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Writings by Early Modern Women

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Swansongs: Reading voice in the poetry of Lady Hester Pulter

Mark Robson

'Which voice would speak of voice?'[1] The implications of Jean-Luc Nancy's question will resonate throughout this discussion, since one of my main concerns here is to introduce what will be for most people an unknown voice, that of the seventeenth-century royalist woman poet Lady Hester Pulter, née Ley.[2] The female voice has become a common concept in early modern and feminist studies, and is central to many discussions of the relationships between writing and subjectivity.[3] Voice, it has been suggested, also has a privileged relationship to manuscript text which print cannot match.[4] Yet to speak of Lady Hester Pulter's 'voice' is perhaps already too hasty, for there are many different tonalities in the manuscript which contains her work. Equally, it would not be wise to move forwards in reading this poetry without reflection on the extent to which the voice or voices that we hear in this work may be described, unequivocally, as 'hers'.[5]

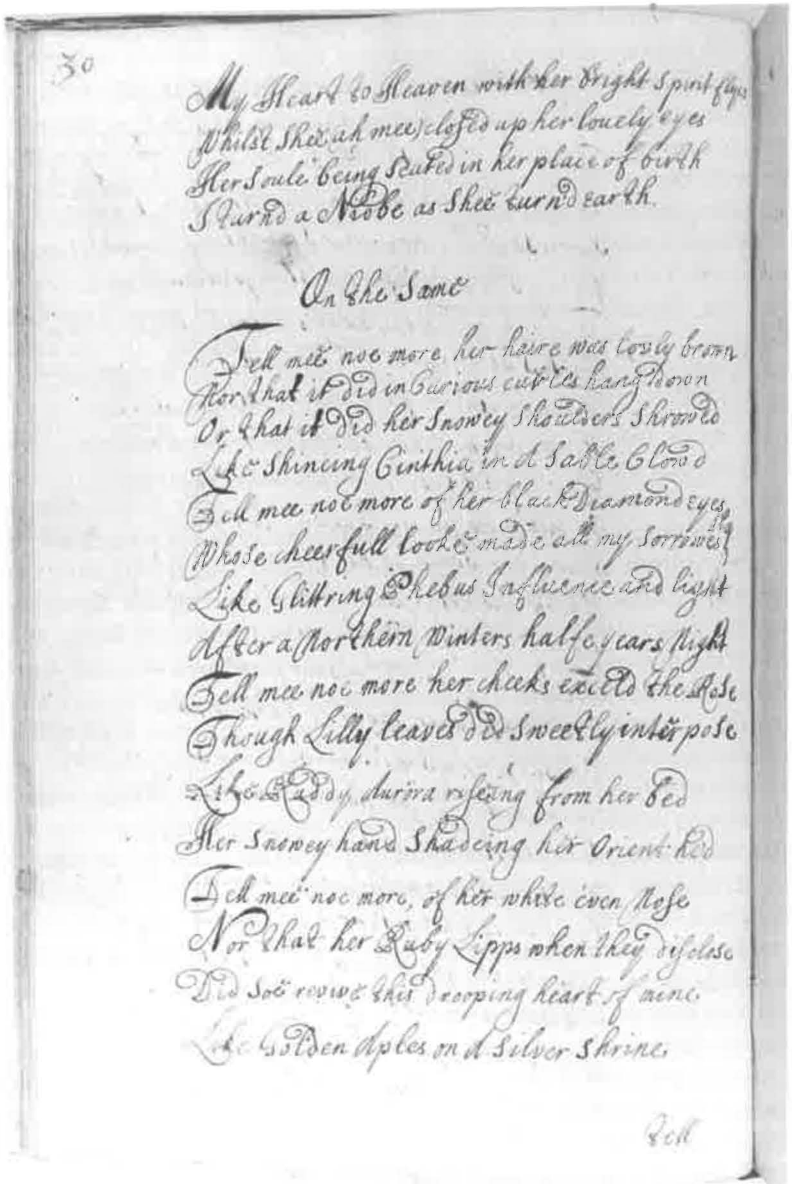
Similarly, an emphasis on voice in lyric poetry is commonplace, but there are reasons to be cautious about collapsing too quickly the distinction between speech and writing. What Lady Hester Pulter's writings seem to demonstrate is that recourse to the referential security of a discourse which seeks to phenomenalize rhetorical figures (including the figure of the author) might lead us into problems that cannot simply be side-stepped. If this is in part a matter of *ethos* (in an Aristotelian sense), it is also a question of the relationships between rhetoric and politics.[6] For if the lyric is the poetic form most readily associated with subjectivity, then lyric poetry is the poetry of the subject, it is a 'subjective' genre. As such, its history partakes of the history of the subject, which is perhaps another way of saying that it is intimately linked to the project of modernity.[7] This question will remain a concern which guides these readings of voice in the poetry of Lady Hester Pulter.

Does my own presentation produce further problems? It will rapidly become apparent that the reading I offer here is not based upon an

appeal to 'female experience' in any simple sense. I appreciate that there are debates around the question of reading women's writing, and that the approach taken here does not sit comfortably with aspects of these discussions. But what I wish to emphasise here is that this is precisely a matter for critical debate. Whilst I have no desire to diminish nor deny the specificity of the experience of a woman writer in the seventeenth century, I also wish to avoid a retreat from a reading of the poetry into areas of biography, cultural history or 'historicism', however conceived. Where such areas are indicated, this is done to throw into relief the distance between such readings and my own. Like Linda Charnes, I am concerned that the famous injunction, 'always historicise', is too often read in early modern studies as '*only* historicise'.[8]

I

University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection MS Lt q 32 consists of a single folio volume bound in seventeenth-century rough calf, and some loose sheets and smaller pieces. The manuscript contains almost one hundred and twenty poems, totalling over five thousand lines, and a prose romance of some thirty thousand words in two parts, the second of which is incomplete.[9] The poetry occupies 129 leaves, and seems from the evidence of the dates given in the manuscript itself to have been written between 1646 and 1665. The first folio bears the title *Poems Breathed Forth by the Noble Hadassas*. The prose romance, which occupies 36 leaves, is entitled *The Unfortunate Florinda*, and begins from the back of the volume (although folio numbering proceeds from the front of the volume and has been added in modern pencil). The text is predominantly in a clear scribal hand (see PLATE 1), with additions and corrections in two other hands. Of these three hands, the second, an apparently eighteenth-century hand, is responsible for the transcription of three whole poems in the bound volume (see PLATE 2), the fair copy of the second part of the romance, annotations to several poems in the bound volume, the Pulter and Ley family genealogies in the loose papers, a fragment in the loose papers which delineates the dramatis personae of the romance, and the transcript of the first stanza of a song, beginning 'There is one black & sullen hour', which appears in three places in the manuscript: once on a loose fragment, once at the end of the poems transcribed by the first scribe, and once on the reversed title-page of the romance. There are alterations in a third hand which might be that of Pulter herself, since these changes tend to improve the sense and perhaps mark errors of transcription. Fifteen poems show signs of



30

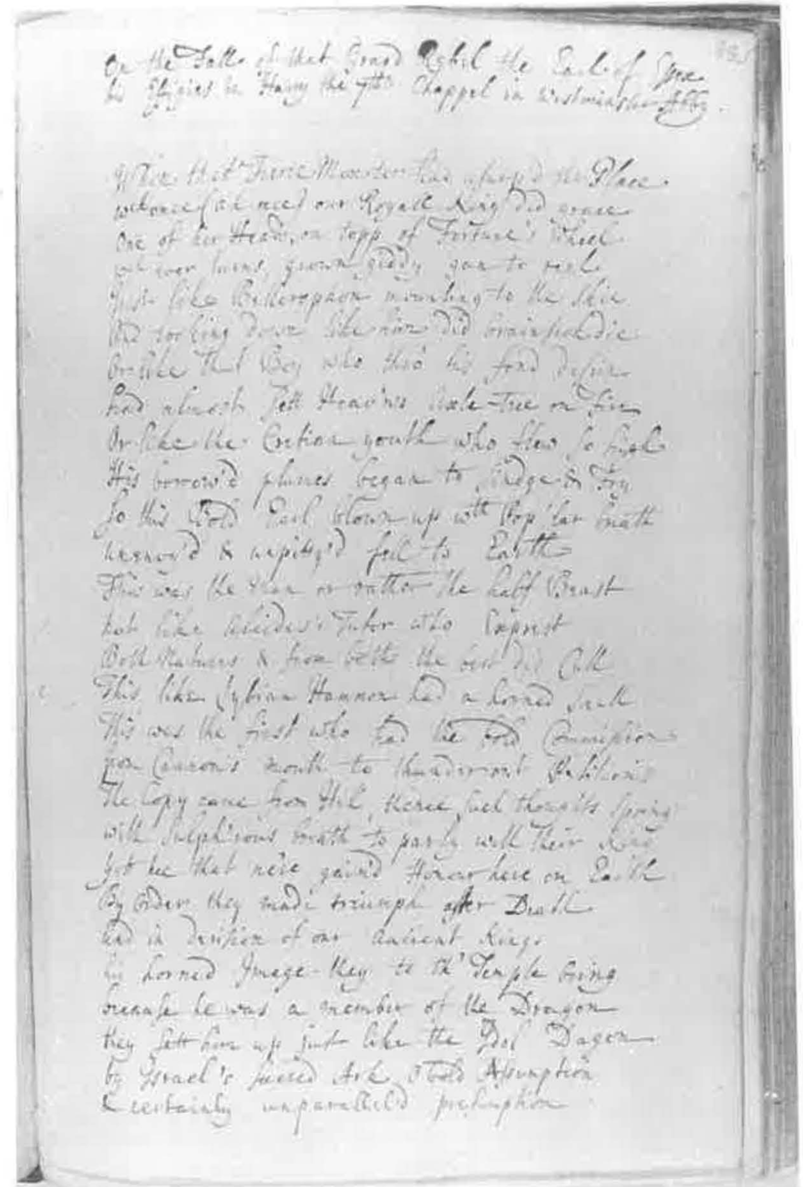
My Heart to Heaven with her bright Spirit flyes
Whilst Shee (ah mee) closed up her lovely eyes
Her Soule being seated in her place of birth
I turnd a Niobe as Shee turnd earth.

On the Same

Tell mee noe more, her haire was lovly brown
Nor that it did in Curious curles hang down
Or that it did her Snowey Shoulders Shrowd
Like Shineing Cinthia in a Sable Cloud
Tell mee not more of her black Diamond eyes
Whose cheerfull looks made all my Sorrowes [illegible]
Like Glittring Phebus Influence and light
After a Northern Winters halfe years Night
Tell mee noe more her cheeks exceld the Rose
Though Lilly leaves did Sweetly interpose
Like Ruddy Aurora riseing from her Bed
Her Snowey hand Shadeing her Orient Red
Tell mee noe more, of her white even Nose
Nor that her Ruby Lipps when they disclose
Did Soe revive this drooping heart of mine
Like Golden Aples on a Silver Shrine.

Tell

PLATE 1. *The ending of Lady Hester Pulter's first elegy and the opening of her second elegy on the death of her daughter Jane, in the hand of the main amanuensis, in* Poems Breathed Forth by the Noble Hadassas: *University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection* MS *Lt q 32, fol. 17v. (Original size 280 × 180mm.) Reproduced by permission of the University of Leeds.*



On the Statue of that Grand Rebel the Earl of Essex in Effigies in Henry the 7th Chappel in Westminster Abbey

PLATE 2. *The opening of Lady Hester Pulter's poem on the Earl of Essex, in the hand of a second scribe, in* Poems Breathed Forth by the Noble Hadassas: *University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection* MS *Lt q 32, fol. 85r. (Original size 280 × 180mm.) Reproduced by permission of the University of Leeds.*

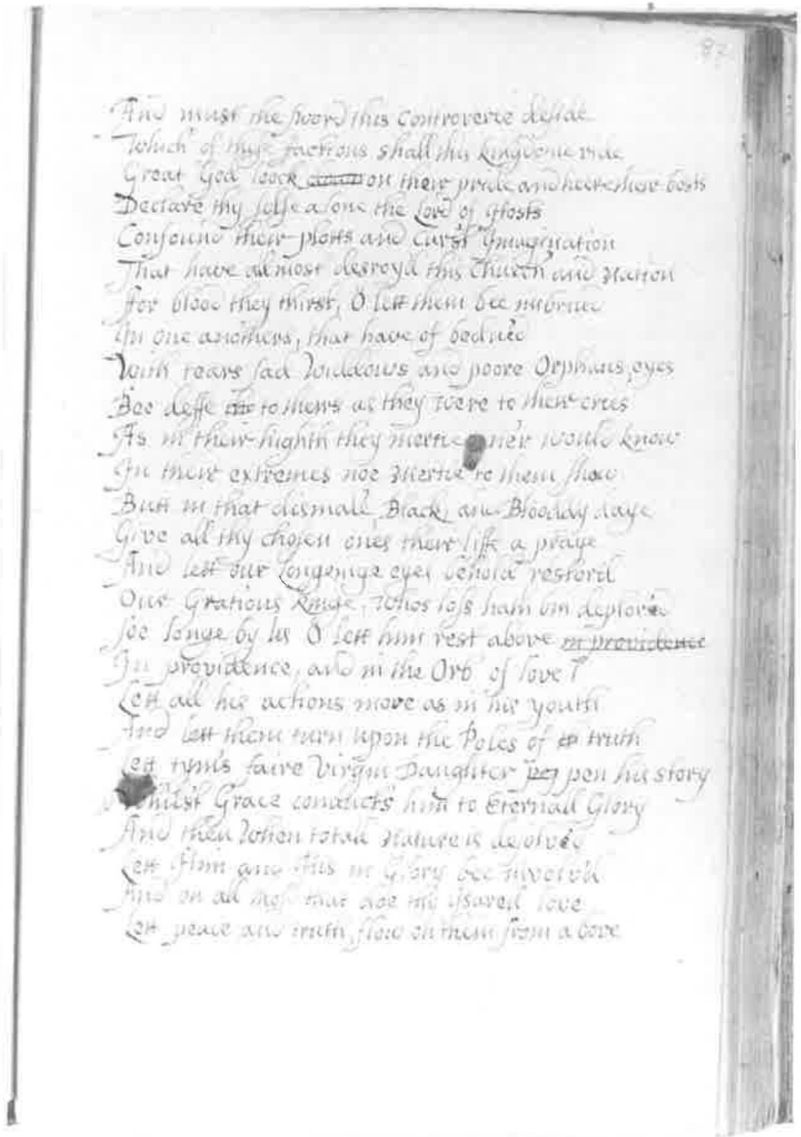


PLATE 3. *Lady Hester Pulter's poem* 'And must the sword this controverce deside', *in a third hand, possibly the author's, in* Poems Breathed Forth by the Noble Hadassas: *University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection* MS *Lt q 32, fol. 87r. (Original size 280 × 180mm.) Reproduced by permission of the University of Leeds.*

some revision. These changes are largely minor, generally extending only to a single letter or word, although there are four poems (three in the volume and one on a loose sheet) which are seemingly also in this hand (see PLATE 3) as well as the draft of the second part of the romance, which is amongst the loose papers.

None of this material appears to have been printed. The poetry is attributed in the manuscript to Lady Hester Pulter, and this attribution is reinforced by the use of the name 'Hadassas', a biblical synonym for Esther, in the title of the volume. On the first folio of the manuscript there is a description of the poems as 'Hadassas chast fances Beeinge the fruett of solitary and many of them sad howers', and a couplet instructs the reader: 'Marvail not my names concealed / In beeinge hid itt is reve'ld'. This manuscript appears to be the unique extant record of her work.

Lady Hester Pulter was the daughter of James Ley, first Earl of Marlborough and Lord Treasurer. Born in 1596, she married Arthur Pulter of Bradfield or Broadfield in Hertfordshire. She outlived all but two of her fifteen children, and the records of Cottered in Hertfordshire show that she was buried on the 9th of April 1678, at the age of 82. Arthur Pulter, born at Hadham Hall in August 1603, was a Justice of the Peace, a Captain in the Militia, and High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1641. His mother was Penelope, daughter of Sir Arthur Capel of Hadham Hall, an ardent royalist. Arthur Pulter apparently withdrew from public life during the Civil War period, dedicating himself to the building of a house at Broadfield. As Sir Henry Chauncy puts it in *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, published in 1700, Pulter 'shortly after the breaking forth of the late Civil War declin'd all publick Imployment, liv'd a retir'd Life, and thro' the importunity of his Wife, began to build a very fair House of Brick upon this Mannor [i.e. Broadfield], but dying he never finished it'.[10] Arthur Pulter died, having outlived all of his children, in February 1689, leaving a grandson James Forester (son of his daughter Margaret) as his heir. Forester was also unable to complete the house before his own death in 1696. The house no longer stands.

II

The poems in MS Lt q 32 encompass a wide variety of genres and there are dialogues, pastorals, polemics and laments, elegies, religious meditations, allegories and parables, satires, love poems, emblems, and praise for the royal family.

It is possible to distinguish three types of poetry in Pulter's writings. Much consists of responses to events of the Civil War period, and

subjects include the execution of Charles I; the deaths of Sir George Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas, shot at Colchester in August 1648 for their parts in the Kentish insurrection; Charles's imprisonment at Holmby in 1647, figured as a lament by the River Thames; the death of Arthur, Lord Capel of Hadham; Sir William Davenant's loss of his nose through syphilis; the suicide of a young woman at Oxford whose royalist lover was killed during the war; and the destruction of the effigy of Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex, in Westminster Abbey. This political poetry is explicitly royalist, and is pervaded by a sense of anger and loss. Pulter is often polemical, condemning what she describes as the 'hydra' of the Parliamentarian 'mob' and the perceived chaos that the war brought.

The other two categories are devotional and, for want of a better term, 'domestic' poetry, and much of the latter is about or addressed to Pulter's children. She explains in the titles of some of these poems that she tended to write them during her 'confinement' periods. That she had fifteen children might explain her relatively prolific poetic output.

Whilst Pulter's work does not seem to have been printed, this should not be taken as an indication that this is 'private' poetry, nor is it indicative of the texts' quality. As Margaret Ezell and others have argued, the circulation of texts in manuscript should not be read only in terms of a relationship to print. Arthur Marotti, for example, notes that a critical tendency to judge the literature of the Civil War predominantly in terms of printed texts has produced an inaccurate picture of cultural production in the period.[11] Similarly, Ezell remarks on the unfortunate consequences of this emphasis for the writing of women's literary history, in which writers prior to the eighteenth century are rendered far less visible because the importance of manuscript texts is not sufficiently appreciated.[12] It was not uncommon for writers' work to be transmitted in this manner, often among members of a 'coterie' audience, and this can be seen in certain cases as a conscious choice. We should not forget here the 'stigma' of print, particularly for aristocratic writers.[13] Equally, in this period, the attempts to control print made by Parliament may also be a determining factor.[14] Nor does this 'failure' to publish apply only to the work of women. Donne and Sidney would be the obvious examples of male writers whose work reached print only in posthumous editions. The compilation of a manuscript such as Pulter's implies a potential readership, even if that readership cannot be identified with any certainty. The most likely audience for this collection of poetry is Pulter's family, and the presence of advice poems addressed to Pulter's daughters suggests an emphasis on a female readership.

III

The two poems that I have chosen for these initial readings are inevitably going to be thought of as in some sense 'representative'. Obviously, the notion of one poem being representative of another is extremely problematic, and so all I can do here is gesture towards two of the types of poetry that are contained within the manuscript. Equally, these readings are far from 'complete'. There is not the space here to give anything more than an indication of certain areas to be explored in greater depth. I have chosen here two elegies, one satirical and political, the other more personal.[15] As I noted above, it has been suggested that manuscript texts have a privileged relationship to the idea of a 'voice' in (or behind) writing. These readings are guided by a similar concern for voices, but in the debate between Ong and Derrida that Harold Love interestingly sets up, the readings presented here would be much closer to the Derridean line than to that of Ong.[16]

The subject of the first of these poems is perhaps adequately described by its title, 'On the Fall of that Grand Rebel the Earl of Essex his Effigies in Harry the 7th's Chappel in Westminster Abby'.[17] Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex, after Cromwell the most prominent Parliamentarian general, died after a stroke on 14 September 1646. As part of the grandest state funeral since the death of James I, an effigy of the Earl was constructed which was included in the procession. Following the funeral, this effigy of Devereux remained in Westminster Abbey, where it became the centrepiece of a Puritan shrine which attracted many visitors. The sermon which formed part of the funeral itself was given by Richard Vines and, by order of 'the House of Peeres', this sermon was published in October 1646, under the title *The Hearse of the Renowned, the Right Honourable Robert, Earle of Essex*.[18] In the sermon, Essex is compared to the biblical precedents Jonathan and Abner, linking their attempts to defend Israel to Essex's military role in the Parliamentarian cause, particularly at Edge Hill. Essex is described as a defender of the liberty and property of England, and his death is said to bring about a 'universall lamentation' (p. 3). Vines' conclusion is that: 'Hee lived *a good Generall*, Hee died *a Generall good*' (p. 36). Although the emphasis that Vines gives to his sermon centres on a theological rather than a political message, stressing the vanity of mortal fame and the inevitability of death ('Death is a fall from every thing but grace' (p. [12]), there are some phrases in the sermon which produce curious effects when viewed with the benefit of hindsight. Whilst towards the end of the text Vines claims of Essex's memory that 'it will be such a

Monument that every stone of it will speak a History' (p. 36), there is also the suggestion in 'The Epistle Dedicatory' (A3^{v}) that, even in the cases of the great and good, 'their very Monuments are mortall'. In a retrospectively extraordinary passage towards the end of his text, Vines comments:

> the losse wee have susteined is great tho he never had wore Buff but onely Parliament Robes, & they say that when a limb or part of a man is cut off, *anima retrahitur*, the soule is retracted, I wish the Phylosophy may be verified in the retraction of his reality and faithfulnesse unto you; that so he may remayne among you in quintessence and vertue, being as it were divided among you, as they say of *Romulus*, that he was discerpt by the Senate, when he died, and every Senatour got a piece of him (p. 37).

This desire for a *metempsychosis*, in which the soul of Essex would be transported from him to the other Parliamentarians, is prompted by a perceived mutilation or dismemberment of Essex's dead body. The interest of this passage becomes more apparent when we realise what happened to the effigy of Essex. His monument did indeed seem to be 'mortal', and the figural dismemberment that Vines wishes for becomes literalized by the actions of one who did not share in the universal lamentation.

For on the night of 26 November 1646, the effigy of Essex was mutilated by the cavalier John White. White concealed himself in the Abbey, attacked the Inigo Jones-designed catafalque with an axe, slashed the effigy's clothing, which included a coat worn by Essex at Edge Hill, and chopped off the effigy's head. Finally, he stole a gilt sword. He was captured two weeks later, imprisoned in the Gatehouse, and questioned in the House of Lords, where he also admitted to accidentally breaking off the nose of a statue of William Camden, the antiquarian. Despite his pleas for clemency, White was allowed to starve in the Gatehouse. The effigy was restored and placed in a glass case to prevent further attacks, and it was only removed from the Abbey in 1661, by Charles II's order.[19] Although Essex's image was not submitted to further damage, he was the subject of numerous satires and polemics. One such is the poem to be found in Lady Hester Pulter's manuscript.

On the Fall of that Grand Rebel the Earl of Essex his Effigies in Harry the 7th's Chappel in Westminster Abby

When that Fierce Monster had usurp'd the Place
W^{ch} once (ah mee) our Royall King did grace
One of her Heads, on topp of Fortune's Wheel
W^{ch} ever turns, grown giddy 'gan to reel

Just like Bellerophon mounting to the skie
And looking down—like him did brainsick die
Or like that Boy who thro' his fond desire
had almost sett Heav'ns axle-tree on fire
Or like the Cretian youth who flew soe high
His borrow'd plumes began to sindge & Fry
So this Bold Earl blown up with Pop'lar breath
Unenvy'd and unpitty'd fell to Earth
This was the man or rather the half Beast
Not like Alcides's Tutor who exprest
Both Natures & from both the best did Cull
This like Lybian Hammon had a horned skull
This was the first who had the bold Commision
from Cannon's mouth to thunder out partitions
The Copy came from Hell, thence such thoughts spring
With sulph'rous breath to parly with their King
Yett hee that ne're gain'd Honour here on Earth
By Order they made triumph after Death
And in derision of our Antient Kings
his horned Image they to th'Temple bring
because he was a member of the Dragon
they sett him up just like the Idol Dagon
by Israel's sacred Ark O bold Assumption
& certainly unparallel'd presumption
Butt down he fell loosing his hands & head
his Father serv'd so, living, hee so dead.
such End such honour lett all Trayters have
but our Augustus Heav'n protect & save.

This poem looks like a straightforward royalist polemic, celebrating the desecration of Essex's monument. Essex is described as an overreacher, with references to Bellerophon, Icarus, and others, and the well-worn topos of fortune's wheel. This is shown to be a familial trait, as the reference to the execution of the second Earl at the end of the poem suggests. Pulter's recurrent image of the Parliamentary supporters as a hydra appears here in the suggestion that Essex is one of the fierce monster's heads, and this prepares the way for the decapitation of the effigy. There is a recurrent movement between a use of third person description and the use of collective terms (such as hydra, our, they, and so on) which suggests that Essex, or at least his effigy, has a synecdochal significance. The destruction of the effigy thus becomes a symbolic victory against the Parliamentarians, and the link to the second Earl also

produces the figure of a posthumous execution; the effigy, a figure of the body, is subject to the same punishment as a physical body. This might be connected to the practice of destroying effigies in cases where a criminal is seen to have escaped justice, but what also takes place is an inversion of the symbolism of the Parliamentarian funeral. John White's actions are figured in the poem as a literal reading of the effigy as a representation of Essex's body.

The hydra might also be read, however, as an image of the inhuman, or more precisely the not fully human, and it is not the only figure of this type to intervene in this poem. The connection made between Essex and the Lybian Hammon (l. 16), like the reference to the Idol Dagon (l. 26), is more than just an assertion of relationship between the effigy and idolatry. Hammon, or Ammon, is usually represented as half-man, half-beast, frequently with the head of a ram or a horned skull. Similarly, Dagon is commonly half-human, half-fish.[20] Such characterisations in Pulter's poem might be read as the adoption of a royalist poetic convention which shows the Parliamentarians as less than human. The horns of Ammon might also be read as the cuckold's horns, potentially becoming an allusion either to Essex's first marriage to Frances Howard, annulled amidst allegations of Essex's impotence and his wife's alleged adultery with Robert Carr, or else to his second, about which there were also suspicions that he had been cuckolded.[21] James Loxley notes the irony in the discrepancy between Essex's martial and marital reputations: 'That the military leader of the revolt should be the Earl of Essex, a man famously divorced for impotence, allowed royalist satire to locate emasculation in a figure who was the iconic centre of the Parliamentarian cause for most of the first civil war'.[22] The implication may be then not so much that Essex is less than fully human but that he is less than a man, with the emphasis on his masculinity.

Phenomenalization of the voice and subject is always necessarily implied in the lyric, but here it would seem that some strategy must be found for avoiding the full phenomenalization of Essex's body. The body of Pulter's text should not stand in for Essex's body, since this would make the text itself an effigy. Unlike the effigy used in the funeral procession, the poem is not intended to be a memorial of Essex, indeed it might best be read as the commemoration of a dismembered body, through its repetition of the dis-*figuring* of the effigy. This avoidance of the phenomenalization of Essex as textual monument is in part attempted through the creation of a less than fully human figure. The *broken* effigy thus remains as the accurate figuration of a human body which is itself incomplete.

The question of gender raised by this attention to masculinity takes us into an area that has not yet been taken into account in this reading of the poem. What of the fact that this is written by a woman? Pulter's adoption of an avowedly royalist poetic position seems to negate any sense of female passivity, particularly if we accept the connection made in so much royalist poetry between writing and fighting. The idea of writing as commitment, and more particularly as committed political action, stands in opposition to the notion of a cavalier withdrawal into drinking, friendship and *otium*. This might be read as a means of engagement for the non-combatant female writer. Yet the rhetoric of masculinity which underpins so much of this royalist writing, especially if conceived through an attack upon the masculine virtues of its opponents, must be disturbed by its inhabitation through a female voice. As Loxley has suggested: 'The corporeal agency such poetry demands is marked as biologically male, defined against a particularly physical lack'.[23]

As Loxley notes, however, this is to grant voice a privileged access to presence and corporeality. The gender difference that this royalist concentration on masculinity is attempting to assert and define is precisely rhetorical. A non-linguistic, corporeal origin must ground the claim for an actively masculine poetic, and yet the claims for poetry as activity and the definition of masculinity upon which this claim is grounded can only take place in the poetry itself. That which is posited as ontologically prior to its linguistic expression turns out to be itself a product of that expression, and the corporeal origin is dispersed into reiterated linguistic acts of positing. Any identification of Pulter's writing as an attempt to enter this discourse as a royalist female combatant necessarily threatens the royalist principle of poetry as action since it is predicated on masculinity.

It might then be possible to read Pulter's focus on the question of Essex's masculinity as a matter of deferral. The place of the woman writer within this masculine poetic convention is displaced, through the projection of a perceived physical lack onto the subject of the poem rather than the speaking persona.

And yet, this may also allow too much to the ontological claims of voice. In a very different poem to be found in the Pulter manuscript, it is possible to read a far less secure operation of voice. Whilst the Essex poem can be read as an attempt to avoid monumentalizing its subject, 'On the same' is an elegiac lament for the death of one of Lady Hester's daughters, Jane. The title refers to a poem which precedes this one in the manuscript, entitled 'Upon the death of my deare and lovely daughter J.P.', to which a note has been added: 'Jane Pulter, baptized May 1. 1625. Buried Oct. 8 1646 at 20'.[24]

On the same

Tell mee noe more her haire was lovly brown
Nor that it did in Curious curles hang down
Or that it did her snowey shoulders shrowed
Like shineing Cinthia in A sable Clowd
Tell mee noe more of her black Diamond eyes
Whose cheerfull looke made all my sorrowes fly
Like Glittring Phebus Influence and light
After a northern winters halfe years night
Tell mee noe more her cheeks exceld the Rose
Though Lilly leaves did sweetly interpose
Like Ruddy Aurora riseing from her bed
Her snowey hand shadeing her Orient he'd
Tell mee noe more of her white even nose
Nor that her Ruby Lipps when they disclose
Did soe revive this drooping heart of mine
Like Golden Aples on A silver shrine
Tell mee noe more her bre'sts were heaps of snow
White as the swans where Cristall Thams doth flow
Chast as Diana was her virgin Bre'st
Her noble Mind can never bee exprest
This but the Casket was of her rich[?] soule
Which now doth shine above the highest pole
Tell mee noe more of her perfection
Because it doth increase my hearts dejection
Nor tell mee that shee past here happy dayes
In singing Heavenly and the Museses layes
Nor like the swans on Cristall Poe
Shee sung her Dirges ere shee hence did goe
Noe never more tell my sad soule of Mirth
With her I lost most of my Joyes on earth
Nor can I ever raise my drooping spirit
Untill with her those Joyes I shall inherit
Those Glories which our finite thoughts transcend
Where wee shall praises sing World without end
To him that made both her and mee of Earth
And gave us spirits of Celestiall Birth
Tell me noe more of her Unblemished fame
Which doth I-mortalize her virgin name
Like fragrant odours Aromatick fumes
Which all succeeding Ages still perfumes

Nor why I mourn for her aske mee noe more
For all my life I shall her loss deplore
Till infinite power her dust and mine shall raise
To sing in Heaven his everlasting praise.[25]

This poem begins as an apostrophe to an unidentified interlocutor, to one who seems to serve as an uncomfortable reminder of a daughter's death. Who is this addressee? Several possibilities present themselves, and attempts to make any identification naturally rest in part upon our definition of lyric poetry and the figure of apostrophe.[26] Lyric poems always imply a voice, speaking or singing, and necessarily imply someone or something to whom this voice speaks. It need not be a person, fictional or otherwise. This unidentified interlocutor is precisely not present, but neither in any strong sense is the author. We must preserve the distinction between author and speaking persona, even or perhaps especially in a poem which appears to be so evidently autobiographical. The reader is thus a hearer, or perhaps, in John Stuart Mill's phrase, someone who overhears.[27] This distinction might be important here, since on one level it is impossible not to think of the reader as the addressee. Yet it is also possible to think of the reader inhabiting the position of the persona who speaks in the poem.

Apostrophe seeks to animate that which is inanimate. As Barbara Johnson suggests:

> Apostrophe is a form of ventriloquism through which the speaker throws voice, life, and human form into the addressee, turning its silence into mute responsiveness.[28]

The refrain of this poem—Tell mee noe more—seemingly enacts not so much a desire for the voice of the other as a wish for silence. Response in this case is to take the form of muteness. There are contrary impulses here; an apostrophic address which calls the other to animation also marks a conversation which is already in progress and that the discourse of the poem seeks to end.

Of course, it is obvious that this is a poem about absence, about loss and mourning.[29] Yet we should not be too quick to establish a strict opposition between animate and inanimate. If apostrophe is a figure of animation, and in particular the animation of the inanimate, then such oppositions become hard to ground.

For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me mourn, might be an accurate summation of the tone of the beginning of this poem. The implied dialogue that the poem enacts offers an apparent divergence between *two* speakers which the reader may only hear as a single voice, and this

is accentuated by the call for the silence of the interlocutor. The repetition of the interlocutor's words, placing the blazon-like description of the daughter's qualities in invisible quotation marks, blurs any clear distinction between the supposedly antithetical positions. We also hear that these words are themselves repetitions; Tell mee *noe more*, not again, not now. I will return to the question of the temporality of this 'now'. The repetition of the descriptions makes the poem's apparent literal meaning untenable: the act of asking not to be reminded of the daughter's qualities is itself a reminder. Of course, for the reader, this a repetition which comes 'for the first time', it is an origin already marked by its secondarity, even without recourse to any mimetic notion of representation of the actual body of the deceased. Thus the desired muteness of the interlocutor is substituted for in the speaker's own locutions.

We might expect this act of mourning to be predicated on the loss of the human, yet the comparisons that are made are conventionally hyperbolic: Jane is 'Like shineing Cinthia', 'Like Glittring Phebus Influence and light', 'Like Ruddy Aurora', 'Chast as Diana', 'her cheeks exceld the Rose', 'her bre'sts *were* heaps of snow', and her body is merely the 'Casket' for her soul. Although such descriptions sound familiar as poetic conceits, we should be aware that most of these are rejected, they are the words that should not be repeated. Perhaps it is the movement into conceit that is the problem, the movement, marked by the repetition of 'like' away from the body itself (if we can use that word here). This presents the possibility of reading against the male love lyric.

The refrain is perhaps an echo of Carew's 'A Song', with its repeated response—Ask me no more—given to a series of impossible demands.[30] This aligns Pulter's poem with a rhetoric of love lyrics, and indeed if it were not for the title of the previous poem it would not be obvious from the opening lines of 'On the same' that this is an elegy. Unlike Lady Mary Wroth, Pulter does not make a clear effort to distance herself from a line of male love lyrics.[31]

The question of temporality becomes significant here. The emphasis on human corporeal finitude, on the need to transcend finite thoughts in favour of a recognition of infinite power and everlasting praise, opens the text to a reading as a memorial. Jane Pulter's body becomes monumentalized through the very act of repressing the memory of its component qualities. We might, then, think of this poem as an effigy. The substitution of a poetic text for an absent human body is not of course uncommon. The most famous examples are perhaps Ben Jonson's claim for 'his best piece of *poetrie*' in the elegy for his son, or Shakespeare's claim for the memorial quality of his sonnets.[32] Similarly, then, when Lady Hester remarks

> Tell me noe more of her Unblemished fame
> Which doth Imortalize her virgin name
> Like fragrant odours Aromatick fumes
> Which all succeeding Ages still perfumes
>
> (ll. 37–40)

the immortalization is enacted in the utterance which requests its own cancellation. The temporal location of the speaker's claim here should be remarked; there is an implication that the speaker already knows what the deceased's reputation will have been. There is an impossibly transcendent position suggested here, but this attempt to move beyond finite perfection is rejected. More pointedly, perhaps, fame immortalizes name, but it is not the name that is the object of mourning.

The sense of temporal dislocation that appears here is not restricted to this moment in the text. The notion of the daughter singing a swan's dirge (ll. 27–28) revives the classical conceit that swans are supposed to sing but once, and that before their deaths. This familiar image, used by Donne and by Shakespeare in both *Othello* and *Lucrece*, might be read as the voice of the future anterior; it can only be interpreted, after the fact, as that which will have announced death.[33] Is this poem, then, an apostrophe to death? Here might be another candidate for the unidentified interlocutor, for there is another *telos* here, that of Lady Hester's own death, and life in death.

The question of what it might mean to write an apostrophe to death, what it might mean to attempt to animate death, or to see death as a force capable of animation, is not one which could be answered too quickly here. Donne's resort to paradox in the movement from 'Death be not proud' to 'Death, thou shalt die' might exemplify the difficulties inherent in such a project.[34] Jonathan Culler suggests that 'apostrophe takes the crucial step of constituting the object as another subject with whom the poetic subject might hope to strike up a harmonious relationship'.[35] Is it possible to have a harmonious relationship with death? Given time, perhaps. Apostrophe is the trope which, through an obliteration of temporality, attempts the instantiation of the poem as a happening, as an event in the ever-present 'now' of a reading. Culler suggests that it is here that lyric is to be opposed to narrative. This is perhaps where Pulter's poem itself, as memorial and as an instance of voice, attempts to enact the transcendence of finitude.

This is then a *memento mori*, but it does not rest upon a strict division between presence and absence.[36] Pulter might be seen to attempt to dwell, to borrow a line from another of her poems, 'amongst the caverns of the dead'.[37] Memory and memorial are always intended

towards the future, even if this must be figured in a future anterior. Just as identification with a royalist poetic cannot guarantee the production of a stable female voice of political engagement, neither can the border between the living voice and the dead voice be located, once and for all. The Muses' lays cannot bring back the dead, but neither can that song be simply silenced within memory. Jane Pulter's voice can also be heard, by the speaking persona at least, in this poem. It is her voice, as much as that of the interlocutor, which acts as a painful reminder. When Hamlet suggests that the rest is silence, he can give no guarantees; the rest of the play should already have told him that.

NOTES

Research for this paper took place at the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, and the John Rylands Library, Manchester. I would like to thank the staff of both institutions. Versions of this piece have been delivered at the University of Leeds, at the Trinity/Trent Colloquium in the English Faculty at the University of Oxford in March 1998, and at the London Renaissance Seminar in April 1999. I am grateful to the organisers, Paul Hammond, Elizabeth Clarke, the late Jeremy Maule, and Thomas Healy, respectively, for invitations to speak. I would also like to express thanks to those who attended for their comments and suggestions. Since this is a paper about voice, it seems appropriate for some of the quality of the original oral form of the presentation to be retained.

1 The implications of this question are played out in Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Vox Clamans in Deserto', trans. Nathalia King, in *The Birth to Presence*, ed. Brian Holmes (Stanford, 1993), pp. 234–47. For this quotation see p. 236.

2 The poetry in question is contained in MS Lt q 32 in the Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds. I am grateful to Leeds University Library for permission to use these texts. The texts presented here, and the biographical and bibliographical descriptions offered, are intended to facilitate the readings of the poems which will follow, and should not be taken as a final version.

3 The titles of some recent publications are all that can be cited here: for example, Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London, 1992); Jonathan Goldberg, *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts* (London, 1986); Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones (eds), *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge, 1994); and Kate Chedgzoy, Melanie Hansen and Suzanne Trill (eds), *Voicing Women* (Keele, 1997).

4 The suggestion is made in Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York, 1982), for example, p. 132. This is discussed in chapter 4 of Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993), especially pp. 141–4.

5 This article is not intended to be a source study. The question of Pulter's influences will, however, be addressed in my forthcoming edition of Pulter's poetry, to be published in the Leeds Texts and Monographs series.

6 See Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Book 1.1365a. *Ethos* in this sense is related to persona and questions of authorial identity. The longevity of this concept may be indicated by T. S. Eliot's 'The Three Voices of Poetry', in *On Poetry and Poets* (London, 1957), pp. 89–102, in which the Aristotelian notion of an original, organising voice linked to authorial intention is maintained.

7 On the political consequences of this shared 'experience', testified to by the work of Paul Celan, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience*, trans. Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford, 1999). For the definition of 'experience' as Lacoue-Labarthe uses it in this text, drawing upon its strict sense as 'a crossing through danger' rather than as something that is 'lived', see p. 18.

8 See Charnes, *Notorious Identity: Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), p. 15.

9 The manuscript was acquired by the Brotherton Collection at Christie's auction, 8 October 1975, lot 353. It was formerly the property of Sir Gilbert Inglefield, Bt.

10 Sir Henry Chauncy, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire* (London, 1700), p. 72.

11 Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca & London, 1995), p. 73. Marotti's discussion of women's manuscripts occupies pp. 48–61.

12 Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore & London, 1993), pp. 37–38.

13 This was most notably argued in J. W. Saunders, 'The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Poetry', *Essays in Criticism*, 1 (1951), 139–64; but see also Steven W. May, 'Tudor Aristocrats and the Mythical "Stigma of Print" ', *Renaissance Papers 1980* (1981), 11–18.

14 These attempts, and the resistance to them, are discussed in the first chapter of Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1–37.

15 Marotti notes the popularity of death as a subject in manuscript collections: *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, pp. 129–30.

16 See note 4 above. The texts of most relevance in Derrida's corpus would be *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, 1976); *Speech and Phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, 1973); although many other passages might be cited here.

17 MS Lt q 32, f. 85r–v.

18 Richard Vines, *The Hearse of the Renowned, the Right Honourable Robert, Earle of Essex* (London, 1646). The edition that I have consulted was printed for Abel Roper, and the connection with the House of Lords is given on the title-page.

19 Much of the following information is to be found in *Whole Proceedings of the Barbarous and Inhuman demolishing of the Earl of Essex Tomb on Thursday Night Last, November 26, 1646* (London, 1646); and Vernon F. Snow, *Essex the Rebel: The Life of Robert Devereux, the third Earl of Essex, 1591–1646* (Lincoln, Neb., 1970), especially p. 494.

20 The complaint about the proximity of the monument of Essex to Israel (l. 27) might also be a reference to the analogy drawn between Essex and the biblical defenders of Israel made in a text such as Vines's sermon.

21 On Essex and Frances Howard, see David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (London, 1993). Ammon is also associated with Alexander the Great, and this may reinforce the critical attitude towards Essex's martial prowess. I am grateful to Peter Beal for this suggestion, and for his comments on this article as a whole.

22 James Loxley, 'Unfettered Organs: The Polemical Voices of Katherine Philips' (forthcoming), typescript, p. 13. I am grateful for the opportunity to read this text prior to publication. See also Loxley's *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke, 1997).

23 Loxley, 'Unfettered Organs', p. 12.
24 Pulter, MS Lt q 32, f. 16v.
25 Pulter, MS Lt q 32, ff. 17v–18v.
26 For a discussion of lyric poetry which has influenced my approach here, see Timothy Bahti, *Ends of the Lyric: Direction and Consequence in Western Poetry* (Baltimore, 1996).
27 Mill, quoted in Bahti, p. 3.
28 Barbara Johnson, 'Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion', in *A World of Difference* (Baltimore, 1987), pp. 184–99 (185).
29 For a useful recent discussion, see Matthew Greenfield, 'The Cultural Functions of Renaissance Elegy', *English Literary Renaissance*, 28.1 (1998), 75–94. For the status of particular genres in the Civil War period, including elegy, see Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven & London, 1994).
30 It is to be noted that Henry King's 'Sonnet' begins with the phrase 'Tell me no more', but it does not maintain this in the manner of a refrain. Scott Nixon addresses the manuscript circulation of Carew's poem in '"Aske me no more" and the Manuscript Verse Miscellany', *English Literary Renaissance*, 29.1 (1999), 97–130.
31 I am grateful to Michael Brennan for this suggestion.
32 Jonson, 'XLV On my First Sonne' from *Epigrammes*, in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols (Oxford, 1925–1952), VIII [1947], p. 41, l. 10.
33 Donne, 'An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary' [1611], in *The Complete English Poems*, ed. A. J. Smith (Harmondsworth, 1971 [1983]), p. 281, l. 407; Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Norman Sanders (Cambridge, 1984), 5.2.245–6; *Lucrece*, in *The Poems*, ed. F. T. Prince (London, 1969 [1990]), ll. 1611–12.
34 Donne, *Divine Meditations*, 'Holy Sonnet X' [1633], in *The Complete English Poems*, p. 313.
35 Jonathan Culler, 'Apostrophe', in *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London, 1981), pp. 135–54 (143).
36 Among many discussions of the function of the *memento mori* in England in this period, notable is Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c.1500–c.1800* (London, 1991), especially chapter 4.
37 Pulter, 'The complaints of Thames 1647 when the best of kings was imprisoned by the worst of Rebels at Holmbie', l. 108, MS Lt q 32, f. 10r. This poem also contains the image of the swan's dirge, l. 104.

Lucy Hutchinson and *Order and Disorder*: The Manuscript Evidence

David Norbrook

I

In the recent revival of interest in women's writing, Lucy Hutchinson (1620–81/2) has been relatively neglected. This may be in part because her failure to print her work (with the notable exception to which we shall come below) makes her seem more cautious and conventional than contemporaries like Behn and Philips, especially because she ascribed it to her inferior abilities as a woman. It has certainly made the reconstruction of her canon a complicated and uneven process. She left behind her a large body of manuscript writings, most of which passed to another branch of the Hutchinson family, and were recorded by Julius Hutchinson in his 1806 edition of *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*. These papers were bequeathed by Julius Hutchinson to his solicitor, who left the country in financial difficulties, and though two of the manuscripts were printed in 1817, and others have found their way back into the archives, the manuscript of her autobiography, which contained a number of poems as well, remains unaccounted for. The other main manuscript known to date, the translation of Lucretius, passed down in the family of its dedicatee, Arthur Annesley, Earl of Anglesey, until its sale to the British Museum in 1853, and was not published until 1996.

The fact that the manuscripts were not printed does not of course mean that they did not receive some form of audience. As Margaret Ezell has pointed out, many women can be regarded as having 'published' even though the circulation was in manuscript form.[1] Hutchinson belongs to this group; and yet her particular political position made her unusually ambivalent about this situation, and her attitude towards the circulation of her writings was a complex one. Though she did assert in the dedication to her Lucretius translation that women should not venture into print, her wording was polemically edged: