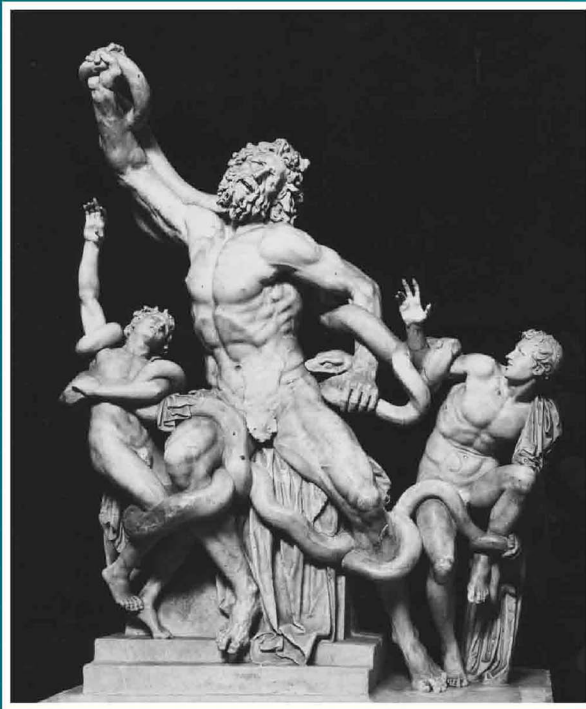


Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature

JENNIFER C. VAUGHT



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Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature

JENNIFER C. VAUGHT

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, USA

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction: Men Who Weep and Wail: Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature	1
Part One: The Intertextual Poetics of Scholarly Men: Affect in Arboreal Works by Spenser and Jonson	25
1. Passionate Protestantism: Spenser's Dialogic, Feminine Voice in Book I of <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	29
2. A Pen as Mighty as the Sword: Stoical Anger in Jonson's <i>Timber, or Discoveries upon Men and Matter</i>	58
Part Two: Emotional Kings and their Stoical Usurpers in Marlowe's <i>Edward II</i> and Shakespeare's <i>Richard II</i>	73
3. "Monster of Men!": Androgyny, Affect, and Politically Savvy Action in Marlowe's <i>Edward II</i>	74
4. "Wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes": Woeful Rhetoric and Crocodile Tears in Shakespeare's <i>Richard II</i>	88
Part Three: Chivalric Knights, Courtiers, and Shepherds Prone to Tears in Pastoral Romances by Sidney and Spenser	115
5. Crossdressers in Love: Men of Feeling and Narrative Agency in Sidney's <i>New Arcadia</i>	117
6. "To sing like birds i' th' cage": Lyrical, Private Expressions of Emotion in Book VI of Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i>	136
Part Four: Demonstrative Family Men: Masculinity and Sentiment in Works by Shakespeare, Lanyer, Cary, Donne, Walton, and Garrick	157
7. "'Affection! Thy intention stabs the center': Male Irrationality vs. Female Composure in Shakespeare's <i>Winter's Tale</i>	160
8. Nightmarish Visions of Grief: Lamentable Men in Shakespeare's <i>Winter's Tale</i> and Walton's <i>Life of Dr. John Donne</i>	177

vi	<i>Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature</i>	
9.	Fathers and Rogues: Peddling Middle-Class Values by Shedding Tears on Stage in David Garrick's <i>Florizel and Perdita</i>	192
	<i>Postscript</i>	209
	<i>Bibliography</i>	213
	<i>Index</i>	235

List of Illustrations

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 4.1 | William Hamilton, <i>The Duke of York Discovering His Son Aumerle's Treachery Richard II. Act 5. Scene 2</i> , oil on canvas, late 1790s, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 102 |
| 4.2 | Henry Fuseli, <i>Richard II. Act 5. Scene 5. "I wasted Time and now doth Time waste me, / For now hath Time made me his numbring clock,"</i> engraving, 1803, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 106 |
| 7.1 | John James Halls, <i>Winter's Tale. Antigonus—"This is the chase—Well may I get aboard!" Act 3, Scene 3</i> , engraving, 1807, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 170 |
| 8.1 | Edvard Munch, <i>Geschrei (The Scream)</i> , lithograph, 1895, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. | 179 |
| 9.1 | James McArdell after a picture by Benjamin Wilson, <i>Mr. Garrick in Hamlet. Act 1. Scene 4</i> , engraving, 1754, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 193 |
| 9.2 | James McArdell after a picture by Benjamin Wilson, <i>Garrick as King Lear, Act 3, Scene 1</i> , engraving, 1754, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 194 |
| 9.3 | William Hogarth and Charles Grignion after a painting by William Hogarth, <i>Mr. Garrick in the Character of Richard III: Shakespeare, Act 5, Scene 7</i> , engraving, 1746, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 195 |
| 9.4 | Simon François Ravenet, <i>Mrs. Pritchard as the Character of Hermione in The Winter's Tale in Garrickiana</i> , engraving, 1754, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 201 |
| 9.5 | Caroline Watson after a painting by Robert Edge Pine, <i>Garrick Delivering the Ode to Shakespeare at the Jubilee</i> , engraving, 1783, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 203 |
| 9.6 | John Saunders after a picture by Benjamin Van der Gucht, <i>Mr. Garrick as Steward of the Stratford Jubilee</i> , engraving, 1769, Folger Shakespeare Library. | 205 |

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For Will

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Introduction

Men Who Weep and Wail: Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature

Weeping and wailing and other demonstrations of excessive emotion often function as sources of power for men in early modern English literature. Though medieval and Renaissance women are usually represented as the sex more prone to such emotional outbursts than men, men also express a wide range of powerful emotions—grief, sadness, melancholy, anger, despair, patience, and joy—in early modern poetry, prose, and plays.¹ In this study on masculinity and emotion in works by Spenser and Shakespeare and a number of their contemporaries, I focus on literary

1 In keeping with classical precedents, excessive displays of emotion are often gendered as feminine in medieval and early modern discourse. In the late fourth century St John Chrysostom criticizes women's excessive mourning and lamentation by focusing on their violent, ritualized gestures of "baring their arms, tearing their hair, making scratches down their cheeks": *Commentary on St. John the Apostle and Evangelist*, trans. Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1960-69), p. 177 as cited by Patricia Phillippy in *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 15. Andreas Hyperius warns his readers that "it is very uncomly and wommanish to lament without measure" and criticizes those who indulge in a "womannish kinde of wayling and shrieking": *The Practice of Preaching, Otherwise Called the Pathway to the Pulpit* (London: Thomas East, 1577), pp. 171-2, 174. Robert Burton similarly notes the shamefulness of those who "almost goe besides themselves" by lamenting like "those *Irish* women": *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Nicolas K. Kiessling, Thomas C. Faulkner, and Rhonda L. Blair, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 176. See Elizabeth M.A. Hodgson, "Prophecy and Gendered Mourning in Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," *SEL* 43 (2003): 103-4, for a brief discussion of Hyperius and Burton in relation to the early modern cultural concern over the excessive mourning of grieving women.

For recent, critical discussions of the gendering of the emotions as feminine and reason or rationality as masculine in the early modern period see: Phyllis Rackin, "Historical Difference / Sexual Difference" in *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Jean Brink (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993), pp. 46, 50-51 and Gwynne Kennedy, *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 2000), p. 5. The Galenic theory of the humoral body positing that women are colder and moister than men contributed to the belief that women are "more susceptible to extreme emotion": Michael Schoenfeldt, "'Commotion Strange': Passion in *Paradise Lost*" in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 45. See also Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (New York: Cambridge

representations of men from different professions and social classes and the power of their emotional expressiveness in general and their shedding of tears in particular. I examine the profound impact of the cultural shift in the English aristocracy from violent warriors to courtiers or gentlemen on the emotional registers of all kinds of men in early modern literature. Although a number of literary critics rightly note that women are often imagined as anxiety-producing, contaminating, or debilitating for men during this period, I demonstrate that those men who ally themselves with women by adopting conventionally feminine forms of expression such as weeping and wailing are often strengthened rather than weakened as a result.² I trace the gradual emergence of men of feeling in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary texts and the blossoming of this popular version of manhood during the eighteenth century. In a variety of works ranging from the epic, lyric, and romance to drama, pastoral, and prose biography, male demonstrations of emotion in public forums and private, interior spaces are empowering, liberating, dignifying, and (politically and financially) useful.

Gender tends to shape and limit the ways in which both sexes display a variety of emotions in early modern texts representative of different literary genres. Men often express their emotions stoically or moderately, or vent intense emotions through violent action.³ Women frequently grieve by weeping and wailing and traditionally

University Press, 1980), p. 42, in which he notes the early modern suspicion that the uterus “weakens rationality and increases the incidence and violence of passions in women.”

2 See, for example, Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5; Coppélia Kahn in *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 12; and Janet Adelman in *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 3-4.

3 Literary and non-literary representations of men who express their emotions stoically, moderately, or violently often reflect the existing cultural decorum about how they ought to display their feelings. Letters, sermons, religious tracts, and courtesy books provide concrete evidence of the vicissitudes of such expectations. Plutarch's letter to Apollonius in response to the death of his son, for instance, epitomizes the ancient tradition of equating stoicism with manliness and effeminacy with slavishness: “Yes, mourning is verily feminine, and weak, and ignoble, since women are more given to it than men, and barbarians more than Greeks, and inferior men more than better men”: *Moralia*, vol. 2, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (London: Heinemann, 1928), 2.165-7. Phillippy notes that male reformers similarly treated stoical, moderate grief as valuable and masculine: *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England*, p. 8. On p. 12 she adds that in a 1531 English translation of Erasmus' *De Morto Declamatio* he encourages men to moderate their sorrow: “To have always a stedfast mynde is a token of a perfect wyse man”: *A treatyse perswading a man paciently to suffer the death of his freende (De morto declamatio)* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1531). Violence, however, can contribute to the acceptability of excess grief in men. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth* Malcolm praises grieving Macduff's decision to act violently in response to the slaughter of his family by exclaiming, “this tune goes manly”: *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), IV.iii.235. In *The English Gentleman*, by contrast, Richard Brathwait discourages such violence in a man and argues, in the words of Mervyn James, that contemplation is “a suitable avocation for the Caroline gentleman”: *The English Gentleman* (1630; reprint, Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1975), p. 47 as cited by James in

perform the cultural work of mourning.⁴ Nevertheless, early modern writers also feature those who redefine customary rhetoric about how men and women tend to display a range of emotions. As we might expect, these writers do not necessarily depict men as the more rational and less emotional sex. A number of the male figures I discuss in this study are prone to excessive demonstrations of emotion and even hysteria. Their social class, ethnic background, and age largely determine the emotional registers associated with them.⁵ In general, these men are at greater liberty to shed tears in the privacy of their own homes rather than in public. Some early modern women focal in my project are not prone to tears and respond stoically, angrily, or even aggressively to misfortune or loss. Not surprisingly, the decorum for how men and women ought to express emotion during this period varies in response to myriad historical, cultural, and religious factors.⁶ Genre also influences the impact

Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 394.

4 In Book I of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Una begins to "waile & weepe" when she discovers that Redcrosse has abandoned her (ii.7.9). Yet in *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 3, Marjory Lange notes that prominent early modern writers such as "Elizabeth I, Rachel Speght, Aemilia Lanyer, and Mary Wroth" tend not to write about tears in an effort to avoid reiterating largely negative stereotypes about the natural predisposition of women to excess emotion. Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* provides an exception to this general rule because she focuses on mourning women who shed holy tears in response to Christ's crucifixion. Literary critics and historians who discuss mourning, ritualized lamentation, and preparing and dressing the corpse as women's work are Sharon T. Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 119 and 173; Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 18; and David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 428.

5 A number of literary critics, historians, and early modern writers discuss how class, ethnic background, and age shape literary and cultural expectations for the emotional expressiveness of men and women. In *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 14, Joshua Scodel argues that imaginative writers from the Elizabethan period through the Restoration present extreme passion as an aristocratic sign of "true nobility." In *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), p. 225, Ralph Houlbrooke notes that immoderate grief was often linked with ethnic groups other than the English. The Irish, for example, were notorious for their "'howlings and lamentations' at funerals": J. Weever, *Ancient funerall monuments within the united monarchie of Great Brittain, Ireland, and the islands adjacent* (1631), pp. 13-17 as cited by Houlbrooke. In *Treatise on Laughter* (1579), trans. Gregory David de Rocher (University of Alabama, 1980), p. 98, Laurent Joubert states that "weeping is easier for those who by their constitution and nature, or by reason of their age, sex, or culture, are weaker and moister, which is why we see phlegmatic people tear promptly, along with children, elderly people, and women."

6 In the "Introduction" to *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture: Shakespeare to Milton*, ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002), p. 8, Swiss and Kent note that the increased tolerance for written expressions of grief in seventeenth-century culture is the result of a number of factors. These factors include the

of gender on emotional expressiveness. The following episodes from Book III of Spenser's epic *The Faerie Queene* (1590) and Shakespeare's history play *Richard II* (1595) and his romance *The Winter's Tale* (1612) showcase the comedy and tragedy surrounding early modern men who weep and wail (and women who do not). Collectively, these episodes illustrate the vital, oftentimes positive ways in which emotion shapes the fictive lives of men and women in early modern literary works.

In Book III of *The Faerie Queene* Spenser lends comedy to Scudamour's weeping and wailing over the abduction of his beloved, Amoret, on their wedding day. Britomart discovers the woeful chivalric knight lamenting on the ground and administers "med'cine" to his "grief" by venturing to rescue his beloved from the enchanter, Busirane. When Scudamour is unable to accompany Britomart into the House of Busirane where the enchanter has imprisoned Amoret, his "grievous" groans, sighs, and sobs become particularly comic and even ridiculous through the exaggerated style in which Spenser presents them. Out of frustration, Scudamour "wilfully" throws himself on the ground where he "did beat and bounse his head and brest full sore."⁷ Though male knights in medieval and Renaissance literature often deliver laments or complaints over the unattainable affections of their ladies, Spenser surprises the reader with hyperbolic details such as Scudamour's dramatic gestures of banging his head and chest on the ground. His brief interchange with Britomart challenges the misleading association of masculinity with reason and femininity with emotion. Ironically, Britomart keeps her cool, while Scudamour loses his head.

Shakespeare's *Richard II* highlights the connection between masculinity and emotional expressiveness, though in a tragic rather than a comic context. King Richard weeps and wails over the loss of his kingdom when he returns from Ireland to discover that his troops now support his political opponent, Bolingbroke. Realizing that he will be deposed and eventually murdered, Richard delivers his famous speech, "For God's sake let us sit upon the ground / And tell sad stories of the death of kings." In response to Richard's lament, the Bishop of Carlisle exclaims, "wise men ne're sit and wail their woes, / But presently prevent the ways to wail."⁸ He scorns the soon-to-be-deposed King for weeping and wailing on the ground in a pathetic fashion and doubts his heroic masculinity as a result. Their dialogue highlights the imposition of rigid standards of decorum for the expression of emotion by male leaders in the public eye. The stoical Bishop views unrestrained demonstrations of emotion as unmanly and effeminizing. As clergyman Thomas Fuller similarly states in 1642, "excessive was the sorrow of King Richard the Second ... beseeeming him

Protestant Reformation and its repudiation of the doctrine of purgatory so that the bereaved no longer prayed for their loved ones there; the increase of literacy and individualism that valued self-expression; the cult of melancholy; and the rising interest in naturalism and psychology that led to personalized displays of affect on tomb inscriptions at grave sites.

7 Edmund Spenser, *Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Fredrick Morgan Padelford, et al., 9 vols. (1932-57; reprint, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), III.xi.7, 8, 13, 27. All subsequent quotations of *The Faerie Queene* are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by book, canto, stanza, and line number unless noted otherwise.

8 *King Richard II*, ed. Peter Ure, The Arden Shakespeare (1956; reprint, London: Routledge, 1989), III.ii.145, 155-6, 178-9.

neither as king, man, or Christian.”⁹ Both religious figures scorn Richard’s lack of moderation.

Nevertheless, early modern men and women in a variety of literary genres often counter or transgress all kinds of limitations placed on how others expect them to express emotion. In Shakespeare’s tragicomedy *The Winter’s Tale* Hermione states that she is “not prone to weeping, as [her] sex / Commonly are.” Yet in response to Leontes’ false claim that she is guilty of adultery, Hermione proclaims with dignity over the loss of her husband’s faith that she has “that honourable grief lodg’d here which burns / Worse than tears drown.” Hermione’s composure and self-restraint are as unconventional and remarkable as the extent of Leontes’ tears in response to the loss of his family. He sheds tears beside the grave of Hermione and his young son, Mamillius, for sixteen years during which he endures the tragic consequences of misjudging his wife.¹⁰ Hermione’s heroic patience, abiding hope for the return of her exiled daughter, Perdita, and forgiveness of Leontes are ultimately more powerful than the savagery of her husband’s jealousy.

Like Hermione, her friend Paulina defies convention by venting her anger at Leontes and falsely reporting that his wife has died. She becomes furious at the King of Sicilia for triggering the death of his son and ordering the abandonment of his infant daughter on a foreign shore. As a result of the charade Paulina orchestrates, Leontes grieves over his loss of Hermione until Perdita returns to Sicilia as a young woman and figuratively restores her mother back to life. In Act V the aggressive and violent dimension of Paulina’s chastising rhetoric provides Leontes with a means of expressing remorse and performing penance for his transgressions. Even though the debilitating emotion of grief resists language profoundly and is ultimately inexpressible, signifying loss through “sad stories of the death of kings” in *Richard II* or tears of contrition for the destruction of a family reunited by the end of the play in *The Winter’s Tale* is psychologically regenerative (III.ii.156). These textual examples from Spenser and Shakespeare foreground the multiple ways in which emotional expressiveness in general and tears in particular are often empowering for early modern men and women in a variety of imaginative writings. Yet at the wrong place and time excessive, immoderate demonstrations of emotion can become debilitating for both sexes.

This book seeks to answer the following questions about early modern versions of masculinity in relation to the emotions. How do definitions of masculinity fluctuate according to factors such as a man’s profession, social class, and age in early modern literature? How do these material factors alter the emotional registers generally

9 Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State* (Cambridge: Roger Daniel for John Williams, 1642), pp. 52-3, as cited by Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England*, p. 70. Likewise, in *The Practice of Preaching* (1577), p. 171, Hyperius advises men to avoid the “effeminate weakness” of immoderate grieving in response to death. In “The Semiotics of Masculinity in Renaissance England” in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 239, David Kuchta demonstrates that such “effeminacy” was often equated with a “loss of moderation” in the early modern period.

10 *The Winter’s Tale*, ed. J.H.D. Pafford, The Arden Shakespeare (1963; reprint, London: Routledge, 1984), II.i.108-12 and III.ii.239.

acceptable for fictive representations of men and boys during this period? To what extent do men and women in a number of literary works by Spenser, Shakespeare, and their contemporaries moderate or stoically restrain their emotions? When are unrestrained displays of pity, compassion, desire, and righteous anger empowering for men in particular? Under what circumstances are women, rather than men, associated with Stoicism, anger, aggressiveness, and violence? How do public and private settings influence male and female expressions of emotion in various genres? In what ways do early modern literary works unsettle the conventional associations of masculinity with reason and femininity with emotion? How do selected texts from this period challenge the customary assumption of the supremacy of reason over emotion in Western culture? Above all, this study refutes the notion that literary conceptions of masculinity and femininity are hegemonic or transhistorical. Likewise, rules of decorum for male and female expressions of emotion in a number of early modern works are highly mutable.

Paradoxically, focusing on the subject of masculinity and emotion is a feminist project.¹¹ Including the study of men in the field of gender studies implicitly challenges the misleading association of men with the mind and women with the body and avoids perpetuating the illusion that men are the ungendered sex.¹² Like women's

11 The topic of masculinity has generated a considerable amount of scholarly interest over the past decade. The following, select references illustrate the variety of recent approaches to this fruitful and intriguing topic. Key, representative works on theories of gender and masculinities across historical periods include Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993). Kaja Silverman focuses on "deviant" masculinities "that eschew Oedipal normalization" in relation to theoretical principles, novels, and film in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 2. Discussing medieval and Renaissance Europe as well as contemporary American culture, Marjorie Garber explores how clothing constructs (and deconstructs) masculinity in *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).

A number of critics have examined medieval and Renaissance texts in light of the field of men's studies, which "originates within feminism" and is an effort to study men as gendered: see, for example, *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees, Thelma S. Fenster, and Jo Ann McNamara (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. xi. In contrast to the focus on heroic warriors in *Medieval Masculinities*, I deal in particular with men who define themselves in other than aggressive, violent terms. In her recent study *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) Ruth Mazo Karras similarly analyzes three non-violent models of masculinity—at court, the university, and the craft workshop—in the late Middle Ages. For a useful examination of the history of manhood in England from 1560 to 1640 see Alexandra Shephard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

12 See Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views," *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982): 109-31, for a discussion of the traditional association of men with the mind and women with the body. This artificial division between the sexes tends to identify women with the emotions, which are often imagined as tied to the body in some way. In *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 18, Susan James contends that "the emergence of a

studies, men's studies as a complementary field of inquiry often exhibits feminist goals and aims by resisting the oppression that results from what Clare A. Lees describes as rigid "classifications of male and female."¹³ A number of literary figures central in my study actively court gender confusion or are noticeably androgynous. In the broadest, theoretical terms this book illustrates that there are multiple kinds of masculinities, instead of several hegemonic categories, and that these male as well as female gender roles are cultural constructions that are performative and even masquerades.¹⁴ Although recent theories of gender have focused on both men and women, they tend to under emphasize issues of history and agency. By reducing historical reality to language, and agency to discourse, they overlook cultural material issues of class, physiology, and anatomy that influence the gendering of the emotions and the body, which is matter not reducible to words.¹⁵ The pronounced cultural shift in the English aristocracy from a class of violent warriors to more civilized courtiers or gentlemen with comparatively little military experience gradually transformed literary standards of manhood in the Renaissance. A bloody or scarred body was no longer the predominant sign of a man in a variety of genres. Although we customarily imagine medieval and Renaissance men in heroic, militaristic terms, I focus on the fictive lives of emotionally expressive figures who occupy private, interior settings as well as the battlefield. My study of men who weep and wail is an effort to validate the power of the emotions and celebrate the sustained, but far from exclusive association of emotional displays with femininity in imaginative

clear division between the body and the mind served to attach women more firmly to the physical world, and a comparable split between reason and passion condemned them to the realm of affect." In *Engendering Men: The Question of Male Feminist Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 1990) editors Joseph A. Boone and Michael Cadden note that a number of contemporary critics have "begun to embody the feminist injunction to return gender to the universal term *Man*" (p. 2).

13 *Medieval Masculinities*, p. xvii.

14 For intriguing analyses of gender as a cultural construction see Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 7, and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 32. Butler is well-known for her emphasis on the performative dimension of gender: see, for instance, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 1. In "Unveiling Masculinity: The Construction of Gender in Mark 6: 17-29," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994), p. 36, Jennifer A. Glancy asks provocatively, "If femininity or womanliness is a masquerade, why not masculinity?"

15 In *Medieval Masculinities*, pp. xviii-ix, Lees remarks on this gap in current thinking about gender. She states, for instance, that "there is little historical study in *Gender Trouble*." Lees continues that Butler's reduction of "historical reality" to language "may be read as implying that the history of male or female oppression is knowable *only* as a narrative of that discourse (despite her rhetorical assertions to the contrary). Such oppression is felt in the flesh and blood of bodies, however restricted to language our representation of it is." Lees responds to Butler's argument about the discursive nature of agency by noting that "the problem is not one of the enormous power of language as a representation of reality, but one of the reductive notion of agency within history analyzed as discourse: 'discourse' can no more deal with change than it can with oppression." The collection *Medieval Masculinities* thereby challenges contemporary theories of sex and gender that deal inadequately with literary history and agency.

writings by early modern male and female authors—Spenser, Shakespeare, Sidney, Marlowe, Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Jonson, Donne, Izaak Walton, and David Garrick.¹⁶

In my study of masculinity and emotion in early modern English literature I consider the ways in which a number of historical upheavals stimulated reimaginings of gender categories. Perceptions of the softening of aristocratic versions of manhood resulted in part from the change in profession for many upper-class Englishmen from the militaristic to the civilian arts.¹⁷ I explore the sustained impact of this historical

16 Schiesari, p. 266, similarly calls for a “feminist rethinking of the emotions” that avoids devaluing or disparaging them. In *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 7, Julie Ellison adds that “the renovation of sentiment as worthy of our most complex thinking and teaching” is an important dimension of “feminist literary scholarship.”

17 Recent critical works on the gradual shift of the English aristocrat from violent warrior to more civilized courtier or gentleman are wide and varied. In *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, p.128, Shephard states that literary and historical studies of “a qualitative shift toward less violent cultural norms” in early modern England often refer to Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). In his ground-breaking work, *Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), pp. 263-4, 269, Lawrence Stone argues that the anxiety among the aristocracy over how to redefine themselves in other than violent, militaristic terms intensified toward the end of the sixteenth century. In “The Crisis of the Aristocracy in *Julius Caesar*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 75-111, esp. 106-8, Wayne A. Rebhorn notes that from the reign of Henry VIII through the Civil War “the aristocracy became a class of courtiers who often had little or no military experience” (p. 107). In her recent “Irishmen, Aristocrats, and Other White Barbarians,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997): 494-525, Debora Shuger discusses the discouraging of the violence endemic to an aristocratic culture of warriors in the writings of Spenser and Davies. She demonstrates that both James Harrington, a seventeenth-century political writer, and Lawrence Stone report that “between 1580 and 1620 the English nobility ceded much of their power—and their property—to the Crown and commons, forsook their ancient habits of violence, and submitted their traditional liberties to the rule of locally administered royal law” (521): see James Harrington, *The Political Works of James Harrington*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 196-9, 606-10 and Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 7, 15, 201, 208, 250, 256. Interestingly, English courtesy manuals from Elyot to Peacham tend to omit military expertise from “the complete ideal of the gentleman”: see Ruth Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1929), p. 48, as cited by Shuger, p. 520.

Other literary critics who discuss the demilitarization of the English aristocracy include Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood, 1540-1620* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), pp. 159-67, 278-81, and 291 and Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 237. In *Society, Politics and Culture*, pp. 308-415, esp. 375-6, James explores the rise of the “new man” in relation to an emerging code of honor associated less with war, pedigree, and descent and more with intellect, learning, and virtue. These “new men” included “lawyers, officials, merchants, even husbandmen and artisans.” He adds that “the traditional ascription to noblemen of innate qualities as men of war ... disappeared” by 1640 (p. 408).

shift on a variety of masculine identities in early modern writings. The widely-documented transformation in the English aristocracy from warriors to courtiers or gentlemen generated a class of men whom Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier* felt compelled to defend against charges of effeminacy.¹⁸ From the ascension of Elizabeth I to the throne in 1558 through the beginning of the Puritan revolution in 1640, profound changes in the structure of the family such as the increasing authority of the wife and mother at home introduced further ambiguity in definitions of gender roles. As William Gouge argues in “Of Domestical Duties,” men and women should be considered partners in marriage.¹⁹ The shifting balance of power in the English household contributed to the somewhat anxious relationship between men and women, who were not as different from one another as prior generations once believed.²⁰

Early modern perceptions of the similarities between male and female bodies added to anxiety-ridden fears of gender ambiguity that rigid cultural expectations about how men and women should express emotion attempted to counter. Thomas Laqueur, who has discussed Galen’s classical theory of the “one-sex body” in relation to Renaissance anatomists, sheds light on how conceptions of physiology influenced cultural dictates placed on the emotional expressiveness of men and women.²¹ According to Laqueur’s critical assessment of early modern interpretations of Galenic theory, males and females share the same genitalia—either external or

See Jennifer Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) for how aristocratic men redefined themselves as dueling courtiers rather than battling warriors. In *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) Markku Peltonen explores why dueling became an integral part of the Renaissance culture of courtesy. Although medieval trials by battle were often considered barbarian, duels of honor became pivotal for the Renaissance ideology of civility. In contrast to Stone, James, and Low, Peltonen contends that duels of honor were not “a remnant from medieval honour culture” but came to England as a result of the adoption of the “Italianate ideology of courtesy and civility” (p. 13).

18 Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 36 and 92. Thomas Hoby translated this work into English in 1561. In *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation*, p. 245, Halpern relevantly notes that “the aristocracy felt emasculated by conversion from a militarized to a consuming class.”

19 See Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 17 and 25, for a discussion of Gouge’s “Of Domestical Duties” in response to shifts in the gender hierarchy at home.

20 In “‘The Part of a Christian Man’: The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England,” in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 215, Susan Dwyer Amussen remarks on the fluidity of gender categories as suggested by the frequency of cross-dressing among all classes of people in the early modern period. She notes that “a steady stream of women—often celebrated in ballads—put on male clothing and went to sea; men put on women’s clothes and disguises in riots.”

21 Here I am borrowing Stephen Orgel’s useful phrase describing Laqueur’s theory in “Nobody’s Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989): 13.

internal—but possess a unique body chemistry consisting of four elements and “humours.”²² Unlike male bodies, which were thought to exhibit more of the higher elements of air and fire, female bodies were imagined as containing more of the lower elements of earth and water and were considered to be colder and moister as a result. From a premodern perspective the body chemistry of women explained why they possessed insufficient heat to push their genitals outside of the body at birth and were more prone to weeping than men. Early modern women, whose bodies were commonly depicted as “leaky vessels,” were also thought to possess less innate ability to control their emotions.²³ As the Dutch physician Levinus Lemnius asserts in *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (1658), “women are subject to all passions and perturbations ... a woman enraged, is besides her selfe, and hath not power over her self, so that she cannot rule her passions, or bridle her disturbed affections, or stand against them with force of reason and judgment.”²⁴ Although the Galenic view of anatomy coexisted with the archaic belief in witchcraft, the cultural misperception that women are more prone to sentimentality than men still persists today.²⁵

Because of the persistent link of sentiment with the female body in early modern discourse, I deal in particular with men whose affective rhetoric, gestures, and tears tend to ally them with women. Recently, literary critics have demonstrated that early modern writers often depict women as sources of anxiety for men.²⁶ A number of the men I examine in this study exhibit a considerable degree of anxiety in response

22 Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). For a useful overview of Galen’s influence on Renaissance understandings of male and female bodies see Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 15.

23 For a relevant discussion of figures like Olivia in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* as “leaky vessels” see Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*, pp. 32-3. In *A Treatise of Melancholie*, a facsimile of the 1586 edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 144, Timothy Bright notes that “children are more apt to weepe, then those who are of greater yeares, and women more than men, the one having by youth the body more moist, rare, and soft, and the other by sex.”

24 Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (London, 1658), pp. 273-4.

25 In *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), editors Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler note in their introductory essay that prior “studies of gender in American sentimental culture have focused almost exclusively on women ... as if critics fear the results of deconstructing the alignments of reason, commerce, and the public sphere with men, and feelings, domesticity and the private sphere with women” (p. 7). The contributors to their collection, however, rightly “question any uncomplicated gendering of sentiment as feminine” (p. 8).

26 In *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* Breitenberg discusses masculine subjectivity in terms of cultural, historical factors such as humoral psychology and changing conceptions of the family. His study differs significantly from psychoanalytic readings of the formation of masculine identity through separation from the debilitating or contaminating figure of the mother by Kahn in *Man’s Estate*, p. 12, and Janet Adelman in *Suffocating Mothers*, pp. 3-4. As these latter two works illustrate, a number of critics have discussed the topic of masculinity in relation to Shakespeare, but fewer have done so in relation to the works I discuss by Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe, Lanyer, Cary, Jonson, Donne, Walton, and Garrick as well as Shakespeare. Though Jonson is known as one of the most aggressively

to the sexual or rhetorical authority of women, but others voice comparatively less or little such anxiety. I build on current discussions of the literary formation of masculine identities in the early modern period by illustrating that writers of poetry, prose, and plays frequently imagine emotionally expressive men and boys who are strengthened by their positive alliances with women and weakened by their separation or alienation from them. Even though some men in the texts I discuss steal women's capacities to move their audiences through laments, complaints, oral narratives, or tears, their speech acts simultaneously highlight how potent these conventionally feminine forms of expression can be.²⁷

Overall, this book aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge about masculinity and emotion in early modern literary texts and cultural contexts.²⁸

masculine figures in the English Renaissance, his ambiguous relation to femininity is less widely addressed.

27 In *The Gendering of Melancholia*, pp. 7 and 15, Schiesari argues that melancholia, a frequently intellectualized emotion, was considered a positive virtue for men but less flattering for women in the Renaissance.

28 The subject of emotion has recently stimulated a great deal of interest from a wide range of disciplines. Pioneering studies of emotion in relation to literary and cultural studies include Norbert Elias' proposal of a theory of emotional change in *The Civilizing Process* and Stone's discussion of sentiment in relation to the family in *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. Paster is widely noted for her inaugural study of the humoral body entitled *The Body Embarrassed* and for the collection of essays that she, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson have recently edited, *Reading the Early Modern Passions*. In *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) Paster discusses the language of affect in early modern drama in relation to its cultural context.

Literary and cultural studies of emotion in terms of gender in early modern England include Schiesari, *The Gendering Of Melancholia*; Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Kennedy, *Just Anger*; and *Grief and Gender: 700-1700*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught with Lynne Dickson Bruckner (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). The number of recent studies on melancholy include Douglas Trevor's *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and reflect an abiding interest in this emotion focal in early modern works such as Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). In contrast to prior, critical discussions of melancholy and its association with elite intellectuals, in *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* I focus on a breadth of emotions expressed by upper-, middle-, and some lower-ranking men representative of different professions and trades.

Over the past thirty years or so writers of literary and cultural criticism have debated the early modern controversy over the status of the emotions. In "The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought" in *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 19-73, William J. Bouwsma analyzes the competing strands of thought on Renaissance perceptions of the dignity, dangerousness, or inappropriateness of the emotions. In *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, pp. 15-19, Schoenfeldt explores the relation between Stoic and Augustinian responses to the emotions and early modern psychology. Schoenfeldt cites Thomas Wright's *Passions of the Minde in Generall*, ed. Thomas O. Sloan (1604; reprint, Urbana: University

Interest in the emotions has blossomed in the last decade, in fields ranging from anthropology and sociology to philosophy and feminism. Nevertheless, relatively few literary critics focus on men and the range of emotions they express in works by Spenser, Shakespeare, and their contemporaries. A common misperception about early modern people is that they “were not particularly conscious of emotions” and were “lacking a vocabulary to discuss emotional experience directly.”²⁹ On the contrary, in the texts focal in this study male and female writers and literary figures often represent or display emotions of “grief,” “anger,” “sorrow,” “despair,” or “joy” with great subtlety. The different terms early modern people chose to describe these emotions highlight gradual shifts in how they thought about these complex concepts expressive of interior states of mind. Though the words “passions” and

of Illinois Press, 1971) as a pivotal source that presents the emotions—described as the “passions” or “affections” in the early modern period—as a disease (p. 17). Future quotations of Wright are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text. I have modernized the spelling in this edition for ease of reference. In *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 79, n. 86, Shuger remarks that Wright’s rhetorical treatise is exemplary of the early modern vacillation between the Stoic and Augustinian poles of interpreting emotion. See Robert Cockcroft, *Rhetorical Affect in Early Modern Writing: Renaissance Passions Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) for further discussion of early modern emotion in relation to rhetoric and linguistics.

Over the last decade in particular, studies of the emotions have emerged in numerous disciplines. Representative works on emotion in relation to anthropology are Catherine A. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) and her “The Cultural Construction of Emotions” in *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, ed. Catherine A. Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 3-13. Lutz’s observation that “emotion is a sociocultural construct” has transformed current research on the emotions (p. 7). Relatively recent critical works on the emotions in terms of history, philosophy, cognitive science, and feminism include: Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 813-36; Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Review Essay: Worrying about Emotion in History,” *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821-45; Adele Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*; Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare’s Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Antonio D’Amasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994) and *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999); and Alison M. Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology” in *Gender /Body/ Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan Bordo (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), pp. 145-171. Jaggar notes importantly that emotions are “historical products, bearing the marks of the society that constructed them” (p. 159).

29 Carol Zisowitz Stearns and Peter N. Stearns cite this common misperception about early modern people in *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America’s History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 22, as quoted by Kennedy in *Just Anger*, p. 2.

“affections” were commonly used in the Renaissance before the term “emotion” took hold around 1660, the words “sentiment” and “sensibility” became popular ways of referring to the sensitive dimension of the psyche in the eighteenth century.³⁰ The word “sentimentality” first used in 1770 highlights the somewhat negative attitude toward excessive amounts of passion before and after the French Revolution that inaugurated the celebrated Age of Reason.³¹ Linguistic metamorphoses of these various terms for feeling illuminate how conceptions of the emotions change over the centuries and in response to specific historical factors. As we know, various individuals are not necessarily passive in the midst of these transformations. Those who contest and revise their culture’s expectations about how men and women ought to express emotion exhibit a degree of agency as a result.

Men who weep and wail often evoke an ambivalent, double-edged response from early modern writers, readers, and dramatic audiences because of two, competing strands of thought on the emotions within the humanist tradition: Stoicism and Augustinianism. The former emphasizes the cultivation of indifference, or *apatheia* toward the dangerous threat of the emotions and the establishing of rigorous and rational self-control.³² Stoicism became increasingly popular among some humanists because of numerous translations of Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch during the 1560s and 1570s.³³ Nevertheless, other English writers tend to combine Aristotle’s emphasis on moderating instead of eliminating potentially destructive emotions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* with St Augustine’s impassioned critique of Stoicism in *The City of God*.³⁴ Both Aristotle and St Augustine emphasize the potential power

30 Steven Mullaney provides this date for the first usages of this term in “Emotion and Its Discontents,” a paper presented at a meeting of the Modern Language Association in Chicago, 1999, as cited in “Introduction: Reading the Early Modern Passions” in *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, p. 2.

31 Although the terms “sentiment,” “sympathy,” and “sensibility” were used throughout the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, they took on specific, increasingly negative nuances in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Meanings for the words “sentiment” and “sentimental,” which first appeared in English in the 1740s, were largely neutral, or slightly positive but became derogatory in the wake of the French Revolution. In the 1750s Garrick attempted to combat such negative meanings of the term “sentiment” through his productions and performances on stage. From 1770 through 1789 when the Reign of Terror began, the term “sentiment” was increasingly associated with anarchic passions that threatened to dominate the balancing force of reason: Leigh Woods, *Garrick Claims the Stage: Acting as Social Emblem in Eighteenth-Century England* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 84. By the end of the eighteenth century the relatively new word “sentimental” had acquired the suggestions of “the shallow, the excessive, and the insincere” in the novel, drama, and philosophical writings that this term still has today: R.F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 17 and 49.

32 Cited from *A Usable Past*, p. 25. As Bouwsma notes, the stoical branch of humanism took hold around 1550 in England.

33 James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 384.

34 Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 2. In the *English Gentleman* (1630), pp. 78, 347, 356, and 459, Richard Brathwait similarly emphasizes the virtue of moderation.