

EMANUEL STELZER

***The Vow Breaker* and William Sampson's Role in 'the Anne Willoughby Affair'**

*This article assesses William Sampson's involvement in 'the Anne Willoughby affair', an episode that caused the vilification of Sir John Suckling and opposition to King Charles. I demonstrate that Sampson's dedication of his play *The Vow Breaker* (published in 1636) to his patroness, Anne Willoughby, directly refers to the incident. The circumstances of composition and staging of this play can provide useful information on provincial playacting and on the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire cultural circles during the reign of Charles I.*

Amid the constellation of early modern English dramatists and poets, William Sampson (ca 1600–after 1655) is a minor name. He is the known author of only three plays: *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater* (acted by the Red Bull Revels, published in 1622) which he co-wrote with fellow Nottinghamshire author Gervase Markham (ca 1568–1637), the comedy *The Widow's Prize* (1625) (no longer extant since it was among the plays Warburton's cook used to line pie bottoms), and that mixture of domestic play and history, *The Vow Breaker* (published in 1636). Because Sampson shares his initials with that other 'provincial playwright', essays devoted to the Shakespeare authorship question awkwardly refer to his name.¹ His mediocre collection of eulogies, *Virtus Post Funera* (1636),² which addresses a great number of noblemen and noblewomen of the Midlands, records the personalities and actions of these circles; this fact has led him to be nicknamed 'that omnipresent poetical chronicler of local life'.³

This article demonstrates that Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* can reveal a number of original features of the career of this author who got involved in the precarious and politically hazardous entanglements linked with the so-called 'Anne Willoughby affair',⁴ that is, Sir John Suckling's disastrous courtship of Anne, the daughter of William Sampson's patron, Sir Henry Willoughby. I discuss

Emanuel Stelzer (emanuel.stelzer@unibg.it) is a PhD student in Studi Umanistici Interculturali at Bergamo University in cotutelle with Justus Liebig University Giessen.

Sampson's connection to this incident, which brought about an affront to the Willoughby family, the vilification of Sir John Suckling, and opposition to King Charles. Scholars have not yet considered Sampson's involvement in the scandal, and I demonstrate that his dedication of *The Vow Breaker* to Anne Willoughby explicitly references this incident.

Recent scholarship has shown how fruitful it is to investigate the patronage system provided by the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire nobility in terms of cultural geography and social dynamics. The pioneering studies carried out by Vivienne Larminie, Kirsten Inglis and Boyda Johnstone, Mary Polito, and especially Julie Sanders's *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama 1620–1650* have cast new light on the socio-political facets of the relationship between intellectuals and the local gentry.⁵ The case of William Sampson is symptomatic of this situation: Larminie suggests that his encomiastic poems to Derbyshire gentry 'indicat[e] a constituency enthusiastic to consume such literature and hin[t] at the active involvement of some of them in the arts'.⁶

To understand the context in which Sampson worked, I introduce Sir Henry Willoughby's family and the conditions of the baronet's cultural patronage. Then, I give an account of John Suckling's courtship of Anne Willoughby and its aftermath. I argue that William Sampson deliberately addresses the affair in *The Vow Breaker*'s dedication, and I also consider whether the dramatic text bears topical references to those circumstances and whether it can give us information on its local reception. I finally deal with the encomium of Sir Gervase Clifton in the play and link it both with his son's earlier courtship of Anne and with the baronet's own intervention in the Willoughby affair.

Sir Henry Willoughby as a Patron of Letters and His Family

During the reign of Charles I, the Willoughbys of Risley, Derbyshire, were a prosperous and a relatively powerful household. The family's head was Sir Henry Willoughby (1579–1649, knighted in 1611). By his first wife, Elizabeth Knollys, he had had Mary (born in 1605) who married Henry Griffith, knight, and died without issue, and Anne (born in 1614), who became her mother's sole heir and hence 'a provincial lady of vast expectations'.⁷ After Elizabeth's death, Sir Henry married Lettice Darcy in 1621, and this union produced Catherine and Elizabeth.

Although leading a secure life in the Midlands, the Willoughbys were a very well-connected family, both in provincial society and in court circles: for instance, the father of Sir Henry's first wife, Elizabeth, was the cousin once removed of Queen Elizabeth.⁸ In 1642, when Sir Simonds D'Ewes married Elizabeth, Sir

Henry's daughter by his second marriage, he was received splendidly, finding 'the table every day no less elegantly set out (which has been his [Sir Henry's] custom for many years past) than if he were one of the greatest nobles of this kingdom'.⁹ D'Ewes, consulting the family's genealogical tables, commented that this family history had given him 'no less pleasure than if I was reading the most ancient Anglo-Saxon annals in manuscript'.¹⁰

Abram Barnett Langdale describes Sir Henry Willoughby's character as being 'typical of the breed — solid, rich, and uninspired'.¹¹ If the first two adjectives are irrefutable (at the time of his death, he had forty-eight servants),¹² the third adjective, however, needs exploration. Henry Willoughby seems to have gathered around himself a cultural circle. William Sampson was in his employment for more than twenty years. Sir Henry was also the patron of the poet Phineas Fletcher, to whom he bestowed the rectory of Hilgay, Norfolk. Fletcher (the cousin of the playwright John Fletcher), who is now best known for his allegorical poem *The Purple Island*, called Sir Henry 'Damon, friendly Damon' in one of his piscatory eclogues. John Trevor Cliffe claims, 'There is no evidence that Willoughby ever took an atom of interest in his dependent's versifying'¹³ and, alternatively, 'that Fletcher was allowed to mention the baronet's name only in his most pious work [*The Way to Blessedness*, 1632] is significant of the older man's modesty and seriousness'.¹⁴ Still, Willoughby's support of poets and intellectuals must have been considerable.¹⁵ Michael Drayton inscribed the presentation copy of *The Battaile of Agincourt* 'to the noble knight, my most honored ffriend the worthy Sr Henry willoughby one of the selected Patrons of thes my latest Poems'.¹⁶ Sir Henry was apparently very interested in music, as well: in 1608, the composer Michael East, just before joining the choir of Ely Cathedral, dedicated a collection of madrigals and other songs to 'M^r Henry Wilughby, of Risly, in the countie of Darby, Esquire: his singular good Master'.¹⁷ In the dedicatory epistle, East fulsomely praises his patron: 'Yet if you deigne to shadow them with your approbation, they will passe as currant as Caesars Image, (though on Brasse or Leather.) I confesse the grace will be more then I can merit, but not so much as your constant loue to our Art doth promise'.¹⁸ From these premises, it seems plausible that Sir Henry could rely on the gratitude and support of various protégés.

The Anne Willoughby Affair

In the autumn of 1633, the courtier and poet Sir John Suckling began to court the nineteen-year-old Anne, suddenly threatening the baronet's prosperity. By 1632, Suckling's political and diplomatic career had come to a temporary halt.¹⁹

In 1630, he probably accompanied the duke of Buckingham in his expedition to the Ile de Ré to relieve La Rochelle from Cardinal Richelieu's army. Afterwards, he likely proceeded to Holland (though it is not clear how actively he took part in the Thirty Years' War), studied at Leyden University, and then travelled back to England where he was knighted on 19 September 1630. From October 1631 to spring 1632, he took part in an embassy led by Sir Henry Vane the elder to Gustavus Adolphus in Germany. When Suckling returned from the continent, he 'came ... to find the face of [the court] extremely changed',²⁰ as he wrote in a letter to Vane on 2 May. By the following year, however, he was again sufficiently well established there, although he had quickly acquired notoriety for gambling and philandering. John Aubrey gives us a memorable account of his behaviour: 'He was the greatest gallant of his time, and the greatest gamester, both for bowling and cards, so that no shop-keeper would trust him for 6*d* ... His sisters coming to the Peccadillo-bowling-green crying for the feare he should loose all their portions'.²¹ Suckling's losses were such that he tried to find a new way to restore his wealth: he started courting Anne Willoughby, the Derbyshire heiress.

Suckling involved in this courtship the king himself, who wrote to Sir Henry Willoughby a request to give Suckling free access to his daughter, or as the king put it: 'we have ... graunted our letters of recommendation concerneing a marriage betwixt him and the daughter of Sir Henry Willoughby'.²² We know from a poignant (but very probably biased) letter which Sir Henry sent to King Charles on 31 October 1634 that Suckling had first attempted the courtship in September or October 1633: he had come to Rislely with Philip Willoughby, a distant relative of Sir Henry, while the earl of Northampton had delivered the king's letter (no longer extant). Her father's letter relates that, from the start, Anne 'resolutely declared ... that she could not affect him, nor would ever entertaine a thought of having him for a husband, although he were accompanied with never soe great advantages of estate or Friends'.²³ Suckling seems to have desisted for a year, but in those months he gambled away yet another considerable amount of money. Suckling's biographer says that '*partly* to compensate those losses'²⁴ (italics mine), he resumed the courtship in the autumn of 1634. In a letter dated 16 October 1634, the king ordered the influential Sir Gervase Clifton (whose relationship with the Willoughbys I discuss later) to accompany Suckling and Philip Willoughby so that the suitor could have again free access to the young woman. The king confirmed that he had already expressed his recommendation one year earlier, when Sir Henry had 'promised ... that if his daughter's affection could be gained, he would give his consent likewise, *which we are assured is obtained*' (italics mine).²⁵ Clifton complied, along with Sir Thomas Hutchinson, and answered the

king on 22 October 1634. He wrote: 'And what we have discover'd in the yonge gentlewoman's affections to Sir Jo[h]n Suckling, that we might not erre in mis-reporting from hir mouth to your Majesty, we most humbly leave to the writinge shee (at our motion) in her owne words subscribed with her hands'.²⁶ He attached this paper signed by Anne: 'Mrs. Anne Willoughby spoken unto by us ... and askt how shee stood affected to Sir John Sucklinge, answered as his Majestie had exprest her in his letter, and being desired more particularly to explaine herselfe whether she affected him as a husband above other men, ans[w]ered she did, and doth love him to marry him'.²⁷

Sir Henry's version is different. In the aforementioned letter of 31 October, he wrote that Suckling and Philip Willoughby locked themselves in a room with Anne, and forced her to sign that document. Sir Henry's letter to the king is indignant: he narrates how Suckling had, prior to this event, 'set on foote ... some secret practices ... with some servants of my owne, and some neere about my daughter, whom I perceived he had Corrupted to abuse me and to betray her unto me'.²⁸ Suckling, moreover, caused Sir Henry Vane to come to his house to press the engagement while the earl of Northampton also arrived threatening royal displeasure. Suckling behaved so insolently that 'by his manner of proceeding would have had it thought she was att least contracted to him'.²⁹

The events that followed this incident are better known to scholars of Caroline literature and theatre, and I only provide a concise outline.³⁰ Anne Willoughby and her father refused to comply with the terms set out in the aforementioned document. She denied she had ever stated she would marry Suckling, which, according to contemporary views, made her a vow-breaker for all intents and purposes (since such a document would not even present the loopholes to annul a marriage promise that would be provided in an espousal *de futuro*). John Suckling rode again to Risley but at Nottingham Bridge he faced another suitor of Anne's, John Digby (the one Sir Henry preferred), who wanted Suckling to sign a paper (purportedly dictated to him by the young woman herself) in which he would relinquish his marriage aspirations. Suckling refused, and Digby cudgelled him there and then. Suckling went back to London and there occurred 'a *Rodomontado* of such a Nature as is scarce credible', as George Garrard wrote to Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford.³¹ The trouble started just outside Blackfriars playhouse on 18 November. Suckling hired swordsmen to pick a fight with John Digby, but they met the resistance from John Digby's friends and the attendants of Kenelm Digby, John's brother (the renowned diplomat and natural philosopher). One of Suckling's servants was killed, the mercenaries were beaten, and Suckling along with Digby was 'committed to the King's Bench' prison

(although they were soon bailed out).³² The scandal was of such proportion that one witness stated that ‘Sir John Suckling, in place of repairing his honor, hath lost his reputation for ever’.³³

Shortly before the attack outside of the theatre, Henry Willoughby came to London with his daughter, staying at the house of their relative Lady Paget. Garrard summed up, ‘the whole Business of discerning the young Woman’s Affection is left to the Discovery of my Lord of *Holland*, and the Comptroller Sir *Henry Vane*, who have been with her, and she will have none of *Sutling* [sic]’.³⁴ Unsurprisingly, given the king and queen’s insistence ‘upon the moral reformation of the court, upon sobriety, chastity and marital fidelity’, the particulars of these incidents caused much disquiet.³⁵ For Suckling, the consequences of this incident meant general disapprobation: many texts taunted his conduct, even years after the events. For the Willoughbys, the question is complex and I will duly address it. In the meantime, I would like to stress that Sir Henry’s behaviour ‘both in court and about the town’³⁶ was considered so disgraceful that in 1638 lord keeper Coventry did not recommend him for the post of sheriff of Derby and wrote to Sir Francis Windebank, secretary of state: ‘you will not hold his discretion very capable of that office in these times’.³⁷ After reporting the incidents of the affair, we can now discuss William Sampson’s involvement. Before this discussion, however, information about the performance of *The Vow Breaker* is necessary.

William Sampson’s *The Vow Breaker*: Date(s) and Place(s) of Performance

We know that William Sampson was working for Sir Henry Willoughby by 1628 since, in a 1649 affidavit preserved at the British Library, he states that he could remember the birth of Elizabeth Willoughby which took place in that year, ‘myself being the Servant unto the said Sir Henry Willoughby’.³⁸ Patricia A. Griffin suggests that the baronet may have employed Sampson a few years before 1628, since Sampson shows himself deeply aware of the social dynamics of the region. We must not forget, however, that, as a Nottinghamshire native, he had direct knowledge of the places the play describes (and, as Sanders puts it, ‘The locally embedded aspects of *The Vow Breaker* are considerable and sustained’)³⁹ and that, likely, ‘he had close connections with the South Nottinghamshire area as well as Derbyshire’.⁴⁰

The frontispiece of *The Vow Breaker* reads: ‘THE VOW BREAKER. OR, THE FAIRE MAIDE of Clifton. In *Nottinghamshire* as it hath beene diuers times Acted by severall Companies with great applause’. Editors disagree on whether

'In *Nottinghamshire*' simply specifies which locality the play refers to or if it indicates the region in which it was performed. I favour the first hypothesis. We must also notice the local topicality of this setting: Risley lies very close to the border with Nottinghamshire and is less than ten kilometres from Clifton, then a small town near Nottingham. The main source of the play was a local legend, 'The Fair Maid of Clifton' which was adapted in a ballad, *A Godly Warning for All Maidens* (entered in the Stationers' Register on 8 June 1603). Importantly, Sampson added a dedication: 'TO THE WORSHIPFUL and most virtuous gentlewoman Mistress Anne Willoughby, daughter of the Right Worshipful and ever to be honoured, Henry Willoughby, of Risley in the County of Derby, Baronet'.⁴¹ Determining when exactly he composed *The Vow Breaker* is rather difficult. John Norton published the play in London in 1636, but the *terminus a quo* remains unknown. Martin Wiggins in his forthcoming catalogue conjectures 1628 as the year in which Sampson wrote it and indicates 1628–36 as the time limits.⁴²

Anne Willoughby's cousin, Ursula Potts, was born in 1624; therefore, Sampson surely wrote the play after Ursula's birth (a fact neither Hans Wallrath⁴³ nor Griffin mentions). Two female characters dominate *The Vow Breaker* (not to mention Queen Elizabeth in the fifth act): the vow-breaker Anne (who, most intriguingly, is named after Sampson's patroness) and her witty cousin, Ursula. We can clearly detect Sampson's homage to the family members of Risley Hall, although Ursula Potts, the only daughter of Sir Henry's sister (also named Ursula), was just a child when he wrote the play. Wiggins's conjecture links with the year of *The Widow's Prize*, the only other single-authored play by Sampson, which might signal that Sampson composed *The Vow Breaker* at an early date within the proposed time limit.

But Griffin and Sanders have highlighted the topicality of many localities and social issues featured in the play (such as royal grants for the navigation of the Trent) that seems to indicate a later date. Griffin notes what may be a clue in this regard: Miles the Miller exclaims that he will return from the war 'with the verses out of new *Hero and Leander*' (2.1.67–8). This line would refer to a scatological parody of Marlowe's poem by James Smith, which probably dates 'from the early or mid-1630s'.⁴⁴

Another element to account for is Sanders's suggestion that Sampson could have elaborated and modified the text for a period before its publication:

The mention in addition that Sampson's play has been enjoyed by audiences 'diuers times' adds weight to suppositions ... in relation to the Osborne and Arbury manuscript play versions that these texts may have enjoyed a peripatetic existence travelling

between different, even neighbouring, households in a single locality, this idea of plays being passed around and possibly altered to suit each specific occasion is parallel to the ways in which we understand manuscript poetry to have circulated and evolved within provincial and urban communities.⁴⁵

This quotation introduces the question of where the play was performed. *The Vow Breaker* represents one of those few extant texts that the dramatists did not conceive for London performance, but intentionally directed at regional audiences. The fact that ‘several companies’ acted the play is interesting. ‘Records of travelling companies become increasingly rare in the early 1620s’ and, as Andrew Gurr shows, ‘under Charles, the evidence of travelling fades away’.⁴⁶ Sanders argues that this play was written and performed specifically for private productions. Whereas Ian Lancashire suggests that ‘Nottinghamshire noblemen imported players for entertainment rather than supporting individual companies’,⁴⁷ Sanders points out that the Willoughbys of Wollaton, the Nottinghamshire branch of the family, retained professional players who performed both in Wollaton and at Middleton Hall (in Warwickshire).⁴⁸ This detail invites us to think that *The Vow Breaker* was staged in front of the local gentry, although Sanders runs into a discrepancy: ‘[In the play w]e witness a neighbourhood being dispatched to war. The poignancy of this in the context of a local performance, where there could have been comparable figures to characters such as Miles the Miller of the nearby village of Ruddington in the real-life audience, is striking’.⁴⁹ A miller would not be the typical example of a member of the local gentry. This play, however, plausibly had multiple audiences: based on a regional legend and portraying shared historical events of the past, it could cater both to popular and to more elite spectators.

Synopsis of the Play

Before discussing *The Vow Breaker*’s dedication, I think a short synopsis of the plot is necessary, since the play certainly is not ‘canonical’ and because its plot has obvious bearings on the contents of the dedication.

In Clifton, the beautiful Anne promises she will marry Young Bateman. Their parents strongly disapprove of this union, and Anne’s father, Old Boote, wants her to marry the wealthy but aged Jermane. In order to gain Boote’s approval, Young Bateman is going to fight at the Siege of Leith (1560), when the English and the Protestant Scots allied to oppose the French-held port near Edinburgh under the regent queen Mary of Guise. A miller, Miles, who also joins the English troops, courts Ursula, Anne’s cousin. Young Bateman proves valiant in the

battle, but he is determined to go back to Clifton. There he discovers that Anne has just married Jermane. Bateman is incredulous but is faced with Anne's scorn. He ominously repeats the words he had pronounced at their engagement: 'Alive or dead I shall enjoy thee' (2.2.154). He hangs himself in front of Anne's door. Old Bateman discovers the body, but Boote's and Anne's reaction is again derision. Later, she discovers she is pregnant with Jermane's child, and soon enough, Young Bateman's ghost comes to haunt her. In a formidable scene (3.3), she goes to Bateman's father's and finds him lamenting and looking at his son's portrait. The ghost appears but, as usual, Anne alone can see him. Ursula and Old Bateman try to comfort her, but the ghost reveals that he will take Anne as soon as she has delivered the baby. In the meantime, the war goes on and the English win. Anne has just given birth to a daughter and she is surrounded by the gossips when Young Bateman's ghost arrives to take her. She cries to the other women to stop him, but they fall into a deep sleep. Against her will, Anne starts to walk out of bed, and assistance comes too late: they find her drowned in the river Trent.

The last act concludes the play in an atmosphere of mirth. Elizabeth I herself comes to Nottingham. The members of the community engage in traditional pastimes, with playful references to Nottinghamshire's folk legends, such as the Robin Hood tales. Miles sings to Ursula parts of the new ballad of her cousin's fate in order to persuade her to love him, but she eludes him by making Boote believe that Miles is another ghost, and Boote strikes him. Queen Elizabeth honours the soldiers, grants a charter to the city of Nottingham for the navigation of the Trent, and invites the mayor and the soldiers to dine with her.

The Vow Breaker: The Dedication and Sampson's Involvement

The 1956 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* still stated that Anne Willoughby was the daughter of Sir John Willoughby⁵⁰ (a blatant error caused either by the confusion of the name of Sir Henry Willoughby with Sir John Suckling and perhaps John Digby or by replacing the baronet's name with his father's, Sir John, who died in 1605), and records have often repeated this mistake. The complex family tree of the Willoughby families has often led historians and critics to such mistakes. This complexity may be one reason why neither the first critical edition of *The Vow Breaker* of 1914 by Wallrath nor the recent edition by Griffin mention the fact that the dedicatee of the play was involved in this disreputable episode. Both editors spend very few words on the dedication.

What was Anne Willoughby's position when the play was published in 1636? She was still unmarried; she would marry, in 1639, Sir Thomas Aston (whose first

wife Magdalene Poulteney died in 1635) and bear him three children. Griffin suggests that in 1636, 'presumably she was not in the position of being a patroness herself: perhaps Sampson just wanted to please her father by dedicating his play to her'.⁵¹ Now, to dedicate a play to a woman was certainly not unheard of, but it remained a rare practice: 'Of the nearly one-thousand extant printed editions of early modern commercial plays, a mere half-dozen are dedicated to women'.⁵² Besides *The Vow Breaker*, they are: Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1612, dedicated to Mary Wroth), Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* (1623, to Katherine Stanhope), Shirley's *Changes: or Love in a Maze* (1632, to Dorothy Shirley), the collected plays of Marston (1633, by the editor William Sheares to Elizabeth Cary), and Ford's *The Lady's Trial* (1639, to Mary Wyrley along with her husband, John). I wish to show that *The Vow Breaker's* dedication has very peculiar features.

The aforementioned dedications vary in length and contents, but they are all appropriately encomiastic and deferential in nature. Besides, Marta Straznicky argues that 'dedicating a play to a woman of irreproachable "honour" and "virtue" ... bolsters the fiction that the play in question, its commercial auspices notwithstanding, belongs to a "private" culture of intellectual refinement'.⁵³ *The Vow Breaker* uneasily accommodates such a purpose owing to its thematic incongruities and its regional topicality. Still, scholars have similarly read its dedication to Anne Willoughby either in the form of encomium or as a prudent and pious way to instruct a young gentlewoman. Sampson voices the following wish: 'Heaven keep you from fawning parasites and busy gossips and send you a husband, and a good one, else may you never make a holyday for Hymen' (28–30). The playwright's wish even caught the attention of the editors of *Biographia Dramatica* (1764–1812), who quoted it in full.⁵⁴ David Bergeron, in his discussion, incidentally inserts a reassuring note: '(She eventually married Thomas Aston)'.⁵⁵ He reads Sampson's decision to dedicate the play to Anne Willoughby as follows: 'A personal relationship in these cases makes the women a natural choice for patronage of the drama'.⁵⁶ This dedication, however, is not a merely typical example of complimentary laudation of a gentlewoman, since I will show that it contains direct references to 'the Anne Willoughby affair'.

Sampson begins the dedication by defending his choice of addressee: 'The title of it, saith ignorant censurers (those critical Momes that have no language but satiric calumny), sounds gross and ignorant, expressing small wit and less judgment in the author to dedicate *A Vow Breaker* under the protection of a lady of your candour, beauty, goodness and virtues' (8–12). As a matter of fact, we know that Sampson not only dedicated this play to Anne, but he also named the protagonist after her. The reason why he made this choice is open to debate and I

discuss it later. So far, however, the dedication contains nothing extraordinary: we have read about a virtuous and beautiful gentlewoman, the patroness of the dramatist. But here is how the sentence continues: he dedicates the play to her 'against those foul-mouthed detractors who, as much as in their venomous hearts *lay, sought* to vilify an unblanched lawn, a vestal purity, a truth-like innocence, a temple of sanctity, the altar of real goodness' (8–15, italics mine). I have italicized the tenses in this catalogue of redundant hyperboles. These verbs are in the past, which may mean that they do not refer to generic acts of defamation, but to something more specific. A following sentence reinforces this sense: 'So *have* your noble virtues, even with the diamond, *eclipsed* darkness and, from obscurity, *gained* greater lustre even then when the two eldest sons of sin, Envy and Malice, *sought* to obscure them' (18–21, italics mine). What event could have occasioned envious and malicious individuals to sully the reputation of this young provincial gentlewoman? I maintain that such incidents must have been the consequences of her broken vow with Sir John Suckling.

The reputation of the girl had been and possibly was still in danger. Sir Henry's letter to the king is very clear: he wanted to do everything to preserve 'his Child from Ruine' (he repeats the word 'Ruine' three times in the text).⁵⁷ This word can refer to Suckling's finances which Sir Henry knew to be limited and, as he wrote, 'much incumbred, and weakened by his owne Riotous liveing, his unlimited gaming and profuse expences which with a much greater estate then all mine is in probabilitye likelxe to last but a small time'.⁵⁸ The 'Ruine' referred to can also have moral overtones: Sir Henry describes Suckling as 'haveing soe unluckye a Reputation with all persons of honour that knowe him, that that woman must be most unfortunate that shall be his wife'.⁵⁹ The Willoughbys could not know that centuries later the biographies of Suckling would remember Anne Willoughby as much for her beauty as for her harsh conduct: 'He [Suckling] had been for some time a captive to the personal charms of the daughter of Sir Henry Willoughby, a lady of great expectations, but unhappily possessed of a temper and disposition revengeful and coarse'.⁶⁰ The *London Magazine* went even further: 'while ... the courage of Suckling is put into doubt, there is nothing enviable in the conduct of the opposite parties; the demeanour of the lady resembles that of a hardened strumpet, and Digby's conduct was that of a ruffian'.⁶¹ The judgment of these biographers was completely in favour of Suckling's behaviour, complaining how 'the world laughed at the Poet, and the ill-natured delighted in his discomfiture'.⁶²

In the dedication, Sampson congratulates his patroness for her behaviour: she acted wisely and 'divine Astraea, sacred justice, the eye and soul of the law, hath vindicated those foul-mouthed detractors' (22–3). Such a sentence clearly alludes

to a specific fact that has happened in the past: it is not a generic attack against literary critics or rumourmongers. The obstinate suitor has suffered the consequences of his actions. The risk, however, has been great, and Sampson tries to hint at her future: 'As you are great in goodness, so shine there still and let the sunrays of your virtues ever yield honoured hatchments and portments to your most noble father and his honoured families, of whom you are a principal column' (23–6). Sampson ends the dedication stating that he would 'ever rest, as [his] bounden duty a faithful servant' to Anne, her 'noble father and all his families' (31–3). He kept his promise: when he was named executor in Sir Henry's will in 1653, he had served the baronet's household for more than twenty years. In the play's dedication, he defends Anne Willoughby and gives advice on her future actions. By doing so, he noticeably shows himself not to have been among those servants and those 'neere about [Sir Henry's] daughter' whom Suckling had suborned.⁶³

We cannot know for sure how much Anne Willoughby's reputation suffered from these incidents in her own lifetime. Some people's attitude towards her, however, must clearly have stirred much disquiet. In his letter, Garrard reported how John Digby, who openly criticized Anne's behaviour, confronted her just after the cudgelling: he asked her 'what she did with such baffled [ie disgraceful] fellows in her company'.⁶⁴ Thus, Garrard comments, 'Incredible things to be suffered by flesh and blood; but that England is the land of peace'.⁶⁵ Many derided Suckling, but the Willoughbys themselves had to deal with the negative consequences of the incident.

If we read the letter that on 1 August 1642 Sir Simonds D'Ewes wrote to Sir Henry asking for his consent to marry Anne's sister, we can note the full-blown style of this declaration of honourable rectitude, which is excessive even for the verbosity common in those times. Besides his fortune, which even if it 'weere ten-fold more than it is', would be unworthy of the baronet's daughter, he promises 'that whatsoever happines the care, industrie or affection of a faithfull man may add to a deserving wife, I shall endeavour to maker her sensible of upon all emergent occasions'.⁶⁶ D'Ewes must have been aware of the affair and wished to demonstrate to Sir Henry that he would never dishonour his other daughter.

More hazardously, we may glean possible information from reading Richard Brome's *The Court Beggar* (ca 1640–1). Matthew Steggle claims that Suckling was 'Brome's greatest *bête noire*'.⁶⁷ In many prologues and epilogues, Brome parodied the courtier poet who had innovated and was changing so many vital aspects of the traditional theatrical business. *The Court Beggar* features the plight of Sir Ferdinando, a thinly disguised Suckling whose gambling, philandering, and

misadventures against the Scottish Presbyterians in 1639 provided an all-too-easy target. Even if some years had passed, the Willoughby affair remained in the collective memory of theatregoers, and Robert Wilcher has shown how the play adapts the incident.⁶⁸ In the comedy, Sir Andrew Mendicant (the 'court beggar' of the title), a tremendously ambitious provincial gentleman, tries to gain favour and wealth at court, but he finds that the only way to do so is to marry off his daughter, Charissa, to the rich but dishonourable Ferdinando. Charissa, in turn, loves another young man, Frederick, whom she has sworn to marry. When Frederick learns of her father's plans, he asks a servant trying to stop him, 'Wouldst thou make her a double-hearted monster?' (1.1.495).⁶⁹ (Consider in *The Vow Breaker* how Young Bateman exclaims: 'If thou shouldst soil this whiteness with black deeds, / Think what a monster thou wouldst make thy self' [1.1.228–9]). Also, compare Old Bateman's protestation: 'Look this way, monster! See, thou adult'ress!' [2.4.77]). Later, Frederick asks Charissa, 'Remember, sweet, your vow' (4.1.86). He is, however, convinced of her true affection, and we have a happy ending, but not before he soundly thrashes Sir Ferdinando. In the comedy, 'the two most discreditable episodes in Suckling's life — his refusal to fight a duel when beaten like a lackey and his flight at Berwick — are duplicated'.⁷⁰ Sir Ferdinando (alias Suckling) is the satiric butt of the play, as well as Sir Mendicant, whereas Charissa can happily marry her Frederick. Brome does not explore the incident any further, and I agree with Kaufmann according to whom there is 'a definite parallel' between the Ferdinando-Charissa-Frederick plot and the Anne Willoughby affair, but not an 'exact point-for-point portrayal'.⁷¹ These changes to the real events make it risky to state that the play shows if and how Anne Willoughby's name had been tarnished.

The Vow Breaker's dedication nevertheless refers explicitly to the notorious incidents of Suckling's courtship. When Sampson expresses his hopes, 'Heaven ... send you a husband, and a good one, else may you never make a holyday for Hymen' (28–30), he hints at the fact that Suckling was a completely undeserving suitor and warns Anne to make a better decision in the future. Whether the play itself bears traces of the 'Anne Willoughby affair' remains for consideration.

The Cliftons of Clifton Hall and *The Vow Breaker's* Local Reception

The English military hero in the play is Gervase Clifton (1515–88), who really fought at the Siege of Leith and was nicknamed by Elizabeth I as 'Gervase the Gentle'. The Willoughbys and the Cliftons had ancient family connections: Hugh Willoughby had married Isabel (d. 1462), daughter of an earlier Gervase Clifton.

Sanders suggests that ‘There is possibly an in-built panegyric here to the character’s local Nottinghamshire namesake, Sir Gervase Clifton of Clifton Hall’,⁷² the son of Gervase the Gentle. This tribute raises the question of Sir Henry and Anne’s relationship with Sir Gervase before and after Suckling’s courtship.

John Newdigate III (1600–42), a local gentleman and an amateur playwright himself, noted down in his commonplace book a few poems entitled ‘Mr Clifton to my Cosin An Willoughby’.⁷³ Just below the second poem (‘He to her after’), one can read a signature: ‘G. Clifton’. I would suggest that the author is Gervase Clifton, the baronet’s son (1612–75). In these poems, he woos Anne Willoughby, but she refuses him (‘Seeing [faire Mistress] ’tis your hard decree / That I no husband but a friend must be’ 110 r, 19–20);⁷⁴ then Clifton gives her some humorous advice on appropriate suitors. In the last poem (‘Ladie, the cause that I remove so farr’), he excuses himself for going away, promising to be faithful and at the same time inviting her to reconsider his courtship. Three critics have attributed these poems to Sir Gervase Clifton himself (1587–1666).⁷⁵ This assignment is less plausible since that personage could not be simply addressed as ‘Mr Clifton’ and the dating of the other pieces collected in the commonplace book (mostly in the late 1620s and 30s) favours his son’s authorship. Clifton has come down through history with the nickname ‘Sir Gervase with seven wives’, but until 1630 he was still married to Mary Egiok, and he married Isobel Meek in 1632. We know that young Gervase Clifton was interested in poetry also from the fact that he borrowed a copy of ‘D.^r Dunnes verses’ around 1630–3.⁷⁶ The exact date of Gervase Clifton’s poems remains unknown, but they were surely written before his marriage with Sara Pusey in 1633. We might surmise that he wrote the last poem before his grand tour in Europe (1629–30), which he undertook accompanied by his tutor, the philosopher Thomas Hobbes. This attribution would be consistent with the reasons he gives for departing (‘not the blazing starr / of opposition, nor the threatening face / of great ones’; nor ‘an inconstant mind’),⁷⁷ though it would mean that he wrote these poems at the young age of seventeen. Newdigate called Anne ‘Cosin’, which would ‘sugges[t] neighbourly closeness’;⁷⁸ thus, he could have read Clifton’s poems, which must have circulated in manuscript. The possibility would not be too fanciful that Sampson either read these poems, too, or at least knew of this courtship, and that at a certain stage when writing his play, he wanted to ingratiate his patroness’s possible father-in-law.

Yet the Willoughbys’ relationship with the Cliftons took a different turn. Not only did Gervase Clifton marry another woman, as we have seen, but his father was the person who reported to the king that Anne had given her consent to marry Suckling. We may wonder why William Sampson left in his play this

encomium to Clifton. A closer look into Clifton's role in the affair, however, can give us some answers. If we carefully read Sir Henry's letter to the king, we can see that Clifton and Hutchinson were not present in the room where Anne was supposedly forced to sign the document. They could not know what had actually happened in there since only Suckling and Philip Willoughby were with Anne. Sir Henry writes, '*And then they called in Sir Jervis Clifton and Sir Thomas Hutchinson to attest her owning of what I am Confident Mr. Willoughbye dictated unto her*' (italics mine).⁷⁹

A related document casts further light on the events. On 6 November 1634, a few days after the king had received Sir Henry's letter, Sir Henry Vane wrote to Clifton, telling him that he 'did litle expect' that 'the adventurers', as he calls Suckling and Philip Willoughby, 'would have been soe ill advised'.⁸⁰ He warned Sir Gervase that Sir Henry had written to the king (and he quotes some sentences of this letter) 'traduc[ing] my Lord of Northampton, yourselfe and your humble servant'.⁸¹ He communicates that the king summoned to court all of them (himself, the Willoughbys, Sir Gervase, and Philip Willoughby) and tells him to send for Hutchinson, as well. They 'will give to God and and [sic] the Kinge a just accompt'.⁸² On the other hand, he assures Sir Gervase that 'his Majesty hath soe good an opinion of your woorth and integritie, that hee will beleave nothings to your prejudice until hee hath first hearde you speake'.⁸³ Sir Henry's letter contains no negative criticism of Sir Gervase. Sir Henry says of him only two things: that, as quoted before, Clifton and Hutchinson had been outside of the room where Anne was presumably forced to sign the document, and that he had only reported to Sir Henry 'how highlye your Majesty was displeased with [Sir Henry] which he sayd your Majesty expressed very apparentlye' by showing him the letter the king had sent him.⁸⁴ No accusations against Sir Clifton are present. On the contrary, Sir Henry expressed doubts on Henry Vane's behaviour. As he wrote to the king: 'Concerneing [Vane's] Carriage towards me I will not now trouble your Majesty with any longer relation, reserving the particulars of that' for a personal meeting at court.⁸⁵ Sir Henry maintains that Anne had been given a letter 'that was delivered her from Mr. Comptroller [ie Henry Vane]', though Sir Henry adds: 'which whether it came from him or noe I am in much doubt of' because 'the Contents of it were such as would not endure the light'. According to Sir Henry, Suckling and Philip Willoughby had 'conjured my daughter to secrecye and would not lett her keepe the letter ... saying that Mr. Comptroller had ingaged them to bring it back unto himselfe'.⁸⁶

These manoeuvres are quite intricate, but what seems clear is that Sir Henry knew that Sir Gervase had only obeyed the king's orders and that he had not

personally forced Anne to write anything. On 25 November 1634, Robert Leake informed Clifton that Sir Henry Vane had said that he could 'be assured of a good welcome' and that the king still 'held [him] an honest man and was well satisfied in the business'.⁸⁷ No historical evidence exists that Sir Henry had a strained relationship with Sir Gervase after the affair. It follows that William Sampson could retain the dramatic encomium to Clifton without incurring his patron and patroness's displeasure.

The mentioning in the play's dedication of Henry Willoughby's 'honoured families' is noteworthy (25–6). If the play was performed in different households, possibly in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, then this reference may be a clue to understand how the play might have been received. Could *The Vow Breaker* be a propagandistic vehicle to defend a local family member in the houses of the neighbours and accuse the courtier from London? This idea is probably fanciful. As stated, we do not know how many alterations were made to the play before its publication. We cannot know, for instance, if it was Sampson's original intention to call the 'vow breaker' after Anne Willoughby or if he changed her name only later on. Why he changed the name remains unclear. The story of the Fair Maid of Clifton was likely very well known and the folklore legend may have accrued charm around a figure who was perceived as a local hero. The original ballad, *A Godly Warning for All Maidens*, represents her as a thoroughly negative character used in cautionary tales against adultery and female fickleness. The play certainly represents her as a beautiful girl, but she is also ambitious, vengeful, and merciless. Her fate, however, makes the audience sympathize with her; she becomes a tragic figure worthy of compassion. Ursula thus heralds her body: 'Behold the saddest spectacle of woe / That ever mortal eyes took notice of' (4.3.253–4). The play characterizes Anne and Bateman's end as follows, echoing *Romeo and Juliet*: 'For never was a story of more ruth / Than this of him and her, yet nought but truth' (318–19).

In 1639 Anne married the widower Sir Thomas Aston (famously portrayed in John Souch's picture *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of His Wife*, ca 1635) who, shortly afterwards, brought suit for the custody of Sir Henry's estate since the baronet had 'been for divers months past visited with great weakness and distraction of mind and sense'.⁸⁸ Sir Henry lived until 1649, but William Sampson found himself in need of new patronage, especially aiming at the nearby Cavendish circle. His collection of poems clearly testifies to this aim since its opening lines are in praise of William Cavendish, earl of Newcastle, and the whole collection invokes many members of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire nobility. We should consider, as well, *Love's Metamorphosis, or Apollo and Daphne*,⁸⁹ a

narrative poem that has remained in manuscript, which he dedicated to Margaret Cavendish.

The Impact of Sampson's Dedication

To recapitulate, in this article I have assessed William Sampson's involvement in 'the Anne Willoughby affair'. Despite the near impossibility of arguing for exact references to the incident in the text of *The Vow Breaker*, since the play's composition date, performance location, and number of modifications prior to publication in 1636 are difficult to know, I have shown that the dedication directly refers to the incidents that caused much concern to the Willoughby family. William Sampson not only defends his patroness's reputation, but he also commends her behaviour and humbly provides advice for future actions. The circumstances of composition of *The Vow Breaker* are intriguing since they can provide useful information on provincial playacting and on the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire cultural circles during the reign of Charles I. William Sampson shows himself deeply aware of the literary connections existing between the gentry and the noble houses of the area, and his play addresses important contemporary issues. The intratextual encomium to Sir Gervase Clifton is an instance of this playwright's wish to ingratiate a powerful neighbouring family, but it can also cast light on the relationship between provincial poets and their patrons. The dedication, which was written explicitly at the time of publication, is an informative document and we can further study it to better understand coeval attitudes towards Sir John Suckling and the position of the Willoughbys of Risley as patrons of letters.

Notes

I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers, and my supervisors, Professors Angela Locatelli (Bergamo University) and Ingo Berensmeyer (Giessen University), as well as Dr Martin Spies (Giessen University) for their precious corrections and support.

- 1 See, for instance, 'The Canon and Chronology of Shakespeare's Plays', Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds), *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford, 1987), 75.
- 2 Sampson also wrote other poetical works which remained in manuscript: the Folger Library possesses his *Cicero's Loyal Epistle according to Hannibal Caro*, while the British Library preserves his narrative poem *Love's Memorphosis, or Apollo and Daphne* (Harleian MS 6947 41 ff 318–36).

- 3 Thomas Cogswell, *Home Divisions: Aristocracy, the State and Provincial Conflict* (Manchester, 1998), 210.
- 4 Robert Wilcher, *The Discontented Cavalier: The Work of Sir John Suckling in Its Social, Religious, Political, and Literary Contexts* (Newark, 2007), 113.
- 5 Vivienne Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture: The 17th-Century Newdigates of Arbury and Their World* (Woodbridge, 1995); Kirsten Inglis & Boyda Johnstone, “‘The Pen lookes to be canoniz’d’: John Newdigate III, Author and Scribe”, *Early Theatre*, 14.2 (2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.12745/et.14.2.875>; Mary E. Polito, “‘This rare Poetesse’: The Remains of Lady Jane Burdett”, *Early Theatre*, 14.2 (2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.12745/et.14.2.880>.
- 6 Vivienne Larminie, ‘Gentry Culture in the Seventeenth Century’, Christopher Dyer and Catherine Richardson (eds), *William Dugdale, Historian, 1605–1686: His Life, His Writings and His Country* (Woodbridge, 2009), 119.
- 7 Herbert Berry (ed.), *Sir John Suckling’s Poems and Letters from Manuscript* (London, ON, 1960), 94.
- 8 This web of relations testifies to the ‘complex, subtle interrelationship between local and national concerns’ in early Stuart county communities (Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620–1660* [Cambridge, 1987], 87). See also Richard Cust, ‘William Dugdale and the Honour Politics of Stuart Warwickshire’, Christopher Dyer and Catherine Richardson (eds), *William Dugdale, Historian* (Woodbridge, 2009), 89–108, and Larminie, ‘Gentry Culture in the Seventeenth Century’, *ibid.*, 109–25.
- 9 Quoted in James Sears McGee, *An Industrious Mind: The Worlds of Sir Simonds D’Ewes* (Stanford, 2015), 380.
- 10 British Library Harleian MS 377 f 208.
- 11 Abram Barnett Langdale, *Phineas Fletcher: Man of Letters, Science and Divinity* (New York, 1937), 64.
- 12 John Trevor Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1999), 199 n24.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 92.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 100.
- 15 It seems that Julie Sanders’s claim in *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama 1620–1650* (Cambridge, 2011), 117 that Ben Jonson, while en route to Scotland, was received by Henry Willoughby, has been refuted by the author, since the Willoughby referred to in James Loxley, Anna Groundwater, and Julie Sanders (eds), *Ben Jonson’s Walk to Scotland* (Cambridge, 2014) is a Robert Willoughby.
- 16 John William Hebel (ed.), *The Works of Michael Drayton*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1961), 3.viii. Another obscure poet, John Baynard, moreover, seems to have dedicated to

- Sir Henry an autobiographical poem, *Scire Sero*, which remained in manuscript and was acquired by the British Museum in 1875: see Edward Bond (ed.), *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts* (London, 1875), 751.
- 17 Quoted in Masahiko Tomita and Soko Tomita, *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Italian Books Printed in England 1603–1642* (Burlington, 2014), 133.
 - 18 Michael East, *The Third Set of Bookes* (London, 1610; STC 7462), *Early English Books Online* (eebo), A2.
 - 19 See Thomas Clayton (ed.), *The Works of Sir John Suckling: The Non-Dramatic Works* (Oxford, 1971), xxvii–xv.
 - 20 Letter from Suckling to Sir Henry Vane, 2 May 1632 in *ibid*, 128.
 - 21 John Aubrey, *Brief Lives: And Other Selected Writings* (New York, 1949), 59.
 - 22 HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 7 vols (London, 1914), 7.405.
 - 23 Clayton, *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, 196.
 - 24 *Ibid*, xxxvi.
 - 25 HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 7.405.
 - 26 *Ibid*, 406.
 - 27 *Ibid*, 406–7.
 - 28 Clayton, *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, 196.
 - 29 *Ibid*, 197.
 - 30 The best accounts are found in Clayton, *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, xxxv and ff, and Wilcher, *The Discontented Cavalier*, 113–17.
 - 31 10 November 1634 letter found in William Knowler (ed.), *The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Dispatches*, 2 vols (London, 1739), 1.336.
 - 32 Robert Leake to Clifton in HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 7.408.
 - 33 Ambrose Randolph to Lady Bacon, quoted in Wilcher, *The Discontented Cavalier*, 115.
 - 34 Knowler, *The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Dispatches*, 1.338.
 - 35 Kevin Sharp, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1990), 9.
 - 36 *CSP, Dom. 1638–9* (London, 1871), 126.
 - 37 *Ibid*, 127.
 - 38 Quoted in Patricia A. Griffin, 'Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*', PhD thesis (Sheffield Hallam University, 2009), 8–9.
 - 39 Sanders, *The Cultural Geography*, 117.
 - 40 Griffin, 'Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*', 20.
 - 41 This and all subsequent references to *The Vow Breaker* are to Griffin, 'Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*'.

- 42 Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford, forthcoming), 8. I would like to thank Dr Wiggins for his generosity in informing me of his estimate.
- 43 Hans Wallrath was the author of the play's first critical edition, *Materialen zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas*, (Louvain, 1914).
- 44 Griffin, 'Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*', 17.
- 45 Sanders, *The Cultural Geography*, 116.
- 46 Siobhan Keenan, *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England* (Houndmills, 2002), 165; Quoted in *ibid*.
- 47 Ian Lancashire, 'Records of drama and minstrelsy in Nottinghamshire to 1642', *REED Newsletter* 2 (1977), 21.
- 48 Sanders, *The Cultural Geography*, 116.
- 49 *Ibid*, 117–18.
- 50 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 26 vols (Chicago, 1956), 21.503.
- 51 Griffin, 'Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*', 20.
- 52 Marta Straznicky, 'Reading through the Body: Women and Printed Drama', Marta Straznicky (ed.), *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England* (Amherst, 2006), 64. I must note, however, that the number of plays with dedications as such is limited, as Lukas Erne reminds us: 'No sixteenth-century playbook was dedicated, and only 30 playbook editions appearing between 1600 and 1622 contained dedications' (*Shakespeare and the Book Trade*, Cambridge, 2013), 103.
- 53 *Ibid*, 65.
- 54 David Erskine Baker, Stephen Jones, and Isaac Reed (eds), *Biographia Dramatica*, 3 vols (1764–1812), 3.388.
- 55 David Moore Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570–1640* (Aldershot, 2006), 81.
- 56 *Ibid*.
- 57 Clayton, *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, 199.
- 58 *Ibid*, 198.
- 59 *Ibid*, 198–9.
- 60 Alfred Suckling (ed.), *Selections from the Works of Sir John Suckling* (London, 1836), 19.
- 61 An, 'Memoirs of the Life and Works of Sir John Suckling', *London Magazine* 1.4 (1820), 373.
- 62 John Heneage Hesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England during the Reign of the Stuarts*, 3 vols (London, 1857), 2.221.
- 63 *Ibid*, 196.

- 64 Knowler, *The Earl of Strafford's Letters*, 1.337.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 James Orchard Halliwell (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, 2 vols (London, 1845), 2.297–8. For more information on D'Ewes's courtship of Elizabeth Willoughby, see McGee, *An Industrious Mind*, 374–82.
- 67 Matthew Steggle, 'Textual Introduction to *The English Moor*' at *Richard Brome Online*, <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/viewOriginal.jsp?play=EM&type=TEXT>.
- 68 Wilcher, *The Discontented Cavalier*, 353–6.
- 69 All quotations from *The Court Beggar* refer to the edition by Marion O'Connor at *Richard Brome Online*, <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/viewTranscripts.jsp?play=CB&act=1&type=BOTH>.
- 70 Ralph J. Kaufmann, 'Suckling and D'Avenant Satirized by Brome', *Modern Language Review* 55.3 (1960), 341, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3721328>.
- 71 Ibid, 340–1.
- 72 Sanders, *The Cultural Geography*, 118, n45.
- 73 Bodleian Eng. Poet MS e 12 (f 110–1v). I would like to thank the staff of the Bodleian Library for providing me with a copy of this work.
- 74 Bodl Eng. Poet MS e 12, 110 r, 19–20.
- 75 Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture*, 173; Victoria E. Burke and Marie-Louise Coolahan, 'The Literary Contexts of William Cavendish and His Family', Martyn Bennett (ed.) *Society, Religion and Culture in Seventeenth Century Nottinghamshire* (Lewiston, 2005), 125.
- 76 Noel Malcolm (ed.), *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1994), 2.822.
- 77 Bodl Eng. Poet MS e 12, 111r, 16–18, 19.
- 78 Mary Polito, 'Remains of Lady Jane Burdett', 213. Sir Henry Willoughby was on friendly terms with John Newdigate: we know, for instance, that he dined with John and his brother Richard at Oxford 'in the summer of 1620' (Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture*, 133).
- 79 Clayton, *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, 198.
- 80 HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 7.407.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Clayton, *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, 198.
- 85 Ibid, 197.
- 86 Ibid, 198.
- 87 HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 7.408.

88 *CSP, Dom. 1640–1* (London, 1882), 239.

89 I am currently working on a critical edition of this late epyllion.