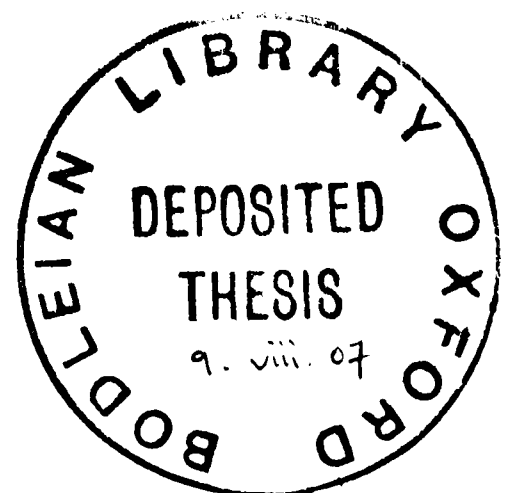


*Literary Jacobitism: The Writing of Jane Barker, Mary Caesar  
and Anne Finch*

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## ABSTRACT

### Literary Jacobitism: The Writing of Jane Barker, Mary Caesar and Anne Finch

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This thesis argues that much of the gender based criticism that has led to the “rediscovery” of neglected early modern women writers has, paradoxically, also served to limit our understanding of such writers by distracting attention from other aspects of their writing, such as their political commitments. The three authors considered, Jane Barker (1652-1732), Mary Caesar (1677-1741) and Anne Finch (1661-1720), have been selected precisely because Jacobitism is central to their writing. However, it will be argued that a focus upon gender politics in the texts of these writers has led to a failure to comprehend the party political boldness of their work.

The thesis examines the writing of each author in turn and explores the implications of Barker's, Caesar's and Finch's Jacobite allegiances for their respective views of human history as played out in political affairs. It also considers the ways in which each author attempts to reconcile a cause that is supposedly supported by God with apparent political failure. The quest of Barker, Caesar and Finch to investigate these issues and to comprehend how Jacobitism forms part of their own authorial identities is central to what is meant here by “literary Jacobitism” in relation to these writers.

The thesis demonstrates that Jacobitism is enabling for each of these three women as it enhances their ability to conceive of themselves as authors by allowing their sense of political identity to overcome their scruples about their position as *women* who write. However, it also illustrates that Jacobitism functions differently in the writing of each of the selected authors. It thus argues that an undifferentiated labelling of the work of these three women as “Jacobite” is as restrictive as their previous categorisation as “women writers”.

[95624 words]

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## Introduction

This thesis has emerged from a reconsideration of two separate areas of academic study that have both undergone a resurgence of interest in the last three decades. During this period, both Jacobites and early modern women writers have found themselves the subjects of intensive scrutiny. This study concentrates on three individuals who fall into both of these categories. Jane Barker (1652-1732), Mary Caesar (1677-1741) and Anne Finch (1661-1720) are all authors whose writing exhibits a strong, if often coded, support for the exiled Stuarts after the Revolution of 1688. They are also authors who have been “rediscovered” in large part due to the pioneering work of feminist-oriented critics whose primary focus has frequently been upon issues of gender in the work of these writers. This thesis will explore the ways in which Jacobitism is manifested in the works of Barker, Caesar and Finch and also the ways in which it influences their perceptions of themselves as authors. It will examine the connection between gender and politics in their writing and the representation of this connection in the extant scholarship on these authors. It will contend that analysis of the gender politics of these writers has so far taken priority over the examination of other forms of political engagement in their work and that, as a result, these other forms have been neglected and often misrepresented. As Danielle Clarke has recently observed, “the search for a radical gender politics” in much initial work on early modern women writers meant that “other kinds of politics were often sidelined”.<sup>1</sup> My study of these three literary Jacobites will support Clarke’s contention by arguing that, paradoxically, the critical emphasis upon gender which has led to the emergence of these authors from relative obscurity may be distorting and

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<sup>1</sup> Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women’s Writing* (Harlow: Longman, 2001) 2.

undermining the party political boldness of much of their writing. The three women writers selected for study have been chosen precisely because I believe that Jacobitism is central to their authorial identities and because the nature of this political commitment, as it functions in their writing, has not yet been fully understood.

The significance and implications of the renewed interest in both Jacobitism and writing by early modern women have been far-reaching and transformative. Howard Erskine-Hill has proposed “the academic rediscovery of Jacobitism as the most notable development peculiar to eighteenth-century studies in recent years”.<sup>2</sup> In a similar manner, Paul Monod, whose work on the cultural manifestations of Jacobite allegiance has added a further development to this already expanding field, has written of the long-term impact of continued loyalty to the exiled Stuarts:

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this tangled story is that Jacobitism was important. It should no longer be possible to ignore it, or stigmatize it as a reactionary vice, restricted to a tiny band of half-crazed zealots. Few areas of political, social or intellectual history can be cited that did not have any connection with Jacobite political culture.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, the increased interest in Jacobitism that has been apparent since the 1970s has resulted in conclusions that are far from uniform. The most fundamental disagreement amongst historians has been over the strength of the Jacobite movement and whether a Stuart restoration was ever truly possible. However, within the confines of this central argument, other disputes have arisen as to the nature and extent of the influence of

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<sup>2</sup> Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Poetry of Opposition and Revolution: Dryden to Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 58.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 345.

Jacobitism over the political character of eighteenth-century Britain. Eveline Cruickshanks, one of the most significant scholars in this field, has thus argued that the Tory party was essentially a Jacobite party from 1714-45, a position that has been countered by Linda Colley's assertion that, for the Tories, Jacobitism was simply "one political option amongst many". Yet more contentious was J.C.D. Clark's assertion that the survival of Jacobitism undermined existing historiographical views that the long eighteenth century was marked by a steady movement towards secularism and modernity.<sup>4</sup>

More recently scholars such as Daniel Szechi, Doron Zimmermann and Edward Corp have furthered the exploration of this field providing additional evidence that, even if Jacobitism continues to cause profound disagreement amongst scholars, it is now firmly established as a credible and worthwhile area of study. Szechi's work has sought to clarify the increasingly complex debate over the importance of Jacobitism by dividing current opinion into three different camps: "optimists, pessimists and rejectionists". According to Szechi, the first of these groups views Jacobitism as a viable political movement that had a genuine chance of success whilst the second group is far more circumspect about its potential. The "rejectionists" see the entire Jacobite enterprise as outdated and doomed to failure. Doron Zimmermann challenges the arguments of both "pessimists" and "rejectionists" by arguing that Jacobitism remained a vital force even

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<sup>4</sup> Eveline Cruickshanks, *Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45* (London: Duckworth, 1979); Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 42; J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Cruickshanks remains one of the most important scholars of Jacobitism. See also *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), edited by Cruickshanks. This collection of essays was one of the first works to reassess the importance of Jacobitism.

after the defeat of 1745. Edward Corp, who has produced one of the most substantial bodies of work in this field, has developed the discussion yet further by moving beyond a consideration of the actual strength of Jacobitism to a detailed analysis of the Stuart courts in exile. Corp's work seeks to complicate conventional wisdom about the poverty and religious intolerance of these courts whilst also exploring the cultural lives of the courtiers and exiles.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst the renewed interest in Jacobitism has primarily been the result of work by historians, it has not been solely their preserve. Although the influence of Jacobitism upon literary expression remains an under-researched topic, there has been some excellent criticism in this area. Howard Erskine-Hill, notable for his exploration of Dryden and Pope's Jacobitism, has also written more generally on this theme. Erskine-Hill's essay, "Literature and the Jacobite Cause: Was There a Rhetoric of Jacobitism?" seeks to explore the Jacobites' politically inflected use of language whilst his more recent essay "Poetry at the Exiled Court" gives a brief overview of literary creation in St. Germain. Murray Pittock's *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* explores related issues through its analysis of the ways in which the struggle between the Jacobites and the Hanoverians was manifested in the language used by both sides.<sup>6</sup> Yet, whilst the criticism of both Erskine-Hill and Pittock has provided a useful

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites: Britain and Europe, 1688-1788* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 1; Doron Zimmermann, *The Jacobite Movement in Scotland and in Exile, 1746-1759* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Eveline Cruickshanks, and Edward Corp, eds., *The Stuart Court in Exile and the Jacobites* (London: Hambledon, 1995); Edward Corp, ed., *The Stuart Court in Rome: The Legacy in Exile* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Edward Corp, ed., *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689-1718* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Poetry Of Opposition and Revolution*; "Literature and the Jacobite Cause: Was There a Rhetoric of Jacobitism?" *Ideology and Conspiracy* 49-69; "Poetry at the Exiled Court," *A Court in*

foundation for subsequent work in this area, it has ultimately been of limited use in relation to my own research. Neither of these scholars has considered the work of Jacobite women writers in any detail and, where such writers have been mentioned, gender identity has once again been prioritised over political identity. Thus Erskine-Hill's brief discussion of Jane Barker's work ultimately concludes that she "is probably a feminist rather than a Jacobite discovery" whilst Pittock's cursory mention of Anne Finch's writing links this author's sense of political exclusion firmly to her sense of dispossession as a woman.<sup>7</sup>

Although scholars of Jacobitism may not yet have paid great attention to the writing of its female adherents, the period during which Jacobitism itself has been subjected to renewed and sophisticated analysis has witnessed the advent of the study of writing by early modern women by some literary critics. Since the 1970s and 1980s a wide variety of texts and individual authors have been "discovered" and an increasing amount of this material is now readily available in anthologies, critical editions and through on-line resources such as the Brown Women Writers, the Orlando and the Perdita Projects. The early studies by Margaret Ezell, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Elaine Hobby, Jane Spencer and Janet Todd amongst others established this area as one that was attracting the attention of some of the leading feminist literary critics of the day.<sup>8</sup> In the 1990s such

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*Exile* 215-34; Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Erskine-Hill, "Poetry at the Exiled Court," 230 n. 38, Pittock 78.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-88* (London: Virago, 1988); Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London: Virago, 1989).

interest not only continued but was reinvigorated by a new generation of scholars such as Carol Barash, Ros Ballaster and Paula McDowell.<sup>9</sup> The impetus created by such work has been sustained and there is now such a relative wealth of material that increasingly complex questions are being asked about the direction of future work in this area. For instance, Sarah Prescott and David E. Shuttleton have argued that:

we need to examine more closely the precise political, social and personal contexts within which women poets both wrote and circulated their work, be it in manuscript or print (or both). Although modern feminist agendas fuelled historical recovery, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the work of individual poets cannot always easily be defined as conservative or progressive at a time when affiliations to respective, but sometimes non-commensurate ideologies concerning the fixity or otherwise of class and gender structures do not necessarily conform to modern expectations.<sup>10</sup>

In a similar vein, Danielle Clarke has suggested that a preoccupation with gender means:

that the very category of ‘women’ we invoke when interpreting a long-neglected body of writing, and its accompanying ideological assumptions, often serves to obscure ways in which women writers of the period perceived and expressed political ideas in the broadest sense.<sup>11</sup>

My research, whilst it may support such contemporary critical views and may thus challenge the findings and assumptions of many of the first scholars to analyse the three authors under consideration in this thesis, would not have been possible without their

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<sup>9</sup> Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Prescott and David E. Shuttleton, *Women and Poetry 1660-1750* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 2.

<sup>11</sup> Clarke 1.

initial work which brought these writers to the attention of a wider community of critics and readers.

One of the first questions that must be addressed by any study that incorporates Jacobitism is the vexed one of “Who or what is a Jacobite?”. As I am here concerned with literary Jacobitism it is useful to turn to Paul Monod’s work on the cultural manifestations of such beliefs in the search for a definition. Monod’s preference is for a broad-based delineation:

It need not be assumed that all Jacobites maintained an unflagging, lifelong devotion to the Stuart family, or that they all would have laid down their lives, their estates or their money for the cause. A very wide range of commitment existed among Jacobites.

The amorphous nature of Jacobitism ultimately leads Monod to conclude that, on a basic level, a Jacobite can be identified simply as an individual who “preferred a Stuart king of the exiled line to the ruling monarch or dynasty”.<sup>12</sup> The Jacobitism of Barker, Caesar and Finch went far beyond this. Each of these women endured a high degree of personal suffering for their beliefs. Jane Barker went into exile with the Stuart court in St. Germain and, like other exiles, experienced severe privation. She also converted to Roman Catholicism at some point in the 1680s and was thus subject to the financial and legal penalties imposed upon the members of that church.<sup>13</sup> Mary Caesar saw her

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<sup>12</sup> Monod 4.

<sup>13</sup> See Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714-80: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) for further information about such penalties. Haydon has written, “Under William III’s Act against Popery, Roman worship was illegal, and the penalty for a priest saying mass was perpetual imprisonment. Conversion to Popery was an offence, as was the sending of children abroad to Catholic countries for their education. Adult Catholics who refused to take the oath of allegiance and the declaration prescribed by the second Test Act were liable to lose their

husband and many close friends and political allies imprisoned for their beliefs and was estranged from her own brother as a result of political differences. Anne Finch and her husband, Sir Heneage Finch, were both Jacobites and nonjurors. Heneage Finch was arrested attempting to join the exiled Stuart court in France, a potentially treasonous offence, in 1690. His refusal to take the oaths of allegiance meant that he and his wife were forced into internal exile in the Kent countryside far from their previous life at the centre of the court in London and also that he was unable to take up his seat in the House of Lords. I will argue that each of these women, despite enduring such hardships, maintained a constant and unflagging commitment to the cause of the ousted Stuarts.

Yet, whilst based on loyalty to James II and his heirs, the Jacobitism of Barker, Caesar and Finch encompassed more than a simple preference for this dynastic line. It also included an entire complex of values and determined these authors' views of human history as played out in political affairs. Paul Monod has suggested that it is difficult to define Jacobitism as an "ideology" as it "was compatible with a wide range of ideological positions".<sup>14</sup> The differing emphases and perspectives manifest in the work of these three authors would support such an argument. However, Monod has also observed that it is possible to identify "a distinctive Jacobite point of view" which revolved around "an alliance of divine right with Country principles ... [that] reaffirmed the sanctity of monarchy, while upholding the rights of the people against injustice".<sup>15</sup> Such an identifiably Jacobite perspective is apparent in the work of Barker, Caesar and Finch.

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inheritance to Protestant relatives by the Act against Popery of 1700, which further forbade their purchasing landed property. Papists were also obliged to pay double land tax..." 47.

<sup>14</sup> Monod 7.

<sup>15</sup> Monod 17.

The commitment of these writers to the Stuarts and the values they saw them as representing provided the foundation for their opinions on the correct ordering of society. Equally important, however, is the way in which each of these writers uses her writing as a way of exploring her own Jacobite commitment and its moral and ethical implications and also of reconciling a cause that is supposedly supported by God with apparent political failure. The quest to investigate these issues and to comprehend how Jacobitism forms part of their own authorial identities is central to what I mean by “literary Jacobitism” in relation to these writers. In this I depart from Howard Erskine-Hill’s work in this field which, through an analysis of Jacobite rhetoric, focuses upon the prevalence of tropes such as those of conquest and rape in such writing.<sup>16</sup> Although such tropes do occur in the writing of Barker, Caesar and Finch, I would suggest that they are far from the most interesting or relevant aspect of Jacobite writing in relation to the three authors under consideration in this thesis. More significant, I would propose, is the fact that Jacobitism lay at the heart of these writers’ individual moralities as manifested through their writing.

In this thesis I will also suggest that Jacobite commitment enhances Barker’s, Caesar’s and Finch’s ability to conceive of themselves as authors by allowing their sense of political identity and loyalty to overcome any scruples they may possess about their position as *women* who write. Much has been written about the potential vulnerability of this position, particularly for those women who sought to publish their writings.<sup>17</sup> As

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<sup>16</sup> Howard Erskine-Hill, “Literature and the Jacobite Cause”.

<sup>17</sup> See particularly Patricia Crawford, “Women’s Published Writings 1600-1700,” *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985) and Angeline Goreau, *The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Dial Press, 1985) 13-17.

Hero Chalmers has recently observed of the royalist women writers she has studied, such authors had to contend with “the prevalence of assumptions that female authorship is incompatible with the feminine virtues of modesty and chastity”. Chalmers’ work is an analysis of the ways in which the royalism of writers such as Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn enabled these women “to find fresh ways of negotiating entrenched resistances to women’s writing” by establishing politicised “authorial images which shift the focus away from the dominance of concerns over the compatibility of female authorship with feminine chastity”.<sup>18</sup> My research indicates that Jacobitism fulfilled a similarly enabling function in the work of Barker, Caesar and Finch. I will suggest that whilst Anne Finch appears to have been inhibited from expressing her gender politics in print, her published works are more overtly party political and Jacobite than has yet been acknowledged. Finch’s sense of herself as a political writer thus appears to have been strong enough to counter, at least temporarily, her anxieties about her status as a woman writer. Jane Barker was less inhibited than Finch about examining issues of gender in print. However, Barker explored such issues in works that were *equally* concerned with Jacobite and Tory politics. My close readings of Barker’s prose fictions suggest that these works are more systematically political than has previously been recognised and that they function as highly specific expositions of the author’s political views. Barker’s manuscript poems, which appear to have been circulated at St. Germain, are even more explicit and aggressive in their politics.<sup>19</sup> I will suggest that Barker’s Jacobitism enables her to create a role for herself as a speaker of

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<sup>18</sup> Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers 1650-1689* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 2, 5, 196.

<sup>19</sup> Oxford, Magdalen College Library, MS 343. See Kathryn King, *Jane Barker, Exile: A Literary Career 1675-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000) 122 n. 57 for information about the manuscript’s circulation.

political truth that is uncircumscribed by any sense of inferiority due to gender. Barker's Catholicism supports her in this role but in no sense does she present herself simply as a vessel of God.<sup>20</sup> Rather, she emerges from her texts as a woman who believes that her political views are expressive of God's will but who also establishes herself as a highly individualised commentator on public affairs. Mary Caesar's Jacobitism enables her to produce a journal that, whilst remaining in manuscript, focuses almost exclusively on such public matters, to the exclusion of private and family concerns, and that thus defies conventional assumptions about the essentially domestic nature of women's diaries in this period.<sup>21</sup>

The three writers considered in this thesis, although united by Jacobitism, are highly diverse in other respects. Finch writes as a nonjuror profoundly committed to the idea of passive obedience and works only in the medium of verse. Barker writes as a Catholic who rejects all notions of passive obedience at the same time that she abandons the Anglican Church. She also moves with apparent ease between the forms of prose and poetry. Caesar, although an Anglican, creates what is essentially a secular work that, whilst existing in the supposedly "non-creative" form of a journal, allows her to shape her experience as profoundly as Barker and Finch shape their "creative" writings.

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<sup>20</sup> Elaine Hobby demonstrates how early modern women frequently justified their writing by presenting themselves "as passive instruments of God's Will, mere channels for his Word," *Virtue of Necessity* 27.

<sup>21</sup> The journal is now housed in the British Library (Add. MSS 62558). An edition of the journal has been produced by Dorothy Bundy Turner Potter, [*The Journal of Mary Freman Caesar, 1724-1741: Literary and Political Events in Georgian England* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002)]. See Harriet Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days: Englishwomen's Private Diaries* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989) for information about early modern women's diaries.

Such differences should serve to remind us of the dangers of seeking to confine these writers through restrictive definitions. My emphasis on the diversity of Barker, Caesar and Finch parallels Hero Chalmers' recent exploration of the distinctive qualities of the work of Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn cited above. Chalmers has warned against the use of "overarching explanations which elide important distinctions".<sup>22</sup> Chalmers has in mind particularly the arguments of Carol Barash and Catherine Gallagher. Barash has posited the existence of "a 'royalist', or a 'late Stuart', or ... a 'Tory' or 'Jacobite' women's poetic tradition". Such a tradition is based upon the idea of the "femme forte" or "heroic woman" whom Barash sees as "a figure for the woman writer" in England and also upon a supposed shared commitment to the figure of Mary of Modena amongst such writers.<sup>23</sup> Gallagher, by contrast, has contended that "Toryism and feminism converge because the ideology of absolute monarchy provides, in particular historical situations, a transition to an ideology of the absolute self". Such absolutism, in Gallagher's view, enabled Tory women writers to attain an "emancipated subjectivity".<sup>24</sup>

Both Barash and Gallagher have been extremely influential in the field of early modern women's studies. Between them they have established, almost as a critical commonplace, the existence of complex and intriguing connections between royalism, Toryism and feminism. Barash's book in particular, with its lengthy chapters on Barker and Finch, has shaped much of the subsequent criticism on these two authors. I do not

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<sup>22</sup> Chalmers 6.

<sup>23</sup> Barash 2, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Catherine Gallagher, "Embracing the Absolute: the Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England," *Genders* 1 (Spring 1988): 24-39 (25, 38).

wish to deny that the work of Barash and Gallagher has provided a useful starting point for the exploration of the relationship between royalism and feminism. Yet, like Chalmers, I would also suggest that by generalising such a relationship we do a disservice to the complexities and subtleties of individual writers. Thus, whilst I would assert that Jacobitism is enabling for the three authors under consideration in this thesis, I would also argue that it functions differently in the writing of each woman. Indeed, one of the main contentions of this study is that early modern women writers deserve the careful and detailed close reading that accentuates such individual differences and that has previously been reserved for their male counterparts. Attempts to incorporate such diverse writers within a uniform female and royalist tradition thus appear premature. This is particularly the case as, I would suggest, Mary of Modena does not occupy a central role in the writings of Finch or Barker and as the concept of an “absolute self” is problematic in relation to three women who all view the notion of selfhood and its relationship to authorship, politics and religion in such diverse ways. Ironically, perhaps, Barash’s attempts to establish a female royalist tradition can even be seen to further the depoliticization of the women it includes. Barash has stated that “... overall, women’s political (in the sense of sectarian or party political) writings have received far less attention than what we might call their sexual political works (poems about marriage, women’s education, their lack of equality)”. Yet Barash’s own emphasis upon female community, the figure of the female monarch and “of an explicitly female poetic authority, separate from a specific political party” in itself further removes our attention from royalist and Jacobite women writers’ engagement with public affairs.<sup>25</sup> I would contend that the works of Barker, Caesar and Finch are overtly engaged with such affairs

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<sup>25</sup> Barash 1, 208.

and that we do not always need to view such engagements solely through the lens of gender identity.

However, I would not wish to suggest that current priorities should simply be reversed and that a focus upon party politics should come to obscure an interest in gender in the work of such authors. To cite Chalmers once more, it is not the case:

that we must now transplant ... [these writers] naively from a category of 'women's writing' to one of 'political writing'; rather that we need to recognize the vital interplay between questions of gender and questions of political identity in their work.<sup>26</sup>

For Anne Finch, I will argue, this “interplay” is ultimately resolved when her sense of identification with the dispossessed male Jacobites and nonjurors enables her to overcome her sense of exclusion as a woman writer. For Jane Barker issues of gender and politics co-exist side-by-side in her published writing. However, Barker’s assertion of Jacobite beliefs becomes increasingly resolute with time and I argue that her final prose fiction, *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* (1726), is the most clearly Jacobite of all her published works.<sup>27</sup> At the close of her career as a published author Barker thus writes as a Jacobite as much as she writes as a woman. Such a trajectory is also visible in Barker’s manuscript work. Although the final section of the three-part manuscript collection of her poetry is composed of texts from her early, and largely non-political, published verse collection, *Poetical Recreations* (1687), the poems in this manuscript

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<sup>26</sup> Chalmers 6.

<sup>27</sup> Jane Barker, *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen; Design'd for the Farther Entertainment of the Ladies* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1726).

which were actually composed last are uncompromisingly Jacobite in content.<sup>28</sup> In these later poems, issues of gender are clearly subordinated to Barker's party political concerns. Throughout the course of her journal, Mary Caesar focuses entirely upon affairs of state and her own Jacobite commitments. For Caesar, authorship is thus solely connected to the exposition of her sense of herself as a political being. Caesar *does* draw attention to her status as a woman on occasion. However, I would argue that her consideration of gender is always secondary to her consideration of party politics.

The excellent work of Paula McDowell on the women who worked in the London book trade from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century provides a useful perspective on this issue of the relationship "between questions of gender and questions of political identity". McDowell argues that for "the non-élite women" she studies "gender was not necessarily the first category of identity". Instead, McDowell suggests that:

a different angle of vision allows us to see the lingering power of older structures of feeling; other 'metaphors of being' not based in individual selfhood. This is especially important in studying women from the ranks of working tradespeople on down, who tended to find empowerment in more dispersed modes of being based in religio-political allegiances, trades or occupations, and other collective social identifications.<sup>29</sup>

The women under consideration in this thesis clearly cannot be categorised as "non-élite". Their writings also demonstrate strong feelings of "individual selfhood". Yet, despite these distinctions, McDowell's observations can offer us a further means of

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<sup>28</sup> Magdalen MS 343; *Poetical Recreations: Consisting of Original Poems, Songs, Odes, &c* (London: Benjamin Crayle, 1687).

<sup>29</sup> McDowell 15.

comprehending the connection between gender and politics in the works of Barker, Caesar and Finch. McDowell's research reminds us that for early modern women identity was not automatically exclusively gendered. Indeed, one might argue that even among modern or contemporary women only feminists would embrace such an exclusively gendered identity. In the laudable attempt to recover writing by early modern women, a gender-based criticism of their work has emerged which has tended to obscure this fact and thus to overshadow the centrality of party political commitments to their multi-faceted identities.

The first chapter of this thesis will explore the consequences of the ways in which the writing of Anne Finch has been edited and anthologised for the manner in which her work has been read. It will also provide a reading of Finch's sole published collection, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (1713), that seeks to counter established notions about the relationship between gender and party politics in this author's work.<sup>30</sup> This chapter will argue that *Miscellany Poems* is more assertively and coherently political than has yet been recognised and that this volume provides the best medium for an examination of Finch's Jacobitism and of her ideological beliefs in general. A consideration of Finch's use of fables and of her attitude to the role of providence in human history will form a large part of this discussion. Also central to this chapter will be an analysis of the role of the concept of passive obedience in Finch's writing. I will suggest that Finch's commitment to this concept leads her ultimately to the belief that political justice will be obtained only in the next life and not on earth. However, I will

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<sup>30</sup> Anne Finch, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London: J. Barber, 1713).

also argue that it is imperative to distinguish between the essential passivity of Finch's Jacobitism and the sense of exclusion fostered by her position as a woman writer that is apparent in many of her manuscript texts. I will suggest that critical focus upon Finch's gender politics has led to the erroneous conclusion that her manuscript texts, in which she explores issues of gender, are more "radical" than her published texts and that this has obscured the profoundly political nature of *Miscellany Poems*. The chapter will conclude with a comparison between Finch's poetry and the critically neglected verse of Mary Astell.<sup>31</sup> This comparison will be used to elucidate Finch's use of the idea of a compensatory afterlife and its implications for both her Jacobite and her gendered identity.

Chapter Two will examine the prose fictions of Jane Barker. In this chapter I will demonstrate that Barker, like Finch, has been studied primarily in relation to her interest in gender. In Barker's case this has been if anything even more restrictive than in Finch's, as the former has also been categorised in particularly narrow terms not just as a woman writer but as a "respectable" or "pious" woman writer. Barker's politics, when they have been discussed, have been de-radicalised by presentation as an essentially sentimental or "emotional Jacobitism".<sup>32</sup> Through close readings of Barker's individual prose texts I will establish that these works are overtly and boldly political. I will also illustrate that the different texts have different political "meanings" that are lost when they are grouped together as examples of a uniform and "nostalgic" Jacobitism. I will

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<sup>31</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poet 154, fols. 50r-97v.

<sup>32</sup> This term originated with Douglas Brooks-Davies in his *Pope's Dunciad and the Queen of Night: A Study in Emotional Jacobitism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985). Howard Erskine-Hill

suggest that Barker's prose fictions are in fact less elegiac than interventionist and that they offer critiques of post-1688 English society that make political demands upon their readers. I will argue that Barker uses her fiction as a means of exploring the events of recent British history and of interpreting such history in a manner that constitutes a call for political change.

Chapter Three will examine Barker's manuscript poetry. In this chapter I will demonstrate that Barker uses Parts One and Two of the Magdalen manuscript, the primary source for her manuscript verse, both to construct an identity as a Jacobite writer and to provide a highly partisan interpretation of contemporary politics. The fact that these works remained in manuscript and were almost certainly only circulated to fellow Jacobites at St. Germain meant that Barker was able to explore her political views more freely in these texts than in the openly circulating printed prose fictions. This chapter will build upon the examination of Barker's treatment of history found in Chapter Two and will investigate the ways in which Barker presents British history in these poems in a way that enables her to advance her own political beliefs. It will suggest that, as in the prose fictions, the Jacobitism presented in these works is not static. In the manuscript poems Barker's Jacobitism alters in line with changing historical circumstances whilst also acknowledging the possibility of political failure and developing ways of coping with such failure. The chapter will also explore the significance of Barker's Catholicism

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views the term as dangerous as it renders such Jacobitism "nostalgic" and divorces it from political action, *The Poetry of Opposition*, 11. See Chapter Three for further consideration of this concept.

to both her authorial and her political identities. In the final section of this chapter I will examine Barker's devotional text *The Christian Pilgrimage* (1718).<sup>33</sup> I will illustrate that this work has previously been misattributed as a translation of a work by François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon (1651-1715), Archbishop of Cambrai, whereas it is in fact a translation of an accompaniment to the Stations of the Cross and one of the earliest works of its kind in English. I will demonstrate that this work is not the mediating attempt to present an acceptable version of Catholicism to an Anglican audience that has previously been assumed. Rather, it is a bold and proselytising statement of commitment to Catholicism.

The final chapter examines the journal written by Mary Caesar between the years 1724 and 1741. My reading of this text will attempt to analyse the nature of its author's Jacobitism and its connection to her perception of herself as an author. I will argue that, as with the cases of Finch and Barker, an over-concentration on the issue of gender in relation to Caesar has led to a distortion of the latter's political stance and has rendered her more passive than is actually the case. I will also suggest that such a concentration causes Caesar to be presented as a figure isolated from her age and from the political events upon which she comments. By focusing upon Caesar's political beliefs and on the relationship between those beliefs and her writing, I will suggest that we can not only place Caesar within her historical context but we can also place her in dialogue with that context. Through such a dialogue Caesar's relationships with other writers, primarily

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<sup>33</sup> Jane Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage: or, a Companion For the Holy Season of Lent: Being Meditations upon the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: E. Curll and C. Rivington, 1718).

Pope, start to emerge.<sup>34</sup> In a sense this final chapter functions as a coda to the thesis as a whole. Through my analysis of Caesar's journal I am able to provide a summation of the differences between the literary Jacobitism of all three of the women writers under consideration in this thesis. I will argue that whereas Anne Finch hopes to achieve political and literary resolution in the afterlife and Jane Barker presents herself as a speaker of truth in an ongoing political battle, Mary Caesar attempts to claim at least a moral victory for the Jacobite cause by narrating its history in what she views as the only appropriate manner. Between them, these three authors thus display a range of responses to Jacobite commitment that illustrates the reductiveness of seeking to subject their individual complexities to a single interpretative model be it one based upon gender or upon an undifferentiated Jacobitism.

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<sup>34</sup>For further information about the relationship between Caesar and Pope see Howard Erskine-Hill, "Under Which Caesar? Pope in the Journal of Mrs. Charles Caesar, 1724-1741," *Review of English Studies* 33, no. 132 (1982) 436-444 and Valerie Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

## Chapter One

### “Let th’ Ambitious rule the Earth”: Anne Finch’s Jacobite Passivity

Anne Finch (1661-1720) is the most well known of the three authors considered in this thesis. Although one could not yet argue that she has achieved mainstream recognition, it is undoubtedly the case that she remains better known than the majority of her female contemporaries, with the exception of such high-profile figures as Aphra Behn. Finch is unusual in that her writing has never entirely disappeared from the public view even though it has been presented in highly selective, indeed restrictive, ways. As a result, the challenge facing those who seek to extend awareness of Finch’s work has not been to recover such work from complete oblivion but to counter the partial and distorted perceptions of it that exist. This chapter will redress an imbalance in extant criticism on Finch in that it will focus on Finch’s political beliefs. I will seek to demonstrate that such beliefs were not only integral to Finch’s work but also that they offer a useful perspective through which other aspects of Finch’s writing, including her attitude to gender, can be more clearly understood. The chapter will open with a summary of Finch’s life and work and also of the main editorial and critical approaches to her writing. After placing Finch in context in this manner, I will present an analysis of her only published collection, the *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* of 1713.<sup>1</sup> I will seek to demonstrate that a reassessment of this volume is essential for an accurate consideration, not only of the role of political commitment in Finch’s writing, but also of her writing as a whole. Finally, I will offer a reading of Finch’s later religious poetry that illustrates the connection

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Finch, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London: John Barber, 1713).

between this work and *Miscellany Poems*. This reading will include a discussion of Mary Astell's poetry. Astell's example will be used by way of contrast to emphasise the unique elements of Finch's religio-political vision.

Anne Finch's life was profoundly influenced by the political events of her day. Born in Sydmonton, Hampshire, Finch was related through both her mother, Anne Haslewood, and father, Sir William Kingsmill, to families with long histories of loyalty to the Crown.<sup>2</sup> Losing her father when she was just five months old and her mother when she was three, Finch was raised by her father's mother, Lady Bridget Kingsmill, in London until she was eleven and then by her maternal uncle, Sir William Haslewood, at Maidwell in Northamptonshire. Although little is known about Finch's upbringing, Barbara McGovern, in her biography of Finch, has observed that Sir William Kingsmill stipulated in his will that all of his children, including his daughters, should be educated.<sup>3</sup> McGovern also notes that Lady Bridget Kingsmill controlled her family's finances and sold a family home in Shoddesdon, Hampshire, in order to make provision for her own daughters' dowries.<sup>4</sup> From such circumstances, McGovern suggests the presence of both a strong female role model and an acceptance of the importance of female education in Finch's early life. It is clear from the evidence of Finch's own writing that she had

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<sup>2</sup> In *Anne Finch and Her Poetry: A Critical Biography* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992) Barbara McGovern provides the fullest existing account of the events of Finch's life. I am indebted to McGovern for the biographical information featured in this chapter. McGovern remarks that Finch's parents "were both descended from old and respected families noted for Royalist sympathies, pride in family heritage, commitment to hospitality, and orthodox Church of England loyalties," 8.

<sup>3</sup> McGovern 10.

<sup>4</sup> McGovern 13.

groundings in the classics, history, the Bible, English literature and also the languages and literatures of French and Italian.<sup>5</sup>

In her early twenties Anne Kingsmill became a Maid of Honour to Mary of Modena. Whilst at court she met Heneage Finch, a deputy lieutenant for Kent, a captain in the Coldstream Guards and also a Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York, later James II.<sup>6</sup> Heneage Finch courted her and, after an initial reluctance to marry, Anne Kingsmill accepted his proposal and the pair were married in the Chapel Royal at St. James' Palace on 15 May 1684.<sup>7</sup> The couple remained childless but the evidence of Finch's own poetry and of her husband's diary both indicate that the marriage was extremely happy.<sup>8</sup>

The Revolution of 1688 brought severe disruption to the lives of Finch and her husband. Both remained loyal to James and identified themselves as members of the nonjuring community that refused to take the oaths of allegiance to the new monarchs, William and Mary. In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, the Finches left London and stayed at Kirby Hall in Northamptonshire with Viscount Hatton and his third wife, the former Elizabeth Haslewood.<sup>9</sup> Finch's exact movements during this period are difficult to trace but by the summer of 1689 she and her husband had returned to the Finch estate at Eastwell in Kent. In August of that year Charles Finch, Heneage's nephew, succeeded to

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<sup>5</sup> McGovern 13-14, 17.

<sup>6</sup> McGovern 26-28.

<sup>7</sup> McGovern 29.

<sup>8</sup> The diary is located in Northamptonshire Record Office (MSS F.H. 258, F.H. 282).

<sup>9</sup> McGovern 55.

the title of the third earl of Winchilsea.<sup>10</sup> Further disruption came in April 1690 when Heneage Finch was arrested attempting to leave England and travel to the court in exile at St. Germain. McGovern has discovered that there is no trace of the warrant against Finch and argues that this might well indicate that such an article was issued directly by a secretary of state, implying that the charges were extremely serious and could have included treason. Despite this, the case was dropped on 28 November 1690 possibly due to lack of evidence.<sup>11</sup> Having spent the time of her husband's arrest and trial in Godmersham, Kent, Finch returned with him to Eastwell by the autumn of 1690. The couple appear to have remained on this estate for at least a decade, moving to the nearby Wye College, also owned by the Finch family, from around 1700 to 1704. In 1708 the Finches returned to London and within the next couple of years moved into a house in Cleveland Row, close to St. James' Palace. However, in August 1712 the death of Charles Finch meant that Heneage and Anne Finch became the fourth earl and the Countess of Winchilsea respectively, inheriting debts and legal disputes as well as the Eastwell estate.<sup>12</sup>

Heneage Finch's continued refusal to take the oaths of allegiance meant that, despite his elevation to the peerage, he was unable to take up his seat in the House of Lords.<sup>13</sup> Further evidence of his nonjuring commitments came when he was a witness at the consecration of three nonjuring bishops shortly after inheriting the earldom, an act that he

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<sup>10</sup> McGovern 57.

<sup>11</sup> McGovern 58-60.

<sup>12</sup> McGovern 61-4, 75, 91, 98.

<sup>13</sup> McGovern 98-9.

repeated in 1721.<sup>14</sup> One of the bishops consecrated in 1713, Samuel Hawes, was later removed from his living and took up residence with the Finches until his death in 1722. The Finches also provided aid to another dispossessed nonjuror, the Reverend Hilkiah Bedford, whose daughter came to live with them and on whose behalf they sought patronage.<sup>15</sup> As McGovern observes, Anne Finch appears to have been as committed to the nonjuring cause as her husband as is evident from her correspondence with the theologian Thomas Brett.<sup>16</sup> In 1715 Anne Finch became seriously ill and a number of her poems written in this year make reference to her poor health. Despite this, Finch survived for another five years, finally dying on 5 August 1720 at Cleveland Row in London from causes that remain obscure.<sup>17</sup> Heneage Finch outlived his wife by six years, dying on 30 September 1726.

Across the course of her long and eventful life, Anne Finch produced a large body of verse and two plays. At present three manuscript collections of her work have been identified. These are currently housed in the Northamptonshire Record Office, the Folger Shakespeare Library and Wellesley College.<sup>18</sup> The Northampton manuscript is the earliest of these three, probably dating from around 1690. It is an octavo collection

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<sup>14</sup> According to John Henry Overton, the 1713 consecration took place “in Scroop’s Court (afterwards Union Court), in the parish of St. Andrew’s, Holborn,” *The Nonjurors: Their Lives, Principles and Writings* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co, 1902) 118-9.

<sup>15</sup> McGovern 184-7. See for instance Finch’s poem “To the Revd. Mr. Bedford” in the Wellesley manuscript and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS Letters 45, fols., 157, 158-9.

<sup>16</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, English Theology MSS., c.26, c.38. The correspondence between Brett and Finch relates to divisions within the nonjuring community. See McGovern 183-5 for further discussion of this issue.

<sup>17</sup> McGovern 187-91.

<sup>18</sup> Northampton, Northamptonshire Record Office, MSS F.H. 258, F.H. 283; Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS N.B. 3; Wellesley, Margaret Clapp Library, Wellesley College, Special Collections, 68.

which measures 123 x 192 mm, has a morocco binding and contains fifty-six poems. The first thirty-six texts are transcribed by a hand that remains unidentified but the remaining poems are in Heneage Finch's handwriting. This manuscript was abandoned with approximately thirty pages remaining empty although it shows evidence of revisions that can be dated as late as 1704.<sup>19</sup> The octavo was obtained by the forerunner of the current Record Office directly from the Winchilsea family at some point in the 1930s. The Folger manuscript, a folio in calf binding measuring 365 x 230 mm, appears to have been begun in 1694 or 1695 and, with the exception of minor alterations by Finch herself, was transcribed solely by her husband.<sup>20</sup> The title page of the folio is inscribed "Miscellany Poems with Two Plays by Ardelia". The collection contains one hundred and six poems by Finch herself and two commendatory poems addressed to her, one by William Shippen and one by a Mrs Randolph.<sup>21</sup> At some point after Anne Finch's death, the folio appears to have passed to a family friend, the Rev. Mr Creak. It remained in the Creak family until it was purchased in 1884 by the critic and author, Edmund Gosse. After the sale of Gosse's library by Sotheby's on 13 May 1929, the manuscript was purchased by H.C. Folger.

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<sup>19</sup> McGovern 68-9. I consider McGovern to be correct when she suggests that "the octavo was seen as inadequate because of its limited length, for it would not have been large enough to contain her two plays, which she included in her second and larger manuscript – a folio. It may also be that Finch decided upon a manuscript meant for more public circulation. This is particularly likely since she published her first poem in 1691 and must have grown increasingly aware of the possibility of a wider audience for her poetry. This would also explain why the very personal poem "On Myself" was not retranscribed from the octavo, and why the prose preface, addressed to the readers of her poems, was written specifically for the folio manuscript and affixed to the beginning of it," 69.

<sup>20</sup> McGovern 70.

<sup>21</sup> William Shippen (1673-1743) was a Tory MP and active Jacobite. Like Charles Caesar, the husband of Mary Caesar, he was involved in the Gyllenborg Plot of 1716/1717 that sought to restore the exiled Stuarts with the aid of Charles XII of Sweden. McGovern identifies Mrs Randolph as "an obscure poet" of whom little can be ascertained, 121.

The final manuscript is the Wellesley collection. A scholarly edition of this volume was published in 1998 by Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant.<sup>22</sup> This manuscript measures 320 x 205 mm, is bound in tan vellum and contains one hundred and twenty leaves. It is comprised of fifty-three poems most of which date from approximately 1710-1720 although the earliest dated text was written in 1702. It also includes a letter from Finch family friend Sir Andrew Fountaine, a poem from Anne Finch's personal friend, Catherine Fleming, and the text, "To the Right Hon:<sup>ble</sup> ANN Countess of WINCHILSEA occasion'd by four verses in the rape of the Lock," by Pope.<sup>23</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, the manuscript was in the possession of the literary critic Edward Dowden. On Dowden's death his library was sold and the manuscript was purchased for Wellesley College by G.H. Palmer in 1914.<sup>24</sup> McGovern and Hinnant have determined that this manuscript was not intended for publication and that it was transcribed by three different individuals, one of whom was Heneage Finch. The other two amanuenses remain unidentified. Extensive study of the manuscript has also led the editors to conclude that Finch herself had very little involvement with the production of this volume and that it "most likely was begun for her when she was quite close to death, as a way of putting her literary affairs in order".<sup>25</sup> In addition to such manuscript collections, Finch also produced a range of published work.<sup>26</sup> Finch's most significant

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<sup>22</sup> Anne Finch, *The Anne Finch Wellesley Manuscript Poems: A Critical Edition*, ed. Barbara McGovern and Charles H. Hinnant (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xlv, xliii.

<sup>24</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xv, xliii-l.

<sup>25</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xliii-xlvi, xliv.

<sup>26</sup> McGovern has discovered previously unidentified publications: "Anne Finch's earliest publications were songs – and all appeared anonymously. The song beginning "'Tis strange this Heart" was set to music by R. Courteville and published in *Vinculum Societatis*, a songbook that appeared in 1691. Two years later another song ("Love, thou art best of Human Joys") saw publication as part of *The Female Virtuoso's, A Comedy*, written by T. Wright and dedicated to the Finches' host at Eastwell, Charles, fourth earl of Winchilsea. ... That same year, in a special issue of the *Gentleman's Journal* entitled *The Lady's Journal*,

publication, her *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions*, appeared in 1713. There is no evidence to suggest that the printed volume was a commercial success.

As can be seen from this summary of Finch's literary output, her writing appeared in a variety of formats and contexts. This diversity, coupled with the fact that no single complete edition of Finch's writing has ever existed, has meant that much of her work has, until very recently, remained unknown. Most individuals reading Finch in the last century or in the opening years of the present one will have encountered her work in an anthology or possibly in one of the four twentieth-century selections of her verse.<sup>27</sup> Such anthologies and selections have tended to present Finch in one of two distinct ways – either as a nature poet praised by Wordsworth or as a poet preoccupied with issues of gender. The ways in which such perceptions of Finch were created can be traced with some degree of precision. However, before considering the posthumous anthologising of Finch it is instructive to consider the contexts in which she would have been viewed by her contemporaries.

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the song appeared again... The next poems Finch had published were religious ones. Six were included in volume I of the 1696 *Miscellanea Sacra*, which apparently sold well enough to go into a second edition two years later," 70-1. The volumes referred to by McGovern are respectively: John Carr, *Vinculum Societatis, Or The Tie of Good Company* (London: 1691); Thomas Wright, *The Female Vertuoso's* (London, 1693) and Nahum Tate's collection, *Miscellanea Sacra: Or, Poems on Divine & Moral Subjects* (London: 1696). Finch's poem "The Spleen" was also published, again anonymously, by H. Hills in 1709 together with Pomfret's "A prospect of death: a pindarique essay". Carol Barash has also identified two different print versions of Finch's elegy on James II, published in September 1701. See Barash's *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 263.

<sup>27</sup> *The Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea*, ed. Myra Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903); *Poems by Anne, Countess of Winchilsea 1661-1720*, ed. John Middleton Murry (London: Cape, 1928); *Selected Poems of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea*, ed. Katharine Rogers (New York: Ungar, 1979); *Anne Finch Countess of Winchilsea, Selected Poems*, ed. Denys Thompson (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987). An edition of Finch's work is currently being prepared for Stump Cross Books by Germaine Greer.

The most significant of these are Charles Gildon's 1701 *A New Miscellany of Original Poems*, Jacob Tonson's 1709 *Poetical Miscellanies*, Richard Steele's 1714 *Poetical Miscellany* and Pope's 1717 *Poems on Several Occasions*.<sup>28</sup> The Gildon anthology includes only the poem "The Spleen," a work which contains sharp social critique and reflections on the situation of contemporary women and which became Finch's most famous work in the eighteenth century. Tonson's volume contained three poems, all broadly pastoral in nature.<sup>29</sup> These poems are entirely in keeping with the mood of the volume as a whole which is dominated by the genre of pastoral. In this work Finch's poems appear alongside those of Swift and Pope in a compilation that was described by Richard Steele as "a Collection of the best Pastorals that have hitherto appear'd in *England*".<sup>30</sup> Steele's own miscellany included Finch's poems "To Mr. Jervas Occasion'd by the Sight of Mrs. Chetwind's Picture" and "A Sigh," although the latter of these was anonymous. Delarivier Manley also included three poems by Finch in *The New Atalantis* of 1709 – "The Progress of Life" in volume I and "The Hymn" and "The Sigh" in volume II.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Gildon, ed., *A New Miscellany of Original Poems on Several Occasions* (London: 1701); Jacob Tonson, ed., *Poetical Miscellanies: The Sixth Part. Containing a Collection of Original Poems, with Several New Translations. By the Most Eminent Hands* (London: 1709); Richard Steele, ed., *Poetical Miscellanies, Consisting of Original Poems and Translations. By the best Hands* (London: 1714); Pope, ed., *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: 1717).

<sup>29</sup> The poems are "A Pastoral Dialogue, Between Two Shepherdesses," "Adam Pos'd" and "Alcidor".

<sup>30</sup> *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 90.

<sup>31</sup> Delarivier Manley, *The Selected Works of Delarivier Manley*, ed. Rachel Carnell and Ruth Herman, vol. 2 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005).

In 1717, Pope included eight poems by Finch in his anonymous collection *Poems on Several Occasions*.<sup>32</sup> As McGovern remarks, the only two authors to receive greater representation in this volume were Pope himself and the Duke of Buckingham.<sup>33</sup> Finch's poems in this work include: a witty reply to Pope; a poem to her friend "the Honourable Mrs. Thynne;" a patriotic poem to her relative Charles, Earl of Winchilsea; three fables; an amusing poem about a flower that is the antithesis of a Wordsworthian nature poem; and a highly political piece entitled "The Fall of Caesar".<sup>34</sup> The latter work, with which Pope ends his collection, carries a clear condemnation of disloyalty from "a Friend, or something nearer thought" (3). In an age that could still remember the deposition of James II by his own daughter and son-in-law, this poem would clearly have had strong resonance.

What is most noticeable about the selections of Finch's works that appear in these collections is the range of poems that are represented; no one single image of Finch as a poet emerges. This diversity is maintained to a certain extent in the anthologies that appeared until the 1770s and 1780s. There are too many volumes to describe each in detail. However, in works such as George Ballard's immensely influential 1752 volume *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, Finch is represented by her verse exchange with Pope and

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<sup>32</sup>This volume has been reproduced as *Pope's Own Miscellany: Being a reprint of Poems on Several Occasions 1717 containing new poems by Alexander Pope and others*, ed. Norman Ault (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1935).

<sup>33</sup> McGovern 105.

<sup>34</sup> The titles of the eight poems which appear in this collection are as follows: "To Mr. Pope, in answer to a Copy of Verses, occasion'd by a little dispute about four Lines in the Rape of the Lock," "An Invocation to the Southern Winds, inscrib'd to the Right Honourable Charles Earl of Winchilsea at his Arrival in London, after having been long detained on the Coast of Holland," "An Epistle to the Honourable Mrs. Thynne, persuading her to have a Statue made of her youngest Daughter, now Lady Brooke," "On a double Stock July-flower, full blown in January; presented to me by the Countess of Ferrers," "The Toad undrest," "The Mastiff and Curs, a Fable inscrib'd to Mr. Pope," "A Fable" and "The Fall of Caesar".

reference is made to the success of “The Spleen”. In the collections produced by Colman and Thornton which went through four editions between 1755 and 1780, Finch is given a large amount of space in which a selection of her fables, “The Spleen” and her poem to Pope appear.<sup>35</sup> In these anthologies, the selections of Finch’s poems represented are recognisably akin to the Finch represented in print during her own lifetime.

This situation changed dramatically with Wordsworth’s “discovery” of Finch. In his *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface* of 1815 Wordsworth identified Finch, in a quotation now well known in Finch studies, as one of the few poets capable of writing about nature between Milton and Thompson:

excepting the nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the *Paradise Lost* and the *Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination.<sup>36</sup>

Wordsworth’s album to Lady Lowther, a quarto of poems and other literary extracts from both male and female authors compiled by the poet for his friend in December 1819, was published in 1905 and further contributed to the critical conception, initiated by the poet’s remarks in 1815, that Finch was essentially a nature poet by prioritising selections from

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<sup>35</sup> George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain: Who have been Celebrated for their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (Oxford: 1752); George Colman and Bonnell Thornton, eds., *Poems by Eminent Ladies* (London: 1755).

<sup>36</sup> William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974) 73.

this aspect of her work.<sup>37</sup> From the appearance of Wordsworth's first printed comments on Finch, it is possible to observe the beginnings of a shift in the representation of her work – a new poem enters the anthologies, the “*Nocturnal Reverie*” so praised by the Romantic poet. It is also notable that Wordsworth himself edited this poem for its inclusion in Lady Lowther's album, removing lines 17-20 which include the reference to Finch's friend the Countess of Salisbury. As Germaine Greer has remarked, such an excision removes those lines which connect the action of the poem to “the social world” and which also provide an example of female companionship in opposition to the world of men. Greer comments, “It would be contrary to the spirit of the poem to overemphasise this tinge of rebellious feeling” but also notes that this exemplar of female friendship reminds the reader that the two women's “freedom consists solely in the fact that no *men* are by”.<sup>38</sup> Wordsworth's editorialising thus eliminates this aspect of Finch's text.

From the early nineteenth century onwards, “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” became the defining work of Finch's oeuvre and was seen to represent the true nature of her talent. Both Alexander Dyce in his 1825 *Specimens of British Poetesses* and Frederic Rowton in his 1848 *The Female Poets of Great Britain* reproduce the poem – in its unedited form. Even though both of these editors include “The Spleen” and other texts in their volumes, the introduction to Finch in both works centres around Wordsworth's remarks in the

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<sup>37</sup> William Wordsworth, *Poems and Extracts chosen by William Wordsworth for an Album Presented to Lady Mary Lowther Christmas, 1819*, ed. Harold Littledale (London: Henry Frowde, 1905) 2-32. Littledale notes that the selections from Finch's work occupy “thirty-two of the ninety-two pages of the manuscript,” ix.

<sup>38</sup> Germaine Greer, *Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London: Penguin, 1996) 254, 255.

*Essay, Supplementary to the Preface*. As a result of such introductions, “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” inevitably becomes the focus of the reader’s attention.<sup>39</sup> By the time that Jane Williams’ *The Literary Women of England* was published in 1861 “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” was the only poem considered worthy of praise, the other poems excerpted being denigrated and Finch’s exchange with Pope being described as “pert and displeasing”.<sup>40</sup>

Even overtly feminist anthologies of the late twentieth century such as Louise Bernikow’s *The World Split Open* and the monumental *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, with their focus upon writing about gender, have tended to include “*A Nocturnal Reverie*”.<sup>41</sup> Such feminist anthologies reveal an interesting development with regard to Finch’s reputation. Even though the poems that appear in the anthologies vary, the ways in which Finch is introduced remain remarkably constant. Such introductions tend to reproduce the idea of Finch as a nature poet whilst also establishing the concept of her as poet concerned with issues of gender. That these interpretations remain static regardless of the poems selected and the ideas they consider has the effect of robbing Finch’s poems of their individuality. For example, although the editors of the second edition of the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* published in 1996 decided to

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<sup>39</sup> Alexander Dyce, ed., *Specimens of British Poetesses, Selected and Chronologically Arranged* (London: T. Rodd, 1825) 134-46; Frederic Rowton, ed., *The Female Poets of Great Britain, Chronologically Arranged with Copious Selections and Critical Remarks* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848) 88-95. Germaine Greer points out that Wordsworth wrote to Dyce and provided “a list of the best passages in her [Finch’s] work, which bears a strong resemblance to the content of Lady Lowther’s album,” *Slip-Shod Sibyls* 251-2. Dyce’s choice of Finch’s works indicates that he was clearly influenced by Wordsworth’s suggestions.

<sup>40</sup> Jane Williams, *The Literary Women of England* (London: Saunders, Otley, and Co., 1861) 146.

<sup>41</sup> Louise Bernikow, ed., *The World Split Open: Four Centuries of Women Poets in England and America, 1552-1950* (London: The Women’s Press, 1979); Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1985).

include two more poems by Finch, no changes were made to the head note to her works.<sup>42</sup> Even Roger Lonsdale's 1989 anthology *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, which attempts to extend the range of Finch's poems represented, including, for instance, some of Finch's fables, does not really challenge the established perceptions of Finch.<sup>43</sup> In addition, as McGovern has commented, the heavily edited version of "The Spleen" included in this collection distorts the poem by reproducing only its most personal lines.<sup>44</sup> The head note to the poems is also problematic. The obligatory reference to Wordsworth appears but the reader is not provided with any context in which to read the fables. Without an awareness of the tradition from which these works emerged, it is hard to see how a reader could use the texts to develop a greater understanding of Finch as a writer.<sup>45</sup>

Such problems are also manifest in the editions of Finch that have been produced. There have been four such works, all of which appeared in the twentieth century. The first was Myra Reynolds' 1903 volume. Reynolds attempted to produce a complete edition of Finch's works but was hampered by the fact that she was unaware of the existence of the Wellesley manuscript collection. The edition also contains numerous textual inaccuracies. Reynolds does provide an extremely lengthy introduction to Finch which is full of biographical detail and which also features a useful section entitled "The Progress of Lady Winchilsea's Fame".<sup>46</sup> However, Reynolds relies heavily on Wordsworth and

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<sup>42</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1996) 98-113. The poems reproduced from the first edition are "The Introduction," "A Letter to Daphnis," "Friendship between Ephelia and Ardelia," "The Circuit of Apollo," "The Answer," "The Spleen," "To the Nightingale," and "A Nocturnal Reverie". The two new poems are "Adam Posed" and "The Apology".

<sup>43</sup> Roger Lonsdale, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>44</sup> McGovern 159. Lonsdale reproduces lines 73-136 of the poem.

<sup>45</sup> Lonsdale 4-6.

<sup>46</sup> Reynolds li-lxxxviii.

prioritises the idea of Finch as a nature poet. In 1928 John Middleton Murry produced selections from Finch's work which again followed Wordsworth in emphasis whilst also presenting Finch as a rather fragile and inadequate poet whose works charmed him through their "peculiar perfection of femininity".<sup>47</sup> So notable is Middleton Murry's simultaneous use of praise and denigration that Margaret Ezell uses his edition of Finch to illustrate the process whereby the attempt to preserve a poet can be performed in such a way as to undermine her reputation by focusing almost entirely upon her weaknesses.<sup>48</sup>

In 1979 Katherine Rogers produced a new edition of Finch's work. The keynote of Rogers' introduction is that Finch, whilst showing sensitivity to gender issues, was primarily a poet of the self. Even though Rogers includes many of the poems from the 1713 text, including some of the fables that are most susceptible to a political reading, the introduction to her edition fails to prepare the reader for the possibility that these poems might be concerned with public or political concerns.<sup>49</sup> In 1987 Denys Thompson produced further selections from Finch. In his introduction Thompson rejects the idea that Finch was a Romantic born out of her time and instead follows Reuben Brower's 1945 argument that Finch was essentially a seventeenth-century poet, albeit a rather poor one.<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, Thompson presents Finch as a fundamentally substandard writer of

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<sup>47</sup> Middleton Murry 14.

<sup>48</sup> Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 128-9.

<sup>49</sup> Rogers, *Selected Poems*.

<sup>50</sup> Reuben A. Brower, "Lady Winchilsea and the Poetic Tradition of the Seventeenth Century," *Studies in Philology* 42 (1945): 61-80. Brower sees similarities between Finch and the metaphysical poets, primarily through her use of conceit and "the union of lyricism with the diction and movement of speech," in her work, 63. However, Brower also feels that some of Finch's poetry "is perfectly characteristic of the poetry of melancholy being written at the turn of the [eighteenth] century," 71.

essentially apolitical works.<sup>51</sup> It is also notable that both Thompson and Middleton Murry reproduce Wordsworth's edited version of "*A Nocturnal Reverie*".

Criticism of Finch's writing has followed similar trajectories to those manifest in the editorial decisions made in relation to her work. In the early years of the twentieth century Edward Dowden and Edmund Gosse, both of whom, as we have seen, owned manuscripts of Finch's work, produced essays on Finch that presented her as proto-Romantic. Dowden, as well as remarking that Finch was born out of her time, sought to undermine what he saw as her inflated reputation, commenting "I think the praise has erred on the side of excess," and also that "her more ardent utterances sometimes seem like music played upon an instrument that had not been properly tuned". Gosse was more positive in his assessment but still managed to damn with faint praise: "She was entirely out of sympathy with her age, and her talent was hampered and suppressed by her conditions".<sup>52</sup> However, despite the interventions of Dowden and Gosse, the main impetus for analysis of Finch's work has come from critics interested in writing by early modern women writers and in issues of gender. The first sustained expansion of such interest came in the 1980s and was inevitably conditioned by the context in which it appeared. Thus Elizabeth Hampsten and Ann Messenger, two of the first scholars to demand attention for Finch, both placed the poet within broader discussions of the ways in which women writers from that period sought to negotiate perceived tensions between gender and authorship. Hampsten and Messenger emphasised the cautious aspects of

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<sup>51</sup> Thompson 7-15.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Dowden, "A Noble Authoress," *Essays Modern and Elizabethan* (London: J.M. Dent, 1910) 234-49 (235, 249) and Edmund Gosse, "Lady Winchilsea's Poems," *Gossip in a Library* (London: Heinemann, 1913) 99-108 (102).

Finch's writing through their focus upon Finch's strategies for avoiding public censure as a woman who wrote.<sup>53</sup> Katherine Rogers' slightly earlier essay on Finch's writing sought to recontextualise her as an "Augustan" writer but also emphasised the ways in which her gender rendered her an "outsider by sex". Such a reading was almost inevitable when one considers that Rogers' essay appeared in Gilbert and Gubar's seminal work *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*.<sup>54</sup>

The 1990s saw the continued prominence of gender in studies of Finch. The title of Dorothy Mermin's 1990 article "Women Becoming Poets: Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Anne Finch," provides a clear indication of the author's intent to analyse Finch's work both in relation to other women writers and also as part of a more abstract reading of the ways in which such writers "wrote and were read specifically as women".<sup>55</sup>

Marilyn Williamson's influential study of the same year *Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750* is similarly preoccupied with placing Finch, not simply in the context of other female authors, but as one of "the first English women who were aware of their own oppression". Williamson's approach is thus explicitly feminist and focuses on Finch's exploration of gender issues whilst also presenting her as a "defensive" writer

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<sup>53</sup> Elizabeth Hampsten, "Petticoat Authors: 1660-1720," *Women's Studies* 7 (1980): 21-38; Ann Messenger, "Publishing Without Perishing: Lady Winchilsea's *Miscellany Poems* of 1713," *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 5:1 (1981): 27-37; "Selected Nightingales and an 'Augustan' Sensibility," *English Studies in Canada* 6 (1980): 145-53. Rev. and rpt. as "Selected Nightingales: Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, et al," *His and Hers: Essays in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986) 71-83.

<sup>54</sup> Katherine Rogers, "Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea: An Augustan Women Poet," *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979) 32-46 (43).

<sup>55</sup> Dorothy Mermin, "Women Becoming Poets: Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Anne Finch," *ELH* 57:2 (1990): 335-355 (352).

who felt unable to publish her boldest works.<sup>56</sup> Ruth Salvaggio's "Anne Finch Placed and Displaced" continues this presentation of Finch in terms of broader concerns with the nature of women's writing as a discrete genre. Focussing upon the importance of shade in Finch's work, Salvaggio comments that "For Finch, shade was not simply a retreat, but the process of a radical displacement that was hers both as a 'woman' who wrote, and as a poet who wrote 'woman'". Salvaggio's essay was reprinted from her own volume *Enlightened Absence: Neoclassical Configurations of the Feminine* and appeared in Anita Pacheco's edition of essays *Early Modern Women Writers: 1600-1720*.<sup>57</sup> These volumes by their very nature clearly place Finch within the contexts both of other women writers and also of "women's writing".

As its title implies, Carol Barash's 1991 article "The Political Origins of Anne Finch's Poetry," sought to draw greater attention to the political aspects of Finch's work whilst simultaneously emphasising that Finch's Tory politics could not be detached from her gender politics. For Barash, Finch "subtly and repeatedly reworks a myth of female community initiated by Katherine Philips ... into a politically oppositional community of pro-Stuart women".<sup>58</sup> A political reading of Finch's work therefore also necessitates a reading that emphasises issues of gender. A similar connection between Finch's gender and her political allegiances is emphasised by Jane Spencer in her essay, "Anne Finch,

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<sup>56</sup> Marilyn Williamson, *Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990) 113.

<sup>57</sup> Ruth Salvaggio, "Anne Finch Placed and Displaced," *Early Women Writers: 1600-1720*, ed. Anita Pacheco (London: Longman, 1998) 242-265 (243-44); *Enlightened Absence: Neoclassical Configurations of the Feminine* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988) 105-26.

<sup>58</sup> Carol Barash, "The Political Origins of Anne Finch's Poetry," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 54 (1991): 327-351 (346).

Countess of Winchilsea (1661-1720): Sorrow into Song". For Spencer, Finch's poetic "stance was shaped both by her situation as a woman and by political defeat".<sup>59</sup>

Scholarly interest in Finch received a considerable boost in 1992 when Barbara McGovern published the first full-length study of this author. McGovern's literary biography sought to integrate a narrative of the events of Finch's life with a new analysis of her work. In her introduction, McGovern states that her "focus is on Finch's historical place and her displacement in early eighteenth-century England, and particularly on the methods by which she developed a poetic identity for her own artistic liberation".

McGovern's work offers the reader a wealth of carefully researched biographical detail, much of it newly discovered, as well as a thoughtful and constructive placing of Finch within her historical, political, religious and literary contexts. Yet, like so many previous critics, McGovern's ultimate emphasis is upon gender. As McGovern herself observes, her reading of Finch's writing leads her to conclude that "when ... determining her own identity through her poetics ... ideologies of gender were foremost for Finch".<sup>60</sup>

McGovern's biography was followed in 1994 by Charles Hinnant's *The Poetry of Anne Finch*, the first full-length purely critical analysis of Finch's writing.<sup>61</sup> Although Hinnant pays close attention to the gendered aspects of Finch's writing he explicitly states that he does not "presume to situate Finch's verse within a distinctively female tradition of

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<sup>59</sup> Jane Spencer, "Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea (1661-1720): Sorrow into Song," *Women and Poetry 1660-1750*, ed. Sarah Prescott and David E. Shuttleton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 60-70 (61).

<sup>60</sup> McGovern 3.

<sup>61</sup> Charles H. Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch: An Essay in Interpretation* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994).

poetry”. Instead, Hinnant argues that his volume is a self-consciously “old-fashioned” attempt to provide a single-author study that argues for the literary value of Finch’s work. In this, he can be seen to be adopting an approach diametrically opposed to Marilyn Williamson’s socio-historic analysis. Hinnant acknowledges that “this approach will not call into question the notion of a canon, but it may alter the canon by revising our sense of what the poetry of a given period looks like”.<sup>62</sup> In this sense, Hinnant places his own analysis of Finch’s work within the context of other efforts to widen the canon of early eighteenth-century texts arguing that Finch’s “achievement in a variety of forms argues, at the very least, that her verse deserves the same kind of attention that has recently been given to the poetry of Rochester, Swift, and Gay”.<sup>63</sup>

In 1998 Hinnant and McGovern joined together to produce the above-mentioned edition of the Wellesley manuscript of Finch’s poems. As one would anticipate, the introduction to this volume combines the emphases of both McGovern and Hinnant’s previous work. It thus situates Finch historically and biographically and argues that her neglect has resulted as much from her Jacobite politics as well as from her status as a woman. It considers the variety of genres to be found in the manuscript, focussing on poems of politics, religion and friendship. Ultimately, however, this introduction also accentuates issues of gender arguing that “it is primarily female companionship and affection that are celebrated in the Wellesley manuscript”.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Hinnant 16.

<sup>63</sup> Hinnant 17.

<sup>64</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xxxii.

I do not wish to denigrate gender-based readings of Finch's work or to deny their validity. However, I would suggest that through such an intense focus upon issues of gender in Finch's writing we are allowing our perceptions of her work to ossify. As we have seen, Finch's contemporary reputation was not stable or static. We should allow this fact to remind us that Finch is not an easy author to categorize. In this chapter I will focus primarily upon Finch's *Miscellany Poems* and will argue that in this, her only published collection, Finch's preoccupations are strongly political. That this has been largely overlooked can at least partly be explained by the fact that very little attention has yet been paid to this volume as a single entity. Individual poems have been discussed but the collection has not been considered in its entirety or in relation to the circumstances of its production. This situation has been exacerbated by the fact that, as discussed above, Finch is most often encountered through the medium of anthologies. In my analysis of *Miscellany Poems* I will demonstrate that this text is far more assertively and coherently political than has yet been acknowledged and also that it provides the most effective vehicle for an examination not just of Finch's Jacobitism but also of the ideological beliefs that run throughout her work. Such beliefs reveal the complexity of Finch's writing as they demonstrate both her willingness to express her political beliefs in print and also the strong strand of passivity that lies at the heart of those beliefs. I will also argue that a detailed examination of *Miscellany Poems* inevitably forces us to reassess our understanding of the relationship between Finch's manuscript and published work and her decisions about what to keep private and what to make public.

One of the most notable divisions that runs through all aspects of Finch's work is this distinction between "public" and "private". This division is manifested in the fact that Finch circulated her work in both manuscript and printed form and in the oft-repeated tension in her work between her desire to write and her awareness of the limitations placed upon female authorship.<sup>65</sup> Such a division is also apparent in Finch's life and its movements between the court of the 1680s, country retreat and London literary society. The critical preoccupation with Finch's gender politics has drawn attention to this divide. The general consensus amongst those who have studied the contrast between Finch's manuscript and her printed texts has been that the former are the most radical whilst the latter are subject to a certain degree of self-censorship. Ann Messenger, for instance, has written that Finch "touched upon many of the same subjects" in both published and unpublished poems, "but, almost without exception, the tone, the attitude, the angle of vision in the unpublished poems differs markedly from what was made public". Messenger further notes that "two-thirds of the manuscript poems have something to say about women, about women writers, or about ... [Finch] as a woman and as a writer". As a result of this analysis Messenger concludes that "it is clear that some consistent principles determined Lady Winchilsea's decisions about which poems to print and which to keep private, and that almost all of those principles were based ultimately on her sex".<sup>66</sup> Marilyn Williamson echoes Messenger's sentiments in her statement that Finch kept "her most transgressive poetry for private circulation".<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See for instance the poems "The Introduction" and "The Apology".

<sup>66</sup> Messenger 33, 33-4, 34, 35.

<sup>67</sup> Williamson 114.

In her article, Messenger also claims that political considerations influenced Finch's decision to keep her elegy on James II in manuscript.<sup>68</sup> However, Messenger omits to mention that whilst a manuscript version of this text does indeed exist, the elegy also appeared in print. Carol Barash has explored the implications of the changes between the manuscript and print versions of Finch's elegy demonstrating the ways in which such changes not only render the manuscript version more intensely Jacobite, but also increase Finch's own identification with the Jacobite cause. An examination of such changes leads Barash to the more general conclusion that "manuscript versions of Finch's well-known lyric poems are frequently more explicitly political than any version she published in her own name".<sup>69</sup> Whilst it would be foolish to deny that the alterations to the elegy on James discussed by Barash do indeed render the manuscript version of the text more radical in this instance, I would argue that to use such changes to justify a wider belief that Finch's published work is more politically cautious is erroneous. I would suggest that this perception of Finch stems from the critical consensus, perfectly exemplified by Ann Messenger, that such caution in print is manifest in her treatment of gender. I wish to argue that such a consensus blinds readers to the boldness with which Finch expresses her party political views in her printed work, a boldness that is demonstrated in the nature of her 1713 collection.

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<sup>68</sup> Messenger 35.

<sup>69</sup> Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry 1600-1700* (2000), 260-8 (260). Barash rightly points out that Finch's elegy "quite consciously echoes Dryden's *Threnodia Augustalis* (1685)," written on the death of Charles II, 260. Barash also shows that in the final stanza of the elegy the manuscript version refers to "Rightful Kings" whereas the published version contains the less contentious phrase, "Happier Kings," 266. Finally, Barash notes that seventeen politically inflected lines that directly contrast James II and William III have been removed in the printed version of the elegy, 267-8.

*Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* is an octavo volume containing eighty-six poems and one of Finch's two plays, *Aristomenes*.<sup>70</sup> The first title page carried the inscription "Written by a Lady". As Barbara McGovern notes, three subsequent title pages, added later in 1713, bore the name "Lady Winchilsea". However, these later versions were not new editions; there was only a single edition of the book to which new title pages were added.<sup>71</sup> The various title pages also carry an illustration of two nymphs with palm leaves and laurel crowns. This illustration may well have been provided by Finch herself as the octavo manuscript features a similar drawing featuring a single nymph. The volume was published by John Barber who also published the Tory periodical, *The Examiner*, for Swift.<sup>72</sup> Barber was a deeply political figure who had strong connections to the Tory party and who was Lord Mayor of London between 1732 and 1733. In both his publishing and his mayoral capacities he was identified as a Jacobite.<sup>73</sup> Although not every work that Barber published was written by an author who shared his political views, the majority of the works that Barber published do broadly reflect his own political standpoint. In 1713 Barber published only three items of poetry aside from a general miscellany of verse and prose: Finch's volume and two other works, both of which were poems celebrating the Peace of Utrecht which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession which had been largely opposed by the Tories. These poems were written by the identifiably Tory and/or Jacobite writers, Bevil Higgons and Joseph Trapp. Trapp's poem was dedicated to Bolingbroke, the Tory statesman who was to flee

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<sup>70</sup> The other play, *The Triumphs of Love and Innocence*, appears in the folio manuscript.

<sup>71</sup> McGovern 99-100.

<sup>72</sup> Barber published *The Examiner* from 1710-1714.

<sup>73</sup> Charles A. Rivington provides detailed information about Barber's political and publishing activities in *Tyrant: The Story of John Barber, Jacobite Lord Mayor of London, and Printer and Friend to Dr. Swift* (York: William Sessions Limited, 1989).

to France in order to join James II in 1715. Higgons's poem was dedicated to Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, a Tory grandee who was still perceived by some Jacobites in 1713 as being sympathetic to their cause.<sup>74</sup>

*Miscellany Poems* contains very little prefatory material. There is an address from "THE BOOKSELLER To the READER" which refers to the fact that "*the Ode on the SPLEEN*" and "*some few Pieces in this Volume*" have already been published "*when scattered in other Miscellanies*" and expresses the belief, or more probably hope, that the public is eager for more works from the same hand. There is no dedication or introduction from the author. However, the first poem in the collection, "MERCURY and the ELEPHANT. A Prefatory FABLE," is used, as its subtitle suggests, to serve as an introduction to the volume as a whole.<sup>75</sup> This text tells the story of a confrontation between the two eponymous characters in which the elephant asks Mercury to adjudicate in a dispute between himself and a wild boar. The elephant has won the contest but has been accused of cheating. This episode ends with the following couplet: "*Amongst you Gods, pray, What is thought?/Quoth Mercury – Then have you Fought!*" (lines 25-6). Finch then proceeds to draw a parallel between the elephant's conduct and any

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<sup>74</sup> Joseph Trapp, "Peace. A Poem: inscribed to the Right Honorable the Lord Viscount Bolingbroke," (London: 1713); Bevil Higgons, "A poem on the peace: inscribed to the Honorable Robert, Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer, Lord High-Treasurer of Great Britain," (London: 1713). There are further links between Higgons and Finch. A poem by Higgons addressed "To Mr Pope" features in Pope's 1717 collection and his sister Elizabeth is mentioned in Finch's Wellesley poem "After drawing a twelf cake at the Hon.<sup>ble</sup> Mrs Thynne's". 1713 was, of course, the year in which Pope first published *Windsor Forest*.

<sup>75</sup> This fable is based upon La Fontaine's "The Elephant and Jupiter's Monkey". The English titles of Fontaine's fables will be taken from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, trans. Marianne Moore (New York: Viking, 1954). This collection remains one of the most comprehensive available in English. However, for accuracy of translation, occasional reference will also be made to *Selected Fables*, trans. Christopher Wood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

presumption on her part that critics will read what she has written. The poem concludes with an assertion that the poet has written solely for her own amusement:

*We own (who in the Muse delight)  
 'Tis for our Selves, not them, we Write.  
 Betray'd by Solitude to try  
 Amusements, which the Prosp'rous fly;  
 And only to the Press repair,  
 To fix our scatter'd Papers there;  
 Tho' whilst our Labours are preserv'd,  
 The Printers may, indeed, be starv'd (43-50)*

This poem thus serves as a playful yet self-protective measure by which Finch can shield herself from accusations that she is taking herself seriously. It also enables Finch to publish her work whilst disclaiming any authorial intention beyond the desire to “fix” her “scatter’d Papers”.<sup>76</sup> More significantly, however, the poem alerts the reader to the fact that the dominant genre in the volume will be the fable. Despite the fact that just under half of the poems in the volume can be so described, the significance of Finch’s intensive use of this genre in her only published collection is frequently overlooked or misinterpreted. Ann Messenger claims that the fable was seen as a “low” genre and also as “an appropriately humble form for a woman to use”. Messenger also suggests that Finch’s choice of this genre is evidence of the conventional nature of the 1713 volume.<sup>77</sup> Marilyn Williamson reiterates such sentiments and quotes Messenger’s remark about the

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<sup>76</sup> Hinnant observes that the reference to “Printers” in this fable reflects the fact that the Copyright Act of 1710 “enabled printers or publishers to enjoy the same legal attributes of ownership as authors,” 20.

<sup>77</sup> Messenger 31.

humbleness of the form.<sup>78</sup> Charles Hinnant is more respectful of Finch's use of fables commenting that:

Finch's fables – like those of her contemporaries, Swift, Gay, and Prior – are more complex and challenging than is commonly supposed. Of the fable's complexity, Finch herself was obviously aware – although she was also aware that it was susceptible of being dismissed as mere children's verse.<sup>79</sup>

Yet, despite this acknowledgement, Hinnant fails to consider the implications of Finch's use of fables for the nature of her 1713 collection. In my analysis of *Miscellany Poems I* will suggest that Finch uses fables in order to engage in a serious and sustained discussion of social and political concerns.

Mark Loveridge's 1998 book *A History of the Augustan Fable* helps us to understand the neglect of this aspect of Finch's work in context.<sup>80</sup> Loveridge demonstrates that until the 1990s very little was written about the history of the fable in England and attempts to rectify this situation by illustrating that the fable was a profoundly influential form in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whereas today fables are regarded as either children's stories or simple moral tales, writers in these earlier eras frequently regarded the genre as a medium for serious political commentary. Loveridge reveals how the birth of this tradition of intensely political fable writing can be traced to the publication

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<sup>78</sup> Williamson 119.

<sup>79</sup> Hinnant 167. In the same paragraph, Hinnant quotes Gay's observation to Swift that the fable was "the most difficult" form he had attempted, *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) 4:22

<sup>80</sup> Mark Loveridge, *A History of Augustan Fable* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

of John Ogilby's *The Fables of Aesop* in 1651, a work that was dedicated to the uncle of Finch's husband.<sup>81</sup> Before Ogilby, the fable was virtually extinct in England. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I both formally banned "political prophecy" and the fable, close kin to this form, also went into decline.<sup>82</sup> That it never entirely disappeared is witnessed by Spenser's use of the form in his *Prosopopoia. Or Mother Hubberds Tale* (1591) and *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579).<sup>83</sup> However, by the mid-seventeenth century, fable was a relatively obscure genre. Ogilby's volume changed this situation absolutely. According to Loveridge, Ogilby's volume of fables was "at that date by far the most politically concerned ever written". Writing as a royalist, Ogilby used fables to comment on contemporary political events and by so doing triggered an explosion in the writing and publishing of fables in the latter half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries.<sup>84</sup> Before Samuel Croxall's *Fables of Aesop and Others* of 1722, which was distinctly Whiggish in tone, the genre was closely identified with Tory and Jacobite writers. As Loveridge observes, "the notable fabulists between 1650 and 1700 – Ogilby, L'Estrange, and Dryden – are either Royalist/Jacobite, or Catholic, or Tory, or some combination of these, in their sympathies".<sup>85</sup> Annabel Patterson, one of the few writers to work on this field before the 1990s, has analysed the extent of the politicisation of the fable. In her 1987 study of the political use of this form Patterson observes that,

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<sup>81</sup> John Ogilby, *Fables of Aesop, Paraphras'd in Verse, Adorned with Sculpture and Illustrated with Annotations* (London: 1651). Loveridge 102-135.

<sup>82</sup> Loveridge 97.

<sup>83</sup> *The Shepherd's Calendar* contains the fables "The Fir and the Bramble" and "The Wolf and the Kid". Annabel Patterson observes that *Prosopopoia* itself acts as a fable "of royal negligence that permits knaves to take over the government," in "Fables of Power," *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 271-96 (278).

<sup>84</sup> Loveridge 107, 98-101.

<sup>85</sup> Loveridge 32. Dryden, of course, used fables in both *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) and *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1700). For a consideration of Dryden's use of fables see Earl Miner, *Dryden's Poetry*

regardless of the political stance of an individual author, after the publication of Ogilby's volume, "not even the most literal translation of Aesop, naked of commentary, could have appeared to its readers as totally innocent of topical meaning".<sup>86</sup>

Yet, whilst both Loveridge and Patterson provide invaluable historical background for the reader of Finch's fables, it is notable that neither of these critics analyses Finch's own work in this genre. Loveridge remarks of his own study, "The most notable omission is probably Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea".<sup>87</sup> Loveridge then directs the interested reader to Jayne Elizabeth Lewis' 1996 study of this genre. However, Lewis' work, whilst it devotes an entire chapter to Finch's use of fable, reads such texts almost entirely as expressions of gender anxiety. Thus, Finch's fables are viewed as "covert fictions of protest against women's cultural disenfranchisement".<sup>88</sup> Any sense of the party political import of such works is completely omitted and once again Finch's gender politics are allowed to obscure her other political concerns. It could thus be argued that Finch's fables have been subjected to a double, or even triple, form of critical neglect. Neglected within the already neglected field of fable studies, Finch's fables, when they have been considered, have been consistently depoliticised. My analysis will seek to redress this imbalance.

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(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967) 144-205 and Steven Zwicker, *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry: The Arts of Disguise* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 123-58.

<sup>86</sup>Patterson 277.

<sup>87</sup>Loveridge xii.

<sup>88</sup>Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 131.

The most important source of fables for Finch in terms of direct influence upon her work appears to have been Sir Roger L'Estrange's 1692 translation of Aesop "*with Morals and Reflexions*".<sup>89</sup> L'Estrange (1616-1704) was a pamphleteer and later journalist who wrote in support of the Stuarts during the Civil War and after the Restoration. Between 1662 and 1688 he was also the official censor of the press. After the Revolution of 1688 he became an open Jacobite and was arrested in 1691 and 1696, but released without charge, as a result of his support for the exiled James.<sup>90</sup> L'Estrange's volume, like Ogilby's, was profoundly influential. It also provided another example of the ways in which fable could be used as a medium for social and political commentary. However, as Loveridge illustrates, L'Estrange's text is not simplistically doctrinaire. The volume contains "no overt anti-Williamite sentiment" but it is characterised by "the almost pathological force of his [L'Estrange's] declarations for Divine Right".<sup>91</sup> Given L'Estrange's reputation and such declarations, the collection was widely perceived as a Jacobite work.

Two of the fables in Finch's *Miscellany Poems* are sub-titled "*imitated from Sir Roger L'Estrange*". It is impossible to know whether Finch was deliberately highlighting the indebtedness of these particular fables or whether others of her fables carried similar attributions at some point. However, the two texts explicitly identified with L'Estrange do indeed have political implications. The first of these fables, "*There's No To-Morrow*," is concerned with a dispute between a pair of lovers.<sup>92</sup> The nymph, who is

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<sup>89</sup> Roger L'Estrange, *Fables of Aesop And other Eminent Mythologists with Morals and Reflexions* (London: 1692).

<sup>90</sup> Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 15 February 2006, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>.

<sup>91</sup> Loveridge 157.

<sup>92</sup> This fable is based upon L'Estrange's "*No to Morrow*".

pregnant, reminds her lover that, on the day on which he seduced her, he promised to marry her “*To-Morrow*”. After much prevarication, her lover finally admits that he has no intention of marrying his mistress, arguing that he is free from his promise as “*To-Morrow*” never actually arrives. The fable ends with the observation that “*There’s No TO-MORROW to a Willing Mind*” (21). However, L’Estrange’s “Reflexion” on this tale includes the moral that it is improper to enter into vows and then to break them.<sup>93</sup> Finch herself makes an implicit allusion to such a moral in the lines:

But yet the Lye not caring to confess,  
 He for his Oath this Salvo chose to borrow,  
 That he was Free, since there was no *To-Morrow*;  
 For when it comes in Place to be employ'd,  
 'Tis then *To-Day*; *To-Morrow's* ne'er enjoy'd (11-15)

This fable, which on the surface appears to be a conventional tale about a lover’s deceit, thus also functions as a contemplation of the nature of vows. The implication of the poem is clearly that excuses may always be found to break their oaths by those who choose to equivocate, yet this does mean that their excuses are morally valid. The question of whether it was acceptable for those who had sworn allegiance to James II to break that vow and subsequently swear allegiance to William and Mary was one of the most contentious issues of the last decade of the seventeenth century. For Finch, as a nonjuror, the repercussions of that debate were still of paramount personal and political significance in 1713. As we have seen, Finch’s husband had been excluded from the House of Lords and from active political life by his refusal to take the oath of allegiance. Finch’s contact with nonjuring clergy would also have made her profoundly aware of the

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<sup>93</sup> L’Estrange comments on “the Impiety first of Entring into Vows, which they intend Before-hand not to

personal cost exacted by such refusal. Her fable thus serves as a vindication of the nonjuring position by its suggestion that those who break vows operate through self-interest rather than principle.

The second fable identified with L'Estrange is entitled "For the Better" and tells the story of a quack doctor who identifies all of his patient's symptoms, even his death-throes, as being "*for the Better*".<sup>94</sup> L'Estrange's "Reflexion" on this fable comments on the fact that flatterers give false advice that results in the sickness of the body politic and that these same individuals abandon the country when things start to go wrong.<sup>95</sup> In Finch's version, the constant refrain of "for the better" seems to indicate that if the patient does represent the state, then false representations have led to measures that have been disastrous. The sentiments expressed in this fable are echoed in another such text in *Miscellany Poems* entitled "*REFORMATION*". This fable tells the story of a man made miserable by his "wrangling and reprovng" spouse (2). In an attempt to improve his wife's temper, the man sends her to a pastoral idyll where she can enjoy complete rest. However, the wife soon returns with a worse temper than ever having terrorised and abused the shepherds and their maids. Resigned, the husband greets his wife with the following reaction:

Yet enter *Madam*, and resume your Sway;  
Who can't Command, must silently Obey.

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Perform, and afterward of Breaking them," 472-3.

<sup>94</sup> This fable is based upon L'Estrange's "A Doctor and his Patient".

<sup>95</sup> L'Estrange writes that "... Kingdoms and Common-Wealths have their Distempers, Intermissions, and Paroxisms as well as Natural Bodies ... There is hardly such Another Pest in a Community, as a Consort of Parasites, that feed Governours with False Representations and Reports of Men and of Things. They First Betray their Masters to Dishonour, and Ruine; and then when they find the Vessel Sinking, Save themselves in the Long Boat," 90.

In secret here let endless Faults be found,  
 Till, like Reformers who in States abound,  
 You all to Ruin bring, and ev'ry Part confound (36-40)

In these final lines, Finch thus opens out the fable to encompass a political message. Like the quack doctor, reformers are seen to be essentially destructive in their innovations. Both fables, I would suggest, effectively work as satires on Whig notions of improvement and progress.

The two fables attributed to L'Estrange, in conjunction with "Reformation," establish the way in which Finch uses fables in her 1713 collection as a medium for engaging with political and social concerns. Although it would be misleading to claim that *every* fable that is featured in *Miscellany Poems* has a political sub-text, my close readings will show that the vast majority of such texts do indeed reflect Finch's own ideological beliefs. Some, like the three already discussed, do this explicitly. For example, "*The Shepherd Piping to the Fishes*" and "*Democritus and his Neighbors*," both based on fables by La Fontaine, deal with the issue of the relation of the people to political power.<sup>96</sup> The former tells the tale of a shepherd who attempts to catch fish by luring them with the beauty of his lover and then with the music of his pipes. When both such tactics fail, the shepherd resorts to "Force" (35) thus seemingly proving the moral that:

*Thus stated Laws are always best  
 To rule the vulgar Throng,  
 Who grow more Stubborn when Carest,*

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<sup>96</sup> The sources in La Fontaine are "The Fish and the Shepherd Who Played the Flute" and "Democritus and the People of Abdera".

*Or with soft Rhetorick addrest,  
If taking Measures wrong (36-40)*

La Fontaine's text concludes with a warning to Kings that reason alone is not enough to control subjects, but that "force" must also be used.<sup>97</sup> Finch's conclusion is slightly subtler in its emphasis upon the use of a strong but lawful authority. The final line of Finch's version is ambiguous. It remains unclear whether the "Measures" themselves are "wrong," which would imply a critique of Whig innovations and possibly of the Revolution of 1688, or whether the people are unsatisfied with them. Whichever interpretation is followed, these lines appear to support a Tory, or indeed Jacobite, view that the self-interested populism associated with the Whigs by their opponents can lead only to disaster.<sup>98</sup>

In "Democritus *and his Neighbors*" the latter call on Hippocrates as they fear that Democritus has gone mad as he has turned to the study of mathematics and philosophy and abandoned all interest in worldly affairs and trade. Hippocrates rejects the idea that his friend has lost his mind and instead, "Pities a Man of Sense, judg'd by a Croud of Fools" (70). The fable ends with the following pointed reflection: "*Then how can we with their Opinions join,/Who, to promote some Int'rest wou'd define/The People's Voice to be the Voice Divine?*" (71-3). The sentiment that the people's voice is not the same as

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<sup>97</sup> La Fontaine, "The Fishes and the Shepherd who Played the Pipe," *Selected Fables*, trans. Christopher Wood, l. 40.

<sup>98</sup> See Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), especially Chapter One, for further information on the Jacobite characterisation of Whigs as self-interested.

God's is Fontaine's. However, Finch's conclusion introduces the idea that the people are being manipulated in what is surely a reference to the claims by some of William's supporters that his acquisition of the throne was a sign of Providential support for their cause. The use of the politically loaded word "Int'rest" further ensures that such claims are seen as self-serving.

The fable "*The Man bitten by Fleas*," which is loosely based upon another source in La Fontaine, is even more explicit in its political references.<sup>99</sup> This fable describes how a man whose bed is flea-ridden calls upon Jupiter to send his thunder to kill the fleas and upon Hercules to destroy them "with a Blow"(17). The man claims that the situation is worthy of the Gods' intervention since the fleas disturb his sleep, a state of affairs with potentially disastrous results:

Strange *Revolutions* wou'd abound,  
 Did Men ne'er close their Eyes;  
 Whilst those, who wrought them wou'd be found  
 At length more Mad, than Wise.

*Passive Obedience* must be us'd  
 If this cannot be Cur'd;  
 But whilst one *Flea* is slowly bruis'd,  
 Thousands must be endur'd.

Confusion, Slav'ry, Death and Wreck  
 Will on that Nation seize,  
 If, whilst you keep your Thunders back,  
 We're massacr'd by *Fleas* (25-36)

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<sup>99</sup> Finch's source appears to be La Fontaine's "The Man and the Flea".

The Gods remain unimpressed by such arguments and tell the man to concentrate on cleaning his house rather than causing “some fatal Breach” (44) which future generations will be unable to resolve but which can be avoided through the exercise of “Prudence” (48). The fable concludes with the following moral:

*For Club, and Bolts, a Nation call'd of late,  
Nor wou'd be eas'd by Engines of less Weight:  
But whether lighter had not done as well,  
Let their Great-Grandsons, or their Grandson tell (49-52)*

Fontaine's version of this tale provides only a warning against bothering the Gods with our petty grievances. Finch's reworking of her source, however, introduces such intensely political allusions that the resulting fable provides an unmistakable denunciation of the Revolution of 1688. In Finch's version the fleas are presumably intended to represent political grievances and the man those who sought reparation for such ills and who predicted dire results if they were not addressed. As Charles Hinnant observes, Finch's tale also “invokes a burlesque analogy between the human body and the body politic”.<sup>100</sup> The man's reference to “*Passive Obedience*” draws clear attention to the political content of the fable and appears to imply that many who professed to believe in this Tory and Anglican doctrine in fact prophesied disaster if James was not opposed. The behaviour of the Gods indicates that the man's response is a dangerous over-reaction that could potentially result in unnecessary political change and profound, and long-term, discord. Finch thus uses this fable to launch an unequivocal and

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<sup>100</sup> Hinnant 178.

unambiguous attack upon the events of 1688 and to assert her belief that future generations will judge those who enacted and supported the Revolution harshly.

Charles Hinnant interprets Finch's version of "The Man Bitten by Fleas" as, at least partially, a critique of "the proposition that the Revolution of 1688 can be rationalized by assimilating it into a Providentialist political schema".<sup>101</sup> The Providentialism Hinnant refers to is the argument, put forward by some supporters of the Revolution, that the fact that William had gained the throne indicated divine support for his kingship. One of the main proponents of this viewpoint was Bishop William Sherlock (1639/40-1707), originally a supporter of the exiled James and a nonjuror. In 1690, however, Sherlock began to shift his position offering prayers for William and Mary as de facto sovereigns and taking the oaths of allegiance in August of that year. Sherlock defended his actions in *The Case of the Allegiance due to Sovereign Powers* (1691) where he argued that God not only established Kings but that He also removed them, thus attempting to counter accusations that the Revolution had dethroned a divinely appointed monarch and had thus subverted the divine will. Despite the popularity of this work, accusations that Sherlock's actions were prompted by self-interest persisted.<sup>102</sup> For Finch, as a Jacobite with allegiances to the nonjuring community, arguments such as those put forward by Sherlock were clearly anathema. Hinnant's reading of "The Man Bitten by Fleas" thus suggests that the Providentialism featured in the fable appears "to subsume rather than acknowledge the more negative aspects of cataclysmic change".<sup>103</sup> According to such an

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<sup>101</sup> Hinnant 179.

<sup>102</sup> Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 15 February 2006 < <http://www.oxforddnb.com>>.

<sup>103</sup> Hinnant 179.

interpretation, Finch's text exposes the devastation that follows as a consequence of such theories and calls those who promulgate them to account. I wish to suggest that such an approach is characteristic of Finch's broader opposition to Providentialism, an opposition that recurs throughout *Miscellany Poems*.

Indeed, a preoccupation with the role of Providence in people's lives is echoed in many of the fables featured in Finch's 1713 volume. By exploring this theme through a variety of different tales, Finch not only examines a traditional topic of fable lore but, as we have seen, investigates a subject with strong contemporary resonance. The overwhelming message of Finch's fables on this theme is that human beings should submit to divine Providence but should not seek to claim its workings for their own ends. As Hinnant observes, the poet's:

critique of Providentialism should not be taken to imply that Finch rejected the doctrine of Divine Providence. It suggests, rather, that she refused to believe that Providence had manifested itself in recent English history or in the commercial revolution that ensued in the 1690s.<sup>104</sup>

As implied by these observations, Providence remains, for Finch, a force that man seeks to co-opt at his peril. The fable "Jupiter *and the* Farmer" tells the story of a "poor

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<sup>104</sup> Hinnant 230.

Clown” (10) who rents a farm from the god on the condition that “All Weathers tow’rds His Harvest may conspire”(13).<sup>105</sup> However, the farmer’s indecision and lack of intelligence means that his power over the elements is not just useless to him, it is actually destructive: “He with such Contrariety does chuse;/So often and so oddly shifts the Scene,/Whilst others Load, he scarce has what to Glean” (23-25). Finally, the farmer acknowledges his own limitations and declares to Jupiter “Let me but live to Reap, do Thou appoint the way”(30). “*The ATHEIST and the ACORN*” offers a similar reminder of the dangers of human interference in a divinely appointed order and of the arrogance of believing that such an order can be fully comprehended by those who are subject to it.<sup>106</sup> It relates the story of an atheist who, whilst lying beneath a tree, reflects that whereas a pumpkin is supported simply by a slender stalk, an acorn has the support of an entire oak. The atheist considers that this anomaly demonstrates the “ill Contrivance” (15) of the world and observes that his own “better Judgment” (16) would have reversed this arrangement. No sooner has he reached this conclusion than an acorn falls from the tree and hits him in the eye. Forced to repent of his arrogance, the atheist concludes, “Fool! had that Bough a *Pumpkin* bore,/Thy Whimseys must have work’d no more,/Nor Scull had kept them in” (28-30). If read out of context, both these fables offer seemingly apolitical morals about the foolishness and arrogance of human endeavours to control Providence. However, within the context of contemporary debates about the role of Providence in recent British history, such as those put forward by Sherlock, and of a volume in which Finch includes other politically engaged fables, these texts can clearly

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<sup>105</sup> This fable has sources in both L’Estrange’s “Jupiter and a Farmer” and La Fontaine’s “Jupiter and His Tenant”.

<sup>106</sup> This fable is based upon La Fontaine’s “The Acorn and the Pumpkin”.

be seen to occupy a position of ideological opposition to Sherlockian Providentialism.

A further fable, “*Man’s Injustice towards Providence*,” attacks such Providentialism from a different angle.<sup>107</sup> This fable tells the story of a merchant who amasses a great fortune and who lives in luxury. When “a Country Friend” (21) asks the Merchant how he has achieved such success, the trader replies, “My *Industry* ... is all the Cause” (27). Carried away by the force of his own argument, the merchant continues “My own sufficiency creates my Gain,/Rais’d and secur’d by this unfailing Brain” (39-40). Barely has he spoken these words when news arrives that his ships have faltered and that his fortune is diminished. When the friend questions him about his change of fortune, the merchant replies, “In Me’s no Change, but Fate must all Things guide;/To *Providence* I attribute my Loss” (54-55). The egotism and self-aggrandisement of the merchant suggests that human beings cannot be relied upon in their interpretation of the events of their lives as these interpretations are frequently influenced by self-interest. In each of these three fables, Finch thus implies that it is arrogant and self-deluded to seek to subject Providence, and our readings of it, to our own human agendas.

Other fables in *Miscellany Poems* also engage with the concept of Providence in the sense that they consider the most appropriate ways for human beings to approach the inevitable vicissitudes of existence. “*The Shepherd and the Calm*” relates the adventures of a swain who lives a life of happiness whilst existing in a state “something less than

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<sup>107</sup> The source for this fable is La Fontaine’s “Man’s Ingratitude and Unfairness Toward Fortune”.

Joy, yet more than dull Content./ (Between which two Extreems true Pleasure lies,/ O'er-run by *Fools*, unreach'd-at by the *Wise*)” (5-7).<sup>108</sup> However, the shepherd abandons this perfect condition in order to pursue the life of a sea-faring merchant. His first voyage is a great success but his second leads to losses as a result of which he is forced to become a servant in the lands where he once lived independently. In time, the shepherd is able to buy back his flock and to re-establish himself in his former situation. On “one Halcyon Day,” however, the sea once more tempts the shepherd to return to his life as a merchant through its promise of fair winds and quiet waters (38). Yet despite such favourable conditions, the shepherd resists the temptation declaring his preference for a life of security: “Give me a certain Fate in the obscurest Vale” (58).

“*The Decision of Fortune*” relates the story of two friends, one of whom resolves to travel the world in order to seek Fortune whilst the other determines to remain at home.<sup>109</sup> The latter does not disregard the benefits that Fortune can bestow stating that “She shou’d be Welcome, if she came this Way” (30). However, neither does he believe that he should actively pursue such benefits. The restless man sets off on his travels but finds that Fortune is elusive. Finally, he returns to his friend’s house only to discover that Fortune is there before him. Fortune then declares that she will bless the Friend who has not sought for her as, “... Merit, when ‘tis found, is my Delight” (53). The conclusion of the fable, spoken by Fortune herself, is that: “... He alone my real Fav’rite rises,/ Who every

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<sup>108</sup> This fable has sources in both L’Estrange’s “A Shepherd turn’d Merchant” and La Fontaine’s “The Shepherd and the Sea”.

<sup>109</sup> Finch’s fable is based upon L’Estrange’s “Two Friends and Fortune” and La Fontaine’s “The Man Who Ran after Fortune and the Man who Waited for Her at Home”.

Thing to its just Value prizes,/And neither courts, nor yet my Gifts despises" (67-69). Such sentiments recur throughout Finch's work, as is demonstrated by the praise of the initial harmonious and moderate existence of the shepherd in "The Shepherd and the Calm". They receive particularly explicit consideration in the poem "On these Words: Thou hast hedg'd in my way with thorns" which forms part of the Wellesley manuscript. In this text a young woman is tempted first by a lover and the prospect of "the alluring World," and, on being shown that the man is a seducer, by the prospect of self-renunciation and a life of celibacy (32). The woman's elderly father steers her away from both of these courses in favour of marriage and a "temperate" enjoyment of life's pleasures (174). Such counsel is typical of Finch's approach to life as reflected in her poetry. Even in her later religious work, with its frequent focus upon heaven and the afterlife, there is no sense that Finch rejects or despises the joys of this world. Her Anglicanism is a true reflection of the "via media" temperance so often claimed for that Church in contrast to what was seen by its proponents as Puritan asceticism and Catholic excess.

Yet, in addition to indicating Finch's belief in a temperate attitude to the affairs of this world, in which material success is held in proper perspective, the moral of "The Decision of Fortune" can also be seen to demonstrate a certain passivity, even fatalism, on Finch's part. Laura Lunger Knoppers has written of the "passivity" of much specifically English Jacobitism, particularly in its reliance on images of the martyred Charles I:

The indefeasible right, sacred monarchy and obedience associated with the figure of Charles I both legitimated the Jacobite cause and undermined its grounds for human action. The very strategy designed to win support for the exiled Stuarts did so at the cost of effecting any kind of real change.<sup>110</sup>

Knoppers' argument draws attention to the potentially negative aspects of Finch's approach to the idea of Providence and its relation to human affairs. Both "The Shepherd and the Calm" and "The Decision of Fortune" convey a certain sense of helplessness. This is entirely understandable when one considers the events of Finch's own life and the impact that events beyond her control had upon it. However, Finch's response to such uncertainty in these two fables and also in texts such as "Jupiter and the Farmer" and "The Atheist and the Acorn" is to retreat into passivity and unquestioning acceptance. Peace and stability, "a certain Fate in the obscurest Vale," are prized above all else and the questioning of Providence is perceived as arrogant and dangerous. In this respect, Finch exemplifies Knoppers' argument much more clearly than the other two authors considered in this thesis. Jane Barker, I will suggest, is far more assertive and interventionist than Finch in relation to her Jacobitism. Essentially, Barker views the battle between the Jacobites and their opponents as an on-going struggle in which she is an active participant. Mary Caesar, by contrast, seeks to reclaim control of events by narrating them in a manner that grants moral, if not actual, victory to the Jacobite cause. Finch's attitude to Providence, as reflected in her use of fables, indicates a less aggressive

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<sup>110</sup> Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Reviving the Martyr King: Charles I as Jacobite icon," *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas N. Corns and Kevin Sharpe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 263-87 (264, 269-70).

approach to her Jacobitism. Whilst she deplores the actions of the Williamites, her commitment to passive obedience and her distrust of human attempts to co-opt Providence inevitably mean that her work demonstrates a sense of submission.

Interspersed with fables that comment on issues of Providence and which reflect Finch's political ideology, *Miscellany Poems* also contains a variety of fables that present a more broad-based social critique. Some of these are not historically specific but feature attacks on age-old human flaws. "*The Eagle, the Sow, and the Cat*" tells of a "crafty *Puss*" who drives the bird and the pig from the oak tree that they all share through a combination of lies and flattery and thus gains sole possession of their home (62).<sup>111</sup> This fable contains a warning against "*Curs'd Sycophants*" (66). "*The DOG and his MASTER*" features a dog who has been taught to snarl at "Rascals" but who finds himself growling at all his master's visitors and thus exposing them as cheats and hypocrites (7).<sup>112</sup> "*The Battle between the Rats and the Weazles*" describes how those Rats who adorned themselves "With lofty Plumage" (10) found themselves unable to hide in "slender Crannies"(15) once they lost the battle and therefore forfeited their lives through "Pride" (11).<sup>113</sup>

Other fables within this general grouping reflect more identifiably contemporary concerns. "*A Tale of the Miser and the Poet*" features a discussion between the two

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<sup>111</sup> Sources for this fable can be found in both L'Estrange's "The Eagle, Cat and Sow" and La Fontaine's "The Eagle, the Sow and the Cat".

<sup>112</sup> This fable is based upon L'Estrange's work of the same name.

<sup>113</sup> Finch's source is La Fontaine's "The War Between the Rats and the Weasles".

eponymous characters in which the former declares that this is a time in which poetry is neglected and in which “Great Men” (76) perceive “*no Worth in any thing/But so much Money as ‘twill bring’*”(78-79).<sup>114</sup> This fable can easily be read as an attack upon the financial changes that had taken place in England since the Revolution of 1688 and which resulted from the institution of the Bank of England in 1694 and the creation of the stock market. Many social and political conservatives were uneasy with such changes and feared the move away from a more traditional land-based economy and social order. “*The Tradesman and the Scholar*” reiterates such concerns and serves as a counterpart to “*A Tale of the Miser and the Poet*” in that it praises values opposed to those of commerce and finance.<sup>115</sup> This fable contrasts the behaviour of an arrogant merchant who mocks the scholar for his retirement and poverty with the humility and commitment of the same scholar. When war destroys the merchant’s fortune and he becomes dependent on charity, he discovers that the scholar is prized and esteemed wherever he travels whilst he himself is disregarded. In a clear rejection of any society which pays too much respect to financial success, Finch concludes this tale with the following moral: “*Wit and the Arts, on that Foundation rais’d,/(Howe’er the Vulgar are with Shows amaz’d)/Is all that recommends, or can be justly prais’d* (68-70). A third fable, “*The Brass-Pot, and Stone-Jugg,*” is also linked to these two texts through its social conservatism.<sup>116</sup> The fable features a conversation between the two vessels in which the pot urges the jug to join him in leaving their current home and seeking “a nobler Life” (3). The jug is wary of such a change as he fears that he is too fragile to survive any jostling for “Preferment” (22). The

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<sup>114</sup> This fable shares some similarities with La Fontaine’s “The Miser Who Lost his Hoard”.

<sup>115</sup> This fable is based upon La Fontaine’s “Knowledge Avails”.

<sup>116</sup> Both L’Estrange’s “Two Pots” and La Fontaine’s “The Pot of Clay and the Pot of Iron” are sources for this fable.

pot replies that he will protect his companion and, although the jug fears that he will be destroyed by the very strength of his guardian, the two set off on their travels. Disaster ensues when the pair roll down a hill and the jug is shattered to pieces. The moral of this fable is “That Equal Company is best,/Where none Oppress, nor are Opprest” (54-55). Such a sentiment could clearly be applied to any society or age. However, the fact that this fable is placed within a collection that features other texts that express mistrust of a society in transition suggests that its author might well have intended a particularly contemporary resonance to the tale.

The final fable that I wish to consider combines reflection upon the age in which Finch lived with observations upon her own role as a commentator on that age. “*The Critick and the Writer of FABLES*” tackles the issue of contemporary literary taste.<sup>117</sup> The author considers a variety of genres only to hear the critic reject each in turn. Fables are dismissed as “childish Tales” (13), epic as “old Bombast” (28) and pastoral as “insipid Dreams” (41). The only form that the critic will countenance is satire:

But urge thy Pen, if thou wouldst move our Thoughts,  
To shew us private, or the publick Faults.  
Display the Times, *High-Church* or *Low* provoke;  
We'll praise the Weapon, as we like the Stroke,  
And warmly sympathizing with the Spite  
Apply to Thousands, what of One you write (49-50)

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<sup>117</sup> This fable appears to be loosely based on La Fontaine’s “For Those Impossible to Please”.

The fable-writer despairs at such advice asking, “Must only Satire keep your Fancies warm?” (55) and concludes, rather wistfully, “*Happy the Men, whom we divert with Ease,/Whom Opera’s and Panegyricks please*” (59-60). The sentiments expressed in this work are in line with Finch’s general rejection of satire as a form. In a poem in the Wellesley manuscript entitled “On my being charged with writing a lampoon at Tunbridge,” Finch declares that hers is a “well temper’d muse” (2) and argues that satire is ineffective in its aims:

Whilst none by Satyre has that conquest won  
 From Romes great Juvenal to England’s Donne  
 The errors of the times have still prevail’d  
 The laughing and the weeping sages fail’d (7-10)

Finch also articulates similar opinions in the prose preface to the folio manuscript where she declares, “As to Lampoons, and all sorts of abusive Verses, I ever so much detested, both the underhand dealing, and uncharitableness which accompanys them, that I never suffer’d my small talent, to be that way employ’d”. The only example of her work that Finch feels might be said to fall into this category is “Ardelia’s Answer to Ephelia” and of this poem the author remarks, “there was no particular person meant by any of the disadvantageous Characters; and the whole intention of itt, was in general to expose the Censorious humor, foppishnesse and coquetterie that then prevail’d”.<sup>118</sup> It is indeed the case that Finch tends to avoid virulent satire in her works. However, the implication in “The Critick and the Writer of Fables” that fables are mere “childish Tales” devoid of

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<sup>118</sup> Folger MS 4-5, 5. This is, of course, a traditional defence of satire. Ben Jonson, for instance, in the Dedication to the Earl of Pembroke at the start of his *Epigrams* states: “I have avoyded all particulars, as I have done names,” *Ben Jonson*, ed. C.H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947) 26.

political and social content is clearly disingenuous. As I have attempted to demonstrate, Finch's use of fables in her *Miscellany Poems* is profoundly influenced by her political beliefs. In addition, through the tradition established by Ogilby and L'Estrange, Finch's readers would have been used to reading such texts for their political and social content. The attempt to claim that the genre that dominates her volume is designed simply for diversion is presumably a protective manoeuvre on Finch's part. As Annabel Patterson has observed, one of the strengths of the fable is that it can function "as an oblique medium of political commentary".<sup>119</sup> Yet, despite the arguments presented in "The Critick and the Writer of Fables," Finch's fables, in her 1713 volume, form a central part of the political identity of that work as a whole. Finch may have despised her age's taste for satire, but her rejection of this form did not equate with a rejection of politically engaged writing.

This is further demonstrated by the other, non-fable, poems Finch chooses to include in *Miscellany Poems*. As is the case with the fables, not all of these texts are political. Indeed, the majority of them are not concerned with political topics and are instead a disparate collection of translations, poems to friends and other works on individual themes. There are, however, also poems which are key exceptions to this and which both convey Finch's Jacobitism and reiterate and develop the attitudes to Providence explored in the fables. Some of these texts express their author's politics almost in passing as allusions or even asides. Thus, in the elegy "*On the Death of the Hon. James Thynne*," the lament for Finch's young friend is interrupted by praise for his ancestor's loyalty to

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<sup>119</sup> Patterson 272.

an earlier ousted Stuart monarch. Referring to Sir William Seymour, later Marquis of Hertford and Duke of Somerset and great-grandfather of the subject of her elegy, Finch writes:

Nor *SOMERSET* his Master's Sorrows weeps,  
 Who to the shelter of th'unenvy'd Grave  
 Convey'd the Monarch, whom he cou'd not save;  
 Though, *Roman*-like, his own less-valu'd Head  
 He proffer'd in that injur'd Martyr's stead (33-37)

Myra Reynolds's note to these lines in her 1903 edition of Finch's work explains that William Seymour "... was one of the three lords who prayed the court to lay upon them, as the advisers of Charles I, the entire responsibility for his acts. Upon his execution they gained permission to bury his body at Windsor".<sup>120</sup> Although Finch was not unusual in mentioning the distinguished forebears of the deceased within an elegy, her choice of ancestor is clearly significant. Sir William's loyalty to Charles functions not simply as a means of praising James Thynne but also as a way for the poet to express her own allegiance to the House of Stuart and, implicitly, for her to link Charles with his son. Jacobites frequently paralleled the events of the Civil War and the Revolution of 1688.<sup>121</sup> The mention of Charles I's execution would, therefore, potentially raise thoughts of James II's own deposition in the minds of a sympathetic reader.

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<sup>120</sup> Reynolds 422 (n.d).

<sup>121</sup> See Monod 49-54.

One of Finch's most famous poems, "*The SPLEEN*," published separately in 1709 but also included in the 1713 volume, displays its political allegiances in a similar manner to the elegy on James Thynne. This poem is not, essentially, a political work but rather a discussion of the nature and effects of "spleen" or depression. Yet, in the midst of a description of the limited and limiting creative opportunities available to women, Finch includes a loaded political reference:

Nor will in fading Silks compose  
Faintly th'inimitable *Rose*,  
Fill up an ill-drawn *Bird*, or paint on Glass  
The *Sov'reigns's* blurr'd and undistinguish'd Face,  
The threatening *Angel*, and the speaking *Ass*. (85-89)

This allusion to the "*Sov'reigns's ... Face*" is ambiguous. It could mean simply that the face of the monarch lacks distinction. More plausibly, however, it could be a hint that the face of the monarch is obscured so as not to indicate whether the sovereign is the *de facto* Hanoverian or the *de jure* Stuart ruler. Finch might also be here referring to an anamorphic picture which needed to be viewed through a special device for its content to become visible.<sup>122</sup> Finch's ambiguity of phrasing is reminiscent of deliberately disingenuous Jacobite toasts in which the wine glass was passed over a finger bowl of water before the health of the King was drunk. Such an action was taken to imply that it was in fact the monarch in exile "over the water" in France who was being saluted. Almost lost amidst the list of feminine activities that Finch rejects is thus a possible

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<sup>122</sup> The West Highland Museum in Fort William, Scotland, has an anamorphic portrait of Prince Charles Edward Stuart amongst its holdings.

reference to Jacobite handicraft. If she had not resolved to write poetry, Finch implies, these are the sorts of activities she might well be engaged in.

“VERSES *Written under the King of Sweden’s Picture*” also operates through allusions that would be apparent to sympathetic readers. However, in this poem, unlike the elegy and “The Spleen,” such allusions form the central focus of the text. The poem is, essentially, a *paean* to the Swedish King which praises his “blooming Sweetness, and ... martial Fire” (15). Such praise might seem innocuous if it were not for the fact that Charles XII of Sweden was viewed by many Jacobites as a potential saviour who might invade England in support of a Stuart restoration. Within this context the final lines of Finch’s poem arguably take on the character of a defence of such an invasion. Writing of Charles’ military might, Finch observes that such force is like “... Lightnings, which to all their Brightness shew,/Strike but the Man alone, who has provok’d the Blow” (17-18). For Finch, a Swedish backed invasion would thus be a defensive act, carried out in response to William’s initial seizure of the throne, rather than an offensive one. What is particularly interesting about this poem is that it was available to be published in 1713. Paul S. Fritz has remarked that “Between 1706 and 1716 the Jacobites, with little success, had worked with great earnestness to win the support of Charles XII...”.<sup>123</sup> Such activity came to light in the discovery of the Gyllenborg Plot of 1716/1717. This plot, in which Charles Caesar, husband of Mary, was strongly implicated, was named after the Swedish Ambassador and was designed to land Swedish troops in England. The fact that Finch

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<sup>123</sup> Paul S. Fritz, *The English Ministers and Jacobitism between the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) 9.

was able to use the Swedish monarch as a symbol of her own Jacobite allegiance three years before this plot indicates not only that she was aware of Charles XII's significance to her cause, but also that she expected her readers to be so as well.

Two further texts in *Miscellany Poems* also rely on an informed and sensitive readership to be alert to their essentially allusive qualities in order to function as political works. "PSALM the 137<sup>th</sup>, Paraphras'd to the 7<sup>th</sup> Verse" and "The CHANGE" both operate as reflections upon the state of a country suffering as a result of political upheaval. As Hannibal Hamlin has documented, during the Renaissance Psalm 137 was increasingly used by writers to convey a sense of political alienation and to express the pains of exile.<sup>124</sup> The Psalm, which begins with the words, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion," laments the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews in Babylon.<sup>125</sup> As such, it lends itself easily to use as an allegory for a wide range of religious and political contexts. As Hamlin also remarks, "... the psalm particularly appealed to writers, since it represented the condition of exile in terms of loss of voice and skill, the inability to *sing*".<sup>126</sup> Finch's paraphrase follows the original text fairly closely but notably omits the final three verses with their emphasis upon the violent destruction of Babylon and the dashing of its children against rocks. Hamlin observes that such verses consistently troubled readers and translators and I would suggest that Finch's omission of them corresponds with her general aversion to

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<sup>124</sup> Hannibal Hamlin, "Psalm Culture in the English Renaissance: Readings of Psalm 137 by Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and Others," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55:1 (2002): 224-257.

<sup>125</sup> *King James Bible* Psalm 137, v.1.

<sup>126</sup> Hamlin 254.

vengeful or venomous writing as typified by her unease with satire and her reluctance to damn her enemies in her religious verse.<sup>127</sup>

Hamlin traces the use of the 137th Psalm by a diverse selection of authors and notes that, although it was used by both sides during the Civil War, the psalm had particularly strong royalist connotations. Citing Clarendon's interpretation of the psalm in his *Contemplations and reflections upon the Psalms of David* (1647), Hamlin demonstrates the way in which the text is used to "emphasize the parallel conditions of the Israelites after the Babylonian conquest and of Englishmen loyal to King Charles I after his defeat by the Parliamentarians". Hamlin also observes that:

Clarendon's appropriation of the psalm is bold but not unique, and is actually entirely in keeping with Charles I's own attempt, using allusions to the psalms, to recast himself as the suffering and penitential King David in the *Eikon Basilike*, attacked so vehemently by Milton.<sup>128</sup>

Within such a context, it is not difficult to comprehend the appeal of this work for Finch and to understand why it is one of only two psalms to be included in her 1713 volume.<sup>129</sup> Although Finch, unlike Jane Barker, was not writing under conditions of physical exile, the psalm's evocation of a people in bondage to a foreign ruler would surely have been resonant for both author and Jacobite readers.

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<sup>127</sup> Hamlin 251.

<sup>128</sup> Hamlin 249-50, 250.

<sup>129</sup> The other is the adaptation of Psalm 148 in "A Pindarick Poem Upon the Hurricane".

The poem “The Change” is, in some ways, Finch’s own personal recreation of the emotional landscape of Psalm 137 with its emphasis on exile and political defeat. In this work, Finch represents what she perceives as the collapse of the political order in England through a depiction of the nation’s withered and desolate countryside. The first three stanzas of the poem address respectively a river, the sun and a building and describe how each of these is in decline. The river is dried up and deserted by both human and animal life. Nymphs and swains, their flocks, swans and fish have all departed whilst the river itself is left “To waste thy sad Remains in Tears” (10). The sun is in darkness and its former glory forgotten: “Not all the past can one Adorer keep,/Fall, wretched Sun, to the more faithful Deep” (27-28). The building is in ruins, “undermin’d by Time and Frost” (30) and, like the river, is abandoned and will soon collapse: “Fall, wretched *Building!* to thy Tomb” (40). The poem is clearly a reflection upon mutability. The speaker declares of the Earth that it “alone is fixt” (42) and the final lines read “O wretched Man! to other Worlds repair;/For *Faith* and *Gratitude* are only there” (55-56). Yet Finch’s text is more than just another poem about transience. The connection between the welfare of the king and the physical welfare of the kingdom is an established poetic trope dating back at least to the image of the Fisher King. As Paul Monod has demonstrated such a tradition continued in later Jacobite verse through the association of James III with fertility traditions: “The idea of the king’s two bodies appeared in the ‘lost lover’ ballads in the guise of procreative power; the king was able to bring fertility, to regenerate nature, because he was divine as well as human”.<sup>130</sup> “The Change” offers the

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<sup>130</sup> Monod 64.

reader the reverse of this scenario. The absence of James, surely represented by the rejected river, sun and building, has led to both his own abandonment by those formerly loyal to him and a deep-rooted lack of fertility in the world. The final stanza broadens the theme of the poem to encompass all of humanity: “The same, poor *Man*, the same must be/Thy Fate, now *Fortune* frowns on thee” (43-44). Yet such expansion works primarily because the reader keeps in mind the ultimate reversal of fortune implicit in the poem – the loss of his throne by James II. The title of the poem is, after all, “The Change” and not just “Change”. Hinnant also detects the Jacobite implications of the poem and notes that the work “is included next to “Upon the Death of James II” in the Reynolds edition”.<sup>131</sup> Reynolds’ ordering is her own as her edition is an amalgamation of Finch’s manuscript sources. Surely, what is equally significant to the positioning of this poem by Reynolds is that “The Change” appears within a volume containing numerous other political works and which thus provides a context within which readers are rendered susceptible to the political subtexts of Finch’s work.

Also essential to any consideration of the political content of *Miscellany Poems* is Finch’s “A Pindarick Poem *Upon the Hurricane in November 1703, referring to this Text in Psalm 148. ver.8. Winds and Storms fulfilling his Word*” and the accompanying “*HYMN compos’d of the 148<sup>th</sup> PSALM Paraphras’d*”. The verse of Psalm 148 referred to in the title reads as follows: “Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word” and the poem is an exposition of the idea that the divine will can operate even in

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<sup>131</sup> Hinnant 233.

circumstances of apparent destruction.<sup>132</sup> The poem opens with the lines “You have obey’d, you WINDS, that must fulfill/The Great Disposer’s righteous Will” (1-2) and the last three words recur twice more within the poem. From the first, it is thus clear that the hurricane is an expression of God’s will yet, as Hinnant observes, “It is not God himself who is present in the hurricane but only the power on earth – where, for the time being, His “Will” is manifest”.<sup>133</sup> Such a distinction is important as it draws attention once again to Finch’s anti-providentialist theology, previously discussed in relation to the fables. As Hinnant observes, one of the most striking features of Finch’s poem on the hurricane is that it:

resists the temptation to use the hurricane of 1703 as a pretext for framing a judgment upon the events of the previous fifteen years. In “The Storm: an Essay,” Daniel Defoe envisages the same event as a “punishment” for the ingratitude shown by a “thankless nation” to William III. Finch approaches this kind of Providential perspective when she makes the speaker of her ode speculate that the hurricane – which damaged the episcopal palace at Wells and killed the latitudinarian Bishop Richard Kidder and his wife – might have spared the “strictly pious” non-juror Thomas Ken (1.100) had he remained as the incumbent. Ken had been deprived of the bishopric of Wells and Bath in favor of Kidder in 1689, after he had voted against the new oaths of allegiance to William III. Yet while the poem moves toward a wishful identification with Ken, the logic of its argument moves in another direction when the speaker exclaims, in relation to the destruction of the palace, “Let not daring Thought presume/To point a Cause for that oppressive Doom” (ll. 98-99).<sup>134</sup>

As indicated by this quotation from Hinnant, Finch’s poem is, despite the reference to

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<sup>132</sup> *King James Bible* Psalm 148, v.8.

<sup>133</sup> Hinnant 246.

<sup>134</sup> Hinnant 247. The quotation from Defoe is taken from *The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe*, 7 vols. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1888) 5: 414-15, Hinnant 273 (n.29).

Bishop Ken, decidedly non-partisan and great emphasis is laid upon the fact that the hurricane does not discriminate with regards to its victims. Finch thus writes of the storm, “Undistinguish’d was your Prey” (10) and, even more explicitly, “Nor WHIG, nor TORY now the rash Contender calls” (177). There are political asides such as the reference to the fact that “... even the Winds may keep the Balance right,/Nor yield increase of Sway to arbitrary Might” (125-6). A sympathetic reader might well view this as an attack upon William’s supposed use of “might” rather than “right” to gain the throne. Likewise, the following lines, where Finch uses Miltonic phraseology against Milton’s followers, can be seen as an attack on Whig calls for “Liberty”:

Free as the Men, who wild Confusion love,  
 And lawless Liberty approve,  
 Their Fellow-Brutes pursue their way,  
 To their own Loss, and disadvantage stray,  
 As wretched in their Choice, as unadvis’d as They (204-8)

Yet such moments are incidental to the overarching anti-providentialism of the poem as a whole. As Hinnant suggests, the power manifest in this work “is inscrutable, because party strife and an endless struggle for dominion reveal its absence, and yet is actual, because the hurricane envisions its material presence”.<sup>135</sup> Such an observation is central to any understanding of Finch’s attitude to God’s intervention in human affairs. As the proverbs that consider the nature of providence also indicate, God’s will is a clear reality to Finch. However, all attempts to subject such will to limited human understanding, or to co-opt it in support of one’s own partisan position, are rejected as examples of both

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<sup>135</sup> Hinnant 248.

ignorance and hubris. The message of Finch's poem on the hurricane, as of her fables, is that humanity must submit to God's will not simply without question, but also with praise. "*The HYMN*" that accompanies the Pindaric is thus a hymn of praise that calls upon all creation to extol God. In this work, the hurricane is seen as a punishment "for our Sins" and thus deserved (60). Humanity's focus should therefore be upon blessing "that Gracious Hand, that did your [the hurricane's] Progress stay" (65). Within both the Pindaric and the hymn, the reader thus sees reiterated the essential submissiveness identified in relation to the fables "The Shepherd and the Calm" and "The Decision of Fortune". Finch's commitment to passive obedience and her refusal to challenge what she sees as a manifestation of God's will thus leads to a stance that reflects Laura Lunger Knoppers' characterisation of Jacobite passivity.

An interesting variation on such passivity is presented in two of Finch's most anthologised "nature" poems that are also included in *Miscellany Poems*. These works, "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat" and "*A Nocturnal Reverie*" so praised by Wordsworth, both foreground the figure of the poetic speaker herself and also form part of the established literary tradition of retreat poetry. Both texts ultimately address the issue of how the individual who seeks to withdraw from a corrupt world – a world such as that presented in the fables and the other political texts in *Miscellany Poems* – functions in her retreat. In effect, these works seek to imagine an ideal society that operates as both an alternative to and a critique of Finch's own world.

“The Petition for an Absolute Retreat” is dedicated to Catharine, Countess of Thanet and is a request to “indulgent Fate” (1) to allow the speaker “A sweet, but absolute Retreat” (3) free from “Intruders” (8). Across the course of this lengthy poem Finch envisages various aspects of this haven which is notable for its simplicity. The retreat will be free from frivolous gossip and will provide “only plain, and wholesome Fare” which will be prepared without the speaker’s own efforts (33). The speaker, Ardelia, will be dressed in plain clothes and she will avoid “Perfumes” and artificial dyes (72). Many critics have observed that “The Petition” can usefully be read against Marvell’s “The Garden” as both poems feature a poetic speaker imagining existence within an idealised sanctuary.<sup>136</sup> However, a central difference between the two works is that, whereas Marvell’s text prioritises solitude over companionship, Finch’s poem seeks to envisage an ideal society within the retreat. In “The Petition” an important aspect of the imagined refuge is thus the presence of “*A Partner suited to my Mind*” (106) and a friend, Arminda, presumably the Countess (197).

Within this simple yet abundant landscape, undoubtedly suggestive of the Garden of Eden, Finch seeks to rework simultaneously the denigration of women, based upon Eve’s submission to temptation, and the exclusion of James II’s heirs. To achieve the first of these aims, Ardelia situates herself as an Eve who will not fall declaring that, of the food available in the retreat, “All, but the *Forbidden Tree*,/Wou’d be coveted by me” (36-37). In contrast to Marvell, we here see Finch seeking not to erase Eve but rather to recreate her. Yet despite this, the scene that Finch imagines is not prelapsarian. The use of the

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<sup>136</sup> See particularly McGovern 84.

word “coveted” proclaims the knowingness of the speaker who is aware of original sin but who seeks to rewrite it.<sup>137</sup> This awareness of the postlapsarian world is reiterated in the section of the poem that introduces Arminda. Envisaging the effects of old age through the analogy of a withered tree, Finch presents Ardelia as desolate and prostrate until rescued by her friend:

Rivell'd the distorted Trunk,  
 Sapless Limbs all bent, and shrunk,  
 Sadly does the Time presage,  
 Of our too near Approaching Age.  
 When a helpless Vine is found,  
 Unsupported on the Ground,  
 Careless all the Branches spread,  
 Subject to each haughty Tread,  
 Bearing neither Leaves, nor Fruit,  
 Living only in the Root;  
 Back reflecting let me say,  
 So the sad *Ardelia* lay;  
 Blasted by a Storm of Fate,  
 Felt, thro' all the *British* State;  
 Fall'n, neglected, lost, forgot,  
 Dark Oblivion all her Lot;  
 Faded till *Arminda's* Love,  
 (Guided by the Pow'rs above)  
 Warm'd anew her drooping Heart,  
 And Life diffus'd thro' every Part (148-67)

The allusion to the “Storm of Fate” must surely be a reference to the Revolution of 1688, a supposition supported by the fact that the tree at the centre of the metaphor is earlier identified as “a lonely stubborn Oak” (142). The oak was, of course, an established Stuart symbol and it is notable that, in “The Petition,” it is felled but not destroyed. The

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<sup>137</sup> Carol Barash draws attention to the postlapsarian implications of this word in *English Women's Poetry* 279.

use of this symbol in conjunction with the reference to Arminda reminds the reader of the Cavalier concept of companionship in retreat. By aligning herself with this tradition Finch thus indicates a source of consolation, through friendship, during times of political dispossession. The reference to the speaker's desire for "unshaken Liberty" in the seventh line of the poem reiterates the political context of the poem. Any mention of this word carried unavoidable political connotations in this period and Finch's employment of the term here, as in the "Pindarick Poem *Upon the Hurricane*," implies a desire to wrest back the term from those at the opposite end of the political spectrum to herself, most notably Milton.

By revising the central Biblical myth on which women's exclusion and supposed inferiority was based, Finch seems to be creating a poem in which she can envisage an alternative both to Eve's fall and to the sin of the society which rebelled against a Stuart King for a second time. By linking Ardelia so closely to the symbol of the oak, and by showing the vine revive through the friendship of Arminda, Finch appears to be hinting at the possibility of a Stuart restoration. Yet despite such hints, "The Petition" remains a cautious work that reveals the essential passivity previously identified in relation to other poems in *Miscellany Poems*. The poem concludes with Ardelia seeking to detach herself from the idyll that she has sought to create:

Let me then, indulgent Fate!  
 Let me still, in my Retreat,  
 From all roving Thoughts be freed,  
 Or Aims, that may Contention breed;

Nor be my Endeavours led  
By Goods, that perish with the Dead! (258-63)

Transferring her focus from the material world to the concept of eternal life, Finch ends her poem with the following aspirations:

Give me then, in that Retreat,  
Give me, O indulgent Fate!  
For all Pleasures left behind,  
Contemplations of the Mind.  
Let the Fair, the Gay, the Vain  
Courtship and Applause obtain;  
Let th' Ambitious rule the Earth;  
Let the giddy Fool have Mirth;  
Give the Epicure his Dish,  
Ev'ry one their sev'ral Wish;  
Whilst my Transports I employ  
On that more extensive Joy,  
When all Heaven shall be survey'd  
From those Windings and that Shade (280-93)

Such sentiments go beyond the submission to God's will demonstrated in Finch's poem on the hurricane and the desire for stability reflected in "The Shepherd and the Calm" and "The Decision of Fortune". The conclusion to "The Petition" thus develops the philosophy of these texts in a way that results in a more complete detachment from events that the poet cannot control. In keeping with the nature of Finch's Anglicanism, a temperate enjoyment of the world's pleasures, as reflected in the simple yet abundant food available in the retreat, is not rejected. However, the focus of the text is now firmly upon a life beyond this world.

The second oft-anthologised “nature” poem featured in *Miscellany Poems*, “*A Nocturnal Reverie*,” builds upon these aspects of “The Petition” and pushes them towards a potential conclusion. This is fitting given that “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” is the final poem featured in the 1713 collection.<sup>138</sup> As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this poem is arguably Finch’s most famous work. A lyric formed from a single sentence and containing strong echoes of *The Merchant of Venice*, it describes a night landscape and the poetic speaker’s response to both this landscape and the prospect of the returning dawn. Essentially, “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” is a poem about what happens when an individual is actually situated, albeit temporarily, within the retreat imagined in “The Petition”. In the nocturnal landscape created in the poem the external world is excluded although once again the speaker has the company of a friend, “*Salisbury*” (19), probably Anne Tufton, the Countess of Salisbury.<sup>139</sup> However, the presentation of retreat in the “*Reverie*” differs considerably from that imagined in the previous poem. The nocturnal is a more melancholy work. Its atmosphere is characterised by “Gloom” (25) and, ominously, it features the song of “*Lonely Philomel*” (4). The poem is dominated by a sense of unease. This tone is created not simply through the evocation of melancholy but also through the fact that, although the external world is excluded from the retreat, both speaker and reader are aware that this exclusion will be broken with the return of day.

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<sup>138</sup> This poem is followed only by Finch’s play “*Aristomenes*”. There are clear political echoes in this dramatic work. Its plot revolves around the restoration of a deposed king and contrasts the behaviour of his son, who is loyal to his vows to his father, to that of the deposing army whose members are motivated solely by material gain.

<sup>139</sup> McGovern 110-112.

The entire second half of the poem is governed by this awareness which is initially introduced through a reference to animals: “Their shortliv’d Jubilee the Creatures keep,/Which but endures, whilst Tyrant-*Man* do’s sleep” (37-38). Finch thus establishes the idea of a circumscribed liberty that can only exist in retreat from the waking world. Directly after her description of the animals’ temporary freedom, Finch moves, in the closing lines of the poem, to a consideration of her poetic speaker’s own condition:

When a sedate Content the Spirit feels,  
 And no fierce Light disturb, whilst it reveals;  
 But silent Musings urge the Mind to seek  
 Something, too high for Syllables to speak;  
 Till the free Soul to a compos’dness charm’d,  
 Finding the Elements of Rage disarm’d,  
 O’er all below a solemn Quiet grown,  
 Joys in th’inferiour World, and thinks it like her Own:  
 In such a *Night* let Me abroad remain,  
 Till Morning breaks, and All’s confus’d again;  
 Our Cares, our Toils, our Clamours are renew’d,  
 Or Pleasures, seldom reach’d, again pursu’d. (39-50)

In these lines, Finch demonstrates the potential cost of the request for freedom from “roving Thoughts” made in “The Petition”. This latter poem ends with an expansive movement through which the speaker, although physically confined within imaginary “Windings, and ... Shade,” is able to experience “that more extensive Joy,/When all Heaven shall be survey’d”. By contrast, the speaker of “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” is left in a far more negative situation. Not merely has she denied herself the contemplation of higher things, she actually sees herself in her “sedate Content” as being allied with “th’inferiour World,” presumably of animals and plants. The phrase “thinks it like her

Own” implies that Finch as a poet does not concede that these two worlds are equivalent. Indeed, her Christianity would prevent her from so doing. However, her speaker appears to have reduced herself to this way of thinking through her attempt to curb her mind’s higher impulses. The final four lines of the poem emphasise that the retreat into the nocturnal landscape, whilst offering security, also involves sacrifice. The night eradicates “Cares, ... Toils, ... Clamours” but also “Pleasures”. The last line of the poem invokes the pain of aspiration, particularly when one’s goals are “seldom reach’d”. “*A Nocturnal Reverie*,” I would suggest, is thus ultimately a defeatist poem that reiterates and intensifies the submissiveness already identified in relation to other poems in the 1713 volume and that ends on a note of both helplessness and hopelessness with regard to this world.

What is notable about Finch’s presentation of her passive position in relation to both Providence and the external world in the poems considered above is that it appears to have little to do with her gender. The fables and the works inspired by the hurricane are not overtly gendered and even “The Petition” and “*A Nocturnal Reverie*,” which do bear traces of their author’s sex, do not explicitly connect desire to retreat from the world with this factor. The reference to “Tyrant-*Man*” in “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” works as an expression of the oppression of both women to men *and* animals to humankind. However, beyond this, gender does not appear to be an overt priority in this text. In “The Petition” the references to gender are far from passive. As we have seen, in this poem Finch by implication reworks one of the foundation stories of women’s supposed inferiority. This aspect of these poems draws attention to the fact that *Miscellany Poems*

as a whole is not preoccupied with issues of gender. The volume thus stands in marked contrast to Finch's manuscript collections where gender *is* a recurrent concern. This is not the place to consider Finch's larger treatment of gender. However, it is worth noting that both the folio and the octavo manuscripts feature works that draw attention to the fact that Finch is a woman writer and to the difficulties that this brings. The prose preface to the folio manuscript thus makes reference to the fact that Finch dared not show her writing at Court "where every one wou'd have made their remarks upon a Versifying Maid of Honour; and far the greater number with prejudice, if not contempt". Quoting her own poem, "The Introduction" Finch also remarks on her own:

sincere opinion, that when a Woman meddles with things of this nature,

So strong, th' opposing faction still appears,  
The hopes to thrive, can ne're outweigh the fears.

And, I am besides sensible, that Poetry has been of late so explain'd, the laws of itt being putt into familiar languages, that even those of my sex, (if they will be so presumptuous as to write) are very accountable for their transgressions against them.<sup>140</sup>

"The Introduction" itself, which is the first poem to appear in the folio manuscript, opens with some of Finch's most anthologised lines:

Did I, my lines intend for publick view,  
How many censures, wou'd their faults persue,  
Some wou'd, because such words they do affect,  
Cry they're insipid, empty, uncorrect.  
And many, have attain'd, dull and untaught

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<sup>140</sup> Folger MS 2, 3.

The name of Witt, only by finding fault.  
 True judges, might condemn their want of witt,  
 And all might say, they're by a Woman writt.  
 Alas! a woman that attempts the pen,  
 Such an intruder on the rights of Men,  
 Such a presumptuous Creature, is esteem'd,  
 The fault, can by no vertue be redeem'd (1-12)

The poem then proceeds to defend women's right to create and to engage in public life, citing Biblical precedents such as Deborah's role as Judge of Israel. However, it concludes with an awareness that prejudice against women writers will ultimately force the poet to accept a purely private audience:

Conscious of wants, Still with contracted wing  
 To some few freinds, and to thy sorrows sing;  
 For groves of Lawrell, thou wert never meant;  
 Be dark enough thy shades, and be thou there content (61-4)

The retreat to the "shades" in this poem in a sense echoes the retreat to passivity in the poems featured in the 1713 volume.

Finch's poem "The Apology" also draws attention to the difficulties faced by women writers. Observing that other women "play the fool" (2) in their own ways by using cosmetics and alcohol, Finch demands the right to pursue her own "pleasures" (4) by writing. The poem is bleak in its implication that such writing will be seen only as another form of feminine frailty: "Each Woman has her weaknesse, mine indeed/Is to write tho' hoplesse to succeed" (15). Yet the text ends with the argument that all writers,

as fallen human beings, are flawed and that, even in male authors' work, "There's less to be Applauded than forgiven" (20). The prose preface to the folio manuscript, "The Introduction" and "The Apology" were not published in Finch's lifetime and, as we have seen, Finch chose to open *Miscellany Poems* with "Mercury and the Elephant". The latter poem does make reference to the fact that its author is a woman:

*Or shou'd my Friends Excuses frame,  
And beg the Criticks not to blame  
(Since from a Female Hand it came)  
Defects in Judgment, or in Wit (29-32)*

However, the overall focus of this fable is not that women writers need special consideration but that *all* writers (and indeed people in general) tend to overestimate their own significance.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the passivity of many of the works featured in *Miscellany Poems* and which seems to be intimately related to Finch's Jacobitism and the sense of exclusion fostered by her position as a woman writer that is apparent in many of the manuscript texts. Such a distinction supports Ann Messenger's contention that Finch's decisions about which of her poems to publish appear to have been largely determined by the desire to keep her gender related works in manuscript.<sup>141</sup> However, as stated in the introduction to this chapter, what such observations do not

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<sup>141</sup> Messenger 35.

acknowledge is that, whilst cautious about expressing her gender politics in print, Finch was prepared to publish works that demonstrated her commitment to Jacobitism. “The Petition for an Absolute Retreat,” arguably the poem that most explicitly confronts gender issues in *Miscellany Poems*, is *also* a publicly political poem. Whilst the reference to Eve in this text, ambitious in its implications but expressed covertly, occurs over the course of just three lines, the explicit analogy that refers to the Revolution of 1688 extends over twenty-six lines. This single poem can thus be taken as an exemplar of the way in which Finch clearly felt more at ease in expressing her party political views than her gender politics to a public audience.

One of the contentions of this chapter is thus that a reassessment of Finch’s choices about what to publish and of the relationship between her manuscript and print poems is required. Whilst such a complete reassessment is beyond the scope of this chapter, I would suggest that an over concentration upon gender in our analysis of Finch’s writing can lead us to neglect the boldly political nature of much of her published work. Thus, I would also suggest that whilst Carol Barash is clearly correct to draw attention to the variations between the manuscript and printed versions of “Elegy on the Death of King James,” a focus upon such alterations without a wider consideration of the political nature of Finch’s published works tends to detract from the boldness of such works. As we have seen, Barash argues that the manuscript version of this elegy is less explicitly Jacobite than the printed version. However, whilst Finch may have taken measures to protect herself in the printed version of this work, what is surely equally significant is that she felt able to publish it at all.

Finch's political boldness is further emphasised once it is noted that although the manuscript collections contain works that are more explicit in their gender politics than those Finch chose to publish, they do *not*, with the exception of the elegy on James, contain works that are more overtly party political than those in *Miscellany Poems*. McGovern and Hinnant argue in their introduction to the Wellesley manuscript that the Jacobite allusions in some of these poems might be the reason why the collection was not published. They cite the examples of Finch's elegies to King James II's wife, Queen Mary, and also to members of his entourage such as his Groom of the Bedchamber, Colonel Baggot.<sup>142</sup> They also suggest that "several poems containing allusions to prominent political and military figures of the era" might have been seen as politically dangerous. Their examples include Finch's poem to Sir George Rooke, a Tory but nonetheless also a *supporter* of the Revolution of 1688, and the text, "Over the Picture of Major Pownoll" which may have been written for a Captain Pownell "who was arrested in 1692 as part of a plan for a French and Irish invasion of England". A poem on the gift of a portrait of Charles XII of Sweden to Lord Carteret is also seen as potentially problematic although no mention is made of Finch's decision to publish a poem about this monarch in her 1713 collection.<sup>143</sup> Other evidence cited is the use of the image of an "uprooted oak" in "Upon an improbable undertaking" despite the fact that similar imagery is used far more overtly in "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat".<sup>144</sup> The inclusion of the undeniably political text "Moderation or the Wolves and the sheep. A

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<sup>142</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xix-xx.

<sup>143</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xxi.

<sup>144</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xxii.

Fable” is also referred to by McGovern and Hinnant. This text, based on sources in Ogilby, L’Estrange and La Fontaine, tells the tale of sheep who are gulled by wolves into thinking the latter mean no harm.<sup>145</sup> As a result, the shepherds allow their dogs to sleep, only for the sheep to be savaged by the wolves. The fable concludes with the moral:

To better Teachers lend your ears  
 When next you have the power  
 A Wolf whatever he appears  
 Intends but to devour (29-32)

McGovern and Hinnant argue that this work is “devoid of specific political reference” but see it as functioning as a Jacobite text through its “images of violence and usurpation”.<sup>146</sup>

I would contend that the fable *could* be read as a warning against both Whig and Williamite politicians but also that this fable is no more boldly political than many of those published in *Miscellany Poems*. Thus, whilst I would suggest that McGovern and Hinnant are right to draw attention to the political allusions within many of the Wellesley poems, I would also argue that it is important to note that Finch had *already* published equally, if not more, political works. Likewise, with the exception of the elegy to James in the folio manuscript, I have been unable to identify a single poem in either the folio or the octavo manuscripts that is more politically daring than those found in Finch’s 1713 volume. We cannot know for certain why Finch chose not to publish the Wellesley texts. It is possible that she simply became more cautious due to age and illness. Despite such

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<sup>145</sup> See Ogilby’s “Of the Woolves and Sheep,” L’Estrange’s “A League betwixt the Wolves and the Sheep” and La Fontaine’s “The Wolves and the Sheep”.

<sup>146</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xxii-iii, xxiii.

uncertainty, however, it is simply not acceptable to argue that Finch's political allegiances are responsible for this decision when this argument is undermined by the overtly political nature of *Miscellany Poems*. Even taking into account that many of the Wellesley poems were written after the 1715 Jacobite rising and the subsequent government crackdown, the suggestion that Finch was fearful of expressing her political opinions in print seems too easy when one considers the content of her 1713 volume. I would suggest instead that it is more likely that the deeply personal aspect of much of the religious poetry in this manuscript, concerned with the poet's spiritual redemption, influenced Finch's decision not to publish. It therefore seems plausible that it was in fact the personal rather than the political aspects of the Wellesley collection that were responsible for it remaining in manuscript.

The final section of this chapter will examine this later religious poetry, contained in the Wellesley manuscript, and the ways in which these poems explore both the retreat from the world and the passivity that characterise the previously considered poems from *Miscellany Poems* and the sense of exclusion as a woman writer discussed in some of Finch's manuscript works such as "The Introduction" and "The Apology". I will argue that, through these poems, Finch combines such passivity and exclusion with her Christian faith and, by so doing, envisages a future in which her political beliefs and her commitment to her right to write are both vindicated.

Before considering the ways in which Finch achieves these ends it is necessary to characterise the nature of this late religious verse. In the introduction to their edition of the Wellesley manuscript, Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant consider the major features of this work. One of the foremost of these is that these poems are:

specifically non-millenarian: the implicit contrast between heaven and earth focuses not on the possible appearance of the Kingdom of God on earth but on Finch's anticipation of bliss in heaven as a recompense for having endured the bitter ashes of defeat for Christ's sake.<sup>147</sup>

McGovern and Hinnant also identify the importance of passivity in relation to Finch's religious writing and her Jacobite beliefs yet fail to connect this with her broader body of work:

contemplation ... helps to validate her [Finch's] uniquely resigned stance towards the world's political hypocrisy. Finch's pessimistic view of the England of the post-Glorious Revolution does not take the form ... of an active Jacobite resistance but of a reluctant withdrawal – a strategic withdrawal carried out in the awareness that the injustice that prompted it can only be redressed in another world.<sup>148</sup>

I would suggest that this focus upon the afterlife is the logical extension of the passivity and the impulse to retreat manifest in many of the texts that appear in *Miscellany Poems*. Finch's commitment to passive obedience, which is demonstrated in these poems, means

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<sup>147</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xxviii.

<sup>148</sup> McGovern and Hinnant xxix.

that she cannot envisage confronting her political opponents in this world. Heaven, however, offers the hope of an existence in which Finch will be enabled to triumph over such opponents whilst maintaining strict obedience to God's will.

Across the course of the Wellesley manuscript, Finch thus reverts continuously to the idea that true happiness can only be found after death. With regard to this theme it is therefore significant that one of the longest poems in the collection is "The last chapter of Ecclesiastes Paraphras'd". Finch's source for this poem is, of course, well known for its emphasis upon the vanity of worldly concerns.<sup>149</sup> In lines that are not based upon her source, Finch develops the idea that this world cannot provide lasting fulfilment previously explored in "The Petition for an Absolute Retreat" and "*A Nocturnal Reverie*". In her paraphrase Finch suggests that God:

... bids thee look for something to be found,  
Which nature yet imperfect, cannot bear,  
In worlds remote, in a sublimer sphere,  
Nor thirst for pleasures, till instated there (180-3)

Such sentiments are reiterated in another Wellesley manuscript poem, "An Aspiration," where, addressing God, Finch signals her rejection of earthly concerns:

All my hopes on thee I place  
Faithfull are thy words of grace

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<sup>149</sup> Another text in *Miscellany Poems*, "All is Vanity," deals with similar themes.

Nor intend to court the times  
For profits intermixt with crimes (11-14)

Such rejection is intimately connected to the idea of submission that is an essential aspect of passive obedience: "Creator to thy hands Divine/See thy creature I resign" (9-10).

Similar preoccupations are visible in "The happynesse of a departed Soul" where Finch adopts the conventional Christian image of the earth as a "prison" (3) from which the soul longs to be freed: "Blest is the Soul which loos'd from sordid Earth/Soars to the Mansions of her Heavenly birth" (1-2). This poem also introduces the idea, developed more fully in other Wellesley texts, that Finch's own literary talent will reach its apotheosis in the afterlife: "My self might utter one of Sion's songs/To thee Lord Jesus tune my harp and heart/With reverence due and true Poetick art" (48-50). However, it is in the two poems "A Supplication for the joys of Heaven" and "A Contemplation" that the theme of a compensatory afterlife is explored most completely. In effect, these two works fulfil a similar function in the Wellesley manuscript to that performed by "*A Nocturnal Reverie*" in *Miscellany Poems*. Just as the latter poem imagines life in the retreat called for in "The Petition," so the manuscript texts seek to represent the afterlife which Finch longs for in the paraphrase of Ecclesiastes and "An Aspiration" and which she glimpses briefly in "The happynesse of a departed Soul".

In "A Supplication" Finch presents heaven as the prize awarded to those who have struggled faithfully on earth and thus as "the safe Goal of our well ended race" (12). In

keeping with orthodox Christian belief, eternal life is the objective to which earthly existence should be directed. Those who achieve this aim are those who prioritise their spiritual over their physical welfare:

... Men refin'd from every gross allay  
 Who taught the Flesh the Spirit to obey  
 And keeping late futurity in view  
 Do now possess what long they did persue (27-30)

Less conventional, however, is the way in which Finch individualises her representation of heaven in order to enable it to encompass her own literary aspirations. Reiterating the desire that her literary talent achieve fulfilment expressed in “The happynesse of a departed Soul,” Finch thus imagines herself achieving glory as a poet:

My low Poetick tendency be rais'd  
 Till the bestower worthily is prais'd  
 Till Dryden's numbers for Cecilia's feast  
 Which sooth depress inflame and shake the breast  
 Vary the passions with each varying line  
 Allow'd below all others to outshine  
 Shall yeild to those above shall yeild to mine  
 In sound in sense in emphasis Divine  
 Stupendious are the heights to which they rise  
 Whose anthems match the musick of the skies (43-52)

Starting with a humility trope through which Finch asks for her own verse to be “rais'd” in the name of God's glory, these lines swiftly move towards a far more ambitious conception of their author's potential. Identifying the most celebrated poetry she can conceive of, Dryden's “A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687”, Finch fantasises about a

time in which these shall be considered inferior to her own work.<sup>150</sup> By claiming that God is the originator or “bestower” of her verse, Finch is able to imagine herself achieving poetic glory. The speaker of “The Petition for an Absolute Retreat,” who begs to be released “From all roving Thoughts” and also from “Aims, that may Contention breed,” imagines only a mental focus upon heaven whilst still living in this world. The speaker of “*A Nocturnal Reverie*” envisages only the thwarting of her earthly aspirations with the return of day. However, the speaker of “A Supplication” is able imaginatively to remove herself from such worldly constraints and thus to overcome them.

Finch achieves such resolution not simply by projecting her ambitions onto an afterlife but also by defining herself not as an individual but as part of a community that is both literary and political. In the closing section of “A Supplication” Finch asks to join both “With Poets who supernal voices raise,” (57) and also:

With the Heroick Spirits of the brave  
 Who durst be true when threaten'd with the Grave  
 And when from evil in triumphant sway  
 Who e'er departed made himself a prey  
 To sanguine perils to penurious care  
 To scanty cloathing and precarious fare  
 To lingring solitude exhausting thoughts  
 Unsuccour'd losses and imputed faults  
 With these let me be join'd when Heaven reveals  
 The judgment which admits of no appeals (61-70)

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<sup>150</sup> Finch's choice of this work by Dryden may well have been politically motivated. In his commentary on Dryden's poem Earl Miner observes that, “espousal of music for social and religious occasions [as in Dryden's text] was commonly a sign of royalist, high Anglican sympathies,” *The Works of John Dryden: Poems 1685-1692*, ed. Earl Miner and Vinton A. Dearing, vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 460.

Although this suffering group is not identified, the references to opposition to a power that holds “triumphant sway” combined with the mention of poverty and exclusion and with Finch’s known political sympathies all suggest that it is composed of Jacobites and nonjurors. By envisaging the triumph of this dispossessed group in heaven, Finch is thus able to disregard the problems caused by commitment to passive obedience on earth. Action, as both a woman with literary ambitions and as a member of a group paralysed by dependence on divine will, can be deferred with good conscience if one is secure in the belief that God will ensure one is rewarded after death. The model of Jacobite passivity that Knoppers argues was disabling in that “it provided no rationale for action or call to arms,” in this poem becomes ironically enabling for Finch as it is through such passive submission to God’s will that the most valuable prizes are achieved.<sup>151</sup>

The poem “A Contemplation” uses this model even more explicitly. In this text Finch imagines heaven as a place “Where none usurps anothers Lands” (15). This allusion surely refers to both the Cavaliers who lost their estates during the Civil Wars and the Jacobites and nonjurors who were dispossessed under William III. In the twelfth stanza Finch builds on this allusion by making the equation between political suffering and religious justification overt:

With Christ’s there Charles’s Crown shall meet  
Which Martirdom adorns

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<sup>151</sup> Lunger Knoppers 264.

And prostrate lye beneath his feet  
 My Coronet of Thorns (45-8)<sup>152</sup>

The central royalist trope of the martyred Charles here allows Finch the opportunity to express her own political and religious allegiance. Although a dependence upon the essentially passive image of martyrdom many have caused problems for those who sought to bring about the political success of the Jacobite cause, it provides Finch with an ideal means of expressing fealty. Just as Charles's martyrdom wins him a heavenly crown, so Finch's political loyalty to the Stuarts and her symbolic laying of her Countess's coronet at Christ's feet in a supreme act of passive obedience will win her eternal life.

In the following stanza, Finch extends the scope of her imagined justification to include the heavenly redress of her own husband's sufferings:

The Lord to whom my life is joyn'd  
 For Conscience here opprest  
 Shall there full retribution find  
 And none his Claimes molest (49-52)

Yet it is not only her immediate family who are represented as transfigured and vindicated in the afterlife. In the closing section of the poem Finch describes the spiritual

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<sup>152</sup> These lines would surely have reminded Finch's readers of William Marshall's famous frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike* (1649). This frontispiece showed Charles positioned in relation to an earthly crown, a crown of thorns and a heavenly crown.

glorification of her associate Lady Margaret Tufton, sister of the Anne Tufton, Countess of Salisbury, who was mentioned in "*A Nocturnal Reverie*". Margaret Tufton, states Finch, is "For piety renown'd" (66) and will thus "in transcending Virtues Shine/And Equally be Crown'd" (67-8). In the poem, Tufton's philanthropy is used by Finch as an exemplar of the laudable use of wealth in contrast to the materialistic extravagance of Cardinal Wolsey and the more contemporary example of the Whiggish Marlborough. This focus upon Tufton might appear to sit oddly within a poem that begins, as its title suggests, as a contemplation of heaven rather than a coterie piece. Yet the reference to her friend enables Finch to establish a similar sense of community in this work as in "*A Supplication*". The implication of this poem is thus that Finch, her family and friends, both political and personal, will be rewarded in heaven for their sufferings on earth. The allusion to a Tufton in both this poem and "*A Nocturnal Reverie*" also emphasises, intentionally or otherwise, the contrast between the earth-bound speaker of the published poem and the hoped for spiritual liberation of the speaker of the manuscript work.

The later religious poetry, particularly "*A Supplication for the joys of Heaven*" and "*A Contemplation*," thus enables Finch to vindicate the passivity that characterises so much of her work and which is so prominent a feature of *Miscellany Poems*. More than this, such poems also reveal the way in which Finch was finally able to present this passivity, in the form of submission to God's will, in a manner that demonstrated that it was through such passivity that she believed she would ultimately be able to achieve both political and literary rewards.

Before concluding my discussion of Finch's religious poetry, I would like to contrast her approach to a compensatory afterlife to that developed in the critically overlooked poetry of Mary Astell (1666-1731). Astell provides a useful counterpart to Finch for several reasons. A fellow Jacobite and nonjuror, Astell was a contemporary of Finch's. Like Finch, Astell also explored the relationship between political and gender-based exclusion and authorship. Astell's poetry thus provides a lens through which to gain a greater insight into the distinguishing features of Finch's poetry on these themes. Astell is, of course, best known as a writer of prose works concerned with philosophical and theological issues and as one of the first "feminists" in England. However, what is less well known is that Astell was also the author of a small volume of poetry.<sup>153</sup> In 1689 Astell addressed her volume to William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, apparently as a thanks offering for the financial assistance and introductions he had provided her with shortly after her arrival in London. Archbishop Sancroft was an appropriate figure for Astell to approach. In her 1986 biography of Astell, Ruth Perry describes how Sancroft was noted for his charitable works and also how, as one of the leading nonjuring clergy, he was an individual whom Astell admired and respected. The volume itself contains just twelve poems and remained unpublished until reproduced as an appendix to Perry's work.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poet 154, fols. 50r-97v.

<sup>154</sup> The text of this manuscript is reproduced in Ruth Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), Appendix D. See Perry 66-69 for further information about the manuscript volume. All quotations have been checked against the original manuscript. For ease of reference, citations will be given for both the manuscript and the Perry appendix.

Unsurprisingly, given the dedicatee, the poems in Astell's collection all address religious concerns. However, the single idea that Astell returns to most consistently is the worthlessness of earthly rewards and the allied belief that those who suffer in this life will achieve recompense in heaven. Like Finch, Astell thus explores the notion of a compensatory afterlife that will redress the wrongs she experiences in this world. Yet Astell's work, unlike Finch's, uses such an imagined afterlife actively to counter the disadvantages faced by the poet in her earthly incarnation. Whereas Finch ultimately appears passively to accept the idea that happiness is only possible in heaven, Astell uses her conviction that she will be redeemed to assert her superiority to all those worldly "blessings" that she is denied. Whilst Finch is thus forced to a position in which vindication must be deferred, Astell's stance leads her to a more militant assertion of her own position in this world.

Astell's compensatory approach to earthly unhappiness is introduced in the very first poem in the collection, "The Invitation" (fol. 52r-v, Perry 401-2). In this poem the speaker finds comfort through the knowledge that heaven will provide a refuge in which worldly troubles are transformed into joy: "Then he who never lets us sigh in vain,/Will turn to brightest Joy thy Greif & pain" (fol. 52r, Perry 402). More significantly, in the first stanza of this poem, Astell also validates her own ambitions by merging her literary with her religious aspirations:

Come Muse, and leave those wings that soar  
No further than an Earthly flight,

Let us the GOD of Heav'n implore,  
 And tune our Notes Aetherial height;  
 Heav'n thy Parnassus be, thence learn thy Song,  
 Thy Saviour's side shall be thy Helicon. (fol. 52r, Perry 401)

In "The Invitation" Astell therefore links her own literary fame to both a heavenly muse and also to Christ's passion:

His Crown of thorns shall be thy bays,  
 His Cross shall be thy shady Grove.  
 Which will at last be to a Kingdom blown,  
 And thy sharp bays will sprout into a Crown (fol. 52r-v, Perry 402)

The initial text in her volume thus offers a presentation of the afterlife that combines a conventional view of an "Eternal Rest" with a far more active and aspirational fulfilment of the poet's ambitions – a Muse that inspires a merely "Earthly flight" is of no interest to Astell, her sights are set on an "AETHERIAL height" (fol. 52r, Perry 401).

In her second poem, "In emulation of M<sup>r</sup>. Cowleys Poem call'd the Motto page I" (fols. 52v-53r, Perry 402-3), Astell develops the links between her creative and her religious impulses and moves towards a rejection of the idea of fame. In this poem, Astell dismisses those qualities that bring earthly renown – wealth, greatness, beauty, wit and fame – yet she does so in a way that inverts the fact that she feels excluded from the possession of such qualities. Instead of arguing simply that she will be recompensed for such exclusion in heaven, Astell reverts to the idea of her own "Ambition" that she has

introduced in “The Invitation” and rejects as beneath her the very assets she feels deprived of: “These cannot my Ambition please,/My high born Soul shall never stoop to these” (fol. 52v, Perry 402). Such sentiments distinguish Astell from Finch. Whereas Finch’s compensatory view of heaven leads her to adopt a passive position of submission to God’s will, Astell’s stance is characterised by the pride of an individual who refuses to be valued by standards that she herself rejects. Yet such self-assertion is problematic. Astell rejects “the common way” of worldly ambition that she is barred from on earth by her “Nature” or sex yet she is also unable to emulate the Christian figures she admires (fol. 53r, Perry 403). The speaker is aware that she cannot “be a Peter or a Paul”. The only female role model she is able to identify is Mary, whose “Priviledge ...[she] cannot wish,” a decidedly ambiguous phrase which implies both a sense of her own unworthiness and a more straightforward disinclination for such a function (fol. 53r, Perry 403). The poem ends on a distinctly ambivalent note with the speaker declaring, “And tho I want a Persecuting Fire,/I’le be at lest a Martyr in desire” (fol. 53r, Perry 403). The solution that the speaker finds to her predicament may be theologically acceptable yet one is left wondering whether it is truly satisfying. The fact that the poem ends with the word “desire” leaves the reader less with a sense of the speaker’s submission to God’s will than with an awareness of her thwarted wishes and potential.

In the poem “Ambition” (fols. 54v-55r, Perry 405) Astell returns to the idea that she is superior to those who seek earthly success yet reverses the dynamic of the poem written in emulation of Cowley. Whereas the latter poem ends on a note of regret, “Ambition” is distinctly triumphant in tone:

Vile Greatness! I disdain to bow to thee,  
 Thou are below ev'n lowly me,  
 I wou'd no Fame, no Titles have,  
 And no more Land than what will make a grave,  
 I scorn to weep for Worlds, may I but reign  
 And Empire o're my self obtain,  
 In Caesars throne I'de not sit down,  
 Nor wou'd I stoop for Alexanders Crown (fol. 54v, Perry 405)

Despite the reference to “lowly me” this poem is spoken in the voice of an individual with a profound sense of self-worth. Perfecting the manoeuvre that enables her to reject the very earthly rewards she may not possess, this text positions the speaker as one who, whilst excluded from “Fame,” “Titles,” “Land” and “Empire,” is simultaneously greater than the greatness she rejects. The third stanza extends such self-reliance, essentially rendering Astell impervious to the whims of critics and establishing her as the primary judge of her own work:

If I write sense no matter what they say,  
 Whither they call it dull, or pay  
 A rev'rence such as Virgil claims,  
 Their breath's infectious, I have higher aims (fol. 55r, Perry 405)

Having already established in her poem in emulation of Cowley that it is spiritual rather than earthly achievement that is of true value, Astell continues to explore this idea in the final two stanzas of “Ambition”. The contrast between those “Mean spirited men” (fol. 55r, Perry 405) who seek worthless fame and her firm assertion in the first stanza that women are possessed of the feature that is essential for true glory – a soul – enables

Astell to finally dispose of the idea that her sex restricts her. Indeed her gender, which implicitly bars her from the possession of many forms of earthly power, in itself seems to become an aid in her quest for “a Crown of Glory”:

This I'me Ambitious of, no pains will spare  
 To have a higher Mansion there,  
 Where all are Kings, here let me be,  
 Great O my GOD, Great in Humilitie (fol. 55r, Perry 405)

These lines are paradoxical in more ways than are implied simply by the coupling of two seemingly opposite qualities. The very humility that the speaker identifies as the route to true glory is barely in evidence in a poem that is committed to exposing her “scorn” for the world and her own “higher aims”. Such a paradox draws attention to the complexity of the situation from which Astell’s speaker seeks to free herself. As a clearly ambitious individual she is forced to sublimate her ambition into terms that coincide with both earthly possibilities and Christian values, yet this very sublimation simultaneously aggrandizes her.

The poem “Heaven” (fols. 75r-79v, Perry 429-435) enables Astell’s recurrent theme of the worthlessness of earthly rewards to reach its apotheosis:

... to its native place my Soul aspires,  
 And something more than Earth desires,

Heav'n only can it's vast Ambition fill,  
 And Heav'n alone must exercise my mind and quill (fol. 75v, Perry 430)

In these lines, Astell returns to the desire she expressed in the opening lines of “The Invitation” that her Muse should help her reach an “AEtherial height”. In “Heaven,” far from being “a poor simple Girl” (fol. 75r, Perry 429) as she claims in that text, the speaker has achieved the confidence to view heaven not as the “Eternal Rest” of the earlier poem, but as the only state that can fulfil her own “vast Ambition”.

The final poem in the volume, “The Thanksgiving” (fols. 90v-93r, Perry 449-453), synthesizes Astell’s belief that worldly gifts are a distraction from the love of God with a reiteration of the idea that earthly suffering is in fact a blessing as it focuses the mind on spiritual redemption. The speaker emphasises her own unworthiness in relation to God’s bounty yet also underlines her confidence in God’s love for her. The features that more worldly individuals might perceive as lacking from her life are transmuted into signs of God’s favour. Even her “Friendless” (fol. 92r, Perry 451) state is a blessing as it is a sign that God has jealously “engross’d” (fol. 92v, Perry 452) all of her heart. The speaker is ultimately shown as vindicated in relation to those who pity her:

From my secure and humble seat,  
 I view the ruins of the Great.  
 And dare look back on my expired days,  
 To my low state there needs no shameful ways. (fol. 91v, Perry 451)

The inversion of worldly hierarchies is thus complete and Astell concludes her volume with a poem in which her speaker marks herself out as an individual beloved of God and “secure” in her dismissal of those who possess the earthly gifts she lacks.

Whilst both Astell and Finch use the concept of a compensatory afterlife as a means of coping with difficult external circumstances, the contrasting tones of their poetry tells us much about their differing approaches to worldly disappointment. Although Astell undoubtedly perceives heaven as the ultimate goal of both her life and verse, she also attempts to assert the dignity and vindication of her poetic speaker whilst she is still on earth. For Finch, the only hope of such vindication lies far in the future after death. Finch also merges her own ultimate fulfilment with those of the communities to which she belonged. She thus imagines her own literary triumph in “A Supplication for the joys of Heaven,” the same poem in which she visualises the vindication of the dispossessed Jacobites. The keen sense of individualism and self-assertion that is so apparent in Astell’s poems is, I would suggest, absent in Finch’s religious writing.

Finch’s poem “A Contemplation” makes the differences between the two authors even more apparent. The verbal echoes between this work and Astell’s “The Invitation” are remarkable. Like Astell’s poem, Finch’s text opens with a decision to raise her thoughts heavenward. However, unlike Astell, Finch feels the need to excuse and justify her ambitious thoughts:

Indulg'd by ev'ry active thought  
 When upwards they wou'd fly  
 Nor can Ambition be a fault  
 If plac'd above the sky

When humbled first we meekly crave  
 Remission for the past  
 We from the fore-tasts which we have  
 May guesse our Joys at last (1-8)

Whereas Finch's lines emphasise her supplication, Astell's reveal her sense of personal entitlement. Rejecting a mere "Earthly flight" Astell aspires to "tune our Notes AEtherial Height".

There are also similarities between the third stanza of Astell's poem and the fifth stanza of Finch's work. Astell envisages God calling her to "Wipe thy blind eyes dark'ned with tears" (fol. 52r, Perry 402) whilst Finch views heaven as a sphere in which "tears are wip'd from clouded Eyes" (19). For Astell, God "never lets us sigh in vain" (fol. 52r, Perry 402) whilst for Finch, the afterlife ensures that "Sighs for ever cease" (20).

However, the closest parallel between the texts is also the one that most clearly illustrates the differences in tone between the two poems. In the final stanza of "The Invitation" Astell visualizes her praise of God as resulting in her attainment of both "bays" and a "Crown" of spiritual glory. Finch by contrast imagines prostrating herself beneath the feet of both Christ and Charles I and crowns herself, not with bays and glory, but with thorns.

A comparison of Astell's to Finch's poetry thus enables the reader to gain a clearer perspective on the passivity of the latter. In this chapter I have illustrated the ways in which Finch's published works are more politically assertive than previously acknowledged and have argued that a too-exclusive focus upon gender obscures this fact. However, at the core of those beliefs that Finch felt able to express in print, lies a submissiveness to God's will and to external circumstances that is the inevitable result of a Jacobitism founded on notions of passive obedience. The example of the poetry written by fellow Jacobite Mary Astell demonstrates that a belief in a compensatory afterlife is compatible with self-assertion in this world. Finch's poetry, by contrast, imbues an already passive political stance with a further layer of personal diffidence. The result is a complex body of work dominated by divergent impulses towards political expression and submission.

Towards the end of her life Finch appears to have resolved the issues of political failure and dispossession as a woman writer that recur in so much of her verse. However, the resolution she achieves, which is demonstrated in her later religious verse, is intensely personal as it is intimately connected to her hopes for her own spiritual salvation. I would suggest that the deeply private nature of such verse, rather than the political connotations of the Wellesley manuscript as a whole, is the most likely reason that these works remained unpublished. The fact that such works did remain in manuscript should not detract from the fact that they are the culmination of a broader body of writing in which Finch had shown that she was not afraid to engage with political issues in public, as is demonstrated by her publication of *Miscellany Poems*. Jacobitism, I would suggest,

was therefore central to Finch's authorial identity as it gave her the impetus to publish her most political works and thus, at least temporarily, to overcome the anxieties she felt about her status as a woman who wrote.

## Chapter Two

### “A History Reduc’d into Patches”: Jane Barker’s Prose Fictions

Jane Barker (1652-1732), poet, novelist and Jacobite polemicist, is one of the early modern women writers who have been “rediscovered” and rescued from almost total oblivion in the past two decades. In 1997 many of her poems and three of her novels appeared in an edition edited by Carol Shiner Wilson and in the year 2000 she became the subject of a single author study by Kathryn King.<sup>1</sup> The body of critical work concerned with Barker, whilst still small, is thus steadily expanding. Considerable research into Barker’s biography has also been undertaken, primarily by Kathryn King, Jeslyn Medoff and Carol Shiner Wilson.<sup>2</sup> As a result, we now possess a substantial amount of information about Barker’s life.

Born in Northamptonshire, Barker lived for eighty years during which time she published both novels and poetry and also produced coterie verse. She appears to have attended a girls’ school in Putney but also to have been a committed autodidact who read extensively in the fields of poetry, classics and medicine.<sup>3</sup> Barker never married and frequently praised the single life in both prose and verse. At some point

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Barker, *The Galesia Trilogy and Selected Manuscript Poems*, ed. Carol Shiner Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Kathryn King, *Jane Barker, Exile: A Literary Career 1675-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). See King, *Exile* 2, for a brief discussion of the disappearance of Barker’s writing from public view after her death.

<sup>2</sup> Kathryn King and Jeslyn Medoff, “Jane Barker (1652-1732) and Her Life: The Documentary Record,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 21.3 (1997): 16-38; Carol Shiner Wilson, Introduction, *The Galesia Trilogy*; King, *Exile*. For the biographical information in this chapter I am particularly indebted to the last of these sources.

<sup>3</sup> Barker’s novel *Love Intrigues, or, the History of the Amours of Bosvil and Galesia, As Related to Lucasia, in St. Germain’s Garden* (London: E. Curll and C. Crownfield, 1713) appears to be strongly autobiographical. Barker’s brother Edward, who studied at Oxford, is portrayed in her novel as assisting Barker’s fictional alter ego, Galesia, in her studies. Edward’s death shortly after he received his MA in 1675 seems to have affected Barker very deeply and her sorrow at his loss recurs as a theme in both her poetry and her prose writings. At some point, probably in the 1670s, Barker also established friendships with a group of students at Cambridge with whom she exchanged coterie verse (King, *Exile* 23). In her novel *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies; or, Love and Virtue Recommended* (London: E. Curll and T. Payne, 1723), Barker describes this supportive community of friends and shows Galesia receiving books and pamphlets from these students.

during the first half of the 1680s and after the death of her father Barker moved to London. There, she published her first book, *Poetical Recreations*, in 1687.<sup>4</sup> The events of Barker's life in the second half of the 1680s are obscure. However, the evidence of her manuscript poems suggests that she converted to Roman Catholicism under the influence of the Benedictines at some point during this decade. After the Revolution of 1688 Barker followed the exiled Stuart court to France. Living in St-Germain-en-Laye, Barker continued to work on her collection of manuscript poems now known as the Magdalen Manuscript.<sup>5</sup> In 1704 Barker returned to Wilsthorp in Lincolnshire, where she had originally moved with her family in 1662, and managed a farm whose leasehold she had inherited several years before.<sup>6</sup> Despite her return to England Barker appears to have remained unstintingly loyal to the Jacobite cause. Indeed, in 1718 Barker wrote to James Butler, second duke of Ormonde, encouraging him to lead a Jacobite invasion of England.<sup>7</sup>

The first decades of the eighteenth century also saw the publication of Barker's novels. *Love Intrigues, or, the History of the Amours of Bosvil and Galesia* appeared in 1713. This was followed in 1715 by *Exilius; or, The Banish'd Roman*. In 1718 Barker followed these two novels with a non-fiction text, a translation of a French devotional work entitled *The Christian Pilgrimage*. In the 1720s Barker published her two "patchwork" narratives: *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies; or, Love and*

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<sup>4</sup> *Poetical Recreations: Consisting of Original Poems, Songs, Odes, & c. With Several New Translations. In Two Parts* (London: Benjamin Crayle, 1688). Kathryn King has discovered that although the title page of this work bears the date 1688, the volume was actually on sale by December 1687. This indicates that the work was not written in response to the Revolution of 1688 as some critics have supposed (King, *Exile* 31).

<sup>5</sup> Oxford, Magdalen College Library, MS 343. See Kathryn King, *The Poems of Jane Barker: The Magdalen Manuscript* (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1998) for further information. See King, *Exile* 112-14 for manuscript evidence of Barker's conversion.

<sup>6</sup> King, *Exile* 13.

<sup>7</sup> London, British Library, Stowe MS 232, Letter of 19 March 1718. This BL holding contains a variety of Jacobite correspondence.

*Virtue Recommended* (1723) and *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen; Design'd for the Farther Entertainment of the Ladies* (1726). Both of these novels feature the character of Galesia, who had previously appeared in both *Love Intrigues* and *Poetical Recreations*. Of these five works, all but *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* were published by the notorious Edmund Curll.<sup>8</sup>

Barker's movements during these years are somewhat elusive and it is possible that she returned to France between the publication of *The Christian Pilgrimage* and *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*. However, it does seem certain that she left England for France once more in 1727.<sup>9</sup> In 1730, following an apparently miraculous cure from a tumour, Barker also became involved in a renewed campaign to have James II canonised. The campaign ended in failure and Barker died within two years of this date.<sup>10</sup> She was buried in St. Germain.

As can be seen from this brief summary, Barker's life was a complex one. Issues of gender, politics and religion intersected in both her life and work and it is this intersection that makes her such an interesting figure. However, I would suggest that, in the move towards gaining recognition for Barker, there is a possibility that her complexity is being overlooked. In Chapter One I considered the ways in which an intense focus upon issues of gender in the work of Anne Finch is limiting our understanding of the political nature of much of her work. In this chapter I will argue

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<sup>8</sup> *Exilius; or, The Banish'd Roman: A New Romance: In Two Parts, Written after the Manner of Telemachus* (London: E. Curll, 1715); *The Christian Pilgrimage; or, A Companion for the Holy Season of Lent* (London: E. Curll and C. Rivington, 1718); *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen; Design'd for the Farther Entertainment of the Ladies* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1726). Kathryn King points out that *Bosvil and Galesia* was the first novel published by Curll (*Exile* 189).

<sup>9</sup> King, *Exile* 159. Wilson, *The Galesia Trilogy* xxxi.

<sup>10</sup> King, *Exile* 103-8.

that, in a similar manner, the desire to make Barker's work more visible may in itself have led to premature and constricting attempts to categorize her writing. As with Anne Finch, the initial impetus for work on Barker came from feminist critics. As a result, the first scholarship concerned with Barker tended to focus on issues of gender. One of the earliest articles on this author, written by Jane Spencer, thus explored the ways in which she sought "to define herself as a woman and a writer". The very title of this article, "Creating the Woman Writer: The Autobiographical Works of Jane Barker," with its emphasis upon gender and autobiography, makes it clear that the first of these designations is as important as the second. Although Spencer acknowledges the importance of both religion and politics to Barker's life and work, such issues are marginalised in this article. Not only is Barker's gender identity viewed as central, it is also presented in extremely narrow terms. Spencer writes that, "Jane Barker was one of the earliest 'respectable' women novelists" and aligns her clearly with the tradition of Katherine Philips as opposed to Aphra Behn.<sup>11</sup> As I will demonstrate, such descriptions have had a powerful and misleading effect upon subsequent interpretations of Barker's work.

Thirteen years after Spencer's initial article on Barker, Carol Barash sought to extend our understanding of Barker's work by drawing greater attention to the political aspects of the texts. Unfortunately, Barash's analysis subjugated Barker's politics to her own gender-based preoccupation with the *femme forte*.<sup>12</sup> This resulted in a focus upon the figure of Mary of Modena and upon female relationships that exaggerated

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<sup>11</sup> Jane Spencer, "Creating the Woman Writer: The Autobiographical Works of Jane Barker," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 2.2 (1983): 165-81 (166, 179).

<sup>12</sup> Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

their significance in Barker's work and thus distorted the nature of her writing.<sup>13</sup>

The late 1980s and 1990s saw moves to contextualize Barker's work in ways which drew attention to the wide variety of the author's preoccupations, most notably with religion and politics. Such contextualisation viewed gender as existing alongside such concerns but not dominating them. The 1988 anthology, *Kissing the Rod*, emphasized the importance of both religion and politics in its headnote on Barker and the three poems by this author reproduced in this volume focus on Catholicism and medical study as well as upon gender politics.<sup>14</sup> Even more significantly, Carol Shiner Wilson's 1997 edition contained an introduction that placed Barker within her literary, historical and political contexts as well as considering her as a "woman writer". Wilson's edition not only reproduced Barker's three novels but also a variety of her manuscript poems, written during the author's exile in St. Germain. Several of these poems point the reader towards Barker's political interests through their focus upon the exiled Stuart monarchs and their court.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, even with such developments, the religious and political aspects of Barker's work remained under explored. Wilson's edition, despite providing an excellent introduction to Barker, could clearly only hint at the possibilities for future study in these areas within the remit of a thirty page introduction. As a result, in her 2000

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<sup>13</sup> See King, *Exile* 130-1 for a detailed rebuttal of Barash's argument.

<sup>14</sup> Germaine Greer, Jeslyn Medoff, Melinda Sansone and Susan Hastings, eds., *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse* (London: Virago, 1988) 354-369. The three poems anthologised are "Fidelia arguing with her self on the difficulty of finding the true Religion," "A Virgin life," and "She beginning to study phisick, takes her leave of poetry, so falls into a long degression on anatomy".

<sup>15</sup> Of particular interest in this respect are "To His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on His birth day 1689: or 99," "To Her Majesty the Queen, on the Kings going to Callis this carnival 1696," "The Miseries of St. Germain, writ at the time of the pestilence and famin, which reign'd in the years, 1694 et 95," and "At the sight of the body of Our late gracious sovereign Lord King James 2d As it lyes at the English Monks".

study, Kathryn King argued that issues of gender still predominated in interpretations of Barker's work and that such a situation served to falsify our perceptions of this author. King warned:

... if this study teaches us anything it is that feminocentric paradigms conceal as much as they reveal and, for historically minded readers, may impose unacceptable distortions. By examining Barker's religious and political affiliations, her immersion in a mixed-gender literary manuscript culture, her continuities with so-called 'male literary traditions' as well as with other women writers, her identifications with universities, learned men, and academic medicine, and her unfolding loyalties to the modern market-place of print, we have seen some of the ways she lived and wrote as part of her own time and place. Indeed, an account of her multiple engagements with early modern culture offers, if not a rebuke, at least a challenge to treatments that assign women to a private feminine sphere and women writers to feminocentric lines of ascent – constructs which, for this period anyway, seem more and more the products of our own separatist imaginings.<sup>16</sup>

My own readings of Barker's work fully support King's conclusions. To prioritise gender concerns over all others in her work seems to inflict precisely the "unacceptable distortions" King laments. Barker, unfortunately, appears to be particularly vulnerable to such distortion. For the reason that they include stories ostensibly concerned with love, courtship and seduction Barker's first published novel, *Love Intrigues*, her two "Patchwork Narratives" and also *Exilius* have been analysed predominantly in terms of gender relationships. In King's words, "existing approaches ... tend to concentrate upon gender-and-genres themes in relation to feminist paradigms of female authorship or to pursue the meanings of Barker's autobiographical self-inscriptions".<sup>17</sup> Like King, I in no way wish to downplay the significance of such interpretations. However, also like King, I wish to suggest that

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<sup>16</sup> King, *Exile* 233.

<sup>17</sup> King, *Exile* 147.

there is more to Barker's work than an exclusive concentration upon gender can reveal. This is especially the case as Barker's writing is frequently viewed not simply through the perspective of gender, but through the restrictive view of gender that was apparent in Spencer's article. As Barker's stories about love tend to be cautionary and as she herself and her quasi-autobiographical literary personas Fidelia and Galesia appear as resolutely single, Barker is frequently seen as a "pious" and "respectable" writer and is placed in contrast to more "scurrilous" novelists such as Behn, Manley and Haywood. King quotes John Richetti's influential description of Barker's works as "pious polemics" but asserts that she herself has yet to discover any evidence that Barker was viewed "as morally improving" or indeed "read at all" after her lifetime.<sup>18</sup>

Whilst undermining the labelling of Barker as a "pious" writer, King also seeks to question the "good girl/bad girl" division of early modern women writers into descendants of either Katherine Philips or Aphra Behn. Making reference to the work of critics such as Paula McDowell and Carol Barash, King argues that such distinctions are simplistic and misleading and serve to eradicate the political connections between writers who are usually separated by such labels.<sup>19</sup> Despite King's efforts, such distinctions remain prevalent today. In 2004 as sensitive a critic as Hero Chalmers reiterated the idea of a division between the heirs of Behn and the heirs of Philips, firmly identifying Barker as an heir of the latter.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> John Richetti, *Popular Fiction Before Richardson, Narrative Patterns: 1700-39* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) 239, qtd. in King, *Exile* 7; King, *Exile* 8. King comments that neither of the patchwork narratives had a second edition (*Exile* 190).

<sup>19</sup> Barash, *English Women's Poetry*; Paula McDowell *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); King, *Exile* 19-20. King does not refute the fact that Barker "wrote to pious and didactic purposes" but argues against a simplistic reading of such didacticism (*Exile* 9).

<sup>20</sup> Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers, 1650-1689* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 200.

Whilst I would agree with King's analysis I would also contend that her application of it does not go far enough. Although King repeatedly emphasises the importance of politics and religion in Barker's writing, I would suggest that her study ultimately underplays the bold and overt nature of Barker's political engagement and, as a result, misrepresents the "tone" of her political expression. Such remarks should not be taken as a negation of King's achievement. On the contrary, it is only because of King's work that we are now in a position to examine Barker's politics in greater detail. In the following two chapters, I will explore the nature of Barker's political beliefs and specifically her Jacobitism. I will argue that Barker is a writer whose politics are far more specific and interventionist than have yet been identified and will suggest that our impressions of Barker's "pious" and decorous writing persona are still preventing us from appreciating her political radicalism.

Central to such radicalism is Barker's Catholicism. Barker's religious beliefs will be discussed in Chapter Three. However, it is important to note at this stage that her conversion powerfully influenced the ways in which she perceived the political events of her age. The collection of manuscript poems by Barker now housed in Magdalen College, Oxford, which includes a narrative of her conversion, offers a profound insight into the ways in which her religion shaped her interpretation of such events. These poems, which were not published during Barker's lifetime, appear to have been circulated only among those sympathetic to her views.<sup>21</sup> In these poems Barker reinterprets English history in the light of her new faith. Viewing the battle between good and evil as quite literally manifested in the events of English political history, Barker presents the battle between the Jacobites and their enemies as a battle for the

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<sup>21</sup> Magdalen MS 343; King, *Exile* 135.

soul of England. Barker's conversion to Catholicism prompts a sense of intense involvement with public, political events. Barker was obviously not the only writer to cast the Revolution of 1688 and its aftermath in terms of a spiritual conflict between heaven and hell. Elizabeth Singer Rowe, although a staunch Williamite, operates in similar terms when writing as "Philomela" in her *Poems on Several Occasions* of 1696.<sup>22</sup> Of course it is important to remember that Barker's and Singer Rowe's readings of contemporary political events should be seen in the context of a widespread literary engagement with ideas of providence and English history in the 1690s and the first decades of the new century. Pope in both the 1704 and 1713 versions of *Windsor Forest* and Dryden in his translations and interpretation of Virgil both use their writing to explore English history. Whiggish appropriations of Milton at this time use the poet to investigate ideas of Englishness and texts such as *Robinson Crusoe* are now being read in terms of Whig history.<sup>23</sup> By viewing early modern women writers such as Barker and Singer Rowe within such contexts we not only extend our understanding of their own work but also further extend the recontextualisation of early eighteenth-century literature as a whole.

Barker's published works, including the prose fictions that will be the focus of the present chapter, are not as apocalyptic in tone as these manuscript texts. However, I would argue that many of them do display a similar level of political commitment,

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<sup>22</sup>Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by Philomela* (London: 1696). King complains about the fact that the writings of early modern women are often depoliticised, "We are reminded how anachronistic it is to expect the verse of early modern women to yield the qualities of mild benignancy that the sentimental notions of femininity of a later age have encouraged us to attach to the idea of 'the woman poet,'" *Exile* 133. King also likens Barker to Singer Rowe: "We hear in Barker much the same note of resounding certitude voiced in the early verse of Elizabeth Singer ... when, in the same decade but from the other end of the political spectrum, she called upon God to punish William's enemies at the Battle of the Boyne," *Exile* 132.

<sup>23</sup> See Nicholas von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain: Republican Historiography in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) and "The First Reception of *Paradise Lost* (1667)," *RES* 47 no. 188 (1996): 479-99; Tom Paulin, *Crusoe's Secret: The Aesthetics of Dissent* (London: Faber,

they simply manifest it in different ways. Barker is *not* a naive writer. She is, admittedly, neither a distinguished versifier nor a great prose writer. However, she is a more accomplished technician than is usually acknowledged. As a result she is able to construct texts that convey political opinions that are, in some instances, not just bold but positively dangerous whilst simultaneously protecting herself. One of the main techniques that she uses to do this is to create works which operate on different levels simultaneously – in effect, she establishes ways of covering her traces. Thus texts such as *Love Intrigues* and the two patchwork narratives are, in some senses, “about” gender relations in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England. These texts allow Barker to explore the implications of love, marriage –and seduction – for women at this time. Perhaps more significantly, they also allow her to explore the possibilities open to women who chose to reject the roles of wife and mother and to live instead as single women. These novels are also *broadly* political in terms that maintain the idea of Barker as a “respectable” woman writer whose politics are less overtly propagandistic than those of, for example, the novelist and pamphleteer Delarivier Manley. Thus, the frequent references to broken vows and lost lovers that recur within Barker’s fictions can – and indeed are– frequently identified as standard Jacobite tropes.<sup>24</sup>

However, certainly in the cases of *Exilius* and the patchwork narratives, the specifics of Barker’s plots can be read as far more precise and indeed far more aggressive in their political implications. I will argue that Barker’s prose fictions contain more

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2005) 80-104 and Michael Seidel, “Crusoe in Exile,” *PMLA* 96:3 (1981): 363-74.

<sup>24</sup> See Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), particularly Chapters 2 and 3, for an extended discussion of Jacobite symbolism. A discussion of the political significance of broken vows can be found in Toni Bowers, “Sex, Lies, and Invisibility: Amatory Fiction from the Restoration to Mid-Century,” *The Columbia History of the British Novel*, ed. John Richetti, John Bender, Deirdre David and Michael Seidel (New

specific political references than have yet been acknowledged and also that the individual texts contain different political messages with her final novel, *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen*, being her most overtly Jacobite. Even Kathryn King, who acknowledges the political aspects of Barker's work, fails to draw attention to the specificity of Barker's political commitment.<sup>25</sup> Although King describes Barker as "arguably, England's leading producer of Jacobite fiction" and points out some of the specific allusions in *Exilius*, her overall interpretation of Barker's politics, as manifested in her prose narratives, is that their Jacobitism is not "overt, systematic, or even sustained".<sup>26</sup> Although the prose fictions are presented as "highly allusive political meditations," they are seen as essentially nostalgic and elegiac – at one point Barker is said to speak "less as a woman than as a study in exemplary Jacobite quietism". *Exilius* becomes an "inadvertently" Jacobite work.<sup>27</sup> A reader unfamiliar with Barker's works would, I believe, gain an inaccurate impression of Barker's engagement with political issues from such comments.

This said, King does make it clear that she believes that "Barker's Jacobite politics went well beyond a sentimental attachment to the Stuart rose, oak trees, and tartan plaids ... or the 'emotional Jacobitism' sometimes attributed to Pope".<sup>28</sup> The term "Emotional Jacobitism" was coined by Douglas Brooks-Davies and has been analysed by Howard Erskine-Hill.<sup>29</sup> Pointing out that "'Emotional' may be equated with 'nostalgia'" and may "be understood to refer to residual feeling when action or

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York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 50-72.

<sup>25</sup> Other works which consider the political aspects of Barker's writing are Carol Barash's *English Women's Poetry* 174-208 and Toni Bowers', "Jacobite Difference and the Poetry of Jane Barker," *ELH* 64 (1997): 857-69.

<sup>26</sup> King, *Exile* 149, 161.

<sup>27</sup> King, *Exile* 149, 163, 152.

<sup>28</sup> King, *Exile* 12.

<sup>29</sup> Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Pope's Dunciad and the Queen of the Night: A Study in Emotional Jacobitism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Poetry of*

desired change are assumed to be hopeless,” Erskine-Hill argues that “Emotional Jacobitism” is part of “a self-evidently retrospective judgement”.<sup>30</sup> Barker does look to the past with regret and she clearly feels that the age in which she lives is one in decline. However, her engagement with politics is not the form of Jacobitism that Erskine-Hill defines as “principled sentimentalism”.<sup>31</sup> Barker’s texts are not simply wistful evocations of a political order that has been lost, they are also critiques of what has come to replace it. As such, they are highly conscious interventions in the world in which their author lives and writes and, I would suggest, in the case of the patchwork narratives, they offer direct political challenges to their readers. Despite her claims that Barker is more than a merely “emotional Jacobite,” King’s characterisation of Barker’s Jacobitism as not “overt, systematic, or even sustained” not only suggests that it *is* close to “emotional Jacobitism” but is also dangerously reminiscent of the remarks made by critics such as Jerry C. Beasley and John Richetti who present Barker as an essentially “moral” rather than political writer.<sup>32</sup>

For Beasley any political content in Barker’s work is entirely subsumed within a more general tone of moral critique:

The point is not that works like Haywood’s amorous *Love in Excess* (1719) or Barker’s didactic romance of *Exilius* (1715) are motivated by hidden partisan interest, or that they set out to record in some veiled way the particular events of contemporary political history. Rather it is that, despite their characteristic brevity and occasional crudeness of composition, such narratives offer surprisingly timely and effective recreations of the moral texture of English society in a post-Revolutionary age. That texture, as it is woven, strikingly resembles

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*Opposition and Revolution: Dryden to Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> Erskine-Hill, *Poetry of Opposition* 11.

<sup>31</sup> Erskine-Hill, *Poetry of Opposition* 10, n. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Jerry C. Beasley, “Politics and Moral Idealism: The Achievement of Some Early Women Novelists,” *Fetter’d or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986) 216-36; Richetti 230-9.

what we find in the blatantly partisan fictions by Manley and Haywood, and the stories themselves very often parallel the novella-like episodes that make up the bulk of a work like the *New Atlantis*.<sup>33</sup>

I would argue that it is *precisely* the point that Barker's novels *are* motivated by "hidden partisan interest" if one knows how to look for it. Indeed, the very similarity Beasley identifies between Barker's texts and Manley's and Haywood's "blatantly partisan fictions" might serve as an indication that this is the case.

For Beasley, *Exilius*, the only one of Barker's novels that he considers in any detail, is primarily concerned with issues of female morality. It is, "... a long, loosely structured, episodic narrative of intense moral purpose — a conduct book of sorts, showing the proper behavior of young ladies in all manner of real-life situations". Although the work does contain "an oblique reference to the exiled Stuart Pretender" it is "never directly topical".<sup>34</sup> As a result of this reading, Beasley sees Barker as presenting only a purely individual message of hope in her work:

... this "new Romance" develops as a sweeping indictment of British culture in general, attacking its prevailing values and institutions as morally bankrupt, disordered, hostile to ideals of social and political justice. The contemporary world as Barker portrays it is brightened only by the resolute Christian heroism of the lonely female saints who struggle to survive in it, although they cannot reconcile it to what they themselves are; and by the few striking figures of male virtue who rush to their defense, comfort and succor them, at last uniting with them in happy marriage.<sup>35</sup>

Within such a reading there is no scope for political hope or intervention. This early novel is thus taken to be representative of Barker's prose fiction as a whole and is

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<sup>33</sup> Beasley 226.

<sup>34</sup> Beasley 228, 229, 229.

<sup>35</sup> Beasley 229.

seen to offer only the option of individual salvation through marriage.

John Richetti demonstrates a similar approach. Also focussing exclusively on the “moral” aspects of Barker’s fiction, the only ideology Richetti identifies in her work is “the ideology of beleaguered virtue”.<sup>36</sup> The patchwork novels, which I will suggest are the most overtly political of Barker’s published texts, are seen to possess “the new ideological wrappings of the female moral sensibility”. The “new and revised Galesia” who appears in these later works has gained no political insight over the course of her lifetime, merely an increasingly narrow moral sense: “What is new is the insistent pious frame of reference; the framework is a deliberate attempt to sell female fiction to a wider audience by making it impeccably respectable”. As it is “Mrs Barker and/or Curl” who are seen as responsible for this Richetti is not even sure that Barker herself is in control of such changes.<sup>37</sup>

To counter such readings, those who see Barker as offering more than an “ideology of beleaguered virtue” need to pay close attention to the nuances of her individual texts in order to demonstrate that her political views are not simply nostalgic or “emotional” and that they are not subservient to a purely gender-based morality. A 2002 essay by Leigh A. Eicke demonstrates one of the ways in which this might be possible.<sup>38</sup> Eicke argues that, as well as writing Jacobite poetry in manuscript, Barker uses manuscripts within her printed texts to signify her commitment to Jacobite politics. Eicke writes:

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<sup>36</sup> Richetti 236.

<sup>37</sup> Richetti 237, 237, 239, 236.

<sup>38</sup> Leigh A. Eicke, “Jane Barker’s Jacobite Writings,” *Women’s Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800*, ed. George Justice and Nathan Tinker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 137-57.

This manuscript link permits Barker to present herself as a scribal author, hence a gentlewoman writer, rather than as a print author, a common hack. Moreover, Barker's use of manuscripts in her novels intensifies the novels' political import, since Barker associates scribal publication with Royalist and, after 1688, Jacobite beliefs. Strongly linking these novels to scribal culture thus allows Barker at once to use and to critique print publication as she advocates the Jacobite cause.<sup>39</sup>

Eicke observes that Galesia recounts the history of each of the poems that appears in *A Patch-Work Screen* and thus identifies each text as a manuscript. Eicke also argues that by pointing her reader back to the manuscript versions of these poems found in the highly political Magdalen manuscript Barker politicizes the prose text in which such poems appear. According to Eicke, Barker uses this technique less extensively but still to political effect in *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen*. *The Lining*, which Eicke sees as a more overtly political novel than its predecessor, is thus a text “structurally resembling a manuscript collection” assembled, by its narrator, from a selection of diverse stories: “Much as the compiler of a manuscript commonplace book would transcribe items, sometimes with, sometimes without attribution, combining and editing the items, so does Galesia with these inset stories in *The Lining*”.<sup>40</sup>

Eicke's discussion can at times appear over complex. Eicke's argument, which of course appears in a book on manuscript circulation, also implies that the politics of Barker's novels are so allusively expressed that they are only available to the initiated few. As Eicke herself admits, the poems in the novels can only serve as a signal back to Barker's Jacobite manuscript volume for those who are already aware of this text. Consequently, Eicke sees Barker's patchwork narratives as “books [which] evoke a

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<sup>39</sup> Eicke 138.

<sup>40</sup> Eicke 147, 149.

culture in which secret manuscripts are passed covertly from writer to knowing reader".<sup>41</sup> The emphasis upon a "knowing reader" suggests that Barker's politics, if not exactly implicit, are also far from explicit. This assumption becomes apparent when Eicke remarks that, in *A Patch-Work Screen*, the author introduces "her Jacobite politics indirectly". For Eicke, this novel contains only "a rare note of overt political commentary". The political aspects of the text that do exist are seen to be expressed through the inclusion of poems from the Magdalen manuscript and through praise of specific Royalist writers and of Catholicism.<sup>42</sup> Eicke views *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* as more explicitly political than its predecessor arguing that, in this work, "the political content becomes even more visible, since most of the characters are identified as Jacobites, and the frequent use of a moral or proverb to end a story reinforces the didactic import".<sup>43</sup> Eicke's analysis of this text undoubtedly contains some excellent readings of individual episodes. However, as in her interpretation of *A Patch-Work Screen*, Eicke focuses solely upon inset stories that she sees as functioning through their links back to Barker's manuscript texts. Even in relation to this supposedly more openly political text, Eicke's emphasis is thus upon the "knowing" reader with access to the manuscripts rather than upon the wider political significations of the novel itself. Thus, whilst I applaud Eicke's efforts to argue that Barker's novels function politically through specific references rather than simply through an amorphous "sentimental" or "emotional" Jacobitism, I would also suggest that the nature of her argument narrows the scope of Barker's political impact. I wish to propose that the politics of both patchwork novels are not simply a matter of hints

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<sup>41</sup> Eicke 137.

<sup>42</sup> Eicke 144, 145-6.

<sup>43</sup> Eicke 147.

and allusions and that these texts are more thematically and consistently political than Eicke allows.

This chapter will now proceed to examine Barker's novels in chronological order and will show that Barker alters her authorial stance across the course of her career from the relatively apolitical *Love Intrigues* (1713) to the bold Jacobitism of *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen* (1726). My aim is not to suggest that gender-based readings of Barker's work are invalid but to argue, as Ros Ballaster does of the novels of Behn, Manley and Haywood, that these texts function in multiple ways simultaneously.

Ballaster writes that:

The readers of women's amatory fiction are required to read by a process of constant movement between sexual and party political meaning, rather than strip off the cloak of party political satire to reveal the 'true' narrative of sexual opposition, as Richetti suggests, or lift the veil of the love plot to reveal the party political one, as McKeon implies.<sup>44</sup>

I would suggest that Barker requires her readers to adopt a similarly "constant movement" between her political and her gender concerns, whilst also requiring them to pay close attention to the often encoded details of her texts.

The first of Barker's novels to be published was *Love Intrigues*. Originally published in 1713 the work was revised and reissued under the title *The Amours of Bosvil and Galesia* as part of the 1719 volume *The Entertaining Novels of Mrs. Jane Barker*.<sup>45</sup>

This text is the least overtly political of Barker's prose fictions. Yet despite this, it is

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<sup>44</sup> Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740*, first pbk. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) 19.

<sup>45</sup> Jane Barker, *The Entertaining Novels of Mrs. Jane Barker. In Two Volumes* (London: A. Bettesworth and E. Curll, 1719).

significant for any consideration of Barker's literary Jacobitism. It is in this novel that Barker develops and refines the character of Galesia who is the narrator of the later, more clearly political, patchwork texts. The nature of this central character is far from static even in this first novel. Kathryn King has explored the changes made between the two volumes in some detail and concludes that whilst the 1719 text displays "heightened piety and didacticism" it is nonetheless the more interesting of the two versions. As a result of Barker's alterations "Galesia emerges ... more spiteful, self-punishing, and sexually humiliated – a more complex and interesting character, in short."<sup>46</sup> King also suggests that the original publication was not authorised by Barker and that the title was provided by Curll.<sup>47</sup>

Within the text, Galesia narrates the story of her first love affair, an ambiguous and complex entanglement with her kinsman, Bosvil, a student at the Inns of Court. Bosvil appears to attempt to involve Galesia in a secret intrigue. A mixture of pride and decorum lead Galesia to refuse "to be courted thus in hugger-mugger" resulting in a series of apparent misunderstandings between herself and her suitor.<sup>48</sup> Bosvil is inconsistent, one minute appearing as lover, the next as mere friend. The unwillingness, or incapacity, of either of the two central characters to express their feelings leads to great distress for Galesia. Bosvil finally marries someone else and Galesia is "forc'd to act the Part of patient *Grizel*, [Griselda]" towards his bride.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> King, *Exile* 187.

<sup>47</sup> King, *Exile* 185-6.

<sup>48</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 11. All quotations have been checked against the original editions but, as these are not readily available, citations for *Love Intrigues* and the two patchwork narratives will be from Carol Shiner Wilson's edition.

<sup>49</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 45.

The most striking aspect of this novel is the vivid presentation of the character of Galesia herself. *Love Intrigues* provides its reader with an insight into the mental and emotional condition of its narrator startling in its power and complexity. For King, it “possesses an immediacy and psychological realism seldom felt in the narratives of Behn, Manley, and Haywood”.<sup>50</sup> The fluctuations of the relationship between Bosvil and Galesia are recorded in minute detail and the anguish felt by Barker’s alter-ego is palpable. At one point, at the height of Galesia’s infatuation, her supposed lover proposes another man to her father as a suitable husband for her. On discovering this betrayal, Galesia descends into a form of temporary insanity:

But oh! my *Lucasia*, I cannot tell you what I suffer’d when I was alone; Rage and Madness seiz’d me, Revenge and Malice was all I thought upon; inspir’d by an evil Genius, I resolv’d his Death, and pleas’d myself in the Fancy of a barbarous Revenge, and delighted myself to think I saw his Blood pour out of his false Heart. In order to accomplish this detestable Freak, I snatch’d up a Steel Rapier, which stood in the Hall, and walk’d away towards the Place of his Abode, saying to myself, The false *Bosvil* shall disquiet me no more, nor any other of my Sex; in him I will end his Race; no more of them shall come to disturb or affront Womankind. This only Son shall die by the Hands of me an only Daughter; and however the World may call it Cruelty, or Barbarity, I am sure our Sex will have Reason to thank me, and keep an annual Festival, in which a Criminal so foul is taken out of their Way. The Example, perhaps, may deter others, and secure many from the Wrongs of such false Traytors, and I be magnify’d in future Times. For it was for ridding the World of Monsters that *Hercules* was made so great a Hero, and *George* a Saint; then sure I shall be rank’d in the Catalogue of Heroines, for such a Service done to my Sex; for certainly the Deserts of *Arabia* never produc’d so formidable a Monster as this unaccountable *Bosvil*.<sup>51</sup>

Although Galesia does not kill Bosvil and recovers from her murderous frenzy, this quotation illustrates the inadequacy of Richetti’s and Beasley’s characterisation of Barker’s heroines as rather anodyne exemplars of Christian virtue.

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<sup>50</sup> King, *Exile* 190.

<sup>51</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 31.

The fact that Galesia is driven to such thoughts through sexual passion undermines attempts to read her as a purely “pious” author.<sup>52</sup> Although *Love Intrigues* is a morally didactic work, the lessons that it teaches are not conventional. Galesia’s sexuality is not punished by seduction, neither is it rewarded through marriage. Instead, Galesia learns the value of independence and of achieving fulfilment through self-control and intellectual pursuits.<sup>53</sup> In an attempt to console herself for Bosvil’s apparent indifference, she persuades her brother to act as her tutor and by so doing acquires a knowledge of literature, grammar and medicine.<sup>54</sup> Although she later admits to an ambivalence about female education, fearing that “sometimes it becomes a Rival to their [women’s] Duty, deluding them from the Care of their Children and Families, the Business allotted them by the Hand of Heaven,” Galesia claims that she herself does “not regret the Time I bestow’d in its [learning’s] Company, it having been my good Friend to bail me from *Bosvil’s Fetters*”.<sup>55</sup> Such lip service to conventional anxieties about learned women are undercut by the fact that Galesia’s intellectual pursuits do indeed appear to be her destiny. Early in her relationship with Bosvil, Galesia composes some verses and inscribes them on a tree. These verses constitute a form of contract between Galesia and the Muses in which the latter offer her literary success in return for a commitment to the single life:

*Methinks these Shades strange Thoughts suggest,  
Which heat my Head, and cool my Breast,  
And mind me of a Lawrel Crest.*

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<sup>52</sup> Kathryn King describes the changes Barker made to this text for the revised 1719 edition and suggests that the 1713 edition was probably not intended for publication, *Exile* 182-89.

<sup>53</sup> King cites Jane Spencer’s remark that Barker intended to “make the single life a new kind of heroine’s destiny” [Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1986) 65 qtd. in King, *Exile* 191.]

<sup>54</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 15.

<sup>55</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 37.

*Methinks I hear the Muses sing,  
And see 'em all dance in a Ring,  
And call upon me to take Wing.*

*We will (say they) assist thy Flight,  
Till thou reach fair Orinda's Height,  
If thou can'st this World's Folly slight.*

*We'll bring thee to our bright Abodes,  
Amongst the Heroes and the Gods,  
If thou and Wealth can be at Odds.*

*Then, gentle Maid, cast off thy Chain,  
Which links thee to thy faithless Swain;  
And vow a Virgin to remain.*

*Write, write thy Vow upon this Tree,  
By us it shall recorded be,  
And thou fam'd to Eternity.<sup>56</sup>*

The poetry may be poor but the seriousness of its intent cannot be doubted. As a result of this almost visionary experience, Galesia determines “to espouse a Book” and forget Bosvil.<sup>57</sup> When she later lapses from this resolve, she has a dream in which she is reminded of her vow:

*I fell asleep in a Corner of our Garden, and there dream'd that an angry Power on a sudden carry'd me away, and made me climb a high Mountain, where I met *Bosvil*, who endeavoured to tumble me down; but I thought the aforesaid Power snatch'd me away, and brought me to that Shade, where I had writ those Verses heretofore on the Bark of an Ash ... in which Verses I had seem'd to prefer the Muses, and a studious Life, before that of Business and Marriage.*

The dream continues with a poem in which Galesia is informed by the “Power” that:

*Since, since thou hast the Muses chose  
Hymen and Fortune are thy Foes;*

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<sup>56</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 14.

<sup>57</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 15.

*Thou shalt have Cassandra's Fate,  
In all thou sayst, unfortunate*<sup>58</sup>

This dream does indeed appear to be prophetic. All of Galesia's subsequent courtships come to nothing and she remains single. This representation of the literary life is not an attractive one. There is a clear indication that Galesia will endure great hardship for rejecting a more conventional feminine path. However, it is also the case that this dream occurs when Galesia is considering forsaking her vow. It serves as a reminder that this vow is binding.<sup>59</sup> Her dedication to the muses is thus something to be taken seriously; it may not provide an easy alternative to a more domestic existence, but it is a genuine alternative and one to which Galesia remains committed in the later patchwork novels. It is also the fact that although her vision offers an uncomfortable portrait of the life she has chosen, there is no indication that life with Bosvil would have been preferable. The clear sexual imagery of Bosvil attempting to "tumble" Galesia does after all conclude dangerously with her almost falling down a high mountain and the characterisation of her suitor throughout the entire novel suggests that he would have been a far from ideal husband.<sup>60</sup> The fact that the alternative to marriage is so harsh can simply be seen as an accurate reflection of the prospects facing a woman writer at the time at which Barker wrote; it does not in itself suggest that that alternative is an invalid choice. In fact, I would argue that the very positing of this alternative existence is in itself the most significant feature of *Love Intrigues*. Kathryn King describes the work as an "ironized romance" that "unfolds with a strange disregard for the pull of amatory convention, either in its seventeenth-century heroic forms or the early eighteenth-century seduction-and-betrayal incarnations

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<sup>58</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 25-6.

<sup>59</sup> It would, of course, be possible to read this reference to a binding vow as a very broad Jacobite allusion.

<sup>60</sup> Kristina Straub provides a discussion of this dream and its relation to sexuality in, "Frances Burney

discussed by Ballaster”.<sup>61</sup> The fact that Barker reworks the conventions of romance enables her to create a role for Galesia that moves beyond the traditional constraints of this genre. By the close of *Love Intrigues* Galesia has emerged as a figure who is neither wife nor mother and who has experienced unsatisfactory relationships yet has not been “ruined” by them. She is a commentator upon her own life and thus, in effect, a figure for the female writer herself.

This is particularly significant as, within the text of *Love Intrigues* itself, there is considerable battle over the means of expression. Galesia repeatedly believes that she is making her feelings for Bosvil clear to him, yet still they fail to reach an understanding. The text is riddled with references to love as a language. Galesia remarks of her behaviour to Bosvil “that the meerest Fresh-man in Love’s Academy could not but read and understand that Language, much more he that had pass’d Graduate amongst the Town-Amours.” For his part, Bosvil declares that his sighs, “... call’d the Blood into your Cheeks, and made me know, (that, young as you were) you understood that Language.”<sup>62</sup>

The novel remains ambiguous and neither the reader nor Galesia reaches a satisfactory conclusion about the meaning of Bosvil’s behaviour. Yet, despite this ambiguity, Galesia does assume control of the affair to the extent that she is the one who narrates it. Her decision at a moment of intense unhappiness within the text to “...go Home, and write the whole Scene of this Treachery, and make myself the last Actor in the Tragedy” is abandoned.<sup>63</sup> However, at a later date, Galesia does, of

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and the Rise of the Woman Novelist,” *The Columbia History of the British Novel* 199-219 (204-5).

<sup>61</sup> King, *Exile* 191.

<sup>62</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 24, 23.

<sup>63</sup> Barker, *Love Intrigues* 33.

course, tell her story yet she does so in a way which transforms it from “Tragedy” to a morally instructive tale of her own survival.

Ros Ballaster has revealed the ways in which amatory novels are frequently concerned with themes of female power and expression. Ballaster writes:

Inscribed in these [amatory] fictions is a gendered struggle over interpretation. Again and again, a dramatic conflict between men and women over the ‘meaning’ of the amatory sign is enacted. In other words, a competition between men and women for control of the means of seduction becomes the central theme of these love stories. ... it is tempting to suggest that the battle for control over sexual representation acts as an analogy for women’s search for political ‘representation’ or agency.<sup>64</sup>

On the surface, the events of *Love Intrigues* appear to have little to do with female political agency. Yet, by the close of the narrative, Galesia has emerged as a character capable of standing back from her own experience and commenting upon it. Significantly, the frame of her narrative takes place as Galesia tells her story to a friend, Lucasia, in a garden in St. Germain where they initially discuss the Nine Years War and where Galesia remarks that her father was a supporter of Charles I during the Civil War. King makes the interesting but undeveloped observation that “the Nine Years War ... is described in terms only a Stuart adherent would use – as a conflict over “King JAMES’S Affairs”.<sup>65</sup> This background to and setting of the novel appear to bear no relation to the story Galesia recounts. Yet these details reveal to the reader the character the Galesia has become. The story she relates may be “about” love but

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<sup>64</sup> Ballaster 40. Kathryn King has remarked that *Love Intrigues* “may be read as a complex instance of the ‘heroinizing of artifice and fictional duplicity’ and analysed along lines laid down by Ros Ballaster in *Seductive Forms*,” Ballaster, 3 qtd. in King, *Exile* 190. However, King rightly points out that the novel transcends such an interpretation as it is unique in its psychological intensity and insight, *Exile* 190.

<sup>65</sup> King, *Exile* 171. King also observes that a 1713 advertisement for this novel appeared in the *Post*

it concludes with the narrator defying the conventions of amatory fiction by choosing to remain single. Freed from such confines, Galesia is able to turn her attention to more than purely “amatory” affairs. The fact that she is based in St. Germain suggests to the reader that she has done so. This, I would suggest, is what makes *Love Intrigues* so significant for the later, more political novels. In this text, Barker develops the character whom she will later use as a vehicle for political expression. Her first published novel thus charts the emergence of a character who now positions herself politically within a text that shows her intention to depart from conventional female roles.

Barker’s next published novel, *Exilius; or, The Banish’d Roman* (1715) is an exception among the author’s prose narratives. It is the only one of these texts that does not include the semi-autobiographical character of Galesia. There is, however, a character of this name featured in the novel. A Numidian princess and huntress this Galesia is a more Amazonian version of Barker’s alter-ego in *Love Intrigues* and the patchwork narratives.<sup>66</sup> Initially scornful of love the Princess is described as being of “a masculine Spirit” and as someone who “undervalu’d the little Delicacies of her Sex, making the Study of Philosophy and the Laws of her Country her chief Business”.<sup>67</sup> Yet the character of the Princess remains a mere sketch and is far less developed than the Galesia who narrates Barker’s other prose fictions. Despite this difference, *Exilius* stands in a pivotal relationship to Barker’s three other novels. Made up of a variety of personal stories told by individual characters, *Exilius* occupies

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Boy, “a tri-weekly with strong Tory leanings and a large country readership,” *Exile* 171.

<sup>66</sup> The publication date of *Exilius* is later than that of *Love Intrigues*. However, *Exilius* was written in stages, over several years, as the subsequent discussion will show.

<sup>67</sup> Jane Barker, *The Entertaining Novels of Mrs Jane Barker. In Two Volumes*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: A. Bettesworth and E. Curll, 1719) 202.

a wider stage than *Love Intrigues*. The narrative is not dominated by a single character and it lacks the psychological insight of the former novel. Instead, *Exilius* offers Barker the opportunity to move from a focus upon the history of an individual character to a broader engagement with “history” itself. *Exilius* also prefigures the later patchwork narratives in that it provides the first instance of Barker creating a narrative from a series of individual stories and anecdotes, a technique, I will suggest, that enables her subtly to convey distinctly political messages.

*Exilius* is a confusing and convoluted work. It consists of numerous intertwined subplots, the majority of which revolve around temporarily thwarted love affairs, cases of confused identity and dramas of concealed parentage. Its purposes are clearly didactic. The “good” characters are rewarded with happy endings to their various entanglements and, in her preface, the very genre of romance itself is presented by the author as potentially morally improving. The “*Kind of Heroic Love*” which has fallen into disuse but which occurs in the romance tradition and which is represented by the positive characters in *Exilius* is praised and the “*Interest and loose Gallantry* [which] *have been set up in its Place*” are condemned and punished. Romances themselves are defended by Barker as promoters of “*virtuous Affection*”. In a broader sense, Barker also argues that such texts help young readers to develop discernment:

*In the next Place, the Study of these Books helps to open the Understanding of young Readers, to distinguish between real Worth and superficial Appearances, whereby they discern that it is not a laced Coat, or a large Wig, that makes a Caesar or a Scipio; nor all the Utensils of the Toilet can make a compleat Heroine, but true Virtue and Honour.*<sup>68</sup>

Such remarks can be read by politically minded readers as an indication that the *de*

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<sup>68</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels*, Preface to *Exilius*, 1, 2.

*facto* possession of a position of leadership does not necessarily endow one with the qualities necessary for the execution of that post. For those not hunting for Jacobite allusions, they can simply be a reference to the merits of lovers who possess constancy as well as glamour. Similarly, the references in the preface to the importance of love in marriage and the damnation attendant upon those who perjure themselves when taking vows work on the same two levels. They are both a praise of constancy and true affection in marriage and also a sideswipe against those who renege on political vows. The very title of the novel is, of course, easy to read as a gesture towards the exiled James II.

As well as inculcating moral and, arguably, political virtues, Barker, in her preface, states that Romances can convey an admittedly partial knowledge of history and classical poetry. As evidence that the form is not despised by writers of quality Barker cites Bishop François Fenelon and John Dryden, directing her readers “*to those great Authors, whose Writings have pleas'd all the World; tho' I think I may say, none have found better Reception than their Romances, Telemachus on the one Part, and Chaucer's Tales reviv'd on the other*”.<sup>69</sup> The reference to *Telemachus*, Fenelon's immensely popular political romance of 1699, can perhaps be seen as a hint by Barker that her work should be read for political content. There are also further surface similarities between the two works; both feature episodes set in an Egypt riven by civil war and eponymous characters who are forced to work as slaves in that country. Beyond this, however, the references to both *Telemachus* and Dryden's reworking of Chaucer appear to function primarily as a means for Barker to lend her work additional gravitas and possibly marketability.

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<sup>69</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels*, Preface to *Exilius*, 4.

From this brief introduction it is clear that *Exilius* can be viewed simply as a “pious” romance with tinges of “emotional Jacobitism” made manifest through vague allusions to constant lovers and unbroken vows. This is indeed the way in which King perceives the novel arguing that “...*Exilius* uses romance, exalted love, and a heroic idiom to project Jacobite faith”.<sup>70</sup> However, I wish to suggest that *Exilius* is more than a nostalgic gesture towards an idealised, even sentimentalised, world of supposedly “Stuart values”. I will argue that through her approach to history, Barker provides in *Exilius* the first instance of her ability to implant political sub-texts within seemingly apolitical contexts and thus protect herself whilst writing far more overtly Jacobite novels than is usually acknowledged.

In the preface to *Exilius* Barker remarks:

*As to the Historical Part, I suppose the Reader does not expect much Exactness, it being a Romance, not an History; so, it matters not who, or who, were Contemporaries; but there having been such and such Names and Families, one may reasonably suppose that Some of the Children, or Branches of those Families, flourish'd all at the same Time; which is sufficient to vindicate the Book, in that Point, from extreme Absurdity.*<sup>71</sup>

On one level, such a statement does indeed reflect the nature of the text that follows. *Exilius*, as already stated, is a romance and Barker does not claim to be striving for verisimilitude in her reproduction of its settings which are primarily ancient Rome and Egypt. Yet on another level, Barker’s statement is somewhat disingenuous. *Exilius* is certainly not a “history” in the sense of being “a fictionalized account of

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<sup>70</sup> King, *Exile* 153.

<sup>71</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels*, Preface to *Exilius*, 6.

historical events”.<sup>72</sup> Neither is it a “history” of a private individual as, for example, are some of Defoe’s novels. Yet, the relationship between *Exilius* and history is not as inexact as Barker suggests in her preface. Amidst all the conventional romance tropes, at the centre of the novel, both thematically and structurally, lies the story of the eponymous hero. This story has a qualitatively different relationship to history from the other tales in the romance for it works as a specific historical allegory directly commenting upon, and criticising, the events of the Revolution of 1688.

An understanding of Barker’s approach to history is essential for those who wish to gain insight into the ways in which her prose fictions function. I wish to suggest that throughout her prose works Barker displays a fundamentally emblematic understanding of history. By this I mean that Barker explores the history of her era through stories which, whilst they may often appear to be apolitical, actually encapsulate her own understanding and interpretation of the political events she has lived through. In this respect, it is useful to compare Barker’s writing to that of Defoe. Robert Mayer has written of Defoe’s use of “history as a storehouse of political lessons” whilst Michael Seidel has analysed the way in which *Robinson Crusoe* functions as a commentary on British history between the Restoration and the Revolution of 1688.<sup>73</sup> Seidel observes that Crusoe’s period of exile on his island corresponds almost exactly to “the twenty-eight years of restored Stuart rule before the 1688 Glorious Revolution”. For Seidel, this implies that Crusoe, whilst king of his own island, is used by Defoe as a means of “representing values that ought to

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 159.

<sup>73</sup> Mayer 171; Seidel, “Crusoe in Exile”.

reign *at home*". As a result, "Defoe establishes in the temporal structure of narrative a way to read historical time in fictional event".<sup>74</sup> Barker's use of history is less tidily allegorical than Defoe's in *Robinson Crusoe* as will become apparent in my subsequent discussion of the plot of *Exilius*. Yet despite this, I would suggest that clear links exist between Defoe's and Barker's uses of history. Like Defoe, Barker uses stories which operate on a variety of levels simultaneously and which readers are able to read in more than one way. Barker's stories can therefore be read as just that – stories. Alternatively, they can be seen to offer a series of "political lessons" and a means of comprehending Barker's own "historical time" through fictional episodes that contain clear, if implicit, references to that time. In this instance, depending on the reader, *Exilius* can be read as an entertainment, or as a romance with a political allegory at its heart. Either way, the more we uncover the layers of political resonance within both Defoe's and Barker's work, the more apparent it becomes that both authors expected an ability to read *around* their narratives and to comprehend their fictional uses of history from at least some of their readers. The attention that is now being paid to the political sub-texts of Defoe's novels needs also to be paid to Barker's writing. Until we, as readers, appreciate the fact that Barker's novels work on multiple levels and convey a variety of political "meanings" we will continue to misread and to diminish her prose writings.

The story of *Exilius* occurs a third of the way into the novel. Raised in exile, *Exilius*, a Roman by descent, has spent his childhood living alone with his father, in a cave. A series of adventures leads him to Egypt where his inherent virtues are recognised and he is made captain of a ship. However, the political situation within Egypt is

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<sup>74</sup> Seidel 366.

presented by Barker as unstable. The Egyptians have a longstanding jealousy of Romans. Such jealousies are manipulated by the man Exilius replaces, Piso, who stirs up discontent with the monarch:

as if the King meant to join with the *Romans*, to overthrow the Religion and Laws of the *AEgyptians*. These Murmurings once infus'd into the Heads and Hearts of the People, fermented so till their Discontents broke out into an absolute Rebellion...<sup>75</sup>

The language used by Barker to describe this rebellion leaves her reader in no doubt as to her total opposition to the uprising and her belief in the hypocrisy of the rebel leaders. The latter are shown to be motivated by self-interest whilst “pretending that all they did or intended, was for the Service of the Gods, and the Preservation of their Laws and Religion”.<sup>76</sup>

The Egyptian prince, Philometer, should be the natural choice to lead the attempt to crush the rebellion. However, this prince is unpopular with the people due to his choice of religion. Philometer is described as:

... an excellent Prince, endow'd with great Wisdom and Courage, and much experience'd in the War; a very just and pious Prince, a true Friend, and a kind loving Brother; the best of Masters to his Servants, and a faithful Subject to his King; but these and divers other excellent Qualities, could not counterpoize that Aversion the People had taken against his Religion, *to wit*, the *Jewish* Way of Worship.<sup>77</sup>

No critic has yet commented upon Barker's choice of her prince's name which is a significant one. Philometer or Philometor was also known as Ptolemy VI, ruler of Egypt from 180-145 B.C. Philometor appears in the Book of Daniel where the events

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<sup>75</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 108.

<sup>76</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 108.

<sup>77</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 109.

of his reign are described as follows: “And in his [Philometor’s] estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.”<sup>78</sup> Peter Clayton’s work *Chronicle of the Pharaohs* provides further information about this ruler explaining that, as a result of invasion, “the curious situation ... arose of there being two Ptolemies, brothers, both nominally declared rulers of Egypt”. Intervention from Rome meant that each brother was assigned a part of the kingdom although ultimately, as is also made clear in *Daniel*, Philometor regained sole control.<sup>79</sup> It is clearly possible to see why such events would offer a parallel to the Revolution of 1688 from a Jacobite perspective. The “vile person” who obtains a kingdom not through war but through flattery would, in such an analogy, be William, whilst the temporarily displaced Philometor would be James. The fact that two Ptolemies existed, both claiming the throne of Egypt, could also be seen to parallel the existence of both a *de facto* and a *de jure* King of England after 1688. That Philometor ultimately regained his throne would add additional Jacobite appeal to the comparison.

It is not possible to ascertain how much Barker knew of Ptolemy VI’s reign.

However, it is entirely plausible that she would have been aware that this King was also known by the name of Philometor. David Boyd Haycock has observed that “by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, interest in Egyptian, Babylonian and Chaldean history was resurgent in England, and particularly at Cambridge University”.<sup>80</sup> Cambridge was

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<sup>78</sup> King James Bible, *Daniel* 11, v.21.

<sup>79</sup> Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) 212.

<sup>80</sup> David Boyd Haycock, “Ancient Egypt in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century England,” *The Wisdom of Egypt: Changing Visions Through the Ages*, ed. Peter Ucko and Timothy Champion (London: UCL Press, 2003) 133-60 (134).

the university attended by the intellectual companions commemorated by Barker in her *Poetical Recreations* (1688).<sup>81</sup> Sir Isaac Newton, Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge, was just one of the many scholars attracted to this field of study. In 1733 Newton published *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*. In this work Newton clearly identifies the ruler whose kingdom is overtaken by the “vile person” as Philometor.<sup>82</sup> Whilst Newton’s volume appeared after *Exilius* it does indicate that knowledge of Philometor was in circulation in the first half of the eighteenth century. In a final twist to these connections, it is also worth noting that a copy of *Poetical Recreations* was found in Newton’s Cambridge library.<sup>83</sup> It is clearly too much of an assumption to argue from these facts that Barker was in contact with Newton. However, the fact that Barker chose the name of Philometor for one of the central characters in *Exilius* does suggest a further layer of political allusion in the text whilst simultaneously indicating that Barker’s knowledge and range of references was even wider than previously suspected.

Within the text of *Exilius* itself the life of Philometor is as troubled as that of his Biblical namesake. The unpopularity of the prince means that the rebels succeed and the King is forced to turn to Exilius for help. Meanwhile, the rebels “become dissolute” and their essential depravity is revealed:

The Priests prophane the Temples with false Explanations of the Oracles, and made the Gods the Authors of their Crimes, and pretend, that all their Sacrilege and Rebellion is for the Sake of the Gods. Thus they fed themselves with Iniquity, and cloath’d themselves with

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<sup>81</sup> See fn. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London: 1733) 183-4.

<sup>83</sup> King, *Exile* 188. King also observes that both Barker and Newton were from Lincolnshire.

Hypocrisy, they bubbled the Vulgar with Lies, and Betray'd their Superiours with Perjury.<sup>84</sup>

The popular dislike of the Prince's religion leads to unpleasant and threatening demonstrations of hostility including, "a solemn Procession, in Contempt of the *Jews*, and their Religion" and to public burnings of effigies of rabbis and Jewish writers.<sup>85</sup> Such discontent is presented by Barker as self-perpetuating and the anxieties of the rebels are exposed as absurd:

so, by these and the like Practices, they keep themselves in a continual Heat and Ferment against they know not who or what; for the *Jews* are so few, and so little formidable, that there is no Cause of Fear; but to be sure their Leaders direct their Malice against the King, perswading the People that he design'd to subvert the Government, and submit himself to the *Roman* Senate, which in them is that last Degree of Madness.<sup>86</sup>

Ultimately, however, the rebellion disintegrates from within. Soldiers are now prepared to revolt against their leaders, "as before against their King," a development presented by Barker as entirely inevitable:

which is not strange; for where there is only a precarious and not a legal Authority, Commands are ill exhibited, and worse obey'd; for such a Kind of an usupr'd Power is, at it were, a Burlesque on Justice, and a Banter on Government, which serve rather to increase than to correct Crimes, for, a wild Vine cannot bring forth good Grapes, but certain Berries, to poyson and intoxicate.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 113, 110.

<sup>85</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 110.

<sup>86</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 110-11.

<sup>87</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 113, 113-4. This final phrase contains echoes of both Isaiah 5, v.2 ("and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes") and Matthew 7, v.18 ("A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit"). As well as using Biblical imagery in *Exilius*, Barker also frequently uses language that sounds proverbial in this text. For example, "If a Man will murder himself, no Physician can make him live" and "for a Mob is but like a great Number of wild Asses, who bray and make a hideous Noise, but able to act nothing in their own Defence," 154, 141. In addition, Barker also cites actual proverbs such as "If one

As a result of such intrinsic weakness in the rebel position, Exilius defeats his opponents and the initial power structure is restored.

Barker's presentation of these events can be read with little difficulty as a politically engaged commentary on the events of 1688. The rebel Egyptians are shown to support Piso because of their tendency to be suspicious of *Romans*, clearly intended to represent Catholics. Piso plays on these suspicions and persuades the rebels that the King is going to align himself with Rome and introduce a foreign constitution. Such accusations correspond to the criticisms made of James II that insisted he was in thrall to France and would undermine England's Protestant character. The heavy emphasis on the nefarious mob also reflects a typically Stuart loyalist horror at the role of this 1680s bogeyman.<sup>88</sup> The arguments of the rebel leaders that their actions are motivated by a desire for "the Preservation of their Laws and Religion" blatantly parallel Williamite rhetoric focussed on opposition to James's Catholicism and his supposedly absolutist ambitions.

However, Barker's analogy is not perfect. The King of Egypt appears to stand for both Charles and James whilst Exilius (a naval commander like James) and the King's brother also both represent aspects of James's history and personality. For example, the King's brother is a Jew and is also criticised by the rebels because of his religion.

The Prince is represented as an exemplary individual, unfairly disliked by the

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will know a Man, observe what Company he keeps" and "the strongest Wine makes the keenest Vinegar" in this novel, 124, 215. However, such language serves a purely stylistic function in *Exilius*. It is not until the patchwork narratives that Barker develops a consistent and deliberate method of using proverbs in her writing.

<sup>88</sup> See Tim Harris, "London Crowds and the Revolution of 1688," *By Force or By Default? The Revolution of 1688-1689*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989) 44-64 and *London*

population and loyal to his brother the King. Such a characterisation would appear to refer to James in his capacity of prince rather than monarch. Such confusion is far from unusual in the literature of the time.<sup>89</sup> Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) has repeatedly been read as a commentary on British politics of the 1680s. George Guffey interprets the enslavement of Oroonoko as a royalist analogy for the loss of James II's throne, a view supported by Janet Todd. Anita Pacheco also reads the work within an historical context, arguing that it charts transformations in late seventeenth-century perceptions of honour.<sup>90</sup> Yet this text does not function as an uncomplicated allegory. Likewise, Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682) eludes any attempts at a straightforward political reading. The characters of Antonio and Renault in the play both appear to represent Shaftesbury and although the play's Toryism is apparent, its exact intentions are open to interpretation. As Malcolm Kelsall remarks, "the action of *Venice Preserved* is inconsistent as political allegory. Both the Senate and the conspirators are corrupt, and if either may stand for the Whigs, both can scarcely do so".<sup>91</sup>

The presence of similar confusion in Barker's novel probably arises from the fact that *Exilius* was composed over three decades. Kathryn King demonstrates that sections of the novel were written considerably before its publication, "... as far back perhaps as the early 1680s in response to the Exclusion Crisis" and that "an earlier version of

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*Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>89</sup> In "Literature and the Jacobite Cause: Was There a Rhetoric of Jacobitism?" *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982) 49-69, Howard Erskine-Hill comments that many "politically allusive texts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries" do not "seem to offer a system of simple political correspondences," 65, n. 62.

<sup>90</sup> George Guffey, *Two English Novelists: Aphra Behn and Anthony Trollope* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975) 3-41; Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London: Virago, 1989) 73; Anita Pacheco "Royalism and Honor in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," *SEL* 34:3 (1994): 491-506.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Otway, *Venice Preserved*, ed. Malcolm Kelsall, Regents Restoration Drama Series (London: Edward Arnold, 1969) xii-xiii.

*Exilius*, then entitled *Scipina*, was ‘in the Press’ in 1687’.<sup>92</sup> In this sense, *Exilius* can be seen to resemble *The Rape of the Lock* in that it, like Pope’s poem, is a text that carries the traces of the differing times at which it was written. Howard Erskine-Hill has described the ways in which the various editions of *The Rape of the Lock*, published in 1712, 1714 and 1717, demonstrate Pope’s response to the changing political climate of these years and his own increased sense of vulnerability.<sup>93</sup> However, whereas Pope split the revised editions of his poem into separate and discrete texts, Barker made the single published text of her novel a palimpsest which revealed the different political contexts in which it was produced.

King has not been able to ascertain why the novel was not published in the 1680s but she does remark that the finished novel has a somewhat “retro” quality.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, I would argue that one of the most interesting aspects of the work is the way in which it functions almost as a composite text reminiscent of numerous romances and Restoration tragi-comedies. In particular it carries echoes of Dryden’s *Don Sebastian* (1689) with its attack on the mob and the self-interest of its leaders and its Jacobite subtext, expressed specifically through what James Winn describes as its “appeals to the feudal values of honor and loyalty that Dryden associated with the Stuarts”.<sup>95</sup> Such echoes remind us of the importance of reading Barker alongside her male contemporaries and not simply positioning her as a “woman writer”.

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<sup>92</sup> King, *Exile* 151. The name “Scipina” echoes the reference to Scipio in the Preface to *Exilius*. However, it is hard to detect any clear political implication in this choice of names beyond a possible signal that Barker admired Scipio as an ideal leader.

<sup>93</sup> Erskine-Hill, *Poetry of Opposition* 71-94.

<sup>94</sup> King, *Exile* 151.

<sup>95</sup> James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) 440.

*Exilius*'s lengthy incubation means that it encompasses a wide range of historical and political references both pro-Stuart and more explicitly Jacobite.<sup>96</sup> The central story of the eponymous hero is thus able to contain allusions to the Exclusion crisis, to Monmouth's Rebellion and to the Revolution of 1688. Yet although each aspect of the story cannot be translated into a single episode of British political history in the 1680s, Barker's interpretation of such history is clear. The rebel leaders are hypocrites who use a feigned interest in their country's welfare as a screen for their own ambition. The fears of the populace upon which the rebels play are shown to be without foundation. The processions against the Jews and the burning of effigies which Barker describes – and which clearly resemble similar processions against Catholics in England in the 1680s – are presented as not only malevolent but also absurd.<sup>97</sup> The community of Jews is small and harmless. In total, the entire episode provides a reading of the events of the 1680s which is strongly pro-Stuart. The rebels are self-interested charlatans and their rebellion an affront to good government, “a usurped Power is ... a burlesque on justice and a banter on government”. A rebel army is a “mob” which, significantly, will inevitably be defeated.<sup>98</sup>

*Exilius* finally appeared in August 1714 although, as Kathryn King points out, its title page bears the date 1715. King sees this as a typical manoeuvre on the part of its publisher, Edmund Curll, designed to “prolong” the work's “currency”. King herself situates *Exilius* within the context of the debates over the succession in 1714 commenting that “The weeks and months following Anne's death saw a flood of pro-

<sup>96</sup> King describes the novel as exploring “the themes of loyalty, constancy, and obligation beloved of Stuart supporters in the seventeenth century and their Jacobite successors in the next,” *Exile* 150.

<sup>97</sup> See Tim Harris, “London Crowds and the Revolution of 1688” and *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* for further information about such processions.

<sup>98</sup> Barker, *The Entertaining Novels* 114, 141.

Stuart writing as fears about the Hanoverian succession and the change of ministry gave rise to pro-Jacobite riots and demonstrations". The "bewildering array of returns from exile" which feature in the text are viewed by King as the essential features of this response. The novel is thus perceived as an attempt "to strengthen Jacobite resolve to resist the House of Hanover and bring home the true king".<sup>99</sup> Beyond such general remarks, however, King does little with the specific political references in the novel. Although she acknowledges the allusions in the story of *Exilius*, King relegates them to a footnote, preferring to see the romance as Barker's "most sanguine fiction," a work which manages to "proclaim faith in the power of loyalty, honour, moral integrity, and steadfast love ... to triumph over adverse circumstance" through its typical romance ending in which all true identities are revealed, all plot complications are resolved and all lovers are married.<sup>100</sup> The work's Jacobitism is thus supposedly manifested passively through its general values rather than through its historical specificity. By contrast, I would suggest that publishing a work which contains the story I have outlined above, in the year before the uprising of 1715, constitutes more of a "call-to-arms" than a "sanguine" and highly abstract promotion of an essentially "emotional" or "sentimental" Jacobitism. *Exilius* in effect contains a warning that the Williamite rebels may themselves still be defeated. Barker's decision to write *Exilius* as a romance is thus not a signal that she is looking backwards, elegiacally, to an era of Stuart power. Rather, it is a decision that enables her to use the conventional plot resolutions of the romance genre to suggest that the Jacobite cause will itself achieve a similarly happy resolution. This novel therefore enables Barker to develop the technique that will come to dominate her later patchwork narratives whereby a chronologically inaccurate yet, for the author,

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<sup>99</sup> King, *Exile* 150, 151.

<sup>100</sup> King, *Exile* 153. King's allusions to the political references in the story can be found on 151, n.11.

politically sound approach to the interpretation of recent history is developed through the use of highly allusive and emblematic stories.

Barker's two patchwork narratives, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies; or, Love and Virtue Recommended* first published in 1723 and *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen; Design'd for the Farther Entertainment of the Ladies* first published in 1726, have suffered similar fates of misinterpretation to *Exilius* – not least because they are most often considered together, almost as a single entity. It is inevitable that critics and readers alike have drawn comparisons between these texts. The two novels share a common central character, the Galesia of *Love Intrigues*, and a similar structure: both novels are composed of a series of tales told to Galesia by a succession of friends and chance acquaintances. Yet despite such similarities it is important to recognise that the two novels do operate in significantly different ways. In the following discussion I will suggest that the politics of *The Patch-Work Screen* are those of a disillusioned Toryism rather than an explicit Jacobitism. By contrast, *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen* displays its author's Jacobitism far more explicitly if sporadically. It is impossible to offer anything other than speculation about why this might have been the case; it might simply be indicative of Barker's growing confidence as a writer or it may reflect the particularly sensitive political atmosphere at the time of the first patchwork novel's publication. As King observes, June 1723 not only saw the publication of *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* but also the exile of Bishop Atterbury. The month prior to these events had witnessed the execution of the Jacobite Christopher Layer.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> King, *Exile* 160.

Critical opinion of the patchwork novels has tended to focus, predictably, upon gender relationships within the texts. When they have been considered in terms of their politics, primarily by Shiner Wilson and King, these party or public politics are read largely through the filter of their gender politics. For example, Galesia's spinsterhood is seen by King to signify "the failure of the Stuart romance" and to symbolise the way in which the Jacobite "lost lover" is, by the 1720s, "truly, perhaps irretrievably lost".<sup>102</sup> However, I would suggest that such readings fail to fit with the implicit politics of the novels themselves. Although the collapse of the 1715 rising had been a catastrophe for the Jacobites, Barker did not abandon her hopes for the cause as is evident from the existence of her letter of 1718 to the Duke of Ormonde concerning a potential Jacobite invasion.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, although Barker's patchwork novels do look back to the era of Stuart power with regret and admiration, their primary focus is upon providing a critique of contemporary English society, albeit under the guise of stories ostensibly set in the reign of Charles II. Like *Exilius*, the patchwork novels are thus less elegiac than interventionist.

The reference to a "screen" in the titles of both novels draws attention to this element of contemporary social critique. The use of such a word inevitably reminds the reader of the widespread description of Walpole as the "Skreen-Master General".<sup>104</sup> The motif of the screen also gives an insight into the ways in which Barker presents her politics in these works whilst also protecting herself from the dangerous repercussions of her beliefs. As Leigh Eicke remarks:

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<sup>102</sup> King, *Exile* 169, 162.

<sup>103</sup> King, *Exile* 160.

<sup>104</sup> King, *Exile* 209.

The screen as an artifact both conceals and reveals; it shields from a too-hot fire or displays the handiwork of its maker. Similarly, Galesia's screen metaphorically both hides and displays the political concepts in the text. It protects by surrounding politics with stories to interest other audiences, and it displays by using key words and phrases to signal a political stance to the partisan reader.<sup>105</sup>

Eicke also makes the perceptive observation that, "Fidelia and Galesia, the manuscript personae, freely express their politics, while the print persona Barker acts as a screen; this Barker both displays and protects these her own Jacobite ideas by presenting them through fictional characters".<sup>106</sup> This reminds us that whilst Barker's texts are frequently *autobiographical*, they are not *autobiography* but fictional and political constructs. As I have argued above, I would agree with Eicke that Barker's texts operate on levels that simultaneously conceal and reveal her political views. However, I would suggest that their "political stance" is present at a deeper level than Eicke's use of the expression "key words and phrases" suggests.

The construction of *A Patch-Work Screen* is complex. The novel is comprised of an opening preface to the reader, an introduction and four "leaves". A considerable amount of Barker's own poetry is also inset into the text.<sup>107</sup> The novel opens with

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<sup>105</sup> Eicke 143.

<sup>106</sup> Eicke 145.

<sup>107</sup> Carol Shiner Wilson observes that "Barker revised numerous poems from ... [Poetical Recreations, Part I] for part three of the Magdalen MS and included them in *Patch-Work Screen*," *The Galesia Trilogy* 76 n. 7. However, Wilson leaves some poems, which feature in the Magdalen manuscript, unattributed in her edition. The following poems that appear in *A Patch-Work Screen* are taken from *Poetical Recreations* and revised by Barker (page references are for the poems' locations in the novel): "The Grove" (76-9), "The Rivulet" (80-2), "An Invocation of her Muse" (85-6), "Anatomy" (86-90), "An Invitation to my Learned Friends at Cambridge" (93-5), "To my Young Lover" (96), "To praise, sweet Youth..." (97), "A Ballad" (98-9), "To my Indifferent Lover" (105-6), "To my Friend Exilius" (111-12), "On the Apothecaries Filing my Recipes amongst the Doctors" (116-9), "To my Muse" (123-4), "To my Friends, against Poetry" (127-8), "A Virgin Life" (139-140), "The Necessity of Fate" (141-3). The following poems that appear in *A Patch-Work Screen* also appear in Part I of the Magdalen manuscript: "A Hymn. Sung in a Psalm Tune" (159) which is part of "Fidelia alone lamenting her parents lately dead", "On the Difficulties of Religion" (163-5) which is part of "Fidelia arguing with her self on the difficulty of finding the true Religion". The following poems appear in both *A Patch-Work Screen* and Part II of the Magdalen manuscript: "Upon Charity" (157-8), "On Dreams" (162-3), "The Childrens, or Catechumen's Elysium," (160-1). The remaining poems do not appear in any other

Galesia travelling in a stagecoach and listening to the stories of her fellow passengers. As the journey progresses, the other travellers leave the coach until Galesia is left alone. Crossing a bridge, the coach overturns and Galesia falls into a river. She finds shelter for the night in a grimy but comfortable cottage and the next day sets off to continue her journey. Wandering into the grounds of an estate she meets its owner, an unidentified “Lady,” who takes her back to her home where she and her maids are constructing a patchwork screen. The Lady asks Galesia to stay with her and help her work on this screen. However, when Galesia opens her boxes to look for items to contribute, she finds only her own writings. The Lady gladly accepts these and begins to attach them to the screen. Leaf I provides “The Continuation of the History of Galesia” interspersed with other stories within the narrator’s own reminiscences. This section reveals Galesia’s continued interest in writing and study, her recovery from her relationship with Bosvil, her friendship with some Cambridge students and her intense grief following the death of her brother. It includes several of Barker’s poems including the distinctive “Anatomy” which considers the workings of the human body in verse form.<sup>108</sup> Leaf II sees Galesia moving to London and feeling both out of place due to her “Clownish Breeding” and shocked at the depravity and irreligion of the city.<sup>109</sup> This section includes a description of Galesia’s pride in her growing reputation as a medical practitioner. Leaf III brings to a close the discussion of Galesia’s various suitors which has also occurred in the previous two sections with a description of a disastrous courtship (“The History of Lysander” considered below) and with her mother finally resolving that Galesia is indeed destined for “a *Single*

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Barker text: “Thou know’st, my Dear...” (91-2), “The Song” (149-50), “The Prophecy” (152), “On the Follies of Human-Life” (153-4), “But what does most of all my Spirit grieve...” (165-6), “An Ode In Commemoration of the Nativity of Christ” (167-73).

<sup>108</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 86-90.

<sup>109</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 110.

*Life*".<sup>110</sup> The section includes Barker's poem "A Virgin Life" which concludes with the line that the business of an unmarried woman is "To serve her God, her Neighbour and her Friends".<sup>111</sup> The final leaf sees the death of Galesia's mother and a renewed focus upon the "frame" of the story and the Lady with the estate.

As will be seen from this brief summary, *A Patch-Work Screen* is an extremely wide-ranging text that defies easy categorisation or simplistic analysis. The novel encompasses material that justifies both a gender based approach and also a more party political reading. I wish to argue that party politics are indeed central to this novel but that the nature of such politics have been consistently misread in relation to this text. I thus disagree with King, the critic who has provided the most sustained political reading of this novel, and who views the work as "a complex elegiac response to the collapse of Jacobite ambitions".<sup>112</sup> By contrast, I would suggest that, whilst distinctly Tory, *A Patch-Work Screen* cannot be categorised as a Jacobite work but is read as such primarily because of our knowledge of Barker's commitment to the exiled Stuarts. I would also argue that Barker's politics in this novel are more active, and less "elegiac" and passive, than King suggests.

Central to King's reading of the text is her interpretation of both the preface to the readers and an episode she calls "The View from the Leads".<sup>113</sup> The latter refers to the section of *A Patch-Work Screen* in which Galesia uses a garret in her home in Westminster as a space in which to study and write but from which she is barred once

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<sup>110</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 141.

<sup>111</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 140.

<sup>112</sup> King, *Exile* 161.

<sup>113</sup> King, *Exile* 200.

an unmarried pregnant woman visits her there.<sup>114</sup> King summarizes those readings of this episode that view it as expressive of the restrictions placed upon Galesia as a woman. Whilst accepting that many such readings are of interest, King also suggests that they are frequently “anachronistic” in their inferences.<sup>115</sup> For King, the central feature of the scene is the fact that, from the roof, Galesia “could behold the *Parliament-House, Westminster-Hall, and the Abbey*”.<sup>116</sup> Viewing such institutions, Galesia contemplates the ways in which the values they supposedly represent have been so frequently distorted:

But with what Amazement did I reflect, how Mankind had perverted the Use of those Places design'd for a general Benefit: and having been reading the Reign of King *Charles* the First, I was amaz'd, to think how those *Law Makers* cou'd become such *Law-Confounders*, as the History relates. Was it Ambition, Pride or Avarice? For what other wicked Spirit entred amongst them, we know not; but something infernal sure it was, that push'd or persuaded them to bring so barbarous an Enterprize to so sad a Conclusion. Ambition sure it cou'd not be, for *every one* cou'd not be King, nor indeed cou'd *any one* reasonably hope it. Neither cou'd it be Pride, because in this Action they work'd their own Disgrace. It must certainly therefore be Covetousness; for they hop'd to enrich themselves by the Ruins of the *Church and State*, as I have heard; though the Riches were of small Durance.<sup>117</sup>

King develops a reading of this episode that combines an interest in gender with an awareness of the political context in which Barker was writing. Within such a reading the exclusion of Galesia from her garret “figures the greater loss bound up in women’s withdrawal more generally from older, more politically engaged modes of literary activity.” As a result, when Galesia is barred from the rooftop she is also

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<sup>114</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 129-33.

<sup>115</sup> King, *Exile* 204.

<sup>116</sup> King, *Exile* 205; Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 124-5.

<sup>117</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 125.

refused “a commanding vision from above of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, the world of law, lawmakers, national history, and public affairs”.<sup>118</sup>

King’s reading of a familiar passage from the Preface posits a similarly politicised Galesia. The passage explores the notion of party political differences through the conceit of patchwork:

*...for, whenever one sees a Set of Ladies together, their Sentiments are as differently mix’d as the Patches in their Work: To wit, Whigs and Tories, High-Church and Low-Church, Jacobites and Williamites, and many more Distinctions, which they divide and sub-divide, ‘till at last they make this Dis-union meet in an harmonious Tea-Table Entertainment. This puts me in mind of what I have heard some Philosophers assert, about the Clashing of Atoms, which at last united to compose this glorious Fabrick of the UNIVERSE.*<sup>119</sup>

King cites Carol Shiner Wilson’s interpretation of this passage which King sees as promoting “an image of bourgeois womanhood *triumphans*”.<sup>120</sup> However, as with the “view from the leads” episode, King repoliticises Barker’s writing by suggesting that the tea-table “does not ... offer a haven from or ‘feminized’ alternative to the public world but is rather the political sphere in microcosm” and thus that it offers “an oblique (and jaundiced) glance at the newly fashionable definitions of femininity that drained women of their political identities while relegating them to cosy protected spaces invoked by metonymic tea-tables.”<sup>121</sup>

Whilst I would applaud this positioning of Galesia as a political figure, I would also suggest that, as in her analysis of *Exilius*, King’s reading of *A Patch-Work Screen*

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<sup>118</sup> King, *Exile* 207.

<sup>119</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 52; King, *Exile* 201.

<sup>120</sup> King, *Exile* 201.

<sup>121</sup> King, *Exile* 202.

falls short of acknowledging the *interventionist* nature of Barker's politics. As mentioned above, for King the patchwork narratives are essentially backward looking. *A Patch-Work Screen* is thus an "elegiac" text whose politics are implicit rather than "overt".<sup>122</sup> The politics that King does identify in the novel are seen as reflected primarily through gendered and highly personalised aspects of the text. Thus, Barker is argued to use her own "spinsterhood and a failure-of-marriage plot to explore by way of analogy the situation of the loyal subject when the 'lost lover' is truly, perhaps irretrievably lost".<sup>123</sup> Although King argues that Barker laments the exclusion of women from the political sphere in her analysis of the two episodes considered above, King herself confines Barker, to a certain extent, by focussing her political expression on this highly autobiographical trope. I wish to argue that Barker's politics in this novel, whilst often expressed through amatory plots, are more socially wide-ranging than is usually acknowledged.

Central to such a reading of *A Patch-Work Screen* are the four final stories related by Galesia, each individually among the longest in the entire novel. Although each of these stories revolves around some sort of amorous intrigue, they all carry implications for society as a whole rather than just for the featured lovers. The first of these stories concerns a woman whose father, although born a gentleman, has made money through trade.<sup>124</sup> He educates his daughter as a gentlewoman but refuses to allow her to marry the lawyer whom she loves, and whom she has vowed to marry, insisting instead that she marry "a wealthy Citizen" who lacks both birth and education.<sup>125</sup> Eventually, her husband's business collapses and she is reduced to

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<sup>122</sup> King, *Exile* 161.

<sup>123</sup> King, *Exile* 162.

<sup>124</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 119-22.

<sup>125</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 121.

working as a nurse. Meanwhile, the lawyer becomes both famous and successful due to his loyalty to Charles II. “*The Story of Belinda*” also concerns the daughter of a gentleman although one who lives on his estate not one who engages in trade.<sup>126</sup> Belinda’s parents are initially paragons who are kind to neighbours, tenants and servants. However, neither Belinda nor her brother inherit their parents’ fine qualities. The brother becomes a dissipated rake whilst Belinda herself is seduced by a married man, becomes pregnant and flees her parental home. It also transpires that Belinda’s father has become miserly since the birth of his daughter, refusing charity to those in need and concentrating all his wealth on his children. “*The History of Lysander*” to some extent echoes that of Belinda.<sup>127</sup> The only son of a widowed gentlewoman, Lysander trains as a lawyer. However, he takes a married woman as his mistress and foolishly settles his estate on her. When he repents of his lifestyle and wishes to marry the virtuous Galesia, his mistress blackmails him and he shoots himself.

The last of the four main tales is the one that has prompted the most critical comment – and confusion. Entitled “*The Unaccountable Wife*” it tells the story of a man, his wife and their servant.<sup>128</sup> The wife becomes “a perfect Slave” to the servant, carrying out all her household tasks and even sleeping in the same bed with both her and her own husband.<sup>129</sup> The wife’s acquaintances assume that her husband has forced this arrangement upon her. However, it transpires that it is the wife who is attached to the servant not the husband. Eventually, the wife and the servant leave the man and move in together. Even after her husband’s death, the wife remains loyal to this

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<sup>126</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 129-32.

<sup>127</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 134-8.

<sup>128</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 144-49.

<sup>129</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 145.

woman. She refuses all attempts to separate them, even rejecting a pension from the Queen, and finally is to be seen begging in the street in order to support the servant and her illegitimate children.

These four stories from *A Patch-Work Screen* all function as critiques of a society in which social hierarchies and harmonies are disrupted and in which money and individualism are prioritised over duty and accountability. Belinda's parents, initially virtuous examples of social responsibility, become greedy and their children epitomise selfishness and sexual indulgence. The nurse is faithless, she breaks her vow to her suitor not through "Obedience" to her father but through "Weakness," whilst her father abandons his respect for social distinctions and sees money rather than gentility as the most desirable feature of a son-in-law.<sup>130</sup> Lysander not only fails in his duty to his dependent mother he also alienates his family's estate and settles it on a socially and sexually unworthy woman. Criticism of "The Unaccountable Wife," understandably perhaps, tends to focus on the range of sexualities that might be featured in the story. However, as King has pointed out, the focus of the story is social as much as it is sexual. The aspect of these domestic arrangements which causes most outrage to those who observe them is the disruption they cause to social relationships and hierarchies.<sup>131</sup> It is the sight of the wife doing the servant's work which puts Galesia's mother "into such a violent Passion, that she had much ado to refrain from laying Hands on her" rather than the knowledge that husband, wife and

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<sup>130</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 121.

<sup>131</sup> King, *Exile* 229-30.

servant share the same bed.<sup>132</sup> And when Galesia tells this story to the Lady whilst they work on the patchwork screen together, the Lady comments only on the wife's refusal to take advice from her relatives and social superiors: "Sure ... This poor Creature was under some Spell or Inchantment, or she could never have persisted, in so strange a manner, to oppose her Husband, and all her nearest Friends, and even her *Sovereign*".<sup>133</sup> This story clearly has interest for students of gender and for those looking for early proto-lesbian texts. However, to focus *only* on these aspects and to remove the story from the context Barker herself creates for it, a series of other stories which focus on *social* relations, is to overlook its contribution to the larger arguments of the novel as a whole.

Barker places these individual vignettes within the larger framework of Galesia's autobiography. This story contains many aspects that correspond with what we know of Barker's own life: her interest in medicine, her friendship with some Cambridge students, the loss of her beloved brother. Yet this narrative also contributes to the novel's overarching social critique. Galesia's horror at the irreligious and acquisitive life she encounters in London mirrors the sense of social decline expressed in the inset stories. Even the character of her own suitors form part of the text's moral disquiet – one suitor is hanged as a highwayman after he turns to robbery through a quest for rakish adventure rather than financial need.<sup>134</sup> Galesia thus functions within the novel as an uncorrupted onlooker and interpreter, placing the events she recounts in their moral and political context.

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<sup>132</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 146.

<sup>133</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 149

<sup>134</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 103-4.

A further frame for the inset tales is of course the fact that Galesia is telling her story and her tales to the Lady on the country estate. This Lady and her husband provide a contrast to the social decline displayed in the stories. The estate they inhabit is well-regulated, they provide comfort to a distressed Galesia and their house is filled with objects made by “poor Gentlewomen” employed by their ancestors “thereby to keep them from Distress, and evil Company, ‘till Time and Friends could dispose Things for their Better Settlement”.<sup>135</sup> The Lady and her husband thus provide a classic example of noblesse oblige and also of a social order founded on such supposedly traditional Tory values as rural as opposed to urban living and respect for social hierarchies. However, this ideal environment is under threat. Towards the close of the novel we learn that the Lady’s husband is “about to lay a Debt upon his Estate” in order to invest in the South Sea Company.<sup>136</sup> Galesia implores the Lady to prevent this “for God’s Sake, your own Sake, your Childrens Sake, and for the Sake of all the Poor, that depend upon your Charity” thus offering a concise expression of conservative fears about the potential social effects of the financial revolution of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>137</sup>

Shortly after this reference, the novel concludes with “An Ode, In Commemoration of the Nativity of Christ” which closes with a call for the conversion of the Jews.<sup>138</sup>

Bearing no relation to the events of the novel *other* than a politically allusive one, this Ode allows Barker to end her work in a manner which is at once decorous and pious, yet simultaneously politically engaged. It would not be difficult for those reading

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<sup>135</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 74.

<sup>136</sup> King observes that “In Jacobite code the Bubble means political corruption ... In Barker’s usage the association serves also to construct the female poet as prophetic outcast, speaking moral truths others are more likely to try to screen,” *Exile* 210.

<sup>137</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 151, 152.

<sup>138</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 167-73.

with an awareness of political sub-texts to view “the stubborn *Jews*” lost in “Error’s foggy Night” as the politically wayward men and women of contemporary England.<sup>139</sup> As King remarks, “in Jacobite contexts the conversion of the Jews stood for that conversion of English hearts and minds that would usher in a Stuart restoration”.<sup>140</sup>

In her address “To the Reader” at the start of *A Patch-Work Screen* Barker refers to her novel as “a HISTORY *reduc’d into Patches*,” a phrase that perfectly encapsulates the way in which this text functions.<sup>141</sup> Robert Mayer’s concept of “history as a storehouse of political lessons,” cited earlier in this chapter, is useful here. In *A Patch-Work Screen* Barker explores history not in a linear or neatly allegorical fashion but by taking “stories” and using them to present “historical truths” as she perceives them, in effect encouraging her readers to draw the correct “political lessons” from the stories she relates. As in *Exilius* chronological accuracy is irrelevant in such a proceeding. Just as ancient Rome and Egypt are presented in an early eighteenth-century novel, dependent on the tropes of Restoration drama, in order to explore both the politics of the 1680s and the Hanoverian succession, so *A Patch-Work Screen* blithely includes references to the South Sea Bubble in tales supposedly set in the reign of Charles II. Defoe’s work once again provides a useful parallel to Barker’s in this respect. Pat Rogers has argued that in *A Journal of the Plague Year* Defoe uses the plague partly as a means of exploring the implications of the South Sea Bubble. Defoe is able to do this because he senses “an imaginative connection between 1665 and 1720”.<sup>142</sup> Barker establishes a similar connection between these

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<sup>139</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 172.

<sup>140</sup> King, *Exile* 164.

<sup>141</sup> Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen* 51.

<sup>142</sup> Pat Rogers, *Eighteenth Century Encounters: Studies in Literature and Society in the Age of Walpole*

two periods in her work. Thus, the historical circumstances of Galesia's own life and those of the people whose stories she tells come to symbolise what is wrong with the age in which the novel is published.

As we know that Barker was herself a Jacobite it is easy to categorise *A Patch-Work Screen* as a work of Jacobite nostalgia but this is not the case. There is a possible hint of Jacobite positioning in the quotation from Dryden's *Love Triumphant* (1694) on the work's title page:

'Tis *Love* does all that's Noble here below;  
*Love* is the *Steel*, that strikes upon the *Flint*;  
 Gives Coldness *Heat*, exerts the hidden *Flame*,  
 And spreads the *Sparkles* round to warm the *World*.

The printed version of this play was dedicated to James Cecil, fourth Earl of Salisbury, who, in James Winn's words, was "a prominent Catholic and Jacobite whose very name was likely to raise the hackles of Dryden's enemies". For Winn, the epistle to Cecil was a clear yet implicit expression of political allegiance: "by pretending to be unable to discuss his patron's religious and political beliefs, Dryden rhetorically emphasizes those beliefs".<sup>143</sup> By choosing to cite such a politically sensitive play on the title page of her own novel, Barker could be argued to be sending a coded statement of her Jacobite allegiance. Surely more significant, however, is the close correspondence between the central themes of the two works. Winn sees *Love Triumphant* as a "deliberately old-fashioned" text whose "nostalgia for a bygone era of high heroic virtue implies satiric contempt for current

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(Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985) 161.

<sup>143</sup> Winn 473.

corruption".<sup>144</sup> The quotation chosen by Barker clearly articulates a conception of heroic love that contrasts with the tales of debauchery and deception she narrates. The sub-title of the novel, "*LOVE and VIRTUE Recommended*," further signals the work's didactic intent. The novel itself is, like *Love Triumphant*, deliberately old-fashioned, praising values which are seen to belong to an earlier era. It certainly appears to reflect Barker's Tory politics but it is *not* explicitly Jacobite, neither is it defeatist. Primarily through the figure of Galesia herself, who comments upon the moral decay she sees around her but who remains personally unpolluted by it, the novel shows that resistance to the corrosive effects of contemporary society is possible. As in the case of *Exilius*, by gesturing towards the ideals of an earlier age Barker suggests that those ideals may be recaptured.

Barker's sequel to this novel, *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen*, follows a similar pattern to its predecessor. Galesia recounts further episodes from her own life and also relates stories told to her by friends and acquaintances. At the opening of the novel the reader learns that the central character has left the Lady's estate and returned to London. Many of the stories related within the novel show a resemblance to those included in *The Patch-Work Screen* – there are further stories of seduction and of perjury and broken vows. Several of the stories also have distinctly Catholic settings, often featuring convents.<sup>145</sup> At the opposite end of the spiritual spectrum there is also a story featuring a succuba. The novel also features retellings of the story of the Portuguese Nun and of Aphra Behn's "The History of the Nun; or, The Fair Vow-Breaker" and "The Wandering Beauty".<sup>146</sup> Toni Bowers has observed that

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<sup>144</sup> Winn 471, 472.

<sup>145</sup> King comments that the inset tales "are concerned to a remarkable degree with convents, priests, nuns, conversions, and the happiness to be found in the 'Society of holy Virgins,'" *Exile* 165.

<sup>146</sup> Jacqueline Pearson explores the changes Barker makes to Behn's source stories in "The History of

the latter “turns on the problem of broken vows, conflating a familiar amatory fable with a political warning in the immediate context of the Glorious Revolution”.<sup>147</sup>

Although this tale does not fulfil an overtly political function within *The Lining*, Bowers’ analysis indicates that Barker’s choice of this tale from Behn can be viewed as significant.

However, the politics of *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* consist of more than veiled hints and possible subtexts. I will argue that, in this her final prose narrative, Barker offers her readers stories that carry clear and assertive political messages and which render this text the most actively Jacobite of her novels. Once again, this means that my reading of the work departs from that of King, the only critic who has so far developed a sustained reading of *The Lining* as a political text. For King, the politics of *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* are a direct extension of those in *The Patch-Work Screen*. More pessimistic than its predecessor, the second of the patchwork narratives is characterised by King as “Barker’s bleakest work” and is seen to express the “intense nostalgia” resulting from its author’s perception that Jacobitism was “an all but lost cause”.<sup>148</sup> As in her analysis of *A Patch-Work Screen*, King’s interpretation of the politics of *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* revolves around a central marital trope, in this instance that of bigamy. This trope, claims King, is used by Barker “to express the troubles of the subject divided between *de jure* and *de facto* husbands/sovereigns and ... to deepen her analysis of Jacobite

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*The History of the Nun*,” *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism*, ed. Heidi Hutner (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993) 234-52. Pearson’s readings are coloured by her assessment of Galesia as “a writer who exemplifies the eighteenth-century ideal of chaste, domestic, unassertive female authorship,” 241.

<sup>147</sup> Bowers, “Sex, Lies, and Invisibility” 65.

<sup>148</sup> King, *Exile* 164, 166, 164.

existence in a time of defeat, compromise, and political illegitimacy”.<sup>149</sup> Ultimately, King reads the novel as reflecting the failure of Jacobitism and the destruction of the hopes of its adherents. King is clearly correct to identify the prevalence of the bigamy trope and her reading of its possible political significance is convincing. Yet I would suggest that, once again, Barker is far less consolatory and far more interventionist than is usually acknowledged. Far from being a text that admits defeat, I wish to argue that *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* is clear in its argument that the Jacobite cause is far from lost.

Although the novel is comprised of many inset tales, I intend to focus upon just two of them. These stories, like the story of the eponymous hero in *Exilius* are, I would suggest, both thematically and structurally central to the novel. Between them they make up almost a quarter of the novel. The first of these stories is entitled “The Cause of the *MOORS* Overrunning *Spain*”.<sup>150</sup> In this tale, which Galesia discovers in an old book, the throne of Spain is usurped by a King who subsequently rapes the daughter of his most eminent general. As a consequence, the general switches allegiance to the moors and helps them to invade Spain. Meanwhile the usurper seeks counsel from a sorcerer in a building known as The Devil’s Tower which reeks of “unwholsome Vapours” and contains a cauldron of boiling blood as well as a gate on which is written the warning “*Be sure thou dost not look behind*”.<sup>151</sup> At the heart of the tower the visitors find a giant image of Time. Carefully walking around this image so as not to look behind themselves, the King and his retinue finally realise to their horror that the warning refers to not looking behind the image rather than to not

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<sup>149</sup> King, *Exile* 165.

<sup>150</sup> Barker, *Lining* 205-10.

<sup>151</sup> Barker, *Lining* 208, 209.

looking behind themselves. As a result, they realise that they are all doomed. The tale ends with the proverb, “*Who drives the Devil’s Stages,/Deserves the Devil’s Wages*”.<sup>152</sup>

This “Trifle of a Story” as Galesia somewhat disingenuously refers to it has clear political resonance.<sup>153</sup> Howard Erskine-Hill has commented on the repeated use of the trope of rape in Jacobite writing and it is easy to see the rape of the general’s daughter by a usurping king as a Jacobite reference.<sup>154</sup> Perhaps even more significant, however, is the image of time as a circular progression in which those who do wrong will themselves be undone. Michael McKeon has commented on the use of circular notions of time in what he refers to as “conservative” narratives.<sup>155</sup> McKeon shows how the idea of time as a cyclical entity allows writers whose political orientation is broadly conservative rather than progressive to create plots in which political wrongs can be redressed and the politically disinherited can be restored to their rightful fortunes. Such a cyclical interpretation of time clearly stands in contrast to Whig notions of time as linear and progressive. For Barker, this tale of the usurpation of the Spanish throne not only enables her to make a point about the illegality of the Hanoverian succession and William’s “usurpation” of the throne but it also allows her to point out, in a far from elegiac way, that the battle is not yet over.

“*The Story of Captain Manly*” carries a similarly Jacobite message but presents it in a less explicit manner.<sup>156</sup> Manly marries for money rather than love. He then takes a

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<sup>152</sup> Barker, *Lining* 210.

<sup>153</sup> Barker, *Lining* 210.

<sup>154</sup> Erskine-Hill, “Literature and the Jacobite Cause,” 49-50.

<sup>155</sup> Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

<sup>156</sup> Barker, *Lining* 182-202.

mistress, the conventionally named Chloris. After the Revolution of 1688 Manly travels into exile and is taken captive by the Turks. However, his inherent abilities enable him to rise above the position of slave. Finally, Manly and his fellow captive, a Roman Catholic priest, convert their female Turkish owner to Catholicism and all three flee the country. This, as previously noted, is just one example of the many stories in this novel in which Barker presents a boldly positive image of Catholicism. The convert offers to marry Manly but he refuses, explaining that he has a wife in England. On arrival in Italy, the Turkish convert enters a convent and the travellers discover that Chloris has already professed as a nun in the same religious house. Upon his return to England, Manly learns that his wife has died and left him her money, signing her will on the very day that he refused to betray her by marrying his Turkish suitor.

As with the tales in *A Patch-Work Screen*, it would be perfectly plausible to read this story as a conventional romantic escapade. However, the political references in the episode make it possible for those who seek Jacobite allusions to find them. Manly, we learn, wavered at the time of the Revolution but eventually followed James into exile. Ultimately, his refusal to perjure himself and betray his initial vows opens the way for him to return to a dutiful life and to be rewarded for it. I would argue that this story provides a clear example of Barker using an amatory plot for political ends. Whereas the tale of the Spanish King offers a warning to those who seek to deprive the Stuarts of their throne, the tale of Captain Manly offers reassurance to those who are sympathetic to the Stuarts yet fear the consequences of expressing this sympathy. Manly *does* suffer but his fidelity leads to his ultimate reward.

One of the most interesting aspects of these stories is the way in which Barker uses proverbs in relation to them. Proverbs feature throughout Barker's prose narratives. Although there are just three in *Love Intrigues*, *A Patch-Work Screen* features nine whilst *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen*, a slightly shorter work than its immediate predecessor, contains sixteen. I would suggest that in this latter work Barker moves away from her earlier use of proverbs as purely illustrative and didactic rhetorical tools to a more political use. In effect, in *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen* Barker uses proverbs as a "screen" behind which to conceal the true import of her politically sensitive stories.

Proverbs in general function in a variety of ways. Scholars of the form such as Archer Taylor and James Obelkevich have demonstrated that proverbs were not always perceived simply as "folkloric curiosities" but were highly respected in the Renaissance by the intellectual elite as "part of their cultural capital".<sup>157</sup> This respect dwindled in the eighteenth century and Morris P. Tilley has argued that during this period "proverbs were first frowned upon and then banished from polite literature," although Wolfgang Mieder has disputed the extent to which this was the case.<sup>158</sup> Regardless of their particular status during various historical periods, however, a uniform feature of the proverb is its essentially collective nature. In order to have meaning, proverbs must both reflect acknowledged social values and be recognised by the society from which they emerge. For Obelkevich the function of proverbs:

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<sup>157</sup> Archer Taylor, *The Proverb* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931); James Obelkevich "Proverbs and Social History," *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb*, ed. Wolfgang Mieder (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994) 211-252 (227).

<sup>158</sup> Morris P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950) viii; Wolfgang Mieder, "A Man of Fashion Never

ordinarily, is moral and didactic: people use proverbs to tell others what to do in a given situation or what attitude to take towards it. Proverbs, then, are ‘strategies for situations’; but they are strategies with authority, formulating some part of a society’s common sense, its values and ways of doing things.<sup>159</sup>

Yet this is not to suggest that proverbs are static. Adrian O. Ward has written of “the inherent instability of proverbs” and there is general agreement that proverbs cannot be seen to possess an unchanging meaning divorced from context.<sup>160</sup> For Roger D. Abrahams and Barbara A. Babcock “the essence of proverb use ... is that it is situated”.<sup>161</sup> In a discussion of Wyatt’s use of proverbs Diane Ross draws attention to the fact that, in the third satire, the two speakers debate the meaning of the proverb “a rolling stone gathers no moss,” the very proverb Barker cites at the end of the tale of Captain Manly:

The speaker suggests that a mossy stone has the mineral equivalent of the good life – safe, rested, protected. Brian, on the other hand, compares the mossy stone to a “fatted swine” wallowing in a filthy manger, suggesting that he would rather stay lean, hungry, and honest. The two speakers’ disagreement about the import of the proverb establishes the poles of argument for the satire as a whole, which debates whether an honest man can make a living in the corrupt world. The ambiguous proverb about the “mossy stone” reflects the poem’s concern with the doubleness of language.

The ambiguity of the proverb cited in the poem thus “destabilizes the genre of moralistic verse epistle,” whilst also “giving the lie to the ‘sure’ place of proverbs”.<sup>162</sup>

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Has Recourse to Proverbs’: Lord Chesterfield’s Tilting at Proverbial Windmills,” *Folklore* 111.1 (2000): 23-42.

<sup>159</sup> Obelkevich 213.

<sup>160</sup> Adrian O. Ward, “Proverbs and Political Anxiety in the Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey,” *English Studies* 81.5 (2000): 456-71 (457).

<sup>161</sup> Roger D. Abrahams and Barbara A. Babcock, “The Literary Use of Proverbs,” *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb* 415-37 (420).

<sup>162</sup> Diane M. Ross, “Sir Thomas Wyatt: Proverbs and the Poetics of Scorn,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18.2 (1987): 201-12 (211).

For Michael Piret this very slipperiness of proverbs makes them effective as a literary device:

The proverb offers more than concision and the magnetic tug of difficulty. At root it offers didactic power, a voice of authority which, thanks to its sheer capacity to entertain, can often make its mark on a reader undetected. It is a splendid because a potentially covert rhetorical tool...<sup>163</sup>

In *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* Barker tends to place her proverbs at the end of the various inset stories, thus appearing to use them to “sum up” or encapsulate the meaning of the preceding tale.<sup>164</sup> This follows the pattern established by Roger L’Estrange in his *Fables of Aesop* whereby the fables frequently conclude with an explanatory proverb.<sup>165</sup> Yet, if Barker’s reader pauses to consider the relationship between story and proverb more closely, it becomes apparent that this relationship is often tangential at best. In some cases, as in “*The History of The Lady Gypsie*,” a complex tale of concealed identity and broken promises, the concluding proverb, in this instance “*Give Folks Luck, and throw ‘em into the Sea*,” appears merely reductive.<sup>166</sup> In other cases, however, the proverbs are almost absurd in their inappropriateness. This is particularly true of “*Philinda’s Story out of the Book*”. This story is concerned with a nun’s broken vows, bigamy and murder but concludes with the proverb “*Marry in haste, and Repent at leisure*”.<sup>167</sup> Likewise, Philinda’s

<sup>163</sup> Michael Piret, “Herbert and Proverbs,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 17.3 (1988): 222-43 (232).

<sup>164</sup> In *Love Intrigues* the proverbs are integrated into the main text and in *A Patch-Work Screen* some are integrated whilst others appear at the end of inset tales.

<sup>165</sup> Sir Roger L’Estrange, *Fables of Aesop And other Eminent Mythologists with Morals and Reflexions*. (London: 1692). Barker herself makes reference in her text to the work of Oswald Dykes, a leading compiler of proverbs, *Lining* 272. However, no one source by this author contains all the proverbs cited by Barker. See Chapter One for a discussion of Anne Finch’s use of fables.

<sup>166</sup> Barker, *Lining* 227-37, 237.

<sup>167</sup> Barker, *Lining* 214-17, 217.

own story, which includes marital friction, wrongful imprisonment and death, is summarized by the anti-climatic “*After a Storm comes a Calm*”.<sup>168</sup>

I would suggest that the most likely reason for Barker’s somewhat peculiar use of proverbs in this novel is that she is using them simultaneously to screen the political import of some of the tales whilst also signalling to the observant reader that there is more to these tales than is suggested by their reductive tags. The very importance of context to a proverb’s meaning emphasises the disjunction between context and meaning in the instance of these tales. This incongruity forces the reader to reflect further upon the possible meaning of the stories he or she has read. Barker has thus identified what Piret sees as the “potentially covert” nature of the proverb and has used the authority implicit in the form for her own personal ends. Rather than explicitly use proverbs to control her readers’ responses, a technique that would be politically dangerous, Barker instead uses the safety of these shared, communal sayings to render her writing acceptable on the surface whilst subversive at its heart. Such methodology demonstrates a further similarity between Barker’s work and *The Rape of the Lock*. As Howard Erskine-Hill writes of Clarissa’s speech on the transience of beauty, which was added to the 1717 edition of the poem, “Her famous speech is then the moral in the poem, but not of it. It serves to make the 1717 *Rape of the Lock* politically unexceptional, at first sight...”<sup>169</sup> In a similar way Barker lays a trail of false “morals” in order to conceal the genuine political ones.

As one would expect, the proverbs attached to the tales of Captain Manly and of the Spanish King function in particularly interesting ways. At the conclusion of Captain

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<sup>168</sup> Barker, *Lining* 211-14, 214.

<sup>169</sup> Erskine-Hill, *Poetry of Opposition* 93.

Manly's tale we learn "*That a Rolling Stone never gathers Moss*" a proverb which seems to bear no relation to either the story or its political subtext.<sup>170</sup> As we have seen in relation to Wyatt, this proverb is notoriously ambiguous and is capable of sustaining directly opposing interpretations. The story of the Spanish King, as already observed, carries the warning that "*Who drives the Devil's Stages,/Deserves the Devil's Wages*". This latter proverb can be read apolitically but for those who view the story in political terms, the proverb carries a clear warning to those whose politics Barker opposes. Leigh Eicke has observed that this proverb resembles a line from the poem "A discourse between Englands ill Genius and his companion" which appears in Part One of the Magdalen manuscript and which is discussed in the next chapter. This poem shows Lucifer involved in earthly politics and firmly opposed to Catholicism and its adherents. The line in question, "For where the Devil leads or drives they go," appears to refer to dissenters.<sup>171</sup> Eicke remarks that this line not only resembles the proverb that concludes the story of the Spanish King but also the moral that appears at the end of the story featuring the character Succubella which is narrated by an individual known as Malhurissa. Succubella is a governess who, in Eicke's words:

tries to lure her pupil into witchcraft, but as they fly to a festive demonic rendezvous, the young woman absentmindedly crosses herself at the stroke of midnight and thus breaks the spell and falls to safety in a monastery. The young woman's internal and habitual Catholicism and the quick thinking of the religious brothers save her from witchcraft and apprehend Succubella before she can escape.<sup>172</sup>

Malhurissa's own story provides an ironic contrast to this tale. Having been educated

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<sup>170</sup> Barker, *Lining* 202.

<sup>171</sup> Magdalen MS 343, fol. 15v.

<sup>172</sup> Eicke 149.

in a convent, the orphaned Malhurissa is instructed by her uncle to remove to a less strict religious house in order to prepare her for entry to the world. Malhurissa is escorted on this journey by a Mrs. Vileman and her companion who lure her to London by promising to show her the delights of the city. Malhurissa is then persuaded into a false marriage with Mrs. Vileman's companion who sexually ruins her and steals her money. Malhurissa's failure to maintain her "internal and habitual Catholicism" and to move immediately to the other convent thus lead to disaster. The false vows exchanged in the pretend marriage can of course also be seen as a Jacobite trope in this story.

For Eicke, however, the main interest of the Succubella narrative is that:

This story shares the poem's demonizing of opponents to Catholicism and clearly presents the virtue and efficacy of Catholicism. This story's especially close relationship to manuscript is cemented by *The Lining's* only overt example of manuscript publication, for it is this story that causes Malhurissa to copy the verses that she shares with Galesia.<sup>173</sup>

These verses are concerned with the Witch of Endor but the allusion does not seem significant to the text.<sup>174</sup> Eicke therefore establishes a linguistic and thematic link between the manuscript poem, the tale of Succubella and the tale of the Spanish King. Eicke acknowledges the surface Jacobitism of the latter, the themes of usurpation, rape and war discussed above, but also feels that a key feature of the political nature of this tale lies in this link:

The writings inscribed in the tower resemble manuscript publication in their limited circulation, and the story's concluding proverb, "*Who*

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<sup>173</sup> Eicke 149-50.

<sup>174</sup> Barker, *Lining* 271.

*drives the Devil's Stages,/Deserves the Devil's Wages*" recalls the line from the manuscript poem. Although this is a commonplace expression, Barker uses a version of it in three places to associate her religious and political opponents with the devil. The stories of Succubella and of the Moors overrunning Spain are the most sensational tales in the volume, echoing the quotidian political diabolism of the manuscript devils and transforming it into a print-friendly supernatural.<sup>175</sup>

Eicke's analysis is extremely useful in that it draws attention to an undoubted connection between these three separate texts. However, it also implies that the proverb in the story of the Spanish King functions solely through its connection to these other texts. As I have argued above in relation to Eicke's general argument, this tends to restrict the political meaning of Barker's text by limiting at least some of its force to those initiated readers who have access to the manuscript volume. By focussing only on this example of Barker's use of proverbs Eicke also fails to acknowledge the ways in which this form functions as a whole within Barker's work, most usually in isolation from the manuscript texts.

The tale of Captain Manly, although less explicit, is arguably more politically dangerous than the tale of the Spanish King. In the latter Barker is dealing with high politics, war, and abstractions such cyclical views of history. The story can, in effect, be read passively by those who agree with its Jacobite stance. If the Devil will finally destroy those who do his work, there is little need for the reader to intervene. However, the story of Captain Manly makes a greater demand upon the sympathetic reader. The implied message of this story is that individual readers must look to their own loyalties and ensure that they are faithful to their beliefs and vows. The difference between the two tales is that between what Michael McKeon has termed

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<sup>175</sup> Eicke 150.

macro- and micro-narratives. The Spanish tale deals with the macro-narrative of state politics whereas Manly's story translates this into a micro-narrative of personal loyalty and responsibility. Barker shies away from pointing this moral home in her choice of proverb, but by choosing a proverb so entirely inappropriate to the tale she mirrors the political import of the story by making the reader responsible for his or her own interpretation. The use of proverbs in *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen* thus demonstrates the far from elegiac nature of the text. Not only do they enable Barker safely to embed highly politicised anecdotes within the novel as a whole, they also enable her to develop a technique that emphasises to her readers the importance of being active in both their interpretation of historical narratives and their political futures.

Barker concludes *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen* with a description of a dream in which Galesia encounters a vivid cast of bawds, whores, false lovers and duped women in a harsh and rocky landscape and is chased from an Edenic valley by a giant named Omrison, which name Barker's editor Carol Shiner Wilson glosses as suggestive of the Latin for "laughing or mocking".<sup>176</sup> Galesia then witnesses part of the Annual Coronation of Orinda on Parnassus before being dismissed from the scene by the Fairy Queen who provides her with a bag of gold. Waking from her dream, Galesia then finds herself being offered another bag of gold by a mysterious stranger. She uses this money to buy a stock of *Female Vertues* and her agent then attempts to sell *Sincerity* to the Ladies of the Court, *Chastity* to the prostitutes of Drury Lane and *Humility* to Ladies of wealth and fashion. Predictably, she encounters a similar degree of failure in each instance. Galesia then learns "The *Story of Mrs. Castoff*"

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<sup>176</sup> Barker, *Lining* 275.

who has been “cast off” by all her friends and relations due to her sinful life. Having now succumbed to abject misery and despair she is willing to purchase some of Galesia’s Virtues in keeping with the proverbial expression that she, “*Cast off Vice, when Vice cast off her*”.<sup>177</sup> It may be a limited success but it does at least imply that repentance is possible for even the most wretched of sinners. Galesia’s agent then distributes copies of Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ* and returns to Galesia, who is preparing to go back to the country estate of the Lady she encountered in *A Patch-Work Screen*.

This is how Barker brings her final novel to a close. In this bizarre allegorical fantasy we have a perfect example of Barker’s “multiple personality” as an author for this ending, like all the best Barker narratives, works on many levels. There are unmistakable reflections upon her role as a woman writer in the description of Orinda’s coronation and also possibly in her expulsion from the Edenic valley by Omrison. These episodes have occasioned much debate amongst critics. For Leigh Eicke, they are “an extended meditation on the stigma of print” in which “Barker’s career in print” is represented through “Galesia’s career in merchantry”.<sup>178</sup> Just as: “Galesia wishes to sell humility to the court and persuade prostitutes to repentance and piety; Barker’s Jacobites wish to chasten the unlawful court and her Catholics advocate repentance, piety, and virtue to all”.<sup>179</sup> Kathryn King ponders the meaning of the gold wondering whether it represents “whorishness or chastity, female corruption or female virtue; it could signify the degeneration of the times or the pure gleam of transcendent value”. The presence of Katherine Philips is also seen as ambivalent,

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<sup>177</sup> Barker, *Lining* 282-9, 289.

<sup>178</sup> Eicke 151, 153.

<sup>179</sup> Eicke 153.

“Does she stand for a feminine literary ideal regrettably vanished from contemporary life? Or for an increasingly outdated and perhaps even faintly absurd model of female authorship?”<sup>180</sup> King’s reading of the episode concludes that it is its transitional nature that marks its importance:

Banished from Parnassus with a handful of gold and unnoticed in any case by its fantastically idealized Queen, Galesia figures her creator’s recognition that as a novelist for pay she no longer defines herself through the genteel literary codes with which she had identified for the better part of her writing life. For all her considerable regrets, it is with the fallen commercialized literary world that Jane Barker has cast her lot.<sup>181</sup>

What is also notable, I would suggest, is that in the coronation scene Barker does not quote a single word of Katherine Philips’s poetry, choosing instead to quote from Cowley’s tribute poem to Orinda.<sup>182</sup> Even in a scene as susceptible to a gendered reading as this one, Barker thus positions herself as much in relation to a male writer as to “the Matchless Orinda”. This whole concluding allegorical section serves, I would argue, as a summation of what Barker has been trying to achieve in her two patchwork novels. She has indeed moved from the manuscript culture represented by Orinda into a world of literary commerce, but her movement into such a world has been at least partially motivated by her desire to change it. And although her patchwork novels may be addressed to “The Ladies” they carry implications for the whole of society.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> King, *Exile* 216.

<sup>181</sup> King, *Exile* 217. King invents the term “Janus Barker” in order to refer to “an aged woman who remained stubbornly attached to the high ideals of the Stuart age and yet was able to produce experimental fictions,” *Exile* 181.

<sup>182</sup> Abraham Cowley, “Upon Mrs. K. Philips her Poems,” *Poems by the most deservedly Admired Mrs. Katherine Philips* (London: 1667).

<sup>183</sup> King argues that Barker’s novels may well have had a larger male readership than is often believed, *Exile* 199.

It is also important to remember that this final novel ends with the positive emblem of the return to the Lady on her well-regulated estate thus offering the reader the knowledge that there is an alternative to the world of “Robbers rifling, Ladies affronted, Maids deluded by false Lovers, insolvent Debtors... Wives mis-used, Husbands abused, Whores slanting, honest Women despised, Girls trappan’d by Bawds, Boys mis-led by Drunkards, Jilts and Thieves” that has been depicted.<sup>184</sup> Barker’s last word as a published author thus appears to be an indication that the society she depicts is not necessarily beyond redemption. Her emblematic approach to history, her “*HISTORY reduc’d into Patches*,” shows that, if they choose to do so, her readers can learn the lessons she offers.

Such a positive conclusion should help to counter the idea that Barker is simply an author of Jacobite nostalgia. All too often, the supposed piety of Barker’s gender politics are allowed to inflect our interpretations of her wider politics and to render her a more demure writer than she is in actuality. Deeply complex, Barker is a writer who repays close reading. Her political stance in her novels is not uniform but is reflected differently in each individual text. What does remain constant, however, is her ability to use stories to explore the events of recent history and to interpret such history in ways which reflect her own political commitments. Such interpretations most frequently function as calls for political change, a fact that is reflected even more strongly in the manuscript poems considered in the next chapter.

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<sup>184</sup> Barker, *Lining* 274.

### Chapter Three

#### “Rebells, Hereticks, Debaucheses and knaves”: Jane Barker’s Manuscript Poetry

The previous chapter considered Barker’s work as a writer of prose and also as a producer of published writing. This chapter, by contrast, will examine Barker’s poetic output and more specifically her manuscript poetry. In her manuscript verse Barker explored her political views more explicitly than in her prose works and simultaneously demonstrated their profound connection with her conversion to Catholicism. The poetry of Barker’s that appeared only in manuscript also stands in complete contrast to her earlier published volume of poetry, *Poetical Recreations* (1688). The former is not primarily a party political work. Although of great interest in relation to Barker’s attitudes to gender, it is largely devoid of the Tory preoccupations of both the prose and the manuscript poetry and cannot be considered in any way a Jacobite work. As such it is beyond the scope of this thesis. The manuscript verse, however, is essential to any consideration of the connection between Barker’s politics and her writing.

The principal source for Barker’s manuscript verse is the collection housed in the library of Magdalen College, Oxford. This is a quarto volume of 136 leaves measuring 227 x 171 mm and bound in what Kathryn King, who has worked extensively on the manuscript, has identified as “contemporary calf”. The manuscript is composed of three discrete sections and a total of eighty poems, seemingly written between 1689 and 1704.<sup>1</sup> Part One, entitled “Poems Referring to

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford, Magdalen College, MS 343. Kathryn King, *The Poems of Jane Barker: The Magdalen Manuscript*, Occasional Paper 3 (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1998) 8. Detailed information about the Magdalen manuscript can also be found in King, *Jane Barker, Exile: A Literary Career 1675-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), especially Chapter Three.

the times,” which contains twenty poems, introduces the character of “Fidelia” who, like Galesia in the prose fictions, functions as the author’s alter-ego. This character, like Barker herself, converts from Anglicanism to Catholicism. She is also intensely loyal to the exiled Stuarts. The poems in this first section comment on the events of James II’s reign and the Revolution of 1688 and are virulent in their condemnation of the latter. King believes that this section had been composed “by late 1700” and that “internal evidence suggests most of the poems were begun earlier, probably between 1685 and 1691 or so”.<sup>2</sup> These poems also feature in a subsidiary manuscript source, “a collection of twenty poems prepared as a New Year’s gift to the Prince of Wales in 1700, now in the British library”.<sup>3</sup> King’s analysis of the binding of the Magdalen manuscript, with which I concur, leads her to conclude that Part One was originally bound separately and was later unbound and combined with Parts Two and Three into the single volume that now exists.<sup>4</sup>

The second part of the manuscript develops the political themes of the first section and gives an insight into the sufferings of the exiled court. Amongst its twenty-eight poems are texts addressed to the exiled King, Queen and Prince of Wales and also an elegy to James II. King believes that this section was composed from around 1689 to 1704 at the latest.<sup>5</sup> The third and final part of the manuscript is the longest section containing thirty-two poems. It features revisions of works featured in *Poetical Recreations* and internal evidence leads King to estimate its dates of composition

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<sup>2</sup> King, *Exile* 101

<sup>3</sup> London, British Library, Additional MS 21, 621. King, *The Poems* 1. This volume is a quarto “in original early eighteenth-century boards (measuring c. 187 x 240mm), later rebound with a new gilt spine spliced-in and with new paste-downs and end-papers,” *The Poems* 1 (n.2). The volume is comprised of fifty-five folios and the pages are also numbered, up to ninety, in the original hand.

<sup>4</sup> King, *The Poems* 8.

<sup>5</sup> King, *Exile* 101-2; *The Poems* 3.

“between 1675 (or earlier) and 1687 at the outside”.<sup>6</sup> The manuscript as a whole appears to have been used by Barker “as a kind of personal poetic archive” as it bears the traces of the author’s own revisions and corrections.<sup>7</sup> Parts Two and Three are written in Barker’s own hand whilst Part One was transcribed by Barker’s cousin, William Connock, a fellow exile at St. Germain. Connock was also the amanuensis for the collection presented to the Prince of Wales.<sup>8</sup> King reasonably suggests that Barker was forced to use an amanuensis due to severe problems with her eyesight. Barker suffered from cataracts and in 1696 had these “couched”. This procedure involved the insertion of a needle into the eye and was extremely dangerous. King argues convincingly that after this operation Barker would have been partially blind.<sup>9</sup>

Some information is available about the provenance of the Magdalen manuscript. In the nineteenth century the manuscript formed part of the library of the collector the Reverend Thomas Corser (1793-1876) and was sold as part of this collection at Sotheby’s on 10 July 1871. It was purchased by a book dealer named ‘Salkeld’ and then, in 1886, by W.D. Macray (1826-1916), the librarian of the Bodleian. At some point Macray appears to have donated the manuscript to Magdalen College where it has remained.<sup>10</sup>

Remarkably little attention has been paid to the Magdalen manuscript by scholars and Kathryn King is the critic who has written on the collection in greatest detail. King’s

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<sup>6</sup> King, *The Poems* 17. See also King, *Exile* 101-2.

<sup>7</sup> King, *The Poems* 5. King also includes on this page a photograph of a thumbprint, presumed to be Barker’s, which appears, marked out in ink, in the manuscript. This print is also reproduced as Figure 2 in *Exile*.

<sup>8</sup> King, *The Poems* 9-13. King identifies Connock through a comparison of the handwriting in Part One and letters known to have been written by Connock.

<sup>9</sup> King, *The Poems* 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> King, *The Poems* 17.

analysis of these texts can be found in both an occasional paper published in 1998 and in a chapter of her 2000 study of Barker's work.<sup>11</sup> The 1998 work forms part of a series of similar papers published by Magdalen College, Oxford and is intended purely as a brief introduction to the manuscript collection. It reproduces just sixteen poems and contains a twenty-three page introduction. The latter focuses primarily on providing bibliographic information about the manuscript and biographical information about its author and it is in these two areas that it remains most useful. As is perhaps inevitable in such an introductory work, King establishes a very broad context for the manuscript claiming that it "is of considerable interest to students of English Catholicism, Jacobitism in its early phases, and spiritual autobiography, as well as students of women's writing."<sup>12</sup> Pressure of space, however, makes it impossible for King to discuss any of these areas in detail. Only two pages are available for an analysis of the poems themselves and, reflecting the climate of Barker studies at the time, these focus almost entirely upon the interest of Barker for feminist criticism. As indicated in the previous chapter, King herself alters this focus significantly in her 2000 study. The selection of poems included in the occasional paper also tends to promote a biographical rather than a political reading of the manuscript. Exactly half of the poems featured are taken from the third and least overtly political section of the collection. Six of the remaining poems are taken from Part Two and only two from Part One, the section that I will argue establishes the religio-political framework for the volume as a whole.

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<sup>11</sup> Kathryn King, *Exile and The Poems*. Carol Barash considers some of the Magdalen manuscript poems in *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 198-208. Howard Erskine-Hill also discusses these poems briefly in his essay, "Poetry at the Exiled Court," *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689-1718*, ed. Edward Corp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 215-34. Whilst acknowledging their interest, Erskine-Hill ultimately concludes that these poems show Barker to be "probably a feminist rather than a Jacobite discovery," 230 n. 38.

<sup>12</sup> King, *The Poems* 3.

The third chapter of King's 2000 study of Barker allows the author considerably more space in which to develop a reading of these manuscript poems. As a result, King makes reference to a larger number of poems than in her introduction to her occasional paper and explores the religious and political contexts to these works in greater detail. King also argues that religious and political identity are at least as significant as gender, if not more so, in the Magdalen manuscript texts.<sup>13</sup> Yet, despite such attempts at contextualisation King's analysis of these poems remains grounded in generalisation:

My overarching argument is that from the 1690s Barker wrote to supply the exiles of her generation with a mythology of banished righteousness. Depicting herself and her fellow exiles as driven by 'cursed orange' to 'wander vagabons alone', she creates fictions of persecution, banishment, suffering, and heroic fidelity designed to sustain a people in diaspora and turn the bleakness of exile into an affirmation of Jacobite ideals. In *Fidelia*, a persona created for the St-Germain poems and found nowhere else in the surviving works, she creates an exemplary figure, a Catholic convert and Stuart loyalist able to remain staunch even when the cost is deprivation and poverty. In the seemingly autobiographical St-Germain verse Barker composes stories of sacrificial devotion congenial to the outlook of other uncompromising Jacobite exiles, fashioning myths that express in equal measure the virtuous ideals and shared paranoia of the tribe.<sup>14</sup>

The rest of the chapter does not significantly elaborate upon these ideas. As a result, the reader is left with the sense that the political poems in the Magdalen manuscript form part of a homogeneous whole and provide an unvarying expression of uncomplicated and undifferentiated "Jacobite ideals". As I argued in the previous chapter in relation to Barker's prose works, such categorisations do Barker a

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<sup>13</sup> King remarks that, "Barker ... writes less 'as a woman' in the Magdalen verse than as a divine-right monarchist and Roman Catholic of a particularly uncompromising sort," *Exile* 131.

<sup>14</sup> King, *Exile* 102-3.

disservice as they impose a uniformity upon her expression that renders her political views less complex and detailed than the evidence of her texts suggests is fair. As with her analysis of the prose fictions, King should be applauded for drawing attention to the essentially political nature of so much of Barker's writing and for demonstrating that her identity as a Jacobite is as significant to her as her identity as a woman. However, as in the case of King's analysis of the novels, I would suggest that such an awareness of the centrality of Jacobitism to Barker's work can serve only as a starting point. A blanket labelling of Barker as a Jacobite is as restrictive as a similar designation of her as a writer preoccupied with "gender". What is now needed is an analysis of Barker's Jacobitism that examines that allegiance in detail and explores the ways in which it is tested and sustained over a period of time and in a range of different texts. In the previous chapter I attempted such an analysis in relation to the prose fictions. In this chapter I hope to demonstrate that Parts One and Two of the Magdalen manuscript offer an account of Barker's Jacobitism at specific times and in particular circumstances. This Jacobitism is not static but alters in line with changing historical events. It acknowledges the possibility of political failure but also develops ways of coping with such a possibility.

This chapter will therefore investigate the ways in which Barker uses the manuscript verse of Parts One and Two of the Magdalen manuscript both to construct her own identity as a Jacobite writer and also to present an interpretation of contemporary politics. Building upon the exploration of Barker's use of history in the previous chapter I will demonstrate that, as in the prose fictions, Barker interprets British history, particularly recent British history, in ways that advance her own political beliefs and which serve as demands for political change. However, in her manuscript

verse, unlike her prose fictions, Barker does not feel the need to resort to the use of encoded stories in order to convey her message. This is clearly because the manuscript was not intended for a wide readership but for fellow supporters of the Stuart cause. There is no evidence that the volume was ever circulated beyond such circles, indeed it would have been dangerous to do so.<sup>15</sup> The manuscript texts therefore provide Barker with the freedom to explore and express her political views openly, a freedom unavailable in the freely circulating, printed prose fictions.

As suggested above and in the previous chapter, Barker's interpretation of history is profoundly connected to her conversion to Roman Catholicism. No official records of this event have been located but it is believed to have taken place at some point in the mid-1680s and appears to have been the seminal experience of Barker's life.<sup>16</sup>

Barker's conversion not only influenced her writing it also made her a member of a religious minority subject to legal and financial penalties.<sup>17</sup> There are references to her change of faith scattered throughout Barker's work, both prose and poetry, published and unpublished, yet the most sustained focus upon her conversion comes in the sequence of Fidelity poems found in Part One of the Magdalen manuscript.

There are twelve such poems.<sup>18</sup> This chapter will focus heavily on the most significant

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<sup>15</sup> King writes, "That Barker's verse circulated at St-Germain seems certain but proof is thin," *Exile* 122 n. 57.

<sup>16</sup> King, *Exile* 11.

<sup>17</sup> King, *Exile* 11-12. See the introduction to this thesis, n. 10, for further information on the penalties imposed on Catholics.

<sup>18</sup> The titles of these poems are as follows: "Fidelity alone lamenting her parents lately dead, and her relations gone to the west against Monmouth," "Fidelity arguing with her self on the difficulty of finding the true Religion," "Fidelity having seen the Convent at St: James's," "Fidelity and her friend on her becoming a Catholick first dialogue," "Second Dialogue," "Fidelity and her friend the third dialogue," "Fidelity weeping for the Kings departure at the Revolution," "Fidelity and her Friend," "Fidelity in France meets one of Portsmouth officers," "Fidelity meets her neighbour reading a letter," "Fidelity in a Convent garden the Abess comes to her" and "Fidelity walking the Lady Abess comes to her".

of these poems and will use them as a starting point for an exploration of the wider religio-political aspects of the Magdalen manuscript as a whole.

Central to the conversion narrative presented in the Fidelia texts is the poem “Fidelia arguing with her self on the difficulty of finding the true Religion” (fols. 11v-13r), the fifth poem in Part One. In this text Barker considers the dilemma of those Anglicans who question the validity of their church’s authority. Deliberating on the relative claims of faith and reason and the seemingly impenetrable “Misterys” (fol. 11v) of Scripture, Fidelia expresses the belief that there must be an incontrovertible source of authority that will provide an end to her confusion:

Then sure some living witness there must bee,  
To hand this down to all posterity,  
And with their blood avouch the verity.  
Such is the Church, not that wherein I live,  
For that can no such Testimony give,  
But quite contrary it’s new doctrins look,  
Denying things affirmed in this book. (fol. 12r)

By the close of this poem the nominally Protestant speaker has decided that the historical continuity and interpretative tradition offered by the Roman Catholic Church lends it an efficacy that the Church of England lacks. Anglicanism is seen as an innovation and a departure from the religion of “the first teachers”(fol. 12r).

Having weighed the advantages and disadvantages of conversion, Fidelia, as her name suggests, remains true to this insight and decides to renew her “baptismal vows” (fol. 13r) under the tutelage of the Benedictines.

For Barker, in the guise of Fidelia, the central religious issue facing her thus appears to have been the need to locate the source of true spiritual authority. In this she was

not alone. Writing of the intellectual and theological conflicts of seventeenth-century English Catholics, Kenneth Campbell has observed that:

Ironically, many Catholic converts used their own reason to decide that their reason was insufficient in religious matters; hence they fell back upon the one Church which they believed could claim the greatest amount of religious authority because of its antiquity, tradition, clearly defined doctrine, or for whatever reason.<sup>19</sup>

Campbell argues that, “The Protestants’ tendencies to divide and to dispute with one another obviously weighed heavily with any man in search of religious authority”.<sup>20</sup>

Louis Bredvold, writing of the background to Dryden’s conversion to Catholicism, makes a similar point arguing that “the question of religious knowledge and authority” provided “the great crux” of religious debate in this period.<sup>21</sup> The issue of church authority appears in Dryden’s work, particularly *The Hind and the Panther*, and also in the written explanations of their decisions to convert apparently provided by Anne Hyde, Duchess of York and Charles II.<sup>22</sup> In her paper, the Duchess shows how she was led to Catholicism by her belief that Anglicanism lacked historical validity, that it had rejected doctrines such as the Real Presence without justification for doing so and that the Roman Catholic Church was infallible and hence the source of religious authority. The paper attributed to Charles II demonstrates a similar motivation for conversion:

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth L. Campbell, *The Intellectual Struggle of the English Papists in the Seventeenth Century: The Catholic Dilemma* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1986) 111.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell 112.

<sup>21</sup> Louis I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden: Studies in Some Aspects of Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1934) 82.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, “A Copy of a Paper, Written by the late Duchess of York,” and Charles II, “Copies of two Papers written by the late King Charles the Second, of blessed Memory. The First Paper,” *The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, As well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the late Earl of Oxford’s Library. Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes.* vol. V. (London: 1745) 42-3, 40-1.

... Christ can have but one Church here upon Earth; and I believe, that it is as visible, as that the Scripture is in Print, That none can be that Church, but that which is called the *Roman* Catholic Church. ... the main, and; in Truth, the only Question is; Where that Church is, which we profess to believe, in the two Creeds? We declare there to believe one Catholic and Apostolick Church; and it is not left to every fantastical Man's Head to believe as he pleases, but to the Church, to whom Christ left the Power, upon Earth, to govern us in Matters of Faith, who made these Creeds for our Directions.<sup>23</sup>

Barker's attempt to locate a source of spiritual "truth" should be viewed in the context of this wider desire for an incontrovertible religious authority. Yet, although the *Fidelia* poems narrate shifts in Barker's religious belief they are not texts that can easily be defined as religious verse. The entire process of conversion, from initial doubts about the authority of the true church to certainty of the truth of Catholicism, is dealt with in the single poem, "On the difficulty of finding the true Religion". Barker, therefore, does not use the *Fidelia* poems to debate theological issues in the abstract or as exercises in devotional writing. Instead, she uses them as a means of interpreting English history, from the Reformation to her own day, and of reconciling such history with her new faith and her political beliefs. Even more significantly, the *Fidelia* poems lead Barker to a clear sense of personal engagement with such history.

Writing of Elizabeth Cellier, another adult convert to Catholicism and participant in the "Meal Tub Plot", Frances Dolan has observed:

Cellier presents her conversion not as a retreat into inwardness but as motivated by her reflections on political struggle: her horror at the treatment of Charles I and Royalists "for their being Papists and Idolators". The conversion, in turn, motivates political resistance: her suspicion that the Popish Plot was merely "pretended" and her determination "to relieve the poor imprison'd Catholics".<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Charles II 40.

<sup>24</sup> Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) 171.

In a similar way, the *Fidelia* poems do not lead Barker within herself to a focus upon her own spiritual struggles but outward to reflections upon the battle between the Catholic and Anglican communions as played out through the events of English history. Such a focus is reflected not simply in the content of the poems but also in the structure of the *Fidelia* narrative as a whole. Whereas the decision to convert is essentially dealt with in a single poem, Barker uses four texts to justify this decision to the world, represented in the form of an anonymous “Friend” who engages *Fidelia* in a series of “dialogues”.<sup>25</sup>

The series opens with the friend expressing shock at *Fidelia*’s conversion which is presented as a form of desertion:

Tell me how cou’d you thus leave in distres,  
Your tender mother, friend, and governes  
Such crimes wou’d shame the worst adulteress.  
A Church which does above all others shine,  
In faith, in manners, doctrin, disciplin  
Which shews that its foundation is divine. (fol. 17v)

After some initial prevarications that “Maids argue best ... in being mute”<sup>26</sup> and that she will not deny “The vertues of your Church” (fol. 17v), *Fidelia* responds with an anecdote relating her encounter with the Test Act in the form of “a hideous monstrous beast” (fol. 18r). *Fidelia* and the beast debate the character of the Anglican Church and its relation to Parliament. The beast denies the validity of transubstantiation and claims that the original church “of sublime decent” is dead, that

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<sup>25</sup> “*Fidelia* and her friend on her becoming a Catholick first dialogue” (fols. 17v-19v), “Second Dialogue” (fols. 19v-21v), “*Fidelia* and her friend the third dialogue” (fols. 21v-22v) and “*Fidelia* and her friend” (fols. 25v-27r).

<sup>26</sup> This suggests that the friend is male. I will, therefore, use the male pronoun throughout the chapter

he is her “heir” and owed “by right of heritage” (fol. 18v) the respect once due to her. Fidelia responds furiously, refusing to pay tribute to the beast and claiming that “To let thee live’s more mercifull than just” (fol. 18v). The following section of the poem is obscure but appears to refer to the Popish Plot through its allusions to a “Plot” which “was a fantome wond’rously begot”. Such allusions only infuriate Fidelia further and she declares to the beast that she wishes she had the strength to “pull out thy tongue”(fol. 19r). The poem draws to a conclusion with the Friend stating of the beast that “intrest binds us to support him now” as “He be’ng the watchfull Dragon of our cause,/’Tis he secures the Golden Fleece our Laws.”<sup>27</sup> Fidelia responds to this remark with the riposte, “Till non obstante Jason pair his claws” (fol. 19r). These lines are also obscure but, through their positioning of Anglicans as defenders of James’ (Jason’s) “cause,” they would seem to refer to the nonjurors who refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary and thus to validate the new regime. The phrase “non obstante” refers to “A clause in a statute or letter patent conveying a dispensation from a monarch or other executive to perform an action notwithstanding any statute to the contrary”.<sup>28</sup> Barker is therefore looking forward not simply to James’ restoration but to a return to full monarchical authority. This would correspond with what is known of Barker’s political opinions as identified by King:

It is clear Barker aligned herself with the ‘non-compounders’, the most intransigent of the Jacobites at St-Germain. These were Catholic hard-liners who rejected the compromise sought by the mainly Anglican ‘compounders’ who proposed restoration on strictly limited terms and called for assurances that measures for the advancement of Catholics in

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when referring to this character.

<sup>27</sup> The term “interest” is politically loaded. It was frequently used by Jacobites to imply that the Whigs were self-serving. See Chapter One, 34.

<sup>28</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary, 5 November 2006 <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>. The OED also states that this dispensation was abolished by the Bill of Rights in 1688. Barker here appears to be moving towards a defence of absolutism. However, this assumption is undermined by other poems in the Magdalen manuscript as discussed later in this chapter (205).

England such as those pursued by James during his brief reign would not be repeated. To Barker and her kind compounding with the Anglican establishment was anathema.<sup>29</sup>

The “first dialogue” between Fidelia and her friend demonstrates a similarly “intransigent” standpoint. The vision that Fidelia invokes is of a powerful sovereign clipping the “claws” of the Church and not seeking to compromise with it. Barker does allow Fidelia’s friend the last word in the poem, giving him the following lines:

But if your non obstante should be cast,  
And \* Street-law get the upperhand at last;  
How wou’d yr forward hopes shrink with that blast,  
Then take my councill, do not hope too fast.

\* Judge Street the only one of the twelve that oppos’d the dispensing power, refering allso to the rabble (fol. 19v)

Yet this concession is purely temporary, a momentary pause in an ongoing dispute that will ultimately be won by Fidelia.

This initial dialogue reveals that, from the very outset, Fidelia’s religious choices are shown to have a clearly political dimension. Although the poem opens with a discussion of religious conviction, it concludes with a disagreement about the law and the constitution. Repeatedly throughout the Fidelia poems, Barker makes similar connections between the publicly political and the personal life of her poetic creations in a manner which King reads as demonstrative of “the reciprocal relation between public macrohistory and private microhistory that organizes the sequence as a whole”.<sup>30</sup> In the poem “On the Victory at Sedgemore” (fol. 9v) the connection

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<sup>29</sup> King, *Exile* 142.

<sup>30</sup> King, *Exile* 111.

between these parallel arenas is made explicit: “My heart rejoyces for the publick good,/Though for my frinds I’ve still inquietude”.

The subsequent exchanges between Fidelity and her “friend” extend such connections. In the “Second Dialogue” (fols. 19v-21v) the poet’s alter ego faces the charge that her conversion was self-seeking, “You chang’d your faith, to be in the court mode,/For fashion sake you change and eat your God” (fol. 19v). A similar charge, of course, was levelled against Dryden. In effect, however, Barker shows that it is the Friend who is the opportunistic pragmatist through his counsel that “these are times, for truth to hold her tongue”. Fidelity counters with the charge that scripture teaches a different lesson: “Such were the times, when the bold Prophet cryd,/Gainst Bethel’s Altar, and its calf defy’d” (fol. 20r). She then explicitly links the apostasy of those who worshipped the idol calves at Dan and Bethel (Hosea 8: 5-7) with those who commit what she regards as contemporary political apostasy:

Those Dan and Bethel Idoles we have here,  
The Test and Penal Laws, which all revere  
To these two calves, all Zealously fall down,  
To swear against the Miter and the Crown. (fol. 20r)

Fidelity thus uses biblical history not simply to defend recent converts from the charge that they lacked principles but also to invert that criticism by implying that it is those who are opposed to Catholicism who are self-serving and irreligious.

In the remainder of the poem Fidelity continues with such inversion, turning each defence offered by her companion into a counter-charge. In response to her Friend’s

suggestion that the Test and Penal Laws were “establish’d in defence,/Of King and Church,” Fidelity sarcastically replies:

Just so the Parliament,  
For the King’s safty troops against him sent.  
Moreover to establish him on’s Throne,  
They did behead from which God bless his son. (fol. 20r)

The Friend’s argument that many Anglicans supported James but were constrained not to act against him by the doctrine of passive obedience is also rejected:

Friend.	Compare us not I pray to forty one, Wee who have been the bulwark ‘gainst his foes, And stoutly did th’ Exclusion bill oppose.
Fidelity.	Though then you did not bite, your teeth you shewd, And offerd him your Test a thing most rude; You were to subtill your own shafts to shoot, But set him up the Butt o’th’ common rout. But we’ll that fault in deep oblivion hide, Do but in NON RESISTANCE now abide; Your Passive faculty shall ne’er by tryd. (fol. 20r-v)

Again demonstrating her “non-compounder” credentials, Fidelity rejects the idea of non-resistance as hypocritical. Firmly committing herself to active involvement, Fidelity here adopts a position opposed to that maintained by the nonjuring Anne Finch and examined in the first chapter. The remainder of the poem enables Barker, through Fidelity, to praise Mary of Modena as “all perfection, intire excellence” (fol. 21r) and concludes with a promise that the speakers will further debate the issues they have raised next time they meet.

The third dialogue (fols. 21v-22v) describes the repercussions of Fidelity’s encounters with the Anglican beast. Hoping to disprove the truth of his allegations, and

presumably prior to her conversion, Fidelity resolved to establish “That Church a virgin, perfect, Excellent,/Nor prostitute to King or Parli’ment”. However, the reader learns that her search led her to the opposite conclusion: “But then I found her, what I blush to tell/A cruell false, deceitfull Jezzabell” (fol. 21v). The allusion to Jezebel introduces a sustained use of the story of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21).<sup>31</sup> Through this allegory, Protestantism in general is compared to Ahab’s wife and presented as promiscuous and diseased:

So many \*lovers she still strove to please,  
That in the end she got a foul disease;  
By which she was with ulcers covered o’er,  
And insects bred in every festered sore.  
At last she did the monster Test produce,  
The ofspring of a general abuse,  
Of whome she’d like to dyed, some say she’s dead,  
And that the monster governs in her stead.

\* Luther, Calvin, & others (fol. 22r).<sup>32</sup>

The fracturing of Protestantism into different denominations, and thus the move away from the single central authority Barker prioritised in “On the difficulty of finding the true Religion,” is shown to lead inevitably to decay and spiritual degeneration. The fact that Fidelity was herself once an adherent of this Church does not cause her to feel any lingering affection for Anglicanism but rather intensifies her loathing of it. When her friend remarks, “I wonder you thus hate this Church of ours/It bears so great

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<sup>31</sup> Barker includes a marginal note at this point which reads, “the author had never seen the poem calld naboth’s vinyard, else she would not have put her sicle in an others harvest,” (fol. 21v). The reference is to the poem of this name by John Caryll. Michael Suarez provides a detailed discussion of this text in his article, “A Crisis in English Public Life: The Popish Plot, *Naboth’s Vineyard* (1679), and Mock-Biblical Satire’s Exemplary Redress,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67:4 (2004): 529-552. Suarez states that Caryll’s poem is “the first sustained mock-biblical verse satire in English” and that it “is routinely adduced as an important antecedent to *Absalom and Achitophel*,” 529. Suarez also suggests that Caryll, who was imprisoned in the Tower during the Popish Plot, wrote his poem in order to “give moral support to the powerless recusant community,” 532. Although Barker claims not to have known of Caryll’s text, this work nonetheless provides an interesting parallel to Barker’s poems which were also written to bolster the morale of a persecuted political group. See also Erskine-Hill, “Poetry at the Exiled Court,” for a discussion of Caryll.

<sup>32</sup> Barker’s own note.

resemblance to yours” (fol. 22r), Fidelia responds, “The more like us, the more I her detest/Apes cause like men are still the uglier beast” (fol. 22v). The conversion to what she sees as the *true* faith thus leads Fidelia to an uncompromising view of all other faiths – any superficial resemblances between Protestantism and Catholicism simply render the former the more repugnant. The Friend counters with the argument that, unlike Fidelia, he and his fellow believers “better know our duty to our King./We do not at oath’s of alegiance start/But swear and act the faithfull subjects part”. Yet for Fidelia such a “duty” is undermined by the fact that it is allied with “intrest”:

You till a soyl, in which you treasure find,  
 You know your duty’s with your intrest joynd.  
 Few wou’d resist the charms of such a she,  
 Who brings with her so vast a dowary.  
 But who courts vertue for her sake alone,  
 None, none, such fools but we in \*forty one.  
 Not that we blame this loyalty in you  
 But wish our duty was our intrest too.

\*the Catholicks then, having no intrest to oblige ‘em to serve the King (fol. 22v).<sup>33</sup>

These lines are unusually muted for Barker. Although Fidelia sees her friend’s sense of “duty” as essentially pragmatic rather than virtuous she finds herself uncharacteristically unable to condemn such pragmatism but rather envious of it. The poem ends on a conciliatory note. The Friend remarks that “If things go as they do,” then the Catholics’ “intrest” may well be joined with their “duty” and Fidelia seconds this wish: “Pray Heav’n they may, I’m sure I’d be your friend/And in good offices our feuds shou’d end” (fol. 22v). Yet despite this suggestion of possible harmony, the overall tone of the poem is confrontational. Not only is Protestantism condemned in

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<sup>33</sup> Barker’s own note.

the severest of terms, its depiction as Jezebel also implies that, like the house of Ahab, it will be providentially destroyed.

The fourth and final poem in which Fidelity debates with her friend and defends her decision to convert is entitled simply, "Fidelity and her friend" (fols. 25v-27r). Caustic and ironic, the poem draws together the themes of the preceding dialogues, exposing the hypocrisy of those who oppose Fidelity's views and simultaneously demonstrating the personal cost exacted by the latter's commitments. The poem is structured around a series of statements by the Friend and corresponding asides by Fidelity which serve to expose the duplicity of the former. Thus when the Friend states that he has "for the King had many an aking heart," Fidelity remarks "for fear in safety he the land depart" (fol. 25v). Likewise, when the Friend comments that "I and my party wish them [James and Mary] very well," Fidelity responds, "That is to say you wish them not in Hell" (fol. 26r). This technique enables Barker to further develop her presentation of Fidelity's opponents as treacherous whilst also levelling a series of specific accusations such as that the "rabble" (fol. 26r) were manipulated by James' enemies and that the "scandals" (fol. 25v) surrounding the monarch and his wife were invented by those same enemies. In a manoeuvre that, as Kathryn King remarks, is reminiscent of Bishop Burnet in Aphra Behn's poem "A Pindaric Poem to the Reverend Doctor Burnet, On the Honour He Did Me of Enquiring After Me and My Muse," the Friend also attempts to persuade Fidelity to work for the new government:

And why will you such hardships undergo  
 If you wou'd but the simple truth declare,  
 The government no recompence wou'd spare.  
 You now may be phisician to the state  
 And it's convulsions cure, at least abate.  
 Your countrys good, and your own safty too

Your honour profit, all ask this of you.  
 For which Ill answer you'l more glorys have,  
 Than Romans their heroick matrons gave,  
 You'd be our Savioress, our Heroine  
 If you'd but speak the truth o'th Prince and Queen. (fol. 26r-v) <sup>34</sup>

Kathryn King comments that these lines combine an appeal to “Barker’s self-image as a lay physician” with a “promise of political agency, of effectual intervention in the current dynastic and constitutional crisis”.<sup>35</sup> Yet Fidelity resists all her friend’s importunities resolving instead “to leave my native shoar/In foreign lands my contrys crimes deplore”(fol. 26r). The poem draws to its close with the friend claiming that Fidelity’s “party” (fol. 26v) is doomed to failure through lack of numbers whilst also claiming that it is James’ opponents who are possessed of the “truth” (fol. 27r). Fidelity, however, has the final say and wrests the concept of truth back for her own side:

To speak the truth I need not be provok'd  
 No more than dor-mouse has need to be rock'd.  
 But your words are ambiguous – adue  
 I'll quit this land till better times ensue. (aside [sic])  
 I know not to what height their spight may come  
 And All have not the gift of martyrdom. (fol. 27r) <sup>36</sup>

This final poem in the series of dialogues between Fidelity and her friend ends on a note that perfectly exemplifies several of the key themes that have dominated the exchange. The repercussions of Fidelity’s conversion for her personal and political life are starkly presented and the reader is once more made aware that there is no clear

<sup>34</sup> King, *Exile* 117 n. 42.

<sup>35</sup> King, *Exile* 117.

<sup>36</sup> These final words are written in a larger hand by Barker’s amanuensis, William Connock, presumably with Barker’s consent. The British Library version of this poem, entitled “Fidelity and her Friend on the Revolution,” omits the last thirty-nine lines of the version featured in the Magdalen manuscript. It therefore lacks the Friend’s appeal to Fidelity to betray her principles. Barker presumably felt that these lines, which emphasise the actions of those who decide to choose

distinction between the public and the private in this narrative. Exile from her homeland has become the only option for an individual like Fidelia who refuses to compromise with the new regime. Fidelia therefore resolves to “quit this land” but only temporarily as she believes that “better times” will arrive. This belief, despite all the arguments put forward by the friend, has remained unchanged since the first dialogue when Fidelia prophesied the return of James as a “non obstante” monarch. Yet this very determination to accept exile reflects the active and engaged stance of Barker’s alter ego. Fidelia, like Barker, refuses to stay in an environment where compromise and quietude will be forced upon her. She rejects the option of non-resistance yet she also refuses to embrace martyrdom, a decision made more emphatic by the larger script used for the final words of the poem. Exile therefore becomes the only viable alternative. By moving to France, Fidelia is able to remain alive whilst actively expressing her political and religious convictions.

Such expression is deeply connected to the concept of “truth” that Barker presents not just in these four poems but throughout the Fidelia narrative and the entirety of Parts One and Two of the Magdalen manuscript. This “truth” is an absolute and uncompromising value that is bitterly contested by opposing sides.<sup>37</sup> The four poems that record the exchanges between Fidelia and her friend show the former judging competing versions of Christianity and deciding that Catholicism is the authoritative interpretation of the Christian religion. As we have seen, once she is convinced of the authority of Catholicism, Fidelia comes to see any alternative as profoundly corrupt.

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pragmatism over principle, were unsuitable for the Prince.

<sup>37</sup> Kathryn King remarks of Barker’s idea of political truth, “In the ... hectic certitudes of the St-Germain verse, written in the immediate context of a propaganda war the print-savvy Williamites had little trouble winning, she returns again and again to contemplate the gap between Protestant propaganda ... and Jacobite truth, by turns frustrated over and infuriated by the power of Protestant fictions to define her reality,” *Exile* 140.

In a parallel manner, in the first two parts of her manuscript, Barker presents a Catholic and Jacobite interpretation of the conflict between James and William as the only true, and indeed Christian, version of events.

To understand this more fully it is helpful to look at the way in which Barker presents her work in the Dedication to the Prince of Wales (fols. 3r-5r) and the address “To the reader” (fols. 5v-6r) which precede Part One of the manuscript. In the Dedication to the Prince, Barker establishes herself as a teller of truth:

But truth is bold and what I here present to your Highness has so much of reality that it supersedes fancy, and scarce leaves place for what they call poetical fiction: The discourses (or at least some of them) contain not onely the sentiments, but even the very words which mallice dictated to people in those days, that one might rather call them a verbal than a poetical repetition, and have so far verified the proverb in me, as to have gaind me much Hatred and many enemys. (fol. 3v)<sup>38</sup>

Claiming an exact verbal authority for her representation of events and casting herself in the role of Biblical prophet, hated for her speaking of truth, Barker introduces her work as “reality” rather than “fancy;” a verbatim record of events rather than a poetical interpretation of them. Her poems represent “truth” whereas those who offer alternative narratives are motivated by malice and deceit.

It is notable that Barker diminishes the effect of her gender in this address. Barker does proclaim her own weakness yet such humility stems primarily from the author’s

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<sup>38</sup> It is difficult to identify the exact proverb referred to by Barker in this quotation. “Flattery makes friends and truth makes enemies” is a possible candidate. See Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of Barker’s use of proverbs.

reverence for writers such as Cowley and Dryden.<sup>39</sup> Barker opens her address to the Prince with a declaration that she hopes:

to wish your Highness not only a happy new year, but a happy new Century, and to lay at your feet this little collection, where in is contain'd part of the madness and mallice which concluded the old; supposing such a retrospect to give as it were a gust to coming Felicity. (fol. 3r)

Directly after this statement Barker introduces her first note of self-abasement, yet it is immediately apparent that her supposed reticence comes not from the fact of her gender but from her sense of implied literary comparisons:

The attempt indeed is somewhat audacious for so feeble a capacity, for if the learned Mr: Cowley found so great a difficulty in writing the transactions of his time, that he suppressd them after written, the enterprize in me must needs seem a temerity allmost to madness. (fol. 3r-v)

A few sentences later a further display of authorial modesty is directly linked to a reference to Dryden and to the Prince himself. Referring to the enemies she has created through her writing and her politics, Barker observes:

But I cou'd expect no other, since that learned and great wit, on the occasion of his Hine and Panthar was so raild at, and ridicul'd, as if he had layd down wit and sence, when he took up Religion, and Holy life; where as both were refind, not above their capacity to understand, but their conveniency to approve: Now if it far'd thus with this great man, what must become of me an insect scribbler; except enliven'd by the rays of your Royal Highnes's protection, which at your feet I begg with profound respect and humility. (fols. 3v-4r)

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<sup>39</sup> King rightly comments that Barker's positioning of "herself in a prestigious and deeply serious tradition of royalist poetic intervention in religio-political crisis" demonstrates both "deference and audacity," *Exile* 137.

At no point during the main body of her argument in this address does Barker refer to the fact that she is a woman. The only gendered note appears in the closing, conventional praise of the Prince's character:

... a person whose fingers are made to wield the needle and distaff, must not presume to write the character of so great a Prince, but with awfull respect admire at distance, those glories in which you are incircul'd, praying for their dayly increase, till their splendor disperce all vapours of Rebellion and faction, and extinguish those blazing meteors, whose influence has causd so much ruine, and mischief to mankind; and that your Royal Highness then refulgent with your native brightness, may like the Coelestial bodys move in your proper sphere, dispensing happiness in your native Country. (fols. 4v-5r)

Yet such self-abnegation functions in a similar way to the author's references to herself as "an insect scribbler" with a "feeble ... capacity". Just as her humility stemmed in those instances from her sense of inferiority in relation to Cowley and Dryden, so here it stems from her sense of the Prince's glory.<sup>40</sup> It is also notable that this reference to her gender occurs only after Barker has already established her "role" as a reliable chronicler. Even Barker's attempts at self-abasement in deference to her royal dedicatee are carefully controlled so as to maintain her authority and to counter the effects of criticism. Although acknowledging that there are more capable writers in England, Barker explains that "Rebellious, and rigorous laws have fixd as it were an impassable gulf betwixt them and the place of your abode". These writers are separated from the Prince by "a piller of a clowd" whilst she is illuminated by "a piller of fire"(fol. 4v). The analogy suggests that Jacobites in England remain imprisoned in Egypt whilst Barker lives in the exiled Court that is, somewhat

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<sup>40</sup> King observes of the relationship between author and prince in this address, "The attitude of extreme humility performed by the language serves then as a kind of metaphor to project at once an attitude of mind and an ideal relationship between sovereign and subject and, by extension, to invoke a whole world of divinely ordered distinctions of hierarchy and rank," *Exile* 136.

paradoxically, figured as the Promised Land.<sup>41</sup> Asking that the Prince, “Regard not the meanness of the offering, but the zeal and affection of the votary,” Barker states that she wishes she could “transfer your story to posterity” and thus “cut off troops of unborn Rebels”(fol. 4r). Even though Barker here implies that the task of influencing future history is beyond her, this admission in no way undermines her reliability as a source.

The address “To the reader” sustains this tone of self-validation. In this text Barker pre-empts criticism by acknowledging it in advance stating that she will no doubt be “condemn’d on all hands” but as she is honest she will take “Justice for rewarde, and Vertue for a Crown”. Scorning the “wreaths of popular applause,” Barker effectively diminishes the impact of any rejection she may receive (fol. 5v). Barker thus establishes a role for herself which she tries to render invulnerable to criticism. She is merely a soldier in an army who does her duty commendably: “Every soldjer is not a general, yet every one that does his duty in his station is commendable: and if in this I have done mine honesty; I leave elegancy to the great and learned writers” (fols. 5v-6r). Barker is clearly self-justifying but not in a remotely apologetic way. As in her address to the Prince, the narrator presents herself as a teller of “Truth”. Fidelity, we are told, speaks in “the common dialect of Catholicks, and her friend that of the Church of England”. If her characters “make an ill figure” the author asks that her readers “blame the original,” not her (fol. 6r). Barker concludes unapologetically and fully anticipating the generosity of her readers:

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<sup>41</sup> A similar sentiment is reiterated in the opening poem of Part Two, “To His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on His birth day 1689: or 99: The author having presented him a Calvary set in a vinyard” (fols. 40v-41v). In this text Barker observes, “For having you we’r here in full content,/Tis they in England suffer banishment,” (fol. 40v).

I ask no bodys pardon for what I have done, touching the subject, the slips of the pen, and defects in the English caus'd by long absence and blindness every generous reader will pardon gratis. and there in lay an obligation on  
 their humble servant (fol. 6r)

Barker thus establishes herself in her prefatory texts as one who has recognised the authoritative versions of both Christian history and of the Williamite and Jacobite conflict. In her work on Elizabeth Cellier and the Popish Plot, referred to above, Frances Dolan interprets this historical event as a battle “about the power of stories”. When analysing the Plot, she writes, “it is impossible to distinguish between events and their narrative representations because those narratives ... were the event”.<sup>42</sup> Oates’ narrative thus *creates* the Plot rather than describes it. Barker knows about the power of narratives and, as we have seen, she is insistent that hers are authoritative. However, Barker is not simply engaging in a propaganda battle. Dolan sees the stories circulating around the Popish Plot and the fear they generate as “the event” rather than the Plot itself, whether real or imagined. For Barker, there *is* a clearly defined reality – a truth beyond the narratives and representations – which must be recorded. The necessity to record this truth stems not simply from the desire to defend the Jacobite monarchs she has followed into exile but from the far more critical belief that the battle between the Jacobites and their enemies is a battle for the soul of England and that the “lies,” as she perceives them, of the Williamites promote the triumph of Satan’s forces.

Thus, interspersed with the *Fidelia* texts are a series of poems recording discussions between Lucifer and his demons, England’s Ill Genius and his Companions and

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<sup>42</sup> Dolan 158.

England's Good Genius and a character called Philanthrophel. In these texts such representatives of heaven and hell comment upon political events.<sup>43</sup> Central to these discussions is the Battle of Sedgemoor (1685) which causes lamentation in hell as described in the poem "A Discourse between England's ill Genius and his companion" (fols. 14v-17r). This poem opens with England's Ill Genius revealing that he is afraid to approach Lucifer as the latter is still smarting from James' victory in this battle. The companion attempts to console his ally by suggesting alternative strategies against the English:

Go tempt the people, and new sins devise,  
Puzzell their brains, with jealousies and lyes  
Of slavery and arbitrary power,  
Of leagues with France, and thousand follies more. (fol. 15r)

Through this demonic mouthpiece, Barker is therefore able to present the accusations that James wanted to institute both arbitrary monarchical power and a league with France as not only fictitious but also inspired, quite literally, by the devil and his minions.<sup>44</sup> Such "jealousies and lyes" are shown to be the direct result of Lucifer's terror at the increasing success of Catholicism and the anxiety that Catholics will successfully counter his misrepresentations of their faith: "By th' dispensation papists have got there/They shew that their Religion's no bugg-bear/As by our arts we made it to appear"(fol. 15r). The triumph of global Catholicism is perceived as imminent.

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<sup>43</sup> King views these poems as deploying the "topos of hell-in-an-uproar beloved of late seventeenth-century political satirists," *Exile* 133. However, I would argue that these texts are also reminiscent of the parliament in hell texts of the Civil War period. See Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 171-223 for more information on this genre. See also Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially Chapters 6 and 7, for a discussion of the political significance of "monsters" in the Civil War period.

<sup>44</sup> The reference to "non obstante" rule in the first dialogue should not be seen as a support for arbitrary monarchy. Paul Kléber Monod observes that "Jacobite propaganda drew a clear distinction between absolute and arbitrary monarchy," *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 18.

The entire world is “almost by Popery o’errun” (fol. 15r) and “worst of all a successor will come,/Who spight of us, will subject all to Rome” (fol. 15v). The companion then proceeds to describe the distribution of serpents, wasps, beetles, hornets and gadflies by a personified Envy to various representatives of English political, ecclesiastical and scholarly life. Singled out for particular notice is Robert Spencer, the Second Earl of Sunderland, a former Catholic convert who famously renounced his faith and deserted James for William of Orange: “Amongst Hell’s Heroes Sunderland shall bee,/Fam’d for his treason, and Hipocrisie” (fol. 16r). Such sentiments cheer England’s Ill Genius who prophecies “a second fall to human kind” with particular suffering due to the English as they participate in their own downfall: “But chiefly England’s fond of its undoing;/A murmuring people allways discontent,/Though Heav’n to them, hath its’s best blessings sent” (fol. 16v). The poem concludes with both the Ill Genius and his companion in agreement that the English deserve such misery because of their outstanding ingratitude:

Neer did their God, his blessings so dispence  
 On people without gratitude or sence.  
 Their Parliaments are Rebels, cleric knaves  
 Their state-men bubbles, and the people slaves,  
 They well deserve the chain of slavery  
 Who take such pains to cast of liberty. (fol. 17r)

“A Discours between England’s ill Genius and his companion” therefore veers between an assertion that Catholicism and those rulers who adhere to it will triumph over their foes both on earth and in hell and a prophecy that humanity, and particularly the English, are on the brink of catastrophe and damnation. The overall sentiments of the poem lack coherence yet Barker is consistent in her clear assertion that earthly historical and political events are reflective of a spiritual struggle between

good and evil, heaven and hell. Committed to the idea that James is a divinely appointed monarch, Barker is therefore unashamed in her alignment of her political enemies with the forces of evil. In the second poem concerned with the battle of Sedgemore, “On Sedge-more victory by Lucifer and his Fiends” (fol. 10v-11r), Lucifer himself laments James’ victory and admits openly to his attempts to destroy this sovereign: “I feard this cursed time e’er since I saw,/I cou’d not get th’Exclusion bill made law”. In Barker’s hands the arch fiend is also made to reiterate the idea expressed in the earlier poem that James’ supposedly absolutist ambitions are a diabolic invention: “For liberty we know he does designe, And that will our whole fabrick undermine” (fol. 11r).

The logical corollary of the fact that Lucifer and his devils lament the victory at Sedgemore is of course that the angels celebrate it. In “England’s Good Genius” (fol. 10r-v) Barker’s reader learns that James’ victory has caused a “mighty joy” (fol. 10r) in a heaven that Barker presents as distinctly sectarian. The victory, which is viewed as the result of the direct intervention of St. Michael, leads the Good Genius to anticipate a flood of religious vocations amongst English women: “Now many an English maid shall be Heav’ns bride”(fol. 10r). The connection between religious and political apostasy is also reiterated: “And that stout people Heav’n once lov’d so well/Till Herisie debauch’d ‘em to Rebell,/Shall now no longer champions be for Hell” (fol. 10v). The recent political history of England is therefore viewed as a direct enactment of the country’s religious deviation.

If Sedgemore is seen as significant by the inhabitants of both heaven and hell, then the revolution of 1688 is perceived as doubly so. In “A discours between England’s ill

Genius and his Companion on the jubilee in Hell” (fols. 24r-25v) the extent of Lucifer’s delight at this event is made apparent. The reader learns that great celebrations have occurred in hell in which all except “the gyant guardian fiend of France” have participated, the latter presumably excluded because his “charge” has offered sanctuary to the exiled James (fol. 24r). For the Companion the revolution is an outstanding event in the devil’s fight against the Christian religion:

‘Tis laudable and just, great joy shou’d be,  
For such a blow to Christianity.  
‘Tis certain that there never yet was known,  
So great a glory to th’infernal Crown.  
Not Corah’s bout, nor that of forty one,  
Those and all others, are of little weight,  
If ballan’d against this our eighty eight (fol. 24r)

As in the “Second Dialogue” between Fidelia and her friend, with its references to Dan and Bethel, Barker here links contemporary political events with the events of Biblical history. Korah’s rebellion against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16) is, remarkably, seen as less significant for Christianity than the overthrow of James II. A possible explanation for this lies in Paul Monod’s discussion of the “moral purpose” behind the Jacobite view of history. As a result of this purpose, “Each situation had to be worse, or better, than its predecessors, because the cycle of history was moving towards a final end. Thus, Oliver was a lesser tyrant than William...”.<sup>45</sup> The overthrow of James is thus worse than Korah’s rebellion as it moves history further towards its conclusion. In the manner common in Jacobite writing, Barker also links the revolution of 1688 and the political unrest of the 1640s that was ultimately to result in the Civil War.<sup>46</sup> This direct association of the rebels of 1688 with the forces

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<sup>45</sup> Monod 51.

<sup>46</sup> See Monod 49-54 for more information about such links.

of evil allows Barker once again to target individuals she sees as worthy of particular condemnation. Henry Compton, Bishop of London and one of the “Immortal Seven” who invited William of Orange to England, is thus designated as: “... the Saviour of our falling worth./It is too little to dubb him a Saint,/Who’s Priest and Hero, Bishop and Gallant” (fol. 25r). The Christian bishop, through his political actions, thus reveals himself to be a saint of hell. Yet, once again, it is not only her direct opponents who are vilified by Barker but also those individuals who she views as cowards and hypocrites – the non-resisters:

But above all the non-resister’s voice,  
Assisted us with cant and pious noyse,  
To bring to pass this mighty enterprise,  
Though heretofore we thought ‘em deadly foes;  
For they deceiv’d ev’n Hell with loyal voes,  
But their intrinsick valleur being known  
Th’excell the greatest Hipocrits in town,  
Ev’n \*Heugh, and Callamy in forty one.  
For which on earth they may be stigmatiz’d,  
But amongst us, they shall be canonizd,  
Amongst the Pharisees of the first class.  
They in Hells kalendars shall have a place.

\*the two great preachers of Rebellion in those days (fols. 24v-25r)

Such hostility to the non-resisters on Barker’s part appears to be closely linked to her view that it is their passivity as much as her opponents’ activity that is responsible for William’s victory. Not only does England’s Ill Genius claim that such passivity “assisted” his cause, he also marvels at the ease of his success: “I wonder that the Tyrant of the sky,/Did not oppose me or my company:/I no resistance found from any foe” (fol. 24v). This lack of resistance highlights one of the key problems that confronts Barker in these poems set in heaven and hell. By viewing the events of English political history as part of a wider battle between God and the Devil, Barker is

faced with the perennial Jacobite dilemma of explaining why the divinely ordained James has lost his throne. The reader's attention is drawn to this problem in "Englands Ill Genius and his companion after the Battell of the Boyn" (fols. 32v-34r). In this poem, the Ill Genius exults in William's victory and proclaims the English to be "downright our friends and slaves,/Rebells, Hereticks, Debaucheses and knaves"(fol. 33v). His companion urges a note of caution but does so in a manner which draws attention to the desperate plight of the Jacobites:

Thou'rt like St Germaines fools raisd to the skys  
If they but hear some old dull prophesies  
And half way home if Barte but take a prise  
Ben't so transported with your good succes  
As to neglect + augment yr happiness (fol. 34r)

The Jacobites with their belief in the divine justice of their cause thus become a symbol of the overconfidence in eventual success that is the hallmark of "fools".

The poem that follows on from this text in the manuscript views the same battle from the opposing viewpoint. "Englands Good Genius and Philanthrophel his companion" (fols. 34v-35v) shows the two titular characters considering "the Loyal partys loss" (fol. 34v). The consolation they find for this defeat stems from a consideration of James' and Mary's noble submission to God's will and from the thought that those who suffer on earth will be rewarded in heaven:

They'r surely Saints, who are fall'n in this war  
The rest he does with resignation bless,  
As earnest of their future happiness.  
So well they suffer, and so well they do,  
'Twou'd make one wish to be a mortal too.  
Their King, and Queen, regret not what they've lost,  
Except the blood it has their subjects cost;

The subjects on the other side content,  
To suffer all the grieffe of banishment (fols. 34v-35r)

At this stage in the volume the only consolation available to Barker's Jacobite readers appears to be the prospect of a heavenly reward, a solution reminiscent of Anne Finch's concept of deferred fulfilment examined in the first chapter. Yet, ultimately, Barker is too engaged with this world to be content with such a postponed triumph. She therefore seeks a more immediate solution to the problem of Jacobite failure in one of the two poems in Part One which feature Fidelia in conversation with an Abbess. In the second of these poems, "Fidelia walking the Lady Abess comes to her" (fol. 36r-v), which is placed directly after "Englands good Genius and Philanthrophel his companion," the loss of Ireland to William's supporters causes Fidelia directly to raise the question of why the Jacobites are so unsuccessful when James' supporters are certain of God's favour:

What have we done, good God, what have we done?  
That on our head this punishment is thrown,  
Our King's a saint, and we are martyrs all,  
And in our cause, Heav'ns cause too seems to fall,  
It makes one ready to think all a cheat,  
And that Religion's but a trick of state,  
Since Providence, does not its cause defend,  
How can we on this Providence depend,  
When Providence wants will or power to grant  
Our want of merit must supply that want  
Thus Providence cheats fooll, and fooll the wise,  
Lulling us into stupid lethargies,  
Till worthless fooll the worthiest men dispise. (fol. 36r)<sup>47</sup>

Such sentiments signal the nadir of Fidelia's hopes and reveal some of the "self-doubt and negative expectation" that Toni Bowers sees in Barker's Jacobite poetry.<sup>48</sup> Yet,

<sup>47</sup> There is an interesting marginal note by Barker at this point in the poem stating, "These atheistical lines, were not given to the Prince, but being in the original, they are here inserted," (fol. 36r).

<sup>48</sup> Toni Bowers, "Jacobite Difference and the Poetry of Jane Barker," *ELH* 64 (1997): 857-869 (861).

in this poem at least, such hopelessness is purely temporary. Fidelia is saved from falling into atheistical despair by the intervention of the Abbess who firmly asserts the idea that “Heav’n’s allways just and good,/Although its ways be n’t always understood” (fol. 36r). The Abbess explains that the Jacobites’ lack of success results from the fact that they are being “punish’d now for former crimes,/Of other persons, and of other times” (fol. 36v). Thus:

If some of your unluckey ancesters,  
 Joyn’d with that Gyant Henry in’s wars,  
 Those wars ‘gainst Heav’n, when he the Church oerthrew,  
 Perhaps that punishment redounds on you,  
 Besides this herisie, your Kings you know,  
 Have been abettors of Rebellion too,  
 In Holland, Rochel, Mary Queen of Scots,  
 Heav’ns hand can’t fail to hit such obvious blots,  
 To mention nothing of your modern plots (fol. 36v)

It could be argued that such an analysis does little to inspire confidence that Jacobite fortunes will soon improve. However, the Abbess’ arguments do enable Barker to find an explanation for those contemporary events which would seem to counter her belief that heaven supports the Jacobites whilst their opponents are allied with Lucifer. Such an explanation revolves around the necessity for Fidelia to reinterpret the Protestant version of English history in the light of her new faith. Through the Abbess’ perspective, Barker offers her readers a new way of viewing the battle between good and evil as manifested in the events of English political history which does not depend purely upon a belief in a compensatory afterlife. A useful parallel can be found in Frances Dolan’s observation that when Henrietta Maria offered prayers at Tyburn for the Catholics who had died there, she sought to transform

traitors into martyrs.<sup>49</sup> In a similar way, the Abbess, through an act of interpretation, transforms England's Protestant identity into a manifestation of rebellion against God's wishes. Barker is therefore able to shift the emphasis from a preoccupation with the vicissitudes of the Jacobites to a focus upon the fact it is England's own past that is the instrument of its current suffering. This ability to take a long view of English history is in line with Monod's assertion that the Jacobites viewed history as a cycle that was progressing "towards a final end".<sup>50</sup> Such a shift obviously necessitates a visiting of the sins of the fathers upon their righteous Jacobite offspring, yet it does allow Barker to regain a sense that providence is ordering events in a manner that will ultimately reward her political friends. The closing lines of the poem, spoken by the Abbess, afford such consolation:

...Heav'ns oft pleas'd to make our shoulders ake,  
 With that same yolk, which we for others make,  
 With our own rod, due vengeance on us take,  
 Then think not Heav'n unjust or negligent,  
 Since its our crimes, procure our punishment,  
 Humbly submit, and faithfully attend,  
 Heav'n is too great, and generous a friend,  
 T'abandon those who on his love depend. (fol. 36v)

The ease with which Fidelity moves from near despair to an acceptance of the Abbess' arguments is less surprising than it might appear from this brief discussion of the poem in which it occurs. Barker is careful to prepare the ground for such a transformation in the other poem which takes the form of a dialogue between the Abbess and Fidelity and which occurs earlier in Part One. In this poem, entitled "Fidelity in a Convent garden the Abbess comes to her" (fols. 29v-32v), the former

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<sup>49</sup> Dolan 100.

<sup>50</sup> Monod 51.

explains that she has banished England from her thoughts and declares that she is “asham’d that I was born in her”(fol. 29v). She sees her homeland as consumed by conspiracy and revolt and concludes that any country that has behaved in such a fashion must have abandoned religious principles:

Her chief Religion in Rebellion lys,  
Her laws and morals in consperacys,  
Though different sects, themselves the true Church call,  
Yet still Rebellion, comprehends them all. (fol. 29v)

Picking up on the idea of the true Church, the search for which has prompted her own conversion, Fidelia here hints at the conventional Catholic argument that Protestantism, as it encourages individual interpretation of Scripture, lacks a central authority and thus inevitably leads to faction. The splintering of religious authority is reflected in a parallel splintering of political authority. The false claims of the “different sects” to be “the true Church” is mirrored in the false claims of William to be King – political and religious fragmentation both stem from a rebellion against the central authority of the *de jure* Church and King.

In this poem the Abbess serves as a foil for Fidelia, allowing her to correct the Williamite line on James’ faults. Yet this representative of Fidelia’s new found Catholic faith also serves a more significant role. By forcing Fidelia to explain the way in which she feels that James’ reign has been misrepresented, the Abbess leads her to acknowledge the full implications of the attacks on James. As such, the Abbess becomes the catalyst for Fidelia’s more thorough going rejection of her own country. When the Abbess voices the standard complaints against James, Fidelia refutes these outright:

A general liberty to all he gave,  
 More large than they in modesty cou'd crave,  
 This goodnes, mallice made misunderstood,  
 Their eye was evil, because his was good,  
 The King say they will arbitrary be,  
 Because he gives his people liberty. (fol. 30v)

Fidelia continues in similar vein countering all accusations against the exiled monarch and stating that his reign was actually a return of “the golden age”(fol. 31v). For this paragon of a King to be so misrepresented it is clear that events have been deliberately falsified, “white was still made black, and black made white”(fol. 31r). Not sure whether to blame Sunderland, Orange, Hell or “our mad Phanantick Zeal” (fol. 32r), Fidelia is forced into the position of one who unequivocally condemns her own country. Whilst the rebels maintain power, the story of English history will remain one that illustrates not divine but hellish intervention: “When future ages shall our story tell,/Mankind will think us Devils, England Hell” (fol. 30r). From such a position, it is a relatively short step to the complete vision of England’s past as a series of “crimes” for which Barker and her fellow Jacobites are being punished presented in “Fidelia walking the Lady Abess comes to her”.

The positioning of “Fidelia walking the Lady Abess comes to her” directly prior to “England’s Ill Genius and his companion after the Battell of the Boyn” also serves to slightly mitigate the effect of the latter poem. As we have seen, the Williamite victory at the Boyne enables the companion of England’s Ill Genius to depict the Jacobites as “fools” in thrall to “some old dull prophesies”. Although these words are spoken by a demon and are therefore intrinsically unreliable, the fact remains that the Jacobites *are* in a losing position at this point. Yet the presentation of the English as “Devils” in “Fidelia in a Convent garden the Abess comes to her” suggests to

Barker's readers that opposition to their current demonic behaviour, even if pragmatically "foolish" at this point, is profoundly honourable. In effect, it must surely be better, and more righteous, to be a Jacobite "fool" than a Williamite knave.

The assurance of the Abbess that "Heav'n is too great, and generous a friend,/T' abandon those who on his love depend," must also indicate that such triumphs as those enjoyed by the Williamites at the Boyne will, ultimately, be overturned by God. To this end it is notable that the final poem in Part One, "Hell's Regret, for the peace & unity like to ensue the Duke of Anjou's accession to the Crown of Spain. spoken as by Lucifer" (fols. 37r-38r), ends this section, and the series of poems featuring the inhabitants of heaven and hell, on a positive note for the Jacobites. In this poem Lucifer laments the fact that, as he believes, the accession of the new King Philip V of Spain will see "Our friends deprest, our enemys uphol'd/Perhaps our dearest Orange too expeld"(fol. 37r). James II is seen as part of a new triumvirate of power, together with the kings of Spain and France, which will promote the triumph of virtue and the collapse of hell's strength: "James, Lewis, Phillip, equally I hate/Tis your curssd union overthrows my state"(fol. 38r).<sup>51</sup>

To understand the idea of human history displayed in the poems set in heaven and hell and in the two poems featuring the Abbess it is therefore essential to appreciate the fact that, for Barker, such history must be viewed entirely within the framework of her religious beliefs. This inseparable connection between religion and politics can be further understood in the light of Paul Monod's description of "a basic cosmology" of

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<sup>51</sup> King demonstrates that this poem "could have been begun no earlier than 8 Nov. when ... news of the King of Spain's death arrived at Paris. The poem is tipped in the BL volume, fos. 54r-55v, obviously a late insertion, indicating it was composed after the volume had been sent off for binding," *Exile* 126 n. 70.

Jacobitism. According to Monod this “cosmology” is comprised of three main elements: “a cyclical interpretation of history, a demonic representation of the ruling monarchs, and an evocation of the extraordinary God-man who was the just and lawful king”.<sup>52</sup> Each of these elements can be found to varying degrees in those manuscript poems of Barker’s under consideration in this chapter. The emphasis upon the cyclical nature of history is perhaps not as explicit as in the inset story “The Cause of the *MOORS* Overrunning *Spain*” which appears in *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen* (1726) or, as we shall see in Chapter Four, as in the diary of Mary Caesar.<sup>53</sup> Yet, such an emphasis is undeniably present in the references to 1641 and in the paralleling of contemporary events with episodes from Biblical history. The evidence of the sequence of poems set in heaven and hell reveals that William and his followers were indeed presented as “demonic”. Finally, Barker repeatedly represents James as not simply God’s representative on earth but as an actual saint.

In a poem such as “Fidelia walking the Lady Abess comes to her,” the reference to James’ sanctity is cursory and contained within the single line, “Our King’s a saint, and we are martyrs all” (fol. 36r). However, as one would anticipate, Barker’s elegy for James, “At the sight of the body of Our late gracious sovereign Lord King James 2<sup>d</sup> As it lys at the English Monks” (fols. 59r-60v), explores the concept of the monarch’s sainthood in greater depth. In this poem Barker continues the defence of James’ reign as monarch that she initiated in the poems concerned with heaven and hell and with the Abbess. The late King is presented as a paragon, “In every station, allways James the just” (fol. 59v). Contrary to popular opinion, he is also described

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<sup>52</sup> Monod 49. King acknowledges the relevance of Monod’s “cosmology” but again does not offer a detailed analysis of its implications for Barker’s Jacobitism, *Exile* 133.

<sup>53</sup> Barker, *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen*, in *The Galesia Trilogy and Selected Manuscript Poems*, ed. Carol Shiner Wilson (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 205-10.

as politically astute: “His well turn’d genius, knew the just extent,/Of Regal power, and rights of Parliament” (fol. 59v). Yet such worldly attributes are seen as the least significant of the qualities of a monarch Barker describes as “prince, and Hero, King, and glorious saint” (fol. 59r). The majority of the poem focuses on the latter, spiritual aspects of James’ glory explicitly paralleling the King’s life with Christ’s:

Three Kings we read of travail’d from afar,  
Conducted by a new form’d star,  
But to find one, we should be at a loss,  
Who left three Kingdoms, guided by a cross,  
This was his scepter, and his crown the same,  
And thus equip’d a pilgrim he became.  
This mighty missionary by heav’n was sent,  
For others good his peoples punishment. (fol. 60r) <sup>54</sup>

In these lines James’ spiritual function as “pilgrim” and “missioner” are clearly prioritised over his role as worldly monarch. The idea that James lost his throne as part of a divine plan is also implicit. This idea is developed more fully a few lines later when James’ reign is presented as a spiritual lesson:

As if it was a strategem of Heav’n,  
T’inhance their crimes, and leave em no excuse,  
Who of such mercy, made so ill an use.  
Beside, he cou’d not be at home confin’d  
He being made to reign ore all mankind. (fol. 60r-v)

In its ability to explain apparent disaster in terms of divine providence, this poem parallels “Fidelia walking the Lady Abess comes to her”. Not only do unpalatable facts receive a theologically acceptable explanation but James’ kingdom is extended rather than diminished by the loss of his crown. His own people may have rejected

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<sup>54</sup> In “Fidelia weeping for the Kings departure at the Revolution” (fol. 23r-v) James is also implicitly likened to Christ when his opponents are seen as deserving of “worse than Iscariot’s fate”. The “Traitors” merit a more severe punishment as Judas at least had the motivation of profit; they “are at expence/They buy it at the price of all that’s good,/Their Honor, profit, and perhaps their blood,” (fol.

him but “In every foreign heart, he found a throne” (fol. 60v). The final lines of the poem continue with this triumphalist tone, reasserting James’ spiritual victory over his rebellious subjects:

And now in Heav’n he ends his pilgrimage,  
Great in his life, but greater in his death,  
In both a true defender of the faith,  
His vertues future ages shall admire,  
Himself a saint, a Martyr was his sire. (fol. 60v)

It is not James alone who is figured as a saint in the Magdalen manuscript. Mary of Modena is also presented in similar terms. In “To Her Majesty the Queen, on the Kings going to Callis this carnival 1696” (fols. 43r-44v), Mary is described as a “help-meet” (fol. 44r) to both James and to Christianity. The Queen’s virtue is seen as directly responsible for God’s favour to the Jacobites:

‘Tis for your sake the armes of france are bless’d,  
And for your sake the Rebels are depress’d,  
‘Tis for your sake, god made France be our friend,  
And for your sake, he’ll peace on Europ send (fol. 44r)

Mary is shown to surpass all who have gone before her in spiritual as well as worldly merit. For Barker there is “No saint so good, no Heroin so great” (fol. 44r). As in the elegy to James, the monarch is also shown to have a distinctly missionary role: “And those who never heard of god before,/ Shall now the god of Englands Queen addore” (fol. 44v). Both Mary and her husband thus move beyond the role of divinely appointed monarch, ruling “by sacred right” (“At the sight of the body of .. King James,” fol. 59r), and perform a far more apostolic function as agents of conversion.

Barker's *Fidelia* poems and the texts featuring heaven and hell thus clearly fulfil the essential criteria of Monod's Jacobite cosmology. Yet, ironically perhaps, a more illuminating analogy for Barker's worldview can be found in the anti-Catholicism of an earlier period of English history. In her study of Elizabethan and Jacobean anti-Catholicism, Carol Z. Wiener argues that the ideology of anti-Catholicism during these periods can best be understood in "apocalyptic terms".<sup>55</sup> Thus, the enemy, the Catholic Church, was viewed as "a tightly-organized monolith" and peaceful co-existence was seen as an impossibility. The aim for both sides was "total victory".<sup>56</sup> Wiener draws analogies with Richard Hofstadter's work on the ideology of the American right during the Cold War citing the latter's explanation that, "Since the enemy is thought of as being totally evil and totally unappeasable, he must be totally eliminated".<sup>57</sup> It is of course possible to see a contemporary updating of such beliefs in present day rhetoric about an "axis of evil" which must be destroyed. Although Barker is working from within a Catholic rather than an anti-Catholic ideology, her presentation of the conflicts she describes operates in similar terms. For Barker, as those who oppose James also oppose God, there can be no compromise with her political opponents; indeed, there must be active opposition to them. Barker's "non-compounder" stance and her fierce dislike of the non-resisters is therefore entirely explicable as the logical outcome of her religious perspective.

It is notable that this correlation between religious and political righteousness remains a constant feature of Barker's thinking across the poems in the *Magdalen* manuscript.

This is not to imply that there is no movement in Barker's interpretation of the

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<sup>55</sup> Carol Z. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle. A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism," *Past and Present* 51 (1971): 27-62 (28).

<sup>56</sup> Wiener 41, 53.

<sup>57</sup> Wiener 53.

relationship between religion and political events in Parts One and Two of this collection. However, this movement stems not from the makeup of Barker's worldview itself but from the alignment of the components within it. Thus, in the first poem in Part One, "Fidelia alone lamenting her parents lately dead, and her relations gone into the West against Monmouth" (fols. 8r-9r), when Fidelia is still nominally a Protestant, the behaviour of her political opponents, those who support Monmouth, causes Fidelia to experience a sense of disjunction between the actions of these opponents and the religion they proclaim:

... thus Religion breaks Religion's laws,  
 Religion, still Religion's all their cry,  
 With which they run down truth, morality,  
 In courts of justice set up perjury (fol. 8r)

Fidelia believes that her opponents are using the Bible "to preach up parricide/ Rebellion, treason, murder, rapin, lust" (fol. 8v).<sup>58</sup> Yet the crisis that this provokes does not cause Fidelia to question her providentialist reading of events but her own religious position: "If this be the effect of holy cant,/I am asham'd that I'm a Protestant"(fol. 8v). Instinctively addressing the Virgin Mary, Fidelia proclaims that if all her friends return safely from battle she will apply herself to the search for the true Church. A few poems later "On the difficulty of finding the true Religion" shows the outcome of this search. Fidelia becomes a Catholic and the disjunction between religion and politics is considerably simplified. Monmouth and his supporters are now her religious as well as her political opponents, not simply because they are Protestants but because they are Protestants who seek to disrupt the principle of hereditary succession to which Barker is committed.

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<sup>58</sup> The word "parricide" is hard to decipher and may read "patricide" which would obviously be

Elizabeth Singer Rowe provides a useful contrast to Barker in this respect. In her 1696 publication *Poems on Several Occasions* Rowe, writing as Philomela, includes poems that portray God on the side of William and hell on the side of the Jacobites.<sup>59</sup> As Rowe supports the victorious side the equation between God's favour and victory is straightforward. Barker, by contrast, is forced to make a mental adjustment to the fact of failure and to reinterpret the meaning of her country's post-Reformation history in order to account for it. The link between religion and politics, and the belief in an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil, thus remains unchallenged in her work. What does change is Barker's, and thus Fidelity's, religious perspective on that struggle.

Barker's religio-political perspective also raises interesting implications for the problem of Jacobite defeatism that was explored in relation to Anne Finch in the first chapter. As discussed in that chapter, Laura Lunger Knoppers has written of the essential passivity that pervades so much early Jacobite writing.<sup>60</sup> Knoppers argues that, convinced of the rightness of their cause and of the fact that God would eventually restore the Stuarts, Jacobites tended towards a dependence on providence rather than human agency. I have argued that for Finch, an Anglican nonjuror who was committed to the idea of non-resistance and who remained in England after the Revolution of 1688, retreat from the world of action becomes associated with Christian duty and with the experience of male Jacobites. The exclusion of the latter

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appropriate in a Jacobite context.

<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by Philomela* (London: 1696). See particularly the poems, "A Poetical Question, concerning the Jacobites, sent to the Athenians," and "Upon King William's passing the Boyn, etc."

<sup>60</sup> Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Reviving the Martyr King: Charles I as Jacobite Icon," *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas N. Corns and Kevin Sharpe (Cambridge: Cambridge

from the worlds of action and of letters mirrors her own sense of exclusion and is thus transformed into a sense of identification. All expectation of fulfilment, both literary and political, is deferred until the afterlife. Barker is far less quiescent. In the Magdalen manuscript poems she specifically rejects the idea of martyrdom in contrast both to those Jacobites identified by Knoppers who were rendered passive by their over-identification with the image of the martyred Charles I and to Finch who, in her poem "A Contemplation," envisages herself prostrate at the feet of the martyred king.<sup>61</sup> In her address to the Prince of Wales Barker accepts the difficulties that she must suffer but does not rejoice in them. In this address Barker remarks that she is pleased "to have sufferd somthing for such a cause" (fol. 3v) but in "Fidelia and her friend" she makes it clear that she counts herself as one of those who "have not the gift of martyrdom" (fol. 27r).

This is not to suggest that Fidelia does not recognise compliance to God's will as a Christian duty. Indeed, in "Fidelia walking the Lady Abess comes to her," the Abbess, who has become a spokesperson for the correct interpretation of Jacobite failure, advises her to "Humbly submit" (fol. 36v) to heaven's decrees. Yet such submission remains a constant struggle for Fidelia. Across the course of Parts One and Two of the Magdalen manuscript Fidelia strives to combine passivity to God's will with the belief that one must oppose human wrongdoing. Fidelia remains preoccupied with her misfortunes and she has constantly to ask for strength from God to bear them. This emphasis is also maintained in the poems concerned with heaven and hell which surround the Fidelia narrative. Although in "England's good Genius

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University Press, 1999) 263-87.

<sup>61</sup> Anne Finch, "A Contemplation," *The Anne Finch Wellesley Manuscript Poems: A Critical Edition*, ed. Barbara McGovern and Charles H. Hinnant (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998) 138-41.

and Philanthrope his Companion” (fols. 34v-35v) the Genius expresses the conviction that earthly suffering must be endured and will be rewarded in heaven, Philanthrope replies that, whilst this is true, earthly rewards are not to be entirely despised: “Heav’ns joys are real this worlds but a jest/Not but I’d have God, give them comforts here/If he thought fit” (fol. 34v). The entire dynamic of this poem is typical of Barker. Despite the opening emphasis upon spiritual compensation, the focus of the poem is upon earthly conditions with the Good Genius even commenting that the saintliness of the fallen Jacobites “‘Twould make one wish to be a mortal too” (fol. 35r) and thus reversing the more conventional movement from mortality to immortality. In contrast, Finch’s focus in her religious poems is more firmly upon the next world. She uses her misfortunes as the stimulus for a vision of an afterlife in which they will be redressed. *Fidelia*, I would argue, by remaining more earthbound, also remains angry and committed to action in this world.

Part of the reason for this difference between the two poets, temperamental distinctions apart, may be their differing positions as “exiles”. Finch remains in “internal exile” within England; she is thus on the defeated side within a larger community ruled by her enemies. Barker, although exiled to France, lived within communities, both the immediate court at St. Germain and the wider society of France, which supported the cause she espoused. As we have seen, Barker also figures this exile as the Promised Land in her dedication to the Prince of Wales. Barker thus appears less troubled than Finch by a feeling of being circumscribed; she has taken action whereas Finch, forced to keep a low profile in Kent, has not. Barker can also write, in these manuscript poems, for those who share her opinions. As such, her poems are unashamedly and aggressively sectarian.

Thus, although Barker does come to see the workings of Providence even in those events which conspire against the Jacobites, this does not lead her to an automatic sense of passivity or to a preoccupation with martyrdom. Even when Fidelity exclaims, “Our King’s a saint, and we are martyrs all” (fol. 36r) in the poem “Fidelity walking the Lady Abess comes to her,” she does not embrace this position. Rather, she struggles to accept it but maintains hope that the Jacobite cause will still be successful. In later years, Barker participated in the campaign to have James II canonised. In 1730 she sent a tumour which had detached itself from her breast to an individual Kathryn King believes was Mother Lucy Theresa Joseph, Prioress of Augustinians in Bruges.<sup>62</sup> The tumour was accompanied by a letter which claimed that Barker had been cured after the growth was touched with a cloth soaked in James II’s blood. Such a letter, as King demonstrates, was part of a wider movement to prove James’ ability to heal and thus his sanctity.<sup>63</sup> However, there is a clear difference between seeking to honour the King’s sanctity after his death and willingly accepting the collapse of his cause during his lifetime. In addition, it is notable that even in the poems which present James and Mary as saints, the focus is more firmly upon the apostolic function of these monarchs in *this* world than upon their reward in the next. In these texts, as is so frequently the case with Barker, the emphasis is placed upon the importance of an active engagement in the battle between heaven and hell.

Within this context, it is important to note that the final Fidelity poem, “Fidelity in st

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<sup>62</sup> King, *Exile* 103.

<sup>63</sup> King *Exile* 103-8. King remarks that “After 1689 the royal touch served in Jacobite propaganda to distinguish rightful king from usurper, James from William,” *Exile* 107.

Germain's garden, lamenting her misfortunes" (fol. 68r-v), is essentially a bitter poem. In this text Fidelity questions the very reason for her birth and it is significant that this moment of despair and self-doubt offers one of the few instances in the Fidelity narrative where the speaker laments her gender: "Why was I born, or why, a female born" (fol. 68v). The word "passionately" is even added in parenthesis after this line. Fidelity argues that she has not deserved her sufferings and attempts to accept the conventional Christian idea that worldly sufferings may be beneficial:

That I complain, or murmur, heav'n forgive,  
 These pills, perhaps, are healthfull purgative,  
 Assist me patiently to take the dose  
 And give me strength to bear my mighty cross. (fol. 68v)

The poem may end on a note of resignation but not a resignation that is easily achieved. The text that concludes the Fidelity narrative is ultimately not a poem in love with passive suffering but one which is equally focused on both heaven and earth.

I do not wish to suggest that Laura Lunger Knoppers' argument about Jacobite passivity has no relevance to Barker's Jacobite poems in the Magdalen manuscript. Poems such as "England's good Genius and Philanthrophel" do contain clear references to the idea that political wrongs will be righted in the world to come and Fidelity does struggle to display a fitting Christian resignation to worldly disappointments. However, I would argue that this struggle remains unresolved in the Magdalen manuscript texts and that, in this collection, there remains a tension between the desire for resignation and the desire for vindication. Such tension is exacerbated by the fact the Jacobite campaign for the restoration of the Stuarts was still continuing at the time of the creation of this manuscript. Part One ends on a

positive note with “Hell’s Regret, for the peace & unity like to ensue the Duke of Anjou’s accession to the Crown of Spain. spoken as by Lucifer”(fols. 37r-38r). Philip of Anjou, a member of the House of Bourbon which was a supporter of the exiled James, became heir apparent to the Spanish crown in November 1700 and this poem was presumably written at this period of great hope for the Jacobites.<sup>64</sup> However, as we have seen, the sequence of *Fidelia* poems concludes with a highly conflicted text that acknowledges that the Jacobite struggle continues.

I would also suggest that this tension cannot simply be explained in terms of Barker’s own poetic temperament. Referring to English stereotypes of Catholics that recurred throughout the seventeenth century, Frances Dolan has written: “The problem ... is that Catholics do not take their grievances lying down, but instead are ‘busy’. In response, Protestants, committed as they are to faith rather than works, can only wait for Providence to intervene on their behalf”.<sup>65</sup> Dolan quotes Carol Wiener’s observation that the English repeatedly, “rewrote their history as the tale of the last-minute salvation of a bumbling and helpless people by a bountiful God”.<sup>66</sup> Such comments, whilst sweeping, do raise interesting possibilities for our interpretation of religious and political writings by early modern women. Barker, as we have seen, finds that her conversion to Catholicism prompts a sense of intense involvement with public, political events. In these manuscript poems, it also seems to have resolved the issue of authority – religious, political and literary – for her. With the exception of the instances mentioned above, it is remarkable how little the question of her gender

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<sup>64</sup> King notes “That the poem was an afterthought is evidenced by the fact that it is present in BL Add. 21, 621 as an inset, a folio sheet folded into two quarto leaves and bound-in after the main body of verse (fols. 54-55v),” *The Poems* 16.

<sup>65</sup> Dolan 17.

<sup>66</sup> Wiener, “The Beleaguered Isle,” 55 qtd. in Dolan 17.

seems to trouble Barker in these texts. Once certain of the authority of the one true Church, and already committed to her concept of the one *de jure* King, Barker wastes no time in worrying about her own authority to write. The surety her conversion lends her seems to extend to her sense of herself as a poet. Throughout the poems considered in this chapter Barker speaks not simply as an individual but as a member of a wider community of the faithful. To a high degree, this enables her to deflect questions of her own personal authority onto the issue of the religious and political authority of the group to which she belongs.

Finch, by contrast, is deeply preoccupied with the problem of her own authority to write. Although she clearly feels able to publish highly political texts in her *Miscellany Poems* of 1713, she agonises over her position as a female poet in her manuscript verse and only feels herself to be on an equal footing with male poets of similar political views when they are exiled and politically disenfranchised.<sup>67</sup> Finch, as a Protestant, does not have the external validating authority of the Catholic Church to support her. Part of a tradition that emphasises the primacy of the individual's response she is indeed far more interested in her own authority as an individual commentator. As a nonjuror committed to the idea of passive resistance Finch is also highly dependent upon the concept of providential intervention. Her own ability to further the cause she believes in is minimal. For Barker, as we have seen, conversion leads to a radical reinterpretation of her country's Protestant past. She is thus able to move beyond the notion that God has abandoned the Jacobites to a broader interpretation of English history which perceives it as an ongoing battle between the forces of good and evil and which also allows her to create a significant role for

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<sup>67</sup> Anne Finch, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London: John Barber, 1713).

herself as a teller of truth in this battle. This interpretation is not available to Finch, the committed Anglican.

Yet Barker's Jacobite faith is not entirely without ambiguity. In a 1997 article Toni Bowers argued that Barker's faith in the Jacobite cause was less firm than is often assumed by critics and in fact diminished over time.<sup>68</sup> Bowers bases her argument upon a perceived link between Barker's disappointment as a poet and as a Jacobite. Undeniably, Bowers' readings of Barker's manuscript poems add an important dimension to our understanding of these works by emphasizing the suffering that they contain alongside their Jacobitism. However, I would suggest that Bowers overstates her case by assuming that such suffering automatically leads Barker to regret her political choices. Central to Bowers' argument is the poem, "The lovers Elesium, Or folls Paradiſe: a dream" (fols. 74r-77r), which appears in Part Two of the Magdalen manuscript. In this poem the speaker dreams that she is in a labyrinth where she encounters the shade of a soldier who died at Sedgemore. This man had actually been preparing to fight against James, under the influence of grief at the betrayal of a faithless lover. However, before his death he not only forgave his lover but also repented of his own political treachery, "I ſaw my guilt and pray'd for James the Juſt"(fol. 74v). The speaker and the ghost then enter a bower, named "fools' paradise" (fol. 75r), filled with those who worship the ideal of romantic love. Just as she is about to leave, the speaker is snatched away to a mountain top where she remembers her own vow to remain a virgin in return for poetic fame. She then sets forth, as a poem within a poem, the text of her own contract with the muses and subsequent realisation that this choice will lead her to share "Cassandra's fate" in

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<sup>68</sup> Bowers, *Jacobite Difference*.

which “Hymen and Fortune” will be her “foes” (fol. 77r). This contract and later reflections upon it subsequently appeared as two separate poems in *Love Intrigues*.

For Bowers “The lovers Elesium” expresses “confusion and disappointment over the choice of renunciation, whether the renunciation of marriage for poetry, or that of her homeland for political and religious principle, both of which have led to thankless ‘banishment’”.<sup>69</sup> Such disillusionment is, according to Bowers, not unusual in Barker’s work and appears again in the poem “The Miseries of St Germain, writ at the time of the pestilence and famine, which reign’d in the years, 1694/et 95” (fols. 51r-54r), which can also be found in Part Two.<sup>70</sup> This poem is an intensely bleak depiction of the sufferings of the exiled court and its followers. St Germain is seen as “Hell in epitomy” (fol. 51r), the recipient of the punishments destined for Nineveh but diverted by the city’s repentance (Jonah 3). Its inhabitants are desperate with hunger and have lost hope: “The people howling in the streets for bread,/Envy their camerades which by them ly dead”. Unsure of whom to blame for their distress, people “Curss god, themselves, fate, orange, and so dy”(fol. 51v). Yet the sufferings of the people are as nothing compared to the agony of James and Mary:

With what regret, none but themselves can know,  
They say they’ve nought but pitty to bestow,  
How hard it is, to souls sublime and great,  
When heart and fortune’s disproportionate,  
This is a mighty misery indeed,  
When Royal hearts, do for their subjects bleed,  
Because they can’t assist them in their need. (fol. 53r)

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<sup>69</sup> Bowers 863-4.

<sup>70</sup> Bowers 863.

The poem ends with the despairing conclusion that the exiles “are ... more contemptible by far,/Then old wives tale, old maid, old cavalier” (fol. 54r).

For Bowers, “The Miseries of St Germain’s” demonstrates “a similar connection between Barker’s disappointment in poetry and in Jacobitism” to “The lovers Elesium”.<sup>71</sup> A third poem, “The Virgins paradise: a dream” (fols. 78r-80v), which also appears in Part Two of the Magdalen manuscript, is seen to complete this connection. In this dream vision the speaker imagines that, whilst flying above the earth, she encounters a “statly palace”(fol. 78v). When the speaker tries to enter this palace an “old portress” confronts her and insists that if she does not submit to being veiled as a nun she will not only “grossly err” (fol. 78v) but will also be drowned in a “three corner’d gulph” (fol. 79r). The speaker therefore accepts the veil and enters the palace. Once inside, she encounters scenes of great beauty: “what wondr’rous joys!/What pleasures all my senses did surprise” (fol. 79r). Yet, this beauty is accompanied by suffering. The palace, it becomes apparent, is the place where “virgins tears” (fol. 79v) are stored and is filled with carvings that give the histories of those who weep. These histories reveal that virginity has been a choice forced upon the women, not a vocation freely embraced. The women lament:

Some for dead parents, some for cruell ones,  
 Amongst whome, Jephthas daughter makes her moans,  
 And many who in monesterys dy’d,  
 Not for devotion, but their mothers pride.  
 Who hide their daughters to hide their own age,  
 Mean time spend what shou’d make their marriage.  
 Large were the streams, which helpless orphans mourn,  
 Betwixt false guardians, and fals Lawyers torne,  
 But that stream was the greatest of them all  
 Which from balk’d lovers, took original. (fol. 79v)

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<sup>71</sup> Bowers 864.

The speaker then approaches the gate outside “the virgins Room of state”. On this gate are displayed two banners “On which heavn’s conquest were imbrodered” (fol. 80r). This “conquest” takes the form of:

... Sedge-more fight, and how Gray ran away.  
 How the Kings guards, made there the Rebels bleed,  
 One wou’d have thought the blood ran down indeed.  
 And all the rest which at that place befell,  
 Which I not minded ‘cause I knew it well. (fol. 80r-v)

At this point, the door is closed against the speaker with the announcement that “mortals there cou’d have no place” (fol. 80v) and she wakes from her dream.

Bowers interprets this poem as further evidence that Barker viewed her choices, to remain unmarried and to support the exiled Stuarts, equivocally, if not regretfully.

For Bowers it is significant that Sedgemoor features upon the banners:

By the time Barker wrote “The Virgins paradise,” the victory at Sedgemoor was long past. Further, it must have seemed more than a little ironic that the Jacobites’ most glorious victory had taken place before the Glorious Revolution had even created “Jacobitism” as an oppositional category, and before the long years of misery and privation that category had entailed ever since.<sup>72</sup>

In Bowers’ reading of the poem the “virgins Room of state” represents “not past but future heavenly conquests”. Yet that future is closed to the speaker whose “virginity and Jacobitism are presented, as in ‘The Lovers’ Elesium,’ as forced choices made under terrible duress and accompanied by bitterness, banishment, and loss”.<sup>73</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup> Bowers 866-7.

<sup>73</sup> Bowers 867.

combined evidence of the three poems “The lovers Elesium,” “The Miseries of St Germans” and “The Virgins paradise” therefore convinces Bowers that Barker’s poetry is marked not by “loyalty” but by “disappointment, uncertainty, and dark regret”.<sup>74</sup>

Bowers’ argument draws our attention towards a significant and neglected aspect of Barker’s political poetry. There is, in poems such as the three considered by Bowers, an undeniable tone of anxiety, even despair. It is also important to observe that the general tone of Part Two of the Magdalen manuscript is darker than that of Part One. Each of the poems discussed by Bowers occurs in this second section. This section also includes the elegy on James and an elegy for the Earl of Exeter (fol. 58r-v), “To Her Majesty the Queen, on the Kings going to Callis this carnival 1696,” the final *Fidelia* poem, “*Fidelia* in st Germans garden, lamenting her misfortunes” and a bitter text which focuses upon Cowley’s neglect and which Kathryn King sees as possible evidence that Barker received no patronage from the Stuart court.<sup>75</sup>

However, I would argue that the bleakness of Part Two is inevitable when one considers that in the Magdalen manuscript Barker is creating a record of an ongoing struggle – a struggle which, as the Abbess indicates, may not achieve a favourable resolution in the near future. Whereas Part One establishes the context within which Barker positions her commentary on contemporary events, Part Two provides a record of her living with the implications of exile and political failure. Yet I would dispute Bowers’ conclusion that one of these implications is necessarily “regret”. The reason

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<sup>74</sup> Bowers 868.

<sup>75</sup> “On the death of the Right honourable the Earl of Exeter” (fol. 58r-v) and “Reflections on mr Cowleys words, The Muses fleece lys dry” (fol. 81r-v); King, *Exile* 127.

for this is simply that at no point during Part Two, not even in the poems cited by Bowers, does Barker, or indeed Fidelia, actually renounce the choices she has made. “The Miseries of Germaines” *is* a truly desperate poem. Its concluding lines remind the reader of the accusation that the Jacobite exiles are “fools” in thrall to “some old dull prophesies” raised in “Englands ill Genius and his companion after the Battell of the Boyn”. Yet, as we have seen, for Barker the alternative to being a fool is being a Williamite knave, an alternative that would automatically involve a renunciation, not just of James, but also of God. The very interconnection between religion and politics that Barker has established in Part One means that the stakes are simply too high for her to turn her back on her Jacobite allegiances in Part Two. Bowers is right to suggest that the references to Sedgemore in “The lovers Elesium” and “The Virgins paradise” link Barker’s politics to her despair. However, the fact that Barker’s poems demonstrate the suffering she and her fellow exiles endured does not mean that they consequently indicate a belief that the speaker’s loyalties are misplaced.<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, the very fact that Barker alternates between attempts at Christian resignation and the desire for immediate victory for her cause suggests that the poems that comment upon Jacobite failures are highly likely to be despondent. Barker, as we have seen, does not renounce this world in the manner that Finch does. The saintliness of James and his queen, and the promise of heavenly reward, are never sufficient consolation for her. Political and religious vindication on earth remain important. The closing of the doors of the “virgins Room of state” in “The Virgins paradise” can thus just as easily be read as a sign that Barker is not yet ready to accept

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<sup>76</sup> King also observes that she does not agree with Bowers’ analysis “that Barker is a ‘deeply equivocal’ Jacobite,” and instead, as we have seen, presents Barker as firm in her beliefs, *Exile* 103 n. 6. However, King does not engage with Bowers’ argument or with the implications of failure for Barker’s politics.

a purely spiritual consolation for her sufferings as a sign that all happiness is closed to her.

The poems that surround those discussed by Bowers contribute to this sense of ambiguity. Part Two is far less coherent than Part One; it includes many occasional poems and its overall character is thus harder to categorise. “The Miseries of St Germans” is placed between a poem addressed to a friend, visiting from England, and a poem on the Ascension.<sup>77</sup> “The Lovers Elesium,” together with “The contract with the muses” and “The Virgins paradise,” appear next to one another. They are followed by the poignant poem on Cowley but also by “A marriage Roundelay” (fol. 82r-v) and “A french song” (fol. 83r). The final poem in this section is “A Song” (fol. 84r) which focuses upon Galaecia’s love for a younger man:

When poor Galaecia aged grew,  
 Young Strephon in his prime,  
 The nosegay which to her was due,  
 Poor nymph she gave to him,

Which coldly he receiv’d and sed,  
 Alas I her bemoan,  
 This nosegay’s like her maiden-head  
 The roses are o’er blown.

This poem supports Bowers’ argument that Barker may have looked back upon her single life with a degree of sorrow. It could also be read as a possible allegory of her lack of reward from the Stuart court. Yet, like the three poems considered by Bowers, it in no way constitutes an explicit renunciation of Barker’s Jacobite sympathies. This poem concludes Part Two on a melancholy note that emphasises a sense of time

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<sup>77</sup> “To my dear Clarinthia, at her arival out of England and staying in Flanders” (fols. 49r-50r) and “on the Ascention venite” (fol. 155r-v).

passing and of the speaker's bleak circumstances yet it is too slight a text to counter the coherent religio-political worldview established in Part One. Instead, this song, like the other apparently apolitical texts in Part Two, reflects the despondency of exile indirectly but does not confront such dejection or offer any response to it that suggests that the certainties of Part One have been abandoned.

In Part Three of the Magdalen manuscript, Barker returns to her earlier poems, those she published in 1687 as *Poetical Recreations*. She thus turns away from the engagement with contemporary history that characterises the start of the volume. Arguably, this is the only option that remains open to her. Part One has established Barker's perspective on the events of her day and Part Two has shown the repercussions of those events for the Jacobite cause. All that remains to recount is the hoped for restoration. However, Barker cannot provide such a conclusion to her volume as the desired ending has not yet been achieved. This fact clearly causes Barker great anguish, as is apparent in the poems discussed by Bowers, yet it does not appear to force any form of political or religious recantation.

It is also important to remember that after completing the Magdalen manuscript Barker went on to write her prose fictions, a series of texts that I have already argued are far more assertively political than is usually acknowledged. Bowers overlooks this fact and her reading of the manuscript poems is entirely self-contained. Whereas Kathryn King tends to downplay the aspect of struggle in the manuscript texts, Bowers overlooks the context within which such struggle takes place. Just as Barker's prose works need to be read in the context of the specific historical circumstances in which they were written, so her manuscript poems need to be viewed

in the context of her wider career as a writer. These poems illuminate the published work through their explicit presentation of Jacobite commitment and its consequences. Yet they form only part of a broader body of work that, whilst it may reflect the vicissitudes of being a Jacobite, consistently maintains an allegiance to the exiled Stuarts.

An interesting coda to this chapter is provided by a work published by Barker in 1718. This is a devotional text entitled *The Christian Pilgrimage: or, a Companion For the Holy Season of Lent*.<sup>78</sup> It is a translation from the French and was published by the notorious Edmund Curll, known more for works of scandal and titillation than for those of piety. This work has been largely overlooked in critical studies concerned with Barker. As one would anticipate, the most extended consideration of the work occurs in King's monograph. However, a close study of the text reveals that King has incorrectly identified Barker's source for her translation and has thus misinterpreted the significance of the volume. King claims that *The Christian Pilgrimage* is "a translation of Lenten meditations" by François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon (1651-1715), Archbishop of Cambrai and author of the tremendously successful romance *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (1699).<sup>79</sup> This latter was written whilst Fénelon was tutor to Louis, Duc de Bourgogne, the heir to Louis XIV, and was widely perceived to be an attack upon the absolutism of the latter. The work was translated into English and was cited by Barker in her Preface to *Exilius*.<sup>80</sup> It is easy to understand why King believes that Barker's text was based on a work by Fénelon.

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<sup>78</sup> Jane Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage: or, a Companion For the Holy Season of Lent: Being Meditations upon the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: E. Curll, 1718).

<sup>79</sup> King, *Exile* 154.

<sup>80</sup> Marc Soriano comments that there were over eighty translations of this work produced by 1830 in *Guide de littérature pour la jeunesse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1975) 252.

The title page of *The Christian Pilgrimage* carries the ambiguous wording, “Written originally in French, and recommended to the Use of all true Lovers of Devotion, by the late pious and learned Mons. De Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray”. In her Dedication to the Countess of Nottingham, formerly Anne Hatton (1668-1743), a High Church Anglican and possible Catholic sympathiser, Barker writes of her hopes “that by your [the Countess’s] Example and Recommendation, it may be propagated in our Country, as it has been in other Regions by the Industry of the Archbishop of Cambray”.<sup>81</sup> The book also includes a laudatory “Character of the Archbishop of Cambray” reproduced from Addison’s and Steele’s *The Guardian*.<sup>82</sup> As King observes, the fact that works by Fénelon were commercially successful in England at this time might well explain why either author or publisher, or indeed both, wanted to emphasise the book’s connection to the Archbishop especially as Curll himself had published a translation of *Telemachus* in 1715.<sup>83</sup>

Yet despite such prefatory material, Barker’s volume bears no resemblance to any known work by Fénelon. The text is in fact a devotional accompaniment to the Stations of the Cross and is based upon a version of the Stations by a seventeenth-century French Jesuit named Father Adrian Parviliers. According to a 1906 text by Father Herbert Thurston, a Jesuit priest who studied the different traditions of this form of devotion, Parviliers’ version of the Stations enjoyed considerable popularity during the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage*, “Dedication to the Countess of Nottingham,” ii. The Countess was the second wife of Daniel Finch, second earl of Nottingham and seventh earl of Winchilsea (1647-1730). She thus married into the same family as Anne Finch. Further information about the Countess can be found in King, *Exile* 154.

<sup>82</sup> Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage* vii-viii; *The Guardian* 1: 69 (May 30 1713).

<sup>83</sup> François Fénelon, *The Adventures of Telemachus, the Son of Ulysses*, trans. John Ozell (London: E. Curll, 1715). See King, *Exile* 154-5.

<sup>84</sup> Herbert Thurston, S.J. *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of their History and Devotional Purpose* (London: Burns & Oates, 1906) 133.

It is therefore entirely plausible that Barker should have had access to Parviliers' text. It also seems likely that Barker's translation of Parviliers' model is one of the earliest works of its kind in English. The English language translation of Parviliers' work held by the Bodleian was printed in 1796 but is based upon a translation of 1739. Holdings in other libraries including the British Library also cite an original translation of 1739 but I have yet to discover a translation earlier than Barker's 1718 text.<sup>85</sup> Even more significant is the fact that I can find no trace of any other attempt to reintroduce this particular devotional practice to an Anglican readership between the Reformation and the emergence of the Tractarians in the nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup> It therefore seems reasonable to speculate that Barker pre-empts the more eminent theological writers of the Oxford Movement in their attempt to reclaim the Stations of the Cross by over a century and a half.

In addition to such innovation, Barker also demonstrates creativity with regard to this text. Not content simply to translate her source, Barker also made significant changes to it. In the dedication to the Countess of Nottingham, Barker states that she has "subjoin'd both the *Penitential* and *Thanksgiving* Psalms of *David*, which I do not remember to have seen collected together in any Book of Devotion that I know of".<sup>87</sup> She also removes the Ave Marias and Acts of Contrition which follow each Station in the original text and adds individual prayers after each Station. No attribution for these prayers is given and it is therefore possible that they are by Barker herself.

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<sup>85</sup> Adrian Parviliers, *The devotions of the stations of the passion of Jesus Christ crucified, which are made in Jerusalem. By the Rev. Father Adrian Parviliers, Translated from the French, 1739* (Dublin: 1796).

<sup>86</sup> I am indebted to the Reverend Dr Barry A. Orford of Pusey House and St. Cross College, Oxford and the Reverend Dr Peter Groves of Brasenose College, Oxford for information about the practice of the Stations of the Cross.

<sup>87</sup> Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage*, "Dedication to the Countess of Nottingham," v.

Regardless of whether this new material is by Barker, she clearly feels authorised to rearrange her source, working on the text as “an honest, though not an exact Translator”.<sup>88</sup> Such alterations are part of Barker’s larger project of rendering the Stations more acceptable to an Anglican audience. In her dedication to the Countess of Nottingham Barker explains that she has made the book, “speak *English*, in the Dialect of the Church of *England*”. Likewise, in her address from “The Translator to the Reader” Barker states that she has substituted “*a* Glory be to the Father” for the Hail Mary whenever it appears “*in order to prevent any sudden Disgust the Protestant Reader might take at the Sight of it*”.<sup>89</sup>

In this text, Barker is therefore explicitly seeking to reinterpret a Catholic devotional tradition in a way that will encourage Anglicans to adopt it. King interprets Barker’s translation as an attempt to make Catholicism more acceptable to Protestant English men and women in the wake of intensified anti-Catholic feeling after the 1715 Jacobite revolt in which Catholics had been implicated. King thus views the translation as an attempt to emphasise common ground between the Roman Catholic and the Anglican communions – the work is therefore perceived to be “conciliatory”. The belief that the source text is by Fénelon is used to lend support to this argument. As King illustrates, Fénelon was in favour with the Jacobites because of his connection with the exiled Stuarts but was also viewed positively by some Anglicans because of his quietist spirituality and his criticism of Louis XIV’s absolutist tendencies. For King, Barker’s choice of text to translate thus reflects her awareness of Fénelon’s “tactical importance” to the Jacobites and to English Catholics.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage*, “The Translator to the Reader,” i.

<sup>89</sup> Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage*, “Dedication to the Countess of Nottingham,” ii-iii, and “The Translator to the Reader,” i-ii.

<sup>90</sup> King, *Exile* 158.

However, as we have seen, Barker's work is not a translation of a work by the benign Fénelon, presented as the acceptable face of the Church of Rome, in the language of the Church of England. Rather, it is attempt to encourage Anglicans to embrace a profoundly Roman Catholic tradition and thus constitutes a bold statement of public and proselytising commitment to Catholicism at a time when such a commitment carried severe penalties. Although Barker does remove some of the most overtly Catholic aspects of her source, such as the Hail Marys, this does not detract from the essential Catholicism of her text. By misattributing Barker's source and by presenting it as less challenging to its Anglican readership than it actually was, King once more undermines the radicalism of Barker's writing.

The question of how Fénelon's name became attached so prominently to Barker's volume remains unsolved and I suspect will remain so. Even if Barker somehow discovered Parviliers work through Fénelon's, the prominent reference to the Archbishop on the title page and the inclusion of a description of his "character" seem excessive. It is possible that, as Kathryn King suggests, Curll wanted to profit from the contemporary vogue for works by the prelate. It is possible that Barker collaborated with him in this and it is equally possible that Curll added the references to Fénelon without Barker's knowledge. The inclusion of Steele's "*Character of the Archbishop*" might well suggest the influence of the publisher rather than the author. Barker, one suspects, would have been more inclined to write her own. It is of course also possible, and somewhat pleasing, to speculate that Barker may have been misleading Curll. The latter was not known for his sympathy for Catholicism and, as Kathryn King remarks, *The Christian Pilgrimage* "is the only Curll publication to be

listed in a bibliography of ... [eighteenth-century] Catholic publications running to nearly 3,000 items".<sup>91</sup>

Regardless of such uncertainties, what is clear is that the misattribution of *The Christian Pilgrimage* should act as a warning of Barker's vulnerability to readings that overlook her radicalism and that distort her identity as a writer through their failure to acknowledge the complexity of the texts she produced. Barker's Catholic faith stands at the centre of her worldview and is therefore inseparable from her commitment to the Jacobite cause. The fact that such a sustained expression of this faith can be critically ignored and misidentified is disturbing. Such neglect should serve as a further reminder that each individual text in Barker's body of work demands close and detailed attention. My consideration of Barker's Jacobitism has attempted to illustrate that Barker's work repays such attention. I have sought to demonstrate not only the importance of Jacobitism to Barker's writing but also the ways in which her political allegiances are manifested differently in different texts and genres. Until detailed attention is given to Barker's work, in all its variety, such differences will not be recognised and our overall understanding of Barker, her Jacobitism and her writing will remain compromised.

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<sup>91</sup> King, *Exile* 154 n. 21.

## Chapter Four

### “No storms nor Beatings of the waters could Tearify them”: The Journal of

#### Mary Caesar

In his 1956 essay “Conditions and Limits of Autobiography,” Georges Gusdorf observes that:

The man who recounts himself is himself searching his self through his history; he is not engaged in an objective and disinterested pursuit but in a work of personal justification. Autobiography appeases the more or less anguished uneasiness of an aging man who wonders if his life has not been lived in vain, frittered away haphazardly, ending now in simple failure.<sup>1</sup>

Continuing with his exploration of the ways in which autobiographical writing is a rewriting as much as a writing of a life, Gusdorf turns to the example of the French churchman and conspirator Cardinal de Retz (1614-1679):

Perhaps Cardinal de Retz is ridiculous with his claim to political insight and to infallibility, since he lost every game he played; but it may be that every life, even in spite of the most brilliant successes, knows itself inwardly botched. So autobiography is the final chance to win back what has been lost – and we must acknowledge that Retz ... knew how to play this game masterfully, in such a way that he seemed to the eyes of future generations a conqueror much more than would have been the case had the obscure intrigues he enjoyed pursuing turned out well for his faction. Retz, the writer and memorialist, compensated for the failure of Retz, the conspirator; the task of autobiography is first of all a task of personal salvation.<sup>2</sup>

Between the years 1724 and 1741 Mary Caesar (1677-1741), the Hertfordshire

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<sup>1</sup> Georges Gusdorf, “Conditions and Limits of Autobiography,” trans. James Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) 28-48 (39).

<sup>2</sup> Gusdorf 39.

gentlewoman and wife of the Jacobite M.P. Charles Caesar, kept a journal of political events.<sup>3</sup> This journal, which presents a strongly Jacobite perspective on these events, is, like Retz's memoirs, also a catalogue of conspiracies and failed plots. Unlike Retz, however, Caesar does not present herself as a "conqueror". Neither can her narration of events turn instances of political failure into triumphs. However, through her presentation of the incidents she describes, Caesar creates what is essentially an emotionally sustaining interpretation of the significance of those incidents. In Gusdorf's terms, Caesar is engaged in "the effort of a creator to give the meaning of his [or her] own mythic tale".<sup>4</sup> Within this "mythic tale," Caesar never questions the fact that her political friends have truth and justice on their side. Likewise, the success of her opponents is not seen to represent the validity of their cause but their essential corruption and the under-handed nature of their methods and of the contemporary political world. In this respect, Mary Caesar's journal can be viewed as an effort at "personal salvation". It is a text in which a commitment to Jacobite ideology is maintained, in spite of political failure, because the moral validity of the cause is constantly reiterated whilst also being detached from practical success.

Mary Caesar was born Mary Freman, daughter of Ralph and Elizabeth Aubrey Freman, in either September or October 1677 at Aspeden Hall, Hertfordshire. Dorothy Potter has researched Caesar's ancestry in some detail and has discovered that her family were strongly Royalist:

Mary's grandfather Ralph was a High Sheriff and Justice of the Peace during the reign of Charles I, but had withdrawn from public life during the Commonwealth. Her father, also a J.P. and Deputy

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<sup>3</sup> London, British Library, Additional MS 62,558.

<sup>4</sup> Gusdorf 48.

Lieutenant for the county, had served in James II's only Parliament and the second Parliament of William and Mary.<sup>5</sup>

Mary Freman married Charles Caesar, a member of a neighbouring family, on 24 November 1702. Her husband, who was born on 21 November 1673, had been returned as M.P. for Hertford in 1701. His father was a previous holder of this position. As Eveline Cruickshanks notes, Caesar served as an M.P. "in every Parliament but one till the end of Anne's reign" and "was one of the leading spokesmen of the High Tories".<sup>6</sup> Charles Caesar was also an intimate of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, and a Deputy Lieutenant and a Justice of the Peace. He also served as Treasurer of the Navy between 1711 and 1714 but fell from political favour upon the death of Queen Anne in August 1714. This year, however, did not mark the end of his political activity. As Cruickshanks remarks: "After the exile of Atterbury in 1723 and the death of Lord Oxford in 1724, Lord Orrery, M.P., Lord Strafford and Caesar jointly managed the Pretender's affairs in England".<sup>7</sup> From 1716 to 1717 Charles Caesar was also a participant in the Gyllenborg or Swedish Plot, designed to support an invasion of Britain by Charles XII of Sweden. As a result of his involvement in this plot, Charles Caesar was arrested although he was subsequently released in February 1717.

The evidence of Mary Caesar's journal indicates that her marriage was "a love

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Caesar, *The Journal of Mary Freman Caesar, 1724-1741: Literary and Political Events in Georgian England*, ed. Dorothy Bundy Turner Potter (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002) viii. I am indebted to Potter for biographical information about Mary Caesar.

<sup>6</sup> Eveline Cruickshanks, "Charles Caesar," *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754*, ed. Romney Sedgwick, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1970) 513-17 (513). I am indebted to Cruickshanks for all the biographical information about Charles Caesar in this paragraph.

<sup>7</sup> Cruickshanks, "Charles Caesar" 515.

match”.<sup>8</sup> However, as Dorothy Potter reveals, Mary’s father also provided her with a substantial dowry of £5000. Potter suggests that, as the Fremans and the Caesars had stood against each other in parliamentary elections since around 1690, the match may have been favoured by Mary’s father as a means of establishing more amicable relations between the two families. However, as Potter indicates, any such hopes were destined to be disappointed as Mary became estranged from her brother Ralph in subsequent years when he became a Hanoverian Tory.<sup>9</sup> On their deaths, both of which occurred in 1741, Mary and Charles Caesar were survived by a son, Julius, and two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. None of these children were to marry.<sup>10</sup> The oldest son of Charles and Mary Caesar, also named Charles, had died previously in 1740. The Caesars’ house in Hertfordshire, Bennington, was destroyed by fire just a few years after their deaths, in 1745.

The journal itself measures 320 x 205 mm. It appears originally to have been composed of loose leaves, divided into five books by the author, but at some point was bound into four books with marbled covers. These books were subsequently rebound into a single leather bound volume by the British Library, the current custodian of the journal. The pages have been numbered, from one to eighty-six, by a later hand than Caesar’s. Only rectos are used and all the versos remain blank. The previous marble covers serve to divide Books One and Two, Books Two and Three and Books Three and Four but not Books Four and Five. Dorothy Potter has made certain discoveries with relation to the obscure provenance of the manuscript. The

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<sup>8</sup> Potter ix.

<sup>9</sup> Potter viii-ix. See A.N. Newman, “Ralph Freman,” *The History of Parliament*, ed. Romney Sedgwick, vol. 2, 54, for biographical information about Mary Caesar’s brother.

<sup>10</sup> Valerie Rumbold observes that “Julius’s suitability to represent the family may be doubted (he never married and was the constant companion of the actress Peg Woffington),” *Women’s Place in Pope’s World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 249.

journal appears “to have disappeared for two centuries” between the sale of the Caesar estate and its appearance in an antiques shop in 1949 when it was purchased by Lieutenant-Colonel John H. Busby of Suffolk. The manuscript was subsequently acquired by the British Library in 1984.<sup>11</sup> The journal has been the subject of relatively little critical interest thus far. The only two significant sources of information about the volume are Valerie Rumbold’s 1992 essay “The Jacobite Vision of Mary Caesar” and Dorothy Potter’s 2002 edition of the text. The latter, which saw Caesar’s work in print for the first time, obviously made the text available to a far larger audience than previously and also attempted to provide a detailed analysis of both the content and context of the journal.

In this chapter, I will offer a reading of Mary Caesar’s journal that attempts to analyse the nature of its author’s Jacobitism and to contrast her example to that of both Anne Finch and Jane Barker. I will also argue that, as with the cases of Finch and Barker, the over-concentration on the issue of gender, which is present in extant scholarship on Caesar, leads to a distortion of this author’s political stance. Such a distortion, I will suggest, renders Caesar more passive than is actually the case. In addition, I will argue that by focussing too narrowly on Caesar’s gender, we run the risk of rendering her an exceptional and isolated figure, a woman commenting on the political life from which she is excluded. If, however, we also focus on Caesar’s political beliefs and on the relationship between those beliefs and her writing then connections to other writers, most particularly Pope, start to emerge. Such connections enable us not only to place Caesar within her historical context, as Potter seeks to do, but also to place her in dialogue with that context. As in my discussions of Finch and Barker, I do not

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<sup>11</sup> Potter xix.

wish to deny the validity or usefulness of gender-based approaches to Caesar's work. However, I would suggest that such approaches need to be pursued in tandem with other techniques, particularly ones that focus on the party political beliefs of these politically literate women.

As with the work of Anne Finch, one of the most interesting divisions in Mary Caesar's writing is that between "public" and "private". The journal itself defies easy classification as either a "public" or a "private" text. Its overt Jacobitism made it politically dangerous and this suggests that the number of those who would have had access to it would have been strictly controlled. Chronologically confusing, filled with mis-spellings and frequently obscure in its references, it is a difficult and often baffling text. Such factors tend to indicate that Mary Caesar intended her work as a "private" text meant either exclusively for her own use or for circulation within a narrow circle of intimates. However, other aspects of the journal complicate such a categorisation. Even if the journal can be categorised as "private" it certainly cannot be described as "domestic".<sup>12</sup> One of the most striking aspects of the work is its comprehensive exclusion of personal information about the author and her family. Other sources detail the deaths, illnesses, family feuds and financial problems that affected Caesar's life during the years she wrote her journal yet the journal itself ignores such difficulties.<sup>13</sup> Instead, Caesar's main focus is upon the political events of the 1720s and 1730s that she experienced and the fortunes of her political friends.

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<sup>12</sup> This distinction is drawn by Harriet Blodgett in *Centuries of Female Days: Englishwomen's Private Diaries* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989) 13. Blodgett claims that "private" does not mean "domestic" but "personal".

<sup>13</sup> Valerie Rumbold provides detailed information about the life of Mary Caesar in "The Jacobite vision of Mary Caesar," *Women, Writing, History: 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992) 178-198. See also Dorothy Potter's edition of the journal.

The absence of conclusive evidence means that it is impossible to form any but the most speculative conclusions about the contemporary readership, if any existed, of Mary Caesar's journal. However, at the opening of Book Four, Caesar provides a rationale for her memoir that gives an insight into the way she perceived her volume. Claiming that "righting was Never my talent," Caesar comments:

My Begining to wright was for amusement. when Malancaoly on the Death of Our Great Friend Treasurr Oxford, and the Absence of Mr Casar, to whom I had not the least thought of showing it to, Not Thinking it could have stood the Test, of His Good Understanding. but To have left it as a sort of seeth or draught. But as Twas Apelles's Circle, tho Not swel'd Out with the Art of Protogenes. (ms 55, Potter 103)<sup>14</sup>

The initial claim that she wrote purely for "amusement" is undercut by the allusion in the final sentence to Matthew Prior's poem "Protogenes and Apelles" (1718).<sup>15</sup> This poem tells the story of the two eponymous artists. When the latter visits the former only to find him absent, he leaves a drawing of "A Circle regularly true" (l. 54) in place of his signature. When he returns, Apelles finds that Protogenes has added "obvious Light, and easie Shade" (l. 80) to his circle. Prior concludes his poem with the following homily:

The dullest GENIUS cannot fail  
To find the Moral of my Tale:  
That the distinguish'd Part of Men,  
With Compass, Pencil, Sword, or Pen,  
Shou'd in Life's Visit leave their Name,  
In Characters, which may proclaim  
That They with Ardor strove to raise  
At once their Arts, and Countrey's Praise:

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<sup>14</sup> All quotations are taken from the Caesar manuscript. Page references are given respectively to both the manuscript source and Potter's edition.

<sup>15</sup> There is a marginal reference in the manuscript at this point that reads "Prior 294".

And in their Working took great Care,  
That all was Full, and Round, and Fair. (ll. 93-102)<sup>16</sup>

Caesar's reference to her journal as "a sort of seeth or draught" implies incompleteness, an implication strengthened by the description of it as Apelles's Circle "Not swel'd Out" with Protogenes' additions. However, it is clear that incompleteness is not to be taken as equivalent to unworthiness. Although she fears that her volume is not good enough for her husband's eyes, her response to this fear is not to dismiss the volume entirely but to explain that she views it as a *preparatory* work. By likening her journal to Apelles's circle Caesar further extends this idea. Although Matthew Prior's poem shows the circle as gaining from the addition of Protogenes' light and shade, the circle in its unadorned form remains Apelles' signature. It is his attempt to leave his own "Name" and to celebrate both art and national pride. By using the analogy of Apelles's circle, Mary Caesar clearly represents her journal as her own attempt at a similarly commemorative and celebratory act. The apparent modesty of the reference to her journal being unworthy of her husband in its extant state is thus undercut by the ambition of Caesar's aspirations.

Valerie Rumbold believes that the envisioned shape of the completed work is indicated in a letter to Caesar from the poet Mary Barber. Rumbold cites this letter as revealing that Caesar had admitted "that she would have liked to write the history of her own times, no doubt envisaging a vindication of Tory truth from the calumnies of the Whig Gilbert Burnet". However, as Rumbold explains, "Mary Caesar would have

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew Prior, *The Literary Works of Matthew Prior*, ed. H. Bunker Wright and Monroe K. Spears, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed., vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

needed a second restoration to make the history to which she had privileged access either publishable or convincingly central to national experience".<sup>17</sup>

Such difficulties help us to understand the tensions between "public" and "private" that exist in Caesar's text. Although the text is "private" in the sense that its circulation appears to have been controlled, it is "public" in the nature of the material that it considers. This may perhaps explain the explicit justification of her writing that follows on from the reference to "Protogenes and Apelles". Explaining that a letter she had written to Lord and Lady Harley had been shared with Matthew Prior, Caesar launches into a list of the literary and political great and good who value her correspondence:

But how terrifid'd when my Lady told me, they had shewn it to Mr Prior, tho she at the same time said he lik'd it. laughing told me He would not say how well, but bid me right on and Never Mind spelling. Pope says sometimes too many letters in my words. Never too many words in my letters.

Dean Swift, There is one part of Pope's Compliment which I can Not Make you for I could not with the striacest search find one letter to many in any of your words, though I found a thousand words too few in your letter.

Part of the Deans I rote Lord Oxford who says  
Your transcribing Swifts letter appears to me like a very curious Jeweller, that taks care to get a fine Gem in the best light.  
Dublin Lord Orrery 1732

A letter from Mrs Casar ought to be answer'd by a head much less perplecect with intricate afairs and a hart les fill'd with sorrow Then mine are at Presant. In the midst of my Affliction it gives me some pleasure to find my Self remembred by you Mm, and indeed I have an Hereditary right to your favour. let me therefore claim a Constant Correspondence with you.

At Lord Landsdowns telling Lord Orckney in that how little Lord Orrery knew me, He said twas Charity. O but my Speling is bad. Lord Lansdown Answer'd I did not observed it, but I'me shure your Stile is good.

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<sup>17</sup> Rumbold, "Jacobite Vision" 196, 198. The letter is housed in a collection of Caesar correspondence at Rousham Park, Oxfordshire in an unpaginated volume labelled "G".

To show Lord Orrery can Express him self apon joy as well as sorrow,  
Nay, Even apon so low a subject as my prease. (ms 55-6, Potter 103-  
4)

Such commendations, whilst illustrating the fact that she was on terms of friendship, if not playful intimacy, with such men (Swift's misspelling "striacest" is surely a joke), are also interesting for the function they perform in her journal. Coming as they do directly after her justification of the volume as a whole, they suggest that her writing has been discovered, perhaps by her husband, perhaps by more than one reader, and that she feels the need to defend it.<sup>18</sup> The praise offered by her correspondents, like her reference to Apelles's circle, serves to defend her work on public rather than private grounds. The men she cites are all public figures. Their praise indicates that her writing can stand the scrutiny of those who move in public circles. If the journal was a purely private text, truly written solely for "amusement," such commendations would be unnecessary; a private text would not need to sustain such public scrutiny.

In her essay "'I Write for Myself and Strangers': Private Diaries as Public Documents," Lynn Z. Bloom explores the idea that apparently private texts can function as "public documents":

... it is the audience hovering at the edge of the page that for the sophisticated diarist facilitates the work's ultimate focus, providing the impetus either for the initial writing or for transforming what might have been casual, fragmented jottings into a more carefully crafted, contextually coherent work.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See Potter 93.

<sup>19</sup> Lynn Z. Bloom, "'I Write for Myself and Strangers': Private Diaries as Public Documents," *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) 23-37 (23).

Bloom goes on to cite William H. Gass's observation that a private diary becomes public to some extent when the writer has "an eye on history":

If I know when I'm gone, my jottings will be looked over, wondered at, commented on, I may begin to plant redemptive items, rearrange pages, slant stories, plot small revenges, revise, lie and look good. Then, like Shakespearean soliloquies, they are spoken to the world.<sup>20</sup>

Gass's remarks articulate much that is true of Mary Caesar's journal: her "jottings" are crafted into a volume that serves a distinct ideological purpose. Her continuous vindication of Jacobitism is to some extent what Gusdorf refers to as a means of "personal salvation" – it presumably helped to sustain her during times of political failure. Yet because her journal engages with public political history it is also, unavoidably, "spoken to the world" in the sense that it addresses the concerns of that world, albeit in a private format.

This "interventionist" aspect of Mary Caesar's writing is overlooked or even denied in much of the small amount of extant criticism on her journal. Valerie Rumbold and Dorothy Potter who, as previously stated, are the only two scholars to have devoted significant attention to the journal, have undoubtedly performed an invaluable service in bringing Caesar to the attention of readers and critics and in providing perceptive analyses of Caesar's writing that help to further our understanding of both the journal itself and the circumstances in which it was written. However, inevitably, both scholars also write from individual standpoints that necessarily influence their presentation of Mary Caesar and her work. Specifically, both Rumbold and Potter, particularly the former, prioritise the issue of gender in their depictions of Caesar.

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<sup>20</sup> Bloom 23. The Gass quotation is taken from "The Art of Self: Autobiography in an Age of Narcissism," *Harper's* (May 1994), 43-52 (49).

Indeed, for Rumbold, despite the emphasis upon Jacobitism in the title of her article, Caesar's writing is defined predominantly in terms of the author's gender. This is not surprising considering that her essay was published in 1992 in a volume specifically devoted to exploring the relationships between writing by early modern *women* and history. This context arguably made such an emphasis upon gender inevitable.

However, Rumbold's focus on gender, I would suggest, leads her to present Caesar as more passive and inward looking than is justified by the journal itself.

This is particularly apparent in the way in which Rumbold deals with the issue of the public/private aspects of the text. Despite the omission of the domestic details that would usually be seen as representative of women's diaries, Rumbold asserts that Caesar "writes exclusively about the areas in which the feminine sphere can properly overlap with the public and political, in effect transforming the public into the private".<sup>21</sup> Caesar's descriptions of visiting Tory prisoners in jail, organising subscriptions for Tory poets and of her relationships with politicians are thus seen as depictions of "private" rather than "public" actions "which, far from emphasizing the potential threat of a woman's interest in affairs of state, effectively assimilated her passionate devotion to acceptable models of wifely and Christian piety".<sup>22</sup> Such categorisation influences Rumbold's generic definitions of the journal. Seeing it as "sometimes almost reminiscent of the commonplace-book tradition" with its transcriptions of prose and verse, its personal reminiscences and the fact that there is "no consistent attempt to explain the significance of events and personalities in terms

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<sup>21</sup> See Blodgett for information about women's diaries. Rumbold, "Jacobite Vision" 179.

<sup>22</sup> Rumbold, "Jacobite Vision" 180.

accessible to the uninitiated reader,” Rumbold seeks to situate the journal within a tradition of specifically *female* writing.<sup>23</sup>

Rumbold offers two main explanations for this interpretation of Caesar's writing.

First, is what Rumbold characterises as Caesar's “assimilation of the political to the conjugal”. Rumbold identifies Charles Caesar as “the authoritative presence” of the book. The fact that Caesar begins her journal whilst her husband is away from home is seen as significant, “Had her husband been at home, their mutual commiseration would perhaps have blunted her commemorative urge”. Rumbold distinguishes Mary Caesar from Lucy Hutchinson, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Duchesses of Marlborough and Buckingham all of whom “express a clear sense of their sex as impediment to participation in political life”. Caesar, by contrast, “never articulates the issue of authority as one of gender”. However, Rumbold locates the reason for this in the fact that “her husband, already the legitimizing subject of her writing, explicitly encouraged her to see herself as a commendable exception to her sex”.<sup>24</sup> The gendered aspect of Caesar's text is therefore inferred from evidence external to the text itself.

Second, Rumbold emphasises what she sees as the emotional quality of Caesar's politics:

At the heart of her Jacobite commitment ... lies not the pragmatism of a professional politician, but a personal and affective devotion to the

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<sup>23</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 179, 178.

<sup>24</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 180.

Stuart family, and to the memory of Queen Anne and her servant the first Earl of Oxford as founders of her husband's fortune.<sup>25</sup>

In this description Caesar's writing is imbued with a certain passivity. The journal is defined as “a work of meditative reflection” whose writing occurred during a period “when there was less scope for the practical service to the cause that had previously occupied her”.<sup>26</sup> The journal thus becomes a substitute for action and “an integral part of a lifestyle which amounted almost to a domestic cult for the edification of family and friends in the Jacobite faith”. Within such an arena, “writing, housekeeping and hospitality all partake of the same consecrated energy”.<sup>27</sup>

Such an analysis is reminiscent of Kathryn King's presentation of Jane Barker's Jacobitism, as depicted in her prose fictions. As I discuss in Chapter Two, King emphasises the emotional qualities of Barker's literary Jacobitism in ways which render her writing less assertive than I believe is justified. King argues that Barker's Jacobitism in her novels is not “overt, systematic, or even sustained” and presents her in one instance “less as a woman than as a study in exemplary Jacobite quietism”.<sup>28</sup>

In a similar manner, Valerie Rumbold genders Caesar's Jacobitism in a way that domesticates it and inscribes a work that deals almost exclusively with high politics as one that demonstrates the “assimilation of the political to the conjugal”. As a result of such analyses, both Barker and Caesar are rendered passive and are effectively disengaged from the realm of political action. Such interpretations exhibit the features identified by Howard Erskine-Hill in his warning against the dangers of

<sup>25</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 179-80.

<sup>26</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 179,182.

<sup>27</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 183.

<sup>28</sup> Kathryn King, *Jane Barker, Exile: A Literary Career 1675-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000) 161,163.

“emotional Jacobitism” which are also discussed in Chapter Two. Arguing that such a term must be used with great care, Erskine-Hill writes that “‘Emotional’ may be equated with ‘nostalgia’” and may “be understood to refer to residual feeling when action or desired change are assumed to be hopeless”. As a result, Erskine-Hill suggests that “Emotional Jacobitism” is part of “a self-evidently retrospective judgement”.<sup>29</sup>

Of course, Caesar’s work *is* retrospective. It is a journal of events that, by the time they are recorded, are already in the past. However, this alone is not sufficient to render them purely nostalgic. Caesar does not seek simply to record these events; she engages in an ongoing process of interpretation that seeks to uncover their true meaning. Caesar’s journal is, therefore, an intervention in the political process in that it provides a reading of it. In many ways Caesar’s authorial method resembles the didactic technique described by Robert Mayer in relation to Defoe for whom “fidelity to the facts was consistent with the presentation of those facts in what the author regarded as the ‘true Light’”.<sup>30</sup> Mayer is here describing Defoe’s attitude to historical veracity within *fictional* texts. In Defoe’s works the problem thus becomes one of categorization: how should these texts be defined and how can the reader separate the fictional from the historical elements within them? Mary Caesar’s journal presents a

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<sup>29</sup> Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Poetry of Opposition and Revolution: Dryden to Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 11. Erskine-Hill believes that the term “emotional Jacobitism” originated with Douglas Brooks-Davies in his work *Pope’s Dunciad and the Queen of Night: A Study in Emotional Jacobitism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>30</sup> Robert Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 171. The reference to the “true Light” is taken from *Annals of King George iv*.

different but related problem: the issue is not what is fiction and what is history, but rather what is history itself.

Caesar addresses this question through the medium of her own authorship and in ways that emphasise both her connections to and her differences from Anne Finch and Jane Barker. In Chapter Three I draw on Frances Dolan's work on Elizabeth Cellier for my discussion of Jane Barker's perspective on historical truth in her "Fidelia" poems. Dolan remarks on the essentially constructed nature of the Popish Plot, commenting that "it is impossible to distinguish between events and their narrative representations because those narratives ... were the event".<sup>31</sup> I demonstrate that Barker, in contrast, did believe in a clearly defined reality beyond the representations and that she felt that it was essential that this reality should be recorded. Mary Caesar's conception of historical reality appears to combine both of these perspectives. Whilst she clearly believes that the Jacobite version of events is the only *true* version, Caesar's way of establishing this truth is through her own narrative. Whilst Barker shows the battle *for* truth, Caesar attempts to win this battle by declaring moral, if not actual, victory for the Jacobite cause. I would therefore contend that Caesar's solution to the ideological and literary battles experienced by both Finch and Barker is one that implicitly emphasises her role as an author over her role as a political agent. Although Caesar's journal provides many instances of its author's involvement in political affairs, it is through her narration of those affairs that she can shape them most fully. Rumbold's assertion that "writing emerged as one way of channelling the

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<sup>31</sup> Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) 158.

loyal zeal which no longer found its outlet so readily in action” thus overlooks the fact that the writing of the journal is in itself a form of political action.<sup>32</sup>

Dorothy Potter’s edition of Caesar’s journal is not as systematic in its approach to gender as Rumbold’s article, yet it does emphasise gender in ways that are worthy of analysis. The edition is entitled *The Journal of Mary Freman Caesar, 1724-1741: Literary and Political Events in Georgian England* and is, notably, part of the “Women’s Studies” series from the Edwin Mellen Press.<sup>33</sup> The subtitle draws attention to the admirable efforts of Potter to locate the journal within its broad intellectual and historical context. Each book of the journal is preceded by an essay by the editor in which she elaborates on the characters and events described by Caesar. The edition thus does not simply attempt to recover Caesar’s text but also to reintegrate it into the contexts from which it emerged. Despite this, the opening sentences of the edition, in the Foreword, do position Caesar firmly as a *woman* writer:

Born in an age when most women’s lives were grounded in a round of domestic duties, childbirths, infant mortalities, religious faith, and the companionship of one’s own sex, Mary Freman Caesar sought and in some measure gained a wider world. Her twin passions, literature and politics, which were wedded to an unqualified support of her husband, his High-Tory friends, and above all the house of Stuart were the most vital elements of her existence.<sup>34</sup>

Potter here identifies Caesar as an exception to her sex. In a sense, her perspective on Caesar’s gender is the reverse of Rumbold’s. Whereas the latter sees Caesar as drawing the world of politics into her “feminine sphere,” Potter perceives Caesar as

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<sup>32</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 183.

<sup>33</sup> *The Journal of Mary Freman Caesar* is volume 33 in this series.

<sup>34</sup> Potter viii.

being able to escape that sphere, to a certain degree at least, and to attain “a wider world”.

Eveline Cruickshanks, who provides the Preface to the edition, also emphasises the fact that Caesar is exceptional:

She was unusual compared to most women contemporaries. Whereas most women’s letters and diaries are limited to domestic matters, household management, family illnesses, and social gossip, Mrs. Caesar wrote as the friend of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, Lord Chancellor Cowper, the Earl of Orrery, and the Earl of Strafford, as well as of Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Matthew Prior. How many women in her day could say as much?<sup>35</sup>

Such statements are problematic for scholars of writing by early modern women.

Although Cruickshanks is correct in her assertion that “the diary of a woman interested primarily in politics and in literature” is “something very rare in the eighteenth century,” that assertion may rest simply on the fact that other such diaries did exist but have been lost.<sup>36</sup> Both Potter and Cruickshanks are right to emphasise the fact that Caesar’s journal *is* unusual as a document. However, this very emphasis takes us perilously close to the “evolutionary” model of women’s writing identified by Margaret Ezell. Within such a model “the past is constructed as a primitive stage”. Early modern women writers are automatically seen as less advanced than their successors and are viewed as essentially “domestic, passive, and modest”.<sup>37</sup> Positioning Mary Caesar as an exception to this model does not undermine the model itself; in fact it strengthens it by implying that other non-exceptional women conformed to it.

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<sup>35</sup> Cruickshanks, “Preface,” *The Journal of Mary Freman Caesar* xiii.

<sup>36</sup> Cruickshanks, “Preface,” *The Journal of Mary Freman Caesar* xiii

<sup>37</sup> Margaret J.M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 103.

Such editorial implications illustrate the complexities that face those who choose to work in this field. Rumbold's approach which presents Caesar's journal as *conditioned* by its author's gender, and Potter's critical stance which proposes that Caesar is an exception to her gender, demonstrate the recurring problem faced by those who study the writing of early modern women, that of how to approach these texts and how to confront the issue of gender within them. As we have seen in the cases of Anne Finch and Jane Barker, the laudable attempt to use gender-based analysis as a means of gaining recognition for these writers has also led to the neglect and distortion of other aspects of their writing.

In her essay "The Tulsa Center for the Study of Women's Literature: What We Are Doing and Why We Are Doing It," Germaine Greer discusses this issue directly:

Scholars working in the field of women's literature have then to develop a formidable range of skills. The most basic of these are probably the bibliographic techniques by which texts are first located, then identified in their time and place, then deciphered and their internal references traced and explicated. As indispensable is the sense of history which confers the perspective in which the work must be seen as representative or eccentric, original or traditional, belonging to one school of thought or another, advancing a tendency in the development of, say, feminist thought or opposing it. Scholarly thoroughness and critical brilliance are not often found in the same person, but students of women's literature owe it to their subject to praise the works for the right reasons, that is, to identify the inner organising principles in them, from which their vitality, if any, stems, together with the problems attendant on living in the shadow of male genius.<sup>38</sup>

Greer's article was written over twenty years ago yet it remains pertinent today.

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<sup>38</sup> Germaine Greer, "The Tulsa Center for the Study of Women's Literature: What We Are Doing and Why We Are Doing It," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 1.1 (1982 Spring): 5-26 (7-8).

Texts by early women writers are still being discovered and, as Greer remarks, “The tools for correct interpretation of the data have themselves to be refined, but if the data itself is incomplete and arbitrarily assembled, no valid inferences can be made”.<sup>39</sup>

To a certain extent, we are still stumbling in the dark in relation to these women’s texts. Until we have both a more detailed understanding of the contexts in which they wrote (is it fair to say that Caesar’s journal is a rare example of a woman’s engagement with literary and political issues?) and of the concepts of gender which we can apply in a non-anachronistic manner to their texts (is Caesar assimilating the wider world to her domestic sphere, or vice versa?) it is hard to offer definitive readings and editions of their texts.

Potter’s edition *is* an excellent attempt to make Caesar’s journal accessible and comprehensible to a wider audience. Yet despite her location of the text within its historical and political contexts it is inevitable that some contexts will be privileged over others. Although Potter refers to both literary and political background in the sub-title of her edition, it is the latter which is paramount. This is perhaps to be expected given Potter’s training as a historian. Although Caesar’s relationships with literary figures are mentioned, as witnessed by the above quotations which refer to her connections with Swift and Pope, the possible effects of these relationships upon her own writing are not explored. This is not to criticise Potter; an initial edition that not only prepared such a complex work for publication but also provided an exhaustive and inter-disciplinary reading of it would be a mammoth, if not an impossible, task. However, it is to suggest that it is probably best to see both Rumbold’s article and Potter’s edition as steps towards a gradual, if limited, understanding of the journal

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<sup>39</sup> Greer 7.

within the wider context of a field which, as Greer argues, is still developing. Until we have more information, not just about Mary Caesar but also about other early modern women diarists, it is premature to attempt a systematic exposition of the journal. All that we can do is to explore other contexts and other readings.

One such context is the literary which, as I have suggested, is somewhat overlooked by Potter. Throughout the journal the influence of Alexander Pope in particular can be felt. Pope was a friend of Caesar's and, as Valerie Rumbold demonstrates, the pair "corresponded from at least 1723" although they almost certainly knew each other before this date. Although Valerie Rumbold suggests that this friendship "was not one deeply based in shared sensibility," Mary Caesar was a loyal friend to Pope and worked extremely hard at raising subscriptions for his *Odyssey*.<sup>40</sup> I would argue that the poet's views on central issues such as friendship and the public and private spheres, whilst not always the same as those of Mary Caesar, emerge from a shared intellectual environment and thus help to elucidate aspects of Caesar's own writing.

One of the most fundamental ways in which such connections are manifested can be demonstrated through an analysis of Caesar's recurrent emphasis upon personal character throughout her journal. Caesar assesses and evaluates the events she relates

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<sup>40</sup>Rumbold, *Women's Place* 231, 233. Rumbold observes of Mary Caesar's involvement in raising subscriptions for the *Odyssey*, "her efforts on his [Pope's] behalf were quite out of the ordinary; and in recognition of the fact he [Pope] placed an asterisk by her name in the list of subscribers and expressed his gratitude in an august pun:

I took another liberty with Your own Name, which you knew nothing of, nor I dare say could have Suspected; & have made a Star of Mrs Caesar, as well as of Mrs Fermor. If anybody asks you the reason of this, quote to 'em this verse of Virgil,  
– Processit Caesaris astrum," *Women's Place* 231.

In her note to this quotation Rumbold observes that "Pope quotes Virgil, *Eclogues*, IX. 47 ("Caesar's star has risen") in a punning allusion to the comet taken by the Romans to be the soul of Julius Caesar ascending into the heavens, a motif which also recalls the apotheosis of Belinda's lock at the end of the *Rape*," *Women's Place* 231 n. 41. The quotation is taken from *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956) II: 293.

through the personalities of those who enact them. The main themes of her journal are truth and falsehood, honour and integrity and the innate connection of these qualities to political virtue. Yet these abstract qualities are explored through the medium of specific human beings. I would suggest that the most helpful way of considering this aspect of Mary Caesar's writing is to compare her views on friendship with those of Pope.<sup>41</sup> Lawrence Lee Davidow has explored the ways in which Pope "associates friendship with social roles and human relationships" but simultaneously "frequently places it among conceptual abstractions, specifically ethical, emotional, or personal qualities which, taken together, constitute the attributes of the good or happy man".<sup>42</sup> As a result, Davidow concludes that "friendship symbolizes, in a virtually synecdochical way, the values which Pope attributes to the private sphere of life," and that consequently, "Private life becomes, both verbally and conceptually, the locus of real virtue".<sup>43</sup>

Mary Caesar's attitude to friendship employs similar ideas yet frequently with different results. Like Pope, she sometimes views friendship as a "conceptual abstraction" – for her "friends" and "good men" are almost tautologous terms. Yet the dynamic between the "public" and the "private" in Caesar's journal works in the opposite direction to that identified by Davidow in relation to Pope. For the latter, the "private" values of friendship lead to the adoption of "an anti-Court posture" in which existing social structures almost inevitably exclude the virtuous:

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<sup>41</sup> Just as Pope positions his patrons as his "friends" so Mary Caesar elides distinctions between herself and her social superiors by presenting them as both personal and political "friends". For Pope's patrons see Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) 151-4.

<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Lee Davidow, "Pope's Verse Epistles: Friendship and the Private Sphere of Life," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 40:2 (1977): 151-170 (154).

<sup>43</sup> Davidow 156,155.

Pope uses the private life as an alternative source of ethical norms to those he satirizes. Thus, while most satire tends finally to reinforce the institutional norms, Pope's does not. Instead of affirming the status quo, he places ultimate value on the rigorous ideals of personal integrity and an open heart.<sup>44</sup>

For Mary Caesar the problem lies not with the nature of the public sphere itself but with its current occupation by her political enemies. She does not perceive the private life as an ethical alternative to the world of politics – she is not interested in retreat in the way that Anne Finch is and her estate at Bennington is not equivalent in its symbolism to Pope's Twickenham. Instead, the private nature of her volume stems from the fact that the public sphere is, she hopes *temporarily*, politically hostile to her views.

The fact remains, however, that Caesar's journal is a private text in the sense that it has few, if any, readers. Its impact on practical events must therefore be nonexistent. Pope's poetry *could* function as a form of public political action because, in Maynard Mack's words, for Pope:

the poet was or should be part and parcel of the body politic, and his task remained what it had been, at least in theory, for both his classical and his Renaissance forerunners: to discourage evil-doing by dragging it to the light and burying it with obloquy, and to quicken excellence of all kinds by offering it eternal fame.<sup>45</sup>

For Mary Caesar, things were not so straightforward. Although Pope himself faced restrictions upon his own membership of "the body politic" because of both class and religion, he was at least able to engage with it in public through his writing.

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<sup>44</sup> Davidow 152,170.

<sup>45</sup> Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 563.

Unfavourable historical circumstances would have made the “history of her own times” that Rumbold believes Caesar wanted to write if not impossible at least highly dangerous. However, I would argue that this fact militates against the idea that Caesar’s journal transforms “the political to the conjugal” as a result of gender anxiety. On the contrary, the fact that Caesar does not choose to write about her domestic existence or to use the private life as her ethical focus, but to create a highly politicised record of the events she witnessed – in effect a private history – indicates that she was being as assertive as she dared. Her journal represents the only form her historical and political writing *could* take and also a logical alternative to the literary and political solutions adopted by Finch and Barker. Whereas Finch defers all expectation of resolution and fulfilment to the afterlife and Barker defines a role for herself as a teller of truth in the ongoing, and apocalyptic, battle between the Jacobites and their enemies, Caesar attempts to fix what has already happened by presenting historical events in what she regards as the appropriate political light. Finch rejects a political landscape that excludes her, Barker seeks to change it and Caesar attempts to reclaim or even reinterpret it.

The example of Pope can also help us to comprehend Caesar’s successful negotiation of a problem identified by Rumbold in relation to another woman writer and a correspondent of Mary Caesar’s.<sup>46</sup> Judith Cowper was the niece of the Lord Cowper who features so prominently in Caesar’s writing. She appears to have been introduced to Pope by Mary Caesar.<sup>47</sup> Rumbold argues that Cowper failed as a writer due to the fact that she could find no workable models to adopt as a female author. Rumbold suggests that Cowper was paralysed not simply by the fact that she was

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<sup>46</sup> See *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, II: 197.

<sup>47</sup> Rumbold, *Women’s Place* 231.

“trying to work in a tradition made by and for men” but also by her dedication to the aspirations embodied in that tradition. As a result:

Cowper commits herself to ideals that are problematic not only for her as lady and potential poet, but also for the male artists who still proclaimed such values: in an age effectively characterized by portraiture and the novel, Cowper accepts from her mentors a commitment to history painting and epic that even they were to find creatively unworkable.<sup>48</sup>

Mary Caesar circumvents this problem by adopting a similar technique to one identified by Davidow in relation to Pope’s epistles. Writing of the latter Davidow argues that they:

may be said to embody domesticated versions of the heroic and pastoral ideals. They transmute Achilles’ wrath into the satirist’s indignation and domesticate the *Iliad’s* world at war into “the strong antipathy of good to bad”. Heroic qualities, like the force of arms and strength of will, become through this translation the force of wit and strength of virtue. And the fulfilment of heroic qualities registers not excess but a “golden mean.”<sup>49</sup>

If Mary Caesar can be said to “domesticate” her text it is only in this non-gendered way. She, like Pope in his epistles, deals with abstract conceptions of moral ideals such as virtue but on the scale of national politics not epic literature. Yet this “domestication” offers her a workable model for her writing. The issues of gender that relate to Caesar’s journal surely revolve around the fact that her writing remains in the *private* rather than the *public* sphere. They do *not* affect her conception of herself as a commentator on the “body politic” and in this she views her role in a way not entirely dissimilar from the way in which Pope views his.

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<sup>48</sup> Valerie Rumbold, “The Poetic Career of Judith Cowper: An Exemplary Failure?” *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. Donald C. Mell (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996) 48-66 (64, 56-7).

<sup>49</sup> Davidow 157.

Caesar's journal therefore provides a highly individual interpretation of the events it describes – both in the sense that the author's individual judgement forms the basis of her political conclusions and in the sense that those conclusions are based upon her judgements of individuals. Caesar's journal is therefore a “private” text in the fundamental sense that it is unashamedly partial. The author's personal consciousness is continually foregrounded and the subjectivity of the text is seen as an asset. Caesar thus quotes the Duke of Buckingham's preference for memoirs in place of histories with approval:

the reason is Obvious as Most commonly wrote by such as have been intrusted, when Compilers of Histories are forc'd to gather from such as know as little as dose themselves. and Load it with words, to swell the Volume. (ms 63, Potter 111)

The creation of this role leads Caesar to form a complex attitude towards the past that is dominated by the need to memorialise key people and events. Caesar's remark that memoirs are superior to histories as the former are “Most commonly wrote by such as have been intrusted” thus carries greater significance than is at first apparent. Caesar is driven almost by a need to “bear witness” to the events she has experienced and to commemorate the people she has known.<sup>50</sup> Writing of her visits to the tombs of Matthew Prior and the Duke of Buckingham, she comments:

As I think it a sort of Duty to the Dead (when in Ons power), In that Nobile and Solom Stroughter of Westminster Abbe. the then Lady Harriat Harly and I Visated the Toom of Oure Departed Frend Mr Prior. with Concern and Reverance. So Hes Mr Caesar and myself that

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<sup>50</sup> Rumbold has described Mary Caesar's journal as her “documentary temple of memory,” *Women's Place* 233.

of the Duke of Buckinghame, whare He seems with such Sarenity and  
Swetnes of Temper. which Were peculiar to Him self...  
(ms 46, Potter 83-4)

A similar commemorative urge can also be observed in Pope's work. Davidow has observed that the latter used his epistles as a means of "memorializing friendships".<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Maynard Mack has described Pope's decision to edit the works of Buckingham as "an act of piety to a dead friend".<sup>52</sup> Caesar's visit to the tomb of the son, and her recording of this visit, appear to fulfil a similar function to Pope's actions as the literary executor of the father.

The reminiscences of such friends determine the very form of the journal. The first volume opens with the death of Lord Oxford, one of the politicians Caesar most admires: "The Loss Lord Oxford is to Mr Casar, maks me reflect on the many changes of His Fortune, since I had the Honor and Happines of being His Wife" (ms 1, Potter 14). Book Two also opens with a reference to the late Lord Oxford:

If Any Thing Could Make up the Loss Mr Casar sustains by the Death of His Great and Good Friend the Earl of Oxford, twould be the Friendship of the Present Lord. Who Omits all Days of Reioysing In His Family During this year of Mourning for His Father.  
Mr Caesar is Honord with the Closest Friendship by the Earls of Strafford and Orrery, Their Impeaching the Former. Hes had No more Effect On that Lord. then the Long Imprisonment hes Had on the Latter. They Were Both Friends to Lord Oxford and Minesters to the Queen during His being Treasurer (ms 20, Potter 50)

These quotations draw attention to another aspect of Caesar's work that has been somewhat overlooked in the criticism and yet which is central to our understanding of

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<sup>51</sup> Davidow 159.

<sup>52</sup> Mack 396.

the journal – her narrative structure. The initial impetus to begin writing comes from the death of one of her political friends. However, this does not lead to a straightforward encomium. Rather, it leads to a train of reminiscences that *include* Lord Oxford but that also takes in a wide range of other events occurring across a vast number of years. The death of Lord Oxford leads Caesar to contemplate her husband’s political career to date which in turn leads to a series of reflections on the political events of the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Book One thus includes discussions of the Sacheverell trial, the Gyllenborg plot, parliamentary elections, the deaths of Matthew Prior and Lord Cowper, and Lord Oxford’s imprisonment. As Dorothy Potter states in her commentary, “The first part of her journal came full circle, beginning and ending with the death of Lord Oxford, and impeachments and plots”.<sup>53</sup>

Like Jane Barker, Mary Caesar views chronological accuracy as an irrelevance. Just as Barker blurs historical divisions by including references to the South Sea Bubble in *A Patchwork Screen*, a novel supposedly set in the reign of Charles II, so Caesar sees no need to follow a linear time scheme in her writing. Indeed, as with Barker, such linearity would undermine the larger political aims of the text. In my discussion of Barker’s prose works I draw on Michael McKeon’s concept of “conservative” narratives through which he suggests that the idea of time as a cyclical entity allows writers whose political orientation is broadly conservative to create plots in which political wrongs can be redressed and the politically disinherited can be restored to their rightful fortunes.<sup>54</sup> Caesar’s journal displays a dependence on similarly cyclical

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<sup>53</sup> Potter 13.

<sup>54</sup> Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

views of time. Lord Oxford's death thus sets off a chain of reflections that defy linearity as the events discussed in these reflections are themselves not part of a linear progression. For Mary Caesar, the historical events of her day clearly do not illustrate some form of political evolution. Thus, there is no imperative to record them in a linear or evolutionary form.

In the first book of her journal Mary Caesar records how her husband was arrested in January 1717 and their home was searched for evidence of involvement with the Gyllenborg plot. Charles Caesar was released as no incriminating evidence was discovered. However, it is notable that Mary Caesar, who appears to have shown great fortitude throughout the search of her home, comments that the only papers found were:

a list of the Army and where they were quarter'd. and collections out of the Eenglish History in Mr Casars Hand, put together in such a Manner. as made them fall Heavy on those Tims. but Not to be taken Hold of. (ms 6, Potter 19-20)

Such items were clearly not treasonable. However, the historical collections were indicative of Charles Caesar's antipathy to the current government, not just in their explicit condemnations of contemporary events, but also in their inherent opposition to Whiggish notions of linear progress. Such opposition is politically significant. If events are not symptomatic of a drive towards historical progress then alternative political directions remain possible, indeed desirable. Just as Charles Caesar's "collections" reveal what McKeon would identify as a "conservative" narrative structure, so the opening books of Mary Caesar's journal demonstrate, in their

circularity, a commitment to the cyclical notion of history we have already seen demonstrated in Barker's prose fictions.

The very date on which Mary Caesar begins her journal, 30 May 1724, underlines such a commitment. This date is the day after Charles II's birthday and his return to London on his Restoration and is thus a reminder of the triumph of the cyclical view of history on a past occasion. In a similar manner, the above quotation, from the opening of Book Two of the journal, emphasises continuity through loss. The only possible consolation for the death of Lord Oxford is the friendship of his son, who, we assume, continues to embody some of the qualities of his deceased father. Caesar moves seamlessly from the continuity of a family line to the idea of political constancy as exhibited by the Earls of Strafford and Orrery. In this one single paragraph Caesar therefore raises four of her central themes: the importance of family, the significance of friendship, political constancy and the remembrance of the dead. Such contiguity is not merely coincidental, it represents the essentially interconnected nature of Caesar's ideological and literary standpoints. The narrative style in which one reflection leads inevitably to another, in which familial continuity leads to thoughts of political continuity, and in which linearity is ignored, is itself representative of a Jacobitism to which inheritance, constancy and restoration are paramount.

Ideas explored by Stanley Fish in his article "Things and Actions Indifferent: The Temptation of Plot in *Paradise Regained*," can help to elucidate this aspect of Caesar's writing. Fish argues that Milton's poem seeks to demonstrate the danger of all attempts "to externalize the moral life" by placing value on things and actions

extrinsic to the self. Such externalization results in “making the struggle between good and evil an event in the world of circumstances rather than a succession of events in the inner world of spiritual choice”. These temptations “find their perfect expression in the dynamics of plot, which, by substituting the curve and arc of greater and lesser moments for the straight line of a moment endlessly repeated, relieves us of the obligation to be perpetually alert”.<sup>55</sup> The conceptions of time revealed in Mary Caesar’s journal are, perhaps unsurprisingly, diametrically opposed to those identified by Fish in *Paradise Regained*. Whereas Milton presents “the straight line of a moment endlessly repeated,” Caesar offers her reader frequent examples of “the curve and arc” of historical experience and of an ideological interpretation of such experience which depends upon notions of circularity and restoration.

Caesar also operates a moral code in which there is definitely a single correct response to external objects and events. The incident, related in Book One, in which she presents hangings commemorating the Restoration of 1660 to Lord Cowper crystallises both this externalization of moral value and her rejection of linear concepts of time. The incident is presented as part of Caesar’s reflections on Cowper’s death:

But Now comes the Fatall Death of the Great Lord Cowper, Who when Att Benington I shewing him the Restoration Hanggings. Turning quick to me He said. They that Once thought they serv’d their Country by Endeavouring to Keep Him [Charles II] Out. Found they Had No way to Save it, but by Bringing Him Home. Seaing in my closet a Picture he lookt through a glass Earnestly Appon it for soom time. then said, it had Not Only a Sweet but A Sensible Countenance. and a Likeness to Both Parents More then Usual. He was not Happier in His Expresstion then in the Most Pleasing Dilivery, and Sr John Denams

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<sup>55</sup> Stanley Fish, “Things and Actions Indifferent: The Temptation of Plot in *Paradise Regained*,” *Milton Studies* XVII (1983): 163-85 (181).

Unimaictable Discription of the Thames May Aptly to His  
Conversation be Apply'd

Tho Deep, yet clear – tho Gentle yett Not Dull.  
Strong without Rage, without O're Flowing Full.

(ms 15-16, Potter 30)

Potter identifies this portrait as one that had been sent to the Caesars by the Old Pretender in 1717 rather than one of Charles II who resembled neither his mother nor his father.<sup>56</sup> This incident is used by Caesar as an emblem of Cowper's political worthiness – when presented with a significant set of “externals” Cowper offers the “correct” response and is thus vindicated in her eyes. Not only does he express an appreciation of the cyclical nature of history through his reflections on the Restoration, Cowper also indicates his rejection of the Warming Pan rumours through his comment on the Old Pretender's physical similarity to his parents.<sup>57</sup> The concluding lines from *Cooper's Hill*, that almost archetypal expression of Stuart loyalties, confer the final seal of approval.<sup>58</sup>

This episode in Caesar's journal has led to a spirited debated between historians Clyve Jones and Eveline Cruickshanks.<sup>59</sup> Jones argues that Cowper was never a Jacobite and that those who seek to claim him for this cause severely misrepresent his political views. Cruickshank disagrees and argues that there is evidence of Cowper's Jacobitism. However, for the student of the journal Cowper's *actual* political allegiance is almost an irrelevance. What is significant about this episode is Caesar's

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<sup>56</sup> Potter 12.

<sup>57</sup> These rumours suggested that James Edward Stuart, later known as the Old Pretender, was not the real child of James II and Mary of Modena but had been smuggled into the palace, in a warming pan, during Mary's supposed labour.

<sup>58</sup> These lines first occurred in the 1655 version of “Coopers Hill”. See Brendan O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks: A Critical Edition of Sir John Denham's Coopers Hill* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 150-1.

<sup>59</sup> Eveline Cruickshanks, “Lord Cowper, Lord Orrery, the Duke of Wharton, and Jacobitism,” *Albion*

presentation of this encounter and her mobilisation of the hangings and the portrait as external markers of political loyalty. In this respect, the anecdote serves a comparable function to Barker's tale of Captain Manly in *The Lining of the Patchwork Screen*.

This tale tells the story of the eponymous hero who initially marries for money rather than love but who ultimately redeems himself by going into exile after the Revolution of 1688 and subsequently rejecting the offer of a bigamous marriage with a wealthy widow.<sup>60</sup> In Chapter Two, I argue that this tale places a great demand upon the Jacobite reader – the implied message of this story is that individual readers must look to their own loyalties and ensure that they are faithful to their beliefs and vows. The emphasis of the story is therefore upon personal loyalty and responsibility. In a similar manner, Caesar constructs a narrative in which Cowper is forced to take responsibility for his political loyalties and to demonstrate them unequivocally by responding correctly to the test she provides.

The incident with the Restoration hangings also draws attention to another aspect of Caesar's journal, the author's recurrent references to portraits. Portraits are given as gifts and as acknowledgments of friendship and political allegiances. Thus the Caesars exchanged personal portraits with the Gyllenborgs and also received the gift of a portrait of Charles XII, beloved of Jacobites and praised in verse by Anne Finch, after their involvement in the abortive Gyllenborg plot.<sup>61</sup> Potter also observes that

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26:1 (1994): 27-40; Clyve Jones, "Jacobitism and the Historian: The Case of William, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Cowper," *Albion* 23:4 (1991): 681-96 and "1720-23 and All That: A Reply to Eveline Cruickshanks," *Albion* 26:1 (1994): 41-53.

<sup>60</sup> Jane Barker, *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen; Design'd for the Farther Entertainment of the Ladies* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1726).

<sup>61</sup> Oxfordshire, Rousham, Caesar Letters, F. This plot was named after the Swedish Ambassador, Count Gyllenborg. See Potter 4-5 for further information. The poems in which Anne Finch praises Charles XII are "Verses Written under the King of Sweden's Picture" and "To His Excellency the Lord Cartret at Stockholm Upon receiving from him a picture in miniature of Charles the twelfth King of Sweden". Valerie Rumbold also discusses Caesar's use of portraits in "Jacobite Vision" 184-5.

Mary Caesar received “a portrait of James Stuart – delivered at Oxford’s suggestion, by the Pretender’s agent Anne Oglethorpe”.<sup>62</sup> This gift took its place alongside other royal gifts – Queen Anne gave Charles Caesar one of her portraits by Godfrey Kneller and Queen Elizabeth had given a portrait of herself to the Caesars’ illustrious forebear, Sir Julius.<sup>63</sup> The Duke of Wharton also presented a copy of his own portrait to Charles Caesar.<sup>64</sup> In the journal Mary Caesar also makes an interesting reference to one of her own portraits immediately before she transcribes her own poem “On the Impeachments”: “Mr Caesar was att London when I wrot this. but so Parssial when att Home. to say it should be Lay’d Upon the Table in my Picture” (ms 17, Potter 32).<sup>65</sup> The painting remains unidentified but this quotation does illustrate that Charles Caesar read at least some of his wife’s work and also that she was happy to be visibly associated with writing in her portrait.

Marcia Pointon has observed that portraits in the eighteenth century were part of a process by which “history was to be read through representations of individuals,” an assertion supported by Louise Lippincott’s remark that “the important books on British history published during the eighteenth century were structured around and illustrated by portraits, not narrative scenes”. Lippincott continues, “In eighteenth-century Britain portraits fulfilled the moral and civic roles that academic theory envisioned for history painting. They recorded history, heroes, virtue, and friendship. They taught morality, enforced loyalty, and represented tradition”.<sup>66</sup> As we have

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<sup>62</sup> Potter 5.

<sup>63</sup> Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 33, 184, 190, cited in Potter 5. The portraits are now housed at Rousham.

<sup>64</sup> Caesar’s journal 22, Potter 51.

<sup>65</sup> See the Appendix for the text of this poem. Potter’s edition also includes two appendices featuring poems written to Mary Caesar by Mary Barber, John Lockman and John Boyle, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orrery.

<sup>66</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 62; Louise Lippincott, “Expanding on Portraiture: The Market, the Public, and the Hierarchy of Genres in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” *The Consumption*

seen, Mary Caesar approached history in a similar manner, comprehending events through a focus upon individual personalities which themselves were seen as representing ethical and moral qualities. Her references to portraits are simply another means by which the centrality of individual personalities to her historical perspective are emphasised.

Caesar's remarks about Kneller's portraits of Queen Anne and George I perfectly encapsulate the blending of these themes:

He [Kneller] allso play'd on the Lute. which he told me had taken too much of his Time. but it had giveing him the Advantage of judging of the sound of Voices, which he said he did. when drawing Queen Anns Picture, Asking if the Crown should be On Her Head, the Queen Answer'd No, I'le have it Lye by me on the Table. I knew what she Ment. But then rejoic'd to think of a German King [George I] soon after being in his room as he was painting which he did with Such Ease as if playing with the pencil, and talking of the politeness of the Upper Germany, I Came from thence, but the King Came from the Lower Germany. (ms 62, Potter 110)

In this extract, the portraits of the two individual monarchs are clearly seen through the perspective of Jacobite ideology. Queen Anne, whom Mary Caesar admired, does not wear her crown in a gesture interpreted as indicating her belief in her brother's claim to the throne. Just a few pages further on in her journal, Caesar refers to the Duke of Buckingham's "Some Account of the Revolution" (1723) as follows:

Finely Exprest and With Delicacy the Duke of Buckingham Mentions the Princesses being Deceived, page 74 so that Two Worthy Religious Ladies Even because They were so, consented to Dethrone a Most Indulgent Father, and to succeed Him Boldly in their Several

Turns Before An  
Innocent Brother, then a Child.

(ms 64, Potter 112)

Anne and Mary are to some extent pardoned for their seemingly inexcusable behaviour as they are seen to be “Deceived”. Likewise, in her portrait, Anne is co-opted to the Jacobite cause – the monarch who is occupying the throne *instead* of James’ true heir is used as a means of enforcing that heir’s claim. It is unclear whether the sentence “I knew what she Ment” is spoken by Kneller or by Caesar. Regardless of the speaker, the sentiment expressed is highly problematic. The evidence of the portraits reproduced in the exhibition catalogue *The King Over the Water* does not support such an interpretation. In his introduction to the catalogue, Edward Corp writes that:

In his French portraits, which were all painted before the death of his half-sister Queen Anne, James is never shown with a crown or any other royal regalia. To appease Tory opinion the legitimate king seems willing to await a peaceful restoration once the throne in London should become vacant. In his Italian portraits, all painted after the accession of the new Hanoverian dynasty, James is hardly ever shown without the closed crown of a king. The legitimate king had now to recover his thrones by force.<sup>67</sup>

In some of these Italian portraits, however, in which James III is asserting his right to the throne, he is pictured with his crown on a table beside him. The iconography of the crown not being on the monarch’s, or would-be monarch’s head, does not therefore appear to indicate a sense of unlawfulness.<sup>68</sup> However, as in the episode in which Cowper is shown the restoration hangings, the significance of this moment in the journal lies not in whether Caesar’s interpretation is correct but rather in the fact

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<sup>67</sup> Edward Corp, *The King Over the Water: Portraits of the Stuarts in Exile after 1689* (Edinburgh: The Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 2001) 16.

<sup>68</sup> Charles I was also frequently portrayed with his crown on a table beside him.

that she chooses to make such an interpretation. As with her quotation from the Duke of Buckingham, so her interpretation of Kneller's portrait is used, to paraphrase Lippincott, to structure her own reading of recent history through a focus upon individuals and the qualities she chooses to associate with them. Likewise, Kneller's portrait of George is used as a means of expressing the Hanoverian's crudeness and essential lack of kingliness.

This emphasis upon the link between personality and politics recurs throughout the journal. In particular, Caesar dwells upon examples of personal integrity by the political faithful. Her text is full of phrases that deny the necessity of drawing attention to the admirable qualities of those she admires whilst simultaneously doing just that. Of Lord Oxford she remarks, "His great Behaviour is so well known 'tis Nedless to Mention it." Yet this sentence is immediately followed by an anecdote illustrating his courage during his trial and imprisonment introduced with the words "But to give a speciment of this great Man In Private Life..." (ms 7, Potter 21).<sup>69</sup>

Likewise, Caesar's obituary of the Earl of Carnwath is introduced with the sentences "I Need Not say He was One of the Condem'd Lords. His speech and Behaviour Ever Will be Remembred" (ms 46, Potter 84).<sup>70</sup> The commemorative nature of the journal, the fact that it seeks to provide a witness to the acts of the politically worthy, necessitates Caesar's drawing attention to those very qualities she claims "'tis Nedless to Mention". Likewise, her equation of friendship with virtue means that in her presentations of those she admires commendation of political integrity is frequently coupled with praise of character and the two become symbiotic. This means that

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<sup>69</sup> Oxford had been impeached and committed to the Tower in 1715.

<sup>70</sup> "Sir Robert Dalzell or Dalyell, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnwath, lost his honors as a result of his part in the Jacobite uprising in 1715," Potter 62.

when Caesar chooses to praise Prior, one of the poets she quotes most frequently and approvingly, his personal qualities and political commitments are considered more fully than his poetry:

The world Knew Mr Prior to be a Fine Poet, but Mr Casar who had the Pleasure of his Friendship Esteem'd that As the least Qualification he was Master of, being Superiour to all Temptation, True to His trust. and to His Friend. His Conversation was Not more Plesant than Instructing but with such an Air of Politness and Good Breeding, that a Stranger Entering the Roome would Not a thought Him a Poet, As Naver being Full of Him Self or Satirocl on others. See Him a Young Man Riseing in King Williams Court. and yit even this with what Decency did He Treat His Unhappy Sovereign in His Carmon Seculare for the year 1700

Janus, Mighty Deity  
Be Kind; and as thy searching Eye  
Does Our Modern Story Trace  
Finding some of Stuart's Race  
Unhappy, Pass their Annals By:  
No Harsh Reflection Let Remembrance Raise  
Forbear to Mention what thou Canst Not Praise:

His Works From His Own Hands I Receiv'd, Telling me if I Could  
Forgive some things ther, He would Promise Never to Erre again upon  
the same Head. Lord Oxford had offen Prest Him to go to France,  
which He Told me he Would Do, if Ever His Frend Tourcey should  
come agane into Power. (ms 8-9, Potter 23-4)<sup>71</sup>

This tribute to a favourite poet is constructed almost entirely of approbation of his personal qualities.<sup>72</sup> Amidst the praise of Prior's gentility, the main focus of Caesar's

<sup>71</sup> The quotation is from Prior's "Carmen Seculare, For the Year 1700. To the King," (1699) ll. 101-07, *The Works*, ed., H. Bunker Wright and Monroe K. Spears, vol. I

<sup>72</sup> Both Valerie Rumbold and Howard Erskine-Hill draw attention to the fact that Mary Caesar's involvement in raising subscriptions for a publication of Prior's works in 1719 was at least partially politically motivated. Rumbold observes that "there was a strong political motive for her efforts, insofar as the impoverished and imprisoned poet was at the time under pressure to incriminate his former master Oxford: 'But Alas they knew Little of that Great Man who After being the Queens Minister and Plenipotentiary in France... Rather Chose to Support Him Self by Publishing His Works by Subscription,'" "Jacobite Vision" 187. The quotation from Caesar appears on page 3 of the manuscript and page 17 of Potter's edition. In his article, "Under Which Caesar? Pope in the Journal of Mrs. Charles Caesar, 1724-1741," *Review of English Studies* 33, no. 132 (1982): 436-444, Howard Erskine-Hill also comments on the political nature of this subscription arguing that the pressure upon Prior to betray Oxford "means that the Prior subscription must have been a covertly political and Tory effort," 437 n. 3.

approval is her friend's ability to be "True to His trust," one of the characteristics she values most highly. Caesar persistently returns to notions of fidelity and trust throughout her work using these ideals as benchmarks for her assessment of public figures. Cowper who, as we have seen, Caesar was determined to include within her circle of the faithful, is described as a Lord whom "Neither Profit Nor Power could sway" (ms 21, Potter 51). Writing of Christopher Layer's accusations that Cowper was involved in Jacobite plots in the years 1720 to 1723, Caesar comments that she saw an early version of the Declaration that Cowper had printed in order to protest his innocence of such charges:

One He showd me in the ruff Draught. The Plot Hanging Over His Head, had No Effect On Him saying to me, a Man Ought to Act as He Thought Right, and take the Event. His Declaration was Without Professions Only Declaring the Accusation to be Falss and Groundless. Which He told me He wrote more uppon the Account of Othrs then Himself. To Prove their Hearsays to be False. (ms 12, Potter 26)<sup>73</sup>

As noted above, this section of Caesar's journal has been the subject of a dispute between Clyve Jones and Eveline Cruickshanks in their wider exchange about whether Lord Cowper can be considered a Jacobite. Cruickshanks, who believes that there is evidence of Cowper's Jacobitism, argues that this anecdote does not rule out the possibility that Cowper had Jacobite loyalties. Cruickshanks maintains that this incident demonstrates that Cowper trusted Caesar. She also observes that "Cowper remained a god in Mrs. Caesar's pantheon until his death in 1723," in contrast to both Bolingbroke and Harcourt whom Caesar "regarded as turncoats".<sup>74</sup> Cruickshanks reads the mutual trust between Cowper and Caesar, and Caesar's continued affection for Cowper, as evidence of Cowper's Jacobitism. Clyve Jones views this section of

<sup>73</sup> Layer was executed as a Jacobite conspirator in May 1723.

<sup>74</sup> Cruickshanks, "Lord Cowper" 35.

Caesar's journal rather differently commenting, "Here is a strong profession of innocence recorded without any comment by Mrs Caesar. She did indeed regard Cowper highly, because she mistakenly believed that Cowper was more inclined to Jacobitism than in fact he was".<sup>75</sup>

The quotation from the journal is undoubtedly ambivalent. Cowper's Declaration was intended to clear him of any involvement in the specified Jacobite plots as Jones suggests. Yet the Declaration does not actually repudiate Jacobitism. Caesar's choice of words in her description of the Declaration is also interesting. The statement that "a Man Ought to Act as He Thought Right and take the Event" is typical of the sort of remark that Caesar admired and that she was fond of quoting to illustrate the integrity of her friends. The following three sentences have a cumulative effect that could be argued to undermine the surface meaning of the Declaration. Clyve Jones comments on the structure of these sentences and argues that they "should surely read as one".<sup>76</sup> However, this is to overlook the force that the three separate sentences carry. Each individual sentence restricts the scope of the Declaration. The fact that Cowper limits himself to the denial of Layer's specific allegations is emphasised. Caesar also foregrounds the fact that Cowper writes the Declaration more for others than for himself and in the interests of truth (another favourite concept with Caesar and one which she inevitably associates with her allies). Caesar's phrasing is therefore highly ambiguous as the differing readings of this episode by Jones and Cruickshanks would suggest. The fact that Caesar does appear to admire Cowper *despite* his Declaration does tend to indicate either that he was a Jacobite who was simply covering his tracks, or that this episode is a prime example of Caesar's ability to co-opt people to the

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<sup>75</sup> Jones, "A Reply" 49.

<sup>76</sup> Jones, "A Reply" 48.

Jacobite cause. Ultimately, however, regardless of which interpretation the reader chooses, Caesar's presentation of Cowper both in this incident and in the description of his viewing of the Restoration hangings illustrates her approbation of the statesman through her association of him with a range of the key personal qualities that she used to express such approval: courage, loyalty, honour and truthfulness.

Even those individuals whom one would assume it would be difficult for Caesar to include in her roll call of the great and the good on account of their troubled personal lives, can be reclaimed by Caesar providing she perceives them as politically "sound". Thus, as Dorothy Potter observes, Caesar is surprisingly sympathetic in her attitude to the Duke of Wharton. Potter remarks that:

Wharton had so thoroughly embarrassed his family, squandered his considerable speaking and writing skills, and ruined his political career, that by the time of his demise in 1731 at age thirty-two, he had become a parody of an eighteenth-century rake.<sup>77</sup>

Despite this, Caesar appears to mourn the Duke, commenting that she "could Not help dropping A Tear at the Account of His Death" in Richard Steele's "Memoirs of the Life of the late Duke of Wharton" (1732) and agreeing with Steele's assessment that Wharton's "Fine Tallance Rightly Apply'd Might Have Made Him Not Only An Honner to his Country but An Ornament to Human Nature" (ms 30, Potter 59). Although Caesar acknowledges Wharton's many weaknesses and quotes his own verdict that "He Wanted No sence but Common Sence," her final judgement is forgiving (ms 29, Potter 59). Potter believes that the explanation for this is simple: Wharton's political allegiances, especially his speech in defence of Atterbury at the

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<sup>77</sup> Potter 38.

latter's trial and his journal *The True Briton* which was friendly to the Opposition.<sup>78</sup> For Caesar, approval of the Duke's politics means that her final assessment of his life is dominated by a sense of regret at unfulfilled potential. In an instance when she is unable simply to equate what she regards as political integrity with an equivalent personal integrity she manages to sidestep any suggestion of dissonance by emphasising the Duke's *inherent* if wasted qualities and his own self-awareness.

Mary Caesar's ability to maintain a positive perspective on an individual's character in the face of circumstances that others might see as compromising that character reaches its apotheosis in her presentation of her husband, Charles. As Valerie Rumbold observes, Caesar's journal omits all reference to one of most problematic aspects of her husband's career in the late 1720s and 1730s, his serious financial losses as a result of the South Sea disaster and the consequent suggestions by Strafford and Orrery to "James III" that he may have accepted bribes from Walpole. Rumbold notes that "after 1731 he [Charles Caesar] is mentioned no more in the Stuart correspondence".<sup>79</sup> Yet, despite this:

No mention of his debts, his exclusion from active Jacobite service or any suspicion of his associates' loyalty to him is made in Mary Caesar's book; and while she may not have fully understood the extent of his fall from favour, their poverty, along with his increasing ill health, was an ever-present anxiety. Still, however, she makes impressive use of her characteristic devotional strategies to light herself through periods of anguish hardly hinted at in her book.<sup>80</sup>

Yet Mary Caesar does not merely omit references to her husband's difficulties, she

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<sup>78</sup> Potter 39.

<sup>79</sup> Rumbold, "Jacobite Vision" 194. See also Cruickshanks, "Charles Caesar," for information about Caesar's financial losses and for allegations that he accepted bribes from Walpole.

<sup>80</sup> Rumbold, "Jacobite Vision" 194.

actively represents him as, in effect, the personification of those qualities she has praised throughout her journal. One of the most revealing examples of this technique occurs in the second half of Book Two where Mary Caesar discusses her husband's opposition to the Excise Bill of 1733.<sup>81</sup> This opposition was ultimately responsible for Charles Caesar's loss of his parliamentary seat which in turn, as Dorothy Potter observes, meant that he was arrested for debt.<sup>82</sup> He remained in prison until 1736 when he was re-elected. Mary Caesar, however, chooses to ignore these setbacks and ends the second book of her journal on a distinctly triumphant note. As Potter remarks:

Two poems lauding Charles Caesar's integrity and his stance against the Excise concluded this section of the journal. Thus a casual reader could not know that Caesar had been defeated in the 2 May 1734 election, coming in last in the poll.<sup>83</sup>

The first of these poems was presented to Charles Caesar by an anonymous "Gentillman of Heartfordshire" and Mary Caesar quotes its conclusion in full:

But Casar, Casar May He prove  
 Again E'are Long, His Country's Love  
 His Honour, His Integrity  
 Virtues Innate, Can Never Die  
 Nor is in His Pow'r to Swerve  
 From Principles His Soul Must Serve  
 Casar Live Long, His Health Let None Refuse  
 Lov'd of His Country, and the Faithful Muse

(ms 37, Potter 68)

This poem provides an instance of Mary Caesar finding in another's words the perfect

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<sup>81</sup> This bill was an attempt by Walpole to increase the power of the excise, a move that was seen by many opponents as leading to unreasonable government involvement in private business. See Potter 48.

<sup>82</sup> Potter 49.

<sup>83</sup> Potter 49.

expression of her own uncompromising moral creed. Her husband, like her friends, is not merely a good man; he is essentially a *representative* of goodness.

This quotation is followed immediately by a full-length poem of six stanzas. This work is not attributed which suggests that it may be by Mary Caesar herself. Entitled “The Hertford-shire Ballad” the poem, which is essentially doggerel, repeats and elaborates on the sentiments of the preceding quotation.<sup>84</sup> Written in the voice of the people of Hertfordshire, it celebrates Charles Caesar’s opposition to the Excise Bill and expresses their hope that he will continue to represent them. Like the first poem, this text therefore ignores Charles Caesar’s electoral failure and also presents him as a moral exemplar lauding his “Integrity,” his “Merit,” his honesty, his ancestry and his resistance to bribery. Dorothy Potter suggests that such praise of her husband might be used by Mary Caesar to counter, consciously or otherwise, “any misgivings of her own about her husband’s loyalty”.<sup>85</sup> This is plausible but it is not necessary in order to explain the role of such texts within Caesar’s journal. Valerie Rumbold has commented on the almost religious purpose of Caesar’s work:

Clearly, one of the functions of her writing is as a devotional activity for the sustenance of faith, and its success may be judged by her persistence in a positive engagement with the political process, and with her husband’s part in it, which is only broken by his death. The utter desolation which then ensues marks the limitations of a faith sustained not so much by confrontation with loss and disillusion as by evasion of their threats.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See the Appendix for the text of this poem.

<sup>85</sup> Potter 47.

<sup>86</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 194.

As Caesar's treatment of her husband in the journal demonstrates, such evasions frequently involve both the "personal" and the "political". Nowhere is this more apparent than in Caesar's treatment of family history. The most sustained treatment of this topic occurs in Book Three after a discussion of Queen Anne's death which concludes with Caesar's praise of the late monarch:

... thus Fell This Great and good Queen And tis as impossible for me  
Even to Attempt the Beauties of that Excellent Queens Mind, as for  
Kneller to have Exprest the Gracefullnes of Her Motion, Which was  
Agreable in Every Action. Even to the Moveing of Her Hand. And the  
Queen Walking, Stroke Not More Awe. then Her Speaking to me Gave  
joy and Pleasure, Which Revives with Thinking of It, Fancying I hear  
the Musick of Her Voice, for such it Was when she spoke. And Piety  
and Good Breeding was so Intirely the Queens, that They seem'd  
Allmost to Dye with Her.

O the Delight I Felt in Hearing Her Majesty from the Thrown, Deliver  
That Speech Which Gave Her so Much joy.

At Length Great Anna said --- Let Discord Cease  
She said, the World Obey'd, and all Was Peace.

On the Queen's Picture at Buckingham House, the Duke After the  
Peace Wrote these Lines

Mistaken Zeal was the First Marys share  
Elizabeth was Form'd for Regal Care  
In Ann Alone These Happy Nations Find  
Prudence and Piety Together joyn'd  
(ms 51, Potter 89)<sup>87</sup>

This extract perfectly demonstrates Caesar's eulogistic approach to Queen Anne, her standard device of turning the personalities of those she admired into near abstractions of virtue ("And Piety and Good Breeding was so Intirely the Queens, that They seem'd Allmost to Dye with Her"), and her use of poetry to bolster the opinions she presents through her own writing. It is immediately after these reminiscences of

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<sup>87</sup> The words "Pope, Windsor Forest" are written in the margin next to this poem.

Queen Anne that Caesar provides a detailed discussion of her husband's genealogy and of his family's connection to a succession of Tudor and Stuart monarchs:

Mr Caesars Ancesters and Him self Has Been Highly Honner'd by These Great Queens. Queen Mary Cristined Sr Julius and Added the Name of Casar to that of Adelmare, He Being Grandson by the Female Line to the Duke De Caerine. But by the Masculine Line, from Baron Adelmare, Made Count of Genoa in the Reign of Charles the Great. to Whom He was Related.  
(ms 51-2, Potter 90)

However, the succeeding anecdotes serve to demonstrate not simply the ways in which the Caesar family have been honoured by monarchs but also the ways in which such monarchs have proved to be problematic friends:

Sr Julius Father Assisting the Countes of Lennox (Who Was Mother to Lord Dargly, After Col'd King of Scotland, as Husbon to the Queen and Father to King James the First) And Lending Her His plate so Enseins'd Queen Elizabeth that She sent Him to the Tower Whare He Dy'd. But that Great Queen Made Amends to His Son Who served Her in Many Places, and had Order'd Him to Continnue the Name of Casar. Honnering Him With Her Prescence in His House there to be Entertand with Her Court Tow Day's and One Night. His Lady Being With Child the Queen Gave Him One of Her Own Smokes. Therein to Rop His Children to Make Them Fortunate. (ms 52, Potter 90)

This story is followed by the narration of a complex tale of royal preferment involving both Charles I and Charles II and summarised by Potter as follows:

The story Mrs. Caesar abridged from Clarendon's History of the Rebellion is long and somewhat confusing, even in the original. As Master of the Rolls Sir Julius Caesar had the right to bestow six Clerks' places. One became vacant, which he wanted for his son Robert, a suitably qualified lawyer. Lord Treasurer Sir Richard Weston blocked the appointment, so that the place could be given to one of his supporters. Caesar's friends protested to Charles I, who agreed the matter needed remedy and ordered Weston to make amends.

Still Weston forgot to do so, despite a note from one of Sir Julius's kinsmen, reminding him to Remember Caesar.<sup>88</sup>

The anecdote concludes as follows:

But to return if King Charls the First Had suffered a Hardship to be, Done to the younger son of Sr Julyas, He after Made Sr Charles His Eldest, Master of the Rolls, in the Begining of the year of 1639 He Dy'd the 6 of December 1642 But before so Blest'd to have it In his Power to Lend that Good King great sums of Money, for Which the Talles still Remain, Sr Charls's soon. Not Haveing An Earl of Tullibardin to Make Lord Clarendon Remember Casar. He was chose for the County of Heartford to serve In the Bless'd and Healing Parliament. and Mea'd Sr Henry by the King in Lord Clarendons Lodgings In White-Hall. And the same King Made His son Sr Charls at Cambridg Who Serv'd for the same county. and Was Father to Mr Casar Treasure of the Navy to Queen Ann of Bless'd Memory (ms 53-4, Potter 91-2)

Written by an author with a more ironic temperament than Mary Caesar such anecdotes could read as a warning against putting one's trust in princes. In Caesar's hands, however, the history of her husband's family becomes material from which to fashion both a statement of loyalty to the Tudor/Stuart line and also to connect that line firmly to the Caesars' own ancestry. This diversion into family history concludes, in characteristic fashion, with a quotation:

As Mr Prior Finely and Nobly Expresses it. Left Unfinish'd by the Sudden and Fatall Death of Her Maiesty August I 1714  
 When to a Low, But to a Loyal Hand  
 The Mighty Empris Gave Her High Command  
 That He to Hostill Camps, and Kings should Hast  
 To speak Her Vengeance As Their Danger Past  
 To Say, She Wills Detest'd Wars to Cease  
 She Checks Her Conquest, For Her subjects Ease  
 And Bids the World Attend Her Terms of Peace  
 The Queen of Peace – – If Time and Fate Have Powr  
 Higher to Rais the Glories of Thy Reign;

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<sup>88</sup> Potter 90-91 n. 64.

In Words Sublimer, and a Nobler strain  
 May Future Bards the Mighty Theme Rehears.  
 (ms 54, Potter 92)<sup>89</sup>

According to Potter one of the most important reasons for Caesar's great affection for Queen Anne "was that she was the last link in a chain of personal connections between various relatives and the monarchy".<sup>90</sup> This final quotation from Prior, that simultaneously commemorates the past yet also looks towards the possibility of the future honouring that past, ultimately fulfils many of the same functions as the journal itself. It remains unfinished but so must Mary Caesar's narration of the links between her husband's family and the monarchy. Those links are presently suspended but the author's Jacobitism must surely lead her to view them as capable of renewal.

This relation of the Caesar family history stands in stark contrast to the absence of Mary Caesar's own genealogy from the pages of her journal. This is all the more startling when one is aware of the impact that her own family, particularly her brother, had upon her life. In Book Two of the journal, Caesar describes the Hertfordshire election of 7 September 1727. As Potter explains:

...seemingly as an afterthought, she gave the voting totals: "Seabright 1424, Freman 1012, Caesar 2021". Since Sir Thomas Sebright, a Tory, had successfully stood since 1715, his victory was no surprise. But the losing candidate so casually dismissed was her brother Ralph, a Hanoverian Tory who for thirty years represented Hertfordshire.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The quotation is from Prior's "An Epistle, Desiring the Queen's Picture. Written at Paris, 1714. But left unfinish'd, by the sudden News of Her Majesty's Death," ll. 21-32, *The Works*, ed., H. Bunker Wright and Monroe K. Spears, vol. I

<sup>90</sup> Potter 76.

<sup>91</sup> Potter 40. Both Caesar and Sebright were elected in this election.

Potter believes that the roots of the “deep estrangement” between Mary Caesar and her brother lie:

in Freman’s political choices dating back to the beginning of George I’s reign. Though he had refused a Hanoverian proposal of employment in 1714 -- the offer in itself a blot in Jacobite eyes -- he had been among the first members to propose an Address of Loyalty in the Commons after the uprising in Scotland the next year. He was also one of several M.P.s who drew up Addresses to the King, condemning the 1722 plot, and was regularly seen at Court two years before George I’s death. While these maneuvers were politically sound, they did not endear him to the High Tories. What else he said or did to anger his sister may never be known.<sup>92</sup>

For an ideological Jacobite like Mary Caesar frankly little else would have been needed. To make matters worse, Freman held Robert Walpole responsible for his defeat. This led to rumours that Charles Caesar had been supported by Walpole and had taken bribes from the Prime Minister. Potter cites a letter of 31 May 1729 sent to the Pretender from a London Jacobite agent warning him that Caesar was now under suspicion. However, Potter finds little evidence of bribe taking as the Caesars’ financial situation remained difficult and as “Caesar was still mentioned in Jacobite correspondence at least until 1731”. More plausible, she believes, is Linda Colley’s suggestion that Freman was potentially troublesome to Walpole as he was in favour with George II and that Charles Caesar was therefore a preferable candidate from Walpole’s perspective.<sup>93</sup>

Such political rivalries acquired a more distinctly personal aspect in 1729:

For a number of years Ralph Freman had been the guardian of a young heiress, Jane Long. It was assumed that she would marry his son and

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<sup>92</sup> Potter 40, 40-41.

<sup>93</sup> Potter 41-3, 43. The reference to Colley is taken from *In Defiance of Oligarchy* 208.

heir, William, but on 3 October Miss Long eloped with William's cousin, Charles Caesar.<sup>94</sup>

Potter's account of this elopement suggests that Mary Caesar may have been directly involved in this frustration of her brother's plans:

Lord Strafford ... credited Mrs. Caesar for the success of the affair: "I dare swear she had no smale hand in the match tho it was against the inclinations of her own Brother but such a Brother, no one can blame her for taking care of her own son before his." A contemporary ballad, "Upon the ROYSTON BARGAIN, or ALEHOUSE WEDDING," describing the Fremans' deception and runaway marriage in coarser terms, was clearly written by someone familiar with both families and their friends. Mary Caesar was doubtless offended if she read it; but for her journal's purposes, neither the marriage and [sic] the circumstances surrounding it existed.<sup>95</sup>

The saga of this marriage did not, however, end with the elopement. In 1740 Mary Caesar's son Charles, the groom in this affair, was killed by a cannon ball whilst on cavalry duty. Potter explains that:

his will named his cousin William Freman -- the man whose intended bride he had stolen in 1729 -- as guardian for his two daughters, Jane and Harriet. In reply to a letter from Charles senior, William affirmed the terms of the will, adding, "not knowing at this Juncture where to place the Ladys I took them for the present to my own home".<sup>96</sup>

As with so much of the ongoing dispute with her brother, these details, including the death of her son, are omitted from the journal.

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<sup>94</sup> Potter 43.

<sup>95</sup> Potter 44-5. Oxfordshire, Rousham, Caesar Letters, C. 17 October 1729, F. 4 October 1729.

<sup>96</sup> Potter 126. Oxfordshire, Rousham, Caesar Letters, C. 16 and 18 December 1740.

At the start of this chapter I quoted Georges Gusdorf's observation that autobiography enabled the writer "to give the meaning of his [or her] own mythic tale". Mary Caesar's treatment of family history, both her own and her husband's, demonstrates the way in which her journal presents just such a "mythic tale". The history of the Caesars is entwined with that of recent Tudor and Stuart monarchs in a way that suits Mary Caesar's perception of herself as a Stuart loyalist. The history of her own family, by contrast, is airbrushed out of her text as it conflicts with, or at least deflects from, this view. Just as Mary Caesar offers a partial interpretation of the political events she narrates, so her narration of family history is made to fit with this interpretation. It is, I would suggest, the same basic impulse to shape events in what she views as an ideologically acceptable manner that leads Mary Caesar to omit both her brother's politics and also any mention of the 1715 uprising from her journal.

Such shaping creates a range of difficulties for the reader of the journal. Gusdorf remarks that the autobiographer "is not engaged in an objective and disinterested pursuit but in a work of personal justification". In her journal, Mary Caesar displays a sense not of *personal* but rather of *political* justification. This justification leads, in Valerie Rumbold's words, to "a faith sustained not so much by confrontation with loss and disillusion as by evasion of their threats". Such evasions necessitate a degree of blindness towards the repercussions of her political ideology. Thus, at key moments, when confronted with situations of genuine moral complexity, Caesar fails to examine the implications of her judgements. On hearing of the death of the Earl of Carnwarth, the eighth Duke of Norfolk, Mary Caesar recollects his imprisonment in the Tower of London between 1722 and 1723 on suspicion of Jacobite activity and comments "they try'd all way's to fright and perswaid Him to a Confesion. But He

behv'd with great Steadines and Resolution." (ms 47, Potter 85). Yet such remarks are weakened by a failure to consider the legal repercussions of the Duke's actions. Jacobitism inevitably raises questions about the relationship between the individual and the state and about the nature of loyalty and obedience. Mary Caesar ignores such questions and simply praises the Duke's actions without considering her rationale for such support. Likewise, in her presentation of the Atterbury trial in Book One of her journal, Caesar sidesteps the ethical niceties of the Bishop's position – as Maynard Mack remarks "though genuinely ignorant of much of the peripheral material that Walpole had turned up, he knew he was on the central point guilty".<sup>97</sup> Yet Mary Caesar is not interested in exploring the moral implications of such guilt for her political beliefs.

Once again, it is through comparison with Pope that we can most clearly understand this aspect of Mary Caesar's writing. Pope also faced the difficulty of characterising real people and coupling their actual personalities with moral (or immoral) absolutes. Indeed, this problem has remained one of the most contentious aspects of his work. As Maynard Mack comments of the *Dunciad* "historical persons in large numbers, enmeshed in the narrative of a 'progress' largely symbolic, assume symbolic implications of their own" and, as a result, "what men or women are seen doing or undergoing becomes an index to what they are or have been".<sup>98</sup> Mack, writing admittedly from a standpoint that is favourable to Pope, argues that although many of Pope's characterizations "take their beginnings from personal antagonism, they are

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<sup>97</sup> Mack 400.

<sup>98</sup> Mack 782.

transfigured by his imagination into warnings of universal application”.<sup>99</sup> Thus, although Pope frequently writes with a political agenda, it is possible, for those who wish to do so, to detach the moral absolutes he praises from their particular political position. Hence the fact that modern readers can still find relevance in Pope’s moral portraits. Mary Caesar, I would argue, applies such symbolism to historical characters (although she primarily focuses on her moral heroes, rather than moral villains) but the nature of her journal does not require her to universalise her representations. For Caesar, standards of morality are inescapably connected to a specific political ideology – Jacobitism. This inevitably leads to circular reasoning: if Caesar admires someone and considers them to be a “good” man or woman, her system of morality leads her to associate them with Jacobitism. This is the sort of reasoning we can see in operation in her depiction of Lord Cowper. Vice versa, those who politics she admires are likely to receive a sympathetic reading of their character, for example the Duke of Wharton.<sup>100</sup> For such interpretations evidence becomes less important than ideological necessity.

It is their respective presentations of the character of the Duke of Wharton that provide the most pertinent points of contrast between the two writers. For Pope, Wharton is a character defined by the very absence of decent qualities, “wanting nothing but an honest heart;/Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt” (193-4) and

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<sup>99</sup> Mack 647.

<sup>100</sup> Valerie Rumbold observes that Jacobitism is “in her [Caesar’s] view ... the necessary consequence of political integrity,” *Women’s Place* 236.

“Whose ruling Passion was the Lust of Praise” (181).<sup>101</sup> Mary Caesar’s willingness to overlook such deficiencies because of a supposed yet suspect political sympathy indicates the difficulties inherent in a world view that posits too close an allegiance between a narrow ideological and a wider personal virtue. Rumbold remarks that Caesar’s “is an imagination which assimilates everything admirable to its own political creed” yet clearly this does not mean that everything or everyone *within* that political creed is admirable.<sup>102</sup> Anne Finch and Jane Barker both bolster their Jacobitism with religious claims for the justice of their cause. Mary Caesar’s journal, by contrast, is profoundly secular in nature: her Jacobitism relies only upon its own self-justification.

Yet ultimately it is her unshakeable belief in Jacobitism and her ability to absorb “everything admirable” to it that is the source of Mary Caesar’s strength. In the final book of her journal Caesar writes the following tribute to the late Lord Strafford:

... Death had now Seiz’d the Last Minister of Queen Ann, his [Charles Caesar’s] Great and Dear Friend the Earl of Strafford who had Abided with him On the Rock, No storms nor Beatings of the waters could Tearify them, They stood Firm and Unshaken Seaing some come from, Others go to the Crown. But the most Wonderfall was a set of Men, not haveing Strength of Mind Longer there to Abide Looking Out. Saw a Bunch of White Feathers sporting On the surface of the Glittering Water that Gentely Play’d att the foot of the Rock, thather they Flew, They Pursu’d (What) Rebellion in Every Light. (ms 81, Potter 137).<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Alexander Pope, “An Epistle to Cobham,” *The Poems of Alexander Pope: The Twickenham Edition*, vol. III: ii, ed. F.W. Bateson, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed., (London and New Haven: Methuen and Yale University Press, 1961).

<sup>102</sup> Rumbold, “Jacobite Vision” 187.

<sup>103</sup> White feathers form part of the badge of the Prince of Wales.

The qualities she applauds in relation to Strafford are visible also in relation to her own personality. Unshakeably loyal, Caesar, through her writing, voices the attitudes of the hardline Jacobite faithful who refused to compromise their ideals for pragmatic purposes. Her ideological perspective may not be subtle or nuanced but it possesses the courage that comes from certainty.

On the following page of her journal to her tribute to Strafford Mary Caesar refers to an anecdote relating to a poetic exchange with Pope which demonstrates the differences between her own such certainty and Pope's more complex political allegiances. Potter provides the background to the exchange:

Having been made aware of her disapproval of his "All-accomplish'd ST. JOHN," their discussion had turned to a poem missing from her collection of his works. To please her, Pope sent the missing poem and a couplet, in which his offending line had become a tribute:

O all-Accomplish'd Caesar! on thy Shelf  
Is room for all Popes Works -- and Pope him self.

Irresistibly flattered, Mary Caesar rose to the occasion and produced four lines in response:

'Tis true Great Bard Thow on my Shelf Shall Lye  
With Oxford, Cowper, Noble Strafford by.  
But for Thy Windsor a New Fabrick Raise  
And There Triumphant Sing Thy Soverain's Praise.

Imitating Pope's Dialogue II, she listed her favorite statesmen; then, referring to Windsor Forest where he proclaimed that "Peace and Plenty Tell a Stuart Reigns" [line 42], suggested that he should compose a new version for another "Soverain," – James III. Her plea was hardly subtle, and Pope chose to ignore it, to her evident disappointment -- "Mr Pope came in Person with thanks" --.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Potter 125. The poem by Pope and Mary Caesar's own lines of verse can be found in the first pages of her scrapbook, currently housed in the Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge. This scrapbook is a leather bound volume, measuring 210mm x 280 mm. It has thirty pages, many of which are empty. The scrapbook is filled with letters, poems and odd fragments.

For Mary Caesar Pope should simply be able to update his former statement of Stuart loyalty. From her perspective such expressions of loyalty are absolute and unchanging – she is one who has “Abided ... On the Rock”. The contingencies of specific historical moments, the fact that Pope’s poem was written for a different monarch in a different time, are irrelevancies. Pope’s lack of a response to her request indicates the gulf between their views on such matters.

This anecdote appears just three pages before the end of Caesar’s journal. These remaining pages are filled with references to the Spanish war and, as usual, to political and personal friends. The journal’s conclusion comes abruptly; a pasted obituary from *The Daily Post* 3 April 1741 announces the death of Charles Caesar:

On Wednesday Night last died, at his House in New Bond-street, Charles Caesar, Esq; Knight of the Shire for the County of Hertford: A Gentleman whose Memory must be ever dear to all who have the Love of their Country at Heart. He was a Gentleman of unshaken Loyalty to his Prince, unmov’d at the Frowns of Ministers, and one who dar’d in the worst of Times, with a Greatness of Soul worthy of himself, assert and maintain the Rights of his Fellow-Subjects, and the Liberties of his Country. The Generosity and Humanity of his Temper, were equal to the Steadiness of his Principles, and the Sentiments he ever express’d both in publick and private Life, were such as could only flow from a Heart, dedicated to Virtue, and incapable of Corruption.

(ms 86, Potter 141)

One can see why Mary Caesar approved of such a tribute to her husband. The qualities that she herself has lauded throughout her journal in relation to those she admired are all present here: loyalty, steadfastness, love of country and virtue.

Immediately after this obituary, Mary Caesar writes the final words of her journal, a quotation from the Duke of Buckingham: “Alas, there’s no Expression/To Tell my

Dismal Woe".<sup>105</sup> For both Potter and Rumbold the nature of the journal's ending re-emphasises the essentially gendered nature of Caesar's writing by claiming that no future is possible for such writing after the death of her husband. Potter remarks that Caesar was "too grieved to continue the narrative that had provided focus and solace during so many difficulties but which now had no meaning as a political and literary record".<sup>106</sup> Rumbold goes further stating that "beyond the pain of bereavement, Mrs Caesar had lost her vital link with the world of political action that had been crucial to her self-image throughout her married life".<sup>107</sup>

Both of these responses seem to me to be over-theorised. All the evidence suggests that Mary Caesar was extremely fond of her husband.<sup>108</sup> Arguably, one does not therefore need to look beyond her intense personal grief for a reason for her ceasing to write. Caesar herself survived her husband by just three months, dying on 8 July 1741. We therefore cannot know whether she would have resumed writing her journal if she had survived. To claim that her journal ceased to have meaning to her thus seems to be a precipitate judgement. Indeed, if one wanted to theorise about the conclusion of the journal, one could easily suggest a reading that countered that of Rumbold and Potter. It is at the one moment when Caesar departs from her standard practice of ignoring the personal that she is unable to continue with her writing. She is quite literally unable to express herself any longer, resorting to quotation and then to silence. One could therefore argue that it is not the case that Caesar loses her link

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<sup>105</sup> Potter identifies these lines as a "paraphrase of 'On the Loss of an Only Son, Robert Marquis of Normandy', Buckingham, *Works* 1723 ed., I. 189, 35-6," 141 n. 76. The following phrase appears directly above the quotation which is written in an extremely shaky hand, "D B 189". Both the 1723 and 1726 editions of Buckingham's *Works* were printed by John Barber, who also published Anne Finch's 1713 *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions*.

<sup>106</sup> Potter 128.

<sup>107</sup> Rumbold, "Jacobite Vision" 195.

<sup>108</sup> Potter cites evidence from Mary Caesar's friends of her great distress, 129-30.

to the political through the death of her husband but rather the fact that she herself departs from the political to focus upon the personal that forces the conclusion of her journal. However, this reading, as much as those put forward by Rumbold and Potter, downplays what I would suggest is the more likely, and straightforward, interpretation of Caesar's decision to stop writing: a simple inability to continue to do so due to overwhelming grief.

Ultimately, however, the fact remains that we simply cannot know whether Mary Caesar would have continued to write if she had lived longer. The ambiguity of the ending of her journal supports my earlier contention that it is too early to categorise her text definitively. Perhaps such conclusive definition is an unrealistic aspiration. Caesar's text is a complex work that raises questions about the relationship between gender and genre that we cannot answer at this point in time. Until the study of writing by early modern women is further advanced – until, in Germaine Greer's words, "the data itself" is complete – we cannot expect to reach a "correct interpretation" of that same data. The overarching argument of this thesis has been that the three women writers under consideration are not well served by a narrow focus upon a single aspect of their work. I have suggested that, as well as viewing them as *women* writers, we must also view them as *political* writers. As more scholars and readers turn to the works of Barker, Caesar, Finch and their female contemporaries, more perspectives on their writing will doubtless emerge. These perspectives will help to counter the partial and limited understanding of their works that we possess at this time. It is therefore imperative that we keep returning to these texts, and to the contexts from which they emerged, with new questions and new

viewpoints in an attempt to accept that they resist inclusion, in the words of Margaret Ezell, “within one tidy narrative”.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* 165.

### Conclusion

Howard Erskine-Hill has written that “what the history of Jacobitism peculiarly teaches us is the value of judging the *status quo* by its own proclaimed standards”.<sup>1</sup> This verdict seems particularly salutary in relation to the three Jacobite authors under consideration in this thesis. One of the main aims of the developing field of the study of writing by early modern women has surely been to “recover” such writers from neglect, disregard and misreading. Yet, as I have attempted to demonstrate, the very impulse to re-evaluate such writers has frequently, and paradoxically, led to an emphasis upon gender that has circumscribed the critical reputations of these women at the very moment in which they are “rediscovered”. If Jacobitism does indeed teach us to evaluate “the *status quo* by its own proclaimed standards” then the Jacobitism of Jane Barker, Mary Caesar and Anne Finch can remain a living force by obliging us to assess our own critical practice in terms of its intended aims. Whilst an analysis of the role and representation of gender in the writing of women such as Barker, Finch and Caesar is invaluable in itself, I would suggest that such an analysis must form just one aspect of our approach to these authors if we are not to limit our understanding of them. Gender-based readings must therefore be accompanied by readings that stress other aspects of these women’s writings, such as, for example, their religious and political concerns. This thesis has therefore been an attempt to expand our comprehension of the three women writers discussed by demonstrating that their political, and in Finch’s and Barker’s cases religious, identities were as important to their lives and writing as their identities as women.

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Erskine-Hill, “Literature and the Jacobite Cause: Was There a Rhetoric of Jacobitism?” *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982) 49-69 (60).

Through close readings of individual texts I have sought to demonstrate the ways in which a commitment to the exiled Stuarts lay at the very heart of the worldviews of my chosen authors. I have argued that without a full and nuanced understanding of the nature of their respective political allegiances, it is impossible fully to appreciate the writing or the ideological beliefs of Finch, Barker and Caesar. In addition, I have attempted to illustrate that Jacobitism is a vital and evolving force within each author's own body of work. All of these women confronted the challenge of maintaining their political allegiances in the face of the repeated failure of the Jacobite cause. As a consequence of this, each author was forced to develop ways of explaining such failure whilst also keeping her own faith in the cause alive. The result of this was, in all three cases, a complex and multifaceted corpus. A subsidiary aim of this thesis has been to reveal this complexity and to demonstrate that the texts discussed merit and repay detailed analysis.

I have also intended to show that such analysis reveals the differences as much as the similarities between Finch, Barker and Caesar. Indeed, by drawing attention to these differences I have hoped to further undermine the "overarching explanations" of the apparent relationship between Toryism and/or Jacobitism and feminism dismissed by Hero Chalmers and examined in the introduction to this thesis.<sup>2</sup> Such "explanations," put forward by critics such as Catherine Gallagher and Carol Barash, seek to establish a tradition of Tory feminist authors.<sup>3</sup> I would suggest that such a tradition can be defined in only the broadest of terms. Although Jacobitism is equally significant to the three women I have discussed, their understandings of this allegiance are not

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<sup>2</sup> Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers 1650-1689* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 6.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Gallagher, "Embracing the Absolute: the Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England," *Genders* 1 (Spring 1988): 24-39; Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

uniform. My intention has therefore not been simply to replace a blanket labelling of such authors as *women* writers with a similarly homogeneous categorising of them as *Jacobite* authors. Rather, it has been to draw attention to the fact that Jacobitism functions differently in each author's work.

For Finch, I have argued, Jacobitism is inextricably connected to Anglicanism and to the concept of passive obedience. This concept is problematic for Finch as it leads her to the conclusion that Jacobitism can succeed only through God's intervention in human affairs. It thus places her in a fundamentally submissive subject position that leaves little scope for personal action and that ultimately sees justice as being possible only in heaven and not on earth. Yet, despite the passivity at the heart of Finch's Jacobitism, her political commitments are enabling for her as a writer. Although she finally resolved her anxieties about her status as a woman writer only by imagining that she would achieve literary glory in the afterlife, the fact remains that she was emboldened to publish profoundly political work. I have therefore argued that Finch's only published volume, her *Miscellany Poems* of 1713, is a confidently and coherently political work whose nature has so far been misunderstood.<sup>4</sup> I also suggest that the Jacobite qualities of this volume require us to rethink our perceptions of the relationship between Finch's manuscript and published texts. I demonstrate that because Finch tended to keep the poems in which she considered issues of gender in manuscript the critical consensus has thus been that it is only in manuscript that this author felt able to express her most controversial opinions. I seek to undermine such preconceptions by illustrating that Finch did, in fact, feel able to proclaim her Jacobite commitment in *Miscellany Poems*. As a result, I aim to establish that an

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<sup>4</sup> Anne Finch, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London: J. Barber, 1713).

overemphasis upon issues of gender in criticism of Finch's work has led to a fundamental misunderstanding of both her nature as a writer and of the boldly political character of her public writing.

In my consideration of the work of Jane Barker I have argued that critical conceptions of this author as a "pious" and "respectable" writer have coloured readings of her Jacobitism. As with Finch, interpretations of gender politics have thus led to premature and erroneous conclusions about Barker's party politics. I have maintained that, when Barker's Jacobitism has been considered, it has been inaccurately perceived as a purely "emotional" or "sentimental" attachment.<sup>5</sup> I have sought to disprove this by demonstrating the assertive and interventionist aspects of Barker's commitment to the exiled Stuarts whilst also establishing that Barker's Jacobitism is manifested differently in her different texts. Through my close readings of the prose fictions, I have shown how each of these works offers a different political message to its readers. I have thus contended that a simplistic labelling of Barker as a Jacobite writer restricts our understanding of her work as comprehensively as a designation of her as a "respectable" woman author. My analysis of Barker's manuscript poetry builds upon my discussion of the prose fictions by illustrating that Jacobitism is a similarly evolving and complex force in these works. I examine the relationship between Barker's Jacobitism and her Catholicism and demonstrate the ways in which her religious faith gives her a sense of her role as a speaker of truth in an ongoing battle between good and evil as revealed in the events of recent British political history. I also contrast Barker's sense of her active involvement in unfolding political

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<sup>5</sup> See Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Pope's Dunciad and the Queen of the Night: A Study in Emotional Jacobitism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985) and Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Poetry of Opposition and Revolution: Dryden to Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 10-11 for a discussion of the term "emotional Jacobitism".

events with the essential passivity of Finch's Jacobitism. Finally, through my consideration of Barker's devotional text, *The Christian Pilgrimage*, and my discovery that the source for this work has been misidentified, I reiterate the necessity of paying close and detailed attention to the works of these writers.<sup>6</sup> I demonstrate that the misunderstanding of the character of this volume has led to a failure to recognise its bold and essentially proselytising nature. I wish to argue that the misreading of this text offers a suggestive paradigm for the ways in which the complexity and assertiveness of these three women writers has frequently gone unrecognised due to a lack of attention to the true qualities of their writing.

In my consideration of the journal of Mary Caesar I argue that, like both Barker and Finch, this author has suffered from a preoccupation with gender that has led to a failure to acknowledge the boldness of her political views. I demonstrate that, by focussing solely on political affairs and ignoring all domestic concerns, Mary Caesar produced a work that defies conventional assumptions about the domestic nature of women's diaries in this period. Thus, although her work remained in manuscript, it provides an example of the way in which Caesar sought to define herself as an author primarily through her role as a political commentator. Despite the fact that Caesar's gender may have prohibited her from being as active in the Jacobite cause as, for example, her husband, the fact remains that, in her writing, her political identity subsumes her identity as a woman.

Overall, what this thesis has primarily intended to illustrate is the intricate nature of literary Jacobitism as manifested in the works of Jane Barker, Mary Caesar and Anne

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<sup>6</sup> Jane Barker, *The Christian Pilgrimage: or, a Companion For the Holy Season of Lent: Being Meditations upon the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: E. Curll, 1718).

Finch. For all of these women, Jacobitism provided a cornerstone of their understanding of human society and its, in their terms, rightful organisation. As such, Jacobitism inevitably inflected their own perceptions of themselves and of their position as women who wrote. I would thus argue that, without paying due attention to the nature of their commitment to the Jacobite cause, it is impossible to understand either the writing of these women or the ways in which they perceived themselves as authors.

Appendix – Poems from Mary Caesar’s Journal

(Text and glosses taken from Potter 32-4, 69.)



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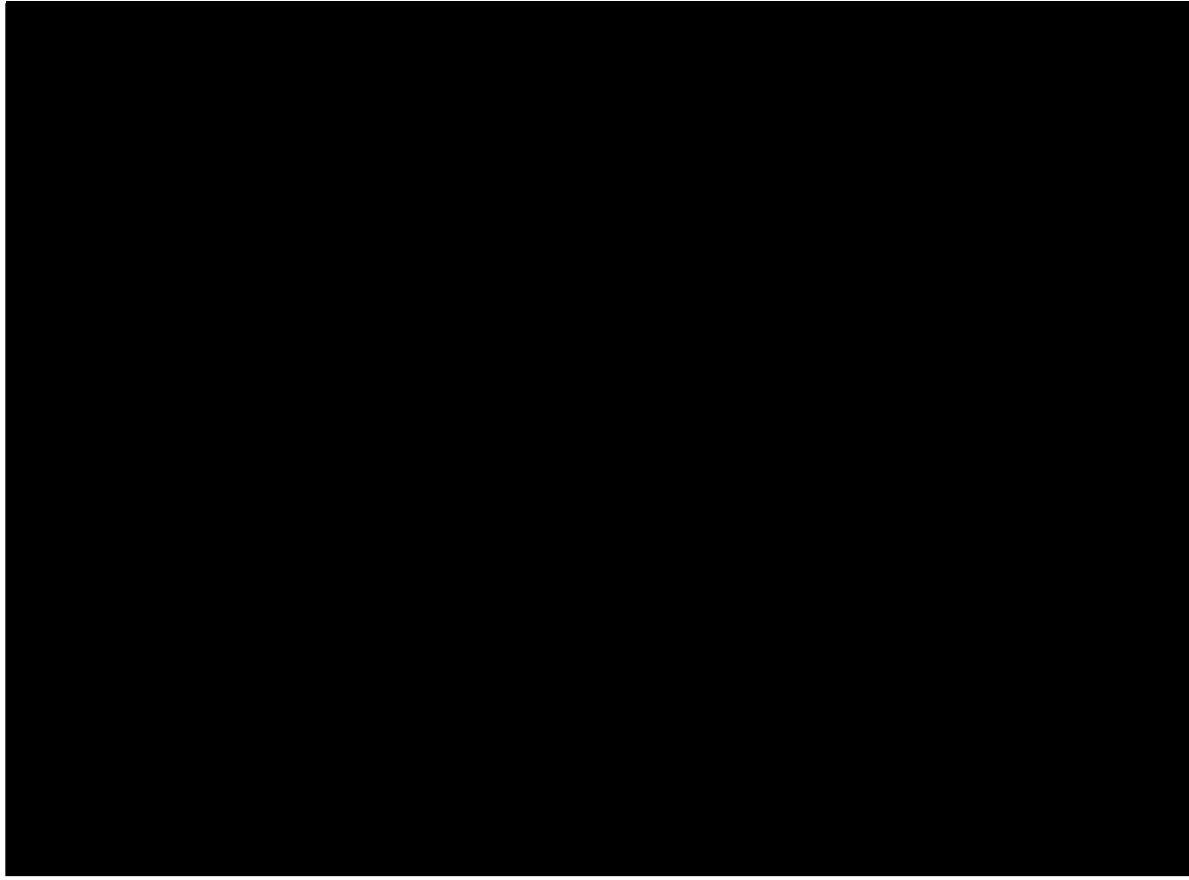
<sup>1</sup> James Butler, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Ormonde, was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Captain-General after Marlborough’s disgrace.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Villiers, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Jersey, minister to France under William III.

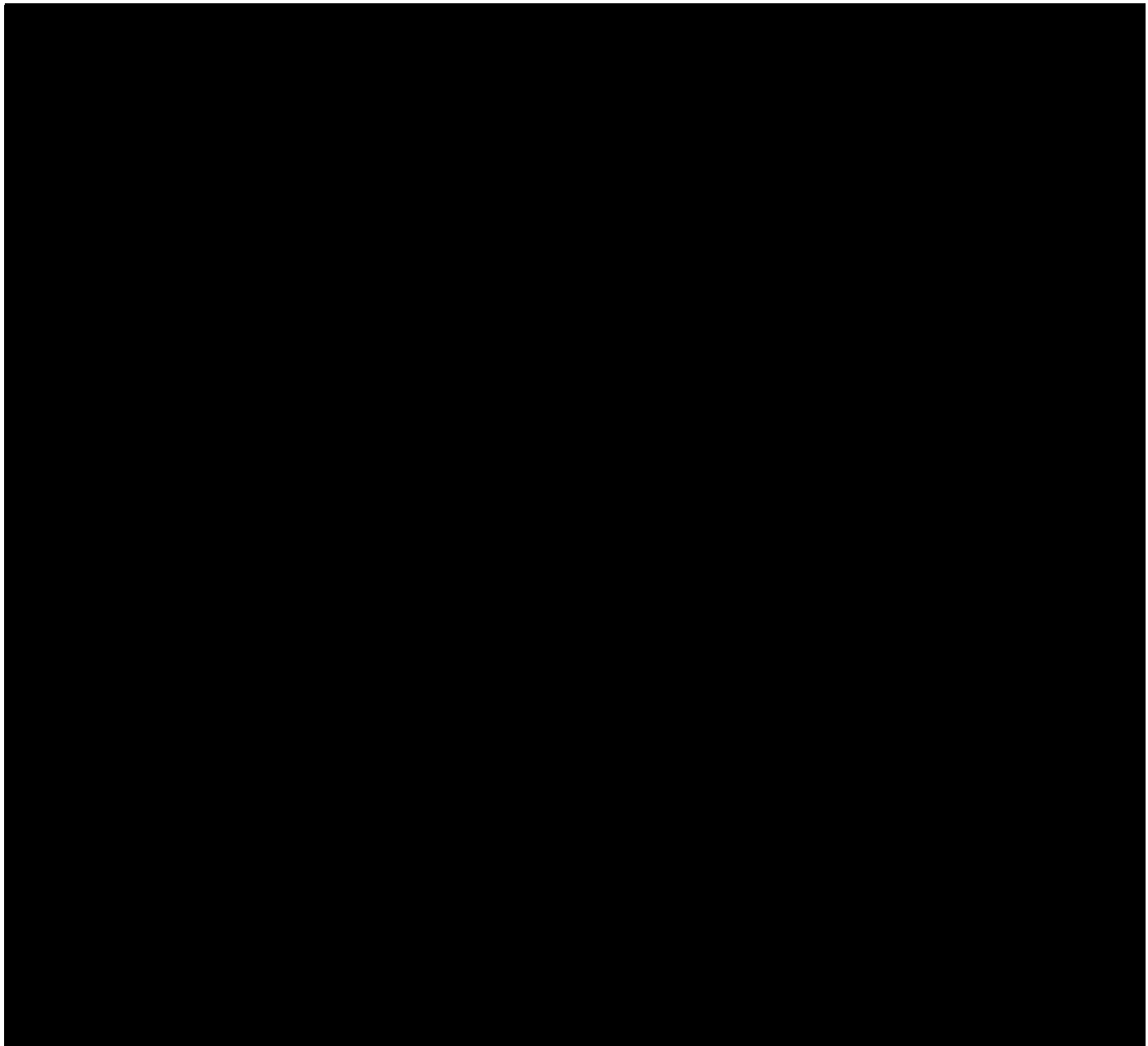
<sup>3</sup> Even before displacing Godolphin, Harley secretly negotiated with France through Jersey and Abbé François Gaultier, chaplain to the Catholic ambassadors and the Marquis de Torcy’s agent.

<sup>4</sup> Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, was Secretary of State for the Northern Department during the negotiations of the Peace of Utrecht.

<sup>5</sup> George I, then Elector of Hanover.

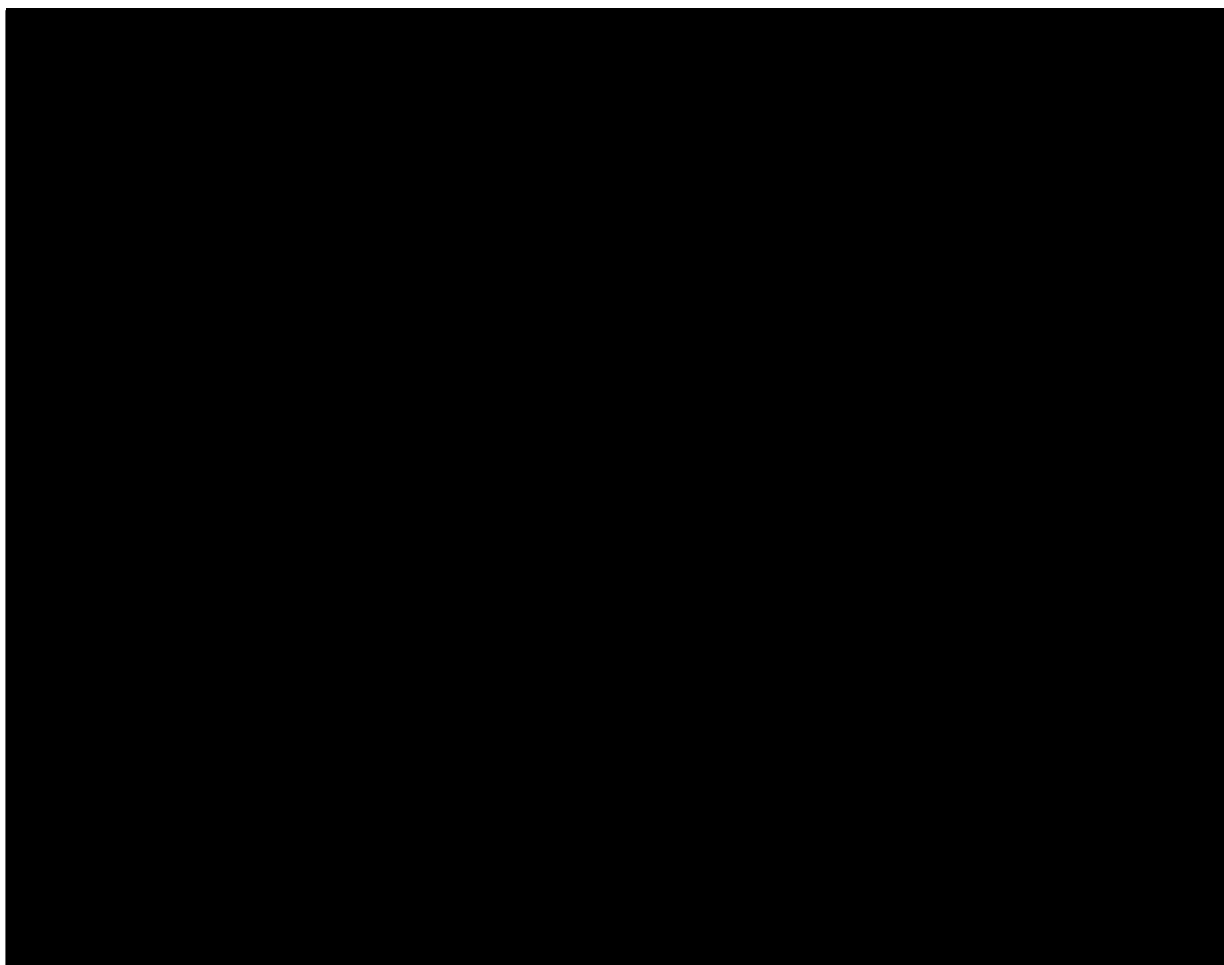


### **The Hertford-shire Ballad**



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<sup>6</sup> Robert Walpole was chairman of the committee of secrecy appointed in 1715 to bring articles of impeachment against the late Queen's ministers.



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