts to preserve nature during this period were motivated by fears of resource scarcity or concern for how these

⁶⁸ Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980), 189.

⁶⁹ Francis Bacon, “Thoughts and Conclusions on the Interpretation of Nature or A Science of Productive Works,” in *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, edited and translated by Benjamin Farrington (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964), 93. In *The New Organon*, Bacon argues that humankind must uncover the “exceedingly useful things [that] are still hidden in the bosom of nature” (86).

⁷⁰ Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*, 23. Merchant argues that this trend has continued into the twenty-first century.

efforts might best serve humankind.⁷¹ While Merchant's argument helpfully explains the intensified exploitation of nature during the early modern period, her efforts to separate these models are ultimately unsustainable. As agrarian capitalism developed and the "discourse of improvement" gained traction over the course of the seventeenth century, the desire to turn the land to profit certainly eclipsed the duty to steward the earth with care outlined in Genesis 2:15. However, these models overlapped in various ways in seventeenth-century England. As I have shown above, Bacon is noticeably more reluctant in *The New Organon* than in *Cogitata et Visa* to license the exploitation of nature, even if the mere belief that humankind enjoys a "right over nature" opens the door to its domination.⁷² In fact, the Recovery model was so successful in seventeenth-century England because it coopted this second model for its own purposes, often depicting the domination of nature in a much rosier light—as an act of stewardship or care.

Like the agrarian-capitalist system it propped up, the "discourse of improvement" also proved remarkably adaptable by folding the duty to steward nature into the desire to master it, then pressing this hybrid model into the service of profit. The increasing popularity of husbandry and surveying manuals in seventeenth-century England demonstrates, perhaps most directly, the adaptability of this discourse. These manuals were primarily designed to advise estate lords on how to best manage their estates. While these manuals did encourage estate lords to practice moderation and to steward their estate with care, the advice put forward in these manuals was increasingly directed at improving efficiency and increasing productivity on the country estate in order to maximize profit.

⁷¹ Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 72. Merchant makes a similar point in *Reinventing Eden*, 23-24.

⁷² Bacon, *New Organon*, 101.

John Norden's *The Surveyor's Dialogue* (1618), for example, redirects the conservative model of responsible stewardship toward the new order of agrarian improvement. In Book 4, the Surveyor argues that even the "best land" will be rendered "evil" if the "aid and industry of a skillful husband" are not employed. He doubles down on this claim by arguing that this evil must be "cleansed" from the land "by the industry of man, who was enjoined that care and travail to manure the earth."⁷³ The Surveyor then suggests that husbandry must be directed at profit by noting that the hedges of the estate he surveys "lie very unhusbandly," which he argues would "increase and yield profit and supply" were they properly husbanded.⁷⁴ In these ways, the Surveyor reframes the duty to "dress" and "keep" nature as a duty to eradicate evil itself by bringing nature under humankind's control, then improving it for profit. In short, his text legitimizes the more intensive and extractive use of nature as a fulfillment of the scriptural injunction to care for the earth.

As Norden's text shows, the duty to steward nature could be repurposed in exploitative ways because not all forms of nature were created equal in early modern England. On the one hand was uncultivated nature, otherwise referred to as wilderness or waste.⁷⁵ The view of uncultivated land as "wild" or "savage" carried over into representations of the inhabitants of these spaces, who were regarded as uncultivated as the land itself. The woods had long been regarded as a refuge for brigands and squatters, an attitude which Norden's text reinforces. When asked by the Bailiff what "Great Britain" looked like when it was "first peopled," the Surveyor

⁷³ Norden, *The Surveyor's Dialogue*, 176.

⁷⁴ Norden, *The Surveyor's Dialogue*, 189.

⁷⁵ Borlik explains that "wilderness" was essentially "synonymous with waste-land" during the early modern period (*Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, 1). In *Reinventing Eden*, Merchant distinguishes between two different kinds of wild, negative and positive: "The negative wild encompassed those outside of civilization: the lower classes, minorities, 'savages,' and wild animals who must be controlled so that civilization could exist and against which it could define itself. The positive wild exemplified God's awesome power to affect the natural world" (85).

responds that it was “a very Desert and wilderness, full of woods, fells, moors, bogs, heaths, and all kind of forlorn places [. . .] for the most part an universal wilderness.”⁷⁶ The Surveyor then argues that the topography of the land clues us in to the temperament of its inhabitants: he first asserts that “people bred amongst woods, are naturally more stubborn, and uncivil, than in the Champion Countries”; he then proposes that “the *Mountains, Meadows Woods, Marshes*, and the *Sea-coast*, breed by nature all *rudes, refractarios et immanes*, without the grace of God directing them.”⁷⁷ In these passages, the Surveyor suggests that good stewards of nature have a two-fold moral duty: to cultivate the wilderness and the equally wild people who dwell there.

As a general rule, the seventeenth-century “discourse or improvement” thus encouraged the widescale cultivation and improvement of land considered waste or wilderness—a massive exercise in what Norden called “reforming the earth.”⁷⁸ By framing uncultivated land as “evil,” Norden’s text reinforces the belief that “human intervention was necessary to improve” the “manifest defects” of “inhospitable, infertile places,” as Borlik has shown.⁷⁹ In turn, Norden’s text also illustrates that “agricultural improvement and exploitation were not just economically desirable; they were moral imperatives” during this period, as Keith Thomas has argued in *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (1983).⁸⁰ Efforts to improve and turn a profit on the land in seventeenth-century England therefore gained legitimacy because

⁷⁶ Norden, *The Surveyor’s Dialogue*, 176.

⁷⁷ Norden, *The Surveyor’s Dialogue*, 169-70.

⁷⁸ Norden, *The Surveyor’s Dialogue*, 177. The Surveyor makes a similar point when he argues that if “noisome weeds [. . .] were duly drained, and carefully husbanded, it would make good meadow in short time” (148). Later in the text, he again links proper stewardship to husbanding the earth: “sith this country is full and most inclinable by nature to this kind of stuff, more than sufficient for fencing and fuel, and corn ground and good pasture nothing plentiful, if the Tenant were a good husband he would stock it up and plow it” (178). In these ways, Norden demonstrates Merchant’s claim that “the best state of nature was an ordered, improved garden rather than a forested wilderness or a barren desert” (*Reinventing Eden*, 85).

⁷⁹ Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, 1.

⁸⁰ Keith Thomas, “Cultivation and Wilderness?,” in *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800*, 254-68 (London: Allen Lane, 1983).

texts such as Norden's framed these efforts as both the expression of humankind's right over nature and the fulfillment of its moral duty to "dress" and "keep" the Garden.

Norden's advice for how estate lords should comport themselves also demonstrates how agrarian improvement was represented as an act of conscientious stewardship. For instance, he insists that estate lords have a "good conscience" and avoid "extremes of austerity, vain prodigality, or compulsive exactions."⁸¹ He goes on to argue that estate lords must be neither "infidels" nor "Tyrants," but dutiful Christian lords, which the estate surveyor, of course, will help them accomplish by providing a rigorous inventory of the estate's features and by drawing up the legal documents which delineated the lord's proprietorial rights and responsibilities.⁸² However, the opening line of Norden's dedication to Robert Cecil, whose family had been Norden's patron for some time, demonstrates a commitment to the logic of improvement under agrarian capitalism:

As the earth (right honorable) was given to man, and man (after divine) was enjoined the care of earthly things, every man in several place, quality and state, the greatest receiving thence greatest dignities, even to be called *Princes of the Earth*, so is it not the least regard, that men of whatsoever title or place, should have of the lawful and just means of the preservation and increase of their earthly Revenues.⁸³

Here, Norden alludes to Genesis 1:26, in which God gives man dominion over the earth. While God is notably unclear as to how this dominion should be exercised in the Hebrew Scriptures, Norden rather explicitly states that this dominion should be geared towards increasing "earthly Revenues," and he pitches his text as the guidebook on how to best do so. Towards the end of

⁸¹ John Norden, *The Surveyor's Dialogue*, 7 and 9.

⁸² Norden, *The Surveyor's Dialogue*, 77. This model of responsible stewardship is perhaps best captured by the Surveyor's question in Book 1: "And is not every Manor a little commonwealth" (34)? As McRae contends, while there are certainly moments in Norden's text that insist on the "active supervision" of the land and its tenants, Norden's focus is primarily on the ways in which the estate lord can maximize profit by knowing his estate inside and out (*God Speed the Plough*, 192-93).

⁸³ Norden, *The Surveyor's Dialogue*, 5.

this dedication, Norden reiterates this point, stating that lords can ensure “greatness” by learning “to preserve and augment Revenues.”⁸⁴ Over the course of his text, then, Norden repurposes Christian models of responsible stewardship to legitimize the logic of agrarian capitalism.

After being revived in the sixteenth century, the pastoral genre fell out of fashion over the course of the seventeenth century and gave way to the georgic mode, which offered additional rationale for land improvement projects. To explain how this shift occurred, it is necessary to describe the main features and function of the early modern pastoral. Paul Alpers and Louis Montrose have emphasized the centrality of representations of shepherds’ lives to the pastoral

⁸⁴ Norden, *The Surveyor’s Dialogue*, 6. McRae argues that the transition from a conservative model of responsible stewardship to a model of estate management based in agrarian improvement is perhaps most evident in the changes made to the final edition of John Fitzherbert’s *Boke of Husbandrie*, printed in 1598. Fitzherbert’s text underwent eighteen different editions between the date of its first publication (London, 1523?) and the end of the century. In its earlier editions, Fitzherbert portrays the ideal estate lord as the center of a stable and harmonious moral economy on the manorial estate. As McRae observes, in this text’s final edition, the printer and likely editor James Roberts shifted the text’s focus, instead encouraging estate lords to implement the practices of the agrarian improver (*God Speed the Plough*, 137-45). Husbandry, gardening, and surveying manuals became increasingly popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and were intended to reach a wide audience, from new estate lords to lawyers, accountants, or rural farmers unable to follow instructions written in Latin. For more information, see McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 135-68; and Elizabeth Tebeaux’s work on technical writing during the early modern period, especially “English Agriculture and Estate Management Instructions, 1200-1700: From Orality to Textuality to Modern Instructions,” *Technical Communication Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2010): 352-78. For an extensive, but certainly not exhaustive list, of husbandry, gardening, and surveying manuals published in early modern England, see Ralph Agas, *A Preparative to Platting of Lanes and Tenements for Surveigh* (London, 1596); Richard Benese, *This Boke Sheweth the Measuryng of all Maner of Land* (London, 1537); Walter Blith, *The English Improver Improved* (London, 1652); Fitzherbert, *Boke of Husbandrie* (1530); Fitzherbert, *The Boke of Surveying and Improvements* (London, 1523); Samuel Hartlib, *The Compleat Husband-man: or, A Discourse of the Whole Art of Husbandry* (London, 1659); Thomas Hill, *A Most Brief and Pleasant Treatyse Teachyng How to Dress, Sowe, and Set a Garden* (London, 1563); Conrad Heresbach’s *Foure Bookes of Husbandry*, translated from Barnabe’s original Latin edition, which was published in 1570 (London, 1577); Valentine Leigh, *The Moste Profitable and Commendable Science of Surveying of Lands* (London, 1577); Thomas Littleton’s earlier work on English property law entitled *Littleton’s Tenures in English* (London, 1481?); Gervase Markham’s over twenty instructional works on estate management and animal husbandry, especially *The English Husbandman. The First Part* (London, 1613); *Markhams Farewell to Husbandry* (London, 1625); *Markhams Methode, or Epitome* (London, 1616?); *The Second Booke of the English Husbandman* (London, 1614); *A Way to get Wealth* (London, 1623); and Markham’s edition of Charles Estienne’s *Maison Rustique; or, The Countrey Farm* (London, 1616); Leonard Meager, *The English Gardener, or, a Sure Guide to Young Planters and Gardners* (London, 1681); Reginald Scot, *A Perfite Platform of a Hoppe Garden, and Necessary Instructions for the Making and Mayntenance Thereof* (London, 1574); Aaron Rathborne, *The Surveyor in Four Bookes* (London, 1616); Thomas Tusser, *A Hundredth Good Pointes of Husbandrie* (London, 1557), which Tusser later expanded to *Five Hundredth Good Points of Husbandry* (London, 1573); John Worlidge, *Systema Agriculturae, or, The Mystery of Husbandry Discovered* (London, 1675); and Edward Worsop, *A Discoverie of Sundrie Errours and Faults Daily Committed by Land-Meaters, Ignorant of Arithmethike and Geometrie* (London, 1582).

tradition by drawing on texts such as Theocritus's first Idyll, Virgil's *Eclogues*, Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* and sections of *The Faerie Queene*, Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, and Jesuit scholar René Rapin's *Dissertatio de Carmine Pastoralis* (1659).⁸⁵ Many early modern pastoral texts portrayed shepherds in a state of *otium*, or leisure, among scenes of natural bounty, often pastures and woodlands. Common among these texts was also the shepherds' complaint, usually about unrequited love. Robert Watson reinforces this view of the pastoral as a depiction of a simpler version of nature in relative harmony with humankind in *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (2006). Therein, Watson explains the revived interest in the pastoral during the English Renaissance as a response "to the nostalgia for unmediated contact with the world of nature" as urbanization, capitalism, new technologies, and the Protestant Reformation clarified the impossibility of this relationship to nature.⁸⁶

Ken Hiltner and Katherine Little have argued that Alpers and Montrose over-emphasized what shepherds represent in pastoral texts, at the expense of exploring the historical realities of shepherds' lives, or how the rise of agrarian capitalism physically altered the English landscape.⁸⁷ In this regard, Hiltner and Little do not so much disagree with Alpers's and Montrose's account of the pastoral genre's defining features, so much as with their scholarly

⁸⁵ Paul Alpers, "What Is Pastoral?" *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 3 (1982): 437-60; Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes,' and the Pastoral of Power," *English Literary Renaissance* 10, no. 2 (1980): 153-82; and Montrose, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form," *English Literary History* 50, no. 3 (1983): 415-59. For more on Rapin's definition of pastoral, see *Dissertatio de Carmine Pastoralis* (1659), in *The Idylliums of Theocritus, with Rapin's Discourse of Pastorals*, translated by Thomas Creech (Oxford, 1684).

⁸⁶ Robert Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 5.

⁸⁷ Ken Hiltner, *What Else is Pastoral?: Renaissance Literature and the Environment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Katherine Little, *Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral and Late Medieval Poetry* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013). For more information on the early modern pastoral, see Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature* (2011); and Douglas Chambers, "'Wild Pastoral Encounter': John Evelyn, John Beale, and the Renegotiation of Pastoral in the Mid Seventeenth Century," in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, edited by Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, 173-94 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992).

approach to this genre. In *Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral and Late Medieval Poetry* (2013), for example, Little argues that the close connection between the figures of shepherd and plowman in the medieval period split in the early modern period, and the shepherd's *otium* became more closely aligned with the leisure enjoyed by agrarian capitalists.⁸⁸ Raymond Williams has also famously taken a materialist approach to the pastoral genre by drawing attention to the ways in which its idealized portrayals of nature mask the exploitative realities of agrarian capitalism.⁸⁹

Scholars generally agree that the renewed interest in the pastoral in sixteenth-century England gave way to “something approximating a georgic ethic” in the seventeenth century, to borrow Hiltner’s words.⁹⁰ As Watson rightly notes, the pastoral’s nostalgic act of looking back to an imagined past in which nature was endlessly bountiful and unaltered by human labor was only ever an illusion because “there is always human work involved in any embrace of the land.” According to Watson, increased interest in the georgic, or a “diligently controlled nature,” signified “a concession that there is no easy road back” to this world of pastoral bliss and that “the fantasy of a rediscovered Eden” was only ever a fantasy.⁹¹ While Watson sets this georgic ethos against the backdrop of agrarian capitalism and imperialism, Anthony Low has demonstrated that the New Science played a formative role in dispelling “prevailing anti-georgic prejudices among the English” over the course of the seventeenth century.⁹²

⁸⁸ Of course, McRae offers a different approach in *God Speed the Plough* (1996), in which he illustrates the centrality of the figure of the plowman to the “discourse of improvement.”

⁸⁹ Williams, *The Country and the City*.

⁹⁰ Hiltner, *What Else is Pastoral?*, 16.

⁹¹ Watson, *Back to Nature*, 68.

⁹² Low, “New Science and the Georgic Revolution,” 234. Little regards these claims that the seventeenth century adopted a georgic ethos as ahistorical because Virgil’s *Georgics* were not imitated in any substantive way until the eighteenth century. Dryden’s translation of *Georgics* was published in 1697.

Scholars such as McRae, Williams, and Don Wayne have illustrated the ways in which seventeenth-century rural verse increasingly bore signs of the new economic order, despite its evocations of an imagined past in which the feudal estate lord and his tenants lived in harmony with each other and with the land. In McRae's words, rural verse composed during this period even, in some cases, endeavored to "remould the ideals of stewardship and moral economy in accordance with the imperatives of a new age."⁹³ One of the functions of country-house verse written by poets like Ben Jonson and Andrew Marvell, which I elaborate on Chapter 2, is to conceal the exploitation of rural laborers and land on the country estate in an effort to glorify the estate lord as the center of a stable, self-sufficient, and harmonious manorial community. This model of responsible stewardship was also an important component of Protestant thought, which nonetheless lent itself well to the emerging capitalist cause. As I show through a discussion of the Puritan New England economy in Chapter 3, the individualism that undergirds Protestant theology is not a far cry from the economic individualism—more specifically, the private accumulation of the means of production—that defines the capitalist mode of production.⁹⁴

Taken together, the "drama of landscape" during this period everywhere staged the intensified exploitation of nature, to draw on the title of Garrett Sullivan's *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property, and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (1998). Land improvement efforts were fueled by the belief that cultivated land was superior to wilderness and waste, and that the latter must therefore be brought under humankind's control. These efforts were also justified by the Hebrew Scriptures, specifically God's double command to "replenish and subdue the earth" in Genesis 1:28 and to "dress" and "keep" the Garden in Genesis 2:15. As

⁹³ McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 279. In addition, see Don Wayne, *Penshurst*; and Williams, *The Country and the City*.

⁹⁴ In making this argument, I am not suggesting a direct causal relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. I discuss the relationship between the two at more length in Chapter 3.

I have argued, this duty to steward nature with care was folded into, not separate from, the larger project to restore humankind's prelapsarian dominion over nature in seventeenth-century England. This hybrid model was then pressed into the service of improving nature so as to turn a profit on it, thus masking efforts to dominate and exploit nature as a fulfillment of one's moral duty to steward the earth. Land improvement efforts were also made more palatable by agrarian capitalism, colonialism, the New Science, and the shift towards a georgic ethos. When viewed together, then, it is impossible to divorce the material treatment of nature in seventeenth-century England from the ways in which it was represented. In other words, these developments reinforce Sullivan's claim that landscape is "profoundly ideological" because it "simultaneously reflects and instantiates attitudes not only toward the land but to a whole range of social phenomena that are indivisible from the land."⁹⁵ To put another way, nature was as much shaped by economic change and new agricultural practices as it was by intellectual discourse in seventeenth-century England.

These forces, combined with the need to raise money for the state, converged in seventeenth-century England to intensify the exploitation of human laborers, animals, the land, and other natural resources.⁹⁶ During this period, environmental policy was shaped by the following concerns: the rapid growth of England's population, timber shortages, disafforestation and deforestation, enclosure and engrossing of farms, draining of the fens and marshes, increased reliance on sea-coal, air and water pollution, harvest failures and famine, resource scarcity, soil exhaustion and nutrient depletion, invasion of species, and loss of biodiversity, along with the

⁹⁵ Garrett A. Sullivan, *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property, and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 2.

⁹⁶ On the ways in which "'economic' and 'environmental' problems" are "constitutively joined," see Jason W. Moore, "The Capitalocene, Part I: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44, no.3 (2017): 602.

rapid growth of the ironworks, shipbuilding, soap, glass, and copper-refining industries.⁹⁷

Demand for lumber, ships, and domestic fuel to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population and to secure England's maritime power, for instance, tripled the price of timber during the sixteenth century and led to widescale timber shortages during the Early Stuart period. To meet these needs and to raise state revenue, both James I and Charles I converted land legally designated as royal forest to ordinary land, a process known as disafforestation. Exclusive proprietary rights were then sold to this land, which was, in turn, privately enclosed by the new owners. The first royal forest subjected to disafforestation and enclosure was Gillingham Forest on the Wiltshire-Dorset border, followed by Braydon Forest in Wiltshire and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. Before this point, royal forests had fallen under the jurisdiction of forest laws which maintained these lands as royal hunting grounds, and tenants in the region enjoyed customary rights to use these lands as commons. By converting royal forest and commons to private property, disafforestation dispossessed these tenants of land they had long depended on for their livelihood, often without proper compensation. The disafforestation of Gillingham Forest, Braydon Forest, and the Forest of Dean led to the Western Risings, which took place between 1626 and 1632. According to Elly Robson, the Crown "abandoned disafforestation from 1632 onward" because of this resistance, "preferring to resurrect feudal forest laws in an attempt to raise revenue through archaic fines levied on forest offenders."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ The information I provide in the following pages on England's environmental policies has been drawn from the following sources: Bruce Boehrer, *Environmental Degradation in Jacobean Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*; Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Merchant, *The Death of Nature*; Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); John F. Richards, "Landscape Change and Energy Transformation in the British Isles," in *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*, 1st ed., 193-241 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.

⁹⁸ Elly Robson, "Improvement and Epistemologies of Landscape in Seventeenth-Century English Forest Enclosure," *The Historical Journal* 60, no. 3 (2017): 632.

Timber shortages also caused the English to increasingly rely on sea-coal, so named because it often arrived by sea after having been shipped from Newcastle. Sea-coal substantially worsened London's air quality, if historical accounts of Charles's complaints are accurate, and produced a terrible smell because of its sulfuric composition. Although laws were put in place to regulate this industry, in practice they were loosely enforced because sea-coal had become one of the more readily available energy sources in England. In fact, Merchant has noted that England's coal-mining output rose from just a few hundred tons to approximately 15,000 tons per year between 1540 and 1640, and its coal imports increased by as much as 25% over this period. In 1661, John Evelyn published *Fumifugium, or, The Inconveniencie of the Aer and Smoak of London Dissipated Together with Some Remedies*.⁹⁹ Addressed to Charles II, Evelyn's text explains London's problems with air pollution, the effects of this pollution on human health, and how London's air quality as a whole might be improved.

The enclosing of common fields and waste, and the engrossing of farms, also expanded over the course of the seventeenth century and led to considerable unrest.¹⁰⁰ In Tudor England, resistance to enclosure broke out in 1549 with Kett's Rebellion in Norfolk and the Cornish Rebellion in Cornwall and Devon, though the immediate cause of the latter was the introduction of the Edwardian *Book of Common Prayer* that same year. In 1593, laws against enclosure were relaxed, after which point many estate lords converted land from grain production to the breeding of cattle and sheep, a practice they continued even after the reinstating of these laws in 1597. For the most part, enclosure intensified in the seventeenth century as England shifted to an

⁹⁹ John Evelyn, *Fumifugium, or, The Inconveniencie of the Aer and Smoak of London Dissipated Together with Some Remedies* (London, 1661).

¹⁰⁰ Most often, enclosure involved the conversion of commons and waste-land, which commoners used for cultivation and pasture, to individually owned plots of land used for pasture. Farmers in a single village sometimes collectively agreed to enclose a plot of land, or petitioned their local government to enclose a portion of commons for themselves.

agrarian capitalist economy, as I have shown earlier in this chapter. Roger Manning's work on enclosure demonstrates that at least 300 anti-enclosure cases were reported between 1530 and 1640, the majority of which are documented in the Court of the Star Chamber's records. According to Manning, approximately half of the cases reported during James I's reign were responses to the enclosure of commons and waste-land, mainly because it dispossessed commoners of their customary rights to the land.¹⁰¹ As Nicholas Blomley has demonstrated, anti-enclosure protesters often targeted hedges as both a material marker of property and a sign of the exclusive property rights. He adds that hedge-breaking was a "legitimate assertion of common right" from the perspective of the protesters, who had been dispossessed of this right.¹⁰² In addition to hedge-breaking, protesters levelled and filled in ditches, or dug up roots, to ensure that re-enclosure would be a slow and difficult process. As a form of resistance, protesters also trespassed parks, plowed up land that had been converted to pasture, continued to collect once-common resources like firewood, and seized livestock.¹⁰³

The most famous anti-enclosure riot of the period was, of course, the Midland Rising of 1607, which began when the Earl of Shrewsbury, Gilbert Talbot, reported that around one-thousand men and women had started "busily digging" in the village of Newton in Northamptonshire, according to Steve Hindle. These efforts escalated over the following days into full-fledged battle between the diggers and the local gentry. In the preceding weeks, as many as five thousand men and women had gathered and begun digging in the villages of Cotesbach in

¹⁰¹ Roger B. Manning, *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509-1640* (New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁰² Nicholas Blomley, "Making Private Property: Enclosure, Common Right and the Work of Hedges," *Rural History* 18, no. 1 (2007): 16.

¹⁰³ For more information, see Briony McDonagh's work on enclosure in "Making and Breaking Property: Negotiating Enclosure and Common Rights in Sixteenth-Century England," *History Workshop Journal* 76, no. 1 (2013): 32-56; McDonagh, "Subverting the Ground: Private Property and Public Protest in the Sixteenth-Century Yorkshire Wolds," *Agricultural History Review* 57, no. 2 (2009): 191-206; McDonagh and Stephen Daniels, "Enclosure Stories: Narratives from Northamptonshire," *Cultural Geographies* 19, no. 1 (2012): 107-21.

Leicestershire; Ladbroke, Hillmorton, and Chilvers Coton in Warwickshire; and Haselbech, Rushton and Pytchley in Northamptonshire.¹⁰⁴ As Christian Langert has shown, one male protester dressed in women's clothing and adopted the role of Lady Skimmington to organize the Western Risings in the Forests of Dean and Braydon in the 1630s, and women also were reported to have repurposed the folk custom of the "skimmington" to protest enclosure by dressing in men's clothing. Cross-dressing protesters, Langert argues, thus exposed the state's "hegemonic understanding of a natural social order," which the state used "to claim that protests against enclosure were unnatural and therefore invalid," instead as "a constructed social network equally unnatural and no more significant than peasants' own claims."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Steve Hindle, "Imagining Insurrection in Seventeenth-Century England: Representations of the Midland Rising of 1607," *History Workshop Journal* 66, no. 1 (2008): 23.

¹⁰⁵ Christina B. Langert, "Hedgerows and Petticoats: Sartorial Subversion and Anti-Enclosure Protest in Seventeenth-Century England," *Early Theatre* 12, no. 1 (2009): 122; and John Martin, "The Midland Revolt of 1607," in *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548–1900*, edited by Andrew Charlesworth, 32–36 (London: Croon Helm, Ltd., 1983). For more information on the enclosure movement and anti-enclosure riots in early modern England, see James P. Bowen, "'Before the Breaking of the Day, in a Riotous Manner and with Great Shouts and Outcries': Disputes Over Common Land in Shropshire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Rural History* 26, no. 2 (2015): 133–59; Edwin F. Gay, "The Midland Revolt and the Inquisitions of Depopulation of 1607," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Series, 18 (1904): 195–244; Christopher Harrison, "Fire on the Chase: Rural Riots in Sixteenth-Century Staffordshire," in *Staffordshire Histories: Essays in Honour of Michael Greenslade*, edited by Phillip Morgan and A. D. M. Phillips, 97–126 (Keele: Staffordshire Record Society, 1999); J. M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Rights, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Philip Arthur John Pettit, *The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire: A Study in their Economy 1558–1714* (Gateshead: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1968); Oliver Rackham, *The History of the Countryside: The Classic History of Britain's Landscape, Flora and Fauna* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000); J. R. Ravensdale, *Liable to Floods: Village Landscape on the Edge of the Fens, AD 450–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Robson, "Improvement and Epistemologies of Landscape in Seventeenth-Century English Forest Enclosure"; Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge, 1957); Christopher P. Rodgers, Eleanor A. Straughton, Angus L. Winchester, and Margherita Pieraccini, eds., *Contested Common Land: Environmental Governance Past and Present* (London and Washington, DC: Earthscan, 2011); Leigh Shaw-Taylor, "The Management of Common Land in the Lowlands of Southern England circa 1500 to circa 1850," in *The Management of Common Land in North West Europe, c. 1500–1850*, edited by Martina De Moor, Leigh Shaw-Taylor, and Paul Warde, 59–85 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); John Walter, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Malcolm Wanklyn, "Rural Riots in Seventeenth Century Shropshire," in *Rural Social Change and Conflicts Since 1500*, edited by Andrew Charlesworth, 7–17 (Hull, 1983); Michael Williams, *The Draining of the Somerset Levels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Richard Wilson, "'Like the Old Robin Hood': As You Like It and the Enclosure Riots," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (1992): 1–19; Angus J. L. Winchester, *The Harvest of the Hills: Rural Life in Northern England and the Scottish Borders 1400–1700* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Winchester, "Upland Commons in Northern England," in *The Management of Common Land in North West Europe, c. 1500–1850*, edited by Martina De Moor, Leigh Shaw-Taylor, and Paul Warde, 33–57 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge:

Resistance to enclosure came to a head in the middle of the seventeenth century with the Diggers, or “True Levellers.” The Diggers defined themselves in opposition to the “constitutional” Levellers, both of whom Oliver Cromwell despised. The platform of the “constitutional” Levellers is most clearly laid out in *An Agreement of the People of England* (1649), the final version of a series of constitutions drafted and debated between 1647 and 1649. In this agreement, the Levellers advocated for the extension to all men over the age of 21—excepting servants, paupers, and Royalists—the abolition of the House of Lords, the transfer of sovereignty to the House of Commons, and the abolition of tithes.¹⁰⁶ Christopher Hill’s work on an earlier petition from September 1648 indicates that the Levellers had “declared in favour of laying open recent enclosures of fens and other commons, or of enclosing them chiefly for the benefit of the poor,” while rejecting “any idea of abolishing property, leveling estates or making all common.” Hill notes that calls to restore lands to communal use, such as the 1648 pamphlet *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, were rare among the leaders of the movement, whereas unofficial Leveller thought tended to push an even more radical program. In his words, “official Leveller pronouncements” did not take a firm stance “in favour of security of tenure for copyholders and against enclosure—until after the defeat of 1649,” while demands for the “abolition of base tenures [. . .] to establish an independent peasantry” began as early as April 1648 among the Agitators in the New Model Army.¹⁰⁷ During the late 1640s, the Levellers’ program for reform was therefore a contested subject, as the movement’s leaders defended

Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

¹⁰⁶ *An Agreement of the People of England* (London, 1649). Earlier drafts of the agreement were famously the subject of the Putney Debates of 1647, during which civilian Levellers and Agitators of the New Model Army debated the terms of a new English constitution.

¹⁰⁷ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London and New York: Penguin, 1972), 95-96.

private property and hesitated to adopt reforms put forward by the more radical faction of the movement, such as equality of property.

When they emerged on the scene in 1649, the Diggers took a much clearer stance: they wanted to abolish private property and restore common use rights to the land. In this respect, as Hill correctly notes, they “spoke for those whom the ‘constitutional’ Levellers would have disenfranchised—servants, labourers, paupers, the economically unfree.”¹⁰⁸ In *The Law of Freedom in a Platform: Or, True Magistracy Restored* (1652), Gerrard Winstanley, a prominent leader of the Diggers, argues that property is the origin of all sin and that “all laws were made in the days of Kings to ease the rich Landlord.”¹⁰⁹ To emphasize the extent to which “rich Landlords” exploit the poor, Winstanley writes that “oppressing Lords of Manors, exacting Landlords, and Tythe-takers” do not let “their brethren [. . .] breathe in the ayr, nor enjoy warmth in their bodies, nor have the moyst waters to fall upon them in showres, unless they will pay them Rent for it.” In Winstanley’s view, agrarian capitalism afforded landlords the opportunity to extract all that it could from the laboring classes, even the air they breathed. To counteract the worst effects of an economic system designed to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor, Winstanley argued that everyone had a right to “the free use of the Earth” because the “Earth is a

¹⁰⁸ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 97.

¹⁰⁹ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform: Or, True Magistracy Restored* (London, 1652), 77. Winstanley also lays out the Diggers’ platform in *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* (London, 1649). The information I have provided here is a simplified and condensed version of Christopher Hill’s and James Holstun’s much more comprehensive work on Winstanley and the English Revolution in Hill, *Winstanley “The Law of Freedom” and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*; and James Holstun, *Ehud’s Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (London and New York: Verso, 2002). For more information on Winstanley, the Diggers, and the radical sects that emerged during the English Revolution, see Christopher Hill’s other work in *The English Revolution 1640* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979); *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1993); *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); *Liberty against the Law: Some Seventeenth-Century Controversies* (New York and London: Verso, 2020); and *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1964).

Common Treasury to all men.”¹¹⁰ He even proposed that Parliament reverse all land sales made since the Dissolution, then to put these lands into a “Commonwealth land fund.”¹¹¹

The Diggers put Winstanley’s ideas into practice in early April 1649, when a group of men, seventy-three of whom are known by name, began to dig the waste-land at St. George’s Hill in Walton-on-Thames in Surrey, England, thereby founding the first Digger community. As Hill notes, the location was not chosen by accident. The colony was set up on the edge of Windsor Forest, where a number of Charles I’s deer were held. The region was also a hotbed of radical activity: English puritan John Udall preached at Kingston-on-Thames, and he was associated with the publication of the Martin Marprelate tracts attacking the Anglican Church. The project was partly launched in response to increasing concerns about hunger and unemployment as well; England had suffered repeated harvest failures between the 1620s and 1650s, food prices and the cost of living had risen substantially in the late 1640s, and many disbanded New Model Army soldiers who had not volunteered for service in Ireland had been refused payment in arrears and now struggled to find employment. The colony lasted through the year, but local Surrey lords raided the colony numerous times, ultimately forcing the remaining members to move the colony to Cobham Heath, where the project ended the following year in April 1650. Other Digger communities were established during the seventeenth century in Wellingborough in Northamptonshire, Cox Hall in Kent, Iver in Buckinghamshire, Barnet in Hertfordshire, Enfield in Middlesex, Dunstable in Bedfordshire, Bosworth in Leicestershire, and a number of additional places in Gloucestershire and Nottinghamshire.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom*, 18, 19 and 27.

¹¹¹ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 105.

¹¹² Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 99.

The programs of many of the radical religious sects that emerged and thrived around the same time as the Levellers and the Diggers were partly a response to agrarian capitalism. As Protestant Christians separated from the Anglican Church, a growing list of sects formed in the mid-seventeenth century, including the Anabaptists, Behmenists, Brownists, Familists, Fifth Monarchists, Grindletonians, Muggletonians, Quakers, Ranters, and Seekers.¹¹³ These sects proved especially popular in English towns among craftsmen, apprentices, clothworkers, and merchants. However, these sects also spread quickly in the moorlands and woodlands where a parson simply could not keep an eye on each one of his parishioners in the often-vast region over which he had jurisdiction. Sectarians were able to disseminate their ideas quite efficiently in print because censorship laws were loosened between 1641 and 1660 and a number of printing presses became hotbeds of radical writing—most famously the print shop of Giles Calvert and the army press of John Harris, a New Model Army Agitator. While the programs of these sects were quite diverse in scope, many expressed at least some concern for economic and agricultural reform. Anabaptists objected to the payment of tithes, for instance, and some allegedly went so far as to reject private property outright. Familists even held property in common. Quaker leaders of Lancashire were largely comprised of northern yeomen and craftsmen, and many members of the movement had suffered at the hands of landlords in the region. While the Ranters and the Quakers shared more in common than either sect would have preferred to admit, the Quakers believed that original sin compelled humankind to labor, while the Ranters practiced a libertine lifestyle. Hill has persuasively argued that this lifestyle was an “extension downwards of the

¹¹³ Hill’s *The World Turned Upside Down* provides a thorough but comprehensive overview of each of these sects.

attitudes of the traditional leisured class,” such as the “dislike of labor,” and thus functioned as a form of protest against “nascent capitalism.”¹¹⁴

The Fifth Monarchist program for reform is most relevant to this dissertation since Chapter 4 examines the ecological thinking of prominent Fifth Monarchists Mary Cary and Anna Trapnel. Based on the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, Fifth Monarchists believed that the Fifth Monarchy was nigh, the period known as the “millennium” during which Christ would reign with his saints on earth for one thousand years. According to Fifth Monarchists, the first three monarchists had already been defeated—the Assyrian, the Persian, and the Greek—but the Fourth Monarchy, the Roman, had yet to be defeated because it lived on in the Anglican Church. Fifth Monarchists denounced the Crown, the clergy, the nobility, and the gentry as proponents of popery, and these sectarians viewed the political upheaval of the 1640s and 1650s as a sign of the Roman monarchy’s imminent destruction. Leaders of the movement included radical preachers Christopher Feake, Vavasour Powell, and John Simpson, and New Model Army Major-Generals Thomas Harrison and Robert Overton were sympathetic to the Fifth Monarchist cause, if not full supporters. As I have said, prophetesses such as Mary Cary and Anna Trapnel also played formative roles in the movement. Many of these leaders were imprisoned for their views and prophetic activities, especially for speaking out against Cromwell’s regime after abandoning support for him when it became clear that he had no plans to deliver on his promises. In 1657 Fifth Monarchist Thomas Venner led an unsuccessful coup against Cromwell, and in 1661 he attempted to take the city of London in the name of “King Jesus,” now known as Venner’s Rising.

As Christopher Hill and James Holstun have shown, radical social and economic change

¹¹⁴ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 274. Both the Ranters and the Quakers allowed women to minister.

were central to the Fifth Monarchist project. In *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (2002), for example, Holstun illustrates the ways in which radical sectarians sought to “transform the relations of productions” (88). Fifth Monarchists’ calls for ecological reform have received considerably less attention, a space Chapter 4 of this dissertation aims to fill. In this chapter, I demonstrate that Cary and Trapnel’s prophetic writings present economic reform as inseparable from ecological reform.¹¹⁵ As I elaborate on in that chapter, like other Christian millenarians, Fifth Monarchists often portrayed the prophesied millennium, also termed the Golden Age or New Jerusalem, as a world in which humankind and the nonhuman world would live in harmony. In the 1650s some millenarians even set up booths displaying lambs and lions in a state of peaceable coexistence as a representation of the millennium, as Thomas has noted in *Man and the Natural World*.¹¹⁶ To varying degrees, sectarians therefore had a hand in resisting the new world order of agrarian capitalism and, in particular, a property system built on exclusive rights to the land, which encouraged the intensified exploitation of other human beings and the nonhuman world.

Land improvement projects in the coastal fens and marshes of East Anglia, which were subject to reclamation during the seventeenth century, were also met with considerable resistance in the 1620s and 1630s. The fenlands were known for their rich soil and biodiverse ecosystems, and the fenlanders who inhabited the region were largely self-sufficient, making their livelihoods by pastoral farming, fishing, and water-fowling. However, the Crown viewed these lands as unimproved commons and waste, which led to the conversion of the fenlands to arable land for the production of grain, sugar beets, and potatoes, or to pasture for grazing. During the final

¹¹⁵ Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger*, 88. For more information on the Fifth Monarchists’ program for reform, see Holstun’s chapter on “The Public Spiritedness of Anna Trapnel,” in *Ehud's Dagger*, 257-304.

¹¹⁶ For the relevant chapter, see Thomas, “Meat or Mercy?,” *Man and the Natural World*, 287-99.

years of Elizabeth I's reign, Parliament passed the General Draining Act of 1600, allowing manorial lords and holders of common rights in the region to cede sections of the fens to investors, who would then enclose the land and drain it by channeling freshwater in the fens to the sea to prevent seasonal flooding. The first major drainage project took place between 1626 and 1628 at Hatfield Chase marsh and the Isle of Axholme, situated at the juncture of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire. At the time, Charles I was lord of a number of manors in nearby villages and believed that he could increase rents in the region by investing in drainage works. Drainage projects continued in Lincolnshire throughout the 1630s. Construction of the Bedford Level drainage works began in 1631, and the channel was completed in 1637. Construction was led by the Bedford Level Corporation and affected some 160,000 hectares (nearly 400,000 acres) of fenland in Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk.

John Richards and Ken Hiltner have convincingly argued that the English Civil War was partly a referendum on fen drainage and enclosure.¹¹⁷ In the 1620s and 1630s, fenlanders mounted legal challenges to drainage projects and rioted over them by destroying enclosures and drainage ditches.¹¹⁸ Drainage projects were sponsored by the Crown and nobility, many of the undertakers who financed the projects were also Royalists, and Cromwell expressed support for the fenlanders before he took power—all of which drove fenlanders to the Parliamentary cause. As a result, the fenlands became one of the main recruiting grounds for Parliamentary forces during the wars. In the 1640s, widespread unrest in the region, heightened by the outbreak of

¹¹⁷ Hiltner, *What Else is Pastoral?*, 163; and Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 219. Richards discussion of fen drainage projects is a particularly invaluable resource for anyone desiring a thorough but concise overview of this subject. For information on environmental policy and resistance during the English Revolution, see George Yerby, *The English Revolution and the Roots of Environmental Change: The Changing Concept of Land in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

¹¹⁸ Pro-drainage literature of the period often justified drainage works by vilifying fenlanders for their poor health, as many became ill with “marsh fever,” or malaria.

civil war, forced many drainage projects to be put on pause. As Richards notes, during the Interregnum fenlanders' lobbying efforts temporarily prevented Parliament from ordering the repair and continuation of the Lincolnshire works. However, the Bedford investors ultimately persuaded Cromwell to continue work on the Bedford level, which was then legalized in 1649 by an act of Parliament. The repairs were completed in 1652, and approximately 38,000 hectares of newly drained fenland was split between the original investors and the Crown.¹¹⁹ Richards contends that the success of the Bedford level—that it survived the fenland riots, the war, and the fenlanders lobbying efforts—dashed any remaining hopes that the fenlanders' way of life, or the biodiverse ecosystem on which they had depended, would be preserved.

Although conservation policies were implemented in seventeenth-century England, these were primarily guided by economic interest and fears of resource scarcity, not by any real concern for the well-being of nature. Reforestation policies, for instance, were often created only to meet England's construction, shipbuilding, and fuel needs. While John Evelyn's *Sylva, or, A Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber* (1664) has been heralded as an early environmentalist text, the text was written in response to an inquiry the English Royal Navy submitted to the Royal Society concerning the effects of England's timber shortages on the shipbuilding industry. Evelyn's argument for reforestation was therefore less an environmentalist defense of the inherent value of trees, than a literary exercise in land improvement that considered how to maintain England's naval force without depleting England's main source of timber. As Evelyn would later boast, for good reason, his text was a driving force behind a 1668 Act for replanting in the Royal Forest of Dean.¹²⁰ In response to timber shortages, England often

¹¹⁹ Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 219-20.

¹²⁰ John Evelyn, *Sylva, or, A Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber* (London, 1664). For more information see Thomas's chapter dedicated to a discussion of the use and misuse of trees in early modern England in *Man and the Natural World*, 198-222.

searched abroad for solutions to this problem. In fact, by 1700 Ireland's forests, which comprised nearly one-eighth of Ireland's land in 1600, had been reduced to just 2%. England also increasingly relied on colonial New England for its supply of timber and ships, which I discuss at more length in Chapter 3. As Borlik has noted, Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion, or A chorographical description of tracts, riuers, mountaines, forests, and other parts of this renowned isle of Great Britain* (1613-1622) perhaps comes closest to what we might call an environmentalist text because, to borrow Borlik's words, "accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation."¹²¹

Animals were also subject to increasingly cruel practices in seventeenth-century England. As I mentioned earlier, the Aristotelian theory of souls and the Great Chain of being reinforced that the nonhuman world was inferior to humankind, who alone had the capacity for reason. Descartes's concept of the *bête-machine* and mechanical philosophy reduced the nonhuman world to a machine that was allegedly incapable of suffering. These ideas helped justify forms of experimentation such as vivisection, which the Fellows of the Royal Society practiced, though Robert Hooke and Robert Boyle avoided performing vivisection on the same animal more than once, for fear of subjecting the animal to repeated torture. The popularity of hunting, bearbaiting, and cockfighting also illustrates that many early modern men and women believed that animals existed, by and large, for humankind's use and pleasure.¹²²

¹²¹ Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, 6-7. Borlik specifically argues that Drayton's text meets each of each of the four criteria Lawrence Buell argues a text must meet to be considered "environmentalist" (Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995]). For Drayton's text, see Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion, or A chorographical description of tracts, riuers, mountaines, forests, and other parts of this renowned isle of Great Britain* (London, 1613-1622).

¹²² For two comprehensive studies of the perceptions and treatment of animals in early modern England, see Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.

However, many of these practices were met with staunch criticism during this period. In her *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666), Margaret Cavendish argues that humankind's dominion over nature must be exercised with great care, writing that "it is a false maxim to believe that if some creatures have power over others, they also have power over nature."¹²³ Cavendish also famously confessed the following in her biography of her husband, William Cavendish: "it troubles my conscience to kill a fly," she writes, "and the groans of a dying beast strike my soul."¹²⁴ Like this statement, her poems "The Hunting of the Stag," "The Hunting of the Hare," and "A Dialogue Between an Oak and a Man Cutting It Down," which I discuss in Chapter 2, demonstrate a deep sensitivity to animals' and plants' capacity for suffering. In *A Watch-Word to the City of London, and the Armie* (1649), Gerrard Winstanley expresses similar sympathy for the cows he once witnessed estate bailiffs beat while working as a cowherd at Walton-on-Thames: "And yet these cows were never upon George Hill, and never digged upon that ground, and yet the poor beasts must suffer because they give milk to feed me."¹²⁵ As I explore in more depth in Chapter 4, Fifth Monarchists portrayed the coming millennium as a vision of harmony between humankind and the nonhuman world. In *Gangraena* (1646), Thomas Edwards even proposes that "there is no difference between the flesh of a man and the flesh of a toad."¹²⁶ In a similar vein, in his essay "Of Crueltie" Michel de Montaigne

¹²³ Margaret Cavendish, *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, 203.

¹²⁴ Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, edited by C.H. Firth (New York: Scribner & Wellford, London, 1886), 175. Nonetheless, like most early modern natural philosophers, Cavendish believed that the primary purpose of all scientific endeavor was utilitarian. For example, in *Orations of Divers Sorts*, she writes, "We [shall] know how to Increase our Breed of Animals, and our Stores of Vegetables, and to find out the Minerals for our Use...for the Profitable Increase for Men" (Margaret Cavendish, *Orations of Divers Sorts, Accommodated to Divers Places* [London, 1662], 244-45).

¹²⁵ Gerrard Winstanley, *A Watch-Word to the City of London, and the Armie* (London, 1649), 329.

¹²⁶ Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (London, 1646), 1:20.

goes so far as to suggest that humankind's presumed "soveraigntie" over nature is "imaginary."¹²⁷

In sum, as England shifted to an agrarian capitalist economy undergirded by the "discourse of improvement," the laboring classes and the nonhuman world were exploited in more intense ways. Moreover, several modes of discourse came together during this period to make a more "accommodating cultural context," in McRae's words, for the agrarian-capitalist logic of improvement.¹²⁸ The resulting "discourse of improvement" authorized the domination of nature by depicting it as an act of conscientious stewardship, then by pressing this hybrid model of domination and stewardship into the service of profit. Individuals hit hardest by these changes did not quietly along with these changes, however. Rioters broke hedges and filled in ditches to protest against disafforestation and enclosure in the Midland Rising of 1607 and the Western Risings of 1626-1632. Winstanley and the Diggers put their belief that property was the origin of all sin into practice at St. George's Hill, rejecting an economic system that benefitted "rich Landlords" at the expense of the laboring classes. In the 1620s and 1630s, fenlanders destroyed drainage works in an effort to preserve their way of life and the biodiverse ecosystems of the coastal fens and marshes. Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* and Montaigne's *Essais*, texts more commonly cited in early modern ecocritical scholarship, also exhorted humankind to steward nature with the utmost care. This dissertation situates women's ecological thinking in the context of these

¹²⁷ Michel de Montaigne, "Of Crueltie," *the Essayes*, translated by John Florio (London, 1603), 243. In the same essay, Montaigne's love for his dog moves him to defend animals' rights to merciful treatment: "Yet is there a kind of respect, and a general duty of humanitie which tieth us not only unto brute beasts that have life and sense, but even unto trees and plants. *Unto men we owe Justice*, and to all creatures, that are capable of it, grace and benignitie. There is a kinde of enter-changeable commerce and mutuall bond between them and use. I am not ashamed nor affraide to declare the tendernesse of my childish Nature, which is such, that I cannot well reject my Dog, if he chance (although out of season) to fawne upon me, or begge of mee to play with him" (241).

¹²⁸ McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 69.

developments by examining how these women contributed to and challenged the logic of improvement that has undergirded the capitalist mode of production since its inception.

To be clear, the “discourse of improvement” was, without question, alive and well in seventeenth-century England. However, Montaigne, Cavendish, and Winstanley’s sensitivity to animals’ capacity for suffering demonstrates that the culture and literature of the period did not unreservedly adopt the logic of agrarian capitalism by the century’s end, as some scholars have suggested. Unfortunately, this argument has been made by overlooking a body of women’s writing that tells a different and more complicated story. As I stated at the start of this introduction, this dissertation is an effort to redress this gap in scholarship on the economy, the system of property, and human relationships to the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England. When women’s writing is given greater consideration in this scholarly discussion, a more well-defined narrative that runs counter to the “discourse of improvement” emerges—one that hews more closely to the Genesis 2:15 model to “dress” and “keep” the earth. Although some of these women strengthen Merchant’s claim that concerted efforts to care for the nonhuman world during this period were driven by how humankind could benefit from them, some even suggest that the nonhuman world is deserving of care because it has value outside of its use to humankind.

IV. Methodology

As I have shown in the previous sections, the representation of nature as a “mere storehouse of useful resources” to be exploited for profit was a product of the changing conditions of the English economy, system of property rights, and relationship to the land during

the seventeenth century.¹²⁹ As agrarian capitalism, a growing domestic and increasingly global market economy, and colonial projects abroad became the order of the day in England, the notion that nature existed to be turned to profit simply became a matter of course. As I have shown, however, this emerging idea was not simply a reflection of the changing times, but a discursive tool deployed to back these changes. During this period, a range of social, cultural, and political forces to authorize and continually re-authorize the exploitation of nature for profit by representing it as a space whose “*raison d’être* was to nourish and enrich human life”—from Bacon’s call to recover the knowledge we lost after the Fall, to husbandry and surveying manuals designed to increase the power and profit of estate lords, and to policies of enclosure, deforestation, and fen drainage.¹³⁰ In literary studies, the field of ecofeminism aims to uncover not only the constructed nature of this representation, but also to help us see just how “this construction serves gender and class interests,” as Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace have argued.¹³¹ In short, from an ecofeminist perspective, the discourse of “improvement” that emerged in seventeenth-century England reinforced male, aristocratic power at the expense of women, other oppressed social groups, and nature itself.

As an offshoot of ecofeminism proper, the field of Marxist ecofeminism directs attention to the specific ways in which the capitalist mode of production has relied, from its earliest days until now, on “social oppression and environmental exploitation” to survive, in the words of Sherilyn MacGregor.¹³² MacGregor expands on this definition by writing that Marxist ecofeminism aims to uncover “the historical connections between primitive accumulation and

¹²⁹ Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature*, 14.

¹³⁰ Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, 1.

¹³¹ Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace, *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 10.

¹³² Sherilyn MacGregor, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 2.

the exploitation of women and feminized nature, as well as to show how capitalism survives by enclosing and appropriating everything involved in subsistence.”¹³³ MacGregor’s definition provides an especially useful way of thinking through women’s discursive and actual engagement in environmental governance in seventeenth-century England because primitive accumulation became part and parcel of the English economy and relationship to the land during this period. Through the enclosing and engrossing of land, the concentration of that land in fewer and fewer hands, and the forcible dispossessing of that land from populations who had long depended on it for their survival—it became clear that the logic of capitalism, here in one of its earliest forms, would survive by exploiting certain bodies and nature in the name of enhancing male, aristocratic power.

This is not to say that the close association made between women and nature in seventeenth-century England was natural or inevitable. Just because women and nature were subject to male, aristocratic modes of power during this period does not mean that women are inherently closer to nature than men, or that women are inevitably better, which is to say kinder, caretakers of nature than men. Not all male estate lords were absolutists, obsessed with mastery and exploitation, and not all female aristocrats were kinder or gentler caretakers of nature. As Jennifer Munroe has argued, it is simply an historical fact that the “modes of power that subjected women to men” during this period “had at their core similar mechanisms that subjected the nonhuman world to the human.”¹³⁴ More specifically, to secure the legitimacy of the patriarchal culture, proto-capitalist economic system, and colonial projects of seventeenth-century England, each of which was built on the domination of women and nature, it was critical

¹³³ MacGregor, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, 18.

¹³⁴ Jennifer Munroe, “Is it really Ecocritical if it Isn’t Feminist?: The Dangers of Speaking for in Ecological Studies and Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*,” in *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide to Reading and Teaching*, edited by Jennifer Munroe, et al., 37-47 (New York: Routledge, 2015), 38.

to represent both as naturally or intrinsically subservient and to clamp down on both when they acted out of turn.¹³⁵ It is also an historical fact, as Ariel Salleh has shown, that women's relationship to nature has historically differed in certain respects from men's—from the “birthing and suckling labours” that connect women to female animals, to the “caring and maintenance chores” expected of women “which serve to ‘bridge’ men and nature,” and to cultural and literary representations of women as nature and vice versa.¹³⁶

Of course, even though women were closely associated with nature in seventeenth-century England, it does not necessarily follow that they fought against the social, economic, and cultural forces that oppressed them and exploited nature. As Sylvia Bowerbank has noted, for example, women were neither “free agents” nor “zombies” in the early stages of capitalism that took form during this period.¹³⁷ In other words, women were not free to participate in the economy in the ways that men were, nor did they have the same property rights, but women also did not simply take a back-seat as the English economy and relationship to the land changed. While some women were outspoken critics of the exploitative logic of capitalism, some went right along with it, and others actively worked to perpetuate it. It would therefore be too reductive to argue that all women necessarily sided with nature as victims of the capitalist enterprise.

¹³⁵ For more information on the ways in which capitalism is built on the domination of women and nature, see Anna Bedford, “Afterword: Ecofeminism through Literary Activism, Hybridity, Connections, and Caring,” in *Literature and Ecofeminism: Intersectional and International Voices*, edited by Douglas A. Vakoch and Sam Mickey, 197-208 (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 203; MacGregor, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, xxi; MacGregor and Charis Thompson, “*The Death of Nature: Foundations of Ecological Feminist Thought*,” in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, 51; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*; Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions*; and Ariel Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx, and the Postmodern*. (London and New York: Zed Books, 1997), 12-13.

¹³⁶ Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 161.

¹³⁷ Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature*, 4.

That being said, it is also not surprising that many women who wrote during this period, having been socialized to undertake care-based roles and having been excluded in large part from the benefits of the capitalist enterprise, at the very least possessed the critical distance needed to understand the need for less exploitative methods of engaging with nature. In the “Afterword” to Douglas Vakoch and Sam Mickey’s *Literature and Ecofeminism: Intersectional and International Voices*, Anna Bedford makes a similar argument: “I would also argue that the practices of caring and nurturing that are part of women’s lives not only make them attuned to the abuse of the environment as part of their concern for the survival of those they care for, but that the inculcation of caring means that women are likely to extend an ethic of care to nonhuman others as well.”¹³⁸ Here, Bedford does not suggest that women are, in essence, closer to nature than men; rather, she acknowledges that a range of social and cultural forces have historically constructed women as closer to nature. Instead of shying away from this fact in order to avoid the charge of a reductive essentialism (that women and nature are predisposed to be allies, for example), Bedford takes up Lynne Bruckner’s call to reclaim these essentialist connections between women and nature, which have been drawn at different historical moments over time, in an effort to see how women operated within these structures.¹³⁹

The Marxist ecofeminist must first acknowledge, then, the following historical realities: women and nature were subjected to similar “modes of power” in seventeenth-century England, women were groomed for care-based roles in English society, women were not intended to be the direct beneficiaries of the capitalist enterprise, and women were uniquely positioned, in these respects, to think outside a capitalist framework.¹⁴⁰ When considered from this perspective, it is

¹³⁸ Bedford, “Afterword: Ecofeminism through Literary Activism,” 200.

¹³⁹ Lynne D. Bruckner, “N/nature and the Difference ‘She’ Makes,” in *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity*, edited by Jennifer Munroe, et al., 15-35 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 17.

¹⁴⁰ Jennifer Munroe, “Is it Really Ecocritical if it Isn’t Feminist?,” 38.

not surprising that a body of women's writing in seventeenth-century England demonstrates a sensitivity to the abuse of nature, and an openness to exploring less exploitative methods of engaging with it. To make this argument is neither to essentialize the connections between women and nature, nor to close off the possibility of other arguments. As I have said, not every single woman writing in seventeenth-century England objected to the exploitation of nature for profit, and most early-modern men and women would not have viewed nature as valuable purely for its own sake. Surely, too, women acted within and responded to conditions which subjected them and nature to systems of male, aristocratic power in different ways (for instance, lower-class women experienced this power very differently than an aristocrat like Cavendish). Like Bedford, however, what I am suggesting is that the social, economic, and political realities of seventeenth-century England may have positioned women in unique ways to view an increasingly exploitative relationship to the physical environment as a problem, for humankind and for nature itself.

My approach to environmental governance in seventeenth-century England, along with the cultural and literary discourse around it, thus begins from two premises: first, the belief that nature existed to be exploited for profit was cultivated in an effort to authorize the imprinting of male, aristocratic power on the land; second, the profits to be gained from this exploitation were not spread equally across gender and class lines, but instead worked to increase the power of the aristocracy and the gentry at the expense of women, other socially oppressed groups, and nature. Working from these premises, I aim to answer the following questions: In what ways did women respond to the changes in humankind's relationship to the land which were produced by changes to the English economy and system of property rights in seventeenth-century England? What role did women play in the exploitation of nature that these changing conditions entailed? How

may class, proximity to power, political leanings, or religious affiliation have affected women's participation in the discourse about environmental governance during this period? Finally, for what reasons did some women buy into the exploitative logic of capitalism then forming in England, and for what reasons did some object to it?

These are questions that ecocriticism cannot fully answer. Broadly understood as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment,” ecocriticism is a mode of critiquing the ways in which humankind has represented, constructed, and engaged with the environment in the past, and how it continues to do so in the present.¹⁴¹ While ecocriticism made an important first step away from earlier forms of “green” scholarship, which simply

¹⁴¹ Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), xviii. Lawrence Buell offers a similar definition in *The Environmental Imagination*; as does William Rueckert in his foundational essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,” in Glotfelty and Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader*, 105-123. For more ecocritical scholarship, including that which focuses on the early modern period, see Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature* (2011); Martin Bruckner and Kristen Poole, “The Plot Thickens: Surveying Manuals, Drama, and the Materiality of Narrative Form in Early Modern England,” *English Literary History* 69, no. 3 (2002): 617-48; Michael P. Cohen, “Blues in the Green: Ecocriticism under Critique,” *Environmental History* 9, no. 1 (2004): 9-36; Simon C. Estok, “A Progress Report on Shakespearean and Early Modern Ecocriticism,” *Revista Canaria De Estudios Ingleses* 64 (2012): 47-60; Estok, “Conceptualizing the Other in Hostile Early Modern Geographies: Situating Ecocriticism and Difference,” *Journal of English Language and Literature* 45, no. 4 (1999): 877-98; Estok, “Doing Ecocriticism with Shakespeare,” in *Early Modern Ecostudies: from the Florentine Codex to Shakespeare*, edited by Thomas Hallock, Ivo Kamps, and Karen L. Raber, 77-91 (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London: Routledge, 1999); Elizabeth D. Gruber, *Renaissance Ecopolitics from Shakespeare to Bacon: Rethinking Cosmopolis* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017); Ken Hiltner, *What Else is Pastoral?*; Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, *Material Ecocriticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); James A. Knapp, “Beyond Materiality in Shakespeare Studies,” *Literature Compass* 11, no. 10 (2014): 677-90; Christina B. Langert, “Hedgerows and Petticoats”; Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, eds., *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land* (Leicester: Leicester University, 1992); Anthony Low, “New Science and the Georgic Revolution”; Leerom Medovoi, “The Biopolitical Unconscious: Toward an Eco-Marxist Literary Theory,” in *Literary Materialisms*, edited by Mathias Nilges and Emilio Sauri, 79-94 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Joseph Meeker, *The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and a Play Ethic* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature; Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Serpil Oppermann, “Theorizing Ecocriticism: Toward a Postmodern Ecocritical Practice,” *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 13, no. 2 (2006): 103-28; Karen Raber, “Recent Ecocritical Studies of English Renaissance Literature,” *English Literary Renaissance* 7, no. 1 (2007): 151-71; Steven Rosendale and Scott Slovic, *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002); Martin Ryle, “Raymond Williams: Materialism and Ecocriticism,” in *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*, edited by Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Garrett A. Sullivan, *The Drama of Landscape; Wayne, Penshurst; Williams, The Country and the City*; and Richard Wilson, ““Like the Old Robin Hood.”

looked to nature as an “object of thematic study,” the field is not without its shortcomings. In drawing a dichotomy between the physical environment and all of humankind, for instance, ecocriticism risks portraying environmental governance as “gender-neutral,” or that all human beings, regardless of gender, interact with nature in the same way.¹⁴² The reality, of course, is that human beings engage with nature in different ways for a variety of reasons, and ecofeminism emerged as a field, in part, to provide this more nuanced view.¹⁴³ The field of ecofeminism also emerged as an effort to consider what ecocritical scholarship had, up to that point, too often overlooked: a body of women’s writing that expressed deep concerns about human relationships to the land.

In MacGregor’s words, by deploying gender as an “analytical category and tool for understanding [. . .] human-environmental relationships,” ecofeminists draw special attention to the “gendered interaction of human labour with the environment” and “the gendered impacts of environmental degradation.”¹⁴⁴ Marxist ecofeminists go one step further by illustrating how the nature of human labor and environmental degradation specifically changed under capitalism, and how these changes worked to enhance male, upper-class power at the expense of women, other socially oppressed groups, and nature. It is for this reason that Marxist ecofeminism lends itself so well to an assessment of how women contributed to the discourse forming and circulating in seventeenth-century England about the changes brought about by emergent forms of capitalism in human relationships to the land. As the range of texts discussed in this dissertation will show, seventeenth-century women writers were certainly thinking about, and female characters on the

¹⁴² Simon C. Estok, “A Report Card on Ecocriticism,” *AUMLA: The Journal of Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 96 (2001): 220; and MacGregor, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, 9.

¹⁴³ Jennifer Munroe, “Shakespeare and Ecocriticism Reconsidered,” *Literature Compass* 12, no. 9 (2015): 468.

¹⁴⁴ MacGregor, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, xxi and 4.

court-masque stage were being used as mouthpieces to consider, the immediate and downstream effects of an increasingly extractive and exploitative relationship to the physical environment. What is especially peculiar is why so little has been said about, to borrow Munroe's words, "what women are already saying and doing" to contribute to this discourse.¹⁴⁵

This dissertation is an effort to redress this gap in knowledge and provide a more "inclusive narrative of ecocritical history," to borrow the words of Greta Gaard.¹⁴⁶ To do so, I bring together to a body of texts that have received little attention to date in early-modern ecocritical and ecofeminist scholarship that would help us better understand the cultural and literary responses to emergent forms of capitalism and increasingly exploitative relationship to nature. I argue that these texts specifically craft an ecological sensibility that challenges the capitalist drive to exploit nature. While this sensibility was by no means new, far too little attention has been given to women's role in cultivating the kind of sensibility evident in texts like Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612), a staple of early-modern ecocritical scholarship. This dissertation brings texts into the fold whose "ethical orientation" might best be described as eliciting an "accountability to the environment," as Todd Borlik writes of *Poly-Olbion*.¹⁴⁷ Rather than "whitewashing" the exploitative logic of capitalism, a charge rightfully laid against pastoral writing from this period by numerous ecocritics, these texts often expose the many ways in

¹⁴⁵ Munroe, "Is it really Ecocritical if it Isn't Feminist?," 46. A considerable amount of ecofeminist scholarship has focused on the English garden and forest. For more on both, see Bowerbank, "Nature as Trickster: The Philosophical Laughter of Margaret Cavendish," in *Speaking for Nature*, 52-80; Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Catherine Diamond, "Four Women in the Woods: An Ecofeminist Look at the Forest as Home," *Comparative Drama* 51, no. 1 (2017): 71-100; and Jennifer Munroe, *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

¹⁴⁶ Greta Gaard, "New Directions for Ecofeminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism," *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 17, no. 4 (2010): 646.

¹⁴⁷ Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, 7.

which that logic was destructive of nature.¹⁴⁸

The next question to ask of these texts, then, is what should our accountability to the environment look like? Munroe's pithy phrase—"speak less, listen more"—is an effective way to put it.¹⁴⁹ Putting this statement into practice, though, as Munroe herself acknowledges, is an incredibly difficult task: letting nature speak for itself, after all, is not fully possible since its experiences can only ever be communicated through human language, and thus mediated through human perceptions and experiences. Put another way, the ecofeminist call to "listen more" will always involve a kind of "speaking for" nature—the very thing ecocriticism and its many subfields aim to avoid. As Munroe points out, however, the point is not to never speak again, but to "speak less," to minimize the amount that we "speak for" nature, or to reframe the act of "speaking for" as an act of representation—of speaking *on behalf of nature* whose concerns we aim to give voice to and address.

Gaard defines the principle aim of "critical ecofeminism" in a similar way: she argues that we should actively listen to the "more-than-human world" in an effort to achieve a kind of "ecological kinship" with the physical environment. As Gaard sees it, this kinship would replace the individualist aims of humanism, the mechanistic worldview of the New Science, a belief in human exceptionalism fostered by Cartesian dualism and the concept of the *bête-machine*, and the exploitative imperatives of capitalism—all of which began in the early modern period and which came together to promote the idea that nature exists to be exploited for humankind's gain.¹⁵⁰ What unites most ecofeminists is a commitment, in short, to a "care-sensitive ethics," a

¹⁴⁸ For scholarship that adopts this view of the pastoral, see Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, 12; Gifford, *Pastoral*; Hiltner, *What Else is Pastoral?*; Meeker, *The Comedy of Survival*; Merchant, *The Death of Nature*; Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions*; Wayne, *Penshurst*; and Williams, *The Country and the City*.

¹⁴⁹ Munroe, "Is it really Ecocritical if it Isn't Feminist?," 47.

¹⁵⁰ Greta Gaard, *Critical Ecofeminism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), xviii and 186. As I have shown earlier, each of these developments were built on the Judeo-Christian mandate to dominate the natural world.

phrase coined by ecofeminist Karen J. Warren that echoes the ethic of care outlined in Françoise d'Eaubonne's first formulation of "ecofeminism" in 1974.¹⁵¹ For both D'Eaubonne and Warren, this ethic of care is grounded in the belief that human beings are able to care about others, human and nonhuman, and have a social responsibility to do so because of that.

In prioritizing active listening to the "more-than-human," the temptation to regard all matter as "vibrant," as the fields of new materialism and posthumanism do, must be resisted. Both new materialism and posthumanism aim to combat the anthropocentrism at the heart of "green scholarship," especially the tendency to regard human beings as distinct from nature and as the main agents acting in the world.¹⁵² Of course, human beings are more deeply entangled with the physical environment than this distinction suggests, and the nonhuman world certainly possesses more agency than has historically been ascribed to it, as several texts discussed in this dissertation will illustrate. Overemphasizing the agency of all matter can be problematic, however, for several reasons. First, we risk downplaying how singularly responsible humankind is for the destruction of the nonhuman world, before but especially since the advent of

¹⁵¹ Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 108. For more ecofeminist scholarship, see Françoise D'Eaubonne, *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (Paris: Pierre Horay, 1974); D'Eaubonne "The Time for Ecofeminism," in *Ecology*, edited by Carolyn Merchant, 174-97 (New York: Humanity Books, 1994); Margarita Estévez-Saá and María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia, "The Ethics and Aesthetics of Eco-caring: Contemporary Debates on Ecofeminism(s)," *Women's Studies* 47, no. 2 (2018): 124-46; Greta Gaard, "Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism," *Feminist Formations* 23, no. 2 (2011): 26-53; Mary Phillips and Nick Rubes, eds., *Contemporary Perspectives on Ecofeminism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); Catriona Sandilands, *The Good-Natured Feminist: Ecofeminism and the Quest for Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); and Vakocho and Mickey, *Literature and Ecofeminism* (2018).

¹⁵² Kay J. Anderson and Colin Perrin, "New Materialism and the Stuff of Humanism," *Australian Humanities Review* 58 (2015): 1-15; Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, "Introducing the New Materialisms," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, 1-46 (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2010); Christopher Gamble, "Figures of Entanglement: Special Issue Introduction," *Review of Communication* 16, no. 4 (2016): 265-80; Ian Hodder, "The Entanglements of Humans and Things: A Long-Term View," *New Literary History* 45, no. 1 (2014): 19-36; and Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2012).

capitalism.¹⁵³ Second, by reducing everything to matter, as Munroe argues, we risk universalizing human experience, and in that way elide the “social, gender, and class inequalities” that shape human beings’ interactions with nature in different ways.¹⁵⁴ Third, by applying posthumanist principles to “early modern men and women” who, in Munroe’s words, “lived their lives in ways that were by no means *posthumanist*,” we risk ignoring the “gendered, classed, and raced” practices of the period and the “systems of power” that produced them.¹⁵⁵ To do so, Munroe goes on to argue, “is an act of willful erasure that is at odds with the lived experiences of men, women, and nonhuman things, and it risks reifying the very power relations that posthumanists aim to dismantle.”¹⁵⁶

Marxist ecofeminism avoids each of these potential problems. First, it does not elide the historical reality, as new materialism and posthumanism risk doing, that the human and nonhuman worlds were regarded as distinct during the early modern period. Second, this methodology foregrounds the direct role humankind and the capitalist enterprise have played in destroying the physical environment. Third, by design Marxist ecofeminism pays special attention to the very “social, gender, and class inequalities” that shape how human beings perceive, represent, and engage with nature. In the case of seventeenth-century England, for

¹⁵³ Freya Mathews cautions against downplaying humankind’s role in the destruction of nature at more length in “Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?,” in *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene*, edited by Lara Stevens, Peta Tait, and Denise Varney, 35-55 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹⁵⁴ Jennifer Munroe, “Shakespeare and Ecocriticism Reconsidered,” 466-67.

¹⁵⁵ Munroe, “Is it really Ecocritical if it Isn’t Feminist?,” 38.

¹⁵⁶ Munroe, “Is it really Ecocritical if it Isn’t Feminist?,” 46. A rising tide of critical and theoretical writing critiques the new materialism from a variety of perspectives and not exclusively for early modern studies. The following sources are a good place to start: Benjamin Boysen, “The Embarrassment of Being Human: A Critique of New Materialism and Object-Oriented Ontology,” *Orbis Litterarum* 73 (2018): 225-42; Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, “Liberation for Straw Dogs? Old Materialism, New Materialism and the Challenge of an Emancipatory Posthumanism,” *Globalizations* 12, no. 1 (2015): 134-48; Christopher N. Gamble, Joshua S. Hanan, and Thomas Nail, “What is New Materialism?” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretica Humanities* 24, no. 6 (2019): 111-34; Thomas Lemke, “An Alternative Model of Politics? Prospects and Problems of Jane Bennett’s *Vital Materialism*,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 35, no. 6 (2018): 31-54; and Paul Rekret, “A Critique of New Materialism: Ethics and Ontology,” *Subjectivity* 9 (2016): 225-45.

instance, an attention to these inequalities illustrates that the exploitative logic of emergent forms of capitalism was not designed to produce conditions of equality, but of inequality—as the few accumulated vast amounts of wealth and land while the many suffered. Finally, this methodology makes it possible to uncover the “systems of power” that undergirded the proto-capitalist practices during this period and fashioned nature as a “mere storehouse of useful resources” to be turned to profit.¹⁵⁷

V. Chapter Outline

As I have said, this dissertation is aimed at writing a more “inclusive narrative” of the “ecocritical history” of seventeenth-century England by bringing women’s writing and female performances on the Jacobean and Caroline court-masque stage into the fold.¹⁵⁸ In Munroe’s words, we must “attend to what women are already saying and doing rather than repeating the androcentric mistake of relying on the representations by men” if we wish to have a more comprehensive understanding of the development of early forms of capitalism, cultural responses to it, and the crafting of an environmental ethos during this period.¹⁵⁹ No account of these developments which overlooks a body of women’s writing that tells a more complicated story about the entrenching of capitalist logic in seventeenth-century English society can be considered comprehensive. First and foremost, then, we must include women’s writing in this discussion as much as possible. Then, we can we start asking in what ways and for what reasons women went along with or cautioned against the exploitation of nature for profit, which has been part of the capitalist enterprise since its inception in seventeenth-century England.

¹⁵⁷ Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature*, 14.

¹⁵⁸ Gaard, “New Directions for Ecofeminism,” 646.

¹⁵⁹ Munroe, “Is it really Ecocritical if it Isn't Feminist?,” 46.

To examine these issues, this dissertation will consist of four chapters. The first turns to representations of women and nature in the Jacobean and Caroline court masque tradition, while the remaining three chapters will focus specifically on seventeenth-century women's writing. In Chapter 1, I argue that the female figures presented in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) and John Milton's *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634) give shape to an ecological sensibility that challenges the patriarchal logic of Prospero and Comus, whose power is primarily built on the domination of nature. In the *Tempest*, for example, Miranda is the first character to insist that Prospero's desperate attempts to control the world around him, much of which manifests as a mastery over nature, must be tempered by empathy. In Milton's masque, the Lady and the shepherdess Sabrina of Milton's masque advocate for an ethic of care similar to that which Miranda calls for in *The Tempest*. Taken together, Miranda, the Lady, and Sabrina suggest that human relationships to nature be grounded in empathy, care, and mercy, not exploitation or extraction.

That this argument is developed through the medium of the Jacobean and Caroline court masque is especially important. Milton's *A Maske* is, after all, a court masque, while *The Tempest* takes on masque-like function and import. The primary function of the Jacobean and Caroline court masque was to authorize the patriarchal system of male governance, control, and prerogative that undergirded kingly power. Rather than endorsing this logic, Miranda, the Lady, and Sabrina instead condemn the exploitative practices and dangerous impact of that power on the natural world and work to determine how humankind might better care for it. At their most basic level, then, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Milton's *A Maske* are not just about the performance of power, but about the physical costs of that performance on the natural world.

As I see it, the remaining three chapters center on a group of women writing in the legacy

of Miranda since the work of each woman writer demonstrates, to varying degrees, an ecological mode of thinking that challenges the exploitative logic of capitalism. In Chapter 2, I examine the ways in which the country-house poetry of Aemilia Lanyer, Lucy Hutchinson, and Margaret Cavendish crafts this ethos. To date, most scholarship on seventeenth-century country-house poetry has focused on that written by men, such as Ben Jonson and Andrew Marvell. This scholarship tends to argue that country-house poetry emerged as a genre in seventeenth-century England to glorify an estate lord's controlling power over his estate. A large part of this power derived from the estate lord's ability to steward and control the land on his estate—or at least to sustain the illusion that he could do so. As scholarship on the topic suggests, country-house poetry worked to sustain this illusion and, in that way, legitimize the power of the estate lord in whose honor the poem was written.

While this argument may be true of men's country-house poetry, it does not hold true for women's country-house poetry written during the same period. By expanding what has historically been included in the country-house genre to a range of women's country-house poems, this chapter offers a more comprehensive view of the social function of country-house poetry in seventeenth-century England. In this chapter, I specifically argue that the contributions Lanyer, Hutchinson, and Cavendish make to country-house genre ask us to reconsider what the estate lord's relationship to nature should be: one characterized by reciprocity, empathy, and mercy, not mastery and exploitation. To do so, these women's poetry elegizes the ecological loss produced by the estate lord's efforts to legitimize his power over the estate. In this way, these women poets engage with patriarchal and anthropocentric discourse in order to push back against it, and to represent a different way of imagining the relationship between human beings and the rural ecosystem. By situating this women's poetry in the country-house discourse of the period,

the scholarly consensus about what country-house poetry is intended to do can be reformulated. In other words, country-house poetry does not always glorify the estate lord as a model steward of the land, nor does it always go to great lengths to disguise the ways in which this idealized vision of stewardship is just that, an illusion. Instead, Lanyer, Hutchinson, and Cavendish show us that country-house poetry could also dispel with these sorts of illusions and instead draw attention to the varied ways in which nature was sacrificed at the altar of the estate lord's efforts to legitimize his power.

Chapter 3 journeys abroad to examine the concerns Anne Bradstreet's poetic *oeuvre* raises about human relationships to the nonhuman world as the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and colonial New England in general, shifted to an economy and property system that provided the opportunity for the unrestricted use of land and natural resources. Early in the chapter, I explain how Bradstreet's life experiences and education equipped her to understand how economic change and literary or cultural representations of the nonhuman world together shape human relationships with it. I then demonstrate that her verse is specially attuned to the ways in which the convergence of an emerging capitalist economy and Puritan theology in colonial New England materially affected these practices. More specifically, I argue that Bradstreet's verse re-energizes the Puritan model of stewardship to temper the increasingly acquisitive attitude towards the nonhuman world in colonial New England. Because this model viewed agricultural labor as a form of devotion to God, it allowed for the individual accumulation of wealth only so long as this pursuit did not actively harm God's creation. In doing so, I also show how Bradstreet's verse undercuts the logic of the seventeenth-century court masque and country-house poetry, which legitimized the imposition of aristocratic power on the land by staging that power in its most ideal form, as I argue in Chapter 2. Taken together, this chapter offers the most

comprehensive and sustained examination of Bradstreet's ecological concerns than has been offered to date.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I compare the utopian writings of Fifth Monarchists Mary Cary and Anna Trapnel with Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World* (1666). While Cary's and Trapnel's texts offer broad-based critiques of the imposition of royal power on the nonhuman world, Cavendish's text latter at once fantasizes, and expresses fears, about wielding this kind of power. In Cary's *A Word in Season to the Kingdom of England* (1647) and *A New and More Exact Mappe, Or Description of New Jerusalems Glory* (1651), and Trapnel's *The Cry of a Stone* (1654), these Fifth Monarchist prophetesses frame Charles I and Cromwell as failed stewards of the English "estate" who will soon be punished accordingly.¹⁶⁰ In *A Word in Season*, Cary offers her "seasonable word" as a corrective measure that, if followed, will provide the "readiest way, and shortest cut to a happie and flourishing estate."¹⁶¹ She then explains the methods by which this estate could be improved in *A New and More Exact Mappe*, most of which center on liberating human and animal laborers from their exploitative oppressors, whose belief that their right over nature is absolute has led to the "unmerciful dealing with many creatures."¹⁶² In *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel plays out Cromwell's imminent fall on the terrain of nature itself. In doing so, she suggests that Cromwell has failed as Lord Protector primarily because he has failed to steward the nonhuman world with care. Having issued this warning, Trapnel then exhorts Cromwell to be a "true Jacob": in her words, to let "Justice and Mercy," not self-interest, guide his actions as steward of his estate.¹⁶³ By making this argument, I offer the

¹⁶⁰ Mary Cary, *A Word in Season to the Kingdom of England* (London, 1647); Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe, Or Description of New Jerusalems Glory* (London, 1651); and Anna Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone* (London, 1654).

¹⁶¹ Cary, *A Word in Season*, 12 and 1.

¹⁶² Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 314.

¹⁶³ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 53.

most sustained critical approach to date of these women as ecological thinkers, as I do with Bradstreet in Chapter 3.

In comparison, Cavendish's *The Blazing World* presents a less clear-cut argument: on the one hand, the text welcomes the use of royal power to restore control over a disorderly world ravaged by war; on the other hand, the text repeatedly draws special attention to the ecological cost of this exercise of power, revealing how an aggressive Empress can do tremendous harm to people and nature. To make this argument, Cavendish sets the cruelty exercised by human beings against the kindness practiced by the half-human, half-animal creatures of the Blazing World, whose scientific knowledge and labor the world's Empress exploits for personal and political gain.¹⁶⁴ By contrasting the hybrid creatures' kindness with the Empress's increasingly tyrannical method of governance, as the Empress capitalizes on her power to "destroy whatever she pleases," Cavendish trades the essentialist claim that women and nature share a unique bond as fellow-sufferers at the hands of men for a broader indictment of humankind as bad stewards of the nonhuman world. In doing so, she demonstrates that humankind as a whole too often fails to practice the justice and mercy Trapnel encourages.

In these ways, Cary and Trapnel simulate worlds that condemn the increasingly covetous and cruel use of the nonhuman world in mid-seventeenth-century England. In doing so, they theorize an ecological ethics grounded in the "holy," "merciful," and "comfortable use" of the nonhuman world, to borrow Cary's words.¹⁶⁵ While Cavendish is also unsettled by the mistreatment of the nonhuman world, her text is, at the same time, disturbingly approving of the Empress's use of scientific knowledge and technology to restore social order, a fantasy that

¹⁶⁴ Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* (London, 1666), Part Two, 21.

¹⁶⁵ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 277, 314, and 317.

comes at the expense of the nonhuman world. To varying degrees, Cary's, Trapnel's, and Cavendish's utopian writings therefore demonstrate that humankind's sovereignty over the nonhuman world should be exercised with the utmost care, not used howsoever we desire.

In the *Coda*, I bring each of these arguments together by turning to Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667-1674), a text that presents the Fall as a marker of humankind's failure to steward the nonhuman world with care. Although both Adam and Eve ultimately fall short as stewards of the Garden, Adam repeatedly subordinates his duty to tend Eden to his desire to indulge in its bounty, while Eve consistently puts her duty over this desire until she falls. Furthermore, the character who successfully persuades Eve to neglect this duty is Satan, whose concern for the nonhuman world is limited to how he might turn it to profit. In Milton's view, the nonhuman world is often subject either to overt exploitation or basic neglect. On the one hand, Satan believes he enjoys an unconditional right to use the nonhuman world however he desires. Like Satan, time and again Adam is unwilling to put the needs of the nonhuman world over his own desires in any substantive or meaningful way, although he does understand that he has a duty to tend it. On the other hand, Eve earnestly desires to steward the Garden with care, and she follows through until the moment it most counts, when she gives in to temptation and violates the sole boundary God has placed on her use of the resources in Eden. In this way, Eve emerges as the best, if imperfect, steward of the nonhuman world in *Paradise Lost*. Shakespeare's Miranda and Milton's Eve thus function as bookends to a larger story that I tell in this dissertation about women's contributions to the discourse about human relationships to the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England and colonial New England.

CHAPTER ONE

“Listen and Save”: Girls’ Ecological Thinking in William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (1611) and John Milton’s *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634)

Introduction

In her 1652 poem written to commemorate the marriage of Alice Egerton to Richard Vaughan, Second Earl of Carbery and future Lord President of the Welsh Marches, Katherine Philips praises Alice for physically renewing the Welsh landscape and spiritually renewing its inhabitants. To do so, Philips begins by positioning Alice as the hero come to “rescue” the Welsh Marches from humankind’s greed, carelessness, and neglect.¹ In the poem’s opening lines, Philips portrays Alice as the female counterpart to the Christian God come to recreate the scene of the Creation: Alice not only draws the Welsh countryside from “obscurity” into the light but also gives form and shape to the “neglected chaos” in which it has “so long” lain.² This “chaos” and this “obscurity” are not a result of mere happenstance, however, as they are in Genesis; here, they are the direct results of “neglect,” which is to say a lack of care. Unlike God, Alice has not arrived in Wales to create something from nothing, but to restore and renew a landscape that has fallen into disrepair through willful neglect. In this way, Philips’s poem is critical of the

¹ Katherine Philips, “On the Right Honourable Alice, Countess of Carberry’s Enriching Wales with Her Presence,” in *Poems*, 16-17 (London, 1667), lines 1-10. To date, Philip’s poem has received little critical attention, appearing in scholarship only as a passing reference to Alice Egerton. Stephen Orgel goes into more detail than most in “The Case for *Comus*,” *Representations* 81, no. 1 (2003): 31-45.

² In the 1630s, two violent uprisings broke out among the local communities of the Forest of Dean in response to renewed policies of disafforestation and enclosure (Julie Sanders, “Ecocritical Readings and the Seventeenth-Century Woodland: Milton’s ‘Comus’ and the Forest of Dean,” *English*, 50 [2001]: 1-18). Christopher Hill has shown that urban Puritan groups based primarily in London saw rural England, especially Wales, as a space in which bad forms of Christianity were practiced. During the period between the Reformation and the Civil War, Hill argues, these Puritan groups attempted to “evangelize” and, in turn, “civilize” these outlying regions, these “dark corners of the land” as they were called (“Puritans and ‘the Dark Corners of the Land,’” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 [1963]: 77-78).

“careless” and “greedy” relationship to nature that has damaged the Welsh countryside, which can only be repaired by Alice Egerton.³

The first signs of humankind’s neglect of the nonhuman world appear in the third line of the poem just after the “first day” dawns, when “Man” becomes “careless” in the way he observes and interacts with the world around him. Man’s first and most immediate response to the dawn, however, is not one of neglect, but one of reflection and admiration: the act of “dwelling” on the dawn inspires a sense of “wonder” at the world around us. In fact, this act is precisely what the eye is designed to do; by its very nature it is “apt,” Philips suggests, and ready to take in any and all views. Philips characterizes the eye as “greedy,” however, and is quick to note that the “wonder” inspired by what our eyes behold shortly becomes a “danger” when our observations of and attitude towards the nonhuman world become “careless.” Wonder, after all, is supposed to inspire care; greed, on the other hand, is self-serving, concerned with nothing but itself, and thus careless of others. When greed overtakes wonder, then, our caring impulse towards nature is lost; we become careless of it and, in turn, a danger to it.

In this chapter, I contend that the female figures in William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (1611) and John Milton’s *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634) make a similar claim. In *The Tempest*, Miranda argues that Prospero’s desperate attempts to control the world around him, which are executed to devastating effect, must be tempered by empathy. In Milton’s masque, the Lady, played by Alice Egerton herself at age fifteen, advocates for an ethics of moderation that, when combined with the shepherdess Sabrina’s philosophy of listening and

³ As Julie Sanders has illustrated, under the early Stuart kings’ rule, the Marches were disafforested, deforested, and enclosed, leased or sold to government officials and courtiers, and converted to the production of iron ore. These policies became increasingly exploitative during the period known as the Personal Rule of Charles I (1629-1640) to generate profits for the then bankrupt royal treasury (“Ecocritical Readings and the Seventeenth-Century Woodland,” 7-10).

healing, strikingly resembles the ethics of care that Miranda initiates in *The Tempest*. Taken together, Miranda, the Lady, and Sabrina offer an alternative model to the danger Philips warns us of when men's eyes look on the nonhuman world too greedily—one that aims to recover our first and most immediate response to it, wonder, which moves us away from exploitation and toward empathy, care, and mercy.

It is especially important that these female figures reimagine what the relationship between humankind and the nonhuman world should be in *A Maske* and *The Tempest* since the former is a court masque and the latter is a play that takes on masque-like function and import. The primary purpose of the Jacobean and Caroline court masque—that is, the court masques performed during the reigns of James I (1603-1625) and Charles I (1625-1649)—was to affirm and ennoble the patriarchal system of male governance, control, and prerogative that undergirded kingly power. Rather than furthering this goal, Miranda, the Lady, and Sabrina instead condemn the exploitative practices and dangerous impact of that power on the nonhuman world and negotiate how humankind might better care for it. At their most basic level, then, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Milton's *A Maske* are not just about the performance of power, but about the physical costs of that performance on the nonhuman world.

I. Women and Nature in the Jacobean and Caroline Court Masque

Both James I and Charles I believed their power to be sanctioned by divine right and thus, in principle, absolute; and the court masque was designed to justify this belief and actions taken in its name. One specific way to do so on the masque stage so was to glorify the monarch's dominion over the nonhuman world. As I have shown in the dissertation's Introduction, during the reigns of both Early Stuart kings, the material conditions and intellectual culture of

seventeenth-century England made it increasingly possible to expand this dominion by expanding the kings' control of land overseas. An emerging market economy and a series of technological advances in agriculture, navigation, and warfare made this expansion physically possible. At the same time, religious and scientific systems of thought that framed nature as made for humankind's use provided the logic to legitimate this control. As a result of these developments, James I and Charles I not only believed they had a right to subdue the nonhuman world, but they could actually do so more easily.⁴

While both kings were afforded new opportunities to control more land and acquired new methods of doing so, neither king enjoyed unlimited power over the nonhuman world. In fact, their reigns remind us of the limitations of such power in many ways. During their reigns, both kings were forced to contend with timber shortages, which were caused by an increased demand for domestic fuel, lumber, and ship-building to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population and to maintain England's maritime power. In turn, these shortages drove both kings towards an increased reliance on the sea-coal industry, which significantly worsened the air quality of London. Although Charles is known to have complained of London's air pollution and a series of laws and regulations were put in place to regulate the sea-coal industry, these were rarely enforced because sea-coal had become one of the most readily available energy sources. In an attempt to account for timber shortages and to decrease reliance on sea-coal, among other policies both kings chose to resume deforestation by continuing Queen Elizabeth's policy of selling licenses to cut trees in lands legally designated as royal forest.

Both kings also faced resistance to a number of their environmental policies, many of

⁴ Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* and *Ecological Revolutions* remain some of the most invaluable when it comes to understanding conceptions of the natural world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For more information on this topic, see Boehrer, *Environmental Degradation*; Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature*; Hiltner, *What Else Is Pastoral?*; Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 193-241; and Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.

which were prompted by the need to raise money for the state. The enclosing and engrossing of land expanded under both kings—a policy which also motivated the draining of the fens under Charles I—exacerbated food shortages and culminated in the Midland Revolts of 1607 and the fenland drainage riots of the 1620s and 1630s. Taken together, while the monarchy materially benefitted from the use and misuse of the natural world in various ways, its policies and practices of land use had considerably damaging downstream effects, which to some degree destabilized the power both kings obsessively sought to secure. In other words, James I's and Charles I's reigns demonstrate just how much royal power is built and depends on the control, regulation, and exploitation of the nonhuman world.

The court masque did not just document this power, but fashioned it in its most ideal image. The court masque's representation of the nonhuman world did not, therefore, simply reflect how it was treated in practice or realistically portray the threats it posed to royal power. Instead, the court masque actively shaped perceptions about how the nonhuman world should be treated going forward.⁵ In other words, if royal power was determined in large part by the king's control over the land, then the nonhuman world must be represented as a domain over which the king enjoyed total and even effortless control. Given that the court masque was one of the few, if not the only, forms of court ritual and scripted performance in which women could participate

⁵ This understanding of the dialectical relationship captured by the court masque between the material realities and artificial construction of power was made possible by New Historicism. For more on how the court masque forms and legitimates the crown's power, see Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Peter Holbrook, "Jacobean Masques and the Jacobean Peace," in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, edited by David Bevington, Peter Holbrook, and Leah S. Marcus, 67-87 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Stephen Orgel, "The Case for *Comus*"; and Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1975). To understand how landscape symbolically represented and actually determined the crown's power in the court masque and other forms of literature during the early modern period, see Christopher Fitter, *Poetry, Space, Landscape: Towards a New Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Terry Kohn, "Landscape in the Transcendent Masque," *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 143-164; and James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979.

during James I's and Charles I's reign, the role that women played in the social construction of the nonhuman world in the court masque becomes particularly important for precisely these reasons. Did female performers and representations of women in masques merely endorse the exercise of monarchical power over the natural world, did they expose the limitations of that power, did they caution against the abuse of that power, or did they accomplish some combination of these? As I have said, the female figures in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Milton's *A Maske* more frequently object to the exercise of royal power over the nonhuman world than they work to prop it up.

My argument in this chapter thus draws on feminist studies of the Jacobean and Caroline court masque, studies of early modern girlhood, and ecofeminism. Feminist criticism began as a twofold project: first, it aimed to explain the range of social, political, cultural, economic, and legal forces that produce and sustain a system of male privilege and domination; in turn, it worked to recover a body of woman's writing that had been swept away by these forces and to empower women in many other ways. Early modern scholarship on girlhood, a relatively new trend in literary criticism, began in a similar way as an effort to recuperate girlhood as a unique component of early modern life. Jennifer Higginbotham, a pioneer in early modern girlhood scholarship, has argued that such a recovery is needed to balance out the abundance of early modern scholarship on boyhood and to resist the tendency to lump girls into the overly capacious category of "women."⁶ A feminist approach to girls' participation in the court masque would therefore set out to explain, as has been done, how the patriarchal ideology upheld by the masque is built on the control of the female body, a process which is often begun early in a woman's

⁶ Jennifer Higginbotham, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Sisters: Gender, Transgression, Adolescence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

life.⁷ An ecofeminist approach to the same would extend this logic to the natural world, bearing in mind that both girls and the nonhuman world needed to be contained to sustain a system of male rule during the early modern period. More specifically, such an approach would first explain how the masque's affirmation of royal power is built on the domination of women, girls, and nature not just in practice, but in performance—that is, by enacting that domination in its most ideal form on the masque stage. In turn, we would need to ask if women, girls, or the nonhuman world yielded to this power or acted against it.

One of the main questions feminist masque criticism has sought to answer is why women were permitted to play such active roles in the court masque but not permitted to perform in the theater during the same period. As Clare McManus has suggested, women were not just “tolerated” but “necessary” to the court masque because the female body played a crucial role in fulfilling its purpose: the “social affirmation” of aristocratic identity and power.⁸ The king's present and future power, after all, could not be secured and maintained if the female body, especially that of the queen, could not be controlled. To display this control, the Jacobean

⁷ The body of feminist scholarship on the early modern court masque is quite extensive. For scholarship on the Lady in Milton's *A Maske*, Alice Egerton, and Queen Anna, see Sarah E. Johnson, “The Female Body as Soul in Queen Anna's Masques,” *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 53, no. 2 (2013): 357-77; Leah S. Marcus, “John Milton's *Comus*,” in *A Companion to Milton*, edited by Thomas N. Corns, 232-45 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001); Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Hope A. Parisi, “From Woman Warrior to Warrior Reasoner: Lady Alice and Intellectual Freedom in *A Maske*,” in *Arenas of Conflict: Milton and the Unfettered Mind*, edited by Kristin P. McColgan and Charles W. Durham, 93-106 (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1997); Brendan Prawdzik, “‘Look on Me’: Theater, Gender, and Poetic Identity Formation in Milton's *Maske*,” *Studies in Philology* 110, no. 4 (2013): 812-850; Kathryn Schwarz, “Chastity, Militant and Married: Cavendish's Romance, Milton's Masque,” *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 118, no. 2 (2003): 270-285; William Shullenberger, *Lady in the Labyrinth: Milton's Comus as Initiation* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008); Jeffrey Steel, “The Lost Lady in the World of *Comus*: Catherine Maria Sedgwick and Margaret Fuller Read Milton,” in *Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and Great Britain*, edited by Beth L. Lueck, Brigitte Bailey, and Lucinda L. Damon-Bach, 175-87 (Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2012); Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Anne-Julia Zwierlein, “‘Betrayed My Credulous Innocence’: Mendacity and Female Education in John Milton and the ‘Battle of the Sexes’,” *European Journal of English Studies* 19, no. 2 (2015): 204-219.

⁸ Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court (1590-1619)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 8.

masque thus carefully controlled how the female body was represented by assigning women to dancing, but not speaking, roles. “The prohibition of female speech,” McManus writes, “was a constraint of the masquing woman within her corporeality. Aristocratic women entered the masque through dance and were seen as physical beings.”⁹ In this way, masques re-inscribed these women as important but ultimately “acquiescent member[s] of courtly society.”¹⁰ In sum, the participation of women in court masques was not the product of some new progressive vision of female agency, but of the desire to affirm and preserve the status quo.

This is not to say that the court masque solely functioned solely as a propagandistic arm of the state to reinforce James I’s power and to reify the gender relations that made it possible.¹¹ Masques did, in fact, present challenges to his authority in the form of the anti-masque, but, as Marion Wynne-Davies argues, “each time the threat [was] circumscribed, allowing a triumphant re-emergence of the accepted ideologies.”¹² James’s queen, however, was not all that interested in affirming her husband’s power, and she instead used the court masque to construct a political identity of her own. In this way, Wynne-Davies argues, Anna of Denmark not only “challenged the gendered preserves of authorship but questioned the legitimacy of absolute male power as symbolized by the Stuart King.”¹³ As a result, Queen Anna has become the focus of many feminist studies of the Jacobean court masque.

When Anna of Denmark came to England as James’s Queen Consort in 1603, she opened

⁹ McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 16.

¹⁰ McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 8.

¹¹ Barbara Lewalski describes the Jacobean era as an “extremely regressive period for women” who had made considerable gains under the reign of Queen Elizabeth (*Writing Women in Jacobean England* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993], 2). James I’s conception of absolute power, which he explains in *The Trew Lawe of Free Monarchie and Basilikon Doron* (Edinburgh: 1599), was patriarchal to an extreme, even misogynistic. Lewalski also shows that the education of women declined during James’s reign and the publication of antifeminist literature substantially increased (2-3).

¹² Marion Wynne-Davies, “The Queen’s Masque: Renaissance Women and the Seventeenth-Century Court Masque,” in Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *Gloriana's Face*, 99.

¹³ Wynne-Davies, “The Queen’s Masque,” 80.

up new possibilities for women as performers and for the masque form itself. Anna is known to have presented and danced in six masques and been actively involved in the production of several others. In fact, in just the first fifteen years of her reign, McManus writes, “Anna’s masquing and commissioning accounted for almost the entirety of the English Jacobean court’s female performance.”¹⁴ One of Anna’s defining characteristics as a masquing woman was to use the masque to actively engage in politics, especially in foreign diplomacy. In February 1609, for example, she angered both the French and Venetian ambassadors, La Boderie and Marc Antonio Correr, by inviting the Spanish ambassador, Don Fernandez de Girone, to a performance of the Jonson’s *The Masque of Queens*, and she later became upset with James when he scuttled her plans.¹⁵ Anna also involved women in court masques in radically new ways, not least of which was her decision to produce masques performed entirely by women. Perhaps the most commonly cited example of Anna’s impact on the court masque is *The Masque of Blackness*, which she commissioned Ben Jonson to write in 1605. The masque caused quite a stir because Anna directed that the female masquers’ bodies be painted black, an act which was viewed as at best indecorous and at worst rebellious.¹⁶ All in all, Anna played such a formative role in shaping the Jacobean masque that Leeds Barroll has gone so far as to claim that many of the masques under her guidance functioned, at least in part, as a “forwarding of the *Queen’s* programmes,” not the King’s.¹⁷

¹⁴ McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 3. The six masques that Anna danced in are *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1603-04), *The Masque of Blackness* (1604-05), *The Masque of Beauty* (1607-08), *The Masque of Queens* (1608-09), *Tethys’ Festival* (1610), and *Love Free from Ignorance and Folly* (1610-11). Anna was involved to a lesser degree in Thomas Campion’s *Somerset Masque* (1613) and Robert White’s *Cupid’s Banishment* (1617). By 1620, McManus notes, only two other masques had included female performers.

¹⁵ See Lewalski, *Writing Women*, 36-7; and Wynne-Davies, “The Queen’s Masque,” 86.

¹⁶ See Lewalski, *Writing Women*, 31-34.

¹⁷ Leeds Barroll, “Inventing the Stuart Masque,” in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, edited by David Bevington, Peter Holbrook, and Leah S. Marcus, 121-43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121. For more information on the life of Anna of Denmark, see Barroll’s *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

Like her predecessor from Denmark, the French-Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria played an active role in shaping the Caroline masque, even composing and acting in her own masque in 1626.¹⁸ Like Anna, Henrietta Maria pushed back on the system of absolute male power in certain ways, although Anna developed a reputation for doing so more explicitly.¹⁹ In *Tempe Restored*, a masque that Henrietta sponsored and performed in, the sorceress Circe cedes power to the royal couple and charges them with restoring order to the Vale of Tempe. Melinda Gough argues that Circe's act locates absolute power not just in the King but also in the Queen, which would weaken the doctrine of absolute male power Charles I sought to enforce.²⁰ Henrietta Maria's primary contribution to the masque form, however, was to give women speaking roles, as is the case in *Tempe Restored*. Her decision was likely influenced by her French upbringing since women were working as professional actresses in acting companies in France by the second decade of the seventeenth century.²¹ Over the course of the 1630s, an increasing number of aristocratic women thus began to take more active roles in sponsoring and performing in masques both at court and in aristocratic households. Some of these women even came to rival Henrietta Maria in fame, the most famous being Lucy Hay, Countess of Carlisle.²² As a result,

¹⁸ For more information, see Wynne-Davies, "The Queen's Masque," 81; and Melinda J. Gough, "A Newly Discovered Performance by Henrietta Maria," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 65, no. 3/4 (2002): 435-47.

¹⁹ In 1604, the French ambassador, Beaumont, expressed pity for James I, whose wife's interest and involvement in the court masque Beaumont viewed as subversive: "Consider for pity's sake what must be the state," he wrote "and condition of a prince, whom the preachers publicly from the pulpit assail, whom the comedians of the metropolis bring upon the stage, whose wife attends these representations in order to enjoy the laugh against her husband." The original passage can be found in correspondence dated 14 June 1604 in Friedrich Ludwig Georg von Raumer's *History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Illustrated by Original Documents* (London, 1835), II, 206. The passage is also quoted in Wynne-Davies, "The Queen's Masque," 86.

²⁰ Melinda J. Gough, "'Not as Myself': The Queen's Voice in *Tempe Restored*," *Modern Philology* 101, no. 1 (2003), 67.

²¹ For more on Henrietta Maria's contribution to the English court masque, see Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Gough, "A Newly Discovered Performance by Henrietta Maria"; Julie Sanders, "Caroline Salon Culture and Female Agency: The Countess of Carlisle, Henrietta Maria, and Public Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 4 (2000): 449-64; and Sophie Tomlinson, "'She that Plays the King': Henrietta Maria and the Threat of the Actress in Caroline Culture," in *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*, edited by Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope, 189-207 (London: Routledge, 1992).

²² Sanders, "Caroline Salon Culture," 451.

the stage was set for a “sea-change in attitude towards women and performance,” Julie Sanders argues, that helps to explain why “female professional actors had become an accepted fact on the English stage” by 1660.²³

While both Queen Anna and Queen Henrietta Maria played substantial roles in the development of the female masque tradition and laid the groundwork for the English actress on the Reformation stage, their contributions were perceived as transgressive to some degree. Some of the masques Anna was involved in, most notably Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness*, were seen as subversive, and her use of the masque to engage in diplomatic affairs suggested that she could not be fully reined in by her husband.²⁴ The masque Henrietta Maria herself composed was regarded as somewhat scandalous because several female performers were dressed in men’s clothing. Furthermore, it has been argued that Henrietta Maria’s performance in Walter Montagu’s *The Shepherd’s Paradise* (1632) did, in fact, prompt William Prynne to smear female actors as “notorious whores” in *Histriomatrix* (1633)—then the most heated Puritan attack on the English theatre.²⁵ Now, this is not to say that Anna’s and Henrietta Maria’s simple assertion of themselves as sponsors of and performers in court masques, no matter the content of those

²³ Sanders, “Caroline Salon Culture,” 463-4. While the bulk of Sanders’s chapter compares Henrietta Maria’s contributions to the Caroline court masque with those of her chief rival, Lucy Hay, Sanders names the contributions of several other women at the end of her chapter—namely, Elizabeth Cecil, Lady Hatton; Lady Mary Villiers, Duchess of Lennox; Frances Weston, Countess of Portland; and Lady Rachel Fane, the future Countess of Bath. Elizabeth Howe has shown that the first recorded use of the word “actress” to mean “female player on the stage” in the *OED* was “directly after Queen Henrietta Maria’s first court performance in a French pastoral on Shrove Tuesday, 1626,” which may attest to Henrietta Maria’s impact on female stage performance (*The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 21).

²⁴ In *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, McManus makes the case that the delay of Anna’s funeral by “a month longer than tradition dictated” suggested that Anna had fallen from courtly favor by the time of her death.

²⁵ For more on Henrietta Maria’s masque, see Wynne-Davies, “The Queen’s Masque,” 99. Early scholarship on Henrietta Maria regarded her literary tastes as poor, and her masques as an art form in decline, a far cry from the likes of the Jonsonian masque. This view is expressed most clearly in Alfred Harbage’s *Cavalier Drama: An Historical and Critical Supplement to the Study of the Elizabethan and Restoration Stage* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1936) but continued through the 1950s. From the 1980s on, however, critics have committed to revising this narrative and revaluing the Queen’s contributions. For more, see Gough, “Not as Myself,” 48-9; and Sanders, “Caroline Salon Culture,” 449-50.

performances, was a radical act of female agency and autonomy or posed a transparent threat to both early Stuart kings' power. Rather, these queens enabled the court masque to do something more than simply legitimate the king's absolute power, not least over the queen's body, by representing that power in idealized ways on stage.

While the need to control the female body is one thread that is carefully woven into the fabric of the court masque, another thread that has as yet received little attention is the need to control the natural world. What feminist masque criticism needs, in other words, is ecofeminism, whose project is to use gender, Sherilyn MacGregor contends, "as a tool for uncovering power relations in the ostensibly gender-neutral institutions of environmental governance."²⁶ In keeping with MacGregor's argument, feminist masque criticism uses gender as a tool to uncover, explain, and work against the power dynamics that work to silence women and control their bodies, in performance and in real life. Ecofeminist masque criticism would bring these same goals to bear on the nonhuman world by examining how female figures in the court masque shaped the discourse about humankind's dealings with that world. More specifically, an ecofeminist approach would explain how the masque form was deployed to affirm aristocratic power over the nonhuman world and assess the role women played in this process—how they may have internalized or been invested in sustaining this power, how they spoke out against its practices,

²⁶ MacGregor, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, 9. Diane K. McColley's work on Milton's *A Maske* is a strong model for the approach I am articulating. It is just the starting point, however, since the vast majority of her ecofeminist scholarship on Milton focuses on *Paradise Lost*, not on *A Maske*. For her work on *A Maske*, see "Milton and Ecology," in *A Companion to Milton*, edited by Thomas N. Corns, 157-73 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001). For her scholarship on Milton's other works, see "Beneficent Hierarchies: Reading Milton Greenly," in *Spokesperson Milton: Voices in Contemporary Criticism*, edited by Charles W. Durham and Kristin Pruitt McColgan, 231-48 (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1994); "Ecology and Empire," in *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, edited by Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer, 112-29 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1999); "Milton and Nature: Greener Readings," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 62 (2001b): 423-44; "Milton's Environmental Epic: Creature Kinship and the Language of *Paradise Lost*," in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, edited by Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace, 57-74 (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001); and *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

and how they imagined the proper care of the nonhuman world. In turn, such an approach would illustrate how representations of nature determine the ways in which power is physically exercised over it, a relationship the masque form is uniquely designed to capture as an art form about how power is constructed. As with the female body, in other words, the court masque must construct the nonhuman world as something that can and must be controlled to enhance and legitimate the king's material power over it. The pressing question is, however, whether this always goes according to plan.

In broad strokes, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Milton's *A Maske* are designed to do just this. Both texts emphasize that male governance is built on the control and domination of nature. Not only was Milton commissioned to write *A Maske* to celebrate John Egerton's appointment as Lord President of Wales, who was responsible for governing the Welsh Marches, but the masque itself is a story about the assertion of the Lord President's control over this space by proxy through his children. Furthermore, Comus himself operates on the worldview perpetuated by the court masque—that a system of absolute male power demands the control and exploitation of women and land. The same can be said of Prospero in *The Tempest*. While *The Tempest* is not a masque, of course, it does take on a masque-like function and import. The first two performances of the play took place at court in Whitehall Palace, one in 1611 and the other in 1613 on the occasion of the wedding of Princess Elizabeth. The play also contains a representation of a masque in the fourth act, and it regularly references, draws on, incorporates, and ironizes elements of the masque. Moreover, the entire play is one long, desperate attempt on the part of Prospero to perform and sustain the illusion of his power in an effort to regain his actual power as Duke of Milan.²⁷ In the hands of Prospero, in other words, the play stages and

²⁷ For scholarship on the function of the masque in Act Four or the resemblance between *The Tempest* and other court masques, see David Bevington, "The *Tempest* and the Jacobean Court Masque," in *The Politics of the*

affirms his controlling power.²⁸ Given that Milton likely had Shakespeare in mind when writing *A Maske* and given the striking parallels between Comus and Prospero, it might be said that Milton transforms the dramatic representation of a masque in *The Tempest* into something real. In other words, Milton re-masques *The Tempest*.²⁹

In both *The Tempest* and *A Maske*, neither Prospero nor Comus is able to enjoy the full range of their power over the nonhuman world. In fact, the female figures in these texts are deeply unsettled by the abuse of this power and often push back against the practices it necessitates. Furthermore, the primary figures who do so are aristocratic and young; both the Lady and Miranda are in their early teenage years, and Alice Egerton was fifteen at the time she

Stuart Court Masque, edited by David Bevington, Peter Holbrook, and Leah S. Marcus, 218-43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); J. Blondel, "From *The Tempest* to *Comus*," *Revue De Littérature Comparée* 49, no. 2 (1975): 204-216; Roy Eriksen, "Masque Elements in *Doctor Faustus* and *The Tempest*: Form and Function in the Literary Masque," in *The Show Within: Dramatic and Other Insets: English Renaissance Drama (1550-1642), I & II*, edited by François Laroque, 285-303 (Montpellier: Paul-Valéry University Press, 1990); John Gillies, "Shakespeare's Virginian Masque," *English Literary History* 53, no. 4 (1986): 673-707; Ernest B. Gilman, "'All Eyes': Prospero's Inverted Masque," *Renaissance Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1980): 214-230; Robert Grudin, "Prospero's Masque and the Structure of *The Tempest*," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 71 (1972): 401-9; James Knowles, "Insubstantial Pageants: *The Tempest* and Masquing Culture," in *Shakespeare's Late Plays: New Readings*, edited by Jennifer Richards and James Knowles, 108-25 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Krystyna Kujawińska, "*The Tempest* 4.1," in *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, edited by Bruce R. Smith and Katherine Rowe, 1176-1182 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Jacqueline E. M. Latham, "*The Tempest* and the Masque of *Queenes*," *Notes and Queries* 23 (1976): 162-163; David Lindley, "*The Tempest*'s Masque and Opera," in *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean*, edited by Tom Clayton, et al., 103-16 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004); Mary Loeffelholz, "Two Masques of Ceres and Proserpine: *Comus* and *The Tempest*," in *Re-membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*, edited by Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson, 25-42 (London: Methuen, 1987); John M. Major, "*Comus* and the *Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1959): 177-183; Kevin R. McNamara, "Golden Worlds at Court: *The Tempest* and its Masque," *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 183-202; Eleonora Oggiano, "'This is a most Majestic Vision': Performing Prospero's Masque on Screen," in *Revisiting The Tempest: The Capacity to Signify*, edited by Silvia Bigliuzzi, Lisanna Calvi, and Ewan Fernie, 202-17 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Kevin Pask, "Caliban's Masque," *English Literary History* 70, no. 3 (2003): 739-756; Irwin Smith, "Ariel and the Masque in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1970): 213-22; Virginia M. Vaughan, "Un-Masquing *The Tempest*: Staging 4.1.60-138," *REAL: The Yearbook Of Research in English and American Literature* 29 (2013): 283-295; and Robert W. Witt, "A Many-Faceted Jewel: Prospero's Masque," *The Upstart Crow* 9 (1989): 112-117.

²⁸ In this way among others, the play invites us to consider the correspondences between Prospero and James I. In particular, see Bevington, "*The Tempest* and the Jacobean Court Masque," 221-22.

²⁹ The most direct evidence that Milton was thinking about Shakespeare while writing *A Maske* is, of course, Milton's 1630 poem "On Shakespear," which printed in the Second Folio in 1632. Furthermore, there is at least one direct allusion to *The Tempest* in *A Maske* (see note 47), and the parallels between Comus and Prospero are hard to miss. For more on Milton's debt to Shakespeare in the *Maske*, see Maurice Hunt, "Managing Spenser, Managing Shakespeare in *Comus*," *Neophilologus* 88, no. 2 (2004): 315-333.

performed the role of the Lady in 1634. In both texts, then, the idealized representation of girlhood becomes a model for considering what it would mean to live an ethical life in and with nature. In her work on the performance of girlhood in the Stuart court masque, Deanne Williams frames *A Maske* as a “masque of girlhood” that defends “the girl performer against popular anti-theatrical commonplaces about the immorality and lewdness of the stage.”³⁰ As the depraved consort with the lecherous, in other words, the Lady stands above the fray—virtuous, chaste, and temperate. These qualities do not merely define her character, however; they also come to define her philosophy of how to engage with the natural world. In contrast to Comus’s immoderate and vicious exploitation of nature, the Lady is moderate, gentle, and caring. Perhaps this is because she is naïve, or too “yong” as Comus puts it, to be tempted or jaded by the power that demands the domination of nature.³¹ Perhaps it is because she is close enough to power to see its destructive nature. In any case, girlhood in *A Maske* takes on an important role in understanding how and how not to care for the nonhuman world.³²

Yet one of the main goals in *The Tempest* and *A Maske* is to groom Miranda and the Lady for their roles in perpetuating the current system of male governance, as dutiful daughters and future wives of men in power. Comus’s desire to make the Lady his queen, the marriage of young Claribel to the King of Tunis, and the eventual marriage of Miranda to Ferdinand are constant reminders of this fundamental fact. There is no real possibility in either text that the Miranda or the Lady will avoid this prescribed fate, much less that they have a desire to do so. As a masque, after all, Milton’s masque is designed to fashion the Lady into a “necessary” but

³⁰ Deanna Williams, “The Lady and Comus,” *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 152 and 149.

³¹ Milton, *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (London, 1637), 755. All future references to *A Maske* will be cited in the text by line number.

³² In her article, Williams takes great care to compare the Lady to Juliet and Marina. Miranda, however, makes only a passing appearance in the article when Williams compares the Lady’s criticism of Comus’s “rudeness” (Milton, *A Maske*, line 178) to Miranda’s “abhorred slave” speech (Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.350-61).

“acquiescent member of courtly society.”³³ This is precisely who Prospero desires Miranda to be as well. She is “necessary” to her father not just because she is his daughter, but because she has a womb, which enables him to attain much more power than he originally had. More specifically, one of the main reasons he is so concerned with marrying her to Ferdinand is to secure the line of succession through a future son and heir, who will presumably rule as a dual monarch—as Duke of Milan and Naples. In this way, Prospero gets his dukedom back and then some. Prospero would also prefer that Miranda be “acquiescent” by quietly going along with his decisions, sitting back and watching his show, and never speaking out of turn.

In the process of being groomed for power, however, Miranda chooses a thornier path to Prospero’s desired end, as does the Lady in *A Maske*. Neither Miranda nor the Lady is content to simply reaffirm the power relations that work to bind them. In fact, both girls become outspoken critics of these relations in their respective texts. While neither the Lady nor Miranda ultimately undo the system of gender relations that work to contain them, they do resist it by refusing to accept a patriarchal system that misuses and abuses the natural world to sustain itself. Although neither perfectly follows her own ethical code or is totally immune from these exploitative practices, both girls are overwhelmingly critical of such practices and dedicated to finding more sustainable ways of exercising power over the nonhuman world.

All of this is to say that ecofeminism and the court masque are not the strangest of bedfellows. In fact, ecofeminism might be one of the best available tools to dissect the Jacobean and Caroline masque traditions. Both James I’s and Charles I’s reigns were marked by a repressive patriarchal ideology, and the court masques performed during their reigns were ideally intended to reinforce that ideology. James I and Charles I were also afforded new opportunities

³³ McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 8.

to vastly expand the scope of their power over the nonhuman world through overseas expansion, with the help of new technologies to execute this mission and a Baconian program of empire to justify it. At the same time, Queen Anna and Queen Henrietta Maria opened up the masque stage to more women and, for the first time in England, women's voices. As women climbed the stage, James I and Charles I hoped, of course, that these women could easily be drafted into their forces as willing soldiers in the fight to augment the kings' power. However, Anna and Henrietta Maria nearly proved deserters, as their active involvement in the masque tradition was perceived by many as a subversion of the kings' absolute power. In a similar way, Miranda and the Lady do not quietly go along with Prospero's and Comus's programs. Both girls use their proximity to male, aristocratic power to openly criticize its impact on the nonhuman world, in that way challenging the masque form as an affirmation of patriarchal power. Might does not make right for either Miranda or the Lady, so they instead "listen" to and endeavor to "save" (line 866) the nonhuman world from Comus's and Prospero's indifference and active harm.

II. *The Tempest* (1611)

In the second scene of *The Tempest*, Miranda introduces herself as a critic of the exploitative way in which her father exercises his power. She begs him to "allay" the "wild waters" of the storm that, as far as she knows, has killed the crew on board a ship at sea and suggests that "had [she] been any god of power" she would "have sunk the sea within the earth, or ere / It should the good ship have swallowed, and / The fraughting souls within her."

Moreover, what motivates Miranda is unadulterated sympathy: "O I have suffered," she cries, "With those that I saw suffer!"³⁴ Miranda does not look on the world with the "careless" and

³⁴ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.1-13. All future references to *The Tempest* will be cited in the text by act, scene, and line number.

“greedy” eyes that Philips warns us of in her poem; instead, Miranda cares for the world around her, and so she contests her father’s exploitation of it. Miranda, in short, exhibits the same traits for which Philips praises Alice Egerton. More specifically, just as Philips writes that Alice will free the Welsh Marches from the greedy eyes of men, Miranda endeavors to free her world from her father’s self-serving and cruel use of power.

The play’s opening scenes, then, demonstrate how royal power is built on the mastery of the natural world and call into question the practices this so often entails. It is for this reason that New Historicist scholars have argued that *The Tempest* is a New World, and specifically post-Jamestown, play. The inseparability of royal power and the control of natural resources was a fact with which Jacobean England was distinctively familiar, especially in the early years of James I’s reign. During Elizabeth’s reign, the Roanoke colony in what is now North Carolina was founded in 1585 and had mysteriously disappeared by 1590. In 1607, just four years before *The Tempest* was first performed, the Jamestown colony in Virginia became the first permanent English settlement in the New World. By 1610, Jamestown was failing, as the colonists faced severe drought and food shortages. Like Prospero, many colonists wanted nothing more than to return to the Old World. In 1617, John Rolfe and Pocahontas even visited England as part of the Virginia Company’s efforts to drum up support for the then-failing Jamestown Colony. Queen Anna, who was not an active proponent of the English colonial project, is said to have substantially increased financial support for it after having met Rolfe and Pocahontas.³⁵ The seemingly imminent failure of the Jamestown colony thus served as a lesson to the crown that

³⁵ For more information, see Louis H. Roper, “Unmasquing the Connections between Jacobean Politics and Policy: The Circle of Anna of Denmark and the Beginning of the English Empire, 1614-18,” in *High and Mighty Queens of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, edited by Carole Levin, Debra Barrett-Graves, and Jo Eldridge Carney, 45-60 (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

royal power was inextricably dependent on the mastery of the nonhuman world and its resources.

Although the island to which Prospero and Miranda have been exiled is located in the Mediterranean Sea, New Historicist readings of the play suggest that the island may also represent the Bermuda islands and the English colonies in the Americas. In 1609, colonists on their way to Jamestown were blown off course and shipwrecked on Bermuda for a period of ten months. This event has been memorialized by William Strachey, a passenger aboard the *Sea Venture* whose *A True Reportory of the Wracke, and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight* (1610) provides an account of the shipwreck, the survivors' time on the island, and their eventual arrival in Jamestown, after they built two small boats to continue the journey. Strachey's account is, of course, regarded as one of Shakespeare's main sources for *The Tempest*. New Historicists have therefore argued that Strachey's account gives us historical grounding to consider how the play engages with England's colonial endeavors.

The relationship between Prospero and Caliban has also prompted arguments that *The Tempest* is, at its heart, a New World play. Prospero's first impulse upon arrival is to claim the island as his own, despite the fact that it was already inhabited. His next impulse is to bring these inhabitants under his control, which he legitimates by dehumanizing them and which he enacts through cruelty and violence. In every way, Prospero's actions demonstrate that domination and exploitation are part and parcel of the colonial project. Furthermore, the character who most vehemently fights against Prospero's tyrannical rule is Caliban, whose name is an anagram for cannibal and very likely alludes to Michel de Montaigne's essay "On the Cannibals," from which Shakespeare directly lifts passages elsewhere in the play.³⁶ In this essay, Montaigne condemns the European penchant for imposing its culture, often violently so, on other peoples, solely on the

³⁶ Gonzalo's speech about his ideal commonwealth (2.1.143-60) is almost directly lifted from John Florio's translation of this essay.

grounds that these people are barbaric and uncivilized. For these reasons, *The Tempest* has become the focus of a vast body of postcolonial scholarship, which is dedicated to understanding the power relations that sustain colonialism and, in turn, to opening up spaces for the colonized to speak for themselves.³⁷

To say that the play is unequivocally a New World play, however, would be to overlook that *The Tempest* was first performed at Whitehall for the royal court and whose purpose, in that sense, was to convey the ideological positions of the court to the court and its orbit. In later performances at the Globe, the play also functioned as a performance of courtly power for a non-courtly audience. *The Tempest* is not just a play about contemporary political realities, then, or the harsh realities of the English colonial project. It is also a play about how power is constructed—that is, about staging and sustaining the illusion of courtly power to create, secure, and reaffirm its material reality. *The Tempest* cannot just be a New World play, then; while it certainly gestures towards the New World, it also remains firmly close to home.

³⁷ For a range of postcolonial readings of the play, see Monique Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood, and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Paul Brown, "'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, edited by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 48-71 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Thomas Cartelli, "After 'The Tempest': Shakespeare, Postcoloniality, and Michelle Cliff's New, New World Miranda," *Contemporary Literature* 36, no. 1 (1995): 82-102; Cartelli, "Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as Colonialist Text and Pretext," in *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations*, 87-104 (London: Routledge, 1999); Theo D'Haen, "Whose Nature Is It Anyway? Empire's Nature-Nature's Empire," in *Nature: Literature and Its Otherness* (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1997); Jonathan Goldberg, *Tempest in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion," in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, edited by Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, 504-35 (New York: Longman, 1998); Jonathan Hart, *Columbus, Shakespeare, and the Interpretation of the New World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986); Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds., *The Tempest and its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000); Papiya Lahiri, "Prospero's Chimera of Indulgence: The Subaltern in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," *IUP Journal of English Studies* 10.1 (2015): 79-86; Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, eds., *Postcolonial Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 1998); Jyotsna G. Singh and Gitanjali G. Shahani, "Postcolonial Shakespeare Revisited," *Shakespeare* 6:1 (2010): 127-38; Ronald Takaki, "The Tempest in the Wilderness: The Racialization of Savagery," *The Journal of American History* 79.3 (1992): 892-912; Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Chantal Zabus, *Tempests after Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

By and large, postcolonial criticism on *The Tempest* centers on Caliban because he is the main agent of resistance against Prospero's rule. In contrast, Miranda is generally regarded as an unwitting, and at times witting, agent in her father's plot because she has internalized his views of Caliban as monstrous and thus sees little problem with the way Prospero treats him.³⁸ In this way, postcolonial readings of Miranda share with feminist readings the view that Miranda is successfully manipulated and exploited by her father for political gain. Many feminist readings of Miranda thus center on the ways in which the dynastic politics of male, aristocratic rule and succession in the early modern period was predicated on Miranda's pliancy, submissiveness, and virginity.³⁹ Alonso's daughter, Claribel, functions in precisely the same way, whose name appears four times to remind us that Miranda plays a vital role in sustaining a system of dynastic politics that survives on the discipline and control of the female body. Feminist critics have also drawn attention to Claribel and other women on the margins of the play—such as Caliban's

³⁸ Melissa E. Sanchez argues that Miranda's "abhorred slave" speech is one example of the ways in which her agency has often been eclipsed by some critics, who have attributed the speech to Prospero or "turn[ed] her rage into a response against the threat that Caliban poses to Prospero's rule rather than to a potential violation of her own bodily boundaries ("Seduction and Service in *The Tempest*," *Studies in Philology* 105, no. 1 [2008]: 65). For more on the intersection of gender and race in the play, and on the relationship between Miranda and Caliban in particular, see Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Lorrie Jerrell Leininger, "The Miranda Trap: Sexism and Racism in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, edited by Gayle Green, Ruth Swift Lenz, and Carol Thomas Neely, 285-94 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980); Jyotsna G. Singh, "Caliban versus Miranda: Race and Gender Conflicts in Postcolonial Rewritings of *The Tempest*," in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, edited by Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 191-209; and Jean Slights, "Rape and the Romanticization of Shakespeare's Miranda," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 41 (2001): 357-79.

³⁹ Chantal Zabus has shown that later iterations of Miranda in adaptations of the play and works inspired by it—especially works by Canadian women writers, such as Margaret Laurence, Sarah Murphy, and Audrey Thomas—champion Miranda as a symbol of female agency. In this way, Zabus argues, these women writers direct our attention away from Miranda's cruel treatment of Caliban and from her body as an object of men's exchange toward her other function in the play as an embodiment of wonder. Reminding us of the meaning behind Miranda's name, Zabus writes: "Miranda entails wonder. In the Latin sense, she is strange and wonderful but in the Spanish meaning, she is the "seeing one," an active agent of her own vision. Also, Miranda's virginity has an appeal for women writers that women's virginity referred less to their state of sexual experience than to their self-reliance. Being both an object of wonder and a desiring subject, Miranda is both a pre-feminist and a "postpatriarcal" [sic] icon" (*Tempests after Shakespeare* [New York: Palgrave, 2002], 104).

mother, Sycorax, and “widow Dido,” to whom Gonzalo only refers in passing—precisely because they occupy these marginal roles. Among these women, Sycorax has received the most sustained attention for two reasons: she is from Algeria, and Prospero views her as a “damned” and “foul witch” who would have posed one of the greatest threats to his power had she not been banished and nearly executed (1.2.263-67).⁴⁰

If feminist readings of *The Tempest* explain how Miranda and other female figures maintain or resist a system of male, aristocratic rule, then an ecofeminist reading of Miranda would argue for her importance in initiating a counter-narrative about Prospero’s exercise of power, specifically as it relates to his exploitation of the island’s inhabitants and resources. Of course, *The Tempest* has been a focus of ecocritics for some time. Todd Borlik and Gabriel Egan, for instance, have read the play in the context of royal policies of deforestation and the drainage and enclosure of the fens. John Gillies argues that the play documents both the representations and realities of the Virginian landscape in the early seventeenth century. Steve Mentz has drawn our attention away from the land and toward the sea in the play as part of his “blue cultural studies” project, which examines how perceptions of and experiences at sea changed during the early modern period as navigational technologies improved and commerce was increasingly globalized. Since the 1970s and 1980s, when the masque in Act Four began to be regarded

⁴⁰ It is notable that no sustained attention is given to Miranda in the second edition of *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare* (edited by Dymphna Callaghan [Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016]), though the companion does contain a chapter on Sycorax (Rachana Sachdev, “Cultural Politics and Gynecology,” 226-43). For the relationship of Sycorax’s witchcraft to women’s role in narrative acts in the early modern period, see Mary Ellen Lamb, “Engendering the Narrative Act: Old Wives’ Tales in *The Winter’s Tale*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*,” *Criticism* 40, no. 4 (1998): 529-553. For feminist scholarship on Miranda, see Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Katherine Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); James Knowles, “Insubstantial Pageants: *The Tempest* and Masquing Culture,” in *Shakespeare’s Late Plays: New Readings*, edited by Jennifer Richards and James Knowles, 108-25 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); and Mary Loeffelholz, “Two Masques of Ceres and Proserpine: *Comus* and *The Tempest*,” in *Remembering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*, edited by Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson, 25-42 (London: Methuen, 1987).

seriously among critics as an integral part of the play, much attention has also been given to the relationship between the cultivation of land and dynastic politics. While these readings are quite diverse in scope, at their core they each aim to show the ways in which nature is entangled with politics.⁴¹ Although the play has been the proving ground of ecocriticism for some time, ecofeminism has yet to take up the play as its subject.⁴² Moreover, although Miranda is deeply concerned about the use of nature in the game of politics, the only politics she has ever been regarded as an active participant in is the politics of courtship.⁴³

Yet, in a play that can be described as a long and many-headed grab for power, Miranda emerges as its first critic and one of its most outspoken. She then sets in motion an alternative model for engaging with the nonhuman world that other characters, such as Caliban and Ariel, build on, which runs counter to Prospero's exploitative treatment of the island's inhabitants and resources.⁴⁴ In this regard, Miranda is a rather poor model for female masque performance and

⁴¹ See Todd A. Borlik, "Caliban and the Fen Demons of Lincolnshire: The Englishness of Shakespeare's *Tempest*," *Shakespeare* 9, no. 1 (2013): 21-51; Gabriel Egan, *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); John Gillies, "Shakespeare's Virginian Masque," *English Literary History* 53, no. 4 (1986): 673-707; Steve Mentz, "Toward a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture, and Early Modern English Literature," *Literature Compass* 6, no. 5 (2009): 997-1013; and Mentz, "Fathoming: *The Tempest* and *King Lear*," in *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*, 1-18 (London: Continuum International, 2009). For more general ecocritical studies of *The Tempest* or Shakespeare's plays, see Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton, eds. *Ecocritical Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2011); Terry Comito, "Caliban's Dream: The Topography of Some Shakespeare Gardens," *Shakespeare Studies* 14 (1981): 23-54; Simon Estok, "An Introduction to Shakespeare and Ecocriticism: The Special Cluster," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 12, no. 2, (2005): 109-117; Estok, "Conceptualizing the Other in Hostile Early Modern Geographies: Situating Ecocriticism and Difference," *English Language and Literature* 45, no. 4 (1999): 877-98; Estok, "Doing Ecocriticism with Shakespeare," in *Early Modern Cultural Studies*, edited by Thomas Hallock, Ivo Kamps and Karen L. Raber, 77-92 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); T. L. Fitz, "The Vocabulary of the Environment in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1975): 42-47; Glen Love, "Shakespeare's Origin of Species and Darwin's *Tempest*," *Configurations: A Journal of Literature, Reconsidered*, *Literature Compass* 12, no. 9 (2015): 461-470; Kevin Pask, "Prospero's Counter-Pastoral," *Criticism* 44, no. 4 (2002): 389-404; and Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare's Nature: From Cultivation to Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴² In fact, *The Tempest* makes no appearance in Rebecca Laroche, Jennifer Munroe, and Evelyn Gajowski's edited collection *Shakespeare and Ecofeminist Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

⁴³ Melissa E. Sanchez has given the most sustained attention to Miranda as an independent agent within the play itself—not in later iterations or modern adaptations as Zabrus has done—by arguing that Miranda takes control of her desires in pursuing a relationship with Ferdinand, despite the fact that her desires so happen to align with Prospero's plan ("Seduction and Service in *The Tempest*").

⁴⁴ In an essay on the play's allusions to Virgil's *Aeneid*, Robert Wiltenburg once noted that "every major character, except Miranda, either wishes, imagines, plots, or claims to be a 'king'" ("*The Aeneid* in *The Tempest*," in

reception, given that the entire purpose of the masque was to affirm and glorify royal power in all its forms. While *The Tempest* was not commissioned as a masque, as I have shown, it contains a representation of one in the fourth act and bears masque-like import. The play was also first performed for James I and the royal court on November 1, 1611, in the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall Palace, and the second recorded performance at Whitehall took place two years later in 1613 to celebrate of the marriage of James's and Anna's daughter, Elizabeth, to King Frederick V, the Elector Palatine.⁴⁵ To a certain extent, then, Miranda's actions can be placed in the context of the masque tradition. As a witness to and a performer in Prospero's machinations, Miranda does not go quietly along with his plan by repeatedly disagreeing with the ways in which her father exercises his power. In this way, she frustrates Prospero's masque-like goals to make her an "acquiescent member of courtly society" and to sustain his fantasy of royal power.⁴⁶ Although Miranda does ultimately marry by the play's end and is unquestionably exploited by her father for political gain, from the start of the play she challenges the very power she and the masque form itself are intended to prop up.

The Tempest's opening scene demonstrates how royal power is built on the mastery of nature and questions the legitimacy of that power. In fact, the first expression of Prospero's power is a tempest, which Prospero has used his powers of magic to generate so as to shipwreck all those who conspired to usurp him as Duke of Milan. Of course, as the storm rages in this first

Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearean Study and Production, vol. 39, edited by Stanley Wells [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 165). Now, Wiltenburg does not suggest that Miranda lacks or is uncorrupted by political ambitions because she is a woman; rather, he suggests that Miranda is uninterested in political power as an independent and rational actor. She has formed her own ideas about how best to exercise power, in other words, and doesn't see it being exercised well by the men around her. Moreover, her most pressing concern is with the ways in which those in power build and legitimate that power by seeking mastery over nature.

⁴⁵ Early scholarship on *The Tempest* suggested that this masque was inserted in the play precisely for this occasion, although this theory has now been discounted. See Kevin R. McNamara, "Golden Worlds at Court," 183-4.

⁴⁶ McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 8.

scene, we and the ship's crew have no reason to believe that this tempest is the effect of anything other than a natural cause. While Prospero generates the tempest to begin the process of reasserting his authority over his co-conspirators, what unfolds as the storm rages on is a series of events that forces us to ask where authority comes from—that is, what backs the nobility's claims to authority. The scene opens in the middle of the storm, and Antonio and Alonso emerge from their cabins below to rather unhelpfully blunder around and yell for the shipmaster. The Boatswain is rightfully irritated because, for all their words, they do not help the crew save the ship from ruin: "You mar our labor," he cries, and in that way "assist the storm" (1.1.13-14). Gonzalo then tells the Boatswain to "be patient," to which the Boatswain replies, "When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of king" (1.1.15-17)? So while Antonio acts as if he owns the ship, the Boatswain calls that power into question by suggesting that the tempest does not care about his claims to authority; in a storm, after all, nature can level us all.

The tempest thus foregrounds just how vulnerable the nobles and the crew are to the forces of nature. For all of Antonio's bluster, his title, Duke of Milan, is of no use, and he lacks the experience and expertise to save the crew from the storm. His authority on the ship, therefore, is illegitimate as a matter of skill and circumstance. The illegitimacy of Prospero's power, however, is a matter of right. Prospero has made nature serve his interests in exactly the way he desires, and he operates according to the belief that might makes right—that his sheer ability to control nature means that he has a right to do so. The Boatswain's question still rings true, however, just in a different register. The only source of Prospero's authority over nature here is his physical power to master and exploit it. However, if nature does not "care [. . .] for the name of king," then nature also offers no justification for actions taken in its name. In the name of king, not to mention one unjustly deposed, Prospero exploits nature because he believes he

has a right to regain his power and position as rightful Duke of Milan. As the Boatswain, says, though, nature is incapable of caring about politics, so Prospero's exploitative practices can only be legitimated by human beings, including himself, who collectively believe that these practices are legitimate. In this way, the Boatswain yet again challenges the nobles' claims to authority—that the mere fact of being “kings” necessarily gives them absolute power and that the mere fact of having power entitles them to exercise it in whatever way they please.

Miranda continues this line of argument in the play's second scene, as she criticizes how Prospero has exploited nature to inflict harm on others. Not only does she beg Prospero to show the ship's crew mercy by putting an end to the storm he started, but she also suggests that he could have taken a different course of action:

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch
But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel
(Who had no doubt some noble creature in her)
Dashed all to pieces! O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or ere
It should the good ship have swallowed, and
The fraughting souls within her. (1.2.1-13)

Here, Miranda builds a case for empathy, mercy, and care as an alternative to destruction. While her father has exploited the sky and the sea to “dash” the crew and the ship “to pieces,” Miranda “suffers” alongside them, is moved by their cries, and can only conclude that they have “perished.” Her sorrow leads her to imagine what she would do were she “any god of power” in order to suggest what he, as that “god of power,” should have done. Miranda has listened to the cries of these “noble creatures” and thus believes they should be saved, not destroyed. In this

way, Miranda builds an alternative model to the way in which her father exercises his power over nature. Her sympathy runs counter to the fantasy of royal power that he primarily exercises in the play's opening scene by controlling nature and using it violently to terrify those who would oppose that power.

Prospero does not take kindly to Miranda's argument. In fact, he goes on to suggest that her insight was nothing more than an irrational and overly emotional outburst: "Be collected," he tells her. "No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart / There's no harm done." Miranda is clearly not satisfied by this answer, crying out, "O, woe the day!" In turn, Prospero repeats, "No harm" (1.2.13-15). It should be noted that Miranda does not yet know that no man on board the ship has died. This being said, this exchange again sets Miranda's compassion against Prospero's lust for power and vengeance. Prospero's indifference to Miranda's sympathy is produced by his knowledge that no one will actually drown and his determination to force the submission of his enemies. Prospero claims that the mere survival of the crew means that no harm has been done.

Prospero's choice of the word "amazement" is also striking in this exchange. Miranda's name derives from the Latin *mirandus*, which means to be wondered at, and she is regularly described as one who wonders and is wondered at. When she sees Ferdinand for the first time, she describes him as a "thing divine" (1.2.416), which he echoes when he exclaims upon seeing her, "O you wonder" (1.2.424)! When she meets the rest of the shipwrecked crew near the end of the play, she cries out, "O wonder! / How many goodly creatures are there here? How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world / That has such people in't" (5.1.181-84)! In each of these cases, wonder is life-affirming; it captures that immediate and original response to the beauty of the world around us that is so quickly corrupted by greed, as Philips argues in her poem. Prospero, however, undercuts Miranda's amazement, saying that the world is only "new" to her (5.1.184),

and this is not the first time he has done so. In fact, her first expression of wonder is characterized as foolish and borderline hysterical. More specifically, by demanding that Miranda put an end to her “amazement” and compose herself, he frames wonder, which will always be the foundation of Miranda’s ethics of care, as the silly and naïve response of a girl whose “virtue of compassion” (1.2.27) has no place in the game of politics.⁴⁷

In an attempt to comfort Miranda, Prospero then proceeds to distract her with the story of how Antonio betrayed him and how they came to the island. In the process, Miranda displays a degree of political acumen of which her father believes her incapable, and she continues to find her father’s explanations unsatisfactory. After Prospero describes how Antonio usurped the dukedom, Miranda asks why Antonio and his co-conspirators did not “that hour destroy” her and her father (1.2.139). Miranda’s question is a revealing one; it illustrates that she understands the threat they pose to Antonio as long as they are alive and that it would have been politically expedient, and potentially necessary, to remove that threat entirely. In turn, her question reveals the extent to which political power is built on and secured through violence. Prospero eventually ends his tale, expecting that he has now assuaged Miranda of her concerns. Her response, however, is telling: “And now, I pray you, sir,” she says, “For still ’tis beating in my mind, your reason / For raising this sea-storm” (1.2.176-77)? While Prospero has just spent considerable time telling his tale of “sea-sorrow” (1.2.170) to justify his reason for doing so, Miranda is not convinced by his argument. Instead, she is preoccupied with and unable to rationalize that other, more horrific “sea-sorrow” with which the play opened: the tempest. It is still “beating in [her]

⁴⁷ Orgel notes that Comus alludes to Miranda by referring to the Lady as a “foreign wonder” (Milton, *A Maske*, line 265). Orgel argues that this use of “wonder” is “subversive because it so perfectly realizes Prospero’s fears: that admiration leads inevitably to seduction, to ravishment. Only here Comus is the victim, seduced and ravished” (“A Case for Comus,” 36). While I agree with the first part of this statement, I disagree with the latter. We can instead read Comus’s use of “wonder” as an act of aggression, an attempt to ravish the Lady, which he goes on to carry out shortly thereafter by abducting her.

mind.” Time and again, Miranda is not satisfied by her father’s answers because his self-serving attempts to regain power and get justice involve exploiting nature to inflict harm on others.

While it is true that she generally supports his efforts to regain the power and position that Antonio unjustly took from him, she is deeply concerned by the methods Prospero has used and plans to use to do so.

Miranda’s dissatisfaction with her father’s methods continues as her relationship with Ferdinand develops. In response to Prospero’s cruel treatment of Ferdinand, Miranda criticizes her father for speaking so “ungently” and hopes that “pity” will “move” her father “to be inclined [her] way” (1.2.442-45). She continues on the same note, and Prospero finally cuts her off by suggesting that it would be ridiculous to listen to her: “What,” he asks, “My foot my tutor” (1.2.466-67)? Prospero flatly dismisses Miranda on the grounds that her duty is to listen and obey, not speak out against him, both as his daughter and as a girl. He again goes on to denigrate her newfound love for Ferdinand because the only men she has ever encountered besides Prospero are Caliban and Ferdinand. True to form, Miranda disputes her father’s claim, saying, “I have no ambition / To see a goodlier man” (1.2.480-81). Her lack of ambition stands in stark contrast, here, to Prospero’s extreme political ambitions—and those of most others in the play for that matter. Moreover, her assertion suggests that it is this very lack of ambition that enables her to see the “good” in others, which Prospero’s own ambitions cause him to disregard or render him unable to see. To put another way, Miranda’s care for others is made possible because she lacks the kinds of political ambitions that so often exclude pity from the world of human relations.

Of course, it may reasonably be argued that Miranda lacks these ambitions because she is naïve and unfamiliar with the realities of court life, having been raised on an island. That being

said, Miranda proves to be quite familiar with the game of politics at several key moments in the play. As I have mentioned earlier, early in the play she expresses surprise that Antonio did not immediately execute Prospero after taking power, indicating that she is keenly aware of the realities of securing political power. The same is also revealed when Miranda and Ferdinand are playing chess in the opening scene of Act Five. While Ferdinand insists that he is not cheating, Miranda suggests that she would understand if he were: “Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle, / And I would call it fair play” (5.1.174-75). Setting aside its sexual undertones, Miranda and Ferdinand’s exchange reveals that Miranda is relatively familiar with the unsavory ways in which power is often gained. Now, it would be wrong to say that Miranda calls for these tactics to be deployed in anything other than a harmless game of chess. Nowhere in the play does she support the attitude that the ends justify the means; in fact, she is critical of this precise attitude. What can be argued, however, is that the game of chess reveals Miranda to be less naïve and more politically savvy than we might initially give her credit for.

Ferdinand reaffirms the difference between Miranda’s sympathy and her father’s cruelty while collecting logs as part of the forced labor to which Prospero has subjected him:

O, she is
Ten times more gentle than her father’s crabbed,
And he’s composed of harshness. I must remove
Some thousands of these logs and pile them up,
Upon a sore injunction. My sweet mistress
Weeps when she sees me work and says such baseness
Had never like executor. I forget;
But these sweet thoughts do eve refresh my labors
Most busilest when I do it. (3.1.7-15)

As Ferdinand piles logs, Miranda suffers with him, just as she suffered alongside the crew during the tempest. Miranda even suggests lines later that the logs themselves would “weep for having wearied [him]” (3.1.19) were the logs he now must pile to burn. In this way, the play suggests

that a reciprocal relationship with nature, here exemplified between Miranda and the natural world, is a more effective method of engaging with nature than the “crabbed” and “harsh” ways of Prospero.⁴⁸ Ferdinand also notes that Miranda’s concern for him is able to “refresh [his] labors,” in a way that is quite similar to Alice Egerton in Philips’s poem. Miranda goes even further to provide this refreshment by offering to “bear [Ferdinand’s] logs the while” (3.1.24) because the work “would become [her] / As well as it does” Ferdinand (3.1.28-29). Miranda is not above hard labor, and her pity moves her to combat her father’s exploitation by partaking in this labor. Pity, for Miranda, involves more than simple words. It materially affects the way she interacts with Ferdinand and the natural world. Her pity enables to see nature as “kind” and “hospitable” (line 187) and to understand that Prospero’s use of nature almost always involves exploitation.

Prospero, however, views the nonhuman world as something that he must master and that he has a right to exploit simply because he has the power to do so. This exploitation reaches an extreme in Prospero’s treatment of Caliban, whom Prospero equates to the “earth” when we first meet Caliban. Moments earlier, Prospero states that he exploits Caliban for his and Miranda’s gain: “He does make our fire, / Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices / That profit us” (1.2.311-14). Caliban reinforces the exploitative nature of this labor by mumbling to himself that “there’s wood enough within” (1.2.314), implying that Prospero doesn’t actually need more wood at that moment. Throughout the play, we are also reminded that Caliban performs these labors under threat of torture, which Prospero frequently inflicts upon him by letting a variety of

⁴⁸ It might be argued that Prospero does view nature as something capable of pity. When describing the moment Antonio sent he and Miranda to sea, Prospero suggests that the winds pitied them: “There they hoist us / To cry to th’ sea that roared to us; to sigh / To th’ winds, whose pity, sighing back again, / Did us but loving wrong” (1.2.148-51). On closer look, however, Prospero seems to blame the wind and the seas for something that is entirely Antonio’s doing. It might thus be argued that Prospero looks on nature unkindly and seeks to control it because he views it as responsible for his current plight.

animals loose on him: urchins that pinch him, hedgehogs that prick him, bees that sting him, apes that bite him, and adders that wind around him. In Prospero's view, in short, Caliban is less a person than a natural resource, as exploitable as any.

Caliban also frames Prospero as a usurper who has exploited the features of the island and Caliban's knowledge of them to assert control over the island. Cursing Prospero, Caliban says:

This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first
Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries in't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o'th'isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax—toads, beetles, bats—light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o'th'island. (1.2.331-44)

Caliban's understanding of power here is inseparable from an understanding of power over natural resources. Upon Prospero's arrival, Caliban notes that Prospero was kind to him, valued his knowledge, and educated him about the workings of the universe. In the process, Caliban came to love Prospero, so he reciprocated Prospero's kindness by showing Prospero "all the qualities o'th'isle." With the advantage of hindsight, however, Caliban now knows that Prospero only cared about Caliban insofar as he could teach Prospero how best to assert and maintain power over the island. Moreover, to sustain this power Prospero must continue to exploit Caliban and "keep" him from "the rest o'th'island," since Caliban knows the island far better than Prospero does and thus poses a threat to him. Caliban ends by undercutting the stability of Prospero's power: Caliban is his only subject, after all, and a discontented one at that. Yet again,

the play chips away at Prospero's claims to power and exercise of it, both of which too often involve the exploitation of the nonhuman world for his own gain.⁴⁹

Of course, Miranda treats Caliban in a similarly cruel manner, if not to the same degree as her father. While Miranda claims to have once "pitied" Caliban, she now calls him an "abhorred slave" who has been "deservedly confined" by her father (1.2.350-60).⁵⁰ The text suggests that Miranda's pity turned into hostility once Caliban attempted to rape her. It is also possible that Miranda, having proven susceptible to Prospero's manipulations, is hostile towards Caliban because he threatens Prospero's hold on power. Although it is clear that Miranda's sympathy and mercy therefore have limits, this does not mean that Miranda's treatment of Caliban invalidates her criticism of her father.⁵¹ To put simply, Miranda is not always a subversive figure in the play. Her role in the play is not as some proto-feminist icon, but as a figure who, early on, sets in motion an alternative model to her father's fantasy of royal power—one which depends on the mastery and exploitation of the island's inhabitants and natural resources.

While Prospero almost exclusively views the nonhuman world as something to be exploited, Caliban views the island, like Miranda, as a space of wonder that treats him kindly and should be treated kindly. In an effort to comfort Stephano and Trinculo, who are frightened by

⁴⁹ Prospero reveals his own insecurity about his power elsewhere in the play. Near the end of the play he refers to a variety of natural phenomena as "weak masters" (5.1.41) whom he has made use of to expand his own powers. In addition, he is particularly troubled by Caliban's mother, Sycorax, because of the power she possesses over the natural world, which seems to exceed his own. She can "control the moon," he notes, "make flows and ebbs, / And deal in her command without her power" (5.1.269-71).

⁵⁰ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.350-60.

⁵¹ Melissa Sanchez has argued that Miranda's agency in this scene has often been eclipsed by those who read Miranda's anger as a "response against the threat that Caliban poses to Prospero's rule." Sanchez goes on to argue that Miranda's anger is instead a direct result of Caliban's "potential violation of her own bodily boundaries" by attempting to rape her. In this way, Miranda's anger is not aimed at affirming her father's power or Caliban's imagined power, but at affirming her own power over her body, which she refuses to let others exploit for political gain ("Seduction and Service," 65).

the noises of the island, Caliban says:

Be not afeard: the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again. (3.2.133-41)

Considering that Caliban is often terrified by certain noises for fear that Prospero has sent animals to torture him (2.2.15-17), it is remarkable that Caliban is still able to be comforted by the island and marvel at what it has to offer. Here, Caliban assures Stephano and Trinculo that the island is nothing to be afraid of and that it is, more often than not, “kind” and “hospitable,” as the Lady in *A Maske* would say (line 187). In fact, nature is so kind to him that its “sweet” and “delightful” noises free him from the psychological and physical burden of his enslavement. He listens to the sounds of the island, and they save him. Unfortunately, however, Caliban does not go so far as to suggest that humankind’s relationship to the nonhuman world should fundamentally change, as Miranda does. He believes that destruction must be met with like destruction, and so he condemns Prospero to similar punishment—in the form of “toads, beetles, and bats”—and insists that Prospero must be “destroyed” (3.2.144) to set right the wrongs he committed against Caliban.

Like Caliban, Gonzalo also emerges as one of the main figures of empathy in the play, but even he is corrupted by the desire for power. Early in the play, Prospero tells Miranda that in addition to the little food and water they were given, the “noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo, / Out of his charity” supplied them with additional goods to survive on board the ship (1.2.159-68). Gonzalo’s compassion extends to the “islanders” he supposes to have seen, which is made clear

when he states that “their manners are more gentle, kind, than of / Our human generation” (3.3.29-33).⁵² Yet the play goes to great pains to reveal that even Gonzalo is not immune from the ambitions that have corrupted the men around him and so often result in the domination of the nonhuman world. Gonzalo hypothesizes that “had [he] plantation of this isle, / [. . .] / And were the king on’t,” then “there would be “no sovereignty.” Sebastian shrewdly replies, “Yet he would be king on’t,” which causes Antonio to joke that “the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning” (2.1.139-54).⁵³ Both Sebastian and Antonio capture the irony in Gonzalo’s scenario: that he would be colonizer and king of an island that would not be structured around such claims to authority. While the word “plantation” means “colonization” here, Antonio initially understands it to mean “the action of planting.” This is why Antonio immediately replies that had Gonzalo “plantation of this isle,” he would have “sow’t with nettle-seed.” Sebastian then adds that Gonzalo might sow the land with “docks, or mallows,” which are used as antidotes to the nettle’s sting (2.1.140). The order of these responses is revealing: it suggests that power is typically exercised first to harm, and only later to care and restore, after the damage has been done.

The wedding masque in Act Four stages another idealized vision of plantation intended, in masque-like fashion, to affirm Prospero’s power over nature. In the wedding masque, the cultivation of the land appears in its most ideal form, and this cultivation is designed to reinforce

⁵² Gonzalo’s claim is the same claim that Montaigne makes throughout his essay “On the Cannibals”: the indigenous peoples of the New World are less barbaric than Europeans.

⁵³ For the equivalent passage in Florio’s translation of Montaigne’s essay “On the Cannibals,” see the following: “It is a nation, would I answer *Plato*, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corne, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulations, covetousnes, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. How dissonant would hee finde his imaginarie common-wealth from this perfection?” (Michel de Montaigne, “Of the Caniballes,” 102).

the importance of fertility in marriage. Juno explicitly states that she, Ceres, and Iris perform this masque to “honor” Miranda and Ferdinand’s “issue,” and Juno goes on to sing about how the land can be made more productive: “Earth’s increase, and foison plenty, / Barnes and garners never empty, / Vines, with clust’ring bunches growing, / Plants, with goodly burden bowing” (4.1.105-13). Ferdinand proves a good model for masque reception because he completely buys into this vision: “This is a most majestic vision,” he tells Prospero, and “so rare a wondered father and a wise / Make this place paradise” (4.1.118-24). In Ferdinand’s eyes, Prospero has made Eden anew. Ferdinand’s assessment is problematic, though, because Prospero controls nature most often in an exploitative way. Moreover, his magic disguises the “harsh physical reality” of the island, as L.T. Fitz argues, in images of lush fertility. Fitz even goes so far as to argue that:

there is no evidence whatsoever to show that there is any kind of cultivation or domestication of animals on the island. Prospero and company seem to have been living on fresh-brook mussels and whatever fish Caliban could trap in his dams. For all that has been said in favor of Prospero's “art” as symbolizing civilization, it seems that in twelve years on the island he has succeeded in establishing no more than what anthropologists would call a “hunting and gathering economy.”⁵⁴

In this regard, the wedding masque functions as another form of exploitation: Prospero constructs an idealized image of his ability to control the nonhuman world to sustain the image that he has been an effective ruler of the island for the past twelve years.

Perhaps this is why Miranda, unlike Ferdinand, does not comment on the wedding masque at all. Her only comment after the masque vanishes is to observe how “distempered” her father has become, who ends the masque because he “forgot that foul conspiracy / Of the beast Caliban and his confederates” (4.1.139-45). Prospero’s power is thus left unaffirmed: his wedding masque cannot run its proper course, and it ends because Prospero suddenly recalls an

⁵⁴ Fitz, “The Vocabulary of the Environment in *The Tempest*,” 47 and 43.

actual plot to overthrow him. Miranda does not help. Rather than simply glorifying Prospero's controlling power over nature, as Ferdinand does, Miranda is concerned with the tremendous harm her father inflicts on other human beings and the nonhuman world in his desperate attempts to maintain control. As I will show in the next section, Prospero is quite similar to Milton's Comus and Comus's mother, Circe, as she is presented in Inigo Jones and Aurelian Townshend's *Tempe Restored* (1632): Prospero is excessively intemperate, and this intemperance often results in the exploitation of the natural world. As is the goal of *Tempe Restored*, the task in Shakespeare's play thus becomes to "temper" Prospero's "distemper'd" mind, and Miranda yet again proves to be particularly attuned to this need.⁵⁵ That Prospero describes his mind as "beating" (4.1.163) here, is notable since it linguistically links him to Miranda, whose concerns about the storm Prospero raised continued to "beat" in her mind even after he justified his reasons for doing so. Through a single phrase, the play again sets Prospero's obsession with power—with its affirmation and preservation—with Miranda's fixation on tempering that power's worst impulses. Miranda thus proves a much worse model of masque reception than Ferdinand: she does not praise the wedding masque, she does not clearly buy into the illusion of power it stages, and she instead reminds us that this illusion both disguises and legitimates the harsh realities that power so often produces.

Ariel is the final character in the play tasked with tempering Prospero's "distempered" mind.⁵⁶ Because Ariel is not human and, like Miranda and Caliban, has long been a victim of

⁵⁵ Townshend, *Tempe Restored* (London, 1631), 7.

⁵⁶ While I use the term "nonhuman world" in this dissertation specifically to refer to animals, plants, the land, and natural resources, it is worth noting that, as a spirit, Ariel is not human and exploited in numerous ways by Prospero. However, Prospero treats Ariel in a categorically different way than Caliban, for example, whom Prospero equates to "earth" and has enslaved for an indefinite period of time. Ariel, on the other hand, is best characterized as indentured servant, whose period of servitude has, in theory, an endpoint. Prospero also inflicts much more extreme harm on Caliban than Ariel throughout the play, and Prospero is more receptive to Ariel's counsel than he is to many others in the play. In this vein, it could be argued that Prospero is more attentive to the

Prospero's domineering impulses, Ariel is uniquely positioned to criticize Prospero's power. In other words, Ariel is both close enough to power to see how it operates and removed enough from it to perceive its damaging effects. Ariel also bears striking resemblances to the Attendant Spirit in *A Maske*. On the simplest level, both belong to the nonhuman world, and both are among the staunchest advocates for mercy in their respective texts. Like the Attendant Spirit, whom I discuss in more detail in the next section, who is motivated by "care" to help the Lady's brothers rescue the Lady (lines 505-6) Ariel's own tender affections for the shipwrecked crew in the play's final scene fuel his appeals to Prospero to be merciful. Moreover, like Sabrina, whom the Attendant Spirit consults, Ariel proposes an ethics structured around "listening" and "healing" (lines 866 and 899) as an alternative to Prospero's exploitative and cruel exercise of power.

Prospero is moved to mercy in large part because Ariel is not human but nonetheless has compassion for the suffering Prospero has inflicted on the shipwrecked crew. In one of the most striking passages of the play, Ariel appeals to Prospero's humanity to choose mercy over vengeance:

ARIEL: Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.

PROSPERO: Dost thou think so, spirit?

ARIEL: Mine would, sir, were I human.

PROSPERO: And mine shall.
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
Thou with their high wrongs I am struck to th'quick,

nonhuman world than I have presented it. Although Prospero is undoubtedly moved by Ariel's arguments for mercy in this scene, as I show, Prospero is only persuaded because he regards Ariel as inferior to humankind.

Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part. The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance. (5.1.16-28)

In this passage, Shakespeare again lifts from Montaigne, altering the phrase “rare action” in the essay “Of Crueltie” to “rarer action.” At its core, “Of Crueltie” is a critique of the “imaginary soveraigntie” that undergirds humankind’s claim to power over nature and an argument in favor of treating nature’s creatures with basic respect and kindness, as I have shown in the dissertation’s Introduction.⁵⁷ By using Montaigne’s words here, Shakespeare specifically directs our attention to the cruelty that too often characterizes humankind’s relationship to the nonhuman world.

To restructure Prospero’s relationship to the nonhuman world, though, will require a considerable amount of effort, as it does in this passage. Prospero chooses “virtue” over “vengeance” for two reasons, which work together: he is taken aback by Ariel’s sympathy for the crew because Ariel is not human, and he is persuaded by “nobler reason.” Prospero’s thought process in this scene is methodical and slow, which is reflected by the slow progression of the lines. He begins by reasoning that he should “be kindlier moved” by the crew’s “afflictions” than Ariel because Prospero, unlike Ariel, is “one of their kind.” In weighing this argument against his “fury,” Prospero is ultimately persuaded by “nobler reason” to choose virtue over vengeance. Though he has finally chosen the course of action Miranda and Ariel have suggested, the source of his compassion is noticeably different from both. For Miranda and Ariel, compassion is almost intuitive; it is their most immediate response to the sight of suffering. Prospero, on the other hand, enjoys making his enemies suffer and must be appealed to time and time again to temper his rage. More importantly, Prospero’s decision to be merciful relies on the same

⁵⁷ For the full passage, see Michel de Montaigne, “Of Crueltie,” 243.

“imaginary sovereignty” Montaigne denounces, as he builds a case for compassion by suggesting that Ariel, who is “but air,” should be less capable of it than he. Prospero’s struggle in this scene thus shows humankind’s relationship to the nonhuman world will not be repaired easily. What is required is a wholesale revaluation of the nonhuman world, and this revaluation must take place through reasoned arguments if our almost instinctual compassion and respect for the nonhuman world, exemplified by Miranda and Ariel, has been lost.

Miranda’s impact on *The Tempest* might best be captured by Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*: “when mercy seasons justice” (4.1.193).⁵⁸ From the start of the play to its end, Prospero comes under attack for the ways in which he exploits the nonhuman world to get justice and, in turn, to reaffirm and sustain his power. Miranda emerges as Prospero’s first critic, remains one of his most outspoken, and sets in motion an alternative method of how humankind should engage with the nonhuman world that runs alongside Prospero’s own. In doing so, she does not positively embrace the role her father would have her play in his masque-like efforts to authorize the exercise of his power over the island and its inhabitants. In this way, Miranda frustrates her father’s goals and makes a subversive case for a new kind of relationship with the nonhuman world. The characters who echo Miranda most loudly are Caliban and Ariel, both of whom are closely associated with nature and direct victims of Prospero’s power. All three propose an ethics structured around empathy, care, and mercy that works to temper Prospero’s most exploitative impulses.

Even Ferdinand, who overpraises Prospero’s masque, comes around by the play’s end after realizing that Alonso is alive: “Though the seas threaten, they are merciful,” he admits; “I have cursed them without cause” (5.1.178-79). In this regard, Ferdinand reiterates one of the

⁵⁸ William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, edited by John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

main messages of *A Maske*: the natural world is most often “innocent” (line 762), “kind” (line 187), and “hospitable” (line 187), as the Lady says, and what makes them “wild” or “threatening” is often the people that inhabit it, lay claim to it, cultivate it, exploit it, weaponize it, and damage it. More importantly, by viewing nature in this more favorable light, we are more likely to treat it with dignity and respect than to dominate it. Prospero himself seems to have come around to this view by choosing mercy over justice, though this choice is not easily made. He is first moved to mercy in response to the strength of Ariel’s compassion, and he vows to “drown [his] book” and “bury [his staff] certain fathoms in the earth” (5.1.55-57) shortly thereafter. By doing so, Prospero suggests that he will give himself over to the nonhuman world, over which he has so desperately and aggressively asserted his control throughout the play.

In his epilogue, Prospero appeals to our own capacity for mercy, asking to be “relieved by prayer / Which pierces so, that it assaults / Mercy itself and frees all faults” (lines 16-18). The imagery of assault seems odd at first glance, but on closer look, it makes perfect sense. In a play that is defined by grabs for power and the preservation of it, the play closes with a message of mercy voiced by the character most desperate to secure and maintain his power. Here at the play’s end, Prospero exchanges his assaults on Caliban, on everyone around him, and on nature with the “assault” of prayer and forgiveness. While the former works to bend others to Prospero’s will, the latter works to “free” them from it. While the former works to harm others, the latter works to repair and restore. This is precisely the argument that Miranda, Caliban, and Ariel have made throughout the play with regard to humankind’s relationship to nature. At the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero joins this cause by suggesting that the only way to repair the damage inflicted on nature in an effort to affirm and legitimate patriarchal systems of power is to practice the ethics of respect, empathy, moderation, care, and mercy set in motion by Miranda in

this play.

III. *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634)

The “greening” of Milton’s corpus began as early as the 1980s. The vast majority of ecocritical scholarship since that time argues that *Paradise Lost* enjoins humankind to “dress” and “keep” the earth, as God commands in Genesis 2:15, and in that way serves as a counterpoint to the increasingly exploitative attitude toward the natural world that emerged over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Diane McColley has played a fundamental role in building up and building out this body of scholarship by contributing extensively to the critical discussion of *Paradise Lost* and widening the playing field to include Milton’s other works.⁵⁹ As a text that foregrounds the natural world and humankind’s treatment of it, *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* proved a natural next step on the path of green readings of Milton’s works. In its early stages, ecocritical scholarship of *A Maske* focused on thematic representations of the natural world. As this scholarship developed, however, the focus shifted, as scholars began to illustrate how *A Maske* documents the material conditions of the natural world during Milton’s time. While early modern masque criticism explains how the court masque did not simply document these conditions but actively worked to shape them, ecocriticism of *A Maske* has been slow to follow suit.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For Diane McColley’s work on Milton and ecology, see “Beneficent Hierarchies,” in Durham and McColgan, *Spokesperson Milton*, 231-48; “Ecology and Empire,” in Rajan and Sauer, *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 112-29; “Milton and Ecology,” in Corns, *A Companion to Milton*, 157-73; “Milton’s Environmental Epic,” in Armbruster and Wallace, *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, 57-74; “Milton and Nature: Greener Readings,”; and *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell*.

⁶⁰ For more “green” scholarship on Milton’s work see Joan S. Bennett, “Virgin Nature in *Comus*,” *Milton Studies* 23 (1987): 21-32; James A. Clark, “Milton Naturans, Milton Naturatus: The Debate Over Nature in *A Maske Presented at Ludlow*,” *Milton Studies* 20 (1984): 3-27; John Creaser, “‘The present aid of this occasion’: The Setting of *Comus*,” in *The Court Masque*, edited by David Lindley, 111-34 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Karen Edwards, *Milton and the Natural World: Science and Poetry in Paradise Lost*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Ken Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Terry K.

As cultural and political productions, masques did not just hold a mirror up to nature but constructed it on stage in a way that shaped how it was perceived going forward and thus determined how it might be treated. The Lady's philosophy of temperance thus plays a vital role in *A Maske* as a foil to Comus's philosophy of exploitation. Of the Lady, McColley writes, "although temperance in the use of nature's bounty has a long literary history, Milton's 'Lady' is perhaps the first advocate of justice to human beings founded on justice towards 'innocent Nature' (line 761)."⁶¹ While McColley does not elaborate much on this argument—the bulk of the chapter is not focused on the Lady or on the masque—she is exactly right. In this section, I take McColley's argument as a starting point and aim to give it greater scope. To do so, I argue that the Lady and the shepherdess Sabrina build an ethics of care defined by empathy, moderation, and mercy that must replace the patriarchal ideology of mastery, domination, and exploitation that legitimates Comus's actions and determined how the Welsh borderlands themselves were governed.

The representation of Wales and the Welsh people as wild, uncivilized, dangerous, and thus in need of taming was not an uncommon one during Milton's and Philips's time. For much of the 1530s, Henry VIII and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell were preoccupied with Wales—how to deal with the lords of the Welsh borderlands, some of whom were would-be claimants to the throne; how to police the border; and how to legally incorporate Wales into England.⁶² Wales was thus viewed as an integral part of England on the one hand, and a "running legal and cultural sore" whose distinct culture, customs, laws, and speech cemented its alterity on

Kohn, "Landscape in the Transcendent Masque," *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 143-164; Julie Sanders, "Ecocritical Readings and the Seventeenth-Century Woodland"; Jeffrey S. Theis, "The Environmental Ethics of *Paradise Lost*: Milton's Exegesis of Genesis I-III," *Milton Studies* 34 (1996): 61-81; Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*; and Robert Wilcher, "The Greening of Milton Criticism," *Literature Compass* 7, no. 11 (2010): 1020-1034.

⁶¹ McColley, "Milton and Ecology," 164.

⁶² J. Gwynfor Jones, *Early Modern Wales, c. 1525-1640* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1994), 51-2.

the other.⁶³ In the intervening century between the Reformation and the Civil War, urban Puritan groups based in London set out to rescue rural England and especially Wales, what they called the “dark corners of the land,” from moral depravity and religious ignorance.⁶⁴ The Welsh Marches had also developed a general reputation for disorder, and at least two violent riots broke out in the 1630s over the crown’s policies of land enclosure.⁶⁵ The first scene of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part I* reinforces these perceptions of Wales, of course, when the Earl of Westmoreland condemns the Welsh Owen Glendower as “irregular,” “wild,” and “rude,” and the Welshwomen who purportedly desecrated the bodies of their enemies on the battlefield as “bestly” (1.1.40-44).⁶⁶ It was also not uncommon to compare the Welsh to Native Americans in the seventeenth century. In fact, in his *A Consolation for Our Grammar Schooles* (1622), schoolmaster and writer John Brinsley classifies Wales as a “barbarous nation,” along with Ireland, Bermuda, and Virginia.⁶⁷

During this period, Wales was thus regarded as a colonial space that must be brought into the fold of its more civilized and powerful neighbor.⁶⁸ From the late thirteenth century to the

⁶³ Philip Schwyzer, “Purity and Danger on the West Bank of the Severn: The Cultural Geography of *A Masque at Ludlow Castle*,” *Representations* 60 (1997): 31. For more information, see Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion before and After Shakespeare* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 180-89.

⁶⁴ Hill, “Puritans and ‘the Dark Corners of the Land,’” 77-8.

⁶⁵ Sanders, “Ecocritical Readings and the Seventeenth-Century Woodland,” 9.

⁶⁶ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*, edited by Claire McEachern (Penguin: New York, 2000).

⁶⁷ John Brinsley, *A Consolation for our Grammar Schooles* (London, 1622), 3. For more on the comparison of the Welsh to Native Americans, see Kate Chedgzoy, “The Civility of Early Modern Welsh Women,” in *Early Modern Civil Discourses*, edited by Jennifer Richards, 162-81 (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 163-64.

⁶⁸ See Kate Chedgzoy, “The Civility of Early Modern Welsh Women”; Christopher Hill, “Puritans and ‘The Dark Corners of the Land’”; J. Gwynfor Jones, *Early Modern Wales*; Prys Morgan, “Wild Wales: Civilizing the Welsh from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*, edited by Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack, 265-83 (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000); Stewart Mottram and Sarah Prescott, “Introduction,” in *Writing Wales from the Renaissance to Romanticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 4; Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage*; Orgel, “The Case for *Comus*,” 32-3; Peter Roberts, “Tudor Wales, National Identity and the British Inheritance,” in *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain*, edited by Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts, 8-42 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Philip Schwyzer, “Purity and Danger on the West Bank of the Severn.” Of course, the representation of Wales was more complicated than this, but this perception was one of the most common.

passage of the Laws in Wales Acts in 1536 and, later, 1542 under Henry VIII, which legally incorporated Wales into the Kingdom of England, there was growing concern about the power held by the Marcher Lords—who guarded, policed, and enjoyed a substantial degree of independence in their control of the Anglo-Welsh border—and about the disorder of the Welsh Marches themselves.⁶⁹ This disorder reached a breaking point in the 1630s, around the time Milton wrote *A Maske*, when two violent uprisings broke out among the communities of the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire in reaction to a renewed policy of disafforestation, the enclosure of forest lands for commercial use, and the establishment of a royal ironworks in the forest, which threatened to dispossess many who had come to rely on this land for pasture and farming.⁷⁰ In short, during this period the Welsh Marches were a border space whose imagined, and at times real, lawlessness was threatening and needed to be brought under the king’s control.

As a Welsh poet, Philips would have been uniquely familiar with the fraught relationship between her homeland and England. It is not surprising, then, that Philips’s poem on Alice Egerton introduces Wales to us in precisely this way. Notably, however, she does not make Richard Vaughan, Alice’s husband and future Lord President of Wales, the subject of this poem, which one might imagine if Philips were interested in reaffirming the need for patriarchal control of the land. Instead, Philips gives the role of controlling Wales to Alice, providing an alternative model to the form of control exercised by the Marcher Lords and Lord Presidents who went on to succeed them. In this way, Philips imagines an alternative model for restoring order to the Welsh countryside: one not corrupted by the greedy eyes of men, but renewed through the virtue and worth of a woman, Alice Egerton.

⁶⁹ “An Acte for Lawes and Justice to be ministred in Wales in like fourme as it is in this Realme,” 27 Hen. 8, c26. These acts are often jointly referred to as the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1546, although this terminology was not used until 1901.

⁷⁰ Julie Sanders, “Ecocritical Readings and the Seventeenth-Century Woodland,” 9.

Alice Egerton was no stranger to Wales. Her father, John Egerton, First Earl of Bridgewater, was named Lord President of Wales in 1631 when Alice was around age 12, and her husband, a local Welsh landowner named Richard Vaughan, succeeded her father as Lord President after the Restoration in 1660. The Lord President of Wales presided over the Council of Wales and the Marches, an administrative body that was revived during the reign of Henry VII in response to increasing concerns about the powers of the Marcher Lords. Eventually, this Council, which was based at Ludlow Castle in the English county of Shropshire, one of the five counties that comprised the Marches, would go on to replace the Marcher lords as the primary body overseeing the management of the Marches. To celebrate Egerton's nomination as Lord President of Wales, Milton wrote *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, and Alice herself played the leading role of Lady in its first performance in 1634.⁷¹

Like any early modern masque, Milton's *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* aims to stage aristocratic privilege and kingly power in their most ideal forms. While the vast majority of these masques were designed and performed for the court, Milton was commissioned to write this masque to celebrate the appointment of Alice's father as Lord President of Wales, overseer of the Marches. *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, then, must be read in the context of the Lord President's power to police the Welsh borderlands in the 1630s.⁷² In broad strokes, the play is, after all, about John Egerton's three children finding themselves not only lost in a "wild wood," as Wales was often characterized at the time, but also prey to the sorcerer Comus, who abducts the Lady with designs on making her his "Queene" (line 265). With the help of a few

⁷¹ In "The Case for *Comus*," Stephen Orgel provides the most comprehensive yet easily digestible review to date of the performance history of *A Maske* and the context in which it was produced, covering John Egerton's appointment to the position of Lord President, Alice Egerton's participation in court masques, and the contested nature of the Welsh borderlands.

⁷² Julie Sanders's work on the regulation and policing of the Forest of Dean during the seventeenth century is absolutely critical reading ("Ecocritical Readings and the Seventeenth-Century Woodland").

good shepherds, the Lady's brothers eventually rescue her, and the children are safely returned to none other than Ludlow Castle, the locus of power in the Welsh borderlands. In the simplest terms, the masque thus glorifies Ludlow Castle, and the Lord President himself, as the enforcer of order in the "wild" Welsh Marches.

Of course, Milton's masque must celebrate the Lord President's ability to control the Marches. In the process of doing this, though, the masque raises a series of questions about how the Marches should be managed: what would order in these "wild woods" look like, how should this order be enforced, and what are the ecological costs of enforcing it? By the end of the masque, it is clear that the answer lies not in a patriarchal logic of control, domination, and exploitation, whose main advocate is Comus, but in the empathy, moderation, and care practiced by the Lady and the shepherdess Sabrina. Just as Philips represents Alice Egerton as the empathetic and caring steward the Welsh landscape needs, Milton positions these female figures, one played by Alice herself, as the best models for the proper care of the Marches. In other words, the person best suited to bring the wild Welsh woods into the fold of England might not be the Lord President himself, whose power the masque at least superficially glorifies, but his temperate and virtuous daughter.

The primary threat that the Lady faces in *A Maske* is the sorcerer Comus, son of Circe and Bacchus, both of whom are famously intemperate. Comus follows in his parents' footsteps almost exactly. In fact, Comus's first act in the masque is to order his herd of beasts to overindulge in a midnight "feast" (line 102) and "revelrie" (line 103) because night is the time when "rigor has gone to bed" (line 107) and sin can be concealed by the "dun shades" (line 127) of the forest. Comus's thought process here is quite similar to that of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:7-8, when they use the forest trees to hide from God after eating the fruit from the Tree of

Knowledge of Good and Evil and to cover their bodies. The story of the Fall is many things, but one version is that the Fall marks the moment when humankind's reciprocal relationship to the nonhuman world crosses over into the exploitative—that is, when “man's greedy ey,” as Philips writes, becomes dangerous to nature.⁷³

Comus's greed is made clearer early in the masque when we learn that one of his main goals is to be “well stock't with as faire a Heard as graz'd / About [his] mother Circe” (lines 152-53). Comus is not the goodly shepherd, here, who cares for his flock as a proper steward of nature, but a pretender who, like his enchantress mother, has every intention of abusing his power to subdue other beings in order to bring them under his control. Comus's “greedy” eyes look on Nature as an object for consumption that he has a right to consume so long as he has the power to do so. Coupled with Comus's gluttonous attitude towards the nonhuman world is something far more sinister. Time and again, his actions are described as acts of “unjust force” (line 590) and even “brute violence” (line 451). Comus, in short, is the true beast of his herd: not only is he uninterested in caring for human beings or the nonhuman world, but he is also willing to deploy any means necessary to exploit them for his own gain.

It is particularly important that Comus is the son of Circe since Circe herself is the subject of a masque entitled *Tempe Restored* (1632), which is, at its heart, an exploration of the downstream effects of the extension of power beyond one's right, otherwise known as tyranny. *Tempe Restored* was produced by Inigo Jones and Aurelian Townshend just two years before Milton wrote *A Maske* and is one of three masques in which Alice Egerton is known to have

⁷³ Philips, “On the Right Honourable,” 1. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve's Fall is explicitly described as harmful to nature. As soon as Eve ate from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, “Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat / Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe” (Edited by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 9. 782-3). As soon as Adam ate, “Earth trembled from her entrails, as again / In pangs, and nature gave a second groan” (9. 1000-1).

performed.⁷⁴ Dedicated to Queen Henrietta Maria, an aficionado of the court masque, *Tempe Restored* begins when one of Circe's captive lovers flees to the Vale of Tempe, driving Circe into a state of near madness. In a moment dripping with irony, Circe exclaims that the man who has abandoned her has made "cruell prey"⁷⁵ of her by stealing her heart, an act which she describes as "inhumane theft."⁷⁶ Of course, Circe does not go so far as to acknowledge that this is precisely what she has done to the men she has transformed into beasts and made her captives. The hunter hunted, after all, rarely admits his predatory past. Circe goes on to claim that nothing can talk her down from her tyrannical impulses but an anti-masque, which is danced by "Indians," "Barbarians," and a variety of "beasts."⁷⁷ The main goal of this anti-masque, as the Chorus states, is to "temper [her] distemper'd Heart," as is the case with Prospero after the wedding masque.⁷⁸ The same task is performed by the Lady, however unsuccessfully, in Milton's *A Maske*: to moderate the excesses of her captor. Like mother, like son.

During the seventeenth century, the word "distemper" referred to excess in a variety of forms, from the excess of bodily humors to disorder in the state. The word "temper," of course, originally referred to the proportional mixture of elements, and specifically the proper balance of the four bodily humors.⁷⁹ In its most direct sense, then, the anti-masque performers are tasked with restoring balance to Circe's excessive passion. But this excess of passion cannot help but spill over into matters of the state. The personal is political, after all, especially when the spurned lover holds the levers of power. The entanglement of love in politics is made most explicitly

⁷⁴ The third masque was Inigo Jones and Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1634). See Orgel, "The Came for *Comus*," 32.

⁷⁵ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 6. References are to page number.

⁷⁶ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 6.

⁷⁷ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 7.

⁷⁸ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 7. While the anti-masque was typically used to present a threat to power that the monarch would then eliminate, the anti-masque here functions to eliminate the threat Circe poses to the Vale of Tempe.

⁷⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "distemper" and "temper."

clear when Cupid himself admits that the business of love is never separate from the operations of power: “My gentle reigne,” he begins, “So wrongd with acting of a Tyrants part / I must Restreyne, / My power abus’d; And fight my injurd Treyne.”⁸⁰ As Cupid commits himself to restraint, Circe doubles down on her intemperance when, after the anti-masque has ended and the gods have intervened, she complains that they are not giving her enough “freedome”⁸¹ in their efforts to restrain her. Exasperated, Athena remarks that it is in Circe’s nature, and in humankind’s more generally, to be intemperate in all things: “Are mortall Creatures, growne so proud,” Athena hypothesizes, “To taxe the Skye, for every Cloud.”⁸² In other words, when presented with a cloud—and another, and another—we demand the sky. Athena suggests, then, that it may be impossible to temper human beings.

While Circe’s immoderation is in and of itself a problem, the masque is more concerned about how this immoderation is not just a personal problem, but a political one. Were the masque only concerned with Circe’s well-being, Jones and Townshend might have rightly titled the masque *Circe Restored*. But, alas, they did not. As the actual title of the masque indicates, Circe’s tyrannical mode of love matters because it has brought disorder to the Vale of Tempe, and the collective goal of those involved must be to trim back Circe’s excesses to restore this garden to its former state. Circe’s “distemper’d Heart” has given rise to a “distemper’d” realm, in which she narcissistically accumulates power by rendering those around her powerless. Like his mother, then, Comus’s exploitative habits matter on the personal level insofar as they have social, political, and ecological consequences. Comus is not just some trifling threat in the “wild wood” sent to test the virtue of the Lady, in other words, but a very real threat to the virtue of the

⁸⁰ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 14-15.

⁸¹ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 15.

⁸² Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 15.

power that reigns over that “wild wood.” Not only must the Lord President, for instance, protect the inhabitants and the landscape of the Welsh borderlands from people like Comus, but he must also do so in a way that does not enlist the same exploitative methods as Comus.⁸³

As in Milton’s masque, a shepherdess, here named Harmony, is responsible for initiating the process of restoration in *Tempe Restored*. The method, it seems, to temper intemperance in both masques is to replace tyrannical exploitation with careful stewardship. Of course, the most ideal stewards are the King and Queen themselves, to whom Circe gives over her powers near the end of the masque: “This Machles Payre, / I make, my Heire: / All I Possesse, I here, Resigne.”⁸⁴ The masque concludes by calling on the King and Queen to restore order and announcing its message in the clearest possible terms: “In Heiroicke virtue is figured the Kings Majestie, who therein transcends as farre common men, as they are above Beasts, he truly being the prototipe to all the Kingdomes under his Monarchie, of Religion, Justice, and all the Vertues joyned together.”⁸⁵ The masque thus ends in a seemingly typical fashion by extolling the virtues of the King and legitimizing his absolute power.

While the masque explicitly locates virtue in the King here, it is important to remember that the masque was dedicated to Queen Henrietta Maria, that she had an active hand in its production, that she herself performs in it as the figure of Divine Beauty, and that the courtly masque was one of the few aesthetic spaces at the time in which women were able to participate.

⁸³ Of course, Comus and his crew are identified with the rioters in the forest, the local or lower-class people who resist the representatives of royal power. On its most basic level, then, the play serves the function for which it was commissioned: to glorify the Lord President’s power over the riotous local communities in the Marches. However, that these same communities resisted the crown’s increasingly exploitative policies of disafforestation, deforestation, and enclosure in the 1630s suggests that Comus is less like the local communities of the Marches than the government officials and courtiers who were expanding their control over the region to fill the royal coffers and their own pockets.

⁸⁴ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 15. In response, Jupiter quips, “She gives but what shee can not keepe” (16), suggesting that Circe has nothing to give because she was unable to maintain her power over her captive lover who fled.

⁸⁵ Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, 19.

Moreover, “the king remains immobile and passive” throughout the masque, scholar Melinda Gough writes, and “it is the descent and dancing of Henrietta Maria alone that acts as the visible agent of Circe’s defeat.”⁸⁶ By the end of the masque, then, power changes hands not from an out-of-hand woman to a more virtuous king, but from one woman to a host of others, the one tyrannical and the rest temperate. Gough goes on to say that, in this way, the masque, may:

have shifted the balance of power within absolutist rhetoric, downplaying its most patriarchal features as articulated by Henrietta Maria’s father-in-law, James I, a notorious misogynist who likened the king’s prerogatives within the state to those of the father within the household. Monarchical rule is still absolute, but *Tempe Restored* represents that absolutist power as shared within the royal marriage.⁸⁷

But this is not to say that *Tempe Restored* makes a case for matriarchal rule, if only because “the queen consort’s power still depends on her social role as the king’s wife, such that female rule remains inconceivable in and of itself.”⁸⁸ Rather, it is to say that “under Henrietta Maria’s aegis,” in Gough’s words, “the Caroline court produced a masque, *Tempe Restored*, that celebrated to an unprecedented degree the prerogatives of elite and nonelite women alike to participate centrally in the social, political, and increasingly theatrical functions of majesty.”⁸⁹ In the place of Circe’s unrestrained passion, then, the masque presents an ethics of moderation that is theoretically modelled in the King but actually put into practice by Harmony, played by Mistress Shepherd, and Henrietta Maria herself.

Milton’s *A Maske* more firmly locates this ethics in the women of his play by situating the primary threat to this ethics in a man, Comus. This does not mean, however, that the other male figures in the play are incapable of moderation; rather, as in *Tempe Restored*, they are simply less active than the Lady and Sabrina in shaping an ethics of moderation and putting it

⁸⁶ Gough, “‘Not as Myself,’” 62.

⁸⁷ Gough, “‘Not as Myself,’” 67.

⁸⁸ Gough, “‘Not as Myself,’” 67.

⁸⁹ Gough, “‘Not as Myself,’” 67.

into practice. Like Circe, Comus is immoderate and even tyrannical in his pursuit of love, as he makes the Lady his captive and is frustrated by her resistance. To achieve his desires, Comus physically takes advantage of the forest terrain to capture the Lady unawares, and the rhetoric he deploys to convince the Lady to his side is based on the belief that the nonhuman world exists to be used, often to its fullest capacity. Like Circe, then, Comus believes that might makes right, that he has the right to extend his power over other human beings and the nonhuman world simply because he possesses that power.

While Comus seeks to lay claim to anything he can get his hands on, the Lady is, like nature in its purest form, “unowned” (line 407). Her “chastitie” (line 420) and temperance make her the rightful “queen oth’ woods” (line 446), and this “noble grace” is said to enable her to “dash” any and all “brute violence” in the forest (line 451). Not only does the Lady represent a form of nature unsullied by humankind, but she is also critical of humankind’s tendency to sully it for their own gain. The first words the Lady speaks in the masque criticize the “riot, and ill manag’d Merriment” the “rudeness, and swill’d insolence” of Comus and his herd (lines 172-8). Here, Comus becomes synonymous with intemperance itself: his actions are “ill manag’d” and excessive through and through. The Lady is also one of the only characters in the masque to entertain the notion that this “wild wood” might be “kind” and “hospitable” (line 187), a characterization that stands out among the overwhelmingly unfavorable descriptions of the woods as a “dreare,” “ominous,” “black,” “tangled,” “rough,” “horrid,” “hideous,” “leavie labyrinth” and “wild surrounding wast” (lines 37, 61, 62, 181, 266, 429, 520, 278, and 403). While we might understandably dismiss her assessment as naïve, the Lady draws a crucial distinction here between the woods, which are ultimately harmless in the play, and the men who

use this space to enact harm.⁹⁰ Sometimes, of course, woods are wild, but the greatest threat in *A Maske* are the men who lurk among them.

The Attendant Spirit echoes the Lady's sentiments, when he arrives to help the Lady's brothers find their sister. As a way of introduction, the spirit signals that he is not interested in exploiting nature for his own gain: "I came not here," he says, "on such a trivial toy / As a strayd Ewe, or to pursue the stealth / Of pilfering wolfe, not all the fleecie wealth / That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought / To this my errand, and the care it brought" (lines 502-6). The operative word in this passage is "care." Everything that comes before it is contrasted to it. The spirit desires neither to steal a stray sheep for food, nor to take the lot of them to "enrich" himself with their "fleecie wealth"; neither is "worth a thought" to the spirit—that is, the thought doesn't cross his mind—because he is solely driven by "care," most immediately for the Lady but also, as this passage suggests, for the nonhuman world itself.

The Lady's and the spirit's visions of the natural environment as either free from humankind's touch or unharmed by it is a short-lived one, though. When the Lady's brothers realize that she is gone, her younger brother fears that she will be forced, like nature, to "defend her fruit" (line 396), and they are right. Much of the Lady's performance in the masque is dedicated to a defense of her fruit—both her chastity and her more general philosophy of temperance—against Comus's gluttonous desires to take it by any means he can. In fact, this image of defending fruit perfectly captures the position the Lady takes in an extended debate with Comus about how Nature can best be celebrated, a debate which acts as a framework for understanding how the female body can best be celebrated.

The true brute of his beastly herd, Comus argues that Nature and the female body are best

⁹⁰ For more on the innocence of Nature, see Kohn, "Landscape in the Transcendent Masque," 147.

worshipped by being used to their fullest capacities, a rhetorical move that most closely resembles the metaphysical poets' poetry of seduction. Comus's argument is stunning in its complexity, as it moves from a simple appreciation for nature's bounty to the threatening possibility that humankind might lose its dominion over the nonhuman world. "Wherefore did Nature power her bounties forth," he asks, "With such a full and unwithdrawing hand, / Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks / Thronging the seas with spawnne innumerable / But all to please, and sate the curious tast" (lines 710-14)? Here, Nature is almost excessive in her bounty: she does not withhold anything from us and leaves "no corner [. . .] / [. . .] vacant of her plentie," as Comus later puts it (lines 717-18). Nature's bounty also serves a dual purpose: for our pleasure and our satisfaction. Nature is not something merely to be wondered at, but to be indulged in, and excessively so.

By Comus's logic, Nature's overabundance can only be matched by a form of consumption that is equally excessive. To thank Nature properly, then, we must use her: "If all the world / Should in a pet of temperance feed on Pulse," Comus says, "Th' all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd, / Not halfe his riches known, and yet despis'd" (lines 720-24). Nature, in other words, has given us everything we could possible need or want, and yet we can't know, much less enjoy, her gifts if we choose temperance over indulgence. To not indulge would also be to slight Nature unjustly because our ignorance of her gifts would prevent us from properly thanking her and thus make her "despis'd." Moreover, by not making use of Nature, we allow her to become overgrown and, in turn, unmanageable, such that we become "strangl'd with her wast fertilitie" (line 729). In not using Nature, she thus becomes a threat to us.

Comus intensifies this threat by arguing that humankind might lose its God-given dominion over the earth should Nature be allowed to go to waste. "The heards would over-

inmultitude their Lords” (line 731), he warns, and the balance of power would shift in animals’ favor. It is important that Comus uses the image of a herd of animals, here, because it shows just how consumed he is by his own worldview. Were this hypothetical scenario to play out, after all—were Comus, in other words, to let Nature go to waste—his most immediate form of power over his herd of men who have been transformed into beasts would be threatened. This is personal, for Comus. Nature must be consumed in order to be controlled. Comus ends his argument with a statement that could be pulled out of any metaphysical poem of seduction: “If you let slip time,” he says to the Lady, “like a neglected rose / It withers on the stalke with languish’t head. / Beautie is natures brag, and must be showne” (lines 743-45). Comus’s use of the word “neglected” here is far different from Philips’s use of the word in her poem to Alice, Countess of Carbery. While Philips uses the word to refer to the ways in which “man’s Greedy Ey” has exploited the Welsh landscape, Comus implies that nature is truly neglected when not used.⁹¹

The Lady opens her response to Comus by enlisting the aid of “Mercie” (line 695) to counter the Comus’s merciless attitude towards Nature. She rejects Comus’s advances outright as “treasonous” (line 702) and states that she is too “wel-govern’d” (line 705) to succumb to them, echoing her opening lines in which she condemns Comus’s behavior as “ill-manag’d” (line 172). Comus’s intemperance, as the Lady frames it, is a political crime, a perversion and betrayal of the proper form of governance. Shortly thereafter, the Lady again recalls her opening lines when she refers to Comus as “riotous / With [Nature’s] abundance” (lines 763-64). She, on the

⁹¹ Comus’s argument perhaps comes closest to the speaker’s injunction to the woman to let him explore her body in Donne’s “To His Mistress Going to Bed”: “Licence my roaving hands, and let them go, / Before, behind, between, above, below, / O my America! my new-found-land” (Woudhuysen, *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, 263-4 [London: Penguin, 1992] lines 25-7). Here, the female body becomes the virgin land of the New World, which the speaker must freely explore to properly use and enjoy it.

other hand, as a “well-govern’d” individual follows Nature’s “sober laws / And holy dictate of spare Temperance” (lines 767-68).

If Nature’s law is one of “spare Temperance,” the most appropriate way of worshipping Nature is not to “pine with want” (line 768) as Athena accuses Circe of doing in *Tempe Restored*, but to be content with “a moderate, and beseeming share” (line 769). In this way, we prevent Nature from going to waste but do not abuse and exploit her bounty. As the Lady goes on to put it, “Nature’s full blessings would be well dispenc’t. / In unsuperfluous even proportion, / And she no whit encomber’d with her store” (lines 772-74) were we to be content with a more moderate share of its gifts. The Lady ends her argument by explicitly attacking Comus’s logic that Nature is best celebrated by being excessively consumed. “Swinish gluttony,” after all, “ne’re looks to heav’n amidst his gorgeous feast, / But with besotted based ingratitude / Cramms, and blasphemes his feeder” (lines 776-79). The Lady begins by deeming Comus the true swine among his herd. She then goes on to argue that in the act of consumption our eyes become fixed to the table instead of on heaven. Gluttony is all-consuming, so much so that we forget to thank the hand that feeds us. In turn, by failing to “look to heav’n” we do not worship Nature, as Comus suggests we would, but instead “blaspheme” her. Comus, of course, will have none of this, and he ultimately dismisses the Lady as “yong” (line 755) and naïve and her arguments as a bunch of “morall babble” (line 807).

Ultimately the Lady is unable to save herself, her brothers are equally ineffective, and the spirit arrives only just in time to criticize the brothers for failing to steal Comus’s wand. In steps the shepherdess Sabrina. The spirit suggests that Sabrina be consulted because she knows the ways of these woods better than they do and will thus know how to release the Lady from Comus’s spells. In fact, we first learn that Sabrina is a “goddesse of the river” who, in spite of

her power, “retaines her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve / Visits the heards along the twilight meadows, / helping all urchin blasts, and ill lucke signes / that the shrewd medling elfe delights to make, / Which she with precious viold liquors heales” (lines 842-47). As a patroness of the river running through the Marches—Sabrina is the Roman name for the River Severn, which straddles the border between England and Wales—Sabrina is uniquely positioned to understand the local environment of the Marches. Sabrina also uses her position to acquire a vast body of knowledge of the local environment, and her methods of doing so are notably much different from those of Comus. In stark contrast to Comus, who only desires to be “well stock’t with a herd” (line 152) to rival that of his mother, Sabrina treats the animal world with tenderness and care by visiting them, attending to their needs, and healing them when necessary. In this way, Sabrina provides an alternative to the brutal tactics often used by colonial powers to bring a new territory under its control—tactics that Prospero himself uses to assert his claim over the island. In other words, Sabrina shows us that “inhabiting and governing outlying territory,” as Cyrus Mulready argues, “requires the integration and adaptation of local customs,” not the imposition of one culture’s beliefs and practices on another.⁹²

It is precisely because of Sabrina’s respect for the local environment, I argue, that the spirit uses the refrain “listen and save” (lines 866 and 889) to summon her aid. To listen and to save, after all, is Sabrina’s *modus operandi*. In many ways, she is the “god of power” (1.2.10) Miranda proposes as an alternative to her father in her opening speech in *The Tempest*, and the very person who might make the woods as “kind” and “hospitable” (line 187) as the Lady first

⁹² Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage*, 189. Erin Murphy argues that Sabrina’s ancestry, which is explained in lines 827-31 of *A Maske*, is important to understanding the masque’s theme of temperance because she, as daughter of Loocrine and his mistress Estrildis, is a “symbol of her parents’ lack of sexual temperance” (*Familial Forms: Politics and Genealogy in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011], 80). Terry Kohn adds that the masque’s emphasis on Sabrina’s ancestry enhances the uniqueness of the Welsh borderlands (“Landscape in the Transcendent Masque,” 161).

imagined them. While Sabrina has the power to dominate nature and bring it under her control, she instead makes a concerted effort to have as little harmful impact on it as possible. She makes this abundantly clear when she first arrives on the scene, saying, “my printlesse feet / Ore the cowslips velvet head, / That bends not as I tread” (lines 897-99). One can’t help but notice the correspondence between Sabrina’s words and our own rhetoric of reducing humankind’s “carbon footprint” on the earth. Taken together, Sabrina’s call to listen, heal, and save nature stands in sharp contrast to Comus’s use of force, guile, and violence.

With Sabrina’s aid, the Lady is freed from her chains and consequently free to return to Ludlow Castle. Comus is, however, nowhere to be found, and we are left to wonder whether the Lady’s call for temperance and Sabrina’s philosophy of listening and healing have effectively won the day. Yet the story is not that simple; it can’t be. At least one way of understanding this play, as I have shown here, is as a battle between the exploitation of the nonhuman world and more moderate ways of engaging with it—that is, with empathy, care, and mercy. But, as the Lady warns, the glutton never looks up from the table, and it is therefore likely that Comus cannot be turned from his ways. We, too, are living out this existential struggle to convince humankind on the global stage to make a collective and concerted effort to look up from the table, to listen, to heal, and to save the earth from disaster. The truer story, Milton’s story, is that it is an extremely difficult task to convince humankind of the morality and pragmatism of the Lady’s and Sabrina’s modes of living. Perhaps it is even truer to say that neither mode will ever successfully win the day, but they can at least stave off disaster for the time being.

And so, we are left with threats largely but not entirely resolved. *A Maske* ends by directly addressing the Lord President himself, whose children have safely returned home and whose new post the masque was commissioned to celebrate. In a song to the Lord President, the

spirit likens the children to branches “goodly growne” (line 968) whose “youth,” “faith,” “patience, and “truth” have been “tri’d” through “hard assays” (lines 970-72) and ultimately triumphed over “Folly” and “Intemperance” (line 975). While the masque falls into allegory here at its end, as was typical of the court masque, the spirit’s song also reminds us of the material connection between the physical environment and the Lord President’s family. John Egerton possesses patriarchal power in two forms: as the father of his children and the Lord President of the Marches. Over the course of the masque, we have learned that one way not to exercise that power is to act like Comus, which is to say to use, overuse, misuse, and abuse everyone and everything around him in an attempt to control them. We have also learned that a more just and sustainable way of exercising that power is to act like the Lady and Sabrina: to educate ourselves about the local environment, to listen to it, to temper our use of it, to heal it in what ways we can, and to reduce our footprint on it. By describing the children as “goodly growne,” the spirit suggests that they have learned this lesson. Moreover, by likening them to branches, he demonstrates how the children’s attitude towards the natural world has a material impact on it. In other words, the children’s respect for nature ensures that the “wild woods” will also be “goodly growne.”

To cultivate this respect in himself and his children, the Lord President cannot simply adhere to the doctrine that might makes right—that his legal power over the Marches grants him the right to do what he wants with them. Rather, he must take a different path. To inhabit and govern the Marches requires, as the spirit suggests, growing like a branch within its woods, as the Lord President’s children have done, not by installing an outsider in a castle. In other words, to best to care for the Marches and its inhabitants, as Mulready also contends, the Lord President must make a concerted effort to understand and adapt to local customs, familiarize himself with

the local terrain and environment, and in that way come to respect and know how best to care for the place and its people. In short, the governance of the Welsh Marches should not begin from a desire to control them but from an effort to respect them—that is, to view this so-called “wild wood” as “kind” and “hospitable” (line 187), to listen and attend to its needs, and to preserve and save it, as the Lady and Sabrina attempt to do.

IV. Conclusion

In the final stanza of her poem to Alice Egerton, Philips describes the poem as a “tribute” from the “shades” and “sad groves” of the Welsh countryside. In this way, the poem becomes a collective offering of thanks to Alice on the part of the Welsh landscape. Philips goes on to honor Alice primarily for the “refreshment” she brings to the landscape itself. Through this renewal, the “despised” Welsh countryside, Philips writes, “shall be growne, / . . . the envy of the Town.” While “growne” is used figuratively here, because the poem has become a tribute from the “shades” and “groves,” we can also read “growne” literally, in the sense that the trees of the countryside will physically be regrown under Alice’s influence. Having “goodly growne” by the end of *A Maske*, in other words, Alice returns to see that the Marches are also “goodly growne.” This regrowth is “just,” too, a word which frequently appears in the poem to describe Alice and her impact on Wales. In this way, Philips suggests that Alice’s presence is vital to Wales not because she will bring law and order to the “chaos” of the Welsh countryside, but because she will treat it justly by caring for what has been “neglected” for some time. At its core, then, this poem is both an elegy for the damage done to the Welsh countryside in the first half of the seventeenth century and an argument for an ethics of care that Philips locates in the person of

Alice Egerton.⁹³

A similar argument is made by the Lady, Sabrina, the Attendant Spirit in *A Maske* and Miranda, Caliban, and Ariel in *The Tempest*. Whereas Comus views nature as an object for exploitation and consumption, the Lady, Sabrina, and the Attendant Spirit view nature as worthy of our respect, which causes them to listen and attend to its needs and to find ways of preserving it. By actively disputing Prospero's domination of the natural world in her very first lines, Miranda shares much in common with the Lady in Milton's *A Maske* and the girl who played her, Alice Egerton, as she is presented in Philips's poem: all three girls share a wonder and respect for nature that might save nature from the "greedy eyes" of men. In their own ways and to different degrees, each of these girls resist the system of absolute male power that they are groomed to sustain by consistently taking issue with one iteration of that power: the exploitation of nature. As shared victims of Prospero's exploitative practices, Caliban and Ariel take up Miranda's call by reaffirming the need to look on nature with wonder and to treat it with mercy and care. In every way, then, these texts are concerned with the physical impact of our imagined sovereignty over nature, and the female figures in them initiate a counter-narrative that challenges this sovereignty and the practices it encourages.

By proposing an alternative model for engaging with the nonhuman world in *A Maske* and *The Tempest*, the one a court masque and the other a play that serves a masque-like function, these female figures challenge the fantasy of royal power that the masque form was designed to prop up. In this way, *A Maske* and *The Tempest* do not idealize royal power; instead, they condemn the physical costs of the exploitative exercise of that power on the nonhuman world. Given that this power became inextricably dependent on the mastery of natural resources during

⁹³ Philips, "On the Right Honourable Alice," lines 21-30.

James I's and Charles I's reigns, both at home and abroad, the claims made by these female figures take on material import. The increasingly exploitative engagement with the nonhuman world during this period—evident in the early Stuart kings' policies of disafforestation, deforestation, and enclosure—was not sustainable, and *A Maske* and *The Tempest* illustrate that a wholesale revaluation of the nonhuman world is required to achieve a more sustainable relationship. As an alternative to the exploitative practices of Prospero and Comus, the female figures of *A Maske* and *The Tempest* offer a compelling model for this relationship—one based on empathy, mercy, and care. As Prospero and Comus make clear, however, it is an extremely difficult task to restructure humankind's relationship to the nonhuman world. Since the instinctual concern that figures like the Lady, Sabrina, the Attendant Spirit, Miranda, Caliban, and Ariel possess for the nonhuman world has been lost, we are instead left to reason our way to an ethics of care that treats the nonhuman world as worthy of compassion and respect.

CHAPTER TWO

“Pinèd Brethren”: Rethinking the Estate Lord’s Relationship to the Nonhuman World in Seventeenth-Century Country-House Discourse

Introduction

Between 1603 and 1624, James I issued at least seven royal proclamations that ordered the gentry to return to their country estates.¹ In the spirit of these proclamations, he composed a poem entitled “An Elegy Written by the King Concerning His Counsel for Ladies and Gentlemen to Depart the City of London According to His Majesty’s Proclamation” (1622). In the poem, he exhorts the English gentry then dwelling in London to return home, and he blames women, “whome scarce a proclamacōn can expel,” for the gentry’s failure to do so (line 3).² As James puts it, the gentry’s wives would sooner indulge in the “wanton pleasures” (line 43) of London than cultivate the true virtues of the English countryside: the women prefer the extravagance of life at Court and in the city—“which doe ruinate / insensibly both honor, wealth, and state” (lines 43-44)—to the “honest” (line 4) agricultural labor of life in the country. At the poem’s end, James invokes Eve’s transgression in the Garden of Eden to urge the gentry to re-establish their control over their wives and, in that way, their estates: “and you good men its best you gett you hence / least honest Adam paie for Eves offence” (lines 49-50). Here, James imagines the return

¹ These proclamations were issued in 1603, 1614, 1615, 1617, 1622, 1623, and 1624. More information regarding these proclamations can be found in Alastair Fowler, *The Country House Poem: A Cabinet of Seventeenth-Century Estate Poems and Related Items* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 102; Kari Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 96; and Barbara K. Lewalski, “The Lady of the Country-House Poem,” *Studies in the History of Art* 25 (1989): 268. Because they were difficult to enforce, royal proclamations were often disregarded entirely, even when issued repeatedly.

² All future references to James’s poem are taken from James Craigie’s edition *The Poems of James VI of Scotland* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1947-1958), 178. The poem is reprinted from the MS Egerton 923. The poem can also be found in Fowler, *The Country House Poem*, 101-3.

of the gentry to their country estates as a return to a prelapsarian world: Paradise might be restored—or, put another way, the Fall might be prevented—if Adam secures his power over Eve and, in turn, the Garden. By controlling their wives, in short, the gentry can control their “cuntrey” (line 6).

Though James’s poem does not fit the traditional definition of a country-house poem, which praises a particular estate lord by way of praising his estate, his poem does partake in the conventions of what Kari Boyd McBride has termed “country-house discourse.” McBride uses this term to describe a discursive pattern present in country-house verse and other early modern aesthetic forms directed at staging the estate lord’s power over his estate in an idealized and highly stylized way, especially his ability to order and control the estate’s inhabitants and resources. James’s poem emphasizes a similar need for order and control by calling on the gentry to reassert their mastery not just over their wives, but also over their “cuntrey” estates—which James suggests will ultimately solidify his own power over the English countryside. Crucially, however, the women to whom James has addressed the poem have not obeyed his proclamations; because of this, his poem endeavors to perform in verse the control he demands, in the hopes that the gentry will actually reimpose control over their wives and country estates. In this way, the poem also reinforces McBride’s claim that estate lords’ legitimacy depended on the “control of everything associated with the feminine by those who claimed the fullness of masculine privilege.”³ Like Jacobean and Caroline court masques, which I discussed in Chapter 1, seventeenth-century country-house discourse engaged in “the performance of legitimacy” to authorize this legitimacy in the real world.⁴

As England transitioned from a feudal-manorial to an agrarian-capitalist economy in the

³ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 5.

⁴ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 3.

seventeenth century, it became increasingly clear that the new order of agrarian improvement would simply double down on the exploitative system of feudal manorialism. To date, most scholars have argued that country-house poetry emerged during the seventeenth century in response to these economic changes. According to these scholars, to reassert the power of the ruling classes over the English countryside, country-house poetry made a conservative turn to the feudal manorial past by romanticizing the estate lord as the ideal steward of a morally-ordered estate.⁵ To make this argument, these scholars have focused almost exclusively on poetry written by men, such as Ben Jonson, Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, and Andrew Marvell. While this argument may be true of men's country-house poetry, it does not hold true for women's country-house poetry written during the same period. In this chapter, I demonstrate that country-house poetry does not always glorify the estate lord as a model steward, nor does it always go to great lengths to disguise the ways in which this idealized vision of stewardship is just that, an illusion.

⁵ For more information, see Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*; Hugh Jenkins, *Feigned Commonwealths: The Country-House Poem and the Fashioning of the Ideal Community* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998); Mary McGuire, "The Cavalier Country-House Poem: Mutations on a Jonsonian Tradition," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 19, no. 1 (1979): 93-108; McRae, "Landscape and Property"; Charles Molesworth, "Property and Virtue: The Genre of the Country House Poem in the Seventeenth Century," *Genre* 1 (1968): 141-57; Peter Remien, "'Home to the Slaughter': Noah's Ark and the Seventeenth-Century Country House Poem," *Modern Philology* 113, no. 4 (2016): 507-29; Williams, *The Country and the City*; Wayne, *Penshurst*; and Christopher Wortham, "'A happy rural seat': Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the English Country House Poem," *Parergon* 9, no. 1 (1991): 139. For more information on the conventions of country-house poetry, see Clare Bucknell, "Luxury and Political Economy in Estate Poetry, 1670-1750," *Philological Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (2017): 349-372; Fowler, *The Country House Poem*; Fowler, "Country-House Poems: The Politics of a Genre," *The Seventeenth Century* 1, no. 1 (1986): 1-14; G. R. Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19, no. ½ (1956): 159-74; Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich, *The Elizabethan Country House Entertainment: Print, Performance, and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Lewalski, "The Lady of the Country-House Poem"; and William McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). Corinne Fowler, Anna Kurian, and Eric Song have approached country-house verse from the perspective of colonialism in Corinne Fowler, "The Rural Turn in Contemporary Writing by Black and Asian Britons: The Case of English Country Houses' Colonial Connections," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 19, no. 3-4 (2017): 395-415; Anna Kurian, "Community, Hospitality, Identity: Teaching the English Country House Poem in India," *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 26, no. 2 (2016): 239-45; and Eric Song, "The Country Estate and The Indies (East And West): The Shifting Scene Of Eden in 'Paradise Lost,'" *Modern Philology* 108, no. 2 (2010): 199-223.

In this chapter, I argue that seventeenth-century women poets Lucy Hutchinson, Aemilia Lanyer, and Margaret Cavendish engage in an ecological mode of thinking that repurposes country-house discourse to dispel with these sorts of illusions and, instead, to draw attention to the ways in which the nonhuman world was sacrificed at the altar of the estate lord's efforts to assert and secure his power. These poets accomplish this in two ways: first, they demonstrate that idealized representations of the estate lord's power over his estate pose a clear and present danger to the nonhuman world; second, they elegize the ecological loss produced by the estate lord's efforts to legitimize and sustain this power. In doing so, these women argue that the estate lord's relationship to the nonhuman world must be grounded in reciprocity, empathy, and mercy—not mastery and exploitation. By making this argument, I demonstrate that the country-house genre has, to date, been too narrowly defined and must be made more capacious in order to fully understand the social function of country-house poetry in seventeenth-century England.

In her *Elegies*, a verse collection she composed in the years after the death of her husband, John Hutchinson, in 1664, Lucy Hutchinson illustrates that with the passing of her husband went both the well-being of his estates and the married couple's dreams of an English republic, which she finds modeled in his estates. In this sense, then, her country-house verse is more progressive than conservative: she sees in the reciprocity between her husband and nature the possibility for a new, more representative kind of politics that rejected tyranny in all forms.⁶ In "The Description of Cooke-ham," Lanyer reimagines humankind's relationship to the nonhuman world as one based on empathy, mercy, and care, not on domination and exploitation.

⁶ As I explain later in this chapter, the Hutchinsons were active opponents of the Stuart kings; in fact, John Hutchinson was a signatory on Charles I's death warrant. While the Hutchinsons initially supported Cromwell, and John Hutchinson was allegedly offered a position in the Protectorate government by Cromwell, Cromwell's increasingly tyrannical method of governance caused Hutchinson to reject the offer and rescind his support for Cromwell.

To do so, Lanyer replaces the estate lord who exploits the nonhuman world to legitimize his power with a community of women, who, along with the Cookeham estate, have become victims of patrilineal disputes over the property. Finally, in “A Dialogue between an Oak and a Man Cutting It Down,” “The Hunting of the Stag,” “The Hunting of the Hare,” and “A Dialogue between a Bountiful Knight and a Castle Ruined in War,” Cavendish powerfully demonstrates the ways in which the nonhuman world suffers at the hands of estate lords seeking to assert and maintain their power. Writing from the perspective of a stag, a hare, and an oak tree, she argues that the underlying logic of traditional country-house poems often makes men tyrants over the nonhuman world.

To make this argument, in the first section of this chapter, I briefly explain how the country-house genre has been traditionally defined and, in particular how these poems often authorized the power of the estate lord over his estate. In the chapter’s second section, I examine the relationship between women and the nonhuman world in country-house discourse of the period, as it is presented in the verse of Ben Jonson, Andrew Marvell, Lucy Hutchinson, and Aemilia Lanyer. In the chapter’s final section, I turn to the verse of Margaret Cavendish, who experiments most with the conventions of country-house discourse by giving nature a voice in matters of estate management. Through the voices of a tortured oak, a hunted stag and hare, and a ruined castle, Cavendish condemns the logic that drives country-house discourse—that the estate lord must master nature for his power to be legitimate.

I. The Traditional Conventions of Country-House Discourse

James’s proclamations ordering the gentry to return to their estates were issued as matters of practical necessity, social duty, and royal empowerment. The most practical need for the

policy was to reduce overcrowding and the high rate of plague deaths in the city, which could be combatted most easily by requiring people living there to leave. James was also concerned about rural unrest, which had been provoked by the enclosure of common lands and the draining of the fens prior to and during his reign. Perhaps most pressing, though, was the need to maintain the social function of the country estate and its lord in the community: as I have shown in the dissertation's Introduction, the country estate played a crucial role not only in sustaining the customs of hospitality but also in providing relief to the poor, a duty once held by the Church before the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-1541) under Henry VIII but which thereafter passed to estate lords and local parish officials. Moreover, the lord of the estate was responsible for ordering the estate so that, ideally, it functioned like an organic whole; if the lord failed to maintain this order, because he was either a poor steward or an absentee landlord, then the king's own control over the countryside was jeopardized by extension. As Leah Marcus argues, James I's proclamations were therefore intended to "[imprint] royal power on the rural landscape."⁷ While this royal policy was largely ineffective because James lacked the power and resources to enforce it, that he continued to renew this policy throughout his reign and wrote a poem backing this policy points to at least two things: his fears that the country estate was declining in importance during his reign and, in turn, that his own power over the English countryside was not totally secure.

The tradition from which country-house discourse developed during the early modern period stretches back to Hesiod and Homer in the eighth century BCE and has come to be known as the *locus amoenus*, a literary topos used to describe an idyllic landscape that provides

⁷ Marcus has described this imprinting of power on the landscape as "repastoralization" (*The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986] 96n8).

protection and comfort. This pastoral tradition was more fully developed by Horace and Virgil in the first century BCE with the former's second Epode and the latter's *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, and by Martial and Juvenal in the first and second centuries CE with *Epigrams* and *Satires* respectively.⁸ During the English Renaissance, country-house poets continued this tradition by romanticizing country life through the praise of the well-ordered country estate, which reflected the virtues of its lord. Country-house poets articulated this praise through apostrophe or direct address, by extensively describing the estate itself and by contrasting the estate in question to competing country estates and to city life. As a general rule, the modesty of the estate being praised was contrasted with the ostentatiousness of other estates. As G.R. Hibbard argues, this praise was designed to make claims for the "social function of the great house in the life of the community and in the understanding of the reciprocal interplay of man and nature in the creation of a good life."⁹

While these conventions were characteristic of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century country-house verse, it was not until the early seventeenth century that country-house verse became particularly popular, and it remained popular through the period just after the Restoration. This resurgence in country-house verse has been explained as a response to the rising tide of agrarian capitalism, which threatened the way of life that had long defined and been preserved by the country estate. On the one hand, emergent capitalism destabilized the power of the nobility and the peers. On the other hand, the gentry needed to legitimize their newly-acquired power because their power was mainly rooted in wealth, not the peerage. These threats were compounded during the 1640s and 50s, as Charles I was beheaded, the Royalist cause was

⁸ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 14-17; Wortham, "'A happy rural seat,'" 139. Lewalski also provides a wealth of information on this subject in "The Lady of the Country-House Poem."

⁹ Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," 159.

defeated, the Commonwealth replaced the monarchy, and both the king's and nobility's claims to power through divine right or title were seriously called into question. As McBride puts it, "If the king was subject to the commons—to the point of death—then what refuge could be found in ancient title to the land?"¹⁰ Over the course of the seventeenth century, therefore, the legitimacy of the estate lord's power itself was at stake, and, in the words of Alastair Fowler, "its basis in landowning, its symbolism in estate and house, its exercise in responsible stewardship."¹¹ More than before, then, this power needed to be continually displayed in its most ideal form if it was to outlast the economic forces that were working to redefine its basis or to delegitimize it entirely, and one way of authorizing this power was to represent it in its most ideal form in country-house verse.¹² As a result, country-house verse became uniquely important because the traditional estate lord's claims to legitimacy and the conservative social values that the country estate symbolized were under threat.

In its attachment to social values that were becoming increasingly disconnected from the social and economic realities of late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, the country-house genre was conservative by nature. This is not to say that country-house discourse wholly ignored the social and economic changes taking place or that it did not bear signs of these changes; rather, country-house discourse "insisted on the unchanging nature of social structures" in the face of these changes. This insistence, McBride argues, reveals "the extent to which aristocratic status continued to depend on country-house discourse for authorization."¹³ In other words, the highly stylized nature of country-house discourse, by which the estate lord's power

¹⁰ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 142.

¹¹ Fowler, "Country-House Poems," 9.

¹² Wortham writes that by the time of the English Civil War the country-house genre was largely used to "speak for the royalists in their defeat" ("A happy rural seat," 138).

¹³ McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 91.

was represented in its most ideal form, made an effective ally for the gentry's cause: their claim to power over the country estate could be legitimized through the nostalgic content and representational form of the poem, even if the source of their power, wealth, was not the traditional source of authority on the country estate. The country-house poem also helped to reassert the authority of the nobility and peers, whose ancient claims to the land were threatened by the new order of agrarian capitalism. To reauthorize the nobility's and the peers' power, and to authorize newly-made estate lords' power, these poems romanticized the feudal manorial past by imagining the estate lord as the wellspring of moral order on the estate.

II. Women and the Nonhuman World in Seventeenth-Century Country-House Discourse

As I have shown, agrarian capitalism altered the rural economy and, with it, social relationships and agricultural practices on the country estate. At the same time, the country estate remained, in theory, a moral economy wherein human beings lived in harmony with each other and the nonhuman world—an economy held together by the estate's lord. As the rural economy shifted from feudal manorialism to agrarian capitalism, this portrayal remained true to a certain degree, insofar as estate lords and their wives extended hospitality to guests and provided charity to the poor. However, through enclosure, the dispossession of commoners of customary use rights to the land, and more intensive agricultural practices, many seventeenth-century estate lords committed themselves to the new order of agrarian improvement by turning the land to profit. As I explained in the dissertation's Introduction, estate lords' wives and widows facilitated these efforts by working alongside their husbands or stepping into the role of estate manager in their absence or after their death. In this respect, estate lords were not always tyrants or aggressive exploiters of the land, and upper-class women on the estate were not necessarily

kinder or gentler stewards of the estate. The function of country-house poetry was simply to maintain the fiction that the estate lord was the ideal steward of his estate, who took active measures to ensure that human beings and the nonhuman world lived in harmony, while the new order of agrarian improvement opened the doors to the opposite—that is, to the intensified exploitation of human laborers and the nonhuman world on the estate.

One of the main ways of legitimizing the estate lord's power in country-house verse was to idealize how he exercised this power over the land and animals on the estate. As steward of the estate, the lord must be a responsible manager of the estate's resources, or he must at least appear to use these resources responsibly. Andrew McRae's description of Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" as a "controlling vision of natural abundance" provides a useful way of understanding the relationship between the estate lord and nature in country-house verse.¹⁴ Jonson's poem suggests that the lord of Penshurst, Robert Sidney, stewards his estate so well that nature jumps at the opportunity to serve him. Everywhere one looks, the things of nature willingly sacrifice themselves to Sidney: birds are "willing to be killed" (line 30) and eels gladly "leap on land / Before the fisher, or into his hand" (lines 37-8); the meadows and woods freely "yield" (line 25); the animals who dwell therein to "crown" (line 27) Sidney's "table" (line 27) and to pay him "tribute" (line 32); and "thy copse," Jonson writes to Sidney, "never fails to serve thee seasoned deer / When thou wouldst feast or exercise thy friends" (lines 19-21).¹⁵ Here and throughout the poem, the natural world actively chooses to serve Sidney because he has not simply imposed himself on it, but because he "dwells" among it, which is to say that he is actively involved in its

¹⁴ McRae, "Landscape and Property," 49.

¹⁵ All future references to Jonson's poem are cited in the text by line number and are taken from Fowler, *The Country House Poem*, 53-62. Don Wayne's *Penshurst* remains the most extended study of Jonson's poem on these issues. Amy Tigner has also taken a food studies approach to Jonson's poem in "The Ecology of Eating in Jonson's 'To Penshurst,'" in *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern Texts: A Field Guide to Reading and Teaching*, edited by Jennifer Munroe, Edward J. Geisweidt, and Lynne Bruckner, 109-120 (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2015).

affairs and is invested in its well-being. In this way, to borrow the words of Peter Remien, the poem depicts an idyllic vision of an estate “populated by dutiful animals complicit in their consumption.”¹⁶

Nature’s willingness to serve Sidney and the seemingly natural abundance of the Penshurst estate is just a carefully curated and highly stylized illusion, though, which disguises the fact that the estate lord must bend nature to his will, often in exploitative ways, to maintain the estate. A closer examination of the passages cited above reveals the lengths to which Jonson goes to veil Sidney’s imposition on the landscape. The “seasoned deer” that the woods are said to offer up to Sidney must actually be hunted and killed, which Jonson euphemistically describes as a hunting “exercise” among friends. In addition, the militaristic language of “yielding” and paying “tribute” suggests, not that nature freely chooses to serve Sidney, but that Sidney is a conqueror to whom nature must submit or be destroyed. The financial troubles that Sidney actually faced, a result of debt and extravagance, also undercut the illusion sustained by the poem that he was a responsible manager of his estate.¹⁷ The country-house poem must, however, gloss over the true nature of this exploitation if the estate lord’s legitimacy as the perfect steward of a harmonious community is to be maintained. As a result, the poem idealizes Sidney’s estate management to such a degree that the control and domination of nature required to make nature serviceable to him appears to be unnecessary, because nature continually and freely offers itself up to Sidney’s table.

¹⁶ Remien, ““Home to the Slaughter,”” 516. Tigner perceives this hierarchy beneath the poem’s celebratory communion and goes on to reread nature’s willing sacrifice to the Penshurst dining table as a response to a much more aggressive coercion and domination of nature by human hands that Jonson’s poem actively disguises, revealing what she calls “the practical underpinnings of the supposed pastoral fantasy” (“The Ecology of Eating,” 112).

¹⁷ McBride has pointed out that Jonson’s representation of Robert Sidney was at odds with the reality of Sidney’s financial situation. He lived rather extravagantly, and his personal letters indicate that he had incurred quite a bit of debt, for which creditors were demanding payment, and that he had repeatedly failed to pay a number of his workers (*Country House Discourse*, 114-15).

Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" takes a slightly different tack to legitimize the power of the lord of Nunappleton estate, Lord Thomas Fairfax, and his daughter, Mary. The poem represents the estate as a "green, yet growing Ark" (line 484) and a "Fort" (line 286) defended by bees, flowers, and stars. As both ark and fort, the estate shields animals from the ravages of the Civil War thanks to the Fairfax family's careful stewardship.¹⁸ However, the poem complicates this idealized image of the estate by alluding to the Garden of Eden, which the speaker describes as a "more gentle Fort" (line 338) and "sweet Militia" (line 330) whose only "garrisons were flowers" (line 332) and whose only "arms" were "roses" (line 333). While Lord Fairfax has thus endeavored to make Nunappleton estate a Paradise on earth, he is ultimately unable to protect the estate, which everywhere bears marks of the war: "But War all this doth overgrow," the speaker states, "We Ord'nance Plant and Powder sow" (lines 343-44). Nowhere is this clearer than in the meadows on the estate, where "careless" (line 425) foot soldiers "massacre the grass along" like "mowers" and accidentally kill a rail (lines 388-400). In this way, as Remien argues, Marvell's poem juxtaposes "the mind's attraction to unspoiled

¹⁸ All future references to Marvell's poem are cited in the text by line number and are taken from Fowler, *The Country House Poem*, 281-301. Katherine Acheson has done an article-length study on the image of the militarized garden in Marvell's poem in "Military Illustration, Garden Design, and Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' with Illustrations," *English Literary Renaissance* 41, no. 1 (2011): 146-88. Hugh Jenkins has centered on Marvell's portrayal of the New Model Army Levellers in the poem (lines 449-56), whom Fairfax defeated at Burford in 1649, as a threat to the estate itself and the system of property country-house verse is designed to prop up ("Two Letters to Lord Fairfax: Winstanley and Marvell," in *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination*, edited by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, 144-58 [Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999] 145-6). For additional ecocritical approaches to Marvell, see Robert Cummings, "The Forest Sequence in Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House': The Imaginative Contexts of a Poetic Episode," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1984): 179-210; Lee Erickson, "Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' and the Fairfax Family," *English Literary Renaissance* 9, no. 1 (1979): 158-68; Ken Hiltner, "Early Modern Ecocriticism," in *The Return of Theory in Early Modern English Studies, Volume 2*, edited by Paul Cefalu, Gary Kuchar, and Bryan Reynolds, 81-93 (London: Palgrave, 2014); Tomás Jatner, "Marvell's Green Thought(s): The Paradoxes of Marvell's Nature Poetry," *Prague Journal of English Studies* 7, no.1 (2018): 9-25; McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell*; Mohammad Hussein Oroskhan, "An Ecological Exploration of Marvell's Selected Poems," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature* 4, no. 3 (2015): 66-71; and Brendan Prawzdik, "Greenwashing Marvell," *Marvell Studies* 4, no. 1 (2019): 4.

environments with the often-brutal realities of how humans interact with them.”¹⁹

Yet for Lord Fairfax’s legitimacy to be maintained, the poem must ultimately explain these “brutal realities” away. It is for this reason that the poem ends by attempting to suggest that these “brutal realities” are largely external to the estate itself. According to the speaker, the world beyond the Nunappleton estate is “but a rude heap together hurled; / All negligently overthrown / ... / Your lesser World contains the Same. But in more decent Order tame” (lines 762-66). In other words, while Nunappleton estate is not fully immune from the destruction caused by the war, it is more well-ordered than the land around it because of Lord Fairfax and Mary. In this way, Marvell is simultaneously able to confront the very real threats posed to country estates and their lords during the Civil War and to argue that Nunappleton estate will suffer less than other estates because of Lord Fairfax and Mary’s virtuous estate management.

As is perhaps best demonstrated by Mary Fairfax, the women in the estate lord’s family played an important role in contributing to the estate’s stability and maintaining the illusion of it. As I have said, women’s duties on the estate included general housekeeping, engaging in charitable work in the community, and managing the estate’s finances when their husbands were away or even incapacitated.²⁰ In “To Penshurst,” for example, Jonson praises Lady Barbara Sidney for her “high housewifery” (line 85), as she is well-prepared when James I makes an unexpected visit to the estate to hunt (lines 76-81). The poem goes on to describe Lady Sidney as

¹⁹ Remien, “Home to the Slaughter,” 525. In other words, Remien writes, “Marvell appreciates the estate as a natural habitat but he never loses sight of the idea that plants and animals will be conscripted to the service of human ends” (529).

²⁰ This notion leads McBride to argue that seventeenth-century country-house discourse “cloistered aristocratic women [. . .] in prodigy houses” while, at the same time, “gentlefolk of all ranks pursued mercantile and capitalist activities that were anything but chivalric. The country house became a kind of living museum for the very ideals that aristocrats were in the process of abandoning” (*Country House Discourse*, 91-2). The “burden of maintaining these fictions,” in other words, was placed “on the shoulders of women and the domestic establishments that defined their lives within that discourse” (*Country House Discourse*, 92). For more information on women’s roles on country estates, in addition to Section 2 of the dissertation’s Introduction, see Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*, 70-5.

“noble, fruitful, chaste withal” (line 90), virtues which carry over to her children and to the estate itself. In this regard, Lady Sidney is valuable insofar as she contributes to the proper functioning and good reputation of the country estate. Mary Fairfax plays a similar role in Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House,” although her role on the estate is more extensively developed in the poem than is Lady Sidney’s in “To Penshurst.” As Mary perambulates the estate, the speaker states that “loose Nature, in respect / To her, its self doth recollect” (lines 657-58). While the speaker most literally means that Mary orders the disorder in nature here, he may also be suggesting that Mary is capable of making nature chaste, an interpretation supported by his later claim that “as all Virgins She precedes, / So you all Woods, Streams, Gardens, Meads” (lines 751-52). The speaker says that she gives the gardens their “wondrous beauty,” the woods their “straightness,” the meadow its “sweetness,” and the river its “crystal-pure,” because she is “more pure, sweet, straight, and fair” than they (lines 690-95). What she gives to them, moreover, they “gratefully again present” (line 698) in turn. Mary’s virtues make nature virtuous, in short, and her generosity makes nature equally generous. In this way, Mary takes on the role of estate lord, whose virtues are modelled by the estate itself.²¹

Mary is not given full credit for her virtues, however, because her father must remain the center of the estate’s moral economy. The poem first credits these to the “Discipline severe” (line 723) of Mary’s parents. Several lines later, the stanza ends with the following couplet: “And goodness doth itself entail / On Females, if there want a Male” (lines 727-28). Here, Marvell draws on the legal language of entailment to describe how Mary attained “goodness”: just as

²¹ In this respect, Lewalski argues, Mary Fairfax functions as the “embodiment of Nature” here, who is both a “transformative force” and “an active human power ordering nature and society” (“The Lady of the Country-House Poem,” 273).

women during the early modern period typically inherited estates only if there were no male descendants in line to inherit it, Mary inherits “goodness” because she is the only heir available as Lord Fairfax’s only child. Mary’s virtue is defined through her father a third time, when she is described soon after this stanza as but a “sprig of Mistletoe / On the Fairfacian Oak” (lines 739-40). This last image is an especially apt one for a country-house poem. First, the image emphasizes how much the estate lord’s power was synonymous with his power to control nature—so much so that the oak is “Fairfacian,” which is to say that its constitution has fundamentally been altered in being owned by Lord Fairfax. Second, this image portrays Mary as a representation of the virtues truly housed in her father, the estate lord, who remains the center of the moral economy on the estate. Both Mary’s and nature’s virtue, then, point to that of Lord Fairfax.

Jonson’s and Marvell’s representations of nature and women in “To Penshurst” and “Upon Appleton House” thus work in several ways. In both poems, nature and women are valued inasmuch as they contribute to the idyllic image of the estate lord as perfect steward of his estate.²² To sustain this image, Jonson depicts nature as a willing slave, which freely sacrifices itself for the lord’s gain, and Marvell centers on the order of Nunappleton estate in contrast to the extreme disorder of the war-torn world beyond the estate. To sustain this image, Jonson also portrays Lady Sidney as the ideal housewife, one so ideal that her home is always already prepared for the arrival of the king himself, and Marvell represents Mary as the heir to her father’s virtues, which renders the estate a refuge from the “rude heap” (line 762) surrounding it. Taking these portrayals of nature and women together, it is clear that both bear a great deal of the burden of bolstering the estate’s lord’s legitimacy on the country estate.

²² Of the women poets discussed in this chapter, this feature is most common to Hutchinson’s poems.

Lucy Hutchinson's country-house verse seems to hew quite closely to these conventions, as she mourns the decline of the Owthorpe estate whose steward, her late husband, John Hutchinson, has died. However, it is crucial to understand that John's death and the consequent decline in his estate was, for her, inseparable from the death of her and John's hopes for a republic—hopes which the Restoration roundly put to an end. As Hutchinson frames it, her husband's estate management is a model for a new, more representative kind of politics, one which intended to do away with long-held beliefs in divine right or inherited titles as legitimate sources of power. More specifically, she sees in the reciprocity between her husband and nature the possibility for a form of government based on increased representation and reciprocity, which is to say one that did not allow a king with absolute power to have a monopoly on the state's affairs. In this regard, Hutchinson presses her country-house verse into the service of a republican, not conservative, agenda. Her personal grief is, in a word, political.

My argument draws on the scholarship of Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, who has argued that Hutchinson's country-house verse demonstrates "how a puritan republican reformed a genre often affiliated with conservatism, royalism, and even Cavalier poetry."²³ Lucy's husband, John, was a Puritan leader of the House of Commons and a parliamentarian governor of Nottingham. He fought in the parliamentary army during the Civil War and was one of the signatories of Charles I's death warrant. In 1663, he was arrested for his suspected involvement in the Farnley Wood Plot, a conspiracy hatched in Northern England to reverse the return to monarchy by capturing and overtaking Royalist strongholds in Leeds. He died in prison one year later in 1664. Lucy herself was born into a Royalist family in 1620, but she later became a staunch republican who, with her husband, did not support the rule of Charles I or Charles II. She and her husband

²³ Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, *Forms of Engagement: Women, Poetry and Culture 1640-1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 147.

also protested against the rule of Oliver Cromwell, whose Protectorate government more closely resembled the monarchy they wanted to do away with than the republic they envisioned for England. Hutchinson's political dreams found their way into her country-house poetry, according to Scott-Baumann: in her husband's political career and his estate management, Hutchinson saw the "basis of a godly republic, thwarted by the Restoration." In this way, Scott-Baumann argues, Hutchinson's verse traces the steps by which "John Hutchinson's Eden becomes the fallen wilderness of the Restoration."²⁴

In the two country-house poems contained in her *Elegies*, the "fallen wilderness" that the Owthorpe estate has become after John Hutchinson's death is one that has fallen into disrepair: it suffers from waste, overgrowth, and pollution, and she laments the fact that it will inevitably be, in her words, prostituted to a new lord. Under John Hutchinson's stewardship, however, Owthorpe was a veritable Eden. Nature was tended well, and his relationship with nature was characterized by reciprocity—the mutual exchange of admiration, care, and gratitude. For example, in "Musings in my evening Walkes at Owthorpe," Lucy Hutchinson juxtaposes the paradise that has passed with the "fallen wilderness" that remains:

The trees about The Gardin Stand
Drooping for want of that kind hand
That Sett & Cherrisht them before
And praysd the greatefull frutes They bore
The flowers hang downe Their drooping heads
And Languish on Their undrest beds
Which now no more reteine That grace
His presence brought to every Place
The murmering springs rise & Complaine
Then shrinke into The earth againe
Least they foule mixtures should endure

²⁴ Scott-Baumann, *Forms of Engagement*, 169. For more information on the ways in which Hutchinson's republican politics carry into her country-house verse, see Scott Baumann, "'Paper Frames': Lucy Hutchinson's *Elegies* and the Seventeenth-Century Country House Poem," *Literature Compass* 4, no. 3 (2007): 664-76. Mihoko Suzuki has turned our attention to Hutchinson's and Cavendish's treatment of animals in "Animals and the Political in Lucy Hutchinson and Margaret Cavendish," *The Seventeenth Century* 30, no. 2 (2015): 229-47.

Since he whoe kept Their Channells pure
No more on Their greene bankes appears
The Clouds offers to lend me teares
While They sayle ore the empty pile
Which his Loved presence did ere while
Soe gloriously adorne and fill.²⁵

According to the poem, as steward of Owthorpe, John Hutchinson loved nature, and nature loved him in turn. He “praysd” and “cherrisht” each part of his “Gardin,” and nature requited his “kind hand,” “grace,” and “loved presence,” with “greatefull fruites” and “teares.” Grieving over his death, the “trees” and “flowers” of Owthorpe “droop” their heads, while the “springs rise & Complaine / Then shrinke into The earth againe” because “their Channels pure” have gone “foule” in his absence. His estate, in short, has become an “empty pile” after his death, a bare and destitute variant of the “rude,” “proud,” and “ambitious” heaps that Jonson and Marvell scorn in their country-house poems.

Owthorpe bears no signs of exploitation at the hands of the estate lord, either. While Jonson’s and Marvell’s country-house poems hide the estate lord’s exploitation of nature under the veil of natural abundance, Lucy Hutchinson presents her husband’s estate as one that lacks this exploitation entirely. In “To Penshurst” and “Upon Appleton House,” the poets’ praise is one-directional, all directed at bolstering the legitimacy of Robert Sidney and Thomas Fairfax. In Hutchinson’s poem, however, praise is a two-way street, which runs from John to nature and from nature to John: while alive, he “cherrisht” nature, and it “loved” him in return. This reciprocity again appears in a particularly striking between the clouds and Lucy herself. As the rest of nature “languishes” in its grief, the “clouds offers to lend” Lucy Hutchinson their

²⁵ Hutchinson, “Musings in my evening Walkes at Owthorpe,” lines 9-24. All future references to Hutchinson’s poetry are cited in the text by line number and are taken from David Norbrook, “Lucy Hutchinson’s ‘Elegies’ and the Situation of the Republican Woman Writer (with text),” *English Literary Renaissance* 27, no. 3 (1997): 461-521.

“teares,” in a beautiful gesture of their shared grief. Here, the poem suggests that the reciprocity that Lucy’s husband actively cultivated, which everywhere appears to Lucy to be lost, might actually live on after his death. In turn, the poem may also suggest that John’s method of estate management, one based on reciprocity and the cherishing of nature, is more sustainable than a method geared primarily towards propping up the estate lord’s power, one that demands the mastery and exploitation of nature.

Hutchinson’s reformulation of the estate lord’s relationship to nature also helps us make sense of the language of empire that appears later in the poem. Near the poem’s end, Hutchinson writes that her husband’s “death hath throne [her] empire downe,” and she goes on to claim that it would be “better never to have bine / Raysd high Then live a fallen Queene” (lines 50-2). Here, Hutchinson coopts the language of empire to reimagine how the estate lord’s power on the country estate should be exercised. More specifically, whereas the expansion of England’s empire overseas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was characterized by the increased exploitation of lands abroad, Hutchinson’s “empire” while her husband was alive was built on a more reciprocal relationship between humankind and nature. Hutchinson reinforces this idea a few lines later, when she describes just how deep her and Owthorpe’s grief runs: “Where ere I looke above belowe / In every side beset with woe” (lines 57-8). One cannot help but wonder if Hutchinson had Donne’s “To His Mistress Going to Bed” in mind when composing this line. “Licence my roaving hands, and let them go,” Donne writes, “Before, behind, between, above, below, / O my America! my new-found-land, / My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man’d, / My Myne of precious stones: My Emperie, / How blest am I in this discovering thee”

(lines 25-30)?²⁶ As Donne imagines it, the body of his mistress is a “new-found-land” whose every nook and cranny he, as its emperor, is entitled to explore and exploit for his pleasure. In Hutchinson’s rendering of the line, Donne’s predatory attitude is replaced by an elegiac one, which laments the loss of an altogether different, which is to say not exploitative, relationship to nature.

Hutchinson’s second country-house poem “To the Garden att Owthorpe” contains much of the same imagery as “Musings in my evening Walkes at Owthorpe.” In the wake of John Hutchinson’s death, nature grieves his loss: flowers “hang Their drooping heads” (line 20), “young trees [. . .] sade and fading stand” (line 23), “spreading weeds” (line 27) go unchecked, and the “noblest Plant / Degenerates” (lines 25-6) because they have “lost his refreshing hand” (line 24) and “his watchfull eies” (line 27). Here, Hutchinson emphasizes that her husband was extremely attentive to nature’s needs. In carefully observing nature, he was able to take concerted steps to reinvigorate it with his “refreshing hand.” In this regard, John Hutchinson’s estate management was dually “refreshing,” as it modelled a different, and less exploitative, relationship to nature than that which was increasingly the reality of the agrarian-capitalist system of seventeenth-century England. The poem further reinforces this idea when Hutchinson longs for the “better ordered rankes” (line 30) of Owthorpe under her husband’s stewardship.

Under “Annother Gardiner” (line 35), however, Owthorpe will lose the care and love that it enjoyed while John Hutchinson was alive. In elegizing her husband’s death and the decline of the Owthorpe estate, Hutchinson also looks to the future, as she imagines the estate in the possession of a new lord, to whom the estate must “prostitute” (line 7) itself. Both she and

²⁶ John Donne, “To His Mistress Going to Bed,” in *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, edited by H. R. Woudhuysen, 263-64 (New York and London: Penguin, 1992). Norbrook notes that the Hutchinsons had a portrait of Donne hanging in their Owthorpe estate (“Lucy Hutchinson’s ‘Elegies,’” 480).

Owthorpe must “in gawdy dresses to [their] next lord shine” (line 43) because it is “now [their] best grace to be wild and rude” (line 10). While it was in their “best grace” to be “least adorne[d]” (line 4), “just” (line 9), and full of “gratitude” (line 9) when John Hutchinson was alive, under the rule of a new lord Lucy Hutchinson and the estate must be wanton and showy to appeal to his desires. Under the rule of a new lord, in other words, women and nature are sold and exploited for his gain. They must change the virtues that John Hutchinson “planted” (line 14) in them for a more “vulgar” (line 13) life and must “prostitute Those joys againe / Which once his noble soul did entertaine” (lines 7-8). Under Owthorpe’s best “Gardiner,” in short, women and nature enjoyed a reciprocal relationship with the estate lord. Under “Annother Gardiner,” this reciprocity will be replaced with exploitation. Since the word “prostitute” was also used at the time to describe the act of devoting oneself to corrupt purposes for financial gain, Hutchinson’s use of the word also suggests that the morally-ordered estate her late-husband cultivated will be handed over to, and sullied by, the money economy of agrarian capitalism in the wake of his death.²⁷

In the poem’s final line, Hutchinson reinforces this idea by concluding that there was no “lover lovelinesse” than the natural world on the Owthorpe estate under her husband’s care, so much so that it can never be “restored” (line 52). The word “restored” here is especially charged, as it juxtaposes the irrecoverable garden of Owthorpe—and, with it, Lucy and John Hutchinson’s dreams of an English republic—with the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II. Hutchinson ends her poem, then, with irony: she illustrates, through a single word, just how much was irreversibly lost when the English monarchy was reinstated. The Restoration dashed the married couple’s hopes for a new kind of politics, one founded on increased representation,

²⁷ See *OED*, “prostitute, v.,” *OED Online*, March 2020, Oxford University Press.

not on the concentration of power in the hands of the few. Moreover, Hutchinson saw this new kind of politics modelled in her husband's careful estate management, which was built on an attentiveness to nature's needs and a mutual exchange of care and gratitude between him and nature. Although Hutchinson's poem endeavors to recuperate these losses—to gather, in her words, the “ungathred flowers” (line 50) of Owthorpe and her hopes for a republican form of politics—the poem acknowledges that this recuperation can only ever exist in verse.²⁸ The reciprocity she observed between her husband and nature was short-lived, and its death signaled the return of a more exploitative approach to the exercise of power, which too often relied on the domination of nature to legitimize itself.

In Lanyer's “The Description of Cooke-ham,” it is not the estate lord, but a community of women who have been forced to leave the Cooke-ham estate in whom Lanyer finds an ideal model of estate management. These women—Lanyer, her patroness, Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, and Margaret's daughter, Anne Clifford—were forced to leave the Cooke-ham estate because of a patrilineal dispute about who was the rightful heir to the property. Over the course of the poem, Lanyer grieves not just the women's departure from the estate, but the fact that the lands on the estate have suffered in their absence. In the process of elegizing these losses, Lanyer challenges the patriarchal logic of country-house verse—that nature must be dominated to legitimize the lord's power. In its place, Lanyer imagines a new kind of relationship to nature, one that is based on empathy, mercy, and care instead of mastery and exploitation.

²⁸ This image of the “ungathred flowers” is a fitting one. The word “anthology” derives partly from the Greek, meaning a “gathering of flowers” (*OED*, “anthology, n.,” *OED Online*, March 2020, Oxford University Press). In this respect, Hutchinson's verse collection functions as an anthology of sorts, a bundle of gathered poems, alone able to recuperate these losses.

In the early 1600s, the Cookeham estate was leased to Margaret Clifford's brother-in-law, William Russell of Thornhaugh. In 1604, Margaret and Anne Clifford arrived at the Cookeham estate to stay for a period of time because Margaret had been estranged from her unfaithful husband, George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland. After her husband's death in 1605, Margaret became involved in a protracted legal battle over his estates at Skipton and Westmorland, which he left to his brother, Francis, in his will. In Margaret's view, the Skipton and Westmorland estates rightfully belonged to her daughter and her late husband's only surviving heir, Anne, the Countess of Dorset. Margaret's petition was based on common law, specifically a writ dating to the reign of Edward II, which stated that these lands could be entailed either to a male or a female heir.

Anne Clifford herself spent the greater part of her adult life fighting to win the legal battle her mother began and to stake her claim to her father's estates. To stake this claim, Anne went against not only the terms of her father's will, but the rulings of the Court of Commons Pleas in 1616 and King James himself in 1617, both of whom ruled in Francis's favor.²⁹ Like her mother, Anne drew on English common law to stake her claim, and she articulated her mode of thinking in a series of diary entries written between 1616 and 1619.³⁰ According to Stephanie Elsky, Anne wrote these entries "during a period when common law was increasingly becoming the instrument by which lawyers and politicians resisted King James I's absolutist tendencies." In this way, Elsky argues, Anne's diaries functioned as a "pseudo-legal document, one that contains within it a relationship to the land that she hoped one day might 'obtain the force of

²⁹ Barbara Lewalski has noted that, although James himself denied Anne Clifford rights to her father's land, Queen Anne may have favorably looked on Clifford's claims ("Re-Writing Patriarchy and Patronage: Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford, and Aemilia Lanyer," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 [1991]: 93).

³⁰ Stephanie Elsky observes that Anne understood common law as the "collected, uncoded wisdom of generations of lawyers and judges" ("Lady Anne Clifford's Common-Law Mind," *Studies in Philology* 111, no. 3 [2014]: 530).

law.”³¹ In 1643, nearly four decades after the legal battle began, Francis’s son died without an heir, and the Skipton and Westmorland estates finally passed to Anne.

As Anne’s tutor, Lanyer would have been familiar with Margaret’s marital and legal troubles, which served as the backdrop for her country-house poem “The Description of Cooke-ham.” Lanyer herself was not immune from marital or legal troubles. Like Margaret, she was likely estranged from her husband, Alphonso Lanyer, a court musician in Elizabeth’s and James’s courts—which may explain why Lanyer was driven into the arms of Elizabeth’s cousin and Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, with whom she had an affair. Lanyer also became involved in at least two legal battles over the course of her life. Her first legal battle occurred during the summer of 1617, when her landlord, Edward Smith, sued and had her arrested because of a dispute over rent payment. Lanyer’s second legal battle began in 1635, when she sued her brother-in-law for the right to half the profits from her husband’s hay-and-straw weighing patent, which Alphonso was granted by Elizabeth’s closest advisor, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, during her reign.³² Lanyer composed “The Description of Cooke-ham” in 1611, when Margaret Clifford was petitioning for her late husband’s estates to be given to Anne. The poem appears as the final poem in Lanyer’s verse collection entitled *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, the first volume of English verse published by a woman. Lanyer’s poem functions mostly as an elegy, as she praises the virtue of Margaret Clifford, who commissioned the poem, Anne Clifford, and the Cooke-ham landscape itself by lamenting the loss of each. With Margaret’s and Anne’s legal dispute over Anne’s right to inherit the Cookeham estate in mind, Cookeham was not a model of “secure land proprietorship,” as Sarah Hogan argues, either in

³¹ Elsky, “Lady Anne Clifford’s Common-Law Mind,” 545.

³² For more information, see David Lasocki and Roger Prior, *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531-1665* (1995) (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

reality or in Lanyer's poem.³³

Hogan rightly goes on to argue that Cookeham is also not “an acquisitive, consumption-oriented place.”³⁴ To clarify this point, it is worth contrasting Lanyer's poem with “To Penshurst,” which Jonson may have written as early as 1612 or even before the composition of “Cooke-ham” but which was only published five years later in 1616 in *The Forest*. On the one hand, Jonson's Penshurst seems to be an eternal, unchanging paradise created by Robert Sidney—a true picture of Eden, given its natural bounty and the social harmony and religious devotion of the people who dwell there. The poem tells a tale of communion on an estate entirely devoid of envy, one that embodies a fantasy of stability, fecundity, and harmony. Additionally, human interaction with the Penshurst landscape is a highly involved, direct, and specifically patriarchal one. Sidney is lord of the estate and surrounding land, and later in the poem we see James I hunt on it. On the land, the creatures of the natural world jump at the opportunity to be consumed, while people feast on them in the hall. Finally, Penshurst is a true picture of home where the “lord dwells” (line 102), and the estate's seemingly natural, ever-present bounty is on full display.³⁵

Lanyer's Cooke-ham, on the other hand, was once like Penshurst but is no longer, an Eden that has withered away after the disappearance of the women it held so dear. Her poem is a tale of exile, separation, and loss on an estate that is the embodiment of lost stability, deterioration, and destroyed harmony. Reciting from a place of exile rather than stasis, Lanyer produces a poem that is much more expressly elegiac: remarkably aware of the passing of time,

³³ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 139.

³⁴ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 139. Hogan adds that Lanyer may be alluding to Meliboeus's speech from Virgil's first Eclogue on being exiled from Rome since both texts have a shared interest in “land confiscation” (139).

³⁵ To draw the contours of the country-house genre, Nicole Pohl provides a brief sketch of Lanyer's and Jonson's poems in “Lanyer's ‘The Description of Cookham’ and Jonson's ‘To Penshurst,’” in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, edited by Michael Hattaway, 224-32 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

her changing relationship to the landscape, the physical markings of the change it has undergone, and her indebtedness to it. Whereas Jonson exerts rhetorical power over Penshurst in his poem to legitimize Sidney's own power as estate lord, Lanyer can only lament Cooke-ham's loss from the place of exile and of womanhood. As a result, Lanyer's interaction with the Cooke-ham ecosystem is primarily articulated through the simile since she can nostalgically reflect on, but not restore, the harmony she once enjoyed with the nonhuman world. In turn, Lanyer endeavors to leave the landscape of Cooke-ham as untouched by humankind as possible, and even to endow it with a value beyond its use to humankind; in other words, the creatures who inhabit the Cooke-ham estate do not simply exist to offer themselves up for consumption at the estate lord's table, as they do in Jonson's poem. While Jonson's poem cloaks the domination of the nonhuman world under the veil of an endlessly reproducible natural bounty, always already there for humankind's pleasure, Lanyer's poem demonstrates that mercy, respect, and love guided the women of Cookeham's interactions with nonhuman world. In these ways, Jonson and Lanyer paint quite different pictures of Edenic harmony on these estates: whereas Jonson's vision of harmony simply glorifies Sidney's controlling power over it, Lanyer's version is decidedly more nature-friendly; as Eve cast out of her beloved Eden, Lanyer laments the loss of the harmony that the women of Cooke-ham earnestly and actively cultivated with the nonhuman world.³⁶

³⁶ Lanyer draws out these oppositions through the changing meaning of "prospect" in the poem, a word which appears first at line 54 and again at line 72. In the first case, the "goodly Prospects" of the "stately tree" ("Cookeham," lines 53-54) so enjoyed by Margaret are those which one might associate with the *locus amoenus*: a source of poetic inspiration, a refuge that provides comfort, and a space for meditation and religious devotion. In the second case, Lanyer describes the "thirteene shires" which "appear'd all in [Margaret Clifford's] sight," "all interlac'd with brookes and christall springs" as "a prospect fit to please the eyes of Kings" (lines 71-3). Here, Lanyer depicts Cookeham as a site on which men can focus their territorial gaze and satisfy their desire to control and own the land. But the real force of these lines lies in its juxtaposition with the previous use of "prospect" as a much less invasive way of interacting with nature. In other words, Lanyer replaces Jonson's adjectival control over the Penshurst landscape with a much more passive and peaceful kinship with Cooke-ham. Of course, when we consider that the goal of Lanyer's poem is to assert her poetic voice, we must ask: which "prospect" is worse for the environment, the one that does not hide its intentions or the one that dissembles and masks them?

In these ways, Lanyer argues for a less exploitative relationship to nature than that which was typical on the country estate. To legitimize Sidney's right to rule, Jonson goes to great lengths to depict the creatures on the Penshurst estate as ones who gladly leap at the chance to improve the lives of the people of Penshurst for little to no reward, while simultaneously disguising the poetic and territorial control of nature at work in Sidney's exercise of power. On the other hand, Lanyer's use of personification, along with the simile and repetition of "seeming," makes room for a much more nurturing relationship in which the female community and nature mutually provide for each other and, more radically, in which the former refrains from intervening in the latter as much as possible in a physically destructive way. In short, Jonson's poem is aimed at laying claim to nature, while Lanyer's poem endeavors to, like John Hutchinson, cherish nature and leave it well alone.³⁷

Lanyer repeatedly brings her, Margaret's, and Anne's exile to bear on her representation of Cooke-ham as a way of arguing for a less patriarchal relationship to nature. Throughout the poem, she reminds us that her access to nature is always mediated, or that she cannot and does not wish to control nature in the ways that the estate lord believes he must. Three times she qualifies her descriptions with "me thought" (lines 17, 33, 132); four times she uses extended similes, which range from line 61 to line 140; eight times she states that nature "appear[s]" (lines 184, 203), "seems" (lines 18, 24, 60, 164, and 181), or "looks" (line 192) a certain way; she even goes so far as to explicitly admit that her wit is "too weak" (line 112); and in, perhaps, the most

³⁷ Louise Noble's ecofeminist reading of "Cooke-ham" teases out this very idea. Perhaps most relevant is her observation of the close "affinity" between the poet and the natural world as victims of male domination. She goes on to say that this "relationship between social disenfranchisement and environmental degradation" enables the female poet, both in need of patronage and of a poetic voice distinct from that of men, to understand the loss experienced by the natural world and therefore speak in its stead. In other words, the shared loss at the hands of men enables women alone to write accurately about the experiences of the natural world ("Bare and Desolate Now": Cultural Ecology and 'The Description of Cookham,'" in *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide to Reading and Teaching*, edited by Jennifer Munroe, et al., 99-108 [London: Routledge, 2015], 108).

self-conscious moment of the poem she writes that the trees “hold like similes” (line 22), entwining their branches and enfolding their leaves as if to shield Margaret Clifford from the sun’s rays in an expression of selfless love and protection: “The Trees with leaves, with fruits, with flowers clad, / Embraced each other, seeming to be glad / Turning themselves to beauteous canopies, / To shade the bright sun from your brighter eyes” (lines 23-26).³⁸ Here, Lanyer deploys the simile not just to emphasize the model of reciprocity that is embodied by Margaret and nature, but also to give nature the opportunity to speak for itself by framing her observations and interpretations of nature as just one possible perspective on the matter.

In a moment of beautifully staggering reversal, Lanyer illustrates the simultaneous strength and fragility of the simile through the transformation of this image of the embrace. As their leaves change color and their flowers and fruits fall away, the trees cling to each other more tightly for a time. But as summer turns to fall and fall turns to winter, the trees eventually surrender, letting their leaves fall away, leaving behind nothing but their bare and deadened branches:

The trees that were so glorious in our view,
Forsook both flowers and fruit; when once they knew
Of your depart, their very leaves did wither,
Changing their colours as they grew together.
But when they saw this had no power to stay you,
They often wept, though, speechless, could not pray you;
Letting their tears in your fair bosoms fall,
As if they said, ‘Why will ye leave us all?’
This being vain, they cast their leaves away,
Hoping that pity, would have made you stay. (lines 133-42)

³⁸ All future references to Lanyer’s poem are cited in the text by line number and are taken from Fowler, *The Country House Poem*, 45-52. For an in-depth look at Lanyer’s portrayal of birds in this poem, see Anna Beskin, “The Birds of Aemilia Lanyer’s ‘The Description of Cooke-ham,’” *Modern Philology* 114, no. 3 (2017): 524-51.

The picture Lanyer paints here is, as Lucy Hutchinson does, best captured by what new materialists have called the “entanglement,” or mutual dependency, between the human and nonhuman worlds: Lanyer’s grief is inseparable from the nonhuman world’s suffering, which both documents and provokes her sorrow. Yet the personification that drives the passage hinges on the emergence of nature’s own voice.³⁹ The trees’ single speech act in the passage comes to us by way of simile, reminding us that Lanyer does not ultimately claim to speak for nature. Moreover, this simile reveals how deep the reciprocity runs between the natural world of Cookeham and Margaret Clifford. As nature pleads for Margaret to stay, like a mother she comforts the trees as they cry in her embrace. Tragically, her “pity” is not enough to make her stay, either, as neither she nor her daughter legally owned the estate. The passage therefore works in at least two ways: first, it presents a brilliant image of symbiosis between women and the environment, offering us a raw, unmediated, and vulnerable experience of loss and grief with nature; then, the passage shocks us back into reality with “as if,” emphasizing that Lanyer does not pretend to possess a full understanding of nature, as Jonson does in “To Penshurst.”

After not only Margaret and Anne but Lanyer herself have left Cooke-ham, winter firmly takes hold and the trees’ embrace withers with its arrival; the “stately trees” that once barred Margaret from the harmful rays of the sun have become mere “briars” and “brambles” and the sun’s “beams” are no longer harmful, but “weak”:

Each arbour, bank, each seat, each stately tree,
Looks bare and desolate now for want of thee;
Turning green tresses into frosty gray,
While in cold grief they wither all away.
The sun grew weak, his beams no comfort gave;
While all green things did make the earth their grave:

³⁹ For more information, see Anderson and Perrin, “New Materialism and the Stuff of Humanism”; Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*; Coole and Frost, “Introducing the New Materialisms”; Gamble, “Figures of Entanglement,”; Hodder, “The Entanglements of Humans and Things,”; and Tuin and Dolphijn, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*.

Each briar, each bramble, when you went away,
Caught fast your clothes, thinking to make you stay. (lines 191-98)

As Margaret leaves, vines and shrubs catch on her cloths, in the hopes that they might entrap her and thus “make [her] stay.” Their efforts, of course, have failed because Anne had no legal claim to the estate. In the wake of Margaret’s departure, then, summer has passed through autumn to winter and Cooke-ham has shriveled under its icy power. The garden, like Owthorpe, has become “bare and desolate” in her absence, not because they depended on her for their basic survival, but in an expression of their extreme grief at the loss of her attention, love, and care.

Lanyer violates this harmony with nature at one particular moment in the poem when she steals Margaret Clifford’s kiss from the oak tree. Four times leading up to this moment, Lanyer uses some variation of the word “vouchsafe” to describe Margaret’s virtue, grace, and kinship with nature.⁴⁰ The word first appears as a plea from Lanyer for Margaret to deign to think about the past, and its next appearance expresses Lanyer’s desire for the eternal love of God’s grace. Lanyer uses the word a third time to recount Margaret’s promise to visit the oak tree before she departs and a fourth time, just after she has stolen Margaret’s kiss, as Margaret’s promise of love to the tree, which she sealed with that kiss.⁴¹ The transformation of this word over the course of the poem accomplishes two things: it likens Margaret’s grace to God’s grace and becomes increasingly tactile, moving from thought, to sight, and finally to touch.⁴² In this way, Lanyer assigns Cookeham the role of an earthly Eden and herself the role of Eve, whose sin violates

⁴⁰ The Oxford English Dictionary defines “vouchsafe” as to “give, grant, or bestow in a gracious or condescending manner.” See *OED Online*, s. v. “vouchsafe, v,” March 2016, Oxford University Press.

⁴¹ Each of the four appearances of “vouchsafe” in “Cooke-ham” may be found here: “Vouchsafe to think upon those pleasures past” (line 13); “And loving heaven that is so far above, / May in the end vouchsafe us entire love” (line 115-16); “But specially the love of that fair tree, / That first and last you did vouchsafe to see” (line 157-58); “So I, ingrateful Creature did deceive it, / Of that which you vouchsafed in love to leave it” (line 171-72).

⁴² By making this comparison, Lanyer elevates Margaret as alone capable of perceiving God’s plan, and in doing so she asserts her own poetic ability to compare Margaret with God. After all, that Lanyer emphasizes Margaret’s ability to perceive “in all his Creatures held a perfit Law; / And in their beauties [. . .] His beauty” (lines 78-80) functions to reveal her own competing powers of perception.

Margaret's grace—and the harmony with nature it engenders—just as Eve's sin violates that of God. This striking allusion to Eve's forbidden theft from the Tree of Knowledge frames the narrative of original sin as one that cautions against and even forbids physical intervention in the natural world. That the kiss Lanyer steals was "vouchsafed" (line 172) to the tree only further suggests that her theft is, in part, responsible for the destruction of the harmony with nature that Margaret fostered. In short, Lanyer steals from nature and gives it nothing in return.

In a number of ways, then, Lanyer's *Cookeham* is a postlapsarian world, and her voice is that of an Eve cast out of her Eden. Unlike James, who wished to reestablish the gentry's and his own control over country estates by exhorting the English gentry to control their wives, Lanyer draws on her experience of exile to reformulate what the relationship between humankind and nature should be on the country estate. As she presents it in her poem, this relationship should not be defined by the mastery and exploitation of nature, but by a reciprocal exchange of admiration, compassion, mercy, and gratitude. Lanyer's poem bears remarkable similarities to Hutchinson's country-house verse in this regard. Both Hutchinson's and Lanyer's country-house verse reimagine what the estate lord's relationship to nature should be. At first glance, Hutchinson appears to hew quite closely to the conventions of the genre by praising her husband as the center of the estate's moral economy. However, this praise is inseparable from her and John's dreams of an English republic, which Lucy saw modeled in the reciprocity that her husband cultivated between himself and nature; he "cherrisht" nature and nature "loved" him in return.⁴³ Like John Hutchinson, Margaret Clifford builds her relationship to *Cookeham* on reciprocity: nature loves her because she regards nature as her "pinèd brethren" (line 92), not something that must be controlled in an effort to legitimize her and her daughter's claim to

⁴³ Hutchinson, "Musings in my evening Walkes at Owthorpe," lines 11 and 23.

Cookeham. For both Hutchinson and Lanyer, then, legitimizing the estate lord's power by reinforcing his mastery of the land on his estate leads to irreversible ecological loss. Instead of exploiting nature for self-gain, Hutchinson and Lanyer argue, the estate lord must empathize with nature, be merciful towards it, and respect it.

III. Letting Nature Speak: Margaret Cavendish's Contributions to Country-House

Discourse

The primary rhetorical mode of country-house verse is apostrophe or direct address: the country-house poet directs his praise at the country estate as a product of the estate lord's skilled and careful stewardship of it. In country-house discourse, then, the nonhuman world is not important in and of itself; rather, it is important insofar as it has been skillfully managed by and made to serve the estate lord. In her country-house verse, Cavendish condemns this logic by giving the nonhuman world a say in the matter. She writes both in dialogue and from the perspective of hunted animals to illustrate how the estate lord's exercise of power all too often poses a clear and present danger to the nonhuman world. For example, in her poem "A Dialogue between an Oak and a Man Cutting It Down," a man sets out to build a "stately house" (line 104) from the oak tree, who presents a series of varied, compelling arguments as to why the man should not do so. While the man is only interested in how he can exploit the nonhuman world to satisfy his desires for a country house, the oak challenges the man's attitude, one that defines country-house discourse—that this world exists to serve humankind.

Cavendish's more well-known poems "The Hunting of the Stag" and "The Hunting of the Hare" also condemn this logic by providing two scathing criticisms of the hunt, one of the main

recreational activities that the lord and his guests participated in on the country estate.⁴⁴ Through the voices of the stag and the hare, these poems articulate the physical and psychological harm that these animals experience while being hunted. The poems then juxtapose the stag's and the hare's fear and grief with the hunters' greed, willful cruelty, and complete lack of concern for animal life. That this apathy and cruelty is not just fun and games, or some unfortunate byproduct of the hunt, but intentional—done as a way for the estate lord to maintain relationships with people in power and to perform his own power over the land—makes the hunt that much worse. In short, the hunt has very real, extremely cruel, even murderous consequences—all for the estate lord's social and political gain. In this way, Cavendish's poems also argue that the cruelty of the hunt undermines the legitimacy of the estate lord's power, which the hunt is designed to display, because the lord has failed his most basic duty as steward to care for all creatures on his estate.

Cavendish's poem "A Dialogue between a Bountiful Knight and a Castle Ruined in War" uses a wider lens to examine the damaging effects of humankind's affairs on the natural world.

⁴⁴ All future references to Cavendish's poems are cited in the text by line number and are taken from the most recent edition of *Poems and Fancies* (Margaret Cavendish, *Poems and Fancies*, edited by Brandie R. Siegfried [Toronto: Iter Press, 2018]). For more information on Cavendish's treatment of the nonhuman world, especially animals, in her poetry, see Benjamin Bertram, *Bestial Oblivion: War, Humanism, and Ecology in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Todd Borlik's anthology of early modern primary sources, especially his sections on "Hierarchy and the Human Animal" and "Margaret Cavendish [Animal Intelligence]," in *Literature and Nature in the English Renaissance: An Ecocritical Anthology*, 87-204 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Leonia Bossert and Christina Alert, "'As if that God Made Creatures for Mans Meat': Margaret Cavendish's *The Hunting of the Hare* and Animal Ethics," in *Ethics of Science in the Research for Sustainable Development, Volume 1*, edited by Simon Meisch, Johannes Lundershausen, Leonie Bossert, and Marcus Rockoff, 247-72 (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos, 2015); Lucinda Cole, "Animal Studies and the Eighteenth Century: The Nature of the Beast," *Literature Compass* 16, no. 6 (2019): e12536; Donna Landry, "Green Languages? Women Poets as Naturalists in 1653 and 1807," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2000): 467-89; reprinted in *Forging Connections: Women's Poetry from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, edited by Anne K. Mellor, Felicity Nussbaum, and Jonathan F. S. Post, 39-61 (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library & Art Gallery, 2002); Tobias Menely, "Animal Signs and Ethical Significance: Expressive Creatures in the British Georgic," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 39, no. 4 (2006): 111-27; Dan Mills, "Mad Madge's Bestiary: Philosophical Animals and the Physiognomic Philosophers in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*," in *The Return of Theory in Early Modern English Studies*, edited by Paul Cefalu, Gary Kuchar, and Bryan Reynolds, 39-57 (New York: Palgrave, 2014); and Suzuki, "Animals and the Political."

At its core, this poem examines the cost of the Civil War not just on the castle at the center of the estate, but on the lands that surround it. In the process, the poem undercuts the image of nature typical of country-house verse as an idealized place over which the estate lord enjoys full and total control. By the end of Cavendish's poem, the titular Knight has no real ability to restore the land and castle that have been destroyed over the course of the war; all he can do is express his willingness to restore both and hope that pity is a sufficient tool to do so. With this poem, then, Cavendish undercuts one of the assumptions of country-house verse—that the estate lord enjoys full control over his estate and, in turn, that he has the means to take good care of it.

In the seventeenth century, the gentry owned as many as 850 deer parks, which were used primarily for the purposes of hunting. The most common forms of hunting that the gentry engaged in during the seventeenth century were deer-, hare-, and, after the Restoration, fox-hunting.⁴⁵ The hunt served two primary functions: survival and the performance of the gentry's power. Not only were these parks used as a way of preserving food sources, but they also provided a recreational space in which to hunt and, in the process, to maintain relationships with people of power and influence. As J.T. Cliffe attests, these "parks were enclosed with fences, hedges, or walls which not only shut in the deer but were also a visible assertion of ownership rights."⁴⁶ If the enclosed park signified the lord's ownership of the land, then the activities in which he engaged in the park, such as the hunt, were designed to actively and repeatedly display his power over it.

From Elizabeth's reign on, however, some members of the gentry began to convert deer parks into arable land to increase their estate revenue, as I explained in the dissertation's Introduction. Additionally, during the English Revolution, deer parks of the Royalist and, to a

⁴⁵ Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*, 157.

⁴⁶ Cliffe, *The World of the Country House*, 51.

lesser extent, Parliamentary gentry were despoiled and many deer set free from estate parks as a rejection of the long-held tradition in England by which land ownership conferred legitimate power on the nobility.⁴⁷ These developments suggest that, in combination with the economic forces threatening to devalue the importance of the country estate in English life, the system that automatically conferred power on estate lords by virtue of their ownership of the estate was becoming increasingly nonviable. All of this again points to the heightened demand for country-house verse during the seventeenth century, the genre best suited to perform the estate lord's power over his estate.

If the land that comprised and the animals that populated the country estate were used to display the lord's power over it, the nonhuman world mattered insofar as it helped the lord advance his interests. In other words, the nonhuman world was preserved and protected on the estate not for its own sake but "to ensure," as Remien puts it, "a future supply of animals to be hunted and consumed through the keeping of warrens (private hunting preserves), forests, wetlands, and meadows."⁴⁸ It is precisely this logic that Cavendish criticizes in her poems that engage in the conventions of country-house verse, all of which appear in her verse collection *Poems and Fancies* (1653): "A Dialogue between an Oak and a Man Cutting It Down"; "The Hunting of the Stag"; "The Hunting of the Hare"; and, finally, "A Dialogue between a Bountiful Knight and a Castle Ruined in War."

In "A Dialogue between an Oak and a Man Cutting It Down," the Oak begins by calling the Man preparing to cut him down to account. "Why," the Oak asks, "cut you off my boughs,

⁴⁷ New legislation making deer poaching illegal in forests, chases, parks, and other enclosed grounds was passed by the republican government in 1651 and by the Restoration government in 1661 to combat the worsening problem of deer poaching that began after the first Civil War. As Cliffe notes, the legislation did little to stop deer poachers from continuing to raid parks and other enclosures (*The World of the Country House*, 54).

⁴⁸ Remien, "Home to the Slaughter," 511.

which largely bend, / And from the scorching sun do you defend” (lines 1-2)? Why, in other words, would the Man harm the oak, which has only served him willingly and well up to this point? Or, should the more selfish line of argument be more to the Man’s liking, why would he work against his own interests in cutting off the boughs that once protected him? The Oak then goes on to list the varied ways in which he has sought to please to Man: the Oak has provided shade after a hard day’s work, shelter during winter storms, a place for the Man to rest his head, and a kind of bower in which “cool winds” blow and birds sing “that their sweet voice might [him] some pleasure bring” (lines 3-10). In an echo of Lanyer’s poem, in which the creatures of Cookeham go out of their way to please the Countess of Cumberland, the Oak adds that the birds “did strive to do their best, / Oft changed their notes, and strained their tender breast” (lines 11-12) to win the Man’s favor. While the Oak and birds have labored long and hard to please the Man, he has enjoyed all that they have done for him while “free from all” (line 16) obligations to reciprocate. Even worse, as the Oak points out, the Man’s actions indicate that he plans to reward nature’s “care and service” (line 19) with further destruction: “And shall thus be requited by good will,” the Oak asks, “That you will take my life, and body kill” (17-18)?

The Oak proceeds to argue that the Man’s actions amount to nothing less than torture. The Oak uses the blazon, typically applied to the female body in Renaissance poetry, to describe the methodical way in which the Man plans to harm the Oak, and in the process forcing us to dwell on the tree’s pain in excruciating detail:

See how true love you cruelly have slain,
And tried all ways to torture me with pain.
First, you do peel my bark, and flay my skin,
Chop off my limbs, and leave me naked, thin.
With wedges you do pierce, my sides to wound;
And with your hatchet, knock me to the ground.
I minced shall be, in chips and pieces small;
And this doth Man reward good deeds withal. (lines 21-8)

By framing the Man's actions as torture, the Oak suggests that the Man is not interested in making use of nature only to meet his most basic needs; rather, the Man is so self-interested that he lacks respect for the Oak and feels no need to reciprocate what it has done for him, so much so that he will go to nearly any length to exploit it for his own gain. Taken together, the Oak's opening argument is a powerful one: humankind's relationship to nature should be one of reciprocity, not exploitation, and any measures taken in pursuit of the latter are not just unnecessary—the Oak, after all, is by nature serviceable to humankind—but cruel.

The Man shows his true colors from the moment he begins to speak, as he matches the Oak's introductory "why" with a "why" of his own, which dismisses the Oak's appeal as the silly complaint of an old-timey tree: "Why grumble you, old Oak" (line 29)? The man goes on to compare the Oak to a king who obstinately clings to power instead of dutifully ceding his position to one of his "acorns young," whose "ambition" will drive them to unseat the Oak at some time anyway (lines 33-7). In developing this line of argument, the Man woefully, and perhaps willfully, misunderstands the way that nature operates: nature is not a political community ruled by an oak-king whose ungrateful and power-hungry courtier-acorns either conspire to overthrow him, or move on to a new king whom they, too, will try to depose. Ultimately, the Man wants to argue that if the Oak, the "king of all the wood" (line 30), must eventually give up his crown, then he might as well do so now by allowing the Man to cut him down. This is all to say that the Man is incapable of setting aside his own anthropocentric worldview to understand or grant the Oak's appeal for mercy.

The Oak replies to the Man by pointing out that his argument is rather absurd, and rightly so. After all, the motivations that drive human action in the political sphere do not apply to oaks and acorns. That the Oak should hasten his own death and consent to his own destruction by this

Man, purely because the Oak's acorn-subjects are disloyal, is ridiculous. Of course, the Man does not respond kindly to the Oak's disobedience, and he goes on to accuse the Oak of "ignorance" (line 67). The Man's suggested remedy for this ignorance is to build a ship from the Oak, which can then "advance" (line 68) its knowledge by travelling around the world. When the Oak turns the Man's offer down—to avoid destruction at sea either by storm or by "greedy merchants" (line 91)—the Man doubles down, stating that he will "build a stately house [. . .] / Wherein shall princes live of great renown" (lines 104-5) with the timber produced from the Oak. The Man goes on to insist that the Oak will derive happiness from its new life as a country house because the Oak will "live with the best company" and will enjoy "all their delight and pastime," all their "plays" and their "masques" (lines 106-8). As the Man would have it, nature finds happiness as an active servant of humankind or a passive observer of its affairs, but nothing more. The Man is unable to imagine that nature might be better off left well alone, a symptom of the early modern belief that nature has no value or purpose outside its use to humankind.

In response to the Man's arguments here, the Oak contends that it would be impossible to find happiness in the affairs of the country house if he must "bear" the "burdens" that make them possible (line 115). Not only must the Oak carry the weight of the house's "brick and tiles" (line 116), but the estate's ruling family "often wound, / And pierce [his] sides, to hang their pictures round" (lines 118-19)—that is, to display their wealth and power. In other words, the Oak must not just bear the structural burden of keeping the house intact, but he must also bear a performative burden of actively showing off the estate lord's power. Moreover, the Oak must perform this arduous labor all to satisfy these people's "vain delights" (line 123). In the Oak's words, humankind, lives for "praise" (line 129), is "restless [and] never pleased" (line 142), and loves only "what he cannot get" (line 138). According to the Oak, it is for these reasons that the

Man wants to build a “stately house” (line 104), through which he can display his wealth and power. In this way, the Oak, Christ-like, becomes a martyr to a ludicrous cause: he must sacrifice his own life and happiness for the superficial happiness of those living in the country house. Nature, in other words, pays the ultimate price for humankind’s temporary and insatiable desires for pleasure and power.

For the Oak, there is, therefore, little honor or freedom in this pursuit. As a result, the Oak spends much of the poem defending a life of simplicity and contentedness over the life of ambition, greed, and cruelty led by the Man. Over the course of the poem, the Oak emphasizes at least three times that he is “contented” (lines 81, 101, and 137) with his life, and his most basic plea to the Man is to let him “live the life that Nature gave” (line 65) because there is far more honor and freedom to be had from it:

More honor ’tis my own green leaves to bear.
More honor ’tis to be in Nature’s dress,
Than any shape that men, by art, express.
I am not like to men, would praises have,
And for opinion, make myself a slave. (lines 125-9)

This passage provides the most explicit condemnation of country-house discourse than anywhere else in the poem. The Oak argues that men desire the “praise” and good “opinion” of others, and they use “art” to attain this by displaying their wealth and power. This is, of course, the main function of country-house verse—to praise the well-managed estate in order to reinforce the lord’s reputation as a good steward and, in turn, to legitimize his power over the estate. In pursuit of power and praise, moreover, the estate lord not only enslaves himself to his desires, but he also often runs roughshod over nature to fulfill them, just as the Man plans to do to the Oak in this poem. According to the poem, then, country-house verse is merely an exercise in artifice, dishonor, and tyranny. Its highly-curated efforts to display the estate lord’s honor and power

actively disguise the fact that the lord's estate management is often less than honorable and that one specific form of power he exercises has the effect of making nature his slave. The estate lord, in other words, is not a model of magnanimity to whom the nonhuman world freely offers its services, but a tyrant who forces this world to do his bidding yet pretends that it does so voluntarily. From the Oak's perspective, then, in the effort to authorize his power, the estate lord makes nature bear the heaviest and cruelest burden.

Cavendish's poems "The Hunting of the Stag" and "The Hunting of the Hare" undertake the same line of argument, and the latter goes so far as to explicitly label men as tyrants over nature. To do so, both poems center on the main recreational activity engaged in on the estate: the hunt. More specifically, they catalog the stag's and the hare's emotional state as the hunt progresses from beginning to fated end. In the process, both poems depict the hunters as tyrants who seek to actively harm the animal world for, it appears, little more than their own sick pleasure. To seek their desired end, moreover, these tyrants have weaponized other horses and hunting dogs against their fellow animals, which shows just how extensive these men's mastery of the animal world is. Finally, both poems insist on the hunters' disturbing lack of concern or respect for animal life, as the hunters actively rejoice in killing the stag and the hare.

The first fifty lines of "The Hunting of the Stag" provide a meticulous description of the stag himself and the environment in which he lives. In these fifty lines, particular attention is paid to the freedom that the stag enjoys in nature, which is so boundless that, out of "pride" (line 14), he loses all thought of the danger humankind poses to him. In this way, the poem places importance on what it means to live in and among nature, in sharp contrast to the hunters' desire to dominate it entirely. When the hunt begins around line 56, the wide lens used to observe nature is quickly closed off by the hunters' murderous tunnel vision. It soon becomes clear just

how far the hunters will go to satisfy their greed, as the poem compares them first to “greedy merchants, which for gain, / Venture their life, and traffic on the Main” (lines 105-6), then to “boys, which without fear / To see a sight, will hazard life that’s dear” (lines 107-8). The hunters are willing to risk their own lives for the kill, and, even worse, they rejoice in the stag’s destruction: “But when they see a ruin, and a fall, / They come with joy, as if they’d conquered all” (lines 111-12). For their “love of mischief” (line 116), the poem states, men become conquerors who lack any and all respect for life, both human and animal.

In fact, only the stag and his momentary ally, the “angry dust” (line 117), appear to regard life as precious. As the hunt nears its end, the hunters become increasingly cruel, and it becomes clear that the stag is outnumbered and that his death is all but inevitable. All he can do is stave off the “army” (line 126) that encircles him for a time. As the stag prepares for his final stand-off, he exhibits the care that these men conspicuously lack, as his “heart so heavy [grows] with grief and care” (line 121). In the stag’s final moments, he also gains an unlikely ally in the “angry dust,” which “[flies] in each face about/ As if’t would, with revenge, their eyes put out” (lines 117-18). It is astonishing that the stag’s only ally in this poem is dust, the tiniest of particles. Of course, the dust’s efforts are ultimately unable to thwart the men’s own, and so the stag must finish this fight alone and must grieve alone, “shedding some tears at his own funeral” (line 140).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Cavendish’s poem recalls the image of Jaques weeping over the wounded deer in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Here, of course, the stag must mourn its imminent death alone. In the play, when Duke Senior asks the Lord if Jaques, who is found weeping over a wounded deer in the forest, “moralize[d] the spectacle,” the Lord quips: “O, yes, into a thousand similes” (2.1.43-5). In an ecocritical study on the use of simile in this play, Robert Watson asks, “which has done more insidious violence to pristine nature as a collectivity during its long siege by humanity: shooting it with a single arrow, or shattering it into a thousand similes?” Watson forces us to consider whether the dangers of killing the deer, which Duke Senior and his companions are about to do, are any more violent than Jaques’s poetic lament over the wounded deer (“As You Liken It: Simile in the Wilderness,” in *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance*, 82). Cavendish’s argument also resembles Montaigne’s defense of animal rights in “Of Cruelty,” which I mentioned in the dissertation’s Introduction but have reproduced here: “Yet is there a kind of respect, and a general duty of humanitie which tieth us not only unto brute beasts that have life and

“The Hunting of the Hare” follows much the same trajectory, but the poem more repeatedly insists on the terror and fear that the “poor Wat” experiences as he is hunted by men hell-bent on killing him.⁵⁰ In perhaps its most powerful passage, the poem illustrates just how incapable these men are of the pity the poem requests of its readers:

Men, whooping loud, such acclamations made,
As if the Devil they imprisoned had,
When they did but a shiftless creature kill;
To hunt, there needs no valiant soldier's skill.
[. . .]
When they do lions, wolves, bears, tigers see
Kill silly sheep, they say, “they cruel be.”
But for themselves, all creatures think too few
For luxury; wish God would make more new.
As if God did make creatures for man's meat;
And gave them life and sense, for man to eat.
Or else, for sport or recreation's sake,
For to destroy those lives that God did make;
Making their stomachs graves, which full they fill
With murdered bodies, which in sport they kill.
Yet man doth think himself so gentle, mild;
When, of all creatures, he's most cruel, wild.
Nay, so proud that he only thinks to live;
That God, a godlike nature him did give.
And that all creatures for his sake alone
Were made, for him to tyrannize upon. (lines 83-106)

As in “The Hunting of the Stag,” the hunters here derive an inordinate and sinister amount of joy from killing the hare, who, like the stag, alone “with weeping eyes / Gave up his ghost” (lines 81-2). While the men think themselves “valiant” and cheer as if they captured the “Devil” himself, the poem rightly points out that it does not take a “soldier's skill” to kill an innocent

sense, but even unto trees and plants. *Unto men we owe Justice*, and to all creatures, that are capable of it, grace and benignitie. There is a kinde of enter-changeable commerce and mutuall bond between them and use. I am not ashamed nor affraide to declare the tendernesse of my childish Nature, which is such, that I cannot well reject my Dog, if he chance (although out of season) to fawne upon me, or begge of mee to play with him” (241).

⁵⁰ Cavendish repeats this phrase six times in the poem, at lines 13, 26, 38, 55, 74, and 82. She also explicitly mentions the hare's terror and fear at least five times, at lines 21, 29, 34, 45, and 46.

hare.⁵¹ The passage goes on to illustrate the hunters' hypocrisy in a few ways. First, hunters often describe the killing of animals by other animals as cruel while simultaneously wishing that God would make more animals for men's consumption. Second, in condemning animals' cruelty to each other, hunters are blind to their own, thinking themselves "gentle" and "mild," not "cruel" and "wild." In perhaps the most striking and grotesque image of the passage, Cavendish writes that the hunters' stomachs have become "graves" filled with the "murdered bodies" of the animals they hunt for mere "sport." The root of the problem, here, is the hunters' arrogance: in believing that God gave animals "life and sense, for man to eat" and "for his sake alone," the hunters justify their extreme cruelty on the grounds that the nonhuman world was "made, for him to tyrannize upon."

In this way, the poem suggests that humankind's self-interest and arrogance have two specific consequences: both cause humankind to abuse the power they have over the nonhuman world and, perhaps worse, prevent humankind from seeing this exercise of power as abusive, or caring that it is for that matter. From the hunters' perspective, if God made the nonhuman world for humankind, then any methods used to make that world bend to humankind's will are legitimate. What makes this logic worse for Cavendish is that the hunt is a tool used by those in power to enact their power over the estate and to put it on display for political and social gain. Perhaps she would have a different take on the hunt were it designed only to satisfy humankind's basic need for food. The fact that the hunt is also a performance, though, makes its murderous consequences that much worse for Cavendish. Her hunting poems argue that the life of one stag or one hare is far more valuable than the estate lord's power, which is the source of value in

⁵¹ Here, Cavendish alludes to the chivalric origins of the hunt, especially how the knight's martial skills carried over to the hunt. Cavendish specifically condemns the fact that the adoption of the hunt by courtly culture, both as its favorite recreational pastime and a symbol of their power, results in extreme cruelty.

country-house discourse. In country-house discourse, the estate lord is the well from which all value on the estate springs; his skillful management makes all on the estate productive members of the community—from the servants in his household to the land on his estate. Cavendish's poems, however, remove the veil from country-house discourse by attending to the ways in which the estate lord is a destructive force on the estate, rather than the creative force he purported to be.

Cavendish's final country-house poem examines the destructive forces of the English Revolution on country estates, the traditional estate economy, and the English countryside, specifically by emphasizing the costs borne by the estate because of a series of wars fought in large part over the nature of authority—who should hold it, where it should rest, and what makes it legitimate.⁵² The titular castle of Cavendish's poem "A Dialogue between a Bountiful Knight and a Castle Ruined in War" was Bolsover Castle, which Sir Charles Cavendish, Margaret Cavendish's brother-in-law, purchased in 1608. The property was seized from Cavendish by the Parliamentarians during the Civil War—something that would have hit even closer to home for Margaret, as her husband's estates at Welbeck and Bolsover were sequestered by Parliament's Treason Trustees in 1652 and 1653 because of his involvement in the Royalist cause—and it was nearly destroyed by the wars end; only the stables and a folly were left standing.⁵³ At the time

⁵² The English Revolution helped to shape a new economic order that brought increased power and control to capitalist elements, commercial and agrarian, in English society. As I stated in the dissertation's Introduction, many country houses were destroyed, deer parks were despoiled, and estates were confiscated during this period. While Royalist gentry's property was the main target, parliamentary gentry were not immune from sequestration and raiding. After the Restoration, some landholders' proprietorial rights were restored, but often not under the same conditions they once enjoyed, and Royalist landholders were forced to adapt to an increasingly agrarian and commercial capitalist economy to retain their property.

⁵³ Siegfried, *Poems and Fancies*, 185n562. In Cavendish's *The-Blazing World*, the Duchess of Newcastle, the author's fictional avatar, laments the sequestration of her husband William's estates while she and the Empress of the Blazing World are *en route* to Welbeck Abbey, five miles from Bolsover Castle: "My dear Lord and husband, said she, has lost by it half his Woods, besides many Houses, Land, and movable Goods; so that all the loss out of his particular Estate, did mount to above Half a Million of Pounds" (108-9).

that Margaret Cavendish composed this poem (sometime between 1651 and 1653), Charles Cavendish “had paid the composition on the property but did not have the funds to restore the castle,” according to Brandie Siegfried, editor of the newest edition of Cavendish’s *Poems and Fancies*.⁵⁴ The Knight of the poem, as a result, is most likely Charles himself.

In one word, “bountiful,” the title of Cavendish’s poem at once captures the logic that drives country-house verse and illustrates that the war has rendered this logic inoperable. In the title, the Knight is described as “bountiful,” suggesting that he is naturally generous and is likely to extend his magnanimity to Bolsover castle. As country-house verse would have it, the Knight’s bounty should in turn generate bounty in nature. However, the problem here is that the Knight’s bounty is not able to restore the castle to its “first form” (line 2) because Bolsover castle has been, as the title indicates, “ruined by War.” In short, the exchange of bounty that defines the relationship between the estate lord and his estate in country-house verse has become impossible. In this way, the poem undercuts the illusion characteristic of country-house verse that the lord enjoys full and total control over his estate.

Should the lord enjoy this control at all, though? Cavendish’s poem seems to argue that, at the very least, her brother-in-law was a far better steward of Bolsover Castle than the Parliamentarians have been during the war. Under the stewardship of the Knight, the Castle was “flourished in plenty” (line 6) and “gild” (line 8) like a woman, with “towers” like “crowns” and “walls, like a girdle” (lines 9-10). The Castle was “in [her] full prime, / And held the greatest beauty” (lines 19-20) and she was “comely, and in perfect health” (line 3). Now, however, the Castle has been commandeered by a “garrison” (line 22) which has decorated the Castle with “guns and pistols” (line 23), destroyed it with “bullets” (line 24) and “choked” (line 28) it into a

⁵⁴ Siegfried, *Poems and Fancies*, 185n559.

state of “drought” (line 40). The estate has been violated like a woman by men who lack the impulse to care for the space because they lack respect for it and have no interest in doing so. All that remains of the Castle is “rubbish on huge heaps.”⁵⁵ The destruction weighs on the Castle so much that she expresses it would be better to “die by [the Knight’s] most noble hand” (line 36) than to be further destroyed by this garrison.

Like Hutchinson’s and Lanyer’s country-house verse, Cavendish’s poem is an elegy at its core. It is an elegy to the ways in which the estate has been ravaged by war, and the elegy is most effectively delivered by the Castle which has been ruined by this same war. In other words, while the Knight does open the poem by expressing his anxiety about the Castle’s current condition, only the Castle can tell its story because it alone has directly experienced its destruction. As a result, the Castle recalls how it was built and furnished, how the creatures on the estate peacefully interacted with each other, and how all of this was “devoured” (line 18) over the course of the war. The Knight’s response to the Castle’s tale is an outpouring of pity, but pity alone cannot save the Castle and its surrounding lands. The Knight promises that his “heart” will “supply thy former spring, / From whence the water of fresh tears shall rise / To quench thy drought” (lines 38-40), and that he will use what “wealth [he has], for to release [the Castle’s] woe” (41). In other words, the Knight can buy back the property, but to restore it, his only tools are his love, pity, and sympathy for the Castle. “But to restore thy health, and build thy wall,” he goes on, “I have not means enough to do’t withal. / Had I the art, no pains then I would spare;

⁵⁵ Both Jonson and Marvell set the Penshurst and Nunappleton estates against other country estates, which they refer to as “rude” and “proud” heaps. Near the end of his poem, Marvell writes, “‘Tis not what once it was, the world, / But a rude heap together hurled; / All negligently overthrown, / Gulfs, deserts, precipices, stone. / Your lesser world contains the same, / But in more decent order tame; / You heaven’s centre, / Nature’s lap, / And paradise’s only map” (lines 761-68). Jonson’s poem ends in a similar way: “Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee / With other edifices, when they see / Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else, / May say, their lords have guilt, but thy lord dwells” (lines 99-102). Here, Cavendish repurposes the image of heaps neither to praise Bolsover Castle nor to denigrate it as one of these “proud” heaps, but to lament the large-scale destruction that has been wrought on this estate.

But all what's broken down, I would repair" (lines 43-46). The switch to the subjunctive mood is telling: the Knight wishes he had the power to restore the Castle to its "first form" (line 2), but in the end he lacks the material means to do so.

This final poem thus powerfully reveals just how fragile the estate lord's power over his estate actually was, and, in turn, just how important a role country-house discourse played in legitimizing that power. Although the Knight wants to restore his Castle to its former health, it is too late. The damage has been done, and he lacks the resources to do anything more than purchase the property back from the troops that have commandeered it and to lament how they have destroyed it. While Cavendish's other poems focus on the ways in which the estate lord's self-interest and arrogance result in a total lack of respect for nature, this last poem illustrates how the physical damage caused by a national conflict over the nature of authority is irreversible, even if individual estate lords like the Knight are sincerely invested in their estate's well-being. Cavendish's contributions to country-house discourse thus offer an in-depth investigation into how humankind's exercise of power in the context of the country estate poses a clear and present danger to the natural world. In turn, she suggests that the attitude towards nature perpetuated by country-house discourse, that nature is at the behest of men in power, is not sustainable. After all, if the legitimacy of the estate lord's power depends on how well he treats nature and how well nature serves him, then the destruction, at times purposeful, of the natural environment on his estate undermines his power. Moreover, if the estate lord finds himself wholly incapable of restoring his destroyed estate, his power is only further undercut. Taken together, Cavendish's poems use the conventions of country-house discourse to provide a striking lesson for estate lords in the dangers of mastering and exploiting nature for their gain: not only does exploiting nature threaten their legitimacy, but, and more importantly, there may be no point of return: the

lives of the Oak, the stag, and the hare cannot be recovered, and the land cannot be restored.

IV. Conclusion

Over the course of the seventeenth century, women poets engaged in the country-house genre to do something more than just legitimize the estate lord's power. In this chapter, I have argued that Lucy Hutchinson, Aemilia Lanyer, and Margaret Cavendish coopted the country-house genre to rethink the estate lord's relationship to nature—one which necessitated the mastery and exploitation of nature, as James's exhortation to the English gentry to reestablish control over their "cuntrey" demonstrates. To do so, these women poets took the logic of traditional country-house verse to task. In particular, their poems reveal how the ideal performance of the estate lord's control over nature posed a clear and present danger to nature that could not be ignored, and even may have had the added effect of undermining the estate lord's legitimacy. Rather than disguising the actual exploitation of nature as an idealized vision of natural abundance, these women poets instead elegized the physical loss and destruction nature was forced to undergo in order to facilitate the estate lord's pursuit of legitimacy. In the process of elegizing this loss, these women poets then used their country-house verse to rethink what the estate lord's relationship to nature should actually be: one defined by reciprocity, empathy, and mercy, not mastery and exploitation.

While Lucy Hutchinson hewed closely to the conventions of the genre, she did so in order to argue for a more reciprocal form of politics, which she saw modelled in her husband's relationship to nature on the Owthorpe estate. Aemilia Lanyer saw this same reciprocity instead modelled in the community of women who visited Cookeham for a time but who were ultimately forced to leave because Anne Clifford's legal claim to the estate was denied. Finally, Margaret

Cavendish claimed that the performance of the estate lord's power on the country estate made men nothing short of tyrants over nature whose attitude towards it must be condemned and reformulated. Moreover, the loss produced by this exploitation was often so total, the damage so irreversible, that the estate lord was powerless to restore nature even if he desired to do so.

As England transitioned from a feudal system to an agrarian-capitalist system in the seventeenth century, it became increasingly clear that the new order of agrarian improvement would simply double down on the exploitation of other human beings and the nonhuman world of feudal manorialism. Hutchinson's, Lanyer's, and Cavendish's country-house verse demonstrates a shrewd understanding of this simple fact, and it asks us to reevaluate the exploitative attitude towards nature built into the capitalist enterprise by directing our attention to the immense loss that results from this attitude—to the loss of an oak, a stag, a hare, flowers, trees, and too many more. In this regard, these women poets were not interested in sustaining the illusion that the estate lord's relationship to nature was only ever a reciprocal and sustainable one. In place of this illusion, they instead sought to expose the burdens nature must carry to benefit the ruling classes and to actually achieve the reciprocity between humankind and nature that was only ever an illusion in country-house verse up to that point. In their view, in other words, the authorization of the estate lord's power by staging his relationship to nature in its most ideal form was nothing more than “exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions,” to borrow the words of Karl Marx. In turn, these women poets used their country-house verse to lift this veil, revealing this exploitation for the “naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation” that it was and that would become part and parcel of the capitalist enterprise moving forward.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: The Communist Manifesto*, translated by Samuel Moore, 191-258 (London and New York: Penguin, 2002), 222. The text of the *Manifesto* follows Samuel Moore's 1888 English translation of the second German edition of 1872, which he did in cooperation with Engels.

I would also like to thank William Stockton and the members of the Editorial Board at *Early Modern Culture* for their diligence and patience in helping me prepare my article, “A Cooke-ham of One’s Own: Constructing Poetic Persona at Nature’s Expense in Aemilia Lanyer’s ‘The Description of Cooke-ham’ and Ben Jonson’s ‘To Penshurst,’” for publication. Chapter Two is, in part, a reprint of this material as it appears in *Early Modern Culture* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1-17.

CHAPTER THREE

“We Must Therefore Be Heer as Strangers and Pilgrims”: Anne Bradstreet’s Ecological

Verse

Introduction

Decorating the fourteenth-century church of St. Botolph’s at Boston in Lincolnshire, England, is a stained-glass panel depicting four famous women from Lincolnshire.¹ Shown in the third panel is Anne Bradstreet, who carries a nest-like basket of eight, bright-yellow fledglings, and whose head is bordered by three pine trees. While the birds in Bradstreet’s care likely correspond to her eight children, this panel can also be read more literally: the birds are, first and foremost, just birds.² Surrounded by pines, the guardian of these eight little birds inhabits nature fully in the panel and serves as its faithful steward. Moreover, the ecosystem in which we find

¹ When the viewer faces the panel, to Bradstreet’s left is Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II, and Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. To Bradstreet’s right, is nineteenth-century English poet Jean Ingelow. For more information, see Ann Stanford, *Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan: An Introduction to Her Poetry* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1974), 124.

² Bradstreet refers to her children as birds in her poem “In Reference to Her Children,” which begins, “I had eight birds hatched in one nest, / Four cocks there were, and hens the rest” (lines 1-2). All future quotations from Bradstreet’s work will be taken from Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. and Allan P. Robb, *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1981). This edition not only retains Bradstreet’s original spelling, but also relies on the 1650 edition of her poems wherever possible because scholars have not verified with full confidence that the revisions reflected in the 1678 edition were made by Bradstreet herself. The first edition of *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America. Or Severall Poems, compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of delight* was printed in London by Stephen Bowtell in 1650. It was followed by a second edition, entitled *Several poems compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight*, which was printed in Boston, Massachusetts, by John Foster in 1678. The second edition’s title page states that the new edition included Bradstreet’s own revisions and several then-unpublished poems found after her death. I am deeply grateful to The Huntington Library in San Marino, CA, for allowing me to consult the first and second editions of *The Tenth Muse*. In 1965, Josephine K. Piercy produced a facsimile of *The Tenth Muse*, though this copy is generally regarded as a poor one because of its textual distortions and erasures. The first edited collection of Bradstreet’s complete works was published by John Harvard Ellis in 1867 (*The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse* [Charlestown: A.E. Cutter, 1867]). This edition printed Bradstreet’s *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, which her son Simon had been in possession of, for the first time. In 1967, Jeannine Hensley’s edited collection *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1967) was published. Hensley’s edition modernizes Bradstreet’s spelling and includes the foreword written by Adrienne Rich that I discuss later in this chapter. Two years later in 1969, Robert Hutchinson released the *Poems of Anne Bradstreet* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), which, like Ellis’s edition, relies on the 1678 edition of *The Tenth Muse*.

Bradstreet in the panel is not a purely imagined space, but instead represents the forests of colonial New England, Bradstreet's home. In fact, the bright yellow plumage of the birds closely resembles that of the American goldfinch, a species common to the region. In addition, the pines encircling Bradstreet's form appear to be white pines, which were among "the most sought after of colonial trees" in New England, according to William Cronon, as England looked abroad for timber to meet its shipbuilding needs in times of timber shortage.³ The St. Botolph's panel therefore presents two modes of engaging with nature: while Bradstreet carefully stewards and protects nature, the white pine signifies the ways in which nature is so often exploited and commodified for humankind's gain.

In this chapter, I argue that Bradstreet's verse does similar work by insisting on the need to limit how nature was used in colonial New England as the colony transitioned to an economy and system of property rights that threatened to open the doors to the more intensive use of land and natural resources. To temper the increasingly acquisitive attitude towards nature generated by these economic changes, Bradstreet's verse re-energizes the New England Puritan model of stewardship, which regarded agricultural labor as an act of religious devotion and bounded the individual accumulation of wealth by a set of obligations to all of God's creation.⁴ Bradstreet's life experiences and education positioned her quite well to make such an argument. In 1630, for

³ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 30. Despite being the tree in highest demand, the white pine was not the most common tree in colonial New England. Groves of white pine were only found in burned-over regions of forest, on ridge tops, or in dried-out flood plains, conditions which provided the full sunlight needed for white pine to grow. The white pine was among the tallest trees in New England, growing as tall as 250 feet and as much as five feet in diameter. The white pine was typically found in the middle region of colonial New England, which included Bradstreet's home of western Massachusetts in addition to southeastern New Hampshire and the woods along the Connecticut River. Hardwoods such as beech, birch, and maple were common to northern New England, which included Vermont, approximately two-thirds of New Hampshire, and nearly all of Maine. Oaks and chestnuts were common to southern New England, which included Connecticut, Rhode Island, and the eastern-most part of Massachusetts. The middle region of the colony was home to a mixture of the north's hardwoods and the south's oaks and chestnuts (Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 26-7).

⁴ All future uses of the term "Puritan" in this chapter refer specifically to the early colonial Protestants of New England. Wherever appropriate, I will refer to them as "New England Puritans."

example, Bradstreet embarked with her family on the Puritans' "errand into the wilderness" of New England, and she was directly related to or in contact with the colony's founders and administrative officials.⁵ Bradstreet was also well-versed in the Elizabethan pastoral tradition, based on our knowledge of the education she received and the books to which she had access. Taken together, Bradstreet's life experiences were defined in many ways by her relationship to nature, and her familiarity with the Elizabethan pastoral tradition suggests that she understood how humankind's relationship to nature was shaped by the early modern literary imagination. I contend that these experiences equipped Bradstreet with an ecological mode of thinking that manifests in her verse in two important ways: first, her verse illustrates how the convergence of an emerging capitalist economy and Puritan theology in colonial New England shaped human relationships to nature; second, her verse challenges the kind of logic often used in the Jacobean and Caroline court masque and in seventeenth-century country-house poetry, which legitimized the imposition of aristocratic power on the land by staging that power in its most ideal form, as I have argued in the first two chapters of this dissertation. In turn, this chapter provides the most comprehensive and sustained approach to Bradstreet as an ecologically-minded poet that has been offered to date.

My argument therefore counters the claim Adrienne Rich makes about the relative absence of ecological concerns in Bradstreet's work in the foreword to Jeannine Hensley's *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (1967). In this foreword, Rich writes that Bradstreet:

appears to have written by way of escaping from the conditions of her experience, rather than as an expression of what she felt and knew. New England never enters

⁵ This phrase derives from a sermon given by Samuel Danforth in 1670 to the parishioners at the church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, entitled *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, 1671). Danforth's phrase riffs on Matthew 11:7 (GNV): "What ye went out in the wilderness to see?" All future biblical references in this chapter will be taken from the Geneva Bible, favored by the Puritans. The Geneva Bible first appeared in 1560 but was not printed in England until 1575. The Bible underwent approximately 150 editions between 1560 and 1644.

her book except as the rather featureless speaker in a “A Dialogue Between Old and New England”; the landscape, the emotional weather of the New World are totally absent; the natural descriptions in her “Four Seasons” woodenly reproduce England, like snow-scenes on Australian Christmas cards.⁶

Here, Rich dismisses Bradstreet’s representations of the natural world as either stilted or “totally absent.” From this claim, Rich then draws the conclusion that Bradstreet’s verse is escapist in nature, rather than “an expression of what she felt and knew.” While it is true that Bradstreet was no natural historian, to say that Bradstreet’s verse is unconcerned with nature on the grounds that Bradstreet fails to provide an encyclopedic survey of the features of New England’s physical environment misses the mark. Put simply, Bradstreet’s verse is more concerned with the ways in which the humans experience and interact with nature, than with cataloging the features of the New England landscape. More specifically, her ecological mode of thought is primarily aimed at examining how literary representations of nature and certain economic configurations alter human’s relationship to nature in very real and tangible ways.

To be fair, Rich acknowledged the shortcomings of her claim in a postscript she wrote just over a decade later, which first appeared in Rich’s *On Lies, Secret, and Silence* (1979) and is reproduced in Hensley’s edition of Bradstreet’s complete works. In her postscript, Rich admits that the passing of a decade made all the difference in her thinking about Bradstreet’s interest in nature. In her words, she could now ask questions that were “unavailable” to her ten years earlier. Rich writes that Bradstreet’s work now provoked the following questions:

What has been the woman poet’s relationship to nature, in a land where both women and nature have, from the first, been raped and exploited? Much has been written, by white American male writers, of the difficulties of creating “great literature” at the edge of the wilderness, in a society without customs and traditions. Were the difficulties the same for women? Could women attempt the same solutions?⁷

⁶ Adrienne Rich, “Foreword,” in Hensley, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, xiv.

⁷ Adrienne Rich, “Foreword,” in Hensley, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, xxi.

In asking these questions, Rich reveals that she has come to regard Bradstreet's verse as an important and unique contribution to our understanding of the Puritans' relationship to nature in colonial New England. In this vein, I argue that Bradstreet's verse is very much about what she "felt and knew" regarding the Puritans' relationship to the land of colonial New England. In particular, her verse re-instantiates the New England Puritan model of stewardship, which viewed agricultural labor as an act of love for God and his creation, at the same time that the colony transitioned to the private ownership of land and adopted more exploitative practices of land use, both of which threatened to undermine this model. In other words, Bradstreet's work raises concerns that this shift to a system of property based on absolute ownership of the land would allow for the unbounded exploitation of nature. To mitigate against the effects of this transition, Bradstreet exhorts her community to "be heer as strangers and pilgrims" because humankind's dominion over nature is not an unrestricted right, but a privilege granted by God, contingent on stewarding all of God's creation with care.⁸

To make this argument, I will first provide a brief overview of Bradstreet's life and work to demonstrate how her proximity to individuals with official positions in the colonial government and her early education shaped her ecological mode of thinking. In the process, I aim to work against Bradstreet scholars who regard her pre-1650 verse as more conventional, and less personal or emotive, than her post-1650 verse. In the second section of this chapter, I will explain how colonial New England shifted from the common use of land to the private ownership of land, as illustrated by town records and early land laws, in order to show how Bradstreet's verse documented and shaped New England Puritan views on humans' relationship to nature, which I will examine in this chapter's third section. Therein, I will argue that

⁸ Anne Bradstreet, Meditation No. 53, *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 203.

Bradstreet uses the conventions of country-house verse in “Contemplations” and “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House” to undercut the logic of country-house poems like Jonson’s “To Penshurst,” which stages the estate lord’s mastery of nature in its most idealized form. In both poems, Bradstreet reads God in nature and, in the process, cultivates the sense of wonder that she believes will move us to respect nature, not strive to master it. This process is not without struggle, however; in both poems, Bradstreet admits that her attempts to praise nature continually come up short and that she has difficulty accepting the fragility of her control over it. I then argue that Bradstreet brings these two poems together in “As Weary Pilgrim” by framing her relationship to God in terms of the failed stewardship of nature. Writing near the end of her life, Bradstreet now asks Christ, her sower, to “raise” her soul anew and set right her relationship to nature and, in turn, her relationship to God. Finally, I read “A Dialogue Between an Old England and New, Concerning Their Present Troubles” as a poem about England as a failed steward of its nation and empire.

I. Anne Bradstreet’s Life and Work: An Overview

Little is known about Anne Bradstreet’s early life. She was born sometime between 1612 and the early months of 1613 in Northamptonshire, England, to parents Dorothy Yorke and Thomas Dudley. At the time, Thomas Dudley worked as a clerk to Augustin Nicholls before taking a position as steward to the Fourth Earl of Lincolnshire in 1619. The Dudley family then moved to the earl’s estate at Sempringham, which had been a priory before the dissolution of the monasteries. The Dudleys had three children when they moved: a son, Samuel, and two daughters, Anne and Patience. In the coming years, Thomas and Dorothy would have three more daughters: Sarah, Mercy, and Dorothy. When Anne was 9, her future husband, Simon Bradstreet,

was hired as her father's assistant, a position Simon held from 1621 to 1624. Although Thomas Dudley and his family moved to Boston in Lincolnshire at some point during these three years, Anne continued to correspond with Simon, who remained in the employ of the earl. After suffering from a serious bout of smallpox in 1628, Anne married Simon at the age of 16. In 1632, Anne gave birth to their first son, Samuel, and seven children followed between 1635 and 1652: Dorothy, Sarah, Simon, Hannah, Mercy, Dudley, and John.

During the years that Thomas Dudley was employed at Sempringham Manor, the estate became a hub of political resistance and nonconformist activity. In the 1620s, the earl and members of his circle began to actively resist a number of royal policies; the earl himself was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1628, in fact, for his involvement in these activities. Talks of emigrating to and establishing a colony in New England were also common among guests who frequented Sempringham Manor. Thomas Dudley himself played a formative role in the creation of the Massachusetts Bay Company, whose earliest supporters and investors included members of the earl's circle. In 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Company was granted a royal charter to lay claim to territories between the Charles and Merrimack Rivers in New England and to establish a colony.⁹ For much of her early life, then, Anne Dudley was connected, through her father, to some of the most important political and religious reformers in England, many of whom would play a leading role in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

On July 12, 1630, the eighteen-year-old Anne, her husband, and her family arrived in Salem, New England, with the approximately 700 other emigrants who comprised the Winthrop

⁹ Stephen Innes has argued that the charter granted to the Company, as well as the format of their meetings, provided a framework for the representative form of government the colonies would eventually adopt. In his words, the Massachusetts Bay Colony transformed from a "trading corporation into a commonwealth" in just four years, between the arrival of the Winthrop fleet in 1630 and 1634 (*Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* [New York and London: Norton, 1995], 206-8).

fleet. Finding the conditions in Salem rather dismal and wholly inadequate for the establishment of a larger colony, Puritan migrants would move first to Charlestown, and then to Newtown (or present-day Cambridge) where they remained until 1635. In 1635, Anne and her family moved to Ipswich, where Anne composed much of her verse. The family moved one more time in Anne's life, relocating to Andover in 1645, where Anne would die in 1672. Throughout Anne's life, the men in her family were actively involved in colonial politics. Her father was chosen to serve as deputy-governor under governor John Winthrop shortly after the Massachusetts Bay Company—which her father helped to form, along with other members of the Earl of Lincolnshire's circle. Simon Bradstreet also served as colonial secretary and agent to the crown in London during Anne's lifetime. In 1679, seven years after Anne's death, Simon went on to become deputy-governor, then governor, of the colony.

Because of her father's position at Sempringham Manor, Anne received a rather good education. While living in England, she had access to both the earl's library and her father's personal library, the latter of which is believed to have contained some 800 books. After migrating to New England, Anne may have also had access to the library of John Winthrop, Jr., which contained over 1000 books. Based on an inventory taken of the books in Thomas Dudley's library at the time of his death, we know that Bradstreet would have had some familiarity with the foundational works of classical antiquity, early modern medicine and religion, and the Elizabethan pastoral tradition.¹⁰ Bradstreet would have been particularly well-versed in the Geneva Bible, a staple of Puritan life, which underwent some 150 editions between 1560 and 1664. Scholars have also shown that Bradstreet would have likely read Plutarch's *Lives* (1579), Sir Walter Raleigh's *The History of the World* (1614), William Camden's *Annales of the History*

¹⁰ The inventory includes only about forty of the hundreds of books Dudley brought with him to New England.

of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth (1630), and John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563). Based on her verse, we know that she was an avid reader of Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas as well, and that she had some knowledge of seventeenth-century anatomy and physiology, as she mentions Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia* (1615) in her poem "Of the Foure Humours in Mans Constitution." Most pertinent to my reading of Bradstreet's verse as ecological in scope, though, are the major works of Elizabethan pastoral that Bradstreet would have encountered: Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), *Colin Clouts Come Home Again* (1595), and *The Faerie Queene* (1609); and Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembrokes Arcadia* (1590) and *Astrophel and Stella* (1591). Having read these texts, Bradstreet was already steeped in an ecological mode of thinking, intentionally or not, when she began to write poetry.¹¹

Between 1630 and 1647, Bradstreet wrote the poems that her brother-in-law John Woodbridge would bring to England in 1647 and arrange for publication without her knowledge.¹² Her verse collection, *The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung Up in America*, was first published in 1650, making Bradstreet the first published poet writing in early America. In 1678, John Foster published a second edition of Bradstreet's work, entitled *Several poems compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight*, in Boston. This edition reprinted *The Tenth*

¹¹ Bradstreet would have read Thomas North's 1579 translation from the French edition of Plutarch's *Lives*, which was itself translated from the original Greek by James Amyot. Bradstreet would have encountered Du Bartas's *Divine Weekes and Works* by way of Joshua Sylvester's 1621 translation. For the full text of "Foure Humours," see McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *Complete Works*, 20-35. For more information regarding the books to which Bradstreet had access and was likely acquainted with, see Rich's foreword in Hensley, ed., *Complete Works*; McElrath, Jr. and Robb's introduction in *Complete Works*, xi-xlii; Stanford, "Books With Which Anne Bradstreet Was Acquainted," in *Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan*, 135-44; and the reproduction of the inventory of Thomas Dudley's library—which was taken August 8, 1653—in Elizabeth Wade White, *Anne Bradstreet 'The Tenth Muse'* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 386-90.

¹² Woodbridge was on assignment in England, having been named chaplain to the commissioners negotiating the terms of the Treaty of Newport, the failed treaty between Parliament and Charles I, which was intended to bring an end to the English Civil War.

Muse with Bradstreet's purported revisions, and published several poems found after her death for the first time.¹³ Poems such as "Verses upon the Burning of our House" and "As Weary Pilgrim," along with Bradstreet's *Meditations Diuine and Morall* and her autobiographical prose, were not printed until 1867, when John Harvard Ellis published his edited collection of Bradstreet's complete works, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse*.¹⁴

Scholars tend to divide Bradstreet's verse into two periods, the poems that were printed in the first edition of *The Tenth Muse* in 1650 and the poems printed after this date. Until recently, the general scholarly consensus was that Bradstreet's earlier verse is the work of an unremarkable poet who, in a rather stilted fashion, unsuccessfully tries to imitate other great Renaissance poets like Du Bartas. By contrast, her later verse makes her a poet for all ages, as readers encounter a more private, lyric voice that explores the supposedly more compelling material of her emotional life. As Carol Schilling has rightly observed, this view can only be sustained by overlooking both the chronology of Bradstreet's poetic *oeuvre*—some of her more personal poems were composed while she was writing poems that appeared in *The Tenth Muse*—

¹³ In 1678, at the same time that he published the second edition of *The Tenth Muse*, John Foster also published a promotional tract written by Simon Bradstreet, Anne's husband, advertising the recently purchased lands of "Narraganset and Niantick Countryes," which he describes as "places very pleasant and fertile, fit and commodious for Plantation" (*Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England*, edited by John Russell Bartlett, vol. III, 1678-1706 [Providence: Knowles, Anthony & Co., State Printers, 1858], 18). For more information on this advertisement, see Katherine Gillespie, "'This Briny Ocean Will O'erflow Your Shore': Anne Bradstreet's 'Second World' Atlanticism and National Narratives of Literary History," *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 3, no. 2 (1999): 115. Anne and Simon Bradstreet also helped to found Andover in 1646, which involved the purchase of land around Cochichewick Brook from a local sagamore, Cutshamache. This deal allowed the Pennacook tribes living nearby to fish in the brook and plant crops, on the condition that the natives did not steal crops from the colonists (Edward Holberton, "Prophecy and Geography in Anne Bradstreet's 'Contemplations': A Transatlantic Reading," in *Transatlantic Traffic and (Mis)Translations*, edited by Robin Peel, Daniel Maudlin, and Susan C. Street, 157-75 [Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013], 160-61).

¹⁴ In the 1960s several more editions of Bradstreet's works were published, including Josephine K. Piercy's facsimile of *The Tenth Muse* (Piercy, *The Tenth Muse (1650), and, from the manuscripts: Meditations divine and morall, together with letters and occasional pieces, by Anne Bradstreet* [Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1965]), Jeannine Hensley's *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (1967), and Robert Hutchinson's *Poems of Anne Bradstreet* (Hutchinson, *Poems of Anne Bradstreet* [New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969]). In 1981, Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. and Allan P. Robb published *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet*, the edition from which I draw most in this chapter.

and the ways in which her later verse also imitates the conventions of Renaissance verse. This artificial division of Bradstreet's work is not only ahistorical, then, but it is also symptomatic of a post-Romantic way of thinking about poetry: what counts as poetry of genius and is thus worth remembering, in other words, is poetry that is deeply personal and interested in the stuff of everyday life. By arguing that an ecological mode of thinking carries through Bradstreet's pre- and post-1650 work, I aim to further chip away at this view.¹⁵

The vast majority of scholarship on Bradstreet's work also centers on her role as a woman and a caretaker of the home. The opening address to the reader in the first edition of *The Tenth Muse* also frames Bradstreet in this way. In this address, John Woodbridge, the man who ferried Bradstreet's poems to London for publication, describes Bradstreet's verse as secondary to her domestic role by assuring the reader that the poems contained within Bradstreet's volume "are the fruit but of some few houres, curtailed from her sleep, and other refreshments." According to Woodbridge, among the qualities that make this "womans Work" worthy of praise is her "discreet mannaging of her family occasions."¹⁶ From the start of her collection, in other words, Bradstreet is praised less for her poetic skills than her domestic ones: Woodbridge applauds her for fulfilling her domestic duties first, and for regarding her creative work as subordinate to these duties—something to be done during the night in the little time she had to spare after taking care of her eight children and home while her husband was away. Unsurprisingly, her verse gives us a glimpse into the trials of this domestic life, revealing a

¹⁵ Carol Schilling, "Corresponding Figures: Embodying Sacred and Secular Commonplaces in Anne Bradstreet's Letters to Simon," *Literature and Belief* 15 (1995): 139-40. Christopher Ivic's article on the ways in which Bradstreet's verse formulates a sense of British identity is partly a response to the problems produced by this view ("'Our British Land': Anne Bradstreet's Atlantic Perspective," in *Archipelagic Identities: Literature and Identity in the Atlantic Archipelago, 1550-1800*, edited by Philip Schwyzer and Simon Mealar, 195-204 [London: Routledge, 2003]). Joshua Bartlett's ecocritical approach to Bradstreet's verse also aims to counteract this view ("Anne Bradstreet's Ecological Thought," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 43, no. 3 [2014]: 293).

¹⁶ John Woodbridge, "Kind Reader," in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *Complete Works*, 525-26.

woman highly conscious of her role as daughter, as wife, as mother, and as manager of the home.¹⁷ Equally as unsurprising is the tendency in Bradstreet scholarship to focus on the poet as a woman, a wife, a mother, and a Puritan.¹⁸ However, as I will show in the rest of this chapter,

¹⁷ Bradstreet managed the home with the help of several servants. In her verse, Bradstreet suggests that she aspired to be as “wisely awful, but yet kind” (line 5) to her servants as her mother was (“An EPITAPH on my dear and ever honoured Mother Mrs. Dorothy Dudley,” in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *Complete Works*, 167). For more information, see Bethany Reid, “‘Unfit for Light’: Anne Bradstreet’s Monstrous Birth,” *The New England Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (1998): 517-42.

¹⁸ For scholarship on gender in Bradstreet’s verse and the construction of Bradstreet’s poetic voice, see Carrie G. Blackstock, “Anne Bradstreet and Performativity: Self-Cultivation, Self-Deployment,” *Early American Literature* 32, no. 3 (1997): 222-248; Susan Bruce, “Anne Bradstreet and the Seventeenth-Century Articulation of ‘the Female Voice,’” in *Feminist Moments: Reading Feminist Texts*, edited by Katherine Smits and Susan Bruce, 19-26 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Pattie Cowell, “The Early Distribution of Anne Bradstreet’s Poems,” in *Critical Essays on Anne Bradstreet*, edited by Pattie Cowell and Ann Stanford, 270-79 (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983); Julia P. Delacroix, “Sparing Fame: Anne Bradstreet’s Elegiac Consolations,” *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 32, no. 1 (2015): 1-30; Ludwig Deringer, “Religious Poetry and New England Verse: Anne Bradstreet’s ‘here Followes some Verses upon the Burning of our House’ and Edward Taylor’s ‘Huswifery,’” in *A History of American Poetry: Contexts-Developments-Readings*, edited by Oliver Scheiding, René Dietrich, and Clemens Spahr, 7-22 (Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier [WVT], 2015); Sara Eaton, “Anne Bradstreet’s ‘Personal’ Protestant Poetics,” *Women’s Writing* 4, no. 1 (1997): 57-71; Elizabeth Ferszt and Ivy Schweitzer, “Anne Bradstreet [Special Issue],” *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 43, no. 3 (2014): 287-405; Elizabeth Ferszt, “Transatlantic Dame School: The Early Poems of Anne Bradstreet as Pedagogy,” *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 43, no. 3 (2014): 305-17; Allison Giffen, “‘Let no Man Know’: Negotiating the Gendered Discourse of Affliction in Anne Bradstreet’s ‘here Followes some Verses upon the Burning of our House, July 10th, 1666,’” *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 27, no. 1 (2010): 1-22; Charlotte Gordon, “‘The First Shall be Last’: Apology and Redemption in the Work of the First New England Poets, Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Poets*, edited by Mark Richardson, 10-23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jeffrey A. Hammon, “‘Make use of what I Leave in Love’: Anne Bradstreet’s Didactic Self,” *Religion and Literature* 17, no. 3 (1985): 11-26; Lucas Hardy, “No Cure: Anne Bradstreet’s Frenzied Brain,” *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 43, no. 3 (2014): 318-331; Tamara Harvey, “‘Now Sisters... Impart Your Usefulness and Force’: Anne Bradstreet’s Feminist Functionalism in the Tenth Muse (1650),” *Early American Literature* 35, no. 1 (2000): 5-28; Alice Henton, “‘Once Masculinities ... Now Feminines Awhile’: Gendered Imagery and the Significance of Anne Bradstreet’s the Tenth Muse,” *New England Quarterly: A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters* 85, no. 2 (2012): 302-25; Robert Hilliker, “Engendering Identity: The Discourse of Familial Education in Anne Bradstreet and Marie De l’Incarnation,” *Early American Literature* 42, no. 3 (2007): 435-70; Andrew Hiscock, “‘A Dialogue between Old England and New’: Anne Bradstreet and Her Negotiations with the Old World,” in *Mighty Europe 1400-1700: Writing an Early Modern Continent*, edited by Andrew Hiscock, 195-220 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007); Zachary Hutchins, “The Wisdom of Anne Bradstreet: Eschewing Eve and Emulating Elizabeth,” *Modern Language Studies* 40, no. 1 (2010): 39-59; Paula Kopacz, “‘Men can Doe Best, and Women Know it Well’: Anne Bradstreet and Feminist Aesthetics,” *Kentucky Philological Review* 2 (1987): 21-29; Jean M. Lutes, “Negotiating Theology and Gynecology: Anne Bradstreet’s Representations of The Female Body,” *Signs* 22, no. 2 (1997): 309-340; Katarzyna Malecka, “Anne Bradstreet’s Application of Modern Feminist Theory,” in *Women’s Literary Creativity and the Female Body*, edited by Diane L. Hoeveler and Donna D. Schuster, 3-22 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Wendy Martin, *An American Triptych: Anne Bradstreet, Emily Dickinson, Adrienne Rich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Elisa New, “Feminist Invisibility: The Examples of Anne Bradstreet and Anne Hutchinson,” *Common Knowledge* 2, no. 1 (1993): 99-117; Patricia Pender, “Disciplining the Imperial Mother: Anne Bradstreet’s ‘A Dialogue between Old England and New,’” in *Women Writing, 1550-1750*, edited by Jo Wallwork and Paul Salzman, 115-31 (Meridian, 2001); Marion Rust, “Making Emends: Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Anne Bradstreet,” *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 88, no. 1 (2016): 93-125; Carol Schilling, “Corresponding Figures: Embodying

Bradstreet's verse also travels beyond the confines of the home, often illustrating her unique understanding of the difficulties the New England Puritans faced in managing the land of colonial new England and the need to revitalize the New England Puritan model of stewardship during a period when the changes made to the economy, system of property, and relationship to the land threatened to do away with this model.

II. Property and Land Use in Colonial New England

Beneath the glass panes depicting Bradstreet in St. Botolph's is a stained-glass representation of the vicar of the church John Cotton delivering his farewell sermon *Gods Promise to His Plantation* in Southampton on the eve of the Winthrop fleet's departure for the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630.¹⁹ Among the audience would have been Bradstreet and her family, who attended services at St. Botolph's while they lived in Boston and who journeyed overseas on the flagship of the Winthrop fleet, the *Arbella*, to New England. In this sermon, Cotton defends his audience's right to leave England to "plant" a colony in New England and

Sacred and Secular Commonplaces in Anne Bradstreet's Letters to Simon," *Literature and Belief* 15 (1995): 139-59; Ivy Schweitzer, "Anne Bradstreet Wrestles with the Renaissance," *Early American Literature* 23, no. 3 (1988): 291-312; Meridith Styer, "The Pen of Puritan Womanhood: Anne Bradstreet's Personal Poetry as Catechism," *Rhetoric Review* 36, no. 1 (2017): 15-28; Timothy Sweet, "Gender, Genre, and Subjectivity in Anne Bradstreet's Early Elegies," *Early American Literature* 23, no. 2 (1988): 152-74; Abram Van Engen, "Advertising the Domestic: Anne Bradstreet's Sentimental Poetics," *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 28, no. 1 (2011): 47-68; and Jennifer R. Waller, "'My Hand a Needle Better Fits': Anne Bradstreet and Women Poets in the Renaissance," *Dalhousie Review* 54 (1974): 436-50.

¹⁹ Cotton served as vicar of St. Botolph's from 1611 to 1632. In 1632, Cotton went into hiding after William Laud, then Bishop of London, summoned him to the Court of High Commission. The following year Cotton left for the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Reiner Smolinski, *The Kingdom, The Power, and the Glory: The Millennial Impulse in Early American Literature* [Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, 1998], 10-19). Based on the royal charter granted to the Massachusetts Bay Company, the Massachusetts Bay Colony originally included the area between the Charles and Merrimack Rivers. The Massachusetts Bay Colony belonged to colonial New England more broadly, which also included the regions of present-day Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. To access the royal charter, see "The Charter of Massachusetts Bay: 1629," The Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass03.asp. The Avalon Project reprints the charter from *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906*, edited by Francis Newton Thorpe (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909).

details the various opportunities their migration presents to them, most of which he renders in terms of the relationship to the land.²⁰ More specifically, his sermon filters the seventeenth-century discourse of improvement through New England Puritan theology, arguing that the Puritans must improve the land if their plantation is to be right with God. In this way, his sermon offers a way into discussing the colonial economy, system of property rights, and relationship to the land in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and colonial New England more broadly.

Cotton opens his sermon by framing the colonists' migration to New England as a fundamental change in their relationship to the land. Comparing the migrants to the Israelites and New England to New Jerusalem, Cotton begins with a reading from 2 Samuel 7:10: "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people *Israel*, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their owne, and move no more."²¹ In citing this verse, Cotton suggests that his parishioners, like the Israelites, have long lacked a permanent claim to the land, and God's gift to them is to provide a place where they may finally put down roots. Cotton goes on to describe the permanence of this new dwelling place in terms of English land tenure, saying that the soon-to-be colonists will "dwell there like Free-holders" with "firme and durable possession," a form of property that many who had chosen to migrate to New England had not been afforded in England.²² Cotton's opening move in the sermon thus represents the New England Puritans'

²⁰ John Cotton, *Gods Promise to His Plantation* (London, 1630), 1. Cotton also says that the colonists have a right to migrate to New England "for the gaining of knowledge" and "for merchandize and gaine-sake" (8-12).

²¹ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 1. In the first general history of New England, entitled *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Savior: Being a Relation of the first planting in New England, in the Yeare, 1628*, Edward Johnson also describes New England as the New Jerusalem, the place in which the millenarian promise of the Second Coming of Christ would be fulfilled. In his words, New England was "the place where the Lord will create a new Heaven, and a new Earth in, new Churches, and a new Common-wealth together" ([London, 1653], 25). Cecilia Tichi's work on Johnson's text and Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) highlights how land was used as a rhetorical strategy for delivering the millennial prophecy (*New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979], 198). For more, see Richard Morton, "Rhetoric in the Wilderness," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 11, no. 2 (1980): 193-200.

²² Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 2. Of course, this belief that the migrants could live as freeholders rested on the assumption that "there [was] roome enough" in America, as Cotton puts it, for everyone to have property (5). This

migration as an act of trading a limited and insecure claim to the land for freehold tenure, which was the most secure form of tenure and, in most cases, did not place restrictions on the proprietor regarding how the land must be used.

Cotton elaborates on this new kind of relationship to land by engaging in the discourse of improvement of seventeenth-century England. In particular, Cotton argues that the New England Puritans' right to the land of this New Jerusalem is legitimate only insofar as they improve the land: "That in a vacant soyle, hee that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is. And the ground of this is from the grand Charter given to *Adam* and his posterity in Paradise, *Gen. I.28. Multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*"²³ Put simply, the New England Puritans have a Christian duty to "improve" or cultivate the land, and their proprietorial rights depend on the fulfillment of this duty. Cotton goes on to state that this right to claim and improve "vacant soyle" derives from Adam's "grand Charter" to "*multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*" In using the word "charter" here, Cotton would have expected his audience to connect Adam's "grand Charter" with the royal charter that the

belief in the superabundance of land would become one of the underlying premises of Locke's theory of property as it applied to America in *Second Treatise of Government* (1689). Captain John Smith drew on this same language in his *Description of New-England* (1616), writing that there would be "no hard Landlords to racke us with high rents, or extorted fines to consume us" in New England (*The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)*, 3 volumes, edited by Philip L. Barbour [Chapel Hill, 1986], 1:332). In the same text, Smith went on to argue that "every man may be master and owner of his owne labour and land; or the greatest part in a small time" (in Barbour, *Complete Works*, 1: 332). In *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), Smith also writes, "Riches [would be] their servants, not their Masters" (in Barbour, *Complete Works*, 2:206-7).

²³ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 5. On the eve of the Puritans' departure for England, Winthrop echoed Cotton's argument: "Why then should we stand striving here for places of habitation etc. (many men spending as much labour and coste to recover or keep sometimes an acre or two of Land, as would procure them many [hundred] as good or better in another Countrie [America]) and in the meane time suffer a whole Continent as fruitfull and convenient for the use of man to lie waste without any improvement?" Like Cotton, Winthrop also sees the colonial project as a fulfillment of God's command in Genesis: "the whole earth is the Lords garden and he hath given it to the sonne of men with a general Commission: Gen:I:28: increase and multiplie, and replenish the earth and subdue it" ("Reasons to be Considered, and Objects with Answers" [1629], *The Winthrop Papers, 1498-1654*, edited by Samuel Eliot Morison, et al., 6 vols. to date [Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1927-1992], 2:138-39). One decade later in 1639, Winthrop echoed these same sentiments, saying "God gave the earth etc. to be subdued [. . .] a man can have no right to more than he can subdue" (Winthrop to [John Wheelwright?] in March 1638/1639, *Winthrop Papers*, 4:102).

Massachusetts Bay Company had recently been granted to establish a colony in New England, where Cotton's audience was bound. Cotton therefore suggests that Massachusetts Bay Company's charter is a renewal, of sorts, of the original charter, and, in turn, that the New England Puritans' improvement of land offered a way of renewing their ongoing relationship with God.

Because land improvement was both an act of social obligation and of religious devotion for Cotton and the Puritans of colonial New England, this "grand Charter" did not grant them unbounded license to use the land in whatever way they pleased.²⁴ Rather, the New England Puritans believed that their use of nature must not only serve the public good, but also demonstrate respect for God's creation. Cotton makes this argument in his sermon by describing God at various times as our "Landlord," "our planter," our "husbandman," and our "Gardiner," and by exhorting his audience to be *trees of righteousness*, a term he takes from Isaiah 61:3.²⁵ He argues that his audience must "strive to attaine the favour of [their] Landlord, and labour to be obedient to him." Cotton elaborates on how to "attaine" this "favour" when he provides his audience with the following instruction: "Learn to walke thankfully before him, defraud him not of his rent, but offer your selves unto his service."²⁶ While Cotton opens his sermon with the promise that his audience will "dwell" in New England "like Free-holders," here Cotton qualifies that claim by limiting how the New England Puritans may use the land that they have been granted. Not only must they pay rent to God, but their right to use the land comes with a set of feudal obligations. Labor, in short, is a mode of serving God, and the Puritans must be right with

²⁴ The original Massachusetts Bay charter was granted in "free and comon Soccage," which gave the Company an unbounded right to the land and provided little information on how the land was to be apportioned (Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 71). See note 19 to access the royal charter.

²⁵ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 12-16. Isaiah 61:3 (GNV) reads as follows: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, and to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

²⁶ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 13.

God, as individuals and as a community, for their proprietorial rights to be considered legitimate. It is for this reason that Cotton urges his audience, with God as their gardener, to “looke well to [their] plantation” and “looke that [they] be right planted.”²⁷ While Cotton’s language is, of course, metaphorical, its powerful force is generated from this more literal reading, which illustrates that the success or failure of the New England Puritans’ “plantation” was, in their view, demonstrative of their faith in God.

Cotton elaborates on this notion of being “right planted” by comparing the future colony of New England to a properly functioning bee colony—that is, one bound by a sense of mutual responsibility. When detailing the reasons his parishioners feel compelled to leave England, Cotton explains that England had become like a hive “so full, that Tradesmen cannot live one by another, but eate up one another.”²⁸ It can reasonably be inferred from this passage that Cotton imagines New England as a hive in which the Puritans “live one by another,” rather than cannibalize each other, as is the case in England in his view. According to Cotton, then, the opportunities for social and economic advancement the Puritans were afforded upon their arrival in New England come with a set of communal obligations that must be met for their plantation to be right with God. It is for this reason that Cotton ends his sermon by describing the “publicke spirit” that should guide their actions in God’s plantation. Cotton sees this spirit modelled in the members of the early Church, whom he praises for practicing a “care of universall helpfullnesse,” which involves looking “not on your owne things onely, but also on the things of others.”²⁹ The end of Cotton’s sermon thus suggests that the colony’s success depends on

²⁷ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 17.

²⁸ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 9.

²⁹ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 19. Near the end of the sermon, Cotton argues that this same care should be extended to native New Englanders: “Offend not the poore Natives,” he says, “but as you partake in their land, so make them partakers of your previous faith” (19). Cotton’s use of the word “partake” suggests that the natives had at least some legitimate proprietorial right to the land, in his view, and that the colonists were simply sharing in these

maintaining a balance between the individualism central to the discourse of improvement and one's obligations to the community and the land.

Taken together, Cotton's sermon gets to the heart of what Stephen Innes has called the "Protestant dilemma," a term he uses to describe the difficulty of achieving this balance.³⁰ As Innes explains in his book *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (1995), the Puritans viewed themselves as a "Covenant People" whose "doctrine of Providence connected outward success with inward conviction of being right with God."³¹ The Puritan concept of the "calling," or the duty to cultivate one's individual talents, developed from this belief. Presbyterian minister, leading figure of the Nonconformist movement, and former chaplain for Cromwell's forces Richard Baxter provides a useful definition of the "calling." In his treatise *A Christian Directory: Or, A Sum of Practical Theology, and Cases of Conscience* (1673), Baxter writes:

If God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or any other), if you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you [violate] one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be God's steward, and to accept His gifts and use them for Him when he requireth it: you may labour to be rich for God, though not for the flesh and sin.³²

In this passage, Baxter argues that the Puritan who fails to "lawfully get more" when given the option to do so violates the "ends of [his] calling" and fails to be "God's steward." In Baxter's

rights. In this passage, Cotton also reinforces the connection the Puritans made between agricultural labor and their relationship to God by encouraging his parishioners to proselytize the natives while making use of their land.

³⁰ Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 25. Innes's phrase is likely a derivative of the phrase "Puritan dilemma" from Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (New York: Pearson, 1958).

³¹ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 11. Holberton further elaborates on "federal covenant theology," stating that the Puritans believed "the vicissitudes of a nation bound by such a covenant were intelligible as directions, warnings or rewards from God" ("Prophecy and Geography in Anne Bradstreet's 'Contemplations': A Transatlantic Reading," in *Transatlantic Traffic and (Mis)Translations*, edited by Robin Peel, Daniel Maudlin, and Susan C. Street, 157-75 [Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013], 166).

³² Quoted in Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons (New York, 1958), 162. In a 1656 pamphlet entitled *A Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, Anglican minister Joseph Lee asks if God's glory and "our own gains and advancement of our estates" are "always incompatible" (quoted in Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 60).

words, profit-seeking was legitimate insofar as the Puritan “labour[ed] to be rich for God,” not “for the flesh and sin.” The Puritan “calling” thus provided a theological justification for the private accumulation of capital and wealth, which was already becoming a central feature of the economies of seventeenth-century England and New England.³³

According to Innes, the pursuit of one’s “calling” and individual profit-seeking were also conditioned on serving the needs of the community. In a moment that echoes Cotton’s metaphor of the beehive, Bradstreet herself argues that individuals have a responsibility to cultivate their talents for the public good. In Meditation No. 77 of her *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, for example, she writes that “there was neuer yet any one man that had all excellences,” so we each “stand in need of something” from others, leading her to conclude that “god will haue vs beholden one to another.” In other words, because each individual has different abilities and skills, Bradstreet contends that “mutuall commerce through the world” could only be achieved through the combined efforts of each individual pursuing her unique “excellences.”³⁴ In this meditation, then, Bradstreet captures the “communally based individualism,” to use Innes’s term, that was part and parcel of the Puritan project in colonial New England. According to Innes, this

³³ Innes writes that the “calling,” in “demanding that every person pursue his livelihood relentlessly and methodically, always tempted him to get out of his place, to strive to grow richer, and eventually seek profit for himself and not for God and community. The Protestant ethic, in other words, always threatened to turn into calculative rationalism” (*Creating the Commonwealth*, 25-6). In this way, Protestantism did not create the conditions for capitalism so much as authorize its logic. As Innes states earlier in the text, “Certain aspects of Puritan belief, particularly the notions of the calling and improvement, harmonized with—and amplified—certain elements of capitalist behavior that many seventeenth-century English men and women, whatever their religion, already exhibited” (*Creating the Commonwealth*, 11). Innes’s scholarship builds on Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. For more on the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism, especially as Weber presents it, see Peter Ghosh’s edited collection *A Historian Reads Max Weber: Essays on the Protestant Ethic* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008); Ghosh, *Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Robert W. Green, *Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1959); Steven Seidman and Michael Gruber, “Capitalism and Individuation in the Sociology of Max Weber,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 28, no. 4 (1977): 498-508; R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Stephen Turner, *The Cambridge Companion to Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³⁴ Bradstreet, Meditation No. 77, *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 209.

mode of life “required not only the preservation of individual right, contracts, and due process of law but also a vibrant civil society capable of promoting social justice and mutual responsibility in the face of capitalism’s tendency to undermine both.”³⁵ By requiring the pursuit of one’s “calling” and conditioning profit-seeking on communal needs, New England Puritan theology at once authorized and limited the acquisitive logic of capitalism and the intensified exploitation of nature that resulted from it.

Social, economic, agricultural, and environmental histories of Puritan New England have, since the 1920s, largely adopted this argument.³⁶ It is generally agreed among scholars that the economy of colonial New England transitioned from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist one, and from a system of property based on communal rights to one based on the private ownership of land, over the course of the seventeenth century. Agricultural histories of Puritan New England inevitably must begin with P.W. Bidwell and J.I. Falconer’s landmark *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States* (1925). In this book, Bidwell and Falconer argue that colonial New England farmers were mainly focused on subsistence farming since New England’s poor soils prevented the production of surplus crops for sale on the market.³⁷ In response to this argument, historians in the 1950s and 1960s argued that Puritan New England was much more, in Schwartz’s words, “market- and profit-oriented” than Bidwell and Falconer had observed.³⁸ In the 1970s, historians modified these earlier arguments by emphasizing the “communally based individualism” Innes sees as central to Puritan life.³⁹ In Schwartz’s view, however, with the exception of Innes’s and Cronon’s work, this line of argument tended to suggest that profit-

³⁵ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 308-9.

³⁶ For an invaluable overview of agricultural history on colonial New England, see Amy D. Schwartz, “Colonial New England Agriculture: Old Visions, New Directions,” *Agricultural History* 69, no. 3 (1995): 454-81.

³⁷ Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1629-1860* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1925).

³⁸ Schwartz, “Colonial New England Agriculture,” 472.

³⁹ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 308.

seeking was secondary to communal concerns. The real strength of Innes's and Cronon's work, for Schwartz, is that both view profit-seeking as equal in importance to the Puritans' communal obligations by showing how an increasingly acquisitive attitude came to define the Puritans' system of property rights and relationship to the land in colonial New England. Schwartz ends her historiographic account of Puritan New England by arguing that colonial women's economic role has been largely overlooked.⁴⁰ One goal of this chapter is to redress this gap in scholarship by examining how Bradstreet's verse was shaped by and helped to shape New England Puritans' conception of property and relationship to the land.

As a general rule, the system of property in colonial New England followed a path similar to that taken by England, gradually transitioning from one based on communal rights to one based on the private ownership of land.⁴¹ This transition by no means followed a strictly linear

⁴⁰ Writing about the dearth of scholarship on colonial women's economic roles, Schwartz states the following: "A fundamental oversight throughout the history of this debate has been the participation of women. The legacy of Bidwell-Falconer and Henretta suggests the prevalence of 'yeomen' farmers, a gender-loaded term which did not accommodate women. By contrast, the market-oriented school tended to emphasize male economic gain, acquisition, and market interaction. In neither approach did historians learn anything about women's crucial economic role. In neither did they gain insight about the economic decision-making process in farm families or learn whether women challenged the authority of their husbands. An exclusive focus on 'the family' as an economic unit precluded any discussion of negotiation for power within that unit" ("Colonial New England Agriculture," 477).

⁴¹ The information I present in the following pages on how land was organized and used in colonial New England has been taken from the following sources. For town records, colonial ordinances, and early land laws, see John F. Hart, "Colonial Land Use Law and Its Significance for Modern Takings Doctrine," *Harvard Law Review* 109, no. 6 (1996): 1252-1300; David Thomas Konig, "Community Custom and the Common Law: Social Change and the Development of Land Law in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *The American Journal of Legal History* 18, no. 2 (1974): 137-77; Kenneth Lockridge, "Land, Population and the Evolution of New England Society 1630-1790," *Past & Present* 39 (1968): 62-80; Darrett B. Rutman, "Governor Winthrop's Garden Crop: The Significance of Agriculture in the Early Commerce of Massachusetts Bay," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1963): 396-415; and Schwartz, "Colonial New England Agriculture." For information on the transition from communal rights to private ownership of land in colonial New England, see Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Barry C. Field, "The Evolution of Property-Rights Institutions: Common Lands in Early Massachusetts Agriculture" (Amherst, MA: Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1985), Typescript, 97-109; Field and Martha A. Kimball, "Agricultural Land Institutions in Colonial New England" (Amherst, MA: Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1984), Typescript, 1-45; Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth* (1995); Mark Stoll, *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Nature in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); and Rona S. Weiss, "Primitive Accumulation in the United States: The Interaction between Capitalist and Noncapitalist Class Relations in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *Journal of Economic History* 42, no. 1 (1982): 77-82. For practices of land use in colonial New England, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (1983); Eric T. Freyfogle, "Land Use and the Study of Early American History," *Yale Law Journal* 94,

path from the one to the other, however; in fact, for much of the seventeenth century, colonial property law included some combination of common property and private property. Moreover, to speak of a unified system of property, which held everywhere in colonial New England, would be inaccurate since property law and customs of land use varied at the town level. Nonetheless, many of these local laws and customs shared common features.⁴² It would also be historically inaccurate to argue that the transition to private ownership of land in colonial New England also entailed the abandoning of one's obligations to the community and to nature. In fact, early land laws in New England indicate that the commons and privately-owned land were closely regulated in the process of this transition. For example, ordinances requiring the land to be improved in specific ways for the public good, as well as ordinances designed to mitigate against or prevent the overuse of natural resources, dominated early land laws. In sum, while land laws varied from town to town, as a general rule colonial New England gradually shifted away from the common use of land and toward its private ownership. Moreover, while it seemed that private gain could soon take precedence over the public good, the legitimacy of private gain was, in

no. 3 (1985): 717-742; and Brian Hall, Glenn Motzkin, David R. Foster, Mindy Syfert, and John Burk, "Three hundred years of forest and land-use change in Massachusetts, USA," *Journal of Biogeography* 29 (2003): 1319-1335. For information on Native American conceptions of property and practices of land use, in comparison to the colonists, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (1983); Peter S. Leavenworth, Peter S., "'The Best Title that Indians can Claim': Native Agency and Consent in the Transfer of Penacook-Pawtucket Land in the Seventeenth Century," *New England Quarterly: A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters* 72, no. 2 (1999): 275-300; Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions*; Gary B. Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1972): 198-230; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); and David J. Silverman, "'We Chuse to Be Bounded': Native American Animal Husbandry in Colonial New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (2003): 511-48. For information on the ways in which economic changes shaped practices of land use in the Mid-Atlantic colonies, review Strother E. Roberts, "Changes in the Genre: A Brief Survey of Early Mid-Atlantic Environmental Histories," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 79, no. 4, Special Issue: Environmental Histories of the Mid-Atlantic (2012): 345-56. For information on the same in the South-Atlantic colonies, see Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴² While some parts of colonial New England were based on the open-field system in England, Bradstreet's Ipswich was modeled on the closed-field system since, as Cronon has argued, the settlers in Ipswich had more experience in the private ownership of land (Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 74).

theory, still conditioned on furthering the interests of the community.

To illustrate how this transition occurred, it is necessary to explain how land was apportioned among the colonists in colonial townships, and how that land was organized and used. Land was allotted to the colonists by the colonial township. Lacking formal political institutions in their earliest stages, colonial townships were created by chartered companies, such as the Massachusetts Bay Colony, grants from existing townships, and, to lesser extent, direct purchase from native peoples or the simple occupation of land. Land was then apportioned among the settlers depending on the size of their estate, their social status, and the resources they had invested in establishing the colony. Despite the fact that town records from the period are dominated by issues concerning land use—such as the leasing of farms, records of land passing from fathers to sons, and inventories of farm equipment—these records do not precisely detail the number of acres and area apportioned to each settler. Nonetheless, historians have estimated that the first land grants allocated 25-50 acres of land to most families.⁴³ The plots of land granted to each family typically consisted of four types: the house lot, land for crop production, meadowlands for the growing of hay, and land for pasture. Once the initial land grants had been distributed, in the words of Barry C. Field and Martha Kimball, “there existed essentially three types of land: (1) privately owned and privately cultivated land (e.g., house lots); (2) privately owned but commonly cultivated land (e.g. planting fields, some pasture areas); and (3) land not yet granted to individuals, the so-called ‘undivided’ land, which was used in common by all, or a portion, of the town’s residents.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Lockridge, “Land, Population and the Evolution of New England Society 1630-1790,” 64. According to Rutman, about 15,000 people and 3,000 families lived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony by 1650. He estimates that the number of acres families were granted was on the lower end of this range, or about 20-30 acres. He notes that about 10-20 of those acres were dedicated to cultivation and 3-4 acres to the production of grain to be exported, which could yield 60-100 bushels of wheat per year (“Governor Winthrop’s Garden Crop,” 411).

⁴⁴ Field and Kimball, “Agricultural Land Institutions in Colonial New England,” 22-23.

Many of the colony's earliest land laws centered on how the commons were to be managed. Lands held in common consisted of land for crop production, which was often enclosed by a single fence to prevent the land from being damaged by livestock; meadow for the growing of hay; land for pasture; and woods for timber production. In the colony's early days, the cost of excluding others from using the land was greater than the transaction costs of managing and maintaining the commons. At the time, transaction costs on the commons were relatively low because there was little crop specialization, meaning that it was much easier for colonial proprietors to reach an agreement about how to put the land to use than it would be were farmers to produce a greater variety of crops and thus require different farming techniques.⁴⁵ Furthermore, since the cost of building fences to enclose plots of land was quite high during this period, common lands also made practical sense because these lands could be enclosed by a single fence. The management of these fences was not without difficulty, however, as the colony's town records indicate. Who was responsible for maintaining a single fence enclosing common lands was unclear. Records indicate that the simplest solution was to require each individual to maintain the portion of the fence that enclosed his portion of land. The common use of land was, therefore, not simply a practice the colonists brought over from England, but a "rational institutional choice," to borrow the words of Field and Kimball, made in response to the agricultural conditions of the early colony.⁴⁶

While private property existed in some form alongside common property for the greater part of the colonial period, New England began to phase out the common use of land when agricultural advances, such as crop specialization and the diversification of cultivation

⁴⁵ Transaction cost is a term used to describe how easy or difficult it was for the proprietors of common lands to reach an agreement about how that land should be managed.

⁴⁶ Field and Kimball, "Agricultural Land Institutions in Colonial New England," 37-38.

techniques, increased transaction costs.⁴⁷ As farmers varied the crops they produced and, in turn, the farming techniques they used, reconciling the proprietors' competing interests became increasingly difficult. The difficulties presented in reaching group decisions meant that it was now less efficient to manage common lands through joint action than to enclose them, creating smaller plots of land, which were separated according to their different uses. Put another way, the common use of land once made practical sense because the cost of excluding others from the use of this land was initially higher than the cost of reaching a consensus about how it should be managed. With the diversification of crops and farming techniques, however, that relationship was balanced or reversed because proprietors found it harder to reach a consensus about how to manage the common lands they oversaw, making private property the more efficient, productive, and profitable economic configuration. In other words, once colonial farmers began to specialize, reaching a consensus about how to manage the common plot they oversaw became more difficult. For property owners, it now cost just as much, or even less, to exclude others from the use of common resources as it did to enclose that land and manage it privately—that is, to enforce its boundaries, to pay the legal costs of ownership rights, and to find ways of reducing possibility for trespassing. As a result, private property became preferable to common property for property owners, who had more to gain from the former.⁴⁸ Taken together, the changes made to New England's system of property were, in large part, a response to its changing agricultural practices and needs, rather than a simple transposition of English land law on the colony.

According to Innes, this shift towards private ownership of land threatened to do away

⁴⁷ Konig argues that many of the proprietors' decisions were influenced by local customs and "varying practices of the many different manors from which the first planters came" ("Community Custom and the Common Law," 165).

⁴⁸ Field and Kimball, "Agricultural Land Institutions in Colonial New England," 38. For Cronon, fences thus signaled much more than the physical boundaries and corresponding property rights of a fixed parcel of land. Fences delineated the settlement's "economic activities and ecological relationships as well" (*Changes in the Land*, 137-38).

with the “bundle of rights and obligations” that characterized older forms of land tenure and the common use of land.⁴⁹ For example, Article 10 of the 1641 “Massachusetts Body of Liberties,” the first legal code approved by the Massachusetts General Court, formally instituted the absolute ownership of land in colonial law: “All our lands and heritages shall be free from all finds and licences upon Alienations, and from all harrlots, wardships, Liveries, Primerseisens, yeare day and wast, Escheates, and forfeitures, upon the deaths of parents, or Ancestors, be they naturall, casuall, or Juditiall.”⁵⁰ In other words, proprietors were now free from feudal obligations, which included both landowning aristocrats’ duty to care for those who worked the land and their more ceremonial duties, and the possibility of feudal lords or the state itself seizing their property. Cronon has argued that this transition to private ownership can be tracked through the changing language of land deeds over the course of the colonial period. While early land deeds tended to describe the land in terms of its various uses, “what was on the land became largely irrelevant to its legal identity” in later land deeds, in his words, “even though its contents—and the rights to them—might still have great bearing on the price it would bring if sold.”⁵¹

Because the New England Puritans, as a “Covenant People,” viewed the success or failure of the colony as a sign of their favor with God, public activities were still closely scrutinized and regulated even as the common use of land was left behind.⁵² As a result, individual ownership of land included a set of obligations to improve the land for the public benefit, on pain of losing one’s title to the land. As John F. Hart’s analysis of town records and

⁴⁹ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 214.

⁵⁰ “Massachusetts Body of Liberties,” 1641, Hanover Historical Texts Project, available online: <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/masslib.html>. Accessed February 11, 2020.

⁵¹ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 74-5.

⁵² Konig, “Community Custom and the Common Law,” 137.

early land laws shows, settlers who had been granted land were expected to “perfect their ownership” by improving the land in some way.⁵³ One Massachusetts ordinance of 1634, for example, explains that those who did not improve the land risked losing their title to it: “If any man that hath any greate quan[tity] of land graunted him, & doeth not builde upon it or im[prove] within three yeares, it shalbe free for the Court to disp[ose] of it to whome they please.”⁵⁴ Another 1636 ordinance of Plymouth conditioned private ownership on the “supposall of their living upon them for the maintenance [and] strength of society.”⁵⁵ The language deployed in these ordinances echoes Cotton’s argument that whoever “bestoweth culture and husbandry” on “vacant Soyle” has a legitimate proprietorial right to that land.⁵⁶ This ordinance illustrates that the Puritan leaders and lawmakers viewed private gain as legitimate insofar as it also contributed to the public good since they were “beholden one to another,” to borrow Bradstreet’s words.⁵⁷ According to Hart, then, property was “not an absolute right that exempted the individual from corporate oversight” for the Puritans, but “a right of stewardship that the public entrusted to an individual, for both private and public benefit.”⁵⁸ In this way, the Puritans could still fulfill their Christian duty to work for God and community even as the system of property shifted to the private, absolute control of land.

⁵³ Hart, “Colonial Land Use Law,” 1259.

⁵⁴ Ordinance of Apr. 1, 1634, *I Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England 114*, edited by Nathaniel B. Shurtleff (Boston: Press of William White, 1853). I am grateful for Hart’s research, which has been an immensely valuable resource in conducting my own research on early land laws.

⁵⁵ The full Plymouth ordinance of 1636 reads: “That whereas land[s] are given [and] g[ranted] to p[er]sons upon supposall of their living upon them for the maintenance [and] strength of society. If it fall out that p[er]sons shall not occupie any such land[s] but dep[art] from the same place, such former grant or grant[s] to be of none effect but shall returne [and] be otherwise disposed of by the Governm[en]t in generall or Towneship in p[ar]ticular as it shall fall out (Act of Nov. 15, 1636, *II Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England 6, 18*, edited by David Pulsifer [Boston: Press of William White, 1861]). Similar views are reflected in measures passed by the New Netherland, New York, and Delaware (Hart, “Colonial Land Use Law, 1260-61).

⁵⁶ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 5.

⁵⁷ Bradstreet, Meditation No. 77, *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 209.

⁵⁸ Hart, “Colonial Land Use Law,” 1281.

By and large, colonists did not extend the same proprietorial rights they enjoyed to the native peoples of New England.⁵⁹ Because the colonists' conception of property rights depended on the doctrine of improvement, many colonists rejected the notion that native peoples, whose more common practices of hunting and gathering and animal husbandry did not correspond to the standard of "improvement," had legitimate claims to the land. The vast majority of the land these native peoples used, then—for hunting, picking berries, or fishing—was, in the colonists' view, theirs for the taking.⁶⁰ In his "General Observations," for instance, John Winthrop argues that the Puritans had the right to claim land the natives used, with the exception of land they used for cultivation:

That which is common to all is proper to none. This savage people ruleth over many lands without title or property; for they inclose no ground, neither have they cattell to maintayne it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion, or as they can prevail against their neighbors. And why may not Christians have liberty to go and dwell amongst them in their waste lands and woods (leaving them such places as they have manured for their corne) as lawfully as Abraham did among the Sodomites?⁶¹

Here, Winthrop suggests all land that was not enclosed or dedicated to animal husbandry did not fall under the rubric of "improved" land. Only the land the natives "have manured for their corne" could be considered as such. It was the Puritans' duty, therefore, to put these "waste lands and woods" to productive use. In 1652, the Massachusetts legislature put forward a similar

⁵⁹ The Wampanoag, Massachusett, Nipmuck, Pennacook, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Quinnipiac tribes lived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony proper. The Mohegan, Pequot, Pocumtuc, Tunxis, and Narragansett tribes lived in southern New England, while the Abenaki lived in northern New England.

⁶⁰ While the native peoples of northern New England mainly engaged in hunting and gathering, the native peoples of southern New England farmed. What differentiated native farming from colonial farming was that the natives' farming never farmed on a single plot of land for long, while the colonists, due to their notion of fixed property, plowed the same field repeatedly, which had long-lasting and damaging ecological effects (Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 44-50).

⁶¹ John Winthrop, "General Observations" (1629), quoted in Silverman, "We Chuse to be Bounded," 1. Elsewhere, Winthrop repeated the same idea: "As for the Natives in New England, they inclose noe Land, neither have any settled habytation, nor any Cattle to improve the Land by, and soe have noe other but a Naturall Right to those Countries" (James Kendall Hosmer, ed., *Winthrop's Journals* [New York, 1908], 294). By "Natural Right," Winthrop meant that the natives had the right to plant crops and allow livestock to graze wherever land was held in common.

claim, proposing that Native Americans only enjoyed proprietary rights to the land they had “by possession or improvement, by subdueing of the same.”⁶²

Native Americans’ conception of property, on the other hand, was largely based on “usufruct rights,” which put boundaries on the ways in which the land could be used. “Usufruct rights” limited an individual’s ownership of land to the period that it was being put to use for a specific purpose. Individual ownership of land or goods thus extended only to what an individual needed and could use.⁶³ In general, the colonists regarded native women as having stronger claims to usufruct rights than native men, since native women performed the bulk of the agricultural labor in the cornfields. Nevertheless, in practice the colonists often did not recognize this labor as granting native women legitimate proprietary claims to the land since some colonists allowed their livestock to range on native cornfields.⁶⁴ Because Native Americans’ use of the land and its resources was restricted to what was necessary, their practices were generally less destructive of nature than the colonists, whose economy and system of property rights

⁶² Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols., (Boston, 1853-54), 3: 281-82. Silverman explains that some natives in the region began to build their own fences or raise and hold their own livestock in response to the colonists’ encroachment on native lands. Tensions escalated over time, culminating in the outbreak of King Philip’s War in 1675. In 1642, the chief of the Narragansetts, Miantonomo, called on his people to defend themselves against the colonists: “For you know our fathers had plenty of deer and skins, our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, and of turkies, and our coves full of fish and fowl. But these English having gotten our land, they with scythes cut down the grass, and with axes fell the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved” (quoted in Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 34n98). Miantonomo’s full speech, “A Call for Indian Unity” (1642) is reproduced in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed., *Major Problems in American Colonial History: Documents and Essays* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1993), 135.

⁶³ Cronon notes that these differing views on property may have caused considerable miscommunication between the natives and the colonists over the sale of a fixed parcel of land. While the colonists would have viewed such a transaction as the sale of the land itself, the natives may have instead viewed the sale as a simple transfer of usufruct rights. It was possible, then, from the natives’ perspective, to sell a piece of land to multiple people for different uses, which would be untenable under the colonists’ notion of absolute ownership (*Changes in the Land*, 61-68).

⁶⁴ Silverman, “We Chuse to Be Bounded,” 513, 535-36. For a more detailed discussion of native women’s work, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 44-52; Virginia DeJohn Anderson, “King Philip’s Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 51 (1994): 601-24; and Robert R. Gradie, “New England Indians and Colonizing Pigs,” in *Papers of the Fifteenth Algonquian Conference*, edited by William Cowan, 147-69 (Ottawa, 1984).

engendered a more acquisitive attitude towards nature. In the process of contrasting Native Americans' relationship to the land with that of the colonists, Cronon makes one crucial additional point: it was the Native Americans' "limited social definition of 'need,'" rather than a more "enlightened ecological sensibility," that prevented Native Americans' from subjecting the land to the kind of overuse and overexploitation that occurred after the colonists' arrived in New England.⁶⁵

Agricultural and environmental historians by and large agree with Cronon that the colonists' "more exclusive sense of property and their involvement in a capitalist economy" were the factors that contributed most to the transformation of the New England landscape in a relatively short period of time after settlement.⁶⁶ The shift to a more fixed system of property meant that the same fields were subject to repeated plowing, which exhausted the already-thin and rocky soil of New England and led to a decline in native plant species.⁶⁷ The production of corn, a staple in colonial New England, was also very demanding on the land, and the colonists' tendency to raise corn without legumes, such as kidney beans, to help fertilize the fields only

⁶⁵ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 98. In fact, Cronon goes to great lengths in his book to detail the ways in which Native Americans altered the landscape of New England in considerable ways, from the clearing of forests to contributing to the decline in animal populations, such as the beaver, a result of Native Americans' participation in the fur trade.

⁶⁶ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, xvi.

⁶⁷ The rocky and thin soil of New England, combined with its short growing season and cold winters, made intense cultivation quite difficult. An early description of Bradstreet's home of Ipswich by Edward Johnson suggests otherwise, however. In *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour*, Johnson describes the Ipswich landscape, Bradstreet's home: "This Towne is scituated on a faire and delightfull River, whose first rise or spring begins about five and twenty miles farther up in the Countrey, issuing forth a very pleasant pond. But soone after it betakes its course through a most hideous swamp of large extent, even for many Miles, being a great Harbour for Bears: after its comming forth this place, it groweth larger by the income of many small Rivers, and issues forth in the Sea, due East over against the Island of Sholes, a great place for fishing for our English Nation." He goes on to describe the land's suitability for animal husbandry: "They have very good land for Husbandry, where Rocks hinder not the course of the Plow, the Lord hath beene pleased to increase them in Corne and Cattell of late; Insomuch that they have many hundred quarters to spare yearly, and feed, at the latter end of Summer, the Towne of Boston with good Beefe; and their Houses are many of them very faire built with pleasant Gardens and Orchards, consisting of about one hundred and forty families" ([London, 1653], 66-67). The veracity of Johnson's description is unclear. According to Cronon, many early descriptions of the New World were overly effusive, likely in an effort to legitimize and promote the colonial project (*Changes in the Land*, 35).

further exhausted the soil. The difficulty of producing crops drove colonial farmers to rely increasingly on livestock husbandry—which made Bradstreet’s Ipswich the second wealthiest town in colonial New England by the middle of the seventeenth century—for surplus production until the 1640s, when the timber, fishing, and shipbuilding industries replaced livestock husbandry as the primary source of economic profit in the colony.⁶⁸ Livestock husbandry led to soil compaction, since the animals’ hooves tore the ground and compacted soil particles, which reduced the amount of oxygen in the soil, thus lowering the soil’s ability to absorb nutrients and, in turn, slowing root growth.⁶⁹

Land for crop production and livestock husbandry also required the forests of New England to be cleared at a substantial rate. There were two primary methods of clearing forests. The first method, known as girdling, involved removing bark from a tree, which prevented it from leafing and thus enabled more light to hit the forest floor, and planting grain beneath the stripped tree. The second method, which the colonists borrowed from native practices in southern New England, relied on burning: trees were felled in summer and allowed to lie until spring; they were then set on fire until only the trunks remained; the trunks were then sawed in half and set on fire again. This repeated burning killed the trees’ green roots, causing them to rot sooner and, in turn, be more quickly removed. In the short term, this process had the effect of recycling nutrients back into the soil, drawing more light to the forest floor, and destroying many pests and plant diseases. Additionally, within one year of being planted maize could grow among the trees’ ashes, without the need to plow or manure the ground. In the long term, however, large-scale deforestation depleted the soil of much-needed nutrients, in addition to causing more

⁶⁸ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 286.

⁶⁹ For more information regarding how this “more exclusive sense of property” affected land use in colonial New England, see Cronon’s chapter on “A World of Fields and Fences” (*Changes in the Land*, 127-58).

dramatic fluctuations in local temperatures, inconstant drainage patterns, flooding, and erosion.⁷⁰

New England's entry into the shipbuilding and iron-manufacturing industries intensified the rate at and extent to which New England forests were cleared. On its own, timber was especially profitable for New Englanders because the supply was high and it was quite easy to prepare for the market: it simply needed to be cut down, sawed, and split before being sold. However, both industries expanded in New England primarily to meet England's increased demand for timber, which partly resulted from the rapid expansion of England's coal-mining, iron-manufacturing, and shipbuilding industries in the seventeenth century.⁷¹ By the early eighteenth century, Massachusetts was producing as many as seventy vessels per year for sale in Britain and the West Indies, and Boston alone had fifteen shipyards. At various points during this period, England regulated how New England could use its forests, going so far as to reserve certain trees for its fuel and shipbuilding needs. In 1704, for instance, the Crown passed the "broad arrow laws" and sent royal surveyors to New England to enforce them. These surveyors marked white pines with arrows, designating them as trees reserved by the Crown for its shipbuilding needs. As many as 2000 trees were required to build a single vessel since timber was used to construct the ship's frame, mast, and spars, and to produce turpentine and tar, which was used for caulking and repairs. While the ironworks industries in England and New England also emerged as a response to timber shortages in England, according to Innes, "a single ironworks might consume no less than 22,000 cords" of wood per year, necessitating even more

⁷⁰ Cronon describes these methods in greater detail in *Changes in the Land*, 117-18. The natives of southern New England would strip forests for wood and clear them by burning extensive sections once or twice per year, which is why some sections of New England forests resembled parklands when the Europeans first made contact in the region. Cronon goes on to explain that these same forests had begun to regrow by the time the Puritans arrived in 1630 due to native depopulation, largely a result of European diseases (*Changes in the Land*, 49, 90-1).

⁷¹ Timber was also used for fences, more general construction, fuel, and barrels for the Spanish and Portuguese wine trade.

deforestation.⁷²

Over the course of the colonial period, New England forests were thus vastly reduced through girdling, burning, overgrazing, and cutting to meet the needs of the timber, shipbuilding, and iron-manufacturing industries. Innes notes that an estimated 700,000 acres of land were cleared between 1630 and 1720, and about 260 million cords of wood had been cut down between 1630 and 1800.⁷³ In particular, New England forests experienced a substantial decline in cedar, oak, white pine, and hickory, the latter of which was commonly used as fuel, and a change in tree species composition in turn. Large-scale forest clearing also resulted in soil exhaustion, dramatic fluctuations in local temperature, inconstant drainage patterns, and increased flooding and erosion. Furthermore, as the colony engaged in international trade and the North American fur trade, New England also experienced a sizeable decline in once-common animal species, such as beaver, deer, bear, turkey, and wolf.

As a general trend, human interactions with the land also shifted considerably. Before European settlement, the native peoples of northern New England were a hunting and gathering society, while those of southern New England were a farming society, though they never cultivated a single piece of land for too long. After the colony was established, however, human interactions to the land were fundamentally altered over time by the colonists' system of fixed property and an economy based in crop production, livestock husbandry, timber production, and shipbuilding. Each of these changes served to dramatically alter the natives' way of life and to intensify ecological changes that would have occurred, although to a much lesser extent, in a

⁷² Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 243. Evidence also suggests, as Innes observes, that the Massachusetts Bay Company and the Massachusetts General Court were interested in an ironworks venture in the colony's earliest stages. For information on the ecological effects of deforestation and the expansion of New England's shipbuilding and iron-manufacturing industries, see Cronon, "Taking the Forest," in *Changes in the Land*, 108-26; and Innes, "The Puritan Ironworks," in *Creating the Commonwealth*, 237-70.

⁷³ Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 93. A cord of wood is 128 cubic feet.

non-capitalist economy engaged in crop production and forest clearing. It is important to acknowledge that the colonists were not particularly concerned about resource depletion or overexploitation as they changed the face of the New England landscape, not least because they believed in the superabundance of land and natural resources. In Cronon's words, the colonists believed quite the opposite: "what they were doing almost wholly in positive terms, not as 'deforestation,' but as 'the progress of cultivation.'" ⁷⁴ The Puritan doctrine of covenantalism informed this view by providing the theological backing needed to understand the improvement of land and economic progress as the will of God.

Taken as a whole, the economy of Puritan New England was certainly not a capitalist one in the strictest sense of the term—that is, one characterized by unbridled economic freedom. ⁷⁵ While the Puritan concept of the "calling" allowed for the individual accumulation of wealth, the colonists believed that private gain must also serve some public good if the Puritans were, in fact, right with God. For this "Covenant People," the success of the colony pointed to their favor with God, so they subjected economic activities and land use to close regulation, as colonial town records, ordinances, and land laws illustrate. At the same time, the New England Puritans' efforts to work for God, for God in nature, and for community were, in reality, increasingly at odds with an emergent capitalist economy, system of private property, and a more acquisitive relationship to nature. Moreover, the Puritans' belief that the "progress of cultivation" was divinely sanctioned and demonstrative of their ongoing relationship with God helped to legitimize the colonists' changing relationship to the land, one which was far more destructive of

⁷⁴ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 126. For a brief overview of this information and more on the ways in which the ecology of New England changed over the colonial period, see Cronon's conclusion in *Changes in the Land*, 159-70.

⁷⁵ Innes contends that those who restrict the term "capitalism" to nineteenth-century industrialization risk overlooking the many ways in which the Puritans were "bearers of a culture that was already capitalist when they arrived in the New World" (*Creating the Commonwealth*, 53-6).

nature than they likely intended. It is this unique convergence of capitalism with Puritan theology, then, that differentiates human relationships to the land in colonial New England from those in seventeenth-century England, which I have discussed in previous chapters.

Bradstreet would have been keenly aware of these changes, and how the New England Puritans' reconciled their Christian duties with a system that threatened to obviate them, not least because of her familiarity with the Elizabethan pastoral tradition and her proximity to some of the leading figures in the colony's founding and administration. Her work demonstrates that she was particularly attuned to the "Protestant dilemma" Innes uses to describe the tension between the capitalist mode of production and an ethical duty to serve the community and to steward the land with care. In this way, Bradstreet's work echoes much of the language Cotton uses in his farewell sermon—that of God as landlord and that of labor as an act of religious devotion. By describing the New England Puritan settlers at various times as "tenants," "strangers," and "pilgrims," Bradstreet argues that God has granted them "usufruct," but not absolute, rights to the land, a system not unlike the native peoples' conception of property in the region. This conception of property occasions Bradstreet to argue that humans bear an ethical and religious responsibility to steward God's earth with care, lest they fail as stewards and, in turn, followers of God. In these ways, Bradstreet's work offers a critical response not only to the increasingly acquisitive attitude towards nature in her own community, but also to the ways in which seventeenth-century literary productions, such as the court masque and country-house poem, staged the absolute control of land by the ruling classes.

III. Bradstreet's Ecological Verse

“Contemplations” and “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House”

As I argued in Chapter Two, what counts as country-house verse should not be confined to poems that authorize the estate lord’s power over nature. Rather, included in this genre should also be poems that challenge this logic and instead imagine alternative ways of interacting with nature. Like the poems of Aemilia Lanyer, Lucy Hutchinson, and Margaret Cavendish, Bradstreet’s “Contemplations” and “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House” deploy the conventions of the country-house genre as it has been defined by early modern scholars up to this point to different ends. Whereas Ben Jonson’s country-house poem “To Penshurst” works to legitimize the estate lord’s power over nature, Bradstreet’s poems emphasize how fragile and insecure humans’ power over nature truly is. In doing so, her poems suggest that humankind’s dealings with nature should be guided by a love for God and his creation, not by a desire to dominate, exploit, and profit from the natural world. As Joshua Bartlett has argued, both poems also model a “general practice of attention” to nature that render Bradstreet an “ecological thinker” in her own right.⁷⁶

“Contemplations” can be best described as an exercise in reading God’s second book, the Book of Nature. Over the course of thirty-three stanzas, Bradstreet describes the woods among which she has presumably wandered beside the Merrimack River in Andover, Massachusetts. Attending to the woods in detail stirs in Bradstreet a sense of wonder that cultivates, in turn, a newfound respect for nature, which everywhere confirms God’s power and grace.⁷⁷ Bradstreet’s

⁷⁶ Bartlett, “Anne Bradstreet’s Ecological Thought,” 293-96. In his reading of “Contemplations,” Bartlett centers on the moments in the poem when Bradstreet imagines the nonhuman world as endowed with human capacities. He goes on to offer a close textual analysis of the use of the familiar “thy” in “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House,” which points, for Bartlett, to Bradstreet’s deep attachment to her material possessions. My argument aims to build on the work Bartlett started by providing a more sustained approach to Bradstreet’s verse as ecological in scope.

⁷⁷ The poem’s thirty-three stanzas reinforce that Bradstreet’s experience in the woods is, at the same time, a religious one; thirty-three is a holy number, after all, and the poem’s form and opening content resembles Dante’s

attempts to read God in nature are marked by considerable struggle. Throughout “Contemplations,” Bradstreet draws particular attention to the difficulties she faces when praising nature, even going so far as to argue that the nonhuman world is better equipped to praise nature than she. While the beauty of nature time and again exceeds Bradstreet’s ability to describe it, the grasshoppers and crickets she hears face no such struggles. Bradstreet also devotes much space in the poem to the insecurity and fragility of humans’ power over nature, especially through the figure of the Mariner, who is disabused of the notion that he is able to master nature shortly after he first appears. In these ways, Bradstreet challenges humankind’s “imaginary sovereigntie” over nature, to again borrow Michel de Montaigne’s phrase.⁷⁸ Taken together, Bradstreet turns the traditional aim of country-house poetry on its head in two ways: first, unlike Jonson, who pours seemingly effortless praise on the estate lord, Bradstreet struggles to find the right words to praise God and his creation; second, unlike Jonson, whose poem performs the lord’s dominance over the nonhuman world, Bradstreet uses her poem to reject humans’ imagined superiority over the nonhuman world. By the poem’s end, it becomes clear that it is the Christian individual’s duty to care for and respect nature, rather than seek to master or profit from it.

The opening lines of “Contemplations” closely resemble those of “To Penshurst,” though we find Bradstreet not on a country estate, but meandering through the woods of Andover.⁷⁹ In

Divine Comedy in important ways. Like Dante the pilgrim in the opening lines of his *Inferno*, Bradstreet finds herself in the middle of the woods, and, like Dante, the journey of this poem is one towards God. The organization of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* also provides a model for Bradstreet’s poem: the *Comedy* itself contains three parts, each of which contains thirty-three cantos, with the exception of *Inferno* at thirty-four cantos. Both Dante and Bradstreet, then, frame nature as a space in which to contemplate and improve their relationship with God.

⁷⁸ Michel de Montaigne, “Of Crueltie,” 243.

⁷⁹ Robert Boschman has argued that this poem depicts New England in a “highly-wrought” way that makes it look like an “Old World garden” (“Anne Bradstreet and Elizabeth Bishop: Nature, Culture and Gender in ‘Contemplations’ and ‘At the Fishhouses,’” *Journal of American Studies* 26, no. 2, [1992]: 250). Holberton, on the other hand, contends just the opposite—that the poem provides a rather accurate portrayal of the topographical features of the Massachusetts woods and countryside. For example, in Stanzas 24-25, Bradstreet compares fish to

Ben Jonson's view, the Penshurst estate has a rather natural, rather than ostentatious, appearance; the estate is less an imposition on the landscape than something that grew up from its ground. Jonson writes, for example, that Penshurst is not "built to envious show, / Of touch or marble; nor canst boast a row / Of polish'd pillars, or a roofof gold." He goes on to say that Penshurst is "faire" because it "joy'st in better markes, of soyle, of ayre, / Of wood, of water" (lines 1-8).⁸⁰ Of course, the country estate is far from natural; it is, quite literally, the physical imposition of the built environment, and the aristocratic power that signifies, on the natural world. In this regard, Bradstreet seems to take Jonson to task in the first lines of "Contemplations" by praising the woods of Andover for being what Penshurst ultimately cannot be—that is, truly natural. "The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride," she writes, "Were gilded o're by his rich golden head. / Their leaves and fruits seem'd painted, but was true / Of green, of red, of yellow, mixed hew, / Rapt were my senses at this delectable view" (Stanza 1).⁸¹ Jonson heaps the same kind of praise on Penshurst, so much so that we could imagine swapping out the word "trees" here for Penshurst itself. Despite Jonson's best attempt to embed Penshurst in the landscape, though, the country estate cannot escape its function as a sign of the estate lord's power.

Rather than praising the estate lord by way of praising his estate, Bradstreet instead praises the woods of Andover in order to praise God, "whose power and beauty by his works we

merchants, which Holberton reads as a commentary on the expansion of the fishing industry in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In his words, Bradstreet "multiplies the trade of fish into a trade of fish conducted by fish" ("Prophecy and Geography in Anne Bradstreet's 'Contemplations': A Transatlantic Reading," in *Transatlantic Traffic and (Mis)Translations*, edited by Robin Peel, Daniel Maudlin, and Susan C. Street, 157-75 [Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013], 157-59). The specific lines to which Holberton refers read as follows: "Eftsoon to *Neptun's* glassie Hall repair / To see what trade they great ones there do drive, / Who forage o're the spacious sea-green field, / And take the trembling prey before it yield" (Stanza 25), in Bradstreet, "Contemplations," in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 167-74.

⁸⁰ Ben Jonson, "To Penshurst," in Woudhuysen, *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, 420-23.

⁸¹ All future quotations from "Contemplations" will be cited in the text by stanza number and can be found in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 167-74.

know” (Stanza 2).⁸² Were the focus of this line not God, the same could be said of the estate lord, whose power is known by the condition of his estate and the improvements he has made upon it. It is to demonstrate the sheer extent of Robert Sidney’s power over the Penshurst landscape that Jonson conducts a meticulous survey of the estate’s features and their various uses to humankind shortly after the poem’s opening lines. While Jonson’s speaker is never at a loss for words in his poem, Bradstreet finds herself entirely at a loss for them in “Contemplations,” so much so that she pauses for a moment at the end of the first stanza. She is so “rapt” by the woods that she is unable to articulate precisely what this experience means to her. As she struggles to find the right words to describe this feeling of wonder, Bradstreet begins to read evidence of God in nature: “If so much excellence abide below,” she asks, “How excellent is he that dwells on high” (Stanza 2)? Here, Bradstreet argues that nature’s excellence does not derive from humankind’s improvement of it, as Jonson contends, but from God’s grace. In fact, so great is the excellence of God’s work that the woods seem, to her, a veritable paradise, not unlike Eden itself: “More Heaven than earth,” she writes, “was here” (Stanza 2). While surveying Penshurst occasions Jonson to reflect on the many ways in which Sidney controls the landscape, Bradstreet’s walk among the woods of Andover captivates her entirely, and she concludes that nature must be the work of God alone.⁸³

⁸² As Ann Stanford has observed of this poem, nature is therefore both a medium through which to contemplate God and a space to be contemplated in its own right, as evidence of God’s glory. Stanford reads “Contemplations” as a poem that engages with the seventeenth-century meditative poem and the emblem book tradition (*Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan*, 93-106).

⁸³ Comparing “Contemplations” to Bradstreet’s pastoral poem “The Four Seasons of the Year,” Stanford argues that there is little difference between Bradstreet’s attitude towards nature in these poems, writing that the “enjoyment of nature is kept subordinate to the main purpose of the poem. Utility remains always in the background of Puritan poetry” (Stanford, *Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan*, 102-3). I would argue that Stanford’s assertion is true of “Four Seasons” but not of “Contemplations.” To clarify, “Four Seasons” can be best described as an “encyclopedic” catalog, to borrow Stanford’s word, of the ways in which the landscape and the nature of agricultural labor changes with the passing of the seasons. In this regard, the descriptive function of the poem may be directed at explaining all the ways in which humankind can make use of nature. In “Contemplations,” however, Bradstreet is “rapt” by nature, an experience which fosters a sense of admiration and respect for nature. Nature thus moves

Bradstreet is so enraptured by the woods of Andover that she repeatedly confesses that she is not fit for the task of praising them in a sufficient way, a marked difference from Jonson's poem. The eighth stanza captures this confession best and is worth reproducing in full:

Silent alone, where none or saw, or heard,
In pathless paths I lead my wandering feet.
My humble Eyes to lofty Skyes I rear'd
To sing some Song my mazed Muse thought meet.
My great Creator I would magnifie,
That nature had, thus decked liberally:
But Ah and Ah, again, my imbecility!

While Jonson intends his survey of Penshurst to illustrate that Robert Sidney truly “dwells” (line 102) there, in contrast to other estate lords who simply impose their power on the landscape, Bradstreet's stanza illustrates what it means to truly dwell among nature.⁸⁴ Whereas Jonson uses his entire inventory of the estate's features as supporting evidence for this final claim, Bradstreet wanders “in pathless paths,” with no clear aim or direction beyond the desire to “magnifie” the woods' “great Creator.” She also does not seek to master or improve the land, as did seventeenth-century estate lords and as Jonson does in his poem. Instead, Bradstreet wanders in a manner as “mazed” as her thoughts, and she admits that she desires but is ultimately unable to connect what she feels to the right words. Declaring her “imbecility,” Bradstreet then brings the stanza to a close by emphasizing that nature's beauty continually exceeds her attempts to put it into words. Bradstreet's admission thus demonstrates just how little she controls nature, both in reality and in her efforts to capture its effect on her in her poem.⁸⁵

beyond utility in this poem. For the full text of “Four Seasons,” see McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 46-53.

⁸⁴ Ben Jonson, “To Penshurst,” in Woudhuysen, *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, 420-23.

⁸⁵ In Stanza 21, Bradstreet is similarly overwhelmed by nature's beauty, so much so that each new feature of the landscape that her eye meets seems to outdo the last: “Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm / Close sate I by a goodly Rivers side, / Where gliding streams the Rocks did overwhelm; / A lonely place, with pleasures dignifi'd. / I once that lov'd the shady woods so well, / Now thought the rivers did the trees excel, / And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.” While the first ten books of Milton's *Paradise Lost* were not published until 1667, it is difficult not to read Bradstreet in these stanzas as a prelapsarian Eve, a wanderer in the “pathless paths” of

This sense of wonder fosters in Bradstreet a duty to respect nature, which she puts into practice by devoting careful and sustained attention to the Merrimack River in Stanzas 22 and 23.⁸⁶ In the process of observing the river, Bradstreet also comes to understand nature as a space in which to enact the Puritan individual's relationship to community and to God. She watches as countless "brooks" and "Rivolets" come together in the river and collectively move toward the "long'd for Ocean." In the movement and convergence of these streams, Bradstreet sees a model of the Christian life, both individual and communal. She notes that life is, like these streams, not without occasional "crooks" and "rubs," but that neither she nor these streams are ultimately deterred from their respective journeys—the streams towards the sea and she towards God. Furthermore, in this meeting of streams, who "hand in hand" glide out to sea, Bradstreet sees the life of the individual Puritan play out: a collection of little streams each pursuing its unique "calling" while gliding always towards the sea. Bradstreet reinforces this message in the final lines of Stanza 23, in which nature guides her to the house of God: "O could I lead my Rivolets to rest, / So may we press to that vast mansion, ever blest." In "To Penshurst," Jonson time and again presses nature into the service of the country estate and its lord to assert Sidney's controlling power over the land. In these stanzas, however, nature guides Bradstreet to a different kind of "mansion," the house of God, which binds all members of her community together. In this way, Bradstreet puts the Puritan model of stewardship into practice, as her contemplations of nature become an act of religious devotion, and she uses nature as a space in which to

the Garden of Eden. Notably, Bradstreet does not make the same mistake that Eve does: while Eve steals from nature, an act which suggests her faith has fallen short, Bradstreet is inspired to care for nature, here, because of the strength of her faith.

⁸⁶ Eva Flores Ruiz and Jesús Lerate de Castro explore Bradstreet's engagement with the emblem tradition at more length in "Puritan Women Facing Suffering: Texts as Tests of Survival in Bradstreet's 'Verses Upon the Burning of Our House' and Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*," *Revista De Estudios Norteamericanos* 10 (2004): 95-109.

demonstrate her love for God and community.

Set against Bradstreet's "imbecility" and her contemplations of the river are the actual sounds of the nonhuman world, which Bradstreet believes bestow better praise on God than does her verse. For example, she writes that the "merry grasshopper" and "black clad Cricket" harmonize a "kind resound" "plaid on the same string" in praise of God (Stanza 9). In response, Bradstreet somewhat despondently asks, "Shall Creatures abject, thus their voices raise? / [. . .] / "Whilst I as mute, can warble forth no higher layes" (Stanza 9)? Bradstreet's complaint in these lines bears striking similarity to Prospero's conversation with Ariel on the topic of mercy near the end of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In this conversation, Ariel attempts to persuade Prospero to set aside his desire for vengeance by arguing that he himself would be moved to pity "were [he] human." Ariel's remarks provoke Prospero to ask, "Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling / Of their afflictions, and shall not myself, / One of their kind, that relish all as sharply / Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art"?⁸⁷ As Prospero puts it, as a human being, he should possess a greater capacity for mercy than Ariel, a mere spirit. Bradstreet's complaint is a related one: if such "abject" creatures as the grasshopper and cricket can so beautifully "warble forth" their songs, why can't she do better? While both Bradstreet and Prospero cling to humans' "imaginary sovereigntie" over the nonhuman world in these moments, their questions have the opposite effect of suggesting that Ariel, the grasshopper, and the cricket are the more merciful stewards of nature.

After the grasshopper and the cricket, Bradstreet turns her attention to the nightingale, who lacks the acquisitive attitude that undergirds the capitalist mode of production then emerging in Bradstreet's home of colonial New England. In Bradstreet's view, the nightingale

⁸⁷ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 5.1.16-20.

“neither toyles nor hoards up in [her] barn,” nor is the nightingale consumed by “cruciating cares / To gain more good” (Stanza 27). Contrasted with the nightingale is man himself, represented in the form of a Mariner, whom Bradstreet shortly thereafter compares to a “weather-beaten vessel wrackt with pain” (Stanza 30). For the passengers aboard the *Arbella*, this comparison would have struck a very real chord: not only had they recently braved the tumultuous seas on their voyage to colonial New England, but the colonial project itself began as a commercial venture headed up by the Massachusetts Bay Company. When we meet the Mariner, he steers the ship “as if he had command of wind and tide / And now becomes great Master of the seas” (Stanza 31). Much to his dismay, this mastery is just an illusion, as his hopes of success are soon dashed by a storm that arrives in the same stanza. In the next stanza, Bradstreet draws a lesson from the Mariner’s experience, writing that he is a “fond fool” who “faileth in this world of pleasure” because he “takes this earth ev’n for heav’ns bower” (Stanza 32). Put another way, the Mariner mistakenly assumes that his power over nature is absolute and thus secure. According to Bradstreet, though, “only above is found all with security,” a lesson the Mariner is forced to learn the hard way (Stanza 32). Bradstreet thus uses the figure of the Mariner to remind her readers of the fragility of what human beings accomplish on earth through their dominion over nature.

It is important to note that the Mariner’s mistaking of earth for heaven here echoes Bradstreet’s earlier response to the beauty of the woods of Andover, specifically when she concludes that the woods seem to be “More Heaven then earth” (Stanza 2). Bradstreet seems to make a mistake similar to that of the Mariner, in other words, by “tak[ing] this earth ev’n for heav’ns bower.” What differentiates these two moments, however, is the qualitative difference in Bradstreet’s and the Mariner’s attitudes towards nature. On the one hand, Bradstreet realizes that

the woods owe their heavenly character to God's grace, power, and benevolence, which occasions her to respect and worship nature as a form of religious devotion. The contemplation of nature thus enables Bradstreet to move beyond herself, to subordinate her concerns to those of nature. On the other hand, the Mariner is so consumed by the desire to "command," "take," and profit from nature in this life that he is unable to see beyond himself, so he subordinates nature to his own set of concerns. In short, he views the mastery he presumes to enjoy over nature as an inviolable right, not a privilege that can be taken away at a moment's notice.⁸⁸

In this regard, the Mariner's attitude is similar to that which Bradstreet cautions against in Meditation No. 53 of her *Meditations Diuine and Morall*. In this passage, Bradstreet frames the Christian individual who has fallen short in his faith as a mariner who, on the journey to "his heavenly country," mistakenly believes the earth to be the true "place of his abode":

a christian is sailing through this world vnto his heavenly country, and heere he hath many conueniences and comforts, but he must beware of desireing to make this the place of his abode, lest he meet with such tossings that may cause him to long for shore before he sees land we must therefore be heer as strangers and pilgrims, that we may plainly declare that we seek a citty aboue.⁸⁹

Here, Bradstreet emphasizes that human beings' time on earth is temporary and, as a result, what power they do have over nature is limited in the most basic way to the duration of their life. This power is also fundamentally insecure: while the mariner in this meditation gains "many conueniences and comforts" from the exercise of his power, it does not shield him from "tossings" like the storm that shatters the Mariner's dreams of mastery in "Contemplations." It is for this reason that Bradstreet argues that "we must therefore be heer as strangers and pilgrims,"

⁸⁸ Elsewhere in the poem Bradstreet expresses amazement that no amount of suffering "can make him deeply groan for that Divine Translation" (Stanza 30). In other words, like the Mariner, human beings often desperately cling to life as if it is the only one we have.

⁸⁹ Bradstreet, Meditation No. 53, *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 203.

whose power over nature is a privilege that should be exercised as a demonstration of one's commitment to God, not an unconditional right to exploit nature for worldly profit. Bradstreet reinforces this idea at the end of the meditation, when she alludes to John Winthrop's *A Modell of Christian Charity*, a sermon he wrote and purportedly delivered to the passengers aboard the *Arbella* during their voyage to New England. Here, she urges her fellow Puritans not to confuse New England, Winthrop's famous "citty upon a hill" and the place to which they were bound, for the true "citty above."⁹⁰ In this way, Bradstreet suggests that the New England Puritans' "errand into the wilderness" and their efforts to establish this "citty upon a hill" must not be guided purely by a desire for private gain, but by their love for God and community.

In the poem, Bradstreet frames the stories of Adam and Eve and, later, of Cain and Abel as stories of failed stewardship to reinforce a similar message. In the Scriptures themselves, both narratives record a fundamental change in human relationships to the land. After creating Adam, for example, God grants Adam absolute dominion over the earth and the right to enjoy nature's bounty in Eden on one condition—that he and Eve do not eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. From the moment of their creation, Adam and Eve's relationship to God is thus defined by their relationship to nature in the Garden of Eden. Bradstreet's poem expertly foregrounds the extent to which this is the case by describing Adam and Eve's first act of disobedience as a violation against nature, which God punishes by fundamentally altering humankind's relationship to it. In Bradstreet's words, Adam "fancyes the apple," then eats it, and in turn is "driven from that place, / To get his bread with pain, and sweat of face: / A penalty impos'd on his backsliding Race" (Stanza 11). Here, Adam and Eve fail in their devotion to God

⁹⁰ John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity* (1630), *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3rd series, 7:31-48 (Boston, 1838), 47.

primarily because they fail as stewards of nature, leading Bradstreet to interpret their theft from nature as a sign of a “backsliding Race.” Because Adam and Eve violated the terms of their relationship to nature, their punishment fittingly forces a change in this relationship: humankind must now engage in difficult agricultural labor to demonstrate their faith in God and to partake of nature’s bounty.

In the poem, Cain serves as an example of the ways in which this new relationship to nature can break down. When we first meet Cain and Abel in the Book of Genesis, their relationship to God is figured in terms of their relationship to the land: Cain is a farmer, and Abel, a shepherd. While the Scriptures do little to clarify why God ultimately prefers Abel’s offering to Cain’s, what matters for Bradstreet is how Cain responds to this moment. Rather than re-committing himself to his agricultural work, which was, for the New England Puritans, demonstrative of their faith in God, Cain instead chooses to raise “his future good” on his brother’s “blood” by murdering Abel (Stanza 13). This act of fratricide fundamentally perverts Cain’s relationship to land: his cultivation of the land is no longer an act of religious worship, but a sign of his active turning away from God, as he mixes Abel’s blood with the “Virgin Earth” (Stanza 14). In response to Cain’s actions, God fittingly condemns Cain to a life not unlike that lived by his brother: Cain trades his occupation as farmer for that of a shepherd but without a flock, a “Vagabond” forced to wander the earth (Stanza 15). Taken together, Cain functions in the poem as an example of how *not* to labor on the land and, in turn, serves to reaffirm the Puritan commitment to sedentary agricultural labor as a demonstration of faith in God.

Over the course of thirty-three stanzas, Bradstreet leads us to God through her contemplation of the woods of Andover. In the process, she tells us several cautionary tales about failed stewardship and religious devotion—from the Mariner, to Adam and Eve, to Cain

and Abel. While Bradstreet desires to be a better steward and to sing God's praises, whose glory she finds expressed everywhere in nature, she repeatedly confesses that she is not fit for the task. Set against Bradstreet and the other human figures featured in the poem are the nightingale, the grasshopper, and the cricket. In observing their ways, Bradstreet is led to a much different conclusion than a country-house poet like Jonson: while Jonson defines the estate lord in large part by his mastery of nature, Bradstreet emphasizes the many ways in which human beings cannot master nature or, even worse, how they exploit it in pursuit of this mastery. Both poets are certainly attentive of the nonhuman world, but the aims of their "practice of attention" differ, to return to Bartlett's words.⁹¹ While Jonson attends to the Penshurst landscape in order to inventory each way in which Robert Sidney has improved the landscape, Bradstreet attends to the woods of Andover to disabuse humankind of its "imaginary sovereigntie" over the nonhuman world.

Like the country-house verse of Lanyer, Hutchinson, and Cavendish, then, Bradstreet's "Contemplations" takes poems like "To Penshurst" to task for reinforcing the belief that humans are superior to the nonhuman world and therefore have a right to dominate it. Everywhere in nature Bradstreet sees signs of God's benevolence and power—from the gilded trees, to the converging streams, to the melodizing grasshopper and cricket. In her view, nature's "excellence" does not therefore derive from human improvement, as the seventeenth-century discourse of improvement would have it, but from God's own "excellence." To "magnifie" God and demonstrate one's faith in him, then, Bradstreet argues that humankind must respect and care for nature, rather than strive to "command" it, or even presuming that we can, as the Mariner does. Instead, Bradstreet argues that humankind's engagement with nature must begin with

⁹¹ Bartlett, "Anne Bradstreet's Ecological Thought," 293.

contemplation and attention, as the poem's title indicates. In doing so herself, Bradstreet concludes that humankind's dominion over the nonhuman world is often neither true nor legitimate, that its "command" of nature is far from secure, and that its use of nature must be carried out with the utmost care.

If "Contemplations" pushes the boundaries of the country-house genre as it has been traditionally defined, "Verses Upon the Burning of Our House" is a country-house poem's worst nightmare, dashing all hopes of humankind's "imaginary soveraigntie" over nature. Bradstreet's poem documents the loss of Bradstreet's home, possessions, the majority of her family's library, and at least one of her manuscripts—a draft of her quaternion "The Foure Monarchies"—to a devastating fire on July 10, 1666.⁹² While the country-house poem as it has been traditionally defined stages and authorizes the estate lord's imposition of power on the land, Bradstreet's poem illustrates precisely how tenuous humankind's control over nature is in painful detail. That Bradstreet chose to date the poem suggests she was thinking about the fire that consumed her home in the context of several other portentous events that occurred during the same year—all of which seemed to point to humankind's failed stewardship of nature. While we do not know exactly when Bradstreet drafted the poem in the months after the fire—only the date of the fire is known—it is likely that she also had the Great Fire of London in mind when doing so. The Great Fire of London destroyed as many as 80,000 homes in the first week of September 1666, two short months after her own home was destroyed.⁹³ That same year, the Great Plague of London

⁹² The final stanza of "The Foure Monarchies" provides this information: "But 'fore I could accomplish my desire, / My papers fell a prey to th' raging fire" (McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 140).

⁹³ In the 1678 edition of *The Tenth Muse*, Bradstreet directly references this fire in her poem "The Foure Elements" through the voice of the personified Fire: "And stately London (our great Britain's glory), / My raging flame did make a mournful story" (Hensley, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* [1967], lines 118-19). These lines obviously do not appear in McElrath, Jr. and Robb's *Complete Works*, since their edition reproduces the 1650 edition of *The Tenth Muse* wherever possible, and the fire occurred in 1666. London was a crowded city with many wooden buildings and thatched roofs, conditions which only fueled the flames.

claimed as many as 100,000 lives, or about one quarter of London's population, in the span of eighteen months. The year 1666 also corresponded to the Number of the Beast, 666, in Revelation 13:18, leading many Fifth Monarchists to believe that 1666 marked the onset of the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. In more ways than one, then, the events of the year 1666 seemed to signal that God was acting through nature to punish humankind. It is important to note that Bradstreet likely would have interpreted these events through the lens of covenantalism, or the belief that humans' outward success was a direct indicator of their favor with God. From this perspective, it could be reasonably argued that natural disasters like the fire which consumed both Bradstreet's home and the city of London signaled God's punishment for humankind's failed stewardship of nature. Through the poem's inventory of the material possessions she has lost, Bradstreet thus works to re-calibrate her relationship to nature and, in that way, to God.

In the poem itself, Bradstreet acts the part of Job, though her path to an acceptance of her suffering and God's ways is a struggle less prolonged and emotionally turbulent. Like Job, Bradstreet is justifiably attached to her material possessions, and she is rightfully devastated when they are destroyed in the fire. To capture the intensity of her grief, Bradstreet provides a virtual tour of the ruins of her home:

And here and there the places spye
Where oft I sate and long did lye.
Here stood that Trunk, and there that chest,
There lay that store I covnted best.
My pleasant things in ashes lye
And them behold no more shall I.
Vnder thy roof no gvest shall sit,
Nor at thy Table eat a bitt.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Bradstreet, "Verses Upon the Burning of Our House," lines 25-30. All future quotations from "Verses Upon the Burning of Our House" will be cited by line number and can be found in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 236-37.

These lines read like a eulogy to the country house, as a material object and as a site of social exchange. Whereas “To Penshurst” functions as an unofficial estate survey, listing the estate’s features and their uses, Bradstreet instead uses deictic language in these lines to provide a painfully detailed inventory of what she has lost. In this way, she uses the techniques of country-house verse, not to idealize the estate lord’s control over his estate, but to tell a cautionary tale about the fragility and insecurity of that control. At this point in the poem, however, Bradstreet has not fully accepted this fact: like Job, she is still deeply attached to her things, and she struggles to linguistically grab hold of the belongings she has lost in an effort to assert control over a situation that everywhere points to how uncontrollable nature can be.

In the space of just a few lines, however, Bradstreet does what Job cannot. She adopts a remarkably stoic attitude towards the situation by rationalizing the fire in terms of divine justice: “so it was, and so ‘twas jvst” (line 16).⁹⁵ Job, on the other hand, spends an excruciatingly long amount of time stuck between the two halves of Bradstreet’s statement: time and again in the Book of Job, Job is unable to move from the fact of his suffering to an acceptance of divine justice. In the face of immense suffering, Bradstreet reconciles herself to God’s ways rather quickly, even if she cannot understand them, rather than challenging them at every turn. In doing so, Bradstreet also recognizes how fragile her control over her possessions is. Whatever proprietorial claims she asserted over her home and her things have, along with her home, gone up in flames; in short, nature has mastered her. Bradstreet doubles down on this idea at the poem’s end, when she bids *adieu* to her belongings: “Farewell, my pelf, farewell, my Store” (line 52). Here, Bradstreet equates her “store” to “pelf,” a word loaded with meaning. While “pelf” can be used in a general way to describe one’s material possessions, the word more commonly is

⁹⁵ It is this tension between Bradstreet’s faith in God and her attachment to the material world that makes the poem, in the words of Ruiz and Castro, a “double-voiced text” (“Puritan Women Facing Suffering,” 100).

attached to some kind of value judgment, indicating trifles or something gained in a dishonorable way, such as war spoils.⁹⁶ By using this word to describe her one-time possessions, then, Bradstreet suggests that her possessions were never rightfully hers at all, despite what she once believed.

Having realized her attachment to her material possessions is a sign of her “vanity,” Bradstreet goes on to argue that what she regarded as her rightful property was only a gift given to her by God for a limited period of time. As in Cotton’s sermon, Bradstreet’s poem depicts God as a “mighty Architect” (line 44) who alone enjoys absolute ownership of the earth. Taking a page out of the book of country-house discourse, Bradstreet describes the house of God as a vision of economic stability:

Thou hast an house on high erect
Fram’d by that mighty Architect,
With glory richly furnished,
Stands permanent tho: this bee fled.
‘Its purchasèd and paid for too
By Him who hath Enough to doe.
A prise so vast as is vnknown,
Yet by his Gift is made thine own. (lines 43-50)

In these lines, Bradstreet advertises heaven as the sole “permanent” dwelling place in which humankind is not burdened by the continual payment of rent. The destruction of her home thus demonstrates just how wrong Cotton was when he promised his parishioners on the eve of their departure for New England that they would “dwell there like Free-holders” with “firme and durable possession.”⁹⁷ If anything, for Bradstreet, human beings more closely resemble tenants with quite limited proprietorial rights to their possessions, rights which can be ripped away at a moment’s notice, like those of the Mariner in “Contemplations.” Because so much of this poem

⁹⁶ See *OED Online*, s.v. “pelf, n.,” December 2019, Oxford University Press.

⁹⁷ Cotton, *Gods Promise*, 2.

draws on the conventions of the country-house genre, it is also possible to read these lines as an exposure of the illusion that country-house poems like “To Penshurst” tirelessly endeavor to sustain—that the estate is a permanent feature of the landscape, that it is “purchased and paid for too,” and that the estate lord enjoys absolute control of the land. In the space of just a few lines, Bradstreet dispels with this pretense, demonstrating that the country house can only ever aspire to the illusion of permanence. Only the house of God, for Bradstreet, truly meets these criteria.⁹⁸

Bradstreet more explicitly draws on the language of land tenure in Meditation No. 70 of her *Meditations Diuine and Morall*. Herein, she describes human beings as the tenants of their landlord, God, in a passage that bears striking resemblance to the language of Cotton’s farewell sermon:

All men are truly sayd to be tenants at will, and it may as truly be sayd that all haue a lease of their liues, some longer some shorter, as it pleases our great landlord to let. All haue their bounds set, ouer which they cannot passe, and till the expiration of that time, no dangers no sicknes, no paines nor troubles, shall put a period to our days, the certainty that that time will come, together, with the vncertainty, how where, and when, should make vs so to number our dayes as to apply our hearts to wisdome, that when wee are put out of these houses of Clay, we may be sure of an euer lasting habitation that fades not away.⁹⁹

Although Bradstreet applies the terminology of land tenure specifically to the human body in this meditation, the language helps to illuminate the argument she presents in “Verses” regarding the tenuous nature of our claims to the land. As in Meditation No. 53, Bradstreet argues that the impermanence of human life necessarily means that humans’ dominion over the earth is impermanent as well since this dominion is restricted to the duration of each individual’s life. In this way, Bradstreet yet again qualifies Cotton’s promise to his parishioners by illustrating that this conception of absolute property is bounded at the most basic level by our own mortality.

⁹⁸ Many estate lords were famously riddled with debt.

⁹⁹ Bradstreet, Meditation No. 70, *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 207.

In “Contemplations” and “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House,” Bradstreet depicts nature in all its forms, from the wonder it inspires to its terrible capacity for destruction. In doing so, Bradstreet draws attention to the many ways in which nature escapes humankind’s desire to master it—in some cases because nature’s beauty exceeds humankind’s ability to describe it and, in other cases, because a single fire can disabuse humankind of its “imaginary sovereigntie” over nature. By deploying conventions of the country-house genre in both poems, Bradstreet also undercuts the logic of poems like “To Penshurst,” a poem designed to sustain the illusion that the estate lord’s power to control the nonhuman world is absolute. Rather than laying claim to nature, in “Contemplations” the wonder that nature inspires leads Bradstreet to conclude that nature is a space in which one’s love for God and all of his creation should be practiced. In “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House,” Bradstreet replaces Jonson’s meticulous survey of the benefits Penshurst daily provides with a survey of the destruction of her home and an inventory of the possessions she has lost, in turn showing how fragile humans’ power over nature truly is. In each of these ways, Bradstreet uses her poems, not to press nature into the service of humankind, but to press humankind into the service of nature by instead attending to the tiniest miracles of nature, such as the grasshopper’s and the cricket’s song, in a careful and sustained way.

“As Weary Pilgrim”

While the Puritan in Bradstreet wrestles with her attachment to worldly things in “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House,” the Puritan ultimately wins out in “As Weary Pilgrim,” which Bradstreet composed in 1669, three years before her death. In this poem, Bradstreet is much

more self-assured, having rejected the seeming treasures of this life as little more than vanity.¹⁰⁰ Having figuratively and literally braved the difficulties of life in the wilderness, she fashions herself as a wearied laborer who now welcomes the next life. By deploying this metaphor of pilgrim as laborer, Bradstreet yet again frames her connection to God in terms of her relationship to nature, a defining feature of Puritan life in colonial New England. To build out this conceit, Bradstreet begins in a fallen world characterized by failed stewardship, embodied by figures like Adam and Cain in “Contemplations.” Over the course of the poem, Bradstreet goes on to recalibrate her relationship to nature and, in turn, to God by asking Christ, her sower, to “raise” her poorly sown soul. Bradstreet’s pilgrimage, in other words, is towards a model of stewardship based on the worship of God through the care of nature.

The opening section of the poem details the arduous “travailes” that Bradstreet has undergone in this life, which she describes as a series grueling encounters with the natural world. Bradstreet is a “weary pilgrim” because she has been worn-out by the “burning sun,” beaten by “stormy raines,” scratched by “bryars and thornes,” caught by “hungry wolues,” rendered lost among “erring pathes,” and cut by “rugged stones” (lines 1-15).¹⁰¹ As she does in “Contemplations,” Bradstreet again articulates the difficulties of her journey towards God as a difficult journey through the wilderness. Nearing the end of her life, she is now ready to trade this series of dangerous encounters with nature for the “safety” of heaven. Of course, Bradstreet’s language is metaphorical: she uses nature as a device for explaining the trials of the

¹⁰⁰ Bradstreet builds on this conception of vanity in more detail in her poem “The Vanity of All Worldly Things”: “What is’t in wealth, great treasures for to gain? / No, that’s but labour anxious, care and pain. / He heaps up riches, and he heaps up sorrow, / Its his to day, but who’s his heire to morrow” (lines 9-12)? For the full poem, see McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *Complete Works*, 159-61. Additionally, refer to Meditation No. 33 in *Meditations Diuine and Morall*: “Much Labour wearys the body, and many thoughts oppresse the minde man aimes at profit by the one & content in the other, but often misses of both, and findes nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit” (in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *Complete Works*, 199).

¹⁰¹ All future quotations from “As Weary Pilgrim” will be cited in text by line number and can be found in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 210-11.

soul in its path towards God. However, these lines should also be read more literally—that is, in the context of the New England Puritans’ “errand into the wilderness.” When the Puritans arrived in New England in 1630, the landscape they encountered was far from the Eden they had imagined; the soil was rocky and thin, and intense cultivation of the land proved quite difficult as a result. In this sense, Bradstreet is not simply a pilgrim weary in soul; she is also a pilgrim weary in body, a byproduct of the arduous “travailes” presented by an often-inhospitable land.

Bradstreet begins the poem, therefore, in a fallen world of failed stewardship and failed devotion. She carries this conceit through to the end to the poem, when she alludes to the Parable of the Sower by describing her body as a “Corrupt Carcasse” that has been “in weaknes and dishonour sowne,” which Christ will hopefully “raise” anew (lines 35-38).¹⁰² In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus compares the relative strength or weakness of the Christian individual’s faith to her failed or successful efforts to cultivate the land. In Bradstreet’s view, the Puritans in colonial New England were quite literally living out this parable: at times, she and the members of her community admittedly failed as stewards of nature and followers of God; although they have occasionally fallen “by the way side,” Bradstreet now wishes to be sown in “good ground,” as the parable goes. By asking Christ to “raise” her soul anew, Bradstreet also echoes Cotton’s farewell sermon. Her poem is a reflection on all the ways in which she has not been, in Cotton’s words, “right planted,” and she now hopes that Christ will remedy this by reaping the “Corrupt

¹⁰² The parable can be found in the three Synoptic Gospels: Matthew 13: 1-23, Mark 4: 1-20, and Luke 8:4-15. In the Geneva Bible, it reads as follows: “The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Carcasse” she has sown. With Christ’s aid, then, Bradstreet believes that she can become the “tree of righteousness” that Cotton uses as a model of Christian life in his sermon. In these ways, Bradstreet thus draws on the traditional connection the New England Puritans drew between the stewardship of nature and one’s faith in God. Moreover, by asking that Christ be her sower, Bradstreet suggests that humankind’s interaction with nature must be guided by its love for God.

In Meditation No. 64, Bradstreet crafts a parable of her own about “gods orchard,” which further illuminates this point. In particular, Bradstreet describes the strength or weakness of an individual’s faith in God in terms of land improvement and deforestation, practices which were increasingly common in colonial New England:

We see in orchards, some trees soe fruitfull, that the waight of their Burden is the breaking of their limbes, some again, are but meanly loaden, and some haue nothing to shew but leaues only, and some among them are dry stocks so is it in the church which is gods orchard, there are some eminent Christians, that are soe frequent in good dutys that many times, the waight thereof impares both their bodys and estates, and ther are some (and they sincere ones too) who haue not attained to that fruitfullnes, altho they aime at perfection And again there are others that haue nothing to commend them but only a gay profession, and these are but leavie Christians, which are in as much danger of being cut down, as the dry stock, for both cumber the ground.¹⁰³

In this passage, Bradstreet conceives of three possible modes of Christian life: there are trees overloaded with fruit, trees bearing a more modest amount of fruit, and trees bearing no fruit, decorated only with leaves. She writes the latter of the three, the “leavie Christians” whose outward signs of faith lack true substance, “cumber the ground” and thus risk “being cut down.” The comparison suggests that “leavie Christians” are no more than Winthrop’s “waste lands and woods”—that is, forests which have not been improved in some way, either by being cleared for tillage or being cut down for timber.¹⁰⁴ In this way, Bradstreet’s meditation illustrates Cronon’s

¹⁰³ Bradstreet, Meditation No. 64, *Meditations Diuine and Morall*, in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 205-6.

¹⁰⁴ Winthrop, “General Observations” (1629), quoted in Silverman, ““We Chuse to be Bounded,”” 1.

view of the New England Puritan settlers as people who viewed forest clearing as the “progress of cultivation”: to improve the land was to do God’s work, and to succeed in these efforts signaled the individual’s and the community’s favor with God.¹⁰⁵ Just as forests must be improved, in other words, so too must Christians strive to “attaine to that fruitfulness” in order to be right with God.

In the final line of this poem, Bradstreet transforms from pilgrim to lover, welcoming Christ into her arms in a striking, religious permutation of the refrain in Christopher Marlowe’s “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” (1599), a poem of erotic seduction set in a world of pastoral bliss.¹⁰⁶ In Marlowe’s poem, the shepherd’s main goal is to encourage his beloved to indulge his desires, and he makes this argument primarily by describing the diverse ways in which the lovers might indulge in nature’s bounty: “Come live with mee, and be my love,” the shepherd pleads, “And we will all the pleasures prove, / That vallies, groves, hills and fieldes, / Woods, or steepie mountaine yeeldes” (lines 1-4).¹⁰⁷ Echoing the shepherd’s refrain, Bradstreet beckons her beloved, Christ, to escort her into the next life in the poem’s final line: “Come deare bridgrome Come away” (line 44). While Marlowe’s shepherd endeavors to seduce his lover by likening the pleasures they might “prove” to those that nature everywhere “yeeldes,” Bradstreet

¹⁰⁵ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 126.

¹⁰⁶ As I explained in the dissertation’s Introduction, many early modern pastoral texts imagined a simpler version of nature in relative harmony with humankind. These texts often centered on the figure of the shepherd, who was depicted in a state of *otium*, or leisure, among scenes of natural bounty, either pastures or woodlands. The shepherd’s complaint, typically about unrequited love, was also a common feature of pastoral texts.

¹⁰⁷ Christopher Marlowe, “The Passionate Sheeheard to His Love,” in Woudhuysen, *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, 265-66; and in *England’s Helicon, Reprinted from the Edition of 1600 with additional Poems from the Edition of 1614* (London, 1925), 186-87. Stanford also notes that “As Weary Pilgrim” in certain ways resembles Plangus’s lament for his beloved Erona in Sidney’s *The Countess of Pembrokes Arcadia* (1590) (“Books With Which Anne Bradstreet Was Acquainted,” in *Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan*, 135-44). As I have shown earlier in this chapter, Bradstreet was extremely well-read in the Elizabethan pastoral tradition, and we know that she read Sir Walter Raleigh’s *History of the World*, so we can safely assume that she was familiar with both Marlowe’s poem and Raleigh’s reply to Marlowe, “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” (1600), which I discuss in the next paragraph. For a more recent critical edition of Marlowe’s poetry, see Patrick Cheney and Brian J. Striar, *The Collected Poems of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

approaches her act of seduction in this poem by instead detailing the minute ways in which her encounters with nature have been difficult and her stewardship of nature has failed. Here at the poem's end, then, Bradstreet yearns for Christ to restore this fallen world of failed stewardship, and to reap what she has poorly sown.

In depicting a world far from Marlowe's world of pastoral bliss, "As Weary Pilgrim" shares much with Sir Walter Raleigh's reply to Marlowe, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (1600). Nature is not endlessly bountiful in either Raleigh's or Bradstreet's poems; instead, the natural world is in a state of decay. Raleigh's nymph paints such a picture in responding to the shepherd's invitation: around her "Rivers rage, and Rocks grow cold," "flowers doe fade, & wanton fieldes, / To wayward winter reckoning yeeldes," and later these same flowers "soone breake, soone wither" and are "soone forgotten."¹⁰⁸ Whereas Marlowe's shepherd views the transitory nature of life as reason to indulge in his desires and in nature's bounty, Raleigh's nymph sees in that same ephemerality reason to reject the shepherd's advances. Moreover, while Marlowe's shepherd views nature as an unlimited supply of resources that exist for his and his lover's pleasure, Raleigh's nymph cuts the shepherd's dreams short by reminding him of the limitations human beings face in their engagement with nature.

Like the nymph, Bradstreet is keenly attuned throughout her work to the many ways in which the shepherd's understanding of nature is flawed. Nowhere in this poem does she pretend that humans' experience with nature is easy or ideal because her faith and her lived experience testified to its difficulties: her faith taught her that we live in a fallen world in which humans

¹⁰⁸ Sir Walter Raleigh, "The Nymphs Reply to the Sheeheard," in *England's Helicon, Reprinted from the Edition of 1600 with additional Poems from the Edition of 1614* (London, 1925), 187-88. I have opted for this edition, rather than a more recent critical edition, to show the poem as Bradstreet would have encountered it. For more on Raleigh's poetry, see Michael Rudick's edited collection *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh: A Historical Edition* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance English Text Society, 1999).

would struggle to partake in nature's bounty, and her experience living in the austere conditions of colonial New England confirmed this view. Like the nymph, Bradstreet also emphasizes the impermanence of the natural world and human life. In "Verses Upon the Burning of Our House," for instance, she contends that human beings cannot occupy the earth as landowners with absolute proprietary rights, not least because of their own mortality.¹⁰⁹ Bradstreet reinforces this view through the figure of the Mariner in "Contemplations," who is disabused of his presumed mastery over nature by a storm. Taken together, Bradstreet's ecological verse functions as a second reply, of sorts, to Marlowe's shepherd, whose invitation to the shepherd rests on the belief that his ability to indulge in nature's pleasures is unlimited.

In these ways, like "Contemplations" and "Verses Upon the Burning of Our House," "As Weary Pilgrim" captures both the harsh realities of the colonists' lived experience with nature in New England and the Puritan call to steward God's earth, even as the economy and system of property rights in the region was increasingly coming to depend on practices that involved the intensified mastery and exploitation of nature. To put another way, Bradstreet's poem makes a case for revitalizing the New England Puritan model of stewardship at a time when that model seemed increasingly incompatible with the economy and system of property rights in colonial New England. While she has failed as a steward of nature in this poem—and humankind has poorly "sown" the land from the moment of the Fall—Bradstreet argues over the course of this poem that she might be, with Christ's aid, a better reaper of the earth—that is, if she allows her love for God to guide her use of nature. In this way, Bradstreet's poem models and enacts how the New England Puritans, ideally, wished to engage with nature: to treat nature as a space in

¹⁰⁹ While Cotton insists in his farewell sermon that New England offers a permanent dwelling place for the Puritans, the Puritans did not regard New England as a permanent home in the early days of the colony. Rather, they viewed New England as a temporary place of refuge from religious persecution, impoverishment, and unemployment in England. Discussions of returning to England continued roughly until the Restoration.

which to demonstrate their love for God and his creation.

“A Dialogue Between Old England and New”

While the poems I have discussed up to this point are rooted firmly in human relationships to the land in colonial New England, Bradstreet’s “A Dialogue between Old England and New, Concerning Their Present Troubles” brings her ecological mode of thinking to bear on questions about the British nation and empire.¹¹⁰ In this poem, Bradstreet raises a set of concerns about land use that only a woman who had lived in both Old and New England and, having travelled the distance of the Atlantic, now writing in colonial New England was uniquely positioned to articulate. As she allegorically travels between each England in the poem, Bradstreet uses land stewardship, both good and bad, as a framework for understanding the primary political and religious conflict plaguing Old England at the time: the English Civil War.¹¹¹ More specifically, Bradstreet draws attention to the land destroyed over the course of this conflict and demonstrates a sharp awareness of the environmental cost of England’s civil wars. Last, by foregrounding England’s failure to manage its own land, Bradstreet calls into question

¹¹⁰ Gillespie has also argued that Bradstreet engages with ideas about empire-building in her verse. More specifically, Gillespie contends that “in the very act of spreading British empire, colonials such as Bradstreet and the men who appended her manuscript with prefatory verses fractured unified definitions of empire and received versions of national identity for the purpose of fashioning a gap between centralized British imperial programmes and the infant colony’s divergent desire to function somewhat autonomously as a ‘semi-periphery’ of the British empire” (“This Briny Ocean Will O’erflow Your Shore,” 99). In the same article, Gillespie links Bradstreet to Sappho, who was dubbed the “tenth muse” by Plato, by comparing Bradstreet’s own situation in colonial New England in the lead-up to the English Civil War with “Sappho’s position as an exile in Sicily from Lesbos in ancient Greece during the period when her native island experienced a series of conflicts between the nobility and the commoners.” Gillespie goes on to say that “the figure of Sappho had been repackaged for early modern English readers primarily through translations of Ovid, himself an exile from the Roman Empire” (“This Briny Ocean Will O’erflow Your Shore,” 100). Stanford reads the poem in a rather different way, arguing that the poem resembles both the broadside ballad and the seventeenth-century sermon. Stanford draws particular attention to New England’s final speech in the poem as an example of the “program of action” that could be found in the “Uses” section of most sermons from the period (*Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan*, 52-61).

¹¹¹ For a discussion of the ways in which Bradstreet’s “Foure Monarchies” responds to the events of the English Civil War, see Jane D. Eberwein, “Civil War and Bradstreet’s ‘Monarchies,’” *Early American Literature* 26, no. 2 (1991): 119-144.

Old England's ability to manage colonial New England.

Bradstreet thus offers a kind of critical reading in "A Dialogue Between Old England and New" of the land use practices of seventeenth-century England. Put another way, Bradstreet suggests that Old England's inability to manage its own land, which the outbreak of the Civil War made evident, makes it potentially unfit to rule and unable to maintain hold over the lands it has colonized like New England. Moreover, the English Civil War represents for the Puritan in Bradstreet a failure of England's most basic moral and religious duty to the land: to properly steward the earth that God has given to us. In offering this critical reading of England, then, Bradstreet asserts the Puritan model of stewardship in England made "new" across the Atlantic as a less environmentally destructive mode of engaging with nature. In making this argument, moreover, Bradstreet positions herself as someone more capable of this kind of stewardship, effectively expanding her role from manager of her home in Ipswich to a manager of an empire.

"A Dialogue Between Old England and New" can be best described as a poem about the environmental cost of war and the various political, economic, demographic, and agricultural problems that stem from the destruction of land. Broadly speaking, the poem begins with New England's concern for her mother, Old England, who grieves over an unnamed problem. As Old England details the cause of her grief, New England attempts to comfort her, but the tone in which New England consoles her mother is often self-congratulatory because she is not plagued by civil war and is, she suggests, thus better managed than her mother. While Old England often laments the religious divisions between Catholics and Protestants that caused the Civil War, much of the focus of her conversation with New England is about the land that has been destroyed, the basic human necessities that have been lost in the process, such as food and shelter, and the lost labor force required to produce both. What is perhaps most interesting about

this poem, though, is that it is voiced by two women: a mother and a daughter representing Old and New England. While the gendering of the land during the early modern period was certainly nothing new, in excluding men from the conversation, Bradstreet suggests that women, and the speaker of this poem, may be better equipped to make decisions about land use than the men, including England's political leaders and those fighting on the battlefield, who have turned a once great England into a "troubled Land" through war.¹¹² At the very least, Bradstreet's choice to have two women voice this poem opens up a new space in which to imagine alternative methods of engaging with the land. In this way, the poem also demonstrates the importance of considering women writer's contributions to the seventeenth-century discourse on improvement and, more broadly, on human relationships to land in seventeenth-century England and New England.

The question that New England poses to Old England at the poem's outset portrays Old England as beset by environmental disaster: "What deluge of new woes over-whelme / The glories," she asks, "of thy ever famous Realme?" When Old England provides what is at best an ambiguous answer, New England proceeds to list a series of possible causes for Old England's new woes, the overwhelming majority of which focus on the destruction of the land. New England runs through the history of Old England, starting with the legendary fifth-century invasion of Old England by brothers Hengist and Horda, whose "tempestuous Wars," she writes, have "trod down" England's fields. New England follows this example with an allusion to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 led by Duke William I of Normandy, "whose victorious hand with *English* blood bedew[ed] thy conquered land." It is clear from the start that New

¹¹² All future quotations from "A Dialogue between Old England and New" can be found in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works* (1981), 141-48. Because the poem lacks line numbers, they are not reproduced in the in-text citations.

England's primary interest, here, is in the catastrophic effects of invasion and war on the land. Moreover, by describing these effects as environmental disasters like tempests and deluges, New England changes the focus of the cost of war from the human lives lost to the physical places destroyed by power-hungry men.

Old England echoes these concerns about the destruction of land and what ramifications it has for the state of England as a whole when she expresses regret for failing to learn from the mistakes of other nations. She cites the various German states and principalities during the Thirty Years' War, in particular, as examples. In Bradstreet's words, the geographical region that encompasses these states and principalities was once a "fruitfull Land" but is now a "barren heath." Additionally, the people who inhabit this region are now "famish'd," as she says, and its castles' walls have been, in her words, "dismantled." What Old England chooses to prioritize in the case of the German states and principalities—the destruction of the natural and the built environment, and the effects this destruction has on the population—gives us a view into her thinking on the English Civil War. What concerns Old England, here, is not so much the religious and political causes of war, but their damaging effects on the land, which has been made barren and, in turn, resulted in a famine.

This sentiment continues through the rest of the poem as Old England questions whether the Civil War will bring an end to the divisions that now afflict her. She says that "one battell, two or three, [she] might abide" if "the field alone [could] this cause decide," but if these military conflicts are only the "beginnings of more woe," in her words, then this war is nothing but futile. Among these woes she cites the "plunder[ing]" of towns, "devastation" of houses, the "dearth of grain," and, most notably, the hopeless "Ploughman" who cannot muster the labor

force needed to help him during the harvest because so many men have been lost to the war.¹¹³ In these lines, Old England is clearly attuned to the effects that reverberate from the destruction of her land: in her words, the failure to properly steward the land renders the State unable to take care of its people and, in that way, unable to fulfill the basic requirements of rulership.

While New England's response to Old England's lament is sympathetic on the whole, in the process of consoling her mother, New England positions herself as superior to Old England for having achieved, in her eyes, a more successful model of land use and management. Since religious divisions played a part in the outbreak of the Civil War, New England suggests that Old England "root out...head, tail, branch, and rush" all things Catholic, which would effectively produce a space that resembles Puritan New England. In this way, New England suggests that Old England is a poorly tended garden, riddled with Catholic weeds that need to be "rooted out" in order to be set right. While Bradstreet considerably oversimplifies the religious conflict, here, by imagining the many Protestant sects that arose during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as having a unified set of interests and beliefs, for a Puritan poet writing in colonial New England, her proposed solution in this section of the poem is not terribly surprising.¹¹⁴

What Bradstreet does at the end of her poem, then, is to elevate New England as a better-managed land than Old England, and herself, in turn, as a skilled manager of it—or at least someone who has put considerable thought into how it could be managed more effectively. In short, by framing the source of Old England's woes as one of mismanaged land throughout the poem, Bradstreet demonstrates the need for an alternative model of land use in England made "new" across the Atlantic and to fashion herself, in turn, as an effective land manager. In this

¹¹³ The figure of the ploughman also appears, though in a far less dire state, in Bradstreet's "Four Seasons," in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 46-53.

¹¹⁴ She also seems to conflate conservative, or Laudian, Protestants with Roman Catholics.

way, Bradstreet extends her skillful management of the home, for which the clergyman Nathaniel Ward praises her, to the realm of politics, of nation- and empire-building. By demonstrating that Old England is unable to effectively and sustainably manage its lands both at home and abroad, which the outbreak of the Civil War made clear, Bradstreet underlines the necessity of a new mode of land management represented by New England—a properly tended, Puritan garden—and for a new manager of England’s lands, a role she herself steps into in this poem as a female poet writing in New England.

Bradstreet’s “A Dialogue Between Old England and New” offers a particularly useful view into the ways in which Bradstreet was thinking about not just her own relationship to nature, but that of England itself—and more specifically how the English empire was and continued in her time to be built on the domination, mastery, and exploitation of nature. As I have shown here, Bradstreet sees in the destruction of the land of Old England during its series of civil wars the need for a less destructive relationship to nature, specifically one that does not bend nature to man’s will in his struggle for power. In the opening of her poem “The Four Monarchies,” a draft of which was destroyed in the fire that consumed her home, Bradstreet writes that there was a time before empire when “Man did not strive for Sovereignty” (line 2).¹¹⁵ However, when the biblical figure and first king, Nimrod, who reigned 131 years before the flood as Bradstreet puts it, took power he “Both Beasts and Men subjected to his spoils” (line 8). Drawing on the ancient myth of the Golden Age, Bradstreet sees the birth of empire as synonymous with domination, and the subjection of nature and its creatures to man’s will as part and parcel of empire-building. In “A Dialogue Between Old England and New,” Bradstreet begins to dismantle this logic by emphasizing its extreme costs on the land itself.

¹¹⁵ Bradstreet, “The Four Monarchies,” in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 53-140.

IV. Conclusion

As I have shown in this chapter, Rich's claims about the absence of ecological concerns in Bradstreet's verse miss the mark. While the landscape is not the primary focus of Bradstreet's verse, and its function is not to provide an inventory of the topographical features of New England, the landscape of New England is not "totally absent" from her verse. Moreover, Rich's additional claim that Bradstreet's only substantive engagement with nature is a set of "wooden" representations of the landscape of England risks eliding the dialectical relationship between material practices of land use and representations of nature, to which Bradstreet's verse so shrewdly attends.¹¹⁶ Put another way, what makes Bradstreet's verse ecological is her awareness of the ways in which particular modes of representing nature shape how human beings interact with it in very tangible ways. As the poems I have examined in this chapter show, after all, the desire to master nature and the pursuit of that mastery are so often fueled and legitimized by humans' "imaginary sovereigntie" over it.

In "Contemplations" and "Verses Upon the Burning of Our House," Bradstreet offers a two-pronged response to the efforts of country-house poets like Jonson to authorize this "imaginary sovereigntie": first, she emphasizes how fragile this power is; second, by attending in great detail to all the ways in which she is "rapt" by nature, she accesses the wonder that she believes will move human beings to respect nature, not strive to master it. In "As Weary Pilgrim," Bradstreet admits that she has often fallen short as a steward of God's creation, so she asks Christ, her sower, to restore her relationship to God by restoring her relationship to the land as an expression of love for God himself, and specifically for God in nature. Bradstreet extends this argument about failed stewardship to the English nation and empire in "A Dialogue Between

¹¹⁶ Rich, "Foreword," in Hensley, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, xiv.

Old England and New” by suggesting that war-torn England would do well to follow the model of stewardship she articulates in “As Weary Pilgrim.” In each of these poems, Bradstreet ultimately exhorts her readers to “be heer as strangers and pilgrims” exercising usufruct, not absolute, rights to the land. In doing so, Bradstreet argues that the dominion human beings were granted by God over the earth is not an unconditional right, but a right that is contingent on fulfilling one’s Christian duty to steward the earth with care.

To work against the exploitative logic of men like the Mariner and Nimrod, as well as Comus and Prospero, Bradstreet’s verse re-energizes the New England Puritan model of stewardship, which insisted that the individual’s use of nature be guided by love for God and all of his creation. Over the course of the colonial period, this model became increasingly untenable, as the economy and system of property in Puritan New England opened the doors to the more intensive use of land and natural resources. In these ways, Bradstreet’s verse is as much a response to her historical circumstances—how the convergence of an emerging capitalist economy and Puritan theology shaped human relationships to the land in colonial New England—as it is a response to the ways in which the seventeenth-century literary imagination shaped these relationships. Rather than legitimizing human’s sovereignty over nature by representing it in its most ideal form in her verse, as the seventeenth-century court masque and country-house poem were designed to do, Bradstreet undercuts this logic by reminding her readers that their command of nature is neither unconditional nor secure.

CHAPTER FOUR

A “Holy Use of All the Creatures”: Mary Cary, Anna Trapnel, and Margaret Cavendish

Seek Ecological Justice in Utopias

Introduction

Margaret Cavendish’s *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* (1666) opens with the story of a young woman who is pursued and abducted by a predatory merchant.

The story reads:

A Merchant travelling into a foreign Country, fell extreamly in Love with a young Lady; but being a stranger in that Nation, and beneath her, both in Birth and Wealth, he could have but little hopes of obtaining his desire; however his Love growing more and more vehement upon him, even to the slighting of all difficulties, he resolved at last to Steal her away; which he had the better opportunity to do, because her Father’s house was not far from the Sea; and she often using to gather shells upon the shore, accompanied not with above two or three of her servants, it encouraged him the more to execute his design. Thus coming one time with a little light Vessel [. . .] to the place where she used to repair; he forced her away.¹

In this scene, the Merchant capitalizes on his maritime expertise to abduct the young Lady: he harnesses his knowledge of the sea, of the position of the young Lady’s home, and of her habit of gathering shells along the shore in order to more easily “execute his design.” In this way, Cavendish’s text primes readers for the young Lady’s own exploitative use of knowledge about the nonhuman world, which the young woman practices on a much larger scale in the rest of the text. After becoming Empress of the Blazing World, the heretofore undiscovered world to which she has been taken, she weaponizes the knowledge, technology, and labor of the Blazing World’s

¹ Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* (London, 1666), 1-2. All future quotations from *The Blazing-World* will be taken from this edition. This scene echoes Comus’s abduction of the Lady in John Milton’s *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*.

half-human, half-animal creatures for personal and political gain.²

To answer the Merchant's act of human injustice, Cavendish's text looks almost immediately to the nonhuman world. Shortly after the merchant has abducted the young woman, Nature intervenes, swiftly delivering the merchant over to the hands of divine justice: "But when," Cavendish writes, "he fancied himself the happiest man of the World, he proved to be the most unfortunate; for Heaven frowning at his Theft, raised such a Tempest" that the merchant's ship was carried to the North Pole, where it was "forced [. . .] amongst huge pieces of Ice," and the men and his crew "were all frozen to death."³ Shortly after this tempest subsides, the young woman washes up on the shores of the Blazing-World, a world separate from her own, and is saved by a group of hybrid creatures, half-bear and half-man, who take her temporarily into their care. In the process, these creatures finally put an end to the Merchant's mastery over nature. Having done away with the Merchant, the not-fully-human world goes on to show its kinder face, as the bear-men soothe the young Lady's fears that "every moment her life was to be a sacrifice to their cruelty." As the text reads, the bear-men were "so far from exercising any cruelty upon her, that rather they shewed her all civility and kindness imaginable."⁴ While all available evidence thus leads the young Lady to expect the worst from human beings and nature, in the end it is humankind that proves most capable of cruelty.

In these ways, the nonhuman world, or the not-fully-human world, in the text's opening scene rejects the exploitative designs of the Merchant, and replaces them with acts of mercy and

² Scholars generally agree that the hybrid creatures are caricatures of early modern natural philosophers. While the creatures' rational capacities render them more than mere animals from an early modern perspective, they are not classified as full members of the human species. What matters more, here, is that Cavendish troubles the binary drawn during this period between rational human beings and machine-like animals by endowing these creatures with intelligence. Since this binary helped to legitimate the domination of the nonhuman world, by dismantling this binary Cavendish also challenges the attitude that the nonhuman world should be dominated.

³ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 2.

⁴ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 4-5.

respect. As the text unfolds, the Empress simply compounds the Merchant's actions by exploiting the Blazing World's hybrid creatures and natural resources in an effort to consolidate power. On the one hand, the text celebrates this consolidation of power insofar as it ensures social order. The text also welcomes the Empress's scientific and technological control over nature, which would define early modern Europeans' relationship with the nonhuman world going forward, as Europeans sought to build global empires. At the same time, considering the text's critical view of the Merchant here, the text also warns against the ruling classes' ability to abuse this power to inflict extreme harm on other human beings and the nonhuman world in these pursuits.

Cavendish's Merchant and Empress share much in common with the "harvest of wicked men" whom Fifth Monarchist prophetess Mary Cary condemns in *A New and More Exact Mappe, or a Description of New Jerusalem's Glory* (1651). In this text, Cary specifically argues that these men's "corruption" had singlehandedly "put an enmity between" the human and nonhuman worlds in mid-seventeenth-century England.⁵ According to Fifth Monarchists like Cary and her contemporary Anna Trapnel, so long as monarchical power existed in name and in practice, there would be no reprieve from either "covetousness" or "cruelty," which Trapnel suggested "would give no rest to Man or Beast": religious minorities would be persecuted; the poor would be dispossessed of their common rights to the land; and poor laborers, animals, and the land itself would be exploited on a more intense scale for the gain of the wealthiest few.⁶

As Fifth Monarchists, Cary and Trapnel believed that this tyrannical exercise of royal power would not go unpunished for long. In their view, the Fourth (Roman) monarchy would soon be destroyed, marking the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ and his saints on

⁵ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 186 and 292.

⁶ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 47.

earth known as the millennium, as prophesied in the Book of Daniel. For most Fifth Monarchists, the political upheaval of the 1640s and 1650s confirmed this view—from the drawn-out civil wars, to the creation of the New Model Army, the regicide, and Cromwell’s tyrannical accumulation of power. Time and again in their condemnations of the ruling classes’ covetous and cruel exercise of power, Cary and Trapnel’s prophetic writings frame Charles I and Oliver Cromwell as failed stewards of God’s “estate,” along with all those Members of Parliament, the Protectorate government, and clergymen who propped up their rule.⁷ According to Cary and Trapnel, God’s scythe will soon cut down this “harvest of wicked men” as a direct consequence of this failed stewardship. In turn, Cary and Trapnel portray the new world that will be established in the aftermath, or the New Jerusalem, as a world in which humankind exercises more mercy and restraint in its dealings with the nonhuman world. By making this argument, I offer the most sustained critical approach to date of these women as ecological thinkers.

In this chapter, I argue that Cary’s and Trapnel’s texts engage in early modern utopian discourse by simulating worlds that condemn the increasingly covetous and cruel use of the nonhuman world in mid-seventeenth-century England. In comparison, Cavendish’s text presents a less clear-cut argument. On the one hand, the text is a materialist fantasy about giving god-like powers to a single ruler, in this case a woman, and it welcomes the use of royal power to restore control over a disorderly world ravaged by war. On the other hand, the text repeatedly draws special attention to the ecological cost of this exercise of power, revealing how an aggressive Empress can do tremendous harm to people and nature. In other words, the text offers a disturbingly enthusiastic portrayal of a ruler’s attempts to restore social order by wielding near-cosmic power and, at the same time, warns against the exploitation on which this order is built.

⁷ Mary Cary, *A Word in Season to the Kingdom of England* (London, 1647), 1.

Although Cary, Trapnel, and Cavendish therefore share a general concern about the ways in which the ruling classes legitimized and sustained themselves by controlling and exploiting the nonhuman world in agrarian capitalist England, Cavendish does not call for the radical political and ecological reform for which Cary and Trapnel advocate.

To varying degrees, these women's utopian writings therefore demonstrate that humankind's sovereignty over the nonhuman world should be exercised with more care. In the process, these texts demonstrate the need for a new set of values that, when put into practice, ensures a more sustainable and less cruel use of the nonhuman world. To be clear, none of these women go so far as to argue that nature should be left alone, or that humankind's God-given dominion over the earth is illegitimate; rather, their argument centers on exercising this power with the utmost care. To counteract the effects of the exploitative impulses of individuals like Cavendish's Merchant and Empress, Cary and Trapnel craft an environmental ethos grounded in the "holy," "merciful," and "comfortable use" of the nonhuman world, to borrow Cary's words.⁸ Although Cavendish does not explicitly call for political or ecological reform of the kind Cary and Trapnel advocate, her text offers a negative model of relations between human rulers and the nonhuman world—at once welcoming absolutist rule, and cautioning against the over-exploitation on which it is built and sustained. In doing so, these texts demonstrate that human beings' "right over nature," to borrow Bacon's phrase, does not entail the unconditional license to use nature however they please, but is instead conditioned on stewarding that world with care—a claim Anne Bradstreet also makes, as I have shown in Chapter Three.

To demonstrate this argument, I begin by providing an overview of the scholarship that

⁸ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 277, 314, and 317. Regarding the "merciful" use of animals, Cary paraphrases Proverbs 12:10 (GNV): "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the mercies of the wicked are cruel." In Cary's words, "*The good man is merciful to his beast*" (*A New and More Exact Mapped*, 86-7).

situates these texts within early modern utopian discourse. I then turn to Cary's *A Word in Season to the Kingdom of England* (1647) and *A New and More Exact Mappe* (1651) to argue that Cary positions herself as the proper steward of God's estate by envisioning a labor system, for humans and animals alike, built on the "holy use" of all of God's creation.⁹ In the next section, I examine Anna Trapnel's *The Cry of a Stone, Or A Relation of Something Spoken in Whitehall* (1654), a transcription of the prophetic visions Trapnel experienced after falling into a twelve-day trance in January 1654 in Whitehall Palace while awaiting the trial of Parliamentary Army Chaplain and Fifth Monarchist preacher Vavasour Powell, who had been accused of slandering Cromwell.¹⁰ By and large, these visions center on the failed stewardship of Cromwell and all those involved in the Protectorate government, who, according to Trapnel and other radical sectarians, had collectively failed to be the "trees of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:3) that John Cotton urges his parishioners to be in *Gods Promise to His Plantation*, which I discussed in Chapter Three. As Trapnel's trance nears an end, she even goes so far as to suggest that she has been charged with the task of infiltrating country estates, and Whitehall Palace itself, to reform the exploitative practices of the ruling classes from the inside out. In the chapter's final section, I return to Cavendish's *The Blazing-World*, reading it in two ways: as a materialist fantasy about putting god-like powers in the hands of a single ruler and as a cautionary tale about how an aggressive Empress can inflict extreme harm on other human beings and the nonhuman world. In doing so, I demonstrate that Cary's, Trapnel's and, to a lesser extent, Cavendish's texts argue for ecological justice, which is to say more just and sustainable practices of engaging with the

⁹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 277.

¹⁰ In April 1654, Trapnel was arrested and tried on charges of madness, vagrancy, witchcraft, and sedition. She was eventually released from Bridewell prison and cleared of all charges. For a full account of her trial, see Anna Trapnel, *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea, or, A Narrative of her Journey into Cornwall* (London, 1654).

nonhuman world.

I. Women's Utopian Writing in Early Modern England

The titles that Cary, Trapnel, and Cavendish give to their texts clue the reader in to their main function as utopian explorations of alternative relationships between humankind and the nonhuman world. For example, in *A Word in Season* and *A New and More Exact Mappe*, Cary fashions herself as farmer, estate surveyor, and New World explorer, and in these roles comes to offer a “new mappe” of a world in which animals are treated more mercifully. In *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel imagines herself as a stone crying out, fusing with nature in order to speak on its behalf. Finally, in *The Blazing-World*, the young-Lady-turned-Empress of the Blazing-World gives new meaning to the world's name by weaponizing the world's “Blazing-stars” to cow her people into submission and exploit and subdue the nonhuman world. In each text, these women engage in a utopian mode of thinking to warn against the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world during the mid-seventeenth century. Unlike Cavendish, however, Cary and Trapnel go so far as to imagine and argue for radical ecological reform.

According to Lucy Sargisson's and Fredric Jameson's views on “utopia,” these texts are utopian because they simulate worlds that not only put the exploitation of the nonhuman world on full display, but also consider how humankind might treat it more humanely. For both Sargisson and Jameson, the category of “utopia” is rather capacious: to be considered utopian, a text does not need to lay out a detailed program for reform; the text must simply demonstrate that alternatives to the current system are both possible and necessary. In *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*, Sargisson writes that the job of utopian writing is “not to blueprint and enclose the future but to explore alternative states of being to those presently existing—to stretch and expand

our understanding of the possible, thus making a multiplicity of radically different futures not only desirable but also conceivable.”¹¹ Fredric Jameson makes a similar claim in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (2005), which includes Jameson’s influential 1982 essay, “Progress versus Utopia, or Can We Imagine the Future?” Like Sargisson, Jameson argues that “the Utopian form” is designed to disabuse us of the notion that “there is no alternative to the system” currently in place. In his view, utopian texts accomplish this “by forcing us to think the break itself, and not by offering a more traditional picture of what things would be like after the break.” As a form, “utopia” is thus a command, of sorts; in Jameson’s words, it is “not the representation of radical alternatives; it is rather simply the imperative to imagine them.”¹² When considered from this perspective, Cary’s, Trapnel’s, and Cavendish’s texts can be classified as utopian because they command us to imagine alternative relationships to the nonhuman, even if they do not fully flesh these out.

Keith Thomas’s expansive conception of the early modern English utopia helps firmly place these texts in this genre as well. In “The Utopian Impulse in Seventeenth-Century England,” Thomas provides an extremely comprehensive overview of the many forms “utopia” took during the period—from literary texts about wholly imagined societies, to political documents that laid out programs for reform, to very real efforts to establish utopian communities. For example, he writes that Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651) and Gerrard Winstanley’s *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652) are utopian texts because they detail “elaborate schemes for ideal commonwealths.” Then, there are “idealized descriptions of other societies which did exist,” such as Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516) and John Harrington’s *Oceana*

¹¹ Lucy Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (London: Routledge, 1996), 52.

¹² Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 231-32 and 416.

(1656), or “secret or semi-secret societies,” such as Salomon’s House, which governs the city of Bensalem in Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627). Thomas also contends that actions taken in the real world can fall under the rubric of “utopia”: in Thomas’s view, the “making of new constitutions,” such as the Levellers’ *Agreement of the People* (1649) or the New Model Army’s *Instrument of Government* (1653) are utopian acts. So too are actual attempts to set up and maintain a utopian community, such as Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers’ utopian experiment at St. George’s Hill in 1649.¹³ The fact that many of these examples appeared in the mid-seventeenth century suggests that the political upheaval of this period provoked a great deal of utopian thinking. It is not surprising, then, that Cary, Trapnel, or Cavendish adopted this mode of thinking to negotiate their specific concerns.

Scholars of early modern England have also shown that utopian texts written in early modern England often turn on the tension between a desire for complete mastery and the need for restraint, which permeates Cary’s, Trapnel’s, and Cavendish’s texts. J.C. Davis has argued, for instance, that the conflict central to the utopian project in the early modern period was the conflict between “limited satisfactions and unlimited human desires.”¹⁴ Robert Appelbaum has

¹³ Keith Thomas, “The Utopian Impulse in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Between Dream and Nature: Essays on Utopia and Dystopia*, edited by Dominic Baker-Smith and C. C. Barfoot, 20-46 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), 27-30. The Diggers’ project at St. George’s Hill had a short run: it began sometime in March or April 1649 and had been put to an end by March of the following year. The utopian texts Thomas cites are listed here in order of their publication date: Thomas More, *A Most Pleasant, Fruitfull, and Wittie Worke, of the Best State of a Publique Weale and of the New Yle called Utopia* (1516), translated by Raphe Robinson (London, 1551); Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis* (London, 1627); *An Agreement of the People of England* (London, 1649); Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, Or, The Matter, Form, and Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London, 1651); Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform: Or, True Magistracy Restored* (London, 1652); *The Instrument of Government* (London, 1653); and John Harrington, *The Common-Wealth of Oceana* (London, 1656). For additional early modern utopian texts commonly discussed by scholars of the period, listed in order of publication date, see Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (London, 1596); Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621-39); Gabriel Platte, *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria* (London, 1641); Samuel Gott, *Nova Solyma, The Ideal City* (London, 1648); William Sprigge, *A Modest Plea for an Equal Commonwealth* (London, 1657); John Milton, *The Readie and Easie Way To Establish A Free Commonwealth and the Excellence Thereof* (London, 1660); and Henry Neville, *Isle of Pines, Or, A Late Discovery of a Fourth Island in Terra Australis* (London, 1668).

¹⁴ J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing, 1516-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 36.

also described the utopian “disposition” in seventeenth-century England as an idealized “sense of one’s potential mastery over a social and natural world.”¹⁵ Thomas has demonstrated that this desire for mastery is often fulfilled by exercising control over the natural world in many utopian texts, as societies endeavor to restore humankind’s “dominion over nature by the controlled use of scientific discovery.” Thomas goes on to argue that many of these same utopian texts draw a direct line between the pursuit of this mastery and the intensified exploitation and dispossession of the poor. In Thomas’s view, many utopian texts thus step in to advocate for the “relief of hunger, poverty, and unemployment.”¹⁶ Amy Boesky’s claim that many early modern utopian texts view economic reform as the necessary condition for all other forms of improvement further reinforces this point.¹⁷

The existing authority on the ways in which the utopian form was used to navigate the “new world of emergent capitalism” in early modern England is Sarah Hogan’s *Other Englands: Utopia, Capital, and Empire in an Age of Transition* (2018).¹⁸ In her book, Hogan argues that utopian texts written during this period offer a wide range of responses to “the lived experience of emergent capitalism, from ambivalent or staunch critiques to anxious anticipations of a more extensive, complete expansion of capitalist policies like enclosure, colonial dispossession, free trade, the division of labor, and the gendering of labor and property.”¹⁹ In this respect, utopian texts were neither decidedly for nor against the logic driving emergent capitalism or the practices

¹⁵ Robert Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

¹⁶ Thomas, “The Utopian Impulse,” 35.

¹⁷ Amy Boesky, *Founding Fictions: Utopian Texts in Early Modern England* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 87. Boesky suggests that this interest in economic reform may be explained by the 40% increase in the number of peasants who were dispossessed of common rights to the land between 1570 and 1640 (101).

¹⁸ Sarah Hogan, *Other Englands*, 149. James Holstun’s *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopian texts of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) is an older, but also invaluable, resource.

¹⁹ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 10.

it enabled. For instance, Hogan views More's critique of private property as a "critical interrogation of what Marx would later call primitive accumulation—the historical theft of land that initiates the capitalist wage relation. Indeed, Marx himself would cite More's satire on sheep in his chapter on so-called primitive accumulation in *Capital*."²⁰ On the one hand, More is concerned about the dispossession and poverty that results from enclosure and a system of property built on exclusive rights to the land, and his vision of an ideal society is primarily built on common use rights to the land.²¹ On the other hand, the text has no apparent qualms about the Utopians' dispossessing anyone of their land should they resist Utopian law or fail to properly improve the land. In other words, although More's text pitches the Utopians' way of life as an alternative to the model of emergent capitalism, their society bears signs of the very system More criticizes, thereby reinforcing Hogan's claim.

While More's stance on emergent capitalism is left unresolved, Hogan finds in Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596) a more or less uncritical enthusiasm for "intensified, accelerated primitive accumulation."²² In her examination of Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Hogan goes global, arguing that this text illuminates how capitalism thrives on "nation-based

²⁰ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 6. Ivo Kamps and Melissa L. Smith have considered what ecocriticism might contribute to our scholarly understanding of *Utopia* that has not already been shown by New Historicist or Marxist readings of the text. To do so, they home in on Julian Yates's speculation about the sheep in More's text: What if, Yates writes, "Raphael granted the sheep a little more play, if he regarded them as potential speakers in their own right rather than as rhetorical glove puppets? What might become possible if we violated the humanist discourse of species to ask whether *a* sheep (not a plural sheep standing in for all animals) but *a* singular sheep might be 'interested' somehow in *Utopia*?" ("Humanist Habitats, or 'Eating Well' with Thomas More's *Utopia*," in *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, edited by Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., 187-209 [New York: Palgrave, 2007], 205). While Kamps and Smith do not go so far as to presume what the sheep's perspective might be, they do conclude that we should not dismiss "the *possibility* of a sheep's perspective" purely because it is "alien and inaccessible to us" or because we assume this perspective has nothing valuable to offer ("Utopian Ecocriticism: Naturalizing Nature in Thomas More's *Utopia*," in *Early Modern Ecocriticism: From the Florentine Codex to Shakespeare*, edited by Thomas Hallock, Ivo Kamps, and Karen L. Raber. [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008], 127).

²¹ More's text is not so much a policy proposal for the abolition of private property in England, as it is a thought exercise in imagining alternative economic configurations that might mitigate against the worst effects of enclosure: dispossession, depopulation, poverty, and crime.

²² Hogan, *Other Englands*, 25.

exploitation and global uneven development.”²³ To make this argument, Hogan examines the actions of the Merchants of Light, who travel abroad to extract information, especially methods of scientific experimentation, from other nations without exchanging anything in return. In this way, Hogan argues that Bacon’s text accentuates the tension at work in most early modern English utopian texts, which often center on “intentionally isolated societies” who, at the same time “engage in expansionist agendas that willingly violate their own carefully demarcated boundaries.”²⁴ From each of Hogan’s claims a clear trend emerges: while some early modern English utopian texts were critical of the exploitative logic of emergent capitalism, despite their most concerted efforts, the vast majority of these texts found its logic convenient and profitable in some form.

In her chapter on “Dispossession and Women’s Poetry of Place,” Hogan takes a different turn by postulating that a “female counter-tradition of utopian writing that adopts dispossession as a theme” emerged in early modern England.²⁵ In her discussion of Isabella Whitney’s “The Maner of Her Wyll” (1573) and Lanyer’s “The Description of Cooke-ham” (1611), Hogan hypothesizes that women’s utopian writings during this period were, by and large, more concerned with the dispossessed and the marginalized than were men’s utopian writings. Nicole Pohl extends this claim in her work on the spaces of the academy, the country house, and the convent; more specifically, she proposes that early modern women writers used these spaces to show that the “true utopic space of being” lies entirely “outside of a masculinist geography of power.”²⁶ Cary’s *A New and More Exact Mappe* certainly supports Pohl’s point, as Kate Lilley’s work on the “anti-masculine rhetoric of vengeance and dispossession, directed against the ‘ripe

²³ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 24.

²⁴ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 67.

²⁵ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 25.

²⁶ Nicole Pohl, *Women, Space, and Utopia, 1600-1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 25.

harvest of wicked men” in this text illustrates.²⁷ Finally, Marina Leslie takes a more cautious approach to this line of argument, reminding scholars that our desire to excavate the past for champions of women’s rights often overtakes our duty to historical accuracy. In her work on Cavendish’s *The Blazing-World*, for example, Leslie adjusts the claims of scholars who have classified this text as a “feminist utopia” by correctly noting that “it has not always been legible as either ‘feminist’ or as ‘utopian,’” not least because the text is about a tyrannical Empress’s efforts to solidify her rule.²⁸

These scholars have therefore shown that early modern women were much more actively engaged in utopian discourse than had been previously understood. In large part, this former gap in the field can be attributed to a canon that was, up to that point, too narrow; it was almost exclusively comprised of literary texts written by men, which presented a detailed “blueprint” for how to create a more perfect society, to return to Sargisson’s words.²⁹ Although one of Lilley’s goals in her work on seventeenth-century women’s utopian writing is to make this canon more inclusive, she makes a particular semantic choice that works against these goals. In her discussion of Mary Astell’s *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), Lilley writes:

Men’s utopian texts have focused on political systems and laws; utopian writing by women has tended to focus strategically on the possibilities and problems of gendered social life and the weight of custom—micropolitical questions of sexuality, maternity, education, domesticity and self-government—while declining the burden of representing a fully articulated model of a new political order.³⁰

²⁷ Kate Lilley, “Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth-Century Women’s Utopian Writing,” in *Women, Text, and Histories, 1575-1760*, edited by Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss, 101-32 (London: Routledge, 1992), 110.

²⁸ Marina Leslie, *Renaissance Utopian texts and the Problem of History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 11. Erin Bonin has made a similar point, writing that Cavendish’s *The Female Academy* (1662), *Bell in Campo* (1662), and *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668) use these spaces to “challenge masculinist assumptions and imagine feminist possibilities” (“Margaret Cavendish’s Dramatic Utopian texts and the Politics of Gender,” *Studies in English Literature* 40, no. 2 [2000]: 340).

²⁹ Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*, 52.

³⁰ Lilley, “Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth-Century Women’s Utopian Writing,” 116.

Lilley's choice of phrasing, specifically "men's utopian texts" and "utopian writing by women," is revealing and worth teasing out.³¹ First, it suggests that seventeenth-century women only engaged in utopian discourse obliquely or partially, while the term "utopia" proper was reserved for men alone. In turn, this phrasing insinuates that the problems arising from "gendered social life" cannot be the stuff of true "utopias," which are primarily concerned with politics and government. In doing so, Lilley risks perpetuating two beliefs: that women's concerns cannot be the subject matter of "utopias" proper, and that women's "utopian writings" are unconcerned with politics. To counter these beliefs, in this chapter I have used the more inclusive "utopian writings" or "utopian texts" when referring to any text engaged in utopian discourse.

Much of the existing scholarship on Cary and Trapnel strikes a balance between the "problems of gendered social life" and the broader political concerns these women tackle in their prophetic writings. For example, Katherine Gillespie has shown that some prophetesses used the private space of the home to resist their domestic roles and to craft public personae. Others fasted for days on end as a gesture of solidarity for the "famished nation," as Catie Gill has illustrated. As Hillary Hinds and Diane Purkiss have argued, still others fashioned themselves as "ungendered souls" or *femme couvertes*, whose prophetic authority came, not from mortal men, but from God. Many prophetesses also exploited qualities that had long been associated with women and used to justify their absence from political life, such as "irrationality," to authorize their prophetic speech acts, as Phyllis Mack's extensive work on Quaker prophetesses has shown. Susan Wiseman has also brought Cavendish's plays into the mix by contending that mid-

³¹ Lilley's choice of phrasing provokes a few questions: First, is there a meaningful difference between "utopia" and "utopian writing" and, if so, what is it? Second, what would happen if we referred to "utopian writing by women" instead as "women's utopian texts"? Third, should we do away with the term "utopia" altogether and instead use the more capacious "utopian writings"? I have opted in this chapter for the more inclusive "utopian writings" or "utopian texts" because both make room for the wide-range of texts that might be considered utopian, as I have shown by drawing on the work of Jameson, Sargisson, and Thomas.

century prophetesses provided a model for female performance on the Restoration stage.³² Finally, scholars such as Teresa Feroli, Carme Font, James Holstun, and Maria Magro have focused more exclusively on the demands presented in these prophetic writings for radical political and economic reform.³³ This chapter builds on the work of each of these scholars by bringing women's prophetic writing to bear on the economic developments of seventeenth-century England, which encouraged the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world.

Cary, Trapnel, and Cavendish played a formative role in shaping the "female counter-tradition of utopian writing" by directing their criticism at the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world.³⁴ While Cavendish creates an imaginary world in which she plays out the

³² Katharine Gillespie, "Anna Trapnel's Window on the Word: The Domestic Sphere of Public Dissent in Seventeenth Century Nonconformity," *Bunyan Studies: John Bunyan and His Times* 7 (1997): 49-72; Catie Gill, "'All the Monarchies of this World are Going Down the Hill': The Anti-Monarchism of Anna Trapnel's *The Cry of a Stone* (1654)," *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism*, 29, no. 1 (2007): 27; Hilary Hinds, *God's Englishwomen: Seventeenth-Century Radical Sectarian Writing and Feminist Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Diane Purkiss, "Producing the Voice, Consuming the Body: Women Prophets of the Seventeenth Century," in *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1799*, edited by Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, 139-58 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); Phyllis Mack, "The Prophet and Her Audience: Gender and Knowledge in the World Turned Upside Down," in *Reviving the English Revolution: Reflections and Elaborations on the Work of C. Hill*, edited by Geoff Eley and William Hunt, 139-52 (London: Verso, 1988); Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Mack, "Woman as Prophets During the English Civil War," *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 1 (1982): 19-45; reprinted in *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism*, edited by Margaret Jacob and James Jacob (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984); Susan Wiseman, "Margaret Cavendish among the Prophets: Performance Ideologies and Gender in and after the English Civil War," *Women's Writing* 6, no. 1 (1999): 95-111; and Wiseman "Unsilent Instruments and the Devil's Cushions: Authority in Seventeenth-Century Women's Prophetic Discourse," in *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts*, edited by Isobel Armstrong, 176-96 (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

³³ For more information, see Carme Font, *Women's Prophetic Writings in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017); Teresa Feroli, *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006); James Holstun, "The Public Spiritedness of Anna Trapnel," in *Ehud's Dagger*, 257-304; and Maria Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography and Radical Sectarian Women's Discourse: Anna Trapnel and the Bad Girls of the English Revolution," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34, no. 2 (2004): 405-37. Hilary Hinds has also argued that travel is central to Trapnel's prophetic act. At the end of *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel's amanuensis remarks with wonder that, immediately after her trance ended, Trapnel travelled some twelve miles from Whitehall to Hackney to Allhallows the Great on Mark Lane, where her congregation met. Hinds sees a close link between Trapnel's radical prophetic utterance and these spaces, which are "already marked by acts of revolutionary appropriation" ("Sectarian Spaces: The Politics of Space and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Prophetic Writing," *Literature and History* 13, no. 2 [2004]: 21). For a similar approach, see Diane Purkiss, "Anna Trapnel's Literary Geography," in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*, edited by Johanna Harris, et al., 162-75 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

³⁴ Hogan, *Other Englands*, 25.

most tyrannical expression of royal power in order to caution against it, Cary and Trapnel go one step further in their prophetic writings by laying out what the world after tyranny will look like. In these ways, these women deploy their utopian texts for purposes beyond the concerns of “gendered social life” and, in that way, demonstrate the need for a more capacious and inclusive canon of utopian texts. As Jameson or Sargisson might put it, rather than resigning themselves to the belief that “there is no alternative” to the increasingly exploitative attitude towards and treatment of the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England, these women instead explore alternative methods of engaging with the nonhuman world, or simply demonstrate the need for new ones.³⁵

II. “My sheepe know my voice”: Mary Cary, Steward of God’s Estate

Mary Cary opens *A Word in Season* by drawing a direct causal link between Charles I’s failed stewardship of the English “estate” and the monarchy’s imminent destruction, prophesied by Fifth Monarchists. In turn, Cary offers her “seasonable word” as a corrective measure that, if followed, will provide the “readiest way, and shortest cut to a happie and flourishing estate.”³⁶ Taken together, in Cary’s view the English estate has gone to waste under the rule of Charles I, and its improvement depends on his reaping the harvest of Cary’s “seasonable word.” In *A New and More Exact Mappe*, Cary expands on this argument by conducting an estate survey of sorts: finding its current state unacceptable, she proceeds to detail the methods by which the English estate can be improved and, in doing so, positions herself as the proper estate steward.³⁷ These

³⁵ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 231.

³⁶ Cary, *A Word in Season*, 12 and 1. In the preface to this text, Hugh Peters writes that Cary’s work is of such high quality that readers “might easily think she plow’d with anothers Heifer,” a reference to Judges 14:18. Here, Peters’s suggestion is a misogynistic one—that it is surprising a woman could engage in biblical exegesis of her own accord and with such success. What interests me, however, is that the terminology of agricultural cultivation that Cary uses throughout *A Word in Season* also finds its way into Peter’s preface.

³⁷ Cary appended *A New and More Exact Mappe* to her text *The Little Horns Doom and Downfall* (London,

methods center overwhelmingly on human and animal labor, especially the exploitation thereof by the wealthy and titled few. More specifically, Cary argues that the unlimited right these men enjoy to exploit human and animal labor for private gain leads to “unmerciful dealing with many creatures” and therefore must be restricted.³⁸ To build this argument, Cary insists that the practices on many estates of dispossessing laborers by revoking their common rights to the land, or the right to enjoy the fruits of their labor, must end. The greater part of her argument, however, defends the right of all animals to a “comfortable” life; in her words, animals must be used, not in a cruel or covetous way, but in a “holy,” and “merciful” way.³⁹

In *Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women’s Writing and the Public Sphere* (2004), Katherine Gillespie argues that Cary relies on the seventeenth-century discourse of improvement to suggest that God enjoys an unlimited right to “manage his estate according to his own design.”⁴⁰ Gillespie’s argument turns on Cary’s exegesis of the Parable of the Talents in *A Word in Season*.⁴¹ As Gillespie puts it, an estate lord provides three servants with talents, or “capital,” in this parable.⁴² While two servants invest this capital, the third, referred to as the “unprofitable servant,” buries his talent and complains that his master “reapest

1651). In this text, an exegesis and recontextualization of Daniel 7, Cary demonstrates that the prophesied destruction of the Fourth Monarchy was already fulfilled by the creation of the New Model Army in 1645 and the regicide in 1649. Cary writes that the new map she will produce in her estate survey will chart “what changes and mutations [God] will make in the earth; in that he will turn it upside down, make it appear no more as it was before; but make it anew, make new heavens and a new earth” (193). Cary supported a number of causes throughout her life, advocating for the creation of “university endowments” for “poor scholars and preachers” and “a fund to support the unemployed and lower classes” (“Mary Cary Rande,” *A Biographical Encyclopedia of Early Modern Englishwomen: Exemplary Lives and Memorable Acts, 1500-1650*, edited by Carole Levin, Anne Riehl Bertolet, and Jo Eldridge Carney [London: Routledge, 2017], 440).

³⁸ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 314.

³⁹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 317, 277, and 314.

⁴⁰ Katharine Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women’s Writing and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 254.

⁴¹ Gillespie notes that the Parable of the Talents was quite “attractive to early modern women,” including Cary and poet An Collins, which suggests “the interests of capitalism” were not necessarily “antithetical to the interests of women” (*Domesticity and Dissent*, 252).

⁴² Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 248.

where [he] sowedst not.” In other words, his master builds his livelihood on the backs of his servants’ labor without doing any of the work himself. At the end of the parable, the master praises the first two servants for turning a profit on their original investment, and he casts the “unprofitable servant into utter darkness.”⁴³ In Cary’s view, this parable teaches its readers that Jesus “requires an improvement of [every talent] to his use,” and she goes on to suggest that the prophesied saints who will usher in the millennium have a Christian duty to cultivate their talents and put them to God’s use.⁴⁴ In this way, Gillespie argues, Cary deploys an economic discourse to a religious end: “Rather than viewing this alienation of worker’s labor as problematic because expropriative, Cary views it as beneficial for both the ‘capitalist’ and the ‘worker.’” Gillespie simply adds that Cary “shifts the right to expropriate to the great agrarian capitalist in the sky, God.”⁴⁵ In sum, Gillespie does not argue that Cary broadly endorses the discourse of improvement or the exploitative practices that estate improvement so often entailed during the seventeenth century; rather, Gillespie demonstrates that Cary only views this discourse as legitimate insofar as it applied to God and his saints’ work on the “nation’s privatized and ‘enclosed’ religious estate.”⁴⁶

While Gillespie makes a compelling case, her argument risks overlooking Cary’s deep

⁴³ The end of the parable can be found in Matthew 25:14-30 (GNV), but is also reproduced here: “Master, I knew that thou wast an hard man, which reapest where thou sowedst not, and gatherest where thou strawedst not: I was therefore afraid, and went, and hid thy talent in the earth: behold, thou hast thine own. And his master answered, and said unto him, Thou evil servant, and slothful, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I strawed not. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming should I have received mine own with vantage. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every man that hath, it shall be given, and he shall have abundance, and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away. Cast therefore that unprofitable servant into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Laura Brace has pointed out that individuals who were against policies of enclosure often cited the end of the Parable of the Talents, specifically the lord’s reply to the third servant, to contend the following: “Men flattered themselves that their goods belonged to them absolutely, but they would find that their riches were not their unconditional property, but God’s talents committed to them, to be employed to best advantage” (*The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998], 79).

⁴⁴ Cary, *Word in Season*, 5.

⁴⁵ Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 247.

⁴⁶ Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 248.

concerns about the increasingly exploitative labor system of agrarian capitalism. Time and again, Cary's writings illustrate that the English estate is a victim of failed stewardship precisely because of the intensified exploitation of human and animal labor legitimized by the discourse of improvement during this period. Moreover, the direct result of this continued exploitation will be the end of human tyranny on earth, as she and other Fifth Monarchists had prophesied. To put another way, the very reason that Cary believes "new heavens and a new earth" will be established is because of the increasingly covetous and "unmerciful" practices justified by the discourse of improvement.⁴⁷ Cary coopts the discourse of improvement in her prophetic writings to demonstrate that this discourse, and the economic system it undergirds, must and will soon be replaced by a set of values aimed at ensuring a "comfortable" life for human beings and animals alike.⁴⁸

To demonstrate that labor must be performed with love for all of God's creation, Cary repeatedly describes estate lords as animals in *A Word in Season*. In the text's opening, for example, she compares estate lords to predatory birds who actively fuel the process of Marx's "primitive accumulation": She writes that "by unjust, and unreasonable wayes" these men "pluck away the lands, or estates, or detain the wages of the poor [. . .] to feather their own nests, and to build them great and faire houses."⁴⁹ Here, Cary describes the construction and decoration of country houses as an act of feathering a nest. In doing so, she suggests that estate lords dispossess their laborers of much-needed land, expropriate their labor, and deprive them of wages not out of necessity, but out of a desire for luxury. In simpler terms, estate lords deprive the poor of the ability to subsist so that the lords themselves may enjoy lives of excess. She

⁴⁷ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 193 and 314.

⁴⁸ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 317.

⁴⁹ Cary, *Word in Season*, 1.

drives this point home in *A New and More Exact Mappe* when she writes that these men “doe covet to treasure up most riches for themselves, and to poll, and rob, and cheat the people, to inhance their owns estates, and make themselves great in the world.”⁵⁰ In *A Word in Season*, Cary argues that estate lords “kick against the Pricks” by engaging in these practices, a phrase describing oxen who kick against the stick used to drive them.⁵¹ Here, Cary places estate lords in the position of the animals typically subjected to them. In doing so, she suggests that estate lords work against Christ by refusing his guidance, just as an ox might resist its driver. Rather than arguing that human beings cannot make use of animals, Cary instead suggests here that the use of animals must be guided by love for God and, by extension, all of his creation, an argument Bradstreet also makes in her verse, which I have shown in Chapter Three. In Cary’s view, then, estate lords have all too often failed as stewards of God’s creation by using their human and animal laborers carelessly and prioritizing private gain over the well-being of each of God’s creatures.⁵²

Cary dedicates a sizeable portion of *A New and More Exact Mappe* to continue to tease out the effects of humankind’s self-interested pursuit of wealth on the animal world. In a larger passage on agricultural cultivation and animal labor, Cary ruminates on the meaning of the “bondage of corruption” that Paul discusses in Romans 8:21: in her words, this bondage “lies so heavy upon the whole Creation, as it makes it groan under the burthen of it, as being very irksome and painfull to it.”⁵³ Here, Cary draws particular attention to the physicality of bondage

⁵⁰ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 56.

⁵¹ Cary, *Word in Season*, 4.

⁵² She also refers to the Parable of the Sower when arguing that people who pursue wealth of this world never loved Jesus “in sincerity” (306). She expatiates on this point by saying, “Whether they were not as the thorny ground, or the stony ground, that never had good rooting, never had indeed the Spirit of the Son in them; but seemed to receive the Word, but it was but with outward flashes of joy” (306).

⁵³ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 86. In addition, see Romans 8:21 (GNV): “Because the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.”

by likening human laborers, animals, and the land collectively to a single beast of burden, who alone shoulders the painful “burthen” of servitude to the wealthy and titled few. Lest any of her readers argue that animals are unaffected by this bondage, Cary clarifies that animals do not willingly choose to suffer, even if they do seem to willingly perform their labors at times: “It is not willingly, that any of them suffer pinching cold, and pining hunger.” On the contrary, she adds:

with delight some creatures, doe and shall performed that service to man in which they were appointed to be usefull to man, as man is Lord over all creatures [. . .] sometimes without whip or spur, and the Ox willingly takes the y oak, and other services severall creatures willingly performe, when they are not abused by men that are unreasonable.⁵⁴

In this passage, Cary illustrates that she, too, is not immune from presumptuously guessing at animals’ thoughts by assuming that animals “performe” their labor “with delight.” Importantly, however, she qualifies this claim by suggesting that whatever “delight” humans perceive in animals’ performing of their labors is conditioned on not being “abused by men that are unreasonable.”

Towards the end of her text, Cary suggests that the tendency for human beings to abuse their God-given power over the nonhuman world is a direct result of the Fall: before the Fall, she claims, Adam and Eve exercised this power with the utmost care, but that their Fall was the first in a long tradition of abusing this power for humankind’s gain. Moreover, any hostility that the nonhuman world demonstrates towards humankind is a rather reasonable response to this abuse: “Before man fell,” she writes, “he was Lord of them all, and they were all in subject to him, and offered him no violence: But now are these creatures in enmity against Mankinde, and many times they prove hurtful and destructive to men, women, and children, by reason of that

⁵⁴ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 86-87.

corruption.” By the end of her text, Cary unequivocally states that “Mans corruption” brought on “an enmity between some of these creatures and Man.”⁵⁵ Since the moment of the Fall, for Cary, the story of humankind has been a story about the tyrannical rule of corrupt stewards exploiting human and animal labor for the private gain of the wealthy few.

At the start of *A Word in Season*, Cary draws on the description of God’s vineyard in Isaiah 5 to reassure her readers that everyone from estate lords to the clergy, government officials, and Charles I himself will be held to account for their failed stewardship of God’s “estate.”⁵⁶ In Isaiah 5, God creates and encloses a vineyard, which he carefully tends for a time but later promises to destroy when it produces “wild grapes.”⁵⁷ The problem, for God, is not that his vineyard is unproductive, but that it has produced bad fruit. In a similar way, Cary states, Charles I and the English government have squandered the “choyce favours” God “bestowed upon” the vineyard of England by bringing forth “wilde grapes” despite God’s most careful efforts.⁵⁸ Cary goes on to argue that Charles I will soon bring forth a different kind of fruit, “answerable fruit,” which is to say that he will be held accountable for his failed stewardship of God’s vineyard.⁵⁹ Cary continues to draw on this language of cultivation in *A New and More Exact Mappe* when she insists that “the Sickle shal be put in to cut down this harvest of wicked

⁵⁵ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 292-93.

⁵⁶ Cary charges Charles I with “desperate impiety and hypocrisie” (*Little Horns*, 41).

⁵⁷ Isaiah 5:1-6 (GNV): “Now will I sing to my beloved a song of my beloved to his vineyard, My beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he hedged it, and gathered out the stones of it, and he planted it with the best plants, and he built a tower in the midst thereof, and made a winepress therein, then he looked that it should bring forth grapes: but it brought forth wild grapes. Now therefore, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could I have done anymore to my vineyard that I have not done unto it? Why have I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it bringeth forth wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: I will break the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be cut, nor dug, but briers and thorns shall grow up: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”

⁵⁸ Cary, *A Word in Season*, 1.

⁵⁹ Cary describes her audience as “you that sit at the Sterne” of the English ship of state (*A Word in Season*, np). Trapnel’s own language resembles Cary’s here: In *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel writes that “the time is coming that they shall be fruit, that they shall bring forth no more fruit for thine” (64).

men.”⁶⁰

Having surveyed the current conditions of the English estate and found them wanting, Cary goes on to map what the new English estate will look like “from the first entrance into it, unto the utmost borders of it” when guided by proper stewards, both she and God, in *A New and More Exacte Mappe*.⁶¹ She begins the text by emphasizing that those who “walke most with God will be the least seekers of this worlds wealth.”⁶² As texts such as John Norden’s *The Surveyor’s Dialogue* (1618) make clear, which I discussed in the dissertation’s Introduction, most seventeenth-century estate surveys were conducted for the following reasons: to provide the estate lord with an extensive inventory of the estate’s features, to draw up the legal documents which explained the lord’s proprietorial rights and responsibilities, and to determine how the estate’s resources might be most effectively made use of and turned to profit. As estate surveyor of this “new world,” Cary takes an alternative approach to estate surveying and management: she “walkes” with God, unconcerned by “this worlds wealth,” and advises other estate lords to do the same.⁶³ She reiterates this point when she explains that England and all other nations will prioritize “not [their people’s] wealth, but their weale; not their treasure, but their safety; not their riches, but their happinesse” once the millennium has arrived.⁶⁴ In these ways, Cary offers up a value system that would counteract the destructive effects of the discourse of improvement: one that prioritizes the well-being of all of God’s creation, not private accumulation for the wealthy few.

Towards the end of the text, Cary describes how these values will be put into practice in

⁶⁰ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 186.

⁶¹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 114.

⁶² Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 55.

⁶³ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 114 and 55.

⁶⁴ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 56.

the New Jerusalem, portraying an estate absent of labor exploitation and expropriation, which instead operates on the “holy use of all the creatures”:

They shall indeed build houses, and inhabit them; and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them; but they shall not defile their houses by sinning in them, nor shall they sin in using the creatures which they shall enjoy: their corn, and wine, and oyl, and flocks, and herds, and fruits of the trees, and of the field, which they shall enjoy, shall in no sort be abused by them: for the Spirit shall guide them to use all the creatures in a holy manner, enabling of them to receive them with prayer and thanksgiving.⁶⁵

The first part of this passage deals with human labor, most of which centers on what Lilley has described as a “new world of georgic self-sufficiency and unalienated labour” (106).⁶⁶ Cary’s main focus in the passage, however, is on humankind’s treatment of the nonhuman world. In particular, she contends that in this new world animals will not be “abused” by human beings, “nor shall they sin in using the creatures which they shall enjoy.” Although Cary never goes so far as to challenge humankind’s superiority over animals, she does insist that humankind must treat them with care and respect, as part of God’s creation.⁶⁷ In other words, humans’ use of the nonhuman world must be approached in a “holy manner,” or guided by devotion to God. Cary doubles down on this idea in the passage’s final line, in which she suggests that human relationships to the nonhuman world will primarily be driven by gratitude, not covetousness.

In the final pages of the text, Cary returns to Romans 8:21 to explain how she squares the continued subjection of animals to humankind with her argument that each of God’s creatures will soon be released from the “bondage of corruption.” Clarifying what Paul means by this phrase, she writes, “it is in regard of mens unmerciful dealing with many creatures, in laying

⁶⁵ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 277-78. Elsewhere, she writes that “by the work of their hands, they shall purchase estates” (309).

⁶⁶ Lilley, “Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth-Century Women’s Utopian Writing,” 106.

⁶⁷ Cary never fundamentally questions whether or not humankind should be allowed to make use of animals. She writes that they can and will continue to be used for food, “laboring in the ground, and carrying burthens, and journeying, and all other things wherein men have occasion to make use of them” (Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 313).

more burthen upon them then they can well bear, and putting of them to do more then they can well do.”⁶⁸ Shortly thereafter, she advocates for the “comfortable use of all creatures, in a more pure manner than ever.”⁶⁹ Here and throughout this text, Cary suggests that animals which are treated mercifully cannot be considered to be in a state of bondage.

Cary also argues here for something more than the simple restoration of humankind’s prelapsarian dominion over the nonhuman world. More specifically, she insists that humankind will take even more care than Adam and Eve in exercising its dominion over the earth and, in that way, will redefine what it means to exercise stewardship over the earth with care. To summarize her point, Cary envisions that animals in this new world:

shall be in no case hurtful, neither one to another, or to mankind: the wolf shall not destroy the lamb, nor the leopard the kid, nor the lion the calf, nor the fatling; but they shall all feed together: and all these shall be so far subjected to Mankinde, as that a little childe shall lead them. *They shall dwell safely in the wilderness.*⁷⁰

In this passage, Cary suggests that all nations’ concern for the “weale,” “safety,” and “happinesse” of their people, which she prophesied at the start of the text, will extend down to the animal world when the millennium arrives.⁷¹ Moreover, animals will be subjected to humankind only so far “as that a little childe shall lead them,” which is to say barely subjected to humankind at all. In other words, rather than treating animals in a covetous or cruel way, humans will instead be guided by a child’s innocent love and wonder, the immediate emotional response that so often underlies our more carefully reasoned arguments for treating the nonhuman world with active care and respect.

⁶⁸ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 314.

⁶⁹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 317.

⁷⁰ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 293. Trapnel also uses the language of children to describing the fulfillment of the Fifth Monarchist vision: A “great company of children will be saved, others die in the wilderness” (*The Cry of a Stone*, 13).

⁷¹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 56.

Finally, any reader who might argue that this new vision of estate management will encourage idleness simply lacks imagination, in Cary's view. First, in her words "it is irksome" for most people "to be always idle," so they will naturally desire to work in some capacity. Second, far from encouraging idleness, she writes, this new approach to labor will replace "toilsome and burdensome employments" with "pleasant, easie, and well-regulated employments" by which each person "shall get a plentiful store of all those outward things which shall tend to the comfortable subsistence of them and theirs."⁷² On God's remade estate, in other words, gone will be the exploitative and expropriative labor that had long existed and only intensified in the shift to agrarian capitalism in seventeenth-century England. In its place will be a new economic system primarily geared towards ensuring a "comfortable" life for everyone. Finally, because this new system will benefit everyone, not just the wealthy and powerful, Cary explains that individuals will be given new reason and motivation to work.

Cary extends this logic to the animal world as well: in her view, the nature of animal labor will also shift because animals, too, have a right to a "comfortable" life. On this front, her prophesy takes two forms: first, she promises that animals will "find enough in the wilderness to satisfie them" in the New Jerusalem; second, they will "bee also set at liberty from all [their] pressures, and griefes, under which [they groane] and let into a condition of gladsomnesse and freedom."⁷³ Here, Cary defends that animals have an inviolable right to a life of "gladsomnesse and freedom." In addition, Cary reasons that, like human beings, animals are also more likely to perform their labors if their working conditions are humane and if they can actually partake in the fruits of their labor. She drives this point home when she writes that animals will "willingly

⁷² Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 310.

⁷³ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 298-99 and 88.

performe” these labors “when they are not abused by men that are unreasonable.”⁷⁴ Taken together, Cary portrays the fulfillment of the Fifth Monarchist vision as a radical shift in the way that animals are treated. She suggests that, for too long, humankind has treated animals in an “unreasonable” and “unmerciful” manner on the grounds that humankind has an unconditional right to use the nonhuman world however it pleases for private gain. In the New Jerusalem, however, Cary argues that bounds will be placed on humankind’s use of animals primarily because animals, too, have a right to a “comfortable” life.

At the end of *The Little Horns Doom and Downfall*, the text to which *A New and More Exact Mappe* is appended, Cary declares “My sheepe know my voice,” a reference to the Parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10:27.⁷⁵ Although Cary primarily alludes to this verse to suggest that what she prophesies is truth, despite what her critics might say, this statement can and should be read in the context of her sustained interest in human relationships with the nonhuman world. Throughout *A Word in Season* and *A New and More Exact Mappe*, Cary moves through a number of spaces, each of which is defined by her relationship to the nonhuman world—from the good shepherd guiding her flock to New Jerusalem, to the farmer offering his “seasonable word,” to the estate surveyor and New World explorer mapping and surveying the terrain of the New Jerusalem. In each of these roles, Cary explains that her texts offer the “readiest way, and shortest cut to a happie and flourishing estate.”⁷⁶ In doing so, she makes clear that her utopian vision of New Jerusalem turns on reforming human relationships to the nonhuman world. In particular, she argues that the dangerous belief that humankind has an unlimited right to use the nonhuman world however it pleases must be put to an end because this attitude so often entails

⁷⁴ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 86-7.

⁷⁵ Cary, *Little Horns*, 45.

⁷⁶ Cary, *Word in Season*, 12; *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 114; and *Word in Season*, 1-2.

the “unmerciful dealing with many creatures.”⁷⁷ In her view, God’s sickle must and will therefore cut down the “harvest of wicked men” responsible. In their place will come a “little childe,” whose “pure” wonder at the world around her will, by Cary’s logic, inspire her to actively care for it—that is, to treat all of God’s creation in a “holy” and “merciful” way.

III. “There is no selfe in this thing”: Anna Trapnel, a Crying Stone

As I stated earlier, *The Cry of a Stone* is a transcription of the series of prophetic visions and songs Trapnel delivered over the course of a twelve-day trance she fell into at Whitehall Palace while awaiting the trial of fellow Fifth Monarchist Vavasour Powell, who had been accused of slandering Oliver Cromwell.⁷⁸ While Trapnel’s visions and songs are remarkably diverse in their particulars, their unifying argument is that Cromwell and the Protectorate government have failed as stewards of the English estate, despite promising the opposite. Like other Fifth Monarchists, Trapnel viewed Cromwell as little different, and perhaps even worse, than the monarchs who came before him, because he speciously promised to protect England from tyranny while acting the tyrant himself. In Trapnel’s words, “the same superfluity and vanity was among Kings of old,” but, unlike these kings, Cromwell and his lackeys “come forth in sheeps clothing.”⁷⁹ In other words, while these “Kings of old” did not disguise their tyrannical

⁷⁷ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 314.

⁷⁸ In his preface to *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel’s amanuensis explains that one of his reasons for transcribing Trapnel’s trance is to combat “various reports gone abroad [. . .] not according to truth [. . .] pervertings and depravings of the Reporters.” The amanuensis goes on to emphasize the sincerity with which he approached the project, while acknowledging the potential imperfections in the text. He writes that he has presented to “publick view a true and faithful Relation of so much as for some 7 or 8 dayes could be taken from her by a very slow and unready hand.”

⁷⁹ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 67. Trapnel repeats this description during the third vision she has during her trance: “Three horns shall arise, a fourth shall come out different from the former, which shall be more Terror to the Saint then the others that went before; thou like a Lamb, as is spoken of in the Revelation, in appearance a Lamb, but pushing like a Beast” (14). In this vision, Trapnel prophesies the destruction of Cromwell himself, directly naming him for the first time in the text. She sees a “great company of Cattel, some like Bulls, and others like Oxen, and so lesser, their faces and heads like men, having each of them a horn on either side their heads; For the foremost, his Countenance was perfectly like unto *Oliver Cromwels*.” Trapnel goes on to say that these cattle

impulses, Cromwell does, making him all the more sinister and dangerous. To explain why Cromwell and his government “utterly shall fall” for their failed stewardship of the English estate, Trapnel repeatedly portrays him, the Protectorate government, and herself as part of the nonhuman world: while Cromwell appears most often as a violent bull, often in “sheeps clothing” as stated above, or a howling tree, Trapnel refers to herself at various times as a crying stone, a “river of tears,” and the “worst of all Gods flock.”⁸⁰ By playing out Cromwell’s imminent fall on the terrain of nature itself, Trapnel suggests that the main reason Cromwell has failed as Lord Protector is because he has failed to steward the earth with care. Having issued this warning, Trapnel then exhorts Cromwell to be a “true Jacob”—that is, to let “Justice and Mercy,” not self-interest, guide his actions as steward of his estate.⁸¹

Much of the criticism Trapnel lobbs at Cromwell, the New Model Army under his leadership, and the Protectorate government turns on a single accusation: that they are the “Oppressors of the Land.”⁸² Although Trapnel may simply mean that they oppress the nation itself, as her trance unfolds, it becomes clear that she means “land” in its most basic sense. Trapnel laments that, rather than having “spiritual appetites,” these men’s “greedy minds” pine “after things here below,” resulting in policies that encourage “mass cruelty and covetousness.”⁸³

“fawn” on Cromwell, urging him on as he drives his horn through the saints in his path and charges at Trapnel. Suddenly, a voice promises to save her, and Cromwell and his company are swiftly “scattered, their horns broken, and they [tumble] into graves” (*The Cry of a Stone*, 13-14).

⁸⁰ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 72, 67, and 3-4. Trapnel takes her title from Luke 19:40 (GNV) when Jesus enters Jerusalem. In this verse, Jesus’s follower praises him as he makes his way into the city. The Pharisees urge him to “rebuke his disciples,” but Jesus says that, were his followers to cease their praise, the very stones would pick up where they left off: “But he answered, and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would cry.” Milton makes a likely allusion to this verse in his own utopian text *The Readie and Easie Way To Establish A Free Commonwealth and the Excellence Thereof*: “What I have spoken, is the language of [. . .] *the good Old Cause*: if it seem strange to any, it will not seem more strange, I hope, then convincing to backsliders. Thus much I should perhaps have said, though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones; and had none to cry to, but with the Prophet, *O earth earth earth!*” ([London, 1660], 148; also quoted in Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, 113).

⁸¹ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 53.

⁸² Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 72.

⁸³ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 50, 58, and 47.

In fact, so consumed are they by this world below, in Trapnel's view, that they are mired in mud: "men are mudded, they speak a little of the new Covenant, a little of thee, and a great deal of themselves."⁸⁴ Her choice of the word "mudded" is fantastic, as she applies both definitions to Cromwell and his men: not only are they stuck or buried in the things of this world—that is, in mud—but their priorities are also terribly confused since they speak more of themselves than God. Moreover, despite having "receiv'd / so much fleece from Christs flock," these men "have not kept in / within [their] bound and Sphear."⁸⁵ Trapnel even goes so far as to argue that these men's aggressive acts of expansion amount to little more than stealing from the English poor: "all thou hast of that thou stol'st / From the Commonweal-poor."⁸⁶ Taken together, Trapnel compares Cromwell and his men to predatory estate lords who enclose more and more land and, in the process, exploit the land, livestock, and human laborers for private gain. Echoing Cary's claim that estate lords too often "pluck away" land from the poor "to feather their own nests, and to build them great and faire houses," Trapnel goes on to argue that these men will "see none of their own feathers," but instead a "new nest of [God's] own making" once the saints have established New Jerusalem on earth.⁸⁷

Because Cromwell and the Protectorate government have allegedly failed as stewards in these ways, Trapnel contends that they will soon come to ruin, which is best captured by her vision of "many Oaks." In this vision, oaks that are "full of Leaves of Profession," which represent Cromwell and his men, are destroyed and replaced by oaks that are "full of Sap," or God's oak.⁸⁸ In a single vision, Trapnel thus articulates the whole of Fifth Monarchist thought,

⁸⁴ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 50. For more information, see *OED Online*, "mud, v.1," March 2020, Oxford University Press.

⁸⁵ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 42.

⁸⁶ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 26.

⁸⁷ Cary, *Word in Season*, 1; and Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 49.

⁸⁸ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 17.

from the destruction of earthly kings to the onset of the millennium:

Another vision I had at the same time, of many Oaks with spreading branches full of leaves, very great limmed; I looking to the root, which lay but very little in the ground, & look't dry, as if it were crumbling to dust, and above the ground was only a little dry bark, on which limmed and spreading Oaks were set; a few shrubs which being by, were very lovely and green, these great Oaks fell suddenly down, and cover'd the other; presently I saw a very lovely tree for stature & compleatness every way not to be paralleld by any thing that every I saw, and before which the great Oaks crumbled to dust, and the little shrubs were raised up, growing and thriving exceedingly; then I desired Scripture to this vision; Reply was, in the first of Isaiah it is said, *They shall be confounded in the Oaks that they have desired.*⁸⁹

At the end of this passage, Trapnel prophesies that Cromwell's downfall will fulfill the promise of Isaiah 1:29-30 that New Jerusalem will be established on earth once all those who work against God have been destroyed.⁹⁰ As oaks, Cromwell and his men are outwardly beautiful but lack substance: their roots are dry, even "crumbling to dust." In contrast, God's oak is a "very lovely tree for stature & compleatness," so much so that it cannot be "paralleld by any thing." In this way, Trapnel suggests that Cromwell and his men will be punished because they made empty promises to the English people. Once these men have been destroyed, Trapnel explains that the radical Protestant sects that Cromwell persecuted during his reign will emerge triumphant. Trapnel's vision portrays this conflict as a battle between shrubs and oaks: "the despised Shrubs that the great Oaks endeavored to scatter and hide in their holes, they shall come forth, and all the Oaks shall crumble into dust; this is not by Might, nor by Power, or Arm, but brought in through the pourings out of my Spirit."⁹¹ In this vision, Trapnel roundly rejects

⁸⁹ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 12.

⁹⁰ Isaiah 1:29-30 (GNV): "For they shall be confounded for the oaks, which ye have desired, and ye shall be ashamed of the gardens that ye have chosen, For ye shall be as an oak, whose leaf fadeth: and as a garden that hath no water."

⁹¹ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 13. Susan Wiseman notes that the Fifth Monarchists and Cromwell were at odds with each other after the fall of the Barebones Parliament in 1654. This tension escalated throughout the 1650s, and the sect faced even more vehement opposition after the Restoration ("Unsilent Instruments and the Devil's Cushions, 190).

Cromwell's self-interested pursuit of power and method of ruling by asserting that the shrubs he has long persecuted, the saints, will instead allow their love for God to guide their rule. Christ and the saints will reign, in other words, as trees with root and sap; that is, they will provide the stability and security Cromwell promised but failed to deliver.

Trapnel builds on this vision of "many Oaks" at several other points during her trance. For example, she writes that the officers of the New Model Army have "but only blustering Oaks have been, / Great tall branches and boughs. / Which have no spirit nor moisture" and so "must out' o'th' Land."⁹² As with her use of the word "mudded," Trapnel yet again uses precisely the right word to capture the problem with these men: like trees howling in a storm, these men are all swagger and fanfare, providing no stability or security. Moreover, despite claiming to "stand / For those that are Christs flock," these officers continue to choose Cromwell—that is, to "declare / So much for this great Oak."⁹³ Having shown that Cromwell has not, in fact, delivered on the promises he made to the English people, or "Christs flock," Trapnel believes that Cromwell's supporters, primarily his ministers, actively work against God and are therefore poor shepherds of his flock. She drives this point home one final time as her trance nears an end: "whereas you were expected to be Oaks, full of shelter, of fruits and of refreshing, Oh but you have beene but blustering Oakes without root, without Sappe."⁹⁴ Recalling her earlier claim that God is an oak "full of Sap," Trapnel offers a model of proper stewardship grounded in providing the basic necessities of life.⁹⁵

Trapnel further builds out her reading of Isaiah 1:29-30 by drawing on 1 Samuel 8, in which the Israelites request a king, to demonstrate that the English garden has been poorly

⁹² Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 20.

⁹³ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 72.

⁹⁴ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 64.

⁹⁵ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 17.

stewarded by earthly kings and will continue to be unless the opportunity for human beings to attain this kind of power is put to an end. Imitating God's response to Samuel, who relays the Israelites' desire for a king, Trapnel says, "I will give you Gardens, but they shall have no springs in them, they shall be as dry chapt ground, they shall be as the fallow ground [. . .] you shall have no green grass in these Gardens." By framing monarchies as unwatered gardens in this passage, Trapnel charges Cromwell with being a poor steward of a dry and barren wasteland. She suggests, too, that this argument applies to all earthly kings, not just Cromwell, a claim she reinforces by speaking from the perspective of the Israelites: "we have hankered from mountain to hill, we have said salvation is in this hill and in that, but let us say so no longer [. . .] thou wilt give us Vineyards, and Gardens, and Trees of thine own, which shall abide." Put simply, Trapnel uses mountains and hills, here, as stand-ins for monarchs. In doing so, she implies that the English people have, over time, simply moved from one king to another, hoping that this king or that king would provide for and protect them. It is for this reason that she declares that "all the Gardens of the Earth [. . .] have been to [them] places of stumbling" up to this point.⁹⁶ In contrast to these "places of stumbling" are God's vineyards and gardens and trees, which are neither "chapt" nor "fallow," but everlasting. In this way, Trapnel suggests that the coming millennium promises to transform human relationships to nature; in her view, it is high time to change course from a long history of failed stewardship by earthly kings.

Having prophesied the end of Cromwell's rule, Trapnel draws on the language of country-house verse to argue that the English people will soon be led out of the wilderness into "sweet Canaan," a country estate of sorts that exceeds all others.⁹⁷ In the final moments of her trance, Trapnel offers an unsettling summary of what has taken place over the previous twelve

⁹⁶ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 17-18.

⁹⁷ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 33.

days: “I have brought my word into thy place, thy very Pallace, and it shall enter the very walls and hangings thereof against thee [. . .] You shall have plenty and fulness, but without comfort.”⁹⁸ Moments earlier, Trapnel also issued one final warning: “Flowers will soon wither, and their fine adornings will come to nothing.”⁹⁹ In these passages, Trapnel prophesies that country estates, and even Whitehall Palace, will come to ruin. To do so, she draws on legal terminology by promising to enter the walls and decorations of the palace itself as evidence against Cromwell and his men. Her warning is clear: in every way, their lives of excess testify to their guilt because, as she earlier argued, they have been built on the backs of poor English laborers and the nonhuman world. As Cary might put it, these birds will be undone by the “fine adornings” they have long plucked from the poor to “feather their nests.”¹⁰⁰ In other words, the very estates and palaces that have signified these men’s power now ensures their ruin.

Trapnel contrasts these finely adorned estates that will soon “come to nothing” with God’s estate, “sweet Canaan,” the description of which she includes in the middle of a song directed at English merchants.¹⁰¹ In this song, Trapnel’s message to the merchants echoes Bradstreet’s message to the Mariner in “Contemplations” and Cavendish’s message to the Merchant in the opening scene of *The Blazing-World*: these men’s presumed mastery over nature is far from secure. As Trapnel puts it, the “Canded ginger” and “Preserved Nutmegs” the merchants covet can “mould” and rot, their “ships” can “split,” an “enemy can rent” their goods from them at a moment’s notice, and their “losses” can be “great.” For Trapnel, the merchants’ belief in their invulnerability—that they can navigate the sea, avoiding all enemy attacks, that their food will never spoil, or that their ship will never be destroyed in a storm—is symptomatic

⁹⁸ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 70.

⁹⁹ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 69.

¹⁰⁰ Cary, *Word in Season*, 1.

¹⁰¹ The full song can be found in Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 30-33.

of their “greedy minds,” which pine only “after things here below.”¹⁰² Like Bradstreet’s Mariner and Cavendish’s Merchant, these merchants invest their time, money, and energy in seeking to control and enjoy the treasures of this world, while failing to realize that this control is fragile and impermanent.

In Trapnel’s view, if the merchants allowed their love for God rather than their “greedy minds” to guide their actions, they would instead enjoy the “true gold” and “sweet preserves” available on God’s estate, which “are as fresh and love as / They were when first [Christ] brought.”¹⁰³ God’s estate also makes a statement against enclosure: it has “lovely open gates” through which “he takes them into himself, / When others are shut out,” not so many fences which enclosed country estates during this period, delimiting who did and did not have the right to use the land.¹⁰⁴ God also “lovingly doth walk” on his estate, in Trapnel’s words, a phrase which echoes Cary’s own “walkes” with God, as she conducts an estate survey of the New Jerusalem without any regard for “this worlds wealth.”¹⁰⁵ Finally, in four short lines, Trapnel shatters the illusion conjured in country-house poems by arguing that God actually delivers on estate lords’ false assurances of economic stability and natural bounty: “What rooms, what wals, what hangings can / set forth of what is there / What meat & drink can be to that / which is so sweet and clear?”¹⁰⁶ In a beautifully broad turn of phrase, Trapnel summarizes her point by proclaiming that those who follow God, not the trappings of this world, “will green things behold.”¹⁰⁷ Unlike merchants and estate lords and other powerful men, whose stewardship

¹⁰² Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 58.

¹⁰³ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 30. Trapnel also assures her readers that “the Lord will not let there be a famishing of the Word in the Land” once the millennium arrives (43). Trapnel’s choice of the word “famished” is an appropriate one, given that England had experienced at least three bad harvests between 1647 and 1649 (Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, 101).

¹⁰⁴ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 55; and Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 33.

¹⁰⁷ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 33.

primarily takes the form of “cruelty” and “covetousness,” God “makes kindness come” and “dost so much love unfold.”¹⁰⁸ In these ways, Trapnel both undercuts human desires to master the nonhuman world and presents an alternative vision of estate stewardship modelled in God: one built on kindness, love, and inclusion, rather than cruelty, covetousness, and exclusion.

In another song, Trapnel contends that only when “sweet Canaan” has been established will humans and animals be released from the increasingly exploitative labor they were subjected to on country estates during this period. In turn, she suggests that an approach to labor which prioritizes the importance of rest will actually yield more than does a system built on labor exploitation. To demonstrate that God will provide this reprieve from burdensome labor, she renders the concept of “rest” in agricultural terms. For instance, she sees this promised rest already modelled on the break from labor that occurs between sowing and reaping when farmers must “stay from gathering up the field / to accommodate the land” and produce “great increase.” In another instance, Trapnel states, “Oh see and learn of Plants and Trees, / of Gardens and the Fields, / A rest there’s from the mighty Lord / which he unto them yeelds.”¹⁰⁹ In both examples, Trapnel separates out humankind’s relationship to the land, or laborious toil, leaving rest alone, God’s main gift to the land. While human beings generally believe that work is essential to productivity and profit—that is, work must be put into the land to improve and turn a profit on it—here, Trapnel suggests it is rest that “yeelds” the greater “increase.” The word “yeelds” works in three ways: first, God provides nature the opportunity to rest; second, this period of rest leads to greater crop yields; and third, the word suggests a relinquishing of control over nature, a logic antithetical to the discourse of improvement. In this way, Trapnel signals that the fulfillment of the Fifth Monarchist vision will put an end to the exploitation of human laborers,

¹⁰⁸ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 47, 49, and 31.

¹⁰⁹ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 48-49.

animals, and the land, which had only intensified over the course of the seventeenth century. In doing so, moreover, she proposes that good estate stewards can best “improve” the land, or ensure greater “increase,” by exercising restraint and giving greater priority to rest in their dealings with human laborers, animals, and the land itself.

Trapnel continues this argument by describing the coming millennium in yet another way: as a mass vertical migration from the ground up to God’s nest in a tall tree. In this song, she states that all of God’s creation will “get up into the high tree, / where none shall go and pluck” and “none can scar, nor them afflict.” She adds that in this tree “no musquet shot can come: / There is not any can draw their Spears / or at all shoot their Canon. / Though nests in trees may shaken be, / yet thine shall e’r remaine.”¹¹⁰ In these lines, Trapnel portrays God’s nest as a refuge from weapons used in hunting and war—a timely image, to say the least. On God’s estate, however, birds will not be hunted, and their nests will not be destroyed through forest clearing or through war. In Trapnel’s words, they will no longer be “plucked,” mirroring Cary’s complaint that estate lords continue to “pluck away the lands” of the poor to “feather their own nests.”¹¹¹ Of course, in this moment Trapnel also alludes to Eve, whose choice to pluck the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil not only violated the bounds God set on Adam and Eve’s relationship to nature, but also triggered a fundamental change in that relationship in the act of doing so. In each of these ways, Trapnel maintains that nature will be unharmed by humankind on God’s estate.

Trapnel brings each of these ideas together by exhorting Cromwell one final time to become a better steward of the English estate. In particular, she argues that Cromwell must be a “true Jacob” by prioritizing “Justice and Mercy” over private gain. She writes that Jacob:

¹¹⁰ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 49.

¹¹¹ Cary, *Word in Season*, 1.

was not for great revenues, great increase, though the Lord gave him great increases; if the Lord gave in to your increases it were well, oh but you take it in from the poore, and from Gods *Israel*, oh that you would take up *Jacobs* practice, as well as you are willing to take in his comforts when you were in the fields.¹¹²

As Trapnel puts it, Cromwell has time and again pursued his own interests at the expense of the people he serves. Like a covetous estate lord, he has valued “great revenues” above all else, exploiting the “poore” and expropriating their labor to enjoy a life full of “comforts.” It is for this reason that Trapnel urges him to “take up *Jacobs* practice”. That is, Cromwell should actually “manifest” that he “love[s] Justice and Mercy,” rather than merely professing to love them while actively working against both.¹¹³

About halfway through her trance, Trapnel declares, “there is no self in this thing.”¹¹⁴ While this declaration means that God speaks through her, it can also be read as a motto for Trapnel’s environmental ethos. Over the course of her twelve-day trance, Trapnel argues that Cromwell and the Protectorate government are no different, and perhaps even worse, than the whole “harvest of wicked” monarchs who came before them, to borrow Cary’s words. In turn, Trapnel prophesies that the Protectorate, like the monarchies that preceded it, will fall and be succeeded by a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, in which royal power will no longer exploit poor laborers, animals, and the land to sustain and legitimize itself. By rendering Cromwell’s fall and the arrival of the millennium as a fundamental shift in human relationships to nature—moving from exploitation to restraint, and from cruelty to love—Trapnel further reinforces her claim that Cromwell has failed to steward his estate with care. Moreover, by stepping into the role of crying stone in this text, she also suggests that nature itself will call Cromwell and his government to account for their failed stewardship—“blustering Oaks,” cut

¹¹² Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 53.

¹¹³ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 53.

¹¹⁴ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 52.

down by a crying stone. Finally, to counteract the worst effects of Cromwell's poor stewardship, Trapnel presents Jacob as a strong model for estate stewardship because he practices "Justice and Mercy," not "covetousness" and "cruelty."¹¹⁵ In these ways, Trapnel fashions herself as an ecological thinker deeply concerned about how the changing economy, property system, and nature of labor in seventeenth-century England encouraged humankind to look on nature with an extremely covetous eye. In turn, by speaking in the voice of the nonhuman world and playing out Cromwell's fall on the terrain of nature, Trapnel opens up the space to consider the need for more restraint, mercy, and love in humankind's dealings with the nonhuman world.

IV. The Power "to Destroy Whatever She Pleases": The Dark Side of Human Relationships to the Nonhuman World in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing-World*

Although Cavendish's *The Blazing-World* does not argue for ecological reform of the kind Cary and Trapnel advocate, her text reveals how an aggressive Empress can do tremendous harm to people and nature. As I have shown in the chapter's Introduction, the text opens with the figure of the Merchant, who draws on his maritime expertise to "Steal" the young Lady "away" while she "gather[s] shells upon the shore."¹¹⁶ In response, Nature swiftly puts an end to the merchant's abuse of power, both over the young Lady and the sea, by putting an end to the merchant himself: winds carry the merchant's ship to the North Pole and drive it into a massive glacier, leaving the merchant and his crew to freeze to death. That a tempest and a group of human-animal hybrid creatures soon after save the young Lady suggests that humankind too often fails to practice the "Justice and Mercy" Trapnel urges Cromwell to "manifest." Cavendish's text thus opens with a timely cautionary tale about deploying scientific knowledge

¹¹⁵ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 53 and 47.

¹¹⁶ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 1.

and technology, here in the form of the Merchant's maritime expertise, to exploit other human beings.

That the Empress simply compounds the exploitation set in motion by the Merchant illustrates that women are not inherently better stewards of the nonhuman world. Shortly after the young woman is saved from the merchant by the tempest and rescued by the bear-men, she becomes the Empress of the Blazing-World and answers the nonhuman world's gesture of kindness with a set of exploitative practices of her own. The justice served by the nonhuman world at the start of the text, then, is only momentary, and the young woman returns the favor by learning all she can about the Blazing-World and its creatures to determine how to best harness and exploit them for personal and political gain. Although the text welcomes the Empress's scientific and technological control over nature to maintain social order, this opening cautionary tale, and the special attention paid to the ecological cost of the Empress's actions, demonstrates that the text is not just a disturbingly enthusiastic portrayal of a ruler's attempts to restore social order by wielding near-cosmic power. Instead, the text should also be read as a critique of the ruling classes' power to inflict harm on other human beings and the nonhuman world.

Before examining the ways in which Cavendish builds this argument, it is necessary to address the tensions between Cavendish's royalist sympathies and Cary and Trapnel's Fifth Monarchism. In *The Blazing-World*, Cavendish herself makes a cameo appearance under the name of Duchess of Newcastle, trusted advisor of the Empress of the Blazing World. Many scholars have argued that the counsel the Duchess of Newcastle offers, which encourages the Empress to consolidate her rule, reflects the royalist sympathies of Cavendish the writer.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Although Cavendish's politics are quite similar to those of Hobbes, their views on natural philosophy differ in considerable ways, particular their views on matter. While Hobbes believed that matter was inert, Cavendish believed it was active, or self-moving, a belief that manifests in *The Blazing-World* in rather humorous fashion. At one point, the Duchess and the Empress decide to dream up worlds according to the opinions of several

Cavendish's support for monarchy as the best possible system for producing order in society and for stifling conflict was firm and lifelong, and the political upheaval of the 1640s and 1650s did much to confirm her views. In *The Blazing-World*, Cavendish bestows repeated praise on the Blazing World's imperial form of government, writing at one point that Paradise is "not acquainted with Foreign Wars, or Home-bred Insurrections." She also remarks on the merits of Paradise's simplified legal code; as she explains, an overabundance of laws "breed[s] Factions" and leads to "open Wars." Finally, Cavendish asserts that monarchy is the most natural form of government because it is "natural for one Body to have but one head," while a commonwealth is

early modern natural philosophers, including Hobbes. When imagining a world created in Hobbes's image, the Duchess experiences a piercing headache: "but when all the parts of this Imaginary World came to press and drive each other, they seemed like a company of Wolves that worry sheep, or like so many Dogs that hunt after Hares; and when she found a re-action equal to those pressures, her mind was so squeezed together, that her thoughts could neither move forward nor backward, which caused such an horrible pain in her head" (100). Here, Cavendish alludes to Hobbes's view on the state of nature as a state of war ("a company of Wolves that worry sheep") and his belief that all life can be distilled down to matter in motion, the foundation of mechanical philosophy. Cavendish and Hobbes were materialists, though their approaches to materialism differed. For much of her life, though not all, Cavendish was a vitalist materialist. She believed that nature shows both order and variability. While mechanism and the laws of motion could explain nature's orderliness, she argued that they could not sufficiently account for nature's variability, leading her to believe that matter was more self-moving than inert. According to Hobbes, all life was matter in motion, and rational thought was just another, more advanced, type of motion. Cavendish captures this view in the above passage when describing the onset of her headache: the very thought of making a world according to Hobbes's opinion paralyzes her, so much so that her very thoughts are unable to move. For more information on Cavendish's absolutist politics, or on the relationship between Hobbes's politics and natural philosophy and her own, see Anna Battagelli, "'No House But My Mind': Cavendish's Hobbesian Dilemma," in *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind*, 62-84 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998); Deborah Boyle, "Fame, Virtue, and Government: Margaret Cavendish on Ethics and Politics," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 2 (2006): 251-90; David Cunning's recent survey, *Cavendish* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); Elayne Fowler, "Margaret Cavendish and the Ideal Commonwealth," *Utopian Studies* 7, no. 1 (1996): 38-48; Catherine Gallagher, "Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England," *Genders* 1 (1988): 24-39; Sarah Hutton, "In Dialogue with Thomas Hobbes: Margaret Cavendish's Natural Philosophy," *Women's Writing* 4, no. 3 (1997): 412-32; Susan James's introduction to *Margaret Cavendish: Political Writings*, ix-xxix (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Victoria Kahn, "Margaret Cavendish and the Romance of Contract," *Renaissance Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1997): 526-66; Sara Mendelson's introduction in her recent edition of *The Blazing-World* (Ontario: Broadview, 2016), 9-50; Nicole Pohl, "'Of Mixt Natures': Questions of Genre in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*," in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, edited by Stephen Clucas, 51-68 (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Lisa T. Sarasohn, "Leviathan and the Lady: Cavendish's Critique of Hobbes in the Philosophical Letters," in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish*, edited by Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz, 40-58 (Madison and Teaneck: Farleigh Dickenson Press, 2003); and Sandra Sherman, "Trembling Texts: Margaret Cavendish and the Dialectic of Authorship," *ELR* 24, no. 1 (1994): 184-210.

“like a Monster with many heads.”¹¹⁸ As these passages illustrate and as many scholars have shown, Cavendish shared Hobbes’s commitment to absolutism, as presented in *Leviathan*, which is difficult to square with the radical sectarianism of Cary and Trapnel.

Her political positions are also not obviously or necessarily conducive to an eco-centric view, of the kind Cary and Trapnel present. For example, it is difficult to reconcile Cavendish’s concern about the sequestration of her husband William’s estates during the English Revolution with the Fifth Monarchists’ call for the destruction of the institution of monarchy or the Diggers’ program to abolish private property and restore common rights to the land. In fact, in *The Blazing-World* the Duchess of Newcastle laments the sequestration of the Cavendish estates as she and the Empress travel through the Forest of Sherewood to the Cavendish estate at Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire. On the way, the Empress notes that, although the forest is “surrounded all with Wood,” there seems to be “more Wood on the Seas (she meaning the Ships) than on the Land.” The Duchess then provides a brief overview of the English Civil Wars, during which, she explains, “most of the best Timber-trees and Principals Palaces were ruined and destroyed; and my dear Lord and Husband, said she, has lost by it half his Woods, besides many Houses, Land, and movable Goods; so that all the loss out of his particular Estate, did mount to above Half a Million of Pounds.”¹¹⁹ In this passage, the two women’s discussion of nature centers on the ways in which it can be exploited—either to create a naval force, or for timber to be sold on the market. While the Duchess laments the destruction of the forests during the war, her concern is focused primarily on the economic loss that this destruction presents to her and

¹¹⁸ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 10 and 16. The Empress observes that the Duchess of Newcastle’s world is “very much disturbed with Factions, Divisions, and Wars” when the two visit this world (102-3). This observation leads the Empress and the Duchess to divine imaginary worlds absent of “ambitious, factions, malicious detractions, civil dissensions, or home-bread quarrels, divisions in Religion, Foreign Wars” (102).

¹¹⁹ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 108-9.

her husband. As I stated earlier in this chapter, it is also difficult not to see the portrayal of the domination over nature in this text as a model for scientific and technological control over nature going forward in early modern Europe, as Europeans sought to build global empires. In each of these ways, Cavendish's text is decidedly less nature-friendly than Cary's or Trapnel's.

Just because Cavendish was a Royalist, however, does not mean that she was heedless of the many ways in which royal power can quite quickly slip into tyranny.¹²⁰ As I have shown in Chapter Two, poems such as "The Hunting of the Stag," "The Hunting of the Hare," and "A Dialogue between an Oak and a Man Cutting It Down" testify not only to her deep and enduring concerns about humankind's affinity for tyrannizing the nonhuman world, but also to her shrewd understanding of the way in which royal power authorizes and sustains itself by exploiting that world. As I mentioned in the dissertation's Introduction, in her biography of her husband, Cavendish again reveals a deep sensitivity to animals' capacity for suffering: She writes, "I am "tender-natured, for it troubles my conscience to kill a fly and the groans of a dying beast strike my soul."¹²¹ Cavendish was also concerned about the role of government-backed science and the methods of experimentation being practiced by the Royal Society, which she explores in *The Blazing-World*. The Fellows of the Royal Society were known to have practiced vivisection, though Robert Hooke and Robert Boyle avoiding performing vivisection on the same animal

¹²⁰ Julie Crawford has made a similar point in her reading of Cavendish's *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668). She reads this play as a "reminder of the sacrifices royalists made in their dedication to the monarchy, it also offers a vision of what they might receive in return, including a better place for royalist women in the restored privileges and property rights of the nobility." In this regard, the text is both a "royalist admonition of Charles I and Henrietta Maria for not helping the royalists retrieve their property" sequestered during the war, and an exercise in utopian imagination. In these ways, Crawford demonstrates that royalism "is a more complex ideology than blanket allegiance to the monarch" ("Convents and Pleasures: Margaret Cavendish and the Drama of Property," *Renaissance Drama* 32 [2003]: 183 and 205). Lisa Sarasohn has also reconciled Cavendish's royalism with her more subversive ideas quite well: "rather than calling for the destruction of social hierarchy and institutions, which [Cavendish] supported for class and personal reasons, she advocated everything that was intellectually subversive within traditional society" (Lisa T. Sarasohn, *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish: Reason and Fancy during the Scientific Revolution* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010], 302).

¹²¹ Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish*, 175.

twice, for fear of unnecessarily torturing the creature, which I explained in the dissertation's Introduction. During her visit to the Royal Society in May 1667, Cavendish witnessed a host of experiments, among which was the observation of a louse under a microscope, though vivisection was not one of them, and thankfully so.¹²²

For some time, Cavendish was regarded as anti-Baconian, not least because of the compassion she displays for animals above.¹²³ However, as Emma Wilkins has rightly shown, Cavendish believed that the primary purpose of all scientific endeavor was utilitarian, a belief she shared with Bacon and the vast majority of Royal Society Fellows.¹²⁴ For example, in *Orations of Divers Sorts, Accommodated to Divers Places* (1662), Cavendish argues that human beings should learn how best to “Increase our Breed of Animals, and our Stores of Vegetables, and to find out the Minerals for our Use”—efforts which contribute to “the Profitable Increase for Men.” Cavendish's worry was simply that this aim could be taken too far, which I show in my discussion of *The Blazing-World*. In fact, in the 1668 edition of her natural philosophical text entitled *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, to which *The Blazing-World* was appended when it first appeared in print, Cavendish wrote, “it is a false maxim to believe that if some

¹²² The precise date that Cavendish made her visit to the Royal Society is not clear. Boesky has suggested May 27, 1667 as the likely date, while Samuel I. Mintz puts it at May 30, 1667 (Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, 123; and Samuel I. Mintz, “The Duchess of Newcastle's Visit to the Royal Society,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 51, no. 2 [1952]: 171). Mintz notes that if Samuel Pepys's diary entry on May 30, 1667 can be believed, then Robert Boyle, with Robert Hooke's assistance, was asked to prepare the following experiments for Cavendish's visit: the weighing of air, the dissolving of roasted mutton in liquor, and demonstrations related to color (172). For Pepys's diary, see Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, edited by Henry B. Wheatley (New York, 1946).

¹²³ Scholars such as Evelyn Fox Keller, Mintz, and Sarasohn have suggested that Cavendish's relationship to the Royal Society was “hostile,” in Wilkin's words, partly because Cavendish was not supportive of the utilitarian aims of science (Wilkins, “Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society,” 246). Wilkin's work on Cavendish's relationship to the Royal Society is an effort to counter this view. For more information, see Evelyn Fox Keller, “Producing Petty Gods: Margaret Cavendish's Critique of Experimental Science,” *English Literary History* 64 (1997): 447-71; Mintz, “The Duchess of Newcastle's Visit to the Royal Society,” and Sarasohn, *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish*.

¹²⁴ Margaret Cavendish, *Orations of Divers Sorts*, 254.

creatures have power over others, they also have power over nature.”¹²⁵ Like the opening of *The Blazing-World*, in its most immediate sense this statement reminds us of the limitations and fragility of humankind’s power over the nonhuman world. In Cavendish’s view, even if we have power over other creatures—as the merchant does over the young woman—at a moment’s notice a tempest can level us all. On a deeper level, however, this statement also contains the seeds of an ethics of care that Cavendish gestures towards in *The Blazing-World* and develops in her other works, one that is wary of the attitude that “might makes right.” Just because humankind has the physical power to control, dominate, and exploit the nonhuman, in other words, doesn’t mean we should exert that power in a cruel way. By Cavendish’s own logic, then, the Empress’s eventual acquisition of so great a “power” that she can “destroy whatever she pleases, not only whole Nations, but a whole World,” should register as sinister and disturbing.¹²⁶ When the Empress first assumes the imperial throne of the Blazing World, she is given the “absolute power” to “rule and govern all that World as she pleased”; by the text’s end, however, this power has taken a considerably darker turn.¹²⁷

Moreover, to argue that Cavendish’s commitment to the Royalist cause can singularly explain the kaleidoscopic diversity of her *oeuvre* is to sell her short as a writer, to believe that a writer’s personal views are always the key to decoding their work, and to assume that the opinions a person holds must always be perfectly consistent. The fictional Cavendish makes a similar point in one particularly meta-textual moment in *The Blazing-World*. The Empress asks Cavendish, “If you glory so much in your Honesty and Vertue, how comes it that you plead for

¹²⁵ Margaret Cavendish, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, edited by Eileen O’Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 203.

¹²⁶ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 21. All future quotations from Part Two of *The Blazing-World* will be cited in this way because it has different pagination.

¹²⁷ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 13.

Dishonest and Wicked persons, in your Writings?” In response, the Duchess answers, “It was only to shew her Wit, not her Nature.”¹²⁸ Here, the fictional Cavendish separates the writer from her writing, arguing that writers can make decisions when writing that do not necessarily reflect their personal beliefs or life experiences. By this logic, Cavendish herself can at once be a Royalist, and be concerned about the more tyrannical forms monarchy can take. Moreover, Cavendish never strictly adhered to any single opinion, believing that to do so endangered the production of knowledge; in this sense, it is actually truer to the nature of Cavendish’s work to make arguments that are mindful of this fact.¹²⁹ In other words, Cavendish’s commitment to absolutism does not preclude her from both supporting a royal or imperial power who is ideally wise and benevolent, and warning against the tremendous harm the ruling classes can inflict on other human beings and the nonhuman world. *The Blazing-World* is undeniably enthusiastic about the exercise of royal power to restore and maintain social order; at the same time, however, the text pays careful attention to the ecological price of doing so, or of taking measures beyond what is necessary to do so.

Although the text embraces absolutist politics under the guidance of a presumably wise and benevolent imperial ruler quite early on when the young Lady assumes power in the Blazing World, the greater part of the text emphasizes that the Empress often exceeds the bounds of what is necessary to establish and maintain order to expand her own power and that of her close friends and allies. A brief sketch of the events that unfold in the illustrates this point well, though I examine each of these events in more detail later in this section. Shortly after arriving in

¹²⁸ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 26.

¹²⁹ Similarly, Oddvar Holmesland has argued that the seeming contradictions in Cavendish’s and Aphra’s Behn’s views on women’s role and place in society in large part comes down to “their refusal to provide simple answers to complicated questions” (*Utopian Negotiation: Aphra Behn and Margaret Cavendish* [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013], 41).

Paradise, the capital of the Blazing World, the young Lady marries the Emperor and, as Empress, is granted “absolute power to rule and govern all that World as she pleased.”¹³⁰ The Empress goes on to patronize and institutionalize the sciences, and she takes a tour of the scientific disciplines of the Blazing World for the greater part of the text. While the Empress expresses genuine interest in the sciences, she repeatedly threatens to dismiss the scientific societies that she helped to form, and to destroy their technology for producing more disagreement and division than order.¹³¹ She then presses this knowledge and technology into the service of her own religious and imperialist agenda in the form of a state-sponsored religion and a war to defend her homeland, both of which smell badly of tyranny and the latter of which leads to widespread destruction and unrest.

When provided differing opinions on how best to approach this war, the Empress threatens to “hang” her advisers, “by reason they give more Words, then Advice.” She then “resolve[s] to return into her Blazing-World, without giving any assistance to her Countrymen.” The Empress’s efforts are only thwarted by the Duchess of Newcastle, Cavendish’s fictional avatar, who “intreat[s] her Majesty to abate her passion.”¹³² The text also insists that this war is a defensive one in nature—to protect the Kingdom of ESFI from attack. As the war progresses, however, the Empress goes on the offensive by using increasingly aggressive methods to make the King of ESFI the “absolute Master of the Seas” and “Absolute Monarch of all that World.” These actions foment the very disorder the Empress strives to combat, as “inlaved” neighboring nations, who are “hardly able to peep out of their own Dominions without a chargeable Tribute,”

¹³⁰ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 13.

¹³¹ For this reason, among others, Cavendish uses this section to satirize early modern natural philosophers. Throughout her discussions with the hybrid creatures, the Empress wonders if their scientific endeavors are less about the production of new knowledge, than about fueling the creatures’ egos.

¹³² Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 11.

join forces to resist her.¹³³ Cavendish's text thus demonstrates the Empress's power to inflict extreme harm on other people and the nonhuman world, which produces more division than order. In these ways, Cavendish paints a picture of a ruler who began with the best of intentions, who was wise and benevolent, but who, when given near-cosmic power, becomes petulant, impulsive, and overly willing to use violence to achieve her ends. Rather than restoring order, moreover, the Empress's exceedingly cruel methods actually incite the very resistance she attempts to quash. For these reasons, Cavendish's text should be read as much more than a utopian panegyric on the Royalist cause.

By making this argument, Cavendish presents her text as a response to Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627). In *New Atlantis*, Bacon tells us that the purpose of Salomon's House, the city's scientific institution, is to seek the "knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things, and [to enlarge] the bounds of Human Empire."¹³⁴ For Bacon, the goal of a scientific institution is not just to arrive at some pure, objective truth. As I have said in the dissertation's Introduction, in *Novum Organum* Bacon states that the purpose of scientific endeavor is to restore that "right over nature" given to us by God in Genesis; in *New Atlantis*, as evident above, the purpose is to extend geopolitical power. Cavendish's *Blazing-World* takes the mantra of Salomon's House to an extreme: the Empress ostensibly founds scientific societies and encourages the pursuit of

¹³³ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 15-20. Of course, these scenes can also be read as a celebration of absolutist politics, which brings order to a disorderly world. As I have shown, however, this order is fragile, as the neighboring nations talk of launching an organized attack on the Empress's forces.

¹³⁴ Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 177. In 1659, Thomas Bushell began to bring Salomon's House to life in Wells, Somerset, in which a "select society of [. . .] philosophers" could gather (quoted in Keith Thomas, "The Utopian Impulse in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Between Dream and Nature: Essays on Utopia and Dystopia*, edited by Dominic Baker-Smith and C. C. Barfoot, 20-46 [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987], 34). For more information on Bushell's plans, see Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, 80. Boesky notes that Bacon's own plans for a state-run scientific institution began as early as 1607, and she cites Cornelius Drebbel's laboratory at Eltham Palace, which James I arranged; Tycho Brahe's Uranibourg; and John Dee's Mortlake as potential inspirations for Salomon's House (*Founding Fictions*, 56-61). Gresham College and its successor, the Royal Society, would, of course, later take inspiration from each of these.

scientific knowledge with good intentions, but which she then uses to establish her own religion, secure absolute power over her people, and enter a war that results in the destruction of many towns in the world of her birth.

Before deploying the hybrid creatures in service of a political agenda, the Empress's interest in the Blazing World's scientific knowledge and technology begins as an innocent exercise in instruction: the hybrid creatures teach her how to do experimental philosophy. Her questions and the hybrid creatures' replies quickly reveal that the Blazing World is right on the crux of the transition between Aristotelianism and the new experimental philosophy—from the Empress's frustration with telescopes and preference for unaided human sight, a preference she shared with Aristotle, to her discussion with the fly-men about whether or not all creatures have existed since the Creation, to her conversation with Galenic physicians. Cavendish, of course, does not explicitly admit as much, but a close examination of the subjects that the Empress discusses and pushes back on tracks quite well with the emergence of experimental philosophy and its slow-but-steady movement away from Aristotelian natural philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ For more information, see Margaret Osler, *Reconfiguring the World: Nature, God, and Human Understanding from the Middle Ages to Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); and Mary Thomas Crane, *Losing Touch with Nature: Literature and the New Science in Sixteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). It is widely accepted that Cavendish was concerned about the New Science's overreliance on scientific tools, specifically microscopes and telescopes for a number of reasons, despite the fact that Cavendish and her husband had acquired a number of microscopes and telescopes during their exile in Paris during the 1640s. Six in their collection were made by Italian experimentalists Torricelli and Eustachio Divini, one of which was an impressive twenty-nine feet long (Emma Wilkins, "Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 68, no. 3 [2014]: 249). Despite the fact that the Cavendishes had acquired this collection, Cavendish still believed that these tools distorted nature and that natural philosophers must proceed with caution when relying on artificial tools to produce knowledge. Emma Wilkins writes that Cavendish's "main objection was that the microscope was unreliable, especially because it was difficult to cut and grind lens. She was also worried that there were things we did not yet know about the microscope's flaws, and she was concerned that the microscope provided no information about the internal composition of things being examined under the lens" ("Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society," 248). In *The Blazing-World*, Cavendish satirizes the bear-men for their repeated inability to draw conclusive proof from their observations of objects under the microscope or through the telescope. Cavendish's view is best captured by the following passage from *The Blazing-World*: "The Empress began to grow angry at their Telescopes, that they could give no better Intelligence; for, said she, now I do plainly perceive, that your Glasses are false Informers, and instead of discovering the Truth,

If Cavendish roots the Blazing World's scientific discourse in the experimental philosophy of her day—best embodied in the activities of the Royal Society, which was founded in 1660—then her rendering of the ways in which the Empress deploys the sciences to advance her political agenda becomes all the more real and all the more frightening. When this discussion of the Blazing World's scientific disciplines ends, the Empress commands the worm-men to fetch her some stone from a “Mountain that did burn in flames of fire,” but to keep their mission a secret. The text explains that this stone heats to such a degree when wet that it “break[s] forth in a flaming-fire.” The Empress then demands that the bird-men obtain pieces of sunstone, which proves impossible without diminishing the light in the world, so they instead “demolish one of the numerous Stars of the Sky,” the so-called “Blazing-Stars” from which the Blazing World gets its name.¹³⁶ A white diamond fashioned from one such star rests atop the Empress's spear as well, which “signified that she was ready to assault those that proved her Enemies.”¹³⁷ Crucially, however, soon after the Empress arrives in Paradise, she learns that Paradise has “no other enemies but the winds.”¹³⁸ Taken together, the text suggests from its earliest pages that the Empress's interest in the sciences, and the general production of knowledge, will be pressed into the service of violence in some way. Of course, this violence might simply be part of the pleasure of the fictional fantasy celebrating cosmic power held in her hands. However, the

delude your Senses; Wherefore I Command you to break them, and let the Bird-men trust onely to their natural eyes, and examine Coelestial Objects by the motions of their own Sense and Reason... That if their Glasses were True Informers, they would rectifie their irregular Sense and Reason; But, said she, Nature has made your Sense and Reason more regular then Art has your Glasses” (*The Blazing-World*, 27). For these reasons, Wilkins suggests that *The Blazing-World* “was (at least in part) a response to the work of two pioneers in English microscopy, Henry Power and Robert Hooke, who had published their works in 1664 and 1665, respectively” (Emma Wilkins, “Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society,” 247).

¹³⁶ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 61.

¹³⁷ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 14.

¹³⁸ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 8. We also learn that there are no guns in Paradise for this same reason: “As for Guns, there was no use of them, because they had no other enemies but the Winds” (8).

attention Cavendish assiduously pays throughout the text to the harm the Empress inflicts by mixing science and politics renders the image above a rather disturbing one.

Once the Empress has sent the bird- and worm-men on their respective missions, readers soon learn that she wants to use these materials to construct two chapels. The first chapel is built and decorated with this same “Star-stone” to signify the glory of Heaven. The second chapel is built around a central fountain made of this fire-stone, which is conveyed through a system of artificial pipes. In this chapel, the Empress preaches “Sermons of terror” intended to demonstrate that “the wicked” can expect to be “tormented in an everlasting fire” after this life.¹³⁹ She justifies this decision by stating that “belief was a thing not to be forced or pressed upon the people, but to be instilled into their minds by gentle perswasions.”¹⁴⁰ In these ways, the Empress uses the scientific expertise of the bird- and worm-men to “gently persuade”—an understatement if there ever was one—the minds of her people into converting to her religion. By doing so, she exposes the dangers of institutionalized science: the power to control the circulation of knowledge, to deploy scientific knowledge to advance a state’s religious and political agendas, and to serve such knowledge to the people on a platter of objectivity and truth.

The Empress also expresses interest in cowing people outside of Paradise into submission earlier in the text, when the Duchess expresses a desire to “be a great Princess.”¹⁴¹ To help the Duchess realize her dreams, the Empress summons the Immaterial Spirits to ask how many worlds exist in the universe and, of these, how many worlds may be conquered so that the Duchess may rule over them: “Is none of these Worlds so weak, said she, that it may be surprised or conquered”? The Spirits inform her that there are worlds that may be conquered but that they

¹³⁹ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 62.

¹⁴⁰ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 63.

¹⁴¹ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 93.

think it wise not to follow these plans for two reasons: these worlds are as “populous” as her own world, and few conquerors “enjoy their conquest, for they being more feared than loved, most commonly come to an untimely end.” As an alternative, the Immaterial Spirits suggest creating a “Celestial World,” which is to say an imaginary world in which the Duchess can be Empress without harming anyone. Despite repeated entreaties, however, the Empress persists, fully prepared to weaponize this knowledge, which she has exploited the nonhuman spirits to gain, in order to conquer another world for the private benefit of her close friend.¹⁴²

Soon after this conversation, the Empress accompanies the Duchess on a visit to the latter’s own world, during which the Empress is directly exposed to the destructive effects of this attitude. Upon arriving in England, the Empress observes that “not any particular State, Kingdom or Common-wealth, was contented with their own shares, but endeavoured to encroach upon their Neighbors, and that their greatest glory was in Plunder and Slaughter.” What “she wonder’d most at,” however, “was, that they should praise or value dirt more than mens lives, and vanity more than tranquility.”¹⁴³ From the Empress’s perspective, due to their vanity, heads of state define, sustain, and enhance their power primarily by imposing that power on the land, especially through dispossession and enclosure. Land becomes nothing more than a playing ground for their “vanity,” and any “value” they place on “dirt” only extends to how that land might be exploited for private gain. The Empress’s visit to the Duchess’s world thus provides an instructive lesson in what can happen when those in power exploit the nonhuman world to strengthen their power.

¹⁴² Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 95-96. In *The Prince*, which was written in 1513 but only printed in 1531, Machiavelli advises rulers to be both feared and loved whenever possible, but to be more feared than loved if unable to achieve both. Here, the Immaterial Spirits instead suggest that wise and benevolent rulers should be more loved than feared and that conquest is a surefire way to ensure the latter. A similar view is put forward earlier in the text: “Fear, though it makes people obey, yet does it not last so long, nor is it so sure a means to keep them to their duties, as Love” (63).

¹⁴³ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 104.

The Empress's brief moment of clarity here soon dissipates, as she chooses to intervene in an ongoing war in ESFI, the world in which she was born.¹⁴⁴ As the text unfolds, the Empress's motivations shift substantially; whereas she enters the war with good intentions, to help the kingdom of ESFI, over time her political agenda becomes increasingly aggressive and dictatorial. Her focus shifts to the amassing of territories and geopolitical power not only for the King of ESFI, but also for herself, suggesting that the Empress, too, has come to "value dirt more than mens lives," and her own "vanity more than tranquility." She proceeds to carry this agenda out by fully weaponizing the scientific expertise of the Blazing World's hybrid creatures. First, she commands the bear-men to "view through their Telescope what Towns and Cities those were that would not submit," and she goes on to destroy these towns with the Blazing World's technology. Her specific strategy is to burn "smaller towns" first, then to "convert their smaller Loss into a Total Ruin" should towns continue to disobey her. When one stubborn town refuses to submit, the Empress devises an even more intricate plan. Knowing that each year the town "was watered by a Flowing Tide" and that the houses were built on "Supporters which were fixt into the ground," the Empress orders the bird- and worm-men to fix fire-stone to these supporters so that "when the Tide came in, all their Houses were of a fire."¹⁴⁵ Because the King of ESFI also complained of economic blockades, the Empress "resolve[s] to ruin all [the enemies'] Trade and Traffick" and destroys their ships. In turn, the text reads, the King of ESFI "became absolute Master of the Seas, and consequently of that World."¹⁴⁶ By belaboring the sheer extent of the destruction the Empress has caused, the text demonstrates that the use of science and technology

¹⁴⁴ ESFI is a thinly veiled reference to England, Scotland, France, and Ireland.

¹⁴⁵ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 17-20. The narrator makes a strange aside that the Empress, "being of a sweet and noble Nature," would not "suffer that [the bird-men] should tire or weary themselves by long flights" (Part Two, 8) while performing this labor for her.

¹⁴⁶ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 16.

to expand “the bounds of Human Empire,” the goal of Salomon’s House, comes at a significant cost.¹⁴⁷ In sum, the Empress exploits not only the knowledge and the labor of the hybrid creatures, but also the variety of natural resources the earth has to offer. In doing so, she proves little different than the Merchant who abducted her or the heads of state she criticized not long ago.

The Blazing-World further reinforces this point by arguing that human relationships to the each other and the nonhuman world are often defined by cruelty. When the Empress is conversing with the Immaterial Spirits, she asserts her belief in the fundamental superiority of human beings by asking if “Evil Spirits” are “reckoned amongst beasts of the Field.” In response to her question, the Spirits explain that many animals are “harmless” and “serviceable,” while human beings are capable of great cruelty:

many Beasts of the field [are] harmless Creatures, and very serviceable for Man’s use; and though some [are] accounted fierce and cruel, yet [do] they exercise their cruelty upon other Creatures, for the most part, to no other end, but to get themselves food, and to satisfy their natural appetites; but certainly [. . .] you Men are more cruel to one another, then evil Spirits are to you.¹⁴⁸

Here, the Spirits distinguish between two forms of cruelty: one based on need, and the other based on excess. While the harm animals inflict on each other is restricted to obtaining what resources they absolutely need, the Spirits imply that human beings inflict harm on each other and the nonhuman world for reasons that often exceed basic need, as the Empress does in the Kingdom of ESFI. The Spirits are therefore correct to add that “evil Spirits” are rarely as cruel to

¹⁴⁷ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 177.

¹⁴⁸ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 82. This exchange between the Empress and the Immaterial Spirits bears some resemblance to Prospero’s conversation with Ariel about the nonhuman world’s capacity for mercy in the final act of *The Tempest* (5.1.16-20). Like the Empress, Prospero believes the nonhuman world is fundamentally inferior to humankind, and in both cases the nonhuman world steps in to revise the person’s views. Notably, a few pages later, the Empress becomes “Melancholic” thinking that she might have had a hand in the Spirits’ sudden disappearance. In particular, she fears that she may have done something wrong in demanding that they provide answers to some of her more controversial questions and, as a result, might be “the cause of their miserable condition” (86). Here, we are reminded that the Empress is not simply a villain.

human beings as human beings are to each other and to the nonhuman world—though they do not go so far as to argue, as Cary does, that “Mans corruption” is responsible for putting “these creatures in enmity against Mankinde.”¹⁴⁹ In this way, the Spirits chip away at the Empress’s belief that human beings are naturally superior to the nonhuman world. To therefore use this notion to justify the cruel treatment of the nonhuman world is not just misguided, but unjust.

Throughout the text, the Empress functions as a reborn Eve who recreates the Fall by exceeding the limitations that God set on Adam and Eve’s relationship to nature. In fact, in several places, the text all but explicitly links the Empress to Eve: not only does the young Lady find herself in Paradise in the first few pages of the text, but the end of the text explains that “there are most tempting sorts of Fruit” in Paradise; additionally, when conversing with the Immaterial Spirits, the Empress asks them “whither Adam fled when he was driven Out of Paradise.”¹⁵⁰ In turn, they reply that Adam was cast out of the Blazing-World and sent to the world in which the Empress was born. The Empress is also tempted in a number of ways throughout the text, most notably when she requests a list of worlds available for conquest so

¹⁴⁹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 292-93. The description of this war in *The Blazing-World* is, in several instances, quite similar to Fifth Monarchists’ descriptions of the destruction of earthly monarchies. In *The Little Horns Doom and Downfall*, Cary explains that earthly monarchies will be “consumed,” as written in the Book of Daniel, by which she means that they will be dismantled piece by piece, rather than destroyed in one fell swoop: “When the Parliament first began to oppose the late King, he had great power, and strength, and authority [. . .] he lost City after City, and Towne after Towne, and county after County, until he came to have dominion over none at all” (40-41). Cary’s description closely parallels the Empress’s gradual destruction of the enemies of ESFI, burning town by town until the need arises to “convert their smaller Loss into Total Ruin” (Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 17-20). Furthermore, the Empress performs a scene upon the waters that sounds much like Fifth Monarchist prophecies of the millenium when she orders the bird- and fish-men to assist her with an illusion that convinces her enemies that the Day of Judgment has arrived: “When it was Night, her Bird-men should carry in their beeks some of the mentioned Fire-stones, with the tops thereof wetted; and the Fish-men should carry them likewise, and hold them out of the Water; for they were cut in the form of Torches or Candles, and being many thousands, made a terrible shew; for it appear’d as if all the Air and Sea had been of a Flaming-Fire; and all that were upon the Sea, or near it, did verily believe, the time of Judgment, or the Last Day was come, which made them all fall down, and Pray” (Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 10). In a way, the Empress helps along the millennium prophesied by Fifth Monarchists. On the other hand, the Empress does little to put an end to tyranny and is thus part of the problem. In this way, it can be argued that Cavendish herself adopts the role of female prophet, come to foretell the end of tyranny by condemning the Empress’s method of rule, even if Cavendish’s political solution differs radically from the Fifth Monarchists’ desired outcome.

¹⁵⁰ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 72-73; and Part Two, 34.

that the Duchess may become the princess she desires. When given the chance, the Empress tends to give in to temptation, choosing to exploit the nonhuman world—from the hybrid creatures, to the Immaterial Spirits, to the natural resources at her disposal—to carry out her tyrannical political agenda.

In the text's epilogue, Cavendish's persona rejects the Empress's desires as covetous and destructive by building on the various arguments made by the Immaterial Spirits.¹⁵¹ To begin, Cavendish writes that the world she created in this text was "more easily and suddenly effected, than the Conquest of those two famous Monarchs of the World, *Alexander* and *Cesar*." She continues:

Neither have I made such disturbances, and cause so many dissolutions of particulars, otherwise named deaths, as they did; for I have destroyed but some few men in a little Boat, which dyed through the extremity of cold, and that by the hand of Justice, which was necessitated to punish their crime of stealing away a young and beauteous Lady.¹⁵²

In this passage, Cavendish emphasizes that she has resisted the temptation that so many rulers have given into—the temptation to master, exploit, or conquer, no matter the collateral damage. Cavendish thus sets herself apart not just from men like Alexander and Caesar, but also from the Empress herself. Unlike these rulers, Cavendish has merely "destroyed but some few men in a little Boat," which was truthfully the work of Justice itself, in her words, not a decision made based on her own particular conception of justice. In effect, then, Cavendish has made herself an "Empress [. . .] of a whole world" without harming more than a few men by creating the "Celestial World" the Spirits suggested earlier in the text. Cavendish even goes so far as to

¹⁵¹ Cavendish hints at the same in her preface "To all Noble and Worthy Ladies: "I am not Covetous, but as Ambitious as ever any of my Sex was." Here, Cavendish suggests that covetousness, not ambition, is the real problem. The Duchess's desire "to be a great Princess," then, is acceptable, but the Empress's desire to conquer another world to fulfill this desire is "covetous" and unjust.

¹⁵² Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 121.

suggest that the Empress is an “unjust Usurper” no different from Alexander and Caesar by encouraging readers to create their own worlds so as “not to prove unjust Usurpers, and to rob” Cavendish of the world she has created.¹⁵³ After all, the Empress spends most of her time in the text dreaming up ways to “rob” others of their world, or actually doing so. Unlike the Empress, Cavendish instead dreams up a utopia, the “Celestial World” the Spirits earlier encouraged her to create, which enables her to simulate the most tyrannical and exploitation expressions of royal power without actually harming anyone, human or nonhuman. This being said, the fantasy she dreams up is not exactly an ideal model of political power-sharing or of humility in humankind’s dealings with the nonhuman world.

The epilogue is, therefore, of a piece with the rest of the text: it celebrates absolutist politics and, at the same time, reinforces concerns raised throughout the text about how royal power legitimizes and sustains itself by weaponizing scientific knowledge and the nonhuman world—from the Merchant, who uses his maritime expertise to capitalize on the opportunity to abduct the young Lady, to the Empress herself, who repeatedly exploits the nonhuman world to achieve her goals. Of course, all of this is made more complicated by the fact that the primary agent of exploitation, the Empress, is a woman, who deploys the not-fully-human scientific thinkers of the Blazing-World to carry out her plans. Rather than claiming that women are somehow closer to nature and thus unlikely or less likely to exploit it, Cavendish suggests that the real problem lies in the human domination of the nonhuman, or, in the case of the Empress, the co-opting of the nonhuman as a tool wielded against other human beings. In this way, Cavendish trades the essentialist claim that women and nature share a unique bond as fellow-sufferers at the hands of men for a broader indictment of humankind as bad stewards of the

¹⁵³ The full epilogue can be found in Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 121-22.

nonhuman world. Although she does not argue for the radical political and ecological reform Cary and Trapnel advocate, Cavendish does argue that the mere ability to control, dominate, and exploit the nonhuman world does not license human beings to exert this power in an excessively harmful way. As Cavendish puts it in *The Blazing-World*, the Empress certainly enjoys the power to “rule and govern all that World as she pleases.” However, by the text’s end, the Empress’s method of governance has taken a disturbing and sinister turn: she has acquired “so great a power” that she can and does “destroy whatever she pleases, not only whole Nations, but a whole World.”¹⁵⁴

V. Conclusion

Throughout their utopian texts, Cary, Trapnel, and Cavendish demonstrate that humankind’s dealings with the nonhuman world have too often been driven by vanity—whether by turning the nonhuman world to profit, or by repurposing it as a proving ground for human sovereignty. According to each of these women, rather than viewing the nonhuman world as deserving of mercy and kindness, humankind has more often than not interpreted the dominion God granted to it during the Creation as an unconditional license to use the nonhuman world in whatever manner it desires. To combat the destructive effects of this attitude, Cary, Trapnel, and, to a lesser extent, Cavendish deploy their utopian texts in defense of the nonhuman world’s right to merciful treatment during a period in which the discourse of improvement encouraged the opposite. Unlike Cavendish, Cary and Trapnel offer broad-based critiques of the ruling classes’ imposition of power on the nonhuman world. In turn, they argue that to achieve any kind of ecological justice, which is to say more just and sustainable practices of engaging with the

¹⁵⁴ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 13; and Part Two, 21.

nonhuman world, demands a fundamental re-structuring of humankind's exploitative and self-serving relationship to the nonhuman world. As I have shown, Cavendish presents a less clear-cut argument that fantasizes about giving near-cosmic power to a single ruler, while also raising concerns about the tyrannical ways in which this power is often exercised over the nonhuman world.

To present her case for ecological reform, Cary conducts an estate survey of sorts in *A Word in Season* and *A New and More Exact Mappe*, finding that animals have long been treated in an "unreasonable" and "unmerciful" way. When human tyranny has been put to an end, however, Cary argues that the new world that will be established will radically alter humankind's exploitative relationship to the nonhuman world. Trapnel makes a similar argument in *The Cry of a Stone* by merging with nature to speak on its behalf and playing out Cromwell's fall on the terrain of nature itself. In doing so, she pins his failure as Lord Protector primarily on his failure as steward of the English estate. In Trapnel's view, the arrival of the millennium will thus set this estate right by fundamentally restructuring humankind's relationship to nature—from exploitation and cruelty, to restraint and love. Finally, Cavendish's *The Blazing-World* puts the scientific and technological control over nature on full display, at once celebrating this control and criticizing the excessive harm the ruling classes often inflict on the nonhuman world to pursue and maintain this control. To varying degrees, Cary's, Trapnel's, and Cavendish's texts therefore condemn the ways in which humankind justifies and sustains its belief in its own sovereignty by controlling and exploiting the nonhuman world.

To be clear, none of these women fundamentally challenge the notion of human sovereignty, or humankind's right to make use of the nonhuman world. As Cary writes in *A New and More Exact Mappe*, for example, animals can be used for food, "laboring in the ground, and

carrying burthens, and journeying, and all other things wherein men have occasion to make use of them.”¹⁵⁵ In *Orations of Divers Sorts, Accommodated to Divers Places*, which I discussed in the dissertation’s Introduction, Cavendish reinforces Cary’s point by encouraging humankind to “Increase our Breed of Animals, and our Stores of Vegetables, and to find out the Minerals for our Use” for “the Profitable Increase for Men.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, these women’s utopian texts do not go so far as to dispute the legitimacy of humankind’s God-given dominion over the nonhuman world; rather, these texts simply insist that this right is conditioned on fulfilling our duty to steward the nonhuman world with care.

To explain how this duty might be fulfilled, Cary and Trapnel offer alternative models of stewardship, each of which is grounded in restraint, mercy, and love. In New Jerusalem, for example, Cary argues that the nonhuman world will be led as if by a “little childe,” whose pure love and wonder are the emotional responses that so often lay the foundation for more carefully reasoned arguments about the need to actively care for the nonhuman world.¹⁵⁷ To love and wonder Trapnel adds justice, urging Cromwell to be a “true Jacob”—that is, to put his love of “Justice and Mercy” into practice, rather than merely professing to love them while working against both.¹⁵⁸ Unlike Cary and Trapnel, Cavendish does not explicitly argue for a nature-friendly, radically reformed model of good stewardship of the nonhuman world; however, she does caution against the abuse of this world for humankind’s gain.

Taken together, these women’s utopian texts draw attention to the many ways in which human beings continually offered up the nonhuman world as “a sacrifice to their cruelty” and

¹⁵⁵ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 313.

¹⁵⁶ Cavendish, *Orations of Divers Sorts*, 244-45.

¹⁵⁷ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mapped*, 293.

¹⁵⁸ Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 53.

“covetousness” during the mid-seventeenth century, as Cavendish and Trapnel might say.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, by simulating new worlds that open up the space to consider the need for and to imagine less exploitative ways of treating the nonhuman world, these women demonstrate that they are not just utopian thinkers, but ecological thinkers. To return, once again, to Jameson’s words, each of these women encourage us “to think the break” from the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world in mid-seventeenth-century England: whereas Cavendish warns against this exploitation by putting the dark side of human relationships with the nonhuman world on full display, Cary and Trapnel complete the “picture of what things would be like after the break.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, 4; Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone*, 47.

¹⁶⁰ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 231-32.

CODA

Miranda's Daughters, Eve's Mothers

In Book Nine of *Paradise Lost* (1667-1674), Milton describes Eve's choice to pluck and eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as an act of violence against nature: "Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat / Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe, / That all was lost."¹ Milton echoes this language about two hundred lines later, when Adam eats of this same fruit for fear of losing Eve: "Earth trembled from her entrails, as again / In pangs, and nature gave a second groan, / Sky loured and muttering thunder, some sad drops / Wept at completing of the mortal sin / Original."² In both cases, Milton describes a personified nature suffering collateral damage that is inflicted when humankind chooses to sin against the Creator. By indulging in their desire to taste the fruit and benefit from its supposed powers—be that knowledge, godhood, independence, or companionship—Adam and Eve neglect their duty to tend the garden in humility and obedience and, in doing so, cause nature extreme pain and grief. Up to this point, love and gratitude for God's generosity, as it manifested in Eden's natural bounty, guided Adam and Eve's labors in the Garden. Deciding that this generosity was no longer enough, however, they transgress the sole boundary God placed on their use of nature and, in doing so, assert an unlimited right to the resources available in Eden. In these ways,

¹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667-1674), edited by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 9.782-84. When Eve informs Adam of what she has done, his hand goes "slack," dropping the garland he had "wreathed" for her and, in turn, causing "all the faded roses" to "shed" from it (9.892-93). With this image, the text illustrates in yet another way that Adam and Eve's loving use of nature has come to an end.

² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.1000-1004.

Milton's epic presents the Fall as the moment in which Adam and Eve fail to steward the earth with care.³

Before the Fall, Adam struggles considerably more than Eve to determine what their duty to steward the earth entails. For example, when Eve suggests that she and Adam divide their labors to prevent "wanton growth" in the garden from daily undoing their efforts to tend it, Adam dismisses this idea on the grounds that God did not make them "to irksome toil, but to delight."⁴ To be fair, in Book Four Adam does admit that tending the Garden is the primary way of demonstrating his love for God: "But let us ever praise him and extol / His bounty," Adam says to Eve, "following our delightful task / To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers, / Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."⁵ Here, Adam clearly understands that he and Eve have a responsibility to take care of the Garden as an act of devotion to God. However, when viewed together, Adam's claims reveal that he subordinates this "toilsome" duty to tend the Garden to his and Eve's main purpose—to "delight" in all that Eden offers. In fact, Adam reinforces this view lines earlier when he explains that the limitation God has placed on his and Eve's use of nature is almost negligible, since they enjoy a virtually unconditional right

³ As I said in Chapter 1, Diane McColley is the leading authority on ecocritical approaches to Milton's works. For more information, see "Beneficent Hierarchies," in Durham and McColgan, *Spokesperson Milton*, 231-48; "Ecology and Empire," in Rajan and Sauer, *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 112-29; "Milton and Ecology," in Corns, *A Companion to Milton*, 157-73; "Milton's Environmental Epic," in Armbruster and Wallace, *Beyond Nature Writing*, 57-74; "Milton and Nature: Greener Readings"; and *Poetry and Ecology*. For additional ecocritical approaches to this text and Milton's other works, see Ken Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Hiltner, ed., *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008); Leah S. Marcus, "Ecocriticism and Vitalism in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (2015): 96-111; Sarah Smith, "The Ecology of Chaos in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 59 (2017): 31-55; Mark Stoll, "Milton in Yosemite: *Paradise Lost* and the National Parks Idea," *Environmental History* 13, no. 2 (2008): 237-74; and Robert Wilcher, "The Greening of Milton Criticism," *Literature Compassion* 7, no. 11 (2010): 1020-34.

⁴ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.242. The text reinforces Adam's view by characterizing God as a "sovereign planter" who "framed / All things to man's delightful use" (4.691-2). Eve specifically argues that "till more hands / Aid [them], the work under [their] labour grows, / Luxurious by restraint; what [they] by day / Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, / One night or two with wanton growth derides / Tending to wild" (9.207-12).

⁵ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4.436-39.

to the earth. In his words, because God has granted them “dominion [. . .] / Over all other creatures that possess / Earth, air, and sea,” he and Eve should “not think hard / One easy prohibition, who enjoy / Free leave so large to all things else, and choice / Unlimited of manifold delights.”⁶ Adam thus views his duty to nature as a small sacrifice to make in exchange for an otherwise unconditional right to “delight” in paradise. In contrast, Eve repeatedly demonstrates that this duty supersedes her desire to indulge in Eden’s bounty with Adam—until the moment she falls.

Despite Eve’s best intentions, she ultimately allows her desires to eclipse this duty, a choice Milton foreshadows by portraying Eve as the lone flower she has failed to tend in Eden. As Eve meanders through the garden, Milton writes, “Each flower of slender stalk, whose head though gay / Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold, / Hung drooping unsustained, them she upstays / Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while, / Herself, though fairest unsupported flower.”⁷ By drawing attention to each flower that Eve “upstays,” Milton simulates the great pains that she takes to treat each flower with the same tenderness and love. In the process of tending to these flowers, however, Eve does not know that she will soon be the flower most in need of support. The tragic force of this moment, then, stems from the tension generated between Eve’s present concern for nature and her future neglect of it. By maintaining this tension, rather than resolving it, Milton suggests that Eve falls short as Eden’s steward because she carelessly forgets her duty when it most counts, unlike Adam, who falls short because he firmly believes that this duty is secondary to his right to Eden’s “manifold delights.” In this regard, Milton provides a fuller picture of the character of humankind’s exploitation of the earth: like Adam,

⁶ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4.428-35.

⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.430-32. Of course, this image of the “unsupported flower” primarily means that Eve has persuaded Adam to allow her to work in the garden by herself and is, therefore, “unsupported” by her spouse.

some individuals believe the earth exists primarily for their benefit; like Eve, however, many of us earnestly believe the earth is deserving of our care, but falter all the same, mainly because we are reluctant to prioritize the earth's needs over our own desires in any substantive or meaningful way.

Unsurprisingly, the character who persuades Adam and Eve to forsake their duty to the earth is Satan, who principally views nature as something to be turned to profit, a perspective which Milton captures best when Satan first arrives in Eden. Introduced as “the first grand thief into God’s fold,” Satan perches in the Tree of Life, which he uses “for prospect,” his thoughts far from “the virtue [. . .] / Of that life-giving plant.” In other words, rather than reflecting on this tree as a sign of God’s love for his creation, Satan’s interest in the tree is restricted to the immediate benefit it provides: a better view of “God’s fold.” In doing so, Satan “perverts best things / To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.” Milton drives this point home by illustrating how quickly Satan’s wonder turns to covetousness upon his arrival: “Beneath him with new wonder now he views / To all delight of human sense exposed / In narrow room nature’s whole wealth, yea more, / A heaven on earth.”⁸ Like the Mariner of Bradstreet’s “Contemplations,” Satan translates all that he sees into opportunities for profit.⁹ In doing so, Satan illustrates that the overwhelming beauty of nature does not necessarily inspire human beings to respect it. In this moment, Satan’s wonder merely intensifies his desire to exploit it for personal gain.

In these ways, Milton partly frames his epic as a story about the failed stewardship of nature—as humankind’s relationship to nature shifts from one based on a sense of duty, love, and respect, to one based on exploitation for private gain. Milton’s approach to tending Earth’s

⁸ The full passage can be found at Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4.192-208. In Book 9, Satan himself reinforces this idea when he declares, “her [Eve’s] ruin now I tend” (9.493).

⁹ The line in “Contemplations” specifically states that the Mariner “takes this earth ev’n for heav’ns bower” (Bradstreet, “Contemplations,” in McElrath, Jr. and Robb, *The Complete Works*, 167-74, Stanza 32).

garden thus mirrors the ecological attitude seen in many of the texts examined in this dissertation, which began with Miranda's defense of wonder as a starting point for an ecological ethics of care and now ends with Eve's sincere, if imperfect, efforts to live by similar values. In response to Adam and Satan, to Comus and Prospero, to seventeenth-century estate lords and heads of state, the women writers and female characters I have discussed raise serious concerns about the ways in which humankind's belief in its own sovereignty fuels efforts to dominate and exploit the nonhuman world for private gain. Knowing that this belief encourages the mistreatment of the nonhuman world, these same writers and characters reframe this sovereignty as a limited privilege, not an unconditional right, contingent on carefully stewarding the nonhuman world. In some cases, they even go so far as to suggest that this "soveraigntie" is "imaginary," to return, once again, to Michel de Montaigne's words.¹⁰

As I have shown in Chapter One, Miranda, Caliban, and Ariel, along with the Lady and Sabrina, condemn Prospero's and Comus's exploitation of nature for personal gain. In turn, they argue that nature must be treated with mercy and respect. In their country-house verse, Hutchinson, Lanyer, and Cavendish make a similar claim in two ways, as I argued in Chapter Two: first, they disabuse estate lords of their presumed mastery over nature; second, these poets draw special attention to the ways in which estate lords legitimize and sustain their power by actively harming the nonhuman world. As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, Bradstreet's verse revitalizes the New England Puritan model of stewardship, which viewed labor as an expression of love for God and his creation, as an alternative to the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England and colonial New England. Finally, in their utopian writings, Fifth Monarchists Cary and Trapnel decry the merciless treatment of the nonhuman

¹⁰ Michel de Montaigne, "Of Crueltie," 243.

world and, in turn, contend that it has as much right to a “comfortable” life as humankind, in Cary’s words. While Cary blames a “harvest of wicked men” for the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world in mid-seventeenth-century England, Cavendish extends this responsibility to humankind as a whole. To do so, she portrays the Empress as a second Eve who gives in to the “most tempting sorts of Fruit” in the Blazing World’s capital of Paradise by exploiting the hybrid creatures and natural resources at her disposal for personal and political gain.¹¹ Like Eve’s Fall, the Empress’s actions remind us that women are not inherently better caretakers of nature. Taken together, Miranda and Eve bookend a much larger story about humankind’s failed stewardship in seventeenth-century England.

In each of these ways, I have read seventeenth-century English history as a story about women who engaged in an ecological mode of thinking while the world around them doubled down on the exploitation of the nonhuman world. By making this argument, I have shown that the fields of ecocriticism and ecofeminism are not presentist frameworks that literary scholars impose on the past, but methods of drawing out a meaning that is already there, waiting for us to unearth it. In the process, I have also emphasized the need for a more inclusive canon of literature that deals with the various shifts in humankind’s relationship to the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England. To provide a more comprehensive view of the literary and cultural responses to these changes, I have given greater consideration to the concerns women raised in the literature of this period about the destructive effects of imprinting humankind’s “imaginary sovereignty” on the nonhuman world.¹²

¹¹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 317; Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 186; and Cavendish, *The Blazing-World*, Part Two, 34.

¹² Montaigne, “Of Crueltie,” 243.

Although the primary goal of this project is neither presentist nor activist in nature, as an added benefit this project does encourage modes of thinking needed to address the most serious environmental problems we face today—from our collective failure to substantially reduce our carbon footprint, to the rapid warming of the earth, rising sea levels, air and water pollution, deforestation, soil degradation, natural resource depletion, overfishing, species extinction, household and industrial waste production, and overpopulation. To explore how a figure like Eve might be used to inform our current approaches to these problems, I would like to return to one of the poems I have included as an epigraph to this dissertation, Jenny Xie’s “Exit, Eve,” which stages Eve’s choice to leave Eden.¹³ In this poem, Xie repurposes the Fall as a story about a free woman freely choosing to care for nature after recapturing the sense of wonder that, ideally, moves us to do so. In the poem’s first two lines, Eve tastes the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and quickly realizes just how few words she previously had at her disposal to capture the wonders of the natural world:

I cut my teeth on green flesh Eden’s navel
Now I understand our vocabulary for what astounds us is thin.¹⁴

Here, Eve suggests that the knowledge she has gained by eating the fruit is a new awareness of the vocabulary she formerly lacked to put her wonder into words. She then turns to observe a “red ginger flower” with the purest simplicity, concluding that “nature doesn’t hide its excess.”¹⁵ As I have shown, when Satan arrives in Eden, his brief sense of wonder simply intensifies his desire to control nature, and he immediately considers ways to turn Eden’s “excess” into profit.

¹³ Jenny Xie, “Exit, Eve,” in *Eye Level* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2018), 60. Xie is a Chinese-American poet whose verse collection *Eye Level*, in which this poem appears, won the 2017 Walt Whitman Award. In this poem, Xie uses gaps to separate phrases within a single line that, when viewed together, form the shape of a snake that slithers through the center of the poem, or chart a map of the side roads by which Eve leaves Eden. I have retained these gaps where possible.

¹⁴ Xie, “Exit, Eve,” lines 1-2.

¹⁵ Xie, “Exit, Eve,” line 3.

In contrast, as Xie portrays her, Eve remains firmly in a state of wonder and appreciation, unruffled by the ways in which her surroundings escape her linguistic control.

As the poem comes to a close, Eve decides to leave Eden the following day by “traversing the side roads.” With a quiet power, she adds, “Let everyone see no one paid my way.”¹⁶ In this final image, I like to think that Xie portrays Eve as Milton’s Eve would have most wanted—alone and free among red ginger flowers, taking her time to traverse the side roads, and absorbing the beauties Eden everywhere offers—until the moment she exits. By the poem’s end, Eve has demonstrated how simple and easy and even, perhaps, desirable it is to care for nature. From the “green flesh” of an apple to a “red ginger flower,” Eden has “astounded” Eve, and she responds in the most unimposing way—not by laying claim to it or carving it up for her own gain, but by lovingly attending to each object she observes as she wanders through the garden. In this sense, this state of wonder has so powerfully moved Eve that her duty to nature, once handed down to her by God, has now transformed into an active choice to treat nature with “assiduous love,” to borrow William Wordsworth’s phrase from an early draft of what would become Part One of *The Prelude* (1798).¹⁷

Like the women who have anchored this project, from Shakespeare’s Miranda to Milton’s Eve, Xie illustrates that the desire and ongoing commitment to treat nature with “assiduous love” begins in wonder, mixed with a little imagination. Like Xie, each of these women demonstrates how humankind might treat the nonhuman world in a more caring way by first “forcing us to think the break itself” from its continued exploitation, to draw on Jameson’s conception of utopia.¹⁸ To do so, figures like Miranda, the Lady, and Sabrina use the awe and

¹⁶ Xie, “Exit, Eve,” lines 9-10.

¹⁷ William Wordsworth, “Was It For This,” in *The Prelude: The Four Texts*, edited by Jonathan Wordsworth, 3-7 (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), line 65.

¹⁸ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 231-32.

wonder that often characterize human encounters with the nonhuman world as a foundation for more reasoned defenses of the latter's right to merciful treatment. Poets such as Bradstreet, Cavendish, Lanyer, and Hutchinson instead force this break by dismantling the belief that humankind's God-given dominion over the nonhuman world entails an unconditional right to use that world in whatever way it desires, a belief which underpinned and was reinforced by agrarian capitalism. In its place, these women put forward a more limited view, arguing that this sovereignty is instead conditioned on stewarding the nonhuman world with the utmost care. Contending that the English monarchy itself would be destroyed for its failure to do so, prophetesses like Cary and Trapnel envisioned the new world to come as a space in which the nonhuman world would no longer be "abused by men that are unreasonable," covetous, and cruel.¹⁹

In each case, these female characters and women writers portray the nonhuman world as something deserving of our active care and respect, knowing that how we represent this world materially shapes our treatment of it. In these ways, they also begin to "think the break" from capitalism itself, which was built on the intensified exploitation of the nonhuman world in seventeenth-century England and which has adapted and survived into the twenty-first century by compounding that exploitation at an exponential rate. As Xie might put it, these women encourage us to let the nonhuman world astound us, to lovingly traverse its side roads, and to listen and attend to its needs, as England shifted to an agrarian-capitalist economy bent on doing the opposite.

¹⁹ Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*, 87.

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