"I KNOW WHERE IS AN HYNDE": WYATT'S REBELLIOUS (SUB)VERSION OF MASCULINE EROTICS

Benjamin Ratskoff

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Advisor: Laurie Shannon
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Who so list to hounte I know where is an hynde  
but as for me helas I may no more  
the vayne travaile hath weried me so sore  
I ame of theim that farthest cometh behinde  
yet may I by no meanes my weried mynde  
drawe from the Diere but as she fleeth afore  
faynting I folowe I leve of therefor  
sethens in a nett I seke to hold the wynde  
Who list her hount I put him owte of dowbte  
as well as I may spend his tyme in vain  
and graven with Diamondes in letters plain  
There is written her faier neck rounde abowte  
Noli me tangere for Cesars I ame  
and wylde for to hold though I seme tame

A white doe on the green grass appeared to me, with two golden horns, between two rivers, in the shade of a laurel, when the sun was rising in the unripe season.

Her look was so sweet and proud that to follow her I left every task, like the miser who as he seeks treasure sweetens his trouble with delight.

“Let no one touch me,” she bore written with diamonds and topazes around her lovely neck. “It has pleased my Caesar to make me free.

And the sun had already turned at midday; my eyes were tired by looking but not sated, when I fell into the water, and she disappeared.

I. Introduction: A Sonnet at the Henrician Court

While King Henry VIII orchestrated the frenzied machinations surrounding the annulment of his marriage to Queen Katherine of Aragon, a scribe copied the sonnet “Who so list to hounte” into his master’s paper folio of verse. In its final lines, the male speaker conjures his object of desire: the hind-as-property of Caesar. Simultaneously drawing on biblical and Roman references, these final lines twist allusions to Christ ascendant and imperial Caesar into a

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proscription of the hind’s ownership by any other than the sovereign. No longer the celestial (and erotic) unattainability of Petrarch’s celebrated Laura, the hind’s unavailability marks earthly ownership, where violation of the interdiction amounts to legal transgression in the first instance. As the manuscript copy of a poem circulated privately among writers and readers at and beyond the volatile Henrician court, the sonnet characteristically avoids disclosing its referents, instead only implying a relationship between the sonnet’s Caesar and King Henry VIII by virtue of their appositional sovereignties. This material history also renders notions of an authentic, unmediated voice obsolete and troubles singular identifications of the sonnet’s author, in turn demanding we not impose modern notions of authorship on the poem. Yet most often, and quite compellingly, publishers and scholars have traced the sonnet to the hand of Henrician diplomat and writer Sir Thomas Wyatt.

In order to acknowledge the accumulated mediation of countless scribal hands—both creative and secretarial—Chris Stamatakis aptly formulates this writer’s personage as, “This artist formerly known as Wyatt,” for “his texts are refracted through the interventions of his family, friends, and Tudor handlers…[which] does somewhat compromise a sense of his

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3 “Noli me tangere,” or touch me not, is spoken by the resurrected Christ to Mary Magdalen in the garden of his sepulcher. “Cesars I am” refers to Christ’s exchange with the Pharisee over tribute money: “In an intimate exchange, Christ gazes at the Pharisee, who tempts Him to deny the legality of paying tribute to Caesar. Shown a gold coin, Christ asks: ‘Whose is the image and the superscription? They said unto him: Caesar’s. Then said he unto them: Give therefore to Caesar, that which is Caesar’s: and give unto God, that which is God’s’ (Matthew 22:20-1).” See: Susan Brigden, *Thomas Wyatt: The Heart's Forest* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2012), 159-62, 24.

4 “Who so list to hounte…” appears in the Egerton manuscript, a critical paper folio of Tudor verse largely written in the hands of three scribal copiers as well as Sir Thomas Wyatt. “Who so list to hounte…” is written by Hand A, the first amanuensis. See: Chris Stamatakis, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Rhetoric of Rewriting*, ed. et al. Helen Barr, Oxford English Monographs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Based on ink analysis, Jason Powell has developed an intricate argument that Egerton “begins as a volume of fair copies and later seems to become Wyatt’s working manuscript, into which he personally copied and even composed his own poems.” “Who so list to hounte…” belongs to the first section of Powell’s bifurcated manuscript. See: Jason Powell, "Thomas Wyatt's Poetry in Embassy: Egerton 2711 and the Production of Literary Manuscripts Abroad," *Huntington Library Quarterly 67*, no. 2 (2004): 275.
‘presence.’” Nonetheless, Sir Thomas Wyatt himself continues to occupy a canonical place in the corpus of Anglophone verse, “long credited with being the first English poet to introduce the sonnet into our vernacular.” Often heralding his work for inaugurating the modern epoch of English poetry, critics have deployed the collection of texts attributed to Wyatt to demonstrate “that our tong is able…to do as praiseworthily as y‘ rest,” as was printed in the posthumous publication of a handful in Tottel’s 1557 *Songes and Sonettes*. Since then, critics have similarly claimed that Wyatt’s “professed object was to experiment with the English tongue, to civilise it,” or that “he brought to English love-poetry…a range of powers, resonances, and instrumental effects that it had not had since Chaucer.” In other words, Wyatt has been positioned canonically as a mobilizing source of English letters, for “to successive critics, historians, and anthologists the poetry of Wyatt and [his courtly contemporary] Surrey was deemed to stand at the fountain-head of a developing lyric tradition.” These arguments, from Tillyard to Pearsall, of literary “pioneering” suggest that Wyatt’s texts may be situated along a temporal narrative of modernity.

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5 Stamatakis, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Rhetoric of Rewriting*, 12, 6. This formulation attempts “to locate [Wyatt] as a scribal agent somewhere at the interface of ‘original producer’ and (mere) ‘collaborator.’” Stamatakis also argues that the Egerton manuscript “is unusual as an artefact of early Tudor poetry, since it is not a miscellany: some of its poems were probably transcribed from Wyatt’s ‘foul papers’ (draft or working manuscripts), while others were seemingly composed in Wyatt’s hand in the codex itself”; a reproduction of the manuscript paper of “Who so list to hounte…” shows Hand A’s inscription of the sonnet as well as emendations by Nicholas Grimald and a marginal annotation, “Wyat,” by George Blage in *Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Rhetoric of Rewriting*, 217, 8.


Such critical assessments are linked to the pervasive periodization of the texts as *early modern*.\(^\text{11}\) Even the evoked lineage with Chaucer above, while expressing a return to the medieval bard’s poetic heights, indicates a rebirth, the origin of a new era. Yet approaching such texts as *early modern* asks one to explore the epistemological assumptions of modernity while rehearsing their somewhat inevitable conclusions, for the chronological modifier marks a progress narrative. Of course, it seems impossible, and rather fruitless, to approach these texts without some set of methodological assumptions, but one must pay careful attention not to constrain the texts with anachronistic judgments. As Margreta de Grazia proposes,

> Once [a text] is put at the beginning of the modern trajectory (once it is named *early modern*) it is committed to anticipating the modern. … Since the modern is, after Hegel, identified with consciousness, subjectivity, Cartesianism, individuality, then the early modern is constrained to display the early stages of their emergence.\(^\text{12}\)

Such a focus on the self and his consciousness—the possessive pronoun should lay bare the gendered constitution of such Cartesian and Hegelian formations of subjectivity—has led many to focus on *Wyatt*: the man, the lover, the diplomat, the poet, the genius. Cathy Shrank has amusingly described such focus as an “impulse to pick over the bones of our dead poets,” which persists even though “Wyatt’s works actually resist and evade such self-exposure, especially when compared to the Petrarchan tradition on which he was drawing.”\(^\text{13}\) Amidst all the textual ambiguity of the manuscripts and the comparable ambiguity of biographical detail, critics have tirelessly pressed on, interrogating the poems for typical links to Henrician diplomacy, wrestling with the now infamous, yet quite dubious, affair between Wyatt and Anne Boleyn, or admiring

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\(^{13}\) Shrank, "'But I, That Knew What Harbred in That Hed': Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Posthumous 'Interpreters'," 375.
his poetry as the immortal proof of contemplative brilliance.\textsuperscript{14} In other words, there has been a continued investment in the notion of an autonomous male agent and writer; or, as Raymond Southall bluntly puts it, “when the psychological dimensions...are considered...it becomes necessary to suppose that one is confronting a personality...I shall suppose it to be Thomas Wyatt.”\textsuperscript{15} Waller’s precise critique of Greenblatt’s analysis of the sonnet in his influential \textit{Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare} explains one important consequence of this investment: “the positions of certain key female figures are not attended to.”\textsuperscript{16} When critics determine the text primarily divulges the interior matters of its univocal author—what Greenblatt calls Wyatt’s “inwardness”—literary concerns pertaining the female object of desire become secondary at best.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, even Greenblatt’s sincere rejection of the belief that “poetry emanates spontaneously from an inviolable core of subjectivity and has no significant relation to power” does not necessarily reorient his perspective towards the female figure desired in the sonnet, whose pronounced link to the male poet’s selfhood cannot be overlooked.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14} Shrank identifies the origin of this trend in both Surrey’s elegy for Wyatt, in which he represented “a Wyatt whose personality is readable...through his work,” as well as in “Surrey’s eponymous claim in another commemorative poem—“1 […] knew what harbred in that hed,” in “But I, That Knew What Harbred in That Hed’: Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Posthumous ‘Interpreters,'” 378. For more recent examples of this trend, see Daalder’s conclusion that, “The first wholly unambiguous reference to a historical event occurs in ‘Whoso list to hunt: I know where is an hind’” in Joost Daalder, "Are Wyatt's Poems in Egerton Ms 2711 in Chronological Order?," \textit{English Studies}, no. 3 (1988): 206. Or Southall’s claim that, “Even before [Anne’s] marriage to Henry her standing was well enough known at Court and the relevance of Petrarch’s sonnet cannot have been altogether accidental as a comment by Wyatt upon Anne,” in Raymond Southall, \textit{The Courtly Maker: An Essay on the Poetry of Wyatt and His Contemporaries} (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1964), 44.

\textsuperscript{15} “Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542),” 607.; \textit{The Courtly Maker: An Essay on the Poetry of Wyatt and His Contemporaries}, 67. Michael McCanles proposes a similar thesis: “I hope to show that the bulk of his poetry presents a coherent psychological situation and that the conventional postures he adopts are partly the vehicles and partly the very embodiment of that situation...Throughout Wyatt’s poems a consistent syndrome of psychological actions and reactions is outlined...From these it is possible to reconstruct the typical Wyatt ‘love situation,’” in Michael McCanles, "Love and Power in the Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt," \textit{Modern Language Quarterly} 29, no. 2 (1968).


\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare}, 139. For example, when discussing the final couplet of the sonnet, Waller writes, “The quotation thus implies the presence of a female self different and distinct from the
Additionally, the historical circumstances of poetic transmission peculiar to Henrician manuscript poetry as well as the particular textual traces of the manuscripts considered to contain Wyatt’s poetry trouble assumptions of a unified, writerly self. Like Stephen Orgel’s persuasive demonstration of the limits of authorship when discussing late sixteenth and early seventeenth century drama, Stamatakis reveals that Henrician manuscript poetry too belies the assumed stability of author-ized texts and “might be defined less by authorship than by handling.”19 The manuscript culture of the Henrician court circulated hand-written poetry among small networks of companions, leading Daniel Juan Gil to speculate recently, “Wyatt gave copies of his poems to friends who might themselves pass the poems on to other friends. In this way, Wyatt’s poetry was widely known and admired, but only within the restricted social circles of courtly readers.”20 Analyses ought to approach such poems as fundamentally social texts moving through courtly spaces, following Marotti’s model in “‘Love is Not Love’: Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order” and his later claim that such texts were “more obviously implicated in immediate social relations…After all, everyone acknowledged that literary communication was
socially positioned and socially mediated.”  

21 Such an approach does not erase Wyatt, ignore his existence, or pretend that he had no part in the sonnet’s production; nor does it propose that historical traces of Wyatt are entirely irrelevant to analyses of the sonnet. It simply acknowledges, as Stamatakis remarks, that without “downplaying the culture of anonymity or unexpressed authorship in Tudor writing…Wyatt manuscripts do frustrate an author-centered bias and lend themselves instead to a more socio-centric approach to composition and textuality.”  

22 It is also important to note that an author-centered methodology proceeds from a reconstructed body of texts presented in unity, an archival structure too often rendered transparent in scholarship yet artfully revealed in Shrank’s critique:

A sense of a consistent outlook, or a coherent body of experience, is thus created by the repetitive nature of the scenarios depicted in Wyatt’s poems and by the recurrence of a similar voice or register across his writing…When read together as a body of poetry, then, the consistency of attitude, tone, and scenario help create the impression that the experiences and emotions voiced are those of the poet himself…Wyatt’s poetic voice—the features of which I have been mapping—is one created out of the experience of sitting down to read a substantial body of his work, presented en masse.  

23 One must thus locate Wyatt’s writerly practice within a particular writerly milieu, thinking of “circulated manuscripts…as ‘events’ in an ongoing kinetic sequence,” while remaining skeptical of attempts to discern expressions of the poet’s internal state with respect to some biographical totality.  

24 After all, “our inability to know for sure whom or what is being hinted at in Wyatt’s poetry is in part produced by the fact that these poems are coterie poems, written for a circle of

22 Stamatakis, Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Rhetoric of Rewriting, 15.  
acquaintances, not primarily intended for a print audience.”

“Who so list to hounte” is no exception, as the poem begins and ends with only a hunter, a Caesar, and a hind—nothing more.

In turn, the sonnet requires readings keenly aware of its cultural situatedness, for one cannot divorce the speaker’s announcement—“Who so list to hounte I know where is an hynde”—from the royal hunt (par force de chiens) of the Henrician court and the deer bodies organized and dismembered by it. Edward Berry usefully summarizes this sport as follows:

par force des chiens…was the most physically demanding and, conventionally, the noblest and most masculine kind of hunt. In its royal or ceremonial form, which was highly ritualized, this hunt took place in field and forest and was roughly divided into five stages: the entry of the hunters into the forest; the consumption of an elaborate breakfast…; the chase of a single deer located earlier by the huntsmen; the baying, death, and dismemberment of the deer, and the rewarding of the dogs; and finally, the return of the hunting party to court.

Reading within this context, my analysis of the sonnet does not assume the (allegorical) presence of a desired woman, a presupposition buttressed by Petrarchan models of desire. Instead, it addresses the actual presence of the sonnet’s hind and the discursive web she invokes; for the hind cannot simply be “an alibi for other themes.” Although criticism has generally focused on the innovative aspects of the sonnet against its source text—Petrarch’s “Rime 190”—this criticism does not usually attend to the most pronounced difference signaled by the sonnet’s hind: the tortured adaptation of Petrarchan desire to the sociocultural contexts of the Henrician court. When read alongside the sonnet, the archival spheres of forest law and hunting doctrine

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26 The hunt par force de chiens was “the noblest kind of hunting, in which a hart or stag was pursued in open forest by hounds guided by scent, and hunters.” Other forms were bow and stable hunting, in which hounds drove deer towards bow-hunters in stands, and coursing, in which hares and other game were pursued with hounds by sight. See: Edward Berry, Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xii.
27 Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study, 17, 36. Broadly, Berry argues, “the hunt can be seen religiously, politically, socially, and sexually as a manifestation of various kinds and levels of patriarchal power.”
together with the Petrarchan tradition illuminate the continuities, gaps, and transformations of masculine erotics when moved from the spaces of a traveling, Tuscan-Provençal poet laureate to those of Henrician diplomats and courtiers. Attending to the sociocultural contingencies of the sonnet redirects our gaze away from the early modern innovator himself and instead towards the spaces of the Henrician court and beyond it—specifically, in regard to “Who so list to hounte,” we are relocated to the royal forest preserves.

II. Of Hinds and Forests

As a loose imitation of Petrarch’s “Rime 190,” “Who so list to hounte” narrates a typically Petrarchan desire for an unattainable, abstract, and predictably female beloved.29 Identifying the centrality of this form to courtly writers and readers, Nancy Vickers states, “As a primary canonical text, the Rime sparse consolidated and disseminated a Renaissance mode. Petrarch absorbed a complex network of descriptive strategies and then presented a single, transformed model.”30 Yet the Wyatt sonnet’s conceit of the hunt does not simply serve to support or anglicize the structures and tropes of Petrarchan desire. As a hind, one of the designated “beastes of Forrest,” the female object of desire enters a particular relationship with her male pursuer(s) in Henrician realms—a relationship organized by the court’s ritual hunt and inflected with Tudor conceptions of property and beastliness.31

These multivalent historical social relations indicate the landscape of an Henrician royal forest while also signaling the looseness of the sonnet’s imitative work; and though loose and imitative may initially appear contradictory, the Renaissance humanist doctrine of imitation

29 See Appendix for Petrarch’s sonnet and translation.
dictated a form of adaptation balanced by borrowing and transformation. In *English Humanism: Wyatt to Cowley*, Joanna Martindale notes Erasmus’s dictum that, “writing must bear the impress of the writer,” language that reminds us of Wendy Wall’s arguments on the masculinized concept of authorship developed in Elizabethan England. Without the author-ized uniformity of Elizabethan publishing, however, the “impress” of imitation does not advocate for a concept of single authorship. Rather, one may often link this “impress” to the writer’s attempts at “assimilating [the model] to their own traditions of style and thought, and to the contemporary historical situation.” Locating traces of these attempts therefore can illuminate the exigent sociocultural concerns of their writer(s) while highlighting moments that tentatively structure a writerly masculinity.

Critics have regularly described the sonnet’s departures from its Petrarchan source material mostly in terms of the speaker’s augmented personality, or “egotism,” and his restrained focus on the female deer. In “Wyatt and the Petrarchan Commentators,” Patricia Thomson examines the sonnet alongside the Petrarchan texts and commentaries available at the time of its writing, a period of robust Petrarchan criticism. Thomson demonstrates not only the influence of the contemporary source texts on a large portion of Wyatt poetry but also, and perhaps more importantly, the influence of the commentaries accompanying these source texts. Yet Thomson concludes, “Wyatt’s imitation of Petrarch’s sonnets, as distinct from earlier translations, are at

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the outset less dependent on either text or commentary,” and she describes “Who so list to hounte” as especially paradigmatic of “such rebellious versions.”36 Thomson’s language here reinforces the paradox in the familiar phrase, “loose imitation,” in which the sonnet remains an adaptive “version” while functioning subversively in its adaptive work. By identifying the sonnet’s relatively unconstrained inventiveness, Thomson suggests an approximate, and largely ambiguous, relationship between “Who so list to hounte” and Petrarch’s “Rime 190.” In her later work, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Background*, Thomson in fact elaborates on this ambiguity by suggesting perhaps the most important departure: “Wyatt converts Petrarch’s contemplation of the hind into a prolonged metaphor from hunting.” 37 Petrarch’s verse leaves out any literal reference to hunting at all. Indeed, the Wyatt sonnet’s predominant conceit of the hunt functions as a fundamental “impress,” structuring other departures from the source text.

Greenblatt likewise offers a thorough analysis of the Wyatt sonnet’s deviations by counterposing poetic choices of Petrarch and Wyatt, respectively. In doing so, Greenblatt details the Wyatt sonnet’s interventions with a keen eye towards his thesis on Renaissance processes of self-fashioning. Greenblatt directly asserts,

Petrarch’s pictorialism is discarded, as is his loving attention to time, place, and season; the mystical vision becomes the hunt; the focus shifts from the longed-for object in its exquisite landscape to the mind of the poet…the former is alone with his unattainable beloved, the latter withdraws from a crowd of hunters…and this [diamond] collar, emblematic in Petrarch of the beloved’s unattainability, her absolute freedom in and for God, seems in Wyatt a sign of her possession by one vastly more powerful than the poet.38

Greenblatt’s comparison shrewdly points to the Wyatt sonnet’s extended conceit of the hunt as a principal mark of difference from the Petrarchan text, even though his accompanying claims

37 *Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background*, 197.
move in another direction than an account of the conceit’s historical particularity.\(^3^9\) For example, Greenblatt articulates Wyatt’s abandonment of time, place, season, and landscape while astutely recognizing the moves from “mystical vision” to hunt, solitude to a “crowd of hunters,” and metaphysical “unattainability” to exclusive possession. Yet, from another perspective, these moves precisely underscore the sonnet’s actual attention to time, place, season, and landscape by situating its narrative into the localized moment of the royal hunt. Although the sonnet’s consideration of setting appears implicitly through the conceit, and there seems little investment by the speaker into the details of landscape, the move to the royal hunt does not discard attention to setting but rather redefines it.

The conceit of the royal hunt relies on the most obvious, yet critically understated, translation of the Petrarchan text: the translation of the Italian *cerva* to the English hind—an oft-overlooked figure perhaps due to the critical focus on the Wyatt sonnet’s innovation. While a hunt of any kind is conspicuously absent in the Petrarchan text, the “translation” of *cerva* as, or to, “hind” uncharacteristically exhibits a seeming lack of innovative “refashioning”: the very term signifying the object of desire—*cerva*/hind—remains semantically parallel between languages.\(^4^0\) In displacing Petrarch’s illusory vision and imaginative poesy, the speaker declares, “I know where is an *hynde,*” staying apparently faithful to Petrarch’s “cerva.”\(^4^1\) Recent English translations of Petrarch’s *magnum opus* have most often rendered the *cerva* as doe, perhaps

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\(^{3^9}\) Patricia Thomson argues similarly, and with more judgment, “The atmosphere is far from dream-like, the picturesque description of the countryside has gone, and the sentiment is arrogant and cynical,” in Thomson, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background*, 197. Additionally, Marguerite Waller makes a persuasive argument that Greenblatt’s rhetorical methodology undermines his claims by presenting “a perspective beyond contingency from which texts and events can be known absolutely” through addressing “a male audience whose empirical experience is called upon to ratify readings which are, in effect, heavily freighted ideologically” in Waller, “Academic Tootsie: The Denial of Difference and the Difference It Makes,” 3-4. In light of this criticism, Greenblatt’s theoretical analysis of Wyatt’s inventive self-fashioning vis-à-vis Petrarch seems less relevant than more immediately textual differences.


because doe provides, to contemporary Anglophone readers, a more recognizable category for female deer than “hind.” 42 However, Tudor readers encountering Petrarch’s cerva in Italian would certainly not equate such a beast with a doe, for the cerva was in fact a female red deer—a hind—whereas a doe was a female fallow (or roe) deer. Thus, in a largely inventive imitation, the Wyatt sonnet seems to offer a moment of “direct” translation by writing the object of desire as a hind.

Philemon Holland’s 1601 translation of Pliny the Elder’s Naturalis Historia demonstrates the intricate categorization devoted to diverse kinds of deer, directly anglicizing Pliny’s general, Latinate category for deer—cervis—by splitting it into the two categories of red and fallow deer. 43 With the prefatory title “Of red and fallow Deere” added to his chapter, Holland immediately reckons deer as multiple and diverse. Holland then commences the chapter with two sexed categories: “The Bucke or Stag…”—the female equivalents being doe and hind, respectively. 44 Subsequently, Holland’s text focuses only on “the Stagge or Hind,” apparently ignoring fallow deer entirely. 45 Holland’s intervention in Pliny’s text works as a (later) parallel to the sonnet’s intervention in Petrarch, drawing attention to categorical shifts between space-times; it is crucial to recall these categories when reading Henrician poetry. On the hasty conflation of red and fallow deer in modern criticism—such as Harry Morris’s analysis of the “dere hart” in the Wyatt poem “They Fle from Me”—Richard Leighton Greene humorously

43 Pliny, Natural History, trans. H. Rackham, Second ed., vol. 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 80. Scholars have also frequently pointed to Pliny’s text as a source for Petrarch’s “candida cerva.” For one example, see: Petrarca, Canzoniere, Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta, 2, 876.
44 Pliny the Elder, The Historie of the Vworld. Commonly Called, the Natvrall Historie of C. Plinivs Secvdndvs. , trans. Philemon Holland (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1601), Electronic reproduction of microfilm, 213. A buck signifies the male of the fallow deer and a stag the male of the red deer at least five years old; a hart signifies the male of the red deer younger than five years old. To remind, a hind signifies a female red deer and a doe a female fallow deer.
45 The Historie of the Vwold, 214.
states, “It looks as if Mr. Morris does not know that a hind, the female of the red deer, and a doe, the female of the fallow deer, belong to two different species. One would like to hear Sir Thomas Wyatt’s own comment on this.” 46 Indeed, yet extant, period texts will have to do.

Edward Topsell—a “vernacular adaptor” of Conrad Gesner’s mid-sixteenth century, magisterial *Historia Animalium*—compares zoographic terms across and between languages (in good humanist, philological style) in his 1607 English-language *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes*. 47 The chapters “Of the Hart and Hinde” and “Of the Fallow Deere” note the Italian for the hind as “Cerua,” and for doe, “Dain[a].” 48 While the linguistic accuracy in “Who so list to hounte” may seem insignificant, the sonnet’s specificity of language moves the desired body into a defined, verbal category of the Tudor hunt. In all aspects of the hunt—from naming the stratified roles of the hunters, to categorizing the dismembered parts of the hunted body—linguistic exactitude comprised a fundamental activity of the ritual. In *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study*, Edward Berry remarks, “As objects of the chase, deer were arranged into a shifting but more or less hierarchical order, according to size, appearance, age, and gender”; hunting acted as a “verbal sport, and one in which the mastery of words implied both power over nature and society.” 49 By strictly translating Petrarch’s *cerva* to hind, while otherwise improvising the *in media res* conceit of the ritual hunt, the speaker enacts the verbal sport while peremptorily demonstrating mastery in it, implicating the sonnet’s textuality as an

48 Edward Topsell, *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes : Describing the True and Lively Figure of Every Beast, with a Discourse of Their Seuerall Names, Conditions, Kindes, Vertues (Both Naturall and Medicinall) Countries of Their Breed, Their Loue and Hate to Mankinde, and the Wonderfull Worke of God in Their Creation, Preseruation, and Destruction. Necessary for All Diuines and Students, Because the Story of Every Beast Is Amplified with Narrations out of Scriptures, Fathers, Phylosophers, Physicians, and Poets: Wherein Are Declared Diuers Hyerogliphicks, Emblems, Epigrams, and Other Good Histories, Collected out of All the Volumes of Conradus Gesner, and All Other Writers to This Present Day.* (London: William laggard, 1607), Electronic reproduction of microfilm, 121, 13.
event in his pursuit. That the extended conceit foreign to the source text partially relies on such conventional translation underscores the sociocultural contingencies invested in this Henrician manuscript poem and animating the speaker’s words to his readers.

In order to understand the hind’s role in this sociocultural specificity, one must interrogate the position of the female of the red deer in the ritual hunt’s verbal hierarchies. Contemporary hunting manuals, zoological writings, and legal treatises articulate the noble position of the red deer, identified as the particular object of the monarch’s hunt. In *The noble arte of venerie or hunting*, a treatise codifying “the Vertues, Nature, and Properties of fiuetene sundrie Chaces together, with the order and maner how to Hunte and kill euery one of them…for the pleasure of all Noblemen and Gentlemen,” Elizabethan poet and courtier George Gascoigne describes the (male) red deer as the type solely intended for the monarch’s hunting pleasure: “It is not to be called a Harte unless he be hunted and killed by a Prince.”

In fact, a prefatory poem “pronounced by the Hart” states, “For King’s delight, it seemes I was ordeyned.” Interestingly, the illusion of the hunted object speaking for himself figures prominently in this justification, similar, though not equivalent, to the Wyatt sonnet’s illusion of the speaking hind—the key difference that, in the Wyatt sonnet, the speaker represents the hunted object’s words as the king’s, a kind of ventriloquism stealthily reserved for intimate manuscript poetry.

50 George Gascoigne, *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting*: *Vvherein Is Handeled and Set out the Vertues, Nature, and Properties of Fiutene Sundrie Chaces Togethér, with the Order and Maner How to Hunte and Kill Every One of Them. Translated and Collected for the Pleasure of All Noblemen and Gentlemen, out of the Best Approved Authors, Which Haue Written Any Thing Concerning the Same: And Reduced into Such Order and Proper Ternes as Are Vsed Here, in This Noble Realme of England. The Contentes Vvhereof Shall More Playnely Appeare in the Page Next Followyng*. (London: Henry Bynneman, for Christopher Barker, 1575), Electronic reproduction of microfilm, frontispiece; 237-38. Prince should not only denote the male descendants of a reigning king but rather any sovereign (masculine) ruler. Additionally, although Gascoigne only mentions the male of the species here, one may assume that the hind also fits this category for, just previously, Gascoigne outlines the “proper termes for the companies” of deer as, “*An Heard of Harts and Hindes, Buckes and Does*,” not wishing to exclude the female members of the species.

51 *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting*, 38.

52 This language of ventriloquism comes from Waller’s analysis of the poem in Waller, "Academic Tootsie: The Denial of Difference and the Difference It Makes," 7.
Tudor hunters may have prized the hind, as the female member, less than the hart (and stag), she still maintained a higher position in the hierarchical order than the fallow and roe deer, whose female members were classified as doe. One also witnesses the distinction in Shakespeare’s “The Rape of Lucrece,” when Lucrece advises Tarquin, “He is no wood-man that doth bend his bow, / To strike a poore vnseasonable Doe.” Although the “poore vnseasonable” state of the beast seems sufficient to repel the sporting hunter, there also lies in Lucrece’s plea a veiled suggestion that Tarquin, as a prince, ought not “bend his bow” for such ignoble deer as the “poore vnseasonable Doe,” in comparison to the regal hind.

The strict translation of Petrarch’s cerva to hind in a Henrician manuscript poem mostly “rebellious” towards its source text therefore calls attention to the marked relocation of the erotic pursuit to the Tudor hunt. Topsell’s catalogue further develops the royal character of the Tudor hart and hind. His Historie, in its chapter on the “Hart and Hinde,” deviates from its usual cataloguing structure “for the delightfull narration of the hunting of the Hart,” precisely because “seeing the manner of the taking hereof (being a sport for princes) hath yet bin touched but very little it shall not be tedious vnto me, to abstaine from the necessary relation of the subsequent stories.” John Manwood’s enduringly influential 1598 Treatise and Discourse on the Laws of the Forrest, which “laid out in systematic fashion the ancient laws pertaining to the afforestation and preservation of the wilderness,” also considers the hind as the specific body desired through the monarch’s hunt, justifying this categorization through a spatial determination: “There be five wild beasts of venerie, that are called beastes of Forrest, and there they are especially set downe

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53 While the term stag normatively signifies a male red deer at least five years old, such deer were not always distinguished from the hart. See: Gascoigne, The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting, 237; Berry, Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study, xii.
54 William Shakespeare, Lucrece (at the signe of the white Greyhound in Paules Church-yard: Richard Field, for John Harrison, 1594), Electronic reproduction of microfilm, ll. 580-81.
55 Lucrece, emphasis added.
57 Topsell, The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes, 133; emphasis added.
to be there, the Hart, the Hynde, the Hare, the Boare, and the Wolfe.”  In doing so, Manwood attaches a specificity of space and landscape to the categorization. Rather than Petrarch’s woodland in which the hind “upon green grass /…appeared to [him],” the Wyatt sonnet’s speaker declares in the first line, “I know where is an hynde,” actively deploying the hind’s obscured and reserved location to situate the sonnet’s narrative in the royal forest.

If the seeming directness of the translation of *cerva* intimates a different, sylvan space in the Wyatt sonnet, it also ironically points to the spatio-cultural contingency of terms between languages. Petrarch’s woodlands commenced a tradition in which their use as sites of refuge relied on a sort of environmental nostalgia for the unpoliced landscapes of old. “Who so list to hounte,” however, proceeds from a quite different, “afforested” space from which the very excesses of the Henrician court seem to emerge, “afforestation” denoting the legal conversion of land to a royal game preserve. The ethereal woodland (of Petrarch), so firmly grounded in Mediterranean and English verse, and the royal forest in the Wyatt sonnet represent divergent, but closely related, effects of coincident ecosystemic changes. In the fascinating *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, Robert Pogue Harrison notes that “the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries in Europe witnessed the widespread extermination of those species of wild animals which could neither be tamed nor utilized, and that deforestation took place on unprecedented

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59 Petrarca, *Petrarch: The Canzoniere, or, Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, 281, emphasis added.; Harrier, *The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt’s Poetry*, 104, l. 1. Attention to the translation of *cerva* to hind seems equally important considering the multispecies landscape of Henrician, Elizabethan, and early Jacobean ideology. Laurie Shannon argues, “As vestigial traces of a Cartesian scheme, our habits of phrase still treat humans and animals as if they had sprung up on different planets by different laws instead of having evolved together in one cosmos,” yet “before the cogito, there was nothing exactly comparable to ‘the animal’…There were creatures. There were brutes, and there were beasts. There were fish and fowl. There were living things. There were humans, who participated in ‘animal nature’ and experienced the same material and humoral conditions of life as animals did” in Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolitan in Shakespearean Locales*, 9-10. Given the relatively diverse, ecosystemic perspective of pre-Cartesian, English thought, the particularities of hind sustained and transformed in translation become more conspicuous.
scales around the Mediterranean and in England.” Harrison argues that one reads in Petrarch “the transformation of forests into sites of lyrical nostalgia” where “the forest appears as a refuge from the boisterous world of human society…and the stress and excess of civilization.” Certainly not a site of lyrical nostalgia implying the increasing disappearance of woodlands, the royal forest of the Wyatt sonnet boldly signifies one of the few spaces where woodlands appeared with force, albeit artificially preserved, harshly policed, and rigorously managed solely for the purposes of the royal hunt.

By locating the origin of the term *forest*, Harrison argues compellingly that its earliest Anglophone meaning coincides with the juridical designation of territory for the king’s royal hunt, and thus coincides with a designation of monarchical sovereignty. *Forest* derives from the Latin *foresta*, which “appears for the first time in the laws of the Longobards and the capitulaires of Charlemagne, referring not to woodlands in general but only to the royal game preserves.” The spatial designation concerned, paradoxically, the survival of those enclosed beasts only so they could be killed, through the hunt, at the monarch’s command. As such, invoking the term supported the use of territory to stage the monarch’s right to subjugate (subordinate) life to violent death, suggesting the forest’s critical role in constituting monarchical sovereignty. The term *sovereignty* here suggests both (modern) political theory—drawing on Achille Mbembe’s Foucauldian assertion that “the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides…in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die”—as well as common-place Henrician usage, in which

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the adjective “sovereign”…describe[s] the specific properties of particular features of the natural world…with an almost performative emphasis on their insuperable efficaciousness or operation.

The “properties” of a thing make it sovereign; the unfolding or enactment of those sovereign properties makes that thing the kind or sort of thing that it is. ⁶³

The sovereignty of a Tudor monarch thus refers to the naturally-endowed “properties” enacted to constitute the monarch’s role as monarch—such as his supreme ownership of a forest and its inhabitants—as well as the biopolitical (or necropolitical) subjugation of bodies enacted through such “properties;” for Shannon also reminds us that “animals play a requisite role in the production of human political sovereignty in the first instance,” meaning the monarch’s violent performance in the royal forest preserve should not be understood as distinct from his broader constitution of political sovereignty elsewhere. ⁶⁴

William the Conqueror’s violent afforestation of England upon seizing power in the eleventh century, one component of his rigorous destruction of native life, illuminates the territorial relationship between establishing sovereignty and the royal hunt: “William’s passion [for the hunt] was such that he afforested vast regions of the country ubicumque eam habere voluit, wherever he so pleased. Entire villages were demolished and inhabitants driven off the land.” ⁶⁵ The link between sovereignty and territory becomes more clear in light of Shakespeare’s Richard II, in which Richard exclaims, upon returning from Ireland to the English shore, “I weepe for joy, / To stand vpon my kingdome once againe: / Deere earth I do salute thee with my hand…/…This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones, / Proue armed soouldiers ere her natuie

⁶⁴ "Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Sovereignty, Human Negative Exceptionalism, and the Natural History of King Lear," 182.
⁶⁵ Harrison, Forests: The Shadow of Civilization, 75.
King, / Shall faulter vnder foule rebellions armes.”⁶⁶ The action of the Wyatt sonnet and the desires voiced therein thus fall within a territorial stage on which the monarch enacts larger demonstrations of sovereignty and power. Furthermore, Thomas Elyot’s 1531 *The boke named the gouernor*, a humanist treatise focused on the education of noble (male) children, pits violent afforestation against “good lern[n]g,” writing that William Rufus, third son of William I, for his dissolute lyuyng and tyrann y beyng hated of all his nobles & people, finally was sodaynely slayne by the shotte of an arowe, as he was huntyng in a forest, whiche to make larger and to gyue his deere more lybertie, he dyd cause the houses of [fifty-two] parishes to be pulled downe, the people to be expelled…whiche he wolde neuer have done if he had as moche delyted in good lern[n]g as dyd his brother.⁶⁷

Elyot thus ties the violence of beastly enclosure—afforestation—to tyrannical power and, by implication, suggests humanist learning as a source of benevolent sovereignty.

The words engraved in diamonds around the hind’s collar—“Noli me tangere for Cesars I ame / and wylde for to hold though I seme tame”—gesture at the legal notion of forest not only by claiming the monarch’s possession of the hind but also by slightly qualifying this ownership with an assertion of the hind’s wildness; she may be the property of the monarch, but her status as such should not indicate domestication. An opposition between propertization and domestication appears extraordinary because of the wild/tame binary’s central role in distinguishing property. Keith Thomas, in *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, notes that lawyers “ruled that no property was possible in animals which were wild (*ferae naturae*) unless they had been killed or tamed by human industry…[beasts] could, when tamed, become the property of men, but…ceased to be property if they reverted to

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⁶⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedie of King Richard the Second. As It Hath Been Publikely Acted by the Right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine His Servants.* (his shop in Paules church yard at the signe of the Angel: Valentine Simmes for Androw Wise., 1597), Electronic reproduction of microfilm, 3.2.4-6, 24-26.
In the common law sphere, this deliberation would indicate that the sonnet’s hind could not operate simultaneously as monarchical property and wild. “They fle from me,” another poem attributed to Wyatt, shows the poetic implications of such common law rulings: “I have sene theim gentill tame and meke / that nowe are wyld and do not remembre.” However, the collar’s deviation from the common law conception points to the sonnet’s setting in a juridical zone quite distinct from common law discourse. The laws of the forest dictated markedly different dynamics of ownership since not only was the afforested space removed from the public domain, it operated under a unique jurisdiction within the multifarious patchwork comprising Tudor law. Henry L. Savage describes how this distinct legality functioned through a policing body that effectively consolidated power in the monarch:

The Law of the Forest was administered by a legal machinery set up for that particular purpose, at the head of which was the court of the Lord Justice in Eyre (Circuit) of the Forest. Since all royal forests were part of the king’s demesne, they were to be enjoyed by the king alone, though he could grant to a subject (generally a great landowner) exercise of the privileges of Forest in a particular district.

Therefore, far from suggesting the hind’s freedom from pursuit, the collar operates in “Who so list to hounte” as a sign of the concentrated monarchical privilege constructed in the zone of the royal forest.

Manwood’s 1598 treatise also illustrates the constitutive relationship between these forest laws and the royal hunt, not surprising considering Manwood’s occupations as “a jurist, a

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gamekeeper of the Waltham Forest, and a judge at the New Forest.“72 Alongside a growing leniency in the enforcement of forest law during the sixteenth century, the rampant clearing of woodlands commenced by William the Conqueror continued through Tudor reign, resulting in the near absence of woodlands altogether and a heavily degraded state of royal forests at the time of the treatise’s publication.73 Thus, Manwood’s treatise already represents a “work of nostalgia,” responding to ecosystemic loss and valorizing the royal hunt for its possible ecological nourishment.74 But deploying the royal hunt as an opportunity to reinvigorate depleted ecosystems demands the survival of the forests’ beasts of princely pleasure. Manwood drafts a mythology of the forest to underwrite their (temporary) survival, accomplishing this task by narrating that the early inhabitants of England began to infringe recklessly upon the beast-filled woodlands; and, once the rauenous & cruell beasts…were banished, the residue, that were then remaining, being beasts of great pleasure for the K[ing] & for noble men to hunt & chase…the kings of this land began to grow careful for the preseruation of them, & therefore they began to priuilegede the woods & places, where those wild beasts were remaining…so that no man might hurt or destroy them there.75

Manwood argues that beasts of the royal hunt required protection from common men, justifying the enclosure of royal forests for the “pleasure” and “priuilege” of the aristocracy. The spatial class distinction comprised in the royal forest did not go unnoticed by commoners, “whose rage [in the form of poaching] was vented not just against parks but the deer within them, symbols of aristocratic privilege.”76 The status of the enclosed deer as princely property transformed them into signs of royal excess in the eyes of common men, who imagined the captive object, awaiting death, as an appropriate scapegoat for the captor.

72 Harrison, Forests: The Shadow of Civilization, 70.
73 Forests: The Shadow of Civilization, 100.
74 Forests: The Shadow of Civilization, 100, 70.
75 Manwood, A Treatise and Discourse of the Lawes of the Forrest, 12.
76 Berry, Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study, 29.
By concentrating monarchical power in this zone of the royal forest, the royal forest effectively functioned as a potent territorialization of the Tudor hierarchy existing among men. Along with Manwood’s definition of a forest as “a certen Territorie…priuiledged for wild beasts and foules of, Forrest, Chase, and Warren, to rest and abide in, in the safe protection of the King, for his princely delight and pleasure,” his mythology of enclosure discloses the forest’s principal purpose in constituting and demonstrating royal prerogative. Furthermore, Savage notes that beasts “were not the only things protected by Forest Law; all trees and foliage, all turf and shrubbery were likewise royal property,” reckoning bounded space alone as the determinant of monarchical ownership (and sovereignty). The safety of the beasts—provided by the protection of monarchical enclosure—paradoxically was ensured by the possibility of their death at the whim of the monarch. Accordingly, the hind’s safety from the sonnet’s speaker, supposedly ensured by the captivating collar’s “Noli me tangere,” seems to suggest her impending death as the monarch so pleases, such that the speaker’s thwarted desire for the hind figures more as competition for slaughter rather than assurance of the hind’s safety. In the context of poaching briefly mentioned above, such competition was also strictly excluded from common men, for “the right to hunt in a forest could only be conferred by the monarch, and even the right to hunt in the boundaries of the forest…was restricted to those of superior wealth and rank.” Because the speaker’s exasperated abandonment of the ritual results from the “vayne travail” of stalking a body that can never be his, the speaker suggestively positions himself as a common poacher. This positioning exaggerates the hierarchical stratification of roles in the royal hunt’s prescribed practices while it also imagines the high-born object of desire at court as merely a sign of monarchical privilege.

77 Savage, "Hunting in the Middle Ages," 33.
78 Berry, Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study, 8-9.
With the king safely seated at the top of the hierarchy of man, claiming ownership over the beasts within a royal forest became all too logical. Harrison writes: “his status as transcendent sovereign of the land invests the monarch with responsibility for the natural world on which his kingdom is founded.”

A warrant existed for claiming such responsibility in the theologically grounded ideology of anthropocentrism: “the long-established view was that the world had been created for man’s sake and that other species were meant to be subordinate to his wishes and needs.” When Gascoigne’s hart claims he had been “ordeyned” for the king’s pleasure, the hart happily affirms the anthropocentrism underwriting Tudor ideology, and Gascoigne performs such anthropocentrism by writing the illusion of a verbally consenting hart. The Wyatt sonnet counters this characterization, in a sense, by deploying a collar in the place of the deer’s voice. Revealing the consent of the hunt’s “ordeyned” body to be a fabrication, a text inscribed by the captor, the sonnet casts into high relief the anthropocentric ideology’s top-down enforcement. The propertized hind figured in the Wyatt sonnet entirely tangles its relatively conventional narrative of Petrarchan desire with the historically contingent setting of the royal forest. In the process, the female object of desire becomes a body naturalized as privileged for the monarch’s pursuit and hunted to establish the monarch’s sovereignty. The sonnet’s speaker simply asks, then, what is the point in playing the (Petrarchan) game?

III. The Failure of Petrarchan Desire

While marking a shift from the pensive woodland idiom of Petrarch, the sonnet’s royal forest preserve and the hunting performed therein evoke a different sylvan trope central to the Mediterranean tradition of erotic verse: the Greco-Roman myth of Diana and Actaeon,

81 One should recognize that Gascoigne’s illusion necessitates an anthropomorphic representation of the hart.
crystallized in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The sixteenth-century development of Anglophone humanism demonstrates the specific relevance of Ovid’s text to Henrician manuscript poetry. Deliberately reconstructing a literary lineage with classical Greek and Roman texts, Renaissance humanists, of whom Petrarch may represent the first important student, spread classical studies from Italy to Northern Europe. Joanna Martindale has argued that “the classics perhaps reached the zenith of their influence on European culture in this period,” since endorsements and imitations of classical life and letters appear so explicitly. Thomas Elyot’s *The boke named the gouernor* offers one of the first English accounts of humanist pedagogical method and exalts the importance of Ovid’s text. After Homer’s *Iliad* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Elyot “wolde set nexte unto [a young gentleman] two bokes of Ouid / the one called *Metamorphoses*…the oether is intitled *De fastis*…bothe right necessary for the understandynge of poetes,” revealing a probable interface between Ovid’s tropes and the high-born writers and readers of “Who so list to hounte.” The classical Greek narrative unfolds within the woodlands reigned over by the huntress-goddess Artemis where she and the hunter Actaeon encounter each other. In Ovid’s retelling, Diana functions as the Latin equivalent of Artemis, endowed with a palimpsest of determinations networked to Greek and Roman mythologies. As a woodland huntress-goddess of the Greco-Roman imaginary, her virginal sexual status serves, Harrison argues, as a metaphor for the purity of her spatial domain: she “belonged to those dark and inaccessible regions where wild animals enjoyed sanctuary from all human disturbance except the most intrepid hunters…Her virginity does not suggest so much asexuality as the primordial chastity of this sylvan retreat.”

84 Elyot, *The Boke Named the Gouernour / Devised by [Sir?] Thomas Elyot Knight*, 34.
The mythology sexualizes the woodland space by correlating the disturbing force of those “intrepid hunters” (read: Actaeon) with a sort of masculine penetration.

After Actaeon (perhaps accidentally) spots Diana bathing nude in the forest, Diana punishes this voyeuristic violation of her body by transfiguring his body into that of a stag.86 Underscoring the transformation of Actaeon is a marked loss of speech and bodily dismemberment by the teeth of his previously subordinate hounds. Diana declares to Actaeon, “Now make thy vaunt among thy Mates, thou sawste Diana bare. / Tell if thou can: I give thee leave: tell hardly: doe not spare,” whereupon his hounds “did gainecope him as he came, and held their Master still / Untill that all the rest came in, and fastned on him too. / No part of him was free from wound.”87 With his body metamorphosed into that of a stag, Actaeon is unrecognizable to his hounds and his hunting cohort; Actaeon proves incapable of disclosing his identity to them, and, moreover, he cannot “tell hardily” of Diana’s naked body. In other words, “in a realm governed by appearances,” as Harrison terms it, Actaeon’s invisible self becomes entirely incapacitated, powerless to prevent his violent death.88 And highlighting the implications of a scopophilic model of erotic desire, the transformation bars Actaeon from verbally continuing his voyeuristic assault on Diana’s nude body. Still, the silencing dimension of the punitive metamorphosis from man to beast does not explain Actaeon’s particular transfiguration into a deer. The woodland setting works as a key determinant here, since the metamorphosis occurs where “Great slaughter had bene made / Of sundrie sortes of savage beasts one morning”—not the legalized forest of the Wyatt sonnet but certainly its sylvan locale.89 While illuminating

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87 *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, 67, ll. 227-8; 69, ll. 83-5.
88 Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, 25. Harrison elaborates, “Human vision is privative in nature; it does not see directly into the nature of things but sees only the outward surface of phenomenal appearances,” which is linked to the post-Socratic redefinition of “the essence of phenomena…in terms of form or outward appearance (*eidos*), and no longer in terms of elemental matter.” See: *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, 27.
89 Ovid, *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, 65, ll. 165-6.
assumptions on the nexus between speech and manhood, the metamorphosis to a stag enables
Actaeon’s hounds to tear him apart, as they had been trained to do. Reversing the sovereign
agency ascribed to the male gaze, Diana creates a disabled, dismembered figure of masculinity.

Petrarch employed a poetic strategy directly responsive to the Diana-Actaeon myth in
order to subvert the imagined silencing and dismemberment consequent to his voyeuristic lyric.
Vickers notes, “Diana’s pronouncement simultaneously posits telling (description) as the
probable outcome of Actaeon’s glance and negates the possibility of that telling…What awaits
him is annihilation through dismemberment.” 90 Because Petrarch’s poems rely heavily on
scopophilic descriptions of a desired, female body, the Petrarchan speaker appropriates and
extends the very voyeuristic valences punished by Diana in the Ovidian myth. He even embodies
Actaeon as lover-poet in a handful of *Rime sparse* poems, and Vickers argues his “response to
the threat of imminent dismemberment is the neutralization, through descriptive dismemberment,
of the threat. He transforms the visible totality [of his beloved] into scattered words, the body
into signs.” 91 The female beloved, whose fragmented body parts are continually fetishized by the
Petrarchan speaker, becomes entirely voiceless through the poet’s writerly transformation of her
into abstracted signs, for “bodies fetishized by a poetic voice logically do not have a voice of
their own; the world of making words, of making texts, is not theirs.” 92 In turn, the Petrarchan
speaker rescues his manhood, under imagined assault by a punitive silencing, in demonstrating
that the world of making texts is resolutely his. The result of this descriptive dismemberment is a
mute beloved who the lover effectively violates through poetry, representing a defenseless,
female object of desire whose body may be routinely read/violated by a host of male readers.

Vickers goes further, claiming that these readers “will enter into collusion with, even become,

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91 "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," 273.
92 "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," 277.
yet another Actaeon,” and in turn men are represented as the autonomous producers of manhood. 93 That the reader, both rhetorically and historically positioned as upper-class male, is immediately implicated in the poem’s erotic politics seems an appropriate paradigm against which one may interpret the relationship between speaker and reader established in the Wyatt sonnet’s convening declaration, “Who so list to hounte I know where is an hynde.”

Like readers of Petrarch who come to embody another Actaeon—and are thereby positioned as both masculine and heterosexually desirous—readers of the Wyatt sonnet are promptly involved in the pursuit. Yet, unlike the securely-empowered Actaeon-reader, whose security and empowerment is guaranteed by the muting and dismemberment of the desired woman, the readers of the Wyatt sonnet are beckoned to by the speaker only for an ultimate experience of futility. In other words, the speaker asks for the reader’s participation only to reveal finally that such participation was in vain, that such engagement in the pursuit can only end with the monarch’s (violent) censure. The speaker calls forth to an ambiguous plurality of bodies with the first words, announcing, “Who so list to hounte I know where is an hynde.” 94 No direct or individuated address appears in the poem, nor an unequivocal reference to the reader, but the opening “Who so” conjures a wide field of potential parties. By sharing knowledge of the desired object’s location, the speaker calls to a mass of hunters who may or may not choose to hunt her. And the ambiguity of address asks the reader to deliberate on the topic: Is he talking to me? Do I desire to hunt a hind? Implicating its reader in the poem’s drama, the sonnet masculinizes him/her within a heterosexual and aristocratic frame, and, in the process, hunting mirrors the reading of erotic verse; the opening address conjoins the courtly practices of

93 "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," 274.
organized reading coteries and the ritual hunt. Unlike the threatened Petrarchan speaker and readers, these masculinized, heterosexually desirous, aristocratic readers need not fear dismemberment, for there exists no seen woman; from the sonnet’s very first line, the female object of desire appears only as a hind of the royal forest, possessed by the monarch and disconnected from the eventual violence enacted on her body.

Notwithstanding the prolific tradition of sonnet-writing that emphatically constitutes itself as the poetry of erotic desire, the scale and force of the hunt conceit camouflages the Wyatt sonnet’s erotic valences by sequestering them entirely to an allegorical register. Yet the speaker’s language functions undoubtedly as the language of desire—with far more resentment than Petrarch—and the question remaining concerns how the conceit constitutes and animates this desire. The sonnet’s octave and sestet commence with the nearly identical phrases, “Who so list to hounte,” and “Who list her hount,” drawing attention to their echo and in turn the seemingly minute changes between them. These changes occur between “Who so” and “Who,” and “to hounte” and “her hount,” such that the only term of desire—“list”—remains constant. One can argue further that the metrical placements of “list” solidify the force of desire, rendering it stable.

95 On this position of the masculinized reader, Marguerite Waller writes, “Sir Thomas Wyatt’s sonnet ‘Whoso list to hunt; I know where is an hind’ inscribes a very obvious absence…This absence is so obvious that when it is missed, or unselfconsciously repeated, I suspect that a nontrivial ideological operation is taking place. This textual effect, which is often repeated but rarely ‘seen’ in the criticism of the poem over that last forty years, is none other than the denial of the position of any reader who is not male, heterosexual, and politically privileged. Or rather, if a position cannot be denied which was never implied, then a great many readers of this poem, be they sixteenth-century aristocratic or twentieth-century American women, contemplate an image of their own nonidentity or noncoincidence with themselves when they try to read themselves as readers of this poem” in Waller, "Academic Tootsie: The Denial of Difference and the Difference It Makes," 5-6.

96 I use these stanzaic structural terms loosely since, although the Petrarchan sonnet form generally follows an octave/sestet pattern, the Wyatt sonnet shows little strict allegiance to this structure.

97 Harrier, The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt’s Poetry, 104, ll. 1, 9. The Oxford English Dictionary glosses list as “to desire, like, wish, to do something” in Oxford English Dictionary, "List, V.1" (Oxford University Press). According to the sole extant concordance of Wyatt’s poetic oeuvre (as demarcated by A.K. Foxwell in the 1914 The Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt), “list” appears at least once in thirty-nine different works of poetry; see: Eva Catherine Hangen, ed. A Concordance to the Complete Poetical Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 250-1. The term’s extensive use for describing a variety of affective activities foregrounds the general fungibility of desire and its developing specificity in “Who so list to hounte.”
Regardless of the various scansions possible for the first line, “list” moves from the milder weight of the second stressed syllable to, in the ninth line, the robust force of the first stressed syllable. The shifts surrounding “list”—“Who so” to “Who;” “to hounte” to “her hount”—also serve to heighten both the speaker’s and the readers’ sense of directional desire by compressing affective desire, the desired object, and the activity of the pursuit. The alliteration achieved through the compression, “Who list her hount,” displays the active desire through prosodic contrast and the move also displaces the initial ambiguity of the addressed mass by closing in on those who have since decided they “list her hount”; this move also “corrects” the metrical ambiguity of the first line. The speaker effectively shapes the subjective desires of his readers, for the reader is implicitly included in this second group, with or without his/her consent.

These shifts that surround “list” effectively move the hind from the role of an ancillary body necessary for whoever may “list to hounte”—a general object required by the sport—to that of the specified, disembodied object of desire, pursued by masculine agents. In this process of displaying active desire and specifying the desirers, the hind transforms into “her,” a gendered pronoun wedged between “list” and “hount.” The effect suggestively conflates those “who list her” with those “who list her hounte,” disclosing the (heterosexual) desire operating through the conceit. Additionally, replacing the initial “Who so list to hounte” with “Who list her hounte” results in tighter rhythmic parallels between “list” and “hounte.”

Mirroring the two activities of desiring and hunting in a kind of staccato, the tighter rhythm results from a lack of the metric ambiguity exhibited in the first line. “List” also works here as a pun on the prescribed language used to incite the hounds of the hunt: “When [a huntsman’s] co[m]paignions shall heare him beginne to hallowe [that is, call the hounds to action], they shall uncouple their houndes & crie, 

lyst hallow, hyke hallow, lyst, lyst, lyst.”\textsuperscript{100} The repetition of the term in the sonnet thus solidifies the parallel between the active hunt and the active desire, inciting the pursuit in its deployment. By slowly guiding the masculinized reader from the routine act of hunting to the identified pursuit of a disembodied female, the speaker shapes and positions the masculinized reader’s desire for the fetishized object. At first, the speaker simply discloses the hind’s location to whoever may engage in the hunt; and subsequently, this speaker attaches the desired body, abstracted into a gendered pronoun, as a sort of target, an achieved telos, to the masculinized reader’s line of pursuit, or vector of desire.

Yet, in a classic pivot that thwarts our expectations, the repetition of the opening declaration, while constituting the reader’s desire, also asserts the pursuit’s futility by reversing the speaker’s demonstrated agency. Establishing his agential position, the speaker calls forth to others in the opening declaration to disclose that he “know[s] where is an hynde.”\textsuperscript{101} The speaker constitutes his autonomous knowledge by posing it against the ambiguous, and theoretically unknowing, mass. Even though he qualifies this assertion with, “but as for me helas I may no more,” the speaker does not apparently discourage others from embarking on such a pursuit.\textsuperscript{102} Yet at the second declaration, the speaker summarily asserts the vanity of the hunt’s activity: “Who list her hount I put him owte of dowbte / as well as I may spend his time in vain.”\textsuperscript{103} Tracing the repetition here, the opening assertion, “I know where is an hynde,” becomes “I put him owte of dowbte,” the implication in the latter ironically being that the hunters, without doubt, might as well “leve of” as the speaker has decided.\textsuperscript{104} The very knowledge offering certainty of the kill metamorphoses into a knowledge that reveals with certainty the pursuit’s

\textsuperscript{100} Gascoigne, \textit{The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting}, 31.
\textsuperscript{101} Harrier, \textit{The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry}, 104, l. 1.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry}, l. 2.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry}, ll. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry}, ll. 1, 9, 7.
futility. This change suggests to the hunter-reader, whose reading thus far has been guided by the speaker’s implicit (and misleading) promise to disclose the hind’s location, that the very act of reading the sonnet similarly functions as a useless exercise, in Petrarchan terms. There certainly lies within it no capture; and, in the absence of capture, the sonnet also lacks the descriptive dismemberment that would satisfy the masculinized, voyeuristic reader.

Instead, the female object of desire in the figure of the hind serves to confirm the futility of this exercise in the face of “ordeyned” possession.105 The reader who “as well as [the speaker] may spend his tyme in vain” wonders whether the time spent refers to the hot pursuit itself, or the sonnet-reading ensued from the first line—or both.106 Thomson has argued that describing the pursuit (whether physical or readerly) as time spent “in vain” serves “to aim a blow at the foundation of the sentiment of courtly love common to Petrarch and the Petrarchans,” itself a trope traced to late medieval Provençal poetry and informed by the feudal relationship between great lady and servant.107 In light of such criticism, it seems the sonnet’s ultimate frustration of masculine desire troubles arguments that men living within an intensely rigid hierarchy animated by prescribed behaviors of courtly love may sublimate their desire for heteropatriarchal power through writing. Arthur Marotti argues that Petrarchan lyric poetry worked as “imaginative heterocosms within which ambitious men would fantasize a kind of mastery they lacked in their actual experience.”108 Yet the sonnet examined here, on the contrary, explicitly and dramatically asserts that the structure of Petrarchan desire fails to provide a fantastic heterocosm, instead offering only a painfully repetitive microcosm of the Henrician court. The rhyme scheme of the sonnet, for example, follows the cyclicality of the Petrarchan octave (ABBA ABBA) but

105 Gascoigne, The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting, 49.
106 Harrier, The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry, 1. 10.
107 Thomson, Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background, 197, 12.
displaces the growing momentum of the Petrarchan sestet (CDE CDE) with the abrupt monotony of rhyming couplets (CDD CDD), coinciding with the abrasive revelation of the monarch’s possession of the hind. In its demonstration of the futility of Petrarchan desire, the sonnet simultaneously attempts to persuade its readers to abandon Petrarchan assumptions and reconsider masculine erotics.

Thomson also aptly notes the general, though not absolute, absence of women in Wyatt poetry, even as an abstract object of desire or fragmented body. She argues, “the aureate speciality, the description of a mistress’s beauty and virtue, is almost entirely lacking in Wyatt,” which raises questions on how exactly the object of desire does figure in this verse categorically representing the erotic pursuit.109 “Who so list to hounte” continues to draw the reader forth to the desired hind by explicitly introducing a “written” text to him/her.110 After demonstrating the pursuit’s doubtless vanity, the speaker tells, “graven with Diamonds in letters plain / There is written her faier neck rounde abowte,” literally framing the final approach as one towards a written text.111 Although the historical, Alexandrian image of the collared hind and the described engraving of the diamond letters no doubt suggest a collar in the Wyatt sonnet, the conspicuous absence of any term for collar magnifies the desired hind’s body, now localized or fragmented into the neck, as the site of writing.112 In doing so, the speaker fragments the female object of desire into a dismembered body part, but that part is a text on which her captivity is written. The fragmented body part becomes the figurative manuscript paper for the forthcoming text, representing writing as an inscription of captivity that veils the inevitable kill. This

109 Thomson, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background*, 130.
111 *The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry*, ll. 11-12.
112 Although I read these implications as figurative and do locate a collar in the sonnet’s narrative, I do not wish to preclude the possibility of reading the diamond letters as directly engraved onto the hind as a sort of flamboyant branding of her body.
representation works to clarify the simultaneous counsel to forsake Petrarchan assumptions:
writing cannot provide (erotic) sublimation if it locks the object of desire into impenetrable

captivity.

The speaker represents the enclosed text itself with bitter irony, revealing a disjuncture
between the written production of text and its read meaning. He first introduces the “letters” by
their specific means of production, “and graven with Diamondes,” before using the broader term,
“written,” in the following line. The letters cut into the collar and emblazoned in diamond
simultaneously suggest a violent process of inscription and a visual display of wealth, power, and
betrothal. The very process of writing the collar’s text appears as incision and ornamentation at
once. Yet, at the end of the line, the speaker somewhat bluntly describes these emblazoned
diamonds as “letters plain.” The description of the letters as apparently both diamond and plain
creates irony out of the latter adjective’s multiple denotations. Plain most obviously suggests
letters that are “not embellished, adorned, or elaborate,” instantiating the contradiction with the
description of the diamond adornments. Yet plain may also describe a surface as “smooth, even; free from roughness, wrinkles, etc.,” which would suggest the skillful mastery of the
collar’s engraver. This denotation introduces yet another intermediary between the speaker
and the hind. No longer does solely the monarch’s voice, layered onto the hind, intervene
between the speaker and his desired object; one must now consider the implied engraver whose
material labor has produced the written text and, though subordinate to the monarch, speaks for

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113 Harrier, *The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt’s Poetry*, 104, l. 11-12.
114 Another poem attributed to Wyatt in the Egerton manuscript, “Marvaill no more,” exhibits the only other use of
“graven” in Wyatt’s poetic oeuvre. See: Hangen, *A Concordance to the Complete Poetical Works of Sir Thomas
Wyatt*, 180. Interestingly, the speaker uses the term similarly to describe the inscription of letters, emphasizing the
material force of the incision: “And in my hert also/is graven with l[ett]res diepe/a thousand sighes & mo/a flod of
teeres to wepe” in Harrier, *The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt’s Poetry*, 144, ll. 5-8. The use of “with” here—“graven
with l[ett]res”—helps clarify “graven with Diamondes” by suggesting that the inscription does not accompany the
diamonds but is formed by them.
116 “Plain, Adj.1”.
him! A third meaning, however, reorients the text towards the reader. Plain signifies that the meaning of the letters “is evident; simple, easily intelligible, readily understood.”\textsuperscript{117} Alongside the speaker’s representation of the written text as an incised embellishment and itself the material labor of yet another (male) writer, the speaker reassures the reader that his/her interpretive capabilities will suffice—the meaning, so says the speaker, is utterly obvious. The extravagance and mastery invested in the writing by multiple men of various accesses to power, the accumulated mediation so to speak, therefore has little effect on the letters’ allegedly self-evident meaning. And in a visual or scopophilic dynamic, in which the speaker and reader can never “have” or touch the object of desire, reading at a distance should allow the speaker and reader to grasp metaphorically what they cannot grasp physically.

Yet the meaning so manifest to the sonnet’s speaker is of course that the hind exists as the exclusive possession of the monarch. After his illustrative preface to the reader, the speaker (re)writes the text on the collar: “Noli me tangere for Cesars I ame / and wylde for to hold though I seme tame.”\textsuperscript{118} These words prevent any man but the monarch from possessing the hind, including the reader. But the Latin literacy required of the reader reveals a potential unintelligibility incongruous with the speaker’s previous assertion that the meaning is “plain”: the very edict constituting the pursuit’s futility requires knowledge of Latin. This departure from the Petrarchan text, which consistently deploys the vernacular Italian, unequivocally positions the reader as educated in the humanist tradition, and therefore an implied member of the educated circles around the Henrician court. However, Cathy Shrank has confronted the problematic Latin by arguing, “The immediate answer is that those are the words used in the commentary,” that is, Vellutello’s biographically-arranged \textit{Il Petrarca}; for “not only was it the

\textsuperscript{117} “Plain, Adj.1”.  
\textsuperscript{118} Harrier, \textit{The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt’s Poetry}, 104, ll. 13-14.
work which Wyatt was probably using…it was also the means by which his Tudor readers were likely to receive their Petrarch.” Nonetheless, that the speaker previously reassured the reader of his interpretive capabilities only reinforces the claim that the speaker speaks quite deliberately to courtly men; and even if a Petrarchan editor initially made the move from the vernacular to the Latin, the reproduction of such bilingualism in the English imitation deserves attention.

Martindale notes, “Boys learnt to read and to write English, Latin and Greek, generally in that order and with the greatest attention being paid to Latin…The aim of the [humanist] system was rhetorical expertise…Hence all the innumerable exercises in translating from one language to another.” As a “translation” from Italian, the sonnet itself functions as the product of a humanist exercise; the collar’s switching between Latin and English within the sonnet requires humanist expertise of its reader, implying that the text of the prohibition intentionally addresses courtly men, closest among men to the monarch’s sphere of power.

Emphasizing rhetorical ability as the mark of inclusion, the conceit of the hunt underscores the exclusive character of the speaker’s drama and intimates the speaker’s attempts at situating Petrarchan desire within the Henrician court. The expected “rhetorical expertise” also recalls Berry’s description of hunting as a “verbal sport, and one in which the mastery of words implied both power over nature and society.” The mastery required of hunters ranged from “The termes of the treading or footing of all beastes of chace and Venerie” to “The Sundrie noyses of houndes, and the termes proper for the same,” demanding a nuanced, intricate attention

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119 Shrank, “But I, That Knew What Harbred in That Hed’: Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Posthumous 'Interpreters',' 392-4. Why Vellutello chose to write these words in Latin remains a mystery. However, Susan Brigden suggests an alternative basis for the Latin text: “It was probably during his first visit to the English court that Holbein painted his dramatic, sublime Noli me tangere. In the garden at first light, Mary Magdalen encounters her Saviour. As she reaches out to Him, incredulous, imploring, He draws back…Uncertainty surrounds this work, but there is reason to believe that Holbein painted it in 1526-8, the time when Henry Wyatt and Henry Guildford were his patrons,” in Brigden, Thomas Wyatt: The Heart's Forest, 161.

120 Martindale, English Humanism: From Wyatt to Cowley, 27.

121 Berry, Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study, 17.
Despite their shared stress on rhetorical skill, the nobility initially posed hunting and humanism as opposing practices. In *Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England*, Fritz Caspari notes a dinner table argument first recorded in 1517—just as Wyatt commenced studies at Cambridge—between Richard Pace, Henry VIII’s secretary of state, and a courtly gentleman: the gentleman declared, “gentlemen’s sons ought to be able to blow their horn skillfully, to hunt well, and to carry and train a hawk elegantly; but the study of letters is to be left to the sons of peasants,” to which Pace purportedly replied, “then you and other noble men must be content, that your children may wind their hornes and keepe their Haukes, while the children of meane men do manage matters of estate.” The sonnet speaker’s exasperation with the hunt and his representation of its endgame logic takes Pace’s argument one step further, deploying humanism to demonstrate the “vayne travail” of the ritual hunt, and in turn suggesting the vanity of Petrarchan pursuit.

If one notes humanism’s role in constituting a particular Renaissance manhood, the literal rehearsal of humanist practice in the sonnet appears to establish both the speaker’s and his readers’ manhood through the bilingual disclosure of the monarch’s ownership of the hind. Martindale emphasizes the importance placed on language by Renaissance humanists by pointing to Erasmus’s argument in *Opera Omnia* that “language is the basic civilizing act, which distinguishes man from beast.” Thus, the speaker’s use of a mute hind as the female object of desire dramatizes the pursuit’s constitution of a Renaissance masculinity while also exposing the elaborate “traffic in women” necessitated by such a constitution. The speaker’s appropriative

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124 Gayle Rubin’s term, “the traffic in women,” evolves out of her anthropological discussion of kinship systems as they relate to a given society’s sex/gender system, describing “ethnographic and historical examples” in which “women are given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favors, sent as tribute, traded, bought, and sold,” and in which “it is the men who give and take [the women] who are linked, the women being a conduit of a relationship
representation of the king’s language mutes the desired “woman” for a mock demonstration of humanist proficiency between the king and the men of court, representing men as the only producers of masculinity and locating the desired “woman’s” body as the site of that production; she is manuscript rather than penning hand. By writing the collar’s words in the sonnet’s final couplet, the speaker guides the masculinized reader’s desire to the fetishized object only to ask the reader to read his/her exclusion from the capture, rendering the readerly pursuit a useless practice when unattainability moves from the imaginative to the legal. Like the speaker, the reader may tell and tell and tell of the hind but to what end? Unlike the sublimation achieved by the Petrarchan speaker and readers who may continually tell and read of the desired, seen woman’s body, the desires of the speaker and readers of the Wyatt sonnet experience continual frustration, thwarting, and obstruction—even as they are complicit in the pursuit.

IV. Conclusion: Literal Reading and Representing the Desired Woman

The sonnet’s audacious production of erotic failure, its sharp signification of monarchical power and sovereignty, and its clever representation of writing as an inscription of lethal captivity all intimate the claustrophobic concerns of coterie manuscript poetry at and around the Henrician court. And all are assembled by the unifying figure of the hind-as-property of Caesar. When examining the contours of the sonnet’s gender politics, it is easy to elide this figure of the hind entirely, reading directly through the deer to an absent or allegorically present subject—that of the desired woman. Yet the conceit’s expansive scope, so expansive that the sonnet verges on rather than a partner to it.” While I do not wish to rehearse the universalism of superimposing anthropological structures at whim, I do think Rubin’s concept may help to illuminate the gender politics dramatized in the sonnet. Furthermore, the phrase gains traction considering that hunted venison, like courtly women, was used as a gift to solidify alliances and relationships. See: Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," in Literary Theory: An Anthology, ed. Julie and Michael Ryan Rivkin (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 779; Berry, Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study, 21.
the dramatic monologue, erases any and all literal reference to the desired woman, whether as an ideal or a body. All of the speaker’s words in the sonnet’s fourteen lines correlate neatly with ritualized practices of the royal hunt, from the early morning “travail” of stalking a deer with the hounds, to the subsequent report of a deer sighting at the morning gathering, to the approval of the deer as the proper object of pursuit. Even the concluding text of the collar does not necessarily indicate, in the literal sense, erotic politics of desire. And yet, readers have little trouble reckoning the hind as a metaphorical vehicle and imagining the sonnet as an intricate metaphor for the masculine sexual pursuit of a desired woman, a conclusion ratified by the medieval traditions of erotic verse in the Mediterranean and England.

Attending to the figure of the deer herself, too, is important, however, because it makes visible the relationship between this four-footed body and the (implied, or imagined) desired woman, calling attention to the interface between literary representation and the broader sociosemiotic structures that constitute it. Although primarily concerned with links between race, species, and imperial power, postcolonial critic Neel Ahuja proposes a useful model—“ecologies of representation”—for interrogating the “transspecies relations underlying representation.” Ecologies of representation attempt to “trace the ways in which the historically situated zones of contact between peoples and nonhuman species create the conditions of possibility for semiotic activities in defined fields of social power.” With respect to the sonnet’s representation of the ritual hunt and the Petrarchan pursuit, Ahuja’s model suggests the critical concatenation of historical cross-species relations situated within the royal forest preserve with the tactical

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125 See “How the huntsman should seeke in the springs, or seede, to finde an hart by the eye,” “Of the place where and howe an assembly should be made, in the presence of a Prince, or some honorable person,” and “The report of a huntsman vpon the sight of an Hart, in pride of grace” in Gascoigne, The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting, 79-80; 90-2; 95-7.
127 "Postcolonial Critique in a Multispecies World," 559.
prescriptions of masculine desire for (and domination of) women at the Henrician court. The sonnet interlocks the violent performance and constitution of (masculine) political sovereignty in the royal forest preserve with the ideologies and practices of sexual pursuit operating at the Henrician court, in the process marking the failure of Petrarchan desire in Henrician realms for all except, perhaps, the sovereign.

Furthermore, attending to the figure of the hind avoids the thoroughly modern trap of sequestering nonhuman literary figures into a phantom catalog of anthropomorphized traits and relations. In deftly demonstrating the early modern “cosmopoliy” of creaturely life, Laurie Shannon demonstrates that “identification [across the species barrier] cannot be described as anthropomorphism,” for “these [early modern] humans were measured as much in contradistinction to angels as to animals, taking their place within a larger cosmography, constitution, or even ‘world picture.’”128 The desired woman invoked by the Petrarchan sonnet does not warrant a critical assessment of the hind solely as an anthropomorphic figure for a “woman” but rather suggests the cross-species relationship between desired women of the Henrician court and hinds of the royal forest preserves. Likewise, immediately reading the “figure” of the hind as animal imagery, “a notion in which animals are successfully assimilated to human rhetorical, poetic, or literary control,” signals a (modern) “world picture” in which animal bodies are more likely to be viewed on a vivisectionist’s table or in a biologist’s cabinet than milked in the street or chased down the road.129 Such a hermeneutic fails to account for the representational effects of ecosystemic difference, ignoring the possibility that this Henrician

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128 Shannon, The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopoliy in Shakespearean Locales, 10. One should also recall that “the category of ‘the animal”—a gross homogenization or “general singular” whose ‘bêtise’ Derrida derides with wit and force—and the particularly binary ‘human/animal divide’ it serves are creatures of a later modernity and the lingering philosophical stagecraft of its Enlightenment inheritance,” in The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopoliy in Shakespearean Locales, 9.
129 The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopoliy in Shakespearean Locales, 6.
sonnet, for example, writes precisely of a hind because of actual convergence and not just metaphorical proximity. This common interpretive pitfall leads Shannon to assert that the “archive has occasionally required the odd defense of literal reading as a proper part of the critical repertoire,” and we must resist the impulse “to assert the power of language to transmogrify everything into a common denominator of anthro-determination.” Part of the task attempted in this analysis involves restoring consideration of a literal hind in the logic of the poem.

The literal reading undertaken here—literal in the sense that it attends to the implications of the sonnet’s hind qua hind—marks the complete absence of a literal woman in the sonnet. She is not available to the speaker, and she is not available to us; she can only be inferred. As the imitation of an Italian sonnet sliced and removed from a *magnum opus* repetitively describing the famed Laura, the Wyatt sonnet alludes to a desired woman while displacing the unity of texts that render her existence tangible. Allowing for the probability that Vellutello’s biographical arrangement and commentary of Petrarch’s work served as source text, Cathy Shrank has noted that Wyatt displaces the “true” Petrarch and Laura by choosing individual sonnets for translation: “Translating Petrarch, [Wyatt] is engaging with what had become a biographical tradition. Yet he also disrupts that narrative. He plucks individual sonnets out of Vellutello’s carefully arranged and interwoven sequence, often further denuding them of external reference points.” As a Petrarchan imitation, “Who so list to hounte” undoubtedly conjures a desired woman, implicitly, imaginatively, or figuratively; but in the absence of a Wyatt-authored *Rime sparse* that would assemble, albeit in fragments, the body of this desired woman, her existence in the poem is anything but literal. This is not to assert that the sonnet only pertains the vicissitudes of

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130 The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales, 5.
Henrician hunting doctrine and forest law. Rather, the space between the literal and the figurative are so compressed in the sonnet that the two become indistinguishable, effectively proposing a political and legal idiom of sexual pursuit at court and a gendered, sexual idiom of hunting in the royal forest preserve. That the sonnet urges its readers to imagine an implicit narrative of sexual pursuit in the sonnet’s extended conceit implicates them as engineers of this interlocking structure, dissolving the distinction between the royal forest preserve and the Henrician court.\footnote{Edward Berry also suggests the intertwining of the literal hunt and the figurative pursuit in his observation that, “Medieval and Renaissance art often represents the hunt as a site for male sexual adventure. One conventional image, it seems, is of aristocratic male hunters fondling common women, as if the poetic convention of the love-chase were so strong it became inevitably realized in the literal hunt.” This observation is accompanied by a reproduced image of a hunting tapestry in which “the disemboweling of a doe is juxtaposed with a hunter’s sexual advances.” See: Berry, \textit{Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study}, 33.}

Therefore, the speaker’s failure in the sonnet, and the failure he reproduces in his readers, troubles any distinction between the legally-inflected disillusionment with the hunt and the erotically-coded failure of Petrarchan desire. The Petrarchan model very much relies on a visible woman, substantiating a scopophilic epistemology of masculine erotics; the poet marks her visibility as the one thing he has consumed, or enjoyed. In the absence of a visible woman and in the context of the speaker’s continued attempts to abandon the ritual, it seems the sonnet rejects the scopophilic prototype of masculine desire idealized in Petrarch and in doing so questions the writerly project of Petrarchanism itself. Not only does the sonnet’s pursuit leave the speaker (and his readers) without sublimation, it also proves vain, futile, and, most importantly, quite dangerous. Rendering the Petrarchan pursuit a rather fruitless or even lethal movement, the sonnet proposes that in its (Henrician) place, legal and political adjudications override any sylvan paradigm to govern and structure masculine desire. The Henrician vertical hierarchy among men, legally-coded and consolidated in practices such as the royal hunt, prescribes masculine valences of desire contrary, or indifferent, to Petrarchan erotics. This is not to say men did not desire...
Petrarchan-ly, so to speak, but that those desires were utterly wasted and also perilous given the mercurial whims of Henry VIII. If we remember that early modern thinkers subscribed to a “constitutionalist sense of legitimated capacities, authorities, and rights that set animals within the scope of justice and the span of political imagination,” the figure of the captive hind works to distill the subsequent consequences for women: desired women function within a legal/political, rather than erotic, idiom; which is to say that the monarch and his legal/political apparatus must mediate any communication between men and their female objects of desire.\footnote{Shannon, \textit{The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopoli

This conclusion is a sharp reconsideration of the English fates of Petrarchan desire, but it does not summarily rebuke Petrarchan erotics for its failure in Henrician England. The sonnet rather attempts to demonstrate that in \textit{this} space—the Henrician court—and in \textit{this} language—Henrician English—Petrarchan desire quite simply cannot work. In 1541, Sir Thomas Wyatt himself delivered an infamous \textit{Defence} in which he eloquently notes the verbal intricacies that can shift meaning in a given situation. Responding to an accusation by a diplomatic colleague that he spoke treasonously at the court of Charles V, Wyatt argues, “yt is a smale thynge in alteringe of one syllable ether with penne or worde that may mayk in the conceavinge of the truthe myche matter or error. For in thys thynge ‘I fere’, or ‘I trust’, semethe but one smale syllable chaynged, and yet it makethe a great dyfferaunce.”\footnote{Kenneth Muir, \textit{Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt} (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1963), 197.} Such attention to monosyllabic detail evokes the striking discursive shifts produced when Petrarch’s \textit{cerva} becomes a Henrician hind, and, subsequently, the lovers’ woodland becomes the highly managed “killing fields for pet deer.”\footnote{Berry, \textit{Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study}, 51.} Because the model of masculine desire disseminated by Petrarch cannot survive in the Henrician court any more than a poacher (or a reckless courtier) can safely slay a hind of the monarch’s forest, the sonnet proposes that the very structure of masculine erotics is sharply
qualified by contingencies of language and place. For a frustrated hunter and an (apparently)
docile hind alike, the governing force that overwhelsms and subordinates all other desires or
considerations—at least at the level of representation—is Henry VIII.
APPENDIX: “190” BY FRANCESCO PETRARCA

Una candida cerva sopra l’erba
verde m’apparve con duo corna d’oro,
fra due riviere all’ombra d’un alloro,
levando ’l sole a ;a stagione acerba.

Era sua vista sì dolce superba
chi’ I’ lasciai per seguirla ogni lavoro,
come l’avaro che ‘n cercar Tesoro
con diletto l’affanno disacerba.

“Nessun mi tocchi,” al bel collo d’intorno
scritto avea di diamanti et di topazi.
“Libera farmi al mio Cesare parve.”

Et era ’l sol già volto al mezzo giorno,
gli occhi miei stanchi di mirar, non sazi,
quand’ io caddi ne l’acqua et ella sparve.

[A white doe on the green grass appeared to me, with two golden horns, between two rivers, in the shade of a laurel, when the sun was rising in the unripe season.

Her look was so sweet and proud that to follow her I left every task, like the miser who as he seeks treasure sweetens his trouble with delight.

“Let no one touch me,” she bore written with diamonds and topazes around her lovely neck. “It has pleased my Caesar to make me free.

And the sun had already turned at midday; my eyes were tired by looking but not sated, when I fell into the water, and she disappeared.]^{136}

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