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PhD Thesis

**“Distinguishing ’twixt knaves and Kings”: Political Agency
and Linguistic Authority in Anne Finch’s Poetry**

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November 2005

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1. PREFACE

Ruth Salvaggio has contended that:

We cannot place Finch in a historical context when her womanly identity has already situated her among the material whose absence made that history possible. We cannot restore any woman to history when the system of history itself is constructed by and through the exclusion of women – both the actual women of history, and the feminine configuration of otherness that she embodies.¹

Similarly, although Dorothy Mermin acknowledged that “many women had written and even published poetry” before the nineteenth century, of whom “by far the most important” were Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn and Anne Finch, she perceived all three as writing “of, from and to” a position “remote from politics and power”.²

Much feminist criticism, particularly of early modern women writers, still relies on the premise that women were “clearly displaced within and from [their] culture” (Salvaggio, p.244), excluded from contemporary discourse, be it poetic or political, social or religious, by their gender. Women’s writing in this period is often still reductively perceived in relation to the supposedly contrasting models provided by the ‘virtuous’ Katherine Philips and the ‘scandalous’ Aphra Behn.³ As Barbara Lewalski has noted, the work of these women is often “too narrowly contextualized – studied chiefly in relation to other women’s texts, or to modern feminist theory, or to some aspects of the period’s patriarchal ideology”.⁴ Yet there are also a number of studies that seek to overturn the established paradigms governing the criticism of early modern women’s writing.

Paula Backscheider, Ros Ballaster, Kathryn King, Paula McDowell and Carol Barash are recent examples of critics who have attempted to revision women’s literary history by moving beyond the dichotomous model of female authorship, questioning

¹ Ruth Salvaggio, ‘Anne Finch Placed and Displaced’, in *Early Women Writers: 1600-1720*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (London and New York: Longman, 1998), pp.242-65 (p.245).

² Dorothy Mermin, ‘Women Becoming Poets: Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Anne Finch’, *ELH*, 57 (1990), 335-57 (pp.335-36).

³ Marilyn L. Williamson, *Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990).

⁴ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.1.

the construction of authorial identity/identities and recovering female political agency. Of these often-groundbreaking studies, it is Carol Barash's reassessment of women's writing and female community in a historical and political framework that has proved the inspiration for this exploration of the political animus behind much of Anne Finch's poetry.⁵

Laura Brown has posed the question "What sort of claim can a political reading make in a field already permeated with political awareness?" and it is a question that is particularly apt with regard to political readings of Finch's work.⁶ Barbara McGovern, author of an extensive and scholarly critical biography of Finch, has traced the history of her loyalties to the Stuart monarchy and documented the financial, social and personal impact of the Revolution of 1688/89 on her private life and public career.⁷ Her status as a non-juror, Tory and Jacobite is now widely accepted, even if few critics have sought to apply these political principles to her poetry. Barash, however, devotes a chapter of *English Women's Poetry* to Finch and her position in the "royalist women's tradition" of political writing, going a step further than McGovern by attending to the "political origins and political referents" of her early poetry (pp.259-60). What then can this thesis hope to add to the discussion?

Rather than focusing primarily on manuscript or published work, her early verses or the fables that dominated the final years of her poetic career, the popular and instantly recognizable poems or more obscure work, this project is an attempt to examine Finch's political poetry and its contexts, whether written in 1690 or 1710, intended for public or private readership, familiar through anthologies and criticism or virtually unknown. By focusing solely on the political possibilities of her entire oeuvre, without feeling compelled to address other issues surrounding the criticism of

⁵ Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁶ Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.171.

⁷ Barbara McGovern, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry: A Critical Biography* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

women's writing in the early modern period, I hope to offer a new and different perspective. Each chapter concentrates on a specific theme or genre that shaped Finch's consciousness as a political poet and enabled her to express her loyalty to the exiled Stuarts, her antipathy to William III and her observations on the political changes effected by his reign.

Robert Hume has defined historicist criticism as "the illumination of text by context", which necessarily involves the collection of new facts and source materials, the contextual interpretation of these facts, the collation of context and text through close reading and the creation of new contexts as a result of textual analysis.⁸ Adopting this methodology, in order to 'displace' Anne Finch from popular misconceptions regarding her life and poetry and 'place' her in a historical and political framework, her work is read here in relation to that of royalist writers, both male and female, writing during comparable periods of Stuart exile and also on the triumph of the Restoration and writers with Tory or Jacobite sympathies at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is particularly important to acknowledge the influence, not only of royalist women like Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn, but also of male writers such as Abraham Cowley, John Dryden and Jonathan Swift on her poetry if we are to properly understand its political intent and significance.

One aspect in which this thesis differs notably from previous studies, even those with a political bias, is in its vision of Finch as a poet with a "systematic political project", correlating her verses with specific events and public figures (Brown, p.171). For example, I suggest that the little known satire 'Sir Plausible' was actually a carefully constructed attack on John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, demonstrating the degree of her political engagement and the extent to which she participated in the rage of party during Queen Anne's reign. Although politically marginalized, the perception of Finch as "writing from the margins" and offering an

⁸ Robert D. Hume, 'Texts Within Contexts: Notes Towards a Historical Method', in *Philological Quarterly*, 17 (1992), 69-100 (p.71).

essentially psychological and metaphorical interpretation of the political situation following the Revolution fails to appreciate the range and depth of political commitment and articulation in her poetry.⁹

The central event in determining Anne Finch's career as a political poet was undoubtedly the Revolution of 1688/89. Finch was born into the affluent royalist Kingsmill family and in 1682 joined the Duke of York's household as a maid of honour to Mary of Modena. The six years spent at the very heart of the Stuart court, surrounded by the physical trappings of kingship, in the company of courtiers and poets such as Rochester and George Etherege and immersed in the public and private dramas of life in the royal household, consolidated her royalist upbringing and forged her life long fidelity to James II and his queen consort. It was at court that she met her husband, Colonel Heneage Finch, a gentleman of the bedchamber to the then Duke of York, who was equally devoted to his royal master and the Stuart monarchy. They married in 1684 in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace.

Barbara McGovern's excellent biography provides the definitive account of Finch's life and an ideal general preface to her poetry, thus it is not necessary here to narrate the minutiae of her private history. However, the import of this personal connection to James II and Mary of Modena and the consequences of their removal from power at the hands of William of Orange and an elite section of parliament are fundamental to any political interpretation of her poetry. After the Revolution, the Finches fled London and while Anne sought refuge in the country at the homes of various sympathetic friends, Heneage made a thwarted attempt to rejoin the king (who had himself fled to France) and was consequently arrested and imprisoned. The couple

⁹ Raymond Williams's phrase "writing from the margins" is used in relation to women's writing by Terry Lovell, 'Subjective Powers? Consumption, the Reading Public, and Domestic Woman in Early Eighteenth-Century England' in *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. by Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.23-41 (p.37). Carol Barash's understanding of Finch as a political poet is predicated on an essentially psychological interpretation of her work.

were eventually reunited in 1690 and found a safe haven at Eastwell in Kent, the family home of Charles Finch, Heneage's nephew and the current Earl of Winchilsea.

At this point the Finches became non-jurors, refusing to swear the oath of allegiance to the newly confirmed sovereigns, William III and Mary II, and were consigned to a life of political exile, prohibited from holding office or participating in public life. Non-juring is generally understood in religious terms, as those who refused to recognize William III did so because they held James II to be the divinely appointed and thus incontrovertible head of the Anglican Church. Jacobitism, on the other hand, is a more contested and often ambiguous categorization. At the simplest level, Jacobites were supporters or adherents of the exiled James II, "those who accompanied the fallen king in his banishment or who actively plotted and fought for his reinstatement at home; they were uncompromising, unquestionably loyal, and necessarily Roman Catholic".¹⁰ Yet as Toni Bowers has noted this definition of Jacobitism is increasingly understood to be "unnecessarily rigid" as:

It leaves us unable to recognize Jacobitism as part of the sensibility of the many English men and women who compromised with the new government but who nevertheless continued to feel sympathy and connection with the dethroned king, to regret late seventeenth-century political developments, or to consider their participation in the new regime provisional – those, in short, who withheld full ideological commitment, or whose commitment mutated over time.

(Bowers, p.857)

The term Jacobite is one used repeatedly in the subsequent chapters to refer to Finch's political allegiances and ideological position after 1688/89, but in the context of Toni Bower's argument rather than as a fixed signifier.

Indeed, the crux of my argument throughout these chapters revolves in many ways around the fluidity of Finch's Jacobitism; although her loyalty to James II and the cause that bore his name was absolute, it did not preclude doubts, insecurities and uncertainty from infiltrating her poetry or entail that her political vision remained

¹⁰ Toni Bowers, 'Jacobite Difference and the Poetry of Jane Barker', in *ELH*, 64:4 (1997), 857-69 (p.857).

fixed and unchanging from 1690 to 1720. Although it would be needlessly restrictive and misleading to assume a straightforwardly chronological progression to her development as a political poet there was a definite shift in her attitude and approach as both her career progressed and contemporary political, social and literary culture evolved. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of her poetry is the mirror it holds to the emergence of a palpably modern society: from her birth in 1661 (the month of Charles II's coronation) to her death in 1720 in Hanoverian Britain, Anne Finch witnessed the reigns of five monarchs, a political revolution, two major European wars, the materialization of a new economy and financial marketplace, the rise of print culture and the public dissemination of ideas, amongst numerous other developments.

Life as a political exile inescapably affected her poetry and the shift from translations and love songs to verses entitled 'On Absence', 'The Change' and 'The Loss' was almost immediate. Inevitably there are a number of poems deserving of wider readership and further study not mentioned in this thesis, some have been omitted due to their lack of political import, such as the verses and songs written prior to the events of 1688/89, others, as in the case of the two verse dramas *The Triumphs of Love and Innocence* and *Aristomenes*, simply because of time constraints. Almost all of the poems considered in the following pages were written during/after the Revolution. The dating of Finch's work is problematic, but the chronology compiled by William J. Cameron has proved invaluable and, unless otherwise stated, the dates provided are attributable to him.¹¹

Throughout the 1690s the exiles lived and worked at various locations in Kent, including Eastwell, Godmersham and Wye College, corresponding with and often visiting numerous friends and relatives such as the Thynne family at Longleat. It was not until the accession of Queen Anne (1702) that the Finches began to participate in London life again, taking a house in Cleveland Row at some point in 1708 and

¹¹ William J. Cameron, 'Anne, Countess of Winchelsea: A Guide for the Future Biographer' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Victoria College, 1951), Appendix A.

establishing themselves, in so far as they could considering their political status, in contemporary society. In 1712, on the death without heirs of his nephew, Heneage Finch acceded to the Winchilsea title, although this seemingly propitious event was problematic due to the pecuniary and legal complexities of the Eastwell estate. Even as the Earl and Countess of Winchilsea, the Finches continued to be plagued by financial insecurity and hardship. Perhaps this is one reason why Anne Finch ventured into print the following year with the publication of *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions*, an octavo volume comprising eighty-six poems and *Aristomenes*.¹²

There has been considerable debate as to the motivations and merits of manuscript circulation over publication, with many misconceptions arising such as the notion that male writers uniformly embraced print culture, while their reticent female counterparts preferred to conceal their work in veiled manuscripts. Publication still represents a desire for public consideration and recognition, while work existing only in manuscript form is often interpreted as that which the author intended to obscure. However, as Margaret Ezell has clarified, verses distributed as single sheet manuscripts and in manuscript collections were "first and foremost presentation pieces, not closet productions" and circulating work in this manner "did not prevent one from having a reputation as a poet".¹³ Equally, she argues that exhibiting a "reluctance to commit one's words or name to print", preferring manuscript circulation, cannot be viewed as "a peculiarly female trait", as countless male authors also failed to engage with print culture throughout this period.

¹² There have been various explanations offered as to Finch's decision to publish at this stage in her career. Ann Messenger conjectured that the appearance of *Miscellany Poems* in 1713 was in all likelihood connected to Finch's new aristocratic status, arguing, "[a] countess had less to fear from a largely hostile public than a plain 'Mts.'". 'Publishing Without Perishing: Lady Winchilsea's *Miscellany Poems* of 1713', *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, 5 (1981), 27-37 (p.28). Barbara McGovern, however, suggests that the publication of Finch's verses at this point is inherently linked to her increased participation in London literary life and close relationships with several influential poets, playwrights and publishers (p.100). Another plausible reason, and one that informs many of the arguments in this thesis, is that "*Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions* was published at the very moment when the political prospects for a reign by the exiled Stuart king appeared to be at their brightest". Charles H. Hinnant, 'Anne Finch and Jacobitism: Approaching the Wellesley College Manuscript', *The Journal of Family History*, 21:4 (1996), 496-502 (p.498).

¹³ Margaret Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp.69/70.

The importance of distinguishing between print culture and manuscript circulation is also contested in relation to political authorship, particularly in relation to women's political agency. Lois Schworer privileges the former with the claim that, for women, "the very act of using the printing press was of great significance" as both a symbolic act of defiance against "traditional norms" and a practical means of empowering women writers, "enabling them to make their ideas public, somewhat permanent, and available to a wider audience than would otherwise have been possible".¹⁴ Yet, as Leigh Eicke contends, manuscript circulation was also fundamental in political writing:

Although manuscript circulation was used in early modern Britain for a wide range of political and not-so-political writings, when a political group was proscribed, scribal publication became the method of choice both because the personal connection a handwritten text suggests would have strengthened community ties, and though some inflammatory Jacobite materials were printed, it was highly dangerous to do so.¹⁵

Carol Barash sees the distinction between Finch's poems in manuscript and print as one of degree; "the published versions are politically soft spoken" while manuscript verses are "more emphatically pro-Stuart" (p.263). Although I examine both forms of literary production in relation to her political writing, I have largely avoided comparisons between versions of the same text and assumptions based on the perceived opposition between private manuscripts and printed publications.

Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions was to be Finch's only significant foray into print culture. The failure of the Jacobite uprising in 1715, increased proscription of Jacobites, the disintegration of her London literary circle and her growing ill health conspired to limit further opportunities to publish a second volume, if indeed that was ever her objective. Fortunately for Finch scholars, access to a

¹⁴ Lois G. Schworer, 'Women's public political voice in England: 1640-1740', in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. by Hilda L. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.56-74 (p.57).

¹⁵ Leigh A. Eicke, 'Jane Barker's Jacobite writings', in *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800*, ed. by George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.137-57 (p.140).

considerable number of unpublished poems has been facilitated by the recent publication of the Wellesley manuscript by Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant. Inevitably, however, until there is a complete scholarly edition of all of her work, verses languishing in obscure manuscripts and miscellanies will remain critically neglected.

The following chapters explore political agency and linguistic authority in five different forms or modes of poetic discourse; from the retirement tradition and melancholic retreat; panegyrics and Pindarics, centred on the figure of the king; occasional and satirical verses inspired by the spirit of change and exchange; to the witty and instructive fable. The panegyric mode, designed to confirm the majesty and power of the Stuart monarchy, is more obviously political than, for instance, verses written in praise of the virtues of retired life; however, as this thesis will demonstrate, they all served a valuable purpose in Finch's construction of herself as a political writer. The years 1690 to 1720 were ones of uncertainty and transition, marked by revolution and the transformation of virtually every aspect of English society, be it political, fashionable, economic or literary. It seems fitting then, that Finch's poetic career should so precisely mirror the age. Each chapter reveals a new aspect of her, perhaps surprising, ability to adapt to the constantly changing world she lived in, as she sought to inscribe her resistance to the Revolution, William III, the Whigs and various other consequences of the deposition of James II through whatever means necessary.

2. "A SWEET, BUT ABSOLUTE RETREAT": RETIREMENT, REFLECTION AND RESISTANCE

After 1688, Anne Finch was forced into a life of actual retirement as she and her husband fled the capital in search of the obscurity they desperately needed as known supporters of the exiled James II. They sought refuge at the homes of friends, such as the Hatton, Thynne and Tufton families, before settling at Eastwell Park, the Winchilsea family seat currently in the possession of the third earl Charles Finch, which was to be their home, intermittently, for the rest of their lives.¹ It was at Eastwell, according to the 'Preface' to *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions*, that Finch became inspired to commit herself to "the service of the Muses":

But when I came to Eastwell, and cou'd fix my eyes only upon objects naturally inspiring soft and Poeticall imaginations, and found the Owner of it, so indulgent to that Art, so knowing in all the rules of itt, and att his pleasure, so capable of putting them in practice; and also most obligingly favorable to some lines of mine, that had fall'n under his Lordship's perusal, I cou'd no longer keep within the limmits I had prescrib'd myself, nor be wisely reserv'd, in spite of inclination, and such powerfull temptations to the contrary.²

It is obvious that these plans to be "wisely reserv'd" were related to the uncertain political situation of the early 1690s and her own precarious status as a political exile; however, as this passage indicates, Eastwell and the sympathetic Charles Finch provided a safe environment in which poetry could flourish. Whilst there is no disputing the fact that this 'retirement' to the country was a political necessity, rather than a lifestyle choice, the recurrent trope of retirement in Finch's poetry also served as a source of linguistic authority.

¹ Christopher Hatton was the first of many loyal friends (often interconnected through familial ties and marriages) to offer shelter to the Finches in the aftermath of the Revolution, at Kirby Hall in Northamptonshire. Eastwell, and the neighbouring Godmersham and Wye College, provided slightly more secure and permanent residences, although the domestic discord of Eastwell between the dowager countess and the mother of the new Earl of Winchilsea ensured that Anne and Heneage made frequent and prolonged visits to friends. Hothfield House, home to Thomas Tufton, Earl of Thanet, his wife Catherine and daughters Catherine and Anne was one such sanctuary, as was Longleat, whose extensive household was headed by Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth. McGovern, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry: A Critical Biography*, pp.55, 108-119.

² *Poems of Anne*, pp.6-12 (p.8).

In this chapter I examine the trope of retirement as a paradigm of the diversity within Finch's political writing. By exposing poetic retirement as a fictional construct, independent of the actual retired life she experienced after 1688/89 and until Queen Anne came to power, I hope to demonstrate the means by which she appropriated the strategies of earlier royalists in order to interpret and re-inscribe her own political exile. There are clear parallels between the poetic tropes employed by Finch in the 1690s and those of the royalist exiles during the 1650s and in both instances they seem designed to negotiate comparable periods of political unrest, confusion and disorder.

The interrelated themes of retreat, friendship and melancholy, all situated in metaphorical shade, enabled Finch to create a secure intellectual space in which to explore the changes arising from the Revolution, on both a personal and national level, and also to formulate her resistance and opposition to the new regime responsible for those changes. It is vitally important not to disregard the political element of her retirement poetry, or indeed to gloss over the theme of retirement altogether, preferring to catalogue 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' and 'A Nocturnal Reverie' as nature poems or concentrate on 'The Spleen' as an autobiographical account of the poet's own illness. Jonathan Sawday and Thomas Healy have argued, in relation to the literature of the Civil War period, that "Confinement is a rather different proposition to disengagement"; a contention that is equally applicable to Finch's poetic retirement.³ Although she endeavoured to create a contained and enclosed poetic space in scenes of shady retreat and melancholic introspection, the illusion of distance and detachment from public and political affairs fostered by her retirement, both literal and figurative, should never be misinterpreted as disengagement.

³ Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, 'Introduction', in *Literature and the English Civil War*, ed. by Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.1-12 (p.8).

i. "A retirement from the noise of towns"

Maren-Sofie Røstvig has observed that "fin-de-siècle exponents of the theme of the happiness of retirement were Stuart loyalists who were never reconciled to the regime of William of Orange".⁴ By espousing the joys and advantages of retirement and retreat these writers were in fact repudiating the authority of the new government and endorsing the "powers of the individual to establish his own way of life" (Røstvig, I, 24). This was by no means a new literary stance. The impact of the Civil War and the Interregnum years, still deeply felt even towards the end of the seventeenth century, ensured that, for many people, the Revolution initially evoked fears of a repetition of the division, uncertainty and bloodshed that followed the forced removal of an earlier Stuart monarch. The deposition of the rightful monarch not only induced a political parallel with the Civil War period, it also suggested a discernible model for writers loyal to James II. They could affirm their allegiance to the exiled king and also assert an alternative version of the Revolution, challenging the account of events propagated by the new government.⁵

Thomas Healy notes that, following the execution of Charles I and the disintegration of their cause, royalist writers consistently employed poetic strategies that relied on "withdrawal and retreat rather than confrontation" and extolled the virtues of their beliefs from "the safety of pastoral enclosures or other places of refuge and confinement."⁶ The same tactics were adopted by Anne Finch, as she sought to construct a relationship with the past (and the subsequent successful outcome, the

⁴ Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal 1600-1700* 2 vols (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), I, 441.

⁵ It is of course easy in retrospect to argue that the so-called 'Glorious' Revolution was on a very different scale to a civil war that divided a country, on both a national and familial level, and resulted in open conflict and bloodshed, but there is little doubt that the political events of 1688/89 were widely believed to be a precursor to another civil conflict. Daniel Szechi argues that "fear of again unleashing the social forces which had so nearly triumphed during the Great Civil War, and of another period of dislocation in general, was still ingrained in British politics at the Revolution and continued until well into the eighteenth century." *Jacobitism and Tory Politics 1710-14* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1984), p.38.

⁶ Thomas Healy, "'Dark all without it knits': vision and authority in Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*", in Healy and Sawday, pp.170-88 (p.171).

Restoration, that ended the prolonged exile of earlier royalist writers), regroup and reassess the current situation and avoid persecution, following yet another crisis for the Stuart monarchy.

It seems fitting to open a discussion of Finch's exploitation of the retirement tradition with one of its most famous proponents, Katherine Philips. During the 1650s Philips refined the concept of royalist retirement, exaggerating the extent of her seclusion in Wales and the private nature of her verse. In fact, as Carol Barash recognizes in her excellent discussion of Philips, these "myths" were intended to "obscure the political origins of Philips's writing, which was rooted in the exile and return of Charles II" (Barash, p.61). A crucial element of her retirement poetry was the employment of pastoral pseudonyms, both in the fashioning of her own poetic persona and the protection of her subjects; indeed, so strong was the identification between the poet and her creation, Orinda, that the two were, and to an extent still are, interchangeable. That Philips proved an inspiration for Finch is evident not only thematically and rhetorically, but also in the latter's assumption of a new poetic persona subsequent to her exile from court.

Finch circulated her early poetry under the pseudonym *Arctia*, a name suggestive of "a female version of Ares, Roman god of war; *Arethusa*, a nymph in the train of the chaste *Diana*, to whom Mary of Modena was often compared, as well as being the Greek word for virtue." (Barash, p.284) By 1694, however, she had adopted the name *Ardelia* and remained so for the rest of her career. Barash interestingly notes that *ardelia* is the feminine form of the Latin word for a meddler or busybody, *ardelio*, offering a novel perspective on Finch's poetic and political approach following the Revolution. *Ardelia* was also the subject of an early retirement poem by Philips, 'A retir'd friendship to *Ardelia*' (1651). In assuming a new poetic identity, Finch distanced herself from those verses written at court under her previous incarnation as a

"versifying Maid of Honour" and aligned herself with the much-admired Katherine Philips, an undeniably political poet who also retained her chaste reputation.⁷

'A retir'd friendship to Ardelia' opens with Philips entreating Ardelia to join her in a carefree and innocent "bowre", a refuge from the "serious follies" of the world.⁸ This invitation becomes more specifically a rejection of the political world in the following lines:

Here is no quarrelling for Crowns,
Nor fear of changes in our fate;
No trembling at the Great ones frowns,
Nor any Slavery of State.

Here's no disguise, nor treachery,
Nor any deep conceal'd design;
From blood and plots this place is free,
And calme as are those looks of thine.

(ll.5-12)

The poet positions her retired bower in direct opposition to the struggle for power between the monarch and parliament and the ensuing political instability, but all rejection is paradoxical, in that whatever is rejected must first be summoned. So it is that in the very act of asserting its freedom from politics the bower is transformed into a political space.

Philips's reference to the "Slavery of State" seems to be a clear condemnation of the supposedly liberating policies of parliament, which were designed to free the nation from the tyranny of monarchical rule. Treachery, calculation, plotting and bloodshed are loaded terms that reveal her opinion of the events of the Civil War and the intervening years and challenge any apparent dissociation from this world.⁹ Philips

⁷ 'The Preface' in *Poems of Anne*, pp.6-12 (p.8).

⁸ *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*, ed. by Patrick Thomas, 3 vols (Stump Cross: Stump Cross Books, 1990 -), I, 97, (ll.1-4).

⁹ Finch's poetry displays a similar attitude to war. 'To Mr F Now Earl of W' (1689) relates that Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, has been charged by "the new House alone to stand, / And write of War and Strife" (*Poems of Anne*, p.20, ll.68-69); a direct attack on William's foreign policy and determination to involve England in his war with the French. This is echoed in 'An Invitation to Dafnis' in the poet's attempts to lure her husband away from his study of the sieges of Mons and Namur and the skill of Louis XIV's celebrated military engineer, Vauban. Finch's retired vision has no place for either the political or military aspects of William's reign, even at a remove: "Let us my Dafnis, rural joys persue, / And Courts, or Camps, not ev'n in fauy view" (*Poems of Anne*, p.28, ll.63-64).

utilizes the standard royalist tropes of retirement, silence, shade, innocence and love/friendship in order to construct a location free from the "noise of warres" (l.15) and her success in creating the ideal royalist retreat is confirmed in the final line of the poem, which asserts that the speaker and Ardelia "Enjoy what princes wish in vain"(l.36).

Friendship has become a central term in critical discussion of Katherine Philips and the women who were influenced or deemed to have been influenced by her poetry, with critics such as Elaine Hobby and Harriette Andreadis either reading female friendship as indicative of actual same sex desire or construing it solely within an erotic context. In Philips's retirement poems, in which friendship features as a more abstract concept than in the intense addresses to Rosania and Lucasia (the pastoral pseudonyms of Mary Aubrey and Anne Owens), the erotic potential of her verses and speculation about same-sex desire are largely irrelevant. It seems likely that Philips was, to an extent, influenced in her representation of friendship in the retirement poems by the French notion of *préciosité*, which was introduced into England by Queen Henrietta Maria, and thereafter closely associated with the Stuart court and royalism.

Précieux or coterie literature involved the creation of an ideal 'society' of friends, not necessarily of the same sex, whose shared manners, taste and language distinguished them from the wider population. It was a literature of exclusivity and it is little surprise that, as Odette de Mourgues has observed, "the *précieux* coteries we know of stand out against a background of wars and unrest".¹⁰ This model of friendship fostered shared allegiances through disguise and secrecy and facilitated political discussion and the circulation of dissenting perspectives without exposure to risk. Carol Barash posits that, in its early stages at least, "Philips's 'Society of Friendship' was part of a discourse about literary and political allegiances during the

¹⁰ Odette de Mourgues, *Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.116.

Interregnum" in which "women's friendship provided a model of political loyalty" (p.56). Although she concedes that Philips's conception of friendship evolved throughout the 1650s until it came to denote almost exclusively a relationship between two women, Barash maintains that the word 'friend' in her poetry "never entirely loses these early resonances of political community. A friend is an ally, one who understands secret, subversive meanings of poems that are, overtly, apolitical" (Barash, p.63).

The erotic complexities of Philips's addresses to her female friends are largely absent in Finch. Mary of Modena's court was "as close as England ever came to the world of the précieuses", and Finch continued to be influenced by this idealized and essentially political model of friendship after the fall of the Stuart court (Barash, p.150).¹¹ Moreover, her reliance on both male and female companionship in her poetic retreats allowed her to concentrate on the political potential of friendship. Harriette Andreadis argues that most of Philips's contemporaries focused on "the Horatian ideal of civilized life and the Aristotelian notion of friendship" in order to negotiate their changed circumstances during the Interregnum, placing "friendship in the context of retirement to nature as an escape from the turmoil of the times than to explore the ecstasies and trials of intimacy through the language of Platonism."¹² It is this idea of "friendship in the context of retirement", still present in Philips, particularly in her early verses, that enabled Finch to create an imagined poetic community founded on shared political beliefs and experiences.

Philips continued to employ the trope of retirement throughout the 1650s. 'A Countrey life' focuses on a tangible or physical expression of retirement rather than

¹¹ Hero Chalmers has argued that "royalist defeat leads to a period of respectful nostalgia", a nostalgia evident in "the support given by male royalists during the 1650s to Katherine Philips's so-called 'society' of friendship and her poetry of women's friendship, both catalysed by the French *précieuse* culture which had fed into the bloodstream of the Caroline court via Henrietta Maria". 'The Politics of Feminine Retreat in Margaret Cavendish's *The Female Academy* and *The Convent of Pleasure*', *Women's Writing*, 6:1 (1999), 81-94 (p.87). The "political resonances of feminine retreat" are similarly evident in Finch's treatment of retirement.

¹² Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics, 1550-1714* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p.70.

the intellectualized form of retreat in 'A retir'd friendship'. The political tone of the opening quatrain immediately segues into the stereotypical representation of country life as an idyllic state evocative of a pastoral golden age:

How sacred and how innocent
A country life appears,
How free from tumult, discontent,
From flatteryc and feares.¹³

Philips recalls a time when "man enjoy'd himselfe" (l.6), poetry flourished and inspired and love was the prevailing force rather than "thoughts of ruling or of gaine" (l.15). Interestingly, the poet claims that "They knew no law nor phisique then, / Nature was all their witt" (ll.21-2), a statement echoing her praise of Henry Vaughan, as one who "Restor'st the golden age when verse was law".¹⁴ Retirement is associated, not with lawlessness, but with a state in which laws have become unnecessary.

'A Countrey life' exposes retirement as a fiction constructed by the poet - "I have a better fate then Kings, / Because I thinke it so" (ll.39-40) - and reinforced by poetic resolve as well as external influences:

But I, resolved from within,
Confirmed from without,
In privacie intend to spin
My future minuts out.

(ll.73-76)

Ambition is posited as the cause of many of life's disappointments and conflicts in the poet's rejection of status and reputation:

When all the stormy world doth roare,
How unconcern'd am I?
I can not feare to tumble lower
That never would be high.
Secure in these unenvy'd walls
I thinke not on the state,
And pittie no man's case that falls
From his ambition's height.

(ll.41-47)

¹³ *Katherine Philips*, pp.159-62, ll.1-4.

¹⁴ 'To Mr Henry Vaughan, Silurist, on his Poems', *Katherine Philips*, p.96, l.28.

Instead Philips rejects all the trappings of successful public life; courtship, "th'exchange" (l.58), revelling and fashionable display in Hyde Park, pronouncing them the result of vanity, in favour of "peace and honour" (l.64). She declares herself immune from these temptations, allowing only meditations on God, friendship and honesty to infiltrate her countryside idyll. Although the final lines of the poem with their reference to war remind the reader of the need for retirement, 'A Countrey life' concludes by stressing that such a retreat is undertaken "not by necessitie, / But wholly by my choice." (ll.87-88), an assertion of political and personal control.¹⁵

The idea that retirement is undertaken only when absolutely imperative is refuted once again with 'Invitation to the Countrey':

For a retirement from the noise of Towns,
Is that for which some Kings have left their Crowns;
And Conquerours, whose Laurells prest their Brow,
Have chang'd it for the quiet Mirtle bough.¹⁶

Here retirement or retreat is presented as a valid choice for powerful and successful men, kings and conquerors, who willingly renounce worldly show and glory for a more contemplative life. By emphasizing the positive character of a preference for retirement over the vanity, folly and ambition of the town, Philips attempts to refigure exile, whether political or personal, into a powerful self-motivated act rather than a forced posture of defeat. Yet there is also a defensive element to retirement, evident in her reluctance to publish and be publicly named as an author: "Believing the retirement she had chose, / Might yield her, if not pardon, yet repose".¹⁷ This posture of poetic coyness and timidity once removed from the safety of a self-imposed retirement reveals the extent to which retreat from the public world was used as a

¹⁵ This assertion of retirement as personal choice can also be found in the work of one of the précieuse's favourite heroines, la Grande Mademoiselle Anne Louise Montpensier, Duchesse d'Orléans. In the prologue to the *Nouvelles françoises* (1657) she presented the king's majority as a signal to women that they should make new lives for themselves away from the official centre of power. However, la Grande Mademoiselle left no doubt that she was leaving Paris, to live a retired life with a group of like-minded political women, through her own free will not through any coercion on the part of the authorities. Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p.53.

¹⁶ *Katherine Philips*, pp.173-5, ll.11-14.

¹⁷ 'To my Lord Arch: Bishop of Canterbury his Grace 1664', *Katherine Philips*, pp.239-41, ll.3-4.

protective device for both the female poet, as in this instance, and the political dissident.

Philips also links both her motivation for writing and her poetic ability to the retirement mode, as it was that "private shade, wherein my Muse was bred".¹⁸ The autonomy and exclusivity of retirement is explored further in 'An ode upon retirement, made upon occasion of Mr. Cowley's on that subject' through the following address to the "unfaithfull World" (1663-64):¹⁹

In my remote and humble seate
Now I'm again possess
Of that late fugitive, my breast,
From all thy tumult and from all thy heat
I'll find a quiet and a coole retreat;
And on the fetters I have worne
Looke with experienced and revengefull scorne,
In this my soveraigne privacie.
'Tis true I cannot governe thee,
But yet my selfe I can subdue;
And that's the nobler empire of the two.

(ll.18-28)

Whereas earlier poems on retirement, written during the 1650s, had drawn connections between the poetic desire for the retired life and the forced exile of Charles Stuart, in the allusions to quarrels over crowns and kings choosing to relinquish their thrones for a quieter life in seclusion, this ode avows Philips's sovereignty in her ability to control her life and resume possession of her own identity.

Jonathan Sawday has argued that, "The conflict of war is also a conflict between psychological models. One model is unified, integrated and royalist, the other disjointed, factionalist and republican."²⁰ Philips's retreat in this poem seems to belong very clearly to the former model. 'An ode upon retirement' centres on the retreat into the self as a means of protection from the vagaries, temptations and betrayals of the world; however, unlike many similar poetic examples of retreat and

¹⁸ 'To my Lord Arch: Bishop of Canterbury his Grace 1664', l.1.

¹⁹ *Katherine Philips*, pp.193-5, l.1.

²⁰ Jonathan Sawday, "'Mysteriously divided": Civil War, madness and the divided self' in Healy and Sawday, pp.127-143 (p.139).

withdrawal as a means of self-preservation, this poem was not written during the Civil War years or the Interregnum, but after the restoration of the royalist monarchy through Charles II.

Paul Hammond has suggested that there was "inevitably an element of stress in the fabrication of the second Stuart monarchy" which he attributes in part to the new king and also the difficulties in reconciling the fundamental concept of the king's two bodies, upon which the Stuart conception of power was founded, with the events of the past twenty years:

After 1660 this was palpably a damaged and questionable theory, for any notion of sovereignty which was founded upon the royal body had to take account of two scandals: firstly the execution of Charles I, the literal dismemberment of the king's body as a deliberated judicial and symbolic act; secondly the sexual exploits of Charles II, the involvement of the king's body in highly publicised promiscuity.²¹

There is also a possibility that the absolute subjectivity exhibited in the poetry of royalist writers such as Katherine Philips and Margaret Cavendish was actually dependent on the absence of the monarch and the shared experience of exile.²² Hence, the return of the monarch and his establishment as a physical presence paradoxically eclipses the autonomy of the royalist woman writer, a dilemma that can only be resolved, according to Catherine Gallagher, by adopting a position of absolute solitude.

Both of these arguments indicate that, for many royalists, the restoration of Charles II was difficult to assimilate with the poetic and political attitudes they assumed in order to negotiate the absence of the monarchy. Philips's retreat in 'An ode to retirement' highlights this sense of confusion and her charges of betrayal and reference to the "inconstant Sea" (l.33) suggest a certain disillusionment with the long-

²¹ Paul Hammond, 'The King's two bodies: representations of Charles II', *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain 1660-1800*, ed. by Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp.13-48 (p.17) and (p.13).

²² Catherine Gallagher, 'Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England', *Genders* 1:1 (1988), 24-33. I explore Gallagher's theories on absolutism and female subjectivity in relation to Margaret Cavendish and Anne Finch in detail in Chapter 3.

anticipated return of the king: "Nor from my selfe shouldst me reclaime / With all the noise and all the pomp of fame" (ll.38-39). These lines can of course be read as a rejection of the acclaim and success that greeted the publication of her work, both the pirated and official editions, the whole poem striking a posture of proper feminine distaste for the public world of print and renown. Although not disputing such a reading of the poem, I propose that 'An ode to retirement', dedicated as it was to the recent retirement from court of one of the great poets of exile, Abraham Cowley, also lends itself to political interpretation.

ii. *Windings and Shade*

'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' (?1690s) in many ways follows the pattern set by the retirement poetry of the 1650s by seeking a respite from the demands of the world:

Give me O indulgent Fate!
Give me yet, before I Dye,
A sweet, but absolute Retreat,
'Mongst Paths so lost, and Trees so high,
That the World may ne'er invade,
Through such Windings and such Shade,
My unshaken Liberty.²³

The essence of the poem is captured in these opening lines: the stress on the absolute nature of the desired retreat, the fear of invasion, the emphasis on liberty and the idea of loss. Absolutism was one of James II's most firmly held beliefs about the nature of sovereignty and one of the potential aspects of his reign that caused the most alarm to his opponents. Thus the desire for an absolute retreat recalls the exiled monarch whose own absolutist principles resulted in his forced retreat to France. The poignant reference to the "Paths so lost, and Trees so high" signals not only Finch's desire to lose herself but also, in a sense, the world she has lost. The word lost reflects both the plight of the Stuart dynasty and the poet: the king, court and all associated with it are

²³ *Poems of Anne*, pp.68-77, ll.1-7.

lost through their physical absence, but there is a sense that the lost cause is itself echoed in her feelings of defeat, confusion and abandonment. Yet she still chooses to situate her retreat in this complex and troubled emotional framework.

The constant refrain throughout 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' is the desire for 'windings and shade' and this shadowy retreat becomes synonymous with poetic and political autonomy. It is a position similar to that adopted by Aphra Behn in her celebratory ode to Queen Mary, on her arrival in England to claim her father's throne:

While my sad Muse the darkest Covert Sought,
To give a loose to Melancholy Thought;
Opprest, and sighing with the Heavy Weight
Of an Unhappy dear Lov'd *Monarch's* Fate [...] ²⁴

This "lone retreat" (l.5) framed by "thick Shade" (l.7) represents Behn's political isolation as a supporter of the exiled James II and signals the end of her poetic career, which cannot be separated from her political loyalty. However, immediately after lamenting the nation's faithlessness, she is drawn to the celebrations surrounding the arrival of "Blest Maria" (l.17) and relinquishes her shady retreat in order to laud the new queen.

Naturally Behn, the consummate political player, justified her apparent desertion of James II and his memory by qualifying her praise of Mary:

Yet if with Sighs we View that Lovely Face,
And all the Lines of your great Father's Trace,
Your Vertues should forgive, while we adore
The Face that Awes, and Charms our Hearts the more;
But if the *Monarch* in your Looks we find,
Behold him yet more glorious in your Mind;
'Tis there His God-like Attributes we see.

(ll.89-95)

The ode celebrates Mary as an incarnation of her father, who remains the "Monarch" in spite of his deposition, rather than an individual in her own right and certainly not

²⁴ 'A Congratulatory Poem to her Most Sacred Majesty Queen Mary, upon her arrival in England' in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, ed. by Janet Todd, 7 vols (London: William Pickering, 1992-6), I, (1992), 304-7, ll.1-4.

as the wife of the conquering William, thus allowing Behn to remain loyal to James, the "Great Lord, of all my Vows"(l.54). In opposition to the dark and gloomy hideaway, Mary is aligned with dazzling light and "with the Sun has equal force" (l.45) and it is this luminosity that allows her to penetrate the shade surrounding the poet: "Her pointed Beams thro' all a passage find" (l.47). Finch, however, sees no trace of James's monarchical power in the new queen; consequently her shady retreat remains inviolable and sacrosanct to the memory of the exiled king.

Finch's dependence on shade is perhaps at its most intense in 'A Nocturnal Reverie'. Written between 1709 and 1713, therefore much later than other retirement poems, 'A Nocturnal Reverie' is a detailed and somewhat mystical account of the hidden beauties of shade and shadow revealed in one continuous sentence.²⁵ The poem depicts the perfect twilight scene "when passing Clouds give place, / Or thinly veil the Heav'ns mysterious Face" and the moon is reflected in the river, exposing aspects of nature rarely seen in the light of day, such as the "paler Hue the *Foxglove* takes", the woodbine, bramble-rose and cowslip and the "unmolested" birds and animals.²⁶ Everything is altered, and yet becomes strangely more discernible, in the absence of light:

When Odours, which declin'd repelling Day,
Thro' temp'rate Air uninterrupted stray;
When darken'd Groves their softest Shadows wear,
And falling Waters we distinctly hear;
When thro' the Gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient Fabrick, awful in Repose,
While Sunburnt Hills their swarthy Looks conceal,
And swelling Haycocks thicken up the Vale [...]
(ll.21-28)

²⁵ Maren-Sofie Røstvig suggests that mysticism, usually in relation to a spiritual experience and union with God, was common amongst all religious persuasions at the beginning of the eighteenth century and played an important part in creating a philosophy of retirement. Røstvig names Thomas Ken, the non-juring bishop, as a poet whose work displayed "mystical leanings" and it seems possible that there was a connection between this impulse and protest against the revolution. (Røstvig, I, 31).

²⁶ *Poems of Anne*, pp.268-70, ll.7-8, 15, 34.

Night, or more accurately twilight, here represents contemplation, order, harmony, and a "sedate Content" (l.39), all elements intrinsic to the retirement tradition, while daylight signals confusion, disruption and also revelation.

The political significance of 'A Nocturnal Reverie' is easy to see, particularly in the association of daylight with tyranny and oppression, with twilight and shade engendering a space in which the poet can revision and reorder her world:

In such a *Night* let Me abroad remain,
Till Morning breaks, and All's confus'd again;
Our Cares, our Toils, Our Clamours are renew'd,
Or Pleasures, seldom reach'd, again pursu'd.
(ll.47-50)

Furthermore the reference to "Salisb'ry" - Anne Tufton, daughter of Catherine Tufton, who married James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury in 1709 - as one whom "stands the Test of every Light" (l.19) connects this poem with 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'.

This passing compliment to a female friend is seemingly unimportant and Wordsworth actually deleted the couplet when he was transcribing the poem he judged one of the few successful 'nature' poems of the last century; however, this tribute to Lady Salisbury as constant and unchangeable, come night or day, shade or sunlight, confirms the importance of friendship for the exiled poet.²⁷ 'A Nocturnal Reverie' echoes 'A Consolation' (discussed in the next chapter) in its play on the changes wrought by night and day, but whereas the earlier poem envisaged the night as a momentary break in James II's authority, symbolized by the sun, 'A Nocturnal Reverie' offers only a fleeting retreat from political failure in the evening shade.

Finch's need for a space that the "World may ne'er invade" is more than the standard rejection of the frivolity, folly and conflict of the public sphere common to the retirement tradition. The poem was written in the early 1690s when William of Orange's actions several years earlier were still perceived by many as an invasion and

²⁷ Wordsworth revised 'A Nocturnal Reverie' for inclusion in a manuscript volume of poetry presented to Lady Mary Lowther in 1819. Germaine Greer, *Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London and New York: Penguin, 1996), pp.245-58 (p.252).

a conquest, rather than the benevolent act of assistance they would become through the rhetoric of the Revolution settlement and with the passing of time. The probability that this is an allusion to William III is consolidated by the declaration "No Intruders thither come!" (1.8), which, in spite of the poet's immediate qualification that this applies only to those who "visit, but to be from home" (1.9), can scarcely escape being read as a defiant political statement. Unwelcome social guests are discouraged in a gesture that might easily be extended to include the unwelcome arrival of a foreign ruler.

The emphatic assertion of "unshaken Liberty" rendered explicit the political nature of the retirement tradition by foregrounding the right of the individual to govern his or her own life, rather than submit to established authority. It can also be read as a declaration of Finch's own liberty of conscience, her freedom of choice in spite of the unspoken pressures placed upon her, denoted by her "unshaken" resolve. Although women were not accorded the same rights or freedoms as men, under either patriarchal or contract theory, and were deemed to participate, if at all, in public and political affairs through their male relatives, Finch's case was exceptional. She had served as a maid of honour to Mary of Modena and, as Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford note, "Women courtiers were office-holders, and like other office-holders they took oaths of office".²⁸ The refusal to acknowledge William III as the legitimate monarch and to take the oath of allegiance was consequently not merely a reflection of her husband's position, but an independent political decision based on her prior oath.²⁹

²⁸ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.371.

²⁹ The case of Susanna Wesley, recounted by Rachel Weil, provides another example of a woman asserting her 'liberty of conscience' in a political context. One evening at family prayers, Wesley refused to say 'Amen' in response to her husband's prayer for King William, earning her husband's wrath and his own oath never to touch his wife again. Interestingly when Wesley, through fear of divine retribution if her husband succumbed and contravened the terms of his own oath, contacted the non-juring clergyman George Hickes he assured her not only that her own political defiance was just but that her husband had perjured himself through his outraged oath as it went against an earlier oath - the marriage contract. *Political Passions: Gender, the family and political argument in England 1680-1714* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.1.

Finch's creation of a poetic space receptive to "unshaken Liberty" recalls Katherine Philips's praise of Henry Vaughan as the poet who restored a mythical golden age when "verse was law" ('To Mr Henry Vaughan, Silurist, on his Poems', l.28). Vaughan, writing at the height of the civil strife in England, celebrated pastoral scenes and themes, such as love and friendship, in a series of poems removed from the ongoing conflict between the king and parliament. The pastoral notion of a golden age of perfect innocence and harmony, when laws, governments and monarchs were unnecessary, was a vision beloved by many royalist writers. Behn, for instance, enthused about a time when "Each Swain was Lord o'er his own will alone" and questioned whether "man ought to live by Rule?" in her expanded paraphrase of Tasso's 'Aminta'.³⁰ Finch, however, did not celebrate a generalized golden age or mourn the demise of this idealized state of existence; instead she endeavoured to experience the liberty and freedom extolled by advocates of golden age mythology on a personal level.

'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' imagines a place untouched by the cares and news, both trivial and important, of the outside world, in contrast to the stress of life in political exile during the early 1690s, constantly awaiting information that might alter the current situation:

News, that charm to listning Ears;
That false Alarm to Hopes and Fears;
That common Theme for every Fop,
From the Statesman to the Shop,
In those Coverts ne'er be spread,
Of who's Deceas'd, or who's to Wed,
Be no Tidings thither brought,
But Silent, as a Midnight Thought,
Where the World may ne'er invade,
Be those Windings, and that Shade [...]

(ll.12-21)

Here silence symbolizes a respite from the "false alarms", misreports, apprehension and raised hopes conveyed by communication with the outside world: a world that is

³⁰ 'The Golden Age', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.30-5, l.57, 116.

figured implicitly as London, with the fop, statesman and shop representing the three centres of power in the capital, the court, parliament and financial institutions.

The lengthy descriptive account of the simple food and clothing required by the poet in her retreat is a standard feature of retirement poetry, particularly that based on a Virgilian model, as it embodies the virtues associated with rural life: ease, fertility and humility. This focus on "plain, and wholesome Fare" (l.33), the absence of perfumes and "not so Gay" (l.64) garments could also be interpreted as a tacit criticism of the excess, extravagance and ceremony of court life. As the rituals and habits of the court were unlikely to have altered radically under William (bearing in mind that Finch had been a member of the Duke and Duchess of York's household during the reign of one of the 'merriest' and most profligate monarchs of them all, Charles II), this espousal of simpler pleasures may be less an attempt to score political points off the new establishment than an effort to reconcile herself to a new way of life.

It may praise solitude but Finch's retreat is not totally solitary, as she requests a companion "suited to my Mind" to share her retired vision. Carol Barash reads these lines as a celebration of female friendship and the creation of a feminocentric space, arguing that the poem "imagines a female companion for Ardelia, the very same Arminda to whom the poem is addressed"; however, whilst the Ardelia does turn to Arminda in the following section, it is clear that the partner referred to here is male (Barash, p.280). The imagined relationship is founded unambiguously on passionate love (ll.119-120) with the reference to Adam and Eve indicative of a heterosexual pairing: "When but Two the Earth possest, / 'Twas their happiest Days, and best" (ll.112-113). The cavalier poetry of the Civil War period relied heavily on the motif of

sexual love, but, although poets like Katherine Philips and Finch were drawing on this earlier poetic tradition, their gender barred them from fully participating in it.³¹

It may be that Philips negotiated this obstacle by shifting the focus of her poetry from heterosexual love to female friendship, but 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' reveals that Finch was attempting to appropriate both political models, the cavalier passion for love and Philips's reliance on female friendship, in her desire for a male partner as well as the support of Arminda.³² Interestingly, the male companionship Ardelia seeks is that of a man free from the "Transports of his fallen State" (l.123), such as rage, jealousy and hatred, a man untouched by the punishments incurred by Adam when he succumbed to "*Satan's Wiles*" (l.124). Furthermore, while she does meditate on the passing of time, "how Time do's haste" (l.132), and laments the passing of youth, "The time alas! too soon outgrown" (l.141) and "approaching Age" (l.151), her lines lack the urgency of the *carpe diem* poems of Herrick, Lovelace and Marvell.

Instead her petition entreats that:

Thus from Crouds, and Noise remov'd,
Let each Moment be improv'd;
Every Object still produce,
Thoughts of Pleasure and of Use [...]

(ll.126-29)

Finch overtly politicizes this discussion of time by relating it to the fate of a "lonely stubborn Oak" (l.142) which resists the ravages of the winds until finally a whirlwind strikes and leaves the tree unavoidably altered with a "distorted Trunk" (l.148) and "Sapless Limbs all bent, and shrunk" (l.149). This depleted oak tree signifies the

³¹ "To Mr F. Now Earl of W" highlights the incongruity of women writing about love, generally the preserve of male poets waxing lyrical about the illicit attractions of their mistresses, in the Muses' astonished reaction to the poet's appeal for assistance with "a Husband's Praise" (l.32: "A Husband! echo'd all around: / And to Parnassus sure that Sound / Had never yet been sent" (ll.37-39).

³² Barash references Richard Strier who envisages such a shift in Philips's poetry, creating a distinction between the public world of men and the world of the private woman, whose love, expressed through friendship is free from base motives and expression. Richard Strier, 'Lyric Poetry from Donne to Philips', in *Columbia History of British Poetry*, ed. by Carl Woodring and James Shapiro (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp.229-53 (p.251). She rejects such a simplistic reading, arguing that such a shift is never fully realised and also that women's friendship in Philips's poetry is a more complex and potentially threatening trope than Strier's reading permits. (Barash, p.55-6).

plight of James II; exiled, isolated and ultimately defeated by the successive blows against him. Mirrored in the fate of the oak is the poet's fate as she envisages herself as a "helpless Vine" (l.152) left unsupported and "Living only in the Root" (l.157):

Back reflecting let me say,
So the sad *Ardelia* lay;
Blasted by a Storm of Fate,
Felt, thro' all the *British* State;
Fall'n, neglected, lost, forgot,
Dark Oblivion all her Lot [...]

(ll.158-63)

These lines expose *Ardelia* at her lowest ebb, offering a glimpse of the bleak reality of political and social exile usually concealed by the positive interpretation of a desired retirement and retreat. Devastated by the events of 1688/89, her life is now a dark oblivion, devoid of any hope for the future.

It is *Arminda* who offers an escape from these feelings of loss and exclusion in a remarkable passage that sees *Ardelia* being almost resurrected from a symbolic death by her friend's love:³³

Faded till *Arminda's* Love,
(Guided by the Pow'rs above)
Warm'd anew her drooping Heart,
And Life diffus'd thro' every Part [...]

(ll.164-67)

The biblical parallel drawn on by Finch to reiterate the importance of friendship, the story of David and Jonathan, highlights the political relevance of the relationship between the two women. David, "the son of *Jess*" (l.182), is, like the poet and her monarch, "Hunted by all kinds of Ills" (l.184) and "From his House, and Country torn" (l.188) and the political implication of this shared exile lies in the figure of David as an established royalist signifier. As a consolation for the various trials that have beset him, fate grants David the companionship and assistance of a friend as

³³ *Arminda* was Finch's pseudonym for Catherine Tufton, Countess of Thanet. Catherine and her husband Thomas, the sixth Earl of Thanet were amongst the friends with whom the Finches sought refuge in the months following the Revolution. Thomas Thanet had been a gentleman of the bedchamber alongside Heneage Finch. Although they outwardly professed allegiance to William and Mary, Lord and Lady Thanet were known to sympathize with both non-jurors and Jacobites. (McGovern, p. 110).

"*Friendship* still has been design'd, / The Support of Human-kind" (ll.192-93). A friend, for Finch, is a "Clue" (l.199) who in a period of uncertainty and instability symbolizes both the past and a way forward to the future, who connects the poet "withdrawn from all the rest" (l.198) with the outside world she is excluded from.

Finch concluded 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' by citing the lives of two prominent Romans, from the period leading to the Roman civil wars, as a final endorsement of the benefits of retreat.³⁴ She begins with the story of Crassus, a consul and censor of Rome, who was forced as a child to flee from the man who had slaughtered his father and brother. Crassus's exile in Spain, when he dwelt in a "commodious ample Cave" (l.209), supported by the kindness of the local landowner whose "entrusted Care" (l.228) supplied him and his companions, "Three Sharers in his Fate" (l.218) with food and entertainment are detailed at length, as Finch expands on the source details (most likely Plutarch or Dryden's translation) to turn a necessary, if comfortable, exile into an idyllic and luxurious retreat. Moreover, she hypothesizes that if only Crassus had made the cave "Both his Palace, and his Grave" (l.231), rejecting public life in favour of a life of retirement, he might have secured "Peace and Rest" (l.232), rather than propagating an unjust personal war against the Parthians, causing the death of his son and suffering an ignominious death all in the "pursuit of Wealth" (l.236).³⁵

This cautionary tale is followed by the story of Sertorius, an exiled commander, who won over the Spanish and continued to lead a victorious army in the name of Rome against the corrupt consuls. He was renowned for his politic

³⁴ The inclusion of the lives of two prominent Romans may also be an allusion to the classical origins of the retirement tradition. Both Horace and Virgil wrote their famous poems on the happiness of retirement, although from slightly different perspectives, against a backdrop of civil strife and successive power struggles amongst the rulers of Rome. Horace's poetic career came about only after the fall of Brutus and the end of his public career and he resisted all efforts to tempt him back into the political world, preferring a life of retirement on his famous Sabine farm. While Virgil did not personally undertake a similar form of retirement, his eclogues and georgics established him as both a pastoral poet and a practical educator on the finer points of agricultural life. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. by Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth 3rd edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.724-27, 1602-07.

³⁵ *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, pp.857-58.

management of those he commanded, one of the most famous examples being his use of a tame white fawn to convey apparently prophetic messages, which convinced the Spanish he was god-like. Eventually, however, his friends who envied his military prowess and power betrayed him.³⁶ Such an ending, the poet suggests, could have been avoided:

Had he his once-pleasing Thought
Of Solitude to Practice brought;
Had no wild Ambition sway'd;
In those Islands had he stay'd,
Justly call'd the Seats of Rest,
Truly Fortunate, and Blest,
By the ancient Poets giv'n
As their best discover'd Heav'n.

(ll.250-57)

By spending his exile in the pleasant and safe retreat of the Islands of the Blest (Homer's Elysian Fields), instead of seeking greatness and power to rival that of his opponents, Sertorius may not have "Felt a Dagger in his Breast" (l.249). In both of these cases retirement offers more than peace, comfort and innocence, more than protection from the follies and vices of public life: it becomes a space in which to overcome personal character flaws, to cheat fate and even potentially escape death, or at least a dishonourable or violent death.

Finch turns in the final lines of the poem to introspection, desiring to be free from "roving Thoughts" (l.260) and contentious ambitions, petitioning fate for "Contemplations of the Mind" (l.283). Carol Barash argues that the poem "reaches inward to soar upward" as the poet aspires to "a vantage-point above earth and heaven, a position from which the political and religious controversies of her own time are rendered miniscule, virtually irrelevant" (Barash, p.281). I would suggest, however, that whilst Finch certainly redirects her attention in the concluding section of the poem, she herself remains firmly located in a "subterranean Place" (l.271), consistent

³⁶ *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p.1393.

with her stance throughout the poem that "all Heaven shall be survey'd" only from the "Windings and that Shade" (ll.292-93).

Røstvig notes that during the Civil War a change occurred within the retirement tradition, namely that "the passive or meditative aspects of country life were beginning to predominate at the cost of its more active sides; the Happy Husbandman was being metamorphosed into a Serene Contemplator", a change evident in 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' (Røstvig, p.143). The poet's musings on the stars and the "outward, glorious skies" (l.273) lead her to contemplation of "th'immortal spirit" (l.274), but Finch envisages the spirit *descending* to earth, to a human level, rather than assuming an elevated position herself. Although the basic classical concept of retirement underwent a variety of transformations throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the belief in an "inner connection between the natural scene and moral, religious, and political aspects of life" remained a constant factor (Røstvig, II, 109). The final plea, to be taught "things unutterable" (l.279), witnesses a desperate attempt to reconcile the moral, religious and political aspects of life, after all the certainties of her world had been shattered by the 'Glorious' Revolution. As the constant internal repetition illustrates, it is a process that can only begin in windings and shade, but as the poet herself persistently stresses, this is a posture of retreat, to regroup and re-gather, not of defeat.

iii. Alterations and Improvements

If the windings and shade of absolute retreat were intended to afford a safe space in which to escape from the conflict and confusion of a particular political moment and reflect on its consequences, then the country house and its gardens presented the possibility of imposing order and permanence in the face of upheaval and disruption. As Jacqueline Pearson notes:

In about 1611, a period marked by anxieties about disorder and the

beginning of the argument between king and parliament over the limits of royal authority which culminated in the 1640s in civil war, a new poetic genre emerged – the country house poem.³⁷

Although Pearson defines the country house poem as a new genre, I would argue that it was in fact part of the retirement tradition. Both the country house or estate poem and verses written from a position of retreat were reactions to political events, seeking resolution through the celebration of various aspects of retired and rural life.

James Turner points out that although Stuart culture was predominantly “courtly and metropolitan” it was funded by the wealth of the country estate, establishing a real political as well as literary connection between the affairs of state and the business of a country estate: “Both kinds of ‘Estate’ should display self-sufficiency, hierarchy, mutual co-operation and communication, subordinated to one powerful lord”.³⁸ The “aesthetics of landscape” continued to be politicized throughout the eighteenth century, predominantly by the Tory party, as “Intervention in the landscape was understood as making explicit and readable statements about the political history, the political constitution, the political future of England, and about the relations that should exist between its citizens.”³⁹

The country house poem originated with Ben Jonson and Aemilia Lanyer and praise of the country estate, both house and gardens, quickly became an important addition to royalist typology. Jonson’s ‘To Penshurst’, an ode in praise of Sir Robert Sidney’s estate in Kent, depicts the ideal country estate in which everything has its place and function; the landowner and his family, the farmers and peasants, and even the animals co-exist in total harmony with each fulfilling their purpose in life. The lord of the estate is generous and fair, his wife is virtuous and organized and the

³⁷ Jacqueline Pearson, “‘An Emblem of Themselves, in Plum or Pear’: Poetry, the Female Body and the Country House”, in *Write or Be Written: Early Modern Women Poets and Cultural Constraints* ed. by Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp.87-104 (p.87).

³⁸ James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p.1 and p.115.

³⁹ Nigel Everett, *The Tory View of Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p.7.

tenants do their duty without complaint. The poem focuses on the natural aspects of the estate, the woodlands, rivers, flora and fauna, rather than the house itself; indeed, the poet mentions it mainly to note what is absent from the building:

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show
Of touch or marble, nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
Thou hast no lantern whereof tales are told,
Or stair, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And these grudged at, art revered the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.⁴⁰

Although Penshurst, in comparison with other estates, may lack expensive fixtures and ornamentation, Jonson makes it clear that such "proud, ambitious heaps" (l.101) will never compete in fulfilling the true function of a country house, as "their lords have built, but thy lord dwells" (l.102).

Whereas 'To Penshurst' subordinates natural beauty to the practical aspects of the ideal country estate governed by a benevolent landlord, 'The Description of Cooke-ham', written in praise of Lanyer's patron Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, focuses almost entirely on the aesthetic attributes of the Clifford estate. 'To Penshurst' is a hymn to regulation, structure and the reciprocal relationship between man and nature, landlord and tenant, king and subject. Lanyer's version of the country house poem, however, translates the hierarchical structure of the model estate into an almost symbiotic relationship between Margaret Clifford, her daughter Anne, Countess of Dorset, and the Cooke-ham estate. All of the beauty, pleasure and splendour observed by the poet is wholly dependent on the "Mistris of that Place, / From whose desires did spring this worke of Grace".⁴¹ The arrival of this "great Lady" (l.10) causes the flowers and the trees to "Set forth their beauties then to welcome thee" (l.34), while even the hills pay homage to their rightful mistress.

⁴⁰ *Ben Jonson: Poems*, ed. by Ian Donaldson (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 87-91 (ll.1-8).

⁴¹ *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, ed. by Susanne Woods (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 128-38 (ll.10-11).

Correspondingly, her departure sees the estate wither and its brilliance fade through grief: "Me thought each thing did unto sorrow frame" (l.132).

'The Description of Cooke-ham' is in many ways a feminized vision of the country house, with a more organic perception of the natural and divine order than that exhibited in 'To Penshurst'. Lanyer assimilates the paradigm into the very structure of the poem, in the identical couplets that both welcome the arrival and lament the departure of the Clifford women:

Each Arbor, Banke, each Seate, each stately Tree,
Thought themselves honor'd in supporting thee.
(ll.45-46)

Each arbor, banke, each seate, each stately tree
Lookes bare and desolate now for want of thee [...]
(ll.191-92)

This structural symmetry creates a contained and enclosed poetic space, a perfect moment captured by the poet, in which Cooke-ham remains perfectly preserved from the "dust and cobwebs" (l.202) of time: "This last farewell to *Cooke-ham* here I give, / When I am dead thy name in this may live" (ll.205-06).

'To the Honourable the Lady Worsley at Longleat' conforms in many ways to the model established by both Jonson and Lanyer of the archetypal country house. Longleat is "fam'd" (l.46) for its buildings, fountains, terraces and labyrinth, monuments to man's skill and proficiency, but it is Lord Weymouth, the liberal and generous landowner, who shall be the testament to future ages, rather than the estate itself:

Protect Him Heaven and long may He appear
The leading Star to his great Offspring here
Their Treasury of Council and support
[...]
Who from abroad shall no Examples need
Of men Recorded or who then Exceed
To urdge their Virtue and exalt their Fame
Whilst their own Weymouth stands their noblest Aime.⁴²

⁴² *Poems of Anne*, pp.52-55, ll.46, 84-6, 90-94.

Like Penshurst, Longleat is not merely a building; it embodies the virtues and graces of its owner.

However, "The Joys Ardelia att Long-Leat did know" (l.98) are inspired not only by Lord Weymouth, but also by his daughter, Frances, Lady Worsley or Utresia, who, like Margaret Clifford, has an immediate effect on her natural surroundings:

Utresia in her fresh and smiling bloom
 With Joys incompass'd and new Joys to come
 Who like the Sun in her Meridian shows
 Surrounded with the Lustre she bestows
 Her self dispensing by her long'd for sight
 To every Place she visits full delight [...]

(ll.24-29)

Finch extends the metaphor to include Utresia's influence over the despondent poet through their written correspondence. In a stark contrast to the celebration of retirement in 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' and 'A Nocturnal Reverie', political exile is exposed here as a "lonely and obscure recess" (l.1) and a "shunn'd retreat" (l.2) in which Ardelia is "Lost to the World" (l.3) and a "Wretch oppress'd by Fate" (l.4).

Exile and despair inevitably affect poetic creativity and Finch extols Utresia's patience and kindness in voluntarily corresponding with "such a dull and disproportion'd hand" (l.14). 'To the Honourable the Lady Worsley at Longleat' encompasses a personal need to pay tribute to Utresia's sympathy and understanding, her ability to "cheer all Hearts and to suspend our pains" (l.32), thus uniting the poet, the patron and the estate. Utresia also provides the link between the despair and upheaval of political exile and the consolation to be found in the permanence and authority represented by the country-house estate. The figure of the benevolent and responsible landowner, in this case Lord Weymouth, can, of course, be construed politically.⁴³

⁴³ Lord Weymouth, although no supporter of James II, acquired a reputation as something of a patron to non-jurors and he was particularly sympathetic to the plight of his brother-in-law, Heneage Finch.

The role of the responsible landowner developed in 'To Penshurst' assumed even greater significance in the country-house poem and royalist propaganda after speculation, stocks and insurance offered new and more immediate ways to accrue wealth. Delarivier Manley's criticism of Blenheim, built to honour the achievements of the Duke of Marlborough, as the antithesis of the country house in the Tory newsletter *The Examiner* (no.51, 12th-19th July, 1711) signifies the fundamental importance of the country house to first royalists and then Tories as a symbol of permanence, order and social responsibility:

While Marlborough came to represent the wealth and influence that may accrue to enterprise at both the personal and national level, his detractors could deplore the undermining of early strength of character by the building of Blenheim Palace at Woodstock Park. This was seen as a useless show-place built out of public monies in time of war for a man with immense capital invested in the City, who would be an absentee landlord for as long as he maintained the standing army on the Continent.⁴⁴

Although the retirement tradition endorsed the power of the individual and the self-sufficiency of rural life, it was founded on the importance of land and property as the proper source of power, wealth and status. During the 1690s the shift in attitudes towards financial gain and social mobility had a detrimental effect on the centrality of the country house, estate and landowner.

Finch questioned the vast prosperity generated by trade and speculation, often at the expense of traditional sources of power and wealth, in 'Man's Injustice Towards Providence', through the query of a country landowner to his friend, a "Thriving Merchant": "How comes this Wealth? a Country Friend demands, / Who scarce cou'd live on Product of his Lands".⁴⁵ The merchant escapes all the vagaries of fortune, with no ships wrecked or looted, which he attributes to his own "Industry" (l.27), an ebullition of pride which predictably precedes a fall when he is financially ruined, an outcome ascribed to providence. The merchant flees his creditors and previous life and

⁴⁴ Virginia Kemy, *The Country-House Ethos in English Literature 1688-1750: Themes of Personal Retreat and National Expansion* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984), p.53.

⁴⁵ *Poems of Anne*, p.196, ll.1, 21-22.

"humbly sues for a Retreat" (l.47) with "his Acquaintance at the Rural Seat" (l.46). The merchant himself is an absentee landlord - "His Wife too, had her Town and Country-Seat" (l.9) - whose constant quest for money and acquisition prevents the proper management of the estate that he ultimately abandons.

Unlike the proprietors of Penshurst and Longleat, the merchant and his wife delight in ostentatious displays of wealth and luxurious surroundings without ever appreciating their real value. Even the merchant's retirement in the concluding lines of the poem fails to bring enlightenment as he refuses to acknowledge his own accountability: "To Providence I attribute my Loss." (l.55). The merchant may mimic the possessions and habits of the fashionable, but Finch makes it very clear that he will never be able to assume the virtues and status of the responsible landlord.

The characteristic affirmation of authority and order within country house poetry reflects, not only a level of anxiety about the precarious nature of those ideals at various political moments throughout the seventeenth century, but also an attempt to actively reassert these values. Virginia Kenny considers such an impulse an extension of the desire to retreat to a retired life:

The virtuous man is a microcosm demonstrating the triumph of harmony over discord. This is essentially the Horatian motif of individual self-control, but the implications of self-sufficiency spread beyond the individual to produce a node of order in a potentially chaotic world.

(Kenny, p.133)

While the traditional retirement poem looked inward to create a new idealized world the estate poem looks outward to influence and redirect the existing world.

'Upon my Lord Winchilsea's converting the mount in his garden to a terras' (written some time between 1694 and 1697) takes as its subject the improvements made to Eastwell by the current owner and third Earl of Winchilsea, Charles Finch. Unlike 'To Penshurst' and 'The Description of Cooke-ham', the poem lacks the extensive description of the minutiae of estate life that often characterized the genre. Instead it looks to another proponent of the country house poem, Abraham Cowley,

and his tribute to Henrietta Maria, 'On the Queens Repairing Somerset House'. The narrative voice of the poem is that of the palace itself, a device that renders the effects of war and civil unrest curiously personal and pathetic, without diluting the political import of such buildings:

When God (the Cause to Me and Men unknown)
Forsook the Royal Houses, and his Own,
And both abandon'd to the Common Foe;
How near to ruine did my Glories go?
Nothing remain'd t' adorn this Princely place
Which Covetous hands could Take, or Rude Deface.⁴⁶

Here the country house (although located in London, Somerset House embodies all of the functions of the country house and estate) and the church metonymically represent the state and divine authority, politics and religion. The fact that Somerset House was traditionally the residence of the queen consort hints at one of the targets of puritan and republican opprobrium, Charles I's forceful and influential queen, Henrietta Maria, but also more generally establishes the royalist tone of the poem.

Cowley compares the ravaging of the palace with the actions on the battlefield at "Naseby's field" on the "fatal Day" (l.10), the resounding and decisive defeat of Charles I and the royalists by Cromwell's army. The "Dismembred Statues of great Heroes" (l.9), defaced by the looters of the palace, signify both the defeated cavaliers who lost their lives and cause at Naseby and also the end of the 'golden age' presided over by the Stuart monarchs. After the theft of its treasures and destruction of its interior, Somerset House is "starv'd to death" (l.12) by neglect and abandonment, a fate represented in very human terms, as the walls gasp, the roofs weep and life disappears from the gardens. The forgotten house, bereft of care and attention, symbolizes the "cavalier winter", the term used by Earl Mincr to render the social and political exclusion endured by royalists, both at home and in exile on the Continent,

⁴⁶ Abraham Cowley: *Poems: Miscellanies, The Mistress, Pindarique Odes, Davideis, Verses Written on Several Occasions*, ed. by A.R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 433-35 (l.1-6).

during the Interregnum.⁴⁷ However, with the Restoration and the return of Henrietta Maria comes hope for the derelict palace: "See how my face is chang'd, and what I am / Since my true Mistress, and now Foundress, came," (ll.17-18). In true country house poem tradition the queen does more than simply repair the damage inflicted on the palace during the Civil War and Interregnum, she actually improves on the original to "Strengthen, Enlarge, Exalt what she Repairs." (l.24).

Similarly, Finch depicts the Earl of Winchilsea as an improver, creating an even more glorious Eastwell than that maintained by his ancestors.⁴⁸ Like Cowley's queen, Charles Finch is concerned with innovation, change and progress rather than merely reconstructing or preserving the past:

If we those Gen'rous Sons deserv'dly Praise
Who o're their Predecessours Marble raise,
And by Inscriptions, on their Deeds, and Name,
To late Posterity, convey their Fame,
What with more Admiration, shall we write,
On Him, who takes their Errours from our sight?⁴⁹

The poem centres on the removal of a "Mountain" that persisted in "Concealing all the beautys of the Plaine" (ll.8-10), allowing Winchilsea to succeed where previous owners of the estate had failed. Finch congratulates the earl on the achievement of the "vast dessign" (l.12) and compares his actions to the conquering impulses of the Roman Empire:

And as old Rome refin'd what ere was rude,
And Civiliz'd, as fast as she subdu'd,
So lies this Hill, hew'n from its rugged height,
Now levell'd to a Scene of smooth delight,
Where on a Terras of itt's spoyles we walk,
And of the Task, and the performer talk;
From whose unwearied Genius Men expect
All that can farther Polish or Protect [...]

(ll.15-20)

⁴⁷ Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 256.

⁴⁸ Finch's depiction of Lord Winchilsea invalidates the theory, advocated by Bernard Mandeville, that all improvement arising as it does from assertive or selfish individualism derives from "narrow self-interest without any natural concern or responsibility for the opinion or welfare of others", (Everett, p.14).

⁴⁹ *Poems of Anne*, pp.33-36, ll.1-6.

Whereas Jonson and Lanyer praised the successful management of nature and envisaged their landowning subjects and their environment co-existing in harmony and order, 'Upon converting the mount' focuses on the subjugation of nature, in the form of cultivation and improvement.

Jacqueline Pearson has argued that although Finch's ode does follow many of the established conventions of the country house poem, notably in its inclusion of classical loci amoeni and the concluding paean of praise, it cannot be read as a straightforward example of the genre.⁵⁰ Pearson argues that 'Upon converting the mount' "shows a subversive engagement with these conventions, since it implies a marked ambivalence about the improvements it ostensibly praises" and she stresses the fact that the central section appears to undermine the commendation and acclaim that opens and closes the poem (Pearson, p.101). Finch observes that men will now look to Winchelsea for his assistance in providing not only "Pollish" but also protection and it is the introduction of this new element that contributes to the ambiguous nature of the poem.

Finch uses this idea of Charles Finch as a protector to turn to the royalist imagery of the grove, a protective enclosure, once located on the estate, but demolished by a previous 'improver':⁵¹

To see a sheltring grove the Prospect bound,
Just rising from the same proliffick ground,
Where late itt stood, the Glory of the Seat,
Repell'd the Winter blasts, and skreen'd the Somer's heat;
So praised, so lov'd, that when untimely Fate,
Sadly prescrib'd itt a too early Date,
The heavy tidings cause a gen'ral Grief,
And all combine to bring a swift relief.

(ll.23-30)

⁵⁰ Loci amoeni literally means charming places and is used to refer to "the literary topos of the set description of an idyllic landscape, typically containing trees and shade, a grassy meadow, running water, songbirds, and cool breezes". Homer's Elysian Fields and the vale of Tempe, both of which are used as comparisons with Eastwell, were typical examples. (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p.880).

⁵¹ As Leah Marcus has noted, "One of the commonest, yet most enigmatic images in royalist poetry of the late Civil War and immediate postwar period is the image of the grove". Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.218.

Although the loss of the grove is protested through pleas, prayers, argument and debate, the poet declares that they are all in vain, "where Pow'r is Absolute" (l.32). She imagines those silenced by "Paternal Awe" (l.33) secretly expressing their sorrow and disappointment in whispers and sighs that echo through the condemned grove and seem to be answered by a "mournfull Breeze" (l.36). Finch uses the grove as a royalist signifier throughout her retirement poetry, and occasionally in other verses as well, but her discussion of its purpose in 'Upon converting the mount' is certainly the most comprehensive and sustained use of the image.

Edmund Waller's 'On St. James's Park, As Lately Improved by His Majesty' (again classified as a country house poem despite its very urban setting) may have supplied the model for Finch's use of the grove in the context of the country house poem. Waller draws a direct line between the country house setting, the motif of improvement and political reform, in his entreaty to Charles II in the year of his restoration: "Reform these nations, and improve them more, / Than this fair park, from what it was before".⁵² It is worth quoting Waller in full on the relationship between poetic creativity, government and the sanctity of the grove in order to unravel the poetic intent of Finch's lines on the grove at Eastwell:

Near this my Muse, what most delights her, sees
 A living gallery of aged trees;
 Bold sons of earth, that thrust their arms so high,
 As if once more they would invade the sky.
 In such green palaces the first kings reigned,
 Slept in their shades, and angels entertained;
 With such old counsellors they did advise,
 And, by frequenting sacred groves, grew wise.
 Free from the impediments of light and noise,
 Man, thus retired, his nobler thoughts employs.
 Here Charles contrives the ordering of his states,
 Here he resolves his neighbouring princes' fates;
 What nation shall have peace, where war be made,
 Determined is in this oraculous shade [...]

(ll.67-80)

⁵² *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. by G. Thorn Drury, 2 vols (London: A. H. Bullen, 1901), II, 40-45, ll.135-36.

Unlike the commemorative marble monuments mentioned by Finch in the opening of 'Upon converting the mount' the grove here constitutes a living memory or living history, the aged trees representing the progress of time and achievement in a way that inscriptions on stone never can. Waller explicitly intertwines power, leadership and wisdom with the peace and tranquillity of the grove, not just in relation to the "first kings", but also to the current monarch who imposes order and composes policy from this enigmatic and mysterious position of infallible authority, judgement and insight.

Ellen Moody has stated that the woodlands and grove were destroyed in 1669/70 on the instructions of the second earl, also named Heneage Finch, the father of Finch's husband and grandfather of the current earl.⁵³ If this is the case then it adds another dimension to the poet's extreme reaction to the loss of the grove:

The very Clowns (hir'd by his dayly Pay),
 Refuse to strike, nor will their Lord obey,
 Till to his speech he adds a leading stroke,
 And by Example does their Rage provoke.
 Then in a moment, ev'ry arm is rear'd,
 And the robb'd Palace sees, what most she fear'd,
 Her lofty Grove, her ornamental shield,
 Turn'd to a Desert, and Forsaken Field.
 So fell Persepolis, bewail'd of all
 But Him, whose rash Resolve procur'd her Fall.

(ll.37-46)

Rather than depicting a scene of "ideal order and authority", Finch exposes the recklessness, obstinacy and the abuse of power demonstrated in the felling of the grove at Eastwell (Pearson, p.89). The loss of this symbol of royalist resistance, shelter and power was particularly poignant after the Revolution when its imagery became important for a new generation of Stuart exiles.

Eastwell itself, under the guardianship of Charles Finch, represented a secure retreat for the poet, thus such an extreme reaction to the actions of the previous landlord, who was moreover her father-in-law, appears both incongruous and somewhat disproportionate in what was after all intended as a form of panegyric.

⁵³ <http://www.jimandellen.org/finch/poem121.html> [accessed 19 October 2005]

However, the second earl did more to threaten the Stuart cause than simply destroy a few trees. As former lord lieutenant of Kent, Heneage Finch was responsible for the apprehension of James II during his first attempted flight to France (December 1688), ensuring that the king was safely returned to custody in London. Furthermore Lord Winchilsea was one of the lords who, interpreting James's failed escape as desertion, voted to offer the crown to William who subsequently ordered and authorized the deposed king's removal from England. Read in this context these lines, particularly the emotive parallel between the destruction of the grove at Eastwell and that of the royal palace of Persepolis, are revealed as a protest against the misuse of authority and interruption of legitimate power displayed in the Revolution. Heneage Finch abused the power bestowed on him as a landowner and peer by the absolute monarch and the results are felt on a national scale as well as on his own estate.

Rather than figuring her subject, the current Lord Winchilsea and his estate, as the successor to a flawed line, Finch represents Charles Finch as the man who will restore Eastwell and rectify the faults of his predecessors;

And though our Ancestors did gravely Plott,
As if one Element they vallu'd nott,
Nor yet the pleasure of the noblest sence,
Gainst Light and Air to raise a strong defense;
Their wiser Offspring does those gifts renew [...]

(ll.55-59)

Charles Finch and the Eastwell he has created become substitutes for the protection and safety of the lost grove: "No longer now, we such Destructions fear, / No longer now the resounding Axe we hear" (ll.47-48). After the disorder and confusion of the Revolution the poem celebrates the efforts of its subject to re-impose a sense of order and control, seen in the "gracefull simetry" (l.53) of the house, the "new wrought Gardens" (l.65) and ultimately in Finch's recognition that the house has escaped the errors of its past: "Where ev'ry fault, that in the Old was found, / Is mended, in the well disposed Ground." (ll.66-67).

iv. "What art thou, *SPLEEN*, which ev'ry thing dost ape?"

Although 'The Spleen' is Finch's most famous Pindaric ode, I have chosen to discuss the poem in the context of her retirement poetry rather than alongside her prophetic and elegiac Pindarics (Chapter 3).⁵⁴ Her treatment of melancholy is laden with the gestures of retreat also found in the retirement verses; indeed, the concept of melancholy is itself closely associated with the idea of retreat and surrender. Any discussion of melancholy in Finch's poetry must first acknowledge the fact that the spleen was a recognized medical condition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with very real symptoms, both physical and psychological. Moreover it was a condition from which Finch suffered throughout her life.⁵⁵ My aim is not to negate the reality of her relationship with melancholy or disregard her personal experience of this debilitating malady; however, melancholy was also exploited for a political purpose during this period and a closer reading of 'The Spleen' reveals the political arguments often lost in the rush to expose the 'secret life' of the woman writer.

Melancholy was primarily regarded as an exclusively female complaint at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Dr. Thomas Sydenham, for example, described by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as the English Hippocrates, suggested that "virtually all women of quality suffered from melancholic disorders."⁵⁶ Gender, and also class, were significant factors in the contemporary perception and discussion of melancholy. 'The Spleen' has recently been read in the context of this patriarchal medical discourse, with feminist critics such as Desiree Hellegers arguing that the poem recognizes that "late seventeenth-century medical narratives simply reconstruct

⁵⁴ 'The Spleen' was first published in 1701, probably without Finch's permission, in *A New Miscellany of Original Poems on Several Occasions*, compiled by the notorious literary hack Charles Gildon. However, according to Cameron, the poem was written in January 1691.

⁵⁵ Finch was taking the waters at Tunbridge Wells as early as 1685, possibly in an attempt to alleviate the effects of the spleen and a number of poems in the Wellesley manuscript document the continued presence of the spleen in her life.

⁵⁶ John F. Sca, 'Melancholy in Anne Finch and Elizabeth Carter: The Ambivalence of an Idea' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 1 (1971), 103-19 (p.108).

existing conceptions of feminine instability".⁵⁷ An awareness of the manipulation of women by the increasingly male medical establishment is evident in the lines:

Tho' the Physicians greatest Gains,
Altho' his growing Wealth he sees
Daily increas'd by Ladies Fees,
Yet dost thou baffle all his studious Pains.⁵⁸

Hellegers links gender and class by suggesting that "masculinist representations of feminized nature and the female body" are used to justify the "confinement of the upper-class woman within the home and her exclusion from modes of cultural production" (Hellegers, p.141).

The 'masculinist' project to restrict the role of women in society described by Hellegers was connected to the increasing commercialization of society and a new anxiety about the instabilities inherent in a credit-based culture, which I will discuss in more detail in subsequent chapters. Finch explicates the relationship between this anxiety and the eagerness to define women as naturally melancholic in her unambiguous reference to two of the remedies prescribed for the spleen, the "Indian Leaf" and the "Eastern Berry" (ll.130-31). By foregrounding the exotic nature of the medication used to treat melancholy the poem exhibits the importance of women as the primary consumers of the imports from foreign trade. Finch's consciousness of a hidden agenda behind what can only be described as the fashionableness of the spleen not only confirms the importance of the poem as a feminist critique, but also denotes its function as a political statement. As Carol Barash notes, "Finch is actually quite careful to position the self-construction of the woman poet in 'The Spleen' in relation to a much larger and changing public political world." (Barash, p.273)

Directly after these observations on the profitability of melancholy, Finch turns to a specific male physician famous for his studies of melancholy, Richard Lower. Lower had been the pre-eminent physician in London, but he fell from favour in 1678

⁵⁷ Desiree Hellegers, *Handmaid to Divinity: Natural Philosophy, Poetry, and Gender in Seventeenth-Century England* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), p.141.

⁵⁸ *Poems of Anne*, pp.248-52, ll.138-41.

as a result of his involvement with the supporters of the Popish Plot.⁵⁹ Following his disgrace, Lower himself suffered from melancholic interludes and Finch charts his decline, from successful man of science to abject victim, as a consequence of the spleen:

Not skilful *Lower* thy Source cou'd find,
Or thro' the well-dissected Body trace
The secret, the mysterious ways,
By which thou dost surprise, and prey upon the Mind.
Tho' in the Search, too deep for Humane Thought,
With unsuccessful Toil he wrought,
'Till thinking Thee to've catch'd, Himself by thee
was caught,
Retain'd thy Pris'ner, thy acknowledg'd Slave,
And sunk beneath thy Chain to a lamented Grave.

(ll.142-50)

Finch portrays the spleen as an elusive and inexplicable condition that defies the anatomist's ability and skill, a mental rather than a physical affliction.

Throughout 'The Spleen' Finch concentrates on the psychological symptoms and effects of melancholy rather than the physical manifestations of the illness, preferring instead to explore it in a wider context. The poem's conclusion seems to reject Lower's role as a physician, noting his "unsuccessful Toil", and his arrogance in aspiring to define the indefinable. From a royalist perspective, it was this very presumption that caused the physician's own predicament, as the same audacity is manifest in conspiring to overthrow the rightful and divinely ordained heir. The divinely sanctioned monarchy is a process not subject to "Humane Thought", thus through his conceit Lower has himself been overthrown and enslaved by melancholy. The association between politics and melancholy is established in the opening section of the poem with the representation of Brutus as a sufferer from the disease:

Such was the monstrous *Vision* seen,

⁵⁹ Finch was not the only Jacobite woman to discuss Lower. Jane Barker also commended "great Lower" for his skills as an anatomist in 'A Farewell to Poetry', published in 1688. Lower died in 1691, yet Barker laments his cruel fate and the failure of "our Practice" and "our Art" to "prolong the motion of his Heart". Carol Barash has suggested that Barker is referring here to the anatomist's "political heart" and his support of the Whigs during the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, thus Lower is "spiritually dead because he has failed the test of loyalty to the king" (p.194).

When *Brutus* (now beneath his Cares oppress,
 And all *Rome's* Fortunes rolling in his Breast,
 Before *Philippi's* latest Field,
 Before his Fate did to *Octavius* lead)
 Was vanquish'd by the *Spleen*.

(11.20-25)

Ian Higgins has argued that James II was paralleled with the "iconic heroes of virtuous Roman republicanism" by a number of pro-Stuart poets, including Dryden and Granville. George Granville (later Baron Lansdowne) was a loyal supporter of the exiled king and he spent the duration of Mary II and William III's reign in retirement. In 'To the King', written whilst James was still on the throne, Granville used the figure of Brutus in a daring paradoxical defence of the king's absolutism:

Brutus to James would trust the Peoples Cause;
 Thy Justice is a stronger guard than Laws.
 Marius and Sylla would resign to Thee,
 Nor Caesar and great Pompey Rivals be;
 Or Rivals only, who would best obey,
 And Cato give his Voice for Regal Sway.

(11.9-14)

The figurative use of Brutus was often ambiguous and complicated in royalist poetry, particularly during periods of political crisis, as exemplified by Cowley's Pindaric ode 'Brutus' (1656): "Is the famous or infamous "Brutus" a tribute to the king-killing Cromwell or one to a would-be Royalist assassin of the Protector, who would remove the tyrant from the State, as Brutus had removed Caesar?"⁶⁰

Cowley's ode praised Brutus as the killer of a tyrant who refused to assume Caesar's mantle of kingship, which suggests a portrait of Cromwell. Yet Cowley included the poem in the 1668 edition of *Pindarique Odes*, a sure sign that 'Brutus' was not a straightforward panegyric to Cromwell, when the tyrant in question was Charles I, beloved father of the newly restored king. Finch circumvents the difficulties inherent in featuring this contested figure in a royalist context by fixing on a Brutus already established in power without examining the origins or nature of his authority.

⁶⁰ Stella Revard, "Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* and the Politics of the Inter-regnum", *Criticism*, 35:3 (1993), 391-418 (p.407).

'The Spleen' focuses on Brutus's defeat at Philippi, an incident also discussed by Cowley:

*Ill Fate assum'd a Body thee t'affright,
And wrapt itself i'th'terrors of the night,
I'll meet thee at Philippi, said the Spright;
I'll meet thee there, saidst Thou,
With such a voyce, and such a brow,
As put the trembling Ghost to sudden flight,
It vanisht as a Tapers light
Goes out when Spirits appear in sight
[...]
Nor durst it in Philippi's field appear,
But unseen attack'd thee there.
Had it presum'd in any shape thee to oppose,
Thou wouldst have forc'd it back upon thy foes:
Or slain't like Caesar, though it be
A Conqueror and a Monarch far mightier than He.⁶¹*

The invisible forces of fate assail Cowley's Brutus, but Finch attributes his defeat at Philippi to a melancholic attack - he is "vanquish'd by the Spleen" - rather than the opposing armies of Antony and Octavius.

Finch had already invoked the figure of Brutus to represent William of Orange in 'Caesar and Brutus' (?1689):

*Though Cæsar falling, shew'd no sign of fear,
Yet Brutus, when thou did'st appear,
When thy false hand, against him came,
He vail'd his face, to hide that shame
Which did on the mistake attend,
Of having own'd thee, for his freind.⁶²*

Written in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, these lines focus on the personal betrayal of Caesar by his friend, reflecting the spectacular disloyalty of William of Orange who was betraying his own uncle and father-in-law. The parallel between Caesar and Brutus, James and William is even more pronounced in 'The Fall of Caesar' (probably also written circa 1689) in the couplet, "But when a Friend, or something nearer thought, / Impos'd a stab who should relief have brought" (ll.3-4).⁶³

⁶¹ *Abraham Cowley: Poems*, pp.195-97, ll.47-54, 58-63.

⁶² *Poems of Anne*, p.138.

⁶³ 'The Fall of Caesar' was published in Pope's 1717 miscellany collection *Poems on several occasions*.

Both poems are an instinctive reaction to the duplicity and treachery involved in William's usurpation of the throne, a situation rendered more abhorrent by the familial relationship between the two men. The reference to Brutus in 'The Spleen' demonstrates a more considered appraisal of the situation. It is unlikely to be coincidental that the poem was written shortly after the defeat of James's Franco-Irish army at the Battle of the Boyne (July 1690) and the beleaguered king's return to France, an event which effectively secured William's monarchy and signalled the end of James II's attempts to regain his throne.

Criticism of 'The Spleen' has tended towards little more than superficial observations of Jacobite sentiment or political undertones; however, I would argue that Finch is actually advancing a specific political agenda here, which is supported by a more detailed reading of the poem. Carol Barash reads the lines on Brutus as a depiction of "the experience of political defeat", commenting that "Brutus, we should recall, was a regicide, the prime assassin of Julius Caesar who killed himself after Mark Antony and Octavian defeated him at Philippi" (Barash, p.273). Whilst this is a perfectly acceptable interpretation of the lines, it offers no explanation as to why Finch chose Brutus or why she is locating an instance of political defeat in a poem on melancholy. Barash fails to attempt a political reading of the poem as a unified whole. It seems probable that Finch was using Brutus's defeat at Philippi to reinterpret James's predicament following William's arrival on English soil, notably the non-materialization of a military engagement and the defection of most of his army, including the lieutenant-general John Churchill and his other son-in-law Prince George of Denmark. She attempts to justify or explain James's failure to successfully defend his monarchy against outside interference both in England and, more recently, in Ireland.

James's inaction in response to the invasion of his kingdom by his nephew was remarkable. The king seemed paralysed by lethargy and completely unable to

implement a decisive strategy; he was also physically incapacitated by recurrent nosebleeds. As Maureen Waller has noted, James began to display signs of “mental disintegration” and became “incapable of reaching a decision about anything”.⁶⁴ This reluctance to engage the opposing army and the ensuing desertion of many of his soldiers followed the pattern set by Brutus at the second battle at Philippi, an encounter forced upon him, at which he was abandoned by his men and consequently defeated.⁶⁵ Through the presentation of Brutus as a man plagued by sleeplessness and by “boating Dreams”, “fond Delusions” and “airy Phantoms” (ll.14-16), Finch seems to be implying that James was likewise a victim of the spleen in the final days of his reign.

Desiree Hellegers contends that Finch “licenses her own struggles against patriarchal tyranny by associating her oppression with the violence enacted against James II. The monarchy remains, for Finch, the model for her own sovereign subjectivity” (Hellegers, p.166). The correlation between James II and the poet as victims of the spleen is thus a means of reinforcing her own political identity and melancholy, at least in the context of ‘The Spleen’, must be understood as a political signifier.

Melancholy is closely associated with the act of retreat, men, “Retiring from the Croud, are to thy Shades inclin’d” (l.73): it is a retreat that can by implication be read as royalist, as melancholy is linked with an absence of light, “thy Shades” (l.97), “thy Shadows” (l.11) and “thy Midnight Hour” (l.15), that could be said to symbolize the absence of the absolute monarch. Judith Butler defines melancholy as “both the refusal of grief and the incorporation of loss, a miming of the death it cannot mourn” and echoes Homi Bhabha’s argument that “melancholia is not a form of passivity, but

⁶⁴ Maureen Waller, *Ungrateful Daughters: The Stuart Princesses Who Stole Their Father’s Crown* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002), p.236.

⁶⁵ *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p.788.

a form of revolt that takes place through repetition and metonymy".⁶⁶ Thus the spleen and melancholy, although genuine medical conditions, also connote, in Butler's terms, a state in which the king's absence is acknowledged, but not accepted. The 'melancholic' ostensibly absents him/herself from public and political life through an act that is itself unequivocally political.

Finch's alignment of the spleen with the "First degrading Sin" (l.28) further substantiates the symbolic potential of melancholy. The spleen, sin's "dull Attendant" (l.29), is linked with the fall of man and contrasted with an idealized vision of life free from melancholy:

Whilst Man his Paradice possest,
His fertile Garden in the fragrant East,
And all united Odours smelt,
No armed Sweets, until thy Reign,
Cou'd shock the Sense, or in the Face
A flusht, unhandsom Colour place.
Now *Jonquille* o'ercomes the feeble Brain;
We faint beneath the Aromatick Pain,
Till some offensive Scent thy Pow'rs appease,
And Pleasures we resign for short, and nauseous Ease.

(ll.33-43)

This golden age scene and its associated "Pleasures" are particularly royalist motifs

used by Finch to represent a romanticized period of political stability under James II.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), p.190.

⁶⁷ Finch also explicitly figured the fall of the Stuart court as the biblical fall in 'Fragment' - the title given to the final section of 'Some occasional Reflections Digested (tho' not with great regularity) into a Poeme', found in the Folger Ms. This manuscript poem was later published as three separate poems - 'The Bird and the Arras', 'Glass' and 'Fragment' - in Finch's 1713 miscellany, an arrangement replicated by Reynolds in her 1905 edition. Finch charts her rise to become a member of the royal household, a role associated with pleasure, felicity, amusement and ease, and also with ambition:

Ambition next allur'd her tow'ring Eye;
For Paradice she heard was plac'd on high,
Then thought, the Court with all its glorious Show
Was sure above the rest, and Paradice below.

(*Poems of Anne*, pp.13-14, ll.7-10)

Ardelia is crushed by the fall of the Stuart court, likened to the original fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, as she shares the ignominious fate of James II and Mary of Modena:

There plac'd too soon the flaming Sword appear'd
Remov'd those Pow'rs, whom she justly rever'd
Adher'd to in their Wreck, and in their Ruin shar'd.

(ll.46-48)

In Cowley's celebratory panegyric 'Upon his Majesties Restoration and Returne', the restoration of the Stuarts is figured as the remedy for a nation possessed by "so desperate a *Disease*"⁶⁸: the disease was Puritanism and republicanism, in comparison with which the Stuart monarchy represented health and ease. Susan Sontag has argued, "Order is the oldest concern of political philosophy, and if it is plausible to compare the polis to an organism, then it is plausible to compare civil disorder to an illness".⁶⁹ However, whereas Cowley saw the Civil War, the absence of the Stuart monarchy and the political changes of the Interregnum as disease or dis-ease, Finch represents the period following the Revolution as one of "short, and nauseous Ease".

Visible civil disorder and widespread resistance were key features of the years preceding the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, but the events of 1688/89 did not overthrow the monarchy and provoked relatively little opposition. Finch acknowledges the loss of the idyllic reign of the Stuarts in the resignation of pleasure, but she also recognizes that William's sovereignty, whilst not legitimate, is not directly comparable to that of Cromwell and parliament. Melancholy has corrupted, not destroyed, the Edenic vision depicted in the poem: the golden age of pleasure and ease has been replaced by a state that mimics but does not successfully recapture them. She plays on the language of illness, with "nauseous" connoting both physical sickness and also something that is repellent or abhorrent. It is this second sense that encapsulates the feelings of a Jacobite like Finch towards William's reign.

The protean nature of the spleen, established in the opening line of the poem, is further explored through the various ways in which it afflicts its victims. This takes two forms: depression as evidenced by tears and sighs, founded on the spleen's "whisper'd Griefs" and "fancy'd Sorrows" (l.48), and hysteria, caused by "o'erheated

This personal insight into Finch's fate after 1688/89 is a stark and slightly bitter reminder of the consequences of loyalty to the Stuart cause - like her patrons, Ardelia is "thrown prostrate to the humble Ground" (l.50), her hopes and ambitions dashed by the Revolution.

⁶⁸ Abraham Cowley: *Poems*, pp.420-32, l.90.

⁶⁹ Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p.76.

Passions" (l.54) and displayed in "clamorous and loud" (l.51) behaviour and "Laughters unprovok'd" (l.52). Finch conforms to gendered perceptions of melancholia in her example of a hysterical wife overcome with the "Vapours" (l.53), but her hysteric actually triumphs over the prevalent belief that "women were erratic and fickle creatures barely capable of holding on to the small measure of reason they possessed", in that her behaviour causes her husband to submit to her desires and "Something resign of the contested Field" (l.60).⁷⁰

Here melancholia is a source of power, albeit through manipulation, and a certain amount of control. This small feminine victory is followed immediately, however, with the restoration of male power:

Till Lordly *Man*, born to Imperial Sway,
Compounds for Peace, to make that Right away,
And *Woman*, arm'd with *Spleen*, do's servilely Obey.

(ll.61-63)

These lines describe more than just the resumption of the natural order through patriarchal control. They employ a deliberately political rhetoric. "Imperial Sway" is a phrase consistently used by Finch in connection with sovereign power, "Right" is a charged word usually connected to discussions of the legitimacy of James II's reign and the illegitimacy of William's claim, and lordship and obedience express the relationship between monarch and subject. Although it is difficult to determine the intention of these lines, it is entirely possible that they allude to James II, represented by the "Lordly Man", who subdues the spleen in all of its manifestations in order to reclaim his lawful position.

Finch disparages those who, imagining that melancholy denotes genius, pretend to suffer from the spleen in order to "imitate the Wits" (l.64) and those who use the spleen as an excuse for "ill Humour" (l.92). The coquette and the fop who

⁷⁰ John F. Sena, "Belinda's Hysteria: The Medical Context of *The Rape of the Lock*", in *Psychology and Literature in the Eighteenth Century* ed. by Christopher Fox (New York: AMS, 1987), pp.129-47 (p.142).

simulate melancholy because it is fashionable also come under attack. In order to expose these pretenders, she details her own genuine experience of the spleen:

O'er me alas! thou dost too much prevail:
 I feel thy Force, whilst I against thee rail;
 I feel my Verse decay, and my cramp Numbers fail.
 Thro' thy black Jaundice I all Objects see,
 As Dark, and Terrible as Thee,
 My Lines decry'd, and my Employment thought
 An useless Folly, or presumptuous Fault:
 Whilst in the *Muses* Paths I stray,
 Whilst in their Groves, and by their secret Springs
 My Hand delights to trace unusual Things,
 And deviates from the known, and common way;
 Nor will in fading Silks compose
 Faintly th'inimitable *Rose*,
 Fill up an ill-drawn *Bird*, or paint on Glass
 The *Sov'reign's* blurr'd and undistinguish'd Face,
 The threatening *Angel*, and the speaking *Ass*.

(ll.74-89)

Barbara McGovern proposes that Finch's purpose in "letting the reader know of her own affliction" is to establish her "credibility as a satirist and social critic for all aspects of the spleen" (McGovern, p.170), while Carol Barash reads these lines as an act of resistance "against those who would limit her poetic ambitions to a lesser female sphere" (Barash, p. 274). Similarly, Ruth Salvaggio argues that this account, and the poem as a whole, demonstrates the "dis-ease of writing the feminine", the difficulty of expressing poetic desires totally removed from male definitions of poetry, with the spleen being the embodiment of that dis-case.⁷¹

I agree with Barash that Finch's exposition of the effects of the spleen on her creativity is an act of resistance; however, for me, these lines, rather than embracing melancholy as Salvaggio contends, refuse to submit to its debilitating power. I would argue that the spleen instead connotes political defeat or resignation. Finch perceives everything through a "black Jaundice" and yields to the belief that her poetic defiance is a "useless Folly" or "presumptuous Fault", although this scene of turmoil and despair is temporary and immediately countered by a contrasting view of poetic

⁷¹ Ruth Salvaggio, "Anne Finch Placed and Displaced", in Pacheco pp.242-66 (p.261).

identity. The reference to the "Muses Paths" implies a political subtext to this section of the poem since the Muse, a source of linguistic authority, often refers to James II in her poetry. By locating herself in "their Groves" and "secret Springs", Finch deliberately aligns herself with earlier royalist poets and the secrecy and seclusion of this scene also suggests its importance as a site of political resistance. Lois Potter has identified melancholy as a metaphor for political and social isolation in the mid-seventeenth century noting that many royalist writers were imitating and borrowing from Robert Burton's influential work *Anatomy of Melancholy* during this period (Potter, p.121).

Finch's assertion that she delights in "unusual Things" and rejects the "known, and common way" can also be read as an affirmation of her oppositional politics. The political content of this passage is reinforced by the concluding lines, which all critics of the poem have recognized as a clear reference to William III. She refuses to participate in the occupations designated appropriate for the increasingly domesticated woman, such as embroidery or painting silk screens with images from nature, deemed a "delightful Entertainment" by an anonymous commentator over two decades later in *The Spectator* (issue 606 in 1714), who went on to remark that "I cannot forbear wishing, that several Writers of that Sex had chosen to apply themselves rather to Tapestry than Rhime."⁷² Furthermore, by juxtaposing the political reference to the "Sovereign's blurr'd and undistinguish'd Face" with supposedly feminine and domestic accomplishments, not only does Finch protest against the exclusion of women from the public and political world, she seems to be suggesting that the public and private cannot be separated.

The representation of William's face as blurred and undistinguished is itself complexly suggestive. Blurred may mean indistinct or unclear, concealed and obscured or even distorted and deformed, just as undistinguished might refer to

⁷² *The Spectator*, ed., by Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), V, 298-300.

something ordinary and unexceptional or to something unrecognizable. All of these implications become controversial when applied to the current monarch. They work to contrast the unexceptional king with the charismatic glamour of his Stuart predecessors, positing him as a mere shadow of their glory, and they might even be understood as a denunciation of William's claim to the throne, by a poet who refuses to accept his sovereignty. Barbara McGovern, who has provided the most detailed interpretation of this couplet, identifies the "threatening *Angel*, and the speaking *Ass*" as an allusion to the biblical story of Balaam:

In the familiar narrative the prophet Balaam, intent upon conquering the Israelites, disregards God's will until he is rebuked by his own ass. Seeing in her path a threatening angel, whose appearance has not been visible to the rider on her back, Balaam's ass turns him aside from his destination and speaks to him with God's words: "I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me" (Num. 22,32).

(McGovern, p.174)

Although not actually recounted here, the words of Balaam's ass summarize Finch's message to William III conveyed by a relentless succession of covert royalist symbols and explicit attacks throughout the poem.

Finch did not confine her critical assault on abuses of the spleen to fops, coquettes and abusive husbands; she also singled out religion, in particular Puritanism, for condemnation. Religion, which has the power to "enlighten" (l.117), is depicted as "veil'd in Darkness" (l.118) and tormented by doubts and matters of principle. The practitioners of this mode of religion are accused of misinterpreting scripture, following instead their own "perverted Text" (l.120) in order to assert control over their congregation:

Whilst *Touch* not, *Taste* not, what is freely giv'n,
Is but thy niggard Voice, disgracing bounteous Heav'n.
From Speech restrain'd, by thy Deceits abus'd,
To Deserts banish'd, or in Cells reclus'd,
Mistaken Vot'ries to the Pow'rs Divine,
Whilst they a purer Sacrifice design,
Do but the *Spleen* obey, and worship at thy Shrine.

(ll.121-27)

Finch's royalism was intrinsically connected to her Anglicanism and her extreme loyalty to James II was due in part to the Anglican belief that the king could not be removed as the head of the church by the decree of Parliament. The Revolution led to serious schisms within the Anglican Church resulting in non-jurors, who believed that their prior oath to James II prevented them from accepting William III and Mary II as sovereigns, 'high' churchmen associated with the Tories and traditional values and 'low' churchmen or latitudinarians who were allied to the Whigs and favoured a more progressive and radical approach to religious doctrine.⁷³ Furthermore the Toleration Act of 1689 granted freedom of worship to Protestant dissenters, thus weakening the monopoly of the Anglican Church and allowing for new interpretations of previously indubitable matters of religion.

Taking into account the association between melancholy and Puritans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, McGovern reads these lines on religious melancholy as an attack on the "false piety" and "excessive fear of damnation" that characterized Puritanism (McGovern, p.176), an argument endorsed by John Sena who observes that by "associating melancholy with dissenting circles, Lady Winchilsea is echoing a relationship common in the period".⁷⁴ For a non-juring Anglican like Finch, the installation of William III, a strict Calvinist, as the head of the Church and the increased religious freedom of Dissenters must have seemed a worrying prospect. Her distrust of the emphasis on the sinfulness of man and of the rigid moral code adhered to by the Protestant sects is reflected in the association of these religious principles with the spleen.

⁷³ Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), pp.289-94.

⁷⁴ Sena illustrates this point with an example from *The Spectator* (issue 494) in which Addison recounts the examination of a student by Dr. Thomas Goodwin, a famous Independent minister who attended Cromwell on his deathbed and later became President of Magdalen College. Rather than being tested on Latin and Greek as he expected, the student was conducted into a darkened room, lit only by a single candle and asked if he was prepared for death. Addison concluded that Puritans measure morality and sanctity by "a sorrowful countenance...catten up with spleen and melancholy" eschewing the joyful and composed approach to religion that he himself recommended. "Melancholy in Anne Finch and Elizabeth Carter: The Ambivalence of an Idea", pp.108-19 (p.113).

The early 1690s were a period of intense political confusion and conflict as politicians, poets and the general populace either reconciled themselves to the changes in government instituted by the revolution settlement or instigated uprisings and resistance to the new monarchy. Whilst Finch, limited by class, gender and a sense of self-preservation, did not engage in any actively treasonous activities, she contrived, as 'The Spleen' reveals, to inscribe her resistance to William's illegitimate authority in other ways. Melancholy in this instance resonates with a deep sense of despair at the current political situation, but it is not an act of surrender. Finch struggles against the dictates and confines of the spleen, refusing to follow Lower and sink beneath the weight of political failure.

3. "ROYAL JAMES WHO NEVER SHALL RETURN/TO CHEER THOSE HEARTS WHICH DID THY SORROWS MOURN": FROM STUART COURT TO JACOBITE EXILE

Finch's retirement poetry, in all of its incarnations, located both linguistic and political authority in the concept of exile, paralleling the 1690s with the 1650s through the work of earlier royalist poets of exile, such as Katherine Philips and Abraham Cowley. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, in their discussion of seventeenth-century political discourse, contend that "All political life derived its legitimacy from a set of authorizing languages", such as scripture, history and the classics.¹ Finch did use scriptural, historical and classical precedent and analogy to validate her verses; however, she also authorized her status as a political writer by imitating or emulating poets and modes of writing closely associated with the Stuart monarchy, both in exile and in power. Thus her actual and poetic retreat was legitimated by the exile of Charles Stuart and his supporters following the Civil War. This exile ended in 1660 with the restoration of Charles II and the Stuart monarchy and was accompanied by a flood of panegyrics celebrating the majesty, mercy and divinity of the restored king and the institution of kingship. In this chapter I explore the panegyric and Restoration imagery and ideology as a source of political and linguistic authority after the Revolution.

i. Politicizing the Panegyric

Leigh Eicke has suggested that Finch's "Jacobite writings are more elegiac and nostalgic than revolutionary" and there is undoubtedly an element of regret and longing for a lost era in her use of panegyric imagery.² The panegyric was a poetic mode particularly connected to the Stuarts: the first recorded use of the noun

¹ *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1987), p.1

² Leigh Anna Eicke, 'The Extremity of the Times: Women and Jacobitism in British Literary Culture' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, 2003), p.245.

'panegyric' occurred in 1603 in 'A Pangyrike Congratulatories Delivered to the Kings most excellent majesty, at Burleigh-Harrington in Rutlandshire', written by Samuel Daniels to celebrate the accession of James I.³ Those panegyrics written in 1660 to celebrate the newly restored king, Charles II, were themselves partly elegiac, as the form evoked a past which could never be recaptured, through its connections to James I and Charles I. Yet, they were also excessive, hyperbolic, congratulatory and jubilant in their depictions of a king reconciled with his people and returned to his rightful place at the head of a nation torn apart by civil conflict.

John Evelyn recorded Charles's entry into London as "a triumph of above 20,000 horse and foot, brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressible joy", and asserted, "such a restoration was never seen in the mention of any history, ancient or modern, since the return of the Babylonian captivity".⁴ The 'Restoration' is generally understood to encompass the reigns of both Charles II and James II, from 1660 to 1688, a period which included the two Dutch Wars (1665-67 and 1673), the Great Plague (1665) and Fire of London (1666), the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis (from 1678) and the deposition of the legitimate monarch.⁵ It was a period fraught with political intrigue, collusion and treachery. However, I use the term 'Restoration' here to refer specifically to the celebration of Charles II's return and the literary, political and symbolic potential encapsulated in that historical moment.

The panegyric may have enjoyed a "short-lived revival" during the early months of Charles II's reign, but its popularity and prominence had abated by the

³ *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a panegyric as "a public speech or writing in praise of some person, thing or achievement; a laudatory discourse, a formal or elaborate encomium or eulogy" (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), VII, 419. However, as James Garrison explains in his definition of the genre, there was a distinct difference between the seventeenth-century panegyric and the twentieth-century synonym encomium. Panegyric denotes a special kind of public occasion, a specific mode and a specific subject of praise. Unlike encomium, there is also a political agenda involved in the panegyric. James Garrison, *Dryden and the Tradition of the Panegyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p.4.

⁴ *The Diary of John Evelyn* ed. by E.S. de Beer, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), III, 246.

⁵ Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), pp. 193-99.

close of the seventeenth century.⁶ The imagery and language of the Restoration panegyric and its iconic representation of the Stuart monarchy, however, clearly influenced and informed Finch's poetry long after the panegyric form had become unfashionable and outmoded. Murray Pittock contends that "Jacobite ideology remained very much the product of traditionalist typology, codified and complex on a high cultural level and deeply loyal to the iconic beliefs which had generated it", thus the panegyric, which reached its apotheosis during the Restoration celebrations, was an ideal foundation for the construction of a Jacobite language and philosophy.⁷

Rather than viewing the "language of typology", frequently used by the Restoration panegyrists, as obsolete, Pittock explicitly links this type of formal, court-based and essentially Stuart writing with the disenfranchised Jacobites, arguing that after the Revolution it "betokened the exclusion it lamented" (Pittock, p.9). The panegyric derived its authority from power, from the conception of the king and the court as the ideal model for the nation and the panegyrist's function as both a propagandist on behalf of the king and the representative of the people. Yet by 1688/89 the monarchy was in tatters, the court was no longer the axis of political or cultural authority and the very people employing the language of typology were those furthest removed from power. Although Pittock plausibly envisages the language of typology and the imagery of the panegyric as the idiom of the "defeated" (p.10), it is equally possible to argue that Finch refused to succumb to this defeat, isolation and empty nostalgia and instead reframed the demonstrative and deliberative functions of the panegyric into effective Jacobite propaganda.

Following his successful usurpation of James II, William III attempted to legitimate his reign through the use of typological language and iconography, either

⁶ Gerald MacLean, 'Literature, culture, and society in Restoration England' in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History*, ed. by Gerald MacLean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3-31 (p.22).

⁷ Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.35.

by appropriating traditional Stuart imagery or deconstructing it in order to expose the artificiality of Stuart kingship (Pittock, p.32). Depictions of the new king as Alexander or Hercules were typically panegyric, drawing attention to his military might and also reminding his detractors of his august lineage.⁸ Like Charles II, he was figured as a restorer of the nation's law, liberty and religion: in an interesting reversal of the Restoration panegyrics, William was paralleled with Oliver Cromwell, while it was the Stuart king, James II, who represented tyranny and oppression. William's campaign to be accepted as king, by both Parliament and the people, is a fascinating example of the power of propaganda, as tracts, prints, commemorative medals and playing cards extolled the virtues and achievements of the Dutch prince (even addressing his somewhat 'unkingly' physical appearance).⁹

Accompanying the glorification of the joint monarchs and the Revolution was the vilification of James II and the trappings of Stuart kingship, as William and his supporters endeavoured to expose the "detached nature of the Stuart 'text', grounded on no reality" and "discredit the whole typological edifice erected to justify such foolish and despicable figures as the Stuarts were portrayed as being" (Pittock, p.32). James was 'exposed' as a king ensnared by the teaching of the Jesuits and politically involved with Louis XIV, a king who was working to replace the Protestant tradition and Anglican Church with his own Catholic religion and diminish the authority of parliament. Perhaps the most horrifying aspect of the Williamite propaganda was the doubt cast on the paternity and legitimacy of the infant Prince of Wales, who was variously announced to be the son of Mary of Modena and a Jesuit priest or smuggled

⁸ Hercules was an emblem particularly associated with the family of Henry IV of France, of whom William was a great-grandson (just as Charles II and James II were his grandsons). Stephen Baxter, 'William III as Hercules: the political implications of court culture', in *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives*, ed. by Lois G. Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 95-106.

⁹ Lois G. Schwoerer, 'Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688-89', *The American Historical Review*, 82:4 (1977), 843-74 (p. 849)

into the birthing room in a warming pan by Catholic midwives in order to secure a Catholic succession.¹⁰

This campaign against James II and the Stuart monarchy suggests another reason for Finch's adoption of panegyric style and imagery: rather than a nostalgic longing for a golden moment in Stuart history, her poetry reveals an active need to preserve and protect the Stuart cause from the slander and mockery of Williamite satire. By reviving the panegyric in favour of James II, to assert her defiance of both William's sovereignty and his attempts to legitimize his seizure of the throne, Finch both refuted these slurs and reasserted James's sovereignty, authority and his continued presence. She refused to allow James II and Stuart ideology to be written out of contemporary history.

'The Consolation' (?1689) covertly celebrated the exiled king, and offered hope to his adherents, through the representation of the king as the sun, one of the key images of the Restoration panegyrics. Although the poem was probably written after the Revolution settlement had proclaimed the joint sovereignty of William and Mary, there was still a very real possibility at this point that success in Ireland would allow James II to reclaim his throne. The sun, the sign of "absolutist sovereignty", appeared in various forms in the poetic flatteries of virtually every account of Charles II's return to power in 1660.¹¹ Abraham Cowley extolled the king's "*Plenipotentiary Beams*" and "*Pacifick Lights*",¹² while Edmund Waller rather excessively depicted Charles as both the "rising sun" and "a flood of light", whose "full majesty at once breaks forth / In the meridian of [his] reign".¹³ Rachel Jevon's 'Exultationis Carmen' also figured

¹⁰ Rachel Weil, 'The politics of legitimacy: women and the warming-pan scandal', in *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives*, ed. by Lois G. Schworer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 65-82.

¹¹ Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch: Magical Politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p. 185.

¹² Abraham Cowley, 'Upon His Majesties Restoration and Return', in *Poems: Miscellanies, The Mistress, Pindarique Odes, Davideis, Verses Written on Several Occasions*, ed. by A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 420-32, ll. 6-7.

¹³ 'To the King, Upon His Majesty's Happy Return', in *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. by G. Thorn Drury, 2 vols (London: A. H. Bullen, 1901), II, 35-39, ll. I, 9, 5-6.

the Stuart monarch conventionally outshining the sun and Ann Lee, like Waller, employed the somewhat hackneyed image of the "rising sun" in 'On the returne of King Charles 2nd'.¹⁴

Although 'The Consolation' does not name James II, Finch's sustained use of the sun in this poem clearly draws on the Restoration representations of Charles II, particularly Rachel Jevon's incorporation of the mythological figure of Phoebus Apollo: in 'Exultationis Carmen', Charles's "Star" has "Long since out-shin'd the golden Phoebus far" (ll.15-16). Philippa Berry has noted that in Roman ideology the figure of Phoebus Apollo was used to "assert the legitimacy of its imperial rulers", therefore this incarnation of the sun would assume particular significance in the aftermath of the Revolution and the anti-Stuart propaganda campaign waged by William III.¹⁵ Reading James as Phoebus Apollo, 'The Consolation' emerges as a carefully crafted piece of oppositional writing as it recalls the possibility of restoration through the connection with Charles II and emphasizes the legitimacy of his brother's claim to the throne.

Finch depicts James/Phoebus as the "ruler of the day" and, like Waller's panegyric to Charles II, she envisages him in "his noon", the moment when the sun is at its most powerful.¹⁶ Jane Barker, a fellow Jacobite poet, who followed James II into exile at St. Germain, used the sun in a similar way in 'To her Majesty the Queen, on the Kings going to Callis this carnival 1696'. Writing on the eve of yet another attempted Jacobite invasion of England, Barker anticipated the restoration of James through the language of the Restoration panegyric: "The sun in greatest splendor does appear / Three months before the usual time oth' year."¹⁷

¹⁴ *Early Modern Women Poets: An Anthology*, ed. by Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 320 (ll. 85-90) and p. 393 (l.29).

¹⁵ Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.41.

¹⁶ *Poems of Anne*, p.18, l.7, 5.

¹⁷ *The Galesia Trilogy and Selected Manuscript Poems of Jane Barker*, ed. by Carol Shiner Wilson (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.295-97, ll.18-19.

What initially appears to be a straightforward portrayal of the absolute nature of the Stuart power and authority becomes unusual when considered in the political context. Finch's unconventional vision of the setting sun, "At night both fall" (l.13), recalls the actual position of both James II and his loyal supporter as political exiles, divorced from the authority and privilege celebrated in the Restoration panegyrics and echoed in this poem. This seems to be a poignant denial of the events of 1688/89, the inability to adapt to the changed political situation, but Finch refuses to be defeated and uses the physical reality of the sun to offer the hope of a restoration for the exiled king. Night may fall and remove the monarch from the zenith of his power, but "the swift hand of time / Renews the morning" (ll.14-15), daily restoring the sun to its rightful place.

As the title of the poem implies, in 'The Consolation' Finch finds solace in the cyclical nature of history and the precedent set by the restoration of Charles II; however, she does not always employ panegyric imagery so positively. Natural imagery imbued with the idea of change, rebirth and renewal abounded in the Restoration panegyrics, anticipating "political and institutional change, as the return of the king is transformed into an event of universal significance" (Garrison, p.71). Thus John Dryden's 'Astraea Redux, A Poem on the Happy Restoration and Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second' figured Charles Stuart's return as the advent of a long absent spring:

Frosts that constrain the ground, and birth deny
To flowers, that in its womb expecting lie,
Do seldom their usurping power withdraw,
But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw,
Our thaw was mild, the cold not chased away,
But lost in kindly heat of lengthened day.¹⁸

The frost conveys the oppression and sterility of the Interregnum on the political, social and literary growth of the nation, while the temperate warmth of Charles II's

¹⁸ *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. by Paul Hammond and David Hopkins, 5 vols (London and New York: Longman, 1995-2005), I (1995), 36-54, II.131-136.

spring signifies the relatively bloodless and peaceful nature of the return to monarchical rule.

Whereas Dryden perceived the Interregnum, the absence of the rightful king, to be a frozen and barren landscape, Cowley imagined the disruption of the natural order in terms of physical illness:

A various complicated Ill,
Whose every Symptome was enough to kill,
In which one part of Three Frenzy possesst,
And Lethargy the rest.¹⁹

Instead of natural order and symmetry, or even the petrified but essentially passive frost of Dryden's panegyric, Cowley saw the Interregnum as a period of "wild and deform'd *Chaos*" (l.125). He drew on the medieval concept of the mystical relationship between the divinely appointed monarch and the "corpus mysticum or immortal body politic of the state" to graphically illustrate the damage wrought by the exile of the king (Berry, p.41). In Charles's absence the nation was wracked by illness and decay, but his return, in Cowley's vision of the Restoration, allows the "*happy Land*" to "Recover from so desperate a *Disease*" (ll.88-90).

Both Dryden and Cowley, along with almost every other panegyrist, were proponents of "noumenal propaganda", in that they interpreted everything around them to reflect favourably on the monarch, even if that contradicted traditional interpretations of specific phenomena. Thus the sudden thunderstorm following Charles's coronation was construed as a sign of divine approval, rather than the more usual panegyric translation of divine anger.²⁰ Reedy argues that panegyrists employed noumenal propaganda as a "political tool to establish Charles's legitimacy as sovereign" (p.21), and it is a political tool evident in 'The Change'. Finch, however,

¹⁹ 'Upon His Majesties Restoration and Return', ll.91-94.

²⁰ Gerard Reedy, 'Mystical Politics: The Imagery of Charles II's Coronation', in *Studies in Change and Revolution: Aspects of English Intellectual History, 1640-1800*, ed. by Paul J. Korshin (Menston: Sealar Press, 1972), pp.19-42 (p.21).

subverted the panegyric technique in order to lament the loss, rather than celebrate the return, of the rightful monarch.

'The Change' initially appears to be a bleak vision of England in the aftermath of the Revolution; a challenge to Williamite attempts to rewrite recent events using the panegyric model of the Restoration. Those who sought to justify the Revolution and the interruption of the line of succession argued that it was the result of "divine providence", that God had intervened, through William, "to deliver his People from the most Pitiful State and Condition".²¹ Yet, in contrast to the peace and prosperity welcomed by the Restoration panegyrics, William's reign was accompanied by the declaration of war on France, Jacobite resistance in Ireland and widespread famine. The land healed and reborn by the restoration of Charles II is now in a state of decline and the river, once the scene of activity, pleasure and plenty, is now "almost dry", while the "wretched sun" is marred by "Darkness".²² Whilst this could be read as an indictment of William III and the illegitimacy of his reign, I would suggest that 'The Change' is actually a panegyric, addressed, however obliquely, to the exiled James II.

Charles Hinnant has argued that "the primary perspective behind 'The Change' [...] is a kind of disillusioned Jacobitism" and also a sense of "betrayal and abandonment", but while Finch certainly appears disenchanted with the nature of power and kingship, the prevailing tone is one of acceptance, empathy and absolution rather than betrayal and abandonment.²³ The hope and anticipation of 'The Consolation' may have reflected a sense of Jacobite possibility fostered by the ongoing conflict in Ireland between William and James's Franco-Irish army; however, 'The Change' was probably written closer to 1691, after the Battle of the Boyne and James's return to France temporarily ended Jacobite hopes.

²¹ John Spurr, 'England 1649-1750', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650-1740*, ed. by Steven Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.6-26 (p.10).

²² *Poems of Anne*, p.84-85, ll.1, 28, 19.

²³ Charles H. Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch: An Essay in Interpretation* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994), p.233.

The river and the sun represent James II, isolated and alone now that he has been removed from power, as those who "sought thee in thy Pride" (l.5) forget him and turn their attentions to "more prosp'rous Floods" (l.8). Finch ruthlessly notes the changeability of every aspect of nature, from nymphs and swains, flocks, herds, fish to flowers and even clouds, in order to emphasis the shift from absolute power to absolute solitude. The series of rhetorical questions posed to the absent monarch, beginning with who or what will "near thee lie?" (l.2) and concluding with "Who thinks upon thy Glories past?" (l.24), relentlessly reiterates the extent of this desertion and also the futility of James's position, as the monarch of a nation that has forsaken him.

Finch also questions her own role as a poet, a question that is particularly apt in the context of the panegyric:

If present Light, nor Heat we get,
Unheeded thou may'st rise, and set.
Not all the past can one Adorer keep,
Fall, wretched Sun, to a more faithful Deep.

(ll.25-28)

These lines shatter the mythology of Stuart kingship by exposing the reality of the political ideology of divine right: even when validated by an elaborately constructed system of iconographical and poetic representation, it signifies absolutely nothing in the king's physical absence. James may continue to rise and set as king at St. Germain, but in England he is "Unheeded" by all but a few. Finch's loyalty is unquestionable, she remains the exiled monarch's "Adorer", but she cannot single-handedly restore Stuart fortunes through her verse. In an ironic reversal of the very nature of the panegyric tradition, in which the ever more excessive flatteries and pronouncements are representative of the poetic need to distinguish one's verse from the eulogies of others, Finch's voice stands alone in providing comfort and support for the exiled king:

None from his ready Road will turn,
 With thee thy wretched Change to mourn.
 Not the soft Nights, or chearful Days
 'Thou hast bestow'd, can give thee Praise.
 [...]

All from thy troubl'd Waters run;
 Thy stooping Fabrick all Men shun.
 All do thy clouded Looks decline,
 As if thou ne'er did'st on them shine.

(ll.33-36, 51-54)

She is the sole panegyrist for a lost reign and an exiled king.

Both 'The Consolation' and 'The Change' were written between 1689 and 1691 amidst immense political disruption and uncertainty. Finch's reliance on the certainties and assurances of panegyric imagery in such a context is understandable, as she sought to protect and commemorate James II as king and also allow for the possibility of another Stuart restoration; yet she was still incorporating elements of the panegyric into her poetry as late as 1716, after the death of both James and William III. The panegyric typology of the royal martyr and Christ-like king forms the basis of 'A Contemplation', a poem written after the death of the last truly Stuart monarch (Queen Anne died in 1714), the proclamation of George I and the crushing defeat of Jacobite hopes in the failed 1715 uprising.

Charles I was executed, "whether by unlucky coincidence or divine providence", on 30 January 1649 and the second lesson for the day from the *Book of Common Prayer* was Matthew 27, the trial and crucifixion of Christ.²⁴ Within two months of his death, the prayers and meditations of the late king had appeared in print and the typology of the royal martyr was born. The *Eikon Basilike*, more commonly known as the *King's Book*, is exceptional in its elevation of Charles I to divine status through continual comparisons between the plight of the imprisoned king and Christ:

I will rather chuse to wear a crown of thornes with My Saviour, then to
 exchange that of gold (which is due to Me) for one of lead, whose embased

²⁴ Laura Blair McKnight, 'Crucifixion or apocalypse? Refiguring the Eikon Basilike', in *Religion, Literature and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688*, ed. by Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 138-60 (p.138).

flexibleness shall be forced to bend, and comply to the various, and oft contrary dictates of any factions.²⁵

The executed king is elected a martyr, not just as one amongst the "glorious saints" (*Eikon Basilike*, p.73), but as the epitome of martyrdom, by echoing Christ's words on the cross:

If nothing but My bloud will satisfie My enemies, or quench the flames of My kingdoms, or thy temporall justice, I am content, if it be thy will, that it be shed by Mine owne subjects hands [...] and forgive them, O My father, for they know not what they do.

(*Eikon Basilike*, p.73)

It is this image of Charles I that dominated the public odes of the Restoration.

As Paul Hammond has noted, the typology of Charles I as a Christ-like martyr was a crucial aspect of royalist propaganda, both during the Interregnum and on the restoration of the monarchy:

The rewriting of history, the purging of sacred, monarchical time, from the taint of republicanism, is most evident in the creation of Charles King and Martyr, through which the fallible human being (a convicted traitor in many eyes) is removed from the unseemly messiness of history into the eternity of martyrdom.²⁶

The parallel between Charles and Christ functioned on two levels: it provided a divine justification for the king's absolutism and intransigence and also revealed a spiritual precedent for the "literal dismemberment of the king's body as a judicial and symbolic act" in the crucifixion of Christ (Hammond, p.13). Thus Waller's 'On the Statue of King Charles I At Charing Cross' envisages a triumphant Charles - "See his son reign where he a martyr died" - and renders his death messianic, as "kings so killed rise conquerors again."²⁷

Abraham Cowley is clearly influenced by the typology of the royal martyr in 'Upon His Majesties Restoration and Return', but his approach is more circumspect:

²⁵ *Eikon Basilike: The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings* (London, 1668, repr. C. & J. Rivington, St.Paul's Churchyard and Waterloo Place, 1824), p.78. McKnight attributes authorship of the *Eikon Basilike* to Bishop John Gauden, but acknowledges that it was based on material written by Charles I and received as such. (p.154).

²⁶ Paul Hammond, 'The King's two bodies: representations of Charles II', in *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain, 1660-1800*, ed. by Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp.13-48 (p.13).

²⁷ *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, II, 75, ll.2, 10.

*Him and his Royal Brothers when I saw
 New marks of honour and of glory,
 From their affronts and sufferings draw,
 And look like Heavenly Saints even in their Purgatory;
 Me-thoughts I saw the three Judean youths,
 (Three unhurt Martyrs for the Noblest Truths)
 In the Chaldean Furnace walk;
 How cheerfully and unconcern'd they talk!
 No hair is sing'd, no smallest beauty blasted;
 Like painted Lamps they shine unwasted.*

(ll.324-33)

Here Charles II, and also his heirs James, Duke of York and Henry, Duke of Gloucester, are figured as the imprisoned Judeans, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were forced to live in exile in Babylon and subsequently proved their faith by surviving the flames of the furnace, after refusing to commit idolatry. Remarkably, this typology actually transcends the more usual invocation of Charles I's martyrdom, as the royal brothers are "*unhurt Martyrs*".

In both of these odes the commemoration of Charles I and re-visioning of the shocking actuality of his death was partially intended to appeal to his newly restored son and further the panegyrist in the king's favour. Finch, however, had nothing to gain by writing 'A Contemplation', if anything the opposite was true, suggesting that the figurative potential of Charles I was still significant for Jacobites. Katherine Philips provides an interesting comparison as her response to the execution of the king, although it explicitly employs the martyr typology, was also written during a period of Stuart exile. 'The double murder of K. Charles, in answer to a libellous rime made by V.P' (1650-51) addresses not only the physical attack on the sacred body of the king, but also the destruction of his reputation in the Republican assault that sought to "dethrone the Christ-like Charles" of the *Eikon Basilike* (McKnight, p.159):

What noble eye could see, (and carelesse passe)
 The dying Lion kick'd by every asse?
 Hath Charles so broke God's lawes, he must not have
 A quiet crowne, nor yet a quiet grave?
 Tombs have been sanctuaries [...] ²⁸

²⁸ Katherine Philips, 1, 69-70, ll.9-13.

Even in death the martyred king could find no sanctuary. Philips relates the violation of Charles I's body and memory in language that evokes the similar fate of the body of Christ, particularly in the representation of Charles as a lion, signifying Christ in his incarnation as the Lion of Judah.

Finch adheres to this scriptural interpretation of political history in 'A Contemplation', as she redresses earthly injustices through the medium of spiritual redemption.²⁹ Whereas 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' concluded with the poet attempting to reconcile the "moral, religious, and political aspects of life" with the desire to lose herself in nature and retirement, 'A Contemplation' sees Finch distance herself from these concerns: "Then let my Contemplations soar / And Heav'n my Subject be" (ll.9-10).³⁰ Interestingly, the idea of the poet inhabiting "a vantage-point above earth and heaven", Carol Barash's misleading interpretation of the final stanza of 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat', is particularly revealing when applied to 'A Contemplation' (Barash, p.281). By removing her contemplations from a temporal context, she depoliticizes an inherently political vision of England: an essential move in a period of renewed persecution for non-jurors and Jacobites.³¹

It is true that Finch was an intensely spiritual woman, deeply committed to her faith and the non-juring church, and the author of a number of religious and meditative verses, but the political subtext of 'A Contemplation' is unmistakable. Her vision of a heaven "Where none usurps anothers Lands / And Theives we do not fear" (ll.15-16) clearly refers to the illegitimate claims of both William III and George I to the throne and their use of English monies and resources to protect and advance their own

²⁹ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems: A Critical Edition*, pp.138-141.

³⁰ Maren-Sofie Rostvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal, 1600-1700*, 2 vols (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), II, 109.

³¹ Barbara McGovern, *Anne Finch and her Poetry*, p.188.

territories.³² The use of the word "Remission" is particularly interesting in relation to the political implications of this model of heaven. She, or rather "we", seek "Remission for the past" (l.6), a request for forgiveness that seems perfectly reasonable given the religious framework of the poem, but remission has several other plausible connotations. It can mean both the act of remitting or the condition of being remitted from a penalty, obligation or punishment and also referral to a court or authority.

Thus, 'A Contemplation' may signal the recognition that it is only in Heaven that the burdens of political and religious conviction, in particular those of Jacobites and non-jurors, will cease to exist, that only God can lift the penalties imposed by William III, George I and, to a lesser extent Queen Anne, and their parliaments on those who remained loyal to the exiled Stuart monarchy. The poem itself could also be read as an act of remittance, as Finch envisages a future in which the opponents of earthly authorities are rewarded by a higher authority and their sufferings finally assuaged:

All Care all Sorrow all Surprise
 Fly from that World of peace
 Where tears are wip'd from clouded Eyes
 And Sighs for ever cease
 Decay or Sicknesse find no place
 In that untainted Air
 But still th'incorruptable Face
 Shall as at first be fair [...]

(ll.17-24)

These lines recall Cowley's depiction of England following the restoration of Charles II as a nation healed and comforted by the presence of the rightful king.

'A Contemplation' acknowledges recent political history, from a Jacobite perspective, through the allusions to the unlawful monarchy and the diseased nation, the antithesis of the Restoration panegyrics, and the "Hypocrisy", "feign'd pretence"

³² Murray Pittock has noted that there was a strong element of xenophobia to Jacobite criticism of William III and the same was true of their attitude to George I: "The idea that the crown was foreign and served foreign interests made the uses of revenue from taxation suspect." (Pittock, p.47).

and "foul Dissigns" (ll.53-54) of those in power, but it also posits an idealized political future. Katherine Philips figured the martyred Charles I as the Lion of Judah and Finch uses the same symbolic framework to depict James II as the sacrificial Lamb of God (l.27), who will be enshrined as a martyr, alongside his father:

With Christ's there Charles's Crown shall meet
Which Martirdom adorns
And prostrate lye beneath his feet
My Coronet of Thorns

The Lord to whom my life is joyn'd
For Conscience here opprest
Shall there full retribution find
And none his Claimes molest [...]

(ll.45-52)

After James II's death in 1701, Mary of Modena campaigned ceaselessly for her husband to be formally recognized as a martyr and canonized by the Catholic Church, an honour anticipated by Finch.³³

Heneage Finch, his political career halted by the Revolution and forced to rely on the charity of family and friends, is the most obvious candidate for "The Lord to whom my life is joyn'd"; however, the formality and solemnity of Finch's language here is inconsistent with earlier portraits of 'Daphnis' as a lover or a husband whose love of battles and maps inspires his wife to teasing, while his gout secures her sympathy.³⁴ Moreover, "Conscience" and "Claimes" are words with obvious political import when read in relation to James II: it could be argued that the exiled king's Catholicism and adherence to his own conscience rather than political necessity precipitated his downfall, as James's claim to the throne was overthrown by his own parliament and his own daughter in support of her husband.³⁵ Therefore it is entirely possible to construe the "Lord" to whom Finch has dedicated her life as James II.

³³ John Callow, *King in Exile, James II: Warrior, King and Saint* (Gloucestershire, England: Sutton Publishing, 2004), p.388.

³⁴ 'A Letter to the Same Person' (1690), 'An Invitation to Daphnis' (?1690s) and 'The Gout and Spider' (?1698).

³⁵ James made no attempt to disguise or moderate his Catholic principles and religious agenda upon his accession. Throughout his reign he endeavoured to repeal the Test Act, thus allowing Catholics to

The panegyric construction of the king as *pater patriae*, or the father of his people, which symbolized the proper relationship between the ruler and his subjects and the hereditary succession, substantiates this reading. *A Discourse of Magistracy*, a Williamite pamphlet published in 1689, declared that "The Title of *Pater Patriae* and *Sponsus Regni*; Father of the Country, and Husband of the Realm, are Metaphors and improper speeches", "nor can a kingdom more properly be said to be married".³⁶ Both of these titles were prevalent during the reigns of Charles II and James II, but, as this pamphlet demonstrates, William III had "little tolerance for the mystical trappings of the Stuart paternalistic monarchy" (Carver, p.349). By adopting the image of the king as *sponsus regni*, the husband of the realm, Finch is thus asserting the principles of patriarchal government and divine order and the sacred nature of Stuart kingship dispelled by the pragmatism of William III and latterly George I.³⁷

She extends the metaphor of the king as the husband of the nation or the people through the biblical allegory of Christ as the bridegroom of the church:

Such balmy Odours shall disperse
As from the Bridegroom's pores
The holy Canticles rehearse
Fell on the Bolts and Doors

When to his Spouse the well-belov'd
More white than Jordans Flocks
Spake whilst her hand the Barrs remov'd
And dew-drops fill'd his Locks [...]

(ll.33-40)

worship freely and hold office, presided over a largely Catholic army and permitted Catholics to assume positions of power within his own household and court. The Declaration of Indulgence (1687), which suspended the tests and permitted Protestant and Roman Catholic dissenters freedom of public worship, and the imprisonment of seven bishops who opposed the act was the final straw for those who believed that James's religious conscience was a serious threat to the established Anglican Church and the political and religious liberties of the people. (Hill, pp.197-99).

³⁶ Larry Carver, 'The Restoration Poets and their Father King', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 40 (1976), 333-51 (p.349).

³⁷ Preserving the mystical aspect of Stuart kingship appears to have been an important consideration for women writers after the Revolution. Jane Barker believed that she was cured of breast cancer by pressing a cloth soaked in James's blood to the affected area and many others reported miraculous cures after being exposed to the late king's blood or pieces of clothing he had once worn. Kathryn King, *Jane Barker, Exile: A Literary Career 1675-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp.103-08. James II continued to 'touch' for the king's evil (scrofula) after 1689, providing Jacobites with evidence of the "continuous divine sanction of his rule" and attesting to the legitimacy and sanctity of his claim to the throne. Geoffrey Scott, ' "Sacredness of Majesty": The English Benedictines and the Cult of King James II', *Royal Stuart Papers*, 23 (Huntingdon: The Royal Stuart Society, 1984), p.5.

In 'Exultationis Carmen', Rachel Jevon depicted an England "Weltering in gore" (l.46) who received her king as "a Bride whose Robes with blood are foul" (l.154), symbolizing a nation irrevocably stained and besmirched by the execution of Charles I and the bloody Civil War. Dryden, however, conceived of a repentant and chastened England which "in the white it wears / The marks of penitence and sorrow bears" ('Astraea Redux', ll.254-55). Finch also figures the church/nation as white, indeed she emphasizes that it is "More white than Jordan's Flocks", an image that recalls the figure of Christ as the sacrificial lamb, whose death released his followers from the burden of sin.

'A Contemplation' is an evocative expression of her political consciousness in 1716. Although she must surely have felt that the Jacobite movement had just lost its last chance of victory, the poem is remarkably free from any sense of bitterness or even regret. Instead it offers thanks for "those Woes / Which pay'd our way to Heaven" (ll.59-60) and awaits the return of "all good things that we have mist" (l.61) in an alternative vision of Jacobite victory. It is worth noting that all of this is accompanied by "Praises in Seraphick Sounds" (l.29), even in a celestial setting Finch remained at heart a Stuart panegyrist.

ii. "And Royal Oaks be of his race"

Conceivably the most influential panegyric typology on Finch's political writing was that of the royal oak. Charles Stuart had evaded capture by parliamentary armies after the Battle of Worcester by hiding in the branches of an oak tree, adding a personal element to the symbolic function of the oak as representative of the Stuart monarchy, which perhaps explains the enduring popularity of the image (Marcus, p.220). Just as the oak tree in Boscobel wood had protected and sheltered the young prince, facilitating his escape, ensuring his survival and encouraging royalist hopes, the royal oak signified the role of the king as the protector of the nation and also embodied the

stability, continuity and permanence of the Stuart monarchy. The oak was a crucial aspect of the mythologizing of the Interregnum that took place once Charles Stuart had been securely restored to his rightful position: the new king even considered establishing an 'Order of the Royal Oak' to reward those who had aided him after the defeat at Worcester.³⁸

Rachel Jevon figured Charles II in the guise of the royal oak in 1660 in order to stress his mercy and the end of the civil strife that had torn apart the nation:

The Royal Oak by stormes of leaves bereav'd
The generous Olive to its soil receiv'd;
Streight follows peace, its Deity being come,
Aside they lay their Arms, Sword, Pike and Drum;
To make a League with th'Royal Oak agreed.
(*'Exultationis Carmen'*, ll.85-90)

Abraham Cowley developed the typology of the oak and its political relevance in the third part of his *Poemata Latina*, published in 1668, which consisted of 'Six Books of Plants', with the fifth and sixth books focusing on trees.³⁹ It was the sixth book, 'Sylva', which attracted the attention of Aphra Behn who published a translation of Cowley's text in 1688, the timing of which could be construed as a rare political misjudgement on Behn's part. Her translation, appearing as it did on the eve of the Revolution, could also be read as a judicious warning of the consequences of opposing the rightful king:

— Here stopt the Oak,
When from the bottom of its Root there broke
A thousand Sighs, which to the Sky she lifts,
Bursting her solid Bark into a thousand Clefts.⁴⁰

Here the execution of the "God-like king" (l.1,023) Charles I is represented through the charged image of the royal oak. The cloven and fractured oak denotes both the physical body of the king and the body politic:

Now *Britany* o'erwhelm'd with many a Wound,

³⁸ Derek Wilson, *All the King's Women: Love, Sex and Politics in the Life of Charles II* (London: Hutchinson, 2003), p.77.

³⁹ *The Works of Aphra Behn*, I (1992), p.443n.

⁴⁰ *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.311-53, ll.1,028-31.

Her Head lopt off, in her own Blood lies drown'd;
 A horrid Carcase, without: Mind or Soul,
 A Trunk not to be known, deform'd and foul.

(ll.1,046-49)

It is hard to imagine a more graphic illustration of the consequences of a nation at war with its monarch and itself.

Although the Restoration panegyrics focused primarily on the physical attributes of the oak, it also possessed mystical and spiritual qualities. Druids were believed to have worshipped the oak tree, holding their religious rites and ceremonies in oak groves, and in the seventeenth century, "Druidic oak became identified with royal oak [...] confirming the magical and priestly role of the king" (Brooks-Davies, p.151). Douglas Brooks-Davies has termed the resurgence of interest in Druidism during the Civil War years and Interregnum a "propagandist phenomenon" as, for both royalists and republicans alike, "the Druids became a symbol of the Golden-Age religion and ancient liberties" (p.103). By employing the typology of the royal oak after the Revolution, Jacobites were also confirming the mythological narrative and mystical power connected with the Stuarts.⁴¹

Finch's poetry abounds with oak trees, from 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' to the fables written later in her career, some of which reflect her Stuart politics, while others appear to just be trees, free from any symbolic connotations; however, she manifestly employs oak tree typology during moments of political transition, using the traditional associations of the Druidic and royal oak to impart a coded political commentary. 'The Tree', although dated between 1685 and 1691, was probably written in the final months of James II's ill-fated reign, 'A Pindarick Poem Upon the Hurricane in November 1703', as the title indicates, accompanied the

⁴¹ It is no coincidence that Heneage Finch presided over a society of Druids, comprised of friends such as Dr. William Stukely and Algernon Seymour, Earl of Hertford, during his years in political exile, in which members addressed each other by supposedly Druidic titles such as Cyngetorix and Segonax. Hilda Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p.156.

accession of Queen Anne and 'Upon an Improbable Undertaking' anticipated the imminent Jacobite uprising (1715) and the potential reign of James III.

The most obvious comment to be made regarding this poem is that the eponymous tree is never actually designated an oak, although it shares all the characteristics of the royal oak iconography. As the poem was written in the early stages of Finch's own poetic transition, from love songs and translations to more politically conscious verses, it is reasonable to assume that she was still in the process of developing her approach to conventional Stuart typologies and assessing their relevance to the contemporary political situation. Of course, it is equally plausible that she simply did not feel that such exposition was necessary, particularly in such a precarious political climate. Although written early in her poetic career, 'The Tree' is an accomplished and complex political allegory, revealing the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the Revolution.

The "guarding Shade" (l.1,398) of Behn's translation of Cowley, a reference to the role of the oak tree in Charles Stuart's fortunate escape after the Battle of Worcester, becomes "delightful Shade" in Finch's version of the royal oak narrative:

Fair *Tree*! for thy delightful Shade
'Tis just that some Return be made;
Sure, some Return is due from me
To thy cool Shadows, and to thee.⁴²

The tree still signifies the king, in this case James II, but in the context of a reciprocal relationship characterized by benevolence and accord, rather than duty and obligation. Like the royal oak celebrated by the Restoration panegyrists, Finch's tree provides shelter, security and protection for the nation, but it also receives honorific music, commendation, dances and garlands of flowers as recompense for its endeavours.

Read against the almost universal rejection of James II during the last months of his reign, this representation of the king is at once naïve, touchingly loyal and a

⁴² *Poems of Anne*, pp.266-67, ll.1-4.

patent denial of political reality; nonetheless, through this idealized vision of natural and divine order, Finch upholds the model of patriarchal government intrinsic to the Stuart monarchy and gently rebukes James's recalcitrant subjects for their ingratitude and disobedience.

In *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent* Ann Messenger interprets 'The Tree' as an attempt to reconcile the seemingly disparate forces of "humanity and nature" through the central theme of justice, an attempt that is ultimately exposed as futile because, as a woman, "her power is limited to her wish-poem; she has no real say in the tree's fate".⁴³ Here the workman's axe signifies the injustice of man's attitude to the tree and to nature as a whole, an attitude that the poet deplores but is powerless to change. Messenger's conception of the poet as a mediator adds yet another dimension to a political reading of this poem and also reveals the personal implications of the Revolution. Finch struggles to balance the panegyric intention of 'The Tree', the justification of James II, the celebration of the birth of a male heir and the continuance of the Stuart monarchy, with the pervasive sense of menace instilled by the "fierce Winds" (l.23), "the Workman's hand" (l.20) and the axe.

In a political context the workman/woodsman, the fierce winds and the gathering clouds, all images used by Restoration panegyrists to signify the Civil War and the threats to the monarchy, presage discontent and civil unrest, while the axe is an unequivocal allusion to the inglorious fate of Charles I. However, even though Finch acknowledges the dangerous precedents for the political turmoil of 1688/89, she refuses to envisage a similar outcome for James II. The 'wish-poem' considered ineffectual by Messenger, a vain attempt on the part of the poet to deny her own inability to effect change, is actually a means of containing the threat to James's sovereignty as it is only recognized within the framework of her overriding desire for the preservation and continuance of the Stuart line. Interestingly, it is the tree's

⁴³ Ann Messenger, *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent: Studies in Augustan Poetry* (New York: AMS Press, 2001), p.43.

"Greatness" that "The Tree" seeks to protect, conscious of the fact that the real threat to James II was not the axe that ended the reign of Charles I, but the assault on his reputation and honour waged by Williamite propaganda. Finch's "Return" to the king is thus a promise, epitomized by the symbol of the flourishing oak, that his fame will endure for "future Ages" (l.19).

The thriving oak tree also suggests the permanence of the Stuart monarchy and the futility of William's attempted usurpation. In Finch's political allegory, the "Stock of Sap" (l.21) and "Summer's Ornament" (l.22) announce the birth of James Edward Francis Stuart on 10 June 1688, the male heir of both James II and Mary of Modena. The new Prince of Wales was born at the height of the political crisis concerning James's authority, only three days after the seven bishops who contested the Declaration of Indulgence were sent to the Tower, and this seemingly joyous event was marred by speculation and scandal surrounding the prince's birth and the widespread opposition to the prospect of a successive Catholic monarchy (Waller, p.189-213). Only six months later an invasion force headed by William of Orange landed at Torbay and began its advance towards London (Waller, p.233). In the midst of such controversy one imagines that it would have been both politic and prudent to neglect the poetic celebrations usually associated with the birth of a male heir; however, Finch, like Aphra Behn, chose to herald the prince's birth and invest the infant James Stuart with her hopes for the future.

Behn's panegyric tribute, 'A Congratulatory Poem to the King's Most Sacred Majesty, On the Happy Birth of the Prince of Wales', focuses on the affirmative aspects of the prince's birth, using it to signify divine approval of James's reign and the end of William of Orange's aspirations: "Methinks I hear the *Belgick* LION Roar, / And Lash his *Angry Tail* against the Shore. / Inrag'd to hear a PRINCE OF WALES is

Born".⁴⁴ Finch is more circumspect, perhaps indicating that 'The Tree' was written after the publication of this ode and following William's arrival on English soil. By locating her praise of the prince and his importance as James's heir alongside the inauspicious symbols of political conflict, she rejects the certainty and assurance of Behn's proclamations as to the Prince of Wales's future. However, Finch also allows for the possibility that the natural and divine order will triumph and rise, phoenix-like, from the ashes.

Ultimately 'The Tree' remains something of a contradiction, reflecting the changeable nature of the period in which it was written. It is both a valediction for an imagined political state that can never be recaptured and a pledge that there will be a return, a restoration, of at least one element of that romanticized vision, the tree, albeit in a different setting or in another aspect. Finch's understanding of her role as a poet on the other hand, is clear, as is her relationship with the tree. In answer to the rhetorical question, "Shall I then only Silent be, / And no Return be made by me?" (ll.15-16), she offers a resounding "No" (l.17), an early assertion of her position as a panegyrist and propagandist for James II.

Finch returned to the symbolic promise of the royal oak with 'Upon an improbable undertaking', probably written in the final months of Queen Anne's reign. The opening lines of the poem recall the romantic representation of James II in 'The Tree', but here the exiled king's fate is accepted, or at least endured, in a way that would have been impossible in 1688/89:

A tree the fairest in the wood
That long on Majesty had stood
A gracefull prospect to the plains
And shelter to the flocks and Swains
Up by the roots a tempest tore
And to a neighbouring meadow bore
The Country sorrow for the Oak
And meaner trees bewail'd the stroke [...]⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.297-99, ll.45-47.

⁴⁵ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp.45-46, ll.1-8.

As Murray Pittock has noted, "uprooted or destroyed oak trees [were] symbols of Williamite conquest" (Pittock, p.17); however, whilst 'Upon an improbable undertaking' acknowledges William's usurpation in the image of the uprooted oak, the tree here is transplanted rather than destroyed. James II is safely removed to France, the neighbouring meadow, while, in a slight rewriting of history, the nation mourns its loss.

Although the "tenants of the Land" (l.9) are comforted by the prospect of a replacement oak, the reality of the situation soon becomes apparent:

With verdant bough and mimic grace
 Another Oak its body rais'd
 And for a while was own'd and prais'd
 But time which all discovery brings
 Distinguishing 'twixt knaves and Kings
 Withers the bough and dries the trunk
 The planters grieved to see it shrunk
 Totring and tending to decay [...]

(ll.18-25)

If, as Helen Hackett has argued, "The monarch's own body was itself an image, the living image of the monarchy", the twisted and stunted form of the usurping tree typifies both William's own physical imperfections and the illegitimacy of his conquest.⁴⁶ William III's lack of kingly stature was frequently mocked by the Jacobite press and was a source of concern for his own propagandists, whose glowing tributes bore little resemblance to the truth: William was a small figure, at just over five feet five inches, hunched and frail, whose features were dominated by a crooked nose and uneven black teeth, whereas James II was over six feet tall, fair-haired and conventionally handsome (Schwoerer, 'Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688-89', p.849).

Finch's use of the knave to denote William III is remarkably similar to that of Jane Barker in 'To His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on His birth day 1689: or 99: The author having presented him a Calvary set in a vinyard':

⁴⁶ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.64.

Mad people, to be managed with a sham,
 And think their game secure for having Pamm
 And on that card stake honour wealth and lives
 Their somptuous houses, and their beautiful wives
 Whilst to the good oth' board they loudly call
 Ne'er think of flush, but Pamm they still extole
 Till for the good oth' board your Highness Loose them all.⁴⁷

Here "Pamm", the knave or jack of clubs, represents William, while "flush" denotes the supremacy and absolutism of Louis XIV. Barker dismisses the Revolution and the new monarch as a charade and disparages those "Mad people" who supported William and staked everything on a "sham" supposedly for the "good oth' board". Pamm's triumph, however, is threatened by the shadowy presence of Louis XIV and his support of the exiled court and Barker concludes with a prediction that the dedicatee of the poem, James Francis Stuart, will "Loose them all" and take the board.

Finch adopts this idea that the knave is a "sham" fostered by powerful players for personal gain and applies it to her own metaphorical narrative of the oak trees. Here, in spite of the best endeavours of the "planters" (l.24) to encourage its cultivation, the counterfeit oak fails to prosper and begins to wither and decay. The failure of the imitation oak to take root and flourish exposes its illegitimacy, allowing her to castigate those who sought to propagate such a deception:

Friends quoth a man who came to see
 The ruine of the bough and tree
 How cou'd your folly be so staunch
 When it had neither root or branch
 To think this Timber cou'd maintain
 Like what you've lost a stable reign [...]
 (ll.35-40)

There is a trace of Jacobite xenophobia in the image of the rootless tree, particularly when contrasted with James II, "the home-bred tree" (l.42), but Finch's assertion that "nature in it had no part" (l.30) in reference to the twisted and aberrant oak also comprises a more sinister interpretation.

⁴⁷ *Poems of Jane Barker*, pp.292-94, ll.56-62.

Melinda Zook has observed that Jacobite propaganda "represented William as either unable (impotent) or unwilling (homosexual) to satisfy his youthful wife's sexual appetite or provide the kingdom with an heir".⁴⁸ Thus the emphasis on the unfruitfulness of the replacement oak, "From whence no sprig or fiber sprung" (l.34), could be a coded reference to these Jacobite assumptions regarding William and Mary's childlessness. James II's virility was indisputable and his heir is figured as the mirror image of his father, who unlike William could "satisfy both use and eye" (l.14) and repair the damage to the country if the natural order was restored:

But yet if you'd successfull be
A Scion from the home-bred tree
May grow in time to fill the place
And Royal Oaks be of his race.

(ll.41-44)

The promise of this new oak is heralded in terms that stress natural progression and growth and ultimately reinforce the ideology of lineal succession.

In their notes to 'Upon an improbable undertaking' the editors of the Wellesley manuscript, Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant, discuss the poem as an allegory in which "the uprooted oak undoubtedly refers to the abdication of James II" while "the fallen oak may be referring in part to the consequences of James III's refusal to convert to Protestantism, in part to the abortive uprising of 1715" (*Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.160n). By assuming that the poem is dated after the publication of *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions* (1713) and the failed Jacobite rebellion, McGovern and Hinnant construe 'Upon an improbable undertaking' as an expression of the disappointment and disillusionment felt by many Jacobites following yet another failed attempt by an exiled Stuart king to reclaim his throne. It seems more plausible, however, to posit that the poem was written before the Hanoverian succession was confirmed.

⁴⁸ Melinda Zook, 'History's Mary: The Propagation of Queen Mary II 1689-1694', in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. by Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp.170-91 (p.173).

Queen Anne's reluctance to ratify the succession, coupled with the Tory majority in government and the influence of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, both of whom had strong Jacobite leanings, was readily interpreted by many in 1713 as a sign of her commitment to Jacobitism and the Stuart succession.⁴⁹ William's military authority in Ireland and Scotland, aided by James II's indecision and reliance on France, had ensured the stability of the monarchy throughout the 1690s and enabled Anne to assume control of a relatively secure throne. This is not to say that Jacobite resistance disappeared, on the contrary, there were a number of plots and intrigues during this period, but the potential for a Stuart restoration that was palpable from 1688 to 1691 was noticeably absent. This sense of potential was resurrected once again in the final months of Anne's reign (1713-14), with many Tories and Jacobites agitating for the accession of James III.

It is the title, rather than the actual tone, of the poem that seems to confirm McGovern and Hinnant's reading, but, as Leigh Eicke has noted, "McGovern and Hinnant have emended Finch's 'Impropable' to 'Improbable'". Their emendation certainly assists comprehension of the title, but it also obscures Finch's wordplay on the impossibility of propping up – the improbability of – the rootless oak of William and Mary" (Eicke, p.255). That Finch intended the title to read 'inpropable' is substantiated within the poem by the reaction of the planters to the rapid deterioration of the mimic oak: they "More strongly prop it every day" (l.26). The 'impropability' of William III and the legacy of his sovereignty were most likely intended to presage the comparable failings of the Elector of Hanover, another foreign usurper. Read in this context, the disillusionment and despair attributed to the poem by McGovern and Hinnant is undoubtedly erroneous.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p.363.

⁵⁰ I continue to refer to this poem by McGovern and Hinnant's title of 'Upon an improbable undertaking' for reasons of clarity.

Both 'The Tree' and 'Upon an improbable undertaking', written in corresponding moments of transition for the Stuart monarchy, during which their fortunes could either change for the worse or the better, focus on the oak tree as representative of the king. Under the auspices of Queen Anne's reign, however, Finch's use of the oak was more circumspect. Her accession, which marked the end of the Whig hegemony established during William III's reign and reinstated the Tories as political players, heralded a new era in Jacobite opposition and necessitated a new approach in Jacobite propaganda and literature. Anne resumed the practice of 'touching' for the king's evil, an ideological position abandoned by William, thus asserting her place in the direct line of succession and verifying her divine right to rule. Furthermore, in contrast to the late king's strict Calvinism, the new queen was devoted to the Anglican faith and took seriously her role as head of the Church of England.⁵¹ Anne was an English queen, a Stuart heir whose legitimacy was unassailable, and as such she could not be as easily vilified as William III.

The continuing association of the oak with the Stuarts is exemplified by the uproar that greeted the Duchess of Marlborough's plans for the landscaping of Marlborough House, which involved the removal of an oak tree planted by Charles II in remembrance of the tree that sheltered him after his escape from the Battle of Worcester.⁵² Edward Ward's epigram, 'Upon rooting up the Royal Oak in St. James's Park, rais'd from an Acorn, set by the Hand of King Charles II who brought the same from his old hiding-place at Boscobel', was typical of the outraged response to the proposed alterations:

Whilst Sarah from the Royal Ground
Roots up the Royal Oak,

⁵¹ Gregg, pp.130-50. The queen's Anglicanism and her preference for the Tories initially appeared propitious for Jacobite hopes. Many Jacobites trusted that Anne would favour the continuation of the Stuart line over a Hanoverian succession and nominate James Francis Stuart, newly declared James III, as her heir, in spite of her half-brother's Catholicism. However, although Anne sought to heal the divisive rifts in the church and mediate between the opposing factions of her government, she had little sympathy for the Jacobite cause and even less for James Stuart.

⁵² Ophelia Field, *The Favourite: Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (London: Sceptre, 2002), p.214.

The Sapling, groaning at the Wound,
 Thus to the Syren spoke,
Ah! may the Omen kindly fail,
For poor Britannia's Good!
Or else not only me you'll fell,
But her that owns the Wood.

Naturally Sarah Churchill was undeterred by the censure provoked by her scheme and felled the celebrated oak.

The use of Delarivier Manley's pseudonym for Sarah Churchill, Zarah, exposes the Tory motives of this seemingly innocuous little verse, adding an ominous twist to the lack of respect shown to Charles II's memory.⁵³ Whilst she is not directly implicated in the act of uprooting the tree, Ward exploits the incident to issue a warning to Queen Anne. The fate of one royal oak may signal that of another: Anne leased the ground on which Marlborough House was built to Sarah Churchill in 1708, and thus Ward was referring to the queen, "her that owns the Wood", rather than the duchess in his portentous wish for "Britannia's Good". The fate of the actual oak tree symbolized the threat to both the monarch and the nation from the effrontery of Sarah Churchill and the political audacity of the Whigs.

Although 'Upon the Hurricane' was written at the beginning of Anne's reign in 1703, several years prior to the scandalous uprooting of Charles II's much-loved tree, Finch draws on the evocative typology of the oak in order to comment upon the new queen and her government thus far and also perhaps to voice her fears for the future:

In vain the *Oak* (so often storm'd)
 Rely'd upon that native Force,
 By which already was perform'd
 So much of his appointed Course,
 As made him, fearless of Decay,
 Wait but the accomplish'd Time
 Of his long-wish'd and useful Prime,
 To be remov'd, with Honor, to the Sea.⁵⁴

⁵³ Manley was a notorious political satirist and Tory propagandist. *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarahians*, published in 1705, was a satirical attack on Sarah and John Churchill, Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and a number of leading Whig politicians.

⁵⁴ *Poems of Anne*, pp.252-62, ll.15-22.

In this account of the storm, any resistance to the powerful winds is futile and the majestic oak, which has survived all other onslaughts, is denied a honourable ending:

But finding All your Ruin did conspire,
She ["Mother Earth"] soon her beauteous Progeny resign'd
To this destructive, this imperious Wind,
That check'd your nobler Aims, and gives you to the
Fire.

(ll.47-50)

It is difficult to establish a definitive reading of 'Upon the Hurricane' as the poem is deliberately opaque. Taken in the context of noumenal propaganda, the destructive aspect of the hurricane appears to be an indictment of Queen Anne, or perhaps William III, but the divine judgement inherent in the destroying winds could also be extended to cover a multitude of transgressions and applied to the Church, parliament and the people themselves. However, if the storm is interpreted as a divine judgement on Anne's reign or her personal character, an assumption made by many, the fate of the oak, representative of the institution of kingship, does not bode well.

iii. 'Bonnie Dundee' and the Jacobite Panegyric

Thus far I have concentrated on Finch's use of the panegyric to celebrate the exiled king, the Stuart monarchy and the institution of kingship, but after the Revolution, she also addressed several panegyrics to prominent Jacobites and figures associated with the Stuarts. 'On the Lord Dundee', 'To His Excellency Lord Carteret at Stockholm' and 'Verses written under the King of Sweden's Picture' are more conventionally panegyric than the quartet of 'picture poems', brief epigrams on men connected with James II or the Jacobite movement; nevertheless, all of these later 'panegyrics' express a need to preserve both the forms and ideals of the Stuart court and to further the Jacobite cause.

Finch confirmed her status as a Jacobite panegyrist with 'On the Lord Dundee', written in July or August 1689, an ode in celebration of the "ablest and most

fearless soldier among the committed Scottish Jacobites", John Graham of Claverhouse, who was appointed second-in-command of the Scottish army and named Viscount Dundee by James II in 1688.⁵⁵ Dundee earned his place in Jacobite mythology as a result of his ambush of the Williamite army at the pass of Killiecrankie in July 1689, one of the few decisive victories achieved in Scotland or Ireland by a Jacobite army. The defeat of the government army, led by Major-General Hugh Mackay, was a significant event in a campaign that had so far failed to secure any substantial victories, but it came at a cost. Caught by a stray bullet during the battle, as he lay wounded, Dundee was shot dead by one of his own men in the process of looting the dead and injured (Callow, p.84).

Finch's ode was not an isolated tribute following the Battle of Killiecrankie. Dryden elegized the fallen conqueror as the "last and best of Scots!" in 'Upon the Death of the Viscount Dundee', a translation of a Latin poem by Archibald Pitcairne, an eminent Scottish Jacobite,⁵⁶ while Jonathan Swift was to describe Dundee as "the best man in Scotland".⁵⁷ Although it was undoubtedly one of the earliest acknowledgments of Viscount Dundee's valour and his sacrifice at Killiecrankie, 'On the Lord Dundee' was never published, perhaps because Finch deemed it too dangerous in the aftermath of the Revolution and too dated over twenty years later when she compiled her poetry for publication.

Needless to say, she ignored, or perhaps was unaware of, the inglorious reality of Dundee's death and focused on his heroism and ascension to Jacobite celebrity:

It must not be; nor can the grave
Graham, your mighty acts conceal;
Oblivion, never can prevail
Against the Loyal, and the brave.
Fame shall the gloomy Tyrant dispossess,
And bear you, on her golden wings,

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: Late Stuart and Early Georgian Britain, 1660-1722* (Harlow: Longman, 1993), p.219.

⁵⁶ *The Poems of John Dryden*, III (2000), 218-20, l.1.

⁵⁷ Cited in Ian Higgins, *Swift's Politics: A Study in Disaffection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.78.

You, that have borne the cause of Kings
To the most distant parts, of the wide universe.⁵⁸

Interestingly, 'On the Lord Dundee' is perhaps the most traditional of Finch's panegyrics, as evinced by the oratorical style of the poem, even though the dual nature of the ode, as both panegyric and elegy, necessitates the use of 'on' rather than 'to'.⁵⁹ She continually addresses Dundee throughout the poem as she reaffirms his triumph on the battlefield, establishes an illustrious lineage of valiant predecessors and avows that, even in death, his fame will be "retain'd" (l.15).

The allusion to Alexander the Great, the "yong Grecian Conqueror" (l.9), secures a position for Dundee in the pantheon of classical and mythological heroes; the reputation acquired by the famous military leader and empire builder, in an extremely flattering assertion, "Already is by you obtain'd" (l.12). Alexander featured prominently in late seventeenth-century panegyrics as the ultimate measure of success. In 'Upon the Death of Lord Hastings', Dryden honoured his subject's prowess as a linguist by comparing him favourably with Alexander "Who conquered men, but not their languages".⁶⁰ Similarly, Behn cited one of Alexander's rare failures, the conquest of Scythia, "Which *Alexander* ne'er could do", in order to console Edward Howard about the critical reception of his play and coax him out of poetic "revenge upon a multitude".⁶¹ Both Dryden and Behn hyperbolize Alexander's weaknesses in order to elevate the stature of their poetic subject, but Finch represents Dundee as Alexander's equal, without devaluing the original.

There was of course a more contemporary and familial precedent for Dundee's loyalty and bravery in the figure of his celebrated relative John Graham, Marquis of Montrose: "Already, in your name was shown / Deeds, second only to your own."

⁵⁸ *Poems of Anne*, pp.81-84, ll.1-8.

⁵⁹ As James Garrison has noted, during the later Stuart period a number of the identifying characteristics of classical panegyrics disappeared from the titles of contemporary panegyrics; for example, "the ceremonial occasion would be omitted from the title, the oratorical origins of the genre ('to rather than 'on') would be forgotten or the subject for praise would be far removed from the description a 'great person'" (Garrison, p.15).

⁶⁰ *The Poems of John Dryden*, I, 3-8 (l.18).

⁶¹ 'To the Author of The New Utopia' in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p.3, l.89, 51.

(ll.16-17). Montrose was a romantic figure in Scottish history, originally a Covenanter and opponent of Charles I he remained loyal to the crown, fought for the king during the Civil War and raised the royal standard for Charles Stuart in Scotland. One of the greatest military leaders of his day, Montrose died in ignominy and shame when, denied a nobleman's death, he was hanged and his body quartered and displayed throughout the land.

Finch portrays Dundee as the direct heir of Montrose, enhanced by his predecessor's reputation and deeds, "Montrose's spirit's doubl'd upon you" (l.21), but also compelled by fate to continue the "glorious things" (l.20) begun by the previous Scottish protector of the Stuart cause. This relationship allows her to covertly introduce the Jacobite obsession with legitimate succession on the premise that Dundee has inherited the abilities of Montrose, "as if to your race 'twere due, / Due, as succession to our Kings" (ll.18-19). Dundee's right and his victory are implicitly juxtaposed against William's usurpation and his army's defeat.

Whereas Pitcairne and Dryden interpreted his death as the end of Jacobitism in Scotland, with the fate of the nation inextricably bound to the fate of the man, Finch celebrates Scotland as the home of such a courageous warrior and anticipates Dundee's successors:

O Scotland! never more, be thou
A cold, unfruitfull Country nam'd,
But, be for heat, and product fam'd;
Not such as answers to the plow,
But such, as Heroes can produce,
For thine, and for thy Monark's use.
To nobler ends, thou doest thy heat bestow,
Not to make corn, and wine, but valiant warriors grow.

(ll.26-33)

Here Scotland's troubled past and often fraught fealty to the Stuart monarchy is forgotten as the nation's loyalty to James II is envisaged through the passion, strength and courage of her soldiers.

Yet Finch's Dundee is a man formed by many nations. Scotland alone cannot claim the credit for this veritable Renaissance man: "No land, but did to you impart / Dundee, what excellent she held" (ll.34-35). In France he acquires the "gracefull arts" (l.37) that enhance his natural beauty and allure, while Scotland and England contribute courage and knowledge:

Courage, your native country gave,
With such a soul, as soon shou'd take
The best impressions Art cou'd make:
Whilst with her sister, England joyn'd
With learning to enrich your mind.

(ll.41-45)

Finally Italy adds the wisdom necessary for "Strattagem, and council fitt" (l.47) rendering him a man destined to be "belov'd" (l.53) by both Mars and Venus. These countries are not selected at random, all possess strong connections to the Stuart monarchy and emphasize the idea that Dundee was "So born, so bred, and so improv'd" (l.54) in order to serve the Stuart cause. Although he served under William of Orange in the 1670s, and was even reputed to have saved the prince's life on the battlefield, Finch notably makes no mention of the Netherlands and its impact on the formation of 'Lord Dundee'.

Leigh Eicke has proposed that this descriptive rendition of Dundee's many virtues, or as she terms it, "Finch's laudatory feminization of Dundee", is characteristic of Jacobite writing by women (Eicke, p.249). Representations of "heroized females" and "feminized heroes" are, Eicke argues, central to Jacobite iconography and are particularly prevalent in women's writing (Eicke, p.127). Cross-dressing certainly played a part in Stuart mythology, presumably as a result of the penchant of both James and Charles for escaping from captivity and pursuit disguised as women during the Civil War years. Finch's portrait of Dundee, with his "frame so

fine, so nicely wrought" (l.39), a man so beautiful he cannot fail to "conquer hearts" (l.40), certainly conforms to this trend.⁶²

The panegyric concludes by returning to the Battle of Killiecrankie, the 'ceremonial' occasion that inspired Finch to such a laudatory heights. The extraordinary achievement of Dundee and his Highlanders against an army superior in numbers and in arms is heightened by the repetition of "Unequal numbers" (ll.57, 58), yet inevitably it is the commander alone, rather than the men who fought and died for him, who receives the poet's praise: "Before your troops, thrice to your foes / One single life, you did expose" (ll.60-61). Dundee's 'glorious' end is equated with that of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden who also died victorious on the battlefield:⁶³

So great Gustavus, tho' with Conquest crown'd,
Had Cypress, with his Lawrells wound,
And slept like Graham, on the field he wonn,
When the great business of the day, was done.

(ll.70-73)

This poignant epitaph, however, looks beyond the death of Dundee at Killiecrankie to an even greater Jacobite victory.

The coupling of the victor's laurel with cypress, symbolic not only of death but also immortality, anticipates enduring fame for Dundee and continuing Jacobite success. As a result of this dual symbolism, cypress was often associated with Christ's death and resurrection and, in the Jacobite context of the poem, also recalls the typology of Charles I as a Christ-like martyr. Thus, 'On the Lord Dundee' concludes, albeit obliquely, with one of the most potent images of the Restoration panegyrics, a

⁶² It could also be argued that Finch's representation of the royal oak, in connection to James II, eschews the more obviously 'masculine' characteristics of the oak tree, such as its size, strength and durability. Instead, Finch's oaks are fair, delightful and adorned with flowers ('The Tree'), celebrated for their supreme grace and loveliness ('Upon an improbable undertaking'). Similarly it is possible to contend that in 'The Introduction' Finch intentionally represents Deborah, the prophet and judge of Israel, as a "heroized female".

⁶³ Finch's appropriation of Gustavus II, the great champion of Protestantism in Europe, seems somewhat incongruous in relation to the death of a man who had earned the name 'Bloody Clavers' in response to his brutal suppression of the Covenanters, Presbyterian opponents of Anglicanism. Furthermore the cause for which Dundee died was headed by a Catholic monarch, funded by a Catholic nation and fought, in the main, by Catholic soldiers. It is possible that she was invoking the memory of this Protestant defender in order to counterbalance attempts by Williamite propaganda to irrevocably unite Jacobitism and Catholicism in the public consciousness.

reminder that death is occasionally followed by spiritual resurrection, poetic immortality or political restoration.

Finch's brief allusion to the famed Gustavus Adolphus in 1689 was followed by two poems inspired by the military daring and Jacobite leanings of the latest Swedish king, Charles XII. Charles XII was an intensely glamorous and exciting figure in European politics, from his accession to the Swedish throne in 1697 until his death in 1718, and his name became synonymous with romanticism, adventure and tragedy throughout the eighteenth century, engaging the fascination of many prominent literary figures, among them Swift, Dr. Johnson and Voltaire. The dashing young Swedish king also acquired a distinctive significance as a Jacobite icon. The relationship between Charles and the Jacobites owed its development to a number of factors: the established diplomatic alliance between Sweden and France, a mutual antipathy to the Elector of Hanover, and even the similarities between the exiled James II and Charles's predecessor, Queen Christina of Sweden, who abdicated the throne but retained her sovereign rights and authority.⁶⁴

'Verses written under the King of Sweden's Picture' is generally assumed to have been written between 1698 and 1701 and is the first of Finch's poems to mention Charles XII. However, these dates encompass the Swedish king's first military campaign against Denmark, a campaign in which he enlisted the assistance of both the English and the Dutch under the terms of the Treaty of the Triple League (1668). It seems highly unlikely that Finch would choose to extol the virtues of a prominent ally of William III, therefore I propose that 'Verses written under the King of Sweden's Picture' was more plausibly written in 1712 prior to the publication of *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions* (1713), when the idea of a Swedish-Stuart alliance was already popularly established.

⁶⁴ Niall MacKenzie, 'Charles XII of Sweden and the Jacobites', *Royal Stuart Papers*, 62 (Huntingdon: The Royal Stuart Society, 2002), pp.9-11.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the panegyric is that Finch focuses almost entirely on her own poetic vision of Charles XII, rather than the actuality of the eponymous portrait. She emphasizes the military might of the Swedish king, imagining him "Encompass'd, as we think, with Armies round" as if to imply that his prowess and dedication are such that he must always be surrounded by the trappings of war, even though they are not included "within this narrow Bound".⁶⁵ Like Dundee and James II, Charles is a feminized hero, "so Fair and Young" (l.7), whose beauty, grace and "blooming Sweetness" (l.15) inspire his men to greatness. His status as a Jacobite hero is confirmed by Finch's exaltation, "O latest Son of Fame, Son of *Gustavus* Linc!" (l.13), which invokes both Gustavus Adolphus and Viscount Dundee to complete a triumvirate of Jacobite protagonists.

'Verses written under the King of Sweden's Picture', like 'Upon an improbable undertaking', is indicative of the undercurrent of Jacobite expectation that accompanied the rise of the Tory party under Harley and Bolingbroke and the much discussed possibility that the dying queen would overturn the Protestant succession in favour of her half-brother. In her concise panegyric Finch naturally celebrated the illustrious military reputation of her subject, but this somewhat threatening martial and triumphant persona was diffused by the assertion that, "So Lightnings, which to all their Brightness shew / Strike but the Man alone, who has provok'd the Blow" (ll.17-18). It is possible, however, to read this couplet as a veiled warning to the Elector of Hanover, potential heir to the British throne, who was engaged in a territorial struggle with Sweden over the contested regions of Bremen and Verden in Northern Germany during this period.⁶⁶

Charles XII may have been an acceptable subject for poetic praise in 1713, but the situation was somewhat different by 1719, when Finch composed 'To His

⁶⁵ *Poems of Anne*, pp.91-92, l.3, 4.

⁶⁶ Jeremy Black, *The Hanoverians: The History of a Dynasty* (London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2004), p.60.

Excellency the Lord Carteret at Stockholm Upon receiving from him a picture in miniature of Charles the twelfth King of Sweden'. The Elector of Hanover had succeeded Queen Anne uncontested to become George I, the Jacobite uprising of 1715 had failed and the Whigs were once more in control of government. Public opinion of Charles XII had also become increasingly politicized: "The Swedish King's ever more widely assumed identification as a Stuart ally, from about 1715 onwards, produced a politically defined opposition in British perspectives on him: Jacobites in favour, Hanoverian loyalists against." (MacKenzie, p.13). The collusion of the Swedish in the planning of the 1715 uprising and the Swedo-Jacobite plot of 1717 ensured that Charles XII was regarded as a Jacobite ally and a threat to the Hanoverian establishment until his death in 1718.

The very title of the poem reveals its Jacobite context. The collection of medals, manuscripts, portraits and miniatures was a "Jacobite mode of communication" that enabled members of the exiled community to express their beliefs and share them with a privileged audience (Eicke, p.120). Mary Caesar, wife of the Jacobite MP Charles Caesar, was perhaps the most famous of Jacobite collectors, who used an assortment of portraits and papers to assert her own allegiance to the cause and also to establish the loyalties of those honoured guests with whom she shared her collection.⁶⁷ As the overt display of images of the exiled royal family would have been extremely provocative and perilous after the Revolution, many collectors substituted other revered figures in Stuart history such as Mary, Queen of Scots or the Marquis of Montrose, as well as the more recent Jacobite darling, Charles XII. Thus Finch's acknowledgment of "the present in the World, the most suited to my Ambition and delight" delivered to her by the "obliging hand" of Lord Carteret is an implicit affirmation of her Jacobite beliefs.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Valerie Runbold, 'The Jacobite Vision of Mary Caesar', in *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1740*, ed. by Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1992), pp. 178-98.

⁶⁸ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp. 23-24, ll.3-6.

John, Lord Carteret, related to the Finches through his marriage to Frances Worsley, Heneage Finch's great-niece, was appointed envoy to Sweden in 1719, so the miniature could be construed as merely a souvenir of his new role for an elderly relative. Carteret had unequivocally endorsed the Protestant succession and there is no evidence of any Jacobite leanings on his part in 1719.⁶⁹ Furthermore, while Finch excessively praises Lord Carteret for his "liveliness of imagination" (l.1), his genius and his diplomatic successes - "all Europe is his Scene and the greatest Princes engage his extensive thoughts and daily conversation" (ll.32-34) - and commends him on the graces and accomplishments of his family, the real subject of the poem is the gift rather than the giver. Carteret is applauded for his choice of a gift that "trafficks for the mind" (l.13) and "do[es] our fancies fire" (l.16) suggesting the symbolic and sentimental value inherent in the portrait of Charles XII for a committed Jacobite.

Finch is inspired by the miniature to return to the "early theme of my aspiring muse" (l.22) and once more extol the virtues of "CHARLES Lord of Peace and thunderbolt of war" (l.19), upholding the Swedish king as a "Christian Hero" (l.20) committed to the defence of both church and country. 'To His Excellency the Lord Carteret at Stockholm' anticipates the enduring legacy of Charles XII as a Jacobite icon, a year after his death at the siege of Frederikshald in Norway, in the poet's reaction to the receipt of his portrait. Finch focuses, not on Charles's death, but on the power of his image, "Bright as his zeal, and glorious as his name" (l.25), and all that it represents. Her sense of exclusion and exile, which had temporarily abated under the auspices of Queen Anne's reign, is evident in the apologetic aside, "As for the news of this place it will be better represented by such as have more opportunities than I have of knowing all agreeable occurrences" (ll.40-42). For the increasingly disenfranchised

⁶⁹ It is worth noting, however, that Jonathan Swift felt compelled to defend Lord Carteret, and also himself, from allegations of Jacobitism only a decade later in 'A Vindication of his Excellency Lord C[arteret], from the Charge of favouring none but Tories, High-Churchmen and Jacobites' (1730). J.A. Downie, 'Swift and Jacobitism', *ELH*, 64 (1997), 887-901 (p.893).

and isolated Jacobite community past glories, opportunities and heroes formed an alternative history and culture for adherents of the seemingly lost Stuart cause.

It is perhaps this need to create a sense of community and purpose that connects the seemingly disparate subjects of the 'picture poems'. These brief inscriptions, whilst far removed from the structural and thematic considerations of the neo-classical panegyric, celebrate figures related in some way to the Stuart cause, both before and after the Revolution, and as such fall into the category of 'Jacobite' panegyric. All four 'picture poems' remained unpublished in Finch's lifetime, although their inclusion in the Wellesley manuscript does not necessarily dictate that they were written after 1713.

'Under the picture of Marshall Turenne taken from his epitaph written in French' honours the famous French soldier, mentor and friend to James II, who died in 1675. Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne and Marshal of France, had commanded James, Duke of York, between 1652 and 1655 during the third war of the Fronde, which conclusively secured the throne for Louis XIV. James himself described Turenne as "the greatest and most perfect man he had ever known and the best friend he had ever had" and, at the request of Turenne's nephew, compiled an account in 1695 of his experiences while serving under the French general.⁷⁰

Given James's propensity for repeatedly recounting his martial adventures and his genuine admiration and love of Turenne, it is likely that Finch knew of the close bond between the two men, hence her tribute:

Turenne with sleeping Monarchs lies interr'd
For loud valour justly so prefer'd
Whilst this to future ages carried down
Shall prove 'tis equal in renown
To wear or to support the Crown.

(*Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.81)

⁷⁰ A.L. Sells, (ed. and trans) *The Memoirs of James II. His Campaigns as Duke of York, 1652-1660*. Cited in Callow, pp.263-64.

Just as James II venerated Turenne, and Turenne fought tirelessly in the service of Louis XIV and France, so too Finch continued to remain loyal to the exiled Stuart king and assert his rights and legitimacy. Controversially, she avers that to support the crown is "equal in renown" to actually wearing it, placing the loyal subject on a par with the monarch. It is certainly true that Turenne had acquired the reputation of a national hero following his death and I would suggest that it is this entitlement to remembrance and a place in history that Finch is referring to in her comparison of kings and their 'supporters', perhaps contemplating her own poetic impact on "future ages".

This preoccupation with reputation and standing is typical of the 'picture poems', suggesting that Finch was indirectly questioning her own poetic and political authority as a panegyrist for the Jacobite cause after James II's death in 1701. 'Under the picture of Mr John Dryden' considers the external factors involved in the formation of a great poet and endorses Dryden's place in the literary canon:

As great a character the Poet draws
From unjust envy as from just applause
Then Dryden since of both none e'er had more
We'll grant like thee none ever writ before.

(Wellesley Manuscript Poems, p.80)

Dryden's resolute loyalty to the monarchy after 1660, and in particular to James II, both as heir to the throne and king, was evident in his public commemorations and justifications of the events and policies of both Stuart kings. Politically motivated satires such as 'Absalom and Achitophel' and 'The Medal', scathing attacks on fellow poets such as 'MacFlecknoe' and 'The Hind and the Panther', a defence of Catholicism, written after the poet's conversion to the faith shortly after James's succession, attracted both acclaim and censure.

Finch shared this extreme devotion, personally, poetically and politically, to the Stuarts and her admiration of Dryden, his work and his unwavering allegiance, is evident in her appraisal of his critics, who are motivated by "unjust envy" rather than

honourable and impartial intentions. Finch also shared Dryden's fate of exile after the Revolution, thus her defence of his reputation as an unequalled poetic genius is also in a sense a reassertion of her own place, however minor, in literary history. In spite of his critics and the change in political fortunes, Dryden will be remembered as a poet, and so perhaps will Anne Finch.

This idea that true greatness and achievement can surmount any opposition is further explored in 'Under the picture of S^t George Rooke':

Nor envy nor the tongue with faction backt
 Shall from this Admiral's renown detract
 Since he who further confirmation needs
 May in his looks read his Heroick deeds.

(*Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.79)

Although as a vice-admiral Rooke's naval successes had contributed to the failure of James II's attempts to reclaim his throne, he was a prominent Tory and as such Finch defended his reputation, under attack from the satires and lampoons of the Whigs. Admiral Rooke's capture of Gibraltar and victory at the Battle of Malaga in 1704 was exploited by the Tories to belittle Marlborough's triumph at Blenheim, as the two men became pawns in the ongoing political struggle between the Tories and Whigs. Dismissing the comments of his detractors as motivated by "envy" and party politics, Finch directs the sceptical reader to the portrait of Rooke as "his Heroick deeds" are manifest in "his looks".

The Jacobite panegyrics, whether addressed to Sir George Rooke, James II, Lord Dundee or Charles XII, centre on the visual image of the heroic individual as representative of his worth, valour or majesty.⁷¹ In this Finch was undoubtedly

⁷¹ I have not discussed the final 'picture poem', 'Over the picture of Major Pownoll' (*Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.82), in any detail largely because the subject of the poem has yet to be identified. McGovern and Hinnant have conjectured that Finch is referring to the Captain Pownell who was arrested in 1692 for his role in the proposed French/Irish invasion of England; however, this attribution cannot be substantiated and there is no evidence that Finch knew of Pownell or that he was particularly significant to Jacobite hopes (p.176). Finch compares her subject with the Roman emperor Titus, famed for his love of the people and interest in their welfare, and thus beloved by all. The epigram compares this reciprocal relationship with the position of Major Pownoll, "in distress" and therefore unable to offer a return, who "strip't of all did all mens Love possess". Pownoll's worth can be measured by the "Love of all unmingled with design".

influenced by the Restoration panegyrics, which relied heavily on the symbolic potential of imagery and iconography. By continuing to praise the leading figures of the Jacobite movement using the language and imagery of the panegyric, she maintained the fiction that the Stuart court in exile and its adherents retained their authority and power, *de jure* if not *de facto*. Finch's appropriation of the panegyric is inseparable from its function in the celebration of the Restoration and glorification of the Stuarts, and her poetic authority in these poems is constructed around her role as a panegyrist, albeit for an exiled king and often hopeless cause. However, although she continued to uphold the idealized vision of the Stuart monarchy established at the Restoration, her adoption of the panegyric as an oppositional form is never less than unique, innovative and distinctly individual.

4. "A MONARK HE, AND RULER OF THE DAY/A FAV'RITE SHE, THAT IN HIS BEAMS DOES PLAY": THE MALE MONARCH AND THE FEMALE POET

As a panegyrist Finch remained, to a degree, detached from her poetic subjects by the formal constraints of the genre. The 'authorizing language' of the panegyric was ceremonial and conservative, constructed around figurative types and biblical exegesis, in order to consolidate the power and majesty of the monarch.¹ Even those poems written in honour of 'lesser' figures, such as her ode to Lord Dundee, relied on excessive hyperbole and universal expressions of praise, creating a sense of distance between the panegyrist and her subject. Although the panegyric, or individual elements of the form, remained an important part of Jacobite political discourse because of its associations with the Stuarts, the public nature of the mode as a means of legitimating authority was necessarily mitigated following the Revolution. Finch continued to incorporate the panegyric into her Jacobite rhetoric, but she also sought other less exposed and conventional means of authorizing her political poetry.

In this chapter I explore the ways in which Finch personalizes the political and locates her poetic authority directly in the figure of the male monarch. Although, as Kathryn King suggests, "To place gender at the centre of the story of women as political agents is, ironically, to miss out on much of their politics", it is also possible to argue that in some cases women used gender assertively rather than negatively, a tactic that is particularly characteristic of royalist women writers (King, p.130). Writers as diverse as Margaret Cavendish and Jane Barker, Aphra Behn and Anne Finch all used gender as a political tool at some point in their literary careers. The affinity between the male monarch and the female poet, used to great political and linguistic effect by royalist women, relies on the gendered nature of the figurative relationship. Exploring the role of gender in the construction of poetic authority need

¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, established "authorizing languages" were the predominant means of legitimating political discourse. (Sharpe and Zwicker, p.8)

not cause us to “miss out on” the importance of women’s political writing, particularly if we recognize that this was only one of many strategies adopted by women writers to validate their work.

i. The Happy Wife: Conjuality and Linguistic Authority

Murray Pittock has suggested that “By 1694, long before the age of sentimental Jacobitism, James was being addressed in terms of the love song”, a trope evident in much of Finch’s early political poetry (Pittock, p.48). ‘The Consolation’ represents the relationship between the male monarch and the female poet in terms of love, pleasure and desire, but also encapsulates the plight of both as political outsiders trapped in physical and metaphorical exile. As discussed in the previous chapter, James II is figured as Phoebus, while the poet is the “soaring lark”.² The lark, like the nightingale, was prized for its song and was a standard poetic trope, but Finch is also playing with the literal meaning of her own name, thus inscribing herself in the text. As Ann Messenger has noted, the bird was a “highly suggestive image” in her poetry, as “birds were not only the enchanting songsters of the woods but also powerless hunted creatures” (Messenger, p.40). Through the representative potential of the bird, the poet metonymically shares the flight of her beloved king as he is forced into exile.

The playful communion between Phoebus and the lark is apparent, as she, his “fav’rite”, the recipient of royal favour, “in his beams does play” (l.8). The same sense of affinity and partiality is displayed in Aphra Behn’s coronation ode to James II:

How e’er I toil for Life all day,
With what e’re cares my Soul’s opprest,
Tis in that Sun-shine still I play,
Tis there my wearied Mind’s at rest.³

Both women revel in their ability to lose themselves in play and pleasure in the metaphorical presence of the king; Behn escapes her “wearied” mind and finds solace,

² *Poems of Anne*, p.18, l.2.

³ ‘A Pindarick Poem on the Happy Coronation of His most Sacred Majesty James II’, in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, I (1992), 200-21, ll.459-62.

while Finch surrenders herself, as to a lover, to the extent that "she never thought of a return" (l.4). Yet neither poet loses her sense of self, rather their poetic identity is secured through this figurative relationship with the male monarch. Similarly this closeness does not disturb the balance of power between ruler and subject, patron and poet; both poets deliberately employ the panegyric symbolism of the sun, signifying James's absolute authority, and Finch clearly defines James as the "Monark" and "ruler of the day" (l.7)

'A Song on Griefe' (?1689) also personalizes the political events surrounding the Revolution and James II's flight to France, although in this case grief not pleasure characterizes the union between the poet and the king:

To thee, great Monark, I submitt,
Thy Sables, and thy Cypresse bring,
I own thy Pow'r, I own thee King,
Thy title, in my heart is writt,
And 'till that breaks, I ne'er shall freedom gett.⁴

Although this politicized rhetoric suggests the reason for Finch's grief, these lines also reveal the intensity of her emotional connection to the male monarch, as her heart is consumed by anguish and loss. The lament that grief can "cloath ev'n love him self, in thy dark livery" (l.5), coupled with images of broken hearts and death, romanticizes the bond between the exiled king and the poet. The personal tone of the poem allows Finch to articulate the extremity of her political loss without fear of reprisal or need for justification, by deliberately failing to explicitly identify the actual cause of her grief.

In the wake of a revolution and a propaganda campaign that cast James II in the role of ruthless tyrant and oppressor of civil and religious liberties, the need to refigure the king as a loving and benign presence evident in much of Finch's early verse is entirely understandable. Moreover, the feminine poetic voice and the implicit theme of union could be read as a manifestation of the Jacobite trope of marriage or

⁴ *Poems of Anne*, pp.18-19, ll.11-15.

sexual union as “an image of wished-for political legitimacy” (King, p.162). Legitimate sexual attraction, in effect marriage, as a metaphor for the political situation and in particular the ideal relationship between the monarch and his subjects was well established in the seventeenth century. While Finch’s interpretation of this metaphorical relationship is usually limited to the monarch and the poet, this does not necessarily preclude a wider political interpretation.

‘A Letter to Dafnis April: 2nd 1685’, also known as ‘A Letter to Daphnis from Westminster’, although written before the Revolution, is perhaps the key to understanding Finch’s sometimes personal approach to political situations. The poem is often dismissed as an autobiographical account of her happiness in the early years of her marriage:

This type of poetry eulogizes husbands who are first and foremost “best of friends” with their wives. In these marriages, the desires and aspirations of husband and wife are so compatible that they cease to be distinguishable, merging into “one pure flame”. The women in these poems stress that their husbands are the highest of their earthly joys, and the conventional imagery used to depict their union is that marriage is the experience closest to being in paradise on earth.⁵

The most remarkable feature of the poem in this context is the rarity of a happy marriage, when so often in this period marriage was little more than a business transaction. Heneage Finch and Anne Kingsmill were married in May 1684 and it is entirely feasible that ‘A Letter to Dafnis’ is simply a celebration of that union, which was obviously a source of great joy to the poet.⁶ However, when read in a political context, as the extended title of the poem demands, ‘A Letter to Dafnis’ acquires another layer of significance: James II and Mary of Modena were officially crowned king and queen at Westminster 23 April 1685.

The fact that the addressee of ‘A Letter to Dafnis’ was actively involved in the coronation further adds to the political intent of the poem. Heneage Finch, originally

⁵ Margaret J. M. Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p.105.

⁶ McGovern, *Anne Finch and her Poetry*, p.29.

assigned to assist the king during the procession from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey, was one of the sixteen men who carried the canopy of the new queen during the coronation procession, at Mary of Modena's personal request (McGovern, p.30). The coronation undoubtedly provided the backdrop to 'A Letter to Dafnis'; however, I would argue that it is also possible to read the poem as a celebration of the act of communion between the monarch and his people enacted through the coronation oaths.

Marriage as a signifier of political legitimacy was an established trope and, as Lois Potter has commented, "the language of politics under the Stuarts, with its emphasis on the family and the succession, makes the domestic and the political interchangeable".⁷ The coronation oath involved a pledge of fidelity, a commitment to the nation, and as such was similar to wedding vows; indeed, "for centuries the symbolic female body of the state had been wedded to the masculine body of the monarch".⁸ Thus it is entirely possible that Finch employed the domestic relationship between a husband and wife to represent the political relationship between the monarch and his subjects.

She refers to her husband as the "Crown" and "blessing" of her life and, as Barbara McGovern has noted, the crown metaphor carries "a rich multiplicity of meanings" (p.39).⁹ In her paraphrase of Ovid's 'Oenone to Paris' (1680), Aphra Behn created a golden age in which erotic freedom symbolized political freedom through the reciprocal relationship of the two lovers. The relationship is at once equal and hierarchal; Oenone refers to Paris as both "Partner of my softest Fires" and "Lord of my Desires".¹⁰ Behn consistently uses politicized language to describe the relationship, as when Oenone reminds Paris "I reign'd the absolute Monarch of your

⁷ Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.102.

⁸ Harold Webber, *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), p.77.

⁹ *Poems of Anne*, p.19-20, l.1.

¹⁰ *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.12-19, ll.1-2.

Soul" (l.85), to corroborate the connection between the innocent freedom of the two lovers and the symbolic relationship between the king and the state. Sir Robert Filmer, the advocate of the patriarchal theory of government so beloved by the Stuarts, and by James II in particular, asserted that "The greatest liberty in the world (if it be duly considered) is for people to live under a monarch", a theoretical model defended by both Behn and Finch through the metaphor of the reciprocal male/female relationship.¹¹

If Finch is a "happy wife" then Daphnis is a "much lov'd husband" (l.2), his "constant passion" (l.3) in wooing the resistant poet is rewarded by her complete devotion; "Daphnis I love, Daphnis my thoughts persue, / Daphnis, my hopes, my joys, are bounded all in you" (ll.8-9). The constant repetition of Heneage Finch's pastoral pseudonym evokes an intensely personal and private poetic space, but, as Barbara McGovern has suggested, "By moving out from an intimate conjugal episode to one addressed to the world at large, the poem takes on social implications, and the tributes of a wife to her husband become more generalized" (p.40). This generalized tribute - "And to the World, by tend'rest proof discovers / They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers" (ll.5-6) - and the juxtaposition of the public and personal also has political implications.

Margaret Cavendish, who had served as a maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria and endured political exile, used marriage and romantic love as a metaphor for the patriarchal model of government and exploited the language of absolute monarchy to authorize her literary creations. Her gendered model of political and linguistic authority almost certainly influenced Behn and Finch, allowing them to manipulate their gender for political and poetic gain. Central to this paradigm was the idea of contractual obligation, explored by Cavendish in the romance *The Contract* (1656). Cavendish's plot involves a marriage contract drawn up by two old friends, a noble

¹¹ Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. by Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.4.

gentleman and a duke, to unite the gentleman's niece and the duke's son in marriage once they come of age. However, the young man, always resistant to the contract, disregards his father's wishes and his own consent and marries another woman after the duke's death. After falling in love with his original betrothed at a masked ball, the new duke persuades her to join him in a plan to overthrow his own marriage and also the new contract linking the lady with another suitor.¹² This complex plot is resolved through a legal trial in which the lady sues for her lover's hand, claiming him as her rightful husband by asserting the priority of the original contract. The romance concludes with the original marriage contract being upheld by the court and the expedient engagement of the viceroi and the duke's spurned wife.¹³

Victoria Kahn has suggested that by refiguring ideas of contractual obligation and political subjectivity through the medium of the romance plot, Cavendish is able to negotiate the potential conflict between her royalist politics and her desire for autonomy:

Cavendish uses the language of romance both to argue for a more equitable contractual relationship between husband and wife and to present an account of political obligation that is based on love rather than on filial obedience, wifely subordination or [...] self-interest.¹⁴

There is a similar contractual element to the husband and wife relationship in 'A Letter to Dafnis', manifest in Finch's "return" of Dafnis's love "as is due" (l.7). However, this sense of contractual obligation is mediated by the fact that it is based on love and mutual respect rather than "wifely subordination". Finch, like Cavendish, redefines the obedience, inequality and subordination of the marriage contract through the language of romance: "They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers" (l.6).

¹² Interestingly the lady, Deletia, is only named during the duke's appeal to the viceroi to release her from any expectations of marriage by claiming her as his own wife.

¹³ *The Contract in Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle: The Blazing World and Other Writings*, ed. by Kate Lilley (London: Penguin Classics, 1994), pp.1-43.

¹⁴ Victoria Kahn, 'Margaret Cavendish and the romance of contract', *Renaissance Quarterly* 50:2 (1997), 526-566 (p.528).

Marriage does not constrain or restrict Finch personally or poetically; on the contrary it reaffirms her sense of self and defines her poetic subjectivity. By emulating Margaret Cavendish's "demonstration of husbandly consent", she was able to construct an authorial identity that remained true to the principles of patriarchal government and upheld the 'natural' authority of both husband and king. In relation to Margaret Cavendish's linguistic authority, Kate Lilley has suggested that:

Cavendish construed her life's work as the prudent management and disposition of a singular oeuvre materialised through the benefits of marriage. Claiming much more than husbandly permission she strategically represented her writing as a conjugal effect, framing the emulation of her husband's greatness as the synecdochal marker of a permitted 'Emulation towards Men' in general 'for their Courage, Prudence, Wit, and Eloquence'.¹⁵

Cavendish credited her "extraordinary husband", who read and endorsed her work, as the motivation behind her literary endeavours: *Poems and Fancies* concluded with a poem that acknowledged William Cavendish as the sole inspiration of the collection, while the dedication to *The World's Olio* commended Newcastle as "my wit's patron".¹⁶

William Cavendish actively encouraged his wife to publish and penned a number of laudatory verses for inclusion in her books. Husbandly consent was taken to its furthest limits when the duke was compelled to defend his wife against the charges of numerous critics who contended that *The Philosophical and Physical Opinions* could not possibly be the work of a female author. In spite of Margaret Cavendish's repeated protestations of authorship, it was her husband's four-page prefatory epistle, "to justify the Lady Newcastle, and truth against falsehood, laying those false and malicious aspersions of her, that she was not the author of her books", that eventually silenced the critics. As Katie Whitaker notes, "Anyone who now

¹⁵ Kate Lilley, 'Contracting Readers: "Margaret Newcastle" and the Rhetoric of Conjugality', in *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*, ed. by Stephen Clucas (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), pp.19-39 (p.19).

¹⁶ Katie Whitaker, *Mad Madge, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle: Royalist, Writer and Romantic* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), pp.159-71.

denied Margaret's authorship of her books would be accusing a man of honour of lying" (Whitaker, p.190-91).

Anne Finch was equally fortunate in her choice of husband. After 1690, Heneage Finch willingly undertook the role of amanuensis and editor of his wife's poetry, transcribing her often illegible work and compiling manuscripts for circulation. Barbara McGovern's assertion that "The role that Heneage Finch played in his wife's development as a writer is enormous", is borne out not only by his practical assistance, but also his unconditional support and encouragement (p.70). Furthermore with 'A Letter to Dafnis' Finch uses her contractual obligation as a wife to validate her career as a poet: "Ev'n I, for Daphnis, and my promise sake, / What I in women censure, undertake." (II.10-11). The use of "promise", like "due" and "return", in relation to her marriage once again invokes the rhetoric of contract; however, consent is the defining aspect of this contractual relationship: Daphnis comes before the reference to her "promise". In the same way Finch is quick to assure the reader that her poetic ambition is the result of "love, not vanity" (1.12); thus her authorship is paradoxically a sign of duty and respect.¹⁷

The association between linguistic and political authority in royalist women writers is a complex and contested issue. Catherine Gallagher, in her discussion of Margaret Cavendish and female subjectivity, struggles to reconcile the symbolic potential of the male monarch for women writers with the formation of an autonomous self:

In her proclamations of what she calls her "singularity", she [Cavendish] insists that she is an autotelic, self-sufficient being, not a secondary creature, a satellite orbiting a dominant male planet, but a self-centred orb, eccentric because outside of anyone else's circle. In describing and

¹⁷ This trope appears repeatedly in Finch's early poetry. 'To Mr. F Now Earl of W.' (?1689) is written at the particular request of Heneage Finch, "Who going abroad, had desired Ardelia to write some Verses upon whatever Subject she thought fit, against his Return in the Evening" and in 'A Letter to the Same Person' (?1690) Finch declares that love is the rightful "President of Verse" (1.3) and love inspires the boldness and confidence of her lines.

justifying this absolute singularity, Cavendish repeatedly invokes the model of the absolute monarch.¹⁸

The theory that Cavendish relied on the “simultaneous presence/ absence” of the monarch to attain selfhood can be successfully applied to work written during Charles Stuart’s exile, but falters with his return to power (Gallagher, p.28). Actual sovereignty could not match imagined absolutism, hence complicating a model of selfhood constructed around absolute power and singularity.

Victoria Kahn’s reading of Cavendish, in response to Gallagher’s proposed model of female identity, argues for a less individual and internalized version of the female author and conceives of a more public approach to political writing. Appropriating the “royalist’s own analogy of the marriage contract to political contract” allows writers such as Cavendish and Finch to “comment on parliamentary as well as sexual politics” rather than withdraw from public life into a “domain of subjectivity” (Kahn, p.558). Thus the reciprocal contract of ‘A Letter to Dafnis’ can be read as a comment on the coronation, the oath of allegiance to the new king and the basis of Finch’s identity as a political poet.

ii. “Your Glorious Fate and Fortune I foretold”: The Political Prophetess

The prophetess is a figure generally associated with the Civil War period, as from the 1640s onwards preaching and prophesying became a discernible phenomenon among women sectaries. Whilst women preachers were often regarded with contempt as scolds, who presumed upon male prerogative and defied biblical strictures on the role of women, the prophetess commanded a “certain nervous respect” because she claimed direct inspiration from God.¹⁹ Yet in spite of the increasing numbers of prophetesses and the importance attached to their pronouncements, they were

¹⁸ Gallagher, ‘Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England’, p.26.

¹⁹ Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel: Woman’s Lot in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Phoenix Press, 1984), p.304.

essentially perceived as mere conduits of God's will. Prophetic women often fell into a trance when inspired by God, physically incapable of understanding or transcribing the visions and proclamations that overwhelmed them, thus these women were "possessed by God" rather than asserting their own voice.²⁰

After 1660 the number of prophetesses dwindled as the restoration of Charles II re-established political and religious stability and a return to order and rationality (Fraser, p.320). The language of prophecy, however, "remained prominent in political literature of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis and [prophecies] were used to justify the Revolution of 1688".²¹ Prophetic visions could be used to sanction a new regime, as was the case with William III, but they were also important in oppositional writing after the Revolution, as a means of formulating and justifying resistance to the contested authority of the new king. Sue Wiseman has asked the question, "Where, if anywhere, is the authority, or the voice of authority, in seventeenth-century prophetic discourse by women?"²² Wiseman's query relates specifically to the religious prophecies of female sectaries, but the prophetic voice adopted by women writers such as Aphra Behn and Anne Finch was an entirely different proposition. The prophesying of the sectaries, even though it could be argued to facilitate women's participation in religious and political life, would have been an anathema to both Behn and Finch, who were Anglican and royalist; but there was another strand of prophetic writing in the seventeenth century.

Poets often assumed the role of the prophet in order to legitimate their work, as it was an established source of linguistic authority and both Behn and Finch drew on this correlation between the prophetic and poetic voice in order to authorize their

²⁰ Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-1688* (London: Virago, 1988), p.26.

²¹ Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.88.

²² Sue Wiseman, 'Unsilent instruments and the devil's cushions: authority in seventeenth-century women's prophetic discourse', in *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.176-96 (p.176).

political poetry. The prophet had two functions, one visionary, in predicting the future, the other representative, as the spokesperson for a deity or king. John Milton fashioned himself as a prophetic bard throughout his career, emphasizing the visionary quality of his work. In the headnote added to the 1645 edition of his *Poems* Milton stressed his prophetic authority by publicizing the fulfilment of one of his predictions; the Anglican clergy he had denounced for corruption in 'Lycidas' (1638) had subsequently been driven from their parishes and by 1645 the established church was under threat from Puritan reforms.²³ Although, as Milton's visionary stance demonstrates, the figure of the prophet was not a uniquely royalist typology, it is as a royalist signifier that I examine the prophetic voice in relation to Behn and Finch.

Sir John Denham appropriated the authority connected to the prophetic voice in 'Coopers Hill' (1642) in order to defend Charles I from his many enemies by "constructing a poetic and political landscape in which they have no voice".²⁴ Denham located his prophetic vision in his topological position within the poem, the top of Coopers Hill, as "the prospect from a high place was well-established as an image of political foresight and inquiry".²⁵ The language used to describe his lofty vantage point further reinforces this prophetic power: he is "Exalted to this height" and "advantag'd in my flight, / By taking wing from thy auspicious height".²⁶ "Exalted" implies not only physical altitude, but also spiritual distance and authority, while "auspicious" suggests luck, positive omens and good fortune, as well as the benefits of the hill's height. From his elevated position the poet prophesies the futility of opposition to the king, through the stability and permanence of London's geography.

²³ "In this monody the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637. And by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy then in their height." in *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. by John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London: Longmans, 1968), pp.232-54 (p.239).

²⁴ Bruce Bocckel, 'Landscaping the field of discourse: Political slant and poetic scope in Sir John Denham's Cooper's Hill', *Papers in Language and Literature*, 34:1 (1998), 57-97 (p.62).

²⁵ James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), p.5.

²⁶ *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks: A Critical Edition of Sir John Denham's Coopers Hill*, ed. by Brendan O Hehir (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp.106-34, ll.13, 9-10.

Denham's use of St. Paul's cathedral is typical of this political approach to London's landmarks and landscape. St. Paul's, recently restored and "Preserv'd from ruine by the best of Kings" (l.20), represented the ecclesiastical reforms sanctioned by Charles I and championed by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud sought to preserve the ritual and ceremony of the church service and the privileged position of priests as mediators between God and the congregation, and to uphold the traditional holy days in the face of Puritan opposition (Hill, pp.74-99). St. Paul's, symbolic of the established church, was under threat from the revolutionary ideas of the Puritans and other Protestant sects and although Denham stresses the permanence of this bastion of traditional values, he also acknowledges the power of religious fervour to effect change: "Time, or Sword, or Fire, / Or Zeale (more fierce than they) thy fall conspire" (ll.17-18). The resilience of the cathedral is synonymous with the ability of Charles I to weather the political storm that was gathering pace in 1642.

Surveying the fixed London landscape is particularly effective as it "allows the old order to seem permanent, orderly and universally agreeable" (Turner, p.107), in the face of widespread political and religious opposition to Charles I and the very idea of the monarchy. By deliberately comparing the source of poetic inspiration with the origins of political sovereignty, Denham establishes himself as a political prophet, "More boundlesse in my fancie, then my eye" (l.12), whose authority stems from the king as well as his topological advantage:

And as Courts make not Kings, but Kings the Court;
So where the Muses, and their Troopes resort,
Parnassus stands, if I can be to thee
A Poet, thou *Parnassus* art to mee.

(ll.5-8)

The final lines of 'Coopers Hill' also establish the poet as a spokesman or representative for the king in his cautionary advice to those endeavouring to curtail the authority and power of the monarchy: "And may that Law, which teaches Kings to sway / Their Scepters, teach their Subjects to obey." (ll.353-54).

John Dryden also appreciated the political significance of the prophetic voice; indeed, Steven Zwicker has suggested that "Dryden's consciousness of his role of poet as prophet surely informed his understanding of his role as mythographer of the Stuart monarchy".²⁷ In 'To my Honoured Friend, Sir Robert Howard' (1660) Dryden points to the conflation of poet and prophet as the most commendable aspect of Howard's verse: "But what we most admire, your verse no less / The prophet than the poet doth confess."²⁸ The authority of the poet/prophet is related to the monarch through Dryden's observation that it is to Charles II that Howard's "Muse first pays her dutious love" (l.93) and he appropriates the poetic authority of his "Honoured Friend" in order to link the success of the earlier verse to the newly restored monarch:

Yet let me take your mantle up, and I
Will venture in your right to prophesy:
'This work by merit first of fame secure
Is likewise happy in its geniture;
For since 'tis born when Charles ascends the throne,
It shares at once his fortune and its own.'

(ll.101-06)

The fortunes of the poet, in this case both Howard and Dryden, are inextricably linked to the fortunes of the king, through the prophetic voice.

Although in this instance Dryden was writing immediately after the Restoration, when Stuart fortunes appeared to be secure and unassailable, the merging of poet and prophet in the seventeenth century was perhaps more prevalent during periods of political crisis. For royalist writers in particular, political instability often proved the impetus for assuming the prophetic voice, in order to construct a relationship between monarch, poet and linguistic authority. 'Upon the double murder of K. Charles, in answer to a libellous rime made by V. P', written by Katherine Philips shortly after the execution of Charles I (1650-51), focuses on the construal of

²⁷ Steven N. Zwicker, *Dryden's Political Poetry: The Typology of King and Nation* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1972), p.64.

²⁸ *The Poems of John Dryden*, I, (1995), 30-35, ll.87-88.

the poet as the agent of the king, rather than the visionary abilities of the prophet, to defend Charles's assaulted reputation:

I thinke not on the state, nor am concern'd
Which way soever that great Helme is turn'd,
But as that sonne whose father's danger nigh
Did force his native dumbnesse, and untye
The fettered organs: so here is a cause
That will excuse the breach of nature's lawes.
Silence were now a Sin: Nay Passion now
Wise men themselves for merit would allow.²⁹

Philips justifies her venture into verse through her need to speak for a king no longer able to represent himself.

Through the analogy of a mute son suddenly able to speak when his father is in danger, Philips validates her poetic voice by allying herself with the figure of the male monarch. Kate Lilley has read the poet's identification with the mute son as "a negative figure of woman's subjection in language", with the "fettered organs" (l.5) conveying "a striking image of internal bondage, the internalization of disempowering ideology"; however, by focusing primarily on the sexual politics of the poem, Lilley oversimplifies the complex nature of Philips's carefully crafted poetic identity.³⁰ James Loxley, alternatively, argues first that 'Upon the double murder of K. Charles' is "doubly voiced" in that the poem marks itself as the work of a woman and simultaneously claims the political identity of royalism and second that the two identities or voices are indistinguishable, as "it is the undesired death of the patriarch which enables the emergence of the repressed, and the female voice is manifested in lamenting his loss".³¹

The father/son analogy expresses the patriarchal contract formed between monarch and subject and the poem's authority is predicated on this relationship.

²⁹ *Katherine Philips*, I, 69 (ll.1-8).

³⁰ Kate Lilley, 'True State Within: Women's Elegy, 1640-1700', in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, ed. by Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992), pp.72-92 (p.89).

³¹ James Loxley, 'Unfettered Organs: The Polemical Voices of Katherine Philips', in *"This Double Voice": Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp.230-48 (p.236).

Charles I's right to "a quiet grave" (l.12) was under threat from the slanderous attacks of his enemies and it is this threat that quite literally forces the poet to speak. By insisting that silence would be a sin, she also claims divine authority for her poetic voice. However, by framing her relationship with the late king through the filial model of the father/son paradigm, denying any interest in affairs of state or the new government and deliberately revealing her sex, "the breach of nature's lawes" (l.6), Philips ostensibly depoliticizes the potentially inflammatory content of 'Upon the double murder of K. Charles'. Her status as a woman writer confers both authority and absolution.

Whilst acknowledging the importance of the prophetic voice as a royalist typology in poets of both sexes, it is also possible to trace a move towards a gendered vision of the prophet in the work of Behn and Finch, through the personal bond between the male monarch and the female poet. This gendered perspective is produced by the way in which these poets interpreted the patriarchal contract through the rhetoric of love and marriage, but it is not necessarily the result of feminist aims. Ros Ballaster has documented the emergence of a female narrative voice in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, a development she attributes to the "profound crisis about the nature of authority and the means of its legitimation" brought about by the prolonged dynastic struggles of successive Stuart monarchs.³² Ballaster contends that the authority of "private female experience" evolved from political concerns; however, in relation to women's fiction of the period, she concludes that women writers in effect internalized linguistic authority, "locating moral value, law and order in the individual" (p.78-79).

Although the conception of the female narrative voice as part of a "larger cultural movement", a response to political changes rather than the manifestation of a feminist agenda, adds a new perspective to the distinctively female poetic voice

³² Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.78-79.

adopted by Behn and Finch, it is difficult to reconcile Ballaster's "feminocentric individualism" with the gendered vision of the prophet in the royalist mode. The Exclusion Crisis, James II's authoritarian attitude to kingship and the continued opposition to his reign, which resulted ultimately in exile, certainly complicated the conventional authorizing strategies of royalist writers, but this was nothing new to the adherents of the Stuart kings.

Leah Marcus has suggested that, during the Interregnum, the "erosion of a royal power with which the Cavaliers so strongly identified" created a "corresponding inner deficit, a self-doubt that had to be countered with various rituals of mastery in which they re-established their self-worth" (Marcus, p.258). In response to the absence of the king and his authority, she argues, royalist poets "crowned themselves monarchs in order to salvage the image of kingship" (p.258). Correspondingly, it could be argued that the prophetic voice allowed royalist poets to negotiate the "erosion" of monarchical power, not by locating that authority in their own person, but by claiming the right to speak for the king and also by re-visioning the political future through poetic prophecy.

Aphra Behn, writing during James II's turbulent reign, used her role as self-appointed prophet for the king to celebrate the major events of his reign, but her 'prophecies' also sought to assert an alternative vision of the king to that proposed by his enemies and by his own harmful policies and pronouncements. Behn established herself as the prophet for James's reign in her elegy for Charles II, in which she declared the new king the "Sacred Promis'd Prince" heralded by a succession of "wond'rous Prophets".³³ She enhanced her poetic authority by figuring herself as the last in a long line of prophets who foresaw James II's accession as an event that would ensure "Plenty, Peace, and Love" (l.168), whilst simultaneously stressing the unique nature of her own prophecy.

³³ 'A Pindarick On the Death of Our Late Sovereign: With An Ancient Prophecy On His Present Majesty', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.190-95 (ll.159-61).

Whereas Denham's poet/prophet projected an aura of isolation and inaccessibility, Behn envisaged herself as almost physically connected to her subject, evident in her premonition of Charles's death in "Ominous *Dreams*" (1.3) and "painful Sleep" (1.9). Similarly, the depiction of James II as the "Royal PROPHE" (1.82) who would fulfil the "great *Prediction*" (1.170) compounded this sense of an unusually close bond between the poet and the king, a bond based on the gendered nature of the relationship.³⁴ Recent feminist criticism has suggested that royalist women writers were naturally drawn to the figure of the queen, whether regnant or consort, as a source of linguistic authority: Carol Barash, for instance, posits Mary of Modena as "an almost sacred figure of [...] royalist poetic ambitions" for women writers such as Behn and Finch (Barash, p.40). She conjectures that women writers felt an affinity with "the alien and marginalized female monarch" rather than the king; however, as Katherine King has argued, this position is "simply not tenable" (King, p.131). For a royalist like Aphra Behn and Jacobites like Anne Finch and Jane Barker, legitimate authority could only be located in the divinely ordained monarch.

'A Pindarick Poem On the Happy Coronation of His Most Sacred Majesty James II and His Illustrious Consort Queen Mary' (1685) is a case in point. Far from revealing "Mary of Modena eclipsing James II", Behn's ode uses the symbolic potential of the new queen to provide a prospective scapegoat for James II, should one prove necessary (Barash, p.131). Louise Fradenburg has suggested that, due to their foreignness, femaleness, status as regents or assumption of 'male' power, queens are constructed as "liminal figures" and as a result are associated with "the concepts of

³⁴ Aside from the theoretical explanations of royalist women's reliance on the figure of the male monarch, it is also true that the Stuart kings were particularly receptive to women. Charles II issued the patent that licensed women to act in public theatres and was known to enjoy the company of women in a platonic as well as sexual capacity, even accepting their counsel on matters of state. Both brothers also owed their fortunate escapes during the Civil War in part to the ingenuity and courage of women: Charles escaped to France after the Battle of Worcester in the guise of manservant to Jane Lane, while Anne Murray was instrumental in the success of the plot to smuggle the young James out of St James's Palace.

both division and unity".³⁵ Although, as always, there is an element of ambiguity in Behn's poetic intention, I would suggest that the coronation ode, beneath its ostensible air of celebration, signals the divisive potential of the new queen.

There is a distinct sense of unease in the poet's attitude to Mary of Modena and the influence she commands over her besotted husband: "Now She may ask whate're the God can grant, / If ought of Pow'r, or Glory, She can want".³⁶ Mary is the "*enchanting Ravisher*" (l.102) who delays the coronation with her sexual wiles and attempts to distract the poet from her task: "Oh *fond seducer* of my *Nobler part*, / Thou soft insinuating *Muse*" (ll.61-62). This echoes the rhetorical denunciations of Henrietta Maria by opponents of Charles I, who attributed his failures as king to the harmful influence of his wife. *The Life and Death of King Charles, or, the Pseudo-Martyr Discovered*, which appeared after the publication of Charles I's personal correspondence in 1645, advised royalists not to follow a king who cared little for them, or the nation, as he was "overpowered by the Inchantments of a woman" (Potter, p.80).³⁷

Although Behn extols the queen's beauty at length and accords her an important, if not equal, role in the day's proceedings, it is James who remains the poet's "*Godlike Patron*" and "*Godlike King*" (l.26). Her acknowledgment of the difficulties preceding his accession to the throne, the "*Senate, whose Ingratitude / The Royal Heir* endeavour'd to *Exclude*" (ll.338-39), reveals her underlying fear of a resurgence of opposition to the new king. Hence the continual repetition of James II's god-like status and legitimacy and the ambivalent portrait of the new queen: Mary of

³⁵ Louise Olga Fradenburg, 'Rethinking Queenship', in Fradenburg, pp.1-13 (p.5).

³⁶ *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.200-21, ll.269-70.

³⁷ The classical parallel of James and Mary with Jove and Juno is also telling. Jove represented the executive aspects of sovereignty and the exercise of power within judicial limits, while Juno symbolized marriage and motherhood, thus appearing to signify a peaceful and ordered monarchy. However, Jove also epitomized sovereign or absolute power, divinity and violent supremacy and Juno was characterized by her jealous temperament and the control she exerted over her husband. Furthermore Behn aligned Mary, not only with the possessive and controlling Juno, but also Laura, the object of obsessive desire and Venus, representative of seduction, charm and deception. (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, pp.800-02, 1587).

Modena embodied, not the unity of the Stuart monarchy and the nation, as suggested in Carol Barash's reading, but the "forces that might tear that unity to pieces" (Fradenburg, p.5).

Of course Behn was more than willing to exploit the advantage of her sex for poetic gain in her congratulatory poem on the news of the queen's pregnancy.³⁸ Relying on her authority as a prophet and a woman, she presumes to comment on the physical body of the queen, inaccessible to her male contemporaries, discerning both the baby's sex and his illustrious future in his "bright *MOTHER's* form".³⁹ Yet, although the ode is addressed to the queen and is dominated by her physical condition, figuratively Mary of Modena is strangely absent from this prophetic vision. The pregnant queen is reduced to a "*VESSEL*, fraught with *England's STORE*" (l.35) and a "*Blessed Womb*" (l.14), who, like her biblical namesake, plays only a subsidiary role. Instead Behn's attention is focused on the promise of the unborn prince:

A young *APOLLO*, rising from the Gloom,
Dress'd in his Father's brightest *Rays*, shall come;
[...]
His Right Hand *Crowns*, his Left shall *Lawrels* give;
And *POETS* shall by *Patron PRINCES* live [...]
(ll.58-69)

This triumvirate of Apollo, James II and the unborn prince validates the connection between political and linguistic authority and reinforces the personal bond between the Stuart monarchy and the poet.

By comparing the unborn prince to Christ - "Like the first sacred *Infant*, this will come / With Promise laden from the *Blessed Womb*" (ll.13-14) - Behn not only reminded her audience of the tenets of divine right that secure Stuart kingship, she also

³⁸ Rachel Weil has argued that the scandal surrounding James Francis Stuart's birth "created an opportunity for women to take part in political debate. It opened up a space where women's presumably superior knowledge about pregnancy and childbirth gave them the authority to speak on a matter of political importance." "The Politics of Legitimacy: Women and the warming-pan scandal", in Schwoerer, *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives*, pp.65-82 (p.75). It stands to reason that the same argument is applicable to Behn's celebratory odes in the period leading up to the birth of the Prince of Wales.

³⁹ 'A Congratulatory Poem to Her Most Sacred Majesty, On the Universal Hopes of all Loyal Persons for a Prince of Wales', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.294-96 (l.41).

placed herself in a line of succession to the biblical prophets, notably Isaiah. She does not rely solely on the authority of the biblical prophets to legitimate her vision, but the precarious state of James II's reign and the widespread apprehension at the prospect of a Catholic heir may have caused her to seek an even greater authority than the troubled king. James remained the "Dread *Monarch*" (I.72), but even Behn could not disguise the fact that his power and influence was far from absolute, but being constantly questioned and opposed: "Who for a stubborn *Nation's* Glory toil, / And court her to be Great against her Will" (II.76-77).

The birth of the Prince of Wales, the longed-for male heir, may have represented the apogee of James II's personal life and his dynastic hopes, but politically the birth of a Catholic heir who supplanted the Protestant princesses, Mary and Anne, was a disaster and effectively ushered in the Revolution. Dryden, the pre-eminent poet/prophet of Charles II's and James II's reigns, greeted the birth of the new prince by rejecting the very role that defined his career as a political poet: "poets are not prophets, to foreknow".⁴⁰ Dryden had weathered numerous political storms during his long service as a Stuart apologist, yet his reluctance to proclaim triumphant prophecies for the heir to the throne indicates that even his loyalty could not deny the perilous position of James and his family in 1688:

Thus far the furious transport of the news
Had to prophetic madness fired the Muse;
Madness ungovernable, uninspired,
Swift to foretell whatever she desired;
Was it for me the dark abyss to tread,
And read the book which angels cannot read?

(II.222-27)

Steven Zwicker commented of 'Threnodia Augustalis', the elegiac tribute to Charles II, that the poet's "vision seems to be no vision at all, but a weary repetition of the props of a political fortune in which he no longer seems to believe" (Zwicker, p.114). 'Britannia Rediviva' questions the value of resorting to such props at all.

⁴⁰ 'Britannia Rediviva', in *The Poems of John Dryden*, III, (2000), 200-18, 1.71.

Dryden, in perhaps his most exact vision, foresaw little hope for the future of the monarchy to which he had dedicated his life. Behn, however, boldly refused to relinquish either her prophetic role or her political vision:

Long with Prophetick Fire, Resolv'd and Bold,
Your Glorious Fate and Fortune I foretold.
I saw the Stars that did attend Your Reign,
And saw how they triumph'd o'er Great Charles's Wain.
Far off I saw this Happy Day appear;
This Jubilee, not known this Fifty Year.
This Day, foretold, (Great Sir!), that gives you more
Than even Your Glorious Virtues did before.⁴¹

This was her last public ode addressed to James II and it bears witness to the intimacy of the poetic relationship constructed around her role as prophet for this monarch's reign. Equally revealing is Behn's poetic stance under the new regime of William and Mary, as the authority, resolve and sense of purpose evident here gave way to the "Excluded Prophet": the disenfranchised poet and political outsider.⁴²

The task of prophesying in the final months of James's reign had been all but rejected by Dryden and his mantle passed to, or was assumed by, Aphra Behn. James's deposition and flight into exile and Behn's death in 1689 did not, however, signal the end of the prophetic voice as a political stratagem and source of linguistic authority for women writers. 'The Introduction', often heralded as confirmation of Anne Finch's 'feminism', can also be read as a Jacobite prophecy, opposing William of Orange's usurpation of the rightful king and anticipating the restoration of the exiled king.⁴³

Finch relied heavily on biblical sources in 'The Introduction' (?1690) to authorize her poetic vision and the relationship between poet and monarch, so exposed

⁴¹ 'A Congratulatory Poem to The King's Most Sacred Majesty, On the Happy Birth of The Prince of Wales', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.297-99, ll.7-14.

⁴² 'A Pindaric Poem to the Reverend Doctor Burnet, On the Honour he did me of Enquiring after me and my Muse', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.307-10, l.62.

⁴³ Katherine Rogers, for instance, talks of Finch's "explicit feminism" and the "plight of the woman poet" in relation to 'The Introduction', while Barbara McGovern sees the poem as a bitter digression on the male concept of women's abilities and role in society. Katherine Rogers, 'Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea: An Augustan Woman Poet', in *Early Women Writers: 1600-1720*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (London and New York: Longman, 1998), pp.225-42 (p.233/4) and McGovern, p.33.

and flaunted by Behn, is less obviously discernible. The physical absence of the king also added another dimension to the poet/prophet paradigm and the role of the prophet as a representative for the monarch, thus creating the need for a non-political source of linguistic authority. Rather than allude in general terms to the tradition of Hebraic prophecy as a vague poetic precedent, 'The Introduction' focused on a particular individual, Deborah, one of the judges of Israel, who exemplified the responsibilities and potential of the prophet:

A Woman here, leads fainting Israel on,
She fights, she wins, she triumphs with a song,
Devout, Majestick, for the subject fitt,
And far beyond her arms, exalts her witt,
Then, to the peacefull, shady, Palm withdraws,
And rules the rescu'd Nation with her Laws.⁴⁴

Although Finch appropriated the poetic and prophetic authority associated with Deborah, her intention was not to devalue or negate the significance of James II but to reinforce her own position as a Jacobite prophet.

Deborah is identified only as a woman, she is never named, and given the repeated emphasis on gendered pronouns, "she fights", "she wins", "she triumphs" and "her arms", "her witt", "her Laws", it is impossible to escape the perception of the poetic/prophetic voice as expressly female. In her account of David's return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, Finch creates a role for women absent from her biblical source:

Here, holy Virgins in the Concert joyn,
The louder notes, to soften, and refine,
And with alternate verse, compleat the Hymn Devine.

(ll.30-32)

Women are figured here as essential to the celebration of the sacred heritage of Israel. Just as Deborah used her song to commemorate Israel's success in battle, the women who raised their voices to accompany the procession of the ark are an integral part of this momentous event. Chronicles I traces the history of the Davidic line in order to

⁴⁴ 'The Introduction', in *Poems of Anne*, pp.4-6, ll.45-50.

instruct and inspire the people of Israel and Finch's oblique allusion to the biblical king in a moment of triumph, in which she envisages a central role for women, seems part of a similar project on behalf of another king.

Furthermore, she expands on the brief mention of women singing in the streets to welcome David home from war (Samuel 1.18) to create a role for women as political agents: "What, can the threat'n'd Judgement now prolong? / Half of the Kingdom is already gone" (ll.40-41). A precedent for her own political loyalties is established through the actions of these women who freely choose to follow David, the rightful king, rather than Saul, a loyalty governed not only by the language of political ideology, but also by emotion and passion: "The fairest half, whose influence guides the rest, / Have David's Empire, o're their Hearts confess't" (ll.43-44). Women here possess the political power to "shake the Crown" (l.39): a not so veiled warning to William III.

By invoking these biblical archetypes demonstrating the power and authority of women, Finch established herself as a prophet in her own right, yet with the security concomitant with being part of an illustrious tradition of politically active and effective women. Although necessarily creating a degree of remove in the relationship between the poet/prophet and the monarch, this manoeuvre was imperative in the aftermath of the Revolution. This perceived distance paradoxically vested Finch's prophetic vision with more credence than a partisan manifesto unambiguously centred on the figure of the king. Nonetheless the same biblical precedents that enabled her to establish her independent poetic stance also attest to the Jacobite nature of the poem.

Deborah combined the roles of judge or political leader, prophetess and military commander and, as the book of Judges clearly indicates, she possessed "greater control of the land and its people than any judge before or after".⁴⁵ This

⁴⁵ Lella Leah Bronner, 'Valorized or Vilified? The women of Judges in Midrashic Sources', in *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, ed. by Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp.78-86 (p.79).

control is apparent not only in Deborah's unification of the tribes of Israel in a victorious military campaign, but also in the power of her song, composed after the battle. It is this song, an act of both celebration and remembrance, that seems to have determined the choice of Deborah as a model, particularly as her "poetic gift is naturally associated with her prophecy".⁴⁶ Furthermore, Mieke Bal explains the significance of the poet/prophet, in the context of Judges, as "one who establishes order in chaos by means of the proper word", who possesses the ability to impose order on political chaos through poetic authority. Through the authority vested in Deborah, inherently connected to James II through the depiction of the biblical prophet as "Majestick" (l.47), Finch could attempt to impose order on and reinterpret the chaos and confusion of the contemporary political landscape.

'The Introduction' was probably written in 1690, a year that brought the decisive defeat of James's Irish and French army at the hands of William III in the Battle of the Boyne, a serious blow to Jacobite hopes. However, it would be incorrect to assume that William III's possession of the throne was by any means secure during this period. It was not until 1697, with the conclusion of the Treaty of Ryswick and the withdrawal of French military support, that James II's dream of reclaiming his throne was effectively shattered (Callow, p.298). Prior to this there was a very real possibility that the exiled king would rally enough support in Ireland, Scotland and even England itself to successfully overthrow his usurping son-in-law. Rather than dwell on the recent Jacobite failures, Finch uses 'The Introduction' to reiterate the basis of the opposition to the Revolution and the dual monarchy and imagine a more advantageous outcome than that lately suffered by James's armies in Scotland and Ireland.

Royalist poets and propagandists had long favoured Davidic typology to assert the legitimacy of the Stuart line and Charles II was frequently figured as "King David, the young king protected by God through years of trouble and exile, but restored at

⁴⁶ Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.210.

last to his kingdom".⁴⁷ The plight of James Stuart, betrayed and forced into exile by the events of 1688/89, yet still, even to many of his opponents, the divinely sanctioned king, fitted perfectly into this typological framework. Even though William, like Saul, was the *de facto* king, James remained the king *de jure*: just as God chose David to rule, William's possession of the throne could not negate that James was the legitimate claimant, he was king by divine right.⁴⁸

This subtle reminder of James's incontrovertible right to the throne was a prevalent theme in Jacobite writing. In response to the legal semantics that had facilitated the dual monarchy of William and Mary, Jacobites also sought recourse to "the law and the constitution because it was here that they had the strongest case [...] If James had the legal right to the throne in 1685, he had it still".⁴⁹ Thus Finch's summation of Deborah's many roles concludes with the prophet's withdrawal to "the peacefull, shady Palm" from which she "rules the rescu'd Nation with her Laws" (ll.49-50). It is this judicial element of the multi-faceted Deborah that perhaps best represents Jacobite hopes for the future of the Stuart monarchy in the unassailable right of James II, particularly in light of the disappointing military campaigns.

'The Introduction' rather inevitably closes with the curtailment of poetic transport and prophetic flight, Finch's "contracted wing" (l.59) prompting her recognition that "th'opposing faction still appears, / The hopes to thrive, can ne're outweigh the fears" (ll.55-6). Yet it is only contracted, not broken. She may retire to the shade and "groves of Lawrell" (l.61), but in the royalist and Jacobite lexicon such a gesture symbolized retreat rather than defeat. Even in this cautious retreat, however,

⁴⁷ Hammond, 'The King's two bodies: representations of Charles II', in Black and Gregory, pp.13-48 (p.18).

⁴⁸ Interestingly, those members of the clergy who embraced the Revolution and its outcome interpreted this scriptural analogy somewhat differently. In this version William III was David, instructed by God to rescue the nation and the Church from the Catholic tyranny of James II, figured as Saul. Stephen B. Baxter, 'William III as Hercules: The political implications of court culture', in Schwöerer, *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives*, pp.95-106 (p.102).

⁴⁹ Howard Erskine-Hill, 'Literature and the Jacobite Cause: Was there a Rhetoric of Jacobitism?', in *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759*, ed. by Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), pp.49-69 (p.51).

Finch refuses to be silent and instructs her Muse, "To some few friends, and to thy sorrows sing" (l.60). Within the context of this poem, song signals victory, it orders the chaos, it celebrates and commemorates and ultimately it triumphs.

iii. "Weep then ye realms": 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' and 'On the Death of the Queen'

The prophetic typology and language that influenced Finch's conception of her role as a political poet throughout the 1690s culminated in her elegy on James II's death in 1701:

O Britain! Take this Wish before we cease:
 May Happier Kings procure thee Lasting Peace;
 And having Rul'd the[c] to thy own Desire,
 On thy Maternal Bosom late expire,
 Clos[^d] in that Earth where they had Reigned before,
 Till States and Monarchies shall be no more:
 Since in the Day of unappealing Doom,
 Or King or Kingdom must declare,
 What the sad Chance or weighty Causes were,
 That forc'd them to arise from out a Foreign Tomb[.]
 O Britain! May thy Days to come be Fair,
 And all that shall intend thy Good,
 Be reverently Heard, and rightly Understood.
 May no Intestine Broils thy Intrails tear,
 No Field in th[e] be Fought, or Nam'd a-new in Blood⁵⁰

The inclusion of a prophetic narrative in an elegy was by no means unprecedented. Dryden concluded 'Threnodia Augustalis', his elegy on Charles II, with a prediction for James II, when he foresaw "The long retinue of a prosperous reign",⁵¹ while Aphra Behn's expectant ode to the new king was an integral part of her tribute to Charles II, as her title suggests: 'A Pindarick on the Death of Our Late Sovereign: With an Ancient Prophecy on His Present Majesty'.⁵²

Behn's 'Ancient Prophecy' was addressed to James as the rightful heir of the late king, and although she envisaged the impact of this "*Divine and Gracious*

⁵⁰ 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James. By a Lady', published in 1701, exists in two versions: one held in the British Library and one in the New York Public Library. I am using the NYPL version, reproduced by Carol Barash. (Barash, Appendix G, pp. 308-13, ll.161-75).

⁵¹ *The Poems of John Dryden*, II, (1995), 389-420, l.507.

⁵² *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.190-95.

Influence" (l.165) on a grateful nation, the ode concentrates primarily on the person of the new monarch. However, James II died in exile, his throne already occupied by William III, rendering impossible a conventional endorsement of the legitimate successor. Faced with the unusual circumstances of the exiled king's death, Finch opted to address the nation directly with a carefully coded "Wish" (l.161) that concealed the Jacobite subtext of the apparently innocuous desire for "Lasting Peace" (l.162). Although 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' proffers the vision of a peaceful, stable and tolerant future, the barely disguised threat of bloody civil war and the suggestion that Britain should be held accountable for James II's final resting place in a "Foreign Tomb" (l.170) belie its seeming acceptance of the vagaries of political fortune.

The auspicious desire that "Happier Kings" will secure peace and plenty for the nation covertly endorses a Jacobite uprising. The phrase "Happier Kings" (l.162) was originally intended to read "Rightful Kings" and continued to do so in the manuscript version; however, Finch obviously reconsidered the wisdom of such an unequivocal assertion before the 1701 publication.⁵³ Even with the revision the Jacobite import of these lines is unmistakable: the only rightful king, on James II's death, was his son James Francis Stuart, newly declared James III by Louis XIV.⁵⁴ In the prophetic vision that concludes 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James', Britain will only experience the security and prosperity she so desires under the rule of James III, the legitimate and divinely appointed king. The refrain "O *Britain!* May thy Days to come be Fair" (l.171) intensifies this impression that a propitious future is entirely dependent on a just (fair) resolution to the succession.

⁵³ 'Upon the Death of King James the Second' can be found in the Folger Shakespeare Library Manuscript. This is also the version printed by Myra Reynolds in her 1903 edition of Finch's work.

⁵⁴ Against the advice of his council and the terms of the Treaty of Ryswick, Louis XIV upheld the right of James Francis Stuart to be declared James III on his father's death, thus endorsing the principles of a divinely ordained and hereditary succession. (Callow, pp.377-79).

Furthermore the poem contains a thinly disguised warning as to the consequences of ignoring "all that shall intend thy Good" (l.172). The reference to "Intestine Broils" tearing at the "Intrails" of the nation is a graphic reminder of the potentially bloody results when the body politic disintegrates, as is the unsubtle allusion to the economic and human casualties of the Civil War: "No Field in the[e] be fought, or Nam'd a-new in Blood" (ll.174-75). James II's death confirmed the extent to which the Revolution had altered the very fabric of the monarchy and 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' reflects that change in its eschewal of the conventional tropes and certainties of the elegiac vision.

Considering Finch's political caution and poetic reticence throughout the 1690s it is difficult to believe that she willingly published such a politically provocative poem as 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James'.⁵⁵ Moreover, designating the poem's authorship as 'By a Lady' ran a much greater risk of discovery than if she had offered no clue as to her identity and remained completely anonymous. Although women writers were by no means uncommon in this period they still numbered relatively few and the poet's 'disguise' would have been easy to penetrate. Finch's need to publicly honour her beloved James II almost certainly provided the impetus for the poem; however, this does not entirely explain either its political extremism or almost immediate appearance in print. Kate Lilley has proposed that the elegiac mode "provided a framework for figuring the unstable relations and shifting boundaries of inside and outside, self and other, family and nation, the private body and the body politic" and it is possible that this inherent flexibility, allowing Finch to oscillate

⁵⁵ Carol Barash has questioned whether or not Finch actually authorized the publication of 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James'. It is possible that someone who had access to a manuscript copy of the elegy published it without her permission. Barash has posited this theory as an explanation for the lack of extant copies of the poem, suggesting that the Finches sought to suppress further publication after the elegy's initial print run (p.263).

between private and public grief, personal sentiment and political rhetoric, also afforded a degree of protection.⁵⁶

Ann Messenger has argued that it was customary to commemorate the "death of a monarch or similarly exalted person, someone who is for whatever reason more than a private individual" in a pastoral elegy, yet 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' incorporates none of the tropes or language associated with the pastoral (Messenger, p.99). It is conceivable that Finch rejected the pastoral elegy in the light of James's status as a monarch in exile only and no longer a public individual, but in view of her Jacobite convictions and the political content of the poem this seems highly unlikely. It seems more likely that she was consciously manipulating generic conventions in order to simultaneously reveal and conceal the political implications of the poem.

Although Finch mourns James II as an individual - her grief is palpable and not merely the ritualized mourning typical of the funeral elegy - she also reaffirms the legitimacy and authority of his sovereignty. Peter Sacks has suggested that repetition, within the context of the elegiac framework, acts to create a sense of ceremony, and it is possible that the repeated emphasis on James's sovereignty, "Royal James" (ll.16, 18, 144), is intended to replace or reproduce the formalized mourning of the pastoral elegy.⁵⁷ This repetition also enables the poet to maintain a balance between the "shifting boundaries" of public and private, political and personal, by "controlling the expression of grief while also keeping that expression in motion" (Sacks, p.23). Even without the formal restraint of the pastoral elegy, 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' never collapses under the weight of personal grief.

Celeste Schenck has posited that the elegy can be further categorized or subdivided along gendered lines:

⁵⁶ Kate Lilley, 'True State Within: Women's Elegy 1640-1700', in Grundy and Wiseman, pp.72-92 (p.82).

⁵⁷ Peter M. Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1985), p.23.

The masculine elegy marks a rite of separation that culminates in ascension to stature; it rehearses an act of identity that depends upon rupture. Not so for women poets, who seem unwilling to render up their dead [...] Built upon a different set of internalised relations with their predecessors, the female elegy is a poem of connectedness; women inheritors seem to achieve poetic identity in relation to ancestresses, in connection to the dead, whereas male initiates need to eliminate the competition to come into their own.⁵⁸

It would be reductive to suggest that all women's writing conforms to an identical pattern; however, the traits associated with the female elegy by Schenck are particularly interesting when read in relation to the elegies dedicated to James II by women.

Aphra Behn's welcoming ode to Mary II is also in a sense an elegy, on the end of James II's reign if not his actual death, and it is revealing that she can only praise the new queen as a manifestation of her father:

Yet if with Sighs we View that Lovely Face,
And all the Lines of your great Father's Trace,
Your Vertues should forgive while we adore
That Face that Awes, and Charms our Hearts the more;
But if the *Monarch* in your Looks we find,
Behold him yet more glorious in your Mind;
'Tis there His God-like Attributes we see.⁵⁹

As a poet "forced to write for bread" Behn could not allow her loyalty to the deposed king prevent her from acknowledging the new monarchs, on whose patronage she would rely.⁶⁰ Yet this panegyric to Mary somehow becomes an elegy for "an Unhappy dear Lov'd *Monarch's* Fate" (l.4), through Behn's insistence on inscribing James onto the figure of his daughter. She refuses to allow James's exile to sever the poetic bond that, perhaps more than any other royalist poet, she had established with the figure of the male monarch.

Interestingly, this sense of connectedness is almost entirely absent from Jane Barker's elegy on the death of the exiled king in 1701. Instead, Barker focuses on the

⁵⁸ Celeste M. Schenck, 'Feminism and Deconstruction: Re-Constructing the Elegy', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 5 (1986), 13-27 (p.15).

⁵⁹ 'A Congratulatory Poem to Her Sacred Majesty Queen Mary, Upon Her Arrival in England', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.304-07, ll.89-94.

⁶⁰ 'Epistle to the Reader', in *Sir Patient Fancy*, in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, VI, (1996), 5.

"rite of separation" and the "eulogy and transcendence" identified by Schenck as characteristic of the masculine elegy. 'At the sight of the body of Our late gracious sovereign Lord King James 2d As it lyes at the English Monks' resurrects the royalist typology of the Christ-like king through the representation of James II as a "mighty missioner" sent by heaven to suffer for the transgressions of his people:

The peoples sins, and Royal martyrs blood,
For punishment to heav'n cry'd oft and lowd
But nothing cou'd by heav'ns just hands be done,
Till this our Righteous Lot was gone.⁶¹

This typological portrait of the king, whilst reflecting the increasingly contemplative life led by James at St. Germain and his preoccupation with his spiritual legacy, is strangely impersonal and suggests poetic detachment rather than the connection one would presume to find in an elegy composed by Barker. Unlike Finch, she actually shared the king's exile in France and, as the title of the poem indicates, was able to physically experience the reality of his death.

Although 'At the sight of the body of Our late gracious sovereign Lord King James 2d As it lyes at the English Monks' pays tribute to James as a prince, general, admiral and king and commends him as "great, brave and august" (l.26), it is his death, martyrdom and elevation to sainthood that predominate: "Great in his life, but greater in his death, / In both a true defender of the faith, / His virtues future ages shall admire" (l.64-66). The sense of loss and sorrow intrinsic to Behn's ode on Queen Mary's arrival in England is missing from Barker's elegy, as her emphasis on James's transcendence effectively precludes the expression of personal grief. In spite of the emotive presence of the king's body, she remains a disconnected observer, whose formal elegy, "Hic jacet, oft hic jacet poets sing" (l.1), is far removed from Behn's "sad Muse" (l.1).

⁶¹ *Jane Barker*, pp.310-13, ll.46-49.

In stark contrast, Finch rejects the strictures of the masculine elegy and tropes of elegiac consolation in favour of a grief "Which knows no bounds, nor Meditates Relief" (l.138). She aligns herself with the figure of the widowed queen, who weeps with "unexhausted Tears" (l.139) and is consumed by "incurable Distress" (l.143). Paradoxically, this inclusion of the grieving queen actually reinforces the figurative bond between poet and monarch, as Finch in a sense appropriates Maria's right as a "Faithful Consort" (l.144) to immerse herself in grief. As in 'A Letter to Dafnis', she redefines the political contract and poetic authority through the medium of the marriage contract, thus blurring the boundaries between the formal elegiac voice and private sentiment. Furthermore, by establishing her linguistic authority through the paradigm of wifely grief, Finch justifies both the connection between poet and subject and her refusal to relinquish James to death: "Strong are the Bonds of Death, but stronger those of Love" (l.160).

The repeated exhortations to weep, addressed to James's attendants and adherents and to the realms he once ruled, almost revel in the permitted excesses of grief, perhaps in recognition of the years of silent suffering occasioned by his exile. Behn's elegy 'On the Death of the late Earl of Rochester', which repeatedly calls on the Muses, youths, beautiful women, the gods of love and finally the "Unhappy World" to lament the loss of "charming Strephon", exhibits a similar rejection of the confines of polite mourning.⁶² Celeste Schenck has interpreted the lack of variation in this refrain as a sign of "continuous mourning", both unrelenting sorrow and the need for remembrance, and a "refusal to be compensated for [Rochester's] death", rather than the movement towards reconciliation and acceptance customary in elegies on the death of a friend and mentor (Schenck, p.20). Finch's recurrent call for the articulation of grief signals a similar "refusal to be compensated", but also an awareness that in the wake of the Revolution James's death would not meet with universal sorrow.

⁶² *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp.161-63 ll. 84-85.

The plea to "Weep then ye Realms" (l.102) and "Weep ye Attendants" (l.116) also reveals her perception of her own role within this unusual elegy. Although the poet/prophet often functioned as the voice of the monarch, in 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' Finch redefines the parameters of the prophetic stance to appoint herself the voice of the people, communicating the grief of those who could not mourn openly and also redressing the striking lack of poetic tributes to the late monarch:

How had the Streets? How had the Palace rung,
In Praise of thy acknowledg'd Worth?
What had our Numerous Writers then brought forth?
What Melancholly Dirges had they sung?
What Weeping Elegies prepar'd [...]

(ll.5-9)

This implies that it is the absence of "Loyal Grief" or even of self-seeking verses to "obtain Reward" (l.10) that has compelled her elegy, a personal and compassionate gesture rather than a conscious political act.

However, this apolitical position is slightly at odds with Finch's assertion that "none shall pay this Verse" (l.16) and her insistence that her Muse is "free" and "disinterested" (l.24). As Virginia Crompton has argued, "Political texts were discredited when their writers were seen to be mercenary: political writers could not provide 'disembodied' commentary, or flattering publicity, without promoting their own political character", thus by establishing the personal and voluntary nature of her elegy, she was also authenticating it as a political text.⁶³

By focusing on James's youth and heroic deeds prior to his accession to the throne, Finch appears to be artfully eluding political controversy. A passing allusion to Julius Caesar, although charged with Jacobite meaning, is the only trace of the biblical and classical typology typical of public elegies, particularly those on the death of a king. She imagines James as a man and heroic individual, as "illustrious *York*" (l.48) and a "Mighty Prince" (l.62), rather than a monarch or a figurative type, preferring to

⁶³ Virginia Crompton, "'For when the act is done and finish't cleane, / what should the poet doe, but shift the scene?': Propaganda, Professionalism and Aphra Behn", in *Aphra Behn Studies*, ed. by Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.130-53 (p.144).

dwell on his childhood presence at the Battle of Edgehill, distinguished service in the French army and leadership of the English navy as opposed to the brief and troubled reign of King James. However, this intimate personal history masks a sustained attack on the man responsible for the king's death in exile, William of Orange.

The Duke of York's naval prowess is recounted by way of his command of the fleet at the Battle of Lowestoft during the Second Dutch War (1665-67). Finch's obvious delight in relating the fate of the Dutch flagship, "Opdam's fiery Blaze"(l.53), named The Orange-tree in honour of the royal house, is hardly surprising. Not content with reliving past victories, she then uses this anecdote to question the new king's loyalty to his adopted nation. The fact that James's naval victories contributed to "keeping England then Superior to the Dutch" (l.69) serves as a reminder that after 1688/89 the nation was subject to Dutch foreign policy, as William used his accession to the throne to lead England into the ongoing conflict between the Netherlands and France. Indeed Finch accuses William III of breeding "new Strifes to keep that ample Sway"(l.83), of prolonging the war in order to consolidate his own position on the throne. This was a standard Jacobite criticism throughout the 1690s: "Not only is the new monarch corrupt and profligate: he is a warmonger, having only taken the British throne so that he might perpetuate conflict with France" (Pittock, p.47).

Needless to say the James II depicted by Finch was never guilty of excessive violence or warmongering - "War ne'er was thy Delight" (l.72) - acting only in "the Nation's right" (l.73) and for "*Britain's* Interest and Renown" (l.91). In 1701 the British economy was suffering from the strain of financing the ongoing conflict and also as a result of the French monopoly of foreign trade, consequently the image of a monarch who consistently aimed to protect "gainful Trade"(l.75) and secure "Peace and Plenty" (l.82) was a potent one. Peace, plenty and prosperity were the watchwords of the Restoration perhaps suggesting that this censure of William's policies was

intended not only to undermine his reign, but recall the precedent of a Stuart restoration.

Opposition to William and Mary lies at the heart of Finch's address to fellow Jacobites and erstwhile supporters of the exiled Stuarts:

O you who in his frequent Dangers stood,
And Fought to Fence then at the Expense of Blood,
Now let your Tears a heavier Tribute pay,
Give the Becoming Sorrow Way:
Nor bring bad Parallels upon the Times,
By seeking, thro' mistaken Fears,
To Curb your Sighs, or to Conceal your Tears;
'Twas but in *Nero's* Days, that Sighs and Tears were Crimes.
(II.94-101)

She calls on those who mourn the death of James II to do so openly, just as they fought for him in his "frequent Dangers" often endangering their own lives. However, this vision of honourable and justifiable grief also reveals the sorry plight of those who remained loyal to the exiled king and his family, in their "diminish'd Bread" and "imbittered Draughts" (I.123). Poverty and misery were an inescapable fact of Jacobite resistance, a direct result of opposition to the new regime.⁶⁴

Yet 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James' is not entirely consumed by loss, sorrow and regret. The reference to Nero, with his dubious claim to Claudius's empire, may refer to William's own disregard for the rules of succession. The importance of divine right and legitimacy pervades the poem, publicizing the injustice of James's fate and prefiguring Jacobite hopes for the next generation of Stuart kings. Finch envisages James II, if he had been allowed to die whilst regnant, lying in state amongst his illustrious ancestors:

Amongst the Kings that have laid down
(As all must do) at Death's cold Feet, the Crown,
Him had you sure Inroll'd, and justly, with the Best [...]
(II.104-06)

⁶⁴ Jane Barker also exposes the sometimes brutal realities of Jacobite life in 'The Miseries of St. Germans, writ at the time of the pestilence and famine, which reign'd in the years, 1694 et 95'. She describes exiled life as "Hell in epitomy" (I.4), with "people howling in the streets for bread" (I.13). *Jane Barker*, pp.302-07.

Following the practice of Scottish poets and courtiers who repeatedly created a, largely fictional, genealogy for the Stuarts in order to endorse and authenticate their right to the throne, she compares the king to his predecessors Elizabeth and Henry VII, managing to imply that James's line goes back as far as the Saxon king Alfred.⁶⁵ Furthermore, this sense of continuity and history does not end with James II, but lives on in his son.

By 1718, however, the still buoyant hopes of 'An Elegy of the Death of K. James' had all but faded. 'On the Death of the Queen' commemorates more than just the death of Mary of Modena; it represents the death of Finch's vision of a Stuart restoration and the Jacobite victory that seemed more elusive than ever. Far from the idyllic scenes of a Restoration-era golden age, or even the studied retreat of the retirement verses, the pastoral setting of 'On the Death of the Queen' signifies resignation and defeat:

Dark was the shade where only coul'd be seen
Disasterous Yew that ever balefull green
Distructive in the field of old when strung
Gloomy o'er the graves of sleeping warriors hung
Deep was the wild recess that not an ear
Which grudged her praises might the accents hear
Where sad ARDELIA mourn'd URANIA'S Death [...]⁶⁶

Finch does not attempt to deny her location in an "ill-omen'd spot / By men forsaken and the World forgot" (l.19-20), her role as a Jacobite prophet reduced to this shadow of a lost cause, forgotten by its enemies and abandoned by all but a faithful few. The public grief and appeals for communal mourning that dominated the elegy on James II are replaced by an awareness that not many will care about the death of a queen long exiled from England or the elegy dedicated to her memory.

Perhaps it is this acknowledgment of Mary of Modena's diminished political importance that inspires the pastoral framework of the elegy; it is constructed as a dialogue between two nymphs, complete with a natural setting and pastoral identities.

⁶⁵ Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746* (London: Methuen, 1980), pp.6-7.

⁶⁶ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp.25-29, ll.1-7.

Thus the queen becomes Urania, while Ardelia corresponds with Lamira, the pastoral pseudonym of Anne Tufton, Countess of Salisbury. Although Finch contends that Mary of Modena's "least dignity was England's Queen" (l.31), her choice of the pastoral elegy, associated with the death of a public individual, is a conscious reminder that Mary was once "England's Queen" and as such her death demands recognition and respect. Moreover, the pastoral form of the elegy, with its implicit emphasis on public and political status, actually facilitates an intensely intimate and poignant remembrance of the late queen, rather than precluding personal grief.

Finch's reaction to the queen's death is reminiscent of Behn's very physical response to the death of Charles II: "Her head reclined on the obdurate stone / Still uttering low but interrupted moan" (ll.23-24). Ironically it is through the piteous and fragmented attempts to communicate this distressing news that her grief is fully articulated:

In sighs which seem'd her own expiring breath
In moving Sylables so often broke
That more then Eloquence the anguish spoke
Urging the tears which cou'd not give relief
But seem'd to propagate renewing grief [...]

(ll.8-12)

There is a suggestion of the obligation inherent in the political contract in Ardelia's excessive grief and her need to share the plight of the queen through her own exclusion and suffering: Ardelia flees from "light and company" (l.21) in order to seek out "the mansions of the Dead" (l.22), empathizing with Urania to the extent that she "with her seem'd unactive or interr'd" (l.26). Refusing elegiac consolation, Finch uses her identification with Mary of Modena, through Ardelia, to establish a symbolic relationship between the poet/prophet and the late queen.

Carol Barash has argued that "Once Mary is dead, Ardelia can long for her without shame or regret"; however, it is more plausibly the death of James II, and the linguistic authority he represented, that allowed Finch to refigure her relationship with

the queen (Barash, p.270). Her lovingly crafted portrait of Mary of Modena is possible because the queen no longer represents a threat to the figurative relationship between the poet and the king. The symbolic bond that had survived and transcended James's exile and physical absence was rendered obsolete by the king's death in 1701. Instead Finch developed a more detached and ironic form of political comment, similar to that of contemporaries such as Addison and Swift. 'On the Death of the Queen' uses the figure of Mary of Modena, then, not as an alternative source of poetic authority, but to symbolize the end of her political hopes and close the chapter on her life-long loyalty to James II and his queen:

Then eager from the rural seat I came
Of long traced Ancestors of worthy name
To seek the Court of many woes the source
Completed by this last this sad divorce [...]

(II.42-45)

Although death is surely the ultimate act of separation, it is perhaps the idea of this "last" divorce, the final dissolution of the marriage contract, with all of its political implications, that wholly encapsulates the painful reality of Jacobitism by 1718.

Yet 'On the Death of the Queen' also recalls a happier time, before the Revolution, when Finch was still a member of the Stuart court and maid of honour to the Duchess of York. This Mary is beautiful and virtuous, full of "winning graces" (l.29) and "numerous charms" (l.53), but also "eloquent and wise" (l.71), able to converse with "embasies in different tongues" (l.69) and engage in political discussion and debate. Finch obviously felt a need to redress the vicious slurs and slanderous attacks on Mary's character by Williamite propagandists, expressing the desire that in her "dutious tribute [...] may truth with energy be found" (II.49-50). The accuracy and veracity of this version of the late queen is given credence by the fact that it was experienced first hand, when the poet was one of Mary's "Domestick train" (l.34).

Of course the inclusion of private experience was not unusual in Finch's poetry. 'The Spleen' and various other poems drew on her own struggles to overcome

the debilitating effects of illness, while a household calamity formed the basis of 'An Apology for my fearfull temper' and numerous friends, family and everyday conversations and occurrences found their way into verse. Yet the detail and sincerity of these recollections of both her own youth and the young Mary of Modena are unique:

Recall'd be days when ebon locks o'erspread
My youthfull neck my cheeks a bashfull red
When early joys my glowing bosom warm'd
When trifles pleas'd and every pleasure charm'd [...]

(ll.38-41)

The personal and political innocence revealed by this touching self-portrait is utterly compelling, as is the idyllic impression of Mary of Modena's court, experienced in all its wonder and novelty by a young maid of honour fresh from country life. Sadly both were disillusioned and corrupted by the 'fall' of 1688/89.

Interestingly, particularly in the context of an elegy for "England's Queen" (l.31), Finch emphasizes Mary's foreignness, from her "Roman Accent" (l.74) and "Tuscan language" (l.32) to her descent from the dukes of Modena and the prominent Este family, "Conquerors o'er the Monarchs of the Earth" (l.101). Louise Fradenburg, in her discussion of female sovereignty, imagines the body of the queen as a "site of crossover between subjection and sovereignty, between cultures, between different spheres and practices of power: public and private, official and unofficial" (Fradenburg, p.9). Thus by juxtaposing Mary's Italian heritage and her role as an English queen, it could be argued that Finch was intentionally constructing a "site of crossover" in which the boundaries between public and private, sovereignty and exile, could be blurred.

The use of classical typology is similarly ambiguous. Livia Drusilla, wife of Augustus Caesar, was celebrated for her beauty, dignity and intelligence, yet she was also perceived as a "ruthless intriguer" whose influence over her husband was not

always benign.⁶⁷ Finch's seemingly innocuous observation that "thro' a woman's wit the world obey'd" (l.79) has disturbing connotations of manipulation, deception and the abuse of power. Equally ambivalent is the allusion to Portia, the epitome of "fortitude and love" (l.80), who was nonetheless complicit in the plot to assassinate Julius Caesar. The frequent comparison of Caesar and James II further complicates the symbolic purpose of these "Roman Ladies" (l.103). The unease and equivocation evident in Behn's attitude to Mary of Modena, the "*enchanting Ravisher*" with the power to sway her husband James II, is manifest in Finch's comment that "from her lovely mouth th' enchantment sprung" (l.77).⁶⁸ Like Livia and Portia, Mary is a potentially divisive figure, with the same influence and authority as her "kindred Dames" (l.87).

Yet it seems that Finch sought to reconcile that symbolic disruptive potential with her own memories of a women who displayed "Endearing sweetness to her happy friends" (l.64). Mary's Italian ancestry and her imposing classical antecedents are immediately negated by the assertion that:

Such was URANIA where they most excell'd
And where they fail'd by nobler zeal upheld
What Italy produc't of glorious names
Her native Country and her kindred Dames
All virtues which Antiquity cou'd boast
She equal'd but on Stormy Britain tost
They lost their value on a northern Coast [...]

(ll.84-90)

This natural integrity and devotion counteracts the threatening aspects of both her foreignness and imposing female predecessors, but, if that is not enough, Finch offers the reassurance that the queen's 'native' virtues ceased to have any meaning or significance upon her arrival in England.

Although focused primarily on the York court and personal recollections of the young Mary of Modena in happier times, 'On the Death of the Queen' also imagines

⁶⁷ *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p.876.

⁶⁸ 'A Pindarick Poem on the Happy Coronation of His Most Sacred Majesty James II and His Illustrious Consort Queen Mary', in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, l.102.

Mary's response to the Revolution and her life in exile: "O'er Britain so her Pious sorrows fell / Less for her Woes then that it cou'd rebel" (ll.114-15). Immediacy and intimacy are replaced by conjecture and symbolism as the exiled queen is figured as the sun "sweetly sinking like declining day" (l.109), overwhelmed by grief, yet never diminished or embittered by the loss of "worldly greatness" (l.117). Finch stresses Mary's compassion and humanity - "As fragrant trees tho'wounded shed but balm" (l.123) - in the face of injustice and the death "in a foreign clime" of her beloved "Consort" (l.118), as the depth and intensity of the poet's earlier reminiscences are replaced by the idea of the exiled queen as a model of Jacobite fortitude and resilience:

Who held her light to three great Kingdoms forth
And gave her Sufferings to dilate her worth
That Gallia too might see she cou'd support
Monastick rules and Britains worst effort [...]

(ll.126-29)

Even her death is mythologized, removed from the tangible mourning and lamentation displayed by Ardelia at the beginning of the elegy.

'On the Death of the Queen' concludes with a prophetic vision, heralded by the change of tense and more formal poetic voice, similar to that of 'An Elegy on the Death of K. James':

All Hail in her triumphant way she meets
Who shall in silent Majesty repose
Till every tomb shall every guest disclose
Till Heaven which does all human loss repair
Distinguishing the atoms of the fair
Shall give URANIA'S form transcendent beauty there
And from the beams Irradiating her face
(Which here but wanted that suspended grace)
Shall shew the Britains how they strove in vain
To strip that brow which was consign'd to reign

(ll.137-46)

However, rather than anticipating a Jacobite uprising or Stuart restoration, Finch's apocalyptic declaration envisages Mary of Modena spiritually transcending the criticism levelled at her by those recalcitrant subjects who supported or accepted the Revolution and subsequent reign of William III and Mary II.

Here the temporal majesty and beauty attributed to Mary of Modena are replaced by language more frequently associated with the Virgin Mary, as the queen appears in a state of "suspended grace" with "beams irradiating her face" (l.143-44). Marian iconography was not uncommon in royalist literature: Elizabeth had often exploited the similarities between her own virgin state and that of Mary in order to endorse her, at times precarious, reign with divine authority (Hackett, p.10). By aligning Mary of Modena with the "queenship of Mary", indicative of her "signal triumph, through her virginity and her Assumption, over human weakness and evil", Finch is able to authorize her own prophetic vision.⁶⁹ In response to those who endeavoured to malign the queen and assail her sovereignty, she removes Mary of Modena from the political sphere to assure her eventual triumph through her own figurative assumption and veneration. 'On the Death of the Queen' evolves from Ardelia's inconsolable grief to the "pious tears" commended by Lamira as "just" (ll.150-51), as she eventually finds elegiac consolation in Mary's symbolic victory, and by implication her own poetic victory, over those who "strove to guide the round" (l.147) and determine the political future.

Earl Miner suggests a distinction between "private poetry" that "turns its heel upon the world, or affects to do so, in order that it may treat the transactions of the intimate heart" and "public poetry" that "avoids what is eccentric to the individual alone in order to celebrate what men share" which is particularly apt in relation to this chapter.⁷⁰ Finch blurs such distinctions between public and private poetry in order to produce verses that combine the intimate and individual with the universal and political.

⁶⁹ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of The Virgin Mary* (London: Vintage, 2000), p.116.

⁷⁰ Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), p.14.

5. "TRADERS WITH THE MUSES": POETRY AND THE POLITICS OF EXCHANGE

Fittingly, it was Aphra Behn who foresaw the advent of a new approach to power and authority in the prophetic conclusion to 'A Pindaric Poem to the Reverend Doctor Burnet on the Honour he did me of Enquiring after me and my Muse' (1688):

Tho' I the Wond'rous Change deplore,
That makes me Useless and Forlorn,
Yet I the great Design adore,
Tho' Ruin'd in the Universal Turn.¹

Figuring herself as the "Excluded Prophet" (l.62), she acknowledged the loss of her linguistic and political authority through this allusion to the forced exile of James II. But not only the monarch changed in 1688/89. In the wake of the Revolution the Stuart doctrines of divine right and patriarchal authority gave way to the social contract, party politics and the appearance of a "new ruling elite".² Behn's observation that William of Orange's arrival in England would "Change every Notion, every Principle" (l.72) was more prescient than even she could have anticipated.

The 1690s were a period of immense change, with the political revolution ushering in new methods of finance, new social mores and new means of communication. The Bank of England was established in 1694, prompting the emergence of public credit, investment, trading in stocks and the growth of a money-based economy (Brown, p.3). By the beginning of the eighteenth century, particularly as a result of the Nine Years War (1688-97), Britain had become a trading nation, importing tea, coffee and sugar alongside silk, cotton and china.³ Economic discourse dominated the early eighteenth century, precipitating and facilitating social, political and literary change, as monetary terms and financial rhetoric were adopted by and applied to all aspects of eighteenth-century culture.

¹ *The Works of Aphra Behn*, I, 307-10, ll.86-9.

² J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.48.

³ Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.4.

In an increasingly capital orientated society, status and power were no longer the sole province of the propertied aristocracy and gentry, but were available to those with enough money or credit to acquire them. Social imitation and aspiration, class competition and emulative spending occupied eighteenth-century society to such an extent that fashion became a key term in the discussion of everything from dress and physical appearance to "religious observance, speech and writing, manners, food, combat, sexual mores, employment, leisure pursuits and human social types".⁴ The world of the fashionable beau monde, the toilette and tea table, were subject to public interest, just as the salon, the coffee house and the court became arenas in which social customs and trivia were discussed alongside politics and affairs of state.

Although the eighteenth century is often regarded as the period in which the ideology of public and private spheres first came into being, it also seems, particularly at the beginning of the century, to have facilitated an unprecedented degree of fluidity between these two spheres, as seemingly personal or trifling domestic details became public property, while political and economic business was ever more accessible on an individual level. Paula McDowell has argued that the eighteenth century witnessed the change from "a courtly, manuscript literary culture, to the print-based, market-centred system we know today" and, while it would be naïve to suggest that such a shift occurred over the space of a few decades, it is certainly true that the growth of print culture contributed to the formation of influential political and social ideologies and made possible their dissemination to a wider market (McDowell, p.5).

Publishing enterprises prospered with the accession of William and Mary, as restrictions and censorship laws were relaxed and the Regulation of Printing Act was abandoned, allowing publishers more autonomy and independence from state control

⁴ Erin Mackie, *Market a la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in The Tatler and The Spectator* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1997), p.2.

and permitting an increase in the number of printing presses.⁵ The deregulation of the printing industry and improvements in textual production created the ideal environment for the emergence of a new literary form, the journal or periodical, that appeared regularly, three times a week in the case of *The Tatler*, and appealed to a wide readership, not just the literary or cultural elite. The most successful of these periodicals were undoubtedly those produced by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Tatler* (1709-11) and *The Spectator* (1711-14), which charmed, influenced and promoted the 'middle class' of eighteenth-century society.

The Tatler and *The Spectator* were politically motivated, invoked the language of commerce and credit and addressed the behaviour, conversation, appearance and foibles of the fashionable world in order to instruct and reform society. Politics merged with fashion, commerce with culture and the role of women with social reform. Addison and Steele's methodology in the literary periodical in a sense provides the model for this chapter and the analysis of Finch's poetry during this period. The deaths of James II (1701) and William III (1702), the accession of Anne and the increasingly relaxed attitude of the authorities to so called moderate non-jurors and Jacobites enabled Finch to rejoin London society, although still excluded from court life, more readily to engage with literary contemporaries and to comment on everyday politics. Although critics such as Charles Hinnant have vehemently asserted her "rejection of a direct engagement in partisan conflict", I would contend that the beginning of the eighteenth century indisputably marked Finch's involvement in "partisan political writing", social commentary and literary exchange.⁶

This interplay between the political, economic, social and literary worlds inevitably complicates any evaluation of political agency during this period. Although

⁵ Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p.24/5.

⁶ Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch: An Essay in Interpretation*, p.230 and Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p.95.

her Jacobite loyalties remained unquestionable, this chapter focuses on the more nuanced and satirical approach to political issues adopted by Finch during the London phase of her career. 'To a Lady who having desired me to compose something upon the foregoing Subject prevail'd with me to speak the first four lines extempore' (?1707) perfectly exemplifies the fluidity between the various spheres and discourses of the early eighteenth century, as the literary, economic and political intersect in this light-hearted verse.⁷ She refers to her poetry as "commerce" (l.11) and figures poets as "traders with the Muses" (l.10), conflating the literary and the marketplace by her use of financial rhetoric.

The Lady's (her name is Celia) expectation of improvisational genius is paralleled with the desire for instant success and immediate gratification of those who invest in stocks and insurance, through an analogy between ready talent and ready money:

For ready talents shou'd you try
From Pall-mall to the City
The stock of all the passers by
All wou'd not be found witty.

(ll.13-16)

The coffee houses of Pall Mall were the haunts of the Scriblerians, amongst other literary/political clubs, while the City denotes the commercial and materialistic world of the Royal Exchange.

Finch's assurance that she would be happy to produce more verses "with little leasure" (l.22), unless of course her head is "lost in a blue hood", introduces a party element to the existing themes of currency and exchange. This throwaway comment almost certainly alludes to the prevalent fashion for women to display their political allegiances by wearing hoods or caps in party colours. Addison, naturally, criticized women who followed this trend, advising them to pay more attention to what went

⁷ 'To a Lady who having desired me to compose something upon the foregoing Subject prevail'd with me to speak the first four lines extempore and wou'd have had me so proceed in the rest which I sent to her at more leasure, with the following verses', in *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.78.

into their heads rather than what adorned them (*The Spectator*, issue 265).⁸ The blue hood was an expression of Jacobite loyalty.⁹

As 'To a Lady' demonstrates, it is difficult to separate the political from the social and economic in a discussion of Finch's partisan writing, thus this chapter, although divided into subsections, necessarily involves a degree of crossover in terms of argument and content. I begin by locating her intellectually in the midst of the London literary scene, examining the extent to which friendships and correspondence with men such as Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift influenced her poetry and politics. Following on from that I review the key issues of early eighteenth century society, such as the representation of women and the emergence of the public and private spheres, examining Finch's poetry in the context of these arguments.

i. Cleveland Row and Literary Connections

Friendship offered the potential for political expression throughout the seventeenth century, a facility evident in the retirement tradition and the verses of Katherine Philips, and indeed Anne Finch. However, this potential was rendered explicit in the early eighteenth century, as "party loyalty became in the late years of Anne's reign 'the new criterion for activity and friendship' in literary London" (Gallagher, p.95). By 1708, the Finches had returned to London and taken up residence in Cleveland Row, directly opposite St James's Palace.¹⁰ Pope was a frequent visitor to the townhouse, as was Swift, and it may be presumed that the painter Charles Jervas, a close friend of Pope's who was a near neighbour, also called on the Finches at home. Swift appears to have introduced Anne Finch to Jacob Tonson and John Barber, both of whom would publish her poems, and possibly also Delarivier Manley, who lived

⁸ *The Spectator*, II, 205-08.

⁹ Leigh Eicke notes that wearing the colour blue (and also white) could be construed as an assertion of Jacobite allegiance. 'The Extremity of the Times: Women and Jacobitism in British Literary Culture', pp.91-96.

¹⁰ McGovern, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry*, p.91.

with Barber and collaborated with Swift on early editions of *The Examiner*. Friendship with Pope and Swift also exposed Finch, in person or by reputation, to the wider circle of their acquaintance, which numbered John Gay, Francis Atterbury, Matthew Prior, Nicholas Rowe, Charles and Mary Caesar, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, amongst others.¹¹

Finch's literary friends and acquaintances during the London years of her career were predominantly Tories.¹² Swift was initially associated with the Whigs and Addison's Whig literary clique, the 'little Senate' which met at Button's coffee house, but by 1710 he had experienced a political conversion and was actively involved with the Tory party. Pope's Catholicism made him a natural Tory, Manley was a fervent Tory propagandist and Barber was alleged to have Jacobite leanings. Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, was a leading high churchman and Tory who contributed to *The Examiner* and, from 1716, was involved in various Jacobite plots. It is possible that Finch was also familiar, through Swift and Pope, with Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, and Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, the leaders of the Tory party and government (1710-14). Although her poetry shared the concerns addressed by Addison and Steele in their journals, there is no conclusive evidence to indicate that she was personally acquainted with either man.

Finch's friendship with Swift and Pope was formed during the period in which all three were actively caught up in the political, social and literary whirl of London life. Thus it is imperative to consider the importance of these relationships and their

¹¹ Finch's inclusion in this extended circle is evident in her poetry: 'To Mr. Jervas, Occasion'd by the Sight of Mrs Chetwind's Picture' (1712/13), 'A Tale of the Miser and the Poet, Written about the Year 1709', 'A Letter to Mrs Arabella Marow', 'The agreeable' and 'To a Lady', all of which mention Prior and 'An Epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore' written for Rowe's play, while Rowe commended Finch with 'An epistle to Flavia, on the sight of two Pindaric Odes on the Spleen and Vanity'.

¹² Paul Korshin has argued that "allegorizing a writer's political loyalties based simply on friendships and allusions is not the soundest sort of scholarship", noting that both Swift and Dr. Johnson, often alleged to be Jacobites on the basis of their friendships, also "had a vast acquaintance of people who were *not* Jacobites"; however, Finch's political loyalties were already firmly established by this period and far from claiming that her friendships with Swift, Pope et al. were instrumental in forming her political opinions, I merely suggest that these relationships were influential in her approach to opposition writing. Paul J. Korshin, 'Afterword' to 'Tories and Jacobites: Making a Difference', in *ELH*, 64:4 (1997), 1091-1100 (p.1092).

influence on her writing after her move to London in 1708.¹³ As Catherine Gallagher has noted, "There was an unprecedented politicization of authorship during this period and in politics a new reliance on writing", and this fusion is clearly evident in the later poetry and her increasingly satirical approach to contemporary politics (Gallagher, p.94). Finch's adoption of the satiric voice, to varying degrees, also owes much to her relationship with Swift and Pope, perhaps the foremost proponents of wit and satire in the early eighteenth century.

Wit was indubitably the language of political commentary during Queen Anne's reign, as John Gay's 'The Present State of Wit, in a Letter to a Friend in the Country' (1711) attests: "I shall only premise, that as you know I never cared one Farthing either for *Whig* or *Tory*, So I shall consider our Writers purely as they are such, without any respect to which Party they may belong."¹⁴ This opening declaration, whilst denying any connection between wit and party interests, actually draws attention to the extent to which political allegiance and partisan politics dominated the literary marketplace.

As Gay accurately noted, virtually all of literary London was divided along party lines, identified and judged as either Whig or Tory.¹⁵ Will's coffee house was the home of the Tory wits, while Whigs met in Button's; the Kit-Cat Club advanced Whig interests, while the October Club represented the enthusiastic younger members of the Tory party and the Scriblerians (Pope, Swift, Gay, Thomas Parnell and Robert Harley) fought a partisan literary battle with Addison, Thomas Tickell and Ambrose

¹³ Barbara McGovern has seen the publication of Tonson's pastorals (1709), which included three of Finch's poems, as the symbolic beginning of the intersection of Finch, Pope and Swift's writing; however, the familiar tone and easy manner of Swift's 'Apollo Outwitted' (1709) suggests a longer acquaintance. 'Finch, Pope, and Swift: The Bond of Displacement', in *Pope, Swift and Women Writers*, ed. by Donald C. Mell (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp.105-24 (p.106).

¹⁴ *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Vinton A. Dearing, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 449-56 (p.449).

¹⁵ Gay notes one, perhaps inevitable, exception to this party rule. Of *The Tatler* and its creator Sir Richard Steele he claims: "Every one Read him with Pleasure and Good Will, and the *Tories*, in respect to his other Good Qualities, had almost forgiven his unaccountable Imprudence in declaring against them." (p.451)

Phillips over the fate of the English pastoral.¹⁶ The idea that the terms Tory and Whig comprehensively encompass the various factions, shifting loyalties, conflicting ideologies and personal agendas within each party is of course absurd; however, it is possible to ascertain the general principles that defined each party. For instance:

A 'Tory' text might express certain characteristic commitments and hostilities: engagement for the rights, powers and privileges of the Church of England, support for the proscription of Dissent from public life, repudiation of latitudinarian politics, subscription to the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance (however modified), detestation of anti-monarchical principles identified with Whiggism, and animus against the naturalization of foreign Protestants and against the Dutch.¹⁷

Tories also commonly figured themselves as defenders of the nation, protecting the 'Country' from the dangerous policies of the court or the Whig executive (Nicholson, p.23).

It is perhaps most useful to situate Finch in the context of Toryism as "opposition polemic" rather than attempt to ally her with one particular Tory faction or simplify the elaborate and composite nature of government during Queen Anne's reign along straightforward party lines. J.G.A Pocock has argued that "opposition polemic" between 1697 and 1713 (a period framed by the Treaties of Ryswick and Utrecht) was directed at the regime that conducted the War of the Spanish Succession: "a regime presented as a system of public credit and national debt, maintaining an ever-expanding professional army and parliamentary patronage, which waged and won great wars abroad but was held to pay for itself by imposing a land tax on the freeholders and gentry" (Pocock, p.234). Although the regime was, broadly speaking, Whig and the opposition Tory, the moderate elements of both parties often colluded in

¹⁶ The Scriblerian Club was founded in 1714 and gathered in Dr. Arbuthnot's rooms in St. James's Palace or in one of the nearby Pall Mall coffee houses. Although the club disbanded on Anne's death and Swift's return to Ireland, the ideas and founding principles of the group resonated in much of its members' later work. Moyra Haslett, *Pope to Burney: Scriblerians to Bluestockings* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.10-36. I use the term Scriblerian in a slightly looser sense throughout this chapter to refer to the general animus of Swift and Pope's writing during this period (1710-14).

¹⁷ Ian Higgins, *Swift's Politics: A Study in Disaffection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.39.

regard to certain policies and Henry St. John went so far as to declare that, subsequent to the Revolution, there was virtually no distinction at all between the two.¹⁸

Jonathan Swift teasingly acknowledged Finch's opposition to Whig policies and politics in 'Apollo Outwitted. To the Honourable Mrs Finch Since Countess of Winchilsea under the Name of Ardelia' (1709). This humorous account of her reluctance to publish, presumably written to celebrate her inclusion in Tonson's miscellany, concludes with Swift's amused observation that "A Whig, and one that wears a gown" should accomplish Ardelia's venture into the literary marketplace.¹⁹ He figures himself as "the thing you hate" (l.63), an Anglican Churchman allied to the misguided and corrupt ideology of the Whigs. Yet in spite of their political differences Swift and Finch obviously enjoyed an affectionate and close friendship. 'Apollo Outwitted' is a witty tale of attempted seduction and ingenuity in which the female poet is cast as a formidable and cunning nymph, "with malice in her heart" (l.26), who tricks Apollo into bestowing poetic gifts upon her, but denies him "his due" (l.37) by calling upon Thalia, the "celestial prude" (l.41), to dampen the god's ardour.

Apollo's revenge is to deny Ardelia fame and recognition for her verses, as she is doomed to be first among "modest poets" (l.57), "negligent of fame" (l.54) and endlessly repeating her verses to the "silent shades" (l.58). Finch's disinclination for print and wider renown, the result of political caution and possibly feminine diffidence, is refigured as "stubborn Pride" (l.53) and a consequence of divine retribution. Ironically it is only the intervention of her Whiggish friend and the services of a Whig printer (Tonson) that save Ardelia, a "lovely maid / Attending on a royal dame" (ll.3-4), from poetic obscurity. Political difference clearly did not prevent

¹⁸ Hill, p.280. Whilst St. John's comment reflects the practical complexities and concessions of government during Anne's reign, there is no doubt that the terms Whig and Tory held a great deal of currency in eighteenth-century political and social life.

¹⁹ *Jonathan Swift: The Complete Poems*, ed. by Pat Rogers (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp.100-02, l.64.

Swift and Finch from becoming friends, but 'Apollo Outwitted' reveals the way in which politics infiltrated even the most innocuous of exchanges.

Political subtexts and literary exchange are also evident in 'The misantrophe', which was almost certainly intended for the famously misanthropic Swift, whose identity is intimated by the reference to "tales of tubs".²⁰ Finch's seemingly nonsensical poem was evidently inspired by John Gay's epitaph, "Life is a jest; and all things show it. / I thought so once; but now I know it", and is symptomatic of the eighteenth-century fondness for witty epigrams and bagatelles.²¹ If "Life at best / Is but a jest" (ll.1-2) then age is definitely worse, a truth epitomized by the need to constantly relive the triumphs and tribulations of youth:

Age is worse
The doatards curse
Consumed in endless story
In tales of tubs
Intreagues and drubs
Retold by Grandsires hoary [...]

(ll.7-12)

Barbara McGovern has posited that 'The misantrophe' was written on the eve of Swift's departure to Ireland after the death of Queen Anne and the fall of the Tory party.²² Swift was instrumental in maintaining the balance of power in the often fraught relationship between Oxford and Bolingbroke, a relationship that was essential for the continuing success of the Tories, situating him at the very centre of party politics and government from 1710 onwards. The dissolution of that partnership, despite his best efforts, the fall of the Tories and the accession of the decidedly pro-Whig George I effectively ended Swift's career as a propagandist and his hopes of advancement within the Church. Responses to his changed circumstances ranged from resentment and bitterness to melancholy and dejection, all of which are exhibited in

²⁰ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.67, l.10.

²¹ *John Gay*, II, p.253.

²² William Cameron dates the poem between 1712 and 1720, although probably closer to 1712; however, McGovern's dating of 1714 makes more sense in the context of Swift's political ambitions and his friendship with Finch.

'The Author Upon Himself' and 'In Sickness. Written soon after the Author's coming to live in Ireland, Upon the Queen's Death', both written in 1714.

In 'The misantrophe' Finch captures the fears of a man used to wielding influence in public life, involved in the "Intreagues and drubs" of contemporary politics, who is suddenly consigned to a life of relative obscurity and the conversation of "tedious fools" and "boys from Schools" (ll.15-16). She concludes by advocating the ideal escape from these eventualities:

These to fly
Retired I lye
Unknown and all unknowing
And think't enough
Not nonsense proof
My own I am not shewing.

(ll.19-24)

McGovern reads 'The misantrophe' as an appropriation of the Swiftian voice, with Finch adopting the persona of a man who "by retiring from society in middle age has escaped the fate that all aged men are threatened with" (McGovern, p.98). However, it is also possible to interpret this final stanza as a reflection of her own political position, intended as a reassurance that retreat is not always final or absolute.

Retirement is not only an escape from tedious discourse, but also political intrigue and suspicion. Swift himself represented retirement as the only possible conclusion to the animosity and persecution he faced as a result of his association with Harley and St. John and his satirical works on their behalf:

By faction tired, with grief he waits a while,
His great contending friends to reconcile.
Performs what friendship, justice, truth require:
What could he more, but decently retire?²³

The idea of retirement in 'The misantrophe' as "Unknown and all unknowing" echoes this vision of retreat as a political necessity and astutely recognises Swift's dread of obscurity and political isolation. The irony of course, possibly designed to console the

²³ "The Author upon Himself", in *Jonathan Swift*, p.163-65, ll.70-73.

exiled misanthrope, lies in the fact that Finch, the great advocate of retirement and political caution, was neither unknown nor unknowing.

She plays with Swift's curmudgeonly reputation in order to refigure the end of his public importance and influence as the manifestation of his perceived aversion to humanity in general. Through this exaggerated account of the pitfalls of ageing in society, Swift is equipped with the perfect excuse for his relocation to Dublin, one that requires no reference to the failure of his political hopes and personal ambitions. What begins as an exercise in Scriblerian-style mockery and cynicism evolves on closer reading into a compassionate and understanding attempt to console a friend and political ally on the loss of his public position.

Although women could not participate in the world of the coffee house or the literary club, there can be little doubt that they were active and valued members of the "intellectual networks of exchange" that surrounded men such as Pope and Addison and Steele.²⁴ Valerie Rumbold has claimed of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose *Town Eclogues* (?1715) were produced in collaboration with Pope and Gay, that she was "almost a Scriblerian", although she never actually attended any meetings of the Scriblerus Club.²⁵ Similarly Finch's conversational exchanges with Pope and Swift, her casual appropriation of the witty epigrams and clever wordplay that characterized the Scriblerians and her increasingly satirical poetic voice all mark her out as a literary counterpart, if not quite collaborator, of this circle of Tory wits. Indeed, as late as 1720 she was included amongst the number of "goodly Dames" and "courteous Knights"

²⁴ *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere 1700-1830*, ed. by Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona Ó Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.2. Women, and certainly aristocratic or middle class women, may not have been permitted within the exclusively male environs of the coffee house, but Swift himself clearly identifies Anne Finch with that world in his correspondence with Stella: "Pr'ythee; do not you observe how strangely I have changed my company and manner of living? I never go to a coffee house; you hear no more of Addison, Steele, Henley, Lady Lucy, Mrs Finch, Lord Somers, Lord Halifax etc.". *Journal to Stella*, Letter 24, 24 May 1711.

²⁵ Valerie Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.134.

gathered by John Gay to celebrate Pope's return from his solitary six-year quest to translate Homer's *Iliad*: "With Winchelsea still Meditating Song".²⁶

Although Finch acknowledged Pope's precocious genius, she also disputed his representations of women and was not afraid to quash his vanity and youthful pomposity where necessary. While reviewing a manuscript copy of *The Rape of Lock* she took objection to Pope's dismissal of women writers as splenetic and appears to have vigorously asserted the case for "female wit".²⁷ Pope responded to these criticisms with a flattering tribute to her own poetic gifts, in which he insisted that "Fate doom'd the fall of every Female Wit / But doom'd it then, when first ARDELIA writ".²⁸ Pope's 'Impromptu' is a charming, if rather conventional, compliment that acknowledges both Finch's influence and the esteem in which he held her as a poet: "Light to the Stars the Sun does thus restore, / But shines himself till they are seen no more" (ll.11-12). The reference to Ardelia's "Mistress on Britannia's Throne" (l.7), however, offers an interesting external perspective on Finch's evolving attitudes to oppositional writing during this period (c.1713).

Pope was almost certainly referring to Queen Anne. His comparison between Ardelia and her "Mistress" focuses on their admirable desire to protect and espouse the rights of others: "I knew ARDELIA cou'd not quote the best, / Who like her Mistress on Britannia's Throne / Fights, and subdues, in Quarrels not her own." (ll.6-8). Anne's reign was defined and dominated by the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713), a war undertaken in order to safeguard the rights of the Hapsburg claimant, the Archduke Charles, to the Spanish throne (as tenuously agreed upon in the Partition Treaty of 1699). Louis XIV had installed his grandson, Philip of Anjou, as King of Spain on Charles II's death in 1700 and immediately asserted his influence,

²⁶ 'Mr. Pope's Welcome from Greece' in *John Gay*, II, 254-60, 149, 174.

²⁷ *The Rape of the Lock*, ed. by J. S. Cunningham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.45 (Canto IV, l.59).

²⁸ 'To the Right Hon.^{ble} Ann Countess of WINCHILSEA: occasion'd by four verses in the rape of the Lock' in *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.68, ll.3-4. This poem is also known as 'Impromptu, to Lady Winchelsea'.

threatening Dutch rights in the Spanish Netherlands and British trading interests, particularly in the Americas. Britain's participation, under Anne's authority, in the conflict could be construed for poetic purposes as altruistic, although in reality it was motivated largely by self-interest.

However, the only British queen that Finch would have recognized as her mistress was the exiled Mary of Modena, whom she had attended as a maid of honour. Moreover, the War of the Spanish Succession was perceived to be a predominantly Whiggish concern, opposed by Tories and Jacobites alike, and Finch herself had written a number of poems criticizing the war, in particular recruitment and the promotion of false ideals of honour and glory. Yet it is also true that she never attacked Queen Anne personally, as she had William III, seeming to accept the queen as a legitimate Stuart heir if not exactly conforming to lineal succession. Pope obviously knew Finch well and could not have been unaware of her Jacobitism, but his 'Impromptu' seems to reflect her more moderate attitude to Queen Anne under the auspices of the Tory government.

Finch answered this accolade with a pointed rebuttal of the attempts to flatter her into submission. Although apparently admitting defeat in the face of Pope's graceful argument, "Disarm'd with so genteel an air, / The contest I give o'er", she actually counteracted her ostensible capitulation with a warning: "Yet Alexander have a care / And shock the sex no more".²⁹ Barbara McGovern reads this "affectionate address" as a sign of the intimacy between the two poets, but the use of Pope's given name also reveals Finch's confidence and authority as a poet, as she admonishes the male poet for his imprudent assumptions about the female sex.

Recognizing the 'Impromptu' as a bid to praise her as the exception rather than the rule amongst women writers, Finch responded in kind with the double-edged comparison of Pope with Orpheus:

²⁹ 'To Mr. Pope In answer to a copy of verses occasion'd by a little dispute upon four lines in the Rape of the Lock' in *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.69, ll.1-4. This poem is also known as 'The Answer'.

You of one Orpheus, sure have read,
 Who wou'd like you have writ,
 Had he in London town been bred,
 And Polish't to his wit

(ll.9-12)

Orpheus, the son of Apollo and a muse, was famed for his ability to compose poetry and songs and as such formed a fitting and gratifying parallel with the talented Pope; indeed, Finch actually depicts Pope as the superior poet. Yet Orpheus was also a "poor soul" (l.13) sadly benighted in his attitude to women, whose "scoffing rhimes" (l.17) incensed his victims to such an extent that these "Resenting Heroines" (l.19) were compelled to exact revenge:

And as thro' Hebrus, rowl'd his Scull,
 And Harp besmear'd with Blood,
 They clashing, as the Waves grew full,
 Still Harmoniz'd the Flood.

(ll.21-24)

This image of the decapitated head of Orpheus floating down the river Hebrus, with the symbol of his gift, the lyre, still making music as the two jostle together is both darkly comic and horrific and the graphic image of the harp covered with the poet's blood after he had been torn to pieces by a pack of avenging women obviously unsettled and disturbed Pope. When editing 'The Answer' for publication in his 1717 miscellany, he excised this stanza, as well as the familiar and belittling use of his first name.

This literary exchange concluded with the witty assurance that the wayward poet will surely be spared Orpheus's fate, "The Lock won't cost the Head" (l.28), if only he learns to "sooth the Ladies" (l.32) and Pope's subsequent inclusion of both poems in his miscellany collection, *Poems on Several Occasions*, alongside 'To Mr. Pope, by the Right Honourable Anne, Countess of Winchilsea' and 'The Mastiff and the Curs'. 'To Mr. Pope' was one of seven dedicatory poems in the collection and was placed second only to the homage of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, an arrangement that, Claudia Thomas suggests, indicates "public acknowledgment of the

countess as a female patron".³⁰ Finch's prominence in the miscellany, in terms of attribution, disposition and quantity, also confirms the high regard in which the notoriously critical Pope held her verse.

The association with Swift and Pope led inevitably to her exposure to the literary marketplace. Not only did she begin to publish her verses, she also participated in the public exchange of ideas and insults, adopting the prevalent witty and satirical voice of contemporary political and social discourse. Whereas previously Finch's poetic stance was one of retreat and often solitude, symbolic of her distance and remove from contemporary life, her London poems signal conversation and connection. She became a trader, not just with the muses, but also with other poets and the leading figures of the day. It is this sense of involvement and interest, coupled with her Tory inclinations, that prompts me to echo Valerie Rumbold and propose that Finch too was "almost a Scriblerian" (Rumbold, p.134).

ii. Virtue and Corruption

J.G.A Pocock has defined the revolution in eighteenth-century political theory as a shift from the "law-centred paradigm and into the paradigm of virtue and corruption". Seventeenth-century political theorists, both for and against the monarchy, had debated the question of "whether a ruler might be resisted for misconduct", a question decisively answered by the events of 1688/89. Theoretical arguments founded on the principles of right and legitimacy were either compromised or justified by the non-violent removal of the lawful king. Furthermore, the Declaration of Rights had imposed substantial limitations on the actual power of the monarch and increased the authority of Parliament, primarily through its control of the nation's finances. Thus the emerging cause for concern subsequent to the Revolution was "whether a regime

³⁰ Claudia N. Thomas, *Alexander Pope and His Eighteenth-Century Women Readers* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, p.143).

founded on patronage, public debt and the professionalization of the armed forces did not corrupt both governors and governed" (Pocock, p.48).

Virtue and corruption were intrinsically linked to the emerging world of commerce and credit. Sir Richard Plainman's denunciation of his niece Lady Reveller in Susanna Centlivre's *The Basset Table* (1705) is typical of the connection between immorality and capital during this period: "For she whose shame no good advice can wake, / When money's wanting will her virtue stake."³¹ Prior to the financial revolution of the 1690s power and authority were the almost exclusive preserve of those in possession of land and property, a model referred to by Pocock as civic humanism. Civic humanism was associated with stability and materiality, virtuous participation in the state and the eschewal of commerce and private interests. However, this model of personhood was increasingly being supplanted by the emergent values of exchange and capital, self-interest and personal development, identified as civil humanism. In party terms, civic humanism was essentially the preserve of the Tories, whilst civil humanism was linked to self-styled moderate men such as Sidney Godolphin and Marlborough and the Whigs.

Colin Nicholson has argued, "Poetry speaks politics in sometimes fiercely direct ways, while developing stratagems of finance and commerce infiltrate rival assumptions and effects into literary structures of argument and response", with changing perceptions of political subjectivity forming the basis of literary debate amongst both opposition writers and government polemicists (Nicholson, xii). Nicholson has also suggested that "Writers steeped in the cognitive ideals of civic humanism found it increasingly difficult to grant self-interested individuals enmeshed in credit-driven commercial enterprise the autonomy and breadth of mind necessary for civic virtue" (p.3).

³¹ *Female Playwrights of the Restoration: Five Comedies*, ed. by Paddy Lyons and Fidelis Morgan (London: J.M Dent, 1991), pp.235-92 (p.241).

Feminist critics, keen to establish some sense of a female tradition, have often instinctively aligned Finch with her predecessor Katherine Philips, rather than the morally suspect Behn, representing her as a pious, diffident and virtuous amateur. However, as Charles Hinnant has indicated, Finch's 'morality' is not merely the stance of the respectable woman writer or the committed Anglican, but is significant in the context of eighteenth-century political rhetoric:

In Finch's case, the appeal of such themes as vanity, transience, and the emptiness of all worldly aspirations can be traced to causes that are as much political and ideological as they are theological [...] When the fall of the Stuarts had shut off the old theology of kingship as the locus of God's representation of Himself in history, Finch's interest shifts towards nature and individual morality – and wisdom becomes important.

(Hinnant, p.230)

The exploration of virtue and corruption in relation to political, financial and social change is a reflection of her belief in the ideals of civic humanism and her deep distrust of the conflation of politics and commerce and its potential ramifications.

Finch's fear that the hierarchical and divinely ordered political and social system was being rapidly eroded by the 'monied interest' is evident in her criticism of the drive to enclose common land:

Whilst vainly Those, of a rapacious Mind,
Fields to other Fields had laid,
By Force, or other injurious Bargains join'd
With Fences for their Guard impenetrable made [...]³²

This displacement of tenant farmers in favour of privatized agricultural production was symptomatic of the extensive changes in English society following the Revolution, changes which "promoted the individual over the group, the economic over the social, the private over the communal, and efficiency over moral obligation" (Mackie, p.34). Interestingly, Finch represents the enclosure of common land as "Th'Inclosures of another's Right" (l.197), revealing the extent to which economic interests and private gain had displaced the idea of right as a salient political ideology.

³² 'A Pindarick Poem, Upon the Hurricane', in *Poems of Anne*, p.252-62, ll.192-95.

The corruption of political duty and civic virtue, a constant theme of opposition polemic, is also the subject of 'To the Rev. Mr Bedford' (?1718). Ostensibly a witty account of the poet's attempts to assist the non-juring divine Hilkiah Bedford, pilloried and imprisoned as the alleged author of the seditious pamphlet 'The Hereditary Right of the Crown of England asserted', 'To the Rev. Mr Bedford' is actually a scathing attack on indifference and individualism.³³ Finch plays with the meanings of the word 'interest', as a pecuniary stake, an advantage, the pursuit of one's own welfare, concern for the welfare of others and the money earned on a loan, in order to highlight the disparity between the moral obligations of public service and the corrupting influence of capital and commerce.

In her quest to improve the situation of the unfortunate Mr Bedford, she is compelled to seek advice and assistance from someone who understands the manoeuvring and machinations of the political system. However, her own urgency and effectiveness, wittily parodied through the disordered toilette, is countered by the hesitancy and reluctance of the Lord to intervene: "Till noting my requesting face / He puts on a refuseing air" (ll.24-25). Finch satirizes the self-importance of politicians with her derisive portrayal of a man merely playing at the business of government: "I'm ruined if I come too late/ Were like to have a warm debate/ I promis't Solon to attend" (ll.35-37). Here a genuine political and honourable concern, the case of Bedford's unjust treatment, is ignored because his Lordship fears being "ruined": a direct correlation between financial interest and flawed politics. Wealth and status, in Finch's account, are the real business of contemporary politics.

Her anger and despair at the state of the nation, the corruption of the political system and the failure of politicians and statesmen to govern responsibly are unmistakable:

O'ercome with sorrow and with shame

³³ In fact the probable author was George Harbin, chaplain to Finch's brother-in-law, Lord Weymouth.

Yet with a Roman virtue scorn
 The land depraved where I was born
 Where men now wealthy grown and great
 En bagatell our sufferings treat [...]

(II.47-54)

'To the Rev. Mr Bedford' is a pointed and poignant narrative, exposing the failings of the civil humanism espoused by the Whig government, city financiers and writers like Addison and Steele.

'To the Rev. Mr Bedford' concludes with a curious declaration, seemingly unrelated to the established personal and political themes:

Yet still I will your cause persue
 Th'unrighteous Judge the harden'd Jew
 As soon might be at rest as I
 Will leave them till they all comply
 Or if no good from thence I draw
 They still are Jews without the Law.

(II.55-60)

These references to Jews initially make little sense; however, when read alongside one of Finch's last verses, 'Ombre and Basset laid aside' (1720), the relevance of these lines is to some extent revealed. Dianne Dugaw's critique of the ballads and songs of this period, including 'Ombre and Basset', notes the "longstanding tradition of anti-Semitism that makes its way into South Sea Bubble songs".³⁴ Although relatively few Jews actually subscribed to the South Sea Company, the beginning of the eighteenth century witnessed a definite increase in the number of Jews involved in London financial circles (Dugaw, p.273). Thus "the harden'd Jew" of 'To the Rev. Mr Bedford' could allude to the perceived prominence of Jews in commerce and speculative enterprises, activities associated, in opposition writing at least, with "huge, ill-gotten, parasitic gains".³⁵ "They still are Jews without the Law" may refer to the legal proscriptions, usually overlooked in relation to economic activity, but the

³⁴ Dianne Dugaw, 'Women and popular culture: gender, cultural dynamics, and popular prints', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800*, ed. by Vivien Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.263-85 (p.273). Dugaw refers to this verse as 'The Stock-jobbing Ladies'.

³⁵ Geoffrey Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: Late Stuart and Early Georgian Britain, 1660-1722* (Harlow, England: Longman, 1993), p.273.

ambiguity of Finch's language and intent encourages a more complex reading of these concluding lines and their overall significance.

The connection between Jews and the market is explicit in 'Ombre and Basset laid aside', a censorious commentary on the vogue for stockjobbing amongst aristocratic women:

With Jews and Gentiles undismay'd,
Young tender Virgins mix,
Of Whiskers nor of Beards afraid,
Nor all their Cousening tricks.³⁶

The young ladies of the Court and fashionable society willingly mix with the more dubious citizens who constitute the "Citty throng" (l.7), even the Jewish merchants and brokers, associated here with usury and deceit. Where once aristocratic ladies limited their gambling to cards and dice, now "New Games employ the Fair" (l.2) and "Brokers all those Hours divide / Which Lovers used to Share" (ll.3-4). Rather than playing games for leisure and entertainment, gambling in stocks and shares was a way of acquiring instant wealth and independence.³⁷

The abandonment of card games may appear to be a somewhat trivial complaint; however, as I have already noted elsewhere, "Card-games, including Ombre, were an understood form of witty comment on international affairs."³⁸ Thus Finch's resentment of the craze for investment represents the fact that politics and the educated involvement of women in the affairs of state, both home and abroad, was being supplanted by the language of credit, "divide" and "share", and the pursuit of personal gain at all costs.

³⁶ *A Treasury of Unfamiliar Lyrics*, ed. by Norman Ault (London: Gollancz, 1938), p.299, ll.9-12.

³⁷ Women's participation in the stock market was largely through investment and trading in the South Sea Company. The South Sea Company was founded in 1711 during Lord Oxford's term in office; however, after Anne's death it converted to the Hanoverian interest and the company directors struck a deal with the Whig administration of Lord Stanhope and Lord Sunderland in 1720 designed to alleviate the national debt. The South Sea Bubble refers to the dramatic rise and subsequent fall in the price of the Company's stock (1719-20) under the weight of inflated projections, mass buying and accusations of bribery and corruption. The bursting of this 'bubble' was the "biggest public scandal of the age" and ruined huge numbers of investors, from the aristocracy to ordinary people who had been persuaded to place their savings in stocks and shares by the promise of guaranteed profit. (Holmes, pp. 271-76).

³⁸ Howard Erskine-Hill, 'Literature and the Jacobite Cause: was there a rhetoric of Jacobitism', in Cruickshanks, p.54.

Stockjobbing was perhaps the most alarming and least understood aspect of the new financial culture, denounced with particular vehemence by opposition writers such as Swift as “knavery and cozenage” and “a mystery of iniquity”.³⁹ Finch’s satirical little verse also warns of the “Cousening tricks” of the stockjobbers and the ill consequences of investment and trading, an admonition calculated to appeal to women’s vanity, if not their commonsense:

Bright Jewels polished once to deck
The fair ones rising Breast,
Or sparkle round her ivory neck,
Lie pawned in iron chest.

(ll.13-16)

‘Ombre and Basset laid aside’ was written and circulating at the height of the South Sea Bubble in 1720, when “few in London” paid attention to anything “but the rising and falling of stocks” and perfectly captures the way in which fashionable society became caught up in the madness of the market.⁴⁰

Yet this populist ballad relates to more than just the behaviour of stockjobbing ladies, it also subtly conveys the political and social changes directly related to the rise of the market. The political rhetoric of virtue and corruption is evident in the juxtaposition of the “Virgins”, symbolizing the traditional values of the aristocracy and ‘landed interest’, and the cozening brokers, the ‘monied interest’. Finch uses the seemingly frivolous behaviour and attitudes of women to represent the threat to society as a whole from market forces.

Undoubtedly the most prominent female shareholder in the South Sea Company, and a number of other financial ventures, was Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, one of the fortunate few who pulled their investment from the Company before the bubble burst. Sarah’s financial acumen and the rapidly acquired wealth of the Marlboroughs was the subject of much speculation and animosity and it was perhaps inevitable that they would come to represent the worst aspects of the changing

³⁹ Swift in *The Examiner*, 2 November 1710, quoted by Field in *The Favourite*, p.373.

⁴⁰ Edward Harley quoted by Field p.373.

political system; avarice, ambition and vanity. Anne's accession heralded an embarrassment of appointments, honours and remunerations for her two favourite subjects: John Churchill, already a lieutenant-general, was appointed Captain-General of the armed forces, Master-General of the Ordnance and a Knight of the Garter, while Sarah was granted the prestigious and lucrative role of Groom of the Stole, Mistress of the Robes and Keeper of the Privy Purse - their joint income was over £64,000, approximately £4 million in modern currency. Furthermore Churchill was elevated from Earl to Duke of Marlborough in 1702, with an additional award of £5,000 to support his new title and estate.

John Evelyn voiced the thoughts of many when he noted that Marlborough's "Ambition and love of riches has no End".⁴¹ Ambition and avarice were amongst the many charges levelled at Marlborough by countless Tory wits during Anne's reign; Jonathan Swift questioned the Captain-General's motives in prolonging the war in his 1711 pamphlet *On the Conduct of the Allies*, while Delarivier Manley constantly attacked Marlborough's alleged political, sexual and financial transgressions in both her scandalous narratives and *The Examiner*. Finch was no exception. From the savage indictment of the professionalization of the army and perpetuation of war under the aegis of William III and his lieutenant-general John Churchill ('All is Vanity'), to the barbed allusion to Marlborough's expeditious rise to power in the reference in 'Upon the Hurricane' to "favour'd Men", there is no mistaking her antipathy towards the principles and policies embodied by the Duke of Marlborough.

iii. 'Sir Plausible'

Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant's scholarly edition of the Wellesley Manuscript has brought to light a number of previously unpublished and little-known poems, proving an invaluable aid to criticism of Anne Finch. It is not surprising that

⁴¹ John Evelyn (1702) quoted by Christopher Hibbert in *The Marlboroughs: John and Sarah Churchill 1650-1744* (London: Penguin, 2002), p.74.

Finch's unpublished verses should have received less critical attention than frequently anthologized poems such as 'The Spleen' and 'A Nocturnal Reverie', but they are no less significant in consolidating her reputation and importance as a poet. Indeed, the Wellesley Manuscript is particularly enlightening in relation to the later stages of her poetic career, revealing the satirical, partisan and above all contemporary nature of her verse, often over-looked or disputed by later critics. Jane Spencer has asserted that "Satire, so favoured by Swift and Pope, is not her mode", perhaps accepting Finch's own claims to "scorn lampoon and a clandestine spite"; however, the Wellesley Manuscript exposes the lie behind the disingenuous protestation that "Who e're of satyre does my pen accuse / Knows not the style of my well-temper'd muse".⁴²

Dryden defended the act of "writing against a particular person" by proclaiming the corrective qualities of satire, the possibility of reforming the behaviour of the individual in question and, more importantly, preventing others from participating in similar "crimes and follies":

'Tis an action of virtue to make crimes of vicious men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their crimes and follies, both for their own amendment, if they are not yet incorrigible, and for the terror of others, to hinder them from falling into those enormities which they see are so severely punished in the persons of others.⁴³

Satire is thus the most fully realized literary expression of the political ideology of virtue and corruption.

Whatever her claims to the contrary, there was a definite satirical element to Finch's verse, from the self-deprecating parody of 'An Apology for my fearfull temper' to the incisive and derisive observations on fashionable society, epitomized by the exposure of "Censorious humour, foppishness, and coquetterie" in 'Ardelia's

⁴² Jane Spencer, 'Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (1661-1720): Sorrow into Song', in *Women and Poetry 1660-1750*, ed. by Sarah Prescott and David Shuttleton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.60-69 (p.63). 'On my being charged with writing a lampoon at Tunbridge', *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.75 (l.48, ll.1-2).

⁴³ *Discourse concerning satire* (1693), in *The Poems of John Dryden*, III, (2000), 302-450 (p.436).

Answer to Ephelia'.⁴⁴ She also, like Swift and Manley, used satire in a political context. 'Sir Plausible' is one of the manuscript poems recently uncovered by McGovern and Himant's scholarship and it is to this seemingly innocuous little rhyme that I turn now, in order to demonstrate the extent to which Finch engaged with the political ideology of Anne's reign and established herself as an opposition writer and satirist.

The possible identity of Finch's Sir Plausible, and the political implications of this witty and penetrating satire, have thus far prompted little debate. Yet nicknames and sobriquets were ubiquitous in eighteenth-century satire, used to simultaneously disguise and reveal the identity of the unfortunate victim, so it seems likely that she intended the appellation to be attached to a specific individual.⁴⁵ Moreover, the accusation of 'plausibility' in connection with a prominent public figure was not confined to Finch's verse. In a letter pertaining to the suspected Jacobite leanings of John Churchill and his famed ability to negotiate the difficult paths of party politics, a correspondent of Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham dubbed the Duke of Marlborough 'Lord Plausible' (Hibbert, p.63). There is every reason to suspect that Finch was aware of this ascription. Nottingham was the cousin of Heneage Finch and although the two branches of the Finch family were not especially close it seems probable that there was some communication between them.⁴⁶

Finch's Sir Plausible is a chameleon, a man who adapts his principles and politics according to his environment:

Sir plausible as 'tis well known
Has no opinions of his own
But closes with each stander by

⁴⁴ 'The Preface', in *Poems of Anne*, pp.6-13 (p.11).

⁴⁵ Swift advocated the use of nicknames, "either commonly known or stamped for the purpose, which everybody can tell how to apply", for satirical purposes in *The Importance of the Guardian Considered*. Quoted by Gallagher, p.97.

⁴⁶ Nottingham possessed a copy of George Herbert's *The Temple* inscribed "Daniel Finch, his book given him by the Right Honble Lady Anne" and it is entirely possible that the Lady Anne referred to was his cousin's wife and respected poet, Anne Finch. *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, ed. by Peter Beal and others, 4 vols (London and Washington: Mansell, 1980-), III 1700-1800: *Laurence Sterne - Edward Young* (1997).

Now in a truth now in a lie
 Fast as Camellions change their dye [...]⁴⁷

Politically, he is at best a moderate, at worst a liar, who remains aloof from party loyalties whilst promising allegiance to all:

Has still some applicable story
 To gratify or Whig or Tory
 And with a Jacobite in tatters
 If met alone he smoothly flatters [...]

(ll.6-9)

Personally, he is charming and courteous to all, the embodiment of urbanity and civility.

It is not difficult to appreciate how all of these qualities unite to form a shrewd and far from flattering portrait of the Duke of Marlborough. Finch subverts the ideals of knighthood, honour, integrity and fidelity, implied by her subject's title to emphasize the corruption and deceit beneath his virtuous façade. Marlborough's premeditated desertion of James II in 1688 and his political manoeuvring in the months leading up to William of Orange's arrival in England ensured that for the rest of his political career he was suspected of duplicity and dissimulation. This reputation for political infidelity was in many respects entirely justified, as he continued to correspond with sources in St. Germain after the accession of William and Mary and later Anne. Satirical attacks on Marlborough took many forms, from his apparent subservience to the whims and demands of his wife and his alleged sexual indiscretions to his legendary greed and parsimony.

Delarivier Manley, perhaps the most vehement and venomous critic of the Marlboroughs, routinely mocked John Churchill as Count Fortunatus, cleverly playing on her victim's rapidly acquired wealth, his reputed avarice and the element of luck or fate involved in his meteoric advancement, although naturally she interpreted this good fortune as the result of Arabella Churchill's relationship with James II and

⁴⁷ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.53, (ll.1-5).

Marlborough's own sexual adventuring with Barbara Villiers, the wealthy and powerful mistress of Charles II.⁴⁸ Finch, however, concentrated exclusively on Marlborough's acknowledged diplomacy and inscrutability, which she reads as insincerity and perfidy. Even his affability and personal warmth are construed as empty flattery and sycophancy, his "wishes fervent" (l.14), servility and interest in others seeming excessive and obsequious in Finch's hands.

'Sir Plausible' was probably written circa. 1713 and this dating is particularly significant in establishing Marlborough as the subject of Finch's satire. By 1713, Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough had finally pushed the patience of the queen to its limit and been banished in disgrace from her numerous positions at court. Similarly, her husband had been relieved of his command of the army and position as Master-General of the Ordnance and accused of embezzling public money and misappropriating military funds. As Ophelia Field has noted "it was now open season on the Marlboroughs" and this almost universal antipathy towards both, but in particular John Churchill who rarely attracted the same level of opprobrium as his wife, obviously prompted the usually cautious Finch into joining the melée with such a barbed satire (Field, p.316).

Following their joint disgrace the Marlboroughs abandoned England for the more appreciative courts of England's allies on the Continent. During this period Marlborough resumed his dangerous practice of corresponding with the exiled Jacobite court and the prospective Hanoverian heirs, Sophia, Electress of Hanover and her son George August, hoping to consolidate his own position on the imminent death of Queen Anne. McGovern and Hinnant have assumed that the "Jacobite in tatters" (l.8) refers to the Finches and their precarious financial situation on inheriting the Winchilsea title and estate; however, I would argue that this line actually refers to the reduced circumstances of the Jacobite exiles following the Treaty of Utrecht (1713),

⁴⁸ Delarivier Manley, *The New Atalantis*, ed. by Rosalind Ballaster (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1991).

which guaranteed the expulsion of the putative James III and his supporters from France. Finch asserts that "If met alone" (l.9) such a Jacobite will be "smoothly" (l.9) flattered and charmed by Sir Plausible, almost certainly alluding to Marlborough's circumspect and clandestine exchanges with Jacobite agents during this period. By emphasizing the secretive nature of these exchanges with the Jacobite court, "If met alone" (l.9), she hints at the double-dealing tactics and political equivocation in his complex negotiations with both the Hanoverians and Jacobites.

That Sir Plausible's ingratiating and hypocritical behaviour is designed "To save his Honour or estate" (l.13) also points to Marlborough as the subject of Finch's satire. Progress on Blenheim Palace, the nation's tribute to his military triumphs, was erratic and ceased entirely in 1710 and again in 1712, due to the vast amount of (public) money required to fund the extravagant plans of Marlborough and his architect John Vanbrugh. While the ideological values symbolized by the country estate were fundamental to civic humanism, Blenheim represented the worst excesses of civil humanism. Opposition to Blenheim and all that it represented is evident in 'A Contemplation':

And Mammon wert thou well employ'd
What Mansions might be wonne
Whilst Woolsey's Pallace lyes destroy'd
And Marlborough's is not done⁴⁹

Construction on Blenheim commenced in 1704 and over the course of twenty years was to cost some £300,000, of which the Marlboroughs themselves provided only £60,000.

Finch contrasts the erection of this costly monument to one man's greed and avarice with the loss of Whitehall, destroyed by fire in 1694, the official residence of Tudor and Stuart monarchs since 1530, when Henry VIII confiscated the palace from Cardinal Wolsey. The destruction of Whitehall, emblem of monarchical power and

⁴⁹ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp.138-41 (ll.89-92).

authority, and the construction of Blenheim, testament to the twin evils of the early eighteenth century, war and commerce, signified the changes in society as a whole as a result of the rise of the market and economic interests (Hibbert, pp.306-38). Finch identifies Marlborough's reliance on public money to fund his vanity project as the underlying cause of his inability to unequivocally commit to one party or faction. Self-interest and self-preservation lie at the heart of Sir Plausible.

His honour is similarly exposed as a contradiction in terms. In *The Rape of the Lock* Pope figured the loss of Belinda's prize ringlet as the loss of her honour:

Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrival'd shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all, our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!⁵⁰

Thalestris bewails the loss of Belinda's reputation and the semblance of honour through society gossip and vulgar jests, as honour here is founded on the public perception of virtue, rather than virtue itself. Like the distraught Belinda, Finch's protagonist would go to any lengths to "save his Honour" (l.13), or more precisely his public reputation and the semblance of honour.

The loss of Belinda's virtuous reputation is conveyed through the insidious image of the "degraded toast", her name besmirched and ruined by the public acknowledgment of her shame. Toasting was a serious business in eighteenth-century society and was often a means of asserting political allegiance or opposition. Jacobites in particular adopted the toast as a coded means of upholding the 'King over the water' or expressing seditious sentiments and establishing a sense of community and camaraderie (Eicke, p.94). Thus the reference to toasting in 'Sir Plausible' appears to satirize Marlborough's peerless ability to insinuate himself into the confidences of any

⁵⁰ *The Rape of the Lock*, p.46 (Canto IV, ll.103-10).

number of political parties and factions. Whereas Belinda becomes the subject of a degraded toast, Marlborough dishonours and sullies the very principles and practice of toasting.

'Sir Plausible' is Finch's most sustained and fully realized attack on John Churchill, yet it can also be read in a wider context as a critique of an increasingly superficial and, paradoxically, sophisticated society, in which surface will always triumph over substance.

iv. Fashion and Femininity

The ideological language of virtue and corruption was not limited to the political sphere, but infiltrated almost every area of eighteenth-century life. Society was increasingly dichotomized into public and private spheres, with the private, domesticated world invariably gendered as a female space and identified with a model of "virtuous femininity" free from all but "pious desires and ambitions".⁵¹ This private sphere, typified by the safe domesticity of the home and family, was constructed as an escape from the corrupting influences of commerce and the political economy. Of course the reason women came to represent the private and domestic in this period was not as a result of their femininity and natural reticence, but because they threatened to penetrate the previously inviolate world of men, through their visible participation in public life. This visibility was facilitated by the emergent print culture that provided women with the means to enter into public and political debate in a systematic and coherent manner.

As Kathryn Shevelow has noted, the participation of upper and middle class women in print culture was almost immediately countered by the "representation practices of that culture" which sought to redefine women's role in society as wholly domestic:

⁵¹ Harriet Guest, 'Eighteenth-century femininity: 'a supposed sexual character'', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*, ed. by Vivien Jones, pp.46-69 (p.47).

That is, at the same historical moment that women were, to a degree unprecedented in western Europe, becoming visible as readers and writers, the literary representation of women - whether as members of an intended audience, as writing subjects, or as textual objects - was producing an increasingly narrow and restrictive model of femininity.

(Shevelov, p.1)

Perhaps the most threatening aspect of women's increased participation in public life for social and political commentators such as Defoe, Addison and Steele lay in the connection between women's visibility and the development of credit finance (Pocock, p.99). As Laura Brown has observed, "Women wear the products of accumulation, and thus by metonymy they are made to bear responsibility for the system by which they are adorned" (Brown, p.118). The campaign to define women's roles and responsibilities as private and domestic was a reaction to the vagaries of the new and uncertain world of "mercantile capitalism", with women used to signify both the positive and negative aspects of the extensive changes prompted by the financial revolution.

Finch's reaction to the limited opportunities available to women is laid out in 'The Introduction':

They tell us, we mistake our sex and way;
Good breeding, fassion, dancing, dressing, play
Are the accomplishments we shou'd desire;
To write, or read, or think, or to enquire
Wou'd cloud our beauty, and exhaust our time,
And interrupt the Conquests of our prime;
Whilst the dull mannage, of a servile house
Is held by some, our outmost art, and use.⁵²

Mr Spectator (in this case Steele) may have deemed the "utmost of a Woman's Character" to be contained in domestic life, confining women to "the Duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother" (issue 342), but it is evident that not all women agreed with this narrow and repressive model of femininity.⁵³ Finch rails against the notion that women's behaviour is in some way predetermined, that all women should be content to occupy themselves with safe and sanctioned activities

⁵² *Poems of Anne*, pp.4-6 (ll.13-20).

⁵³ *The Spectator*, III, 269-72.

within the private sphere.⁵⁴ Figuring herself, in her role as a female poet, as an "intruder on the rights of men" (l.10), she judiciously identifies the primary motivation behind women's relegation to the domestic sphere. It is women's 'presumption' in venturing too far and too successfully into male territory that has led to her enforced exclusion from the public sphere.

Erin Mackie summarizes the "ideal genteel woman", envisaged by male commentators such as Addison and Steele, as one who had:

Almost no contact with the worlds of industry and commerce, politics, or science. She produces, consumes, administers, and learns within household walls for familial ends. The retired is the natural life for woman; forays into the larger world of urban society are undertaken only to remind her of the superior attractions of domesticity.

(Mackie, p.116)

'Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia' (?1690s) appears to endorse these values in its critique of Almeria, the archetypal fashionable lady, and society life. Although female consumption and acquisition were frequently viewed in a positive light, with "female dress and ornamentation" and feminine rituals such as the tea table coming to represent "trade, prosperity, luxury and commodification" (Brown, p.44), women were also perceived to be particularly susceptible to "the seductions and corruptions of the fashion commodity" (Mackie, p.48).

An early issue of *The Spectator* lamented the fact that women are attracted to everything that is "showy and superficial" and Almeria is no exception, from her ostentatious public greeting of Ardelia (ll.28-31) to her love of novelty and spectacle found in monsters and waxwork shows (l.40).⁵⁵ Even Almeria herself is figured in superficial terms, an object to be admired and praised:

Whilst the gay thing light as her feather'd dresse,

⁵⁴ The idea that both sexes were equal but essentially different was gaining ground at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Previously women and men were perceived to be the same, although women were "biologically inferior and socially subordinate"; however, this was superseded by the premise that women were different from men not in degree, but in kind. Women's domestic roles were acknowledged as vitally important and on a par with male achievement, but their authority and virtues existed only within these narrow parameters (Shevelov, p.4).

⁵⁵ Issue 15, *The Spectator*, I, 66-69.

Flys around the Coach, and does each cusheon presse,
 Through ev'ry glasse, her sev'ral graces shows,
 This, does her face, and that, her shape expose,
 To envying beautys, and admiring beaux.

(ll.45-49)

Almeria is a commodity, but she is also a consumer of exotic and luxury goods, drinking "fragrant tea" (l.80) from "the best china Equipage" (l.85) and adorning herself in the finest silks, lace and ribbons.

Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace has argued that "fine china or porcelain denotes women and their weaknesses" in a number of eighteenth-century texts, with the love of china representing "an undue fixation on the surface of things" and marking the female subject negatively as a woman of "no depth".⁵⁶ Furthermore Almeria's account of her struggles to obtain the best china - "Thro' to the ships, for the first choice I stear'd, / Through such a storm, as the stout bargemen fear'd" (ll.82-83) - mirrors the passage of foreign goods to Britain and draws her into the "national debate about the debilitating effects of a home economy indebted to foreign trade" (Kowaleski-Wallace, p.53). The demands of fashion implicate the female consumer in a wider political argument.

Finch further explores the connections between fashion, commerce and national politics in 'The agreeable: In answer to the foregoing letter, by Ardelia' through her incorporation of French phrases into her comic deconstruction of female beauty and style. French design had always been reflected in English fashions, with new styles for women introduced through fashion dolls imported from France. However, during the War of the Spanish Succession there was an embargo on all French imports. The editors of *The Spectator*, amongst others, were delighted by this liberation from French domination and dreaded the end of war and the inevitable "Inundation of Ribbons and Brocades" (issue 45, I, 191-95) that would surely follow.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p.53, 61.

This antipathy was much more than an aesthetic reaction to the formality and excesses of French fashion:

In England, zealous pursuit of fashion was identifiably a 'French' characteristic and could imply complicity with all that was wrong with the French, including the absolutist ideology of the ancient regime [...] Again and again, (bad) fashion is the (French / Papist) tyrant whose hold is broken by the restoration of reformed English taste.

(Mackie, p.95)

Read in this context, Finch's casual "j'enseay quoy" disclose her awareness of the political subtext of modish discourse, particularly as the agreeable lady in question is actually a Dutch mastiff.⁵⁷

On the surface her discussions of the beau monde and contemporary fashions seem to correspond with the guiding principles behind both *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*: to "expose the false Arts of Life, to pull off the Disguises of Cunning, Vanity, and Affectation, and to recommend a general Simplicity in our Dress, our Discourse, and our Behaviour".⁵⁸ Almeria is exposed as a shallow, vain coquette, consumed by materialistic desires and obsessed by appearances and superficial judgements. Similarly, 'The puggs: a dialogue between an old and young dutch Mastiff' satirizes the world of the beau monde, London's fashionable elite, who devote their days to pleasure, outward show, affectation and personal gain:

For 'tho' they neither read nor write
If they make love can play and fight
Are comb'd and powder'd and appear
At either park and call'd my dear
If they know how to push their fortune
And the best giver to importune
To supple they've their masters lick't
The very moment they've been kick't
Have all fidelity maintained
Until by larger proffers gain'd
Who can pretend to go beyond 'em
Or blame such patrons as defend 'em [...]⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp.11-12, l.62.

⁵⁸ 'Dedication to Maynwaring' in *The Tatler*, ed. by Donald F. Bond, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), I, 7-8.

⁵⁹ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp.5-9, ll.5-16.

However, it would be naïve and reductive to assume that Finch unreservedly agreed with either the motivation or the means governing the drive to reform English society during the early eighteenth century.

Kathryn Shevelow has pointed to the fact that reforming or popularizing literature, with its strong ties to Whiggism and the Dissenting tradition, was often regarded as a "nascent challenge to elite culture", the very culture that Anne Finch belonged to and consistently defended in her poetry (Shevelow, p.98). Although men such as Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Daniel Defoe sought to counter the worst excesses of consumer and credit culture, they did so by replacing established "civic virtues" with the "virtues of sociability"; refinement, politeness and taste (Nicholson, p.3). Women were castigated as the worst offenders against these ideals, through their voracious pursuit of fashion and status, while credit, that ambiguous, irrational and unstable entity, was often figured as feminine; however, it was to women that the social reformers looked to cultivate and promote the values of sociability:

In its pure ideological formulation, the domestic sphere, the family nest, is immune from contamination by the toxins of commodification, interest, and instability that pollute the worldly world. Women must stay at home in order to fulfil their "natural" function and so ensure the value and stability of the home. Just as crucially, the home ensures the cultivation of the right kind of women and the right sort of femininity - complacent, retiring, orientated entirely around the family.

(Mackie, p.118-19)

Whilst Finch was clearly concerned about the influence of commercial and financial forces on contemporary society, it is equally evident that she was determined to resist the confinement of virtuous femininity advocated by male commentators.

'The Introduction', as already discussed, questions the proposition that the home and domesticity are the natural remits of women. Similarly, 'An Epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore' (1713) protests against the marginalization of women through a defence of the infamous Jane Shore, mistress of Edward IV. The epilogue to Nicholas Rowe's she-tragedy queries the playwright's depiction of Jane Shore as a

weak and helpless victim, confessing that the task was undertaken in anticipation of a very different play:

I all her glorious history run o'er,
And thought he would have shewn her on the stage,
In the first triumphs of her blooming age;
Edward in public at her feet a slave,
The jealous *Queen* in private left to rave;
Yet *Jane* superior still in all the strife,
For sure that mistress leads a wretched life,
Who can't insult the Keeper and the wife.⁶⁰

This version of the royal mistress imagines a woman with a "glorious history" full of passion, energy and drama, all enacted in the public arena, a woman who is "lavish, careless, gay and fine" (l.13); however, Rowe revives the story of *Jane Shore* to "bring her here to mortify and whine" (l.14), confess her faults and receive her punishment.

Finch's aversion to Rowe's characterization is unequivocal - "I hate such parts as we had plaid today" (l.15) - and recognizes that the objective of *The Tragedy of Jane Shore*, to restrict and control women both symbolically and literally, is part of a larger cultural trend. Whilst women are judged purely on appearance, their worth to society determined by relative youth and beauty, men are accorded a "better fate" (l.39):

The pretty fellow, that has youth outgrown,
Who nothing knew, but how his cloaths did sit,
Transforms to a *Free-Thinker* and a *Wit*;
At Opera becomes a skilled Musician;
Ends in a partyman and politician;
Maintains some figure, while he keeps his breath,
And is a fop of consequence till death.

(ll.40-46)

Men are allowed to develop their potential and experience new roles and responsibilities in the public sphere, from youthful fop to statesman, but women are permitted to engage in public life only as objects to be admired and quantified and expected to retire to a life of useful domesticity as soon as their beauty fades.

⁶⁰ *Poems of Anne*, pp.100-101, ll.4-11.

Leonore Davidoff has argued of the public/private dichotomy that whereas women were consigned to a "resolutely generalized, private, and domesticated world", men actually experienced a range of "different and specialized public arenas".⁶¹ Something of this argument appears to be present in Finch's epilogue as she lists the various public roles available to men, from fashionable to intellectual society, music to politics, as they constantly engage in the economy of exchange. Women, on the other hand, are either visible, as fashionable objects, or invisible, in retired domesticity, their identity dependent on the male gaze, "And seen no more, when not alas! admired" (l.38). Finch, however, daringly rejects the roles prescribed for women by contemporary society in favour of the rights of men: "And so would I have had our mistress Shore / To make a figure, till she pleas'd no more" (ll.47-48).

Almeria's counterpart in 'Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia' also eschews the model of virtuous femininity proposed as the alternative to the emptiness and artificiality of fashionable society. Ardelia may prefer the "dull country" (l.33) to the "sharpe detraction" of town talk, deem the amusements of the beau monde to be "tedious" (l.39) and express horror at the vicious gossip and tittle-tattle of the coquettish Almeria, but her rural hours are bestowed on books and plays rather than suitable domestic pursuits. Almeria scornfully remarks upon this love of Dryden, George Etherege and Nathaniel Lee and "some few Authors, old and dull to me" (l.74), locating it firmly outside the fashionable world inhabited by Almeria herself. Yet Ardelia's love of these outmoded playwrights denotes more than her detachment from contemporary fashions and interests, it also connects her to the ideals and manners of the Restoration courts of Charles II and James II, responsible for fostering the talents of men such as Dryden, Etherege and Lee.

⁶¹ Leonore Davidoff, 'Regarding Some 'Old Husbands' Tales': Public and Private in Feminist History', in *Feminism: The Public and The Private*, ed. by Joan B. Landes (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.164-94 (p.176).

Rather than moderating the extremes of fashion and embracing the reformed manners and tastes of sociability, Finch instead constructs an "ideological attack on the mercantile class and a nascent consumer culture" (Kowaleski-Wallace, p.63). Whereas the periodicals, journals and pamphlets that flourished at the beginning of the eighteenth century sought to impose boundaries and gain control over the financial revolution and the potentially threatening systems of credit and speculation, she completely avoids any form of participation in consumer society. Ardelia privileges the foundations of civic humanism - property, the Church, learning and traditional manners - over the modish, self-satisfied and self-centred world of both the beau monde and the developing middle class. Her decision to remain in "fam'd and fertile Kent" (l.243), the celebrated site of royalism and Jacobite opposition, is both a rejection of urban life, with all that it entails, and an implicit criticism of the current monarch (William III) and his regime, answerable for the new political economy and its innate corruptibility.

Consumerism, fashion and politics merge once again in 'The puggs', a satirical discourse on patronage and the contemporary appetite for "the new and the different, for fresh experience and novel excitements, for the getting and spending of money", an appetite that "lies at the heart of successful bourgeois society".⁶² The poem centres on a dialogue between two lap dogs, in itself a comment on contemporary fashions, as "lap dogs of very specialized types became more popular - partly through the pug introduced into England probably by Queen Mary II" (McKendrick, p.321). Although the younger of the two pugs laments that he has been replaced in his mistress's affections by a new dog, the "wondrous pretty" (l.105) Yanica, he himself once benefited from the same desire for novelty that has precipitated his downfall.

The older pug's account of the tortures he has endured in the pursuit of fashion - "See how they've hagl'd my bavaire / And as that were not scorn enough / Have

⁶² *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p.316.

snipt may cravat to a ruff" (ll.74-76) - mocks the absurdities of contemporary society and both pugs behave like royal favourites or sycophantic courtiers who 'frisk and fawn' for attention and admiration and are subject to the whims and fancies of their masters:

Now hugg'd and priz'd shut up and hamper'd
Then lash'd and spurn'd and gladly scamper'd
Or cring'd till it did so endear me
That not a servant durst come near me
And all who did not love must fear me [...]

(ll.61-65)

However, the plight of both pugs, and in particular "pug in Leicester feilds" (l.26), also reflects the changing face of English politics under William III and Anne. The Dutch pugs, popularized by Mary II, are "now esteemed as mungril strangers" (l.44), an observation that reflects the uneasy position of William's Dutch favourites and adherents upon the accession of the resolutely English Queen Anne.

The younger Dutch pug is replaced in his mistress's affections by the novel charms of Yanica, whose "Minyion" (l.108) demeanour and temperament suggests an identification between her rising favour and the renewal of Jacobite hopes during the period in which 'The puggs' was probably written.⁶³ Yanica could be read as representative of the resurgent Tory party, under the Francophile leadership of Robert Harley and Henry St. John, while the unfashionable pugs symbolize the demise of the Dutch ministers and Whig government who dominated William III's reign. The caprice and inconstancy of fashionable society, created to a degree by the revolutionizing principles of William's fiscal policy and economic reforms, are not limited to frivolities and fancies such as lap dogs. The age or rage of party is fuelled by the attitudes and demands of an increasingly consumerist society.

⁶³ The residence of the older pug at Leicester Fields, home to Sir Andrew Fountaine, a close friend of the Finches and correspondent of Anne Finch, suggests that 'The puggs' was written prior to 1711, when Fountaine left London (McGovern, p.239n).

v. *The Tea Table*

Perhaps the most potent and enduring symbol of women's participation in the political economy, and also the backlash against their prominence as consumers, was the tea table. Tea was a lucrative commodity in eighteenth-century Britain. By 1721, thanks to the thriving East India Company, tea imports stood in excess of one million pounds, with tea representing Britain's success as a trading nation (Kowaleski-Wallace, p.22). Such an expensive and exotic commodity required an appropriate setting and, in contrast to the masculine, spontaneous and noisy world of the coffee house, the making and drinking of tea became a restrained and carefully orchestrated ritual presided over by women.

Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace notes the delineation of tea and the tea table as "a definitely British, upper-class, feminine, and domestic activity" and, in the idealized vision of male social reformers, this scene of controlled domesticity embodied the values of taste, refinement and passivity that they sought to impose upon women and contemporary society in general (p.22). Although it acquired new layers of meaning over the course of the eighteenth century, the initial "cultural definition" of the tea table was "as a gendered site, a 'feminine' locus where the civilizing process could occur". Naturally this process depended on the participation of women; however, "in order to participate in the civilizing process, women were required to discipline themselves. The management of female behaviors, gestures, and, above all, speech, were the prerequisites for women's cultural participation" (Kowaleski-Wallace, p.21).

Tea was eulogized as the "Muse's friend" by Edmund Waller in 'Of Tea, Commended by her Majesty' and the "sacred Drink of Chastity" by Nahum Tate in *Panacea: A Poem upon Tea*, but the tea table was also figured as the site of rumour

and scandal by Eliza Haywood and John Gay.⁶⁴ Haywood's 'The Tea-Table, or, a conversation between some polite persons of both sexes' subverts the domestic propriety of the tea table by depicting this sanctum as a site of exchange, where people "inform themselves of the Intrigues of the Town", while Gay's fashionable nymphs, Doris and Melanthe in 'The Tea-Table. A Town Eclogue', consume "cup after cup" of "flow'ry Tea" as they indulge in an afternoon of character assassination and malicious gossip.⁶⁵ Rather than the virtuous femininity envisaged by reformers such as Addison and Steele, these tea tables are corrupted by coquetry, tittle-tattle and social, as opposed to economic, speculation.

Ardelia appreciates the aroma and taste of the "fragrant tea" (l.80) provided by Almeria, but she fails to remark upon the china in which the tea is served or properly observe the niceties of the tea table. In 'Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia' the consumerist and gendered ideology of the tea table is rejected through Ardelia's utter disregard for the time-consuming and materialistic rituals surrounding the straightforward act of drinking tea. 'An Epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore' also comments on the ideological connotations of tea with Finch's repudiation of Rowe's play and her own involvement in this "devaluation of the female figure" (Brown, p.97): "Before I promis'd, had I read the play, / I wou'd have staid at home, and drank my Tea" (ll.16-17). She juxtaposes her public attack on the injustice of Rowe's characterization and the increasingly restricted role of women in contemporary society with the popular perception of tea drinking as a private, feminine and domestic pursuit.

There is, however, an element of ambiguity in her appropriation of the symbolic potential of tea, as it could be intended as a protective strategy or a covert attack on the regulatory nature of the tea table. Tea here metonymically represents the idealized model of femininity, private, domestic and passive, advocated by periodicals

⁶⁴ *Poems of Edmund Waller*, II, 94 (l.7) and *Panuceus: A Poem Upon Tea: in two cantos*, by N. Tate (London: Printed by and for J. Roberts, 1700).

⁶⁵ Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina and Other Works*, ed. by Alexander Pettit, Margaret Case Croskey and Anna C. Patchias (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004) and *John Gay*, I, 234-37, ll.4-5.

such as *The Spectator*, and the paradigm by which this model is achieved. Finch's narrator, the actress Mrs Oldfield, is reassuringly identified as a virtuous female consumer through the act of drinking tea "at home" (l.17), a pose seemingly in accordance with the playwright's agenda to limit women's potential and power. Yet this defiant epilogue is both written and performed by women, thus subverting the discernible intent to limit women's public presence through the example of Jane Shore.

In 'To the Hon.^{ble} Mrs. H__n' (?1717) Finch focuses on the ritual of taking tea rather than the commodity itself, juxtaposing the domestic tableau of the tea table with contemporary political events in order to obscure the increasingly marked boundaries between public and private spaces. The poem opens with an oblique warning that "Each day each hour new danger brings" before shifting to the contained and composed setting of the tea table:

These Ladies dreaming of no ill
Who fragrant tea did drink and fill
And but for laughing had sat still [...]⁶⁶

The scene is one of unhurried leisure and ease, untroubled by public concerns or serious conversation. The comic invasion of a "solemn foe [...] cloathed in black" (l.13), however, shatters the domestic calm and subtly reminds the reader that women are neither as helpless nor disinterested as some "criticks of the Town" would like.⁶⁷ Finch relates the horror that greets the discovery of the rampaging mouse, whose progress is detailed in military terms, and the realization that "no friend no Champion" (l.46) is at hand to dispatch "th' assailiant" (l.16).

In contrast to the domestic world inhabited by the ladies, there is a multiplicity of occupations and pursuits open to men; the political world of "the House of Peers" (l.31), the military, the learning and debate of the coffee house or the idle pastimes of the fop. Although this list of absent rescuers intensifies the sense of captivity and

⁶⁶ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, pp.63-65, l.3, ll.7-9.

⁶⁷ 'The agreeable', in *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.66, l.1.

constriction endured by women, it also hints at Finch's resistance to such a limited existence in the reference to "the Cocoa" (l.40), a coffee house patronized by fashionable Tory gentlemen and Jacobites. This coded allusion reminds the reader, not only of the poet's own Jacobite sympathies, but of the continuing interest and participation of women in the Jacobite movement and political life in general. Such a reading is reinforced, on the sudden disappearance of the "ennemy" (l.48), by her comment that "Without Dubuis a Peace compleat / Return'd on this well-timed retreat" (ll.49-50).

Guillaume Dubois, a French diplomat, was instrumental in securing and sustaining the Peace of Utrecht (1713), the political treaty masterminded by Oxford and Bolingbroke that finally ended the War of the Spanish Succession. Finch's reference to Dubois in 'To the Hon.^{ble} Mrs. H__n' works on a number of levels; signalling her interest in the minutiae of contemporary politics, her connection to the Tory party and Jacobitism and also her defiance of women's relegation to the private sphere. The death of the hapless mouse is secured without the intervention of the Lord, Captain John, Charles or Will and order restored without male, or indeed French, collaboration. The ladies may return to "mirth and tea" (l.52), but their victory over the mouse challenges the perception of women as vulnerable and fragile and transgresses the gendered distinctions between the active, public sphere and the passive, private sphere.

Finch's pronouncement of danger, it would seem, pertains to more than just a mouse:

Then Madam pray advise the fair
To change that cold neglectfull air
And make our life and death her care

For tho' Mankind before her bow
Mankind the practice won't allow
To be destroy'd she knows not how.

(ll.64-69)

The dangers facing women and female subjectivity at the beginning of the eighteenth century were far more ambiguous and insidious than the obvious threat posed by a mouse, as she was well aware, yet 'To the Hon.^{ble} Mrs. H__n' reveals that, albeit inadvertently, women are able to defend themselves if they wish to.

The idea of exchange buttresses 'To the Hon.^{ble} Mrs H__n' as it does so many of these poems. The world of commerce is inevitably never far from the surface of eighteenth-century consciousness, in the ladies' exchange of tea and conversation and the implied fluidity of the seemingly disparate public and private spheres. Although Finch successfully appropriated the language of commerce and exchange and acknowledged if not accepted the changes in political and social life, her satirical insights into contemporary society mask a sense of nostalgia and regret for the changes occasioned by the Revolution.

In 'The Tale of the Miser and the Poet. Written about the Year 1709' she reflects on the cultural impact of the financial revolution, lamenting the fate of poets in an age fixated on acquisition and consumption:

Your PRIOR cou'd not keep in Places;
And your VAN-BRUG had found no quarter
But for his dabbings in the Morter.
ROWE no Advantages cou'd hit on,
Till Verse he left, to write North-Briton.
PHILIPS, who's by the Shilling known,
Ne'er saw a Shilling of his own.
Meets PHILOMELA, in the Town
Her due Proportion of Renown?
What Pref'rence has ARDELIA seen,
T'expel, tho' she cou'd write the Spleen?⁶⁸

This catalogue of "Slighted, or Discarded" (l.52) poets comprises both Whigs and Tories, political difference forgotten in the reality that there is now "no Worth in any thing / But so much Money as 'twill bring" (ll.78-79).

Finch parallels the current neglect of poets and playwrights with the reign of Charles II, when "Learning had o'er run the Nation" (l.34) and "Riot, Masking,

⁶⁸ *Poems of Anne*, pp.191-94, ll.54-64.

Playing" (l.32) took precedence over commerce and economic gain. By reflecting on an era when "witty beggars" were "in fashion" (l.33), she incisively reveals the disparity between the reigns of Charles and James II, dedicated to knowledge, creativity and pleasure, and those of William and Anne, focused on novelty, affectation and capital. By 1709, the Wit may remain "transported with Inditing, / Unpay'd, unprais'd, yet ever Writing" (ll.1-2), but it is Mammon who is in the ascendancy, "Brave Sir, your Time is ended, / And Poetry no more befriended" (ll.29-30). Although the poem concludes with the expectant desire that time will "new Augustean days revive, / When wit shall please, and Poets thrive" (ll.98-9), Finch cannot escape the truth that, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, "Mammonists surpass us" (l.102).

6. "TO FABLE I DESCEND WITH SOFT DELIGHT": FINCH AS POLITICAL FABULIST

Over a third of *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions* consists of fables; indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to state that the fable appears to be Finch's preferred mode of writing based on sheer volume, especially during the years of Queen Anne's reign (1702-1714). It is surprising, then, that so little critical attention has been paid to her fables and in particular their political significance. Perhaps many potential critics have been deterred by Wordsworth's dismissive comment that Finch was "unlucky in her models - Pindaric odes and French Fables".¹ Wordsworth's disapproval, however, was influenced by the reduced status of the fable by the nineteenth century, as a genre suitable only for the instruction and amusement of children, and failed to take into account the immense popularity and credibility of the fable in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Jayne Lewis has noted that, "During the turbulent decades that divided the English Civil Wars from the entrenchment of Georgian culture in the middle of the eighteenth century, a torrent of animal fables flooded England."² John Ogilby, who published his *Fables* in 1651, is credited with this renewed popularity of the Aesopic fable in England and with politicizing the genre for his seventeenth-century audience.³ The publication of Jean de la Fontaine's fables in 1668 further added to the reputation of the genre, by showcasing a new style of fable. In contrast to the brief and somewhat stark form of the traditional Aesopic fable with its obvious moral, La Fontaine's fables were witty, suggestive and oblique.⁴ Far from the associations with children and

¹ Letter to Alexander Dyce, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by Alan G. Hill, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967-1993), V (1979), 239.

² Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.1.

³ Annabel Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), p.53.

⁴ Mahasveta Barua, 'The political and feminist significance of Anne Finch's fables' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1994), p.68.

folklore it would later acquire, the fable during this period was perceived to be a political mode:

The stories of the beasts, the birds, the trees, and the insects quickly acquired or recovered their function as a medium of political analysis and communication, especially in the form of a communication from or on behalf of the politically powerless.

(Patterson, p.1)

This is not to suggest that all fables should automatically be assumed to have a political agenda; however, it is clear that a number of writers, including Aphra Behn, Dryden and Roger L'Estrange, were using the fable to express politically sensitive ideas or allegiances.

Mark Loveridge has suggested that during the Augustan period:

A twin tradition of fable evolves, one aspect of which is expressive of the values of voices which are more culturally dominant, and which use fables in a relatively unselfconscious manner. The other - 'double fable' [...] - is more eclectic, paradoxical, and witty, and is often in an anxious or provocative mood over questions of power.⁵

Finch's fables fall into the latter category. They were written for the most part between 1700 and 1713, a decade after the deposition of James II, and, like the satirical poems, they necessarily move away from the uncomplicated Jacobite stance adopted in many of the verses written immediately after the Revolution and during William's reign. Whereas Finch had previously located her poetic authority in the figure of the male monarch and relied on the symbolic language of the Stuart monarchy to frame her political beliefs, the role of the fabulist was that of the outsider, disenfranchised by class, gender or politics, removed from centres of power, and therefore required a different approach.

The reasons for choosing to "resort to fable", according to H.J. Blackham, are twofold and entirely unrelated: "one tactical, a need for concealment, the other 'philosophical,' development of thought."⁶ Finch's need for concealment was necessitated by her political status and, as I have indicated throughout, was a key

⁵ Mark Loveridge, *A History of Augustan Fable* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.31.

⁶ H.J. Blackham, *The Fable as Literature* (London and Dover: The Athlone Press, 1985), p. 209.

factor in the choice of each genre she worked with, not just the fable. Yet Blackham's theory that the fable provided an ideal medium for the "development of thought" suggests that the genre offered a unique opportunity to explore the nature of power and political ideology, at a point in her career as a political poet when, like many other Jacobites, she was reluctant to position herself in direct opposition to a Stuart monarch. For the most part, the fables included in *Miscellany Poems* deal with universal themes, such as ambition, change and providence, which were often imbued with political significance at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Mahasveta Barua has commented that "The concerns of most fabulists were not really so much with supporting their particular party politics, as they were with advising against further instability and fragmentation", and this anxiety is evident throughout Finch's fables (Barua, p.80). Although power, commercialism, hierarchical government and self-interest are recurrent themes, they are treated, for the most part, universally without explicitly associating the situations portrayed in the fables with a particular party. There are, of course, exceptions, notably 'Reformation' and 'Moderation', which attack concrete policies rather than abstract themes. In the case of the fable, "The medium was an important part of getting the message across; parallels between the fable and the real world were not drawn out but assumed" and Finch generally allowed the political potential or significance of her fables to remain implicit (Barua, p.8).⁷

Roger L'Estrange, the Tory and Jacobite pamphleteer, licenser and polemicist, often drew explicit parallels between the moral of his fable and national politics as can be seen in one of his fables, 'A Doctor and his Patient', later imitated by Finch as 'For the Better': in the 'Reflexion' L'Estrange compares the patient in his tale with the nation, while the flattering doctor becomes a statesman (Lewis, p.152). Similarly,

⁷ In his discussion of the dualistic nature of the literary fable, Mark Loveridge submits the idea that "The fable is as witty as you wish it to be; or *as witty as you are*" (Loveridge, p. 36). It is a premise that seems equally applicable to the political character of the fable.

Aphra Behn used her versions of Thomas Philipott's translations of Aesop to interpret contemporary political events.⁸ Thus the moral of 'The Ringdove and the Fowler', "The young usurper, who design'd t'invade, / An others right, himselfe the victim made", clearly referred to the unfortunate Monmouth, while 'The Lyon and the Mouse' openly incorporated one of the most celebrated incidents in Stuart mythology, "An Oak did once a glorious Monarch save".⁹ Behn's fables leave little doubt as to her political loyalties. She was writing in the final days of the Stuart monarchy, while L'Estrange, who lost his position as Licenser of the Press on William's accession, published his fables in two parts in 1691 and 1699. The work of both reflects its proximity to the cataclysmic events of 1688/89. Finch's fables, on the other hand, reveal the changes initiated by the Revolution and represent the increasingly complex political system and language of political commentary.

The power of the fable lies in "the drama of an irrefutable demonstration" and "the seductiveness of a seemingly innocuous exercise", making it the perfect form for Finch, the disenfranchised outsider, as even those readers who were ideologically opposed to the arguments inherent in her fables could not dispute the moral impact of the simple narratives.¹⁰ The fables, perhaps more so than any of her poems, were intended for publication and signify an attempt to communicate her interpretation of political events to a wider audience. This is evident in the language employed: moving from the intricate and stylised imagery and language of the court, aimed at an educated elite, and the more coded poetics developed in support of James II and the Jacobite cause, to a more familiar and direct poetic voice. Finch questioned the changing world around her, in the way that her increasingly politically sophisticated readers were beginning to do, and sought to provide answers that reaffirmed her own belief system.

⁸ Philipott had provided the English translations for the first edition of Francis Barlow's *Aesop's Fables with his life* in 1666, but Behn was commissioned to condense Philipott's verses for a new edition in 1687. Notes to *Aesop's Fables* in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, I, 427-429.

⁹ XII, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p.235 and XXIII, p.239.

¹⁰ Marcel Gutwirth cited in Barua, p.172.

i. The Writer of Fables

Jayne Lewis contends that "Finch's Aesopian poems apply fables to a new version of the problem of how to establish literary authority in 'modern' England" (Lewis, p.131). 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables', 'The Dog and his Master' and 'Mercury and the Elephant' question the very nature of the fable and its place in literary culture. Fables, as a form, are often compared to parables in the sense that "The spiritual content of parable - like the 'truth' of fable - lies only in the application, and in the character or authority of the speaker" (Loveridge, p.36). The authority of the speaker in the case of the parable was unquestionable and absolute, as Christ himself spoke in parables; therefore fabulists sought to legitimize their own work by equating the two forms. For a fable to succeed there needed to be no doubt as to the authority and veracity of the fabulist.

Yet Charles Hinnant has disputed Finch's authority as a fabulist, arguing that 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables' is an "incipiently sceptical poem, unwilling to give full authority and credence to the poet's own affirmations" (Hinnant, p.171, 173). He suggests that the moral, "*Happy the Men, whom we divert with Ease, / Whom Opera's and Panegyricks please*",¹¹ exposes her attitude to, not only this poem, but the fabular tradition as a whole: "The moral points to a vein of comic self-belittlement that infuses all of Finch's fables. This vein humanizes the poetry as it portrays Finch as an author who is unable to take herself or her verse completely seriously" (Hinnant, p.173).

In 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables' (?1705-06) she disingenuously represents fables as merely "aery Fictions" written in order to distract and increase the volume of her poetic output, "To fill my Page, and rid my Thoughts of Care" (ll.5, 6). Furthermore, the critic dismisses the fable as a little admired and artificial mode

¹¹ *Poems of Anne*, pp.153-55, ll.59-60.

employed by the "lazy Trifler" (l.12) who aspires to fame and reputation. The "easily persuaded Poet" (l.15) concedes to the superior judgement of the critic and suggests alternative forms, in what appears to be a brief history of Finch's poetic career. However, the critic rejects both of the ideas proposed by the poet; labelling the "Shades and Springs" (l.32) of retirement poetry "insipid Dreams" (l.41) and announcing, "I'm sick of *Troy*" (l.29) at the suggestion of a classical theme. While there is an obvious element of humour and ridicule here, I would disagree that her comic tone necessarily signifies self-mockery or reflects her attitude to the fable. Finch clearly takes the form and her authority as a fabulist seriously and the apologetic intention of the poem is questionable.

'The Critick and the Writer of Fables' is located in the middle of *Miscellany Poems* and had therefore already been preceded by twenty-one fables, thus its apologetic tone is undermined by the fact that the poet has previously established her authority within the collection. Whereas Hinnant sees the intervention of the critic and the poet's desire to conform to his demands as representative of Finch's own uncertainty and lack of confidence in the genre and her mastery of it, I would argue that by incorporating the voice of the critic into her defence of the fable, the poet is pre-empting potential criticism and asserting control over the project. Both the critic and the poet are aspects of Finch's poetic voice and, although the critic appears to be the dominant voice in the poem, it is the poet who has the last word, paradoxically by assuming the critic's voice and questioning the supremacy of satire and lampoons.

Finch's true opinion of the genre is revealed in the introduction to the poem, in the fabulist's undertaking to translate, "Endite" (l.4) and "Teach, as Poets shou'd, whilst they Divert" (l.8). The word divert appears twice, indeed it frames the poem, and I would suggest that diversion is integral to the purpose of 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables'. 'Divert' can be read straightforwardly in the context of the stated aim to entertain and amuse, but it also signifies the political need to distract and

deflect attention away from the potentially dangerous meaning contained within the 'humble' fable.

The critic's vehement reaction to the mention of Troy is interesting, seeming to indicate a renunciation of the poet's earlier explicitly Jacobite poetry, as the Trojan wars and particularly the story of Aeneas were popular Jacobite typologies:

Dryden's *Aeneid* was an officially acceptable version of what was already unofficially (as Dryden knew when he introduced extensive Jacobite vocabulary into his translation) a Jacobite document, a statement almost of the Jacobite credo; the exile and restoration of the Trojan Stuart, rightful heir of Brutus, made by James Phillip of Almericlose in his *Grameid*, and more explicitly by Maitland in his translation of the central books of the *Aeneid*, dedicated to Mary of Modena in 1691.

(Pittock, p.7)

Finch was incorporating Trojan typology in her poetry as early as 1690 with a clear Jacobite agenda, as 'A Letter to the Same Person' illustrates:

The *Trojan* Prince did pow'rful Numbers join
To sing of War; but Love was the Design:
And sleeping *Troy* again in Flames was drest,
To light the Fires in pitying *Dido's* Breast.¹²

Here Aeneas, figured in his role as a lover, functions figuratively as James II. 'A Letter to the Same Person' may be framed as a love poem from the poet to her absent husband, in itself a political statement as Heneage Finch's absence in 1690 was a direct result of his allegiance to James, but even love had been appropriated for the Jacobite cause.

Leigh Eicke has suggested that the romance tradition, with its focus on chivalry and heroic classical antiquity was often adopted by Jacobites to align the Stuarts with "majestic, historic, successful predecessors, such as Aeneas" and the romanticized illustrations of Apollo and Daphne and Aeneas and Dido, along with the uncharacteristic hyperbole of "a thousand fond Endearments" (l.23) certainly seem to conform to this tradition. The depiction of enduring love and faithfulness also facilitates a political reading of the poem, as "The topic of lovers' constancy,

¹² *Poems of Anne*, pp.23-24, ll.11-14.

constancy that withstands trials of distance, deception, time and circumstance, also found an echo in Jacobite loyalty to their exiled monarchs."¹³

Thus if classical themes and allusions, to Troy and Aeneas in particular, are indicative of Jacobitism, then 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables' seems to be eschewing those values and beliefs. Troy may have been a suitable topic for Hobbes, Chapman, Congreve and Dryden but the critic announces that such "old Bombast" (l.28) will no longer "please the Men of Taste" (l.27) who want poetry that seeks out "private, or the publick Faults" (l.46). Literary society, according to the critic, now demands poetry that reflects the times and incites debate: "We'll praise the Weapon, as we like the Stroke, / And warmly sympathizing with the Spite / Apply to Thousands, what of One you write." (ll.48-50). The fable writer's reply is to bemoan the state of affairs in which satire alone can gratify a literary audience and even then they "praise with such Reserve" that "ne'er so liberally we Authors carve" (ll.56-58).¹⁴ However, Annabel Patterson stresses that the fable "had from its origins functioned as a self-protective mode of communication" and Finch's acknowledgement and apparent dismissal of her position as a Jacobite writer could be read as a protective strategy, particularly as she entered the literary marketplace (Patterson, p.5).

'The Dog and his Master' (probably written at the same time as 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables') offers a more assured statement of Finch's role as both a Jacobite and a fabulist, perhaps because it is framed as an animal fable and so seems less concerned to address issues of literary authority and political allegiance. The authority of the speaker is confirmed in the concise introduction, "No better *Dog* e'er kept his Master's Door", and followed by a simple narrative free from interpretation or

¹³ Eicke, 'The Extremity of the Times: Women and Jacobitism in British literary culture', p.116.

¹⁴ This apparent denunciation of satire cannot be taken at face value and I would suggest that, like Swift, she should be read as a 'double-handed fabulist'. Mark Loveridge has argued that "Swift and others such as Anne Finch can define verse fable as working against satire, but since Swift has as double-handed a grip of his pen as anyone, he can also use fables as satire [...] Double-handed fabulists, then, may also apparently react against themselves, against aspects of their own practice." (Loveridge, p.31).

moralising on the part of the fabulist.¹⁵ Snarl initially acts under the auspices of his absent master's authority, but he soon begins to extend the boundaries of his prescribed role and act on his natural abilities:

To keep the House from Rascals was my Charge;
The Task was great, and the Commission large.
Nor did your *Worship* e'er declare your Mind,
That to the begging Crew it was confin'd [...]

(11.7-10)

Snarl guards against both the obvious threats to his master's estate, such as beggars, thieves and the "known Delinquents of the Times" (1.15), and also more subtle dangers:

I trace a Flatt'rer, when he fawns and leers,
A rallying Wit, when he commends and jeers:
The greedy Parasite I grudging note,
Who praises the good Bits, that oil his Throat;
I mark the Lady, you so fondly toast,
That plays your Gold, when all her own is lost:
The Knave, who fences your Estate by Law,
Yer still reserves an undermining Flaw.
These and a thousand more, which I cou'd tell,
Provoke my Growling, and offend my Smell.

(11.19-28)

Finch frequently vilified the sycophancy, self-interest and commercialism of the court and fashionable society in the early eighteenth century and by figuring these elements as threats to the security of Snarl's master she signals the political subtext of the fable.

Linguistic authority actually lies with "honest *Snarl*" and, as Murray Pittock has noted, "'Honest' was one of the code-words which indicated [Jacobite] patriotism" (Pittock, p.67). It is tempting to read this a continuation of Finch's linguistic relationship with the absent James II, seeing her as quite literally guarding the state and his reputation in the dead king's absence. However, it can also, and perhaps more accurately, be construed as an examination of the fabulist's role within contemporary society. The authority of the 'writer of fables' is predicated on her responsibility to the reader and to the truth.

¹⁵ *Poems of Anne*, pp.206-07, l.l.

'Mercury and the Elephant' (?1712), the prefatory fable that opens *Miscellany Poems*, further explores the role of the fabulist by focusing on the public reception of poetry and the relationship between the poet and the literary marketplace. The poem opens with a meeting between Mercury and the elephant who is blocking the celestial messenger's path and then proceeds to seek Mercury's opinion on the misrepresentation of his fight with a wild boar:

But Fame (quoth he) with all her Tongues,
 Who Lawyers, Ladies, Soldiers wrongs,
 Has, to my Disadvantage, told
 An Action thoroughly Bright and Bold;
 [...]
 But I defy the Talk of Men,
 Or Voice of Brutes in ev'ry Den;
 Th' impartial Skies are all my Care
 And how it stands Recorded there,
 Amongst you Gods, pray, What is thought?¹⁶

Mercury, however, was not even aware that a fight had taken place, "Then have you Fought!" (l.26).

Finch uses the elephant's situation to discuss her own position as a poet, arguing that just as the elephant is concerned with preserving its reputation so, "Solicitous thus shou'd I be / For what's said of my Verse and Me" (ll.27-28). The poet imagines herself apologizing to friends and entreating the goodwill of critics on behalf of her work, attributing any faults to her gender, only to find out, like the elephant, that no-one was aware of these poetic endeavours: "Then has she Writ!" (l.33). Just as the elephant dismissed public opinion in favour of divine judgement, so too she understands that "asking what the World will say" (l.35) is the result of vanity on the part of the poet. Finch goes on to assert the theory that any interaction between an author and their readers is in fact both unwelcome and unnecessary:

Nor make long *Prefaces*, to show
 What Men are not concern'd to know:
 For still untouch'd how we succeed,
 'Tis for themselves, not us, they *Read*;

¹⁶ *Poems of Anne*, pp.3-4, ll.11-14, 21-25.

Whilst that proceeding to requite,
 We own (who in the Muse delight)
 'Tis for our Selves, not them, we *Write*.

(ll.38-44)

Fittingly, as the introduction to *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions*, 'Mercury and the Elephant' concludes with a mention of printing as the means of 'fixing' the poet's "scatter'd Papers" (l.48) and ensuring that her work is available for posterity, although, as she wittily notes, her disregard for public opinion and personal success may rebound on the poor printer who, seeing no return on his investment, will "be starv'd" (l.50). Yet even as she foregrounds the public accessibility of her fables, Finch demonstrates the genre's effectiveness as a "self-protective mode" through the needless fears of the elephant; instead of misinterpretation and false representation, his actions have gone unnoticed.

ii. "*I snarl, 'tis true, and sometimes scratch*"

The fable, perhaps more than any other verse form, is "self-consciously demystified and secondary" (Hinnant, p.168). Rather than attempting to obscure their original sources, Finch, and her contemporaries, openly acknowledged the fact that their fables were translations, imitations and adaptations, often referencing their indebtedness to other poets in subtitles.¹⁷ The secondary nature of the fable, far from imposing limitations, was often a great advantage for political writers, especially those in opposition, as it created a distance between the fabulist and the content of the poem, thus reinforcing the self-protective aspect of the genre.

Hinnant has further argued that Finch was "adamant in her refusal to deal overtly with specific individuals" within the fables, avoiding "any direct or even

¹⁷ In her essay on Anne Finch as a translator, Ellen Moody discusses the difficulties inherent in determining the source texts for many of Finch's translations and adaptations, including the fables, and assesses the importance of considering these poems in the same light as her original verses (<http://www.jimandellen.org/finch/as translator.html>). Moody also provides an extensive list of the original sources for Finch's fables (<http://www.jimandellen.org/finch/masterlist fables.html>).

indirect reference to contemporary figures"; however, the apparently simple and derivative form of the fable allowed her to conceal an unambiguous political subtext, targeting specific individuals, events or policies, without attracting undue attention (Hinnant, p.175). 'Reformation', 'Moderation, or the Wolves and the sheep. A Fable', 'The Man bitten by Fleas' and 'The Lord and the Bramble' all suggest definite targets rather than abstract themes and concepts.

'Reformation' was an adaptation of Jean de la Fontaine's 'Le Mal Marie', but Finch renamed the fable and refrained from overtly linking her version to the original text. Changing the original title of the poem or neglecting to mention the source material could be just as revealing as acknowledging the attribution and, in this case, offers an insight into the political intention of the poem. I believe that 'Reformation' is a barely disguised attack on Mary II and the policies she was involved with as queen, thus La Fontaine's title was just a little too easily deciphered, exposing the poet to discovery and prosecution. Both Mary and William actively promoted and practiced a more moral and temperate approach to life and the queen was the patron of The Society for the Reformation of Manners, which advocated moral reform, particularly in the theatres, and sought to criminalize profanity and obscenity. In her portrait of the "wrangling and reproofing *Wife*"¹⁸ it is possible that Finch was satirically subverting the popular Whig image of Mary as a good and obedient wife (used to counter Jacobite propaganda which posited Mary as a betraying daughter) who deferred to her rightful master, her husband, and who 'managed' rather than reigned.¹⁹

The fable opens with an account of the activities of the reforming wife that have caused her husband, servants and acquaintances such misery:

A Gentleman, most wretched in his Lot,
A wrangling and reproofing *Wife* had got,
Who, tho' she curb'd his Pleasures, and his Food,
Call'd him *My Dear*, and did it for his Good,

¹⁸ *Poems of Anne*, pp.202-03, l.2.

¹⁹ Melinda Zook, 'History's Mary: The Propagation of Queen Mary II 1689-1694' in Fradenburg, pp.170-91 (p.171).

Ills to prevent; She of all Ills the worst,
 So wisely Froward, and so kindly Curst.
 The Servants too experiment her Lungs,
 And find they've Breath to serve a thousand Tongues.
 Nothing went on; for her eternal Clack
 Still rectifying, set all Matters back;
 Nor Town, nor Neighbours, nor the Court cou'd please,
 But furnish'd Matter for her sharp Disease.

(II.1-12)

Finch depicts a woman whose interference in the lives of others is born out of dissatisfaction and discontent and who, in spite of her best efforts, has a negligible or, worse, a detrimental effect on those she is attempting to reform. As a result of this constant meddling the harassed husband decides to send his wife to the country where, "With no Affairs to manage of her own" (I.14), he hopes that she will learn to appreciate rather than criticize.

Unfortunately his hopes are dashed when his wife returns full of censure for the licentious and indolent behaviour she has witnessed:

Not rail! she cries - Why, I that had no share
 In their Concerns, cou'd not the Trollops spare;
 But told 'em they were Sluts - And for the Swains,
 My Name a Terror to them still remains;
 So often I reprov'd their slothful Faults,
 And with such Freedom told 'em all my Thoughts,
 That I no more amongst them cou'd reside.

(II.23-29)

This pastoral golden age scene, almost synonymous with the idealized politics of the Stuarts, is disrupted by the unsolicited and unwelcome opinions of the sanctimonious wife. The traditional sexual and political freedom of the pastoral is satirically contrasted with the "Freedom" of the reformer to disparage, condemn and impose her views on others. The moral of the tale extends the faults of the officious wife to the national 'improvers' and issues a dire warning as to the outcome of their project: "Till, like Reformers who in States abound, / You all to Ruin bring, and ev'ry Part confound." (II.39-40).

Finch may not have engaged with the witty sexual politics of the Restoration in the manner of Aphra Behn, and her poetry is remarkably free of the sexual licence of many of the Restoration poets and dramatists, but as 'The Tale of the Miser and the Poet' demonstrates, she believed that this period represented the golden age of poetry and lamented its downfall. The Society for the Reformation of Manners and the wave of dedicated reformers, such as Jeremy Collier, who followed in its wake were vehemently opposed to such literature and attacked the theatres above all as sites of vice and immorality.²⁰ Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698) was surprisingly influential and it condemned the work of Congreve and Dryden, amongst others; writers who were not only Finch's contemporaries but who represented a connection with the seemingly lost Stuart cause and who also provided the model for much of her own poetry. The threat to the theatre and the reputation of some of period's greatest playwrights at the hands of reforming zeal must surely have influenced Finch's conception of 'Reformation'. From this ostensibly innocuous little fable about a dominating wife it is possible to distinguish an attack on Mary II, a critique of the fashion for reform and preservation of virtue and a defence of the ideals and importance of the literature of the Restoration.

'Moderation' adopts a more serious tone than 'Reformation', but offers a similar approach to contemporary politics, indicating the subject of the poem through the use of a coded word fraught with political meaning. Moderation originally referred to sincerity and lack of pretension, a connotation illustrated by Finch's use of the word in an early fable, 'The King and the Shepherd' (?1698):

Where no Magnificence or Pomp appears,
But Moderation, free from each Extream,

²⁰ Collier's position was particularly ironic as he was an Anglican clergyman who had become a non-juror after 1688. The majority of the plays he castigated, however, although performed during William and Mary's reign, were written under the auspices of Charles II and James II, both of whom patronized Restoration playwrights and the theatre. In spite of his dislike of William and Mary, Collier's views were actually in accordance with the dual monarchs' own attitudes to the impropriety of both the plays themselves and the culture of theatre going.

Whilst Moderation is the Builder's Theme.²¹

During Queen Anne's reign, however, the word moderation was used as "a term of abuse in the political lexicon of the Tories and Jacobites".²² In a political context, moderation referred to the method of government favoured by Anne during the early years of her reign in an attempt to mediate between the two political factions, the Tories and the Whigs, and the extremes within each party. The political "Moderate Men" or managers were Marlborough, Godolphin and Robert Harley, working outside the confines of party and the influence of the leaders of the Tory party, Nottingham and Rochester, and the Whig Junto.

Moderation also denoted the policy of the low church Party, towards Dissenters and other religious sects, in advocating the practice of occasional conformity. Occasional conformity and toleration of diversity within the Protestant religion, which allowed Dissenters to take communion in the Church of England, and hence qualify themselves to hold public office, was a contentious issue resulting in division within the Anglican Church. Moderation was perceived by many Tories to be a threat to the established Church and they tried repeatedly to pass an Occasional Conformity Bill banning the practice. For Jacobites and a number of Tories, moderation represented the destabilization of both the Church and the State and posed a considerable threat to the continued peace and security of the nation. Naturally much of the opprobrium was directed at one man, the ubiquitous Lord Marlborough, whose influence with the queen, the Whigs and the high church Tories (even after he formally distanced himself from the party) was essential to the success of moderation (Gregg, pp.199-233).

William Shippen, a parliamentary Jacobite and poet, voiced the fears of many in 'Moderation Display'd' (1704), when he argued that this policy, in theory and effect, would allow a "*New Sett of Men*" to "Ruine both Church and State with their

²¹ *Poems of Anne*, p.162-64, ll.53-55.

²² *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.177n.

New Politicks".²³ Finch would have undoubtedly known the poem, as it included a glowing endorsement of her husband's nephew, Charles Finch, in his capacity as envoy extraordinary to Hanover in 1702/03:

Who in Sophia's Court, with just Applause,
Maintain'd his Sov'reign's Rights, his Country's Cause.
For 'tis in him, with Anguish that I find
All the Endowments of a Gen'rous Mind,
Whate'er is Great and Brave, whate'er Refin'd.
For 'tis in him Fame doubly does Commend
An Active Patriot, and a Faithful Friend.

(ll.94-100)

Interestingly, the poem declares that *Laelio*, Lord Winchilsea, "deserves his own recording Muse" (l.93), a probable reference to Anne Finch, who had already celebrated the third earl in 'Upon my Lord Winchilsea's converting the mount in his garden to a terras'. Shippen was familiar with Finch as a poet, penning a dedicatory poem, 'To the most ingenious Mrs Finch on her incomperable Poems' in her honour; moreover, as the title of this poem and the reference in 'Moderation Display'd' suggest, his knowledge of her poetry predated the publication of *Miscellany Poems* in 1713. The seemingly innocuous reference to Finch as a "recording Muse" indicates the likelihood that Shippen had access to her poetry in manuscript form and was aware of the highly political nature of much of her verse. She was thus implicated in this scathing attack on moderation in 1704 and her fable was almost certainly a reply or addition to 'Moderation Display'd'.

'Moderation' represents the political concerns of those opposed to the policy of moderation through the fate of a flock of sheep, fooled into accepting a company of wolves as their own:

The Sheep a People void of strife
Who by the Laws posesst
All that was fit to nourish life
And give them ease and rest.

Were now perswaded from their right

²³ Lord, George deForest, and others, eds, *Poems on affairs of State: Augustan satirical verse, 1660-1714*, 7 vols (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963-1975), VII, 20.

By Wolves that hid their Spleen [...]

(ll.1-6)

The wolves are able to deceive not only the sheep, but also their guardians, the shepherd and his dogs, "Towzer Bluff and Snapp" (l.17), by disguising their natural instincts and carefully infiltrating the sheep's numbers:²⁴

But moderate in all their ways
They herded with the throng
And gave that vertue so much praise
That all things else seem'd wrong.

(ll.9-12)

The moral of the tale lies in the fact that according to the laws of nature, "A Wolf whatever he appears / Intends but to devour" (ll.31-32); however, the political message of the poem is revealed in the poet's attitude to the wolves, whose response to the shepherd exposes more than an animal's biological imperative:

Ye ruin'd fools the Wolves replied
Did you believe that we
Cou'd Doctrines 'gainst our selves provide
Or limited wou'd be [...]

(ll.25-28)

Through the political rhetoric used to discuss the plight of the sheep at the hands of the wolves, "Laws", "right", "Doctrines", "limited", Finch offers an extreme view of the effects of political moderation, with the nation left betrayed, ravaged and ruined as a result of this policy. Charles Davenant had attempted to defuse fears of partisanship and change with the assurance that "t'is not [...] a Change from Tories to Whiggs but from Violence to Moderation" (BM MS. Lansdowne 773, f.29v, cited in *Poems on Affairs of State*, p.19), but in Finch's fable 'moderation' is shown to be itself a form of violence. She envisages the fulfilment of Shippen's prophecy at the end of 'Moderation Display'd' that "The *Whigs* should Triumph in a *Tory* reign" (l.366), a victory made possible by "*Mod'rate Methods*" (l.364).

²⁴ Moderation was facilitated by the removal of the high church Tory elements of the queen's ministry in 1704 and it is not inconceivable that the sleeping dogs represent those high Tories who were now distanced from government, such as Nottingham, Rochester and Buckingham, while the shepherd is an appropriate representative for Queen Anne. It is difficult, however, to provide conclusive attributions for the fable's characters.

Whilst the sheep in 'Moderation' lose their rights, and ultimately their lives, through the folly and negligence of their supposed protectors, 'The Lord and the Bramble' advocates the defence of inherent liberties and rights and demonstrated the power of passive resistance. This fable focuses on the struggle between "A Man of Pow'r and Place" and the "slighted *Bramble*" that interferes with the Lord's tours of his estate.²⁵ The reader is clearly intended to empathize with the plight of the bramble rather than the Lord, as the bramble has a just reason for attempting to waylay the owner of these "stately Walks and Groves" (l.1):

That this injurious partial Wight
Had bid his Gard'ner rid it quite,
And throw it o'er the Pail.

Often the *Bry'r* had wish'd to speak,
That this might not be done;
But from the Abject and the Weak,
Who no important Figure make,
What Statesman does not run?

(ll.8-15)

The bramble's obstruction of the Lord is actually the only way in which it can secure an audience with the "tender-footed Squire" (l.27) and protest against its unfair removal to make way for "buffle-headed Trees" (l.21) and "tap'ring Yews" (l.23).

'The Lord and the Bramble' (?1710) seems to be a precursor to the satirical 'To the Rev. Mr Bedford' (1718), in that both feature a powerful male figure too preoccupied and self-important to attend to the concerns of those affected by his decisions and actions. However, whilst the satire concludes with the Lord successfully shirking his responsibilities and involvement with the female poet, the fable, because of its didactic and moralistic function, is able to posit a more satisfactory outcome: "For know, where'er my Root is set, / Those rambling Twigs will Passage get, / And vex you more and more." (ll.33-35).

²⁵ *Poems of Anne*, pp.185-86, ll.2-3.

Not only does this fable offer the, somewhat threatening, assurance that the oppressed and disenfranchised will not be marginalized, it further links the figure of the bramble with the poet:

*No Wants, no Threatnings, nor the Jail
Will curb an angry Wit:
Then think not to chastise, or rail;
Appease the Man, if you'd prevail,
Who some sharp Satire writ.*

(ll.36-40)

Here Finch explicitly links the resistance of the bramble with an increasingly politicized literary society and the persecution of those "*angry Wit[s]*" who voiced their opposition to the government or monarchy in print. The Treason Act (1362) was amended in the 1690s to allow the writing, printing or publication of a seditious libel to be interpreted as high treason and throughout the 1690s pro-Jacobite printers, pamphleteers and ballad-sellers were imprisoned, whipped, put in the stocks and even hanged for their involvement with literature deemed to be a threat to the establishment.²⁶ That Finch was aware of the dangers of disseminating anti-government views, whether through verse or private correspondence, is evident from 'A Letter to Mrs Arabella Marow' (1715).

Apologizing for the delay in replying to her friend's letter, she offers the explanation that she has been "detain'd by reflecting on the great cautiousness with which we must write to our friends under the present posture of affairs".²⁷ The political ramifications of the failed Jacobite uprising of 1715 lead Finch to regret that her correspondence cannot please because it "must report no news / Least Messengers our Persons ceaze / Who have confin'd the Muse." (ll.11-13). She also acknowledges the constant threat of discovery and arrest on suspicion of treason, in her allusion to the Postmaster General, Charles, Baron Cornwallis, "Cornwallis breaks up every seal"

²⁶ William Anderton, the principal publisher and printer of Jacobite literature in the 1690s, was hanged in 1693, Elinor James and Elizabeth Powell were imprisoned for their Jacobite writings and numerous women who hawked Jacobite pamphlets and ballads were whipped or sentenced to hard labour, even though they were rarely politically motivated but driven by financial necessity. (Eicke, p.54).

²⁷ *Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, p.47, ll.4-6.

(1.18). 'A Letter to Mrs Arabella Marow' recognizes that by 1715 the right to privacy, freedom of expression and poetic autonomy was at the very least seriously under threat, if not completely eradicated; however, 'The Lord and the Bramble', probably written before the accession of the authoritarian George I and the increased government surveillance prompted by the uprising, exhibits a surprising degree of defiance in the face of possible prosecution.

It is also possible that she was using the fable as a defence of her contemporary, Delarivier Manley, and also, by implication, of herself. Manley was arrested in 1709 and tried for sedition and libel following the publication of the second volume of *The New Atalantis*, a scurrilous and inflammatory roman à clef, which cast aspersions on the reputations of many leading political figures, including the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.²⁸ Although Finch was not yet linked professionally with Manley's publisher, John Barber, who was also arrested, she probably knew both Manley and Barber on some level through her friendship with Jonathan Swift. More importantly, Finch was directly connected to the source of all the contention, as both volumes of *The New Atalantis* included her poems, 'The Progress of Life' (vol. I) and 'The Hymn' (vol. II), and alluded to her identity.²⁹ Thus the "*angry Wit*" of 'The Lord and the Bramble' could refer to Delarivier Manley, an identification reinforced by the curiously gendered advice to "*Appease the Man*", rather than 'the poet', 'the wit' or 'the satirist'. Manley often played with different variations of her own name within her fictions, appearing as Delia or Rivella, and it is not implausible to suggest that

²⁸ Finch's defence of Manley, if indeed this is the intent of these lines, functioned on a political as well as literary level. As Catherine Gallagher has noted, the prosecution of Manley was a "partisan affair" undertaken in the hopes of uncovering a Tory plot at the centre of *The New Atalantis*. The government intended to redirect the scandal created by Manley's transparent indictment of the Whigs onto the Tories by forcing Manley to reveal her informants and political motivations. Gallagher, p.89.

²⁹ Paul Bunyan Anderson, 'Mrs Manley's Texts of Three of Lady Winchelsea's Poems', *Modern Language Notes*, 45 (1930), 95-99.

Finch created a pun on the author's surname in order to simultaneously conceal and reveal the partisan nature of her moral.³⁰

ii. *"Learn from a Fable, I have somewhere found"*

Finch's three poems based around the figure of the shepherd are indicative of the more universal approach to politics within her collection of fables. 'The King and the Shepherd' (?1698) opens with an unambiguous indication of the fable's moral objective:

Through ev'ry Age some Tyrant Passion reigns:
Now *Love* prevails, and now *Ambition* gains
Reason's lost Throne, and sov'reign Rule maintains.
Tho' beyond Love's, Ambition's Empire goes;
For who feels Love, Ambition also knows,
And proudly still aspires to be possest
Of Her, he thinks superior to the rest.³¹

This is followed by the tale of a shepherd whose good management of his flock attracts the attention of the king, who "Transfers the Sway" (l.17) and enlists the shepherd to apply the same good management on a larger scale by making him "Lord-Keeper" (l.18). Naturally the shepherd's good fortune renders him a target of envious courtiers and "Whisp'ers now defame / The candid Judge" (ll. 48-49) in their attempts to poison the king against him.

The climax of the story comes when the king goes to visit the shepherd's palace and instead of the expected ostentatious display is met with modesty and restraint. Undaunted, "the Sycophants" (l.56) argue that ill-gotten wealth is concealed in a chest, which, when opened, reveals the tools of the shepherd's former occupation, "The Hook, the Scrip, and for unblam'd Delight / The merry Bagpipe" (ll.64-65). Upon seeing these objects the shepherd realises that real wealth is not to be found at court after all:

³⁰ Feminist critics such as Ros Ballaster have similarly manipulated Manley's name when examining her 'manl [e] y' appropriation of masculine discourse.

³¹ *Poems of Anne*, p.162-64, ll.1-7.

No Emulations, or corrupted Times
 Shall falsely blacken, or seduce to Crimes
 Him, whom your honest Industry can please,
 Who on the barren Down can sing from inward Ease.

(ll.72-75)

The moral of the tale is reiterated in the shepherd's lament that no one is free from the "Curse of some Ambition" (l.84).

'The King and the Shepherd' is particularly interesting as it functions as a meta-fable, through the internal fable of the blind man who mistakes a serpent for a staff and refuses to heed warnings that he is in fact holding a snake, that "when awak'd will kill" (l.34). Preferring to believe that he has been rewarded by Fortune, the "sightless Wretch" (l.28) ignores the advice and cautions of others, with the inevitable consequence: "No *Staff*, the Man proceeds; but to thy harm / A *Snake* 'twill prove: The Viper, now grown warm, / Confirmed it soon, and fastened on his Arm." (ll.41-43). This succinct fable serves as a warning to the reader that they ignore the 'truths' revealed in fables at their peril. It also establishes the authority of the fabulist, through the figure of the hermit, whose prediction that "such Heights are levell'd in a trice, / Preferments treach'rous, and her Paths of Ice" (ll.23-24) is fulfilled in the framing fable of the shepherd who finds out that "Some Ill, that shall this seeming Good ensue; / Thousand Distastes, t' allay thy envy'd Gains, / Unthought of, on the parciminious Plains." (ll.45-47).

Ambition is described using the language of monarchy and power; it is a "Tyrant" (l.1), occupying a throne and enjoying "sov'reign Rule" (l.3) throughout its "Empire" (l.4). Finch deliberately applies this typology of absolute power and influence in order to demonstrate the extent to which ambition has corrupted the natural order and supplanted reason and sense. The vilification of ambition, nearly always figured as wild, vain, false, unjust or endless, transcended party lines and featured in the works of Addison and Defoe, as well as Pope and Swift. Finch's monarchical language suggests that she was attempting to link ambition with the state

and also with the imperialism that dominated British politics and society during the eighteenth century. Pope may have envisaged Britain's empire building as the end to discord, persecution and "mad *Ambition*" (l.414) in the conclusion to *Windsor-Forest*, but 'The King and the Shepherd' offers an alternative outcome.³² This would have been a controversial stance as "the benefits of empire were rarely disputed" and perhaps could only have been expressed within the unthreatening context of the fable (Brown, p.157).

'The Shepherd and the Calm' also recounts the perils of ambition, but links it more overtly to trade and commercialism, through the tale of a shepherd lured away from his humble but contented life:

But yet, a fatal Prospect to the Sea
Wou'd often draw his greedy Sight away.
He saw the Barques unlading on the Shore,
And guessed their Wealth, then scorn'd his little Store.³³

Finch highlights the speculative aspect of trade and commerce - "Then wou'd that Little lose, or else wou'd make it more" (l.12) - which led an increasingly economic society to reject the security of property in favour of immediate gain. In her fable the shepherd's fortunes are mirrored by the aspect of the sea: when "smooth it lay, as if one single Wave / Made all the Sea" (ll.21-22) the shepherd- turned- merchant prospers and "Gold to Gold his happy Voyage joins" (l.26). However, his next endeavour is accompanied by "rugged Blasts" (l.28) that result in his ruin, as the "broken Merchant" (l.30) is left shipwrecked on the very shores where he once lived as a humble shepherd. As with 'The King and the Shepherd', the beleaguered shepherd is granted a reprieve from his ambition and allowed to return safely to his former occupation, having learnt from "sad Experience" (l.37) that a "slender, but

³² Interestingly, Colin Nicholson has posited the theory that *Windsor-Forest* is more than a "piece of political myth-making" and actually indicates "an early alertness to the possessive egoism that an ethic of conspicuous consumption develops and strengthens" (Nicholson, p.25). The excessive consumption of the early eighteenth century was of course intrinsically linked to the rise of imperialism and the resulting proliferation of luxury foreign goods, a process Laura Brown terms "imperialist acquisition" (Brown, p.43).

³³ *Poems of Anne*, pp.183-85, ll.8-11.

secure Estate" (l.50) is more valuable than the fickle temptations of fortune and commerce.

This sense that literature and learning has been devalued by the rise of commercialism and fashion and the pursuit of financial self-interest is one that pervades Finch's fables, belying her assertion in 'The Tale of the Miser and the Poet' that she is content to wait until "Poets thrive" (l.99) once again. 'The Tradesman and the Scholar', a reworking of La Fontaine's 'L'Avantage de la Science', recounts the disdain of "A Citizen of mighty Pelf" for the "Master of Sciences and Arts" as the scholar "drives no Trade" or even seeks to earn a fortune or patronage by his studies.³⁴ However, when war and unrest "lays the City waste" (l.42) and its inhabitants are forced to survive on their own merits, "From Shops, and Trade, and Wealth divorc'd" (l.46), it is the student and the man of letters who is "welcom'd, wheresoe'er he came" (l.55) and whose company is sought by "Potentates" (l.56) and universities far and wide. The instability and impermanence inherent in trade and speculation is rejected in favour of "*Wit and the Arts*" (l.68), which form a foundation that can never be eroded, no matter what the external circumstance.

In this respect the fable can be read as a continuation of themes discussed in the previous chapter. Erin Mackie has noted that many social commentators felt a certain amount of consternation about a society in which "people were placing hopes, dreams, and desires in commodities, where human creativity and potentials for transformation were being attached to things" and 'The Tradesman and the Scholar' echoes popular fears about the dangers of consumption (Mackie, p.64). The poem also explicitly aligns the wealth, display and ignorance so prized by the tradesman with the city.

Pat Rogers argues that "The unpleasant physical facts of the contemporary town serve as a negative image: an actuality of poverty, confusion and immorality to

³⁴ *Poems of Anne*, pp.194-96, ll.1, 4, 12.

set against the dream of learning, the vision of heroism, or the pastoral idyll" and this image is clearly incorporated into the fable, although Finch never engages with the idea of the city and the actuality of London culture to the same extent or with the same fascination as Swift and Pope.³⁵ 'The Tradesman and the Scholar' also carries an echo of the widespread apprehension of civil war breaking out as a result of Jacobite unrest. The moral of the tale is only revealed by the occasion of war, which destroys "the City", the focus of much of the poet's anxiety about contemporary society, and forces her two characters to endure a life of exile. However, rather than dwell on the negative consequences of the financial revolution the construction of 'The Tradesman and the Scholar' as a fable enables the poet to adopt a didactic tone and offer an alternative to ignorance and penury in the form of the scholar.

Finch's shepherd chooses a "certain Fate" (l.58) over the vagaries of Fortune, a recurring figure in her fables, unlike the foolish blind man of 'The King and the Shepherd', whose dogged belief in the Fates and Fortune cause him to ignore the fact that he is holding a serpent rather than a staff. She turns once again to Fortune in 'The Decision of Fortune: A Fable', an admonitory tale for those who actively pursue fortune, fame and wealth, as the man who chases Fortune around the globe in hopes of reward eventually finds her at the home of his erstwhile neighbour who "unseeking *Fortune* shall possess".³⁶ The moral of the fable is immediately obvious and can be taken at face value, but a more detailed reading reveals a complex narrative reflecting Finch's concerns and opinions about her own society. The man favoured by Fortune is established as a land-owner who chooses to protect his "few Paternal acres" (l.17), unlike his neighbour who prefers to seek out Fortune instead of staying "at Home, Dull and Content / With Quarter-Days, and hard extorted Rent" (ll.12-13). Here the contemporary ideological conflict between the 'landed interest' and the 'monied

³⁵ Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1972), p.8.

³⁶ *Poems of Anne*, pp.174-76, l.51.

interest', tradition and innovation, is embedded in a fable, in order to present a simplified form of an argument prevalent in the literature of the period.

Finch depicts Fortune as something of a coquette: the virtuous landowner refers to her followers as "the Darling[s] of this Lady *Chance*" (l.19) who 'court' her favour, while Fortune makes her appearance in a "gaudy coach" (l.42) and her inconstancy, the trademark of the coquette, is continually asserted through the descriptions of her as "this fickle Mistress of all Human-kind" (l.38) and "the uncertain Dame" (l.41). Fortuna was the goddess of chance or luck, often associated with gambling, who was refigured in the financial idiom of the eighteenth century as Credit or Lady Credit and J.G.A Pocock has observed that in Augustan journalism:

Credit is symbolized as a goddess having the attributes of the Renaissance goddess Fortune, and even more than that she equated with fantasy, passion and dynamic change. She stands for that future which can only be sought passionately and inconstantly and for the hysterical fluctuations of the urge towards it.

(Pocock, p.99)

Finch subverts the very model of Fortune that she has appropriated from, predominantly male, financial and political rhetoric, through Fortune's decision to reward the virtuous and honourable landowner rather than the adventurer:

Fortune behold, who has been long pursu'd,
Whilst all the Men, that have my Splendors view'd,
Madly enamour'd, have such Flatt'ries forg'd,
And with such Lies their vain Pretensions urg'd,
That Hither I am fled to shun their Suits,
And by free Choice conclude their vain Disputes;
Whilst I the Owner of this mansion bless,
And he unseeking *Fortune* shall possess.

(ll.44-51)

Fortune and Credit may have traditionally symbolized disorder and have come to represent male anxiety about the nature of credit finance, but here Fortune is redeemed as a figure of reason and order by spurning the advances of men who seek her favour by 'corrupt' means (Pocock, p.114). The fable concludes with what could be read as a

damning indictment of the new credit-based society and the men who participate in its speculations:

To Knaves and Fools, when I've some Grace allow'd,
 'T has been like scattering Money in a Croud,
 [...]
 Whilst Crowns, and Crosiers in the Contest hurl'd,
 Shew'd me a Farce in the contending World.
 Thou wert deluded, whilst with Ship, or Steed,
 Thou lately didst attempt to reach my Speed,
 And by laborious Toil, and endless Pains,
 Didst sell thy Quiet for my doubtful Gains [...]

(ll.54-55, 61-66)

Fortune rewards the man "Who every Thing to its just Value prizes" (l.68), not the speculator or stockjobber.

Many of Finch's fables examine the nature of power in the wake of the Revolution and the increasingly party-led form of government. "The Shepherd Piping to the Fishes" (?1701), possibly reflecting Tory concern over the politics of moderation, effectively demonstrates the inadequacies of "wheedling Arts", as the shepherd tries to ensnare the fish by stealth and to charm them into submission.³⁷ Naturally he does not succeed and resorts to a tried and tested method: "And from his Shoulder throws the Net, / Resolv'd he wou'd a Supper get / By Force, if not by Parts." (ll.33-35). The net is the most effective method of catching fish, just as power and control stems from authority and right, rather than politicking and persuasion:

*Thus stated Laws are always best
 To rule the vulgar Throng,
 Who grow more Stubborn when Carest,
 Or with soft Rhetorick addrest,
 If taking Measures wrong.*

(ll.36-40)

'Democritus and his Neighbours' also focuses on the diminished importance of the inherent authority so important in the governance of the Stuart monarchs. The fable relates the power of "a Croud of Fools" to judge and determine the fate of a "Man of

³⁷ *Poems of Anne*, pp.173-74, l.32.

Sense" and asks the question: "*Then how can we with their Opinions join, / Who, to promote some Int'rest, wou'd define / The People's Voice to be the Voice Divine?*"³⁸

Although William III appropriated much of the Stuart ideology and iconography in order to consolidate his own reign, he notably avoided the divine aspect of that monarchy, due to the implications it would have for his own position as an elected king. 'Democritus and his Neighbours' stresses the fact that power has shifted from the monarchy to the government and the people, as the people's voice has taken precedence over that of God. The moral of the story suggests that it is a shift facilitated by powerful men and endorsed by the government for their own ends, an idea that was pervasive in the political climate of the early eighteenth century. A similar moral can be traced in 'The Eagle, The Sow, and the Cat', in which the cat symbolizes the self-interested statesman, politician or courtier who disrupts the divine order and hierarchy for his own "treach'rous Gains".³⁹

This fable is particularly relevant to political society due to Finch's use of language and signifiers associated with the Stuarts; the eagle is the "Queen of Birds" who takes up residence in "a stately Oak" in order "t'increase the Regal Stock" (ll.1-2) and the cat uses the threat of a "Foe intestine" (l.44) to triumph over the eagle and the sow. Tomoko Hanazaki has noted that, during Queen Anne's reign, "familiar birds emerged as a new convention of the English fable addressing a wider political audience" and between 1708 and 1716 the eagle was consistently used to represent the queen, with other bird types allocated to her ministers and the various political factions.⁴⁰ If, as Cameron suggests, 'The Eagle, the Cat and the Sow' was written circa 1708, then it seems likely that Finch was an early proponent of this form of bird typology. Her fable is based around the hierarchical structuring of society, which functions perfectly at the beginning of the tale, with the eagle nesting at the top of the

³⁸ *Poems of Anne*, pp.208-10, ll.70-73.

³⁹ *Poems of Anne*, pp.198-200, l.63.

⁴⁰ Tomoko Hanazaki, 'A New Parliament of Birds: Aesop, Fiction, and Jacobite Rhetoric', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27.2 (1993-94), 235-254 (p.237, 245).

tree, the agile cat residing in the middle and the earth-bound pig inhabiting the roots. The cat disrupts this ideal society by manipulating the eagle and the sow into such a state of fear and anxiety that they flee the tree, leaving their young to her tender mercies.

The oak tree has been a persistent trope throughout Finch's political poetry, connoting the patriarchal government of the Stuarts and representing stability, security and also the mystical element of Stuart kingship; however, in 'The Eagle, the Cat, and the Sow' she uses the oak to express the dangers inherent in the new models of society perpetuated by the revolution. 'The Atheist and the Acorn', an imitation of La Fontaine, also features the oak tree, in a fable reinforcing the natural order and divine authority and warning those who seek to question it: a reading emphasized by the fact that the humble villager of the original version is replaced by an atheist. The "dull presuming Atheist" questions the sense of having a pumpkin, supported only by a "little String", growing so close to the ground, while the might of the oak tree is wasted on its disproportionately small fruit.⁴¹ Finch mocks the atheist's "better Judgement" (l.16) - after all who can presume to know nature better than its creator - when an acorn falls from the oak and hits him on the eye:

Th' offended Part with Tears ran o'er,
As punish'd for the Sin:
Fool! had that Bough a *Pumpkin* bore,
Thy Whimseys must have work'd no more,
Nor Scull had kept them in.

(ll.26-30)

Jayne Lewis proposes a gendered approach to the poem, linking the "acorn's defiant energy with women's bodies in their manmade trappings" (Lewis, p.140), a comparison suggested by the fact that the acorn's fall occurs when it is "loosen'd from the Stay" (l.24). This is an interesting idea and one that could explain the importance of the female poet in administering moral truths within the context of the fable, which

⁴¹ *Poems of Anne*, pp.169-170, l.3, 8.

by its very nature releases her from the restraints normally imposed by both gender and politics.

If one was to apply bird typology to 'The Owl describing her Young Ones', bearing in mind that owls generally signified supporters of the Hanoverians, then the opening lines of the fable would leave little doubt, if any ever existed, as to Finch's feelings towards the designated heirs to the throne: "Why was that baleful Creature made, / Which seeks our Quiet to invade, / And screams ill Omens through the Shade?"⁴² Even if, as Charles Hinnant has argued, her use of animal or bird characters cannot be read as representations of specific monarchs, courtiers or politicians, 'The Owl describing her Young Ones' remains a powerful political statement. The fable cautions against misrepresentation and false authority in a literary context, "*Faces or Books, beyond their Worth extoll'd, / Are censur'd most, and thus to pieces pull'd.*" (ll.76-77); however, this is one of the few instances in which the moral is less revealing and instructive than the actual body of the fable.⁴³

Finch uses the fable to present a complex argument about the nature of power under the terms of a social contract. The owl enters into a contract with the eagle in order to secure protection for her offspring, but her vanity causes her to exaggerate the physical attributes of the owlets, creating a 'loop-hole' through which the contract can be nullified. The owl's actions, far from securing the "Safety [of] her Tribe" (l.7), actually place them in danger and result in their eventual fate as the "Eagle's food" (l.6). The eagle is figured as the "King of Cedars" (l.25) and the owlets are depicted as "Heiresses" who, in the absence of any male successors, stand to inherit the "ancient Yew" they inhabit.⁴⁴ According to Locke, all men are naturally "free, equal and

⁴² *Poems of Anne*, pp.178-81, ll.1-3.

⁴³ Although I am focusing primarily on a political reading of this fable, Jayne Lewis posits an interesting alternative, arguing that 'The Owl describing her Young Ones' focuses on sexual politics and "the female artist's fate in patriarchy". Lewis convincingly links the fable to contemporary literary culture by reading the owl, eagle and owlets as symbols of Finch, the reader and *Miscellany Poems* itself. (Lewis, pp.151-52)

⁴⁴ There is a poignant recognition of the probable end of the Stuart monarchy in Finch's description of the owls' status: "This ancient Yew three Hundred Years, / Has been possess'd by Lincol Heirs: / The

independent" and cannot be subjected to the political power of anyone else without their consent, therefore the agreement between the owl and the eagle, entered into with the full consent of the owl, is surely a legitimate contract.⁴⁵ Yet the young, female owlets, dependent on their mother for food and shelter, cannot be said to be free, equal and independent in relation to the power and sovereignty of the eagle, who is their superior in might and intellect.

As Carol Pateman has argued:

The assumption that individuals were born free and equal to each other meant that none of the old arguments for subordination could be accepted. Arguments that rulers and masters exercised their power through God's will had to be rejected; might or force could no longer be translated into political right; appeals to custom and tradition were no longer sufficient; nor were the various arguments from nature, whether they looked to the generative power of a father, or to superior birth, strength, ability or rationality.⁴⁶

Under the patriarchal mode of government advocated by Robert Filmer and practised by the Stuart monarchs, the king was obligated to protect and defend his subordinates as a condition of his natural and divinely endorsed right to rule. Thus the eagle would have been required to offer his protection to the owl, who acknowledged her own weakness when she admitted that fear of fortune-hunters prevents her young from taking to the air, without any contractual exchange of favours or services: "And serving him, his Favour bribe." (l.9).

For Finch "the popular notion of a contract based upon utility rather than obligation threatened [...] to erode the very core of any society" (Hinnant, p.190), and this is certainly the case in 'The Owl describing her Young Ones', embodied in the bloody fate of the owlets: "The Plumes are stripped, the Grisles broke, / And near the Feeder was to choak." (ll.62-63). Although the owl condemns the eagle, exclaiming against "League-Breakers" (l.66) and the eagle charges the owl for her deception -

Males extinct, now All is Theirs." (ll.19-21). Queen Anne's death would see the crown pass to the House of Hanover.

⁴⁵ John Locke: *Two Treatises of Government* ed. by Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p.330.

⁴⁶ Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p.39.

"Upon your self the Blame be laid; / My Talons you've to Blood betray'd, / And ly'd in every Word you said" (ll.73-75) - it is the very nature of the contract that has resulted in this situation.

She also uses the fable to question the concept of status, through the owl's exaggerated account of her offspring's charms. Erin Mackie argues that, in the early eighteenth century, taste, manners and social prestige were no longer solely aligned with aristocratic birth and also that social prestige was increasingly judged on purely aesthetic values (Mackie, p.9). This shift in perception can be traced in the owl's description of her children, as she recommends them to the eagle on the basis of their appearance:

In Looks my Young do all excel,
[...]
I hope I've done their Beauties right,
Whose Eyes outshine the Stars by Night;
Their Muffs and Tippetts too are White.

(ll.11, 22-24)

Mackie further adds that "Fashion serves both to embody the new encroachment of class-based, economic pretensions to status and a way to talk about these pretensions and the socio-political changes associated with them." (p.14).

In making his decision on the identity of the owlets, the eagle relies on their appearance to determine whether or not they belong to the "enchanting, beauteous Race" (l.45) described by the owl. Finch's eagle initially uses the language of fashion to judge the owlets's status, commenting that, "These wear no *Palatines*, nor Muffs, / *Italian Silks*, or *Doyley Stuffs*, / But motley Callicoes, and Ruffs" (ll.52-54), but later associates status with noble birth when he asks the owl:

Were then your progeny but Owls?
I thought some *Phoenix* was their Sire,
Who did those charming Looks inspire,
That you'd prepar'd me to admire.

(ll.69-72)

Pateman argues that "Contract [...] gains its meaning as freedom in contrast to, and in opposition to, the order of subjection of status or patriarchy", yet as this fable illustrates it is impossible to distinguish between the two: contract has become inextricably bound, through the new language of fashion, to the standards of its patriarchal predecessor (Pateman, p.9).

The simple form and uncomplicated language of the fable belies its potential to present complex political arguments hidden within familiar tales of animals and unsophisticated characters. Finch consistently fulfils her manifesto, laid out in 'The Critick and the Writer of Fables', to expose the vanity, greed and ambition inherent in contemporary society and educate her readers as to their dangers. That she does so whilst entertaining and amusing, often in a darkly humorous manner, is a testament to her aptitude for the genre. The fables discussed in this chapter demonstrate a notable range of political comment, from veiled partisan attacks to more objective speculations on the nature of the political system, all the more remarkable for the form in which it is delivered.

7. CONCLUSION

Jacobitism is often associated with Ireland and Scotland, nations which witnessed the martial aspects of James II's attempts to reclaim his throne, with secret plots and daring uprisings, with strident toasts damning William III or the Hanoverians and with the vicious and inflammatory ballads and pamphlets that urged decisive action in order to return the Stuarts to power, but there were also many less dangerous and less categorical means of conveying political, religious and emotional attachment to the exiled monarchy. After the Revolution and the subsequent flight of the king and his family, those members of the court who remained in England and his supporters in the populace as a whole sought comfort and solidarity through a variety of pastimes and pursuits, all of which served to confirm both their own loyalty and the enduring power of Stuart ideologies and iconographies.

Many of James II's adherents in England refused to swear the oaths of allegiance to the new king and queen, William III and Mary II, while others absented themselves from public life and political office. Even seemingly petulant or futile gestures such as abstaining from toasts to the new monarchs were a vital means of communicating opposition to the Revolution and resisting attempts to remove the name and legacy of James II from history. Jacobitism could also be expressed through the wearing of white roses and cockades or clothes in apposite colours and by displaying images of the exiled monarch, his family or other luminaries, past and present, with a connection to the cause. Even Heneage Finch's antiquarianism, an ostensibly innocuous interest suited to his retired lifestyle after 1690, possessed strong Jacobite connotations in its preservation of history and concern for veracity. Jacobitism involved both active and passive protest, ranging from the harsh realities of military campaigns and the dangerous penalties of clandestine intrigues to the sentimental and essentially romanticized perception of James II as a tragic hero, victim of religious persecution, political machinations or familial resentment.

Although contemporary critics often attest to Anne Finch's Jacobitism, finally invalidating the apolitical approach to her poetry instituted by Wordsworth, there still remains a certain reluctance to embrace the degree to which she engaged with current political ideologies and events and other partisan writers. Throughout this thesis I have contested that Finch's Jacobitism was not a fixed constant, merely the manifestation of her personal connection to the Stuart royal family revealed through nostalgic longing and empty regret. Rather it was an intrinsic part of her poetic subjectivity and authorial identity. Furthermore by focusing on specific forms of poetic discourse, such as the panegyric and the fable, the preceding chapters have demonstrated the extent and diversity of Finch's political agency.

Chapter One considered the importance of the retirement tradition and melancholic mode through their connection to earlier royalist writers and the poetics of exile. The nostalgic and reflective elements of Jacobitism were very much evident in the poetry discussed in this chapter, as Finch constructed her identity through her role as a disenfranchised outsider. Yet, although lamenting the fall of James II and Mary of Modena, poems such as 'The Spleen' and 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' also revealed the defiant and subversive possibilities contained in Finch's verse. Chapter Two focused on the importance of traditional Stuart iconography to Jacobite writing, as Finch adopted the role of the panegyrist in order to celebrate and defend the exiled king against Williamite propaganda. Although panegyric typology and conventional signifiers like the royal oak are often regarded as empty rhetoric or mere nostalgia, this chapter proves the importance of panegyric writing as a source of linguistic and political authority long after the glory days of the Restoration.

In Chapter Three, I examined the significance of gender in establishing a bond between the male monarch and female poet, as Finch sought to personalize her relationship with James II and authenticate her role as his poet/prophet. Her political subjectivity is endorsed by the closeness of the figurative relationship between

monarch and poet, a familiarity dependent on the gender of the poet. Chapter Four differs somewhat from previous chapters by turning from past royalist writers to near contemporaries of Finch, as her political perception was shaped through interaction and exchange rather than the models provided by her predecessors. Perhaps, more than any other, this chapter exemplifies the multiplicity and range of Finch's political discourse and the way in which her conception of Jacobitism evolved throughout her career. Literary networks and clubs, the preoccupations of fashionable London, party politics and the financial marketplace are all related to her oppositional writing, as she concentrated principally on attacking the enemies of Jacobitism rather than defending the exiled Stuart monarchy.

The final chapter attempted to reassess the fable in a political context and contested that this mode of writing must be considered alongside other more evidently political forms. Through her fables Finch continued to disseminate Jacobite ideas and narratives, albeit appreciably encoded, in a lucid and accessible form, ensuring that the principles behind Jacobitism and oppositional politics in general reached a wider audience than other more elite verse forms.

In conclusion, this thesis both confirms the work of earlier critics, such as Barbara McGovern and Carol Barash, who first conceived of the political nature of Anne Finch's poetry and offers a new perspective on her Jacobite writing.

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