

Power and Piety:

discretio spirituum in the paratexts of early modern English women translators

By

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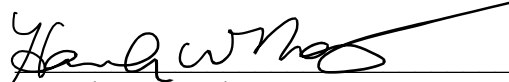
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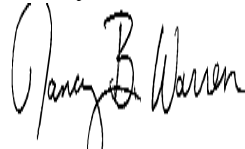
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Abstract

The use of modesty topoi by early modern women writers has frequently been studied, but very rarely have these literary devices been explicated in light of the theological traditions which dictated their use. This study argues that the ways of addressing and appealing to religious-political authorities in the English Reformation remained largely continuous with the pre-Reformation tradition of *discretio spirituum* as a source of spiritual and literary authorization, even as evangelicalism and humanism differentiated the theologies and educations of these women from their visionary predecessors. By looking at the paratexts of Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth I, Anne Locke, and Mary Sidney Herbert, this study examines the continuities of *discretio spirituum* in the work of evangelical translators during the Tudor Reformations. Recognizing *discretio spirituum* as an ongoing source of religious and political legitimation in early modern England complicates the study of female discourse, and allows for a more complete picture of the self-fashioning of women writers across the Reformation.

To Amy, Hannah, and Melody:
three brilliant women, who introduced
me to *these* brilliant women.

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¹ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Open Source Shakespeare, accessed on 26 April, 2020, 3.3.1503. https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=12night&Act=3&Scene=3&Scope=scene

DISCRETIO SPIRITUUM AND EARLY MODERN WOMEN'S WRITING

Introduction

In 1544, the young princess Elizabeth presented an English-language translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Le Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* to her stepmother, Katharine Parr. Prefacing the translation written out in the princess's neat hand is a dedication where Elizabeth tells how she "translated this little book out of French rhyme into English prose, joining the sentences together as well as the capacite of my symple witte, and small lerning coulde extende themselues."² By enacting this modesty topos, Elizabeth joined countless women before her who used the paratexts of their works to speak negatively about their own ability, despite the fact that a translation from French to English at age eleven must have taken no small amount of work or training. Elizabeth uses these common literary tropes for self-fashioning, and therefore must be read in light of the religious and political context in which she attempted to appeal to her stepmother's authority for legitimation, as well as the historical and theological contexts in which these tropes originate.³

The literary device of a modesty topos points towards a much longer tradition of women as thinkers and visionaries who navigated the complex sets of political and religious authorities whose response could range from supportive, to censorious, or worse. The theological tradition of *discretio spiriuum*, or the discernment of spirits, shaped the way that these authorities responded to women writers, and in turn, changed the way that women wrote in order to confirm to these demands for *probatio* or proof. Although *discretio spirituum* is more obvious in the

² Elizabeth, Janel M. Mueller, and Joshua Scodel, *Elizabeth I: Translations, 1544-1589* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 42.

³ For more on the study of Renaissance self-fashioning, see Stephen Greenblatt's monumental work on the subject: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

work of medieval visionaries, this paper argues that early modern English translators also used the tradition of *discretio* to navigate the shifting, complex religio-political system of which they were an influential part. *Discretio spirituum* is arguably so implicit in the tradition of female discourse that the evangelical women examined here automatically gravitate towards working with it, while simultaneously benefiting from the range of opportunities available to them through humanist educations which would not have been available to their medieval counterparts a century before. For evangelical women translators in Tudor England, a result of this changing world was the opportunity to manipulate the tropes of *discretio spirituum*, while encountering less urgency among inquisitional authorities to test for demonic possession than their counterparts in the Catholic Reformation. Thus, the shifting center of authority became more political than spiritual, as *discretio spirituum* was modified for the self-fashioning of women in an increasingly-reformed and religiously-centralized English culture.

As a survey of the literature will soon demonstrate, there is no lack of analysis of the modesty topoi and authorization strategies used by early modern women writers. Frequently, these prefaces and dedications are compared to the topoi used by medieval women to legitimate their work. However, the need remains to examine these modesty topoi as part of a longer *theological* trajectory which points towards a methodological unity in self-authorization across hundreds of years of rampant political and religious change. This thesis hopes to underline the importance of including influential theological traditions from the early church and medieval period in the analysis of early modern literature. The tradition of *discretio spirituum* offers a particularly compelling study because it complicates how we analyze the various authorities at play in the promotion and reception of religious, and even secular literature of all genres during the early modern period.

The paratexts of early modern women translators can be understood as a continuation of the longer theological tradition of *discretio spirituum*, and modesty topoi and other literary devices demonstrate how these women enact the same *probatio* as their medieval visionary counterparts. While *discretio* is certainly not the only possible way to read the literary paratexts of women writers and translators in early modern England, I argue that it adds a particular depth to our reading that allows for historical continuity, even as each woman follows, flaunts, or revises these conventions to further her own religious and political interests. Using Roslynn Voaden's categories of authority, knowledge, and virtue, I analyze the dedications of Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth I, Anne Locke, and Mary Sidney Herbert, each of whom uses *discretio spirituum* to legitimize and promote their translation while negotiating the gendered challenges of self-presentation and rapidly-changing religious pieties and political authorities. Each of these women works out the particular emphasis of her reformed spirituality and political interests within this living tradition, suggesting the value of *discretio spirituum* as a common measure for evaluating each translator's religious and political motives for flattering or admonishing their chosen authority.

Studying Early Modern Women

Scholarship on early modern women remains a relatively new subject, with its inception in the work of feminists in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴ Betty Travitsky, Elaine Beilin, Margaret Hannay, and many others began to unearth the texts of women previously deemed inconsequential to a largely white male canon. In the urge to identify sites of gendered oppression, this resulted in often-literal readings of the self-construction of early modern women in their writings. Patricia Pender writes, in her comprehensive book on *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, that the modesty topos in particular was originally conceived as “undoubtedly more truthful than men's”—itself a gendered assumption about the complex status of women and their writing in early modern England.⁵ This assumption has been challenged by the work of some recent scholars such as Pender, Danielle Clarke, and Kimberly Anne Coles, who suggest, as Pender says, that “there is surprisingly little room in this model for women's engagement or resistance to cultural norms, or adequate recognition that while conduct manuals are pedagogical treatises designed to police certain behaviors, they do not necessarily succeed in this ambition.”⁶ Instead, Clarke argues that “although post-structuralism and its cognate fields of critical theory have forced us to scrutinize the investments of the male literary voice much more closely, it has failed to upend the idea that female-scripted voices are always and unproblematically female.”⁷

⁴ Betsy Crouch, "Finding a Voice in the Academy: The History of Women's Studies in Higher Education," *The Vermont Connection*: Vol. 33 (2012), 17-9.

⁵ Patricia Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

⁶ Pender, *Early Modern*, 6. See also: Kimberly Anne Coles, *Religion, Reform, and Women's Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷ Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke, "Introduction," in *This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*. eds. Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), 6-7.

The current reevaluation of the voices and writing of early modern women has particular resonance in field of translation studies. Jaime Goodrich's *Faithful Translators*, focused on the translations of early modern women, works to further integrate translation studies, gender studies, and humanist education practices. She writes that changes within the field of translation studies, as well as other changes in gender studies, have "necessitated a reassessment of this assumption that faithful [or literal] translators were necessarily passive conduits for the original author's text."⁸ This reassessment continues, as a picture of early modern authorship's complexity begins to emerge, resulting in a widened definition of authorship which can include "editors, compositors... creators of marginalia," and therefore translators.⁹ The work of Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda M. Hosington has notably brought the work of translation studies and early modern print culture into conversation.¹⁰

⁸ Jaime Goodrich, *Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 6.

⁹ Goodrich, *Faithful Translators*, 7.

¹⁰ 'Thresholds' refers to the work of Genette, who refers to paratexts as a 'threshold of interpretation'. Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda Hosington. *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain (1473-1660)* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3.

Early Modern Women's Translation

Translation was not a new practice for women in the early modern period. In medieval England, three women who wrote in Middle English were primarily translators: Juliana Berners, Eleanor Hull, and Margaret Beaufort.¹¹ It seems likely that many other early female translators' names will be hidden behind the anonymity of monastic orders and unattributed manuscripts. So while the printing press opened up new avenues of distribution which differed from standard manuscript circulation, the existence of women as translators was not brought about, or even cheapened, by the printing press. The changing modes of distribution and ever-shifting bounds of authority which characterized the Reformation were arguably, the biggest changes for women translators in the English Renaissance, particularly in the Tudor years. The conflation of new technology and redefined or fluctuating sources of authority resulted in an expansion of authorial opportunity for upper-class women across confessional lines, particularly where they shared the ambitions of Renaissance humanists. And while this state of affairs was also equally an opportunity for male translators to contribute to the religiopolitical conversation, women still "faced an additional burden of conforming to contemporary expectations of feminine virtues, such as chastity, silence, and obedience."¹² This resulted in a significant difference between male and female translators, in that there was an "overwhelming tendency for women's translations to be characterized as private works based in the domestic sphere," regardless of the extent to which certain translations by women had significantly more public currency than equivalent translations by men.¹³ While some of the women examined in this study were in actuality

¹¹ Sherry Simon, "Gender in Translation," in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, Peter France, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26.

¹² Though, of course, as noted earlier, Pender has suggested a potential gap between these conduct manuals and the extent to which they actually governed the work of women writers. Pender, *Early Modern*, 6.

¹³ Goodrich, *Faithful Translators*, 21

contributing to matters of religious and political import, the way they went about promoting their contributions often began from this need to demonstrate a particularly gendered virtue alongside authorial competence.

Translations of the written word were not simply the pious exercise of an educated woman, but rather, an opportunity to demonstrate theological and political prowess. The choice to make a translation, as demonstrated by both evangelical and recusant translators, was a statement of values. These are not necessarily proto-feminist values, but rather, women translators participating in religio-political conversation within humanist masculine values.¹⁴ These translators and translations functioned within a patristic economy where women's political educations helped them become eligible wives for nobility, while promoting particular theological and cultural claims through paratextual self-expression, and the intentional translation and circulation of specific authors within their spheres of influence.

Women translators, then, navigated a complex religious and moral landscape, even as they wrestled with the work of translation itself. Translations are authorial works in their own right, particularly in the way that they, like most other works in the Tudor period, "imitate foreign-language sources", but also do the work of assimilating foreign ideas into national

An example of the way that some translations, though framed as 'private' works, were influential public pieces can be found in Anne Cooke Bacon's translation of John Jewel's *An apologie or answere in defence of the Church of Englande* which is authorized and legitimized by then-Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker, who promotes it over an anonymous English translation published in 1562. His prefatory letter makes it seem as if the manuscript has come into his hands by accident, and he is publishing it on behalf of Cooke, who is too modest to admit to its worth. As Gemma Allen suggests, this is a literary device, and it is extremely unlikely that this was done by chance encounter. See: Gemma Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: Education, Piety, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 62.

¹⁴ As Jamie Goodrich ably demonstrates in her examination of Jane Lumley's translation of Isocrates' orations, some women with this education used it to situate themselves and their work within the domestic sphere of the commonwealth theory. See: Jaime Goodrich, "Returning to Lady Lumley's Schoolroom: Euripides, Isocrates, and the Paradox of Women's Learning." *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance Et Réforme* 35:4 (2012): 97-117.

literature.¹⁵ For women, these translations were a relatively acceptable way to participate in the religious debates, since as Schurink notes, translations by women were perceived as “secondary to ‘original’ works by male writers from which they derived their authority.”¹⁶ As Jane Stevenson writes, this self-expression was “seen as relatively legitimate” despite ongoing anxiety around the appropriateness of women’s writing at all.¹⁷ Schurink and Stevenson’s assessments are probably at least partially accurate, given the often-cited outcry of Edward Denny, whose “advice to [Mary] Wroth was to repent of writing ‘lascivious tales and amorous toys,’ and employ her literary talents imitating her ‘virtuous and learned aunt,’ Mary Sidney Herbert Countess of Pembroke.”¹⁸ However, the extent to which we see religious translations as relatively ‘acceptable’ should be held alongside the tension that women writers had to navigate: a thin line between ‘virtuous’ piety and religious innovation. While women could co-opt the authority of the mostly male writers they were translating, the authority upon which these translations rested was always tenuous, at best, or at the least, required much more ongoing negotiation of that authority than a male writer’s translation. It has been argued that translations should be examined based on the question of “who was trusting (or distrusting) whom and why”,

¹⁵ Fred Schurink, in his introduction to the volume *Tudor Translation* argues that translations “should be studied not as mere sources that make text from different cultural traditions available for assimilation into a national literature, but as ‘original’ works to stand beside other forms of writing that imitate foreign-language sources-which in the context of the Tudor period means most literature” *Tudor Translation*, ed. Fred Schurink, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

“Recent scholarship has highlighted the importance of understanding terms such as ‘authorship’ and ‘reader’ in relation to a medieval context, especially also when considering questions of gender. Diane Watt notes that we need ‘more enabling and elastic definitions of authorship’ when we speak of medieval textual production, in order to be able to consider the large number of ‘pseudonymous, anonymous and collaborative texts’, as well as ‘translations and compilations’, and to take into account questions of patronage, circulation and audience.”

Anke Bernau, “Medieval Antifeminism,” in *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500*, Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt, eds. Vol. 1 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 81.

¹⁶ Schurink, *Tudor Translation*, 12.

¹⁷ Jane Stevenson, “Women Translators from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century,” in *Translation – Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader*, eds. Daniel Weissbort and Astradur Eysteinnsson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 130.

¹⁸ Melody Knowles. “Politics in a Paraphrase: The Treatment of Ps. 132 by Mary Sidney Herbert” (Unpublished manuscript: 2019), 38.

since “[c]ontext, local purpose, and a set of cultural beliefs or principles...inform what a ‘good’ translation is for a specific culture, society, and intended purpose.”¹⁹ Upper-class English men in the early modern period might have to consider the ideological implications of their translation (e.g., whether the source work promoted evangelical or catholic views) and make publication decisions accordingly, based on the popular sentiment toward that ideology and the extent to which their publications would endanger or empower their social networks. However, while women would also need to consider these implications of their translation, they also had to confront the suspicion associated with women writers: a suspicion which suggests that women needed to assume that their translation began from a place of distrust rather than trust, between the translator and reading audience. Translation work was risky, and was caught up in particular moral expectations of the translator’s behavior, particularly if that translator was a woman. The self-fashioning of women translators must be read, consequentially, as performing to these expectations. Therefore, it is dangerous to read elements of this performance, like the modesty topos, too literally.

The paratexts of women’s translations have long been important to the study of women’s writing, though the content of these paratexts has been construed in a variety of different ways. As Kimberly Anne Coles writes, “critical convention has it that women... occupied a marginal position in key developments concerning modern religious, political, and poetic reform,” but as examined earlier, this tradition of scholarship is only just beginning to move towards a more complex picture of the part that women played in the religio-political changes of the English Reformation.²⁰ For a small group of women who had the education to do so, some “early modern

¹⁹ Rizzi, Lang, et al, *What is Translation History? A Trust-Based Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 11-12.

²⁰ Coles, *Religion, Reform, and Women’s Writing*, 7.

women writers were far more fundamental to the development of Protestant consciousness, and later artistic identity” than women’s studies scholarship has previously taken into account, and the paratexts associated with these writings which are “subject to a series of conditions and regulations which we do not always recognize.”²¹ Much scholarship since the early 2000s has focused on defining and understanding these conditions and regulations, which require multilayered and interdisciplinary analysis to unearth. The complexity of oppressions and oppressors, power and disempowerment which can be read in the front matter of women’s translations proves the point Helen Smith and Louise Wilson make when they suggest that “the Renaissance paratext is an ever-expanding labyrinth, as likely to lead to a frustrating dead-end as to a carefully built pathway, or to deposit the reader back outside the building rather than guide him or her into the text.”²² And while the paratexts of translations “operate in multiple directions,” I suggest it is possible to read these multilayered texts as fitting comfortably within the expansive tradition of *discretio spirituum* as it affected the cultural and religious consciousness of readers throughout the Reformation.²³ The literary topoi used by women translators to enact a performance of their own virtue are simultaneously a cross-confessional continuation of *discretio spirituum* in early modern England.

²¹ Coles, *Religion, Reform, and Women’s Writing*, 7.
Clarke, *This Double Voice*, 6-7.

²² Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7.

²³ Smith and Wilson, *Renaissance Paratexts*, 7.

Discretio Spirituum and Women Writers

Although the material culture of literary circulation changed in the Renaissance with the advent of the printing press, prefaces and other paratextual materials were used often by women in the medieval tradition. Significantly, these paratexts are one of the major ways through which authors, and especially translators, were able to self-fashion by saying something about why they wrote or translated the work. The most well-known of these prefatory examples come from the medieval mystical tradition, to which womens' writing during this period has long been both attributed and reduced. Of course, only some of these texts are specifically theological, or deal with religious visions to the extent that Julian of Norwich and others do, but of these, many include some statement or qualifier about the authorship itself.²⁴ Whether they see themselves as having an authorial role, or simply acting as conduits for God, the women translators we examine from the early modern period use their paratexts to participate in a long history of women defending their writing to a potentially skeptical public.

The medieval tradition continued by early modern writers was multi-dimensional, and the content of earlier prefatory material depended upon both social and geographic location. Although there are some notable examples of women claiming intellectual authority, the authorization of visionaries was most often accompanied by bodily proof in the power of the vision. Hildegard of Bingen writes in *Scivias* that:

...although I heard and saw these things, because of doubt and low opinion of myself and because of diverse sayings of men, I refused for a long time a call to write, not out of

²⁴ Julian of Norwich, for instance, begins her text noting that she is "unlettered", and provides several short prefatory statements, saying that "I pray you all for God's sake, and counsel you for your own profit, that ye leave the beholding of a poor creature that it was shewed to, and mightily, wisely, and meekly behold God that of His courteous love and endless goodness would shew it generally, in comfort of us all.... But the spiritual sight I cannot nor may not shew it as openly nor as fully as I would. But I trust in our Lord God Almighty that He shall of His goodness, and for your love, make you to take it more spiritually and more sweetly than I can or may tell it." Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Grace Warrick (London: Methuen, 1958), 4, 19, 21.

stubbornness but out of humility, until weighed down by a scourge of God, I fell onto a bed of sickness.²⁵

This demure statement hides Hildegard's brilliant negotiation of "the shark-infested waters of imperial-papal politics" and the ambiguity of her prophecies, which ensured their longevity and lack of official censorship.²⁶ Hildegard, unlike a number of her fellow female visionaries, never faced official censorship. Her introduction to *Scivias* suggests, at the least, that she knew her audience, but other writers were not so careful. Few are as bold as Mechthild of Magdeburg, who introduces *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* by writing that:

This book I hereby send as a messenger to all religious people, both the bad and the good; for if the pillars fall, the building cannot remain standing; and it signifies me alone and proclaims in praiseworthy fashion my intimacy. All who wish to understand this book should read it nine times.²⁷

Each of these statements, despite the different devices used to legitimate their work, demonstrates the extent to which women writers have needed to defend their work to circumvent a skeptical or hostile public. What was censored or accepted by authorities seems to have varied based on the religio-political context during which the work was written.²⁸

This suspicion of medieval women and their writing, or negation of it, was dependent on a variety of factors. As James Coakley demonstrates, the relationship between women mystics and their confessors was largely collaborative until the late Middle Ages.²⁹ The suspicion of

²⁵ Hildegard, *Scivias*, trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 60.

²⁶ Kathryn Kerby-Fulton writes in *Books Under Suspicion* that Hildegard's ambiguity meant that she could never explicitly be tied to radical activism of specific political movements (this is true of even her condemnation of mendicants, written before the emergence of mendicant orders) (204). In England, she demonstrates that Wycliffian condemnation of Hildegard was not specifically of the latter's works, but rather of the Hildegardiana imitation "Insurgent gentes", probably authored in thirteenth century Paris.

Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 190.

²⁷ Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. Frank J Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 39.

²⁸ Kerby-Fulton makes a convincing case for the unique circumstances surrounding suspicion of Margery Kempe, in light of York Minister's attempts to control the "political canonization" of the executed Richard Scrope. Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 245-6.

²⁹ John Wayland Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

women's claims to epistemology about the divine only universalized as the inquisition began to gain traction. This suspicion of women, particularly around accusations of witchcraft, set in at "about 1400, when increased clerical nervousness about the charismatic powers of such women was making their male collaborators more cautious about what they wrote."³⁰ This limited acceptance of women's spiritual revelation, however, is predicated on the material bias inherent in their manuscript production: the authorizing pen of a male confessor was ultimately less risky than the pen of the educated woman herself. In some cases, the lack of a male confessor's mediation proved detrimental or fatal to women who chose to "write" their own work, since the authorization of of male confessor was one of the hallmarks of the *discretio spirituum* tradition.³¹ This tradition, dating from the patristic period, would have been widely disseminated, particularly as the inquisition gathered momentum leading up to the early modern period.³²

It was Rosalynn Voaden's landmark work *God's Words, Women's Voices*, that first brought to critical scholarly attention the work of Jean Gerson, a 14th century French theologian who laid out *probatio* of *discretio spirituum* in reaction to Bridget of Sweden's canonization, which suggested that more rigorous verification of visionary claims was needed.³³ In *De probatione spirituum*, Gerson proposed the questions *tu, quis, quid, quare, cui, qualiter, unde, require* as a way to verify the claims of mystics:

³⁰ Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*, 3.

³¹ Here, I do not mean the literal act of writing, particularly given issues around literacy. Instead, I mean those women, like Margery Kempe, whose writing voice is their own, and is not mediated by a confessor or director figure.

³² Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete each faced varying levels of censure (or in the last case, death), even before Coakley's date of 1400. Each wrote their works themselves—Hildegard in Latin, and Mechthild and Marguerite in the vernacular—and this censure seems to particularly center around the authority each woman claimed by refusing to be mediated by a male confessor figure (the voice of "I" rather than a third person narrator).

³³ Interestingly, although Gerson's formulation of *discretio spirituum* was written in reaction to Bridget, he is notable for later using *discretio* to defend Joan of Arc. See Daniel Hobbins, "Jean Gerson's Authentic Tract on Joan of Arc: Super facto puellae et credulitate sibi praestanda (14 May 1429)," *Mediaeval Studies* 67 (2005), 99-155; Sean Field, "A New English Translation of Jean Gerson's Authentic Tract On Joan Of Arc: About The Feat Of The Maid, and the Faith That Should Be Placed In Her," *Magistra*, 18.2 (Winter 2012), 36-54.

Who is it to whom the revelation is made? *What* does the revelation itself mean, and to what does it refer? *Why* is it said to have taken place? *To whom* was it manifested for advice? *What kind* of life does the visionary lead? *Whence* does the revelation originate?³⁴

Gerson elaborates on this further in an earlier treatise, written in 1402. In *De Distinctione*

Verarum Visionum a Falsis, he says that:

The result of all that we have here said is that the coin of divine revelation is to be examined. It must be seen whether it has the weight of humility without the vanity of curiosity and pride; if it contains the flexibility of discretion without superstitious stubbornness and lack of receptivity to advice; if it manifests the durability of patience in advertistly, without any complaint or false imitation; if it shows the form of truth without mendacity or any undue attachment; if it has the bright and sincere color of divine love without contamination or filth of carnality.³⁵

Voaden notes that *discretio spirituum* should, for Gerson, result in a reliance by female visionaries on their male spiritual directors—in line with Coakley’s argument about the authorizing role of male spiritual directors. While Gerson is often characterized by modern scholars as a censor of female visionaries, it is important to note his varied, and extremely nationalist support of some women compared to others. And as Moshe Sluhovsky demonstrates, while Gerson certainly was an authority on the subject during his time, *discretio* was not a concept unique to the medieval period, nor was his work read in isolation by the church.³⁶

Most famously, both Augustine and Cassian wrote on the discernment of spirits in the fifth century. Cassian writes of different kinds of knowledge—theoretical and practical—where “the theoretical can never be seized without the practical.” In the words of Abba Nesteros:

³⁴ Jean Gerson, *Oeuvres* IX, 180, trans. Paschal Boland, “The Concept of *Discretio Spirituum* in John Gerson’s ‘De Probatione Spirituum’ and ‘De Distinctione Verarum Visionum a Falsis.’”, Dissertation (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), 30.

³⁵ Jean Gerson, *Early Works*, trans. Brian Patrick McGuire (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 363.

³⁶ Wendy Love Anderson writes against an overly simplistic portrayal of Gerson as anti-women—his insistence upon the role of *discretio* was applied both positively and negatively to female visionaries throughout his writings. “Gerson’s Stance on Women,” in *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. Brian McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

...certain steps have been arranged... in such a way that human lowliness can mount to the sublime... If these follow one another according to the method that we have mentioned, a person can attain to a height to which he cannot fly if the first step has not been taken.³⁷

Thus, spiritual knowledge requires certain practical steps to prove its validity. Augustine, in *De Genesi ad litteram*, cites the distinguishing of spirits [from Paul] as a necessary gift. Like Cassian, he sees different kinds of vision as better able to discern “immediately whether [the spirit] is evil.”³⁸ Anthony Ossa-Richardson, in discussing the use of *discretio* during the Catholic Reformation and Enlightenment, points out that significant seventeenth century clerics like Giovanni Bona knew and recycled “precepts of discernment found in... John Cassian and St. Anthony, St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor, Denys the Carthusian, Henry of Langenstein, and Henry of Freimar.”³⁹ Alfonso of Jaén, a contemporary of Jean Gerson, wrote *Epistola solitarii ad reges* and cited theologians ranging from Chrysostom to Aquinas and Nicholas of Lyra when arguing by which signs divine revelation should be examined.⁴⁰ *Discretio* would have, therefore, been widely known across the medieval west, both through pervasive patristic influence, and the writings of many contemporary scholars and clerics.

Discretio spirituum was also widely disseminated to the general populace through sermons, cautionary tales, and advice manuals which encouraged care with outward devotion, lest the practitioner be lured into demonic hypocrisy.⁴¹ Voaden cites examples of this occurring in works like the anonymous *The Cloud of Unknowing*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and *A Tretis of Discrecyon*

³⁷ Cassian, *Conferences* XIV.II, ed. Boniface Ramsey (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 505.

³⁸ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* XII.13-14, trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 196.

³⁹ Anthony Ossa-Richardson, “Voet and *Discretio Spirituum* after Descartes,” in *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Clare Copeland and Jan Machielsen (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 242.

⁴⁰ Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 1999), 50.

⁴¹ Voaden, *God's Words*, 64. The much-cited reaction to Margery Kempe is an excellent example of the suspicion inculcated in a people who would have been used to hearing or preaching *discretio spirituum*.

of *Spirites*, as well as in Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*.⁴² Perhaps, then, what is so notable about Jean Gerson's recycling of *discretio spirituum*, is not necessarily his use of the concept in particular, but rather his insistence upon its application to female visionaries, and the extent to which his sentiments would be institutionalized and heightened as Rome responded to religious conflicts in late medieval Europe.⁴³

Given this history of suspicion, it is no wonder that women who wrote so often named their intention (and supposed reluctance) in writing their visions by using literary techniques like the modesty topos. By claiming the authorizing nature of God's vision or male authority at the expense of their own, female visionaries could claim "the weight of humility without the vanity of curiosity and pride" as formulated by Gerson.⁴⁴ Kathryn Kerby-Fulton makes the case that growing political censorship around popular religious groups "drove major writers of the period to widespread use of visionary genres."⁴⁵ The interpretation of these genres through *discretio spirituum* meant that a spiritual director, or the visionary herself, had a unique chance to claim authority for "novel" or even "unorthodox thoughts," if the authority, knowledge, and virtue of the claimant could be adequately defended.⁴⁶

⁴² Voaden, *God's Words*, 65.

⁴³ For more on medieval women and the inquisition, see: Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴⁴ Gerson, *Early Works*, 363.

⁴⁵ Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 395.

⁴⁶ Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 395.

Discretio after the Medieval Period and Issues of Contemporary Scholarship

In light of the importance of these medieval traditions of legitimizing women's visionary writing, it is not surprising that later writers would make use of the same set of *probatio* criteria to claim authority for potentially-subversive thought. However, the continuing effects of *discretio spirituum* in early modern women's writing have not yet been substantially explored by contemporary theological and historical scholarship.

The most thorough discussion of *discretio*'s continuing effects in the early modern period can be found in the work of Moshe Sluhovsky.⁴⁷ Although specifically focused on spiritual and demonic possession, in reality, Sluhovsky's text is intimately related to the aforementioned medieval conception of *discretio* as located in Gerson's thought. The complicated nature of discernment is encapsulated in this dichotomy, that *discretio* can be the "charismatic gift" as well as the "sense of moderation [which] was a required normative behavior."⁴⁸ An examination of women's writing as modeled by Voaden seeks to understand how women like Margery Kempe explicitly modeled the kind of behavior—this "sense of moderation"—which would verify their visionary claims rather than call them into suspicion.

Gerson's *probationes*, as focused as they are upon the visionary herself, maintains the equanimity that Sluhovsky argues is characteristic of high medieval *discretio spirituum*. Not only does Gerson ask about the character of the visionary herself, but he also includes three (even arguably four) questions about the content of the vision itself in *De probatione spirituum*. In asking "*What* does the revelation itself mean, and to what does it refer? *Why* is it said to have taken place?... [and even] *Whence* does the revelation originate?," Gerson is asking about content

⁴⁷ Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, 172.

specific to the vision itself. Sluhovsky argues that his approach, in essence, results in logical indecision about the possibility of proving the vision. However, Gerson's assessment also gives visionaries the benefit of the doubt based on a combined scrutiny of character and content, which later Catholic reformers moved away from as the Inquisition became more prosecutorial.

Sluhovsky's examination of *discretio* manuals of sixteenth and seventeenth century continental Catholicism argues that reaction against visionaries—specifically women—in the Catholic Reformation moved away from an analysis of both behavior and content, to a judgment of woman's personality as the sole basis of *probatio*. It was not until the Fifth Lateran Council in 1516 that the Catholic Church “ordered bishops to investigate all claims of prophetic knowledge and mandated that before any prophecy or alleged vision were to be made public or preached, it should be approved.”⁴⁹ Just a year before Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, this decree, and fears of heretical sects, would begin to reshape the use of *discretio* by Catholics into the early modern period.

As the Protestantism spread in the sixteenth century, *discretio* was also reshaped as a reaction to reformers and Catholics alike. Clare Copeland and Jan Machielsen write that although Protestants rejected the cult of saints, they “had martyrs, heroes, and even visionaries of their own whose actions were worthy of study, recollection, and second-hand discernment,” particularly given the reluctance with which lay Protestants gave up the doctrine of miracles.⁵⁰ The outward signs of possession or vision had changed in many places to include the ‘superstitious’ ritual practices of Catholic piety and even the claims of Reformist extremists, but the practice of *discretio spirituum* survived and was adapted to these new contexts, since

⁴⁹ Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, 180.

⁵⁰ *Angels of Light*, 7. For more on miracles in the early modern period in England, see: Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

“[d]iscernment, as a personal pursuit and as a collective one, was inexorably linked to the identification of sanctity, both ‘real’ and ‘false’.”⁵¹

The effect of these changes on the work of women trying to enact the ever-changing *probatio* is far less documented. Rosalynn Voaden’s work, referenced earlier, models this approach when examining Margery Kempe and Bridget of Sweden in the medieval period. She uses three categories of discourse centered on authority, knowledge, and behaviour, which are intimately related to the categories of assessment suggested by Gerson and in the other conduct manuals examined by Sluhovsky. However, these categories attempt to assess the particular ways which female visionaries seek to fulfill the *probatio* of figures like Gerson.⁵² It is easy to see the ways in which people like Margery Kempe worked to fit into the bounds of *discretio* (for which she was and is the object of much scorn). And although Margery is a particularly obvious example of enacting various literary topoi to fulfill *probatio*, the works of other female medieval visionaries have long been studied by scholars across disciplines seeking to understand female writers, theologians, and the lives of women in these periods.

Medieval visionaries worked assiduously to avoid censure, or worse, and their early modern counterparts were no less interested in navigating the complex authorities governing their self-expression⁵³ However, even in Sluhovsky’s excellent study of the conduct manuals of

⁵¹ *Angels of Light*, 15.

⁵² “Authority is concerned with authenticating the vision by appealing to a celestial or ecclesiastical interpretation, and by locating the visionary within an ecclesiastically endorsed tradition. The category of Knowledge examines the ways in which the visionary demonstrates her knowledge of the doctrine of *discretio spirituum*. Behaviour covers the manner in which the visionary’s behaviour confirms to the principles of *discretio spirituum*.”

Voaden, *God’s Words*, 80-1.

⁵³ There is a great deal of work around the efforts of medieval visionaries efforts to avoid censure or worse by church authorities. This is not to say that early modern women have not been studied: any keyword search will reveal the sheer amount of material available on English early modern women’s writing, or on early modern visionaries and censorship by both catholic and reformed authorities across Europe. See: David Loewenstein, *Treacherous Faith: The Specter of Heresy in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jonathan Dean, *To Gain at Harvest: Portraits from the English Reformation* (London: SCM Press, 2018); Genelle Gertz, *Heresy Trials and English Women Writers, 1400-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge

discretio in early modernity, the tradition of *discretio spirituum* and the efforts of women to fulfill *probatio* have largely been confined to geographic areas impacted by the inquisition in the Catholic Reformation. Yet any study of the Reformation will reveal the concerted efforts of both Catholic and reformed authorities to protect the theological sanctity of their movements from outside interference, thus by necessity resulting in the discernment of spirits. And while examinations of the records of heresy trials and martyrologies are far from lacking in the English Reformation, no study has yet taken the precepts of *discretio spirituum* as present in the medieval period and applied them more broadly to the examination of women's writing in Tudor England.⁵⁴

There are some important interdisciplinary works that begin this conversation.⁵⁵ Nancy Bradley Warren's *The Embodied Word* points towards some of the continuities of the medieval *discretio* tradition when examining use of bodies and bodily language in both medieval and early modern women's spiritual writing. After all, this incarnational epistemology would have been the only theological domain open to women after the stratification of theology in the medieval period. Warren's study finds that "in both medieval and early modern women's religious writings from diverse confessional origins, individuals and communities, bodies both personal and corporate as well as both past and present, matter together."⁵⁶ However, Warren does not explicitly examine the *discretio spirituum* tradition, although her examination of incarnational

University Press, 2012); Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

⁵⁴ An excellent work on female evangelical martyrs is Megan Hickerson, *Making Women Martyrs in Tudor England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁵⁵ Others have already been cited, including: Pender's *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*; Coles' *Religion, Reform, and Women's Writing in Early Modern England*; Clarke's edited collection 'This Double Voice': *Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*;

⁵⁶ Nancy Bradley Warren, *The Embodied Word: Female Spiritualities, Contested Orthodoxies, and English Religious Cultures, 1350-1700* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 11.

piety, incarnational epistemology, incarnational textuality, and incarnational politics can also be read as the efforts of various individuals and communities to provide *probatio*.⁵⁷ While this bodily, or *incarnational*, focus on women's spiritual writing is one way to track *discretio spirituum* across periods, other genres of writing offer opportunities to track the emergence of *discretio* in more subtle ways. This analysis chooses to focus on religious translation as one of the many possible genres through which *discretio spirituum* re-emerged in light of early modern print practices, and the growing use of paratexts in a patronage system.

By focusing on the paratexts of religious translations, it is important to note the particular ways that women translators used *discretio spirituum* differ from texts which emphasized the writer's bodily experience as the epistemological framework of their writing. Humanist attitudes toward the education of women, particularly in some major English Protestant families, as well as the popularity of a patronage system, show a shift in context where some women writers no longer had to rely upon bodily knowledge of God to claim authority when speaking of God. Women translators could not simply rely on claims of embodiment alone, given the intellectual nature of translation. Translations in a humanist tradition carry their own claims to authority through the knowledge the translator has of the language; unlike the tradition around embodiment, the translator must be endowed with some particular wisdom and education, even if it is just skill in translating from Latin to English. Claims of negative capability were less effective for women translators, a literary shift which is visible in each of the paratexts this study examines.

The following analyses of paratextual dedications written by Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth I, Anne Locke, and Mary Sidney Herbert each support my central argument: that the

⁵⁷ Warren, *The Embodied Word*, 7.

same precepts of *discretio spirituum* which were followed, flaunted, and subverted by their visionary counterparts in the medieval period influenced the dedications of female translators in early modern England. As an earlier comparison of Hildegard and Mechthild demonstrates, there were a variety of ways that women claimed authority for their work in the medieval period, and this is no less true in early modern England. While the broad categories used by Rosalynn Voaden to examine the presence of these *probatio* (or rules enforced by *discretio*) are uniquely present in each dedication, a close analysis shows that their application was inherently flexible depending on the translator's particular religious context and political goals.

TRANSLATED PIETY: COOKE, ELIZABETH, LOCKE, AND SIDNEY

Anne Bacon Cooke and *Fouretene Sermons*

Although modified as a consequence of both humanism and new systems of religious and cultural patronage, the trademarks of *discretio spirituum* are very much present in the paratext of Cooke's translation *Fouretene Sermons*. In 1548, Anne Cooke Bacon translated *Fouretene Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne* into English from Italian. At just twenty years old, she was the product of the humanist learning espoused by her parents, who educated her and four sisters. Her father was tutor to Edward VI, and given her mother's strongly-worded admonition against learning Italian quoted in Anne's dedication in *Fouretene Sermons*, it is clear that her family were ardent supporters of evangelical Protestantism. Married to Nicholas Bacon, Elizabeth I's Keeper of the Great Seal and friend to Matthew Parker, and mother to famous Renaissance man Francis Bacon, Anne Cooke Bacon's skill as a translator was well-known to her contemporaries.⁵⁸

Although Anne is also famous for her translation of Bishop John Jewel's *Apologia ecclesiae anglicanae*, which some argue is a more sophisticated translation than *Fouretene Sermons*, the latter is the only printed translation with a dedication written and signed by the

⁵⁸ She has also been lauded by later historians, such as C.S. Lewis, for her excellence in translation. He writes that "Anne Lady Bacon deserves more praise than I have space to give her... Again and again she finds the phrase which, once she has found it, we feel to be inevitable.. If quality without bulk were enough, Lady Bacon might be put forward as the best of all sixteenth-century translators." C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 307.

translator herself.⁵⁹ There are only a few editions which actually contain this preface.⁶⁰ These are the 1551 edition, which contains Cooke's dedication to her mother, and the 1570 edition, which is a reprint of the 1551, according to STC. The first publication of Anne's translations in 1548 (2 eds) did not identify Anne as a translator.⁶¹ It was only in the second 1551 edition that *Fourtene Sermons* was published under Cooke's name, including not only the new sermon translations, but also the dedication and preface. The later 1570 edition, with twenty-five sermons, only named Cooke as the translator, omitting R. Argentyne entirely, even though some of the sermons in this reprint include his translations.

Valerie Wayne refuses to speculate on the reason for the initial occlusion of "the name of Anne Cooke in favor of R. Argentyne's and.. [the eventual occlusion of] his name in favor of hers."⁶² Gemma Allen, however, in her meticulous work on the Cooke sisters, suggests, that "Anne's authorship was stressed in the second 1551 edition to highlight support for Ochino within influential circles at the Edwardian court."⁶³ This is particularly plausible, given that the fourteen sermons published in 1551's second edition were Ochino's later work, and were "a more explicit engagement with the Calvinist theology of predestination."⁶⁴ The later occlusion of Argentyne's name pointed out by Wayne is likely a result of the evangelical reaction to Foxe's

⁵⁹ Gemma Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: Education, Piety and Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 64-5. Allen mistakenly argues that the preface to *Certain Sermons of the ryghe famous and excellent Clerk* (STC 18766)—published in 1551 as well—is the authorship of Cooke (62). However, the preface is actually a reprint of the preface from Argentyne's *Sermons of the right famous and excellent clerke master B. Ochino* in 1548, with several sentences added at the conclusion which are more likely to be an addition from the publisher than from Cooke herself.

⁶⁰ This paratextual element in the author's own voice is what this project is most interested in, although an analysis of Archbishop Matthew Parker's dedication would prove an interesting study of the use of the modesty topos on behalf of Cooke.

⁶¹ One 1548 edition named R. Argentyne instead, who translated six of the eleven sermons, but received attribution for all eleven. One 1551 edition included fourteen new sermon translations in addition to the previous eleven, but did not name a translator.

⁶² Anne Cooke Bacon, Valerie Wayne, Bernardino Ochino, and John Jewel, *Anne Cooke Bacon*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), x.

⁶³ Allen, *Cooke Sisters*, 59.

⁶⁴ Allen, *Cooke Sisters*, 59.

Acts and Monuments, which details Argentyne's persecution of Protestants under Mary I, and his return to evangelicalism when the political tides turned.⁶⁵ Although Foxe's account is certainly embellished, it does suggest that Argentyne was less principled under the threat of persecution, and thus lost favor with evangelicals upon the circulation of Foxe's works. Cooke, who later sheltered nonconformists under threat during Elizabeth I's reign, would certainly have been seen as a more virtuous evangelical role-model by the 1570 edition's publication.

Anne Cooke's Protestantism, as exemplified in *Fouretene Sermons*, is representative of both the humanism which gave her an education and the continental Calvinist writings making landfall in England during Edward VI's reign. Even Edward's famous treatise (mostly against) papal supremacy, begun in the same year *Fouretene Sermons* was published, is demonstrably indebted to Ponet's translation of Ochino's *A dialoge of the uniust usurped primacie of the Bishop of Rome*.⁶⁶ Indeed, Ochino's Calvinism made a significant impact in England during Edward's reign.⁶⁷ Not only was Ochino given refuge during his exile, but he also received a prebendary at Canterbury, and was admired by many in the English aristocracy.⁶⁸ The circulation of his work among the Cooke-Bacon circles is evidence of his influence on Edward's court: Anthony Cooke, Anne's father, tutored Edward, and thus Edward's use of Ochino in his treatise is not coincidental.⁶⁹ Ochino's influence is visible in Cooke's dedication in 1551, when she

⁶⁵ After detailing his involvement in the persecution of Agnes Wardall, the next section describes "The doings of Argentine. In King Edward's time a Protestant. In queen Mary's time a foul papist and a persecutor". He, according to Foxe, "toward the end of queen Mary, he came to London, and in this queen's time began to show himself again a perfect Protestant." John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. Stephen Cattley, Vol. 8 (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1839), 219-22.

⁶⁶ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant* (London: Penguin Press, 1999), 27.

⁶⁷ After his exile, he recounts in a letter to Girolamo Muzio that immediately after taking on the habit of the Capuchins, he realized three truths: that "Christ has offered retribution for his elect and he is our only justification; religious vows are not only vain, but downright impious; the Roman Church is an abomination in the eyes of God." Bernardino Ochino, *Seven Dialogues*, Trans. Rita Belladonna (Toronto: Dovehouse Editions, 1988), xv.

⁶⁸ Ochino, *Seven Dialogues*, xix.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth I is also known to have translated one of Ochino's sermons at around the same time Cooke's translation was (first anonymously) published.

affirms her mother's belief that God "doth fore se and determyne from wythout begynnyng, al thynges, and cannot alter or rewarde after our desurued workes, but remayne stedfaste, accordyng to hys immutable wyll."⁷⁰ This doctrine of predestination, so strongly upheld by Ochino, is woven into the work of Anne Cooke.

Predestination was not the only idea of Ochino's which likely influenced Cooke. Belladonna writes that Ochino thrived in the "ecumenical atmosphere" at Edward VI's court: an atmosphere fostered by the latter's attempts to gather representatives of global Protestantism in order to organize "the Protestant equivalent of the Council of Trent."⁷¹ Later accounts of Ochino's wanderings after his removal from England upon Mary I's accession to the throne suggest that this ecumenical Protestantism was so essential to his ecclesiology that he could not cooperate with centralized attempts to remove extremist reformed sects from supposedly Protestant cities on the continent. This same ecumenical bent is true of Anne Cooke's Protestantism as well: she is renowned for her assistance to puritan adherents under persecution during the latter years of Elizabeth I's reign, and may have been responsible for funding Field's *A Parte of a Register*, the puritan equivalent of Fox's *Actes and Monuments*.⁷² It seems likely that this ecumenical worldview, fostered in Edward VI's reign and Ochino's writings, was part of the Protestant utopia that Cooke hoped for and worked towards during her lifetime.

In a short reign which was notably iconoclastic and consistent in its support of evangelical theology, it must have seemed that the work of Cooke and others in translating continental Calvinism for an English audience was finally bearing fruit. What is captured in

⁷⁰ Cooke, *Fourtene Sermons*, A4v. In: Anne Cooke Bacon, Valerie Wayne, Bernardino Ochino, and John Jewel, *Anne Cooke Bacon*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

⁷¹ Ochino, *Seven Dialogues*, xix.

⁷² Anne Cooke Bacon, *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon*, ed. Gemma Allen (London: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society, 2014), 27.

Cooke's writings and advocacy is a civic and religious ideal which would never fully come to fruition, thanks to Edward's early death, but seemed possible, if not probable, during the timespan of Edward's reign. When Lynne Magnusson writes that Cooke "might be regarded as an exemplary member of a church never fully erected, an exemplary citizen of a state that never came fully into being," she speaks of a reformer whose vocation was located in her religious belief in election and an ecumenical Protestantism, and had all the tools of a humanist education to enact this reform as much as the limitations of gender and the ever-shifting monarchical position would allow.⁷³ This commitment to a theology of predestination "'in some measure counteracted the silencing import' of Anne Cooke['s]... identity as a woman."⁷⁴ Combined with an optimism around human potential and intellect supported by the humanism of Thomas More and Erasmus, Cooke's evangelicalism represents the hopes of Reformed thinkers in the years following Henry VIII's death, and is more at home in the evangelicalism of Edward VI, rather than in the calcifying of the Church of England's moderate Protestantism that is true of Elizabeth I's reign.⁷⁵

By enacting the predestination theology of Ochino and Calvin in her dedication of *Fourtene Sermons*, Anne Cooke both appeals to the authority of these theologians, all the while serving an essential role in shaping the conversation around theology at court through the use of her name on the 1551 edition. While her dedication may seem innocuous, and even insular in its

⁷³ Lynne Magnusson, "Imagining a National Church: Election and Education in the Works of Anne Cooke Bacon," in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*, eds, Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 42.

⁷⁴ Magnusson quoting Schleiner. Magnusson later continues that "This summoning to an active vocation helped to resolve the early modern contradiction between the educating of the gifted female humanist and the denying her of any prospect of office of public place to do the good in society that Erasmus and Colet's civic humanism programmatically raised as its goal in founding schools for boys like St. Paul's..." ("Imagining a National Church", 43.)

⁷⁵ Thomas Betteridge, *Writing Faith and Telling Tales: Literature, Politics and Religion in the Work of Thomas More* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 9-10.

appeal to her mother for approval, she uses Ochino's evangelicalism, along with the legitimizing pen of an anonymous preface author, to claim authority in such a way that her name becomes synonymous with the idealistic Calvinism which she championed through Edward VI's reign, and for the rest of her life. Through the material tools of varying print editions (and, later, Argentyne's fall from popular grace), her name becomes the authorizer of Calvinist religious-political policies in the court of Edward VI. What begins as a one-sided authorization, in which theologians authorized a woman translator, becomes a relationship of mutual legitimation, particularly in the realm of insular court politics and political nationalism, where Anne's Englishness and status helped champion the ideas of a foreign theologian.⁷⁶

Tamara Harvey argues that instead of seeing female modesty in the seventeenth century as either explicit acts of concealment or subversion, it is possible to see women writers using modesty topoi as a way of engaging with contemporary discourse.⁷⁷ It is useful to apply a similar lens to Anne Cooke's dedication, particularly if we see *discretio spirituum* as an established, authorizing discourse which, in turn, informs these other modes of participating in contemporary discourse.⁷⁸ The basic tenants of *discretio spirituum* as defined by Gerson's "*tu, quis, quid, quare, cui, qualiter, unde, require*" are largely present in the paratext of Anne Cooke's *Fourtene Sermons*, to the extent that Cooke performs the vanishing act that Voaden suggests is required of a visionary. The genre of translation is, itself, a kind of vanishing act. Nowhere is this

⁷⁶ Allen, *Cooke Sisters*, 234.

⁷⁷ "In this book I propose a third reading of modesty in the works of four women who lived in the Americas during the seventeenth century. Rather than bemoaning their modesty as submissive or doubting their manifest claims by naming it subversive, we may accept this modesty as an engagement of contemporary discourses that embraces modesty as keeping due measure and understands bodies as functional but symbolically unimportant. The modesty I explore is associated with discipline, practice, and embodied efforts that are always conditioned by the limits of human perception in a fallen world rather than the concealment of shameful female bodies." Tamara Harvey, *Figuring Modesty in Feminist Discourse Across the Americas, 1633-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 2.

⁷⁸ See *Angels of Light: Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Copeland and Machielsen (Leiden: Brill, 2013), for a discussion of *discretio spirituum* in the context of early modern visionaries across Protestant and Catholic divides.

more clear than in the material history of the text itself, where the various sermon translations of Ochino into English morph into multiple print editions, first boasting the name of Argentyne, and then occluding his name in favor of Cooke's. Which translations were done by which translator is almost negligible, and as demonstrated above, Cooke's name is only included in 1551 when she seemed most useful to the larger evangelical project. The ephemerality of the translator's name, in some ways, is even more compatible with *discretio spirituum* than the work of medieval visionaries themselves, because the author of the original text, not the translator, is often, though not always, the public-facing representative of the ideas presented. Thus, inasmuch as Cooke is using *discretio spirituum* as a way of personally engaging with contemporary religio-political discourse at court, the genre of translation and authorizing demands of *discretio spirituum* simultaneously require Cooke's invisibility.

Cooke's role as a translator suggests the complex nature of applying *discretio spirituum* to the genre of translations. Inasmuch as those who translate are subject to the standards of *discretio*, they also serve as authorizers of the original work's author (if known), and therefore play a particular role in the maintenance of the mode of *discretio* discourse itself. So while this analysis takes up the legitimization of Cooke as the *translator* in light of this tradition, it is essential to remember that people like Cooke, particularly given her class and influence at Edward VI's court, helped legitimize Ochino within the same tradition. Anne Cooke must also be legitimized according to the *discretio spirituum* tradition, as demonstrated in the use of standard literary topoi in the paratext of *Fourtene Sermons*. In analyzing Bridget of Sweden and Margery Kempe, Voaden provides three major categories, authority, knowledge, and behavior,

through which she evaluates their use of *discretio spirituum*. I use the same categories as defined by Voaden, with some modifications.⁷⁹

Cooke follows the pattern of medieval visionary women in that she must prove that her reason for translating operates under the approval of evangelical authorities. She must publicly state the extent to which her (potentially rebellious) learning of Italian is redeemed by her choice of works to translate out of Italian. Here, there is no Rome operating as the pre-eminent authority. Instead, Cooke's dedication cleverly appeals to the authority of her parents, who are both adherents to and teachers of evangelicalism, and who can, under the requirements of *probatio*, authorize her work in court. Yet, Cooke here also defends her knowledge of Italian, arguing to her mother that through her own knowledge, she "haue at the last, percived it my duty to proue howe muche the understandyng of youre wyll, could worke in me towardses the accomplushyng of the same."⁸⁰ The understanding of her mother's will is not the same as obeying it to the letter—rather, Cooke circumnavigates the instruction itself while still obeying her mother's intent of inculcating evangelical piety in her daughter. She pays verbal deference to her mother's authority, while acknowledging that her *own* knowledge allows her to accomplish the intention. This is not subversion, so much as it is a translator's participation in the discourse of *discretio spirituum* itself. Anne Cooke cannot, and does not want to, deny that she has the knowledge which makes translation possible, but works instead to align her translation choice with the authorizing potential of her parents, who in this new movement are best positioned to promote her work to the legitimizing mechanism of the English court.

⁷⁹ "I examine the manner in which the visionary is constructed in the discourse of *discretio spirituum* under the three categories of Authority, Knowledge, and Behaviour. Authority is concerned with authenticating the vision by appealing to a celestial or ecclesiastical interpretation, and by locating the visionary within an ecclesiastically endorsed tradition. The category of Knowledge examines the ways in which the visionary demonstrates her knowledge of the doctrine of *discretio spirituum*. Behaviour covers the manner in which the visionary's behaviour confirms to the principles of *discretio spirituum*." Voaden, *God's Words*, 80-1.

⁸⁰ Cooke, *Fourtene Sermons*, A4v.

Not only must Cooke provide a dedication in her own words, but she must also rely on the authority of the unknown G.B. to provide additional legitimation in the style of earlier male confessor figures.⁸¹ It is difficult to make many assumptions about exactly *how* G.B. legitimized the translation, since the actual identity of G.B. has been lost to history. The preface itself doesn't give many clues, as he simply says that "these translated sermons of the famous Bardardine were come to myne hand."⁸² How did they come into his possession, and what relationship did G.B. have with Cooke herself? Although we don't know the answer to this question, the genre of his preface suggests traditional authorizations of women's writing by their male confessors and spiritual directors.⁸³ So although his preface itself serves as a device of legitimation—presuming that his identity would have been known to those reading the 1551 edition—he also locates her within the evangelical polity which operates in opposition to the "pryckemydantes" and "Docters of diuinitye."⁸⁴ Much like the convention of *discretio spirituum* in which male confessors locate their subjects in a lineage of prophets and visionaries, G.B.'s preface places her *against* the lineage of 'papists', and so uses the individualist, evangelical polemic of scriptural authority to argue for Anne's lineage as a virtuous believer whose "honest

⁸¹ The presence of an external authority figure in the paratext of early modern women's writing is not new to Anne Cooke's translation. Another example, not included in this study because of the lack of prefatory material written by the translator herself, is Mary More Roper's translation of Erasmus' *A Deuout treatise upon the Pater noster*. In the paratextual letter written by Richard Hyde, he employs some of the same enactments of virtue as G.B. does for Cooke, albeit within the context of an argument for the humanist education of women. He writes that Roper, or "this gentywoman whiche translated this lytell boke herafter folowyng whose vertuou conuersacion lyuyng and sadde demeanoure maye be profe cuydente ynough what good lernynge dothe where it is surely roted". Roper is an exemplar from "whom other women may take example of prudent humgle behauour charitable and Very christen vertue with wiche she hath with goddes helpe endeouored her selfe no lesse to farnisshe her soule...". Indeed, a significant amount of Hyde's letter is focused on the way that humanist learning can allow women to better learn virtue (while sardonically noting how learning does not necessarily equate to virtue in men), resulting in an argument for Roper's translation which almost exclusively enacts the *probatio* of virtuous behavior in the author. It is interesting to speculate, based on Cooke's letter, how Roper might have employed *discretio* in a dedicatory letter of her own. For a facsimile of Hyde's preface, see: William Atkinson, et al. *Early Tudor Translators: Margaret Beaufort, Margaret More Roper, and Mary Basset*. The Early Modern Englishwoman. Printed Writings, 1500-1640, Series 1, Part 2, V. 4 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

⁸² Cooke, *Fouretene Sermons*, A2.

⁸³ Again, see James Coakley in *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*.

⁸⁴ Cooke, *Fouretene Sermons*, A2.

trauel” allowed these sermons to be available for “the amendement of thy [the reader’s] life.”⁸⁵ By setting up such a comparison, the reader who is sympathetic to evangelicalism must accept Anne Cooke’s translation—errors and all—as a part of the work of God encapsulated in the reformed project. G.B. therefore provides authorization of Cooke in light of the tradition of *discretio spirituum*, arguing that for Protestants, the translation shows, in Gerson’s words, “the bright and sincere color of divine love without contamination or filth of carnality.”⁸⁶ Thus, even in a religio-political system where the authority of endorsed tradition had recently shifted, the conventions of *discretio spirituum* which relied on appealing to ecclesial authority are still present in Cooke’s dedication, even if modified by new sources of authority in a reformed church.

The second of Voaden’s categories for conforming to *discretio* deals with knowledge, or “the ways in which the visionary demonstrates her knowledge of the doctrine of *discretio spirituum*.” As demonstrated by Voaden’s analysis, this form of authentication is very closely related to the discerning of God from the devil in the specific context of visions. In medieval use of *discretio spirituum*, this specific spiritual component emerges out of the expectation that “spiritual vision was the form of transcendentalism usually experienced by women; intellectual vision was usually experienced by men.”⁸⁷ In Augustine’s three forms of vision, this intellectual vision is the only one in which there is no deception, because in seeking out meaning, “it either finds its object and enjoys the fruit of its search, or it fails to find it” and keeps searching.⁸⁸ Consequently, the corporeal and spiritual visions of women must always be verified by the

⁸⁵ Cooke, *Fourtene Sermons*, A2.

⁸⁶ Gerson, *Early Writings*, 363.

⁸⁷ Voaden, *God’s Words*, 86.

⁸⁸ Augustine of Hippo, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Vol II, Trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 197.

intellectual vision of men, the latter of which is not prone to deception. Here, G.B. also functions as a spiritual director, and tells us of Cooke's knowledge of *discretio spirituum*, albeit in a form heavily influenced by the genre of translation.

Translation itself fits comfortably into the realm of Augustine's intellectual vision: moving between two languages requires right *understanding* of the ideas being translated. The translator must choose the appropriate words to equivocate, and the range of choices to be made requires the kind of 'seeking out meaning' which Augustine says is the goal of intellectual vision. Cooke already demonstrates intellectual vision by the very act of making a translation—consequently, the only way to demonstrate knowledge of *discretio spirituum* is to admit her own possibility for error and (intellectual) deception, which in Augustine's schema, would be the failure to achieve understanding.⁸⁹ As a result, the category of knowledge of *discretio spirituum* in the context of the humanist education project becomes almost indecipherable from the category of behavior (or virtue), where admissions of error, in order to demonstrate modesty and humility, are common.

In this case, G.B.'s verification of Cooke's knowledge also falls into Voaden's final category of 'behavior' (hereafter referred to as 'virtue'). She is apparently well aware of *discretio spirituum* because her "shamfastnes would rather haue supprest" the sermons, which were given to G.B. "halfe agaynst as wyll."⁹⁰ Anne Cooke's enacting *discretio spirituum* is also demonstrated by the fact that they were given to G.B. before publication. Despite the intellectual nature of her vision, she is aware that even a translation must be authorized and promoted by someone other than herself. Whether it is the material authorization of G.B., or the "proteccion"

⁸⁹ Augustine, *Literal Meaning*, 197.

⁹⁰ Cooke, *Fourtene Sermons*, A2.

of her mother's hands, knowledge of *discretio spirituum* is accomplished by the repurposing of the modesty topos.⁹¹

The use of the modesty topos by Anne is perhaps the most obvious adherence to *discretio spirituum* in her dedication. From the excuse of her “weake memory,” her admittance that the translation has not been “done in such perfectio, as the dignitie of the matter doth requyre,” and her note of “myne own debilitye,” the dedication gives plentiful examples of her virtue.⁹² G.B. also points out her virtue, defending any mistakes of Cooke's by closing his preface, noting that if there are any mistakes in translation, it is because the work is by a “Gentyl womans, who comenly are wonted to lyue Idelly, a maidens [who] neuer gaddid farder then hir fathers house to learne the language.”⁹³ Because she, in comparison with other gentlewomen of more dubious reputations, has lived virtuously, she has not learned the language in Italy, but rather at home. This is both a sign of virtue, as well as a reasonable excuse for error. Therefore, any possible errors in translation become a moral quality to be desired through the modesty topos, which further authenticates the translation as a byproduct of a virtuous translator and enacter of *discretio spirituum*.

In light of each categorical enactment *discretio spirituum*, Anne Cooke accomplishes what Voaden says is the hallmark of the discourse—that is, the obliteration of individuality.⁹⁴ As she writes of Bridget of Sweden, “a good—a successful—visionary is a nobody speaking the words of God.”⁹⁵ Cooke, while claiming authority to be the medium for Ochino's theology to the English court, highlights herself as simply a medium for the promotion of evangelicalism, an

⁹¹ Cooke, *Fouretene Sermons*, A4v.

⁹² Although, as discussed earlier, this topos is only enacted so far as it does not injure the reputation of Ochino. Cooke, *Fouretene Sermons*, A4 and A4v.

⁹³ Cooke, *Fouretene Sermons*, A2v.

⁹⁴ Voaden, *God's Words*, 91.

⁹⁵ Voaden, *God's Words*, 91.

obedient daughter who internalizes the teachings of her parents.⁹⁶ Even in G.B.'s glowing preface, she promoted as an exemplar of evangelical virtue, in contrast to papal allies. Although her vision is intellectual, and is in patristic and medieval ordering, a uniquely male vision, she inhabits that space by submitting the intellectual vision to male authority, suggesting that even intellectual vision in women is prone to deception, and thereby validating her inhabitation of this space by enacting the virtue of submission. Further use of the modesty topos shows her virtue, an essential component of *discretio spirituum*. She is, in fact, so virtuous that she almost disappears in favor of promoting Ochino's predestination and the larger religio-political evangelical project. By 'disappearing', she claims mastery of *discretio spirituum*, thereby enacting her own authority: as master of this mode of discourse, and therefore, as the best promulgator of Ochino's evangelicalism to the English court.

An evolution of *discretio spirituum* in early modern English paratext is exemplified in Anne Cooke's dedication of *Fourtene Sermons*. She, like the women visionaries before her, reformulated the demands of *probatio* (the testing of visions) in light of a new evangelical régime where the authority was the English court, and by extension, her parents. G.B., her unknown authorizer, exemplifies her as a model of evangelical virtue in opposition to learned and exclusivist supporters of papal authority. Her intellectual vision is communicated through the act of translation itself, and therefore knowledge of *discretio spirituum* is only demonstrable through claims to virtue, of which she and G.B. provide many. Although not writing within the "visionary" genre, translating Ochino's radical sermons on predestination arguably would have required the same proof of their godliness, and the virtue of both author and translator. Given

⁹⁶ Note here too, the powerful statement of obedience to familial values which puts her on par with the royal family. She is obedient to the teachings of her mother, and presumably by extension, her father. Her father, tutor to Edward VI, operates as an ideological authority to whom even the king attends.

Ochino's relative popularity at court, and the success of the 1548 translation of sermons under Argentyne's name, the final proof of godliness and virtue required would have been that of the newly publicized translator: Anne Cooke Bacon. By successfully co-opting the topoi of *discretio spirituum*, Cooke used her influence to promote the ideals of "a church never fully erected": "the destroynge of man hys glorye, and exaltinge wholly the glory of God."⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Magnusson, "Imagining a National Church", 42; Cooke, *Fouretene Sermons*, A3v.

The Humanist Translations of Elizabeth I

Since the Virgin Queen has been so meticulously examined by historians, theologians, and women's scholars alike, her inclusion could risk overshadowing the (perhaps more significant) translation work of less powerful women. However, as a member of a royal family where her own legitimate claim to the throne was repeatedly questioned, and where royal status did not necessarily equal security, Elizabeth's power cannot always be assumed. Indeed, each of her translations finished before her ascension to the English throne in 1558 includes a dedication to either Henry VIII, Katharine Parr, or Edward VI which enact the same topoi present in the works of other female translators. Despite Elizabeth's audience being specific rather than written to the general public in a print edition, the norms of *discretio spirituum* still govern the paratextual presentation of her translations.⁹⁸ Her engagement with *discretio* shows an active engagement with modesty topoi, which are manipulated to promote her image as a Christian learned prince in the humanist tradition.

At age eleven, Elizabeth translated Marguerite de Navarre's *Le Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* from French into English. Although there is much ambiguity around which manuscript Elizabeth was working from, or how she gained access to it, the end result was an English translation, gifted to Katharine Parr for New Year in 1545.⁹⁹ As Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel demonstrate in their reprinted edition of this text, the sixteenth century printed editions of Elizabeth's translations published by John Bale (1548) and James Cancellor (1568) differ significantly from Elizabeth's largely literal renderings of Marguerite de Navarre's

⁹⁸ Of course, a manuscript copy does not necessarily mean that the work was private or restricted only to the dedicatee. See: Jane Donawerth, "Women's Poetry and the Tudor-Stuart System of Gift Exchange," in *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, eds, Mary E. Burke, et al. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

⁹⁹ The manuscript that I work from is MS Cherry 36 owned by the Bodleian, handwritten by Elizabeth and presumably the copy gifted to Katharine Parr. As reprinted in Mueller and Scodel.

Miroir.¹⁰⁰ This is not to say that Elizabeth did not occasionally shift the content of her translations to match her own beliefs: in *Miroir*, for instance, she “tones down” Marguerite de Navarre’s claim that “human beings can unite with the divine... as a gift of grace.”¹⁰¹ However, the printed editions of Bale, Cancellor, and later, Bentley, include insertions of scripture verses by Bale which could suggest access to another manuscript other than Parr’s, or may just be additions like a number of the other changes that Bale makes.¹⁰² Of more religious import is the careful omission of Marguerite de Navarre’s authorship from Elizabeth’s translation, through her substitution of “me” for Marguerite’s “moy sa MARGVERITE,” and a simplification of “Marguerite de France, Soeur Vnicque due Roy, par la grace de Diev Royne de Navarre, au Lecteur” to an oblique “To the reader.”¹⁰³ In the context of Henry VIII’s court, and Stephen Gardiner’s pro-Catholic influence on the king, keeping Marguerite’s authorship anonymous in a translation dedicated to the queen shows Elizabeth’s awareness of the challenges of promoting evangelical ideas in her father’s household.

Elizabeth’s translation emphasizes a reading of Marguerite which has a reformed emphasis of the singularity of God’s grace for salvation, and in doing so, demands that Katharine, as patron, treat the “unperfect and uncorrect” text as God would treat a penitent sinner.¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth begins her dedication to Katharine with the acknowledgement that even if “the witte of a man, or woman, waxe dulle, and unapte to do, or understand anything perfittely,

¹⁰⁰ *Miroir*, 35.

¹⁰¹ “Any such implication evidently violated Elizabeth’s lifelong conviction that humility in the presence of God was a sacred obligation, repeatedly shown in her Latin prayers where she styles herself as God’s ‘handmaid’.” *Miroir*, 17.

¹⁰² For an examination of the various manuscript and print editions of this text, see: Maureen Quilligan, *Incest and Agency in Elizabeth's England* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 51-75; David Scott Kastan, “An Early English Metrical Psalm: Elizabeth’s or John Bale’s” *Notes and Queries* 21 (1974): 404-5.

¹⁰³ This is based on textual examination of Antoine Augereau’s 1533 edition of *Miroir*, which Mueller and Scodel propose as the likely source text for Elizabeth’s translation. *Miroir*, 44-5.

¹⁰⁴ *Miroir*, 42

onles it be alwayes occupied upon some manner of study.”¹⁰⁵ Demonstrating then the usefulness of attempting study even if a person’s wit is “dulle,” she moves into an analysis of her own translation, writing that she joined “sentences together as well as the capacitie of my symple witte, and small lerning coulde extende themselues.”¹⁰⁶ Praising the meekness of Marguerite’s reliance on God’s grace, Elizabeth mirrors the same theology in her protestations of her own unworthiness, since “as for my part which I have wrought in it, as well spiritual as manual, there is nothing done as it should be, nor else worthy to come in your grace’s hands, but rather all unperfect and uncorrect.”¹⁰⁷

By mixing both the “spiritual” and “manual”, she approaches Katharine’s “accustomed benevolence” in the same way that she reads Marguerite’s approach to God. While emphasizing a reading which has a reformed emphasis of the singularity of God’s grace for salvation, thereby excluding the mystical discussions of love which are also present in Marguerite’s text, the dedication demands that Katharine, as patron, treat the “unperfect and uncorrect” text as God would treat a penitent sinner. A reader with reformed sympathies (which are well-documented in the case of Katharine Parr) must accept Elizabeth’s *apologia* in the same way they would accept salvation through grace alone. By hinging her *apologia* on both “spiritual as manual,” she is freed to stop noting her own unworthiness, since “my confidence is in your grace’s accustomed benevolence, than if I should bestow a whole year in writing or inventing ways for to excuse them.”¹⁰⁸ Thus reformed theology, in Princess Elizabeth’s dedication both encapsulates her own weakness as a translator, and empowers her to rely on the grace of the patron and reader. This is a spiritual and literary turn which both enacts and subversively empowers her in the face of the

¹⁰⁵ *Miroir*, 40.

¹⁰⁶ *Miroir*, 40; 42;

¹⁰⁷ *Miroir*, 42.

¹⁰⁸ *Miroir*, 42.

royal authority of her stepmother and father. It, in turn, both accomplishes her submission to the appropriate political and ecclesial authorities, and demonstrates her knowledge of *discretio spirituum*.

Just a year later, Elizabeth presented Katharine Parr with another text—an English translation of the first chapter of John Calvin’s *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne*.¹⁰⁹ In a dedication letter written in French, she invokes some very Renaissance praise of the learning of humankind, beginning with the pictorial carvings left behind by earlier generations and concluding that section with Johannine-inflected praise of the invention of letters, through which “we see that God by His Word and Scripture can be seen, heard, and known for who He is, inasmuch as it is permitted and necessary for our salvation.”¹¹⁰ Elizabeth incorporates this reflection of Calvin’s emphasis on Scripture as the source of God’s revelation to mankind in this translated chapter, and shows her assent to this precept of reformed doctrine. However, by this point in the reign of Henry VIII, Calvin’s Scripturalism would have been one of the only evangelical positions safe to espouse in such a public manner. Just six months after Elizabeth’s gifted translation, Katharine would be accused of heresy by Stephen Gardiner and his faction at court, which almost resulted in her estrangement from the king and presumably-certain death.¹¹¹ Although such an event was narrowly avoided, it shows that the late years of Henry’s life were not safe ones for any with evangelical loyalties.

Only in the second half of the dedication does Elizabeth turn to her own authorship, constructing her motivations for translating in light of this long tradition of human and divine

¹⁰⁹ The manuscript that I work from is MS RH 13/78 owned by the National Archives of Scotland, handwritten by Elizabeth and presumably the copy gifted to Katharine Parr. As reprinted in Mueller and Scodel.

¹¹⁰ *Miroir*, 215.

¹¹¹ *Miroir*, 207.

authorship, “by a natural instinct, following our aforesaid predecessors.”¹¹² In this dedication, the sources of authority are Calvin’s words, which become almost a revelatory experience, since “a single sentence has power to ravish, inspire, and give knowledge to the most stupid and ignorant beings alive, in what way God wishes to be known, seen, and heard.” Calvin’s particular authority merges with the authority of God’s revelation through the written word, and such revelation, for Elizabeth, “is sufficient in itself and has no need for any human approval, support, or help.”¹¹³ In terms of her own translation of this authoritative, and even revelatory, work, she protests that Calvin’s theology “would require greater eloquence or adornment or words and sentences than I would know how to apply it.”¹¹⁴ The revelatory nature of this text, however, is so compelling that she cannot help but translate it.

Here, again, in demonstrating her knowledge of the conventions of *discretio spirituum*, Elizabeth uses her previous ambiguity about the authorship of Calvin’s work to suggest a reason for, and authorize her translation. She “considered, following principally the intention of my author, [and therefore]... was emboldened, and ventured to translated it word for word.”¹¹⁵ Perhaps this is a statement about her style of translation, which is “word for word,” and therefore follows “principally the intention of my author.” However, given the previous lack of distinction about the extent to which Calvin’s authorship and God’s revelation differ in the *Institution*, she seems to also be playing with the idea of what authorship means. God’s ability to be ‘pictured’ through the manifestation of the Divine Word in “the image and effigy of spiritual, invisible, and impalpable” is a result of human invention which has been progressing, as she suggests earlier in

¹¹² *Miroir*, 217.

¹¹³ *Miroir*, 217.

¹¹⁴ *Miroir*, 217.

¹¹⁵ *Miroir*, 217.

her dedication, “since the creation of the world.”¹¹⁶ It is possible, therefore, to read her following “the intention of my author” as not just a literal translation of Calvin, but an adherence to the intention of God who is her (“my”) author. This wordplay suggests a very reformed enactment of *discretio*—Elizabeth is predestined to translate Calvin’s revelatory word at “the intention of my author,” thus appealing to the ultimate ecclesial authority as a verification of her translation’s merit.

This is not to say that Elizabeth does not enact the far more typical literary topoi common to early modern use of *discretio*. On the contrary, the final paragraph of her dedication of *Institutes* fully participates in this tradition through several instances of the modesty topos. Much like her previous dedication of *Mirror* to Parr, Elizabeth requests that her stepmother “pay more regard to the zeal and the desire I have of pleasing you than you will to the capacity of my simple ability and knowledge.”¹¹⁷ Like Anne Cooke, Elizabeth inhabits Augustine’s intellectual vision by the very act of making a translation.¹¹⁸ Because the only way to demonstrate knowledge of *discretio spirituum* is to admit her own possibility for error and (intellectual) deception, she does so by appealing to Katharine Parr’s ability to commend her “zeal and desire” rather than her “simple ability and knowledge.”¹¹⁹ While she may be subject to intellectual deception, her desire to translate this almost-holy text faithfully excuses any errors that she might have, since she is only “to the best of my ability, as she who is least” illuminating the path for Parr to “grow so very perfectly in the knowledge of Him that the organ of your royal voice may be the true instrument of His Word.”¹²⁰ It is in this final line that Elizabeth’s very particular use of the

¹¹⁶ *Miroir*, 215.

¹¹⁷ *Miroir*, 217.

¹¹⁸ Augustine, *Literal Meaning*, 197.

¹¹⁹ Augustine, *Literal Meaning*, 197. In Augustine’s schema, intellectual deception would be the failure to achieve understanding.

¹²⁰ *Miroir*, 219.

modesty topos is exposed. Elizabeth never fully self-abases herself to the extent that she must rely solely on the feminine virtues of chastity, modesty, and humility. In making this translation, her stated intent is not to educate or teach, but only to better enable her stepmother to educate and teach “so as to serve as a mirror and lamp to all true Christian men and women.”¹²¹ Subversively, this “illuminating” is still teaching, contributing to the greater good of promoting knowledge to Christians. The actions which govern her decisions to translate always move towards the health of the religio-political realm, which must be led by a monarch who can do this work of ‘illumination’, and by implying this, Elizabeth fashions herself as the fulfillment of this prophesy.

Perhaps, then, what is most intriguing about this examination of *discretio spirituum* in these paratexts of a young Elizabeth I is the lack of acknowledgement of Voaden’s third category of “behaviour”, where “the visionary’s behaviour confirms to the principles of *discretio spirituum*.”¹²² Unlike Anne Bacon Cooke, there is no external G.B. assuring readers of the princess’s virtuous behavior. Indeed, the only real mention of virtuous behavior in Elizabeth’s dedication of *Mirror* is her reference to the importance of study, despite the dull wit of the student’s mind. Study, and dedication to knowledge, is the virtue which Elizabeth claims as the authenticating behavior. Here, the roots for this virtue are not found in the humility or chastity of a medieval visionary, but rather in the important Renaissance image of the monarch “as a Christian, learned prince—one of the most celebrated personae in early modern politics.”¹²³ Linda Shenk’s *Learned Queen* interrogates this image of Elizabeth as a learned prince, an image carried to new heights by contemporaries like her tutor Roger Ascham, and encouraged by

¹²¹ *Mirror*, 219.

¹²² Voaden, *God’s Words*, 80-81.

¹²³ Linda Shenk, *Learned Queen: The Image of Elizabeth I in Politics and Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

Elizabeth as a tool with which to carry out domestic, international, and ecclesial diplomacy throughout her reign.¹²⁴ In such a conception of royal virtue, erudition is a far more valuable tool than humility or chastity for claiming proper behavior.¹²⁵ In behavior, Elizabeth's virtue must mirror her potential or actual claim to the throne: a choice unavailable to other women translators who must enact their claims of virtue on different terms.

The dedications of *Mirror* and *Institutes* were at least initially written for the eyes of Katharine Parr and her circle, however they were disseminated later. So we now turn to one of the two translations dedicated to the two male monarchs in the Tudor line, which enacts a different, less independently assertive use of *discretio* in Elizabeth's paratext. In 1545, the same year as her Calvin translation, Elizabeth dedicated translations of Katharine Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* to her father, Henry VIII. Translated from English into Latin, French, and Italian, these prayers were originally written by her stepmother, largely adapted from part of Thomas Kempis' *De imitatione Christi* with two additional prayers for Henry and his success on the battlefield authored by Parr herself.¹²⁶ Elizabeth's multilingual translations were created as a New Year's gift by "His Majesty's most humble daughter... [who]... wishes all happiness and begs his blessing on her knees."¹²⁷ She opens her letter by acknowledging submission to her father, naming his benevolence since "by all laws and by various services in manifold ways, I am bound unto you." Although not as long of a digression as in her dedication to Katharine, she briefly ruminates on the acceptability of spiritual labor, presumably hers, to "a king, whom philosophers regard as a god on earth." Appealing to Henry's divine right of kingship, Elizabeth

¹²⁴ Shenk, *Learned Queen*, 3.

¹²⁵ Though, the virtues of humility and chastity are also employed by Elizabeth throughout her life as devices for legitimating her rule as an unwed female monarch. However, in 1544, these are not yet imperative for maintaining the image of the Virgin Queen.

¹²⁶ *Miroir*, 130-1.

¹²⁷ *Miroir*, 135.

then suggests that *Prayers* is suitable for her translation because of its “assemblage by a queen as subject matter for her king.”¹²⁸ The authority upon which Elizabeth rests her translation is her connection to Henry as his daughter. By translating them, she “would be indebted to you not only as an imitator of your virtues but also as an inheritor of them.”¹²⁹ In translating a work which devoutly esteems Henry’s own virtue, Elizabeth lays claim to this virtue too, which, in addition, “ought to be held in slightly greater regard because it has been translated by your daughter.”¹³⁰ It is unclear what her point of comparison is when she speaks of “greater regard”: perhaps this is a comparison to the many dedicated translations and other works which Henry would naturally receive for New Year. By claiming her own privilege as a daughter, she acknowledges both the political and ecclesial authority governing her, while asserting her translation’s merit in light of her imitation of, and therefore inheritance of this authority.

Perhaps unusually, Elizabeth’s demonstration of her knowledge of *discretio* in this dedication does not acknowledge that hers is a finished work which might be prone to intellectual deception. For Elizabeth, any error in her translation, is to be pardoned, since positive reception of *Prayers* “will incite me eagerly so that, as much as I grow in years, so much will I grow in knowledge and the fear of God, and so it will be that I will worship Him more religiously and honor your majesty more dutifully.”¹³¹ Any encouragement, despite errors, will be assimilated into Elizabeth’s growing literary and spiritual knowledge, and the translation is therefore to be commended as a part of the young monarch’s active learning. Henry as a political and spiritual authority is therefore given the role of tutor, and asked to respond in a way that stimulates further growth. The request is familial: both familiar and submissive, where

¹²⁸ *Miroir*, 136.

¹²⁹ *Miroir*, 136.

¹³⁰ *Miroir*, 136.

¹³¹ *Miroir*, 137.

Elizabeth's capacity knowledge is framed as a positive good, rather than an area fraught with possibilities for intellectual deception. This may be seen as further evidence for the distinct difference between Elizabeth's enactment of virtue within the humanist role of Christian learned prince, and other non-royal literate women writing in English at this time. Despite the difference in how Elizabeth appeals to Henry's authority, compared to her dedications to Katharine Parr, this analysis reveals that the end result of each set of *probatio* still results in the same particularly royal Christian humanist self-fashioning.

Unlike Anne Cooke and others, Elizabeth's claims to virtue are exclusively centered around her knowledge, and the authorities to which she appeals are specific rather than general because of her own royal position. The particular *topoi* that she employs are used differently depending on whether she is dedicating a work to Katharine Parr or Henry VIII. Stark, too, are the contrasts between her enactment of reformed theology in her dedications of *Mirror* and *Institutiones*, where she invokes her own weakness in order to rely on the grace of the reader, or uses predestination to translate Calvin's revelatory word at "the intention of my author." Where Elizabeth is more explicit about her commitment to reformed theology in her dedications to her Katharine Parr, she tends to emphasize humanist ideas of kingship and education in her dedications to her father and brother. The merit of her work, and indeed, of her own claim to authority, is dependent upon their benevolent commitment to the project of Christian humanism. In all of these cases, Elizabeth's fulfillment of *probatio* are centered on the areas of authority and knowledge, with very little effort devoted to proving her feminine virtue. In *Writing Renaissance Queens*, Lisa Hopkins writes that Elizabeth's "ideas of her status which are expressed in her writings of the period tend to be blurred and confused."¹³² And while it is true that Elizabeth has

¹³² Lisa Hopkins, *Writing Renaissance Queens: Texts by and About Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), 12.

mastered the art of matching her self-fashioning to the demands of a particular audience, at least in her dedications, this is not “blurred and confused”. Rather, it is a clever repurposing of traditional modes of *discretio spirituum* which allows her to engage with both Christian humanist ideas and reformed theology, while simultaneously negotiating with the royal authority of which she was a part.

Anne Locke and the *Sermons of John Calvin*

In 1560, Anne Locke published a translation of Calvin's four sermons *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*. Each woman examined so far in this study has had a distinct way of using the conventions of *discretio spirituum*, and Anne Locke is no exception to this. If anything, the particular audacity of Locke's use, and lack of use, of *probatio* suggests the extent to which both her class and nonconformist positionality freed her from the particular topoi of modesty which are obsessively present in the paratexts of other early modern women. Anne Locke shows an awareness of the rules of *discretio spirituum*, and demonstrates that awareness by flaunting them in order to further the reformed theological project of which she was an intimate part. So too does her use of the conventions of authority point towards a nonconformist belief in the grounding of all authoritative claims in the salvific work of Jesus Christ, to which all earthly authorities are subject. These uses of the *discretio* categories of knowledge and authority offer a reflection of Locke's particular class location and reformed theological perspective.

Anne Locke published her first translation just two years into the reign of Elizabeth I.¹³³ The daughter of a London merchant and "royal agent with Reformist leanings," Anne's first husband Henry Locke was a mercer who, by all accounts, was equally supportive of the reformed project which Anne so vocally championed.¹³⁴ John Knox, the Scottish Presbyterian reformer, stayed at their home in 1553, and a number of surviving letters demonstrate the regularity of Locke's correspondence with Knox over the ensuing years. He is, for instance, the reason for Locke's rapid escape to Geneva with her two young children during the Marian years,

¹³³ Variant spellings include Locke, or Lok.

¹³⁴ Elaine V Beilin, et al. *Protestant Translators: Anne Lock Prowse and Elizabeth Russell*. The Early Modern Englishwoman. Printed Writings, 1500-1640, Series 1, Part 2, V. 12 (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2001), ix.

and it was likely during this time that Locke completed her sermon translation.¹³⁵ Katherine Brandon, the Duchess of Suffolk, to whom this translation is dedicated, was a friend of Katharine Parr during the reign of Henry VIII, and like Locke herself, fled abroad for fear of persecution during the reign of Mary I.¹³⁶ Published in 1560, with a second edition, now not extant, published in 1574, Locke's dedication of *Sermons* provides compelling evidence of the extent to which Locke saw herself as a purveyor of "this medicine beyng offered us."¹³⁷

At almost 13 pages long, Anne Locke's dedication is a treatise unto itself. Indeed, after the address to "the Right Honorable, and Christian Princesse, the Lady Katharine, Duchesse of Suffolke," Locke launches into her theological argument with only a nod at the convention of acknowledging Katharine's authority.¹³⁸ This nod is a parenthetical address in the middle of the first sentence to "my gracious & singular good Lady," which is a complete non-sequitur to the rest of the sentence's discussion of the possibility for virtue in the midst of suffering. Locke begins her extended medical metaphor, where the patient's willingness to accept earthly medicine which are the ways of the world, or heavenly medicine, which is God's grace, are of ultimate importance to the well-being of the human soul. This medicine, Locke acknowledges, can be found in the "receipte God the heavenly Physitian hath taught, his most excellent Apothecarie master John Caluine hath compounded."¹³⁹ It is here for the first time that she references her own part in the distribution of this salvific medicine, which "I your graces most bouden & humble haue put into an Englishe box, & do present unto you."¹⁴⁰ Only here, on the third page of her paratextual treatise, does Locke begin to make traditional overtures to

¹³⁵ Beilin, *Protestant Translators*, ix.

¹³⁶ Beilin, *Protestant Translators*, x.

¹³⁷ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.vii

¹³⁸ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.ii

¹³⁹ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

¹⁴⁰ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

Katharine's authority. Anne Locke is "your graces most bouden & humble," and her "thankes are taken away & drowned by the greate excesse of duetie that I owe you."¹⁴¹ However, she does not remain in this position of personal acknowledgement for very long, since her next lines speak to Katharine's authority from the perspective of Calvin and then, God. She writes that Calvin "thinketh his paynes recompensed if your grace or any Christian take profit of it."¹⁴² Although unable to speak of Katharine's status in such everyman terms of her own account, by citing Calvin's desire for this work to be useful to "your grace or any Christian," Locke reconfigures the usual centrality of the authority of the patron, suggesting that what matters more than deference to Katharine's rank is the accessibility of this medicine to all Christian people, regardless of class. Calvin, too, becomes an authority in this schema, where the distribution of salvific medicine overrules concerns of class. Those who sow the Word become more authoritative, and therefore may dictate the recompense for their labors. Locke's "thankes" (or perhaps the thankes owed to her) are "drowned by the greate excesse of duetie that I owe you," but the words which Locke places in Calvin's mouth are more equalizing and exacting.¹⁴³ Calvin's recompense ultimately points towards God, who "recompensed he can not be."¹⁴⁴ Locke then lists the various ways that Katharine can thank God, "your graces profession of his worde, your abidyng in the same, the godly conuersation that I have sene in you," all of which are already present in her life and "your selfe do better understand & practise than I can admonishe you."¹⁴⁵ This glowing compliment of Katharine's religious practice and virtue is not a relinquishing of the authority which Locke has placed outside of Katharine as patron. And even

¹⁴¹ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

¹⁴² Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

¹⁴³ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

¹⁴⁴ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

¹⁴⁵ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.iii

in acknowledging Katharine's virtue, Locke only says that she cannot "admonishe" the duchess to do any more than what she is already doing. It is clear throughout the rest of the dedication that Anne Locke sees her role as that of an admonisher, compelled by the grace of God and Calvin's evangelism which prioritizes all Christian people. Thus, for Locke, she acknowledges her social duty to Katharine, while at the same time reinforcing her own authorial role as witness whose God-centered authority is mediated only by Calvin's words.

Only at the conclusion of this treatise does Anne Locke again return to the question of authority and patronage. Eight pages after this first reference to Locke's duty to Katharine, she moves from the first person plural—through which she suggests that her preface is meant to be read by all Christian people, rather than just her dedicatee—to the first person, where she again directly addresses Katharine. She implores Katharine to:

...wyth me, to wishe hym [Calvin] Gods benefit of eternall happie life for his reward, euen as I wishe your grace continuall health of life and soule for your preseruacion, not onely for this newe yeare, but also for the tyme that shall excede all extent of yeares, beseching you to accepte bothe my worke and prayer.¹⁴⁶

In this moment, Locke and Brandon are co-collaborators in supporting Calvin's particular theological mission, even as Locke invokes more stereotypical language of submission to her patron's rank and authority. Only in the last two sentences, does Locke yield to conventions of gifting and patronage. This is also where she, for the first time, discusses her translation in any length. Other than an earlier mention of her own role in putting together the translation, which she "haue put into an Englishe box," the conclusion of her missive is the only other place where she discusses "my translation of this booke." She has "rendred it so nere as I possibly might, to the very wordes of his text, and that in so plaine Englishe as I could expresse."¹⁴⁷ Locke emphasizes

¹⁴⁶ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.vii

¹⁴⁷ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.viii

that she has sought clarity, allowing for her error by noting that it is rendered as closely as she “possibly might”, and as she “could expresse.” However, unlike other dedications we have examined, she doesn’t explicitly apologize in advance for her error. This is not an *apologia*, and Locke’s final sentence essentially negates the potential for error which she acknowledged in the first part of the sentence. She requests that Brandon “take it good parte,” “[s]uche as it is.”¹⁴⁸ Locke offers no conditions for acceptance should Brandon find errors in her translation. Taken together with the implications of Katharine Brandon’s duty as a purveyor of Calvin’s interpretation of God’s word, Locke’s concluding sentiments are not a request, but a demand for the duchess to do her part as an influence in the English religio-political system, a system to which Locke only had partial access.

Susan Felch suggests that Locke’s dedication to Brandon, and the accompanying paraphrase of Psalm 51, indicates “a writer... who was already confident that her work would be well received” through “its publication by one of the premier London printers, John Day; its generic experimentation; its lack of apology for female authorship; its display of education, intelligence, and creativity.”¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Locke’s insistence on flaunting the conventions of the *apologia* suggests this confidence in her own theological voice.¹⁵⁰ A flaunting of convention,

¹⁴⁸ Locke, *Sermons of John Calvin*, A.viii

¹⁴⁹ Susan Felch “The Public Life of Anne Vaughan Lock,” in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters Women and Gender in the Early Modern World*, eds. Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 146.

¹⁵⁰ It is worth saying that there is some argument over the authorship of the paraphrase of Psalm 51 included in this translation. Susan Felch and Rosalind Smith have argued that it is Locke’s authorship, while Steven May has argued that it was actually authored by Thomas Norton. While the signature of the piece is confused, it is probably helpful to assume that it is Locke’s authorship, since all other assertions are based on conjecture. And even if the actual authorship is not Locke’s, the edition’s printed assumption that it is suggests a similar confidence on the part of the translator and printer, and a similar staking of theological and poetic authority. See: Susan Felch, “The Exemplary Anne Vaughan Lock,” in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 15-27; Steven May, “Anne Lock and Thomas Norton’s Meditation” *Modern Philology* 114.4 (2017), 793-819; Rosalind Smith, “‘In a mirrour clere’: Protestantism and Politics in Anne Lok’s *Miserere Deus*,” in *This Double Voice’: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, eds. Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), 41-60;

however, does not necessarily mean that Locke was unaware of these conventions. Indeed, by analyzing the way that Locke reconfigures the authority of patron to emphasize the larger Calvinist project and its Christian universality, it is possible to see how Locke circumvents *discretio spirituum*'s particular demands around the acknowledgement of ecclesial and political authority. Instead, she turns the requirement of duty which she would owe to a patron of greater stature, and instead requires that loyalty of Katharine Brandon in supporting the reformed project. Every nod to conventional modesty topoi is subverted by the higher agenda and authority of God—and Calvin.

By acknowledging, and then subverting, *discretio*'s demands of couching theological revelation in religiopolitical authorities, Locke simultaneously fulfills the *probatio* which require her to demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of *discretio spirituum* itself. By enlisting the authority of Brandon instead of offering the latter overtures of modesty, she 'mobilizes a female patron to put political pressure upon the sovereign through a persuasive rhetoric of service and duty'.¹⁵¹ For Locke, the importance of purveying this salvific medicine to the eyes of the newly crowned Elizabeth I merits prioritizing its theological virtue rather than her own personal virtue as a translator, and it is this urgency which drives her to enact the conventions of *discretio* in new and noticeable ways.¹⁵² Instead of the behaviors of modesty and virtue—in the case of Anne Cooke Bacon, or the enactment of knowledge which demonstrated Elizabeth I's virtue as a learned Christian prince, Anne Locke acknowledges and subverts *discretio spirituum*'s expected tropes of virtuous female behavior in order to gain further publicity, and recruit even the queen

¹⁵¹ Smith, as quoted in Felch, "The Exemplary Anne Vaughan Lock", 19.

¹⁵² "In Calvin's sermons, in the notes to the Geneva Bible, in Lock's preface, and in the sonnets that conclude the volume, Hezekiah is consistently linked with the archetypal royal sinner and penitent, King David himself. And David, as English people well knew, had long been identified with Henry VIII. Now as his daughter begins her reign, Lock presents this 'Englishe box' to the duchess not as a private gesture but as a courtly New Year's gift, a public offering in a public space." Felch, "The Exemplary Anne Vaughan Lock", 19-22.

to the Reformed cause.¹⁵³ By dedicating her emphatically theological paratext, psalter paraphrase, and translation to Katharine Brandon, she used her “political acumen, courage, and public presence to urge the newly installed Elizabethan court toward this Reformation piety.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Anne Locke’s subversion of *discretio* bears some resemblance to the way that Margery Kempe used the public nature of her knowledge of *discretio spirituum* to legitimize her visionary status. While flaunting it, instead of trying desperately to fulfill it like Kempe does, both Locke and Kempe demonstrate the ways that the conventions of *discretio spirituum* can be weaponized as a tool for public and political purposes.

¹⁵⁴ Felch, “The Public Life of Anne Vaughan Lock”, 143.

Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke and the *Psalmes*

Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke wrote two prefatory poems to attach to her manuscript gift to Elizabeth I, who was expected to visit Wilton House in 1599. By then, Sidney was a famed poet and translator, whose works had already been in circulation, and whose familial reputation as the sister of poet Philip Sidney only bolstered her personal reputation. Born into a family without a title, Sidney became Countess of Pembroke upon her marriage in 1577, enabling her fame as a writer and literary patron, as well as her ongoing relationship with influential members of court.¹⁵⁵ Two poems, “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell Spirit” were affixed to a massive paraphrase of the psalter, written by both Sidney, and her famed brother Philip, who had died in 1586 from a battle wound. Although there has been some debate around the nature of their collaboration, it is largely acknowledged in contemporary scholarship that Philip’s work ends at Psalm 43, and Mary Sidney continued the project over the next dozen years, alongside translations of Petrarch’s *Trionfo della Morte* (late 1590s) and Robert Garnier’s *Tragedie of Antonie* (1592). The psalter itself is impressive: Mary Sidney’s 107 psalms are written in 128 different verse forms.¹⁵⁶ The work circulated in manuscript originally, and was not published in full in print until 1963.¹⁵⁷ However, both manuscript and print editions of works by Mary Sidney show that unlike many upper class women, she was unafraid to affix her name to her work as it was variously circulated. In the case of the *Psalmes*, although her name is affixed to the project, she also works to emphasize her now-deceased brother’s co-authorship. Despite the protestations of modesty and deference to her brother which she makes in “Even Now that

¹⁵⁵ Mary Sidney and Philip Sidney, *The Sidney Psalter*, ed. Hannibal Hamlin et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xiv-xv.

¹⁵⁶ With Psalm 119 broken up into multiple sections.

¹⁵⁷ Margaret P. Hannay and Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550 - 1700* ed. Mary Ellen Lamb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), xxii.

Care” and “To the Angell Spirit”, Clarke suggests the work’s likelihood as a “joint venture from the start” and the “complexities of authorising herself as a woman aspiring to the poetic paraphrase of a divine text” must temper any face-value analysis of Sidney’s topoi.¹⁵⁸

Including Mary Sidney’s *Psalmes* in this project brings up the challenge of defining translation. After all, this collaboration between Mary and Philip is almost too authorial to be a literal translation, since the poetic improvisation in this work, and genre of paraphrase itself, is a political and cultural reworking of Scriptural texts. As analyses of the Sidney Psalter show, often the paraphrased psalms differ quite radically in meaning compared to the Hebrew text.

Additionally, there is no evidence that Mary Sidney (or Philip Sidney) were translating from the Hebrew, and recent scholarship has suggested that they were working from sources like the Geneva Bible or Calvin's commentaries.¹⁵⁹ Danielle Clarke writes that “the Sidney Psalms... profoundly transform the accepted understanding of terms like ‘translation’, ‘paraphrase’, and indeed ‘psalm’,” and indeed the question of whether the *Psalmes* are a “translation” in the typical sense is open to debate.¹⁶⁰ They have been critically examined as poems authored by the Sidneys, as well as translations made by the Sidneys, and I include them in this study because regardless of the technicality of their translation from one language to another, they are almost certainly a cultural translation from one *context* to another. Mary Sidney herself notes this in the first of her prefatory poems, writing that the *Psalmes* are “Now English denizend, though Hebrue

¹⁵⁸ Danielle Clarke, “The Psalms of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke” *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Sidneys 1500-1700 Vol 2: Literature*, eds. Margaret P Hannay, et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 297.

¹⁵⁹ Melody Knowles, “‘Now English denizend, though Hebrue borne’: Did Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, Read Hebrew?” *Studies in Philology* 109.3 (Spring 2012): 279-89.

¹⁶⁰ Clarke, “The Psalms”, 296.

borne.” This cultural translation both merits inclusion, and also suggests multiplicity of ways in which a translation can operate in the religio-political sphere.¹⁶¹

The prefatory poems “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell Spirit”, although supposedly separate in purpose, both constitute an argument for Mary Sidney’s authorship which enact *discretio spirituum* within the political context of Elizabeth’s anticipated visit and the personal context of Sidney’s memorial to her brother. In “Even now that Care”, Sidney acknowledges the many cares and concerns which weigh on Elizabeth, that “with thy happy greatnes dayly growes,” and suggests that “my Muse offends” the preoccupied queen upon whom “in chiefe dependeth to dispose what Europe acts in these most active times.”¹⁶² This first stanza questions whether even “One instant will, or willing can shee lose” by “not reading, but receiving Rimes.”¹⁶³ Yet, taking a risk that the presentation of these poems will not distract Elizabeth I from her political duties, Sidney continues the next stanza of the dedication, daring to present the manuscript to Elizabeth “as humblenes may dare cherish some hope they shall acceptance finde.”¹⁶⁴ Although not to be taken as “not waighing less thy state, lighter thy Care,” Sidney suggests that divine right has “assign’d thee goodnes suting that Degree” meaning “others toile, is Exercise to thee.”¹⁶⁵ Arguing that there must be some time for leisure, “these the Postes of Dutie and Goodwill shall presse to offer what their Senders owe.”¹⁶⁶ With the exception of her

¹⁶¹ Danielle Clarke addresses this issue of the false divide between devotional and poetic motives, writing that “[i]t is crucial, of course, to recognise the ways in which the Sidney Psalter deliberately and self-consciously sets itself apart from existing metrical versions [of the psalter], and to acknowledge that this is a potentially risky strategy, but poetics and devotion are not mutually exclusive categories: this surely is the cumulative argument of the Psalter? As Alexander asserts, “what the Sidneys are able to do is to merge the pursuit of formal variety with the aims of the psalmist, to ‘sing a new song’” (112), a project that is seemingly authorised by the Psalter itself in its repeated self-consciousness about the need for songs and forms appropriate to the praise of God.” Clarke “The Psalms”, 305.

¹⁶² Mary Sidney Herbert, et al., *The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), I.103.

¹⁶³ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁶⁴ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁶⁵ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁶⁶ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

mention of “humblenes” which implies a self-referent, it is only in this second stanza that Sidney first enacts a personal modesty topos constructed around her brother’s death. These “Senders” of duty and goodwill:

Which once in two, now in one Subject goe,
the poorer left, the richer reft away:
Who better might (O might ah word of woe.)
have giv'n for mee what I for him defraye.¹⁶⁷

The death of her brother has “the poorer left” who must now “defraye” the former’s obligations. This mercenary language is scattered throughout the poem, such as in phrases like “undischarged rent” and “Senders owe.” Functioning as a metaphor for duty and honor owed from a subject to a monarch, and from a poet to a patron, Sidney makes it clear that it is now her duty to “defraye” the debt owed by Philip, who is the richer of the two. Thus, taking on this debt for herself allows Sidney an authorial autonomy not possible as an independent female poet. As Shannon Miller writes, “Mary Sidney does much more than not praise the queen; she makes Philip the image of an all-dispensing fount and tribute... As such, Mary Sidney grants to her brother what another client—Edmund Spenser—grants to the Queen herself...”¹⁶⁸ Perhaps ironically, by making Philip the source of her authority and the originator of Elizabeth’s tribute, Mary Sidney subversively co-opts this now-heavenly authority, through which she makes her own authority known. For all her discussion of Elizabeth’s political power and status as the divine monarch, Philip’s status as poetic and spiritual authority could explain why this poem “does not contain the fulsome praise of Elizabeth one would expect from the title.”¹⁶⁹ Mary Sidney’s grief about Philip, expressed in a poem which is ostensibly written for Elizabeth I, further demonstrates the extent to which the

¹⁶⁷ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁶⁸ Shannon Miller “Write or Be Written,” in *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550 - 1700* ed. Mary Ellen Lamb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 168.

¹⁶⁹ Hannay as quoted by Miller, “Write or Be Written”, 152.

literary project of memorializing her almost-sainted brother authorizes her own devotional and poetic work.

The next stanza includes another use of the modesty topos—this time on behalf of both herself and Philip. Sidney writes that “but hee did warpe, I weav'd this webb to end; the stuffe not ours, our worke no curious thing.” Here, her enactment of modesty denies both originality and even some level of ‘authorship’.¹⁷⁰ However, this suggestion that translation involves “stuffe not ours” is quickly undermined by Mary Sidney’s particular choice of syntax just a few lines later. When contextualizing the psalter as the work of “the Psalmist King,” she says of their translation that it is “Now English denizend, though Hebrue borne.”¹⁷¹ Unlike Anne Locke’s “Englishe box,” the idea of design has much more agency. Whether Sidney meant design such as “to plan in the mind, intend,” or “to mark out, nominate, appoint, designate” (the second definition could have some subtle reference toward reformed theology), an aura of creation and authorial license is implied by a design, or re-design of the psalter into a newly English poetic context.¹⁷² Thus, the idea that this is “stuffe not ours” nor a “curious thing” is quickly subverted by importance of the national project of English poetry. Yet, the dedication continues to refuse authorial credit. Perhaps aware of the authoritative focus on Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney returns to the image of duty owed to her monarch.

And I the Cloth in both our names present,
A liverie robe to bee bestowed by thee:
small parcell of that undischarged rent,
from which nor paines, nor paiments can us free...
...for in our worke what bring wee but thine owne?
What English is, by many names is thine.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Early modern conceptions of authorship are fluid, and are far less individual than we would conceive of them today. Still, Mary Sidney openly acknowledges the possibility that their work is not noticeable in any major way—a conclusion which an analysis of *Psalmes* would immediately refute.

¹⁷¹ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁷² Oxford English Dictionary

¹⁷³ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

The poems, now established as a uniquely English gift, are offered as a “small parcell of that undischarged rent.” While surely a multilayered image of the duties owed to a monarch by her subjects, Shannon Miller and others have suggested that the emphasis on land and rents are also concerned with the fate of the Pembroke estates because of the failing health of the Earl of Pembroke.¹⁷⁴ Mary Sidney’s reliance upon Elizabeth I’s royal favor is perhaps especially visible in this part of the poem and the ensuing emphasis on “those nighe feelds where sow'n thy favors bee.”¹⁷⁵ Yet, the land and the duty of the poet to her patron are all centered on the manifestation of Elizabeth *as* “What English is.”¹⁷⁶ In the ultimate portrayal of Elizabeth’s personhood as both the owner and judge of “our worke,” Mary Sidney enacts Elizabeth’s royal authority as the end of the poetic project: “what bring wee but thine owne?”¹⁷⁷ Miller writes that the “alternate spiritual model of obligation” presented in these poems “set[s] the state for a new connection between Elizabeth, these poems, and the figure with whom the Queen is to enter into a new relationship: King David”.¹⁷⁸ Miller argues that Sidney’s goal is not a commendation, but an admonition to become a certain kind of patroness, and that the following lines about “What English is, by many names is thine” is an “assertion about the need for the protection of national poetry.”¹⁷⁹ It is also a picture of Elizabeth’s authority which is far more similar to the glowing image painted of Philip Sidney in ‘Angell Spirit’, with “thy great worth; exceeding Natures store,” “so rare thy fairest minde” and “lives no witt that may thy praise become.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Miller, “Write or Be Written”, 167

¹⁷⁵ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁷⁶ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁷⁷ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁷⁸ Miller, “Write or Be Written”, 168-9; Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.104;

¹⁷⁹ Miller, “Write or Be Written”, 169

¹⁸⁰ Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.104.

The final authority provided as an example to Elizabeth's own royalty is the example of King David, who is the "King" who "King should onely to a Queene bee sent."¹⁸¹ Only the author of the psalms, "[who] Gods loved choise" and "Devotion," is an appropriate lover, whose "hope, his zeale, his praier, plaint, and praise, Needles thy person to their height to raise."¹⁸² In this "spiritualized union with King David," Elizabeth is provided with a spiritual authority which is appropriate to her stature, a union made possible through the Sidney Psalter which can only materialize through her enactment of a particular patronage of the English poetic project.

This analysis of "Even Now that Care" demonstrates the extent to which Mary Sidney appealed to two spiritual authorities as a way of admonishing Elizabeth to read the proffered *Psalmes* as a patron of English poetry. A translation of the psalter, in abstract, would be less in need of authentication than other religious translations of Calvin or other continental reformers. However, the particular innovation of the Sidney Psalter, in its cultural translation into an English polemic, would have needed particular authorization from Elizabeth, whose divine authority also dictated "What English is." While the category of authority in Voaden's work on *discretio spirituum* is "concerned with authenticating the vision by appealing to a celestial or ecclesiastical interpretation, and by locating the visionary within an ecclesiastically endorsed tradition," the tradition at play here is only ecclesiastical so much as Elizabeth is the divine head of the Church of England.¹⁸³ What needs authentication is the religious and poetic national vision encompassed in the reworking of David's psalms, and to gain this authority, Mary Sidney uses *discretio spirituum* to appeal to Elizabeth's patronage using the language of duty. Meanwhile,

¹⁸¹ Miller names the specific context of this as a return "to the very issue that had caused Philip to 'offend' the Queen" during the controversy of Elizabeth's potential marriage to Francis, when Philip had encouraged her away from the match, resulting "in his devastating loss of court favor". Miller, "Write or Be Written", 171.

¹⁸² Herbert, *Collected Works*, I.103.

¹⁸³ Voaden, *God's Words*, 80-1.

she exalts and upholds the spiritual and poetic authority of Philip and King David as exemplars of the kind of patronage she wants Elizabeth to confer on the English reformed poetic project.

Sidney knows the risky ground she is treading on, obvious in her attempt to fix her own brother's error which destroyed his reputation at court.¹⁸⁴ She demonstrates her own knowledge of *probatio* by enacting several modesty topoi, one of which is centered on the merits of the translation in and of itself, while the other of which begs her own personal unworthiness, since she is "the poorer left." By enacting these topoi, Sidney performs proper humility to her queen, while she simultaneously, through her exaltation of her brother, shunts the narrative majority of poetic responsibility to Philip, who in death must take the blame for both perfection and imperfection while Mary Sidney gains his spiritual authority for her own poetic pursuits.

Through the two poems which preface the *Psalmes*, Mary Sidney demonstrates her knowledge of the doctrine of *discretio*, and uses it to impress upon Elizabeth the political and spiritual import of her patronage of English poetry.

¹⁸⁴ Miller, "Write or Be Written", 168.

Conclusion

These analyses of Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth I, Anne Locke, and Mary Sidney Herbert all suggest that these women used some of the same *probatio* as their visionary counterparts in the medieval period. While divided by several theological ruptures, and an array of Tudor monarchs with wildly different religio-political loyalties, the prevalence of modesty topoi and appeals to authority in paratextual dedications demonstrate far more continuity than difference. By applying some of Rosalynn Voaden's categories of *discretio spirituum* across the paratextual work of these evangelical women, it is possible to analyze not just the particular literary tools which remain consistent, but also the way that self-presentation remained a negotiation between secular and spiritual authorities, religious and political pieties, and the demonstration of virtuous behavior and linguistic competence.

Critics of the application of *discretio spirituum* in such disparate locations such as the paratexts of women translators might argue that it is incoherent to apply *discretio* outside of an inquisitional context. It is easy to see the way in which 'discernment of spirits' might be particularly relevant to the witchcraft or heresy trials of people like Anne Askew, but is it possible to abstract such a notion outside of a particular visionary context? While *discretio* is certainly not the only possible way to read the literary paratexts of women writers and translators in early modern England, I argue that it adds a particular depth to our reading of these texts that ties these literary tools to a much longer Christian tradition. Thus, a person such as Mary Sidney Herbert can be read as participating in a religious tradition which finds its roots in Augustine, even though she neglects to explicitly mention God in "Even Now that Care". Applying the lens of *discretio spirituum* to these texts allows us to read works which have been classed as

“literature” within a far more interdisciplinary, and period-porous contemporary context which we are only beginning to explore.

The particular use of *discretio* by Cooke, Elizabeth, Locke, and Sidney suggests that *discretio spirituum* was not only important to the dedication genre in early modern England, but that its application was inherently flexible within the translator’s particular social context. For Cooke, this was the use of her own virtue to promote Ochino’s reformed theology within the English court. Elizabeth’s social location allowed her to use *discretio* to bolster her humanist image as a Christian learned prince, while Anne Locke, on the other hand, flaunts *discretio*’s requirements of virtue and humility in order to promote Calvinism to the newly-crowned Elizabeth. Mary Sidney Herbert uses the conventions of *discretio* in her cultural translation of the *Psalms* to admonish a much older Elizabeth to support the project of English poetry. Each of these women negotiates the particular emphasis of her evangelical spirituality and political interests within this received, living tradition. What this suggests, beyond the content of these differences, is that a theological analysis of *discretio spirituum* can offer a common measure for evaluating each translator’s religious or political motives for flattering or admonishing their chosen authority.

There is still a great deal of work to be done. Some of the questions to be answered in early modern England include the way that Catholic and later recusant writers participated in this tradition, and how they may have made use of it differently during Protestant rule. To what extent can *discretio spirituum* be used cross-confessionally in a time of persecution, and who are the authorities addressed by these religious minorities? Other genres than translation should be analyzed, and there is as of yet no comprehensive account of the similarities and differences between male and female written enactments of *discretio*—either in the medieval or early

modern periods. Are there characteristics that make *discretio* distinctly feminine, or has scholarship's analysis of the tradition tended towards women because of the particularly gendered influence of people like Gerson? And finally, is there a point at which the continuity of a tradition like *discretio* breaks so radically that its own precepts are undermined, in say, the Enlightenment?

In this study, my hope is to point towards the possibilities of integrating theological and literary analysis, while suggesting, as Nancy Bradley Warren and others do, that the literary traditions present even among reformed and radical evangelical women in early modern England are far more continuous with previous periods than has been widely acknowledged. And as this study of *discretio spirituum* suggests, while the particular creedal orthodoxies between Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Catholicism, and every sect in between, may have been in contention, the written ways of addressing and appealing to the religio-political authorities of and about each contested theology remained largely continuous. As Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth I, Anne Locke, and Mary Sidney Herbert each demonstrate, the fulfillment of *probatio* could be modified to fit the particular context of each woman through modesty topoi and a demonstrated knowledge of the *discretio* tradition. By performing the conventions of *discretio spirituum* in new theological and literary contexts, early modern women translators could, and did, engage in “strategic self-fashioning”, and sought to promote the reformed project within their various, overlapping spheres of influence.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 3.

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