

"PLASTIC POWER": IMAGINING ADAPTABILITY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
ENGLAND

Nathaniel Doyle Stogdill

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Approved by:

Reid Barbour

Mary Floyd-Wilson

Megan Matchinske

Ruth Salvaggio

Jessica Wolfe

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ABSTRACT

NATHANIEL DOYLE STOGDILL: "Plastic Power": Imagining Adaptability in
Seventeenth-Century England
(Under the direction of Reid Barbour)

"Plastic Power": Imagining Adaptability in Seventeenth-Century England

argues that English authors used generic conventions to imagine and experiment with the advantages of adaptability in times of social crisis and change. I focus on the ways in which the literary imagination was used to develop a "flexible social identity" that could accommodate the continual disruption of social, institutional, and economic relationships in the decades surrounding the English Civil War. By revising a scholarly tradition that views the period and its literature in strict partisan terms, this study recovers the importance of the imaginative as a tool for early modern authors to maintain sociability against the demands of ideological divisiveness.

For Jane

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INTRODUCTION

"PLASTIC POWER"

In 1659, Abraham Cowley finally relented. Following the encouragement of his patron, Henry Jermyn, he wrote to Charles II and asked the incensed king to forgive the insult of a few lines and extend the same indemnity that he seemed ready to grant even “his most outrageous enemies”:

But though I am fully satisfied in conscience of the uprightness of my own sense in those [two] or three lines which have been received in one so contrary to it, and though I am sure all my actions and conversation in England have commented upon them according to that sense of mine, and not according to the interpretations of others, yet because it seems they are capable of being understood otherwise than I meant them, I am willing to acknowledge and repent them as an error [. . .]¹

This is, at best, a half-hearted apology. His confession is qualified and dampened by a dense series of adverbial clauses, beneath which the error is finally contingent on the impreciseness of language and the interpretive failures of his readers, not his intent. Cowley concedes that he may have miscalculated the reception of “those [two] or three lines,” but he does not retract their meaning. This evasiveness was not lost on Charles, who denied Cowley both his promised post in the restored government and the living granted to him by Henrietta Maria. After a series of failed suits, Cowley permanently retired to a country estate at Chertsey in what was seen to announce a final, disaffected

¹ Quoted in Arthur Nethercot, *Abraham Cowley: The Muse's Hannibal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 189.

abandonment of a frustrating political career.

At the center of this controversy was a short passage in the preface to his 1656 edition of *Poems*. In a digression on the role of poets in a “warlike, various, and a tragical age,” he urges his contemporaries that

we must march out of our Cause it self, and dismantle that, as well as our Towns and Castles, of all the Works and Fortifications of Wit and Reason by which we defended it [...] The Names of Party, and Titles of Division, which are sometimes in effect the whole quarrel, should be extinguished and forbidden in peace under the notion of Acts of Hostility.²

This call to abandon commitments to the partisan causes that had both disrupted and defined the period is also a call to abandon the major sources of identity-making in the period. In the fallout that followed these comments, Cowley experienced first-hand the hostilities of the partisan culture he attempted to correct, in which even non-partisanship was politicized. Once partisan positions began to solidify in the 1640s, non-affiliation became political territory: polemicists for all parties derided the invidious “Neutralls” as agents for the opposition. Cowley’s absence from England during the Civil Wars, and his affiliation with Henrietta’s Louvre faction, had already raised suspicions among Charles’s advisors that his commitment to the king’s cause was only half-hearted, and his return to England in 1654 prompted reports that he was operating as a double-agent for the Commonwealth. His call to “march out of [. . .] Causes” and extinguish “Names of Party” seemed to already suspicious partisan minds a final abandonment of the king’s cause.

Like his opponents, Cowley’s defenders interpreted his plea for non-partisanship as a partisan maneuver. His friend and posthumous editor, Thomas Sprat, regards these controversial comments as “the only part of his life, that was liable to mis-interpretation.”

² Abraham Cowley, *Poems* (London: 1656), sig. a4r-v.

In his “Life of Abraham Cowley,” he assures his readers that Cowley’s remarks were likely a form of subterfuge meant to deflect attention away from his activities as a loyal spy for the exiled monarchy. And even if they did represent a genuine endorsement of the Protectorate, he argues, Cowley’s critics should consider it “the error of one Paragraph, and a single Metaphor” that holds little significance of his longer career as a contributor to the “Royal Cause.”³ Sprat must have sensed that these sympathetic reinterpretations were somehow still misinterpretations: rather than testing their viability on his readership, he omitted the original statement from the preface of the posthumous edition of Cowley’s works, hoping to obviate further controversy.

Nonetheless, the controversy survived. Modern critics continue to revive Cowley’s “single Metaphor,” reading it into contemporary political contexts in order to reconstruct the political motivations and functions of Cowley’s poetry. Arthur Nethercot reads it as a genuine, prudent, but miscalculated acquiescence to the Cromwellian government: if not for the restoration of the monarchy, he argues, “this statement of the situation would probably have been accepted as eminently fair and sane.”⁴ Thomas Corns sees it as a bolder gesture of disaffection with the royalist cause, in which Cowley “[wraps] himself in the white flag of surrender” in repudiation of the party that led to his imprisonment and interrogation in 1655.⁵ Raymond Anselment, on the other hand, sees in it evidence of Earl Miner’s notion of “Cavalier retreat”: far from abandoning the royalist cause, Cowley is withdrawing from an inhospitable contemporary political environment

³ Thomas Sprat, “An Account of the Life of Abraham Cowley” in Abraham Cowley, *Works* (London: 1684), vii.

⁴ Nethercot, *The Muse’s Hannibal*, 159.

⁵ Thomas Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 259.

to nourish and sustain his partisan values in a state of stoic constancy.⁶ James Loxley sees a more strident commitment to an active royalist subversion of the Protectorate, in which Cowley's preface asserts his past partisan activities without repudiating them, establishing "a *modus vivendi* with the Protectorate whilst avoiding a recantation."⁷ Annabel Patterson allows possibilities for all these partisan readings, finding in the preface a form of "functional ambiguity" that invites and accommodates contradictory interpretations.⁸

In many ways, these critical responses to Cowley are representative of recent scholarly approaches to the period, which give special attention to the ways in which the Civil War solidified social categories by forcing English subjects to identify with a party in the conflict. Literary historians appropriate these partisanized histories and read the literature of the period as expressions of *a priori* partisan affiliation. Ruth Nevo, Earl Miner, Maren-Sofie Røstvig, and Raymond Anselment, for instance, read in royalist writings of the late-Civil War and Interregnum a disenchantment with social engagement following the political defeat of the monarchy in which royalists retreated from the social realm and into a Stoic self-resolve to endure the hostile winter of Protectorate rule. This model imagines a static relationship between authors and political causes, in which literature mirrors the partisan sympathies and experiences of its authors: defeated

⁶ Raymond Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve* (Neward: University of Delaware Press, 1988), 174-5. For the principles of the *vita beata* and *vita bona* underlying the notion of Cavalier retreat, see Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) and Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal* (Oslo: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962).

⁷ James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 97-8.

⁸ Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 150-1.

royalists represent defeat. Other scholars regard the literature of the period as sites of participating in, not simply representing, the partisan experience. Following the course largely established by David Norbrook's influential *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, these critics study the ways in which imaginative literature intervenes in the political disputes of the period by fusing the aesthetics with polemics: Milton's *Paradise Lost* is, for these critics, a "republican epic."⁹ Scholars like Sharon Achinstein, Thomas Corns, Annabel, and Nigel Smith illuminate the ways in which "republican" literature served as a literary complement to the political resistance of republican rebels and religious dissenters, overwriting the conventions of court poetry as these rebels sought to override England's monarchical government.¹⁰ This work was so influential to studies of the period that Cambridge University Press published a companion to the *Writing of the English Revolution*, which presents the English Revolution as an event that took place on the page as well as the battlefield, a political event that written, not just written about.¹¹ Critical attention to the political engagement of "republican" literary culture likewise drew attention to the political interventions of "royalist" literature. James Loxley, for instance, seeks to overturn Miner's notion of "Cavalier retreat" by demonstrating how royalist authors used their writings as "activist gestures" to resist Protectorate repression:

⁹ David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London; Boston: Routledge, 1984). See also his equally important *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Thomas Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Nigel Smith *Literature and Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹¹ *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. N.H. Keeble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Lovelace's *Lucasta*, in this sense, is a royalist rallying cry.¹² Recently, scholars like Nicholas McDowell and Blair Worden have shown that the partisan divisions that we have taken for granted were not as strict as we have imagined. By recovering the numerous personal, professional, and economic relationships that existed between royalists and republicans, they provide a revised picture of political inter-involvement in mid-century society that likewise found expression in the period's literature: for Worden, Milton's 1645 *Poems* is not a consistent or exclusive act of republican expression, but one that also incorporates typically royalist conventions in an effort to resituate himself and his republicanism in relation to other royalist voices.¹³ Edward Holberton is concerned with the same complication of political divisions when he describes the difficulty of crafting precise partisan messages in an Interregnum culture more properly characterized by its ideological confusion than its consistencies.¹⁴

While these approaches represent important differences in how we study and understand seventeenth-century literature and culture, underlying each of them is a concern with the ways in which mid-century authors express—or fail in their attempts to express—the partisan affiliations that Cowley calls on his contemporaries to dismantle. But Cowley's willingness to hazard the disfavor of the recently restored Charles rather than disavow his plea for non-partisanship should encourage us to hazard our own critical predispositions about partisanship in the period. Therefore, in this project I take seriously

¹² Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry*, 6.

¹³ Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Worden, Blair. *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ Edward Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate: Culture, Politics, and Institutions* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

the interest of Cowley and his contemporaries to march out of and dismantle the structures of social meaning that divided their age. In doing so, I hope to shed new light on mid-century literature by shifting critical attention from expressions of social identification to the many unsettling and transformations that interrupt it.

The project's title, "Plastic Power," is drawn from Margaret Cavendish's Restoration romance, *The Blazing World*. Part philosophical treatise and part romance, nearly half of the text is taken up with a discourse between the recently elevated Empress of the Blazing World and her animal-men philosophers about the nature of the physical universe. "Plastic power," she learns, is the "power of the corporeal, figurative motions of nature."¹⁵ This "plastic power" is the fundamental operation of a plenistic universe that exists only in the infinite movement of infinite parts. For both Cavendish and her counterpart Empress, their unsettled societies mirror the movement of this infinitely moving nature. In order for Cavendish to act in the "universal action" of mid-century England she, like any other part of nature, must measure herself to this movement around her and "[make] the World my Book, striving by joyning every several actions, like several words to make a discourse to my self."¹⁶ Cavendish finds agency in her unsettled world by studying, internalizing, and enacting the "plastic power" that is fundamental to it.

Cavendish was not alone in opinion that mid-century England was under the influence of a "plastic power." The conflicts played out in the Civil War and its aftermath vacated the traditional sources of social authority in England, creating a lasting social disruption that confounded conceptions of how society was structured. For Albertus

¹⁵ Margaret Cavendish, *Blazing World*, ed. Kate Lilley (London: Penguin, 2004), 170.

¹⁶ "The Epistle" to "The third part of the first BOOK" in *World's Olio*, 46-7.

Warren, this disruption created a “torrent of nimble dayes.” Charles I, unlike Cavendish, refused to yield to the “plastic power” of this “torrent,” finding what he called an “embased flexibleness” unbecoming. Warren, on the other hand, who had supported the king throughout the Civil War, encouraged his contemporaries to adapt to a social experience in which all “laws depend on alteration.”¹⁷ *Plastic Power* is concerned with how, following the English Civil War, attentiveness to “alteration” in both its enticing and indecorous modes led to the development of what I term a “flexible social identity” – an identity that learned to eschew stability and adapt in a social landscape that was not only changed, but also continually changing. In the following chapters, I illustrate the ways in which the demands of adaptability at mid-century reimagined the social experience, emphasizing “alteration” rather than continuity, mutability rather than stability, and multiplicity rather than singularity.

I track these reconceptualizations as they occur in the literary imagination, where authors could subject notions of plasticity to a flexible treatment. Francis Quarles complained that England’s contested social environment was a “riddle” in which he found himself “tost and turned as a Weather-cock to [his] own weakness.”¹⁸ I focus on how literary genres were used to represent and respond to the social change that “turned” Quarles and his contemporaries “as a Weather-Cock.” Lyric in particular, a form associated with “verses,” or “turnings,” allowed authors to collapse distinct times, places, conventions, and themes into their own expression and consider flexibility’s significance within and across different discourses and contexts simultaneously. Each chapter considers how some of mid-century England’s most influential authors experimented

¹⁷ *The Royalist Reform’d*, (London: 1650), 19.

¹⁸ Francis Quarles, *The Loyall Convert* (Oxford: 1643).

with epinician odes, amatory verse, elegies and travel narratives, using the conventions of their genres to provide different perspectives on a complicated, changing social experience.

In the first chapter, Abraham Cowley uses his edition of Pindaric imitations—a genre that attracted Jonson, Drayton, Sidney, and Milton, among others—to represent and respond to the institutional failures displayed in the ongoing social conflicts of the 1640s and 1650s. Cowley distills Pindar’s characteristically difficult epinician odes into an “irrational” and “obscure” public poetry that defies social and poetic conventions with an insistently “enthusiastical” force. The resulting “*Dithyrambique* tide” of imaginative expression overwhelms all subjects and precedents that are “not strong built and well *ballasted*,” expressing the incessant social change that had undone the customary authorities in mid-century England. Cowley turns this tide against the failed “forms” that asserted themselves in his changing society, drowning the authoritative and totalizing philosophies of royalists, republicans, Anglicans, and reformists alike. For Cowley, the “Pindaric” is a force of fluid change that unsettles established ways of knowing, and reimagines meaning in terms of movement. In the *Pindarique Odes*, Cowley envisions a social identity that is created in the dynamic process of adapting to continuous change, rather than in static relationships with stable authorities.

The displacement of identifiable and durable social authorities exposed English subjects to multiple, competing demands on their social loyalties. My second chapter reads the amatory verses in Thomas Stanley’s Civil War-era *Poems* as an experiment with notions of loyalty at a time when social upheavals had strained ideological, institutional, and interpersonal commitments. Stanley uses the conventions of love

poetry—the valorization of intimacy, expressions of undying devotion, and the anxiety of infidelity—to display the frustrations of a social experience in which professed loyalties were seized on as polemical fodder and used to compound conflicts rather than facilitate sociability. But Stanley does not allow his lovers to languish, and instead uses them to develop a notion of “philandering loyalism” that allows them—like members of his own patronage circle, which included figures with pronounced and conflicting political affiliations—to preserve sociability by taking on multiple, contradictory loyalties in a social environment that was constantly changing and contradicting itself.

The alert adaptability imagined by Cowley and Stanley required an attentiveness to the “instants” in which historical change occurred. The third chapter argues that *Lachrymae Musarum*—a collection of Interregnum elegies that includes contributions from Andrew Marvell, John Dryden, Robert Herrick, John Denham, and Richard Brome, among others—coordinates the interpretive efforts of multiple elegaic speakers in order to examine the mode of “instantaneous interpretation” that had been developed in the emergent newsbook culture of the 1640s. For scholars of early modern news, the Civil War created a state of “constant revolution” that forced the development of a new information technology, the periodical newsbook, which was used to bolster partisan interests by interpreting history as it happened. The elegaic mode offers a similar approach to history through the act of interpretive mourning, by which elegists assign significances to a single historical instant: in this case, the death of the young Henry Lord Hastings. But the elegaic mode is also one in which the elegist’s ability to interpret the world is overcome by grief. The competing interpretations of Hastings’s elegists are interrupted by expressions of shared, uncontrollable grief that unite, rather than divide,

the individual voices of the collection. In this way, *Lachrymae Musarum* argues a strategy of sociably conceding to the historical change figured in the death of Hastings, rather than insisting on divisive partisan interpretations of it.

Meeting the demands of a changing culture required that English subjects imagine themselves simultaneously living in and moving between different historical moments, social conditions, and ideologies. This hybridization of the social experience was analogized in travel narratives, a form that increased in popularity as the country proceeded from the Civil War, through the Interregnum and Restoration, and into the eighteenth century. The fourth chapter considers the animal-men in Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World* as literalizations of the amphibianism required by England's social travelers. Her bird-men, bear-men, and worm-men are hybridized subjects who express and incorporate the social variety in which they operate, and speak to the poly-temporal, poly-political, and poly-cultural contexts that had come to characterize social experience. This multi-valence finds full expression in "Margaret the First," who presides over the social diversity and movement that she imaginatively integrates in her "Blazing World."

CHAPTER 1

ABRAHAM COWLEY'S "PINDARIC WAY": ADAPTING ATHLETICISM IN INTERREGNUM ENGLAND

For Abraham Cowley, the battle of Newbury undermined exemplarity. He breaks off his epic, *The Civil War*, in the middle of the battle's action, stunned by the death of his friend and patron Lucius Cary, Viscount of Falkland. This loss is a martial and cultural tragedy that represents the unhinging of royalist triumphalism. Falkland, who bleeds virtue from his wound, vividly displays the vulnerabilities of an epitome-hero caught in a conflict that does not presuppose his inviolability. By undermining its exemplars, the Civil War confronted conservatism in such a way that even victories disturbed the royalist domain, prompting Cowley to lament, "We gain'd a Field, and lost in him a World."¹ Falkland's death registers a disruption of the aristocracy's figurative value in a violent culture fighting to displace it from its traditional site at the center of cultural meaning. Divorcing the aristocracy from its customary function in the social economy created uncertainty about the source and transmission of social identity. Without viable heroes, Cowley's epic mode is obsolete:

A Muse stood by mee, and just then I writ
My Kings great acts in Verses not unfit.
The trowbled Muse fell shapelesse into aire,
Instead of Inck dropt from my Pen a Teare.²

¹ Abraham Cowley, *Civil War*, ed. Allan Pritchard (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 3.568.

His muse is perplexed and leaves off its monument building and dissolves into shapelessness. Like the accomplishments of his fallen exemplar, Cowley's celebration is insubstantial and fails to signify. The customary structures of social signification began to come undone as the individuals and institutions on which they were based struggled for stability throughout the decade. The elimination of the aristocracy's centralized influence over culture called into question the nature and necessity of institutional authority as the engine for creating and transmitting social identity, and English subjects were forced into imagining alternative sources and means of creating meaning in an uncertain social environment.

Typically, critics treat the *Civil War* as the origin of a disaffection that they trace throughout Cowley's subsequent works.³ There was certainly cause to despair, and Cowley does so in often highly conventional ways: his weeping pen anticipates the compendious collection of lament poems, *Lachrymae Musarum* (1649). But we must not flatten our understanding of his career based on a single reading of an abrupt ending. Doing so collapses the expansive corpus of classical imitation and translation, occasional poetry, amatory verse, divine epic, personal essay, polemic, and drama that Cowley produced in the 1640s and 1650s. Nigel Smith reminds us that the genres and forms of mid-century verse are bound up with the themes of the Civil War and Commonwealth, and that experiments with genre should be understood as experiments with social power.⁴ Cowley's experiments are no exception, and it is with this in mind that I would like to

² *Civil War*, 3.545-8.

³ See, for instance, David Trotter, *The Poetry of Abraham Cowley* (London: Macmillan, 1979) and Raymond Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988).

⁴ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 4-5.

read his *Pindarique Odes*, arguably the most innovative and dynamic poetry of a generation in disarray.

Pindaric imitation was a popular and versatile form for expressing and exploring the complex political relationships of early modern England and Europe. As Stella Revard has shown, Pindar's praise for his athletes and patrons provided imitators with an epinician and encomiastic poetry that served a variety of purposes: Pindaric odes were written to compliment monarchs, celebrate military victories, solicit patronage, and praise the dead.⁵ These expressions of praise were also occasions for interpretation, and Pindaric imitators embedded in their celebrations commentaries on the political subjects and contexts of their praise.⁶ Attentive to the politics of praise, much of the recent scholarship on Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* attempts to read in his imitations a commentary on the political turmoil of the 1640s and 1650s. For these critics, Cowley's Pindaric muse is a royalist muse that represents and responds to the stresses placed on the king's supporters who were struggling with their disenfranchisement under parliamentary and republican rule.⁷

⁵ Stella Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode: 1450-1700* (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001) and *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode: 1450-1700* (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), in which she observes that Pindaric imitation became so widespread by the end of the seventeenth century that it became a "catch-all medium to commemorate all sorts of events and all kinds of persons" (xiv).

⁶ For Revard, Pindaric imitation was such a rich register of social experience that she suggests we can "In some ways [. . .] chart the history of western Europe from the mid-fifteenth to the early eighteenth century simply by following the progress of the Pindaric 'victory' ode" (*Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode*, xii).

⁷ Some critics find in the *Pindarique Odes* an unwavering royalist commitment: Lois Potter regards Cowley's Pindaric persona as a "royalist type" in *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 143; for Revard, the imitations use "innuendo and indirection" to criticize the Protectorate and express support for the royalist cause (*Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode*, 125-152). Ruth Nevo sees in the

But Pindar provided his imitators with a model of public poetry that replicates both the possibilities and the failures of the social values and relationships it represents. Pindar's widely-read epinician odes celebrate aristocratic athletes as social exemplars whose victories epitomize individual skill, the virtue of individual communities, and the values shared by a broad pan-Hellenic culture. Pindar's reputation is a product of the public themes and performances of his odes, as well as their stylistic distinctiveness. He was a notoriously difficult poet among his contemporaries, and remains so today: his elliptical allusions, wide-ranging digressions, and elaborate metaphors resist authoritative interpretations and tend more towards oblique rather than direct celebration. This interpretive difficulty became a distinct Pindaric characteristic, and many imitators attempted to reproduce his stylistic obscurity as well as his encomiastic themes. In some cases, these two characteristics merged so that many readers found in Pindar's stylistic obscurity an evasiveness that qualified and finally undercut his celebrations.

Pindar's odes focus on the central relationships that were being reexamined in the middle of the seventeenth century. Athletic contests, the prompt if not always the focus of the odes, staged interpersonal conflict as part of a broader social event that celebrated struggle. The games themselves were religious ceremonies—the Olympian and Nemean games honored Zeus, the Pythian games honored Apollo, and the Isthmian games honored Poseidon—that modeled the individual and group rituals used to celebrate a

imitations an attempt to reconceive royalist heroism as Stoic self-restraint following their military and political failures: *The Dial of Virtue: A Study of Poems on Affairs of State in the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 119-30. Thomas Corns reads in them a disaffected recantation of royalism and the adoption of an idiom better suited to complex political expression: *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature 1640-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 250-268. For Annabel Patterson the odes are “double-agents in ambiguity” and deliberately avoid taking sides in an age when political legitimacy was in dispute: *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 144-158.

body of shared values.⁸ Pindar's victors and patrons were aristocrats and tyrants, and their accomplishments demonstrated the depth and nature of inherited virtue. The success of these individuals reflected and enhanced the fame of their homelands, illustrating the extent to which social figureheads both channeled and constructed the identities of their communities. And, performed by a local chorus, the odes themselves were celebrations and modeled the ways in which communities defined and related to themselves.

Pindar's athletic contests are arenas for ritualized struggle that furnish a sanitized version of the *ponos* (toil) that characterizes social experience. The odes represent a culture in which toil is unavoidable: "No one is without his share of toil, nor will be."⁹ Pindar's athletes are in constant motion, outstripping other competitors, shifting grips, deflecting blows, and hurling javelins. The distinct identities of the competitors blur into the motion of their contests so that the process of struggle becomes the means by which identity is created:

...But in the test the result
shines clear, in what ways someone proves superior,
as a child among young children, man among men, and thirdly
among elders – such is each stage that our human race
attains.¹⁰

The *ponos* reproduced in athletic contests replicates a broader social experience in which virtue is understood through its performance. Struggle is a prerequisite for virtue, and thereby an ethical necessity:

⁸ Most early modern commentaries advertise the religious occasions of the games. The comment from the Erasmus Schmidt edition (Wittenberg, 1616) is typical: "Et Olympii quidem ludi in honorem Iovis: Pythiivero, Appinis: Nemei, initio Archemori, postea Iovis: Isthmii, Palaemonis initio, postea Neptuni, fuerunt celebrati."

⁹ Pythian 5, 54. Unless otherwise noted, translations are from the Loeb editions, edited by William Race.

¹⁰ Nemean 3, 70-4.

Achievements without risk
win no honor among men or on hollow ships,
but many remember
if a noble deed is accomplished with toil.¹¹

Inborn talent and divine aid are no substitute for the performance of nobility proven
through active contest:

By honing someone born for excellence
a man may, with divine help,
Urge him on to prodigious fame;
and few have won without effort that joy
which is a light for life above all deeds.¹²

In the economy of the odes, *ponos* is inseparable from personal, social, and aesthetic value. Pindar found it so fundamental to constructing his own poetic identity that he replicates it in his lyrics to highlight his skill: he announces, “I am not a sculptor, so as to fashion stationary statues that stand on their same base” and variously—sometimes simultaneously—represents his song as an arrow, javelin, discus, runner, wrestler, or deep-voiced bowstring.¹³ Moreover, the odes were intended to be performed by choral dancers, and most early modern editors note that the circular structure of strophe, antistrophe, and epode designates both thematic and choreographic movement, fundamental elements of Pindar’s lyrics.

The various *ponoi* represented in Pindar’s odes are also part of religious ceremonies that enact the intersections between the human and divine worlds. The games themselves were religious festivals that invited the participation of the deities they honored. Pindar’s gods are immanent and ubiquitous: they summon him to immortalize

¹¹ Olympian 6, 9-11.

¹² Olympian 10, 20-3.

¹³ Nemean 5, 1.

the contests and contestants, supervise and intervene in individual events, and admire or sometimes envy the victors. Consequently, Pindar's victors stand as emblems for divinity: their triumph is evidence of divine involvement in human events and the story of their victory illustrates the means of that involvement. These victors signify divinity, but they also embody it. The *areta* (virtue) necessary for and displayed in victory is patterned on abstract ideals, which are both athletic—strength, balance, endurance—and social—generosity, hospitality, good judgment, etc. In their successes, Pindar's victors embody the perfections that constitute *areta* and move beyond their mortality to share in the *theos* (divine will) that supervises their victory. Pindar often characterizes success as journeying beyond the pillars of Hercules, the figurative bounds of civilization and the limitations of mortality so that, for Pindar, “victory is like a transfiguration.”¹⁴ Pindar's victors owe their success to divinity, but they also, in a limited way, channel it. This double relationship with the supernatural—supplication and participation—furnished early modern readers with a model for understanding the demands of abstract social values, and how to translate those codes into social behavior.

Pindar shares in this *areta* through his own poetic *ponoi*. He figuratively likens his poetic activity to the athletic activity of his victors, but he also offers a more substantive equivalence between artistic and athletic accomplishment: the Pythian games included musical as well as athletic competitions, and Pindar subsequently commemorates a champion pipe player among his victors.¹⁵ He emphasizes that the

¹⁴ See M.M. Hornblower, *Pindar: Victory Odes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16.

¹⁵ Pythian 12 is dedicated to Midas of Akragas, winner of the *aulos* competition. The only other non-athletic ode is Nemean 11, written for Aristagoras of Tenedos on his installation as a councilor. Unlike musical accomplishment, this political victory is no substitute for athletic

performance of an ode is a “communal prayer,” a form of religious celebration that invites the same divine interaction achieved in the athletic games.¹⁶ The opening to Olympian 2 is typical of the mediation between the human and divine that takes place in the performance of an ode:

Hymns that rule the lyre,
what god, what hero, and what man shall we celebrate?
Indeed, Pisa belongs to Zeus, while Herakles
established the Olympic festival
as the firstfruits of war;
but Theron, because of his victorious chariot,
must be proclaimed...¹⁷

The ode, like Theron’s chariot race, is an occasion for ontological intersection, blending Zeus’s divinity, Theron’s exceptional sublunary accomplishment, and Herakles’s iconic human-divinity. Pindar achieves his own “transfiguration” primarily through his relationship with the muses, who assist his song in the same manner supervising deities assist victors at athletic festivals. His muses inspire him, in turn transforming him into a vehicle for divine song:

...Begin for the ruler of the cloud-covered sky, daughter,
a proper hymn, and I shall impart it to their voice
and the lyre.¹⁸

Like an athlete lifted by divine assistance to a victory that both symbolizes and manifests *areta*, Pindar is prompted by his muses to compose odes that are both inspired by and replicate divinity.

victory, and Pindar qualifies his praise of Aristagoras by suggesting he would have been better served to focus his efforts on athletic glory.

¹⁶ Pythian 3,1.

¹⁷ Olympian 2, 1-6.

¹⁸ Nemean 3, 10-12.

Early modern editors and readers identified Pindar's relationship with his muses as central, and found in his invocations a poetic model for representing the abstract religious and philosophical values that shaped their social behavior. Cowley sees Pindar's references to his muses as an essential element of his poetry, warning in the prefatory note to his translation of Olympian 2, "*the Reader must not be chocqued to hear him speak so often of his own Muse; for that is a Liberty which this kind of Poetry can hardly live without.*"¹⁹ This observation points to the prominence of Pindar's invocations in the odes and contemporary commentaries on them: Pindaric imitations and understandings of the Pindaric could "hardly live without" mention of the gestures to his muses or the relationships they represent. Revard traces the different meanings and uses of Pindar's muses in Renaissance culture, arguing that his direct contact with divine sources through inspiration shaped his reputation as a vatic poet whose music mediated between the divine and human by translating supernatural harmony into sublunary order. Whether they were regarded as actual Greek deities or allegories that represented supernatural talent, Pindar's muses became symbols of divine preferment. An early modern readership looking to "Christianize their muse" found in Pindar's various divinities a rich source for their typological readings: praise for Zeus was transferred to the Christian God, Hercules was a stand-in for Christ, and his athletes signified the piety and steadfastness of the saints. These recastings of Pindaric elements into something more recognizable in contemporary Christian culture invited further efforts to make Pindar relevant to an early modern readership. Pindar's muses expanded beyond their religious roles, and began to signify, and eventually embody, secular elements of early modern culture as well. In their more secular form, Pindaric muses could take on discrete nationalistic characteristics, and

¹⁹ "The Second Olympique Ode of Pindar."

the process of imitation was understood as a form of naturalization: Ronsard, the first major early modern imitator of Pindar, claimed to make the Greek muses speak French; Cowley describes his own imitations as an attempt to “try how it will look in an *English habit*,”²⁰ Thomas Sprat hardly distinguishes between Cowley, “the English Pindar,” and his source, noting that critics of the English odes “contend not against Mr. *Cowley*, but *Pindar* himself.”²¹ Revard sees in this secularization the development of a new genre, the philosophical ode, in which Pindar’s muses signify philosophical principles and abstractions instead of pagan or Christian divinity. This new utilization of the Pindaric form gained traction in the seventeenth century, achieving prominence in Cowley’s odes addressed to philosophical concepts such as “Destinie” and “Life and Fame,” which anticipate the secular odes of the Restoration and eighteenth century.²² The Pindaric ode became a flexible form in the seventeenth century. Its ability to accommodate divine and secular values made it an important and useful genre at a time when the source and nature of these values were in contention.

Pindar’s odes provided a platform for representing the broad ideological systems that governed social behavior, but were not, in ancient or modern terms, democratic: *areta*, as both the capacity for and performance of ideal behavior, was a distinctly aristocratic characteristic. For Pindar, glory is a function of natural and inherited abilities unique to the aristocratic classes, and is set against the artificial and learned banality of the *demos* (people). Pindar’s famous passage from Olympian 2 illustrates this superiority,

²⁰ *Poems*, sig. Aaa2v.

²¹ Thomas Sprat, “An Account of the Life of Abraham Cowley” in Abraham Cowley, *Works* (London: 1684), xii.

²² Stella Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode: 1450-1700* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001).

modeling a class distinction that is thematic throughout the odes:

I have many swift arrows in the quiver under my arm.
They speak to those who understand,
But for the most part they require interpreters.
Wise is the man who knows much by nature,
While those who have acquired their knowledge
Chatter in pointless confusion, just like
A pair of crows against the divine bird Zeus.²³

The divinity that Pindar imitates and channels in his odes is comprehensible to only an elite coterie whose understanding of divinity is natural and precedes the performance and interpretation of the odes. The lyrics lose their capacity to signify divinity without natural and innate pre-knowledge. The act of interpretation for an audience outside of this coterie of understanders is artificial, and therefore incomplete and distorted. Interpretation disrupts the ordered meaning of the odes and the relationships with divinity that they model: whatever knowledge is transferred through the artificial process of interpretation produces confused insults against Zeus, not celebrations of his perfection. *Arete* represents social ideals that are the innate and exclusive function of Pindar, his victors, and their shared patrons. Pindar's odes reproduce this aristocratic exceptionalism, mirroring back to his class of understanders the origin and substance of their superiority.

Early modern readers encountered Pindar through thick commentaries that showcased him as a purveyor of the values and behaviors that characterized aristocratic elitism. Commentators produced detailed glosses on this aristocratic focus, and were especially interested in the intersections between Pindar and his aristocratic subjects, patrons, and audiences. Editors compounded the motific *arete* and the ceaseless self-referentiality of the odes with lengthy *vitae* that blended fact and mythology, fashioning

²³ Olympian 2, 82-8. This is Anthony Verity's translation from *Pindar: The Complete Odes*, ed. Stephen Instone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Pindar as a thematically and biographically aristocratic poet. An apocryphal account of Alexander sparing only Pindar's house during his sacking of Thebes furnished the most durable and emblematic illustrations of Pindar's aristocratic associations. This anecdote appeared frequently in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century commentaries, and Milton famously iterates it in his sonnet, "Captain or Colonel, or Knight in Arms" as a device to protect his own property in the face of an impending attack on London by the king's forces at the outset of the civil war.²⁴ Alexander's regard for Pindar modeled for Renaissance readers a merged respect for Pindar as a man of degree and a rich source for representing and understanding an aristocratic *ethos*. The odes appear frequently in humanist collections of *sententiae* compiled to educate young aristocrats, and were found to be such a robust source for this didactic medium that an edition of Pindaric *gnomoi*, *Aristologia Pindarica Graeolatina*, was published in the middle of the sixteenth century.²⁵ Sidney concurs with countless others, including Nicholas Sudor, Ronsard, Spenser, and Drayton, that Pindar is a valuable source for teaching archetypal behavior to a class of elite readers in order to prompt them to noble actions: "But as the unimitable Pindare often did, so is that kind [heroic verse] most capable and most fit, to awake the thoughts from the sleepe of idlenesse, to embrace honourable enterprises."²⁶ Ronsard fuses this didactic function with the epinician mode of the lyrics, offering in his

²⁴ I.e., "Sonnet 8." The Trinity Manuscript provides a title for the otherwise unlabeled sonnet that reinforces the immediacy of the historical circumstances in which it was written: "On his dore when ye Citty expected an assault/ When the assault was intended to ye Citty."

²⁵ Revard, 17.

²⁶ *Defense of Poesie* (London: 1595). Isidore Silver notes that Ronsard looked to Pindar as a model for addressing monarchs, and that his appropriation of the Pindaric form for contemporary events and figures influenced the use of Pindaric imitation in the period: *The Pindaric Odes of Ronsard* (Paris: n.p., 1937).

imitations both lessons and praise for his patrons. By the 1640s, Pindarics had been co-opted as a form of royal encomia that articulated and celebrated the inviolable superiority of an aristocratic elite, and the genre was fit to justify and re-examine the constitution of a class whose vulnerabilities were so vividly displayed and recounted during the civil war.

Pindar elevates his aristocratic heroes, but he does not isolate them from those they rule and represent. His athletes are metonymies for their *poleis*: their victories signify and celebrate their own native strengths, as well as those of their community. By emphasizing this reflexivity, the odes capture victories that are both archetypal and intensely local. These two functions merge in the public performance of an ode, a “ritual celebration” that invites victors and communities to define themselves through the occasion of athletic achievement. Pindar’s epinicians were performed as part of elaborate public festivals, and he frequently folds this context into the content of the odes in order to emphasize the centrality of a community’s participation in the performance of his songs. Triumph in the games entitled Pindar’s victors to fame, but could not provide it, and the force of their victory risked dissipating in obscurity without the public reiteration these performances provided:

Men have a saying: do not hide a noble accomplishment
on the ground in silence. Rather, a divine song
with verses of acclaim is called for.²⁷

His victors rely on these rituals to furnish the public recognition and celebration necessary to translate their accomplishments into public memory, where they could endure. Moreover, these ceremonies are opportunities for communities to celebrate themselves through the celebration of their aristocratic heroes, whose accomplishments

²⁷ Nemean 9, 6-8.

are reflections of their hometowns:

For let him know well, whoever in that cloud of war
Defends his dear country from the hailstorm of blood

by turning the onslaught against the opposing army,
that he fosters the greatest glory for his townsmen's race,
both while he lives and after he is dead.²⁸

These self-congratulatory festivals are occasions for self-construction in which communities simultaneously confer glory to their victors and themselves. Public rituals facilitate a reciprocity between Pindaric victors and their *poleis* in which each constitutes the other. This reciprocity mirrors the principle of mutuality between governor and subject that dominated early modern political economies, and provided a model for Renaissance readers looking to reexamine the function and utility of state rituals in the construction of aristocratic and community identities.

Pindar's odes reproduced the social relationships that preoccupied his early seventeenth-century audiences, but his recurrent stress on the inescapable limits and failures of mortality was most pertinent to a changing culture in which these traditional relationships seemed to be insufficient. His odes constantly undercut the individual and social accomplishments he proclaims, counterbalancing superhuman achievement with reminders of human limitations. Pindar is careful to make explicit the inviolable distinction between the divine and human:

There is one race of men, another of gods; but from one mother we both draw our breath. Yet the allotment of a wholly different power separates us, for the one race is nothing, whereas the bronze heaven remains a secure abode forever.²⁹

²⁸ Isthmian 7, 26-30.

²⁹ Nemean 6, 1-4.

Even his aristocratic victors, vaunted above the *demos* through their natural nobility and triumphant demonstration of *areta*, are only immortal-like and bound by the parameters of their mortality:

But men's valor is determined by the gods.

.....
Do not seek to become Zeus; you have all there is
If a share of those blessings should come to you.
Mortal things befit mortals.³⁰

Pindar owns up to his own limitations as a poet whose corporeal instruments can offer only incomplete praise through imperfect imitations of his muses' songs: "My mouth is too small to recount all the things that the holy precinct of Argos holds as its/ portion of blessings; furthermore, men's satiety is grievous to encounter."³¹ Poets that attempt to overcome the insufficiencies of their subject and song risk producing an artificial panegyric that distorts rather than represents natural *areta*:

I believe that Odysseus' story
has become greater than his actual suffering
because of Homer's sweet verse,

for upon his fictions and soaring craft
rests great majesty, and his skill
deceives with misleading tales. The great majority
of men have a blind heart, for if they could have seen
the truth, mighty Aias, in anger over the arms,
would not have planted in his chest
the smooth sword.³²

This poetic deceit disrupts the didactic social function of heroic achievement and lyric, whose distorted lessons are more likely to mislead than instruct. Without reliable models for *areta*, the reciprocal relationship between hero and community that is based on the

³⁰ Isthmian 5, 11, 15-17.

³¹ Nemean 10, 19-20.

³² Nemean 7, 20-27.

celebration of archetypal behavior is a fragile ideal:

For easily can even weaklings shake a city;
but to set it back in place again is a difficult
struggle indeed, unless suddenly
a god becomes a helmsman for the leaders.³³

Disorder lurks in the odes. Nonetheless, it qualifies but never subsumes the epinician project, leaving unresolved the tension between stark triumphalism and dark realism.

Early modern editions of *sententiae* register these dueling themes: Erasmus's *Adages* are representative, citing both the dire "Creatures of a day! What is man? What is he not?/ He is the dream of a shadow..." and the ebullient "Excellence soars upward like a tree fed on fresh dews/ lifted among the wise and just towards the liquid upper air."³⁴ Pindar offers a model of public poetry that replicates the possibilities and failures of the social values and relationships it represents. As such, the genre captured the conflicting confidence and disillusionment of Cowley and his contemporaries as they fought for causes that had failed them.

But even these limits had limits. Pindar is a notoriously difficult poet, and the *gnomoi* through which he defines his social economy are discrete moments of clarity conveyed with a stylistic boldness that frustrates meaning and, for some, reason. The odes are rich with expansive metaphors that sometimes overrun the themes they are used to elaborate: Pindar often leaves thoughts unfinished as he tirelessly forces his figurative associations to their points of failure, and is forced to reign in his muses in order to complete his praise. His structure, style, and themes are incessantly elliptical, creating a dizziness that is compounded by a syntactical impenetrability and archaic diction that

³³ Pythian 4, 272-4.

³⁴ Pythian 8, 95-6 and Nemean 8, 40-42, in "Homo bulla" and "Festina Lente," respectively.

baffle readers. Classical scholars are divided over whether this unique and difficult style is a celebration of obscurity or a function of his project to praise.³⁵ The issue was clearer for early modern readers, who filtered the odes through Horace's characterization of Pindar as a fundamentally overwhelming poet:

Like a river that rushes down from a mountain,
which rains have swollen above its normal banks,
so does Pindar rage and rush on with his
deep voice.³⁶

For Horace, Pindar soars above the banal, rejects regularity and “tumbles new words through his daring dithrambs and is carried along in rhythms free from rules.”³⁷ These classifications captured the confusion of early modern readers who struggled to unwind Pindar's knotted meter and metaphors, and were reproduced in most sixteenth- and seventeenth-century commentaries on the odes. In spite of efforts to identify regularity in the lyrics—Erasmus Schmidt attempted to make Pindar comprehensible to readers in his edition, and most editors note the patterned strophe, antistrophe, epode cycle—Horace's famous comments controlled Pindar's reputation. Imitators compounded this reputation by reproducing Pindarics that channeled Horace's caricature: Ronsard converts Pindaric rage into poetic *fureur*, and Cowley struggles with a source that he finds to be “irrational,” and “obscure.”³⁸ Early modern readers encountered in Pindar a poet who was irreducible and uncontrollable, for whom conventional boundaries and limitations

³⁵ For positions that represent this rift see John T. Hamilton, *Soliciting Darkness: Pindar, Obscurity, and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) and William Race, *Style and Rhetoric in Pindar's Odes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

³⁶ *Odes* 4.2, 5-8. Translation from Race, 123.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-12.

³⁸ For more on Ronsard's *fureur*, see Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn Ode*, 82, 90; and Hamilton, *Soliciting Darkness*, 144-8.

were sites for possible transgression, overflow, and excess. These soaring stylistics provide the potential for transfiguring and transcending the strictures of mortality that are incessantly reiterated in the thematic *memento mori* of the odes. If Pindar's emphasis on limits allowed seventeenth-century readers to understand the weaknesses of their traditional social structures, his flights and floods provided an imaginative means by which they could overwhelm and override their commitments to inherited customs and conventions.³⁹

Cowley, like Jonson in his Cary-Morrison ode, found in Pindar the material for a poetic response to his shifting culture. But, unlike Jonson, his traditional mainstays for social identity—namely, the king, church, and aristocracy—had been displaced, and he was forced to use his material to redefine, not simply reconstitute, the social order they customarily maintained. Cowley recreates in the *Pindarique Odes* a poetic parallel to the confusion that characterized English cultural experience throughout the Civil War and Interregnum. Through the selective use and manipulation of his Pindaric material, he manages to exaggerate the specific components of his cultural experience that he finds most significant so that they become the fundamental characteristics of the imaginative world he constructs: the expansive metaphors and incessant digressions of Pindar's style furnished a motif that replicated the apparent disorder of social reorganization he was witnessing. Within this deliberately distorted arena, he appropriates Pindaric themes and

³⁹ Lois Potter, Thomas Corns and Stella Revard agree with Annabel Patterson's assessment that Cowley uses Pindar's stylistic obscurity to create a "functional ambiguity" that resists the interpretations of contemporary political discourse (pp. 150-1). Nigel Smith finds in the odes a poetic energy that eschews political expression and explores a mode of panegyric freed from the "unity of praise" formerly directed at Charles: *Literature and Revolution in England* (pp. 277-86). Achsah Guibbory argues that Cowley uses the liberty of the Pindaric form to celebrate practitioners of the New Science as intellectual liberators: "Imitation and Originality: Cowley and Bacon's Vision of Progress." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 29.1, *The English Renaissance* (Winter, 1989), 99-120.

figures that coordinate with contemporary responses to the distinct dilemmas of his Pindarized world: the structures of ritual are analogous to the demands of partisanship, a class of elite understanders stands in for coterie communities, the transmission of fame approximates the operations of cultural inheritance, and demonstrations of *areta* replicate principled behavior. His assessment of these responses is finally critical: none of them can stabilize or sustain themselves within the enhanced fluidity of a society that denies its authorities. Underlying these failures is a shared reliance on stable associations with institutions, like-minded communities, custom, or reason as a means through which identity is constructed and evaluated. But the practices derived from this assumption are necessarily impracticable in a social environment that denies the possibility of stable authorities with which to identify. By translating his cultural moment through Pindar's uniquely unconventional poetic material, Cowley is able to investigate and eventually repudiate the predominate modes of social interpretation and representation that were incompatible with the realities of a changed and changing culture.

I.

The *Pindarique Odes* are directly influenced by Horace's classification of Pindar as a raging and rushing poet "free from rules." Cowley warns in the general preface to the 1656 edition of his *Poems*, in which his Pindaric imitations first appear, that this section of the collection will be jarring and unfamiliar: "The *Figures* are unusual and *bold*, even to *Temeritie*, and such as I durst not have to do withal in any other kind of *Poetry*."⁴⁰ He reiterates this observation in the preface to the section of Pindarics to argue that the stylistics of the victory odes are so unconventional that he had to invent a new method of translation to accommodate their distinctive boldness. The most obvious trace of

⁴⁰ Abraham Cowley, *Poems* (London: 1656), sig. b.

Horace's influence, however, is "*The Praise of Pindar*," Cowley's Pindaric rendering of Horace's influential Ode 4.2, the source that shaped his own understanding of the difficult lyrics. This imitation occurs early in the sequence—between Cowley's translations of Olympian 2 and Nemean 1 and his first original imitation, "The Resurrection"—so that it, like Horace's ode, mediates between Pindar and contemporary interpretations of him. Cowley's version rehearses Horace's most famous conceits: a soaring "*Theban Swan*," the Icarian failure of imitators, and the uncontrollable swell of his verse. Cowley converts these themes and images into a motif, so that his ode reiterates Horace's characterizations in a poetics derived from them. Like Pindar, he insistently presses his metaphors beyond their capacity to produce new meaning, recreating the tumbling and expansive verse that he describes:

So *Pindar* does new *Words* and *Figures* roul
Down his impetuous *Dithyrambique Tide*,
Which in no *Channel* deigns t'abide,
Which neither *Banks* nor *Dikes* controul.⁴¹

His "*Theban Swan*" is held aloft by the meticulous elaboration of its flight, and soars until Cowley's language falters:

Lo, how th' obsequious *Wind*, and swelling *Ayr*
The *Theban Swan* does upward bear
Into the *walks* of *Clouds*, where he does play,
And with extended *Wings* opens his liquid way.⁴²

The double meaning of "liquid"—"airy" or "watery"—marks the limits of the poem's aerial vocabulary and the swan's figurative flight. Cowley enriches these stylistic elaborations by continuously underscoring the themes they are meant to illustrate: in the Icarian opening, for instance, he repeatedly reminds readers of Pindar's inimitability,

⁴¹ "*The Praise of Pindar*," 12-15.

⁴² *Ibid*, 36-9.

terming him “imitable by none,” “the *Phaenix Pindar*,” “a vast *Species alone*,” and his verse an “*unnavigable Song*.” He further supplements his Horatian framework with an annotative apparatus that magnifies rather than clarifies Pindar’s irrationality and excess: his “*Dithyrambique Tide*” is glossed as “a bold, free, *enthysiastical* kind of Poetry, as of men inspired by *Bacchus*, that is, *Half-Drunk*...” and the insufficient attempts to control his irrepressible song are defined more precisely, “*Banks, natural; Dikes, artificial*. It will neither be bounded and circumscribed by *Nature*, nor by *Art*.”⁴³

“*The Praise of Pindar*” articulates a methodology for Pindaric imitation that is based on Pindar’s irregular stylistics rather than his didactic utility. Cowley showcases this prioritization in his translations of Olympian 2 and Nemean 1, where he puts to use a new mode of translation that subordinates the content of the odes to their erratic form:

Upon this ground, I have in these two *Odes* of *Pindar* taken, left out, and added what I please, nor make it so much my aim to let the Reader know precisely what he spoke, as what was his *way* and *manner of speaking*, which has not been yet (that I know of) introduced to *English* [. . .].⁴⁴

Pindar’s unconventionality invites Cowley to develop an unconventional means of conveying it, even if it means he must depart from his source.⁴⁵ The result is a poetics that can Pindarize Pindar into conformity with his derivative irregularity: he, for instance, justifies one of the many omissions in Nemean 1 as a stylistic necessity that otherwise

⁴³ *Poems*, 19-20, nn. 2.1, 2.2).

⁴⁴ *Poems*, sig. Aaa2v.

⁴⁵ Cowley found this new mode of translation to be so innovative that it could not yet be named. In his “Account of the Life of Mr. Abraham Cowley,” Thomas Sprat characterizes it as “leaving Verbal Translations, and chiefly regarding the Sense and Genius of the Author” and identifies Cowley as “the absolute Inventor of it.” Edward Phillips, in the entry on Cowley in his expansive *Theatrum Poetarum*, also registers Cowley’s departures from his Pindaric originals.

“would but embroil the story, and addes nothing to the *similitude*.”⁴⁶ The subsequent imitations recreate an “*enthysiastical*” poetry that resists and, when necessary, supersedes the regularity and sententiousness that Jonson emulates in the Cary-Morison ode. By distilling Pindar to his “*manner of speaking*” rather than “precisely what he spoke,” Cowley self-consciously creates an epistemology that obscures its origins and undermines its ability to construct and convey knowledge.

Cowley found in the obscure, impetuous, and digressive *Pindariques* a poetic complement for a culture that had lost the stable sources through which it recognized and reproduced social meaning. Pindar’s stubborn indecipherability captured the crisis of a nation estranged from its own customs and religion, raving in its reinterpretations of itself. Elizabeth Sauer’s observation that there was a “fluidity that characterized the dissenters’ individual and communal identities” does not overstate the impression for some that the reformists had introduced into the social economy an agitating formlessness that eroded the existing social order.⁴⁷ For Cowley, the “*Dithyrambique Tide*” of Pindar’s “*unnavigable Song*” captured this disintegrating fluidity, and in his Interregnum imitations he adapts the subsequent disarray into poetic conceits that represent exaggerated visions of dissolved natural, artificial, and social structures. “The Resurrection,” which Cowley feels “is truly *Pindarical*, falling from one thing into another, after his *Enthysiastical manner*,” imagines that the Rapture will release an atomic disorganization that immediately erodes natural forms:

Then shall the scatter’ed *Atomes* crowding come
Back to their *Ancient Home*,

⁴⁶ *Poems*, 16, n. 7.2.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Sauer, “*Paper Contestations*” and *Textual Communities in England, 1640-1675* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 100.

Some from *Birds*, from *Fishes* some,
Some from *Earth*, and some from *Seas*,
Some from *Beasts*, and some from *Trees*.
Some descend from *Clouds* on high,
Some from *Metals* upwards fly [...]⁴⁸

Divine reorganization originates in a cosmic disorientation that undoes the categorical distinctions between elements and species and indiscriminately blends the matter of the universe into a heap of undifferentiated atoms. Cowley coordinates this apocalyptic confusion with a description of his unruly Pindaric muse as a raging “*Pindarique Pegasus*” that is “fierce,” “unbroken,” and “impatient” in its disdain of “the *servile Law* of any settled *pace*.”⁴⁹ This unruly Pindaric muse resists poetic constraint and convention as it represents disorder, articulating an affinity between poetic and cosmic confusion that provides Cowley with a heedless decorum that tends towards the formlessness it describes.

But however aptly the Pindaric medium replicates the disorientation experienced by Cowley and his peers, we must not mistake aesthetic confusion for authorial confusion. Though “enthusiastical,” Cowley is no zealot and maintains control over his Pindaric flight and the disarray he describes. Though he frequently indulges and enhances Horace’s vatic characterizations, Cowley is unwilling to concede that he or Pindar are overwhelmed by their enthusiastic lyrics. In “*The Praise of Pindar*,” Cowley qualifies the Horatian portrait of Pindaric flight by casting his source as a Daedalean figure who virtuosically controls his soaring song: “Who ere but *Daedalus* with waxen wings could fly,/ And neither *sink* too low, nor *soar* too high?”⁵⁰ Similarly, the unruly Pegasus of

⁴⁸ “The Resurrection,” 37-43.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 52-64.

“The Resurrection” can be ridden, if not broken, when mounted skillfully: “‘Twill no *unskillful Touch* endure,/ But flings *Writer* and *Reader* too that *sits* not *sure*.”⁵¹ Thomas Sprat, Cowley’s friend, editor, and apologist, later praises his friend for accomplishing this steady poetic equestrianism and avoiding the Icarian failure presaged in Horace’s ode.⁵²

II.

Through the deft management of his Pindaric material, Cowley becomes the agent as well as the object of the disorder he describes. His imitations permit an imaginative engagement with the realities of Interregnum rule that moves beyond inert and perplexed reaction. Though the Interregnum was a period of royalist disrepair, it was also an era of republican reconstruction. The institutions and rituals established to replace the dissipated immanence of the monarchy during the Commonwealth provided Cowley with social structures against which he could channel the deconstructing tide in which he was caught. Reformists deployed a rhetoric of construction and endurance as they struggled to erect their ideological edifices. James Harrington’s *Oceana*, which appeared the same year as Cowley’s *Poems*, urges that the Commonwealth be “instituted well,” otherwise it will be susceptible to the instability that collapsed the monarchy and “will every houre produce a new Order, the end whereof is to have no Order at all.”⁵³ Harrington is anxious to recuperate an “inconstant and floating” cultural moment and install through reasonable

⁵⁰ *The Praise of Pindar*,” 3-4.

⁵¹ “The Resurrection,” 65-6.

⁵² Thomas Sprat, “An Account of the Life of Abraham Cowley” in Abraham Cowley, *Works* (London: 1684), xii.

⁵³ James Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana* (London: 1656), 53.

discourse the durable stability of the “superstructures natural unto popular government.”⁵⁴ The *Pindarique Odes* supplied a poetic contravention to Harrington’s vulnerable order, releasing against it the force of a Pindaric surge to test its stability: “For which reason, I term his Song *Unnavigable*; for it is able to drown any *Head* that is not strong built and well *ballasted*.”⁵⁵ Little of the republican experiment proved to be well-ballasted, and the figurative drowning envisioned by Cowley was as real as it was wished for by him and his royalist cohort. Through the imitations Cowley is able to emphasize that the forceful formlessness that had dissolved the court and church during the Civil War was permanent and indiscriminately disallowed royalist and republican structures alike.

In the *Pindarique Odes*, Cowley displays and directs the disarray of his social condition. This double-function enables him to simulate in the lyrics a disorienting world in which meaning is dislocated from stable sources and susceptible to the unpredictable shifts of a fluid environment. He situates in this fluidity the sources of order derived from Pindar’s odes—public ceremony, aristocratic elitism, and moral *ethos*—to test their viability in a context that is inhospitable to their influence. These experiments allow him to challenge the utility of contemporary responses to post-Civil War England and search out alternative methods of locating and creating personal and public significance in its unfamiliar and uncertain environment. Taken together, his imitations are an attempt to understand this new social reality and how to locate personal and public significance in its interminable flux.

⁵⁴ James Harrington, *The Art of Lawgiving*, excerpted in *Divine Right and Democracy*, ed. David Wootton (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 403.

⁵⁵ *Poems*, 19, n1.1.

Pindar's odes provided Cowley with the material and method through which he could examine and reimagine the production of social meaning. The public ceremonies for which the odes were composed were indispensable sites for the creation and transmission of cultural meaning. Rituals themselves, the lyrics were nested within a ritualized reiteration of the political and religious relationships through which Greek communities understood themselves. Their attention to the significance of the aristocratic *areta*, athletic and theocratic *ponos*, and immanent *theos* demonstrated in the games furnished early modern audiences with a compendious account of a social order in which political and religious ideologies, local communities, ancestral lines, and individual accomplishment intersected with and reciprocated each other through public ritual.⁵⁶ But for Cowley, this ritualized reflexivity could not operate in an unstable Interregnum culture that was contending over what, how, and whether to celebrate. Produced in an inscrutable social era without stable or recognizable relationships to its authorities, the *Pindarique Odes* cannot transmit the cultural conditions of their production. Like Pindar's original odes, they are inherently and irrecoverably anachronistic, even in their own time, and therefore inhospitable to meaning derived from an understanding of their context: Cowley's lament in the preface to his 1656 *Poems* that a "warlike, various, and tragical age is best to write of, but worst to write in" captures the frustration of identifying and reproducing meaning in a confused cultural condition.⁵⁷ The stable and structured relationships that make meaningful ritual possible are irrelevant to the imitations. Instead, Cowley draws on Pindar's reputation as a pan-Hellenic poet willing

⁵⁶ The expansive commentaries found in early modern editions and Cowley's own notes to his odes suggest precisely how rich a source Pindar's odes were for understanding Greek cultural history.

⁵⁷ *Poems*, sig.a2v.

to provide praise wherever it was due to create a poetic perspective that prefers to assess rather than reproduce the various authorities of a fractured social order.⁵⁸ The result is a reformed ritual directed by a supervising muse that “*consists more in Digressions, then in the main subject,*” facilitating for Cowley an epistemological disposition that permits the indulgence of social complexity to infringe on coherent understanding.⁵⁹

Whereas Pindar’s lyrics and their performance confirm the stable and mutual relationships they represent, Cowley’s Pindarized muse is impelled only to survey, not order and integrate, its disparate social material. However tenuously harnessed by “strong *Judgment*” or “Sound *Memory*,” his muse is drawn by an “Unruly *Phansie*” that ignores natural, religious, and imaginative boundaries:

Where never *Foot of Man*, or *Hoof of Beast*,
The passage prest
.....
The *Wheels* of thy bold *Coach* pass quick and free;
And all’s an *open Road* to *Thee*.
Whatever *God* did *Say*,
Is all thy plain and smooth, uninterrupted *way*.
Nay ev’n beyond his *works* thy *Voyages* are known,
Thou hast thousand *worlds* too of thine *own*.
Thou speakst, great *Queen*, in the same *stile* as *He*,
And a *New world* leaps forth when *Thou* say’st, *Let it Be*.⁶⁰

The muse’s transgressive language supplants the *logos* as the principle origin of organization, freely traversing and replacing God’s spoken creation with an easy liberty

⁵⁸ The geographical and political diversity of the games that furnished Pindar his material are traceable in early modern commentaries. The Schmidt edition, for instance, notes, “Conveniebat autem ad celebritatem Olympicam omnis Graecia, una & exteraenationes, ex Aegypto, Libya, Sicialia, &c. quae tamen ad deliberations de rebus Graeciae non admittebantur, sed tantum ad certamina...” Moreover, in the prefatory note to his translation of Nemean 1, Cowley notes the “*extraordinary conflux of all Greece*” to the Nemean games (p. 11).

⁵⁹ *Poems*, 1.

⁶⁰ “The Muse,” 20-1, 28-35.

that denies the divide between secular and divine. Speaking in “the same *stile* as *He*,” Cowley’s muse is aligned with a creative force whose motivations and machinations originate outside of the existence it generates; like God, she is a dark and elusive origin understood only through her abundant and unprecedented creations.

The “Unruly *Phansie*” that directs the dis-organization of natural and divine order informs a poetic perspective that insists on perceiving and reproducing multiplicity. In “The Exstasie” it manifests as a whirlwind that mounts the speaker on a conventionally Pindaric flight that exposes him to a battery of elements:

I pass by th’arched *Magazins*, which hold
Th’eternal stores of *Frost*, and *Rain*, and *Snow*;
 Dry, and *Secure* I go,
 Nor shake with *Fear*, or *Cold*.
Without *affright* or *wonder*
I meet *Clouds* charg’d with *Thunder*,
And *Lightnings* in my way
Like harmless *Lambent Fires* about my *Temples* play.⁶¹

Inured to the violence of complexity, the speaker is unaffected by the rapid assault of frost, rain, snow, sound, and fire, and retains his capacity to perceive and experience the distinctiveness of the condensed storms. Even in their rarefied forms the elements are inert and cannot capture the sense or senses of a subject moving through them. The speaker’s flight, and Cowley’s perspective which follows it, continues through this firmament, past the limits of “*Galileos Glass*,” until it merges with the ascent of Christ to a heaven that “drowns all *What*, or *How*, or *Where*.” The poem pursues its flight through heaven, following Christ on an interminable climb into an indeterminacy that guarantees further transformation and possibility:

But where he stopt will nere be known,
Till *Phoenix Nature* aged grown

⁶¹ “The Exstasie,” 17-24.

To 'a Better *Being* do aspire,
And mount *herself*, like *Him*, to 'Eternitie in *Fire*.⁶²

Poet, speaker, and reader are held aloft by the experience of engaging with a complexity that is endlessly compounded as the ascent in the poem continues.

The sustained and indulged multiplicity articulated in “The Muse” and “The Exstasie” is fundamental to the themes and structures of the *Pindarique Odes*, and offers a dynamic alternative to the rehearsed and predictable rituals through which social identity had been constituted for Pindar and pre-war England. Like the speaker in “The Exstasie,” Cowley suggests, subjects continuously aware of and engaged with the complexity of shifting circumstances resist being restrained by or identified with any single experience. Instead, they are affected by perspective shifts that constantly reconstitute what was previously immediate and familiar:

And (Lo!) I *mount*, and (Lo!)
How small the biggest Parts of *Earths* proud *Tittle* show!
Where shall I find the noble *British* Land?
Lo, I at last a *Northern Spec* espie,
Which in the *Sea* does lie,
And seems a *Grain* o' th' *Sand*!
For this will any *sin*, or *Bleed*?
Of *Civil Wars* is this the *Meed*?
And is this, alas, which we
(Oh *Irony* of *Words*!) we call *Great Britainie*?⁶³

Borne through change by his whirlwind fancy, the speaker, like the exiled Cowley, must renegotiate his understanding of a newly distant physical and political world. From this prospect, England and the origins of its Civil War are almost indiscernible. The thought that the social demands of Great Britain alone, situated as an isolated speck in an expansive and expanding sea of multiplicity, could control behavior and identity is an

⁶² Ibid, 85-88.

⁶³ Ibid, 7-16.

absurd irony. So too, for the post-war Cowley, is the idea that the partisan identifications of the Civil War could continue to make demands on the loyalties and behaviors of English subjects amid the cultural discontinuities of the Commonwealth. His infamous insistence that “we must *march* out of our *Cause* it self” is an invitation to consider the capacious and shifting contingencies of a social reality in which affiliations with single entities are impracticable and anachronistic.⁶⁴ The institutional categories supplied by royalism, republicanism, monarchy, and Commonwealth are impotent attempts to enforce a single source of social meaning in an Interregnum culture that was producing and recognizing multiple alternative authorities.

Many of Cowley’s contemporaries attempted to repair the uncertain status of centralized authorities by turning to the intimate communities of small social circles for supplementary meaning when institutional structures faltered.⁶⁵ These circles flourished in the 1640s and 1650s: royalists who had removed to their country estates organized themselves into tight-knit groups of social friends; secret societies, like Thomas Stanley’s Order of the Black Riband, attempted to coordinate domestic resistance to the reformist projects; alternative circles opened up among the French exiles as they debated strategies for their return. Lois Potter has noted that royalists in particular prized these exclusive hermeneutic communities because they provided protected—and sometimes

⁶⁴ *Poems*, sig. a4r.

⁶⁵ For more on the complexity of these networks and their relationship to the club cultures earlier in the century see *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000); Michelle O’Callaghan, *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs, and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith, and the Order of the Fancy* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994).

subversive—alternatives to a public sphere supervised by Protectorate authorities.⁶⁶ But Nicholas McDowell has reminded us that these circles were not always ideologically homogenous: Thomas Stanley's patronage circle, for instance, included royalists and reformists who engaged in congenial intellectual and literary exchange.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, within these communities participants could develop a coded culture that was rooted in discretely local contexts and relationships, and therefore invulnerable to the broadsides of authoritative critics and censors who could not decipher them. Cowley himself had direct experience creating meaning in these exclusive circles in his capacity as a royal cipher who coded and decoded communications between Charles and Henrietta throughout the war.

Circles attempted to protect against the liabilities of institution-based identity by relocating authority in the consensus of an initiated few. But this deflection nonetheless presupposes that meaning can be derived from a single, stable source. Cowley makes it clear in his imitations that Pindar's obscurity, which invites and undermines alternative interpretations, disallows any preference for this artificial expertise: "For as for the *Pindarick Odes* [...] I am in great doubt whether they wil be understood by most *Readers*: nay, even by very many who are well enough acquainted with the common Roads, and ordinary Tracks of *Poesie*."⁶⁸ The specialized knowledge furnished by training in "common Roads" and "ordinary Tracks" is inapplicable to an unruly poetics constituted by its digressions from the common and ordinary. But on this point Cowley is

⁶⁶ *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660*.

⁶⁷ Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁶⁸ *Poems*, sig. b1r.

not content to rely on Pindar's form alone, and insists on locating in the odes a further thematic endorsement of epistemological multiplicity that denies the privileged understandings of coteries. This required him to strain a Pindaric material that eagerly and repeatedly attributes social meaning to groups of elite, aristocratic understanders. He makes this revision directly and deliberately in the first poem of the sequence, his translation of Olympian 2, by distorting Pindar's famous characterization of his song as "many swift arrows" that speak only to interpreters with innate, natural knowledge. In Cowley's appropriated version, these arrows are launched indiscriminately and endlessly:

How, noble *Archer*, do thy wanton *Arrows* fly
At all the *Game* that does but cross thine *Eye*?
Shoot, and spare not, for I see
Thy sounding *Quiver* can nere emptied be;
Let *Art* use *Method* and good *Husbandry*,
Art lives on *Natures Alms*, is weak and poor;
Nature herself has unexhausted store,
Wallows in *Wealth*, and runs a turning *Maze*,
That no *vulgar Eye* can trace.⁶⁹

As in Pindar's original, the arrow metaphor opens into an elaboration on a thematic preference for nature over artifice. But the wantonness of Cowley's arrows recharacterizes the nature that he praises. Pindar's nature—shorthand for the inborn aristocratic superiority he shares with his patrons and heroes—is transformed into a force of Pindaric irregularity and transgression.⁷⁰ In the remaining ten lines of the stanza, Cowley describes his renovated nature in the same language he uses to characterize his unruly muse: it "bears loud *Thunder*," "oretakes the *Flying* prey," "basks in th' open *Flames* of *Day*," and shrouds "soaring *wings* among the *Clouds*." In this moment, nature and muse merge: the spraying arrows of Cowley's song coordinate with a sprawling

⁶⁹ "Olympian 2," 144-52.

⁷⁰ Cowley glosses this metaphor as "very obscure" (p. 10, n. 1.1).

nature that disdains the restrictions of artifice.

Cowley singles out in his perplexed audience those bound by their training in an artificial knowledge that attempts to trace with “*vulgar Eye*” the “*Method* and good *Husbandry*” of an erratic world and song. Insofar as they share interpretive methods, interpretive communities construct artificial meanings that are overridden by the complexity they attempt to discipline. Cowley reminds his readers of these limitations by littering his odes with the corpses of dilapidated coteries: he derides “*Aristotle*, and most *Philosophers*” for their “vulgar opinion” that the heavens are “*Immutable* and *Incorruptible*,” “*Grammarians*” do violence with their subtle and reductive philology until “we are abus’d by *Words*, grosly abus’d;” myopic partisans are as likely to misattribute the result of a chess game to the “losing party” and “th’ *ill Conduct* of the *Mated King*.”⁷¹ The praise in “*To Mr. Hobs.*” is for a “great *Columbus*” whose novel philosophy exceeds the limitations of schools that preceded it: “his *Notions* are so *New*, and so *Great*, that I did not think it had been possible to have found out *words* to express them clearly.”⁷² Hobbes overcomes the “*universal Intellectual reign*” of Aristotle, “the mighty *Stagarite*,” and supplants “*Vast Bodies of Philosophie*” that “all are *Bodies Dead,/ Or Bodies by Art fashioned*.”⁷³ The odes regard political, religious, and intellectual circles as micro-institutions whose artificial meanings, like those of the social structures they seek to supplement, cannot survive the centrifugal pull of multiplicity.

Some sought to override the scattered contemporary claims to authority by

⁷¹ “The 34 Chapter of the Prophet *Isaiah*,” p. 51, n.3.1; “*Life*,” 2; “*Destine*,” 17.

⁷² *Poems*, 28, n. 5.1.

⁷³ “*To Mr. Hobs.*,” 18, 17, 1, 3-4.

appealing to the inherited laws and customs of a shared history. Loyalists like Robert Filmer used English history to confirm the monarchy as a custom and considered cultural obeisance to be a matter of common law, and therefore unquestionable. Reformists like the irascible John Warr dispute the historical precedence of the monarchy, arguing that it is instead a relatively recent invention that stands on laws that are “contrary” and “full of tricks,” and alternatively urge the revival of what they see to be the more ancient “fundamental laws” of popular liberty that had been squelched by the upstart customs of the crown.⁷⁴ The famous Digger, Gerrard Winstanley, found it useful to legitimize his project for radical reform by tracing its genealogy to Christ, “this Great Leveller.” There were reformers who endorsed wholesale departures from the demands of cultural inheritance, but these historical repudiations often prepared the way for new laws that were designed to endure and develop into custom through generational reiteration. The *Petition of Right* offers a parliamentary solution to the deficiencies in common law, but it does not reject altogether its utility as a mechanism of transmitting identity and directing behavior. Even Milton, despite inveighing against “tyrant custom,” readily illuminates the origins of the religious reform in the practices of the primitive church and meticulously traces the precedents for regicide in English history. This functional coordination of change and reestablishment was fundamental to the Civil War and Interregnum reformist arguments that sought both to justify the apparent novelty of their restructured rights and persuade royalists to realign themselves with the emerging social order: in this age, “laws depend on alteration.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ John Warr, *The Corruption and Deficiency of the Lawes of England Soberly Discovered: or Liberty Working up to Its Just Height* (London:1649), in Wootton, 148, 153.

⁷⁵ Albertus Warren, *Royalist Reform 'd* (London: 1650), 12.

Nevertheless, the recent interruptions to historically validated institutions invited a reassessment of cultural inheritance as a source of social meaning. Despite attempts to recover or create customary precedents, the continuity between retrospection and prospection had been disrupted. For dismayed loyalists and optimistic reformers alike, the past was losing its place in the present. The *Pindarique Odes* test the viability of social artifacts in an environment that resists their attempts to originate and affirm authority through durability. Within the stylistic and thematic inconstancy of the odes, history is a process of extinction, not endurance and expansion. “*Life and Fame*” warns that meaning exists in discrete moments of time, not its progression, and like life, is restricted to “Vain weak-built *Isthmus*, which dost proudly rise/ Up betwixt *two Eternities*.”⁷⁶ Attempts to extend significance beyond this bounded *kairos* and survive in the *chronos* of cultural memory are artificial tasks undone by the expanding eternity in which they assert themselves:

And with what rare *Inventions* do we strive,
Our Selves then to *survive*?
 Wise, subtle *Arts*, and such as well befit
 That *Nothing Mans no Wit*.⁷⁷

This inhospitable history sustains only the semiological husk, not the substance, of meaning. Caesar’s accomplishments survive as syllables, not useful models of behavior:

‘Tis true, the *two Immortal Syllables* remain,
 But, Oh ye learned men, explain,
 What *Essence*, what *Existence* this,
 What *Substance*, what *Subsistence*, what *Hypostasis*
 In *Six poor Letters* is?⁷⁸

⁷⁶ “*Life and Fame*,” 9-10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 14-17.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 34-38.

Emptied by anachronism, Caesar cannot assert his significance in a culture that derives meaning through its own restricted context. Throughout the odes, temporality similarly asserts itself against the integrity of memorialization. “*To the New Year*” offers a Pindarized version of the “*stream of Time*” that dismembers what it conveys:

Alas, what need I thus to pray?
Th’old avaritious *year*
Whether I would or not, will bear
At least a *part of Me* away.⁷⁹

Cowley militarizes this tide, so that time becomes a razing army of chronology whose “*Months, Days, Hours* that march I’th’ *Rear* can find/ Nought of *Value* left behind.”⁸⁰ Celebrations of the new year, which attempt to discern cyclicity in this decay, are tenuously artificial and eroded by the natural and immediate experiences—the loss of friends and liberty, pains of sickness and sadness—of ageing.

The respect for changing circumstance over continuity in the odes contributes to a cultural amnesia in which the demands of historical inheritance have little traction. The translation of Olympian 2 preserves Pindar’s praise of a functional forgetfulness:

For the past sufferings of this noble Race
(Since things once *past*, and fled out of thine hand,
Hearken no more to thy command)
Let *present joys* fill up their place
And with *Oblivions silent stroke* deface
Of foregone Ill the very *trace*.⁸¹

Cowley maintains the theme of subsequent joys overriding past suffering, but his version elaborates on the chronological trigger of this transformation: Pindar’s “noble joys” are temporalized into “present joys” which initiate a trend towards oblivion. The odes

⁷⁹ “*To the New Year*,” 11-14.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 18-19.

⁸¹ “Olympian 2,” 107-112.

represent a culture susceptible to its continuous encounters with a changed and changing present that overrides the experiences of the past. No matter how history asserts itself, the tenure of its meaning is inescapably tied to a contemporary community incapable of remembering. Custom and law cannot be coordinated with an irrecoverable past or an indiscernible future, and therefore lose their usefulness as guides for social interpretation and behavior.

Those disaffected by the shared shortcomings of institutions, circles, and cultural inheritance turned inward to principled reason and righteousness as alternatives through which they could escape the insufficiencies of flawed external structures of social authority. Earl Miner, Maren-Sofie Røstvig, and Raymond Anselment have traced in royalist communities the cultivation of a Stoic self-reliance and resolve through which they could sustain themselves in a culture inhospitable to them in their defeat.⁸² At the same time, advocates for political reform claimed to be reformulating society based on principles of reason that were immune to the corruption of party or custom. Religious reformers sought to substitute the principles and practices of personal spirituality for the decadent forms of Laudian Anglicanism. Their apologists responded to charges of enthusiasm and distraction by insisting that, with the exception of some who mistook zeal for truth, their spiritual reform was fundamentally reasonable and that their critics were burdened by their own irrationality: William Walwyn counters conservative criticisms of “enthusiasms and revelations” by blaming schoolmen and poets who would “misguide

⁸² Raymond Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve*. For the principles of the *vita beata* and *vita bona* underlying the notion of Cavalier retreat, see Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) and Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal* (Oslo: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962).

credulous hearts of good men whose reasons contradicted their own delusions.”⁸³

Loyalists and reformist alike were contending over claims to a reason that seemed to be independent from, and therefore authoritative in, the disarray of an increasingly fragmented age.

Cowley’s Pindarics confront the reliability of reason as a source for understanding and acting in a disordered social environment. As I have tried to make clear above, Cowley enhances the stylistic and thematic disarray of Pindar’s odes to create a deliberately “enthusiastical” and “irrational” poetics designed to resist interpretive penetration. His insistent digressions and dis-orientations frustrate attempts to stabilize meaning, challenging the utility of reason as a means of making sense of the shifting multiplicities of Interregnum culture. But understanding disorder and moving through it are different operations: Anselment’s neo-Stoic cavaliers and Walwyn’s rationally righteous reformers both have confidence in their reason-based responses to the irrationality in which they found themselves. The *Pindarique Odes* challenge this function by questioning the possibility of converting principles of reason into practice. In the notes to “The 34 Chapter of the Prophet *Isaiah*,” Cowley likens Isaiah’s verse to Pindar’s, noting their shared “boldest flights,” “extraordinary Figures” and “almost *Invisible connexions*.”⁸⁴ But unlike in other critical episodes in which he details Pindar’s distinct style, Cowley attempts to provide a historical explanation for this unusual and difficult poetry: “for the old fashion of writing, was like *Disputing* in *Enthymemes*, where half is left out to be supplied by the Hearer: ours is like *Syllogisms*, where all that is

⁸³ William Walwyn, *The Compassionate Samaritane* (London: 1644), in Wootton, 247-280; 249.

⁸⁴ *Poems*, 50, n.1.1.

meant is exprest.”⁸⁵ The implied and explicit meanings provided by enthymemes and syllogisms prompt different types of rational behavior, both of which are dismissed in the odes. Enthymemes assume inherent, shared rationality and therefore prompt an abbreviated form of mutual communication. But the Pindaric trend towards incoherence disallows the possibility for any single and cohesive meaning: shared understanding is a relic of the irretrievable “old fashion.” Syllogisms, on the other hand, do not assume this shared rationality and instead expect that opinions can be changed through cumulative reasoning. But this model of argumentation assumes that “all that is meant” can eventually be expressed, a possibility precluded by the dynamic and expansive multiplicity represented in the odes. The critical apparatus appended to the odes is intended to demonstrate the limitations, and finally failures, of syllogistic representation. Cowley purposefully designs his imitations—translations and originals—to be obscure so that he may subsequently compose notes to provide supplementary meaning. Nevertheless, despite their copiousness, his commentaries cannot provide clarity: aware of the deficiencies of his attempts to discipline the odes, he confesses his “great doubt whether they will be understood by most *Readers*.” The practices affiliated with rational epistemologies—the expected and eventual behavior prompted by enthymemes and syllogisms respectively—are swept away by the dynamic confusion into which they introduce themselves.

This skepticism towards reason-based social ordering is related to a broader uncertainty over the possibility of translating principles into praxis. Like Jonson, he found himself in a social environment that seemed to disregard the values he had cultivated just a decade earlier. But unlike Jonson, Cowley senses that the possibility for

⁸⁵ Ibid.

stable representation is irrecoverable in a fluid Interregnum culture that dissolves its cultural material. He opens the preface to the *Poems* by disowning an edition of hack poetry published under his name, fearing the misattribution has distorted his reputation. He is sensitive to the importance of his reputation as the vehicle for his public identity, and is discomfited by its vulnerability:

It was in vain for me, that I avoided censure by the concealment of my own writings, if my reputation could be thus *Executed in Effigie*; and impossible it is for any good *Name* to be in safety if the malice of *Witches* have the power to consume and destroy in it an *Image* of their own making.⁸⁶

Cowley is concerned with the lack of control he has over the representation of himself in a charmed public sphere where identity is spontaneously and indiscriminately created and destroyed. No matter how integrated he conceives of his personal identity, he fears it must come undone in a culture that refuses to recognize him as the source of his own identity. Claims to rationality—or any other principled motive for behavior—are overridden by the hostile whim of the anonymous supernatural forces that seize on self-representation. Cowley's account of Brutus's life illustrates how treacherous translating principle into practice can be. Initially he praises the Roman as a Jonsonian compass able to convert his self-centered virtue into "the wide and fair *Circumference*" of a social norm.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, by the end of the ode Brutus's virtue loses its influence, exposing him to the ambush of a supernatural "*Spright*" wrapped "i' th' terrors of the *night*":

Nor durst it in *Philippi's* field appeare,
But *unseen* attack'ed thee there.
Had it presum'ed in any shape thee to oppose,
Thou wouldst have forc'ed it back upon thy foes:
Or slain't like *Cesar*, though it be

⁸⁶ *Poems*, sig.a1r.

⁸⁷ "Brutus," 8.

A Conqu'erer and a *Monarch* mightier far than *He*.⁸⁸

Brutus, like Cowley, is susceptible to an irresistible specter of formlessness that reduces personal virtue to “An *Idol* onely, and a *Name*” through an overpowering mystery “Too deep for all thy *Judgement* and thy *Wit*.”⁸⁹ Any public order coordinated by static personal virtue or reason will necessarily fail in a fluid social environment that ceaselessly confronts and confuses attempts to stabilize experience.

III.

But Cowley is not caught in the inertia of despair. There is a recurrent dynamism throughout the *Pindarique Odes* as he evaluates and erodes structures of social authority and meaning. As he displays and directs his own “impetuous *Dithyrambique Tide*,” he constantly repositions himself as a poet, translator, critic, and commentator who is never fixed to a single role or perspective. The speakers in the odes emulate this prolific repositioning as they accommodate and relate the inconstancy of the environments through which they move. Unlike the fixed Brutus, assassinated by formlessness in his constancy, Cowley manages to recover and retain agency by adapting to his shifting circumstances. That is, as he represents and responds to his “various” age, he does so with a functional variety that allows him to survive and operate in the change he experiences. Linking epistemology and praxis, he endorses the acknowledgement of multiplicity and uncertainty as a means of managing in them.

The attentive adaptation demonstrated and demanded by the odes recovers a version of Pindaric athleticism that, unlike the controlled and decorous action offered by Jonson in the Cary-Morison ode, coordinates itself with inconstancy. Cowley distills his

⁸⁸ Ibid, 58-63.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 75, 79.

Pindaric source to a forceful and fluid activity that is essentially destructive. None of the ordered structures in the odes are so “strong built and well *ballasted*” that they can resist the momentum of his dissolving tide. However it undercuts understanding, this incessant motion also offers itself as a source for a unique type of meaning derived from its movement. In a comment on the prophet’s call for the world to be “Still, as old *Chaos*, before *Motions* birth” in the invocation to “The 34 Chapter of the Prophet *Isaiah*,” Cowley identifies motion as the origin of natural order: “For as soon as *Motion* began, it ceased to be *Chaos*, this being all *Confusion*, but *Natural Motion* is *regular*.”⁹⁰ Chaos is inert and meaningless in its stasis. The odes rehearse this marriage of stasis and meaninglessness by forcing all attempts at stability into their characteristic confusion. Natural motion, on the other hand, begins in and produces a regularity that resolves incoherence. This regularity is not a function of a highly-wrought Jonsonian decorum that fixes behavior to artificial conventions; this structured restrictiveness is precisely what is undermined by Pindar’s indecorous odes. Cowley’s motion is natural, and therefore uncontrollable, but nevertheless “regular” insofar as it is frequent and measurable. As a fundamental and understandable principle of experience, motion may become a means for understanding that experience. Any interpretation of its moving meaning, however, requires a flexible, athletic mind able to contort itself to accommodate constant change. The *Pindarique Odes* cultivate this adaptability by creating an epistemology informed by the principles of regular motion, rather than static affiliation, as a way of seeing and producing meaning in a culture that was increasingly denying it.

Cowley models this athletic epistemology in the accommodation of his unruly Pindaric material. His interest in reproducing the manner rather than the matter of his

⁹⁰ *Poems*, 50, n.1.1.

originals permits him to coordinate himself with the kinesis of Pindar's flights and floods and avoid the certain madness they otherwise cause in controlled, literal translations. The result is a precarious control within the uncontrollable that facilitates, in the case of Pindaric imitation, poetic production: his Daedlean ability to "neither *sink* too low, nor *soar* too high" is a prerequisite for composing poetry famous for its tendency to overwhelm the sense of those who attempt to translate, imitate, and interpret it. Cowley emphasizes his muse's virtuosic range of motion as it attempts to keep pace with the Pindaric torrent it imitates. Mounted on its "*traveling throne*" his muse passes "quick and free" through physical and temporal space: she reaches to undiscovered corners of nature "Where never yet did pry/ The busie *Mornings* curious eye" can "pluck up with ease" materials from the past which she puts to "publique *Use*" and pulls into the present future years before "They *Life* and *Motion* get."⁹¹ This conglomerate natural and temporal material transforms into a "slippery *Snake*" which the muse, like a wrestler, in her "certain hand holds fast."⁹² The imaginative product of this wrangling is an active poetry whose inventions enhance the mobility of its materials:

The meaning is that *Poetry* treats not onely of all things that are, or can be, but makes *Creatures, Satyrs, Fairies, &c.* makes *persons* and *actions* of her own, as in *Fables* and *Romances*, makes *Beasts, Trees, Waters*, and other irrational and insensible things to act above the possibility of their natures, as to *understand* and *speak*, nay makes what *God* it pleases too without *Idolatry*, and varies all these into innumerable *Systemes*, or *Worlds* of Invention.⁹³

His muse compounds the possibility for action by refracting it through "innumerable *Systemes*" that create new actions to perform and releases subjects to "act above the

⁹¹ "The Muse," 26-7, 37, 41, 53.

⁹² Ibid, 61.

⁹³ *Poems*, 25, n.2.3.

possibility of their natures” to perform them. This process magnifies actions so that they persist beyond themselves: “Nay, thy *Immortal Rhyme*/ Makes this once short *Point* of *Time*,/ To fill up half the *Orb* of *Round Eternity*.”⁹⁴ This athletic poetry is prolific in its dynamic multiplicity and is able to create durable meaning by actively moving through, not establishing memorials against, time. This function is explicit in the notes, where Cowley clarifies, “That is, The subject of *Poetry* is all *Past*, *Future* and *Present Times*; and for the *Past*, it makes what choice it pleases out of the *wrack* of *Time* of things that it will save from *Oblivion*.”⁹⁵ For Cowley and his muse, meaning making begins with the management of movement.

Cowley replicates his muse’s active collection and collation of its moving subjects by creating in the *Pindarique Odes* a poetry that is always shifting. The translations that introduce the imitations are acts of improvisation in which he navigates the “unnavigable” through his willingness to adapt himself and his source. He advertises in his notes the adjustments he must make in order to construct a cohesive text that is justified to his own vision of Pindaric principles. These additions, omissions, and paraphrases are so frequent that the translations become a moving text that consists more in its departures from than its fidelities to Pindar’s odes. He transitions this approach to his original imitations, in which he similarly tracks more closely the manner over the matter of their composition. He co-opts Pindar’s preference for pursuing digressions over main subject, producing poems that, like “*The Resurrection*,” self-consciously illustrate and confront their inability to restrict the range of their “violent course.”⁹⁶ The

⁹⁴ “The Muse,” 70-2.

⁹⁵ *Poems*, 25, n.3.1.

Pindarique Odes deliberately unsettle themselves, but never so violently that they unseat Cowley as the agent of their action. His Daedlean capability to “neither *sink* too low, nor *soar* too high” sustains him within this flux and allows him to direct its principles and tropes as the meaningful social critique described above. The subject and object of the poetic motion he conveys, Cowley retains control of himself and his material and creates meaning through an athletic adaptation within Pindaric change.

The intellectual athleticism displayed in the content and form of the odes invites readers to replicate the adaptability they encounter. Cowley remarks that the characterization of the games as “The fair *First-fruits* of *War*” is apt because it captures the importance of athletic contests as a preparation for war:

I think the Olympique Games are so called, because they were sacred exercises that disposed and improved men for the war, a *Sacred bloodless* war, dedicated to the Gods.⁹⁷

But the conflict that the games anticipate is a social, not military, action that demands an application of spiritual athleticism in a “*Sacred bloodless* war.” Cowley sees value in practicing adaptability to prepare for social action. Insofar as they reproduce the social dilemmas of the Civil War and Interregnum, the *Pindarique Odes* are an arena in which readers may train themselves for the athletic agency displayed by Cowley in their creation. The self-proclaimed obscurity of the imitations enforces what could be termed a “difficult interpretation” that simultaneously invites and frustrates attempts to understand them. Clarity and confusion merge in the text and commentary of the odes, juxtaposing into a single interpretive activity the experiences of knowing and not knowing. John Hamilton notes in his assessment of Cowley’s supplementary notes that these

⁹⁶ “*The Resurrection*,” 56.

⁹⁷ *Poems*, 6, n.1.4.

elaborations on the historical and literary context more often compound the obscurity of a passage by interjecting superfluous information that, if it does not begin as a digression, often digresses from itself.⁹⁸ Cowley permits himself a similar superfluity in the amendments to his translations, including among changes which purify the Pindarism of his source an occasional “innocent *addition* to the *Poet*, which does no *harm*, nor I fear, much *Good*.”⁹⁹ The resulting material, especially that in the notes, exploits the expectation that it is meaningful, forcing readers to make their own distinctions between substance and distraction.

The odes do not statically impart meaning. Instead, they coyly invite readers to create it through a process of assessment that requires them to constantly evaluate what in the poems and the notes is valid material for interpretation and what is not. But any final understanding remains elusive: the necessity of contending with Cowley’s distortions and digressions distracts readers from their primary material. Each elision or superfluous addition distances readers from their source, replacing the text of the odes—translations and imitations alike—with the experience of attempting to understand them. The odes train their readers in an active interpretation that demands the flexibility to range through the uncertainty of multiple, contending authorities. Cowley invites his readers to practice this active epistemology by endorsing the literal enactment of Pindaric odes:

The *Numbers* are various and irregular, and sometimes (especially some of the long ones) seem harsh and uncouth, if the just measures and cadencies be not observed in the *Pronunciation*. So that almost all their *Sweetness* and *Numerosity* (which is to be found, if I mistake not, in the roughest, if rightly repeated) lies in a maner wholly at the *Mercy* of the *Reader*.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ John Hamilton, *Soliciting Darkness: Pindar, Obscurity and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 183.

⁹⁹ *Poems*, 8, n.6.2.

Like Cowley and his muse, readers may create meaning by calibrating themselves to the measured motion of their material. This pronounced exegesis furnishes alternative meanings tied to performance—musical “sweetness” and “numerosity”—that can survive in the irregularity that frustrates the conventional interpretations of those “acquainted with the common Roads, and ordinary Tracks of *Poesie*.”

In the odes addressed to contemporary figures, “*To Mr. Hobs*” and “*To Dr. Scarborough*,” Cowley models for his readers possible social applications of the athleticism they practice in the Pindarics. As mentioned above, the ode to Hobbes praises a philosophy derived from a “*Living Soul*” that is able to overwrite the dead “*Vast Bodies of Philosophies*” that preceded and were contemporaneous with it. Hobbes, like a reader of Pindar, accommodates disparity:

Nor can the *Snow* which now cold *Age* does shed
 Upon thy reverend Head,
 Quench or allay the noble *Fires* within,
 But all which thou hast *bin*,
 And all that *Touch* can *be* thou’rt yet,
 So fully still dost Thou
 Enjoy the *Manhood*, and the *Bloom* of *Wit*,
 And all the *Natural Heat*, but not the *Fever* too.
 So *Contraries* on *Aetna*’s top conspire,
 Here hoary *Frosts*, and by them breaks out *Fire*.¹⁰¹

This “*Living Soul*” acknowledges and expands into anachronism and antagonism, coordinating contradictions into a philosophy whose “*Variety*” is “full of *Concord*.” Hobbes’s writings on natural and political philosophy demonstrate a successful reconciliation of conflict and meaning through action and imagination. Similarly, the ode for Charles Scarburgh, who reputedly orchestrated and funded Cowley’s release from

¹⁰⁰ *Poems*, sig. b1r-v.

¹⁰¹ “*To Mr. Hobs*,” 78-87.

prison in 1655, praises the physician for his skillful management of his confusing condition. “*To Dr. Scarborough*” more explicitly locates its subject in the characteristic fluidity of the contemporary social environment:

How long, alas, hath our mad *Nation* been
Of *Epidemick War* the *Tragick Scene*,
Whilst *Slaughter* all the while
Seem’d like its *Sea*, to *embrace* round the *Isle*,
With *Tempests*, and *red waves*, *Noise*, and *Affright*?¹⁰²

The sea of slaughter released by this “*Epidemick War*” resembles a Pindaric tide that threatens to dissolve the social order it overwhelms. Cowley imagines the extinction of England if diseases had been allowed their own competing “*Civil Wars* in *Men* to wage”: “Sure the unpeopled *Land*/ Would now until’d, desert, and naked stand.”¹⁰³ Scarburgh, who left the direct conflict of the field to train in and practice medicine during the Civil War, prevents this drowning of English society by managing the fluidity confronting it: “The *Inundations* of all *Liquid pain*/ And *Deluge Dropsie* thou do’est *drain*.”¹⁰⁴ His capability to redirect this deluge of disorder requires a rigorous and repetitive action in which he becomes an agent of the liquidity he attempts to control:

The cruel *Stone* that restless pain
That’s sometimes *roll’d away* in vain,
But still, like *Sisyphus his stone*, returns again,
Thou *break’st* and *meltest* by learn’d *Juyces* force,
A greater work, though short the way appear,
Then *Hannibals* by *Vinegar*)
Oppressed *Natures* necessary course
It stops in vain, like *Moses*, Thou
Strik’st but the *Rock*, and straight the *Waters* freely flow.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² “*To Dr. Scarborough*,” 1-5.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 9-10.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 21-2.

Scarburgh is able to disarm the destructive fluidity of his social environment by taking on its characteristics, directing it, like Cowley in the Pindarics, against the stubborn and solid sources of pain. Together, the examples of Hobbes and Scarburgh provide contemporary clarity and context for the principles of Cowley's Pindaric motif, bridging the gap between epistemology and praxis and encouraging readers to apply the athletic adaptation to change that they practice in the imitations.

IV.

Cowley joined his contemporaries in composing a celebratory poem to mark the restoration of the monarchy. Like the poems of his peers, his Pindaric "Ode Upon The Blessed Restoration and Returne of His Sacred Majestie, Charls the Second," celebrates the return of the monarchy as an escape from the dangerous disorder of the Commonwealth. But this ode resists envisioning the Restoration as a recovery of pre-war order and authority, and instead attributes it to a process of change initiated in the fluid uncertainty of the Interregnum. His characterization of the social repercussions of the Civil War recalls the disorder and precariousness of the Scarburgh ode:

Already was the *shaken Nation*
 Into a wild and deform'd *Chaos* brought.
 And it was hasting on (we thought)
 Even to the last of *Ills, Annihilation*.¹⁰⁶

The parenthetical "we thought" reinforces the historical and cognitive distance from this "wild and deform'd *Chaos*." God, waiting "till the *storm* was past" has resolved the "cruell businesse of *Destruction*" with beauty and speed.¹⁰⁷ But God's divine re-ordering

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 34-42.

¹⁰⁶ "Ode Upon The Blessed Restoration and Returne of His Sacred Majestie, Charls the Second," 124-127.

is removed from the chaos it overwrites, and is therefore distinct from the king's tumultuous condition within it. Charles II experienced his exile:

Much is he *tost* at *Sea*, and much at *Land*,
Does long the force of *angry gods* withstand.
He does long *troubles* and long *wars* sustain,
Ere he his *fatall Birth-right* gain.¹⁰⁸

For Charles, the Restoration is tied to a process of sustained struggle within uncertainty and flux, not a spontaneous miracle performed in post-mortem peace. Like Cowley's athletic readers, this encounter with fluidity prepares him for social action: "They *harden* his *young Virtue* by degrees;/ The *beauteous Drop* first into *Ice* does *freez*,/ And into *solid Chrystall* next advance."¹⁰⁹ Charles's virtue is solidified through struggle, but it is not static. He returns at the Restoration as a Pindaric tide that subsumes the structures of the Commonwealth:

No frantick *Common-wealths* or *Tyrannies*,
No *Cheats*, and *Perjuries*, and *Lies*,
No *Nets* of human *Policies*.
No stores of *Arms* or *Gold* (though you could joyn
Those of *Peru* to the great *London Mine*)
No *Towns*, no *Fleets* by *Sea*, or *Troops* by *Land*,
No deeply entrencht *Islands* can withstand,
Or any small resistance bring
Against the *naked Truth*, and the *unarmed King*.¹¹⁰

The re-ordering that Charles facilitates originates in his ability to navigate and redirect the forceful disorder of his Interregnum experience. Consequently, Cowley represents the Restoration as a surge of activity that includes the sea and land, which had

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 139, 141.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 290-3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 285-287.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 194-202.

antagonistically but productively tossed him, in an exuberant celebration in which “*Artificial Joy’s* drown’d by the *Natural*.”¹¹¹ Even Stoics must “some *Excess* allow.”¹¹² The reconstituted royal authority that Cowley imagines in 1660 is crafted in and accommodates the constant motion that had become, and would remain, the English social condition.

The restored government, however, rapidly reinstitutionalized itself as the source of social authority. Nonetheless, Cowley retains his Pindaric posture throughout a Restoration society that was actively, and falteringly, attempting to revive its reliance on stable, centralized authorities for identity construction. Some contemporaries had gone to school on their unstable situation and advocated for an adaptive moderation that tempered extremism and shifted with circumstance. George Saville, Marquis of Halifax, the most famous spokesman for these “Latitude-men” and “Trimmers” articulates their approach as a “wise mean between these Barbarous Extrems” and urges that “heaven decreed there must be a mixture.”¹¹³ But however these responses acknowledged fluidity and exercised the adaptive athleticism encouraged by the Pindarics, they still depended on and conformed to the contending institutions they attempt to navigate. Halifax’s defense of laws, which argues that “rivers belong as much to the channel in which they run as to the spring from whence they arise” is at odds with Cowley’s vision of a Pindarized social flood “which neither *Banks* nor *Dikes* controul.”¹¹⁴ The Trimmer’s restraint is a condition

¹¹¹ Ibid, 365.

¹¹² Ibid, 374-5.

¹¹³ Halifax, George Saville, first Marquis of, *The Works of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax*, ed. Mark Brown, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 184, 186.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 182.

of his participation in the constraining efforts to reinstitutionalize social authority. In his Restoration essay, “Of Liberty,” Cowley sees in this ambitious conformity “the Character of an *Anti-Paul*, who became all things to all Men, that he might destroy all.”¹¹⁵ Behavior measured to comply with established expectations inflicts a “perpetual constraint” that is calibrated to social degree so that the king, the center of social authority and the source of identity construction, is “guarded with Crowds, and shackled with Formalities.”¹¹⁶ He and his subjects are both bound by the expectations his authority demands, forced to participate in a paralyzing “*Hyper-Superlative* ceremony”: “he never sets his foot beyond his Threshold, unless like a Funeral, he have a train to follow him, as if, like the dead Corps, he would not stir, till the Bearers were all ready.”¹¹⁷ Cowley avoids this rigormortis in his country retirement, in which he is “master of his own actions.” He makes clear in his ode “Upon Liberty” that the obscurity of his self-exile from the social demands and engagements of the Restoration is linked with the poetic obscurity of the imitations. His rustic remove is distinctly and deliberately Pindaric:

The more Heroick strain let others take,
 Mine the Pindaric way I'll make.
 The Matter shall be grave, the Numbers loose and free.
 It shall not keep one settled pace of Time,
 In the same Tune it shall not always chime,
 Nor shall each day just to his neighbour Rhime;
 A thousand Liberties it shall dispense,
 And yet shall manage all without offence,
 Or to the sweetness of the Sound, or greatness of the Sense.¹¹⁸

As he did amid the republican institution building and formalized responses of the

¹¹⁵ Cowley, *Works* (London: 1684), 81.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 83.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 83-4.

¹¹⁸ “Upon Liberty,” 113-122.

Interregnum, Cowley finds an alternative to the restrictive “Custom, Business, Crowds, and formal Decencie” of his age in Pindaric liberty.¹¹⁹

Cowley has had more critics than defenders. Mistaking retirement as retreat and obscurity as avoidance, Raymond Anselment declares that “no attempt is made to explore the [. . .] years of defeat and suppression,” no doubt influencing Thomas Corns’s accusation that Cowley “[wraps] himself in the white flag of surrender.”¹²⁰ Assessments of his Pindaric knowledge have been no more kind: Congreve’s condemnation of the imitations as “a bundle of rambling incoherent Thoughts, express’d in a like parcel of irregular Stanza’s” begot Pope’s complaints about “that chain of irregular stanzas which Cowley introduced, and falsely called Pindaricks” and resonates in Johnson’s famous assault on “metaphysical poetry” in his “Life of Cowley.”¹²¹ These eighteenth-century criticisms endure today among scholars who dismiss Cowley as a sophomoric Hellenist who misunderstood his source. These dismissals ignore the control Cowley had over his social and poetic material as he combined them to reinvent social identity amid a cultural crisis. Mischaracterizations of the *Pindarique Odes* as dilettantish and despairing limits their legacy to “a number of miserable imitators” and overlooks the influence of the athletic adaptability that they develop. The imitations resonate in the influential poetry of Katherine Phillips, Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, Anne Finch, and John Wilmot, who each explore flexible social behavior as an alternative to the inherited and imposed forms of social authority. Anne Finch’s “Adam Pos’d,” illustrates the influence of

¹¹⁹ Abraham Cowley, “Upon Liberty,” in *Works* (London: 1684), 18.

¹²⁰ Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve*, 183; Thomas Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 259.

¹²¹ Quoted in Jean Loiseau’s study, *Abraham Cowley’s Reputation in England* (Paris: H. Didier, 1931).

Cowley's Pindaric experiments with fluidity and irrationality. She imagines Adam stunned by the vision of a "Fanstick Nymph" indiscernable in "Her various Fashions, and more various Faces":

How had it pos'd that Skill, which late assign'd
Just Appellations to Each several Kind!
A right Idea of the Sight to frame;
T'have guest from what New Element she came;
T'have hit the wav'ring Form, or giv'n this Thing a Name.¹²²

Finch's Adam is confounded by his encounter with a specter of female formlessness that forces him to leave off his act of ordering. His ability to name and categorize the world is interrupted by the indiscernability of a "wav'ring form" that refuses to be stabilized or identified. This confrontation disrupts the enforcement of structured identity construction by stupefying its origin. Like Falkland in the field or Brutus in his tent, Adam, the source of ordered and ordering authority, is sabotaged by a fluid power that denies the influence of artificial form over formlessness.

¹²² Anne Finch, "Adam Pos'd," *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London: 1713), 7-11.

CHAPTER 2

"CHANG'D YET CONSTANT": THOMAS STANLEY'S PHILANDERING LOYALTY

The ordered and ordering authorities that Cowley drowns with his “*Dithyrambique Tide*” nonetheless exerted residual demands on the culture that had contended with them. However they forecasted the disillusionment represented in the *Pindariques*, the noisy clashes of cannons and cant in the 1640s intertwined the discourses of loyalty and disloyalty as both sides attempted to consolidate consensus for their cause by blasting the obstinate constancy of their opponents. An intensified insistence on loyalty accompanied the tendency to dismantle and disaffiliate it. Increasingly obscured as origins of identity construction, the problematic and problematized social authorities that were alternatively asserted and undercut throughout the civil wars nonetheless insinuated their influence in a society in which the idea of loyalty was more resilient than its sources.

Constancy was in contest in mid-seventeenth-century England. The structure and economy of loyalty was a pressing theme for mid-century polemicists seeking to position themselves and their audiences within the numerous and volatile conflicts that erupted during the 1640s and smoldered in the subsequent decades. Pamphlets like *A Resolution of Conscience* (1649), *Royalty and Loyalty* (1647), and *Rules to know a Royall King, from a Disloyall Subject* (1642), promised clarity for a readership beset by multiple

demands on their social affiliations. Apologists for both parliament and the king urged constancy, but they disagreed on the sources, obligations, and consequences it imposed. The king's party adapted divine right and common law arguments to fix the monarchy as the origin of social authority, and insisted on implicit obedience as an essential mechanism of social order, even when they conceded to a qualified and less absolutist constitutional monarchy. Republicans, on the other hand, relocated the origin of authority in the people and, by proxy, their parliamentary representatives, and argued for interest-driven consensus as the fundamental determinant of social action. There were, of course, departures from and variations on these generalized tenets: polemicists dauntlessly recharacterized themselves and each other as the fortunes and debates of the conflict shifted. But each position in the increasingly partisan debate—royalist, parliamentary, or elusive “neutral” against which both inveighed—required an assessment of the competing sources, structures, and obligations of the loyalty these polemicists explicated.

This discourse of loyalty in turn developed a discourse of disloyalty. Hardened partisan positions extolled constancy among their proponents but simultaneously encouraged inconstancy among their opponents in order to recruit converts. Pamphlets such as *The Loyall Convert* (1643) and *The Royalist Reform'd* (1649), which advocate for rebel and royalist apostasy respectively, interlock loyalty and disloyalty as mutually necessary in their partisan projects. The oxymoronic titles represent the inextricability of the two postures: loyalty is urged on the grounds of conversion and conversion is an indispensable gesture of loyalty. The contradictions complement, and then finally collapse into, each other. The result is a loyalty that is dissociated from static and dogmatic partisan affiliations and displaced onto the dialectical movement between them. In short,

the pressure on loyalties transformed notions of loyalism.

The demands on the acts and ideas of loyalty were disorienting. To many without predetermined partisan sympathies, each party's claim to England's religious and political interest seemed equally persuasive. The clarity of casuists could not compel a clear social action. Instead, their persuasive contradictions only deepened the perplexity of their undecided readers. In *The Loyall Convert*, Francis Quarles identifies the "riddle" faced by these rational readers who were called on to contemplate two parties whose standing could be undercut as easily as it was confirmed.¹ Continually qualifying and qualified, both parties were destabilized and became sites where social meaning was disputed, not created. Neither party could accrue or assert the authority necessary to influence the behavior of the unaffiliated. Instead, these readers were stranded in an uncertainty that forced them to reassess the viability of both as reliable sources of social identity and search out alternative sources to clarify and direct their loyalties. Without "an Oedipus to reade this Riddle," he complains that he found himself "tost and turned as a Weather-cock to [his] own weakness." Quarles, and the fellow readers he characterizes, react by disregarding these faltering authorities and turning inward, preferring the weakness of their own self-direction to resolve the uncertainty of unaffiliation by exploring disaffiliation.

This close attention to the problematized principles and practices of loyalty helps explain the popularity of amatory verse, a genre thick with professions of loyalty, during the 1640s and 1650s. The practitioners of love lyric in the period were predominantly "royalist" authors who were forced to rejustify and redirect their loyalties as the king's

¹ Francis Quarles, *The Loyall Convert* (Oxford: 1643).

political and military defeats compounded.² Amatory verse was familiar territory for representing the anxieties of unstable social affiliation: Elizabethan sonneteers fortified their love lyrics with political significance and used this enriched amatory space to explore and compete for social affiliations and agency, and the tradition resurfaced in a Caroline court where the tropes of a fashionable Neo-platonic love were used to criticize and compliment the policies of the crown.³ The codes for self-expression and understanding that were cultivated in the Neo-platonic cults of the 1630s survived the dissolution of the court culture in which they originated. After a decade of use, the language of courtship had become customary, and former courtiers continued to communicate through these familiar conventions even in their exile: Abraham Cowley, for instance, claims to have written *The Mistressse* (1647) to please his courtier friends, rehearsing the stylized self-representation of a previous, less contentious condition. This persistent wooing was notable to their contemporaries, and for attentive polemicists, amatory posturing became more than a characteristic of royalist verse and instead began to characterize royalism. Parliamentary apologists lampooned the king's supporters as languishing lovers: Marchamont Nedham, for instance, caricatures credulous royalists as "love struck novices" in the parliamentary newsbook, *Mercurius Britannicus*, and Milton dismisses *Eikon Basilike* as a "vain amatorious poem." In the pamphlets of the parliamentarian opposition, amatory developed into shorthand for anachronistic and out of touch, particularly in the context of the pugnacious polemic that dominated the press.

² I hope to qualify the category of "royalism" in the remainder of this chapter by re-examining the assumptions about loyalty in the period that underlie it.

³ See Anthony Mariotti, "'Love is Not Love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order," *ELH* 49.2, (1982) 396-428 and Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987, respectively.

By the end of the 1640s, when John Hall prepares for a career of writing political prose advocating for reform, he feels it necessary to first declare his repudiation of the “sullen groves of lyric poetry.”⁴

Underlying Hall’s distinction and Nedham and Milton’s mockery is the same observation that has drawn critical attention to these verses: it seems strange that these authors continued to compose love lyrics in a “warlike and tragicall age” so inimical to them and “unseasonable” for their subject.⁵ Recent interest in royalist culture has forced critics to engage seriously with the volumes of love lyrics that some of the period’s most prominent and popular poets produced during their campaigns, exiles, and imprisonments. The result has been a series of substantial studies that attempt to account for the apparent historical incongruity of these verses. The consensus has been that these authors remember the 1630s as an idealized age of stable and undisputed loyalties between monarch and subject, and that their amatory verse surreptitiously reasserts these loyalties by rehearsing the language that was used to express them. But there is disagreement over the objective of this nostalgia. Some see in these love lyrics the establishment of a purposely frivolous fictional space that was deliberately distanced from the realities of the political conflict in which these poets had and were continuing to suffer. That is, the familiar conventions of their poems created a protective consensus into which they could retreat to incubate their loyalties during a period of disfavor.⁶

⁴ Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 112.

⁵ See Cowley’s preface to his *Poems* (1656) and Davenant’s “Preface to his most honour’d friend Mr Hobs” appended to the 1651 edition of *Gondibert*.

Alternatively, other critics find in these verses an attentive and entrenched engagement with the issues that predominated the contemporary struggle, discovering in these collections a potent reassertion of conservative counter-discourses. For these critics, the amatory renewal of the 1640s and 1650s operates as a militarized aesthetic designed to confront and defy the ideological force of parliamentary reform.⁷ But whatever their disagreements, these approaches agree that courtier poets used their amorous material to express an unproblematic constancy to an organized royalist resistance. Whether they reveal a withdrawal into recuperative retreat or the advancement of an ideological insurgency, both interpretations assume that the loyalty of these poets was not compromised even as its conditions were.

Always rigorous and often compelling, these readings nonetheless flatten both the contemporary contest over constancy as well as the conventions of a complicated English amatory tradition. Fixed loyalty to an unaltering authority was impractical when the idea of loyalty was as unstable as its sources. For ideologues in particular, partisan commitment required a paradoxical capacity for constant change as each party adjusted its arguments in response to the shifting contingencies of an unresolved conflict. The love lyrics produced by many of the poets caught in this contentious irresolution provided an imaginative space fit to represent the anxious uncertainty of loyalties in distress. Inflected by Petrarchan, Neo-platonic, classical, and continental influences, this amatory verse was a genre in which loyalism was vexed and interrogated, not comforted or confirmed.

⁶ See, for example, Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) and Raymond Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve: Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988).

⁷ See, for example, James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: the Drawn Sword* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997) and Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism, 1628-1660* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Within this economy, eagerly-sought vows of monogamous commitment more frequently exacerbate than quell the anxieties of imagined infidelity. When lovers do discover self-resolve in their beloved, they often blast it as obstinate non-compliance and endeavor to flatter, bully, browbeat, and bribe their mistresses out of their uncompromising constancy. And these beaux were hardly static in their single-mindedness: they deftly redefine their postures and arguments according to the shifting refusals used to deflect their advances. Calibrated to inconstancy, these love verses self-consciously undermine uncomplicated reiterations of fealty or recuperative retreats into stable loyalties. Instead, the exasperated attempts of these moody lovers to decipher and influence their impenetrably coy mistresses express the struggle of their authors to restructure repeatedly the principles and practices of their stressed political loyalties.

In the hands of former courtiers forced to reevaluate and rearticulate their loyalties, the adaptation demanded by the amatory economy was no simple generic device. Poets used their slick suitors to construct thematic progressions in which they investigate the consequences of juxtaposing a traditionally proscriptive loyalism with self-interested adaptiveness. Insofar as the poems were analogs for political experience, conventions morphed into ethics. Lyrics like Thomas Stanley's "Changed Yet Constant" consult the same contradictions that preoccupy *The Loyal Convert* and *The Royalist Reform'd* and explore the implications of inscribing constancy in change. For Stanley and other putatively royalist poets, the conventions and tensions of their amatory verse developed an imaginative space in which they could experiment with the durability of different social authorities, their relationships with them and their movements between them. Within the "sullen groves of lyric poetry" these poets could enhance and prolong

the play between demure mistresses and their protean suitors in order to recreate and respond to the troubled conditions of their own threatened constancy. The mutual reposturings that take place between lovers model the attentive calibrations necessary in a social environment in which subjects were contesting over authorities while those authorities simultaneously contested over them. In the interminable uncertainty of their *locus amoris*, conflicted authors develop the amatory equivalent of Cowley's Pindaric *ponos*, advocating through their languishing lovers a subjective authority that is refined within and according to conflict.

In order to register responses to contradiction we must first be willing to recognize it. Interpretations that regard mid-century love lyrics as expressions of constancy begin by reading for what is constant. These readings are most compelling when they discover continuities between contemporary collections of amatory verse: Earl Miner, for instance, coordinates excerpts from Herrick's *Hesperides* and Lovelace's *Lucasta* in order to make his case for "Cavalier retreat"; Thomas Corns, on the other hand, identifies gestures of exasperation in these authors in order to argue for the predominance of disaffection; and James Loxley identifies a shared combativeness that indicates the intractability of royalist resistance. These readings are enticing, but their shared emphasis on inter-textual consistencies risks overstating similarities as consensus. The methodological tendency to coordinate texts often leads critics to overlook, omit, or dismiss contradictions within and between editions as erratic or insignificant. I propose that we instead take seriously these inconsistencies and allow authors to contradict themselves in order to understand how they represent and cope with contradiction.

But by treating texts holistically I do not mean to deny altogether the

sophisticated readings of previous studies. Poets experimenting with adaptability represented a range of alternative loyalties in order to represent their adaptive movement between them, expressing uncompromising commitment alongside shifting inconstancy in an amatory language that allowed for both. Nostalgia for an idealized pre-war tranquility persisted despite increasing disillusionment and was one of the few attitudes to span the partisan divide.⁸ Gerald Hammond's reading of escapism in the first *Lucasta* as an imaginative retreat into this nostalgia seems both persuasive and accurate.⁹ Similarly, militarized resistance survived the seeming definitiveness of the regicide: short-lived rebellions erupted throughout the 1650s, and James Loxley's reading of "To Lucasta. From Prison" as a literary accompaniment to this sustained engagement hardly admits dispute. And considering the judicious and attentive shifts urged in pamphlets like *The Royalist Reform'd*, it is difficult to challenge Joshua Scodel's reading of "The Grasshopper" as a struggle to measure recuperative recreation against an active and interested engagement.¹⁰

We cannot deny that dogged commitment to the monarchy endured. But if we allow these various articulations of constancy, we must recognize that they are expressed alongside and in dialogue with each other and that the texts of Lovelace's *Lucasta* interweave to create a textured representation of loyalty. By recognizing that mid-century

⁸ Some of each party's most confrontational figures justified their bellicosity as the means of restoring antebellum peace.

⁹ Gerald Hammond, "Richard Lovelace and the Uses of Obscurity," the Chatterton Lecture on Poetry, 1985, *Proceedings of the British Academy*. 71 (1985), 203-34. For an alternative reading of multi-vocal and multi-loyal of the 1659 *Lucasta: Posthume Poems*, see Thomas Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 244-50.

¹⁰ Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

love lyrics were capable of displaying confident commitment as they indulged in and fretted over infidelity, I hope to recover a textured loyalism that overlays expressions of constancy and inconstancy in order to examine their intersections. Doing so demands that we first read within editions for contradictions before we read across them for consistencies. Therefore, I have chosen to focus on a single edition—the 1651 edition of Thomas Stanley’s *Poems*—in order to discover how mid-century authors of amatory verse might have used their genre’s diversity to represent, understand, and respond to crises of loyalty in diverse and dynamic ways.¹¹

Stanley was at the center of a royalist culture responding to its strained commitments. When he returned from the continent in 1646 he took up residence in the Middle Temple and quickly established himself as a sympathetic and solvent patron who was eager to support fellow poets and scholars whose mis-placed loyalties in the first civil war had left them professionally and financially ruined. Stanley’s immediate circle included noted figures such as James Shirley, John Hall, Robert Herrick, and Richard Lovelace, but its sphere of influence reached much wider and included Marchamont Nedham, Andrew Marvell, and even John Milton.¹² As Stanley’s patronage circle expanded so did his influence. Some of the period’s most recognizably “royalist” works originated in this community: Lovelace’s *Lucasta*, Stanley’s *Anacreontica*, and most of the famously “loyal” commendatory verses attached to the first edition of Beaumont and

¹¹ And within this edition, I focus on the first section of Stanley’s mainly self-authored amatory verses. But this reading is meant to be applied within and across the different sections of the edition.

¹² For the nature and reach of this influence, see Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) and Blair Worden, *Litreature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Fletcher's collected works can be traced back to this group's conversations. Stanley's financial and artistic contributions to this cultural production have prompted many scholars to echo Robert Wilcher's recognition of him as a "leader in sustaining the cultural life of a defeated royalism."¹³ As the hub of loyalist literary production in London during the late 1640s and throughout the 1650s, Stanley was uniquely positioned to witness the diverse consequences of fixed affiliation to the crown, as well as the imagined responses to the disappointments and disenfranchisements that followed.

Stanley's centrality is certain, but we should hesitate at the implication that the cultural life that he oversaw was homogenous or even exclusively "royalist." Recent attention to the Stanley circle and its members has discovered a community less like-minded than its legacy suggests. Nicholas McDowell notes that the Stanley circle provided a "link between literary culture, sociability, and liberty of thought," and observes that the autonomous "liberty of thought" was a premise for, not a product of, the group's sociability.¹⁴ The literary exchange through which the cohort cohered was as argumentative as it was emulative, rendering their imitative *modus operandi* a site for epistemological and aesthetic debate rather than consensus. Tastes and styles overlapped, but they did not conform: Herrick, Shirley, Sherburne, and Stanley collaborated in a competition to translate Secundus's *Basium* 6; taken together, the alternative Anacreontic voices assumed by Herrick, Sherburne, Lovelace, Stanley, and Alexander recreate a poet in conversation with himself; and when Hall prepared his version of the "Golden Verses of Pythagoras" he included Stanley's 1651 attempt in order to highlight

¹³ Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism, 1628-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 320-1.

¹⁴ McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance*, 5.

his own improvements.¹⁵ Nor was there a political shibboleth: Hall, for example, remained an active member of the circle—and a favorite of Stanley’s—even as he advocated for parliamentary reform and strove to associate himself with that “Goos-quill champion” of the regicides, John Milton. This lack of consensus reveals a community that expresses the contentious context in which it was embedded, favoring its contradictions and contests over settled ideological agreement. But rather than prompting the entrenched polarity observable in contemporary debates, these differences of opinion furnished materials for the congenial disputes that characterized the circle’s activities. Heterogeneity was constitutive, not divisive, in a community that depended on debate as a technique for developing and maintaining social contact. Members often belonged to numerous literary and political circles and were included in Stanley’s for a number of reasons. In order to participate, therefore, members had to measure and adapt their own multiple loyalties according to the shifting debates while acknowledging and accommodating the alternative opinions and loyalties of other contributors: members of Stanley’s “Order of the Black Riband,” a secret society formed to mourn for and support the monarchy in its defeats, had to set aside Hall’s parliamentary sympathies in order to respond to his poetic projects. The result was a “brotherly dissimilitude” more liberal than Milton imagined, in which individuals alternatively displayed, suppressed, and redirected their different allegiances, while alternatively acknowledging and overlooking those of others, according to the shifting topics and contexts of social exchange.

The amatory verses that Stanley composed and circulated in this community of

¹⁵ For more on these collaborative competitions, see Stella Revard, “Thomas Stanley and ‘A Register of Friends’”, in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 148-172. Other essays in this collection explore ostensibly “literary” circles as micro-cultures in which members experiment with different expressions of agency and modes of self-governance.

complicated loyalties register the functional adaptability its members were forced to practice. The 1651 *Poems* extensively reworks and expands its 1647 predecessor, reproducing in its diverse revisions the conventional and thematic variety developed by a long English amatory tradition. This interregnum edition blends its influences, intermingling new and old verses in a conglomerate collection of originals, imitations, and translations. But, like Stanley's congenial cohort, these constituent voices co-mingle and converse without silencing each other: deifying Petrarchan idealists are counseled by Ovidian philanderers, Bion's pastoralism is unsettled by Secundus's secret kisses, and a hedonistic Anacreon interrogates the didacticism of Pico's *Platonick Discourse on Love*. Within this suspended heterogeneity, Stanley is able to coordinate numerous and sometimes divergent amatory economies and, by positioning different types of lovers within them, recreate in his collection a multi-faceted perspective that acknowledges alternative systems of loyalty and alternative responses to their different demands. Stanley explores the benefits and liabilities of unsettled loyalism as his lovers sport in the prescriptions of Neo-platonism as well as the excesses of Epicurianism, and posture intransigent post-mortem constancy alongside gleeful infidelity. By crossing conventions within and between his poems, Stanley constructs an imaginative space that replicates and experiments with the constant inconstancy demanded in a culture contradicting itself in crisis.

I.

1651 sought to begin in what ended in 1647. The end of the first civil war, marked by the king's retreat to Scotland and a prolonged series of surrenders, was also the end of an independent and unified royalist cause. Though the king retained his significance as a

figure of cultural and political authority—Scottish Presbyterians, Parliament, and the increasingly disgruntled New Model army struggled to align themselves with Charles in his initial defeat—the royalist movement lost its cohesion, autonomy, and finally effectiveness as a social force. Hall’s report to a country friend in 1647 that “the Kings party, which before these times was visibly overspread the face of the Kingdom” had been “quelled” testifies to the diminishment of the royalist cause as a coherent and ubiquitous social presence.¹⁶ Though the king remained alive, the diffusion of his party had a broad social significance, dilating into a national political disunity that caused “the whole frame of State to bee taken in peeces.”¹⁷ The acculturated fealty that the king’s party once commanded was an unserviceable gesture associated with an age “before these times.” Royalists and reformists alike sought to re-acclimate these anachronistic affiliations in the new social realities of a post-regicidal society. Parliamentarians drew on Hobbes’s predecessors in contract theory to urge the necessity of disengaging from a defunct monarchy and redirecting affiliations to the recently-installed parliamentary rule. Some of the king’s former supporters found accommodation advantageous and echoed parliamentarian arguments to persuade their peers of the strategic and practical benefits of realignment. Those determined to remain constant to the English crown despite its disrepair were forced to adapt their loyalism so that it could accommodate absence: many disengaged from the damaged incarnations of the dismantled monarchy and reinscribed their obligations in the abstract principles of divine right or the elusive justifications of custom, while others attempted to reidentify with the exiled prince Charles and Henrietta

¹⁶ John Hall, *A true account and character of the times, Historically and Politically drawne to give satisfaction to his friend in the Countrey*. (London: 1647),1.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 2.

Maria. Whatever the maneuver, the failed affiliations of 1647 were fodder for the following decade.

And so it was for Stanley who found the “Conclusion” of 1647 more fit for a “Dedication” in 1651. In its original position, this short poem frames the preceding sequence of lyrics as a trial of loyalties through which the speaker’s original amatory commitment has endured:

He who thy willing Pris’ner long was vow’d
And uncompell’d beneath thy Scepter bow’d,
Returns at last by thy kind power unbound,
At least with freedome, though not Conquest crown’d:
And, of his Dangers past a grateful Signe,
Suspends these papers at thy numerous Shrine.¹⁸

Stanley’s self-satisfied speaker congratulates himself for his resilience, expressing an optimistic confidence in durable constancy that can be found in other loyalist love poetry of the period. His vow retains its force as a guarantor of service despite the pull of passing time, changing circumstance, and his mistress’s inscrutable opinion. Endorsed by its endurance, the speaker’s loyalty becomes an epistemological lens through which he understands his experience. His steadfastness allows him to retrospectively tame into meaning the dangers that beset him by converting them into a “Signe” for his devotion. This secure constancy inures him to the pressures of time and circumstance, permitting him a freedom in eluding them that would otherwise be endangered by engaging with and conquering them. This distance diminishes the effects of change so that they register only as penned offerings to an object of loyalty that remains unaltered by their inert mutability and retains its capacious and harmonious numerosity.

But in 1651, Stanley and his speaker seem less confident in their constancy. In

¹⁸ “Conclusion,” 9-14.

this revised edition Stanley strips out the nine commendatory verses that had previously introduced the volume, isolating his resituated lyric as the initial artistic and interpretive pronouncement of the collection.¹⁹ In its redetermined capacity as a “Dedication,” this lyric reappropriates the trials of loyalty as the collection’s point of departure, not arrival. The speaker accounts for the dangers he has endured prospectively, rather than retrospectively, alerting his readers that the following poems represent encounters that confront and question the fixed loyalty he nonetheless maintains. Stanley only lightly revises this lyric when he repositions it, but his small adjustments reveal a speaker more vexed than his 1647 self by his endangering exposure to change. His reconceived lover expresses his endurance through engagement rather than evasiveness, overcoming the dangers that threaten his commitment by confronting them: “[He] Returns at last in thy soft Fetters bound,/ With Victory, though not with Freedom crown’d...”²⁰ But playing the conqueror has its costs, and his victories render him vulnerable to the inconstancy he overcomes. However triumphant he is in the contests for his constancy, his engagement with change nonetheless accepts its potential to influence his commitment. By acknowledging change and its potential disruptions as an origin for his action, Stanley’s speaker relinquishes agency to conditions that operate outside of and against his amatory relationship. Now accountable to inconstancy, lover and beloved are constrained by their exclusivity. The obeisance that once facilitated freedom is transformed into an obduracy that restricts it: previously “unbound” by love’s “kind power,” this suitor is now in its “soft fetters bound,” forced to regard in his constricting commitment the freedom

¹⁹ Moreover, by removing these commendatory verses, Stanley dislocates himself from the consensus of a community of like-minded loyalists.

²⁰ “Dedication,” 11-12.

available only in disaffiliation. Constancy, Stanley announces, now has consequences. This acknowledgement provides the premise for a revised edition that, in its expansions, creates a rigorous and irreducible diversity in which constancy is recursively reconsidered. This multi-vocal collection heeds the hesitations of its paratextual paramour, using its recurrent contraventions to measure the effects of a fixed affiliation that accepts the changeability that threatens to confound it.

II.

Constancy is central to Stanley's collection. Both versions of his framing lyric hinge on the irreconcilability, but also the proximity, of conquest and liberty. Though at odds, both are consequences of conscientiously maintaining a besieged commitment: in the context of the poems, conquest follows confrontation while liberty attends avoidance. Their divergence is in their alternative expressions of, not departures from, a constituent constancy. This shared origin is indelible, and persistently links the two modes of loyalty through their loyalty, despite their differences. Stanley so closely associates conquest and freedom that they remain syntactically interchangeable regardless of the other revisions to his lyric: his speaker is with freedom but without conquest in 1647, and with conquest but without freedom in 1651.

This double nature of loyalism as a force of polarization and parity captures the dilemma of a nation driven to crisis by contradicting constancies. The controversies of the 1640s and 1650s were not always about *whether* to be loyal, but frequently *how* to be loyal. However its sources had been unsettled by conflict, loyalism—as an impulse and an ethic—remained important to the English social economy. Fealty, and the affiliative identity that informs it, was reinforced in the cultural memory by centuries of continuous

reiteration. Repeated practice had rendered it rote, and subsequently difficult to dismiss as a precondition for social order and action. Therefore, despite their disagreements over where and how it should be directed, royalists and republicans agreed that loyalty was indispensable as a principle and practice of social government. Royalists were reluctant to dissociate *a priori* obedience from its traditional and familiar source, the monarchy. Parliamentary reformists were less interested in devaluing this commitment than redirecting it to and through the structures of parliamentary representation.

Fundamental to the economy of constancy for which both sides advocated is an imagined mutuality between governor and governed. Royalist apologists posited the obligation of subjects to celebrate their rulers, who in turn represent and enact social order. In his “Answer to the 19 Propositions,” Charles concedes that he relies on the consensus of the English people for his authority, but maintains that they are incapable of ruling themselves: without his protection the commons would destroy distinction and end in a “dark equal chaos of confusion.” Republican apologists relocated the origin of state power in the consensus of the people, but maintained this structured tension between the people and their government: the people construct their government, then legitimize it by submitting themselves to its governance – as John Warr puts it in his 1649 pamphlet, *The Corruption and Deficiency of the Lawes of England Soberly Discovered*, people create laws to bind princes and “reciprocate with obedience to encourage good rule.”

Much of the love poetry produced in the early stages of the civil wars was shaped by the contemporary dispute over the context of coveted fealty and the workings of the structured reciprocity that converted it into social order. Royalist poets in particular used the language of loyalty so prominent in the genre to reinforce the emphasis on constancy

advocated by their apologists. We can, for instance, identify a sympathy between the 1642 pamphlet *Rules to know a Royall King, from a Disloyal Subject*, penned by a self-advertised “kings friend,” and Sidney Godolphin’s “Constancy.”²¹ The central conceit of *Rules to know a Royall King* is a set of jewels that reveal different characteristics of those who look upon and handle them. The principle stone is the justice jewel, which ruins the eyes of traitors and exposes “disloyall subjects.” These ethical “touchstones” are the imaginative resolutions to the increasing indiscernability of a personal and public loyalty destabilized by a widespread dispute: by overriding a subject’s ability to conceal her motives and sympathies, these jewels break down the barrier between the personal and public and expose the individual to the irresistible reach of the social institutions —crown and church— that supervise the social sphere.²² This “kings friend” insists on the ubiquity and indelibility of the monarchy in spite of the late challenges to it. Within this stable framework, loyalty takes on an ontological necessity: in the familiar nesting of social authorities, God, the monarchy, and fathers are fastened to each other and disloyalty to one of these figures in turn denies the authority of the others. Within these ontological correlations, apostasy risks more than atheism, democracy, or the disruption of domestic order. At stake is the very possibility for self- and social- identification: the tract warns, “jarr no more ye valiant Britaines,/ Lest you lose your Being.” Any refusal to perform traditional fealty disrupts the reciprocity between crown and subject, collapsing

²¹ Godolphin joined the king’s forces early in the civil war and was known for to be unflappable and even obstinate; he was killed in a skirmish in 1643, before Cowley’s high-water mark at the Battle of Newberry.

²² This sort of device resurfaces in the first muddled years of the Restoration as Ithuriel’s Spear in *Paradise Lost*, which Milton’s sentry angel uses to tap suspicious figures to discover their true forms.

the social symbiosis through which royalists understood themselves.²³

Godolphin's "Constancy" reproduces this constitutive loyalty, offering a speaker who defines himself through his constancy not just to his mistress, but to the idea that she might return his love. The speaker begins by acknowledging the elusiveness of his would-be lover, but this crisis of failed mutuality is quickly supplanted by an imagined requital that transforms "Love unreturned" into a more distilled and stable completeness:

Love unreturned, howe'er the flame
Seem great and pure, may still admit
Degrees of more, and a new name
And strength acceptance gives to it.²⁴

The purity and strength provided by the discursiveness of acceptance is reward for a single-minded focus on the possibility for reciprocity. Godolphin's lover remains committed to the idea of his loyalty regardless of contingencies:

The mind's last act by constancy
Ought to be sealed, and not the way.²⁵

The speaker, like the author of *Rules to know a Royall King*, regards himself in terms of his constancy and will not think of himself outside of the structured exchange in which it is relevant. He goes so far as to create imaginative supplements for his indecisive mistress to keep alive the reciprocity through which he defines himself and his love:

So hardly in a single heart
Is any love conceived,
That fancy still supplies one part,
Supposing it received.²⁶

²³ *Rules to know a Royall King* (London: 1642).

²⁴ "Constancy," 1-4.

²⁵ Ibid, 7-8.

²⁶ Ibid, 13-16.

In the end, the lover's commitment to his own constancy supersedes the behavior of his mistress: if she accepts his affection, his love is purified and enhanced; if she denies it, her pity for his obduracy becomes "the most wished for monument."²⁷ Underlying Godolphin's emphatic constancy is a confidence in the traditional social economy in which subjects could position themselves relative to certain reliable, if not immutable, social mainstays. The king, like Godolphin's mistress, may, at times, be illegible or unresponsive, but he still asserts a social presence that demands responses from his subjects. The loyalty insisted upon in "Constancy" and *Rules to know a Royal King* are attempts to shore up a model of social exchange that centered around apparently indispensable social institutions like the monarchy, court, and state church. Godolphin's speaker stubbornly inserts himself into a social discursiveness, "lest he lose his being."

Despite their repeated defeats, royalists continued to return to their conviction that social stability depended on the shared duties that bound subject and prince. As Robert Wilcher has shown, the arguments for this obligation became more conservative as the crisis escalated, and royalist polemicists returned to their divine right claims after witnessing the ineffectiveness of their more accommodating, *de jure* posture in the middle of the decade.²⁸ Pamphlets like Robert Grosse's *Royalty and loyalty* (1647) retrieve the mutuality optimistically modeled five years earlier in *Rules to know a Royal King*: situated between illustrations of royalty and loyalty, Grosse's frontispiece declares "quam bonum est regum & populum convenire."²⁹ Though conciliatory, Grosse's position is hardly collaborative: his full title indicates that the obligations he envisions are

²⁷ Ibid, 24.

²⁸ Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, 205.

²⁹ Robert Grosse, *Royalty and loyalty* (London: 1647).

unilateral, and that reconciliation depends on recognizing “the power of kings over their subjects: and the duty of subjects to their kings.”³⁰ His arguments for a relationship in which subject and monarch are “both happy in enjoyment of each other” are couched in the familiar hierarchical inequities of divine right theory: a prince has “prerogatives” and “royalties” that are exclusive and preordained, while a subject has “immunities” and “privileges” that are contingent on willing and obedient subordination.³¹ Royal authority originates outside of the context of its expression, so that monarchs exist as both prince and principle. The identity of the subject, on the other hand, hangs entirely on the imaginative and legal acquiescence to this authority in its eternal and physical forms. Grosse defines subjects as “those who submit [themselves] to be governed,” restricting the identity and agency of a subject to a single act in which identity and agency are renounced.³² Grosse seems uninfluenced by the recent erosion of royal and royalist authority, and his plan for “effecting of a pacification” recalls the steady confidence of 1642 and appears willfully nostalgic in the aftermath of what had been endured.

Stanley incorporates into his collection expressions of the rejuvenated convictions insisted upon by royalists as their fortunes declined at the end of the decade by reviving the amatory articulations of constancy and constitutive reciprocity that were once used to represent them. The short lyric, “Unaltred by Sickness” uses the Neo-platonic notion of double-natured man to recreate in his mistress the amatory equivalent of the double-natured monarch modeled in *Royalty and loyalty*. The speaker’s mistress straddles the ontological divide between divinity and corporeality, existing as both purified abstraction

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 21.

³² Ibid, 34.

and physical incarnation. Reduced to the beauty that compels the speaker to service, she is both an idea and its expression. Like Grosse's prince, she exists in contingency, but is not susceptible to it. This allows Stanley's speaker to apostrophize and taunt the illness attempting to alter her appearance: "Sickness, in vain thou dost invade/ A Beauty that can never fade."³³ Partly corporeal, she is capable of contracting disease—sickness, after all, still invades her—but her beauty remains immune to the effects of illness. Because her beauty, like royal authority, originates and exists *ab æterno* and extends into her physical presence, it retains the inalterability of an abstraction in its physical presence. The speaker concedes that if a disease could disprove the correspondence between divine and human by affecting her appearance—even if it could "impair/ One of the sweets which crown this fair"—it would be grounds for abandoning this vulnerable beauty and realigning with sickness as the conquering force. In this case, he imagines, he and thousands of other lovers their "drooping hopes might justly seek,/ Redress" in a more potent certainty of decay. This concession seems to accept as possible the premises of contract theory—the permeability of change and the double legitimacy of conquest and consensus—but instead dismisses them in order to rearticulate and redouble his confidence in the secure immutability of his love's beauty. He quickly reiterates her preternatural permanence:

But such assaults are vain, for she
Is too divine to stoop to thee;
Blest with a Form as much too high
For any Change, as Destiny[...] ³⁴

Her demi-divinity secures her against change and, confirming in her an unaltered and

³³ "Unaltred by Sicknesse," 1-2.

³⁴ Ibid, 11-14.

unalterable status that qualifies her, through her beauty, as a suitable pattern for social behavior, a “Destiny.” At the end of the poem, the speaker announces, “what’s her Beauty, is our Fate,” accepting her exclusive control—as a person and a principle—over his social experience. Like Grosse’s subject, who becomes a social agent by relinquishing agency to the representative of an abstract royal authority, Stanley’s lover is both defined and effaced in his obedience to his mistress’s inviolable beauty.

In early modern amatory verse lover and beloved often merge in the expression of loyalty. Stanley and his peers were working with a Petrarchanism in which, as Heather Dubrow has observed, speaker and mistress often collapse into each other.³⁵ In “The Kisse,” one of the few lyrics retained from the 1647 edition, the speaker imagines that a moment of physical intimacy initiates a sublime intimacy in which he and his mistress enjoy an unencumbered intermingling. Their kiss is an expression of their exclusive commitment, in which their souls abandon their impeding bodies and conjoin:

Freed from their fetters by this death
Our subtile Forms combine;
Thus without bonds of sence they move,
And like two Cherubins converse by love.³⁶

The amatory assurance provided by the kiss unites the two lovers in a spiritual arena in which love, initially the motivation for communicating, becomes a means of communicating. In their sublimated state they share a mind, intuiting instead of articulating their integrated affection: disdaining to “Discourse by sence” they “in a kisse [their] mutual thoughts convey.”³⁷ But this refining mutuality is nonetheless reliant on the

³⁵ Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 41.

³⁶ “The Kisse,” 3-6.

lips the lovers seem to leave behind; like Donne's speaker in "The Ecstasy," to which this poem owes much, Stanley's speaker accepts the indispensibility of their bodies.

Therefore, because she draws his soul from him, she must replace it with her own:

Thou canst not both retain; for I
Must be with one inspir'd;
Then, Dearest, either justly mine
Restore, or in exchange let me have thine.³⁸

The unity provided by their performed loyalty is predicated on a structured reciprocity in which souls are swapped, not amalgamated in a purified subtlety. Both lovers maintain their distinctiveness and are linked by their separate, but shared, discursion: their sublimation is a "mutual" condition in which they "converse" and "exchange." Like the speakers in "Constancy" and "Unaltered by Sickness," this lover refuses to conceive of himself outside of this exchange. If she decides to interrupt their reciprocity by returning his soul and retrieving her own, he urges her to keep his, finding the subsequent death more satisfying than an unthinkable existence outside of their shared exclusivity. He, like the king's friend who penned *Rules to know a Royall King*, envisions the loss of his being outside of the dynamic—and defining—discursion with the object of his loyalty.

The reciprocal exchange that unites all of these lovers, and the obedient subjects they stand for, is ontological as well as interpersonal. The authority of monarch and mistress originates in, represents, and returns to the divinity they embody. The divine right arguments that resurged among royalists at the end of the 1640s identified the king as an agent of eternity. The power and mystery of his rule were as inscrutable as the godhead that endorsed him. Fealty was, subsequently, a matter of faith in which

³⁷ Ibid, 8, 12.

³⁸ Ibid, 15-18.

individual interest was subordinated in a practiced obedience to an external and ordering divinity that was personified in the prince. Stanley's mistresses are alluring to their suitors for similar reasons. Both are suitable objects of loyalty because they co-exist as the abstract forms of the perfection they embody. Their lovers anticipate that their devotion will allow them to enjoy their mistresses in person and principle, securing them purified physical and spiritual pleasures. In their human-divine hybridity, monarch and mistress permeate the experiences of their devotees, asserting their influence across the civil, spiritual, and intellectual arenas in which their subjects imagine themselves.

III.

But divine right conceptions of royal authority had lost their force when Stanley was assembling his 1651 edition. Even Charles conceded this point, and the efforts of hard-line loyalists to recover the arguments of the early 1640s could not turn back the predominating secular theories for the origin of social authority that both sides had advocated in the middle of the decade. The divine right model of an eternal authority that thoroughly penetrated and integrated social experience had come undone. The king's authority had been anatomized throughout previous decade, and his decapitation provided his opponents with an opportunity to parse up his power in practice, not simply in principle. Competing interest—of individuals, institutions, or ideologies—struggled with each other to establish their claims over the diverse and distinct arenas of social experience that were once unified by the preordained and penetrating presence of the monarchy. The king's supporters competed with their peers for position as the social order was being remade. But in order to maintain the legitimacy of the monarchy following the fragmentation of its authority, loyalists had to reimagine its authority in

fragments. If it was not divinely ordained, where did royal authority originate? Was it in the person of the prince? The principles of social order and unity for which monarchy stood? Or these principles in practice as a bureaucratic institution? How, and where, was the monarchy able to influence the imagination and behavior of its subjects in its dis-integrated condition?

Undivining authority was an unsettling procedure that forced loyalists to scrutinize what was recently inscrutable. This was an unfamiliar and frustrating task for those practiced in automatic loyalty. “The Gloworme,” which immediately follows “The Dedication,” captures the perplexity produced by attempts to balance demystification and wonderment, and prepares us for the perspective shifts that will follow as the edition attempts to reassess the origin and operation of social authority.³⁹ The speaker initially notes that this “animated Gem” seems to be heaven-sent, seen by some as a star “which falling from its native Orb dropt here,/ And makes the Earth (its Centre,) now its Sphere.” This fallen star so strongly retains the astral influence of its “native Orb” in its new sublunary sphere that a credulous observer might mistake a multitude of them for a “terrestrial Galaxie.” As both a relic and representative of its supernal origin, it remains marvelous to the wondering mind. But the speaker dismisses this understanding as that of an “erring Passenger” unable to perceive and understand correctly from a distorting distance, and invites his mistress to approach and examine this “unknown light.” This closer look demystifies the glow-worm, but the empiricism it applies provides more confusion than clarity:

Take’t up fair Saint; see how it mocks thy fright,

³⁹ “The Gloworme” was originally included in the 1647 edition, but it takes on new meanings in its new position immediately following the prefatory poem’s reconsideration of stable and secure sources of loyalty.

The paler flame doth not yield heat, though light,
Which thus deceives thy Reason, through thy sight.⁴⁰

The glow-worm is an anomaly—a flame that produces light but no heat—that confuses the senses, and subsequently understanding, of the speaker’s mistress, an examiner unaccustomed to perceptual contradictions. This affront to her expectations “deceives [her] Reason,” compromising the empirical epistemology that was supposed to supersede the superstitious explanations of the “erring Passenger.” The process of rational assessment undercuts the rationality on which it relies. Moreover, the glow-worm loses its luster when subject to this close scrutiny:

But see how quickly it (ta’ne up) doth fade,
To shine in darkness onely being made,
By th’brightness of thy light turn’d to a shade.⁴¹

The most rudimentary act of analysis—the mechanical taking up—alters the glow-worm and eliminates the curious characteristic that made it an attractive object for analysis. Under the figurative light of empirical examination and the physical light of the lamp it requires, the glow-worm loses its luminescence and dims into a banal shade. At this point in the poem, the speaker’s corrective empiricism has cost him the occasion—his mistress is deceived and disappointed and his extraordinary phenomenon is an ordinary worm—so he retreats into the figurative to recover meaning in the moment:

And burnt to ashes by thy flaming eyes
On the chaste Altar of thy hand it dies,
As to thy greater light a sacrifice.⁴²

These final lines are thick with Petrarchan tropes—flaming eyes, a sanctified body,

⁴⁰ Ibid, 10-12.

⁴¹ Ibid, 13-15.

⁴² Ibid, 16-18.

illuminating beauty—and represent a return to the metaphor and mythologizing that was abandoned at the beginning of the poem. Faced with the failures of an anatomizing analysis, the speaker is forced to return to the flawed epistemology he has already debunked. But the speaker's reversion is not a resolution: investigation and imagination are at odds when mystery is the source of meaning. The speaker's urge to enlighten is incompatible with a marvelous object made "To shine in darkness onely," and he is reduced to expressing commitment through enervated convention and cliché as he attempts to interpret the uninterpretable.

Stanley opens his edition with this dilemma at a time when royalists were facing their own trouble literalizing the formerly figurative power of the monarchy. Anthony Ascham, writing in support of the new government, identifies the importance of abstracting the origins of civil authority. Authority by right—secular or divine—is always doubtful and subsequently susceptible to dispute if a ruler allows his subjects to scrutinize the origin of his right. In order to maintain their authority, governors must maintain the mystery of their right. Any governor incapable of obscuring the source of his authority is vulnerable to the inquiries into it.⁴³ For royalists, the regicide was a material lesson in the potentially violent consequences of allowing an overzealous investigation of authority. Their concession of divine right justification earlier in the decade had demythologized the monarchy, and these loyalists were forced to reassert the crown's authority—and their loyalty to it—in a new social economy in which their myth had lost its meaning. Like Stanley's speaker in "The Gloworme," they found that they had only facile metaphors to justify the royal authority they had elsewhere explained away. Despite popular disguise poems, such as Cleveland's "The King's Disguise" or

⁴³ Anthony Ascham, *Of the Confusions and Revolutions of Governments* (London: 1649).

Vaughan's "The King disguis'd," that attempted to rejuvenate and reauthorize a diminished and indiscernible royal presence, the monarchy's supporters struggled to resituate their loyalty to an authority disempowered by the demystifications of the previous decade.

As the ideas of social authority changed, so did representations of it. Stanley's 1651 collection interrogates its iterations of divine right authority, confronting lyrics like "Unaltred by Sicknesse" and "The Kisse" with contradicting voices that demystify and revalue the amatory experience. "Love Deposed," for instance, upends the rule of the idealized mistress by uncoupling her from the abstract version of herself, allowing the poem to present a new ethic without a divinity to defer to. The poem opens with an iconoclastic call to arms in which the speaker urges his fellow lovers to end their superstitious service at love's shrine, insisting that they "Renounce with me/ Th' Idolatrie, Nor this Infernal Power esteem divine."⁴⁴ This act of consciously and emphatically denying love its divinity immediately empowers these lovers, enabling them to disarm Cupid, the agent of love's supernatural authority:

The Brand, the Quiver, and the Bow,
Which we did first bestow,
And he as tribute wears from every Lover,
I back again
From him have ta'ne,
And the Impostor now unavail'd discover.⁴⁵

The speaker is reconstituted in the process of deliberately adjusting his perception of power, recovering an authority that he had once deferred by imagining love's divinity. In this respect, his reconceptualization is an act of imaginative subversion in which amatory

⁴⁴ "Love Deposed," 4-6.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 7-12.

authority is wrested out of abstraction and resituated in an immediate source: himself. By untying Cupid's "mystick charm," the speaker and those who follow him are free from the automatic obedience envisioned in "The Kisse," where fealty is also faith, and no longer "confin'd to law or bounds so narrow."⁴⁶ In their rejuvenated agency, these lovers are able to reject their mistresses as mediators of the sublime: though elsewhere capable of causing "subtile Forms [to] combine," the speaker warns these "bright Beauties" that he and his cohort "safely now your subtil power despise."⁴⁷ Refusing to affiliate the amatory and the divine allows these lovers to guard their hearts against any "new arts" and avoid accidentally remanding their newly-recovered agency:

We will no more
His power implore,
Unless like Indians, that he do no harm.⁴⁸

The system of ethics at which the poem arrives—one that excludes divinity from the origin and experience of authority—is strange, and the non-deferentiality that underlies and enables it is foreign, "like Indians."

The imaginative undivining that takes place in "Love Deposed" dismantles the multifaceted presences and powers of bewitching mistresses in order to consolidate the identity and agency of the speaker. When allowed their divinity, these "bright Beauties" straddle the different arenas of the amatory experience: they are at once the abstracted ideal of love, a mistress expressing that ideal through amatory engagement, and a woman whose physical beauty attracts amatory attention. Like divine right monarchs, they exist as principle, practice, and person bound together by the abstraction they express. But

⁴⁶ Ibid, 14, 18.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 19, 21.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 25, 28-30.

once they are deposed, this sympathy is disassembled; the subtle knot is undone, and these different identities become disparate ones. The constituent elements of the amatory experience are inert in this dissected state. When the continuity between ideals and their incarnations is interrupted, idealized love is demystified, Cupid is disarmed, and individual mistresses lose their charms. Royalists found their demythologized monarchy in a similar disrepair. The undivining of the crown in the previous decade eventually divided the king from his office, dissociating the person of the monarch from its institutionalized practice as monarchy. In its parsed state, the king's cause presented loyalists with the dilemma of determining to what, precisely, they were to be loyal.

Ideological retreat into the ideals of a pre-war past was attractive to supporters who found their loyalties disrupted in the disfavorable political realities of the Interregnum. Concentrating on the cultural values of conservatism rather than its institutional structures allowed loyalists to affiliate with the monarchy as an abstraction that was unaffected by the historical uncertainties that had forced its civil and ecclesiastical governments into disarray. In "Speaking and Kissing," Stanley offers his readers a speaker who, like these loyalists, prefers to self-identify and express himself through abstraction. The poem counterposes two familiar demonstrations of affection—speaking and kissing—in order to distinguish between them as modes of amatory expression. The speaker characterizes their conversation in conventional terms, focusing on her voice as an enrapturing melody that transports him:

The air which thy smooth voice doth break
 Into my soul like lightning flies,
My life retires whil'st thou dost speak,
 And thy soft breath its room supplies.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ "Speaking and Kissing," 1-4.

Her voice is a physical and supernatural force that moves both air and soul when she speaks. The verbal exchange between lover and beloved is powerful, but it is nonetheless exceeded by the more intimate act of kissing:

Lost in this pleasing Extasie
I joyn my trembling lips to thine,
And back receive that life from thee,
Which I so gladly did resign.⁵⁰

Though urged by the “Extasie” that her speech inspired, his kiss necessarily silences her when they join their lips, forcing them both into a different mode of communication. The subsequent, non-verbal experience is an invigorating one in which the speaker reclaims the soul previously evacuated by his mistress’s psychophysical voice and completes the reciprocity between them. The silent language of lip pressing offers its own epistemology, and forces a reassessment of how love and language are understood:

Forbear, Platonick fools, t’ enquire
What numbers do the soul compose;
No harmony can life inspire
But that which from these accents flows.⁵¹

“Platonick fools” preoccupied with discerning the principles and patterns of perfection are confronted with the possibility that life originates in the inarticulate experience of a kiss: verbal expression extinguishes life in the speaker, but a kiss “can life inspire.” The vocabulary of communication must be redefined to represent the “numbers,” “harmony,” and “accents” of the unheard expression in which life originates. Kissing supersedes speech as an alternative expression of loyalty that operates in the shared knowledge that is exclusive and unique to two lovers. Kisses invigorate because they express through isolated intimacy what is undiscoverable and inexpressible by a common language shared

⁵⁰ Ibid, 5-8.

⁵¹ Ibid, 9-12.

with a speaking public and the “Platonick fools” who measure it.

Isolating loyalism in abstraction and exclusivity eschews accountability to the mishandling of common minds, but this asocial solution has both limitations and liabilities. Dissociating principle and practice is impractical because it is impracticable. Withdrawing into a protected commitment to the monarchy as an incorruptible ideal separate from the distress it faced as an overthrown government failed to resolve the very real and immediate dilemmas faced by royalists during the Interregnum: recalling the Halcyon days could not recall a sequestered estate or royal dispensation. “The Returne” reminds us of the insufficiencies of the isolated idealizations advocated in “Speaking and Kissing.” The speaker opens by abstracting his mistress into a purified principle of beauty that operates outside of nature:

Beauty whose soft Magnetick chains
Nor time nor absence can [untie],
Thy power the narrow bounds disdains
Of nature or Philosophie,
That canst by unconfined laws
A motion, though at a distance, cause.⁵²

Transformed into idealized beauty, she exists independent of her body and asserts her presence across the physical and temporal distances that threaten to interrupt her influence over her suitor. Abstracted from the limiting “narrow bounds...Of nature or Philosophie,” her subtle self observes “unconfined laws” and asserts its invisible influence over the imagination of the speaker. Nonetheless, this principled presence cannot compensate for proximity, and this lover attempts a return across the distance that his ideated mistress disdains:

Drawn by the sacred influence

⁵² “The Returne,” 1-6. The 1651 version of the poem has “unite” in line 2, but all other printed versions of the poem, including the 1647 original, read “untie.”

Or thy bright eyes, I back return;
And since I no where can dispence
With flames that do in absence burn,
I rather choose 'midst them t'expire
Then languish by a hidden fire.⁵³

The speaker discovers that his mistress is both principle and person, and that the “sacred influence” of her idealized form is a supplement, not a substitute, for the “bright eyes” of her physical presence. Consequently, his attraction to her is hybridized as well. Purely abstract love experienced in absence is bound to be dissatisfying: however his intellectual love is sated by her “sacred influence,” his physical desire remains unabated and he continues to “burn” with “a hidden fire.” Later in the collection, “La belle Ennemie” reiterates the necessity of immediacy in the amatory experience: the speaker resigns his “willing mind” to his mistress-enemy, but urges her not to insult his heart “with too much tyrannie and art” lest, by her mismanagement, she “lose the prize.” The poem ends with the hope his mistress will prove true the maxim that lovers are “got by Beauty, kept by Love.” That is, the amatory experience originates in abstract and irresistible influence, but is maintained through the measurable practice of good governance. Love and loyalty are best experienced first hand.

But by 1651, the monarchy had been ejected from the structure of civil government and was, for the moment, dysfunctional in its displacement and therefore an unsuitable source of social affiliation. Many former members of the monarchy’s bureaucracy suffered a strained exile in France that dispersed courtiers, officers, and soldiers across contending camps. Redistributed among factions, the monarchy as an institution was fragmented and ineffectual, an idea more than a reality and therefore subject to the deficiencies of an abstraction. Affiliation among these factions required

⁵³ Ibid, 7-12.

loyalists to imagine how the monarchy was experienced and direct their loyalties according to their conceptions. The subsequent circles developed around the people rather than policies of the recently decapitated royalist cause, and primarily situated Henrietta Maria and her followers against Prince Charles and his. Despite Charles I's insistence that his authority extended beyond his person, reformist polemicists succeeded in imaginatively divorcing the king from his cultural presence and consequently confining royal authority to the king himself. Facing a displaced monarchy that was ineffectual as both an ideology and an institution, many loyalists found themselves restricted to the personified presence of a royalism that otherwise had been demythologized and dismantled.

"Song: Fool take up thy shaft again" demonstrates the redirections required in order to downscale loyalty from principle to person.⁵⁴ The lyric begins with an indictment of disembodied love. The frustrated speaker scolds a disarmed Cupid who has spent his store of arrows in an unsuccessful assault on his mistress's affections: "Fool take up thy shaft again [. . .]/ Throw not then away thy darts,/ On impenetrable hearts."⁵⁵ Like in "Love Depos'd," the speaker observes an ideal unable to assert itself effectively in an economy of desire and subsequently revalues its relevance to his experience. But unlike in "Love Depos'd," the interruption of idealized and actualized love is not simply a matter of demystifying the ideal. Rather, for this speaker, the abstract idea of love is fundamentally incompatible with its experience: whether active or inert, this Cupid is incapable of successfully conspiring with a mistress who remains "impenetrable."

⁵⁴ Galbraith Miller Crump identifies Lope de Vega as the source of this lyric in his edition of Stanley's poems, *Poems and Translations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

⁵⁵ "Song: Fool take up thy shaft again," 1, 5-6.

Dislocated from love's influence, his mistress assumes the frigidity that characterizes social and sexual disinterest:

Think not thy pale flame can warm
 Into tears,
Or dissolve the snowy charm
 Which her frozen bosom wears,
That expos'd unmelted lies
To the bright suns of her eyes.⁵⁶

She is unresponsive in her isolation, and therefore an unsuitable object for amatory affection. Nonetheless, the "frost" of her complacency cannot cool the speaker's urge to affiliate with her:

But since thou thy power hast lost,
 Nor canst fire
Kindle in that breast, whose frost
 Doth these flames in mine inspire,
Not to thee but Her I'll sue,
That disdains both me and you.⁵⁷

At the end of the lyric, his mistress's icy presence supplants the figurative fire of a remote and unrelatable abstraction that has lost its power. The "frost," which testifies to her divorce from the heat of Cupid's flame, signals her ability to exert an influence independent of her idealized self, and becomes the new source of her suitor's attraction. This redirection signals the speaker's reconceptualization of the structure of loyalty, so that it is understood through the immediate person of his mistress rather than the figurative abstraction with which she is traditionally associated.

But this pivot to his mistress herself cannot promise to be more satisfying than his commitment to her through an incapable Cupid. However he refocuses his fealty, she remains frigid, inhospitable to the flames she inspires. The speaker does not turn to her

⁵⁶ Ibid, 7-12.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 13-18.

because he regards her as a more receptive venue for his affection; he turns to her because, by the end of the poem, she is the only venue for his affection. And so the poem ends in uncertainty, with the speaker's loyalty straitened to a single, unresponsive source. This dissatisfaction was familiar to those who were forced to affiliate with the people of the monarchy when the idea and institution had failed. The disguise poems mentioned above concentrate on the Charles's elusiveness as a characteristic of his mysterious majesty, but they are also attempts to recuperate a royal person that resisted recognition: accounts of the king's various disguises and dramatic escapes recharacterized him as an unstable entity susceptible to shifts in appearance. The subsequent uncertainty was a dilemma for loyalists: it is difficult to identify with someone you cannot identify. The disembodiment figured in the poems by Cleveland and Vaughn registers the fading influence of Charles as an embodied figurehead. This disillusionment is borne out by attempts to depersonify the monarchy and disaffiliate with Charles in the years before his death: Stanley's Order of the Black Riband, for instance, formed to mourn the defeat of the king in 1647, three years before the conflicts of the civil wars had been fatally resolved. Others preferred not to dwell on Charles's indeterminacy and chose to disaffiliate themselves from their acting monarch and realign their loyalties with his son and immanent heir. Wherever the affiliation—the assassinated king, his anxious son, or destitute queen—when Stanley's edition appears in 1651, a loyalism that depended on the physical person as an embodiment of social authority was unsteady.

The insufficiencies of the monarchy's ideological, institutional, and interpersonal presences became a liability for those looking to remain loyal to it in its disrepair. Fixed affiliation to a faltering mainstay left loyalists vulnerable to failings of the source of their

social identity. "To Celia pleading want of Merit" represents the danger of maintaining an unaltered commitment to an entity that has lost its significance. The speaker complains that his mistress's modesty disrupts the fundamental economy of their relationship:

Dear urge no more that killing cause
Of our divorce;
.....
Though thou deniest I should be thine,
Yet say not thou deserv'st not to be mine.⁵⁸

Her self-effacing coyness is an abdication of authority that renders her inferior to the speaker, and therefore an unsuitable source for his fealty. He prefers that she reject his worth rather than her own because it confirms her superiority and allows him to identify himself through her ability to influence him. But by denying her own merit, she also denies herself a place in his structure of loyalty, supplying the "killing cause of [their] divorce" by undermining the premise of their union. This displacement leaves the speaker alone in his love, stranded in a solitary loyalty to an absence: "'Tis lesse crime to be kill'd by thee,/ Then I thus cause of mine own death should be."⁵⁹ Faced with a mistress unworthy of his affections, he cannot, like many of the lovers we have encountered above, repair the relationship by redirecting or reimagining his loyalty. The problem is no longer *how* he is loving, but *that* he is loving. And it is through this ill-directed loyalty that he becomes the "cause of [his] own death." He pleads that his mistress revalue herself and re-engage with him in an "equal love [that] knows no disparity," otherwise her "sacrilegious modestie" will diminish her worth and alienate his love. But at the end of the poem, constancy is in question. The lyric reclaims the conventional ethic of the devoted lover and recasts it as a means of compounding the dissatisfaction it attempts to

⁵⁸ "To Celia pleading want of Merit," 1-2, 5-6.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 11-12.

resolve.

IV.

Charles was obdurate in the end. At the opening of his trial, he famously refused the lawfulness of the court that had called him there. Ignoring the arguments on both sides for him to moderate his position, he insisted that he had received a “divine Trust” that he would not betray to the interests of this “new Authority.”⁶⁰ To many, including the enthusiastic audience of *Eikon Basilike*, Charles’s stand was an admirable assertion of constitutional monarchy’s intractable position at the center of English society.⁶¹ But this confident constancy was out of step with the cultural change that had empowered the “new Authority” that he attempted to ignore. Throughout the 1640s, polemicists for both sides saw in the civil conflict the disruption of cultural continuity: as noted above, John Hall, whose sympathies were not simply partisan, recognized the emergence of “new parties, new interests” that supplanted the once ubiquitous presence of the “king’s party.”⁶² By 1650, change was no longer disrupting society, it was driving it. Albertus Warren observes in *The Royalist Reform’d* that “God hath set a period to every form,” and urges his reluctant readers to adapt themselves to the inescapable “torrent of nimble dayes” in which they are caught.⁶³ The Act of Engagement made the recognition and accommodation of change a legal necessity by threatening to deny fundamental rights to

⁶⁰ For a discussion on Charles’s hardening on this point, see Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, 275.

⁶¹ Charles considered his position in terms of rigidity, claiming that he would rather wear a crown of thorns than one of lead whose “embased flexibleness” bends with factions. See Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, 158.

⁶² Hall, *A true account*.

⁶³ Albertus Warren, *The Royalist Reform’d*, (London: 1650), 19.

those who refused to realign themselves with the republican regime established after the regicide. Loyalists who objected that their previous oaths bound them to the monarchy with “many solemn and sound ties” found that constancy was not simply a matter of conscience, and that their recusancy had very real repercussions.⁶⁴ Charles’s defiance of the “new Authority” left the legacy of an unaccommodating cause that stranded his followers with the consequences of a principled fixity unsuited to the “torrent of nimble days” that confronted them. Like the lover in “To Celia pleading want of Merit,” the problem for these loyalists was not *how* they were loyal, but *that* they were loyal to their now distant and dysfunctional cause.

One option was to heed Albertus Warren’s call to accept reform and discard those “many solemn and sound ties” that had become disabling in a changed and changing social economy. After all, Warren notes, the unaltering posture asserted in tracts like *Some Scruples of Conscience* is a recent and fanatical phenomenon responsible for creating the “new sin called falling or defection from principles.”⁶⁵ “The Divorce,” which immediately follows the iconoclastic “Love Deposed” in the 1651 edition, imagines the initial disaffiliation that is necessary for the reaffiliation of reform:

Dear, back my wounded heart restore,
And turn away thy powerful eyes,
Flatter my willing soul no more,
Love must not hope what Fate denies.⁶⁶

The speaker and his mistress face an adverse fate that disallows their love. Rather than suffer in anticipation of the unattainable, the speaker resolves to remove himself from the

⁶⁴ *Some Scruples of Conscience* [. . .] *Against the Taking of the Engagement* in Wooton, *Divine Right and Democracy*, 357.

⁶⁵ Warren, *Royalist Reform’d*, 8.

⁶⁶ “The Divorce,” 1-4.

obligations of an unfunctioning and unfulfilling amatory commitment. His release from an affection infringed on by fate furnishes a restoration in which he reclaims control over his unattached affiliations. He begs her to abandon those “smiles and kisses” that bind him to her, and subsequently wound him “deeper than Disdain” in a context that prohibits the relationship that they promise.⁶⁷ The speaker abandons altogether love and the loyalty that it demands, choosing instead to sue his mistress for scorn: “I onely for thy scorn do sue,/ ‘Tis charity here not to love.”⁶⁸ In these final lines, the speaker accepts the impracticality of his fixed affiliation. The unloving charity that ends the poem inverts the conventional oxymoron of amatory verse—a mistress’s cruel love—and signals the speaker’s transition out of an economy of loyalty and into one of self-interested reaccommodation.

But for many loyalists this abrupt abandonment was unthinkable, and they instead sought strategies to maintain their “many solemn and sound ties” within the torrent of social change that they could not ignore. This need for accommodation created a crisis of constancy that forced loyalists to reconceive of their commitment in terms of the change that threatened it. Stanley arranges a series of poems in the middle of the collection that considers the challenge of blending royalism and reform without the apostasy advocated by Albertus Warren. The series opens with a song that reiterates the same confidence in structured reciprocity that is modeled in lyrics like “Unaltred by Sicknesse” and “The Kisse.” The poem urges the mutuality of lovers and disdains the idea of a disengaged mistress: the speaker would “rather marry a Disease,/ Than court the

⁶⁷ Ibid, 5-6.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 23-4.

thing I cannot please.”⁶⁹ The idea of inter-involvement is fundamental to this amatory economy, so that even doubts about his mistress’s fidelity can undo his fervent but fragile commitment: “What pleasure is there in a kisse,” he asks, “To him that doubts the Heart is not his?”⁷⁰ This loyal lover understands himself through the reciprocation of his loyalty. His declaration that “Tis I love you, ‘cause you love me” links the two lovers in their fixed fidelity to their shared affection.⁷¹ Originally part of the 1647 edition, this song’s frequent appearance in contemporary songbooks and miscellanies suggests that its theme of stable and reciprocal loyalty was a popular one amid the confusion of accelerating cultural change.⁷²

But in 1651 Stanley does not allow his readers to settle into this stability, inserting into the sequence an “Answer” that offers a point-by-point rejoinder to this song’s argument for a mutual, constitutive constancy. This lyric reiterates the structure and language of the preceding poem, using these formal echoes to revisit and invert the themes of its source. This speaker disarms his double’s opening threat to “not cast a Thought on” his mistress unless she single-mindedly bind him, instead insisting that his mistress withhold her love: “Yet if thy Love were paid to me,/ I would not offer mine to thee.”⁷³ Rather than finding comfort in his mistress’s attention, this lover dissociates his affection from hers, finding pleasure in the contradiction of “[courting] the thing [he]

⁶⁹ “Song: Wert thou yet fairer then thou art,” 7-8.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 11-12.

⁷¹ Ibid, 18.

⁷² For manuscript evidence of this reception, see Galbraith Miller Crump’s notes to the poem in his edition of Stanley’s *Poems and Translations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

⁷³ “Answer,” 5-6.

cannot please.” This speaker eroticizes rejection, advising his would-be mistress to measure her disinterest: “She that my love will entertain,/ Must meet it with no lesse disdain.”⁷⁴ His love is excited and enriched by the expectation that it will go unfulfilled, and he encourages the disdain that feeds it, countering the demand that desire must be met “with equal Fires” with the observation that “mutual fires themselves destroy.”⁷⁵ Mutuality endangers rather than engenders the identities of the two lovers, so that “willing Kisses yield no Joy.”⁷⁶ By the end of the poem, the interdependence that characterized the amatory experience of the song is undone. The lover who understands his love through its reciprocity (“cause you love me”) is displaced by one who understands his it through its discontinuity (“cause thou canst deny”).⁷⁷ This “Answer” responds to the popular model of close and uncompromising constancy advocated in the 1647 “Song” by reimagining love and loyalty in terms of the disaffiliation demanded by cultural discontinuity. The poem rewrites the premises of loyalty so that it is defined through the distance rather than the intimacy of its participants, reconceiving constancy as a function of disassociation, not a guard against it.

“The Relapse,” which immediately follows, enlarges this revalued distance and disdain into an ethics that advocates for infidelity. The poem begins with a lover who, like the speaker in “Answer,” insists that his mistress disguise her affection: he asks that she “turn away those cruel Eyes” lest they “tempt a second wooing.”⁷⁸ The rejection of

⁷⁴ Ibid, 9-10.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 18.

these “cruel Eyes” recalls the dismissive posture of the previous poem, but what this speaker finds most objectionable is not the affection itself, but rather its reiteration. This relapse into a “second wooing” restricts his mistress’s domain to the already-exhausted affection of a single subject. Her insistence on single-mindedly revisiting the site of previous victories leaves her vulnerable: “Though my first death proclaim thee fair,/ My second will unthrone thee.”⁷⁹ The risk is that other potential lovers may mistake her exclusivity for deficiency and begin to detach themselves from her as a devalued beauty:

Lovers will doubt thou canst entice
No other for thy fuel,
And if thou burn one Victime twice,
Both think thee poor and cruel.⁸⁰

Isolation is a liability in an economy that demands expansiveness. The resolution represented by her return renders her unfit to command loyalty outside of the restricted arena of a single relationship. Rather than see her unthroned by an undeserved reputation for being “poor and cruel,” the speaker discourages his mistress’s relapse into reiterative fixity. The poem instead encourages her to desituate herself and expand her affection so that she might entice a world of would-be loyalists with her robust and indiscriminating accessibility.

This series of poems—“Song: Wert thou yet fairer then thou art,” “Answer,” and “The Relapse”—responds to the crisis of constancy that faced loyalists by revaluing the inconstancy against which they defined themselves. The “Song” that initiates the series registers the liabilities of practicing a principled obduracy in an age of rigorous change.

⁷⁸ “The Relapse,” 1, 4.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 11-12.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 13-16.

The loyalty of the “Song” is uncertain and incapable of accommodating even the idea of infidelity. The speaker is aware of his vulnerability to changing affections and circumstances, but he is unwilling to allow himself or his mistress to abandon the constitutive constancy that binds them to each other. The following “Answer” releases its lovers from this vulnerability by rejecting their tenuous reciprocity as a precondition for fidelity. The poem separates the experience of loyalty from its expression, imagining a relationship that depends on denials rather than reaffirmations. This measured response assures that loyalism can be nurtured subtly, outside of the ostentatious displays of obstinacy inspired by Charles’s principled stand. Finally, “The Relapse” reconsiders the practicality of principled continuity and invites loyalists to consider accommodating their cause to the circumstances that confront them. This speaker urges his mistress to evaluate herself as an object of loyalty and to measure her actions so that she remains one. In these circumstances, her reiterative constancy threatens her ability to attract and hold affiliations, and he concludes that it is more prudent to preserve the practice of loyalty over its principles. He accepts that in order to maintain the faith of her followers she must be unfaithful. Through this series of poems, Stanley offers an alternative to the unrelenting stubbornness of principle that left loyalists vulnerable in a contravening culture. He imagines a functional infidelity that allows an object of loyalty to stray from its principles in order to accomplish its purpose of retaining followers. This accommodation releases loyalists from choosing between their “solemn and sound ties” and the “new sin called falling or defection from principles” by allowing those principles to float with them in the “torrent of nimble days.”

Calls for a more accommodating, if not faithful, cause appear throughout the

collection. "The Self-cruel," which immediately precedes the series discussed above, expresses the mutual disadvantage of insisting on immutable expectations. The speaker uses his own amatory death to persuade his mistress to soften her uncompromising demands:

For in my Death (though long delay'd)
Unwisely cruel thou appearst.
Insult ore Captives with disdain,
Thou canst not triumph o're the slain.⁸¹

Her over-exaction of his willing loyalty abuses that loyalty. She is "unwisely cruel" by pushing her demands beyond his ability to satisfy them, thereby incapacitating him and his loyalty. Her authority is increased when she calibrates her demands to captivate loyalty, but proudly overextending her insistence risks exhausting loyalty and precluding the triumph that comes from controlling it. There is a transgressive morbidity in her post-mortem cruelty. Her fixation on reiterating her abusive insistence after it has rendered him unresponsive is an obsessive and self-damaging performance in which she "[glories] in [her] own defeat."⁸² As in "The Relapse," the speaker calls on his mistress to examine the consequences of her single-mindedness:

Behold how thy unthrifty pride
Hath murdered him that did maintain it;
And wary Souls who never tride
Thy Tyrant Beauty, will disdain it:
But I am softer, and that me
Thou wouldst not pity, pity thee.⁸³

The "unthrifty pride" of her persistence prohibits the durable devotion that it demands. This self-serving blindness breeds disdain, not devotion, and advertises a tyranny that

⁸¹ "The Self-Cruel," 3-6.

⁸² Ibid, 12.

⁸³ Ibid, 13-18.

discourages fealty. But the final couplet offers an alternative in which the speaker examines his own vulnerability and discovers viability for a loyalty that is expressed through softness and pity rather than the hardness of an exacting pride. The speaker accepts in his hardship the failures of fixity and encourages his mistress to abandon the obduracy by which she undoes herself.

This ethics of softness resolves the dilemmas posed by a rigid constancy by conceding to the conditions that prohibit it. The speaker calls on his mistress to recognize the recursive cruelty of her sado-masochistic stubbornness as a strategy for exacting and enacting loyalty, and urges her to rejuvenate herself and her followers by practicing an active empathy that conforms to circumstances: a soft pity. Stanley's incorporation of poems in the popular *carpe diem* mode gives voice to the urgency of adopting an active accommodation by arguing for a desituated and non-exclusive beauty that is valuable only in its usefulness. His translation of Ronsard's short lyric, "The Revenge," for instance, emphasizes the importance of understanding and responding to change by imagining it as the medium through which identity is expressed. The speaker reproves his unyielding mistress as a "Fair Rebell to [her] self, and Time."⁸⁴ The equivalence that the speaker draws between the self and time locates identity creation in the continually unfolding context of temporal change. Denying this undeniable change also operates as self-denial, and this mistress effaces herself in her isolation. Her stubborn unresponsiveness disregards the engagement that her existence demands, and her identity is eroded by the active time that she attempts to ignore until she finally loses her "youthfull prime/ And age his Trophie rears."⁸⁵ The speaker imagines her eventually

⁸⁴ "The Revenge," 1.

reproving the “inconsiderate pride” by which she conscribes herself: “Why Beauty am I now deni’d/ Or know not then to use it?”⁸⁶ In this retrospection she recognizes the recursive detriments of an ethics of denial, finding herself denied the beauty she once denied. The “inconsiderate pride” that motivates her to waste away in inactivity is, in part, an ignorance that fails to consider the contingency of her worth: her effort to protect and preserve her beauty fails because she does not recognize that her beauty is transient and has only a fleeting value in fleeting circumstances.

The poems in which Stanley’s lovers advise their mistresses out of inactivity give voice to the anxieties of those loyalists left vulnerable by their unaccommodating cause. These lyrics bolster their endorsement of inconstancy with reassurances that loyalties are flexible and can accommodate change. They allow that an authority that commands loyalties may commit necessary infidelities without sacrificing the affiliations of its followers. Stanley’s translation of Tristan’s “The Bracelet,” displays the potential double function of a shifting mistress who is able to both elude and engage her suitors.⁸⁷ The speaker regards this band woven from his mistress’s hair as a physical testament to the “many chains” that tie his heart to her. But this token is an ambiguous artifact of affection that speaks the contradictions of a complicated loyalty. The braided band testifies to a mistress in constant motion:

These threads of Amber us’d to play
With every courtly wind,
And never were confin’d,

⁸⁵ Ibid, 3-4.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 7-8.

⁸⁷ A second lyric by the same name, but drawing its influence from Donne, appears later in the collection.

But in a thousand Curls allow'd to stray.⁸⁸

Unlike the stolid beauty of "The Revenge," this mistress unrestrains herself, allowing her behavior to curl with her hair. She and her locks promiscuously move with the winding winds of courtiers and the court. Unbinding herself is an act of enlargement that permits her to stray—meaning both "to strew" and "to escape control"—in a thousand different ways. As a reminder of the expansive unrestraint of an active mistress, the bracelet points to an energetic inconstancy that defies constraint. But the remark that these locks "us'd to play" suggests that the band speaks a second meaning that marks the end of movement. For the speaker, the bracelet represents the immutable bond between him and his mistress: "These fetters are to Me,/ Which to restrain my Freedom, loose their own."⁸⁹ As an expression of the speaker's personal commitment, these straying curls solidify into fetters that bind his behavior. In the context of his loyalty, the bracelet is transformed into a sign that confirms constancy: he and her flowing hair both lose their freedom and conform to a mutual fixity. But the mistress's expansive inconstancy is not affected by the constancy she causes. The bracelet's second meaning is created in its removal from her, and represents the loyalty that she prompts in him, not the effect of his loyalty on her. By allowing these two contradictory meanings—her floating infidelity and his unfaltering commitment to it—the bracelet illustrates a potential intermingling of constancy and inconstancy and imagines a stable loyalty that allows its authorities to accommodate change.

"The Bracelet" attempts to imagine more fulsomely the functional infidelity asked for in "Answer" and "The Relapse." This mistress engages and accrues loyalties by

⁸⁸ "The Bracelet," 5-8.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 11-12.

permitting herself to stray: “[playing] with every courtly wind” attracts potential followers by proving that she is not “poor and cruel,” and also maximizes her exposure so that she can continue to enlarge her following. Lyrics like Stanley’s translation of Montalvan’s “A Ladie weeping” imagine the unifying ubiquity of influence that might be accomplished through this expansive infidelity.⁹⁰ The speaker figures his weeping mistress as a force of unbounded fluidity:

As when some Brook flies from it self away,
The murm’ring Christal losely runs astray.
And as about the verdant Plain it windes,
The Meadows with a silver ribband binds [.]⁹¹

This mistress is moved and moving: like an overcharged brook, she overwhelms her stable, bounded self and “losely runs astray.” This straying and winding recalls the playful liberty of “The Bracelet,” but intensifies it into a transgressive Pindaric tide. Though this “silver riband” lacks the violence of Cowley’s torrent, it nonetheless exceeds its banks and swells to surround the earth that typically contains it. The resulting flood is a vision of her ubiquity: “Printing a kisse on every Flower she meets,/ Loosing her self to fill them with new sweets.”⁹² By “loosing her self,” she expands her presence and unifies this figurative landscape—which is at once her cheek, her sympathetic suitors, and the English loyalists they stand for—by “watering every Flower.”⁹³ The language of Stanley’s translation echoes that of other lyrics that call for stubborn mistresses to release

⁹⁰ Crump identifies the source of the lyric as Montalvan’s play, *El Senor don Juan de Austria*. A manuscript version of the poem is titled, “On the Picture of a Gentlewoman weeping/ Out of a Spanish Comody.”

⁹¹ “A Ladie weeping,” 1-4.

⁹² Ibid, 5-6.

⁹³ Ibid, 11.

themselves from their exclusivity—whether it be to themselves or a single suitor—and imagines an authority capable of expanding its influence to a community of loyalists through its fluid activity.

The policy of expansive accommodation that Stanley imagines in these inconstancy poems relieves some of the stresses put on loyalists in a time of rapid cultural change, but it also compounds other anxieties and uncertainties that often accompany commitment. When, for instance, does strategic straying develop into a more damaging form of self-effacement that infringes on the integrity of an entity that is always adjusting itself? At what point do these constant changes confound followers and force them into a confusion over what, precisely, they are following? When does confusion discourage affiliation, and what is the value of constancy to a cause that is insubstantial and continually desituating itself? Finally, at what point do the inconsistencies and unreliabilities of adaptability cease to be frustrations and become betrayals?

V.

Stanley's suitors are not always confident in their constancy. The figure of the fretful lover languishing over the imagined infidelities of an unfaithful mistress was conventional in amatory verse of the period, and Stanley uses the anxieties expressed through this convention to articulate, explore, and respond to the dilemmas of identifying with an authority that continually unsettles itself. His translation of Lope de Vega's "The Dream" reassesses the security of a static commitment to a straying cause by interjecting the cynical and self-protective voice of a "jealous Soul at strife."⁹⁴ The shock of dreaming his mistress's infidelity causes him to recognize that loyalty is predominately

⁹⁴ "The Dream," 1.

experienced and understood through the imagination:

I saw, when last I clos'd my Eyes,
Celinda stoop t' anothers Will;
If specious Apprehension kill,
What would the truth without disguise.⁹⁵

The speaker is vexed by a vision of her unfaithfulness. His “specious Apprehension” elicits a response as acute as any that might be prompted by “the truth without disguise.” This equation of specious apprehension and undisguised truth allows the imaginative experience of loyalty to infringe on, and even replace, the embodied experience. The vision itself emphasizes the tenuousness of affiliations that can be formed and reformed by fictions: in stooping to another’s will, she exposes as assumptions the speaker’s beliefs about her superiority and her commitment to him. Unlike in “The Bracelet” and “A Lady Weeping,” the act of inconstancy—no less real because it is imagined—threatens rather than facilitates affiliation. Loyalty’s rewards are finally insubstantial:

The joyes which I should call mine own
Me thought this Rival did possesse:
Like Dreams is all my happinesse;
Yet Dreams themselves allow me none.⁹⁶

In other inconstancy poems, the speaker urges his mistress to interact widely in order to enhance her influence and expand a community of like-minded loyalists. But this mistress strays in unreliable ways that disregard the speaker’s security and encourage the competing concerns of a community of rivals. At the end of the lyric, the speaker accepts that the favors of an elusive authority are illusory and that, as an imagined experience, his loyalty can only offer him an imaginary security.

By giving voice to this disenchantment, “The Dream” allows Stanley to

⁹⁵ Ibid, 5-8.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 9-12.

acknowledge one of the main liabilities of the inconstancy he advocates throughout his collection. Caught in his commitment to a non-committal authority, the speaker is incapable of securing his own interests while bound to a mistress who acts according to her own. Her incessant adaptation has little use for his expectations, which attempt to guarantee their behavior against, rather than in, the demands of change. The speaker's assumption that their mutuality is immune to these demands is disrupted by the realization that his mistress is willing to engage and disengage her obligations as her circumstances shift. However their interests may have aligned, this overlap was temporary, and the speaker finds himself compromised in his commitment to an authority unconcerned with his well-being. This anxiety of owning an interest that is isolated and vulnerable to the conditions of change was familiar following the fractiousness of the 1640s, when conflicts of interest were inevitable in a culture that was constantly contradicting itself.

"Interest" was a central concern in the middle of the seventeenth century. Many attributed the conflicts of the civil wars to the intensification of individual and sectarian interests that superseded the broader, national interest. In the opening pages of *The Loyall Convert* (1643), Francis Quarles pleads with his readers to set aside the "private Respects and Interests" that have reduced England from "the Earths *Paradise*, and the Worlds *Wonder*" to a "Nursery of all *Sects*."⁹⁷ Four years later, Stanley's favorite, John Hall, notes that the nation "hath not beene more distracted since the beginning of this impious war, then it is at this present" when "new parties appeare, and new interests are discovered, that we seemed to oreact some wel contrived Romance. In which every page

⁹⁷ Francis Quarles, *The Loyall Convert* (Oxford: 1643), Sig. a1r-b1r.

begets a new and handsome impossibility.”⁹⁸ Following the regicide, Hall’s associate, Marchamont Nedham, regards all social action as an expression of interest, and therefore encourages his readers to measure each other according to the “grand End” of their interests rather than isolated actions:

Interest is the true *Zenith* of every State and Person, according to which they may certainly be understood, though cloathed never so much with the most specious disguise of Religion, Justice and Necessity: And Actions are the effects of Interests, from whom they proceed, and to whom they tend naturally as the stone doth downward.⁹⁹

At the end of the decade, Nedham prioritizes the discernment of interest to argue against the reinstatement of the monarchy. In *Interest will not Lie* (1647), he refutes the thesis of the pro-restoration pamphlet, *The Interest of England stated*, by addressing the individual interests—papist, royalist, presbyterian, baptised, neuter, army, parliament, and the city of London—that make up “England’s True Interest.”¹⁰⁰ The full title and argument of Nedham’s tract envisions England as a collective of diverse and contending interests that resists the tidy consensus of a common-weal and demands to be addressed in its heterogenous multiplicity.

For Nedham, interest is the new rule, and acknowledging its exigencies is essential for social action. In *The Case Stated*, he offers an anatomy of interest, in which he identifies and prioritizes English national interest alongside the various interests of religion, liberty, and individual persons that had come to dominate the culture with their

⁹⁸ Hall, *A true account and character of the times* (London: 1647), Sig.. a1r.

⁹⁹ Marchamont Nedham, *The Case Stated Between England and the United Provinces* (London: 1652), 23.

¹⁰⁰ Marchamont Nedham, *Interest will not Lie. Or, a View of England’s True Interest* (London: 1659).

conflicts. Charles's offense in the civil wars was a misprioritization of interest in which he advanced "his prerogative, above the Law, by which he ought to have ruled, both by his oath, and the constitution of this Nation, and his power upon the consciences of his Subjects."¹⁰¹ Charles's personal interest infringed on the broader interest of the nation and the individual liberty of his subjects, and Nedham sees the subsequent military resistance as an attempt to reassert these interests against the "Cavaliers" championing the "Kings interest" above those of the nation.¹⁰² The anti-national self-regard advanced by the king and his cavaliers acts against the interest of England, and it also signifies to Nedham fundamentally foreign behavior. The primary topic of the tract is the perfidious double-dealing of the Dutch who, similar to the self-serving Stuarts, seem to prioritize their own trade interests above the shared political and religious interests they have pledged to their allies. Nedham contrasts the English-Dutch alliance of the Elizabeth's rule, when both countries seemed to share "one Nation, one Cause and quarrel," with the self-invested disingenuousness of these "Forraign *people*!"¹⁰³ The pamphlet's explication of Dutch self-interest illustrates the unique demands of the interest-driven culture initiated by Charles's pursuit of his own prerogative. When interest directs action above obligation, declarations of constancy are continually undercut and contradicted. Nedham notes that those focused on "prosecuting their opportunities" for their own "satisfaction and profit" only treat treaties, leagues, and oaths as "specious and gilded [Coverings]"

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 3.

¹⁰² For all the attention that the ambiguous epithet "Cavalier" has received, Nedham uses it here to denote a partisan affiliation that included courtiers, soldiers, and courtier-soldiers.

¹⁰³ *Interest will not Lie*, 3, 17.

and that these sincere assurances are unfit to “lay a *Foundation* for us to pitch upon.”¹⁰⁴

The commitments of cozeners cannot be credited:

For though Leagues are confirmed with all the sacredness that man knows
of to bind the performance, yet if advantage be Paramount to such
stipulations, when a fair opportunity is presented, no bonds be they never
so high and intrinsecall, will be able to preserve those Leagues from doing
Homage to the supream *Deity* of *Gain & Profit*.¹⁰⁵

In an interested economy, the immediate incentives of acting according to advantage and opportunity supersede the “high and intrinsicall” value of honoring obligations.

Subsequently, treaties, oaths, and other gestures that bind behavior are deceptions that disguise the opportunistic inconstancy they are designed to guard against. Even exacting the “strongest and most sacred Stipulations” is insufficient to prevent the infringements of interest on the instruments of trust.

In an economy of interest, the value of loyalty is contingent rather than “intrinsicall.” In contemporary usage, the term “intrinsicall” had a slightly broader meaning than the modern “intrinsic,” and meant that something was “inward, secret, [or] familiar” rather than “inherent.”¹⁰⁶ A loyalty without “intrinsicall” value has no “inward” value to an individual continually reevaluating her interest, nor does it have a “familiar” value between individuals whose first priority is their own advantage. Rather than expressing a consensus commitment, this defamiliarized loyalism instead registers the shifting interests of those engaged in it. Nedham complains that the Dutch are skilled at softening the terms of their commitments into a flexible ambiguity that they can then

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ This is the definition provided in Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia*, the standard vernacular dictionary in the seventeenth century and the source for most of the entries in Edward Phillips’s influential *New World of Words*.

reinterpret according to their interest. In one case of their “craftiness and cunning,” Nedham accuses the Dutch of entering into an anti-piracy truce with the Portugese with the purpose of exploiting the spirit of trust in order to more easily overtake and plunder Portugese ships. When confronted over this apostasy, the Dutch justified their opportunistic violation of the spirit of the treaty by arguing that, according to a little-examined clause they had inserted, the terms of the truce had not yet taken effect. The tract is full of these “tergiversations,” and points to a concern that loyalty loses its usefulness as a tool for social engagement once it is subject to the shifting contingencies of self-interest.

The Changeable Covenant (1650), which exposes the Scottish infidelities to *The Solemn League and Covenant* (1643), shares Nedham’s anxiety that the trust economy that traditionally had structured social interactions was obsolete in an age of interest. The title itself indicates the tract’s concern that changeability is now inherent in assurances of constancy. The advertisement that occupies the remainder of the title-page anticipates the author’s complaint that the Scottish Covenanters treat the covenant as a prompt for their deceptions: they have “imposed upon *England*, by their false Glosses, and perverse interpretations of the Covenant” and practiced “their Iugglings, Tergiversations, and dangerous Designes [. . .] under pretence of the Covenant, Articles, and Treaty.”¹⁰⁷ For both the Scots and this skeptical author, the covenant is a site where meaning is manipulated. The “perverse interpretations” that the Scots provide do not contradict their contract: the author concedes that their interpretations “proceeded from the Covenant” but that they “flowed from a seeming ambiguitie” unnoticed by the “plain dealing

¹⁰⁷ *The Changeable Covenant* (London: 1650).

English.”¹⁰⁸ When interpreted according to interest, the covenant is a source of ambiguity, not obligation. The self-interested Scots are able to “stretch the Covenant” and “make it speak quite contrary to itself” in order to accommodate their advantage.¹⁰⁹ The author is dismayed that the Scots could justify protecting Charles against the English Parliament by using the covenant that aligned them with Parliament’s effort against the king. By reinterpreting its ambiguities, the Scots make the covenant complicit in their inconstancy, leaving the “plain dealing English” parliamentarians vulnerable in their commitment to an agreement that can be turned against them. The author observes to his readers that the opportunistic Scots now use “their old *Treaty* and *Covenant*, as weapons against us” to such advantage that they are not likely to leave it off “unlesse *the solemne League and Covenant* were made upon such conditions, that the *Scots* might absolutely break it, and yet the *English* remain bound.”¹¹⁰ The tract ends with an image of an English army stationed against the invasive interest of the Scots, who stand “*waiting an opportunity, at their best advantage to make.*”¹¹¹

This anxiety over the influence of interest found expression in the amatory verse of the period. The genre’s Petrarchan and Neo-platonic concern with a love that exceeds sublunary limitations allowed authors to assert the importance of a stable system of social values that acts above the shifting concerns of an opportunistic interest. Joshua Scodel counts erotic abandon among the modes of excess that influenced the ideas of ethics in

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 12.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 13.

early modern England.¹¹² His discussion of amatory excess focuses on the poetry of the mid- and late-seventeenth-century and argues that conservative poets used the genre's emphasis on amatory enthusiasm to endorse an ethics of excess that confirmed the superiority of an aristocratic elite over the ethical moderation of an expanding merchant class.¹¹³ Scodel finds that these poets associated the prioritization of an ethical mean with a cultural meanness that was motivated by a self-serving ambition. The financial and political opportunism of this merchant class represented the encroachment of interest on the secure social authority of the ruling elite. The love lyrics of Carew, Davenant, Dryden and Behn prize the profound feeling of overpowering love as a proof of an aristocratic merit that transcended ascribed social identities and norms. For these poets, erotic abandon demonstrates a lack of concern for economic solvency or social respectability. The noble excess of this "aristocratic riot" operates as a rebuttal to the ignoble, deficient interests that motivated the financial and political ambitions of a mean merchant class.

Stanley's collection includes lyrics that offer an amatory intervention against the encroachments of interest. The speaker of "Ambition," for instance, urges the importance of love to a mistress who has cooled to him in her interested pursuit of wealth and fame. His disappointment is a betrayal that indicates an ethical misprioritization: "Poor love to harsh Disdain betray'd/ Is by Ambition thus out-weighed."¹¹⁴ This ambitious mistress offers an amatory equivalent to the profit-driven Dutch and opportunistic Scots whose

¹¹² Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹¹³ Once again, by "conservative" I mean something close to the dynamic of mutual obligation and dependence outlined by Isabel Rivers in *The Poetry of Conservatism: A Study of Poets and Public Affairs from Jonson to Pope* (Cambridge: Rivers Press Ltd., 1973). Her conservative poetry's "creation of an image of public order" is especially applicable (x).

¹¹⁴ "Ambition," 5-6.

self-serving behavior exploits the expectations of the “plain dealing English.” The suitor contends that the “vast extent/ Of Constant Faith” available in an amatory experience vaunts lovers “farre/ ‘Bove all that are/ Born slaves to Wealth, or Honours vain ascent.”¹¹⁵ The “constant faith” imagined between these lovers prizes the stable mutuality of an intimate amatory experience, and is not the “aristocratic riot” described by Scodel. Nonetheless, like erotic abandon, indulging in this mutual love establishes an amatory space that secures a set of shared values against the unpredictable opportunism of interest.

If we keep in mind the model of a deliberately dis-interested love offered in “Ambition,” we can find throughout Stanley’s collection different assessments of a customary economy of constancy forced to come to terms with the vexing inconstancy of interest. In this light, the deifying Neo-platonism of “Unaltred by Sicknesse” and “The Kisse” express a confidence in divine right monarchy as a social force abstracted from, and therefore invulnerable to, the emerging uncertainties of political and financial interest. The undivining that occurs in “Love Deposed” and “The Returne” attempts to envision a monarchy that remains immune to instability, but is also attentive to the threatened interests of its followers. The inconstancy poems accept that it is impractical to ignore the influence of interest and encourage an uncompromising cause to accommodate in order to preserve the common interest of itself and its followers. Taken as a whole, the collection does not favor any one of these responses as a definitive solution to the impositions of interest: divine right poems reassert their ethics after they have been rebuked, and jealous lovers anxiously exact their oaths of exclusivity alongside *carpe diem* endorsements of expansive indulgence. But by allowing these lyrics to

¹¹⁵ “Ambition,” 7-10.

qualify and undercut each other, Stanley captures the perplexity of a culture learning to accommodate the unpredictabilities of interest.

Love lyrics are well-suited to respond to the problems posed by interest in specific political and economic contexts, but we must be careful not to limit their meanings to socio-economic commentary. The intimacy of amatory discourse makes the anxiety they represent more immediate than the remote interests of a Scottish parliament, the double-dealing of the Dutch in the East Indies, or the heady ideological incompatibilities of competing social classes. Interest undermined sociability by prioritizing individual concerns over the concerns of the community, disrupting the reliability of trust and constancy as premises for interpersonal interaction. The anxiety over this disruption extended across social categories and affiliations: Nedham's reformist merchant class is as anxious as Scodel's aristocratic elite. Although accusations of interest served partisan purposes—Nedham's cavaliers act in the "Kings interest" and Scodel's conservative poets react against the interested motivations of parliament's political base—the epithet lacked the partisan specificity of terms like "iconoclasm" and "cavalier," and was used to indicate different forms of self-serving and subversive non-conformity. Regardless of political affiliation, interest-driven behavior was alien and invasive. The prioritization of advantage as the chief motivation for social action exposed relationships of all sorts to changes in priorities and contexts. Sociability was rendered uncertain when relationships were valued according to the shifting contingencies in which they existed rather than the "intrinsicall" agreement between its participants.

Constancy assumes "intrinsicall" value when contingency is the rule. Those who adhere to an unaltering loyalism are vulnerable to those attentively adjusting to occasion,

and often find themselves, like Portugese pirates and English covenanters, faithful against their own advantage. Stanley's translation of Marino's "Commanded by his Mistress to woe for her" illustrates the hazards of committed service to the self-interested. As the title suggests, the speaker's mistress has engaged his obedience in order to betray him. The speaker finds his constancy tasked with subverting the cause that it serves. This contravening constancy is unfamiliar in the way that it derives infidelity from fealty:

Strange kind of Love! that knows no President,
A Faith so firm as passeth faiths Extent,
By a Tyrannic Beauty long subdu'd,
I now must sue for her to whom I su'd.¹¹⁶

This strange love does not abide by the shared interest it implies. The mistress's subtle repurposing of her suitor as one who sues *for* her rather than *to* her appropriates his agency and subsumes his interest within hers. The speaker becomes a dummy for his mistress's ventriloquized desire, and is disaffiliated from the courtship he performs: "Employing thus against my self my Breath,/ And in anothers Life begging my Death."¹¹⁷ Her interested realignment transforms his firm faith into a self-immolating duty. His complaint that this newly-preferred rival is one by whom she is "nor priz'd, nor understood" inattentively argues for the "intrinsicall" intimacy that she has discarded. But by the end of the poem, he acknowledges that his obedience is out-moded:

Nor the obedience of my Flame accuse,
That what I sought, my self conspir'd to loose:
The haplesse state where I am fix'd is such,
To love I seem not, cause I Love too much.¹¹⁸

It is not loyalty itself that leaves him loveless, but the "haplesse state" in which he

¹¹⁶ "Commanded by his Mistress to woe for her," 1-4.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 7-8.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 29-32.

practices it. His faith is unfit for a context that turns constancy into self-conspiracy. Unlike the speakers in "The Bracelet" and "A Lady Weeping," who affiliate with an inclusive inconstancy, this loyalist is abandoned by a shifting, self-serving cause that disregards his interests.

VI.

In a changing and contingent culture, commitments could not secure the shared interest that they signified. Loyalists were forced to acknowledge that they might be cozened in their constancy to an adapting cause. Stanley's translation of Montalvan's "The Self-Deceaver" expresses the uncertainty of a subject preparing himself to accommodate the inevitability of betrayal. The poem begins with the speaker weighing his competing impulses to be both "Deceav'd and undeceav'd" of his mistress's infidelity: if he remains "deceived," he saves himself the suffering of the discovery; were he to be "undeceived," the certainty of the confirmation would prevent a perpetual "mistrust of happinesse."¹¹⁹ He assumes inconstancy and determines that, in both cases, his loyalty is a liability: "deceav'd" or "undeceav'd," loving a "subject not deserving Love" makes him complicit in his own abuse.¹²⁰ But unlike Marino's speaker, who maintains his dysfunctional obedience despite the "haplesse state" in which it is abused, this suitor prefers to react to the impositions of inconstancy rather than turn self-conspirator. He resolves to protect himself by becoming the agent of his own delusion:

He that to cheat himself conspires,
From falsehood doth his Faith secure
In Love uncertain to believe

¹¹⁹ "The Self-Deceaver," 1, 6.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 10.

I am deceiv'd, doth undeceive.¹²¹

By self-deceiving himself into a state of perpetual doubt, the speaker secures himself against the faithlessness of others. His determination to love uncertainly in uncertainty accommodates inconstancy in order to avoid its injuries. His subsequent rule to “in distrust inconstant steer” is part of a strategy to unsettle himself so that he can better monitor and respond to contingency.¹²² In his perpetually unsettled state, this suitor experiences his loyalty as a process rather than a position. He responds to the perils of unpredictability by developing a vigilant distrust and nimble inconstancy that allows him to operate in constant change, imagining an attentively adapting loyalism that is suited to the stresses of self-interest.

In “The Self-Decaver” and the many other infidelity poems in his collection, Stanley’s speakers overcome inconstancy by becoming inconstant. His slighted suitors smart from the abuse of their commitment and come to regard loyalism as an unstable experience in which they must unfix their faith in order to secure their self-interest against the shifting concerns of others. Like the Self-Deceaver, the speaker in the song, “No, I will sooner trust the Wind” has learned to “in distrust inconstant steer”:

No, I will sooner trust the Wind,
When falsely kind
It courts the pregnant Sails into a storm,
And when the smiling Waves perswade
Be willingly betray'd,
Then thy deceitful Vows or Form.¹²³

The speaker is attentive to the instability that underlies the promises made in kind

¹²¹ Ibid, 15-18.

¹²² Ibid, 20.

¹²³ “No, I will sooner trust the wind,” 1-6.

courtship and smiling persuasion. With this awareness he finds that the verbal and physical allurements of his mistress's "Vows [and] Form," which in other poems serve to entice and secure commitments, instead operate as the snares for a fluid self-interest that deceives the commitments it entices. The speaker navigates this unstable environment of windy vows and fluid forms by evaluating and adjusting to its storms. This attentive adaptation distinguishes him from other easy-hearted "fools" who see a static stability in the "smooth flatt'ring Deep,/ But not the hidden dangers know."¹²⁴ But experiencing deceit corrects assumptions of stability, and these suitors, like the speaker, learn to shift with and disengage from what they see as a fluid infidelity: "They that like me thy Falsehood prove,/ Will scorn thy Love."¹²⁵ Proving falsehood is preparation for practicing it. Infidelity instructs the betrayed speaker of the song, "I Prethee let my heart alone" to guard against engagements: he boasts that other lovers may be beguiled,

But I am proof against all art,
 No vows shall e're perswade me
 Twice to present a wounded Heart
 To her that hath betry'd me.¹²⁶

Here, as above, the experience of infidelity forces itself on the ideas of amatory engagement. The betrayed lover reforms his ideas of loyalism in terms of his betrayal, incorporating into his identity the inconstancy that had cozened him. The speaker in the song, "I Will not trust thy tempting graces," which immediately precedes "No, I will sooner trust the Wind," remains on guard against the deceitful charms, imprisoning embraces, fettering arms of a confining mistress attempting to "captivate [his] heart" or

¹²⁴ Ibid, 3-5.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 13-14.

¹²⁶ "I Prethee let my heart alone," 13-16.

“fool [his] liberty away.”¹²⁷ This diligence ensures that his “wary heart is free,/ And unconfined as [hers],” and allows him, like the other lovers in Stanley’s infidelity poems, to elude the elusive engagements of a fluid loyalty.¹²⁸

The purposeful and responsive infidelity that Stanley imagines in these lyrics found expression in the reformist polemic of the period. As early as 1644, William Walwyn, who would become one of the central figures of Leveller movement, urges that social unity depends on the recognition that “the times change, and the men with them.”¹²⁹ Walwyn envisions an unsettled social environment that in turn unsettles its participants; the ability to change within this changing context is essential for social cohesion and continuity. Anthony Ascham accepts this imperative as a premise, arguing at the end of the decade that obdurate loyalists must learn to accommodate the contradictions of inevitable social change by “taking opposite oaths,” an exhortation reiterated by Albertus Warren in *The Royalist Reform’d*.¹³⁰ By 1653, John Lilburne found that this change was widespread and incessant. He complains that “violations, breaches, and encroachments eat like a gangrene on common liberty” and, like one of Stanley’s lovers disaffected with violable vows, disregards oaths as meaningless expressions of constancy in an inconstant condition.¹³¹ But for these reformists, representing instability serves a purpose: observing the inevitability of social change confirms the necessity of

¹²⁷ Ibid, 1-7.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 13-14.

¹²⁹ William Walwyn, *The Compassionate Samaritane* (London: 1644), in Wootton, 253.

¹³⁰ Anthony Ascham, *Of the Confusions and Revolutions of Governments* (London: 1649), in Wootton, *Divine Right and Democracy*, 351.

¹³¹ John Lilburne, *The Just Defence of John Lilburn, against such as charge him with turbulency of spirit* (London: 1653), in Wootton, 146.

the political and religious reforms that they advocate. For Walwyn, cultural change creates an epistemological uncertainty and encourages religious toleration; Ascham and Warren advertise it in order to encourage political reaffiliation with the republic, and Lilburne is anxious to restructure the nation's laws according to a code of "native rights." For these figures, inconstancy is transitive and temporary: re-forming ends with the ends of reform.

But the instability that Stanley represents is indefinite. He removes motivation from the social movement he imagines, so that change and its challenges are continuous. The stability promised by the reformist agenda is as uncertain and unsuitable in this change as the conservative structures it seeks to subsume. Affiliations in this fluidity, his dissatisfied suitors discover, inevitably dissolve and disappoint.

Stanley's infidelity poems supply a solution to the change that vexes loyalties throughout the collection. The speakers of these poems, like Stanley and his contemporaries, are confronted with an immediate and unusual instability that undermines their attempts to secure themselves through strategies of constancy. But where other lovers attempt to recover and reinforce their strained commitments, like displaced loyalists looking to remain constant to their cause, these suitors survive in uncertainty by measuring themselves to their moving environment. For these unlucky lovers the affects of infidelity are irreversible, and they accept that inconstancy is inherent in the experience of loyalism. Their willingness to concede to instability through attentive adaptation offers a strategy for responding to change that avoids the vulnerabilities of insisting on static and "intrinsicall" engagements that cannot endure. In these speakers, Stanley imagines an identity that learns to appropriate the inconstancy of

its environment and change continuously in order to operate in continuous change.

Though this adaptive identity avoids fixing its affiliations, it does not refuse to affiliate: in an economy of shifting obligations, fluid loyalty is not necessarily disloyalty. Stanley's lovers do not abandon love and the loyalty it invites, they simply re-envision it free from the beguiling engagements imposed by "Vows [and] Form" and invigorate it with an alertness to their own shifting interests. Savvy to instability, these suitors allow Stanley to imagine an inconstancy that is constitutive of, not contradictory to, the practice of loyalty. "Chang'd yet Constant," announces in its title the lyric's attempt to reconcile change with constancy.¹³² The poem opens with a speaker arguing to his mistress that what she sees as his infidelity is actually a consequence of his commitment:

I vow'd t'adore
 The fairest Saint,
Nor chang'd whilst thou wert she:
But if another Thee outshine,
Th' Inconstancy is onely Thine.¹³³

This speaker's loyalty is not tied to his mistress's demands or his promises to serve her, but to a subjective standard of fairness. Like the airy authorities of other infidelity poems, this mistress is insubstantial and unstable. The beauty by which she commands obedience is comparative, not innate, and dependent on the speaker's own sexual interests.

Consequently, her relative value fluctuates according to changes in her context as the women around her, and the speaker's tastes, shift. Little more than temporary vehicles for a contingent beauty, this mistress and the other "Thees" who qualify her are ciphers of

¹³² A manuscript version of the poem titles the lyric "Constant Change Defended," which provides an even more intimate view of their interdependence in which constancy is claimed by the change it grammatically modifies.

¹³³ "Chang'd yet Constant," 4-8.

inconstancy and are ceaselessly “by/ Themselves betray’d.”¹³⁴ In order to remain faithful to “the fairest Saint,” the speaker must continually reaffiliate as his beautiful authority moves from mistress to mistress. He denies that he has been disloyal, insisting that inconstancy is a function of his fidelity to a moving beauty:

[Beauty] bids me choose
A Deity
Diviner far then thine;
No power can Love from Beauty sever;
I’m still Loves subject, thine was never.¹³⁵

The speaker distinguishes between loving her and loving beauty in her. His obligations to his own self-interested attractions supersede those to the self-betraying sources that only temporarily hold his admiration. This self-loyalty allows him to engage in order to satisfy his self-interest, but also demands that he disengage as those interests change, so that “’twere as impious to adore/ Thee now, as not t’have don’t before.”¹³⁶ Stanley’s suitor ends by endorsing a loyalty that evaluates the value of its affiliations: “Of Lovers they are onely true/ Who pay their Hearts where they are due.”¹³⁷ But this value is susceptible to the shifting contingencies of the different contexts and interests that give it meaning. Loving truly requires a changeable constancy that is constantly changing.

Learning to adapt allows loyalists to eschew the liability of a single loyalty by engaging in multiple loyalties. In “Loves Heretick,” Stanley expands our view of this changing constancy by imagining an expansive and active loyalism that continually

¹³⁴ Ibid, 17-18.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 25-32.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 38-40.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 55-6.

moves between its multiple loyalties.¹³⁸ The speaker opens by offering himself as an object lesson in adaptive loyalism:

He whose active thoughts disdain
To be Captive to one foe,
And would break his single chain,
Or else more would undergo;
Let him learn the art of me,
By new bondage to be free.¹³⁹

This instructive suitor addresses an audience of impatient lovers whose anxieties resemble those of Stanley's contemporaries, who found themselves constrained by proscribing commitments that were incompatible with the conditions of cultural change. Both lover and loyalist contend with "active thoughts" that "disdain" a continuous captivity in which disengagement from the "single chain" of one cause forces the immediate engagement in another. But the speaker's "art of me" offers a solution by focusing on engaging rather than engagement, reconceiving constancy as a process of repeatedly seeking out "new bondage" and avoiding the restraints of a single, settled captivity. Like the lover in "Chang'd yet Constant," he denounces any "tyrannick Mistresse" who "[dares]/ To one beauty love confine" and remains "unbounded as the aire" in an inclusive and expanding courtship in which he "All may court but none decline."¹⁴⁰ His airy affections are unfixed, and he finds that he must constantly move his affiliations as different mistresses move him. But he is also moved by new mistresses as

¹³⁸ Crump identifies this lyric as a translation of a Marino adaptation of Ovid. Though the poem registers these influences, as well as the influence of English authors like Donne and Carew, Stanley does not reference a source or italicize the text, as he does with other translations and adaptations in the collection. By obscuring its influences, Stanley invites his readers to interpret it in within the more immediate contemporary context in which it was composed.

¹³⁹ "Loves Heretic," 1-6.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 7-10.

he moves. Eventually the experiences of moving and being moved merge: “Wherefoe’re I turn or move/ A new passion doth detain me.”¹⁴¹ The speaker must endlessly engage and disengage in order to operate in an environment crowded with causes. Consequently, an account of his unconfined constancy requires a catalogue: he loves mistresses who are cold, active, wild, tame, rich, poor, wanton, coy, dark, fair, tall and short. His “divided heart” allows him to love diversely in diversity, so that “every beauty takes [his] mind, Tied to all, to none confin’d.”¹⁴² The speaker measures himself to multiplicity in order to move through it. But, as in “Chang’d yet Constant,” taking on multiple loyalties does not demand disloyalty: though to “none confin’d,” he remains “Tied to all,” securing the liberty of his “active thoughts” and “unbounded” affections through a loyalism that is changing and capacious.

Stanley imagines in these libidinous lovers a solution to the crisis of constancy that faced his contemporaries. Their lithe loyalism offers lessons to a nation that found its traditional loyalties confounded by social change and the “new interests” that sprang up in uncertainty. They resolve these two central stresses by modeling a changeable constancy that is capable of accommodating social movement and adapting out of the severe and isolating constraints of any single cause. By relying on their own shifting passions to direct their duty, they prioritize pleasure over principle in their interactions. This philandering ethics imagines a sociability otherwise disallowed by an incessant cultural change and the divisive demands of partisan affiliation. “Tied to all” but “to none confined,” Stanley and his contemporaries could move in a culture that constantly moved them.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 13-14.

¹⁴² Ibid, 59-60.

Stanley's collection replicates this sociable philandering in its readers. Like the speaker in "Loves Heretick," whose alert and passionate mind is taken by "every beauty," Stanley's readers engage with a diversity of figurative authorities as they turn the pages of his edition: the luminescent beloved in the "Gloworme" attracts with an exuberant beauty that seizes the mind of her suitors, while the mistress in "Excuse for wishing Herlesse Fair" is admired for a self-restraint that does not "dazzle [their] weak eyes"; "Wert thou yet fairer then thou art" imagines a fervency that engages the unrestrained "with equal fires," while the coyness in "Loves Innocence" satisfies through the intimacy of a secret passion, and mistress of "Answer" allures her discerning lovers by disguising her affection with denials. Each mistress attracts differently, recreating in the reading experience the mixed sympathies and interests that characterized the reader's social experience. Readers are also asked to imagine different ways of being loyal as they encounter these different sources for their loyalty: as analogs for the divine right authority, "Unaltred by Sickness" and "The Kisse" demand an automatic and unaltering obedience to their *ab aeterno* authority; "The Bracelet," on the other hand, imagines a constancy that allows its cause to shift in the contingencies to which it is susceptible, while "The Self-Deceaver" endorses a fluid loyalism that is attentive to its airy authorities and able to adapt according to its own interests. Each poem asks its readers to imagine a constancy that answers its own unique desires and circumstances. But the reader is not bound by the obligations of any single poem: as she reads through the different poems in the edition, she encounters different desires, circumstances, and constancies. Reading the collection is a process of repeatedly engaging in and disengaging from the various loyalties that it represents while simultaneously keeping

them all in mind. Stanley's collection supplies an imaginative experience in which readers must take "every beauty" into their mind, and move between its mixed mistresses with a "divided heart" as they should move between the mixed loyalties and loyalisms of mid-century England.

Stanley's *Poems* represents and recreates an adaptive loyalism that is suited to the challenges of social change. In doing so, Stanley invites his readers to participate in the social philandering practiced in his patronage circle, in which curious minds created a community through their contradictions. The debates through which members identified with each other required a diversity that avoided divisiveness. Differences of opinion—artistic and intellectual, political and religious—provided a texture to rather than a template for their engagement. This community achieved a sociability in the divisive stresses of the age by socializing through its diversity. And Stanley stood at the center of this philandering circle, indulging in and accepting the multiple and shifting loyalties of its members as he adapted his divided heart in a changing culture coming to terms with its own instability.

CHAPTER 3

"HASTINGS DEAD": ELEGY AND INSTANTANEOUS INTERPRETATION IN *LACHRYMAE MUSARUM*

It all happened so quickly. The trial itself was designed to proceed with speed: a committee was established to “see the Scaffolds speedily set up,” its commissioners were instructed to execute their judgment “speedily, and impartially,” and the charge itself was “abbreviated, to make the dispatch sooner.”¹ Once the trial was underway, the judges were on guard against delays: an appeal that the case be heard by the full parliament was denied by a commission already “too much delayed” by the request, and further arguments were regarded as attempts to “[delay] an ugly Sentence” and were repeatedly interrupted by a court “not sensible of . . . delays” and eager to pronounce its “speedy Judgement.”² The execution was as swift as the sentence: the scaffold speech was shortened by the miraculous absence of a characteristic stammer, and “after a very little pause,” the executioner “at one blow severed his head from his Body.”³ It was only afterwards, when the head had been sewed back onto the body and the corpse embalmed,

¹ *Perfect Occurrences. of Every Daie iournall*, Num. 107, 12-19 January, 1648/9, in *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England: 1641-1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 225. All newsbook references are drawn from this edition, unless otherwise noted. Page numbers correspond to this edition.

² *The Moderate*, Numb. 30, 30 January – 6 February, 1649, 240, 239; *A Perfect Diurnall*, Numb. 287, 22-29 January 1648/9, 235, 234.

³ *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*, Numb. 288, 29 January – 5 February, 1648/9, 249.

that events were slowed by a disagreement over whether and how to bury the dead king.

The pace of Charles's trial and execution reveals the temporal attentiveness of a society undergoing rapid and immediate cultural change. The 1640s were a decade of sustained civil conflicts in which England's institutional, social, and economic relationships were repeatedly reworked. For many, these disruptions forced the nation into a pressing and unsettled present that was suddenly disconnected from its past. The week following the king's execution, the newsbook, *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, complained about the conditions of the new "now" that the regicide had created: "not long a goe we were comforted, and hop'd there would be a happy reconcilment of King, Parliament and People (by a Treaty) but now we fear; then we laugh'd, but now we languish; one day we are comforted, the next confounded."⁴ The reiterated immanence of "the next [day]" promised a recurrent change that undermined the possibility of cultural continuity, and forced a focus on the isolated present. A decade earlier, Henry King warned his parishoners of a "monstrous time before and behind us" that "incessantly feeds on us": the "past is not now, future not yet, onely the present may be called a time."⁵ In the environment of reiterative expiration in the 1640s, the traditional sources of social stability—monarchy, church, parliament, people—came to signify the cultural uncertainty they customarily overcame: "*Mutability* is but *Times* Ensigne; nothing visible is permanent, the most Glorious King, or palmed State, is but the recorded *Monument* of *Uncertainty*."⁶ England was not just changed, it was changing. Even the isolated and

⁴ *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, Numb. 43, 249.

⁵ Henry King, *The Sermons*, ed. Mary Hobbs (Rutherford: Scolar, 1992), 193, quoted in Andrea Brady, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century: Laws in Mourning* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2006), 60.

immediate “now” is an unsettled position that constantly looks back to when it was not, and forward to when it will not be. At any moment, English society seemed to be poised in an elusive and inscrutable present, anticipating the upheavals of “the next [day].”

England was in a constant state of newness. Joad Raymond speculates that, though it only rarely left traces, “What news?” was one of the most frequently asked questions in the period.⁷ As events accelerated throughout the 1640s, each day offered its own news, overwhelming the ability of customary news sources—almanacs, corantos, and garrulous travelers—to accurately report it. For scholars of early modern news, like Raymond and J.P. Somerville, the Civil War created a state of “constant revolution” that forced the development of innovative information technologies that could measure and report on a history that was always changing.⁸ The result was the newsbook, a genre structured around the historical change it was designed to represent. The most innovative characteristic of the newsbook was its periodicity: typically, issues were produced in weekly runs, and the contents divided into individual days. By parsing the week’s events into its “diurnall occurrences,” newsbooks give the reader a sense of the discrete temporality of the events that they represent: the events of Tuesday, January 30, 1649 did not happen—and could not have happened—on Monday, January 29, or Wednesday, January 31. Authors and editors further emphasized the temporal distinctness of their contents with deictic reminders that events occurred “on this day” and “in this instant,”

⁶ 250-1.

⁷ Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1.

⁸ J.P. Somerville, *The News Revolution in England: The Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 167; Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 6.

fixing their historical material in a distant and delimited past. This impression of unique and expiring temporal contexts was sharpened by the introduction of serialization in the middle of the decade: assigning each issue a number fixed it in a particular place in the sequence that became more and more distant from the contemporaneous “now” as more issues were released and the count increased. Consequently, each issue—and the events and interpretations it represented—was pushed into the past that it reported with the appearance of the subsequent issues. As newsbooks became more popular and numerous, multiple, competing issues began to appear on the same day, layering the weekly news with instantaneous and ephemeral accounts that were repeatedly replaced in a news cycle attempting to keep pace with a culture that was continually “new.”

Though a self-consciously ephemeral form, newsbooks had an important presence in the period as a tool for interpreting temporality. Simply providing the news—whether it was an account of the Grand Remonstrance, Pride’s Purge, or the body count from the Battle of Newbury—made the surfeit of current events seem both immediate and understandable. Newsbooks offered a nation devoured by a “monstrous time” the opportunity to understand history as it happened. The serialization that isolates news events also reconciles them into a progressive sequence that suggests narrative unity: Tuesday’s events are not Wednesday’s, but they both occur in the larger temporal unit of the week represented in an issue; *Mercurius Pragmaticus Numb. 42* is not *Mercurius Pragmaticus Numb. 43*, but they both belong to the same selective history of a single mercury. There is a cohesiveness within and between issues that gives the impression of a continuous historical experience. Each newsbook was its own “puny Chronicle” that reconciled and gave meaning to an episodic history as it was experienced. This ability to

link historical experience and historical imagination served a powerful polemical purpose at time when an England was struggling to understand the relationship between its unsettled present and suddenly distant past. Newsbooks steered the attention of an increasingly reading and read-to English public to contested political “instants” that demanded instantaneous interpretation in order to be incorporated into their politically and historically partial narratives. Daily events became the contested sites of political opinion-making. The *Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer*’s announcement in January 1649 that “The Triall of the King is the Great Hinge on which for this weeke the Doore of this intelligence must move,” represents an interpretive mind that is in motion, but nonetheless focused on the news events of “this week.” Dozens of other newsbooks swung around this same hinge, assigning their own significances and opinions to the king’s trial as they prepared the news of the next week.⁹ A reluctant press man himself, Charles complained that news coverage had made “every man a state man” in an age already rent by partisan opinions. Newsbooks were regarded as “paper bullets” that had “done more mischief in this Kingdome then ever all my Lord of *Essex*’s or *Thomas Fairfaxes* whole train of Artillery ever did.”¹⁰ By forcing a sense of interpretive emergency in the episodic history they represented, newsbooks contributed to the cultural change that they reported.

Much of the interpretive attention of the 1640s was concerned with loss. Personal, political, and economic losses were common in a decade of sustained civil conflict. As Margo Swiss and David Kent note, the Civil War created a condition of

⁹ See Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 69-79 for more on newsbook culture in 1649.

¹⁰ *A Fresh Whip for all scandalous Lyers. or, A true description of the two eminent Pamphleteers, or Squibtellers of this Kingdome* (London, 1647), quoted in Raymond, *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England*, 14.

“prolonged grief” in which regular expressions of “godly sorrow” were thought to have an affect on contemporary political affairs.¹¹ Elegies were commonly included in newsbooks, a practice concentrated in the “literary” newsbook *Mercurius Melancholicus*, which advertises its overlaying of lyrical lament and news reporting.¹² But however widespread the experience of loss was in the period, individual losses were sites of dispute. Like a news event, a loss event served as a historical hinge that drew the interpretive attention of the communities that changed around it: in the case of elegies, for instance, mourners expressed opinions on the dead, the situations of the death, and the social context in which it occurred. In a society attentive to the polemical opportunities occasioned by change, a public death invited a contest over its potential significances. The subsequent exchanges transformed the process of interpretive mourning into a polemic of lament that expressed and entrenched the partisan divisions of the period. The king’s supporters, for instance, used treason executions as the impetus for expressing a distinctly royalist grief designed to criticize these displays of parliamentary authority.¹³ In his scaffold speech, Strafford drew attention to the event of his execution as an opportunity for political commentary, providing an interpretation of the “instant” of his execution as it was happening: “I have heard the people clamour and cry out, saying, that through my occasion the times are bad.”¹⁴ Parliamentary propagandists disputed this

¹¹ *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture*, ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002), 13-14.

¹² Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 165.

¹³ For more on the importance of treason trials as propagandic opportunities, see Susan Clarke, “Royalists Write the Death of Lord Hastings: Post-Regicide Funerary Propaganda,” *Paragon* 22.2 (July, 2005), 115-116.

¹⁴ Quoted in Brady, *English Funerary Elegy*, 94.

interpretation of the “occasion” and re-wrote the moment in elegies and fictional death confessions that depict Strafford confirming the justice of his sentence and the authority that had issued it.¹⁵ Parliament recognized the polemical power of public mourning and attempted to create its own propagandic funeral events: in what Susan Clarke regards as an attempt to “control the mourning agenda,” for instance, Parliament spent £250 on a lavish state funeral for Dr Isaac Dorislaus, who had been assassinated in The Hague by royalist agents.¹⁶ Royalists disrupted these interpretive displays of mourning by attacking the effigies of parliamentary figures and composing counter-elegies to correct the literary memorials of their opponents.¹⁷ Death was a news event that demanded the instantaneous interpretations of a lamenting polemic that eagerly assigned propagandic significance to loss.

Charles’s death dominated the headlines. Elegy was in the news, and news was in elegies as royalists and republicans scrambled to control the interpretations of an execution that was also a regicide.¹⁸ Propagandists for both parties produced pointedly polemical laments, but critics point to the high volume of royalist elegies as evidence that the elegaic mode was a particularly important form of social expression for the king’s supporters. For James Loxley, this interpretive mourning was a self-investigative means

¹⁵ Brady, *English Funerary Elegy*, 107.

¹⁶ Susan Clarke, “Royalists Write the Death of Lord Hastings: Post-Regicide Funerary Propaganda,” *Parergon* 22.2 (July 2005), 116.

¹⁷ For the desecration of effigies, see Brady, 87; on the strategy of royalist counter-elegies, see James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 192-3.

¹⁸ Brady suggests that this exchange was further intensified by denying Charles the finality of his funeral rites, which rendered his death imaginatively incomplete and subject to restagings in public record (129).

of exploring how the idea of royalism had been changed by the death of Charles, and for Susan Clarke these elegies performed the “funeral of active royalism.”¹⁹ Nigel Smith considers Charles’s death as an event that focused the lamenting polemic of royalists by “[sucking] all elegaic energy into its own subject,” and also enlarged elegaic expression into a mode suitable for every subject.²⁰ Moreover, the mourning posture offered a durable form of political expression that opposed the expanding voice of republican panegyric produced in the early years of the Commonwealth.²¹ These and other critics cite this royalist “equation of corpse and cause” in order to argue that royalist writers sought opportunities to collaborate on elegy collections in the period following the regicide in order to create a “partisan stage to challenge the established political order.”²²

The most common example used to argue for the polemical collaboration of royalist elegists is *Lachrymae Musarum* (1649), a collection of thirty-eight elegies edited by Richard Brome to memorialize the young Henry Lord Hastings, who died of smallpox on the eve of his wedding less than five months after Charles was executed. Hastings’s death certainly had royalist significances: in her published funeral blessing, his famous grandmother, Lady Eleanor Davies, remarked that her grandson had been “Heretofore inclining to the Royal Party” and there is some evidence that he may have been present at

¹⁹ Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry*, 195; Clarke, “Royalists Write the Death of Lord Hastings,” 115.

²⁰ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 287.

²¹ Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 293.

²² Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry*, 192; John McWilliams, “‘A Storm of Lamentations Writ’: *Lachrymae Musarum* and Royalist Culture After the Civil War,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33, Medieval and Early Modern Miscellanies and Anthologies (2003), 275.

the Siege of Colchester;²³ his father, the Earl of Huntingdon, supported the king for most of the conflict and his uncle, a commander in the king's army, was imprisoned by Parliament before joining Charles II in France; and following a public procession in London, his body was interred at Ashby de la Zouche, the family estate that had operated as a fortified royalist stronghold for most of the first civil war. As was the case with Strafford, Laud, Charles and other public deaths in the period, Hasting's death was an opportunity to interpret social significances into a current event—for John Joynes, the Hastings family chaplain and contributor to the edition, young Hastings was a “Cypher for these many yeers”—and the collection sometimes unsubtly claims Hastings as a symbol for royalist loss by representing him through distinctly royalist symbols: the full title of the edition, which is partially reiterated in the title of every elegy in the collection, announces a noble lineage that traces back to Edward IV, and the page heading above the first poem displays the four crowns of England, Wales, Scotland, and France, with insignia, an emblem found in other royalist publications in the period.²⁴ But the royalist significances of the edition are deeper than the interpretive symbols interpolated onto it: Hasting's death was abrupt and, as an only son, he represented the end of a noble line. These circumstances offered an elegaic subject that provided the same thematic opportunities that Charles's execution had provided earlier in the year.

²³ “Sions Lamentation, Lord Henry Hastings, His Funerals blessing, by his Grandmother, the Lady Eleanor,” in *The Prophetic Writings of Lady Eleanor Davies*, ed. Esther S. Cope (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 274.

²⁴ John Joynes, “On the incomparable Lord Hastings: An ELEGIE.” 21. For the royalist significance of emblem of the four crowns, and a survey of other royalist symbols in the edition, see the introduction to Marvell's contribution to the collection, “Upon the Death of Lord Hastings,” in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* ed. Nigel Smith (Harlow, England; New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 24. Because of the similarity between titles in the edition, I include both author and title in all of my citations, along with the original typography, to make references as clear as possible.

Scholars of *Lachrymae Musarum* are in general agreement that the biographical, emblematic, and thematic royalism of the collection signals a consensus between the authors on the proper polemical coding of the historical event of Hastings's death. For these critics, each of the elegists treats Hastings as a substitute for Charles, contributing to the creation of a cohesive political community engaged in a distinctly royalist act of mourning.²⁵ Creating this analogical link between Hastings's death in June and Charles's death in January imaginatively unites these two abrupt episodes within a partisan interpretive framework that gives the impression of a continuous royalist history. The polemicized historical imagination fashioned in this interpretive consensus works prospectively as well as retrospectively: for many critics, the collection prepares its readers for a continued royalist resistance to the Commonwealth by encouraging them to assume the "aggressive stance of avengers."²⁶ Like a newsbook devoted to assigning its interpretive significances to the week's events, *Lachrymae Musarum* operates as a "single signifying unit" that interprets and incorporates the "instant" of Hastings's death into its own history.²⁷

But reading *Lachrymae Musarum* as a "single signifying unit" assumes a unanimity of expression that the elegaic form and its occasion cannot easily provide. Like

²⁵ For Smith, *Lachrymae Musarum* is "infected with the huge grief required for the royal martyr" (287); Loxley agrees that Charles's execution is "near the surface" of many of the poems in the edition (199); Michael Gearin-Tosh regards the collection as a "symptom of oblique mourning" for the king, "Marvell's 'Upon the Death of Lord Hastings'", *Essays and Studies* 34 (1981), 108-9; McWilliams agrees that Hastings operates as a "surrogate for Charles" (274); Lois Potter argues that Hastings's death provided an opportunity for royalists to "lament the general state of the world," *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1649-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 51.

²⁶ Potter, *Secret Rites*, 192.

²⁷ Loxley invites that we read the numerous collections of poetry published in the late-1640s as "single signifying [units] which [present] the opportunity for the exploration and maintenance of a poetics of activism" (223).

other lyrical forms, elegies express the limitations of their own expressions. As Heather Dubrow has shown, early modern lyric was frequently described as both an embodiment of motion and an incitement to it. As a mode comprised of verses, or turnings, lyric more often displays shifts between conditions of success and failure, power and impotency, than the entrenched and unchanging confidence of a single position.²⁸ This expressive ambivalence is heightened in the elegaic mode, in which the topos of inexpressibility and unpreparedness—famous in Milton’s “forc’d fingers rude”—was conventional. Like other elegists of the period, the contributors to *Lachrymae Musarum* announce their inability to meet the expressive demands of the occasion and recursively point to the inadequacy of their interpretive attempts. Even the most explicit political interpretations offered in the collection are undercut by elegaic voices constantly pointing to their interpretive failures. Moreover, the arguments for a “single signifying unit” presume that there was a uniformity among the contributors that allowed their contributions to coalesce into what Clarke regards as an “unoriginal commemorative poetry by men of homogenous, though slightly varying social, backgrounds.”²⁹ While the collection is predominated by royalist voices—Denham and Herrick are the most prominent among others who experienced sequestration or were ejected from their livings—it also includes poems by John Hall and Alexander Brome, who supported Parliament, and figures like Marvell and Marchamont Nedham whose allegiances shifted with changes in political authority.³⁰ Inclusion in the edition depended foremost on family, friendship, patronage,

²⁸ Heather Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2008), 17-18, 27-8.

²⁹ Clarke, “Royalists Write the Death of Lord Hastings,” 119.

and literary relationships, not political affiliation, and the poems themselves demonstrate that the differences in these relationships produced more than “slightly varying” ways of imagining and addressing their shared subject. The heterogeneity of the political and social relationships of the elegists undermines the assumption of a political consensus among the contributors, as well as the implicit premise that political incompatibilities precluded social and poetic collaboration.

This chapter argues that *Lachrymae Musarum* is aware of its shortcomings as a “single signifying unit,” and that its editor and contributors displayed these shortcomings in order to interrogate and overcome the mode of instantaneous interpretation that was dividing their history and society. The interpretive unity of the edition is disrupted by the falterings of thirty-eight elegaic voices struggling with themselves and the insufficient meanings they attempt to attach to their uncertain social experience. Hastings’s death is an historical instant that eludes the significances assigned to it. The struggle of the edition is not to assert the supremacy of a single partisan interpretation of history, but to come to terms with the failures of an interpretive historiography and to restore the possibilities of socialization by recognizing the inherent elusiveness of historical experience.

I.

Hastings’s death was covered by England’s most famous newsman. Marchamont Nedham began his career producing the reformist paper, *Mercurius Britannicus*, before

³⁰ For a study of Marvell’s deft loyalism, see John Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). For more on both Nedham and Marvell’s adaptiveness, see Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) and Blair Worden, *Litreature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

switching to the royalist mercury, *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, at the beginning of the second civil war. His sharp-witted and unmerciful propaganda made him one of Parliament's top targets, and after the decisiveness of king's execution he abandoned *Pragmaticus* and went into hiding before being appointed by the new regime to produce the official state paper, *Mercurius Politicus*.³¹ It was in these intervening months, when Nedham was between newspaper jobs, that he wrote his elegy, "On the untimely death of the Lord HASTINGS." Nedham was not shy about his importance as a reporter of current events and political opinion-maker, and regarded his commentaries to be "the very *Cream* of all *Intelligence*."³² Nedham believed his interpretive attention transformed the daily occurrences of a fleeting history into the news of a nation. When he turns this attention to the "nimble pace" of Hastings's death, he is a newsman without a paper, who has tasked himself with reporting the social significances of his "untimely" subject.³³

Hastings's death was news. Abrupt and unexpected, it had the temporal distinctiveness of a "new" event that had happened in the immediate "now." His smallpox overcame him so quickly that Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne, father-in-law-to-be and personal physician to both Charles I and Cromwell, was unable to treat it: for Denham, his soul departed so swiftly that it cartoonishly left behind a "cloud of flesh."³⁴

³¹ Though *Pragmaticus* continued to run during and after Charles's trial and execution, Worden argues that it was produced by an impostor who imitated Nedham's distinct style.

³² Quoted in Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 169.

³³ For more on how the "untimely" makes demands on the self-referentiality of the present, see Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). Though Harris's notion of untimeliness predominately focuses on material culture, his arguments for the polytemporality of the present are applicable above, here and throughout the essay.

³⁴ "An ELEGIE Upon the death of the Lord HASTINGS," 45.

And the improbable timing of his death on the eve of his wedding was such an unpredictable interruption that it seemed to confound history: John Benson addresses the grieving Elizabeth Mayerne as a bride “Widowed, ere Married,” and for Dryden, confused celebrants must “bring a Winding for a Wedding-Sheet” to this strange occasion.³⁵ Moreover, the death had a broad social relevance: the Hastings family was well-connected and the death of their only son was important throughout their wide network of family, friend, and patronage relationships and prompted responses from the neighborhood gentry, literary associates, and financial beneficiaries. But, as Raymond reminds us, “news events are not born, but made”: however newsworthy Hastings’s death may have been, it had to be interpreted in order to become *news*.³⁶

News is concerned with the “new,” and, like savvy newsmen selling their “instants,” Hastings’s elegists advertise the newness of their subject. As an occasional genre, elegies isolate their subjects from a common history, separating them into their own time where they can be assigned special meanings. By announcing the occasion for their lament, the elegists in *Lacrymae Musarum* create an impression of the acute occasionality of their shared subject. All but one elegy in the edition pronounces in its title that it is “upon” or “on” the death of Hastings. The deictic pointing of “upon” to *this* event at *this* time isolates the death event in history, marking it as distinct and worthy of the elegist’s—and reader’s—special attention. As readers move between elegies, the reiterated “upon” follows them, reminding them of the historical uniqueness of Hastings’s death. When elegists take up this subject in the text of their poems, they

³⁵ Benson, “Upon the much-lamented death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 9; Dryden, “Upon the death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 4.

³⁶ Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper*, 127.

thematize the historical distinctiveness that they advertise in their titles. The word “new” echoes throughout the collection as contributors represented a tragedy that “newly thrust” the young Hastings out of history as a “new oblation” to angry gods.³⁷ Philip Kinder and Denham direct their readers’ attention to “here, here,” lest miss this “new” event happening “now.”³⁸ Like the other historical “instants” that demanded Nedham’s “nimble...[and] quick” wit in order to become news, the newness of Hastings’s death demands that his elegists be fit with a swift “Tiptoe-Language” that is attentive to temporal immediacy in order to interpret it into meaning.³⁹

But not everything that is “new” is news. Hastings’s elegists had to show that their subject was worth the attention that they were giving it. In order for an event to have a broad significance, it must be able to appeal differently to different audiences. The importance of Hastings’s death was not that it was relevant throughout his family’s wide and various social networks, but that there was a reason for its relevance. Hastings needed to seem thick with significances in order for his death to be deemed significant.

The strategy of presenting events in terms of their multiple possible significances was an important strategy for manufacturing the appearance of social importance, particularly within a newsbook culture aiming to maintain and increase its readership. After reporting numerous potential political meanings for a comet spotted on a November

³⁷ Denham, “An ELEGIE Upon the death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 22; Thomas Bancroft, “To the never-dying Memory of the Noble Lord *Hastings*, &c.,” 11.

³⁸ Philip Kinder, “Upon the death of the Lord Hastings,” 2, 9; Denham, “An ELEGIE Upon the death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 13.

³⁹ The description of Nedham was offered by his press rival, John Taylor, who wrote for the parliamentary paper, *Mercurius Britannicus*, when Nedham was producing *Pragmaticus*. Quoted in Raymond, 36. John Rosse, “Upon the much-lamented Departure of the right Hopeful, and truly Noble, HENRY Lord HASTINGS,” 13.

night in 1643, *The Complete Intelligencer and Resolver* generously encourages even those meanings that it cannot provide, conceding that “it may have as many significations as light it self.”⁴⁰ The exact meaning of the comet remains obscure, but its importance as a site of meaning is not. The impression of importance was also enhanced by providing different types of perspectives on the significance of an event. Raymond uses the case of Anne Greene, whose improbable survival of her hanging for infanticide prompted an outburst of different legal, medical, religious, and political readings and innumerable wonder accounts, as an example of how competing treatments of an event collaborated to validate their shared subject.⁴¹ *Mercurius Aulicus* was counting on a similar effect when it began printing its competitors’ errors on the final page of every issue. The self-legitimization of these corrections goes beyond the disputed interpretations: *Aulicus* is saying that you may disagree with his politics, but you cannot disagree with the importance of his content. In each of these examples, it is a consensus of interpretations, not an interpretive consensus, that bestows social significance.

The most meaningful social events are palimpsests where a diverse society has been allowed to write on itself. The elegaic tendency to epitomize the deceased creates the conditions for this palimpsestism. Within the mourning encomia of *Lachrymae Musarum*, Hastings is variously epitomized as an “emblem,” a “pattern,” a “paramount,” the “abstract of men” who “of all British heroes [is] most divine.”⁴² As this “abstract of men,” he condenses and dispenses a variety of social meanings: “Graces and Vertues,

⁴⁰ *Complete Intelligencer and Resolver*, *The second of Novemb.* 1643, 174.

⁴¹ Raymond, *Making the News*, 169-173.

⁴² Thomas Bancroft, “To the never-dying Memory,” 33; John Rosse, “Upon the much-lamented,” 72, 85, 20; Marchamont Nedham, “On the untimely death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 58.

Languages and Arts,/ Beauty and Learning” are “fix’d and conglobate in ‘s Soul,” which is “virtues Magazine” that can “dispense itself all ways.”⁴³ His ability to speak multiply is often likened to the cloven, flaming tongue of the Pentecost, which bestowed on evangelists the ability to speak to different audiences in their native languages.⁴⁴ This universalized expressibility has a universal social relevance: the “Royal, Loyal, Learn’d, Lov’d *Hastings*” is layered with political, philosophical, and amatory significances that deserve the attention of “all good men.”⁴⁵ For Joynes, truth, religion, church, academy, virtue, justice, honor, and “whatsoever’s good” did “conspire/ To him, as to their centre, to retire.”⁴⁶ He “Emblem-wise” articulates England’s diversity to itself, attracting the attention of an entire nation to his “full Worths.”⁴⁷ Unlike Milton’s “great cypher set to no purpose before a row of significant figures,” Hastings, “that Cypher for these many years,” is rich with his own significances and adds value to the figures that surround him. By emphasizing his rich signification, Hastings’s elegists manufacture importance for their subject: his loss is a “general loss” that deserves a “universal groan.”⁴⁸

The literary illusion of Hastings’s death as an instantaneous and important event creates the impression that it requires immediate interpretation. The epitomized Hastings is an allegory that compels responses: George Fairfax “[owes his] sighs and cries”; for

⁴³ Dryden, “Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 31-5; William Pestel, “An *ELEGIE* On the death of the Right Honourable, *Henry Lord Hastings; Presented at his Funeral*,” 28; John Hall, “An *ELEGIE* Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 70.

⁴⁴ Acts 2: 1-12.

⁴⁵ Thomas Pestel, “ON *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS*,” 23-4.

⁴⁶ “On the incomparable Lord *HASTINGS*,” 11-24.

⁴⁷ Aston Cokaine, “On the death of my worthy Friend and Kinsman, the Noble, Vertuous, and Learned LORD *HASTINGS*,” 21-2.

⁴⁸ William Pestel, “An *ELEGIE*,” 15-16.

Francis Standish “*We must*” attempt to “lament our part”; Edward Standish agrees that “we are bound to grieve”; and Denham finds it a “shame of exemption” and “irrational” not to mourn.⁴⁹ Voicing this compulsion creates the effect of sincerity, but these irrepressible laments are not prompted by Hastings himself, whose short life was unremarkable, but the allegorical Hastings who is imagined as the “abstract of men.” For Denham, Hastings’s death is an interactive literary experience that merges the acts of reading and responding into a single moment: he warns his reader that her “busie eyes/ Will weep at their own sad Discoveries,/ When every line they adde, improves thy loss.”⁵⁰ Interpretive lament is necessary for readers who must simultaneously “read, and mourn.”⁵¹ The subsequent expressions that are forced from them are controlled by the themes of the occasion: Hastings’s death makes mourners out of everyone. Allegorizing Hastings’s death makes it influential by forcing readers to imagine and express themselves in terms of the “Embleme-like” epitome that they have lost. That is, the representation of Hastings affects how his mourners imagine and represent themselves.

English newsmen allegorized current events in order to satisfy a society eager to interpret itself. The dramatic events of the 1640s lent themselves to poetic handling. Poems like Abraham Cowley’s epic *Civil War* created a poetic historiography that seized on historical material as literary material full of figurative value. Newsbook authors worked like so many poets to assign their own figurative significances to their moving history. By controlling how history was imagined, they could also control how it was

⁴⁹ Fairfax, Untitled, 6; Francis Standish, “An *ELEGIE* Upon the death of *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS* [. . .],” 9-10; Edward Standish, “An *ELEGIE* On the much-lamented death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 4; Denham, “An *ELEGIE*,” 8-10.

⁵⁰ “An *ELEGIE* Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 1-3.

⁵¹ “An *ELEGIE*,” 8.

accessed and experienced. The news industry's terminological distinction between "news," "Intelligence," and "Information" speaks to the attentiveness with which newsmen reworked their history into opinion by assigning it significances: "news" was technically any historically new event, whereas "Intelligence" was "news" shaped by an editor for his audience to understand, and "Information" was an editorialized opinion on the "news" that was meant to influence a reader's judgment of it.⁵² Newsbooks needed narratives: they provided heroes, villains, and storylines to shape the sympathies of their readers. And in a society pressured by the prolonged emergency of civil conflict, readers were meant to imagine themselves as actors in the valorized history that they read about. Allegorizing history had consequences. As competing newsbooks fought to control these consequences by imposing their storylines on the weekly news events, they saturated history with fictions. For many contemporaries, the history provided in newsbooks was purely fictional: John Cleveland, for instance, finds in them the tools by which "the *Quixotes* of this Age fight with the Windmills of their owne Heads," and *Mercurius Mastix* blasts them as full of "parboyl'd Non-sense."⁵³ In an information culture that allowed interested readers to buy, borrow, read and debate numerous different news accounts in a single day, conceptions of history—and the individual's role in it—were mixed with "parboyl'd Non-sense" intended to influence action.

Public deaths in particular were highly allegorical events that required participants to socialize through the metaphors of the occasion. Funerals presented mourners with

⁵² For Raymond's illuminating discussion of this distinction, see *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 155-63.

⁵³ John Cleveland, *The Character of a London Diurnal* (London: 1644), 3; *Mercurius Mastix: Faithfully Lashing All Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spies, and others; who cheat the Commonwealth under the name of Intelligence*, Numb. 1, 20-27 August. 1652, 13.

two texts: the decaying text of the corpse and the lasting text of the figurative memorial, where the social significance of the deceased was assigned and represented.⁵⁴ Marvell's famous characterization of Charles as "the Royal actor" for whom "the armed bands/ Did clap their bloody hands" emphasizes the theatricality inherent in death events, particularly at a time when they served propagandic purposes.⁵⁵ Funeral memorialization was a complex, multi-textual form of expression: the different venues of private mourning, funeral sermon, public procession, and burial service each offered their own symbolic representations of the worth of the dead and the grief of the living. The ubiquity of elegy as a stylized token of grief lent a literal multi-textuality to these occasions, particularly when a death occurred in a prominent or wealthy family: the receiving chambers in the houses of mourning families could be covered with elegies left behind by visitors, elegies were often read at funeral services, and they were commonly pinned to hearses during processions and lined the graves that finally received the body.⁵⁶ Public mourning made demands on the imaginations of its participants, who were forced to interpret and interact through the metaphors of this multi-textual occasion. Elegaic allegory mediated the social experience of mourning: elegists were always reading, and they were always read in an event layered with the expressions it compelled. But funerals were not only mourning events, they were also ceremonies of the state and sites for representing different social relationships. Competing elegists displayed in a literary context different positions on social order, power relations, gender imbalances, and

⁵⁴ For more on the how the double textuality of funerals created a social text with a unique legibility, see Brady, *English Funerary Elegy*, 62-7.

⁵⁵ "An Horatian Ode," 53-6.

⁵⁶ For more on the materiality of elegies, and the physical inscriptions of public lament, see Brady, *English Funerary Elegy*, 5-6.

economic competition in the period. As elegists and other members of the mourning community represented their grief and read the grief of those around them, they also expressed and evaluated their places in the social economies performed in the funeral's texts. Like the fictions of newsbooks, elegies seize on the social imaginations of their audience as they allegorize their grief.

The contributors to *Lachrymae Musarum* attempt to control the social imagination of the edition's readership by controlling the metaphors of mourning. For John Benson, the tears of these muses are not collaborative, but part of a competitive lament in which "each *Muse* out-vies/ The Other, in their mournful *Elegies*."⁵⁷ William Pestel, whose elegy was presented at Hastings's funeral, warns his audience that they should not be measuring each other's responses, anxiously reminding them that as "each eye,/ Swoln big with Grief, drops down an Elegie" they were drawn together "not to view each other, but with Zeal and Service pure,/ To wait on him [Hastings]."⁵⁸ These elegists understood the stakes of controlling the figurative representation of their subject. The allegorized Hastings compels responses from his readers, forcing them to imagine a social context and their roles and responsibilities within it. For Alexander Brome, elegy making is a form of self-fashioning, in which the elegist "Must be the *Poet*, and the *Subject* too."⁵⁹ The social imagination this requires, and the action it impels, is shaped by the metaphors in which it originates. By controlling how their readers imagine Joynes's catalogue of truth, religion, church, academy, virtue, justice, honor, and "whatsoever's good" that is compressed into the "Embleme-like" epitome of Hastings, these elegists could influence

⁵⁷ "Upon the much-lamented death of the Lord HASTINGS," 3-4.

⁵⁸ "An *ELEGIE*," 3-7.

⁵⁹ Alexander Brome, "Upon the unhappie Separation of those united Souls," 34.

how their readers understood and experienced the broader social and historical context of “these many yeers.”

II.

“HASTINGS dead” was the lead. *Lachrymae Musarum*’s contributors call this headline throughout their elegies: Marvell opens his lyric by announcing the occasion, “*Hastings* is dead;” Richard Brome maintains that “All may be said/ Or written in few words, *Lord Hastings’s dead*,” and Denham instructs that “in HASTINGS dead,/ Their Anger, and our ugly Faults, are read.”⁶⁰ But however gripping, the pronouncement “HASTINGS dead” is a news report, not a news event: the headline indicates to readers that the elegy’s material is meaningful, but it requires the interpretation of the elegist in order to have meaning. The epitomization that takes place in the process of interpretive mourning transforms the “news” of Hastings’s death into “Intelligence.” As the center of truth, religion, church, academy, virtue, justice, honor, and “whatsoever’s good,” Hastings is a “Paramount” of the familiar, who is recognizable and accessible to a broad social audience. As he is increasingly abstracted into a “Cypher for these many yeers,” he becomes more widely familiar, until he becomes an “Embleme” that all can understand, and therefore a tool to understand all. This universalization enhances his importance, so that his death is a subject of “general Wo” that prompts “an universal Groan.”⁶¹ Insofar as it forces this “universal Groan,” the “news” of Hastings’s death is transformed into “Information” in the shared opinions and responses of its readership:

⁶⁰ Marvell, “Upon the death of the Lord *Hastings*, 3; Richard Brome, “To the Memory of the Right Noble, and most Hopeful, *Henry Lord Hastings*, Deceased,” 21-2; Denham, “An ELEGIE Upon the death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 49-50;

⁶¹ Richard Brome, “To the Memory of [. . .] *Henry Lord Hastings*, Deceased,” 10; William Pestel, “An ELEGIE,” 15.

“all good men” mourn. The interpretive mourning of the elegists translates the “news” of Hastings’s death into a piece of “Information” that shapes the behavior of an entire community. William Pestel regards the attendees at Hastings’s funeral as a “press of People [. . .]/ Oppress’d with inward Anguish” in which “On each face/ Sorrow sits deepy printed; and each eye, Swoln big with Grief, drops down an Elegie.”⁶² Each of these mourners understands and responds to Hastings’s death in the same way: the individualized “inward grief” expressed on “each face” and in “each eye” merges into the collective “press of people.” The news of Hastings’s death event is shaped to beget a mourning event, which is itself newsworthy: it is “wonderful” that an entire community comes together to mourn the “wonder” of Hastings in unison. Some of the elegists express jealousy for Hastings as the center of this broad, consensus response. After detailing “With how much State [Hastings’s] *Obsequies* perform’d,” John Benson concludes, “*Fain would I die, to be thus wept upon,*” expressing his own awe with the actual and immediate effects of the imaginative interpretation.⁶³

But these “wonderful” effects are achieved through the attention of the elegist: Benson is congratulating himself when he desires to be the subject of his own poetic transfiguration. The elegist’s poetic handling of history—by which “instants” are transformed into “news,” “Intelligence,” and “Information”—creates a community of readers whose actions can be influenced by the elegaic imagination: William Pestel, for instance, invites his readers to “sigh/ Together,” and “so [conspire]” together.⁶⁴ By speaking, elegists position themselves as the spokespersons for the community of

⁶² “An *ELEGIE*,” 1-4.

⁶³ “Upon the much-lamented death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 2, 12.

⁶⁴ “An *ELEGIE*,” 16-17.

mourners that they create. The elegist's posture as social commentator and community spokesperson was conventional after a decades-long development of funerary elegy as a distinct genre that was fit for personal, public, and professional expression.⁶⁵ Dennis Kay regards Spenser's pastoral elegy *Astrophel*, which was composed during the period of unprecedented elegy production that followed Sidney's death, as a watershed in this development of English elegy. For Kay, Spenser's use of elegy as a public poetry that allows its self-aware speakers to explore poetic, cultural, and political topics consolidated the virtuosic voice of the elegist and influenced the English elegaic tradition through Drayton, Daniel, Donne, and Milton.⁶⁶ This Spenserian elegist establishes himself as a skillful mourner, what G.W. Pigman terms a "master of lament," who invites his audience to "grieve like me."⁶⁷ This process of instructive mourning positions the elegist as a privileged authority in a community of mourners and allows him to guide that community's understandings of its historical experience. The elegist models both self-examination and social examination to his readers, creating a continuity between understandings of the self and understandings of history. The meanings created in the immediate and occasional process of interpretive mourning are meant to be expansive and durable: by teaching their community of mourners how to understand *now*, they also teach them how to understand the future and past *then*; by teaching them how to read

⁶⁵ The form and popularity of elegy developed rapidly at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, when it was assigned its function as funerary poetry. Before this period, "elegy" was used to denote more generally any lyric poetry written in elegaic meter.

⁶⁶ Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). Kay further notes the development of a "vogue of sincerity" that merges senses of public duty and private self-awareness.

⁶⁷ G.W. Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 75.

their social conditions *here*, they also teach them how to read social conditions in a distant *there*; by directing how they and others should act in the proximate *here* and *now*, they influence how they and others should act *there* and *then*. The elegist's effort is to develop a robust understanding that integrates notions of the self, society, and history within a single interpretive framework.

The elegist's deictic construction of "here, here" and "now" creates a complementary "there, there" and "then" that must be accounted for. This dialectical deictic is necessary for a genre concerned with transition, as elegists must display different spatial, temporal, and spiritual conditions in order to mark the movement between them. *Lachrymae Musarum*'s contributors adhere to the elegaic convention of "splitting ambivalence," in which Hastings's place in an idealized, heavenly afterlife is detailed alongside a description of the debased world from which he has escaped.⁶⁸ And like the king's trial and execution, Hastings's death was a hinge around which history moved, which allowed his elegists to comment on the "instant" of his death itself, as well as the times that preceded and followed it. These temporal and spatial distinctions also delimit ethical conditions: before Hastings died, England was a place of opportunity and hope, but now it breeds disappointment and despair, and his purified existence in heaven exposes the degeneracy of the world that he transcends. But by representing these differences alongside one another, the elegist's capacious understanding encompasses the temporal (now-then), spatial (here-there), ontological (is-is not) and ethical (should-should not) dialectics that it establishes. Hastings's elegists repeatedly attempt to represent and reconcile difference in a grand display of their ability to resolve the wide-

⁶⁸ "Splitting ambivalence" is Pigman's term. For more on the convention, see *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy*, 46.

reaching social dilemmas of discontinuity and change that were represented in his instantaneous death.

Like other elegists, *Lachrymae Musarum*'s memorialists are concerned with separating and spanning space. In order to emphasize his absence, Hastings's elegists imagine him in a place that is distinctly not here: dislocation is crucial for Hall, who cries, "he's gone, he's gone, and cruelly fled;" for Marvell, Hastings dwells above "the *Turnaments/ Of all these Sublunary Elements*;" Bancroft reports that "now his Part is done/ On this lowe Stage," and envisions him "above Mortal Change;" Mildmay Fane puns that "he's Hasting hence" from a world that had "with him [an] opposition."⁶⁹ Fane's notion that the world had an "opposition" to Hastings, who was "too good for it," suggests that Hastings was out of his place while living "here." His death re-replaces him in a heaven fit for his perfection and with its own opposition to the imperfect "Sublunary *Elements*" of the "lowe Stage" that had rejected him: "there's a difference 'twixt Heav'n and Earth" and Hastings is now a "Refin'd [. . .] Great *Saint* [. . .] in an eternal Sphere" and "joy'st th' applause of Angels there."⁷⁰ Hastings's heaven is distant and incompatible with the "here" of the elegist and his audience: while he is applauded by an "Angelick Quire, enflamed with his love" in "those Celestial Bowers," "our thoughts [are] fixt on Clay."⁷¹ But however distant and incompatible these "Celestial Bowers" are, they are not unrecognizable. As Brady notes, the elegaic act of representing loss expresses

⁶⁹ Hall, "To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*, On the death of his Son," 29-30; Marvell, "Upon the death of the Lord Hastings," 35-6; Bancroft, "To the never-dying Memory of the Noble Lord *Hastings*," 38-9, 54; Fane, "Upon the death of the most hopeful young Lord, The Lord *HASTINGS: A Remembrance from a Kinsman*," 13, 15.

⁷⁰ Hall, "To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*, On the death of his Son," 93; Denham, "An *ELEGIE*," 46-7; Thomas Pestel, "On the untimely death of *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS*," 55.

⁷¹ Joynes, "On the incomparable Lord *HASTINGS*," 70-4.

confidence in the representability of the transcendent in the mundane.⁷² The heaven in which Hastings is imagined reflects the world that he has left behind: Samuel Bold envisions a monarch, a House of Peers, bishops, church nobles, and an academy in his heaven; Hall allows “Ill-boding Meteors” to streak his heavenly sky; and Marvell represents Hastings biding eternity by watching the world below him and thinking about his family.⁷³ Nor is Hastings unapproachable in this familiar heaven. John Cave allows that mourners can participate in Hastings’s transcendence by mirroring his gaze from heaven, and studying him as Marvell imagines he studies them: “so shall all/ That but minde HIM, grow Metaphysicall,/ Rarely transcendent.”⁷⁴ Thomas Pestel imagines that this “minding” can accelerate an eventual reunion with Hastings in heaven, advising Lucie, the Countess of Huntingdon and Hastings’s mother, to “think of her clear open way/ To heaven, obstructed by his stay” and to “let [her soul] flie/ To Quarries there above the skie.”⁷⁵ The epitomized Hastings exists within and across separate spaces: for Dryden, “His native Soyl was the Four parts o’ th’ Earth/ All *Europe* was too narrow for his Birth.”⁷⁶ By ubiquitizing Hastings’s presences, his elegists likewise enlarge the scope and applicability of their interpretive authority as they follow him across earth and into heaven.

Hastings’s elegists are also invested in expanding their subject—and their

⁷² Brady, *English Funerary Elegy*, 209.

⁷³ Bold, “A Funeral-Elegie upon the Right Honourable the Lord HASTINGS,” 50-3; “To the Earl of HUNTINGDON, On the death of his Son,” 96; Marvell, “Upon the death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 35-40.

⁷⁴ Cave, “An *ELOGIE* Upon the most lamented death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 23-5.

⁷⁵ Thomas Pestel, “For the Right Honourable, *LUCIE* Countess of HUNTINGDON,” 96, 103-4.

⁷⁶ “Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 21-2.

interpretive reach—across different temporal territories. The epitomized Hastings was rich with historical significances. Many elegists in the collection represent Hastings as a singular phoenix who avoids being extinguished by the passing of time by repeatedly reinvigorating himself: Dryden sets the reiterative newness of his phoenix-like subject against “old three-legg’d gray-beards” who “live three Ages out” as “Times Offal, onely fit for th’ Hospital,/ Or t’ hang an Antiquaries room withal;” Thomas Higgons likewise disparages those “dull, useless men, whom Nature makes in vain” who are “remembred but till Death,/ Whose empty story endeth with their breath” in order to praise Hastings as one “in whom/ All that times past can boast, or times to come/ Can hope.”⁷⁷ The reiterative attention of the elegists and other mourners who continued to memorialize Hastings for months after his death contributed to this protraction of his historical presence. Brady observes that death, like other significant historical events, “is never over in an instant.”⁷⁸ Mourners prolong the moment of death through the ceremonies and representations they use to mark it, expanding it into broader temporal territories so that it straddles the present and the past and also projects into the future: Cokaine imagines that successive elegists will memorialize Hastings until they “reach the end of Time.”⁷⁹ As Raymond notes, “history had always teemed with meaning,” and it was the objective of literary interpreters, like newsmen and elegists, to seize upon those meanings by commanding the interpretive present.⁸⁰ Poor handling of the historical “now” risked

⁷⁷ Dryden, “Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 80-4; Thomas Higgons, “Upon the death of my Lord *Hastings*” 3-6, 10-11.

⁷⁸ Brady, *English Funeralary Elegy*, 1.

⁷⁹ Cokaine, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 108.

⁸⁰ Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 125.

foreclosing influence over the historical imagination: during the week of the king's trial, for instance, *Mercurius Pragmaticus* hopes that the king's sentence will be mishandled, "not onely depriving [the regicides] of their present subsistance, but the meanes of future."⁸¹ *Lachrymae Musarum*'s elegists carefully managed their historical moment in order to influence their audience's perceptions of the broader history represented in the "instant" of Hastings's death.

Hastings's death absorbs history into its own moment. Its abruptness creates a sense of pressing immediacy that halts temporal movement and fixes history in an anxious and urgent "now." Pausing temporal progression disrupts notions of causality and creates the impression that history entirely consists of instantaneous effects that are isolated from their causes: Cokaine, for instance, has difficulty discerning "what dire Aspects/ Occasioned so Tragical Effects;" and Cave finds this demanding present disorienting and asks to be taught "these two flat Contraries to reconcile;/ Th' *Effect* to be, and still and still subsist;/ The *Cause* to vanish, and yet ne'er be mist."⁸² Hastings's death commands a forceful "now" that exists by and in itself, independent of the influences of the past. This enhanced importance transforms the present into a tool for understanding the rest of history: Rosse invites his readers to "Ghess by the Sequele" of mourners presently responding to Hastings death how important a figure he was in the past. "Now" is an interpretive window for understanding "then." Instantaneous interpretations of this "now" affect how the present is imagined, and also set the framework for imagining the past and future.

Elegy is attentive to its own occasion, but does not confine itself to it. There is a

⁸¹ *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, Numb. 42, 16-30 January, 1649.

⁸² Cokaine, "A Funeral-Elegie," 39-40; Cave, "An *ELOGIE*," 6-8.

tension within the elegist to focus on the immediate moment and the responses it forces, and to eternalize the valorized experience of grief into what Heather Dubrow regards as “transhistorical lament.”⁸³ *Lachrymae Musarum*’s elegists find that the historical significance of Hastings’s death points their imagination to the past as well as the present. Cokaine, for instance, is drawn to imagine how Hastings’s death would have been received in antiquity: “Had this befalln in antient credulous times,/ He had been Deifi’d by Poets Rhymes.”⁸⁴ Imagining “That Age” likewise subjects it to the interpretive scrutiny that Cokaine applies to the “Tragical Effects” of this age, and he concludes that the present modes of mourning are preferable and “we must pay/ No such Oblations in our purer Way.”⁸⁵ Although Cokaine concludes that the past is different from the present, he nonetheless unites the two historical moments through the interpretive attention he uses to compare them. He further imagines that Hastings’s universal relevance will initiate similar interpretations of history within the widespread community of his mourners: “After a large survey of Histories,/ Our Criticks [. . .] (wise/ In parallelling generous souls) will finde,/ This youthful Lord did bear as brave a minde” as Titus, who was deified by the Roman Senate.⁸⁶ This retrospective maneuver constructs an understanding of the past based on understanding of the present: history is full of “hairy Comets pregnant with Mishaps” that are retrospectively given significance by “After-claps/ Of Princely Horrour.”⁸⁷ Hastings’s elegists use his death to give meaning to

⁸³ *The Challenges of Orpheus*, 142.

⁸⁴ Cokaine, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 45-6.

⁸⁵ “A Funeral-Elegie,” 53-4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 25-28

⁸⁷ Rosse, “Upon the much-lamented Departure,” 38-9.

the “hairy Comets” of their history: Joynes, for instance, regards the fall of Ashby, the family estate and royalist stronghold during the first civil war, as an act of “Prophetick Buildings” that “did prognosticate/ [. . .] his fall:/ [. . .] for whose sake they had stood.”⁸⁸ This historical attention forces the past to prospect itself into the present so that it, like Joynes’s “Prophetick Buildings,” reacts to the elegaic “now” that it precedes: the “fam’d Heroes of the Golden Age” that Cokaine looks back on “[see] themselves out-gone” in Hastings.⁸⁹ Richard Broome’s remarkable inclusion of an elegy by Arthur Gorges converts into editorial practice this elegaic technique of forcing the past to speak to its own moment. Gorges’s lyric, “Upon the Death of *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS*,” is, with minor alterations, the same elegy that he supplied for the deaths of Sidney, Elizabeth, and Prince Henry. But what is most remarkable about the inclusion of this elegy is not that it is recycled—elegy is a largely imitative, and often self-imitative genre—but that Gorges died in 1625, a decade before Hastings was born. The appropriation of Gorges’s elegy overrides the anachronisms of historical difference and signals a deliberate effort to reach into history and force a figure from the past to contribute to the interpretive efforts of the present.

Lachrymae Musarum draws the past into its interpretive present, and also projects that interpretive present into the future. The epitomized Hastings combined “all times past” and “times to come.”⁹⁰ The young Hastings was a figure of promise and hope: he was a “hopeful Instrument” who “gave free scope/ To change our Wishes into Present

⁸⁸ Joynes, “On the incomparable Lord HASTINGS,” 84-90.

⁸⁹ Cokaine, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 93, 98.

⁹⁰ Higgons, “Upon the death of my Lord *Hastings*,” 10.

Hope” and guaranteed the realization of “our hopes.”⁹¹ As a “hopeful Instrument,” Hastings was the means by which England imagined its future. He retains this prospective influence through the on-going memorializations that protract the moment of his death and consolidate his reputation into a legacy that can survive the passing of time. The transformation of Hastings into the idea of Hastings allows him to be transmitted through successive generations of mourners. This lively and durable reputation supplies Hastings with an imaginative prosthetic that allows him to overcome the limitations of mortality: “What ere was wanting in his Life’s extent,/ His Fame supplies, without a Monument.”⁹² Hybridized as “Life” and “Fame,” Hastings confounds the distinctions between living and dying, rising and expiring, so that Edward Standish can open his elegy announcing, “He’s rise again, as sure as buried.”⁹³ Richard Brome, Charles Cotton, Mildmay Fane, Thomas Bancroft, and the anonymous “J.B.” address their elegies not to Hastings or his family, but to his imaginative presence in the future as a “memory.”⁹⁴ Establishing Hastings in the cultural memory extends the territory of elegaic interpretation. By ensuring that “if, for his fall/ *We* cannot weep enough, our *Children* shall,” they direct the behavior of figures in the future as Brome forces Gorges to speak from the grave. By remembering the epitomized Hastings, successive generations of mourning children will perpetuate the elegaic interpretation of him as they “Trascribe th’

⁹¹ Joynes, 39; Thomas Pestel, “On the untimely death of *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS*,” 37-8; Robert Millward, “*EPIGRAM* Upon the death of the most hopeful, *Henry* Lord *Hastings*,” 2.

⁹² Bancroft, “To the never-dying Memory of the Noble Lord *Hastings*,” 43-44.

⁹³ Edward Standish, “An *ELEGIE*,” 2.

⁹⁴ Joad Raymond speculates that the “J.B.” is likely John Birkenhead, the founding editor of the first English mercury, *Mercurius Aulicus*. If this is the case, two of the most famous newsmen of the seventeenth century covered Hastings’s death.

Original in new Copies” and create “An Issue, which t’Eternity shall last.”⁹⁵ The Hastings constructed in the instantaneous interpretations of “now” endures in the emulative “minding” of him in the future. These elegists imagine that the phoenix-like Hastings forms the future out of himself, and that he and their interpretation of him will renew themselves in an endless issue of “new Copies.”

The epitomized Hastings is an artifact of the self-generative authority of his elegists. By instantaneously interpreting the instant of his death, these elegists attempt to transform the historical Hastings into a versatile interpretive tool that enhances their expressive potential. This figurative Hastings, who speaks all languages to all people in all places at all times, expresses the significances that his elegists assign him, allowing them to project their interpretive voices and influences across the diverse historical experiences and imaginations of their audiences.

III.

But “*Hastings* is dead.” The meaning-full Hastings created in the epideictic opening of the elegies succumbs to the impermanence represented by his abrupt death. The loss of this “hopeful Instrument,” whose fulsome meanings allowed his elegists to inhabit and unify their diverse history, marks an end to these meanings and the historical cohesion and legibility that they provide: Joynes’s “Cypher for these many yeers,” the center to which “whatsoever’s good” conspired, “is gone; and now this carcase, World,/ Is into her first, rude, dark Chaos, hurl’d.”⁹⁶ “HASTINGS dead” announces the end of the many meanings—the capacious “whatsoever’s good”—that are expressed in his epitome. But it also announces an end to the process of authoritative meaning-making that his

⁹⁵ Dryden, “Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 101, 5.

⁹⁶ Joynes, “On the incomparable Lord Hastings,” 25-6.

elegists use to create his—and their own—social influence. Hastings’s death forces its own subject on the minds of his elegists, so that there is “nothing to know or feel, but’s loss.”⁹⁷ His elegists witness in him the loss of the meanings they assign him, as well as the ability to assign him meanings. This denial of the interpretive interventions of the elegaic voice transforms the role of the elegist, restricting it to unelaborated reporting rather than interpretive representation. Richard Brome, whose elegy concludes the main section of odes and summarizes the project of the collection as a whole, finds “This story is too true/ To be made more perspicuous to our view,/ By adding Fiction to’t” and therefore orders his muse, “Away [. . .] or bid me hence from thee,” so that he might “grieve without [her] aid.”⁹⁸ Grieving without the interpretive aid of imaginative meaning-making, Brome’s speaker restricts his elegaic efforts to expressing simply “*Who* he [Hastings] was, not *What*.”⁹⁹

“HASTINGS dead” undoes the epitomized Hastings by subjecting its universal meaning to the insistent encroachments of universal loss. For many elegists, Hastings’s death marks the end of his exemplarity and the influence it exerts over the social imagination: remarks like J.B.’s lament that “such a *Star* [. . .]/ Its much-admired Influence should withdraw” and Cokaine’s lament that his “Noble Spirit” is “fled away” are reiterated throughout the edition.¹⁰⁰ For Charles Cotton, his death represents the failings of exemplarity itself. Cotton’s observation that virtue’s “best Pattern’s lost” in Hastings leads him to conclude that being virtue’s “best Pattern” is no safeguard against

⁹⁷ Ibid, 82.

⁹⁸ Richard Brome, “To the Memory of the Right Noble [. . .] *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 19-21, 1, 17.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 36.

¹⁰⁰ J.B., “In Honour to the Great Memorial,” 7-9; Cokaine, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 10.

loss: neither “The strength of Goodness, Learning, and of Arts,/ Full crowds of Friends,
nor all the Pray’rs of them [. . .]/ Could rescue him from the sad stroke of Fate.”¹⁰¹ The
limitations of Hastings’s exemplarity are further emphasized by his inability to force a
response from nature: Cotton wonders, “Why was not th’ Air drest in Prodigious forms,/ To groan in Thunder, and to weep in Storms?/ [. . .] why did not His/ In Nature work a Metamorphosis?”¹⁰² The inability of his epitome to metamorphose the historical “now” of the elegy with his rich meanings likewise signals the end of his ability to metamorphose the dialectical “then.” Higgons regrets the historical limitations of an elegaic subject that expresses its own failures: “the Subject of our Grief, in whom/ All that times past can boast, or times to come/ Can hope, is lost.”¹⁰³ Hastings is no longer a subject for “times past” and “times to come.” Unlike Cokaine’s “fam’d Heroes of the Golden Age” who are drawn to look forward from a past and “[see] themselves out-gone,” Dryden’s past keeps to itself in Hastings’s “Change” into “Corps.” Hastings’s death signals the end of the past’s place in the present: if he had “di’d of old” in an age that ascribed to Pythagorean metempsychosis, “how great a strife/ Had been, who from his Death should draw their Life,” but instead all the “ag’d Sires” gathered in his epitome—Seneca, Cato, Numa, Caesar—“die in one so young, so small.”¹⁰⁴ The epitomized Hastings’s influence over the future is likewise limited. He is no longer a “hopeful Instrument” who projects his influence through the prospective imagination of his readers: Pestel’s “Rare monument” which “[changes] our Wishes into Present Hope” is

¹⁰¹ Cotton, “An Elegie,” 14, 16-17, 20.

¹⁰² Ibid, 21-4.

¹⁰³ Higgons, “EPIGRAM, Upon the death of the most hopeful, *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 9-11.

¹⁰⁴ Dryden, “Upon the death of Lord *HASTINGS*,” 67-8, 73-4.

lost, and instead “these Hopes are now meer Dreams become.”¹⁰⁵ The loss of this “hopeful Instrument” renders his elegists vulnerable to a future that they can neither imagine nor influence: when the “Hope of *Huntingdon* is turn’d to Clay,” they find that “in his Urn, our *hopes* [are], thus, buried” and that “what destroys our Hope, secures our Fear.”¹⁰⁶ The interpreted and interpreting Hastings who could “dispense [himself] all ways” was suddenly absent from the history that he had inhabited. The absence figured in his death is also the absence of the meanings that he is assigned, leaving his interpretive elegists with little to express: for Richard Brome’s muse-less speaker, “All may be said/ Or written in few words, *Lord Hastings’s dead*.”¹⁰⁷

The transformation of Hastings from a figure who demonstrates ubiquitous meaning to one who expresses the absence of meaning signals a shift in the elegaic subject from the “dead Hastings,” who is assigned significance in an ongoing process of interpretive mourning, to the “death of Hastings,” a historical event that situates his meanings in the context of his death. The transhistorical meanings of the memorialized Hastings cannot overcome the historical “instant” in which they originate. As an expression of the absence of the figurative “dead Hastings,” the “death of Hastings” displays the intrusion of an unruly, changing history that resists unifying interpretations. The “instant” of his “untimely” death defies the historical imagination of his elegists: his “untimely Fate” was “ne’er foresaw” and completes this specific “Ages Tyrannies.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ John Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*, On the death of his son,” 85.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Brome, “To the Memory of the Right Noble [. . .] *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 34; Francis Standish, “An *ELEGIE*,” 6; Denham, “An *ELEGIE*,” 18.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Brome, “To the Memory of the Right Noble [. . .] *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 22.

Hastings's death marks a moment of historical change and, like *Mercurius Prgmaticus* complaining about the new "now" in the weeks that followed Charles's execution, *Lachrymae Musarum*'s elegists bemoan the "now" of a Hastings-less world: Joynes, for instance, complains that "Not perfect Bankrupt was this Land till now," and that "till His fall,/ We could not justly say we had lost All;" Cave likewise locates Hastings's ability to "[dispel] the Fog of these black days" in an irrecoverable past, while "now but t'have had such, we are left to boast."¹⁰⁹ The moving history represented in Hastings's death moves away from this "instant" and its significances as it continues to change and offer up an evermore immediate now. Cave finds himself offering his memorialized Hastings to an amnesic audience that has moved on and is living in its own moment: in order to get them to "minde" Hastings, he must re-mind "the Speculators of our time,/ How meerly supernatural, sublime/ HIS being in it [the Concrete World] was."¹¹⁰ No longer a trans-historical figure for "All [. . .] times past," "times to come," or even "these many yeers," Hastings is "a *Genealogie*/ Unto himself" whose influence is confined to the isolated and miniaturized history of an obsolescent "instant."¹¹¹ The acute temporality of an elegaic subject whose influence is restricted to its own history likewise places historical restrictions on the influence of the elegaic voices that commemorate it. Near the end of his ode, J.B. instructs against the excessive grief of Hastings's parents, who "make so shrill a Noice, Ecchoing Fruitless Groans," advising that "There is a time for Tears; but

¹⁰⁸ Denham, "An ELEGIE," 31; J.B., "In Honour to the Great Memorial," 10; Denham, "An ELEGIE," 16.

¹⁰⁹ Joynes, "On the incomparable Lord HASTINGS," 11; Cave, "An *ELOGIE*," 32, 34.

¹¹⁰ Cave, "An *ELOGIE*," 17-19.

¹¹¹ Alexander Brome, "Upon the unhappie Separation of those united Souls," 67.

certainly,/ There is a time to lay those Sorrows by.”¹¹² This common and conventional consolation restricts the act of interpretive mourning, and subsequently the influence of elegist, to a specific “time for Tears” that elegists and their grieving audiences leave behind as they move out of the occasion for mourning and into a historically new “time to lay those Sorrows by.”

The elegaic tendency to impose limits on interpretive expression is thematized in the genre’s topos of inexpressibility, in which elegists are overwhelmed with grief and unable to make sense of or assign meaning to their subject. The act of interpretive mourning succumbs to the expressions of “true grief” in the moment of loss. This “true grief” privileges the historical “now” by yielding to the affective demands of its occasion as a moment that can only be responded to, not represented into meaning. Hastings’s death marks a moment of historical change that “Unfixeth all about it,” stranding his elegists in the “first, rude, dark Chaos” of a world without his influence.¹¹³ The miseries of this moment cannot be assuaged: “these impossible Wishes cannot finde/ A place; and are but scatter’d by the Winde.”¹¹⁴ Hastings’s mourners can only respond with their groans, and so they release a “storm of Lamentations writ;/ Tempests of sighs and groans, and flowing eyes,/ Whose yeelding balls dissolve to Delugies.”¹¹⁵ Thomas Pestel offers a “Rational Reply” to these mourners who are driven to distraction in their “Tempests of sighs and groans,” but nonetheless implicates himself in their “mad mistake:” “Rabide for

¹¹² J.B., “In Honour to the Great Memorial,” 59-60.

¹¹³ J.B., “In Honour to the Great Memorial,” 44; Joynes, “On the incomparable Lord Hastings,” 26.

¹¹⁴ Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*,” 7-8.

¹¹⁵ Cokaine, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 4-6.

want of Rest, we keep/ A bawling, and refuse to sleep:/ Dead-weary tir'd, yet scorn to stay.”¹¹⁶ These emotional responses in the moment of Hastings’s death overwhelm the possibility of all other meanings, so that for Nedham, “The onely Legacies he left us, are,/ *Grief* to his Friends; and to the World, *Despair*.”¹¹⁷

The affective landscape of the grieving “now” is inhospitable to interpretations and the processes of meaning-making. Denham’s representation of Hastings’s death as a subject that his readers must simultaneously “read, and mourn,” for instance, invites them into an experience that both engages and confounds their interpretive attention to loss. For Richard Brome, the elegaic task is one that “stupifies us with Astonishment/ Which dumbs us, and benums our Faculties.”¹¹⁸ The “dark Chaos” left by the withdrawal of Hastings’s “sweet influence” resists the integrating social meanings that elegists attempt to express in him: the loss of his “Noble Spirit” is the loss of an ability to discern and express nobility, so that “Noble here must be none.”¹¹⁹ For Joynes, the problem is not only the loss of an interpretable subject in Hastings, but the loss of the ability to interpret altogether: he complains that, “Vertue and Knowledge now for Monsters go;/ To grope out Truth henceforth, how shall we do?/ Or find what’s Just or Sense?”¹²⁰ Joynes’s anxious “how shall we do?” expresses both that meanings of virtue and knowledge are lost, and that the very ways of making meaning are lost with them. Likewise, for Dryden, Hastings’s “immature” death is an untimely moment that marks the inversion of

¹¹⁶ Thomas Pestel, “For the Right Honourable, *LUCIE*, Countess of HUNTINGDON,” 47-50.

¹¹⁷ Nedham, “On the untimely death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 93-4.

¹¹⁸ Richard Brome, “To the Memory of the Right Noble [. . .] *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 26-7.

¹¹⁹ Samuel Bold, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 47.

¹²⁰ Joynes, “On the incomparable Lord HASTINGS,” 27-9.

customary knowledge and ways of knowing that govern social behavior:

Is *Death* (Sin's wages) Grace's now? shall Art
Make us more Learned, onely to depart?
If Merit be Disease, if Vertue Death;
To be Good, Not to be; who'd then bequeath
Himself to Discipline? Who'd not esteem
Labour a Crime, Study Self-murder deem?¹²¹

In the death of Hastings, *Lachrymae Musarum* presents its readers with a representation of their moving history and the interpretive shortcomings of the elegaic spokespersons who have appointed themselves to assign it meaning.

Incapable of “conspiring” together in an understanding of what is noble or virtuous in their changed and changing condition, *Lachrymae Musarum*'s elegists simply “sigh together.” This act of impulsive and non-deliberative collective grieving unites a diverse community of mourners whose sometimes contradictory social affiliations are overwritten by the affective demands of their shared historical moment. In the context of the edition, the royalist Denham's call to “read, and weep” in defiance of an “irrational” tearlessness finds a complement in the parliamentary sympathizer Alexander Brome who encourages his reader to “*mourn*, as he ought to do,” and Herrick's “Contingent Miserie” likewise co-mingles with reformist John Hall's widespread “every sigh or groan.”¹²² Alexander Brome imagines himself as a single contributor to a concert of mourners in which the ranks of social and poetic superiority break down: as “*Princely Eagles*, when together th'are/ Met at a *Carcase*, yeeld the *Fly* a share,” so

¹²¹ Dryden, “Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 7-12.

¹²² Alexander Brome, “Upon the unhappie Separation of those united Souls,” 34; Herrick, “*The New Charon*, Upon the death of *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 18; Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*,” 5.

The *Tongs* and *Jews-trump* too, when they do come
In Consort, serve to fill a *Vacuum*,
And to compleat the *sound*, though artless Tone:
So he that can't *sing Elegies*, can groan.¹²³

Neither “*Princely Eagles*” nor flies, professional elegists nor rude groaners can turn away from their shared subject, and therefore turn towards each other in their shared response to it. Insofar as William Pestel’s “press of People” comes together “not to view each other,” they constitute a “sad Assembly” that is universally “Oppress’d with inward Anguish” and collectively issues “an universal Groan” that “Befits a Gen’ral Loss.”¹²⁴

But in order to maintain the cohesion of their reconciled consensus, Pestel’s “press of people” must monitor their impulse “to view each other.” And in order to maintain the expressive cohesion of a collection intended to display collective lament, *Lachrymae Musarum*’s elegists must sweep aside the potentially divisive partisan interpretations of Hastings’s death. The various instantaneous interpretations of historical moments offered up by newsbooks had rent the English social experience with so many “paper bullets,” prompting reactions against the divisiveness displayed and encouraged. The distrust of polarized and polarizing polemic is evident in the increasing frequency of claims to “impartiality” on newsbook covers as savvy editors attempted to cater to more conciliatory minds of their readers without necessarily changing the political tone of their content.¹²⁵ The aptly-titled newsbook, *A Book Without a Title*,

¹²³ “Upon the unhappie Separation of those united Souls,” 7-12.

¹²⁴ “An *ELEGIE*,” 1, 6-7, 2, 15-16.

¹²⁵ The year 1648-1649, for instance, saw the first publications of *The impartial intelligencer*, *Mercurius anti-mercurius*, *Impartially communicating truth*, *Mercurius Impartialis*, and *The royall diurnall*. *Impartially imparting the affaires of England*. In each case, the claim to impartiality is disingenuous, but the claim itself points to the expected appeal that such a position would have to a potential readership.

whose only issue appeared in the month of Hastings's death, takes to task a newsbook culture eager to assign interpretive "titles" to weekly events: on the opening page it sets itself against the "folly of this Nation to be taken most with highest Titles, and lowest Matters, in all weekly Transactions" and offers instead to "appear honest to all in speaking truth without fear to every Interest."¹²⁶ Hastings's elegist likewise recognized that their unifying subject is vulnerable to the "mischief" of divisive interpretations of what Joynes terms the "new profane Opinion."¹²⁷ Alexander Brome imagines Hastings as a "*Tennis-ball* bandy'd 'tween" two competing forces, a subject "Whom (like young *Doctors*) *Women* use to kill,/ To try *Experiments*, and *nurse* their skill:/ The *Females Trophie*."¹²⁸ As a site that attracts contending interpretations, Hastings, like the patient of untrained doctor or the lover of a manipulative mistress, is susceptible to the unskillful handlings of his interpreters. For Dryden, Hastings's poxed corpse displays the consequences of allowing multiple, competing interests to invade a common cause:

Blisters with pride swell'd, which th'row's flesh did sprout
Like Rose-buds, stuck i' th' Lily-skin about.
Each little Pimple had a Tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit:
Who, Rebel-like, with their own Lord at strife,
Thus made an Insurrection 'gainst his Life.¹²⁹

Hastings is overcome by these proud, "Rebel-like" blisters who act against themselves by infecting the subject that they inhabit. If Hastings's elegists are to guard the consensus of their common grief, they must protect their experience against the invasive sectarian

¹²⁶ *A Book Without A Title* (London, 1649), sig. Ar.

¹²⁷ Joynes, "On the incomparable Lord HASTINGS," 62.

¹²⁸ "On the unhappie Separation of those united Souls," 17, 19-21.

¹²⁹ Dryden, "Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*," 57-62.

claims of “So many spots.”¹³⁰ Francis Standish imagines that Hastings’s death represents an opportunity to overwrite and leave behind partisan divisiveness: Hastings is a “Jewel, for which strove *Pallas*, *Juno*, and the Queen of Love,” and Jove, “Remembring therefore what great Wars/ Fell out, upon their former Jars,” locked “this Jewel in this Tomb” in order to “prevent the like to come.”¹³¹ For Standish, Hastings’s death presents new, conciliatory meanings that contravene the strife of interpretive contests.

But as Dryden’s distinctly partisan plea for non-partisanship demonstrates, sweeping away the polarizing language of interested interpretation was no easy task in period that had become accustomed to it. Nonetheless, by repeatedly rearticulating partisan language in different rhetorical contexts and in the mouths of different speakers, the collection as a whole diminishes this language’s effectiveness as divisive expression. The predominating critical consensus that *Lachrymae Musarum* is a site of a distinctly royalist lament, for instance, is not without support: the edition is riddled with royalist language and symbols. Thomas Pestel the younger proclaims that there was “never Subject Loyaller inclin’d” than this “Royal, Loyal, Learn’d, Lov’d *Hastings*” and he, John Rosse, and J.B. are not alone in praising the “royal blood” and “noble blood” that the title page makes apparent in tracing his lineage to Edward IV.¹³² Elsewhere, Hastings’s death is handled as an explicitly royalist event: it is a “Blood-Royal Fate” likened to that of “The late Great Victim” in which he takes up a “Heavenly Crown, for an Earths Coronet” in a distinctly royalist heaven with a “Monarch, and a House of

¹³⁰ Ibid, 55.

¹³¹ Francis Standish, “In obitum, *Henrici Domini Hastingsii*.”

¹³² Thomas Pestel, the younger, “On *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS*,” 12, 19, 18; Rosse, “Upon the much-lamented Departure,” 49; J.B., “In Honour to the Great Memorial,” 16.

Peers,” where he sings “Hallelujah in Heav’n, with *Charles* our King.”¹³³ When read in terms of the political affiliations of the edition’s most prominent contributors—Denham’s support of the king is as apparent as Herrick’s and Alexander Brome’s, even if that of Cave or Milward is less well-known—these characterizations seem to be explicit attempts to assign Hastings’s death exclusively royalist significances. But when in the mouths of elegists whose loyalties were less established or even explicitly aligned with the interests of parliament, the partisanship of these expressions becomes less distinct. John Hall, for instance, who edited the famed reformist newsbook *Mercurius Britannicus*, observes that “So many Noble Bloods had found there home” as freely as Denham and other recognizably royalist contributors.¹³⁴ Likewise, when Thomas Higgons, who married the widow of the parliamentary general Robert Devereaux and spoke in favor of recognizing Richard Cromwell while serving as a member of parliament, notes that Hastings’s blood streams “from the Royal loyns of *Englands* Kings” he is being as forthright about the Hastings lineage as any royalist in the edition.¹³⁵ And Nedham, who would begin editing *Mercurius Politicus* for the new regime just months after composing his elegy, unmockingly bemoans the “streams of Noble Blood” and his regret that that the same “*Hatchet* [that] did hew down/ Those well-grown Oaks, and Pillars of the Crown” as well as this “tender Sapling” echoes John Rosse’s lament over the loss of “this Royal,

¹³³ Thomas Pestel, the elder, “On the untimely death of *HENRY* Lord *HASTINGS*,” 39; Denham, “An *ELEGIE*,” 21; Robert Millward, “*EPIGRAM* Upon the death of the most hopeful, *Henry* Lord *Hastings*,” 8; Bold, “A Funeral-Elegie,” 50; Edward Standish, “An *ELEGIE*, On the much-lamented death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 27-8.

¹³⁴ Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*,” 20.

¹³⁵ Higgons, “Upon the death of my Lord *Hastings*,” 12.

Loyal Stem.”¹³⁶ The unexpected appearance of royalist language and symbols in the elegies of those who would have been regarded as political rivals undercuts its effectiveness as a polemic that expresses exclusive partisan meanings.

Hastings’s death never fully merges with the regicide as a royalist tragedy. His elegists do not treat him, as recent scholars have, as an uncomplicated “surrogate for Charles.” The allegories used to articulate the similarities between Hastings and Charles also emphasize the differences between them: Hastings’s living influence was “*like a King Conquering by approach*” and his loss is “so *great*, that none/ In our *Age* has exceeded it, but *One*,” and when in heaven he reigns “*neer Charles* his Wain” and sings “*with Charles* our King.”¹³⁷ Hastings is “like,” “neer,” and “with” Charles, but is never a substitute for Charles. This allegorical distancing marks the limitations of his figurative royalism: however he “promis’d to appear/ What *Strafford, Falkland*, and brave *Capel* were,” his abrupt death interrupted that promise and displays his failure to achieve the figurative significances of a royalist hero. *Lachrymae Musarum*’s seemingly “royalist” symbolism is best understood as a form of allegorical expression, not polarizing polemic, which enables elegists with conflicting partisan affiliations to unite in a consensus experience that is *like* mourning for *a* king, and avoid the divisiveness of a politically valorized mourning “infected with the huge grief required for the royal martyr.”

Hastings’s death represents a changing history that refuses to be slowed by the clumsy interpretations of the polemical imagination. His elegists imagine him as a figure

¹³⁶ Nedham, “On the untimely death of the Lord HASTINGS,” 4-7; Rosse, “Upon the much-lamented Departure of [. . .] HENRY Lord HASTINGS,” 53.

¹³⁷ Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*,” 65-6; Francis Standish, “An *ELEGIE* Upon the death of HENRY Lord HASTINGS,” 21-2; J.B., “In Honour to the Great Memorial,” 69-70; Edward Standish, “An *ELEGIE*,” 27-8. My emphasis.

who embodies the instantaneous and uninterpretable change that his death displays. The language used to express his absence represents him as a subject that has already moved beyond the interpretive context of the elegist: he has “[taken] wing” and is “Hasting hence;” he is “gone” and “lost.” He exists outside of the immobilized interpretive time of partisanship, which universally assigns the same meaning to each changing historical moment in order to create the impression of an integrated, ideological history. Marvell imagines him as one who has “out-run his *Age*” as “those of growth more sudden, and more bold/ Are hurried hence,” setting his suddenness against the “Phlegmatick and Slow [who] prolongs his day,/ And on Times Wheel sticks like a *Remora*.”¹³⁸ Like a Remora, the mythical fish thought to attach itself to ships and slow and redirect their course, the “Phlegmatic and Slow” polemical minds of Hastings’s contemporaries attach themselves to their moving history, prolonging and redirecting its moments within their partisan histories. Hastings, on the other hand, exists and expires in his own instant, eschewing the slow process by which meaning is created through and across a unified, unfolding history: for Hall, rather than arriving at his “full Perfections” over time as those “who/ By lame Degrees to a Full stature grow;/ He, at the first was such” and “shew’d, at once, Perfection and Haste.”¹³⁹ By creating meaning in his own moment, Hastings sits outside of a unified, unfolding history that assigns and accrues meanings by “lame Degrees,” eluding even those instantaneous interpretations which assign significances to the historical “now” as it happens: existing “at once,” he was “like Lightning, which all Sight confounds,/ And strikes so swiftly, that it seems to be/ Rather the object of the

¹³⁸ Marvell, “Upon the death of the Lord *HASTINGS*,” 10, 15-16, 11-12.

¹³⁹ Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*,” 37-9, 44

Memory.”¹⁴⁰ Always an “object of the Memory,” Hastings never exists in a historical “now” that can be interpreted by a swift polemical mind. Unstuck to a single meaning in a turning history, Hastings is a “tender, fleeting form” who moves at his own “nimble pace,” free from the “Phlegmatick and Slow” history created by the polemical mind.

Lachrymae Musarum privileges movement as a site of social meaning: Hastings’s death marks a moment of historical change that moves the collection’s diverse contributors to move together in a collaborative act of mourning. The social meanings that are lost with the epitomized Hastings are recuperated in the act of minding the social movement he embodies and encourages. In what was the concluding elegy of the collection before the hasty addition at press of an eight poem “Postscript,” Richard Brome invites his readers to engage with the historical, emotional, and social movement demonstrated in his edition:

Thou *World*, Read and Collect all, here, exprest
Of Excellencies on this Lord deceast;
And adde, with it, all thou canst think is good;
And all that thou canst wish were understood
To be thine own, to all is said before [. . .]¹⁴¹

Brome’s objective is not to assemble a “single signifying unit” of unified and unwavering partisan expression, but to invite his diverse audience into an act of historical interpretation that is collaborative and ongoing: the “Postscript” itself signals that the edition was already moving beyond itself when Brome writes his elegy. *Lachrymae Musarum* seeks to overcome the divisiveness of its unsettled “*World*” and restore socialization by encouraging its interpreters to continuously “Read and Collect” and “adde” to their understanding of an instantaneous history that was always already moving

¹⁴⁰ Hall, “To the Earl of *HUNTINGDON*,” 60-2.

¹⁴¹ Richard Brome, “To the Memory of [. . .] *Henry Lord Hastings*,” 50-4.

beyond them.

CHAPTER 4

MARGARET CAVENDISH'S SPECTACLES OF SEVERALNESS AND RESTORATION SOCIABILITY

For seven weeks in 1667 London could not look away. Her appearance at Lincoln's Inn Theatre, where she sat adorned in "antique dress" with her "brests all laid out to view in a playhouse," ensured that she was the show. Samuel Pepys spent weeks trying to catch sight of her, and a chance glimpse only made him "hope to see more."¹ John Evelyn called on her four times in three weeks, delighting in an entertainment in which his bemused wife Mary discovered that her "part was not yet to speak but to admire."² The king was so eager to see her that he came to her in person to welcome her to the city. Whitehall was crowded with expectant viewers who came to "see her, as if it were the Queen of Sweden."³ The halls of the Royal Society were crowded with "much company, indeed very much company, in expectation" of what would be the first time the fellows "beheld a Lady" among them.⁴ When she arrived, the "philosophers did peer" at

¹ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: Bells, 1970-83), vol. VIII., 187.

² Mary Evelyn, Letter to Ralph Bohun (c. 1667) in *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*, ed. Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview, 2000), 91-3.

³ Pepys, *Diary*, vol. VIII., 163-4.

⁴ Quoted in Katie Whitaker, *Mad Made* (Basic Books: NY, 2002), 198.

her and Evelyn “ne’er saw anything so witty.”⁵ She was a spectacle in the streets, thronged by “100 boys and girls running looking upon her” and “crowded upon by coaches all the way she went.”⁶ Margaret Cavendish was in the eyes, minds, and mouths of Londoners: letter writers and diarists reported that “the Duchess of Newcastle is all y^e pageant now discoursed on” and “all the town-talk is nowadays of her extravagancies.”⁷ Only the stranger sight of Dutch warships sailing up the Thames could divert this enthralled attention from “so extraordinary a woman.”⁸

Cavendish’s admirers were fascinated with a figure they found to be “extraordinary.” Mary Evelyn found her “so extraordinary a woman [. . .] in all things,” John Evelyn noted her “extraordinary kindness” and was “much pleased with [her] extraordinary fanciful habit, garb, and discourse;” her visit to court was “thought extraordinary,” and her presence at the Royal Society as “extraordinary” as it was unprecedented.⁹ The “extravagancies” she displayed in “habit, garb, and discourse,” were sometimes conceived of as a generic eccentricity: when the victim of a practical joke appeared at the gates of Whitehall dressed as a Babylonian princess, Charles II concluded, “I bet it is the Duchess of Newcastle.”¹⁰ But, more often, her singularity was

⁵ Quoted in Whitaker, 198; Evelyn, “I’ll tell the Jo,” quoted in *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*, ed. Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2000), 24.

⁶ Pepys, *Diary*, Vol VIII, 209.

⁷ Letter from Charles North to his father, 13 April 1667, Bodleian MS. North. c. 4., fol. 146; Pepys, *Diary*.

⁸ Mary Evelyn, Letter to Ralph Bohun.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Count Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of the Count de Gramont*, 2. vols, ed. Henry Vizetelly (London, 1889), I, 171-2. Quoted in Whitaker.

imagined in terms of a characteristic severalness by which she incorporated into herself distinct and even oppositional figures: in a commendatory verse for *Sociable Letters*, for instance, her husband William wonders that “in her self so many Creatures be,/ Like many Commonwealths, yet all agree,” and Evelyn marvels that all learned women “summed together, possess but that divided which your Grace retains in one [person].”¹¹ For those observing her, Cavendish is a site where “many Creatures” and “many Commonwealths” agree, where several figures are “summed together” in “one [person].” The many-ness that William and Evelyn identify in her is not incidental. Cavendish deliberately fashioned a self-styled severalness for herself, displaying a “mixt nature” that she termed “hermaphroditical.” Her distinctive dress for the season, for instance, incorporated feminine and masculine elements, layering low-cut dresses with exaggeratedly long trains beneath a black knee-length juste-au-corps fashionable among men. When she arrived at the Royal Society wearing a broad-rimmed Cavalier-style hat in addition to her distinctly male coat, Evelyn found the effect of her mixed gender appearance remarkable: she was “like a cavalier, but that she had no beard.”¹² This “hermaphroditical” effect was likewise expressed in her writings, where she not only freely mixed genres—*The World’s Olio* included “various sorts” for “several palats” in order to offer “something for everyone”—but also genders by publishing prolifically in the typically male arena of public authorship and writing extensively on natural philosophy which, as her “extraordinary” visit to the Royal Society indicates, was still

¹¹ William Cavendish, “Upon Her Excellency the Authoress,” in *Sociable Letters*, ed. James Fitamaurice (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2004), 44-5; Quoted in Whitaker, 310.

¹² “I’ll tell the Jo,” quoted in *Paper Bodies*, 25.

regarded an exclusively male field of inquiry.¹³ She recreated this conglomerative serveralness in conversation, reciting memorized passages from her works and boasting that universities should replace Aristotle with her writings, so Mary Evelyn that found that she was, in person, “as rambling as her books.”¹⁴ The “extraordinary [. . .] habit, garb, and discourse” that John Evelyn admires during his visits is not simply strange, it is a spectacle of severalness.

Cavendish’s severalness was both “extraordinary” and “extra-ordinary.”¹⁵ William’s “yet all agree” points to the abnormality of collecting “many Creatures” and “many Commonwealths” in a single “self.” Likewise, John Evelyn regards her extraordinary “[summing] together” of other learned women as a sign that she has “excelled” them. But where John Evelyn sees a praiseworthy excellence in her severalness, his wife sees a disruptive aberrance: she is “surprised to find so much extravagancy and variety in any person not confined within four walls,” and wonders at Cavendish as one of the “contrary miracles” of “this age,” who “is not of mortal race, and therefore cannot be defined.”¹⁶ And while John Evelyn “ne’er saw anything so witty” in her cross-dressed appearance at the Royal Society, Pepys found “her dress so antic and her deportment so unordinary, that [he did] not like her at all.”¹⁷ For Pepys and Mary Evelyn, Cavendish’s severalness is a threat to the ordinary order that it exceeds: she is

¹³ “Upon her Book Intituled the World’s Olio,” in *The World’s Olio* (1655).

¹⁴ Mary Evelyn, Letter to Ralph Bohun.

¹⁵ “Extraordinary” as well as “extravagant,” which was also frequently used to describe Cavendish, could mean “unique” as well as “erratic” or “divergent” in the period.

¹⁶ Mary Evelyn, Letter to Ralph Bohun.

¹⁷ Pepys, *Diary*, vol. VIII, 243.

“antic,” “unordinary,” and “contrary” and as a figure who sums together all sorts of “extravagancy and variety” she deserves to be “confined within four walls.” The failure to confine her transgressive severalness was cause for concern: Mary Evelyn is “surprised,” Pepys does “not like her at all,” and Dorothy Osborne complains that “there are many soberer people in Bedlam; I’ll swear her friends are much to blame to let her go abroad.”¹⁸ The threat of Cavendish’s severalness was not simply that it challenged ideas of the ordinary, but that the transgressiveness that it represented was allowed to “go abroad” where it might influence social experience of others. There was a concern that Cavendish’s strange severalness was contagious. Since this “so extraordinary a woman” had arrived in London, established boundaries and behaviors had begun to give way: Pepys’s normal routes and routines around town were disrupted as he went out of his way to catch sight of her, the king was behaving strangely by welcoming her in person and then visiting her in the queen’s apartments, and the Royal Society had opened its doors to her. After admiring this “extraordinary” and “extra-ordinary” woman Mary Evelyn is impatient escape her influence: “the creature called a chimera which I had heard speak of, was now to be seen, and that it was time to retire for fear of infection” and with the hope that “as she is an original, she may never have a copy.”¹⁹

Cavendish staged her unsettling “[summing] together” as England was undergoing its own controversial experiments with severalness. The Declaration of Breda, which set the preliminary terms for the restoration and settlement of Charles II in 1660, proposed a “free and general pardon” that was intended to reconcile the

¹⁸ Dorothy Osborne, *Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple*, ed. Kingsley Hart (London: Folio Society, 1968), 58.

¹⁹ Mary Evelyn, Letter to Ralph Bohun.

contradictory interests that had divided the nation the over the previous two decades. Charles hoped that this general pardon would overwrite the contentiousness of the past and prepare England for a “perfect union” in which “those wounds which have so many years together been kept bleeding, may be bound up”: “henceforth all notes of discord, separation and difference of parties be utterly abolished among all our subjects, whom we invite and conjure to a perfect union among themselves.”²⁰ This proposed unification hopes to resolve discord by eliminating the “separation and difference” that underlies it. There is no need to bridge differences because “all our subjects” conjure a “perfect union among themselves,” not between themselves. But the Declaration only “invites” this uniformity as an idealized “perfect union.” Separation and difference had come to characterize the English social experience, and Charles needed a strategy for reconciling the different interests of his subjects without appearing as though he was acting against them. He therefore assures that his general pardon will allow for a social unity that preserves, rather than polices, the differences that had emerged over the previous decades:

because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other (which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed or better understood), we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no men shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matter of religion.²¹

Rather than “abolishing” difference through enforced conformity, Charles imagines achieving social unity through a “freedom of conversation” between “several opinions,” in which “differences of opinion” are constitutive of, not a threat to, the new settlement.

²⁰ King CHARLES II. his DECLARATION To all His Loving SUBJECTS of the KINGDOM of ENGLAND. Dated from His Court at Breda in Holland, the ⁴/₁₄ of April 1660 (1660).

²¹ King CHARLES II. his DECLARATION To all His Loving SUBJECTS.

On the eve of the Restoration, Charles imagines a conglomerative society that, like Cavendish's summed severalness, incorporates "many Commonwealths" into itself.

But, as William's "yet" reminds us, it was unexpected that "many Commonwealths" might be collected together and "all agree," and Charles's proposed state in which "several opinions" were "composed" in a "freedom of conversation" was no less strange. David Martin Jones notes that, in the early stages of the Restoration, there was a general "climate of obedience" in which parliamentary supporters and moderate religious reformists accepted the conciliatory terms of the Declaration of Breda as they were rearticulated and authorized in the *Act of free and general pardon, indemnity and oblivion* (1660).²² Moderate Presbyterians like Richard Baxter pleaded indemnity in order to avoid retribution for their role in overthrowing the monarchy, and urged other reformists to do so as well. Even some of the self-described "zealous" attempted to reinscribe themselves in the new social unity facilitated by general indemnity: Hugh Peters, who was grouped with those most egregious regicides exempted from pardon, insisted on his deathbed that, though zealous, he was not "extreme" and deserved the benefits of indemnity as one "contented with any good Government that would keep things together."²³ But other reformists viewed the "composed" unity of general indemnity with distrust and saw an imposed uniformity where Charles had promised a "freedom of conversation." And this concern was not without cause. Whatever its claims for a "perfect union," the resettled government's dual strategy of indemnity and oblivion was meant to overwrite the legislation and loyalties of the previous decades: the Act of

²² David Martin Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance in Seventeenth Century England: The Political Significance of Oaths and Engagements* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1999), 179.

²³ Hugh Peters, *A Dying Father's Last Legacy* (1660).

Indemnity automatically invalidated all ordinances since passed without royal consent, and, as David Martin Jones reminds us, the many new state oaths were meant to obviate the ambiguity and “remove any reservation that a subject might hold or be able to conceal his loyalty to the monarchy.”²⁴ Consequently, Quakers and other radical sects tenaciously and vocally resisted the conciliatory conformity offered in the Act of Indemnity on the grounds that it required them to sacrifice the “authentick veracity and just credulity” of their own consciences to the inferior injunctions of the state.²⁵

But if these political and religious reformists were suspicious of an indemnity that seemed to be motivated by distinctly partisan interests, supporters of the king and the restored government were concerned that the “general pardon” may be too general. To some the easy realignments of figures like Richard Baxter and Hugh Peters with the resettled government seemed to be opportunistic and disingenuous attempts by dissenters to disguise their dissent behind the protections of indemnity. *The Black Book opened*, for instance, a “tragical discourse between a noble cavalier and [. . .] King-killers” parodies this opportunism in the character of a Scot who invokes the “Act of Indempnity [that] cures all” before being exposed and condemned with the other regicide “Devils.”²⁶ Likewise, the stubborn non-conformity demonstrated by Quakers and other sectarians motivated concerns that the Act of Indemnity provided legal protection to those who refused to concede the priority of their interests to the broader social unity that the act was meant to facilitate. In his tract *The Inconveniencies of Toleration*, conformist clergyman Thomas Tomkins complains that the liberty of conscience promised in the

²⁴ Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance*, 173.

²⁵ See Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance*, 175.

²⁶ *The Black Book Opened* (London: 1660).

Declaration of Breda and Act of Indemnity is “strangely Wild and Unmanageable” when “handled by experience”: permitting rather than punishing dissent, “it layeth us open to all the folly and phrenzy imaginable, to all those Heresies which the Scripture calls Damnable, and is a publick Invitation to all sorts of strong Delusions, and the believing of Lyes.”²⁷ Rather than incorporating “several opinions” into a harmonious social whole, the Act of Indemnity fosters dissent and intensifies divisiveness by allowing non-conformists to disguise their sedition.

But royalist objections to the “strangely Wild and Unmanageable” severalness of Charles’s “perfect union” extended beyond concerns that it protected the “folly and phrenzy” of their opponents. Charles’s use of indemnity to replace the political interests of Interregnum with the priority of his own restored government erased royalist and parliamentary histories alike. The services and sufferings of the crown’s supporters during the civil wars and Interregnum were relegated to the same “oblivion” that indemnified Parliament’s supporters. In order to preserve their interests, therefore, royalist pamphleteers urged the importance of memory against an indemnity that would “unavoidably burthen and punish the Innocent, and let the guilty go free.”²⁸ For Roger L’Estrange, Charles’s forced forgetfulness is as criminal as the “MURDERERS [. . .] Plunders, Robberies, Sequestrations, Decimations, [and] Confiscations” it forgives: “Are we obliged by the Act of *Oblivion*, to quit our *Nature*, and our *Reason* with our *Passions*:---to such a Losse of *Memory*, as utterly defaces the very *Images* of things *Past*, and robbs us of the benefit of our dear-bought *experience*?”²⁹ The imposed amnesia of

²⁷ *The Inconveniencies of Toleration* (London: 1667), 1.

²⁸ William Cole, *A rod for lawyers* (London: 1659), 14.

indemnity acts on the minds of royalists as those iconoclasts and rebels who invaded their estates, defacing their past and robbing them of their own experiences. L'Estrange's royalists are forced into an unnatural and irrational anachronism that interrupts their history and its benefits. William Cavendish wrote a "little book" of political advice to Charles after the death of Oliver Cromwell when it appeared that a restoration of the monarchy was immanent, and urged against these same detriments of indemnity.³⁰ Perhaps for this reason, William was disappointed to find himself excluded from the resettlement negotiations that produced the Declaration of Breda. But whatever Charles's motivations, the subsequent struggle to recover their estates—some of them defaced by parliamentary forces, some confiscated, and others sold to cover the costs of exile—and reclaim "the benefit of [their] dear-bought *experience*" from the "Losse of *Memory*" became a central theme in Margaret's Restoration writings.

For many supporters of both king and parliament, the attempt to compose through indemnity the "several opinions" by which the English "engaged in parties and animosities against each other" rendered Interregnum animosities more proximal and pronounced. Rather than reconciling the entrenched partisan engagements that had emerged over the previous decades, it intensified them as different parties—the restored government, religious reformists, regicides, and royalists—sought to protect their interests against the infringements of a strange social severalness that threatened to undercut them. While he promises a "general pardon," Charles nonetheless heightens political discrimination against republicanism by exempting those associated with the regicide as unforgivable and insisting on reiterated oaths to ensure a conformity

²⁹ Roger L'Estrange *A Caveat to the Cavaliers* (London: 1661), 10.

³⁰ See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 223.

consensus to his restored monarchy. Hugh Peters experienced the contradictions of this indemnity that exacerbated the divisiveness it promised to resolve: although he plead for benefits offered by the Act of Indemnity, he nonetheless found that, by naming him as one of the exempted traitors, the act had set a “hard character upon [him].” Just as Charles was selective in extending his general pardon, reformists and supporters of Parliament were selective in their acceptance of it, embracing indemnity only insofar as it provided legal protection for their own interested behavior during the civil wars and Interregnum. Royalists, likewise, concede to indemnity as grounds for the restoration of the monarchy so long as it does not force them to forgive. Like Dorothy Osborne and Mary Evelyn, who were unsettled by an extra-ordinary transgressiveness that needed to be contained, those “engaged in parties and animosities against each other” attempted to restrain the similarly “antic” severalness that Charles’s indemnity had allowed to go abroad.

Cavendish studied the severalness of her society as closely as that society studied hers. The “unnatural War” of the 1640s seemed to her to sweep England “like a Whirlwind.”³¹ While this whirlwind war was widely destructive—it “felled down [. . .] houses, where some in [the] Wars were crusht to death”—where it did not destroy it divided. In her short essay, “Of a civil War,” this “greatest storm [. . .] splits the vessel of a Common-wealth.”³² This commonplace metaphor of civil war as a splitting storm focuses the essay’s attention on the severalness of pre- and post-war society. The remainder of the essay is spent elaborating on a second metaphor that likens England to a deck of cards vulnerable the repeated re-shufflings of factions. In times of peace, the

³¹ In Margaret Cavendish, *Nature’s Pictures* (London: 1656), 372.

³² Margaret Cavendish, *World’s Olio* (London: 1655), 55.

social order is a unified severalness: when “made up in order, every several suit is by itself,” the numbered cards are “like the commons in several degrees,” and the “coate cards” are the nobility. Civil war, however, disregards the internal order of these suits and instead shuffles them together as so many separate cards: “but factions [. . .] setting life at the stake shuffle them together, intermixing the Nobles and Commons, where loyalty is shuffled from the crown, duty from Parents, tendernesse from children, fidelity from Masters, continencies from husbands and wives [etc.].” Like the splitting storm that begins the essay, this social shuffling and intermixing sunders the unions of king and subject, parents and children, husbands and wives, interrupting the relationships between these several parties and treating them as separate parts to be recombined indiscriminately in the interested dealings of “gamester” factions.

Recent scholarship has begun to examine Cavendish’s severalness as closely as her contemporaries did. Many of these readings regard her extra-ordinariness as a distinctly royalist display designed to reshuffle England’s “several suits” to their proper order and restore loyalty to the crown. Like Susan James, these critics observe that Cavendish’s led a “life moulded by the fortunes of the Royalist party to which she belonged.”³³ While recent scholarship on royalism has challenged both the notions of a “royalist party” and what it meant to belong to it, there is little doubt that her social connections linked her social experience to the political fates of the royalist cause: while her brothers fought for the king in England, Cavendish moved in the community of royalist exiles on the continent, first as a maid to the queen and then as the wife of one of Charles I’s preeminent generals and Charles II’s closest advisors. Like L’Estrange, who

³³ Margaret Cavendish, *Political Writings*, ed. Susan James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), ix.

feared a “Loss of *Memory*” that would deface the royalist past and rob them of their “dear-bought *experience*,” Cavendish had many reasons to maintain and assert royalist memory: her eldest brother Charles was executed by Fairfax outside the family estate and royalist stronghold at St. John’s, parliamentary soldiers broken open the family tombs and abused the corpses of her recently-interred mother and sister, and, after the Restoration, she and William struggled to reclaim their estates first confiscated by Parliament and then by the oblivion of Charles’s indemnity.³⁴ Hero Chalmers, therefore, finds in Cavendish’s extravagance a spontaneity and diversity that enacts the distinctly royalist aesthetic expressed in works like Herrick’s *Hesperides*.³⁵ Likewise, Emma Rees ties the theatrics of this enactment to a continued enjoyment of public performances that had become an expressly royalist, exilic art: that is, by staging her strangeness, Cavendish recalls the elaborate entertainments enjoyed by royalists during their exile and insists that this experience of exile is irreducible.³⁶ Sujata Iyengar argues that hermaphroditized hybridity of this staged and exulted royalism operates as a “Royalist riposte to the Interregnum [. . .] that affirmed the supremacy of distinctions of rank above all other categories—race, gender, or religion.”³⁷ And for Rachel Trubowitz, the extraordinariness of this spectacularized strangeness was crafted to create a fantastical effect

³⁴ For the execution of Charles and the desecration of the tomb at St. John’s, see Whitaker, 105. Fairfax’s troops broke open the tombs, “scattered bones about with profane jests” and cut off and wore as hats the hair of Mary and Elizabeth Lucas.

³⁵ Hero Chalmers, “‘Flattering Division’: Margaret Cavendish’s Poetics of Variety,” in *Authorial Conquests: essays on genre in the writings of Margaret Cavendish*, ed. Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2003), 133.

³⁶ Emma Rees, “Triply Bound: Genre and the Exilic Self,” in *Authorial Conquests*, 35.

³⁷ Sujata Iyengar, “Royalist, Romanticist, Racialist: Rank, Gender, and in Science and Fiction of Margaret Cavendish,” *ELH*, vol. 69, no. 3 (Fall, 2002), 650.

that could re-mythologize and re-enchanted the monarchy against reformist attempts to demythologize the state and church in favor of a methodical, precise, and disciplined system.³⁸ For these critics, Cavendish's strange spectacle of severalness is strategically transgressive, crossing certain social boundaries in order to reaffirm others, disrupting the ways in which parliamentarians and reformists identified themselves in order to authorize her own royalist identity.

But Cavendish's extra-ordinary severalness was unsettling even to those royalists who should have been most sympathetic to it. It is, after all, Mary Evelyn who fears the "extravagancy and variety" of this "chimera" might infect her, and Dorothy Osborne who finds "many soberer people in Bedlam." Cavendish's characteristic divergences from categorical identities, which her contemporary observers found "antic" and "contrary," dismissed displays of political identities as it did those of gender and class. After witnessing the reiterative making, taking, and breaking of state oaths during the Civil War and Interregnum, she grew suspicious of seemingly straightforward partisan professions:

to make it [swearing] common is to make it of no effect. Besides it shows little wit and lesse memory, that they should want words to fill up their discourse with, but what oaths are fain to supply; and for lying where there is no truth, there can be no trust; and where there is no trust, there can be no union; and where there is no union, there can be no perfect society.³⁹

Overusing and misusing oaths contaminates them and they become displays of "no truth" and "no trust" rather than assurances of social union. Cavendish herself was complicit in this disuniting "lying where there is no truth" during the Interregnum: though she refused,

³⁸ Rachel Trubowitz, "The Reenchantment of Utopia and the Female Monarchical Self: Margaret Cavendish's Blazing World," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Autumn, 1992), 236.

³⁹ *World's Olio*, 15.

and was eventually granted an exemption from, taking the Engagement Oath when she returned to London to solicit Parliament to restore her husband's property, she and William nonetheless insisted that her brother-in-law, Charles, do so in order to reclaim part of the Cavendish estates. Though perhaps necessary to recover her husband's income, this "no truth" nonetheless compounds the condition of "no trust," "no union," and "no perfect society" that had contaminated public expressions of loyalty in the period. In this culture of distrust that Cavendish identifies, the stable and forthright partisan assertions of an overt "royalist riposte" were as insufficient and untrustworthy as the "no truth" of Charles's engagement.

As a hybridized chimera made up of "so many Creatures," Cavendish confounded the identifications that she invited. Mary Evelyn and Dorothy Osborne, for instance, found their sympathy for her political conservatism undercut by the "contrary" combination of her familiar politics with her extravagant dress and self-assertive conversation. Likewise, Pepys, who was drawn to her theatrical appearance was nonetheless was put off by her characteristic public shyness during her visit to the Royal Society: he found that she was "comely" but said "nothing worth hearing." Cavendish's strange severalness was indiscriminate in its subversiveness, challenging the sensibilities of royalists and reformists, men and women, nobility and merchants, even as it attracted them. Rather than reaffirming the oppositions between these parties, her extraordinary severalness provided grounds for their agreement: whatever their distinctions of party, gender, or class, all could agree that Margaret Cavendish was unusual and unsettling. As evidenced in her presence at the Royal Society and Charles's in the queen's chamber, her strangeness invited a diverse and divided society to cross the cultural boundaries that they

had been policing in order to view in her “hermaphroditical” person the spectacular transgression of those same boundaries.

This chapter argues that Cavendish developed what we might call a “spectacular severalness” in order to incite her Restoration audiences to eschew the divisions of “parties and animosities” and instead socialize through their distinctive severalness. By making a spectacle of her strangeness, she sets off her “mixt nature” as something that deserves the special attention of her readers and spectators. This attentiveness to her “mixt nature” prepares readers to consider the similarly mixed nature of a Restoration society that had summed in itself “so many Commonwealths” and “many Creatures.” That is, by studying her severalness, Cavendish’s contemporaries learn to think severally, and are familiarized with their social hybridity that had once seemed so strange. I focus in particular on *The Blazing World* (1666), itself a hybridized text that contains many notable hybrids, as a work that invites Restoration readers to admire and then enact the sociable severalness that it represents.

I.

Cavendish’s nature is insistently infinite.⁴⁰ While conversing with her servant spirits as Empress of the Blazing World, the novel’s heroine is advised that it is impossible to number the different parts of the universe because, “God’s creation, being an infinite action, as proceeding from an infinite power, could not rest upon a finite number of creatures.”⁴¹ For Cavendish, God enacts his infinite power infinitely. As the

⁴⁰ For Cavendish’s familiarity with theories of infinity in the period, see B.J. Sokol’s “Margaret Cavendish’s *Poems and Fancies* and Thomas Harriot’s *Treatise on Infinity*” in *A Princely Brave Woman*, ed. Stephen Clucas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). Sokol argues that Cavendish was exposed to and influenced by Harriot through her brother-in-law Charles’s translation of his treatise on the subject.

expression of “infinite power” through an “infinite action,” the natural world and the creatures it contains must be innumerable: therefore, “as numbers do multiply, so does the world [. . .] to infinite,” so that “nature is so full of variety.”⁴² This infinite and various nature replicates both the number as well as the means of its creation. As God’s infinite action “could not rest upon a finite number of creatures,” so are the motions of nature “infinitely various in infinite nature.”⁴³ Created in a process that “could not rest,” nature likewise cannot rest, but instead is “one infinite self-moving body, which by the virtue of its self-motion is divided into infinite parts, which parts being restless undergo perpetual changes and transmutations by their infinite compositions and divisions.”⁴⁴ Cavendish’s restless nature continually compounds its own variety through “infinite changes, compositions and divisions” until it is impossible to recognize any “single part” in the “infinite changes and alterations” that happen as “one part [is] infinitely divided and composed with other parts.”⁴⁵ Even the atom, though not “infinite in bulk,” is nonetheless “subject to infinite change.”⁴⁶ These “infinite changes” are as various as nature’s many changeable parts: her “self-moving [. . .] actions, are not all alike, but differ variously; neither doth she perform all actions at once, otherwise all her Creatures would be alike in their shapes, forms, figures, knowledges, perceptions, productions, &c.

⁴¹ Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings*, ed. Kate Lilley (London: Penguin, 2004), 172.

⁴² *The Blazing World*, 172, 138.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁴⁵ *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* (London: 1666), g2r.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12r.

which is contradicted by experience.”⁴⁷ Nature’s severalness is not simply a function of its infinity, it is fundamental to it: without various actions across time, nature would be uniform and “alike,” existing and expiring “in an instant,” an impossibility “contradicted by experience.”⁴⁸

This perceptive experience through which we register nature’s restless and unbounded variety is informed by a mind measured to the infinity that it observes. For Cavendish, the mind is material and subject to the same tendencies of a natural creation that “could not rest” and was never “alike.” And so, just as nature has her “material motions,” the mind has its “different motions of reason.” The perpetual motions of reason create the same boundless variety of thought that is created through the material motions that continually compose and divide the infinite “parts” of nature: “for reason, being dividable, because material, cannot move in all parts alike” and therefore causes “different opinions in different parts.”⁴⁹ This divisible reason, moving differently in different parts, creates a cacophony of thoughts that sets the mind buzzing “like a swarm of bees.”⁵⁰ And just as there is variability in the different rational parts of a single mind, so is there variability between many different minds swarming in their own ways. The volubility within and between multi-parted minds enhances the perceived variety of a nature by subjecting it to the divergent interpretations of each individual mind. For Cavendish, the “rational parts of matter” produce many rational and regular ideas that are

⁴⁷ Ibid, 11r.

⁴⁸ For Cavendish’s more complete claims for the necessity of existence unfolding over time, see *Observations*, k2v-11r.

⁴⁹ *Blazing World*, 123.

⁵⁰ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 121.

held in common agreement, as well as many “Irregular Fancies and Opinions.” These different fancies and opinions intensify the variety of a nature already infinitely various: “if all mens Opinions and Fancies were Rational, there would not be such variety in Nature as we perceive there is.”⁵¹ Here, the perceptive experience of nature is a convergence of the “different opinions in different parts” that are both inherent in and external to each individual mind: the swarm of regular and irregular opinions produced by one woman’s divisible reason contributes to the wider buzzing din of “all mens Opinions and Fancies.”

The rational material of the mind may be able to divide itself into infinitely “different parts,” but it cannot have infinite perceptions. The mind can only know what it is capable of knowing and therefore, as parts of nature, we can only know nature partially: “particular parts could not have infinite perceptions, but that they could but perceive such objects as were subject to that sort of perception that they had [. . .].”⁵² Each part of the divisible mind—regular, irregular, fancy, opinion, etc.—may only know according to its own particular way of knowing. This is illustrated in the *Observations* itself: Cavendish makes her claim about the restriction of knowledge to “[sorts] of perception” at the end of the opening section of the work, which is set forth as a lengthy and contentious debate about natural philosophy between two parts of her mind, her former self and her latter self. Likewise, each part of nature knows according to its own “sort of perception.” The worm-men in the *Blazing World*, for instance, confirm to the Empress that, although humans cannot see underground, the creatures that live “in the

⁵¹ *Observations*, f2r. It is important to note that, in this passage, Cavendish clarifies that by “rational” she means “regular.”

⁵² *Ibid*, qv.

bowels of the earth” have their own “kind of sensitive perception that was as serviceable to them, as sight, taste, smell, touch, hearing, etc.”⁵³ This unique “kind of sensitive perception” is more suitable to the subterranean lives of the worm-men, and serves as a substitute for the “optic sense” of the creatures who dwell in light above the ground. Although serviceable to them, this “sort of perception” restricts their knowledge to a particular way of knowing: because they lack “optic sense” they are incapable of commenting on “refractions, reflections, inflections, and the like,” and therefore have no use for technologies like microscopy, which they leave to the bear-men natural philosophers. Likewise, when the Empress asks these worm-men to use their knowledge of minerals to offer their judgments of certain alchemical processes, they note that this is beyond the limits of their particular type of knowledge: “the worm-men excused themselves, that they were ignorant in that art, and that such questions belonged more properly to the ape-men, who were her Majesty’s chemists.”⁵⁴ The worm-men, bear-men, and ape-men are distinguished by their unique types of knowledge as well as the unique types of ignorances particular to their own “kind of [. . .] perception.” This intense localization of understanding to certain “kinds” or “sorts” is a function of an infinite nature made up of several parts: “every part has its own particular self-knowledg, as well as self-motion, which causes an ignorance between them; for one parts knowledg is not another parts knowledg; or does one part know what another knows.”⁵⁵ For Cavendish, particular knowledge is fundamentally partial, so that even Adam’s act of naming the creatures of God’s creation was necessary incomplete, “for he was an earthly,

⁵³ *Blazing World*, 150.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 150.

⁵⁵ *Observations*, p1r.

and not a watery creature, and therefore could not know the several sorts of fishes.”⁵⁶

Moreover, the partiality of Adam’s knowledge is not a common knowledge shared by other humans, for “one man is not another man, nor has another mans knowledg.”⁵⁷

The inability of a particular knowledge to perceive the whole of nature likewise affects its ability to conceive the whole of nature. No matter how many “parts” of knowledge are contained in a single buzzing brain, “no creature can know infinite perceptions in nature.”⁵⁸ Though it may be possible for us to perceive a variety, we are incapable of perceiving “all”: “nature is so full of variety, that our weak senses cannot perceive all the various sorts of her creatures; neither is there any one object perceptible by all our senses, no more than several objects are by one sense.”⁵⁹ However “various” a particular perception may be, it is not “infinite” and therefore cannot measure itself to the entirety of an infinite nature. Moreover, the completeness of a “various” knowledge is undercut by its own variety. As “one parts knowledg is not another parts knowledg,” so is each sense’s knowledge, as part of the multi-sensory mind, not another sense’s knowledge: we cannot, as Cavendish observes, taste wind. And, as each sense is limited to its own unique kind of perception, it is therefore impossible that all of the senses could converge is a complete sensory knowledge of any single object that has its own particular perceptive qualities. Knowledge *by* all of the senses is as impossible as knowledge *of* all by the senses. The excesses of an infinite nature operate on the mind like a “multiplicity

⁵⁶ *Blazing World*, 178.

⁵⁷ *Observations*, p2r.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, f2r.

⁵⁹ *Blazing World*, 138.

of words [which] confounds the solid sense.”⁶⁰ The result is a chronically incomplete perception and conception of the world that leaves only an impression, not an understanding of, the complete whole that it cannot conceive: as “no part of Nature can conceive beyond it self” it cannot “conceive the Essence of God, or what God is in himself; but it conceives onely, that there is such a Divine Being which is Supernatural.”⁶¹ As “particular Creatures” working with “divided knowledges [. . .] none can claim a Univeral infinite knowledg,” but must instead “take so much pains in searching after” the “obscure and hidden infinite varieties of Nature” we are incapable of conceiving.⁶²

Incapable of conceiving of the whole, these particular minds must find meaning by studying the several single parts of the infinite nature that eludes complete understanding. In *World's Olio*, Cavendish encourages her readers to reorient their minds away from the “Universal and infinite” and onto the “little”: “Every little Fly, and every little Peble, and every little Flower, is a Tutor in Natures School to instruct the Understanding.”⁶³ This understanding is particular both in that it is a partial knowledge of nature and that it is a knowledge of nature’s particles: little flies, little pebbles, and little flowers. The reiterative “every little” imagines a tutoring of the mind that remains focused on the miniature: the understanding moves from “little Fly” to “little Fly,” and “little Peble” to “little Peble” rather than into a fulsome comprehension of nature’s “all.” The section of *World Olio* in which Cavendish advocates for this understanding through

⁶⁰ “Epistle” following the first part of the first book of *Worlds Olio*, E2br.

⁶¹ *Observations*, g1v.

⁶² *Ibid*, e2r-v.

⁶³ *World's Olio*, 103.

“little” parts consists of fifty-five aphoristic allegories, many of which deal with the mind and are not longer than a single sentence. Cavendish uses miniaturized metaphors to in order to instruct her readers to mind the miniature. She herself claims to have learned by “piece-meals rather than full relation” and this instruction in parts characterizes her works: both the *Sociable Letters* and *Philosophical Letters* consist of many different epistles, which she considers “scenes,” that range across subjects; *World’s Olio* is a melange of “various sorts” and, as such, is divided into different books, which are subdivided into different “parts,” and then further subdivided into individual essays or aphorisms; and her *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* follows the fragmented, topic-specific structure of Bacon’s *Sylva Sylvarum*, and is itself only part of a hybridized text that includes *The Blazing World*, which itself is made up of “romancical,” “philosophical,” and “fantastical” “parts.”⁶⁴ For Cavendish, the limited, particular understanding of “particular Creatures” must necessarily be the knowledge of parts.

Though “little,” “parts” are neither simple nor stable objects of study for Cavendish. To be tutored by “every little Fly, and every little Peble, and every little Flower,” or every little aphorism in *World’s Olio*, the mind must move between these little pieces, measuring itself to the constant movement of “restless” parts undergoing “perpetual changes.” Cavendish’s texts were as “restless” as those “infinite parts” of the nature that she describes: like the debate between her former and latter selves in the *Observations*, her texts often present multiple and contradictory perspectives that undercut, revise, or supplement each other, imitating the “infinite compositions and divisions” of a perpetually changing nature. By asking her readers to tutor their understanding through the study of these restless parts, she is likewise inviting a restless

⁶⁴ *Blazing World*, 124.

way of knowing. That is, in order to fix itself on particulars, the particular mind must unfix itself.

Cavendish's restless parts do not move in isolation, but are continually interacting with each other, so that a mind trained on many moving parts must likewise study the relationships between them. In her early works—most notably her *Poems and Fancies*, and *Philosophical Opinions*—Cavendish endorsed the notion of a vacuum, which accounts for movement as objects variously occupying or vacating empty space. Later in her career, however, she recanted this endorsement, seeing in the theoretical vacuum a “stoppage of all natural motions” that was at odds with her notions of a nature undergoing perpetual and infinite change.⁶⁵ She instead advanced a plenistic version of the universe, imagining an infinite and integrated nature in which fullness was fundamental: her worm-men instruct the Empress that “all parts of nature [. . .] may be infinitely divided, commixed and changed” but “parts cannot be separated from parts as long as nature lasts.”⁶⁶ The interrelation of parts in the plenistic universe is so extensive that removing even the smallest piece would uncreate nature: “infinite nature would be as soon destroyed, as that one atom could perish.”⁶⁷ In order for motion to occur in a plenistic universe, parts must make way for each other: when solid bodies move, for instance, “the liquid or rare bodies must contract or dilate, according to the motion of those bulky bodies, to fill the place left behind, or to make room.”⁶⁸ Whether solid,

⁶⁵ Letter 161, *Sociable Letters*, ed. James Fitzmaurice (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 224.

⁶⁶ *Blazing World*, 151.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Letter 161, *Sociable Letters*, 224.

liquid, or rare, the infinite parts of Cavendish's nature are continually combining with, detaching from, filling in or making room for each other in what Cavendish terms a "respiration" that operates as a "universal action" in nature.⁶⁹ Engaged in a collective and universal complementary movement that continually unsettles them, the infinite parts of this respiring nature lack any inherent or stable properties, and can only be understood in reference to each other: there is no "single part" of nature because it is infinitely divided and composed with other parts; likewise, there is "no ascension or decension in infinite nature, but only in relation to particular parts."⁷⁰ Indeed, as Cavendish notes, the term "single parts" is itself a contradiction: "single" suggests that these parts are entirely autonomous and exist "with no reference to each other," while "parts" suggests they are individual portions of a whole that can only be understood referentially.⁷¹ The several parts of nature have no inherent measurement or location, but instead must be understood *in relation to* each other.

"Nature's school" exists not in "every little" part, but in the interactions between them. But there must meaningful differences between individual parts in order for the relationships between them to be meaning-full. The innumerable parts of Cavendish's respiring nature are never combined, puzzle-like, into an complete unit, but are instead unified through a continuous and incomplete act of recombining with each other. Therefore, although the different parts of nature may be "so closely intermixt" that they "cannot be separated from each other," they nonetheless maintain "distinct degrees" and "distinct and different actions" so that "one part is not another part, and [. . .] the actions

⁶⁹ *Observations*, f1-r.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, g1-v; *Blazing World*, 174.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 11-v.

of one degree are not the actions of the other.”⁷² Cavendish’s nature, like her nation, is comprised of “closely intermixt” parts moving according to their own “distinct and different actions.” But, unlike in Restoration England’s many parties, the differences and distinctions between these parts are complimentary, not contentious: nature’s diverse “actions are ballanced by opposites,” not rent by extremes, producing a “Harmonious variety” between all of “Natures parts.”⁷³ Cavendish imagines a variety that is harmonious not homogenous, in which its opposite parts are balanced, not oppositional. This harmony is achieved by means of an irreducible variety, not in spite of it.⁷⁴

Those hoping to “instruct the Understanding” of their particular minds, therefore, must shift their focus from the meaning-less “single parts” to the meaning-full relationships between them. For Cavendish, perception is the “action of figuring or patterning” several parts, and is as fundamental an action in her infinite nature as universal respiration.⁷⁵ In order to act in perpetual change, each constituent part must have “some knowledg or perception of each other,” otherwise there can be “no commerce or intercourse, nor no variety of figures and actions.”⁷⁶ That is, in order to engage with and participate a world in constant commerce and intercourse with itself, the particular

⁷² *Observations*, m2.-r.

⁷³ *Ibid*, m2-v.

⁷⁴ This notion of harmony resonates with contemporary conservative political models that maintained that class differences was necessary for social order, and is offered as an alternative to strictly vertical models of social authority that tended to top-heavy tyranny and the horizontal models of undifferentiated and discordant democracy. While Cavendish makes arguments for this type of political harmony throughout her writings, and her sympathies are undoubtedly with maintaining a strong and stable aristocracy, I am interested in how Cavendish imagines a harmony through hybridity and hermaphroditism that depends on the disruptions of, rather than preservations of, established social categories.

⁷⁵ *Observations*. F1-v.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*.

mind must learn to perceive, or pattern, its several parts by recognizing the relationships that they have to each other. But perceiving these relationships is insufficient; the mind must also be prepared to conceive of them. Whether several parts are understood in relation to or separate from each other depends on how the mind is prepared to see them: “a whole is nothing but a composition of parts, and parts are nothing but a division of the whole,” therefore, “a whole and its parts differ not really, but onely in the manner of our conception.”⁷⁷ The difference between an integrated whole and several separated parts is a matter of conception. The distinction seems to be arbitrary and illusory, but how severalness is conceived is important for Cavendish: she warns that “Ignorance is caused by division, and knowledg by composition of parts.”⁷⁸ Knowledge itself depends on the ability of the mind to conceive of the composition of parts.

Cavendish instructs the readers of her works in the proper perception and conception of several parts. In the extensive paratextual material of her multi-parted works, she urges her audiences against reading her in excerpts. She advises the “understanding Readers” of her *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*, for instance, to guard against her critics who “more out of Malice than Learning, or through Ignorance for want of understanding” take “particular Chapters or words out of that Work” and leave out the “foundation or ground of my Philosophy.”⁷⁹ These malicious, unlearned readers separate the particulars of her work with a “blind Ignorance [that] may not perceive that Uniformity, or Composure thereof,” so that, to their dividing minds, even

⁷⁷ Ibid, l2-v.

⁷⁸ Ibid, g2-v.

⁷⁹ “A Complaint and a Request to the Noble and Learned Readers of my several Works, especially my Philosophical and Physical Opinions” in *Nature’s Pictures* (London: 1656), 403 [387].

“the uniform’st Work that is may be disfigured or misformed, by taking out some pieces, or adding mishapen parts thereto.”⁸⁰ In order to avoid this “blind Ignorance” that cannot perceive uniformity, she encourages the “Courteous Reader” of her *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* to approach her work with a composing rather than a dividing mind, exhorting her to “read all before you pass your Judgments and Censures” and observe the relationships between its several parts “since one place will give you an explanation of the other.”⁸¹ “Explanation” exists interstitially, in the interaction between the several parts of her work, not in any single chapter or word, so that even the errors of “particular Chapters or words” are overwritten by the meaning the whole: to the “Courteous Reader” interpreting according to “the best sense,” particular errors “are not so material, but either by the context or connexion of the whole discourse, or by a comparing with other places, the true meaning thereof may easily be understood.”⁸² The “best sense” of “Courteous” and “understanding Readers” is an interpretive mind that “summes” rather than subtracts—a function Cavendish condemns as “a kind of death to numbers”—and discovers meaning in the context, connection, discourse, and comparison of each part to several others.⁸³

Cavendish presented her attentive Restoration audiences with texts that were several but not separate, diverse but not divided, that challenged their oppositional minds to read across rather than according to difference. The convergence of several parts in her respiring nature, discursive texts, and hermaphroditical dress in each case intermingles

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *Observations*, h3r.

⁸² Ibid, e2v.

⁸³ *BlazingWorld*, 172.

opposites into a composed whole that reinscribes the meanings of each single part in the composed meaning created through their relationships with each other.

II.

Lady Phoenix's arrival is a spectacle. She comes to town with "such splendor as the world never saw the like," attracting from a fascinated and curious public "wild rumors of her dress, her equipage, her pride, her vanity, [and] her feeding 'only upon thoughts.'" These speculations "fill the town's talk" but, despite all of this attention, "no one really knows her."⁸⁴ Like many of the figures in Cavendish's different plays, letters, and prose fiction, there is much of Cavendish in this character, whose splendid arrival mirrors her own spectacular arrival in London. But, unlike her authoress, Lady Phoenix never made it to the playhouse: the play was never finished and, like so much of Cavendish's drama, it was never produced.

But the emphasis on the spectacular appearance of this autobiographical character reveals Cavendish's close identification with her own spectacular displays and their reception. Cavendish had immediate and attractive models for the extra-ordinariness that drew her such acclaim and scorn in the spring of 1667. The evocation of typically male heroic roles and representations by famous women such as Queen Henrietta Maria and Queen Christina of Sweden provided Cavendish with notable examples for her own strange hybridized appearance and behavior. Although she did not accompany her, she was serving as Henrietta Maria's maid when the queen returned to England with an army that she had raised Netherlands, marching at its head as the self-proclaimed "she-majesty generalissima over all."⁸⁵ Meanwhile, French artists, inspired by the fashion for *femme*

⁸⁴ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 305.

forte, were painting portraits of aristocratic women dressed in armor or as martial classical goddesses. Marie de' Medici, the former queen regent and mother to Henrietta Maria, commissioned Reubens to paint a gallery of these portraits, which include depictions her riding into battles, and which were on display for visitors to the Palais du Luxembourg.⁸⁶ The breast-bearing classical costume that Cavendish wore to Lincoln's Inn Theater upon her arrival in London is an enactment of these romanticized depictions heroic women. Queen Christina—crowned king of Sweden and an active scholar who was deemed “masculine” by her contemporaries—cultivated her own spectacle of masculinity by dressing in male attire and appearing costumed as an Amazon warrior. Christiana's extra-ordinary appearance and wit drew a crowd, including during a 1654 visit to Antwerp, where Margaret and William had settled after leaving Paris.⁸⁷ Cavendish's similarly strange appearance and conversation drew the same curious crowds in London a decade later.

Cavendish's spectacles are displays of a strange and unexpected hybridity, but they are also spectacles of self-composition. Fashion was an important site of Cavendish's self-fashioning. In her autobiographical *True Relation*, she confesses that she “took great delight in attiring, fine dressing and fashions, especially such fashions as I did invent myself, not taking that pleasure in such fashions as was invented by others,” and, subsequently, “report did dress [her] in a hundred severall fashions.”⁸⁸ Attiring herself is an act of innovation that is at once self-expressive and strange: what she regards

⁸⁵ See Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 43, for a full account of this and Cavendish's appropriation of it in her drama.

⁸⁶ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 89-90.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 176-77.

⁸⁸ “A True Relation,” 387, 382.

as inventive dress is for Pepys an “antic dress.” Not “by others,” her innovative attire announces itself as both unconventional and self-authorized and, as such, deserving the special attention of “report.” Cavendish’s fashion is a form of spectacularized authorship that draws attention to the uniqueness of its invention: “Dressing is the poetry of women, in shewing the fancies,” allowing them to express artistic invention in “several and various dresses, in their many and singular choice of cloths, and ribbons, and the like;” therefore women must dress with “infinite care” and apply accessories, like fashionable face patches, “like wise sentences in a speech.”⁸⁹ Cavendish’s hybridized, “antic dress” gives expression and attention to the invention, fancy, choice, and care of female self-expression. And she is as careful to spectacularize the work that she writes as she is the work that she wears. Cavendish is assertive about advertising the strangeness of her own hermaphroditical authorship. She parrots critiques that her “Sex is not bred up to” learning, and that “Wiser Women ne’r writ” books, while nonetheless demonstrating that learning in her work.⁹⁰ Likewise, her apologies for the faults of her “sex and breeding” to those “Professors of Learning and Art” who “humble [themselves] so low” to read her works are meant to advertise that these professors are engaging with her work.⁹¹ If, as her critics accuse, her writing is a “Fantastical disease,” she is “infected with the same disease, which the devoutest, wisest, wittiest, subtilest, most learned and eloquent men have been troubled withal.”⁹² By featuring critiques that her writing transgresses into a

⁸⁹ *World’s Olio*, 87; *Poems and Fancies*, A3r. See also Whitaker, 22, 294.

⁹⁰ *Observations*, D2v; “To His Excellency The Lord Marquis of Newcastle” in *Sociable Letters*, ed. James Fitzmaurice (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2004), 38.

⁹¹ “To All Professors of Learning and Art,” in *Sociable Letters*, 40.

⁹² *Observations*, C1r-v.

typically male authorship, she draws attention to her transgression: arguments that she *should not* be writing emphasize both that she *is* writing and that it is strange. By drawing attention to her hermaphroditical writing Cavendish makes it as much a spectacle as her hermaphroditical dress, so that Dorothy Osborne could complain that the widely-discussed and wondered-at *Poems and Fancies* was “ten times more extravagant than her dress.”⁹³

The spectacle of self-composition is central to *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy to which is added, The Description of a New Blazing World*. Cavendish intended for this hybridized text—part philosophical treatise, part prose fiction—also to feature the figure of her own extra-ordinariness, Lady Phoenix, but the unfinished play remained unpublished. Nonetheless, the two remaining parts make use of the same strategies of self-spectacularization. In the preface to the *Observations* portion of the text, for instance, she draws attention to the strangeness of participation in the typically male discourses of natural philosophy: she urges that she is “as ambitious of finding out the truth of Nature, as an honourable Dueller is of gaining fame and repute” and will therefore “fight with none but an honourable and valiant opposite” but fears that she will be regarded as “an inconsiderable opposite, because I am not of their Sex.”⁹⁴ As with her reinscription of the critique of her “Fantastical disease” in the broader tradition of male philosophical figures, which is also from the prefatory material to the *Observations*, Cavendish situates herself in an unexpected discourse while acknowledging the strangeness of this situation. Once Cavendish asserts herself as an unusual but

⁹³ Quoted in Rebecca D'Monté, “‘Making a Spectacle’: Margaret Cavendish and the Staging of the Self,” in *A Princely Brave Woman* ed. Stephen Clucas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 120.

⁹⁴ *Observations*, D1v.

“honourable Dueller” in the preface, in the address “To the Reader” on the facing page she turns the curiosity that her strangeness excites to the content of her books, which “explain and illustrate [her] own opinions.”⁹⁵ Likewise, the preface to *The Blazing World* opens the work by addressing the strangeness of printing a work of “fancy” alongside her philosophical treatise: “If you wonder, that I join a work of fancy to my serious philosophical contemplations [. . .].”⁹⁶ The abrupt “if you wonder” that begins the work is, of course, an invitation to wonder. And the remainder of the preface is a breathless justification of her unconventional decision to join two seemingly opposed parts—a “piece of fancy” and “philosophical observations”—“at the end of their poles.”⁹⁷ Both the *Observations* and the *Blazing World* advertise their strangeness to draw and then redirect the special attention of the reader to the invention, fancy, choice, and care of their apparently antic authoress.

As textual spectacles, the *Observations* and the *Blazing World* invite wonder in order to transform it into study. After self-advertising the strangeness of her *Observations* and turning her readers’ attention to her attempts to “explain and illustrate [her] own opinions,” she complains about the difficulty of her task: “to make the Philosophical Conceptions of ones mind known to others, is more difficult then to make them believe, that if A.B. be equal to C.D. then E.F. is equal to A.B. because it is equal to C.D.”⁹⁸ Natural philosophy consists of the “Contemplation” that is unique to an individual mind and cannot be conveyed with the same ease and effectiveness as the

⁹⁵ Ibid, D2r.

⁹⁶ *Blazing World*, 123.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 124.

⁹⁸ *Observations*, d2v.

sylogisms of a universal reason. The particular conceptions of Cavendish's own mind are initially incompatible with the particular minds of her readers. Most minds are not immediately prepared to receive the unfamiliar conceptions of others: "every brain is not so ready to dispose conceits in, to fill places for the understanding, to view suddenly as it is thrown in, but lies in a confused heap, without ordering, and a slow understanding."⁹⁹ The "confused [heaps]" of her readers' brains must be ordered and made ready to receive the particular conceits of her "own opinions." The self-composed strangeness of her texts makes way for this preparation. As spectacles, these texts are performances that "[clear] the understanding" and "[make] a deeper impression in the minde of the spectatours" than conventional texts, which are "onely read."¹⁰⁰ The strangeness of Cavendish's spectacular texts require a special attention that composes the "confused [heaps]" of her readers' minds, making deep impressions in otherwise unimpressible places of understanding indisposed to her conceits.

Cavendish herself experienced the deep impressions that strangeness could make in the surprised mind at the "Carneval Time" in Antwerp, where she encountered a female freak who was half-woman, half-dog: this woman was "like a Shagg-dog, not in Shape, but Hair, as Grown all over her body" and was such a sight that "stay'd in Memory, not for the Pleasantness, but Strangeness" until her mind "kick'd her Figure out, bidding it to be gone, as a Doglike creature."¹⁰¹ She was likewise deeply impressed by

⁹⁹ *World's Olio*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰¹ From *Sociable Letters* (London: 1664), no. CXCIV, p 405. Also quoted in Sophie Tomlinson, "'My Brain the Stage': Margaret Cavendish and the Fantasy of Female Performance," in *Women, Texts, and Histories 1575-1750*, ed. C. Brant and D. Purkiss (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 133.

actress wife of an Italian mountebank, who was so skillful at playing the part of a man that it seemed “as if she had been of that Sex” and “one would have believed she had never worn a Petticoat, and had been more used to Handle a Sword than a distaff.”¹⁰² Cavendish’s mind retained the impression of these performances even after the local magistrate forced the itinerant troupe to move on by re-enacting their spectacular strangeness in her imagination:

to please me, my Fancy set up a Stage in my Brain [. . .] and the Incorporeal Thoughts were the several Actors, and my Wit play’d the Jack Fool, which Pleased me so much , as to make me Laugh Loud at the Actions in my Mind [. . .] but after my Thoughts had Acted, Danced, and Played the Fool [. . .] the Magistrates of the Mind Commanded the Fancy-Stage to be taken down, and the Thought-Actors to go out.¹⁰³

As with the “Strangeness” of the dog-woman, the magistrates overseeing her mind must intervene and expel the fancy-actors inspired by the hermaphroditic spectacle of this actress, “so leaving [it] Free of such Strangers.” The spectacularization of the strange—at the freak show, on the stage—makes way for it in particular minds that are otherwise unprepared for it. By drawing her readers’ attention to the hybridized strangeness of herself as a female philosopher and her texts, which join the fanciful and the philosophical “at their poles,” Cavendish hopes to force herself on the minds of her readers like a dog-woman or hermaphroditical actress and “explain and illustrate [her] own opinions” in their startled imaginations.

The *BlazingWorld* is insistently strange. The narrative begins with a stranger transgressing established boundaries: a travelling merchant crosses into a foreign country where, “a stranger in that nation,” he abducts a young woman above him in birth and

¹⁰² Ibid, 406-7.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 408.

wealth and sets off towards the North Pole on “so strange an adventure,” “not knowing whither they went, nor what was to be done.”¹⁰⁴ The merchant’s transgressions are manifold—he crosses geographical, cultural, amatory, economic, and class boundaries—and these transgressions initiate a strange adventure of “not knowing” that confounds the understanding of every character that has been introduced into the narrative. Although the merchant’s place in the narrative is short-lived—he and his crew freeze to death on the second page—the transgressiveness and “not knowing” that he introduces into the tale come to characterize the heroine’s experience as she makes her way in the unusual social and geographical terrains of the new world in which she arrives. The Blazing World is as incessantly and perplexingly several as the one that Cavendish describes in her *Observations*: her heroine moves between “several islands” and “several cities” until she arrives in the capital, Paradise, which is itself “in a form like several islands,” and at an imperial palace so immense and elaborate that “a stranger would lose himself therein without a guide.”¹⁰⁵ The lady’s own guides when she arrives are as strange and several as the world that they navigate: the bear-men, fox-men, bird-men, and satyrs who lead her between the several islands and cities on her way to Paradise recall the hybridized spectacle of the dog-woman that fascinated and disturbed Cavendish at Antwerp, and they also command the same curious attention of the story’s heroine. These animal-men are central to the narrative as both geographical guides across Blazing World’s strange terrain and as philosophical guides to an eccentric natural world that does not conform to her expectations and understandings.¹⁰⁶ Hybrids in a hybridized world, these animal-men

¹⁰⁴ *Blazing World*, 125.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 131.

embody and articulate the extra-ordinary severalness of the Blazing World. And, as with the dog-woman and actress whose strangeness caught the magistrates of Cavendish's mind off-guard, these hybrid guides, who transgress natural, epistemological, and geographical boundaries, occupy and entertain the "not knowing" mind of the lady. Strange spokespersons for strange world, they mediate the lady's understanding by directing her curious attention to themselves and the world that they represent.

But the spectacles of strangeness that capture the lady's imagination do not remain estranged. Rather, these encounters with the unfamiliar incite her to study and finally sympathize with the extra-ordinariness that unsettles her. Like the dog-woman, who stayed in Cavendish's memory for her "Strangeness," the lady's mind is seized by these "strange creatures": "The Lady now finding herself in so strange a place, and amongst such a wonderful kind of creatures, was extremely stricken with fear, and could entertain no other thoughts [. . .]." ¹⁰⁷ These creatures are so "wonderful" and "strange" that they overwhelm her mind and she can "entertain no other thoughts." But unlike the dog-woman, whose impression Cavendish kicks out "as a Doglike creature," these strangers are allowed to stay. Rather than expelling all "such Strangers" that contradict her understanding, the lady accepts wonderful strangenesses of the Blazing World as sites of instruction. Although the "terrible" appearance of the bear-men causes her to expect that "every moment of her life was to be a sacrifice to their cruelty," she nonetheless finds "that rather they showed her all civility and kindness imaginable." ¹⁰⁸ The strange kindness and civility of these seemingly terrible monsters confounds her expectations and

¹⁰⁶ *Paper Bodies*, ed. Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview; Hadleigh, 1999), 32.

¹⁰⁷ *Blazing World*, 127.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 127.

she determines to examine more closely the contradiction of these creatures who are at once both cruel and kind. As they and the other animal-men attend her on the journey Paradise, she observes their repeated kindnesses to her and each other until her initial expectations are overturned:

and though the Lady at first fancied herself in a very sad condition, and her mind was much tormented with doubts and fears, not knowing whether this strange adventure would tend to her safety or destruction; yet she [. . .] finding those sorts of men civil and diligent attendants to her, took courage, and endeavoured to learn their language; which after she had obtained [. . .] she was so far from being afraid of them, that she thought her self not only safe, but very happy in their company.¹⁰⁹

At first it seems that the lady is, once again, on the sort of “strange adventure” that followed her abduction. But, rather than remaining in the discomposed state of “not knowing” she trains her attention on her strange guides on this strange adventure, and, in doing so, becomes acquainted with their strangeness. Instead of rejecting the unfamiliar, she learns to speak its language. The subsequent discourse unsettles her expectations and make way for a new understanding of and acquaintance with the “terrible” strangeness that had, at first, startled her. The narrator identifies her heroine’s self-education in strangeness as an opportunity to instruct her readers in their own approaches to the unfamiliar: “by [this example] we may see, that novelty discomposes the mind but acquaintance settles it in peace and tranquility.”¹¹⁰ In this case, it is not the kicking out or “leaving [her] Mind Free of such Strangers” that recomposes the mind, but an acquaintance with the strangeness that had unsettled it.

Importantly, the lady’s self-education does not consist of a resolution of the strange, but an acquaintance with it. Her knowledge is not one that forces the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 130.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

discomposing novelty of the Blazing-World and its animal-men inhabitants to become familiar to her expectations and understandings. Rather, it becomes familiar with the novelty it discovers in them. The strangeness of the animal-men is fundamental to their ability to guide and assist the lady—and then Empress—in the Blazing World. Part animal and part man, they combine both the physical and intellectual attributes unique to each species, allowing them a hybridized understanding of the world that combines the experiential knowledge particular to their species, such as a bird’s knowledge of the air or a fish’s knowledge of the sea, and the rationality particular men: the worm-men, for instance, use their unique “kind of sensitive perception” in order to observe the subterranean world and their intellectual and discursive capacities to relate and debate those observations. The Empress is as startled by this hybridized intelligence of the animal-men as she is by their hybridized forms, and she spends most of her early career as Empress studying their strange intelligence in a philosophical discourse that takes up nearly half of the text of the *Blazing World*: as the bear-men discuss experimental philosophy, the bird-men the heavens and the air, the fish-men the sea, the worm-men the earth, the spider-men mathematics, the Empress is repeatedly “amazed” with the insights they provide. But while this hybridized knowledge is amazing to the Empress, it is nonetheless as particular as hers: despite having their own “kind of sensitive perception,” the worm-men lack the alchemical expertise of the ape-men and, without an “optic sense,” they must defer microscopy to the bear-men. Moreover, although members of a species share a unique kind of perception, there is not necessarily consensus among them: the bird-men, for instance, cannot agree on the causes of wind, and the Empress nearly dissolves the academy of bear-men following a disagreement over how to interpret the

blazing stars that they observe in their telescopes.¹¹¹ While these animal-men may have several ways of knowing, their knowledge is nonetheless incomplete: even the enhanced vision of the bear-men's microscopes cannot see a vacuum, immaterial substances, non-beings, or "mixed beings."¹¹² Therefore, the Empress must do as Cavendish suggests in the *Observations* and put these particular knowledges *in relation to* each other. In her discourse with the animal-men, the Empress recognizes that "no particular knowledge can be perfect" and that she must instead coordinate "several intelligences" from "several employments."¹¹³ When enquiring about the nature of frost, for instance, she aligns the opinions of the fish-men, bird-men, worm-men, whose observations in turn add "a great light to the ape-men [. . .] concerning their chemical principles."¹¹⁴ This discursiveness within and between the Empress's strange guides, who are themselves discourses of species and knowledges, deprivileges any single source and way of understanding in a strange and several world. Through her encounters with these hybrids, the Empress learns to assemble out of many different parts and kinds a hybridized knowledge that is as strange as the world and creatures that she observes

The Empress's mind is "settled" precisely when it is most unsettled and prepared to perceive the diverse novelties of a nature that is constantly recomposing itself. This acquaintance with the strange, by which she becomes familiar with unfamiliarity, translates the perception of severalness into a conception of severalness, as Cavendish urges in the *Observations*. By studying the unsettled categories of the Blazing World and

¹¹¹ *Blazing World*, 139; 141-2.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 145.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 162; 159

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 148.

its inhabitants, the Empress learns to unsettle her own categorical thinking. In this respect, the spectacles of strangeness in the *Blazing World* operate on the mind much like the spectacles of the stage. Scholars of Cavendish's drama identify in her plays attempts to recreate in the imaginations of her audiences the deep and disruptive impression that the hermaphroditical actress created in hers: for Rebecca D'Monte, for instance, Cavendish "produces spectacles out of transgressed boundaries [. . .] specifically because they provide her with a way of transgressing those boundaries."¹¹⁵ The spectacle of transgression facilitates transgression. When Cavendish incorporates the spectacular into her non-dramatic writing, this continuity between the observation and experience of transgression is preserved: for Brandie Siegfried, the spectacles that Cavendish writes into the *Observations* and the *Blazing World* startle the imagination, replacing its structures with an "elasticity of being" that precedes knowing and sets up new conditions under which thinking takes place.¹¹⁶ And for Hero Chalmers, the new conditions of thought that spectacle establishes in the mind "forestall the fixed meanings that might invite literary, scientific, or political criticism."¹¹⁷

As the Empress studies the spectacular strangeness of the *BlazingWorld*, her own startled mind settles into a new way of knowing that forestalls fixed meanings and eschews the certainties that produce and invite criticism. Her elastic intellect, which creates meaning out of the "several intelligences" from "several employments," imitates

¹¹⁵ Rebecca D'Monte, "Making a Spectacle: Margaret Cavendish and the Staging of the Self," in *A Princely Brave Woman*, 121.

¹¹⁶ Brandie Siegfried, "Anecdotal and Cabalistic Forms in *Observations of Experimental Philosophy*," in *Authorial Conquests*, 78.

¹¹⁷ Hero Chalmers, "Flattering Division: Margaret Cavendish's Poetics of Variety," in *Authorial Conquests*, 140.

Cavendish's own mind as she describes it in *The World's Olio*, in which her "thoughts are like Pancakes, and the Brain is the Pan wherein they are tossed and turned by the several Objects, as several Hands."¹¹⁸ Meaning is not situated in any single, authoritative source but instead in the many turnings that take place as she studies and coordinates the several different opinions of her animal-men. Even after the animal-men have withdrawn and removed the direct influence of their "several intelligences," the Empress's mind continues to turn: after her desire to create her own cabala causes the immaterial spirits with whom she was discoursing to disappear, she takes up "diverse debates with her own thoughts."¹¹⁹ This debate within her own mind recreates the discourse she holds with the immaterial spirits and animal-men, and recalls the debate between her former and latter selves that opened the *Observations*. And when the immaterial spirits do return, they supply her with the Duchess of Newcastle's soul to serve her as her scribe and companion in the creation of her cabala. This introduction of Cavendish herself as a character in the text further refracts her place in it: she has at once an authorial presence as the narrator, a figurative presence in the Empress, and an autobiographical presence as the Empress. At the moment that her figurative self internalizes the discursive knowledge she practices in her debate with the animal-men, the authorial Cavendish splits her presence in the text, offering herself as a companion to herself. For the remainder of the text—a section as long as her discourse with the animal-men—Cavendish is in conversation with herself. The immaterial spirits recommend the Duchess as a scribe willing to compose thoughts for and with the Empress: unlike the souls of famous ancient and modern writers, who are "so self-conceited, that they would scorn to be the scribes to

¹¹⁸ *World's Olio*, 101.

¹¹⁹ *Blazing World*, 179.

a woman,” the Duchess is “ready to do [. . .] all the service she can.”¹²⁰ As a divided mind collaborating with itself, the Duchess-Empress dyad both enacts and preserves a way of knowing severally in the *Blazing World*. Like the “Courteous” and “Understanding” readers who Cavendish petitions in the preface to the *Observations*, the Duchess and Empress understand through “context or connexion” and remain on guard against those ignorant and malicious readers who “cannot perceive Uniformity.” When the Empress discovers that the disagreements within and between the different societies of the animal-men have developed into “contentions and divisions,” she confers with the Duchess and the two determine dissolve the societies rather than have an “unquiet and disorderly government” in which each faction sets its interest against the others in “perpetual disputes and quarrels.”¹²¹ As expressions of a fundamentally several mind, the Empress-Duchess duo is sensitive to the susceptibility of particular minds to veer into partisanship, in which “some think their arguments come nearer to truth, and are more rational than others; some are so wedded to their own opinions, that they never yield to reason; and others, though they find their opinions not firmly grounded upon reason, yet [. . .] nevertheless maintain them against all sense and reason.”¹²² The Empress and Duchess overwrite this “Ignorance [that] is caused by division ” with their own intellectual severalness, a “composition of parts” in which these “two loving souls did often meet and rejoice in each other’s conversation.”¹²³

The Empress’s corrective intervention in a society dividing itself according to

¹²⁰ Ibid, 181.

¹²¹ Ibid, 201-2.

¹²² *Blazing World*, 202.

¹²³ Ibid.

self-interested factions “wedded to their own opinions” illustrates the possibilities for enacting the severalness that the mind perceives and conceives. The Empress’s experience with the severalness of the Blazing World is both intellectual and social: as she learns to discover meaning by creating relationships between different parts and opinions, she in turn expresses those discoveries in her relationships with other characters and creatures. Shortly after her first experience self-instructing herself in strangeness, in which she overcomes her initial terror with the “strange” and “wonderful” bear-men and becomes happy “in their company,” she translates her own acquaintance with the wonderful into a social acquaintance. When she and her animal-men attendants arrive in Paradise, the Emperor of the Blazing World finds her so strange and wonderful that “he conceived her to be some goddess, and offered to worship her.”¹²⁴ The soon-to-be Empress corrects his startled mind by making her own strangeness familiar to him: “she refused, telling him, (for by that time she had pretty well learned their language) that although she came out of another world, yet was she but a mortal.”¹²⁵ She recognizes in him the same stunned response to the unfamiliar that she had experienced in her encounter with the bear-men and refuses to allow his startled mind to expel her by designating her a divinity more appropriately worshipped than understood. Using her own imperfect knowledge of his language, which she gleaned from studying the strangeness of the animal-men, she engages with him in the very discourse that he was prepared to reject. As she acquaints him with herself, she nonetheless retains her unfamiliarity: though she is a mortal, she also “came out of another world.” She is at once otherworldly and familiar, strange but not a stranger. And as her knowledge of the

¹²⁴ *Blazing World*, 132.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

animal-men made her happy “in their company,” the Emperor, “rejoicing, made her his wife.”¹²⁶

The process of perceiving, conceiving, and then enacting a strange severalness is reiterated in the Empress’s various interactions and adventures for the remainder of the text. After cultivating a discursive knowledge in her conversation with the animal-men, in which their “several intelligences” inform one another and her own thoughts, the Empress and her new companion the Duchess create their own imaginative worlds according to the principles of collaborative severalness that the Empress has just experienced. The Duchess, at first, attempts to model her world on the principles of those most famous ancient and modern philosophers whose “self-conceited” souls were passed over as scribes for the Empress. And just as these philosophers would have scorned to serve the mind of the Empress, so are their philosophies inhospitable to the Duchess’s mind as she attempts to construct her world: Thales troubles her with demons who “forced her to obey their orders and commands;” Pythagoras puzzles her with numbers so that she cannot “order and compose the several parts;” Epicurus’s “infinite atoms made such a mist, that it quite blinded the perception of her mind;” Descartes’s ethereal globules make her “so dizzy with their extraordinary swift turning round, that it almost put her into a swoon;” and the “press and drive” of parts in Hobbes’s opinions put such pressure on her mind that “her thought could neither move forward nor backward.”¹²⁷ These “self-conceited” philosophers, like those factions of animal-men that the Empress will later dissolve who are “so wedded to their own opinions,” impose a uniformity of thought that incapacitates the Duchess’s mind. Rather than engaging in a conversation of

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ *Blazing World*, 187-8.

several thoughts, these philosophers force their opinions on her own, blinding her perception, straitening her thoughts, and forcing her to obey their orders and commands. The Duchess dissolves each of these worlds, resolving to abandon patterns, whose imposed uniformities “do her no good,” and to invent her own world according to the principles of severalness that the Empress discovered in her discourses with the animal-men: like the infinite and respirating nature described in both the *Observations* and reiterated in dialogue with the animal-men, her own world “appeared so curious an full of variety, so well ordered and wisely governed, that it cannot possibly be expressed by words.”¹²⁸ Once she has created this world of many parts moving *in relation to* each other, she shares it with the Empress so that she might perceive the severalness of that she had composed in her mind. The Empress studies this spectacle of composed severalness and determines to make “such another world in her own mind” with the assistance and “best instructions” of the Duchess’s mind.¹²⁹ By sharing her composed world with the Empress, the Duchess imparts her own conception of severalness to the mind of the Empress. Shortly after sharing their composed minds with each other, the Duchess and the Empress leave behind their bodies and transport their souls into the brain of the Duke of Newcastle, where they converse with his thoughts as their thoughts had conversed with each other. The Duke’s mind serves as a salon-like setting for a conversation between three different intellects. For the Empress and Duchess, engaging with severalness does not dead-end in the self-conceit of a single mind. Rather, by imitating its inclusions and compositions in their interactions, they invite others to enact the severalness of their own minds.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 189.

The Empress uses spectacle as a tool to startle particular minds out of their entrenched interests and draw them into the process of perceiving, conceiving, and enacting severalness that trains them to compose their society. After the Empress has settled the “contentions and divisions” between the different academies in that threatened “great disorder” in the Blazing World, she receives news that her native country, EFSI, is similarly threatened by the contentions of a “great war” in which “most parts or nations thereof made war against that [her] kingdom.”¹³⁰ In order to defuse this partisan threat, she devises a spectacle of strangeness designed to confound the partisan mind out of its certainties and into an impressionable condition of “not knowing.” She stages this spectacle at sea, where concealed fish-men draw her sail-less ships so that they seem to move themselves, and at night her bird-men and fish-men carry luminescent fire-stone so that the sea and sky seem ablaze. The first innovation puts the navies “into a great amaze” and the second into “such a fright at night, and to such wonder in the morning [. . .] that they knew not what to judge or make of them [. . .].”¹³¹ The Empress converts this “great amaze” and “wonder” into curiosity, drawing the special attention of her observers to herself and her intervention in the conflict. When she sends a offer of assistance the general of her native country’s navy, she promises to appear in a spectacular form—“a splendorous light, surrounded with fire”—which “made both the poor councillors and sea-men much afraid; but yet they longed the time to behold this strange sight.”¹³² As with her initial encounter with the Emperor upon her arrival in the Blazing World, the Empress maintains her strangeness when she first appears to her allies, refusing to come

¹³⁰ Ibid, 202.

¹³¹ Ibid, 208-9.

¹³² Ibid, 209-10.

nearer than shouting distance “by reason she would not have that of her countrements anything else should be perceived, but the splendour thereof.”¹³³ By maintaining the splendor of her appearance, she acquaints them with her strangeness in order to convince them to accept the strange assistance that she offers: “to destroy all your enemies before this following night.”¹³⁴ Although this encounter with the wonderful causes “several opinions and judgements [. . .] in the minds of her country-men,” when they witness the spectacle of her strange intervention—unseen, her fish-men place fire-stone, which burns underwater, under the enemy ships so that “all the enemy’s fleet was of a flaming fire—they “all cried out with one voice, that she was an angel sent from God to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies.”¹³⁵ The Empress’s strange spectacle, in which she composes the elemental opposites, fire and water, likewise composes the “several opinions and judgements” of her countrymen into “one voice” united in an acquaintance with her strangeness. Moreover, witnessing this “miraculous delivery and conquest” overwrites the partisan interests of her country’s enemies and causes them to compose themselves in an allegiance with EFSI: “when the neighbouring nations and kingdoms perceived her power, they were so discomposed in their affairs and designs, that they knew not what to do” and resolved to “submit and pay tribute to the said King.”¹³⁶ The failure of certain countries to compose themselves into this social unity is a result of their failure to perceive and conceive the strange severalness that the Empress demonstrates in her miraculous conquest: the Empress’s bird-men place fire-stones on top of tops of

¹³³ Ibid, 210.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 211.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 212.

houses in select countries and warn the inhabitants that, when it next rains, their towns will catch fire. These enemies are at first “amazed to hear men speak in the air” but “laughed when they heard them say that rain should fire their towns, knowing that the effect of water was to quench, not produce fire.”¹³⁷ The inhabitants of these recusant nations have failed to instruct themselves in the Empress’s strange compositions of fire and water and rely on their own entrenched certainty that the two elements oppose each other. The next rain, in which “all their houses appeared of a flaming fire,” rewrites the philosophical opposition between fire and water and, with it, the political opposition to EFSI: through this second “miraculous [. . .] conquest,” the remaining cities, nations and kingdoms at war with her nation acquaint themselves with the strangeness that she spectacularizes and learn to ally themselves. The Empress deploys spectacles, rather than armies, in what Bowerbank and Mendelson identify as “awe-inspiring rather than life-destroying tactics for keeping peace,” hoping to instruct dividing minds to compose themselves by perceiving, conceiving and enacting the severalness she represents to them.¹³⁸

As a spectacular text, the *Blazing World* is designed to intervene in and instruct the divided society of Cavendish’s Restoration England as the Empress’s spectacles compose the “contentions and divisions” of the *Blazing World* and EFSI. By inviting her readers to wonder at her hybridized text, and then presenting them with wonderful hybrids within it, the *Blazing World* is itself an encounter with strangeness. And Cavendish encourages her readers to approach this strangeness of the text in the same way that it is approached within the text. In the “Epilogue to the Reader,” she invites her

¹³⁷ Ibid, 214.

¹³⁸ *Paper Bodies*, 34.

readers to recreate in their reading of the *Blazing World* the collaborative world-making that takes place between the Empress and the Duchess: “if any should like the world I have made, and be willing to be my subjects, they may imagine themselves such [. . .] but if they cannot endure to be subjects, they may create worlds of their own, and govern themselves as they please.” The world that she presents to her readers is an expression of mind accustomed to studying and composing severalness: “from the time of twelve years old,” she tells her readers, “I have studied upon observations, and lived up-[on] contemplation, making the World my Book, striving by joyning every several actions, like several words to make a discourse to my self.”¹³⁹ By inviting her readers to use her book as the model for their own world, she is inviting them into the process of studying, contemplating, and joining “every several actions” so that they might make a “discourse to [themselves].” That is, by encouraging her readers to perform to themselves the encounters with severalness represented in her text, she prepares them to join the “several actions” they must encounter and perform in their own experience.¹⁴⁰

On their journey from Paradise to the Duke of Newcastle’s brain, the Empress and the Duchess attend a play in London before traveling to Nottinghamshire. After the performance, the Duchess explains the techniques of the Restoration theater to the Empress: “most of their plays ere taken out of old stories, but yet they had new actions, which being joined to old stories [. . .] made new plays.”¹⁴¹ Like these playwrights,

¹³⁹ “The Epistle” to “The third part of the first BOOK” in *World’s Olio*, 46-7.

¹⁴⁰ Jay Stevenson argues that readers of Cavendish’s texts are “ambiguously implicated” in the playfulness of her texts, which they are invited to accede to or laugh at (“Imagining the Mind: Cavendish’s Hobbesian Allegories,” in *A Princely Brave Woman*, 143-55). I see Cavendish’s invitations as a strategy to engage, not simply implicate, her readers.

¹⁴¹ *Blazing World*, 192.

Charles II was trying to use indemnity to fit “new actions” to England’s “old stories.” But the “new plays” acted in Restoration society simply restaged old rivalries. For Cavendish, the social reconciliation that Charles imagined could not be achieved by simply combining different parties. Sociability requires relationships. If parties are not put *in relation* to each other, there is no union, only a “concourse, which is to meet rather than to unite.” Society, on the other hand, includes “discourse [. . .] which gives light to the eyes of understanding.”¹⁴² Cavendish’s strange texts put several parts in discourse with each other, joining the old with the new, the male with the female, the familiar with the unfamiliar. And when she stages these “new plays” in her “antic dress” or “wonderful” writings, she incites her spectators to a discourse with themselves and each other. When Pepys finally encountered her at the Royal Society, it was her ordinariness that disappointed him, not her extra-ordinariness: he complains, “nor did I hear her say anything that was worth hearing, but that she was full of admiration, all admiration.”¹⁴³ After weeks of studying Cavendish’s spectacular strangeness, Pepy’s mind had become accustomed to the uncustomary, and this encounter with the ordinary now seemed strange.

¹⁴² *World’s Olio*, 15-16.

¹⁴³ Pepys, *Diary*, vol. VIII, 243.

EPILOGUE

THE MAKING OF THE PAPIST MILTON

“Papist.” It was a familiar insult. And one he often used himself: Charles I, for instance, objects to reformation like “every papist and popish king;” the king’s apologist, Salmasius, is put to his task by “some hairbrained, half protestant, half papist chaplain;” and the restoration of the monarchy promises to bring in a queen “in most likelihood outlandish and a papist, besides a queen-mother such already.” He flung this epithet nearly forty times in his polemical career. But the insult took on new meanings when it was unexpectedly directed back at him.

Milton has long been recognized as one of England’s most fervent spokespersons for anti-Catholic and anti-monarchical sentiments. He represented these antipathies early and throughout his career, and they are widely reiterated in critical studies of the literature, history, politics, and religion of the seventeenth century. Most modern scholars accept these positions as fundamental to understanding the body of Milton’s literary and political works, and in doing so assume Milton’s contemporaries did as well. Yet, even as Milton issued some of his most earnest pleas against the tyranny of both kingship and Rome, accusations that he was a Catholic sympathizer began to appear in polemical tracts. These charges emerged with new vigor and purchase following the Popish Plot, as Milton’s associations with the political and religious turmoil of the previous decades

aligned him with what seemed to some a crypto-Catholic threat to an uncertain succession and a fragile social order. Milton and the papacy were convenient bugbears for those looking to blame social unrest on non-conformity. Polemicists fused these two figures amid the shifting debates of the Restoration, finding the papist Milton to be an especially effective and flexible metaphor for the dangers of dissent.

This unlikely polemical tradition that aligned Milton with the papacy cannot be accounted for completely in terms of the doctrines and casuistry of anti-popery. Anthony Milton's careful study of the tense intersections of the Reformed and Roman churches in Stuart England illustrates that the parameters of anti-papal discourse and rhetoric were closely tied to debates over the character, obligations, and loyalties of an English subject. The terms of anti-popery shifted as they were redeployed as epithets in various debates about the English subject's responsibilities to his conscience, king, God, state church, and to the international Protestant cause.¹ The discourse was just as unstable within these categories as it was between them. Henrician apologists developed a rhetoric of anti-popery to justify the autonomous civil authority of the English monarchy, and Elizabethan propagandists elaborated England's anti-Catholic legacy as an important characteristic of national identity. Anti-popery rhetoric was turned against the monarchy when the Jacobean and Caroline courts seemed to be cultivating Catholic sympathies, and the crown found itself a victim of the very propaganda it had produced two generations earlier. The discourses of "popery" and "anti-popery," in other words, had a variety of unpredictable valences, most of which had no religious implications. It should therefore not surprise us that when Restoration polemicists leveled their charges against Milton their criteria for popery were as inconsistent as their attacks were vitriolic: each new

¹ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

accusation elaborated and qualified its predecessor, pointing to an increased willingness to experiment with the limitations of inherited social categories. This reiteration and reconstitution of a papist Milton signals an anxiety over the apparently irreconcilable social categories represented by Milton and the papacy. They no longer seem to mark stable and distinct identities.²

Milton issued the charge of popery with characteristic boldness in his own poetic and polemical writings, exploiting the flexibility of the epithet to accommodate the different claims of sedition he leveled against his opponents. He staged popery in all of its valences throughout his literary and political career, shifting its meanings as his arguments shifted to decry various cultural manifestations of tyranny and idolatry. For example, the sycophantic and opportunistic episcopacy in *Reason of Church Government* renews Henrician anxieties about Rome's surreptitious undermining of royal power: the central image of the tract's conclusion features the prelacy, armed with shears, threatening to trim away the power of a sleeping, regal Samson.³ In *Areopagitica*, Rome stands as an image of an intellectual tyranny that threatens the freedom of inquiring minds: Milton grants freedom of expression for even fractious dissenters, excepting only Catholics who are disqualified as slavish adherents to a Rome that "extirpats all religions

² By alternating between the terms "papist," "Catholic," and "Romish," and their various forms, I do not attempt to distinguish stable meanings in their muddled and inconsistent uses among Milton's contemporaries beyond their usefulness at indicating a loose association with the perceived religious and political doctrines of the Catholic Church in England and abroad. I do make an effort to retain the terminology used by each author when discussing their claims, but beyond this loose adherence, I take as much liberty with these terms as the authors addressed in this essay.

³ John Milton, *Reason of Church Government*, in Volume 2 of *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82). All references to Milton's prose come from this edition, and hereafter will be cited as *YP*.

and civill supremacies.”⁴ In response to the enhanced and apparently uncompromising royal authority of Personal Rule and the Romish elements of Laudian ceremony, Milton combined anti-monarchical and anti-Catholic rhetoric. He thus established a trope to which he returned throughout his career as he produced propaganda for the Protectorate and wrote against the restored monarchy: in *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*, he answers the arguments of Salmasius by dismissing the persistent royalist apologist as a papist, and he renders Satan as an unmistakably popish monarch.

Milton’s anti-papist sentiment was obvious to his contemporaries as he continually reconstituted and reiterated “popery” to signal new varieties of sedition in different arguments and arenas. In the examples given above, for instance, Milton alleges popery to decry a prelatical threat to the established monarchy, an unquestioning obedience to a dogmatic authority, the fervent defense of the recently displaced monarchy, and the inherent tyranny of kingship. He blasted his opponents with charges of popery so frequently, in fact, that his name itself developed into an epithet for all iconoclastic Puritan dissenters. In the 1670s, champions of Uniformity seized on this metonymic Milton, using it as a polemical tool for denouncing their non-conformist opponents. Sharon Achinstein provides a useful example in her remarks on how Milton’s reputation was used to enhance the perceived radicalism of Marvell: according to *The Transproser Rehears’d*, “there are many *Miltons* in this one Man” and he was a “*Martin-Mar-Prelate*, a *Milton*”; likewise, Samuel Parker warns in *A Reproof to the Rehearsal Transpos’d*, “your Collection will afford as good Precedents for Rebellion and King-killing, as any we meet with in the writings of J.M. in defence of the Rebellion and the

⁴ YP 2:565.

Murder of the King.”⁵ This conversion of Milton’s visible attacks into an epithet for non-conformist sedition indicates a willingness on the part of Restoration minds to think of social movements metonymically. Polemicists were able to condense and simplify the complexities of groups and doctrines into a representative personality. Milton’s affiliations with social institutions and discourses eclipsed his biographical and historical person. As a metonymic figure, he was regarded as part of the social fabric’s mythology rather than as an historical figure moving through it. This figurative Milton stood in for social forces, both embodying and expressing the institutions and discourses with which he was associated. Milton’s name overwrote the shorthand of institutional categorization and became the categorizing means to express the institutions he defined. As such, he became a social form in the Restoration mind that served as a substitute for the particular institutions and discourses he represented. Considered as a social form, Milton as metonymy was open to late-seventeenth century reform as a kind of institution himself. Through the very rigor and visibility of his attacks on Rome, Milton inadvertently became a force and figure of the institutional tyranny he decried.

Notably, the first printed accusation pointing to Milton as a papist appeared when disenchantment with the social forms and reforms Milton championed had intensified. On the eve of the Restoration, *The Character of the Rump* (1660), a relatively short but potently vitriolic and sometimes scatological tract, suggested that Milton and other supporters of the Commonwealth were in league with the pope. The tract likens the Rump Parliament to “the hinder part of the many-headed Beast, the Back-door of the *Devils Arse a Peake*” that owes “its first being to the Pope” and is perpetuated by

⁵ Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton’s England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 156.

republican supporters of the Commonwealth. Further, Milton is cast as “their Goos-quill Champion, who had need of *A Help meet* to establish any thing, for he has a Ramshead, and is good only at Batteries, an old Heretick both in Religion and Manners, that by his will would shake off his Governours as he doth his Wives, foure in a Fourtnight.”⁶ The pamphleteer links the pope, the father of the Commonwealth, “who that time made the Devil a Cuckold,” with Milton, “the parent that begot his late new Commonwealth.” In this way, the pamphlet returns to the Tudor polemic of patriotic anti-papacy as an endorsement of English monarchy. With the Restoration at hand, the anti-monarchical Milton was out of popular political opinion and became victim to some of the same anti-Catholic accusations he had leveled against royalist sympathizers. Repudiation of the Interregnum experiments, and their most visible champion, became state-endorsed after the Protectorate dissolved. Despite his blindness and friendships with members of the newly-restored government, Milton was considered a sufficiently dangerous social force for the restored government to imprison him. Giddy royalist propagandists, whom Milton in his bluster had hectored during the Interregnum, now deployed his own protean epithet against him.

The Character of the Rump’s accusations of popery, however, are a function of Milton’s associations with sectarianism and the perceived fractiousness it created, not his adherence to Catholic doctrines. That is, the accusation of popery reflects his political activities, not his specific religious affiliation.⁷ Milton and his cohort are caricatured in

⁶ *Character of the Rump* (London, 1660), 2-3; A2.

⁷ Here and throughout, I dismiss as red herrings the possible biographical confusion with his Catholic-convert brother, Christopher, and the distortion of his time in Italy. The emphasis on Milton’s polemical writings and political career in each of the accounts indicates a broader

the idiom of set-piece stereotypes used to blast religious and political sectarians: they are sodomites, divorcees, cuckolds, and heretics. The vision of interlocking and indistinguishable groups of dissenters—papists, puritans, parliamentarians, Commonwealthmen—illustrates the view of many conformist apologists who grouped together all forms of dissent. This imprecise understanding of sectarianism allowed discrete groups to cross-contaminate each other in the minds and rhetoric of these single-minded propagandists and their sympathetic readership. Thus, association with one sect meant taking on others' attributes, the variety depending on the propagandist leveling the accusations. Milton's reputation as a non-conformist of many stripes implicated him as a papist as well; in this regard, Milton was simply a papist by association.

But the link between sectarianism and the social threats Rome represented has a more substantial legacy than innuendo. In order to strengthen the Church of England in the face of burgeoning Catholic power on the Continent, Elizabethan and Jacobean casuists sought to consolidate the English Protestant community and to position it against Rome. The demand for Protestant unity superseded doctrinal rigidity and led pragmatically-minded conformists to advocate for toleration of the more mild non-conformists. But reluctance and false-starts blunted these attempts at accommodation, and half-hearted initiatives to force conformity ignited noisy debates from the puritan minority. Exasperated conformist apologists blamed English Protestant disunion on these unruly non-conformists, arguing that they diminished the potency of English Protestantism, making it more vulnerable to international and domestic Catholic threats. Thomas Nashe had issued this charge against the puritan rabble as he represented the

context for these accusations that cannot be accounted for by these narrow, albeit convenient, explanations.

state church amid the furor of the Marprelate controversy, and Dryden later reiterated the charge in “The Medal” and “Religio Laici.” This model worked better as propaganda than as a sound account of the politico-poetic landscape, requiring intellectual and evidentiary blurring when applied to real scenarios. Nonetheless, this link between non-conformists and papists persisted in the minds and polemics of conformist writers throughout the century. The non-conformist Milton, who so prominently argued with apologists for the Church of England from the early 1640’s until the end of his career, served as an attractive and available target for propagandists looking to reassert the necessity of conformity in the wake of the Protectorate’s failed policies of religious toleration.

To make its case for Milton’s collusion with Rome, *The Character of the Rump* foregrounds his status as a prolific polemicist as much as his association with the republican and puritan causes he advocated in his writings: “Goos-quill Champion” leads the list of sectarian stereotypes used to characterize him. Critical analyses of oath-making and oath-taking during the seventeenth century indicate that casuistical evasion of loyalty oaths, and the conformity they sought to enforce, were regarded as extensions of crypto-Catholic resistance. Perez Zagorin notes, for instance, that after the explosion of state loyalty oaths in the sixteenth century, English Catholics more readily, if unevenly, approved of certain forms of dissembling as acceptable tools to avoid the obligations of state oaths. When puritan and parliamentary casuists began to adopt similar arguments to justify the loosening of obligations to the church and monarchy, polemicists for conformity responded that such arguments strengthened the English Catholic cause: if

puritan dissembling was legal, so was Catholic dissembling.⁸ The slick arguments of non-conformist casuists came to be identified with the subversive doctrines they advocated. As David Martin Jones argues, casuistry relies on a subject that decides on its own and develops a “language of self-understanding” incompatible with the institutionalized loyalty that state oaths were supposed to ensure.⁹ At the Restoration, non-conformists were linked with pre-war Catholics through their use of casuistry to justify their dissembling and non-compliance. Their flexible, sometimes contradictory arguments were offered as evidence that their consciences had been eroded by zeal.¹⁰ The heft and complexity of Milton’s polemical arguments thus gave his writing the flavor of subversive and Romish casuistry. It hardly mattered that Milton trumpeted anti-papist sentiment if he continued to denounce and renounce like a papist.

Though the turn of anti-Catholic rhetoric against the new political and religious dissidents—republican non-conformists—had purchase in early Restoration polemic, *The Character of the Rump* remained the only accusation of popery against Milton for nearly twenty years. The lack of any response to the charges presented in the pamphlet suggests that it was perceived as nothing more than a morsel of defamatory vitriol, and that it got lost in the more substantial social commentary offered at the Restoration.

Propagandists may also have been reluctant to turn anti-Catholic slurs against Milton while he was still living: even though he required a helpmeet, he still packed a powerful pen. Moreover, in the years immediately following the king’s restoration, the court

⁸ Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 229.

⁹ David Martin Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance in Seventeenth Century England: The Political Significance of Oaths and Engagements* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1999), 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., 175, 190. See also, Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

seemed to be endorsing a politics of reconciliation rather than polarized extremism. For instance, in August 1660, Charles II proposed, and the Convention Parliament passed, the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, restricting Restoration reprisals to those who had direct involvement in the regicide, effectively pardoning the general majority of republican dissenters.

The king's largess, however, was short-lived, and as official treatments of dissent began to shift with the unstable social realities of Restoration culture, the specter of a papist Milton reemerged. The Clarendon Codes, and specifically the Act of Uniformity (1662), did a great deal to make the more extreme view of non-conformity official policy by indiscriminately excluding all dissident groups from the church. Radical puritans were lumped together with Catholic recusants in a single legal category. And this categorization was not simply a matter of legislative uniformity: as the mainstream within the church began to recognize Catholic sympathies within the royal family and at court, the old anxiety over a Catholic threat was renewed, and so was its accompanying anti-Catholic rhetoric. Many, including Dryden, renewed the argument that dissent and fractiousness weakened the church, making it more vulnerable to Catholic attacks. Dissenters were seen to be in league with Rome. Titus Oates's fictional, but widely-believed account of a Popish Plot whipped this anti-Catholic sentiment into a furor and escalated the Exclusion Crisis. When Oates published *A True Narrative of the Horrid Plot* (1679), a piece of propaganda released to legitimize his claims, he named Milton as a papist. In this climax of national anti-Catholic sentiment, and with Milton dead and unable to rebut, the charges against him came with renewed vigor.

Oates constructs his accusations against Milton using the same rhetoric as *The*

Character of the Rump: the characteristics of his popery are based on his associations with sectarians and his bold polemics, which Oates claimed had interrupted efforts at Protestant unity. Oates prominently emphasizes Milton's affiliation with regicides, a particularly potent and flexible charge during the Exclusion Crisis and a nearly inexhaustible theme for propagandists attempting to validate claims of sedition. In his dedicatory epistle to Charles II, who reportedly laughed at his initial charges, Oates urges the emergency of the papist threat by recalling the regicide, and Milton's role in it:

The Popish Lord is not forgotten, or unknown, who brought a Petition to the late Regicides and Usurpers, signed by Five hundred principal Papists in *England*; wherein was promised upon condition of a Toleration of the Popish Religion here by a Law, their joint resolution to abjure and exclude the Family of the *Stuarts* for ever, from their undoubted right to the Crown. Who more disheartened the Loyalty and patience of your best Subjects, than their confident Scriblers *White* and others? And *Milton* was a known frequenter of a Popish Club. Who more forward to set up *Cromwell*, and to put the Crown of our Kings upon his head, than they?¹¹

In the following year, at least three other polemical tracts reference directly or quote Oates's characterization from *A True Narrative*, one of which was subsequently translated into French. This widespread reiteration of Oates's unfounded and poorly justified accusation validated it, and polemicists began to speak of Milton as a renowned papist. The perceived emergency of the Catholic threat and the versatility of the charge of popery distanced Milton's posthumous reputation from the biographical and doctrinal realities of his life. Effectively dislodged from the biographical man, Milton's reputation became increasingly subject to the exigencies of the ideological battles of the Restoration.

This increased enthusiasm for charges against Milton signals a new willingness to

¹¹ Titus Oates, *A true narrative of the horrid plot and conspiracy of the popish party* (London, 1679), 2, 3.

reconceptualize Milton as a controversial figure in the context of shifting historical contingencies, but it also suggests a shift in how the Catholic threat was conceived and constructed during the Exclusion Crisis. New representations of the papist Milton, insofar as he was an emblem for Catholic sedition, can help trace modifications in the popular understanding of the Catholic threat. One of the primary anxieties driving Oates's fiction is that the Catholic threat can be undetectable. Dissembling, after all, was integral to English Catholicism. In the libelous arena of Restoration polemic, the lack of clear evidence for Catholic sympathies on the part of someone accused of them not only failed as an exculpatory measure, it provided proof that he or she was particularly adept at the Catholic practice of deception. Oates mentions Milton as a Catholic conspirator, a "known frequenter of a Popish club," who participated in a pact between Rome and the late regicides to displace the Stuart line and reinstitute English Catholicism. By suggesting that the real threat came from the scheming of crypto-Catholics, Oates's narrative recalls the near-cataclysm of the Gunpowder Plot and the very real hazards posed by a subterranean Catholicism. Robert Hancock's *Loyalty of Popish Principles Examined* (1682), a spin-off from Oates's *True Narrative*, enhances Oates's accusations, explaining that Milton's heterodox and heretical opinions would have been less curious if he had professed his popery: "If *Milton* (the great Oracle of one of the Factions) had owned himself to be Papist, there had been no reason to wonder at the Impiety of his Doctrines, which he either did, or might have learned from the Popes and greatest Divines of the *Roman Church*."¹² Hancock thus turns the anti-papist argument on its head: he begins with the assertion that, doctrinally, Milton was a papist, but his equivocation renders him an ambiguous crypto-Catholic whose advertised Protestantism

¹² Robert Hancock, *The Loyalty of Popish Principles Examined* (London, 1682), 32-33.

sits uncomfortably with his certain impiety. A characterizing function of Miltonic popery is to deny itself. For Hancock, the “wonder” that this denial provokes represents a deliberate strategy to create uncertainty about Rome’s anti-monarchical agenda by deflecting blame onto Protestant reformers: “[He], with his usual confidence, acquits the Popes, and charges his Antimonarchical principles on *Luther, Zwinglius, Calvin, Bucer, Martyr, Pareut*, and all the Reformed Divines.”¹³ As such, Milton fits the paradigm of the secret Catholic who, in disguising his anti-Protestantism, implements a broader anti-establishmentarian agenda to discredit and dismantle the English monarchy and the state church.

Oates’ and Hancock’s accounts foreground another strand of late-century popery applied to Milton: obscurity. Because dissembling was so closely linked with Catholic casuistry, any perceived ambiguity or obscurity in a text could seem to some the markers of its author’s Catholicism. We cannot forget that there is much in Milton that may have puzzled his contemporaries. Jason Rosenblatt reminds us that the discontinuities between Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the Yale edition of Milton’s prose take most readers off-guard.¹⁴ A Restoration readership decades removed from the historical contingencies in which Milton wrote some of his most definitive polemic would have encountered the same struggles tracing doctrinal consistency across his work. In addition to his exasperating erudition, the positions Milton asserts with authoritative boldness in his poetry and polemics are open to later qualifications and contradictions, which he asserts with the same characteristic boldness. That is, as he worked through his notions of state

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Jason Rosenblatt. “Milton, Natural Law, and Toleration,” in *Milton and Toleration*, ed. Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 126.

power, religious liberty, ecclesiology, and soteriology, he took up contradictory positions and left little room for his previous assertions: for example, the concern he expresses for his regal Samson at the end of *Reason of Church Government* sits uncomfortably next to the Nimrod episode of *Paradise Lost*. *The Character of the Rump* ignores historical and biographical explanations for this sort of contradiction in order to paint Milton as a capricious contrarian: “he is so much an enemy to usual practices, that I believe when he is condemned to travel to *Tyburn* in a Cart, he will petition to be the first man that ever was driven thither in a *Wheel-barrow*[.]”¹⁵ Apparent inconsistencies rendered the doctrinal Milton a powerful but ambiguous force that unsettled royalists, parliamentarians, papists, conformists, and sectarians alike. Milton’s social and intellectual indecipherability forced his contemporaries to contend that he operated according to a protected and uncontrollable set of motivations that refused to be translated into public discourse where it could be monitored. This uncomfortable sense of Milton indeed lined up neatly with the characteristically Catholic mental reservation that the state attempted to control with such legislation as the Test Acts of 1673 and 1678, which required that oaths of conformity be sworn without equivocation and with words taken in their “usual meaning.”¹⁶

Milton’s indecipherability pointed to more than just popish equivocation; it also characterized in general the variegated Catholic identity that some polemicists constructed for him, and it helps to explain why attempts to cast Milton as a Catholic took place even as he was being decried for his extremism as a puritan dissenter. His puritan distaste for Romish invention, tyranny, and idolatry seemed to confirm the very

¹⁵ *Character of the Rump*, 3.

¹⁶ Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, 212.

principles he himself attacked. In a work designed to account for the monarchy's triumph over non-conformists, and dedicated to James II, John Northleigh comfortably groups Milton with puritan dissenters, calling him one of "those Epidemick and most damnable Quacks of the Kingdom."¹⁷ These aggressive proclamations of Milton's puritanism did not curb representations that identified him as Catholic. Rather, with a wink at their readership, propagandists exaggerated the context of his puritanism in order to enhance their papist portrait. The appearance of *Defensio pro populo Anglicano* among the list of works by prominent puritan authors ordered to be burned in Oxford in July 1683 for being "false, seditious, and impious . . . Heretical and Blasphemous, infamous to Christian Religion, and destructive of all Government, both in Church and State" prompted accusations of popery.¹⁸ Edward Pettit found in this declaration material to include in his *Visions of Government*, a fictionalized exposé of "The *Antimonarchical* Principles and Practices of all *Fanatical Commonwealths-men*, and *Jesuitical Politicians*." In a Dantean tour of the Restoration's political and religious landscape, Pettit relates an allegorical version of the book burning at Oxford, wherein he groups the mainly Protestant authors together with an anonymous crowd of Jesuits: "At our first entrance, how wonderfully was I surpriz'd to see *Hobbs* and *Baxter*, *Knox* and *Buchanan*, *Hunt* and *Gilby*, *Milton* and the *Jesuits*, sitting all together like friends, but in a very disconsolate posture!"¹⁹ In this vision, Milton and his Catholic acquaintances are

¹⁷ John Northleigh, *The Triumph of our monarchy, over plots and principles of our rebels and republicans, being remarks on their most excellent libels [etc.]* (London, 1685), 9-10.

¹⁸ The characterization of books ordered to be burned at Oxford is drawn from James Wright, *A Compendious View of the Late Tumults & Troubles in this Kingdom by Way of Annals for Seven Years* (London: Edward Jones, 1685), 178. The list of authors whose works were ordered burned included Andrew Fletcher, George Buchanan, Richard Baxter, and Thomas Hobbes.

¹⁹ Edward Pettit, *Visions of Government* (London, 1684), 148-9.

“Fanatical Wizards, who are in pain, whilst their charms of Rebellion are burning.” As the narrator learns this, an anonymous “Physician” throws open the door to a courtyard, wherein the narrator and his guide, Seignior Christiano, witness a “great Fire” of burning books. The remainder of the episode is spent interviewing these figures after they have been administered a cordial of “Impudence, Contradiction, and Obstinacy” that causes them to make conciliatory apologies for their previous religious and political dissent.²⁰ The tract clearly offers an allegorical lampoon of the ideological back-pedaling of certain disenfranchised dissidents. Even as Milton’s reputation as an anti-papist was circulated and disputed, polemicists asserted his intimacy with Rome, easily grouping him with insurrectionary Jesuits in a single socio-political allegory.

Pettit’s *Visions of Government* represents another variation on the link between puritan sectarians and crypto-Catholics unified in their shared non-conformity, but his account is unique in its own fictive awareness: it is as much vision as it is polemic. Pettit forms his narrative around historical facts—such as the 1683 Oxford book burning—but he employs a sensational fictional framework that elaborates upon these facts. Historical and biographical realities are useful to Pettit insofar as they can be converted into more flexible fictional forms and distorted to serve his propagandistic argument. The ease with which Pettit stages Milton in his ostensible fiction foregrounds the very fictiveness of the previous claims for Milton’s popery. None of the polemicists mentioned above is making the simple and absurd argument that Milton was an actual practicing Catholic. In fact, a great deal of contemporary polemic emphasized Milton’s anti-popery, including Marvell’s infamous *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England*, which appeared just two years before Oates’s *True Narrative* had reignited the

²⁰ Ibid, 149-50.

popish accusations against Milton.²¹ Rather, their arguments rely on social tropes for Catholicism: religious and political non-conformity, threats to Protestant unity, polemical casuistry, menacing indecipherability, and hypocritical puritan zealotry. In order to make these arguments, they had to distort the literal meaning of Catholicism—adherence to the doctrines of the Roman church—by invoking its alternative social meanings. In a culture that remembered and reiterated Milton’s strong anti-Catholic sentiment, the idea of “popery” had to take on the flexibility allowed by figurative associations in order to be used as an effective epithet. Within the fictional framework of propaganda, where the charges against Milton were less accountable to standards of proof, the figurative meanings of “popery” could work alongside the literal meanings, blurring the distinctions between “Catholic-like” and “Catholic.” To construct authority for their claims, polemicists resorted to a strategy of literariness to prevent their audiences from taking their claims literally.

Nonetheless, in the face of this fundamental fictionality, these renderings of Milton as a papist became more than fodder for partisan polemicists and began to carry the weight of “true account” that their authors promised in their prefatory material. Although the fictional foundations of Milton’s Catholic reputation were essential to the success of the libel, a reference to that reputation does appear—if only briefly and amidst stronger and more popular opinion—outside of the contentious and overwrought public sphere of propaganda. In a diary entry dated 1698, Zachary Merrill mentions several of Milton’s widely known professional and literary achievements, and that he died a papist:

Milton a good Grammarian a schoolmr, he practis’d the Doct Divorce

²¹ Andrew Marvell, *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England* (Amsterdam, 1677).

upon his own wife, at last taken to be under Secretary to Oliver, vindicated
the Cutting of th Head agt Salmasius, for wch never call'd to Account, but
He had a brother that was a Papist, and he ('twas that) dyed one.²²

Even if this entry does not reflect a widespread contemporary belief that Milton was a practicing papist, it does signal that Milton's reputation as a papist existed outside the vexed arena of polemical exchange. While the polemics that influenced Merrill might have been constructed out of political exigencies that accelerated after Milton's death and peaked during the Exclusion Crisis, there is no political payoff when Merrill reiterates their charges in his diary. His account relies on its own form of authorization independent of public opinion. Merrill values the fictionalized Milton constructed in Restoration polemic as well as the biographical Milton grounded in the facts of his public career. This portrait folds Milton's figurative Catholicism back into his private biography, creating a hybridized figure that Merrill accepts as historically valid.

Attention to the Restoration's political environment, and to popery's alternative meanings and implications during the period, help the polemical tracts make sense to a modern audience, but claims of Milton's popery outside of a public, political context are more problematic. How did the tenuous claims of polemical rhetoric get transformed into a biographical fact readily and casually accepted by Milton's near-contemporaries? One explanation is, of course, that Merrill's entry is singular, and it represents a unique gullibility on Merrill's part, rather than a larger social phenomenon. This, however, seems unlikely: what little evidence we have suggests that Merrill had the background of

²² Oxford. Bodleian Library. Rawlinson MS D.1120.

someone fully able to recognize, understand, and approve of Milton's non-conformity.²³ Perhaps, on the other hand, it was the very fictive nature of this particular brand of propaganda, rather than its believability, that made it seem like a fact. Any actual attempt to authenticate Milton's Catholicism would have been undermined by his popular legacy as a strident anti-papist. Dismissed as fiction, however, these accounts could have operated independently of the supervision of official record or memory, allowing them to proliferate, expand, and insinuate themselves into public, and then private, understanding. If so, the fictive status of the attacks may have given them a viability that extended beyond simple believability. Through the repetition of their fictions, in other words, Milton's opponents were able to create and nurture a defamatory biographical fact that would have been untenable just two decades earlier.

Merrill's entry may, finally, hint at the source of the phenomenon itself. Free from the polemical realm's demands to fictionalize, it stands as an observation, not an accusation. For Merrill, Milton's popery was simply known, a biographical fact equivalent with his tenure as Latin Secretary. This assumption highlights exactly how tenuous and contrived some of these accusations of popery were, particularly the extrapolation that Milton's anti-Catholic sentiment is evidence of his crypto-Catholic sympathies. We can acknowledge, and his contemporaries would have agreed, that crypto-*anything* is an unlikely category for Milton. He was included in Merrill's diary because, even twenty-five years after his death, he could not be ignored. I would like to suggest that this prominence itself may have helped construct his Catholic legacy.

²³ Stephen Wright identifies Merrill as the son-in-law of ejected minister and schoolmaster, Samuel Ogden, in his DNB entry on Ogden. Wright reports that Merrill acted as the usher for Ogden's school and recorded the schoolmaster's teaching methods. Merrill's diary entries substantiate this role and further demonstrate a fulsome understanding of, and sympathy for, the non-conformist controversies of his day.

The celebrity that prompted Merrill to include Milton in his diary also helped define the popery Merrill found notable. For Milton and his contemporaries, Rome's restrictions on conscience characterized its tyranny. The immediate threat was not an impending invasion by a Catholic army; it was the intellectual servility imposed by forced adherence to papal doctrine. This characterization of Catholicism as a restriction on liberty was particularly durable, persisting in the face of contradictory historical realities: in spite of the loyalty of English Catholics to the monarchy during the Civil War, royalist and republicans alike sustained the link between Catholicism and arbitrary or absolutist rule throughout the Restoration.²⁴ In this respect, to be a papist meant to be a formidable social figure who denied liberty of conscience. The terms of popery, in other words, are grounded in force of personality. Milton's visibility as an agitating non-conformist and supporter of the regicide, coupled with his polemical hectoring, qualified him as a papist in this sense. Milton's detractors emphasize his demanding indomitability in their characterizations of his Catholicism: he "is good only at Batteries," is affiliated with a regicidal cabal of "confident Scriblers," and in his capacity as a "great Oracle" he exonerates Rome "with his usual confidence," only to choke on his own "Obstinancy" after the Restoration. For the loyalists that he targeted in his polemic, Milton was an unsuffering and insufferable spokesperson for parliamentary and puritan reform, whose confident pleas for toleration seemed themselves a tyranny. The prominence and forcefulness of his advocacy transformed Milton the celebrity apologist into a metonymic substitute for the reformist doctrines and disciplines he championed. His character alone channeled the multifarious dissent that had dogged loyalists for decades. By the time his opponents began to charge him as a papist, "Milton" had become a social form that

²⁴ Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance*, 185.

signified a particular brand of institutional values and practices, rather than a social person who simply advocated for those values and practices. His name was fast accumulating the daunting meanings that the Eighteenth Century would eventually refer to as the “Miltonic.”

As a social form, Milton was subject to the revisionary efforts of royalist polemicists seeking to deconstruct the forms and figures of the Protectorate and reclaim control over the imagery of national identity and political loyalty. Looking to exert control over the perceived rigidity of the republic, for example, royalist writers enthusiastically rewrote Cromwell’s iconographic masculine authority as feminine and tyrannical incontinence.²⁵ Similar revisions of his “Goos-quill Champion” were inevitable. *The Character of the Rump* offers the richest example of this iconographic renovation of Milton, dismantling his social identity like the body of a Petrarchan mistress. In this characterization, Milton is reduced to a disjointed assemblage of stereotypes —cuckold, heretic, regicide, divorcer—and he is thereby disarmed. Fractured, he gets reduced to a cowardly champion fighting his battles with quills, impotently reliant on attendants in his blindness. By also leveling charges of popery against Milton, these Restoration polemicists were attempting to dissolve the foundation of Milton’s indomitable reputation as an unimpeachably Puritan regicide. Each new accusation of popery redefined the terms of his sedition in ways that were based on Milton’s reputation, but that also experimented with the flexibility of the epithet “papist” in order to discover weaknesses in his legacy. For these insistent polemicists, Milton’s popery is non-falsifiable. As they have redefined it, popery both characterized and was a characteristic

²⁵ Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 136.

of the Miltonic. But in order for this unlikely marriage of the Catholic and the radically Protestant to hold, the two categories “papist” and “Milton” had to collapse into each other: Milton had to be redefined in order to be Catholic, and Catholicism redefined in turn. The two categories lost their essential meanings in order to take on more historically specific and potent social ones. By combining two oppositional social forms—Milton and Rome—Restoration polemicists demonstrate the fundamental inadequacies of both as stable forms of social categorization.

The papist Milton is as much a chimera as that which Mary Evelyn finds in Cavendish’s chambers. The categories and categorized thinking that, decades earlier, would have made this hybrid unthinkable, have yielded to the “plastic power” of a society in constant flux. Like Cowley’s Pindaric muse, Stanley’s lovers, Hastings’s mourners, and Cavendish’s Empress, these Restoration minds have measured themselves to this “plastic power” and, by joining “new actions” to “old stories,” have made a “discourse to [themselves].”

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