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Sibling Affection and Domestic Heterosexuality in Lodovick Carlell's *The Deserving Favorite*

Even for a Caroline dramatist, the courtier playwright Lodovick Carlell has received miniscule critical attention, despite his authorship of eight original plays, several of which were performed by the King's Men at court and in London.[1] It is not my intention to rescue Carlell's oeuvre from obscurity.[2] Instead, I want to argue that his first published play, *The Deserving Favorite* (1629), provides significant insight into the strategies of legitimation that accompanied the emergence of a historically particular form of heterosexuality during the seventeenth century. Several scholars have identified the seventeenth century as the period in England during which a recognizably modern form of heterosexuality gained prominence. In *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, Valerie

1. An *MLA International Bibliography* online search of Carlell yields six *Notes and Queries* essays, two dissertations (each a critical edition of a play), one dictionary entry, and one book chapter, Mark Hutching's "The Stage Historicizes the Turk: Convention and Contradiction in the Turkish History Play," in *English Historical Drama, 1500–1660: Forms Outside the Canon*, ed. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 158–78. Two major studies of Caroline drama are largely dismissive of Carlell: see Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama: A Historical and Critical Supplement to the Study of the Elizabethan and Restoration Stage* (New York, 1964 [1936]), pp. 103–04, and Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis, 1632–1642* (Cambridge, Eng., 1984), p. 283.

2. Carlell's plays, with original publication dates, are *The Deserving Favorite* (1629), the two-part *Arviragus and Philicia* (1639), the two-part *The Passionate Lovers* (1655), *The Fool Would Be a Favorite* (1657), *Osmond the Turk* (1657), and *The Spartan Ladies* (lost; entered in the Stationers' Register in 1640). See Julie Sanders, "Carlell, Lodowick (1601/2–1675)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4669, accessed 11 Jan 2013]. Carlell also translated Corneille's *Heraclius* (1664). The title-page of *The Deserving Favorite* cites performances by the King's Men at court and the Blackfriars Theater. *Arviragus and Philicia* was performed at the Cockpit, Hampton Court, and the Blackfriars (Harbage, p. 97). *Osmond the Turk* and *The Fool Would Be a Favorite*, "As they have been often acted, by the Queen's Majesty's Servants," were published together as *Two New Playes* in 1657 (title-page). According to its title-page, *The Passionate Lovers* was presented twice for the King and Queen at Somerset House and "very often at the Private House in Black-Friars."

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Traub distinguishes the sixteenth-century ideology of "companionate marriage" from the later seventeenth-century ideology of domestic heterosexuality, which "*demands* the melding of love and erotic desire" and is characterized by "an intensified cultural interest and investment in the mutual erotic desires of men and women."[3] Rebecca Bach describes the emergent heterosexuality of the late seventeenth century as invested less in erotic mutuality than in the belief that men were more sexually desirous than women. Nonetheless, like Traub, Bach regards the elevation of sexual pleasure between men and women as a crucial feature of a developing "heterosexual imaginary," in contrast to an earlier "homosocial imaginary" that privileged male-male bonds as a sign of gentility.[4] Focusing on the cultural privilege afforded the monogamous heterosexual couple, James Bromley argues that during the seventeenth century marriage became increasingly "invested with value as a site where affection was desirable."[5] According to James M. Bromley, the valorization of emotional and sexual intimacy consolidated in the heterosexual couple was eventually naturalized as a modern social norm.

In this essay I am less interested in locating the *Deserving Favorite* in the shift from one socio-sexual paradigm to another—whether that shift is defined as a movement from companionate marriage to domestic hetero-

3. Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Eng., 2004), pp. 265, 258–59, italics in original. Traub defines the ideology of companionate marriage as the promotion of the conjugal unit "as a locus of domesticity, spiritual equality, and companionship" (p. 259). According to Traub, historians of marriage assume the "naturalness of heterosexuality" and thus "rarely treat the *meanings* of erotic desire, and the bodily practices such desire involves, as subject to historical specificity" (p. 261).

4. Rebecca Ann Bach, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature before Heterosexuality* (New York, 2007), p. 2. Louis-Georges Tin locates the shift from a predominantly homosocial to a predominantly heterosexual culture much earlier than the seventeenth century. Tin's argument that twelfth-century courtly love initiated "modern heterosexual culture" is compromised by his broadly transhistorical view of "heterosexual culture" as persisting in its essential form throughout the centuries (*The Invention of Heterosexual Culture* [Cambridge, Mass., 2012], p. 3). For more persuasive and nuanced accounts of medieval "heterosexuality," see Glenn Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation* (Minneapolis, 2003), esp. pp. 37–77; Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't* (Minneapolis, 2005), esp. pp. xi–xxviii; and James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago, 2006), esp. pp. 51–62. The argument that "heterosexuality" is properly a nineteenth-century psychiatric concept is made by Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (New York, 1995) and Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001). In this essay, I use "heterosexuality" to refer to a seventeenth-century ideological formation in general accord with Traub's account of the emergence of "domestic heterosexuality."

5. James M. Bromley, *Intimacy and Sexuality in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Eng., 2012), p. 1.

sexuality or from a homosocial imaginary to a heterosexual imaginary—than in exploring how the play makes visible the ideological strategy of using erotic "likeness" to validate marital unions as consensual and erotically compatible. Denise Walen, the only other critic to provide a detailed analysis of the play's erotic landscape, rightly observes that Carlell represents female homoeroticism as a valid form of "romantic love."[6] Walen's argument that the play finally legitimizes heteroerotic relations at the expense of homoerotic relations does not, however, take into account the formidable obstacles to the achievement of romantic love between men and women. In the mid-seventeenth century, erotic relations between men and women do not constitute the dominant or normal "sexuality" in contradistinction to a perverse homosexuality. *The Deserving Favorite* suggests that passionate heteroeroticism can earn legitimacy to the degree that it successfully emulates the affectionate relations between women and between siblings.

The Deserving Favorite idealizes female-female bonds in particular as offering unmarried women the pleasures of egalitarian friendship and erotic autonomy that they are less likely to experience in marriage.[7] In this regard, the play celebrates what Laurie Shannon has described as "homonormativity": "an almost philosophical preference for likeness" that represents same-sex affections as natural, since like proverbially seeks like, and that renders marriage problematically mixed.[8] The "homo" in "homonormativity" can also extend to sibling relations, in which nature and (sometimes) nurture are shared.[9] Writing of *Twelfth Night*, Shannon re-

6. Denise A. Walen, *Constructions of Female Homoeroticism in Early Modern Drama* (New York, 2005), p. 143. Citing scholarship by Erica Veevers and Harriette Andreadis, Walen affirms that the discourse of Platonic love fashionable at Henrietta Maria's court "created a space in which to represent female same-sex affection" as nominally chaste, even though such affection might "emit an obvious sexual energy" (pp. 139–40). See Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge, Eng., 1989) and Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics 1550–1714* (Chicago, 2001).

7. Melissa Sanchez critiques the feminist habit of rendering female same-sex relationships as always loving and supportive, a critique anticipated by Douglas Bruster and myself. See Melissa E. Sanchez, "'Use Me But as Your Spaniel': Feminism, Queer Theory, and Early Modern Sexualities," *PMLA* 127 (2012): 493–511; Douglas Bruster, "Female-Female Eroticism and the Early Modern Stage," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Culture: Early Modern Literature and the Cultural Turn* (New York, 2003), pp. 119–44; Mario DiGangi, *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley* (Philadelphia, 2011), pp. 60–87.

8. Laurie Shannon, "Nature's Bias: Renaissance Homonormativity and Elizabethan Comic Likeness," *Modern Philology* 98 (2002): 183–210, 191.

9. For a discussion of the difficulty of distinguishing various modes of sameness ("homonormativity") from difference ("alloisis") in John Lyly's *Euphues*, see Stephen Guy-Bray, "Same

marks that "the sense of kind-ness or likeness that causes persons of the same sex to be presumed amenable to each other also governs a second order of likeness in the play: the relatedness of siblings or twins."[10] What is particularly compelling about *The Deserving Favorite* is that both orders of likeness—the sibling as well as the same-sex—are *eroticized* and serve to model mutually affectionate conjugal relations, albeit imperfectly. Although female friendship approaches the ideal of a consensual and erotically sensual partnership, the play suggests that intimate relations between women best thrive in a separatist environment removed from courtly social and economic exchanges, including the marital negotiations crucial to cementing dynastic and political alliances. Brothers and sisters can model loving intimacy between men and women, yet siblings are too close in blood to be married. Female-female and brother-sister relationships thus constitute complementary yet socially unsustainable models of consensual marital union.

The Deserving Favorite centers on the romantic adventures of Lysander and Clarinda, who overcome various obstacles to their marriage only to discover, just as they are about to recite wedding vows, that they are biological siblings. Unlike John Ford, who in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* depicts the consummated love of a brother and sister, Carlell eschews the tragic sensationalism of an incestuous sibling relationship.[11] Still, Carlell prompts us to imagine an erotically charged and physically intimate relationship between these siblings, most overtly when Lysander pretends to offer Clarinda his sexual services as an adulterous lover. When confronted with the shocking knowledge of their shared biological origins, however, Lysander and Clarinda simply affirm their former affections as having been appropriate to their natural sibling bond and then consent to marry other partners. The remarkable ease of this comic resolution depends upon homonormativity as a transportable model of conjugal desire. It is as if the appeal of Lysander and Clarinda as potential spouses—and it is noteworthy that each is ardently courted by, and finally weds, a member of the

Difference: Homo and Allo in Lyly's *Euphues*," in *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570–1640*, ed. Constance C. Relihan and Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York, 2003), pp. 113–27.

10. Shannon, "Nature's Bias," p. 208.

11. For a different approach to the literary depiction of "incest schemes," including brother-sister relations, see Quilligan, who argues that in traditional societies such as early modern England "female agency empowers and is empowered by an endogamous assertion of family privilege" (p. 27). See Maureen Quilligan, *Incest and Agency in Elizabeth's England* (Philadelphia, 2005).

royal family—fundamentally lies in their having achieved erotic intimacy with a comparable partner, even if that partner happens to be a sibling. Of course, in early modern England sodomy and incest were defined as criminal acts and regarded as inimical to the formation of orderly households. Nonetheless, *The Deserving Favorite* suggests that the emergent ideology of domestic heterosexuality might have found a strategy of legitimation in the imitation or appropriation of erotic "likeness," whether that likeness was imagined to characterize same-sex or sibling bonds.[12]

That an emphasis on erotic desire within marriage might have been regarded by Caroline elites with suspicion is evident in the anxiety some courtiers expressed about King Charles' apparent infatuation with his wife. As I have argued elsewhere, in the late 1620s there were fears that King Charles was excessively enamored both of his great favorite, the Duke of Buckingham, and of his wife, Henrietta-Maria.[13] Carlell lived and wrote in this courtly environment, and several of his plays explore questions of sexuality and honor in aristocratic settings.[14] Although my reading of *The Deserving Favorite* will not take King Charles as a source or analogue, Carlell's exploration of the ethical and political issues at stake in sexual relations among aristocrats certainly reflects contemporary modes of addressing these problems. Whereas we are familiar with the Caroline discourses of Platonic love and same-sex friendship, we have yet to explore what eroticized sibling relations might have to tell us about the history of sexuality during the mid-seventeenth century.[15]

12. Comparing the strategies of authorial legitimation in the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher folio to those in Margaret Cavendish's *Plays* (1662), Jeff Masten makes a similar point regarding the late seventeenth-century "emergence of male-female collaboration out of the prior discourse of homoerotic friendship" and "the (re)construction of heterosexual marriage out of a particular vocabulary of Renaissance homoeroticism." See Jeff Masten, "My Two Dads: Collaboration and the Reproduction of Beaumont and Fletcher," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, 1994), pp. 280–309, esp. p. 300.

13. DiGangi, pp. 194–95.

14. The title page of *The Deserving Favorite* identifies Carlell as "Esquire, Gentle-man of the Bowes, and Groome of the King and Queens Privie Chamber."

15. Carlell returns to the representation of sibling bonds as a model for romantic love in two other plays. In *Arviragus and Philicia*, Arviragus is raised as the King's foster child. Arviragus' affection for the King's daughter, Philicia, later blossoms into romantic love. As Philicia explains, "we loved so such when wee were children, before wee knew in words how to expresse a passion, that now after so many degrees, to serve our selves with language, or professions, were justly to beget a doubt wee did not love" (sig. A12). Arviragus emphasizes the reciprocal eroticism that emerges from this quasi-sibling bond: "Since then we have one soule, why shud our bodies longer be at distance?" (sig. B1). In *The Passionate Lovers*, sibling and sibling-like bonds exist in a more compli-

II

In *The Deserving Favorite*, the emphasis on homosocial bonds that Rebecca Bach finds characteristic of an early seventeenth-century valorization of noble masculinity is present in the King's relationship with the Duke, his cousin and favorite. Although the King is also criticized, in a manner typical of Caroline drama, for letting his excessive love for a favorite compromise his sense of justice, the play does not concentrate on the erotic and political complications of that relationship. Instead, it focuses on the problem of the Duke's courtship of his social inferior, Clarinda, the daughter of Count Utrante. Clarinda wishes to marry her social equal, Lysander, the son of Count Orsinio, but is being pressured into a nonconsensual marriage with the Duke. As Lysander explains to his sister Mariana, the favorite is "too neere a kin in loue /And bloud to our dread Soueraigne to be deny'd" in his suit.[16] Moreover, Lysander owes the Duke a double debt of gratitude for having secured his estate against the machinations of his wicked uncle and for having saved his life after a hunting injury. Finally, because it is generally known that "the King / So passionately doth loue the Duke," Lysander worries that Clarinda's resistance to the Duke's suit will imperil her father (sig. B2). Citing this line, Dale Randall observes that Carlell wrote the play in 1629, "in the warm afterglow of George Villiers, the glorious Duke of Buckingham."[17] In June 1628, the House of Commons condemned Buckingham for his influence over King Charles; two months later, Buckingham was assassinated. At first blush, what Randall calls Carlell's "daring" in depicting a King passionately enamored of his favorite might be mitigated by the predominantly positive portrayal of the Duke, who is, after all, a *deserving* favorite. The Duke, if jealous and possessive, is far from the corrupt, ambitious favorite of much Caroline drama.[18] Nonetheless, the title's bald assertion of the Duke's desert is challenged by the play's nuanced analysis

cated relationship to the fulfillment of romantic desire. Prince Agenor asks his younger brother Clarimant to pose in public as the lover of Clorinda, with whom Agenor has a mutual love that he must conceal from his father. Posing as Clorinda's lover, Clarimant falls in love with her; when Clorinda permits him the "affection of a brother to a sister," Clarimant complains that he will envy the man who enjoys the "greater happiness" of a reciprocated erotic desire for her (sig. K7v).

16. Lodovvicke Carlell, *The Deseruing Fauorite* (1629), sig. B1v. Further citations will come from this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.

17. Dale B.J. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642–1660* (Lexington, KY, 1995), p. 243.

18. DiGangi, pp. 192–220.

of what constitutes desert in a spouse, and of what the balance between obedience and erotic desire might be in the formation of elite marriages.[19]

When he remarks that the Duke is "too neere" the King to be denied, Lysander reveals that the question of Clarinda's sexual consent is overdetermined by the unequal power relations authorized by the King's favor. In this way Carlell links favoritism and non-consensual marriage as relationships—the former male-male, the latter male-female—based on imbalances of power and affection. Hence, Clarinda understands her father's support of the Duke's suit as a harbinger of the "bondage" implicit in all "ties of marriage / Made by the parents without the childs consent, / Though nere so rich or hononrable [*sic*]" (sig. B2). Even though the Duke himself insists that Clarinda be granted "the freedome of her choyce" (sig. B2v), the King is astonished that Clarinda would contemplate refusing his beloved favorite. Warning Count Utrante, "Remember you may draw vpon your selfe / Our high displeasure by her refusall" (sig. B2v), the King issues a threat that comes close to an exercise of tyrannical power. Describing the problem of "consent without agency," Melissa Sanchez observes that in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and *Pericles* subjects cannot resist even abusive superiors without raising the threat of anarchy.[20] Thus, Sanchez asks where proper submission to the sovereign ends and collusion with tyranny begins (p. 92). Surprisingly, Clarinda does attempt to reform (if not precisely resist) the King when she later asserts that his "excessiue loue" for the Duke made her hide her love for Lysander in fear of precisely the kind of reprisal the King threatens against her father (sig. G2v).

19. That the running title of the play is not "The Deserving Favorite" but simply "The Favorite" might alert readers to ponder how the criteria of desert are defined and negotiated in the play.

20. Melissa E. Sanchez, "'Accessory Yieldings': Consent Without Agency in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Pericles*," *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (New York, 2011), pp. 87–115, esp. p. 89. For scholarship on women's sexual consent in early modern England, see, in addition to Sanchez, Laura Gowing, "Consent and Desire," *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2003), pp. 82–110; Laurie Shannon, "Professing Friendship: Erotic Prerogatives and 'Human Title' in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*," *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago, 2002), pp. 90–122; Kathryn Schwarz, "'Twixt Will and Will Not': Chastity and Fracture in *Measure for Measure*," *What You Will: Gender, Contract, and Shakespearean Social Space* (Philadelphia, 2011), pp. 155–79; and Julia Reinhard Lupton, "*All's Well That Ends Well* and the Futures of Consent," *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago, 2011), pp. 97–129. Lupton argues that the emphasis on marital consent in the early modern period did not intend to make wives equal to husbands, but to insert an element of "provisional autonomy and self-determination into an unequal relationship" (p. 101).

The pursuit of courtship through the distancing formulas of Platonic love creates a further obstacle to the fashioning of reciprocal and consensual heteroerotic bonds. The Duke adheres to the Platonic love tradition in which the lover must be "made worthy" of his mistress by suffering in her service (sig. B3v).[21] His extravagant worship of Clarinda's virtues epitomizes the courtly figuration of male desire as an idealized projection of the female beloved. As Erica Veevers astutely notes, the Duke "is perfect in the code of the romances," and Clarinda's rejection of his courtship exposes such "exaggerated compliment" as flattery (p. 52). If the Duke's compliment becomes intelligible as flattery, it is because his social and political superiority to Clarinda so overtly belies the Platonic fiction of the male suitor's unworthiness. But the Duke's recourse to flattery also evokes his role as favorite, in that favorites were generally suspected of using pleasing words to manipulate the monarch's affections. In this way, Carlell again associates non-consensual marriage and favoritism as institutions that are founded on inequality of power and that enforce, in Clarinda's words, "bondage" of affections (sig. B2).

Lysander's intimacy with Clarinda permits him to communicate more genuinely than the Duke; nonetheless, his desire is also mediated by the protocols of Platonic love. Although Clarinda's social equal, Lysander abases himself as an unworthy lover:

> When first I saw you,
> The height of all my aymes was onely to haue leaue
> To loue you, so excellent I then esteem'd you:
> But you in time, out of your bounty,
> Not for my desert; for no desert can reach
> Your height of merit, gave loue for loue,
> For which I owe my life sau'd by that mercy
> From despaire, and lent me for to serue yo[u]. (sig. C1)

Clarinda responds that her love was not a gift but the "wages" of Lysander's "true / And faithfull seruice" (sig. C1), thus affirming the courtly romance formula in which the "excellent" mistress is elevated above an admiring servant. This model of romance presumes the inferior "desert" of the male

21. Veevers discusses the popularity of Platonic love in France, and Henrietta-Maria's role in its adoption at the English court. In Platonic love, as epitomized by d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, however, the goal of courtship is not marriage but the "self-improvement of the hero" (p. 18).

lover, yet allows his inferiority to be redeemed through the compensating bounty of the merciful lady. In this way, courtly romance involves reciprocity of roles—the generous mistress rewards the true servant—and an exchange of "love for love" that presages conjugal harmony and affection.

If Clarinda's affections are elicited by Lysander's abasement as courtly lover, they are cooled by the Duke's preeminence as court favorite. Persuading Clarinda of the prudence of marrying the Duke, Lysander attempts to make a virtue of the contradiction that the Duke's greatness poses to the model of the serviceable courtly lover. He observes to Clarinda that although the Duke was free to choose for his wife "the most transplendent Beauty" in the kingdom, he selected her, his social inferior, as his "sole Commandresse," thus demonstrating a humility that could only derive from "true affection"(sig. C2). The Duke's affection, that is, has tempered his political superiority to Clarinda and made possible a bond of mutual love: an inversion of the scenario in which Clarinda's affection elevates Lysander's inferior moral worth, making him a suitable lover. Unconvinced by Lysander's logic, Clarinda cites the Duke's superior birth and status as obstacles to mutual love, since "equalitie doth giue birth to more affection, / And those more violent, there being no respect / To be a hindrance" (sig. C3). Since any affection she might feel for the Duke would be compromised by "respect" of their differences, especially by her enjoyment of the marriage's material benefits, Clarinda protests that she could only love such a husband "[u]nworthily" or impurely (sig. C3v).

Although Clarinda here articulates the sentiment that her love for her husband should be "worthy," she also advocates for "more violent" affections between husband and wife as essential to conjugal happiness. In a subsequent conversation, Clarinda and Lysander depart from the aristocratic civility of their usual protestations of love to give voice to such violent sexual passions. These passionate expressions are insincere to the extent that both Lysander and Clarinda are dissembling for rhetorical intent, but the voicing of such ardent yearnings nonetheless suggests the presence of desires that are otherwise difficult for noble young lovers to admit. Fittingly, Lysander and Clarinda have met at night in a dark, secluded arbor, where Lysander attempts to prove himself a villain in order to provoke Clarinda to renounce him and marry the Duke. Lysander praises Clarinda's wisdom in denying him premarital sex, for to have "inioy'd the sweets of love" while unmarried would have risked their exposure should Clarinda have become pregnant. Once Clarinda marries the Duke, however, she and Lysander can experience the "stolne pleasures" that whet the

"appetite" and "adde to our delights" (sig. E2). The erotic frisson of this conversation is enhanced in that the Duke, who is spying on the lovers, believes Lysander's protestations to be sincere; disgusted, he exits vowing revenge on his rival. Clarinda easily penetrates Lysander's dissemblance of lust, for his "vertue shewes it selfe / Quite through that maske of vice" (sig. E3). Pretending to consent to his adulterous plan, she concurs that it will be easy enough for her to share her "embracings" with both husband and lover (sig. E3). When Clarinda finally puts an end to this performance, the return to modest discourse signals a retreat from the false temptations of lust and craft, and a reaffirmation of the lovers' true, virtuous selves: as Lysander admits, "I see my heart lies open to you" (sig. E3v). Yet at this very moment of renouncing impulsive lust, Clarinda desperately swears that she will commit suicide if Lysander does not marry her within three days. Lysander's resolution to marry Clarinda echoes the same language of bodily possession that had charged their dissembled declarations of lust: they are fated to "enjoy each other," Lysander will joyfully "embrace" what her oath compels him to perform (sig. E3v). In the end, the couple's performance of lust materializes erotic feelings that are not disavowed as much as they are channeled into the desire for a consensual marriage.

The "more violent" passions expressed by Clarinda and Lysander also provoke the Duke to challenge Lysander to a duel, an event that decisively shifts the erotic terrain of the play. The duel accomplishes several dramatic aims. First, in the aftermath of the duel, the Duke disappears and is presumed dead, an absence that gives Carlell the space to explore another fraught courtship: that between the King's sister, Cleonarda, and Lysander. That Cleonarda's desire for Lysander is mediated through her intimate relationship with his sister, Mariana, imparts a different value to heteroerotic desire than the courtly love featured in the first part of the play. Second, with the Duke's absence Carlell shifts focus from the male rivalry over Clarinda to the female rivalry over Lysander, who is pursued by both Clarinda and Cleonarda. Unlike the Duke, who asserts his masculine honor in an impassioned attempt to kill Lysander and possess Clarinda, Cleonarda defers to Clarinda's previous claim on Lysander. For his ungracious attempt to dispossess Lysander of Clarinda, the Duke suffers a symbolic death that provides an opportunity for redemption. The Duke comes to recognize that a lover's worth derives from mutual affection and consent, not from superiority of birth or status. Ultimately, the shuffling of affections instigated by the duel leads to the tragicomic revelation

that permits a happy ending. With the revelation of the sibling relationship between Lysander and Clarinda, all the lovers can be sorted into two couples: Lysander will marry Cleonarda; Clarinda will marry the Duke.

III

Retroactively, the revelation of biological siblinghood also affirms the importance to the marriage plot of mutual, consensual relationships, of which the brother-sister bond (now confirmed to have always subtended the affection between Lysander and Clarinda) stands as a primary model. In the introduction to their collection *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World*, Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh observe that "reciprocity is a central feature of the sibling relationship" and that "brother-sister relations might be distinguished not only by competition or authority but by genuine mutual empowerment as well."[22] The reciprocal sibling bond between Lysander and Mariana, established in the first scene of the play, also accords with Amy Froide's finding that "ties between siblings were some of the most long-lasting and deep relationships" in early modern England.[23] Froide's description of women who never married as "single but not alone" accounts for their economic and affective bonds with family members as well as with unrelated single women, with whom they sometimes shared households. Moreover, Carlell represents both these forms of intimacy through Mariana, a single woman who is friend and confidante both of her unmarried brother and the unmarried Cleonarda, with whom she lives on a forest estate.

In the opening lines of the play, Lysander conveys the primacy of this sibling bond through his desire to share with Mariana his "neerest touching secrets" about his love for Clarinda (sig. B1). That the intimacy between siblings functions as a kind of substitute for the intimacy between lovers is suggested by Lysander's slippage from "dearest Sister" to "deare *Clarinda*" and by the way in which the content of his secret—his nearness to one woman, Clarinda—accords with the mode of the secret's conveyance, his nearness to another woman, Mariana:

22. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh, "Introduction: Thicker than Water: Evaluating Sibling Relations in the Early Modern Period," *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington, 2006), pp. 1–14, esp. pp. 2, 11.

23. Amy M. Froide, *Never Married: Single Women in Early Modern England* (New York, 2005), p. 52.

Lys. From thee my dearest Sister
I haue not hid my neerest touching secrets:
Thou know'st how truly I did loue,
And how at last I gain'd my deare *Clarinda*.
Mari. I doe; and wish that I could tell you such a secret of mine owne; for of all men liuing, I thinke you most happy.
Lys. Most miserable of men.
Mari. How can that be! is not *Clarinda* yours?
In which (were I a man) I should beleeue
More happinesse consisted, then for to be a Monarch. (sig. B1)

Although lacking a comparable secret to share with her brother, Mariana affirms her intimacy with him by identifying with his happiness in possessing Clarinda. The urge to share secrets, as Julie Crawford argues in her discussion of early modern women's secretaries, is a familiar sign of affectionate intimacy. The "friendship- and knowledge-based mode of political and social agency" often associated in early modern culture with the sharing of counsel between men or, as Crawford demonstrates, between women, manifests here in the form of a sibling bond.[24] Through his exchange of counsel with Mariana, Lysander confirms their exchange of affection: "Sister, I know you loue, nor will I be a debter; / You are both my Friend and Sister" (sig. B2v). The sibling bond thus models a reciprocal and consensual heteroeroticism that in the case of Lysander and Clarinda is threatened by patriarchal control over female sexuality.

Mariana also enjoys a reciprocal affection with Cleonarda, who is both her social superior and intimate companion. Accompanied only by Gerard, the keeper of the hounds, Cleonarda and Mariana live together in a forest lodge. According to Lysander, Cleonarda has issued a "strict command, / That none but those appointed should come neere the Lodge" (sig. B2v). The image of women living a cloistered existence in the woods draws on the imagery of Diana's band as a "public of lesbian separatists," in the words of Jennifer Drouin.[25] According to Drouin, in plays such as Thomas Heywood's *The Golden Age* and John Lyly's *Gallathea*, "lesbian separatism" aptly describes Diana's leadership of a female band that is sequestered from the world of men and heteroerotic desire. Cleonarda does not preside over

24. Julie Crawford, "Women's Secretaries," in *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze*, ed. Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray, and Will Stockton (Burlington, 2009), pp. 111–34, esp. p. 113.

25. Jennifer Drouin, "Diana's Band: Safe Spaces, Publics, and Early Modern Lesbianism," in *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze*, ed. Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray, and Will Stockton (Burlington, 2009), pp. 85–110, esp. p. 97.

a distinct "public" of separatists, since no other women apart from Mariana are reported to accompany her. Nonetheless, the play markedly cordons off this strictly protected female companionship from the world of political and marital exchanges pursued at court.[26] Moreover, Cleonarda's masculine gender performance evokes the exoticism of Diana's sylvan existence.[27] A fearless hunter, Cleonarda is wounded while rescuing her hounds from a furious stag. The Duke praises her as "a Lady of that noble Spirit, / That she wants nothing but the person of a Man / To be one, her heart being equall / To the most valiant." (sigs. D4–D4v). Reporting Cleonarda's valor in hunting down and decapitating a wolf, the Duke elicits incredulous responses. Lysander remarks that "'tis strange a woman should do this"; Count Utrante concurs, "But that your Grace doth tell it, / I should not thinke a woman could doe this" (sig. D4v). Lysander's "strange" expresses both admiration and possible discomfort at exceptional female behavior; the men's use of "should" conveys surprise both that a woman would wish to act so valiantly and would be capable of acting so valiantly.[28] Tellingly, it is a woman who finds Cleonarda's strangeness most alluring: "I should accompt it as the most acceptable / Service that you could doe, to bring me to kisse the hands / Of this much to be admir'd Lady" (sig. D4v). Whether disconcerting or appealing, Cleonarda's mystique is heightened by the mystery of her desire to live away from the court, a preference that is overtly questioned but never explained.

If the descriptions of Cleonarda as a type of Diana lead us to expect a homoerotically titillating scene, Carlell does not disappoint. At their first appearance, Cleonarda and Mariana are flushed with heat and exercise:

> *Cleo*. It is hot *Mariana*; wee'l rest our selves a while,
> And when the day growes cooler haue another course.
> *Mari*. I wonder how the Deere escaped; the follow-dog

26. Carlell's representation of a sylvan lesbianism accords with the poetry of Katherine Philips, which "positions Nature as fully *continuous* with female desire, a continuity intensified by Philips's use of images of pastoral retreat as the proper home for passionate women" (Traub, p. 304).

27. By the time we hear of Cleonarda, Diana has already been evoked, though not in connection to Cleonarda. Hoping to discourage the Duke's marriage suit, Clarinda claims that since she is "a votresse to *Diana*, in whose Temple / I doe shortly meane to dwell, I am free / From any fire that can bee kindled / By desert in Man" (sig. C4). In a later scene, Cleonarda enters "*drest like a Nymph*" (sig. I4v *sd*) and Lysander compares her to Diana wooing Endymion (sig. K1), an important reminder that Diana is not associated exclusively with female homoeroticism.

28. On the mid-seventeenth-century tortion of the word "strange" in the direction of sexually "queer" significations, see Masten, "My Two Dads," pp. 287–94.

Once pinch'd him.
  Cleo. It was the bushes sau'd him.
  Mari. Why will you course among the bushes?
Gerard the Keeper would have brought you
To a fairer course; but you will neuer let
Him goe along.
  Cleo. I hate to haue a tutor in my sport.
I will finde and kill my Game my selfe;
What satisfaction is't to me if by another's skill
I purchase any thing? (sig. F1)

The familiar erotic connotations of venery are present here in the sexually suggestive language of "hot" (lustful), "bushes" (pubic hairs), "sport" (amorous play), and "satisfaction" (sexual fulfillment).[29] As if evoking the female separatism of Diana, Mariana remarks on Cleonarda's willful exclusion of Gerard from the hunt. Strengthening the connection between sport and sex, Cleonarda's assertion of the pleasure she takes from pursuing her game without male interference prompts Mariana to remind her that when it comes to finding a husband, her brother will "take that paines for you" (sig. F1). Although granting her brother an advisory role, Cleonarda insists on her own power of choice:

He shall haue leave to name me one;
But if I doe not thinke him worthy of me,
Ile breake that Kingly custome, of marrying
For the good of the State; since it makes Princes
More miserable then Beggers; for Beggers marry
Only those they loue. (sig. F1)

Even while Cleonarda advocates her right to marry the man she loves, the "knowledge transaction" that transpires here between women indicates that what is primarily at stake is Cleonarda's ability to maintain the power of consent she has exerted in choosing Mariana as her beloved companion.[30] The scene ends with an acknowledgement of the erotic "sport"

29. On "bush" as pubic hair, see Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (New York, 2000), pp. 168–69; and Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London, 1994), pp. 177–78. Although Walen notes the "obvious intimacy" between Cleonarda and Mariana, she does not discuss the explicitly sexual language of the passage (p. 141).

30. Crawford, "Women's Secretaries," p. 112.

these women are free to enjoy in the absence of any male "keeper." Just before they leave to bathe in the river, Cleonarda announces, "I am resolu'd to kill a Deere to night, / Without the Keepers helpe" (sig. F1), activating a homoerotic allusion to the death (orgasm) of the deer/dear (beloved woman).

Cleonarda's affection for Mariana complexly mediates her burgeoning desire for Mariana's brother Lysander, both enabling it and subtly interweaving it into the affective bonds the women already share. When, following the duel, Mariana and Cleonarda come across a wounded Lysander, Cleonarda expresses reservations about assisting the man who appears to have killed her kinsman. Yet Cleonarda concludes that should Lysander die, she will "lose" Mariana forever: "either shee'l dye for griefe, / Or else shee'l hate me. . . . Besides, there is something, I know not what it is, / Bids me preserue *Lysander*" (sig. F4). Cleonarda's overwhelming concern for Mariana's contentment, as well as a more mysterious impulse to preserve Mariana's brother, pushes Cleonarda toward Lysander, but also draws her back to Mariana as a companion who requires her care. Cleonarda not only fears that Mariana might sicken from grief, she gives out that Mariana has fallen ill as a pretext for bringing provisions to the lodge, where Lysander secretly convalesces. Imagined as ill, Mariana competes with her brother as an object of Cleonarda's loving attention: Cleonarda instructs Gerard to "see that all things be well, / And in the morning bring me word how *she* hath / Slept to night" (sig. F4v; emphasis added). It seems likely that the "she" in this line is a composition or transcription error for "he," and that Cleonarda is meant to express anxiety not about Mariana's psychological distress but about Lysander's physical recovery.[31] We might speculate that the compositor, registering Cleonarda's concern for Mariana's wellbeing, erroneously substituted "she" for "he." Yet the emphasis on sibling likeness in *The Deserving Favorite* might also suggest that Cleonarda's mysterious attraction to Lysander has something to do with his kinship to Mariana; in this way, the confusion of pronouns speaks to that blurring of identities.

31. Both early editions have "she"; in his edition, Charles Gray notes that "she" is "probably a mistake for 'he.'" See Charles H. Gray, *Lodowick Carliell: His Life, a Discussion of his Plays, and "The Deserving Favourite"* (Chicago, 1905), p. 112. Writing of *As You Like It*, Jeffrey Masten critiques the heterosexist assumptions behind editorial emendations of a presumed pronoun "error" (of "his" for "her"). See "Textual Deviance: Ganymede's Hand in *As You Like It*," in *Field Work: Sites in Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. Marjorie Garber, Paul B. Franklin, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (New York, 1996), pp. 153–63.

In a soliloquy, Cleonarda struggles to understand the source of her newfound attraction to a man, which pulls against her history of primary devotion to a woman. After berating herself for being seduced by Lysander's "outward beauty," Cleonarda concludes that she was in fact allured by his "inward worth" (sig. G1). She attributes the melting of her otherwise hard heart, which has never yielded to a man, not to Lysander's physical beauty, but to his universally recognized virtue:

> It was
> The inward brauery of his mind, which all
> The Kingdome doth admire, that turn'd my heart,
> Which vntill now hath beene like adamant
> To Kings, to melting Ice to him, and not his
> Outward beauty, that neuer could haue found
> A passage to my heart, but that the way
> Was chalked out to it by his Fame: (sig. G1)

By conforming her feelings to the pervasive judgment of Lysander's desert, Cleonarda eases her dismay at having allowed an attractive man to open a "passage to [her] heart." Yet just as in the Duke's thwarted courtship of Clarinda, social inequality interferes with the fashioning of an intimate bond. To take Lysander as her husband, Cleonarda realizes, would be to elevate one of her brother's subjects to the position of her "Master" (sig. G1). Eschewing such indecorum, Cleonarda resolves to return to her "old sports agen," a reaffirmation of the pleasurable mutuality she has enjoyed with Mariana (sig. G1).

Cleonarda's unfulfilled passion for Lysander raises questions about worth and obligation in heteroerotic relations similar to those raised by the Duke's fraught courtship of Clarinda. Just as Lysander feels indebted to the Duke for having rescued him during a hunt, so he feels indebted to Cleonarda for having rescued him following the duel. These obligations carry romantic consequences. Lysander claims that "[g]ratitude compels" him to release Clarinda to the Duke; similarly, he feels obligated to "backe returne" Cleonarda's amorous looks, despite his devotion to Clarinda (sigs. B1v, G3). He worries, however, about the "undeserued fauor" the princess bestows upon him (sig. G3v). The discrepancy in status between Lysander and Cleonarda admits the intrusion of the same questions that had troubled the Duke's pursuit of Clarinda. Is love rendered impure when marriage promises greater material benefits to one partner? How likely is it that a spouse's gratitude for "undeserved favor" will develop into erotic

affection? Spurred by wounded honor, the Duke intended to brush aside such questions by vanquishing Lysander and asserting his worthiness to possess Clarinda. Dwelling in paradox, Cleonarda instead understands that the virtue for which she loves Lysander requires his loyalty to Clarinda; Cleonarda's love must therefore remain "barren" (sig. G4v). Modulating her desire for Lysander into a "[s]isterly affection" (sig. H1), Cleonarda discovers a homonormative solution that simultaneously reaffirms her intimacy with Mariana—in that they both become "sisters" to Lysander—and lays claim to the reciprocal love that the play associates with siblings. Regarding Lysander as a brother, Cleonarda thus maintains a kind of intimacy with him through a state of unfulfilled sexual desire. As Lysander had observed to Clarinda regarding the obstacles preventing their marriage, Cleonarda might well think of Lysander as her brother, since their "soules may embrace, but not [their] bodies" (sig. B4).

IV

Recognizing the affective function of sibling bonds in the play allows for an understanding of homoerotic and heteroerotic desires as mutually enabling instead of antagonistic. Denise Walen, noting Mariana's distress upon discovering Cleonarda's attraction to Lysander, argues that Mariana "resents the interruption to her intimacy with Cleonarda and fears he [Lysander] will replace her in the affections of the princess." According to Walen, a heteroerotic relationship "displaces" an "original," long-standing homoerotic relationship (p.142). Yet it is possible to interpret Mariana's distress not as jealousy at a competing intimacy but as concern that her friend's infatuation with a man she barely knows will jeopardize her happiness and autonomy:

> Shall I belieue that your great heart, that euer
> Yet contemn'd loue, can on a sodaine in foure
> Or fiue daies knowledge, be struck by my vnworthy
> Brothers slender merits, and one that must
> Be periur'd too, if he should loue you. (sig. H1v)

If Mariana's resistance to her brother's intrusion proceeds from her same-sex attachment to Cleonarda, it is at least in part because that attachment expresses an erotic freedom threatened by the sudden onset of "love": a conquering—and, via Cupid, an allegorically male—force that has "struck" her friend's "great heart." That Cleonarda's passion has arisen from such lit-

tle knowledge of Lysander only confirms Mariana's suspicion that love has compromised the princess' powers of reason and, correlatively, her ability to consent. Perhaps Mariana cites her brother's "slender merits" not in a fit of resentment or sibling rivalry, then, but in an attempt to draw her friend's attention back to the problem of social inequality as an obstacle to mutual conjugal affection.

Cleonarda finds one solution to this problem in the homonormative assertion of a "[s]isterly affection" that links her long-standing love for Mariana with her emergent love for Lysander (sig. H1). Similarly, the problem of female sexual rivalry is resolved through the homonormative admiration that suddenly transpires between Cleonarda and Clarinda.[32] Upon first sight of Cleonarda, Clarinda shelters herself in the distancing language of disparate worth that characterizes socially unequal courtships throughout the play. In this instance, the argument about disparate worth applies to physical beauty, not explicitly to differences of birth or status, though the language of fairness can also connote high status.[33] Clarinda's self-denigration provokes both women to visceral avowals of the pleasure they take in looking at each other:

> *Cla.* The Princesse is the fairest Creature
> That yet mine eyes euer beheld, why does she looke
> So stedfastly vpon me? Gracious Madame,
> What see you in this worthlesse frame,
> That so attracts your eyes.
> *Cleo.* I see *Clarinda*,
> In each particular of the whole frame,
> Which thou term'st worthlesse, an excesse of beauty,
> Which in another Lady might breed e[n]vy;
> But by my life I take deligt to looke on thee.
> *Cla.* And Madame, may I perish,
> If ere mine eyes yet met an object, wherein
> I tooke halfe that delight that I doe now
> In looking vpon you; were I a man,
> And could frame to my selfe a Mistris by my wishes
> Hauing the wide world to choose in, for each

32. In his brief discussion of the play, John Franceschina downgrades the erotically charged bond between Cleonarda and Clarinda to a "homosocial friendship" (*Homosexualities in the English Theatre: From Lyly to Wilde* [Westport, CT, 1997], p. 99).

33. Kim F. Hall, "'These Bastard Signs of Fair': Literary Whiteness in Shakespeare's Sonnets," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London, 1998), pp. 64–83.

Particular to make vp the whole, I should beleeue
It were a fruitlesse labour, if I went farther
Then your selfe thus fram'd. (sig. H4v)

Clarinda claims to find Cleonarda more attractive than anyone else she has ever seen—evidently including Lysander. What is particularly significant about this encounter, however, is not the comparative diminishment of heteroerotic desire but rather the likeness of feeling, the sentimental accord, between the two women. One sign of this accord is the mirroring of terms in a kind of linguistic homonormativity. Clarinda introduces the language of a "worthlesse frame," which is alliteratively imitated by Cleonarda ("whole frame"); Clarinda then transforms the noun "frame" into a verb ("could frame") and an adjective ("thus fram'd"). Cleonarda declares that she "take[s] deligt" in Clarinda's appearance; Clarinda returns the compliment.[34] Picking up on Cleonarda's admiration of "each particular of the whole frame," Clarinda argues that in designing an ideal woman she would take from Cleonarda "each particular to make up the whole." Clarinda's rhetoric of male identification ("were I a man . . . ") also echoes Mariana's exact words to Lysander at the very beginning of the play ("were I a man" [sig. B1])—words that expressed, aptly enough, Mariana's appraisal of Clarinda as the ideally desirable woman.

This mutual admiration moves Cleonarda to defer to Clarinda's previous claim on Lysander, despite Cleonarda's greater social and political sway. Erica Veevers observes that the heroines of Carlell's plays typically "support each other in a high-minded view of love which goes beyond personal interest, and eventually leads to a happy conclusion" (p. 67). In *The Deserving Favorite*, it is particularly salient that a homonormative attraction persuades the socially superior Cleonarda to go beyond personal interest in supporting Clarinda's right to marry the man she loves. The recognition that female same-sex intimacy might facilitate the formation of a happy marriage informs Lysander's fantasy that Clarinda and Cleonarda will cohabit after his death:

Weepe not, *Clarinda*, you may liue happily
You and the Princesse may together make
A kinde of Marriage, each one strongly

34. According to Erika T. Lin, "the sensual and sexual valences" of the word "delight" foreground "the centrality of the body as both producer and receiver of spectacle" (*Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* [New York, 2012], p. 115).

> Flattering themselues, the other is *Lysander*;
> For each of you's *Lysanders* better part: (sig. L3v–4)

If the Duke's solution to erotic rivalry is to remove his rival from the equation, Lysander's solution is to incorporate himself in the persons of the mutually admiring rivals. The conceit that each woman constitutes the "better part" of the man she loves authorizes a same-sex marriage in which each woman perceives the other as husband. Closely scrutinized, Lysander's narcissistic fantasy ostensibly projects, in an instance of hyper-homonormativity, a biologically female same-sex marriage of two Lysanders (since *each* woman preserves a better part of him).[35] Nonetheless, the reciprocal admiration between Clarinda and Cleonarda, which takes place in Lysander's absence, suggests that the women would be capable of a happy coexistence without any beyond-the-grave intermediation from him.

V

If producing a happy ending, even in fantasy, is beyond Lysander's power, it is because a comic ending for *The Deserving Favorite* requires the intervention of the reformed Duke, who must finally earn his titular epithet. Justifying his quarrel with Lysander, the Duke had boasted that he loved Clarinda more than Lysander, and "better [did] deserue / To be beloued by her" (sig. F1v). Like the haughty Prince of Aragon in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, who regards himself as the worthiest husband for Portia, the Duke arrogantly "assume[s] desert."[36] In the aftermath of the duel, the Duke repents his jealousy and pride, and sequesters himself in the forest. The Hermit delivers to the court the Duke's dying words, which confess the injustice of his attempt to possess Clarinda and degrade Lysander:

> May she [Clarinda] enjoy *Lysander*, whom now I doe
> Beleeue is worthy of her: for I that
> Most vnjustly went about to crosse it,
> Must pay my life downe for my error;

35. Drawing from Judith Butler's discussion of kinship in *Antigone's Claim*, Julie Crawford argues that the incest taboo does not necessarily require that all kinship relations formed through marriage be heterosexual ("*All's Well That Ends Well*, Or, Is Marriage Always Already Heterosexual?" in *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Madhavi Menon [Durham, 2011], pp. 39–47).

36. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al., 2nd ed. (New York, 2008), 2.9.50.

> *Lysander*, I forgiue thee my death, and so
> I hope the King, (sigs. H2–H2v)

Instead of actually paying for his dishonorable act with his life, as a tragedy might demand, the Duke disguises his identity and thus receives the opportunity to perform, albeit unawares, true acts of service for his beloved. When Iachimo attempts to rape Clarinda, who is wandering the forest disguised as a page, the Duke responds to her cries and frightens him away. Rescuing Clarinda from rape redeems the Duke from his earlier attempt to possess her without her desire or consent. Through his kindness in finding food and shelter for the distressed page, moreover, the Duke performs charitable services for Clarinda that exceed the empty promises of his earlier flattery and help to remove the "hindrance" of social inequality that Clarinda believed would interfere with conjugal affection (sig. C3). At the same time, Carlell evokes the comic convention, familiar from *Twelfth Night*, in which an adult man finds himself attracted to a young woman disguised as a boy. As typically occurs in such scenarios, the Duke calls attention to the physical charms of the "sweet youth" (sig. L1): "It is the pretiest boy that yet I ere did see, / And yet me thinkes I have seene a face like this before" (sig. I4). Although the Duke's attraction to the page derives from his prior attraction to Clarinda, it is also possible to understand this episode as yet another instance in which same-sex intimacy prepares the way for and legitimizes conjugal intimacy. When the Duke and Clarinda take shelter for the night, Clarinda insists on sleeping alone and in her doublet; when subsequently reflecting on the events of that evening, however, the Duke asks her pardon for having ignorantly been her "bedfellow" (sig. M2). The evident intimacy they share under false identities later bears witness to Clarinda of the Duke's "worth and affection" (sig. N1v).

Typical of seventeenth-century tragicomedy, *The Deserving Favorite* concludes with a series of revelations, none more astonishing than the confession of the Hermit, who is actually Lysander's father, Count Orsinio. Count Orsinio reveals that his wife stole Lysander as an infant from Count Utrante: his supposed son, therefore, is really Clarinda's biological brother. It is hard not to hear revisionist history in Lysander's claim that he "did euer" love Clarinda as "a Sister rather then as a Mistris," but the point is that the prohibition of marriage between the siblings opens the way for two marriages that no longer seem compromised by discrepancies of worth and desire (sig. N1v). Through the evidence of the Duke's "worth and infinite affection" for her, Clarinda has grown to care for him to the point of

wishing that "he were [her] Brother" (sig. M3). When she discovers that Lysander is her actual brother, Clarinda rather effortlessly "turns" her affections from him to the Duke:

> the large testimony that you haue giuen
> Both of your worth and affection to me,
> Haue turn'd that great affection in an instant,
> That I bare *Lysander*, as you could wish it,
> Vpon you; nay to say truth, I euer lou'd you,
> Though not so well as hee, and held your worth
> As great. (sig. N1v)

In this resolution, the transit between sibling and conjugal affections moves in both directions. Lysander and Clarinda's erotic feelings are shown to be "merely" the affections of loving siblings.[37] At the same time, Clarinda shifts her sisterly affections from Lysander onto the Duke, as if she cannot understand conjugal love as anything but love for a brother. Similarly, the social difference that had presented an obstacle to the marriage of Cleonarda and Lysander is rendered insignificant by the princess' argument that although his blood is inferior to hers, "his mind's heroicke, / And who will compare the seruant with the Master? / The Body is no more vnto the Minde" (sig. N2v). Here the difference of blood between princess and subject is understood not as a socially meaningful fact but as a manifestation of pure corporeality, which does not compromise a subject's spiritual nobility. Cleonarda's self-sacrificing promise to convert her passion for Lysander into a homonormative sisterly affection is thus rewarded in the achievement of a reciprocal love: her "greatnesse" of "[s]pirit" is matched by Lysander's heroic mind (sig. N2v).

The Deserving Favorite can help us to appreciate how intimacies between brothers and sisters might have more to tell us about the history of (hetero) sexuality, and particularly about the contested and uneven emergence during the seventeenth century of what we would later come to recognize as the norm of heterosexual conjugality. Sibling relations can represent a "natural" form of mutual love between men and women, although taboos against incest limit the physical expression of that intimacy. *The Deserving Favorite* indicates, however, that affections between brothers and sisters might

37. Walen acknowledges that Lysander begins the play "romantically in love with Clarinda, but ends it as her loving sibling" (p. 143); however, she does not comment further on that rather remarkable transformation, or on its larger implications for erotic relationships in the play.

fall somewhere on the broad spectrum between the fully chaste and the sexually consummated, and that we might look to those hard-to-define sibling bonds for evidence of the way in which the homonormative—in the sense of kin likeness—grants legitimacy to the heteroerotic. That Carlell was not the only Caroline author to recognize the possible slippage from the sibling to the conjugal is evident from Robert Herrick's poem "No Spouse but a Sister," from the collection *Hesperides* (1648). A dedicated bachelor, the speaker of this poem explains the appeal of a "chaste" yet eroticized pseudo-marriage with his sister:

> A Bachelour I will
> Live as I have liv'd still,
> And never take a wife
> To crucifie my life:
> But this I'le tell ye too,
> What now I meane to doe;
> A Sister (in the stead
> Of Wife) about I'le lead;
> Which I will keep embrac'd,
> And kisse, but yet be chaste.[38] (sig. B5v)

Herrick evokes the satirical tradition in which husbands complain of the miseries of marriage, here described with humorous exaggeration as crucifixion. Faced with a life of conjugal torment, Herrick's bachelor opts to live with his sister, whom he can control (or "lead" about) and with whom he can enjoy the physical intimacies of embracing and kissing, and possibly, depending on how one interprets the highly ambiguous term "chaste," other non-procreative erotic acts. In Carlell's courtly romance, there are no witty bachelors to devise such resourceful schemes. *The Deserving Favorite* moves its aristocrats resolutely toward marriage, but must legitimize those couplings by demonstrating, through the benevolent influence of intimate same-sex and sibling bonds, the spouses' erotic and emotional compatibility. The comic promise at the end of the play is that marriages constituted through likeness will provide mutual pleasures instead of the crucifying bondage of unfulfilled passions and unequal obligations.

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38. I thank Jordan Windholz for this reference. For research assistance on this essay, I would like to thank Hillel Broder.