

## WEDLOCK A PARADICE; OR A DEFENCE OF WOMAN'S LIBERTY AGAINST MAN'S TYRANNY

This work responds to *The Pleasure of a Single Life, or the Miseries of Matrimony. Ocasionally Writ Upon the Many Divorces Lately Granted by Parliament* (1701), a virulently misogynistic diatribe in verse whose speaker rails against his beautiful but indiscriminately adulterous wife, who cuckolds him with his own servants. The two parts of the title separated by 'or' – 'Wedlock a Paradise' and 'A Defence of Woman's Liberty' – indicate the double and contradictory message of this text. The text is in a man's voice, beginning with a traditional praise of women for her 'Vertues' and 'Charms' (p. 277), which abruptly switches to expound a more overtly political argument about women's political and military abilities and rights. The editors believe that just as some male authors ventriloquized women (for example, 'Esther Sowernam' in the earlier Jacobean pamphlet debate around Joseph Swetnam's *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women* (1615), so this anonymous text could be one which ventriloquizes a male voice but expresses a female subject position. Worth noting in this context is that the text's publisher, J. Nutt, published Astell's works.

While *The Pleasures of a Single Life* celebrates the speaker's life before marriage when his mind could 'Travel all Nations ... / With ease and safty' through his reading,<sup>1</sup> in *Wedlock a Paradise*, it is women in distant – both historically and geographically – Assyria who provide the speaker with examples of female excellence: Semyramis's military victory leads to her, rather than her husband, playing the 'Sov'reign's part' (p. 279); the author claims that she would have outshone Alexander the Great if they had been contemporaries. After Semyramis's death and the resulting male usurpation of women's freedom, Valasque addresses an oration to her female cohorts, in which she indicts man who 'into his cruel Hands has gain'd, / Those Female Rights by Woman long maintain'd, / And by seuerer unnat'ral Usage strives, / To make us Slaves instead of Wives' (p. 280). Recalling Margaret Cavendish's *Orations of Divers Sorts* (see Volume 1, pp. 335–84) as well as her play *Bell in Campo* (1662), Valasque rallies a female army by '[a]bjur[ing] ... [man's] pretended Pow'r' and 'their upstart Tyranny' (p. 280), which succeeds in subduing the males. The author asks, why should 'Wife the

wiser slave, obey the *Lordly Fool* and exhorts her female readers by echoing Valasque's harangue to her 'sisters': 'Stand up *Fair Ladies* and your Rights maintain, / Heav'n gives you equal Liberty with *Man*' (p. 282).

M.S.

*Notes*

- 1 *The Pleasure of a Single Life, or the Miseries of Matrimony. Occasionally Writ Upon the Many Divorces Lately Granted by Parliament* (n.p.: n.p., 1701), p. 2.

*Wedlock A Paradise; Or, A Defence of Woman's Liberty against Man's Tyranny* (London: J. Nutt, 1701)

Wedlock a Paradise;  
OR, A  
DEFENCE  
OF  
Woman's Liberty  
AGAINST  
Man's Tyranny.

In Opposition  
To a POEM, Entitul'd, *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, &c.

LONDON,

Printed, and are to be Sold by *J. Nutt*,<sup>1</sup> near *Stationers-Hall*, 1701.

**Wedlock a Paradise;**  
 Or, a Defence of  
**Woman's Liberty**  
 AGAINST  
**Man's Tyranny.**

When Time had freed me from my Childish Years,  
 And Tales of Bugbears could not raise my Fears,  
 The first two Stages of my Life being spent,  
 Beneath a stern Preceptor's Government,  
 In whose Dominion Forreign Tongues took Place,  
 And brought our Native Language in disgrace,  
 Whilst *Greece*, or *Rome*, gave ev'ry Youth his Theme,  
 And Heath'nish Authors were in most esteem;  
 Where Penal Laws by his own Pow'r were made,  
 That *Lilly's* Rules<sup>2</sup> might strictly be Obey'd,  
 Or each Offender by the Wastband siez'd,  
 And punish'd as our Jirking Monarch pleas'd,  
 But I in Thought too Manly, and too Wise,  
 To stoop to my sowl Guide's Severities,  
 At Eighteen Years was timely call'd away,  
 From my dull Pedants harsh Imperious sway,  
 B'ing now by kinder Friends Paternal care,  
 (Who for my Welfare no Expence would spare)  
 Advis'd Law's crabbed System to pursue,  
 That knotty Science Master'd but by few,  
 To make of it no Mercenary use,  
 But guard my self from the vile World's abuse,  
 That no Clandestine frauds might hurtful be  
 In a loose Age to my Prosperitie,  
 But my own Rights and Properties secure  
 From Wrongs which unlearn'd Empty Heads endure:  
 In Order to my Friend's Commands Obey,  
 Within the *Temple's*<sup>3</sup> Ancient bounds I lay,  
 Well stor'd with Books of Law, and various Arts,  
 To please my Mind, and fructify my Parts,  
 Bent to laborious Study I began,  
 From a green Youth to learn to be a Man;  
 I por'd and read, yet small advantage found,  
 Much I perus'd, but little could expound,  
 My Brains of undigested stuff grew full,

The more I Study'd I became more dull;  
 No quick'ning Spirit in my Books could find,  
 That would to Raptures raise my heavy mind.  
 Thus with Laws puzzling Rudiments I strove,  
 Arm'd with much patience eager to improve,  
 But in my gentle progress daily fear'd,  
 My Task would prove unconquerably hard:  
 Much did I read, but little could retain,  
 Immoderate Study stupifi'd my Brain;  
 At last I call'd to mind Old *Cato's* Rule,<sup>4</sup>  
 Not only taught, but practic'd more at School,  
 Let Mirth sometimes be with thy Labours join'd,  
 'Twill make thy Pains sit easie on thy Mind:  
 These kind Instructions with my Genius took,  
 And made me mix Deversions with my Book;  
 Somtimes the soothing Bottle I enjoy'd,  
 But that Delight Excess too oft destroy'd,  
 Which leaves behind this never failing Curse,  
 If not low Pockets, yet a deep remorse:  
 Thus Conscience when our Reason's led astray.  
 That we her Dictates can't or won't Obey,

}

Tho' drown'd in Wine o'er Night she'll punish us next day.  
 In search of Friendship I the Town walk'd round,  
 But Friends were Comforts rarely to be found;  
 No Obligations could sement<sup>5</sup> so fast,  
 But still the Union was too weak to last,  
 Self Interest always snap'd the feeble Chain,  
 My searches for a faithful Friend were vain.  
 As when the wise Philosopher<sup>6</sup> at Noon,  
 His endless task by Candlelight begun,  
 And thro' the Streets of ancient *Athens* ran  
 To find that *God* on Earth an *honest-Man*;  
 So I the Noisy Town Examin'd round,  
 But no such thing as *Friend*, or *Pleasure*, found;  
 Till Beauty's kind warm Influence touch'd my Heart,  
 And quicken'd Love's soft fire in ev'ry part,  
 Her Heav'nly Looks my drowsy Soul inspir'd,  
 She'd all that could be Vallu'd, or admir'd,  
 Each Glance of her dear Eyes to me apply'd,

}

My thoughts refin'd and my Soul rarified  
 Administring more Joys than the whole World beside.  
 Beauty of all Delights, I found most dear,  
 No pow'r had touch'd my Longing Heart so near:  
*Woman*, I thought on Earth the only Good,  
 And she alone my restless Soul pursu'd;  
 Trusted in her, nor fear'd to be deceiv'd,  
 The more I look'd, the more I still believ'd,  
 In her sweet Conversation I should find,

All that was Grateful, Generous and Kind;  
 Friendly, Obliging, Faithful, Loving, Chast,  
 And with much more than Man could hope for, Blest:  
 Conceiving all those Beautious Charms that shin'd  
 In her Angellick Face, good Heav'n design'd,  
 But as External Marks of Graces in her Mind. }  
 So the plump Peach the longing-Eye invites,  
 And by its Laky-Cheeks the Gust Excites  
 Tempts us by Colours which without are seen,  
 To tast the lusheous Juice contain'd within.

Thus fir'd with Love the Fields and Groves I rang'd,  
 My Life, my Thoughts, na, all the World seem'd chang'd;  
 Male Conversation odious to me grew,  
 To that deceit, call'd *Friend*, I bid adieu,  
 And those false Topping flatt'ers, who in vain  
 Assum'd that Title they would ne'er maintain,  
 Who rais'd their Friendship by the Wine they drank,  
 And hated to deserve, or give a Thank,  
 Taking each kindness done 'em as their due,  
 But ne'er return one greatful<sup>7</sup> Act in lieu:  
 When *Drunk*, of Friendship, Love and Freedom full;  
 But *Sober*, strange, shy, negligent and dull,  
 Thus warm'd with Wine, shall value no Expence  
 To serve his Friend, nay, fight in his Defence;  
 But when he's Cool, he breaths another air,  
 The *Sword* and *Pocket* both shall Padlocks wear;  
 His drunken Vows, and Oaths will all disown,  
 And is but, Sir, *Your humble Servant*, grown.  
 These truths which I by sad Experience found,  
 Made way for Love to give the deeper wound,  
 Hating Man's treach'rous Flatteries to bear,  
 I sought for truer Friendship in the *Fair*,  
 From my own Sex, to *Female Refuge* run,  
 Admiring all, but yet ador'd but *One*,  
 For none wel-bred, or youthful could I see,  
 But what had some peculiar Charm for me;  
 She that Dame Nature had but homely made,  
 Perhaps a kind Obliging Humor had;  
 Or if deform'd, 'twas likely then I found;  
 Her Crumpling Ladyship had Wit to wound;  
 If Peevish, Proud, Ill-natur'd, or a Fool,  
 To make amends, she's Rich or Beautiful;  
 None, but some Gifts, or good Acquirements had,  
 That might be put in Ballance with the Bad:  
 The meanst of 'em all can yield delight,  
 To the Hale Youth with vig'rous appetite;  
*Jug*, tho a rural Damsel, can afford

Pleasures, that sometimes may Oblige a Lord;  
 For homely Fabricks we have often seen,  
 Have had well Furnish Cleanly Rooms within,  
 Besides, some Minds not curious do prefer  
 Course<sup>8</sup> Huts, to Mansions which more stately are;  
*Diogenes* with a wise Soul inspir'd,  
 His *Tub* beyond a Palace far admir'd,  
 And in his *Cask* with more Content sat Crown'd,  
 Than the *Great Greek*<sup>9</sup> in all his Trophies found.  
 So the Brown Dame sometimes a heart shalt Ease,  
 When Beauty with her Charms has fail'd to please;  
 Therefore since diff'rent Objects we approve,  
 And oft our thoughts from *Good* to *Bad* remove,  
 A Shapeless Chip sometimes may light the *Fire of Love*.  
 Tho' Beauty *my* harmonious Soul admir'd,  
 And such a Maid I found my heart desir'd,  
 One, who could vigh<sup>10</sup> with Angels for her Form  
 Whose dazzling Eyes the frigid *Zones*<sup>11</sup> might warm;  
 And by their Influence gen'rously impart,  
 A healing Balsam to my wounded Heart;  
 But yet the nicest Vertue could not find,  
 One Error in the Fredoms of her mind,  
 She was so strictly Chast, altho' so gently kind,  
 The Gods to 'nrich her Soul gave ev'ry Grace,  
 And Nature's purest Charms adorn'd her face;  
 Thus Heav'n, and its lower Agent, both bestow'd,  
 All that could make her Beautiful and Good,  
 These Gifts her Education much Improv'd<sup>12</sup>  
 And made her still more worthy to be Lov'd,  
 Crown'd her Perfections with a gen'rous mein,  
 That answer'd all the Vertues Lodg'd within:  
 Of Eloquence she such a Portion had,  
 Her Wit such Notions to her Tongue convey'd,  
 Altho' we falsely Term the *Sex* so weak,  
 'Twould make a *Cic'ro* blush to hear her speak,  
 With such Enduments<sup>13</sup> was the Damsel blest,  
 She Excell'd Man, as much as Man does Beast,  
 And as I thought her, prov'd, a Paradise at least.  
 So Chast her mind, her Beauty so devine,  
 'Twould fire an *Anch'rets*<sup>14</sup> heart as well as mine;  
 No sordid Cinick<sup>15</sup> surely could forbear,  
 T'adore a Virgin so devinely fair.  
 Or without Love and Admiration view,  
 Those Charms a Monarch gladly would pursue;  
 I begg'd and pray'd till her Consent I got,  
 To Tye, for Life, the happy *Gordian Knot*;<sup>16</sup>  
 Happy I well may say, for so it prov'd,  
 Her Vertues ev'ry Jealous Thought remov'd  
 And her kind Usage show'd 'twas me alone she Lov'd,

Such sweet harmonious Words at all times hung,  
 And drop'd so kindly from her melting Tongue;  
 To hear her Speak put ev'ry Care away,  
 And gave new Sun-shine to the cloudiest Day,  
 Making each Moment joyful, and the Night  
 She bless'd with unexpressible delight;  
 My Faults, tho' num'rous none would she reprove,  
 But by her kind Forgiveness show'd her Love;  
 Tho' I had Failings she was Errour free,  
 And shun'd 'em by observing 'em in me;  
 Her Goodness never wanted some Device,  
 To always make my Home a *Paradise*.  
 Bless'd Woman, were it not for thee alone,  
 My Life no true felicity had known:  
 O happy Wife, thou only faithful Friend,  
 That Husband never can enough Commend,  
 On thee in time of need we truly may depend.  
 'Tis from thy Charms that I with pleasure see,  
 My self reviv'd in my own Progenie,  
 And by thy Consolations do I find,  
 The Cares of Life made easy to my Mind;  
 Since more than all these Comforts we enjoy  
 In the fair Sex, whom we too oft decoy,<sup>17</sup>  
 And then misuse, as if kind Heaven gave  
 Woman, not as a Partner but a Slave,  
 Vain empty Thought that Man has all the sway,  
 And Woman, tho' more perfect, must Obey.  
 A harsh Decree, and but of late made good,  
 Since we have basely Chill'd the Female Blood,  
 Who were long since to Arms and Arts apply'd,  
 And in heroick Actions lay their Pride,  
 Bred to the use of Bow, Launce, Sword and Shield,  
 Expert in War, and fearless in the Field,  
 Would Conquer when they Fought, or Bleed before they'd yield. }  
 What sturdy Hero of the *Grecian* Race,  
 Or *Roman* Cæsar ever could surpass  
 Those glorious Actions, those Atchievements done  
 In Battles, which the weaker Sex have won.

In Old *Assyria*,<sup>18</sup> many Ages since,  
 When *Ninus*, *Nimrod's* Grandson<sup>19</sup> reign'd as Prince,  
 Who amongst all their Tyrants could abound,  
 With greater Valour than was early found  
 In brave *Semyramis*,<sup>20</sup> who fought disguis'd,  
 And by her Bravry all the Camp surpris'd,  
 Greedy of Fame, and Gen'rous of her Blood,  
 Detach'd a Party, and the Town subdu'd,  
 Which till she gave her Aid whole Armies had withstood. }

Then that her Deeds might raise her Sexes Pride,  
 Sh' unveil'd those Charms which her disguise had hid,  
 To let 'em see one Woman could do more,  
 Than all th' *Assyrian* Arms had done before.  
 The King surpriz'd to see a Face so bright,  
 Thought strange such Beauty should so bravely fight,  
 Her Looks beheld, and having heard her Fame,  
 Chose for his Queen the fair heroick Dame.  
 Who Beg'd of *Ninus* the Monarchal Sway,  
 And did the Sov'reign's part so wisely play,  
 Husband that Lordly thing she subject made,  
 And rul'd the Kingdom whilst the King Obey'd,  
 By the whole Land her Conduct was approv'd,  
 She was not only honour'd but belov'd;  
 Great was her Power, unparrell'd her Charms,  
 She Conquer'd with her Beauty, well as Arms  
 The *Egyptian Mummies* trembled at her Name,  
 And all the *Eastern* Kingdoms sung her Fame;  
 She the old Walls of *Babylon* rebuilt,<sup>21</sup>  
 And Show'rs of *Ethiopian* Blood she spilt,  
 Those sully'd Regions into Slav'rie beat,  
 And many Armies drown'd in Blood and Sweat,  
 Her great designs good Fortune never fail'd,  
 For whensoever she fought her Arms prevail'd:  
 Her Conqu'ring Forces did no less contain  
 Than Thirty Hundred Thousand fighting Men,  
 To this great Host that did on foot appear,  
 Five Hundred Thousand Horsemen added were,  
 An Hundred Thousand Cammels Join'd the Throng,  
 Whose Riders carry'd Swords four Cubits long;  
 As many Chariots grac'd the num'rous Host,  
 From whence were Arrows Stung and Jav'lins Tost,  
 The Seas with Twenty Thousand Ships she spread,  
 These were but Servants, Woman was the head. }  
 Thus all this mighty Pow'r one lovely Dame obey'd.  
 Great were her Forces, and as large her Soul,  
 Both were too potent to admit Controul.

Had this fair Queen the *Persian* Scepter sway'd,  
 And led the Army in *Darius*<sup>22</sup> stead,  
 The *Macedonian* had been forc'd to Yield,  
 And Piles of Bleeding *Greeks* had grac'd the Field:  
*Great Alexander* it would ne'er have been,  
 But *Great Semyramis* the *Persian* Queen,  
 Who forty Two Years rul'd th' *Assyrian* state,  
 Enlarg'd her Bounds, and made her People great;  
 Had these two Heroes in one Age but liv'd,  
 The *Grecians* Fame the Grave had ne'er Surviv'd.

Woman the Prosperous Youth had far out-done  
 Her Brav'ry all his Glories had out-shone,  
 More than the *Persian's* God does a small Star at Noon. }  
 The Gallant Dame when danger was most near,  
 Would always with most Courage then appear,  
 Thro which rare Spirit she such Wonders did,  
 Would make our Modern Heroes blush to read.

When brave *Lybussa*<sup>23</sup> o'er *Bohemia* reign'd,  
 Woman Man's Arbitrary Pow'r restrain'd,  
 In Arts and Arms the Female Sex excell'd,  
 And o'er their weaker Husbands long prevail'd,  
 Till Death to th' Grave the Valiant Princes bent,  
 Who to *Promislans*<sup>24</sup> left the Government:  
 His Wife deceas'd, he rul'd the Reins alone,  
 Without a Female Partner in the Throne,  
 Then the Male Sex their Rigid Pow'r began,  
 And *Woman's* Freedom was usurp'd by *Man*,  
 The Husband struggl'd for Tyrannick Sway,  
 But braver *Wives* still hated to Obey.  
 And like themselves would valliantly agree,  
 To rather stoop to Death than Slaverie;  
 Of these the fair *Valasque*<sup>25</sup> led the Van,<sup>26</sup>  
 Enrag'd at the new Tyranny of Man,  
 And when her brave Design she'd wisely laid  
 To'r injur'd *SEX* she this Oration made.

*Dear suff'ring Sisters, now our Gracious Queen*  
*Libussa's fled, and can no more be seen,*  
*And MAN into his cruel Hands has gain'd,*  
*Those Female Rights by Woman long maintain'd,*  
*And by severe unnat'ral Usage strives,*  
*To make us Slaves to Slaves instead of Wives;*  
*Shame on our SEX if tamely we submit,*  
*To cringe like Spaniels at our Husband's feet,*  
*And obey those we justly should despise,*  
*As Cow'rdly Victims conquer'd by our Eyes,*  
*Who us'd to Creep and Fawn with Cap in hand,*  
*To Beg those Favours they would now Command;*  
*But if, like me, you'l solemnly Abjure*  
*Man's Rule, and all his base pretended Pow'r,*  
*And with my Resolutions but Agree,*  
*We'll soon pull down their upstart Tyranny,*  
*The Hardships Woman suffers we'll remove,*  
*And make them Dread our Wrath, and Court our Love.*  
*Amen, the Crowd unanimously Cry'd,*  
 With brave *Valasque*, One and all comply'd,  
 Chose her as Queen she might their Army lead,

And to the gen'rous Task they all agreed.  
 When thus *Valasque* found her Sex all free,  
 To hazard Life for their old Liberty,  
 She fix'd a Time, and warn'd 'em to prepare  
 Their Bows, and all Accouterments of War,  
 Proud *Tyrant Man* in order to subdue,  
 And then by Oath engag'd 'em to be true.

The Day be'ng come the Wives and Virgins arm'd,  
 Inspir'd with Courage, and with Malice warm'd,  
 I'th' *Praguan* Fields in mighty Numbers met,  
 There strung their Bows, and did their Lances whet.  
*Valasque* mounted on a noble Steed, }  
 Did the fair Train of Female Warriars lead,  
 Resolving all, like her, to Conquer, or to Bleed.  
 When thus array'd their Husbands they defy'd;  
 And vow'd by Arms the Quarrel to decide.  
 The Men Allarm'd in num'rous Bands appear'd,  
 Yet still the braver Women never fear'd,  
 But their stern Adversaries Force withstood,  
 And the Male Pow'r by Dint of Sword subdu'd, }  
 Dispirited the Men whole Legions slew,  
 Whilst the Survivers from their fury flew,  
 Shrunk into Holes and Woods, and arrant Cowards grew.  
*WOMAN* thus flush'd with Conquest rul'd the roast,  
 And made all Towns contribute to their Host,  
 Who grew so num'rous, and expert at length,  
 That neighbouring Crowns grew Jealous of their Strength;  
 Did what they List, made all Obey their Pow'rs,  
*Men* were their Slaves, as *Women* now were ours.  
 The Husband Cook'd the Kettle whilst the Sun  
 Deny'd the use of Arms sat by and spun,  
 Whilst the good Wives and Daughters rang'd the Field,  
 And to their Spears made Bears and Lyons Yield.  
 Thro' all *Bohemia* Women rul'd as Lords,  
 And aw'd their Husbands by their Tongues and Swords;  
 Grew cunning, Sturdy, Resolute and wise,  
 Did Fear abominate, and Lust despise,  
 They *Visigrade*<sup>27</sup> besieg'd, fierce Battles fought,  
 And Vict'ries o'er Superior numbers got:  
 To fortify themselves *Dievizo* built,  
 There practised Riding, Turnament and Tilt,  
 And so expert in *War* and *Weapons* grew,  
*Bohemia* better Soldiers never knew;  
*Valsaque* with such Art her Sword could wield,  
 That seven Men she in one battle kill'd,  
 And had not Thousands from her fury fled,  
 She'd added more to th' Numbers of the dead.

Why then should Man his partial self deceive  
 And from late Laws, and modern Craft believe,  
*Husband*, tho' less discreet must bear the Rule,  
 Govern, tho' madly, yet without Controul,  
 And *Wife* the wiser slave, obey the *Lordly Fool*.

}

Stand up *Fair Ladies* and your Rights maintain,  
 Heav'n gives you equal Liberty with *Man*,  
*Woman* is Born by nature full as free,  
 And is, if learn'd, as wise and brave as *He*.  
*Woman* in Beauty's far more perfect made,  
 And rather than Obey should be Obey'd;  
 For less Perfections doubtless should adore  
 The worthy'r *Being*, which is Bless'd with more:  
 Therefore to th' Gods we humble Rev'rence pay,  
 Because we're far less excellent than they.  
 Man's sturdy Nerves to labour were decreed,  
 To till the Fertile Ground, and sow the Seed;  
 Whilst *Woman*'s duty at his leisure whiles,  
 Is not to share, but to reward his Toiles,  
 And his tir'd Limbs refresh with Lustreous hugs and Smiles.  
 Nor are her Favours to be always Carv'd,  
 When *Man* desires, but when he as well deserv'd;  
 For Love and Beauty are the best Rewards,  
 That lib'ral Heav'n to Mortal *Man* affords,  
 Whose Joyful Fruits are so divinely sweet,  
 They'll Surfit if too greedily we Eat.  
 Thus what's most pleasant when discreetly us'd,  
 Grows nausious soon if by excess abus'd.  
 Love is the highest Bliss we can enjoy,  
 And who'd so bless'd an Appetite destroy;  
 Which *Man* can only lessen, or impair,  
 By tasting various Numbers of the Fair.  
 He that to one he loves is only kind,  
 Such Blessings must beyond the vicious find,  
 No where discover'd yet thro' human Life,  
 But in that faithful Friend a *Vertuous Wife*.  
 May all, like me, the Heav'nly Rib adore,  
 Admire his own and covet still no more,  
 Such Joys I find in my indulging Mate,  
 Whose Love's so constant, and her Charms so great,  
 That for Ten thousand Kingdoms I'd not change my State.

}

}

*Woman*, thou kind best part of human Race,  
 Heav'nly thy Form, and Angel-like thy Face,  
 In whose soft pleasing Simitre<sup>e28</sup> we see,  
 An Awful, yet a sweet Epitomie  
 Of *Jove*, of Heav'n, and all its Harmonie.

}

'Tis from your Charms our beſt Conceptions riſe,  
Of Joys Eternal hid beyond the Skies,  
No Pow'r but Beauty could my Soul enflame,  
Nor was I bleſſ'd till to thy Arms I came,  
Early thy pleaſing Influence warm'd my heart;  
Woman I Love, and Woman I aſſert,  
To be a Heav'nly Gift beyond the World's deſert.

}

*FINIS.*

## *Wedlock A Paradise; Or, A Defence of Woman's Liberty against Man's Tyranny*

1. J. Nutt: John Nutt was Mary Astell's publisher for *Some Reflections on Marriage* (1700) and *A Serious Proposal for the Ladies* (1706).
2. Lilly's Rules: William Lilly (1602–81), a famous astrologer; his *Christian Astrology* (1647) contained rules for judging marriage questions.
3. *Within the Temple's Ancient bounds*: The Temple included the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple. They were liberties of London with their own jurisdiction, and were two of the Inns of Court, where barristers gained their professional training.
4. *Old Cato's Rule*: It is much better to judge a man's morals by his words than by his appearance. Compare 'Democritus Junior to the Reader' from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621): 'It is most true, stylus virum arguit, our style betrays us, and as hunters find their game by the trace, so is a man's genius descried by his works, Multo melius ex sermone quam lineamentis, de moribus hominum judicamus; it was old Cato's rule'.
5. *sement*: cement.
6. *wise Philosopher*: Diogenes of Sinope (c. 404–323 BC), a Cynic philosopher.
7. *greatful*: grateful.
8. *Course*: coarse.
9. *The Great Greek*: Alexander the Great, who according to tradition, sought Diogenes out.
10. *vigh*: vie.
11. *the frigid Zones*: Aristotle divided the earth into three different zones: temperate, torrid, and frigid.
12. *All that could make ... much Improv'd*: A notable affirmation of women's education, in line with Astell's *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694, 1697).
13. *Enduments*: endowments.
14. *Anch'rets*: hermit; ascetic.
15. *Cinick*: cynic.
16. *To Tye, for Life, the happy Gordian Knot*: an echo of *The Pleasures of a Single Life, or the Miseries of Matrimony* (n.p.: n.p., 1701): 'But Oh, the Wretched hour I ty'd the Gordian Knot' (p. 3). After attempting unsuccessfully to untie the Gordian Knot, Alexander the Great cut it in half with his sword.
17. *decoy*: to allure or entice (wildfowl or other animals) into a snare or place of capture; to entice or allure (persons) by the use of cunning and deceitful attractions (*OED*).
18. *Assyria*: an empire that comprised the northern half of Mesopotamia.
19. *Ninus, Nimrod's Grandson*: the eponymous founder of Nineveh.
20. *Semyramis*: a semi-legendary Assyrian queen who killed Ninus and took the throne.
21. *the old Walls of Babylon rebuilt*: The Hanging Gardens of Babylon (or of Semiramis) and the walls of Babylon were considered among the Seven Wonders of the World.
22. *Darius*: Darius the Great (c. 549–486/85 BC), Emperor of Persia.
23. *Lybussa*: twelfth-century Queen of Bohemia, who ruled with her husband.
24. *Promislans*: King of Bohemia and husband of Lybussa; he conquered Valasque by trickery.
25. *Valasque*: one of Lybussa's favourites and her successor; she led a female army against Promislans' forces.
26. *Van*: The foremost division or detachment of a military or naval force (*OED*).
27. *Visigrade*: north of Budapest, the site of a thirteenth-century castle.
28. *Simitre*: symmetry.