3. Attending to Kairotic Moments in Early Modern Women’s Writing

For early modern England, *kairos* could mean and be many things. As a rhetorical theory, *kairos* mean “timeliness,” the ability to speak at the right time, knowing exactly when to speak, or conversely, knowing when to remain silent. *Kairos* also included notions of rhetorical delivery, whether that meant knowing the proper place for speaking, knowing how to arrange a speech, or when and where to place one’s figurative language devices. For early modern speakers and writers, *kairos* was also a political theory emphasizing opportune moments for speaking, especially when one is compelled to speak in circumstances such as offering advice to a monarch. Such a political theory included lessons on necessity for speaking and moral flexibility when speaking. Finally, *kairos* was not simply a theory, but an action—knowing how to seize the kairotic moment with a sense of urgency, prudence, skill, and speed.

*Kairos* may have been an advanced theory taught in the upper forms of grammar schools and at universities, and was practiced in such political arenas as the king’s court, the law courts, and pulpits. Yet strikingly, it was also the foremost instruction for early modern women, as any cursory reading of the period’s conduct literature would suggest. Indeed, women were taught to employ their speech (as well as their silence) with best judgment and discretion, depending on the place, occasion, present company, and exigent circumstances. And what’s more, women were taught by conduct writers how to make these judgment calls for themselves. In practice, in both their speech and writing, women worked both on and against such prescriptions, deploying *kairos* as a means for addressing their personal, social, religious, and political concerns. Through *kairos*, women intervened in, challenged, and disrupted the injustices they saw happening to and around them, whether it was the ways women were represented in popular texts and discourses; the oppressive norms and cultural forces that attempted to silence and marginalize underrepresented groups; or their problems with the current government’s administration of the nation.

For this workshop, then, we would like to consider ways in which early modern women writers employed *kairos*; addressed the kairotic moments and exigencies of the day; ways in which women seized moments for speaking in order to participate in social and political contests; how women used *kairos* (and other strategies for timing and temporality) disruptively in social and political debates; and the implications for reading for and thinking about women’s uses of *kairos* in early modern English texts.

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CHAPTER 2

The Art of English Poesy

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Book 3 / Chapter 23

[Text content]

[Further content]

[Continued content]
book of ornament
Book / Chapter 3

The art of English prose

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CHAPTER 24

Of decorum in education which belongs to the

commencement of the good order.

The art of English


Verse: The Art of English

[Text continues]
FROM THE FRENCH HISTORY

ANNE DORMERIE (1618-1707)

Introduction
The French Revolution

Anne Downie

The City of Paris, France, 1792

From the French History

The blood of the Marquis de la Fayette in the arms of the Queen of France.
from the French History

41
Your conclusion with this one thing above the rest.

Let the Animal be the Chinook to recover.

The earth and all of things are all one part.

And when you do it for the Prophet of the hour.

And think of the virtues of the hour could call.

And the remembered grief of an instant hour.

And the forgotten sorrow of a moment hour.

And the praised beauty of an hour that is best.

And the beloved memory of an hour that is dearest.

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And the beloved memory of an hour that is dearest.
The King, more furtive, did the knightly deed best
Kneeling in the church, with tears and groanings, made
Himself to seem so low, and so to hide his
Body, that no man might know which was he who did
The deed.

from the friend, friendly
The Windmills, 16th, and the ball was not wide.  
The windmill, 16th, and the ball was not wide.  

A Chain of Pearls  

Diana Primrose  

Renaissance.  

New York: Routledge, 1944.  

My Thing: Diana.  

fn: from
To keep the fear that is so great, bright.

Where the fear of the world may still exist.

And so to wonder, she is the great,

To keep the fear, for the great, bright.

The world is the great, for the great, bright.

And so to wonder, for the great, bright.

The world is the great, for the great, bright.

And so to wonder, for the great, bright.

The world is the great, for the great, bright.

And so to wonder, for the great, bright.
NOTES
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TENDANCE

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Highly Princess Queen
In Honour of The High and

The Works of Anne Bradstreet

2010

Ed. Jemimah Hensley. Cambridge

From:

Ezra's Chime Band Sheet

[Handwritten notes in the margin]
Another

In every one of the great Spy's friends,
If many words on their exchange stand.
Whose might these spare speak (though dead long since)
Here lies the written, for unprenant edifice,
So bare, a frame, here to till what's more.
Here lies the pride of genius, genius of kings.