

BEYOND AGENCY: WOMEN WRITING ROMANCE AS POLITICAL INTERVENTION
IN THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

by

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Abstract

Beyond Agency: Women Writing Romance as Political

Intervention in the English Revolution

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This project examines four sub-aristocratic seventeenth-century women who wrote romance and historical narrative as political interventions during the social upheaval of the English Revolution: Judith Man defends Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, to Parliament in her translation, An Epitome of the history of faire Argenis and Polyarchus (1640), of a French abridgement of John Barclay's Argenis; Suzanne Du Verger advocates for Catholics in her two translations of Jean-Pierre Camus' French romances, Admirable Events (1639) and Diotrephe (1641), as well as in Du Verger's Humble Reflections (1657), a vitriolic response to Margaret Cavendish's The World's Olio (1655); Anne Bradstreet rejects English "romance" for New English history in The Tenth Muse (1650); and Anna Weamys reexamines women's political roles in her royalist yet moderate A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia (1651).

In order to reconstruct the political contributions of each author to their varied political causes, I examine the conversations between their texts and paratexts, how their books speak to and for their authors' social positions, their revisions of the uses of

romance, and their political subtexts. Each woman belonged to a class that had unusual access to the aristocracy because of their service to noble families, although they themselves had no real claim to titles or were gentry. They adapt the genre of romance, which had been so often used as a discourse of aristocratic display, for their own political purposes, which range from defending Catholicism to revising the Puritan Plymouth Bay Colony's approaches to internal dissent. I argue that these authors sought agency to redress political grievances rather than to achieve authorship. When seen together, these texts constitute a new involvement for sub-aristocratic women in imaginative literature, one that continues after the Restoration.

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Introduction

During the English Revolution, doorways were places of information and dispute, both literally as entrances to public places and figuratively in the prefatory materials fronting texts, whether circulating in print or in manuscript. David Cressy describes physical thresholds in the early seventeenth century as information centers for an increasingly inquisitive and literate public: “Many of the subversive writings that scandalized the early Stuart authorities first appeared on public thresholds (places of entry and egress, half indoors and half out, on walls, gates or doorways, or entrances to churches, churchyards, or shops)” (322-23). He further notes that the tenor of public discourse on these physical thresholds became increasingly contentious in the late 1630s (324). In this dissertation I argue that during the English Revolution textual “thresholds” performed a similar function for women, who did not have a presence on those public thresholds. Prefatory materials, the textual equivalent to Cressy’s physical thresholds, provided an alternative space for women to perform entrances into public discourse. Prefaces, Dedications, Commendatory Poems, and Letters to the Reader were places “half indoors and half out,” staged versions of the public threshold, more calculated and less spontaneous, but still disputatious.

The disruptions of the civil wars, the subsequent tumultuous Interregnum, this new availability of political debate in physical and textual thresholds and elsewhere allowed voices from lower social strata and reforming religious groups a new publicity. Women seized upon these disruptions as entrances for the speaking and writing of their

own political and religious concerns. In this project I look at four women writing prefatory materials and narrative, and I argue that a tradition of sub-aristocratic woman-authored romance emerged in the years 1639-57, one that combined aesthetic traditions of romance with political and religious concerns. Feminist scholarship on women's literature of this period has focused primarily on texts written by the aristocracy and the struggle of these women to justify and present themselves as authors. In contrast, the prefatory materials of my four authors reveal these romances tried to be genteel, but not aristocratic. Authorship was not the goal, but the means to advance various political agendas. In striving to further their agendas, women continued to write politically motivated romances beyond England's revolutionary years.

In an earlier stage, this dissertation was as an examination of women's prefatory materials as an overlooked literary genre that both protects and promotes public feminine discourse and shows women manipulating rhetoric and form with a finesse that has been underappreciated. Physically and generically a liminal genre, prefatory materials show women becoming literary critics, as well as social commentators—actors well outside the private sphere—as they measure the public possibilities of their texts. These textual beginnings also display both men and women negotiating the public reception of women's books.

Often we have read prefatory materials as though they factually document the material details of textual production and authorial intentions and identities. Instead we ought to recognize that in their canny rhetorical stances and marketing ploys, prefatory

materials epitomize the particular combination of audacity and servility that was the lot of early modern sub-aristocratic authors. When introducing women writers, these paratexts respond to public anxiety about feminine authorship in order to justify and contain the scandal of their texts. They also model how to read women's texts. As such, textual thresholds provide avenues for examining the history of women's authorship, and I was trying to find the ways that individual women constructed themselves as authors. While writing that dissertation, however, I found that these texts were also cultural and political interventions. Focusing on women's authorship *per se* obscured the fact that these texts were creating and shaping a new and vibrant tradition of politicized romance.

Authorship for its own sake may have motivated women of more privileged classes who experienced literary coteries and laureate prototypes (like Jonson, Spenser, and Raleigh), but it did not propel early modern sub-aristocratic women into print. In light of this observation, this project became an exploration not only of the beginnings of English women's authorship, but also of the increasing contributions of sub-aristocratic women to public debate. I discuss four authors who used the intersection of the genres of romance and prefatory materials in their rhetorical strategies: Judith Man in her translation, An Epitome of the history of faire Argenis and Polyarchus (1640), of a French epitome of John Barclay's Argenis; Suzanne Du Verger in her two translations of Jean-Pierre Camus' French romances, Admirable Events (1639) and Diotrephe (1641), as well as in Du Verger's Humble Reflections (1657), a vitriolic response to Margaret

Cavendish's Olio (1655); Anne Bradstreet in The Tenth Muse (1650); and Anna Weamys in A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia (1651). All but Bradstreet were writing prose fiction romance; I include Bradstreet because her histories in verse attempt to achieve similar goals, also using narrative, that Man, Du Verger, and Weamys were accomplishing using romance strategies on the other side of the Atlantic. Bradstreet's geography accentuates her criticism of English politics, and she chooses history over romance to politicize literary genre.

Romance, politically complicated and often suspiciously secular, and yet England's most popular reading material outside religious texts, was a potentially compromising genre for the chaste woman writer. Prefatory materials, always added after the main text had already been written and perhaps already typeset, constituted a genre of posed beginnings and public presentations of authorship. In the combination of these two genres, romance and prefatory materials, exists a narrative of women intervening in public discourse, taking advantage of the English Revolution's explosion of radical voices in print, and collectively (and inadvertently) creating a tradition of political participation in women's imaginative literature. In this dissertation I track how women's voices of protest developed in their imaginative literature during the English Revolution. As a result, women's production of romance increased significantly after the Restoration, whereas it had been rare before 1640. Carol Barash discusses the "residual voice of protest" as a defining force in the development of Restoration women's shared poetic ideals (7). Authorship may not have been a primary or conscious goal for these

authors in the mid and late seventeenth century, but they developed an authorial self awareness as they wrote political polemic.

Feminist criticism has dug deeply and successfully to find a history of women reading and writing in spite of patriarchal prohibitions. In looking so persistently for authorship as an event in itself, feminists have unintentionally made print publication the goal of women's literary endeavors;¹ consequently they have found authors, but not those authors' motivating agendas. Feminists have also looked hard at the ways women have been positioned within predominantly male paradigms of discourse. The scholarship of the last ten years has not, however, recognized how the complexities of women's literary interventions spoke to their own culture and how women authors attempted to manipulate contemporary conversations and crises. As a result, women's authorship in this period looks less substantive than it is. In the "authorship" paradigm, women's romance produced during the English Revolution looks like derivative mimicry of a popular form. When seen within the English Revolution context of romance as a political discourse, women's romance is original and inventive. Furthermore, women writing romance did not accept the rules of the uses of romance that scholars have reconstructed, namely that romances of this period are usually royalist and depend on roman à clef for their political topography.² In fact, women used romance as a strategy

¹ Margaret Ezell has been the tireless and thorough exception, from The Patriarch's Wife (1984) through Social Authorship and the Advent of Print (1999). Ezell has recently recorded the 1996 discovery of a manuscript of verse and prose by Hester Pulter, miscatalogued for years at the University of Leeds Brotherton Library, as a telling example of what her arguments have long claimed ("Laughing Tortoise").

² Lois Potter discusses roman à clef along with other secretive discourse in the English Revolution in

for defending their religion, as in Suzanne Du Verger's two collections, or to revise political ideology, as in Judith Man's translation, or to protest missing women's voices in political rhetoric, as in Weamys' Arcadia.

When we only look at the mechanisms of women achieving poetic agency, we miss how their texts changed or attempted to change public discourse. We have settled for women's texts as being reflexively concerned with their own existence, and we have missed the activism we wanted to find, namely, women intervening in their cultural moment. This group of four early modern sub-aristocratic writers is more interested in influencing public debate than in arguing for their right to authorship. And yet authorship is clearly a useful tool for them. In her prefatory materials, each of my authors claims an authorial lineage and either overtly or obliquely recognizes a nascent tradition of women's literary production and places herself within it. These paratextual claims for textual continuity attempt to create a tradition far larger than the individual author's endeavors. Similarly, a part of the feminist task has been to catch the suppressed women's voices of the past and release them into the service of women's liberation. We look in their texts for evidence of their relevance to our own "woman question," but in doing so, miss the kinds of liberation that these women themselves sought in their contemporary religious, social, and political forums. These authors *perform* public speech rather than defend their right to do so, making their "feminism" more opaque to us, but also more exciting when read in their cultural context.

The scholarly focus on *how* women enact literary authority grows out the task of recovering texts, and this project would not exist without that recovery. I want, however, to return to *why* we first looked for these early modern writing women, namely, their political presence. Looking at previously obscure imaginative texts produced during the English Revolution, I argue that these women-authored romances were correcting what they saw as grave errors in their society. Their texts are far more ambitious than we have recognized. Although it is difficult to assess their effects, they were not entirely ignored, as seen in John Woodbridge's note about other women writers in his prefatory poem to Bradstreet's first book:

If women, I with women, may compare,
 Your Works are solid, others weake as aire;
 Some books of Women I have heard of late,
 Perused some, so witlesse, intricate,
 So void of sense, and truth, as if to erre
 Were only wisht (acting above their sphear)
 And all to get, what (silly soules) they lack,
 Esteeme to be the wisest of the pack. [sig. A5]

Woodbridge celebrates Bradstreet's successful authorship in comparison to other women's books that he considers failures. As I will discuss in chapter three, Woodbridge was entirely in tune with the political possibilities of his sister-in-law's book. Man's and Du Verger's narratives were in print and from thoroughly different political orientations.

His comment verifies the currency of women's books as well as his perception of their class aspirations ("above their sphear"). In his derision of women attempting to write witty books, we get a sense that women's literature achieved visibility, though with varying degrees of acceptance. By choosing narrative instead of the tracts and prophecies that were the choice of public text for other women, these four writers deliberately entered a more sophisticated discourse, one that required a sense of literary genre and form as a forum for their political drive. While romance has an important history within the era's royalist discourse, the four authors featured here, Man, Du Verger, Weamys, and Bradstreet, each use their texts as statements of diverse political ambitions and religious hopes, in the service of Catholicism, Puritanism (of the sort that fled England to create a theocracy), moderate parliamentarianism, and royalism.

My work participates in a new phase of literary criticism that interprets the incorporation of early modern women authors into the canon. Instead of focusing on the struggle of poetic agency, it is time to look at how women's texts represent other kinds of agency within their culture. Danielle Clark, in The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing (2001), challenges earlier habits of critical reading that have kept positioning women's authorial voices within rigid formulas shaped by the loudest Renaissance voices denigrating women's authorship: "If early modern prescriptions regarding women's capacities and roles had been taken at their word, we would have no literary output at all from women" (3). Susan Wiseman's study, Conspiracy and

Silence (2006), on early modern women's political work in the seventeenth century, shows how their prescribed exclusion from public speech resulted in more flexible modes of participation, not silence. Catharine Gray, in Women Writers and Public Debate in Seventeenth-Century Britain (2007), looks at the problematic public/private divide that has defined so much literary criticism of early modern women's authorship and identifies political concerns in the genres of poetry, prophecy, and treatise in the English Revolution.

Man, Du Verger, and Weamys have been little studied in the five or ten years that their texts have been readily available in Early English Books Online, the Ashgate editions, the electronic databases, Orlando and Renaissance Women Online, because critics have been looking for women producing authorship in male models. Richard Helgerson's terms, "laureate," "courtly amateur," or "professional," offer the most helpful formulations of early modern authorship, but they constitute a largely male paradigm. The laureate model of poetry presents the author's self in his literature as well as a sense of his works' national importance. Helgerson's examples of Jonson, Milton, and Spenser describe "three poets whose ambition preceded and determined their work, three poets who strove to achieve a major literary career and who said so" (1). Professional authors received pay for their work, although this category at times overlaps with the definition of the laureate. Amateur poets, on the other hand, engaged in poetry as a pastime that usefully highlighted their own aristocracy. Helgerson points

out that Sidney writing the Arcadia and then dismissing it as a youthful toy indicated conspicuous leisure (64).

Where Helgerson's paradigms can be usefully applied to women's literature, the writers are either from extreme privilege or are highly unusual exceptions. For example the amateur model has been at times a successful one for women of privilege who were privy to male amateur texts and the kinds of coteries that produced them. Mary Wroth's rich and allusive court and familial background placed her Urania and sonnets into a readymade amateur network; Arcadia was a signature family text and Sidney's fame and glories provided a handy and enabling mythology.³ Amy Scott-Douglass fits Margaret Cavendish's definitions of her own authorship into the laureate paradigm.⁴ At the end of the English Revolution, Aphra Behn is often celebrated as the first woman to earn her living by writing, an accolade that first legitimized her work to literary critics.⁵ The existence of one professional woman writer at the end of the period points to the absence of that model's availability for most women.

Man, Weamys, Bradstreet, and Du Verger do not adopt the language of the laureate, the amateur, or the professional because the semiotics of that literary system were largely unavailable to them. They did not imagine a Virgilian progression of

³ Mary Lamb discusses the "safe houses" where the Sidney women met and shared manuscripts (149-51), and Margaret Hannay notes Mary Sidney's involvement in cross-gendered manuscript circulation (Philip's Phoenix 109-10). Even the celebrated censorship of Wroth's text was not primarily a suppression of women's writing itself. Sir Edward Denny fought the way his family had been represented in Wroth's romance, not that it had been represented at all. Instead of correcting the representation itself, he chose to attack its author, and her gender provided an additional and convenient target.

⁴ Scott-Douglass looks at Cavendish's prefaces as building her reputation as the first woman laureate.

⁵ Ezell discusses the Behn's landmark status as the first professional writer in women's literary history (Writing Women's Literary History 47).

accomplishment, and neither could they be professional authors looking for a livelihood based on aristocratic favor and patronage and the bestowal of offices.⁶ Each of the women I discuss in this dissertation fashions a public voice in order to intervene in her society for a cause which she perceives as greater than authorship in itself.

In summary, this project covers the points of entry for four sub-aristocratic women seeking a public voice in order to participate in the extended political and social crises of the civil wars and Interregnum (two eras within the English Revolution). I argue that the civil wars and the years leading up to the first battles generated ongoing cultural disruptions that created opportunities for women's public voices, even those from traditionally undereducated and powerless classes. The intersection of romance with prefatory writing produced a discourse of authorship en route to advancing the author's politics. One place we find this intersection is in the printed book. In the material beginning to the woman's book is a tug of war between various representations of her authorship. Because this front matter was produced after the main text, it did not materially change it, but that does not mean it did not try. Prefatory materials attempt to precondition the reader's experience of the text and frame the woman author within its boundaries. Viewed together, these previously unstudied women's romances of the English Revolution constitute a new tradition—sub-aristocratic, feminine, and public—of women writing imaginative texts.

⁶ Arguably their texts may provide them the basis of going into service for an aristocratic family, as is imaginable in the case of Weamys and Man.

Before examining each of these authors in detail, I want to frame the culture within which they wrote, the England that was suffering deep political and cultural disruption from 1639-1660. Since much of this dissertation depends on prefatory materials as places of proclamation and disguise, I first describe both the early modern conventions of the preface and then summarize recent critical theories on the function of prefatory materials in English culture and literary culture more specifically. Various communities are represented in these books' prefatory materials: the high⁷ aristocracy of their dedicatees, the authors' uniform and perilous status in the margins of that world, a cadre of authorizing male literary forebears, and other women writers. In the next section, I discuss romance as a strategy and as extremely popular cultural material before and during the English Revolution. Issues of class inflect both romance as a genre and how my four authors use it as a strategy, so I move into a discussion of these four women's sub-aristocratic status and what that meant for their political and literary voices. The works I examine all came to print within the years 1639-1657, a period I discuss in the final section of this "Introduction" as the most politically explosive in Britain's seventeenth century.

Defining and Theorizing Prefatory Materials

The richness of early modern prefatory materials is in the diversity of their voices and forms. For women writers, dedicatory letters provide a fiction of a private audience

⁷ In this Introduction's section on class, I discuss the various "levels" of aristocracy and gentility of seventeenth-century England.

(the dedicatee) while stationers and writers of commendatory poems addressed public readers. The result is a confluence of representations of the woman author and a microcosm of the conflicting goals of and anxieties about women's texts. The front matter of books by Man, Du Verger, Bradstreet, and Weamys is the starting place for this project's exploration of how each woman positions her text as a way to interject her public voice into the conversation of the English Revolution. We cannot read these prefatory materials as simple statements of textual goals. Because they navigate cultural pressures on women's writing and the censorship of religious beliefs or political positions, they are complex rhetorical documents with highly specialized conventions. I read prefatory epistles and poems in conjunction with their main texts, and I also examine them within the context of the culture at large and the political goals of the author's community. Reading these layers of influence demonstrates how these romances of the English Revolution were political documents where women advocated for their communities and negotiated authorship as their means to a public voice.

With these sorts of complications in mind, in this section I first look at what constitutes "prefatory materials" and their conventions, and how recent criticism has defined their function in early modern literary culture. Then I look at the ways in which women's prefaces redefine their authorship as public presence. Sometimes they subvert prefatory conventions later in their main text, and other times they flatly refuse to participate in the typical prefatory façade.

Prefatory material constitutes a genre with its own customs. Although these practices were not expounded in treatises on the subject, writers of prefaces write as though the genre has fixed expectations, sometimes trying for themselves to fix those expectations as they write. Suzanne Du Verger, for example, begins Admirable Event's Dedication with an explanation of how such letters should work and how her letter fulfils those dictates. Various contributors to paratext critique the weaknesses of the form: writers of commendatory poems say the authenticity of their admiration will go unnoticed because most commendatory poems exaggerate their praises; authors complain of their own utter abjection in a dedicatory letter, only to claim authority over the text in their letter to the reader; or as Elizabeth Cary does, they will abandon the modesty topos entirely, observing that they would not have sent their work to the press if they did not think it good reading.

Within prefatory materials are a variety of sub-genres: dedicatory letters, commendatory poems or epistles, and letters to the reader. Women writers adapted the conventions of each form in order to manipulate feminine authorship into a phenomenon that would work for their individual goals. Weamys and Man both dedicated their texts to the daughters of noble families, creating an intimacy by claiming kinship via their shared femininity. These prefatory letters were calculated to appear as private correspondence, which made them all the more irresistible to the public reader. The directions given to the dedicatee, usually a privileged aristocratic woman, in fact enclose directions to the reader at large, who inevitably will ponder the "private"

dedication. The fiction of the private letter is just that, a fiction.⁸ Commendatory poems, inserted by other authors, immediately complicate the woman writer's reading instructions by modeling a series of interpretations before the reader ever arrives at the main text. In contrast to a posed desire for privacy, the succeeding prefatory voices establish competing readings that focus on the author's sex or her source text, but not on the romance itself. Instead of trusting the author's own claims or these prefatory literary critics, we must read prefatory materials in conjunction with the author's text and cultural moment in order to get a sense of their intended public interventions.

Prefatory materials belonged to a space physically apart from the title page's claim of the book's contents. In fact they were often produced in their own gathering and edited in later re-printings. Half in the text and half out, printers, authors, and "friends" added prefatory materials after the advertised main text had already been printed. The tone and style of front matter was specific to the author's subject matter and class: writers of religious works express apprehension at their books being included in bookstalls cluttered with secular works (Saenger 30). Or, as in the case of Samuel Gott's 1650 religious treatise, An Essay on the True Happiness of Man, in Two Books, they spurn the entire practice of prefatory display: "I Beg no Patronage, I need no Apology. Truth is the best & indeed only true Patroness; if in any thing I have offended her, let it be as a Null among ciphers, and signify nothing" [sig. A4]. Political prefaces are bold and declarative for their side, as seen in innumerable pamphlets and newsbooks

⁸ Margaret Ferguson suggests that women sometimes used print to codify their text, protect it from the errors of transmission, and keep their voices private.

produced to record the progress of the civil wars. Scientific texts have explicit explanations of their scientific authority.⁹ Some academic aristocrats do not even bother with prefaces while aspiring gentry include a multitude of pieces explicating the merits of the author and his or her work. Young poets (especially university students) use an elaborate prefatory structure, as in Robert Baron's The Cyprian Academy, which I discuss below. Literary works often embrace paratext into the tone of their main text and alternate humility with directions on how to read. Despite all these variations, there was still an understanding of prefaces' rhetorical functions that had a history rooted in classical authority.¹⁰ Classical prefaces did not include other items, like commendatory poems and title pages. Since those other items frequently cross over and adopt prefatory functions, I gather these beginning texts under the terms "prefatory materials" or "front matter," which emphasizes the material aspect of the book while accentuating how that physicality creates an entrance into a text or fronts a text. Throughout this dissertation, I also refer to these items as "paratext," following Gérard Genette's theories of front matter.

Genette introduced the term "paratext" to refer to all textual matter external to the main text, whether physically present at the beginning or the ending of the book (he adopts *peritext* to refer to front matter alone and *epitext* for material at the end; I use

⁹ Dunn examines Bacon as an example of an emerging "prototype of scientific objectivity" (112) and as creating the "idea of scientific community" (125) in his prefaces.

¹⁰ Kevin Dunn describes the modesty topos as the most enduring legacy of the Classical preface (1-7). Additionally the conflict between the leisure necessary to produce texts and the virtue of public life continues in various forms in more learned early modern prefaces (5).

paratext because at times I include epitaphs or paratextual moments within the main text, as in Cavendish's internal prefatory letters beginning different sections of Olio). Genette also defines paratext by its effect: how it presents the book to the reader (is "made present" as well as is "presented"). Paratext is a genre "characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility" (3). Since it draws attention to the act of writing, as a genre it is reflexive, almost always referring to its own tradition, whether bemoaning the exaggerations that most prefaces make and declaring its own significant differences, or describing the function of prefaces.

Transferring Genette's idea of authorial responsibility to early modern books creates some complications. For instance, while the early modern author often does address the reader, prefatory materials collect several other representations of the author, presenting an amalgamation of contemporary discourses on authorship and then on this author in particular: the printer or stationer markets a product, a friend defends and claims association with a public voice, a relative negotiates a family reputation. Early modern paratext represents and produces authorship, perhaps a more literal "author-function" than we usually imagine. When women are the authors in question, the paratext has an increasingly complicated task, selling the text to a potential buyer while at the same time defending the chastity of a woman's public voice.

The issue of women's chastity as it relates to printed texts requires a brief digression. A woman's printed text was unusual and faced the early modern propensity

to connect everything a woman did with her chastity; however, that pervasive concern about feminine chastity can be seen as a cultural reflex, not a persistent focus. I am not contending that Suzanne Hull's discussion of Renaissance femininity as chaste, silent, and obedient is inaccurate (135-42), but pointing out that that trio of virtues was a preached ideal, not a reflection of women's own ideals or their reality. Chastity received such automatic and quotidian lip service that it appears to be a perpetual and overarching concern, and it was. And yet, it also was not. It was not so much genuine critique as handy grounds for condemning feminine misbehavior. A woman's disregard for her own chastity would receive punishment and a collective cultural indignation would erupt, but that does not mean, as has been claimed,¹¹ that any woman's public voice or book resulted in accusations of prostitution. Contemporary scholars see chastity as *the* defining factor in women's lives, but I suspect that for writing women of the era, it did not dominate their authorship as much as it dominates our criticism of it. In women's prefatory materials, women and their presenters claim the author's chastity as a matter of course, but they do not design their entire paratext around it, which they would have done if printed women's voices were perceived as innately whorish and sexually inappropriate. In the sub-aristocratic books of the English Revolution, we see more contemporary attention focused on the sheer novelty of women's printed texts than on their sexuality. With that disclaimer in mind, "authorial responsibility," in Genette's sense, is still a luxury over which women authors had even less command

¹¹ For instance Wendy Wall connects women's "public speech and harlotry" (280).

than contemporary male authors. Bradstreet, for example, did not even know her book was going to be printed.

In order to read authorial statements that appear in paratext, we need to understand them not as transparent declarations of authorial hopes and intentions, but as bids to get a book bought and read without public shame or retribution. We need to look at these statements through the lens of the author's social limitations, the political situation greeting the text, contemporary generic conventions, the bookseller's marketing, and the very real possibility of public humiliation and state censorship if a book was deemed threatening. When aristocrats publish, they may declare a vague reluctance to print, but in fact their defenses do not express the same anxiety as those by authors from middling classes, who exist "between aristocratic amateurism and the marketplace" (Wall 3). Younger university men publishing literary texts—poetry and drama—mimic the aristocratic pose of a reluctance to print with elaborate prefatory materials; they tend to have larger collections of commendatory poems prefacing their works, paving the way for their social advancement and preferment. Baron's Cyprian's Academy, which I discuss in my final chapter on Anna Weamys, is a typical example of a young poet publishing out of Gray's Inn with ten long and fully signed commendatory poems by fellow students praising the poetry that follows and piggybacking on Baron's bid for some public recognition, all seeking "to inscribe their works precisely as gentlemanly pastimes as a means of acquiring social, if not literary, legitimation" (Wall 55-56).

One of the most frequent conventions of prefatory materials in early modern printed books is the claim for and defense of textual authority. The dedication both asks for preferment and conveniently adds the name of an aristocrat to the text; the dedicatee may not know anything about the book or its author, but the very presence of his or her name offers an aura of authority to the perusing customer, the potential reader. The stationer may offer his own explanation for the text's debut and provide a narrative textual history, balancing self protection with marketing concerns. Thomas Heath's introductory note to William Sales' (pseudonym) 1655 Theophania markets it as "severall modern histories Represented by way of ROMANCE: and POLITICKLY discours'd upon; by an English Person of Quality," thus offering mystique as a selling point. Heath defends his author's education and literary judgment, only adding, in his last line, a throwaway comment about the book's relation to recent history.¹²

Other prefatory commonplaces, the frequently claimed reluctance to print and the accompanying modesty topos, contrast with concurrent claims for the values of the text, whether religious, social, educational, or moral. Michael Saenger recognizes how clerical reluctance to print was based not on an aristocratic exclusivity but from not wanting to seem mercenary when printing sermons (30). The conventional commendatory voices that usually follow these presentations of authority use conflicting justifications and sometimes claim alternative sources of authority for the

¹² Victoria Kahn describes Theophania as emblematic of 1650s' royalists use of romance as "an analytical tool for reflecting on the causes of the war and contemporary crisis of political obligation" ("Reinventing Romance" 627).

decision to publish. Women's printed texts were still novel during the English Revolution and the front matter of these books offer a remarkable display of the various perceived obstacles to women's public voices and equally variant solutions, often prescribed by male readers, to justifying this particular woman's text (as opposed to women's writing in general). A single paratext contains conflicting versions of both who the author is and why she gets to write.

The way that the main text either reinforces or contradicts paratextual declarations teaches us how to read both an author's overt and covert statements. Authorial claims in prefatory materials are necessarily unreliable because of how writers are negotiating their authority in a public arena. This very complexity makes prefatory materials intriguing texts where women might justify their own agency only to dispense with it as a distraction later. Many women, like Weamys and Man, argue that paternalistic authorities insisted their books go to print; however, not every woman writer resorted to this excuse. Cary rejects prefatory convention altogether: "I will not make use of that worne-out forme of saying, I printed it against my will, moved by the importunitie of Friends. I was moved to it by my beleefe, that it might make those English that understand not French, whereof there are manie, even in our universities, reade Perron" [sig a3]. Furthermore, Cary thinks her translation is well done and says so. As a book dedicated to the queen and openly participating in the queen's project of proselytizing the English for the Pope, the modesty topos is not useful to Cary's project. Her paratext is unusually blunt, reinforcing that it is a dependent genre, one that cannot

be read apart from its main text. Often the author depends on that sense of contingency to get away from the focus on agency. Prefatory materials define authorship in an attempt to reach out to the reader by defining the ideal readership. The author we find in the preface is one posed for the reader.

Annabel Patterson noted in Censorship and Interpretation (1984) that critics have ignored the “dedications, engraved title pages, commendatory poems and epigraphs” that “alert the reader to his special responsibilities” (48). Three main studies have responded to this critical gap and provide background for my examination of four women working within the genre for their own political ends. In Pretexts of Authority: the Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface (1994), Kevin Dunn reviews the preface in light of Renaissance revisions of Aristotle’s suspicions of the preface¹³ and discusses prefaces as ongoing negotiations between public and private authorship. Dunn connects the emerging ideal of the public sphere in English political thought to the concurrently evolving form of the preface, noting that “from the middle of the sixteenth century onward, there developed a powerful ideology of the ‘common wealth,’ an ideology that stressed public utility, the good of the nation over that of private individuals” (8). For the early Tudors, a public man was one with enough rank and power to merit display of himself to commoners. By the 1640s, the “public” came to refer to the good of the “common” person, rather than a sphere containing the concerns of a

¹³ Dunn interprets Aristotle as distrusting prefaces because they are opaque and try to persuade a reader to judge a text before reading it (2).

few elite persons.¹⁴ Looking at canonical religious and scientific “pretexts,” Dunn highlights the changing uses of authority in early modern texts as “between the medieval and Enlightenment models of authority” (9). He revises Foucault’s definition of the author as existing when he or she becomes subject to punishment. Instead Dunn proposes that “texts, books, and discourses begin to need authors at the moment when their transgression itself seeks institutionalization. . . . when the subversive discourse finds itself on the brink of empowerment” (10). This changed definition of the “public sphere” is inextricably intertwined with the political events preceding the civil wars, especially the clashes between Charles I, Laud, and Strafford who strove to maintain the older meaning of “public sphere,” against the demands of Parliament for debate and popular input into national governance.

Dunn’s history of the preface and its uses in defining authorship provides an insight into the prefatory practices of Man, Du Verger, Bradstreet, and Weamys. In the rapidly changing political situation during the English revolution, women authors began to articulate new possibilities for their texts. The four women in this dissertation all position their writing in relation to spectacularly successful male literary authority: Man translates an epitome of the influential Argenis by John Barclay, Du Verger translates the well known Jean-Pierre Camus’ romances for an English audience, Weamys continues Philip Sidney’s famously unfinished Arcadia, and Bradstreet revises Du Bartas for the New World. Although they claim to grow their texts from established voices,

¹⁴ Dunn refers to Arthur B. Ferguson’s 1965 The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance (8).

they in fact revise that authority for the current cultural moment. These women's texts fit into a new public discourse that was beginning to value common conversation instead of displays of authorial majesty.

Wendy Wall's The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance (1993) tracks how front matter became a place to display social class, (the print version of the author's rank always aimed higher than reality). She identifies sixteenth-century conventions of paratext as a claimed reluctance to print, flattery of the reader, and contempt for the public reader. Noticing the desire for upward mobility that drove many "gentlemen" writers, Wall argues that class insecurities about printing result in a gendered discourse of the printing press in male-authored prefaces, especially in sonnet cycles and miscellanies; here the masculine press imprints the feminine, passive book, ostensibly feminizing the book's author as well. She argues that male poets mitigate the indignity of print by characterizing it as a masculine activity. Looking at women's prefatory materials—especially those by Mary Sidney, Aemelia Lanyer, and Mary Wroth—Wall discusses women's contrasting modes of self-authorization: "Just as Spenser, Gascoigne, and Daniel reshaped authorship by restructuring its relationship to femininity and love, these women writers enlarged the emergent concept of authorship by situating it within the tradition of female legacy, Biblical sanction, and family lineage" (339). Wall examines prefaces to vernacular love poetry produced by women of immense privilege or women intent on mimicking that privilege in print. Both groups focus on establishing a gendered poetic identity rather

than a public voice contributing to political conversation, which fits Dunn's calendar of the evolution of the public sphere in the seventeenth century.

Saenger, in The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance (2006), defines paratext by its textual engagement with the reader, arguing that paratext constituted both marketing of the book and, to a lesser extent, a conversation between readers and book producers. A chief virtue of his study is his inclusion of a wide range of early modern books—from instructional works to drama—and his recognition of how slanted the market was toward religious publications (to the point that other genres sometimes claimed religious overtones as a part of the book's advertising). He connects paratext with poetry, arguing that "front matter has a special relationship to the idea of literariness because it marks a boundary between the commerce of the book and the content of the book" (18). He devotes the largest part of his book to examining conventions of individual paratextual items, especially title pages, dedicatory letters, letters to the reader, and commendatory verses. Covering book publishing from 1580-1620 allows him to track prefatory conventions being established as the book trade increased its efficiency and became a successful economic enterprise. Saenger argues that the authorship of front matter was consistently unstable because of a) the mix of unverifiable claims made for advertising purposes, b) the material instability of the text (the order of prefatory items, or even their inclusion, depended on how they were sewn for an individual purchaser, which could easily change), c) and the

collaborative nature of front matter and its numerous authors, some identified and some not.

Dunn, Wall, and Saenger all recognize paratext as a textual place troubled by the conflicts between public expectations and individual authorial concerns. Paratext tries to draw readers into a text while at the same time instructing them how to read properly. Derrida's idea of the *supplément* suggests another paradigm for how prefaces work both for and against the main text. The *supplément* is both an addition to and a substitute for the difference between signifier and signified. Similarly, prefatory materials apologize for the text without being the text, and they add to the text while substituting for it. Front matter is extra, a negotiation for a text's reception, and at the same time it attempts to compensate for anything offensive within the text. Without becoming too enmeshed in this analogy, the idea of paratext as a compensation for the main text helps us to understand the many messages of paratext and what they hope to accomplish. If the main text has any deficiency, the paratext hopes to fill in those gaps by justifying the author's limitations; if the main text breaks rules, the paratext excuses it in advance by claiming the errors are printer's mistakes; if the main text can be misconstrued, the paratext tries to tell readers how to interpret it correctly; if the main text is incomplete or confusing, the paratext tries to stand in for those absences.

Women's prefatory materials function as a genre of authorship building, but they also must be read as rhetorical displays and not disingenuous declarations of women's literary authority. Paratext is more often mined for excerpt-worthy material to

relate to authorial identity than it is recognized for its rhetorical guises. I want my work to correct that tendency to believe authors' own prefatory representations of their texts. The preface is as much artifice as the work that follows. There are directions to read, but those directions should make us suspicious. Reconstructing strategies of women's authorship requires investigating a muddle of situational techniques of artful self promotion, all accomplished against a culture that dismissed women's intellectual production. Consequently, looking at prefatory materials as defending a woman's literary authority requires looking not only at her own description of her project, but also at the many other voices defining it and her voice. The demands of marketing coexist uneasily with defenses of feminine virtue and rank. Consequently the study of paratext must be balanced with readings of authorship found within the main text, especially when the authors in question are women whose own writing reinforces the very cultural constraints they are in the act of breaking.

With these goals of the paratext in mind, I argue that the reader is the subject of the preface as much as the author. While the paratext presents and defends the author, it also manages the phantom of the reader, navigating between the anxious author, printer, and stationer and the threatening reader. In the midst of the flattering dedicatory letters and the obsequious apologies are instructions to readers which in turn provide a way for us, arriving belatedly, to see early modern reading in action, albeit rehearsed action. This display of reading is at times countered by narratives within the main text that undo the prescribed reading approach offered in the preface.

The definition of what readers should be doing begins to slip. Looking at this unsteadiness in the understudied realm of women's reading and writing reveals how wily women readers and writers were and had to be. Their explanations of their books' conventional feminine virtues necessarily do not fit the political aims they simultaneously accomplish.

Women's agency especially occurs in the slippage between prefatory reconciliations of authorship with feminine virtue. The writer of the dedicatory letter claims a private reading community with other women that often conflicts with the text's public mission. With this privacy as a frequent pose, women authors then construct a literary authority from a miscellany of sources, a different dynamic from the masculine conflict between the individual author and the burden of Classical tradition. Most well known studies of successful Renaissance literary authority understandably gender it as a masculine concept,¹⁵ while studies of writing women depict women's authorship as accomplished via elaborate strategies and against great cultural odds.¹⁶ For instance, while men often represent their authorship in a preface or a letter to the reader, women write their version of authorship not in a letter addressed to public readers, but to a particular woman reader in a letter of dedication. This prefatory sub-

¹⁵ John Guillory, Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History; David Quint, Origin and Originality; Jacqueline Miller, Poetic License: Authority and Authorship in Medieval and Renaissance Contexts; Wendy Wall does devote a chapter to women's literary authority.

¹⁶ The most influential critical studies on early modern women's literature include: Elaine Beilin, Redeeming Eve; Suzanne Hull, Chaste, Silent, and Obedient; Barbara Lewalski, Writing Women in Jacobean England; Betty Travitsky, The Paradise of Women, Demers, Women's Writing in English: Early Modern England.

genre empowers women writers so much that, in some cases, the mode of dedication becomes the main text itself, as in Aemelia Lanyer's eleven long dedicatory poems and Anne Bradstreet's "The Prologue" in The Tenth Muse, making paratext an invaluable place to look for women's place in the literary tradition.

Margaret Hannay suggests that dedications and epitaphs, as genres, were "confined to the margins of discourse," and so were typical "feminine" genres ("Doo What Men May Sing" 149). Looking at a genre that exists on the sidelines, and yet in conjunction with main texts, provides special information about women writers. For the four authors in this dissertation, paratext functions as a negotiation into the contentious political conversation of the English Revolution. Sharon Achinstein's work on readers of the period characterizes them as actors in revolution, cast for their parts by the extraordinary output of printed material that was breaking down borders of geography, social constraints, and religion; England as a nation "began to participate in a national sphere for cultural exchange of ideas and information . . . The political nation, which in the Tudor age had been an elite men's club, expanded to encompass a literate populace in the revolutionary period" ("Texts in Conflict" 64). The consequence, the "potent and lasting transformation in the conduct of politics" (64), was an opportunity for voices usually kept at the edges of social discourse to contribute to this emerging national sphere. The new discourse emerges in prefatory materials. Liminal texts where writers position themselves as entering into public discourse become also the moment when they demand their readers' participation. In Milton and the Revolutionary Reader,

Achinstein describes writers “demanding that their audiences make political choices and they participate in the political process; in sum, they invoked a revolutionary idea of a reader” (3). When reading women’s prefatory materials in conjunction with their romances, we find a new sub-aristocratic class of readers and writers who participated in the public discourse of the English Revolution.

Romance and Paratext as Women’s Revolutionary Discourse

Romance presented, in fiction, a kind of heightened reality which was similar for many readers to the stress of the civil wars. Sir Charles Cotterrell, translator of the French Cassandra (1652), introduces his work with the acknowledgment that while, one decade earlier the story of this romance would have seemed mere fantasy to English readers, the complete upset of the English political system during the civil wars created an audience more receptive to the extremities of romance:

Her [Cassandra’s] ten years story is so artificially contrived, and with such exact decorum, that the truth whereon it is grounded, appears the greater fiction; yet neither can the strange successe of the Graecian Conquerour, the fatall destruction of the Persian Monarchy, the deplorable end of unfortunate Darius, the afflicted estate of his Royal Family in exile and Captivity, the easie compliance of his subjects with the prevailing Party, not any other passage in it seem improbable to us, whose eyes have in as short a space, been witnesses of such Revolutions, as hardly any Romance, but sure no History can parallel. [sig. a1].

In Gautier de Costes de la Calprenède's 1642 French original, Cassandra had focused on the feminine heroic; in its English version ten years later, it was a version of current events. Not only was romance a useful context for Revolution-era polemicists, but its stories of deposed kingdoms and royalty in distress now had a strange ring of truth. The connection of romance and contemporary cultural critique became more desperate and less opaque. Critical work on romance has begun to untangle the genre's political goals from its frivolous reputation, and I outline these changes in approach in this section. I argue that Man, Weamys, Du Verger, and even Bradstreet, in spite of her denigration of the genre, used romance as a strategy of public speech during the English Revolution. They did so by adapting its conventions to their needs and by navigating through contentious popular connections between women and romance. Because of the openness of the genre to revision and new authors, romance continued its tradition as a vehicle for political interventions, but with two new types of authors: now, women and sub-aristocratic authors were writing romance for the benefit of communities beyond the old royalist order.

Before it was a strategy, romance was a time-honored set of literary practices that could appear in several different genres. Although this project covers prose fiction and verse history in the 1640s and 1650s, romance as a literary term also describes drama, masques, epyllions, and epic; its inflections appear in almost every Renaissance literary genre. Victoria Kahn lists the cross-genre conventions of romance most popular during the 1630s and 1640s as "idealizing Neoplatonic fictions, the ethical extremes of

good and evil, a tendency toward allegory, and a plot often modeled on the quest” (“Hobbes” 5). Even within prose fiction important divisions exist—for instance, chivalric romance is more about quests while Heliodorean romance follows the preservation of chastity (against immense odds which became a part of the fun). But these divisions are not rules rigidly followed by romance authors themselves, so I hesitate to claim them as intrinsically defining the genre, especially during the English Revolution when so many boundaries, literary and otherwise, became suddenly flexible. A more helpful definition is to think about romance as a fluid genre, one where the author adapts generic conventions to fit an old form into a contemporary political discourse. Romance gets made and remade to fit many political situations. Spenser and Sidney, two important precedents, were revered during the period and were models of poets using romance simultaneously to honor and disrupt their monarch’s rule. The tradition of romance speaking to power was long and venerable by the time Man, Du Verger, and Weamys began their work, and they continued the tradition of adaptation, fitting romance to their sub-aristocratic politics.

Barbara Fuchs discusses romance as a strategy instead of a genre or a “mode,” as Northrop Frye would categorize it; she argues that it is “a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi, including idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity, that . . . both pose a quest and complicate it” (9). Women writing in the waning Renaissance of early modern England certainly use romance as a strategy, although not with the sense of delay and wandering

that Fuchs emphasizes. While the unfinished quality of romance does fit well with the uncertainties of war and a people trying to find their narrative within it, most of the romances I discuss were produced during or in the immediate aftermath of the wars, when extraordinary events, that once seemed the stuff of romance, were still being reported daily in the news books. Instead of continuing romance's atmosphere of delay, they borrow some of the certainty and closure of epic in order to offer a version of history that fits into their own political interventions. (I discuss below the relationship of these texts to authoritative male texts in terms of epitome, translation, and continuation, literary acts that use momentous epic functions without the momentous form and length.) Weamys, Man, and Du Verger offer romances that have definite endings. Weamys tidies up the loose ends of Sidney's finished romance in an effort to correct unfinished romance and project a conclusion onto revolutionary politics. Romance's extravagant stories were appealing because they were not too distant from the newsbooks' realities, but the strategy of deferral did not fit with the texts' political commentary or the culture's longing for closure and stability.

Helen Cooper describes romance's tendency to change its own conventions by calling the elements that change "memes" rather than conventions; a "meme" is "an idea that behaves like a gene in its ability to replicate faithfully and abundantly, but also on occasion to adapt, mutate, and therefore survive in different forms and cultures" (3). The analogy works for the mid-seventeenth-century changes in romance as well (Cooper ends her survey at 1616). During the English Revolution, the line between romance and

political discourse became thinner than ever as polemic became the dominant mode in all literary discourses of the day. Rosalie Colie argues that the tendency to reinvent genre was a hallmark of Renaissance literary invention (17); in the years of the English Revolution, this flexibility of genre increased.

It has become a critical commonplace that romance was an overtly political discourse in the 1640s. Lois Potter's 1989 study of romance as a royalist discourse (Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660), Paul Salzman's discussion of didactic romance in English Prose Fiction, 1558-1700 (1985), and Annabel Patterson's chapter on romance in Censorship and Interpretation (1984) all discuss romance as political discourse. Patterson describes Sidney's Arcadia as a particularly elegant case study of romance functioning as a politically coded text because of Sidney's own relationship with political power. Being in disgrace with Elizabeth I gave him a direct encounter with censorship. Patterson argues that the political inflections of Arcadia only increased during its extreme popularity during the seventeenth century. She suggests that Parliamentarians adopted it for their cause, aligning Sidney's militant Protestantism with their cause, until 1658 when royalists reclaim it (an arguable date if one looks at Weamys' moderate royalist text in 1651 as well as roman à clef romances in the early part of the decade).

Both sides found it a mode useful for their propaganda, although critical work on the period has tended to favor the royalist uses of romance. Lois Potter contends that "there were some literary forms which belonged specifically to the royalists, and which

were equally specifically the targets for satire by Parliamentarians. These were plays, whose performance had been forbidden by ordinance since August 1642, and romances. Simply to write in either form was to make a statement about one's relation to the party in power" (74). Kahn more recently argues that after the 1630s and 1640s, romance became a discourse that both sides adopted; she cites the example of Essex's defection to the Parliamentary cause as evidence ("Hobbes" 5-7). Kahn further argues that the great change in the 1650s was that "royalist romance now conjured up not only the world of aristocratic values, of love and adventure, but also the more mundane realities of passion and interest" (23). Royalist romance no longer was usually a reference to the rights of birth and lineage; rather, there was a sense that romance had been taken over.¹⁷ As Kahn puts it, the "romances of the 1650s foregrounded contingency" (23) rather than the inevitability of monarchical government. Although literary criticism has focused on royalist uses of romance, it was a contested genre and a strategy employed by both sides when useful for their propaganda.

Fuchs' reminder that romance was the most commonly shared literary experience¹⁸ in England shows what a wide context there is for examining romance in the period. Charles Carlton notes the difficulty that the aristocracy had in choosing sides once they realized revolution was inevitable. While many did not like the king personally or approve the record of his rule, they felt that their honor and loyalty was at stake and

¹⁷ Nigel Smith also discusses how both royalist and parliamentary literature adapted romance for their own political purposes (248).

¹⁸ Biblical literature was the dominant shared literature, so I assume Fuchs means literature beyond religious texts.

were motivated by an ethos of honor (52-59). Although the Puritan leadership used the language of a godly war, routing out papists and the appearance of papists,¹⁹ while royalists used a discourse of romance and chivalry and honor, both sides adopted the rhetoric of romance when it suited their purposes. And as I discuss in my chapter on Bradstreet, Puritans sometimes claimed Spenser and his romance, along with other staunch Tudor Protestants, as prophetic of their movement. In fact, the variety of political perspectives represented in these four women's books is much greater than the critical consensus of royalist romance would lead us to expect. The women featured in this dissertation adopted a diverse set of strategies for translating the stories and tropes of romance from the upper echelons of society to their individual sub-aristocratic concerns. As I will discuss in my section on class below, these women were outside the titled classes and yet experienced some of their privilege by educating or being educated with aristocratic children. For them, the civil wars were a political and literary opportunity to use romance as a strategy on behalf of their own communities, which were increasingly unified by the imperatives of religious beliefs.

While creating their own contemporary strategies of romance, women had a popularly imagined history with the genre that complicated their authorship of it. Elizabeth's ruses using romance to manipulate counselors and ambassadors were well remembered, both fondly and warily. She used romance to nudge her court into appropriate poses of submission, managing her courtiers with the rhetoric of romance

¹⁹ Carlton describes Parliamentary leadership countering the language of royalist honor with rhetoric of a holy crusade (59-65).

and plying them with language that would keep them subservient to her desire. Francis Bacon noted that Elizabeth's sexual politics—which permit “amorous admiration but prohibit desire”—played out “much like the accounts we find in romances” (cited in Montrose 84). The queen's courtiers neither expected nor were seeking a physical consummation; flattery constituted a crucial element in sustaining a political presence in the Elizabethan court. This memory of Elizabethan uses of romance combined with the nostalgia for her reign situated romance as both a successful discourse of power as well as a negative and manipulative one. John Watkins argues that civil war royalists remembered Elizabeth as “Gloriana, a quasi-divine being from whom power, virtue, and legal authority emanated to the realm at large” whereas Parliamentarians “preferred an alternative Elizabeth who yielded to masculine counsel” and had steadfastly opposed Catholicism returning to England (96). One's opinion of Elizabethan rule could define the appropriate uses of romance. Women's literature often shows the memory of Elizabeth as a powerful authorization for their writing.²⁰

In addition to the threat of powerful women using romance strategies for their own advantage, there was a fear that romance compromised chastity. Some popular invectives condemning romance as reading material unsuitable for any young person, especially women, presented easy grounds for suppression and criticism of a woman's text. Women prefacing romance were under some pressure to defend their texts since their genre was secular and somewhat threatening. Consequently these prefatory

²⁰ Lisa Gim discusses Diana Primrose's and Bathsua Makin's homages to Queen Elizabeth I and argues that she “had become a symbol of national pride and religious and political achievement” (183).

materials epitomize many of the problems of women's literary authority. And yet while the two earliest women writing romance, Margaret Tyler in 1578 and Mary Wroth in 1621, both encountered obstacles to their authorship, women writing during the English Revolution seem less concerned about these cultural prohibitions, a testament to the urgency of their ideological concerns.

Tyler's translation of the first part of a popular and multi-part Spanish romance, Diego Ortunez de Calahorra's Espejo de principes y cavalleros (El Caballero del Febo), made her the first Englishwoman on record to write a secular romance. Her often-cited argument that "if women can read romance then they should be able to write it," is not a sentiment encouraged in popular romances in the decades that followed. Rather, as Helen Hackett points out, prefatory materials continue to describe the use of romance as inspiring male heroism, leaving no space for female readers (61). It would be forty years until the appearance of a second woman's romance, Mary Wroth's The Countesse of Montgomerie's Urania.

Women characters occupied interesting positions within romance plots, often playing a passive object but also, in newer romances, surprisingly powerful actors, as seen in characters like Bradamante, Britomart, and Pamela. Barbara Lewalski identifies romance as a genre that informs that resistance, both in women's use of the genre in literary texts and in their imitation of it in real life escapades (311). In addition to discussing Wroth's major contribution to Jacobean romance, Lewalski identifies the ways that Princess Elizabeth and Arabella Stuart cast themselves as romance heroines.

Henrietta Maria (and Charles I) continued and expanded this Jacobean adoption of romance as strategic to their reign. When their power began to crumble, romances continued to appear, but now also authored by a sub-aristocratic class seizing the opportunity to remake politics and society. The political impetus of English Revolution romance may have spurred the increasing number of women's publications in the genre. Women caught in the action of the civil wars seemed at times to copy the great women characters of romance. Lady Derby defended her husband's home, Lathom House, while under siege. Her defiance and bravery so inspired the garrison entrapped with her that they cheered, "We'll die for his Majesty and your honour—God save the King," stormed out of Lathom House, and conquered the Parliamentary forces (Carlton 167). While some women defended their houses from siege, others worked the battlefield, at times reloading muskets and sometimes firing on the enemy themselves. Carlton records James Strong's poetic assessment: "To most 'tis known / The weaker vessels are the stronger grown" (qtd. in Carlton 165). Women who took on these male roles in the absence of their husbands were celebrated as fighting for the cause, whichever side for which they fought. They also acted out that common romance convention, the woman in man's armor, fighting for her own quest.

The growth of romance as a social discourse during the English Revolution was a contributing factor to the increase of women's work in the genre. After only two women's printed romances in 1578 and 1621, five women's romances appear within a twelve year period (1639-51). In the divisive years preceding the civil wars, three works

of romance by women were published: in 1639, Du Verger's Admirable Events; in 1640, Man's Argenis; and in 1641, Du Verger's second translation of Camus, Diotrephe. Then ten years later, in 1651, Anna Weamys Arcadia came to print. Margaret Ezell's article on the recent discovery of Hester Pulter's folio manuscript which includes poetry and a substantial original romance, composed between the years 1640 and 1660, reveals at least one other woman responding in romance. Pulter's volume shows one woman mounting a royalist public intervention in manuscript. Ezell notes that Pulter's husband retired from public life instead of participating in battle, "but what then immediately strikes one on reading her writings is that Hester Pulter was not silent, resigned, or detached about contemporary political events" ("Laughing Tortoise" 343). In the mounting pressures before the outbreak of the first civil war and the royalist use of romance during the English Revolution, women created opportunities for authorship. This increased production of imaginative literature by women was concurrent with an even greater explosion of women's prophetic literature. Andrea Fabrizio has recently argued that seventeenth-century prophetic women crafted their religious messages as "alternative approaches to authorial voice" (4).

Because of their complex relationship to romance, both as a literary genre and as a cultural poetic, early modern women adopted various strategies to explain and defend their involvement in such a charged genre. I had chosen romance as a parameter for a more detailed study of women's prefaces because of its popularization across class lines as a "woman's genre" and because of its occasional condemnation as dangerous reading

material for women because of its secularity. I unexpectedly discovered that looking at women's uses of romances reveals their participation in a political discourse more than a secular one. Political ideology was inseparable from religious belief in the period, so their romances are far less secular than many of their sixteenth-century predecessors.²¹ Women's prefatory materials are an especially rich place to see arguments of the genre at work because the ingredient of gender makes the need for defense much stronger. Although restrictions varied among different social groups and there were always exceptions, women's public voices were restricted. This sense of prohibition often increased when the genre in question was public and imagined expanded women's roles.

Several contemporary polemics denounced romance, arguing that its effects on women readers were especially insidious. Juan Luis Vives' condemnation of romance, in his frequently reprinted The Education of a Christian Woman (1528), was one of the most well known: "I wonder what it is that delights us in these books unless it be that we are attracted by indecency. Learning is not to be expected from authors who never saw even a shadow of learning. As for their storytelling, what pleasure is to be derived from the things they invent, full of lies and stupidity?" (qtd. in Fuchs 81). At the same time, other cultural authorities scorned the genre as effeminate and suitable only for the dull sensibilities of feminine or feminized readers.²² Hackett interrogates the

²¹ Examples include the prose romances by Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, and Thomas Lodge. Steve Mentz argues that these three popularized a form of commercial romance (3-4).

²² Hackett notes disparagement of romance was commonplace by the 1620s (176).

popular view of women's reputed weakness for romance, and especially how the genre was gendered feminine. The gendered prefatory addresses to readers of prose fiction began in the 1570s, but she argues that does not signal, as has been assumed, that romance's readers were women; instead she contends that the characterization of these texts as feminine in fact was a ploy to advertise them as titillating text to male readers. In her view later romance becomes more legitimately a women's genre—women are actually reading the romances, and prefatory addresses to women are in fact intended for women readers—and it becomes more of a cultural commonplace to inscribe romances as silly reading and a waste of time for anyone, but especially women. Lewalski confirms this change in Jacobean women reading and writing in the genre, noticing that women actively pursued it as a form, a genre and a strategy: “romance, identified for a century as a literary discourse especially attractive to and dangerous for women, was in this period preempted by them” (311). The prefatory materials to women's printed romances provide examples of their gendering of both the genre and authorship, and examples of how the material text can reveal the history of women's authorship. For example, the only paratext to Wroth's Urania is Simon van de Passe's engraving of a scene from her romance; the engraving seems to have been produced especially for her book, a material detail which reflects her unique relation to her text. That the engraving is produced exclusively for her text, suggests that she was more deliberate in her authorship and in her printing than she later admits.²³

²³ I am referring to the controversy initiated by Lord Denny concerning the Urania. Josephine Roberts'

The conventions of romance often overflowed into the style of their prefatory materials, and women authors (or their commendatory poem writers) request that the reader grant the same chivalrous reception that a knight would give a lady. Man writes her dedication in the rhetoric of romance. Weamys is described with romance imagery (and fights her way out). Du Verger redefines the genre from romance to history. Bradstreet rejects romance in favor of history, and yet employs romance tropes in her verse. Women writing romance have a particular relationship with the genre, partly due to its openness to many voices. While lyric poetry objectifies women, romance offers an opportunity for a public voice in the midst of political turmoil. Women capitalize on this multiplicity of voices and write their own fictions while at the same time writing their way out of being depicted as mere characters in a romance.

Traditional literary criticism has classified romance as a silly genre, unless under the pen of Spenser or Sidney.²⁴ New Historicism says that romance improved when it was encoded with political history, a development which informs my uses of romance. Another way to read the genre, however, is as a purely idealist form, a genre recording the longing for the way the world ought to be. Weamys' Arcadia is a strong example of a woman's idealist interaction with romance, especially because she revises Sidney's romance as a vehicle for social and political critique. When Weamys approaches Arcadia, she writes from within the failure of the politics featured in Sidney's book;

edition of Wroth's poems, The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth, includes a detailed discussion of this controversy, as well as a copy of Wroth's letter apologizing for her publication (31-36).

²⁴ Hackett gives examples of twentieth-century critical discomfort with the popular romances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1-3).

however, she does not finish his romance with the inclusion of a regicide and the triumph of factionalism. Instead she continues his political landscape into its own best self: some of her asides conspicuously correct the monarchy. Women writing in the English Revolution enfold romance's idealistic strains into their political uses of the genre. The conclusive endings of romances by Weamys, Man, and Du Verger idealize possible conclusions to their moments of political crisis. (I have not yet mentioned Anne Bradstreet in this section and that is because instead of writing romance, she spurns it. She belongs in this dissertation because she frames her political voice outside romance and yet uses some of the lessons of romance. Her denouncement of the romance strategy is a canny rejection of such a fantastic basis for political intervention.)

Romance was indeed a complicated strategy in a time of war. Its rhetoric contrasted starkly with carnage, and yet its idealizations gave vision to social ambition when class boundaries were momentarily fluid. Carlton characterizes the civil wars as class wars in some aspects. Royalists were contemptuous of the lower class captains that often achieved elevated positions in Parliament's army (182). When Prince Rupert self-consciously modeled himself as a romance hero for the royalists, the Puritans published derogatory tracts, ridiculing his exaggerated romantic affect, in an effort to mitigate his cultural power (189). Newcomb argues that "the romance's treatment of social mobility was urgent not only to lower-class readers but also to aspirant writers for the educated classes, many struggling to justify new kinds of social mobility" (8). For sub-aristocratic women writing romance, the genre offered several levels of new

mobility; on the one hand, they wrote a genre whose women authors had till then been almost exclusively privileged. On the other hand, romance was a way to champion the causes that set them apart from that privilege, as I will discuss in the following section.

Revolution from Below: Sub-Aristocratic Writing Women

Throughout the dissertation I use Hero Chalmers' term "sub-aristocratic" to describe the class of Man, Du Verger, Weamys, and Bradstreet. Chalmers uses it to describe how Margaret Cavendish deliberately developed an elite authorial identity as a contrast to the social mores that should govern lower class women (31-33). As a duchess, Cavendish implies that self-display through her published works is appropriate for her, but not for non-elite women, whom Chalmers calls sub-aristocratic. I use the term "sub-aristocratic" to refer to this group of women authors who had some proximity to the aristocracy and whose title pages described them as gentry as a conscious acknowledgement of a certain fluidity in early modern terminology. The term is useful because it accurately captures the complexities of seventeenth-century class identities. While many call themselves or were called "gentle" on title pages, they do not fit with our impressions of the class beneath the aristocracy called gentry.

Surveying some of the historical critical literature that has attempted to provide a definition shows not only disagreement about defining "gentry," but also about which period really shows the flowering of this class.²⁵ F. J. Levy's strategy of discussing the

²⁵ In an exchange between Michael Hicks and Peter Cross regarding Hicks' review of Cross' book The Origins of the English Gentry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), Hicks argues that historians frequently

term sums up the problem. He notes that there is no precise definition, and for his purposes (a discussion of their educational practices from 1550-1640) offers the following working criteria: "Those members of the group whom I mention all held substantial acreage: none were worth less than one hundred pounds a year. I have excluded members of the peerage, however recently ennobled, the principal officers of state, and the clergy" (12, n4). Levy adopts this definition because he wants to write about the "'ordinary' country gentleman," someone who owned property and had enough income to have some influence in his regional government. I use his definition as a starting place for defining gentry in my own scholarship because it shows how project-specific many definitions of the term seem to be. For my purposes, I want to recognize how widely "gentlewoman" and "gentlemen" were used in seventeenth-century printing practices as terms conferring a vague sense of respectability without any reference to the more technical requirements of gentry.

The most useful contemporary reference for seeing the fluidity of the term "gentry," which I have found, is in Thomas Hobbes' chapter in Leviathan called "Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour, and Worthiness" and which the OED cites in its definition of gentry. Hobbes offers a precise definition only to undercut it. He notes that the gentry comes from a German tradition of heraldry and seems at first to restrict the term to families with coats of arms (77). Yet he introduces this section by arguing that

choose their own period of study as the one when the gentry really emerged (www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/hicks.html). McKeon notes that answering the question "Who is the gentry?" has been another central problem for historiography about the rise of the gentry (159).

such terminology is relative at best: "honour consisteth only in the opinion of power. Therefore the ancient heathen did not think they dishonoured, but greatly honoured the Gods, when they introduced them in their poems, committing rapes, thefts, and other great, but unjust, or unclean acts" (76). He argues that "till there were constituted great commonwealths, it was thought no dishonour to be a pirate, or a highway thief; but rather a lawful trade" (77). Hobbes qualifies his definition of gentry by saying that coats of arms are only relevant if "eminent privileges" have been conferred along with the heraldic symbols (77). Hobbes' own qualification of his seemingly technical definition of "gentry" reveals how relative class claims could be. Michael McKeon notes that for "many contemporaries, the 'gentry' were a part of the 'aristocracy'" and it "was easy for contemporary writers to conflate gentility with gentry and to treat the latter as a general and inclusive category more or less synonymous with 'nobility'" (159). While the titles of the aristocracy were carefully ranked and defined (and had been since the creation of the House of Lords in the fourteenth century), the definitions of the middling classes of gentry were more nebulous. As Hobbes says, the important thing is not the heraldry but the power.

Sub-aristocratic women had none of the social power of a Cavendish or a Cary or a Sidney, and neither did they have any local influence like the landed gentry. Rather, the titles given them in prefatory materials are like the coats of arms that Hobbes scorns because they had no eminent privileges. On title pages, these women are ranked "gentlewomen," but their actual positions reveal very little power or money. Yet

because they are in service to the aristocracy, they are granted some of the privileges of that higher class, most notably education. Judith Man and Anna Weamys both seem to have benefitted from learning with noblemen's daughters, and Anne Bradstreet's father taught her to read and gave her some access to the library at the great house where he was manager.

Aristocratic women had a better chance at education and their texts are certainly more sophisticated in aim and execution. Authors like Margaret Cavendish, Elizabeth Cary, and Mary Wroth have relatively well documented literary reputation for practical reasons. Texts by elite women were preserved as curiosities and historically useful. Consequently their books were the biggest and easiest to find when scholars began to look for the answer to Joan Gadol-Kelly's famous question, "did women have a renaissance?" For instance, Wroth's two-volume continuation of her uncle's Arcadia is undoubtedly a more complex literary text than Weamys' smaller and tidier continuation. We have paid scant attention to texts produced by women from lower social tiers because it has taken so long to find their texts and has been often impossible to verify anything of their biography. Because these sub-aristocratic women produced just one work in print and then disappeared, presumably into marriage, childbirth, death, or service, we have little sense of their text's reception or their own ideas about authorship.

Another benefit of working in close range to aristocratic women was a certain exposure to books as political documents. Women of privilege were not only wealthy,

but they also could have a level of political influence, depending on their individual situations, educations, and inclinations. Hilda Smith has established that titled women had a degree of political knowledge and power that has been missed by critics who have projected backward from women's relative powerlessness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (39). In the seventeenth century, kinship networks and courtly connections were often as relevant to the private realm as to the public sphere. Lois Schworer lists women's activities in "political culture" (her term for the many different ways that political power was manifest) as "dispensing patronage, influencing decision makers and elections, petitioning, demonstrating, gift-giving, entertaining, haranguing, reporting seditious conduct, writing and disseminating ideas in printed form" (57-58).

I argue that for sub-aristocratic women, imaginative literature was primarily a political act. This was not the case for most women writers of privilege, though their texts at times required defiance and they were aware of the political implications. In spite of Smith's and Schworer's arguments that aristocratic women may have had more actual political influence than they did in later centuries, their texts existed within a context of leisure and coterie; they were badges of class and the status quo rather than texts seeking political change. Amy Lynn Farmer's dissertation on social rank and literary authority includes two Interregnum women—Margaret Cavendish and Katherine Phillips. She shows them using their social rank or their patronage as a part of their textual authority while at the same time trying to maintain "respectability" in writing. But for the sub-aristocratic women writing romance in the years around the English

Revolution, authorship had a quite different function. Each came from a community seeking political rights and with no familial rights to a public voice. The family origins of Man, Du Verger, and Weamys are completely unknown except for these women's own references to them as encouraging their education. Bradstreet's father was educated only because of an inheritance received upon the deaths of closer connections to inherited money. Man revised political propaganda to include women's voices; Du Verger sought an acceptance of Catholicism in England; Bradstreet defended Puritan theocracy; Weamys wrote as the daughter of royalist clergyman who had been disenfranchised by Parliament.

This dissertation connects four sub-aristocratic women with romance, English Revolution politics, and prefatory materials. In using romance strategies, these women adopt a discourse usually associated with an exclusive courtly milieu, and yet social ascendancy is not the goal of their texts. While they would not reject respectability or useful associations with the gentry or aristocracy, their texts do not primarily aim in that direction. Instead these women writers emerge from smaller political domains; their books, while mimicking some of the affectations of printed women's texts from a higher class, aim beyond social climbing and into political conversation.

Other Voices in Women's Paratext: Translation, Epitome, Selection, and Transmigration

Each of the four authors, Man, Weamys, Du Verger, and Bradstreet, adopts a male precursor as her authorizing voice, revising that voice in order to fit a world turned upside down. The material forms of their books accentuate that sense of debt since they

are printed as continuations, epitomes, and translations. Man translates an epitome of an extremely well-known political text. Du Verger first selects and translates Jean-Pierre Camus' texts, and her selection re-makes Camus' romances to highlight the strength of women in an idealized Catholic world. Weamys continues Arcadia at a time when Sidney and Elizabeth were contested icons bandied between political sides trying to use the two luminaries for their own purposes. Bradstreet rejects romance for historical epitome (as her title page announces), using Du Bartas as her authority.

Each woman offers her writing as an interpretation of a cultural authority. First they read an authorized text in their acts of translation, continuation, and selection, and so hope to authorize their own writing by association. Second they read their culture through the canonical lenses of Sidney, Camus, Barclay, Coeffeteau, and Du Bartas. Although these women differ significantly from each other, they have a shared strategy. Clarke, in rejecting gynocritical explanations of women's commonalities, suggests "what women writers did share, broadly, was a sense of their social positioning in relation to men, and the common aspects of their work are largely a consequence of shared material conditions and assumptions about their social roles *relative to men*" (3). In spite of their paratextual claims of fidelity to their original texts, each woman's version of that authorizing literary figure remakes his text. For example, one change common to all four is a gendering of literary discourse, but their textual interventions also extend beyond self-authorization. They impose their pressing social and religious concerns into their readings, producing writing intended to share in public discourse.

To continue, to translate, to select, and to praise a canonized public voice authorizes the women's version of him. Her changes are often unacknowledged, and so the missed power of these "beginnings" in women's public discourse results from our own failure to see their texts as more than derivative. This constant manipulation of allusion is both a commentary on contemporary public issues and a new way of imagining solutions to those issues, whether in romance or polemic.

Occasionally in this project I use marketing's concept of a "brand name" as an analogy for the power of these allusions in the popular culture of the English Revolution. Although branding in the marketing sense is a twentieth-century notion, the dynamic of name recognition upon which it depends is similar to how literary reputation began to work in the crises of the civil wars and Interregnum. These women authors deploy authorial icons for political ends and, in doing so, reshape the "brand." This relationship between the sub-aristocratic emerging woman writer and her literary brand becomes a key component of her public voice.

Looking at these source texts—Sidney, Barclay, Du Bartas, Camus—we find that within the romance genre, they are writing history, in Raymond Williams' sense of the word, where history "in different hands, teaches or shows us most kinds of knowable past and almost every kind of imaginable future" (qtd. in Zemon-Davis 148). The connection between history and romance is not such a stretch, as Fuchs points out when noticing that "the romances of chivalry often exhibit what Daniel Eisenberg calls 'pseudo-history,' presenting themselves as historical texts more akin to chronicle than

fable” (79). When romance imitates history, it does not aim for wholeness or accuracy, but instead it looks for its immediate utility, the way in which reading the past can project the future and instruct the present. This approach to romance is the legacy that Man, Weamys, Du Verger, and Bradstreet adopt and remake from their source texts: the use of versions of history and imagined futures in order to instruct the present.

Natalie Zemon Davis, after asking a Virginia Woolf-inspired question, finds three things necessary for a woman to write history. Her discovery highlights how these authors use romance:

She needs first of all some access to materials about her subject, written, printed, or oral; and she needs enough public life to be able to go and ask people questions or to observe intrigue, conflict, and debate. . . . Second, the historian needs access to the genres of historical writing, to the rules for ordering and expressing historical material I would say third, and especially important, she needs a sense of connection, through some activity or deep concern of her own, with the areas of public life then considered suitable for historical writing—namely, the political and the religious. (154-55)

Sub-aristocratic women in the English Revolution were not writing the kind of history that Davis imagines; they had little exposure to the genres of historical writing that would be necessary. In producing prose fiction recording the intrigues and debates of the English Revolution, they make romance into a new literary strategy. Instead of

focusing on the imaginary, these stories speak to a country at war, offering the possible endings its history might have. These authors had two out of three of Davis' requirements. As women connected to education and high ranking persons of power, they had sources of information. And each of their political interventions reveals a "deep concern of her own." They tell this history in the genre they know, romance.

Their uses of history are not confined to romance, but also appear within other modes of writing, especially epitome. Chloe Wheatley, in a work in progress, discusses seventeenth-century writers of epitome as using the genre to co-opt the traditional functions of epic. They portray a culture's past in order to formulate a way of approaching its present and to define and construct readers' connections with history.²⁶ This reduced version of history parallels the posed unobtrusiveness of women's romance, which always needs male authorization to get started. Epitome is a term that has special value for each of these woman's books. Du Verger translates an author who abridges romances, as does Man, though in quite different ways. Bradstreet's work is called an epitome on her title page. And Weamys makes short work of continuing a very long genre. Continuation and translation have similar dynamics. In writing continuations of their male predecessors, the woman author enters into the text's first conversation, but also authors it anew by contextualizing it within the English Revolution.

Translation has been a vexed mode for feminist literary critics who want to find women's writing, but must settle for translations. While finding women acting as

²⁶ In Wheatley's The Long and the Short of It: Epic, Epitome and the Early Modern Historical Imagination, she investigates the epitome's printed forms and cultural functions.

conduits for male texts is not as satisfying as finding their 'original' compositions, these authorships are starting places for women's voices. We have underrated them because they seem derivative, but translation was not denigrated in the early modern period. Clarke tries to correct recent feminist history that calls translation a "safe" kind of writing for women writers; she argues that while translation had a pedagogical function in humanist education, it remained a textual aberrant of some other book (12). She further argues that we must read women's writing in its early modern context, which valued imitation both as a rhetorical exercise and as a way to come closer to truth: "If women's writings in the Renaissance are largely derivative, then they conform absolutely to what their culture valued in art and writing, 'poesie an art not only of making, but also of imitation,' referring both to the imitation of nature and the imitation of authoritative predecessors" (14). Our more recent critical quandary about how to value translations ironically echoes early modern critical views, which evaluated translations by gender rather than quality.

Two examples of paratextual responses to early modern translation illustrate this gender divide. Owen Felltham praises Kingsmill Long's Argenis (1625) as transcending the mechanics of translation: "Thou hast done a good work, well: as one that draws / The Copy of a Piece, wherein the Laws / Of Art are all confined, yet in that draught / Thou rather adds to them, then they lose ought" (ll. 5-8). Although translations usually "welke" (l. 9) or wilt, Long has "naturalized" Argenis (l. 20).

According to Felltham, Long has solved the problem of authorship—losing the nuance of a text’s first language—by his standalone English version.

This view of translation as a creative act was, however, a gendered one. Mary Roper Basset’s translation of More’s De Tristitia Christi in the 1557 edition of Thomas More’s huge collected works gets quite a different treatment. The printer inserts a commendatory letter before her translation (which occurs about three quarters into the collection), though he does not introduce any of the other translations this way. He compliments Basset for becoming a medium for More’s true voice. He says her translation “goeth so nere Sir Thomas Mores own english phrase that the gentlewoman (who for her pastyme translated it) is no nerer to hym in kynred, vertue and litterature, than is hys englishe tongue; so that it myghte seme to have been by hys own pen indyted first, and not at all translated” (1350). Coming at the peak of the humanist educational project, the printer’s letter was surely a compliment. That he maneuvered his letter to contain the one female contributor to the Works shows that women’s texts were valued differently.

Reading women’s translations, along with their continuations and epitomes, reveals their public ambitions as well as their literary hopes. Suzanne Trill argues that “translation . . . is not simply a passive reflection of a previous text, but a form of writing which, by establishing it within a new context, makes a claim about the status of the translated text” (qtd. in Clarke 13). Man and Du Verger bring texts into England’s political maelstrom for specific purposes. In finding those purposes, we begin to

understand how these translations are acts of authorship. The purpose of the text cannot help but change in its new context, which, for the authors in this dissertation, was a period of intense social upheaval, as I discuss in the next section.

A Revolution: 1639-57

Although the dates of this dissertation fall quite neatly into the years of Charles I's Bishop's Wars with Scotland (1639 and 1640), the ensuing civil wars (1642-46; 1648-49; 1649-51), and the Interregnum years following regicide (1649-60), I was more concerned with the publication dates of four women authors when I first framed this project (1639-57).²⁷ The coincidence of these publication dates with the period of political and social upheaval turns out to be more than serendipity. Each text not only responds to revolution, but forges itself as commentary and activism, both creating and cementing social change. The civil wars were a time of upheaval and stress for the entire country, and very few people did not suffer its consequences. Yet women found themselves in new positions. The war destabilized more conventional gender roles since men were fighting, exiled, imprisoned, dead, or hiding; Morrill estimates that during the 1640s about one out of every four adult men were engaged in some level of military action (23). Women's voices become a part of the fray. Katherine Phillips and Margaret Cavendish are the most well known literary examples, but there are also the memoirs of Anne Halkett, Lucy Hutchinson, Ann Fanshawe, and Lady Anne Clifford; the letters of

²⁷ Du Verger's romance, Admirable Events, was published in 1639; the last book under discussion in this project is Du Verger's 1657 polemic, Du Verger's Humble Reflections.

Lady Brilliana Harley and Dorothy Osborne; and an explosion of sectarian women's pamphlets like those of Dorothy White, Anna Trapnel, Joan Vokins and many other Quaker women. Social boundaries became more flexible as did opportunities to speak on theology and politics, inextricably intertwined as they were in the causes and fighting of the wars. In this section I discuss the history of the English Revolution as it pertains to women's increasing contributions to the public sphere.

To us, the years 1649-1660 seem obviously an in-between place, but it is with the advantage of hindsight that we call those years the Interregnum with the connotation that the English public was waiting for the return of the king. The person experiencing the 1650s knew it as the beginning of something entirely new. Social ascendancy must have suddenly seemed possible, in light of Cromwell, who appropriated every aspect of kingship except the title "His Majesty." In 1640, the idea of overthrowing the monarchy as a political system or even deposing Charles as a particular monarch was unthinkable. Morrill describes the outbreak of war in 1642 as a surprising turn of events, the "Civil War no-one had wanted and no-one had planned." (21). By 1650, the king was dead. Parliamentary governance was growing tiresome and criticism of it had an increasingly wide audience. Robert Applebaum discusses the changes as creating "a reforming of political subjectivity and the languages that could be used to address political issues. English subjects were now able to imagine themselves as the objects of their own political and religious hopes" (142). He further describes the English Revolution as a time of questioning the "precedent of inherited order." Out of

this a total disruption of culture emerged a forum that suddenly had space for sub-aristocratic women's public voices.

Women's roles changed significantly in this period because of the stresses of war. Gim highlights the business responsibilities that the civil wars thrust on women while men were away at war and cites the dramatic increase in women's printed books in this period (188). Hence, the years 1639–57, while based on publication dates, also offer a timeline of social instability and war that provided new opportunities for women's authorship, which in turn recreated women's cultural roles. The closing of all public theaters in 1642 forced English theater to evolve into an underground closet tradition. Soon after the theaters re-opened in 1660, women were not only allowed on the stage, it was mandated that female roles had to be played by women.²⁸ Similarly, women's publication increased again after the Restoration.

Four characteristics peculiar to this era of war make it a rich time for women writing romance at the decade's beginning and end. First, preceding the wars was Henrietta Maria's powerful reign at her husband's side, which I discuss in more detail as animating Catholic recusant writers in my chapter on Suzanne Du Verger. Women first had speaking parts in plays at her court (but, as Gough points out, never in masques).²⁹ Sophie Tomlinson argues that women's participation in the queen's plays and masques

²⁸ Ann Thompson records the official change (101-02) and gives more general background in women's evolving roles in English theater in "Women/'women' and the Stage."

²⁹ In "'Tempe Restored'" Gough notes that English "queens' voices were typically heard in neither plays nor masques" (60) before Henrietta Maria, who both appeared in and spoke in masques thus importing the ways of the French court to her new home.

may have “spurred on the greater social, cultural, and political activity during the revolutionary period” (qtd. in White 28). Additionally, the queen’s religious agenda encouraged a bold proselytizing from Catholic women in and surrounding her court, an openness echoed by the official sanction of women’s voices in the Catholic Reformation.

Second, as N.H. Keeble points out, the distinguishable aspect of the English Revolution from past internal rebellions was that it was a war of ideas rather than a grab for power (2). At the beginning, no one in Parliament revolted against the monarchy *per se*, but they deeply objected to Charles I’s inflexible interpretation of the Divine Right of Kings. With some exceptions, women rarely contributed to battlefields or military struggles, but a war of ideas was open to readers and writers at large, especially those aspiring political voices who could print their contributions to the public conversation. Henrietta Maria’s habitual defiance of English mores when it came to her faith had provided a very public example of one woman’s engagement in public debate and inspired Du Verger’s similar resistance. Writing Protestant women, like Bradstreet, frequently looked back to Queen Elizabeth as an example of a woman’s public voice.

A third encouragement to women’s political voices was that Henrietta Maria’s obvious goal to spread Catholicism in England created a feminine discourse of religion. This queen’s influence differed from Queen Elizabeth because Henrietta Maria could never style herself the prince, a woman acting the male monarchical prerogative. Instead she was a wife and in theory and in her proclamation, a submissive one, and yet, she never compromised her faith in that submission to her king and her husband. The

English civil wars erupted over the power to define religious toleration, state control of religion, and a pervasive fear of Catholicism, largely in response to Henrietta Maria. The bishop's wars with Scotland were a response to Laud's imposition of a high church style of worship that was similar to Catholicism and the attempt to impose episcopal authority on the Scottish. Parliament defied Charles because it claimed it feared he was leading the country towards Rome. One result of these entrenched religious positions was that the rhetoric of battle on both sides always invoked God as favoring their cause. Carlton argues that royalists claimed the great chain of being to bolster their defense of the monarchy against rebellion while Puritans claimed they were following God's will (49-51). Women producing literature within religious networks found that they could speak publically for God, as Henrietta Maria had done.

The fourth important change was the sudden increase in printed materials due to the need for broadcasting the wars' news and ideas as well as the disintegration of the censorship apparatus. In the 1640s London experienced a profusion of printed texts. Cressy describes the English print trade in the 1630s as producing about 600 or 700 titles annually and contrasts it to the 4,000 pamphlets and books that were printed in 1642 (xii-xiii). The king's censorship system failed, especially after the execution of Strafford and Laud. The degree of censorship within later Interregnum culture was itself unpredictable. Parliament belatedly tried to adopt the role of censorship, but the print trade had become too diffuse to control and Parliament had too much else to do

anyway. While Parliament succeeded in closing down the theaters, they failed to impede the press, which became a substitute entertainment.

Women authors responded to the English Revolution in the same way that they did to front matter; both were places trying to define the future. Front matter offers many possibilities without being the book itself; Interregnum government did the same, offering a possible political system without quite managing to be the thing itself. Front matter of books became the place to fight border disputes and definitions. Women's literary history underwent changes during these years, changes that would affect writing women for the next century and echoed changes to women's roles in society at large; women both recorded that change as well as initiated it by writing it into existence. The number of women's printed books grew, along with printing in general, and after the Restoration, women's authorship continued to increase. Earlier women's writing had either been on the fringes or from the top; women only infrequently wrote romances. After the transitional period between 1639 through the 1650s, an outpouring of women-authored romance began, so much so that eventually the genre gained a reputation as a women's genre.

Beyond Agency: Women Writing Romance as Political Intervention in the English Revolution

In Chapter One, "Fictive Literary Histories in Judith Man's Argenis," I discuss Man's translation of Coeffeteau's epitome of the most influential and understudied romance in Jacobean England, John Barclay's Argenis. In 1639, the political upheavals

were already beginning, and by 1640 the public mob had become a political entity (in contrast to various containable uprisings of the past). In 1640, Man's text tried to counter the mob with a version of Barclay's romance. Man's Argenis celebrated Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford just months before his spectacular fall from power, which also marked the first successful parliamentary intervention into monarchical power. The charge that was Strafford's downfall was the appearance of his Irish army as a Catholic Army against English Protestants (in fact he was raising it to help the king's attacks on Scotland). There had been an increasing and genuinely felt fear of a Catholic infiltration into England; as Henrietta Maria's influence increased, so did the sense of panic. The intense popularity of Foxe's Book of Martyrs promoted a horrifying vision of Catholic rule, and the execution of Strafford was a preemptive response. In the process of presenting her political text to counter Strafford's negative publicity, Man develops a sense of an author function in her work, enough so that by the time her translation is finished and she is defending her text to readers in her prefatory materials, she places herself in a lineage of women translators.

In Chapter Two, "Moving from Paratext to Text in Suzanne Du Verger's Catholic Romances," I continue examining the demise of Charles I and Henrietta Maria's court by looking at Suzanne Du Verger's romances. The dates of her publications span both the beginning and the end of this dissertation. She is a culmination of what a women's conscious relationship to writing romance could accomplish, and her 1657 book realizes the potential of prefatory discourse to undo class and gender. Du Verger's two

translations of Jean-Pierre Camus' proselytizing French romances in 1639 and 1641 attempted to import the Catholic Reformation into England. Her first romance appeared in London in 1639, and its presentation revealed no signs of political dismay; however, her second book bears the marks of secret Catholic publications from Douai, a geography that fits with the drastic changes in the political situation in those two years.³⁰ In 1639, English Catholics seemed to have achieved a new level of toleration and safety, but in 1641, following a series of defeats for Charles both on the battlefield and in skirmishes with Parliament, it was clear that neither Catholicism nor the current version of monarchy was safe in England. In her last book, she abandons the rhetoric of romance but not its political uses when she responds to and reproves Margaret Cavendish's authorship that lacks political purpose and seriousness.

In Bradstreet's 1650 collection of her writings from the past decade that view England's troubles from the distance of "New England," we find one version of women's authorship responding and correcting the perilous events of "home." In Chapter Three, "Anne Bradstreet: Poetic Expediency Makes Political Agency," Bradstreet's poetic agency emerges from how she grounds her work in both the literary and political legacies of Sidney and Du Bartas. Bradstreet writes The Tenth Muse for her Massachusetts Bay Colony community through a scribal publication dedicated to her father. These first two publications, one scribal and one printed in London in 1650, have often been belittled as derivative and mere practice before she accomplished her "real"

³⁰ Bennett notes that Catholic literature was sometimes printed on secret presses in England with a title page listing the place of publication as Douai (117).

poetic achievements later when her verse became more personal and poised. I argue that this undervaluing of Bradstreet's early work results from a critical assumption that it was written for a private audience. A close reading of the paratextual material in conjunction with The Tenth Muse reveals Bradstreet instructing a colonial public struggling with the contradictions of their own theocracy and an Old England struggling with civil war.

Chapter Four, "Transmigration as a Prefatory Discourse in Anna Weamys' A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia," discusses how in Weamys' 1651 continuation, romance functions both as a literature of coping as well as a front for reinterpreting kingship for the Interregnum era. Male commendatory poets confuse Weamys' literary goals by using a façade of nostalgia to mitigate their discomfort with the figure of the woman author. Weamys, however, writes her book as a reprimand to the male literary authority and male governing that led to the chaos of the civil wars. Using romance to imagine an ideal state, she completes Sidney's unfinished Arcadia by describing ends to wars and governments where women's voices have public power.

Chapter One: Literary Histories in Judith Man's *Argenis*

In *An Epitome of the history of faire Argenis and Polyarchus* (1640), Judith Man produced a version of one of the early seventeenth century's most popular romances, John Barclay's *Ioannis Barclaii Argenis* (1621), celebrated for its roman à clef intrigues and political discourses. Since her narrative is not only a translation but also an epitome of Barclay's long romance, scholars have scarcely noticed it as an instance of women's authorship. Looking at the history of the *Argenis* and the public debate that her text was entering shows how Man's book rebranded a discourse of monarchical authority into one defending Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. As Charles I's most influential advisor, Strafford achieved an unpopularity that came to signify the conflict between the king and Parliament. At the beginning of the clashes that would escalate into civil war and regicide, Man produced a version of the century's most beloved defenses of a king's absolute power, *Argenis*. She positions it as a defense of Strafford's still ascendant influence over Charles I. The phenomenon of Judith Man, a sub-aristocratic woman contributing a sophisticated political literature to the public sphere, signals a turning point in women's writing, one that would repeat throughout the period of the English Revolution. Her *Argenis* stands as an early harbinger of what would become, throughout the 1640s and 1650s, a commonplace use of romance as political propaganda and a new visibility of women's public voices. Judith Man, like the other authors in this project, achieved authorship largely because she aimed for a political voice.

Barclay's Argenis is a romance with an engaging story combined with absolutist political views. He produced it after ten years of working for James I and its political theory, as I discuss below, appealed to Charles I as well. Man's book operated at a remove from Argenis' English reputation because she translated Nicolas Coeffeteau's French epitome of Barclay's book, Histoire de Poliarque et D'Argenis (1624). Coeffeteau's edition omitted entirely Barclay's celebrated discourses and further transformed the book into a plot-driven romance by eliminating the allegory. What results is a tale of a hero, who is a better reader and writer than the bumbling representatives of male monarchical power that surround her (and indeed pursue her). Man's translation capitalizes on this story of a woman as an actor in matters of state to defend Strafford and consequently insert her voice into a public controversy.

Her text emerges from a rich intersection of literary coterie, romance, epitome, translation, and impending political crisis. In this chapter, I follow the story of her romance from educational coterie to public text and examine how this confluence informs her construction of her individual authorship as well as her implied defense of women in general. In her dedication, she directs her aristocratic dedicatee, Anne Wentworth, how to approach her text and declares that their educational coterie shares the book's authorship. She instructs Wentworth to read Argenis the woman as well as Argenis the text. Man addresses male readers differently, giving them a romance-based approach to her text in her "Letter to the Courteous Reader" and recommending a chivalric approach to this woman's text, an ethos she later unravels in her narrative. As a

young untitled woman, Man writes from the periphery of mainstream literary cultures. The book she produces promises readers the short version of a widely circulated and influential text with a political history. The dedication also reveals her book's wider cultural context and political performance, namely the emerging controversy surrounding her dedicatee's father, Strafford. Along with the political uses of her text, Man uses Argenis's narrative intentionally to intervene in the history of women's writing, undoing its conventional prescriptions from her preface in her story.

I first discuss in some detail the history of Argenis as a flexible brand of political theory. Coeffeteau disrupts that history by containing the plot in epitome and erasing the political discourses, which I discuss in my second section. Then I contextualize Man's translation of Coeffeteau's epitome: how it emerged from her education with the Strafford family and how its plot served very different purposes for her than it had for Barclay and Coeffeteau. Man's text was also valuable as a text to answer Strafford's negative publicity. In order to discuss how her text was politically useful, I look at how his sudden ascent to power had hurt his reputation. After contextualizing Man's epitome within its connection to Strafford, I examine her prefatory materials in order to see her two different audiences and explore the possibility that her family pushed the book into print for their own purposes. Finally I argue that Man's Argenis stands at the beginning of a new era of the public sphere, which as an uncontrollable virtual space, could no longer exclude women's political voices. As a political text, Man's book was not effective—Strafford's reputation worsened and was a contributing factor in his

downfall—but her book was the beginning of a new kind of authorship for women, one that participated in public debate.

History of the Book

When Man's Argenis and Polyarchus was published in early 1640, the small book profited from Barclay's popular literary brand, which by then had already been printed in over twenty Latin editions, along with translations into nearly every European language.¹ There were three translations into English alone: Ben Jonson's translation of the first three books, done at the request of King James and lost in a house fire in 1623. In his elegy for his burnt library, he lists "Three books, not amisse, Reveald (if some can judge) of Argenis, For our own Ladyes" (qtd. in Huber and Riley 31).² Kingsmill Long's translation, Barclay his Argenis. Or, the loves of Polyarchus & Argenis. Faithfully translated out of Latin into English, in 1625, and, done so "that our Nation might not be deprived of the use of so excellent a Story" [sig. A2]. A third translation, John Barclay his Argenis, translated out of Latine into English: the prose upon his Majesties command, by Robert Le Grys, was made at the request of Charles I in 1628.³ With Judith Man's 1640 Argenis, Henry Seile, stationer for Man, Long, and Le Grys, was able to add a third English version of Barclay's bestselling Neo-Latin romance to his booklist, only this time

¹ Huber and Riley discuss the immediate popularity of the book and the difficulty of getting it in England until the first London printing in 1622 (I: 30-31). Zurcher also summarizes Argenis's reputation in England (x-xi).

² Interestingly Jonson's intended audience, the "Ladyes," acknowledges the limited readership of Barclay's Latin book.

³ A second edition of Long's translation was republished with a new engraved title page in 1636.

the work was in epitome, octavo instead of folio, and lacked Barclay's name on the title page since Man had translated a French epitome by Coeffeteau. The absence of Barclay's name also demonstrates how Argenis had become a literary brand signifying political discourse, since his name was not needed to identify the book.

Only two copies of Man's translation survive; its fragility perhaps attests to a book hastily produced to counter Strafford's poor reputation in London or perhaps is just another small popular book. Its title page, much plainer than contemporary octavo romances without any framing or "portal" decorations, has three words vastly larger than others in the title—Epitome . . . History . . . Argenis—to arrest a browser's attention. Seile's three earlier editions of the Argenis were all bestsellers, and so the enlarged name on Man's book extended that popularity. Additionally the title page advertises Man's dedication to Anne Wentworth, Strafford's daughter, and so asserts the new Earl's participation in the book's political brand.

In order to understand Man's romance as a political document, we must contextualize it within the first Argenis' publication history. Barclay wrote his neo-Latin political romance while living in Rome, immediately following ten years in London at King James' court. Barclay's Neo-Latin version had enjoyed a wide European readership since its first publication and was particularly popular in England, in spite of his Catholicism, partially because of his familiarity to the court where he had worked for ten years. Barclay practiced a sort of Catholicism palatable to an English king since, like his father before him, he argued that papal power could not extend to secular governments

because it would then interfere with the divine right of kings. Riley and Huber's description of William Barclay's De Regno et Regali Potestate adversus Buchananum, Brutum, Boucherium, et reliquos Monarchomachos (Paris 1600) underlines the reasons for the popularity of Barclay and his son's politics to kings in general and especially to James I and Charles I:

this work summarizes and arranges in order all the arguments for absolute monarchy by divine right. Authority to command comes only from God; it cannot be derived from the people. . . . The king's authority to command, his sovereignty, is unlimited. The king makes laws for all, and he is above his own law. None but God can judge his actions.

Rebellion against a legitimate king is never justified for any reason.

Barclay leaves no room for Parliaments or Estates, no room for rebellious or refractory nobles. (I: 7)

The younger Barclay's diplomatic text followed his father's lead and at times reads as an encomium for the divine right of kings model that James I and his son both embraced.

Barclay's Argenis, a prototypical post-Sidneian romance, features lost royal children, a cross-dressed lover, shipwrecks, courtly intrigue, and an absence of the marvelous. Donald S. Cheney identifies the generic similarities between Sidney and Barclay's romances as "narrative prose and lyric intervals, of political discourse, historical allegory, and drawn-out erotic quests" (697). The story centers on Argenis, princess of Sicily, much sought after as a marriage partner because of her great beauty

and the kingdom she would inherit. Her desirability is so great that Poliarchus, along with good many of his eligible princely peers, falls in love with her upon simply hearing of her beauty. He smuggles himself into Argenis' seclusion by dressing as a new lady-in-waiting. They fall in love and the rest of the story describes their numerous premarital obstacles, including nearly-mortal wounds, mistaken identities, and political insurrections. The conclusion comes to a narrative impasse: Poliarchus and Archombrotus have both been presented as honorable suitors to Argenis and so the reader becomes enmeshed in the dilemma of who deserves to marry her (we are pointed towards Poliarchus by Argenis' own preferences); this standoff dissolves with the discovery that the rival is Argenis' half-brother, which explains Archombrotus' affection for her since, in the world of romance, royal blood often translates into a likeable character with a "natural" heroism. Poliarchus produces his own sister as a bride for his vanquished rival, resulting in a peaceful network of familial kings who each embody Barclay's descriptions (placed throughout the romance) of good government.

Barclay, who was constantly questing for patronage, had purposely flattered his monarchical readers, the kings of France and England, with compelling discourses about the duties of the people to esteem and obey the king. The very name "Argenis" came to imply loyalty to the king and support for his absolute sovereignty, one which Charles used in one of his battles with Parliament. The king's commission of a second English translation in 1628 was an attempt to reinforce, via romance-as-propaganda, the monarch's power to Parliament and the English public after the Petition of Right

controversy.⁴ He lost the fight to Parliament, but his commission of Argenis strategically signaled his defiance in a text that was conveniently widely read and applauded by his subjects.

Barclay found romance a useful genre and yet was also ambivalent about its reputation, and he directs his text to erudite, male readers, using his book to interrogate political models, flatter European monarchs, and adapt romance for a contemporary national commentary. Paul Salzman describes the Argenis as bringing again into prominence a Sidneian “sustained presentation of historical events in disguised, romance form” (148). While he certainly did re-popularize the romance as a contemporary political allegory, Barclay produced his narrative as an elite Latin work and critiques simplistic readings of his narrative. The storyteller in Argenis, Nicompompus, describing a book somewhat like Barclay’s own, declares he would like to write a handbook for political actors in a pleasant narrative form, but not anything so oversimplified that characters merely stand in for historical persons (*roman à clef*); if anything he warns his readers that his story will be hard to decipher. Rather he will write a

stately Fable, in manner of a *History*: in it will I fold up strange events;
and mingle together Armes, Marriages, Bloodshed, Mirth, with many and
various successes . . . because I *seeme* to tell them Tales, I shall *have*
them all: they will love my Booke above any Stage-play, or spectacle on

⁴ Amelia Zurcher relates the Le Grys edition to the Petition of Right controversy (“Introduction” x), as does Annabel Patterson (191-92).

the Theater. So first, bringing them in love with the potion, I will after put
in wholesome hearbes . . . (Huber & Riley 337)⁵

Not only does Barclay's storyteller promise a morally nourishing text where "readers will meet with themselves," but he also claims an intentionally ambiguous roman à clef. He continues: "Besides, I will have here and there imaginary names, to signifie severall vices and vertues; so that he may be as much deceived, that would draw all in my writing, as he that would nothing, to the truth of any late or present passage of State." Barclay's claim is that he does not want to encourage allegory extending too far into historical or current government. Amelia Zurcher, reading Nicompompus' claims at face value, attributes a moral goal to Barclay's text, claiming he wants "to exemplify that romance can be a morally serious and even reformatory genre, . . . a way to stimulate his readers' self-reflection and activate their consciences" (Seventeenth 100). Annabel Patterson also presents this passage as Barclay's own declaration of his literary intentions of "displacing contemporary history into romantic fiction, a strategy made explicit by Nicompompus" (189). But Barclay does not call this imaginary book a romance; if anything he uses Nicompompus to distance himself from the genre, comparing his textual affect to a performance (a "stage play" or a "spectacle on the Theatre") rather than a book. Donald Cheney⁶ has argued that Barclay's reservations about the "true history" in his romance both protected his authorship and maximized his text's

⁵ Quotations are from Huber and Riley's modern edition of Long's translation.

⁶ "Barclay's Argenis: An Epic-Romance for all Nations" Renaissance Society of America Meeting. Chicago, IL. April 4, 2008.

usefulness for various nations who would like to see themselves in the heroes and their enemies in the villains. By multiplying the possible interpretations, Barclay also multiplies his patronage opportunities. What is most interesting here is that Barclay does not want his book associated with popular literary romances; he does not envision common or women readers of his text. Publishing it in Latin makes its readership both wide (since educated men in courts across Europe could all read Latin) and almost exclusively male. He further protects his text from misreading by claiming to obfuscate its correlations with contemporary persons and events.

Because Argenis' many roman à clef references to well-known events and personalities could apply to multiple European courts, it was widely read, and then dissected and discussed, throughout those courts. The plot also seems to have been appealing in itself, as in John Chamberlain's excited response: "I was so taken and carried away with it that I could not give over, (as indeed it is the most delightful fable that ever I met with . . .)" (qtd. in Huber and Riley 30-31). That Chamberlain dubs the book a fable instead of calling it a romance both echoes Barclay's own claims for his book and reveals a certain moral purpose available to readers, or at least to one reader, as well as removing it from the sensational mode of popular romance (although the addictive nature of the plot—"I could not give it over"—would seem to betray its roots in the genre).

In spite of Nicompompus' admonitions that imaginative literature should inspire moral introspection, the immediate result of Barclay's book was quite the opposite.

Mining the book's allegories seemed to be one of its chief pleasures, and an international flurry of strenuous identifications of characters and places within the courts of Europe followed. Within a year of its first publication, the Argenis was almost always published with one of various keys attached that would align courtiers, countries, and kings with Barclay's characters.⁷ Long even begins his 1625 translation by declaring in his dedicatory letter that he intends to "become the Key to this piece of hidden Treasure" [sig. A2]. Argenis' popularity emerged from its currency, not its moral accomplishments, continuing along the career path of political romance, namely, virtuous claims disguising critical political commentary and opinion. Barclay's text repels simple allegory, making it all the more malleable for a variety of political purposes.

Literary critics have made their own keys to Argenis' discourses on English history, and one digression particularly recounts the ongoing conflict between Parliament and English monarchs about the limits of each one's powers (Salzman 151-52).⁸ Although the main plot allegorizes France's Henry IV's successful rise to monarchy, further digressions and intrusions of the narrator are possible retellings of English court events in disguise as well as discussions on the nature of kingship that would flatter James I (and that later his son would find useful). Mauritania stands in for England, and its Queen Hyanisbe represents a version of Queen Elizabeth. Poliarchus, the young hero who eventually marries Argenis (and so ascends to the throne), convinces Queen

⁷ Zurcher lists three printed keys, one in manuscript, and allusions to other manuscript keys (xiii).

⁸ Salzman also interprets other specific events from recent English court memory as appearing in the romance, such as the Overbury scandal.

Hyanisbe of the barbarity of her country's laws that require Parliamentary approval for the monarch to raise and collect taxes. Poliarchus says "Nobody can be counted an absolute king who has not full power, without the privity of his subjects, to make war or conclude a peace" (ll. 741). Hyannisbe offers a compelling discourse on republicanism in reply, but then she quietly takes his advice and uses the military emergency of war to set a precedent of levying taxes for defense without parliamentary consent. But rather than only defending the monarch's point of view, Barclay adds an element of question to Poliarchus' seeming triumph in this debate. Poliarchus persuades Hyannisbe to his point of view, but finds her arguments threatening enough that he cuts off the discussion: "This hard speech concerning the commonality moved Poliarchus. Hindering therefore Hyannisbe's discourse, he thus began . . . (ll. 739). Although I have summarized this conversation, in the Argenis, this interchange makes one of the long digressive discourses which are a signature of Barclay's text.⁹

While this exchange epitomizes the book's appeal to James I and Charles I, it also hints at another reason for Argenis' widespread appeal since the anecdote includes space for readers with dissenting political views to find their experience within the text. The connection between Barclay and ideas of monarchy begins with James I and the attempt by his first Parliament to limit the throne's power. John H. Timmis notes that 1621, the same year of Argenis' first printing, was the first parliamentary attempt to

⁹ Not all of Barclay's textual identifications flattered English monarchs; Zurcher points out that Meleander's poor political judgment and self-indulgent foibles echoed a conventional image of James I (Seventeenth 121).

change the balance of power from the Tudor model, a moment similar to Charles I's encounter with the petition of right (4-6). The power of the sovereign and his ability to raise money for wars were the very issues that Charles was combating with Parliament when he commissioned Le Grys' translation of Argenis. Until Man's 1640 translation, Barclay's epic-length romance that alternated political discourse with plot was the English Argenis, whether in English or in Latin; it had been contextualized as a book that commented on the English monarch's conflicts with Parliament over the proper balance of power. Man's book, appearing just when the battles over sovereignty were again causing political distress for the king, creates a new English Argenis, a popular one that speaks to the same issues but in an urgent shorthand.

From Barclay to Coeffeteau

Man's Argenis differed strikingly from the heavy folio versions that had represented it so far. Her book rebranded Argenis, making it more affordable, more like popular romance and less obviously like political theory. Her translation came via the epitome by Coeffeteau, a prominent Catholic priest (Bishop of Marseilles at his death in 1623) who was celebrated for his skillful prose. Like Jean-Pierre Camus (discussed later in my chapter on Suzanne Du Verger), Coeffeteau used his literary talents in service of the church, following François de Sales' teaching, which encouraged personal piety and works of charity as an ambition of the Catholic Reformation. Fiction could be, for this theology, a vehicle to teach virtue, especially to women. Danielle Clarke aligns his uses of fiction with Camus' contemporary moralistic and pietistic romance (237). Zurcher

theorizes that Coeffeteau translated and abridged Barclay's romance either as a favor to the deceased Barclay (they had a mutual friend in common) or to circulate Argenis in France with its controversial political ideas erased ("Introduction" xi). Understanding Coeffeteau's changes, both intentional and unintentional, is the focus of this section.

In England Coeffeteau was well known for his Tableau des Passions (Paris 1615), translated into English in 1621 by Edward Grimeston as A Table of Humane Passions and an often reprinted account of faculty psychology. Anthony Levi calls it "a basically scholastic treatment of the passions with a strong intellectualist tendency" (151-52). The Table presents a view of fiction that suggests Coeffeteau's goal for his epitome of Barclay. He divides the soul into vegetable, sensible, and reasonable parts, which he translates into a hierarchical view of art. Works that appeal mainly to the sensible soul have a different audience than those that appeal to the highest and most rational division. While Barclay's longer romance appealed to the reasonable soul, Coeffeteau seems to have epitomized Argenis for the middle soul, the concupiscent reader who prefers plot to discourse. Epitome for Coeffeteau is a way to simplify a long popular text for less educated readers, and so his version of Argenis manages Barclay's text for a non-Latin French public, granting them familiarity with a popular romance brand without troubling them with the political arguments that might encourage them to question authority.

In abridging the text for this lower tier of readers, Coeffeteau fundamentally changes its structure. The narrative line becomes chronological instead of *in medias res*,

firmly planting it in the genre of prose romance with none of Barclay's references to the more highly regarded genre of epic. He erases Barclay's distinctive style from the text, cutting his celebrated political discourses and omitting his name from the title page, as though the title of his romance was enough of an allusion for readers to know from what text Coeffeteau is making an epitome. He keeps the name Argenis while adding Polyarchus, and consequently his book gets the bonus of the brand of Barclay's longer text while at the same time sounding more like other popular romances with two names in the title (e.g., the much reprinted Valentino and Orson). In Coeffeteau, the reader experiences a quite different book, namely the plot without the philosophy. What remains is a story about a weak king who needs a young prince to advise and save him, and the young prince who does advise and save him and also gets to marry his daughter. The fortuitous offspring of Coeffeteau's epitome is the newly created strong female character Argenis, born from the reduction of allegory, where abstract virtues so often are feminine, into plot. Barclay had written Argenis as the "throne"—her name is an anagram for *regina*—and in his allegory she stands for the monarchy and more specifically, the nature of sovereignty. Generically feminine, like a muse or a fate, Barclay's Argenis functions at the level of abstraction. The suitors trying to marry that Argenis do not seek the *eros* typical to contemporary romances, like Wroth's Urania; instead their interest in her signifies the pursuit of power. In Barclay's text, discourses on the nature of monarchy and the duties of a king and his subjects pose as love speeches to or about a beloved. Coeffeteau literalizes those speeches, making them

discourses of romantic love. Only Argenis, now as a woman character, has been transformed by her previous version as a representing a throne and ultimate earthly power, a strikingly stronger romance heroine than her fictional peers.

Coeffeteau adds just one speech that has no basis in Barclay's plot. This addition, a discussion of Argenis' virtuous constancy, revises her role, emphasizing her more as a character in a romance with feminine virtues rather than an abstraction in an allegory:

Poliarchus shall know that I can love, more constantly, and truly then He.
At least if My sex takes away the means, to dispute against Him, the glory
of Arms, nothing shall hinder Me, to take from Him that of Constancy.
This list is open to all the courageous spirits, without distinction of sex,
and I shall not be the first Virgin, who hath surpassed men, in fidelity.

[sig. E8]

While in Barclay's text, Argenis' virtue had described the strength and manliness, or the *virtu*, of a throne, the masculine use of virtue, in Coeffeteau's version a new Argenis refits virtue as chastity. This characteristic of a virtuous Renaissance woman is the very thing that Man points to as the chief merit of her romance and her dedicatee. Here, a woman's virtue refers to her chastity while a man's refers to his strength. Argenis becomes much more like Mary Wroth's Pamphilia, that is, a character in a romance grappling with issues of subjectivity and the moral superiority of women over men (in terms of constancy). Wroth's romance features constancy as a feminine virtue; one celebrated passage describes a book that Pamphilia reads: "the subject was Love, and

the story she then was reading, the affection of a Lady to a brave Gentleman, who equally loved, but being a man, it was necessary for him to exceede a woman in all things, so much as inconstancie was found fit for him to excel her in, hee left her for a new” (qtd. in Beilin 231). It is no wonder that Man cites Wroth’s romance as authorization for hers in her “Letter to the Reader.”

Coeffeteau’s changes may have been aimed at women readers, as the addition of a description of feminine constancy by a cleric seems to indicate. Coeffeteau did not have his Polyarchus and Argenis printed (he died suddenly after writing it), but he shared the manuscript version with a group of prose writers who met at his house from 1621 until his death and called themselves the *L’Academie de Nicolas Coeffeteau* (De Boer 740). A friend from the *Academie* had it printed posthumously in a duodecimo (as explained in the book’s afterword).

From Coeffeteau to Man

In her dedication, Man at first follows Coeffeteau’s lead and writes herself and Wentworth into his contemporary discussion of feminine virtue: “as for Constancy, You have not (I dare say,) Your equal, seeing You are resolved, to be conformable unto the Will of God, and of my Lord Your Father” [sig. A4]. Man frames obedience, a chief goal for both sons and daughters, within constancy. Along with the feminine virtue of constancy discussed above, she defines her own virtue as obedience as she lends her text to the press because of submission to “those who watch over my actions, and endeavour my diversion,” ostensibly to her parents. Man’s extravagant praise of

Wentworth centers on her relationship to her father; the essence of which is the constancy of the daughter's obedience to her father's commands. Man's translation emerges from within the context of a women's educational coterie within Strafford's household, one which valued the study of languages, especially French, and which produced one other early modern woman writer of note, Alice Thornton.

In her prefatory materials, Man positions her translation as a virtuous exercise, one accomplished after normal working hours and in order to perfect her French. Her connection to the Wentworth family was either that she learned with Strafford's daughters or tutored them herself. She shares the surname of Peter Man, Wentworth's trusted steward of his English estate and so may be related in some way to him. Zurcher notes that no Judith Man was included in the 1630s' wills of Peter Man or his wife Barbara (ix), so she was probably not in the steward's immediate family. Although the stationer assures his "gentleman" readers that Man's birth is "truly noble," the ambivalent phrase says less about Man's actual social status and more about the recurring early modern topos of authorship as social opportunity. Whatever her birth, she claims a kinship with other women in print and she seems to have belonged to a coterie of Wentworth women. Dedicating her text to a female aristocratic reader was, as I discuss in more detail in my next chapter on Suzanne Du Verger, a typical move in women's front matter as it both created a façade of privacy as well as a sense of an acceptable and enviable literary coterie within the paratext.

In her association with the Wentworth girls, Man participated in some level in an educational coterie. In her preface, she recalls their “Schoole of Vertue,” which presumably refers to time together reading and writing and accentuates her intimacy with the family:

It is not needful, I should use many words, to let You know, that this Book belongs to Your Ladyship, It sufficing that You know, I am Yours, (since You gave me the liberty, to call my self so, when I had the Honor to be admitted into the House of my Lord Your Father, where my parents did introduce me, and where I have profited near You and my Lady Arabella your Sister, as in a Schoole of Vertue). [sig. A2]

Man is not the only woman who looked back at this school as a golden opportunity. Alice Thornton, nee Wandesford, also participated in this group and wrote in her 1668 autobiography a glowing appreciation of her time with the Wentworth family:

It pleased God to give me a safe passage with my mother and her family into Ireland about the year 1632, my father being there before and sent for us over. Where I enjoyed great happiness and comfort during my father's life¹⁰ and had the opportunity of the best education the kingdom could afford in the sweet and excellent company of my Lord of Strafford's daughters, the most virtuous Lady Anne Wentworth and Arabella, learning those qualities with them my father pleased to order me, as: the

¹⁰ Christopher Wandesford was Strafford's employee as well as a loyal supporter and friend. He died within days of hearing of Strafford's execution.

French language, writing and speaking the same, singing, dancing, playing
on the lute and theorbo. (151)

Thornton's description offers the particulars of Man's "schoole of vertue" and they are fairly consistent with contemporary prescriptions for women's education: singing, dancing, playing an instrument, and French (rather than Latin). Thornton praises this atmosphere of learning in the same grateful tone that Man uses in her dedication, which emerges from the reverence due to a still powerful family of note as well as appreciation for the coterie atmosphere that Thornton and Man both experienced. In addition to the studies Thornton lists, Strafford also had his daughters instructed in writing, sending a tutor with them on visit to their maternal grandmother for that purpose.¹¹

Thornton lists French first when describing their studies—and it is the only area that she details ("writing and speaking the same")—a note that reinforces a sense of the group's positive language-learning atmosphere. Strafford also proudly reported his daughters' educational attainments in a letter to their maternal grandmother, especially noting their accomplishments in French: "Nan, I think, speaks *French* prettily, which yet I might have been better able to judge had her Mother lived; the other also speaks, but her Maid being of *Guernsey*, the Accent is not good" (II. 380). This preeminence of French language study (the association of the lost mother accentuates it as a feminine accomplishment) would be a fitting background to Man's later claim that she translates

¹¹ "I thought fit to send with them one that teacheth them to write; he is a quiet soft Man, but honest, and not given to any Disorder" (Wentworth II. 380).

Coeffeteau's epitome initially in her process of studying the language. As an eighteen year-old among these younger girls,¹² and perhaps a relative of Wentworth's steward, Judith Man may have been tutoring them as well as practicing her own French.

Additionally although Thornton writes over twenty-five years after her association with the Wentworth family, she adopts language identical to Man's to praise the eldest daughter, conventionally describing her as "most virtuous." In addition to the rhetoric of virtue quoted above, Man further praises Anne Wentworth as surpassing *Argenis*: "and as touching of virtue whereof You are a Pattern, You excel Her, being Virtue itself" [sig. A3]. Strafford's thirteen year-old daughter was reportedly precocious (her maternal grandmother who sent the sisters home after an abbreviated visit) (Timmis 42), and not always an exemplar of early modern ideals of feminine obedience; however, the repeated reference reveals that this small group of learning women and girls had a shared language of virtue, echoing a conventional goal of women's education. This coterie plays some part in Man's translation from the French (as her stationer puts it, her "lucubrations," which implies the translation is the product of extra nighttime study and above her usual obligations) and provides a context for her interrogations of feminine virtue and the uses of romance.

¹² At the time of publication, Anne Wentworth would have been thirteen, her sister Arabella, twelve, and Alice Thornton, thirteen. Man says she was eighteen when she translated *Argenis*.

Barclay, Strafford, and Man

The printed edition of Man's book had a political subtext unrelated to Anne Wentworth's virtue. Her father was the king's most trusted counselor at the time, but increasingly out of favor with parliamentary colleagues. According to Man's preface, she translated Argenis during the Christmas of 1639. Charles granted Strafford a controversial earldom early the next year,¹³ which her book defends in its 1640 paratext. As significant as Man's defense of his earldom is Strafford's own relationship to Charles I's previous translation of Argenis. Strafford had been imprisoned in 1627 because of his refusal to pay one of the forced loans, arguing that the king's wily taxation was an abuse of authority and an unacceptable circumnavigation of Parliament. He also had opposed the king in the 1628 petition of right controversy, the very conflict that the king protested by commissioning the Le Grys translation. Man's short Argenis functioned as a shorthand reminder to the king of his own literary response to the Petition of Right controversy and signaled Strafford's public capitulation to Charles' view of monarchy, a retraction of his earlier opposition to the king's attempts to exercise absolute sovereignty. In this section I discuss how Man's Argenis continues a public debate about the proper powers of the monarchy rather than being primarily a means for advancing her own sense of authorship.

¹³ Sir Henry Vane had plans for the earldom for himself; Clarendon describes it going to Strafford as "an act of the most unnecessary provocation that I have known, I believe was the chief occasion of the loss of his head" (qtd. in DNB 1188).

As mentioned above, Charles I commissioned Le Grys to make a second English translation in 1628, just two years after Long's. Zurcher theorizes that this was Charles' attempt to reinforce the monarch's power to Parliament and the English public during the Petition of Right controversy, which prohibited taxation without consent, forced billeting of troops, violation of the writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and martial law in peacetime as its main tenets (x). Le Grys repeatedly reminds the king and other "understanding readers" that his translation appears at the king's command, explaining the translation has been summoned erases the usual prefatory demand for a "formal apologie" for appearing in print [sig. A2]. Patterson notes this reluctant language in Le Grys' preface and speculates that his abjection in the face of the king's demand is a translator's politic attempt to divert attention from the publication as signaling his own opinions of the controversy (191-92). Although Parliament forced the king to assert British civil liberties and the rule of law in the Petition of Right, Charles I continued to undermine these assertions by his actions as signaled by his commission of a new Argenis.

When Man's book was published, Strafford was rising in power; he was the king's most trusted advisor and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and his new title signaled Charles's trust and approval and perhaps transcendence of their earlier disagreements. Yet even in early 1640, although Strafford's blackened name had not yet become the national preoccupation of later months, he was a contested figure. Later opponents would spread this unpopularity well beyond Parliament by sponsoring a print campaign against him where "Black Tom Tyrant" replaced his earlier and already derogatory

nickname of “Thorough” (Oman 110). Man nods to his declining reputation when she defends his earldom; she argues that the new title was wholly the king’s idea and that Strafford received it as a reward for good work, “without asking and intercession” [sig. A4]. Her defense implies there was some suspicion or rumor that Strafford’s new title was undeserved or the result of his own inappropriate importuning.

Man’s epitome reminds the English reader of Argenis’ earlier interventions into images of kingship while at the same time inserting Strafford into the political conversation of the text’s histories. By evoking the earlier successes of Barclay’s romance while importing a French version of it,¹⁴ Man rebranded Strafford as a supporter of Charles I’s version of monarchy, which might not have been assumed after his famous parliamentary opposition against the king in 1628. Strafford’s “change of sides” was controversial and earned him a reputation for political maneuvering, one that would hurt him in his trial. It was true Strafford navigated political waters with great care. Richard Cust records how the Earl’s correspondence with his close friend and employee, Christopher Wandesford, Alice Thornton’s father, shows Strafford adopting, perhaps merely practicing, various political poses. According to Cust, Strafford balanced his reputation on two fronts, court and country. While seeking preferment at court, Strafford was careful to maintain his status as an “honest” gentleman to the gentry at home (73-77). Cust argues that Strafford’s maneuvers were not Machiavellian and that

¹⁴ Salzman traces the Caroline popularity of French romance (114-16) and remarks that in the “elegant world of Charles I . . . all things French were fashionable” (148). He also cites a Restoration complaint about this trend: “Booksellers . . . scorn any thing of this Kind below and *Originally in F-----* in the Title Page, with a *Made English*.”

the tension between court and country reputations was one that most elected members of Parliament had to manage (78). It is worth noting that one possible literary history for Man's book is that she had very little to do with its publication and that it was entirely the idea of Wandesford or Peter Man, although the details of Man's two prefatory letters seem to belie this scenario. Either way, the point is that Strafford's reputation was by no means happenstance, and Man's book fit with his deliberate self-presentations in other contexts.

If Charles I had been as powerful as he imagined, Man's book might have coincided with Strafford's continued political ascent, but conditions had changed since the last appearance of Argenis. In the climate of "anti-Catholic hysteria" (Wilcher 37),¹⁵ Argenis was hardly a helpful public text to associate with Strafford's name. A romance with several Catholic connections—Barclay *and* Coeffeteau—was not effective for Charles I in 1628 because of the increased tensions between Laud's church and less ceremonial Protestant groups who were already suspicious that the king was secretly Catholic and trying to convert the country. The fear of Catholic conspiracy was another piece in the puzzle of Strafford's downfall; his plan to bring an Irish army to fight for the king in Scotland was misrepresented as a Catholic invasion of England. Additionally, after years of sumptuous masques elucidating the absolute nature of kingship, an extended literary metaphor preaching extreme power for monarchs had little appeal to

¹⁵ Anthony Fletcher's The Outbreak of the English Civil War has a compelling summary of how imminent the imagined "Popish plot" seemed to Pym, the Parliament who impeached Strafford, and the London multitudes (11-13).

parliamentary readers who were fairly well sated with romantic discourses of monarchy by 1640. As an example of the widespread disenchantment of the court with the King's governing, Robert Wilcher describes Sir John Suckling's warning to the king about the failures of Carolinian rule as "an effort to inject some realism into royal strategy by identifying the principal interest of the King as 'a union with his people'"; he argued "that popular demands in two areas of policy must be satisfied—'Religion and Justice'—and that cannot be done 'by any little Arts, but by reall and Kingly resolutions'" (43). Even courtiers loyal to the king struggled with his eleven years without a Parliament and their powerlessness to redress grievances and have any input into governance. Man's book misread the political moment and arrived when its content had become outdated although the numbers of that type of public discourse were increasing as never before.

Strafford's trial and execution began a new level of public debate, one that extended beyond the court and Parliament. Terence Kilburn and Anthony Milton explain the publicity surrounding Strafford's trial as the beginning of an entirely new popular political awareness: "for the first time . . . an active and informed public opinion was emerging to exercise an important voice in the affairs of the realm" (230). They emphasize that the public consciousness of court affairs was not a unified force; rather, versions of court events and persons were always in competition for the public eye: "a number of inchoate public opinions were generated, capable of constructing authority in a number of ways, and therefore enticingly open to being courted or seduced by a variety of political actors, by the crown or its critics alike" (231). William Pym and his

political associates stirred up and sometimes directly sponsored speeches against Strafford, and their power over public opinion was a significant element of their success. David Scott Kastan also records the 1640 appearance of public opinion as an “effective political agent” (171) that culminated in public lobbying for Strafford’s execution, quoting a London resident’s response: “My Lord of Strafford had not died . . . if the people had not pressed the Lords in a tumult as they did” (172).

Timmis also shows how Strafford’s unpopularity was the last straw against him. Although the Earl had not committed treason and Parliament failed to prove any of their charges against him, they passed a bill of Attainder declaring him a danger to the state and executed him anyway. The London mobs intimidated the few Lords who could have voted against Strafford’s execution (168). Cressy estimates the numbers of Londoners on the streets responding to the rumor of Strafford’s possible rescue on May 3 at over 10,000 (382). The king delayed authorizing the bill for as long as he could but eventually was frightened by public demand; he justified his surrender with “if my own person only were in danger, I would gladly venture it to save Lord Strafford’s life; but seeing my wife, children, and all my Kingdom are concerned in it, I am forced to give way unto it” (170). Fletcher records a “fortnight of political panic” preceding Strafford’s death (14-15) and the unquenchable publicity of about the case and his famous scaffold speech afterwards (16-17). Wentworth’s self defense was savvy and politic, but failed to counter the new populism that appeared during his trial. Man’s book is the only known dedication to his

family which appeared to counter the wave of anti-Wentworth propaganda (though immediately after his execution, some broadsheets memorialized him as maligned).

Man could not have foreseen these coming upheavals when planning the publication of her book, though perhaps the “others” who encouraged her to put her Argenis in print perceived it as a small opportunity (when the book was entered in the stationer’s register, Strafford was at the height of his influence with the king, but his reputation at court was fading). Charles I had sworn to protect Strafford, declaring “as he was the king of England he was able to secure him from any danger, and that the Parliament should not touch a hair of his head” (Traill 170). The civil wars were not imagined; the severity of the coming split between the king and Parliament was yet unthinkable. Although Man did not see this uproar coming, her text remains in part an effort to counter the beginnings of a campaign against Strafford, whose downfall was the beginning of a political era in England when the public participated in political debate through print more than ever before.

Justification of and by Fiction

Looking at Man’s presentation of her text in her prefatory materials shows her constructing a political voice and negotiating between the private and public claims on her femininity. Her title page, her dedication, and her letter to the reader, which I examine in this section, navigate between deference and defense as she positions her text in the service of the Strafford family. Man claims she has designed her title page to give “Argenis the precedency, rather than unto Poliarchus in the Frontispece of this

Booke,” and so she immediately declares that has designed the threshold of her book to highlight its feminine hero as well as to request a similar chivalric courtesy from her male readers. Man adopts the discourse of romance in her prefatory materials and advises her readers to approach her text using romance mores—especially the ideal of courtesy to women—in order to read correctly; however, reading as Man suggests finds Argenis transformed. Poliarchus, previously a hero, is a bad reader whereas Argenis is a good reader and writer. Man capitalizes on the accident of Coeffeteau’s epitome, which made Argenis into a strong woman of romance and writes her own text as an intervention of women reading and writing. This intervention occurs when she disconnects the prefatory rhetoric of feminine submission from the world within her narrative.

Looking at Man’s title page exposes her book’s contrasts with earlier Argenises: the advertisement of it as an “epitome” highlights that this Argenis has discarded Barclay’s allegory for plot while “history” spells out the book’s genre and relative affordability, as well as hinting at a likely audience.¹⁶ Epitome is the key to Man’s transformation of Barclay’s large sprawling romance into a woman’s text; epitome was a rhetorical exercise recommended as a way of mastering texts, as was *translatio*, *paraphrasis*, *metaphrasis*, *imitatio*, and *declamatio*. Because epitome abbreviated texts, it made some educators suspicious. Wheatley describes Roger Ascham’s disdain for the misuse of epitome as complaining “that many epitomes ultimately replaced their

¹⁶ A shorter octavo would have been much less expensive than the earlier folios by Barclay, Le Grys, and Long, though still a more substantial book than Coeffeteau’s smaller edition.

originals, and in this way could teach only ‘this wise lesson, that a man ought to beware, to be over bold, in altering an excellent mans work’” (“Abridging” 863). By the seventeenth century, epitome frequently provided cheap access to learned texts. Wheatley tracks a change in discussions of epitome, showing how it moved from being a “disgraceful shortcut circumventing study” to being a “key point of entry” into otherwise overwhelming long and expensive books (858).

As an epitome and a romance, Man’s Argenis fit in with an emerging tradition of women’s books, which were associated with epitome as a genre of abbreviation and redaction, and so defined women as readers needing something smaller and easier than longer originals. Anne Bradstreet’s poem “The Four Monarchies” is described on her title page as an “epitomie.” Suzanne Du Verger translates Camus’ Admirable Events which he describes as abridgements “stript of the ornaments which might have set forth their bodies in a far fairer hew” [sig. a6]. As epitome is crucial to Man’s transformation of Barclay’s elite Argenis into women’s literature, romance was another accessible genre for women readers. A history was a romance, and romance could be a large Spenserian production, but more likely it was a small book aimed at a popular readership. Citing a contemporary trade list from the Stationer’s Company of books frequently found in traveling peddler’s bags—“Small Godly Books, Small Merry Books, Double-Boks, and

Histories" [sic]—Margaret Spufford records the popular conception of the history as a romance, usually chivalric, aimed at a wider class of readers (xix).¹⁷

On the bottom half of the title page, a second set of words stands out: Coeffeteau . . . gentlewoman . . . dedicated . . . Anne Wentworth . . . London. For obvious reasons, the names of the French epitomizer and the dedicatee are further advertising points. Man is not named but alluded to as a "gentlewoman." Although her name is not a surprising omission, the inclusion of her gender marks her text as potentially a novelty. Man's epitome seems from its title page on to announce its social place as well as functioning as a political tool in redeeming Strafford's ruined reputation. Yet its size and missing prefatory materials also seems at odds with such a grandiose goal, as I will discuss after looking at the paratext in some detail.

Man's prefatory materials, when seen working together as an introduction to her narrative, have three main functions. First she defends her work, her dedicatee and her main character as paragons of virtue: "as touching Virtue whereof You are a Pattern, You excel Her, being Virtue itself" [sig. A3]. Man explains her text as being from a virtuous woman writing about a virtuous woman for a virtuous woman. Writing is a wholly virtuous act. The uses of virtue are long ranging for any early modern author, but had a special importance to writing women. Part of the sales appeal of women-authored books was the novelty of the "young gentlewoman" advertised on the title

¹⁷ I use the phrase "wider" class keeping in mind that, as Teresa Watt argues, cheap print does not only mean a lower class of reader, rather it includes more readers (4-7); "court" readers could also have read Man's book.

page, and yet being advertised on doorways and public places (where title pages were often posted as advertisements) was not a good fit with the appearance of chastity and results in an inflation of the paratextual rhetoric of virtue. Man's defense of her own writing and of her dedicatee's father is they are virtuous people working for virtuous ends.

Man's syllogistic reasoning—Man's person belongs to Anne Wentworth; the book came from Man; therefore the book belongs to Wentworth—claims virtue for herself as well as for Wentworth; however, she also adopts a discourse of gift giving that can be seen in other early modern dedicatory letters. Lisa Klein, describing Elizabethan gift exchanges as political transactions, discusses this ethos using Spenser's dedicatory cantos of Book Six of The Faerie Queene as her example: "Then pardon me, most dreaded Sovereign, / That from yourself I do this virtue bring, / And to yourself do it return again" (VI.vii). Klein summarizes Spenser's presentation as a dialogue of obligation: "Spenser's tribute to Elizabeth's courtesy is compulsory: he is obligated to give it, and his tribute in turn compels the queen to be courteous to him" (467). Five decades later, this courtly discourse of gift-giving and indebtedness becomes increasingly characteristic of dedicatory letters, popularized by books such as the 1634 The Mirrour of Complements, which features sample letters requesting patronage (qtd. in Peck 15). Man uses this same reciprocal logic in presenting her virtuous book to Wentworth:

It is not needful, I should use many words, to let You know, that this Book belongs to Your Ladyship, It sufficing that You know, I am Yours, (since You gave me the liberty, to call myself so . . .) whence it follows, that I only give You that which is Yours, being found in me: and though it should be otherwise, I could not present it to any one, that deserved it better then Yourself. [sig. A2-A3].

Linda Levy Peck notes that early modern letters of dedication were not superficial compliments but political transactions that could earn tangible rewards (19). Man's book seems both an acknowledgement of privileges received and a defense and a celebration of the family's rising social status.

Secondly, Man's tone changes from her dedicatory letter to her "Letter to the Reader," and she writes herself into a new tradition, the barely existent one of women writing romance. She defends her work with a literary history of women's translations of romance: "And I intreat thee, Gentle Reader, to oblige me so farre, as not to presume that I doe it, out of vanity; because it is not without example, and could produce thee many of my sexe, who have traced me the way, witnesse the translation into French of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, the New Amarantha, and the Urania, with many others" [sig. A7]. Salzman cites Genevieve Chappelaine's 1624 translation of Sidney's Arcadia as the one to which Man most likely is referring (86). The English Short Title Catalogue lists no New Amarantha though the name is similar to Francis Bacon's The New Atlantis (1626). Her reference to the Urania likely refers to Wroth's 1621 romance. Man constructs a

literary history of women translators in which to place her book and so legitimize her translation.

Thirdly Man describes how to read her text and offers two gendered models of reading. In her dedicatory letter she asks women to read for virtue while in her “Letter to the Reader,” she asks men to read as chivalrous characters in a romance. Note her direction to Wentworth:

The reading of this Epitome, Madam, which I dedicate unto You, as being
Yours, and which I put to light under Your protection, will represent
Argenis unto You, as the Fairest, most Vertuous, and Constant Princesse
of Her time. And I have thought, reading this History, that I have seene
Your true portraiture in the person of this Faire Lady. For, making a
Parallell of this Princesse with Your Honour I find You very suitable. [sig.
A3]

In her extremely ingratiating, and so quite generic, dedication, Man asks Wentworth to read with an eye for beauty and virtue. Recalling the allegory with which the Barclay’s Argenis began, Man reinvests the allegory into her dedicatee, making Anne Wentworth is the true Argenis. The words “you” or “your” are repeated thirty-five times in the dedication (making the second person singular constitute well over a tenth of its content) and the fonts strikingly reinforce the message that the woman reader should align her own virtue with Argenis’. Every instance of “you” or “your” is in a roman font larger than the rest of the italic text. To use a romance correctly, Wentworth and

women readers more generally must read for a moral education, a simple response to a written text.

Man then addresses male readers in her “To the Courteous Reader,” where instead of a defense of feminine virtue, she places the burden of the problem—namely how to read a woman’s text—on the reader, recommending that their chivalry guide them:

I pray thee to excuse the faults, if there be any, and remember, that women (for the most part) are unacquainted with the study of Sciences; and by that means, may sooner err; Also, I esteem that thou art Courteous enough, to use me according to the courtesy and custom, due to the Ladies of this Country, where I was borne; And of whose Privilege I make use, giving Argenis the precedency, rather then unto Poliarchus in the Frontispiece of this Book; And in so doing, I shall not be a little obliged to thee. [sig. A7]

Man’s gentlemen should read differently, or so she tells them in her preface; they are capable of criticizing the quality and accuracy of the translation. She asks them to adopt a particularly English version of chivalry and then models this sort of reading when she interprets her own title page—which places Argenis ahead of Poliarchus—as a display of courtesy to women. While directing their reading, Man also nationalizes chivalry as a properly English response to her book.

Man both downplays and defends her text in her prefatory statements. On the one hand, she has made her book only to practice her French and because she has a melancholy humor that drives her to a solitary occupation like reading. She has allowed her text to be published only because she is an obedient daughter (or niece or servant; her actual position remains unclear, but filial obedience is one defining paradigm). On the other hand, she presents women's authorship as perhaps more normal than it was and says she is merely following many other women translators before her and her work is a homage to "the most learned Prelate of his time" (Coeffeteau). Other than her allusions to other women's texts, Man's excuses for publication fit into the usual repertoire of prefatory self defenses. In the upcoming section I discuss the implications of Man's prefatory materials for her romance as a woman's foray into both authorship and an attempted public voice. If her readers apply her recommended reading practices to her narrative, they find first that her characters do not follow those directions at their peril and second that she aligns feminine virtue with women who are strong and active in public affairs.

Texts in the Narrative

One of the amusing and hopefully not unforeseen effects of Man's equation of Wentworth with Argenis is the parallel equation of King Meleander with Wentworth's father, Strafford. King Meleander is recognizable as a version of Sidney's Basilius; Barclay's bumbling king similarly nearly loses his kingdom by a chain of ill made decisions involving his daughter, upon whom the succession of his kingdom depends.

Meleander misreads a series of “texts”: a disguise, a reported crime, and traitorous letters. He believes too easily. In the process of representing these texts, her book becomes a book about reading and so becomes a text about its own mission: what should readers do when encountering reported treason? How should they approach a woman’s book? Readers represented within the romance engage with texts in a variety of ways, but King Meleander is the most visible reader as well as the worst. A poor critic and over confident in his own abilities as king, the loyalty of his subjects, and the peacefulness of his kingdom, he perceives neither the subtlety of people nor of their speeches. He nearly loses his throne twice in the narrative and is saved only by young princes who want to marry his daughter. Meleander does not question Poliarchus’s disguise as a woman, and he believes false reports of Poliarchus when everyone else in his court right down to his guards are confident in the prince’s fidelity. Man’s language pointedly highlights the king’s mistakes.

Meleander’s first misreading is of Theocrine’s (the crossdressed Polyarchus) appearance, rescue, and disappearance. Although the king has secluded his daughter in a high tower on an island and away from all men in order to protect her chastity and her kingdom, he allows a new lady-in-waiting, Theocrine, to join the enclosed royal entourage without interrogation. Clearly Meleander is not an experienced reader of romance, as the narrator comments: “he imagined that this yong Sunne, should be the ornament of his Crowne, the prop of his State, the delight of his Life, and the consolation of his Old age. But men are ignorant of their destinies, and know not what

may befall them” [sig. B2]. When Theocrine saves the king single-handedly from an ambush and then disappears, he assumes that she was a visiting goddess, Minerva, and promptly sets up a temple in her honor and appoints his daughter as the main priestess. The set up becomes comical when Poliarchus returns to the kingdom, now as himself, and suddenly becomes a devout worshipper of Minerva: “neither His, nor Argenis’ devotion, was not so much fixt, on the contemplation of the ceremonies nor on the admiration of all the pompe, as to enterchange amorous looks, wherein lay all their felicity” [sig. C2].

The king’s next misreading also results from misjudging appearances. Poliarchus, as himself now instead of Theocrine, helps Meleander defeat the rebel forces and then leaves the kingdom. While departing, he gets into a bloody tussle with the rebels’ ambassadors sent to surrender (they attack Poliarchus and he acts in self-defense). The rebels misrepresent that event as Poliarchus’ unprovoked attack on a party of ambassadors, in defiance of the laws of war and chivalry. The story seems absolutely preposterous to everyone at court and soldiers “openly jeere at this accusation” [sig. C3]. The king, however, begins to feel that he must assuage the messengers’ anger and so declares Poliarchus a criminal, offering a reward for his return to the court. Man notes that the commoners immediately seize on this reward and range around the countryside looking for their prey, a representation of the dangers of the public mob as well as its power.

A final instance of Meleander's misreading shows him unable to use a text correctly. He has already been shown as disliking reading as an activity, leaving his daughter when she exchanges "discourses" with her Theocrine and another companion (Meleander's "age tooke away the sweetnesse of this entertainment" [sig. B6]). Then he responds in anger to the messenger instead of its sender when Poliarchus forwards letters that reveal one of his courtiers, Licogenes, to be a traitor. Instead of investigating the betrayal, he turns against Poliarchus, the Prince who has repeatedly worked to salvage Meleander's monarchy from the king's own mishandling of it.

When Meleander finally reads something right, it is a woman's text. The Queen of Mauritania, Hyanisbe, writes him an explanation of how her foster son, Archombrotus, actually is his son and Argenis' sister. The care that he takes with her text differs markedly from his earlier sudden judgments: "At the opening of the letters, the King changed color, having read them very exactly, and with an extraordinary attention" [sig. E8]. The text that captures Meleander's attention is one that is at odds with Man's recommendations in her preface where she describes women's texts as often muddled because they are "unacquainted with the studie of Sciences; and by that meanes, may sooner erre" [sig. A7]. In her preface, she also coyly appeals to the male reader's vanity, asking that he treat her book with the same courtesy characteristic of male characters in romances. But her narrative accentuates the trouble that this kind of reading can create when Argenis inadvertently causes Archombrotus to fall in love with her; when she "thanks [Archombrotus] with so much courtesy, and by this civility, did

put Herself in danger to spoil all" [sig. D2]. The last third of the romance is a record of trying to overcome Archombrotus masculine misreading. Rather correct reading comes from examining texts "exactly, and with an extraordinary attention," something that the book's three main female characters—Argenis, Hyanisbe, and Timoclea, a noblewoman who hides Poliarchus from the mob and helps the plot along occasionally—consistently accomplish.

Another significant instance of male misreading comes from Poliarchus, the hero. Without waiting to hear the context, Poliarchus mistakes Argenis' greeting to her newly discovered brother as a rejection of his love, and in the instant of seeing the embrace, he hatches a plan to kill her and her whole family and follow the murders with his own suicide. His contemplation of this murder/suicide takes a long two printed pages to describe graphically, the longest soliloquy in this epitome; he has his hand on his sword to begin the mayhem when fortunately Argenis explains that Archombrotus is not longer a rival to Poliarchus but a potential brother-in-law. Abandoning his homicidal plans, but skipping an opportunity for some probing self-analysis, immediately he is happy and back in love with Argenis. It is a romance moment and not an unusual one. Romance characters make rash judgments all the time and then suffer for them: the Red Crosse Knight believes Archimago's false dream of Una and Basilius falls in love with a disguised Pyrocles. These characters' errors reveal their poor moral health; they have a willingness to believe in appearances, a trope in romance that Man's text depends on. What is more unusual is how women's better reading and writing offer a counterpoint

to bad male readers. Spenser's Una remains a good reader but she also remains an allegorical figure, unlike Argenis, whom Coeffeteau and Man have released from allegory.

Argenis is remade as a mere character in a romance, who happens to be, like Pamphilia, a paragon of constancy, thanks to Coeffeteau's tinkering with Barclay. Man also focuses on Argenis' virtuous constancy in her preface. But in the story she is a woman of unusual strength for a romance, as Coeffeteau and Man write her, not as an allegory. In order to read Argenis as strong, we have to read her like a "regular" character of romance. Man uses the discourse of romance in her prefatory materials and asks that readers approach her text using romance mores—extremely virtuous ladies and courtesy to women—to help us read correctly. When we do read that way, instead of allegorically, we find Argenis transformed. Poliarchus, previously a hero, is a bad reader. Argenis, on the other hand, is a good reader and writer as well as a political agent.

Reading the Whole Man

The underlying question of my discussion of Man's Argenis is how much of this translated text belongs to her. She chose to translate Argenis from a selection of available French romances and used her paratext to frame it within a specific cultural paradigm of service to an aristocratic family, one that turned out to be central in the beginning of the English civil wars. Man changes very little of Coeffeteau's text in her

translation, and reading her translation shows a careful word to work correlation.¹⁸ Seen in the context of her educational circle, Man's claim that she translated Argenis as a learning exercise seems at least partly true (often such claims seem to excuse a text as one that the author never meant as a public one). The change in Barclay's Argenis from epic romance to epitome, from allegory to plot, produced a new book, and arguably one more available and appealing to a sub-aristocratic woman translator. Man does not change the plot or genre, but her placement of the revised Argenis into the political maelstrom of 1640 is an attempt to revise Strafford's reputation and relation to the crown into public consciousness. Man also defends her right to use romance as a contribution to public debate while interrogating the nature of public texts.

Man's plot depends upon conspiracy, misrepresentations, and misreadings; nothing would happen if various characters maneuvered with transparency. The story begins with Poliarchus deceiving Argenis and her father in order to gain access via the time-honored romance staple of disguise. When Argenis discovers his deceit, she responds indignantly with a metaphor of fiction and printing that continues throughout their relationship and is related to the conspiracy upon which the narrative hangs. At the very core of her complaint is that she does not know if she can trust authorship. Poliarchus is the author of her love as well as of her confusion, as well as the danger in which she is repeatedly placed by not being able to admit their love publicly. For her, the answer is transparency. She "conjures" Poliarchus three times to return to Sicily

¹⁸ Zurcher notes this as well, describing the translation as exact and Man's diction in English as awkward at times because of her fidelity to the French (x).

with his army as a sign of his power.¹⁹ Three times he returns in various disguises, never with the show of power that Argenis is convinced will be required to accomplish their marriage. Instead of Poliarchus arriving with a French army that will compel King Meleander to accept a suitor, a rival arrives with his own impressive show of force.

The reader is aligned with Argenis' perspective in the romance, as is most clearly indicated in the narration of Argenis and Poliarchus' first meeting. The prince adopts the name and wardrobe of Theocrine, a fictional French princess of his own devising, but the narrative continues to refer to Theocrine as "he," until the moment when Argenis meets Theocrine, when suddenly he becomes she and remains so until the very moment when Theocrine admits his true identity to Argenis. Then the narrator again begins to refer to Theocrine as he. Truth in Argenis the story is then seen through the eyes of Argenis the character, until Poliarchus' homicidal mental digression at the story's climax. This story about reading and how to manage political intrigue suggests readers adopt a self-conscious and careful approach to their own reckonings of current events.

¹⁹ As often has Man describes her characters speaking to each other, she represents communication not as speaking, but as conjuring. Characters conjure each other to do things, say things, believe things. Man applies the verb equally to characters who are trustworthy than to those that are not. Conjuring promises both the power and deceit available in speech. In seventeenth century usage of conjure had several meanings. In a sense that was becoming obsolete, to conjure was to swear an oath with someone, and particularly with a conspiratorial intention. But the word could also have a more interrogatory sense of pleading or charging a person to act in a certain way. The term's more familiar magic connotation was also current. Man's characters seem to have the first two senses in play when she describes their communications with each other. While the marvelous is so often a vital element in romance, magic and conjurations of that kind are entirely absent from all the versions of Argenis. Man describes conspirators as conjurors, but when characters are conjuring each other, they might be swearing oaths or arguing a course of action or conspiring together.

As a book designed to honor one of the most powerful men in England, Man's epitome is materially underwhelming: short and small. The prefatory materials include only Man's dedication to Strafford's daughter, his new coat of arms, Man's letter to the reader, and the stationer's letter to the reader. Often such books, especially romances, included a string of commendatory poems and letters in praise of the author. The brevity of its prefatory materials suggests that this Argenis was produced in a hurry and was indeed a first defense of Strafford's declining reputation. While Man does accomplish one goal implied in her letter to the reader, namely showing how women could write and how her readers should approach her book and women's writing in general, her dedication failed to signal Strafford's political philosophy of kingship and move public opinion in his favor. Instead of winning public opinion to Strafford's favor, Man's 1640 text footnotes the failures of the Caroline reign and was a small voice of opposition to parliamentary rebellion against the king.

The cultural context for Man's text was quite different from that of the later romance writers of the English Revolution; only eleven years separates Man from Anna Weamys' 1650 romance, but the world had been turned "upside down."²⁰ For Man, the king was still the king and her employer, or her uncle's employer, was still one of the most powerful men in the kingdom. Man writes a text that is a shorthand reminder of a subject's proper relationship with a king, who within the world of Argenis, should have absolute power and respect. Within months this would all begin unraveling. But for the

²⁰ Christopher Hill's phrase, taken from the literature of the period, seems one of the best descriptions of the experience of the period.

moment, she writes under an umbrella of safety, even though the umbrella was illusory. Suspicion, slander, news—both true and false—and imaginations are rife in Man's Argenis, making it an education in the necessity of testing the verity of report. The burden of good reading is laid on the reader, who must read with an active interest in the truth rather than settling for the easiest conclusions.

Chapter Two: Moving from Paratext to Text

in Suzanne Du Verger's Catholic Romances

In 1657, an intrepid correction of Margaret Cavendish's The World's Olio (1655) appeared under the title Du Vergers Humble Reflections. Its author, Suzanne Du Verger, earlier had published Admirable Events (1639) and Diotrephe (1641), both edited translations of Jean-Pierre Camus' popular romances, but this later text signaled a dramatic new turn. Unlike her previous books, in which her dedications were entirely deferential, Humble Reflections departs boldly from that obeisance in spite of its title's claim. Although without reputation or title herself, Du Verger ignores the customary extreme deference to the aristocracy, choosing instead to flaunt the humble origins of her text. Instead of dodging anti-Catholic bias, she openly defends the faith against Cavendish's misrepresentation of monasticism. Examining her three books, and in particular her prefatory materials, reveals the relatively unknown Du Verger's authorship to be the byproduct of achieving a political voice, a striking contrast to the relative luxury of deliberate literary personae of more privileged women writing imaginative literature in the period.

Du Verger's translations started her authorship as a bid for personal patronage and public acceptance of Catholic texts, but her final text displays a new self-awareness. Her reply to Cavendish vehemently three levels of response to Olio. She makes an overt defense of Catholicism while also correcting what she sees as Cavendish's corruption of

women's authorship by a misuse of her publicity. Du Verger also dissects and parodies the duchess' assumptions about how class privileges literary authority.

Cavendish's literary career has been a boon to critics looking for lost worlds of women's writing in the seventeenth century, and they have noted that her own strong sense of individuation or singularity was her most empowering attribute as an author.¹ She disliked Henrietta Maria's sophisticated court when she arrived in 1642 and early established herself as an outsider, a situation that did not improve when the court went into exile in France. When she married the powerful and rich William Cavendish in 1645, becoming first a marquess and later a duchess, she made her outsider status a mark of her privilege and transcendence of the rules governing most women's behavior.² Cavendish found a literary voice that erupted spectacularly into print with three lavish folios in the space of three years; from 1653 to 1655, she published Poems and Fancies (1653), Nature's Pictures Drawn by Fancies (1653), (one week after Poems and Fancies), and Olio (1655).³ Cavendish's authorship was too extravagant and plentiful to have been lost or misplaced and understandably has a critical tradition longer than most other early modern writing women.

¹ Anna Battigelli discusses Cavendish's life as a series of isolating exiles that led her to adopt "the mask of the exiled cavalier" as a unifying theme as an author (10); James Fitzmaurice discusses her self-presentations as constructions of herself as a solitary genius.

² Sarah Hutton notes Samuel Pepys' famous description of Cavendish as "a mad, conceited and ridiculous woman" (160) and notes other contemporary descriptions of Cavendish's reputation as an eccentric (175, n.1). Emma Rees discusses critical preoccupation with Cavendish's eccentricities (12-14).

³ Cavendish continued her printing career with new publications and revisions until her last book, a biography of her husband in 1671. For the purposes of this chapter, I am only concerned with the three publications that Suzanne Du Verger would have known.

In contrast Suzanne Du Verger's authorship has not been fully noticed (except in the introductions to two volumes in the Ashgate facsimile series),⁴ but looking at her career in its entirety reveals that she is a rare example of a sub-aristocratic woman printing multiple books for English readers⁵ for overtly religious, and so highly political, ends during a time of social chaos and in the shadow of her own Catholicism. She transformed her rhetoric and her mission in the fifteen-year course of producing her three books. In this chapter I argue that while her dutifully formulaic 1639 and 1641 dedications applied to titled and powerful women for patronage and protection for her book, Du Verger reinterprets the genre in her 1657 book. Again she dedicates her work to a "great lady," this time Margaret Cavendish, but now to correct her. She rebuffs Cavendish's printed misrepresentations of monasticism not only as misinformed but also as making women's writing appear foolish. Having written her earlier publications

⁴ Jane Collins first connected Du Verger's multiple publications to one person in her "Introductory Note" to Camus, Jean-Pierre, S. Du Verger, and Jane Collins. *Susan Du Verger*. (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1996). Desma Polydourou and Erin Hendriksen include *Diotrephe* in their 2004 facsimile edition, *Fiction of Unknown or Questionable Attribution. The Early Modern Englishwoman*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004): 9-10. Database entries include: Brown University. *Women Writers Online*. (Providence, R.I.: Women Writers Project, 1999). <http://www.wwp.brown.edu/> and *Orlando Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006. <http://orlando.cambridge.org/>. Susan Wiseman notes both *Du Vergers Humble Reflection* and the earlier translations of Jean-Pierre Camus' romances in relation to her discussion of Cavendish (260-61); Danielle Clarke briefly discusses Du Verger's *Admirable Events* as part of Henrietta Maria's Catholic regime; Douglass Robinson incorrectly excerpts Camus' "The Author's Epistle to the Reader" as Du Verger's own preface to her translation, concluding, again incorrectly, that she edits out "everything entertaining in the original" (153); Kim Walker makes the same error (51-52); she is noted Smith and Cardinale's *Women and the Literature of the Seventeenth-Century* and in Betty Travitsky's *A Paradise of Women*.

⁵ Du Verger's second and third books were either printed in Douai in 1641 and 1657 or were printed on secret presses in England that claimed Douai as the place of publication, as did many overtly pro-Catholic books during the English Revolution.

in the service of the Catholic Reformation⁶ mission to proselytize England under the cover of romance, she recognizes in her third book the possibility of writing paratext as polemic. In her last book, she argues for women's writing as religious work while defending the theology that has empowered her own textual production, and her three books together offer an extraordinary opportunity to assess one woman's literary career created from the peripheries of mainstream class, religion, and gender.

Her three dedications evolve from being a self-effacing genre to being a bold one of self-declaration, which also shows how her literary authority moves from the paratextual to the textual. In the following chapter, I first summarize the ways in which Henrietta Maria's influence encouraged the acceptance of Catholic authors and how that atmosphere enabled Du Verger. I then examine Camus' writing and mission as the source for Du Verger's translations and trace the ways in which his counter-reformational theology empowered her as well as Henrietta Maria's court. Looking at Du Verger's title pages and dedications, I follow how she executes her authorship differently in each publication. I then argue that in her last book, Humble Reflections, Du Verger transforms her authorship from serving primarily her faith and church to constructing an ideal of women's writing based on scholarship and gender alliances and more self-consciously shaping her authorship as a public defense of her community.

⁶ I follow the historian Elizabeth Rapley's current historiographic use of "Catholic Reformation" to refer to an early seventeenth-century change in the Catholic response to the Reformation from adversarial to "a period of genuine religious regeneration, during which the Church recognized, and moved to redress, the immense problems within itself" (74).

Before putting these pieces of the chapter together, I am pausing to introduce Du Verger's life story and literary history since its pieces have not been assembled elsewhere. Du Verger describes herself as English in her last book and may have been born in England though likely from a French family. She was born Suzanne Duval or de Laval and married Jean-Jacques Du Verger. Although French women usually kept their maiden names, she seems to have adapted to English custom when living and publishing in London and taken the last name of her husband. She had two daughters, Françoise (b. 1636) and Suzanne (b. 1640), both born in London and sent to France in their younger years. She died in the two years following her 1657 Humble Reflections as she is listed as deceased on her daughter's marriage certificate dated 18 November 1659.⁷ She weathered the rapid reversal of Catholic fortunes in the 1640s, perhaps by emigrating with many other English Catholics to Douai where her second and third books may have been printed.

Du Verger's known literary career exists as a sequence of three books, all decidedly Catholic. Her first two, Admirable Events and Diotrephe, are both translations from French of Camus' moralizing romances, and Humble Reflections is the answer to Cavendish. She used her first two books in service of the queen's efforts to proselytize

⁷ Her biographical information is found on the marriage certificate and immigration records of Françoise, who emigrated from Paris to Montreal in 1659 and was married the same year; Françoise's mother, Suzanne Du Verger, is listed as of London, "à Londres," and born about 1616. In 1671, Françoise was executed after being accused of murdering of her husband, three abortions, and one infanticide. Laurie Howland (email, Dec 10, 1997) pointed me to the entry on Dr. Etienne Bouchard in the Memoires de la Societe Genealogique-Essay, which records his involvement in the younger Du Verger's criminal trial and conviction.

the English and dedicated them to prominent Catholics, Henrietta Maria herself and Lady Herbert. According to the dedicatory letter in Diotrephe, the queen recognized and rewarded Du Verger's contributions to English Catholic culture. Mission energizes her text, and the new Catholic sanction of women's spirituality further facilitates it. The literary atmosphere Henrietta Maria's court also likely encouraged Du Verger's dedication through the queen's own practice of moralizing secular genres, especially romance. (Theoretically Du Verger could have been active in the court simultaneously with Cavendish, but there is no evidence beyond timing for this connection.)

In Admirable Events Du Verger selects stories from Camus' popular French collection, Les evenemens singuliers (1628). In choosing just twelve from Camus' original sixty, she adapts them to highlight issues of class and gender and edits out overt references to Catholic theology and practice from both his text and paratext for her English readers. In translating Diotrephe, Du Verger continues Henrietta Maria's mission to make a place for Catholicism in England; in her small book's scant dedication, just three long sentences, to Herbert, Du Verger offers no real defense of her book's Catholic mission, though its moralizing plot and narratorial admonitions show her continuing her efforts on behalf of the Catholic Reformation. Diotrephe recounts how a folk tradition of exchanging marital partners on Valentine's Day ends disastrously. In Humble Reflections, Du Verger explains that she read a woman-authored book excitedly, looking for a colleague, until she discovered that Cavendish has misunderstood and unjustly attacked monastic life, which then motivated Du Verger's Humble Reflections, which

consists of a reproachful dedication to Cavendish, five reflections on Olio's misguided assumptions, and a point-by-point rebuttal; the latter two sections continue the dedication's tone of reprimand and so smudge the usual distinctions between text and paratext. Instead of taking a male text and adopting its mission as she did in her first two books, Du Verger interrupts the one genre that women wrote without interference, the dedicatory letter, and revises its tone from obsequious to scolding, and then continues her main text in that same paratextual tone.

Henrietta Maria's Catholic Court

Du Verger's authorship is first a response to a religious and literary atmosphere that Henrietta Maria established in her English court, one that encouraged women to step outside cultural boundaries of feminine behavior for the cause of faith. The young queen's 1625 arrival marked the first monarchical Catholic presence in London since Queen Mary's reign, by then well mythologized in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, and Protestant English culture was accordingly suspicious. The Pope, her godfather, had granted a special dispensation for her marriage to a Protestant with the understanding that she was to be an ambassador of the faith. The new queen's marriage contract provided the basis of her Catholic mission in England: it both allowed her to practice her faith (a publicly disclosed agreement), and also prohibited further persecution of English Catholics and allowed them access to the queen's chapel (two "secret articles" signed privately by James and Charles without Parliament's knowledge) (Bone 26-30). Armed with injunctions from both her mother and the Pope to evangelize the English court

while maintaining an appropriately submissive attitude to her husband, the new queen did not have an easy transition to the Protestant court. Erica Veevers points out the inevitable misunderstanding of Henrietta Maria's French culture and Catholic religious habits by an English court more comfortable with separating religion and court culture. Whereas Henrietta Maria embodied Francois de Sales' court lady who made "piety and virtue compatible with pleasure and social grace, by placing society under the guidance of religion" (26), English faith, especially its Puritan factions, had no theological sympathy with dancing and plays. Henrietta Maria was at once threateningly Catholic and yet frivolous.⁸

The queen's gradual absorption into court life and increasing influence with the king after Buckingham's assassination eventually changed the tone of the court uses of romance, which came to venerate fidelity in marriage⁹ and Platonic love as a basis for friendships between courtiers, both women and men. A letter from James Howell gives some sense of how noticeably influential Henrietta Maria and her courtly manners had become by 1634:

The Court affords little news at present, but that ther is a Love call'd

Platonick Love, which much sways there of late; it is a love abstracted

⁸ Melinda Gough's thorough documentation of critical work on Henrietta Maria shows that modern critics, until quite recently, perpetuated this perception of the queen ("Not as Myself" 48-50). Britland further documents how Henrietta Maria's reputation for frivolity is a critical creation (1-2).

⁹ Victoria Kahn summarizes the Carolinian uses of romance: "judging from contemporary poems, letters, and the masque roles they themselves performed, Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria were perceived as exemplifying the pastoral romance of domestic love instead of the chivalric exploits of foreign affairs" ("Hobbes, Romance" 6).

from all corporeal gross impressions, and sensuall appetit, but consists in contemplation and Ideas of the mind, not in any carnall fruition. (qtd. in Davies 189)

The queen slowly imported a new culture into the English court that, while popular and influential with some, never integrated with more conservative (Puritan) ideas of appropriate monarchical behaviors that existed beyond insular palace coteries.

Henrietta Maria's most noticeable innovation was the reinterpretation of the queen's role at court in masques and plays, which became more frequent and featured women's speech as well as their visual presence.¹⁰ Britland has written about Henrietta Maria's first dramatic production at court, Les Bergeries, as the first public performance of the queen's continuing public differentiation of herself from the English court, noting both the radical nature of a queen speaking parts in a play (46-47), even a private one, and how the play itself celebrated a "Salesian mode of social interaction" in privileging women "as the arbiters of taste and delicacy, which gives them a social role in the promotion of civility and polite behavior" (44-46). Henrietta Maria's postnuptial love affair with Charles began three years into marriage, and her plays became her way of affirming her newfound acceptance by her royal spouse and her consequent power at court. Gough documents Tempe Restored, a masque by Inigo Jones and Aurelian Townshend performed in 1632, where the queen revised an earlier version of her mother's masque where power was personified in the king. In the daughter's English

¹⁰ Gough tracks theatrical productions in France during Henrietta Maria's childhood and youth in order to show the ways that drama informed her political identity ("Courtly Comédiantes" 194).

version, the king's "Heroic Virtue" must unite with the queen's "Divine Beauty" in order to conquer the play's villain, in this case Circe ("Not as Myself" 62). Gough argues that in this instance the queen's masque "offers a unified self-conscious allegory regarding the chaste powers of beauty, in art and in women" (65). The masque both asserted her new influence with the king and linked that influence to her femininity.

Henrietta Maria's presence in the English court provided new opportunities for English Catholics and was a catalyst for religious books sympathetic to the queen's agenda. As both Britland and Veevers show, by the late 1630s the Catholic presence in court had increased, thanks to visiting relatives from France and some prominent English conversions.¹¹ White documents the queen's successful and controversial legal interventions on behalf of imprisoned Catholics and in loosening restrictions on recusants (31-34). Danielle Clarke notes that Henrietta Maria's court had a Catholic mission of proselytizing that encouraged the translation of French romances or other texts (253-54). Women's participation in this project of transforming the English court was a product of the queen's own authority and the Salesian endorsement of women's spirituality. By 1638, when Du Verger's book was entered in the stationer's register, the queen's political influence was unmistakable as was the spread of the courtly manners she had introduced, even within a context of faction and a negative popular image of

¹¹ Veevers records that the masque *Luminalia* was the queen's celebration of the increasing Catholicism in the English court (142-46), and Britland enlarges this discussion by including the presence of the French exiles, including the queen's mother, as affecting the religious tenor at court (170-71; 175-78).

the foreign queen.¹² Although Du Verger's known biography is too sketchy to know whether her family immigrated to England on the periphery of the young queen's court or were French expatriates seeking favor upon her arrival, Henrietta Maria's cultivation of French culture at court would have encouraged the translation of Camus' romances, not for the enlightenment of a queen who famously disliked the English language,¹³ but as part of her operation to import French and Catholic values into a foreign Protestant culture. Du Verger's dedications to Henrietta Maria (Admirable Events) and Lady Herbert (Diotrephe), both romances that combined a moral agenda within a religious context, establish her Catholic identity and request access to and support from a powerful court coterie.

Jean-Pierre Camus' Writing and the Catholic Reformation

The queen's proselytizing had its roots in the French *dévot* movement, of which Camus was a well known and published advocate. The *dévot* movement began in response to the Reformation; in France it was a movement to combine extreme Christian piety, including both active works of charity and silent meditation, within the aristocracy. Camus transferred a movement designed for the nobility to bourgeoisie

¹² White presents the queen as unpopular outside the court from the moment she refused to participate in Charles' Church of England coronation in 1626 and argues that she was also resented by certain factions within the court. She was also physically absent from English subjects since she participated in few public ceremonies or court progresses (20-29). Her power, not concomitant with her popularity, was strongest in the late 1630s (30-31).

¹³ Henrietta Maria differentiated between courtiers based on their abilities to speak French (Britland 31) and marked "out a favoured circle through her preference for the French language" (62). White further documents the queen's reluctance to learn English (20-21).

readers and lower class listeners of sermons.¹⁴ Du Verger's choices in translation reveal the widespread appeal of his religious romances to Catholic readers both on the Continent and in England. Camus (1584-1652), for many years the Bishop of Belley, published 250 books of either sermons, pamphlets, and romances in France; about half of these books were romances, but over 400 individual sermons are included in this number, making his homilies the most frequently printed and reprinted of his generation (Bayley 188),¹⁵ a result of his popular and fiery preaching that called for clergy to reform and inspired laypeople of all classes to use more devotional practices in everyday life. Parish priests and literate laypeople, especially those in the *dévot* movement, were his market; priests read his work for material for their sermons (as he recommends they should do in one of his prefatory letters to a collection of sermons) and laypeople used them to meditate on sermons or reinforce other aspects of spirituality (Worcester 47). Camus' romances emerged from and popularized François de Sales' devotional movement.

Although Camus studied law, he was ordained a priest and bishop, by Sales, who became a friend and mentor and inspired the younger priest's fiction. His popular tribute to Sales' life and teaching, L'Esprit du Bienheureux François de Sales (1639-41), secured his literary reputation until the nineteenth century, and in fact a new translation was published for the religious market in 1952.¹⁶ Camus was dedicated to

¹⁴ Richard Strier discusses the workings of class within the *dévot* movement (36-38).

¹⁵ Worcester lists multiple editions of Camus' sermons as evidence of their popularity (53).

¹⁶ The Spirit of St. François de Sales. New York: Harper, 1952; Worcester discusses Sales and Camus'

Sales' mission as well as his general outline for the proper behavior for bishops, namely not being absent from his seat for more than three months a year and his life being as much as a witness as his preaching. The Council of Trent had admonished: "every bishop to give evidence that his life, which is a perpetual kind of preaching . . . is consistent with his office" (Worcester 12).

Preaching was a bishop's highest responsibility and his life was to answer his precepts visibly. Camus answered his vocational call to preaching both from the pulpit and by publishing many of his sermons and a variety of romances to illustrate those sermons. Departing from the drier aims of scholastic oratory (more typical of his contemporaries¹⁷), Camus designed his sermons to move, *movere*, his hearers following the tradition of the "grand style" mastered by Nicolas Caussin, another of Camus' influential friends whom Du Verger cites in her preface to her first translation. In this preaching style, the speaker tries to move the congregations' emotions with vivid word pictures (Worcester 63-64). Camus' preaching retained the scholastic use of examples to illustrate main "points" in the sermon, (which Worcester calls the "thesaurus style" because of authors' frequent reliance on commonplace books of similar allusions). Camus writes his stories as moral exemplars, as he says in his letter to the reader in Admirable Events: "But thou shalt here finde naturall beauties without art; I meane, examples which borrow all their grace and worth from the force of truth" [sig. a5]. Later

friendship (19-20).

¹⁷ Peter Bayley summarizes the scholastic roots dominant in seventeenth century sermons (77). He also notes that theories of preaching oratory remained largely uninfluenced by humanist ideas of oratory.

he again calls his stories “examples of good and evil” [sig. a7]. In spite of this constant of exemplarity and its pointing back to a moral point, his fiction is not predictable. Often virtue wins, especially in the selections that Du Verger chose for Admirable Events, but many of his stories contain the bleak reality that earthly justice does not always prevail. Another element from Camus’ preaching which also emerges later in Du Verger’s prose is a style that Bayley calls “catenary prose” (85), which consists of quoting a string of proofs by church fathers in order to reinforce the preacher’s spiritual authority. Bayley also calls Camus’ contribution to preaching manuals an “aesthetic of brevity” (87), one prompted by Sales’ insistence that brevity was an essential in good preaching (Worcester 219). While Admirable Events and Diotrephe both follow Camus’ recommendations for brevity, they are departures from his typically longer romances, and he describes his own authorial self-restraint as a deliberate and difficult effort.¹⁸

In his predilection for exemplarity, his democratic goals for his preaching, and his catenary techniques are the roots of Camus’ purposes for romance. Les evenemens singuliers, the basis for Du Verger’s Admirable Events, dramatizes the lessons that the Bishop taught from the pulpit, and yet he sees its genre, romance, as complicating his religious agenda. In his “Author’s Letter” to Diotrephe, Camus refers to his text as a

¹⁸ “I study as much as I can for brevity, and thereupon abridge it of all the trimmings with which I extend my other Histories, where giving my minde scope, as in a full sea, I hoyse up sayles, and run at large, as the course of my penne carries: here I cut my Vine, and nip of its buds, yea I clip my winges to keep me from soaring: I keep close to the matter, & give little liberty unto my thoughts, to spread into digressions, if they be not necessary . . . I have weaned my self from the sweet milke of poesie . . . I have also taken away the other graces, as Apostrophes, dialogismes, complaints, speeches . . . in briefe, all that might enlarge or embellish, so that in comparison of our other relations, these are but abridgments of histories . . .” [Diotrephe sig. a5-a6]. Many of Camus’ other romances were significantly longer, like his six volume L’Alexis.

history and then seems to give it a new though unnamed genre, "*Singular Narrations*." He describes himself as countering popular fiction: "I see my selfe alone in this kinde of writing," which has the goal "to countermine and overthrow the enormous multitude of profane and dishonest books which are daily set forth, and which corrupt good manners" [sig. a5]. Camus' own revisions and disruptions of the genre reinforce this sense that his fiction is anti-romance. Although he undoes the genre, he needs it and claims his stories will be best understood in relation to romance in his "Author's Epistle to the Reader" in Admirable Events: "the enterprise which I have taken in hand, is to wrastle, or rather to encounter with those frivolous books, which may all be comprised under the name of Romants" [sig. a]. Throughout this prefatory work, Camus simultaneously disparages romance while also adopting its techniques for his own fiction, revealing that his dispute is not wholly with the form of romance, but with one element of it, the "fantasticall conceits of faynings, or impossibilities, of absurdities, of inchantments, of extravagancies, and such like trumpery" [sig. a]¹⁹ so often contained within it.

In his prefatory letters,²⁰ he undersells his own proximity to romance by distancing himself from his own tales and discussing them as a pedagogical tool. In

¹⁹ Camus' description of the ills of typical romances sounds like Honoré d'Urfé's L'Astrée. Although a friendship between the two men was longstanding, Camus' fiction rebrands romance against D'Urfé's popular form. For Camus, romance should be moralistic with a definite ending whereas D'Urfé's romance was a case study of the very fictions against which Camus protests.

²⁰ Camus thought it essential to include prefatory materials, declaring that "to embark upon the reading of a book without knowing the motives of the author and the matter, form, and purpose of the work, is like sailing without a sail" (Premières homélies quadragésimales, 1618, qtd. in Worcester 47).

particular Camus draws attention to the artifice involved in the creation of romance and undoes its characteristic “marvelous.” Camus claims his stories are true because they narrate real events or, when fictitious, they are at least “probable,” and done in the name of a higher truth. He creates a distinction between the true and the merely factual within his stories. He prescribes a pithy approach to writing romance in order for its moral purpose—overthrowing “so many fabulous books”—to prevail. For Camus’ purposes in Admirable Events, brevity is more powerful than length, and elaborate rhetoric and fancy wordplays might distract the reader from the real benefit of romance: moral education. He says these stories are short, because the “bones of the event” attract a reader more than an overly ornamented narrative. So important is this point that Camus adds other metaphors to reinforce it: small paintings are just as good as big; small daggers wound more fiercely than swords; small streams are just as “delectable” as rivers; and meat cut into smaller bits is easier to eat. While claiming to abridge romance and consequently to rid it of unnecessary rhetoric, Camus embellishes his own theory of romance with a baroque list of metaphors; that romance should wound like a dagger as well as nourish like a bite of meat would seem to distract from his claim that romance should be short and to the point.

The contradictions in Camus’ own charming descriptions of his goal show the difficulties of his project. Inaccurately aligning truth with brevity, he complains that the length and unfinished nature of romance never lets it come to a moral point and so he promises that his romances will be short and, consequently, true. He says he wants to

tell a barebones story so as not to distract the reader with “ornament” or “technique,” yet his repeated intrusions draw attention to his narratology and achieve a similar effect as romance’s showy prose, namely, drawing attention to the work’s artifice. Camus further heightens his readers’ awareness of his storytelling techniques by giving names in a seemingly arbitrary way and disguising the places where these events happened. The mix of storytelling and reporting gives the events the appearance of truth, and yet it keeps the readers’ attention on the method of the narrative rather than the events, which is against his stated narrative purpose. Camus tries to resist romance by fabricating a sense of reality in his story, and yet conventional plots and characters of the genre continue to inflect his stories.

Another and more effective solution that Camus tries is to upend the marvelous within romance by following generic plot turns—the old man’s inappropriate passion for a younger woman or the temptation of adultery—to absurd and gruesome conclusions. The consequences for evil are dire and often bloody, but even when not quite over the top with spewing body parts, there is generally plenty of misery to reward those with evil intentions.²¹ The good also get what they deserve. He takes romance’s tradition of adulterous love, and does not add any ornamentation—poetry or love laments—in order to uncover the genre’s immoral premise. Patricia Parker’s Inescapable Romance

²¹ Mark Bannister points out the “gratuitous violence” in two of Camus’ novels: L’Amphitheatre sanglant and Les spectacles d’horreur. The latter stresses “the horrifying cruelty of which human beings are capable, with no suggestion of a benevolent force protecting the innocent” (54). In England such fiction was more didactic, featuring violent reprisals for misdeeds, as seen by the popularity of John Reynolds The Triumphs of God’s Revenge (Seigel 191-92).

argues that the deferred ending leaves romance constantly unfinished, which then becomes a characteristic of the genre; Camus undoes this characteristic by refusing to defer the consequences of romance conventions. One example is his "L'Estrille," which Du Verger translates as "The Curried Persons," where romance becomes blood sport when a betrayed husband murders his unfaithful wife and her bandit lover with a curry comb. Camus describes their wounds and deaths in lingering detail because his moral purpose, he would argue, justifies including the gruesome particulars. Camus follows plots to their logical end, which means seeing what happens to characters after marriage. Instead of repeatedly deferred satisfaction, Camus likes to show the disaster that can follow consummating the inappropriate love that is a staple of romance plots. In "The Old Man Passionate in Love," a Basilius-like father falls in love with an orphaned girl who teaches his daughters sewing. Instead of the age difference making him an object of fun within the story, he marries the younger woman, an event that undoes the expectations of the genre. The marriage results in the deaths of his sons and sons-in-law, after which the old man dies broken and alone. Following the romance plot to its logical conclusion leads Camus to write anti-romance.

One last way in which Camus undoes romance is by making virtue more important than social rank. Romance as a genre often appears to subvert social mores, but usually that appearance is itself usually overthrown in future plot developments. Many romance shepherds and shepherdesses who leave their quiet pastures to accomplish great feats in battle and/or royal marriages eventually find out that they

were in fact royalty themselves. Some plot development—a rebellion, an evil uncle, or perhaps a jealous courtier—has sent a royal baby into the wilderness or across the ocean (preferably in a “bark”). While being raised by salt of the earth peasants, the child’s difference from his or her surrounding society keeps erupting until that mystery of difference is solved (by a letter, a locket, or perhaps even the repentant uncle). As Helen Cooper summarizes this romance trope: “when it comes to identifying the true heir, magic works. No one but the rightful successor to the throne of Britain . . . can pull the sword out of the stone” (324).²² Spenser’s Red Crosse initially seems to be a bumpkin, but he eventually shines at his profession, and then it turns out that he “springst from ancient race / Of Saxon kings” (l.x.65.1-2). Timias, on the other hand, who is a squire (and remains one), is recognized as valiant in the story, but he does not get to marry a princess or slay a dragon. He just does not have the birth for it.²³

Camus’ romances provide rare exceptions to this pattern, and he taps into a literary tradition of a hero’s spiritual qualities transcending low birth, although this is not the usual trajectory for characters of lower social classes in romance. An example of this class ascent in another text discussed in my project is where Man’s stationer calls her “truly noble,” a claim that is worth puzzling over. He seems to say “truly” noble with an implication that nobility is something that exists in a spiritual realm rather than a material or courtly one. This possibility would exist in the same tradition as Chaucer’s

²² Cooper discusses this convention of royal birth as an almost always necessary component of the genre (324-44).

²³ “Spenser . . . sets himself a particular problem since he allegorizes nobility of character as nobility of lineage, so leaving no way open to consider the possible separation of the two” (Cooper 338).

gentillesse, implying a certain courtesy in one's approach to people and spiritual gifts of kindness or righteousness, moral qualities that do not rely on the accident of birth.

Sales had focused his efforts on introducing devotional practices into the French court, but Camus' prose fiction repeatedly elides class distinctions when it comes to matters of Christian holiness. This undoing differs from Sales' focus on the nobility particularly enables Du Verger. In "The Generous Poverty," discussed in more detail below, the protagonist is born poor and without the birth or breeding that would justify her elevation in a prince's esteem and her later strength on the battlefield. If anything, Camus takes pains to describe the desperate circumstances of her birth, born to a merchant bankrupted by his generosity to a friend. Her focus on life's virtuous possibilities results in her triumph over her low birth. This dynamic occurs in several stories, most notably again in "The Honorable Infidelity," where although a princess is raised as a shepherdess, her royal blood shines through her pastoral garb and reveals her true identity.²⁴ But even though using this conventional elevation of noble blood, Camus focuses more on Castule, her childhood playmate and fellow shepherd who protects her virtue from several attempted rapes. Unlike most romances of this type where the lowborn and loyal playfellow from the fields would fade into the background, doomed to a life of adulation (like Spenser's Timias), Camus allows Castule to marry the

²⁴ This story is in "Certain Moral Relations," a second collection of Camus stories published with Du Verger's selections; on the cover, Du Verger is called the translator of both, but a separate "Letter to the reader" prefacing the second collection is signed by Thomas Brugis.

princess and thus upsets a key function of romance, preserving and naturalizing the social order.

Camus' own opinion of women's place in the life of faith was less misogynist than his English contemporaries, a result of the French *dévot* movement and its empowerment of women's religious roles. But whereas the French "feminism" of the salons made women a vehicle of Platonic love, elevating her and in some way immobilizing her, Camus' positive female characters are both more active and less refined, and just as subject to sin as well as heroism as male characters are. He extends a serious religious life to the lower classes. Elizabeth Rapley defines the *dévot* movement by its members, pious laypeople who practiced a regular and structured devotional life and who were committed to good works (74-77). She tracks how this movement became the basis for the first non-cloistered active religious communities for women (83-88). Worcester examines Camus' work with women's religious groups and notes that the bishop encouraged monastic groups that wanted to be active in their work as opposed to remaining cloistered for meditation and/or seclusion. The key difference between these two types of monastic groups was choosing either to engage with the "world" or to separate from it. Both in his fiction and in these kinds of administrative decisions, Camus repeatedly endorsed women who were publically visible working on behalf of the Church. In addition in his sermons he praised Biblical women and popular saints who achieved holiness by working outside the confines of traditional gender stereotypes (149-50; 157-58). Worcester argues that looking at the

imagery in Camus' sermons reveals an emphasis on feminine metaphors when explaining the ideal relationships between clergy and laypeople or people and God, noting that "breastfeeding is consistently his favorite image" (245). Camus was not always ideologically "for" women and has some extremely negative female characters in his fiction as well as the women heroes that Du Verger highlights.²⁵ However, Camus' portrayals of feminine vices are balanced with his representations of women's virtues to a greater extent than seventeenth-century religious culture at large.

Camus' views on women's value to the Church apparently encouraged Du Verger who, like the queen, saw herself as called to evangelize the English for the Catholic Church and contributed her translations to this spiritual cause. Before Du Verger's translations, Camus' English reputation was based on two Catholic instructional texts²⁶ and Sir John Suckling's Brennoralt, a skeletal dramatic version of Camus' long Iphigene, perhaps performed at court in 1639. Suckling, one of the queen's favored courtiers, writes Camus' romance as tragedy with overtones of Romeo and Juliet, abandoning its religious mission for plot. Suckling ignores how, for Camus, the romance convention of the "lady knight" became an opportunity to show the extreme accomplishments possible by women in pursuit of virtue. Du Verger's Admirable Events is then a

²⁵ Eglal Henein lists Camus' misogynistic accomplishments in fiction.

²⁶ A discours hapned between an hermite called Nicephorus & a yong lover called Tristan, who for that his Mistresse Petronilla entred into Religion would faine become an Hermite (1630) was excerpted from Camus' long romance Petronilla and dedicated to the Catholics of Ireland. A spirituall combat: a tryall of a faithfull soule or consolation in temptation (1632) is handbook for dealing with temptation. Both were translated by Miles Car and published in Douai. Because of their Catholic topics, their circulation in England was not widespread or very public.

corrective to Suckling's Camus; her translations concentrate on Camus' virtuous heroines whereas Suckling's cross-dressed Iphigene manipulates characters mercilessly for her own ends.

Although Camus wants his books to correct romance, later English printers, translators, and readers do not recognize the complications he offers the genre and highlight his work as romance—especially in the midst of the 1650s royalist romance trend. John Jennings' title page to his translation, Elise; or, Innocencie Guilty, identifies it as romance in almost the largest print on the page. The collections of prefatory materials honoring Camus' translator not only assume that these works are straightforward romance, but also efface Camus' authorship of the text. In Major Wright's translation, Nature's Paradox (1652), the title of Robert Loveday's commendatory poem sums up the general tone of the book's six commendatory pieces: "Upon Belley's Iphigenes, better'd into *English* by the Ingenious Pen of His Dear Brother, Major WRIGHT" [sig. a4].²⁷ Du Verger, in contrast, translates not just Camus' stories, but also his two letters to the reader, emphasizing her acceptance of Camus' religious mission for romance.

Readings of Du Verger

Camus' writing and preaching were well known and highly regarded in his lifetime; however, tracking reader responses to Du Verger is more difficult. We have

²⁷ Three of Camus' romances appeared in English in the 1650s. In addition to Nature's Paradox, Wright had previously translated The Loving Enemie (1650). John Jennings translated Elise; or, Innocencie Guilty; A New Romance (1655).

only her own claim that Henrietta Maria has rewarded her work, Cavendish's refusal to answer Du Verger's criticism, and the printer's layout of her text as evidence of her readers' responses. Unlike Man, Weamys, and Bradstreet, Du Verger has no prefatory commendations; her paratext consists only of her own dedicatory letters and her printer's decisions on how to present books by a woman and a Catholic. Du Verger's three books show her growing mastery of the dedicatory letter in succeeding publications, and by 1657 her letter begins as her text proper rather than as an external plea for patronage. Having learned from Camus' revision of romance, Du Verger reforms the dedicatory letter into a critique of its usual conventions. As limited as these other "readings" are, they show a certain influence. Du Verger's dedications to Henrietta Maria and Herbert suggest some level of court connection.²⁸ Her saucy third book reveals a certain confidence in the power of her public voice, one affirmed by her printer who sets Du Verger's name in a large font to dominate the title page.

The printer's presentation of the text responded to the financial realities of the author as well as the sense of distinction that the printer felt was due either to the author or her book. A quarto in itself did not say a whole lot about the author's status (unlike a folio or a duodecimo), but other parts of the printing process reveal both the printer's view of the book and author as well as what he/she thought the text's reception would and should be. Authors' influence over title pages was often minimal; the printer and her stationer were her first readers, and use the title page to market a

²⁸ I have not found evidence of Du Verger at court, but further research may. Her publications fit the pattern of the artists and authors that the queen patronized.

product. Unlike many contemporary books that had elaborate paratextual apparatus, the layouts of Du Verger's title pages are the only extra-authorial prescriptions of how to read her book. As the proverbial covers by which books should not be judged, they track one version of her literary career, one connected to the declining fortunes of Catholics during the English Revolution. As Catholics lost power and freedom, her title pages lost their embellishment and exposition.

The title page to Admirable Events, her first book, describes its text through a series of active verbs that firmly (and not unreasonably) define Du Verger's relationship with the author: "selected . . . written by Camus . . . translated by S. Du Verger . . . printed by Thomas Harper." Each verb's subject trails its action, making the action the real relevant information to the text except for the first verb, which lacks its subject; selection is an important aspect of the text's authorship, as is underlined by the large font on the title page, and especially when Du Verger's selection is of just twelve of the sixty in Camus' collection. Selection suggested that the Catholic text has been mediated for English Protestant readers who were selectively appreciative of Catholic continental devotional books. Robert S. Miola argues that there was a certain amount of shared devotional literature between Catholics and Protestants in seventeenth-century England, noting as examples Catholic admiration for George Herbert's poetry and Richard Crashaw's success with Protestant readers (169). The printer highlights her authorship by including her name on the title page without specifying her gender and so does not exploit it as a selling point by highlighting it as a work translated by a "woman

of quality” or “a gentlewoman,” a common descriptive tag on contemporary woman-authored books, included for advertising purposes.²⁹ As I will discuss below, Du Verger’s selection process was a careful and deliberate authorial act, one designed to justify both her cause and her means of defending it, namely through a women’s public text.

Du Verger’s religious environment changed drastically in the space of her 1639 dedication to Henrietta Maria to her 1641 dedication to Herbert. Being a Catholic had become easier under James I and Charles I as attested by some powerful Catholic courtiers in their courts. William Barclay, a Catholic and fellow Scot, was popular at court as was his son (as discussed in my chapter on Judith Man). Toby Matthew is another case of a Catholic’s success under James I, who hired him to help negotiate the marriage between Charles I and the Spanish Infanta. Henrietta Maria continued in this tradition, opening her own chapel and creating a courtly enclave for English Catholics. Within the space of two years, however, the English government went from semi-official toleration to forcing Catholics underground and prohibiting the queen from leaving the country in case she raised a Catholic army on the continent.

The plainness of the second and third books’ title pages also echoes, both verbally and pictorially, Camus’ plan to give readers substance instead of flourish.

²⁹ Each of the other authors in this project is not named on her title pages. Anna Weamys comes closest with “Written by a young Gentlewoman, Mrs A.W.” Judith Man is a “yong gentlewoman” and Anne Bradstreet also “a Gentlewoman in those parts,” i.e., the New World. This description of the author in terms of gender aligns with Helen Hackett’s theory that male authors of romances in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, often included an address to woman readers not as a serious address, but rather to signal the erotic nature of the romance material. To advertise the woman author would not necessarily signal racy material (although there may have been an echo of that dynamic), but advertised some sense of the material’s novelty while keeping women’s names from being plastered on doorways.

Diotrephe's material simplicity reflects the decline in fortunes of Catholic books in the two years between its 1641 publication and Admirable Events' pre-civil war appearance. The story and the male author are explained, and only inside do we find the translator's information. Lacking a border and with few words, it is stark compared to her earlier book and indeed most quarto romances of the time, merely stating that this book is a "historie" written by Camus. Du Verger's last book comes fifteen years later and its similarly minimal title page only describes the book, its author, and its purpose. The omission of the place of publication was frequent enough in Catholic books printed in Douai and smuggled into England that Wing suggests Douai as its place of publication. The missing printing information simultaneously provides cover from investigation and indicates a loss of credibility. The title page merely describes the book without asking for permission or forgiveness, except for the title's "humble." Du Verger's name in the title is the biggest font on the page, comparable only to Olio, making Du Verger and Cavendish central to the book's identity. She no longer derives her authorship from an accepted male author. The title page claims that her book is humble, but the audacity of answering Cavendish undermines that claim.

Du Verger's Dedicatory Letters and the Texts That (Do Not) Follow

Camus emphasizes the importance of prefatory materials in several of his authorial epistles. In Admirable Events he judges typical romances by their own prefatory claims: "the falshood of these Romants, Adventures, Chivalries, and other such trash, which confesse themselves fabulous in their Prefaces" [sig. a]. Although Du

Verger does not write prefaces with Camus' confidence, at least not initially, her dedicatory letters function as letters to the reader, simultaneously maintaining the fiction of a chaste private audience and addressing a wider public, and so becoming her place of authorial self presentation. Looking at the three letters in sequence provides a narrative of Du Verger's construction of herself as an author and her increasingly astute construction of her readers. In her first letter, she presents herself as writing a letter that adheres properly to the genre's conventions that she outlines in her first sentence. Her second letter, somewhat perfunctory in comparison, consists only of a three sentence bid for attention to Lady Herbert. In her third dedicatory letter, Du Verger makes her "dedication" a challenge to her addressee and the start of her book instead of an external paratextual event. This series of letters reveals a sense that Du Verger views her books as accomplishing real political work on behalf of her Catholic community.

Du Verger writes her first dedicatory letter adhering strictly to a prescribed form that she lists in her first paragraph; dedications ought to: first, request protection for the text and the author from its consequences; second, proclaim "some testimony of devoted affection"; and third, appear "gratefull for benefits received" [sig. A3]. After explaining the three items a dedicatory letter ought to accomplish, citing "ancient and moderne custome," she then shows how her letter fulfils these dictates. Du Verger is aware of the public nature of a dedication, and so her approach to Henrietta Maria both asks for and receives the queen's approbation. A dedication, Du Verger further explains,

ought to epitomize the loyalty and honor owed to the queen by all subjects, and so her work is duty, not presumption: “I professe no more then what the least and meanest in the ranke of subjects is owing to the source of Majesty, whose influence quickeneth, gives motion and being to all civill industries, sending their lives to equall center” [sig. A4]. Her focus on the importance of the proper mechanics of dedicating a text reappears at her letter’s conclusion where she reiterates the propriety of her “thrice humble dedication” with a conceit comparing the queen’s allure as a dedicatee to the magnetic qualities of amber, thus lending an air of inevitability to her dedication; Henrietta Maria compels adulation like amber “commands the ascent of small, worthless substance, not for their merits sake, but for the honor of its force, and virtue to attract” [sig. A5].

Once past the clutter of her framing devices, she defends her book with her own views of romance and extends Camus’ explanation, namely that religious romance should be preaching exemplified in narrative. She describes her book as “industry” appropriate for a woman’s pen. Du Verger’s ideal readers would look for spiritual growth, but even if they are not ideal and look for mere delight and distraction, they will still receive an education from her histories, which are “storehouses” of knowledge that uncover the reality of good and evil working the world. Indeed, Du Verger follows Camus’ lead and pushes her readers to see her stories as true even if they are not factual, calling them “the only monuments of truth, which they purely deliver, no way flattering or concealing any thing” [sig. a5]. They provide exemplars for the person

trying to decide how to live, a way for them “to fashion out the life.” Romance itself then is a vehicle of moral introspection and then action. She describes her stories as an “armoury,” alluding to the spiritual armor³⁰ that a good believer puts on in order to go out into the world and also to knights in romance. But lest we imagine that armor belongs only in a rarefied and masculine world, she notes that this experience is for people of “all degrees.” At the beginning of the paragraph, she addresses “your Highness” the queen and so also includes at least one woman reader in this spiritual experience. Ultimately Du Verger prescribes a particular experience of romance: read to be strong like a knight. She follows this prefatory prescription for reading with a story that depicts a woman who accomplishes the martial and spiritual feats of knighthood.

“The Generous Poverty” is buried in the middle of the third book of Camus’ sixty stories, but Du Verger chooses it as her flagship story to open her volume. The story’s hero, Rosana, embodies the Catholic Reformation message most empowering to Du Verger, that neither gender nor degree limits virtue. The story, worth summarizing for its unusual depiction of a lower class woman challenging gender stereotypes without narrative consequences undercutting her achievement, features the daughter of an impoverished merchant whose widowed mother becomes a wet nurse for a German prince, Sapor. In spite of their immense gap in social class, the two children play

³⁰ Ephesians 6: 13-17 reads “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (King James Version).

together as brother and sister. They grow so close that Rosana becomes his attendant page during his schooling and consequently becomes an accomplished courtier, adept at “dancing, leaping, vaulting, riding, fencing, shooting with bowe, and piece, running, playing at tennis, at pell mell, and hunting” [sig. B6] and only able to participate in more traditional feminine pursuits “not without much contradiction” [sig. B7]. Repeatedly referred to as an Amazon both in Camus’ text and Du Verger’s translation, Rosana’s femininity is embodied in her chastity. When the Prince’s love for her takes a sensuous turn, she dissuades him from his impure thoughts and actions with the lessons in logic that she has learned in her studies with him: “I love Sapor as my life, but as I love mine honour more then my life, so I love it also more than Sapor” [sig. B6]. With his passion thus cooled, Sapor arranges a marriage between his best friend and Rosana (as her low birth prevents their marriage to each other).

Before marriage, Rosana insists that her future husband, Numerian, must respect her education and background, not treating her as a “house Dove, to imploy my selfe in spinning, sowing, and keeping the chimney corner.” Instead he must allow her to “exercise my selfe in armes, and hunting, and such like recreations, and if thy courage doe call thee at any time forth to warre, either of thy owne accord, or with our Master, that thou then make me partaker of thy labours, and thy hazards, and also of thy laurels, and palmes” [sig. C3]. When her husband tries to keep her from joining him in battle, she reminds him of their contract and that “heaven hath made me thy partner” [sig. C4]. Both Numerian and Rosana die heroically in battle, leaving their orphaned children

and Sapor to mourn their valor. Camus ends his story by describing how Rosana has accomplished great virtue outside of the usual boundaries of rank: “O soule truly heroicall, and who mightiest have deserved a more eminent birth, and higher fortune, but what need had she of birth, or fortune? Shewing us in her generous poverty, that vertue is not tied in the degree or bloud of persons, and that it raiseth those that possesse it even above all human condition” [sig. C6].

Rosana’s strength is no accident under Camus’ pen; his sermons glorify Biblical saints who stepped beyond their birth, class, and vocation to perform extraordinary events in the name of faith. Not only does he condone exceptional women, he calls all women to consider their calling outside the realm of traditional feminine domains for the sake of God and the Church, a call that Du Verger heeded. She edits “The Generous Poverty” to accentuate its strong lead character. She omits a section where Camus praises Rosana’s wise innocence as a child and avoids infantilizing her main character. And she highlights Rosana’s rejection of women’s tradition vocations. Du Verger’s translation of “une compagne casaniere” [house companion] into “house dove” introduces an inequality into Camus’ more neutral phrase. Camus’ Rosana rejects spinning and house work—“à filer and à garder le foyer de la maison”—but Du Verger’s Rosana moves the location of housework into the chimney corner, devaluing the relegation of women’s work to the household. For Du Verger, Rosana continues her prefatory metaphor of what a good reader of her romance will do, namely, put on spiritual armor, and the story fits with her dedication to Henrietta Maria, who played an

Amazon in the late masque Salmacida Spolia and would increasingly characterize herself, and be characterized by a scornful popular press, as a martial woman.³¹

The contrast between Camus' and Du Verger's approaches to writing of Admirable Events shows their different relationships to romance and their different ways of establishing literary authority. Du Verger ever so subtly revises Camus' idea of romance. He calls his stories exemplars, referring his fiction back his sermons. He keeps his fiction in a scholarly masculine realm by distancing himself from the plot by explaining the technique in rhetorical terms. She calls them histories, which in popular usage often meant stories rather than historical records and yet which has a less fantastic connotation than romance. She explains her technique by claiming that reading the stories will inspire personal change. She uses the popular Horatian dictum, that literature should delight and instruct, but instead of couching her theory of romance in the technical language of the trivium, she says that romances give pleasure and pleasure is a good way to learn. Du Verger does not have Camus' distance from the fiction because she explains the experience of reading the fiction, both as a reader/translator and as a writer/translator, whereas Camus focuses on what the experience should be. Another way Camus highlights his intellectual approach to his task is his prefatory display of his classical learning and so he creates himself as an

³¹ Britland sees this evolution of the queen's masque persona as a result of the increasing political pressures on the Stuarts (187). She cites William Davenant's poem "To the Queene" as another instance of the queen's portrayal as an Amazon in the late 1630s (187-91). She further uncovers Henrietta Maria's self-representation as an Amazon during the civil wars and the alarmed perceptions of the queen's malignant political influence through the 1640s (193-97).

authority that includes plenty of fancy classical allusions. Du Verger, on the other hand, uses spiritual authorities (the church fathers) to support her arguments.

Her second dedication (Diotrephe), cursory in comparison to her first, is to another Catholic, Lady Herbert, nee Margaret O'Brien, from an aristocratic Irish family and married to Edward Somerset, second Marquis of Worcester (called Lord Herbert once his father inherited the earldom in 1628).³² Du Verger refers back to her previous work (her "first fruits"), showing her own sense of continuity in the two projects. The word "imboldened" is her beginning sentence, and it marks a new tone from her letter to Henrietta Maria. She authorizes her writing by reminding readers that the queen has acknowledged and rewarded that first publishing enterprise and then announces this dedication to Herbert as an act of gratitude for past patronage. She then explains that the brevity of her prefatory materials results from the greatness of her source text, which is "penn'd by so able a hand, that onely to name its author is sufficently to commend the worke" [sig. A3]. She ends with a word to her readers beyond Herbert when she tells her that the book needs no further defense because "its perusal will inforce approbation from all impartial minds & solid understandings" [sig. A3].

Early modern dedicatory letters usually boast an obsequious tone, effusive praise of the dedicatee, and at least a tenuous connection between text (despite its glaring flaws etc.) and patron. The author appears self effacing while in fact being self

³² The only existing biography of Somerset states that no particulars about this marriage are available (Dircks 30), except that this was Somerset's second marriage and that Lady Herbert became stepmother to one son and two daughters. Her only biological child died in infancy.

promoting; she claims her text is a gift while hoping it will earn a reward. The genre fit well with cultural ideals of women's speech as its required submissive tone defined its rhetorical strategies. Additionally it created an illusion of privacy with its form, a letter addressing a single reader. Saenger describes the effect as a paradox where the "book is made to appear as a private gift which is being exposed to common view, even though previous and subsequent pages proclaim the book to be a commodity for sale" (58). Women often dedicated their books to other women, either wives or daughters of wealthy men or women powerful in their own right,³³ and so avoided addressing directly the anonymous and potentially lascivious public reader. This fictional privacy shielded women from the very moment when they disseminated their voices to the public. Aemeila Lanyer found the genre so empowering that over one third of her Salve Deux Rex Judaeorum (1611) consists of eleven dedicatory poems addressing the most powerful women in England. As with most genres, dedicatory letters immediately become most interesting when their rules are broken, and women writers were quick to reinvent dedications, as the anonymous author of Eliza's Babes (1652) does in her prefatory "To Her Sisters," where she claims to share authorship with God.

In her first two books, Du Verger uses her dedications to Henrietta Maria and Herbert as almost textbook requests for patronage, with some directions for the general reader added in the case of Admirable Events. By Humble Reflections, she has an entirely different purpose, tone, and approach in her letter, using paratext as a part of

³³ Peck investigates women's roles in patronage networks in Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England (68).

the book instead of a mitigation of public speech. Du Verger's more practiced hand emerges from her increased experience of writing and how readers perceive it as well her ever increasing boldness in defending her religion. Her dedication does not begin with a direct address (i.e., "To the most excellent Majesty . . ."). Instead she first gives the letter a title and a function, and only then addresses her dedicatee: "THE EPISTLE TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE MARCHIONESSE OF NEWCASTLE," an announcement of the pose this document is taking rather than an actual address to its reader. Also, the earlier dedications are elaborately signed while the one to Humble Reflections noticeably is not. The missing niceties of the sign off provide some authority to Du Verger, a recognition that by now her reader will see that the genre has been turned upside down.

Humble Reflections marks two big changes in Du Verger's work from 1641 to 1657. First the book's genre changes from romance to polemic. Secondly the author acquires her own literary authority for most of the text, partly by blurring the lines between paratext and text proper. Her very title announces her authorship as though casual readers will know who she is: Du Verger's Humble Reflections. The dedicatory letter, no longer a surreptitious authorial self-presentation and certainly not a plea for patronage, is less a dedication than an admonition and begins the argument of the text itself. Another way that Du Verger's prefatory materials become a part of the main text is through her references to herself and inclusion of commendatory information within the text. Claiming that she cannot write out English church history because her Latin is

not quite good enough to do the research (a way of noting that although her Latin is “slender,” she does have some), she asks an anonymous male colleague to interpret and summarize sources. Before her authority fills in some of the history of monasteries in England, he offers an encomium of Mrs. Du Verger’s virtues: she is “known to be a lover of learning, and a verie *virtuoso* in antiquities, beyond the rate of a woman” [sig. C8]. In doing so he fills in the missed opportunity of commendatory additions to the prefatory materials and gives Du Verger an aura of academic status, a fascinating tone in a book challenging Cavendish’s authorship. In order to discuss Humble Reflections further, it is necessary to look at the peculiar conditions of its composition.

Du Verger, Cavendish, and Communities

Each of Olio’s three books consists of three loosely organized parts and covers topics as diverse as history, natural philosophy, medicine, and political science. Generally the work has consecutive paragraphs with subtitles (“Of Agues” or “What Romancy is”), but in one section she abandons this method in order to write a series of proverbs and another is simply a long list of “allegories,” i.e., “Words of Commendations, mixt with the Flowers of Rhetorick, make a sweet Posie of Joy, when they are bound up with the Beams of Pleasant Eyes: But words of Reproach, bound up with the Wrinkles of Frowns, make a Rod to whip an Offender” [sig. Q1]. Although her divisions seem random, they are similar to contemporary school texts and printed books with a commonplace style.

Cavendish begins Olio with a discussion of fame that leads to a discussion of writing, why men write, and why they publish what they write. Although she frames her discussion in terms of masculine accomplishment, she in fact is outlining why she herself writes. Several points in this section were bound to irritate a translator of romance, as when Cavendish describes translators “as Marchants [that] . . . traffick out of one language into another” [sig B3], and writers of romance as bawds seeking to “entice the mind” [sig. B3], and romances as ultimately “meer falsehoods . . . “if it be a lie made from truth it is a romancy” [sig. C]. Cavendish then belittles scholarly work:

Scholars are never good Poets, for they incorporate too much into other men, which makes them become lesse themselves, in which great scholars are Metamorphos’d or transmigrated into as many several shapes, as they read Authors, which makes them monstrous, and their head is nothing but a lumber stuf with old commodities, so it is worse to be a learned Poet then a Poet unlearned, but that which makes a good poet, is that which makes a good Privie Councillor, which is, observation, and experience, got by time and company. [sig. B3]

Cavendish here uses the transmigration poetic trope for authorship that we see in other 1650s’ paratexts as a way to mitigate the anxiety of authorship that royalists experienced in London (and that I discuss in my chapter on Anna Weamys), but Cavendish characterizes that appeal to authority as monstrous. Later on she responds to Du Verger’s criticism by calling her some sort of “scholarly” sort of woman, and so

belittles this sort of derivative authorship in contrast with her own claims to originality.³⁴ Her response to Humble Reflections was to discount its source as unreliable and strange: “there has one Chapter of my Book The Worlds Olio, treating of a Monastical Life, been answer’d already in a little Pamphlet, under the name of a woman, although she did little towards it; wherefore it being a Hermaphroditical Book, I judged it not worthy taking notice of” [sig. C1]. Again she characterizes a text appealing to learned sources for its authority as monstrous (especially in light of its criticism of her). Cavendish further elaborates on the difference between learning and wit, again using the comparison of merchants who traffick goods, this time to describe scholars who merely depend upon the intellectual accomplishments of others, in comparison to poets who work from their own original wit.

Olio’s taxonomy of authors privileges original composition over *imitatio*; the entire first part defends her claims to literary authority. She admits her own lack of learning, and then justifies it by inventing an entire system of authorship based on wit—“neither to be learnt nor gotten, for it is a free gift of nature” [sig. C2]. While classifying types of writers, as though part of a scientific treatise on newly discovered oddities, she reiterates at each turn that imitation is a lower accomplishment than writing from personal experience, both at the level of internal musings and encounters with systems of people and nature. She complains, for instance, that “most *Modern Writers* do but

³⁴ Cavendish’s opinion of women academics, the kind of woman she thinks Du Verger might be, also emerges in her plays. Erin Lang Bonin describes how in The Female Academy educated women cannot withstand traditional calls to matrimony (341).

new-dress old Authors” [sig. E3]. In Cavendish’s literary system, the work of a scholar is inferior to that of a poet, theater is superior to romance, and original wit will always present truth more accurately than academic accomplishment.

When Cavendish turns her prose on monasticism, her tone changes. Whereas the earlier short essays are confident and declaratory, she presents the problems of the Catholic tradition by narrating a debate, though the “dispraise” is often hard to distinguish from the defense. The main objections to religious communities that she reports are their separation of resources from the commonwealth: monastics eat food they have not produced, they do not fight for the state in times of war, and they use the laity’s wealth for the church without any recompense. Even abstinence comes under fire because it withholds human reproductive resources. The second half of the essay overcomes an imaginary monastic self defense by initially continuing the discussion in the third person: “they, in their own defence, say, that they cast off all pleasures of the world . . .” [sig. F3]. Cavendish then abruptly abandons the narrative distance and adopts the “enemies’” arguments as her own, decrying the abuses of the church’s tradition of indulgences. Then she switches her tone to one of rational utility, noting that abstinence in fact prevents overpopulation and that church ceremonies conveniently amuse “the common people and busies their Minds” [sig. F3]. The confident and declarative tone of her earlier essays returns when she ends her discussion of the church by imagining self-abnegation as unappealing to God as opposed to the Protestant focus on the internal practices of faith. Her imaginative foray into the

mind of God elevates her text above the terms of the debate she has presented, which becomes for Du Verger one of the most presumptuous elements of Cavendish's dispute with monasticism.

Cavendish ends Olio with a poem that challenges her readers to answer her book if they find it problematic, but she clearly expects no response, characterizing readers with objections as foolish and unlearned. What is curious about her imagined condemning reader is that he is only male; seemingly there is no place for a woman reading her book: "But I am sure there's none Condemn it can, / Unless some Foolish and unlearned Man, / That hath not Understanding, Judgement, Wit, / For to perceive the Reason that's in it" (ll. 9-12). In failing to address the woman reader, she also fails the woman writer, a lapse that Du Verger's response corrects.

Humble Reflections displays a sub-aristocratic woman's response to a duchess' privilege, as well as demonstrating the increased confidence of a woman of letters in spite of her own perpetual outsider status as a woman with no socioeconomic clout and as a Catholic writing to a very Protestant England. Coming fifteen years after her last known publication and two years after The World's Olio (1655), Du Verger's book responds overtly to Cavendish's dismissal of monastic life and covertly to her cavalier attitude towards writing and printing. Ideas of community supply both of her arguments: by connecting the theology of Catholic monasticism to church fathers and tradition, she defends the moral uprightness of monastic communities, and then she further implies that similar communal values should also inform women's writing. Du

Verger's response to Olio's representation of monasticism is intertwined with her rebuttal of Cavendish's lavish self-presentation as an author.

Cavendish claimed Olio was, for the time being at least, "My best Belov'd, and greatest Favorite," and she reprinted a revised edition in 1671. (The minor changes in the section "A Monasticall Life" are lexical and grammatical, and acknowledge none of Du Verger's criticisms.) The folio's title page is an elaborate engraving and introductory poem, designed by Cavendish and used in some of her other books as well, and shows statuary men without legs who gaze respectfully at the woman author.³⁵ The poem inscribed into the engraving is an astonishing and elaborate conceit of its own inadequate representation of Cavendish's beauties, directing the reader only to glance at the visual image of Cavendish—"as it were by chance"—and then to find the substance of her beauty in her book, which is her "Soul's picture, Judgment, Witt."

Dedicating her book to Fortune, Cavendish immediately marks her rejection of the self-effacing dedications that most writers must produce. She describes her book's possible success with a metaphor of a shrill and loud and brazen voice that everyone will hear, exactly the kind of voice that women writers more typically avoid:³⁶

wherefore if Fortune please, with her helping hand, she may place my
book in Fames high Tow'r, where every Word, like a Cymball, shall make

³⁵ James Fitzmaurice discusses the three engraved frontispieces that Cavendish used for all her printed books, arguing that Olio's classically styled one purposely represents her as a solitary genius as well as a "harmless eccentric" (203).

³⁶ For instance, in a printer's note prefacing Anna Weamys' Arcadia hopes the book's readers will not "disrelish the shrillness of the Note" of her prose and Weamys herself hopes that her "pitch," i.e., the higher feminine voice, of her writing will not offend readers.

a Tinkling Noise; and the whole Volume, like a Cannon Bullet, shall Eccho
 from Side to Side of Fames large Brasen Walls, and make so loud a
 Report, that all the World shall hear it. [sig. A2]

She also dedicates her book to her husband (with a memorial poem to her brother-in-law, to whom she had dedicated her first two books). Her dedications do not bother requesting protection for her book, but rather proclaim rank, since she is married to one Cavendish and the sister-in-law to the other. Although in these dedications Cavendish poses herself as bold and above social restrictions of women's writing, she was extremely sensitive to potential criticism. With each new edition of her books, Cavendish issued new letters and prefaces in order to defend and shape her literary reputation. After her encounter with negative responses to Poems and Fancies (1653), her first publication, her husband chivalrously wrote prefatory letters for each of her books, authorizing her texts and their authenticity.

Cavendish's numerous prefatory letters throughout Olio attempt by reiteration to prove the authenticity of her authorship and to place it beyond the reach of condemnation. Enlarging the role of paratext allows her to address the reader repeatedly in epistles interspersed throughout the book. These multiple letters often imagine several different sorts of readers, leading Emma Rees to point to the letters as slippages that repeatedly register her anxiety about her text and its misreadings (28). In Olio's second epistle, for instance, Cavendish defends herself from accusations that she has not written her own books by describing her intellectual accomplishments, ending

by ironically granting some literary authority to her husband: "Thus my minde is become an absolute Monark, ruling alone, my thoughts as a peaceable Common-wealth, and my life an expert Souldier, which my Lord settled, composed, and instructed" [sig. H4]. Especially in her epistle to the third book, a frequently anthologized selection, Cavendish defends both the sense and the material of her previous and current books. Although she begins with "The reason I print most of what I write," the letter becomes a tirade against criticisms received of her books rather than explaining why she prints so many of them. She blames her poor orthography on the printer and then argues that it "is against nature for a woman to spell right" [sig. O3]. Her next epistle precedes a section of scientific paragraphs and counters possible accusations that her opinions sometimes contradict each other. She excuses the contradictions within her work by saying that "it is said there is nothing truly ever known" [sig. T3]. Throughout each of her self-defending epistles, she repeatedly dismisses educated objections to her work by belittling scholars as "pedanticks" and at the same time excusing her own inaccuracies because as a woman she is not educated enough to know any better.

The other strain of self defense that pervades her writing demands that the reader accept her authorship with all its limitations intact, as she signs off her final letter, Yahweh-like, "but whether it please, or be disapproved, I am as I am, Margaret Newcastle" [sig. T3]. Class privileges Cavendish's literary authority to the point that her writing and her readers must remain at the mercy of her personality.

Cavendish's defensiveness results in her continuing reluctance to let go of the prefatory mode—she keeps redoing her epistles, readdressing her readers, directing them how to respond to her writing and to her printed book. Her authorial self presentation (profuse prefatory materials became one of her authorial signatures) is completely outside of what a lower class of author can manage. Amy Scott-Douglass examines Cavendish's multiple prefaces (calculating that she wrote nearly 100 of them) throughout all her books and argues that rather than being factual statements about authorship, psychological revelations, or feminist polemics, as earlier critics have claimed, Cavendish deliberately designed them as places of authorial self-presentation. She emphasizes the "public, performative, rhetorical nature of Cavendish's prefaces" and reads them as "the products of multiple discourses, especially . . . the self-crowned laureate's strategies of authorization" (30). Using Helgerson's paradigm of the early modern laureate to define Cavendish's authorship, Scott-Douglass argues that for the laureate and for Cavendish, "writing is heroic: the great poet and the hero are one in the same" (34). Although Helgerson's map of early modern male writers as either professionals, amateurs, or laureates does not always apply easily to contemporary women writers, Scott-Douglass identifies a likely motivation for Cavendish's grand self-presentation. Du Verger, who affirms the heroic in Cavendish's work, writes a responding narrative of reading Olio's prefatory materials and the first section and then demands a revision in the performance.

In Cavendish's book, with its multiple paratextual epistles to the reader throughout the entire text, and in Du Verger's final book, with its dedicatory letter that dispenses with the customarily deferential dedication, the previously *pro forma* genre of preface now bleeds into their entire works. Paratext becomes *the* text. They both achieve public voices without apology, and that boldness is remarkable. Each voice comes from their different places of opposition, not defending writing as women's work *per se*, but attaching their arguments to a larger cause. For Cavendish, the cause is her self-proclamation of "laureatess" and for Du Verger it is religion.

While Cavendish refuses to let go of her prefatory mode because she needs repeatedly to construct her authorship, Du Verger sustains her prefatory mode more as offense than defense. Du Verger does not object to Cavendish's writing or her heroic persona. In fact in her earlier translations, she consistently selects stories that celebrate women heroic who are beyond the dictates of gender and in spite of other women's disdain. But she objects to the inaccuracies of Cavendish's secular and theatrical critique of her religion which she condemns as a privilege of class. It is noteworthy then that the cross-dressed heroines, or *femme fortes*,³⁷ of Cavendish's later fiction fight more for the right to fight as women than for other political or religious conflicts. In contrast, Du Verger's publications are part of a religious mission rather than a display of right, and, as I will show, her scornful recycling of Cavendish's prefatory metaphors show how irrelevant she finds Cavendish's texts.

³⁷ Hero Chalmers argues that the French tradition of the *femme forte*, or heroic woman, influence Cavendish's repertoire of military women (40-46).

Du Verger had initially come to print with two dedications that asked not only for protection but also for recompense, requests with a transactional nature more in keeping dedications of the time; however, when she responds to Olio, she adopts some elements of Cavendish's prefatory tone. Her dedication to her rival does not pretend to do the work of the usual sort of dedicatory letter; instead she narrates her experience of reading Cavendish's book: "Madame, I must ingenuously confesse that at the first onset, my sharpe appetite greedily tooke downe those unaccustomed cates, and that with much satisfaction, and delight (eying in it the honour of our nation, and sexe, wherein we have had but few arguments of such abilitie) till I had past a great part of that which first offered it selfe" [sig. a]. Looking for models of English women's writing, Du Verger discovers that although she admires "the delightes of your [Cavendish's] skilful hands," the depictions of Catholicism are inaccurate.

Du Verger's consequent defense of monastic life against Cavendish's attack proceeds point by point—it has all the logic and form of a legal rebuttal, but she frames it within her writing grievance against Cavendish. First she responds to the paratextual food imagery in Olio's only (and unsigned) commendatory poem, "To the Lady of Newcastle, upon her Book intituled, The World's Olio." The poem uses all the food imagery appropriate to a book named after a fancy stew; it also emphasizes the rich nature of the materials of such a stew—venison, quail, pheasant, partridge—and presents the book as an "Olio of Confections" and a "Sumptuous Banquet for your Brain." The poet hopes the book will somehow help her have children. Interestingly the

language of food in this commendatory poem is completely at odds with Cavendish's own uses of food metaphors and her discussions on eating and drinking throughout her book. In her discussions on translators, she derisively adopts the metaphor of feasting, arguing that translators embellish their texts "to please the Luxurious palats of men" and so "rather become insinuators, then translatours" [sig. C3]. She contemptuously explains that these readers/translators complain that they must have fancy sauces and rich foods, because "they will say the stomack cannot bear plain meat, and that they will faint if they have not choice" [sig. C3]. The writer of her commendatory poem describes Cavendish's book with these gourmet metaphors, and so undoes Cavendish's own discourse of plain fare.

Du Verger ignores the external authorship of the food discourse, instead choosing to read the commendatory metaphor characterizing Olio as an aristocratic feast as Cavendish's own representation of her text; she then adopts a virtuous tone in opposition to the duchess's wealth, portraying herself as one "not accustomed to feede of such dainties, so delicatly dressed, seasoned, sett out with all that seems rich in nature" [sig. a]. She describes her experience of the text as one of initial enjoyment followed by indigestion—her stomach "began to ryse, and loathe" the Olio, a reaction which then causes Du Verger's text. While she admires Cavendish's skill, she condemns the "stale and corrupt" ingredients that have caused her to spew out her response. She accuses the Duchess of Newcastle of producing books below her rank and her talents. The title page's description "humble" announces the opposition of her class status to

Cavendish's—an argument that she continues in her letter and that becomes her authority for her position and her authorship. The dedicatory letter upsets the order that it usually preserves, turning class upside down just as Camus inverts romance; instead of asking for recompense, the author puts herself in the position of giving. The tag description on the title page acknowledges and corrects this upset by claiming the corrective ought to come from Newcastle herself: “an appeale from her mes-informed, to her owne better informed judgement.” By the end of the dedicatory letter, Du Verger again adopts the tone of the submissive dedicatee, concluding with “all the submission and respect to your Honour Imaginable,” not a convincing turn of phrase after her admonishing tone throughout the letter.

Once having countered the imagery implicit in Olio's title, Du Verger then turns to Cavendish's conclusions about religious communities and begins her exhaustive correction. After quoting the short essay “*Of a Monastical Life*” in full, she then writes five answering reflections and then a longer section where she answers each sentence individually. Her rebuttal includes her own observations interspersed with long quotations from St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and other church fathers.

Correcting Cavendish's views on monastic life is also correcting the way her authorship errs in its representation of another community—this time of women writers. For Du Verger, writing bends boundaries of both gender and class, and she bolsters her first two books with allusions to communities that should empower women's literary work whether or not such communities even exist. First she appeals to

powerful and rich Catholic women who have a shared mission of faith, one that exists in a spiritual realm beyond mere gender and a mission reinforced by Sales' writings as embodied in Camus' stories. As mentioned above, Henrietta Maria, Du Verger's first dedicatee, arrived in England with two enjoinders from her mother: to be submissive to her husband and to protect her faith. When the two came in conflict, faith usurped submission. Du Verger, clearly aware of Camus' and Sales' respect for women's roles in the Catholic reformation, if not the queen's specific injunctions, requests protection for her book because she is doing the work of a queen, a boldness justified because of the religious mission behind it. The stories she translates (only twenty percent of Camus' collection) are those highlighting women using gender roles skillfully, subverting them for God's work.

Secondly Du Verger selects Camus' stories that offer powerful representations of women's communities. For instance in her translation of "The Old Man Passionate in Love," a needlework group connects women's work with storytelling. In the narrative, Camus exposes a romance staple, a Basilius-like old man afflicted with an inappropriate passion for a younger woman. Following a romance convention to its logical conclusion, he addresses the question, "what if the older man could marry the younger woman?" In the story, the beloved, Eufroxy, sits with the old man's daughters to teach them sewing and they tell stories together; this picture of feminine community entices the old man to love Eufroxy, whose needlework expertise is her living. Teaching his younger daughters

how to do this work leads to storytelling around the fireside, implying that women's community leads to women's texts:

During the long winters nights, she spent the best part of the evening with the three daughters of Sostene, which, with two sonnes he had by his former wife, the good old man sitting in the chimney corner in his furred gowne, tooke great pleasure in hearing the tales that these wenches told, whilst they were at their work, and the songs which they sung, and other such pleasantnesse, yet all within the limits of honesty, and virtue, but in all these things, as well, as in the works, Eufronie excelled, and was as Diana amongst her nymphs. By degrees (for fire requires time to melt ice, and then to make the water boyle which comes of it) the actions, the countenece, the speeches of Eufronie delighted him, the features likewise of her face, her smiles, her looks, and her other graces imprinted themselves on his heart, so that hee desired shee might always accompany his daughters, and he amongst them, a faire, not golden, but silver lockt Apollo amidst the Muses, he became very impatient within himself when Eufronie came not. [sig. F4]

Additionally Du Verger's first three stories in Admirable Events, selected from Camus' book and arranged to Du Verger's taste, all feature active women annexing romance for the sake of community. Rosana, as discussed above, proactively defends her right to knighthood in order to defend her knight, who stands for her city. Du Verger's third

story, "The Discreet Children," concerns a widow who wants sexual satisfaction without disturbing her children's inheritances; she contrives a secret second marriage, with the complicity of her children, whose response the narrator admiringly describes as obedience and warns the reader, "if these foure children were not amazed at this proposition, is not a question to be asked" [sig. D8]. In all these stories, strong women use the modes of romance to protect family and community as well as individual fulfillment. As the narrator ends "The Discreet Children," "thus was the mother contented, the children counted discreet, and all things passed quietly without rumour" [sig. E8].

Thirdly Du Verger defends monastic communities and was certainly well aware of the famously active women's religious groups in Douai, where her second and third books may have been published.³⁸ Her act of reproof shows the value that Du Verger found in a virtual community of women writers, an approach to literary production that is very much in line with the monastic vocation. Mary Ward's career in creating feminine centers of learning and action and other active English women's religious communities provide an informative parallel to what Du Verger accomplishes textually.³⁹ Although her energies seem focused on defending monasticism and subsequently the Catholic faith, her subtext defends literary community: her premise for commenting on

³⁸ Jane Collins suggests that Du Verger may well have been living in Douai during the English Revolution and perhaps of part of a women's religious community, a fascinating if unlikely possibility. Du Verger's husband was still living at the time (x).

³⁹ Claire Walker points out while Ward's communities are the most well documented of English convent-style recusancy, Englishwomen founded other continental convents after the English reformation, well before Ward, as well as being active in foreign convents (14-15).

Cavendish's work is its mistaken representation of monastic life. She responds to Olio out of a sense that her Protestant rival's work demands correction because it imperils the cause of the woman author. Plenty of inaccurate anti-Catholic diatribes emerged in print throughout the 1640s and 1650s, so Du Verger not only responds to a text that misunderstands her religion, but chooses to correct a book by a woman whose writing does not fairly represent women's work, either in its private monastic version or its public printed face.

Du Verger, as well as many other early modern women writers, depends upon a certain sense of textual community. As the visibility of women's texts increase, so does the number of those texts. Salzman explains an increasing sense of awareness among women writers of each other's authorship: "While many women who wrote saw themselves as venturing into dangerous and uncharted territory, many were conscious of their predecessors and saw themselves as 'women writers'" (Reading 9). For women writing outside the privilege of title and wealth, a writing community was either an entirely textual affair, existing only in the knowledge gained from women-authored books at the bookstalls or the traveling bookseller, or was found within the context of service, either tutoring wealthy men's daughters or reading aloud to mistresses. In their prefaces we see community in action in their dedications, principally, but also in their references to other writing women.⁴⁰ Eufony's group of women reading, telling stories, and doing needlework is the place where women begin writing romance. Du Verger's

⁴⁰ One example is, as discussed in the previous chapter, Judith Man's references to Mary Wroth's Urania and "many" other writing women.

prefatory materials and narratives show women's communities as central to their textual production. Cavendish upsets this context and instead writes from isolation and individuality. Du Verger's narrative of reading Cavendish suggests that she has been reading other women's books and placing her earlier work into their own. Du Verger seeks community in Cavendish's authorship and describes Olio as first seeming "a common banquet for all," from which she "could not conceive my selfe excluded" [sig. a].

Du Verger's construction of women's writing communities is utterly at odds with Cavendish's notorious singularity. She commandeered her extraordinary life circumstances to make her own writing possible, but she sees herself as exceptional (as indeed she was) rather than a model for other women writing in the seventeenth century. As noticed earlier, this singularity has been a topic of debate among Cavendish critics, and although it is possible to argue that her sense of singularity did not separate her from her cultural context (as Scott-Douglass does), she was still undoubtedly outside the experience of women writers like Du Verger, Man, and Weamys, all sub-aristocratic women who also came to print during the English Revolution. Her wealth, title, and marital status, along with a husband unusually supportive of his wife's writing, provided her an immunity from the kinds of rules that the majority of early modern women had to navigate more carefully. While it is delightful to watch her rhetoric and humor at work, the grounding for the frustration of her less privileged writing colleague is

obvious. Du Verger was not the only woman to object to Cavendish's writing,⁴¹ but she was the only one to censure it publicly. But far from reproving her for writing itself, Du Verger writes to save Cavendish from short sighted views of other women's work using monastic life as her vehicle of discussion.

Critical work on women's textual communities has come to disparate conclusions. While there is some work on reading and writing circles at upper echelons of society (coteries and salons),⁴² finding evidence of women's textual communities in sub-aristocratic classes is more difficult. Clarke dismisses previous work on women's writing communities: "there is little evidence that early modern women writers perceived or claimed any common identity as writers and surprisingly little acknowledgement on the part of individual writers that they had read one another's work" (3). Her assertion ignores the frequent dedication of women's works to other women and the ways that women would work and read together. The prefatory materials in the 1640s and 1650s challenge the implied absence of these women's voices. Du Verger and Judith Man both acknowledge other women writers and their concern for a proper reception for a woman's text in general as well as theirs in

⁴¹ Cavendish's feminine critics include Dorothy Osborne, "Sure the poor woman is a little distracted, she could never be so ridiculous else as to venture at writing books, and in verse too" (qtd. in Hintz) and Mary Evelyn, who described Cavendish's discourse as "airy, empty, whimsical and rambling as her books, aiming at science, difficulties, high notions, terminating commonly in nonsense, oaths, and obscenity" (qtd. in Worsley, 222);

⁴² The most notable example is the collection of essays, Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England edited by Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

particular is evident in their prefatory materials or, in Anna Weamys' case, in their narratives.

At the beginning of the civil wars, Du Verger's translations are cautious. By 1657, she lives in a society that no longer enforces the same restrictions on women's voices. By the Restoration, much had changed for women: they were wearing makeup and acting onstage; they were writing and publishing romances more prolifically, sometimes empowered by more elite women's visibility and writing—Anne Bradstreet's poem to Elizabeth is a good example of the powerful memory of a woman monarch—but also empowered by a new library of sub-aristocratic women's writing coming up from below and challenging the way stories had been written.

Chapter Three: Anne Bradstreet's Transatlantic Political Agency

Anne Bradstreet shapes her poetic persona more consciously than Man, Weamys, and Du Verger, but pressing political issues similarly drive her poetic production. In the same way that Man benefits from her connection to the Wentworth family, Bradstreet received educational advantages from being associated with the Lincoln family, who had produced Elizabeth Clinton's 1622 The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie. In addition to receiving the advantages of access to an impressive library and to being educated with her brothers, she also saw the precedent of a much honored matriarch writing and publishing with the full support of her family.¹ Bradstreet's early education immersed her in English literary culture. Her literary reputation, however, does not stand on her English poetic lineage, but her status as a pioneering poet, the first published American poet. The acclaim is well deserved, but has often failed to note the possible influence of Bradstreet's first book, The Tenth Muse (1650), back "home" in London where it was first printed. Critics also have not noticed Bradstreet's earlier scribal publication in Massachusetts, presented to her father and circulated in the colony.

The geography is important because Bradstreet's book inserted a woman's political experience into both colonial and English public discourse. The publication of her book in London presented the political possibilities of feminine authorship, and her manuscript edition contributed to a conversation about theocracy in her New England

¹ Virginia Brackett discusses the library that would have been available as well as the possible influence of Clinton's Nurserie on Bradstreet's authorship (364-66).

community. Most Bradstreet scholarship has missed the two publics who read The Tenth Muse. Bradstreet imagined her book as a public text for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, arguing for a commonwealth crafted in response to the civil wars and regicide and in contrast to its parent country. Her second reading public—Interregnum London—was not one she necessarily chose; her book was exported for printing in England by a relative who had his own interpretive designs on her text. In this chapter, I look at the surprisingly large critical history of Bradstreet’s paratext and note that scholars have continued to define her literary accomplishments by the same odd standards set by the writers of her commendatory poems, although with increasing theoretical finesse. Bradstreet’s commendatory poems model readings of her first book, but they also point to the public mission of her text. Looking then at the prefatory materials written by her, which consists of her dedication to her father and her “Prologue” to the first manuscript edition of her poetry, I show how Bradstreet frames her poetic agency as in the service of her political goals.

In the next section I argue that Bradstreet’s public was the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where her father provided both a cultural and political authority for her text, as the patriarch of her family and the sometimes governor.² She grounds her work in the Protestantism of Sidney and Du Bartas, as seen in her elegies for them. Bradstreet’s admiration of Sidney is complicated by the secularity of his prose romance and courtly poetry. While recognizing Bradstreet’s own aim for her text as exerting local influence, I

² The governorship ran in two year cycles and was elected by freemen members of the colony, according to the group’s charter.

then discuss how her text was co-opted by the Fifth Monarchist movement in England. Finally I look at how her book enters public discourse, both advising readers in England still embroiled in internecine struggle and addressing her own colonial government through her dedication to her father and through her theology of peaceful governance. Although she does not write a romance, I include her in this dissertation because she grapples with its problems as political genre and frames her political voice within the genre of history, which she presents as correcting romance. Her verse histories employ some strategies of romance in spite of her denial of their power.

History of the Book

Bradstreet's first book was published in London in 1650 with the full title: THE TENTH MUSE Lately sprung up in AMERICA. OR Severall Poems, compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of delight. The books contents are then displayed in detail:

Wherein especially is contained a compleat discourse and description of

Elements,
Constitutions,

The Four { *Ages of Man,*
Seasons of the Year.

Together with an Exact Epitomie of
the Four Monarchies, viz.

Assyrian,
Persian,

The { *Grecian,*
Roman.

Also a Dialogue between Old *England* and
New, concerning the late troubles.

With divers other pleasant and serious Poems.

By a Gentlewoman in those parts.

Printed at *London* for *Stephen Bowtell* at the sign of the Bible in Popes Head-Alley. 1650.

The descriptive detail given on the title page accentuates its use as an advertisement for the book. Inside, paratextual authors present a mishmash of impressions of her literary authority, linked together by constant reference to its most striking factor, her gender.

Bradstreet's role in her book's publication in London continues to be debated, in spite of contemporary evidence pointing to the poet not knowing about its English publication until after the fact. Bradstreet's brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, states that he brought the book from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in order to print it without the author's knowledge. He justifies his theft by claiming that a printed version will save its circulating manuscript pages from corrupting the unity of her text. The posthumous 1678 reprint The Tenth Muse includes a new poem, "The Author to Her Book," in which Bradstreet describes her response to the 1650 printed version as surprise and regret. She confirms that the manuscript was "snatcht from thence by friends, less wise than true / Who thee abroad, expos'd to publick view" (Poems 177). She adopts the conventional metaphor of her writing as her "offspring," which she describes as "ill-form'd," "in raggs," a "rambling brat," and finally a bastard: "If for thy father askt, say, thou hadst none" (178). Besides producing some unfortunate psychoanalytic readings of

Bradstreet's experience of maternity as it relates to her writing,³ this poem means either that she did not intend her book for English publication or that she found it so disturbing twenty-five years later that she maintained the fiction of its theft.

Recent critics, who perceive Bradstreet's authorship as a rallying cry for women writers, have posited that Bradstreet's continued denial that the 1650 edition was planned is merely a conventionally modest ploy to sustain her reputation as a good private woman.⁴ These critics understandably dismiss that tone of regret in favor of Bradstreet's gleeful self-defense in her "Prologue": "I am obnoxious to each carping tongue / Who sayes, my hand a needle better fits, / A Poets Pen, all scorne, I should thus wrong; / For such despight they cast on female wits" [sig. B3].⁵ This latter reading of Bradstreet's coy plans for her book's publication in England is enticing because it reveals a woman author proud enough of her poetic achievements to make them public in her home country. Such a premise does not, however, fit with her own statements nor adequately explain why she would continue this pose twenty years after a very successful publishing event. It would be more convenient for my argument if Bradstreet herself had pushed her political poems to be published defiantly in England, but the alternative remains a compelling story of women's authorship. Bradstreet's manuscript edition proposed revisions of Puritan theocracy to the smaller sphere of an expatriate

³ For instance, Michael D. Reed. "The Prologues of Edward Taylor and Anne Bradstreet: A Psychoanalytic Reading." *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 19 (1997): 5-14.

⁴ Elizabeth Ferszt, on the other hand, claims that it is common sense that Bradstreet would have known of the planned publication of her poems as her community was too small to hide those kinds of plans (9-12).

⁵ Bradstreet wrote "The Prologue" for the manuscript edition and it was co-opted for the printed one.

community formulating their own rigid government. When Woodbridge deliberately used Bradstreet's critique of Old England from the authority of New England for his own political purposes when traveling home, he inserted a woman's voice into public debate.

The Tenth Muses' stationer, Stephen Bowtell, had also published Nathaniel Ward's immensely popular The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America willing To help mend his native Country, lamentably tattered, both in the upper-Leather and sole, with all the honest stitches he can take in 1647. It went through four editions in 1647 alone. Ward had been the Dudleys' parish priest in England and was well known to the family; it is generally assumed that he connected Woodbridge with Stephen Bowtell, the stationer who published The Tenth Muse. Ward's own twenty-five page book continues a jocular conversation carried on in pamphlet literature about who has the right to preach and provide spiritual guidance. While his book has a different tone and style than Bradstreet's far more serious poems, the title pages market the two books on similar premises, that New England can discipline Old England. Ward and Bowtell insert Bradstreet's book into this public conversation and highlight on the title page how she has "sprung up" to offer a dialogue between Old England and New.

The Manuscript Edition of The Tenth Muse

Elizabeth Wade White, in Anne Bradstreet: The Tenth Muse (1971), suggests that there must have been a manuscript edition, now lost, of Bradstreet's poetry that was the basis of the 1650 The Tenth Muse. White's theory of a manuscript edition has been largely ignored by critics because it does not fit with the portrait of Bradstreet as a

private woman poet. Yet White's claim fits both early conditions of textual production in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the structure of the text itself. The absence of presses had already made scribal publication a norm in colonial America, part of what David D. Hall calls the "diverse modes of literary production in early New England" (142). Recently Margaret Ezell, who has long argued for the recognition of manuscript books as public texts, looks at the circulation of Bradstreet's work and asserts that she "actively participated in literary culture while far away from the center of literary production in London, with her poems read in manuscript and circulated in multiple copies" (*Social* 49).⁶ The manuscript version was circulated at least within her immediate and extended families and probably within the early settlements. Theresa Freda Nicolay outlines Puritan attitudes towards publication as well as some historical details on the first press (1638) in New England and its unavailability for poetry. Its first printing was the 1640 *Bay Psalm Book* and its output was singularly religious. She notes that early American male poets had published in England "where the cost was lower and the final product was of higher quality. More importantly, authors could reach a larger audience in England and often wrote for that audience" (12).⁷

In addition to reaching more readers, printing a text fixed its order and content. Woodbridge explains that he brought Bradstreet's manuscript for printing in England in 1650 because the circulation of her poetry had become uncontrollable:

⁶ Ezell delightfully characterizes Woodbridge's publication of Bradstreet's papers as "piracy" (*Social* 46-51).

⁷ Nicolay's source for this discussion is Jayne K. Kribbs, "Printing and Publishing in America from Daye to Zenger" in *Puritan Poets and Poetics*. Ed. Peter White. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1985.

I fear the displeasure of no person in the publishing of these Poems but the Authors, without whose knowledge, and contrary to her expectation, I have presumed to bring to publick view what she resolved should never in such a manner see the Sun; but I found that divers had gotten some scattered papers, affected them wel, were likely to have sent forth broken pieces to the Authors prejudice, which I thought to prevent, as well as to pleasure those that earnestly desired the view of the whole.

[sig. A3]

Woodbridge hoped to preserve the textual integrity of Bradstreet's manuscript by making a public record of "the whole" and saving it from potential bowdlerization by scribal publication. Margaret Ferguson, recognizing that manuscript circulation has been understudied, notes although it was an alternative to the more random dispersal of printed texts, it still did not allow an author to limit readership of her text (160-62). The fate of a text circulated in manuscript was often transcription, and transcription often resulted in modification.

Paratextual Bradstreet

The prefatory materials to The Tenth Muse reveal how Bradstreet instructs her readers how to approach her book and what male commendatory authors made of those instructions, but they tell us little about the book's poetry. The first responses to Bradstreet's book are in these prefatory materials to its English print edition, where commendatory poem writers claim to praise her work and yet express ambivalence

about it. In this section I examine both the commendatory poems, male-authored and remarkable in both tone and quantity, and Bradstreet's own paratextual presentation of her text. Somewhat like Weamys' Arcadia, published one year later, the front matter has quite a large collection of introductory material. After the title page is John Woodbridge's letter to the "Kind Reader," where he explains the book's New England origins. Following the letter are eight commendatory poems and two anagrams. All of them adopt a witty tone that negotiates the text as a public event notable because the author is a woman. Bradstreet's two paratextual poems follow these commendations. They were written earlier for the manuscript edition and seem to have inspired the witty tone and *querelle des femmes* topic for the paratextual authors.

Bradstreet's dedication to her father documents her material hopes for her book, as opposed to Woodbridge's, and must have prefaced the manuscript presentation of the collection. Dedications were rhetorical exercises produced under the most trying conditions. Usually formulated as epistles, they had to connect the dedicatee meaningfully with the text at hand, balancing deference with their own attempts to achieve literary authority. Often dedications were a plea for patronage in the form of financial recompense, but in other cases, as in Bradstreet's "To Her Most Honoured Father," the dedication used the patron's name and position to claim an aura of authority for the text. Bradstreet's poetry challenges the dominant version of colonial theocracy, but her prefatory materials deflect attention away from her political

interaction and towards her own humble pose. She seems to subjugate her poetic project entirely to her father's authority.

The presentation of her verse to Thomas Dudley acknowledges him as her father, a poet himself, her mentor (since he oversaw her education), and the governor. Her dedication has an underlying anxiety about her father's opinion of her book's authenticity, a worry that he might suspect her lines of "stealth," especially as regards her debt to Du Bartas. This concern is especially interesting in light of the confusion so often in women's prefatory texts about the identity of the woman author: is it the woman or the man who has been an influence and literary mentor?⁸ Bradstreet clearly asserts her own authorship although framing that claim within a conventionally modest tone. In addition to differentiating her verse from her source, she distinguishes between her father's verse and her own in a context of homage. His verse has inspired her "thoughts to soar," and she mentions and copies his poetic form, the quaternion. (His poems are not extant.) Her quaternions are "bounden handmaids" to his, and her "lowly pen might wait upon these four" [sig. B1]. She further parallels the relationship of their verse to their father/daughter relationship: "these same are they, from whom we being have." The "we" here refers not only to her poetry, but also to Bradstreet herself. Her dedication also models how she would have a reader understand her text: first as original poems of homage and second as stories that show conflicts being successfully resolved.

⁸ I discuss this dynamic again and in more detail in the next chapter on Weamys' *Arcadia*.

Reading “The Prologue” reveals Bradstreet’s own negotiations of her authorship, but not her unfiltered political views. She playfully undoes potential objections to her book. For instance the poem’s very beginning is a comic rewriting of typical beginnings of epics and alludes to Virgil’s opening lines of The Aeneid. She lists potential topics of her poetry, claims that she cannot intrude on masculine poetic domains, retracts that aversion, and goes on “to sing of Wars, of Captaines, and of Kings, / Of Cities founded, Common-wealths begun” [sig. B2] in “The Four Monarchies.” Bradstreet demonstrates a cultural awareness of the *querelle des femmes* debate in her “Prologue.” In acknowledging the terms of this commonplace debate, she plays along with its premises, defuses it, and then creates her public voice. She makes a case for women’s poetry in a subjunctive tone when she asks readers to take the muses’ gender seriously as support for women’s verse (similar to Man’s text, when Argenis steps out of allegory). She quickly undercuts this argument by making fun of the Greeks who “did nought, but play the foole and lye” (6.6). She has, however, an ongoing conversation about the authority of Greek culture, literature and tradition. After calling them foolish in her “Prologue,” characters in her first quaternion, “The Foure Elements,” each authorize themselves via Greek tradition.

Within the commendatory poems, there is a similarly facetious tone, common to prefaces by male authors. Critics have read this tone as revealing male contempt for her poetry instead of responses to the topics of her prologue. Nathaniel Ward introduces his former parishioner with a strange confluence of tones in his commendatory poem. He

begins and ends his commendation by inserting her work into the *querelle des femmes* debate, perching himself somewhat precariously on the fence, as his ironic concluding line demonstrates: “Let men look to’t, least women weare the Spurs” [sig. A3]. He deploys a persona of a bumbling male prefacer unsure of his own rhetorical prowess, clearly a joke, but one less at Bradstreet’s expense than as an introduction of the paratextual undercurrent of gender competition. His false humility then merges with a more typical prefatory protectiveness and gallantry toward his writing woman protégé.⁹

Woodbridge’s prefatory letter shows him approaching his sister-in-law’s work with an awareness of its novelty as well as the *querelle des femmes* tradition to which Bradstreet refers in her “Prologue.” He also presents his motive as a kind of gallantry and protection, opposing her wish for her verse to remain private in order to protect it from piracy or misunderstanding. He opens his letter to the “Kind Reader” with a curiously feminine metaphor to describe his act of prefacing her work: “had I opportunity but to borrow some of the Authors wit, ‘tis possible I might so trim this curious Work with such quaint expressions, as that the Preface might bespoke thy further perusal” [sig. A3]. As a verb, trim has several meanings. The word’s interest for the writer’s use in connection to Bradstreet lies in its different masculine and feminine definitions. An obsolete version of trim meant to strengthen, both materially and spiritually (as in encourage). Later, the word seems to separate into masculine and

⁹ Tamara Harvey discusses Bradstreet’s use of the *querelle des femmes* discourse in “‘Now Sisters...Impart Your Usefulness and Force’: Anne Bradstreet’s Feminist Functionalism in *The Tenth Muse* (1650),” which I discuss in detail in the next section.

feminine versions of itself: in one sense, “to trim” has a nautical connotation, referring to work done to strengthen a ship bottom and later to working with ship sails. In the word’s feminine version, the word is associated with decorating clothing, adding extra adornment. When he declares his own temptation to “trim” Bradstreet’s text, he means that he wants to bolster its conformity to prevailing fashion, not that he is concerned with the text’s general strength. Woodbridge also is concerned with defining a woman’s literary work in relation to her other work. Calling her book a “curious work” connotes both its novelty as a woman-authored text and its attention to detail. “Curious” is another word that can have a frivolous meaning, so again he seems to guard against the perception of the work as denigrating Bradstreet’s femininity. He pointedly explains that the author has not written her poems at the expense of housework: “the Poems are the fruit but of some few hours, curtailed from her sleep, and other refreshments” [sig. A5].

Bradstreet’s prefatory materials have been mined more deeply for cultural significance than the other authors in this project, because of her status in American literature. The conclusions have been various, but the dynamic has been the same. Readers have rarely traveled beyond the interpretations of The Tenth Muse that her commendatory poem authors first modeled and so have missed the historic function of the 202 pages that follow the book’s prefatory materials. Not to say that Bradstreet’s defenders have not read her poetry, but the issues that dominate Bradstreet criticism are her gender and her originality, both issues that arise in the commendatory poems. In fact, critics have discussed Bradstreet’s prefatory materials in more depth than those

of male contemporary poets and long before the relatively recent emergence of paratextual studies. This focus on her paratext proves what a powerful genre it is in the critical reception of women's authorship. Another layer of irony to this dependence on the commendatory poems to introduce Bradstreet's work is that their authors, her contemporaries, seem not to have read beyond her own opening poems where she introduces her literary debt to Du Bartas and her status as a woman poet. Their topics are those that Bradstreet first introduces in her "Dedication" and "Prologue," and the commendatory poets take her tone as their guide. Bradstreet abandons the *querelle des femmes* discourse in her main text. Additionally, she may copy Du Bartas' sense of Protestant mission, but her history of the kings of the worlds is a project far different from Du Bartas' narrative of creation.

Critical discussion on the commendatory poems has ranged from merely identifying their possible authors to castigating them for their sexism. As mentioned above, the authors of these prefatory materials set a critical tone that remained a reading paradigm of her verse for years, namely that her verse's value lies in the novelty of its author's gender. The basic claim is true; for a woman to publish a book with The Tenth Muses' attention to science and history was an innovation. The prefatory writers present Bradstreet as a *querelle des femmes* curiosity, but in doing so they follow a discussion she presented in her "Prologue." By reading superficially the prefatory focus on the problem of gender and Bradstreet's own concerns about the originality of her

verse, critics have been duped by the posed presentation of the author and have missed the poetry's public function.

Furthermore, being fixated on the prefatory fodder has shaped readings of the quaternions, as in "The Four Humors," discussed below, where peace and mildness overcome dissent and bluster. Critics have read this dynamic as the feminine overcoming the masculine, which seems valid, since Bradstreet does focus on gender and poetic agency in "The Prologue," as do the authors of the commendatory poems. A closer look, however, shows that the four humors are sisters and therefore characterizing choler as a masculine emotion depends on a misreading of Bradstreet's decision to gender the humors feminine. Beyond her paratext, Bradstreet connects her quaternions with the civil wars, Protestant poetic tradition, and the creation of a new Commonwealth in New England. Mistaking her paratextual mix of humility and wit as a mission of constructing a model of feminine authorship has resulted in Bradstreet's reputation as a private poet rather than the public voice that her contemporaries perceived.

For New England readers, her manuscript was a proposal that a government based on Biblical goals, as the Massachusetts Bay Colony claimed to be, must look carefully at Biblical precepts at New Testament ideals of government rather than extracting Old Testament laws as convenient. For English readers (whether or not she herself intended any "English" reputation for herself), she represents an outside voice deliberately commenting on the internecine wars that are ravaging their country. She is

marketed as having a certain authoritative perspective on the English troubles, as “The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America,” and as such, her book becomes a visible voice of a woman entering public discourse. As her title page advertises, her poetry interprets England’s crisis in “a Dialogue between Old England and New, concerning the late troubles.”

Constructing Authorship: A Bradstreet Critical Tradition

Beyond her commendatory poems, Bradstreet’s authorship has a larger critical tradition than does Man, Weamys, and Du Verger because of her title as America’s first published poet. Reading three and a half centuries of response to her work reveals what a critical tradition of women’s early modern writing might look like if they had been included in the canon earlier. Her later poetry has been examined as curious, then pioneering and groundbreaking, and finally ambitious and successful, depending on the politics of her critics. In contrast, her early work is often dismissed as derivative and pre-feminist. In this section I examine the history of critical response to Bradstreet and trace its debt to her early commendatory poem writers.

Nineteenth-century critics treat Bradstreet as an interesting case of a woman stuck in the Puritan muck and trying to transcend the narrow views of her religion, a tradition which reveals more about that century’s anxieties over America’s Puritan roots than Bradstreet’s own religious views. John Harvard Ellis’ thorough collected works of Bradstreet (1867) offers a deliberate and thoughtful consideration of her work in his preface and presents her as a serious poet (lvii-lxiii). Ellis balances his critiques of her

less elegant verse with his praise for her valiant attempt, as a woman, at authorship.

Moses Coit Tyler, writing in 1878, depicts Bradstreet's poetry as imprisoned in her religion: "Literature, for her, was not a republic of letters, hospitable to all forms of human thought, but a strict Puritan commonwealth, founded on a scheme of narrow ascetic intolerance, and excluding from its citizenship some of the sublimest, daintiest, and most tremendous types of literary expression" (Critical Essays 32).

More recently, critics have been breaking Bradstreet out of the seclusion of the exceptional woman mold to see what her authorship might have signified to her contemporaries. In a sense, critics are no longer insisting that Bradstreet transcend her culture in order to reach forward to accomplish the needs of our own (namely, to find early modern women authors defying patriarchy or religion), but instead are investigating what the cultural significance of her work was to early modern England and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. A related gap in the critical history of The Tenth Muse is the tendency to locate it as either British or American literature (depending on the critic's area of study) when in fact Bradstreet's book inserted her public voice in both places, although with different purposes for each. Very recently critics have recognized that The Tenth Muse is a transatlantic text, recalling genres and poetic modes from an English past while at the same time realizing new religious and political opportunities, and then using them to berate the corrupt home culture in England.

Tamara Harvey's narrative of the critical treatment of Bradstreet roughly outlines three more recent schools. The first one, epitomized by White's work, describes the

early poetry as derivative, a view achieved by a literal reading of The Tenth Muse's "The Prologue," where Bradstreet worries that critics will say her verse is "stolne." These critics prefer the more "expressive" poetry in her later work, which, as Harvey points out, ignores the ways in which her early poetry is grounded in early modern poetic discourse (5). The second school recognizes how Bradstreet's poetry adopts and subverts Renaissance poetic conventions in order to redefine discussions of gender and women's poetic agency. Harvey criticizes the absence of a reader in these critical constructions of Bradstreet as well as the seemingly static nature of the discourses upon which she purportedly builds her authorship. Harvey prefers a third school that not only historicizes Bradstreet's poetry but recognizes her act of authorship as sophisticated participation in these debates and redefinition of them: "By exploring how Bradstreet mounts a feminist challenge to sexist hierarchies through direct engagement of debates and conventions of her time, we can better appreciate her skills, better understand her audience, and perhaps better identify common strategies that link her writings to the works and thought of other women responding to the same or similar social and intellectual traditions" (25).

To Harvey's assessments, I add the observation that Bradstreet criticism has often foundered when trying to make sense of the changes in content and tone from her earlier political poetry to her later lyrics. Certainly the poetic persona of The Tenth Muse contrasts strikingly with the elegiac voice of her later poetry, and this difference is not a simple puzzle to solve. I argue that Bradstreet's earlier poetry presents advice on

governing to her father, to whom she dedicated the book, and to the Puritan community at large, who saw it in manuscript pages and book form. The political intent of her book has been ignored because of the failure to read it in the context of the Elizabethan political literary discourse that Bradstreet learned in her reading in the Lincoln's library and took as her guide.

Early feminist readings adopt Bradstreet as a case study of a woman writing herself out of patriarchal repression, and as such, define her early poetry as useful, but mostly awkward and waiting for liberation. They value her later verse because in it she seems to free herself from male poetic forms and influences. White's Tenth Muse reintroduced Bradstreet to feminist critics of the 1970s, framing the early poetry as formulaic exercises leading to later great lyric poetry. Discussing them in her chapter "The Maturing Writer," she describes Bradstreet's early work as "essentially scholastic rather than lyrical" (228).¹⁰ Adrienne Rich's and John Berryman's well known responses to Bradstreet have reinforced the critical tradition of reading this first published American poet as helplessly constricted by her own Puritan worldview and constricting cultural taboos against women writers.¹¹

¹⁰ More recent criticism continues this tradition. Rosamund Rosemeier in 2001 describes Bradstreet as writing The Tenth Muse poetry with an awareness of its lower quality, claiming that "the speakers present themselves as not yet fully developed" (41).

¹¹ In his "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet" (1953), John Berryman imagines an "intimate dialogue with Anne Bradstreet and the mutual sexual attraction that almost draw them into a transhistorical affair" (Spencer 354). His poem to Bradstreet was his first literary success. Adrienne Rich's foreword to Jeannine Hensley's 1967 edition of Bradstreet's poetry characterizes her early poetry as derivative and her later verse as an early feminism. Susan Wiseman highlights how Rich's and Berryman's searches for "their own American poetic forebears" led to their failure to historicize Bradstreet's work (182-84).

Bradstreet's topics indeed became more homely and domestic in her later verse, which has been interpreted as her culminating success as a woman poet, because it allegedly creates a feminine mode of private verse and a defense of it as "women's work." In this paradigm (Harvey's first and second critical schools), Bradstreet achieves poetic agency by engaging a fiction that women's literary production was essentially domestic and consequently private both in audience and in subject. Although undervaluing the early verse, White argues that Bradstreet's 1650 book was the beginning of women's literary history. She claims that Bradstreet was the first English woman poet worth noticing, listing women writers competing for the title and then dismissing possible earlier takers with surprising ease. For instance, she describes Isabella Whitney as "obscure" (277) and "neurotic" (279); Mary Wroth's Urania is "pretentious" and "undistinguished" (281). While White's description of Bradstreet as the ultimate "first poet" in an emerging tradition of women's verse simply is not accurate, her argument that The Tenth Muse is a landmark in women's publication history is more probable. White supposes that Cavendish saw Bradstreet's publication as a kind of permission to print her own books (285), a delightful supposition for which there is no evidence beyond timing of publication. We do know, however, that Bathsua Makin praised Bradstreet's poetry as an example for women in her 1673 An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen (White 20) and that John Norton, in his 1672 "Funeral Elegy," connects Bradstreet's virtues to her authorship. Even Cotton Mather describes her work as providing "a grateful Entertainment unto the Ingenious,

and a Monument for her Memory beyond the Stateliest *Marbles*" (qtd. in Cowell and Stanford 10).

This type of interpretation continues after White's book. Nicolay argues, for instance, that "Bradstreet brings new respect to traditional female territory. Puritan attitudes regarding family life and government helped Bradstreet to transform maternal authority into literary authority" (22-23). Walter Hughes characterizes Bradstreet's poetry as primarily a private feminine version of masculine public discourse found in sermons and lyric poetry, both public and private. He reads her poetry within a seventeenth-century alignment of erotic desire with longing for God, a discourse prominent in both English metaphysical poets like Donne and Herbert as well as their near contemporary Puritans in New England (121). His comparison of Bradstreet, Wigglesworth, and Taylor is compelling and engaging, but he bases his conclusions on the assumption that she considers God as her primary audience. Her own defense of her public voice undoes such a premise. Again Bradstreet's later verse is her real accomplishment because of critical inability to imagine any public audience for her political poetry.

These versions of Bradstreet's poetic production do not contest nineteenth-century dismissals of her work as confined to a women's sphere, but argue that she turns traditional women's roles on their head, turning them into a place of poetic power. These critics try to identify the ways that she rewrites her poetry into a feminine tradition, looking at how she genders her verse and so revises and feminizes

predominantly male traditions of literature. Through this interpretive lens, Bradstreet's early work is clunky because she is looking at male uses of poetry and trying to fit herself within them without looking to her own essential femininity for revision. Then she gets in touch with her maternal self and finds her true poetic calling, the discovery of a true poetic voice through the essentially feminine experiences of motherhood and family. Although this argument has some appeal, it depends on a notion that Bradstreet's intellectual and spiritual destination was always the later personal lyrics. Indeed the later verse seems more attractive because its topics, motherhood and grief, appear to transcend her Puritan culture of which we remain suspicious.

Entering fully into this opposition of feminine and masculine valuations of Bradstreet's text, early critics read certain "feminine" criteria, namely a private audience and domestic topics, as the terms of her poetic success. In this paradigm, Bradstreet's move to domestic poetry necessarily becomes a triumph since that has already been set up as her poetic goal. Her verse improves when it deals only in private matters, which "proves" the power of domestic verse for women's literature. Looking at Bradstreet's texts this way produces powerful feminist readings of her later poetry but simultaneously limits the reach of her earlier verse. For instance, Bradstreet begins her poem on the "The Four Ages of Man" with an unusual foray into the experience of the mother of the child. To examine the stages of man, whether divided into four or seven, is a certain kind of textbook experience for a poet. Jacques' outlines the stages of human experience with a certain sort of melodrama in As You Like It, providing a

melancholic satire of the Seven Stages of man rhetorical exercise.¹² Bradstreet's version adds the mother's experience of birth as a new component to this classic essay. If we only look at her addition to this genre of poem as evidence that she is gendering it, then we miss the other discourses connected to this mother/child paradigm often explored in poetry, namely the creation of poetry itself. The conventional pose of the author as giving birth to his text (generally a cross-gendered metaphor authored by a male poet) is not only common to the period but is one that Bradstreet herself adopts in her "The Author to her Book." Bradstreet's expositions of motherhood must also be read as rhetorical exercises instead of pointing to an inevitable gendering of her verse.

Reading the later feminized verse as the goal of Bradstreet's earlier derivative efforts repeats the readings of the very commendatory poems often proposed as sexist and unfair. Bethany Reid, for example, discusses the prefatory materials as a way to contextualize Bradstreet's authorship, especially the unsigned anagram:

Anna Bradestreate. Deer neat An Bartas.

So Bartas-like thy fine spun poems been,

That Bartas' name will prove an epicene. [sig. B1]

She highlights the use of the word "epicene" and claims it was pejorative. The usage in the OED shows seventeenth-century usage of "epicene" as neutral. Steve Brown identifies Jonson, in Epicoene, or the Silent Woman, as transforming the word from its philological meaning of a neutral grammatical gender to refer to things "adapted to

¹² Michael J. B. Allen describes the multiple sources for this speech and notes that its topic was a commonplace (332)

both sexes; worn or inhabited by both sexes" (256). This connotation of the word seems to be well in use by the 1620s so that when Bradstreet's prefacer calls her an "Epicene" in 1650, it is a complimentary reference to Du Bartas' name as having become grammatically able to include women's authorship. Its use in the anagram points to a continued tendency in the prefatory materials to women's books to focus on gender when describing women's writing. Reid concludes that in The Tenth Muse, Bradstreet "intricately if uncomfortably weaves herself into a male tradition of poetic influence"; however, she sees in Bradstreet's later response the English printed edition of her book in "The Author to her Book," an undoing of that dynamic: "Instead of writing another male-tradition poem or engaging in witty repartee with her male prefacers, as some critics have read 'The Author to her Book,' Bradstreet claims a counter-tradition" (539). Reid claims that Bradstreet feminizes her writing when she chooses her family as subject. Reid misreads the use of "epicene" in this opening anagram, seeing it as a denial of Bradstreet's accomplishment, but then she herself unconsciously adopts the tone of that misreading to claim that the early poetry is not feminist enough.

A contrasting approach is Harvey's own work on The Tenth Muse, which integrates the supposedly misogynist commendatory poems into the context of the classic *querelle des femmes* debate. She looks beyond this opening sequence and shows Bradstreet's continuation of this debate throughout her text. Understanding her use of Helkiah Crooke's medical encyclopedia in her quaternion "Of the Foure Humours" shows Bradstreet's learned intervention into perceptions of women's bodies, "sexist

medical theory” (23), and male preeminence. Understanding the cultural context of this debate in Bradstreet’s prefatory materials uncovers an entirely different tone from the commendatory poem writers. Instead of being rudely misogynistic, they continue a debate that Bradstreet began in her prologue. Reading their “commendations” in the context of her witty reworking of *querelle des femmes* leads us to read their tone as jestingly responding in kind.

While turning to examine a more recent critical tradition that posits public goals for The Tenth Muse, I want first to note how Bradstreet presents herself as contributing to significant contemporary political issues. She describes just one of her poems as private, her “Contemplations,” where she tells her children that this work is for them and she does not here write “to set forth myself.” This supposed turning from a public voice to a private one comments on her own perception of her earlier textual accomplishments, which not only “set forth” herself, but also her political views. Any claim to a private text is strikingly missing from her manuscript version of The Tenth Muse where she seems more concerned that readers might accuse her of plagiarism. My discussion of her public goals for her text contributes to an emerging recognition of her intellectual participation in the events and crises of her day on both sides of the Atlantic, further defining Bradstreet’s poetic output as public conversation instead of private verse.

Critics are just beginning to acknowledge Bradstreet's public voice.¹³ In addition to Harvey, Wiseman has looked at how Bradstreet's poetry was co-opted by her male publishers in its English publication in order to contribute to the burgeoning Fifth Monarchist movement, which I discuss in more detail below. Two dissertations have argued for the public functions for Bradstreet's poetry. Elizabeth Ferszt, in her unpublished dissertation, argues that Bradstreet wrote her poetry for pedagogical purposes. Her main evidence for suggestion is that the quaternions are dated 1642, the same year that the Massachusetts Bay Colony voted to make families responsible for teaching basic literacy to their children. Ferszt argues that The Tenth Muse was a schoolbook and blames its stilted tone on its pedagogical purpose. Perhaps more usefully she contextualizes Bradstreet in a diverse colonial America by contrasting her more conventional "Bay Colony" tone with Roger Morton's rebellious Anglicanism and openness to Native American culture and with Roger Williams' extreme separatism from more moderate Puritan agendas. While Bradstreet could have used her poetry as a teaching text in a dame school, her prefatory announcement of her poetry as "obnoxious" does not obviously identify it as a school text. Additionally her dedication worries that her father might think that her poetry competes with his earlier quaternions or that she has plagiarized Du Bartas. Neither of these concerns would be relevant to a school text, especially since imitation was a pedagogical virtue, not a fault.

¹³ Robert Arner's 1976 article departs from the critical consensus of his time by treating The Tenth Muse as having some structural integrity, rather than as a random collection of poetry from which critics can extract quotations and poems as needed. I will discuss his work below, but in the meantime would like to note that he is an early lone voice in his resulting discussion of Bradstreet's work as political.

A second dissertation, Charlotte Gordon's Incarnate Geography, argues for Bradstreet's original contributions to a New English poetic identity that became a more significant heritage for American literature than has been recognized: "The claim that there is a distinctive New England point of view that emerges during the seventeenth century must be reconsidered in order to include one of the contemporary and central proponents of this idea, Anne Bradstreet" (9). Gordon also discusses Bradstreet's poetry as forging a new transatlantic identity, claiming a Puritan mission in New England that negotiates the distance between Old England and New. Gordon argues for the influence of Robert Filmer's theories of male leadership on Puritan culture. Filmer's theories advocated women's participation in public arenas as long as they remained subordinate to male guidance (a view that Bradstreet endorses in "The Prologue," where she reassures her readers that "men have precedency.")¹⁴ The Bradstreet she describes is far different from the private household poet eulogized by twentieth-century literary critics. Instead Gordon depicts a "devout Puritan who knew many of the most powerful ministers of the colony" and was "steeped in the doctrinal debates of her time. Her father and husband were deeply engaged with the ministers in the process of building a

¹⁴ Robert Filmer (1588-1653) published Anarchy of a Limited and Mixed Monarchy (1648) and Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings (1680, but circulated in manuscript during the English Revolution), treatises that asserted Biblical male headship of the family and conflated that model with political theory to justify the divine right of kings. Gordon argues that women's roles had more breadth under this theoretical paradigm since women were not forbidden from public action, only required to act under male authority. She further argues that women's roles became more conservative in the eighteenth century once this model became outdated.

godly community. She herself was concerned with the building of a godly government through the business of building a godly family” (128).

Bradstreet, Gordon argues, develops a New England identity, one geared specifically to correcting the wrongs of Old England and grounded in the reforming ideals of her faith. As the daughter of one governor and wife to a man so active in shaping his community that he would also become governor (although after her death), she engaged in a public discourse that sought to define the Massachusetts Bay Colony venture. Gordon argues that Bradstreet’s poetry tries to establish a specifically American tradition of poetic agency.

Bradstreet Writing *The Tenth Muse* for the Public Sphere

Building on earlier arguments for Bradstreet’s public voice, I argue that The Tenth Muse offers political models for her father’s involvement in the colonial government¹⁵ as well as critique of an English motherland. The American colonies, especially those in Massachusetts, were created with a sense of critique of their homeland. Max Sugar records how the twelve charter members of Bradstreet’s emigration group met secretly in 1629 and decided they would be self-governed, “defended by rulers ‘which should be ourselves’” (6), rather than choosing a royal charter.¹⁶ Bradstreet’s poetry continues this sense of commentary and revision. With the advantage of distance and a culture of

¹⁵ Dudley was governor for four two year terms from 1635-1653 and served as deputy governor during the alternate years.

¹⁶ In contrast to Virginia’s colonies, which had royal charters, meaning they were governed from London (Sugar 6).

dissent, she criticized English society to a degree unimagined by her English writing women contemporaries. That critique was exported to England for the use of Puritan factions there. The most obvious examples in The Tenth Muse are her “A Dialogue between Old England and New, concerning their present troubles” and “The Four Monarchies,” which I discuss in this section. I also look at Bradstreet’s criticism of Old England, at how her book was co-opted in its 1650 London edition as a voice in the growing Fifth Monarchist movement in England, and at how her poetry imagines an ideal theocratic state. I discuss how Bradstreet’s manuscript publication had a New England readership which functioned as a colonial version of English literary coteries.

Like her poetic male forebears, Bradstreet writes history in order to give covert but public direction to reigning political dogma. She offers moral interpretations on political subjects, directing her most political poem to a figurative “Old England” and correcting her home country. From the safety of an insular Puritan community (comparatively so¹⁷), she writes more boldly than her contemporaries across the Atlantic. Bradstreet dedicates her work to the most powerful ruler in her community; because that ruler happens to be her father, her poetry seems to be already aiming at the familial function that she seems to perfect later. But in fact, her manuscript

¹⁷ Both dispute and diversity also existed within that community. Nicolay notes the diversity of early Puritan culture: “the Puritan immigrants brought with them many ungodly folk who were tolerated because of the settlers’ need for help in pushing back the frontier and building towns in its place. In addition, there were many dissenters among the New World Protestants” (15). She refers to Phillip Gura’s A Glimpse of Sion’s Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1984) in her discussion of the diversity of New England Puritanism. But the colony had enough doctrinal freedom from the Church of England that its disagreements were often within the context of agreed Puritan theological tenets.

publication of her poems to her father is an entry into the public discourse of the colony. A male poet's dedication to the governor of the colonial settlement would have suggested a public purpose. Since the governor is Bradstreet's father, that dedication has been read *only* as dutiful homage. When we read Bradstreet this way, the demands she makes on a father reputed to be stern and inflexible are striking (White 5; Ellis lv). While he serves an authorizing function as her father and colonial magistrate, as dedicatee he receives a treatise on leadership. Combining history and scientific theory, while rejecting romance, Bradstreet designs a work that portrays an ideal governor as merciful, truthful, crafty, and just.

Despite her own prefatory claims that she should not write about politics and history, her poems are recommendations on how to govern. She seems to say she will not write on political topics, saying they are "for my mean Pen, are too superiour things" [sig. B2]. She then tells a narrative of not being able to help herself from writing after reading Du Bartas, consoling the reader that "A *Bartas* can, doe what a *Bartas* wil, / But simple I, according to my skill" [sig. B2]. Bradstreet writes a poetic lineage for her authorship where Sidney and Du Bartas are her forebears, further evidence of her intention to use her poetry for similar public purposes (while also correcting the faults of her predecessors).

Bradstreet roots her poetry in the political crises and literary traditions of England and repeatedly contextualizes The Tenth Muse within a world of public poetry. To accomplish this, she displays a showy deference to male poets while inserting her

poetry into their tradition of using a poetic voice for political comment. In her 1650 publication, the poems look home to an earlier generation of English poetry and to contemporary English politics, and also forward to the Puritan commonwealth. Her family's move to New England was not an obvious or easy one for her, as she recorded in a manuscript book written for her children to read after her death: "After a short time I changed my Condition & was married, and came into this Country, where I found a new World and new manners at wch my heart rose, But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it & joined to the chh., at Boston" (Complete Works 216). Yet Bradstreet still likely considered herself an Englishwoman when writing this early poetry. Massachusetts settlers retained their sense of English identity in the late 1630s and throughout the 1640s (Siminoff 34), and many Puritans returned to England to fight in the civil wars (Sugar 7). Gordon argues that The Tenth Muse belongs in the tradition of seventeenth-century English poetry—Bradstreet's "use of traditional genres, as well as her generic innovations, stem in large part from her concerns over her relationship to the genealogy of English literary figures" (216)—and that not until her later work does she depart from that tradition in order to create a new American kind of poetry. Certainly The Tenth Muse corrects the corruptions of her old home as well as instructing her new home. Her sometimes focus on Old England is a constant reminder that New England exists because of the failures of the English Church to stay true to a Protestantism that Bradstreet traces back to the Reformation of Edward IV and Elizabeth I.

In calling her poetic persona “New England,” she claims an authority and a sense of revision. It is also seen in her “Prologue,” where she writes with a sense of detachment and irony about Old England’s views of feminine value in the context of the *querelle des femmes* debate. She can afford that revisionary tone because she published her book as a manuscript edition in New England for a local audience who understood her frames of reference. Leaving England had meant losing home comforts, but it also translated into the freedom to explore the full implications of her theology as one that fully includes the female subject as a person seeking evidence of God’s grace and election.

Old England’s failure is a spiritual one, as Bradstreet’s allegorical version admits in her dramatic dialogue with her daughter, New England: “ile shew the cause, / Which are my Sins, the breach of sacred Lawes.” She then contextualizes her failures within the ongoing conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism: instead of punishing drunkenness and keeping the Sabbath, England has embraced idolatry, “foolish superstitious adoration,” and the Pope. Bradstreet has Old England sum up these sins as “the Gospel is trod down, and hath no right.” The gospel as an interpretive key to Old England’s woes surfaces twice more in the dialogue and becomes the key to national redemption. Old England says, while recounting the history of the first civil war: “This [executions of Strafford and Laud] done, an Act they would have passed fain, / No prelate should his Bishoprick retain; / Here tugg’d they hard indeed, for all men saw, / This must be done by Gospel, not by law.” The gospel here is opposed to the law, which

in this context refers to the Old Testament dispensation versus the New Testament covenant of grace, “the gospel.” Further in the poem, Old England again uses the term when describing her current crisis: “Religion, Gospell, here lies at the stake, / Pray now dear child, for sacred Zion’s sake.” Using gospel as an appositive for religion specifies a particularly Puritan view of their interpretation of the faith. The OED defines one common seventeenth-century use of the “gospel” as indicating Puritan opposition to Catholic or Church of England misinterpretations: “identified by Protestants with their own system of belief, as opposed to the perversions of Christianity imputed by them to their adversaries; also applied by Puritans and modern Evangelicals to the doctrine of salvation solely through trust in the merit of Christ's sacrifice.” Dallying with false gospels is the crux of England’s problems, and without properly understanding and accepting her error, she remains in peril.

While Old England can diagnose her illness, she needs New England to prescribe the cure, which the daughter enthusiastically does by praising the current banishment of “popery” from the English Church. She hopes it will be replaced by a new crusade to the Turks and paints a vision of the possibilities for an English rebirth:

Jew and Gentile, to one worship go,
 Then follows dayes of happinesse and rest,
 Whose lot doeth fall to live therein is blest:
 No Canaanite shall then be found ith’land,
 And holinesse, on horses bells shall stand. [sig. N8]

In order for this vision of the Fifth Kingdom to prevail (and expand fully enough to produce even equine sanctity), Old England must let “Parliament, prevail, / And in a while you’ll tell another tale” [sig. N8]. Critics have largely missed how Bradstreet positions herself as a public voice in “A Dialogue” and the calm and authoritative voice which she adopts while offering prescriptions for good government in England. Her poetry in The Tenth Muse has been condemned for its dullness and lack of skill; critics have argued that it is a practice poem where she imitates male writers instead of finding her true feminine voice. But these critiques of Bradstreet miss her astonishing advice to the new governors of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and to England.

Later readers may have missed (or dismissed) the political tone of Bradstreet’s early work, but her first readers did not and in fact co-opted it for their own purposes when publishing The Tenth Muse in England. The most useful poem for English Fifth Monarchists was “The Four Monarchies,” her longest poem; its 110 pages span over one third of the original quarto. Ferzst argues that this “quaternion was probably in its day the most culturally significant piece in that collection. Indeed, it would be hard to overestimate the importance of this long iambic poem, stuffed full of direct and oblique allusions to the very nature of monarchy, as well as to the situation of the English monarchy, to the issues of royal succession, legitimate and otherwise” (59). Unlike many literary critics, early readers, including her brother-in-law, who took the book to England, and Nathaniel Ward, whose stationer printed it, seized upon the book’s

potential political uses in England as well as the authority they could construct for her New England voice.

“The Four Monarchies” consists of an extended series of ‘cases in point’ of issues of leadership, listing examples of the corruption of absolute power and the meritorious accomplishments of the occasional wise ruler. As might be expected in the fallen world, Bradstreet finds few paragons of virtue, and most of “The Four Monarchies” is a litany of public leaders whose triumphs were won by various means, often nefarious. Evil rulers at times echo the England Bradstreet has left behind while virtuous kings exemplify how good government works. Bradstreet focuses on the record of their leadership, both what they accomplished and the morality of their methods. The list of monarchs shows them competing within her poem for acclaim, and she compares the gruesome values of notorious leaders with the calmer measures of their more just peers.

At times there are conscious echoes of the strife in England. For instance the story of Sardanapalus, last king in Ninus’ line in the Assyrian kingdom, offers some parallels to King Charles as a king who loses power, overthrown by people in need of leadership. While Sardanapalus’ court was more like the reputed hedonism of Charles II than the ordered and chaste court of Charles I, the story does allude to a contemporary perception of the king as over-involved in courtly entertainments and captivated by the Catholic queen. Another allusive story is in the “Persian Monarchy” where a King Artaxerxes Mnemon, Cyrus’ brother, “unto a country Village flyes, / And for a while

unkingly there he lyes; / At last, displayes his Ensigne on a Hil, / Hoping with that with that to make the *Greeks* stand stil" (sig. l1). Bradstreet offers a parliamentary version of the inconclusive Battle at Edgehill.

The most allusive passage is the interregnum following Cambyses' death (in the "Persian Monarchy"), and Bradstreet uses it to comment on the inherent problems of kingship. Cambyses' satraps meet to choose a king, and Bradstreet describes each as "Who like to Kings, rul'd Kingdomes as they pleased" [sig. G7]. Her parenthetical comment begins her narrative of a debate about how the Persians will get a new king (and not a tyrant like Cambyses). In the discussion on "what forme of Government now to erect" comes the suggestion that they turn to an oligarchy rather than a monarchy and ask to be "governed by an Aristocracy." Bradstreet's version of the consequent decision reinforces the parliamentary suspicion of Charles I's inner circle: "But others thought (none of the dullest braine,) / But better one, then many Tryants reigne" [sig. G7]. The king that emerges from this decision is Darius Hyslaspes, whose ensuing rule Bradstreet lifts up as exemplary. She notes that he "made wholesome gentle Laws" [sig. G8], rebuilt the Jewish temple, and fought with valor (though with a humiliating loss to Greece). She explains her lack of detail about the process of choosing a king with "What arguments they us'd, I know not well, / Too politicke (tis like) for me to tell" [sig. G7], backing away from her own story telling, an internal echo of her overly modest paratextual self-presentation.

The moment presciently describes 1650 England, and Woodbridge's publication of it in England was a deliberate attempt to use an outside voice from New England to criticize the English political situation, post-regicide and pre-Lord Protector (Cromwell took the post in 1653). Wiseman's recent work on Bradstreet supplies one of the first critical examinations of Bradstreet's book as an English publishing event. Wiseman tracks the identities of the men who produced Bradstreet's book and argues that they were connected with the emerging Fifth Monarchist movement. In The Tenth Muse, they found a voice to add to their polemical clamor:

When Bradstreet's poems travelled to England in 1647, the issue of the nature of tyranny was of urgent significance, and by the time they were published England was a republic, with a reading public highly alert to the contemporary significance of arresting the four monarchies at a moment when the temporary defeat of monarchy might seem to prefigure the present English crisis. (195)

Wiseman's allusion to Bradstreet's arrested fourth monarchy refers to the poet's halt in her history when it is time to describe the fourth monarchy. While Bradstreet does finish her history of the Grecian monarchy, she does it briefly and ambivalently, which Wiseman sees as indicating the poet's own theological qualms about where her narrative is leading in terms of the contemporary English crisis.

The Fifth Monarchist movement emerged from reading the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel and his visions of four earthly kingdoms and their failures. Early

modern interpretations of Daniel's vision aligned the stories of great earthly kingdoms that fail with the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires.¹⁸ After recounting the disastrous ends of each throne, Daniel envisions God eradicating earthly corruption:

behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days . . . and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (7: 13-14)

This passage had long been read as corroborating the prophecies of the end of the earth and beginnings of God's eternal kingdom recounted in the Book of Revelation. During the civil wars and especially the Interregnum, some Puritan theologians began to read the English Revolution and the fall of Charles I as indicating that the Fifth Monarchy was at hand. Wiseman's research reveals how Ward and Woodbridge were involved with these groups and how they produced Bradstreet's printed work as a contribution to these eschatological discussions (199-209). Bradstreet's poetry was co-opted for Interregnum political purposes, which makes clear, as Wiseman says, that The Tenth Muse was "considered politicized poetry" (207).

"The Four Monarchies" lists exemplary rulers and contrasts them with the spectacular moral failures of corrupt kingship, which highlights Bradstreet's political views, but it does not have a consistent narrative of kingship. No uniformity underlies

¹⁸ The prophet recounts his dream vision in Daniel 7: 2-14.

her narrative indicates how a king should rule. When, however, we look at the “Four Monarchies” in conversation with her quaternions, as Robert Arner has done, we find a structural continuity with its purposes as well as directions on how to interpret history and the kings who ruled. Bradstreet imagines the construction of New England’s government by analyzing history for examples of righteous kingdoms, the implication being that they are guides that the Massachusetts Bay Colony should follow.

Arner argues that Bradstreet structured her book as an instructional book on good government. He divides the book into three sections and contends that they build on each one’s themes and structure (in a “colonial baroque”) in order to conclude in the final poem, “Of the Vanity of All Worldly Creatures,” that “only Christ promises permanence” (62). Arner’s divisions accentuate the politics of her book. His first section, which includes her dedication to her father, “The Prologue,” and “The Quaternions,” has Bradstreet repeatedly characterizing her work as inferior to male accomplishments (48). Arner defines the second section as the most political with the long “The Four Monarchies” and “A Dialogue Between Old and New England”: “insofar as it is mostly an extended criticism of kings and political institutions men have invented, it suggests a questioning of the political acumen and simple human wisdom of a succession of male potentates” (48). In his last section, Arner groups the elegies and final two Biblically based poems together in a somewhat uncomfortable fit, since they do not offer a tidy answer to the preceding political section. Bradstreet’s quiescent theological conclusion belies the intense considerations she has earlier given matters of state and governing.

Arner's divisions are a helpful reminder to read The Tenth Muse as coming from a manuscript book that Bradstreet herself ordered in a presentation copy to her father and reminds the reader that Woodbridge defended his surreptitious printing of her poetry by saying that he sought to preserve Bradstreet's manuscript book.

Even though the structure is not quite as neat as Arner frames it, he correctly identifies her central poetic conflict as the consistent weighing of the worldly cares of state against the eternal concerns of the soul. It is within those spiritual concerns that Bradstreet elucidates her prescription for a successful theocracy. The poems immediately following Bradstreet's dedication and prologue, her "four; and four, now meanly clad / To do their homage unto yours most glad," contain a portrait of the good governor, especially in the first two quaternions. The portrait is not a list of good qualities but analogies of gospel ideas of governing. In the poems on the four elements, humors, ages, and seasons, the defining quality of a good ruler is a wisdom that brings about consensus and unity rather than governing by mere force. "The Four Humours" is preoccupied with definition of a true soldier, a militant metaphor that fit with Puritan hopes to carve out a new life for their faith in New England. A careful reading of the "The Four Humours" reveals it ignores issues of gender entirely. Rather it is a dramatic meditation on the temptations of power and a response to the conflicts in both England and New England.

It is worth pausing to note that while English political conflict figures loudly in Bradstreet's poems, her immediate context lies in the intense conflicts in colonial

government. They are the background for the staged debates of the first quaternions.

Mary Clare Carruth argues that the contemporary condemnation and exile of Anne Hutchinson from the Puritan communities in America is vital to Bradstreet's poetry (75-81), and Reid discusses Bradstreet's and Hutchinson's contrasting experience of public discourse (517-19).¹⁹ Wiseman also notes how "the governors of the New England colony, of which Dudley [Bradstreet's father] was one, saw it as overrun by uncontrollable, protean, religious, political and social movements and debates whose purchase spanned the old world and the new" (187). While Bradstreet never mentions the internal tensions and discords of the colony,²⁰ she offers solutions to them. Bradstreet does not write for a docile or uniform community, and consequently her debate poems are not as hypothetical as they may seem. Her critiques and analyses of Old England's problems present New England as building a colonial commonwealth on the wreckage of the mother country.

The question that the Humors set out to solve has its source in multiple New Testament narratives where Jesus' disciples argue about who is the greatest among them. Bradstreet's humors share the same concern and the first three—Choler, Blood, and Melancholy—each present an extended case for her right to govern the other four. Their arguments list their own merits and contemptuously describe their competitors. The last humor, Flegme, offers humility as an entirely different approach to the

¹⁹ Also Mary A. McCay discusses the connection in "Anne Hutchinson and Anne Bradstreet: Two New England Women." *Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters*. 11.1 (1981): 2-21.

²⁰ Her silence on these issues is similar to her silence on the public tribulations of her sister, Sarah, who was ultimately disowned by their father and excommunicated for her heretical public speech.

competition. She lists the qualities that the others have proposed as necessary for a prince—bellicose militarism and craftiness—in order to admit that she does not have them; all she can offer is love and she promptly suggests that they abandon the debate: “Let’s now be friends, ‘tis time our spight was spent . . . / Unless we ‘gree all fals into confusion” [sig. D5]. She concludes:

Nor jars, nor scoffs, let none hereafter see,
 But all admire our perfect amity;
 Nor be discern’d, here’s water, earth, aire, fire,
 But here’s a compact body, whole, entire. [sig. D5]

Flegme’s proposal for unity succeeds in disarming the battle with the same answer that Christ had repeatedly offered his disciples: “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18: 3). Here Jesus responds to the disciples’ question “who is the greatest?” (Matthew 18: 1-5). This contrast between godly models of government and corrupt human versions repeats throughout the four gospels. The story of the disciples fighting about their own qualifications for greatness is the most similar to Bradstreet’s debate between the humors and is found, with the same answer, in Mark 9: 33-37.²¹ That

²¹ “And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.” Similar passages occur in Matthew 16: 21-28 and Matthew 23.

Bradstreet models her debate about greatness and leadership on a Biblical model does not prove that she hierarchized the feminine over the masculine; it does, however, provide an alternative paradigm for the theocratic mission of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which was often beset by strife and debate. Her intended audience for this poem is not a print market in England, but a growing colony in New England, which has the opportunity, as Bradstreet sees it, to remake entirely a broken system. Insofar as her audience extends beyond her father, she addresses her public, namely readers of manuscripts in New England.

Continuing a Poetic Tradition of a Public Voice

Like other early modern women writers, Bradstreet highlights her textual relationship to cultural icons in order to legitimize her own work; relating her poetry to authorizing male precedents, Sidney and Du Bartas, helps her enter into the public conversation. In this section I look at Bradstreet's descriptions of her poetic relationships to Sidney and Du Bartas. David Norbrook argues that the political literature of the English Revolution followed a tradition of poetry and romance from the sixteenth-century Reformation. Bradstreet followed not only the spiritual guidance of these two poets, but also their more worldly uses of poetry as vehicles of political protest.

Bradstreet uses Sidney's and Du Bartas' iconic status as an inarguably safe beginning place for developing her own poetic agency, but more importantly, she adopts their own political uses of poetry as authorization for her own political voice.

Along the way, her theology outgrows Sidney's, but she remains strongly influenced by Du Bartas, whose overtly religiously styled projects aligned more neatly with her own. Du Bartas and Sidney used poetry as a way to wield political pressure and to enter the public sphere from outside the circles of power. Bradstreet's response to their political stances, and reveals her recognition of the complications of their legacy for her own poetry. She writes herself into a conversation with the political aims of their texts while both admiring and admonishing them in her elegies. Bradstreet's responses to these Protestant poets and heroes of the faith show her seeking the benefit of authorship, public presence, rather than "authorship" in itself.

Bradstreet's elegies for Sidney and Du Bartas recount in complex detail her debts to them and, more allusively, her plans to surpass them. Two opposing aspects of Sidney's legend conflict throughout the poem: his courtly "poesy" and his heroics for the Protestant cause. She condemns the Arcadia, later offering it mild redemption: "a world of treasure, in that rubbish lye" [sig. O]. She redirects the reader to Sidney's real legacy, his battle on behalf of the Protestant cause. Her elegy for Du Bartas proffers more decisive praise and is more traditional in its trope of the elegist's inability to write a poem great enough to match and commemorate its subject. Nancy E. Wright argues that Bradstreet uses the elegy's epitaphs to establish her poetic authority (each elegy has a short epitaph praising, respectively, Sidney and Du Bartas). Wright has Bradstreet presenting her poetry as necessary to sustain the fame of Du Bartas and Sidney (251). While her actual elegies are complaints of the inadequacy of her poetic skill to

commemorate these poets properly, her added epitaphs concisely celebrate the poet and memorialize the lessons she would like remembered from their work. Her epitaphs are the very poetry that the preceding elegies, acting as prefaces, claim she is unable to write. The elegy, like paratext, simultaneously obfuscates the power of her text and demonstrates what a powerful text would look like, which then is found in the epitaph.

Bradstreet's perceptions of Sidney's and Du Bartas' poetry as political verse were grounded in Puritan valuations of the verse of the Protestant Reformation. Norbrook argues that seventeenth-century Puritans retained a memory of Edward VI's radical Protestantism as a six-year golden era for faith, a time that "established a conception of the function of poetry, and a canon of reforming poetry, which was to remain influential until the Civil War" (41). He connects Petrarch's influence over Wyatt and Surrey first to Petrarch's religious (anti-Papal) verse, explaining that later this "tradition became overshadowed in the Elizabethan period by more courtly poetic modes, but awareness of the older tradition was preserved, especially in Puritan circles" (41). Later Puritan thinkers found poetic forebears in Sidney and Spenser, whose literary works were formed as political documents as well as imaginative literature.

Norbrook continues this observation into his examination of the ways that later religious radicals clung to Spenser's poetry as informing their cause:

When The Shepheardes Calender was published the issues of ecclesiastical pride and luxury were newly controversial. A group of religious radicals had become impatient at the slow pace of reform under

the Protestant queen from whom they had hoped for so much, and had begun to turn the old anti-Catholic rhetoric against the Elizabethan hierarchy. The rhetoric of Spenser's ecclesiastical eclogues is at least superficially similar to the radicals' propaganda, and led many later Puritans to claim him as one of their own. (54)

He further argues that Spenser's views were more complex than those of his radical contemporaries, but that their readings of his poetry as sanctioning their cause had some basis in reality: "The political rhetoric of Spenser's ecclesiastical eclogues suggested to contemporaries that he was endorsing this tradition of low-church Protestantism, not nostalgic conservatism" (61). He concludes that "it would be misleading to suggest that all Elizabethan admirers of The Shepheardes Calender had Puritan sympathies: some readers were content to enjoy the poems' metrical and rhetorical virtuosity. But in moments of crisis, poets who saw themselves as defending the Protestant prophetic tradition would revive Spenser's pastoral rhetoric" (81).

Even more relevant to Bradstreet's poetic accomplishments are the ways that Sidney used poetry in the public sphere. Norbrook describes Sidney's work in poetry as more courtly than Spenser's uses of the prophetic mode; however, he still "produced a critique of irresponsible absolutism by means of a critique of courtly poetic forms" (83). For Puritan readers, including Bradstreet, Sidney's exile from court was evidence of his virtue and his death at Zutphen was his crowning glory, as Bradstreet proves in the most dramatic line in her elegy: "O Zutphon, Zutphon, that most fatall City, / Made famous by

thy fall, much more's the pitty" [sig. O]. Norbrook claims that it is "possible to trace a clear line of succession, both in intellectual and familial kinship, from Sidney and his circle down to the classical republicans of the Commonwealth in the 1650s—down to Sir Philip's great-nephew Algernon Sidney" (88).

As she is well aware, Bradstreet's choice of genre is at odds with her claim of Sidney as a mentor, and her exclusion of romance in favor of history shows a significant revision of his work. This revision is explicit in her elegy for Sidney, where she belittles his romance as "penned in his youth." She looks back to Elizabethan England as glorious time for the faith, especially in comparison with England under Charles I and a Catholic queen. Sidney was essential to that glory; however, she does not praise him because of his writing. Or rather she does, while at the same time censoring it. First she praises his rhetoric, logic, and eloquence: "of musick and poesie thou wert king" [sig. N8]. Then mentioning the Arcadia, she condemns it: "I praise thee not for this, it is unfit, / This was thy shame, O miracle of wit: / Yet doth thy shame (with all) purchase renown, / What doe thy virtues then?" [sig. O]. Bradstreet later supports her censure by reminding readers that Sidney also discounted the work:

Let then, none dis-allow of these my straines,
Which have the self-same blood yet in my veines;
Who honours thee for what was honourable,
But leaves the rest, as most unprofitable:
Thy wiser dayes, condemn'd thy witty works,

Who knows the spels that in thy Rethorick lurks? [sig. O]

Bradstreet instead would reclaim Sidney's reputation as a soldier, and specifically a Protestant soldier. She celebrates his martyrdom as "what was honourable," but nearly half the poem is consumed with condemning Sidney's romance. After a brief respite where she praises him as Zutphen's Achilles, she condemns him afresh, this time for his adulterous love for Stella. Later, when lamenting his death, she describes the concurrent tragedy as his heroic fighting and dying not being embalmed in epic: "I wish some Homer would / Engrave in Marble, with Characters of gold / The valiant feats thou didst on Flanders coast, / Which at this day fair Belgia may boast" [sig. O]. Bradstreet then presents herself as that great author engraving an epitaph.

Bradstreet's condemnations of romance continue throughout The Tenth Muse, and she ostentatiously omits stories that contain the faults of romance, namely being untrue and lascivious. For instance she suspects that the story of Thalestris, queen of Amazons, is apocryphal and so leaves it out, but not before drawing attention to the exclusion:

Thalestris Queen of th'Amazons now brought
 Her Train to Alexander, (as 'tis thought.)
 Though most of reading best and soundest mind,
 Such Country there, nor yet such people find.
 Then tell her errand, we had better spare
 To th'ignorant, her title will declare. (143)

Bradstreet presents Thalestris and the possibility of hearing her story and then opts not to tell it because of its possible inaccuracies. She rejects romance for truth. She also highlights this exclusion by mentioning the Amazons' errand, and then daintily refusing to explain it. This tantalizing absence contrasts with similar moments in romance where such a story becomes a moment for the reader to view the forbidden. Sidney lets his readers share Pyrocles' view of Philoclea bathing in the river and so stealthily introduces a moment of visual pleasure framed by a *pro forma* narratorial scolding. Bradstreet refuses to do this and so we do not get to read that imagined scene of one hundred Amazons presenting themselves to Alexander the Great as willing mothers to his children. The absence points to her major revision of Sidney, the substitution of history for romance.

William Bouwsma's The Waning of the Renaissance (2002) describes the uses of history as changing in the seventeenth century and cites the perception of Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World as quaint and outdated by the 1640s because the goals and methods of historical study had changed (62). Bradstreet, while basing much of her information on Raleigh's History,²² constantly questions the truth of its stories. Her reading of Queen Semiramis emblemizes her reading and questioning of history. She had queried the veracity of her sources even in her reports on the earlier male Assyrian monarchs, but in the case of reading a queen's history, Bradstreet is even more aware of how Semiramis has been subject to a different kind of reading by historians. Early in

²² Harvard Ellis quotes the passages from Raleigh's prose history that seem to correlate with Bradstreet's poetic versions (xlili-xlix).

her reading she interrogates the veracity of the queen's reported valor and vice. She points out differing stories of Semiramis' biography and scatters her own doubtful assessments of the very story she tells: "others report" . . . "they feign" . . . "Sure from this fiction" . . . "Some think the *Greeks*, this slander on her cast" (55).

Epitome is the second genre that intersects both with Bradstreet's critique of romance and the influence of another male poet, Du Bartas. This condensing of longer poems and histories into epitomes became an extremely popular form in the seventeenth century. Her title page declares her longest poem "an Exact Epitomie of the Four Monarchies," and she makes the same claim within the poem: "In this Epitomy, too long to tell / How neatly *Eumenes* did here excel" [sig. L7], signifying that while "The Four Monarchies" is her longest poem, it accomplishes the goals of an even longer genre, epic.²³ Bradstreet's anxiety about Du Bartas' influence over her poetry is in part due to her own work epitomizing his epic goals, though she separates her history from his work. She writes to her father how she fears he will think her work too derivative: "one *Bartas* was my friend, / I honour him, but dare not wear his wealth, / My goods are true (though poor) I love no stealth" [sig. B2]. Unlike in the case of Sidney, whose Protestant political goals she shares but whose courtly literature she rejects, she comes closer to Du Bartas in literary form as well as religion.

In conclusion I would like to think about the very beginning of Bradstreet's book, the title page of The Tenth Muse, which announced her authorship as a novelty on two

²³ I discuss how seventeenth-century epitome tried to adapt the historical goals of epic in my earlier chapter on Judith Man.

fronts: the woman author as well as the writer “sprung up” from “New” England. The title page presents several possibilities for reading Bradstreet. She speaks from the still exotic colonial outpost, and the distance commands attention to her views on the “recent troubles” of Old England. At the same time her status as “gentlewoman of those parts” is juxtaposed with her poetry that is “full of delight.” Remembering that title pages were also advertisements plastered on doorways offers another visual view of Bradstreet, who in this paratext becomes a voice so public that her authority to speak to issues of state is signposted all over London.

Chapter Four: Transmigration as a Political Discourse in
 Anna Weamys' A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia

Anna Weamys' A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia (1651) emerged from a subculture of disenfranchised royalists navigating a new political way through the aftermath of the king's death. In a culture where resurrection was foundational to religious belief—both in Christ's resurrection and the theology of the resurrection of the saints on Judgment Day—Weamys' paratextual authors insert a version of resurrection into her book, which itself is a continuation of another resurrection story (King Basilius' waking up from the appearance of death). Writing an apolitical continuation of Arcadia in the two years following the regicide would have been an extraordinary separation from a culture that kept reinvesting Sidney into the current political moment. Yet Nigel Smith expresses astonishment at Weamys' apolitical narrative, remarking that “it was still possible to read Sidney in a non-politicised way” and Weamys' Arcadia is an “entirely unpoliticised wrapping-up of Sidney's more richly suggestive material” (236). In fact Weamys' book presents a moment when elegy was turning into a more pragmatic and yet still political response. Her paratextual authors, who were in various positions of compromise with Parliament, highlight her romance as an echo of an ideal past while at the same time trying to construct a political present within their commendatory poems.

Weamys' authorship is subsumed by Sidney's as these authors look backwards to find value in the present, and they devalue women's authorship in the process of adopting her text for their purposes, namely constructing a workable political moment.

Weamys' printed book includes elaborate prefatory materials—a dedication by Weamys, a letter from the stationer to the reader, and five commendatory poems—that stage seven readings of Weamys' romance in the shadow of the deposed and executed king. Men prefacing her Arcadia nostalgically glorify her text as a continuation of Sidney's authorship, repeatedly marking his role in her text by calling it her "additional" and employing a rhetoric of textual spirit to identify his presence. In particular four out of six of her prefacers characterize her work as the voice of Sidney "transmigrated" into a woman's text. The repetition of a resurrection metaphor ("metempsychosis") in separately authored prefatory texts underscores anxiety about women's authorship and signals royalist political longings. Sidney's role as a cultural locus for those longings shows the uses of his name and Arcadia as a literary brand in a similar dynamic as seen in popular uses of Barclay's Argenis. Whereas Barclay became a symbol of defending the prerogatives of the king, Sidney was a 1650s' icon of a lost social order and an imagined Elizabethan past that seemed a receding oasis of political stability.

Weamys' text enters this public sphere as royalist factions were emerging from the shock of the finality of regicide. Unlike Man and Du Verger, Weamys does not write from the midst of the battle, but in the aftermath of defeat. Consequently her text does not present itself as a weapon in the war for political power. The moderate royalists, who engineer her paratext, had all made their own diffident compromises with parliamentary authority. Weamys' Arcadia is then not separate from her political situation, as Smith argues; rather elegy combines with transmigration, and the resulting

nostalgic political discourse boomerangs between the culture that has been lost and the political opportunities of the present.

I begin this chapter by exploring the cultural legacy of Sidney that Weamys inherits and the increasingly embattled Sidneian symbolism of the English Revolution, especially following the king's execution. I discuss an emerging literary trope figured by transmigration as revealing an underlying discourse of longing and an urge to move beyond regicide into the new political present. I then examine how individual items of front matter model various methods of reading Weamys that ignore her authorship in order to celebrate the return of Sidney. Finally I demonstrate how Weamys upsets these models of reading a woman's text by revising readers' very notions of what constitutes a text within her Arcadia. When Weamys writes her continuation, she writes in homage to a lost culture and yet she also inserts revisions into it that advocate for the rights of a sub-aristocratic class and for women's voices. In her dedication Weamys both summarizes her finished book and signals how she wants her readers to encounter this book, namely, as a feminine text, which she represents as a fabric. She rescues her Arcadia from Sidney's overbearing presence by showing the death of Philisides in her narrative and representing women's authorship as public, revered, and compelling.

History of the Book

When Weamys responds to Sidney's challenge to "some other spirit" to finish his stories, she finishes and recreates the most famous and revered English prose romance of the sixteenth century. Her very attempt signifies the beginnings of a literary culture

that now had room for a woman to adapt a courtly text into a political discourse representing sub-aristocratic interests rather than just the concerns of an elite class. Weamys is the third woman (after Mary Sidney and Mary Wroth) to continue Sidney's texts, but she is the only sub-aristocratic woman to do so. Sidney had invited women readers into his romance—he had offered it to his sister's coterie for reading—and it remained popular with women readers until the mid eighteenth century.¹ The women to whom he offered the Arcadia were privileged readers, not the daughters of disenfranchised clergy (as Weamys was). Sidney had also invited readers to finish his romance, but although women had broached the task before Weamys, she is the first woman without empowering family and social connections to respond to his invitation. Sidney listed eight narratives that remain undone:

But the solemnities of these marriages, with the Arcadian pastorals, full of many comical adventures happening to those rural lovers; the strange stories of Artaxia and Plexirtus, Erona and Plangus, Helen and Amphialus, with the wonderful chances that befell them; the shepherdish loves of Menalcas with Kalodulus' daughter; the poor hopes of the poor Philisides in the pursuit of his affections; the strange continuance of Claius' and Strephon's desire; lastly, the son of Pyrocles, named Pyrophilus, and Melidora, the fair daughter of Pamela by Musidorus (who even at their birth entered into admirable

¹ Caroline Lucas in Writing for Women contrasts positive depictions of women reading Arcadia with attacks on the romance as a tempting distraction from work or better reading (118-121).

fortunes) may awake some other spirit to exercise his pen in that
 wherewith mine is already dulled. (847-48)

Weamys finishes five of Sidney's unfinished narrative strands: three couples enter into companionate marriages (Erona and Plangus, Helena and Amphialus, Urania and Strephon), Mopsa finishes her story, and Sidney's main characters—Pamela and Musidorus, Philoclea and Pyrocles—celebrate their weddings.

Her book participates in an early modern genre of "Sidneian texts." In the seventy years between his death and Weamys' Arcadia, various continuations of Sidney's work were produced, including elegies for Sidney produced by both courtly and university circles, adaptations of stories from the Arcadia, and supplements and continuations to his unfinished works. The types of Sidneian texts that most clearly relate to Weamys' Arcadia are the adaptations, supplements, and continuations of his unfinished plot. Once the New Arcadia appeared in 1593, various authors cautiously added text to it, taking permission from Sidney's own parting injunction. William Alexander's supplement bridging the narrative gaps between the Old Arcadia and Sidney's unfinished revision began appearing in some of the later issues of the 1613 edition, and in 1638 another supplement by James Johnstoun was printed. Other supplementary texts include: Richard Beling's 1638 Sixth Book of the Arcadia; Gervase Markham's two volumes of The English Arcadia (1607 and 1612); Lady Mary Wroth's The Countesse of Montgomerie's Urania (1621); Frances Quarles's Argalus and Parthenia (1629); and his

son, John Quarles's prose version of his father's work, A Continuation of the History of Argalus and Parthenia (1659).

Weamys' known biography consists of contextual information gleaned almost entirely from her book. To summarize Patrick Cullen's brief biography: she was young when she wrote her book and her father arranged the publication of the volume. Cullen's research reveals a Dr. Weamys who lost his church position under Parliament and who is most likely her father. The family fits in with the displaced but moderate royalists who write her prefatory materials. Contributors to her prefatory materials—James Howell, Frances Vaughan, Henry Pierrepont, Marquess—had all lost personal fortunes and political power during the civil wars and each had achieved a level of compromise with the new government. What is known of her identity, combined with the personal histories of those contributing to her prefatory materials, shows her involvement with a group of recovering royalists trying to make sense of Parliament's successful rebellion, one that did not fit with the romance narratives that had defined courtly politics.

Her romance appeared when popular opinion was beginning to turn against the Puritan Government; three bloody civil wars, economic hardship, and a dead king darkened the triumph of Parliament's rule and army power. David Underdown describes the 1650s' zeitgeist as "the belief that a return to the old order would bring relief from the fiscal and cultural oppressions of the centralizing Puritan state. Only monarchy, it seemed, would guarantee the survival of local liberties and customs, would restore the

traditional order of community and good neighbourhood” (270). Weamys’ book participates in a reimagining of English politics, one where monarchy works for all society, including women.

Sidney as a Cultural Context

During the civil wars and the ensuing commonwealth rule, the Sidney legend was an infinitely adaptable commonplace used by both royalists and parliamentarians. In this section, I examine how, for discouraged royalists who had been forced into a position of compromise, the Sidney legend represented both lost power and plans for regaining it by sowing discontent with the Parliamentary regime. Sidney’s name had so many associations—courtier, poet, soldier—that opposing causes adopted it for their own purposes, as the following two Interregnum examples show. In a 1649 collection of elegies (including poems by Marvell and Dryden) commemorating the death of the 18 year-old Henry Hastings,² his grandfather Thomas Pestel mourns his death as a loss for all England: “*But O Sydneian! O Blood-Royal Fate! / Great Britain’s curse whose sinful, shameful State / Makes all Heroic Virtue soon decay*” [sig B6].³ In Hastings’ death, England loses a possible rebirth from its current political decay; Hastings might have been the man “wherein th’Almighty’s hand / would cast new Nobles, and restore the

² Hastings died of smallpox on 20 June, 1649, and was the only male heir to Ferdinando, Earl of Huntingdon.

³ Lachrymae Musarum: The Tears of the Muses: Expressed in Elegies: Written by diverse persons of Nobility and Worth, Upon the death of the most hopeful, Henry Lord Hastings etc. London, Printed by Tho. Newcomb. 1649. The collection was so popular that a second edition was published in 1650. In the same collection, Dryden employs the metempsychosis trope to signal that England cannot regain Hastings, but his virgin-widow can wed his soul and so “bring thou forth/Th’Idea’s of his Virtue Knowledge, Worth; Transcribe th’Original in new Copies” (92).

land" [sig. B6], just as Sidney might have been a powerful statesman if his life had not been similarly cut short. John McWilliams surmises, by examining the wide range of contributors, that the extreme mourning for Hastings was more for the recent regicide and the fading royalist cause than for the unaccomplished Hastings, whose "death came to represent the royalist war dead and, more widely, was emblematic of a court culture that seemed to be on the verge of extinction" (274). Pestel's elegy promotes romance tropes of royal blood; in this reading, Sidney symbolizes a lost old order, one where royal birth promised heroic virtue and sovereignty.

One year later the publication (as discussed in the previous chapter) of Anne Bradstreet's The Tenth Muse (1650) glorifies Sidney's red-blooded Protestantism at Zutphen as a forerunner of the Puritan fight against Catholicism: "O brave Achilles! I wish some Homer would / Engrave on Marble, in characters of Gold, / What famous feats thou didst, On *Flanders* Coast / Of which, this day, doth faire *Belgia* boast" [sig. O]. Earlier Bradstreet condemns Sidney's "witty works": "I praise thee not for this, [Arcadia] it is unfit, / This was thy shame, O miracle of wit: / Yet doth thy shame (with all) purchase renown, / What doe thy virtues then?" [sig. O]. Parliamentarians' adoption of Sidney to their cause found its precedent in his wrangling with Elizabeth I over the defense of Continental Protestantism. David Norbrook discusses Sidney's contact with radical Protestants as a matter of concern for Elizabeth. She was also aware of how Sidney wanted to limit monarchical power, making "sure that the monarchy did not step beyond the bounds traditionally allotted to it" (88). Sidney's renegade respect for the

demands of his faith beyond Elizabeth's more moderate agenda is exactly the aspect of his fame that appealed to the Puritans. The splintered and diverse anti-royalist factions of the civil wars all agreed on the dangers of Catholicism and had a unifying fear of it. They also suspected that Charles I's court was inured to seeing its own religious peril and perhaps had been already seduced by the queen's faith. For Bradstreet, Sidney's romance jeopardizes his sterner Protestant virtues.

In either case, Sidney remains a hero, but his accomplishments are re-ranked depending on the cause adopting him. In both cases, Sidney represents the illusion of a fictional stable government of Elizabethan England and becomes a key nostalgic phrase for disempowered royalists and defensive Puritans alike. This nostalgia on display is more than a trope of grief. In discussing how Stuart culture idealized Elizabeth I, John Watkins argues that that nostalgia is a "rhetorical invention that induces rather than reflects a perception of historical rupture" (4). Much of the looking back, whether to Elizabeth, Barclay, or Sidney, during the English Revolution was a search for future political change. Bradstreet says of Elizabeth's rule: "Was ever people better ruled then hers? / Was ever Land more happy, freed from stirs?" [sig. O5], creating a greater division between Tudor and Stuart reigns than may have been historically accurate. In the political wreckage of the 1650s, Sidney was a contested figure; the battle for the Sidney brand was a battle for England's political landscape.

As seen above, both parliamentarians and royalists invoked Sidney, romance, and various qualities of the Elizabethan era in their propaganda. Entering this Sidneian

debate in 1651, Weamys celebrates his prose romance rather than his martyrdom for a Protestant cause, recapturing Sidney and memories of Elizabethan England for the royalists from texts like Bradstreet's recent elegy. The prefatory materials to Weamys' book present it as primarily a tribute to Sidney's legacy, emphasizing her Continuation rather than her Arcadia. In the printed book readers first encounter invocations to Sidney as its true author before entering into Weamys' narrative. As the author of the first English Arcadia as well as an embattled contemporary icon, Sidney's reputation both markets Weamys' book and attempts to fix Sidney politically; while both sides and various others used Sidney for their political needs, the royalists now claimed a special affiliation with his Arcadia and its resurrected king, seeing it as the enabling ancestor for their increasingly political uses of prose romance.

This battle for the Sidney legacy was an intensifying of a debate that began soon after his death. In Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and Creation of the Sidney Legend (1986), Dominic Baker-Smith documents Sidney's literary popularity until 1640, showing how even early university volumes probably served a political function, as well as celebrating Sidney's life (Dorsten 90-91). His postmortem popularity began immediately, when several volumes of elegies quickly appeared after his funeral. Four Latin university volumes were published in 1587, which focused on Sidney's heroism in battle and his political negotiations (Dorsten 89). Another four non-academic volumes, containing long elegies by single authors and also published in 1587, celebrated Sidney's reputation more as a soldier than as a poet (Woudhuysen 254). Sidney was especially celebrated as

a “symbol of the age” (Colaianne and Godshalk ix). These early poems contain a tone of inadequacy, the elegist’s conventional pose of insecurity about portraying the courtier hero who famously produced his own texts with a display of *sprezzatura*. George Whetstone, in his dedication to Lord Lisle, apologizes that his elegy cannot show “the life & grace, which shined in his [Sidney’s] actions” [sig. A3]. John Dickenson’s Arisbas (1594) epitomizes this genre, invoking “Sweet Astrophil the solace of my pen, / Wonder of worth, and Peere of peerelesse men” in his prefatory epistle [sig. Aiv].⁴

The most important change in Sidney’s fame occurred in the decade following his death, when his reputation as a poet superseded his military fame. Raphael Falco shows that by 1600, the elegies began to celebrate his poetic achievements rather than his patronage of poets or military reputation.⁵ Seeing this canonization as a move to establish a “national literature” (2), Falco argues that the new focus “indicates a change in the attitudes of Elizabethan poets toward their own literary genealogy” (1). Spenser’s Astrophel, containing Mary Sidney’s “The Doleful Lay of Clorinda,” marks a new phase in Sidney’s fame in 1595. The tone of elegiac loss and the contrast of the inadequate present with the glorious lost past became a staple in Sidney’s allusions, whether commemorating his statesmanship, his courtly *sprezzatura*, his Protestant militancy or his poetry. This longing for the past becomes the basis of a series of Sidneian resurrections, all commenting on the contemporary political disruption.

⁴ Victor Skretkowitz lists many of the texts influenced by Sidney’s text (xliii–liii).

⁵ Gyorgy E. Szonyi discusses the failed attempts of Sidney and his early biographers to de-emphasize his secular poetry over his other diplomatic accomplishments (457).

Sidney's fame spread beyond university and courtly circles; after the spectacular public funeral rites, other social classes participated in his quickly established legend. Lori Humphrey Newcomb discusses the history of servant readers, especially women, who were drawn to romances (125-28). In 1624 the merchant tailor guild built their annual pageant around Sidney's reputation as a poet and a courtier. John Webster wrote the text of their Monuments of Honor, which features Sidney as a spokesperson for the "five famous Schollers and Poets of this our Kingdome, as Sir Jeffery Chaucer, the learned Gower, the excellent John Lydgate, the sharp witted Sr. Thomas More, and last as worthy both Soldier and Scholar, Sir Philip Sidney" [sig. B]. Webster praises poets for their ability to "eternize brave acts by their pen": "These beyond death a fame to Monarckes give, / And these make Cities and Societies live" [sig. B2]. The value of poetry is its ability to retail greatness "beyond death," a version of the attitude that inspires the later eulogies to Sidney's spirit. In the preface to the reader, they claim that their pageant's real relevance lies in Sidney's stamp and otherwise their poetry would be mere presumption, unworthy of notice. They further claim that the value of poetry is its celebration of truly great matters, that is, matters of state. As the pageant's character of Sidney declares: "To Honor by our Wrightings worthy men, / Flowes as a duty from a judging pen" [sig. B2]. Alongside the tradition of Sidney's influence on courtly and coterie literature is his name's symbolic cachet for lower classes as representing the greatness of England. This strain of the Sidney legend is the one that is under contention in the English Revolution.

Evocations of Sidney's spirit developed as a way of trying to import that idealized past into a corrupt present. Foreshadowing the later transmigration metaphors, Mary Sidney began the rhetoric of continuation as a textual resurrection of her brother's spirit when she completed translating his Psalms.⁶ In her dedicatory poem attached to the manuscript edition of their Psalms, "To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip Sidney," she describes the impertinence of finishing his Psalms—"Pardon (oh blest soul) presumption too too bold" (l. 25)—and yet justifies it by the possibility that in these Psalms, his spirit will live again—be resurrected—in her continuation of his unfinished task. This fear of presumption being vindicated by a mystical presence of Sidney's spirit initiates a pattern of reference for Sidneian texts and becomes a prefatory commonplace in commendatory poems for writers continuing, adapting, or supplementing his texts. The references to Sidney's spirit are ongoing, and ironically ignore his own call, at the end of his *Arcadia*, for "some *other* spirit" to awaken and finish his romance instead of his own frequent reincarnations (emphasis mine).

Sidney proved to be a flexible brand, and his name became shorthand for courtiers who exhibited literary excellence, Protestant strength, physical prowess, or effective statesmanship. Or, as in the 1649-1650 examples above, Sidney could epitomize a lost glorious and stable Protestant monarchy. The range of his legend was wide and

⁶ Margaret Hannay in *Philip's Phoenix* (1990) records the ways in which Mary Sidney instigates her brother's legend (60). Also see Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (1990). Descriptions of the cult of Sidney can be found in: *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*; introduction to Dennis Kay's *Anthology of Sidney Criticism*; introduction to Skretkowicz' edition of the *New Arcadia* (1593).

produced several threads of discourse. Spanning from Elizabeth's later years to the Restoration, the literary styles of these Sidneian texts change, along with their politics.⁷ Patterson records the more specific chronology of Arcadia's fame and appropriation through the Restoration: "It achieved extraordinary significance as a cultural symbol in the court and even the life of Charles I; it featured in the political debates over his execution; it became . . . a symbol of a certain type of fiction—the romance—fiction with ideological content, whose very fictionality held an interesting and provocative relation to its engagement with history" (18). Two events in Arcadia's active afterlife made Weamys' 1651 use of Sidney's romance even more politically significant: the regicide and the scuffle over Eikon Basilike's inclusion of Pamela's prayer as one prayed by Charles I, a claim identified and rebutted by Milton in Eikonoklastes.

Transmigration: A Discourse of Authority, Longing, and Change

One constant in Sidneian texts is the reverence for their source combined with the anxiety about continuing his texts. Gavin Alexander, writing about Sidney's influence on literary culture before 1640, notes this peculiarity in Sidneian anxieties of influence. He refers to his own critical work on authors influenced by Sidney as "prosopography," which he defines as a "trope that conjures the voice and form of those absent, dead, or imagined into some sort of rhetorical presence" (xxxvi). These authors, he notes, do not

⁷ Kevin Pask writes a literary genealogy of the Arcadia (73-78). Also Jennifer Klein Morrison's unpublished dissertation, "Readers Turned Writers: The Dynamics of the Sequels to Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia" reads four continuations (including Weamys' Arcadia) as readings of Sidney's text. Renee Marie Pigeon's 1988 dissertation "Prose Fiction Adaptations of Sidney's Arcadia" also follows the literary fortunes of Sidney's prose romance through the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

claim mere imitation, they “write Sidney, resurrect him, shape or transmit his voice” (xxxvi). Prefatory materials become a meeting place of continuation and fear, and they interlace reverence for the lost heroism of Sidney as the “original” author with the angst of continuing him. This commonplace trope of Sidneian texts became even more fraught in the English Revolution, when a poetic trope of transmigration represents the worry of presuming to write “for” Sidney and the trope of his mystical poetic influence. (Transmigration was interchangeable as a term with metempsychosis—the soul’s ability to move from a body after physical death into another body, whether human or animal.) After the 1649 regicide, authors began to conflate the writing of Sidney with a resurrection not with poetic soul, but a missing political system.

Transmigration was distinctly unorthodox and was often referred to with some derision⁸ or as something interesting and even desirable but ultimately untrue, but it was also something of a prefatory fad in commendatory poems throughout the 1650s. The term appears in many contexts, but most often as nostalgia for a past greatness, particularly of a literary kind. Its appearance in elegies correlates with this trend, since it signals loss.⁹ During the English Revolution, transmigration emerges as both a discourse of longing, by royalists¹⁰ and a discourse of counter-insurgent attempts to re-establish

⁸Heninger cites Lucian as beginning the tradition of mocking Pythagorean transmigration (32; 52-53), and other glosses on transmigration and metempsychosis have a tentative tone or dubious context.

⁹Two contemporary elegies where transmigration appears are Thomas Jordan’s “An Elegie on Mr. John Raven, Gent” in *Elegaick Poems* (1646) and James Howell’s “A Passionat Elegie Upon His Long-endear’d Friend, Daniel Caldwell, Esq.” in *Poems on several Choice and Various Subjects* (1663).

¹⁰Paul Salzman’s chapter in *Writing of the English Civil War* discusses post-regicide romances as being infused with nostalgia for the lost monarch.

the monarchy figuratively if not literally. Both promised to bring a more glorious past back to the present through a transmigration of heroic spirits. In this section I track how transmigration developed into a trope of Sidneian nostalgia by looking at its Pythagorean source and its evolving usage.

The success of the transmigration trope depended on readers sophisticated enough not to react viscerally to its apparent heresy. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, transmigration and metempsychosis always refer to Pythagoras, whom S. K. Heninger argues was a more important figure of philosophy to the Renaissance than we usually recognize because he was seen as a source for Plato and Aristotle (19).¹¹ Pythagoras bases his belief in transmigration on his theory of the immortality of all souls, a theory for which he was celebrated in the Renaissance as a precursor of Christ, while at the same time, made his ideas theologically suspicious.¹² In 1650, Samuel Gott summed up a Protestant theological response to Pythagoras when he dismisses him as “dark and obscure, full of Imaginary Fansies, and Cabbalistic Conceits” (sig. G5); he further indicates that Plato intuited Christianity and was the real master of “abstracting the soul from those Coporeall and inferior things” [sig. G4].

The place of this trend was the front matter of books, which combined a new mission of nostalgia and rebellion with marketing in the 1640s and 1650s. Lois Potter, in

¹¹ Anthony Grafton traces three main sources for the popularization of Pythagorean ideas in the Renaissance: the Golden Verses, attributed to Pythagoras and often appended onto Greek and Latin grammars; Diogenes Laertius' biography; and the Book XV of Ovid's Metamorphosis (789). Heninger adds Plato's Timaeus to the list of popular texts that disseminated Pythagorean ideas.

¹² A detailed account of Pythagorean transmigration is found in James A. Philip's Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism (151-171).

her study of royalist literature, cites Humphrey Moseley's edition of William Cartwright's works, published in 1651, the same year as Weamys' Arcadia, as the largest collection of prefatory poems with a subtext of royalist political commentary. In the fifty-two commendatory verses, various writers "praise great literature of the past, drawing attention at the same time to the cultural degeneration which they blamed on Parliament and the war" (21). The fad of transmigratory discourse is in part due to this sentiment, i.e., any good writing appearing during this period must be due to a mystical reappearance of England's more glorious literary past, which means England's royalist past.

Writers of prefatory materials, especially of commendatory poems, first adopted transmigration as a windfall for witty descriptions of poetic talent. As a strategy of legitimization, transmigration especially appears in front matter as a way to praise a poet in terms of how he or she represents established poetic voices, and the lists of poets who show up as validating influences provide a sampling of various contemporary literary canonizations. The focus on the past makes transmigration seem a trope of homage, always wishing for a current text to become as powerful as a past one. This focus on history makes it easy to miss that transmigration in fact makes great claims for the present, demanding readers' attention by using the familiar signposts of the past. The virtue of transmigration is that it recognizes both the merits of history as well as the possibilities of the present. It is a subjunctive term of praise, i.e., this text is so wonderful that it is as though a great poet has been resurrected from the past into the

present text. The transmigratory claims stop just short of saying how the present moment is about to match or surpass the past.

Sidney is a key figure in the emergence of the discourse of transmigration in the English Revolution. His talents were diverse enough so that almost any faction who needed a figurehead would be able to find it in Sidney, and often did. The prefatory materials to Robert Baron's The Cyprian Academy (1647-48) represent this trend of transmigratory discourse and emerge from a coterie related distantly to Weamys' publishing circle.¹³ Baron's Academy has been historically interesting since his plagiarism of Milton's 1645 Poems went unnoticed for 100 years.¹⁴ Skretkowicz notes that Baron also lifted sections of the Arcadia directly into his book and that it is unclear whether or not the borrowing would have been obvious to most seventeenth-century readers (xlix-l). The twelve prefatory poems, by friends from Grays Inn or Oxford, abound in tongue-in-cheek witticisms and literary borrowings and connect Baron's youthful authorship to Ovid, Sidney, and Barclay, using the same trope of transmigration to explain them: "the famous Sidney's soul . . . had gone / a relic till the Resurrection . . . had not she / Found out her match, and wedded been to thee" [sig. A3]. Another poem claims that "had Barclay seen thy book, he would have said / 'Unhappy Argenis thou art betrayed'" [sig. A5]. And neither does Ovid escape Baron's superior wit: "No more let old Ovid's sacred ghost / Be grieved for, he now survives again," and later, "This muse cannot be less than

¹³ James Howell is the glue that holds this circle together. Baron dedicated the book to him and Howell wrote commendatory poems for some of his other books.

¹⁴ The DNB notes the plagiarism. The extent is so much that it seems to be a publication of his commonplace book with an authorship claim attached.

Ovid's was / Only it suffered a transmigration / Into a body of a newer fashion" [sig. A5].

Baron's commendators were perfectly justified in identifying the soul of Sidney in his verse since he plagiarized the work directly. What is really noticeable in these references to transmigration are the commendatory poets' exaggerated claims that Baron's verse matches or surpasses that of Sidney, Spenser, Jonson, and Ovid and so implies that the present text has the same authority as ancient and contemporary laureates.

First Readers Looking at Weamys

Julie Campbell and Cullen have both identified a royalist coterie at work in Weamys' prefatory materials. Howell wrote his poem in prison, and the Vaughan and the Pierrepont families had suffered significant financial losses on behalf of the king (Cullen xxii-xxviii). The writers of her book's prefatory materials were a group of disenfranchised royalists opposed to parliamentary success who capitalize on the longing for monarchy that Weamys' text emanates. They present Sidney as the true author of her book, via transmigration, and so catapult yet another version of "Sidney" into Interregnum discourse. This Sidney shuts women's authorship out of Arcadia, making him the author of Weamys' romance. The paratext to Weamys' Arcadia is a reading not so much of Weamys' text but of the phenomenon of a woman's public voice, as I will discuss in this section. I look at paratextual authors' conflicts between praising Weamys' continuation and wishing for the rebirth of the original author and how her authorship is consequently subordinated to Sidney's.

Weamys' prefatory text is inundated with ghostly appearances in order to explain her Arcadia.¹⁵ Commendatory poems, as a genre, are supposedly about the skill of the author of the main text, but they were popular also as a place to display the commendators' poetic skill. The kind of repartee and high-strung wordplay that we encounter in Weamys' male-authored prefatory materials is not unusual, but the unity and concentration of the transmigration metaphors is. The paratextual letter and poems do indeed commend the author, but the author they praise is Sidney, not Weamys. This preference for Sidney is partly due to the prejudices typical of male readers in a time when few women wrote imaginative literature; yet it also points to a cultural moment where the Sidney "brand" evoked nostalgia for lost order.

Even before the prefatory texts, the title page subordinates Weamys' authorship to Sidney's. A comparison with other Sidneian texts reveals that his name figures more prominently on Weamys' title page than on those of other continuations and supplements; it is A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia. Gervase Markham, in contrast, alludes to Arcadian texts, not Sidney alone, in his title, The English Arcadia. The text is definitely Markham's. Other Sidneian texts have titles with similarly less direct allusions: The Cyprian Academy; Argalus and Parthenia; A Continuation of the history of Argalus and Parthenia; The Countesse of Pembroke's Iychurch. The only other work displaying Sidney's name as its true author was a 1684 forgery.

¹⁵ Campbell suggests that this prefatory celebration of the Continuation shows that Weamys successfully "mirrors Sidney's traditional style" (79) and "reflects his traditional Renaissance ideological stances" (81), reading the modest rhetoric of Weamys' dedicatory letter as an unvarnished description of her literary debt to Sidney.

The seven items of Weamys' paratext are materially distinct from the main text. The prefatory material is in its own gathering, physically reinforcing the impression that it is a production somewhat apart from her Arcadia. The font is small and tight whereas the main text's font is so large that it seems too big for the small octavo book, allowing only nine or ten lines on a page. The small text and cramped arrangements accentuate its production separate from the main text and that cost was a factor. The Folger copy feels as though the paper is lighter than in the main text and the print certainly bleeds through more. The material difference suggests that someone, perhaps Dr. Weamys, her father, sponsored the production of this Arcadia's paratext. Weamys writes only the dedicatory letter while the other materials justify a *woman's* continuation of Sidney's work, an issue that does not preoccupy Weamys though she adopts a usual deferential pose towards Sidney and a generic hesitation to print. Her full name does not appear title page but her gender does: "a Young Gentlewoman, Mrs A.W."

Male- and female-authored introductions to Weamys' text swing between several representations of her person and her writing and yet are surprisingly cohesive in tone and imagery. In their repetition of transmigration to explain her work, her paratextual authors make her text a mysterious transfusion of Sidney's ghost into a woman's words. By referring to her authorship as an exceptional and a marvelous occurrence, her male readers represent the continuation of the Arcadia as a spectral production beyond Weamys. By then by undoing Weamys' exceptionality, they make continuing Sidney a task for any reader, as many readers and writers of romance did.

Patterson traces a line of romance through the eighteenth century that was indebted to Sidney's romance; in particular, she discusses a "mini Renaissance" of the Arcadia that began during Charles I's reign and culminated in the 1661 complete publication of the previously sequels of (beginning in 1653) Princess Cloria (159-202). Jennifer Klein Morrison argues that by 1651, "the Arcadia had become a literary text charged with political associations and meanings, . . . and one in which participation by male readers in the construction of the text was accepted and even encouraged" (187).¹⁶ The identities of these introductory voices define the political cachet of Weamys' text: they all lean royalist and were part of a subdued oppositional subculture.¹⁷

Following Weamys' careful dedication to the Pierrepont sisters, which I discuss in the next section, the tone of the prefatory materials changes; witty banter overtakes her careful explanation of her text. Stationer Thomas Heath, in his prefatory epistle "The STATIONER to the Ingenious Reader," ignores Weamys' chaste self-presentation when he addresses the reader, describing her text as a potentially threatening woman's voice and offering two opposing reading strategies: indulge the woman writer by responding with the chivalry of a character in a romance or imagine that a man did in fact write it. Heath inserts Weamys into the image of the woman writer as an inappropriately public figure with a jarring voice by asking "If any Critical ear, disrelish the shrillness of the

¹⁶ Gavin Alexander tracks the many levels of response to Sidney in Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney, 1586-1640 (2006). Stephen B. Dobranski argues that unfinished texts in the seventeenth century were a specific genre that encouraged active reader in Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England (2005). He looks at Sidney as an "extreme example" of this phenomenon (73).

¹⁷ Cullen notes that all the identifiable people connected with Weamys' Arcadia shared "compromising royalist politics" (xxii).

Note; let it be tuned to Apollo's Lyre, and the harmony will soon be perceived to be much better; and the Lady appear much more delightful to her Musidorus" (4). Heath implies that although women's writing always sounds shrill, Weamys' text deserves to be heard by the courteous reader.

Heath next argues that her text sounds as though a man could have written it, and he bases his praise on this premise. Contradicting his earlier assessment of Weamys' shrill text, he implies that the problem with most women's writing—that it exists at all—is absent from the Arcadia because her writing is not a typical woman's text. The reader must listen like a man, with "Apollo's Lyre," and he will hear her text correctly. Resorting to a series of figures that describe idealized women constructed by men or possessing masculine talents—Pygmalion, Pamela, Philoclea, and Minerva—he argues that Weamys writes as men would construct an ideal woman's authorship. Uncertain which argument will most mitigate her authorship, Heath combines them, making his paratext a much more "confused theam" than Weamys'. His uneasy portrait of the woman artist competes with his celebration of Sidney's authorship. Readers are not to be confounded by Weamys' authorship, but instead amazed by "no other than the lively ghost of Sidney, [who] by a happy transmigration speaks through the organs of this inspired Minerva" (ll. 6-7).

Heath's other books are all romances in strategy (if not in genre) with a tendency to roman à clef, fitting Patterson's definition of the royal romance. For instance, his letter presenting the then anonymous (William Sales) and Sidneian Theophania: or

severall modern histories represented by way of romance and politickly discours'd upon by an English person of quality (1655) explains at some length the signs of the unknown author's "illustrious spirit." Having assured the reader of the author's nobility, Heath then mentions offhandedly that readers may notice some characters similar to well known contemporaries (that Theophania is a roman à clef is in fact transparently obvious even to a modern reader—one example has Prince Rupert represented by a dashing chivalric army officer, a role the prince self-consciously adopted during the civil wars). Weamys' book is one of Heath's earliest romances, written before the genre became a commonplace rebellious royalist discourse and yet using some of the strategies of political subtext that became characteristic of later books.

The prefatory materials to these works point without fail to their political currency as inherent to their value and they typically protest the contemporary restrictions on theater and the loss of courtly entertainment. The 1653 The queen or the excellency of her sex, sold by Heath, contrasts markedly with the cross-dressed prefatory materials of Weamys' text. In a commendatory poem, one R.C. writes "To Mr Alexander Goughe upon his publishing The excellent play etc." and argues that the press must substitute for the stage while the theatres are closed because when there, "no ladies swoon / at the Red Coates intrusion: none are strip't; / no historiatrix has the copy whip't / No man don'd women's cloth's: the guiltless press / Wears its own innocent garments" (sig.

A3).¹⁸ Heath sells books that connect him with a group of moderate royalists, no longer willing to fight Parliament openly, but not at peace with the current government. In the prefatory materials introducing these texts, critique of the current regime repeatedly hides in the guise of cooperation with Parliament and resignation to the current political situation.

Following Heath's letter, H. P. M.'s poem, "On the Ingenious CONTINUATION of Sir PHILIP SYDNEY'S ARCADIA By *Mistress A. W.*," worries about the validity of the preface as a literary genre. He ignores the transmigration trope, but still reverts to the idea that Weamys' text belongs to Sidney. The first half of this poem is not about Weamys or even Sidney, but is rather a self-conscious discourse about the art of commendatory poems and their over-proliferation. H. P. M. argues against trusting such poems since they generally exaggerate a text's merits, and that "this fault is epidemical, do but ore-look / The Stationers Stall, 'tis spoke in ev'ry book" (ll. 11-12). H. P. M. does not excuse his addition to this copious genre by explaining that Weamys' text is an exception and merits such praise; rather, he coyly explains that he loses his commendatory-poem virginity to a woman's text: "But I can quit / Myself of this, till now I never writ / Nor had I done it now, but that a She / Did tempt my pressing for her company" (ll. 15-18). H. P. M. associates Weamys' public voice with the exact bawdy stereotype she avoids when he describes his participation with the frequent sexual pun of the press.¹⁹ While H. P. M.

¹⁸ The reference to William Prynne's 1632 condemnation of Henrietta Maria's masques here counters objections to women reading and producing romance.

¹⁹ Wall notes the sexual connotations of the press translated undergoing a pressing into acting "the lady's

refutes the supposition that Sidney is somehow present in Weamys' text, he values it for its references to Sidney instead of Weamys' ingenuity. He also brings Sidney's work into the current moment: "Nor is't, where things are left undone, a sin / To seek to end what greater ones begin" (ll. 25-26).

Cullen speculates that H. P. M. might stand for "Henry Pierrepont, Marquess," the father of Weamys' dedicatees (xxv). Pierrepont had been created a marquess in 1645 for his service to Charles I when in Oxford; however, he tired of the royalist cause and paid fines to Parliament in 1647 for the return of his estates. Jeffrey Collins records that Pierrepont's compromise outraged exiled royalists while earning him the protection of Parliament (217). Cullen cites a letter from Howell to Pierrepont that suggests the marquess sponsored a literary salon and provided incomes for writers: "your house may be called a true academy, and your head the capitol of knowledge, or rather an exchequer, wherein there is a treasure enough to give pensions to all the wits of the time" (xxvii). Pierrepont became a physician and was most interested in medical and scientific texts, several of which were dedicated to him, including Hobbes' 1656 Six Lessons to the Professors of Mathematicques (Collins Allegiance 217). Even if he did not write this poem, he remains a figure publicly associated with Weamys' book because of her dedication to his daughters. Pierrepont's history suggests that Weamys' dedication was an attempt to remedy her family's situation and make peace with the new regime by asking for patronage from a powerful aristocrat who had changed sides. (James

part and be[ing] pressed by a man" (1).

Howell made a similar decision to compromise with Parliament and was released from prison ca. 1650 or 1651.)

F. W.'s "On the *Continuation* of Sir Philip Sydney's *Arcadia*. By Mistress A. W." tells the story of Sidney's unfinished work in order to explain this Arcadia as a miraculous reappearance of Sidney. Unlike the first two authors, he spends less time focused on Weamys' identity and more on how Sidney's spirit has returned to finish the *Arcadia*, "his gallant generous spirit" having mystically acquired:

a reprieve

From's sleeping dust hath purchas't, Death's malice

Defying with a timely Metempsychosis.

He breathes through female Organs, yet retains

His masculine vigour in Heriock strains. (ll. 12-16)

"To Mistress A. W. Upon her *ADDITIONALS* to Sir PHILIP SYDNEY'S *ARCADIA*," by James Howell, the only commendatory poem whose author's identity is certain, continues again the discourse of the resurrected poet.²⁰ Like Henry Pierrepont and Weamys' own father, Howell had been on the wrong side of Parliament. Michael Nutkiewicz describes Howell as a staunch supporter of "both monarchical and aristocratic values, and may be seen as a paradigm of the royalist mind during the English Civil War" (21). During and

²⁰ Howell also figures peripherally in Judith Man's authorship since Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, employed him at the same time as Peter Man, Judith Man's relative, and while she translated an epitome of Barclay's *Argenis* in 1640. Howell's roman à clef, *Dodona's Grove*, was first published the same year. Henry Wotton's commendatory poem praises Howell's romance: "Me thinks, breathes Barclay" [sig. A3]. It is probably a coincidence that Weamys' 1651 *Arcadia* and Howell's second part to *Dodona's Grove* are also published close together.

after his eight years in prison, Howell generally navigated between royalist and parliamentary factions. He was released from the Fleet in around the same time that he published his second part of his popular Dodona's Grove (the first part— Dendrologia: Dodona's Grove, or, The Vocall Forest, an account of events since 1603—appeared in 1640 and was reprinted three times before 1650). In his first part of this roman à clef, he had written a coded history of England up till 1640. Having resigned himself to living in England as a republic, he documented the ten years from 1640 to 1650 in the sequel, this time flattering Parliament instead of the king.

Baron had dedicated his Cyprian Academy to Howell, who spent part of his time while imprisoned from 1642 to 1650/51 writing letters and commendatory poems for various royalist literary works. One of Howell's commendatory poems was to Weamys' 1651 Arcadia. When representing Weamys' continuation of Sidney's work, Howell uses the transmigration trope that had also dominated Baron's paratext, but adapts it for reading a feminine text. He focuses unambiguously on Weamys' texts as being produced by a strange transmigration of Sidney, the original author, into Weamys' body, declaring in his first line:

If a Male Soul, by Transmigration, can
 Pass to a Female, and Her spirits Man,
 Then sure some sparks of Sydney's soul have flown
 Into your breast. (ll. 1-4)

In 1647, Baron's commendatory poets had constructed his authorship as one surpassing his literary forefathers; in 1651, Weamys' poets construct her authorship as though her literary forefather has actually written her text. Both paratextual collections use transmigration as a literary figure to explain their relations to preceding poets, but with a gendered understanding of metempsychosis. The use of the transmigration trope sounds very different in the two collections, and two factors explain this change. First, Weamys' gender complicates the validity of her authorship, and second, literary tropes of resurrection signify differently in 1647 than 1651.

Howell's judgment of Weamys' Arcadia remains reserved. It will be Sidney's influence that inspires the quality of any of her future verse; certainly for Howell, the "sparks of Sydney's soul" in Weamys' Arcadia constitute its merits.

But Yours gives Time the start, as all may see
By these smooth strains of early Poesie,
Which like Rays of one kind may well aspire,
If Phoebus please to a Sydneyan fire.

Howell's commendatory poem, written as a favor for Weamys' father, is especially interesting when examined against two other paratextual poems he wrote for Major Wright's two translations of Jean-Pierre Camus' romances, The Loving Enemy in 1650 and Nature's Paradox in 1652. Sandwiching Weamys' 1651 romance, these two poems contrast with the courtly gendering of his representation of the woman author. Howell celebrates the male romance as a triumph of authorship over translation: "Original and

Copy Co-excel / The Prelate [Camus] and the Soldier [Wright] share the Bell: / In Speech they differ, but for Mind and Frame / They are unanimous, and still the same" (ll. 9-12). In the earlier romance, The Loving Enemy, "Camus is much your debtor" (l. 1) because now he "speaks stronger lines, and in more sinewy strains" (l. 10). Howell muddies the relationship of the translator and the translated, making Wright the author of Camus' English text; he does the opposite with Weamys, making Sidney the author of his own continuation. His different tone is partly a chivalrous sexism and partly the longing for the return of the courtly discourse associated with Sidney, and not with Camus.

The last commendatory poem, "On the *Continuation* of Sir *Philip Sydney's* ARCADIA; By Mistress A. W.," by F. Vaughan, argues that Weamys' writing, and women's writing in general, should be heard for its own merits, and so provides a surprise ending to the otherwise ambivalent discussions of women's authorship in the earlier prefatory matter. Cullen speculates that the author may have been Frances Vaughan, the wife of Richard Vaughan, a close friend of James Howell (xxvii-xxix). She employs many of the earlier figures of speech, but turns them to Weamys' advantage. While she recognizes the language of needlework as a metaphoric safe haven for writing women, Vaughan rejects that domestication of women's verse. She opens with the suggestive: "Lay by your Needles Ladies, take the Pen, / The only difference 'twixt you and Men" (ll. 1-2). Vaughan alludes to the earlier paratextual manifestations of transmigration with a Christianized reading when she emphasizes the equality of souls at the poem's turn: "Since all Souls equal are, let all be heard" (l. 6). Neither is wit an essentially male quality

since “Good Wine does need no Bush, pure Wit no Beard” (l.5). In fact, men seem to have lost their poetic touch, and according to Vaughan, it is up to women to write verse of Sidney’s caliber: “So when in Sidney's death Wit ebb'd in Men, / It hath its Spring-tide in a Female Pen” (ll. 9-10).

Weamys presents her own view on prefatory materials when she presents another women storyteller, Mopsa, who finishes Sidney’s Mopsa’s unfinished narrative, a comic version of Weamys’ own task. Not only do Mopsa’s listeners offer tongue-in-cheek applause, Philoclea rewards her with exaggerated praise, typical of prefatory materials:

Thus finished Mopsa her tedious tale, which though it was very
ridiculous, yet wanted it not applauses from all the auditors: and
Philoclea in requital presented her with her bridal robes, telling her
deserved larger encouragements to elevate her wit; and more speeches
she used in Mopsa’s commendation, whose partial sense were subject to
believe all such rare realities; in which blind opinion I will leave her. (73)

The clearly false praise of Mopsa’s text reveals Weamys’ own suspicions about praise—the very same kind of praise found in the poems prefacing her own printed texts. She does not make the same mistake as Mopsa; she does not believe everything her paratextual authors will tell her. They would make her into Sidney’s image but she is creating her text as a woman’s public voice, one that should be heard, not mocked.

As the readings above show, tempering the extravagant praise typical of prefatory materials by displacing Weamys' authorship, Arcadia's commendatory poems provide lessons in how to interpret her text before readers get to her narrative. The discourse of metempsychosis offers a secular parallel to another place of women's authorship that exploded in the 1650s: prophecy. Suddenly many differing versions of faith were visible and appeared in print with less fear of reprisal. Many prophets appeared and the majority of them were women. Suzanne Trill defines the early modern English prophet as a vehicle for the voice of God connected to "contemporary assumptions about female passivity; it was God's spirit, not the woman's, who spoke" ("Religion" 43). As Trill points out, this theory of women's authorship resulted in the female body becoming the site of conflict when the prophecy did not fit with prevailing culture. Although God's spirit as the speaker should protect the woman's body—the mere vehicle—in fact the woman's body becomes the place to test the veracity of the prophet's claim that God is printing his words through her. Royalists developed a parallel tradition of transmigration and prosopographia, but the speaking voice calls not for a religious reformation but a political one. Weamys' body is merely the vehicle for Sidney's continued authorship of his Arcadia. Like the Interregnum prophets, her femininity will carry all the blame for the text's failures while achieving none of the praise for its successes.

Weamys Looking at Weamys

Weamys' book displays two moments rarely seen in Renaissance literature—a woman reading and the male readers' responses, as seen in her continuation and revision of Sidney's Arcadia and her paratextual authors' responses to her "reading." In search of evidence of how early modern women read, Heidi Brayman Hackel has surveyed the marginalia in over 100 copies of the Arcadia and has found none in a woman's hand, even though approximately one quarter of those texts belonged to women readers. She concludes that women's reading practices cannot be found in marginalia because women rarely wrote in their books, beyond signing their names. Hackel argues that women's marginalia is rare because of the intersection of cultural prescriptions of silence with reading: women did not read in public, were not encouraged to develop speaking skills, and were not allowed critical voices (101). The intersection of Weamys' prefatory texts and her narrative representations of women's texts fill in some of this missing history of women's readership.

Unlike the royalist romances later in the 1650s,²¹ Weamys' Arcadia is not a roman à clef hiding textual allusions to the civil wars and their players; instead she portrays a world where kings rule as they should and where wars have comprehensible causes, identifiable heroes and villains, and definite conclusions. Klein Morrison argues that Weamys rejects politicizing her romance via typical roman à clef typical of 1640s and

²¹ Zurcher discusses royalist romance as hitting a 1650s' peak with the following most notable examples: Robert Boyle's Parthenissa (1655); Richard Brathwaite's Panthalis (1659); Percy Herbert's The Princess Cloria (ca. 1650); Theophania (1655) (Seventeenth 3). Thomas Heath was the stationer for several of these romances.

1650s romance; instead, Weamys' Arcadia represents peace and quietness in its concluding marriages and two deaths (187-88). As Campbell describes it, Weamys illustrates "how a new generation of noble and royal leaders may, through successful marriage alliances and careful military maneuvers, bring about a peaceful and strong monarchy" (81).

In her dedicatory letter to the Pierrepont sisters, Weamys does not protest her authorial subordination to Sidney. Participating in it becomes part of her self-portrayal as a virtuous woman, which, to adopt Hull's summary of the prescribed virtues for a Renaissance woman, meant being chaste, silent, and obedient. Immediately positioning herself outside the public domain, Weamys herself does not address the reader; instead she directs her text to a specific female audience, Anne and Grace Pierrepont, claiming a private and so a chaste voice, not a public one. If one objection to women's writing was the association of the public circulation of women's voices with loose sexuality, Weamys carefully places herself outside any of the objectionable stereotypes of a woman's public voice by making it private. And yet, as I argue in this section, she turns against this pose accentuating the virtues of a private woman within her Arcadia in order to tell the stories of women's successful public voices and rulers who tend to the claims of sub-aristocratic classes. The narrator of her text speaks from a sub-aristocratic point of view and so draws attention to her celebration of a revised monarchy.

Weamys claims that the publication of her text marks her obedience and that she would prefer silence to publication: "Whereof I beseech you charitably to believe, that

my ambition was not raised to so high a pitch, as the Title now manifests it to be, until I received Commands from those that cannot be disobeyed" (ll. 6-7). In her evasion of any seeming ambition, Weamys adopts a metaphor referring to the stereotype of women's loud and unruly voices, which are public when they have a high pitch. Weamys asks her imagined and private audience not to perceive her as being a shrill-voiced woman (as her stationer did), but rather she argues that obedience produces her reluctant public voice.

Along with chastity, silence, and obedience, Weamys includes labor—writing as work—as an attribute of a virtuous woman. Her tone of modest self-effacement—"If I had not observed that the greatest humility, reigns in the bosoms of the Noblest Personages, I should not presume to Dedicate this most unworthy Fabric to your Honors: especially when I consider the poorness of my endeavors, and admire the Learned Sidney's pastimes" (ll. 1-5)—is typical of authors writing in the shadow of Sidney, but here Weamys also opposes her "endeavors" to Sidney's "pastimes."

Weamys writes as work; Sidney writes as sport. Wall, in her study of sixteenth-century prefaces, discusses how social climbing men wrote their authorship as play rather than work, a privilege of the wealthy and the titled. Wall describes prefatory materials as representing "poetry as the product of the aristocratic sitting room, where courtiers invented verse in leisurely game-playing and conversation . . . many poets felt compelled to inscribe their works precisely as gentlemanly pastimes as a means of

acquiring social, if not literary, legitimation" (55-56). Secular texts by men outside these classes often mimic this claim.

Rejecting the language of leisure, Weamys counters this male and aristocratic pose with her feminine and non-courtly pose: women's work does not categorically exclude writing. Weamys characterizes her book as an "unworthy Fabric," employing a rich and feminine metaphor to describe her text. As women's work, the fabric reference evokes women's needlework and sewing. While making clothing was most often work for male tailors, sewing tapestries was women's work, and Anne Laurence points out that the "word 'work' was synonymous with needlework" (148). Although in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, needlework would come to mark aristocratic women's leisure, for an untitled "gentlewomen" like Anna Weamys, needlework was more craft than art. Roszika Parker identifies an emerging division between art and craft in sixteenth-century England with increased regulation of both amateur and guild-produced embroidery (71). Weamys also initially separates "artist from artisan" (5) by describing her work as artifice, a term with craft associations. The needlework metaphor evokes stereotypes of women's work and values. Fabric was the item most often listed in early modern women's wills, especially those of middle class women who had some disposable income. Anne Laurence lists various fabric items owned by early modern women as "domestic articles like curtains, chair-covers, tablecloths, carpets . . ." (145). Fabric as a material possession had long lasting value; women bequeathed clothing and cloth items

in their wills and secondhand fabric items were competitively priced with new pieces (145).

Weaving and sewing also has a long metonymic history of representing women's writing or their silent yet public voices. Patricia Demers remarks on the prevalence of the trope in early modern culture of women recreating versions of Penelope weaving her story. Elizabeth Talbot's many depictions of the Metamorphosis in needlework have themselves been the subject of critical analysis (Oakley-Brown 127-34).²² Mary Sidney presented her continuation of her brother's Psalms as a woven cloth: "he [Sidney] did warp, I weaved this web to end" (qtd. in Klein "Your Humble Handmaid" 476). Perhaps the most important context for fabric in the early modern period was in the grammar schools where "boys were taught to read, write and cast accounts, whereas girls were taught to read and sew, knit and spin" (Spufford 34). Sewing was girls' equivalent to boys learning to write,²³ and Weamys builds on this cultural parallel. In characterizing her work as needlework, Weamys advertises her romance as a safe²⁴ yet creative women's activity while also reminding readers of a long tradition of tapestries providing women with public voices.

²² Oakley-Brown cites Santina M. Levey's Elizabethan Treasures: the Hardwick Hall Textiles for information about Talbot's needlework. Also Lisa Klein discusses Talbot's embroidered cloak as a placatory gift to Elizabeth I (469-71); Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones discuss Talbot's work as authorship (49).

²³ Spufford also notes a subgenre of romance that heroizes male weavers and cloth workers (238-44). See Roziker Parker's chapter, "The Domestication of Embroidery," where she argues that in the seventeenth century, needlework became a primary requirement in English women's education.

²⁴ Parker also notes the commonplace that the needlework was also a guard of women's chastity and a proof of her virtue (74-76, 81).

An anecdote about the differing interior design decisions of Charles I and Parliament accentuates the currency of this understanding of tapestries as texts. Adamson records Charles I's un-hanging of the Cornelius Vroom tapestries, which celebrated the 1588 triumph over the Spanish Armada, and their later re-hanging in the House of Lords in 1644. Charles I sought to rid his court of visual displays of Elizabethan militant symbols, especially those with anti-Catholic spin. Parliament conspicuously returned the tapestries to public view in a much frequented parliamentary hall, making them an emblem of how Parliament fancied itself as a protector of Elizabethan Protestantism. For Weamys, the tapestry becomes a site of women's writing and functions like the Vroom tapestries; throughout her romance, they are one of the many kinds of texts that she represents and teaches her readers how to read.

The sewing/writing connection in Weamys' plot highlights both the potential power and value of women's public texts. Erona, redeemed from her misguided love in Sidney's Arcadia, designs an elaborate tapestry for her ladies in waiting to sew, overnight, as a wedding gift for Pamela and Philoclea:

In which time Erona employed her inventions about a present for Pamela and Philoclea, which she was very ambitious of, they being the mistresses of Musidorus and Pyrocles, to whom she acknowledged her self infinitely engaged; and without delayance, she set all her maids to work the story of their love, from the fountain to the happy conclusion: which by her busy fancy she shadowed so artificially that when it was perfected, and

she had showed it to the Princes, they vowed that had they not known by experience those passages to have been gone and past, they should have believed they were then in acting in that piece of workmanship. (64)

Art is a creative act yet also labor: Erona “employed her inventions” and the fabric is “workmanship,” a product of her “busy fancy” and her maids’ “work.” Weamys maintains the metaphor from her dedicatory letter to the Pierrepont sisters, but she allows the woman artist a strong subjectivity and for her work also to be “fancy.”²⁵ The response to Erona’s fabric is remarkable. Musidorus and Pyrocles “vowed that had they not known by experience those passages to have been gone and past, they should have believed they were then in acting in that piece of workmanship” (64). Within Weamys’ Arcadia an “unworthy Fabric” in fact has great worth. Erona’s “busy fancy” has “shadowed so artificially” that its readers nearly mistake fiction for reality. Her presentation of the gift to Pamela and Philoclea two pages later similarly succeeds:

Now the night before these happy nuptials, Erona presented Pamela and Philoclea with her rare piece of work, which they received with thanks and admiration; and for the honor of Erona (she being the inventor of it) they caused it to be hung up by the image of Cupid in the Temple. (66)

²⁵ Erona’s text also participates in a tradition of women’s giving of handmade gifts to those with power. Klein notes that “women were adept at using . . . the signifying potential of their hand-made embroideries, in ways that were empowering as well as expressive. . . . The many instances of hand-wrought gifts remind us that women did enter the arena of cultural production, where they promoted their interests and praised the monarch, although less through writing than through their work with the needle” (462).

As in Weamys' paratextual representation of her writing, Erona's text is a fabric, a different kind of writing, as well as the product of a virtuous woman's labor. And yet her tapestry also comments on how sub-aristocratic texts remain unknown or ignored. As a queen, Erona is as beloved a figure as Sidney was to the English; crowds cheer for her whenever she announces news or leaves her palace. She designs her tapestry text but it is the ladies of the court who work out the design, similar to how the prefatory materials to Weamys' text represent her relationship to Sidney's Arcadia. Sidney has made the design and Weamys has worked it out with her needle. Further complicating her own suspicions of praise, Erona's tapestry is hung in Hymen's temple, putting her gentlewomen's work on display without their names attached to the text just as Weamys' name is not printed with her Arcadia.

Weamys' view of the power of sub-aristocratic texts, whether named or not, revises Sidney's representation of the connection between needlework and poetry, which also appears as women's work in Sidney's Arcadia. When Musidorus first enters Arcadia, escorted there by Clauis and Strephon, one of the first emblems of its wealth and beauty are the happiness of the shepherds, including "a young shepherdess knitting and withal singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work and her hands kept time to her voice's music" (70). This connection between needlework and art remains a lower class experience. Pamela—the most regal and powerful woman in the romance—specifically refutes any special meaning in women's needlework when Crecopia tries to read the embroidery on a purse Pamela has worked while in captivity.

Crecochia discusses the purse as though it is a text replete with paratextual material:

“Full happy is he . . . to whom a purse in this manner, and by this hand wrought, is dedicated. In faith he shall have cause to account it not as a purse for treasure but as a treasure itself” (484). Pamela’s response warns Crecochia not to read her needlework as any sort of text: “I promise you I wrought it but to make some tedious hours believe that I thought not of them; for else I valued it but even as a very purse” (484). Weamys sees women’s work differently; the purse would not be a very purse but a book to be read.

Two other feminine texts within Weamys’ Arcadia confirm her revision of Sidney’s depiction of women’s texts by showing their power within the narrative. Philoclea’s letter to Amphialus produces immediate and happy obedience to its command that he love Helena of Corinth:

and when he read it, the curiousest eye could not espy the least motion of discontent to reside in him . . . when he had fully delighted his eyes with Philoclea’s gracious lines, he changed his note from admiring her perfections, to blazon his now amorous phrases of Helena’s worth . . . which made him extremely wonder at the hidden virtues of Philoclea’s letters for working so great a cure in his understanding. (44-45)

Here Philoclea’s writing redeems a confirmed villain and overcomes the convention of the absolutely immovable lover. Philoclea’s second textual triumph comes when Plangus tells his story to Basilius (that Pyrocles and Musidorus are dead and he wants to

rescue Erona). The narrator points out that later Philoclea retells this story to Pyrocles (when it turns out that he is not dead), and she tells it much better: “Then Plangus related all circumstances in the same manner that afterward the divine Philoclea sweetly declared to her lover, the admirable Pyrocles. And believe me, she told it with more liveliness and quickness of wit than Plangus did himself” (19).

We learn from these stories that women can create art so powerful and writing that it can mentally *transport* readers (Musidorus and Pyrocles). Weamys ignores the transmigration metaphors that her prefacers use to explain her writing; instead she aligns invention with craft and artifice. Weamys refers to representation as “artifice” throughout her narrative, using the sense of work created by a craftsman—a person who works with his hands and materials—rather than our more contemporary negative sense of a thing contrived. The OED’s first definition emphasizes the sixteenth-century class connotation inherent in the work “the making of anything by art, construction, workmanship” and then “mechanic art, artificer’s work.”

Weamys’ narrator often aligns this Arcadia with voices from lower social strata. Romance has long been associated with pastoral, but the practical elements of shepherds’ occupations are usually lost in the more important theme of unrequited love. Weamys’ Claius and Strephon, when recounting the beginning of their adventures, note the arrangements they made for their sheep upon leaving to rescue Urania (90). That same voice of the sub-aristocratic intrudes at other moments as well, as when “under-workmen” are watching Helen and Amphialus’ developing love for each other.

They are so inspired that they, “endeavoring to follow their superiors’ rule, . . . did unexpectedly finish their art” (49). Later the narrator speaks from within the “multitudes that went to see the magnificent sight” of a royal procession. Another instance rewrites what good kingship would look like from a lower class view when Kalodolus, arranges for the end of the war, not just the beginning when he makes sure to pay them in full and send them home. Weamys engineers her narrator to speak for women and for a sub-aristocratic class, showing how the wars have disrupted social order and how the best kings include the joys and woes of *all* their subjects when governing.

Conclusion

Eikon Basilike’s representation of Charles I meditating on Pamela’s scaffold prayer continued the integration of the Arcadia and romance with the experience of revolutions and social disruption throughout the Interregnum. The paratextual authors of Weamys’ Arcadia adopt the resurrection trope of transmigration in order to claim a purpose for the present by connecting a current event, in this case Weamys’ book, with the past. Her narrative portrays a world where monarchs rule well and military leaders see it as a part of their job description to look after their troops. Campbell presents the plot of Weamys’ Arcadia as a new beginning, with “a new generation of noble and royal leaders may, through successful marriage alliances and careful military maneuvers, bring about a peaceful and strong monarchy” (81). This re-imagined monarchy that has overcome both “rebellion in Arcadia” and the royal preoccupation with the pastoral

describes both the longing for an older political system, as well as the ways these depleted royalists, like Weamys' family, might imagine that future monarch: stable, interested in all levels of society, and able to contain rebellion.

Epilogue

In discussing the drive for a political voice as a driving motivation for authorship more powerful than mere recreation and literary accomplishment separate from the public sphere, I have constantly been asking the question “how do women begin to write when all the odds are against them doing so?” That question began the dissertation and has, as good questions probably should, led me away from itself. The act of writing in itself was alluring, but was not the end of sub-aristocratic women’s texts. Each of these authors chose to write imaginative literature connected with romance, in order to re-tell history in the frame of their ideology. My question evolved to “What were these women trying to say?”

Each author was ideologically different, often to extremes. The sheer increase in the number and diversity of voices during the years when monarchical authority was breaking down and after the office of the censor had been disbanded showed early modern readers how much was at stake in the wars and political debates of the time. Catholics alternated between elation and despair in the ascension of Henrietta Maria’s powers and then her increasingly powerlessness. Within Puritan factions, the diversity of opinions about the proper place of religious and secular governments played out on both sides of the Atlantic. Voices from dissenters without the mainstream acceptance of Puritans suddenly had a public presence in a multitude of prophetic and polemical pamphlets. The bewildered Church of England congregants and disenfranchised priests

were mired in their own internal extremes and a complete loss of power and published their own brand of nostalgic literatures.

I have focused on these women coming to public voices, but poetic agency was an indispensable aspect of that journey, as was class. While Man, Du Verger, Weamys, and Bradstreet do not see their texts as primarily literary productions, in the specialized sense of their aristocratic peers, Cavendish and Wroth, the idea is not entirely foreign to them. They mimic upper class versions of authorship in order to shape their own forays into a public text; however, their texts had a cultural function that acts quite differently than declaring a family romance, as Wroth does, or offering a translation of popular literature, as Tyler does. Women reading and writing were circumscribed, and I want to be careful that I acknowledge how deep those cultural prohibitions were. Those boundaries are in fact what makes their entries into publication so interesting because sub-aristocratic women producing romance, whether in print or manuscript, had a purpose for it quite outside their more privileged women peers. The decision to contribute a political romance to the public debate during the English Revolution was an argument for a place at the table, or to skip the metaphor, have a voice in the contentious ideologies that were articulated and refuted in the print marketplace.

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