

5-4-2018

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“For I no liberty expect to see”: Astronomical imagery and the definition of the self in

Hester Pulter’s elegiac poetry

By
Tamara Mahadin

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts of English
in English
in the Department of English

Mississippi State, Mississippi

May 2018

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“For I no liberty expect to see”: Astronomical imagery and the definition of the self in
Hester Pulter’s elegiac poetry

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Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: English

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Title of Study: "For I no liberty expect to see": Astronomical imagery and the definition of the self in Hester Pulter's elegiac poetry

Pages in Study 74

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Hester Pulter's (1605-1678) work was discovered in 1996 in the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds. Pulter composed her poetry in the 1640s-1650s, but her works were not compiled until 1660s. Overall, her manuscript contains one hundred and twenty poems and emblems in addition to an unfinished prose romance. Pulter recalls her personal life in her poems, and the collection includes her elegiac and lyrical poems on different topics such as politics, religion, childbirth, and the death of her children. In her elegiac poetry, Pulter explores the experience of childbirth and sickness through a set of conventional Christian ideas about death. However, Pulter's elegiac poetry also breaks away from Christian conventions, often through the use of astronomical imagery. In this thesis, I argue that Pulter's grief and consolation strategies sometimes differ from her contemporaries; however, she eventually finds consolation using imagery drawn from her knowledge of the new astronomy, allowing her to reconstruct her identity. Through comparing Pulter with her contemporaries such as George Herbert, Katherine Philips, and John Donne, Pulter's poetry, which has been unstudied until recently, provides an example of a woman writer who is familiar with the seventeenth century poetical

conventions while also breaking away from them to alter her elegiac performances in her poetry.

DEDICATION

For my grandfathers, Ottallah Mahadin and Mahmoud Almaita, may their soul rest in peace.

For my parents, Kamel O. Mahadin and Khalida Almaita who inspired me to always follow my dreams.

For my brothers, Tariq, Yazan, and Amer who taught me that hard work pays off.

For my mentor, Dr. Rula Quawas, who believed that women can conquer the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my thesis committee who have supported me throughout my research. I sincerely thank my thesis chair Dr. Lara Dodds who have introduced me to Hester Pulter's work and encouraged me to do the thesis track. I could not have done it without her guidance and willing to help me while writing the thesis. I also wish to express my gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Shalyn Claggett and Dr. Thomas Anderson who supported me during my thesis process.

I would also like to thank the English Department at Mississippi State University who have fulfilled my dream to continue my studies in English Literature.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1996, a manuscript of Lady Hester Pulter's writing was discovered in the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds. The seventeenth-century poet composed her poetry in the 1640s and 1650s, but her works were not compiled until the 1660s (Eardley, "Introduction" 1). In 2014, Alice Eardley published the first critical and only edition of Pulter's manuscript and titled it, *Poems, Emblems, and the Unfortunate Florinda*. As Pulter's manuscript is her only known work, it significantly examines a woman's experiences in the private sphere through many personal (domestic) poems addressing her life as a wife and especially as a mother. Moreover, her poems address so-called public concerns, including political changes, religion, and scientific developments. Because her poems were not written for publication, her poetry provides a valuable opportunity to explore the literary ambitions of a female writer who did not have to meet the expectations of a specific audience (Eardley, "Introduction" 2). Pulter deals with a variety of themes from religious to political and scientific ones. She provides an inside look of an early modern writer engaging with themes that were not always examined by some of her contemporaries, which highlights the importance of studying her private writing. Pulter's domestic poetry returns frequently to her experience of suffering in childbirth, sickness, and the death of her children. In her elegiac poetry, Pulter constantly struggles with her

identity, which she tries to regain through using her faith in God and the knowledge of contemporary science.

Given the limited information about the private life of Hester Pulter, she remains an enigma. The daughter of James Ley (The first Earl of Marlborough), Pulter was born between 1605 – 1607 in Ireland. In 1608 James I commanded her parents to move to England. Other than the fact that her family moved from Wiltshire to Beckington, details of Pulter's childhood remain unknown, including her education and where she lived after 1613. Though Pulter's connections to her contemporaries are undocumented, her family appears occasionally in the literary record. For instance, John Milton wrote a poem to her sister Margaret, praising Pulter's sister for "learned eloquence" (Eardley, "Introduction" 14). Though Pulter's education remains unknown, her poetry reveals a woman knowledgeable in classical literature, the new astronomy, and religion. After her teen-age marriage to Arthur Pulter, she settled two years later in Broadfield, where Pulter seems to have spent much of her life. Broadfield appears frequently in the poems, sometimes as a place of grief. Between 1624 and 1648 Pulter gave birth to fifteen children but only two survived her (Eardley, "Introduction" 13 -16). Pulter's grief influenced her mental and physical state shaping her melancholic poetry.

In 1996, Mark Robson discovered Pulter's manuscript of "Poems breathed forth by the Noble Hadrassas" and "The Unfortunate Florinda" at the University of Leeds. Unfortunately, little is known about the manuscript's whereabouts between the mid-eighteenth to the nineteenth century (Eardley, "'Shut up'" 348). Eardley asserts that the manuscript, when it was auctioned in 1976, reached the University of Leeds library where it remained hidden until 1996 ("Shut up" 349). Eardley observes that Pulter "did not share

her work with high-profile literary, intellectual, or even social connections, and it was apparently not read or owned by anyone of note. Because of this, [the manuscript] provides a valuable test case for the narratives we have constructed about seventeenth-century women and their writing” (“Shut up” 351). Elaine Hobby asserts that more than two hundred women writers were published between 1649 and 1688; however, their work represents women writing privately. Pulter is a perfect example of Wilcox’s examination because of Pulter’s private writing. Even though Pulter’s work was not published, Margaret Ezell, like Eardley, emphasizes the importance of studying manuscripts of early modern women writers – especially since most of their writing during this period was in manuscript form. They assert that focusing specifically on printed books threatens to devalue women’s writing, some of which Ezell believes to be “extraordinary” (“Shut up” 335). Ezell refers to Pulter’s manuscript to highlight its relation to politics in the seventeenth-century. Unlike Ezell, who, like the majority of scholars, studies Pulter’s work among that of early modern woman writers, Mark Robson studies her work beyond the period’s “biography, cultural history or 'historicism’” (“Swansongs” 339). He argues that scholars should aim at studying Pulter’s writing from a voice different than that of her own since most of them examine Pulter as a “woman writer.” In this thesis, I argue that Pulter’s grief and consolation strategies sometimes differ from her contemporaries; however, she eventually finds consolation using imagery drawn from her knowledge of the new astronomy, allowing her to re-construct her identity.

One stage of scholarship regarding Pulter’s poetry placed an emphasis her royalist identity and her poetic responses to the seventeenth-century political changes. Much of her work, composed during the English civil war, expressed her royalist belief that a king

must govern the social hierarchy (Eardley, "Introduction" 6). Like other royalist poets such as Katherine Philips and Robert Herrick, Pulter responds to political defeat. In the poems, "Upon the Imprisonment of his Sacred Majestie that unparalleled Prince King Charles the First" and "On the horrid murder of that incomparable Prince, King Charles the first," Pulter expresses her anger, fear, and grief. In this respect, Pulter contributes to the important tradition of royalist women's writing identified by Hero Chalmers, Sarah Ross, and others. Chalmers stresses the importance of royalist women writers who need to be "back on the map of seventeenth – century royalist literature" (5). She mentions Katherine Philips, Margaret Cavendish, and Aphra Behn as part of royalists whose work provides historical documentation of royalist literature. She explores how they challenged gender-biases concerning their writing and eventually were able to prove their authorship beyond their gender. Pulter's poems suit her argument concerning how women royalists challenged gender-bias. Furthermore, Ross traces women writers who have chosen different forms of poetry, such as elegies and emblems, to discuss political changes. She examines how Pulter's tears and sighs in reaction to the English Civil War are "prolific, politicized, powerful ... in the series of fifty-three emblem poems" ("Hester Pulter's Elegies" 138). Ross asserts the significance of reading Pulter's work because it highlights the trend of "a gendered poetic trope" ("Hester Pulter's Elegies" 136). Therefore, Pulter's royalist poems and emblems in reaction to the political and historical events provide a new feminine lens for political writing. Like Pulter, other women royalist writers such as Philips discussed their political opinions through poetry. Comparing Philips and Pulter in her recent article, Eardley demonstrates the differences between their approaches to political affairs. While Pulter's royalist poems seem to offer

“satirical and somewhat angry commentary,” Philips is “sensitive to slander and acknowledges, albeit for rhetorical and thematic reasons, that there were conventions governing what women, or for that matter any respectable individual, could or could not say in poetry” (“Shut up” 353). Yet, Ezell states that “Hester Pulter was not silent, resigned, or detached about contemporary political events” (343). Composing privately gave Pulter freedom to discuss political affairs without worrying about her audience. Therefore, Pulter’s political poems offer a significant source for critics investigating women’s writings in the royalist literary period.

Scholars have also emphasized the impact that political changes had on the personal lives of seventeenth-century women writers like Pulter. Kate Chedzoy discusses how the memory of war affects Cavendish, Hutchinson, Brackley, and Pulter. She considers Pulter's ability to juxtapose political affairs with familial mourning as “nostalgia for a lost England” (127). Moreover, she believes that studying women’s writing in relation to politics is crucial because it highlights how individuals are formed in a crisis like war (166). Like Chedgozy, Ross emphasizes that Pulter’s recounting of political changes shows her constant grief, which highlights Pulter’s verses as “both personal and political” (“Tears” 1). For example, Ross believes that “Pulter’s poem on Jane’s death illustrates the eruption of political concerns into the most personal of domestic occasional elegies” to reveal the impact that the civil war had on Pulter and other women writers (“Tears” 4).

Another stage of scholarship focuses on Pulter’s poetry highlighting her religious doctrine during the political and religious changes. Whereas critics acknowledge that the supporters of King Charles defended the belief in divinely appointed kings, Hobby states

that the supporters of Parliament defended their belief that they were “a godly force” (12). Parliament succeeded in altering both belief and Anglican Episcopal church services such that Pulter’s emblems express why, as a royalist, she could not be part of the new 1640 church ceremonies (Eardley, “Introduction” 9). Then, when Cromwell became the Lord protector of England in 1653 and dissolved Parliament because they opposed God’s decisions, Pulter attacks Cromwell’s tyranny based on her belief that a divinely appointed king as head of the church should be the one who also governs the country (Hobby 12). According to Hobby and Eardley, Pulter’s poetry reflects the political debates regarding religious doctrine and their effects on the body politic.

Moreover, scholars have compared the poetic forms of Pulter’s devotional poetry with those of other seventeenth-century poets, focusing on how Pulter adopts and adapts to new poetical conventions. Elizabeth Scott-Baumann argues that “In order to understand women’s place in literary history, we need to excavate and analyze their dialogue with existing traditions” (9). Much of Pulter’s devotional poetry imitates famous seventeenth-century poets such as George Herbert and John Donne, revealing her familiarity with seventeenth-century literature. Elizabeth Clarke traces Donne and Herbert’s devotional poetry and then explores women writing religious verses such as Anne Southwell, Amelia Lanyer, and Hester Pulter. Both Clarke and Eardley elaborate the similarities between Pulter’s religious poetry and George Herbert’s. For example, like some of Herbert’s poems, Pulter’s deals with doubt and confusion resolved by God’s consolation. Scott-Baumann asserts women’s writing “as acts of reading, re-creation, challenge, and appropriation” (7). Though Pulter adopts the elegaic forms from Herbert, she transforms them as exemplified by her discussions of her daughters’ deaths, wherein

her consolation disappears. Moreover, Pulter's religious poems share characteristics with John Donne's. Pulter uses images from astronomy, astrology and alchemy to understand herself and her surroundings just as Donne "frequently uses startling images from the new philosophy" (Eardley, "Introduction" 25). Nigel Smith extols a formalist approach to studying royalists' women writers such as Philips and Pulter to expand our understanding of the work of early modern women writers (232 – 43). The similarities between Pulter's devotional poems and those of other seventeenth-century poets reveal both her familiarity with others' forms, and her ability to transform or modify those forms.

Pulter's manuscript consists of 130 poems and an unfinished prose romance. While these two genres reveal her versatility and skill, my focus is on her elegiac poetry. The first part of her manuscript includes sixty-seven, mostly personal poems: political elegies, devotionals, childbirth poems, and elegies dedicated to her children. Apart from these, Pulter draws frequently on the new science of astronomy, astrology, and alchemy as a source of imagery in the second part of her manuscript: fifty-three emblems that were probably composed between 1653-1658 (Ross, "Hester Pulter's Elegies" 157). Rachel Dunn and Sarah Ross both assert that Pulter's work is the only example of the English Emblem book made by a woman, highlighting how remarkably her work breaks from traditional conventions in the early modern period. It is through this new science that Pulter develops her new emblems to assert her identity and place in the world.

Pulter writes within the emblem tradition to challenge its conventions. As Ross argues, emblems were prominent between the 1630s - 1650s and were used for devotional, spiritual, and moral purposes ("Hester Pulter's Elegies" 158-159). While traditional emblems consist of a motto, an image, and a moral symbol to represent the

world, Eardley states that Pulter's emblems "differ from conventional emblems in that they do not have a separate motto and they are what are now called 'naked' emblems, which is to say they are not accompanied by visual images" ("Introduction" 27 -28). Nevertheless, they contain strong "imaginary object[s] or scene[s]" that demand the reader to examine them (Eardley, "Introduction" 28). Like Eardley, Rachel Dunn states that Pulter assesses "the emblem to collapse or transform" it (56). Therefore, Pulter uses the emblem tradition to transform it to comment on the "contemporary world, to look forward as well as backward" and by doing this, Pulter's contemporary world defies the emblem as a genre (Dunn 57). Thus, Pulter transforms the emblem to discuss political and social changes. Dunn believes that "Pulter's entrance into the emblem genre can be seen as part of the movement of women empowered by civil war debate. Critics have noted the opportunity for women's increased political participation in the mid-seventeenth-century surrounding the debates of the civil wars" (56-66). Eardley and Dunn's illustrate that Pulter is unconventional in the way she writes her emblems through transforming the genre to fit a contemporary world.

The most recent scholarship has emphasized Pulter's familial elegies. Pastoral and funerary elegies were prominent in the seventeenth-century, and Pulter chooses these forms to mourn the deaths of her children. Andrea Brady mentions female poets like Pulter and Bradstreet who wrote about the death anniversaries of their beloved ones (52). Pulter's pastoral elegy revisits her daughter's grave on the second anniversary of her death to remember "the seasonal cycle as a symbol of natural decay and rebirth" (Brady 52). Wilcox refers to several seventeenth century female poets, including Anne South, Lucy Russell, and Hester Pulter, who elegize death and mortality, examining the impact

of these ideas on female identity (“‘Jove's Great Priviledge’” 177 – 92). She finds that Pulter’s attachment to her daughter beyond death is inevitable, ultimately affecting her identity, and notes, “After Jane's death, Pulter's heart seems to vanish in the numbness of loss” (“‘Jove's Great Priviledge’”191). Grief from the loss of her daughters results in her constant illness and sadness. Wilcox suggests that Pulter chooses classical references to illustrate her mourning, references that help her to shape a new identity full of sorrow (“‘Jove's Great Priviledge’” 192). Wilcox further explores how the deaths of her daughters influence Pulter’s life to contemplate through elegiac form her own death. Research focusing on Pulter’s elegies reveals critical interest in how early modern women writers perform elegiac forms of feeling.

Scholarship regarding Pulter’s use of contemporary science is limited; however, Sarah Hutton emphasizes Pulter’s ability to examine her spirituality through the new astronomy. Although there is no definitive information about Pulter’s education, she was, as the daughter of an earl, familiar with the science of the day, including astrology and astronomy (Eardley, “Introduction” 14). According to Londa Schiebinger, “science became fashionable in the middle decades of the seventeenth-century,” and women were familiar with the scientific revolution, especially “women of high rank” (37). Therefore, Pulter may have had access to books on science because of her status as daughter of an earl and wife of the wealthy Arthur Pulter, who had royal court connections. J. Archer elaborates on Pulter’s ability to draw upon natural philosophy, such as alchemy, in her poems to create vivid imagery. Eardley contends that, besides alchemy, Pulter draws upon her “considerable knowledge of relatively recent ideas and discoveries within astronomy” (“Introduction” 11). Hutton asserts that Pulter’s poetry draws upon the new

science of astronomy because it shows a deep understanding and “knowledge of contemporary science” (“Hester Pulter” 3). Hutton believes that, in one way or other, women have “contributed to the revolution in scientific thinking in the seventeenth-century” (“Anne Conway” 232). For instance, Margaret Cavendish builds from her understanding of philosophy a utopia, where gender does not pose a problem. Unlike Cavendish, Pulter’s poetry offers the inner world of a seventeenth-century woman who witnessed the new discoveries of astronomy and astrology. Hutton, exploring the new astronomy in Pulter’s works, such as “This Was Written in 1648,” and focusing on the relationship between Pulter’s life and astronomy, states, “Pulter’s borrowings from astronomy and natural philosophy radiate the same spiritual optimism. She uses contemporary science and astronomy as a means of making unconventional adaptations of conventional spiritual motifs” (“Hester Pulter” 4). As such, Pulter’s poetry is not about showing her knowledge, but rather a larger scientific context for “spiritual reflection” (4). While Hutton does mention that Pulter’s astronomical poetry uplifts her spirit, her argument mainly discusses Pulter’s contemporary science within its historical context, and Pulter’s attainable sources that may reflect her knowledge of astronomy. Till now, scholars mention that Pulter’s references to contemporary science enable her to reflect spiritually on her illness and sadness; however, my own research expands on that point to illustrate how she uses the new astronomy into her elegiac performances.

My thesis examines Pulter’s ways of expressing her grief and her journey to find consolation; however, while she does have some similarities with her contemporaries, she diverts from them, and gains consolation by embracing the new astronomy. In all the chapters, I compare Pulter’s elegiac poetry with some of her contemporaries such as,

George Herbert, Katherine Philips, and John Donne to illustrate Pulter's poetical conventions that are similar to her other seventeenth-century poets. The thesis will also examine how Pulter creates her own conventions to reflect her personal state. The first two chapters highlight Pulter's struggle with her identity in her devotional and familial elegies. Chapter one compares Pulter's elegies with Herbert's: their parallel devotional themes and Pulter's divergence from Herbert as she asserts her inability to always gain consolation from God specifically when she recalls the death of her daughters. Chapter two links with the previous chapter through examining Pulter's familial elegies of her daughters through comparing them to Philips's elegy to her son. By building on Kate Lilley's argument that women's consolation disappears in these elegies through refusal to reify their children, I will highlight Pulter's different refusal to reify her daughters through emphasizing her desire to die to join them in heaven (87). While Pulter wishes to accompany her daughters in heaven, the chapter ends by illustrating that Pulter's comfort is slightly restored once she incorporates astronomical imagery in her familial elegies – a consolation denied by female narratives of similar 17th century elegiac traditions.

Pulter reconstructs her identity through exploring the new astronomy as self-reflective when she distances herself from the death of her daughters and God. Chapter three illustrates Pulter's ability to create images from astronomy to reconstruct her identity. I will compare Donne's traditional metaphors from astronomy with Pulter's images to show how her elegiac poetry breaks away from Christian convention, and, as Hutton suggests, reveals her creative path to "spiritual optimism" ("Hester Pulter" 4). Her spiritual optimism, gained through coupling scientific knowledge – both astronomy and astrology – with creative vision allow her to find temporary consolation and to

reconstruct her identity. Pulter is eventually capable of using the new astronomy as a consolatory strategy to restore her identity. Departing from her contemporaries, Pulter is able to transform and appropriate poetical conventions to what is relevant to her state of mind. Therefore, Pulter's work proves her ability to adopt and adapt to the poetical conventions through changing them to fit the context of her personal life.

CHAPTER II

“DEAR GOD, FROM THY HIGH THRONE LOOK DOWN”: THE DEVOTIONAL ELEGIES OF HESTER PULTER AND GEORGE HERBERT

As the largest section in her manuscript, Hester Pulter’s devotional poetry offer a wide range of poems dealing with personal suffering. To escape her emotional struggles, Pulter’s elegiac poetry mostly focuses on her conventional Christian ideas about death, anticipating an afterlife to solve her constant grief. While these poems show Pulter’s personal conflicts, Sarah Hutton elaborates that those poems offer “spiritual uplift, infused with hope and joy. Like George Herbert... [Pulter] sees beyond the dissolution of the fragile beauties of the world to the true life hereafter” (“Hester Pulter” 4). Some of Pulter’s devotional poetry offer a consolation in their resolution that is similar to Herbert’s poetry. Many of the poems in Herbert’s *The Temple* follow a rhetorical pattern of doubt transformed into consolation. Likewise, Pulter’s devotional verses offer a comparable consolation to Herbert’s poetry; however, the scholarship exploring their similarities has yet to be done. Addressing this gap in the criticism, this chapter compares Herbert’s and Pulter’s devotional poetry to examine how Pulter also departs from Herbert’s writing style.

When comparing her work with Herbert’s devotional poetry, scholars who explore Hester Pulter’s elegiac poems of the same period note that a comparison reveals Pulter’s ambivalent literary relationship with Herbert’s poetry. Alice Eardley points out

that Herbert's devotional poetry was quite famous during the seventeenth-century, and that Pulter was one of the many poets who were likely familiar with his work ("Introduction" 25). Among the many religious poets of the seventeenth-century, George Herbert is the most eminent devotional poet. Herbert's *The Temple* displays devotional lyrical poetry, and almost all his poems depict a set of conventional Christian ideas about sin, pain, death, and life. His sacred poems were so popular that multiple editions were published in the seventeenth-century, suggesting a wide readership. Pulter's poetry, compiled between 1640 and 1650, engages with some of Herbert's themes such as sin, death, and pain. This may suggest that Pulter's poetry may have been influenced by Herbert's writing style. Maureen Mulvihill asserts, "The writings of Hester Pulter show us a familiarity with Biblical themes, devotional verse, [and] the 'metaphysical' poets (especially George Herbert, Donne, Marvell)" (5). Additionally, Eardley states "several of [Pulter's devotional verse] poems are plain-style compositions written in imitation of George Herbert" ("Introduction" 25). Likewise, Rachel Dunn emphasizes Pulter's familiarity with Herbert through examining Pulter's emblems in relation to her devotional poetry (55-73). The scholarship on Pulter asserts her similarities with Herbert, examining how Herbert's work may have been an inspiration for her own; however, none have illustrated the differences between similarities.

Yet, even though both poets have similar patterns, they sometimes differ with their resolutions. Both poets begin their poems with the speakers' doubt and disturbance, and in the end, the speakers gain comfort from God. Furthermore, both poets offer consolation strategies through their poetical form. For Herbert, the speaker's rhyme is mended at the ending of the poem while Pulter's consolation is achieved through singing.

While Pulter's elegiac poetry offers a consolation in their resolutions, comfort is not always renewed. Her poems display the doubts and the discomforts due to sickness, childbirth, and the loss of children, all to demonstrate the struggle in her relationship with God. Her personal struggles, especially when grieving the loss of her daughters, illustrate that consolation and comfort are nonexistent for her. Her multiple elegiac and religious poems illustrate her constant need to find consolation. In this chapter, I argue that Herbert and Pulter's poetry offer similar devotional movements such as a shift in tone from the speakers' doubts to gaining consolation from God that restores their faith. However, Pulter's elegiac poetry sometimes presents the impossibility of consolation, especially when personal loss interferes, such as recalling the death of her daughters, proving that comfort cannot be evident unless she dies and joins them in heaven. Though my overall thesis focuses on Pulter's ability to reconstruct her identity through astronomy, it proves Pulter's difficulty of achieving consolation in these poems and her journey to gain it through the new astronomy; therefore, this chapter on Pulter's elusive consolation illustrates the challenges Pulter faces in reconstructing her identity.

Herbert's Speaker: From Doubt to Reassurance

Herbert's poem "Denial" is an example of his developmental forms that express spiritual states. Herbert's "Denial" uses specific rhyme scheme where the rhyme of the poem matches the speaker's doubt and frustration. In the first half of the poem, the last line of each stanza breaks the rhyming pattern, but when the speaker gains consolation at the end of the poem, the rhyme of the poem is corrected. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker's frustration becomes explicit when he learns that God is dismissing the speaker's prayers:

And mend my rhyme. (21-30)

The speaker examines his soul that is now “untuned, unstrung”; his weak spirit is no longer capable of being lively since it is just like a broken flower. The speaker tries to “cheer” up and reveals that when God answers his calls and prayers, his soul and mind may sing and eventually repair his rhyme. Even though the speaker does not say that God has agreed to his wishes, the last two lines demonstrate the mending of the rhyme to reflect the speaker’s recovered soul. In this way, Herbert’s ending offers an emotional and spiritual rescue mirrored in poetic form.

Pulter’s Tentative Consolation: From Reassurance to Continuous Doubt

“Eclipse,” the first poem in Hester Pulter’s manuscript, follows the pattern established by Herbert’s “Denial”: the pattern that turns from uncertainty to consolation from God. “Eclipse” also establishes themes that recur throughout Pulter’s poetry such as sin, mortality, death, pain, faith, and the afterlife as she examines nature and the world she lives in relation to herself. She divides “Eclipse” into four parts, in which she examines in sequence the clouds, the earth, the moon, and finally mortality, death, and sin, each preventing her from experiencing happiness; however, the ending of the poem demonstrates Pulter gaining consolation like Herbert’s speaker.

In the first part, Pulter discusses her annoyance with the clouds because they conceal the bright blue sky. She then realizes their temporary effect and acknowledges her similarities with the clouds – how they soon enough must fade away like herself.

Both will eventually vanish:

1. Why do those frowning vapors interpose
Between the bright expansion and mine eyes?
By Whose unkindness for a time I lose

The beauteous prospect of the azure sky
Deny not thus my sight to satisfy
Malicious clouds, before you rarefy

For you are of a variable condition
(As well as I) and shall ere long dissolve
Glory not then in interposition
For into other elements revolve
You must, perhaps by condensation
Hinder not then (so poor) a contention. (1-12)

In the first stanza, Pulter examines the thickness of the clouds and their “unkindness” for shielding the blue sky, which explains her annoyance because she wants to see the sky’s light. When she addresses the clouds’ “variable condition,” she refers to the clouds shielding the blue sky. The clouds’ changing condition is like her own situation, because she experiences constant change within herself. By showing their constant change, she reveals that both will eventually “dissolve” (8). As she addresses the clouds, she observes that the clouds’ association with the blue sky will change and go back to its original state, which is dissolution. Pulter may refer to the “elements” as the reverting of her surroundings when they go back to their essential state, in the same way that human beings return to dust, which illustrates the dissolution of both. Pulter regards the world as everchanging and everything that exists as eventually dissolving.

In part two, Pulter speaks of her discomfort from the earth, to which she gives the same attributes as the clouds such that both the clouds and the earth discomfort her. She demonstrates her uncertainty and sadness with her surroundings and elaborates on the influence the earth has on her:

2. And thou, sad, pond’rous, passive, globe of earth;
Though for thy weight thou canst not mount above,
And though from thee my baser parts took birth,
Yet dost thou show to me more hate than love,

For with thy shadow thou eclipsed the light
Of Splendent Phoebe from my feeble sight

Surely thy destiny is known to thee;
And the continual revolution
Of elements, as we do hourly see,
And thy irrevocable dissolution
As well as mine, or rather conflagration
Then envy not (for frame) my contentation. (13- 24)

Addressing the earth as “sad” because it cannot reach above like the clouds, Pulter explains that it gives her birth and yet hates her. She may refer to Earth as the mother that gives birth to everyone; however, this mother does not provide her happiness. She believes that the earth casts a shadow, which obscures the moon, “Pheobe,” from her fragile sight. Therefore, the earth limits her sight like the clouds that cover the light from the blue sky. Like clouds, the earth will one day dissolve; therefore, the earth has its own destiny too, which means that it will return to its elemental state as will the clouds. She examines the dissolution of both the earth and the clouds as sources of “contentation,” and she enjoys witnessing their dissolution. Pulter reflects on her surroundings, the clouds and the earth, only to realize her own similarity to them as all three are capable of dissolution.

Similarly, Pulter explores the solar eclipse and its direct influence on her, starting with her discontent because it obscures the sun’s light. Just as she previously remarks on the earth casting a shadow on the moon, she notes the moon likewise dimming the sun's light. Extending her imagery of the solar eclipse to reflect its impact on the sun and herself, she writes:

3. And thou, dark body of the globious moon,
That dost obscure that radiant Delia’s sight,
Threatening to make my sun to set at noon,

Whereby I lose his influence and light;
Dost thou not know inevitable fate?
Then in conjunction do not show thy haste.

For the impartial Parcae now have spun
Thy thread (and mine); then he that lends thee light
Shall wane himself, and dark shall be thy sun
As in the chaos were the shades of night.
Then shall your shining spheres with fervor melt,
Then shall be done by thee as you has dealt. (25-36)

The moon's obscuring of the sun's light during the eclipse disturbs Pulter, who, throughout her poems, illustrates the importance of light. She prefers the daytime to nighttime because it gives hope. When the sun's light disappears, she believes that its positive effect on her is lost. Subsequently, her mind turns to the Fates, "Parcae," who in Roman mythology control everything including the moon, the sun, and her own life. She reflects that while the sun lends the moon its light, the sun's light fades out, even though she knows that the sun and the moon exchange light. Their exchange builds to the mutable condition that all her surroundings experience.

Pulter's more personal observations mark the final part of the poem, where her discomfort and awareness allow her to gain consolation. While the moon obscures the light of the sun, in part four, mortality, death, and sin obscure glory for her soul. This demonstrates her shift into a more personal perspective when she examines all three:

4. But oh, Mortality, 'tis thou alone
That dost obscure bright glory from my soul;
'Tis thou that fett' rest me with flesh and bone,
And makst me here in dust and ashes roll,
Presenting to me transitory toys,
And hidest from my soul celestial joys.

But Death, triumph not in my dissolution;
For though thou holdst [me] in thy cursed jaws

And I my passage make through revolution,
Humbly obedient to my maker's laws,
Yet he that doth in infinite power excel
In love to me hath conquered Death and Hell.

But Oh my sins (my sins) and none but those
Make my poor soul o'erflow with sad annoy;
'Tis they, and none but they, do interpose
Twixt heaven and me, and doth eclipse my joy.
'Tis neither clouds, nor moon, nor shades of earth
Could keep my soul from whence she had her birth. (37-54)

Pulter's examination of being mortal demonstrates that it prevents her from having eternal glory because it restricts her with "flesh and bone"; therefore, she is alive but cannot reach "celestial joys." While being mortal provides some joys that she does not care about, it prevents her from experiencing death, which is what she wants to confront. On the other hand, death will not conquer her because she knows that Jesus Christ has conquered "Death and Hell." Because she is obedient, she will not suffer because of Jesus Christ's love for his people. As much as Pulter's continued mortal existence annoys her, her sins are the ones that make her "poor soul o'erflow with sad[ness]." The interference of her sins comes between heaven and herself and "doth eclipse [her] joys." The metaphorical eclipse illustrates sin as the moon that causes an obstacle between Pulter and heaven. Because of this, sin eventually prevents Pulter from being happy. However, nothing can keep her from the love of God. Through her reasoning and faith, she gains consolation as she reaches the ending of the poem. Pulter's gaining consolation proves a similar pattern to that of Herbert's speaker, where both speakers at last achieve consolation. The clouds, the moon, and the earth can never intervene between herself and God; therefore, in the previous parts Pulter displays her annoyance at them but eventually acknowledges that they can never obscure God from her.

While the previous parts illustrate Pulter's discomfort and sadness, Pulter's uncertainty disappears when she finds consolation through Jesus Christ. Pulter's confinement remains, as sin controls her, yet her hope in Christ provides the ultimate comfort:

For were my soul from all transgression free,
Earth's fading pleasures I would then despise;
Corruption, I would trample over thee,
And with swift eagle's wings I'd mount the skies.
But oh, my sins, they will not let me fly,
They fetter me more than mortality.

But yet, my savior doth hope me feed,
Who did in love my cursed nature take,
And, that poor I might live, in death did bleed;
He to eternal glory will me take.
Then Sin, triumph no longer over me,
For I, in Christ, have conquered Death and thee. (55-66)

Pulter believes her sins limit her more than life does because they cannot disappear and fade away to leave her troubled soul. However, she knows that Jesus Christ gives her hope that she will be free. Since He loves His people, she states that He will love her "cursed nature." Because He has sacrificed Himself and bled for her, she reveals that He will save her again. Again, through reason and faith, she realizes that sin will no longer win because, through Jesus, she will conquer death and sin – a comfort to her, knowing that hope exists for her in Him.

Pulter's first poem in her manuscript uses images from astronomy and Roman mythology that she continues to explore throughout her poetry. Furthermore, she demonstrates the struggle within her but realizes that nothing can come between her and the love of God. Therefore, she finds "hope" in her Savior, and her journey moves from doubtfulness to consolation from Christ. These recurring ideas reveal how Pulter's

journey towards consolation is not achieved because of her sorrowful soul. Following Herbert's pattern of received consolation from God after suffered doubt, Pulter composes "How Long Shall My Dejected Soul," "My Soul's Sole Desire." and "Dear God, From thy High Throne look Down." As Herbert's "Denial" ends with mended rhyme, Pulter's poems sometimes end with singing hallelujahs. This analogy between poetry and singing reveals how both derive from the mending art of consolation.

In "How Long Shall My Dejected Soul," Pulter contemplates her depressed state and conflicted soul as she pleads with God for death; however, she is able to regain consolation through singing to God. She recalls the everlasting love, life, light, and glory that she wants from God. For the most part, she reflects on her soul as being full of darkness. Therefore, she questions God's role in relation to her sorrowful soul because she wants God to remove her sadness so that she can live endlessly:

How long shall my dejected soul
(Dear God) in dust and darkness roll
Without one ray

Of thy eternal love and light
To conquer these sad shades of night
That endless day

In my forsaken soul may shine;
The hallelujah shall be thine.
Oh then look down

Upon a ruined heap of dust
Slave to those tyrants Death and Lust;
My hopes, oh crown,

My God, vouchsafe to enfranchise me,
Let me no more a vassal be
To Sin and Pain.

These vanities I fain would leave;

Oh then my [weary] soul receive
With thee to reign. (1-15)

Pulter begins her poem with a rhetorical question, asking God how long her soul shall suffer in the darkness without endless “love and light.” She begs God to “look down” and to answer her prayers, which mirrors Herbert’s speaker asking God to mend his rhyme. Pulter believes she is subject to death, lust, sin, pain. She may have capitalized death, lust, sin, and pain to demonstrate herself as a “slave” to them since they have power over her. However, God is superior to all of them, so she wants Him to set her free by breaking her away from “those tyrants [...] vanities.” By setting her free, Pulter’s soul will no longer suffer because she will finally spend her time in heaven with God. Pulter’s thoughts of life after death in heaven are repeated constantly throughout her poems to illustrate her desire to overcome her personal struggles.

Pulter continues to imagine what life would be like after she goes to heaven, which helps her to regain consolation from God through singing. In the final two stanzas, Pulter sets a hopeful tone for herself through finding consolation from God:

In those celestial joys above,
Involved with glory, life, and love,
And then thy praise

(My everlasting God and king)
To all eternity I’ll sing
In unknown lays (16-21)

Pulter regards heaven as a place where life is free from pain, love is everlasting, and joy is eternal; therefore, she will continue praising God and singing to Him even after she goes to heaven. She imagines heaven as a place where an afterlife exists, very unlike her current state where, due to her sorrowful soul, she is not living. Thus, she imagines

heaven as a space filled with happiness and everlasting joy. Subsequently, the transition and the shift in tone and language demonstrate a consolation. Pulter starts the poem with a question and then uses agitated language, such as Pulter being a “slave to those tyrants Death and Lust” (11). However, she ends the poem with an optimistic view, in which hope becomes reinstated through singing to God. Pulter’s poem ends with consolation through knowing that one day she will receive eternal joy and glory from God through singing.

The idea of praising God through singing continues in Pulter poem, “My Soul’s Sole Desire,” where she ends her poem similarly; furthermore, it also depicts the shift where she moves from discomfort to assurance. She reaches consolation through her faith because she understands that life after death holds everlasting joy. For that to happen, she has to continue praising God:

Thou that didst on the chaos move,
Illustrious spirit of life and love,
Oh pity me

And on my dark soul design to shine’
Sin, Death, and Hell, with all resign
Their place to thee

Then shall my soul’s sad shades of night
Be turned into meridian light
Until my story.

Begun below, goes on above
In joy and life being crowned by love
With endless glory

Then those unknown celestial joy
Those Hallelujahs to your praise
I’ll ever sing

And thine immensity implore,
Thy majesty alone adore,
My God and king. (1-18)

Instead of beginning with a question, Pulter addresses God through revealing His powers. She reasons that whereas God has given life and love to earth, He has given her “Sin, Death, and Hell.” Because of this, her soul darkens, yet she expresses that Sin, Death and Hell will at some point leave. When they leave, through death, she can go “above,” where joy, life, and light will be eternal with God. Though Pulter “knows” that eternal joy exists in heaven, such joy is still “unknown” because she does not know what experiencing joy will be like. Nevertheless, she will continue praising God through singing. She believes that with all of God’s greatness, she will forever love Him. As Pulter changes throughout her poem from being distant from God to realizing Him as the one who will keep her safe and strengthen her faith in Him, the poems demonstrate her finding consolation through Jesus Christ and God who have given her hope. Because of this hope, she continues to praise God nonstop for the everlasting glory and is able to gain consolation.

Although Pulter’s pleading voice persists in her poem “Dear God, From thy High Throne Look Down,” she finds consolation eventually through realizing that she has to keep praising God for all eternity. She pleads with God as she did in “How Long Shall My Dejected Soul,” to look down and observe her, so that He can finally free her from misery:

Dear God, from thy high throne look down
And let my sufferings have their crown;
I thee implore.

Though grief calcine my flesh to dust,
Yet in thy mercy still I trust

and thee adore.

Should I to tears dissolved be,
Yet will I still depend on thee
for evermore.

Or should I sigh away to air;
Though rarefied, I'd not despair
but in thee trust.

Though I to atoms am dispersed
I in their dances am unversed
yet shall no dust

Of my old carcass e'er be lost,
Through in thousand figures tossed;
for thou art just.

What mortal can or dares to look
Into thy glorious blessed book
where written be

Of me, poor wretched me, each part;
E'en all my soul, my thoughts, my heart
thou plain may'st see

That I my gracious God do love
A thousand, thousand worlds above
and still praise thee. (1-27)

As Pulter keeps asking God for death to save her from misery, she repeats the word “trust” to show that no matter what is the outcome of her death, she trusts God enough to know best. Nevertheless, she has a greater hope in God because she trusts him and his mercy above everything. She extends her imagination in this poem by visualizing the way she will die. Subsequently, she continues to observe the multiple ways God can end her days such as dying through her tears or sighing. Another option for her death can be through dissolving to atoms, whereby her body will scatter to small particles. Even though Pulter contemplates the different possible ways of her death, her thoughts

demonstrate her attachment to ending her sufferings, because it is her only escape from her pains. In the last three stanzas, she realizes that every mortal is in God's "blessed book" including her; therefore, she states that God can read her soul, heart, and thoughts. The metaphor suggests that since God can understand every part of her, He can see her love for him that goes beyond "a thousand, thousand worlds above." When Pulter realizes that God can see everything she does even her thoughts, she concludes that God always looks down even when she thinks He is not. Like Herbert's speaker who asks God to correct his rhyme and heal his soul and eventually it happens, Pulter's prayers have been answered as her spirit is restored temporarily. By acknowledging that God observes her, she feels better because her heart demonstrates her love towards God. Thus, Pulter's pleading to God to look down at her shifts when she finds consolation through knowing that God already sees everything.

Like that of Herbert's speaker, Pulter shifts in tone from examining her own faith in God to eventually gaining consolation from Him; however, she also illustrates a new sense of consolation. While scholars like Eardley and Dunn acknowledge Pulter's familiarity with Herbert, this further proves that Pulter's writing is similar to Herbert's devotional poetry. From a similar tonal shift to the mending art of consolation, both Pulter and Herbert's speakers constantly plead with God to observe them and to comfort their souls. While Pulter desires death, her image of moving to a better place after life demonstrates hope, evocative of Herbert's abiding consolation. Because of this, she decides to praise God and sing for Him to show her faith. She considers what afterlife would be like in her poems, and by doing so, she believes that her dejected soul will finally be free from pain and sorrow. She explores heaven as a place where she can find

“endless glory” and “celestial joy.” Therefore, she imagines her afterlife as “involved with glory, life, and love.” Though because of her personal struggles, she frequently wants to die to escape her depressed soul, after exploring heaven, she is able to find consolation and reassurance from God. Through her persistent discomfort and sorrowful soul, Pulter decides to examine devotional Christian ideas about death such as heaven and afterlife to understand her existence and to explore her relationship with God, which shows that a permanent consolation can happen if she dies. In her devotional elegiac poems, Pulter imagines her afterlife and death only to establish a connection with God and to eventually find at the end of her poems temporary consolation through her faith in God.

While Pulter shares recurring ideas similar to Herbert’s, her consolatory strategies fail in her familial elegiac poems. Pulter is inconsistent in her poems because she does not always receive a consolation through her faith in God. Her writing style differs and changes whenever she discusses the death of her children. Therefore, her larger consolation, whenever she talks about her children, will happen if she dies to join her children in heaven. Her poem, “Oh my afflicted, solitary soul”, illustrates this. In it, she demonstrates her discomfort at the beginning of the poem, and while she tries to uplift her spirit, she ends the poem struggling because she feels helpless as to how she can finally join her children in heaven.

In “Oh my afflicted, solitary soul,” Pulter addresses her soul by asking questions regarding its persistence to stay on Earth; however, her helplessness remains as she realizes that she cannot join her daughters in heaven. Pulter’s question at the beginning of

the poem leads to a set of multiple questions throughout the poem such as her inability to understand her soul's attachment to earth:

Oh my afflicted, solitary soul,
Why dost thou still in dust and ashes roll?
As if thou [weren't] of celestial birth,
Or thy beginning and thy end were earth.
Believe't, thou art a sparkle of that light,
And thou art capable of endless bliss;
Thou knowest nothing if thou knowest not this.
Enlarge thy hopes (poor soul) then reassume
Thy ancient right; thou needs no borrowed plume
For thou hast noble wings to take thy flight.
Why dost thou in this dunghill earth delight?
We talk of summers and delicious springs,
I am resolved, here are no such hills,
Of shady groves and purling crystal rills.
We do but dream; in them we laugh or weep
And never wake until in death we sleep. (1-18)

Pulter addresses her troubled soul through questioning its constant fixation to live on Earth. She tries to give hope to her soul by telling it that it is "a sparkle of that light" and "capable of endless bliss." She wants to boost her spirit by reclaiming her soul once again and through explaining that life after death will eventually be better. She aims to comfort her spirit; however, she asks her soul about the reason behind enjoying earthly joys. Here, she explores her soul's constant attachment to earth because, although she wishes to leave it, her soul is preventing her escape. The answer to her question is that she talks with her soul, who observes earthly creations. She knows that she does not enjoy her surroundings because she insists that she cannot see any. She claims that all she and her soul do is dream about the "shady groves and purling crystal hills." Thus, earthly aesthetics exhibit themselves through the dreams of her and her soul, and, even in both, her soul is either laughing or crying. It seems that Pulter distinguishes between life on

Earth and another life on Earth as experienced in her dreams to emphasize that earth is always sorrowful for her and that even when she wants to “laugh,” it would be through a dream. She is lamenting her life on Earth, exploring her unhappiness, when she realizes that her soul is preventing her from finding endless happiness.

Pulter continues talking about her soul’s attachment to earth; however, when she shifts to discuss death, she reveals her urge to die and to join her children. Since some of her children have died and only two have survived her, she desires to die so that she can join them in heaven and in that way free her soul from sorrow:

Then what’s this world we keep ado about?
We weep enter and go sighing out.
(Ay me) this thought of death my courage dashes;
Must I, and mine turn all to dust and ashes?
Death hath already from my weeping vine
Torn seven fair branches; the grief and loss is mine.
The joy is theirs who now in glory shine,
And as they were to me of infinite price
So now they planted are in paradise
Where their immaculate above the stars or Poles,
Where they enjoy all fullness of desire.
Oh when shall I increase that heavenly choir? (19-31)

Pulter shifts to ask a question about the role humans have in the world because, for her, she sees life as a place where human experiences lead to sorrow. She states that when humans are born, they cry, and when they die, they leave earth. The reasons behind her considerations of life as painful and full of distress lie in her experience of the loss of her children. By 1655, Pulter had lost seven children. Thus, when she thinks about death, she daringly rushes towards it because she wants to be with her children. For Pulter, death means moving to a better place where her "afflicted soul" will no longer suffer. She reflects on the death of her seven children when she says that death has already taken

them. The strong imagery that she provides when she describes her seven children “torn” from a tree shows the pain she felt when death took them one by one. Bear witness to those deaths has only prolonged her suffering because she grieves. While her innocent children have found consolation in “paradise,” she must suffer until she dies. Pulter imagines that, unlike her, her children are in a place above the earth and the stars, where they enjoy their afterlife to the fullest, wishing she can join them in heaven because if she joins them, she then gains permanent comfort.

The last sentence in the poem “Oh when shall I increase that heavenly choir?” demonstrates Pulter’s struggle to find comfort in a world where her children are not with her. She does not find consolation when she discusses the death of her daughter, but a possible consolation is death to be with them. While I have previously discussed how Pulter achieves consolation from God when she does not mention the death of daughters, here Pulter’s permanent consolation is death if she can have it. Pulter regards death as the ultimate solution to gain eternal consolation since her conflicted soul is beyond repair when she remembers the death of her children. Therefore, the poem “Oh my afflicted, solitary soul” begins and ends with a question, unlike previous poems in which Pulter gains consolation from God. This is significant because it shows how she is in constant grief and somehow cannot escape her sorrow when it comes to the death of her children. Through ending the poem with a question, she depicts her struggle in finding comfort on Earth. Moreover, some of the poems previously end with her singing and praising God that eventually help her to gain consolation. On the other hand, Pulter here questions when she shall raise her “heavenly choir.” She asks God when she can raise her voice to exceed the power of singing in a low tone, so she can have a better life. Thus, the singing

as a consolatory strategy fails her in this poem since she feels powerless. Rather than singing, Pulter asks God how much she has to sing for God to hear and comfort her soul. Although Pulter finds consolation through her faith in God in the previous poems, she still struggles to find comfort, especially when she recalls the death of her daughters.

Comparing the famous seventeenth-century poet Herbert to Pulter is essential to understand the poets' devotional poetry because as a private poet, Pulter's writing proves that she may have been familiar with Herbert's poetical conventions. While her writing is like that of Herbert's, she departs from his writing style and eventually alters it to appropriate her personal state, proving that comfort during personal loss is difficult to achieve. For Pulter, the loss of her daughters exceeds any form of consolation, even her unique consolatory strategy, singing. Thus, it shows that she cannot relieve her distressed soul while on earth. The only consolation for her is to die to join her daughters in heaven, which she illustrates through visual imagery of the afterlife. Therefore, she continues questioning herself and the death of her children because, without them, comfort is nonexistent. This illustrates Pulter's connection to her daughters and displays a new way of observing her personal struggles, as if the remembrance of them erases God's consolation. Having poems that end with reassurance from God and poems that end with continuous discomfort show Pulter's constant struggle to find permanent consolation.

CHAPTER III
“TELL ME NO MORE”: FAMILIAL ELEGIES IN HESTER PULTER AND
KATHERINE PHILIPS

Elegies were a common poetic form in the seventeenth-century. Elegies allow poets to share their melancholic thoughts regarding the death of a beloved one and, in some cases, to provide commentary on the moral and spiritual life of their communities. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* defines the elegy as a poem of “loss or mourning” (397). They provide a space for poets to mourn and to find consolation. The best-known poets of the seventeenth-century—Ben Jonson, John Donne, Katherine Philips, John Milton, and Lucy Hutchinson—authored both political and familial elegies. Differing by purpose and audience, political elegies mourn the deaths of public figures such as kings, queens, or politicians, while familial elegies are drawn from the poet’s private life. Both male and female poets wrote poems in these two categories, but familial elegies were common among female poets because women’s writing was considered more appropriate when confined to the domestic sphere. In familial elegies, women expressed their mourning for family members and close friends, such as Hester Pulter and Katherine Philips. Unlike Pulter, whose manuscript was discovered only recently, Philips was one of the most well-known female poets of the 17th century, due to the fact that her writing was published while she was alive. Though Pulter’s work may have been

circulated among her relatives, her elegies display her private life and thoughts.

Nevertheless, both poets share common ground regarding personal loss in their familial elegies. In this chapter, I examine Pulter's elegies of her daughters in relation to the poetry of Katherine Philips who authored an elegy upon the death of her son Hector. I will also highlight how Pulter's tone shifts in her familial elegies when she uses the new science as a possible consolatory strategy to deal with her loss. Examining both female elegists will help to understand the way Pulter depart from Philips's in coping with her mourning to find consolation through the new astronomy.

Scholarship on women's writing demonstrates that women use elegies that incorporate mourning the dead and also expands beyond the basic purpose of the elegy. As a genre, the elegy is "a fluid and mobile genre that offers women a particularly powerful position from which to speak" (Ross, "Introduction" 19). Kate Lilley states that women writers write elegies that can discuss "women's lives, women's texts, and the social, economic, and legal consequences for women of bereavement (the shift, for instance, from wife to widow; mother to non-mother). In doing so they also engage questions of inheritance, [and] hierarchies of grief" (79). Danielle Clark asserts that early modern women writers wrote elegies because it was "a well established basis for public speech" to highlight their grief, and "enable women to reiterate the social bonds which gave them their status, and ultimately their authority" (166 -7). To illustrate the diversity in their elegies, Sarah Ross traces women's political elegies because she regards them as "elite forms" where women are capable of being political as well as examining their personal loss. Similarly, Elizabeth Hodgson argues that women writers offer a "complex connection between the dead and the living who mourn them" (2). For example, Hodgson

examines Katherine Philips's poems to assert that Philips' writing is "a mutually constitutive mourning rhetoric in which losses that are somehow defined as private are then connected to public meaning" (106). This highlights that Philips' pattern in relation to grief is "as public and as visible as the memory of those of whom she writes" (Hodgson 127). So far, the research indicates that women write elegies to not only highlight their personal loss, but also to connect it with the public sphere.

Lilley's essay, "True State Within: Women's Elegy 1640 - 1700," examines the influences of gender on the elegy. She suggests that female elegists negotiated their gender-appropriate roles and the prevailing image of their femininity when they wrote in that time period. While female elegists were quite prominent in the 17th century, Lilley identifies two types of elegies common among female poets: proxy and familial elegies. Proxy elegies focus "on the bereaved rather than the elegized to encompass what would usually be thought of as distinct categories of elegy – private as well as public, familial as well as non-familial" (78). However, in the second part of her essay Lilley discusses in depth familial elegies by focusing on women's discourse, and she uses Katherine Philips's elegies as her textual evidence to explore gender-negotiated elegiac discourse (84). Katherine Philips's poem, "On the Death of my First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips, born the 23rd of April, and died the 2nd of May 1655," exemplifies the futility of consolation by announcing at the end "the death of her writing" (78). According to Lilley, women's consolation disappears in the elegies, meaning that their mourning and grief exceeds the kind of consolation the elegy can provide to the elegist because of their recurrent grief. Therefore, Lilley suggests that elegies do not provide comfort to the women elegists because they "seem to partake of a logic of renunciation and cancellation,

expressly refusing the reification of the elegized... Again and again women's elegies refuse the consolations we associate with elegy, to close either by announcing the death of their writing... or... their own desire to die" (87). Lilley's essay was published in 1992, prior to the discovery of Hester Pulter's manuscript in 1995, so Pulter's elegiac poetry offers an opportunity to reexamine and build on Lilley's argument in relation to Philips's familial elegy. Both poets fail to find consolation from their mourning elegies because of their inability to escape their grief that leads to refusing the consolation regarding the death of their children. However, both poets have different experiences with the death of their children. While Philips lost her son Hector during childhood, Pulter lost her daughters, Jane and Penelope, when they were young adults. Both poets react to their loss differently while Philips's elegy imagines the death of her writing, Pulter's elegies of her daughters demonstrate her constant contemplation for physical death of the body, which builds on Lilley's argument that a woman elegist sometimes desires her own death. Even though Pulter regards her death as the ultimate solution, her tone shifts when she focuses away from her daughters' deaths to images from astronomy.

Eardley compares the works of Philips with Pulter's to highlight how Pulter's "manuscript could contribute to literary history" ("Shut up" 351). She compares Pulter's and Philips's royalist poems by examining their different approaches to political affairs, given that Philips was writing for the public and Pulter was not. Accordingly, she characterizes the voice of Pulter's royalist poems as "satirical and somewhat angry commentary," in contrast with the voice of Philips's royalist poems so aware of her readership because "there were conventions governing what women... could or could not say in poetry" (353). Eardley extends her study to examine Pulter's and Philips's familial

elegies. She focuses on Philips's elegy to her son "Epitaph: On Hector Philips. At St. Sith's Church" and writes, "Philips chooses to uphold the consolatory elements of elegy, focusing not on her own grief but on the brilliance of her son's liberated soul and on the place he has secured in heaven" ("Shut up" 354). While Eardley explores that Philips finds consolation through the elegy, this is not always the case in Philips' other elegiac poem "On the Death of my First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips, born the 23rd of April, and died the 2nd of May 1655," where Lilley argues that Philips refuses the consolation by announcing the symbolic death of her writing. On the other hand, Eardley asserts that Pulter, in "On the Same [1]," "sidesteps the elegiac form entirely, choosing instead to defy both social and literary convention through the use of love lyric as a vehicle for mourning" ("Shut up" 354). Since both poets offer comparable elegiac experiences, my focus is to compare how each differently rejects the reification of their children and to examine the way in which Pulter not only rejects the consolation regarding her daughters' death but also her own mutable existence on earth. Though Pulter finds temporary consolation from astronomy, most of her elegies reveal her longing for the death that will bring her a lasting consolation -- her promised reunion with her daughters in heaven.

The Symbolic Death of Philips's Writing:

Philips examines in her poem, "On the Death of my First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips, born the 23rd of April, and died the 2nd of May 1655," the continual grief she feels after Hector's death that leads her to announce the symbolic death of her writing because her muse is mourning her son's death. In the first two stanzas, Philips recalls the unexpected death of her son, and her sudden childlessness:

Twice forty months in wedlock I did stay,
Then had my vows crowned with a lovely boy.
And yet in forty days he dropped away;
O swift vicissitude of human joy!

I did but see him, and he disappeared,
I did but touch the rosebud, and it fell;
A sorrow unforeseen and scarcely feared,
So ill can mortals their afflictions spell. (1-8)

After being married for six years, “Twice forty months,” Philips is finally a mother only to lose her child forty days after his birth. His sudden death brings immediate pain and sorrow. Her grief consciously expands when she realizes that she can no longer hold her baby and when she becomes aware from her experience that “human joy” may unpredictably vanish (4). Her childlessness leaves her imagination bereft of any future but a sorrowful one. That Hector died as a child leads to her rosebud metaphor. Since rosebuds are usually unopened, they can represent Hector’s childhood that never bloomed. She touches “the rosebud, and it fell” conveying also how death robs her of experiencing all stages of motherhood, even growing old with Hector (6). Thus, Philips’s demonstrates how the death of her son has left her nothing but constant sorrow.

Philips continues to mourn until she finally rejects the reification of her son (Lilley 87). Philips questions her loss and her fate since she is caught between her own distress and lament for her son, resulting in the symbolic death of her writing:

And now (sweet babe) what can my trembling heart
Suggest to right my doleful fate or thee?
Tears are my muse, and sorrow all my art,
So piercing groans must be thy elegy.

Thus whilst no eye is witness of my moan,
I grieve thy loss (ah, boy too dear to live!)
And let the unconcerned world alone,
Who neither will, nor can refreshment give.

An offering too for thy sad tomb I have,
Too just a tribute to thy early hearse;
Receive these gasping numbers to thy grave,
The last of thy unhappy mother's verse. (9 - 20)

Philips realizes that no joy can be hers when her son is not with her, and she acknowledges her inability to find joy in worldly affairs. She admits that no one around her is aware of her moans and tears except herself, which reveals the level of privacy and isolation that a mother has; moreover, people cannot offer her “refreshment[s]” because she faces a permanent grief (Lilley 17). While elegies are a way for the poet to find eventual consolation, Philips finds none. As Lilley explains in her essay, Philips announces the death of her writing because she cannot find consolation through composing elegies. Her lamentation, “tears are my muse, and sorrow all my art,” demonstrates failed consolation as she shows how her elegy for her son is but “piercing groans.” Groans, not writing, are now her art motivating her final line, “the last of thy unhappy mother’s verse.” This line, exemplifying her inability to write, offers one reason: her muse is full of sorrow. Philips also demonstrates her inability to understand Hector’s death, which can be another reason for her not finding consolation. Her unanswered questions and her muse’s recurring grief reinforce her mourning discourse, “sorrow [is] all my art” (11). Because Philips cannot find consolation in her elegiac writing, she refuses the reification of her son. To demonstrate her refusal, she declares the death of her writing (Lilley 78). Even though the death of her writing is symbolic, it illustrates Philips’s rejection of the kind of consolation that an elegy provides for the elegist. While Eardley claims that Philips gains consolation in “Epitaph: On Hector

Philips. At St. Sith's Church," Philips' other elegiac poem to her son proves that consolation does not always exist.

The Death of the Elegist, Hester Pulter:

Acknowledging that Philips's works were published while she was still alive and that Pulter's poems were not even publicly circulated in manuscript form, it is significant that Pulter's experience of the death of a child was quite different from that of Philips, whose speaker is so aware of her readers. Pulter lost her daughters Jane and Penelope when they were between the ages of 20 to 22. Moreover, only two out of her fifteen children survived her, intensifying her loss. Not surprisingly, then, Pulter authored more elegies for children than Philips's one. Perhaps significantly, too, Pulter wrote poems about her daughters while they were alive. Different experiences of motherhood and of the death of a child result in significant differences in the authors' elegies. Though failed consolation is constant in the elegies of both Philips and Pulter, both poets refuse the reification of the elegized in different ways. While Philips's refusal results in the symbolic death of her writing, Pulter's refusal results in her longing for physical death whereby she believes that she will join her daughters in heaven – her consolation -- to find eternal happiness. Whereas Philips imagines a form of poetic dissolution, Pulter imagines physical annihilation as the only appropriate compensatory gesture toward such loss.

Before her daughters' deaths, Pulter's attachment to them is evident in that her happiness depends upon being with them. In "To My Dear Jane Pulter, Margaret Pulter, Penelope Pulter, They Being at London, I at Broadfield," she elaborates on the physical

distance between them. The poem initially highlights Pulter as “Lonely” and “dull” in Broadfield and how she wants her daughters to visit her because all she has are “empty toys” (1,4,13). Demonstrating that Broadfield is filled with material things that she does not value, and that she feels that her daughters’ presence will “exhilarate” her spirit:

Come then, exhilarate my drooping spirit.
So may those eternal joys inherit,
So may there ever in your happy breast
Those blessed gems, joys and peace, still rest.
Then when Astraea, with her sacred charms,
Hath thrown you in mild Mercy’s downy arms,
O’erlooked by Providence, allured by love
To those immortal mansions above.
Then, when each element it's part shall claim,
May you all live in glory and in fame. (15-25)

Pulter wants “celestial joys” to uplift her spirits, and, to have these eternal joys, she needs her daughters’ physical presences. She explores the possible and endless joys that she and her daughters may experience, once they are reunited, through an allusion to the Greek myth of Astraea, who escapes earth to go to heaven during the Bronze age and who is to return to earth one day to bring the Golden Age. Pulter shows how Astraea figuratively takes her daughters to “those immortal mansions above” while they dwell in London to reveal the lengthening distance from them that she feels, as well as her certainty that their reunion will bring them, figuratively speaking, a Golden Age. Whether her daughters are with her or with Astraea, Pulter wishes them a life lived in “glory and in fame.” Here she illustrates her deeply spiritual bond with her daughters while revealing herself as a mother who cannot imagine her children not being around her. Pulter’s attachment to her children in her poetry remains consistent while they live, such that these poems reveal her spiritual dependence upon theirs.

Pulter's daughters die when young adults, prompting her to write a significant number of elegies in which she explores her constant grief and desire to join her daughters in heaven. In almost all of these elegies, Pulter cannot find consolation while she lives. In her elegy "Upon the death of my Dear and Lovely Daughter J. [ane] P. [Pulter]," she compares herself with parents who have seen their children growing up. Unlike them, she feels bereft of the chance to see Jane growing to maturity, provoking her constant tears. She then recalls Jane's memory and unexpected early death:

Which dying gave her virgin soul new birth,
Yet still my heart is overwhelmed with grief,
And tears (alas) give sorrow no relief.
Twice hath sad Philomela left off to sing
...
Since all-devouring death on her took seizure,
And Tellus womb involved so rich a treasure,
Yet Still my heart is overwhelmed with grief,
And time nor tears will give my woes relief. (11-15, 19- 22)

Pulter's recalls Jane's death as a "seizure." While a seizure is often unpredictable and rapid, this may suggest that Jane's death was unexpected to Pulter. With her sudden death, Pulter believes that the earth has gained "a treasure," but she laments that Jane's death overwhelms her heart. Ultimately, she regards Jane's death as a new birth, a recurring concept throughout her poetry due to her belief that death is the gate for eternal glory and happiness. Compared with her daughter, she is the one "overwhelmed with grief," full of sorrow and tears instead of "relief."

Pulter continues recalling the memories of Jane's death, recollections and memories that serve only to increase her anguish. She remembers the day that Jane died when her "sparkling diamond eyes" closed. To assuage her saddened heart, she creates metaphors from astronomy and astrology that lead her to contemplate the possibilities of

life on other planets and, more importantly, to examine how long it has been since she lost Jane's presence:

Twelve times hath Pheobe, horned, seemed to fight,
As often filled them with her brother's light
Since she did close her sparkling diamond eyes,
Yet my sad heart for her still pinning dies,
Through the twelve houses hath the illustrious sun,
With splendency, his annual journey run,
Twice hath his fiery, furious horses hurled
His blazing chariot to the lower world,
Showing his luster to the wond'ring eyes
Of our (now so well known) antipodes
Since the brack of her spotless, virgin story,
Which now her soul doth end in endless glory
Yet my afflicted, sad, forsaken soul
For her in tears and ashes still doth roll. (23-36)

Pulter examines the relationships of light between the moon, the sun and Jane. The moon receives light from the sun, a "brother's light," yet the sun loses light when the moon becomes full. Accordingly, when she sees the full moon, she remembers Jane's "sparkling diamond eyes" close over her, and that image brings her heart more pain. Since this elegy also commemorates the two year anniversary of Jane's death, Pulter refers to the twelve zodiac signs that interest her, beyond the loss of her daughter, to know what life could be like on other planets and to imagine a possible life in the other "antipodes" (32). Though her mourning of Jane continues, her exploration of other habitats invites her to find consolation in them. The "now so well known" provides a space that calms her thoughts enough to recall her daughter dwelling in heaven. This source of escape, however, does not prevail and Pulter's "sad, forsaken soul" continues to ache for Jane.

Finally, Pulter rejects the reification of Jane by recalling how she herself became transformed into the Greek Niobe:

But what a heart had I when I did stand,
Holding her forehead with my trembling head?
My heart to heaven with her bright spirit flies
Whilst she (ah me) closed up her lovely eyes.
Her soul being seated in her place of birth,
I turned Niobe as she turned earth. (44-50)

When Jane turns to earth as her spirit goes to heaven, Pulter sees herself turned into an immoveable rock like Niobe. Her allusion to Greek mythology is germane. In *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, book 6, Niobe, the mother of many children, always brags that she is a better parent than Apollo and Artemis. Apollo and Artemis punish her pride by killing her children and transforming her into a rock. Roxanne Gentilcore explores grief in relation to women in *Ovid's Metamorphosis* stating that “the metamorphosis of the female griever represents the power of grief to transform and to subsume the woman while making her permanent sorrow a feature of the physical landscape” (64). The excessiveness of grief becomes a greater sorrow for Pulter that she turns to a rock to display her “permanent sorrow”. Roxanne argues that “while Niobe is physically transformed, her grief remains; there is no consolation in this metamorphosis” (97). Similarly, Pulter has no consolation as she transforms to a rock. While her daughter goes to “earth,” eventually finding peace, Pulter remains grieving the death of her daughter. Jane’s death pains Pulter to the extent that she herself longs for death to join her daughter in heaven; however, since she is unable to die, her transformation to a rock shows that she rejects the reification of her daughter since she cannot die and turn to “earth.” The permanent sorrow illustrates Pulter’s rejecting the reification of her daughters, which

proves Lilley's argument that women refuse accepting the consolation the elegy can provide to the elegist due to permanent grief.

Constant grief compels Pulter's elegy, "On the Same [1]," revealing how insatiable her mourning discourse is. This time, she refuses the reification of her daughter by rejecting the blazons that increase her sorrow and grief. Blazons vividly revive her memory of the beautiful features of Jane's physical body, evoking her refrain, "Tell me no more." By dismissing these anguish-inducing images, Pulter refuses to be consoled by the reification of her daughter:

Tell me no more her hair was lovely brown
Nor that it did in curious curls hang down
Or that it did her snowy shoulders shroud
Like shining cynthia in sable cloud.
Tell me no more of her black diamond eyes (1-5).

...

Nor never more tell my sad soul of mirth
With her I lost most joys on earth.
Nor can I ever raise my drooping spirit
Until with her those joys I shall inherit,
Those glories which our finite thoughts transcend
Where we shall praises sing, world without end,
To him that made both her and me of earth
And gave us spirits of celestial birth. (29-36)

As Pulter regards Jane's "lovely brown" hair and beautiful bright eyes like a "black diamond," she finds that these physical features only increase her mourning, only increase the pain that accompanies her constant struggle to find consolation on earth. She realizes that she will not experience joy until she dies. Therefore, she rejects her earthly memories of Jane's presence because they remind her only of loss. Her rejection crescendos to her admission of only one realizable consolation: her inheritance of those promised joys after death when her reunion with Jane is possible and when they will sing

praises “to him that made” them of earth and gave them “spirits of celestial birth” – celestial afterlife. Thus, Pulter refuses the reification of her daughter – which nearly occurs in the blazon, through conventional poetic form – because she constantly wishes for her death as the ultimate comfort, proving her refusal of Earthly matters as it brings constant grief and pain.

In the last couple of lines, Pulter reinsures she will forever mourn the loss of her daughter, and she demonstrates her desire to die as the ultimate way to find comfort, refusing the reification of her daughter through examining her own death. Pulter’s recurring and permanent grief confirms that consolation is inevitable when she realizes that she is not with her daughter. Until then, Pulter affirms her insatiable mourning:

Nor why I mourn for her ask no more
For [all] my life I shall her loss deplore
Till infinite power her dust and mine shall raise
To sing in heaven in his everlasting praise (41 – 44).

Pulter cannot find joy unless divine “infinite power” raises Jane’s “dust” and hers “to sing in heaven.” Singing in heaven “everlasting praise” to her Creator represents her ultimate reason for rejecting the reification of Jane. Pulter ends the poem with singing for God, as in Chapter One, where I explored Pulter finding consolation through singing and praising. In the midst of her own personal struggles, Pulter seeks to reunite with God as a source of solace even when her ultimate comfort is death.

Whereas Pulter remembers through blazons her daughter’s physical features in “On the Same [1],” she continues using blazons in “Made When I was Not Well” to examine her own physical features, an examination that culminates in her wish to die to accompany her daughter in heaven:

My soul, why dost thou such a mourning make
This loathsome ruined prison to forsake?
Seest thou these eyes ('tis thou that gives them sight
Or they would quickly set in endless night);
What splendent sprightliness in youth they had,
Now Weeping makes them dim, and dull. and sad.
These locks did curl and were a golden brown;
Now thin and lank, like silver threads, hang down. (1-8)

Since Pulter rejects the reification of her daughter through examining her own death in this poem, she rejects the reification of herself too. Pulter rejects her physical state as an older woman and wishes to be young and as alive as she has been in her youth. Pulter sees herself as worn out and dull and realizes that her soul can no longer live because of her excessive grief. She depicts her hair as fragile and silver unlike that of her youth when it was “golden brown.” When compared with the demeanor of her youth, her present demeanor is old, including her face, as if blood has been drawn out of it, which explains the absence of her rosy cheeks as she remembers, “My lips were cherries, rosy were my cheeks” (12). Since these physical features remind her of her grief, Pulter rejects her own reification – a reification in which elegiac poetry tends to traffic, says how Pulter allows elements of genre to transform.

Pulter ends the poem by declaring reasons why she longs to die to find consolation through joining her daughter, this time Penelope, in heaven. Since her soul and her physical features are both dull and dead, she cannot understand her soul's determination to stay on earth. Consequently, as she questions her soul's determination to stay on earth, she demonstrates her persevering longing to leave earth:

Time's tyranny they feel and sorrow's spite.
My sportive wit and mirth is now laid by,
None is more moping now, and dull, than I;
My joys to heaven with my dear Pen did fly.

Then why, my soul, art thou so fond to stay
Seeing all that's lovely in me doth decay;
For shame pack up thy virtues and away. (21- 27)

Pulter's question to her soul about why it is "so fond to stay," shows that she cannot understand her soul's yearning to stay when "all that's lovely" in her has "decay[ed]" (25-26). Desperately wanting to be with her daughters, she finds her happiness and joy in the prospect of dying and joining them. Just as she refuses the reification of Penelope, she refuses her own.

Whenever Pulter discusses the death of her children, her grief and sorrow are permanent; however, her tone shifts in "A Solitary Discourse" when she creates imagery drawn from astronomy. In the first part of the poem, she continues exploring the prospect of death and reveals it to be her ultimate consolation as the only way to be with her children:

When sickness, age, and grief (of all the worst)
Have acted all their parts? Then comes pale Death
And closes up their eyes and stops their breath.
How empty and how vain is carnal love
Compared but with a glimpse of joys above?
...
From heaven, my soul, (from heaven) thy comfort springs
For earth (alas) naught but affliction brings. (28-32, 45-46)

Pulter's rhetorical question acknowledges that after "sickness, age, and grief," comes death (28), and death, after all of her suffering of what she considers to be the worst kind, marks the end of such affliction and the beginning of comfort through reunion with her beloved daughters. Accordingly, she acknowledges the emptiness that physical love provides compared with the spiritual love awaiting her in heaven. Her constant wish to

die can be felt as constant as her mourning. Here again, Pulter expresses her inability to find comfort on earth.

When Pulter omits reference to the deaths of her children to contemplate the images from astronomy's celestial science, her hope becomes slightly evident, especially in the poem, "A Solitary Discourse":

But if in innocence I had stood upright,
Nor sun, nor moon, should hurt me day nor night.
But I (ay me) in Adam fell from glory,
Which makes me live a life most transitory.
Then those celestial orbs that shine so bright;
Happy should be their influence and dances,
Both their full-eyed aspects and secret glances.
Then unto them I should be independent. (77-85)

Pulter finds that, had she been innocent, nothing could have hurt her; however, she is sinful and that by itself makes her live a "transitory" life. Acknowledging her temporal state, she describes "celestial orbs" as "bright" and "happy" (81-82). However, she decides to be "independent" from them, even though they bring happiness because of their "full-eyed aspects and secret glances" (85). Since this poem places Pulter in a sphere apart from the deaths of her children, she is not contemplating and longing for her own death; she is free to examine her surroundings and the new astronomy through which she may find consolation. Though Pulter does not let her imagination delve into the cosmos, situating herself in its presence provides temporary consolation.

Both Pulter and Phillips reject the reification of their children in their elegies; however, they do so differently. While Phillips's rejection results in the symbolic death of her writing, Pulter's rejection results in her longing for physical death imagined most vividly through astronomical metaphors. By acknowledging the different experiences of

each poet, we understand each one's different viewpoint adopted when mourning. Unlike Philips, who only wrote two poems for her son Hector, Pulter wrote a series of poems dedicated to her daughters while they were alive and dead. Nonetheless, both poets reveal further causes of their recurring mourning, namely that they can never fully find consolation through the ritual practice of composing elegies. As Lilley's argues, their failure "engenders writing" and ultimately causes a continuous cycle of grieving (92). Pulter's constant wish to die is evident in her elegies because she does not want to be separated from her daughters, a longing that extends to her refusal to be reified. Her attachment and her grief is persistent when she discusses the death of her daughters. However, this persistence disappears somewhat when she omits reference to her children's deaths to observe other planets and their existence.

Pulter's astronomical imagery becomes a new consolatory strategy as means for Pulter to find consolation in her elegiac poetry since she believes that they have a positive influence on her. Therefore, the astronomical references somehow break Pulter's cycle of grieving to illustrate a possible happiness and comfort from observing the cosmos. Though her hope in this celestial contexts may be temporary, the context provides a new lens for examining Pulter's poetry because it portrays her limited ability to find consolation, especially in the elegies where she draws images from the new astronomy.

CHAPTER IV

“UP TO THAT SPHERE”: THE NEW ASTRONOMIES OF HESTER PULTER AND

JOHN DONNE

Pulter’s work offers significant knowledge about recent astronomical discoveries. Her engagement in astronomical and astrological thoughts offer a new lens as Pulter heavily expands and engages with both. Pulter uses astronomical imagery for comfort as she has struggled physically and emotionally in her life. The scholarship about Pulter in relation to the contemporary science of astronomy mention its influence on her life as she contemplates and reflects on her spiritual and celestial journey. Sarah Hutton regards the influence of the new astronomy on Pulter as spiritual, saying, “The allusions to contemporary science in [Pulter’s] poems are embedded within a wider context where they share the poetic purpose of her other poems, namely spiritual reflection” (“Hester Pulter” 4). For Hutton, Pulter uses the recent scientific discoveries “as means of making unconventional adaptations of conventional spiritual motifs” (4). Eardley explores the melancholic state of Pulter’s poetry through examining the astrological imagery and how she defines herself in relation to it (““Saturn”” 239 – 54). While both Hutton and Eardley mention Pulter’s astronomical poetry as a spiritual reflection, none have expanded on it to show how Pulter uses it for comfort. Not only does Pulter find comfort through her

astronomy, but her astronomical imagery proves that she is capable of gaining consolation, aiding her to restore her identity.

Like Pulter, other seventeenth-century poets wrote about astronomy to engage with it in the literary form such as John Donne. Astronomy becomes significant in seventeenth-century literature since it provides a space for writers to illustrate their own understanding of the universe. While Pulter decides to accept and to examine the new astronomy as the key to redefine and to understand herself, some seventeenth-century poets express their uneasiness towards it. Donne, for one, shapes the new astronomy worldview into a symbol and a metaphorical image of the destruction of the world. This demonstrates his refutation of the new astronomy, as he believes it to have a negative influence on him and on the world; thus, he continues to support the older scientific worldview. Conversely, Pulter embraces astronomy as it is, beyond the metaphorical and symbolic ideas it engenders. Rejecting conventional metaphors and symbols, she accepts the new astronomy by exploring its function in the universe, an exploration which helps her to understand both her surroundings and herself. Whether seventeenth-century poets accept the new astronomy or not, they use different lenses through which to observe celestial changes. Whereas Donne's lens is conventional, Pulter's lens in her elegiac poems accepts the recent scientific worldview, through which she regains her identity and can redefine her role in relation to her environment, affirming a temporary consolation that she gains from the new astronomy.

Donne's Astronomy and the Destruction of the World:

Donne's elegy, "An Anatomy of the World," illustrates a disturbing world, one in which the new scientific discoveries mirror the laity's uncertainty with their faith.

Donne's elegy sheds light on the death of Elizabeth Dury, a fifteen-year-old girl, whose father Sir Robert Dury was Donne's benefactor. Even though Donne never met Elizabeth, his aim was to represent Elizabeth as the idea of woman rather than presenting who she was. His analogy illustrates that her death mirrors the death of the world. Helen Wilcox argues that Donne's poem aims to commemorate women's lives while examining other poets that have done same. Wilcox says that "Donne's 'Anatomy' is a poem of extremes: on the other hand, the overt idealizing of Elizabeth Dury as a platonic... and on the other, the exaggerated contempt of the world in its fallen and wounded state without her" ("Donne's 'Anatomy'" 177). Wilcox's addresses Donne's world as "fallen," in 'Anatomy,' and to reflect that idea, several words are repeated in the poem to indicate the world's death, such as "languished," "sick," and "gone" (lines 11, 23, 69). Additionally, Donne repeats the refrain "She, she is dead; she's dead: when you know'st this" four times in his poem to express not only the death of Elizabeth, but also the death of the world.

After the first refrain, in the next couple of lines, Donne shifts to the corruption of the world, such as recent discoveries in astronomy. Donne originally published this elegy in 1611, the year before Galileo published *The Starry Messenger*, which affirmed the Copernican heliocentric theory as opposed to the geocentric. To highlight these paradigm-changing discoveries, Donne elaborates on them to depict the state of confusion and uncertainty they cause:

And new philosophy calls all in doubt,
The element of fire is quite put out,
The sun is lost, and th'Earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it.
And freely men confess that this world's spent,

When in the planets and the firmament
They seek so many new; they see that this
Is crumbled out again to his atomies.
'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,
All just supply, and all relation;
Prince, subject, father, son, are things forgot. (205- 215)

Donne's concept of doubt affirms that the new discoveries leave people feeling lost. He mentions "the new philosophy" that represents the new science. Donne describes the sun as "lost". In 1610, Galileo discovered Jupiter's four Galilean moons, the basis for Donne's reference to the new planets. As astronomers try to identify the roles of the sun and the Earth, the laity becomes more confounded. Donne describes the effect of the confusion: "no man's wit/ Can well direct him where to look for it" (208-9). The new heliocentric worldview and new planets leave people so confused that they start to believe that the world is "spent," crumbling to pieces. The world is dead because religion's logic, which had formed the people's geocentric worldview, clashes with scientific discovery. Thus, Donne explores how religion is "forgot" (215). When Donne explores the world as consumed by the new discoveries, he also shows how the present age of reason mirrors the death of faith. As he asserts the clash between the heliocentric and geocentric worldviews in relation to religion, he affirms how the new astronomy disrupts his understanding of the world since it challenges his faith and the unity of the world.

For Donne, Elizabeth's death mirrors the death of the world, and thus his elegy fails at providing consolation for the world. While Wilcox's argues that Donne succeeds in commemorating the death of Elizabeth, which he does, a consolation to the world is nonexistent. Donne asserts a corrupt world when he says: "She, she is dead; she's dead:

when you know'st this, / Thou know'st how lame a cripple this world is" (237-8). After the refrain, Donne asserts a corrupt world that is a great sickness that mainly lies "rotten at the heart" (241). Therefore, the significant changes in England such as the new astronomy and the shift of religion have caused tension for Donne. After Donne has studied the "dissection" of the world, he discovers "a world be gone" (66, 69). Donne believes that Elizabeth's death "hath taught us dearly that thou art / corrupt and mortal in thy purest part" (61-2). Elizabeth's death has taught the world that men are corrupt in their nature, proving that a consolation disappears in relation to the world because of its content disturbance.

Whereas Donne's elegy examines the new heliocentric worldview through a geocentric one, Pulter explores the heliocentric worldview directly, and it is through accepting it that she finds temporary consolation from grief. Because her elegies explore directly the function of the new discoveries in the universe, they reveal how Pulter draws new images from astronomy, and they illustrate her comprehensive examination of the heliocentric worldview and solar system. As such, Pulter shapes the new astronomy to examine its universal language through questioning the new science. Furthermore, whereas Donne draws upon astronomy to create symbols, Pulter rejects this practice. Her images expand on the foundation of astronomy as it is – as revealed by Copernicus and Galileo. For example, Pulter in "This was Written in 1648," acknowledges Galileo's astronomical discoveries through her astronomical imagery through affirming the planets orbiting the sun in "His splendency should be obscured by light" and referring to the Galilean moons "Then Jupiter attended like a king/ Four radiant moons he in his train doth bring (line 30, 42-3). Their discoveries offer her a way to identify and to understand

the universe through her direct perception. Offering space for her perception to expand, the new astronomy offers her a new approach to composing the elegy. Since she explores the new astronomy as a source of happiness (rather than confusion), she can imagine the possibility of finding consolation through it.

Pulter's Astronomy and its New Lenses:

In "A Solitary Complaint," Pulter examines her distressed soul relative to detailed scientific descriptions from the new seventeenth-century astronomy. From the beginning, she affirms the Copernican theory and explores the planets revolving around the sun as fortunate:

Must I be still confined to this sad grove
Whenas those vast and glorious globes above
Eternally in treble motions move.
Thrice happy Hermes moves in endless day
Being underneath the sun's illustr'ous ray.
Next, lovely Venus swiftly hurries around
The sun's bright throne, with equal luster crowned.
Next Tellus to whom Sol light extends.
Runs round his orb, fair Cynthia her attends,
Whom he irradiates with constant light
Though she appears so various to our sight. (1-11)

While Pulter is "confined" and "sad," she pictures the planets above her, Mercury, Venus, and Earth, moving in "treble motions," and so they iterate the Copernican theory, referring to the new heliotropic center of the world and the planets revolving around it. She regards Mercury as "Thrice happy" since it moves endlessly around the sun. Imagining that she is moving on Earth around the sun, too, she depicts a favorable account of the new astronomy. Rather than dismissing it, she embraces the new vision offered by Copernicus when says, "Next Tellus to whom Sol light extends. / Runs round

his orb.” Therefore, Pulter observes the Earth, Tellus, moving around the sun. This new vision liberates her from previous conventional metaphors drawn from the envisioned geocentric universe.

Pulter’s then depicts the four Galilean moons that lead her to further show the positive influence of the new astronomy on the universe and on herself. She recalls the four Galilean moons when she writes, “Then Jupiter attended like a king/ Four radiant moons he in his train doth bring” (14-15). She emphasizes that Jupiter, the largest planet, is to notice the four moons trailing, encircling him as she, too, becomes aware that many moons may no longer be hidden:

Saturn, as many following his huge sphere;
At least no more to our dim sight appear.
All these encircle Phoebus glorious mound
By whom, with splendor, all these stars are crowned
But whether this sun his influence doth owe
Unto some other sun none sure doth know.
But every orb his fellow doth illustrate
For none the ends of nature dares to frustrate.
Thus all those suns and stars forever move.
About the fount of life, and light, and love. (16-25)

As Galileo uses his telescope to identify the four moons, Pulter uses her imagination and reason to envision all the planets and their moons made visible to humans. Pulter acknowledges that Saturn may have several moons; however, they may not be visible yet. Pulter imagines all these planets surround the sun’s “glorious mound” (18). While she acknowledges the planets encircling the sun, she does not know if the sun owes his “influence” to “some other sun” out in the universe. Therefore, she admits her limited knowledge, admits that unknown planets may exist though unseen. Then she returns to the visible sun illuminating “every orb” as a way to show the sun’s powerful nature to

shed light on every orbit (22). As Pulter explores the sun's light radiating on other planets, she finds the stars and the planets a fountain of "life, and light, and love" (25). Pulter's knowledge of the new astronomy is the foundation for understanding the roles of the stars and planets to shed the sun's positive influence on the world.

While "A Solitary Complaint" offers a detailed astronomical description of the new world, Pulter in "This Was Written in 1648" becomes more personal when she draws astronomical imageries in relation to herself. The previous poem illustrates a universal language towards the new astronomy through showing its influence on herself and society too. Pulter's language is common among the seventeen-century audience as she is discussing a discourse that is relevant to her time. Though she further explores these scientific changes in relation to the solar system, Pulter continues drawing these astronomical images; however, she decides to write about them in relation to herself, making it more personal. Even in "A Solitary Complaint," Pulter takes a more personal approach in the beginning and the end of the poem, but in "This Was Written in 1648," she deals completely with her personal life. Pulter decides to escape her physical confinement through using her imagination to set her thoughts free in which she places herself among different planets. Therefore, her physical confinement does not stop her from imagining her life on other planets. In both poems Pulter still regards the new astronomy as a source of life and rebirth. The significant difference in this poem, however, lies in Pulter going on an astronomical journey by placing herself among other planets and moving from one planet to another. Moreover, the second poem is written from yet another perspective, with Pulter finding temporary consolation beyond religion and through astronomy.

In “This Was Written in 1648,” Pulter continues wondering about the role of the stars and planets; however, her sadness starts to fade away when she places her thoughts among them. In the title of the poem, Pulter provides biographical material about her physical confinement and temporary state after writing the poem. In the preface of the poem, Pulter says that she wrote “This Was Written 1648” when she had her “15 child” (150). Because of her sickness and weakness, she had to stay in bed for ten days. Suffering from melancholy, Pulter explains that she could not move herself until God “restored” her from her “weakness” (150). Like “A Solitary Complaint,” Pulter’s elegiac poem examines the planets closely through her imagination; however, she decides to place her thoughts above, helping her to find temporary consolation in the end. Pulter decides to break free from her physical confinement during the night through her imagination:

Sad, sick, and lame, as in my bed I lay,
Lest pain and passion should bear all the sway,
My thoughts being free I bid them take their flight
Above the gloomy shades of death and night.

They, overjoyed with such a large commission,
Flew instantly without all intermission.
Up to that sphere where night’s pale queen doth run
Round the circumference of the illustrious sun
Her globious body spacious was, and bright
...
Attired like some fair nymph or virgin queen
With naked neck and arms, and robes of green. (1-9, 14-15)

At the beginning of her poem, Pulter decides to break free of the physical confinement that is causing her melancholic state by letting her thoughts escape her condition. Pulter asserts she is “sad,” “sick,” “lame,” and lying in bed (1). She is afraid that her pain will overcome her, so she chooses to set her thoughts free. She meditates during the night

because it is her least favorite part of the day, so her thoughts become “overjoyed” when they fly away without interruption, and they keep going to the farthest place she can think of, up to the “sphere” where the “night’s pale queen” usually runs (3-6). Therefore, her melancholic thoughts are transformed into joy, and when she sees the queen above, she describes her image as a “fair queen or virgin queen / with naked neck and arms, and robes of green” (14-15). She then realizes that this queen comes from another world, showing her what Pulter herself would look like if she were originally from another planet. Because of Pulter’s sadness and suffering, her imagination takes her to an exotic place where she imagines life different than that on Earth.

In half the poem, Pulter alludes to the planets and their roles by exploring the possibility of life on them. Many people during the sixteenth century viewed the moon as another inhabited planet. When Pulter says, “I did perceive she was another world / This world appeared to me another star,” she sees a different life on the moon that resembles life on Earth (18, 20). Steven Dick points out that before Galileo, Kepler asserted that “the moon, planets, and even stars might be bodies of a nature similar to Earth, each with its own inhabitants” (69-70). However, Galileo rejected that idea because he believed that life did not exist on other planets, and even if it did, it was beyond imagination (Dick 208). Given her references to the nature of the moon, Pulter seems familiar with the recent discoveries in the seventeenth-century, and this explains her detailed scientific description of the new astronomy. In 1638, John Wilkins published his book *The Discovery of a World in the Moon* that helped in popularizing the new astronomy among the laity. He believes that the Earth and the moon are the same, both of whose light comes from the sun (Shapiro V). Also, he suggests the possibility that a habitable world

exists on other planets. By viewing the Earth and the moon as the same, Wilkin's ideas parallel Pulter's when she sees the moon as another planet where life is possible. By imagining a life on other planets, Pulter demonstrates her curiosity about what her life would be like if she went there, which eventually has a positive impact on her.

As Pulter's poem "A Solitary Complaint" examines the visibility of the planets, the second poem does the same, as she elaborates on the planets in detail. Pulter's understanding of the visibility and invisibility of Venus and Mercury have changed due to Copernicus and Galileo's discovery that the planets orbit the sun. After Pulter concludes writing about the moon, she moves to Venus and Mercury. She addresses Venus as the "usher to the night and day/ Sometimes she waned, then again increase" (24, 25). While Venus appears in the east at the morning, it then appears in the west at the evening. Sometimes it fades out, but then appears again. After Pulter examines Venus, her imagination runs to Mercury who "pop[s] behind the sun" but still cannot be seen properly (28). Pulter points out that she cannot catch a glimpse of it because of the sun's "beams" that "dazzled [her] tender eye" (32). She explores that idea when she confirms that she cannot see Mercury due to the Copernicus theory:

And now my wonder is again renewed
That he enlightening all could not be viewed
Yet to my reason this appeared the best:
That he the center was all the rest
The Planets all like bowls still trundling round
The vast circumference of his glorious mound
He, resting, quickens all with heat and light. (33-39)

Pulter realizes that she cannot see Mercury because the planets orbit the sun, showing that she accepts Copernicus's heliocentric model, rather than a geocentric model in which the planets and the sun orbit the Earth. Here Pulter uses her own reasoning in relation to

astronomy and that helps her in examine her surroundings through using her own logic. Therefore, the new astronomical changes offer a space where Pulter questions and reasons the way in which some planets perform. This new lens provides a deep context for understanding how the planets work beyond studying them metaphorically or symbolically because for Pulter, she literally imagines living on another planets, which may help her have a better life as the these planets substitute heaven. After Venus and Mercury, Pulter mentions Jupiter and says it has “Four bright attendant always hurried around” (43). Meditating on and imagining the role of the planets during the night helps Pulter to situate herself among the planets, proving that her knowledge ultimately to question the way they function. Through reflecting and examining her surroundings, astronomy in literature marks a transition where Pulter embraces the new science as a source of placing and finding herself on other planets. Therefore, Pulter’s literary and scientific imagination illustrates an acceptance of the new astronomy, and more importantly, her ability to expand on her scientific knowledge to question and reason with it.

In addition to astronomical knowledge, Pulter's astrological theories demonstrate her ability to reason and to relate these theories to herself on Earth, and to understand herself and her place among the planets and the stars. Curry examines astrology through historical contexts to show how astrology has been to prophesize social and historical events, helping people to mentally cope with their lives (2-3). Pulter mentions Venus as the planet that “cause[s] war or peace” (26). Even though they are only theories that Venus has a positive or negative connotation, Pulter’s knowledge regarding the effect of Venus on Earth confirms that her contemplation of the planets goes beyond just

observing them. She considers their influence not only on her but on earth, proving a universal language in which Pulter's laity may be familiar with. Pulter's language illustrates her ability to examine the cosmos since it provides her the space to escape her pain. Her examination extends to the planets as a huge part of Earth's landscape, so she does not see them as separate entities. This shows Pulter accepting the new astronomy and embracing the recent changes rather than doubting them. Contemplating and understanding the planets helps Pulter to examine their significance and impact on Earth; therefore, she acknowledges the effect of these planets on her and on Earth. This poem differs from the previous one in which Pulter excessively contemplates her surroundings through examining the role of the stars and planets in relation to herself and the universe. By exploring the influences of the planets on herself, Pulter illustrates their direct impact on her:

Next Jupiter, that mild, auspicious star;
I did perceive about his blazing car
Four bright attendants always hurried around
Next flagrant Mars where no such moons are found
Then Saturn (whose aspects so sad my soul). (40- 45)

While Jupiter gives Pulter hope for a better future through regaining her identity, Saturn "makes [her] soul sad" (45). Pulter may have decided to discuss Jupiter first instead of Mars because the recent discoveries have examined the four Galilean moons, Jupiter, while Mars's discovery remained ambiguous as "no such moons are found" (44). Pulter understands the astrological effect of each planet and remains ambiguous when she does not know the function of certain planets. Nevertheless, her knowledge determines what is effective and ineffective for her. Moreover, the planets' astrological effects provide Pulter the escape she needs to help her mindset as she contemplates some of the planets'

influence on Earth and herself, providing an insight into her thoughts regarding the planets during her confinement. Pulter ends her astronomical journey with the stars and how they bring her back to reality and eventually restore her spirituality, showing that the new astronomy helps regain her identity.

Acknowledging the differences between the first and second poem is significant for understanding Pulter's way of breaking away from religion. In "A Solitary Complaint," Pulter, in the last two lines, reassures the reader that the planets are fortunate and a source of happiness by asking God to join the other planets:

Then, oh my god, irradiate my sad soul
That I about thy glorious throne may roll.
Let me the mean[e]st of these stars attend.
Then all my rays in praise shall reascend.
For thee, and only thee, I will adore;
My God, my God for ever, ever more. (24-31)

Earlier in the poem, she expresses her sad soul and since she has found the place to feel happy, she insists on God to "irradiate" her sadness just like he has radiated other planets with "life, and light, and love." Therefore, Pulter acknowledges possible consolation in astronomy and she can have it if she can join "the mean[e]st of these stars" (28). While Pulter moves beyond religion to find happiness, she goes back to assert that her powers are limited. As Pulter has previously examined the planets as the fountain of love, light, and life, she wants to attend the "mean[e]st of these stars" (28). Pulter restores her faith in God and finds consolation from religion and astronomy since astronomy has led her to find God again. Even though she does not reach the consolation she wants at the end of the poem, her astronomical imagery provides a temporary one, and she waits for her God to give her permanent consolation.

On the other hand, Pulter in “This Was Written in 1648” separates astronomy from religion. Her main focus lies in observing her surroundings and embracing the new science. Pulter, in the last ten lines, moves away from the planets and gazes at the fixed stars as their brightness confuses her. She knows that the stars are different from the planets, and their brightness frightens her imagination, making her return to her sad state. Pulter makes a transition, describing “Night,” which has a double meaning as both a Greek mythological goddess and as the literal night. She says that the Night has furies to torture people for their crimes. Pulter points out that that the furies come at night; however, when the day approaches, they must fly and go to the opposite side of the Earth. As they fly away, Pulter affirms her soul being comforted, illustrating the temporary consolation her knowledge of the new astronomy provides:

And from the light with her now frightened fled,
And then my maids window curtains drew
and as my pain, so comfort did renew
Unto the god of truth, light, life, love
I'll such lays here begin shall end above. (64-68)

Pulter ends the poem through examining a new day. Opening the curtains has comforted Pulter because it is no longer night time; she appreciates the day as “the god of truth, light, life, love” (67). Eventually, she feels better and she starts to sing, which helps her to regain her strength and end her physical confinement. In Chapter One, I discussed Pulter’s devotional poetry, ending with her singing for God which helps her to regain temporary consolation. Praising God leads her to finding consolation; however, Pulter breaks away from praising God here to praise her surroundings as a way to find temporary consolation beyond religion. Even though the night is not Pulter’s favorite

time, her knowledge and imagination of the planets and stars has helped her to escape. Pulter regains temporary consolation in her poem, although she wants to have it endlessly. The astronomical imagery helps Pulter to escape and to understand herself because the ending of the poem illustrates Pulter's vitality, as if she has regained her younger self back. The knowledge of the stars and planets provides Pulter a space where she is able to regain her spirituality and identity.

Both Donne and Pulter offer different world views of the new astronomical ideas; however, they capture the ability to use the new science to reflect on their lives. In his elegy, Donne's analogy of the death of Elizabeth Dury as the death of the world, and more importantly, he regards the new discoveries as the death of the world since people become confused with all these changes. Therefore, Donne uses astronomy from a metaphorical and symbolic point of view, and to contrast these ideas, Pulter's use of astronomy in literature offers a new way of examining the new science. She adopts, questions, and reasons with the new astronomy to evaluate her own identity in relation to the planets and the stars. Therefore, Pulter embraces the new astronomy in her elegiac poems and provides scientific descriptions of recent discoveries that help her to write about astronomy to regain her identity. She finds temporary consolation when she sets her thoughts free, which illustrates her breaking away from religion even when she knows that it is God's power. Her physical confinement has not stopped her from thinking about her surroundings. Even though Pulter's poems were written after the 1630s, she seems aware of the astronomical revolution in which she decides to follow reason. Pulter disrupts the traditional and metaphorical use of astronomy in literature to

explore new ideas emerging in the astronomical imagery, which ultimately helps her in finding consolation and eventually, regain her identity.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As Pulter's elegiac poetry illustrates her constant struggle in her relationship with God and the death of her daughters, the development of her identity happens only when she uses astronomical imagery to find temporary consolation. The previous chapters demonstrate the strength of Pulter's work comparing and contrasting it to notable seventeenth - century poets. While scholars have looked into Pulter's appropriations in the emblem tradition and eventually discovered that she transforms and alters the emblems, the previous chapters prove Pulter's ability to alter her elegiac performances in her poetry too. In her recent essay, Eardley states:

While Pulter may not have been participating in public conversations, her forms and vocabulary demonstrate that she was aware of such discussions and quietly contributed to them in ways less vigorously filtered through considerations of public acceptability. As a result, she is able to adopt and adapt familiar poetic conventions and rewrite them in a mode that sounds much more personal and confessional, and in doing so she provides a radically different view of what it meant to be a woman and a poet in the period. ("Shut up" 358)

While the elegy is a form for the elegist to gain consolation, Pulter's elegies show the incapability of finding comfort due Pulter's personal suffering. Nonetheless, it has helped Pulter to alter the elegiac form through adopting some of the previous poetical conventions while altering some to appropriate her condition. Pulter's devotional poetry is similar to Herbert's where both she and the speaker initially find consolation from God; however, Pulter does illustrate her inability to gain consolation from God when she

mentions the death of daughters; therefore, their death is inconsolable and leads Pulter to contemplate her own death, “(Ay me) this thought of death my courage dashes / Must I, and mine turn all to dust and ashes?” (21-22). Another example of Pulter diverting from her contemporaries is when Pulter uses “singing” to comfort her soul in some of her poems. This analogy between poetry and singing reveals how both are related to the mending art of consolation. While Pulter finds consolation in some of her devotional elegies through singing, her soul and anguish is inconsolable knowing that her daughters are not with her, proving the elegiac form does not always provide comfort for the elegist. The poetical conventions and the consolatory strategies in her elegies do not always comfort Pulter and they initially fail her at finding consolation.

Similarly, Pulter’s familial elegies explore the inconsolable condition once she remembers the death of her daughters. Their death exceeds any form of consolation and prevents Pulter from being in solace. Pulter alters the poetical conventions of the elegy for her condition such as modifying the function of blazon. For example, while Pulter praises her daughter through using blazons, she rejects their reification through using a repetitive refrain, “Tell me no more her hair was lovely brown/ Nor that it did in curious curls hang down” (1-2). While the elegy is a form for the poet to remember the dead, Pulter refuses to remember her daughter’s physical features and explores that she wants to instead join her daughter in heaven. Pulter continuously stresses the idea of afterlife, and she extends on it when she regards the new astronomy as rebirth, aiding her to reconstruct her identity. Pulter eventually finds consolation and restores her identity through adopting the new astronomy of the seventeenth-century, offering the new science as a consolatory strategy to comfort her. Rather than rejecting the scientific developments

of the seventeenth-century, she uses them in her elegiac poems to examine their roles and influence on her. Therefore, Pulter's poetry departs from other seventeenth-century poets through modifying the poetical conventions and the consolatory strategies through appropriating them for her personal state.

By breaking away from these poetical conventions and examining ways to console herself, Pulter offers an example of a woman writing outside the norm of seventeenth-century male and female poets. While Pulter's poetry remains private, it gives her many privileges because she was able to write without having concerns about the public's reaction towards her poetry. She adopts and changes the poetical conventions to explore herself, leading to a better understanding of her own. Even though Pulter's work is still not widely known, as an early modern woman writer, it highlights a woman writing about different aspects in her life, capable of capturing "what it meant to be a woman and a poet" in the seventeenth-century (Eardley, "Shut up" 358). Adding Pulter's contribution to other seventeenth-century poets highlights a female poet who was capable of transforming the traditional poetical conventions, such as astronomical imagery, as purely self-reflective. So far, Pulter expands on the importance of studying early modern women writers' manuscripts since it reveals information about both their personal lives and the effect of the historical events on them. Therefore, Pulter's contributes and challenges the works of other seventeenth-century poets, confirming the remarkable work of an early modern woman writer.

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