

Ladies of the Oddest Passion: Early Modern Women and the Arts of Discretion

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Discreet? What means this word Discreet?
(ABRAHAM COWLEY, "Discretion")

I take the first part of the title of my essay from a character in Mary Wroth's *Urania*, dubbed the Lady of the Oddest Passion, who makes a fleeting appearance in book 3.¹ This lady, described as "most loving, most discreet" (452), is loved by, and in return loves equally, two men. All three were content with this situation for a time, but ultimately the Lady is pressed to choose between the suitors. She is unable to do this, so all three accost the traveling Ollorandus, asking him to make the choice: "to whom you give her she shall be contented with him, and leave the other" (449). By the end of the scene, however, the two male lovers have made their own decision to abandon their mistress, which the bemused Ollorandus thinks is the appropriate end for such a lady.

Among the many odd things about this scene, the conjunction of "most loving" and "most discreet" in the description of the lady is perhaps one of the oddest. Discretion in love would not seem to apply to a lady who openly loves two men and is unable to exercise her judgment in choosing one over the other. The suitor describing the lady appears to justify his use of the term by following it with the presumably clarifying and laudatory information that she "judicially carried her hand evenly, when he kissed one, I had the other, she sate betweene us still, and ever gave us even and indifferent graces," locating her discretion in her judiciously evenhanded distribution of the signs of her affection, providing no evidence of a preference. But this

1. All quotations from the *Urania* are from *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies (Binghamton, NY, 1995), and will be included parenthetically within the text.

ultimately serves to trouble the nature of her discretion (from Latin *discernere*, to distinguish) even further, particularly when the suitor concludes by highlighting her problematic failure to make a distinction between them, insisting that “we must divide, and she take one[,] which she cannot doe” (452).

Wroth also complicates this scene by embedding two conflicting narratives within it. When the suitors describe their situation to Ollorandus, they explain that they have arrived at their present crisis because of their demand that the Lady make a choice: “lately we desired to have our loves each onely to himself . . . yet we will not fall out, but have it put to judgement” (451). But the Lady tells a different story; according to her, her father has insisted that she marry: “It is most true, I am now brought to choose one, for my father will have me marry” (453). Wroth has the Lady transfer the demand placed upon her from the suitors and locate it in a more socially conventional narrative of the father’s command that his daughter marry, and yet within this narrative Wroth still maintains for her the freedom of choice. Nonetheless, the Lady cannot find within herself the “power to choose.”

It has been noted that Wroth “undermines [the] patriarchal double standard throughout her romance by valorizing a woman’s freely chosen love (whether adulterous or not) over the inescapable constraints of aristocratic patriarchal marriage.”² But the idea of “a woman’s freely chosen love,” while it certainly offers an alternative to the arranged marriages of so many unhappy female characters and provides for women a degree of personal and cultural agency, fails to account for the figure of the lady who, though free to choose, does not. (Although the Lady’s refusal to choose may be construed as signaling her resistance to the pressure to marry and conform to societal expectations, her willingness to abide by Ollorandus’s judgment implicates her in the very ideology she might otherwise appear to be resisting.) And “a woman’s freely chosen love” also elides the alternative construction of women who may (only) appear to choose freely: they may be enthralled to passion in a way that renders them no more free than ladies constrained by contracted marriages.

Where then do we situate the Lady of the Oddest Passion? To what extent has she affirmed her integrity (and the integrity of her love) or belied her capacity for self-determination? Wroth’s brief episode featuring a “most loving, most discreet” lady posits, but does not clarify, a correspondence between erotic passion and discretion that poses an

2. Bernadette Andrea, “Pamphilia’s Cabinet: Gendered Authorship and Empire in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” *ELH* 68 (2001): 337.

array of further questions. When the Lady insists on her continuing and equal love for two men and will not discriminate between them, leaving the decision to a passing stranger knight, is she still exercising her discretion or has she relinquished it? To what extent does discretion enable or disable individual agency in a nameless, loving lady who, atypically for her time, is given the opportunity—or is forced—to make her own choice in love but is unable—or refuses—to do so? What is the relationship between discretion and the cultural codes that pertain in this scene, where a loving and discreet lady becomes scorned and ostracized? Ultimately, my concern in this essay is to investigate how “discretion” figures in early modern constructions of selfhood and of the relation between the self and society, particularly for women. As we shall see, the unsettled meaning of the term “discretion” reveals the complex constellation of discourses that marked early modern thought concerning the possibility of discrete or separate selves and concerning the culturally prescribed social role of the discreet subject.³

I

As early as 1531, in *The Booke named the Governour*, Sir Thomas Elyot was decrying the confused use of the term “discretion.” Identifying the last three (out of eight) branches of prudence as election, experience, and modesty, he defines election as the determination, after careful deliberation, of “what is to be effectually folowed or pursued, reiectyng the residue . . . declaring what is good, what viciouse, what is profitable, what improfitable,” and he defines experience as the “actual execution” of election.⁴ The virtue of modesty is the last and most troublesome to describe. Following Cicero, he defines it as “the knowlege of oportunitie of thinges to be done or spoken, in appoyntyng and setting them in tyme or place to them conuenient and propre.” But defining modesty as such, to suggest consideration of context in the appropriate framing of behavior and speech, is not the end of the matter, for it turns out that a kind of linguistic confusion attends our understanding and use of the term. Elyot explains:

3. In using this term, I intend to invoke what Elizabeth Hanson calls the “jostling” produced by the term “subject”—as she explains it, between “the modern meaning which designates the site of thought and experience and the Renaissance meaning which proclaims the subordination of the governed” (*Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* [Cambridge University Press, 1998], 2). Wroth, who refers in the *Urania* to a “subject-like freedome” (639), provides some evidence that this jostling of associations existed within the Renaissance meaning of the term, not only in its relation to “the modern.”

4. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Governour* (1907; repr., London: J. M. Dent, 1937), bk. 1, chap. 25, 105.

Wherefore it semeth to be moche like to that whiche men comunely call discretion. Al be it *discretio* in latine signifieth Separation, wherin it is more like to Election; but as it is comunely used, it is nat only like to Modestie, but it is the selfe Modestie. For he that forbereth to speake, all though he can do it bothe wisely and eloquently, by cause neither in the time nor in the herers he findethe oportunitie, so that no frute may succede of his speche, he therefore is vulgarely called a discrete persone. Semblably they name him discrete, that punissheth an offendour lasse than his merites do require, hauyng regarde to the waikenes of his persone, or to the aptnesse of his amendement . . . In euery of these thinges and their semblable is Modestie; whiche worde nat beinge knowen in the englishe tonge, ne of al them which under stode latin, except they had radde good autours, they improperly named this vertue discretion. And nowe some men do as moche abuse the worde modestie, as the other dyd discretion. For if a man haue a sadde countenance at al times, and yet not beinge meued with wrathe, but pacient, and of moche gentilnesse, they whiche wold be sene to be lerned, wil say that the man is of a great modestie; where they shulde rather saye that he were of a great mansuetude; which terme, beinge semblably before this time unknowen in our tonge, may be by the sufferance of wise men nowe receiued by custome, wherby the terme shall be made familiare. That lyke as the Romanes translated the wisdomes of Grecia in to their cite, we may, if we liste, bringe the lernynges and wisdomes of them both in to this realme of Englande, by the translation of their warkes; sens lyke entreprise hath ben taken by frenche men, Italions, and Germanes, to our no litle reproche for our negligence and slouth.⁵

Etymologically, from the Latin, *discretion* signifies separation and is nearly synonymous with *election*, the deliberative ability to distinguish the good from the bad and to make choices based on that distinction. However, the common misuse of the term has confused it with *modesty*, a term, we are first informed, “nat being knowne in the englishe tonge,” though we soon learn that it too is now used, but incorrectly, in place of *mansuetude*, which itself is “semblably before this time unknowen in our tonge.” Rather than signifying a form of prudence, the term “discretion” functions as a synecdoche for the problematic state of the language itself and generates in Elyot’s analysis a proliferating sense of linguistic indistinctness and instability. In fact, Elyot’s own discussion illustrates part of the problem: discretion may properly signify separation, but he points to its improper use as evidence of the distinction between the vulgar and those who have read their Latin authors and also of the need to erase that distinction by bringing the

5. *Ibid.*, bk. 1, chap. 25, 106–7.

learning and wisdom of the ancients into familiar discourse. Discretion figures both the necessity of and resistance to constructions of social and linguistic distinctions in “this realme of England.”

In a recent essay, David Hillman has examined the term “discretion” as a “keyword” (à la Raymond Williams) of the early modern period.⁶ According to Hillman, discretion became, by the end of the sixteenth century, a term with “exclusionary functions” (78) used “to ground a hierarchical ideology” that constructed “social, cultural, or aesthetic difference” (75) and yet was a term used “so frequently and so loosely” (83) that it marked “an undefined—indeed, an undefinable—standard of linguistic and cultural competence” (75). The key text in Hillman’s analysis is George Puttenham’s *Arte of English Poesie*, where the elusive concept of discretion is identified as the measure of an equally elusive quality of decorum. Whereas Hillman sees Puttenham using the term “discretion” primarily to erect class distinctions, separating out and excluding the unlearned and the uncourtly, I would highlight another locus of contention in the relevant passage of Puttenham’s *Arte*. Puttenham identifies decorum—specifically referring to the use of figures—as “the line and levell for al good makers.”⁷ The “election” of figures, according to Puttenham, is the writer’s, but we locate discretion in the readers who judge and thereby “determine” the decorum of those choices: “the judgement is the worlds, as theirs to whom the reading apperteineth” (269). The world, however, is “replenished with many judgements,” and consequently, controversies will arise, but they will be resolved “by discretion, not perchaunce of euey one, but by a learned and experienced discretion,” that is, by those “who can make the best and most differences of things by reasonable and witty distinction.” Residing in “the discerning part of the minde,” discretion, the measure of decorum and the adjudicator of judgment, is itself various: there are “sundry sortes of discretion all unlike” (270). The real crux of Puttenham’s argument thus uneasily pits the perspective of the individual—decorum will be judged by “euey man according to his discretion”—against the consensus of a social group—“for the most part all discreete men doe generally agree” (271).

This is also the issue at stake when Puttenham discusses the acquisition of discretion: the “experienced discretion” ultimately trumps

6. David Hillman, “Puttenham, Shakespeare, and the Abuse of Rhetoric,” *Studies in English Literature* 36 (1996): 73–90. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. ed. (New York, 1985).

7. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589; repr., Kent State University Press, 1970), bk. 3, chap. 23, 268. I have modernized the i/j spelling. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

the “learned” discretion for, as he explains, “one man of experience is wiser than tenne learned men, because of his long and studious obseruation and often triall.” For Puttenham, “experience” valorizes the social world over the isolated self: “yet whosoeuer obserueth much, shalbe counted the wisest and discreetest man, and whosoeuer spends all his life in his owne vaine actions and conceits, and obserues no mans else, he shal in the ende prooue but a simple man” (271). Social exchange and social intercourse become the ground of true discretion, opposed to the retired, solitary person whose discretion is never honed, exercised, and tested by social engagement. And yet the pressure of the individually distinct and distinctly various judgments of individual discretion continually lurks in Puttenham’s discussion, threatening his promotion of a culturally designated “perfit discretion.”⁸

If we look again at Elyot’s comments on discretion, we see that his identification of how the term is commonly (mis)used articulates an alternative perspective on a similar area of concern. Elyot speaks of the vulgar use of the term to refer to those who forbear to speak, even though they can do so both wisely and eloquently, because of a judicious consideration of the time and audience. In common parlance, according to Elyot, discretion also refers to the judicial practice of rendering judgments not according to the letter of the law but by taking into account the particular situation of the person being judged. “Discretion” in both cases signals the intersection—rather than the separation—of the individual and the social: in the first case, the discreet individual chooses to restrain his speech in response to social circumstances, while in the second, the judge uses his discretion to make the legal structure respond to individual circumstance. Discretion thus both gives license to the individual to exercise his judgment and counsels, in accordance with cultural codes, against unlicensed expression. As such, it becomes a mark of the negotiation between emerging discourses of individuality and individual agency and the cultural codes that construct and constrict them.⁹

8. In the last part of his essay, Hillman addresses how discretion tries to “exclude . . . a large part of the realm of private experience . . . attempting to create a fit between objective and subjective structures” and how, in Shakespeare, the “abuse” of discretion “refracts the official structures of discourse” (“Puttenham, Shakespeare, and the Abuse,” 81, 84).

9. Discussions and debates about the status of the early modern sense of the self in relation to cultural institutions are now numerous, as are footnotes referring to them. For a cogent assessment of the major arguments, especially of the new-historicist and cultural materialist idea of the social construction of subjectivity, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), esp. 1–34.

Discretion was especially an issue in early modern discussions of propriety in behavior and decorum in speech, areas in which the relation of discretion to the status of the self is particularly troubled. In these contexts, “discretion” typically involves some extent of constraint on the free expression of the individual and often becomes associated with secrecy or hiddenness. If “discretion” refers to the prudent judgment that can distinguish and separate, certain aspects of the self are primary among what must be kept “discrete” or separate from public disclosure or expression, implying simultaneously the excision of the self from the social, its limitation by social contingencies, as well as its self-contained integrity distinct from them.¹⁰ According to the *OED*, “discretion” in the early modern period referred to “the action of separating or distinguishing” as well as to the “liberty or power of deciding, or of acting according to one’s own judgment,” the last implying that “discretion” provides an arena of free activity to the individual. Yet “discretion” also insists on engagement and compliance with prevailing social and moral codes, referring to “the ability to discern or distinguish what is right, befitting, or advisable, esp. as regards one’s own conduct of action”; synonyms include “circumspection.” Similarly, “discreet” means “showing discernment or judgment in the guidance of one’s own speech and action; judicious, prudent, circumspect, cautious.”

In *The English Gentleman* (1630), Richard Brathwaite addresses his readers on these matters, advising both concealment of the self and conformity in the name of discretion: “May your *Speech*, (Gentlemen) be so seasoned, as it may relish of discretion . . . *Speake* freely, yet with reservation, lest the *Comedians* phrase have some allusion to your opennesse; being so full of *chinkes*, as secrecie can haue no hope to finde harbour in your bosome.”¹¹ The same applies to behavior, which must be managed with discretion so as to appear—if nothing else—irreproachable: “Wee would be loth to be taxed of indiscretion in our *Speech*; let

10. Compare discussions of the French *discrète* in relation to the poetry of Louise Labé, which, as Mary B. Moore notes, “fuses several meanings in English . . . behaving both tactfully and appropriately . . . staying within bounds, conforming to limits, remaining integral” (*Desiring Voices: Women Sonneteers and Petrarchism* [Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000], 121). See also William Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 193; Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 172; and Deborah Lesko Baker, *The Subject of Desire: Petrarchan Poetics and the Female Voice of Louise Labé* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996), 159, on the double entendre suggesting both “separately” and “prudently.”

11. Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman* (London, 1630), 13–14, Early English Books Online, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu> (STC 2nd ed. / 3563). Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

us labour likewise to appeare blamelesse and unreproueable in our *Life*" (83). It is particularly in relation to one's passions that discretion must be exercised because of the threat passions pose to the containment and comportment of the self. As Brathwaite explains, "there is nothing that darkeneth or obscureth the Light of *reason*, more than the boundlesse effects of *Passion*, which makes a man forgetfull of that he should say, no lesse than indiscreet in that hee doth say" (88). This is most starkly represented in Edward Calver's 1641 *Passion and Discretion, in Youth and Age*, which dramatizes a "Combat in the Minde" between the two disputants, with Discretion admonishing, "restlesse Passion, keepe thyself retir'd."¹² Discretion may curtail the expression of the self, and yet it may also maintain the self and preserve it from public scrutiny or approbation; it provides a template for the individual to engage in appropriate social discourse and counsels seclusion from such discourse. "There is nothing which argues more indiscretion," Brathwaite writes, "than an aptnesse of discovering our selves" (279). Hence, he concludes, "without discretion doe nothing" (291).¹³

Discretion was a notably gendered concept in the Renaissance; it was identified as a preeminent virtue for women and often cited along with the familiar triad of chastity, silence, and obedience. Conduct books frequently quote from *Proverbs*, "a faire maid without discretion or good manners is like a ring of gold in a swines snout."¹⁴ For a woman to be discreet in these contexts is, as she is often cautioned,

12. Edward Calver, *Passion and discretion, in youth and age* (London, 1641), title page and 6, Early English Books Online (Wing C316).

13. Compare Marcy North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (University of Chicago Press, 2003). North uses the term "discretion" far more loosely than I do and is concerned primarily with associating the conventions of "amorous discretion" with strategies of authorial anonymity, but her discussion of the functionality of this anonymity as it negotiates secrecy and exposure and as a "source of authority, privilege, control, text presentation, and even identity" (33) provides another context for some of the issues I discuss here. Other discussions of discretion in the Renaissance have focused on Donne's sermons and how discretion negotiates the demands of effective preaching and the intricacies of political and moral obedience: see Jeanne Shami, "Donne on Discretion," *ELH* 47 (1980): 48–66, and "Anti-Catholicism in the Sermons of John Donne," in *The English Sermon Revised*, ed. Lori Ann Ferrell and Peter McCullough (Manchester University Press, 2000), 136–66; and Marla Hoffman Lunderberg, "John Donne's Strategies for Discreet Preaching," *Studies in English Literature* 44 (2004): 97–120.

14. Thomas Bentley, *The Sixt Lampe of Virginitie Conteyning a Mirroure for Maidens and Matrons* (London, 1582), 4, Early English Books Online (STC 2nd ed. / 1894); see also Heinrich Bullinger, *The Golden Boke of Christen Matrimonye* (London, 1543), xli, Early English Books Online (STC 2nd ed. / 4047); and Joseph Swetnam, *The Ayrainment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Vnconstant Women* (London, 1615), 43, Early English Books Online (STC 2nd ed. / 23534).

both to observe social dictates for proper behavior and also, since it is her prescribed role, to be retired from that social discourse. In *The Compleat Woman* (1632), Jacques du Bosc advocates in women “the three perfections which *Socrates* desired in his disciples, Discretion, Silence, and Modesty.”¹⁵ In du Bosc’s initial discussion of these virtues, discretion is associated with silence, though he emphasizes that there is a distinction between them: “I would not have them thinke, I purpose to take away the use of speech, instead of ruling it”; the virtue is “to use speech with discretion, and to restraints the liberty of the tongue” (bk. 1.19, 22). Speaking well is not particularly difficult for women, but “discretion is more difficult and necessary for them, then eloquence” (bk. 1.19). The discretion du Bosc advises constrains “liberty,” but it is a necessary defensive strategy to keep one’s true self in protective custody. “We are in a cunning age,” he explains, and although words were “invented to expresse thoughts,” they now “serve no more then to hide them handsomly”; “even Innocence it self hath need of a maske, or veile . . . it is no lesse a folly to shew ones heart openly to those who stand alwayes in ambush then to walk naked among armed enemies . . . from whom we cannot defend our selves” (bk. 1.17). Hence discretion both defines a woman’s role in society and creates the possibility of maintaining an identity separate from it. Later, du Bosc identifies discretion with prudence (which “is particularly employed in deliberating and choosing”) and criticizes men for denying that women are proficient in this area: “They had done themselves no little wrong, to slight and neglect them [women], where Prudence and discretion was requisite” (bk. 2.22, 19). Although he speaks at first here about the public function of the discreet woman, giving examples of women who were able to make wise decisions that saved their countries while men were unable to do so (“they have sometimes brought good remedies to the most desperate maladyes of States and Provinces”), he quickly turns to the role of discretion in more personal and domestic scenarios, for here, without this virtue “there is nothing but brutish affections, nothing but dangerous conversations, and but uncertaine confidences” (bk. 2.18, 22). Du Bosc affirms that discretion in women may allow them to perform a crucial role for the state, that it restrains passion and circumscribes speech, and that it maintains secrecy and protects “one’s heart” from “ambush.”

The issue of discretion—and the relation between the social and the individual—is particularly at stake when, as often in the Renaissance,

15. Jacques du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*, trans. N. N. (London, 1639), bk. 1, 18, Early English Books Online (STC 2nd ed. / 7266). I have modernized i/j spelling. Further references will be cited parenthetically by book and page number.

it was both coupled with love and associated with women. In *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), Brathwaite advises that “There is nothing which requires more discretion, than how to *behave* or carry our selves while we are enthralled to *affection*.”¹⁶ In this formulation, discretion circumscribes behavior but is also liberating: the alternative is enslavement to one’s own passion. This discretion applies to the choice of a beloved—gentlewomen must be “discreet in theyre choice” (146)—as well as to the restrained conduct of those in love, who “scorne to paint out their passion in plaints” (33) yet do not resort to feigning indifference: “Let them appear what they are, with that discreet temper, as they may deserve the embraces of a Noble Louer” (34). The ambiguity here is notable: on the one hand, discretion advises against the full and direct expression of passion; on the other, it allows for disclosure of the self (“let them appear what they are”). Furthermore, Brathwaite’s phrasing leaves unclear whether “what they are” naturally is discreet or whether they should convey what they are with discretion, that is, with due concern for social propriety, so that they “may deserve the embraces of a Noble Louer.” Ultimately, countering the common saying that asserts the sway of passion and the senses over reason, “*One cannot loue and be wise*,” Brathwaite offers his “tenet”: “*One cannot truly loue, and not be wise*.” Hence, he cautions the gentlewomen he addresses, “in this Subject . . . is your temper best tryed, your discretion most required” (32). According to Brathwaite, discretion enables a woman in love to shape a self that observes cultural norms and can therefore engage in effective social behavior, though his discussion acknowledges alternative perspectives, Brathwaite’s position suggests that to fully realize both love and female agency requires the rule and judgment of discretion.

II

In the *Urania*, Wroth makes these concerns about the constitution of the female self in love the subject of open debate, and it is precisely this last issue that she at one point has Pamphilia discuss with Leandrus.¹⁷ Leandrus, who loves Pamphilia (the constant lover of

16. Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (1631; repr., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970), 32. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

17. Many critics have written on female subjectivity in Wroth. See, e.g., Jeff Masten, “‘Shall I turne blabb?': Circulation, Gender, and Subjectivity in Mary Wroth’s Sonnets,” 67–87; Nona Feinberg, “Mary Wroth and the Invention of Female Poetic Subjectivity,” 175–90, both in *Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. Naomi Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Carolyn Ruth Swift, “Feminine Identity in Lady

the fickle Amphilanthus), has spied her walking alone in a garden. He decides to take advantage of the moment and accosts her with an argument that she should make a judicious choice in love: “Such is your discretion . . . as to know, that love with discretion is the truest love; and therefore to a brave Princesse, and especially to you . . . discretion should adventure to perswade you to make choyce of some one you might affect for a husband . . . and so to be matched with one fit for your estate, in birth and greatnesse, and so judgement will continue affection betweene you” (213). The discretion Leandrus advises here is one that chooses on the basis of what is socially appropriate, “fit for your estate.” In response, Pamphilia begins by agreeing that “Discretion in love, I must confesse . . . as discretion it selfe is best,” but she proceeds to mount what is essentially the opposite argument: “but if love come wholly to be governd by it, that wil have so great a power, as love will loose name and rule, and the other for riches, or other baser things, shall prevaile against the sweetest passion, and only blisse, which is enjoying; therefore my Lord Leandrus, by your favour, I must say I thinke you err in this, and in the truth of love, which is a supreme power . . . what glory were it to him to have a cold part of wisdome to rule with him? No, his honor is to be alone . . . and all to yeeld to his law . . . he must not have it said, that love with discretion is the truest love, since in truth of love, that is but a bastard, brought up at home like a right borne child” (213).

Disparaging the social considerations that Leandrus claims are paramount to discretion (and a discreetly governed love), Pamphilia rejects the idea that discretion should preside over love; rather this “sweetest passion” is the “supreme power” that should have “rule.” When she calls love with discretion a “bastard, brought up at home like a right born child,” Pamphilia articulates the inferior nature of a love governed by discretion, implying that discretion is merely a facade of compliance with social codes. Yet love with discretion also becomes, in her conceit (and contra Leandrus), transgressive, defiant of that social code, the product of unlawful desire that is both treated as though it conforms

Mary Wroth's Romance *Urania*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984): 328–46; Maureen Quilligan, “The Constant Subject: Instability and Authority in Wroth's *Urania* Poems,” in *Soliciting Interpretation*, ed. Elizabeth Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (University of Chicago Press, 1990), 307–34; Shannon Miller, “Constructing the Female Self: Architectural Structures in Mary Wroth's *Urania*,” in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 139–61; Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Andrea, “Pamphilia's Cabinet”; Naomi Miller, *Changing the Subject* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

to acceptable standards and trained to do so; discretion nurtures and provides a vehicle for a passion that may not otherwise be socially acceptable. The status of discretion becomes further clouded as she concludes: “yet is [Love’s] judgement such, as hee makes discretion shine through all his acts; but how? as a servant to his greater power; as if your heart should command your tongue, to deliver what it thinks, but discreetly to doe it so, as offence may not proceede from it: here is discretion, and yet the tongue is but the hearts messenger” (214). As Christina Luckyj explains, in these last lines Pamphilia “attempts to have it both ways,” for here “discretion, is both selective prudence and authentic self-expression . . . Pamphilia’s brand of discretion . . . is also a radical form of anti-discretion, as she pursues her own subjective desire while outwardly observing the reticence collectively valued by her class.”¹⁸ In fact, according to the final words of Pamphilia’s argument, Love employs and even exploits discretion, so that the passions of the heart can be spoken without offense, not unlike the earlier (and denigrated) “bastard, brought up . . . like a right born child.” Love and discretion are not as antithetical as she first suggests, but neither does she affirm Leandrus’s idea of a discretion defined solely by social norms.

At stake in this discussion as well is the self-sufficiency of the woman in love, the issue that frames the conversation. When Leandrus spies Pamphilia walking alone in the garden, she “quiet outwardly appear’d,” but “her inward thoughts more busie were” (212); she is so occupied with her passion that she is surprised by Leandrus’s appearance and interruption of her solitary musings: “such businesse had her passions, as til he interrupted them with words, she discerned him not” (213). When Leandrus accosts her, he tells her that, rather than be alone, she should be with someone who loves her who could defend her, as the walls of the garden could not. But Pamphilia has argued that she is well guarded by her “spirit” as well as by the garden walls. Love is “treacherous,” she goes on to explain, and she would rather rely on

18. Christina Luckyj, “A moving Rhetorike”: *Gender and Silence in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2002), 137–38. In part of her astute analysis of silence in early modern England as “an unstable and highly contested site” (39), Luckyj claims that Wroth’s work “offers a more complex and sustained exploration of the relationship of silence to gender and discretion than any other early modern woman’s text” (130) and argues that “the paradox of Pamphilia’s silence in the *Urania* is captured in the ambiguity of the term ‘discretion’” (137). This, however, is the only passage concerning “discretion” from the *Urania* that Luckyj examines in detail. Although I am not wholly comfortable with her near identification of silence and discretion (138), I would agree, as my essay argues, that “discretion” shares the “multivalence” that Luckyj associates with silence as a mark of “both subjection and subjectivity” (57).

the walls than “ones power I could not love” (213). Her claim to be both self-contained and self-sufficient has already implicitly met its counterargument in Leandrus’s unsuspected intrusion into her solitary space and solitary reflections, and the ensuing discussion of love and discretion obliquely comments on the same issue as it announces love’s mastery of both discretion and the one who loves (who must “yeeld to his rule”), denigrates the discretion that would constrain the “sweetest passion,” and affirms the disclosure of the heart only in a socially approved or “discreet” discourse.

These concerns are addressed in another episode, when Pamphilia is accompanied by Orilena on a sea voyage. They are fit companions, “both their loves absent, both extreemly loving,” though the difference is that Orilena is married to Philarchos and can openly express her love and her distress at her lover’s absence, whereas Pamphilia “longed for nothing but power, or meanes to expresse her love by” (363). While on board the ship, the two women “made verses . . . to expresse their affections by.” Pamphilia, we are told, “was most to be pittied, because her love was most, and most painefull to endure, as being haunted with two hellish Spirits of keeping it secret, and bearing the waight it selfe. The other Lady had more libertie, so more ease, for she might boldly say she wanted Philarchos, and bewayled his absence, yet never did shee so, but Pamphilia sighed with her, and so sister-like condoled with her, as she exceld her in passion, which made some eroniously say, that counterfeting was more excellent then true suffering, because judgment governs where passions are free, when fully possesst they master beyond, and so expresse not so well, as if ruld with discretion; for an Actor knows when to speake, when to sigh, when to end: a true feeler is as wrapped in distempers, and only can know how to beare” (364). Pamphilia excels both in passion and poetry. The common misinterpretation of her superior poetry, we are told, was to think that counterfeit passions produce better poetry: that passions can only be expressed “so well” when “judgment governs” or when they are “ruld with discretion,” whereas the free and open expression of love, because it lacks the tempering rule of discretion, is less effective. Pamphilia’s behavior encourages this misperception, because she has successfully kept hidden her status as a “true feeler.” However, the fact is that Pamphilia is truly passionate and is using this occasion to express her feelings truly; she is neither counterfeiting passion nor ruling it with discretion. And yet her prior discretion has enabled this moment, since she has in the past been so successful in keeping her love secret that everyone assumes that she is “free” from passion. Hence Pamphilia’s discretion facilitates the open expression of her passion, even as it, paradoxically, remains undiscovered and undisclosed. That

the expression of a passion not ruled by discretion is mistaken for a discreetly governed expression implies the inefficacy of discretion as a genuinely distinguishing feature. This scene also disputes the cultural assumption that “fully possess” and unconstrained passion “masters” the individual as well as her ability to communicate her “true” feelings in discourse.

These issues are fully—if inconclusively—explored in a later scene when Pamphilia confesses to Urania her desire to leave Corinth, the site of her continuing unhappiness about the unfaithful Amphilanthus. Urania asks her whether her distress will thereby be relieved. Pamphilia demurs: “I should hate my selfe as ill as I doe this place, if I should doe so, change cannot nor must not aspire to worke such effect in mee.” In a quick retort, Urania challenges Pamphilia: “‘Change,’ said Urania, ‘deserves no honour; but discretion may make you discerne when you should bee constant, and when discreete, and thus you doe not change but continue, judicall as alwayes you have beene’” (459).

Urania’s advice sounds tautological (discretion enables one to discern when to be discreet) and self-contradictory: it promotes the exercise of discretion over the power of change, opposes discretion to constancy (the issue is whether to be “constant” or “discreete”), and finally identifies discretion as the defining and constant feature of Pamphilia’s unchanging nature. The art of discretion advocated by Urania involves, as her language suggests, the capacity to judge and discern; in context it implies exercising discernment in choosing the object of one’s love, especially in changing that object, and more particularly being able to govern one’s passions so as to make that change or choice. Discretion in Urania’s advice implies the power of self-determination: unlike the passivity that Pamphilia associates with “change” (“change . . . must not aspire to worke such effect in mee”), Urania’s idea of discretion makes Pamphilia an active agent, allowing her to discern and choose, and also supports the integrity of her character (“continue judicall, as alwayes you have beene”). If Pamphilia exercises her discretion, choosing to be discreet and rejecting constancy, she will remain unchanged.

However, counter to Urania’s identification of Pamphilia’s defining attribute as discretion, Pamphilia defines her sense of self by the constancy of her love for the fickle Amphilanthus. As Pamphilia explains in this scene, her unhappiness would only increase “if I let in that worthlesse humour change, which I can never doe till I can change my selfe, and have new creation and another soule; for this is true and loyall” (459). For Pamphilia (as she sees it) to remain true to herself—indeed, to remain herself—she must reject discretion and the ensuing possibility of being discreet rather than constant. For Pamphilia, the exercise of discretion undermines the integrity of self; to choose to

love another (to make the focus of her love the result of deliberation) would endanger her identity.

The terms of this debate are clarified in a later discussion when Urania is accusing Pamphilia of failing to “governe one poore passion” and hence failing as well to “master your selfe” (468), a loss of discretion or self-government that will also impugn Pamphilia’s public role as a princess governing others and her country (“Where is that judgment, and discreet govern’d spirit, for which this and all other places that have beene happy with the knowledge of your name, hath made you famous?”). Pamphilia’s response—“Pamphilia must be of a new composition before she can let such thoughts fall into her constant breast, which is a Sanctuary of zealous affection” (470)—echoes her earlier one, insisting, as Maureen Quilligan has remarked, “that her constancy . . . constitutes her claim to a stable self.”¹⁹ The discretion Urania associates with the ability to govern the self and its passions, and to make judicious choices in matters of love, becomes for Pamphilia the betrayal of a self defined by the zealous affection that lodges within the refuge of her heart. As such, Pamphilia among the ladies in Corinth, who await the return of their lovers to whom they will be married, alone remains “unpromised, for she was her owne, but as she had unfortunately given her selfe” (457). Wroth’s language here refuses to resolve the issue; Pamphilia’s self-possession is asserted (“she was her owne”) even as it is suggested that she has (willfully) relinquished it.

The concept of discretion in the *Urania* thus becomes a contested site of agency and subjectivity. According to Urania, discretion implies agency: rather than submitting to the power of love, or to the power of change, discretion refers to a sphere of action in which the subject can free herself from subjection to a larger force (including her own passion) and exercise her volition. And yet this positive idea of discretion is destabilized by Pamphilia’s counterargument. Willed choice in matters of love violates the sanctuary of the passionate self that resists the socially approved ethos of self-government; furthermore, this private sanctuary involves the anchoring and nurturing—rather than the discreet restraint—of the zealousness of desire.

In the earlier scene, Pamphilia, unconvinced of the appropriateness of Urania’s advice, uses Urania’s own history to imply its more general inapplicability. Recalling how Urania had to be thrown into the enchanted water of St. Maura to stop her from vainly loving Parselius, Pamphilia notes, “Were you so discreet? . . . When time was, as I remember, you were forced to bee washed before you could manifest your judgment in leaving” (459). Pamphilia remembers a time when

19. Quilligan, “The Constant Subject,” 322.

Urania was not, in Urania's own terms, discreet (when Urania could not exercise her judgment in choice of her beloved). It was not discretion then that enabled Urania to choose to love another (to be discreet) but rather the force of the magical properties of the sea. If discretion involves agency, the ability to judge, and the ability to master and direct one's passions, discretion is a capacity that is here seen as originating in being forced against one's will to abandon constancy in love. Yet even after Urania was cured of her love for Parselius, and changed the object of her affection to Steriamus, she is found lacking another form of discretion, and this raises more questions. A tormented Urania, lamenting Steriamus's absence, is discovered by Philistella, "in the walkes, speaking unto her selfe, and walking with so fast, and unused a fashion, differing from her grave, and discreet manner, as if love had lay'd a wager with discretion, yet hee would make her at that time (to fulfill his will) forget her selfe, and wholly serve him; he won that, and judgement made her asham'd, when Philistella came unto her, and told her shee wonder'd to see her so" (330). Urania's customary behavior is grave and discreet, but her passions here are so consuming that, having won the wager with discretion, Love's "will" reigns and Urania's "selfe" is forgotten. "Discretion" presumably maintains the integrity of the self, whereas when passions hold sway, the scaffolding of the self disintegrates.

But this concept of discretion soon gives way to another in this scene. When Urania admires Philistella because "you can keepe your paines more secret, and more close," Philistella demurs that she was unable to "cover yet my flames." Everyone knew her love and her distress; she sighed, and wept, "wav'd . . . with each passion up and downe," much to the concern of the court and her parents. "Call you this discretee, and wise behaviour? could love no better bee dissembled, or the sparkes no finelier raked up in discretion?" (330-31). Discretion would not so much have tempered or mastered her passion as enabled her to hide it better. At this point in the conversation, "discretion" no longer figures the ability to maintain the self but rather to dissemble its feelings. Philistella now insists to Urania that in this "you indeed doe better . . . like cunning workemen best beguile our eyes." But Urania rejects the intended compliment as though it were an insult; she claims, rather competitively, to have rivaled Philistella in failing to cover her love, recounting her days spent sighing and weeping, and concluding, sarcastically, "yet I am secret, and discreet in love" (331). As the conversation proceeds, Urania recounts the effects of her dunking in the enchanted waters, when she regained a type of discretion (being "freed from my first love, and had a power to choose againe" [331]), and Philistella confesses that with her, love, in a sense,

won the wager with discretion, but in such a way that her self is not lost but rather is defined by love (“all I aime is love . . . so as being made, maintained by love, and in love shaped” [333]). Finally, at the end of the scene, the two women vow a friendship in which “our most private thoughts be to each other plaine and open, secrecie to all others held, and only love, and we, know what we thinke” (334). If discretion would require the women to maintain secrecy and prevent them from exposing their love, it also provides that “private” space where they can be “plaine and open”; the idea that discretion insures self-possession and the stability of the self against a disintegration threatened by passion is challenged by the affirmation of a self that is “maintained” and “shaped” by passion.

III

The various ways the term “discretion” figures the contested status of the expressive, passionate female self are given visible form in Margaret Cavendish’s play *The Comedy named the Several Wits* (1662), which features “Discretion” as a character.²⁰ In the play, four ladies (Doltche, Solid, Caprisia, and Volante) representing the humble, wise, choleric, and wild wits are courted by various men. Although the play allows each clever and sharp-tongued female character the opportunity to voice her objections to the patriarchal control of love, women, and marriage, the play ends on the day of a group church-wedding: Madamosel Doltche will marry Monsieur Nobilissimo; Madamosel Solid will marry Monsieur Perfection; Madamosel Caprisia will marry Monsieur Generosity.²¹ The one figure whose fate is not as clearly determined is Madamosel Volante, who, being wooed when the play opens by Monsieur Bon Compaignon, initially rejects marriage altogether, vowing “I will live a maid, as long as I live” (2.12.88). Soon, however, she encounters Monsieur Discretion, who is drawn by the fame of her wit. He counsels her not to “bury your wit in silence” but

20. The play was published along with several others in *Playes written by the thrice noble, illustrious, and excellent princess, the lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London, 1662). I have used the Women Writers Project electronic edition from *Renaissance Women Online*, <http://www.wwp.brown.edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/texts/rwoentry.html>. Parenthetical references in the text are to act, scene, and page.

21. See Mihoko Suzuki, “Margaret Cavendish and the Female Satirist,” *Studies in English Literature* 37 (1997): 483–500, for a discussion of how in this play, “although the generic exigencies of the comic plot dictate a move away from satire to achieve marriages, the marriages are nevertheless qualified by the persistence of the satiric perspective” (489).

soon gives a long speech advising her to use her wit and her speech with restraint: "wit must be used like a strong spirited horse, it must be restrained with a bridle, not prick'd with the spur, least it should run away, and fling the Rider." In particular, it must conform to the "smooth paths of civility, or the clean wayes of modesty," reined in especially by "time and occasion, . . . as when to speak, and to whom to speak, and on what to speak, and when to make a stop of silence" (2.17.92). Meeting with Volante's resistance, he takes a quick leave, whereupon Volante muses upon his character ("Monsieur *Discretion* is a handsom man, he hath a wise countenance, and a manly garb; his discourse is rational and witty, sober and discreet") and concedes that she spoke foolishly to him (2.17.97).

Discretion is a masculine figure here, somewhat oddly positioned; he is attracted by reports of Volante's speech and wit yet counsels her to restrain them; she rejects his advice but then privately confesses her attraction to him. Later, in a scene with Doctor Freedom, Volante, asserting that it is superior to "speak truth . . . than to flatter, or dissemble," insists on her capacity for direct self-expression: "my words and thoughts, are so well acquainted . . . and there is such a friendship betwixt them, as they never move several wayes, but runs even together." She is announcing her "desire" to "kill" men, or "at least to wound them with spitefull words," when Monsieur Discretion enters, complaining that Doctor Freedom is welcome among the ladies while he is "oftentimes shut, and lockt out" (3.27.101). Again he makes a quick departure, with a polite parting "Your Servant, Ladies," whereupon Doctor Freedom counsels Volante to "follow Monsieur *Discretion*, he will make you a wise Lady and make your wit discreet, as it should be." Vociferously celebrating wit as the greatest power ("wit cannot be made, it is a Creator . . . the first Master, or Mistress of Arts . . . it makes Heavens, and Hells"), Volante then turns around and asks Doctor Freedom to "pray present my service to Monsieur *Discretion*" (3.17.106). The status of Monsieur Discretion is completely destabilized here: Discretion is championed by Freedom, whose (allegorical) presence among a group of young ladies gives them the liberty to speak out; Discretion proclaims himself to be at the service of ladies, who may choose whether to admit his company or not; yet they are told to follow him, and even Volante offers him her service.

In the next scene between Volante and Doctor Freedom, Volante asks the Doctor to cure her of an affliction that Doctor Freedom diagnoses as the "disease" of "love," which he claims cannot be cured because (echoing Volante's earlier retort to his suggestion that she follow Discretion and allow him to make her wit discreet) "love no more than wit, can neither be temper'd, nor yet be rul'd, for love and wit, keeps neither moderate bounds, nor spares diet, but dyes most commonly

of a surfeit.” Volante argues now that “discretion can cure both,” and Freedom, insisting that “your disease is past my skil,” recommends that she “send for Monsieur *Discretion*,” and offers to “get a meeting between Monsieur *Discretion* and you, and to make the match betwixt you” (4.40.116). Volante presumably now believes that freedom sorts not well with either love or wit and that for her love and wit to be healthy they must be matched with discretion; yet she is unable to take the initiative herself to seek it out and must ask the help of freedom to solicit discretion on her behalf.

In the final scene in which Volante appears in the play, she is conversing again with Doctor Freedom, who congratulates himself: “Am not *I* a good Doctor now, that hath got you a good Husband?” (5.42.117). But the match has not yet been fully accomplished, according to Volante: “Nay, Doctor, he is but a Suiter, as yet.” Freedom suggests that she follow the footsteps of her friends, who express themselves fully and openly, and that she “woe upon the Stage, as the rest of your Comorades doth,” but Volante refuses, because “*Discretion* never whines out love in publick.” The purest love, she now explains, “is most conceal’d”; Doctor Freedom, who proposed and helped facilitate Volante’s joining with *Discretion*, now warns her, “Take heed, for if you keep it too tenderly, and close, it may chance to catch cold when it comes abroad.” This last conversation (Volante’s last appearance in the play) concludes with a servant’s announcement to Volante that “Monsieur *Discretion* is come to visit you,” and she exits anticipating her “contract” with *Discretion* (5.42.118). The play ends, however, on an uncertain note for the couple. In the next two scenes (which are the final ones), various characters discuss the weddings they are attending that day. In the penultimate scene, the talk is about the “two weddings” (of *Doltche* and of *Solid*), and in the final scene, *Caprisia* and *Generosity* agree to “go strait to Church, and be married” as well. There is no mention of a marriage between Volante and *Discretion*. Have they kept their love so discreet that they marry in secret? Or are we left questioning whether the pair will ever be united? In the end, theirs is the one marriage that is not, and perhaps cannot be, celebrated in the play. *Discretion* has been figured as an alternative to the freedom of expression and of desire, both positively and negatively, and yet it is Freedom itself that (at times) endorses *Discretion*. Gendered male, *Discretion* is crucial to the welfare of Lady Volante; their proper relationship is figured as a marriage. Yet that relationship is difficult, and is held in abeyance. And what would happen, we are made to wonder, to Volante, the outspoken “wild wit,” were she to be joined to *Discretion*? Would she lose her name and identity? Or would she, as her absence from the marriages announced at the end of the play may suggest, become “most concealed”?

Michael Schoenfeldt has argued that the Renaissance model of the self was that of a well-governed body, including particularly the control of passions.²² When reason failed to curb the affections, he writes, the result was “a vision of the self completely out of control. . . . Giving way to one’s various passions is a loss of power over the self, a surrender of sovereignty . . . the self loses any sense of its integrity” (89). In positing an early modern ethos of self-regulation that functions to “constitute rather than suppress the self” (109), he sets himself against more Freudian models of identity that, as he says, regard repression as pathology (17), as well as against the new-historicist focus on the individual as a “victim” of cultural control (11), which sees the self as “the product of socio-cultural discourses, institutions, and practices” (12). Schoenfeldt has more recently acknowledged a more positive attitude toward the passions in the Renaissance, evidence of “the radical inconsistency with which early modern culture confronted the phenomenon of passion”; and Richard Strier has more boldly argued for a tradition that “allows for strong, even uncontrolled emotion.”²³ The permutations of discretion that this essay has traced suggest a vigorous and ongoing dialectic of self and society, self-expression and restraint, and, finally, passion and judgment in early modern discourses of identity. Philistella can talk about a self shaped by a love that has overpowered discretion in the same episode in which Urania is charged with a lack of discretion that yields a loss of self. Pamphilia can object to the exercise of discretion as a betrayal of her self in response to Urania’s argument that discretion would allow her to control and maintain her identity. Pamphilia can openly express her ungoverned feelings in poetry that is viewed as counterfeiting passion or ruling it with discretion. Freedom itself advocates that the Wild Wit be joined to Discretion in a match whose consummation defies representation.

For women in particular, whose identities were less secure,²⁴ and which marriage threatened (legally) to erase,²⁵ who were counseled to be discreet and retired (both literally and figuratively) from social

22. Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

23. Schoenfeldt, “‘Commotion Strange’: Passion in *Paradise Lost*,” in *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 46; Richard Strier, “Against the Rule of Reason: Praise of Passion from Petrarch to Luther to Shakespeare to Herbert,” in *ibid.*, 23.

24. See Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1985), 149ff., on the inconsistency, instability, and incompatibility of subject positions available to women in the Renaissance.

25. See Belsey, *Subject of Tragedy*, 153; and Frances E. Dolan, *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: St. Martin’s), 193–95.

discourse,²⁶ who were considered, moreover, “leaky vessels” unable to control the physiological and affective excesses to which they were especially vulnerable,²⁷ discretion invoked various and competing directives: for the construction of the self and the denial of the self, for social engagement and withdrawal from society (to a place that can designate either freedom or restraint), for silence and self-expression. Hence the Lady of the Oddest Passion may well, in some senses, be “most discreet” when she refuses to choose and rides off alone, that is, when she refuses to make the judgment that would “separate” her two suitors, and thereby is left separated from them. To be sure, she resists societal demands and is rejected by them. Nonetheless, she complies with a patriarchal code by relinquishing her power of choice to a man, and, though she is then left unchosen, she has remained true to her “most loving” self, so that, as the suitors say in the parting rebuff that provides her title, she can “crowne her self as Lady of the oddest passion.” She openly declares her socially inappropriate passion and then is constrained from addressing her quickly departing suitors even though she “faine would have spoken.” Ultimately, when she is left to “glory in her owne folly, or to cover her selfe with her owne shame,” she boldly affirms, in a final declaration that concludes the scene, “I liv’d before I loved them, and shall (I trust) live, and love againe without them” (453–54). Leaving the “standers by satisfied with uncertainty,” in the end, for better and for worse, to borrow the description quoted earlier of Pamphilia, “she was her owne, but unfortunately as she had given herself.”

26. See, e.g., Peter Stallybrass, “Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed,” in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, ed. Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy Vickers (University of Chicago Press, 1986), 126–27.

27. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).