Dissimulating Romance

The Ethics of Deception in Seventeenth-Century Prose Romance

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that seventeenth-century English prose romances are motivated by anxieties over truth-telling and the ethical practice of deception. From the title of MacKenzie's *Aretina: A Serious Romance* (1660), I take the collocation 'serious romance' to refer to the philosophically and politically engaged prose romances of the seventeenth century. Following Amelia Zurcher's work on the concept of 'interest' in 'serious romance', this thesis examines a separate but related aspect of the genre's moral philosophical engagement: its investigation of the ethics of dissimulation.

By dissimulation, I mean the art of lying by concealment. Dissimulating techniques include controversial rhetorical tools such as equivocation and mental reservation, but dissimulation is also implicated in laudable virtues such as prudence and discretion. The thesis traces arguments about the ethical practice of dissimulation and other types of lie through English prose romances from Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590) to Orrery's *Parthenissa* (1651-69) to suggest that seventeenth-century romances increasingly espoused theories of 'honest dissimulation' and came to champion the theory of the 'right to lie'.

The thesis examines a range of works which have hitherto received scant critical attention, notably Roger Boyle's *Parthenissa* (1651-69), Percy Herbert's *The Princess Cloria* (1652-61), the anonymous *Theophania* (1655) and *Eliana* (1661) and John Bulteel's *Birinthea* (1664), alongside better studied romances such as Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590), Wroth's *Urania* (1621) and Barclay's *Argenis* (1621). It situates readings of these original English romances within the context of the French romances of D'Urfé, Scudéry and La Calprenède, as well as within the context of contemporary moral philosophy.

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A Note on the Text

Spelling

In quoting from these romances, original spelling has been preserved, although the variation between 'u' and 'v' and 'i' and 'j' has been modernised. Non-significant italics have not been preserved.

Dates

I follow most modern historians by rendering dates according to the Julian calendar, but adjusting the year to start on January 1.

Terminology

To avoid Anglocentrism, I use the term 'Civil Wars' to refer to the military and political unrest across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the 1640s and 1650s; I use the term 'English Civil War' to refer specifically to the conflict between King and Parliament 1642-6. I refer to the government of 1649-60 as the 'Commonwealth', rather than the 'Interregnum', as this seems to better reflect a time when it appeared by no means certain that the monarchy would be restored.

Most critics refer to Scudéry's *Artamène, ou, le Grand Cyrus* simply as *Cyrus*; however, as this thesis concerns itself with several other Cyrus narratives, I have opted for *Artamène* for the sake of clarity. *Cloria* refers always to the 1661 *The Princess Cloria*; when referring to the earlier parts published separately, I cite them as *Cloria and Narcissus*. I employ *L'Astrée* to refer to the title of D'Urfé's romance, but as I am quoting from Davies' translation I refer to the central heroine as Astrea.

Translations

All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated. John Holland, Jessica Lazar and Elizabeth Sandis all kindly assisted with translations from Latin and Helen Moore with translations from French.

Citations

Romances of this period have no consistent form: some are divided into volumes, parts and books, others into just parts and books, others again into books with sub-parts; some contain continuous page references throughout a volume, others have page numbers beginning afresh with each part or book. This is complicated by the liberty stationers took in reorganising sections in new editions: while the 1663 edition of Loveday's translation of La Calprenède's *Cleopatra* is divided into three parts, each of four books, the 1736 edition is divided into two books, of seven and five parts respectively. Similarly the three parts of *Parthenissa* were originally printed in quarto volumes each containing four books or half a part; the 1676 folio edition was divided into six parts: Part One containing six books, Part Two containing two books, and every part thereafter containing four books.

For ease of reference, citations of romances where pagination is not continuous (such as *L'Astrée*) will be given in the form section:page or, where pagination is renewed from subsection to subsection, section:subsection:page. This form is also used for modern books in several volumes, for instance, citations of the Roberts' edition of *Urania* are given as volume:page. Where pagination is continuous, as in all editions of *Argenis*, only the page number shall be given even though the romance is divided into five books; similarly when referring to those romances which exist in single-volume modern editions (such as the *Arcadia*), only a page number will be given.

ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
BNF	Bibliothèque National de France
BP	Boyle Papers, The Royal Society
Bod	Bodleian Library Collections
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
ELH	*English Literary History*
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NLW	National Library of Wales
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OUP	Oxford University Press
PRO	Public Records Office
SEL	*Studies in English Literature*
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

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KEY DATES

Year	English Romances (first editions only)	French Romances (and translations)	Literary, Philosophical or Artistic Events	Political Events
1612				England enters the Protestant Union; Death of Henry, Prince of Wales (Nov)
1618				Bohemian Revolt begins Thirty Years' War (May)
1619		First part of Gomberville's *Polexandre* published as *L'Exil de Polexandre et d'Ériclée*		
1620				Rebel forces of Prague defeated at the Battle of White Mountain (Nov); Frederick and Elizabeth of Bohemia flee Bohemia
1621	Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* Barclay's *Argenis*		Philemon Holland completes English translation of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*	
1622		Sorel's *L'Histoire Comique de Francion*		
1625	Kingsmill Long translation of *Argenis*		Grotius' *On the Law of War and Peace*	Death of James I; Accession of Charles I (March); completion of the Queen's Chapel at Somerset House; marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria by proxy (May)
1626			Bacon's *The New Atlantis* Caussin's *The Holy Court* published in English	
1628			William Harvey discovers the circulation of blood	Assassination of Duke of Buckingham
1629	Le Grys translation of *Argenis*	*L'Exil de Polexandre* republished with different characters		Charles I dismisses Parliament and Personal Rule Begins
				Birth of future Charles II (May)
1632		Part One of *Polexandre* published, followed by four more parts 1632-7	Anthony Van Dyck arrives in England	

1633			Montagu/Jones' *The Shepherd's Paradise* (Jan); Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*	William Laud succeeds to see of Canterbury (Aug)
1634			Milton's *Comus* (Feb);	Introduction of Ship Money (Oct)
1637				John Hampden's case against Ship Money heard in court (Nov)
1638				Scottish National Covenant (Feb)
1640	Braithwaite's *The Two Lancashire Lovers*		Davenant/Jones' *Salmacida Spolia*	Catalan Revolt against Spain (May to 1659); Portuguese Revolt against Spain (to 1668); Charles I recalls Parliament; the Long Parliament opens (Nov); *Habeas Corpus* Act passed abolishing courts of High Commission and Star Chamber
1641		Scudéry's *Ibrahim, ou L'Illustre Bassa*	Torquato Accetto's *Della Dissimulazione Onesta*	Catalan Republic declared (Jan); Henrietta Maria flees to Holland with crown jewels to raise continental support; Execution of Earl of Strafford (May); Mary, Princess Royal, marries William II of Orange (May)
1642		La Calprenède's *Cassandre* (1642–50)		Battle of Edgehill (Oct); Death of Cardinal Richelieu (Dec); Cardinal Mazarin takes over as Chief Minister
1643				Death of Louis XIII; Accession of Louis XIV with Anne of Austria as regent (May)
1644			Milton's *Areopagitica*; Corneille's *La Mort de Pompée*	Battle of Marston Moor
1645			*King's Cabinet Opened*	Battle of Naseby
				Earl of Glamorgan agrees to freedom of worship for Irish Catholics
1647				Revolts in Naples and Sicily (to 1648)
1648	*Nova Solyma*	La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre* Scudéry's *Artamène, ou, Le Grand Cyrus* (1648–53)		Paris mob assaults home of Cardinal Mazarin inaugurating **Fronde crisis** (Jan); deposition and execution of Sultan Ibrahim (Aug); **Peace of Westphalia** ends Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire and Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch Republic (Oct); Ukraine revolts against Poland (to 1668); James Duke of York escapes Parliamentary imprisonment and flees to The Hague
1649			*Eikon Basilike* (Feb) Lovelace's *Lucasta*	**Execution of Charles I** (Jan); Louis XIV flees Paris (Jan); Cromwell orders Drogheda massacre (Sept)
1650	Thomas Bayly's *Herba Parietis*; Samuel Sheppard's *Amandus and Sophronia*		Percy Herbert's *Certaine Conceptions* Davenant's *Gondibert*	Condé arrested (Jan) Death of William II of Orange; birth of William III

1651	Orrery's *Parthenissa* (Part One)	Scarron's *Roman Comique*	Hobbes' *Leviathan*	Charles II and Scottish army defeated at Battle of Worcester (Sept)
1652		*The History of Philoxypes and Policrite* (a translation of an incident in Scudéry's *Artamène*) is printed in English by an anonymous translator; Cotterell's translation of *Cassandra*	Premiere of Corneille's *Théodore*	**First Anglo-Dutch War** begins Condé's troops enter Paris (July) Act for the Settlement of Ireland (Aug); death of Prince Maurice (Sept)
1653	Percy Herbert's *Cloria and Narcissus* (Part One)	*Artamène* (Part One) is printed in English		Mazarin is recalled (Feb) and Fronde revolt peters out; Cromwell assumes offices of Lord Protector (Dec); death of Princess Elizabeth
1654	*Cloria and Narcissus* (Part Two); John Reynolds' *The Flower of Fidelitie*	Scudéry's *Clélie* (1654-61)		Treaty of Westminster ends First Anglo-Dutch War (April); Royalist uprising in Salisbury (March); Abdication of Queen Christina of Sweden (June)
1655	*Theophania Parthenissa* (Parts Two – Four)	Davies' *Clelia* (Part One)		
1656	*Parthenissa* (Part Five) James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana*	Davies' *Clelia* (Part Two)	Cowley's *Davideis*	
1657		Davies' *Astrea* (Parts One-Two)		
1658	*Cloria and Narcissus* (Part Three)	Davies' *Clelia* (Part Three) Davies' *Astrea* (Part Three)		Death of Cromwell (Sept)
1659	Braithwait's *Panthalia*		Molière's *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (Nov)	Richard Cromwell resigns the Protectorate (May)
1660	Ingelo's *Bentivolio and Urania* Mackenzie's *Aretina*	Davies' *Clelia* (Part Four)		Charles II issues the Declaration of Breda, promising a general pardon and some religious toleration (April); **Restoration of Charles II** (May); Act of Oblivion and Indemnity; Death of Princess Mary (Dec)
1661	*The Princess Cloria* *Eliana*	La Calprenède's *Faramond ;* Scudéry's *Almahide, ou l'esclave reine* (1661-63)	Robert Boyle's *The Sceptical Chymist*	Death of Cardinal Mazarin (Mar); commencement of personal rule of Louis XIV

1662		English translation of *Pharamond*		Royal Society receives Charter; Charles II marries Catherine of Braganza; **Act of Uniformity**, outlawing Puritan opinion in the Church of England
1663		Loveday's *Cleopatra*	Katherine Phillips' translation of Corneille's *Pompée* first performed	
1664	John Bulteel's *Birinthea*			
1665	John Crowne's *Pandion and Amphigenia*			Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67) declared (March) Great Plague sweeps London, killing a fifth of the capital's half a million population
1666				Great Fire of London (Sept) destroys over 13,000 houses and 89 churches including St Paul's
1667			Publication of *Paradise Lost*	Charles II dismisses Clarendon (Aug)
1668			Dryden's *Secret-Love, or, The Maiden Queen* and *An Essay of Dramatick Poesy*; Newton constructs first reflecting telescope	Treaty of Lisbon ends Portuguese Restoration War and Spain recognises the House of Braganza (Feb)
1669	*Parthenissa* (Part Six)			Death of Henrietta Maria (Aug)
1670		De Subligny's *La Fausse Clélie*	Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada*	
1672				Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74)
1676	Complete folio of *Parthenissa*			
1677	*Evagoras*			
1678		*La Princesse de Clèves* Complete Davies' translation of *Clelia* printed	Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (Feb)	
1687	Boyle's *The Martyrdom of Theodora, and of Didymus*			
1688			Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*	

INTRODUCTION: DISSIMULATING ROMANCE

In Richard Braithwaite's 1640 romance, *The Two Lancashire Lovers*, the academically inclined heroine, Doriclea, tries to manipulate her parents into allowing her to marry her tutor by engineering a series of increasingly dramatic ruses. The narrator introduces one such trick – a pretence at serious illness – with a surprising reference to political theory:

> Who knowes not how to dissemble, he knowes not how to live. But if that Art receive approvement, Love and no other Object should be the instrument.[1]

This formulation of the Latin aphorism, *Nescit vivere qui nescit dissimulare, perire melius*, or "He who does not know how to dissimulate, does not know how to live, and is better dying", was more commonly known in its Tacitean variant, *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*, or "He who does not know how to dissimulate, does not know how to rule." The idea that dissimulation was an essential tool for the individual seeking to gain and retain power was a core tenet of Tacitism, a controversial strand of political theory that valued the pursuit of self-interest over the conventions of traditionally conceived virtue. By glossing Doriclea's guises with a Tacitean maxim, amorous play is granted a broader social and political significance – as Amelia Zurcher has argued, Braithwaite's dissimulating heroine is a powerful example of Tacitism's social "diffusion" in mid-century England. No longer purely a mode of political expression, dissimulation is so rife it has become part of everyday communication.[2] But Braithwaite avoids the controversial position of seeming to endorse Tacitism by insisting that dissimulation should only

[1] Richard Braithwaite, *The Two Lancashire Lovers: Or the Excellent History of Philocles and Doriclea* (London: Printed by E.G. for R. Best, 1640), 204. Braithwaite also refers to this maxim in his advice book, insisting both, "She knowes not how to live, nor how to love, that knowes not how to dissemble," and, "dissimulation sorts not well with affection: Lovers seldome read Loves Polliticks." *The English Gentlewoman* (London: Printed by B. Alsop and T. Fawcet, for Michaell Sparke, 1631), 34.

[2] Amelia Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century English Romance: Allegory, Ethics, and Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 113.

"receive approvement" in cases of "Love and no other Object." Dissimulation can be safely practised in the domestic sphere, perhaps, but elsewhere its effects may not be so benign.

Strictly speaking, dissimulation has a narrow definition pertaining to deception through concealment. In the words of Richard Steele, "simulation is a Pretence of what is not, and Dissimulation a Concealment of what is."[3] Discussions of dissimulation locate its practice within three distinctive spheres: the political, the religious and the social.[4] In the late sixteenth century, dissimulation was primarily associated with these first two spheres. George Puttenham, for instance, drew an association between dissimulation, allegory and courtly art.[5] But by the mid-seventeenth century, the apparent ubiquity of dissimulation in the social sphere had become a cause for comment and concern. Dudley North in his 1645 *A Forest of Varieties* complained "friendships are grown rare, dissimulation, cost and ceremony have extirpated them" and Percy Herbert, author of the 1652-61 romance *The Princess Cloria*, decried dissimulation as "the first general corruption" of this "unfortunate age."[6] Herbert feared dissimulation was practised unthinkingly and without purpose, calling it "a custom now adaies so much in fashion, that I have observed it sometimes affected, without any intention at all of compassing benefits."[7] If the growing acceptance

[3] Steele notes that "the learned make a difference between simulation and dissimulation" although, as we shall see, there is a certain amount of slippage between the two practices. Richard Steele, *Tatler* 213 (August 19, 1710): 1.

[4] I take this division into spheres of practice from Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 2009), 18-24.

[5] Puttenham describes "the Courtly figure Allegoria" as "the Figure of False Semblant or Dissimulation", like "the Great Emperour who had it usually in his mouth to say, *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*." Literary device is here figured not merely as the servant of the ambitious, dissimulating courtier, but as itself a flattering politician. George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 270-71. See also Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 113.

[6] Dudley North, *A Forest of Varieties* (London: Printed by Richard Cotes, 1645), 69; Percy Herbert, *Certaine Conceptions, or, Considerations of Sir Percy Herbert, Upon the Strange Change of Peoples Dispositions and Actions in These Latter Times* (London: Richard Tomlins, 1650), 139.

[7] *Certaine Conceptions*, 143. As Zurcher puts it, Herbert fears dissimulation has become merely "social reflex," *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 113. Similar concerns are expressed in a variety of genres, notably in religious literature. The puritan Daniel Dyke bemoaned dissimulation as "so common a practise in the world"

of dissimulation outside the political sphere is of little concern to Braithwaite, for Herbert it is a source of considerable anxiety.

In this thesis, I trace anxieties about dissimulation as both a political and a social practice by examining its representation in the genre of prose romance. I contend that seventeenth-century prose romances engage with key aspects of the philosophical debate surrounding the practice of dissimulation in the political and social spheres and reveal deep anxieties about its normalization. I make this argument in service of a broader claim for the relevance of prose romance to mid-century intellectual culture. Historians of the novel have tended to disregard romance as an out-dated genre, a backwards-looking remnant of a bygone age.[8] But in this thesis, I argue that seventeenth-century English prose romances are extremely contemporary in their interests and deeply concerned with the key political and moral philosophical questions of their day.[9] In particular, I suggest they demonstrate

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that "it is counted wisdome for men thus to vaile their intents with pretences, their meaning with their words, that the truth may be thought false, and falshood true." Daniel Dyke, *The Mystery of Selfe-Deceiving: Or, a Discorse and Discovery of the Deceitfulnesse of Mans Heart* (London: William Stansby, 1634), 15.

[8] Conventional literary histories present romance as the seed of the novel or the foil against which the novel emerged; the critical conversation around seventeenth-century romances has rarely moved beyond this question of influence. I will summarise in brief the key arguments in this critical debate: Lennard Davis and J. Paul Hunter argue that there is no formal link between romance and the novel: Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 40-43; J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York and London: W.W.Norton & Company, 1990), 23. However, most other critics view romance as a key stage in the development of the novel, either as its opposite or as its seed. Michael McKeon sees romance as the form against which the novel defined itself: *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 19-22. Terry Eagleton and Margaret Anne Doody present romance as the root of the novel; indeed, for Doody, romances *are* novels: Eagleton, *The English Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 2-5; Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 1. Steven Moore builds on Doody's work in his recent two-part history of the novel, which classifies seventeenth-century French and English prose romances as novels: *The Novel: An Alternative History, 1600-1800* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 171-217 and 541-582. While I applaud attempts to draw attention to prose romance by fitting it within more familiar critical territory, such as the history of the novel, I have some reservations about work such as Moore's which smooths out romance's distinctive qualities and leaves us with the impression that prose romances are simply naïve or not very good novels. A more nuanced depiction of the relationship between romance and the novel is presented by James Grantham Turner, who differentiates between 'old' and 'new' romance: "'Romance' and the Novel in Restoration England," *The Review of English Studies* 63, no. 258 (2011): 58-85. Similarly, the recent *Cambridge History of the English Novel* affirms "the enduring power of romance": Clement Hawes and Robert L. Caserio, ed. *The Cambridge History of the English Novel* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 1.

[9] In this, I follow Paul Salzman, Annabel Patterson, Victoria Kahn and Amelia Zurcher. Salzman's revolutionary study of early modern prose fiction finds the romance form became a "serious, imaginative exploration of pressing dilemmas" in *English Prose Fiction, 1558-1700: A Critical History* (Oxford:

an engagement with two pressing questions: *Is it ever acceptable to lie?* and, *How can we know who to trust when dissimulation is ubiquitous?*[10]

This thesis presents three main arguments. The first is that seventeenth-century English and French prose romances are differentiated from earlier 'extravagant' or 'fantastic' romances by being presented as 'serious' works which explore questions of moral and political philosophy and reject the deceptive conventions of older romances. The second is that many 'serious romances' weigh the benefits to be accrued by deception against conventional expectations of traditionally-conceived virtue and find in favour of well-intentioned if nevertheless deceitful 'honest dissimulation' in social and political conduct. 'Honest dissimulation' is presented as an Aristotelian Golden Mean between outright deceit and inappropriately open speech and underscores notions of courteous behaviour such as the *honnête homme* (an ideal of courtly masculine behaviour which emerged out of *préciosité* and privileged the needs of others over self-interest). The third is that 'serious romance' plays on the common perception of romance as deluding to invite investigative, or active, reading.

I seek to build on the work of Amelia Zurcher, whose 2007 *Seventeenth-Century English Romance: Allegory, Ethics, and Politics* identified a swathe of mid-century romances missing from traditional literary histories.[11] While Mary Wroth's *Urania*, the first

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Clarendon Press, 1985), 112; Patterson suggests romance was "redefined as serious" in *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 160; Kahn reads "the politics of romance" as commenting "on the contemporary crises of political obligation" in *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640-1674* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 177; and Amelia Zurcher reads the genre as articulating "specifically early modern anxieties about the ethics of political agency" in *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 4.

[10] The first question is posed by Dallas Denery in *The Devil Wins*, 1-18.

[11] Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*. For an example of literary histories of the period which exclude romance, see Thomas N. Corns, *A History of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007). Those which have acknowledged prose fiction tend to do so dismissively. James Sutherland, for instance, dismisses seventeenth-century prose romances as a literary "cul-de-sac" not worth reading and *Parthenissa* in particular as an "extinct volcano" in *English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 206, 203. However, the *Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*

published prose fiction by an English woman, has been the subject of considerable critical interest, and John Barclay's *Argenis* and the anonymous *Theophania* have received their first modern critical editions, Zurcher remains the only critic to consider romances such as Thomas Bayly's *Herba Parietis* and John Crowne's *Pandion and Amphigenia*. Even better-known romances such as Roger Boyle's *Parthenissa* are sometimes cited but are rarely examined in any detail.[12] Despite Zurcher's persuasive call to accommodate mid-century romance into intellectual and literary histories of the seventeenth century, prose romance remains a neglected genre, and to date romances such as John Bulteel's *Birinthea* have received no critical attention. This thesis follows Zurcher in examining works that have received scant study, despite their apparent contemporary popularity, but it deviates from Zurcher in seeking to situate readings of original English romances alongside the French romances of D'Urfé, Scudéry and La Calprenède. Similar to the editors of the recent collection *Seventeenth-Century Fiction*, I believe that seventeenth-century romance is better understood when considered as what Isabelle Moreau terms a "trans-European

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includes a chapter by Amelia Zurcher on prose romance, "The Political Ideologies of Revolutionary Prose Romance," ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 551-63. Studies of romance also tend to exclude the prose romances of the seventeenth century; the Blackwell *Companion to Romance*, for instance, leaps from Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare to the eighteenth century: Corinne J. Saunders, ed. *A Companion to Romance from Classical to Contemporary* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

[12] Where seventeenth-century romances have received any kind of sustained attention, it has usually been in service of a broader literary or cultural history. Thus, Nigel Smith gives part of his chapter on heroic ideology in mid-century literature to romance, Annabel Patterson devotes one chapter to "royal romance" to argue that censorship drove literary form, Lois Potter references *roman à clef* as a politically motivated genre affiliated with royalism, Victoria Kahn reads romances as contributions to a debate about the role of the passions in political obligation and Paul Salzman devotes an extended chapter to tracing what he calls the "political/allegorical romance" within a broader history of early modern prose fiction. See Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 233-46; Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 159-202; Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 72-8; Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 223-51; Paul Salzman, *English Prose Fiction*, 148-201. While Zurcher's account remains the sole monograph dedicated to seventeenth-century original English prose romances, work on Arcadian imitations and continuations by Gavin Alexander and Natasha Simonova has shown the century to be a period of innovative engagement with and interest in romance. See Gavin Alexander, *Writing after Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney, 1586-1640* (Oxford: OUP, 2006); Natasha Simonova, *Early Modern Authorship and Prose Continuations: Adaptations and Ownership from Sidney to Richardson* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

phenomenon."[13] Indeed, I follow Jonathan Scott who argues that seventeenth-century English culture can only be understood both within a pan-European context and as a unity (rather than divided into before and after 1660).[14] Despite the myriad of sources testifying to the popularity of the French heroic romances and their evident impact on mid-century English thought and culture, there remains a clear need for a sustained study of the interaction between the French and English traditions.[15] This area is too large to be tackled within the confines of a doctoral thesis, but I hope to gesture towards the kind of work still to be done.

[13] Isabelle Moreau, "Seventeenth-Century Fiction in the Making," in *Seventeenth-Century Fiction: Text and Transmission*, ed. Jacqueline Glomski and Isabelle Moreau (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 1.

[14] Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in a European Context* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 4-5. It has long been recognised that the time royalists spent in European exile was hugely formative and that they brought back with them Continental ideas that reshaped English culture after the Restoration. See P.H. Hardacre, *The Royalists During the Puritan Revolution* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956). For examples of the way this idea has shaped literary theory, see, for instance, Charles K. Smith, "French Philosophy and English Politics in Interregnum Poetry," in *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. Robert Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 177-209.

[15] There are, of course, several sustained studies of the French heroic romance, notably Mark Bannister, *Privileged Mortals: The French Heroic Novel 1630-1660*, Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs (New York: OUP, 1983); Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Woman and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Erica Harth, *Ideology and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, *'Exclusive Conversations': The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1988); Anne E. Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Edward Baron Turk, *Baroque Fiction-Making: A Study of Gomberville's 'Polexandre'* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978). The work of Bannister and DeJean in particular has shaped my reading of the French tradition. Jusserand first suggested there might be links between French and English romance authors in *Le Roman Anglais: Origine Et Formation Des Grandes Écoles De Romanciers Du XVIII^{e} Siècle* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1886). Louis Charlanne stressed the influence of Scudéry and La Calprenède on late seventeenth-century English literature and culture in *L'Influence Française En Angleterre Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librarie, 1906), 159-76. But the last detailed work on the interaction between French and English romances was done in the early twentieth century, in Albert W. Osborn, *Sir Philip Sidney En France* (Paris: H. Champion, 1932); Thomas Philip Haviland, *The Roman De Longue Haleine on English Soil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1931); Kathleen M. Lynch, "Conventions of Platonic Drama in the Heroic Plays of Orrery and Dryden," *PMLA* 44, no. 2 (1929): 456-471. Since then, reference to the French tradition has often served to dismiss English prose romances as derivative. This critical manoeuvre is part of a broader narrative which distinguishes imitative romance from the 'native' and original English novel, see, for instance, Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 43. There is, of course, a much larger critical tradition studying the influence of French literature and culture on Restoration England outside the genre of romance, and particularly the influence of French romances on English drama. See particularly Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989); Leslie Howard Martin, "The Consistency of Dryden's "Aureng-Zebe"," *Studies in Philology* 70, no. 3 (1973): 306-328.

Zurcher's account of prose romance focuses on the question of self-interest and deploys this ethical problem as a means of exploring the genre's rehearsal of political philosophy.[16] In this thesis, I examine an area of separate but related ethical enquiry – the virtue or vice of dissimulation – and seek to situate prose romance within theories of deception, an area of historical enquiry which has received some attention in the last 25 years. Building on Perez Zagorin's seminal *Ways of Lying*, historians such as Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, Jon Snyder and Dallas Denery have explored the history of deceit; Steven Shapin has performed similar work in his history of truth.[17] While Denery demonstrates that the philosophical toleration of mendacity has ancient origins, Zagorin, Cavaillé, Snyder and Shapin present the seventeenth century as a period of unprecedented examination into the ethics of truth-telling during which many moral philosophers proposed increasingly lax ethical positions towards deceit. In this thesis, I shall demonstrate that anxieties around the impulse to honesty also motivate literature, particularly prose romance. Prose romances exemplify many of the ways in which the seventeenth century was, as Zagorin calls it, the "Age of Dissimulation."[18]

The title of the thesis, 'Dissimulating Romance', refers both to the ways in which romance was perceived to be a deceptive or misleading genre and the ways in which as a genre it sought to engage with the moral philosophical problem posed by dissimulation in the civil, political and religious spheres. As the title contains two loaded concepts, I will explore the

[16] Similarly, Victoria Kahn argues that prose romances suggest that "a frank recognition of the centrality of interest is the foundation of any secure government," in "Reinventing Romance, or the Surprising Effects of Sympathy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2002), 627.

[17] Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," *Social Research* 63, no. 3 (1996); Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations. Jules-César Vanini, François La Mothe Le Vayer, Gabriel Naudé, Louis Machon Et Torquato Accetto: Religion, Morale Et Politique Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002); Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe*; Dallas G. Denery, *The Devil Wins: A History of Lying from the Garden of Eden to the Enlightenment* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[18] Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, 116.

critical heritage of 'romance' and 'dissimulation' separately before further elucidating their connection.

I – Romance

i) Defining Romance

Romance resists definition. Chivalric verse romances seem to bear few similarities to the chapbook romances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and these seem distinct again from the late Elizabethan romances inspired by the Greek novels of Heliodorus, Achilles Tatius, Longus and Xenophon of Ephesus.[19] As Barbara Fuchs observes, defining romance is not made easier by the rich collection of meanings the word has accrued over time: it can refer to continental vernacular languages, to verse tales composed in these languages, to fantastic fictions, or to an amorous affair.[20]

Northrop Frye suggests romance should be considered a 'mode' rather than a genre and identifies the presence of common "building blocks," such as "mysterious birth, oracular prophecies…foster parents, adventures which involve capture by pirates, narrow escapes from death, recognition of the true identity of the hero and his eventual marriage with the heroine." Frye's definition emphasises "the uniformity of romance formulas" throughout the history of the mode.[21] By contrast, Patricia Parker suggests we understand romance not by what it contains but by what it executes.[22] She identifies romance as resistance to resolution, as a form in which "the focus may be less on arrival or completion than on the strategy of delay."[23] Barbara Fuchs advances this reading, arguing that romance is best

[19] Nandini Das, *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570-1620* (Farnham: Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 21.
[20] Barbara Fuchs, *Romance*, ed. John Drakakis, New Critical Idiom (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.
[21] Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 4-5, 6.
[22] Fuchs, *Romance*, 8.
[23] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 5.

understood not as a genre or mode, but as "a set of strategies that organize and animate narrative."[24] While these strategies remain constant over time, certain narrative 'building blocks' can be privileged or sidelined to allow romance to continue to respond to its specific historical and cultural circumstances.[25] Helen Cooper suggests that the repetition of both formal and narrative conventions invites us to understand romance as "a lineage or a family of texts" which contain certain "resemblances".[26] Through the combination of formal strategies and recognisable memes, romance has proved an enduring and malleable form which, as Fredric Jameson observes, is both timeless and deeply rooted in the historical circumstances of its production.[27]

Romance has often been defined in relation to what it is *not*: it is not epic, it is not history, it is not the novel.[28] Amelia Zurcher observes that where epic is martial, masculine, nation-building, teleological and strongly end-stopped, romance is amorous, feminine, individual, episodic and resistant to closure.[29] For David Quint, the "linear teleology" of epic lends itself to the story of history's victors, while "cyclical romance patterns" better reflect the experiences of contingency and loss of agency characteristic of history's losers.[30] But some critics have identified the presence of romance strategies within epic (and within histories and novels) and pointed out the permeability of genre boundaries. Colin Burrow, for instance, refers to "epic romance" as one hybrid genre, and notes how many epics are

[24] Fuchs, *Romance*, 36.
[25] For the constants which have survived into modern romance, see Scott McCracken, *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 76.
[26] Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 8-9. Similarly Nandini Das reads romance as "generational" in *Renaissance Romance*, 4-7.
[27] Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History* 7, no. 1 (1975): 135-163.
[28] Amelia Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance: Romance Writing in Seventeenth-Century England," *Literature Compass* 8, no. 6 (2011), 377.
[29] Ibid.
[30] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 9, 13. See also Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance," 377.

enriched by romance strategies of delay and repetition.[31] As Adam Smyth observes, "early modern writers and readers generally treat genres as loose, tentative and negotiable – as momentary frames for holding a text together, which yield quickly to other frames."[32]

The permeation of romance strategies into other genres stands testament to the fluidity of romance itself over time. Indeed, as Christine Lee argues, "the meaning of 'romance' and its cognates changes radically between 1550 and 1670." Where in the sixteenth century 'romance' connoted a text that was Continental, chivalric, and amorous, by the mid-seventeenth century, 'romance' could refer to any fictive tale.[33] Forms of the word 'romance' such as 'romancical', 'romancial', 'romancist' and 'romancy', proliferated around 1650.[34] This rich linguistic variation stands testament to the way 'romance' had become a generalised term pertaining to any and all prose fiction. The variety encompassed by early modern romance has made it a generative area for critical work: for Lawrence Principe, romance is a major source for the development of scientific writing, for Julie Eckerle, romance strategies are key to early modern life writing, and for Julie Crawford, Helen Hackett and Lori Humphrey Newcomb, romance's presumed female readership offers fertile ground for examining connections between gender, genre and the history of the book.[35]

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[31] Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: OUP, 1993). Anthony Welch takes up the term in his reading of Davenant's Civil War epic, *Gondibert*, in which he identifies elements of 'romance retreat.' Anthony Welch, "Epic Romance, Royalist Retreat, and the English Civil War," *Modern Philology* 105, no. 3 (2008): 570-602. Gordon Teskey identifies romance "as a source of disorder, or potential for change" within epic in *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance*, ed. Gordon Teskey and George M. Logan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 7. See also Paul Salzman, "Royalist Epic and Romance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. N.H. Keeble (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 215-230

[32] Adam Smyth, "Commonplace Book Culture: A List of Sixteen Traits," in *Women and Writing, c.1340-c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, ed. Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (York: York Medieval Press, 2010), 94.

[33] Christine Lee, "The Meanings of Romance: Rethinking Early Modern Fiction," *Modern Philology* 112, no. 2 (2014): 287. See also Turner, "'Romance' and the Novel in Restoration England."

[34] Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance," 376.

[35] Lawrence M. Principe, "Virtuous Romance and Romantic Virtuoso: The Shaping of Robert Boyle's Literary Style," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56(1995): 377-397; Julie A. Eckerle, *Romancing the Self in*

What has traditionally been called romance has come to be considered under the category of 'prose fiction'.[36] There is considerable interest in Elizabethan prose fiction, as well as in the presence of romance strategies in other forms, notably drama.[37] Criticism has tended to focus on Elizabethan authors such as Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe, drawing attention to what Steve Mentz terms a 'Heliodoran moment' in late Elizabethan culture, and it has rarely looked beyond Wroth's *Urania* to the epic prose romances of the mid-seventeenth century.[38] Inadvertently, this has reinforced the notion of disjunct between romance and the novel, creating a picture of seventeenth-century prose fiction as a vast wasteland between Wroth's *Urania* and Behn's *Oroonoko*. A welcome exception is the recent edited collection, *Seventeenth Century Fiction* (2016), which seeks to bridge this gap with cross-cultural studies of prose fiction in English, French, Spanish and Italian across the long seventeenth century.[39] This is work I wish to supplement, and in focusing on mid-seventeenth century prose fiction, this thesis endeavours to show that while seventeenth-century prose romances owe a great deal to their Elizabethan antecedents, they also possess distinctive features of their own.

Early Modern Englishwomen's Life Writing (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013); Julie Crawford, *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2014); Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000); Lori Humphrey Newcomb, "Gendering Prose Romance in Renaissance England," in *The Blackwell Companion to Romance*, ed. Corinne Saunders (London: Blackwell, 2004).

[36] As Nandini Das puts it, "prose fiction is established on the old *locus* of romance." Das, *Renaissance Romance*, 3. The recent collection *Seventeenth-Century Fiction* employs 'prose fiction' over romance, arguing it best encapsulates what was meant at the time by *roman*, a more encompassing category than 'romance' as we conceive it today. See Moreau, "Seventeenth-Century Fiction in the Making," 2.

[37] See, for instance, Naomi Conn Liebler, ed. *Early Modern Prose Fiction* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2007); Mary Ellen and Valerie Wayne Lamb, ed. *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Das, *Renaissance Romance*;).

[38] Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Gordon Teskey identifies in Elizabethan romance a "proclivity…to formal and stylistic experiment rather than to narrative invention." George M. Logan and Gordon Teskey, ed. *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 7.

[39] Jacqueline Glomski and Isabelle Moreau, eds., *Seventeenth-Century Fiction: Text and Transmission* (Oxford: OUP, 2016).

ii) The Authors of Seventeenth-Century Romances

This study limits itself to what we might call 'aristocratic romances', a collection of romances which share certain traits: they are written in prose and are epic in scope, contain both amorous and martial adventures, are printed in an elaborate form for a presumably aristocratic readership, concern themselves with the affairs of princes and demonstrate a clear and specific engagement with contemporary moral and political philosophy. They are highly digressive, containing casts of hundreds of characters, and the majority are – in the Arcadian tradition of English romance – incomplete. They are generally structured around an overarching frame narrative which begins *in medias res* and enfolds a series of retrospective narrations. They are allegorical, although they do not all participate in the vogue for *roman à clef*, and are set in a recognisable historical, usually classical, past. Finally, they are highly self-referential, presuming a readership well-versed in the conventions of romance. While some reflect deep research and a near encyclopaedic knowledge of classical history, others recycle the names and places of earlier romances to reflect knowledge of romance reading rather than scholarly histories. The effect of this is to create a fictive geography, divorced from any cartographical reality, whose significance is developed by the cumulative experience of numerous heroes traversing the same ground. These romances assert themselves to be elite literature in content and readership, differentiating themselves from the popular chapbook romances of the day, which were shorter, tended to treat of lower-class characters, relied less on high-flown language and more on sexual innuendo, and often contained other texts such as ballads.[40]

Many such aristocratic romances were written over the course of the seventeenth century, and this thesis shall make passing reference to a variety of printed and manuscript

[40] For a study of these other kinds of romance and the way they developed in response to a changing literary marketplace, see Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

romances. However, there are several key romances which serve as the lodestones of the thesis: Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (first printed in 1591), John Barclay's *Argenis* (1621), Percy Herbert's *The Princess Cloria* (in parts, 1652-1661), and Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery's *Parthenissa* (in parts, 1651-1669). It is worth noting immediately that these authors lived and worked in very different socio-political milieux, and I by no means intend to claim universal political or philosophical sympathies, nor that they held unchanging sympathies throughout their lives. The politics of Part Six of *Parthenissa* (printed 1666) are responding to a very different climate from Part One (printed 1651, but circulating in manuscript in 1648). Rather, this thesis will make claims for certain common rhetorical and narrative strategies that indicate an ongoing engagement with a particular strain of philosophical thought. Despite significant differences, the fictions of Sidney, Barclay, Herbert and Orrery function to investigate the ethics of dissimulation, the relationship of deception to fiction, and modes of political and social behavior. I will consider other romances more briefly – D'Urfé's *L'Astrée* (1607-1627) in its translation by John Davies (1657), Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621), the anonymous romance *Theophania* (written c. 1645, first printed 1655), the English translation of Madeleine de Scudéry's *Artamène* (first published in France in parts, 1648-51; in English in parts 1652-55), Samuel Sheppard's *Amandus and Sophronia* (1650), Richard Braithwaite's *Panthalia* (1659), Robert Boyle's *The Martyrdom of Theodora and Didymus* (written c.1649, first printed 1687), Thomas Bayly's *Herba Parietis* (1650), the anonymous *Eliana* (1661), John Bulteel's *Birinthea* (1664) and John Crowne's *Pandion and Amphigenia* (1665). When considering French romances I refer to and quote from their contemporary English translations, but note that many readers might be presumed to have had at least a passing acquaintance with the originals.

There are numerous points of intersection between these romance authors and translators: many were recusant Catholics (Percy Herbert, Thomas Bayly, John Barclay, the anonymous author of *Theophania*); many experienced extended periods of exile and/or voluntary residence on the Continent (Barclay, Herbert, Bayly, Davies, the Boyle brothers, the translator Charles Cotterell); many were related to the Sidney-Herberts (Wroth, Herbert) or enjoyed close friendships or patronage ties with the Sidney-Herbert faction (Cotterell, Orrery, Boyle, the anonymous author of *Theophania* and John Reynolds, an author of popular romances). But for all the points of intersection, there are as many if not more points of distinction: some romance authors have left little mark on history besides their prolific body of original work and translations (Bulteel); for others, romance writing was a side project to their great contributions in other fields (law for MacKenzie, science for Boyle, drama for Orrery). For some of the authors, a considerable amount of biographical information has been recovered (Herbert); others remain almost as elusive as when this project began (Bulteel).

Their politics are equally diverse, and over the course of this study it has become clear that few romance authors held uncomplicated political loyalties, particularly those writing in the mid-century. Orrery fought for the king in the First Bishops' War before serving under the Parliamentary commissioners in Cork and acting as one of Cromwell's key advisors, Bulteel served Parliament in the army in Ireland but wrote poetry lamenting the death of the king, and even the outspokenly loyalist Herbert privately confessed doubts about the cause.[41] Other authors, such as the anonymous author of *Theophania*, have left no evidence of their political affiliation, but their romances suggest a politics that is neither

[41] Herbert fought in the siege of Gloucester, but appears to have held reservations about English Catholics fighting for the king. Shortly before going into exile on the Continent in September 1644, he described his inner conflict to his wife: "not that I can doubt the cause (though I doe not like this cause of fighting for the True protestant religion)." PRO 30/53/7, no. 33, TNA, cited in Ian William McLellan, "Herbert, Percy, Second Baron Powis (1598-1667)," *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/68255, accessed 2 Jan, 2014].

Republican nor straight-forwardly royalist. This thesis will question, therefore, the critical commonplace that romance is an inherently royalist genre.

The notion of 'royalist romance' has been forwarded by Annabel Patterson, Victoria Kahn, Paul Salzman and Lois Potter.[42] Kahn in particular reads mid-century romances as illustrating Derek Hirst's argument that throughout the 1650s, royalists used culture to sustain political protest, to "assert the philistinism of those in power" and thus "to conduct a fundamental exercise in delegitimation."[43] While this is undoubtedly true (we might note Cleveland's jest that the Commonwealth would never be the subject of an *Arcadia*, see footnote 68), it does not necessarily follow that the genre was always and inevitably politicised, nor that loyalties were straightforward. Romances such as Harington's *Oceana* clearly present Republican thought and works such as Orrery's *Parthenissa* were celebrated by monarchs and Republicans alike.[44] Often the politics of romances depended as much on who was reading them as who was writing them.

[42] Annabel Patterson coined the term 'royal romance' to refer both to Stuart strategies of self-presentation and the interest of many romance authors in the fate of the Stuart monarchy. Victoria Kahn describes romance as "compensatory fiction" for "defeated royalists" and Paul Salzman describes the Civil Wars as an event that had "literary repercussions" and forced royalists to find a mode "which provided some reassurance of a heroic outcome." Anthony Welch notes that the romance locus of regenerating gardens became an important image in mid-century royalist epics. Lois Potter argues for "genre as code", suggesting that the romance form served as a cipher signifying royalist allegiances. See Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*; Kahn, "Reinventing Romance, or the Surprising Effects of Sympathy," 626; Paul Salzman, "Theories of Prose Fiction in England: 1558-1700," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 301; Welch, "Epic Romance, Royalist Retreat, and the English Civil War"; Potter, *Secret Rites*, 72-112. See also David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 364.

[43] Kahn, "Reinventing Romance," 628; Derek Hirst, "The Politics of Literature in the English Republic," *The Seventeenth Century* 5, no. 2 (1990): 149. Philip Major suggests that French romances could be tuned to loyalist purposes in the period and that the act of translating became a political statement, while Marotti argues that the publisher Humphrey Moseley – responsible for the majority of romances printed in English in the 1640s and 50s (sometimes in partnership with Thomas Dring) – saw himself as "the preserver of an endangered Royalist or loyalist body of texts." Philip Major, "'A Credible Omen of a More Glorious Event': Sir Charles Cotterell's *Cassandra*," *The Review of English Studies* 60, no. 245 (2009): 406-430; Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 261.

[44] For Republican thought in *Oceana*, see Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 246-9. The sixth part of *Parthenissa* was written at the request of Princess Henrietta Maria, sister of Charles II, but the Republican Henry Stubbe, refuting Richard Baxter's ideal of sovereignty outlined in *Holy Commonwealth*, refers Baxter to the "better pen" of "the Lord Broghill, who in his *Parthenissa* hath excellently debated the case of a Republick" and to John Harrington, whose *Oceana* contains so "much of learning and judgment" that "his

The term 'royalist' itself requires some investigation, as it by no means expresses a uniform ideology or conveys a singular experience. The sympathies of Herbert's *Cloria* are clearly with the exiled royal family, but the final part of the romance, printed in 1661, is an extended plea for religious toleration under the new regime. Indeed, Herbert rebukes Charles II for ingratitude towards his Catholic followers and expresses dissatisfaction with the longed-for Restoration. Written over the course of a decade, *Cloria* reflects the complex web of allegiances of a man who was Catholic, Welsh and Royalist but who was also the first cousin of the prominent parliamentarian Algernon Percy and closely related to the militant Protestant Sidney-Herbert faction. Similarly John Kerrigan has observed the tangled web of political and social allegiances that shaped the work of mid-century Irish writers such as Orrery.[45] To understand the conflicting loyalties which shape romances such as *Cloria* and *Parthenissa*, we have to resist what Philip Major calls the "dominant scholarly paradigm" which divides literature of the period into the "strictly oppositional categories" of "'royalist' and 'parliamentarian'". Instead, I follow Major in speaking of 'royalisms' rather than 'royalism' because royalism as a creed "resists distillation" and must be understood as "the diverse opinions and varying degrees of commitment that lay under the broad umbrella of royalist allegiance."[46] Rather than thinking of romance as 'royalist', in this thesis I will consider it to be 'aristocratic', both in readership and in its interests. I argue that romances provide an aristocratic critique of unlimited monarchy,

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modell is so farre above…praises." Henry Stubbe, *Malice Rebuked, or a Character of Mr. Richard Baxters Abilities* (London: 1659), 42. Stubbe, a prominent Greek and Latin scholar and a friend of Hobbes and Selden, was an outspoken Republican in the 1650s who clearly read an affinity of political thought into Orrery's *Parthenissa*. He is likely referring to the debate in the Third Part, Book III, between Ventidius and Artavasdes over the relative merits of a Commonwealth and a monarchy. Boyle puts forward arguments in favour of both systems but ultimately the debate is left unresolved, with both men agreeing only that "no form of Government [is] so bad, but to change it by a War is worse." *Parthenissa*'s politics might best be understood, then, as reactionary rather than revolutionary. Roger Boyle, *Parthenissa, That Most Fam'd Romance. The Six Volumes Compleat* (London: Printed by T.N. for Henry Herringman, 1676), 356.

[45] John Kerrigan, "Orrery's Ireland and the British Problem, 1641-79," in *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, ed. David J. Baker and Willy Maley (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 197-225.

[46] Philip Major, "Introduction," in *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and Its Aftermath, 1640-1690*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Philip Major (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 5, 3; Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, "Introduction: Rethinking Royalists and Royalism," in *Royalists and Royalism During the English Civil Wars*, ed. Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 4.

while simultaneously condemning violent resistance. They do not avow straightforwardly Royalist politics so much as demonstrate anxieties about the relationship of subjects to the government, whether that be the Commonwealth or a Stuart sovereign.

iii) The Readers of Seventeenth-Century Romance

In asserting that seventeenth-century romances were 'aristocratic', I am making a claim not merely about their politics but also about their readership. While it is impossible to recover exactly who read romances, we can note that their very length presumes their readers belong to the leisured classes.[47] We can observe, too, that they were dedicated to members of the nobility, that many extant copies contain armorial bookplates (although of course copies were more likely to have survived in aristocratic collections), and that they were usually an expensive purchase.[48] We can generalise from the status of known readers, such as Dorothy Osborne, Anne Clifford and Dorothy Sidney.[49] And we can draw conclusions from the abundance of literature which emphasises how central a knowledge of romances was to court culture, and how romance reading served as a marker of taste.

[47] Sutherland, *English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century*, 204; Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 27.

[48] As Lori Humphrey Newcomb observes, there was a marked difference in the cost of books published in quarto and in folio, but publication in quarto or octavo format did not necessarily imply more solvent readers, and both "the most elite and the most functional of texts alike appeared in quarto format, unbound." Newcomb notes that an unbound quarto "cost more than a ballad but significantly less than a folio; it was beyond the reach of the poorest but not beneath the dignity of the rich." Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance*, 78, 282 n.4. Romances such as *Cloria and Narcissus* and *Parthenissa* were printed first in quarto as separate parts and then reprinted in folio as complete works; others, notably translations from the French such as Davies' *Astrea*, were only ever issued in folio. This might suggest something about their perceived appeal; as Alice Eardley argues, translations from the French were seen to be more 'aristocratic' than original English romances. *Eliana*, *Bentivolio and Urania* and *Herba Parietis* are the only English romances to be printed solely in folio format, *Birinthea*, *Theophania* and *Theodora and Didymus* only in quarto and *Panthalia* only in octavo. On the cost of romances in France, see Maurice Lever, *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981), 14; on the marketing and sale of French romances in England, see Alice Eardley, "Marketing Aspiration: Fact, Fiction and the Publication of French Romance in Mid-Seventeenth Century England," in *Seventeenth-Century Fiction: Text and Transmission*, ed. Jacqueline Glomski and Isabelle Moreau (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 130-42.

[49] The marginalia in Anne Clifford's copy of *Argenis* is discussed in Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 235-6. Other prominent known readers of *Argenis* include John Evelyn and Peirisc (whose letters describe their reading),the politician Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the theologian John Robards, the scientist Robert Hooke and, later, Madame de Pompadour, who all owned copies of *Argenis* now held by the Bodleian Library, the library at Lanhydrock House, the National Library of Wales and Trinity College, Cambridge respectively.

Poet Robert Whitcombe describes familiarity with romances such as *Parthenissa* as "absolutely requisit amongst the English-Gentry now…necessary to the Complement of Courtier…neither Man nor Woman can safely Sail in the Courts dangerous Ocean without it."[50] Similarly in *The Gentlewoman's Companion* (1672), Hannah Woolley (author of texts on cooking and household management) outlines the ideal education for gentlewomen who wish to succeed at court, recommending that works "which treat Generosity, Gallantry, and Virtue, as *Cassandra*, *Clelia*, *Grand Cyrus*, *Cleopatra*, *Parthenissa*, not omitting Sir *Philip Sidney's* Arcadia, are Books altogether worthy of their Observation."[51] Woolley is one of many commentators who outline a canon of 'great' romances with which the aspiring courtier should be familiar.[52] These lists present romances – mainly French, some English – as a form of cultural capital and knowledge of them as an aid to social mobility. As Alice Eardley argues, the presentation of French heroic romances as elite literature was a canny ploy on the part of English publishers such as Humphrey Moseley to ensnare "aspirational" middle-class readers who sought

[50] 'To the Reader' in Robert Whitcombe, *Janua Divorum, or, The Lives and Histories of the Heathen Gods*, (London: Printed by W. Downing for Francis Kirkman, 1677), 3A4. Whitcombe claims that knowledge of the lives of the ancient Gods is as essential for poets as the knowledge of romances is for courtiers.

[51] Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewoman's Companion* (1672) as quoted in Manuele D'Amore and Michele Lardy, *Essays in Defence of the Female Sex: Custom, Education and Authority in Seventeenth-Century England* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 102. The attribution to Woolley is doubtful, see John Considine, "Woolley, Hannah (b.1622?, d. in or after 1674)," *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac. uk:2167/view/article/29957, accessed December 7, 2016].

[52] Such a 'canon' is laid out by Francis Kirkman in the Preface to *The History of Don Bellianus*; of seventeenth-century English romances, which he calls "an other sort of Histories," Kirkman lists the "incomparable" *Arcadia*, John Reynolds' *Gods Revenge Against Murther*, Nathaniel Ingelo's *Bentivolio and Urania*, Percy Herbert's *The Princess Cloria* and Roger Boyle's *Parthenissa*. 'To the Reader' in Francis Kirkman, *The Famous and Delectable History of Don Bellianis of Greece, or, The Honour of Chivalry* (London: Printed for Francis Kirkman, 1673). Kirkman's catalogue is discussed in Helen Moore, "Admirable Inventions: Francis Kirkman and the Translation of Romance in the 1650s," in *Seventeenth-Century Fiction: Text and Transmission*, ed. Jacqueline Glomski and Isabelle Moreau (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 143-58; Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance*, 149-54; Turner, "'Romance' and the Novel in Restoration England," 63-6. Other lists suggest a similar romance 'canon': George MacKenzie cites "Sidney, Scuderie, Barkley and Broghill" and before them Heliodorus as the great romance authors in the preface to *Aretina; or, The Serious Romance* (Edinburgh: Robert Broun, 1660), 6 (*Aretina* was published in London the following year by Ralph Smith and George S[awbridge]). As Zurcher observes, these lists suggest we have lost what was at the time perceived to be a "thematically and formally coherent group of narratives," Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 191.

admission "into a world of elevated cultural entertainment."[53] When we call romances 'aristocratic', then, we are describing as much an imagined as an actual readership: whatever their class, romance readers understood themselves to be partaking of aristocratic entertainment.

Eardley stresses the tactics of publishers such as Humphrey Moseley in constructing French romances as status symbols. To this I would add that by examining extant copies of romances, many of which are substantially annotated, we find evidence that readers understood both English and French romances to have a certain kind of 'serious' cultural value, and that they perceived connections between these romances and both contemporary politics and political philosophy. On the front and endpapers of the National Library of Scotland copy of *Aretina* (RY.III.H.9), for instance, a reader has inked quotations from Virgil's *Eclogues*, as if enfolding *Aretina* within the political genre of the pastoral and placing it at the end of a literary tradition stemming back to the great Latin authors. Elsewhere, we find references not to Latin literature, but to earlier English romances already perceived to be significant. In the endpapers of the London Library copy of the 1636 Kingsmill Long *Argenis*, for instance, an anonymous reader has attempted a Latin translation of a section of the *Arcadia* in which Zelmane watches Philoclea bathe.[54] The reader notes he or she was given the copy in 1644; the translation suggests, then, that mid-century readers perceived political romances such as *Argenis* and the *Arcadia* to belong to a self-referential group of texts.

Readers clearly viewed folio romances, such as *Argenis*, *Cloria*, and *Parthenissa*, as valuable objects worthy of careful preservation. Many are bound with elaborate gilt tooling and show signs of careful mending, such as lost pages copied out by hand and the neat

[53] Alice Eardley, "Marketing Aspiration," 136. Maurice Lever argues that romances were also aspirational reading material for the upper middle-classes in France in *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle*, 15.
[54] I assume the translation is the reader's own, although I have not verified this.

correction of printing errata. Some copies of *Argenis* contain supplementary paratextual material from later editions, as if readers attempted to perfect their own copies as later editions were produced. In the Senate House copy of the 1625 Nicholas Buon French translation (D.L.L. B.b.4), for instance, a reader has copied the clavis from the 1627 Elzevier edition by hand into the frontpapers of his own copy.

Romance reading was often a communal activity.[55] In the National Library of Wales copy of *Ibrahim* (PQ 1921.1), we encounter a group of readers who appear to have been reading the book simultaneously. The copy contains the signatures of eight contemporary readers: Sarah Parry, Simon Parry, Edmund Morgan, Mrs Ann Walker, Mrs Mary Sandye, Anne Pembruge, and a Jane and a Mary without surnames. Of these, Sarah and Simon Parry, Edmund Morgan and Ann Walker seem to have been the principal annotators. Throughout the volume they practised their penmanship, marked key passages in the text with circles and manicules, and left notes for each other. The readers even co-authored poems in the margins of the book, including a 28-line poem on the theme of constancy in love on the blank page between Parts 3 and 4. Romance reading has served as a spur to communal creative activity.[56]

[55] Carrie Hintz stresses the important of romance reading as a shared experience and describes the significance of "coterie reading" in the circle surrounding Dorothy Osborne in *An Audience of One: Dorothy Osborne's Letters to Sir William Temple, 1652-1654* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 85. We can find another example of such 'coterie reading' among 'The Society of Friendship', a circle of readers and writers including Katherine Philips, Margaret Cavendish, Sir Charles Cotterell (the translator of *Cassandre*) and Roger Boyle (author of *Parthenissa*). Members of the circle were avid readers of French romances: Philips wrote a poem upon Scudéry's *Almahide*, and the group assumed romance names among themselves in a manner imitative of the French salons. Cotterell was 'Poliarchus', the hero of Barclay's *Argenis*, and Cavendish went by 'Policrite', a heroine from Scudéry's *Artamène*. Romances were not merely read or produced in literary circles, but were part of the group's identity formation. For Katherine Philips as a reader of romances, see Alex Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 169-201.

[56] Elsewhere we can find examples of readers conversing in the margins of the text. In the British Library copy of the 1636 Henry Seile edition of Kingsmill Long's translation of *Argenis* (838.c.1) one reader upbraids another 'you are Conceited Coxcomb to pretend to Correct, what you scarce understand' beside the other reader's marginal comment on page 41, largely lost when the pages were recut.

I have drawn on these discrete examples to give some idea of the heterogeneity of romance reading practices. Over the course of this study, I examined copies of English and French prose romances held across nineteen collections.[57] This research necessitates closer analysis and a longer study, but there are some conclusions that can be drawn here in brief. First, to speak in general terms, there are some obvious discrepancies in the ways folio and quarto, French and English, romances were read. Folio romances are much more likely both to contain marks of ownership and to contain marginalia than quarto texts, original English romances more likely to contain marginalia than translations from the French, and English romances with obvious *à clef* resonances (such as *Argenis*, *Cloria* and *Theophania*) contain the highest incidence of annotations. The names of women readers are found more often in copies of French romances (in the original or translation) than in English.

More specific conclusions can be drawn from comparing marks of use left in extant copies of individual romances; let us briefly compare results from examining thirty-five copies of *Argenis*, seventeen of *Parthenissa* and fourteen of *Cloria*.[58] Fifty-seven percent of copies of *Argenis* contain legible contemporary marks, ranging from scribbles, sums or signatures to detailed and extensive marginalia in English, Latin and French, as well as indices and other symbols that presumably linked to lost commonplace books. *Argenis* resembles the *Arcadia* in being among the books most commonly annotated by early modern readers.

[57] My sample includes: one private collection, Bodleian, British Library, Bristol University Library, Edinburgh University Library, Doctor William's Library, Lambeth Palace Library, Lanhydrock House, London Library, Mitchell Library (Scotland), Mitchell Library (State Library of NSW), National Art Library, National Library of Scotland, National Library of Wales, Senate House, Trinity College Cambridge and in Oxford, Worcester, Queen's and University Colleges.

[58] This is a fraction of surviving copies of *Argenis* and *Parthenissa*, but a more statistically significant percentage of copies of *Cloria*, of which ESTC reports just 54 surviving copies across all editions (four quartos of *Cloria and Narcissus*, two folios of the complete *The Princess Cloria*). For *Parthenissa* and *Cloria*, copies of all editions were examined; for both, there was a higher rate of marginalia and marks of ownership in folio than in quarto editions. For *Argenis*, only unabridged editions in English, Latin and French before 1664 were examined; editions in English were more likely to contain both marginalia and marks of ownership, but where editions in Latin were annotated, those annotations were more extensive. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest number.

William Sherman has found that some books, such as "religious polemics and practical guides to law, medicine, and estate management," were annotated more than fifty percent of the time throughout the STC period. *Argenis* seems to contain a comparable level of annotation to these, even though other genres saw a dip in annotation after the 1590s, before rising again in the 1640s and 50s.[59] Certainly a number of annotating readers of *Argenis* are reading in the mid-century. Heidi Brayman Hackel has found in copies of the *Arcadia* that nearly half are signed, many with multiple signatures, with women's names appearing in nearly half the signed copies and men's in three quarters.[60] My initial survey of *Argenis* points to a more coherently male readership: similar to the *Arcadia*, nearly half the copies are signed, but of the nineteen contemporary signatures, just two can be identified as women's (four are illegible or ambiguous, and thirteen are clearly men's). Twenty-nine percent contain extensive marginalia relating to the text: three notable forms of such annotation are clavis-style identifications, finding notes (such as, "Arsida cum Poliarchu colloquim" or 'Arsidas and Poliarchus talk' [Bod.Vet.D2.e.25, 1623 Frankfurt]) and commentary on the text (such as "mendacia omnia" or 'all lies' beside Barclay's description of Usinulcae, or Calvin [Bristol PA8465]). Other marks include manicules, underlinings, half-lines of scripture and phrases of unknown origin, drawings, labels of characters in engravings and penmanship practice. In one copy of the 1630 Latin Elzevier edition, an Oxford student has underlined any words he doesn't recognise and written the English in the margin while keeping a running vocabulary list in the endpapers (Bristol PA8465).

Engagement with *Parthenissa* and *The Princess Cloria* is less varied. Sixty-four percent of copies of *Cloria* contain marks of use, but the majority of these are either marks of

[59] William H. Sherman, "What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Books?," in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, ed. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 124; see Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 159.
[60] *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 159.

ownership or evidence of clavis-based reading (found in five of the fourteen copies, or thirty-six percent).[61] *Parthenissa* appears to have invited less annotation. Only forty-seven percent contain any marks of use, and these are principally marks of ownership dating from the eighteenth-century. There are some signs of close and persistent reading through to the end of the text: in four of the 1676 folio copies examined, the reader has gone through and carefully corrected any printing errata. This variety in ways of reading romances seems to suggest that some romances were read more 'closely' and taken more 'seriously' than others, and that many readers were intent on uncovering the works' political resonances.

Other material aside from extant copies also reveals ways in which seventeenth-century romances were read. In the commonplace book of John Lowther, for instance, we find he studied Scudéry's *Artamène* to improve his French; Robert Boyle commonplaced extensively from the romances of his brother Roger and La Calprenède, noting elegant turns of phrases; Pepys records his wife's delight in French romances while Elizabeth of Bohemia deployed romance characters to describe the geopolitical landscape.[62] This diversity of responses suggests that readers put romance reading to a variety of purposes,

[61] I exclude the copy at Trinity College Cambridge (Munby b.37) from this number, as the sole identification in this copy is almost certainly twentieth century. However, I include the British Library's 1653 quarto (12613.b.32), in which the text has been supplemented by details from history narrated with the names of the characters; I count this a variant form of clavis reading.

[62] The notebook of John Lowther of Whitehaven, Lonsdale Papers, DLONS/W/1/32, Cumbria Archive Centre, entry dated 1654. Lowther read at least the first part of *Artamène* in French and noted down phrases of interest, as well as keeping a running vocabulary list. In Roger Boyle's workbook of 1647, he records hundreds of phrases from La Calprenède's *Cassandre*; similarly in the workbook of 1649 he records phrases from the first book of his brother's romance, *Parthenissa*. See *Diurnall Observations, Thoughts, & Collections. Begun at Stalbridge April 25th 1647*, BP 44, Royal Society and *A Diurnall Miscellaneous Collection, Begun March the 25th 1648/9*. BP 8, [supplementary leaf in BP 3, fol. 146], Royal Society. Pepys records his wife's reading of *Artamène* and *Ibrahim*, noting at one point the boredom of her recounting "long stories out of *Grand Cyrus*." She appears to have been reading *Artamène* intermittently between 1660 and 1666, testament to the extreme length of the romance. See Robert Latham, ed. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection* (London: Penguin, 1993), 101, 616, 880, 930. In letters to Sir Thomas Roe, Elizabeth of Bohemia describes plans to make Prince Rupert the king of Madagascar as a fanciful scheme akin to something from a "storie Romance" like "Don Quixotte." See correspondence between Elizabeth of Bohemia and Sir Thomas Roe November 1635 in Nadine Akkerman, ed. *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*, vol. II: 1632-1642 (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 366, 583, 589, 596, 960, 964.

and that romance narratives could be used to provide a recognisable structure to real life experiences.[63]

I offer this initial evidence survey not to provide any final conclusions on the readership of seventeenth-century romances, but to suggest that such a project might be illuminating. At present, work on the reading of seventeenth-century romances is confined to Heidi Brayman Hackel's study of 151 copies of Sidney's *Arcadia*, which has revealed a great deal about early modern reading practices, particularly the popularity of Sidney's romance with women readers.[64] There exist some studies of annotations left in discrete copies of texts, notably in Wroth's *Urania*.[65] Louise Wilson has argued for the importance of factoring serialisation into any study of popular literature, Lori Humphrey Newcomb has demonstrated the enduring popularity of Elizabethan romance into the eighteenth-century, and Alice Eardley has argued that 1650s romance translations had a far larger market share than has previously been recognised.[66] What is missing is an extended study of readership which combines textual and historical evidence with that contained in extant copies. Throughout this thesis I shall make repeated reference to contemporary annotations in copies of romances to forward just one of many conclusions about seventeenth-century

[63] Dorothy Osborne wrote about her courtship with William Temple in literary terms and self-consciously deployed romance conventions (notably that of separated lovers), observing, "Can there be a more romance story than ours would make if the conclusion should prove happy?" For the ways in which romance narratives helped Osborne to structure her real world experience, see Hintz, *An Audience of One*, 70-86; Femke Molekamp, "Therapies for Melancholy and Inordinate Passion in the Letters of Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple (1652-1654)," *The Seventeenth Century* 29, no. 3 (2014): 255-76. For the use of romance tropes in early modern women's life writing, see Eckerle, *Romancing the Self*.

[64] Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 137-195.

[65] See Susan Light, "Reading Romances: The Handwritten Ending of Mary Wroth's *Urania* in the UCLA Library Copy," *Sidney Newsletter and Journal* 14 (1996): 66-72; Rachel Orgis, "'[a] Story Very Well Woorth Readinge': Why Early Modern Readers Valued Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*," *Sidney Journal* 31, no. 1 (2013): 81-100; Renee Pigeon, "Manuscript Notations in an Unrecorded Copy of Lady Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomeries' Urania*," *Notes and Queries* 236(1991): 81-2.

[66] Louise Wilson, "Serial Publication and Romance," in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Ashgate, 2013), 213-221; Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance*; Eardley, "Marketing Aspiration." On 'shared reading' or the circulation of chivalric romance across multiple social milieu, see also Roger Chartier, "Reading Matter and "Popular" Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century," in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Roger Chartier and Guglielmo Cavallo (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999), 269-312.

romance reading: namely, that readers recognised romance's deployment of political philosophy.

iv) Criticism and Defences of Romance

Romances were commonly accused of being 'false', misleading or corrupting. To list but a few examples: the bookseller William London would paraphrase Montaigne in declaring "Romances are the trash of writings," describing them as "Incentiva Vitiorum," or, incentives to vice; Allestree feared romances taught "false measures of Honor" and encouraged duelling; and Jacques du Bosc described romances as "extreamly bad and extreamly dangerous."[67] Even the romance authors Richard Braithwaite and John Crowne dismissed the genre as "nurseries of wantonnesse" and "merely low and sordid fancies."[68] The fear that romances were not only misleading but might teach the "Arts of Intrigue" was common, and François de la Noue explicitly compared the dangers of romance reading with that of politic philosophy, contending "the reading of the bookes of Amadis de Gaule, & such like is no lesse hurtful to youth, than the works of Machiavel to age."[69] The fear that romance reading was morally corrupting underpins Milton's famous critique of romance in *Eikonoklastes*, in which he makes much of the story that Charles I repeated Pamela's prayer from Sidney's *Arcadia* before his execution. Milton inveighs against romance, claiming the *Arcadia* may be "full of worth and witt" but it is also "vaine and

[67] William London, *A Catalogue of the Most Vendible Books in England* (London: William London, 1657), C2. London is, in fact, paraphrasing Florio's translation, which is more hostile to romances. See Frances Amelia Yates, *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 235; Richard Allestree, *The Gentlemans Calling* (London: Printed for Tim Garthwaite, 1660), 141. Jacques Du Bosc, *The Excellent Woman Described by Her True Characters and Their Opposites*, trans. T.D. (London: Printed for John Wyat, 1695), 11. For an extended history of attacks on romances as immoral, see Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance*, 12-19.

[68] Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman*, 139; John Crowne, *Pandion and Amphigenia, or, The History of the Coy Lady of Thessalia Adorned with Sculptures* (London: Printed by R. Mills for I.G., 1665), 307.

[69] Romances are accused of teaching the "arts of intrigue" in Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, ed. Margaret Dalziel (1970; repr. Oxford: OUP, 1989]), 381; François de la Noue, *The Politicke and Militarie Discourses*, as quoted in Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance*, 12.

amatorious" and not "to be read at any time without good caution."[70] The King's inappropriate "outward work of Devotion" reveals the hollowness of his inner faith, which is content to worship through "the polluted trash of Romances and *Arcadias*."[71] For Milton, romance reading encourages superficial performance over true feeling. Such invective says more about the way the spectre of romance was deployed by Parliament than it does about Milton or romances themselves. As Diane Purkiss has argued, Parliamentarian rhetoric turned the association between romance and court culture into a politically charged point during the Civil Wars, and romance came to represent "metonymically the closure of the court, and hence its artifice."[72] The fantasy of romance made it a potent symbol for the perceived frivolity of Stuart rule.

Milton's recommendation that romances should only be read with "caution" is a common one, regularly directed towards those who might seem most vulnerable to romance's deluding charms: women and young people.[73] Charges against romance as 'misleading' are tied into the popular perception that its main readers were women, but it is debateable whether romances really were oriented towards a predominantly female readership. Certainly it is part of the form of romances of this period that they are dedicated and addressed to an aristocratic female patron. But as Lori Humphrey Newcomb demonstrates, romance's association with women readers is probably more likely a matter of "literary convention" constructed from a "host of references in Renaissance texts to women reading

[70] John Milton, *Eikonoklastes* (London: Printed by Matthew Simmons, 1649), 12. Milton's attitude towards romance has been the subject of extended critical debate over the last century. George Williamson argues that Milton rejected romance entirely as a Cavalier genre; similarly Annabel Patterson suggests that the deployment of romance by Charles I and his supporters led Milton to view the romantic mode as "irretrievably spoiled." George Williamson, "Milton the Anti-Romantic," *Modern Philology* 60, no. 1 (1962): 13-21; Annabel Patterson, "*Paradise Regained*: A Last Chance at True Romance," *Milton Studies* 17 (1983): 197.

[71] Ibid, 11, 13. Similarly royalists invoked the supposed depravity of the Commonwealth government by asserting its inability to be incorporated into a romance narrative: "No fond Romance, no fam'd *Arcadia* treats, / Of such Eutopian, frantick Judgement Seats." John Cleveland, *Monumentum Regale or a Tombe, Erected for That Incomparable and Glorious Monarch, Charles the First* (London, 1649), 5.

[72] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 79.

[73] For injunctions against romance directed at female readers, see Eckerle, *Romancing the Self*, 5.

prose romance", while in fact romance attracted a large audience of both genders.[74] Similarly, Helen Hackett argues that female readership "came gradually to exist while also being exaggerated for rhetorical and satirical purposes."[75] Attacks on romances associate them with female readers because women were popularly understood to be more credulous and less discriminating. It was a way of besmirching the genre by suggesting it was patronised by undiscerning readers and expressing fears that such ill-equipped readers might absorb the "'wrong' types of knowledge" from their suspect reading.[76]

This 'wrong' type of knowledge is principally sexual – critics of romances fear that romance reading encourages young people to think about earthly rather than spiritual love – but also politic. We can find such an anxiety in Jacques Du Bosc's 1609 *L'Honneste Femme*, in which he argues that romances are not merely lies, but that they teach deceptive behaviour. For Du Bosc romances can only be pleasing "to some, to whom a Lie appears more beautiful than Truth."[77] Romances present solely the "empty appearance of good" while being in fact "nothing but Vice" and through this falsity they teach "actions that are dishonest, examples that are lascivious, and passions that are extravagant." Romance reading "renders us ingenious and cunning," teaching us not only "the evil we should be ignorant of, but also the most delicate and charming ways of committing it." For Du Bosc, the great danger of romances is that they present Machiavellian behaviour as heroic;

[74] Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance*, 121, 5. See also "Gendering Prose Romance in Renaissance England." Low levels of female literacy must also be factored into any narrative of gendered reading: David Cressy estimates that 90% of women were illiterate at the time of the Civil Wars, as quoted in Hintz, *An Audience of One*, 65.

[75] Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 67.

[76] Kaye Mitchell, "Gender and Sexuality in Popular Fiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction*, ed. David Glover and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 123. Mitchell explores how anxieties about women readers continue to this day, particularly in relation to popular fiction.

[77] Du Bosc, *The Excellent Woman*, 12. There exist also two earlier translations in English – one by N.N. first published in 1639 and one by Walter Montagu in 1655. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his close affiliation with the court entertainments surrounding Henrietta Maria, Montagu's translation does not contain any of Du Bosc's scathing remarks pertaining to romances. Indeed, while Montagu skirts the issue of genre entirely, he seems to challenge his source in his insistence that "those that perswade themselves, that reading is a Schoole to learn to doe ill cunningly" should consider that the flaw lies not in the books, but in the readers, for such as "have not judgement enough to discerne vice, have no more to make choyce of vertue." Jacques Du Bosc, *The Accomplish'd Woman*, trans. Walter Montagu (London: Gabriel Bedell and Tho[mas] Collins, 1656), 66.

unsurprisingly, Du Bosc is far more concerned about the effects of such lessons on supposedly credulous women than on more discerning men:

> When we often see there, this Woman quitting her Country and her parents to run after a stranger, whom she fell in love with in a moment; Or read how the other found ways to receive Letters from her Gallants; or to give them their guilty assignations. These are nothing but Lessons of Artifice and skill, to teach persons how they may sin with subtilty.[78]

Du Bosc fears that 'false' romances teach women to defy their guardians in pursuit of their own desires and to do so with cunning. Romance reading might encourage women to become liars.

While romances claimed they invited emulation of only virtuous behaviour, critics such as Du Bosc feared that readers' affective responses disabled their critical abilities to discern virtue from vice. Du Bosc insists that the danger of romance reading is that "we suffer our selves very often to entertain a true compassion for feigned miseries, and dissolve into tears for imaginary Shepheards," and that while "we know what we read to be meer fiction; yet it fails not for all that to give real motions while we read it."[79] It is this "true compassion" for the fictional that is the gateway to romance's more sinister lessons:

> The mischief enters insensibly into our Soul with the pleasing words, and under the charms of those adventures that affect us…as our Bodies do without our consent partake of the quality of the things we eat; so our minds espouse, in spite of us, the Spirit of the Books we read.[80]

Du Bosc depicts the dangers of romance reading as something that enacts change without the reader's consent. It is the very pleasure of reading which disables our discernment and renders us vulnerable to romance's questionable moral teachings. Indeed, Du Bosc claims it is impossible to "take pleasure in the relations…without being defiled with the uncleanness which they convey under a disguise."[81] In Du Bosc's formulation of

[78] Du Bosc, *The Excellent Woman*, 11, 18-19.
[79] Ibid., 12, 17.
[80] Ibid., 16.
[81] Ibid., 15.

romance's affective didacticism, the deception perpetrated by romance – its very fictionality – invites an affective response which disarms our truth-discernment and invites us to emulate cunning behaviour: through producing affect, 'false' romances teach us how to lie. At the core of these attacks on romances, then, are the interconnected ideas that romance is *false* in the sense of being fictional, and that it teaches falsehood, in the sense of lying.

Against these charges of being both false and corrupting, romances employed two principal defensive strategies: they claimed the Greek novels as classical precedents and they proclaimed their truthfulness, either as works of historical 'fact' or of more oblique allegorical 'truths'.[82] Romance authors drew on the established moral function of fables in the Christian tradition. The author of the 1648 Christian romance *Nova Solyma* (originally erroneously attributed to Milton), asserts, "If you condemn poetry as full of falsehood and fiction, then you condemn Christ who related fables in order to bring to view in clear light truths unobserved or concealed."[83] The 'falsity' of stories serves to bring to light 'truths'. Such a claim suggests that the repudiation of romance can carry uncomfortable implications for the great defining allegory of Christian culture: the resurrection narrative.[84] For the author of *Nova Solyma*, then, the distinction between 'trifling' romance and 'serious' Christian allegory is entirely artificial, and imaginative literature can have a serious moral purpose.

[82] Deborah Ross, *The Excellence of Falsehood: Romance, Realism, and Women's Contribution to the Novel* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 2. Nigel Smith evocatively describes Scudéry's deploment of history as a process of "immunising them from the reputation for fantasy which plagued romance tradition" in *Literature and Revolution*, 242.
[83] Samuel Gott, *Nova Solyma* (London: John Murray, 1902), 296.
[84] As Northrop Frye argues, sacred and secular narratives are structurally almost indistinguishable and the distinction between them is not in their form, but in their reception. One is accepted to be true, the other false. Such a generically arbitrary differentiation "leads to a general distinction between serious and responsible literature on the one hand, and the trifling and fantastic on the other." Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 8-9, 17.

It is precisely this 'serious', educative purpose on which defences of romance reading and writing rest. Romance authors would claim that its affect was tuned to a didactic moral purpose and that rather than corrupting readers into virtue, romance stories touched the heartstrings to encourage emulation of virtue. The notion that fiction can 'teach through delight' goes back to Horace and was a familiar argument rehearsed by romance authors looking back towards Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*. In the preface to the manuscript romance *Loves Laurell Garland*, for instance, the author John Reynolds claims his purpose is "sollye to the supplantinge of Vice and the ingrafting of Vertue" and directs the reader to the "ingenious and invincible Apologie" of the "Immortall and Inimitabell Sydney: the Glorie of our glorious England, the Tr[easure] of Europe: and the Woonder of the World."[85] Similarly Sir George Mackenzie, the noted Scottish jurist and author of the 1660 romance *Aretina*, wrote extensively of the didactic value of romances and of their superiority over factual history as a learning tool. In his *A Moral Essay Preferring Solitude to Publick Employment*, published anonymously in Edinburgh in 1665 and reissued in London in 1666 under the author's name, MacKenzie wades into the age-old debate about the relative merits of the active or the contemplative life.[86] He argues that the cerebral romance is of greater didactic value because it can conceal the vices that are inevitably recorded alongside the virtues of real historic figures. He argues, "To talk of *Amphialus*, who never was, is the same thing as to talk of *Alexander:* only *Amphialus*, cannot be

[85] 'Loves Lawrell Garland,' Add MS. 34782, fol.4r, BL, 1606. The manuscript was edited for an unpublished PhD thesis at the University of California against which I was able to compare my transcription; the author also published two articles on Reynold's work: Jerry Holt Bryant, "*Loves Laurell Garland*: Edited from the Manuscript," (PhD diss.,University of California, 1960); "John Reynolds of Exeter and His Canon," *The Library* 5th ser. 15 (1960): 105-17; "John Reynolds of Exeter's 'Love's Laurell Garland': An Unpublished Romance," *Manuscripta* 8 (1964): 131-45.

[86] The treatise was controversial and drew responses from figures as prominent and varied as John Evelyn, Thomas Traherne, Abraham Cowley and the Earl of Clarendon. See Brian Vickers, ed. *Public and Private Life in the Seventeenth-Century: The Mackenzie-Evelyn Debate* (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1985) and Jan Ross, ed. *The Works of Thomas Traherne*, 5 vols. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 1:xxi.

stained with cruelty, vanity and drunkenness as *Alexander* is."[87] MacKenzie firmly believes that romances are superior to the "servile, and lucrative imployments" of history because through fiction, the author can highlight those aspects of the past which show us "what should be done."[88]

Similarly the antiquarian Henry Hare, Baron Coleraine, in his spiritual essay, *Paradise Found Out*, addresses those who "divert themselves with looking over a Romance" and are "pleased in reading a *Cleopatra* or a *Parthenissa*."[89] Coleraine notes that an "Allegorical way of writing" is always preferable to "the ungentile Ethicks of a dull Aristotle" and describes romance as a "Stratagem to make You in love with Religion, a Counter-treason to betray You into Felicity, a Designe to render You Happy, against Your Wills."[90] What is striking about Coleraine's formulation of fiction's didacticism is the way he aligns it with fraud. Imaginative literature is presented as a scheming or designing lover – not unlike the scheming lovers within romance – and its deceptiveness is here translated into a positive quality. We are encouraged to be credulous; the work asks us to permit it to delude us, because through fraud we learn the truth. Such a strategy recognises that allegory is inseparable from the language of subterfuge or dissimulation, and this allegorical subterfuge can serve as both charge against and defence of romances. Critics of romance feared it would be read by vulnerable readers who would not penetrate the allegory to the 'truth' beneath. But defenders of romance saw the credulity of the reader as essential to the success of the generic stratagem, the only means through which the reader could be gulled into virtue.

[87] George MacKenzie, *A Moral Essay Preferring Solitude to Publick Employment* (Edinburgh: Robert Brown, 1665), 51.
[88] *Aretina*, 7.
[89] Henry Hare Coleraine, *The Situation of Paradise Found Out: Being an History of a Late Pilgrimage Unto the Holy Land* (London: Printed by J.C. and F.C. for S. Lowndes, H. Faithorne and J. Kersey, 1683), A3-A4.
[90] Ibid, 29-30.

We can find a similar strategy in the prefatory material to Loveday's translation of La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre,* in which a prefixed letter from John Pettus praises the way in which Loveday has "drest [Cleopatra] fully in our English habit."[91] Pettus goes on to explain that Loveday's "disswaders" do not understand "the advantages that arise from Romances", noting that romance's "pleasing Utopia's" are "but Political Stratagems to ensnare or elevate our thoughts to high endeavours, or our endeavours to extraordinary actions." Pettus's defence of romance rewrites the anxiety about the genre's deceptiveness and its female readers' credulity into a claim that romance's Machiavellian strategy aims to deceive its readers into virtue. Key to this deception, of course, is the erotic frisson implicit in the overlay of the heroine's half-dressed body onto the book as an object.[92] The naked female body, so often depicted as a temptation to vice, is here reimagined as a deceptive lure into virtue. Romance rewrites its traditionally negative associations with amorous adventures, credulous readers and deceitful content into a dissimulating aesthetic tuned to a didactic purpose. In so far as fiction was a lie, it was a benign one which deceived readers into emulating moral behaviour.

Loveday describes *Cleopatra* as "history enameled with Fiction," and such a description perfectly captures the ways in which romance simultaneously drew on its historical facticity as proof of its 'truthfulness' while reforming that history in a way that might have more moral 'use'.[93] Such a strategy was part of romance's claims to a kind of truthfulness

[91] La Calprenède, *Hymen's Prœludia: Or, Love's Master-Piece*, trans. R. Loveday (London: Printed by R.D. for Rich[ard] Lownds, 1663). The first part of the translation was published in 1653; Pettus was the husband of one of the dedicatees of the third part.

[92] Collapsing the body of the heroine into the object of the book is a strategy common to romances; the 1652 Cotterell/Moseley translation of *Cassandre*, for instance, imagines the original French romance as the naked body of its heroine around which the clothing/translation has been "hastily and carelessly thrown about." There is an erotic thrill to the undressed heroine/book who must be adorned by her (usually male) translator. This image is deployed to advertise the sale of the complete Cotterell translation in folio despite the release of another part-translation by an unknown translator published by Humphrey Moseley in octavo earlier in 1652. Cotterell's argument is that just as sexual desire is not slaked by possession, so lovers of *Cassandra* will desire to possess the work a second time, or in a second translation. La Calprenède, *Cassandra: The Fam'd Romance*, trans. Sir Charles Cottterell, 2nd ed. (London: Peter Parker, 1676), A3.

[93] 'To the Reader' in La Calprenède, *Hymen's Prœludia*, 3.

based on 'probability'. The emphasis on 'virtuous probability' over historical reality was a key part of the intertwined principles of *bienséance* and *vraisemblance* that had sprung up to govern the French theatre and quickly began to leave their marks on other literary forms. Defined by Cotgrave as "probableness, or likenesse of truth", *vraisemblance* is the principle that actions in fiction should be believable.[94] It is closely associated with *bienséance*, the principle that art should conform to the rules of morality and taste. The rules of *bienséance* called for historical dramas or romances to bend the events of history itself if necessary in order to reflect contemporary moral tastes. Indeed, Corneille's *Théodore vierge et martyre* (1645-46), which would inspire Boyle's *Theodora and Didymus* (written 1648/9, first printed in 1687), was a flop precisely because its subject matter (a heroine forced into prostitution when she refuses to recant her Christian beliefs) was seen to contravene the rules of *bienséance*.[95] Brought together, *vraisemblance* and *bienséance* produced literature that was not historically accurate, but was seen to reflect the most likely behaviour of moral and tasteful characters. Plays and romances presented not what was true, but what *should* be true if we were guided by strong moral principles and codes of civilised conduct.[96] *Vraisemblance* and *bienséance* would find their way into English romances as the principles of 'probableness' and 'decorum'.[97] When seventeenth-

[94] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues (1611)* (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970).

[95] According to Susan Read Baker, the tragedy closed after just five performances because of the "repugnant nature of its subject." See *Dissonant Harmonies: Drama and Ideology in Five Neglected Plays of Pierre Corneille* (Tübingen: G. Narr, 1990), 52. The alliance of *vraisemblance* with *bienséance*, or artistry with ethical judgement, could thus exercise what Michael Moriarty terms "ideological censorship"; the rules of neoclassical poetics often reinforced conservative power structures and "confirm[ed] public opinion." See Michael Moriarty, "Principles of Judgement: Probability, Decorum, Taste, and the *Je Ne Sais Quoi*," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 523.

[96] Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 32-3. As Gérard Genette notes, *vraisemblance* was closely associated with "propriety." *Vraisemblance* is part of a "tacit contract" between genre and readers, in that the *vraisemblable* narrative is one "where the actions answer…to a body of maxims accepted as true by the public to which the narrative is addressed." Gérard Genette and David Gorman, "'Vraisemblance' and Motivation," *Narrative* 9, no. 3 (2001): 239-258 (242).

[97] Michael Moriarty, "French Criticism in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 555. In the anonymous 1720 translation of *La Princesse de Clèves*, for instance, what is *vraisemblable* is translated as what is 'probable'. See "La

century English prose romances insist on the 'probability' of their own subject matter, they are looking back towards Sidney, the rhetoric of suspicion and the suspicion of rhetoric, but also towards the principles of French Classicism which closely associated believability with good taste and exemplary morals.

The requirements for *bienséance* could also drive the aesthetic of open-endedness so common to romances of the period. Orrery's *Parthenissa*, for instance, is left incomplete because he can see no way of resolving the romance without violating either the truth of the history or the spirit of good taste. Printed in five volumes (3 parts) between 1651 and 1656, the incompletion of *Parthenissa* was clearly a source of dismay for Orrery's readers and when in 1669, Orrery published a sixth volume (Part 3, Books 5–8), he claimed it was at the request of Princess Henrietta Maria, sister of Charles I and Duchess of Orleans, who had "ordered…another Part."[98] Despite this, he admits the work is still unfinished because, "since I limit my self in the main Events to the Truth of History, I was Apprehensive, Madam, that the ill result of Her Destiny might have given you as much Trouble, as the ill Stile in which I should have related it."[99] Incompletion here is a result of the inability to meld historical truth with *bienséance*: the fate of Boyle's characters in their historical sources is hardly compatible with tastefulness or the moral compunction that the virtuous should be rewarded.[100] Nevertheless, in 1691 an eager reader wrote in to the *Athenian Mercury* to enquire if the work had ever been completed; the *Mercury* explains that it is the subject matter that precludes resolution, it being "so mournful a Subject" that it should "make all the poor Ladies that read it break their hearts." The *Mercury* goes on to explain

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Princesse De Clèves," in *Madame De La Fayette: Œuvre Complètes*, ed. Camille Esmein-Sarrazin (Lonrai: Gallimard, 2014), 461; *The Princess of Cleves*, trans. anon ([London], 1720), 188.

[98] Boyle, *Parthenissa*, 3.5.A2 (1669).

[99] Ibid., A3.

[100] We might compare this with La Calprenède's complaint in the Preface to *Cassandre* that "I find most difficulty to accommodate those passages to a likelihood, which are really in the History." 'Likelihood', here, refers to *vraisemblance*, or the notion that something might be believable because it is *probable* rather than factual. La Calprenède, *Cassandra*, trans. Cotterell, 'To the Reader', II.

that the author's "own Immature Fate robb'd us at once both of that and him, and forc'd him to leave greater Enterprizes unfinish'd than that of *Parthenissa*."[101] As has been noted with Sidney's *Arcadia*, the incompletion of the work is associated with the incomplete life.[102] Indeed, incompletion was a common feature of seventeenth-century English romances: the *Urania*, *Parthenissa*, *Birinthea*, *Theophania*, *Eliana* and *Pandion and Amphigenia* are all incomplete, a decision which might reflect the enormity of the undertakings, but is likely also a stylistic homage to Sidney.

To summarise, then, we have seen that critics of romances attacked the genre on two key grounds: its falseness or improbability, and the risk that it might corrupt vulnerable (generally troped female) readers. Against these accusations, defenders of romances developed a range of strategies: they claimed romances contained allegorical 'truths', that romances did not employ affect to dupe the reader into vice but rather to gull them into virtue, and that romances were not 'false' but historically 'probable'. We begin to see already, then, the ways in which romance strategically deployed a dissimulating aesthetic to counter criticism and achieve its stated didactic purpose.

v) The Tropes of Seventeenth-Century Romance

There are two tropes of seventeenth-century romance I wish to elucidate in further detail: their manipulation of the historical past, and their engagement with political philosophy. The relationship between history and romance in literature of this period demands a thesis of its own; its complexities are alluded to by Amelia Zurcher in her article, 'Serious Extravagance', and are addressed by McKeon.[103] 'History' is a fluid term in the period,

[101] "Question 10," *Athenian Gazette or Casuistical Mercury* Tuesday, September 1, 1691.
[102] For the significance of aposiopesis in biographical myth-making, see Alexander, *Writing after Sidney*.
[103] Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance"; McKeon, *Origins*, 45-64. Woolf suggests that aristocratic male readers of romances did not distinguish romances from works of history or theology in D.R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 97-98. See also Benjamin Boyce, "History and Fiction

meaning 'story' as much as 'factual account', and many romances announced themselves to be 'histories'; the *Astrée*, for instance, was first published in English as *The History of Astrea*. 'History' was a catch-all term; it could refer to factual accounts, to biographies, or to works of pure fiction.[104] But romances *were* histories in something like the sense that we understand the word. Seventeenth-century romances were usually set in the classical past, and treated the adventures of recognisable historical personages. Drawing on the humanist conception of history as "a branch of rhetoric" which educated through providing admirable past exempla, romance claimed to invite virtuous emulation by presenting truthful portraits of historical figures: their deployment of history was an integral part of their didactic purpose.[105] Madeleine de Scudéry was the foremost proponent of romances which interwove fictional narratives with the true stories of classical leaders and were founded on remarkable historical and geographical accuracy. Her *Artamène, ou, Le Grand Cyrus* (1648-51) interweaves Xenophon and Herodotus's accounts of the Persian military hero, Cyrus the Great, and creates fictional narratives that sit easily alongside the familiar tale of the ideal ruler. This technique inspired free-form English imitations, such as John Bulteel's *Birinthea*, which also tells the history of Cyrus the Great and is clearly indebted to Scudéry. In the preface to her romance *Ibrahim* (1641-44), Scudéry explains she drew on the classical past "to give a more true resemblance to things" because when,

> falshood and truth are confounded by a dexterous hand, wit hath much adoe to disintangle them, and is not easily carried to destroy that which pleaseth it; contrarily, whenas invention doth not make use of this artifice, and that

in "Panthalia: The Royal Romance"," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 57, no. 3 (1958): 477-491.

[104] Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance," 383; Lee, "The Meanings of Romance," 294. Michael McKeon refers to the "categorical instability" of history and fiction before 1700 in *Origins*, 20.

[105] Iain Hampsher-Monk, *A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 2.

> falshood is produced openly, this gross untruth makes no impression in the soul, nor gives any delight.[106]

What Scudéry stresses is the way romance's recognisable historical setting (its *vraisemblance*) is key to its emotional affect (its *impression in the soul*), and it is affect which is key to romance's claims to educate. 'Teaching through delight' is only possible if the reader is affected and, as Boileau puts it, "the spirit is not moved by what it does not believe."[107] Romance's engagement with history was thus key to its perceived didactic purpose: as Nicholas Paige observes, "nonhistorical subject matter" had limited perceived "utility."[108]

Orrery's *Parthenissa* (1652-76) reworks the conventions of Scudérian romance, notably that of the famous classical hero travelling in disguise, in his creation of a hero who is simultaneously the Persian king Artabanes and the Roman gladiator Spartacus. By conflating two historical personages from distinct traditions, Orrery exposes the limitations of Scudéry's attempts to locate romance narratives within a specific historical and geographical space. His romance demonstrates an impulse to play with history and to reshape it to fit new narratives. In the Preface to *Parthenissa*, Orrery stresses the mingling of historical fact and invention that characterised romance:

> Amongst my many Faults, I know none which had a lesse Disputed Assendent over me, then a Detestation to Readeing and Studdy, in which vast unhappinesse I continued 'till I went to see the World, and making some Residence in France, I assotiated my selfe with Persons of my owne Age, where I soone found, that he who was Ignorant of the Romances of

[106] Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahim, or The Illustrious Bassa. An Excellent New Romance*, trans. Henry Cogan (London: Humphrey Moseley, William Bentley and Thomas Heath, 1652).
[107] As quoted in Nicholas D. Paige, *Before Fiction: The Ancien Regime of the Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 28.
[108] Ibid. Barbara Shapiro notes that there was a tension in the seventeenth century between competing theories of historical writing: one view "related it to literature, morality and rhetoric, and another…to science, the truthful and accurate recording of facts, and suspicion of rhetorical skills." We can see such a tension shaping defences and criticisms of romances. Defences of romances present history as a branch of literature with a moral purpose, while critics of romances see history as a question of facticity. See Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 148.

> those Times, was as fitt an Object for Wonder, as a Phylosopher would be, who had never heard of Aristotle, or a Mathematician of Euclyd. This inforc'd me to reade, Necessity performing what should have sprunge from a handsomer Principle. In the Perusall of those Bookes, I mett with the names & some of the Actions, of those Hero's, whome I had heard off, in the Scoole; This gave me a passionate desire to separate the Truth from the Fixion, in the effecting whereof, I became as much a Friend to reading, as I had bin an Enemy to it. This experiment I esteem'd an ingratitude to Conceale; & I have cause to believe since Romances Acted a Cure upon me, they cannot fayle of doeing the Like upon any other.[109]

Orrery's account rehearses many details common to defences of romance writing and reading: the young man first encounters romances in his travels in France, he learns that romance-reading is a marker of taste and culture, and his experiences with French romance inspire him to write an original romance in English. What is unique about Orrery's defence is the way he credits romances with whetting his scholarly appetite. They are the tool an educator can use to inspire a young and reluctant reader to learn about the past. Orrery uses romance's fictive play with the past to defend the genre from charges of being 'idle', 'trivial' or 'extravagant', grounding his defence of romance reading in his own experience to claim that romances exert fascination in their mediation of the past through fiction. It is the desire to unpick the interweaving of truth and fiction, history and romance, that spurs the reader on to a better knowledge of truth.

This engagement with history is also an engagement with political philosophy and romances stage the learning of political skill through the reading of history. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, for instance, the hero Musidorus (posing as Palladius) is described as one "who by some experience, but especially by reading histories, was acquainted with stratagems."[110] Inspired by past examples of martial ruses, Musidorus disguises his army

[109] Preface to the first part of *Parthenissa* (Waterford and London: Peter de Pienne for Humphrey Moseley, 1655). This edition is a reissue with cancel title page of the 1651 Waterford edition. The Preface is not reprinted in the complete folio edition of 1676, from which I shall quote hereafter. This preface is acknowledged and imitated by Robert Whitcombe in his *Lives of the Heathen Gods* (1677), in which he similarly articulates the utility of romance reading.

[110] Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Victor Skretkowicz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 35. All citations are from this edition except where stated.

as a mob of peasants to infiltrate the walls of an enemy town and rescue the captive Clitophon. Reading history has taught Musidorus both to lead and to dupe. If histories offer lessons in successful military and political manoeuvres, then romance claims to historical facticity can be understood as foundational to their political engagement. Through long allegorical pseudo-histories, romances such as *Parthenissa* draw on the recognised didactic function of historical narratives to suggest a political philosophy for the present.

The association between amorous and political narratives has been much studied.[111] Matthew Woodcock notes the play on 'courtship' in Sidney's romance refers to both political and amorous negotiations and in writing about the *Arcadia* and the *Urania*, Melissa Sanchez notes how many early modern authors "understand political subjection in sexual terms" so that "their analyses of desire are also analyses of how power works."[112] Love stories are rarely solely about the problem of intimacy, but double as vehicles to explore questions of "power and influence, ambition and anxiety."[113] As Kahn, Sanchez and others have argued, some of romance's most celebrated conventions – its pastoral settings, its far-flung journeys, and its potential to sustain transparent or opaque allegories – fitted the genre for political debate at the Jacobean and Caroline courts, particularly on

[111] The fullest exploration of the early modern analogies between marriage and monarchy can be found in Sid Ray, *Holy Estates: Marriage and Monarchy in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2004). Ray explores the subversive possibilities of the marriage analogy and argues that it could be exploited both by rulers to legitimate absolute authority and by dissidents to argue for rule by consent. See also Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), 39, 42, 271-273 and Jonathan Goldberg's analysis of the way royal portraits employed images of state power to express intimacy in *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 89, 94.
[112] Matthew Woodcock, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Sidney Circle* (Horndon: Northcote House 2010), 5; Melissa E. Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 4.
[113] Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 3.

the question of Protestant military intervention in Europe.[114] The tropes of seventeenth-century romance were always (although not exclusively) tuned to a political purpose.

It is largely from Sidney that the reading public developed a taste for interpeting romances according to their political relevance. Studying the extensive annotations left in William Blount's copy of the *Arcadia*, Fred Schurink has noted the many connections Blount drew between Tacitean politic philosophy and Sidney's romance, although he did not draw comparisons between events in the romance and precise events in recent history.[115] Similarly Heidi Brayman Hackel has noted that annotations in copies of the *Arcadia* suggest the work was read in the context of contemporary political philosophy.[116] This understanding of the romance genre as inevitably politicised would come to shape its production and reception through the seventeenth century: as Paul Salzman puts it, "romance was positioned, by the beginning of the 1620s, as a genre that could carry considerable political weight."[117] When it comes to mid-century romances, many critics have noted the obvious parallels between romance narratives and the events of the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth era. Works such as *The Princess Cloria* are clearly topical allegories, functioning on one level as *romans à clef*. But the very transparency of these allegories renders them unexciting, and seeking after clavis correspondences risks constructing a singular meaning which elides the richness and variety of romance's responses to contemporary thought.[118] In this thesis, then, rather than seeking after close

[114] Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 139. See also Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 5; Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, 39-44.
[115] Fred Schurink, "'Like a Hand in the Margine of a Booke': William Blount's Marginalia and the Politics of Sidney's *Arcadia," The Review of English Studies* New Series 59, no. 238 (2008): 1-24.
[116] Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 158-69.
[117] Paul Salzman, *Literature and Politics in the 1620s: 'Whisper'd Counsells'* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 104.
[118] Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 16. Danielle Clarke argues that clavis reading divided readers into circles of "insiders" who could decode the allegory and "outsiders" who could not, in *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 235. This take on the clavis romance emphasises the heterogeneity of the romance reading experience and stresses that *roman à clef* neither has nor was perceived to have one singular allegorical meaning. Many commentators dismissed clavis-reading even at the time: in his 1628 anti-romance *The Extravagant Shepherd*, Charles Sorel mocks the vogue for romance keys,

correspondences between romance plots and contemporary political events, I shall be teasing out the ways in which the allegorical nature of romance allows it to express anxieties about modes of political behaviour.

II – Dissimulation

i) The Ethics of Honesty

I began by speaking specifically about dissimulation as the art of concealment. Before continuing to elucidate the early modern debate about dissimulation as a practice distinctive from other ways of lying, it is worth briefly sketching the overarching questions with which all debates about deceit are concerned. In this way, we will gain an understanding of how anxieties about dissimulation fit within a broader, long-standing discourse surrounding the ethics of honesty.

What is deceit? To paraphrase Montaigne, where honesty is single and absolute, deceit is multi-faceted and various.[119] Types of deceit may include spoken lies, lies of omission, secrets and misdirection. The act of deception might most broadly be defined then as the act of leading someone to believe that which is not true, by word, gesture or act, or by omission of a word, gesture or act. Lies are a particular type of deception practised through speech (except in the cases of 'lies of omission', which are not truly lies at all).[120] A fairly conventional definition of a lie is to say something you believe to be false with the intention of deceiving: the key elements here are that a lie is something *spoken*, it is *known*

observing "when we have learned all these explications...we have learned but very triviall and ordinary things." Charles Sorel, *The Extravagant Shepherd; or, The History of the Shepherd Lysis*, trans. John Davies (London: 1654), 65.

[119] "The opposite of truth hath many-many shapes and an undefinite field," quoted in Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," 863.

[120] Jennifer Mather Saul stresses that the ethical distinction between lying and misleading "turns on the notion of *saying*" in *Lying, Misleading and What Is Said: An Exploration in Philosophy of Language and Ethics* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), vii.

to be false by the speaker, and it is said *with intention to mislead*.[121] Grotius defines a lie as "a falsehood spoken knowingly, in a sense contrary to either what we think or design."[122] Such a definition separates it from dissimulation, which may involve lies, but is more often associated with silence and misleading through withholding of information than it is with spoken untruths.

Honesty has always been a fundamental part of moral philosophy, defined by Hobbes as "the science of virtue and vice" and generally understood to be the strand of philosophy devoted to ethics.[123] Ethics might broadly be understood as the moral principles which govern both actions and the manner in which actions are conducted. There are several types of ethics. Virtue ethics (or aretaic ethics) are Aristotelian in origin and emphasise the morality of individuals over that of actions. As Stan van Hooft puts it, "virtue ethics theorises the characteristic states of the agent which lead to action, deeming those that lead to morally good actions or, more broadly, socially acceptable actions, to be virtues, and those that lead to unacceptable or morally bad actions as vices."[124] This distinguishes virtue ethics from duty ethics or practical ethics. The former, also known as deontological ethics and associated with Kant and Aquinas, insists on the duty of acting according to a set of moral rules regardless of consequence. The latter is also known as applied ethics and tends to be situational, thinking about the correct way to respond to specific and recognisable moral problems.

[121] Most modern philosophers agree that a lie must be spoken with the intention to mislead. For this point of view, see for instance Sam Harris, *Lying* (United States: Four Elephants Press, 2013), 4. But some philosophers, such as Don Fallis, query the stress on intent as intrinsic to the definition of lying. Fallis suggests substituting 'intention to deceive' with the weaker condition, 'an expectation that the hearer *might* be deceived' or even erasing the anticipation of listener response altogether. See Don Fallis, "What Is Lying?," *The Journal of Philosophy* 106, no. 1 (2009): 39-43.
[122] Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, ed. Richard Tuck (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 1209.
[123] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. A.P.Martinich (Ontario: Broadview Literary Texts, 2002), 119.
[124] Stan van Hooft, 'Introduction' in *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, ed. Stan van Hooft (Durham: Acumen, 2014), 2-3.

When it comes to lying, Kantian duty ethics would hold that we have an obligation to tell the truth as we know it but no responsibility for ensuring that others interpret that truth correctly.[125] Practical ethics would suggest that some situations permit lying, where others do not. Virtue ethics would consider the motivations of the individual who is lying: *why are they doing so? is the intention malicious or benevolent?* Dishonesty for self-interested gain would be morally wrong; dishonesty to spare someone's feelings or maintain civil conversation might be a small good; dishonesty to protect someone's life would be a positive virtue.

The questions of virtue ethics are very much the questions of romance. As Jennifer Mather Saul has argued, when we judge the acceptability of a lie, we are making judgements about whether someone's priorities are correct (does the obligation to truthfulness outweigh the obligation to charity, for instance) and what their motivations are (is the lie malicious or benevolent, self-serving or disinterested). In other words, we are judging what the lie might reveal about an individual's character.[126] Romance's emphasis on the acceptability of deception by some people in some situations seems to reflect a culture used to the virtue ethics model of proceeding, but in which the dawning practical ethics was beginning to influence philosophical thought. Stylistic shifts towards *vraisemblance* and narratives of individual psychology helped to focus fiction as a vehicle for ethical exploration. This thesis examines romances as philosophical thought experiments which adopt both virtue and practical ethics approaches; in its emphasis on character and individual motivation, fiction rarely has much to do with duty ethics.

[125] Kant argued that we have an obligation to speak the truth, even if to do so would knowingly endanger another's life. See Immanuel Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives," in *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 346-50. Quoted in Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1999) 267-72; discussed in Bok, 37-9.
[126] Saul, *Lying, Misleading and What is Said*, 88.

The principal argument in favour of honesty is that it secures social cohesion.[127] In 1688, the preacher Robert South declared, "Society is built upon trust, and trust upon confidence of another's integrity."[128] South's declaration recognises several key overlapping concepts within the history of truthfulness and deception: the notion that trust underpins social cohesion, that confidence (referring both to trust and to privileged information) is a feature of interpersonal relationships and that trust and trustworthiness are aspects of an individual's character. The important of trust as a sociable virtue has long been recognised; Aristotle celebrated the "moral excellence" of the honest man.[129] Augustine transformed Aristotelian virtue ethics into Christian ethics, in which to speak less than the truth was an act of apostasy because it devalued the sanctity of the language we use to understand and praise God.[130] We see these two ideas united in the seventeenth-century cult of Neoplatonism, particularly at the court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, which celebrated the three transcendentals: beauty, goodness and truth. This conceptual triangle presumes that these concepts are cognate; where there is not truth, there can be neither beauty nor virtue. As Robert P. Kennedy has demonstrated, it is this Platonic premise that underlies the Christian presumption that virtue and truth are "convertible."[131]

But the influence of Machiavelli on early modern English thought and the work of philosophers such as Hobbes shifted the grounds of ethical debate. For Hobbes, the imperative towards truthfulness was self-interest; we are honest with others so that they are honest with us. This allows for more flexibility in the practice of honesty than was

[127] Bok, *Lying*, 17-31.
[128] Robert South, "A Sermon Preached at Christ-Church Oxon, before the University, October 14, 1688," in *Twelve Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions* (London: J Bettenham for Jonah Bowyer, 1727), I.480. Quoted in Michael Bryan, Megan Richardson, Martin Vranken and Katy Barnett, *Breach of Confidence: Social Origins and Modern Developments* (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2012), 5.
[129] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by H. Rackham (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1926), IV.vii.241.
[130] For an elaboration of this idea, see Robert P. Kennedy, "Truthfulness as the Bond of Society," in *Augustine and Politics*, ed. Kevin L. Hughes, John Doody and Kim Paffenroth (Maryland and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), 35-52.
[131] Ibid., 36-38.

previously admitted and has paved the way for the modern (post-Nietzsche) understanding of lying as a necessary evil in modern life.[132] Despite this, the English language colludes in the presumption of honesty. There are many verbs for the act of conveying falsehood (to lie, to dissimulate, to feign and to dissemble, to list but a few), but there is no verb for *to truth*.[133] Our language has a moral bias towards veracity; we assume speech is truthful unless told otherwise.

Truthfulness is a form of implicit social contract. As T.M. Scanlon explains, truth-telling forms a contractual recipient-provider relationship in which the two concerned parties have quite different motivations. While the recipient is always seeking information on which they can rely, the provider's intentions may include preserving privacy, protecting reputation or other people's feelings, or "reserving…information for their own exclusive use."[134] The principle that forbids us from lying, then, is always in favour of the recipient rather than the provider (we might compare this with Sissela Bok's assertion that the

[132] For this view, see Jeremy Camphell, *The Liar's Tale* (New York and London: Norton, 2001). There is a broad literature on lying in contemporary life, far more than is possible to survey here, beyond noting that it falls broadly into three areas: the scientific, the political and the philosophical. Psychologists have had a particular interest in the practice of lying and have found deception to be more common among both humans and animals than was previously thought. The most prominent studies have been carried out by Bella DePaulo, including Deborah A. Kashy, Bella M. DePaulo, Susan E. Kirkendol, Melissa M. Wyer and Jennifer A. Epstein, "Lying in Everyday Life," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70 (1996): 979 -95; Deborah A. Kashy, Bella M. DePaulo, "Everyday Lies in Close and Casual Relationships," ibid. 74 (1998): 63-79. Much of this work underpins a resurgence of interest in lying both as a philosophical problem and a political reality. The seminal work on the philosophy of lying remains Sissela Bok's *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*; others include Sam Harris, *Lying*; Alison Leigh Brown, *Subjects of Deceit: A Phenomenology of Lying* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998). It would be impossible to provide a full list of works both academic and popular which address the issue of political deception; however, the following may be considered representative of the present interest in political truth and accountability: Peter Oborne, *The Rise of Political Lying* (London: The Free Press, 2005); Lionel Cliffe, Maureen Ramsay and Dave Bartlett, *The Politics of Lying: Implications for Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Martin Jay, *The Virtues of Mendacity: On Lying in Politics* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010); Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

[133] This is an observation by Christopher Ricks discussed in Jay, *The Virtues of Mendacity*, 42. There is a medieval form 'to troth', meaning principally to betroth or marry, now obsolete. See "*Truth, v.*" *OED* Online. June 2016. OUP. (accessed August 18, 2016). This defunct use of the word neatly encapsulates the association between truthfulness and promise-keeping which is still recognised today but had greater currency in the seventeenth century.

[134] T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 317-18.

deceived generally take a far dimmer view of deception than the deceiver).[135] The provider may have other obligations against which they must weigh the principle of openness and there can be cases, notably those of breach of confidence, in which secrecy is considered more ethical than honesty. Claims for and against honesty, then, are both premised on the notion that ethical behaviour involves the abnegation of self-interest (Hobbes is, of course, the revolutionary counter to this). As a legal principle, 'confidence' exists to counter the demands of self-interest and fiduciary law is founded on the recognition that the principles of truthfulness and trustworthiness are rarely aligned with self-interest.[136]

If we accept, then, that while honesty is desirable, there are situations where it may be unethical, we establish a philosophical problem regarding when to privilege honesty and when to privilege other claims. Many modern ethicists, notably Bok, recommend avoiding all forms of deceit (the rule that *honesty is the best policy*) because it saves us from this philosophical uncertainty.[137] In other words, they recommend privileging honesty above all other claims. As Ralph Keyes notes, sometimes "a bit of oversimplification is preferable to a slippery quest for acceptable lying guidelines which leave too many doors open for casual dishonesty under the heading of Good Intentions."[138] But many seventeenth-century authors chose to pursue this 'slippery quest.' Milton, for instance, argued that the ethical duty to be honest could not be placed above the obligation to act in the best interests of our neighbours. Milton acknowledged "it frequently happens that not only to disguise or conceal the truth, but actually to tell lies with deceitful intent makes for

[135] Bok, *Lying*, 20-22. Cf. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 4.
[136] Breach of confidence is a modern area of fiduciary law only formalised in the twentieth century, but 'confidence' as a legal term has a much longer history going back to the sixteenth-century Court of Chancery. The idea that certain matters are privileged, either by their sensitive nature or by the nature of the relationship between confider and confidant, has a long philosophical heritage. For the history of confidence philosophically and legally, see Michael Bryan et al, *Breach of Confidence: Social Origins and Modern Developments*, 17-18.
[137] Bok, *Lying*. See also Eric Alterman, *When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and Its Consequences* (New York and London: Viking, 2004), 314.
[138] Ralph Keyes, *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2004), 246.

the safety or advantage of one's neighbour."[139] Milton sought to formulate a definition of lying which recognised that the duty to be honest was secondary to our duty to the well-being of others. For Milton, lying could not be merely "the expression of an untruth, either by words or actions, with deceitful intent," because such a definition could encompass disinterested and benevolent as well as self-interested and malicious deception. Instead, Milton proposed to define a lie as prompted by "evil intent" and told "to someone…to whom it is the speaker's duty to be truthful."[140] In other words, for Milton dishonesty only became vicious in situations where duty demanded the privileging of truthfulness. The benevolent lie is not really a lie at all.

Milton is tackling the same problem as that articulated by many prose romances: is a lie still vicious if the speaker's intentions are good, and the results are positive? This attempt to isolate situations in which deception might be acceptable has an august history. Indeed, since antiquity philosophers have asked whether there might be distinctions in types of deception, and whether such distinctions might depend on the nature of the deception itself (for instance, is it spoken, performed through signs or conveyed through silence) or the situation in which the liar finds themselves. Most philosophers have held that secrecy (what the early moderns more often termed 'reservancie') is permissible, as long as it is not misleading.[141] But the questions of types of lie and of situations which permit dishonesty have been areas of spirited debate for over two millennium. It is within these debates that we must situate the specific discourse on the ethics of dissimulation, and the broader questions seventeenth-century romances ask about the relative virtue of honesty.

[139] John Milton, "Two Books of Investigation into Christian Doctrine Drawn from the Sacred Scriptures Alone," in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), VI: 760.
[140] Ibid.
[141] T.M. Scanlon notes, however, that there are situations in which we may be obliged to speak the truth as we know it, particularly in cases of giving aid. This obligation, however, does not stem from a moral obligation to speak the truth, but from the principle of giving aid. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 320-1. For a close study of the ethics of secrecy, see Sissela Bok, *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation* (Oxford: OUP, 1984).

In this thesis, I shall argue that while some romances assert Aristotelian virtue ethics, many – particularly mid-century romances – respond to the dawn of practical ethics by offering situation-specific guidelines for acceptable deceit. They privilege character and individual motivation to demonstrate that the virtue of honesty must be applied with discretion, according to the demands of each situation, and that the practice of certain types of dishonesty does not compromise an individual's virtuous character. To the question, 'Are there any conditions under which deceit is acceptable?' they unanimously answer 'yes', and they insist upon distinctions between types of deception, generally considering 'dissimulation' to be a form of acceptable guile where 'simulation' and outright 'mendacity' are not. But to the question, 'what are these conditions?' we find a range of answers. Indeed, it is through exploring these conditions that romances generate narrative action.

ii) Dissimulation: Acceptable Guile?

As we have already established, dissimulation is the art of deception through concealment. It is often implicit in words that carry more positive connotations, such as "reservancie", as well as words that carry a heightened negative presumption against them, such as "hypocrisie." It is frequently defined in reference to the more active simulation.[142] The Puritan clergyman Daniel Dyke defined dissimulation as "dissembling and concealing that which indeede is," as opposed to simulation, which is "fayning and counterfeiting that which indeede is not."[143] As we shall see in Chapter One, philosophers generally argue

[142] For many examples of such definitions, see Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations*, 11-38. See also Cavaillé, "Simulation Et Dissimulation: Quatre Définitions (Xvi^{e}-XVII^{e} Siècles)," in *Deceptio. Mystifications, Tromperies, Illusions, De L'antiquité Au XVII^{e} Siècle*, ed. Françoise Laurent and Francis Dubost (Montpellier: Publications de l'Université Paul-Valéry, 2000), 49-75.

[143] Dyke, *Mystery of Selfe-Deceiving*, 12. Dyke's treatise was published posthumously in 1615 by his brother Jeremiah, and dedicated to the Countess of Bedford, sister of Dyke's patron, Lord Harington of Exton. It was popular enough to receive a second edition in 1634 and to be translated into French in 1636. Robert Boyle quotes from Dyke in his discourse on hypocrisy and simulation in "The Aretology or Ethicall Elements of

that simulation is always wrong, but in some circumstances, dissimulation can be permissible and, even, ethical.

Dissimulation is distinguished from simulation and, indeed, from other forms of lying by its intention: it is principally associated with the correct regulation of the passions.[144] In his famous courtly handbook, Baltasar Gracián advises the reader that as "passions are the breaches of the mind," so "the most usefull knowledge is the art to dissemble."[145] The passions, in other words, leave us vulnerable to manipulation and it is only through dissembling that we can protect ourselves from others' predatory interests. If dissimulation is recommended for courtiers to conceal their desires, then perhaps it is hardly surprising that an overtly aristocratic genre such as romance should be interested in the correct deployment of dissimulation. Just as romance is the genre of the amorous and the political, so dissimulation is the art of the lover and the politician.

Theories of dissimulation tend to divide it into spheres of practice.[146] Louis Machon, advisor to Cardinal Richelieu in the 1640s and author of the manuscript essay *Apology for Machiavelli*, argued that there were two fundamental types: *civile et morale* and *politique*.[147] The historian Jon Snyder divides early modern discourses on dissimulation into no less than five discursive fields.[148] The German scholar Karl Ittig divides dissimulation not by sphere but by type of practice, delineating "pretence of the mind", by

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Robert Boyle," in *The Early Essays and Ethics of Robert Boyle*, ed. John T. Harwood (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 111.

[144] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 6 and *passim*.

[145] Baltasar Gracián y Morales, *The Courtiers Manual Oracle, or, The Art of Prudence* (London: Printed by M. Flesher for Abel Swalle, 1685), maxim 98, 92. *Oráculo Manual y arte de prudencia* was first published in Spain in 1647, and first translated into English in 1685. This collection of 300 maxims is more commonly known now as *The Art of Worldly Wisdom* and remains popular in modern translations.

[146] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 18-24.

[147] *Apologie pour Machiavelle en faveur des Princes et des Ministres d'Estat*, as discussed in Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 18-9. Machon's treatise is considered in Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, "Louis Machon (1603-Après 1672). Autopsie d'Une Non-Publication," in *De La Publication Entre Renaissance Et Lumières*, ed. Christian Jouhaud and Alain Viala, Groupe De Recherches Interdisciplinaires Sur L'Histoire Du Littéraire (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 93-109.

[148] See Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 21.

which he means speaking contrary to one's true beliefs or feelings, from "pretence of body", by which he means actively pretending to be someone different, or assuming a disguise.[149] He then goes on to divide "pretence of the mind" into the spheres of political, religious and civil dissimulation.

In this thesis, I shall draw on Ittig's two-tier distinction of dissimulation into types and spheres of practice, and shall refer to the arguments surrounding the legitimacy of dissimulation as belonging to three spheres: the political, the religious, and the social. But it is important to recognise, as Snyder does, that reflection on dissimulation was dispersed and the distinctions between, for instance, discourse on courtly dissimulation and on civility, or courtly dissimulation and reason of state, are hazy. The kinds of dissimulation advocated in advice books for courtiers, such as Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, straddle arguments about the role of dissimulation both in civility and in reason of state theory.[150] But with this methodological caveat, I will proceed to outline briefly the key arguments for and against dissimulation in the political and religious spheres.

In the political sphere, debates about dissimulation form part of broader discussions relating to reason of state theory, the role of counsel and the formulation of resistance to sovereign rule. These will be further elucidated in later chapters, and I note here only that dissimulation was commonly presented as being essential to the art of rule. This idea has its origins in Tacitus's *Annals*, in which deceit is satirically upheld as a virtue; Tacitus tells us the Emperor Tiberius "cherished none of all his self-ascribed virtues more dearly than dissimulation."[151] Machiavelli would develop the idea of dissimulation as a counter-intuitive virtue through his famous image of the ruler who "should imitate both the fox and

[149] Karl Ittig, *De Simulatione Et Dissimulatione* (Leipzig: Immanuel Titius, 1709), 12-14.
[150] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 19.
[151] Tacitus, *The Annals*, trans. John Jackson (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1931), IV:71.

the lion."[152] Many later writers in the 'advice to princes' genre would recommend some level of deceptive practice on the part of the ruler.[153]

Dissimulation was not merely recommended for the sovereign, but for the courtier, most famously of course in Castiglione's *sprezzatura*. The success of this philosophy would produce the irony of the idealised *honnête homme*, whose goal was not to be natural, honest or 'authentic' but merely to appear to be so.[154] Nicholas Faret's popular courtly handbook *L'Honnête Homme. Ou, l'art de plaire à la cour* (1630) followed Castiglione in its recommendation that the courtier should aim "to pass for an *honnête homme*" ("passer pour un honnête homme").[155] The disingenuousness of this philosophy lay behind the ubiquitous association of courtiers with flatterers.[156]

In the religious sphere, we find theological arguments regarding when, if ever, it is acceptable to dissimulate faith. Passages from the Bible – notably "Let love be without dissimulation" (Romans 12:9) – seem to suggest never. But authorities were divided over the question. The Biblical passage in which Paul admonishes Peter for concealing his faith (Galatians 2:11-14) was much debated by the early Church fathers. Jerome held it up as an example of acceptable dissimulation, but Augustine vehemently disagreed.[157] In his two works *De Mendacio* ('On Lying', c. 395) and *Contra Mendacium* ('Against Lying', c. 420) Augustine imagines the ideal Christian as an "*homo fenestratus*, whose face ought to be an

[152] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), 61.
[153] See, for instance, Matthieu Coignet, who stresses that while princes should lay aside malicious guile, it does not follow that every man should "speake what he thinketh" nor "discover to everie one the secrete of his minde." *Politique Discourses Upon Trueth and Lying: An Instruction to Princes to Keep Their Faith and Promise*, trans. Sir Edward Hoby (London: Printed by [John Windet] for Ralfe Newberie, 1586), 11.
[154] David M. Posner, *The Performance of Nobility in Early Modern European Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 20.
[155] Ibid., 19-20.
[156] Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," 887. For the popular image of the courtier as a hollow mask, see Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 107-8.
[157] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 16. See also Chapter Two of Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*.

open book and whose heart ought to be as transparent as glass."[158] Augustine could see no occasion when it would be acceptable for a Christian to speak anything other than the complete truth and this rigid position would govern Christian ideas about lying for the next millennia.[159] Calvin echoed Augustine, directing believers to suffer state penalties rather than commit apostasy.[160] Calvin's argument reflects the ways in which religious dissimulation was understood to be an act of political resistance in so far as it served to protect unorthodox believers from oppressive laws.

The association of political with religious dissimulation saw many commentators conjoin charges of deceit and apostasy. The anonymous 1589 pamphlet, *The Atheism of Henry of Valois*, for instance, promises to penetrate "the unknown hearts of kings" to demonstrate "the true aim of…dissimulations and cruelties."[161] Henry III is compared with Machiavelli, "the dissimulating Florentine", and revealed to be both a cruel tyrant and a heretic.[162] In pamphlets such as this, we see that the danger of dissimulation in the political sphere is not merely that it may render treason opaque, but that it may conceal heretical beliefs. In particular it was Catholics who were associated with Machiavellianism, and Italians – Catholic, foreign, and from the land of both the Pope and Machiavelli – who were particularly suspect. To be 'Italian' became synonymous with perfidy.[163] Edward Stevens, for instance, describes Charles IX as having inherited "the Italian genius of deep and subtil dissimulation."[164] Similarly in Civil War-era England, the King's preacher, Edward Symmons, described the rebels as students in the "Schooles of Machiavell and the

[158] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 17.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, 68-75; "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," 889-94.
[161] *L'atheisme De Henry De Valois: Où Est Monstré Le Vray but De Ses Dissimulations & Cruautez* (Paris: Pierre des-Hayes, 1589), 23.
[162] Ibid., 16.
[163] John Roe, "Machiavellian Dissimulation and Allegory: The Writings of Roger Ascham and Sir Philip Sidney," in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 157.
[164] Edward Stephens, *A Discourse Concerning the Original of the Powder-Plot* (London: Printed for John Leigh, 1674), 79.

Jesuites."[165] The charge of political dissimulation evoked in the name of Machiavelli is allied both with recusancy and with the sin of rebellion.

Rebellion is, of course, always touched with the whiff of deception, going back to the first rebel, Lucifer himself. Indeed, John Taylor's *A Satyre against swearing, equivocation, mentall reservation, and detestable dissimulation* opens by observing:

> To pretend, and the contrary to intend,
> With th' World began, and with the World shall end:
> The Divell himselfe (who first made man a sinner)
> Of this dissembling Art, was the beginner.[166]

For Taylor, dissimulation is the art of the devil. Taylor's satire notes two particular types of dissimulating speech associated specifically with religious dissimulation: equivocation and mental reservation. Equivocation was a rhetorical technique particularly associated with nicodemism, in which the speaker drew on words or phrases with double meanings to seem to tell the truth while actually misleaidng the auditor.[167] This rhetorical trick was developed by the sixteenth century theologian Martin de Azpilcueta, known as Navarrus, who outlined the arguments for mental reservation.[168] Navarrus held that man owed the truth only to God and that as God heard what was in one's mind, it was acceptable to speak half-truths to other men. As Zagorin observes, this theory reimagined "the communicative relationship…as something that existed not between two speakers or a speaker and an auditor or questioner, but between the speaker and himself and the speaker and God."[169] The practices of equivocation and mental reservation became infamous in Elizabethan and Jacobean England following the publication of treatises on the subject by the recusant

[165] Edward Symmons, *A Military Sermon Wherein by the Word of God, the Nature and Disposition of a Rebell Is Discovered, and the Kings True Souldier Described and Characterized* (London: Printed by Henry Hall, 1644), 13.
[166] John Taylor, *Epigrammes Written on Purpose to Be Read* (London: [s.n.], 1651), 24.
[167] Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," 897.
[168] Ibid., 897-900. See also A. E. Malloch and Frank L. Huntley, "Some Notes on Equivocation," *PMLA* 81, no. 1 (1966): 145.
[169] Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," 899.

Catholics Henry Garnet and Robert Southwell.[170] The public hysteria following the 1605 Gunpowder Plot caused "inquiries into religious conscience" to become "radically intensified" and the 1606 Oath of Allegiance rendered religious beliefs "matters of the utmost importance to the commonwealth."[171] As James Shapiro has argued, the effect of the Gunpowder Plot was to introduce a new national threat to popular consciousness: not an irresponsible monarch or manipulative counsellors, but equivocating subjects.[172] Dissimulation and its related practices were perceived to be the tools of Catholic rebels seeking to undermine national stability. But while popularly understood to advocate deceit, in fact both equivocation and mental reservation only allowed for minimal deception in very specific situations. The techniques were devised principally to protect nicodemites from being forced to reveal their true beliefs to state authorities when questioned under oath.

Religious dissimulation is thus implicitly associated with casuistry, political disloyalty and even rebellion. The modern philosopher Irit Samet defines loyalty as a "disinclination to exit" and "a willingness to set aside self-interest."[173] In this sense, loyalty is fundamentally opposed to political and religious dissimulation, which is affected to forward individual interests which may or may not serve the sovereign. There is a broad literature on the problem of rebellion and the strategies of rebels, demonstrating that as the king was seen as God's anointed, rebellion was not merely a political but also a religious act. As Charles I's preacher, Edward Symmons, observed, "to rebell against a King is to strike at the face

[170] Seventeenth-century Europe was swept by the fear of nicodemism (the appearance of subscribing to orthodox religious practices while in fact retaining other beliefs), although the practice was likely less common than the literature might lead us to believe. Zagorin describes the period as the 'Age of Dissimulation' and explores the many 'ways of lying' used to conceal divergent religious belief. See Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*.
[171] Todd Butler, "Equivocation, Cognition and Political Authority in Early Modern England," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 54, no. 1 (2012): 132.
[172] James Shapiro, *1606: Shakespeare and the Year of Lear* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 178-207.
[173] Irit Samet, "Fiduciary Loyalty as Kantian Virtue," in *Philosophical Foundations of Fiduciary Law*, ed. Andrew S. Gold and Paul B. Miller (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 127.

of Christ as God."[174] Dissimulation in romances serves as a type of shorthand for disloyalty; as the young hero of Herbert's *Cloria*, Prince Arethusius, reflects, "diseases in a state are never more demonstrated, then by inconstancy."[175]

III – Dissimulating Romance

I conclude this Introduction by addressing briefly why dissimulation should prove a useful frame through which to consider the strategies of seventeenth-century prose romance. What I shall contend throughout this thesis is that romances respond to the question of when and how one can dissimulate ethically. Romances reflect anxieties about the practice of dissimulation in the political, religious, and social spheres without necessarily repeating the traditional Augustinian view that all deception is vicious. Rather, they recognise the necessity of some dissimulation and weigh the ethical claims for truthfulness against other duties, such as loyalty and self-interest.

There appears to be a growing interest in problems of trust and deception, honesty and dissimulation. The first history of trust was published in 2014, a much overdue and very welcome addition to the field.[176] Recent work on early modern dissimulation, such as the edited collection *Dissimulation and Deceit* (2015), Denery's *The Devil Wins* (2015) and Snyder's *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy* (2009), has focused principally on continental debates.[177] There is at present no work on theories of dissimulation within an English context. Unsurprisingly, then, there has been less interest in dissimulation and its related practices from scholars of English literature. The use of the rhetorical techniques of dissimulation, such as equivocation and amphibological speech, has been written about in

[174] Symmons, *A Military Sermon*, 33.
[175] Percy Herbert, *The Princess Cloria, or, The Royal Romance* (London: printed by Ralph Wood for William Brooke, 1661), 445.
[176] Geoffrey Hosking, *Trust: A History* (Oxford: OUP, 2014).
[177] Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzig, eds., *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Denery, *The Devil Wins*; Snyder, *Dissimulation*.

Macbeth.[178] A similar emphasis on dissimulation as a solely religious practice can be found in work on John Donne.[179] Verena Lobsien reads ideas about transparency and dissimulation as the point of conjunction between Neoplatonic and Christian philosophy within seventeenth-century literature. She defines dissimulation as the "hiddenness, obscurity or opacity of transcendence", treating it entirely as a theological problem rather than as a social and political practice.[180] Sergio Zatti considers dissimulation to be an aesthetic practice in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and indeed interprets poetic deceit as a key element of Counter-Reformation poetics.[181] Writing on the relationship between good manners, dissimulation and privacy in eighteenth-century literature, Patricia Meyer Spacks convincingly demonstrates that expectations of feminine 'propriety' were born out of older arguments in favour of dissimulation.[182] Louise Barry's article "Deception and Dissimulation in Madeleine de Scudéry's *Promenade de Versailles*" more closely complements the work I perform here.[183] Barry reads the politics of dissimulation in Scudéry's late short story as an implicit critique of absolutism. Similarly, Dallas Denery reads Scudéry's *Conversations* as an attack on dissimulation; I take issue with this argument, suggesting that Scudéry stages a debate over dissimulation and sincerity only to reveal fundamental similarities between the two as modes of social performance.[184]

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[178] See, for instance, Maria F. Fahey, *Metaphor and Shakespearean Drama: Unchaste Signification* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 74-114; Steven Mullaney, "Lying Like Truth: Riddle, Representation and Treason in Renaissance England," *English Literary History* 47, no. 1 (1980): 32-47; Shapiro, *1606*.

[179] Michael W. Price, "'Offending without Witnes': Recusancy, Equivocation, and Face-Painting in John Donne's Early Life and Writings," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 22 (1996): 51-81; "Donne's Critique of the *Arcana Imperii* in the *Problems*," *Studies in Philology* 101, no. 3 (2004): 332-355.

[180] Verena Olejniczak Lobsien, *Transparency and Dissimulation: Configurations of Neoplatonism in Early Modern English Literature* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 2.

[181] Sergio Zatti, "Epic in the Age of Dissimulation: Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*," in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 1999). John Roe similarly notes the parallels between dissimulation and allegory in "Machiavellian Dissimulation and Allegory."

[182] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 87-114.

[183] Louise Barry, "Dissimulation and Deception in Madeleine De Scudéry's *Promenade De Versailles*," *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 28, no. 1 (2006): 135-145.

[184] Denery, *The Devil Wins*, 237-246.

Finally, Paul Salzman and Helen Moore have argued that Barclay's *Argenis* recommends political dissimulation as a tool of the sovereign and as a legitimate mode of female resistance.[185]

Scholarly work on dissimulation in literature is hampered by the lack of a clear consensus as to what dissimulation might mean and how anxieties about it might manifest themselves in imaginative literature. For some, dissimulation is a poetic technique allied to allegory; for others, it is a complex theological question. For some, it is a dangerous and subversive political practice; for others, it is a legitimate means of self-empowerment. As this Introduction has demonstrated, 'dissimulation' carried all of these connotations in the early modern period. I take this variance of meaning as key to my reading of dissimulation as it operates within romances, noting that there exist conflicting representations of the art as simultaneously virtuous and vicious and that its legitimacy was dependent on the circumstances of its practice. I rely, too, on the interdependence of ideas about political, religious and social dissimulation, acknowledging that it is the permeation of the political into the social that colours fears about the normalization of dissimulation as a social practice. In this study religious dissimulation will be sidelined to some extent, simply because mid-century romances tend to privilege problems of social and political dissimulation. Where they conceptualise religious dissimulation, it is usually as an act of political resistance which asks questions about the nature of civic obedience rather than about the Christian imperative towards honesty.[186] In reading romance as dissimulating, I draw particularly on both Zatti and Roe's conception of allegory as dissimulating and on the correlation Spacks draws between dissimulation and later notions of propriety. The

[185] Salzman, *'Whisper'd Counsells'*; Helen Moore, "Romance: *Amadis De Gaule* and John Barclay's *Argenis*," in *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 59-76.

[186] Herbert's *Cloria* and the anonymous *Theophania* both directly address the problem of recusancy, but in each case they present recusancy as the natural result of a sovereign power which infringes on individual self-determination; recusancy is charged with political resistance, rather than theological difference.

argument I am making, however, is that romance examines dissimulation from the viewpoint of moral philosophy. In other words, I read romance as a vehicle for ethical exploration.

This thesis explores what Colin McGinn calls "the embeddedness of the ethical in the fictional," or the understanding that narrative is generated by ethical questions.[187] Writing as a moral philosopher, McGinn observes that ethics can be expressed in two ways: as commandments (directives to do this, and not that) and as parables (narratives in which characters with recognizable motivations are required to make choices).[188] When we seek to convey moral philosophy through parable, we find our focus inevitably shifts from the morality of an action to the unique circumstances of a character in that situation. Romances invite us to test moral principles and the competing claims of various virtues, allowing us to play out different ethical choices. It is through this lens that I suggest we can understand the repetition common to seventeenth-century romances. It has often been observed that Mary Wroth's *Urania* repeats the same narrative again and again with slight variations; it has not hitherto been observed that both Herbert's *The Princess Cloria* and Orrery's *Parthenissa* do the same. The effect of this repetition, I argue, is to demonstrate how characters confronted with the same situation can make different ethical choices, all of them justifiable, but all of them with unique consequences. The romance form lends itself to the philosophical thought experiment, and in the seventeenth century it constantly tests the same question: *under what circumstances is it permissible to lie?*

[187] Colin McGinn, *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1997), 175. McGinn's work is a call to moral philosophers to investigate fiction as a source of philosophical ideas, to convey their ideas through parable as well as commandment, and to teach moral principles through fiction.
[188] Ibid., 171-3.

CHAPTER ONE: SUSPICION IN ARCADIA

The opening lines of Francis Quarles' popular verse romance *Argalus and Parthenia* (1629) describe Sidney's Arcadian world as a prelapsarian idyll free from suspicion or deceit:

> Within the limits of th'Arcadian land,
> Whose gratefull bounty hath inricht the hand
> Of many a shepheard swaine, whose rurall Art
> (Untaught to gloze, or with a double heart
> To vow dissembled love) did build to Fame
> Eternall Trophies of a Pastorall name,
> That sweet Arcadia;[1]

Quarles' Arcadian shepherds are characterised by their honest innocence; they have not been taught the rhetorical skill of 'glozing', or dissimulating speech.[2] But just a few lines later, the poem destabilises its own characterization of "sweet Arcadia" as a haven of transparency. Listing the virtues of Parthenia's mother, Quarles commends her as "wisely suspitious."[3] In a world without 'glozing' or 'dissembling' we might wonder why suspicion is necessary at all, let alone how it should be practised correctly or 'wisely'. The answer comes with the entrance of the dangerous Demagoras, whose secret passion for Parthenia is the disordering force which generates narrative action. A "Laconian lord"

[1] Francis Quarles, *Argalus and Parthenia* (London: John Marriott, 1629), 1. Reprinted as a chapbook, Quarles' 3-book romance went through 10 editions in 35 years and 20 editions before 1720, making it one of the most popular romances of the seventeenth century. See B.S. Field Jr., "Sidney's Influence: The Evidence of the Publication of *The History of Argalus and Parthenia*," *English Language Notes* 17(1979): 98-102. For a history of seventeenth-century chapbooks, see Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance*. Newcomb traces chapbooks editions of *Dorastus and Fawnia* which, like *Argalus and Parthenia*, is a youthful erotic narrative lifted out of a more extended Elizabethan prose romance (Greene's *Pandosto*).

[2] In Cotgrave's dictionary, 'glosing' is given as a synonym for 'simulation'. To 'gloze', derived from to gloss or to interpret, is a popular word in mid-century romances, often coupled with 'to flatter' or 'to dissemble', but referring more generally to any misdirecting speech, as in the first scene of Shakespeare's *Pericles* when the tyrannical King Antiochus, seeking to buy time when it becomes apparent that Pericles has uncovered the king's incestuous relationship with his own daughter, tells the audience "I will gloze with him." Similarly in Underdowne's translation of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, Calasiris pretends not to know of Theagenes' love for Chariclea: "I thought it then a fitte time to glose with him, and to guess at that, which I knewe well inough." Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues (1611)*; *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, I.i; Heliodorus, *An Aethiopian History*, trans. Thomas Underdowne (London: Francis Coldocke, 1569), 89.

[3] Quarles, *Argalus and Parthenia*, 2.

whose lands border Arcadia, Demagoras is an outsider in both class and nationality. His penetration into the poem and the landscape brings secrecy and suspicion into Arcadia. On first sighting Parthenia, Demagoras is

> voyd of strength to hide, or to discover
> The tyrannous scorching of his secret fires,
> Prompted by passion, with himselfe conspires.[4]

His love is invoked through the language of deceitful secrecy ('hide', 'discover', 'secret', 'conspires'); we understand immediately that he will employ subterfuge in his attempts to win Parthenia, and that the Arcadians are uniquely vulnerable to his deceit by virtue of their own lack of guile. True to the conventions of pastoral romance, dishonesty is the vice of the educated courtier, not the innocent shepherd, and Demagoras' class as much as his nationality marks him as a danger to both Parthenia and the transparency of the Arcadian social order.[5] To counter Demagoras' plots, Parthenia must learn to keep secrets and practise 'wise suspicion'. Before revealing her love for Argalus to the shepherdess Athleia, she probes Athleia's discretion:

> Athleia, dare thy private thoughts partake
> With mine? Canst thou be secret? Has thy heart
> A locke that none can pick by theevish art,
> Or brake by force? Tell me, Canst thou digest
> A secret, trusted to thy faithfull brest?[6]

Parthenia has learned to trust no one in Arcadia unless they can demonstrate their own talent for concealment. In short, she has learned to value dissimulation. In the Arcadians' education from a state of trust and transparency to one of suspicion and opacity, Quarles demonstrates a broader tension within the genre of pastoral romance: the ideal of an innocent populace uncorrupted by the vice of mendacity is not reconcilable with the

[4] Ibid., 5.
[5] Although Quarles follows his Sidneian source by making Parthenia the daughter of gentry, he emphasises the lowliness of her status compared with that of Demagoras (10-11). In the tradition of pastoral, her low status signifies her native honesty.
[6] Quarles, *Argalus and Parthenia*, 38.

conventions of romance, in which deception generates narrative. Without deceit, there can be no story; pastoral innocence must either be corrupted, or is its own kind of lie.

Quarles' verse romance is not entirely representative of those seventeenth-century romances this thesis will address under the broad banner of 'serious romance': it is in verse, it pursues a singular plot, it is relatively brief, and it is directed to a popular rather than an aristocratic readership. By contrast, the 'serious romances' which are the subject of this thesis are in prose, contain a multiplicity of plots and a cast of hundreds of characters, extend over many books, and are aristocratic in their concerns and their readership. Nevertheless, I begin with Quarles to demonstrate two key elements of mid-century English romance: firstly, that seventeenth century romances understood themselves to be the heirs of a literary tradition inaugurated by Sidney's *Arcadia*, and secondly that they are motivated by anxieties over the practice of secrecy and mendacity in their Arcadian source. When Quarles rewrites Sidney's romance, he foregrounds transparency only to demonstrate that Arcadia (and, metaphorically, contemporary England) is corrupted by secrecy and suspicion.[7] Quarles is writing in the 1620s, when the success of Barclay's political allegory *Argenis* (1621) was opening up new possibilities for the romance genre and a new genre theory, 'serious romance', was in its nascence. 'Serious romance' eschewed the magical or implausible tropes of the Iberian romances in favour of a quasi-forensic interest in individual psychology, motivation and 'probability'. It rejected associations of romance with 'idleness' and instead proposed an active and didactic genre that investigated moral philosophy and political theory.[8] In this chapter, I will argue that this process of generic redefinition was intertwined with an anxiety over the practice of

[7] Quarles' personal interest in the vices of mendacity and hypocrisy is evident in his three-book collection of poems and epigrams, which contains no less than four poems 'On the Hypocrite', as well as poems on cyphers and on secrets. See *Divine Fancies: Digested into Epigrammes, Meditations, and Observations.* (London: M.F. for John Marriot, 1638), I:11, II:96,107, III:18.
[8] Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance."

suspicion and dishonesty in the two great progenitors of 'serious romance', Sidney's *Arcadia* and D'Urfé's *L'Astrée*.

I – The Virtue of Deceit

I have tended to refer broadly to (dis)honesty and suspicion but, as Steven Shapin argues, the seventeenth-century had a specific and disputed terminology to discuss the abstract notions of truth and falsehood. Early modern commentators distinguished between three gradations of deception: "*secrecy* was a habit or policy of closeness that might or might not be benign depending upon circumstances; *dissimulation* was an intentional withholding of truth when truth-telling might be deemed appropriate" and "*simulation* was a positive intentional act or utterance."[9] This tripartite distinction of types of falsehood is derived from Lipsius, who distinguishes between 'light', 'middle' and 'great' deceit. Light deceit, which Lipsius recommends, "departs only slightly from virtue" and includes "distrust and dissimulation"; middle deceit, which he tolerates, "comes very close to sin" and includes "bribery and deception"; great deceit, which he condemns, "deviates not only from virtue but even from the laws and represents a solid and full-fledged malice."[10] Lipsius' definition presents deceit as a self-defensive practice which encompasses not merely how we may protect our own secrets from others ('dissimulation') but how we read what others tell us ('distrust'); if you dissimulate, you must assume others are dissimulating too. For Lipsius, deceit is its own model of social proceeding, one that incorporates both the practice and suspicion of falsehood. This connection between presentation and perception is integral to this study, which argues that romances present dissimulation as a valid mode of both cognition and self-expression.

[9] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 103.
[10] Justus Lipsius, *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, edited and translated by Jan H. Waszink (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), IV:xiv, 513.

Lipsius defines his three gradations of falsehood in relation to 'virtue', a term that carried its own set of contested meanings. Falsehood of any degree is antithetical to both Christian and classical conceptions of virtue which did not admit categories of dishonesty. Augustine's Christian moral scheme made a virtue of *parrhesia*, or openly declaring all thoughts.[11] Seventeenth-century scepticism of this virtue is evident in John Crowne's 1665 romance, *Pandion and Amphigenia*, in which 'Parrhasia' is the name given to the country in which two friends, by concealing their love for two sisters, ultimately destroy each other.[12] Ironically, the geography of transparency is riddled by dangerous jealousy and suspicion.

Some gradations of truth-telling were sketched by Aquinas, who introduced the concept of *fingere* (feigning) in his *Summa Theologiae* and explained that it was "not always to lie, for a pretense sometimes has reference to a further meaning and conveys a truth figuratively." Aquinas made allowances for lies by omission, stating: "it is nevertheless licit to conceal the truth prudently under some dissimulation." His notion of *fingere* thus anticipates the Renaissance rhetoric of equivocation and its related practices of mental reservation, amphibological speech and outward shows of conformism.[13] But Aquinas was the only theologian to suggest there might be gradations of deceit with individual moral valence; the doctrinal position was that any deceit was vicious.

Shaped by the works of Cicero, early humanism developed a form of public or civic virtue which similarly excluded any kind of falsehood. The crown of Cicero's cardinal virtues

[11] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 16. Augustine's two treatises *De Mendacio* ('On Lying, c. 395) and *Contra Mendacium* ('Against Lying', c. 420) argued there was no occasion when a Christian could speak anything other than the complete truth. For a detailed study of Augustine's approach to truth and mendacity, see Paul J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theory of Duplicity* (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2004); Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation," 869-875.
[12] Crowne, *Pandion and Amphigenia*, 20.
[13] As quoted in Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 18. Aquinas divided lies into *mendacium iocosum* (the lies of fiction), *mendacium officiosum* (benevolent lies) and *mendacium perniciosum* (harmful lies). See also Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 72.

was justice, which was founded on 'good faith', or complete continuity between a man's words and his actions.[14] But as Richard Tuck has argued, the advent of a 'new humanism' based on the ideas of Tacitus rather than those of Cicero led to a re-examination of Ciceronian 'virtue.'[15] In his history of the Emperor Tiberius, Tacitus satirically made a virtue of deceit, claiming Tiberius "cherished none of all his self-ascribed virtues more dearly than dissimulation."[16] Tacitus' influence can be noted in the popularity of the tag *qui nescit dissimulare, nescit imperare* ("he who knows not how to dissemble knows not how to reign") which would be attributed by seventeenth-century historians and philosophers to the Emperor Frederick, Louis XI of France, James I of Great Britain, to Lipsius and to Tacitus himself.[17] This tag exemplifies the idea that the vices of the private man might be the virtues of a king; behaviour has a different moral valence depending on when, where and by whom it is practised. This redescription of vice as virtue was triggered by Machiavelli, who redefined the classical virtues (justice, fortitude and temperance) as a new, "pragmatically grounded concept of *virtù*."[18] As Michael Moriarty and Quentin

[14] "The foundation of justice…is good faith – that is, truth and fidelity to promises and agreements." Cicero, *De Officiis*, edited and translated by Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1913), 25. For the reception of Ciceronian *iustitia* in the Renaissance, see Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics: Renaissance Virtues*, 3 vols., (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 2:25-26, 62.

[15] Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 5.

[16] Tacitus, *The Annals*, IV:71.

[17] The phrase is erroneously attributed to Tacitus by the Puritan and Parliamentarian John Canne in his anti-Scots pamphlet *Emanuel, or, God with Us* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1650), 34. Anthony Welden attributed it to James I in *The Court and Character of King James* (London: Printed by R.I. and sold by John Wright, 1650), 102-103. Karl Ittig attributed it to both Emperor Frederick and Lipsius in *De Simulatione Et Dissimulatione*, 19. But it is most commonly attributed to Louis XI, notably in Gomberville's *Polexandre* (1619-37) in which Louis XII is described as "the Sonne of a Father, who had never taught him any other thing then this: that, He knew not how to raigne, that knew not how to dissemble." Marin le Roy de Gomberville, *The History of Polexander*, trans. William Browne (London: Tho[mas] Harper for Thomas Walkley, 1647), 220. Henry Peacham also attributed it to Louis XI in both *The Complete Gentleman* (1622) and *The Truth of Our Times* (1638), see Virgil B. Heltzel, ed. *The Complete Gentleman, The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1962), 30, 186. For other attributions of the tag to Louis XI, see Adrianna Bakos, "'Qui Nescit Dissimulare, Nescit Regnare': Louis XI and *Raison D'état* During the Reign of Louis XIV," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52(1991): 399-416. For other examples of this tag in Jacobean literature, see Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, 68-69.

[18] Michael Moriarty, *Disguised Vices: Theories of Virtue in Early Modern French Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 2. For the rhetorical technique of redescription, whereby vicious behaviour might be re-imagined as virtuous or virtuous behaviour, vicious, see Moriarty, *Disguised Vices*, 3; Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 138-180; Skinner, "Paradiastole:

Skinner have demonstrated, Machiavellian *virtù* reimagined what constituted moral conduct, but retained the Ciceronian association between virtue and the public sphere.[19] It established the notion that morality could be divorced both from legal justice and from piety (what Richard Turk terms "moral atheism").[20] Machiavelli did not endorse the practice of deceit for its own sake or indeed by private individuals, but recommended it to rulers for their own and for public security; nevertheless, popular misconception aligned Machiavelli with 'subtilty' and 'policy', two words with decidedly negative connotations in early modern England.[21] Politic ideology rewrote the vice of dissimulation as the virtue of *raison d'état*, or political necessity, but this 'virtue' was hotly contested by anti-Machiavellians.[22]

The contested 'virtue' of political dissimulation is evident in Madeleine de Scudéry's romance *Almahide* (1661), which stages a debate between royal counsellors over the merits of proceeding with cunning or with force in the face of civil unrest. The dangerous Dragutt, elsewhere shown to be violent and untrustworthy, dismisses the plan of the loyal Agath by impugning his advice as Tacitean:

> Though it has been said, THAT HE WHO CANNOT DISSEMBLE, KNOWS NOT HOW TO REIGN: I am of Opinion that 'tis a better and more sure saying, That he that will Reign, must Punish.[23]

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redescribing the vices as virtues," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 149-163.

[19] Moriarty, *Disguised Vices*, 3; Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 1981; repr., 2000), 35-53.

[20] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, 86.

[21] Nicolai Rubinstein, "The History of the Word *Politicus*," in *The Language of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge CUP, 1987), 54-5.

[22] There is a considerable body of scholarship on the early modern reception of Tacitism and the development of "politic ideology." See particularly Alan T. Bradford, "Stuart Absolutism and the 'Utility' of Tacitus," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1983): 127-55; Peter Burke, "Tacitism, Skepticism and Reason of State," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991); J.H.M. Salmon, "Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50 (1989): 199-225; "Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 169-88; Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*.

[23] Madeleine de Scudéry, *Almahide; or, The Captive Queen*, trans. John Phillips (London: Printed by J[ohn] M[acock] for Thomas Dring, 1677), 80. *Almahide* is unique among Scudéry's romances in being left incomplete, and when Dryden borrowed from the romance to create his *The Conquest of Granada* (1679-71), he resolved the plot with reference to *Las Guerras Civiles de Granada* by Pérez de Hita. The king dies in

Scudéry does not put this Tacitean tag in the mouths of the loyal counsellors, although their subtle plan might well seem worthy of Tacitus' cunning Emperor, but gives it instead to the actual Machiavel in the romance: Dragutt, who seeks to undermine the king's loyal advisors by imputing that their plan is Tacitean. Scudéry demonstrates here that the practice of the contested 'virtue' of dissimulation could be perceived as weak or disreputable, but also that those who appear to be most suspicious of dissimulation might in fact be its most subtle practitioners. *Almahide* is Scudéry's most politically engaged romance: telling the story of a maiden traded between two nations in order to broker international peace, the romance openly stages the conflict between "interest of state" and "humane interest."[24] The romance testifies to the mid-century crisis of virtue: the divorce of traditional Christian and Classical virtues from political virtue is seen to have dangerous consequences for the individual.

It is within this context that we must understand Lipsius's division of deceit into secrecy, dissimulation and simulation. Lipsius's tripartite structure of types of falsehood graduating from virtuous to vicious broke from earlier conceptions of simulation and dissimulation as paired forms of deceit. Previously Cicero had disavowed the terms together and Machiavelli had licensed them both.[25] In Christian and 'old humanist' or Ciceronian conceptions of virtue, falsehood is singular and immoral; in Machiavellian 'politic virtue',

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battle, Almahide converts to Christianity and subsequently marries her Christian lover. This ending is adopted by Phillips in his translation, and is one of the most prominent examples of the way translations of this period are often so free they call for critical examination as unique works in their own right. See Jerome William Schweitzer, "Dryden's Use of Scudéry's Almahide," *Modern Language Notes* 54, no. 3 (1939): 190-192. Elsewhere, Schweitzer argues that *Almahide* is, in fact, the work of Scudéry's brother, Georges. See *Georges De Scudéry's Almahide: Authorship, Analysis, Sources, and Structure* (The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1939) and Nicole Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, trans. Stuart R. Aronson (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 55.

[24] Scudéry, *Almahide*, 136.

[25] Cicero stated that a man's life should involve neither dissimulation nor simulation ("ex omni vita simulatio dissimulatioque tolleda est") but Machiavelli suggested that a leader of men had to be both "a great feigner and dissembler" ("gran simulatore e dissimulatore"). Cicero, *De Officiis*, III:xv,331; Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 62, as discussed in Martin Dzelzainis, "Bacon's 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation'," in *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley, 2010), 331.

there are a multiplicity of falsehoods which share a singular moral valence shaped by the sphere in which the deceit is practised (ie all degrees of deception are acceptable when practised by a king in the name of public security). But Lipsius suggested that some forms of deceit were more culpable than others; the nature of the deceit is as significant as that of the practitioner. By introducing gradations of truth, Lipsius found a way of speaking about falsehood that accommodated the necessity for some untruths without endorsing complete fabrication.[26] Separating simulation from dissimulation and granting the latter a tenuous virtue, Lipsius recuperated politic behaviour within a Ciceronian (and, indeed, a Christian) moral scheme. His distinction would shape the ways seventeenth-century moral philosophers approached the problem of falsehood. Grotius, for instance, divided deceit into 'positive' and 'negative' categories, reasoning that the latter must be permissible "since we are not obliged to discover to others all we know, or desire; it follows, that it is lawful to dissemble some things before some men, that is, to hide and conceal them."[27]

Perhaps the most obvious heir to Lipsius' distinction is Bacon, who begins by imitating Lipsius' tripartite structure in his essay "Of Simulation and Dissimulation."[28] Bacon divides deception into three categories with increasing levels of moral culpability: i) "closeness, reservation and secrecy", ii) "dissimulation…when a man lets fall signs and arguments, that he is not, that he is" and iii) "simulation…when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be, that he is not." But although Bacon initially divides falsehood into three, ultimately his essay confirms the duality of its title. He suggests "secrecy" and "dissimulation" cannot be separated, but are mutually dependent: "He that

[26] For Lipsius's advocacy of dissimulation as a form of self-control, see Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 124-9.
[27] Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1199.
[28] On Bacon's rhetorical imitation of Lipsius, see Martin Dzelzainis, "Bacon's 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation'". For both the influence of Machiavelli and Tacitus on Lipsius and Lipsius' influence on the development of politic ideology in England, see Adriana McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 16-17. For Lipsius' pan-European influence, see Erik de Bom, Marijke Janssens, Toon Van Houdt and Jan Papy, eds., *(Un)Masking the Realities of Power: Justus Lipsius and the Dynamics of Political Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

will be secret, must be a dissembler in some degree." Secrecy and dissimulation are acceptable because "the discovery of a man's self, by the tracts of his countenance, is a great weakness."[29] Dissimulation is constructed as positive, almost virtuous deception beside vicious simulation. This distinction would allow mid-seventeenth-century political philosophers such as Frédéric Rivet to recommend some variant on the precept "To feign is forbidden, but to dissimulate is not."[30]

In arguing that dissimulation and simulation gained distinctive moral valences in the seventeenth century, I follow Jon Snyder and take a contrary position to that of French historian Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, who claims the inseparability of the two terms in his coinage "dis/simulation." Although Cavaillé observes that seventeenth-century theorists perceived distinctions between simulation and dissimulation ("It is one thing to keep a secret and another thing to lie"), he argues that in popular discourse there was a tendency to elide the two such that dissimulation was understood to stand both for concealment and active pretence.[31] This kind of elision can be seen in a source such as Cotgrave's dictionary, in which there are just two entries connected with simulation (definitions of 'simulation' and 'simulateur') while there are no less than six entries for variants of dissimulation ('dissimulateur', 'dissimulation', 'dissimulatrice', 'dissimulé', 'dissimulément' and 'dissimuler').[32] Simulation is defined with remarkable specificity as

[29] Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 21. For a detailed discussion of Bacon's essay, see Posner, *The Performance of Nobility*, 103-9. For the influence of Machiavelli and his use of aphorism on Bacon, see Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose*, 69-70.

[30] "Le feindre est defende, mais le dissimuler point." *Discours Sur La Nourriture De S. A. Monseigneur Le Prince d'Orange*, KB 73 J 11 (Den Haag: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1654), 22r. Placed in charge of the young Prince of Orange's education by his mother, Princess Mary of England (the 'Cloria' of Herbert's Commonwealth romance), Rivet would later reformulate these precepts into the posthumously published *De l'Education des Enfants et Particulièrement de Celle des Princes* (Amsterdam: Elzevier, 1679). See B. Rang, "Letters Across the North Sea: A Dutch Source of John Locke's 'Letters Concerning Education'," in *The North Sea and Culture (1550-1800): Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Leiden 21-22 April 1995*, ed. Juliette Roding and Lex Heerma van Voss (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1995), 378-95.

[31] "Une chose est garder un secret, une autre mentir." Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations*, 31. Translation from Snyder, *Dissimulation*, xvi.

[32] Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues (1611)*.

"dissembling, cogging, glosing, flatterie, hypocrisie; a colour, or pretence; a fayning, or counter fitting, of what one is, or meanes, not." By contrast, the entries for dissimulation are individually less extensive although collectively more copious. 'Dissimulation' is "dissembling, disguising, hypocrisie, cloaking" and 'dissimuler' is "to dissemble, counterfeit, play the hypocrite, pretend one thing, and doe another." The division into 'dissimulateur' ("a double dealer") and 'dissimulatrice' ("a woman dissembler") is suggestive of the word's gendered connotations. A male dissimulator is specifically associated with the criminal activity of 'double dealing' while a 'dissimulatrice' is the more generic 'dissembler', a charge that could be levelled at all women. The fact that both simulation and dissimulation can be understood through some of the same synonyms – 'dissembling', 'hypocrisie', to 'counter-feit' – and that 'simulation' is defined with less frequency but greater specificity seems to suggest that linguistically 'dissimulation' was the umbrella term and 'simulation' was employed only when referring specifically to active pretence ("a fayning of what one is"). Cotgrave's dictionary better reflects the word's popularity in French than in English but it nevertheless gives us a clear idea of how it was interpreted by the English readers and translators of French romances. It suggests that while in moral philosophy 'dissimulation' and 'simulation' were distinct, in usage 'dissimulation' was commonly employed to refer to any gradation of falsehood.

In drawing on Cotgrave's dictionary, however, I note that 'dissimulation' and 'simulation' were used more interchangeably in French than in English, and the distinction between the two terms drawn by Bacon is principally an Anglophone one. In French, 'dissimulation' often (although not always) carries the implication of disguise.[33] For this meaning, the more common early modern English term would be 'feigning'. As Cavaillé observes, the English use of 'dissimulation' has remained closer to the Latin etymology ('dissimulare')

[33] Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations*, 13-14, n.9.

in its purer meaning of concealment.[34] This said, we must remain aware that 'dissimulation' is a fluid term, which only becomes more flexible over the course of the seventeenth-century. In the charges of dissimulation levelled at perceived enemies, such as Jesuits, Scots, or Puritans, the implication is not merely that they conceal, but that they are inconstant, misguided and misleading. Such a fluidity exposes the way any discussion about dissimulation bleeds into broader questions about truthful speech and political loyalty.

The linguistic preference for 'dissimulation' over 'simulation' is evident in English romances, where the words 'dissimulation' and 'dissembling' abound and the term 'simulation' appears rarely. Cavaillé might hold this as evidence for a perceived inseparability in the morality of dis/simulation, but I suggest that the philosophical distinction between acceptable, even 'virtuous' dissimulation, and unacceptable 'vicious' simulation is maintained through a broader lexicon: words such as 'reservation', 'closeness', 'concealing' or 'disguising' suggest the acceptable practice of secrecy and/or dissimulation. By contrast, the use of words such as 'feigning', 'glozing', 'counterfeiting', 'pretending' or 'hypocrisy' signify unacceptable, malicious simulation. We might think here of Louis Machon's gloss, "when we want to make a virtue of dissimulation, we call it prudence."[35] By remaining alert to the broader lexicon of mendacity when reading romances, we develop a sense of when deception is virtuous, vicious or ambiguous. For simplicity's sake, throughout this thesis I shall employ 'dissimulation' to refer to practices of misleading secrecy and concealment and 'suspicion' to refer to the distrust which for many authors is an essential part of practising dissimulation.

[34] Ibid., 20.
[35] As quoted in Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 9, n.24.

Thus far, I have sought to demonstrate that the debate over the relative morality of dissimulation was centred around the cultivation of virtue in two spheres – the political and the moral – and that Lipsius' model of gradations of falsehood was significant because it acknowledged the necessity of dissimulation in the political sphere without entirely condoning mendacity. Some forms of falsehood – namely, secrecy and dissimulation, rather than simulation – could be permissible without resorting to the kind of "moral atheism" outlined by Tuck. Seventeenth-century romances engage with this contested (re)definition of falsehood as something that is occasionally acceptable by transplanting the problem into a third discursive field – the civil, for which the erotic usually serves as a shorthand. The genre's interest in erotic and social dissimulation connects with both the religious and political discourses outlined above and with the discourse on civility. Romance's interest in a vice that, in the correct setting, might actually be a virtue is hardly surprising – as Nigel Smith has noted, romance as a genre is "perennially concerned with the presentation of virtuous ideals and vicious opposites."[36] When virtue is redefined, the genre reshapes itself to accommodate the new perception that virtue might be two very different things for shepherds and for princes. It is this new conception of alternate and contested models of virtue that prompts the generic shift towards 'serious romance'.

II – 'Serious Romance'

Critical work on seventeenth-century English romances has tended to pursue two related areas of enquiry: romance's association with royalism and its distinction from epic. Annabel Patterson was the first to associate Civil War and Commonwealth romances with royalism, arguing that Charles I actively developed a public persona which drew on elements from chivalric romance and that this mythos encouraged the writing of the

[36] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 234.

royalist experience within a new generic formula, 'royal romance', to evade censorship.[37] Phillip Major suggests that the royalist experience of impoverished leisure during the Commonwealth motivated the surge in translations of French heroic romances, which were read in the English context as articulating a history of defeat and exile.[38] Lois Potter also connects the royalist cause with the romance genre, noting the ways in which royalists deliberately employed romance language as a cipher in the style of the French *salonières*.[39] Arguments about the generic associations of royalism overlap with those about the supposed decline of epic during the Civil War. Anthony Welch has argued against a traditional reading of a 'royalist retreat to romance', which implies the surge of popularity of romances in the 1650s is a direct result of epic's failure to accommodate defeat. Instead, Welch emphasises the way "romance fictions offered parallel histories where the crises of the revolutionary era could be reenacted and wrestled with."[40] Nigel Smith reads romance

[37] The term 'royal romance' is derived from the title of Richard Braithwaite's 1659 *Panthalia; Or, the Royal Romance*, see Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 159-202. Although Patterson perceives the 'royal romance' to be a Stuart phenomenon, exiled royalists also employed the language of romance to discuss European royalty. In Paris during the Fronde crisis, William Temple described his anticipation at meeting Archduke Leopold, youngest son of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and leader of the Spanish troops allied with Condé and the Frondeurs, in the terms of an avid romance reader: the Archduke's "towring titles gave mee occasion to draw his picture like the Knight that kills the Gyant in a Romance" and he is disappointed to find "he lookes as like Tom or Dick as ever I saw any body in my life." "Essays by Sr W. T. Written in His Youth at Br* in [1652] When He Was About *," in *The Early Essays and Romances of Sir William Temple Bt.*, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1930), 154.

[38] Major, "Sir Charles Cotterell's *Cassandra*." Salzman similarly aligns the translation of French romances with royalism in *English Prose Fiction*, 177. Major focuses solely on the translation of *Cassandre*, but other romance translations seem to suggest Parliamentarian sympathies. Robert Loveday was secretary to the Puritan and Parliamentarian Clinton family and dedicated his 1654 *Hymen's Prœludia* (the third book of *Cleopatra*) to Lady Clinton. Her husband, Theophilus Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, published a short pamphlet criticising the 1626 Forced Loan and accusing Charles I of seeking "the overthrow of Parliament and the freedom that we now enjoy." Quoted in Peter C. Herman, *A Short History of Early Moden England: British Literature in Context* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 189-90. Clinton was the dedicatee of Book VIII of the "republican poet" Thomas May's 1627 translation of Lucan; see Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 44-45. Clinton joined the parliamentary army in 1642 alongside his father-in-law from his first marriage, William Fiennes, first Viscount Saye and Sele, and was attainted for treason in 1647. See "A Charge Consisting of Several Heads: Whereupon the Earle of Lincoln, Earle of Suffolke, and Earle of Middlesex: The Lord Hunsdon, Lord Willoughby of Parham, Lord Bartlet, and Lord Maynard Are Impeached of High Treason," (1647). Dorothy Osborne's letters suggest that Fiennes also wrote a romance although, if so, it is no longer extant. Edward Abbott Parry, ed. *Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple 1652-54* (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welsh, 1888), 161.

[39] Potter, *Secret Rites*, 72.

[40] Welch, "Epic Romance," 571. Welch notes that arguments about the decline of epic are shaped by Abraham Cowley's royalist epic *The Civil War*. Cowley blames the poem's incompletion on Charles I's defeat at the first battle of Newbury in 1643: "it is so uncustomary as to become almost ridiculous, to make

alongside epic as a genre that underwent a series of revolutions during the 1640s and 50s, but was sapped of vitality by the political events it sought to represent. He argues that the genre attained "serious status as a form of *roman à clef*" but also that "the concern with mapping public events in romance structure led to an overdetermination of the form, depriving it of any intrinsic life."[41] Paul Salzman argues that both epic and romance are Royalist genres employed in a "direct engagement with a complex political situation", although he doesn't endorse the idea of genre exhaustion.[42] Although Patterson uses 'royal romance' to refer primarily to the royal family's strategies of self-presentation, the term has become shorthand for the collection of Commonwealth and early Restoration extended ('epic') romances. This is unfortunate, partly because while these romances are aristocratic in interest and affiliation none presents a straightforward or uncritical view of Stuart sovereignty, and partly because the emphasis on the genre's royalism has elided the richness and variety of its ethical and political concerns.

Victoria Kahn and Amelia Zurcher have sought to widen the critical debate beyond Salzman's descriptor 'French heroic' and Patterson's 'royal' by suggesting ways in which these romances can be read as something other than royalist *romans à clef*. In their respective work on the language of contracts and sympathy (Kahn) and the problem of interest (Zurcher), they point to a sophisticated genre which is both ethically and politically engaged without strictly aligning with royalist politics.[43] Zurcher terms this 'serious romance'.[44] As a collective noun, 'serious romance' has the advantage over

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Lawrels for the Conquered." Abraham Cowley, "Preface to *Poems* (1656)," in *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J.E. Spingarn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), 2:80. Welch suggests that epic survives the Civil War in a hybrid genre that incorporates the *locus amoenus* of romance as a new feature of epic.

[41] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 235.

[42] Salzman, "Royalist Epic and Romance," 215.

[43] Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*; Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*.

[44] Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance." Patterson describes the way "romance…came to be redefined as serious" during the Caroline period in *Censorship and Interpretation*, 160. The term is earlier employed in passing by Diane Purkiss in *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War*, 79. Philip Major

'royal' or 'royalist' romance: it is not limited by date, politics or language and can incorporate earlier seventeenth-century romances such as Barclay's *Argenis* (1621), avowedly Republican romances such as Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656) and the popular French romances of Scudéry and La Calprenède. When we employ this broader term, we begin to see how 'serious romance' developed its own self-conscious genre theory rooted in a perceived generic shift inaugurated by the two great pastoral romances, Sidney's *Arcadia* and D'Urfé's *L'Astrée*. These romances model in form, content and reception the ideal 'serious romance': they are epic in length and discursive in style; they reject the 'improbable' or 'fantastic' conventions of earlier romances in favour of something approaching psychological realism; they are able to sustain readings as both political allegories and pleasurable, "idle" tales; they incorporate the contemporary fashion for Neoplatonic love and Neostoic philosophy; they were published in sequels with collaborators (in Sidney's case, of course, posthumous collaborators); they are didactic and call for 'intelligent' or active reading. Grounded in the developments of the *Arcadia* and *L'Astrée*, I will suggest that 'serious romance' asserts 'probability' as its central tenet as part of a three-fold strategy to: i) assert the genre's novelty; ii) counter charges of duplicity and claim a superior veracity over both 'old' romance and contemporary history; and iii) encourage active or investigative reading.

By 'probability', romance authors mean something closer to 'credibility' than to verity. Lorna Hutson defines ideas of probability as "'informal' or rhetorical rather than logical modes of proof by which a legal decision might be arrived at, or a political course of action recommended."[45] When 'serious romances' call themselves 'probable', then, they

takes up the term 'serious romance' and it seems likely to become a standard way of referring to those mid-century romances which claim their own political, philosophical and/or ethical significance.

[45] Lorna Hutson, "Probable Infidelities from Bandello to Massinger," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 229.

mean they are 'convincing' in the way that rhetorical proof might be convincing. They claim a logical coherence, rather than a factual veracity, although some historical or factual truth often supports a claim for 'probability'. Arthur F. Kinney argues that this shift towards probable narratives results from the increasing import of rhetorical techniques into prose fiction, and that Elizabethan prose fiction is marked by its persuasions "to the credible, as rhetoricians argued to the probable."[46] 'Probable' narratives, in other words, are not necessarily truthful ones. Kinney suggests that they invited the reader to participate in *methaxis*, or "actively judging" the 'probability' of the story.[47] This resistance to literal interpretation constitutes what he terms a "dynamic process of reading."[48] If critics of romances feared the credulity of readers who might be quixotically enflamed by tales of chivalry, 'serious' romances insist on their 'probability' as a way of advertising the discernment of their readers.

'Serious romance' self-identifies as the genre of the probable and consciously distinguishes itself from earlier romances with their dependence on magic, on prophecies and on unrealistic *deus ex machina* resolutions.[49] This distinction was most clearly articulated in English by the Royalist soldier and fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, Matthias Prideaux, in his 1648 *An Easy and Compendious Introduction for Reading All Sorts of Histories*, a work of literary theory so popular it was printed five times before 1665.[50] Prideaux repudiated those romances which depended on "impossible attempts and

[46] Arthur F. Kinney, "Rhetoric and Fiction in Elizabethan England," in *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983), 393.
[47] Ibid., 388.
[48] Ibid., 393.
[49] While I claim this as a distinctive seventeenth-century shift, I note that in the sixteenth century Jacques Amyot argued that romance needed to be probable in order to be instructive and recommended the mingling of historical fact and likely fiction. See A. Maynor Hardee, "Towards a Definition of the French Renaissance Novel," *Studies in the Renaissance* 15 (1968): 25-38.
[50] "Serious Extravagance," 383. Prideaux died of smallpox in 1646; his father John Prideaux, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford and Regius Professor of Divinity, edited his papers to produce *An Easy and Compendious Introduction* posthumously. Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 29.

victorious, stupendious inchantments", accusing them of "stuffing the Fancy and Memory with ridiculous Chimerah's, and wandering Imaginations, to the excluding or stifling of more serious meditations."[51] Prideaux divided romances into seven types, of which only three ("morall", "politicall" and "satyricall") were acceptable reading matter, although even then, "only to those that can read them with Judgement, and make use of them with discretion."[52] Unacceptable, non-serious romances included the "endelesse" romances, such as *Amadis de Gaule* and *Palmerin*, and the "depraved" and "ridiculous", such as the tales of *King Arthur*. Prideaux introduces his "Morall Romances" as the heirs of the Heliodoran tradition.[53] These romances are "nothing else but Poeticall Ethicks, that with apt contrivance, and winning Language, informe Morality."[54] The second type of acceptable romance are those that "poynt at Policy", of which type he includes Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Barclay's *Argenis*.[55] The third are satirical romances such as *Don Quixote* which "wittily scourge" the "vanity" of those unacceptable romances which do not encourage "serious meditations."[56] Prideaux's principles outline new provinces for the romance genre, claiming it as a space of ethical, moral and political enquiry which seeks to teach moral lessons and expose ("poynt at") political problems. This new kind of romance is aimed at a very specific reader: one with "Judgement" who knows how to use romance's lessons "with discretion."

Prideaux's formula for romance (subtract the "inchantments" and "chimerahs", add moral or political lessons) is iterated by both English and French romance authors in their

[51] John and Mathias Prideaux, *An Easy and Compendious Introduction for Reading All Sorts of Histories* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, Printer to the University, 1648), 343.
[52] Ibid., 343, 345.
[53] On the perceived morality of Heliodorus, see Mentz, *Romance for Sale*, 47-71. On the influence and translation of Heliodorus, see also Elizabeth B. Bearden, *The Emblematics of the Self: Ekphrasis and Identity in Renaissance Imitations of Greek Romance* (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Skretkowicz, *European Erotic Romance*, 111-165.
[54] Prideaux, *Easy and Compendious Introduction*, 344.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 345.

prefaces. The Scottish jurist Sir George Mackenzie would prefix his *Aretina: A Serious Romance* (from the title of which Zurcher derives the term) with 'An Apologie for Romances' in which he claims moral philosophy to be the province of 'serious romance':

> Albeit essayes be the choicest Pearls in the Jewel house of moral Philosophy, yet I ever thought that they were set off to the best advantage, and appeared with the greatest lustre, when they were laced upon a Romance.[57]

The notion of 'lacing' styles together to create a hybrid form is developed in the Preface to the anonymous *Eliana*, which announces that romance is no longer concerned solely with "love-stories", but encompasses "things Oeconomical, Ethethical [sic], Physical, Metaphysical, Philosophical, Political and Theological."[58] *Eliana* fulfills its promise of variety, including within the romance essays and dialogues on Stoic philosophy, polytheism and the nature of love as well as a story about the tyranny of the Roman emperor Caligula which draws closely on Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum*.[59] 'Serious romance' was presented as flexible and all-encompassing both in style and in subject matter. The genres of the essay, the dialogue and the translation could be encompassed within romance as easily as political or philosophical ideas.

'Serious romance' theory replaced the 'impossible' events of old romances like *Orlando Furioso* with a kind of psychological realism. John Bulteel, in the Preface to his 1664 romance *Birinthea*, claims he seeks to stay "close to probability" and limit his narrative to events "within the naturall bounds of Reasons and Possibility", eschewing the "Extravagant Impossibilities" of medieval romances and focusing instead on "the Character of a man."[60] Bulteel's Scudérian romance (*Birinthea* is a rewriting of Scudéry's

[57] 'An Apologie for Romances' prefixed to Mackenzie, *Aretina*, 7.
[58] *Eliana: A New Romance Formed by an English Hand*, (London: Printed by T.R. for Thomas Dring, 1661), A3v, 4v.
[59] Zurcher, "Serious Extravagance," 380, 383.
[60] John Bulteel, *Birinthea, a Romance*, (London: John Playfere, 1664), A6, A4.

Le Grand Cyrus, itself a version of Xenophon's *Cyropædia*) is indebted to Scudéry's interest in individual thoughts and motivations. In the Preface to her romance *Ibrahim, or The Illustrious Bassa*, Scudéry complains of "certain authors [who] are contented to assure us that such a Heroe thought of very gallant things, without telling us what they are; and this is that alone which I desire to know."[61] This desire to know not only what a hero did, but what he thought or felt, is at the heart of Scudérian *vraisemblance*.[62] We can see the influence of such a style in Sir Percy Herbert's Preface to *The Princess Cloria*, in which he justifies his choice to write a romance rather than a factual history by explaining that "a bare Historical Relation…gives no liberty for inward disputations, or supposed passions to be discovered."[63] Like Scudéry, Herbert privileges mental and emotional revelations as explanatory tools which render romance more 'probable' or believable.

Scudéry's oblique reference to "certain authors" suggests a hinterland against which 'serious romance' is defined. For Prideaux, this is the improbable Spanish and Iberian "endelesse" romances; for the leading French theorist of 'serious romance', Pierre-Daniel Huet, this was the Italian verse romance and specifically the debate surrounding Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Daniel Javitch argues that Pigna's 1554 *I romanzi* and Giraldi's 1554 *Discorso* first theorised "chivalric romance as a genre quite distinct from ancient epic" which nevertheless did not violate Aristotle's rules for poetics. Giraldi in particular argued that romances, with their multiplicity of plots and protagonists, were Aristotelian fictions adapted to the taste of modern readers.[64] But the new Aristotelians Tasso and Minturno maintained that romance transgressed the rules for heroic poetry: "unity of

[61] Scudéry, *Ibrahim,* 2A3.
[62] Bannister observes that in heroic romance, "heroism lies not in the action but in the motivation and the reasoning behind it." Bannister, *Privileged Mortals*, 130.
[63] Herbert, *Cloria*, A2v.
[64] See Daniel Javitch, "Italian Epic Theory," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 211. See also Glyn P. Norton, "Theories of Prose Fiction in Sixteenth-Century France," ibid: 305-13.

action, narrative coherence and continuity."[65] Both sides of the debate sought to construct Aristotelian epic in relation to its "transgressive opposite, the romance," a binary inherited by modern critics.[66]

'Serious romance' theory sought to establish a modern genre that had moved beyond the terms of the sixteenth-century Italian debate and theorists presented their own progeny as distinctive in form and intention from the Italian verse romances. The most extended manifesto for 'serious romance', Pierre-Daniel Huet's *A Treatise of Romances and their Originall* (1670), distinguished between the "Romances in Verse" treated by Giraldi and those which "now properly called Romances, are Fictions of Love-Adventures, writ in Prose with Art, for the delight and Instruction of the Readers."[67] Huet emphasises the importance of Aristotelian *mimesis*, or Sidneian 'teaching through delight', and claims a didactic purpose for seventeenth-century romances. He draws the distinction between verse and prose romances through the familiar terminology of the 'probable' and the 'marvellous':

[65] Javitch, "Italian Epic Theory," 212. Minturno's Latin *De Poeta* (1559) and Italian *Arte Poetica* (1564) and Tasso's *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* (1562-65, printed 1587) were extended treatises on Aristotle's theories of poetry and drama. The influence of the Italian debate would continue to be felt more than a century later in England and France, where theorists such as Rapin would align themselves with Minturno against old romance's "Extravagances and Absurdities." Rapin understood modern French romances to be the heirs of Tasso's Aristotelian *La Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) rather than "the *Romantick Poetry* of *Pulci, Boyardo,* and *Ariosto,* that…regarded no other Rules than what the heat of their Genius inspir'd." See R. Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, trans. Thomas Rymer (London: printed by T[homas] N[ewcomb] for H. Herringman, 1674), 15-16.

[66] Javitch, "Italian Epic Theory," 212.

[67] Pierre-Daniel Huet, *A Treatise of Romances and Their Original. By Monsieur Huet. Translated out of French.* (London: R. Battersby for S. Heyrick, 1672), 4, 3. The *Treatise* was first translated into English in 1672 by an anonymous translator, and again in 1715 by Stephen Lewis. All quotations are from the 1672 translation. First published as the preface to Madame de la Fayette's *Zaïde* (1670), Huet's *Treatise* locates itself within the gyno-centric, romance-reading salon culture of the disgraced *Frondeurs*. As a member of the Académie Française and Scudéry's *samedis* salon, he produced his own original romance, *Diane de Castro*, and translated the Ancient Greek romance, *Daphnis and Chloe*. For a brief biography, see that by Pierre-Joseph d'Olivet prefixed to the posthumous edition of his works *Huetiana, Ou Pensées Diverses De M. Huet* (Paris: Jacques Estienne, 1722), iii-xxiv. For a detailed study of Huet's work and influence, see April Shelford, *Transforming the Republic of Letters: Pierre-Daniel Huet and European Intellectual Life, 1650-1720* (Rochester, New York: Rochester University Press, 2007).

> Poems have more of the marvellous, though always bounded within probability. Romances have more of the probable, though sometimes they incline to the marvellous.[68]

The generic distinction between 'old romance' and new, 'serious romance' is not merely one of form (verse vs. prose) or of language (Italian vs. French and English), but of the degree to which they treat the 'probable' and excise the 'marvellous'.

The interest in Huet's treatise in England underscores the extent to which 'serious romance' was perceived to be an Anglo-Gallic genre.[69] Mackenzie listed "the famous Sidney, Scuderie, Barkley, and Broghill" as the great authors of modern romances.[70] Similarly, the French critic Charles Sorel credited Sidney alongside D'Urfé with generating a generic shift towards the 'probable' and the political.[71] The letters of Dorothy Osborne and Pepys' diary bear witness to the popularity of mid-century French romances in England. In her correspondence with William Temple 1652-54, Osborne would express her preference for French romances over English, and for reading in the original rather than in translation. Temple's own engagement with French romances while in exile in Paris can be measured in his romances, which are adaptations of tales from François de Rosset's *Histoires Tragiques* and are rich in Gallicisms. This is a style he acknowledges in his Epistle to the Reader, stating "Many French words not yet usuall among us I beleeve are slipt in, that beeing the language most familiar to mee at the time of their writing."[72] Temple's modern editor notes that among his most frequent Gallicisms are 'to drole',

[68] Huet, *A Treatise of Romances and Their Original*, 5.
[69] For an outline of the reception of French romances and their concomitant *précieuse* culture in England, see Kathleen Lambley, *The Teaching and Cultivation of the French Language in England During Tudor and Stuart Times* (Manchester and London: Manchester University Press and Longmans, Green & Co., 1920), 319-24. See also Séverine Nathalie Genleys, "Picturing Women in *Urania* by Mary Wroth and *Clélie* by Madeleine De Scudéry" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2003), 132-157.
[70] Mackenzie, *Aretina*, 6.
[71] Charles Sorel, *De La Connoissance Des Bons Livres, Ou Examen De Plusieurs Autheurs* (Paris: A. Pralard, 1671), 8.
[72] 'To the Reader' in William Temple, "A True Romance, or The Disastrous Chances of Love and Fortune. Sett Forth in Divers Tragicall Storys Which in Thees Latter Ages Have Been but Too Truely Acted Upon the Stage of Europe.," in *The Early Essays and Romaces of Sir William Temple Bt.*, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 35.

meaning to 'make sport', 'brigues' meaning 'intrigues' and 'research' meaning 'courtship'.[73] Like many English romance authors, Temple favours the term "resentments" to mean passionate feelings, taken from the French "ressentiments" meaning "A full tast, a true feeling, a sensible apprehension."[74]

It cannot be said that French romances were Anglicised to nearly so powerful a degree, but the influence of Sidney and Barclay certainly resounded in Paris and the impact of the English Civil War echoes through French romances much as the religious and political turmoil under Henry III and IV shaped the plot of *Argenis*, and the crises of the Fronde and the machinations of Mazarin would wind their way into *The Princess Cloria*. In *Clélie* (1654-61), Scudéry's usurping dictator Tarquinius Superbus might well stand for Cromwell and the discourses on treating with tyrants could reflect on the diplomatic difficulties Mazarin and Condé faced in negotiating with the Commonwealth government.[75] In October 1650, Scudéry wrote to Bishop Godeau, "God grant that those who design to make of France what Cromwel and Fairfax have made of England may never gain control."[76]

The foundation of French 'serious romance' and a powerful cultural voice in England in its own right was D'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, described by Robert Boyle as "the French Arcadia."[77] D'Urfé – like Sidney, like the royalist writers of the mid-century – is writing from a place of exile and political protest: he supported the Catholic League against royalist forces, and

[73] Ibid., 56, 214-215.
[74] Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues (1611)*.
[75] Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 186. For an analysis of the impact of the English Civil War on French intellectual and political culture, see Philip A. Knachel, *England and the Fronde: The Impact of the English Civil War and Revolution on France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).
[76] "Dieu veuille qu'elle ne se raffermisse pas, et que ceux qui ont eu le dessein de faire de la France ce que Cromwel et Fairfax ont fait de l'Angleterre ne puissent jamais avoir de crédit!" M. Monmerqué, ed. *Lettres De Mademoiselle De Scudéry À M. Godeau* (Paris: Alphonse Levavasseur, 1835), 33. Translation from Dorothy McDougall, *Madeleine De Scudéry* (London: Methuen & Co., 1938), 74.
[77] As quoted in Kathleen M. Lynch, *Roger Boyle, First Earl of Orrery* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1965), 17.

after making peace with Henry IV in 1602 retired from court life to Forez, where *L'Astrée* is set.[78] Like later romance authors, such as Herbert, Braithwaite, MacKenzie and Scudéry, D'Urfé also published moral essays; romance serves as an alternate form to work through the moral questions that trouble him. For a work that was an instant success on both sides of the Channel and that continued to shape English literary culture for well over a century, the reception of *L'Astrée* in England has received surprisingly little critical attention.[79] First published in Paris in 1607 and continued in instalments until 1627, the first volume was translated into English in 1620 by John Pyper and was popular enough to merit a second edition in 1625.[80] The romance was translated anew in 1657-58 by John Davies, a Welsh royalist and prolific translator.[81] Like many other royalists, Davies went into exile towards the end of the Civil Wars, living in France c. 1647-52, where he appears to have read and, perhaps, begun translating a number of French romances.[82] In collaboration with the prominent romance publishers Humphrey Moseley, Thomas Heath and Thomas Dring, Davies would also produce translations of Charles Sorel's popular anti-romance, *The Extravagant Shepherd* (1653), all the volumes of Scudéry's *Clelia* (1655), and the last three parts of La Calprenède's *Cleopatra* (as *Hymen's Prœludia*, 1659). Davies'

[78] Maxime Gaume reads D'Urfé's military experience as integral to the formation of his romance in *Les Inspirations Et Les Sources De L'Oeuvre D'Honoré D'Urfé* (Saint-Étienne: Centre d'Études Foréziennes, 1977), see particularly 315-19.
[79] The only study of *L'Astrée*'s impact on English culture appears to be Sister Mary Catherine McMahon, "The Astrée and Its Influence," *The Catholic Historical Review* 12, no. 2 (1926): 225-240.
[80] D'Urfé died in 1625 and the fourth volume was edited by his secretary, Balthazar Baro, who added a fifth volume of his own composing in 1628. There are some doubts as to how much of the fourth volume is by D'Urfé. As Lambley notes, translation is not always a reliable indicator of popularity, as many such as Osborne preferred to read in the original French. Lambley, *The Teaching and Cultivation of the French Language in England*, 320.
[81] Davies' political affiliations are evident from his hagiographical depiction of Charles I as "the martyr of the people" in John Davies, *The Civil Warres of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Printed by R.W. for Philip Chetwind, 1661), 282. After returning from exile in 1651, Davies joined the circle of cavalier poets surrounding Sir Thomas Stanley, to whom he dedicated his translation of *L'Astrée*. For Davies' association with the Stanley circle, see Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 13-31.
[82] Edward Chaney, *The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion: Richard Lassels and 'The Voyage of Italy' in the Seventeenth Century* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1985), 379.

translations remained definitive and popular: *Cleopatra* was reprinted in six further editions before 1736, and *Clelia* was reissued in 1678.

Given the self-consciously Gallic nature of English 'serious romance', it is hardly surprising that one of the most forceful defences of modern romances should come from the Epistle to the Reader before Volume One of Davies' translation of *L'Astrée*.[83] Davies describes romances as the "highest & noblest productions of man's wit", "advantageous to piety and civill life", and argues for the superior utility of fiction over truth, romances over histories, for "the one, it seemes, by reason of her nakednesse, finding so much the colder reception; the other, disguized in the dresses of Witt, and Eloquence, the noblest entertainement that could be expected."[84] He argues for the superiority of modern romances over those that have come before:

> What was before censur'd as extravagance of imagination is now reconcil'd to probability, and restrain'd by judgement. What falsly ravish'd the eager apprehension into amazement at impertinent and Quixoticall Attempts, does now but gently enflame the minde into an æmulation of the perfections, & a sympathy for the weakeness and sufferings it finds represented…This, Reader, is the designe of the worke thou now hast in thy hands. Here thou find'st a cleare representation of the Noblest and most generous images of life, and such an accompt of the passions and actions of Men, as few bookes of this nature afford so plentifull; with such variety of excellent discourses, and an extraordinary sententiousness, as deservedly celebrate this above any Author of the kinde. Here thou hast a jealous and distrustfull Astrea; a despairing, yet faithfull Celadon; a fickle and unconstant Hylas; and such intricate scenes of Courtship, Love, Jealousie, and the other passions, as cannot but raise in thee a consideration of humane Affaires, suitable to the severall emergencies.

Davies employs the familiar dichotomy of probability opposed to 'extravagance', but he adds to this a distinction in the way the two types of romance operate on the reader: old

[83] Huet would credit D'Urfé's *L'Astrée* with initiating the shift towards 'serious romance' in France, stating "Monsieur dUrfee [sic] was the first who retrieved them from Barbarity, and brought them to rules, in his incomparable *Astrea.*" *A Treatise of Romances and Their Original*, 109.
[84] Honoré d'Urfé, *Astrea, a Romance*, trans. John Davies (London: Printed by W[illiam] W[ilson] for H. Moseley, T. Dring and H. Herringman, 1657), A2.

romance 'ravishes' but new romance 'enflames'. This semantic shift conceives the book as a suitor to the reader, here imagined as a woman vulnerable to 'ravishment'. As Amy Greenstadt has noted, 'ravishment' was a word that was changing its legal meaning in the seventeenth century. In medieval law, 'ravishment' was taking a woman from her father or husband with or without her consent; female intention had no legal weight. Augustine had first theorized that a ravished woman remained chaste if she had been violated against her will; as Augustine's ideas became more popular, the definition of 'ravishment' changed to mean an attack against the woman's will.[85] When Davies speaks of being "falsly ravished…into amazement", he implies that the reader is being tricked into something contrary to their will. Significantly this kind of ravishment leads only to passive, voyeuristic "amazement." By contrast, 'enflame' suggests the creation of desire in the reader-lover. Unlike the passive reader of old romance who is ravished against their will, the reader of new romance is wilfully enflamed into a dialogic, imitative relationship with their book-suitor. The reader demonstrates their engaged, wilful desire through the active expression of sympathy and the emulation of the work's heroic virtues. Davies claims this to be the intention ("the designe") of the work, constructing a feedback loop of intentionality in which the work intends to rouse intentional engagement on the part of its reader.[86] This is part of 'serious' romance's strategy to distance itself from charges of misleading credulous readers and instead emphasise its readers' discernment.

It is significant, of course, that reading should be described as 'ravishment' – a gendered description which images the woman-reader at the mercy of the masculine-book. 'Serious romances' sought to define themselves not merely in opposition to 'fantastic' romance, but

[85] Amy Greenstadt, *Rape and the Rise of the Author: Gendering Intention in Early Modern England* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 6, 9, 15.
[86] Figuring the reader's understanding as a woman vulnerable to ravishment is not unique to romances. In the Epistle to the Readers prefixing Francis Quarles' *Divine Fancies*, Quarles assures the reader "I will not…commit Rape upon your understandings…I have written at my own perill; understand you at your owne pleasures." Quarles, *Divine Fancies*, B1.

to charges that romances corrupted vulnerable readers. Vulnerable readers were, of course, women and children, and numerous conduct books would insist on the importance of preventing young people of either sex from reading romances. James II in his *Papers of Devotion*, a treatise advising new converts to Roman Catholicism, would explicitly recommend protecting women from romance-reading:

> There is another thing I must recommend to you, that such of you as have yonge persons under your charge, should not lett them reade Romances, more espesialy the women kind, as best tis but losse of tyme, and is apt to put foolish and rediculus thoughts in to their heads, especially the femals, history is usefull, and as diverting, and one should early instill into them the making good use of their tyme, and above all things avoyd laisinesse.[87]

The assumption that women were more vulnerable to imbibing "ridiculous thoughts" from romances bears some examination: why is it that some readers were vulnerable, while others could be trusted to read "with discretion", in Prideaux's phrase? The answer is grounded in theories of suspicion and dissimulation. The uneducated (presumably women and the lower classes) were considered to be more credulous; in the words of physician Sir Thomas Browne, they are "the most deceptible part of mankind."[88] Less inclined to intellectual suspicion, women are vulnerable readers because they are more trusting.[89] 'Serious romances' demand to be read "with judgment" and "with discretion"; what they are calling for is to be read with discernment. This idea is also conveyed through prefaces that invert the image of the masculine book deluding the female reader, instead presenting the book as the vulnerable female body subject to the reader's ravishing gaze. In the Preface to *Cassandra*, the translator Charles Cotterell imagines the book to be the vulnerable body of a naked woman, who must be clothed in his rhetorical skill to be

[87] Godfrey Davis, ed. *Papers of Devotion of James II* (Oxford: The Roxburghe Club, 1925), 17.
[88] Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: Or, Enquiries into Very Many Received Tenents, and Commonly Presumed Truths* (London: Printed by T.H. for Edward Dod, 1646), 8. Elsewhere Browne observes that the Devil rightly targeted women, being "cunning enough to begin the deceit in the weaker," *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 2.
[89] Alex Davis offers a thorough overview of criticisms of romance readers as both 'idle' and 'credulous' and romance itself as misleading in *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance*, 10-16, 25-6, 35.

protected from the reader's prying eyes.[90] This images the reader to have "busy eyes", a distinctive mid-century term which accommodates the practice of dissimulation both as self-concealment and distrust.

L'Astrée's didactic "designe" is to account for "the passions and actions of men", a phrase which places dual emphasis on motivations ('passions') and events ('actions'). Similar to Scudérian romance, Davies' *Astrea* seeks to explain its own narrative and render the events 'probable' by revealing individuals' motivations for their behaviour. It is not surprising, then, that Davies introduces the three best-known characters by adjectives which explain both their motivation and their behaviour: "jealous and distrustfull Astrea", "despairing, yet faithfull Celadon" and "fickle and unconstant Hylas." These adjectives introduce the world of *L'Astrée* as one in which the virtues of Neostoicism ('constancy', generally conceived of in romance as sexual fidelity) are opposed to the dangers of politic behaviour ('distrust', generally derived from either experiences of or one's own proclivity towards deceit and infidelity). In his defence of 'serious romance', Davies invokes a romance-world driven by two key motivations: suspicion and fidelity.

III – Love's Verity

L'Astrée self-consciously dramatises its own 'seriousness': in the episode of the Fountaine of Loves Verity, magic is rejected in favour of everyday, 'probable' solutions to the problem of dissimulation and distrust. D'Urfé's defining moment of genre definition is interwoven with its anxiety about honesty and misinterpretation.[91] The magical fountain of truth – the Fountaine of Loves Verity – is located at the geographical and narrative centre

[90] La Calprenède, *Cassandra*.
[91] In his influential reading of *L'Astrée*, Norbert Elias notes that while disguise and deception are common features of earlier literature, it is only in *L'Astrée* that they become "an object of reflection." For Elias, *L'Astrée* is shaped by questions arising "from the fact that people can mask themselves, their thoughts and feelings." See Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1969; repr. 2006), 273.

of Honoré d'Urfé's epic romance.[92] In Volume 2, Book I, Part III, the very middle of the three volume romance, we are introduced to the story of Alcidon and Daphnide, two lovers who have been torn apart by jealous suspicion and have come to the heart of Forrest to consult the fountain and have their trust restored. Daphnide has accused Alcidon of infidelity and believes his eloquent self-defence is "but oyled words and gilded language to gloze over his excuses, without any reality of truth."[93] Her suspicion seems well justified in light of the other narratives in *L'Astrée*: D'Urfé's romance is a litany of tales of faithless lovers, children who keep secrets from their parents and courtiers who plot against each other and their sovereign. In *L'Astrée*, women are wise to be suspicious of masculine rhetorical skill, which in its many narratives of both politic and erotic courtship is shown to be nothing more than self-interested 'glozing'. But Daphnide's suspicion, although justified within a wider narrative context, is incomprehensible to Alcidon:

> She is like unto those who look through coloured Glasse, whose eyes see all things to be of the same colour: for her minde being possessed either with Love or Ambition, she judges of all things according to those Glasses; so every thing which she sees in me, seems unto her to be as she sees them in her self.[94]

Alcidon's simile of the coloured glasses constructs Daphnide's suspicion as faulty perception, as an inability to see 'clearly'. But the problem cannot be resolved simply by removing the filters from her eyesight, because the coloured glass is not external but internal: it is her own impure motives which guide her into misinterpreting the behaviour

[92] The Fountaine of Loves Verity recurs as an image of delusive fantasy throughout the romance (as, for instance, in the tale of Belinde and Damon at 1:186) and has proved a popular incident for critical analysis. See, for instance, the description of the fountain as a sort of "hermeneutical key, grounding interpretation in the last instance on an exterior, empirically verifiable source" in Thomas Dipiero, "Unreadable Novels: Towards a Theory of Seventeenth-Century Aristocratic Fiction," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 38, no. 2/3 (2005): 136.

[93] D'Urfé, *Astrea*, 2:77 (although an error in pagination marks this as 75). All quotations are from the three-volume translation of *L'Astrée* in 1657-58 by the Welsh royalist and prolific romance translator, John Davies (1625-91). The first translation of *L'Astrée* into English was undertaken by John Pyper in 1620, but Pyper only translated the first 12 books, comprising Volume 1 of Davies' edition; I have chosen to draw on Davies as the more complete translation.

[94] Ibid., 2:79.

of others. Alcidon suggests that her suspicion of him is evidence that her own behaviour is driven as much by the expectation of material ('Ambition') as romantic ('Love') rewards. This iteration of the formula "suspicion always haunts the guilty mind" is its own kind of 'coloured glass', presuming concealed vice does not lie behind rhetorical skill but behind suspicion itself.[95]

Alcidon and Daphnide's situation is fundamentally a breakdown of communication: he cannot express himself in terms she will believe. Their inability to communicate openly stems from their differing attitudes towards social converse. Alcidon advocates 'taking on trust', a Ciceronian model which assumes that because trust is essential to social converse, it is in everyone's best interest to be both trusting and trustworthy. For Alcidon, Daphnide's inability to trust renders her untrustworthy. The 'trust-dependence' of the social order was articulated by the Restoration politician Sir Charles Wolseley, who insisted, "Men cannot live and converse together, without putting some trust in each other…Trust, is the first and chief ground of all human converse."[96] In *Parthenissa,* trust is "one of the most sacred tyes."[97] Trust was equally essential to intellectual enquiry, Montaigne noting that "almost all the opinions we have, are taken by authority, and upon credit."[98] In this intellectual context, Daphnide's refusal to take Alcidon's assertions 'on credit' indicates her affiliation with the seventeenth-century counter-movement of political, moral and intellectual suspicion. Contrary to Montaigne, Peacham would regret that "the world hath taken so much upon trust from credulous and superstitious antiquity

[95] Shakespeare, *King Henry VI Part 3*, V.vi.
[96] Sir Charles Wolseley, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism Made Manifest* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1675), 153. I take the notion of "trust-dependency" as the foundation of social order and a key anxiety for Wolseley from Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 8-18.
[97] Orrery, *Parthenissa*, 232.
[98] 'Of Physiognomy' in Thomas Seccombe, ed. *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne Done into English by John Florio* (London: Grant Richards, 1908), 3:359. For Montaigne and the relationship of trust to epistemology, see Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 16-17.

that nowadays it will hardly believe common experience."[99] For Peacham, the world was governed by a natural logic that could be intuited by the discerning thinker without resort to an external authority. Championed by Bacon, Descartes and Boyle, this scepticism would prove the foundation of the Royal Society's scientific method and Locke's empiricism.[100] Scientific or intellectual suspicion was aligned with the broader distrust of received notions of virtue and vice, or what Michael Moriarty and John Conley term the 'suspicion of virtue', a movement which produced the ironic maxims of La Rochefoucauld.[101] In a political arena dominated by post-Machiavellian politic philosophy, suspicion was laudable and seen to be just as essential to social converse as trust. Alcidon and Daphnide thus stand for two distinct modes of thought: if Alcidon demands the right to be 'taken on trust' on the grounds that social cohesion depends on leaps of faith, Daphnide articulates the Tacitean counter-view of necessary suspicion in a social and politic world governed by concealed interests.

The collision of thought represented by Alcidon and Daphnide's contrary modes of trust and suspicion has social, political and moral implications. Romantic love tending towards marriage symbolises social cohesion; the inability of the lovers to trust one another enough to marry demonstrates the destabilising power of suspicion in a social order dependent on

[99] Peacham, "The Truth of Our Times," 231.

[100] See Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*. See also Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008). Boyle would champion proceeding with distrust in the scientific arena, but with trust in the moral and politic spheres, reflecting an awareness that different frames of mind – different 'spectacles' – were called for depending on the circumstances.

[101] Michael Moriarty, *Disguised Vices*, 4. Moriarty focuses particularly on the writings of La Rochefoucauld, although he takes a similar position in his study of Pascal and Descartes, *Early Modern French Thought: The Age of Suspicion* (Oxford: OUP, 2003). A frequenter of the Marquise de Sablé's salon and a collaborator with Madame de La Fayette (credited by some to have co-authored *La Princesse de Clèves*), La Rochefoucauld's philosophy was heavily influenced by Tacitus and he employed the rhetorical technique of redescription in maxims such as "Our vertues are for the most part but vice disguised" and "That which is called Constancy in the Grave and Wise, is only an Art to conceal the sentiments of their hearts." Circulating initially in manuscript, *Réflexions ou Sentences et Maximes Morales* was first published in 1665 and went through five editions in thirteen years. The first complete English translation was published by Aphra Behn in 1685; the work would go through numerous English translations in the eighteenth-century. Aphra Behn, *Seneca Unmasqued: A Bilingual Edition of Aphra Behn's Translation of La Rochefoucauld's Maximes*, ed. Irwin Primer (New York: AMS Press, 2001), 4, 6. See also John Conley, *The Suspicion of Virtue: Women Philosophers in Neoclassical France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002).

trust. The real danger, of course, is dishonesty – not merely because it breaks the chain of communication in one instance, but because it is seen to prompt destructive suspicion. Montaigne judged dishonesty to be the most dangerous threat to social order, arguing that "no other meanes keeps us bound one to another, but our word."[102] Social stability depends upon clear and reliable communication. No wonder, then, that Sir George MacKenzie, the Scottish jurist and author of *Aretina*, decried dissimulation as the vice which "striks at the root of all humane society," and Robert Boyle feared hypocrisy had become "epidemicall."[103] Sir Percy Herbert, author of *The Princess Cloria*, complained that the widespread vice of dissimulation makes it "unpossible almost in any communication to know what another meanes, by reason whereof there is scarce any content at all left in society."[104] Herbert's complaint – that widespread dissimulation had created a culture of suspicion and destroyed social "content" – presumed that trust was the appropriate foundation for the social order. Within this traditional Christian and/or Ciceronian conception of contiguous public and private virtue, both lying and suspicion are abhorrent and disordering vices.

But other commentators would accept the practice of deceit as natural and instead theorise a society structured, not on trust, but on the appropriate practice of suspicion. Richard Braithwaite, author of the romance *Panthalia* and the successful conduct book *The English Gentleman*, advocates "reservancy" as a principal virtue and advises against "being too credulous in giving trust to the relations of others, or by being too credulous in imparting…thoughts to the secrecie of others."[105] Like Lipsius, Braithwaite views secrecy and suspicion as complementary practices within the necessary and admirable virtue of

[102] 'Of Lyers' in Seccombe, *Essayes*, 1:39. See also 'Of Giving the Lie', 2: 402-3.
[103] George Mackenzie, *A Moral Paradox: Maintaining That It Is Much Easier to Be Vertuous Then Vitious* (Edinburgh: Robert Broun, 1667), 18; "Of the Properties of Morall Vertu" in Robert Boyle, "The Aretology or Ethicall Elements of Robert Boyle," 110. See also Mackenzie's *A Moral Essay Preferring Solitude* 58-59.
[104] Herbert, *Certaine Conceptions*, 139.
[105] Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman* (London: Printed by Felix Kyngston for Robert Bostocke, 1633), 135, 137.

dissimulation. For Braithwaite, suspicion is the appropriate mode not merely of listening but of self-expression.[106] The tale of Alcidon and Daphnide elucidates the implications of proceeding with suspicion, a problem that vexed many authors of seventeenth-century romances.

Alcidon and Daphnide's mutual suspicion is seen to be so incompatible with the social order that it literally drives them out of their own society (the trope of *dépaysement*) and, directed by an Oracle, they arrive in Forrest to consult the Fountaine of Loves Verity. But supernatural powers such as fountains and prophecies offer no solutions to the problem of disordering suspicion. They discover they have misinterpreted the Oracle: the fountain is inaccessible, long ago closed up and guarded by impenetrable enchantments. The wise shepherd Adamas explains that the Oracle referred to an "allegorical" fountain:

> The proper quality of the Fountaine of Loves Verity, is to see whether or no one doe truly love. Then any thing that can let us see the same thing, may upon the same reason be said in that particular, to be the Fountaine of Loves Verity; that is, working the same effects which this Fountaine doth; Now Time, Services, and Perseverance, is this Fountaine of which we speak.[107]

There is no magic that allows us to read the minds and intentions of others. Only time and experience can allow us to accurately judge another's veracity, or prove our own trustworthiness. Adamas recommends that Alcidon and Daphnide observe "the daily conversation of these sincere shepheards and shepheardesses" so that they may come to distinguish between "sincerity" and "falsity and dissimulation."[108] Building on the traditional opposition between the court as the site of false flattery and the country as the location of honesty and plain-speaking, Adamas imagines the shepherds to live in a pastoral society founded on trust and unshaken by suspicion. "Sincerity" and

[106] Ibid, 135. On the use of "reservancie with friends," see 279-304; against "credulitie," see 236-39.
[107] D'Urfé, *Astrea*, 2:78.
[108] Ibid.

"dissimulation" are constructed as opposing social forces, the one pastoral and stabilising, the other courtly and destabilising. Adamas' notion of 'sincerity' implies not merely transparency, but also the absence of any motivation that requires concealment. The shepherds can be honest because they are virtuous. This is certainly how Robert Boyle understands it in his essay on virtue, where sincerity is defined as "unfeignedness of intention" and "rectitude of ends", the opposite of "hypocrisy", "equivocation" and "simulation" which are "the Putting on of a seeming Vertue, for the more easy attainment of a man's owne By-Ends."[109] Employing a similar image to that of Alcidon's "coloured glass", Boyle suggests sincerity is like "spectacles" or a "perspective-glas that will help us to a siht of the (invisible) Deity."[110] Our own transparent and virtuous motivations help us to perceive divinity in the world around us. For Boyle, as for Alcidon, our motivations shape our perception and so for the successful functioning of a trust-dependent social order, we must practise 'sincerity' both as a mode of self-expression and as a perceptive frame.

But although Adamas locates 'sincerity' within the pastoral world of Forrest's shepherds and shepherdesses, the romance as a whole suggests that there is no environment untouched by suspicion. Indeed, *L'Astrée* begins with its eponymous heroine, the 'sincere' shepherdess, accusing her lover Celadon of infidelity. The power of Astrea's suspicion is so disruptive it prompts Celadon's departure from Forrest and inaugurates the Heliodoran narrative of constancy in the face of separation and suffering. Suspicion divides the

[109] "On the Properties of Morall Vertu" in Boyle, "The Aretology or Ethicall Elements of Robert Boyle," 109.

[110] Ibid., 108. The image of moral or ethical frameworks as 'spectacles' recurs in seventeenth-century philosophy. Boccalini accused Tacitus of having "framed a kinde of spectacles, that work most pernitious effects for Princes; for so much as being put upon the noses of silly and simple people, they so refine and sharpen their sight, as they make them see and prie into the most hidden and secret thoughts of others, yea even into the centre of their hearts." That Tacitean suspicion might teach men to see into the hearts of others was considered more positively by Sir William Cornwallis, who praised Tacitus for "so piercing an eye into the designes of Princes and States." Quoted in Bradford, "Stuart Absolutism and the 'Utility' of Tacitus," 137.

shepherds and even the idyllic Forrest is not safe from its destructive power. Like the inaccessible fountain, social trust has vanished from the world of *L'Astrée* and there is no way to recover it. Astrea's suspicion, like Daphnide's, is misplaced and destabilising, but elsewhere the romance dwells on the dangers of credulity. The trusting, courtly heroine Dorinde is deceived by no fewer than three men before realising that her lover "is a man; and being so, he is allowed to be inconstant and false."[111] This bitter recognition of the double standards for men and women voices disillusionment with the virtue of constancy which governs the frame narrative of Celadon and Astrea. This constancy may be practised by shepherds, but not by the courtiers with whom Dorinde engages and by the third volume of the romance, she has learned to proceed on the basis of suspicion rather than trust. Astrea must learn the counter-philosophy and come to trust Celadon before they can be reunited. At the very end of the romance, Astrea's friend Leonide chides her for her suspicion of others which he believes leads her into unnecessary secret-keeping:

> This dissimulation…might be good at another season, or before one who has not so much knowledge of your affairs as I have; but to me…it is to be thought, fair Astrea, that these dissimulations are to no purpose, and that you do your self an injury, if you do not speak more freely unto me.[112]

Astrea practises dissimulation inappropriately: her default position of suspicion leads her to dissimulate indiscriminately. She has not learned when, where and with whom she may let down her guard and speak openly. Astrea and Dorinde thus demonstrate the danger of employing the incorrect 'coloured glasses' in their respective environments. Dorinde's presumption of trust is inappropriate in her courtly sphere where converse is based on suspicion, but Astrea's suspicion is misplaced in the pastoral realm where converse is founded on trust.

[111] Honoré d'Urfé, *The Third and Last Volume of Astrea a Romance*, trans. John Davies (London: Printed by [William Wilson] for Humphrey Moseley, Thomas Dring and H. Herringman, 1658), 3.
[112] Ibid., 325.

Astrea and Dorinde must learn how to trust 'correctly' by a process of trial and error. There are no magical solutions to the problem of how to truly know and trust another person; time and experience are the only true teachers in *L'Astrée*.[113] The Fountaine of Loves Verity's explicit allegorical status thus becomes an important moment of genre redefinition in response to the danger posed by dishonesty and suspicion. The fountain is clearly inspired by the Arch of Loyal Lovers on the Firm Island in *Amadis de Gaule*. The Arch in *Amadis* is a test that can only be completed by the most faithful man and the most beautiful woman. Similarly, Adamas reveals that the enchantment around the fountain can be broken by "the most faithfull Male and Female lovers in the world."[114] The exercise of trust will defeat the charm, but as the fountain can only be found by exactly those lovers who would not need to consult it, it is effectively concealed for eternity.[115] In rewriting the enchantment of *Amadis* as inaccessible and self-defeating, *L'Astrée* openly dramatizes its own 'probability' as a break from the conventions of earlier romances. *L'Astrée* insists its heroes must build trust the hard way, through patience, suffering and experience. D'Urfé raises the possibility of magic only to deny its accessibility, either to the characters or to narrative resolution, and the problem of Alcidon and Daphnide's mutual distrust is never resolved. D'Urfé's self-conscious rejection of the supernatural devices that characterised earlier epic romances such as *Orlando Furioso* heralds seventeenth-century romance's shift towards the new genre of 'serious romance', one that would be characterised by both its ethical concerns and its formal attempts at verisimilitude. It seems significant that the moment *L'Astrée* dramatizes the rejection of the magical in favour of serious romance's

[113] Steven Rendall notes that the image of the fountain conjures up nostalgia for "lost transparency" in the Introduction to Honoré D'Urfé, *Astrea*, trans. Steven Rendall (Tempe, Arizona: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997), xviii.
[114] *Astrea*, 2:78.
[115] The incident of the Throne of Love in Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* is similarly modelled on the Arch of Loyal Lovers. The imprisoning magic of the Throne cannot be broken "till the valiantest Knight, with the loyallest Lady come together." Josephine A. Roberts, ed. *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania by Lady Mary Wroth* (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), 48-49. For other examples of the influence of the Arch of Loyal Lovers, see Helen Moore, ed. *Amadis De Gaule* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), xix-xxi.

'probability' is also the moment that dramatizes the social problem of suspicion. The process of genre redefinition is inextricably linked with the problem dishonesty and suspicion pose to the social order.

L'Astrée demonstrates its own 'probability' by rejecting the 'impossible', the 'fabulous' and the 'extravagant', located in the image of the inaccessible Amadisian fountain. For contemporary readers, this generated a perception of the romance's 'realism', although it bears little resemblance to anything we would consider 'realistic' today. *L'Astrée*'s turn towards a more plausible plot is also a turn towards a narrative that dramatizes the process of interpretation: much like the idealised 'discrete' reader, D'Urfé's heroines must learn to 'read' correctly within their socio-political sphere. The process of correct interpretation is part of correctly practising dissimulation; in order to conceal our own secrets, we must understand when, where and with whom we may reveal them. As in the cases of Daphnide and Astrea, awareness of our own opacity can sometimes lead us to 'misread', meeting transparency with suspicion. What *L'Astrée* demonstrates, then, is that our reading of others is its own kind of narrative generation, requiring us to weigh the evidence before us and reconstruct the most 'probable' or 'plausible' interpretation in order to assess whether or not others are truthful. But if the romance celebrates the 'probable', it simultaneously reveals an awareness that the most 'probable' or 'plausible' narrative is not always the correct one. Overhearing the shepherd Lycidas bewailing the pains of unrequited love, Phillis complains to Astrea that none of the shepherd-lovers in Forrest are to be trusted:

> The Shepheards of this Country are so full of dissimulation, that their hearts do commonly denie, what their tongues do promise; And if you do well observe this Shepheard here, you will finde him all Artifice; and as for those expressions which now we have heard, I do believe, that when he espied us coming, he set himself in the way purposely, that we might hear

> his dissembling complaints; otherwise, had they not been better spoken unto us then to the aire and senslesse woods?[116]

Phillis' argument here is based on what is 'probable' or 'plausible': it is unbelievable that a shepherd might reveal his heart in a lonely soliloquy, particularly when there are others around who might overhear. *L'Astrée's* repeated reliance on the 'implausible' narrative trope of overhearing inspired one of the most famous illustrations of the romance: an engraving by Bernard Lens II (see Figure 1, p. 97). Phillis' interpretation, although based on 'plausibility', is incorrect and the romance ultimately proves Lycidas' fidelity; guided by what is 'probable', Phillis utterly misconstrues Lycidas' intentions. Her suspicion reveals a troubling awareness that individual actions are capable of many interpretations, particularly in the 'real' world of Forrest where there is no magical fountain to stand as the guarantor of honesty. But relying on reason and our sense of what is plausible to penetrate the opaque behaviour of others is no guarantee that we will interpret correctly; proceeding with suspicion can be just as misleading as proceeding with trust. In emphasising their own 'probability', seventeenth-century romances reveal an anxiety about their potential misconstruction by readers who lack discretion. Like Phillis, the reader who does not know how to practise 'correct' suspicion may well misunderstand the work's intentions and misinterpret its postures as deceptive. *L'Astrée* thus announces romance's suspicion of its own inherited tropes. It suggests that shepherds may not be honest; lonely soliloquies may not be a genuine outpouring of emotion but an artifice designed to entrap; the prince in disguise may be a malicious invader, or not even a prince at all. The romance of probability is a genre that reads its own inherited conventions with suspicion.

[116] D'Urfé, *Astrea*, 1:51. My reading here runs counter to that of Mary Trull, who suggests that overhearing in pastoral romance provides an "erotics of authenticity" and that penetrating the unquestioned veracity of the private lament provides voyeuristic pleasure to the reader. See Mary Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 6. I would argue, however, that self-conscious romances such as *L'Astrée* view the association between privacy and veracity with scepticism, and raise the fear that the private lament may, in fact, be a public pose.



Figure 1 Celadon complaining of the cruelty of Astrea, is overheard and comforted by Silvia. By Bernard Lens II (London, 1659). © National Trust / Alessandro Nasini.

IV – Probable Allegations

The dangers of misreading and the problems posed by romance's deceptive conventions are dramatized in the final book of Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. If the events of *L'Astrée* are driven by suspicion, those of the *Arcadia* are driven by suspicion's counterpart, concealment. Enflamed with love for the Arcadian princesses, the princes Musidorus and Pyrocles conceal their true identities and disguise themselves as the shepherd Dorus and the Amazon Cleophila (renamed Zelmane in the *New Arcadia*). King Basilius is fooled by Pyrocles' disguise; Queen Gynecia is not; both desire Pyrocles/Cleophila and the combination of lust and confusion propels the narrative forward until the princes elope with the princesses and the Queen accidentally poisons the King. Musidorus and Pyrocles are arrested and charged with the ravishment of the princesses and the king's murder.[117] The final book of the romance is dominated by their trial, during which the princes and the reader are presented with a very different version of events from the light-hearted romantic romp we have encountered so far.

The *Arcadia* demonstrates throughout a concern with credulity and suspicion. Sidney hints at the weakness of King Basilius by suggesting he is "not the sharpest piercer into masked minds."[118] His government is supported by the perceptiveness of Philanax, who builds the case for the prosecution against the princes.[119] Philanax founds his case on the princes' opaque motivations for travelling in Arcadia as 'private men'. Concealed identities might conceal dangerous intents to rob, rape and murder. Indeed, the princes' strategies for

[117] This broad outline of the *Old Arcadia* does not conform with Sidney's revised scheme in the *New Arcadia*. However *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* was published in a hybrid-form of the first three books of the *New Arcadia* and the last two books of the *Old*, so that this summary might seem to best represent the resolution of the overarching narrative as early modern readers encountered it.
[118] Sidney, *Arcadia*, 293.
[119] Blair Worden suggests the pairing of credulous monarch and suspicious counsellor in the *Arcadia* parallels contemporary perceptions of Elizabeth and her master of intelligence, Sir Francis Walsingham, in *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), 175.

wooing the princesses do seem Machiavellian: Pyrocles displays a "dangerous cunning" while Musidorus manipulates the credulous, low-born Mopsa by "policy."[120] The romance convention of the disguised prince is put under pressure and in Philanax's 'probable' but incorrect interpretation, is revealed to be something dangerous and debasing. According to Philanax, a prince in disguise is no prince at all.

Philanax constructs his case with rhetorical skill, employing a series of leading questions to suggest that the princes' postures conceal only one plausible motivation: material ambition. He refuses to credit Pyrocles' claim to royal status, arguing:

> What can all the earth answer for his coming hither? Why alone, if he be a prince? How so richly jewelled if he be not a prince? Why then a woman if now a man? Why now [Pyrocles], if then Zelmane? Was all this play for nothing, or if it had an end, what end but the end of my dear master? Shall we doubt so many secret conferences with Gynecia, such feigned favour to the over-soon beguiled Basilius, a cave made a lodging, and the same lodging made a temple of his religion, lastly, such changes and traverses as a quiet poet could scarce fill a poem withal, were directed to any less scope than to this monstrous murder? O snaky ambition, which can wind thyself in so many figures to slide thither thou desirest to come![121]

Philanax suggests that Pyrocles' behaviour is "monstrous" and belongs in a poem; even with the most rational explanation, there is something of the fantastic verse romance about his seemingly inexplicable layers of deception. Although Pyrocles claims that Philanax's assertions are "void of all probable allegation", the trial scene serves to demonstrate how very implausible the true story is, and how easy it is for the truth to be glossed with an interpretation that rings 'more true' than the facts.[122] As Lorna Hutson notes, "The narrator of the *Arcadia* may label Philanax's speech 'malice', but it nevertheless has more *prima facie* likelihood than the story we have followed as readers through 'books' or 'acts' 1 to

[120] Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: OUP, 1985), 89, 205.
[121] Ibid., 337.
[122] Ibid., 341.

4."[123] Hutson argues that the rhetoric of sixteenth-century dramatic narrative shifted in response to developments in legal culture and the late Elizabethan theatre sought to incorporate judicial techniques for evaluating probability and likelihood into their own narratives of increased verisimilitude. A similar argument could be made about late Elizabethan and early Jacobean romances, many of which demonstrate the failure of legal process or the narrative of 'probability' to accurately assess erotic fidelity.[124] Philanax's arguments, based as they are on the logical imputations of disguise, fail to account for the illogical motions of passion. In defending themselves, the princes seek to rewrite this narrative of ambitious deception on the grounds of honest love: Pyrocles claims that they were "inflamed by love" and that this passion led them to assume "such forms as might soonest bring us to the revealing of our affections." Pyrocles suggests that deception is the fastest way to openness and love is "the thread to guide you in the labyrinth" of Philanax's accusations.[125]

But neither Philanax nor Euarchus are convinced by this defence grounded in intention: having come to Arcadia in disguise, the princes have sacrificed their trustworthiness. Pyrocles and Musidorus claim that as princes they should be exempt from legal proceedings; their royal status gives them the right to be taken at their word. They depend on being judged within a social convention that understands gentility to incorporate honesty. As the sixteenth-century English humanist Sir Thomas Elyot explained, "trust" is promise-keeping between "men of equal estate or condition."[126] To be trustworthy was the

[123] Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 133.
[124] See, for instance, Greene's *Philomela, or The Lady Fitzwater's Nightingale* and *Pandosto*; Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*. For an overview of the genre of 'calumny romance', see Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*, 269-323. See also Hutson, "Probable Infidelities."
[125] Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, 340.
[126] According to Shapin, Elyot articulates two other kinds of social trust: faith, which is a "belief in the promises of God" and loyalty, "the keeping of promises made by a subject to his king." Together the three categories of "trust", "faith" and "loyalty" made up "fidelity", which Elyot saw to be the basis of Ciceronian

foundation of gentility and trusting was the practice of gentlemen.[127] Seventeenth-century romances make frequent reference to this association between high status and trustworthiness. In Barclay's *Argenis*, Poliarchus instinctively trusts Archombrotus based on a recognition of comparable social status, and decides he "himself would be worthy of a greater calamity, if he should offer to doubt his fidelity."[128] In de Subligny's comic anti-romance *La Fausse Clélie* (1670), the sceptical Montal resolves the question of whether a ghost has or hasn't appeared by asserting, "one must take respectable people at their word when they say they have seen something."[129] If the gentleman had the right to greater credit, then a prince's assertions could be taken completely on trust. As Percy Herbert wrote in his collection of moral essays, "the word of a Prince and a Gentleman, hath been held in all ages a manner sacred, and far more binding then prisons."[130] In *Argenis*, Radirobanes, King of Mauritania, asserts his right to be trusted by emphasising his royal birth: "Leave off therefore suspition, unworthy my condition."[131] Similarly in the final part of Orrery's *Parthenissa*, the word of a king is weighed above that of his subjects: "why should you credit the despair of a Subject, more than the word and assurance of his King?"[132]

But Pyrocles and Musidorus find that by practising deception, they have forfeited the right to be believed. The Arcadian court will not acknowledge them as princes, but only as "private men" because their claim to royal status "stood in their own words, which they

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justice, or the "public weal." See Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 9; Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named The Governor*, ed. S. E. Lehmberg (London: J. M. Dent, 1962 [1531]), 181-82.

[127] For the association between gentility and trustworthiness, see Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 65-101. See also Mervyn James, *English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642*, Past and Present Supplement (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978), 28-31.

[128] John Barclay, *Barclay His Argenis: Or, The Loves of Poliarchus and Argenis*, trans. Kingsmill Long (London: Printed by G.P. for Henry Seile, 1625), 12.

[129] As quoted in Paige, *Before Fiction: The Ancien Regime of the Novel*, 70.

[130] Herbert, *Certaine Conceptions*, 146.

[131] Barclay, *Argenis*, 237.

[132] Orrery, *Parthenissa*, 785.

had so diversely falsified as they did not deserve belief."[133] In the words of George Mackenzie, "dissimulation thrives never but once" and having been discovered in one deception, Pyrocles and Musidorus have lost all credit for honest relation.[134] Philanax articulates the principle that those who are caught in one lie doubtless have more to hide. Fulke Greville noted that the "dark webs of effeminate princes be dangerous fore-runners of innovation"; as readers we may delight in the layers of confusion, but we also recognise the potentially disordering practice of deception.[135] The *Arcadia* puts the very conventions of romance on trial and suggests that love is an improbable and suspect motivation for the dangerous trope of princes in disguise.

The *Arcadia* articulates the generic problem that a prince practising deception does not merely undermine the value of his word but dishonours his status; the practice of deception runs counter to the demonstration of heroic worth. In passing judgment, Euarchus observes that if they *are* princes, "by making themselves private" they have "not only left to do like princes, but to be like princes" and so "have deprived themselves of respect due to their public calling."[136] Giovanni Della Casa's *Il Galateo,* translated by Nathaniel Waker in 1663 as *The Refin'd Courtier*, called it a "huge unworthiness for Rulers to lye" and warned that "equivocall speeches and mentall reservations become none, much less great men." Only "truth is the beginning of heroical vertue."[137] As Steven Shapin argues, deception was perceived to be debasing.[138] The problem of princely deceit is thus not merely that it upends a social order based on trust, as seen in *Astrea*, but that it threatens to destabilise a

[133] Sidney, *Arcadia*, 333.
[134] MacKenzie, *A Moral Essay Preferring Solitude*, 58.
[135] Fulke Greville, "A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney," in *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 9.
[136] Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, 349.
[137] Giovanni Della Casa, *The Refin'd Courtier, or, a Correction of Several Indecencies Crept into Civil Conversation*, trans. Nathaniel Waker (London: Printed by F.G. for R. Royston, 1663), 109, 108, 99.
[138] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 74. This moderates the argument of Mervyn James, who stresses that deception is only debasing when it is publicly imputed, see *English Politics and the Concept of Honour*, 28-9.

class system in which virtuous honesty is aligned with wealth and the practice of trust is a marker of social status.[139] Philanax's suspicion dishonours Pyrocles and Musidorus; as Hobbes explains in *Leviathan,* "To believe, to trust, to rely on another, is to honour him; [it is a] sign of opinion of his virtue and power. To distrust or not to believe is to dishonour."[140] Musidorus complains that "such men as we are submitted not only to apparent falsehood but most shameful reviling" and Pyrocles reacts to the perceived insult by seeking to prove his honesty through trial by combat.[141]

Their violent reaction testifies to a culture in which the accusation of lying against a man of high status was a grave offence indeed.[142] Montaigne noted, with some irony:

> We are more sharpely offended with the reproach of this vice, so ordinary in us, then with any other; and that it is the extremest injury, may be done us in words, to upbraid and reproach with a lie. Therein I find, that it is naturall, for a man to defend himselfe most from such defects as we are most tainted with.[143]

Accusations of dishonesty are the "extremest injury" precisely because they impugned not merely a man's trustworthiness but his social status. The association between gentility and credibility has been traced with care by Steven Shapin, who argues that a preference for 'gentle' authorities who were unencumbered by the bias of self-interest or economic dependency shaped the attitudes and early membership of the Royal Society. Shapin draws attention to the way social values and hierarchies shaped the pursuit of knowledge.[144]

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[139] As Susan Dwyer Amussen observes, "by the late sixteenth century 'credit' described both honesty and solvency." *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 152.
[140] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 69.
[141] Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, 341, 346.
[142] On the importance of 'giving the lie', or rescuing oneself from imputations of dishonour, see Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 107-114. Sidney's interest in accusations of dishonesty was particularly pertinent in the 1580s, when changes to defamation law in the Elizabethan period brought verbal misdemeanours within the common law and slander litigation increased. Accusations about the sanctity of a man's word, particularly as regards marriage contracts and plight-troths, quickly became one of the most common causes of litigation. See Andrew Zurcher, *Spenser's Legal Language: Law and Poetry in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 63.
[143] 'Of Giving the Lie' in Seccombe, *Essayes*, 2:402.
[144] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 65-101.

Barbara Shapiro takes a slightly different line, stressing that gentility was "one of a number of bases for trust" and that "moral status and reputation blended into but were not identical to social and economic status."[145] Both agree, however, that a reputation for honesty was at the heart of chivalric honour culture; unsurprisingly, the challenge to a duel is worded as 'to give the lie'. Losing a duel was a public loss of status which proved the loser the 'liar'.[146] But the princes' attempt to recuperate their status through duelling is misguided. The practice of the romance trope of disguise has undermined the sanctity of their word; continuing to follow romance conventions by seeking a duel will not prove their honesty. They are operating in the wrong generic mode.

To follow Shapin's argument, the foundation of the principle that members of the gentility are inherently 'honest' is that they are devoid of motive: unlike the lower classes, the gentility does not want for anything, and it is necessity that motivates deception. A gentleman's estate allowed him the life of leisure that Aristotle argued was essential to develop virtue.[147] Such idleness was the badge of disinterest and therefore the guarantor of honesty.[148] Idleness and independence are the qualities of pastoral heroes, and the abundance of necessities underlies pastoral's description of shepherds as 'honest': they want for nothing, and consequently have no need for underhanded stratagems. To some extent, pastoral has always reflected anxieties about dissimulation, founded as it is upon the juxtaposition of the deceitful court and the artless countryside. Pastoral shepherds are

[145] Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 140, 16.
[146] As Markku Peltonen argues, challenges to duels were worded as accusations of dishonesty because such accusations "questioned the gentleman's entire status as a gentleman." *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 60. See also Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance*, 152-7. Davis stresses the intangible social benefits that could be reaped by successful duelling.
[147] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 51-2, 76.
[148] 'Idleness' is, of course, a common association with romances – Sidney described his *Arcadia* as "this idle work of mine" and Crowne his *Pandion and Amphigenia* as the product of "idle hours." The use of 'idle' as a generic identifier seems designed to reinforce the association between romance and aristocratic culture: romances are both the product of idleness and consumed by the idle. Romances present themselves as being produced by, about and for the gentry. Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, 3 and Crowne, *Pandion and Amphigenia*, 307. On the association between disinterestedness and veracity, see Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 83.

not actually lower class, but allegorise an idealised gentility in so far as they are removed from the pressure to acquire material goods or influence. In *L'Astrée*, for instance, the nymph Galathea reflects favourably on the lower status shepherd, Celadon, observing he and his companions "are not shepheards out of any want, but because they would enjoy that sweet and harmlesse kind of life."[149] To be a shepherd is not to be impoverished or ignobly born, but to reject the world of courtly ambition. As a genre, pastoral is less about class than about social sphere of action: the courtly gentleman is dishonest and corrupt because the business of court life and its emphasis on acquisition prevent the cultivation of virtue; the country gentleman has greater leisure and can pursue virtuous honesty.

Pastoral romance is thus generically engaged with the threat dishonesty poses to gentle status. As Richard Braithwaite put it, nothing could "disparage or lay a deeper aspersion upon the face of Gentrie, than to be taxed for fabulous relations."[150] Braithwaite's anxiety about the 'fabulous' is echoed by Obadiah Walker in his educational manual in which he advises a young gentleman to "be not hyperbolic and extravagant…for the wit takes away the credit; whereas the end of speech was first to make us understood, then believed."[151] The vocabulary Braithwaite and Walker employ to describe the vice of lying is strikingly similar to the terms with which the authors of 'serious romance' would repudiate the 'extravagance' of 'old romance'. Lies are over-the-top ('hyperbolic'), impossible ('extravagant') and fictional ('fabulous'); they do not stand up to the sober suspicion of a listener seeking to construct a 'probable' chain of events, and their demonstrative 'impossibility' debases their practitioner. When 'serious romances' assert their own 'probability', they are making bold claims both for their superior veracity and for their

[149] D'Urfé, *Astrea*, I:13.
[150] Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman*, 83.
[151] Obadiah Walker, *Of Education. Especially of Young Gentlemen* (Oxon: at the Theater, 1673 [1672]), 248. According to Shapin, Walker's comment reflects the importance of appearing honest over actually being so, *A Social History of Truth*, 80-1.

gentility. They align themselves with Sidney as works which expose the conventions of 'old romance' to the suspicious eyes of a reader educated in the legal narrative of 'probability'. 'Serious romance' claims to be more truthful, and so more aristocratic, than those romances that have come before.

Sidney's *Arcadia* resolves with the testimony of the princesses and the revival of Basilius, allowing the princes to recoup their honesty and their royal status without resorting to violence. But Philanax's redescription of their behaviour is more than a rhetorical set-piece; it expresses a genuine anxiety that the tropes of disguise and deception that pervade romances might be debasing. As we have seen, traditional Christian and Ciceronian conceptions of virtue were founded on the practice of openness. Romance's routine deployment of opacity pointed to a genre that aligned itself more closely with Machiavellian or politic ideology than with traditional Christian virtues. 'Serious romance' develops its discourse of 'probability' and 'motivation' in response to the problems of suspicion and deception in its sources, *L'Astrée* and the *Arcadia*. As we will see in the coming chapters, the problem for seventeenth-century romances becomes how to construct a notion of 'heroic virtue' in which suspicion and deception are not debasing, but ennobling.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONSTANT *DISSIMULATRICE*

In the margins of a copy of Kingsmill Long's 1625 translation of John Barclay's *Argenis*, an anonymous reader pauses to reflect on the narrative with reference to the maxims of Machiavelli (see Figure 2, p. 110).[1] Beside a description of the treacherous Selenissa's double-dealings with her royal mistress Argenis, the reader remarks:

> *Machiavelli est axioma horrendum vel collectio laudanda quosdam everti*
>
> (It is an appalling axiom, or, if you will, a praiseworthy conclusion of Machiavelli's that certain persons should be ruined)[2]

The reader appears to be thinking of Machiavelli's maxim, "People should either be caressed or crushed. If you do them minor damage, they will get their revenge; but if you cripple them, there is nothing they can do."[3] It is unclear to whom the reader refers with this remark: the "crafty old woman", Selenissa, or the princess, Argenis.[4] Both have proved themselves adept at deceit. Selenissa plays the Machiavel by feeding Argenis "guilded…pills of suspition" against other courtiers, but it is Argenis who must 'ruin' her

[1] PR 4116 B33, NLW. The reference to Machiavelli is the only extended gloss, but the copy is covered in a rich variety of other marks and symbols. Some of these marks are familiar from standard indexing ciphers, but other symbols appear to be idiosyncratic: a 'P' is placed beside moral precepts and an 'ɔ' marks comments relating to kingship or rule. There are 18 different symbols employed throughout the book, as well as extensive underlining, individual words in the margins, and corrections to printing errata. The majority of these marks are found in chapters which contain long philosophical debates. Taken together, they paint a picture of an active reader who was drawn to Barclay's extended discourses on political theory. We can find evidence of similar reading practices in Robert Hooke's copy of the 1629 Le Grys translation, also at the NLW (PR 4116 B33), where key passages have been numbered and presumably correspond to entries in a lost commonplace book. For standard indexing symbols used by Renaissance readers, see William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 25-30.

[2] Sincere thanks to John Holland, who provided this translation.

[3] *The Prince*, as quoted in Michael L. Morgan, ed. *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, 5th ed. (Indianapolis and Lancaster Gazelle, 2011), 512.

[4] Barclay, *Argenis*, 70.

treacherous nurse to protect her own position.[5] What is evident is that the reader is drawing an association between political philosophy and gendered agency. Barclay's heroines are nothing if not Machiavellian, and the reader is torn between admiring and deprecating their schemes. In his recognition that Machiavelli's adage is simultaneously 'appalling' and 'praiseworthy', the reader evinces conventional discomfort with Machiavellianism while simultaneously acknowledging the necessity of *realpolitik*.

This chapter investigates the idea that women might be more Machiavellian – that is to say, more cunning or duplicitous – than men. It asks, *Why are women assumed to be liars?* and the seemingly contradictory question, *When, if ever, is it permissible for women to lie?* Close readings of two romances from 1621, Barclay's *Argenis* and Mary Wroth's *Urania*, suggest some answers. In both romances, dissimulation is implicated in the performance of constancy, the principal female virtue. Constancy is the virtue of maintaining a strong commitment, to a goal, person or ideal; it is "the quality of being resolute, steadfast or unwavering in some commitment despite the trials and tribulations of life that might threaten to undermine that commitment."[6] It is the principal virtue of Neostoicism, the movement inaugurated by sixteenth-century writers such as Lipsius, Montaigne and Du Vair. As Quentin Skinner argues, the stoic outlook recommended "the need to remain steadfast in the face of Fortune's unchangeability" and it carried "political implications", notably the idea that the stoic should submit to the "existing order of things."[7] As a doctrine of endurance, Neostoicism appears to be opposed to dissimulation, which encourages mutability and is perceived to be a strategy of resistance and self-preservation

[5] Ibid. *Argenis* was first published in Latin in 1621, and translated into English by Kingsmill Long (1625) and Robert Le Grys (1629). I have chosen to quote from the Long translation: it was the first and the only one to go into a second edition (1636).
[6] Clea F. Rees and Jonathan Webber, "Constancy, Fidelity and Integrity," in *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, ed. Stan van Hooft (Durham: Acumen, 2014), 399-408, 401. Rees and Webber note that honesty is not quite the same thing as fidelity: where constancy is concerned with maintaining a commitment, fidelity relates to the active performance of that commitment. Constancy is a passive virtue; fidelity an active one.
[7] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: CUP, 1978), 2:278-9.

rather than endurance. But in *Argenis* and *Urania*, the association between deception and disloyalty is decoupled and instead the romances suggest there may be a paradoxical link between the virtue of constancy and the more dubious practice of dissimulation. In Wroth's *Urania*, the heroine Pamphilia is a skilful secret keeper whose stoic silence proves a strategic virtue. In Barclay's *Argenis*, the romance trope of threatened chastity proves a testing ground for the virtue of neostoic constancy. To maintain her constancy (in the sense of romantic fidelity to her lover), Argenis must dissimulate. Questions of constancy and dissimulation are inherited by the mid-century romance, *The Princess Cloria*, in which Herbert utilises the trope of the captive princess to suggest that the virtue of constancy might have limitations as a mode of political conduct and to foreground fraud over patient endurance. All three romances suggest that the honesty principle might not be compatible with the virtue of constancy and work instead to redescribe the traditional female vice of dissimulation as the grounds of virtuous female political agency.

Throughout this chapter, I use the French term *dissimulatrice* to convey the early modern perception that there was a type of dissimulation practised by and specific to women. *Dissimulatrice* refers to a female dissimulator, although in French it carries connotations of disguise and nefarious, even criminal, activity.[8] It is a useful term for our purposes because it suggests that the acceptability of deceit might be interpreted very differently depending on the gender (and authority) of the practitioner. It is for this reason that romances articulate questions about constancy and deception through tales of young women looking towards marriage. Women's "socially determined dependence" on men, and on the social, political and economic structures ruled by men, are determinants which locate them as what Amelia Zurcher terms "representative ethical subjects."[9] As we shall see, it is this

[8] On the association between 'dissimulation' and disguise in French, see Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations*, 13-14, n.9.
[9] Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 167.

state of female dependency which Zurcher, Shapin and others have found to underlie associations between femininity and deceit, and it is the problem of political dependency that makes the question, *When can women lie?* so powerful and so potentially disruptive. In the conventional analogy of family and state central to the political meaning of romances, the subject position of women serves as an allegory for the political subject and romance stories of constancy under threat prove vehicles for exploring questions of political fidelity. To ask, *When can women lie to men?* is also to ask, *When can a subject lie to a sovereign?* and to suggest that subjects and sovereigns might be held to different standards of honesty. When romance authors such as Wroth, Barclay and Herbert explore forms of acceptable feminine dissimulation, what they are really articulating is a form of resistance theory.

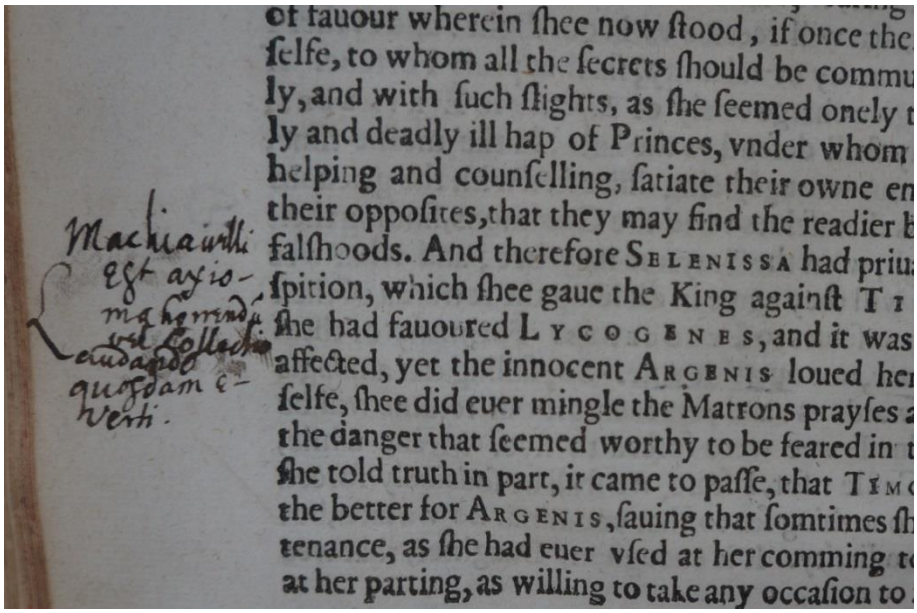

of fauour wherein ſhee now ſtood, if once the
ſelfe, to whom all the ſecrets ſhould be commu
ly, and with ſuch ſlights, as ſhe ſeemed onely t
ly and deadly ill hap of Princes, vnder whom
helping and counſelling, ſatiate their owne en
their oppoſites, that they may find the readier b
falſhoods. And therefore SELENISSA had priu
ſpition, which ſhee gaue the King againſt TI
ſhe had fauoured LYCOGENES, and it was
affected, yet the innocent ARGENIS loued her
ſelfe, ſhee did euer mingle the Matrons prayſes a
the danger that ſeemed worthy to be feared in t
ſhe told truth in part, it came to paſſe, that TIM
the better for ARGENIS, ſauing that ſomtimes ſh
tenance, as ſhe had euer vſed at her comming t
at her parting, as willing to take any occaſion to

Figure 2 Marginal annotation in the 1625 Kingsmill Long translation of Barclay's *Argenis*. The National Library of Wales PR 4116 B33.

I – Why Do Women lie?

Or rather, why did the early moderns believe women were liars?[10] The Anglican clergyman Samuel Torshell in *The Womans Glorie* observed lying was "very naturall to women."[11] This kind of casual misogyny is exemplified by Posthumus in *Cymbeline*:

> For there's no motion
> That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
> It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,
> The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;[12]

Posthumus manages to blame women not only for their own lies, but for men's as well.[13] Such a fear – that women's deceptiveness might prove corrupting – was common; indeed, in the mid-sixteenth century pamphlets such as *The Deceyte of Women* drew on biblical examples to demonstrate the risk female untrustworthiness posed to men.[14] Women's speech was considered less credible: John Kerrigan notes that women "were constrained in their capacity to swear" and "were disadvantaged as word-givers"; Lorna Hutson describes the popular perception of women as less "oathworthy"; and Laura Gowing's study of libel

[10] For a history of the association between women and deceit in the late medieval and early modern periods, see Denery, *The Devil Wins*, 199-246.
[11] Samuel Torshell, *The Womans Glorie a Treatise, Asserting the Due Honour of That Sexe, and Directing Wherein That Honour Consists* (London: Printed by G.M. for John Bellamie, 1645), 190. Appointed tutor to the king's two youngest children while they were in parliament's care, *The Womans Glorie* is the published text from a sermon Torshell delivered in 1644 on the birthday of Princess Elizabeth. Jacqueline Eales, 'Torshell, Samuel (1605-1650)', *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27570, accessed 3 September, 2016].
[12] Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, II.v.
[13] We can find echoes of Posthumus in the hero of Samuel Sheppard's 1650 prose romance, *Amandus and Sophronia*, in which Amandus extrapolates from the slandered heroine to describe all women as "false in their words, doubtful in their acts. " As in *Cymbeline*, in Sheppard's romance the virtue of the heroine is proved and the hero excoriated for his lack of faith. Indeed, few seventeenth-century romances confirm the misogynistic association of women with deceit, using it instead to implicate the hero in un-heroic misogyny. Samuel Sheppard, *The Loves of Amandus and Sophronia* (London: Printed by G.D. for John Hardestie, 1650), 64-5.
[14] *The Deceyte of Women, to the Instruction and Ensample of All Men, Yong and Old* (London: W. Copland for Abraham Vele, 1557). Later works continued to draw on Biblical example to demonstrate the duplicity of women; see, for instance, Henry Hooton, *Bridle for the Tongue* (London: W. Taylor, 1709), 143; Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 2-3.

litigation demonstrates the ways in which women's words had "lower and more precarious credit."[15]

The association between women and deceit has classical origins. Drawing on Galen, the personal physician of Louis XIV Martin Cureau de La Chambre claimed "the woman is cold and moist" and therefore "apt to Dissemble, Flatter, Lie."[16] According to Aristotle, women were defective men and therefore "more void of shame, more false of speech, more deceptive."[17] In so far as gendered virtue was perceived to be a matter of gradation rather than essential difference, exceptional women were able to demonstrate masculine virtue beyond the usual purview of their sex.[18] We can find echoes of this worldview in *Argenis*, where Barclay praises the "manly constancy" of his heroine and her "more than womanly apprehension."[19] But Argenis is the exception, not the rule, and her unusually masculine loyalty and perception reiterate a gender binary in which men are characterised as honest, loyal and perceptive, while women are duplicitous, faithless and either overly suspicious or overly credulous. If the Aristotelian Golden Mean held up honesty, loyalty, trust and faith as virtues, women were often aligned with the vices of *excess* – either excessive openness (accusations of garrulity and injunctions to control the tongue) or excessive opacity (accusations of secret-keeping), excessive credulity (accusations that women were easily misled) or excessive suspicion (accusations that women were overly

[15] John Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 26, 28; Hutson, "Probable Infidelities," 223; Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 50; see also Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact*, 16.

[16] Martin Cureau de La Chambre, *The Art How to Know Men*, trans. John Davies (London: Thomas Dring, 1665), 26. Valentin Groebner argues that the Galenic theory inspired early modern descriptions of women as mutable or "unreadable", in *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Mark Kyburz and John Peck (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 255.

[17] As quoted in Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 88.

[18] Ibid., 88 n.105. For the dissolution of the "one-sex" model in early modern England, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990).

[19] *Argenis*, 68. Similarly Richard Braithwaite praises his Bellingeria (a shadow of Elizabeth I) for her "masculine spirit…above the effiminacy of her sexe"; Braithwaite celebrates his Doriclea for her "noble constancy and masculine spirit"; and Percy Herbert praises his heroine Philogenia (Queen Christina of Sweden) for her "masculine spirit," Richard Braithwaite, *Panthalia, or The Royal Romance* (London: Anthony Williamson, 1659), 1; *The Two Lancashire Lovers*, 89; Herbert, *Cloria*, 451. These descriptions reinscribe the association of masculinity with authority and of femininity with subjugation.

jealous). The more perfect male found it easier to approach the Golden Mean of honesty; the imperfect female inevitably exceeded the boundaries of virtuous truthfulness and trust.

Partly this reflects the fact that verbal honesty was not valued in women. For women, honesty traditionally meant *sexual* honesty and 'honour' was located in the intact female body.[20] Where honesty for men had to do with consistency between words and deeds, for women it was principally physical and only secondarily rhetorical. Female honesty thus intersects but is not quite congruent with arguments about the virtues of chastity and constancy. For women, constancy is primarily sexual fidelity; for men, constancy has a broader remit, relating to political fidelity and the relationship between words and deeds. Women might thus be said to have two kinds of honesty: bodily honesty, or chastity, and verbal honesty. The overriding importance of one could compromise the other; because it was of paramount importance that women retain their bodily honesty, some amount of mendacity might be permitted – even encouraged – to preserve chastity. Paradoxically, women could tell lies if doing so might keep them 'honest'.[21]

This paradox shapes the plot of the influential Greek romance, Heliodorus's *Aethiopika*. Separated from her beloved Theagenes, Charicleia avoids being forced into marriage with other men by practising what John Winkler calls "strategic falsehood".[22] Held captive by pressing suitors, she pretends to consent to marriages she does not want in order to buy time to escape. She justifies this dissimulation by claiming, "A lie too can be noble if it

[20] See Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, 100-4. Amussen notes a shift in the mid-seventeenth century from defamation cases brought by men (over half before 1640) to those brought by women (nearly two thirds by 1660), but observes that they were always more likely to be brought against men, a reflection of the facts that men's words were considered more credible and therefore more dangerous and that "women's reputations were more easily threatened" (103). See also Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 52, 112-114.

[21] The persistence of this problem into the twentieth-century is noted by Adrienne Rich, who observes, "truthfulness has not been considered important for women, as long as we have remained physically faithful to a man, or chaste," in *Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying* (Pittsburgh: Motheroot Publications/Pittsburgh Women Writers, 1977), 3.

[22] John Winkler, "The Mendacity of Kalisiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodorus's *Aethiopika*," *Yale Classical Studies* 27 (1986): 93-158. See also Jonathan Crewe, "Believing the Impossible: *Aethiopika* and Critical Romance," *Modern Philology* 106, no. 4 (2009): 601-616.

helps those who tell it and does not harm those who hear it."[23] Within the logic of the romance, Charicleia's duplicity is heroic because it preserves her 'honesty'. One answer to the question, *Why are women assumed to be duplicitous?*, then, is that women are perceived to need recourse to mendacity to preserve their 'honesty'. It is important to the justification of Charicleia's deceptions that she should deceive while she is unaware of her true identity: not knowing she is a princess, with access to political and economic power, for much of the romance Charicleia's only bargaining chip is her chastity. If for men credibility is publicly demonstrable through financial credit, for women it depends upon their sexual honour, because it is this which secures them the protection and financial support of men. We see, then, how credibility inevitably becomes embroiled in erotic economics.

Susan Amussen has demonstrated how in early modern England poverty was aligned with a lack of credibility. The concept of 'credit', to which only the upper classes had access, "equat[ed] wealth with moral worth."[24] Similarly Craig Muldrew identifies a "social ethic of credit as trust" throughout the period 1580-1720 and argues that the growth of consumer culture fundamentally reshaped the way we thought about trust and led to material assets becoming key markers of reputation.[25] With restricted access to both material wealth and the means of creating it, women also had limited 'credit': they were excluded from those networks in which financial and reputational credit were the dual criteria for admission.

[23] Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Romance*, trans. Moses Hadas (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), 26. We can find the same logic articulated by Innogen in *Cymbeline*: "If I do lie and do / No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope / They'll pardon it. " (IV.ii)

[24] Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, 155. A similar argument is put forward by Steven Shapin. Barbara Shapiro introduces some nuances, arguing that "moral status and reputation blended into but were not identical to social and economic status." Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact*, 16. Laura Gowing argues that the notion of 'credit' for both men and women incorporated a number of interconnected characteristics, including "good neighbourliness, trustworthiness, financial independence, sexual virtue, and social class," but that for women all these characteristics were "filtered through the lens of sexual honesty." Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 128, 129.

[25] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 3.

Women's credibility was measured by their principal means of attaining material support: their sexual honour.[26] Fundamentally, then, the logic behind the association of women with deceit is based on the presumption of economic dependency.

In making this argument, I am drawing on the work of Steven Shapin, who has demonstrated that a lack of access to both political power and material assets was the principal common factor among those deemed 'unreliable.'[27] Shapin argues that seventeenth-century concepts of gentility absorbed the ideals of older honour culture, such as constancy, dependability and veracity, so that the notion that the gentleman's word could be trusted became essential to constructions of noble masculinity.[28] Honour and honesty became convertible. We can perceive this association in Cleland's *Instruction of a Young Noble-man*, in which he advises:

> The authoritie, puissance, and safety of al Princes dependeth upon faith, & promise keepeing. Keep therfore your faith preciselie, as the onelie badge, and marke of your honour: for the greater men you are, the more you are bound to performe it, in respect your libertie is the greater in making of it:[29]

Cleland's advice cuts to the heart of the basis for the belief in gentle credibility: the liberty granted by financial and social independence carried with it a presumption of disinterest which would guarantee truthful speech. The stress Cleland places on the "safety of al Princes" emphasises the relationship between word-as-bond and political fidelity: the gentleman must keep his faith because it is on the loyalty of the aristocracy that the stability of the social structure depends. Partly, then, women are constructed as 'dishonest' as a way of deflecting the threat of dishonesty onto a group already excluded from the

[26] For the importance of sexual honour to social mobility, see Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 125-6.
[27] See "Unreliable People" in Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 86-95.
[28] Ibid., 66-86. On the importance of word-as-bond in constructions of honour, see also James, *English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642*, 8, 28-32.
[29] James Cleland, *The Instruction of a Young Noble-Man* (Oxford: I. Barnes, 1612), 199, as discussed in Shapin, 69. See also Shapin on disinterestedness, 83.

marketplace; such a charge serves to contain the very real threat dishonesty or inconstancy might pose to political stability.

It is because women were understood to be dependent that they were conceptualised as deceptive; inevitably those in "constrained circumstances" were understood to be doubtful truth-tellers, or what Shapin calls "unreliable people."[30] As La Chambre argued, "distrust and jealousie" and "artifice & craft" are the "issue of weakness and fear."[31] As Shapin states, "women took their social standing from men" and their legal identities were sublated into their father's or, upon marriage, their husband's.[32] The 1632 compendium, *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights*, explains that a married woman has no right to her inheritance, wages or rents, for "[e]very feme covert [married woman] is *quodammodo* [in a certain way] an infant."[33] The parallel drawn between women and children here is striking for the way it so clearly articulates the feminine position of dependency. Dependency was not, of course, a circumstance unique to women, and Shapin elucidates the ways in which literature on deceitful women, lying servants and the dishonest lower classes formulated the problems of trust and dependency in the same terms.[34] The assumption of dependent duplicity is based on the perception that individuals are always and inevitably motivated by self-interest. It assumes that a certain group of privileged (usually male) individuals are capable of honesty because their financial independence renders them *disinterested*. The logic of self-interest thus shores up lines of social

[30] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 86.
[31] La Chambre, *The Art How to Know Men*, 27.
[32] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 87. Amy Louise Erickson observes that wives could not enter into contracts or legal suits and their property became their husband's in *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 24-5.
[33] *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights: Or, The Lawes Provision for Woemen* (London: John More for John Grove, 1632), 141. The *Lawes Resolution* was intended to be a handbook both for lawyers and for women. See Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, 21.
[34] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 91-3. Many sources testify to the fear of lying servants. For instance, Montaigne cited the authority of Apollonius in observing, "It was for servants to lie, and for freemen to speake truth." See L.C. Harmer, ed. *Montaigne's Essays*, 3 vols., (London and New York: J.M.Dent & Sons, Everyman's Library, 1965), 2:373.

interdiction by insisting upon associations of masculinity, wealth and credibility as opposed to femininity, dependency and dishonesty.[35] The distinction between honest masculinity and dishonest femininity disbarred women from those public spaces in which credibility was paramount: the marketplace and the council chamber.

We can perceive the intersection of interest and dissimulation at play in Scudéry's *Artamène*. In a sub-plot in the first part, Prince Atsamones loses his crown to a usurper whose attractive children seem to present an ideal marriage prospect for Atsamones' own son and daughter. But Atsamones warns his children not to seek a return to power through marital alliance. Any such romance would be inauthentic and while "dissimulation is excuseable in weak oppressed people," Atsamones insists he and his children cannot dissemble further than to converse in "all appearing civility" with the usurping family. Anything further would be "unworthy" of their royal birth.[36] Dissimulation is the behaviour of the weak, and engaging in it is a marker of 'unworthiness.'

It is this broader logic of dependency which makes women such useful representatives to explore the question of transparency within dynamics of dominance and submission. As Toni Bowers observes, love stories are rarely stories about amorous interactions, but are concerned with various "relationships of dominance and submission" such as those "between God and humankind, king and parliament, father and child, husband and wife, landowner and tenant, master and servant, governor and governed, elder sibling and

[35] Shapin argues that categories of honesty and deceitfulness map onto "powerful institutions of exclusion", in which those who were excluded from "literate culture" – the 'ignoble', 'servile' and 'base' – were assumed to be deceptive by their nature, in *A Social History of Truth*, 88. See also Kerrigan, who states "tradesmen, servants, and the like were not members of the community of truth…because they had so little honour to lose but also because they were subject to pressure from their masters or economic need," in *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, 27.

[36] Madeleine de Scudéry, *Artamenes, or the Grand Cyrus, an Excellent New Romance*, trans. F.G. Gent (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1653), I:103.

younger, and so on."[37] And, as I argue, they are about the very specific problem of honest speech within relationships of power and dependency. When romance authors ask, *When can women lie?*, they are really asking, *When can those in positions of dependence lie?* The answer to this, for Sidney at least, is never.

II – The Wicked *Dissimulatrice*

Romances traditionally work on the pairing of good and wicked women: the good woman is virtuous, chaste and constant, the bad woman vicious, licentious and deceptive.[38] Such oppositional pairs of women prove a way of depicting threats to a social network dependent upon the word as bond, in which a man's word is "itself underwritten by the Word of God."[39] As Douglas Canfield argues, the "faithful lady is a sign of cultural integrity" and threats to her chastity represent an assault on the verbal economy of trust, an assault which can only be resolved through calamitous violence. The faithful lady's "dark double", the inconstant woman, represents another threat to word-as-bond: the risk that a man may put his faith where it is undeserved.[40] Female constancy (rather than rhetorical honesty) functions as a barometer of social trust. As far back as the *Odyssey*, romance has built on the contrast between pairs of oppositional women. The wicked enchantress Circe can employ magic to pursue her desires; the patient Penelope, by contrast, has only the traditional female virtues of patience, silence and obedience to win the day. But what these binary constructions of women reveal is a difference of *intention* rather than of *action*. Penelope, too, practises deception – weaving and then unpicking her work at night to delay her suitors – but her deceptions, unlike Circe's, are valid because they are directed towards preserving her constancy. This distinction is pinpointed by Robert Greene in his 1587

[37] Toni Bowers, *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2011), 32.
[38] Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 5.
[39] J. Douglas Canfield, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), xi.
[40] Ibid., 43.

romance *Penelope's Web*, which describes Penelope's "pollicie," a term of dubious praise. Her weaving is done "with pollicie to prevent that which the honest and honorable pretence of her chastitie was not able to defend"; Greene suggests dishonest "pollicie" can be virtuous when it is employed in defence of sexual honesty.[41] George MacKenzie offers a less favourable view of Penelope's stratagem in his attack on all dissemblers: "Men in Dissimulation do but (like *Penelope*) undo in the Night, what they were forc'd to do in the Day-time."[42] When romances pair a wicked and a virtuous *dissimulatrice,* then, they reveal an uncomfortable awareness that the virtuous schemes of one woman can look a lot like the vicious plotting of another.

In the *New Arcadia,* Sidney tries to allay this problem by insisting on the rhetorical as well as the sexual honesty of his heroines and by contrasting their honest constancy with the schemes of the "spitefully cunning" wicked *dissimulatrice* Cecropia.[43] As we saw in Chapter One, Sidney's *Old Arcadia* concludes with a troubling re-examination of the classic romance convention, the prince in disguise, and hints that the princes' supposedly harmless deception might be both dangerous and debasing. When Sidney revises his romance to create the *New Arcadia,* he introduces a new character to explore the danger deception poses to stability. "The mischievously subtle Cecropia," skilled in "wicked eloquence," is a new kind of romance *dissimulatrice*: one who does not rely on magic or enchantments, but on her own subtlety and her ability to read and manipulate others (436).

Cecropia desires political power above all else. Conveniently, her son Amphialus has fallen in love with one of the Arcadian princesses; Cecropia encourages Amphialus to

[41] Robert Greene, "Penelope's Web," in *Life and Works of Robert Greene*, ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart (London and Aylesbury: The Huth Library, 1881-86), 151. The *Odyssey* is perhaps a distinct example to have chosen here as it celebrates guile – Odysseus is known for his cunning more than his bravery or strength. For this reason, certain ethical writers have been uncomfortable with the lessons the *Odyssey* purports to teach. Cicero, for instance, observes that Odysseus's feigned madness "was not morally right" although it was expedient, *De Officiis*, III.xxvi.373.
[42] George MacKenzie, *Moral Gallantry* (London: 1711, first printed 1667), 233.
[43] Sidney, *Arcadia*, 335. Citations hereafter in text.

kidnap the princesses and stage a rebellion, advancing his right to the throne through both military and erotic conquest. While Amphialus is at war, Cecropia exerts increasing pressure on the princesses to marry her son and secure his claim to the throne. When debates and exhortations fail, she stages mock executions of both Pamela and Philoclea to attempt to move them to acquiescence. Sidney's *dissimulatrice* relies on these "sleights" (436) of hand rather than magic to manipulate others; in this sense, she is typical of new, 'serious' romance.

Cecropia's mock executions stand in sharp contrast to the real violent deaths taking place beyond the besieged castle walls. In the *Arcadia*, women coerce other women through fraud, while rivalry between men is resolved through force. But later romances rework Cecropia's trickery into a device which neutralises masculine violence and cements male friendships. In Orrery's *Parthenissa*, for instance, the eponymous heroine is abducted by her rejected suitor, Surena.[44] When her lover Artabanes besieges the town to rescue her and is taken captive, Surena stages his execution, fooling Parthenissa and the reader into believing Artabanes has been killed to coerce Parthenissa into accepting Surena's hand. Only later do we discover that Artabanes' death was staged as a way of smuggling him safely out of the city walls. Surena tells Parthenissa "to counterfeit was absolutely necessary, when I made your sufferings my disguise." Indeed, he insists he could not tell her the truth earlier because "your not being sad enough, might have given you cause to have been so." The heroine's very transparency is problematic and ironically renders her untrustworthy. Unlike romances such as *L'Astrée*, which celebrate sincere communication, in *Parthenissa* transparency is neither a particularly useful nor valuable skill, except in so far as it can be manipulated by others to create a misleading performance of sincerity.

[44] Amelia Zurcher notes that this incident mimics Sidney's in *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 133.

By freeing his rival, Surena's gesture of generous disinterest prompts Artabanes to acknowledge that the two are more similar than different: "that which causes my fault, does yours…we are both innocent, or both excusable."[45] The device of mock execution serves to neutralise violent rivalry between competing suitors and initiate a friendship based on the recognition of similarity.[46] Cecropia's cruel, manipulative trick is repurposed by Orrery into a performative demonstration of disinterest which secures masculine friendship. This rewriting of an Arcadian device is illustrative of the ways in which, over the course of the seventeenth-century, manipulations such as mock executions shift from dangerous destabilising threats to the tools of masculine civility which reaffirm homosocial networks endangered by rivalry. 'Vicious' plots are rewritten as the foundation of aristocratic alliance.

But in the *Arcadia*, tricks and sleights are seen to be particularly feminine forms of coercion practised by women against other women. As Richard McCoy has argued, Cecropia serves an important narrative function in the *New Arcadia* by deflecting the sin that might otherwise be attached to the rebel Amphialus. Although Amphialus and Cecropia appear to be working together to achieve a joint goal, Sidney insistently displaces the blame for civil unrest from Amphialus onto his mother and the romance emphasises that Cecropia alone is responsible for the torments inflicted on the princesses.[47] Amphialus, the narrator tells us, "was utterly ignorant of all his mother's wicked devices – to which he would never have consented, being, like a rose out of a briar, an excellent son of an evil mother" (317). McCoy emphasises the role of intention in diminishing Amphialus's culpability, emphasising that Cecropia, motivated by ambition, is far more

[45] Orrery, *Parthenissa*, 563-66.
[46] Here I build on Zurcher's argument that the male rivalry plot in *Parthenissa* is premised upon identification rather than difference, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 132-3.
[47] Richard C. McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia* (Sussex and New Brunswick: The Harvester Press and Rutgers University Press, 1979), 173.

culpable than Amphialus, who is motivated by love.[48] Cecropia's true depravity is revealed when she encourages her son to rape Philoclea, urging him to exert that "imperious masterfulness which nature gives to men above women. For indeed, son, I confess unto you, in our very creation we are servants" (403). As Julie Crawford has argued, the *Arcadia* invites us to read attitudes towards women politically, as indicative of attitudes towards the people.[49] Cecropia's invitation to violence and her assertion of her own gender's weakness is deeply disturbing not merely personally but politically. The narrative use of women as political subjects is also a feature of tyrant tales, as Rebecca Bushnell has demonstrated. Bushnell argues that the rapacious pursuit of uncontrolled desires coupled with a failure to acknowledge the choices of others is a hallmark of the Renaissance tyrant.[50] Recognising 'otherness' is part of acknowledging that there are limitations on sovereign power. In early modern fiction, misogyny is evidence of tyranny.

We can perceive a similar logic in Barclay's *Argenis* when the nurse Selenissa invites the rejected suitor Radirobanes to take by force what will not be given to him willingly:

> Such seasons require not a slow Lover…by rape the gods also have taken to themselves Wives: love excuseth rash enterprizes, and the sacred name of Husband blotteth out injuries: neyther am I cruell against my Nurse child, Argenis desires to be forced; and for this reason, that she may keepe her word with Poliarchus, to whom shee promised never willingly to be married to another.[51]

In Selenissa's echo of Cecropia, the problem of women's credibility (or lack thereof) is turned to a disturbing end: because women's words can't be believed, their stated desires

[48] Ibid.
[49] Crawford, *Mediatrix*, 30-72.
[50] Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
[51] Barclay, *Argenis*, 216. Unlike Cecropia, it seems likely that Selenissa means 'rape' in the sense of 'ravishment', or kidnapping, rather than sexual assault. Their effects on Argenis's honour, however, are synonymous. The threat of rape in *Argenis* – as, indeed, in most seventeenth-century romances – has its origins in the Greek novel. Catherine Connors suggests that in Barclay's revision of Heliodoran tropes, the preservation of chastity is a metaphor for political stability and the threat of rape stands for the threat of rebellion. See Catherine M. Connors, "Metaphor and Politics in John Barclay's *Argenis*," in *Metaphor and the Ancient Novel*, ed. Stephen Harrison, Michael Paschalis, and Stavros Frangoulidis, *Ancient Narrative Supplementum IV* (Groningen: Barkhius Publishing, 2005).

have no meaning. In the logic of a world in which women's speech is not credible, Argenis's oath to Poliarchus can be reinterpreted as pure performance, and her stated aversion to Radirobanes as hidden desire. Indeed, in the *Arcadia* Cecropia assures Amphialus that "'No' is no negative in a woman's mouth" (402). A woman's words have no status as truth, and therefore do not need to be heeded.

It is against this kind of logic that Sidney positions his heroines, Philoclea and Pamela, who conjoin rhetorical and bodily honesty. We can read Sidney's insistence on the 'honesty' of his heroines in their physical appearances. Philoclea, for instance, dresses with "neither a careful art nor an art of carelessness" (329). Debates about female dress and cosmetics frequently participated in this construction of gender; as far back as Tertullian forms of bodily adornment have been harnessed as evidence of female duplicity.[52] Philoclea's lack of art in dress implies her lack of rhetorical art as well. Strikingly, Sidney also emphasises that there is no art to her "carelessness." This seems a strange insistence, unless read as a reference to *sprezzatura*, often translated as nonchalance, and meaning the art of seeming to have no artifice. Sidney is keen to emphasise that Philoclea's artlessness is not the performative artlessness of Castiglione's courtier but is genuine.

When Amphialus tries to force Philoclea into marriage, Pyrocles/Zelmane encourages her to "pretend some affection" to her suitor, Amphialus. This pretence will protect them until Pyrocles can "work something" to save them both. But Philoclea protests:

> Shall my tongue be so false a traitor to my heart as to say I love any other but Pyrocles?...For dissimulation – my Pyrocles, my simplicity is such that I have hardly been able to keep a straight way; what shall I do in a crooked? But in this case there is no mean of dissimulation, not for the cunningest.

[52] Denery, *The Devil Wins*, 209, 227; see also Price, "'Offending without Witnes,'" 67-9. Price notes that the image of face painting was often deployed to describe Catholics and implied religious dissimulation.

> Present answer is required, and present performance upon the answer. (429-30)

Philoclea insists she is too "simple", or too innocent, to practise this kind of deception, but then conveniently sidesteps the issue by insisting that dissimulation can hardly help them. Amphialus seeks a "present performance"; if she pretends to accept his suit, she may well find herself married to him straight away. Even in cases of extreme exigency Philoclea does not resort to deception.[53] Sidney raises the idea that dissimulation may be a legitimate form of female resistance to rapacious masculine desire, but then steps back from presenting us with a dissimulating heroine by insisting both on her inability and on its lack of utility.

This moment hints at the logic behind feminine deceit as a natural function of dependency. For Pyrocles, it would be no violation of morality for Philoclea to dissimulate with her captors because she is under duress. But, solid as this ethical position may be, the *New Arcadia* does not sustain it. Rather, Pamela and Philoclea stand for honesty regardless of circumstance; indeed, Pamela insists "those who do falsehood to their superiors, teach falsehood to their inferiors" (389). For Pamela, the class imperative towards truthfulness overrides the gendered permission to dishonesty: unlike the princes, neither Pamela nor Philoclea will risk debasing themselves by practising dissimulation.

Pyrocles' argument that it might be permissible for Philoclea to dissimulate is more radical than it sounds to modern ears. Cicero suggested that one's word was bound only if it was given freely and without compulsion.[54] But later authorities, including Aquinas, Grotius,

[53] Although later in the romance she and Pamela submit to Pyrocles' persuasions and try to buy time by pretending to request permission from their parents – a trick later imitated by Herbert's heroine, Cloria. Once again Sidney tries to displace blame by showing that the impulse to deceive comes from Pyrocles, not from his virtuous heroines. Herbert also imitates this strategy, and his Cloria rarely chooses to deceive without being talked into it first by someone else.

[54] Cicero, *De Officiis*, III.xxiv, xxviii.

Hobbes and Pufendorf, insist that promises made under duress are binding.[55] Hobbes, for instance, argues "covenants entered into by fear…are obligatory."[56] Grotius reserves deceit and the breaking of promises for those in positions of power. In his view, lying is vicious because it infringes on the right of others to have free access to information; it is only permissible in those whose authority enfolds the rights of others – ie governors or sovereigns – and therefore where no true infringement of others' rights can take place.[57] Subjects cannot lie to their sovereigns, although their sovereigns can lie to them. The origins of the notion that subjects and sovereigns might be held to different standards of honesty are, of course, Platonic. Plato's concept of the 'noble lie' held:

> The rulers…of the city may, if anybody, fitly lie on account of enemies or citizens for the benefit of the state; no others may have anything to do with it, but for a layman to lie to rulers of that kind we shall affirm to be as great a sin, nay a greater, than it is for a patient not to tell his physician or an athlete his trainer the truth…"[58]

The idea that sovereign deception was acceptable for the common good underpins reason of state theory. But when Pyrocles suggests that Philoclea can and should lie to her captor, he is suggesting the far more radical position that a subject might lie to their sovereign.

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[55] For Grotius and Hobbes, as for Aristotle, covenants extracted under duress are still binding; thus, a conquered nation is bound to the conditions imposed by the victor. However, Aquinas distinguishes between ordinary and/or political promises and marital or religious vows made under duress; the latter he does not consider binding. See James Gordley, *The Philosophical Origins of Modern Contract Doctrine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 82-85; D.D. Raphael, *Hobbes, Morals and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2003), 55. The debate surrounding obligations incurred under duress continues today. For the argument that promises exacted through force or fear might still have "moral force", see Seana Valentine Shiffrin, *Speech Matters: On Lying, Morality and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 47-78, and Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 325-6.

[56] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 105, see also 158. Hobbes draws a distinction, however, between covenants of protection – that is, oaths willingly undertaken to avoid a real risk of death, which *are* binding – from covenants of non-resistance – that is, oaths that one will not resist threats to one's life, which can *never* be binding (100, 106). What Hobbes articulates, in other words, is that one has the right to resist coercion through force or fraud, but that any covenants made in the act of resistance remain binding. We might understand the implications of this in romances thus: i) threats to life or property are represented as threats to a heroine's chastity, ii) the heroine has the right to resist such a threat by lying, but iii) any covenants made as resistance – such as the promise to marry a ravisher – remain binding because, iv) the threat of force does not constitute a constraint on one's action or judgement.

[57] "It is not a criminal Lye, when he who has an absolute right over all the rights of another, makes use of that right, in telling something false, either for his particular advantage, or for the publick good." Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1218.

[58] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, Loeb Classical Library (1930; repr. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), III.iii.213.

Such an argument comes perilously close to resistance theory, the strand of political thought which argued that there might be limitations on sovereign power and civil obedience.[59]

But Pamela and Philoclea resist the idea that deception might be an appropriate form of opposition, offering in place of strategic dissimulation the performance of neostoic constancy as an alternate mode of resistance to tyranny. Instead of lying to or negotiating with their captors, Pamela and Philoclea choose to endure Cecropia's torments with "silence and patience" (421). Indeed, the power of their silent fortitude is such that Pamela is described as "conquering…with her suffering" (422). Such passivity is a feature of Neostoicism, which celebrated "endurance over heroic action" and thus, as Mary Ellen Lamb argues, spoke particularly to women as it was "consonant with the sexual ideology of the time" and "heroized the enforced nonparticipation of ordinary women in the public arena."[60] The early modern handbook of Neostoicism, Lipsius's *De Constantia* (1584, first translated into English in 1591), presented Neostoic constancy as a philosophy of self-control and self-containment in uncertain times. For Lipsius, constancy is "a right and immoveable strength of the minde, neither lifted up, nor pressed down with externall or casuall accidentes."[61] He held it to be an essential virtue in periods of social and political turmoil.

Constancy is traditionally a feminine virtue which locates fidelity in bodily honesty. Just as financial credit underpinned masculine speech, so constancy in the sense of sexual continence was the guarantor of truthful speech for women: a chaste woman was also a

[59] *Arcadia*'s critique of unconstrained monarchy has been much studied. See, for instance, Crawford, *Mediatrix*, 30-72; Skretkowicz, *European Erotic Romance*; Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics*; Annabel Patterson, "'Under...Pretty Tales': Intention in Sidney's *Arcadia*," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 15, no. 1 (1982): 5-22.
[60] Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 126-7.
[61] Justus Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, trans. John Stradling (London: Richard Johnes, 1595), 9.

believable one. The association between fidelity as a sexual, a political and a verbal virtue invites us to read narratives of erotic constancy and rhetorical truthfulness as parables of political loyalty. But although sixteenth-century French thinkers presented Neostoic constancy as advocating submission to authority, in seventeenth-century England neostoicism was often seen as a path of passive resistance and could be what Andrew Schifflett calls a "subtle casuistry of political activism."[62] For English neostoics, constancy was allied to Tacitean politic philosophy and carried the whiff of political opposition. Julie Crawford argues that neostoic constancy was a "statement of power" in so far as its practice constituted an "active achievement of the will", while Schifflett describes it as "a rhetorical means for noble English malcontents."[63]

It is the individualism of Neostoicism which opposes it to established government. The self-sufficiency of the stoics offered a philosophy of resistance not through action but through disengagement.[64] Where sixteenth-century thinkers had relied on the Ciceronian premise that "it was possible to be both moral and successful in public life," seventeenth-century philosophers were drawn to Seneca, for whom virtue could only be located in retirement.[65] But withdrawal could itself be a public statement: as Crawford notes, it could be read as a "symbolic form of resistance to the consolidation of monarchic power."[66] Refusing either to collude with or to resist sovereign power was a badge of aristocratic integrity.[67] In rejecting deception and choosing instead rhetorically honest constancy as a form of passive non-compliance, Pamela and Philoclea are choosing the 'gentle' or

[62] Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2:279, 282; Andrew Schifflett, *Stoicism, Politics and Literature in the Age of Milton* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 1. See also Crawford, *Mediatrix*, 45-6 and Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 48-50.
[63] Crawford, *Mediatrix*, 45; Schifflett, *Stoicism, Politics and Literature*, 15. Christian neostoicism as a mode of aristocratic critique of monarchic power was particularly associated with the Sidney-Herbert circle; see Schifflett, 340 and Crawford, 37.
[64] Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 48-50.
[65] Geoffrey Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 66, 68.
[66] Crawford, *Mediatrix*, 46.
[67] Ibid., 49.

'aristocratic' mode of resistance. Such a model denies female/lower-class duplicitous dependency and instead deploys endurance as proof of aristocratic independence. Sidney presents these heroics of endurance as ultimately of greater utility than deception. While Philoclea insists dissimulation will be of little use, the strength of her and Pamela's endurance is such that "captivity might seem to have authority over tyranny" (363). Sidney emphasizes the agency of class (aristocratic constancy) over that of gender (feminine duplicity).

Sidney resists delving into the possibility that the performance of constancy might have recourse to the techniques of dissimulation. In contrasting the "dissembled thoughts" (363) and schemes of his wicked *dissimulatrice* with the honesty and endurance of his heroines, the *Arcadia* presents constancy as a form of non-strategic resistance. But as an individualistic philosophy which deployed retreat as resistance, stoicism was often perceived to be tactical.[68] When later Jacobean authors Wroth and Barclay explore the virtue of female constancy as a mode of resistance, their romances demonstrate the ways in which the performance of constancy depends on the mastery of dissimulating techniques.

III – Politic Silence

At first glance, Wroth's *Urania* appears to restate the Arcadian dichotomy of a wicked *dissimulatrice* implicated in political deceptions and a virtuous heroine who is celebrated for her heroics of constancy. The central narrative of the *Urania* is that of Pamphilia, Empress of the East, whose unfaltering love for the vacillating Amphilanthus is one of the only continuous threads in a romance which bridges empires and generations. Wicked *dissimulatrices* such as the Queen of Candy, a woman "practised…in the muddy ground of wickedest inventions and treacherous attempts", plot to alienate Amphilanthus from

[68] Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 48-50.

Pamphilia, whose virtuous constancy is proved by continuing to love in spite of these schemes and often without apparent requital.[69] *Dissimulatrices* proliferate in the sub-plots as well. In the story of the Romanian succession, the queen manipulates her husband into banishing his rightful heir by means of "dissimulation, and protestation of her affections" (1:71). Her political manoeuvres are complemented by her sexual license: "her passions then growne immoderate and ungovernable" and her "strength of judgement failing her" gives "libertie and assurance" to "her ends, which never were but either politike, or lascivious" (1:73). The wicked *dissimulatrice* conjoins sexual and rhetorical dishonesty, both of which are seen to result from the same cause: a lack of Stoic self-control.

But dissimulation in the *Urania* is associated with constancy as well as with promiscuity. Wroth's heroine, "the eastern star, the never-enough-admired Pamphilia" (1:417) is a determined secret keeper whose ability to control her passions is aligned with her ability to control her tongue. Her mastery of neostoic constancy manifests itself as unnecessary and excessive secrecy.[70] Wroth's romance thus illustrates the ways in which traditional feminine virtues – modesty, discretion, silence and constancy – are really the strategic performance of concealment. Virtuous heroines in the *Urania* turn out to be as silent and as unreadable as their dissimulating opposites.

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[69] Josephine A. Roberts, Suzanne Gossett and Janel Mueller, ed. *The Second Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania by Lady Mary Wroth* (Tempe, Arizona: Renaissance English Text Society, 1999), 132. Citations hereafter in text.

[70] Many critics have identified constancy as the principal virtue in Wroth's romance, far more than could be meaningfully summarised here, beyond observing that critical opinion tends to fall broadly into two camps: those who view Pamphilia's constancy as excessive or perverse, and those who view it as a statement of independence. Josephine Roberts argues that Pamphilia redefines constancy as fidelity to one's lover rather than fidelity to one's spouse in the Introduction to *Urania* (I:lxi); Maureen Quilligan argues that Pamphilia's constancy "constitutes her claim to a stable self" in "The Constant Subject: Instability and Female Authority in Wroth's *Urania* Poems," in *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 307-35, 322; for Amelia Zurcher, Pamphilia's traditionally conceived feminine virtue risks "loss of self" but also her "absolute devotion to her own passion makes her oddly self-sufficient" in *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 31, 69; Jocelyn Catty considers constancy to be subjection in *Writing Rape, Writing Women in Early Modern England: Unbridled Speech* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 183; Gary Waller, Melissa Sanchez and Sue P. Starke read Pamphilia's enduring constancy as masochistic in Gary F. Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert, and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Wayne State University Press, 1993), 277; Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 117-144; Sue P. Starke, *The Heroines of English Pastoral Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 112.

The opacity of others is exemplified in the tale of Limena. Loved by Perissus, but married to the jealous and violent Philargus, "a wild man" of "great unworthiness" (I:8), Limena is persecuted by her husband for her emotional commitment to another man. In the company of her father, her husband and her lover, Limena's voice is stifled, and her lover, Perissus, is curious about the cause of her silence:

> Neither of these brought my Mistris from a grave, and almost sad countenance, which made me somewhat feare, knowing her understanding, and experience, able and sufficient to judge, or advise in any matter we could discourse of: but modestie in her caus'd it, onely loving knowledge, to be able to discerne mens understanding by their arguments, but no way to shew it by her owne speech. This (and withall feare of discovering some passions, which she, though excelling in wit and judgement; yet could not governe, at least, guiltines forc'd her to thinke so) was the reason she held her gravitie. (I:7)[71]

For Helen Hackett, this incident illustrates the way "Wroth conforms with seventeenth-century prescriptions of silence as a feminine virtue."[72] Ideal feminine behaviour was highly controlled and early modern conduct books preached chastity and silence. Richard Allestree devotes single chapters of *The Ladies Calling* to the virtues of modesty and meekness (1673), while Braithwaite argues women should "be as silent as the night" because "modesty affecteth silence and secrecy; a chaste woman solitarinesse and privacy."[73] Female virtue is not merely sexual honesty, but rhetorical absence: a trustworthy woman for Braithwaite is one who doesn't speak at all. Unsurprisingly, emblematic depictions of femininity are often silent. In Guillaume de la Perriere's emblem

[71] For a close reading of this passage, see Christina Luckyj, *'A Moving Rhetoricke': Gender and Silence in Early Modern England* (Manchester and NY: Manchester University Press, 2002), 134.
[72] Helen Hackett, "'Yet Tell Me Some Such Fiction': Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania* and the 'Femininity' of Romance," in *Women, Texts and Histories, 1575-1760*, ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 39-68, 52.
[73] Richard Allestree, *The Ladies' Calling* (Oxford, 1673); Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman*, 170, 111.

book of 1614, for instance, the embodiment of female virtue holds a finger across her lips.[74]

But as Christina Luckyj argues, Limena's mute modesty is also suggestive of the ways in which silence in the *Urania* can be "subversive".[75] Philargus is perturbed by Limena's silence because he doesn't know how to interpret it. Ascribing it to her "modestie", he fears that silence enables Limena to "discerne mens understanding" while concealing her own thoughts. In allowing Limena to understand others while retaining her own interiority, Limena's silence is a piece of perfect dissimulation. Silence also permits her to dissemble her passions, giving the appearance of "modestie" where there is "guiltines." It functions, then, as a form of misdirecting self-control. Many early modern authorities recommended dissimulation as a technique for controlling and concealing the passions. Lipsius, for instance, commands "let an able man then take good heed to suppress his Passions, or at least to dissemble them, with so much dexterity, that no countermine find a way to uncipher his will."[76] Similarly Gracián in his aphorism 'To Dissemble' advises:

> Cover thine heart with a hedge of diffidence and reserve… He who yields to his passions…stoops from the state of a Man, to the condition of a Beast; whereas he that disguises them, preserves his Credit, at least in appearance…. A complete man must then in the first place apply himself to the subduing of his passions, and then to the dissembling of them so artfully, that no spie can ever be able to unmask his thought.[77]

The passions should be controlled and concealed; where control is impossible, they should at least be dissembled.

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[74] Guillaume de la Perriere, *The Theater of Fine Devices, Containing an Hundred Morall Emblemes*, trans. Thomas Combe (London: Richard Field, 1614). Sissela Bok discusses emblems for silence in *Secrets*, 291, n.24. See also Luckyj, *'A Moving Rhetoricke'*, 48.
[75] Luckyj, *'A Moving Rhetoricke',* 133-4.
[76] Justus Lipsius, *Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine*, trans. William Jones (London, 1594), 12.
[77] Gracián y Morales, *The Courtier's Oracle*, 92 (Aphorism 98). The 1685 English translation is a rather free and poor rendering of Gracián's more elegant turns of phrase, such as "a linces del discurso, jibias de interioridad" or "oppose lynxes of discourse with cuttlefish of interiority," trans. Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 46.

Limena's strategic silence presages Pamphilia's constant concealment.[78] Pamphilia is singled out by her virtue of discretion: she is "the most silent and discreetly retir'd of any Princesse" (1:61). Her discretion is demonstrated by her ability to "wisely govern" her passions so "she was not mistrusted to love so violently" (1:214). Controlled speech is highly prized by Pamphilia, who for much of the first part of the romance will only express herself freely when she is alone. She retires to the woods where she "breathes out her passions, which to none shee would discover, resolving rather so to perish, then that any third should know shee could be subject to affection" (I:61). Found alone in the forest by Amphilanthus who discerns "her eyes some-what sweld" and enquires the cause, "modesty and greatnesse of spirit over-ruling her," she does not confess her love for him but lets him know "she desired not to reveale her secret thoughts" (I:245). As the master of civil conversation, Amphilanthus' "civilitie" teaches him "not to urge" but yet she fears "she did amisse in being so secret" (I:245). Pamphilia is a highly skilled secret-keeper, but even as the romance valorises silent concealment it suggests there might be something questionable about excessive secrecy.

The association Wroth draws between silence, self-control and discretion is worth disentangling. Sissela Bok defines discretion as "the intuitive ability to discern what is and is not intrusive and injurious" in our communications with others. It describes the facility to navigate complex moral questions relating to what is "truthful or deceptive, helpful or harmful," and to discriminate between those with whom revelations might be appropriate and those with whom they are not.[79] As Hobbes says, it is "good judgement."[80] In so far as discretion concerns the communication or concealment of information, it bears a strong resemblance to the virtue of 'reservancie' advocated by mid-century conduct book writers

[78] Luckyj, *'A Moving Rhetoricke'*, 135.
[79] Bok, *Secrets*, 41.
[80] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 54.

such as Richard Braithwaite. In *The English Gentleman*, Richard Braithwaite warns "how dangerous it is to discover the secrets of our heart, even to those to whome we have engaged our heart: for wee ought not to give our friend power over us."[81] As a form of judgement which allowed women both to discriminate between what was being said to them and to control their own speech, discretion was an intrinsic part of female honour/honesty. As the prominent court Catholic Walter Montagu put it in his free translation of Du Bosc's *L'Honneste Femme*, "with discretion the vicious preserve their honour, and without it the virtuous lose it."[82] For Montagu, discretion is a mode of self-presentation that offers the appearance of honesty; in a world of appearances, it is needed by the virtuous and the vicious alike.

Romances reveal a troubled awareness of the fluidity between dangerous dissimulation and admirable discretion. In Robert Greene's *Euphues His Censure*, for instance, the adulteress princess Maedina is introduced as having "an exteriour kinde of discretion" but "inwardly had she such a subtil dissimulation to cloak the foulest spot of vice with the maske of virtue." Her husband Polumestor dismisses his suspicions, telling himself not "to reward vertue with distrust, or to be suspicious where no occasion of doubt is offered."[83] In Greene's romance, female discretion is mere performance designed to lull the trusting husband into a false sense of complacency. But in Wroth's *Urania*, discretion is presented as correct dissimulation which does not conceal vice, but rightly demonstrates virtue.

Wroth's heroine is defined by her silent discretion. The association between judgement and silence assumes that discretion is a function of self-control: only the discreet speaker can be trusted to control the urge to spill secrets. Pamphilia's discretion brings her praise

[81] Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman*, 280. Braithwaite is here recycling Castiglione, who stresses that even a dear friend should not be trusted with all one's thoughts.
[82] Jacques Du Bosc, *The Accomplish'd Women*, trans. Walter Montague (London: Tho[mas] Collins and John Ford, 1671), 60.
[83] Robert Greene, *Euphues His Censure to Philautus* (London: John Wolfe, 1587), C3v, D1v.

for being "soveraigne of your selfe by Judgement" (1:214). In the second book, the heroine Pamphilia and her suitor Leandrus debate the relationship between love and discretion. Unaware of Pamphilia's prior attachment, Leandrus seeks to woo Pamphilia by presenting himself as the most 'discreet' choice and arguing that as her judgement must lead her into matrimony, so too it will lead her into love:

> Love with discretion is the truest love…discretion should adventure to perswade you to make choyce of some one you might affect for a husband…and so judgement will continue affection betweene you. (1:213)

But Pamphilia is quick to provide a counter-argument. While "discretion it selfe is best" in most things, she argues that when love is governed by discretion, it seeks after "riches, or other baser things" rather than "enjoying." Pamphilia rejects Leandrus's strategic discretion, fearing that such discreet love is really nothing more than material ambition. For Pamphilia, love should not co-rule with the "cold part of wisdome":

> His power must not be limited, nor his government mixed, as if he had a counsell set about him, or a protector over him, his knowledge wanting no advice, his knowledge never knowing partner, who is in truth all wisdome, all knowledge, all goodnesse, all truth; he must not have it said, that love with discretion is the truest love, since in truth of love, that is but a bastard, brought up at home like a right borne child: and yet is his judgement such, as hee makes discretion shine through all his acts; but how? as a servant to his greater powers; as if your heart should command your tongue, to deliver what it thinkes, but discreetly to doe it so, as offence may not proceede from it: here is discretion, and yet the tongue is the hearts messenger. (I:213-14)

Through Pamphilia's decoupling of love and discretion, Wroth articulates resistance to the common literary analogy between love and politics. Love, Pamphilia suggests, bears little similarity to the operation of sovereign power, because love is a "supreme power" whose "knowing wanting no advice" operates more like a tyrant than a good monarch. Instead, Pamphilia suggests that the relationship between love and discretion is one of master and servant: discretion serves love by expressing it appropriately. Lies are often described as a divorce between heart and tongue, but Pamphilia insists on the connection between the two

organs. The tongue exerts a controlling or limiting influence over the heart, conveying what it feels but doing so 'discreetly' to avoid 'offence'. Pamphilia's speech seems to reflect contemporary anxieties about the agency of the tongue. As Carla Mazzio argues, early modern pamphlets recommending ways to control speech, particularly for women, perceived an association between unrestrained speech and excessive desire.[84] But Pamphilia imagines the tongue not as the vehicle through which uncontrolled desires might be expressed, but through which passions might be concealed if they cannot be subdued. Rather than self-interested judgement of potential advantage, discretion is controlled speech which neither conveys an untruth nor offers complete revelation. In the stress Pamphilia places on avoiding giving "offence", we can hear a nascent theory of civility in which opaque conversation begins to gain its own moral force. Theories of civility prize inoffensive speech even when it is to the detriment of the honesty principle. The paradox of the pinnacle of French seventeenth-century civility, the *honnête homme*, is of course that in privileging the needs and desires of others over self-interest (and so, supposedly, being honest), the *honnête* conversationalist finds himself being anything *but* honest in order to prevent giving offence or being indiscreet. But of course the *honnête* speaker is not expected to be rhetorically honest, but to be inoffensive: that is, to practise prudence and discretion in their speech. In suggesting that discretion might be the servant of love, Pamphilia is justifying her constantly concealed emotions on the grounds of civility. As expectations of truthfulness decline and are replaced by the expectation of controlled speech, our duty towards revelation is also diminished and concealment becomes its own moral good.

The implication of dissimulation in traditional feminine virtues, such as modesty and discretion, is nowhere more obvious than in the way Wroth contrasts her "discreet"

[84] Carla Mazzio, "Sins of the Tongue" in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 52-79.

heroine Pamphilia with her indiscreet rival, Antissia.[85] Both women love Amphilanthus, and both women write poetry, but where Pamphilia's love and writing are characterised by modesty and retirement, Antissia advertises her passions and her work in a way that draws only scorn from her community. Pamphilia is so private with her feelings and with her poetry that she will only write when alone in a forest; indeed, she carves her poems on tree trunks (1:90-92). By contrast, Antissia recites her poetry to anyone who will listen, and as a result her friends believe she has gone mad and decide it is "a dangerous thing att any time for a weake woeman to studdy higher matters then their capasitie can reach to" (2:41). Although poetry is "commendable" in lovers "beeing a way most excellent to express their pretious thoughts in a rare and covert way" it is not accceptable when it is "raging, raving, extravagant discoursive language" which renders her "fittinger for a man in woemans clothes acting a sibilla then a woemen" (2:41). Discretion and the concomitant virtue of self-control, Wroth suggests, are not merely necessary in love, but in writing.

We see a similar formulation of the discreet and indiscreet learned woman in Book Ten of Scudéry's *Artamène* in the inset tale, The History of Sapho. Much like Wroth's *Urania*, the story of Sapho seems designed to provoke the reader into wondering how much might be coded authorial autobiography. It tells of the literary and romantic aspirations of the learned poet, Sapho, who searches for constant love without the restrictions of marriage. Sapho writes in absolute secrecy and takes great "care to conceale her knowledge." She guards her poems closely and "did impart them with so much difficulty, and seemed to value them so little, that it augmented her glory." Sapho's display of nonchalance and modesty ensures "never any of her sex had so great a reputation."[86] By resisting sharing her work, Sapho secures demand. As Scudéry's modern editor, Karen Newman, observes, Sapho is "like the courtier who must seem always to perform and succeed with no apparent

[85] Melissa Sanchez complicates the picture of Antissia as merely Pamphilia's foil in *Erotic Subjects*, 139.
[86] Scudéry, *Artamène*, X:87.

effort."[87] Newman argues that Sapho's dissimulating nonchalance is favourably compared with the ostentatious pedantry of Damophile who forcefully advertises her own erudition.[88] Damophile seeks "all manner of opportunities of publishing what she knew, and even tyred people with a relation of her learning", prompting the narrator to inform the reader that while "there is nothing more taking and charming than a woman whose mind is furnished with excellent knowledge when she knows how to use it; so there is nothing so ridiculous nor troublesome, than a woman that is foolishly learned."[89] Sapho's story stages the problem of knowing when and how to use learning: Scudéry, like Wroth, insists that education and poetic skill should be practised with artful concealment. It is quite acceptable for women to lie as long as their lies downplay their abilities.

Discreet concealment is the model for artistic endeavour within both *Artamène* and *Urania*. Towards the end of the first part, Pamphilia recounts the life of Lindamira, a story of cousins in love who, through various misunderstandings, marry others. The parallels between Lindamira's tale and Pamphilia's life are obvious, but Pamphilia insists on disguising it as a "French story" (I:499) – perhaps a reference to the genre of *roman à clef* – and her audience, the maid Dorolina, plays along. Dorolina suspects the story is "something more…then a fixion, yet her discretion taught her to be no Inquisitor" (I:505). *Urania* introduces discretion not merely as a mode of social conduct, but of both writing and reading. Just as Pamphilia practises both personal and artistic dissimulation, so Dorolina proves a dissimulating reader, concealing what she knows or suspects she knows. Here female lying proves a way of sharing truths and building emotional intimacy.

[87] See Madeleine de Scudéry, *The Story of Sapho*, trans. Karen Newman (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 7. *The Story of Sapho* is the only section of *Artamène* to receive a modern English translation.
[88] Newman notes that Scudéry offers a critique of the excesses of *préciosité* long before Molière, *The Story of Sapho*, 7.
[89] Scudéry, *Artamène*, X:91.

If Wroth's romance suggests ways in which the correct performance of constancy (and other female virtues) might rely on the tactics of the *dissimulatrice*, it also stages the consequences of a social order which demands deceptiveness from women. Feminine opacity is seen to engender masculine suspicion, and male jealousy has terrible consequences for the female characters. The tale of Limena, in which her jealous husband Philargus isolates her from her friends, imprisons her, ties her to a stake and whips her, and ultimately plans to murder her, is a disturbing take on the genre of calumny romance.[90] Philargus cannot understand Limena's continence, assuming that her love for Perissus must be sexual, and although she honestly admits her love for Perissus and her bodily fidelity to Philargus, he refuses to credit her "bewitching tongue" but continues demanding the truth "without dissembling speeches or flattring finenes" (I:12). Limena's open admission of her romantic infidelity leaves her open to accusations of sexual dishonesty. In a world in which women were presumed to be mendacious and in which their honesty resided not in their speech but in their bodies, it is small wonder that narratives of excessive jealousy or suspicion should prove so popular and enduring. Jealousy narratives are not so much interested in whether or not women lie as in how men can trust the word of their dependents. If amorous romances ending in marriage ask, *When can women lie?*, the jealousy and calumny romances beginning after marriage ask, *How can men know women are telling the truth?* Lorna Hutson suggests that narratives of erotic jealousy are really about the philosophical problem of how we conceptualize the existence of others. They investigate the "ethics and practicalities of acting on uncertain, merely probable and conjectural knowledge."[91] Certainly in the *Urania*, we find that jealousy narratives are

[90] For a close reading of Limena's story, see Helen Hackett, "The Torture of Limena: Sex and Violence in Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*," in *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing*, ed. Kate Chedgzoy, Melanie Hanson, and Suzanne Trill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 93-110.
[91] Hutson, "Probable Infidelities," 221.

commonly tales of monstrous over-reactions to suspicion. The consequences of doubt are rarely positive.

Throughout the *Urania,* Wroth returns again and again to the problem of how we can know what others are thinking and feeling. The Duke of Saxon's story in Part II aptly illustrates Wroth's condemnation of jealousy and suspicion. The Duke describes his visit to the far-off kingdom of Dacia, "a strict place" where "a hard hand is held over the woemen" because the men have "an naturall knowing unworthines about them, which procures too much hatefull Jealousy" (II:14). A visiting knight, Salamino, "nott knowing the maner of that country" and "immaginning ther inward harts had binn as true as their outward showes did testify" begins a flirtation with the recently married Celia whose husband, "an unworthy conditioned fellowe" and "of the most malitious, wicked humour…who ever made his bace suspitions, certainties," responds by banishing his wife from court (II:14-15). He asks his wife to "counterfait her self not well" but her distress makes her fall "wounderful sick, without any dissimulation" (II:15). The near-discovery of Celia and Salamino's affair leads to violent conflict, with Salamino wounded and Dacia absorbed into the Holy Roman Empire. The tale seems to illustrate Du Bosc/Montagu's fear that we can "grieve many to death by our suspition".[92] Certainly the moral Wroth proposes is:

> Jealousie in the highest ranke, suspition of every looke, doubt of reason when that poysoned hart is the greatest traiter, and thes shut up in the close cabinett of beeleefe, and confidence of all ills; vertue, Noblenes, freedom, hospitality, freindship, blood, duty, faith, and all buried in the consuming grave of dogged suspition. (II:16)

Jealousy and suspicion are the enemies of virtue, and Wroth repeatedly characterises masculine jealousy as 'unworthy,' a damning word indeed in a romance in which the highest commendation is that of 'worth.' To give but a few examples, Philistella is praised

[92] Bosc, *The Accomplish'd Woman*, 133.

as one in whom "were all truths of worthines placed" and her death leaves "all worthe in woeman dead" (II:8) and Rosindy is "the mirrour of true worthe" (II:167). Pamphilia is "the honor earthe had for worthe and Constancie, the magasine of spottles love…as far as her worthines, which excelled worthe itt self could warrant" (II:140) and Amphilanthus is "the most worthy of all the worthiest in the world" (II:174), "the worthiest of mankinde" (II:173) and "the all-afflicted, yet still most worthy Amphilanthus" (II:141). The play on Wroth's surname may perhaps explain her preference for the adjective and particularly for its use as a descriptor of Pamphilia, Wroth's fictive persona within the romance.

To be 'worthy' in the *Urania* is to demonstrate rationality and self-control – "reason and worth being companions" (I:11) – and to perform any act worthily is to do so "in a manner befitting one of high standing or character; in accordance with one's own dignity or personal worth; honourably, nobly."[93] It is a term which incorporates both judgement and status. 'Worth' also carries implications of a certain level of financial credit: in *The Tempest,* Prospero gives away Miranda to Ferdinand by saying "Then, as my gift and thine own acquisition / Worthily purchased take my daughter."[94] The conjunction between honour and financial credit in the term 'worthy' is made explicit in *Pericles,* when the bawd tells Marina that Lysimachus is "an honourable man" and she replies "I desire to find him so, that I may worthily note him."[95] The play here on the promissory note hints at a society in which respect for someone's worth depends as much on their financial credit as it does on their reputation for honour. In his conduct book, *The Gentleman's Calling*, Richard Allestree draws a similar connection between capital and virtue in observing a correlation between the economic "depressions the Gentry have fallen under" and their

[93] *OED, "Worthily, adv."* (OUP; accessed 22 September 2016)
[94] Shakespeare, *The Tempest,* IV.i.
[95] Shakespeare, *Pericles*, IV.v.

"voluntary descents…from true worth and virtue."[96] That 'worth' refers to rank, moral rectitude and financial credit is made plain in *The Princess Cloria* in which Herbert describes "worthiest persons" as those of "fortunes, titles or glory."[97] If 'worth' implies honour and credit, it also implies honesty and credibility. Indeed, in the *Urania*, we are regularly reminded of a character's credibility by means of an assertion of their 'worth'. Rosindy's tale of the follies of Antissia may provoke surprise, but not disbelief, and his audience trust this "strange relation" because it is told them "by the most worthy and temperate Prince living, and the discreetest from all kinde of follys" (II:36). Rosindy's reputation for worth and discretion protects him from suspicions of hyperbolic or extravagant 'relation'.

Very few central characters in the *Urania* are not described as 'worthy' at least once, and the indiscriminate use of 'worthy' across the principal cast points to a general equality of status although they have widely different responsibilities and exercise varying degrees of political power.[98] Urania and Veralinda, the two shepherdesses who discover they are princesses, are introduced as 'worthy' before their true status is known. Amphilanthus is the Emperor of the West, Pamphilia, the Empress of the East, while their siblings Urania and Philarchos seem to exert no power whatsoever. To be 'worthy', then, is to belong to a class whose financial security enables disinterested behaviour, rather than to exercise political power; to be 'worthy' is to be creditable. But as the Duke of Saxon's story teaches us, to be 'worthy' is also to be trusting. The jealous husband is guilty of "unworthie suspition"; to suspect that others may be concealing thoughts or feelings from us impugns our own honour. The *Urania*, then, seems to present a paradoxical moral: we should use politic silence to dissemble our true feelings, but we should not suspect others of

[96] Richard Allestree, *The Gentlemans Calling* (London: Printed for Tim Garthwaite, 1660), A4.
[97] Herbert, *Cloria*, 371.
[98] I'm suggesting here that 'worthy' might operate in the *Urania* much as Shapin finds that 'gentle' did in the early modern period, *A Social History of Truth*, 45.

concealment. If we can take one moral from the quicksands of Wroth's romance, it is that we are led into vice when we believe we have unique insight into the hearts of others. The *Urania* teaches us not to pry.

IV – Dissimulating Self-Control

If *Urania* suggests dissimulation might be implicit in feminine virtues such as silence, modesty, constancy and discretion, Barclay's exactly contemporaneous romance *Argenis* offers a more overt defence of women's lies by redescribing the wicked *dissimulatrice* as a canny and self-aware political actor. Barclay's heroine Argenis is "made for dissembling, by her sex and many businesses."[99] Gender and statecraft are conjoined, and their deceptions are presented as justifiable – even heroic – through the romance's sympathetic depiction of its heroine, Argenis, who must lie to remain constant to her lover, Poliarchus. The central allegorical resonance in the name 'Argenis', an anagram of 'Regina', invites us to read the work as a depiction of the quest for and operation of sovereign power.[100] In celebrating Argenis's feminine deceptions, then, the allegorical force of the romance asks us to recognise and admire the political deceptions permissible under reason of state theory.

In *Argenis*, we encounter a morally ambiguous world in which "many vertues…do oftentimes grow into vices, and which is more strange, the same affections, according to the nature of the times, are sometimes vertues, sometimes vices" (5). Unlike earlier romances, which insist that certain actions are patently evil no matter the circumstances, the philosophy of *Argenis* is one of moral relativism. The rhetorical trope of redescription is reworked into an elastic moral framework in which certain behaviours may be virtuous or vicious depending on the sphere in which they are practised. This self-conscious

[99] Barclay, *Argenis*, 389. Citations hereafter in text.
[100] Moore, "Romance: *Amadis De Gaule* and John Barclay's *Argenis*," 69.

redescription of virtue recalls Machiavellian politic philosophy and explains, perhaps, why many readers perceived *Argenis* to be an exemplum of seventeenth-century Tacitisim. Cowper, for instance, praised *Argenis* as a romance that "would not dishonour Tacitus himself" while scholars such as Peirisc and Grotius read it with "enormous delight and admiration."[101] A contemporary reader of the 1623 Frankfurt edition noted popular aphorisms with a decidedly Tacitean bent in the margins of his copy, such as *Regum inconstantu amicitia*, or, 'the friendship of kings is inconstant.'[102] Through the genre of romance, *Argenis* attempts to answer the same question as that considered by Grotius roughly contemporaneously: "whether deceit be one of those things that are always evil, and in which the maxim takes place, that we must not do evil, that good may come of it; or whether Deceit be to be reckoned among such as are not evil in their own nature, but that it may sometimes happen, that they may be good."[103]

Born and educated in France, of Scottish and French ancestry, Barclay lived at the court of James I between 1606 and 1615 where he was patronised by Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. He posthumously published his father's *De Potestate Papae*, a controversial work which denied papal authority took precedence over that of princes, an argument

[101] Cowper as quoted in Henry Seymour, *A Discovery of a Numerical Cypher Key in John Barclay's Argenis* (London: The Bacon Society, 1931), 8. This eccentric article is representative of early twentieth-century criticism of seventeenth-century romances, which often pushes clavis reading beyond the plausible. Recently, Helen Moore has observed how early readings of *Argenis* have tended to privilege political allegory over other modes of interpretation. Moore stresses that while *Argenis* has contemporary resonances, "these elements do not exert a structural or determining influence on its plot." See Moore, "Romance: *Amadis De Gaule* and John Barclay's *Argenis*," 69.
Grotius, as reported by Peirisc in a letter to Barclay of May, 1621. Correspondence between Barclay and Peirisc is preserved in the Bibliothèque Imguibertine in Carpentras, Provence, MS Carpentras 1872, fol.72-195 and extracts pertaining to *Argenis* have been transcribed and translated in Rebecca Linder, "Romancing the Throne: A Literary and Political Analysis of John Barclay's *Argenis* (1621)" (PhD diss., University of Aberystwyth, 2003), 221-2. For the friendship between Grotius, Peirisc and Barclay, see also Bearden, *The Emblematics of the Self*, 139.
[102] Bod Vet.D2e.25, 31. Evidence of clavis reading in this copy pertains principally to contemporary Germanic politics. Such idiosyncratic identifications are suggestive of the ways in which clavis reading can produce highly diverse and personal results and often proves a readerly rather than an authorial hermeneutic.
[103] Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1198.

echoed in *Argenis*.[104] Barclay moved to Rome in 1615 so that his family could continue practising Catholicism, and it was there that he wrote *Argenis*. The romance was first published in Paris in 1621, the year of his death.[105] Although written in Latin, *Argenis* was an immediate sensation in both England and France.[106] Charles I quickly commissioned translations into English, first by Ben Jonson whose translation was entered into the Stationers' Register in 1622 but presumably lost in the fire which destroyed his library, then by Kingsmill Long in 1625 and again by Robert Le Grys in 1628.[107] The romance was popular across Europe, inviting translations into every major European language within a decade and even non-authorial sequels.[108] Epitome texts containing the amorous plot and omitting the long dialogues on political theory were produced by Nicholas Coeffeteau (1624, translated by Judith Man in 1640) and John Jacob (1734).

The amorous plot concerns the adventures of Argenis, daughter of King Meleander and heir presumptive to the Sicilian throne. The action begins *in medias res* with the arrival of Archombrotus, a disguised Mauritanian prince, to Sicily. He encounters and befriends Poliarchus, a French nobleman, who is fleeing Sicily having been wrongfully accused of treason by the credulous Meleander. Archombrotus aids Poliarchus's escape before travelling on to Meleander's court, a hive of conspiracy stirred up by the ambitious courtier Lycogenes. When Lycogenes and his faction rebel outright, Meleander relies on the military aid of Archombrotus and the Sardinian prince Radirobanes to re-exert control.

[104] Marie-Claude Tucker, 'Barclay, William (1546–1608)', *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/1352, accessed 1 Oct 2016].
[105] Nicola Royan, 'Barclay, John (1582–1621)', *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/ view/article/1342, accessed 2 Oct 2016].
[106] John Chamberlain remarked on how difficult copies were to come by in his correspondence with Sir Dudley Carleton. See the letters of March 30 and May 11 1622 in Norman Egbert McClure, ed. *The Letters of John Chamberlain* (Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1939), 2:428, 435-6.
[107] Although Coleridge would later celebrate *Argenis* for its Republican sympathies, Zurcher speculates that the 1628 translation may have been commissioned because Charles I sought texts which upheld the royal prerogative during the debate over the Petition of Right. See *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 203.
[108] For translations of *Argenis*, see the Introduction to Mark Riley and Dorothy Pritchard Huber, eds. *Argenis*, *Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae/Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 273, 2 vols. (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), I:51-8.

Both are declared lovers of Argenis and when she refuses them, Radirobanes conspires with the nurse Selenissa to abduct Argenis and force her into marriage. This plot is foiled by Archombrotus and "quicke-witted Argenis" (187) whose "practiz'd subtilty" (197) teaches her to pretend illness and seek retirement on the day of the planned assault; the threat to chastity certainly justifies deception in *Argenis*. Although Sicilian law prevents Argenis from marrying a foreigner, she has secretly contracted herself to Poliarchus, revealed to be the King of France travelling in disguise. Argenis proves her constancy by scheming to avoid any other marriage. Her lies include false prophesying, pretending to consider Radirobanes' offer of marriage, and manipulating her father into inviting the French fleet into the Sicilian harbour for the nation's protection while secretly planning to escape with the French. All is resolved when letters from Archombrotus's mother, Hyanisbe, reveal that he is in fact Meleander's son.[109] With Archombrotus now the heir to the Sicilian throne, Argenis is free to marry Poliarchus. By resolving the romance with a division between woman and throne, Barclay is able to reward both his virtuous princes.[110]

Interwoven with the amorous plot are a number of dialogues relating to politic philosophy such as debates over the best form of government (49-55), analysis of religious schism with a particularly vociferous anti-Calvinist bent (76-80), discussion of the dubious art of astrology (117-125), advice regarding the treatment of traitors (158-164), and discourses on the right of kings to tax their subjects at will (299-306). This last – and Poliarchus' argument that kings should not require an act of parliament to impose taxes on their people

[109] The final revelation of Archombrotus's parentage is foreshadowed in the way the younger generation collect pseudo-parents throughout the romance. Argenis and Radirobanes call Argenis's nurse 'mother', at various points Poliarchus calls both his friend Timoclea and Queen Hyanisbe 'mother', and Lycogenes offers to act as Poliarchus's 'father'. These moments of familial identification usually come after one party has done the other some exceptional service, the statement of the familial bond serving to affirm a political alliance. It emphasises the dynastic interest in *Argenis* and cues us to expect the final revelation of the true family bond.

[110] As Zurcher shows, the structure of paired princes seeking the same woman, and the reward ultimately being divided in two, giving one the political and one the amorous prize, is much imitated in later romances. See for instance the tale of Fridius, Navarinus and Mantuina in *Cloria*, 24-5, as discussed in Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 154-5

– must have had a particular pertinence for the Jacobean public. After the Parliament of 1614 refused to impose new taxes, James I did not call Parliament again for another seven years. *Argenis* is replete with such contemporary resonances; Claire Jowitt, for instance, has traced the ways in which *Argenis* reflects changes in Jacobean maritime policy.[111] Another prominent contemporary reference is to the Overbury affair.[112] Frances Howard was a well-known example of a real-life *dissimulatrice* whose reported sexual license and implication in witchcraft and murder brought scandal to the heart of the Stuart court.[113] Jacobean romances which celebrate strategising heroines pursuing forbidden marriages might seem to speak to cultural anxieties regarding female sexual license and court culture that were of particular urgency in the second half of James I's reign.

The courtly world of *Argenis* is one of masks and secrets, in which individual opacity proves an essential virtue. Every assertion is glossed with doubt and the risk of being deceived is built into communication; for instance, Archombrotus is described to Meleander as one who "unless he dissemble…comes from Africa" (20). "All men are full of suspicion," Argenis complains, and "subtly pry into all countenances, and whatsoever may hide treachery" (57). The Sicilian court is dominated by factions and competing interests and everyone practises "cunning slights" (16). These schemes and suspicions ultimately bring Sicily to civil war and Meleander finds "the councils of his nobility faithless" and "his secrets disclosed" (7). In such an environment, the conjunction of erotic and political interest in the one desirable object, the beautiful princess whose dowry is a

[111] Claire Jowitt, "Pirates and Politics in John Barclay's *Argenis* (1621)," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 156-72.
[112] The Overbury affair is shadowed in *Urania* I:563-5, see Roberts' commentary in *Urania* I:789. For Barclay's reference to the Overbury scandal, see Jacqueline Glomski, "Politics and Passion: Fact and Fiction in Barclay's *Argenis*," in *Seventeenth-Century Fiction: Text and Transmission*, ed. Jacqueline Glomski and Isabelle Moreau (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 52.
[113] Alastair Bellany traces the influence of the Overbury affair into the mid-century and suggests that it left a tinge of "popish corruption" around the royal court which helped to fuel "anxieties about court popery" during the crisis of 1640-2 when texts from the pre-war period were reprinted and "polemically reinterpreted for propagandist ends," in *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 262.

throne, raises questions about the sincerity and disinterestedness of the young heroes' amorous intentions.

In a suspicious and conniving world, dissimulation takes on a positive moral force. The romance excoriates deceit on the part of subjects towards the ruler, but lauds sovereign deception. *Argenis* defends five principal kinds of lie: lies to protect others (Aquinas' *mendacium officiosum*), lies in self-defence, lies to protect the commonweal, lies to maintain obligations to a superior power, and poetic fictions. Much has been written about this last defence of lying or, rather, of imaginative narrative. The court poet, the humorously named Nicopompus (a cipher for Barclay himself), announces his intention to craft "some stately fable" which will "mingle together Armes, Marriages, Bloodshed, Mirth" and "feed [readers'] minds with divers contemplations" (109). Barclay's defence of the social utility of narratives which mingle fact and fiction is, of course, a defence of *Argenis* itself; it is certainly a defence of 'lying' in so far as romances themselves were perceived to be 'lies'. But it is the romance's more overt engagement with what constitutes ethical deception in the social and political spheres that we shall focus on here.

Argenis begins with a benevolent lie. When Poliarchus is accused of treachery and has to flee Sicily, his servant, Gelanorus, comes up with "a device to delude his enemies"; namely, that Poliarchus has drowned. Gelanorus "cunningly lament[s] the death of his master" and the lie is confirmed by Archombrotus "with well counterfeited grief" (29). In applauding this benevolent deception, *Argenis* invites us into a world of moral relativism in which it is not action but intentions that shape assessment of virtue. Gelanorus' deception is the correct performance of fealty to his master, representative of one of the key political arguments in *Argenis*: that no virtue trumps that of fidelity to one's superiors. In keeping with his more honourable social and narrative status, Poliarchus is initially

resistant to the deceit. Timoclea suggests he escape wearing an old wig once used by a hanged criminal, to which Poliarchus consents while "chafing that he should need such base disguises to save himself" (32). Poliarchus can be no enemy to disguise – elsewhere he happily dons the dress of an Amazon and of a noble gentleman – but here the problem seems to be twofold: Poliarchus resents both the intention behind this diguise ("to save himself") and its "base" nature. He resents appearing in the guise of someone of lower social and moral status, and believes that when his life is at stake, the correct heroic mode is of noble action over ignoble fraud. But Poliarchus is talked out of his misguided association of transparency with honour when the prudent counsellor Arsidas reminds him that even the Gods were not ashamed to hide "under base and brutish shapes" (32). The suggestion that a simulation such as a disguise may not impugn the wearer's honour is suggestive of a shift in ethical theory. Action and act have ceased to be convertible and a good person is not one who always behaves virtuously, but one who can respond discretely to changing circumstances. Virtue ethics are beginning to give way to a dawning practical ethics.[114]

Barclay plays repeatedly with the relationship between social status, reputation for virtue, and honesty. We can find the nexus of these ideas in the romance's anxiety that dissembling might allow individuals to counterfeit higher status. It is a critical commonplace that the seventeenth-century saw a decisive increase in the rate of social mobility. As class barriers became slightly more permeable, the dissembling villain who lied to rise above his station became an increasingly popular literary figure.[115] This personality is invoked in *Argenis* in the conversation between Archombrotus and Arsidas

[114] The term 'practical ethics' was first used in England in the late seventeenth century, but the idea of a practical ethics divorced from Christian virtue had already been current for over a century. Dale Jamieson, "Constructing Practical Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 847.
[115] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 15-17.

on the merits of promotion at court. Arsidas observes that while social promotion is a positive thing, bringing the best and brightest into the king's service, often those who are advanced can merely "speake nothing rashly" and are able to "hide the defects of their owne wit" (36). Such men can be advanced "with the borrowed rayes of dignity…as meaner gemmes sometimes by cunning workemanship or the gold they are set in, receive a lustre equall to the best" (36). In so far as courtly discretion is a learned behaviour, it can be imitated in ways that potentially destabilise a class system based on birth. The conventions of romance tend towards social conservatism, so although *Argenis* hints at the problem of promoting a lower-class dissembler, it evades any endorsement of apparent social mobility by revealing that Poliarchus and Archombrotus were in fact born to power. Lying about their status is not a self-interested act designed to secure advancement, but a pointed display of *disinterest* in so far as it limits their abilities to acquire their central object, Argenis. Archombrotus' foster mother, Hyanisbe, explains that she encouraged him to travel to Sicily "as a private man" lest "the flattery of others, might carry him quite away from that fresh and reall vertue, which being often denyed to Princes, ennobles the actions and estates of meaner men" (399). Flattery – that most reprehensible kind of dissimulating speech – risks stultifying the cultivation of virtue. Paradoxically, in order to deserve their status, Archombrotus and Poliarchus must dissemble it. Unlike *Arcadia*, in *Argenis* debasing disguises are in fact proof of worth.

Intention is key to judging the morality of action in *Argenis*. But as Paul Salzman has aptly illustrated, intention is often ambiguous and Barclay's "narrative method…reinforces the reader's uncertainty about the interpretation of behaviour and analysis of motives."[116] Certainly the characters remain opaque to each other, to the reader and at times, perhaps, even to themselves. Poliarchus is seen to have a particular gift for self-deception. After

[116] Salzman, *English Prose Fiction*, 152.

capturing a pirate ship that has robbed the Queen of Mauritania of her treasure, Poliarchus decides not to free the slaves bound to the ships' oars, even though they pose no threat to him. He justifies his decision by asserting:

> For he both stood in neede of rowers, to carry him into Africa; and he would not, that so many unknowne to him, and perchance not undeserving their bondage, should have the meanes to doe him any harme. (96)

It is his need to reach Africa that drives his cruel decision to keep the men enslaved, but Poliarchus easily justifies the decision to himself on the grounds of rational suspicion. In the dissimulating world of *Argenis*, the heroic characters suspect before they trust – or at least use reasonable suspicion as the justification for unheroic acts. Motivation is often unclear, and at times we sense that the characters are not certain of their own intentions, or willingly choose to deceive themselves. The narrative form of *Argenis* privileges ambiguity over clarity, and offers us no trustworthy voice.

If the hero Poliarchus suspects before he trusts, Meleander appears at first to be a king in the model of Sidney's Basilius, one who is too quick to trust others. Our first introduction to Meleander is through the description Poliarchus gives Archombrotus. According to Poliarchus, Meleander is "gentle and vertuous," "easily deceived", and a king who "putteth such confidence in others, that hee thinketh by his owne goodnesse, all men to stand so affected to him." (5) Jacqueline Glomski argues that *Argenis* stages the education of its ruler into prudence: through conversation with wise counsellors, "the prince learns by experience how to shed his naïveté and to distinguish between the wisdom of political necessity and the deception of tyranny."[117] But this is not entirely convincing: Poliarchus might believe Meleander is a weak king, but in the incident with the rowers, as elsewhere, Barclay invites us to question his hero's judgement.

[117] Glomski, "Politics and Passion," 62.

It is from Meleander that we hear and see the romance's most overt defences of dissimulation. Meleander is gifted at concealing his true thoughts. When he hears of Poliarchus' death, for instance, thinking "it not then safe to lament publicly, since many of Lycogenes his friends had their eyes upon him, to observe each look, word, and gesture," he assumes "a settled countenance…reigning neither grief nor joy" (21). When negotiating with the traitor Lycogenes, he easily feigns amicability (an art the narrator glosses as the "vileness of courtship" (48)) and is seen "dissembling the grief of his mind, and counterfeiting all tokens of mirth" (61) and performing a "dissimulation of joy and security" (65). Such a lie is not merely acceptable under the rules of permissible lying to enemies in times of war (laid out most famously by Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia*, and also by Grotius) but laudable because it is for the public good.[118] Meleander instructs his daughter in the necessity of concealing her thoughts and feelings. Explaining to her the responsibilities that come with rule, he tells her that "which is most requisite in a Prince" is to "learne to be silent" (26):

> Wee are in ill case, Argenis, unlesse we can so beare injuries, as that wee seeme insensible of them…You know how Lycogenes is revolted from mee, and many cities falne to his faction: but they are most dangerous, which are in my bosome, and dive into my counsels, observing mee more truly like a captive than a King. (26)

These corrupt counsellors advise Meleander to make peace with Lycogenes. Although Meleander perceives their counsel is self-interested, he pretends to be deceived, judging it more politically expedient. He explains to *Argenis* that he "must have feared a great mischief" had he "refused to be so deceived" (26). Meleander's perceived credulity is revealed to be a mere dissimulation, adopted because he recognises the value of shows of trust as political manoeuvres. We might question, then, the critical assertion that

[118] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia: The Education of Cyrus*, edited and translated by Walter Miller (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), I.vi.35-41; Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1194, 1222. According to Grotius, this right does not extend to the breaking of promises or oaths.

Meleander is a weak king who must learn prudence over the course of the romance. It might be more accurate to say that in a nation overwhelmed with plots and suspicion, Meleander prudently adopts the pose of the imprudent king.

Meleander's rejection of transparency is part of *Argenis*'s depiction of sovereignty as necessarily and inevitably restricted. Bacon claimed "men in great place, are thrice servants" and "have no freedome; neither in their Persons; nor in their Actions; nor in their Times."[119] Meleander's artful dissimulation is reflective of his dependency, a point that is driven home in the final book when the honest Cleobulus refuses to act as Meleander's ambassador because he fears the channels of communication between himself and the king will become corrupted. In depending on their courtiers for information, money and military support, kings prove to be as dependent – and therefore as compromised – as their subjects.[120] Unsurprisingly, some authors compared the dependent duplicity of princes to that of women. Montagu/Du Bosc describes both princes and women as being vulnerable to insincere compliments: "Beauty and Royalty does not so easily find teachers as flatter[er]s."[121] Similarly Samuel Torshell is "very angry with those authors, that have given a kind of allowance, unto princes, and unto women to counterfeit."[122]

The correct operation of sovereign power is seen to be incompatible with conventional morality. In the story of the deposed king Aneroestus, Poliarchus's foster father, we learn that he lost his throne because he was unwilling to compromise his honesty. Living a retired life as a religious hermit, he reflects that "to dissemble, to over-reach, to doe contrary to their owne words, are held noble and glorious parts in kings" (377) and that it

[119] 'Of Great Place' in Bacon, *The Essayes*, ed. Kiernan, 33. See also Shapin, "those in positions of power were in fact *more* constrained than simple independent gentlemen," in *A Social History of Truth*, 100.
[120] Montaigne, for instance, observed that no one had more need of "true, sincerely-free and open hearted advertisements, then Princes." 'Of Experience' in Desmond McCarthy, ed. *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne, Translated into English by John Florio* (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1928), 338.
[121] Du Bosc, *The Excellent Woman*, 5.
[122] Torshell, *The Womans Glorie*, 190.

is "he that can carry…things with most cunning, gaines…the more glory" (379). He condemns kings who believe "the gods…would not give them power to governe, without the helpes of vices and wickednesses" (377), but nevertheless acknowledges that because "these things…made my government burdensome to mee" (379), he lost his throne. Aneroestus' reflections on kingship demonstrate the ways in which sovereigns may not be bound to the same rules of morality as ordinary people, but also that sovereigns should not take this greater license to dissemble as permission to vice. The fine line between sovereign prudence and malicious deceit is perhaps best articulated by Hobbes, who says, "To prudence, if you add the use of unjust or dishonest means…you have that crooked wisdom which is called craft."[123] But prudence is also associated with rhetorical skill ("eloquence is power, because it is seeming prudence") and with the consent of subjects to the authority of the monarch ("to prudent men we commit the government of ourselves more willingly than to others").[124] Prudence as a middle-ground between transparency and vicious deception is a necessary and honourable attribute for the capable monarch.

Argenis shows herself to be a canny student of her father's lessons, quickly outstripping him both in dissimulating self-control and in political scheming. She conceals her love for Poliarchus with consummate skill, using arts such as feigning a "violent cough" so that "the distemper of her looks…might be thought from her forcible straining" (27). Argenis demonstrates complete bodily awareness, knowing exactly how to mimic the signs of sincerity. She controls "her smiles, looks, and graces so cunningly, that…none of the nobility thought themselves slighted, or neglected" (25). She avoids the charge of being susceptible to evil counsel by appearing, erroneously, not to have favourites. The descriptor 'cunning' is an ambiguous word in *Argenis*, used as often to refer to the plots of Argenis as to those of the wicked traitor Lycogenes. 'Cunning' is a fluid quality. When

[123] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 56.
[124] Ibid., 67.

Lycogenes omits "no point of cunning" to seem loyal to the king while simultaneously giving "assurance to those of his own faction" that "the fury of war might be renewed" (47), we are meant to deplore this equivocation because it defies the obligation he has to a legitimate higher authority. But Argenis is this higher authority and so there can be no broken obligation. Between monarch and subject, the right to deceive is not reciprocal. The fluid morality of royal and subject deception is tied to the perceived distinction between deplorable Machiavellianism and acceptable reason of state theory. While the former was understood to mean fraud practised in pursuit of self-interest, the latter referred to those manoeuvres undertaken by the monarch and his wise counsellors for the national interest. Interest and intention underpin the moral valence of action.

So it proves with Argenis, whose lies are justifiable because they allow her to remain faithful to a higher obligation, that is, her oath to Poliarchus. It is key to *Argenis* that the promises exchanged between Argenis and Poliarchus should be considered as binding as marriage itself. Argenis swears to Poliarchus that although she has "long since…called thee Husband" she will retake her vow, and "doe sweare by both our lives, that no power shall force mee to falsifie this oath: Argenis shall be wife to none, if not to Poliarchus" (201). Before the 1753 Marriage Act, the exchange of vows was enough to make a marriage (although the validity of such a marriage is a point of particular contention in Wroth's *Urania*).[125] Argenis' promise to Poliarchus binds her to the behaviour of a dependent wife and secures her to his interests. It renders her dissimulation legitimate because it is in the service of preserving her promises to a legitimate authority. Argenis' schemes are laudable in the same way Lycogenes' are not: the morality of political deception is judged by the obligations they meet or override and the interests they serve.

[125] Susan Staves, *Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln and London: Univeristy of Nebraska Press, 1979), 191.

To preserve her oath to Poliarchus, Argenis must become a scheming political actor. In this, she greatly resembles Charicleia, who must lie and scheme to maintain her fidelity to Theagenes.[126] Argenis' first and most sustained deception is to conceal from her father that her attendant, Theocrine, was actually Poliarchus in disguise. When this is revealed, Radirobanes takes it as evidence of Argenis' "secret unchastity": "Can you thinke her chaste…who was daily with her Love, and who at length deceived her Father?" (237) But Radirobanes' insistence on reading female sexual and rhetorical honesty as co-dependent only reveals his own dissembled vices (214) and brings him scorn from Meleander's counsellors. In the world of *Argenis*, as in *Urania*, accusations of female license are damning indeed, and masculine suspicion of female virtue is never a marker of heroic worth.

Among her many deceptions, the one which has the most political significance is Argenis' falsifying of prophecy. In keeping with 'serious romance', *Argenis* does not contain the magical or the marvellous, but uses belief in the supernatural to demarcate the credulous from the rightly sceptical. Argenis is able to turn such credulity to her advantage, pretending to receive prophetic knowledge from the goddess to prevent the signing of a peace agreement with Poliarchus' enemy. Her performance is comically convincing:

> She rolling her eyes more terribly, began her speech, not in meter (for she could not so suddenly compose it) but from the way of humane discourses, and like a Divine rapture…when she had uttered many things in this prophetic fury, falling to a lamentable shrieking, she resembled a true possesst prophetess. (63-4)

Religious prophecy is a mode of speech particularly accessible to women. As Keith Thomas has argued, the seventeenth century and particularly the years of the civil war were rife with claims for ecstatic revelation and women prophets were particularly

[126] There are obvious similarities between *Argenis* and the *Aethiopika*. See Bearden, *The Emblematics of the Self*, 138-9.

prominent, a phenomenon "partly explained by the fact that the best hope of gaining an ear for female utterances was to represent them as the result of divine revelation."[127] Through prophecy, Argenis is able to speak both publicly and credibly despite her gender. Prophecy also permits her to play on the superstition of the common people to further her own ends and exert a political power otherwise denied her.

The prophetic ruse allows Barclay to comment on superstition and idolatry. A treatise on idolatry by the French theologian Jean Filesac may well have influenced Barclay's thought here. In his 1615 *Idololatria Politica*, Filesac criticised idolatry as a political tool and questioned the divine aura of kingship.[128] Beliefs in the Divine Right of Kings and the Royal Touch helped to give royalty an aura of divinity.[129] The exploitation of these beliefs for political ends was one of the more controversial features of Machiavellian politic philosophy. Followers of Machiavelli were accused of making "open profession of religion but for advantage" and believing "the Scriptures were devised by men, onely for policye sake, to maintaine peace in states and Kingdomes, to keep subjects in obedience to lawes."[130] Barclay picks on these anxieties about the perceived utility of faith, suggesting that while royalty may have no divine power, the pretence serves a useful purpose. If the people are foolish enough to be taken in, it is only the foolish king who does not exploit their superstition.

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[127] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin Books, 1971), 163.

[128] Martin Mulsow, "Henry Stubbe, Robert Boyle and the Idolatry of Nature," in *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy, 1600-1750*, ed. Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 126.

[129] The idea of the Royal Touch runs counter to the Protestant doctrine of the cessation of miracles and consequently James I refused to practise it when he first ascended to the throne. But after just six months, he bowed to public pressure to reinstate the ceremony. See Stephen Brogan, *The Royal Touch in Early Modern England: Politics, Medicine and Sin* (Suffolk and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press and the Royal Historical Society, 2015), 68-80.

[130] John Dove, *A Confutation of Atheism* (London: Printed by Edward Allde for Henry Rockett, 1605), 4-5.

Arguments about the rights of sovereigns to lie to their subjects thus intersect with the considerable literature on the kinds of people to whom we *should* lie for their own good.[131] Erasmus, commenting on Plato's noble lie, emphasised that the deceptions of political actors are the means by which "the crass multitude is deceived in its own interest, in the same way that parents deceive children and doctors the sick."[132] Similarly Grotius confirms that it is no "criminal lie" to deceive "children or madmen" because they have no "freedom of judgement."[133] Milton's position went further still in his positive affirmation that "some people ought to be deceived," such as "children, or lunatics, or people who are ill, or drunk, or hostile, or themselves deceitful," as well as "enemies, or madmen, or thugs, or murderers."[134] Furthermore, Milton suggests there can be no deceit without injury:

> In the proper sense of the word "deceit," no one can be deceived unless he is, at the same time, injured in some way. If, then, we do not injure him in any way but, on the contrary, either assist him, or prevent him from inflicting or suffering injury, we do not really deceive him, not even if we tell him a thousand lies, but rather do him a service of which he is unaware.[135]

This flexible interpretation of the obligation to veracity perceives the honesty principle to stem from our duty to deal justly with our neighbours: it can be no injustice to delude someone for their own benefit, and therefore no lie. Barclay explores a similar idea in his description of Meleander as "happily deceived" by his daughter (57). Argenis's lies do not cause injury but tend to the national benefit of Sicily and the personal benefit of its king; such lies are not merely acceptable, but virtuous.

[131] On arguments in favour of and against lying for the public benefit, see Bok, *Lying*, 165-81.
[132] Erasmus, *Responsio ad Albertum Pium, Opera Omnia*, as quoted in Bok, *Lying*, 168.
[133] Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1215.
[134] Milton, "Two Books of Investigation into Christian Doctrine Drawn from the Sacred Scriptures Alone," 760, 762.
[135] Ibid., 761.

The broader logic at work here is that those in situations of dependency are not merely more deceptive, but potentially more *credulous*.[136] In his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, a work exposing popular false beliefs, physician Sir Thomas Browne fears that "uncultivated understandings" – that is, those minds that have not been trained to deduce truth "from the principles of knowledge, and causes" – will be but "bad discerners of verity."[137] Similarly, Montaigne noted that those excluded from elite education would always exercise poor judgement and be easily taken in: "Forasmuch, therefore, as the mind being most empty and without counterpoise, so much the more easily doth it yield under the burden of the first persuasion. And that's the reason why children, those of the common sort, women, and sick-folks are subject to be misled and so easy to swallow gudgeons."[138] Key to the logic of *Argenis* is that there are some people to whom we *should* lie. Such an argument takes *Argenis* well beyond the moral compass of Sidney's *Arcadia*.

In the character of Argenis, Barclay rewrites the wicked *dissimulatrice* into a heroine whose lies are acceptable because they meet her obligations to a higher authority and allow her to preserve her chastity in face of the threat of rape. The allegorical force of the work invites us to read Argenis as the embodiment of sovereignty and so suggests that deceptions such as the falsifying of prophecy might in fact constitute the correct use of royal power. It is of course key to the logic of the romance that Argenis' political judgement should be superior to her father's, and that she has correctly identified the suitor who will best serve the national interest. Her dissimulations in aid of such a choice seem to illustrate the maxim, *qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*. But if the allegory of the romance endorses political dissimulation and sustains reason of state theory, the surface

[136] Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 77-8.
[137] Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 8. See discussion in Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 77.
[138] 'It is Folly to Refer Truth or Falshood to our Sufficiency,' in Stephen Greenblatt and Peter G. Platt, eds., *Shakespeare's Montaigne: The Florio Translation of the Essays* (New York: New York Review Books, 2014), 34.

narrative endorses the practice of a kind of dissimulation that appears more broadly social. *Argenis* rewrites the *dissmulatrice* into the heroine for whom deception is the principal sign of both her sexual virtue and her mastery of political *virtù*.

V – The Right to Lie

Throughout this chapter, we have encountered the recurring question of whether it is permissible to lie under duress or in cases of dire necessity. We have seen that romance authors figure this problem as a threat to female chastity to play on the ambiguity between a woman's rhetorical and her sexual honesty. In the *Arcadia*, Sidney champions female rhetorical honesty even in situations of extreme personal threat; in the *Urania*, by contrast, Wroth introduces the idea that the performance of constancy (ultimately a political virtue) might have recourse to the techniques of dissimulation; in *Argenis*, Barclay seems to suggest that dissimulation might be a legitimate mode of feminine resistance, but ultimately confirms the Platonic argument that deceit is permissible in a sovereign but not in a subject. The mid-century romance, *The Princess Cloria*, inherits these questions from earlier romances and reworks them into a fuller exploration of the right to lie. In *Cloria*, we find a clear articulation of the notion that dissimulation might be a valid mode of political resistance. Unsurprisingly, it is explored through the familiar romance trope of the threat to female chastity.

Published separately in quarto parts as *Cloria and Narcissus* between 1653 and 1658 and then as a complete folio in 1661 as *The Princess Cloria* (2nd ed. 1665), Percy Herbert's five-book romance follows the adventures of Cloria, the eldest daughter of King Euarchus of Lydia (named after the wise judge of the *Arcadia*, one of *Cloria's* many Arcadian references).[139] Cloria loves Narcissus, the Duke of Cyprus, but is pursued by both Osiris,

[139] No work has been done on Herbert's transformation of Sidney's romance, although this would doubtless be a fruitful avenue for future scholarly inquiry. There are many moments in which Herbert makes plain his

Prince of Egypt, and Cassianus, her landless cousin. When the Lydian Senate initiates a civil revolt and executes her father, Cloria is imprisoned by the rebels and must disguise herself as a boy to escape to Cyprus. The final two books follow her brothers, Arethusius and Ascanius, on their quest to regain the crown of Lydia. The two-stage progression of the romance (following first the adventures of Cloria and then of her brothers) allows for patterns of repetition which highlight the complementary lessons in the amorous and political narratives. Debates about dissimulation, for instance, occur twice between Cloria and her nurse, and then again between Arethusius and his advisor. If Cloria's debates are about the morality of lying to a suitor, Arethusius's is more explicitly about the problem of lying to allies and enemies. Both siblings learn the same lesson (that dissimulation is not merely essential, but the most virtuous response to dire necessity), and the repetition serves to emphasise the allegory at play, in which the amorous is shorthand for the political.

Sir Percy Herbert (1598-1667), 2nd Baron Powis, was a loyalist and recusant Catholic from the Welsh branch of the Herbert family.[140] Herbert was imprisoned for recusancy in 1642, fought with the king at the siege of Gloucester, and in September 1644 went into Continental exile with his son, remaining abroad until 1649.[141] His estates were sequestered, but he compounded for their partial return in 1650 and spent much of the

debt to the *Arcadia*, notably in the tale of Orestes and Alciana in Part One which rewrites that of Argalus and Parthenia and in the incident in which Arethusius rescues Joyela from a bear in Part Four, an obvious nod to Musidorus's rescue of Pamela in the *Arcadia* which seems intended to construct the Delphine (Catholic) Joyela as Arethusius's romantic interest and introduce Catholic sympathies into the work. Such moments of narrative imitation allow the romance to openly stage its debt to Sidney and illustrate its distinctive attitude towards deception as something laudable rather than necessarily dangerous.

[140] For biographies of Herbert, see McLellan, "Herbert, Percy, Second Baron Powis (1598-1667); Charles Henry Cooper, "On Percy Herbert, Lord Powis," *Archaeologia* 39, no. 2 (1863): 464-470.

[141] In September 1646, Herbert and his son travelled to Naples with fellow recusant Hugh Cressy, former chaplain of Lord Strafford. See Chaney, *The Grand Tour*, 75, 369. Herbert's travels afterwards are untraceable until 1649 when, before returning to England, he visited Douai. Presumably he stayed at the English college, a Catholic seminary where Dr George Leyburn, an admirer of Herbert's, resided. See PRO 30/53/7/48. After returning briefly to England in 1650, Herbert's son returned to the continent where he lived in Paris and Switzerland with his uncle Sir William Craven. See PRO 30/53/7/55-58.

1650s in retirement, his mobility much limited by the Act of Confinement.[142] On the restoration of Charles II, Powis Castle was returned to him.

As a prominent Catholic at the Caroline court, Herbert was targeted by a proposal that the eldest sons of recusants should be taken from their fathers to be raised Protestant. As Lord Strafford recounts, only Herbert's personal relationship with the king prevented his son from being "made the only example" of "the most jesuited Papist of England."[143] In a surprising incident, in 1629/30 Sir Percy took part in a duel against his cousin Richard Herbert in defence of his father's honour. Both parties emerged unscathed.[144] Herbert had a reputation for great devoutness and was a patron of Catholic intellectuals.[145] John Fisher's *A Treatise of Prayer* (1640) was dedicated to his wife Elizabeth while to Sir Percy was dedicated George Leyburn's *Holy Characters* (1642) and J.A. Rivers' *Devout Rhapsodies* (1647).[146] His son, Sir William Herbert, would be implicated in the Popish Plot and follow James II into exile, serving as Lord Chamberlain of the Jacobite Court.

[142] For the sequestration of Herbert's estates, see TNA SP 20/13/1-4 and W. J. Smith, ed. *Herbert Correspondence: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Letters of the Herberts of Chirbury, Powis Castle and Dolguog, Formerly at Powis Castle in Montgomeryshire*, (Cardiff and Dublin: University of Wales Press and Irish Manuscripts Collection, 1963), 22-3. William Herbert describes the family's dealings with the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents in 1650 in PRO 30/53/7/53-54. In the Preface to his advice book *Certaine Conceptions*, Herbert reflects on how "the late Act of Confinement" has given him "neither…conveniency of books nor liberty for conversation." Herbert, *Certaine Conceptions*, A2.

[143] William Knowler, ed. *The Earl of Strafforde's Letters and Dispatches*, (Printed by William Bowyer for William Knowler, 1739), 2:147. The stress of this episode may perhaps shape his eloquent defence of Argylius (the Duke of Argyll) in Part Four of *Cloria.* His sister Joyela pleads tolerance for her brother, blaming his treachery to the crown on his early removal from their family to be raised in a different religion: "my Brother being taken young with violence, out of the protection of his worthy and religious Father, and committed to the custody of them, who ever since have endeavoured to pervert his thoughts, towards their sinister purposes against all Kingly Government." (401)

[144] See NLW Powis 11023. Interestingly, Orrery also fought a duel in 1640 in defence of his mistress's honour. See Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 113.

[145] For instance, in a letter to Dorothy Sidney of 5 December 1639, the Earl of Northumberland observed that Anne Dormer, Lady Carnarvon (daughter of Philip Herbert) "is grown so devout by conversing with my Lord Powis…that now she will neither dance or see a play upon the Sabbath." See Noel J. Kinnamon, Michael G. Brennan and Margaret P. Hannay, eds. *The Correspondence (c.1626–1659) of Dorothy Percy Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Ashgate, 2010), 149.

[146] Lady Herbert converted to Catholicism after her marriage, presumably around or before 1633; a letter from her brother William Craven in 1633 assures her he will cease to debate points of religion with her. See PRO 30/53/7/22. Later, Herbert would write to his wife that among the blessings of their marriage were "that your fortune made upp my estate & my conversation resolv'd you a Catholick." See PRO 30/53/7/33. Lady Herbert remained in Wales during the 1640s to manage what remained of the family estates; her letters to her husband and son describe building works undertaken and suggest friends who might compound on Herbert's behalf. See NLW P2/1/1/1-2.

Percy Herbert's experiences of imprisonment, battle, exile and confinement clearly inform his romance, which contains several extended tales of men and women who suffer for their religious faith. Part Five of *Cloria* contains two extended pleas for religious tolerance, an insight perhaps into Catholic hopes at the dawn of the Restoration.

Victoria Kahn describes *Cloria* as the "most Hobbesian" of mid-century romances and a "work of analysis and counsel": the romance is concerned with analysing how the Civil Wars came about, how the royalist cause unfolded, and how a restoration might be effected.[147] Nigel Smith and Emily Griffiths Jones read the romance as a self-conscious investigation of the role of providence in romance. According to Smith, "the apparent lack of agency in the characters" represents "a desire on Herbert's part to make his reader experience a stoical expulsion of emotions."[148] Most critics, however, write about *Cloria* as a royalist *roman-à-clef* offering an account of the Civil Wars.[149] In the elaborate allegory of the work, Cloria and Narcissus stand for Mary, Princess Royal, and William of Orange; Euarchus for Charles I; Cassianus for Charles Louis of the Palatine; Arethusius and Ascanius for the future Charles II and James II. The depiction of the Civil Wars is complemented by a loose shadowing of Continental politics: inset tales recount the Bohemian revolt and the start of the Thirty Years' War, the crisis of the Fronde and the abdication of Queen Christina of Sweden.[150] The popularity of the romance as *à clef*

[147] Kahn, "Reinventing Romance, or the Surprising Effects of Sympathy," 629.
[148] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 239. See also Jones, "Milton's Counter-Revision of Romantic Structure in *Paradise Regained*."
[149] Critical readings of *Cloria* have focused on its real world correspondences. For Michael McKeon, Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, *Cloria* is an early 'secret history', a "bi-levelled" allegory which locates the causes of public events in the private sphere, see Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 492-4; Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, *Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2008), 353. See also Annabel Patterson, *Early Modern Liberalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 185-9; J.C. Davis, "The Prose Romance of the 1650s as a Context for *Oceana*," in *Perspectives on English Revolutionary Republicanism*, ed. Gaby Mahlberg and Dirk Wiemann (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 65-83.
[150] Josephine Roberts employs the term 'shadowing' to refer to Wroth's technique of developing multiple and often conflicting versions of the same person within the cast of her romance, in *Urania*, I:lxxi. This is a

fiction is evident from the many examples of clavis-based reading in extant copies of *Cloria*. In the British Library copy of the 1665 edition (BL 837.1.13), two readers have created separate keys in the front papers making unique and sometimes contradictory identifications (see Figure 3, p.164); in the former Bradford Library and the Bavarian State Library copies, readers have noted geographical correspondences in the margins; in the Trinity College, Cambridge copy (Munby b.37), a reader has identified religious leaders such as Calvin (these identifications are probably Victorian or early twentieth century); and in the London Library copy, a reader has made solely British personal and geographical correspondences, ignoring any passages of the romance relating to continental politics.[151] The profusion of clavis identifications suggest *Cloria* was read by contemporaries in a similar vein to *Argenis*, or to French romances such as Scudéry's *Artamène* or the more obviously *à clef Agésilas et Ismenie*.[152] Certainly such a profusion of clavis readings points to *Cloria*'s evident and perceived engagement with contemporary politics.

pertinent term to adopt for the strategies of mid-century romance because it acknowledges real-world correspondences without reducing the meaning of romances to the singular clavis reading.

[151] In a similar mode of annotation, in the British Library's copy of the 1653 *Cloria and Narcissus* (BL 12613 b.32), a reader has made additions to the text with reference to real history while employing the names of the characters: for instance, beside the description of Polinex's (Strafford's) trial, the reader has noted Euarchus was persuaded to his favourite's execution by "all but ye flamin of Sardis" (William Laud). Laud did, indeed, protest Strafford's execution.

[152] *Agésilas et Ismenie* is an 80-page manuscript romance which circulated with claves. It recounts the love affair of Madame de Longueville and Count Maurice de Coligny and the latter's duel with the duke of Guise. The only complete text is BNF MS Arsenal 2276, a presentation copy from 1666, but fragments of the romance with claves are preserved in MS Français 6046 and MS Français 864. The clavis alone is preserved in MS 3724 B Tome II, alongside a key to *Artamène*. The romance has received no critical attention aside from Victor Cousin, *La Jeunesse De Madame De Longueville* (Paris: Didier, 1853). Other examples of this style include Jean de Lannel's *Le Roman Satirique* (1624) and the anonymous *Florigénie ou l'Illustre victorieuse* (1647), a history of the courtship of Marguerite de Rohan and the Chevalier de Chabot. See *La Société Française Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Didier et cie, 1858), 8.

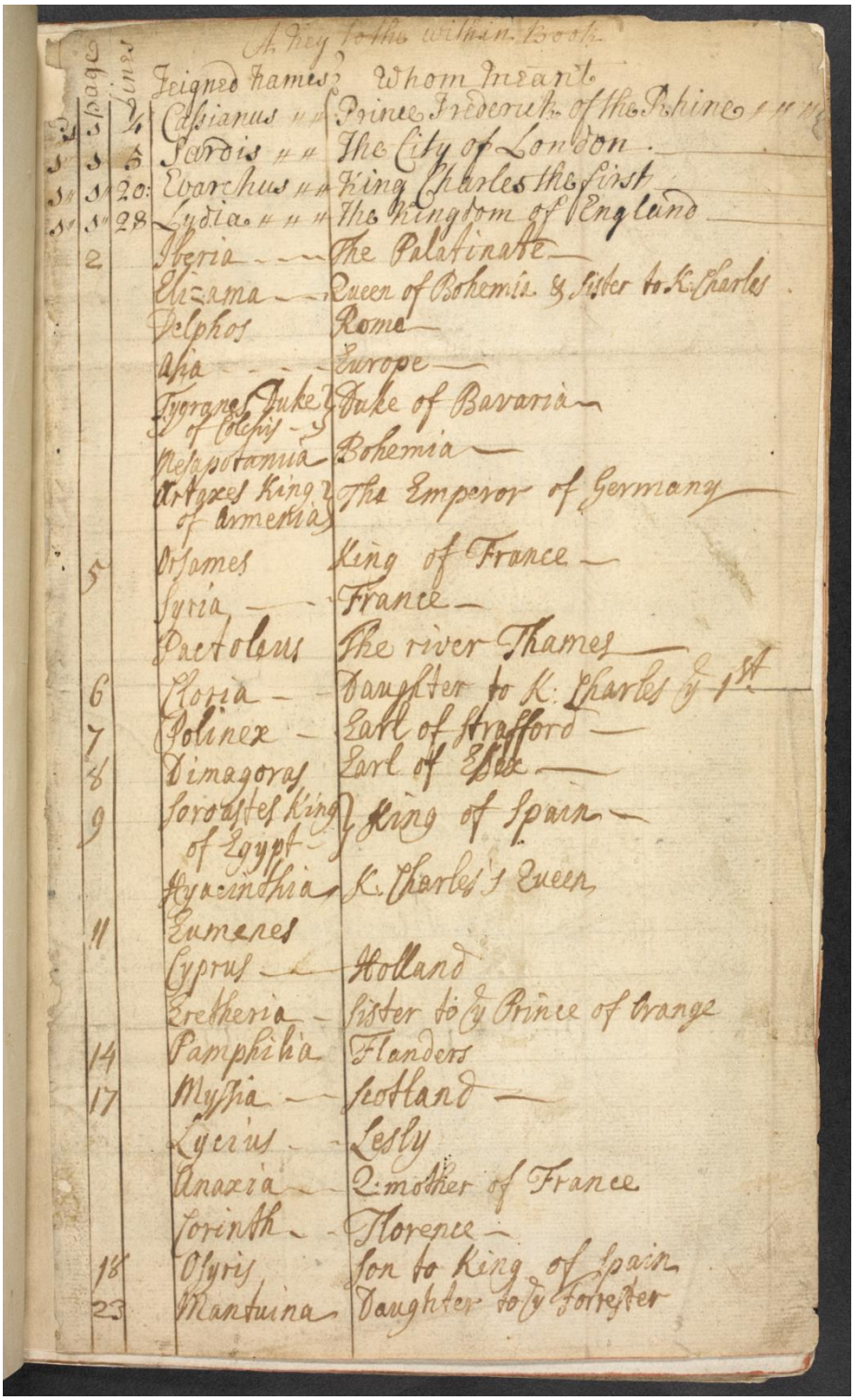


Figure 3 One of two manuscript keys in a copy of the 1665 *The Princess Cloria*. © The British Library Board 837.1.13.



Figure 4 Sir Percy Herbert, 2nd Baron Powis (c.1598-1667). © National Trust Images / Clare Bates.

But despite the many self-evident correspondences, Herbert recommended his readers "do not look for an exact History."[153] Herbert goes on to explain that a key to the work was solicited, but that he chose not to supply one because "it might seem publickly, too much to determine State particulars" and it might take "off something from the Quaintness of the design."[154] Instead, he insists that the romance is to be read allegorically as well as historically and Cloria is "not onely to be taken for the Kings Daugher, but also sometimes for his National honour."[155] The problems facing Cloria, then, are the problems facing the nation as a whole. And the recurring problem facing Cloria is when, if ever, it is acceptable to lie.

Cloria argues for the necessity and the wisdom of practising dissimulation to deflect political threat. The romance is so invested in this question it stages three extended dialogues on the problem, the first two between Cloria and her nurse, Roxana, and the last between Arethusius and his advisor, Meliander (knowingly named after Barclay's dissimulating king).[156] In these dialogues, the innocent heroine and hero are educated out of their naïve preference for honesty (Cloria at first believes "plaine dealing is best in all morall actions") and into the practice of dissimulation.[157] In the first dialogue between Cloria and Roxana, Cloria learns that dissimulation might be the morally correct response to superior force. This problem is figured through the familiar problem of the threat to chastity.

[153] Herbert, *Cloria*, A1.
[154] Ibid., A1v-A2. La Calprenède also encouraged readers not to pursue clavis reading. See La Calprenède, *Pharamond: Or, The History of France* (London: James Cottrell for Nathanael Brook and Samuel Speed, 1662), A2v.
[155] Herbert, *Cloria*, A2.
[156] See ibid., 67-72, 280-83, 391-3.
[157] Ibid., 281. Citations hereafter in text.

When separated from her lover, Narcissus, Cloria is taken prisoner by Osiris, prince of Egypt, who seeks to force her into marriage. Cloria is repelled by Osiris's affection, but her nurse Roxana, a "politick old woman" (76), advises her to tread carefully:

> Such is the necessity of the time, and the power of your captivity, that either you must force your will to comply with Osiris, if he prosecute his affections, or dissemble so far your intentions, as to give him some hope of your consent. (67)

Roxana warns Cloria that should she refuse Osiris outright, she runs the risk of "dishonour…by an equal violence" (67) and instead advises the use of "humility and seeming estimation of his worth" as well as "some dissembling complements" (68). The wicked nurse of *Argenis* who plots against her mistress is reconfigured as the wise political counsellor who encourages plotting in her charge. Roxana suggests Cloria pretend some affection for Osiris but claim "duty and modesty" require her parents' consent, and thus buy herself some time (68). Cloria is "scarce contented with counsel, whereby to shew her self so great an hypocrite in her love" (68), and initially resists this advice. She seems at first, then, to be following Pamela and Philoclea in insisting upon honesty regardless of circumstances. But a conversation with Osiris forces her to see her situation in a new light. Led into a gallery containing images of "the doleful representation of the Story of Philomela's ravishment," Cloria pauses to reflect "upon her own state, being also in the power of an inflamed Lover" (69).[158] Taking the lesson from fiction that women are all too vulnerable to male desire, she chooses "the safest way" which is "exactly to follow her

[158] The story of Philomela is often employed to represent women's lack of agency and to create a sense of the threat male desire poses to the honest woman: in *Cymbeline*, Innogen is reading the story of Philomela the night Iachimo enters her bedroom; in Greene's calumny romance, *Philomela; or, The Lady Fitzwaters' Nightingale*, the heroine is named after Ovid's victim and is shown to be reading while her husband and his friend plot against her. All three romances employ Ovid's tale as an image of female vulnerability to male trickery, and all three show women consuming art (books in two cases, a portrait in a third) while their would-be lovers watch in secret. The story of Philomela is used to confirm female honesty in slightly unexpected ways. Conventional arguments suggested that reading for pleasure turned a woman towards loose behaviour and immorality, but in *Cymbeline* and *Philomela*, reading is an intimate activity confirming the woman's solitariness: she reads precisely because she has *not* taken a lover. Reading, in other words, is a guarantor of chastity.

Governesses direction" and cunningly suggests to Osiris that as "the best affection is to be perswaded, and not compelled" so he should give her "some time of respite," otherwise "to the eye of the world" their marriage "must needs appear forced" (71). After Osiris has agreed and departed, Cloria is in despair "how to winde her dissimulation out of the engagement" and begins "bitterly to accuse her self of ingratitude, to the dear love of deserving Narcissus, since like a coward, she durst not own it before the face of any power" (72). But Roxana assures her that her scruples are but "errour" and that Narcissus will rather "approve of your discretion" (73). Roxana's casuistry redescribes dissimulation such that it is not a breach of the honesty principle, but adherence to the virtue of constancy. Furthermore, she insists that any promises Cloria might make "cannot binde at all" because "you are a prisoner, and therefore not tied to any contract made in such a state" (73). Cloria listens closely to this logic, and when Osiris importunes her again, she is well equipped to manipulate him. The narrator reflects "her necessities had taught her a craft, that was not at all in her nature, for that she alwayes esteemed it dishonourable to dissemble" (74).

The Princess Cloria narrates the intellectual development of a woman who *learns* to dissemble in response to 'necessity'; it suggests, moreover, that such deception may be the most correct response to superior force. Most radically of all, the romance argues that promises made under duress are not binding. This is an unorthodox ethical position to take, and one that has its roots in Catholic resistance theory rather than in more traditional political philosophy. Resistance theory is, of course, most prominently associated with the English Civil War and the justification mounted by parliamentary forces: namely, that unshakeable sovereignty rested in the people, not the monarch.[159] The Roman Catholic priest and anti-monarchical philosopher Thomas White would insist that resistance for the

[159] See, for instance, Anthony Ascham, *A Discourse: Wherein Is Examined, What Is Particularly Lawful During the Confusions and Revolutions of Government* (London: 1648).

sake of self-preservation was always wrong: "No man…can justly attempt such a disobedience, to save his owne life and goods, or the life and goods of his owne family." For White, the only justification for rebellion is "what is best for the people" and it is only "when *evidently* the tyranny of the Governour is greater then the mischiefe hazarded" that "the subject is free" to resist their authority.[160] But resistance theory has a longer history associated with religious resistance, with Catholics who refused to swear the Oath of Allegiance and with the supposedly Jesuit practices of equivocation and mental reservation.[161] The idea that lying to authority might be permissible in certain situations hearkens back to Catholic treatises on equivocating or amphibological speech and the practice of mental reservation, such as Henry Garnet's *A Treatise of Equivocation* which argued that it was permissible for Catholics to lie under oath about their faith.[162] Henry Mason's 1624 *The New Art of Lying* would call Jesuit equivocations nothing but lying "by a new name."[163] As a prominent practising Catholic, Herbert was doubtless familiar with the arguments which justified concealing one's faith from authorities. But what Herbert articulates in *Cloria* is not so much a Catholic argument about the virtues of equivocating speech as it is a development of natural law theory.

As Cavaillé shows, mid-century debates surrounding dissimulation coincided with the development of natural law theory by jurists such as Grotius, who, working "from the twin

[160] Thomas White, *The Grounds of Obedience and Government* (London: Printed by J. Flesher for Laurence Chapman, 1655), 110-11, 114. While most Catholics took the side of the King during the Civil Wars, White was one of a small band of Catholics known as the 'Blackloists' who supported Parliament. White was a friend of Sir Kenelm Digby, Descartes and Thomas Hobbes and a leading voice in the campaign to achieve toleration for Catholics under Cromwell. *Grounds of Obedience* was censured by the House of Commons in 1649 and so not printed until 1655. See Beverley Southgate, 'White [Blacklo], Thomas (1592/3-1676)', *DNB*, *OUP*, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26274, accessed 3 September 2016].

[161] See particularly Butler, "Equivocation, Cognition and Political Authority in Early Modern England"; Paul Wake, "'A Monster Shapeless': Equivocation and the Treasonous Imagination," *Textual Practice* 25, no. 5 (2011): 941-960. As Jennifer Mather Saul notes, the idea behind mental reservation is that "only lies to God matter," not lies to people. See *Lying, Misleading and What is Said*, 105-6.

[162] See David Jardine, ed. *A Treatise of Equivocation* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851). For a full discussion of Garnet's treatise, its influence and the trials of Garnet and Southwell, see Shapiro, *1606*, 178-207.

[163] Henry Mason, *The New Art of Lying, Covered by Jesuites under the Vaile of Equivocation* (London: Printed by George Purslowe for John Clarke, 1624), 'Epistle to the Reader'.

precepts that truthfulness was a tacit contract in spoken exchange and that individuals had certain inalienable rights, such as the right to defend their own lives," developed the burgeoning idea that there might be "a *right to lie*."[164] This idea eroded previous distinctions made between simulation and dissimulation by suggesting that it was not the nature of the deception (concealing or projecting, what Cavaillé calls 'negative' or 'positive' deceit) but rather the motivations behind and the purpose to which it was employed that determined whether or not the deceit was licit.[165] We can find the influence of these ideas in the mid-century discourse on the taking of oaths, a problem which received considerable public debate during the Commonwealth and early Restoration. Prominent works such as Robert Sanderson's *De Juramento* (printed in Latin 1648, trans. 1655) offered a way to reconcile consciences to the seeming disloyalty of swearing the Engagement, an oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth government, having previously sworn the Oath of Allegiance to King Charles. For Sanderson, oaths were not binding if they were overruled by a higher power, or if the situation changed considerably after swearing ("the state of things is…changed").[166] Sanderson insists,

> If any man subject unto the power of another, whether Master, Father, or Prince, voluntarily compelled by force or fear, or misled through fraud, or example of others, happen to make any oath, whereunto he believeth his Master, Father, or Prince, had he bin present, would not have condescended; the same hath sinned against his duty in swearing, and is bound in no wise to fulfill that oath.[167]

For Sanderson, oaths extorted by fear or force are not binding if and when a previous obligation is owed to a higher authority. This is ideologically descended from Catholic casuistry, in which obedience owed to the Pope (and, of course, to God) overrode that owed to the king and other temporal authorities. Sanderson repurposes these arguments for

[164] Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations*, 19; see also Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1194-1239.
[165] Cavaillé, *Dis/Simulations*, 19.
[166] Robert Sanderson, *De Juramento: Seven Lectures Concerning the Obligation of Promissory Oathes* (London: Printed by E.C. for Humphrey Moseley, Octavian Pulleyn, and Andrew Crook, 1655), 248. See discussion in Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, 3.
[167] Ibid., 247.

a royalist audience needing to accommodate itself to the Commonwealth government, suggesting that obligations owed to the exiled Stuarts nullify oaths enforced by the new government. We can see the influence of this theory of casuistry in *Cloria*, in which Cloria's prior and 'higher' obligation to Narcissus overrides the ethical duty to be honest.[168] Indeed, what *Cloria* demonstrates is that the cardinal virtues may not be mutually sustaining, but competing.

Cloria's rejection of *Arcadia's* honesty principle is part of its overall rejection of neostoic constancy as a mode of political resistance. Indeed, *Cloria* suggests that although political constancy may be essential for stability – Arethusius fears "diseases in a State are never more demonstrated, then by inconstancy" (445) – constancy has its limitations, beyond which it threatens to become something like sinful obstinacy or dangerous wilfulness. The French prince Orestes is accused of holding grudges, described as a "certain kinde of obstinate constancy" (285), while some suggest Euarchus maintained the Lydian (Anglican) religion "rather with obstinacy then constancy" (583). Indeed, *Cloria* often suggests that what looks like the virtue of constancy may in fact be the vice of wilfulness. In the story of Salona and her husband Leonides, a general in the king's army, Leonides' son is held hostage by the Senate and will be executed unless Leonides surrenders the town his troops hold for the king.[169] Leonides refuses, choosing loyalty to the king over the life of his son, a choice the romance describes as "most wilfully constant" (244). Salona protests to her husband that this is merely the "fond conceits of Honour and Loyalty" because "where a Prince hath not power to protect, the Subject hath no obligation to obey: neither can we be more tyed to our friends, then to perform those things we ought concerning our selves" (246). Salona articulates a Hobbes-ian theory of governance based

[168] As Joseph Hall, the royalist Bishop of Norwich, articulated in his seven rules concerning oaths, "No oath is, or can be of force, that is made against a lawfull oath formerly taken." Joseph Hall, *The Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of an Oath or Covenant* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1643), 3.
[169] For a close reading of this incident, see Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 158-60.

on contract, in which self-interest guides us into knowing our duty. As Hobbes argued, "the obligation of subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long and no longer than the power lasteth by which he is able to protect them."[170] The debate between husband and wife over the correct performance of constancy raises questions about whether it is an interested or a disinterested virtue: Leonides functions in the chivalric mode, in which unremitting loyalty is the performance of gentlemanly 'word-as-bond', but Salona is operating according to the new ideas of contract theory, in which loyalty is dissolved when it can no longer be supported. Despite acknowledging that his choice will make him "looked upon like some horrid creature" (248), Leonides persists in his decision. The problem is suppressed by a daring rescue which saves the boy's life just in time, but the question of whether constancy is always a virtue, or whether there are occasions when its performance might be excessive, continues to haunt the text.

Such a problem is wrapped up with the question of when lying might be acceptable. Indeed, we find it recurring in response to Cloria's captivity. After escaping the imprisonment of Osiris in Egypt, Cloria returns home to Lydia only to be imprisoned by the rebellious Senate forces. Her brother Ascanius comes to visit her, disguised as a country maid, and advises her to bear her sufferings with patience:

> The minde is able to be a noble conqueror over all unfortunate disasters…I have read of many brave persons, that in the highest expressions of tyranny, and afflictions imposed upon their bodies, by their worst and greatest enemies, have at last in despight of all their cruelty, born away onely the Palm and Lawrel of Victory; as it were confounding their very persecutors, with the extraordinary constancy of their own sufferings. (230)[171]

[170] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 166.

[171] This instance offers one example of the ways in which Herbert plays on historical fact without conforming to the demands of the *à clef* genre. On the evening of 21 April 1648, The Duke of York escaped imprisonment at Syon House by dressing as a woman; so far, then, Ascanius's stay with Cloria reflects historical fact. But the sister he had been imprisoned with was not Mary, but Elizabeth, whose later death became something of a royalist *cause célèbre*. Indeed, Cloria's adventures bear closer resemblance to those of Elizabeth than to those of Mary Stuart and Herbert plays upon the ambiguity of these correspondences to

But Roxana warns against Ascanius's advocation of "heroical suffering" (230), asking why any should "strain nature to no purpose" if such "vain and needless sufferings" (231) can be avoided "with a wise (though not a base) complyance" (230).[172] The nature of the "complyance" she advises is, of course, dissimulative, being merely the pretence of cooperation. She goes on to suggest that suffering is only endured by those of "foolish and preposterous ambition" who are "blown up with vain-glorious fumes" rather than "seasoned with true fortitude" (231), but that such "glory" is rarely attained because "those resistances in the dark shall never come truly to the knowledge of the world" (231). Roxana rewrites heroic constancy as a cover for the pursuit of glory, and suggests that 'wise complyance' might be the truer form of heroism. She continues to advocate for dissimulation and negotiation with their captors. In her insistence that there is a kind of compliance that is 'wise' and not 'base', Roxana resists the traditional association between deception and debasement and suggests instead that the strategic performance of inconstancy might be a truer form of heroism than Ascanius's "heroical suffering."[173]

Endurance is celebrated in the character of Euarchus, who is exhorted by his priest to make his "heroical vertues…apparent to all the world, by a majestick patience in…outward suffering" (320). But *Cloria* emphasises that such suffering should be 'outward' or performative – it should be displayed so that material benefits such as enhanced reputation can be recouped. This is not Roxana's "resistances in the dark" but the performance of suffering, adopted "since the contrary can no way prevent…oppression, but rather encrease

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prevent the reader's knowledge of recent history from undermining romance suspense: by combining the tales of the two princesses into one heroine, the reader can never be quite sure whether happy marriage or death in captivity awaits Cloria.

[172] For other recommendations of 'wise compliance', see 373, 500-1. Annabel Patterson offers a reading of Roxana's advice as a "significant compromise between activism and passivity," *Censorship and Intrepretation*, 195; Kahn notes "the oscillation between recommendations of wise compliance and a kind of Foucauldian discipline of the passions," *Wayward Contracts*, 232.

[173] We might profitably compare this with the suspicion of glory articulated in MacKenzie's *Aretina*, in which "glory makes men too credulous, because it ponders danger too little." Glory is a source of anxiety because its pursuit – requiring trust and courage – leads men to expect trustworthiness and bravery in others and blinds them to fraudulence. *Aretina*, 323.

the misfortune." This is a Machiavellian or Tacitean kind of constancy – it is feigned for political ends. But it is not preferable, and it is not the mode of political engagement *Cloria* teaches its young hero and heroine. In times of turbulence, *Cloria* recommends dissimulating compliance when possible, and the heroism of endurance only when all other avenues of resistance are closed.

As part of the romance's mission to stage its heroine's education into the arts of deception, Cloria shows she has learned to embrace politic dissimulation over the heroics of suffering and now seeks to convert others to her school of thought. In the fourth part, she advises her brother Arethusius to broker a deal with the untrustworthy Myssians (Scots) in order to regain the Lydian throne. Their friend and advisor Creses fears Cloria is "too confident of the truth and honesty" of others and displays "overmuch credulity" (373) in trusting the Myssians. But Cloria defends herself from this charge, explaining she is recommending only a "politick compliance," not an enduring pact. She argues "necessities must for the most part put people upon desperate resolutions" and compliance must be preferable to being "any longer tost in uncertain Seas of discontent and trouble" (374). Cloria has learned that necessity should prompt politic plotting, not patient suffering. Arethusius is initially resistant to this idea. His name makes reference to the Christian martyr Marcus Arethusius who refused to build an idolatrous temple and died for it; it is suggestive of principled suffering, rather than strategic compliance (in so far as Arethusius shadows Charles II, the refusal to bow to idolatry presumably refers to resistance to the demands of the Scottish kirk). But Arethusius ultimately accepts the plan, and proceeds to learn for himself the value of 'wise compliance' in a later dialogue (see 500-1).

The lesson of *Cloria* is of the value of compromise. Indeed, part of the new 'serious' romance as exemplified by *Cloria* is a narrative emphasis on negotiation rather than warfare, and the romance contains far more scenes of political manoeuvring than it does of

battle. This heroism of compromise reflects the particular political moment of *Cloria*'s conception, that is, the years of the Commonwealth. As Susan Staves has demonstrated, the 1650s were characterised by far more collaboration than later royalist myth would acknowledge.[174] Royalists who returned from exile and wished to compound for their estates had to acknowledge the sovereignty of Parliament by taking two oaths: the Solemn League and Covenant, and the Negative Oath.[175] The Covenant imposed a number of obligations, among them "the reformation of religion," while the Negative Oath demanded swearers promise to submit to parliament and forswear aid to the king. As Susan Staves observes, "considerable casuistry was required to reconcile consciences to these oaths," particularly by those who had previously taken the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance to Charles I. A later Commonwealth oath, the Engagement, was intended to be administered to all men but repealed in 1654 after fierce criticism.[176] In Herbert's valorisation of compromise and his insistence that oaths or promises extracted through force "cannot binde", we can hear echoes of the casuistry demanded of royalists seeking to 'wisely comply' with Cromwell's government. Cloria's advocacy of "politick compliance" speaks to a particular royalist experience of the 1650s.

But although *Cloria* defends such 'compliance', Herbert is careful to distance himself from its practice after the Restoration. In the Preface to the 1661 complete edition, Herbert describes his experiences of the Civil Wars:

> It might be thought, the Authour shewed more Fidelity than Policy; especially by those, that esteemed it best to comply with a Man, that never relented in his revenge, or was less cruel for his Dissimulation. (A1)

Herbert's insistence on his "fidelity" and his refusal to "comply" fits within a broader Restoration narrative of disassociation from the revolution and the Commonwealth

[174] Staves, *Players' Scepters*, 20-34.
[175] Ibid., 26.
[176] Ibid., 25-7.

government. Unsurprisingly, after the Restoration, most people sought to present themselves as resistors rather than collaborators.[177] If the romance advises compliance, Herbert is keen to emphasise his own personal constancy to the Stuarts. The paradox between text and paratext is suggestive of the fundamental instability of romances written in parts over this period, which had to accommodate changing mindsets after the Restoration.

In the transition from Sidney's rhetorically honest and chaste heroines to Herbert's heroic constant *dissimulatrice*, we can identify the development of a new school of political thought. Herbert's justification of lies of necessity, his insistence that promises made under duress are not binding and his scepticism of neo-stoic constancy reflect the influence of seventeenth century resistance, natural law and contract theories. But we can also identify a shift in ethical theory. *Arcadia* conjoins rhetorical and sexual honesty because it adheres to Aristotelian virtue ethics, in which character and actions are convertible. Philoclea's resistance to deception is part of what marks her out as virtuous and distinct from the romance's vicious *dissimulatrice*, Cecropia. But *Argenis* and *Cloria* reflect the influence of the new practical ethics, in which what is characterised as virtuous action is situation dependent, and in which a vicious act does not necessarily constitute a vicious character. It is this more flexible form of ethical theory that will shape later romance's attitudes towards deception.

In *Cloria*, Herbert suggests that self-preservation justifies dissimulation. In this, he is breaking with previous constructions of feminine dissimulation in romances. In the *Urania*, women are constant even when it imperils their own lives; in *Argenis*, the heroine's deceptions have a national importance and are thus justified under reason of state theory; but in *Cloria*, although the heroine is a princess, she is not the heir to the throne,

[177] Ibid., 3.

and indeed it is suggested that a marriage to Osiris (and later, when the situation is repeated, to Cassianus) would be of sounder political benefit than one to Narcissus. What is at stake here is not the national interest but personal choice. *The Princess Cloria* breaks from earlier romances in its suggestion that the rights of the individual might be powerful enough to justify mendacity to a social superior. As we will see in Chapter Three, mid-century romances combine natural law theories of a *right to lie* with older notions of a *right kind of lie* to produce a distinctive doctrine of acceptable deceit: the theory of 'honest dissimulation'.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CREDULOUS PRINCE

"I call nothing…vertue, that is mixed any way, either with dissimulation, or indirect dealing," declares Arethusius, the dispossessed hero of *The Princess Cloria*.[1] Debating the relative virtue or vice of dissimulation with his chief advisor Meliander, Arethusius insists "craft is but an unprofitable, and tyrannical master to fear" which runs contrary to princely "courage and wisdom" (391). For Arethusius, dissimulation is debasing, reducing his claims to heroic status by impugning his courage. But this insistence on plain-dealing proves a liability. When Lydia descends into civil war, Arethusius is forced to make alliances with untrustworthy opponents in order to regain his crown. In a political climate characterised by "unusual jealousy and suspicion" (429), Arethusius must learn to veil his thoughts and guard his speech. Indeed, *Cloria* suggests that far from being debasing, dissimulation is an intrinsic part of royal worth, being "as necessary in Princes actions, as the Sword of Justice to be drawn when there is occasion" (391). Arethusius must accept "sometimes we must dissemble towards people…I cannot deny it" (392) and learn "totally to dissimulate his passions" (608) before he can ascend the Lydian throne.

Part of *Cloria's* education into the arts of deception is also an education into the correct operation of trust. Arethusius's resistance to dissimulation and his misfortune of trusting where he should not are paired faults: we are told his "disposition was so good and uncorrupted, that he scarce believed the art of dissimulation could be in another, since he found his own thoughts pure without fiction" (387). This is a reiteration of the problem we have encountered already in *L'Astrée*: our own attitude towards honesty colours our ability to discern the truth in others. As Sidney puts it in the *Arcadia*, a tendency towards over-

[1] *Cloria*, 392. Citations hereafter in text.

credulity is the "only disadvantage of honest hearts" (318). Arethusius's inability or refusal to dissimulate prevents him from accurately assessing the truthfulness or loyalty of his followers. His education into dissimulation, then, must also be one into the appropriate practice of distrust. This presentation of dissimulation and distrust as complementary practices hearkens back to Lipsius, who described dissimulation as the "daughter of distrust."[2] Dissimulation in this sense is not merely the practice of secrecy or misdirection, but incorporates ways of interpreting as well as ways of performing.

One of the principle questions mid-century romances pose is, *How can we know who to trust in a world rife with dissimulation?* There can be no answer to this question; there is no satisfactory solution to the problem of individual opacity. Ultimately, all romances can recommend is to proceed 'honestly' but with distrust. Such advice is of course particularly pertinent during the political and social upheavals of the period 1640-60. Mid-century and Restoration romances depict civil war-era Britain as a nation riven by lies and deceit; indeed, some suggest that lying might have been the cause of the conflict. But the solution they offer is not to return to an age of plain-speaking, but instead to universalise the practices of distrust and concealment. Drawing on a range of mid-century romances, but particularly Orrery's *Parthenissa* (1651-66) and the anonymous *Theophania* (1655) and *Eliana* (1661), in this chapter I argue that mid-century romances perceive the practice of dissimulation and measured distrust to be essential components of heroic worth. To maintain this paradox, romances depend on the nascent theory of *honest dissimulation* – a kind of deception which is acceptable because it is disinterested. It is on the grounds of this disinterested deception that romances rewrite the problematic trope of the disguised prince and configure 'honest dissimulation' as something very like the burgeoning ideal of sincerity.

[2] Lipsius, *Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine*, 117.

I – The Problem of (In)Credulity

Mid-century romances abound with stories of princes whose trusting natures jeopardise their kingdoms. The best-known precedent for this is Sidney's Basilius, but later romances continue to echo the Arcadian problem: in Barclay's *Argenis,* King Meleander relies on "untrusty servants"; the dethroned prince Rosicles in Braithwaite's *Panthalia* is described as a "credulous prince" and "of a malleable and easy temper"; King Euarchus in Herbert's *Cloria* is mocked as "our credulous king"; and in Orrery's *Parthenissa* Prince Artabazus is easily misled by "the goodness of [his] disposition, so highly misled and abused by the subtilty and wickedness of others."[3] This concern with credulousness and its potential to undermine royal status had direct political purchase. In Sidney's time, there were fears Elizabeth I was too susceptible to the blandishments of her enemies.[4] Similarly Jacobean courtiers feared the influence of the Duke of Buckingham over both James I and Charles I.[5] And in the immediate aftermath of Charles I's execution, both histories and romances located one of the causes of the years of tumult in Charles's virtuous, trusting nature. The Earl of Clarendon, for instance, cited "the lenity of his nature and the tenderness of his conscience" as features which left Charles susceptible to the "great hypocrisy and dissimulation" of others.[6] In *Cloria*, Euarchus recognises just before his execution that his greatest failing has been his "credulity" which has "been so much abused by those [he] trusted in [his] affairs." He is unfavourably compared with his father, who is admired for his "much wisdom though more policy."[7] Without wishing to overstate the allegorical correspondence of the work, in so far as Euarchus stands for Charles I, *Cloria* might be

[3] Barclay, *Argenis*, 5; Braithwaite, *Panthalia*,100; Herbert, *Cloria*, 337; Orrery, *Parthenissa*, 54.
[4] Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, 175.
[5] For the literary impact of Buckingham's perceived evil influence, see Siobhan C. Keenan, "Staging Roman History, Stuart Politics, and the Duke of Buckingham: The Example of *The Emperor's Favourite*," *Early Theatre* 14, no. 2 (2011): 63-104.
[6] Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols. (1888, repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 4:490, 314.
[7] *Cloria*, 332, 310.

said to reflect Commonwealth nostalgia for Jacobean peace and admiration for James I's mastery of reason of state.[8] Anthony Welden credited James I with the motto, *qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*. Although not generally favourable to James, Welden admires "how perfect the King was in the art of dissimulation, or to give it his own phrase, *King-craft*."[9] In this chapter, I argue that mid-century romances are vexed by the possibility that a morally good king might not have mastered this misleading 'craft', and that they stage the sovereign hero's education into the correct practice of royal dissimulation.

But if Commonwealth-era romances probe the problem of royal credulity, early Restoration romances warn against the opposite problem: a king who is overly suspicious. In John Crowne's 1665 *Pandion and Amphigenia*, the suspicious King Agis is "ever suspecting all men of evil" and his ever-present fear of deception renders him "tyrannical." The tyrant's suspicion alienates his subjects, "there being nothing more averse to a generous and noble spirit, especially if refined by honour and advancement, than to be slighted," and he is easily deposed by the "ambitious and politick Hiarbas."[10] To suspect another's word is the greatest insult; by distrusting his advisors, Agis dishonours them and undermines the foundations of his own rule. Similarly in John Bulteel's 1664 *Birinthea*, the tyrant Vectorez is characterized by his widespread use of spies and informants, and his kingdom is overrun with unnecessary suspicion. The paranoia of the monarch spreads through his court and the heroic Gadate finds he is watched by a hundred "busy eyes".[11] Vectorez is ultimately deposed by Cyrus, who wins the allegiance of Vectorez's people by deliberately impoverishing himself to enrich his friends. Cyrus's demonstration of trust

[8] Other romances (and contemporary histories) blamed Jacobean peace for the conflict under Charles I. In *Panthalia*, for instance, it is a "surfet of peace" that has caused the nation "to be more remiss in the prudent management of her State." Braithwaite, *Panthalia*, 177.
[9] Welden, *The Court and Character of King James*, 102-3.
[10] Crowne, *Pandion and Amphigenia*, 31-2.
[11] Bulteel, *Birinthea*, 137, 213. The sense of this evocative turn of phrase is found in other romances to indict the fish-bowl atmosphere of the royal court. Braithwaite evokes "Princes Courts" as "ful of Eyes and Eares: Eyes, to pry and observe: Eares, to hear and traduce." *Panthalia*, 3. We might think, too, of the Rainbow Portrait of Elizabeth I, in which her cloak is decorated with eyes and ears, implying she sees and hears all.

(primarily in the form of munificence) is shown to generate trustworthy behaviour. If Civil War and Commonwealth-era romances identify credulity as the vice of the weak king, Restoration romances warn against tyrannical over-suspicion, distrust and resistance. This changing emphasis reflects a shift in cultural concerns. Commonwealth romances rehash the events of the Civil Wars and, like contemporary histories, draw on the king's credulity as an explanation for the trauma which is acceptable to both loyalists and Republicans. But Restoration romances have a new goal: preventing the recurrence of the conflict by advising the new king to accept counsel.[12] In their tales of deposed tyrants, romances such as *Pandion and Amphigenia* and *Birinthea* emphasise the importance of counsel to limit the pernicious effects of sovereign paranoia.

We have begun already, then, to elucidate the ways in which the problem of (in)credulity is both universal and specific to kings. In general terms, belief belonged to those virtues and practices which ought to conform to the Aristotelian Golden Mean. Meric Casaubon (son of Isaac) explains:

> Credulity, oppos'd to Incredulity, may be understood two ways, either as a vertue (for so the word is taken sometimes, by Christian writers, especially); or both Credulity…and Incredulity may be taken as two vicious extreams, of what we may call πίςις, in general, taken for a rational belief, or, belief grounded, either upon ordinary grounds of reason, and probability…In either sense, credulity taken, will fit our purpose well enough: yet of the two, I rather chuse the second, that credulity may be taken for a vice; that so, as all, or most vertues, according to Aristotle's doctine, (though by some, upon very light grounds, as I conceive, much opposed) we may place this πίςις, or belief also in the middle of two vicious extremities.[13]

[12] In writing about Restoration drama, Paula Backscheider notes that the playwrights of the 1660s were "working within a long tradition of addressing, even instructing, their sovereign." In this chapter, I claim a similar function for Restoration romance. See Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 36.

[13] Meric Casaubon, *Of Credulity and Incredulity in Things Natural, Civil, and Divine* (London: T. Garthwait, 1668), 6-7.

In matters of faith, credulity is a virtue. But in the civil and political spheres, credulity and incredulity are vices falling on either side of virtuous 'rational belief', or belief grounded in probability.[14] Credulity and incredulity accrue a variety of other associations for Casaubon: credulity is associated with Papism and with witchcraft, incredulity with atheism and apostasy; credulity is associated with blindness and excessive loyalty, incredulity with jealousy, suspicion and treachery; credulity is associated with extravagant misinterpretation of fables and romances, incredulity with those who don't read at all. If Casaubon presents credulity as a vice, worse still is *incredulity*, which verges on atheism, the vice "most horrible, damnable, and most unworthy of a rational man."[15] In a world in which religious belief was believed to underpin civil obedience and the word of God guaranteed the sanctity of oaths, any suspicion of orthodox belief could be taken as evidence of inherent untrustworthiness. Individuals who did not conform to Anglican orthodoxy could be constructed as either overly 'credulous', having been taken in by Jesuit or Puritan preachers, or overly incredulous, having responded with suspicion to those religious and temporal authorities that should be taken on trust. When romances address the problem of royal (in)credulity, then, they reflect the fear that the leader him(or her)self might conceal unorthodox beliefs – a problem that dogged the Stuarts, who were regularly suspected of crypto-Catholicism.[16] Anxieties about (in)credulity thus map onto broader cultural anxieties about nicodemism and the threat it might pose to political stability.

But there are also specific anxieties surrounding royal (in)credulity relating to the perceived role of counsel: the weak or credulous king might trust a corrupt counsellor,

[14] We might note here the implications for 'serious romances' which, as we have seen, construct themselves as the genre of the 'probable'. When romances claim their own 'probability', they are asserting their Aristotelian virtuous credentials and making claims about the truth-discerning abilities of their readers. Romance readers are neither overly credulous nor incredulous, but practice 'rational belief' grounded in 'probability'.

[15] Casaubon, *Of Credulity and Incredulity*, 7.

[16] One of the first acts of Parliament after the Restoration made it a criminal offence to call Charles II a Catholic. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, 41.

while the incredulous or tyrannical king might not take advice at all. As L.J. Reeve has demonstrated, fears over evil counsel reflected upon the monarch himself and were often implicit criticsms of his judgement.[17] A weak king could be taken in by experienced dissimulators who might flatter him into decisions which undermined national stability.[18] There were fears, too, that self-interested flatterers might encourage the king to pursue his passions to excess. Philosophers recommended kings seek 'honest counsel': only the transparent courtier could guide the king into the requisite art of self-control.[19] The onus for taking such counsel was placed on the king himself.[20] As a large and diverse group of individuals, Parliament was best placed to offer disinterested advice and so calling Parliament came to be seen as an "extension of the obligation on the sovereign to take counsel."[21] Charles I's years of Personal Rule laid him open to accusations of either not heeding counsel, or putting trust in dishonest counsellors instead of 'honest' Parliament.

We can see a surprising reflection of these anxieties around counsel in a French context in the Preface to Madeleine de Scudéry's *Ibrahim*, in which she asserts:

> I have had a care likewise to deal in such sort, as the faults, which great ones have committed in my History, should be caused either by Love or by Ambition, which are the Noblest of passions, and that they be imputed to the evil counsell of Flatterers; that so the respect, which is alwayes due unto Kings, may be preserved.[22]

Scudéry displaces criticism of the king onto criticism of his counsellors. As in fiction, so in life: in England in the 1640s, Parliament seized upon arguments surrounding counsel as

[17] L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 30.
[18] Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 89.
[19] See Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants*, 12-15, 37-79.
[20] Linda Levy Peck, "Kingship, Counsel and Law in Early Stuart Britain," in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 81.
[21] Conrad Russell, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642* (London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 8.
[22] Preface to Scudéry, *Ibrahim, or The Illustrious Bassa.* We might compare this with Thomas Bayly's interdiction on criticising the king: "Subjects should set a Watch before their Mouths, to keep the Door of their Lips, least they Offend with their Tongue, in speaking ill of Princes." Thomas Bayly, *The Royal Charter Granted Unto Kings by God Himself and Collected out of His Holy Word, in Both Testaments* (London, 1649), 39.

justification for taking up arms. Adherents of Parliament could reconcile themselves to this apparent disloyalty to the king by swearing that they were not taking arms against their sovereign, but against his advisors. We can identify this logic in pamphlets such as the 1642 *An Appeale to the World in these Times of Extreame Danger*, which insists "the will of a King is not an unlimited will" when he has been "seduced by wicked Counsell."

The problem of royal susceptibility to potentially malicious counsel is reflected in a number of mid-century romances. In Braithwaite's 1659 *Panthalia*, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots is loosely shadowed in the story of Mariana, whose "indiscreet credulitie" leads to her being misled by scheming courtiers who saw how "apt was [her] innocence to become credulous." Likewise her cousin, Bellingaria (Elizabeth I), is of a "too credulous spirit" when it comes to her advisors, and a "too light credulity" when it comes to the protestations of Mariana.[23] Both women are fooled into plots against the other's interests, and their credulity leads to Mariana's death. But *Panthalia* also stages the dangers of honest counsel in its account of the maligned advisor Sophronio (a shadow of the Earl of Strafford) who, despite his honest service, is put to death by the king to placate his rebellious council. On the scaffold, Sophronio offers a moving account of his actions, insisting that his "crime is Loyalty," that he has been "no servant to time, but to truth," and that his death is "a sacrifice of Loyalty."[24] The narrator interprets the events (as Charles I did in *Eikon Basilike*) as a tipping point in the dawning conflict which "begot a distrust" of the king "who had subscribed against his own resolution and publike protest, to the death of so faithfull a servant."[25] Here of course the problem is not the king's credulity, but his untrustworthiness and weakness. *Panthalia* suggests both that kings are too credulous to wicked counsel, and too weak to be spoken to honestly.

[23] Braithwaite, *Panthalia,* 25, 28, 27.
[24] Ibid., 233-35.
[25] Ibid., 248.

We can find a more abstract reflection on the problem of counsel and credulity in the popular genre of calumny romance. Calumny – that is, the slandering of others – is the "vice of vices" according to Lipsius. It has two ends: to deceive and to hurt.[26] In romances, calumnies tend to take the form of slandering female virtue, and often lead to legal process. As a genre, calumny romance poses important questions about the nature of chivalry, asking, *What is the point of being virtuous if doing so results in innocent suffering?* and, *What protection is there for the innocent against the cunning?* As Helen Cooper has argued, these kinds of romance narratives reflect anxieties about the agency of female desire.[27] But they also reflect concerns about the correct operation of trust in the face of the problem of individual opacity. It is unsurprising, then, that calumny romance was particularly popular during the 1640s and 1650s. Popular metaphor held that the king was husband to his nation; stories of the breakdown of marital trust invited comparisons with the distrust which so characterised Charles I's relationship with his people by the 1640s.

Calumny narratives proliferate in the 1650s. To give but a few examples, in Samuel Sheppard's *Amandus and Sophronia* (1650), the eponymous couple are divided when suspicions are planted regarding Sophronia's fidelity. Similarly the first parts of Orrery's *Parthenissa*, published in the 1650s, are structured around repeated tales of slander against and suspicion of virtuous women. When Parthenissa's lover Artabanes suspects her of infidelity, she protests, "is an accusation then a sufficient convincement?" and assumes that his credulity can only stem from his own perfidy.[28] But it is in Thomas Bayly's 1650 *Herba Parietis: Or, The Wallflower* that we can most clearly perceive the connection

[26] Antony Stafford, *Meditations, and Resolutions, Moral, Divine, Politicall. Written for the Instruction and Bettering of Youth; but, Especially, of the Better and More Noble. There Is Also Annexed an Oration of Iustus Lipsius, against Calumnie. Translated out of Latine, into English* (London: Printed by H.L. for Thomas Saunders, 1612), 130-32.
[27] Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, 269-323.
[28] Orrery, *Parthenissa*, 257.

between problematic royal (in)credulity (figured as unjust suspicion of the virtuous wife's chastity, and incorrect trust of the scheming, calumniating courtier) and political unrest.[29] *Herba Parietis* is the tale of an ambitious courtier, Maximanus, who abuses his prince's trust to stir up suspicions against the queen before leading the population into outright rebellion. In articulating civil war as resulting from the incorrect operation of royal trust, *Herba Parietis* rehearses many of the anxieties common to mid-century romances: the problem of a too-trusting monarch and scheming courtiers; the fear of a populace who are either overly credulous, overly suspicious, or both; concern over wayward forms of reading and interpreting; and the belief that social unrest is caused by deception and can be resolved by revelation of the 'truth'.

Set against an a-historical background of the Goths' invasion of Rome and the ejection of the Moors from Europe, *Herba Parietis* is driven by a Westernizing impulse to advance Christianity against these twin Barbarian threats by means of marital alliances. It thus exemplifies the ways in which 'serious romances' reflected upon contemporary political problems through erotic narratives set in a fantastic version of the distant past. Bayly was a Royalist clergyman who wrote his only romance in 1649-50 while imprisoned in Newgate, probably for publishing *The Royal Charter Granted unto Kings by God Himself* after Charles I's execution.[30] His sympathetic portrayal of a king whose misplaced trust leads to civil war has obvious contemporary purchase. Prince Lorenzo is fooled into doubting the

[29] First published in 1650 and re-issued in 1679 by Peter Parker, *Herba Parietis* was the source for the primary plot of George Powell's tragedy *The Treacherous Brothers*, first published in 1690. The romance has received scant critical attention. Amelia Zurcher offers a reading of the romance's revolutionary attempt to present love as "inclusive rather than exclusive" in *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 126-9, and Paul Salzman takes notice of the work in *English Prose Fiction*, 288-9. Written while Bayly was imprisoned in Newgate, the romance is mentioned by Jerome de Groot and Molly Murray in their work on prison literature. Jerome de Groot, "Prison Writing, Writing Prison During the 1640s and 1650s," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2009): 193-215; Molly Murray, "Measured Sentences: Forming Literature in the Early Modern Prison," ibid.: 147-67.

[30] Bayly was the son of Lewis Bayly, Bishop of Bangor and author of *The Practice of Piety* (1642), a popular devotional text. It is probable that Bayly converted to Catholicism around 1654 before his death in the late 1650s. Thompson Cooper, 'Bayly, Thomas (d. c.1657)', rev. Stephen Wright, *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://ez proxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/1767, accessed 6 Oct 2016].

virtue of his wife, Honoria, despite a premonition by his guardian spirit warning him to take care where he places his trust:

> Sullie not a Princes name,
> By too much credulence to fame.
> …. He that is easie of belief,
> Runs downe staires to meet a Thief.[31]

Over-credulity, the spirit suggests, has the potential to 'sully' a prince's reputation and undermine royal prestige. Lorenzo's decision to trust the word of his advisor over his knowledge of his wife has far-reaching political consequences, jeopardising his alliance with Rome and ultimately stirring his people up into rebellion.

But Lorenzo is not solely to blame; Honoria, too, has been too trusting. Believing themselves to be "guarded with innocence", Lorenzo and Honoria extend universal trust even towards those who have wronged them. Driven by desire for Honoria, Maximanus attempts first to seduce and then to rape her, but Honoria chooses to conceal this violent assault, believing the "truth of his intentions" was only to test the strength of her loyalty to Lorenzo.[32] This insistence on extending trust where it has been violated is shown to be an errant *misreading* of others. Indeed, Honoria's friend, the more worldly Amarissa, advises her to publicly accuse Maximanus first, otherwise "when Falshood hath once made Truth a Defendant, it hath taken away her Testimonie."[33] Amarissa understands that Honoria's secrecy may devalue her reputation for honesty and chastity. Furthermore, Amarissa is aware of how delicate reputation is and how easily the common people can be misled, being "both credulous and ambitious" and known for their "willingness to be deluded."[34] Sure enough, when Maximanus accuses Honoria of seducing her servant, he finds a willing audience among those who have long viewed the queen's "modestie" as nothing more than

[31] Thomas Bayly, *Herba Parietis: Or, The Wallflower* (1650; repr. London: The Brummell Press, 1969), 42.
[32] Ibid., 26.
[33] Ibid, 29.
[34] Ibid., 29, 28.

"a piece of cunning" (5). When Honoria is put on trial, she finds few who credit her story, because "some out of envy, some out of complacence to so great a Favourite, were willing enough to beleeve" the calumny and "a foolish mistake" is "sufficient enough to create a Beliefe, where the mind is willing to receive it" (27). Ambition can render a subject willing to be deceived if they can see any benefit to themselves by the lie, and Honoria's innocent belief in the trustworthiness of others does not account for the influence of self-interest in shaping belief.

Lorenzo is taken in by Maximanus, who is "able enough…to entangle no small flies, within the fine spun cobweb of his fucetious [sic] language" (48). His inability to 'read' Maximanus's intentions correctly has both personal and political ramifications: his wife is imprisoned and condemned to death, and his people are stirred up into outright rebellion. In a romance which stresses that the common people are easily misled, the burden of correct interpretation is placed on the monarch. Credulity is the vice of the common people and is inevitably tied to ambition and self-interest; in the case of kings, it 'sullies' royalty and is dishonouring. It is only when Lorenzo learns the truth and acknowledges that he should have trusted his wife that he regains his lost honour. Honour is, of course, key to romances: it is the "public recognition" of the romance hero's internal virtue.[35] This conjunction is made explicit in the resolution of *Herba Parietis*, a triple wedding in which the happy couples must pass through the Temple of Virtue to the Temple of Honour. Bayly's final image of the two conjoined temples was a popular Renaissance metaphor for the association of honour and virtue as described by La Primaudaye: "For this cause the auncient Romans built two Temples joined together, the one being dedicated to Vertue, and the other to Honor: but yet in such a sort, that no man could enter into that of Honor,

[35] Curtis Brown Watson, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 73.

except that he passed through the other of Vertue."[36] Honour and virtue are indivisible, and the former follows on from the latter. But it is not traditionally conceived virtue which underpins honour in *Herba Parietis*; rather, it is politic distrust.

Orrery's epic romance *Parthenissa* (1651-66) also employs the calumny romance to explore the problems of credulity and opacity.[37] In *Parthenissa*, the dangers of (in)credulity are juxtaposed with the rewards to be reaped by trusting 'correctly'. Amorous narratives serving as a shorthand for the social and political, *Parthenissa* makes this point through repeated calumnies, which are believed by the incorrectly (in)credulous and dismissed by those who have mastered the appropriate Aristotelian golden mean of belief. There has been scant critical work on Orrery's *Parthenissa*, and what exists tends to relate the work to the author's chameleon-like political career. Both Paul Salzman and John Kerrigan read the work as illustrative of the 1650s problem of divided loyalties.[38] As an Irish Protestant and a Royalist who served as one of Cromwell's chief advisors before becoming an "architect of the Restoration," Orrery's career illustrates the central preoccupation of his romance with competing ethical duties.[39] His brother Robert Boyle

[36] As quoted in Ibid., 94.

[37] A small number of copies of the first edition of the first book of *Parthenissa* survive, providing evidence of a private printing in 1651 before a second edition in 1654. See C. William Miller, "A Bibliographical Study of *Parthenissa* by Roger Boyle Earl of Orrery," *Studies in Bibliography* 2 (1949): 115-137. Although she was an acquaintance of Orrery, Dorothy Osborne does not appear to be aware of the 1651 edition when she anticipates the first volume of *Parthenissa* in a letter to William Temple from 1652/3. See Parry, *Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple 1652-54*, 160. We can be sure that Orrery had completed most of Book One by 1648 as his brother's work-diary from 1649 contains ten folio pages of closely written literary and moralistic aphorisms copied from Book One of *Parthenissa*. See 'A Diurnall Miscellaneous Collection, Begun March the 25th 1648/9', BP 8, fol.118-122v. A supplementary leaf can be found in BP 3, fol.146.

[38] John Kerrigan argues *Parthenissa* is "fraught with the strain of maintaining, or manufacturing, a display of loyalty" and is designed to "intervene in politics in the…hope of extending Anglo-Protestant hegemony in Ireland." Similarly Paul Salzman describes the world of *Parthenissa* as one where "divided loyalties are ubiquitous" and the "question of when one has the grounds to disobey echoes…and no single or simple answer is provided." See John Kerrigan, "Orrery's Ireland and the British Problem, 1641-79," in *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, ed. David J. Baker and Willy Maley (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 219, 198; Salzman, *English Prose Fiction*, 199, 196.

[39] Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 244. There exist two book-length studies of Orrery's career. The first by Kathleen Lynch details the plot of *Parthenissa* but offers little in the way of analysis. See Kathleen M. Lynch, *Roger Boyle, First Earl of Orrery* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1965). The second

certainly perceived a connection between *Parthenissa* and Orrery's military career in Ireland in the 1640s, congratulating him on having so "happily emulated" his hero Artabanes at the siege of Munster and celebrating *Parthenissa* for giving "romances as well credit as reputation".[40] Nigel Smith notes that unlike other contemporary romances, *Parthenissa* resists mapping onto recent English history.[41] Amelia Zurcher furthers this argument, arguing that *Parthenissa* resists any allegorical construction and instead reaches towards a new realism.[42]

In the words of John Mallet, *Parthenissa* is a romance about "the mysteries of love, of state, and of glory."[43] It is structured around four interlocking tales, all told retrospectively in the first person: the tales of Parthenissa and Artabanes, Izadora and Perolla, Altezeera and Artavasdes and Statira and Callimachus. All four are stories of tested constancy, and none save that of Izadora resolve happily. Heavily influenced by the French heroic romances of La Calprenède and Scudéry, *Parthenissa* is governed by three principal virtues: constancy, faith and gratitude. We can perceive the interaction of these virtues in *Parthenissa*'s most extended calumny tale, that of Altezeera.

Altezeera is committed to her lover Artavasdes until her brother, perceiving more benefit by allying himself with Prince Pacorus than with the foreign gentleman Artavasdes, fools Artavasdes into believing Altezeera has been unfaithful. Only after her marriage is the truth revealed, whereupon Artavasdes and Altezeera fall into a swoon in each others' arms, initiating the second calumny plot. Seeing the two "in this senseless but happy posture",

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by Patrick Little does not mention *Parthenissa* at all. See Patrick Little, *Lord Broghill and the Cromwellian Union with Ireland and Scotland* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004).

[40] Letter of 20th December 1649 in Thomas Birch, ed. *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle.*, 6 vols. (London: Printed for J. and F. Rivington, L. Davis, W. Johnson, S. Crowder and T. Payne, 1772), 6:50.

[41] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 245.

[42] Amelia Zurcher, "The Narrative Turn against Metaphor: Metonymy, Identification, and Roger Boyle's *Parthenissa*," in *Go Figure: Energies, Forms, and Institutions in the Early Modern World*, ed. Judith H. Anderson and Joan Pong Linton (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 73-90.

[43] Letter from John Mallet to Robert Boyle, March 1657, in Birch, *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, 6:634.

the ambitious courtier Phraates seizes the chance to make mischief and betrays them to Pacorus's chief advisor, Labienus.[44] His "judgement…so infinitely deluded by his Sight" (390), Labienus in turn takes this account to Pacorus, who surprises both his counsellor and the reader by refusing to countenance the charge:

> I will not so much as listen to thee; there needs no greater proof that Phraates has ly'd, than his accusing Altezeera; and the greatest Sin next to that, is to believe she stands in need of a justification. (392)

Altezeera offers to prove her innocence to Pacorus, but he resists, asserting it is both "more fitting, and…secure, to credit Altezeera's innocence without any other proof but the knowledg of her Life" (394). Precisely because he has not demanded proof of her innocence, Altezeera feels compelled to provide it:

> To believe me Innocent, after I had evinc'd I was so, could not be more Just, than to believe I was so before I prov'd my self, was obliging: Had you thought me guilty, I might perhaps have left your Sin, your Punishment; but your concluding me Innocent, invites me to reward your believing it, by my proving it. (392)

Altezeera's virtue is such that it will not reveal itself to those who lack faith. But when Artavasdes hears of Pacorus's display of trust, he questions whether it "is fain'd, or real" (395). Artavasdes is perhaps rightly suspicious of Pacorus's motives: in recompense for Pacorus's generous display of trust, Altezeera plans to banish Artavasdes and reconcile herself to her unwanted marriage. Artavasdes protests that such a plan would in no way prove her loyalty to Pacorus, which can only be demonstrated by continual tests: that is to say, by daily rejection of her love for Artavasdes. But Altezeera explains that her choice is not made from the virtue of fidelity, but from that of gratitude:

> In recompensing Pacorus, I do but imitate the gods: for though to believe the mysteries of Faith in Religion, is only to believe what we cannot do otherwise without eternal Sufferings; yet the gods have allotted a proportionate Beatitude for duration, as the recompence of it. (395)

[44] Orrery, *Parthenissa*, 386. Citations hereafter in text.

Altezeera imagines happy marriage to be like the "beatitude" of Heaven and the appropriate reward for Pacorus's act of faith. Erotic trust is explicitly identified as the parallel virtue to religious faith. The maligned Altezeera observes "that noble Virtue, Chastity, is like the Fundamentals in our Religion, the highest are not to be prov'd, but believ'd" (391) and elsewhere explains that the proof of chastity is not in empirical evidence, but in the faith of the believer: "chastity is like happiness, it must be thought so, to be so" (396). *Parthenissa* accords a positive voice to female sexuality, emphasising women's rhetorical and sexual honesty. But it also stresses that such honesty is not to be proved but must simply be believed. Erotic fidelity cannot be assessed rationally by means of legal process or deductions of probability, but demands to be taken on trust. As Labienus sadly reflects, "there was no possibility of proving a woman chaste" (387). With no possibility of absolute proof, *Parthenissa* celebrates faith in the lover as the parallel virtue to faith in God. The logic of romance, of course, holds love to be its own sovereign power. Love's sovereignty demands our confidence. The allegorical force of calumny romance, then, is to stage the rewards of rightly trusting the highest authority, God himself.

II – Lying, Credulity and Atheism

Thus far, I have argued that romances posit royal (in)credulity to be a cause of social conflict. We have established that (in)credulity – royal or otherwise – is a problem of excessive confidence or suspicion beyond the virtuous Golden Mean of 'rational belief.' Such 'rational belief' is tested in romances through calumny, and the hero demonstrates his worth by correctly trusting the calumniated woman over the self-interested advisor. Now let us turn to events in which we can locate a nexus of anxieties about belief, conflict and faith: the Civil Wars. We shall see that romances identify the Civil Wars to have resulted from a breakdown in social trust caused by excessive (in)credulity. Romances

explain the Civil Wars as resulting from the lies of those outside the English political nation – women, Catholics, the Scots and the Irish – and the credulity of key political actors.

Romances present themselves as uniquely equipped to grapple with the causes and events of the Civil Wars. The Preface to *The Princess Cloria*, for instance, announces that in recent history "the Ground-work for a Romance was excellent…since by no other way almost, could the multiplicity of strange Actions of the Times be exprest, that exceeded all belief, and went beyond every example in the doing" (A1v).[45] The irrationality and inexplicability of recent history makes romance – historically the genre of the incredible and the fantastic – uniquely qualified to present and analyse the events of the recent past. Certainly the turmoil of the times must have seemed near unprecedented in Western memory. Between 1640 and 1660 there were six revolutions across Europe. Writers attempted to explain the violence, turbulence and uncertainty of the period as the result of lies and those who were taken in by them.[46] Joseph Hall, for instance, blamed the conflict on "poore well-meaning soules…whose credulity hath heedlessly betray'd them into zealous error."[47] Deception is implicated in violent revolt because it is perceived to be the vice which enables other vices. As Percy Herbert put it, "scarce can there be any crime of a high nature committed, but for the most part something of deceipt must accompany the action."[48] The danger of deception is that it facilitates and conceals other crimes; it is thus

[45] This literary mode of interpreting events was not confined to romances. Describing the battle for Nottingham Castle in January 1644, Lucy Hutchinson observes, "If it were a romance, wee should say after the successe that the Heroes did it out of excesse of gallantry," in Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson with the Fragment of an Autobiography of Mrs. Hutchinson*, ed. James Sutherland (London, New York and Toronto: OUP, 1973), 114.
[46] Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 27.
[47] Dedication, Joseph Hall, *The Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of an Oath or Covenant*.
[48] Herbert, *Certaine Conceptions*, 140.

the most threatening vice to political stability, as the state cannot prosecute what is not seen or known.[49]

Cloria narrates the causes of the pan-European turmoil as the natural result of the innocent credulity of some and the ambitious dissimulation of others. The first and perhaps principal cause of Lydia's troubles for Herbert is the king's overly trusting nature, ill-suited to an age dominated by the principles of politic philosophy. The Lydian court "nourished…Vipers, that…conversed no where but by deceit" (485) yet Euarchus remains unaware that flattery and dissimulation comprise the courtier's arts, and insists on trusting where he should not. But *Cloria* stresses that it is not merely Euarchus's quickness to trust that is to blame for the conflict; his people's unnatural suspicion is equally culpable. Euarchus's troubles are the result of "the envious suspicion of his own people" who believe all princes' "thoughts and actions are masked" (305). *Cloria* suggests the danger of Machiavellian politic philosophy might be that it creates a *perception* of royal dissimulation. When the public assumes the king practises the arts of dissimulation, it becomes even more dangerous for him both to practise rhetorical honesty himself and to presume it in others. Indeed, in his final speech to the Senate, Euarchus laments how "much innocent blood hath been spilt, for want of sufficient credulity," blaming the people's "rather suspicion then belief of my future intentions" (304). Conflict only increases the problem of universal distrust, and the characters in *Cloria* find war "hath bred more then suspicion enough amongst all sorts of people" (428) and the troubles have led to "unusual jealousy and suspicion" (429). In such an environment, it is pure folly to meet suspicion with openness and a measured dissimulating distrust is the only possible response.

[49] See Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London and New York: Penguin. 2006), on the threat of the "hidden crime," 92; see also Bok, *Lying*, 22.

Blaming the Civil Wars on problems of social mistrust was not, of course, a strategy unique to romances. Clarendon, for instance, explains the conflict as the result of a breakdown in social transparency, citing "the spirit of craft and subtlety in some, and the unpolished integrity of others, too much despising craft or art" as "all contributing to this mass of confusion now before us."[50] The problem for Clarendon is not merely that some are crafty, but that some 'despise' art: what is needed is a happy medium between self-interested cunning and uncivil ('unpolished') honesty. Clarendon imagines the conflict to have been caused by a communication breakdown in which the uneven rise of dissimulation while others retain "unpolished integrity" has led to confusion and violence.

Concealed beliefs – particularly religious ones – were seen to be a particularly insidious threat. *Cloria*, like many histories of the time, blames the Irish (the Cretans) and the Scottish (the Myssians) for the outbreak of war, deriding them for their "subtlety and craft" (382), their "falshood" (475) and their "crafty…dissimulation" (311). The Cretans and the Myssians are distinguished from the Lydians by their credulous belief in suspect doctrine. The Myssians are "delighted rather with…strange and wonderful stories…then with the soundness…of doctrine and reason" (388) while the Cretans are a "sensual and inconstant people who cannot be brought from believing the old and feigned stories of their commanders" (385). Their credulity in matters of faith also prompts credulity in politics, and they are easily taken in by the villains of the romance, Hercrombotus and Argylius – the leaders of the Senate forces and the Myssian army respectively – who are characterised by their strategic self-interest. Hercrombotus is "almost as much feared in his dissimulation as in his cruelty" (534) while Argylius is possessed of "craft and cunning" and only his "dissimulation…kept him safe" (425). In a romance which traverses many nations affected by the Thirty Years' War, it is unsurprising that *Cloria* should locate the

[50] Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion*, I:4.

causes of the Civil Wars in religious difference. Christian faith was the source of the monarch's claims to power, and the grounds upon which subjects were bound to obey. Unsurprisingly, then, religious schism threatened to undermine the foundations of monarchy and open the doors to civil revolt. Arethusius bemoans "the Nation of the Lydians, once the very flower of glory and gallantry, is now not onely become base and most unworthy in her productions, but the sole centre of all falsehood, corruption and atheism, betraying their Princes for a little gain and gaining ignominy for their reward" (485). For Arethusius, lack of religious faith has prompted the rebellion, "contracted by reason of our falshood" (433). Infidelity to the king and to God are related concepts.

As Kate Loveman demonstrates, the belief that lying was at the heart of most social conflict could be both "disturbing and comforting": on the one hand, it fed popular paranoia that the nation was "constantly imperilled by plots and deceits," but on the other, such a fear made it seem as though all threats could be resolved by universal recognition of one 'truth'.[51] Unsurprisingly, then, establishing that 'truth' – whether religious, political or interpersonal – was an important task, and high value was placed on the ability to discern truth from falsehood. There was a growing appetite for guides such as La Chambre's *The Art How to Know Men* (1660, first translated 1665), which promised to teach readers to penetrate the opacity of others.

Loveman shows how various types of deception were seen to endanger the nation: the Gunpowder plot stirred up enduring panic about Jesuit equivocation, the Overbury affair brought the dangerous duplicity of women into public debate and tales of duplicitous servants were rampant. But it was 'popery' that "provided the master narrative of deception."[52] For Daniel Dyke, for instance, "the Church of Rome carrieth away…in this

[51] Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 27.
[52] Ibid., 24.

kind of deceitfull painting and colouring…making the shew of godliness to be onely a cloake of wickedness."[53] Jesuit plots were held responsible for everything from the Civil Wars and the execution of Charles I to the rise of the Quakers and the Great Fire of London.[54] Jesuits were believed to seek the destruction of the Protestant nation through both violence and conversion, using lies, disguises and fraudulent literature to win the credulous to their faith. The concern with lying Jesuits was also a fear that good, trusting Protestants might be 'taken in'. Crucial to the Protestant analysis of Catholic practices as 'false' was the concept of idolatry.[55] Catholics were believed to have supplanted worship of the one true God with reverence for idols and for images. The ceremonies of Popery were mere trickery and illusion, and the belief that sin could be assuaged through clerical absolution was another 'lie' that was seen as evidence of Catholic hypocrisy.[56] Protestants feared the credulous laity had been taken in by a scheming clergy who extracted a profit from the guilt of believers.[57] Orrery, for instance, remarked that the Irish Catholics "are a people…who though otherwise understanding enough, let themselves be still deluded by ridiculous things, and by more ridiculous persons."[58]

Peter Lake argues that the popular view of Papists as ignorant, gullible and superstitious allowed Protestants to appropriate for themselves the values of knowledge, discernment and rationality. Lake states "every negative characteristic imputed to Rome implied a positive cultural, political or religious value which Protestants claimed as their own

[53] Dyke, *The Mystery of Selfe-Deceiving*, 16.
[54] Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 24. Matthew Neufeld notes that Restoration-era sanctioned histories traced the civil wars back to seditious conspiracies and plots. This manoeuvre emphasised the innocence of Charles I and the wickedness of Puritans, thereby justifying the Puritan exclusion from politics after 1660. See Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars after 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), 28-9.
[55] Peter Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," in *The English Civil War*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London and New York: Arnold, 1997), 183-4.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 24-7.
[58] *A Letter from the Lord Broghill to the Honourable William Lenthall Esq.*, 1651, as quoted in Kerrigan, "Orrery's Ireland," 197.

exclusive property."[59] Protestants were Casaubon's 'rational believers', where Catholics demonstrated dangerous (in)credulity. But it was not merely Catholics who were held to be simultaneously mendacious and gullible. Charges of both deceptiveness and credulity were levelled at any divergent religious group, notably puritans, adherents of the Scottish kirk and atheists.[60] Puritans feared Laud was a "notable deceiver" and that Laudianism was little more than "Popery and faction."[61] In this construction of religious difference as simultaneously deceptive and credulous we find that trustworthiness, or lack thereof, is an important component of partisan community building. The fear of nicodemism serves to reinforce the boundaries of a Protestant community of trust.

The use of fears of deception to build partisan communities reached its zenith during the Civil Wars. There was an explosion of print media after censorship lapsed in 1640 and over "22,000 pamphlets, sermons, newsbooks, speeches, broadside ballads and other ephemera" appeared during the years of the Revolution, a number that surpassed even what would be printed during the French Revolution.[62] With such an abundance of printed material advocating a variety of political positions, the competition to carve out a market share was fierce and writers sought to differentiate their work by claiming it contained greater 'truth'. As Sharon Achinstein has shown, a dominant theme in revolution writing is

[59] Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," 182. See also Kate Loveman and Tiffany Werth, who have argued that much early modern fiction deploys a binary opposition of credulous Catholic and astute Protestant readers. Werth finds in early modern English romance a rejection of Papist wonder and a celebration of rational Protestant reading. The excision of the magical or supernatural from what we have termed 'serious' romance is, for Werth, evidence of romance evolving to meet the tastes of a post-Reformation reading public. See Loveman, *Reading Fictions*; Tiffany Jo Werth, *The Fabulous Dark Cloister*.

[60] See, for instance, John Canne's account over the battle at Dunbar in 1650, in which he lambasts the Scots for their "falshood and hypocrisie," and calls all Scots "lyars, and a seede of falshood" in John Canne, *Emanuel, or, God with Us: Wherein Is Set Forth Englands Late Great Victory over the Scots Armie, in a Battle at Dunbar, Septemb. 3. 1650* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1650), 15. Similarly Cleveland wonders what "experience'd English" would "believe a Scot?" in 'The Scots Apostasie' in *Poems. By J.C. With Additions* ([London], 1651), 50.

[61] *A Prophecie of the Life, Reigne, and Death of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Printed for R.A., 1644).

[62] Sharon Achinstein, "The Uses of Deception: From Cromwell to Milton," in *The Witness of Times: Manifestations of Ideology in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Katherine Z. Keller and Gerald J. Schiffhorst (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1993), 175.

the promise to "undeceive" the reader, who would be too astute not to discern the truth of the writer's message.[63] The established conventions of anti-Catholic and anti-Puritan discourse provided a framework for civil war polemic, which now sought to paint opposing factions as deceptive. Cromwell was repeatedly invoked as the "arch dissimulator" in loyalist propaganda, while distrust for the king was stirred up by accusations that he took counsel from and was sympathetic towards Papists, or even harboured secret Popish inclinations.[64] Many feared the influence of the Queen who, as both a Catholic and a woman, could only be misleading the credulous king.[65] Lucy Hutchinson, for instance, complained Charles "was enslaved in his affection only to her, though she had no more passion for him than what served to promote her designs."[66] The Queen's 'designs' were, of course, the spread of Catholicism. As both a lying woman and a lying Catholic, fears surrounding the influence of Henrietta Maria aptly demonstrate the perceived associations between deceptiveness, Catholicism, gender and counsel.

The fear that Catholic or Puritan 'lies' might cause conflict plays out in various ways in mid-century romances. Such fears are presaged, of course, in Barclay's *Argenis*, in which the "too much simplicity" of the Hyperephanians has left them vulnerable to the rhetoric of Usinculca (Calvin) and they have been by his "eloquence deceived." By divisions of

[63] Ibid., 177.

[64] See, for instance, the Preface to Herbert, *Cloria* and the pamphlet *The Machivilian Cromwelist*, the full title of which is a thorough indictment of Cromwell as a liar: *The Machivilian Cromwellist and Hypocritical Perfidious New Statist: Discovering the Most Detestable Falshood, Dissimulation and Machivilian Practises of L.G. Cromwel and His Confederates, Whereby They Have Long Time Abused and Cheated Both the Houses, City and Country; and the Wicked and Treasonable Things They Have Done, and Unwarrantable Means They Have Used to Carry on Their Own Ambitious Designs* (London, 1648). 1649/50 saw particular hysteria over the threat of lying. For instance, John Lilburn's *The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England Revived, Asserted and Vindicated* (London, 1649) claims to have been "printed in the grand yeer of hypocriticall and abominable dissimulation."

[65] As Melissa Sanchez argues, "by 1640, Charles' devotion to his wife was widely viewed as infidelity to his subjects." *Erotic Subjects*, 150. On fears about the queen's influence and the emasculation of Charles I, see also Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 82.

[66] Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, 8-9. For the popular fear that Charles I was too much in thrall to his queen, see also Braithwaite, *Panthalia*, 98; Henry Parker, John Sadler, and Thomas May, eds., *The Kings Cabinet Opened: Or, Certain Packets of Secret Letters & Papers Written with the King's Own Hand, and Taken in His Cabinet at Nasby-Field* (London: Robert Bostock, 1645), 43; Clarendon, *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon* (Oxford, 1759), 79. The idea of 'enslaving affection' has, of course, particular romance resonances.

religion "the Commonwealth is made…wavering" and divergent religious beliefs are become the "plague of the Kingdom."[67] Later Catholic romances, such as *Theophania* and *Cloria*, rehearse both anti-Papist and anti-Puritan polemic. In *Theophania*, the reforming queen Theodora describes the religion of the "Roman Gods" as "the vain Chimera's [sic] of superstitious brains, or else the subtile inventions of wicked Polititians."[68] *Cloria*, meanwhile, describes those of the Herenzian (Anglican) religion as "crafty and factious actors" (198) who are "tyrannical and fantastical" (398). Both romances repeat the association between religious difference and dynamics of subtlety and credulity. Most importantly, both stress the political danger posed by deceptions perpetrated in the name of religion.

The fear that Machiavellian politicians might be manipulating devotion for political ends recurs in mid-century romance depictions of unjust rulers. In Part Six of the anonymous *Eliana* (1661), the hero Araterus slays a serpent worshipped by the people of the Far East, only to find himself made into a God in its place. The high priests explain this deception is perpetrated because otherwise "the people would become disobedient" if not held in check by the rules of faith which prop up the priests' political regime. Araterus laments the blindness of the people and takes from this the lesson that "ignorance is the mother of…devotion: What a sad thing it is that Religion should be made the decoy of Politicians!"[69] Similarly in *Cloria*, the wicked tyrant Hercrombotus (a radical Herenzian, or Puritan) believes religion is "no other than fictions…that have kept brave spirits from honour and glory in the world, by burying people in sloath and idleness, under pretence of sanctity" (533). In the character of Hercrombotus, we discover that the appearance of piety

[67] Barclay, *Argenis*, 77-9.
[68] Renee Pigeon, ed. *Theophania* (Ottawa, Canada: Barnabe Riche Society Publications, 1999), 203.
[69] *Eliana*, 240.

conceals inner atheism and encounter the Machiavellian idea that the principal purpose of religion might be to prop up political power.

At its most extreme, then, politic dissimulation was seen to be motivated by atheism. As Michael Hunter observes, in the early modern period it was presumed that only "an orthodox religious outlook" could underlie both moral behaviour and rationality.[70] Immoral or irrational action was symptomatic of atheism and vicious dissimulation was evidence of religious deviance. This association is drawn in Sidney's *Arcadia,* in which his wicked *dissimulatrice* Cecropia is an atheist touched by the "filthinesse of impiety."[71] She advises Pamela not to rely on external powers but on her own wisdom: "be wise, and that wisdom shall be a God unto thee" (359). But Pamela is not taken in by this misapplication of 'wisdom', and warns Cecropia's "godless mind" (362) that an "all-knowing God…sees into the darkest of all natural secrets, which is the heart of man, and sees therein the deepest dissembled thoughts" (363). Pamela rightly perceives that Cecropia's atheism relies on and generates dissimulation; she is prone to excessive deceit precisely because she is not supported by an underlying faith.[72]

Cecropia's atheism, dissimulation and desire for power are combined functions which demonstrate her mastery of Machiavellian political theory. In his *Discourses on Livy,* Machiavelli praised Numa for fabricating miraculous tales to impose rule on his "untutored and superstitious" subjects, claiming he "had recourse to religion as the most necessary and assured support of any civil society."[73] The theory that religion was a key component in the maintenance of power was a source of disquiet for Renaissance political theorists. Ascham, for instance, lamented those who "counte as Fables, the holie mysteries

[70] Michael Hunter, "The Problem of 'Atheism' in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35 (1985): 146.
[71] Sidney, *Arcadia,* 363.
[72] McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney*, 199.
[73] Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, as quoted in Ibid.

of Christian Religion" and "make Christ and his Gospell, onelie serve Civill pollicie."[74] Likewise the French Jesuit Nicholas Caussin sought to show through Biblical example that a king who "built upon this Maxim of pietie, that Religion and Law must be made to serve our proper interests, will ultimately lead a life of crimes and disturbances."[75]

The anonymous *Theophania* draws on the perceived association between atheism, Machiavellianism and dissimulation in ways that seem to illustrate Caussin's dictum that the politic use of religion leads only to social disruption.[76] Much like *Cloria, Theophania* offers an account of the Civil Wars with thinly veiled *à clef* resonances. In its sympathetic account of the plight of the Irish, as in its title which declares it to be concerned with the struggles of the 'True Religion', we can identify certain Catholic sympathies.[77] *Theophania* is a seven-book romance structured around a static frame narrative and three extended retrospective narrations. The romance begins *in medias res* with the shipwreck of the princes Philocles (Prince Rupert) and Demetrius (William of Orange) on the shores of Sicily.[78] They are brought to the home of Synesius (Robert Sidney, second earl of Leicester) and are told of the war in Sicily between its king, Antiochus (Charles I), and his people, led by Cenodoxius (Robert Devereux, third earl of Essex).[79] On Synesius's estate Demetrius meets Alexandro (Charles, Prince of Wales) and reveals his love for Demetrius's sister, Mariana (Princess Mary). In the fourth book, Prince Alexandro encounters Cenodoxius, who is now having doubts about the civil revolt he has led and

[74] As quoted in Hunter, "The Problem of 'Atheism'," 140.
[75] Nicholas Caussin, *The Holy Court*, trans. Sir T[homas] H[awkins] and others, 5 vols. (Rouen: Printed by William Bentley and to be sold by John Williams, 1634), IV:114.
[76] *Theophania* is often ascribed to William Sales, but there is no evidence for this. Pigeon notes that it was likely written in 1645 by someone close to the Sidney family, although it was not published until 1655. See the Introduction to Pigeon, *Theophania*, 12-14.
[77] Ibid., 78-9.
[78] The identifications here are made by Pigeon, Ibid., 16-18, 66.
[79] Like many mid-century romances, *Theophania* owes a clear debt to Sidney's *Arcadia*. Its Arcadian allusions begin on the title page, where the following epigraph appears: "Nec divinam Sydneida tenta / Sed longe sequere & Vestigia semper adora." A version of this motto also appears at the end of Richard Beling's continuation of the *Arcadia*. Ibid., 12.

tries to excuse his involvement by explaining the last fifty year of Sicilian history from his family's perspective. He describes how his father, Heraclius (Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex) was manipulated by Theodora (Elizabeth I) and how her decision to break from the Church of Rome led to civil unrest. He goes on to describe his own sufferings under Seleucus (James I) and Antiochus, and advises Alexandro to negotiate with the rebels before a rising new leader, Corastus (Cromwell), seizes control. The last tale has less obvious historical parallels: a soldier is killed, his friend vows revenge, and his wife kills herself. Here the story breaks off, incomplete.

The structure of *Theophania* is designed to privilege revelations from the past as a way of explaining present-day problems.[80] As Paul Salzman has argued, this is a technique used by the French heroic romances, which resort to the *récit* – a first-person retrospective narration – to explain otherwise indecipherable present-day events.[81] In *Theophania* it is the genesis of the Civil Wars that is the "mystery" of the present and that requires recourse to the past to be explained.[82] In the tale of Cenodoxius, the Civil Wars are presented as the result of religious schism, which is itself prompted by Queen Theodora's atheism and dissimulation.

Theodora is introduced as a natural deceiver, one who "surpassing even all her sex in the art of dissembling" has "by artifices and dissimulations – to speak truly, unworthy the dignity of a queen…gained the hearts of the people" (203). Cenodoxius dwells at length on her duplicitous nature:

> She appeared to the vulgar the most submiss of women, and was believed to have neither affections nor desires, but what tended only to the common good. Insomuch that her most violent proceedings were thought forced by a public necessity; her unjust wars abroad in fostering rebellions amongst the

[80] Ibid., 46.
[81] Salzman, *English Prose Fiction*, 187.
[82] Pigeon, *Theophania*, 46. All citations hereafter in text.

> subjects of neighbouring princes, pious undertakings for the relief of the distressed; her frequent oppressions at home, studied policies for the preservation of her country's liberty; her violation of the laws, a watchful providence for the protection of justice; and which was most admirable, her profound dissimulations, real virtues and innate tenderness of affection to the people. By which she so won their hearts – who judge only by outward appearances – that the great ones, who chiefly groaned under her tyranny, though they perceived her artifices durst not seek to undeceive them. (193-4)

Theodora is a true Machiavellian prince – one whose greatest *virtù* is her ability to camouflage her vices and justify violence by 'necessity', the watch-word of reason of state theory as first outlined by Machiavelli and ascribed to both Charles I and Cromwell during the Civil Wars.[83] The romance evinces concern with such politic scheming, particularly because Theodora's ability to dissimulate is tied to her lack of secure faith. After narrowly surviving an encounter with a Roman assassin, Theodora declares she can no longer risk Romans living "promiscuously amongst the Sicilians, as if they had been one people" (208) and proceeds against the Romans with "cruel tortures…blood and slaughters" (200). She defends her decision to Heraclius:

> You may easily believe it is not choice but necessity that at length forces me to it: for during the reign of Euphemia, my elder sister, when I was cruelly persecuted by the flamens as suspected to have an aversion to their gods, did I not by oaths, and protestations, and a strict observance of all the usual rites and ceremonies, assure my sister of my constancy in that belief wherein I had been blessed? And if you will imagine me so wicked to have dissembled then for my own security, why, since the power hath been in myself, have I not freely declared my opinions? (208)

Theodora's break from the Roman church is not the result of religious conviction, but of her will to power. She resents co-sharing power with Valentinianus, Emperor of Rome, and seeks to prove that "the people of Sicily love their queen and reverence her authority more than they fear his thunder. And in contempt of his power I will set up onions, or cats, or what my own fancy shall best like, to be adored in his chiefest temple" (200). In the reference to "onions, or cats", the idols of ancient Egypt, we encounter the evidence of

[83] Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England*, 176-78.

Theodora's heathen lack of faith. That this heathen religion is, in fact, Anglicanism is made plain by Theodora's declaration that the new religion of Sicily will acknowledge "no god…but the omnipotent Jupiter", a nod to the Protestant suspicion of Catholic saints, and will be practised with "a limited devotion and such rites as may best suit with the politic maxims of the present government" (205). Heraclius warns Theodora,

> It is only the fear of the gods and of infringing their laws which maintains amongst the people the prerogative of princes, as deputed to them for the administration of their divine Justice…Therefore in abolishing them you may perhaps destroy the tenure of your own power…when you embolden the hands of the vulgar with profane hands to violate those things which in all ages have been reputed sacred, at the same time you instruct them to vilify and despise the authority of kings. (206)

Regal power is inextricably intertwined with religious mystery: without the one, the other is weakened. *Theophania*'s *récit* locates the origins of present-day conflict in the way the Reformation devalued oaths of fealty to temporal authorities.

It is unsurprising that romance atheists such as Cecropia and Theodora should be female. As we have observed already in anti-Catholic polemic, the charge of being deceptive is deployed to secure the boundaries of a Protestant community in which individuals can trust and be trusted. By locating the source of dissimulation outside the Protestant, masculine political and commercial nation, writers reduce the threat dissimulating atheism poses to public decision-making. Femininity, deceptiveness, religious non-conformity, and self-interest are all presumed to be mutually reinforcing characteristics, against which the Protestant male (the principal political and commercial actor) can be constructed as trustworthy, discerning, pious and disinterested. The logic is that certain people (women, or Catholics, or servants, or atheists, or foreigners) are liars because limitations on their participation in the political and commercial spheres put them in a position of dependence and that, because they are liars, they cannot be trusted to participate in social, economic and political transactions which might reduce their dependency. Such circular logic allows

'undesirable' individuals to be excluded from social networks dependent upon trust. Communities can be policed and membership controlled through accusations of lying and women, Papists, foreigners and the lower classes could be excluded on the basis of their inherent 'dishonesty' and over- (or under-) credulity. It is not surprising that charges of dissimulation should be used this way most vehemently during the Civil Wars, when the stability of the Protestant trust community fractured. Charges that Charles I had secret Papist leanings and was being misled by his Catholic wife conjoin these anxieties about religious and feminine dissimulation, and demonstrate the ways in which accusations of deceit were key to partisan community building.

i) Defeasible Oaths

Let us digress, briefly, to consider the more broadly social effects of these widespread concerns about divergent or even absent belief. The mid-century saw rampant fears about the plasticity of language when words were not tethered to orthodox belief. These fears shaped responses to the verbal signifier of integrity: the oath. Word-as-bond began to transmute under the pressures of rising secularism, suspicion and universal dissimulation, and in romances we encounter arguments about when it might be acceptable – even virtuous – to break oaths.

Anxieties about the plasticity of language and the "perjuration of…oathes and vowes" abound in an early Restoration romance, *Eliana*.[84] The romance has been ascribed to the Restoration poet and playwright Samuel Pordage (1633-91), who would later write plays relying on plot lines from French romances, notably La Calprenède's *Cleopatra* and

[84] *Eliana*, 124. Citations hereafter in text.

Cassandra.[85] The transition from Commonwealth *romancier* to Restoration playwright is a well-trodden path: Orrery, John Crowne and John Bulteel would similarly transition from writing romances to plays after the Restoration. The only reading of the romance has been proposed by Amelia Zurcher, who argues that *Eliana* explores the conflict between love and interest and provides a sharp reading of succession as an "ethically problematic act."[86] *Eliana* is most commonly cited for its remarkable preface, which defends romances as inducements to virtue which are more effective than sermons in leading readers away "from the leud actions of vice" (2A3). "Bewitching, frothy" romance serves,

> to depaint vertue and vice in their natural and genuine colours, and to exhibit the fairness of the one, the foulness of the other, and the rewards of both…Romances are not always farc'd with Love-stories and toyes, though those are intertexted for delight, and…things Oeconomical, Ethethical [sic], Physical, Metaphysical, Philosophycal, Political, and Theological as well as Amatory, may be, not unaptly, not unfitly exhibited. (A3v)

This preface clues us in to the perceived interests of the romance, and warns us not to read it too literally as merely an amorous tale.

Eliana reveals a particular anxiety about the taking and breaking of oaths. Robert Boyle described oaths as "the ultimate and highest Confirmations of Truth", and argued that they should be sworn rarely and treated seriously; this is an argument that *Eliana* certainly endorses.[87] Through the tale of a rashly sworn "blind oath" (108), the central narrative of *Eliana* elucidates the disastrous consequences of taking oaths too lightly. In a prolonged inset narration, the lovelorn hero Euripedes recalls how his married lover Queen Agauve (a wicked *dissimulatrice*) asked him to prove his love by swearing to do whatever she

[85] Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (London: Faber, 1984), 222-42. See also Nigel Smith, "Pordage, Samuel," *DNB*, OUP, 2004 [http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/22547, accessed 28 August 2016].
[86] Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century Romance*, 124-6, 167-71.
[87] Robert Boyle, *A Free Discourse against Customary Swearing; and, a Dissuasive from Cursing* (London: John Williams, 1695), 41. Although not published until 1695, the discourse was written in the 1640s and thought "seasonable for the times" (A2).

commanded; he freely consented, "imagining that the worst thing she could have commanded, would have been to have banisht me from her" (108). But to his horror, he found the oath he had sworn "most rashly" bound him to kill her stepson, the rightful heir to the throne. Amazed by "the temerity of [the] oath," Euripedes protested but Agauve insisted upon "the considerations of [his] love and oath" (109). The mistake initiates a crisis of honour and induces "the continual wrack and torment of [his] conscience"; murdering a child and his future king is "so wicked an act" that Euripedes can hardly bear to contemplate it (109). But, "having sworn to effect it" (109), he makes "resolutions of perpetration" (110) and proceeds with hired assassins to abduct the child. Thus far, then, word-as-bond seems to triumph over virtue.

But when the child is in his power, Euripedes "seeing and observing I know not what kind of authority in the childs face" (110) realizes the folly of maintaining the oath to his lover over bonds of fidelity to his king. The emphasis on the child's "authority" as the source of Euripedes' transformation recalls mid-century arguments about the lawfulness and unlawfulness of oaths. Philosophers such as Joseph Hall and Robert Sanderson emphasised that oaths were only binding as long as they were consistent with a superior power, with existing oaths, and while circumstances remained the same.[88] This logic is deployed in MacKenzie's *Aretina,* in which the hero Megistus persuades the secretary of the rebel Misarites to give up the details of a plot by arguing that allegiance to the king overrides any oaths of secrecy demanded by his master: "all oaths are given with this proviso, that they wrong not our Superiours."[89] Similarly *Eliana* emphasises that Euripedes cannot be bound to keep any oath that enjoins him to violence against his legitimate king.[90] He

[88] Hall, *The Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of an Oath or Covenant*, and Robert Sanderson, *De Juramento*.
[89] Mackenzie, *Aretina*, 190.
[90] The importance of maintaining oaths of allegiance to the monarch is also emphasised in *Cloria*, in which Joyela explains that "without the exact observance of fidelity, confirmed by the solemnity of sacred oaths

rescues the child, fighting off the hired assassins who try to insist upon upholding "the oath they had taken" (110). As we have seen, the cultural construction of the gentleman is of one who understands the sanctity of his word.[91] But in *Eliana*, it is the gentleman who rightly understands that one's word can and should be flexible and that the breaking of an oath might be more virtuous than its maintenance; accepting the fluidity of ethical principle – in this case, word-as-bond – is an essential part of the demonstration of heroic worth. It is the lower class and unheroic characters who are unable to make this ethical distinction and insist upon performing their oaths even when doing so might be unethical or unlawful. This is inflected, of course, by material interest: the hired assassins insist upon their oaths in "the hope of the reward they were to receive" (110). From a position of aristocratic independence, Euripedes has the liberty to make ethical judgements that those in positions of dependency cannot. What *Eliana* claims for its aristocratic heroes is not greater honesty, but greater discernment as to when honesty might or might not be appropriate.

In staging the defeasibility of wrongfully imposed oaths, *Eliana* reflects contemporary anxieties surrounding Commonwealth and Restoration oaths – the former of which sent loyalists into exile and the latter of which excluded Presbyterians and Puritans from public office. Anxieties about religious dissimulation played into fears regarding the sanctity of oaths: belief in God supposedly underpinned covenants and few people could credit the possibility of 'moral atheism.' Popular opinion held that only the fear of God kept men honest and religious division was seen to weaken the boundaries between word and truth. As the Church of England clergyman John Dove argued:

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between a King and his people, the certainty of humane accords cannot be hoped for or expected." Herbert, *Cloria*, 402.

[91] See, for instance, James, *English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642*, 28-9.

> Religion doth maintaine civill government, and kingdomes are best governed where men have the greatest feeling of religion, because the fear of God having taken a deepe roote in mens hearts by the often preaching of the worde, doth binde subjects to their Princes farre more fast then humane lawes, & the fear of the Princes displeasure.[92]

Similarly Sir Charles Wolseley argued that "the great and only foundation, upon which all trust amongst mankind is erected, is a general acknowledgement of a supreme Power above them, that perfectly knows their actions."[93] As the Church splintered and appeared to diminish in authority, the question arose: *if fear of God did not keep people from lying, upon what basis could we assume others were being truthful?* For some early modern philosophers, the answer to this is self-interest. Hobbes argues that it is self-interest that obliges us to maintain covenants, observing, "he which declares he thinks it reason to deceive those that help him can in reason expect no other means of safety than what can be had from his own single power."[94] But as self-interest was also associated with Machiavellian politic philosophy, the suggestion that interest could guarantee authenticity was not uncontroversial, and fears that language itself had been devalued by religious schism were rampant. Even Hobbes acknowledged "the bonds of words are too weak to bridle men's ambitions, avarice, anger and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power."[95] Part of the problem of religious schism was that it undermined word-as-bond, the core principle of honour and honesty.

The pressing point for *Eliana* is that words may not be binding, a fear that had particular resonance in 1661. In the early years of the Restoration, Charles II sought to override the oaths of the Commonwealth government through acts such as The Corporation Act (1661) and, later, the Act of Uniformity (1662) and the Act for Restraining Nonconformists from

[92] Dove, *A Confutation of Atheism*, 7.
[93] Wolseley, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism Made Manifest,* 65. As MP for Oxford in the 1650s and an intimate of Cromwell's, Wolseley was an advocate for greater religious toleration.
[94] Hobbes, *Leviathan,* 110.
[95] *Leviathan,* 104.

Inhabiting in Corporations (1665). These oaths coerced public officers, university fellows and schoolmasters to abjure the Solemn League and Covenant and swear non-resistance. As Susan Staves has demonstrated, the problem with the repeated imposition of new oaths during the Commonwealth and early years of the Restoration was that it began to devalue the oath as a way of recognising legitimate obligation. Oaths had once been understood to have "a kind of magic power…that gave them a force above that of a mere claim to be proven true or false with empirical evidence." But as new oaths replaced old, they were increasingly understood to be nothing but breath, carrying no force to constrain the swearer to their bond.[96] As Robert Boyle put it, "in oaths…too constant a frequency depreciates that authority which their rareness as well as nature gives them."[97] In a culture anxious about dissimulation and 'Jesuitical' manipulation of language, oaths were often buttressed with sermons, prefaced with Biblical text, and contained avowals that the swearer used neither equivocation nor mental reservation.[98] Concerns regarding dissimulation seemed to demand more frequent and more complex oaths, while simultaneously rendering such oaths less credible.

Whilst *Eliana* presents the breaking of an imposed oath to be ethically correct, outside the political sphere it excoriates promise breakers. The story of two brothers, Marcipsius and Lonoxia, in love with the same woman, Atalanta, is a tale of "breach of promise" (147) which aptly illustrates the romance's interest in the distinction between justly and unjustly broken oaths, innocent and culpable deceptions. The tale is framed as a reparation narrative: Lonoxia overhears Atalanta's lament for her traitorous lover and, stricken with

[96] Staves, *Players' Scepters*, xiv, 207. See also Chapter 11 in Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Mercury Books, 1966).
[97] Boyle, *A Free Discourse against Customary Swearing*, 35. On frequent inappropriate swearing in popular discourse, see also Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 107.
[98] Condren, *Argument and Authority*, 235. The Oath of Allegiance to Charles I demanded swearers take the oath "without any Equivocation, or mentall evasion or secret reservasion whatsoever." William Ingoldsby, *Englands Oaths, Taken by All Men of Quality in the Church and Commonwealth of England* (London: G.J., 1642), 4.

love, decides to "repair that breach with…truth, obedience and affection" (125). Following Sidney's Pyrocles and Barclay's Poliarchus, Lonoxia disguises himself as a woman, Sabane, and becomes Atalanta's handmaiden, hoping that years of "long services" might make him "worthy" of her love (153). They live together in "perfect friendship" (134) until Atalanta's maid discloses the truth: Atalanta has been seduced and abandoned by Lonoxia's brother, Marcipsius, and is expecting his child. The maid emphasises Atalanta's innocence: she was taken in by "the oaths, the vowes and the Stygian attestations" of Marcipsius (143) and everyone believed "it impossible for him to illude the gods, or that after those vowes and oathes he could violate them for fear of being punisht with their thunders, so we gave the more trust to his words" (143). The belief that the word of God underpins oaths lends credence to Marcipsius's promises and so, "believing his passions, and crediting his vows," Atalanta "lost her virginian gem" (144). But when "he had satiated himself, and gain'd the end of his long suite," Marcipsius departs, "very profuse of his oaths" and with "no conscience to delude both gods and men by an emitting thousands that he never had intention to perform" (144). Atalanta finds that what she has interpreted as promises as good as marriage are nothing but empty air. In this scathing account of a lying oath-taker, *Eliana* insists that oaths, no matter how profusely sworn, are no guarantee of fidelity.

Material interest is a stronger motivator than the virtue of word-as-bond. Atalanta finds "many excuses to justify his breach of promise" (147) but when Lonoxia confronts Marcipsius, he discovers his brother has abandoned Atalanta for a new "beauty" who "hath a crown to give as well as pleasure" (148). If the dishonesty and unworthiness of Marcipsius is demonstrated by his heedless pursuit of self-interest over the demands of duty, the honesty of Lonoxia is proved by his continued service to Atalanta even after he

renounces all claims to amorous interest.[99] Horrified by his passion for a woman once possessed by his brother, Lonoxia vows "to love her as a sister," "to love only for virtues sake" and "to have a passion without carnal desires." He chooses to believe this is "the best love, and seem'd most Celestiall" (150). He maintains his deception for many months, until the day Atalanta gives birth to his nephew, when Lonoxia's "modesty" forces him to confess his "imposture" (152). While admitting a "figment to deceive" (152), Lonoxia insists his "designes…were honest" but are now "diverted" to "the same stamp that a brothers hath to a sister, or is the same that your self (divin Atalanta!) bore to the faigned Sabane" (153). Lonoxia insists upon the 'honesty' of his scheme because it has aroused in Atalanta a reciprocating fraternal emotion. Furthermore, he insists on his fidelity to her which "never transcur'd the bounds of vertue" (153). Atalanta is appropriately horrified, but forgives him on the grounds that she sees "the same virtue Sabane hath hitherto exhibited to remain still in Lonoxia" (153). Despite his imposture, Lonoxia has managed to exhibit a transparency of virtue which assures Atalanta that she has been deceived in appearances, but not in essentials. In its tale of two brothers – one who deceives with words, the other with appearances – *Eliana* reflects a broader cultural anxiety regarding the plasticity of language and the defeasibility of oaths. Words are no surety, and only actions are reliable guarantees of faith. Lonoxia's faithful and disinterested deception is formulated as heroic action, in contrast to Marcipsius's breach of promise. In *Eliana*, imposture paradoxically proves the grounds of sincerity.

Unlike *Eliana*, Orrery's *Parthenissa* works to re-inscribe the sanctity of oaths, and oaths are invoked repeatedly with reference to their inviolability. When one of the heroes swears on the life of his lover, for instance, the reader is assured that such an oath is held "in too much veneration to violate" (224). But the very surety of oaths in *Parthenissa* is itself

[99] Amelia Zurcher reads this tale as an example of romance's fraternal rivalry plot and as an interrogative narrative, suggesting it asks whether disinterested love is possible. *Seventeeth-Century Romance*, 167-70.

problematic: when characters swear to perform vicious actions, the power of the word takes on its own life and nothing can recall these villains to their consciences. When Prince Arsaces vows he will marry Parthenissa with or without her consent, Parthenissa's ally Surena explains that Arsaces has made this vow "with so many horrid oaths, that he has rendered it a lesser crime to act his sin, than to decline it" (513). In a world in which word-as-bond is a key virtue, paradoxically Arsaces is bound to vice by the rules of virtue. Surena resorts to the laws of oath-taking to try to prove that Arsaces cannot be bound to his new oath because it overrides a previous vow:

> When I resign'd up the Princess Parthenissa to you, 'twas, Sir, upon terms you confin'd your self to by so many solemn and reiterated vows…That sacred contract you made with me, was not conditional, but absolute: so that no ill usage of hers to you, can render legitimate a resembling return of yours to her. The knowledg I had of your Passion, and of the impossibility of her receiving and rewarding it, made me intently careful to leave you no way of violating your engagement, but by violating your oaths. (591)

Surena attempts to impose the laws of oath-taking onto his sovereign, stressing the value of word-as-bond as the cornerstone of the political contract. But the sophistry of Arsaces' brother, Orodes, rewrites this logic, drawing on the laws of covenant to justify why Arsaces' promise cannot be binding. Orodes argues that princes cannot be bound to oaths by their subjects and that Surena's duty to Parthenissa is secondary to his duty to his King: "the tyes thou hast to Parthenissa, are but accidental; and those thou has to me, are natural" (590). The hint at natural law theory here might make us think of Grotius's argument that as sovereign power incorporates the rights of its subjects, a king cannot be said to violate these rights.[100] Orodes seems to suggest that the 'natural' ties between Surena and Arsaces override covenant: an oath cannot be broken if in being owed to a subject, the sovereign effectively owes it to himself. The conventions of romance teach us who to side with: Surena as the conventional defender of innocence has moral if not political authority. In

[100] Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 35-38.

revealing Arsaces and Orodes to consider themselves above the code of word-as-bond, *Parthenissa* hints at fears about the nature of the political contract itself. A monarch who does not perceive his power to be limited by obligations to his subjects begins to seem less like a just king and more like a tyrant.

ii) The Suspicious Tyrant

Little has been said about the threat of tyranny in mid-century romances because the complexities of such a question demand a thesis of their own. But before progressing to outline what mid-century romances believe constitutes the 'ideal' ruler – one who is neither overly credulous nor dangerously suspicious, but practices heroic distrust – it would be worth briefly outlining the figure against whom the ideal dissimulating royal hero is defined. The character of the tyrant in mid-century romances is of one who doesn't perceive any limitations on his authority, and therefore neither practises nor sees the value of dissimulation as a form of self-censorship. As Rebecca Bushnell has argued, in classical and Renaissance dialogues on leadership, self-mastery is the prerequisite for lawful kingship while licentiousness is the marker of the tyrant.[101] Two mid-century romances – Samuel Sheppard's *Amandus and Sophronia* (1650) and Bulteel's *Birinthea* (1664) – draw on the common association of tyranny with the rapacious pursuit of personal desires to argue for the importance of sovereignty limited both by counsel and by the monarch's own ability to practise heroic self-control.[102] These romances elucidate three principle ideas:

[101] Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants*, 9-36.

[102] Initially a moderate Parliamentarian with sympathies for Charles I, Sheppard changed allegiance in 1646 and was imprisoned for writing inflammatory royalist pamphlets. Whilst in prison he wrote his famous verse epic, *The Faerie King*. Andrew King, 'Sheppard, Samuel (*c.*1624–1655?)', *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) [http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/25347, accessed 29 Aug 2016].
Little is known about the Restoration-era writer and translator John Bulteel but from his collection of manuscript poems preserved in the Bodleian Library, we can deduce that Bulteel spent his youth in Ireland in the service of Sir Percy Smith, Lieutenant Colonel and Deputy Governor of Youghal, and was a member of Sir Percy's household in the 1650s. It is tempting to imagine that his *Birinthea*, like Orrery's *Parthenissa*, might reflect the conflicting loyalties experienced by Irish Protestants during the Commonwealth, but any

that the tyrant is characterised by the excessive pursuit of personal desires; that the rapacity of these desires enjoins his subjects to dissimulation; and that these dynamics promote cultures of suspicion which can only lead to conflict.

In *Amandus and Sophronia*, the tyrant Clodomer's threat to rape the heroine provides the justification for an act of extreme resistance: "speaking far from heart," Sophronia pretends to consent to his desires, only to murder him in his bedchamber.[103] She justifies this act on the grounds of politic necessity: "Thou foolish Tyrant…Bear witness, thou Supream ever-living Power, that I am forced to this outragious Act, for the preservation of my chaste Honour."[104] The threat of ravishment constitutes such dire necessity that Sophronia is permitted to practise force or fraud in resistance.[105] The romance rewards Sophronia for this "dreadfull deed": she marries her beloved Amandus and they are crowned king and queen in Clodomer's place. But the horror of the act is not easily suppressed, and the romance returns to it twice in the last twenty pages, reiterating its necessity for "the preservation of…chaste honour" (122) and emphasising it was caused by the king's "absurd unkingly deportment" (126). The romance stresses that Sophronia's act has positive political consequences: the people are grateful she has "taken off their burthensome head, without hurt to the Body politick" because "Clodomer had forfeited the essence of a King, by giving too much scope to his fond loving Lunacie" (126). Clodomer's inability to control his desire is romance shorthand for poor rule.

Clodomer's son Rhoxenor is equally tyrannical, and he too fails to perceive the appropriate limitations on his amorous desires or his political power. For Prince Rhoxenor, Sophronia's indifference is both an amorous and a political problem, demonstrating her to

evidence of his political leanings is difficult to deduce from his literary output, which predominantly consists of translations of French prose. See MS Rawl. Poet. 159, particularly fols. 209v-210r, 215v and 222r-223r.

[103] Sheppard, *Amandus and Sophronia*, 108.

[104] Ibid., 113.

[105] For resistance *in extremis*, see Julia Rudolph, "Rape and Resistance: Women and Consent in Seventeenth-Century English Legal and Political Thought," *Journal of British Studies* 39, no. 2 (2000): 157-184.

be not merely a resistant woman, but a resistant subject. His advisor wonders why the prince does not compel Sophronia's affection:

> Is it not in you, to dispose of Sophronia, and Amandus, as you shall thinke fit? Are they not your Subjects, and Servants, are not (or ought not) their lives and estates, to be at your appointment?[106]

Rhoxenor is convinced by this logic and proceeds to imprison Sophronia. By applying a political punishment for a personal slight, Rhoxenor shows he believes his power to be limitless, controlling not just bodies but hearts and minds.

John Bulteel's 1664 *Birinthea* similarly plays on the image of the tyrant as a leader whose rapacious sexual appetite leads him to disregard the rights of his citizens. But in *Birinthea*, the excesses of tyranny are more openly contrasted with the dissimulating self-control of the ideal prince. *Birinthea* is a reworking of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, one of the first classical works to be brought to Europe from Byzantium, and it exerted considerable influence over Renaissance political thought.[107] As Jane Grogan has argued, Xenophon's Cyrus was often invoked in Renaissance 'advice to princes' literature.[108] Xenophon's Cyrus proved the model for several mid-century heroes, among the most popular and influential of which was the heroic Cyrus of Madeleine de Scudéry's *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* (1648-53), which draws material from the accounts of both Herodotus and Xenophon to construct an ancient narrative which shadows the events of the Fronde crisis.

Perhaps inspired by Scudéry's *Artamène*, Bulteel also takes Xenophon as the starting-point for a political romance. The key facet of Bulteel's rewriting of both Xenophon and

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[106] Sheppard, *Amandus and Sophronia*, 14.

[107] Christopher Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 4. On the reception of the *Cyropaedia* in early modern England and France, see James Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3-25. Despite the clear influence of Xenophon on Machiavelli and Castiglione, there appears to be no scholarly work on Xenophon and his reception in Italy.

[108] Jane Grogan, "'Many Cyruses': Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and English Renaissance Humanism," *Hermathena* 183 (2007): 63-74. See also *The Persian Empire in English Renaissance Writing, 1549-1622* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Scudéry is the way he juxtaposes the self-control of the ideal sovereign, Cyrus, with the rapacious pursuit of desire seen in the tyrants, Vectorez and Cyaxares. There is a basic principle of selection at work in Bulteel's rewriting of Xenophon: *Birinthea* embroiders upon Xenophon's tales of dissimulation and betrayal, while ignoring much of Xenophon's martial plot. The romance is structured around several *récits*, in which defectors from Vectorez's army explain what has brought them to betray their king. These tales are troubling to Cyrus, who "was most desirous to know the cause which could excuse the infidelity and rebellion against a Prince, whom nature and birth had made to be his Soveraign."[109] The answer he receives again and again is that Vectorez has used violence and deception to forward his own personal interests above those of the state. In the story of Gadate and Chryseide, for instance, the pure love of the noble Gadate and the virtuous Chryseide is tested by the violent passion of the tyrannical Vectorez, whose desire for Chryseide leads him to slander the two lovers, banish Gadate, plot to murder him and trick Chryseide's family into betraying her. Finally Vectorez castrates Gadate and attempts to rape Chryseide, who kills herself to preserve her chastity. These tragic events are narrated to Cyrus by Gadate's servant, who explains,

> My Master upon less grounds then now he has, might very justly have dispenc'd with the Obedience he owes to Vectorez, and you will quickly find, that he is too generous, to have forsaken that party, if that Tyrant had not constrained him by such cruelty as is above all example, in not only denying his Subjects the Liberty of innocent actions, but even the most becoming and Ligitimate desires.[110]

Vectorez's inability to conceive of limitations on his power – assuming his subjects' hearts are in his direction as well as their bodies – can lead only to political betrayal.

[109] Bulteel, *Birinthea*, 174.
[110] Ibid., 175.

Ideas about legitimate obedience and tyranny inform the frame narrative as well as the *récits*. When the heroine Birinthea is imprisoned by Cyaxares, she imitates Cloria and turns "necessity into Policy", offering Cyaxares an "outward show of Civility and Respect" rather than showing her true "aversion."[111] The right to resist tyranny through dishonesty ensures the tyrant never receives honest counsel. The virtuous Cyrus, by contrast, is delineated by his willingness to listen to honest discourse and to learn from it. After hearing a succession of tales describing rapacious tyranny, Cyrus learns that allegiance might have limitations and ultimately declares himself an enemy to his uncle's interests, insisting that someone must "tame my Uncles unruly passion." Cyrus does not want "judgment to distinguish what obedience he owed to his Prince, to whose will he must be indispensably subject, onely so long as he maintain'd it reasonable."[112] If *Eliana* suggests that the discerning breaking of oaths might be a marker of aristocratic worth, *Birinthea* reformulates this as a more specifically political problem, emphasising that loyalty is not absolute and the relationship between subject and sovereign forms a defeasible contract. The marker of heroic worth in *Birinthea* proves the ability to recognise limitations on sovereignty and – most importantly – to either conceal or subdue the passions.

III – Honest Dissimulation

Thus far, we have established lines of association in early modern thought dispersed through romance's depictions of sovereignty: credulity is associated with weak rule and with the dangers of poor counsel, incredulity with atheism and the devaluing of oaths; fraud is the act of the tyrant, while the schemes of political rebels are redescribed as just resistance. The problem romances sought to resolve, then, was how the ideal ruler might

[111] Ibid., 246.
[112] Ibid., 166.

trust and rule 'correctly'. This is the question at the heart of *Cloria*'s debates on dissimulation.

When Prince Arethusius finds he has been betrayed by the Myssians with whom he has made a covenant, his "youthful choller" leads him to declare them "cowards and traitors" (389) and to spit upon their "false pretensions and poisonous language" (390). But his chief advisor Meliander, "fearing that the prince betrayed his secret thoughts, to the knowledge of his hidden enemies; by his passionate expressions…drew him into a more retired place for conference" (390). Once there, he expounds upon the necessity of dissimulating one's feelings:

> Sir said he, as it becomes not a Prince to seem dejected by any accidents, so ought you to be perswaded, that intemperate passions, are of nearest neighbourhood to such expressions: Besides you must consider, that in the open devulging of any distastes, or intention of revenge against what persons soever; before you have those enemies in your power, serve but to strengthen them and weaken your self, in arming those people by a forewarning admonition, of what they shall expect, when opportunity complies with your desire…So that Sir, rather then entertain these unprofitable (if not dangerous) mutinies in your minde, observe I beseech you the wise maximes of your Grandfather, who thereby overcame all his difficulties, and at the end reigned most gloriously, according to his own will and pleasure in *Lydia* ; which was to let none see his spleen, but every one his pleasant countenance… for dissimulation is as necessary in Princes actions, as the Sword of Justice to be drawn when there is occasion; since the one doth but better try and examine the vertue or guilt of men, as the other doth give them their rewards or punishment, according to their deserts. (391)

Meliander seeks to shape his charge into the model prince who employs dissimulation to conceal "intemperate passions." Such self-control allows the prince to separate himself from both the credulous ruler, who is so open with his thoughts that he can be taken advantage of, and the unlicensed tyrant, whose heedless pursuit of his own passion reflects a disrespect of the rights of others and a misunderstanding of the obligations of kingship. Only the middle

road – that is, dissimulating passions as a step towards controlling them – allows the worthy prince to gain and retain power.

The "command of reason over passions" was recommended by numerous seventeenth-century authorities, notably the French Jesuit Nicholas Caussin, whose *Cour Sainte* (first trans. 1626 as *The Holy Court*) was a popular text among English recusants at the Caroline court.[113] Caussin recommends that if one feels "inwardly moved, to bridle the tongue, so the apprehensions of the heart may not break forth."[114] I offer Caussin as the example of this popularly recurring idea because the frontispiece of the 1634 *The Holy Court* (reproduced in the 1663 edition, see Figure 6, p.225) seems to offer a possible visual source for the frontispiece of the complete 1661 folio of *Cloria* (see Figure 5, p. 224). While the detail is different, the composition is the same: within identical monumental structures, they throw focus onto a central figure gazing up towards the divine – in *Cloria*, the famous image of the saintly Charles I. Should this imitation be purposeful (which I suggest only tentatively), we might take it as an invitation to perceive certain affinities of thought between *Cloria* and pre-war Catholic court culture.

Earlier tales in *Cloria* emphasise the importance of keeping a tight rein on passion. In the tragic tale of Alciana and Orestes, by "not being able to hide that, which his discretion should have concealed" – that is, his passion for Alciana – Orestes finds he is transparent to the "watchful spyes" of his enemies who successfully conspire to prevent their marriage (33). Like the heroes of the sub-plots, Arethusius must learn "a reserved secrecie [is] to be preserved alwayes in a Princes bosom" (392) and that "a little dissimulation" is "neither

[113] Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 155.
[114] Nicholas Caussin, *The Holy Court*, trans. Sir T[homas] H[awkins] and others, 5 vols. (Rouen: Printed by William Bentley and to be sold by John Williams, 1634), III.xviii (81). Like many commentators, Caussin distinguishes between such dissimulating self-control and outright lying, bemoaning that "now adays…to lie is no longer a vice, but a necessity of nature." II.vii (45).

improvident or dishonourable, the better to discover the false intentions of…enemies" (393). Similar patterns of secrecy and self-control are valorised in contemporary romances such as *Aretina*, in which Prince Theopemptus (clearly a fictive depiction of Charles II) returns from exile to a court overrun with intrigue, but is "so prudent as to dissemble his resentments, knowing that cheats are like flowers and herbs, which are best discerned when they flourish most, and most hated when best discerned."[115] Self-control is represented here as strategy, lulling the deceitful into a false sense of security so that their plots can be uncovered.

Key to the acceptability of this kind of deception is its benevolent intentions. The Prince is perfectly within his rights to practise Platonic 'noble lying' for the good of the state. We must, of course, accept the loyalist argument that Arethusius would be a better ruler for Lydia than Hercrombotus – a distinction *Cloria* makes by distinguishing between Arethusius's assured faith and Hercrombotus's politic exploitation of religion. The importance of intention is elucidated in the amorous as well as in the political plotlines. In Part Three of *Cloria*, the heroine is once again taken captive, this time by the Lydian Senate, and is once again importuned to marry where she does not love. This time, the proposed suitor is her cousin Cassianus, who has changed sides and is now fighting with the rebels.

Again, the need for Cloria to balance the exigency of her situation with her desires for freedom and her promises to Narcissus prompts a dialogue on the virtue of dissimulation, and again Roxana must harden Cloria's heart away from honesty and towards the canny practice of deception. So far the romance repeats itself. But this is repetition with a difference: this time Roxana does not stress the question of *necessity*, but of *intention.*

[115] MacKenzie, *Aretina*, 326.



Figure 5 Engraved frontispiece of 1661 *The Princess Cloria.* © The British Library Board 12403.c.18.



Figure 6 Frontispiece of Nicholas Caussin's *The Holy Court* (1663 ed.). © The British Library Board L.20.p.2.

This subtle distinction introduces a new theory of deception into the romance: that of benevolent deception, or what we shall call 'honest dissimulation.' *Cloria* suggests that such 'honest dissimulation' might be the appropriate counter to problematic credulity.

Roxana explains to Cloria:

> As I cannot deny said she, but dissimulation in it selfe, is a flattering vice that steales upon many dispositions with certaine possible if not probable signes of lawfulnesse, becaues they are contented to be perswaded by their imaginations, they meane no hurt in their intention, which notwithstanding I must confesse, destroyes all morall conversation; yet in all respects of the contrary, for a person to uncover his breast upon every occasion, without leaving himselfe a defence against his crafty enemy, were a madnesse capable to ruine his fortunes as often as the opportunity presented the meanes. Wherefore Madam, in the generall I can only give this rule, when a body is left at liberty whether he will speak or no, let him rather hold his peace, then so much as intimate a falshood by his words, or in friendly conversation appeare not candid and satisfactory: but if in deepe examinations that may produce great consequences either of good or hurt, for my part I am of opinion, all art possible may be used to avoyde the determination, provided a direct untruth be not admitted; or the damage of a third party sustained by the concealement. (281-82)

If Roxana's logic first introduces the idea that good intentions do not make dissimulation permissible – citing such an excuse as the folly of "imaginations" – she goes on to make much the same argument herself, asserting that "all art possible" may be used as long as it offers no "damage of a third party." The dissimulation Roxana has advocated earlier in the romance now has qualifiers and justifications: it is not a "direct untruth" but rather a 'covering the breast' or veiling one's thoughts. If earlier in the romance Roxana has justified the right to lie, here she appears to be defending the more specific practice of dissimulation as deception by concealment.

But this elaborate sophistry does not quite hold up. The sceptical Cloria suggests that if Roxana's logic is applied "to my case with my cousin", it will expose that dissimulation and lying may be different in practice but no different in effect because she will "have wonne [him] into a beliefe of what I never intend." It is in the effect, rather than in the

practice, that there "lyes hidden the deceit." Where Roxana tries to define deception through the intentions of the deceiver, Cloria insists on defining it according to the perception of the auditor. Roxana tries to persist in differentiating practice from effect, pointing out that whatever Cassianus may believe, "it doth not appeare you have engaged your selfe either by words or actions" and so any deception Cassianus might labour under can only "rest upon the fault of his own fancy." What Cloria believes to be a lie might be no lie after all, for if she has "after a manner deluded his thoughts…yet it cannot be esteemed false…for that you may have a resolution to entertaine his affection, if my Lord Narcissus…should miscarry." The copia of Roxana's justifications reveals something of the slippery slope of logic upon which dissimulation depends. But Cloria is convinced, agreeing on the familiar grounds of necessity as well as on the new grounds of intention: "I cannot deny, but that there is a necessity in my dissimulation at this present; and the rather am I content a little to practice the faculty, for that I know Cassianus can sustaine no prejudice by my intentions" (283).

The significance of this dialogue is two-fold: in seeking to distinguish dissimulation from others types of deceit and insisting upon it as no "direct untruth", Roxana reiterates some of the arguments we have already encountered about the difference between simulation and dissimulation. But Cloria's scepticism of this distinction reminds us that the boundaries between permissible dissimulation and illicit simulation are not clear, and that the distinction might mean little to the lied-to. Roxana's arguments in favour of dissimulation seek to unite two schools of thought in the philosophy of the lying. As Jennifer Mather Saul has argued, one school of thought claims that lies are never acceptable, but the definition of lying is strict, and many types of deception are not lies. This is the Kantian tradition, into which modern moral philosophers such as Bok and Harris might broadly be seen to fall. The other tradition works with a much broader

definition of lying – encompassing dissimulation, secrecy, misleading and equivocation – but this tradition will find some lies more or less problematic depending on their motivations or consequences. The distinction here is important: in the first, one act of deception might be more acceptable than another simply due to the *method* being employed; in the second, it is the consequences and intentions that determine whether the deceit is licit.[116] But Roxana's notion of acceptable "art" combines the two: it insists that causes, consequences and intentions must be judged in order to determine the acceptability of a lie, but also that the way of lying is important. She combines the theories of there being a *right to lie* that we saw in Chapter Two with those of there being a *right kind of lie* that we saw in Chapter One to develop a complex justification for certain kinds of lies based on their intention. This doctrine of a lie which is rendered acceptable by both its form and its intent is a seventeenth-century innovation, known by the paradoxical term 'honest dissimulation.'

The concept of 'honest dissimulation' is most closely associated with the Italian political theorist, Torquato Accetto, whose 1641 treatise *Della Dissimulazione Onesta* ('On Honest Dissimulation') "pushed the discourse on dissimulation to the extreme limits of paradox." Accetto's theory of dissimulating honestly was entirely self-interested, to do with the acquisition and maintaining of wealth and power.[117] But the paradoxical notion of 'honest dissimulation' has a longer history in Western thought, referring more generally to the theory of benevolent disinterested deception, or deceptions which are perpetrated for the benefit of others. Such an idea originates with Augustine. In his *De Mendacio*, Augustine argued that there could be such a thing as "honesta mendacia", or harmless lies which have

[116] Saul, *Lying, Misleading and What Is Said*, 9.
[117] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 21, 59-67.

positive consequences.[118] This acknowledgement of the possibility of benevolent deception has an uneasy relationship with Augustine's insistence that all deceit is vicious. Indeed, it points to the ways in which even for early philosophers, the boundaries between lying and truth are unclear.

'Honest dissimulation' is most famously associated in English thought with the controversial justifications of the Jesuits. In his *A Treatise of Equivocation*, Garnet described the use of "mixed propositions" in which meaning was generated from a combination of the spoken and the unspoken: thoughts or gestures could alter or supplement the spoken word. The "mixed proposition" was one strategy for lying under oath without lying to God; Garnet called it "honest dissimulation."[119] The term might seem, then, to have a somewhat controversial history in English moral philosophical thought, associated as it was with religious and political resistance. But in fact it seems to have been taken up to refer to deceptions perpetrated for the common good. In his famous *Defense*, Philip Sidney simultaneously defends dissimulation and romances by asserting that readers can learn how to be good subjects from Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*:

> Xenophon excellently faineth such another stratageme, performed by Abradates in Cyrus behalfe. Now would I fayne know, if occasion presented unto you, to serve your Prince by such an honest dissimulation, why you doe not as well learne it of Xenophons fiction, as of the others verity.[120]

For Sidney, 'honest dissimulation' appears to be that practised for the good of the state in service of the king; it is a lie justified both by reason of state theory and by duty. It is a kind of disinterested deception romance is uniquely qualified to teach us. Similarly, in the *Basilikon Doron*, King James rewrote Cambyses's lessons for his own son, advising Prince Henry to "be curious in devising stratagems, but always honestly; for of any thing they

[118] Gillian Rosemary Evans, *Getting It Wrong: The Mediaeval Epistemology of Error* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 199.
[119] Jardine, ed. *A Treatise of Equivocation*, 12-14, 56.
[120] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 225.

worke the greatest effects in the warres, if secrecie be joyned to invention."[121] For King James, 'honest dissimulation' reflects the advice of Cyrus's father that lying to enemies is permissible.

The notion of 'honest dissimulation' recurs in a number of seventeenth-century conduct books and essays. To give but a few examples, in his *A Treatise of the Court* De Refuge advises "dexteritie" for courtiers, which he explains as being the skill by which "wee may sometimes dissemble, or conseale some truth very honestly; yea, and make shew not to know or understand some thing that is of consequence and importance in the businesse wee have in hand, to the end that wee may gaine time to answere, and not bee surprised, or taken unprovided."[122] For De Refuge, 'honest dissimulation' is part of the courtier's art of controlling their expression or of what they "make shew". Indeed, Dudley North advocates "honest dissimulation, and a dissembling chearefull patience" as the "kinde of vertues necessary" for a good courtier.[123]

If 'honest dissimulation' is the virtue of kings working for the good of the state and of courtiers skilled at masking their thoughts, it also has a particular mid-century resonance referring to those with royalist sympathies who accommodated themselves to the Commonwealth. Thus, on the Restoration of Charles II, Cromwell's secretary in Scotland, Mr Downing, was pardoned by the King who,

> would it should be believed that the strong aversions which this Minister of the Protectors had made appear against him on all occasions…proceeded not from any evil Intention, but only from a deep and honest dissimulation,

[121] As quoted in Jane Grogan, *The Persian Empire in English Renaissance Writing, 1549-1622* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 58.
[122] Eustace de Refuge, *A Treatise of the Court or Instructions for Courtiers Digested into Two Books*, trans. John Reynolds (London: Printed by I.M. for Will Lee, 1622), 175.
[123] North, *A Forest of Varieties*, 89.

> wherewith he was constrained to cover his true Sentiments for fear to prejudice the Affairs of his Majesty.[124]

'Honest dissimulation' is distinguished from those deceptions practiced with "evil Intention" and is instead associated with retaining divergent beliefs in times of political oppression. It is a necessary skill for those living in times of great political and social upheaval because it allows for adaptation without resorting to hypocrisy or lying.

In one of its most striking invocations, 'honest dissimulation' starts to resemble theories of civility. In his list of precepts for the ideal prince, *Discours Sur La Nourriture de S.A. Monseigneur Le Prince d'Orange*, Rivet recommends the judicious use of pretence in the public, or politic, arena. Indeed within a political framework, dissimulation is considered a moral good which secures the prince the respect and allegiance of his subjects. The prince will be loved "who honestly dissimulates the faults of others" (391, cf 306).[125] Dissimulation to protect others is seen as the foundation of civil conversation, and the author insists "sometimes it belongs to civility to seem not to know, or not to see, or not to hear things which we know, or see, or hear" (308).[126] To be part of polite society requires a complex process of simultaneously knowing and not knowing, seeing and not seeing, hearing and not hearing, and this kind of deceit is presented as a moral good. The author never advocates ignorance, blindness or deafness – the prince must always remain at the centre of the flow of information – but praises the pretence of ignorance. As the tool of polite conversation, 'honest dissimulation' begins to intersect with contemporary discourses on the practice of sincerity.

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[124] James Heath, *The Glories and Magnificent Triumphs of the Blessed Restitution of His Sacred Majesty K. Charles II* (London: N.G., R.H. and O.T., 1662), 76-7.

[125] 'Il sera cherÿ, qui honestément dissimulera les fautes d'autruÿ." KB 73 J 11, 'Discours Sur La Nourriture de S.A. Monseigneur le Prince d'Orange,' fol. 27r.

[126] "Car il appartient quelques fois a la civilité de faire paroistre de ne sçavoir, ou de ne voir, ou de n'ouir point ce, que l'on sçait, ou voit, ou oÿt. " Ibid., 22v.

Sincerity is the opposite of dissimulation. At least so claims Mathilda, the central conversationalist in Madeleine de Scudéry's dialogue 'Of Dissimulation and Of Sincerity.'[127] Pressed on the difference between honesty and sincerity, Mathilda explains that while truth is "the Soul of Sincerity", sincerity consists not merely in rhetorical honesty but in complete conformity between body and mind:

> It commonly produces a certain openness of heart, which appears in the Eyes, and renders the Physiognomy agreeable. Sincerity does not like Truth turn upon Words. All our Actions must also be sincere. It is ever an enemy to Artifice and Dissimulation.

For Mathilda, sincerity is the display of authenticity expressed through inadvertent and unintentional bodily signs. It is conformity of thought and bodily expression; it cannot stage itself, and it cannot be strategic.[128]

But to Mathilda's surprise, her companions remain unconvinced that sincerity and dissimulation are distinct and opposite qualities. Lucinda and Don Pedro observe how easily "seeming sincere" can be assumed and fear that "those who dissemble most dexterously are those, who have the most reputation of being sincere." When assessing another's sincerity, it is "very easie to be deceived." Endeavouring to recuperate sincerity as a non-strategic virtue, Mathilda explains that there is a distinction between that "false sincerity" which "studys it self, views it self, and proportions it self to others" and true

[127] Madeleine de Scudéry, "Of Dissimulation and Of Sincerity," in *Conversations Upon Several Subjects* (London: H. Rhodes, 1683)166-77. The dialogue is excerpted from Scudéry's 1667 short romance *Mathilde d'Aguilar*, her only romance not to receive an English translation, although it proved popular in France where it went through six editions in just under a century. The dialogue was published in Scudéry's collection of philosophical conversations, *Conversations Sur Divers Sujets* (1680), which was translated into English in 1683. It is from this translation that I quote; the entire conversation can be found in *L'Histoire de Mathilde d'Aguilar* (Paris: Martin, 1667), 153-73. For the sources of Scudéry's *Conversations*, see Paule Letteri, "Édition Critiqe de 'Conversations Sur Divers Sujet' (1680) De Madeleine De Scudéry" (PhD diss., Université de Montréal, 1993). The dialogue is discussed in Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 162-3; Denery, *The Devil Wins*, 245-6.

[128] Modern scholars offer similar definitions of sincerity as a "natural enactment of authenticity anchored in, and yielding, truth." See Ernst van Alphen and Mieke Bal, "Introduction," in *The Rhetoric of Sincerity*, ed. Ernst van Alphen, Mieke Bal, and Carel Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-16; Frans Willem-Korsten, "The Irreconcilability of Hypocrisy and Sincerity," ibid., 60-77. Similarly Lionel Trilling defines sincerity as a "congruence between feeling and avowal" and the "unmediated exhibition of the self," in Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, 7, 9.

sincerity, which is "always the same." Such 'false sincerity', or dissimulation, is imagined as a divorce between self and expression, or a way of standing back and watching the self perform. 'True sincerity', by contrast, is an embodied experience which allows no such observation. The distinction is valid from the point of view of the sincere subject, but as Mathilda's friends insist, for the observer it is impossible to tell the difference.

Scudéry's dialogue invites us to question whether transparent communication is even possible. Forced to qualify what she means by 'sincerity', Mathilda admits that even sincerity has its limitations: the sincere do not "say all they know" nor do they "lose their Judgment," and on many occasions, "we are allowed not to open our hearts." Indeed, sincerity "ought to be attended with a just discretion, which sets bounds to it, and regulates its use." The more Mathilda explains what she means by 'sincerity', the more it starts to resemble her companion's definition of dissimulation as "the masterpiece of Prudence and Judgement." Both sincerity and honest dissimulation turn out to be methods of controlled communication which limit access to thoughts and feelings in order to secure positive social interactions. As Padilla explains to Mathilda, even people who are "perfectly sincere" are guilty of saying "more or less than they think": "we conceal Love, Hatred, Ambition; and we only shew, what we believe may please or be useful." Such an acknowledgement veers close to the recognition that there is no such thing as one clear or stable truth, particularly when it comes to the human heart.

IV – The Prince in Disguise

It is through what we have called 'honest dissimulation' – or dissimulation with benevolent intention – that mid-century romances reinterpret the genre's problematic trope of the disguised prince. As we saw in *Arcadia*, such a trope threatens to debase the practitioner. But seventeenth-century romances rework the problem of the lying prince into an argument in favour of pretence, by suggesting that it is through disguising themselves

that princes prove their true 'worth'. We have seen such a construction in Barclay's *Argenis,* in which disguise allows princes to develop virtue away from the flattery of self-interested courtiers. Similarly in Scudéry's *Artamène,* Cyrus disguises himself as a private soldier in order that he might pursue "Honour and love of Glory." His disguise is intended to allow him "to instruct and improve myself to the best advantage; I would learn to know myself and all the world."[129]

The problem of imposters was a serious one in the early modern period. As Valentin Groebner has argued, identification practices depended principally on one's word.[130] The fear that people might pretend to be someone they were not was so pronounced that the German scholar, Karl Ittig, imagined identity theft as a unique category of dissimulation, "pretence of the body."[131] The romance hero's choice to disguise high status is a way of expressing heroic disinterest by giving up access to what Hobbes terms a man's "instrumental" powers. In his definition of power, Hobbes divided the "power of a man" into two categories: natural and instrumental. Natural powers are those with which nature has endowed an individual, such as "extraordinary strength, form, prudence, arts, eloquence, liberality, nobility." They are powers that cannot be stripped away by another authority. Instrumental powers are those which can be acquired and taken away, such as "riches, reputation, friends."[132] The sum of a man's natural and instrumental powers is his worth, which is "so much as would be given for the use of his power."[133] The romance use of disguise is a way of employing natural powers and rejecting instrumental ones; it is a narrative manoeuvre deployed to demonstrate the hero has a 'worth' separate from his instrumental powers.

[129] Scudéry, *Artamenes*, I:96.
[130] Groebner, *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe*. Groebner shows how important clothing and distinguishing bodily marks were as evidence of identity.
[131] Karl Ittig, *De Simulatione Et Dissimulatione* (Leipzig: Immanuel Titius, 1709), 12-14.
[132] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 66.
[133] Ibid., 68.

But English romances imitating this French model during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum had to accommodate a more nuanced depiction of royal power. In *The Princess Cloria*, for instance, Arethusius's disguise allows him to demonstrate his substantial natural powers. Disguising himself as the hunter Thusius, he rescues Joyela and her maid from a bear, and his strength and courage invite Joyela to suspect he may be more than he seems. She detects the truth "by comparing Thusius persons and actions with what had been told her of the Beauty and Courage of Prince Arethusius, though now something obscured by his Huntsmans disguize." She correctly interprets Arethusius's bravery as a sign of his inherent nobility and intuits that he must be the exiled prince. However, because "she considered the trust belonged to another, and not to herself," she does not reveal her discovery but instead aids his escape (635). Joyela's penetration of Arethusius's disguise reveals her to be a canny 'reader' who understands the conventions of the genre to which she belongs, and who can correctly interpret actions as markers of true identity. But Joyela knows how to keep a secret; if she is a savvy interpreter, she is also a discreet one.

But in *Cloria*, Arethusius's disguise has been adopted because his instrumental powers have been curtailed. As a prince in exile, with limited financial resources or political power, Arethusius has to rely on his natural powers as the sole evidence of his 'worth'. The moment Joyela sees through his disguise serves as an important recognition of heroic 'worth' which confirms the association between class and 'worth' but divorces such 'worth' from purchasing power. Given the financial constraints on many aristocratic families, not to mention on the exiled Stuarts, it is unsurprising that the conservative genre of romance should seek to affirm aristocratic privilege precisely when its performance appeared to be under threat.

In this context, *Cloria* has to work hard to confirm the French heroic association between disguise and disinterest. When the hero has no instrumental powers, disguise begins to look less like the performance of disinterest and more like an interested response to political threat, employing pretence to gain political or material advantage. *Cloria* tries to insist that these disguises are not an interested performance through its doctrine of permissible deceit in cases of necessity. Unlike the self-interested Artemisia, who disguises herself to seduce Narcissus, Cloria and Arethusius are forced into disguise for self-preservation. But this distinction is difficult to sustain: Cloria's disguise enables her to marry Narcissus, while Arethusius's ultimately leads him to resume the throne of Lydia. It is difficult to sustain a reading of disinterested disguise which does not serve to secure political or amorous desires.

Anxieties about the potential debasement of disguise had particular pertinence during the Civil Wars, when the romance trope of royals travelling in disguise suddenly had real world referentiality. The Duke of York escaped imprisonment in Syon House disguised as a woman, while Charles I famously fled from the Siege of Oxford disguised as a servant (see Figure 7, p. 238). In John Cleveland's 1646 poem *The Kings Disguise*, the poet muses on Charles' infamous flight from the Siege of Oxford, and meditates on the nature of authority in the absence of external markers. He fears that Charles' disguise renders him "an usurper to his Prince" and that while disguised "y'are not i'th'presence, though the King be there."[134] He bewails that necessity has forced Charles to this "sacriledge" or "prophanation":

> Is't not enough thy Dignity's in thrall
> But thou'lt transmute it in thy shape and all?

[134] Cleveland, *Poems*, 40-44.

But the poem goes on to suggest that any who believe Charles' costume is "vile" or debasing are, in fact, merely poor readers of the signs of majesty. The King is like "the Gospel coucht in parables" which challenges any "Cabinet-intruders" to penetrate the front:

> Keys for this coffer you can never get,
> None but S. Peter's opes this Cabinet.
> This Cabinet, whose aspect would benight
> Critick spectators with redundant light.
> A Prince most seen, is least: What Scriptures call
> The Revelation, is most mysticall.

This reference to *The King's Cabinet Opened*, a Parliamentarian pamphlet published in 1645 after King Charles' private cabinet was found in the aftermath of the Battle of Naseby and his letters to the queen published, implies that the Parliamentarians are not merely poor readers of disguise, but of scripture. The man who cannot see the true majesty behind the King's dress similarly cannot perceive the mysteries of divine revelation. Disguise as a literary trope is explicitly aligned here with faith, with wonder and with mystery.

The fear that deception might be debasing is articulated by the German scholar, Karl Ittig, in his treatise on dissimulation. Ittig is generally in favour of most types of deception, arguing both simulation and dissimulation should "be tolerated with an unhesitating respect."[135] But he is concerned by disguise – what he terms "pretence of the body" – as a tool which can lead to usurpation of authority.[136] He gives a list of ancient kings who usurped the throne by pretending to be someone they were not, and concludes that "pretence and dissembling of persons, when undertaken unlawfully for specific reason, has in the past ended in the destruction of the pretenders." His objections to disguise are

[135] Ittig, *De Simulatione Et Dissimulatione*, 9.
[136] Ibid., 12-14.

twofold: he fears it might promote unworthy individuals to positions of power and responsibility, and that ultimately it might be less effective than other forms of deceit.

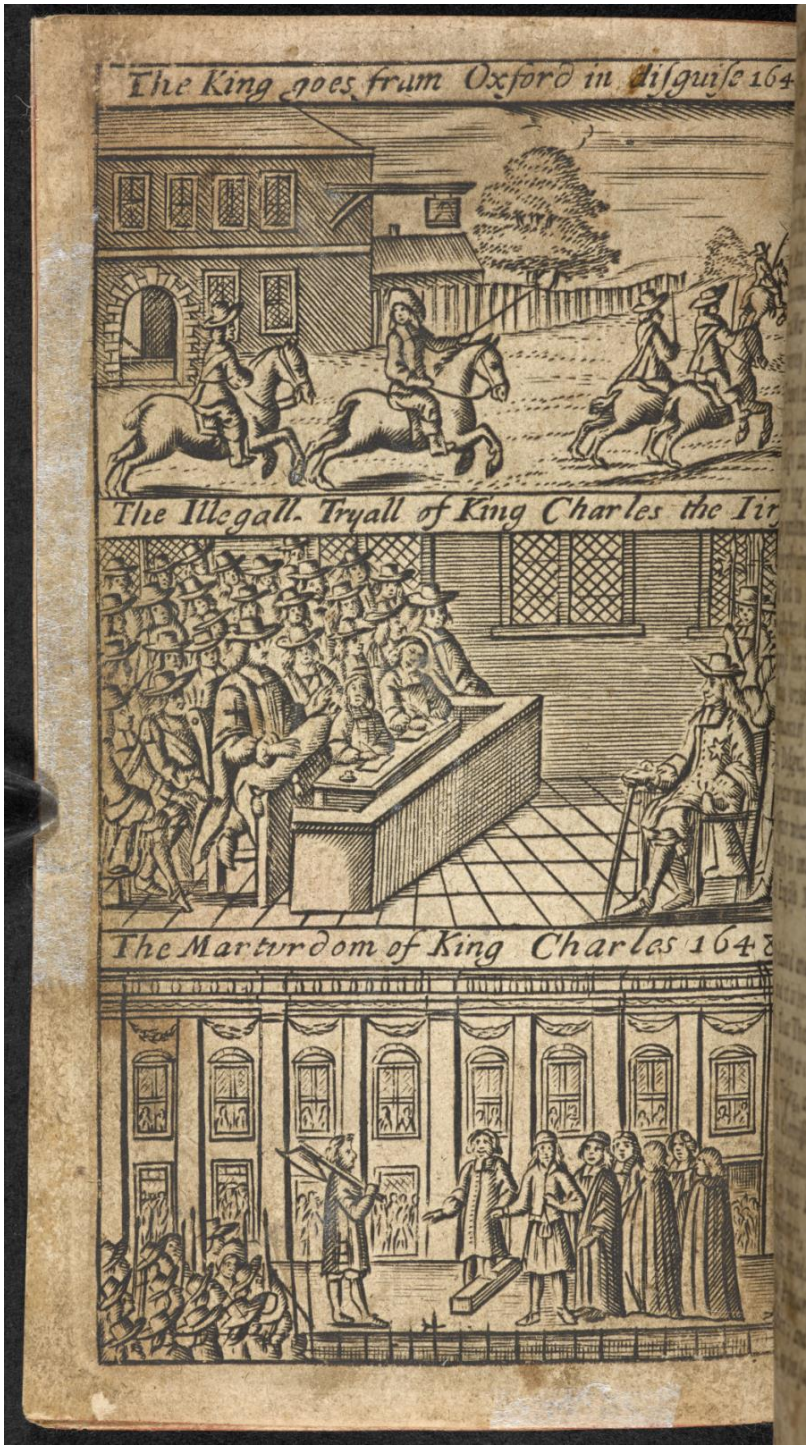


Figure 7 Engraving of the King's escape from Oxford, from Nathaniel Crouch, *The Wars in England, Scotland and Ireland* (1681). © The British Library Board 807.a.5.

Eliana offers a more radical interpretation of the prince in disguise motif by taking as its hero Ittig's unworthy, dissembling pretender. Instead of a prince who disguises himself as a commoner to prove his 'worth' and thus win the hand of a beloved princess (the model in *Argenis*), *Eliana*'s hero is a worthy commoner who disguises himself as a prince. Earlier English and French romances deployed disguise to illuminate the hero's natural worth, but these natural powers were always supported by hidden but accessible instrumental ones. *Cloria* problematises this by offering us a hero whose natural powers are not sustained by financial worth; *Eliana* goes further still, offering us a hero who has no access to instrumental powers. Such a view is deployed to advocate for the political philosophy of rule by consent: to an individual with proven natural powers, instrumental ones may be bestowed.

Like many mid-century romances, *Eliana* repurposes narratives from the *Arcadia* to very different ends. It opens with the journey of two cousins – Euripedes and Araterus – who are almost immediately separated in a shipwreck. The adventures of Euripedes, who is frequently crossed in love by scheming, ambitious women, fill the first five books, and it is only in the sixth book that we discover what has become of Araterus (until now presumed dead). After the shipwreck he was captured by pirates and only escaped by fomenting rebellion among the crew. In a speech heavily reminiscent of republican rhetoric, Araterus incites the crew members to throw off the captain's "Tiranny without controulment" (230) and reclaim their original status as "coequall with their captain" by resisting the "subtilty and ambition that at first destroyed this coequality" (231). But after this stirring speech, it is revealed that Araterus himself does not believe it to be "contrary to the nature of men, and the end of their creation to be restrain'd and subjugated by their fellow-creatures" (231) but merely deploys such arguments to mislead those "ready enough to imbibe them" and is in fact seeking "not only his liberty, but to have it accompanied with their ruin"

(231). Much like *Panthalia, Pandion and Amphigenia* and *The Princess Cloria*, *Eliana* evinces a healthy distrust for "how incapable the common people are to judge of verity" (232).

After escaping the pirates, Araterus travels on to India, where he becomes the lover and champion of the Queen of India. Conscious that their disparity of status stands in the way of their marriage, Araterus's servant pretends that Araterus is a prince in Europe. Araterus confirms the lie to the Queen's counsel, who then agree to ratify their marriage, and Araterus becomes King of India. This reverse deception is justified on similar grounds to the more conventional prince-in-disguise deception of earlier romances – namely, the grounds of love – but where earlier romances employ this role reversal to separate love from ambition and stress the *disinterest* of its disguised princes, the deception of Araterus aligns love and ambition. *Eliana* seems to present a very different view of ambition from earlier romances, not as something dangerous, but as something valuable and as an important social force in and of itself.

Eliana is careful to emphasise that the lie about Araterus's status comes not from him but from his servant. Indeed, Araterus is reluctant "to acknowledg that for truth…so far was he from accumulating honours to himself which he was conscious did not belong to him, though he were assured none there could convict him of an untruth" (270), but he is persuaded by his servant Argelois, who points out that if Araterus does not confirm his lie, Argelois himself will be exposed as "an imposter" and that his servant's loss of status "would reflect on him" and might in turn bring Araterus into "disesteem" (270). Paradoxically, Araterus' desire to be considered credible enjoins him to sustain the lie.

The romance attempts to distinguish between the deception of Araterus, who maintains a lie told by another in order to win a beloved princess, from that of his rival, the prince of

Sirana, whose suit to the Queen is "rather an effect of his ambition than his love" and for which he employs "all his art and subtilty" (272): the romance sets up a conflict between ambitious pretence and disinterested pretence. But such a conflict is difficult to sustain in the face of the ethical dilemma of lying to his beloved. The romance attempts to make the distinction clear by showing that the Prince of Sirana falls back on force when he cannot succeed by fraud: his deceptions take the form of excessive flattery both of the queen and her counsellors and, when this fails, threats of military action. The difference, then, is in *intention*: the prince deploys deception to attempt to *compel* the queen to marry him while Araterus deploys deception in order to give the queen the *choice* to marry him. Araterus's deceptions are noble in so far as they validate the queen's right to choose for herself, and not merely for politic interest.

But there are broader questions at stake: questions about the right of the lied to to have the truth, and questions about the ethics of succession itself. Is it right for Araterus to sustain this lie, when doing so crosses his intended's right to the truth and violates the succession laws of India? These problems are circumvented by the suggestion that no one is really taken in by the lie; what is not believed cannot truly be vicious. At first it appears the Indians are convinced. Indeed, the Queen's chief counsellor Peomontile claims that "our reason might have told us, that those actions we have seen, could not proceed but from a man of merit and quality" (270) and the Queen does not question his behaviour, believing it only natural that a man might dissemble "his birth out of a generous humour" (270). The conventions of romance stand in Araterus's favour. Araterus's courage on the field and his loyalty to the queen – the markers of 'worth' – support his claims to royal birth.

But when the matter of the marriage is put to the Queen's counsel, whose consent is essential, we learn that in fact the Indians have not been taken in. The counsellor Maurisha points out,

> Some say he is a Prince, what proof have we of it, but himself? and who would not attribute Titles of honour to himself where he knows he cannot be disproved? a likely matter that a Prince should be driven so far from his own Countrey, and be so willing to remain here without the least desire of returning…She is a mark fair enough for an ambitious man; and who would not pretend greatness for so great a glory? (279)

The romance raises the troubling question that perhaps the division into the loving and ambitious rivals is not as neat as it has first appeared. Maurisha goes on to explain that the real problem of such a status disparity in marriage is that he will never be able to rule the queen as he should: "Do you not think that the queen, knowing him to be her Creature, and so inferiour to her, will not still exercise her authority over him, and though he be in place of an husband, account him in that of a servant?" (280) The problem here, then, is that a lie which is recognised and which everyone has colluded in sustaining may not be enough to change behaviour.

He goes on to suggest that Araterus's deceptions may not be limited to that of rank, but all his behaviour may be performative: "his excellent parts, sweet and winning behaviour, his many vertues, moderation and generosity…these are sutable exhibitions, purposely prepared to forward his high designes" (281) and fears that when once a prince, like many an ambitious young man, "their former vertues are oft-times changed into vices" (281) by the obtaining of power. He concludes by suggesting that men of low status are apt to pretend to virtues they do not possess: "men of mean conditions are so apt to fain those vertues they have not" (281) that if Araterus's quality cannot be trusted, then neither can his appearance of virtue. Maurisha denies, in other words, that a man's 'worth' can be perceived externally.

Peomontile protests these accusations:

> Alas! what avails it to be vertuous, since it cannot shelter from the Calumniator? How wickedly and maliciously goes he about to defame

> Araterus, and to make all those vertues he is indued with to be the effects of his dissimulation. (284)

Peomontile insists that Araterus's rank is not in question: "those that are acquainted with him cannot but see all the marks of honour and nobility in his breast; neither was it his own assumation or bragging that made it known, but by an extraordinary way, and contrary to his desire" (282). Araterus benefits from the associations between 'worthy' behaviour and rank, and between modesty and credibility: because he has not declared his rank himself, he is more credible. But then Peomontile mounts an extraordinary argument: he suggests both that high status may not make one any more credible, and nor might it necessarily be a sufficient justification for rule. In other words, he suggests that even if Araterus is not of royal extraction, this may not matter in light of his evident abilities. Peomontile insists it is no "Maxime of policy…that Princes were only indued with a capacity from the gods to rule, others to obey" and that history gives many examples of "Princes…that have lacked a capacity to rule" while "others far from line of Nobility…have not only had the capacity to rule, but to rule well." Indeed, Peomontile goes so far as to question the convention of romances going back to the Greek novels, in asserting that princes, "were they ignorant of their birth, and not nursed up in those princely employments, we should see that the gods inspiration is secondary through education" (284). Peomontile suggests that there may be no such thing as an inherent 'worth', but that all powers can be acquired through fortune and education. The radical nature of this argument is not merely political but generic – in suggesting that tales of princes raised without knowing their birth are stories of rulers not equipped to rule, *Eliana* suggests that the virtues of the ruler are more important than their birth. He goes on to observe that Araterus's virtues are clearly "not fain'd or forc'd" and that it is born princes who have more reason to dissemble than men of low status:

> Had not a vicious Prince then need to cloke and palliate his vices for fear, lest they might alieanate him from the hearts of the people, and make them glad to imbrace any opportunity of depriving him of ruling, rather than subject themselves to one who shews himself so vicious before he attains his power? Is it not for this very reason that many Princes have dissembled, and palliated their evil natures till they have attained their aims, and have been able to warrant their enormities? (285)

If Maurisha argues that there is an alignment between status and virtue that renders princes more 'honest' than ordinary men and therefore more worthy of rule, Peomentile disassembles this argument, suggesting that princes may have as much recourse or more to dissimulation than private men, and that there is no clear association between class, virtue and honesty that guarantees ability to rule, but that such an ability is principally the effects of education.

The debate between the two councillors circles around the issue of whether or not Araterus is a prince and whether or not he can be *believed* – two inter-related problems. Paradoxically, of course, Peomentile's argument is that if Araterus is *not* a prince, he may be more credible, thus giving credit to the notion that he is of royal birth. What is striking about this debate is the way it is brought to a conclusion: the councillor Meador decides that although Araterus is a "stranger by birth" he is "every way fit and capable" of being their King. Meador entirely circumvents the question of Araterus's birth which has dominated the previous discussion and instead argues that "vertue was more to be considered than any other thing, yet in him they would find youth, beauty, courage, prudence, magnanimity, generosity and every thing that should accompany a Prince" (286) and that therefore the counsel should be guided by the queen, who has "honoured him, and stiled him with the Title of Prince" (285). The point Meador seems to be making here, then, is that his actual birth is not relevant: Araterus has the necessary qualities of a prince, and is being treated as one by the queen. Does the question of his birth matter, when he is eminently capable of performing the role?

The councillors, in other words, are *not taken in* by Araterus's lie: they recognise the unlikelihood of a prince stumbling into their territory and not returning to his own. But they choose to maintain the fiction of his status because it serves their interests to have as a prince a man who is so eminently fitted for the role. Where earlier romances had resolved the problem of a 'worthy' or deserving individual who appeared to be without fortune or rank by revealing they were actually a prince, *Eliana* separates 'worth' from both birth and purchasing power, and in its emphasis on rule by consent, it suggests surprising Republican sympathies.

This chapter has argued that mid-century and Restoration romances reflect contemporary anxieties regarding trust and belief and fears that over-suspicion might devalue the principle of word-as-bond central to the trust-dependency of early modern society. In their particular concern with sovereign credulity, romances illustrate the common precept that a prince should conceal his own thoughts and distrust the words of others. This practice conforms to the principles of the paradoxical 'honest dissimulation' as it was understood by contemporaries, and it is through the paradoxical 'honesty' of princely deceit that Restoration romances respond to the problem we first articulated in Sidney's *Arcadia*: that deception might be debasing. In the first year of the Restoration, *Eliana* reworks the trope of the disguised prince into an illustration of the ways in which deception might prove quite literally ennobling.

CONCLUSION: AFTER ROMANCE

At the end of Charlotte Lennox's comic anti-romance, *The Female Quixote* (1752), the heroine, Arabella, is shocked to discover that the heroic romances she has taken for true historical accounts are, in fact, fictional. A doctor of divinity sent to cure her of her "extravagant notions" and "fantastick Ideas" explains that the romances from which she has drawn her ideas of correct conduct are merely "senseless Fictions, which at once vitiate the Mind and pervert the Understanding" and are nothing more than a "Falshood of History".[1] At first Arabella resists consigning her favourite books to the pile of "empty Fictions". She mounts a defence of the "Veracity of these Books" based on social contract theory:

> There is a Love of Truth in the human Mind, if not naturally implanted, so easily obtained from Reason and Experience, that I should expect it universally to prevail where there is no strong Temptation to Deceit; we hate to be deceived, we therefore hate those that deceive us; we desire not to be hated, and therefore know that we are not to deceive. Show me an equal Motive to Falshood, or confess that every Relation has some Right to credit.[2]

For Arabella, romances can be trusted in the way people can be trusted: because it is a social good to be considered trustworthy, our self-interest guarantees that we are honest with others. Needless to say, such an argument demonstrates a complete misapplication of Hobbesian thought: the contract between author and reader cannot be understood through the logic of self-interest. Indeed, the Doctor is at a loss to correct her misapprehension, finally suggesting that romance authors are perhaps not "intentionally culpable" for perpetrating a deceit because they do not "expect…to be credited." He must explain to Arabella that "truth is not always injured by fiction."[3] Arabella's failure to grasp the conceptual difference between 'fiction' and 'falsehood' is a marker of her lack of worldly

[1] Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, 102, 340, 374, 376.
[2] Ibid., 376.
[3] Ibid., 377.

experience, but it is the mission of female quixote narratives to educate their credulous heroines into the distinction between fiction and lying. Arabella must learn that it is possible to tell stories without lying and that the ethics of truthfulness do not apply to the rules of fiction.

The comedy of *The Female Quixote* depends upon the reader's superior understanding of how fiction operates. Arabella has been taken in by romance's truth-claims, but the canny reader of Lennox's novel understands that these do not constitute claims to facticity. As the doctor explains, the "excellence of Falshood…is its Resemblance to Truth"; truth-claims are a form of literary aesthetics, not a demand to be read for historical fact.[4] This seems entirely self-evident to the modern reader; today, the word 'fiction' primarily refers to imaginative literature. But as Catherine Gallagher has argued, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries one of the primary meanings of 'fiction' was "deceit, dissimulation, pretense," a meaning that was only fully superseded in the eighteenth century.[5] Arabella's confusion over the operation of fiction reflects a cultural environment in which the categorical distinctions between fiction and deceit were still imperfectly understood.

Thus far this thesis has examined ethical debates about deceptive speech and behaviour, rather than formal questions about fiction as a 'type of lie'. I have said very little about the early modern anxiety that romances were not merely about dissimulation, but that they might themselves be dissimulating. This is partly because these are separate questions which happen to share a similar vocabulary: the veracity of a book does not carry the same ethical questions as the veracity of an individual's speech. What they share, however, is an interest in the question, *How do we know what is true?* and a growing awareness that in a

[4] Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, 378.
[5] See Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," in *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 338-9; *OED*, "*Fiction, N.*" (OUP; accessed 20 July 2016).

world (interpersonal or literary) in which motivations are opaque, no authorities are entirely trustworthy and all must be assessed for their 'truth-status'.[6] To conclude, then, I consider the semantic confusion between 'fiction' and 'falsehood' and raise questions about the kind of literary project romance engages in when it defends modes of deception.[7] I suggest that defences of lying have stylistic, as well as ethical, implications, and that romance's valorisation of honest dissimulation constitutes a defence of imaginative literature itself. The gradual development of fictionality as something distinct from lying animated the fashion for anti-romances, particularly narratives of female quixotes, and allowed anxieties about credulous readers to be expressed through tales of innocent women 'taken in' by the increasingly outdated genre of romance. Throughout this thesis, we have seen charges of deception deployed to confirm categories of social exclusion; it remains only to note that the same technique was used to delineate romance from the more 'truthful' novel.

I – Gulling into Virtue

The truthfulness of romance has long dominated both attacks and defences of the genre. As we have seen, it was from romance's supposed historical truthfulness that it derived its claims to moral 'truth'. Supposedly the romance style presented historical fact in a more palatable form and through inviting affective identification, eased the reader's path towards the emulation of virtue. This was the theory of 'gulling into virtue': in so far as fiction was a lie, it was a benign one which deceived readers into emulating moral behaviour. Against this argument for romance's 'truthful' moral purpose, critics undermined romance's claims to truthfulness. By proving romances to be factually 'false', critics also sought to show that romance duped its readers into emulating behaviours that

[6] I take the term 'truth-status' from Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 20.
[7] For a history of the perceived association between fiction and falsehood, see John Hollander, "The Shadow of a Lie: Poetry, Lying, and the Truth of Fictions," *Social Research* 63, no. 3 (1996): 643-61.

were unrealistic, inappropriate and even vicious. The grounds of critical debate thus established an association between the problems of romance's truthfulness and its morality. For both defenders and critics of romances the key question became, *to what purpose is the deceptiveness of fiction tuned?*

Conduct books such as Jacques Du Bosc's 1609 *L'Honneste Femme* exemplify this anxiety around dissimulating romance. For Du Bosc, romances are not merely lies, but teach deceptive behaviour. They are nothing but the "empty appearance of good" offering readers "Lessons of Artifice and skill."[8] Du Bosc's anxiety about both the truthfulness and the teachings of romances reflects a deficiency in the early modern critical vocabulary: in the seventeenth century, the semantic distinction between the fictional and the deceptive was blurred. Undoubtedly readers understood implicitly that a fictional narrative was not the same as a conman's cheat. Conventional definitions of lying going back to Augustine distinguish art from deception on the grounds that it neither intends to mislead nor is there any expectation of truthfulness. The twin criteria of deceptive intent and expectation of truth must be applied for something rightly to be called a lie; as Philip Sidney expressed it, poetry "nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth."[9] But the very need to assert this distinction between the fictional and the deceptive is revealing. It points to a culture in which the distinctions between fiction and deceit were recognised, but which lacked a critical vocabulary to discuss them. As Catherine Gallagher has argued, fictionality only ceased to be a "subcategory of dissimulation as it became a literary phenomenon."[10] Drawing this distinction was not aided, of course, by the real world referentiality of mid-century fiction. Romances such as *Theophania, Cloria* and *Artamène,* while not keyed at

[8] Du Bosc, *The Excellent Woman*, 19.
[9] Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 235.
[10] Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," 338.

the level of precise one-to-one correspondence with historical events, invited the reader to absorb real world truths from the fictional space.

Understanding this conceptual confusion allows us to situate criticisms and defences of romances within their epistemological context. If we read seventeenth-century romances as the products of a period in which the notion of 'fictionality' was still in its nascence, we can understand why critics of romances such as Du Bosc were alarmed by the possibility that romances might be mistaken for factual histories, and why defences of romances relied on a two-fold strategy which simultaneously made truth claims dependent upon historical 'probability' while asserting that what was 'false' was a lie told in the best interests of the reader. Defenders of romance advocated for the genre on the grounds that it 'gulled into virtue': romance's deceptiveness was a *disinterested* and therefore 'honest' lie intended to 'teach through delight.' Throughout this thesis, I have argued that romances defend the dubious 'virtue' of deceit through valorising an ideal of benevolent, or honest, dissimulation. This concept underlies both reason of state theory and theories of civility or politeness; this notion also, I suggest, underlies the genre definition of 'serious romance'. Romance's claims to truthfulness are really claims to the 'honesty' of its deception in a world in which the distinction between fiction and deceit is still open to interpretation. When romances ask, *what lies are acceptable?* they are also asking, *what kinds of stories are acceptable?* The answer seems to be, *those which seek to inculcate virtue*. To the extent that fiction is understood to be a lie, romance authors' limited defence of 'lying' through the notion of 'honest dissimulation' proves to be a sophisticated form of genre defence which seeks to prove the validity of imaginative literature.

We can find consideration of the ethics of story-telling most elegantly expressed in Barclay's *Argenis*, in which the poet Nicopompus outlines his plan to write a "stately fable" in which readers "shall meete with themselves." But everything will be so

cunningly concealed that "he may be as much deceived, that would draw all in my writing, as he that would nothing, to the truth of any late or present passage of state."[11] Nicopompus describes a tale in which the reader is always and inevitably deceived, whether they read to uncover real world truths or to enjoy the surface narrative. There is a clear purpose to this process of obfuscation: through layers of concealment, Nicopompus aims to expose the vices consuming the state rather than individuals. He seeks to explain political events not through the actions of individuals but through the workings of iniquities such as flattery and credulity, self-interest and ambition. Antenorius, to whom Nicopompus outlines this plan, is much taken with the idea and praises him for this "new kind of writing" which will be "confounding the fraudes and practices of the wicked, and arming Honesty against them." Through a poetics of deception, then, Nicopompus aims to expose the fraudulent and protect the honest. Encouraged by Antenorius, Nicopompus begins "his most usefull and delightfull Story" and a new chapter of the romance commences: Nicopompus is implicitly identified as Barclay and his literary project to be *Argenis*.[12] This strategy reworks Du Bosc's fear of fiction's corrupting deceptive pleasure into a literary theory of beneficial deception. *Argenis* suggests that through deceiving the reader, the romance teaches discernment.

The association of fiction with lying would remain a problem of particular significance well into the eighteenth century. This semantic confusion inflects quixote narratives which are premised on the character of the too-credulous reader who takes as literal truth what is meant as allegory or pure fancy. Anti-romances made comic play with the figure of the naïve reader and the popularity of quixotic heroines such as Juliette from de Subligny's *La*

[11] Barclay, *Argenis*, 109.
[12] Early readers seem to have perceived this connection. A reader of the British Library copy of the 1636 Henry Seile edition (838.c.1.) has underlined Nicompompus's words "My purpose" and noted in the margin 'l.y.s. designe Book'. Letters have been lost when the pages were recut, but this might possibly be 'Barclays designe in this Book.'

Fausse Clélie (1670) and Arabella from Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) stand testament to the widespread belief that romance readers were credulous and imbibed dubious moral lessons from their reading. The overly credulous reader is a product of the ambiguity between fiction and deceit as distinct categories. In the late seventeenth century, jokes about readerly lack of discernment concealed a deeper anxiety about the difficulty of discerning the truth in a world of partisan politics and mass print publication in which the practice of civility had come to incorporate the techniques of dissimulation. It is a preoccupation with what Kate Loveman terms "inexperienced readers".[13] Rising literacy rates and a growth in printing activity saw widespread changes in access to information, particularly during and after the Civil Wars. The growth of partisan politics in the late Stuart era fed fears about the kinds of information the middling sort could access and whether they were equipped to interpret it 'correctly'.[14] Loveman argues that in such a climate, readers were encouraged to believe it was their "first responsibility to discern the truth-status of a work", a model she terms "sceptical reading".[15] In this environment, the model of heroic romance with its aesthetic of benevolent deception became unsustainable. As readers looked ever more carefully for the 'truth', romance developed a reputation for being an out-dated and misleading genre only favoured by the 'extravagant' and the deluded.

II – Transparent Delusion

It is within this debate about romance's 'truth-status' and the ethics of fictionality as a type of deception that we might profitably situate the popular female quixote narratives of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The delusions of Lennox's quixotic heroine Arabella are produced by a literary aesthetic reliant upon benign deception. But in quixote

[13] Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 23.
[14] Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 332.
[15] Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 20.

fictions, the credulous reader is 'taken in' by romances in a way that is evidently *not* to their benefit. Quixote narratives put the perception that romance was dissimulating to various uses: they play on the association between deceptive romance and its credulous readers to comic effect, while simultaneously questioning whether romances do in fact convey dangerous knowledge. They deploy the spectre of misleading fiction to explore broader questions of trust and honesty, asking *how do we know what is true?* and *how do we trust we are being told the truth?*

The too-credulous reader has been a stock-figure of comic anti-romances since *Don Quixote*; the innovation of later anti-romances was to make such a figure young, female and of marriageable age. As we have seen, young women are of particular ethical and political interest in romances, and they are similarly invested with political meaning in the comic anti-romance. In quixote narratives, they represent the 'vulgar' or the newly literate – that new class of readers who were presumed to be dangerously over-credulous.[16] The joke is that a reader has taken literally what was meant allegorically and seeks to emulate the adventures of romance heroines. These are tales of readers who have misread romance's claims to a kind of 'truthfulness', incorrectly understanding *vraisemblance* to mean facticity. As a consequence of misreading romance's 'truth-status', they take entirely the wrong moral lessons from romances.

One of the first female quixotes can be found in de Subligny's *La Fausse Clélie* (translated into English in 1678 as *The Mock-Clelia, or Madam Quixote*), a comic anti-romance in which the heroine, Juliette d'Arviane, suffers from chronic 'fits' of madness in which she believes she *is* Clélie from Scudéry's romance. These fits lead her into extraordinary imitative behaviour, such as fleeing from perceived 'ravishers' (in reality, her suitor, family and friends) and throwing herself into a canal (an imitation of Clélie's swim across

[16] On the association between deceivability and vulgar status, see Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, 23-4.

the Tiber also found in Lennox's *The Female Quixote*). We learn early on that Juliette has come to believe she *is* Clélie after recognising "some conformity" between her own life and that of Scudéry's heroine, notably a shipwreck, an abduction and an earthquake. When she reads *Clélie*, she finds, "Monsieur de Scuderi…hath foretold in this Romance, the Adventures that I should meet with."[17] The romance narrative offers Juliette a way of interpreting the otherwise random misfortunes that afflicted her early life.[18]

This cautionary tale about dangerous over-identification speaks to more than merely a casual misogynistic association between femininity and delusion: it indicates a deeper fear about the power of narrative to encourage affective identification and the danger of using fiction as an interpretive principle to understand the real world. Concerns about the pleasure of romances producing excessive and disordered personal identification surface repeatedly in criticisms of romances: describing the dangers of over-emulation, Hobbes drew on the readers of romances as an example of those who cannot separate the real from the fictional:

> When a man compoundeth the image of his own person with the image of the actions of another man, as when a Man imagines himself a Hercules or an Alexander (which happeneth often to them that are much taken with reading of romances), it is a compound imagination and properly but a fiction of the mind.[19]

Hobbes fears that such 'fictions of the mind' lead to the reckless pursuit of reputation and vainglory against the instincts of self-interest and self-preservation.[20] Indeed, for de Subligny as for Hobbes, what is disturbing about this process of affective identification is the way it encourages behaviour that runs counter to self-interest and is therefore unpredictable. Such behaviour can only be conceived of as 'madness', or what *La Fausse*

[17] Adrien-Thomas Perdoux de Subligny, *The Mock-Clelia: Being a Comical History of French Gallantries and Novels, in Imitation of Don Quixote* (London: Printed for Langley Curtis, 1678), 16, 22.
[18] Doody, Introduction to *The Female Quixote*, xxiv.
[19] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 17.
[20] See Victoria Kahn, "Hobbes, Romance, and the Contract of Mimesis," *Political Theory* 29 (2001): 5.

Clélie terms "extravagancy".[21] To be 'extravagant' is to be "out of bounds", or to exceed the boundaries of reason or propriety.[22] It is used in conjunction with romances to stress their improbability; when used to describe quixotic characters, it implies behaviour that lacks restraint. This notion of extravagant behaviour as unconstrained is important for the way it maps onto our recurrent questions of honesty and transparency in social behaviour. As we have seen, dissimulation is associated with Stoic self-control and the concealment of the passions. The delusion of the Quixote represents the opposite of self-mastery; as Scott Paul Gordon has observed, madness in fiction often serves to reveal a 'true' self unshackled from the learned behaviours of civility. Rhetorical artifice is forgotten; romance delusion – that is, the belief that fiction is factual – is really a form of extreme transparency.[23] Quixotes are taken in by romance's deceptions precisely because they lack artifice themselves. In staging a process of learning to 'read' correctly, quixote tales also stage an education in correct social performance: quixotic heroines must be re-educated from their naïve romantic transparency into dissimulating civility.

Against the model of dangerously emulous reading, *La Fausse Clélie* offers an alternate model of reading that is not affective but empirical. Nicholas Paige argues that *La Fausse Clélie* stages the evaluation of narrative veracity and offers models of "sceptical readers."[24] As Paige shows, other characters within the romance are shown to respond with scepticism to improbable tales, questioning the credibility of the source and the coherence of the story. This 'rational' mode of reading is exemplified by the Chevalier de Montal, who doubts the truthfulness of the romantic story told him by Mademoiselle de Barbisieux in the twelfth book (or "novel"). Mademoiselle de Barbisieux's story is typical of late-century French romance: it is a tale of tested fidelity, extramarital love and the correct

[21] Subligny, *The Mock-Clelia*, 11, 25, 51.
[22] OED, *"Extravagance, N."* (OUP; accessed 10 February 2015)
[23] Scott Paul Gordon, "The Space of Romance in Lennox's *Female Quixote*," *SEL* 38, no. 3 (1998): 511-12.
[24] Paige, *Before Fiction*, 68.

performance of discretion. These are themes that would receive their most sophisticated treatment in *La Princesse de Clèves* just eight years later, but already in de Subligny's anti-romance their authenticity is being questioned. The tale is simple: to conceal his affair with a judge's wife, the Count of Bermilly pretends to woo the judge's niece, only to find himself in a deadly rivalry with the niece's actual suitor. When this rival is found dead, Bermilly cannot provide an alibi without compromising his mistress, and chooses to be beheaded rather than expose her. The Count has "lost his head for his too great secrecy and discretion," proof that there is such a thing as "too much circumspection."[25] Mademoiselle de Barbisieux recounts the tale to prove that there are men who can be "secret and discreet in their Love", but at least one member of her audience, the Chevalier de Montal, struggles to credit her:

> How come you yourself to believe it, answered he, if that Master-piece of Secrecy hath told nothing thereof? There is repugnancy in all you have said; for if the matter hath been kept secret, no body can know it.
>
> Ha! Sir, replyed she, neither was it discovered till long after, by the means of a Chamber-maid that was in the Plot, to whom the Presidents Lady hath done some bad Offices since.
>
> But, replyed he, might not that have been done out of spight by the Chamber-maid? It is very well known, such Sluts can say and doe mischief enough when they are offended.
>
> Nay, said she, there is nothing more true than what you have been told; the Murtherer has been apprehended since, and hath at his death publickly declared that the Count was no way guilty of the murther of his Rival; but that it was himself onely, because having been abused by him, he could no other way be revenged.
>
> The Chevalier is onely incredulous, said Mademoislle Velzers, because he is not the man that would doe what the Count of Bermilly did.[26]

[25] Subligny, *The Mock-Clelia*, 262. See discussion in Paige, *Before Fiction*, 69-71.
[26] Ibid., 263, although errors in pagination mean this should be 226. As Nicholas Paige observes, the effect of the auditors' questions is to limit "apparent improbability," *Before Fiction*, 69. We can find the same joke repeated in Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, when, on being informed that the famous lovers of antiquity never declared their feelings, Mr Glanville protests, "But pray, Madam, if the illustrious lover of Clelia had never discovered his passion, how would the world have come to the knowledge of it?" Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, 45.

The Chevalier presses Mademoiselle repeatedly on the credibility of her sources: how can a secret be known? Can a dismissed servant be trusted? He believes the Count's excessive discretion is so improbable it must be a lie. His response to the tale is intellectual and sceptical, not affective, and he is only satisfied upon learning that the true murderer has made a public declaration: for the Chevalier, secrets and gossip are unreliable sources for narratives and only public speech is credible. The Chevalier's model, unlike that provided by Juliette, is one of sceptical reading (or listening). He does not trust authors as sources of authority, but asks, *How can I know this is true?* The contrast with Juliette's mode of reading is powerful. *La Fausse Clélie* seems to pit two modes of reading against each other: the one feminine, credulous, deluded and affective; the other masculine, sceptical and rational.

But even as *La Fausse Clélie* appears to advocate for the rationality of sceptical reading, the anti-romance simultaneously suggests that both modes of reading may be limited by the problem of affect. Mademoiselle Velzers' joke that the Chevalier might be a sceptical reader purely because *he* would not act with such excessive discretion raises questions about the relationship of individual experience to truth assessment. Just as Juliette has found romance a 'truthful' way of interpreting her life experiences, so it is 'false' to the Chevalier to whom it does not represent his own lived experiences. Both readers try to determine the authenticity of the narrative by seeking to identify themselves – that is, their own motivations or their own experiences – within the tale. In so far as both modes of reading are rooted in affect, the Chevalier's sceptical mode of truth assessment may be just as fallible as Juliette's. It is telling that *La Fausse Clélie* ultimately relies on the conventions of romance for its resolution: diving into the canal in imitation of Clélie, Juliette is rescued from drowning by her long-lost lover and swept away in his carriage, and it is "the Joy that she felt in finding her dear *Aronce* again" that "compleated her

cure."[27] A romance adventure of her own appears to teach Juliette that she is not, in fact, Clélie, but the heroine of her own life. This adventure may reveal the limits of *Clélie* for explaining the real world, but it can hardly be said to teach Juliette the falsity or improbability of romance tropes. If *La Fausse Clélie* is an anti-romance about ways of interpreting fiction, ultimately it reaffirms the romance conventions it appears to undermine.

La Fausse Clélie raises the problem of romance-induced paralysis, demonstrating how reading romances might cripple our judgement to discern the truthfulness of real-world narratives and might leave us dangerously transparent to other, more sceptical, readers. The same idea is picked up in Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, in which the heroine's romance delusion appears to render her uniquely vulnerable to cunning predators. But much like seventeenth-century romances such as *Argenis,* which redescribes the female vice of deception as admirable strategy, *The Female Quixote* turns the traditional female vice of credulity into the grounds of feminine agency. Arabella's romance delusion turns out to be the source of her power in the narrative.

Raised by her widowed father in an isolated castle, Arabella's interest in reading leads her to her deceased mother's collection of romances (in "very bad Translations") and, being "wholly secluded from the World" with "no other Diversion," she comes to believe that romances are "real Pictures of Life." Lennox is careful to stress that this idea comes to her "from the Manner of her Life, and the objects around her" as much as from the books themselves. Arabella's youthful seclusion in a distant castle with a "melancholy" parent resembles the youthful experiences of romance heroines; much like Juliette, Arabella finds

[27] Subligny, *The Mock-Clelia*, 396.

romance is the vehicle which best makes sense of a lonely life and chance occurrences.[28] It is from epic heroic tales of love and adventure that Arabella forms her view of the world, models her own behaviour and interprets that of others. She delights in romances as "shining Examples of Generosity, Courage, Virtue, and Love; which regulate our Actions, form our Manners, and inspire us with a noble Desire of emulating those great, heroic and virtuous Actions, which made those Persons so glorious in their Age, and so worthy imitation in ours" (40). Unsurprisingly, then, she consistently misreads those around her: she believes that her carp-stealing servant, Edward, is really a noble lover who has disguised himself to be near her, that her uncle's care for her comes from concealed desire, that a prostitute at Vauxhall is really a noble lady in disguise and that passing men on horseback are ravishers from whom she must escape by swimming across the Thames (an imitation of *Clélie* also found in *La Fausse Clélie*). This last adventure causes so serious a fever that her life is nearly lost, and it is in the fragile stages of recovery that she is brought to understand the error of her ways, to perceive the distinction between history and fiction and between fiction and deception, and to accept that reading alone cannot prepare one for the world because "knowing the ways of Mankind...cannot be learned but from Experience" (379). Arabella must learn that books are no substitute for real life.

On first examination, *The Female Quixote* appears to be a fairly stereotypical anti-romance, exhorting credulous readers to beware of the evil in what they are consuming so voraciously. Arabella's reading teaches her to be overly mindful of her own 'glory' and to wish death on any who threaten it; she even demands that her suitors duel. Her reading invites her to assume her own centrality in the lives of those around her, ascribing

[28] Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, 7. Citations hereafter in text. Arabella resembles Biddy Tipkin, the heroine of Richard Steele's *The Tender Husband* (1712), who has "spent all her solitude in reading romances," *The Tender Husband* (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1712), 16.

passionate desire for her to all the men of her acquaintance.[29] By reading the world according to the conventions of romance, she is free to imagine hidden passions where none exist. Indeed, the rules of romances teach her that a lover will take "all imaginable Pains to conceal his Passion" even going "so far in his Dissimulation, as to pretend Love" to another (292). "The more resolutely a Man denies his Passion," Arabella explains to her cousin, Miss Glanville, "the more pure and violent it is" (292). Arabella's understanding of the romance world as one governed by concealment, dissimulation and strict control of the passions enables her misreading of the real world and allows her to sustain a belief both in her own desirability (which the novel ultimately upholds – few men do not fall under Arabella's spell) and in her own genius at penetrating the hearts and minds of others. The irony of *The Female Quixote* is that Arabella's romance imagination turns out to be at least partially self-fulfilling: when she demands others conform to the rules of romance, they often do. By insisting upon the exact performance of romance behaviours, Arabella trains her cousin to attend and leave her when she wishes, to conceal his passion for her while remaining a devoted servant, and even finally to avenge her honour.[30] Arabella secures cooperation for her delusion and is thus able to put off unwanted marriage until she has moulded her cousin into the ideal suitor. Delusion proves the grounds of Arabella's agency, securing her the amorous narrative in which she longs to star.

Arabella's transparency is juxtaposed with the non-romance reading characters, whose performance of dissimulating strategy recoups few material benefits. In the romance tradition of providing oppositional honest and dishonest female characters, Arabella's cousin Miss Charlotte Glanville is introduced as her non-romance-reading foil. Charlotte

[29] Patricia Meyer Spacks observes that quixote narratives rely on the perceived appeal of romances to women not because women are gullible, but because romances "tell the truth of female desire," which is to be of greater importance in the public sphere. By reducing all real world motivations to erotic desire, romances inflate the role women play in real world affairs. Patricia Meyer Spacks, "The Subtle Sophistry of Desire: Dr. Johnson and "The Female Quixote"," *Modern Philology* 85, no. 4 (1988): 533; see also Deborah Ross, "Mirror, Mirror: The Didactic Dilemma of *The Female Quixote*," SEL 27, no. 3 (1987): 464.
[30] Doody, Introduction to *The Female Quixote*, xxv.

spends much of the romance concocting schemes to humiliate her cousin and secure her cousin's suitors for herself. She mistrusts Arabella's transparency because she "could not think it possible, one Woman could praise another with any Sincerity" (91) and she misreads Arabella's romantic language as a subtle attack: when Arabella likens her to "fair and virtuous Antonia," Charlotte "could not imagine Arabella spoke this seriously" and believes her words are "designed to sneer at her great Eagerness to make conquests" (89).[31] If Arabella is one example of a 'poor reader' in Lennox's novel, Charlotte is another. Her failure to read Arabella's words as anything other than insincere strategy is what Scott Paul Gordon terms "a Mandevillean misreading" of others which reveals nothing so much as her own strategic deployment of language.[32]

Arabella, by contrast, is defined by her 'artlessness'. While Charlotte spends four hours dressing "in order, if possible, to eclipse her lovely cousin," Arabella prepares with "Haste and Negligence" and yet "nothing could appear more lovely." (83-4) Arabella's naturally attractive appearance is indicative of her innocent and artless nature.[33] The romance insists she is "always benevolent and kind" (140) and her misconstruction of those around her tends to their credit: she takes the scandalous Miss Groves at her word, believing she is married and not that she has been seduced out of wedlock, and elsewhere she takes pity on a young prostitute, believing her "Quality is not mean" (336). If this comes from a misreading of class – she believes both women to be of higher social and, consequently, moral status than they are, insisting to Miss Glanville, "It is hardly possible to suppose, a young lady of Miss Groves's quality would stain the lustre of her descent by so shameful an intrigue" (140) – it is nevertheless impossible to interpret Arabella's behaviour as

[31] Gordon, "The Space of Romance," 508.
[32] Ibid., 504, 508.
[33] Ross, "Mirror, Mirror: The Didactic Dilemma of *The Female Quixote*," 467.

anything other than generous and sincere.[34] When Arabella is finally led from her romance delusion, the doctor warns her that "it is impossible to read" romances "without lessening part of that Humility, which keeps us awake to Tenderness and Sympathy, or without impairing that Compassion which is implanted in us as an Incentive to Acts of Kindness." He insists romances teach only "the Arts of Intrigue" (381). Such a charge seems to echo Du Bosc's over a century before. But as Scott Paul Gordon argues, *The Female Quixote* does not sustain this attack on romances: it is the non-romance reading Charlotte who has learned "the Arts of Intrigue" by youthful exposure to society. The sheltered Arabella, who has read only romances, is far more transparent. As in *Don Quixote*, the most sympathetic characters are romance readers; *The Female Quixote* reserves its scathing attack on social hypocrisy for those who do not read romances.[35]

Even as *The Female Quixote* stages a credulous reader's education into 'correct' reading, it confirms the value and credibility of the romances it mocks. Romances are not merely the source for Arabella's generous personality, but also for her clear-sighted understanding. Indeed, some of her most lauded speeches are lifted almost word for word from romances. Her dialogue on raillery, for instance, for which she is praised as speaking "like an Orator," is lifted straight from 'The History of Pististratus' in Book IX of *Artamène* (268).[36] Such a manoeuvre is part of Lennox's ambiguous treatment of romance: it may be the source of Arabella's folly, but it is also the source of her morals, her knowledge of history and philosophy, and even her fashion choices. There is nothing about Arabella that has not been carefully constructed in imitation of romances: to admire her is to accept that romances, for all their folly, contain much that is worthy of emulation. In this late response to seventeenth-century romances, *The Female Quixote* resists any association between the

[34] Mary Patricia Martin, ""High and Noble Adventures": Reading the Novel in *The Female Quixote*," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 31, no.1 (1997): 57.
[35] Gordon, "The Space of Romance," 509.
[36] Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, see editor's note on 406.

falsehood of romance and the viciousness of its teachings. Rather, it suggests that dissimulation as practised by Miss Glanville – that is, a kind of civilised hypocrisy – is the vice of non-readers, whose lack of imagination paradoxically signals their opacity. Arabella's romance-induced sincerity secures her the ideal suitor; Miss Glanville's cunning can only catch a husband who would prefer Arabella.

Quixote narratives confirm the common criticism that romance was 'dissimulating', using romance as a referent to ask questions about the contract between author and reader and to explore methods by which readers might assess the truth. But while they affirm the association between romance and deception, quixote narratives raise questions about whether romance's deceit is malevolent or whether it is an 'honest' dissimulation which teaches virtue and proves a source of agency for its credulous heroines. The influence of romance is a rhetorical transparency and a generosity of interpretation which is decidedly more admirable than civility's covert self-interest. In so far as romances teach disinterested transparency, quixote narratives suggest a little romance reading may be no bad thing.

III – After Romance

The promise of the novel was that it would not mislead. Congreve, in the Preface to his 1692 novel *Incognita; or, Love and Duty Reconciled*, describes how romance can "elevate and surprise the Reader into a giddy Delight", only to "leave him flat upon the Ground…when he is forced to be very well convinced that 'tis all a lye." The novel, by contrast, is "of a more familiar nature."[37] If it does not offer the highs of romance delight, neither does it threaten to dupe the reader. Quixote narratives, in painting the dangers of romance delusion, confirm these associations between, on the one hand, romance and dissimulation and, on the other, the novel and truthfulness. The principles that had

[37] William Congreve, *Incognita: Or, Love and Duty Reconciled* (London: Printed for Peter Buck, 1692).

governed the development of 'serious romance' – that is, the neoclassical principles of *vraisemblance* and *bienséance* – were now claimed for the novel by writers such as Lennox. "The only Excellence of Falsehood," the doctor of divinity tells Arabella, "is its Resemblance to Truth" (378). And it is the tale of Arabella herself, rather than the tales she reads, that most closely resembles the real world.[38] Just as 'serious romances' were defined against the implausibility of Iberian romances, now defences of the novel repeated the same strategic manoeuvre to claim further generic innovation.

Some protested this relegation of romance to nothing more than an out-dated dupe. In the Preface to *Exilius: Or, The Banished Roman*, Jane Barker maintained that romances were "not to be discarded as wholly useless" because "the study of these Books help[s] to open the understandings of young Readers, to distinguish between real Worth and superficial Appearances."[39] But few concurred that romances taught discernment; the popular perception of the romance reader was of one who lacked discrimination and was easily taken in by 'false' narratives. The shift from Don Quixote to the *female* quixote reflects the growing derision of the genre. The sins of romance – its extravagance, its deceptiveness, its garrulity – are the sins of women, and only women could enjoy them.[40] The 'serious' purpose announced by seventeenth-century romances – that is, their turn to the political, their ethical engagement and their careful deployment of moral philosophy – is whitewashed by their association with credulous female readers, who can be supposed to take nothing from them but delusions of their own importance. In assigning romance the role of deluder of credulous readers, the 'serious' ethical drive of seventeenth-century romance has largely been forgotten.

[38] Critics such as Laurie Langbauer and Mary Patricia Martin have argued that *The Female Quixote* stages a "renunciation of romance" which is as much about announcing the arrival of the novel as it is about the dangers of credulous reading. Martin, ""High and Noble Adventures": Reading the Novel in *The Female Quixote*"; Laurie Langbauer, "Romance Revised: Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 18, no. 1 (1984): 29-49.
[39] Jane Barker, *Exilius: Or, the Banished Roman. A New Romance.* (London: E. Curll, 1715), A2.
[40] Langbauer, "Romance Revised," 39.

Throughout this thesis, we have observed how charges of dissimulation are employed to construct categories of exclusion, limiting circles of trust to those who are male, upper class and Protestant. By painting certain social groups as inherently deceptive, trustworthy communities can be delineated and cohesion secured among those deemed honourable. Trust networks are strengthened by the creation of boundaries around them, but such boundaries limit access to the social and economic benefits that come with membership. This strategy of exclusion is also used to delineate genre. We have seen already how it was employed in the defences of 'serious' romances to distinguish them from the Iberian romances that had come before. Now as the seventeenth century waned, the charge of deceptiveness separated 'serious' romance from the burgeoning novel. Through accusations of deceit, romance could be isolated from more 'worthy' reading material and relegated to the shelves of credulous readers: women, children and the lower classes. This manoeuvre was also part of a nationalist endeavour to reclaim certain genres as 'honest' English literature and to repudiate romance as French foppery.[41] Both *The Female Quixote* and Steele's quixote drama *The Tender Husband* make reference to Orrery's *Parthenissa*, the English romance most obviously in the French heroic mode, but they principally take aim at French romances such as Scudéry's *Artamène* and La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre*. The novel, by contrast, is an *English* form (for all that it certainly derived from the late century French *nouvelle*). In the Preface to *The Secret History of Queen Zarah* (1705), Delarivier Manley insists that the new "Little Histories" are "much more agreeable to the Brisk and Impetuous humour of the English," a somewhat ironic remark given that her Preface is in fact a translation from the French (abbé Morvan de Bellegarde's 1702 *Lettres Curieuses de Littérature et de Morale*, itself a paraphrase of du Plaisir's 1683 *Sentimens sur Les Lettres,*

[41] For the association of anti-French and anti-romance sentiment, see Aparna Gollapudi, "Jokes and Party Strokes: Whig Ideology and Wife Reform in Steele's *The Tender Husband* and Johnson's *The Masquerade*," *Modern Philology* 108, no. 3 (2011): 406.

et Sur L'Histoire, Avec des Scrupules sur Le Stile).[42] The defining qualities of de Bellegarde/Manley's new popular 'histories' are their relative brevity, their narrow focus on a small cast of characters, their contemporary or near-contemporary settings and their greater "Probability of Truth, which consists in saying nothing but what may morally be believed." Romance's 'probability' – so loudly asserted by Scudéry and her English adherents – was unmasked as unnatural artifice and Manley insisted, "A Reader who has any sense does not take part with these Fabulous Adventures, or at least is but slightly touch'd with them, because they are not natural, and therefore cannot be believ'd." The extended, fabulous, lying romance is repudiated in favour of the brief, probable, truthful novel. It is perhaps a credit to Lennox's novel and the genre claims of early eighteenth-century authors that seventeenth-century romance remains largely unstudied, dismissed as a formal 'dead-end', or as merely a highly imitative genre lacking in innovation or scholarly interest. But the very success of anti-romances depends on the popularity of their target: *The Female Quixote* was funny because Arabella's reading – now largely forgotten – was still in circulation in the eighteenth century. *Artamène*, for instance, went into a new ten-volume octavo English edition in 1690, while *Theodora and Didymus* was reprinted in 1703, adapted by Thomas Morell as a libretto for Handel's *Theodora* which premiered in 1750 and then adapted as a long poem by Mary Deverell in 1784. Generally speaking, French romances seem to have enjoyed a longer life than their more overtly political English counterparts: the letters of Mary Delany recount the reading of *Clélie* at a house party in 1732, those of Horace Walpole record his reading of *Clélie* in the early 1730s and

[42] Manley, *The Secret History of Queen Zarah, and the Zarazians* A2. The abbé de Bellegarde's essay claims that the new shorter works are more pleasing to the humour of the *French*, see John L. Sutton Jr., "The Source of Mrs. Manley's Preface to 'Queen Zarah'," *Modern Philology* 2 (1984): 167-72. Manley's authorship of *Queen Zarah* is disputed, see J.A. Downie, "What If Delarivier Manley Did Not Write *The Secret History of Queen Zarah*?," *Library* 5, no. 3 (2004): 247-64. The declarations made in the Preface of *Queen Zarah* are hardly new: as early as 1663, Chappelain had declared romances had died along with La Calprenède and, with the exception of *Parthenissa*, English romances after the Restoration had begun experimenting with shorter forms. See Paige, *Before Fiction*, 62.

the Anson and Lucas family papers reveal two generations of women who were reading and discussing *L'Astrée* in the 1750s and 1770s (although Amabel Lucas's 1773 verdict on *L'Astrée* was that "it is not comparable to the Arcadia.")[43] The success of the novel in declaring its triumph over romance has somewhat overshadowed romance's continued popularity into the eighteenth century.

But despite many authors' insistence on the innovation and the 'truthfulness' of the novel, the first novels clearly inherit the themes and ethical interests of seventeenth century romances. 'Secret histories' such as Manley's *Queen Zarah* owe a great deal to the earlier roman-à-clef, and are clearly the descendants of *Argenis* and *Cloria*, as well as the shorter French *à clef* fictions such as *Agésilas et Ismenie*. 'Secret histories' are driven by the same impulse as mid-century romances to expose hidden narratives of sexual and political intrigue. According to Rebecca Bullard, the 'secret history' is "a revisionist mode of historiography" which reveals "that monarchs and ministers routinely attempt to dupe their people in an effort to extend their own power."[44] In their overt interest in political secrecy and deception, the operation of Machiavellian policy and the revelation of sexual antics, they are thematically as well as formally the heirs of mid-century prose romance. Anxieties about dissimulation as a specifically Catholic and/or political practice became less fraught at the dawn of the eighteenth century, but ethical problems about the practice of deceit in the social sphere continued to dominate eighteenth-century fiction. Romance's anxiety about political, social and religious dissimulation might seem to live on in the

[43] For Mary Delany and Horace Walpole's correspondence relating to romances, see Margaret Anne Doody's Introduction to Lennox, *The Female Quixote,* xv. For the Anson and Lucas families' reading, see L30/23 fol. 9 (also L30/9) *Lucas Papers*, Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Office and D615/P(S)/1/3 Letters of Elizabeth, Lady Anson, *Anson Papers,* Staffordshire Records Office.
[44] Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674-1725: Secret History Narratives* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 1, 94.

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel's much-studied concern with politeness and hypocrisy.[45]

Throughout this thesis, I have argued both for the prominence of romance in seventeenth century literary life and for the particular importance the ethical problem of dissimulation (religious, political and civil) assumed for romance authors and readers. Troubled by the threat deceit and suspicion seem to pose to social and political stability, in romances we find types of lie classified as acceptable or unacceptable and dissimulation valorised as a middle way between dangerous transparency and immoral lying. They present dissimulation as a mode of deception and distrust that might permissibly accompany heroic action in an uncertain world. This strand of ethical theory was intertwined with an ongoing process of genre definition: defences of the new 'serious romance' insisted the works held a certain 'truth-status' because they were both 'probable' and founded on historical fact, but also maintained that their falsehood was 'honest' or benevolent. The paradoxical nature of such a defence would leave romances open to ongoing questions about their truthfulness, a problem inherited by the early novel.

There remains, of course, much to be said about seventeenth-century romance. Work on prose romance of this period has largely focused on questions of political theory – an area to which this thesis has sought to contribute – but seventeenth-century romances are substantial works which have a great deal to say beyond the ethical and the political. Scholarly work on seventeenth-century romances is hampered by the lack of reliable modern editions and critical editions of the most substantial English romances, *The Princess Cloria* and *Parthenissa*, would be welcome additions to the field. In this thesis, I have not sought to perform editorial work, but brief examinations of the early editions of

[45] See, for instance, Jenny Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).

both *Cloria* and *Parthenissa* reveal variations between Parts One and Two as they were published in the 1650s and as they were published in the complete folios of 1661 and 1676 respectively. These variations are sufficiently substantial – sentences added or missing, words substituted for others, certain tautological phrases removed – to suggest authorial intervention between the first and later editions. A more detailed comparison between the texts would reveal the extent of these changes and would, I suspect, be politically as well as stylistically revealing. Should the length of these romances prohibit modern reproduction (as well it might), the model of the *Artamène* and *La Règne d'Astrée* projects, both part of the Corpus Électroniques de la Première Modernité (CEPM) project at Paris-Sorbonne, might offer one way of accommodating seventeenth century romance's prolixity for the modern reader.

In line with this kind of textual work, a close study of extant copies of English romances would doubtless shed new light on early modern reading practices. Throughout this thesis, I have made reference to striking annotations found in extant copies within the UK. These annotations have revealed a pattern of reading romances for contemporary political relevance and, perhaps more significantly, they have demonstrated sustained close reading. Early commentators such as Sutherland speculated that few could read to the end of these substantial romances, but studies of annotations reveal quite the reverse: readers demonstrate an indefatigable interest in the lives of heroes and heroines and surprisingly few readers who annotated their texts did not make it to the end.

As a final word, I note that the toleration of deception in seventeenth-century romances might seem stranger to modern readers than it did to its contemporary audience. Recent modern philosophy has taken an increasingly stringent approach towards questions of truth and deception. Sam Harris's applauded *Lying* (2013) insists that anything that deviates from the truth is a lie and should be shunned, a view he expounds with fervour. At the

extreme, Brad Blanton's Radical Honesty movement demands the open expression of every thought that passes through the practitioner's mind in social conversation. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that most adherents of these movements are white, middle-class, male citizens of stable and democratic nations: in other words, they are those who traditionally have the least to fear from transparency. Critics of Harris's book note this problem: his work does not acknowledge that it is relatively uncommon to lie with vicious intent and far more common to lie in situations of real exigency (I speak here not of 'white lies', but of more serious breaches of the honesty principle). In this, our seventeenth-century forebears had the advantage: whatever we might think of a system which aligned gentility with credibility and excluded all others from moral and financial status, such a model does at least acknowledge the pressure that necessity places on conventional morality. Perhaps the value of studying the problem of dissimulation in romances lies in recognising the extent to which modern anxieties about truthfulness are bound up in inherited ideas about social cohesion that date back to the early modern period. Only with such an awareness can we begin to address those social and political structures which confirm homogenous communities of trust by excluding those who are perceived (fairly or unfairly) to be dishonest.

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