“Deir Sister”: The Letters of John Knox to Anne Vaughan Lok

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Summary: *Anne Vaughan Lok was a prominent supporter of the protestant cause and an active participant in the early reformed communities of the mid-sixteenth century. Although recent scholarship on Anne Lok seems to indicate that she may have felt hindered by her own gender and overly dependent on male reformers, a close study of the epistolary exchange between Lok and John Knox reveals the presence of a strong woman, whom Knox often consulted, whom he persistently invited to Geneva, and whom he often considered as an equal.*

Anne Vaughan Lok Dering Prowse, a member of the sixteenth century London merchant class, published during her lifetime a small but significant body of literary works including translations of sermons by John Calvin and Jean Taffin, two dedicatory epistles, and a sonnet sequence on Psalm 51.¹ As increasing attention is paid to her life and her writings, the Anne Lok who emerges is revealed as a prominent, active, and articulate member of the English reformed community.

Unlike many women writers of the sixteenth century, quite a lot is known about Anne Lok as Patrick Collinson demonstrated in his classic biographical article of 1965.² Lok was probably born in the early 1530s to Stephen Vaughan, a London mercer and later the crown financial agent in Antwerp, and Margaret (or Margery) Guinet, silkwoman to Anne Boleyn while she was Queen.³ Vaughan apparently spent a great deal of time on the Continent and when Margaret died on September 16, 1544, he exerted considerable effort in finding a wife suitable to manage his household and his three children, Anne, Jane, and

Stephen, who “wanting a mother and lacking the presence of a father, may soon tumble into many displeasures”.⁴ His second marriage, licensed on April 27, 1546, was to Margery Brinklow, widow of another London mercer, Henry Brinklow, who had written a strongly Protestant pamphlet, *The Complaint of Roderyck Mors*. Stephen Vaughan himself, commenting on his second wife, paraphrased Proverbs 31: “riches is the gift of God, but an honest woman that fearest God is above all riches.”⁵

Although we know very little about the personal relationships and domestic atmosphere in the Vaughan household, young Anne was certainly heir to a rich cultural, political, and spiritual heritage. Whatever the religious disposition of Margaret Guinet, Stephen Vaughan complimented her as “witty and housewifely” and her position in the Queen’s household would have both required and bestowed a certain social rank superior to that enjoyed by many merchant families.⁶ Anne’s stepmother added to the household her own connections with the nonconformist community in London. Stephen Vaughan, too, was embroiled in protestant causes. In 1530 he was engaged by Henry VIII to convince William Tyndale to return to England under safe conduct. Vaughan’s appreciation for Tyndale, however, exceeded that of the King’s, and he was forced to abandon the attempt at reconciliation. Although he repudiated being either a Lutheran or “Tyndalin,” yet he wrote to Cromwell in 1531 that “I have the holy scripture, given to me by Christ’s church, and that is a learning sufficient for me, infallible and taught by Christ.”⁷ While Vaughan remained a loyal agent of Henry VIII, he retained his protestant sympathies, even petitioning Cromwell on behalf of the Merchant Adventurers to spare Tyndale’s life during his imprisonment for heresy in 1535-1536, “on the legal grounds that the arrest of Tyndale at the English House in Antwerp had violated the rights of immunity enjoyed by the company.”⁸ Although further evidence of Vaughan’s direct involvement with radical protestantism is sketchy, his marriage to Margery Brinklow and later their employment for Anne of a tutor who was suspected of religious heresy, suggest a strong commitment to the new religion.⁹ Young Anne Vaughan, therefore, was apparently raised in a family with substantial financial and political connections and one which was sympathetically inclined not just toward protestantism but toward the more radical reformers.

It is unclear to what extent her first husband, Henry Lok, another mercer whose father, Sir William Locke, had also been part of the court of Henry VIII, participated in the London nonconformist community. Nevertheless, during the winter of 1552-1553, the Scottish reformer John Knox apparently stayed

with the Loks and the family of Henry Lok's half sister, Rose Hickman, before fleeing to the Continent upon the accession of Mary. On May 8, 1557, Anne, along with her two children and a maid, also arrived in Geneva where she stayed until early 1559. By June of that year she was back in London and reunited with her husband who died sometime before 1573. Probably in 1573 Lok married Edward Dering, a younger preacher who was examined for his religious views by the Star Chamber in 1573 and silenced by Queen Elizabeth's command in December of that same year. In a Christmas Eve letter to his brother, Dering reports gratefully that Anne had escaped detention, again suggesting her intimate involvement in the nonconformist community.¹⁰ Dering died on June 26, 1576 of tuberculosis and by 1583 Lok had married Richard Prowse of Exeter, a man of considerable prominence. Christopher Goodman, a friend from Geneva and one of Knox's closest associates, preached a controversial sermon in Exeter in 1583 and Collinson suggests that he probably came to the cathedral through the efforts of Anne Lok.¹¹

As this brief account suggests, it seems that Anne Lok, as an adult, enthusiastically embraced the religious community of her childhood and actively supported the protestant cause both in England and abroad. Her religious commitment is certainly pronounced in her published works which are devoted to promoting a vital spiritual life. Although the scholarship on her writings is still scanty, attention has recently been focused on three elements in the dedications and sonnets.¹² First, of course, is the insistently protestant tone of her work. Second is the rhetorical skill which she demonstrates. But, third is an emphasis on Lok's frustration with her restricted role within the nonconformist community. On the basis of a comment in Lok's dedication to the Countess of Warwick, namely that "great things by reason of my sex, I may not doo, and that which I may, I ought to doo," Margaret Hannay argues that Lok was clearly frustrated at the gender restrictions under which she lived and worked.¹³ Hannay emphasizes the word *may* which she takes to have the force of "not permitted to" rather than "unable to" which would be conveyed by the word *can*. From this linguistic distinction, Hannay argues that Lok was frustrated by her limited role, and was, therefore, forced to contribute merely her small basket of stones rather than a more weighty offering. Furthermore, Hannay claims that this sentence indicates that writing was "the only political work" a protestant woman was permitted to do.¹⁴

While it is certainly possible that Lok may have felt constrained by her gender, this sentence in the dedication is the only indication of her alleged frustration. Besides a lack of corroborating material, there exists a body of

positive evidence which suggests that Lok enjoyed a prominent, active, and, indeed, relatively unrestricted role within the nonconformist community. This broader context, which has been largely overlooked, consists of the fourteen letters she received from John Knox.¹⁵ The Knox-Lok correspondence is rendered somewhat problematic by the loss of all the original documents. Lok's letters to Knox have not survived in any form, which means that we have only one side of their conversation. Knox's letters to Lok, however, are preserved in two seventeenth-century transcriptions.

In 1583, John Field, apparently without permission, published a sermon by John Knox on Matthew 4 which he obtained from Lok.¹⁶ In the dedicatory epistle addressed to "the vertuous and my very godly friend, Mrs. Anne Prouze of Exeter," Field urged her to share other Knoxian memorabilia with the church at large. Whether she succumbed to this plea and submitted her letters to Field or whether they later found their way to England through her son, Henry, or another source, is unknown.¹⁷ Whatever the transmission history, the first three letters are preserved in a 1603 manuscript transcription of Knox's writings which is presently in the library of Edinburgh University.

The remaining eleven letters were apparently made available to David Calderwood (1575-1650) who transcribed them into his unpublished six volumes of manuscripts on the history of the Scottish Church. These manuscripts include a mid-sized version which was used as the copy text for *The History of the Kirk in Scotland* published by the Wodrow Society in 1842-49; a longer, less ordered version; and a smaller compilation which was published in folio in 1678. By the mid-nineteenth century, when David Laing came to edit the still standard *Works of Knox*, he was unable to locate any of the original letters to Lok. He reproduced the first three letters from the 1603 transcript but was forced to reconstruct the remaining letters from Calderwood's manuscripts. Although Laing insists that "Calderwood's fidelity in transcribing the documents inserted in his History, has never been called in question," the nature of the transmission — from the original letters, to transcriptions and excerpts in Calderwood, to Laing's collation — leaves the exact composition and date of any individual letter open to scrutiny. Nevertheless, I will be using the texts given by Laing as constituting the closest approximation to the originals. These letters demonstrate that Lok was a very active member of the nonconformist community and filled a prominent role within it.¹⁸

The first letter, apparently written from Geneva, offers a joint address "to Mistress Locke and Mistress Hickman," the women who had offered hospitality to Knox during a recent sojourn in London, and is full of Knox's warm

memories of these two friends.¹⁹ They were, Knox says, especially kind to him, "with a speciall care over me, as the mother useth to be over hir naturall chyld," with the result that he, in return, took them into his confidence (*Works*, 4:220). In particular, he felt compelled "to be mair plane in suche matteris as efter hath cum to pass, then ever I was to any" (*Works*, 4:220). The "suche matteris" appear to be Knox's prediction that life in England for true Protestants would shortly become much more difficult, a prophecy fulfilled with the Marian persecution. Throughout this letter, Knox continues to remember and comment upon the close ties he sustained with both Lok and Hickman: they are most dear to him of all in London; with no one else he "was so familiar" (*Works*, 4:220); he is assured of their "constant love and cair" (*Works*, 4:221).

Indeed, this affection motivates the main thrust of the letter, which is to urge Lok and Hickman to leave London and join him in Geneva. Knox presses his request as he both reminds them of his prophecy of imminent persecution and warns them of the dangers of succumbing to idolatry if they remain in a country which is perilous to their spiritual health. At the same time, he recognizes the physical difficulties of such a move and remains confident that God can protect them in the midst of the wicked English generation just as He did Lot in Sodom.

The most intriguing aspect of Knox's appeal is the way he addresses married women rather than their husbands. As he begins, Knox acknowledges that any move must be congruent with the wishes of the dominant male presence in the household so that they should flee the present idolatry only "by the consall and discretoun of those that God hath apoyntit to your heidis (your husbandis I meane)" (*Works*, 4:219). Having made this concession, however, Knox urges a more primary commitment, that of obedience to and trust in God. So, having just suggested that they follow the counsel of their husbands, Knox nevertheless encourages them to actively pursue an endeavour which it is not clear their "heads" will approve: "Dispyse not my consall, deir Sisteris, howbeit at this present it appeirs hardlie to be followit. God sall prepair ane easie way, sa that his godlie will be preferit unto yours" (*Works*, 4:219). By the end of the letter Knox is even more insistent. As he reminds them of the "horribill plagues" that come upon idolaters, Knox directs them to "call first for grace by Jesus to follow that whilk is acceptabill in his syght, and thairefter communicat with your faithfull husbandis" (*Works*, 4:221), which, while it does not exclude the husbands from decision making, clearly subordinates them to a secondary role. The women are first to prepare themselves for imminent exile and then tell their husbands what they have decided to do.²⁰

What is clear from this letter is that, for these protestant women and for their spiritual mentor, godliness, particularly that expression of godliness which involves an active rejection of idolatry, is the prime directive. All other considerations, including appropriate structures of authority (for instance, that husbands are the heads of their wives), are ultimately subordinate to this great requirement. It is also clear that godliness is gender inclusive. Although a nodding recognition is given to the special problems that women may encounter in their pursuit of godliness, Knox obviously expects that Lok and Hickman will continue to oppose idolatry and actively pursue God's will, even if that means abandoning their comfortable homes. Moreover, he firmly expresses his confidence in their character: "God grant ye remane in the same mynd that then I found yow, whilk was, that ye litill regardit the rest of the warld, or yit the love of your contrey, in respect of that lyfe to cum; and that ye rather wald leif possessionis and freindis nor that ye suld admit idolatrie" (*Works*, 4:220). Whatever restrictions may arise from being female, these are swallowed up in the larger demand to flee idolatry.²¹

In the interim, Lok apparently wrote Knox a brief letter in which she mentioned some of her spiritual troubles, expressed her desire to see him again, and asked about the disposition of her Bible which was in the possession of a James Young. The remark about spiritual troubles raises the issue of the relationship between Protestant women and various reformers. On the basis of numerous letters, such as those between Elizabeth Bowes and Knox or between Edward Dering (Lok's second husband) and Mary Honewood, Collinson and others have suggested that, for many women, these intense personal exchanges took the place of the relationship in the old church between penitent and father confessor.²² Rather condescendingly, Collinson also notes that "in a society of arranged marriages, in which the wives nevertheless had leisure to cultivate religious neuroses and sufficient freedom to move outside the household, it is not to be wondered at if an intimate friendship with some physician of the soul was not seldom the result."²³ Yet it seems quite inaccurate to characterize Lok's friendship with Knox as overly dependent. If anything, the dependency, at least emotionally, seems to flow in the opposite direction. To be sure, any analysis is irreparably handicapped by the fact that we have only one side of this conversation. But, although Knox here, and in a later letter, responds to her spiritual troubles sympathetically, his comments are brief and directed toward encouraging her to trust what she already knows. In this second letter (but the first addressed to Lok alone) dated November 19, 1556, Knox reminds Lok to wrestle with God as Jacob did with the angel, and

reassures her "that ye ar not destitut of his Halie Spreit, for it floweth and giveth witnes of it self in your grevous complaynt and ernist prayer" (*Works*, 4:237).

At the same time, Knox is most effusive in this letter about his affection for Lok and, indeed, his emotional dependence upon her:

Deir Sister, yf I suld expres the thrist and langoure whilk I haif had for your presence, I suld appeir to pass measure. To haif sene yow in prosperitie it wes to me, no dout, comfortabill, but now yf it sall pleas God that I suld sie yow in theis most dolorous dayis, my comfort suld be dubled, for in prosperitie in the middis of mirth, my hart quaikit for the sorrowis to cum; and sum tymis I sobbit, feiring what suld becum of yow. . . Yea, I weip and rejoise in remembrance of yow; but that wold evanische by the comfort of your presence, whilk I assure yow is so deir to me, that gif the charge of this litill flok heir [Knox was a minister in Geneva], gatherit together in Christis name, did not impeid me, my presence suld prevent my letter (*Works*, 4:238).

Such warmth might seem to imply an erotic if not an explicitly sexual relationship were it not for the fact that it is immediately followed by greetings from his mother-in-law and wife.²⁴ Apparently Lok responded to this letter indicating that the situation was somewhat improved in London and that her husband objected to their leaving for Geneva.

The third letter from Knox to Lok, dated December 9, 1556 and accompanied by the sermon on Matthew 4 which was later published in 1583, is brief. The newly married Knox apologizes for his hurriedness due to the pressing cares of his "domesticall charge" to which he is unaccustomed, and "the administratioun of publick thingis aperteaning to the pure flok heir assemblit in Chrystis name" (*Works*, 4:239).²⁵ Nevertheless, Knox once again presses his request that Lok join him in Geneva, "the maist perfyt schoole of Chryst that ever was in the erth since the dayis of the Apostillis" although he recognizes that she is currently unable to do so (*Works*, 4:240-41). She is, he notes, impeded both "be impyre of your heid" and also by "so gud occasioun as God hath now offirit yow to remane whair ye ar," but he is still moved "to desyre your presence, yea, and the presence of all sic as unfeanedlie feir God" (*Works*, 4:240-41).

We do not know how Lok managed either to convince or to defy her husband and leave London, but the *Livre des Anglois*, a record of the English exiles in Geneva, notes that "Anne Locke, Harrie her sonne, and Anne her daughter, and Katherine her maide," arrived in Geneva May 8, 1557; within four days, "Anne, the daughter of Anne Locke, and of Harry Locke, her

husband” is recorded as dead (9;17). It is possible that Henry Lok, Sr. may have accompanied his family to the Continent, perhaps staying at Frankfurt while they travelled on to Geneva, but more likely he stayed in London during Mary’s reign.²⁶

Despite the personal cost, however, Lok remained at Geneva for the next 18 months with the colony of exiled English, worshipping at the church where Knox was a minister and continuing her close connection with him. While we have no contemporary record of this period, Lok apparently used the time to translate the sermons of John Calvin which were published in 1560 and also to write the sonnet sequence on Psalm 51 which she appended to that volume.

These initial three letters from Knox to Lok before her arrival in Geneva, however, reveal two important aspects of Anne Lok’s life and character. First, she obviously was an active member of the London reformational group that supported Edward VI and which later felt the brunt of Mary’s persecution. Whatever we may not know of her, we must certainly admit that her religious commitment was intellectually, ethically and emotionally central to her being. Second, although Lok’s position in the Protestant community was clearly gendered in some respects — for instance, Knox refers to her husband as her head and also employs maternal, nurturing images to describe her in the first letter — in other ways her role appears unaffected by her sex. Both Knox and Lok clearly expected that her loyalty to God would take precedence over all other claims on her affection. This intense religious motivation, then, suggests that the primary category for analyzing Lok’s own writing should be spirituality rather than gender.

The correspondence between Knox and Lok resumed in 1559, after Knox had left Geneva on January 7 to return to Scotland, confirms Lok’s intense involvement in religious issues, including those of a public nature. Lok apparently wrote to Knox on February 7, 1559 concerning the appropriateness of sacraments administered according to the second edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Specifically, she wished Knox’s advice on the issue of accompanying friends to church in order to witness baptisms or to participate in the Lord’s Supper. The nonconformists in general, and Knox in particular, were considerably exercised over what they considered the remnants of papish superstition in the English liturgy which included, among other practices, the chanting of the Commandments and Creed and kneeling at communion. Since the English-speaking Genevan church used a simple liturgy designed by Knox himself, it is unlikely that Lok’s questions referred to Switzerland. Probably she wrote, either from Frankfurt regarding the situation there, or in anticipation

of her return to England where she faced the choice of attending a compromised church or eschewing fellowship with an organized group of believers.²⁷

In his response of April 6 1559, Knox mentions that he did not receive her letter until March 17, nearly six weeks after she had sent it, probably to reassure her that he was not ignoring her concerns. Not surprisingly, given his previous encounters with the *Prayer Book* and his general animosity toward any form of idolatry, Knox strongly encourages Lok not to attend services where, he believes, ceremonies outweigh worship and the sacraments are unattended by preaching. What is of greatest interest, however, is the way in which he proceeds with his argument. First, Knox acknowledges that his opinions will seem "extreme and rigorous" (*Works* 6:11). Such a frank admission, of course, carries the rhetorical effect of making dogmatic views seem more palatable by attributing them to an honestly self-aware speaker. Second, however, Knox appeals to Lok's own wisdom and insight in making her decision. Although the force of his conclusion, "Now, Sister, if with good conscience yow may communicat with that which, in effect, is no sacrament, and if yow may honour him, as Christ's minister, who is but a bastard, yea Christ's plaine enemie als oft as he cometh there, to find favour of him, be judge yourself" (*Works* 6:14), may seem to mitigate the conditional nature of the "if" (who after all would want to listen to an enemy of Christ?), the sentiment of self-determination is still present. And elsewhere he does, more generously, return the decision to her: "God grant yow his Holie Spirit rightlie to judge" (*Works* 6:14). Third, Knox assumes that Lok is earnestly seeking a godly solution to a difficult problem as she steers her way between the sins of omission (neglecting church attendance) and commission (supporting idolatry). Thus, he can frame his response as advice rather than command, although, in line with his triumphalist vision, he clearly thinks it inconceivable that two people who share the Spirit of God will disagree on what he believes is the clear instruction of Scripture.

This letter, however, does not merely address Lok as a spiritual equal; it also seeks her approbation. The tone of the entire missive is clearly defensive, stemming perhaps from the accusation, implied in later letters, that some felt his return to Scotland was driven more by personal and national concerns than by concerns for the kingdom of God, but even more by the almost universal rejection of his tract, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. In light of the criticism he had recently encountered, Knox in this and subsequent letters is eager not merely to inform Lok on the progress of the Scottish reformation but also to enlist her approval and sympathy. Nowhere is this bid for support stronger than in his opening remarks

where he expresses his dependency in a particularly open and vulnerable manner. Knox insists that he is loyal to his friends, but, more importantly, he gives the reason for this loyalty, namely that he needs them more, perhaps, than they need him: "Of nature I am churlish, and in conditions different from many: Yet one thing I ashame not to affirme, that familiaritie once throughlie contracted was never yet brocken on my default. The cause may be that I have rather need of all then that any hath need of me" (*Works*, 6:11).

There are at least two ways of viewing this letter in terms of understanding Lok's position within the community of nonconformists. On the one hand, Knox's firm words of advice and the enlisting of Lok within the circle of personal supporters might seem to confine her to a more private domestic sphere, particularly appropriate for women.²⁸ On the other hand, the letter is surprisingly ungendered. Knox's theological advice is similar to that addressed to men or to the church at large, and, as I have already noted, he does ultimately recommit the matter to her conscience. Furthermore, Knox's need for close associates extended to male as well as female comrades and, as subsequent letters bear out, he looked to Lok not just for emotional support but also for practical aid, including raising funds.

The next extant letter, dated May 3, 1559, is short and simply assures his "dear Sister" that he has arrived in Edinburgh, that he has no time to communicate other news to her and that he needs her prayers as he prepares to do battle for the soul of Scotland. In light of his comment to "[a]dvertise my brother, Mr. Goodman, of my estate, as in my other letter sent unto yow from Diep I willed yow" (*Works* 6:21), we may assume that at least one letter, written either before or after April 6, is missing since in the April 6 letter he specifically omits greetings to particular individuals: "No man will I salute in commendation specialle, although I bear good will to all that unfreinedlie professe Christ Jesus" (*Works* 6:14).²⁹

The next letter, dated June 23, 1559, is an exuberant account of Knox's early adventures in Scotland. Writing that his dear Sister might "know the successe of Christ's Evangell" Knox is frequently the hero of his own tale and his triumphalist vision of God's will working its way in the world against idolatry is fully vindicated by the events in Edinburgh (*Works* 6:21-26).³⁰

By this time Lok was apparently at home in London and Knox asks her to do a number of favors. She is to distribute his letter, both to London friends and to those still remaining in Geneva, thus squelching any slanders about the course of events in Scotland. He also asks her to contact Christopher Goodman and Knox's mother-in-law and wife, requesting them to proceed to Scotland.

Finally, Knox commits to Lok the bearer of the letter, "a poore man unknowen in the countrie, to whome, I beseeche you, shew reasonable favour and kindnes tuiching his merchandise, and the just selling therof" (*Works* 6:27).

All of these requests, from the assumption that Lok can communicate with far-flung colleagues to Knox's confidence that she is in a position to help a poor merchant financially, reveal that Lok played an important role within the nonconformist community. The role of intermediary is confirmed in the next letter, written just a few days later which responds to her letter of June 16 and continues Knox's defense of the troubles in Scotland, reiterating that the reformers are not seeking civil war, but only "the reformatioun of religioun, and suppressing of idolatrie" (*Works* 6:30).³¹ Knox includes a presumably more detailed account of the events in an enclosed letter to Adam Haliday, which he says she should first open and read and then deliver. The briefness of his missive to her is explained by the sudden availability of a messenger who is eager to leave.

Although these letters are mostly full of news about the Scottish rebellion, the personal element is not neglected. Sometime prior to September, Lok wrote to Knox at midnight about a spiritual battle. In his response on September 2, 1559, Knox's advice is pointed and brief. She should continue her struggle, knowing that others are also engaged in the same battle and thus being "content to enter under mercie, to forsake your self, and to drinke of His fulnesse, in whome onlie consisteth the justice acceptable to his Father" (*Works* 6:79). While Knox admits that this may sound terse, "It may appeare to you that I speeke nothing to purpose" (*Works* 6:79), he implies that her spiritual character is such that a brief reminder will stir her on to the appropriate action: "Fight, and fruict sall succeid, albeit not such as we wold, yit such as sall witnesse that we are not voide of the spirit of the Lord Jesus, who onlie is our justice, sanctificatioun, and holines" (*Works* 6:79). In this letter he also updates Lok on the news from Scotland, indicating that a longer version had been sent to Mr. Wood who had been asked "to communicate the same with you, and with other brethrein of Geneva" (*Works* 6:78). He explains that the pressure of time prevents his writing individual letters about the progress of the reformation, but he remains interested in responding to her personal trials.

This letter once again fails to distinguish between Lok and Knox's male friends on the basis of gender. It may be Lok, or Haliday or Wood who receives the first hand information about the progress of the reformation in Scotland. Each, however, is expected to be the purveyor of the good news to fellow believers in London and on the Continent. Second, Knox's terse military

imagery in response to Lok's spiritual struggles, suggesting a certain "Buck up" mentality, admits no quarter to female weakness or religious susceptibility. Third, Knox feels free to criticize Lok and Wood equally for their failure to get Christopher Goodman safely to Scotland, although his disappointment does not prevent him from requiring their further assistance. "We laike labourers, alas! and yee and Mr. Wood have deceaved me, who according to my requeist and expectatioun, hath not advertised my brother, Mr. Gudman. . . I beseike you to inquire, and to cause him repaire to me with all diligence that is possible" (*Works* 6:78).³²

Lok, in the meantime, had written at least one letter to Knox which miscarried in delivery. Her March 23rd missive from Frankfurt, apparently again about the questions of church attendance since she, at the time, had not heard from him (cf. the April 6 letter from Diep which responded to her queried of February 7) did not reach him until September 13. She also sent her questions via a letter from his wife, which he received on September 20, 1559. To both requests, he answered in the letter of October 15, 1559, repeating his advice to abstain from church services since "we ought not to justifie with our presence such a mingle mangle as now is commaunded in your kirks" (*Works* 6:83). Knox accepts Lok's evaluation of the moral dilemma, namely that if she does not attend services she may be accused, or even be guilty, of sinful negligence but that if she does attend, she may unwittingly be promoting idolatry. He reassures her, however, that when, as in her case, the principle is clearly stated, she can refuse to attend with a clear conscience and without worrying about the effect of her testimony on others. This letter is somewhat more moderate than the April 6 missive, with Knox indicating that he cannot pronounce on each issue of the *Book of Common Prayer* as he has not examined the new edition. He confidently reassigns the problem to her own judgement and discretion, however, reminding her that "oft ye have heard of my mouth, that in the Lord's actioun nothing ought to be used that the Lord Jesus hath not sanctified, nather by precept nor by practise" (*Works* 6:84). Furthermore, he wishes that she not merely remain unbound to the *Book of Common Prayer*, but also to his own words. Scripture and conscience are sufficient guides for her spiritual growth. In an amazingly strong and clear statement of self-determination Knox writes:

And, therefore, Sister, as I will not be a snare to your conscience, to bind me ather to my words, ahter yit to my worke, farther than I prove by evident Scripture, so darre I not counsell you to doe that thing which my self as no wise minded to doe. Stronger reasoun have I none to give unto you, nather

yit to assure my owne conscinece, when I disassent from the multitude, than is the precept of my God, thus commanding not Israel onlie, but the whole kirks of the Gentiles. . . Nather my penne, nather yit my presence, can prescribe unto you how farre yee are addebted to expone your self to daungers for these imperfectiouns in religioun which ye cannot remedie; but yee, directing your heart to advance God's glorie, sall be instructed by his Holie Spirit how farre yee may condescend, and how farre ye are bound to abstaine (*Works* 6:84).

Knox's admission that Lok may not be able to remedy every imperfection in the church is mirrored by his own sense of impending difficulties. Thus his triumphalism takes on a more chastened tone as he predicts a forthcoming plague on the afflicted flock and concludes that it is better to sigh and complain before God so that one is forced to run to Jesus than to succumb to "the opinioun of vertue that puffeth up our pride" (*Works* 6:85). It is possible to read in these sentiments a warning of the confidence Knox had expressed in June when he first returned to Scotland.

Lok's position as central clearing house and intermediary is again noted in this letter as Knox asks to be remembered to a number of people and also requests that she send on letters to Geneva (which he then adds in a postscript that he was unable to finish) as well as another letter "to Deepe, to William Guthrie, frome my Wife" (*Works*, 6:85).

The letter of November 18, 1559 continues Knox's chastened mood. He again writes to counteract the rumors she may have heard and to assure his "deare Sister. . . that our esperance is yit good in our God" (*Works* 6:100). Apparently in a previous letter, not extant, he had written to her, or perhaps to a group of people including Lok, asking her to raise money for the cause in Scotland. Now he reiterates this request for money that will "keepe souldiours and our companie togither" (*Works* 6:101), adding that he trusts Lok to believe that he is suing on behalf of the gospel, not for his own or his country's sake: "I cannot weill write to anie other, becaus the actioun may seem to appertaine to my countrie onlie. But becaus I trust yee suspect me not of avarice, I am bold to say to you, that if we perishe in this our interprise, the limits of Londoun will be straiter than they are now, within few yeeres" (*Works* 6:101). This request reveals not only Knox's confidence in Lok's personal friendship, but the evident position, both morally and financially, that she held among the London reformers. He was evidently confident that she could at least address the appropriate people for the not inconsiderable sums of money needed to pay soldiers and conduct the business of rebellion (or as Knox preferred to consider

it, defense). Lok's position is further strengthened when we consider Knox's other letter of November 18 (*Works* 6:98-100). On the same day, Knox wrote to William Cecil asking him to send without further delay the money and men England had promised. During this pressing crisis, Knox took the time to write to the two people he thought could help him most — William Cecil, already on his way to becoming the most powerful man in England, and Anne Lok. In addition to the financial support which he hopes she can raise from other sources, he asks for more personal supplies for himself, namely Calvin's commentary on Isaiah and the revised *Institutes* or "anie other [books] that be new and profitable" adding that he "will provide that yee sall receive the prices upoun your advertishment" (*Works* 6:101).

Lok's response must have been disappointing to Knox. On November 28 she wrote that she had either been unable or unwilling to raise the necessary funds and exhorted him to wait on God's providence and pray rather than fight. On December 2, she reported the alarm raised by a fire in a nearby lodging, repeated that neither those of high or low degree were willing to support the soldiers in Scotland, and asked him to respond to the doubts which she had raised in an earlier letter. Apparently, once again, letters had miscarried, as Knox apologises that she has "not receaved my Answere" and noted that his wife, much distracted by the difficulties in Scotland, is unable to find the "first extract" (presumably a copy) of his previous response (*Works*, 6:104). This letter sounds a discouraged note as Knox indicates that his current situation is worse than what he experienced as a French galley slave in 1547-49. Yet, at the same time, this letter is remarkable for its tone of mutuality as Knox both accepts Lok's rebuke and exhortation (although he still wishes for material assistance) and returns his attention to God as the only source of comfort in her own difficulties. Her advice, he admits is "godlie and truelie" (*Works* 6:103) and while he does not condemn her spiritual questioning, he does not think that she "greatlie need[s]" his answers, for "God [will] make your self participant of the same comfort which ye write unto me" (*Works* 6:103).

Knox's only letter to Lok in 1560, written on February 4, recapitulates many of the themes of his earlier epistles. He writes "[l]est that sinister rumours should trouble you above measure, dear Sister" (*Works* 6:107) and gives somewhat more encouraging news of the events in Scotland: "We have had wonderful experience of God's mercifull providence; and, for my owne part, I were more than unthankfull, if I sould not confesse that God hath heard the sobs of my wretched heart, and hath not deceaved me of that little sparkle of hope which his Holy Spirit did kindle and foster in my heart" (*Works* 6:108).

He repeats his request for books and suggests that he will again ask her to raise money on his behalf: "I must be bold over your liberalitie not onlie in that [i.e., purchasing books], but in greater things as I sall need" (*Works* 6:108). He concludes by asking her to give a letter to Coverdale and to salute various acquaintances, including, for the first time in their correspondence, her husband (*Works* 6:108).

After this letter, the correspondence sputters to a halt, the remaining two missives being both brief and tantalizing. Nineteen months after his previous letter, on October 2, 1561, Knox wrote a brief note in which he thanks Lok for a "token" which she sent without a letter. Although Knox acknowledges some "impediment" which apparently prevented her writing, he cannot help but complain that "if yow understood the varietie of my tentations, I doubt not but yee would have written somewhat" (*Works* 6:129). It is tempting to speculate what the impediment was and suggestions range from the romantic (Henry Lok forbid further correspondence), to the theological (Lok herself had begun to lose confidence in Knox, perhaps over the issue of spiritual versus physical warfare), to the mundane (the token was sent via a messenger who had to leave on a moment's notice). There is, however, simply no evidence to explain either the impediment which prevented Lok's writing in October or the drought of correspondence in 1560-61 following the nearly monthly epistles of 1559.³³ It is certainly possible that some letters have been lost, as is implied by Knox's comment in this letter that he had previously sent to Lok a copy of the Scottish Confession of Faith in unbound quires. Apparently, he had not heard whether or not she received this gift. Knox's tone, however, is clearly discouraged as he writes of wanting to die and defends himself against implied charges of negligence: "If yow, or anie other thinke that I, or anie other preacher within this realme, may amend such enormiteis yee are deceaved; for we have discharged our consciences, but remedie there appeareth none, unless we would arme the hands of the people in whome abideth yitt some sparkes of God's feare" (*Works* 6:130).

The final letter, dated May 1562, is probably only an extract as it does not include any of the expected salutations or concluding personal comments. As with most of the letters from Scotland, Knox writes so that Lok will not be troubled by any rumors she may hear and, as in the previous letter, the prevailing tone is discouragement: "God hath further humbled me since that day which men call Good Fryday, than ever I hath beene in my life" (*Works* 6:140). The correspondence ends abruptly as Knox concludes that more trouble is doubtless brewing, "for suspicion once kindled, is not easie to be quenched" (*Works* 6:141).

While these letters reveal a strong and mutual friendship between Knox and Lok, of equal interest is what they reveal about Lok herself and what insight they provide into her own writings. Although the materials are admittedly sparse, the portrait of Anne Lok which emerges is intriguing and complex. It seems clear from this correspondence that Lok was a strong woman, dedicated to the Protestant cause and actively loyal to it throughout her life. As John Field complimented her in 1583, she was “no young scholler” in the school of Christ (A3r). Her intense devotion, as revealed by her dedicatory epistles and sonnet sequence and as suggested by the letters, was matched by a practical concern to promote the kingdom of Christ through such actions as travelling to Geneva and remaining there despite the death of her daughter, acting as an intermediary for Knox, attempting to raise funds for the reformation of Scotland, and exhorting Knox on the importance of prayer and trust. There is no suggestion either that she disagreed with Knox’s theology, which forbid women to rule in the home, church, or government, or that she allowed this prohibition to curtail her progress in the school of Christ. Nor can Lok’s role easily be dismissed as one restricted to a private, domestic sphere. Her financial help to the “poor merchant” who bore Knox’s letter, and her attempts to raise money for the Scottish reformation, as well as the publication of her books, all point to a more active public role.

It is particularly interesting to note that this strong portrait of Lok emerges from letters written by the protestant male most likely designated a misogynist. It is certainly true that Knox, and presumably Lok, believed firmly in a gendered hierarchical structure. As Elaine Beilin pointed out,

to ask whether sixteenth-century women writers were feminists is to ask an anachronistic question. These writers, in keeping with their era, devoted themselves to regenerating the image of women in the familiar terms of their own culture, not imagining or advocating a different society in which all women might change their ordained feminine nature for equality with men or public power.³⁴

Yet, the evidence of the letters, whose rhetoric is remarkably ungendered, suggests that while hierarchical distinctions were recognized, they were not necessarily seen as coercive. It is doubtful that impermissibility necessarily led to frustration, particularly when, as in the case of Anne Lok, other data suggests that she maintained a strong role within her community and a mutual friendship with one of its key leaders.³⁵ The sentence which troubles Hannay, “great things by reason of my sex, I may not doo, and that which I may, I ought to doo” can also be read with an emphasis on the final active verb, “that which I may,

I ought to doo," as an expression of the active agency which Lok apparently pursued throughout her life.³⁶

Thus, read from within her own community of faith, an expression of "what I may not doo" can be seen as a simple recognition of difference, as part of the dominant modesty topos employed by both male and female writers, or as a graceful introduction to her own continuing effort to support the reformed movement in England. As Beilin points out, "Beyond the dedicatory expressions of humility common to writers of both sexes, Locke does not apologize for her literary efforts. Perhaps a conviction that she was a part of God's Providence overcame any doubts she may have felt as a female author."³⁷ Certainly Lok's correspondence with Knox helps us understand not only her fervent religious commitment, but her prominent, active, and, indeed, unrestricted role within the nonconformist community.

Calvin College

Notes

1. *Sermons of John Calvin, upon the Songe that Ezechias made after he had bene sicke, and afflicted by the hand of God, conteyned in the 38. Chapter of Esay* (STC 4450 London, 1560) includes a dedication to Katherine, Duchess of Suffolk, the translation of four sermons from Isaiah 38, and the sonnet sequence. The sonnets are prefaced by the comment that Lok, or perhaps the printer, added them, "not as parcell of maister Caluines worke, but for that it well agreeth with the same argument, and was deliuered me by my frend with whom I knew I might be so bolde to vse & publishe it as pleased me." Earlier scholars such as Patrick Collinson suggested that the "frend" was John Knox, but Margaret Hannay, based on the congruence of language between the dedication and the sonnets, has argued that the poems were written by Lok; see Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), p. 280, and Margaret P. Hannay, "'Unlock my lipps': the *Miserere mei Deus* of Anne Vaughan Lok and Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke," in Jean R. Brink, ed., *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England* (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1993), p. 21. Other authorships are also possible, however, since the Marian exiles in Geneva included several published poets such as William Kethe and William Whittingham. Nevertheless, at this point it seems appropriate to include the sonnets within Lok's *oeuvre*. Lok's translation of Jean Taffin's *Of the Markes of the Children of God, and of their Comforts in Affliction* (STC 23652 London, 1590) begins with a dedication to the Countess of Warwick, continues with the translation of Taffin's *Des Marques des enfans de Dieu et des consolations en leurs afflictions*, and concludes with a 124 line poem entitled "The necessitie and benefite of affliction." The popularity of this book is attested to by the extant copies which were published in 1590, 1591, 1597, 1599, 1608, 1609, 1615 and 1624.
2. That article, originally published in *Studies in Church History* 2 (1965): 258-72, has subsequently been republished in *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and*

Puritanism, pp. 273-87. Collinson's account and W. C. Richardson's monograph on Stephen Vaughan provide the major secondary sources for Lok's biography as summarized here: see W. C. Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan, Financial Agent of Henry VIII. A Study of Financial Relations with the Low Countries* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Studies, 1953). Brief notices are made of Lok in a number of surveys of sixteenth century women including D. M. Stenton's *The English Woman in History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), p. 136; Kathy Lynn Emerson's *Wives and Daughters: The Women of Sixteenth Century England* (Troy, NY: Whitson, 1984), pp. 230-31, and Elaine Beilin's *Redeeming Eve: Woman Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). Lewis Lupton, who also published a facsimile of the British Museum's copy of *Sermons of John Calvin*, includes information about Lok in his *A History of the Geneva Bible* (London: The Olive Tree, 1972-1977), 2:9-41; 4:19-24. Entries on Lok also appear in *An Encyclopedia of British Women Writers*, ed. Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter (New York: Garland, 1988), p. 297, and in *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

3. W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 15, 20.
4. Quoted in W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p. 21.
5. Quoted in W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p. 22.
6. W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p. 85, note 26.
7. Quoted in W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p. 27.
8. W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p. 34.
9. W. C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p. 85, note 27.
10. Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism*, p. 285.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Roland Greene in *Post-Petrarchism: Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 129, and Michael R. G. Spiller in *The Development of the Sonnet: An Introduction* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 92-93) briefly note Lok's contribution to the sonnet form. Susanne Woods ("The Body Penitent: A 1560 Calvinist Sonnet Sequence," *ANQ*, 5 [1992], 137-140) draws attention to the skilful deployment of poetic devices as well as Lok's "vigorous attention to the body" (p. 138) while Margaret Hannay discusses the similarities between Lok and Mary Sidney Herbert in "'Unlock my lipps'..." Less attention has been paid to the dedicatory epistles, although Hannay includes a brief discussion along with her transcription of the dedication to the Countess of Warwick in "Strengthening the walles of Ierusalem: Anne Vaughan Lok's Dedication to the Countess of Warwick," *ANQ*, 5 (1992), 71-75.
13. Margaret P. Hannay, "'Strengthening the walls of Ierusalme'", p. 72.
14. Margaret P. Hannay, "'Unlock my lipps'", p. 34.
15. Knox biographers, of course, primarily view the letters for what they reveal about the reformer, but, incidently, they also comment on the character of Anne Lok. Edwin Muir, true

to his cranky spirit, demotes Lok to one of Knox's "circle of admiring women" (*John Knox: Portrait of a Calvinist* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1929], p. 48) and the "most maternal of all his women friends" (p. 95). Marjorie Bowen sees her as "emotional, dissatisfied, seeking in religion an outlet for an eager vanity, a love of drama, of excitement": *The Life of John Knox* (London: Watts & Co., 1940), p. 52. Jasper Ridley, however, regards Lok as "a very gifted and enterprising woman" whose 1590 translation of Taffin shows "traces of Knox's spirit" (*John Knox* [New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968], pp. 247-48). From the side of the female correspondents, more attention has been paid to Elizabeth Bowes, Knox's mother-in-law than Lok, although Christine Newman and A. Daniel Frankforter do look briefly at the letters to Lok; see Christine M. Newman, "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes: A Study of a Sixteenth-Century Gentlewoman," in W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, *Women in the Church* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 307-324, and A. Daniel Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes and John Knox: A Woman and Reformation Theology," *Church History*, 56 (1987), 333-347. Collinson summarizes the content of the letters in his biographical essay on Lok but does not consider them in detail.

16. *A notable and Comfortable exposition of M. Iohn Knoxes, upon the Fourth of Matthew, concerning the tentations of Christ: First had in the publique Church, and then afterwards written for the comfort of certain private friends, but now published in print for the benefite of all that feare God* (STC 15068 London, 1583).
17. David Laing suggests that the letters may have been returned to Scotland by one of the reformers, James Carmichael, John Davidson, or James Meville, who spent some time in exile in England during 1584, or by Lok's son, Henry Lok, during one of his visits to the court of James VI (John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing, 6 vols. [Edinburgh: Thomas George Stevenson, 1846-1864], 6:7).
18. Part of the difficulty of Lok scholarship in the past has been identifying the boundaries of her work. Her contemporaries doubtless associated the Anne Lok of the Knox letters, the A.L. of the 1560 translations, the Anne Prouze from whom Fields obtained the Matthew 4 sermon and the A. Prowse who translated *Of the markes* as all being the same person. But, Laing was unsure of the relationship between Lok and Prowse, and as late as 1957, D. M. Stenton could write of Anne Prowse that "nothing seems to be known" about her: cf. D. M. Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), p. 136. Laing does tentatively suggest that Lok and Prowse may be the same person, although he does not strongly press the claim (Knox, *Works*, 4:239-40, footnote 3).
19. Although the letter is undated, Laing assigns it to 1556 (Knox, *Works*, 4:222).
20. Knox probably did not see any conflict in this final bit of advice. At least during this stage of his life, he embraced a triumphalist approach to the ethical life in which he assumed that, despite difficulties, the right would ultimately and inevitably prevail. Thus Knox confidently concludes that "than sall God, I dout not, conduct your futsteppis, and drect your consallis to his glorie: So be it" (*Works*, 4:221).
21. Knox's rhetoric is not without its complications. He creates a psychological receptivity on the part of his listeners by presenting himself as a tortured soul in need of consolation and approval. At the same time, his rhetorical stance and allusions consistently align him with the exalted status of a biblical author. It is not that he explicitly claims divine authority for

his pronouncements — in fact, he frequently distances his own life and words from the authoritative Word of God. But, in fact, the constant biblical echoes and the way in which he places his own ideas, requests and even requirements alongside the biblical injunctions gives them an authority which is heightened, rather than diminished, by his appeal to his reader's own integrity. If they are truly God's children, as he knows them to be, then they will be able to judge God's will appropriately. And that will, he implies, is none other than his own judgement. Nevertheless, despite this high view of his own opinions, Knox persistently shifts the burden of decision making back onto his female correspondents as he expresses his confidence in their own sanctified judgement.

22. Collinson, p. 275; Robert Louis Stevenson, "John Knox and his Relations to Women," *Macmillans Magazine*, September and October 1875, reprinted in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books: The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, III, 1906-1907, p. 269.
23. Collinson, p. 276. Recently A. Daniel Frankforter has challenged the notion of spiritual hypochondria with regard to the Bowes-Knox correspondence, arguing that Bowes pressed Knox both spiritually and intellectually to consider the more difficult aspects of reformed doctrine, particularly the relationship of election and free will ("Elizabeth Bowes and John Knox," 333-347).
24. Robert Louis Stevenson seems to have been the first to suggest that Lok was "the woman he loved best," although he did not imply any sexual impropriety in the relationship ("John Knox and his Relations to Women," p. 280). The effusive sentiment, however, is not confined to Lok or even to his other female correspondents. Knox could also be warmly affectionate towards his male colleagues, as when, for instance, he tells Thomas Upcher that "yf I can not ease any part of your greif...yit I prais my God I can lament and murne with my brother tormentit" (*Works* 4:242).
25. In the Calderwood manuscripts, the transcription at the head of the letter reads, "To Mr. Locke" (*Works* 4:239, footnote 2).
26. As difficult as it is to trace Anne Lok's life, it is even more difficult to learn much about her first husband. The more generous scholars suggest that he was equally committed to the reformation cause, perhaps even journeying with Anne from London but then attending to his business interests elsewhere on the continent (Charles Huttar, "Anne Vaughan Locke," in *An encyclopedia of British Women Writers*, p. 287; Lord Eustace Percy, *John Knox* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937), p. 246. Anne's return to Henry after the Genevan exile and her inscription to him on the flyleaf of her first book, "*Henrici Lock ex dono Annae, uxoris suae, 1559*," indicates that the marriage remained intact despite the separation. Jasper Ridley insists that unlike Elizabeth Bowes, Knox's mother-in-law, who did break with her husband in order to follow her conscience, "Henry Locke was a Protestant, and though he felt unable to leave England himself, he obviously had no objection to the departure of his wife and family" (p. 247). Other scholars assume that Henry Lok was a nominal protestant at best, and that Anne essentially deserted him for her religious commitments (Collinson 280).
27. Knox himself had been forced to leave Frankfurt on March 27, 1555 after a dispute with Richard Cox and others over the *Book of Common Prayer* (Ridley, p. 210).
28. Susan Wabuda in "Shunamites and Nurses of the English Reformation: The activities of Mary Glover, Niece of Hugh Latimer," in *Women in the Church*, ed. W. J. Sheils and Diana

Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) argues the important role of women, often called "nurses," who provided hospitality for reformed preachers.

29. It is possible that a letter written between January 7 and February 7 miscarried, since Knox may be responding in the April 6 letter to Lok's complaint that he has ignored her. That missing letter, containing information about his situation from the time of leaving Geneva to arriving in Diep, would then have been a general letter intended not only for Lok but for her fellow exiles in Geneva. In subsequent letters, as I shall note, general information about Knox's activities is assumed to be common property, to be shared by all those interested in his fate.
30. For instance, the Bishop of St. Andrews who ordered Knox not to preach and threatened his life, is casually dismissed for "that boast did little affray me" and the learned doctors are "als dumbe as their idols" in the presence of the mighty reformer (*Works* 6:25).
31. Laing gives the date as June 25 which Ridley corrects to June 29 (*Works* 6:30; Ridley, p. 350).
32. Goodman did eventually arrive in Scotland in August 1559 (Ridley, *ibid.*).
33. Laing suggests, on the basis of an August 19, 1569 letter to an unknown correspondent in England, that Knox had simply been too depressed to continue his extensive letter writing. In that missive, Knox comments that in the last seven years he has "negligentlie pretermitted all office of humanitie toward you," explaining, but not excusing himself: "For albeit I have beene tossed with manie stormes, all the time before expressed, yit might I have gratified you and others faithfull, with some remembrance of my estate, if that this my churlish nature, for the most part oppressed with melancholie, had not stayed tongue and penne from doing of their duetie" (Knox, *Works*, 6:566).
34. Elaine Beilin. *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, p. xvii.
35. As Hilda Smith argues, modern feminists, that is, "individuals who viewed women as a sociological group whose social and political position linked them together more surely than their physical or psychological natures" and who wanted to change the sexual balance of power did not appear until the second half of the seventeenth century: *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 4.
36. The problem here is the choice of a hermeneutic position. I would suggest that a broader consideration of cultural theory may help to generate a useful critical paradigm. In 1954, linguist Kenneth Pike coined the terms emic and etic to refer to the differences between an insider's view of language (or behaviour) and the external perspective assumed by an analyst. Although etic descriptions may be pragmatically useful particularly during the initial stages of analysis, Pike argued for the goal of emic description, an interior structuring which values idiosyncrasies, "irregularities" and "blurring of borders" without assigning a judgmental etic designation such as inconsistency. As Pike himself noted, "People of one nation (or class of society, etc.) may sometimes appear to one another to be 'illogical' or 'stupid' or 'incomprehensible' simply because the observer is over a long period of time taking an alien standpoint from which to view their activity, instead of seeking to learn the emic patterns of overt and covert behaviour" (*Language in relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*, 2nd. ed. [The Hague: Mouton, 1971], p. 51). Since 1954,

the terms emic and etic have become important in a number of disciplines (see *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate*, edited by Thomas N. Headland, Kenneth L. Pike and Marvin Harris [Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990]). The application to literary theory is, I think, apparent. Without denying the power that our own theoretical paradigms play in the interpretation of texts, we can, nevertheless, understand those paradigms merely as etic constructions. While we may not be able to re-inhabit the emic world of a past time and culture, we can nevertheless try to map its contours with the same descriptive respect that ethno-linguists and anthropologists extend to contemporary oral cultures. Such emic analysis, for instance, can at least describe the dynamic of hierarchal submission and spiritual equality which defined a viable Protestant culture without necessarily forcing those values into a more familiar etic pattern of ideology, subversion, and containment. Recent examinations of the relationship between concepts of gender hierarchy and gender equality in the sixteenth century have, in fact, seen these terms as necessarily opposed and, therefore, as requiring resolution. For instance, as Mary Beth Rose notes, "Although Protestant discourse raises. . . challenges to established hierarchies of gender and power in courtship and marriage, it rarely resolves or even acknowledges them; indeed it is clear that the authors, busily constructing a new ideology of private life, for the most part fail to recognize the potential conflicts they have articulated": "Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (1991), p. 298. I would suggest that another theoretical paradigm might see these concepts as complementary rather than contradictory.

37. Beilin, p. 63.