

Sir William Cornwallis the Younger (c.1579-1614)
and the Emergence of the Essay in England

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98,000 words

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
University of Oxford

Abstract

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This thesis provides a full-length critical treatment of the *Essayes* (1600-01) of Sir William Cornwallis (c.1579-1614). Cornwallis' *Essayes* are the first examples of the 'familiar' essay in English: to which the rhetorical shaping of persona and the use of the personal voice are central. This is the first such study of Cornwallis since an unpublished 1930s Ph.D. thesis, and situates his *Essayes* within their cultural, social, and material contexts. The thesis draws upon previous work on Cornwallis and his *Essayes* from the 1930s and 1940s, but also on recent developments in early-modern English studies, especially in the fields of the history of rhetoric and the history of reading. The thesis challenges the assumptions behind two major critical approaches to the early-modern essay: firstly that it is a form in which the personal voice can be unambiguously expressed, and secondly that it is an essentially derivative genre, more closely related to methods of reading and compiling than to writing. This thesis argues, however, that Cornwallis's essays are elaborate fusions of classical commonplaces, humanistic rhetoric, and ethical theories of how to live, resulting from complex interactions between different strands of humanistic educative practices, and that Cornwallis's use of the personal voice is shaped by ethically-inflected rhetorical theories of affect and imitation. The thesis further attempts to show how essays were being read in this period, and to do so offers a study of the material traces of reading, in the form of annotations and commonplace books, left by early-modern readers of John Florio's English translation of Montaigne (1603).

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Introduction

In 1864, the American poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson received for his birthday a copy of the 1613 second edition of John Florio's English translation of Montaigne's essays.¹ It was a well-chosen gift, for in 1850, Emerson had described his love for the French essayist when he had chosen him for his example of the Sceptic in *Representative Men*. He explained that, 'It seemed to me as if I had myself written the book, in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thought and experience'.² Emerson's very personal reaction to Montaigne's essays is typical of many modern readers, but one of the earliest readers of Montaigne in English responded in quite a different way, calling attention not to his feelings of intimacy with the French author, but rather to the improving qualities of Montaigne's book, writing that 'For profitable Recreation, that Noble French Knight, the Lord *de Montaigne* is most excellent'.³

This thesis has two inter-related and inter-dependent aims. The main aim is to provide an in-depth study of the author of the sentiment expressed above: the essayist Sir William Cornwallis the Younger (c.1579-1614). Cornwallis is the first English exponent of what is now known as the 'familiar' mode of essay writing, which takes the rhetorical shaping of persona and the use of the conversational personal voice as its driving force, for which reason alone he justifies a full study. The second aim of this thesis grows out of the first, which is to increase our understanding of the origins and nature of the early-modern essay at the time of its emergence as an independent literary

¹ Houghton Library, Harvard University: HOU GEN Mon 30.2* Lobby III.4.8. This copy had missed the eye of the provenance cataloguer, but is inscribed in Emerson's autograph on the front end paper: 'R. W. Emerson from J. Elliot Cabot May 25 1864'. Cabot was one of Emerson's co-editors on the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review*, and his own signature is on the title page of the book. May 25 1864 was Emerson's sixty-first birthday.

² Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men: Seven Lectures* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1850), p. 697. Emerson also mentions on the same page that 'A single odd volume of Cotton's translation of the Essays remained to me from my father's library, when a boy. It lay long neglected, until, after many years, when I was newly escaped from college, I read the book, and procured the remaining volumes'. This is now also in the Houghton Library.

³ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes*, ed. D. C. Allen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 42. All further references to Cornwallis's *Essayes* within this thesis are to this edition unless otherwise stated, and all page references are incorporated into the main text.

genre in English at the cusp of the seventeenth century. Cornwallis and the essay genre are also situated within a nexus of current research interests in early-modern studies, chief among which is the relationship between humanistic methods of education and literary practices.

Since the first collections of essays in English were published at the cusp of the seventeenth century, the word ‘essay’ has undergone a semantic and conceptual narrowing in English. There are now certain preconceptions of what an essay is – chief among which are the notions that it demands a highly subjective, individualistic viewpoint and aims to capture the thinking process on paper. Such notions are often projected back onto the early-modern essay: Ted-Larry Pebworth has argued for example that ‘the early essay’s intention is to present a mind thinking’. It is one of the intentions of this thesis to interrogate these received ideas about the early English essay by offering – to use Margreta de Grazia’s phrase – an ‘unmodernizing’ of the texts under discussion.⁴ ‘Unmodernization’ is perhaps particularly necessary when addressing early-modern texts or genres which have become renowned as harbingers of the ‘modern’ – as is the case with the essay, which Marielle Macé has argued is the definitive mode of twentieth-century French writing.

This thesis will show that Cornwallis’s *Essayes* are the results of complex interactions between different strands of sixteenth-century humanistic educational practices of reading and writing. I argue that Cornwallis’s aim in the *Essayes* is not to realistically present a representation of the mind thinking as an end in itself, but rather that his use of the personal voice is shaped by ethically-inflected rhetorical theories of affect and imitation. There has been much critical writing on the English periodical essays of the early eighteenth century, and on English essayists more generally from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Similarly, the most famous early-modern essayist, Michel de

⁴ Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Montaigne, and his *Essais* (1580) have been much discussed, and the debt to Montaigne among English writers of the period (especially dramatists) long acknowledged.⁵ A study of Cornwallis therefore works towards filling certain gaps in our current understanding of the history of the essay, and lays the groundwork for a fuller study of the English literary essay in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

1. Scholarly Context.

This thesis is the first full-length study of Cornwallis and his *Essays* since an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by R. E. Bennett in 1931.⁶ Bennett's thesis is divided into two sections, covering 'The Work' and 'The Life' of the essayist. Of these, it is Bennett's biographical research into Cornwallis and his family which retains most importance today. Along with P. B. Whitt, who made many of the same biographical discoveries independently in the same period,⁷ Bennett corrected significant misunderstandings about Cornwallis's life which had led to him being conflated with his uncle, Sir William Cornwallis the Elder.⁸ Bennett also noted that Cornwallis's 'distinguished family and traditions constituted the most important part of his background',⁹ but although his work provides helpful factual information about the Cornwallis family, he does little to bring these findings to bear on a critical reading of Cornwallis's essays. My thesis rather seeks to build upon this knowledge of Cornwallis's friendship and familial networks to examine their socio-rhetorical importance for his formulation of the early English essay, suggesting that rather than these merely providing an inert context for his writing,

⁵ On Montaigne's reception in England, see Chapter Five.

⁶ R. E. Bennett, 'The Life and Works of Sir William Cornwallis' (Harvard University: Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1931).

⁷ P. B. Whitt, 'A New Light on Sir William Cornwallis, the Essayist', *RES* 8:30 (1932): 155-169.

⁸ William Hunt's 1887 *ODNB* entry for Cornwallis the essayist compounded much of the confusion between the two men, conflating information from both their lives, and offering a death date of 1631, which is inaccurate for either William Cornwallis but has nevertheless been retained in many present day library catalogue entries for the essayist.

⁹ Bennett, 'The Life and Works', p. ii.

Cornwallis's essays are themselves a literary manifestation of the culture that these networks created, and existed within.

The second part of Bennett's thesis is significant for being the most detailed and extensive study of Cornwallis's essays to date. In it, he points to features of the Cornwallis's essays which remain important for my discussion of them, perhaps most notably the roots of the essays' subjects in the topics of commonplace books. He discusses classical antecedents of the essays in Plutarch and Seneca, and examines contemporary literary parallels of the genre too: one of the most valuable sections of the thesis is his treatment of Cornwallis's paradoxes, their literary heritage, and their relation to his essays. But Bennett's dissertation is also limited by the priorities and scholarly methods of his time. One of his major concerns is Cornwallis's style, which he frequently discusses in terms of praise or dispraise: certain essay openings are 'good', while others are less so, as Cornwallis is a generally 'careless writer'.¹⁰ Bennett's dissertation is similarly constrained by his attempt to ensure that Cornwallis emerges from it as a good person, which sometimes leads him to veer away from examining particular features of the *Essays* too closely. On the matter of whether or not Cornwallis was being truthful about his lack of intent to publish the *Essays*, for example, Bennett acknowledges that he has 'avoided' this subject, but although he notes that such disavowals were common, 'I find it easier to suppose that Cornwallis was the honest writer he pretended to be than that he was an artist at dissimulation'.¹¹ The way in which Bennett approached his subject was very much in line with some of the important critical paradigms of his time, as he describes Cornwallis as 'a radical and early member of what Professor Morris W. Croll calls the Attic school'.¹² Croll's invocation of Montaigne and Bacon in his influential work on 'Ciceronian' and 'Anti-Ciceronian' schools of Renaissance prose is indeed

¹⁰ Bennett, 'The Life and Works', p. 230.

¹¹ Bennett, 'The Life and Works', p. 191, n. 7.

¹² Bennett, 'The Life and Works', p. 230.

perhaps one of the reasons behind the peak of interest in Cornwallis and the English essay in the early twentieth century, especially in American universities such as Bennett's.¹³ As I discuss in Chapter One, however, more nuanced understandings of early-modern rhetorical practices and ethical theories which have emerged in recent years offer the opportunity for a valuable reappraisal of Cornwallis's own rhetorical strategies.¹⁴ Similarly, developments in scholarly methods and priorities since Bennett's thesis was written, not only in the history of rhetoric, but perhaps particularly in the history of the book and the history of reading, provide an ideal basis for moving forwards from the foundations Bennett laid over eighty years ago.

Alongside his thesis, Bennett also provided valuable work on the nature of Cornwallis's relationship with Montaigne, noting importantly that Cornwallis was not a 'slavish imitator' of the French author and providing a comprehensive list of those essays by Montaigne which Cornwallis – who never quotes from Montaigne directly – can be certain to have read.¹⁵ He also published four of Cornwallis's paradoxes which are preserved in manuscript in the Bodleian Library and which had previously been unprinted, providing a helpful discussion of their probable Continental sources,¹⁶ as well as working to clarify the bibliographic status of Cornwallis's output.¹⁷

Following the work on Cornwallis by Bennett and Whitt in the 1930s, the next important contribution to his critical bibliography came in 1946, with the edition of the

¹³ Morris W. Croll, 'Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon', in *Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm: Essays by Morris W. Croll*, eds. J. Max Patrick and Robert O. Evans, with John M. Wallace and R. J. Shoenk (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 167-202.

¹⁴ For a critique of Croll, see e.g. Debora Shuger, 'Morris Croll, Flacius Illyrius, and the Origin of Anti-Ciceronianism', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 3:4 (1985): 269-84.

¹⁵ R. E. Bennett, 'Sir William Cornwallis the Younger's Use of Montaigne', *PMLA* 48:4 (1933): 1080-89.

¹⁶ R. E. Bennett, 'Four Paradoxes by Sir William Cornwallis, the Younger', *Harvard Studies in Philology and Literature* XIII, (1931): 219-240.

¹⁷ R. E. Bennett, 'The Publication of Cornwallis's *Essays* and *Paradoxes*', *RES*, 34 (1933): 197-98; see also the letter exchange between Bennett and Whitt in the *Times Literary Supplement*, beginning with a letter from Whitt on 20 October 1930, and followed up by letters from Bennett on 20 November and 4 December 1930.

Essayes by Don Cameron Allen.¹⁸ This was the first edition of the *Essayes* to have been published since 1632, and remains the only critical example of its kind.¹⁹ It is valuable in part thanks to Allen's identification of literary sources for almost all of the direct quotations within Cornwallis's text, and for his list of textual variants between the seventeenth-century editions of the *Essayes*, along with their bibliographic descriptions. Allen does not analyse Cornwallis's use of his sources, however, and his notes to the text are otherwise fairly basic, with little other textual or literary detail being given. Similarly, the short introduction provides no factual information or critical readings which had not already been established in the previous decade by Bennett and Whitt. It is valuable however for the strength with which Allen argued for Cornwallis's importance as the founding father of the English essay: the edition was generally well-received, with reviewers suggesting that it could profitably lay the groundwork for a more detailed study of the essayist, even if its own introductory treatment of it remained just that.²⁰

As it happens, Allen's edition led to no new full-scale work on Cornwallis's *Essayes*. The next substantive study of his *oeuvre* was an edition of his long paradox *The Encomium of Richard III* (1977), which collated all extant manuscripts of the text that were known at that time, along with the printed version, and offered a textual and critical introduction which placed the paradox in its potential political and social context.²¹ With the addition of new archival information, this work informs my own treatment of the socio-literary contexts of the scribal and printed circulation of the *Encomium* in Chapter Four. The *Encomium* has attracted a small body of work independent of the rest of Cornwallis's

¹⁸ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes*, ed. D. C. Allen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946).

¹⁹ Bennett notes that 'Mr. Whitt informs me that he has learned indirectly that Professor Louis Wann is preparing an edition of Cornwallis's works', but this edition never materialised. Bennett, 'The Life and Works', p. ii.

²⁰ See e.g. Geoffrey Bullough, 'Review. Essayes by Sir William Cornwallis the Younger', *RES*, 24 (1948): 326-27; Harold Jenkins, 'Essayes. By Sir William Cornwallis the Younger', *MLR*, 43:1 (1948): 106-08; Alexander M. Witherspoon, 'Essayes by Sir William Cornwallis the Younger', *Modern Language Notes*, 63:3 (1948): 206-07.

²¹ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *The Encomium of Richard III*, eds. A. N. Kincaid and J. A. Ramsden (London: Turner & Devereaux, 1977).

output. It has been used primarily however in literary and historical studies of Richard III's reputation,²² rather than discussed alongside Cornwallis's own other literary writings.²³ At the same time, his paradoxes more generally have been used as exemplars of paradoxical writing in the period,²⁴ or mentioned briefly in more detailed discussions of this genre.²⁵

Cornwallis has also benefited in a sidelong fashion from work focusing on other more well-known authors with whom he was connected. His unpublished poems, for example, were recently held up to the light by Steven W. May, who has thereby offered an important re-evaluation of the extent of the friendship between Cornwallis and John Donne, to whom the poems were sent.²⁶ In the same way, Cornwallis (and other early English essayists) are frequently given brief mentions in discussions of Montaigne (or Montaigne's reception in England), usually being labeled to a greater or lesser extent as an imitator of the French writer,²⁷ although it is notable that even in specific descriptions of Cornwallis outside of this context he is often treated primarily as a lesser version of Montaigne.²⁸

Similarly, in the latter part of the twentieth century, Cornwallis attracted some interest within wider work on the intellectual contexts of Neo-Stoic writing in late sixteenth- and

²² It has been used in this context since at least Horace Walpole's 1768 book *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard*. As I discuss in Chapter Four, Walpole owned one of the manuscripts of the *Encomium*. See Allen T. Hazen, *A Catalogue of Horace Walpole's Library*, 3 vols. (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1969): II.403.

²³ See e.g. W. Gordon Zeeveld, 'A Tudor Defense of Richard III', *PMLA*, 55 (1940): 946-957; Conal Condren, 'Cornwallis's Paradoxical Defence of Richard III: A Machiavellian Discourse or Morean Mythology?', *Moreana*, XXIV:94 (1987): 5-24; A. R. Meyers, 'Richard III and Historical Tradition', in his collected essays, *Crown, Household, Parliament in Fifteenth Century England*, intro. R. B. Dobson (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), pp. 349-372. Cornwallis's *Encomium* has also been discussed alongside another early-modern treatment of Richard III, which itself mentions Cornwallis's *Encomium* as an anonymous source text. See Sir George Buck, *The History of King Richard III*, ed. A. N. Kincaid (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1979).

²⁴ E.g. Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 99-100.

²⁵ E.g. Peter G. Platt, *Shakespeare and the Culture of Paradox* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), p. 19, p. 26.

²⁶ Steven W. May, 'Donne and Egerton: The Court and Courtship', in Dennis Flynn, Thomas M. Hester, and Jeanne Shami (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 447-459; esp. pp. 454-56.

²⁷ See recently e.g. Richard Scholar, *Montaigne and the Art of Free-Thinking* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 75.

²⁸ E.g. Lydia Fakundiny, 'Cornwallis, Sir William the Younger', in *Encyclopedia of the Essay*, ed. Tracy Chevalier (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), pp. 406-08.

seventeenth-century England.²⁹ This is a natural development leading on from his stylistic co-option into Croll's 'Attic School' of writers earlier in the century,³⁰ but Cornwallis has usually played a small part in these studies and has not been discussed in a way which illuminates the intellectual genesis of the essay as a new literary genre in England. An important exception to this is Geoff Baldwin's treatment of Cornwallis in the context of early-modern ethical theories of the self and the Stoically-inflected rhetorical construction of a persona which at once allows the writer to take an active part in the world and remain safely removed from it.³¹

Cornwallis has also naturally played a role in larger discussions of the early-modern English essay, although such treatments have themselves been relatively sparse. In a parallel to the spike of interest in Cornwallis himself in the first part of the twentieth century, wider studies of the early-modern English essay also emerged in this period, but these suffer from similar critical limitations to those which affected Bennett's thesis.³²

Across the course of the twentieth century, two major strands of critical response to the early-modern English essay have emerged. The first of these privileges the essayists' use of the first-person, with Ted-Larry Pebworth arguing in an influential article that the 'early essay's intention is to present a mind thinking'.³³ Within this approach, the essay has been presented as a space for individualistic self-expression,³⁴ attempting a truthful

²⁹ Most notably, J. H. M. Salmon, 'Stoicism and the Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50:2 (1989): 199-225; Gilles D. Monsarrat, *Light from the Porch: Stoicism and English Renaissance Literature* (Paris: Didier-Érudition, 1984), esp. pp. 109-25.

³⁰ E.g. George Williamson, *The Senecan Amble: Prose Form from Bacon to Collier* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), esp. Chapter Four.

³¹ Geoff Baldwin, 'Individual and Self in the late Renaissance', *The Historical Journal*, 44:2 (2001): 341-364.

³² Hugh Walker, *The English Essay and Essayists* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1915), which should be considered in the light of its perceptive review by W. F. Bryan in *Modern Language Notes*, 31:6 (1916): 347-56; E. N. S. Thompson, *The Seventeenth Century English Essay* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1926); Bonamy Dobré, *English Essayists* (London: Collins, 1946); Arthur Tilley, 'The Essay and the Beginning of Modern English Prose', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, eds. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, 15 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-1927), VIII.368-90.

³³ Ted-Larry Pebworth, 'Not Being, but Passing: Defining the Early English Essay', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 10:2 (1977): 17-27.

³⁴ Sometimes as a form of resistance. See e.g. Claire de Obaldia, *The Essayistic Spirit: Literature, Modern Criticism, and the Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

representation of one person's lived experience and thought.³⁵ Related to this have been studies of the essay's development in the hands of late seventeenth-century natural philosophers, most notably Robert Boyle, with an emphasis here being placed by critics on the connections between *essay* and experiment.³⁶ This reflects a common feature of modern studies of the early-modern English essay, namely that their main interest usually lies in the latter part of the seventeenth century, so that essayists of the early part of the century such as Cornwallis are therefore employed as a kind of contextual background as the essay morphs into (natural) philosophic writing, the periodical, or the novel. Scott Black's *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain* (2006), the only recent book to take the early-modern English (or British) essay as its primary subject, in fact traces the influence of the early seventeenth-century essay on each of these later forms of writing.³⁷

Black's book is however also at the heart of the second major strand of critical response to the essay, which has sprung up in opposition to the first, and which seeks to situate the early essay within its precise historical context and examine not what makes it intrinsically forward-looking, but rather the ways in which it is deeply rooted in the past. Instead of emphasizing the personal expression and innovation of the essay genre, Black lays stress upon the close connections between the early essay and late sixteenth-century humanistic pedagogical methods and tools of learning, such as commonplace books, arguing that these first essays are primarily 'records of reading', rather than of writing.³⁸

³⁵ E.g. Graham Good, *The Observing Self: rediscovering the essay* (London: Routledge, 1988).

³⁶ E.g. Michael L. Hall, 'The Emergence of the Essay and the Idea of Discovery', in *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre*, ed. Alexander J. Burtrym (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989), pp. 73-91; Kathryn Murphy, 'The Anxiety of Variety: Knowledge and Experience in Montaigne, Burton and Bacon', in *Fictions of Knowledge: Fact, Evidence, Doubt*, eds. Yota Basaki, Subha Mukherji, Jann-Melissa Schramm (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); James Paradis, 'Montaigne, Boyle, and the Essay of Experience', in *One Culture: Essays in Science and Literature*, ed. George Levine (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 51-90; Rose-Mary Sargent, *The Diffident Naturalist: Robert Boyle and the Philosophy of Experiment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), e.g. p. 185.

³⁷ Scott Black, *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), Chapters 3, 4, 5.

³⁸ Black, *Of Essays and Reading*, p. 24. Such work builds upon previous studies of the importance of commonplacing culture to early-modern modes of thought and writing. See e.g. Ann Moss, 'Commonplace-Rhetoric and Thought-Patterns in Early Modern Culture', in *The Recovery of Rhetoric*, eds. R. H. Roberts and J. M. M. Good (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), pp. 49-60; and her

On the one hand, this approach is an important qualification of the traditional presentation of the essay as a site of personal expression or radical experimentation, which in itself is often inflected by twentieth-century preconceptions that the essay is always an inherently modern genre.³⁹ On the other hand, by re-describing the essay as primarily a site of reading, this approach threatens to overlook the essay's integrity as a form of literary writing. Black's concentration on humanistic practices concerned with the pedagogical tools of learning such as commonplace books is important. But it also runs the risk of over-emphasising this to the detriment of other strands of humanistic thought and motivations – rhetorical, ethical, social, and institutional – of which the kind of pragmatic reading integral to this notebook culture is only a part. This thesis, therefore, seeks to nuance Black's approach, by arguing that Cornwallis's essays are an ethically-informed literary and rhetorical enterprise resulting from complex interactions with these different strands of humanistic practices and institutions. In this, I follow the example of Warren Boutcher, who has written comprehensively on the sophisticated means by which this learned humanistic culture was transfused into the vernacular in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. I am especially indebted to the way in which he has discussed Montaigne's English reception within this context, particularly his work situating the origins and early circulation of John Florio's English translation of the *Essais* (1603) within the private institutions of civic learning associated with noble households of the period.⁴⁰

Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). There has also been work specifically on Montaigne and commonplace book cultures of learning and reading: see e.g. Ann Blair, 'Bodin, Montaigne, and the role of disciplinary boundaries', in Henry S. Turner (ed.), *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 29-40; Peter Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).

³⁹ Marielle Macé has recently called the essay the definitive mode of French writing in the twentieth century. See, *Le temps de l'essai: histoire d'un genre en France au XXe siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2006).

⁴⁰ See especially, Warren Boutcher, 'Florio's Montaigne: Translation and Pragmatic Humanism in the Sixteenth Century' (Cambridge: Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1991); 'The Origins of Florio's Montaigne: "Of the Institution and Education of Children, to Madame Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford"', *Montaigne Studies*, XXIV (2012): 7-32; 'Montaigne's Legacy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne*, ed. Ullrich

This thesis also seeks to situate Cornwallis and the essay more broadly within particular areas of early-modern studies upon which my work both draws, and in some cases, to which it hopes to offer a small contribution. The history of reading, and especially the material traces left by early-modern readers, has become a particularly vibrant area of study in recent years, and my thesis builds upon the work of scholars such as William Sherman (2008), which both describes and demonstrates the potentialities of such research.⁴¹ Chapter Five of this thesis in particular contributes to the growing work on Montaigne's reception in England and especially to the sub-section of that which has begun to explore the archival evidence left behind by readers of the *Essais* in both French and English.⁴² Recent studies of readers of vernacular literary texts in this period, notably by Heidi Brayman Hackel (2005) and Fred Schurink (2010),⁴³ have been particularly valuable in extending the range of readers and types of text under discussion.⁴⁴ Following on from this, I seek to situate Cornwallis's reading habits and the relationship between these and his rhetorical practices in essay writing within the variety of ways of reading that might come under the label of 'active' or 'humanistic' reading:

Langer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 27-52; 'Marginal Commentaries: The Cultural Transmission of Montaigne's *Essais* in Shakespeare's England', *Montaigne et Shakespeare: vers un nouvel humanisme*, eds. Pierre Kapitaniak and Jean-Marie Maguin (Montpellier: Société Française Shakespeare, 2004), pp. 13-27; "Learning Mingled with Nobilitie": Directions for Reading Montaigne's *Essais* in their Institutional Context', in *Le Visage changeant de Montaigne/The Changing Face of Montaigne*, eds. Keith Cameron and Laura Willett (Paris: Champion, 2003), pp. 337-362; 'Humanism and Literature in Late Tudor England: Translation, the continental book and the case of Montaigne's *Essais*', in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*, ed. J. Woolfson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 243-268. On vernacular humanism in these contexts more generally, see Warren Boutcher, "'Rational Knowledges" and "Knowledges ... drenched in flesh and blood": Fulke Greville, Francis Bacon and Institutions of Humane Learning in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sidney Journal*, 19 (2001): 11-40; 'Vernacular Humanism in the Sixteenth Century', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 189-202.

⁴¹ William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

⁴² Here see particularly, William M. Hamlin, 'Florio's Montaigne and the Tyranny of "Custome": Appropriation, Ideology, and Early English Readership of the *Essays*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 63:2 (2010): 491-544; John O'Brien, 'Montaigne in Some London Libraries', *Montaigne Studies*, XXIV (2012): 141-162.

⁴³ Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Fred Schurink, 'Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73:3 (2010): 453-469.

⁴⁴ Peter Mack has also provided a valuable re-evaluation of the ethical, as well as the pragmatic, implications contained within 'the Renaissance approach to reading in fragments'. See, 'Rhetoric, Ethics, and Reading in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Studies*, 19 (2005): 1-21; p. 3.

from the ‘pragmatic’ and ‘goal-orientated’ reading of learned texts in preparation for civic life so brilliantly and influentially described by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine,⁴⁵ to an actively meditative private practice of reading with its roots in medieval traditions.⁴⁶

At the heart of humanistic theories of learning is the relationship between reading and writing, and in relating Cornwallis’s habits of reading to his literary practices, this thesis also draws upon recent work in the history of rhetoric, especially those studies which discuss the rhetorical cultures associated with, and created by, particular communities and places, and the relationship between these cultures and communities and the development of particular forms of writing.⁴⁷ In so doing, I also build upon the seminal work on the material cultures of such communities by H. R. Woudhuysen and Arthur F. Marotti, as well as drawing upon the important work on the manuscript circulation of literary texts later in the century by Harold Love, and the distinctions he makes between different types of scribal publication.⁴⁸ In particular, I demonstrate that the way in which Cornwallis writes his essays, and their content, is intimately bound up with his familial and social networks and the shared rhetorical and scribal cultures and communities associated with these networks. In this way, the early-modern essay emerges as a sociable form, although not necessarily one which relies upon the unproblematic rhetorical

⁴⁵ “‘Studied for action’: how Gabriel Harvey read his Livy”, *Past and Present*, 129 (1990): 30-78. Anthony Grafton, ‘The Humanist as Reader’, in *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 179-212. For the argument that the nature of humanism changed over the course of the sixteenth century to become more of a ‘pragmatic’ education preparing men for success in civic government, see Geoffrey Elton, ‘Humanism in England’, in *Impact of Humanism on Western Europe*, eds. Anthony Goodman and Angus MacKay, (London: Longman, 1990), pp. 259-278. Boutcher discusses Florio’s translation of Montaigne within this context in ‘Florio’s Montaigne’, esp. Introduction.

⁴⁶ On these medieval reading practices, see Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images. 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴⁷ E.g. Kathy Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Michelle O’Callaghan, *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Arthur F. Marotti, *John Donne, coterie poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

creation of a sense of intimate friendship between author and reader, as has frequently been suggested.⁴⁹

2. Cornwallis and early English essays: 1597-1632

I Holde neither *Plutarke's* nor none of those auncient short manner of writings nor *Montaigne's* nor such of this latter time to bee rightly tearmed Essayes; for though they be short, yet they are strong and able to endure the sharpest tryall. But mine are Essayes, who am but newly bound Prentise to the inquisition of knowledge and vse these papers as a Painter's boy a board, that is trying to bring his hand and his fancie acquainted. (190)

Cornwallis makes this striking declamation of literary originality and independence at the beginning of his essay 'Of Essaies and Bookes' (1601). The implications of Cornwallis's statement that only 'mine are Essayes' are explored throughout this thesis: his complex relationship with classical authors in his formulation of a new early-modern literary genre, his interactions with his famous contemporary forebear Montaigne, and the ethical and educational motivations and rhetorical strategies underlying his presentation of himself as 'newly bound Prentise to the inquisition of knowledge'. By insisting upon his uniqueness as a writer, Cornwallis marked out his work as innovative and original, but in the very way in which he distances himself from other authors, he at the same time suggests that he is worthy to be considered as the equal of classical giants like Plutarch or celebrated contemporaries like Montaigne.

Cornwallis's early champions P. B. Whitt and R. B. Bennett both celebrated him as the first 'familiar' essayist in English,⁵⁰ and this classification has remained with him,⁵¹ with 'familiar' here being taken to mean essays written in a chatty and discursive tone by an interested amateur on a variety of subjects. But although this classification is a useful

⁴⁹ E.g. Kuisma Korhonen, *Textual Friendship: The Essay as Impossible Encounter from Plato and Montaigne to Levinas and Derrida* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2006).

⁵⁰ Whitt, 'New Light', p. 169; R. E. Bennett, 'Essayes by Sir William Cornwallis the Younger', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XLVI (1947): 317-19; p. 317.

⁵¹ See e.g. his current entry in the ODNB. Arthur Kincaid, 'Cornwallis, Sir William, the younger (c. 1579-1614)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn. Oct. 2008).

one, it needs to be used with the awareness that it offers a convenient retrospective qualification. For Cornwallis himself does not claim to introduce merely a new sub-genre into English (i.e. the *familiar* essay), but an entirely new genre (i.e. simply *the essay*). In other words, following Cornwallis's definition, if a so-called 'essay' was not an essay after his own style, it was not simply a different sort of essay, but not correctly an essay at all. In so doing, he also moves to position himself as the sole father of the English essay tradition, and at the same time, by establishing his literary originality in this way, pre-empts both comparisons with other writers, and accusations that essays were little more than glorified commonplace books.⁵² His self-effacing tone transforms the possible perceived weakness of his way of writing into one of his most positive selling points: it is paradoxically the fact that his essays are not 'strong' that makes them truly essays. The opening to 'Of Essayes and Bookes' therefore becomes both definition and defence. Cornwallis employs his assiduously cultivated rhetorical persona as a type of extended *captatio benevolentiae*: the technique traditionally used in classical oratory and letters to capture the audience's good-will and thus increase the exponent's power of persuasion. In this way, the association of Cornwallis's mode of essay-writing with the 'familiar' becomes more telling, mirroring as it does the introduction of the 'familiar' into classes of letter writing in the late sixteenth-century.⁵³

In this way, too, Cornwallis's defence of his essays might be considered alongside the much more formal vernacular defences of poetry in the late sixteenth century.⁵⁴ Just as poetry paradoxically was considered to contain an internal defence of itself as a unique vehicle and form of knowledge, so too does Cornwallis suggest something similar through his own presentation of the relationship between knowledge and writing in the

⁵² Such comments dismissing the literary originality of early-modern essayists are discussed in Chapter One.

⁵³ The relationship between essays and letters is discussed briefly in Chapter Two.

⁵⁴ For an excellent and convenient discussion of the most significant of these treatises, see the introductory material to Gavin Alexander (ed.), *Sidney's The Defence of Poesie and Selected Renaissance Criticism* (London: Penguin, 2004).

Essayes.⁵⁵ It is further perhaps suggestive that two of only three texts to be published in England and Scotland under the title ‘essayes’ before 1600 were collections either of verse or of a mixture of verse and prose: in Scotland, *The essayes of a prentise, in the diuine art of poesie* (1584), the work of the nineteen-year-old King James VI of Scotland (nineteen years away from assuming the English throne), and in England, *The poetickall essayes of Samuel Daniel* (1599). Cornwallis’s use of the word ‘Prentise’ echoes the title of King James’s work, and it is notable that both volumes are concerned to a greater or lesser extent with establishing new modes of vernacular literary writing.⁵⁶ Similarly, Daniel’s *Poetickall Essayes* have convincingly been shown to emerge out of the same cultural and social contexts which engendered Florio’s English translation of Montaigne, to which Daniel contributed a prefatory poem.⁵⁷ The precise nature of the relationship between prose and verse essays in this period would in itself be worthy of a detailed study.

In referring to ‘such of this latter time’, Cornwallis avoids even naming the only other English writer to have published a volume of prose essays before him: the statesman, lawyer, and natural philosopher Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Bacon’s *Essayes* were printed in 1597, alongside two other short works, *Meditationes Sacrae* and *Of The Colours of Good and Evil*. Bacon’s essays signaled his first appearance in print, and they were immensely popular, repeatedly augmented by Bacon until 1625, reprinted throughout the seventeenth century, and translated into Italian, French, and Latin. He himself referred to his decision to translate them into Latin as a way of preserving the longevity, as he saw it,

⁵⁵ On the knowledge of the essayist, see Chapter One.

⁵⁶ See e.g. Jennifer Richards, ‘Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the Politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71:2 (2008): 303-21.

⁵⁷ Samuel Daniel, *The poetickall essayes of Samuel Daniel* (London: Simon Waterson, 1599). See generally, John Pitcher, ‘Samuel Daniel’s occasional and dedicatory verse: a critical edition’, 2 vols. (University of Oxford: Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, 1977). Pitcher describes Daniel’s ‘general indebtedness to Montaigne’ (II.344). On the relationship between Daniel and Florio, see also Boutcher, ‘Florio’s Montaigne’, pp. 176-7 and 203-04. For the connections between Daniel’s *Defence of Rhyme* (1603) and Montaigne’s essays, see also J. I. M. Stewart, ‘Montaigne’s *Essays* and *A Defence of Ryme*’, *RES*, IX (1933): 311-12. The implications of, and new evidence for, the depth and importance of Daniel’s Italian travel and connections, see recently June Schuleter, ‘Samuel Daniel in Italy: New Documentary Evidence’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 75:2 (2012): 283-90.

of his ‘most currant’ work.⁵⁸ The original collection contained only ten essays, each of which comprising a collection of *sententiae*, giving them a greater similarity to a book of aphorisms than to a volume of essays such as those by Montaigne or Cornwallis. In later editions of 1612 and 1625, Bacon both increased the number of essays (38 in 1612 and 58 in 1625), as well as lengthening and elaborating upon the existing essays.

In contrast to Cornwallis’s attempts to distance himself from any perceived classical antecedents, in a cancelled dedication to Prince Henry of the 1612 edition of the essays which survives in manuscript, Bacon explained that ‘*Senecaes* Epistles to *Lucilius*, yf you marke them well, are but *Essaies*, – That is dispersed Meditacions, thoughte conveyed in the forme of Epistles’.⁵⁹ In establishing this link between his own essays and Seneca’s *Epistulae Morales*, Bacon illuminated one of the most important literary, social, and intellectual contexts for the genesis of the early-modern English essay: the genre of advice literature. As this thesis will demonstrate, Cornwallis’s own essays emerge out of some of the same impulses which engendered literature directed at the ethical and civic education of young (noble)men in this period, a context which Warren Boutcher has also described as directly informing the origins of Florio’s translation of Montaigne.⁶⁰

Bacon has frequently been co-opted into the critical tradition described above which seeks to situate the genesis of later seventeenth-century natural philosophic essays in this earlier period. In this way, his actual *Essayes* – which do not fit into this narrative particularly well – can become subservient to the perceived ‘essayistic’ qualities of his other writing concerned with ‘experiment’ and ‘experience’.⁶¹ Such an approach necessarily distances Bacon from Cornwallis, who does not fit into such a history. In his edition of Bacon’s essays, Michael Kiernan similarly contrasts Bacon and Cornwallis,

⁵⁸ Sir Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; reissued 2000), p. 5.

⁵⁹ The original letter is held in the British Library: MS. Add. 4259, fol. 155^r. It is reproduced in Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels*, ed. Kiernan, p. 317.

⁶⁰ Boutcher, ‘The Origins of Florio’s Montaigne’, pp. 14-18.

⁶¹ E.g. Murphy, ‘The Anxiety of Variety’.

noting that they differ ‘in both aim and accomplishment’.⁶² At the same time, this approach distances Bacon’s essays from their own internal context within Bacon’s other early writings, something which has perhaps been encouraged too by the fact that, following their original pattern of publication, it has been traditional for Bacon’s essays to be published as an individual volume separated from his other work. The connections between the essays and Bacon’s early notebooks have been discussed by both Peter Beal and John Pitcher, in a way which points towards the potential fruitfulness of situating them within the context of his earlier writings more widely.⁶³ The inclusion of the 1597 essays within Alan Stewart’s forthcoming edition of Bacon’s *Late Elizabethan Writings, 1597-1602*, however, following on from Stewart’s recent edition of Bacon’s *Early Writings to 1596* (2012),⁶⁴ will provide an enormously valuable starting point for a re-evaluation of the essays within their immediate chronological context among Bacon’s own writings. This is set to complement Kiernan’s single volume edition of the *Essayes* (1985) for the *Oxford Francis Bacon* series by encouraging them to be situated intellectually and historically next to Bacon’s other early writings, especially his letters of advice to figures such as the Earl of Essex.⁶⁵ Describing the place of the essays within the cultures which created these types of text also illuminates the shared heritage of Cornwallis’s and Bacon’s essays in forms of advice literature. But while Bacon’s essays are directed more towards pragmatic career humanists, Cornwallis’s employ a rhetoric of advice which is less goal-orientated, and which insists that it is the movement towards change, rather than the end result of this process, which is more important: the two essayists’ differing understanding and use of affective rhetoric is discussed in this context in Chapter One.

⁶² Bacon, *Essayes or Counsels*, ed. Kiernan, p. li.

⁶³ Peter Beal, ‘Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth Century Commonplace Book’, in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts*, ed. W. Speed-Hill (Tempe, Ariz.: Renaissance English Text Society, 1993), pp. 131-47; p. 145; Sir Francis Bacon, *The essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 257.

⁶⁴ Sir Francis Bacon, *Early Writings to 1596*, ed. Alan Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012). This is Volume 1 of the projected 15-volume ongoing *Oxford Francis Bacon* project.

⁶⁵ The volume will also complement ongoing work on the material cultures of composition surrounding Bacon’s early writing, which I discuss in relation to his essays in Chapter Four.

Advice literature, as has been mentioned above, also draws together the shared intellectual and social origins of Cornwallis's essays with Florio's English translation of Montaigne, and the implications of this are drawn out more fully in Chapter Five. It also underpins Robert Johnson's minor volume *Essaies, or imperfect offers* (1601), the brief sentences of which also suggest the influence of Bacon.⁶⁶ While the earliest volumes of English essays are primarily secular in orientation, the genre soon developed a more religious inflection at the hands of certain authors.⁶⁷ The two essay collections of Daniel Tuvill share much of their origins with Florio's translation of Montaigne, which has a dedicatee in common with that of Tuvill's first collection, *Essays Politic and Moral* (1608): Lady Anne Harrington. Tuvill was her secretary, and explains in his dedicatory letter that his project was begun in 'such idle hours as remained free to me from your employments'.⁶⁸ Tuvill's second collection of essays, however, as its title – *Essays Moral and Theological* (1609) – suggests, represents a more directly religious turn. This is directed instead to the Bishop of Bath and Wells (and later of Winchester), James Montague (1568-1618). The potential of the essay genre to be adapted to an overtly religious use can similarly be seen in its relation to the sermon, and John Donne's posthumously published *Essays in Divinity* (1651),⁶⁹ while Owen Felltham's (c.1602-1688) perennially popular *Resolves: Divine, Morall, Politicall* (1623) also began to merge the spiritual and the secular in a more overt fashion.

In the early years of the seventeenth century, the English literary essay developed in various directions, aside from the religious, and grew in popularity. As well as the several editions of Cornwallis's and Bacon's essays printed in this period, Johnson's essays were

⁶⁶ Robert Johnson, *Essaies, or rather Imperfect offers* (London: John Barnes, 1601).

⁶⁷ On Bacon's essays and religion, see Christel Veldhuijzen, 'Francis Bacon's *Essays*: An Analysis of its Religious Features' (Utrecht: Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 2008).

⁶⁸ Daniel Tuvill, *Essays Politic and Moral and Essays Moral and Theological*, ed. John L. Lievsay (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971), p. 5.

⁶⁹ John Donne, *Essays in Divinity by John Donne*, ed. Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

republished in 1607 and 1613 (and again in 1638),⁷⁰ Florio's translation of Montaigne in 1613 and 1632, and furthermore, a miscellaneous assembly of texts quickly began to emerge under the title of 'essays' in the years between the first edition of Cornwallis's *Essayes* in 1600 and their final seventeenth-century edition in 1632.

In particular, these early years of the seventeenth century saw the emergence of texts which directly invoked a merging of literary genres in their titles, becoming particularly associated with character-writing.⁷¹ Characters – short, pithy, and usually satirical descriptions of certain 'types' of person such as a drunkard, a maid, or a fool,⁷² and branching out into characters of places, such as prisons or taverns⁷³ – were themselves increasingly popular as a literary genre in the years following the manuscript circulation and 1614 publication of Sir Thomas Overbury's poem *The Wife*, and the characters which were published alongside it in ever-increasing numbers.⁷⁴ This type of overlap led some

⁷⁰ They also probably provided the inspiration for the title of William Mason's *A handful of essayes. Or Imperfect offers* (London: John Grismand, 1621).

⁷¹ See the section on 'Essays and Characters' in Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century 1600-1660*, second rev. edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

⁷² One seventeenth-century manuscript collection of characters contains 'A character-maker' among its subjects. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: Osborn Files Folder 286. It reads as follows: 'A Character maker is one should knowe men and manners, all mens humors and hee should not be strangers. He speakes dissolu'd verse in prose, for the most part: hee should likewise obserue much, and not lack the practique part. Hee should not to doe well be unprovided of a younger Brothers proportion of witt, w^{ch} with an elder brothers Travaile were not amisse. Tis requisite. Hee were valiant too, least hee be beaten black and blue for ~~beating~~ <abusing> men wth black and white, w^{ch} liberty hee takes choosing rather to use his Penn then his hand to convert mens faults, for ~~th~~ he knowes the strength of his Jest may bee better borne than that of his arme. If you can p[er]swade him to undertake in a Character to speake his friend, he will rather loose him then his iest, being made, he sends it to some of his acquaintance, in whose hands like Mansfeilds Souldiers they die before they see their Enemies', fols. 6^v-7^r.

⁷³ See here for example G[eoffray] M[y]nshull, *Essayes and Characters of a Prison and Prisoners* (London: Matthew Walbancke, 1618). This had first been printed (apparently without Mynshull's knowledge), with the author identified only as Yarffeg Lluhsnym (i.e. Geffray Mynshull backwards) earlier the same year as *Certaine Characters and Essayes of Prison and Prisoners* (London: William Jones, 1618). The only copy of this earlier edition listed on the ESTC is in the British Library: 12354.a.51(1.); under the anonymous description of its author as 'Novvs Homo a Prisoner in the Kings Bench' on the title page, a contemporary reader has identified him as 'Geffray Mynshul'.

⁷⁴ For some examples see, Chester Noyes Greenough, *A bibliography of the Theophrastan character in English with several portrait characters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947). On character-writing in this period, see Benjamin Boyce, *The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947); J. W. Smeed, *The Theophrastan 'character': the history of a literary genre* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Both should be read however in light of John Considine's definitive work on Overbury and the commercialization of the literary coterie and culture surrounding him, in which Considine argues that the so-called 'Theophrastan' nature of these characters is in fact inaccurate. See John Considine, 'The Humanistic Antecedents of the First English Character-Books' (University of Oxford: Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, 1994). For other more recent account of character-writing which puts it in the context of physiological humoral theories and early-modern discourses of interiority, see Jacques Bos,

writers, such as John Stephens in *Satyrical essayes characters and others* and *Essayes and characters, ironical and instructive* (both first published 1615), to develop the kernel of advice literature contained within the earliest essays in another direction, bringing it closer to satire, and the ‘humour’ plays reliant upon comedic and satirical stereotypes which were so popular in both popular and academic drama of the period.⁷⁵ Similarly, although perhaps best-known for his conduct book *The English Gentleman* (1630),⁷⁶ the poet Richard Braithwait (1588-1673) also experimented with the more satirical side of advice literature through character-writing in his *Whimzies: Or, A New Cast of Characters* (1631),⁷⁷ which he followed up three years later with *A Strange Metamorphosis of Man, transformed into a Wildernesse. Deciphered in Characters*.⁷⁸ Furthermore, texts which did not advertise themselves as essays in their titles were described as such inside, as was the case with Felltham’s *Resolues*, for instance.⁷⁹ By 1620, Edward Blount, the publisher of the anonymous *Horae Subsecivae. Observations and Discourses*, was able to explain to the reader that ‘*The Booke, you see, is of mixt matter, by the way of obseruations, or Essayes, and Discourses. There haue been so many precedents of this kinde, and (when they haue come out of the hands of good*

‘Individuality and Inwardness in the Literary Character Sketches of the Seventeenth Century’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 61 (1998): 142-57 and his ‘The rise and decline of character: humoral psychology in ancient and modern medical theory’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 22:3 (2009): 29-50.

⁷⁵ The most famous examples of the former were written by Ben Jonson in the years immediately before the publication of Cornwallis’s *Essayes: Every Man in his Humour* (1598) and *Every Man Out of his Humour* (1599). An example of the latter, *Pedantius*, performed in Cambridge in the 1580s, is discussed in Chapter Two. On the possible relationship between the development of this kind of drama and the Bishops’ Ban of 1599, see Bryan Thomas Herek, ‘Early Modern Satire and the Bishops’ Order of 1599: Manuscript, Print and Stage’ (University of Maryland: Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 2005). On this topic see also Richard A. McCabe, ‘Elizabethan Satire and the Bishops’ Ban of 1599’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 11:2 (1981): 188-193.

⁷⁶ Richard Braithwait, *The English gentleman: containing sundry excellent rules or exquisite observations, tending to direction of every gentleman, of selecter ranke and qualitie; how to demean or accommodate himselfe in the manage of publike or private affaires* (London: John Haviland, 1630). The connections between essays and conduct books such as Braithwait’s is discussed in Gertrude E. Noyes, *Bibliography of Courtesy and Conduct Books in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, NJ.: Tuttle, Newhouse and Taylor, 1937). Noyes describes Cornwallis’s essays ‘Of Behaviour’, ‘Of Affectation’, ‘Of Fantasticknesse’, ‘Of Fame’, ‘Of Discourse’, ‘Of Youth’, ‘Of Advice’ as concrete examples of conduct literature within the essay tradition.

⁷⁷ Allen H. Lanner (ed.), *A Critical Edition of Richard Brathwait’s Whimzies* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1991).

⁷⁸ [Richard Brathwait], *A Strange Metamorphosis of Man, transformed into a Wildernesse. Deciphered in Characters* (London: Laurence Chapman, 1634).

⁷⁹ Owen Felltham, *Resolues Divine, morall, politicall* (London: Henry Seile, 1628), sig. A2^r.

*Writers) always so approued, that there needs no Apologie for putting in one Booke, so different Arguments?*⁸⁰

Similarly, in 1615, the prolific and popular writer Nicholas Breton (1554/5-c.1626) had cemented the place of the essay-character within the burgeoning English essay tradition by dedicating his *Characters vpon Essaies Morall, and Diuine* to Bacon as the highest of all essayists.⁸¹ This thesis situates the origins of Cornwallis's *Essayes* – and the English essay more generally – in elite social and literary communities associated with the emergence of vernacular humanism in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but the appropriation of the genre by the populist writer Breton in 1615 marks its entry into a more obviously commercial type of vernacular literary marketplace.⁸² This marketplace was itself frequently dependent on the perceived origins of the texts created within it in a more elite community, often ones associated with a limited scribal circulation of particular texts within particular groups of people, as John Considine has brilliantly demonstrated in his discussions of the commercial manipulation of Sir Thomas Overbury's literary circle in this way.⁸³ Furthermore, such activity itself emerged out of a tension which was itself always contained within the earlier essays themselves, and in Chapter Four I discuss the way in which Cornwallis invokes this tension throughout his *Essayes*.

⁸⁰ Anon., *Horae Subsecivae. Observations and Discourses* (London: Edward Blount, 1620). The book has been attributed to both Grey Brydges and William Cavendish, while in one copy a contemporary reader has identified the author on the title page as 'Gilb. Cavendish', William's older brother. Bodleian Library: 8° D 41 Th. The book, which has strong Baconian overtones, has now however been convincingly attributed to William Cavendish, although it has been suggested that the three final discourses within it might be by Cavendish's tutor Thomas Hobbes, in whose hand a fair copy of some of the essays survives at Chatsworth House. Cavendish also translated some of Bacon's essays into Italian as an exercise. On Cavendish and Hobbes here, see Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 6-7. For the attribution of the text, see also Douglas Bush, 'Hobbes, Cavendish and "Essayes"', *Notes and Queries*, 20 (1973): 162-4.

⁸¹ Nicholas Breton, *Characters vpon Essaies Morall, and Diuine* (London: John Gwillim, 1615), sigs. A3^r-A5^r.

⁸² On the popular vernacular literary marketplace in this period, see e.g. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (eds.), *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁸³ See most conveniently, John Considine, 'The Invention of the Literary Circle of Sir Thomas Overbury', in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000), pp. 59-74.

3. Cornwallis Brief Biography and Bibliography⁸⁴

Cornwallis was born around 1579, a date established thanks to a marginal note in a manuscript miscellany in which his work appears.⁸⁵ He died in 1614, and was buried in the Church of St-Martin's-in-the-Field in London on 1 July. He was born into an established East Anglian family, the eldest son of the courtier and diplomat Sir Charles Cornwallis (c.1555-1629) and his first wife, Anne Nicholls (*bap.* 1551, *d.* 1584). His grandfather was the recusant Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19-1604), but there is no evidence that either Cornwallis or his father had any Catholic sympathies. Cornwallis travelled to Ireland under the Earl of Essex in 1599, and was knighted there. He served as MP for Orford in Suffolk in 1604 and 1614, and was sworn in as a member of King James I's Privy Council in 1603. The unlikely evidence that he attended university at Oxford is discussed in Chapter Three. He married Katherine Parker (1582-1634) on 25 August 1595 and the couple had eleven children. Cornwallis's father was Ambassador to Spain in Madrid from 1604-09, and Cornwallis visited him there on more than one occasion. Sir Charles's correspondence stands witness to his son's role in carrying messages between Spain and England, and indeed it has not previously been noted that the essayist played a significant enough role here to merit his own number code of identification in the cipher Sir Henry Wotton concocted for his correspondence to Sir Charles; while Sir Charles is listed as no. 106, the next entry reads 'S^r William Cornwaleys y^r Lo^{ps} sonne. 107'.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ I here provide only a very basic overview of Cornwallis's life and writings, drawing largely upon his entry in the *ODNB*, the introduction to Allen's edition of the *Essays*, and the work of Bennett and Whitt. The implications for his writing of his family and social background are drawn out throughout this thesis, but especially in Chapter Three, where I provide more detail about his grandfather, father, and uncle. Similarly, all of his literary writings described in this section are discussed in detail in the main body of the thesis. For some further detail on Cornwallis's family and their social connections in a very slightly later period, see Joanna Moody (ed.), *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon, 1613-1644* (London: Associated University Presses, 2003). Lady Jane was the second wife of Cornwallis's uncle, the elder Sir William.

⁸⁵ Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 169, fol. 132^r.

⁸⁶ British Library: MS. Add. 39853, fol. 15^r. This is a personalized cipher for Sir Charles Cornwallis; there is another version, which does not include either of the Cornwallises, and incorporates many other changes, in British Library: MS. Add. 4277, fol. 200^r.

The majority of Cornwallis's literary output was written in a period of a few years around 1600.⁸⁷ The *Essayes* were first published in two parts by Edmund Mattes in 1600 and 1601.⁸⁸ Mattes also published Cornwallis's *Discourses vpon Seneca, the tragedian* in 1601, discussed in Chapter One. The first part of the *Essayes* was republished by Mattes in 1606.⁸⁹ In 1610, both parts of the *Essayes* were republished, this time by John Browne. This edition contained three new essays: it is unclear whether these were written for the new publication or were old essays which had not previously been included. Browne also published the *Discourses* as part of the same volume.⁹⁰ The final seventeenth-century edition of the *Essayes* was published by John Marriot and sold by Ambrose Ritherdon in 1632, and again included the *Discourses*.⁹¹ This edition also had an engraved title page, discussed in Chapter Four. Cornwallis wrote several paradoxes, four of which remained in manuscript until published by R. E. Bennett in the edition described above in the 1930s, and the rest of which (including one verse paradox on 'nothing') were published in two separate posthumous volumes;⁹² these are discussed in Chapter Four. Aside from these writings, Cornwallis also had an elegy on the death of Prince Henry included in the third edition of Joshua Sylvester's *Lachrymae Lachrymarum* (1613), discussed in Chapter Three. Cornwallis is also credited with the authorship of an epigram 'Upon Montaign's Essayes' in at least one manuscript.⁹³ Three poems by Cornwallis, along with a verse epistle to John Donne, are in the Bodleian Library, and are discussed in Chapter Four.

⁸⁷ See Cornwallis, *Essayes*, pp. xviii-xxiii for detailed bibliographic descriptions of the various editions of the *Essayes*.

⁸⁸ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes* (London: Edmund Mattes, 1600). Entered to Mattes in the Stationers' Register on 13 November 1600; *A Second Part of Essayes* (London: Edmund Mattes, 1601). Entered to Mattes in the Stationers' Register, 19 October 1601.

⁸⁹ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes* (London: Edmund Mattes, 1606).

⁹⁰ The *Essayes* were transferred from Mattes to Browne on 1 March 1609/10.

⁹¹ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes. Newlie Corrected* (London: Thomas Harper for John Marriot and to be sold by Ambrose Ritherdon, 1632).

⁹² [Sir William Cornwallis the Younger], *Essayes of certaine paradoxes* (London: Thomas Thorpe, 1616); Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes or rather, Encomions* (London: Richard Hawkins, 1616); an edition with all of the paradoxes from these two volumes was published the next year: Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essayes of certaine paradoxes* (London: Richard Hawkins, 1617).

⁹³ Bodleian Library: MS. Firth d. 7, fol. 163^r. The epigram is printed in a slightly altered form from what appears to be another manuscript (although I have so far not been able to locate it) in William C. Hazlitt

4. Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first introduces the relationship between humanistic reading habits and Cornwallis's essay-writing practices, relating this to Cornwallis's conception of the type of 'generall' knowledge required by a gentleman and an essayist, and providing a detailed examination of Cornwallis's own reading. In Chapter Two, I relate this to a discussion of Cornwallis's use of affective rhetoric, discussing his use of the personal voice and his implied relationship with his readers in the context of rhetorical theories of *ethos*. In Chapter Three, I examine Cornwallis in his socio-literary contexts, discussing his familial and friendship networks, and arguing that his *Essayes* are shaped by the shared rhetorical and scribal cultures and communities associated with these networks. In Chapter Four, I examine what is known of the scribal circulation of Cornwallis's work within the framework established in the previous chapter, culminating in a case study of the manuscript and printed circulation of his long paradoxical essay *The Encomium of Richard III*. In Chapter Five, I take the thesis full circle: having demonstrated the importance of the relationship between reading and writing in the formulation of Cornwallis's *Essayes*, in this final chapter, I make a study of contemporary readers' responses to early-modern essays, examining the traces left by these readers in the form of annotations and commonplace books, and demonstrating how these illuminate the nature of essays in this period. Finally, a Conclusion points towards the place of Cornwallis and the essay within the wider context of changes within humanistic modes of thinking, reading and writing across the seventeenth century, discussing the way in which the literary essay has become associated with modernity, and suggesting that while the essay emerges out of humanistic culture, it also paradoxically contains within it the seeds of that culture's decline.

(ed.), *Inedited Poetical Miscellanies: 1584-1700. Selected from mss. chiefly in private hands. With a few explanatory and illustrative notes* (London: Chiswick Press: Printed for Private Circulation, 1870).

Chapter One

The Essayist as Reader: The Ethics of Reading in Cornwallis's *Essayes*

Introduction.

In the final paragraph of his 1601 essay 'Of Essaies and Bookes', Sir William Cornwallis offers his readers an insight into his own reading practices. He explains that among his books, 'There are none that I scratch with my Pen that doe not fatherly counsaile me to the way of Vertue' (202). Cornwallis is referring here to the usual early-modern habit of annotating books: a strategy of reading which writers of essays expected or encouraged their readers to develop and apply for themselves.¹ In the 1628 second edition of his immensely popular essay collection *Resolues Diuine, Morall, Politicall*, for example, the poet and essayist Owen Felltham (c.1602-1668) defended himself against criticisms he had received for not annotating his text with references to the sources of his quotations and allusions.² 'I should only have troubled the *Text*, or spotted a *Margent*, which I always wish to leave free for the *Comments* of the man that reads', he explains, repudiating his detractors and instructing his readers at one and the same time.³ The final chapter of this thesis will explore in detail what happened when seventeenth-century readers took the essayists up on their invitation to fill the margins of their books with 'the *Comments* of the man that reads'. This chapter, however, will discuss the extent to which Cornwallis's *Essayes* of 1600 and 1601 could themselves be described as 'the *Comments* of the man that reads', taking as its starting point the central claim of the only recent book to have the

¹ On readers' marginalia in the period, see particularly William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

² Felltham's *Resolues* was first published by Henry Seile in a much shorter form (one hundred 'resolves' which later became the 'first century' of the later editions) in 1623. Its popularity is attested by its frequent enlargement and reprinting: it was published eight times before Felltham died (the eighth edition being in 1661), and then another three times in the late seventeenth century, and once more in 1709. On Felltham generally, see Ted-Larry Pebworth, *Owen Felltham* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976); and on the *Resolues* more specifically, see Laurence Stapleton's chapter, 'The graces and the muses: Felltham's *Resolues*', in her book *The elected circle: studies in the art of prose* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1973), pp. 73–92.

³ Owen Felltham, *Resolues Diuine, morall, politicall* (London: Henry Seile, 1628), sig. A2^r.

early-modern English essay as its main subject: Scott Black's *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain* (2006). In this, Black describes the first English essays (including those of Cornwallis) as 'tools of reading that do not claim to be original or originary' and suggests that they are no more than 'records of reading'.⁴

This chapter works in tandem with the second. In this first chapter, I begin by establishing the importance of methods of reading (and learning more generally) in the formation of Cornwallis's *Essayes*, arguing that humanistic reading habits are foundational to Cornwallis's writing practices, and that they inform the ideals of 'generall' knowledge which infuse the *Essayes*. But, in Chapter Two in particular, I also seek to establish the creative possibilities inherent in these methods of reading, arguing that in his essays, Cornwallis engages a persona that is shaped by ethically-inflected rhetorical theories of affect and imitation.

The suggestion that essays are little more than extended comments drawn out from the essayist's reading – simply moved from the margins of the page to the main text – has been a staple of responses to the genre since its early days. Ben Jonson famously derided the early English essayists' lack of originality and literary skill, scorning them for writing 'out of what they presently find or meet' in books and papers'.⁵ It is in this kind of response that we can find the seeds that would grow into the branch of modern critical readings such as Black's: the difference being that Jonson casts a negative light on the essayists' activities; Black is, it seems, more sympathetically inclined towards his subject, or at least, more neutral.

⁴ Scott Black, *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 24. For this part of Black's argument, see especially the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

⁵ Jonson's *Timber, or Discoveries* (posthumously published in 1641) has been recently edited by Lorna Hutson in David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson (eds.), *The Works of Ben Jonson*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): VII.524.

The derogatory tone of Jonson's comments is, however, mimicked in some other modern reactions to seventeenth-century essays, as we can see if we turn for a moment to the twentieth-century critical response to Daniel Tuvill (*d.* 1660), who wrote two volumes of essays in the first decade of the seventeenth century: *Essays Politic and Moral* (1608) and *Essays Moral and Theological* (1609). In the introduction to his combined edition of the two volumes, John L. Lievsay exposes the patchwork of unacknowledged quotations and paraphrases from other works which form the basis for much of both the argument and content of Tuvill's essays. He comments that Tuvill 'no doubt justified his somewhat shady practice by pretending to himself that such pillaging was that function of art which in those days bore the label of "imitation"'.⁶ By calling Tuvill's practice 'shady' and describing him as 'pillaging' earlier texts, Lievsay himself takes up the vocabulary of early-modern discussions of *imitatio*. The moral inflection of his language grows out of a distinction between so-called good and bad types of imitation current in the seventeenth century, a distinction which itself has its roots in classical writing on the subject.⁷ '[P]illaging' is one of the group of words associated with metaphors of theft, which were frequently used to describe incomplete imitation, or the misuse of imitative practices.⁸ Cornwallis provides a typical example in his 1600 essay 'Of Iests and Iesters', when he states that 'There is another sort worse then these [people who would rather 'loose a friend rather than a Iest'], that neuer vtter any thing of their owne but get Iests by heart and robb bokes and men of prettie tales and yet hope for this to haue a roome

⁶ Daniel Tuvill, *Essays Politic and Moral and Essays Moral and Theological*, ed. John L. Lievsay (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1971), p. xiv.

⁷ See the definitive discussion of the different types of imitation in G. W. Pigman III, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33:1 (1980): 1-32. On imitation in the period, see too Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). For an early and influential account of early-modern imitative practices, described by Pigman as '[t]he most thorough discussion of imitation' (p. 1, n.1), see Hermann Gmelin, 'Das Prinzip der Imitatio in den romanischen Literaturen der Renaissance', *Romanische Forschungen*, 46 (1932): 83-360.

⁸ Pigman notes that '[b]orrowing and its unscrupulous cousin, theft, like culling flowers, are frequent images of nontransformative imitation or following' in the period. See 'Versions of Imitation', p. 5., n.8.

about the Salt' (47): such behaviour is seen as a breach of both social and literary propriety.

The criticisms being leveled here are not against imitation in general, nor even against unacknowledged reliance on external sources, as Lievsay might suggest. Rather, they are against incomplete or unsuccessful transformation of material. This is what Jonson is railing against when he denigrates the essayists for 'writ[ing] out of what they presently find or meet' in their reading. He is not criticizing the fact that they are gathering material from books in the first place: this was a staple of humanistic methods of learning and reading, in which students were encouraged to collect useful or striking quotations from their reading in a commonplace book. This method of study was given its most influential expression in the early-modern period by the Dutch humanist and pedagogue Desiderius Erasmus, whose rhetorical handbook *De copia* (1512) was the most frequently reprinted of such texts in the period.⁹ The importance for Cornwallis's *Essayes* of this method and the metaphors associated with it is such that it is worth spending a moment discussing it in more detail now.

In Part Two of *De copia*, Erasmus describes the purpose and method of compiling a commonplace book in a section entitled 'Of Assembling Illustrative Material'.¹⁰ He explains that one must read extensively:

our student will flit like a busy bee through the entire garden of literature, will light on every blossom, collect a little nectar from each, and carry it to his hive. Since there is such an abundance of material that one cannot gather everything, he will at least take the most striking and fit this into his scheme of work.¹¹

⁹ Peter Mack records *De copia* as going through 168 editions between 1512 and 1580. For Mack's illuminating discussion of the importance of *De copia*, see his recent *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp. 81-87.

¹⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, *Collected Works* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974 –), XXIV:635-648.

¹¹ Erasmus, *Collected Works*, XXIV:639.

The 'hive' is the commonplace book, in which the student was instructed to arrange quotations under different topic headings, ready to be used as inspiration or cited in a composition.

By likening the student to a 'busy bee', Erasmus returns to the classical roots of this method of reading. In number 84 of his *Epistulae Morales*, 'Of Gathering Ideas', Seneca compared the scholar culling pertinent extracts from his several books to the bee collecting pollen from several different flowers.¹² The pollen was stored in 'cells', which in Erasmian terms would be the commonplace book. The pollen in turn would be transformed into honey, as the bees 'blend those several flavours into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came'.¹³ In literary terms, the quotations arranged in the commonplace book would be transplanted and transformed into the student's own original compositions, for as Erasmus explains to his students, 'whatever the occasion demands, you will have the materials for a speech ready to hand'.¹⁴

The 'busy bee' was a popular metaphor for productive work in the early-modern period.¹⁵ Cornwallis offers a nuanced example of it in 'Of Loue' (1600) when he contrasts flatterers, whom he describes as 'Drones', with the ideal of the industrious worker 'Bees that will not be vnprofitable' (21). As this distinction between the different types of bees suggests, however, the apian metaphor did not always signify the same thing. Although it falls under the general heading of what G. W. Pigman III has

¹² Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, trans. Richard M. Gummere, 3 vols. (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1953-1958), II:277-279.

¹³ Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, II.279.

¹⁴ Erasmus, *De copia*, p. 638.

¹⁵ Sir Francis Bacon famously held up the bee against the ant and the spider in his *Novum Organum* (1620). On this see Paolo Rossi, 'Spiders, Ants, Epistemologists' in *Francis Bacon, terminologia e fortuna nel XVII secolo*, ed. Marta Fattori (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984). For a consideration of the image in terms of early modern practices of *imitatio*, see Greene, *The Light in Troy*, esp. pp. 73-76; and especially the superlative treatment of the apian and other metaphors of imitation in Pigman, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance'. See also Jürgen von Stackelberg, 'Das Bienengleichnis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der literarischen *Imitatio*', *Romanische Forschungen*, 68 (1956): 271-293.

described as the ‘transformative’ model of imitation,¹⁶ he cautions that ‘the apian metaphor is perhaps the most misleading topos because it is used to present two opposed conceptions of imitation: the poet as collector (following) and the poet as maker (imitation or emulation). ‘The apian metaphor is not always transformative’.¹⁷ Consequently, Seneca follows up his metaphor of the bee with another ‘transformative’ model of imitation, which this time explicitly privileges the transforming of material over the collecting of it, likening this process to the human digestive system:

the food we have eaten, as long as it retains its original quality and floats in our stomachs as an undiluted mass, is a burden; but it passes into tissue and blood only when it has been changed from its original form. So it is with the food which nourishes our higher nature, – we should see to it that whatever we have absorbed should not be allowed to remain unchanged, or it will be no part of us. We must digest it; otherwise it will merely enter the memory and not the reasoning power.¹⁸

It is this metaphor that Francis Bacon picks up and develops in his essay ‘Of Studies’, when he states that ‘Some *Bookes* are to be Tasted, Others to be Swallowed, and some Few to be Chewed and Digested’, or, in other words, ‘some *Bookes* are to be read onely in Parts; Others to be read but not Curiously; And some Few to be read wholly, and with Diligence and Attention’.¹⁹ It is also this metaphor which Jonson turns against the essayists. For he develops his argument against them with the implication that the imitative process for the essayist is frozen in the collecting or recording stage: ‘in all they

¹⁶ As opposed to ‘dissimulative’ imitation, in which a writer deliberately tried to obfuscate the relation of their text to its sources, and ‘eristic’ imitation, in which a writer is engaged in a struggle for supremacy with their source. See Pigman, ‘Versions of Imitation’, pp. 3-4.

¹⁷ Pigman, ‘Versions of Imitation’, p. 4. As Pigman notes, Seneca himself points to the ambivalent status of the bee as an agent of transformation, noting that there is disagreement over whether the bees makes the pollen into honey themselves ‘by a certain property of their breath’, or whether ‘the juice which they obtain from the flowers forms at once into honey’, without any further act on the bees’ part after the initial collection of the pollen: Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, II.279.

¹⁸ Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, II.281.

¹⁹ Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; repr. 2000), p. 153.

write', he claims, 'they bring it to the stake raw and undigested'.²⁰ John L. Lievsay employs the same vocabulary to criticize the limitations of Tuvill's *Essayes*, suggesting that Tuvill has 'digested nothing' of his reading.²¹

Scott Black defends Tuvill against Lievsay's criticisms, but he does so not by making a case for Tuvill's originality as a writer, but rather by claiming that Lievsay's mistake is that he 'expects Tuvill's *Essays* to operate as a kind of writing when they seem more legible, and less offensive, as a kind of reading'.²² Black goes on to state that the early English essay is 'a genre that makes no claim to originality', and that rather, "Essay" was the name for a tool of reading that enabled a certain competency and skill – a kind of commonplace book where the work of selection and collection that is key to humanist reading is practiced and undertaken'.²³ In other words, the essay should be re-categorised from a way of writing to a way of reading: after which, the criticisms leveled by Jonson in the seventeenth century and Lievsay in the twentieth can, Black suggests, be swept away. Commenting that 'Lievsay's problem with Tuvill's *Essays* echoes Castelain's with Jonson's *Discoveries*',²⁴ Black argues that 'Both [texts] were taken at first to be collections of essays, but, through careful research into sources, were discovered to be collections of notes and quotations, registers of reading. Both Jonson's *Discoveries* and Tuvill's *Essays* are better read as effects of reading instead of writing'.²⁵

²⁰ Jonson, *Works*, VII.525. It is perhaps no surprise that Jonson should be at the forefront of critical discussions of early-modern questions of plagiarism and imitation. See for example, Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²¹ Tuvill, *Essayes*, p. 198.

²² Black, *Of Essays and Reading*, p. 20.

²³ Black, *Of Essays and Reading*, p. 20 and p. 21.

²⁴ Black is referring to the French scholar Maurice Castelain's suggestion in his introduction to his critical edition of the *Discoveries* that the text should be 'left out of the Jonsonian canon; that practically, the book is not his' thanks to the numerous borrowings from other authors contained within it. See Ben Jonson, *Discoveries: A critical edition with notes on the true purport and genesis of this book*, ed. Maurice Castelain (Paris: Hachette, n.d. [1906]), p. vii. For a short but illuminating discussion of Castelain's edition and the originality or otherwise of the *Discoveries*, see Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 13-15.

²⁵ Black, *Of Essays and Reading*, p. 23.

The connection Black draws between early English essays and commonplace books is an important one, and is in line with one of the claims which underpins my own thesis: that the Cornwallis's *Essayes* grows directly out of his engagement with such humanistic practices of reading and learning. This is a connection which has already been made in some strands of criticism on Montaigne: Ann Blair has discussed the influence of commonplace book culture on Montaigne's essays in an article which compares his practices with that of Jean Bodin;²⁶ Peter Mack has recently described the impact of humanistic learning practices – including habits of commonplacing – on Montaigne and Shakespeare;²⁷ Francis Goyet has written about the relationship between Montaigne's essays and his own marginal annotations and commonplacing practices;²⁸ and Terence Cave has demonstrated the importance of Erasmus's teachings on *copia* to French writing more generally, including the influence on Montaigne.²⁹ The overarching importance of commonplacing culture to habits of both reading and writing in the period has been explored superbly and at length by scholars such as Ann Blair, Ann Moss, Peter Beal, and R. R. Bolgar.³⁰

However, by claiming that 'The commonplace method isn't really a tool of composition', and that essays should be viewed primarily as 'registers of reading', rather than acts of writing, I would suggest that Black pushes his case too far. The overall purpose of creating a commonplace book, as Erasmus makes clear, is to aid the student in the process of composition (both spoken and written): and one of the arguments of

²⁶ Ann Blair, 'Bodin, Montaigne, and the role of disciplinary boundaries', in Henry S. Turner (ed.), *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 29-40.

²⁷ Peter Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).

²⁸ Francis Goyet, 'A propos de "ces pastissages de lieux communs" (le rôle des notes de lecture dans la genèse des *Essais*)', *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne* 5-6 (1986): 11-26 and 7-8 (1987): 9-30.

²⁹ Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: problems of writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

³⁰ Ann Blair, *Too much to know: managing scholarly information before the modern age* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010); Ann Moss, *Printed commonplace-books and the structuring of Renaissance thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Beal, "Notions in Garrison"; R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), esp. pp. 272-75.

this chapter is that ‘the commonplace method’ absolutely *is* a ‘tool of composition’, as well as a tool of reading. Indeed, the training in reading which essayists such as Cornwallis would have received in the schoolroom repeatedly stressed above all things the inter-connection of reading and writing.

Furthermore, by suggesting that the way to deal with criticisms such as Jonson’s is to examine the essay as evidence of its creator’s reading only, Black is in danger of ignoring the claims which the early modern essayists made for themselves as writers, as well as readers. Montaigne famously claims in the letter to the reader at the start of the *Essais* that nothing like it had ever been written before, and in the opening to ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’ (1601), Cornwallis expressly argues for the literary originality of his enterprise, marking himself out as the founder of a new genre: only ‘mine are Essayes’, he tells the reader, in a sensational rejection of his literary antecedents (190).

There is no doubt that Cornwallis’s essays are shaped by the books he had been encouraged to study, and the methods by which he had been taught to read these books. The essay as it emerges in England at the cusp of the seventeenth century is the product of good humanist readers, and this chapter consequently explores the place of reading within Cornwallis’s essays. Moreover, as Black points out, essayists like Tuvill and Cornwallis explicitly describe their work as being ‘undigested’: Cornwallis explains that the essay involves a ‘manner of writing wel befitting vndigested motions’ and distances himself from writers such as Montaigne on the grounds that the latter’s supposed essays are too ‘strong’ (190). At the same time, however, the essay in this period is also the product of good humanist writers, writers who *did* conceive of themselves as doing something ‘originary’ and as being involved in a literary project. Statements such as the one made by Cornwallis above need to be read in this light: as being made not by a private reader in a journal of their reading, but as a public writer, speaking through the mouthpiece of a carefully crafted literary persona: the persona of the essayist. It is only

when we acknowledge this fact that we can begin to reconcile Cornwallis's description of the essay as 'vndigested' with his claim, made in the same paragraph, that he is spearheading a new genre of literary writing in English.

One of the possible problems, therefore, which is inherent in Black's re-positioning of the early-modern English essay as an act of reading rather than of writing, is the way it downplays these literary qualities, and in a way is too quick to read the essays at face value as personal records of reading whose function is to enable better capabilities for reading in others. In other words, as little more than teaching aids to encourage their reader to better digest texts in the future, rather than as a literary product, a result of successful digestion in their own right.

It is certainly true that the essay demands work on the part of its reader, and this thesis argues that the genre falls into the wider field of advice literature (advice regarding both how to live and how to read, the two being intrinsically linked) in the ways in which it was both written and read in the seventeenth century. But Black's positioning of the early English essay as a tool of reading (both of the essayist and their readers), rather than a manner of writing, explicitly presents the essay as an essentially unoriginal product that distorts its identity as an ethically-informed literary and rhetorical enterprise.

Black's concentration on the *un*originality of the essay places him in opposition to another, influential branch of critical response to early-modern essays, a school of thought which Black describes himself as reacting against:

Recent accounts of the essay construe it as a romantic genre organized by the dynamics of excess and resistance, or voice and expression. None of these adequately accounts for the genre's profile in the seventeenth century. Early modern essays are first and foremost part of a practice of moral philosophy, tools that help one engage, not resist, the commonplace.³¹

³¹ Black, *Of Essays and Reading*, p. 15.

This thesis will support some of the basic premises of Black's claims here, contending that the essay should be seen as an outreach of moral philosophy, that it is a form of writing which grows out of an engagement with the commonplace, and that it is misleading to view the earliest English essays as being primarily engaged with demonstrating personal expression.

This last claim has been particularly influential, as, in contrast to Black, scholars have argued for the essay's inherent originality by stressing its innovation as a very personal literary product, whose aim is to realistically present the individual mind in thought, and which uses the personal voice to break new ground in the accurate written representation of the self.³² Marielle Macé has recently called the essay the definitive mode of twentieth-century French writing,³³ and the idea that the early-modern essay is an inherently 'modern' genre thanks to its exponents' perceived interest in interiority and individuality is a common one. Qualities usual to twentieth- and twenty-first-century essays, such as their interest in recording what one modern-day novelist and essayist has described as the 'messiness' and 'truthiness' of lived experience,³⁴ are often back-projected onto seventeenth-century essays, so that Ted-Larry Pebworth, for example, has argued for the importance of some kind of psychological realism to the seventeenth-century essay, stating that 'the early essay's intention is to present a mind thinking'.³⁵

Black's foregrounding of the importance of the way in which the essay is rooted in generalized, humanistic sixteenth-century practices of reading offers an important alternative view to that which privileges the so-called 'modern', individualistic qualities of the essay. Notably, however, he too is reliant on reading the essays as personal documents which lack any particular rhetorical affect, in as much as he responds to them

³² See for example Graham Good, *The Observing Self: rediscovering the essay* (London: Routledge, 1988).

³³ Marielle Macé, *Le temps de l'essai: histoire d'un genre en France au XXe siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2006).

³⁴ Zadie Smith, *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2009).

³⁵ Ted-Larry Pebworth, 'Not Being, but Passing: Defining the Early English Essay', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 10:2 (1977): 17–27.

as personal ‘records of reading’. As we have seen, there are limitations to Black’s approach, not least in the way in which it turns the early essay into something that is more a pedagogical tool than a piece of literature; this perhaps mirrors the way in which the creative qualities of the essay are downplayed even by those scholars who argue for its originality, as their response to the essay often relies so much on the notion that it is a realistic representation of its author on the page. This thesis will suggest that what is missing from both of these accounts is an understanding of the importance of the persona of the essayist: the fact that the essayist, as well as the essay, is a rhetorical creation.

For while Black is keen to describe the importance of reading practices to the essay, he is less keen, it seems, to acknowledge the importance of writing practices, by which I here mean rhetoric. Furthermore, it is through rhetoric that we can begin to see the way in which the two strands of modern critical response to the essay are in fact woven together as part of the fabric of the early essays themselves. For the personal voice of the essayist, which has become increasingly privileged as integral to the form over time, has its roots in the same kinds of humanistic educational practices which Black invokes to move the essay away from this kind of reading. Specifically, it has its roots in rhetorical theories of ethos which rely heavily on affect, and the use of the speaker or writer’s personality to persuade or teach their audience.

This chapter and the second therefore work as an inter-related pair, both centered around Cornwallis’s essays, for which reason I introduce the main themes for them both here. The current chapter discusses the rhetoric of reading in the *Essayes*. As part of this, I examine the place of reading within wider ideals of ‘generall’ knowledge within the essays, and discuss the moral and ethical motivations which underpin these ideals. I then move on to discuss Cornwallis’s reading more specifically, discussing both authors and genres of especial importance and the use and role of quotations within the essays.

In Chapter Two, I move on to connect the rhetoric of reading to the rhetoric of writing, arguing that the two are joined together via the medium of Cornwallis's persona of the gentleman-essayist, a creation formed from Cornwallis's humanistic training, and the stylistic representative of the way in which self-knowledge was seen to be fundamental to the accumulation of any other of type of knowledge in the period. In particular, I discuss the importance of affect in Cornwallis's rhetoric, arguing that rhetoric for him is not a form of pragmatic persuasion to a particular end, but is instead an ethically informed process which is part of a continual attempt to form a conjunction between ways of writing and speaking, and ways of being; of forming a union between the 'tong and the hart'.

* * * * *

Before moving on to the meat of this chapter's analysis, it is worth pausing to ask: if the essay grew out of humanistic educational practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, what then do we know of Cornwallis's own experience within these systems? Unfortunately, as with much of his biography, the answer is not much. D. C. Allen suggests that '[t]he nature of his linguistic knowledge and the narrow limits of his reading indicate a man whose education was in the hands of tutors. There is nothing to suggest that he had been through the university curriculum' (xiii). There is an old suggestion that Cornwallis was a member of The Queen's College, Oxford based upon a string of recollections from Sir Thomas Overbury's father, Sir Nicholas. These were recounted to Sir Nicholas Oldisworth in 1637, and in one of these, Sir Nicholas Overbury remembered:

That when Sir THO: OVERBURY was a litle past 20 yeares old [i.e. around 1601], hee and John Guilby, his father's chiefe clerke, were sent (vpon a voyage of pleasure) to Edinburgh, with 60^{li} between them. There Thom: mett with Sir W^m Cornwallis, one who knew him in Queene's colledge at Oxford. S^r W^m commended him to diverse, & among the rest of Robin Carr, then page to the

earle of Dunbarre: So they two came along to England together, & were great friends.³⁶

None of the official university or college records show any sign of Cornwallis's attendance at Queen's or elsewhere at either Oxford or Cambridge; neither do the other usual sources where we might expect to find him mentioned (most notably Anthony Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*). Sir Thomas Overbury attended Queen's from 1595-98, which, as both Allen and P. B. Whitt have pointed out, is 'probably too late for Cornwallis'.³⁷ R. E. Bennett suggests that Cornwallis lived in Oxford for a time, and this could certainly explain Overbury's remark: that is to say, that Cornwallis had known Thomas Overbury when the latter was at Queen's, without having been there himself.³⁸ I have not, however, found any evidence for this beyond Bennett's suggestion, and he himself offers no proof of it. Cornwallis himself refers to the short-lived nature of his formal education in his encomium of Julian the Apostate: 'I sucked not long enough of my Schoole-master to proue a Commentor'.³⁹

Even without more details, however, the reader and writer which combine to create Cornwallis the essayist demonstrate that Cornwallis the man must have enjoyed a

³⁶ British Library MS. Add. 15476, fol. 92v. For a discussion of the implications of this passage for Cornwallis's biography, see Cornwallis, *Essays*, p. xii; Whitt, 'New Light', pp. 157-158; and Bennett, 'The Life and Work', pp. 67-68.

³⁷ Cornwallis, *Essays*, p. xii; Whitt, 'New Light', p. 158. Edmund Gosse also suggested that Cornwallis had attended Oxford, positing that the essayist's friendship with John Donne had begun at the university. See, *The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Pauls*, 2 vols. (London: W. Heinemann, 1899), I:90. As Whitt rightly notes, however, this seems an unlikely starting point, considering that Donne was at Oxford from 1584-87, when Cornwallis was not even ten years old; and when discussing this matter Gosse also confuses Cornwallis with his uncle, Sir William Cornwallis the elder (who had himself attended Cambridge in any case; as had the essayist's father, Sir Charles, who was at Trinity College there. The family connection with Cambridge might make it even less likely that the younger William Cornwallis would have attended Oxford, had he gone to university at all): I:216; see also Whitt, 'New Light', p. 158. Whitt here draws upon information from R. E. Bennett, in which Bennett also corrects Gosse's assumption about Donne and Cornwallis, although he still states as fact that Cornwallis and Overbury were at Queen's College together, based upon the Oldisworth/Overbury manuscript: see, 'Sir William Cornwallis', letter to *The Times Literary Supplement*, 20 November 1930, p. 991. It is much more likely that Cornwallis and Donne met at some point during the 1590s, probably through Inns of Court connections, something I discuss further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

³⁸ Bennett, 'Life and Works', p. 68.

³⁹ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essays or rather, Encomions* (London: Richard Hawkins, 1616), sig. H2r.

traditional humanist education, even if it did not take him as far as one of the universities. Moreover, Cornwallis's acknowledgement of his lack of extended formal education, which was nevertheless underpinned by an understanding of the culture of which that formal education was a part, became an integral part of the disingenuous voice of the socio-rhetorical creation which was his amateur gentleman-essayist.

1. 'His knowledge ought to be generall': Reading and Knowledge in the *Essayes*

It is a pittifull thing at great assemblies to see how the ritch and gay will ingrosse the talke, and how basely they vse that commoditie, not a word able to profit a Hackney-man. They send Time away worse appparelled then their Horse-keepers, poor & naked of what is precious, but loden with straw and durt, good only for Thatchers and Dawbers. At this time I suffer much, specially if I would choose rather to fill my eares then my belly. I wish for Fidlers to confound them or any noyse sauing theirs. I would at this time loose my memory, for she is couetous and takes all, and with this she will pollute all, make all taste of Barbarisme. (36)

Cornwallis's description of the terrible conversation on offer at an assembly opens his essay 'Of Discourse' (1600). In the following essay, 'Of Censuring', Cornwallis comments with sadness and disapproval that in 'this vnhappy and monstrous world', 'our conuersation is to delight, not to better; we haue commerce and traffick with our goods, not our minds' (38). By taking the reader with him to the assembly in the previous essay, Cornwallis primes them to agree with this forthcoming statement: his depiction of his fellow guests has already amply illustrated the point. But 'Of Discourse' is not only about habits of conversation. In only the previous essay, Cornwallis refers to the *Essayes* as being written in 'my talking stile' (35), and his description of how 'the ritch and gay will *ingrosse* the talke' (my italics) continues the association between speaking and writing.

But 'Of Discourse' provides an implicit comment upon not only the act of writing, but also the act of reading. Describing his memories of the conversation at the assembly as making 'all taste of Barbarisme', Cornwallis employs the same metaphors of eating commonly used to describe methods of reading. The association of conversation with

eating and drinking pervades the essay, as Cornwallis moves away from the general description of the assembly in the opening paragraph and begins to share the details of his various disappointing conversational encounters. He first describes his approach to a ‘fellow in blacke’, whom he assumes from his appearance to be a scholar: ‘I goe to this Vessell and, thirsting after some good licour, hastily pierce it, where there issueth medicines or law-tearmes. Alas, it is either a Surgeon, or an Atturney’. He is disappointed by what he has found: ‘these are places to grow fat in, not wise’ (36); in Baconian terms, these are conversations which should only be ‘Tasted’, rather than ‘Chewed’, for if consumed in large quantities they will lead one only to ‘grow fat’, resulting in mere intellectual flab rather than an increase of true wisdom.

Cornwallis’s description of the conversation which ‘make[s] all taste of Barbarisme’ introduces a similar conceit. Once again, the transformative process has gone awry; rather than being the ‘civil conversation’ encouraged amongst the nobility of the period,⁴⁰ the talk at the assembly instead precipitates the reverse process, returning the gathering to a primitive state of ‘Barbarisme’, so that perversely, ‘any noyse’ is preferable to speech. This is reminiscent of Cornwallis’s terrible depiction of the possible descent of society in ‘Of Keeping State’ (1601): ‘Thus comes Kings, Lords, Gentlemen, Yeomen, which difference were it onely in name without the duties belonging to each of them, words should goe without meaning and meaning separated from wordes, speech should loose her name, man his society, and all should bellow and roare like beasts’ (85). Because conversation should be a form of ethical and educational exchange, it is fittingly ironic that the illustration of this bestial ‘bellow[ing] and roar[ing]’ should come in an essay which takes as its nominal subject different types of civilised discourse.

⁴⁰ *Civil Conversation* is the English title of one of the most famous and influential conduct manuals of the period: Stefano Guazzo’s *La civil conversazione* (1574).

Elsewhere in the *Essayes*, Cornwallis describes a long-ago time when ‘England remained vnpolished and vnmanured by the sweetnesse of Letters’ (194). The conversation at the assembly is similarly ‘vnmanured’, ‘loden with straw and durt’ (36). Rather than providing a fertilizer which can encourage growth and transformation, the conversation is of such low quality that it is mere excrement. In this, it mirrors the result of ‘Rawly digested’ reading, which Cornwallis’s friend John Donne⁴¹ presents in his ‘Satyre II’ as the literary efforts of a plagiarist (ll.25-30):

But he is worst who, beggarly, doth chaw
Others’ wits’ fruits, and in his ravenous maw
Rawly digested doth those things out-spew,
As his own things; and they’re his own, ’tis true,
For if one eat my meat, though it be known
The meat was mine, the excrement’s his own.⁴²

Both the conversation of the ‘ritch and gay’ and the plagiarist’s writing are the equivalent to excrement, rather than manure: in other words, waste product which can be put to no better or new end.

Returning to Cornwallis’s circuit around the room at the assembly, we find that after his disappointing encounter with the scholar who turned out to be a surgeon or a lawyer, he finally succeeds in finding some true ‘Vniuersitie’ men. But their conversation is problematic too: ‘Their discourse is good but too finicall; you vndoe them if you suffer them not to goe Methodically to worke’. This style of discourse is not to Cornwallis’s taste: ‘I like not this’, he tells us, ‘Except his aduersarie be a Fencer too, there is no vnderstanding one another’ (36). The academics’ discourse is the equivalent to one of their scholarly books: written in an obliquely methodical fashion and not accessible except to an elite group of men who enjoy the same level of learning. Just as Cornwallis

⁴¹ The friendship between Donne and Cornwallis and its possible significance for Cornwallis’s development of his writing is discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁴² John Donne, *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, ed. Robin Robbins (Harlow: Longman, 2008; rev. edn. 2010), pp. 378-379. Robbins notes that there is a variant manuscript reading of ‘Rankly’ for ‘Rawly’ in l.27, but comments that “‘Rawly’ suits better the image of regurgitating poorly digested fragments”, p. 379.

described passing off another's jests as a breach of both social and literary propriety, so this type of overly narrow conversation involves a problem of decorum:

It is a general fault among the best professions. For Mercenarie and Mechanicke it skills not. It becomes them well to discover themselves by their speech. But a Gentleman should talke like a Gentleman, which is, like a wise man. His knowledge ought to be generall; it becomes him not to talke of one thing too much or to be wayed downe with any particular profession.

As he makes clear at several points within the *Essayes*, Cornwallis himself is a 'Gentleman',⁴³ and so at the end of 'Of Discourse' he resolves to keep his own conversation on a general level, and only to 'speak words that may be vnderstood' (37). Cornwallis's status as a gentleman has another implication too, for if the reader follows the logic of Cornwallis's sentence in the above extract, the gentleman-essayist must be a wise man too, and so we begin to see one of the ways in which the twenty-two-year-old Cornwallis imbues his essayistic persona with an air of discreet authority.

In parallel to this, it might also be suggested that a gentleman is also the equivalent to a good reader, something we come to by examining a little more closely Cornwallis's statement that a gentleman's 'knowledge ought to be generall'. This refers both to the need to be knowledgeable about a 'generall' variety of topics, and also to the necessary process of collecting the knowledge of those topics from a 'general' range of types of source: books, men, the natural world, history, and finally oneself.

To begin with the first of these: Cornwallis explains that having a familiarity with a variety of topics has the benefit of enabling the gentleman to talk with different people on different subjects, so that if he 'meetest with a fellow that wold faine show thee he is a Mathematitian or a Nauigator', he can 'be content to talke with him of Circles and Quadrangles, of the Poles and Nauigating Starres' (37). Just as a successful reader needs a

⁴³ See particularly for example his discussion of 'we Gentlemen' in 'Of Life, and the fashions of Life' (59-62).

good commonplace book, Cornwallis's advice here suggests the need for something like a mental and conversational equivalent of such a notebook which, as we have seen, ensured that 'whatever the occasion demands, you will have the materials for a speech ready to hand'.⁴⁴ Indeed, habits of commonplacing were closely connected with the *ars memorativa*, and commonplace books themselves were generally seen as a way of improving the memory.⁴⁵ Cornwallis describes different areas of knowledge as belonging to different areas of a house: 'If thy Ghests be weary of thy Parlor', he advises, 'carry them into thy Gallery' (37). This calls to mind one of the most famous of the arts of memory: the method of memorizing information or parts of a speech by envisaging different elements as being kept in different rooms of a so-called 'memory palace', using a variant of the 'method of loci'.⁴⁶

It is partly for this reason that Cornwallis is so distressed by the poor quality of conversation he encounters at the assembly: it provides him with no new material to add to his existing store. In treating conversation in the same way that he would treat his reading matter, Cornwallis follows contemporary advice which stressed the similarities between the two, for the practices of commonplacing so integral to habits of reading and writing in the period were also vital to early-modern theories of discourse. The first three books of one of the most famous Italian treatises on behaviour in general and conversation in particular, Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversazione* (1574), was translated into English (from an earlier French translation by George Chappuys) by George Pettie

⁴⁴ Erasmus, *De copia*, p. 638.

⁴⁵ On this see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*; also Noel Malcolm, 'Thomas Harrison and his "Ark of Studies": An Episode in the History of the Organization of Knowledge', *The Seventeenth Century*, xix (2004): 196-232, esp. pp. 209-215. On early-modern questions of whether in fact the keeping of a commonplace book worsened the memory, see Peter Beal, "'Notions in Garrison'", p. 139.

⁴⁶ The earliest teaching regarding this rhetorical aid is found in Book III of the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (formerly attributed to Cicero), but it also forms an important part of the advice on memory in the rhetorical writings of Cicero and Quintilian. On the architectural mnemonic and others see, among others, Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *The Craft of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966).

in 1581 as *Civile conversation*.⁴⁷ In it, Guazzo uses the same metaphors of imitation and transformation to describe techniques for listening and speaking as were commonly used to discuss methods of reading and writing:

We must not blame the diligent industry of some, who like unto Bees, gather hony of diverse flowers: and not suffering one word, sentence, or mery jest, spoken by others, to fal to the ground, write them in their tables, to the intent to use them afterwarde eyther in speaking or writing.⁴⁸

As Guazzo makes clear at the end of this quotation, seedlings of conversation were seen as capable of being transplanted into the written word, as well as growing into further speech. The response of Guazzo's interlocutor Anniball demonstrates too that the written and spoken word were seen as capable of cross-pollination in both directions: 'I likewise commend those, who to store themselves more plentifully, reade comedies and other posies'.⁴⁹ In this way, we can begin to see the way in which the building blocks of conversations and of compositions have shared roots in similar methods of reading and listening: comparable processes of gathering material and attaining knowledge. So the interplay between listening and reading and speech and writing hints at the other way in which a gentleman's knowledge should be 'generall' knowledge: the way in which it required that learning should be amassed from men, as well as books.

Moreover, just as we can see that Cornwallis's advice on gentlemanly conversation involves similar methods for collecting and using material as were recommended for students' reading practices, so we can see too that although Cornwallis disparages the 'finciall' discourse of the university men, his privileging of wide general knowledge itself

⁴⁷ Stefano Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo, written first in Italian, diuided into foure bookes, the first three translated out of French by G Pettie* (London: Richard Watkins, 1581). An English translation of the fourth book, based upon a translation of the original Italian by Bartholomew Young, was printed in 1586 when the entire treatise was republished by Thomas East. Was Cornwallis perhaps thinking of Guazzo's particular reference to 'mery jests' when he put a rather harsher gloss on the behaviour of the stealer of jokes in 'Of Iests and Iesters'?

⁴⁸ Guazzo, *Civile Conversation*, Book Two, fol. 16^r.

⁴⁹ Guazzo, *Civile Conversation*, Book Two, fol. 16^r.

comes from the same impulses which shaped the university curriculum in the period. This is the ideal of the encyclopedic circle of knowledge, or *Egkuklos-paideia*, which was fostered by the educational teachings and practices which informed the curricula of both the schoolroom and the university in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁰ Just as for Cornwallis the ideal gentleman is the possessor of a ‘generall’ knowledge, so too ‘[t]he general scholar was the ideal product of the arts curriculum of the English universities in the seventeenth century’, an ideal which retained its currency throughout the seventeenth century, so that in 1668, the ageing scholar and divine Meric Casaubon (1599-1671) could write a treatise in the form of a lengthy familiar letter to the young clergyman Francis Turner (1637-1700), extolling the merits of ‘Generall Learning’.⁵¹

We see praise of general learning in other more explicitly literary contexts too. In a marginal comment in his copy of Thomas Twine’s English translation of Dionysius Periegetes’ *The Survey of the World* (1572), the scholar Gabriel Harvey (1552/3-1631) praised the medieval poets Chaucer and Lydgate not just for ‘their witt, pleasant veine, varietie of poetickall discourse, & all humanitie’, but for ‘their Astronomie, philosophie, & other parts of profound or cunning art’. The reason being, he adds, that ‘It is not enough for poets, to be superficial humanists: but they must be exquisite artists, & curious vniversall schollars’.⁵² So here we see how such general knowledge was seen as integral to

⁵⁰ On schoolroom teaching practices in the period, see Peter Mack’s extensive writing on rhetoric and early-modern education, perhaps most conveniently on this particular aspect, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and also T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare’s small Latine and lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944). On the humanities curriculum in the universities in the seventeenth century, see Mordechai Feingold, ‘The Humanities’, in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume Four: The Seventeenth Century*, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), IV:211-357.

⁵¹ Unpublished in Casaubon’s lifetime, the original manuscript is held in the Bodleian: MS. Rawl. d. 36, pp. 1-35. It has been superbly edited by Richard Serjeantson as *Generall Learning: A seventeenth-century treatise on the formation of the general scholar* (Cambridge: Renaissance Texts from Manuscripts, 1999). All my references to the text are taken from the printed edition; for Serjeantson’s discussion of the ‘general scholar’ as ‘ideal product’ of the university curriculum, see p. 14. Francis Turner would later become the Bishop of Ely, and would find a rather less favourable place in literary history as Andrew Marvell’s *Mr. Smirke, or, the Divine in Mode* (1676).

⁵² G. C. Moore Smith (ed.), *Gabriel Harvey’s Marginalia* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), pp. 160-161. The comment follows many other annotations praising poets for their knowledge of astronomy. On Harvey’s marginalia see further, Virginia F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia and*

the creative arts, as well as to academic training. Pertinently for the purposes of this chapter and the next, it should be noted that rhetoric, to particular schools of which this ideal is central, crosses into both of these areas.

Cornwallis's praise of general knowledge in 'Of Discourse', then, needs to be understood as part of a broader tendency in humanistic methods of learning. His gentlemanly conversation shares similarities with the more 'finicall' discourse of the university men, even as he rejects it. But although Cornwallis stresses the importance of having an understanding of a variety of subjects, ranging from history, to poetry, to medicine, to mathematics, and his *Essayes* reflect such knowledge, he does not insist on an exhaustive treatment of the material. 'Lesse Astronomy then will make a Kalender will serue my turne', he tells us, explaining that he needs 'onely so much is sufficient in a gentleman, as seeing the reuoltions of the heauens, he may see them without dismaidnes and vse his knowledge to the comfort of his ignorant charge' (200).

This latter point is important, for in Cornwallis's eyes, the end goal of knowledge is not knowledge in itself, but moral improvement, as we can see when we consider the way he describes one of the benefits of his ability to 'discourse' upon several different subjects in 'Of the obseruation, and vse of things' (1600): 'I would not loose my knowledge of Hawkes and running Horses for any thing. They are not without vse; I meete often with people that vnderstand no other language; and then they make me sociable and not vnpleasing to the company' (51). In other words, these forms of knowledge and discourse help Cornwallis to play his part in the social ecology of learning exchange and moral profit. The way in which Cornwallis counts activities such as hunting as a form of knowledge is important, for it returns us to the second meaning inherent in his description of the gentleman's knowledge as 'general': the way in which

Library (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); on Harvey as a 'pragmatic' humanist reader, see Grafton and Jardine, "Studied for action". On the history of the ideal of the *Enkyklios paideia* in classical rhetoric, see Thomas Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 29-32.

knowledge can be acquired through a disparate range of means. As this chapter will demonstrate, reading was an important part of this process, but it had to take its place in a wider circle of learning.

As we have seen, part of Cornwallis's disappointment at the assembly in 'Of Discourse' is the way in which the conversations there provide him with no way of learning anything. As the financial metaphors employed by Cornwallis make clear, conversation was meant to be a form of intellectual and social commerce, but the men described in the essay's opening paragraph use that 'commoditie' so 'basely' that there is 'not a word able to profit a Hackney-man' (36). As such, they have failed to satisfy one of the most basic demands of early-modern conversation, the fact that, as Lorna Hutson reminds us, 'someone must always be learning from the exchange'.⁵³ In fact, they have doubly failed, for they cannot even offer anything to 'profit' their social inferiors: 'They send away Time worse apparelled then their Horse-keepers'. On a very basic level, this means they are failing in their duty as highly situated members of the social hierarchy, for as Cornwallis explains elsewhere, noblemen have a particular responsibility and duty towards the lower orders: they must be 'meet to gouerne or at least wise, to be an example to lower degrees' (59). Order has been disrupted, and Cornwallis's description of his memory as 'couetous' towards the end of the paragraph follows through this theme of reversal, for rather than his retentive memory being a profitable and positive attribute, it is shown instead to be part of another distorted transaction, greedily retaining details of the evening which Cornwallis would be better off forgetting.

To fully draw out the connections between reading and other forms of profitable learning, and the importance of this for Cornwallis, we can turn to the natural companion within the essays to the opening paragraph of 'Of Discourse'. This is the first paragraph of 'Of the obseruation, and vse of things'. Once again, Cornwallis begins with

⁵³ Lorna Hutson, 'Civility and Virility in Ben Jonson', *Representations*, 78:1 (2002): 1-27; p. 14.

a personal anecdote about a recent conversation, but in contrast to that being reported in 'Of Discourse', this one illustrates an ideal of conversational exchange.

In a striking opening line – 'I Come now from discoursing with an Husband-man' (50) – Cornwallis draws in the reader with a sense of intimacy and immediacy, as he creates the impression that he has sat straight down with his pen as soon as he has come back inside. This suggests that what he has learned has been so important that he must write it down at once, and thus encourages the reader to value what he has to say. It also highlights immediately one of the main themes of the essay: that while reading and writing are closely linked, it is not just reading which can provide material for writing, but 'obseruation' and social intercourse too.

This time, rather than the socially superior guests at the assembly, Cornwallis has been talking to a mere 'Husband-man', who would fall well outside the expected remit of conversation manuals: he is, Cornwallis explains, 'without obseruation, respect' – and, most importantly – 'ciuilitie'. He is on a level, in other words, with the 'Hackney-man' who could not profit from the rich men's conversation in 'Of Discourse'. In direct contrast to this, Cornwallis describes how he himself has benefitted from his conversation with the husbandman. Once again there has been a conversational exchange, as Cornwallis's familiar use of financial metaphors make clear: 'I haue sold him an houre of my time & haue ware for it' (50). Unlike the people he derided in 'Of Censuring', he and the husbandman have had 'traffick' with their minds, not with their goods, and have therefore fulfilled the true purpose of good early-modern conversation. Cornwallis describes the 'good sound principles' of the husbandman as 'becomming a better fortune' (50). This functions in the dual sense that they both deserve to be put to a 'better fortune' or use than the husbandman can give them, and in that they better suit a man of 'better fortune', such as Cornwallis, for although the husbandman has 'a greate deale of wit', it needs to be 'refined and separated from the durt that hangs about it' (50).

The husbandman's 'wit' has come from 'experience' and 'learning of Tradition', but it takes another kind of learning to 'make a more worthy vse of them', and Cornwallis elaborates on what this other type of learning might be in the second paragraph:

There is not that thing vpon the Earth that, well examined, yeeldes not something worthy of knowledge. [...] I do first prescribe them that desire to proue excellent in distilling these simples to lay in a good store of the fuel of learning. Whatsoever he hath of his own natural wit is not sufficient; it makes not the fire hot enough. For there is a good deale of tough vile stuffe to be drawne out before what is pure can be gotten. (50)

This last sentence almost repeats Cornwallis's statement that the 'wit' contained within the husbandman's speech needs to be 'refined and separated from the durt that hangs about it'. Rather than prove a general point by illustrating it with a particular example, Cornwallis instead uses a particular instance to lead the reader towards a wider point about the possibility of acquiring wisdom from perhaps unexpected places; this move from the particular to the general or vice versa was a common technique in classroom compositions.

The knowledge Cornwallis gains from his conversation with the husbandman is part of what Peter Burke has identified as a tradition of 'popular knowledge', which existed alongside (and sometimes challenged) academic forms of learning and which relied upon oral transmission, often amongst the poorly educated, such as Cornwallis's husbandman.⁵⁴ And so by describing his conversation with the husbandman, Cornwallis makes the role of this 'popular knowledge' explicit, and acknowledges its place in the accumulation of learning – a place which is particularly well-suited to the essay form, with its 'talking stile'.

Cornwallis's language in this second paragraph suggests him to be taking on the role of the reader's moral physician ('I prescribe', 'simples'), and indeed, in 'Of Knowledge'

⁵⁴ Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: from Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000; repr. 2002), p. 15.

(1601), he explains the necessity of adding a moral gloss to natural phenomena to understand their true purpose: ‘naturall Philosophy shewing vs what we haue; morall, how to vse what we haue’ (133). Again, Cornwallis draws upon the ideal of a circle of knowledge, explaining in ‘Of the Obseruation, and vse of things’ that ‘thinges are a kinne to one another; they come all out of one Fountaine; and the knowing one brings you acquainted with an other and so to others’ (50): knowledge builds upon knowledge just as moral philosophy builds upon natural.

His statement that ‘natural wit’ is not enough, but requires ‘the fuell of learning’ is mirrored by a very similar declaration in ‘Of Censuring’, when he explains that ‘When I heare a naturall man speake in his best, I can say but “wittie”; my commendations are at the farthest. But the tongue steeped in the true vnderstanding incident to learning hath Wisedome for his reward’ (41). Following this, Cornwallis acknowledges that one way of acquiring this ‘vnderstanding’ is via ‘Experience’, but he stresses that this method is ‘too full of scarres and wounds, and is bought with gray haire, and danger; when the other hath no lesse that hath trauailed but in his study’ (41).

It is this latter which Cornwallis emphasizes in these two related moments in the *Essayes*. For his privileging of ‘study’ over ‘Experience’ in ‘Of Censuring’ comes at the beginning of a discussion of books, ‘to whome’, Cornwallis confides, ‘if you would not say I were too bookish, I should giue the first place of all things heere’ (41). For ‘The best witte of man that euer was’, he explains, ‘not assisted by such helps as may make my comparison blasphemous, neuer brought so much into the world as by their assistance he hath had’ (41).

This makes sense of what otherwise seems quite a sudden change of subject in ‘Of the obseruation, and vse of things’, when Cornwallis moves from his discussion of the knowledge to be found within careful observation of the natural world to announce that ‘All kinde of bookes are profitable except printed Bawdery; they abuse youth’ (50).

Admittedly, the connection between the two superficially disparate parts of the paragraph is made by the linking sentence ‘the knowing one [thing] brings you acquainted with another and so to others’; for in claiming that ‘All kinde of bookes are profitable’, Cornwallis provides a specific illustration of this chain of knowledge, and of his statement at the start of the paragraph that ‘That diuine Artisan that made them [everything on earth] neuer fashioned any thing vnprofitably now euer set forth any of his workmanship without some inward virtue’ (50). But Cornwallis’s description in ‘Of Censuring’ of the particular importance of books in developing knowledge helps to explain why he chooses different types of books as his example here.

Moreover, in introducing the topic of books, Cornwallis develops the structure of his essay, which, as we have already seen, relies upon a movement between specific, often personal, examples and general points. This is an important element of his compositional habits, which maps his rhetoric of self-knowledge onto humanistic rhetorics of reading, as Chapter Two will demonstrate.

In this case, Cornwallis continues with his specific example of the various uses which even superficially unprofitable books can be put to: ‘Pamphlets and lying Stories and News and twoo penny Poets, I would know them, but beware of beeing familiar with them’ (50). Not content with this level of specificity, however, Cornwallis then returns to the use of personal example that he employs at the beginning of the essay, but in an even more intimate form, as he explains exactly how he ‘knows’ these writings:

My custome is to read these and presently to make vse of them. For they lie in my priuy; and when I come thither and haue occasion to imploy it, I read them (halfe a side at once is my ordinary), which when I haue read, I vse in that kind that waste paper is most subiect too, but to a cleanlier profit. I see in them the difference of wits & dispoitions, the alterations of Arguments pleasing the world, and the change of stiles. This I haue in despite of him, be he neuer so ignorant. And if hee hath any thing good among such store of ill, why that is mine too.

(50-1)

This startling passage has several purposes. On the one hand, Cornwallis claims to be offering the reader an insight into his personal habits, in a manner which might be compared to Montaigne's method of sharing with his readers personal details which were usually considered out of bounds in polite society (for example descriptions of his bodily functions and sexual preferences). This is a feature of Montaigne's text which has been described as one of the most important of his ethical innovations, as he uses such intensely personal anecdotes as a way of implicitly expressing his ethical preferences.⁵⁵ The intimacy of Cornwallis's description helps to create a sense of closeness between him and his readers, which can then be exploited to encourage the reader to respond positively to Cornwallis's argument. But as well as offering a snapshot of Cornwallis's private habits, the passage also demonstrates Cornwallis's literary creativity, playing as it does upon the traditional metaphorical connection between reading and digestion, and turning it into something literal. Just as the second-hand poet of Donne's 'Satyre II' is capable of producing only waste produce, so Cornwallis uses what he sees as second-rate literature in place of 'waste paper'. It is not the excrement itself, for Cornwallis does get some use out of it, but it is only one step removed from it, and, after its 'profit' has been extracted, it is similarly disposable.

In this way, we can see how the use of the personal anecdote in Cornwallis's essays can often have a literary function, as here he is able to turn his experience into an extended metaphor growing out of established literary conventions. This demonstrates both one of the ways in which the use of the personal voice would become an integral part of Cornwallis's literary technique, and also the way in which personal experience, like the observation of the natural world or discussions with other people, could be turned into writing, just as reading could be.

⁵⁵ Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne*, p. 174.

For although the main section of 'Of the obseruation, and vse of things' revolves around the knowledge that can be gained from books, Cornwallis constantly draws comparisons between books and other sources of learning. His childhood books, for instance, are the equivalent to the hunting and hawking which formed his 'occupation' before taking their rightful place as his 'recreation' (51). Similarly, 'profit' and 'recreation' can be found both from listening to a ballad singer and from reading pamphlets in the privy. Developing his discussion once again with specifics, Cornwallis runs through a list of examples from historical lives, culled from first Plutarch and then Tacitus; demonstrating what can be learned from each: '*Pyrrhus* representeth to vs the vncertainty of the world', for example, 'not holding any conquests sure' (52).

But in the concluding paragraph, Cornwallis moves away from books, and back to something which is closer to the original subject of the essay. He explains first that he has 'beene content to taste Histories and their obseruations that I might tell you that yet know it not that there is yet something else to be noted besides the Series of the History' (53); the use of the word 'taste' bringing us back to metaphors of digestion and confirming that this is part of that bigger process of accumulating general knowledge. In his final lines, Cornwallis draws a direct comparison between learning from such historical examples and from 'our liuing Relations, from men and from their actions' (53); just as, in another place, he explains that 'the conuersation of age is the wisest booke' (171).

In 'Of Knowledge', Cornwallis explains that to be fully effective, moral and natural philosophy must be used in tandem: 'naturall Philosophy shewing vs what we haue; morall, how to vse what we haue' (132-3). It is because of this that Plato is so important to him: 'for both Philosophies I onely esteeme *Plato*, who doth so cunningly weaue them together as (me thincks) he saith he is content to giue you knowledge on condition you should be honest' (41-2). The natural world, men, history, and books, are in some basic

sense all a form of natural philosophy; they all then require the gloss of moral philosophy to draw out their true worth, or otherwise (as in the husbandman's hands), they remain unrefined 'durt'. Cornwallis's essays, then, are part of this process of refinement: the fruits of his reading and observation being brought out by his pen.

Despite the superficially discursive style of the essay, therefore, when it is broken down it becomes apparent that it is in fact extremely tightly structured, based upon basic rhetorical techniques of composition such as comparison and example. Lifting it above such an exercise, however, is Cornwallis's distinctive voice, which itself provides the final missing link in the circle of learning: the application of self-knowledge.

2. 'My occupation hath been vehemently bookish': Cornwallis's 'generall' reading

At the end of 'Of Essaies and Bookes' (1601), Cornwallis draws his discussion of books to a close by reluctantly admitting that 'There are many bookes, by mee omitted' (202). He goes on to defend the limited number of books he has written about by recourse to one of his favourite authors: 'I am of *Senecae's* minde concerning this variety of Bookes', he explains, 'who compares an vnsetled reader to a traueller that hath many Hostes and few friendes'.⁵⁶ More than this, the formal nature of his project forbids him from discoursing on this one subject any longer: 'There are more [bookes]', he acknowledges, 'but mine is an Essay, not a Catalogue' (202). No actual catalogue of Cornwallis's library is extant, but his *Essayes* (and other writings) provide us with many glimpses over his

⁵⁶ The reference to Seneca is from Epistle 2, 'Of Discursiveness in Reading', *Epistulae Morales*, I.7.

shoulder of what he read.⁵⁷ In this way, as Scott Black argues, essays do provide a ‘record’ of early-modern reading material and practices.⁵⁸

Essays do not provide the more comprehensive coverage of books owned by a particular individual that we might hope to be able to piece together from particularly thorough surviving library catalogues,⁵⁹ but they are significant in that they provide records of reading, rather than merely of ownership (which could or could not indicate that the books had actually been read). They are even particularly useful in recording reading because – as we saw from Cornwallis’s description of what he liked to read whilst in his privy – they provide a record of a larger spectrum of reading than we might expect to find described, for many writers adhered to a practice which the lawyer and scholar John Selden (1584-1654), among others, advised: ‘In quoting of Books; quote such Authors; as are usually read; others you may read for your owne satisfaction but not name them’.⁶⁰ In this way, Cornwallis’s essays also provide evidence of what kinds of books might be read in what kind of circumstances.⁶¹ Furthermore, they also offer something of a commentary from Cornwallis on his reading, particularly in essays such as ‘Of Essayes and Bookes’ (1601) and ‘Of Censuring’ (1600), in which Cornwallis deals directly with his opinions about certain books and authors.

⁵⁷ There is evidence, however, of the book-buying habits of Cornwallis’s grandfather, Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/9-1604), in the latter’s letters (now preserved among the Tanner manuscripts in the Bodleian Library), some of which may have a connection with Cornwallis’s own reading tastes; these letters are described as part of a wider discussion of the impact of Cornwallis’s familial background on his writing in Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁵⁸ Black, *Of Essayes and Reading*, p. 24.

⁵⁹ There have recently been several excellent studies of individual readers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, based upon recreations of their subject’s libraries, while comprehensive library lists from other early-modern readers have also been helpfully edited. For the former, see e.g., William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amhurst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000). For the latter, among the best examples are, e.g., Nicholas K. Kiessling, *The Library of Anthony Wood* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2002); Robert H. MacDonald, *The Library of Drummond of Hawthornden* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971); W. O. Hassell, *The Library of Sir Edward Coke* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950); David McKitterick, *The Library of Sir Thomas Kynvett of Ashwellthorpe, c. 1539-1618* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 1978).

⁶⁰ John Selden, *Table Talk*, ed. Frederick Pollock (London: Selden Society, 1927), p. 24.

⁶¹ In Chapter Four I provide a discussion of some connections between invocations of particular spaces in the *Essayes*, and their connections with specific habits of reading and composition.

For although Cornwallis could draw out the potential benefits inherent in ‘All kinde of bookes’, there are certain books, authors, and genres which have particular importance for him. Unsurprisingly, classical texts take prime position: ancient poets, philosophers, historians and of course rhetoricians all have their place. Most important are Seneca, Plutarch, and Plato, but other classical writers like Tacitus, Suetonius, Ovid, Lucan, and Virgil are all invoked with greater or lesser frequency. The same genres which attract him among the ancients comprise the majority of his reading among contemporary authors too, especially history: he is a diligent reader of the Italian historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), and also makes some use of Machiavelli’s Florentine histories. Italian writers in particular are favourites among non-classical authors, including Petrarch, Tasso, and Sanazzaro. English writers are only mentioned very rarely; but across both the *Essayes* and Cornwallis’s other publications, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Thomas Overbury, and Chaucer all make fleeting appearances.

As studies of early-modern readers have become more popular, they have frequently stressed the prominence of the so-called ‘pragmatic’ school of reading brilliantly described by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, in which the kind of targeted ‘goal-orientated’ reading employed by professional scholars is paramount, although not all-consuming.⁶² As Fred Schurink has recently and acutely pointed out, however, the emphasis on this ‘active’ and ‘goal-orientated’ reading as it has been taken up in much recent scholarship on reading can leave the impression that all early-modern readers read all texts ‘for action’, all of the time.⁶³ The reality, as scholars such as Schurink have begun to illustrate, is rather more complex.⁶⁴ The pragmatic method of reading was certainly one of the most important and frequently used modes available to early-modern readers.

⁶² Grafton and Jardine, “Studied for Action”.

⁶³ Fred Schurink, ‘Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73:3 (2010): 453-469.

⁶⁴ See also for example Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and more generally the wide variety of reading practices described in Sherman, *Used Books*.

But readers read different texts for different reasons; different texts for the same reasons; and sometimes, the same text at different times for different reasons. Furthermore, while ‘reading for action’ is generally interpreted as reading for pragmatic or political purposes,⁶⁵ as my earlier discussion of Erasmus’s general advice about reading demonstrates, the humanist ideal stressed that all reading should be ‘active’, whether that involved reading for political purposes, or to cull beautiful phrases to aid one’s own compositional skills. Such teachings also present one of the difficulties inherent in basing arguments upon traces of reading such as annotations, commonplace books, or citations in books of other books. Namely: this type of advice encouraged readers to record only ‘profitable’ reading, rather than other forms of reading, such as one solely focused on enjoyment; so because particular modes of reading more strongly encourage material traces than others, they naturally become more prominent in modern studies.

Moreover, another kind of ‘reading for action’, one which is of particular relevance for the essay, co-exists with the more usual definition of this term. This is the type of meditative reading which has its roots in the medieval tradition, in which the point of reading was actively to try to become a better person.⁶⁶ This mode of reading has links to habits of (especially Puritan) journal writing, as they were developed in the seventeenth century, in which the aim of writing a spiritual diary was moral improvement.⁶⁷ So as Cornwallis describes both how ‘writing is the draught of reading, and by this I have disburthened my head & taken account of my profiting’ (74), and how ‘I write thus; I thinke thus; and I hope to do thus’ (8), we can begin to see the way in which the essay

⁶⁵ For this see for example, Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*.

⁶⁶ On these medieval practices of reading, see Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images. 400-1200* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

⁶⁷ Effie Bottonaki, ‘Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen’s Spiritual Diaries: Self-Examination, Covenanting, and Account Keeping’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30:1 (1999): 3-21; Tom Webster, ‘Writing to Redundancy: Approaches to Spiritual Journals and Early Modern Spirituality’, *The Historical Journal*, 39:1 (1996): 33-56. I discuss some of the connections between (spiritual) account keeping and essay writing in Chapter Four.

forms a conjunction of this type of meditatively-inflected reading and writing for a profit that is not material, but rather moral, but none the less active.

This suggests that Scott Black's description of early modern essays as simply 'records of reading' needs to become more nuanced, for it threatens to homogenize these disparate methods of reading. For while Cornwallis's essays grow out of his reading, and his methods of composition are directly related to his methods of reading, those methods of reading are various, and similarly, the ways in which Cornwallis engages with the books he reads when he writes the *Essayes* are various too.

The different impacts of these different ways of reading on Cornwallis's writing become more easily apparent through the examination of his engagement with particular authors and genres which have especial prominence in the *Essayes*, but they are particularly well brought out by a close look at the contexts surrounding Cornwallis's use of particular quotations. The next section of this chapter therefore begins with a discussion of some of Cornwallis's favourite authors, before moving on to look on a smaller scale of some particular moments of Cornwallis's reading as they are represented through his use of quotations.

a) Seneca

Of classical authors, Seneca holds an important position within the *Essayes*, and Cornwallis has found a place in modern critical writing concerned with Neo-Stoic prose of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁶⁸ Cornwallis's interest in neo-Stoicism was encouraged by the wider literary interests of his familial and social networks. J. H. M. Salmon, for instance, discussing interest in Seneca and Tacitus in early Stuart England, has placed Cornwallis within a much wider social network 'loosely

⁶⁸ I discuss him in this context in Chapter Three.

bound by patronage and family, [which] had a common interest' in the ancient authors'.⁶⁹ It is partly out of this environment that the essays were formed, and the full ramifications of these and other social contexts on the development and circulation of Cornwallis's essays will be discussed in Chapter Three. But the importance of Seneca, and the way in which Cornwallis is often discussed in contexts of Neo-Stoic writing of the period, means that it is therefore worth concentrating for a period here on the particular importance of Seneca and Neo-Stoic ideals for Cornwallis's *Essayes*.

The compositional similarities between Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* and the early-modern essay were first articulated by Sir Francis Bacon, in a cancelled dedication of the revised 1612 edition of his own essays to Prince Henry, before the latter's untimely death. The original dedication survives in manuscript, and in it, Bacon explains that '*Senecaes* Epistles to *Lucilius*, yf you marke them well, are but *Essaies*, – That is dispersed Meditations, thoughe conveyed in the forme of Epistles'.⁷⁰

Cornwallis was much more unwilling to acknowledge this kind of classical literary precedent, but he was still demonstrably influenced by the late sixteenth-century vogue for Neo-Senecanism, and one of the most obvious ways in which this is made apparent is the Stoically-inflected ideas which permeate the *Essayes*. In 'Of Fantasticknesse' (1600), for instance, Cornwallis makes the typical Stoic equation of wisdom with 'Resolution and Constantnes' (70), and in 'Of Humilitie' (1601), he praises a 'minde constant and free' (107). On a more individual level, Cornwallis freely admits that he has been inspired by Seneca in terms of his own morality. In 'Of Resolution' (1600) he describes how 'I found my selfe' thanks to his reading of Seneca and Plato (5).

⁶⁹ J. H. M. Salmon, 'Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50:2 (1989): 199-225; p. 209.

⁷⁰ The letter is reproduced in Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; reissued 2000), p. 317. For the original, see British Library MS. Add. 4259, fol. 155r.

The 1610 edition of the *Essayes* contains three new essays: ‘Of Adversitie’, ‘Of Fortune and her Children’, and ‘Of the Admirable Abilities of the Mind’. All of these new essays have Stoic themes, which is interesting especially in light of the inclusion of Cornwallis’s *Discourses upon Seneca the tragedian* (originally published 1601) in this volume, turning it into virtually a mini collected works.⁷¹ There is no internal evidence that allows for definite dating of these three essays, but if they were newly produced for the 1610 edition, it suggests that Cornwallis’s interest in Neo-Stoicism was not just a youthful fad.

But despite his interest in, and obvious admiration for, Stoic philosophy, Cornwallis is not wholly uncritical of it, and here we begin to see how reading and rhetoric entwine, as Cornwallis uses his essayistic persona to articulate and illustrate some of the intellectual and social debates raised by his reading. Reid Barbour has suggested for example that a conflict was generally experienced by Neo-Stoics in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, due to concerns about the practical ‘absurd unattainability’ of Stoic ideals of constancy and resolution, as well as the ‘tendency toward an explosive selfishness’ which could be contained within them.⁷² This finds an expression in the *Essayes*, when the difficulties of attaining a complete immersion in Stoic ideals are depicted in ‘Of Resolution’, that most Stoically-titled of essays. Despite Cornwallis’s resolve not to be influenced by outside events, ‘a wife, or a friend’ might interrupt him, so that ‘I come again to see my promise broken; that challenge in colde blood makes me desperate, that were it not for the comfort of my youth, which greatly giues me time, I should surely punish inconstancie with greater rygour’ (6).

In the context of English Neo-Stoicism, the writings and editions of the Dutch humanist and neo-Stoic Justus Lipsius – whose *De constantia* Cornwallis praises (112) –

⁷¹ The only one of Cornwallis’s printed texts not to be included in the volume was his 1604 tract *On The Miraculous and Happie Union of England and Scotland*. This was also the only one of Cornwallis’s texts printed during his life-time not originally published by Edmund Mattes: instead, it was published by Edward Blount in London and Thomas Finlason in Edinburgh.

⁷² Reid Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture* (Amhurst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), p. 114.

are of particular importance.⁷³ Lipsius and his followers are important voices on the ‘anti’ side of what Morris Croll called the Ciceronian and Anti-Ciceronian schools of writing in the period.⁷⁴ Cornwallis was counted among this group by George Williamson and later critics,⁷⁵ and was described by R. E. Bennett as an ‘early and radical member’ of the Attic School, thanks to the fact that his reading interests exactly match its ‘main preferences and antipathies’,⁷⁶ and because of comments from Cornwallis himself about the ‘disease of words let in by *Cicero*’ (176). Cornwallis’s stated preference is for the clarity of writers like Xenophon (192) and he describes his own writing style as being similarly straightforward: ‘I thinke not of making moralitie full of imbrodery cutworkes, but to cloth her in trueth and plaineness’ (202).

Of course, this insistence upon his commonsensical, plain-speaking nature and dislike of rhetoric is itself part of the rhetorical device of the persona of the chatty, ingenuous gentleman essayist employed by Cornwallis. As such, it functions to engage and disarm the reader, but, as George Williamson has pointed out, ‘simplicity’ was also a hallmark of the Stoic style of oration.⁷⁷

b) Tacitus (and Plutarch)

As Salmon’s article demonstrates, an early-modern interest in Seneca was often coupled with an interest in Tacitus, and Cornwallis is frequently invoked, as by Salmon, as a writer typical of this group.⁷⁸ Tacitus is indeed one of the most commonly cited classical

⁷³ On Cornwallis and Lipsius, see Baldwin, ‘Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance’. On Lipsius’s influence more generally, see Mark Morford, *Stoics and neostoics: Rubens and the circle of Lipsius* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁷⁴ See conveniently, Croll, *Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm*.

⁷⁵ George Williamson, *The Senecan Amble* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).

⁷⁶ Bennett, ‘Life and Works’, pp. 230 and 231.

⁷⁷ Williamson, *The Senecan Amble*, p. 137.

⁷⁸ For examples of this, see Patricia Parker, ‘*Fatti Mascii, Parole Femine*: Manly Deeds, Womanly Words’, in *Sparks and seeds: medieval literature and its aftermath: essays in honor of John Freccero*, eds. Alison Cornish, John Freccero, and Dana E. Stewart, and intro. Giuseppe Mazzotta (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), pp. 291-316; and Ronald Mellor, ‘Tacitus, academic politics, and regicide in the reign of Charles I: The tragedy

writers in the *Essayes*, although he is not alluded to as often as Cornwallis's overall favourite historian, Plutarch. In line with the suggestion that Cornwallis favours the pared down style of the anti-Ciceronian school, he praises Tacitus for utilizing 'so grave a stile' in 'Of Censuring' (42).

Furthermore, in 'Of Vanitie', Cornwallis explicitly contrasts Cicero's style with that of Seneca and Tacitus: 'I make as great a difference betweene *Tacitus*' and *Senecae*'s stile and his [Cicero's] as musitions betweene *Trenchmore* and *Lachrymae*. Mee thinkes the braine should daunce a Iigge at the hearing a *Tullian* sound, and sit in counsaile when it heares the other' (175). Here then, Cornwallis demonstrates the fruits of the methods by which he has been encouraged to read: he privileges a style that encourages the brain to 'sit in counsaile', rather than 'daunce a Iigge', in other words, the style that encourages the most profitable result from reading. As a closer understanding of Cornwallis's criticisms of Cicero's style illuminates his reading of the historians, it is worth making a brief digression on the subject here.

Cornwallis is not wholly critical of Cicero, acknowledging in the next paragraph that 'his matter is substantiall and honest'; it is in a way the fact that the 'matter' is so worthy that makes him despair of the – to his eyes – more ineffectual manner in which it is treated.⁷⁹ In other words, Cornwallis criticizes Cicero's lack of decorum: his style does not befit the gravity of his subject. Tacitus's and Seneca's style and subject on the other hand, are reflective of one another; and this concern reflects upon Cornwallis's choice of his 'talking stile', thanks to all the ethical and social connotations of early-modern conversation it brought with it. Cornwallis is also careful to note that it is Cicero's imitators (who have been encouraged by his style, rather than his substance) who have

of Dr. Isaac Dorislaus', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 11:2 (2004): 153-193.

⁷⁹ Making a distinction between reading something for style and reading something for substance was common in the period. University students, for example, were advised by Richard Holdsworth never to imitate Plautus's Latin style, for example, even if they should use him as a source of witty sayings and the like.

done his reputation the most damage: ‘though hee bee betrayed among Pedantes and Boyes (which hee may thanke his Style for), yet hee is meeter for greater persons and sounder iudgements’ (175). Cornwallis is however unusual in the extent to which he criticizes Cicero himself, even as he heaps additional blame on his followers; Cicero has himself encouraged such poor imitators through his initially ill-chosen style, which, in Cornwallis’s turn of phrase, takes on more of a moral, rather than an aesthetic implication. Erasmus, in the key text for this debate, the *Ciceronians* (1528) blamed not Cicero himself for the poor reputation of ‘Ciceronian’ style (advising his students to use his writing as one of their examples for imitation, for example), but rather his imitators, who had taken their imitation to the extreme, in a way which would have been abhorrent to Cicero himself.⁸⁰

As this shows, one of the main reasons for Cornwallis’s preference of one author over another was whether or not their style or genre of writing aided or hindered the reader’s understanding, particularly their moral understanding. When he praises Xenophon, he does so because ‘hee so plainly discoureth the way of vertue as the easiest vnderstanding cannot goe astray nor the worst abuse him with interpretation’ (192). So, the reason for favouring one style of writing over another is again not an aesthetic, but a moral one. The praise of Xenophon forms part of a larger discussion in ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’, in which Cornwallis also praises Seneca for the fact that his ‘moralitie is easie to bee vnderstood and easily digested to the nourishment of vertue’ (192). In contrast, Aristotle’s is ‘more high, and to the reader more questionable, whether it will make him curious or honest’ (192).⁸¹ This underlies Cornwallis’s preferences as to

⁸⁰ For a good discussion of this, see Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, pp. 96-97.

⁸¹ On the changing connotations of curiosity in early-modern England, see Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: a cultural history of early-modern inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Peter Harrison, ‘Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge, and the Reformation of Natural Philosophy in Early-Modern England’, *Isis* 92:2 (2001): 265-290; Carlo Ginzburg, ‘High and Low: The Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *Past and Present*, 73 (Nov. 1976): 28-41. On the honest man in the period, see Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and courtliness in early modern literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge

his favourite modes of writing too, meaning that he prefers Xenophon (finding him more ‘safe’) above ‘those works which stand vpon Allegories; for euery head hath not fire enough to distill them, nor euery vnderstanding patience enough to find out the good meaning’ (192). It also affects his own stylistic preferences, leading to his resolve in ‘Of Discourse’ that he will ‘speak words that may be vnderstood, and, to my power, to meane wisely rather than to speake eloquently’; in other words, he will not make the same mistake as Cicero (37).

This brings us back to Tacitus, for Cornwallis writes of him that despite his gravity of style, ‘he is more wise than safe’ (201). This comes as part of a long discussion about history writing at the end of ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’, in which Cornwallis stresses the ethical impetus which he sees as informing the reading of histories.⁸² Cornwallis notes that ‘the truest reflecting glasses are those that present particular men’s liues’ (201), but Tacitus presents a problem, for the lives described by him are such that they do not easily offer the reader a moral. This is ‘not his fault’, Cornwallis explains, for ‘the Painter is not to be blamed though his picture be ill favoured if his paterne were not so, nor *Tacitus* thought ill because *Tiberius* was a tyrant, *Claudius* a foole, *Nero* vicious’ (201). But it does mean that the reader (as with an allegory) might need more help in finding the good lesson hidden away among the vice. Yet Tactius has been ‘so ill handled by commenters’ that though Cornwallis is ‘sure, hee meant still wisely’, they have either ‘conuert[ed] his iuice into as little variety or good vse as “Beware by mee good people”’ or ‘left him as they found him, without making him confesse any thing’, which is equally as damaging (201-2) Rather than aiding the reader to get the most out of Tacitus, then, the commentators instead do the opposite: ‘he that fetches his sentences out of their pages aduentures a bemyring’ (202).

University Press, 2003), Chapter One.

⁸² This was a long-established mode of reading histories; see for example William Blundeville, *The true order and Methode of writing and reading Hystories* (London: William Seres, 1574).

For this reason, Cornwallis prefers the lives written by Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius, who ‘cannot but recompense the reader’s paines’ without the need for any additional commentary (201); in other words, they are much less open to being ‘abused’ than is Tacitus, and equally, their ‘sentences’ are more easily accessible. This is immediately followed by another comparison which confirms Cornwallis’s priorities: ‘*Comines* is a good Historiographer; he knew much of the practicke part of state learning; but I hold *Guicciardine* a better scholler and more sententious’ (202).⁸³

As this demonstrates, Cornwallis’s interest in reading such books of lives is for the moral exemplars they provide, the way in which they can lead the reader towards a better way of life: ‘the temperance of these [Diogenes Laertius’s] Philosophers mingled with the valour of *Plutark’s* Captaines cannot chuse but make an exact man’ (201); the phrase ‘cannot chuse but’ emphasizing the smaller capacity for misinterpretation on the part of the reader. Peter Burke has demonstrated that the reason for Tacitus’s sharp rise in popularity after the turn of the seventeenth century was because of his status as ‘the master of prudence’, noting that this reflected a more general ‘shift from virtue to prudence’, which meant that ‘Plutarch, the master-moralist, was in decline from the later sixteenth century’, while Tacitus in contrast rose.⁸⁴

Although late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century readers (including Montaigne) admired Tacitus for the morality he provided, he increasingly, as Burke attests, became associated not with morality, but with pragmatism. For Cornwallis, however, the main reason for reading Tacitus, as for reading any author, was not for pragmatic or political

⁸³ Guicciardini’s ‘sententious’ qualities were made obvious by Robert Dallington, *Aphorismes ciuill and militarie amplified with authorities, and exemplified with historie, out of the first quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* (London: Edward Blount, 1613).

⁸⁴ Peter Burke, ‘A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians, 1450-1700’, *History and Theory*, 5:2 (1966): 135-152, p. 151.

insights, but for moral ones; his reading of Tacitus is tempered by the ethics of reading which informs all of his literary encounters.

It is because the moral insights could be obscured or abused that Cornwallis, as much as he praises Tacitus, urges that he be used with caution, wishing that 'I wish hee were as rare [as he is worthy], for I hold no eye meete to wade in him that is not at the helme of State' (42). Elsewhere, Cornwallis suggests that '*Virgil's Aeneiads* [is] a Booke meete for a Prince and his nearest instruments' (193-4) and that '*Senecae's* Tragedies fit well the hands of a statesman' (193), and in each case, it is not for the political insights that he advises this, but because in both cases reading these authors will help the prince become a better man, something which is particularly important for a ruler.

In this way, we can see that caution needs to be exercised in describing Cornwallis simply as a Tacitean, for a more subtle distinction should perhaps be drawn which distinguishes Cornwallis as part of an early wave of interest in Tacitus the moralist, rather than the later development of interest Tacitus the political tactician. In other words, Cornwallis's reading of Tacitus, and of history more generally, in the *Essayes* grows – as does so much of the essays – out of the sixteenth century, rather than looking forward to the seventeenth.

Tacitus, then, although an admired figure, needs to be handled with more care than Cornwallis's much-loved Plutarch, whose morality is, from Cornwallis's view, 'safer' and much less problematic. Plutarch and Tacitus do however share a quality which attracts Cornwallis to both of them, namely an interest in causal histories: Tacitus has 'so piercing an eye into the designes of Princes and States neuer met in one man' (42). This understanding of inner motivation was one of the originary reasons behind a revival of

interest in Tacitus in the sixteenth century; Lipsius, for example, praised him as being 'skilled at revealing causes' (*acutus in explicandis causis*).⁸⁵

In this, Tacitus forms one of a group of writers noted by Cornwallis for similar reasons. He praises Montaigne for his interest in deciphering not only what happened, but why it happened, and the motivations behind it: 'I like nothing better in *Montaigne* then his desire of knowing *Brutus*' priuate actions, wishing more to know what hee did in his Tent then in battaile' (214). Cornwallis's favourite modern historian, Guicciardini, was similarly praised for his more psychologised view of history. This interest in historical causes rather than (or at least as well as) effects is perhaps part of a larger cultural impulse around the turn of the century which Joel B. Altman has described as being characteristic of the question-led curiosity of the 'Tudor play of mind'.⁸⁶

The structure of the essay form encourages this questioning, based as it is on debate, comparison and contradiction. All of which stem from schoolroom techniques; Cornwallis's compare and contrast approach towards various great men at the end of 'Of Censuring', for example, could have been a schoolroom exercise.⁸⁷ This type of rhetorical comparative approach combines with the reliance on looking towards the private lives of great men to find out the causes behind public events, to provide one motivation behind Cornwallis's recourse to himself as an exemplum (often one to avoid) in the frequent moments when he contrasts his behaviour with an ideal, or advises his readers to do the opposite to what he himself has done; it also helps once again to situate the *Essayes* as products of a sixteenth-century way of thinking, that was nonetheless under development.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Cited in Burke, 'The Popularity of the Ancient Historians', p. 150.

⁸⁶ Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

⁸⁷ On Montaigne's essays in this context, see Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne*, Chapter One.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of Montaigne's use of himself as an exemplum in the context of historical lives, see Timothy Hampton, 'Unreadable Signs: Montaigne, Virtue, and the Interpretation of History', in *Humanism*

c) Diogenes Laertius

Before leaving Cornwallis's reading of histories and biographies of great men behind, it is worth pausing for a moment to comment more particularly on his familiarity with Diogenes Laertius, who is a little more uncommon among late sixteenth-century readers than staples of the schoolroom like Plutarch and Tacitus. Cornwallis himself came to the Greek author later in life than these other writers: 'I happened very lately among my bookes to meete with *Diogenes Laertius*' (129). The meeting was obviously a happy one, for Cornwallis goes on to enthuse that 'I was much delighted euen more then euer I was with any booke' (129).

Cornwallis's claim that he has only 'lately' read *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* is borne out by the pattern of the text's appearances in the *Essayes*: it is frequently quoted or alluded to in the 1601 second volume, but does not get mentioned at all in the 1600 first part. But although it is only in 'Of Trappes for Fame' that Cornwallis describes his discovery of Diogenes Laertius, a reader who had also enjoyed the Greek author would have been alerted to the essayist's newfound interest much earlier. Not only has Cornwallis already incorporated several quotations from *The Lives and Opinions* earlier in 'Of Trappes for Fame' itself, quotations from the text first appear in other previous essays in the collection, the first coming in 'Of Feare' (on p. 111), Essay 32 of the second volume ('Of Trappes for Fame' is Essay 35).

As he explains in 'Of Essayes and Bookes' (1601), Cornwallis's linguistic ability did not stretch to Greek, and so Diogenes Laertius in his original would not be among those authors 'whom I vnderstand' (196). The quotations from *The Lives and Opinions* which are scattered throughout the *Essayes* are therefore in Latin, taken from one of the dual Greek-Latin editions of the text which would have been available to Cornwallis in the

in Crisis: The Decline of the French Renaissance, ed. Philippe Desan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), pp. 85-106.

late sixteenth century. Two such editions appeared in the decade preceding the publication of Cornwallis's *Essayes* in 1600-01. In 1594, a translation by the papal secretary Tommaso Aldobrandini (*b.* 1568) was published in Rome.⁸⁹ This followed hot on the heels of an edition published in Geneva in 1593, which had a commentary by the classical scholar Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614).⁹⁰ The main text of this edition was however taken from an earlier translation by the French printer and classical scholar Henri Estienne (1528 or 1531-1598), published over two decades earlier in 1570.⁹¹

Comparing the Aldobrandini and Estienne translations against Cornwallis's quotations from Diogenes Laertius in the *Essayes* demonstrates that the essayist was reading *The Lives and Opinions* in Estienne's translation. What is harder to establish is whether he was using the 1570 or 1593 edition. Neither was fresh off the press when Cornwallis was reading Diogenes Laertius around 1600, so he could have 'happened' across an old copy of either version. Cornwallis does not make any direct use of Casaubon's commentary on the text, which might point towards the use of the earlier edition, but apart from this evidence of omission there is nothing to suggest whether it was the 1570 or 1593 edition which had such a newly prized position on Cornwallis's bookshelves and within his *Essayes*.

'I found hardly a page', Cornwallis furthers rhapsodizes, 'but I wished my memory to gather some gifts in them – not a line so full of precious liquor as the words were too short wasted for the matter' (129). His love of Diogenes Laertius rivals even his admiration for old favourite Plutarch: 'Hee is in great estimation with me and shal be one of my neerest companions and, by *Plutarch* his leaue, haue the vpper hand' (129). The reason for this, Cornwallis explains, is that: 'I find few of his [Plutarch's] Captains

⁸⁹ Diogenes Laertius, *De vitis dogmatis et apophthegmatis eorum qui in philosophia claruerunt*, trans. Tommaso Aldobrandini (Rome: Aloysium Zanettum, 1594).

⁹⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *De vitis, dogmatis & apophthegmatis clarorum philosophorum*, trans. Henri Estienne and ed. Isaac Casaubon (Geneva: Henri Estienne, 1593).

⁹¹ Diogenes Laertius, *De vitis, dogmatis & apophthegmatis eorum qui in philosophia claruerunt*, trans. and ed. Henri Estienne (Geneva: Henri Estienne, 1570).

Philosophers, but amongst *Laertius* Philosophers, many Capitaines and instructions for common-wealth not inferiour to *Plutarch*' (129). The lives of men he finds in Diogenes Laertius' provide an ideal combination of contemplative and active skills which takes us back to 'Of Discourse', where Cornwallis describes his admiration for 'Plato his Description of *Socrates*, who although a Souldier and a Scholler, yet he discoursed stil like wisdom, which commaunds ouer all' (36).

Cornwallis's comparison of Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius therefore provides us with a good insight into his ethical motivations in reading histories, a motivation which carries over into his use of *exempla* in the *Essayes*. Diogenes Laertius provides a better illustration of the ideal of 'generall knowledge' described at the start of this chapter, and so provides Cornwallis (and Cornwallis' readers) with a better source for achieving such 'generall knowledge' themselves.

3. Uses of quotation in the *Essayes*

As the brief list of some of the main authors mentioned in the *Essayes* demonstrates, Cornwallis's reading matter was not particularly unusual for a man of his station; they are all texts which appear on many booklists from the period, and many of them would have been schoolroom texts.⁹² In 'Of the obseruation, and vse of things', Cornwallis describes the benefits of his childhood reading, when he 'was bound' to '*Arthur of Brittain* and things of that price, for my knowledge was not able to traffick with any thing more rich. *Stowe's* Chronicle was the highest; yet I haue found good vse of them; they haue added to my experience'. This 'experience' is partly learning how to make the most out of his reading, for 'If in *Arthur of Brittain*, *Huon of Burdeaux*, and such supposed chiuallrie, a man may better himselfe, shall hee not become excellent with conuersing with *Tacitus*,

⁹² Lucretius, one of the more uncommon authors quoted in the *Essayes*, was almost certainly read through the medium of Montaigne, as he employs quotations which also appear in Montaigne's work.

Plutarch, *Salust*, and fellowes of that rank?’ (51). Here, Cornwallis mounts what is possibly a deliberate repost to Roger Ascham, who in *The Schole Master* (1570), invokes Malory’s tales of King Arthur to decry the poor state of children’s reading, and its possible moral ill-effects: ‘What toyes, the dayly readyng of such a booke, may worke in the will of a yong ientleman, or a yong mayde, that liueth welthelie and idelleie, wise men can iudge, and honest me, do pitie’.⁹³

Here then, Cornwallis himself makes the direct comparison with the techniques of reading he began to learn as a child and the methods he employs – only to better ends and on more worthwhile books – as an adult, thus stressing the way in which this way of reading (which fed into a way of writing) was absolutely foundational.

Just as the books which Cornwallis reads were not uncommon, so too the specific quotations which he employs throughout the essays are frequently ones which were widely used in the period, often even appearing in printed anthologies or commonplace books, so we can see the extent to which the *Essaies* are informed by an interplay with this notebook culture. To take just a couple of examples of this, his quotation of Pseudo-Seneca in ‘Of Resolution’: ‘*Omnia tempus edax depascitur, omnia carpit / Nil sinit esse diu*’ is found in Nicholas Ling’s *Politeuphuia* (1597), at the end of the section of ‘Of Time’.⁹⁴ Similarly, a quotation from the *Aeneid* (6.95-6) in ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’ (195) appears in the teacher John Brinsley’s popular classroom text *Ludus literarius: or, the grammar schoole* (1612).⁹⁵ The grouping of such quotations under headings like ‘Of Time’ points towards the way in which such common quotations often carried their own connotations with

⁹³ Roger Ascham, *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong but specially purposed for the priuate brynging vp of youth in ientlemen and noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latin tonge* (London: Iohn Daye, 1570), fol. 27^r. Cornwallis and Ascham similarly disagreed on the value of Italian books, which Ascham also suspected of ill-effects.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Ling, *Politeuphuia. Wits common wealth* (London: I. Roberts, 1597), p. 229. The quotation stayed in common use long enough to be included in a printed commonplace book again just over a century later: see Anon, *Synopsis communium locorum praecipue ad mores spectantium* (Oxford, 1700), p. 91.

⁹⁵ John Brinsley, *Ludus literarius: or, the grammar schoole* (London: Humphrey Lownes for Thomas Mann, 1612), p. 51.

them before being used by Cornwallis, so he could rely on the reader quickly to grasp their significance, in keeping with his wish to be easily understood; it also points to similar connotations contained within the comparable headings of the essays themselves.

But Cornwallis's use of quotation changes throughout the essays, reflecting different ways of reading appropriate to different genres and different contexts. In order to explore these different types of reading, and how that affects the interaction between the quotations and Cornwallis's own text, I focus on a small case study of related groups of quotations: Cornwallis's reading of two examples of epic poetry. This revolves particularly around a case study of the essayist's complex relationship with Homer, but also his reading of an early-modern vernacular epic – Tasso's *La Gerusalemme Liberata* – in order better bring out the implications of these distinctions of context and genre, and other questions of decorum in reading, and writing.

The way in which different quotations have different functions has its roots in the varying uses of the rhetorical figure of testimony in the period, which could be used variously to illustrate or to prove a point.⁹⁶ So once again, the relationship between reading and rhetoric become paramount.

a) The importance of context: Homer's *Odyssey*

As with his reading of Diogenes Laertius in Henri Estienne's dual-language edition, all of Cornwallis's encounters with Greek texts were in translation. R. E. Bennett comments that the amount of Greek literature which Cornwallis read in Latin translation is substantial enough to be worth noting, but he makes no reference to a moment when Cornwallis expresses some hesitancy about reading one particular Greek author in such a

⁹⁶ On testimony in its rhetorical context, see R. W. Serjeantson, 'Testimony: the artless proof', in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, eds. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 179-194.

translation.⁹⁷ This comes in ‘Of Essayes and Bookes’ (1601), when Cornwallis states that he ‘dare not speake’ of Homer because he cannot read him in his original language (196). In light of the fact that Cornwallis read other Greek authors in translation without displaying such qualms, this disavowal is striking, and yet in previous discussions of Cornwallis it has either not been mentioned, or cited only as proof that the essayist could not read Greek; this is how D. C. Allen glosses the line in his edition of the *Essayes*, merely commenting: ‘Here, Cornwallis admits his obvious ignorance of Greek’ (263, n.196.1-2).

Cornwallis writes that he will not ‘speake’ of Homer ‘because as neare as I can, I will not build vpon others’ (196), but he is seemingly quite happy to ‘build vpon others’ elsewhere, both with regards to texts originally written in Greek and indeed in French. In his discussion of Montaigne in ‘Of Censuring’ (1600), he explains that ‘I haue not been so much beholding to the French as to see in his Originall; yet diuers of his peeces I haue seen translated’ (42). Rather than express uncertainty over the merits of this, Cornwallis praises the project: it has been ‘very wel done’ according to ‘they that vnderstand both languages’, and ‘*Montaigne* speaks now good English’ (42); furthermore, Cornwallis certainly does not display any hesitation in passing judgement on Montaigne’s work, despite only having access to it in translation.⁹⁸ Similarly, when he heaps glowing praise upon Diogenes Laertius in ‘Of Trappes for Fame’, Cornwallis does not even mention the fact that he has had to read him in Latin. Indeed, in the very same essay as he claims that he will ‘not build vpon others’ with regards to Homer, he extols the virtues of being able to do exactly that with one of his favourite Greek writers, Plato: ‘Of other bookes though I haue already commended *Plato*; yet speaking of bookes, I must againe mention him for his commentor’s sake, who doth excellently illustrate him’ (199). The

⁹⁷ Bennett, ‘Life and Works’, p. 210.

⁹⁸ I discuss Cornwallis as a reader of Montaigne in the context of other early-modern English readers of John Florio’s translation of the *Essais* (1603) in Chapter Five of this thesis.

‘commentor’ to whom Cornwallis refers here is the Italian humanist Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), who produced the first translation of all Plato’s extant writings into Latin, and provided commentaries on them, and so it seems that when it comes to matters of philosophy, Cornwallis is glad of a guide to encourage him to get the most out of the material.⁹⁹

It is now worth providing some context which demonstrates that elsewhere, Cornwallis might even be seen as encouraging his own readers to ‘build vpon others’ in their understanding of ancient texts. His own *Discourses upon Seneca* is itself made up of a series of exegeses of various quotations culled from Seneca’s plays; and indeed, in his commonplace book, the Warwickshire gentleman Edward Pudsey does not quote directly from Seneca, but instead excerpts liberally from the *Discourses*, suggesting perhaps that this particular reader at least was happy to mediate his knowledge of Seneca through ‘build[ing] vpon others’.¹⁰⁰ In her unpublished edition of Pudsey’s commonplace book, Judith Mary Gowan comments upon the fact that Pudsey was ‘content to take Seneca thus at second or even third hand, whereas other classical authors are experienced at least one stage more closely, in translations of their complete works’.¹⁰¹ Translations of the classics were, it seems, Pudsey’s preferred option, as all of his extracts from ancient texts in the commonplace book are from English versions, such as Richard Greneway’s 1598 translations of Tacitus.¹⁰²

In the case of Seneca’s plays, Pudsey would have had the option of culling quotations directly from the English translations of ten of Seneca’s tragedies by Thomas Newton

⁹⁹ For a good collection of recent essays on Ficino, see Michael J. B. Allen, Valery Rees, and Martin Davies (eds.), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

¹⁰⁰ Bodleian Library: MS. Eng. poet. d. 3, fols. 33v-35r.

¹⁰¹ Judith Mary Gowan, ‘An edition of Edward Pudsey’s commonplace book (c.1600-1615) from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library,’ (University of London: Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, 1967), p. 277.

¹⁰² Fred Schurink has pointed out that this does not necessarily mean that Pudsey could not read Latin, ‘for the inclusion of a number of Latin tags suggests otherwise [...] University-educated Sir Francis Castillion showed a similar preference for English translations of classical and other foreign-language texts in his commonplace book’, in ‘Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading’, p. 465, n.42.

(1544/5-1607) and others, which were published in a combined edition in 1581.¹⁰³ Although she does not mention the availability of these English translations, Gowan does suggest two opposed reasons as to why Pudsey might have been ‘content’ to read Seneca via Cornwallis: “This may indicate a lack of reverence for Seneca – or it may indicate the reverse, in that he was so familiar and so indisputably *the* authority on morals that one’s knowledge of him informed all one’s thinking, and did not need to be explicitly set forth or discovered’.¹⁰⁴ The latter option seems much more likely. Indeed, the fact that Seneca was such a moral authority, and was frequently read as such, in the period provides another reason for Pudsey’s reliance upon the *Discourses*.

Pudsey is turning to Cornwallis not for an English translation of the tragedies (indeed, Cornwallis only provides the quotations from the plays in Latin, so Pudsey would have had to have had at least a basic knowledge of the language to get the most out of the *Discourses* themselves), but rather, for the moral gloss which Cornwallis puts on them: it is Cornwallis’s writing about Seneca which is excerpted in the commonplace book, not merely the epithets from the plays themselves. In other words, if Pudsey’s main interest in reading Seneca was to extract particularly morally valuable *sententiae* from them, it makes sense that he would have been ‘content’, or would even have preferred, to access Seneca via a writer who had already done the harder work of choosing particularly valuable quotations, as well as providing the first steps towards thinking about them. This is in a way a watered down version of Cornwallis’s eagerness for Ficino’s help in comprehending Plato.

In other words, the reasons a reader has for turning to a particular author might influence the way in which that reader was prepared (or even preferred) to encounter that author; and so this perhaps begins to bring us towards a reason for Cornwallis’s

¹⁰³ Thomas Newton *et al.* (trans.), *Seneca his tenne tragedies, translated into English* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1581).

¹⁰⁴ Gowan, ‘An edition of Edward Pudsey’s commonplace book’, p. 277.

divergent responses to being unable to read Homer in Greek: this is one of the forms of 'context' I meant by 'the importance of context' in the sub-title to this discussion. The others are: the original context of the quotation in its native text; and its context when it is taken up by writers other than Cornwallis, both of which are discussed below.

For Cornwallis's claim that he 'dare not speake' of Homer in 'Of Essayes and Bookes' because he cannot read him in the original is even more puzzling when we consider that elsewhere in the *Essayes*, he appears quite happy to quote from a Latin version of the *Odyssey*. In fact, Cornwallis includes three translated quotations from the *Odyssey* in the *Essayes*, although there are none from the *Iliad*. The first of the *Odyssey* quotations comes in 'Of Knowledge' (1601): 'For Patience is inuincible, conquering when resistance is conquered. Hee is not ouercome, whose discourse and resolution can say with *Vlisses*, *Hoc quoque cor prefer, namque hoc grauiora tulisti?*' (139). As D. C. Allen notes, Cornwallis has this from Ficino's translation of Plato's *Phaedo* (258, n.139.21-2).

So rather than Cornwallis simply lifting the quotation directly from the original text, it has already been transplanted into first a new context and then a new language, before being moved by Cornwallis into yet another new context (surrounded by another new language), showing the way in which the quotations within the *Essayes* often bury within them histories within histories, and voices within voices, lives within lives. This kind of complex literary past-life, in which one quotation contains within it memories of, and references to, more than one time period, culture, language, and person, is just one of the elements inherent to the essay which complicates the idea that it is a genre based upon unproblematic personal and individual expression.

Such echoes of the literary past are found elsewhere in Cornwallis's use of the *Odyssey*, the other two quotations from which are found in 'Of Solitarinesse and Companie' (1601) and 'Of Vaine-glory' (1601). The quotation from the *Odyssey* in the latter is one of a list of examples of acts of 'brave spirit' taken from both history and literature; exactly

the kind of list for which a commonplace book would be useful: these examples could easily have been grouped together under a heading such as ‘courage’ (187-8). The quotation describes how, in a time of misfortune, ‘*Ulysses encourage[d] the fainting spirits of his companions*’ by reminding them of how they escaped past troubles (such as being trapped by the Cyclops) thanks to his intellectual cunning and skill (Book 12, ll.208-12).¹⁰⁵ The way in which Cornwallis combines the example of mythical, literary heroes such as Odysseus with accounts of rulers taken from the history books (Plutarch and Guicciardini are both used in this section) is part of the ‘generall’ knowledge we encountered in the introduction to this section, demonstrating how different types of writing (in this case, history and poetry) could be read in the same way to find examples of wisdom.

But at the same time, another, specifically literary, history is invoked by the Latin translation of the *Odyssey* used by Cornwallis. Like the one taken from Ficino’s translation of Plato, the quotation from the *Odyssey* in ‘Of Vaine-glory’ conceals within it several different voices and literary traditions. The opening line reads ‘*O socij, Ignari haud aumus ante malorum*’, which is almost identical to another line in another poem, this time one originally written in Latin, which runs: ‘*O socii (neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum)*’. The other poem is, of course, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, a work engaged in its own constant conversation with, and remodeling of, Homer’s epic.¹⁰⁶ Odysseus’s exhortation to his men in the *Odyssey* is mirrored by a moment in Book One of the *Aeneid*. Aeneas and his

¹⁰⁵ For the original passage from Homer see, *The Odyssey*, trans. A. T. Murray, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1919), I:447.

¹⁰⁶ On this remodeling, and particularly on the *Aeneid* as the product of Virgil’s reading in general and his reading of Homer in specific, see, Damien P. Nelis, ‘Vergil’s Library’, in *A Companion to Vergil’s Aeneid and Its Tradition*, eds. Joseph Farrell and Michael C. J. Putnam (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 13-25. It was common practice to compare Homer and Virgil in the period; a comparison of the two forms the basis for Book V of Julius Caesar Scaliger’s hugely influential *Poetices libri Septem* (Lyon: 1561); for a modern French translation of the fifth book see, J.C. Scaliger, *La poetique. Livre V, Le Critique*, ed. and trans., Jacques Chomarat (Geneva: Droz, 1994). William Webbe, in *A discourse of English poetrie* (1586), compares the ‘Heroycall workes of Homer in Greeke, and the heauenly verse of Virgils *Aeneidos* in Latine’ considering them both excellent places to seek out ‘the noble actes and valiant exploits of puissaunt Capitaines, expert souldiers, wise men, with the famous reportes of auncient times’, sigs. Ci^v and Ci^r.

men take shelter on the Libyan Coast and Aeneas beseeches his companions to take courage even though their situation seems desperate, encouraging them, as in Homer's poem, to remember how they have escaped worse situations before, including the 'Cyclopea saxa', the rocks of the Cyclops (ll.198-202, l.201).

This passage from the *Aeneid* was a popular one in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, frequently invoked in various contexts to describe the benefits of thinking back in a time of trouble to moments of deliverance from past misfortunes. Towards the end of *Barneuels apology: or Holland myserie* (1618), the Dutch statesman Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619) applies it to his own life, citing these lines (translated as 'Those are not the first euils (I wis) we haue endured: & we hope, braue mates, to bee rid of these') alongside his remembrance that 'such were my troubles (yet God deliuered me out of them) in the yeares 1586, and 1587, vnder the Earle of *Leicester*, and in the yeares 1588, 1589 vnder the Lord Willoughby', and his subsequent belief that now, 'I presume, God in his good time will assoile the truth, destroy falshood, and confound the authours thereof'.¹⁰⁷ The passage remained in frequent use throughout the seventeenth century. Describing how to 'learne from a gust of calamity how to withstand the greatest tempest of Misery', in his moral treatise *The Picture of Patience* (1629), William Jeffray used the example of 'Aeneas, the patterne of noble Cheiftaines', and his rousing speech to his stranded men to give encouragement to his own readers.¹⁰⁸ Three decades later still, John Smith used it in *The Myserie of Rhetorique Unvail'd* (1657) as an illustration of prosopopoeia, when this rhetorical figure is used to 'make dead men speak',¹⁰⁹ demonstrating the longevity of Aeneas as an *exemplum* across the course of the period.

¹⁰⁷ Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, *Barneuels apology: or Holland myserie. With marginall castigations* (London: William Jones for Thomas Thorp, 1616), sig. H2^v.

¹⁰⁸ William Jeffray, *The Picture of Patience, or, a Direction to Perfection Most Needfull and Vsefull in These Dangerous Daies of Sinne, and Publike Feare* (London: Thomas Harper for Robert Milbourne, 1629), p. 44.

¹⁰⁹ John Smith, *The Myserie of Rhetorique Unvail'd* (London: E. Cates for G. Eversden, 1657), pp. 153-154. Aeneas and Odysseus both had, of course, long histories of being used as *exempla*; both crop up frequently in Erasmus's *Adagia* (1516, frequently extended and reprinted), for example.

The status of the passage as a traditional example of taking courage from the memory of escaping from past misfortunes is highlighted by its inclusion in the section ‘The consideration of Mercies formerly enjoyed, an excellent means to bear up our spirits under present Afflictions’, in John Spencer’s (d. 1680) *Kaina kai palaia* (1658).¹¹⁰

In quoting the comparable moment from the *Odyssey*, then, Cornwallis’s use of it is in line with the usual moral gloss drawn from it. Furthermore, Cornwallis’s use of a translation which itself had been written through the lens of the *Aeneid* invokes a literary heritage for the passage which both serves to imbue it with its own kind of historical authenticity and authority, and also strengthens the quality of timeless wisdom which Cornwallis seeks to draw out from it. Although it is impossible to claim that Cornwallis specifically chose this translation over others available to him because of its closeness to the language of the *Aeneid*,¹¹¹ his knowledge of the latter would surely have meant that he would have been aware of the connections between the wording of the two, and the subsequent connotations of this affinity.

In all of the above examples of the use of the comparable passage from the *Aeneid*, there is no sense that any importance was placed upon the fact that the lines originated in a poem; in some of the instances, in fact, they are presented in English prose translation, either alongside the original Latin or instead of it. But when William Webbe (fl. 1566?-1591) considers the same passage in *A discourse of English poetrie* (1586), as part of his discussion of the excellencies of the part-translation into English of the *Aeneid* by Thomas Phaer (1510?-1560), he specifically focuses on the relationship between the content and the form. Describing how ‘louinglie and sweetely he [Aeneas] comforted them [his men]’ in the lines, Webbe comments upon how the flow of the verse

¹¹⁰ John Spencer, *Kaina kai palaia. Things new and old, or, A store-house of similies, sentences, allegories, apophthegms, adagies, apologues, divine, morall, politicall, &c.: with their severall applications collected and observed from the writings and sayings of the learned in all ages to this present by John Spencer* (London: W. Wilson and J. Streeter for John Spencer, 1658), p. 355.

¹¹¹ For example the famous Latin translation and commentary by the French poet and humanist Jean de Sponde from 1583, which translates the lines quite differently.

emphasizes this consolatory tone: ‘in his [Virgil’s] comfortable consolations, howe smoothly hys verse runnes’.¹¹²

So here we find someone noting the way in which the verse itself comments upon the moral application of the passage. This is not something Cornwallis does in his use of the verse quotation from the *Odyssey* in ‘Of Vaine-Glory’; for him here the main point is not that the lines are in verse but that they contain a pertinent example. But it does perhaps help point towards a possible explanation for his hesitancy in speaking of Homer in ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’ when he displays no such qualms elsewhere in the *Essayes*.

For Cornwallis’s refusal to discuss Homer comes as part of a section of his essay which is explicitly concerned with the role of ‘Poesie’; and poetry not in the wider application to which it could be put in the period (as in Sir Philip Sidney’s *The Defence of Poesie*) of ‘fiction’, but specifically writing in verse: ‘Howsoeuer, that *Scithian* fellow esteemed musicke basely by preferring the neighing of horses before it; yet, no question, both musicke and letters and, especially, verses, which participat both with musicke and letters, is a braue raiser of the spirits’ (195).¹¹³ Leading on from this general beginning about the rhetorical force of ‘verses’ and their effect on the ‘spirits’, Cornwallis moves on to the more specific and ever-popular topic of the relationship between arms and poetry, declaring that ‘I thinke armes disable not themselves with taking assistance from Poesie, for doubtles it makes valour beautifull and wel becomming; for taking away part of his

¹¹² William Webbe, *A discourse of English poetrie Together, with the authors iudgment, touching the reformation of our English verse* (London: John Charlewood for Robert Walley, 1586). Phaer’s translation of the first seven books of the *Aeneid* was published in 1558, followed by the posthumous publication by his friend William Wightman of Phaer’s translations of the eight and ninth books, as well as his incomplete version of book ten. In 1573 another friend, Thomas Twyne, published a completed version of Phaer’s translation. See the modern critical edition of the combined Phaer-Twyne *Aeneid*: Steven Lally (ed.), *Aeneid of Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne: A Critical Edition Introducing Renaissance Metrical Typography* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1987).

¹¹³ The ‘*Scithian* fellow’ is Ateas, King of Scythia: Plutarch recounts this story in *De Fortuna Alexandri*, Oratio 2; see Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt *et al.*, 16 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927-2004), IV:427. Henry Peacham describes the persuasive power of music in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622): ‘Yea, in my opinion no rhetoric more persuadeth or hath greater power over the mind; nay, hath not music her figures, the same which rhetoric?’, p. 103. On the connection between music and rhetoric, see Brian Vickers, ‘Figures of Rhetoric/Figures of Music?’, *Rhetorica*, 2 (1984): 1-44.

fiercenesse and adding insteede thereof reason makes it true Fortitude' (195).¹¹⁴ It is when he gets even more specific that Cornwallis makes his confession about Homer: 'Of Poets for this purpose', he explains, 'some learned talke much of *Homer*, but though they are learned, yet I dare not speake of him because as neare as I can, I will not build vpon others' (195-6).

In other words, Cornwallis 'dare[s] not speake' of Homer in a context where the fact that Homer was writing in verse is vital to the point. In 'Of Knowledge', when Cornwallis quotes from the *Odyssey* via Ficino via Plato, the fact that Homer was a poet is basically irrelevant, as the quotation has been turned into prose. In the other two quotations from the *Odyssey*, the verse is retained, but the main point for their inclusion is the moral or example which can be drawn from them, which is present (as we have seen from the examples of uses of the mirroring passage in the *Aeneid*) in the same sense whether it is preserved in verse or in prose; so it does not matter that the passages have been translated into Latin and the original nuances of versification changed or lost. It might be fitting that in 'Of Vaine-glory', Cornwallis uses a verse quotation to illustrate 'a braue raiser of the spirits', considering the way he describes poetry's particular facility for this in 'Of Essaies and Bookes', but although this adds an extra dimension to the use of the passage, it is of secondary importance, as opposed to the primary importance attached to the fact of Homer being '[o]f Poets' in the discussion of poetry and arms in 'Of Essayes and Bookes'.

Another potential reason for Cornwallis's reluctance to 'speake' of Homer is suggested by advice regarding the reading of Homer in his original language in university syllabi in the period. In the 'Directions for a Student in the Universitie' produced by Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649), the section prescribing the reading of Seneca's

¹¹⁴ On Montaigne's essays within the context of this debate, see James J. Supple, *Arms versus letters: the military and literary ideals in the 'Essais' of Montaigne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

tragedies, Lucan, Statius, and Homer in the winter months of the fourth year of study advises that students should ‘Allow a fortnight to each of the 4 first, & a month to the last’; the additional length of time advised for Homer partly a result of the fact that he was being read in Greek.¹¹⁵ The extra allocation of time to Homer continued throughout the seventeenth century; in his directions for students from 1700, modeled closely on Holdsworth’s, Dr John Merryweather recommended that when reading Juvenal, Persius, Claudian, Virgil and Homer in the third year of study, students should ‘Spend a fortnight in each of the Latine ones & a month in Homer’.¹¹⁶ As we have seen, the most likely case is that Cornwallis never attended one of the universities, and so the emphasis even in their curricula on the relative difficulty of encountering Homer in Greek is perhaps yet another reason why Cornwallis would consider him to be best left to men more ‘learned’ than himself, at least when something more than just extracting moral or other kinds of wisdom was at stake.

Finally, an essay of Montaigne’s also provides another context for considering Cornwallis’s unwillingness to ‘speake’ of Homer. In the opening section of ‘Of the most outstanding men’, (‘Des plus excellens hommes’, 2.36) the French writer declares that there is the possibility that ‘even in his [Homer’s] art itself, Virgil may ‘be compared with him’, but offers the caveat that ‘I leave it to those men to judge who know them both. I who know only the one can say only this according to my capacity, that I do not believe that the Muses themselves could surpass the Roman’.¹¹⁷

Here, then, we can see how a reluctance to speak about Homer is used as part of an essayistic modesty; a part of the studied negligence so vital to the essayistic persona. Leaving Homer to the ‘learned’, as Cornwallis on the whole does, and Montaigne

¹¹⁵ Richard Holdsworth, ‘Directions for a Student in the Universitie’, appears as Appendix II in Harris Francis Fletcher, *The Intellectual Development of John Milton* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 646.

¹¹⁶ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: MS. Osborn c581, p. 145.

¹¹⁷ Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, ed. and trans. Donald M. Frame, intro. Stuart Hampshire (London: Everyman, 2003), p. 690.

professes to do, furthers the impression of the essayist as only ‘newly bound Prentise to the inquisition of knowledge’ (190), for whom Homer, widely considered in the period as the foundation of all knowledge, is a figure as yet far beyond their reach or understanding.¹¹⁸

b) The importance of genre: Tasso’s *La Gerusalemme Liberata*

While Cornwallis quoted from Homer – when he was prepared to engage with him at all – and other Greek authors such as Diogenes Laertius and Plato in Latin translation, his quotations from other authors in the *Essayes* are always presented in their original language, and always without translation into English. In the case of the Latin authors, this is not unusual: his readers could have been expected to have a good enough grasp of Latin to do without a translation, and besides, as noted earlier, the majority of the quotations Cornwallis employs in his essays were familiar ones. What is slightly more unusual is the fact that the Italian quotations which are sprinkled throughout the essays are also left untranslated. This is perhaps a relic of the linguistic interests of the circles within which his essays were circulated in manuscript, for an understanding of Italian could not be assumed among the wider audience the *Essayes* would find in print as could a working knowledge of Latin.¹¹⁹

Cornwallis himself certainly had a good knowledge of Italian. One of his four unpublished paradoxes, which are preserved in the so-called commonplace book of Sir

¹¹⁸ William Webbe calls Homer and Virgil the ‘the summe and grounde of all Poetrie’, *A discourse on English poetrie*, sig. C^v; Montaigne writes that Homer ‘made the infancy of poetry and of several other sciences mature, perfect, and accomplished. For this reason he may be called the first and last of poets’, *The Complete Works*, p. 691. Over a century later, in the preface to his translation of Homer’s *Iliad*, Alexander Pope could still write that Homer encompassed ‘the whole circle of the arts, and the whole compass of nature’, and that his work provided ‘the very Foundation of Poetry’, *The Iliad of Homer, translated by Mr. Pope*, 6 vols. (London: W. Bowyer for Bernard Lintott, 1715-20), vol. I, sigs. B3^r and B^r.

¹¹⁹ On the nature and extent of the circulation of Italian books in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see John L. Lievsay, *The Englishman’s Italian Books, 1550-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969).

Stephen Powle,¹²⁰ is based upon the sixteenth paradox of the *Paradossi* (Lyons, 1543) of the Italian humanist Ortensio Lando (c.1510-1558).¹²¹ As R. E. Bennett has demonstrated, Cornwallis must have used the original Italian version of Lando's work.¹²² Because he did not read French, he could not have used the French anatomist Charles Estienne's 1553 translation of the paradoxes. And the English translation by the playwright Anthony Munday (1560?-1633), based upon Estienne's and printed in 1593 under the title *The Defence of Contraries*, only included the first twelve of the *Paradossi*. As noted in the opening to this section, Italian literature had a significant presence in Cornwallis's *Essayes*, but the two Italian authors which he cited most commonly were the historian Guicciardini and the poet Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), whose epic poem *La Gerusalemme Liberata* is quoted liberally throughout the 1601 volume of the *Essayes*.

Tasso is one of the two poets amongst those 'whom I vnderstand' that Cornwallis is willing to discuss when he refuses to refer to Homer in 'Of Essaies and Bookes', and whom he uses as a good example of the affective relationship between arms and letters. The other is the classical poet Lucan. Writing of the two, Cornwallis suggests that it is only the authority of antiquity which Tasso lacks to put him on a level with his classical predecessors: 'Of those whom I vnderstand, *Lucan* and *Tasso*, the one of which is ancient and the other as worthy if seasoned by so much time; but I will not chide the world for that, for the reuerencing of age and times past moderately is a good fault of a good nature' (196).

Despite his admiration for Tasso, Cornwallis does not begin to cite him until the second volume of the *Essayes* in 1601. During the preceding decade, Tasso had become increasingly well-known to English literary readers, even if they were unable to read him

¹²⁰ Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 169.

¹²¹ On the importance of Lando, and with reference to Estienne and Munday too, as part of a wider discussion of the humanist revival of paradox and especially its relationship with the learned disciplines in the early-modern period, see Agnieszka Steczowicz, "'The Defence of Contraries': Paradox in the Late Renaissance Disciplines (University of Oxford: Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, 2004), esp. Chapter One.

¹²² Bennett, 'Four Paradoxes by Sir William Cornwallis, the Younger', pp. 221-222.

in Italian. *La Gerusalemme Liberata* had influenced Edmund Spenser's English epic *The Faerie Queene* (1590/1596) while a translation of the first five cantos of the poem by the antiquary and poet Richard Carew (1555-1620) was published in 1594.¹²³ Cornwallis himself quotes from throughout the Italian poem, but in 1600 a full English translation of Tasso's epic (with a dual English-Italian text) became available for any of the essayist's readers who did not share his facility with Italian; the appearance of which may equally have sparked Cornwallis's interest in the poem, or at least encouraged him to start incorporating it into his essays. This full English version by Edward Fairfax (1558?-1632x1635?) was one of the great Elizabethan translation projects from Italian into English, and was extremely popular;¹²⁴ Robert Allott included fifty cantos from it in his anthology *England's Parnassus* in the very year of its publication.¹²⁵ In this way, then, the use of Tasso helps the *Essayes* speak to current literary interests, in a way which complements the emphasis on timelessness which is encouraged by the quotations from Homer.

In the introduction to this section on quotations I described the way in which the quotations from Cornwallis's essays sometimes appear in printed commonplace books, under headings such as (to return to the previous example) 'Time', and I mentioned that this reflects upon the way in which the commonplace-style of the essays' titles themselves come with a ready-made store of examples. This is reminiscent of Erasmus's

¹²³ Richard Carew (trans.), *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or The recouerie of Hierusalem An heroicall poeme written in Italian by Seig. Torquato Tasso, and translated into English by R.C. Esquire: and now the first part containing five cantos, imprinted in both languages* (London: Christopher Hunt, 1594). On Carew's translation, see Patricia Thomson, 'Carew's Tasso', *Neophilologus*, 65:1 (1981): 144-147.

¹²⁴ Edward Fairfax (trans.), *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or The recouerie of Ierusalem. Done into English heroicall verse* (London: A. Hatfield for I. Iaggard and M. Lownes, 1600). There is a helpful modern critical edition of the translation available: Kathleen M. Lea and T. M. Gang (eds.), *Godfrey of Bulloigne: a critical edition of Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata, together with Fairfax's original poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

¹²⁵ Robert Allott, *Englands Parnassus, or, The choysest flowers of our moderne poets, with their poetickall comparisons descriptions of benties, personages, castles, pallaces, mountaines, groues, seas, springs, riuers, &c.: whereunto are annexed other various discourses both pleasant and profitable* (London: N. Ling, C. Burby, and T. Hayes, 1600).

method in the *Adagia* (1512, frequently extended and reprinted),¹²⁶ when his most extended discussions of proverbs have much in common with the early-modern essay.

More particularly, they have much in common with particular way in which Cornwallis uses quotations in the *Essayes*. This is also the same way in which he uses them in the *Discourses upon Seneca*. Namely, he takes a quotation, and then subjects it to a (primarily) moral exegesis, carefully drawing out the significance of each line and phrase. In the *Essayes*, this way of using quotations is particularly prominent in Cornwallis's reading of Tasso, and especially comes to the fore in 'Of Essaies and Bookes'.

Here, for example, Cornwallis takes a couplet from Tasso's epic: '*E par lieto morir poscia che 'l crudo / Totila è vinto, o salua il caro scudo*' (17.73.7-8) and then breaks it down into distinct phrases: '*E par lieto morir*' and '*E saluo il caro scudo*', which he then glosses over the course of the paragraph (197). He then does the same thing with another couplet immediately afterwards, although this time his analysis takes him twice as long (197-9). Tasso is not the only writer to undergo this treatment: in the same essay, Cornwallis has already applied the same technique to lines from the *Aeneid* (195). The other most prominent place in the *Essayes* where Cornwallis employs this way of handling a quotation is at the start of his essay 'The Instruments of a States-man' (the only one of the essays without a prefix). Here, he begins with an epitaph from the *Aeneid* (6.261), and then opens up his discussion from there, much as he does with the epitaphs which head the individual *Discourses upon Seneca* (203).

The quotations from Tasso which Cornwallis uses in this way in 'Of Essaies and Bookes' form part of his discussion of the specific role of poetry, and act as illustrations of the points which Cornwallis has raised about the relationship between poetry and warfare and especially about the role of poetry in raising the spirits and inspiring

¹²⁶ Peter Mack posits that the frequent expansion of the *Adages* might have given Montaigne a precedent for the similar multiple extensions of his *Essais*. Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne*, p. 4.

fortitude. More than this, however, both these quotations and the ones from the *Aeneid* come at a place in the essay after Cornwallis's discussion of the inherent dangers of writing which uses allegory, and his praise of writers such as Xenophon for their plain style, discussed in the section above.

This discussion concludes with a particularly damning description of poetry: 'Thus offend most Poets, who, larding their writings with fictions, feede the ignorant and vicious with as much poison as preservative' (192). Triumphantly, Cornwallis produces evidence from a poet which he claims strengthens his case, demonstrating the use of quotation as testimony with its more legal connotations: 'This one of them confesseth speaking to his Muse', he begins, before quoting several lines from Tasso (1.2.68-70 and 1.3.1-4). In these lines, Tasso indeed 'confesseth' his use of 'fictions', but he does so to celebrate the power of poetry to make unpleasant truths palatable, or, as Sir John Harington described it when he used the same passage to opposite effect in the apology for poetry which prefixes his translation of *Orlando furioso*: 'This is then that honest fraud, in which, as *Plutarch* saith, he that is deceiued, is wiser than he that is not deceiued, & he that doth deceiue, is honester than he that doth not deceiue'.¹²⁷

This then demonstrates the importance of understanding the original context for a quotation, for here, Cornwallis turns Tasso's words against himself in a way which is contrary to the poet's intention, and to other contemporary readings of the passage.¹²⁸ So here, unlike his usual habit of relying on a reader's knowledge of a quotation to enable them to quickly read it in the right way, instead Cornwallis perhaps relies upon a lesser knowledge of a passage to encourage his readers to think about it in a way contrary to its usual interpretation.

¹²⁷ Sir John Harington, *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse* (London: Richard Field, 1591), sig. ¶iijv.

¹²⁸ See also Sir Philip Sidney's similar argument about the moral value of poetry in *The Defence of Poesy* (c. 1580), in Gavin Alexander (ed.), *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 14.

But this context of Cornwallis's fears about the possible moral mishandling of poetry is important for the detailed, phrase by phrase analysis he subjects Tasso's verse to later in the essay. For it could be interpreted as a demonstration to his readers of how to go about reading poetry safely, so that its potential worth could be extracted, and it could rightfully take its place alongside history-writing as a source of knowledge. This would be in line with the use of the same technique of exegesis at the start of 'The Instruments of a States-man' and in the *Discourses*, which associates this style of using a quotation with a stronger directly pedagogic intention than is usually the case with the *Essays*. It is reminiscent too of the way in which Cornwallis glossed the meanings of historical personages in 'Of the obseruation, and vse of thinges', something he particularly described as a type of teaching aid (52-3). Cornwallis's 'safe' use of poetry, coming right after he has warned of its potential evils, also further serves to establish his credentials and increase his readers' confidence in him; his analysis of the quotations becomes both a literary and a ethical *coup*.

4. The moral reader

In 'Of Affection' (1601), Cornwallis discusses the dangers inherent in falling prey to the titular subject, 'whose inticements brings on equally both excesse and obstinancie'. As evidence for this, he turns to the example of poetry. Cornwallis calls upon his readers to 'Witnesse the many idle lines of louers, whoe haue made many foule Papers for the sakes of their faire Mistresse, whose luxurious conceits they haue made loue answer for and called them loue. *Talis amor teneat, nec sit mihi cura mederi*' (83). The quotation Cornwallis uses here to illustrate the ridiculous nature of extreme affection is taken from Alpheisiboeus's despairing lament in the eighth of Virgil's *Eclogues*, when he desires that Daphnis will suffer the same unrequited love for him that he has for Daphnis, and *nec sit mihi cura mederi*, 'and I shall not cure him' (l. 89).

This line from Virgil is the last of a four-line quotation from Eclogue VIII which is a staple of rhetorical textbooks in the period. The schoolteacher Thomas Farnaby (1574/5-1647) uses it in his *Index rhetoricus* (1625) to illustrate the figure of epizeuxis, and it remained associated with this figure throughout the seventeenth century.¹²⁹ In 1657, John Smith followed Farnaby (as he acknowledges in his margin) by using the same lines to illustrate epizeuxis in his own handbook *The Mysterie of Rhetorique Unvail'd*. In his description of the function of epizeuxis, Smith tells his students that ‘This figure serves to the Emphatical setting forth of the vehemency of the affections and passions of the mind’, explaining that its power comes through the use of repetition: ‘a word is germinated, and repeated, by way of emphasis’.¹³⁰

In cutting the four-line quotation down to one, Cornwallis removes the reason for the quotation’s suitability for illustrating epizeuxis, i.e., the emphasis created through the repetition of words and phrases found in the Latin verse (there are several instances of this throughout the four lines; in the case of this final line, the opening ‘Talis amor’ has already been used as the first words two lines above). But Cornwallis immediately follows the quotation with his own comment on such lovers as have been described, stating that, ‘I wish them no Physicke’ (84). In so doing, he takes up the last part of the Latin sentence and reformulates it into his own words, offering not a direct translation but a form of transformative imitation. More than this, he provides the missing element of repetition, so that between the two languages, and the two writers, we find a version of epizeuxis. Furthermore, it is an example of the trope which is being used in the exact context which Smith specifies, in a discussion which emphasizes the ‘vehemency of the affections and passions of the mind’.

¹²⁹ Thomas Farnaby, *Index rhetoricus scholis & institutioni tenerioris aetatis accommodatus* (London: Felix Kingston, 1629), p. 22. I quote from the second edition; the *Index* was first published in 1625, and was then reprinted several times over the seventeenth century.

¹³⁰ Smith, *The Mysterie of Rhetorique Unvail'd*, p. 90.

In this moment then, we find a conflation of practices of reading and practices of rhetoric, fittingly situated around a discussion of ‘the passions of the mind’, a subject integral both to Cornwallis’s essays and to the particular strand of rhetorical practice which informs them, a rhetorical mode which combines a way of writing (or speaking) with a way of being.

This brings us back to ‘Of Discourse’, and the connections made within it between early-modern theories and habits of conversation and Cornwallis’s practice of essay writing. More particularly, it brings us to another, inter-related connotation of Cornwallis’s statement that a gentleman’s ‘knowledge [and conversation] ought to be generall’. He goes on from this to explain that ‘One knowledge is but one part of the house, a baywindowe or a gable-ende. Who builds his house so maimed, much lesse himselfe? No, be compleate’ (36-7). Cornwallis here uses vocabulary which would become central to the conduct manuals of the seventeenth century. One of the most famous, written by Henry Peacham (1578-*c.*1644), was called *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), and promised its reader that it would fashion ‘him absolute in the most necessary & commendable Qualities concerning Minde or Bodie that may be required in a Noble Gentleman’.¹³¹

This manner of being ‘compleate’ therefore situates the *Essayes* within the wider genre of advice literature, and in the tradition of writing on conduct and conversation.

Cornwallis’s advice to keep the conversation general follows received advice about conversational practices, which can be traced back to the teachings of Greek and Roman authorities on conversation: both Plutarch and Cicero, as well as other classical authors such as Varro, warned that conversation should be kept at a general, inclusive level, and

¹³¹ Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (London: Francis Constable, 1622), title page. Peacham’s book, probably the best-known contribution to English conduct literature of the seventeenth century, was reprinted in 1627 and 1634.

that a speaker should not spend too much time on any one subject.¹³² Such advice was to remain common currency across the seventeenth century.¹³³ Peacham's book was re-printed in 1661,¹³⁴ and in 1670, the clergyman Richard Lingard (1633/4-1670) explained to the young readers of *A letter of advice to a young gentleman leaving the university* that one should not 'impose your *Academical* discourses, nor glitter affectedly in *terms of Art*', noting too it was a similar 'weakness' to talk 'of ones *Trade* or *Profession*, to those that neither *mind* it nor *understand* it'.¹³⁵ And in the same decade, the academic and educationalist Obadiah Walker (1616-1699) cautioned that one should not 'in *ordinary company* treat of matters too subtil and curious'.¹³⁶

In this way, Cornwallis's statement that a gentleman's knowledge and conversation 'ought to be generall' is connected with a way of being; not just to a way of learning or reading. Moreover, that way of being is in turn directly linked to a way of writing. This chapter has stressed the underlying ethical impulses which form the backbone of Cornwallis's reading habits. Building upon this, the next chapter will show that the way of learning and the way of being described above were, in any case, closely connected.

¹³² Varro's advice was itself discussed by Aulus Gellius, whose idealised *urbanus homo* might be seen as something resembling a classical antecedent to the 'compleat gentleman' of early-modern advice literature (and indeed, of Cornwallis's essays). On these classical writers and conversation, see Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 96.

¹³³ Steven Shapin discusses the continued presence of such concerns in the later part of the century, noting that 'it was widely recognized that civil conversation was highly vulnerable to forms of discourse which were demanding of technical competence or which bore upon men's passions and interests'. Shapin, *A social history of truth: civility and science in seventeenth-century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 118.

¹³⁴ Peacham's text even retains its currency in today's era of self-help books, as evidenced by a work which takes his title for its own. See Brad Miner, *The Compleat Gentleman: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry* (Dallas, Texas: Spence Publishing Company, 2004), a text which has a chapter advocating the cultivation of 'the commingling of restraint and detachment that is sprezzatura and that we can easily call cool'. In an interesting modern parallel to the aims of Peacham's text, feedback from one reviewer on the Amazon.com website states: 'I cannot imagine a better gift for a young gentleman on the verge of graduation. This book has the potential to make the reader a better man'.

¹³⁵ Richard Lingard, *A Letter of Advice To a Young Gentleman Leaving the University* (London, 1671), p. 11 and p. 15. Lingard originally wrote this as a private letter of advice for a friend of his, James Lane, at the request of the latter's father, Viscount Lanesborough.

¹³⁶ Obadiah Walker, *Of Education. Especially of Younger Gentlemen* (Oxford: at the Theater, 1673), p. 250. Walker based his advice on his own teaching experience at University College, Oxford (where he rose to be Master from 1676-1688).

Cornwallis himself hints at this when he explains that one cannot be a good reader before first being a good man: ‘many [people] are so ill as when they haue found out an interpretation meete to nourish their sensuality, they stay there and are the worse for their reading’ (192). Concerns about the moral status of the reader remain prominent throughout the seventeenth century, so that in 1668 Meric Casaubon was still expressing similar worries to Cornwallis’s about the potential misuse of reading by any man who does not have the requisite ‘pregnancie of witt and judgement, naturally, to make a right use of all he hath read, in due tyme & place’.¹³⁷

The idea that to be a good reader, one must first be a good man, is also linked to one strand of classical teaching on oratory which was further developed in the early-modern period: namely the idea that to be successful in moving his audience, an orator must be a good man (or at least, give the appearance of goodness). It is the combinations of these rhetorics of reading, writing, and being in the *Essayes* which Chapter Two of this thesis will now explore.

¹³⁷ Casaubon, *Generall Learning*, p. 12.

Chapter Two

The Essayist as Writer: The Affective Rhetoric of Cornwallis's *Essays*

Introduction: Competing Modes of Rhetoric.

I knew a Country Church furnished with a Clocke, whose hammer was stricken by an Image like a man; vpon the wheelles stood a Catte, which, when the Image stroke, made such haste away as the Parishioners, when they should haue wept for their sinnes and were moued thereunto by the Preacher, laughed at the Catte's nimblenesse. So is it with this man's hearers; they catch at some prettie sounding words and let the matter slip without any attention. (37)

Cornwallis's tale of the cat and the church clock comes at the end of his essay 'Of Discourse'. Through it, he illustrates and comments upon two competing modes of rhetoric. The first, represented by the cat, has great 'nimblenesse', but is basically nothing more than a superficial distraction, as symbolized here by the way in which the exploits of the cat move the congregation's attention away from the sermon. This distraction is dangerous, even though it may appear to be amusing, for it turns the parishioners away from their moral and spiritual improvement to concentrate instead on something worldly and fleeting. Similarly, the 'prettie sounding words' of Cornwallis's interlocutor do not ornament, but rather mask, any substance contained within his speech. The feline rhetorical mode also distracts the congregation from another use of rhetoric which is described in the passage, this time represented by the preacher. Cornwallis explains that the congregation 'should haue wept for their sinnes', and that they have been 'moued thereunto by the Preacher'. As is indicated by the weeping which is meant to result from the preacher's words, his discourse is meant to direct his audience towards the spiritually beneficial end of repentance through the implementation of emotional persuasion, in other words, through affective rhetoric.

Significantly, however, the parishioners have not been 'moued', but rather, distracted by the cat's playfulness; in Cornwallis's analogy, they have been distracted by rhetoric which, in its superficial ornamentation, distracts attention from the matter, rather than

illuminating it. In this way, the speaker is as potentially dangerous as the poets who, 'larding their writings with fictions, feed the ignorant and vicious with as much poison as preseruatiue' (192). For while the latter infect the understanding by introducing the dangers of 'fiction', beguiling the reader by sugaring over something potentially unpalatable, the former 'poison' instead by 'dress[ing] Truth and wisdom too gawdily. It is the country fashion to sugar ouer what is naturally sweete' (37).

This concentration on style over matter is the same criticism Cornwallis levels against Cicero's imitators in 'Of Vanitie'. For although Cicero's 'matter is substantiall and honest', it is ill-served by his copious style, which Cornwallis vividly describes as 'but a pickled Herring to bring on drinke; for his diuisions and repetitions are for nothing but to bring his memory acquainted with his tongue and to make three words of one', the down-to-earth example of the herring serving to bring rhetoric out of the schoolroom and into the alehouse. Cornwallis is amazed that Cicero ever 'got the people of Rome tyed so fast to his tongue, for were his matter no better than his stile, hee should not perswade me to looke vpon him' (175). In other words, he is astonished that Cicero's audience were ever able to get past the trappings of the 'prettie words' to find the 'honest' matter beneath.

It is Cicero's rhetorical choices which has lead to his 'betray[al]' by his imitators, who have ignored the matter and copied only the style, which has the same effect as the style of speech described at the end of 'Of Discourse': 'He profits not his Auditory' (37). Cornwallis describes Cicero's imitators as 'Pedantes and Boyes' (175), and this mirrors the final guest at the assembly, who is a 'Creature that weyes euery word and will be sure to turn the *verbe* behind, affects elegancy and to be thought learned'; in other words, a pedant.¹ Meric Casaubon uses similar language later in the seventeenth century to

¹ On the figure of the pedant in the early modern period, see A. Stäuble, *'Parlare per lettera': Il pedante nella commedia del Cinquecento e altri saggi sul teatro rinascimentale* (Rome, 1991). On the French context in particular, see Jocelyn Royé, *La figure du pédant de Montaigne à Molière* (Geneva: Droz, 2008).

distinguish the true ‘generall scholar’ from the pedants, who, ‘for a little witt, & some quaint language would be thought the onely worthy, & truly learned of the world’.²

Pedantry and rhetoric are linked elsewhere in the *Essays*, too, as Cornwallis explains that ‘Rethorike’s Cookery is the vomit of a Pedant’ (200). As with his comparison of an overly ornamental style with a pickled herring, we here see another example of the digestive process traditionally associated with reading and writing being exploited or going awry; in this case, even going backwards. The pairing of rhetoric and pedantry was a traditional one, as illustrated by the academic drama *Pedantius*, originally acted at Trinity College, Cambridge on 6 February 1581, and written by one of the college fellows, Edward Forsett (1553/4-1629/30).³ In the published edition (1631), before the main drama begins, the character Pedantius ‘discusses himself’.⁴ His speech is broken down into lines given to characters named after rhetorical tropes such as ‘Apostrophe’, ‘Battism’, and ‘Comparison’, each of whom are given a line reflective of the figure’s rhetorical use, so that ‘Metaphor’, for instance begins a sentence: ‘And if Dromodotus does not equal him with his barbarous whirlwind’; and ‘Mimesis’ concludes it: ‘at least he will surpass him in his formal points’ (ll. 9-10).⁵ This literalises one of the many criticisms leveled at pedants; that they were overly concerned with a passive, mechanical approach to rhetoric, such as listing tropes, rather than its performative, active use.⁶

It is the pedant’s lack of interest in the practical application of rhetoric to moral ends which remains particularly troubling for Casaubon, as it was seventy years earlier for

² Casaubon, *Generall Learning*, p. 120.

³ The date is established in the edition of the play by G. C. Moore Smith (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1905), p. x.

⁴ Edward Forsett, *Pedantius Comoedia* (London: William Stansby for Robert Mylbourn, 1631), [n.p.]. English translations are from the online edition translated by Dana Sutton: <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/forsett/act1trans.html> [accessed: 14/03/12].

⁵ The character of the pedant in drama has a long history, reaching back to the figure of the pedagogue in Plautus’s *Bacchides*.

⁶ Such a criticism against pedants was still a commonplace in the nineteenth century, when Thomas de Quincey could write that ‘A pedant only will insist upon the names’, *Essays on Style, Rhetoric, and Language*, ed. Fred N. Scott (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1893), p. 64.

Cornwallis; tying in as it does with their shared preoccupation with the correct moral disposition required in a good reader. Casaubon criticizes the pedant who ‘think[s] himself a learned man, because he hath read much, and when he doth make use of his reading, unseasonably, impertinently, think’s of it well himselfe, though no bodie else doth’, and through this ensures that the name pedant taints all scholars, being ‘very wrongfully cast upon all, indifferently, whose industrie, & generosity of spirit doth aspire much further’.⁷ This mirrors wider concerns about the misapplication of learning across the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, concerns dramatized in several plays (both academic and popular) written in the years leading up to the publication of the *Essayes*. In plays such as *Pedantius*, or Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (1595-96?), learned men, pedagogues and scholars like Holofernes, are often depicted as self-important to the extent that their sense of superiority precludes them from putting their learning to a practical moral use which aids the wider community, a use which Cornwallis describes at the end of ‘Of Vanitie’ as the proper goal of all learning:

There are in man yet many things that might be made vertuous, for his glimmering is a kinne to the sight of our first father before his fall. The breath that was once breathed into him (though corrupted) yet is not wholly taken away. Except Vanitie still makes vs fall, wee may yet rise to Diuine height; to defend which poyson, Contemplation and studie are excellent Antidotes. (184)

As shown in its negative portrayal on the stage, such a narrow preoccupation with learning as an end in itself was commonly seen as antisocial and irrelevant; learning was instead meant to form part of a larger economy of intellectual, moral, and social exchange. It is this concern which lies behind the sententious opening of ‘Of the admirable Abilities of the mind’ (1601), when Cornwallis writes: ‘That states men become more exact and singular then other men is because they rule men. Schollers, that

⁷ Casaubon, *Generall Learning*, p. 120.

are in the next rancke, be inferiour because their knowledges are limited; for none confesse themselues so thoroughly in their bookes as liues' (235).

Correctly used, learning should be shared and conveyed through the civil conversation of men such as Cornwallis's ideal gentleman from 'Of Discourse'; whose virtues Cornwallis's gentleman-essayist sought to represent through his own 'generall' discourse in the *Essays*. It is this first type of sterile and unprofitable learning which, as seen above, Cornwallis frequently associates with an overly ornate style of speech or writing, which is similarly unproductive; as the potentially profitable 'matter' becomes subservient to 'prettie wordes'.

The insistence Cornwallis places on retaining a bond between style and matter involves him in the debate about this very subject which takes us back to the divide between the so-called Ciceronians and Anti-Ciceronians which was mentioned in the previous section. Cornwallis, as we have seen, has been described even as a 'radical' member of the latter school. The pedagogue Roger Ascham (1514/15-1568), perhaps the most famous English educationalist of the Elizabethan period, is, in contrast, frequently cited as an exemplum of the Ciceronian tribe; an allegiance which was noted by his contemporaries, as well as by modern critics. In *The Advancement of Learning*, Bacon famously declared that Ascham 'almost deifie[d] *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*', and concluded that 'Here, therefore, is the first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter'.⁸ Such a statement places Cornwallis and Ascham firmly on either side of the divide, for this runs directly contrary to Cornwallis's continual insistence on the primacy of matter (*res*) over style (*verba*). And yet the line between Ascham and Cornwallis on this subject is, in reality, not nearly so clearly drawn.

⁸ Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 22.

As Thomas M. Greene has demonstrated, Ascham does not actually advocate the ‘study [of] words and not matter’, as Bacon alleges.⁹ Rather, Ascham criticized those who made too strong a divide the other way, lamenting the ‘hurt ye do to learning, that care not for wordes, but for matter, and so make a deuorce betwixt the tong and the hart’.¹⁰ As Alvin Vos has pointed out, ‘Ascham knows very well that the hallmark of Cicero’s rhetorical theory is its insistence on the union of *sapientia* and *eloquentia*, on the harmonious partnership of words and matter’.¹¹ Suddenly, Cornwallis and Ascham do not look so far removed after all. As for Cornwallis, too, despite his emphasis on the importance of content, it is the ‘harmonious partnership of words and matter’ which is vital; and it is this which prevents him from falling into the camp which Ascham himself criticizes for ‘car[ing] not for wordes, but for matter, and so make a deuorce betwixt the tong and the hart’. In fact, the dedicatory letter from Henry Olney to the Harington ladies which is prefixed to Part One of the *Essayes* employs exactly this vocabulary to describe Cornwallis, reassuring the noblewomen that ‘*I doubt not but his heart (which alwaies agreeth with his tongue) & all his other powers are, & shall euer be, consecrated to your Ladiships’ seruice*’ (3).

A professed dislike of rhetoric is a characteristic of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century essayists, epitomized by Montaigne’s expression of his antagonism towards classical rhetoric in *De la vanité des paroles* (‘Of the vanity of words’, I.51). Peter Mack has demonstrated the ways in which, in spite of Montaigne’s protestations, his compositional technique in the *Essais* in fact ‘owes everything to his grammar-school

⁹ Thomas M. Greene, ‘Roger Ascham: The Perfect End of Shooting’, *ELH*, 36:4 (1969): 609-625; p. 614. Greene further suggests that it is Bacon himself who ‘could justifiably be accused of fermenting that divorce’ between words and things, pp. 614-615.

¹⁰ Roger Ascham, *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong but specially purposed for the priuate brynging vp of youth in ientlemen and noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latin tonge* (London: Iohn Daye, 1570), fol. 46^v.

¹¹ Alvin Voss, “‘Good Matter and Good Utterance’: The Character of English Ciceronianism”, *Studies in English Literature*, 19 (1979): 3-18.

training',¹² and Chapter One of this thesis similarly sought to demonstrate some of the ways in which Cornwallis's use of his reading was also indebted to classical and humanist pedagogies based on established rhetorical training in reading and writing. Part of the essayists' disavowal of interest in formal rhetorical techniques is intended to disarm the reader and encourage a sense of artlessness in their prose, rather than of coercion. Mack quite rightly points to the formal rhetorical and logical training which underpins the essayists' compositional techniques, despite their own protestations against rhetoric in their essays. But significantly, as the comparison between the two suggests, just as it is misapplied or overly pedantic learning which Cornwallis criticizes, rather than learning itself, so he does not dismiss all rhetoric, but rather, only what he considers to be its (moral) misuse. This is why he praises Montaigne in the terms he does in 'Of Censuring' (1600): 'hee hath made Morrall Philosophie speake couragiously, and instead of her gowne, giuen her an Armour. He has put Pedanticall Schollerisme out of countenance, and made manifest that learning mingled with Nobilitie shines most clearly'. It is why, too, he specifically praises Montaigne's English translator for having 'translated into a stile admitting as fewe Idle words as our language will endure' (42), for this economical style brings with it rhetorical and therefore moral connotations which Cornwallis believes well suits the content of Montaigne's essays.

When he uses the word 'rhetoric' in the *Essayes*, Cornwallis always gives it the implications of an almost caricatured level of Ciceronian excess and copiousness, as in 'Of Vanitie'. But this extremely elaborate style is only one of the strands of late sixteenth-century rhetoric which he could have invoked. For a contemporary guide to another available mode of rhetoric, we can turn to the now little-known figure of Thomas Storer

¹² Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne*, p. 1. On Montaigne and rhetoric, see further Frank Lestringant (ed.), *Rhétorique de Montaigne: actes du colloque de la Société des amis de Montaigne, Paris, 14 et 15 décembre 1984* (Paris: Champion, 1985); and John O'Brien, Malcolm Quainton, and James J. Supple (eds.), *Montaigne et la rhétorique: actes du colloque de St Andrews (28-31 March 1992)* (Paris: Champion, 1995).

(c.1571-1604), a poet from Christ Church, Oxford, who was still famous enough in the late seventeenth-century to be praised by Anthony Wood as having been ‘held in great renown for his most excellent vein in poetry’, but who has now fallen off the edge of the Elizabethan literary map.¹³ In his poem *The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey Cardinall* (1599) Storer describes a quite different mode of rhetoric. Having presented the ‘nymph’ Theology, Storer describes Rhetoric as one of her handmaidens:

The next, faire, smiling with a pleasing cheere,
 Had pow’re to rauish and enchant mens eares,
 High *Rhetorike* whose shadowed vaile showne cleere,
 With siluer tongues, and ouer it she weares
 A wimpled scarf bedew’d with hearers teares:
 Whose captiue hearts she should detaine long while,
 With pleasure of her vnaffected stile.¹⁴

Other handmaidens include Logic and Astronomy, among others, as Storer demonstrates the way in which all disciplines were able to benefit from rhetoric, joined together by the circle of the arts discussed in the previous section. Moreover, Rhetoric’s status as a handmaid of Theology illustrates the potential for a morally inflected impulse behind the art, displaying a similar interest in the spiritual benefits of rhetoric and learning as does Cornwallis in ‘Of Vanitie’. It is not surprising that it is in this latter essay that Cornwallis first offers the reader a long discussion of bad rhetoric in the form of Ciceronian imitators and their ilk, before travelling round to demonstrate the true quest which should motivate the accumulation of learning at the end of the essay, when he describes the possibility of regaining something of our pre-lapsarian virtue and wisdom through the correct use of learning (and, by implication, rhetoric). The picture of rhetoric offered by Storer was a popular one; for example this stanza appears under the heading

¹³ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. Philip Bliss, 4 vols. (London: 1813-1820), pp. 750-751.

¹⁴ Thomas Storer, *The life and death of Thomas Wolsey Cardinall. Diuided into three parts: his aspiring, triumph, and death by Thomas Storer, Student of Christ Church in Oxford* (London: Valentine Simmes for Thomas Dawson, 1599), sig. E^r.

‘Retoricke’ in Robert Allott’s anthology *England’s Parnassus* (1600),¹⁵ and it also acts as something of a mirror for the very similar picture of rhetoric which lurks behind the anti-rhetoric façade of Cornwallis’s *Essayes*, a rhetoric which is at once affectless and affective.

In contrast to the overly-complex style explicitly associated with the term rhetoric by Cornwallis in the *Essayes*, Storer’s appellation of Rhetoric’s ‘vnaffected stile’ is instead very close to Cornwallis’s statement about his own style in ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’, namely that he seeks to ‘cloth [morality] in trueth and plainenesse’ (202). It is reminiscent too of his criticisms of the ‘affected’ style of speech in ‘Of Affectation’ (1600), which is characterized by the ‘disease of wordes’ (68) that is elsewhere said to have been ‘let in by *Cicero*’ (176). Furthermore, Storer’s description of the scarf Rhetoric is wearing as ‘bedew’d with hearers teares’ takes us back to the country church where we began, and to the parishioners who ‘should haue wept for their sinnes’, but instead ‘laughed at the Catte’s nimblenesse’. Unlike the preacher in Cornwallis’s tale, Rhetoric in Storer’s poem has been successful in moving her audience to visible emotion; and she has done so through the use of an ‘vnaffected stile’.

The school of rhetorical teaching represented here is one which placed a strong emphasis on the orator’s capacity to touch the audience’s emotions. This is the same school of rhetoric which stressed the need for the good orator to be a good man, or at least to give the appearance of goodness, which returns us to the conclusion of the previous chapter, in which I introduced the idea of a connection between this and Cornwallis’s argument that to be a good reader, one must first be a good man. This association between good speaking and good character makes it therefore unsurprising that this mode of rhetoric is represented in the *Essayes* by the figure of a preacher. The need for an orator to have a good character has its origins in Aristotle’s theories of *ethos*,

¹⁵ Robert Allott, *England’s Parnassus, or, The choysrest flowers of our moderne poets, with their poetickall comparisons descriptions of benties, personages, castles, pallaces, mountaines, groues, seas, springs, riuers, &c.: whereunto are annexed other various discourses both pleasant and profitable* (London: N. Ling, C. Burby, and T. Hayes, 1600), p. 342.

or character, in the *Rhetoric*, but it was taken up in an altered form by some later Roman orators such as Quintilian, before being transmuted and transformed in the early modern period by both rhetorical theorists and, as I will argue in this chapter, by Cornwallis.

The role of emotion in rhetorical teaching has a close connection too with theories of the passions, as knowledge of the passions and how to control them formed the basis of the use of affect in oratory. Treatises on the passions became increasingly popular around the turn of the seventeenth century; perhaps the most famous English vernacular treatise on the subject came out in the same year as Cornwallis's essays were published: *The Passions of the Mind in General* by the Jesuit Thomas Wright (c.1561-1623). Such treatises frequently engaged with strategies of self-knowledge and self-control, which could be exploited both by professional rhetorical tacticians and more mundanely by skilled exponents of civil conversation; for similar pieces of advice were offered in conduct books popular in the period. These connections between rhetoric and medical writing, theoretical discourses on the passions, and conduct literature emphasize the move towards moral and spiritual improvements which were entwined with theories of discourse. In other words, the interconnectedness of the arts of speaking (or writing) and the arts of living: something expressly suited to the first-person, interrogatory, intimate voice of the essayist.

1. The Rhetoric of Self-Knowledge in the *Essays*

In the Introduction to this chapter I argued that the preacher in Cornwallis's tale of the country church in 'Of Discourse' represents an affective mode of rhetoric which places a strong emphasis on both the importance of touching the emotions of the audience and on the *ethos* or (good) character of the orator. But the preacher cannot retain the attention of his flock when faced with the competition of the 'Catte's nimblenesse', that is, the 'prettie wordes' which distract attention away from the real 'matter' at hand. He is

therefore used as an example of unsuccessful orator. I would now like to suggest that Cornwallis presents the preacher as praiseworthy, but ultimately unsuccessful, in his use of rhetoric because of what is in a sense the pragmatic end to which he is trying to put it, even if that end is one of encouraging moral or spiritual improvement. In a sense, the preacher forces his affective rhetoric onto the parishioners, rather than encouraging them to take it upon themselves. The preacher's use of affective rhetoric, although put to good use as he encourages the parishioners to repent their sins, is in this sense comparable to the pragmatism which is one of the motivations behind Francis Bacon's interest in the persuasive power of the emotions. In contrast, affective rhetoric for Cornwallis is not merely a mode of speaking which has at its heart an attempt to persuade. It is not just a way of achieving a goal, but rather itself intrinsically part of the goal. That is to say, it is part of a synthesized, organic mode of being, part of a continual process directed towards individual and societal well-being and improvement which is taking place at all times and not just being switched on at a particular moment, for a particular end. In other words, it is the ultimate conjunction of words and matter, the ultimate way of ensuring that there is never 'a divorce between the tongue and the heart'.

At the beginning of Cornwallis's essay 'Of Resolution' (1600) he writes that, 'The worlde is a booke; the wordes and actions of men Commentaries vpon that volume; the former like manuscripts priuate; the latter common, like things printed' (5). It is a striking opening, and not just to this essay, but to the entire collection, for 'Of Resolution' is the first of the *Essayes* published in the first volume of 1600. In these brief opening lines, Cornwallis sets in place his work's foundation stones. This essay therefore lends itself particularly well to a discussion through which to tease out some of the most important aspects of the relationship between rhetoric and reading in the *Essayes* which forms the basis of the connection between the arguments of this chapter and Chapter One.

Firstly, the description of the world as a book references the traditional concept of

reading the 'book of nature' as part of the accumulation of wisdom. As Chapter One sought to show, this is something which Cornwallis saw as integral to his ideal of 'generall' knowledge. Secondly, in making a more nuanced distinction between the different types of 'commentaries vpon that volume', Cornwallis then introduces his belief that 'the wordes and actions of men' should be one and the same. The latter is just the 'common' or public presentation of the former, and both of these are ultimately the outward representatives of even more 'priuate' thoughts: 'performing any thing, it is the giuing thoughtes bodies and sending them into the world' (219), as Cornwallis explains elsewhere.

The first of these, then, relates to the rhetoric of reading and observation; the second to the rhetoric of speaking and writing. Having set up them both, Cornwallis then moves on in his second paragraph to introduce the glue with which he will join these building blocks together: the socio-rhetorical creation which is his essayist.

Truly, I neede no other example than myne owne life, which endured continuall troubles, while youth and folly gouerned my barke in a sea of chaunges. I still contradicted my selfe, attempted nothing, but a languishing wearinesse possessed me before the ende. But it was no matter; so vnworthy were those thoughts and intents as they were worthy of an vntimely death and to be interred in the mire of Irresolution. In the end I found my selfe. Aye, and my soule vndertooke to guise me into a more wholesome aire. I dare not say she hath kept promise really, but it was my owne fault; yet in part she hath. Her motions, my memory, and bookes haue done something. (5)

The first encounter between Cornwallis and the reader is a formative one. It immediately introduces the essayist's self-deprecatory and confiding tone, engaging the reader's sympathy at the very start of the collection, in what is ultimately a prolonged exercise in *captatio benevolentiae*, or the capturing of the reader's goodwill; in a way replacing the traditional epistle to the reader which would usually seek to overtly perform this function.

Part of the way in which Cornwallis does this is by introducing the impression that he is on a continual journey of self-improvement. In this way, the essayist as presented in the text personifies his subject of 'Resolution': the perfect conjunction of 'hart and tong' which is essential to Cornwallis's understanding of the proper function of rhetoric. This mirrors similar moments of union between essayist, style, and subject, in other essays; as in 'Of Sleepe' (1600), where the 'drowsie stile' of the essay both metaphorically imitates, and supposedly literally replaces, Cornwallis's usual afternoon napping (58). More than this, the essay form itself embodies 'Resolution' too, thanks to the generic links between 'essays' and 'resolves' as literary forms in the period; Owen Felltham, for example, calls an individual example of his *Resolues Diuine, Morall, Politicall* an 'Essay'.¹⁶ The union between essayist and essay, between words and matter, becomes even more 'compleate'.

Cornwallis's self-presentation in this paragraph in fact encapsulates two senses of 'resolution': both the resolve to do better and the more stoically inflected resolve to become stead-fast through self-knowledge. 'I found my selfe', Cornwallis tells the reader, 'Aye, and my soule vndertooke to guide me into a more wholesome aire'. At the same time, however: 'I dare not say she hath kept her promise really, but it was my owne fault. [...] Her motions, my owne memory, and bookes haue done something', but although Seneca and Plato among the latter 'offtime make me thinke well', yet 'they seldome make me do well'. Although he presents it as an ideal, Cornwallis also acknowledges that the combination of thinking and doing is difficult, and must therefore be part of a continually evolving process.

Cornwallis continues to interrogate the practicality of his ideals in the essay's second paragraph, this time engaging a form of *ekphrasis* (in its more general sense of vivid

¹⁶ Felltham, *Resolues Diuine, morall, politicall*, sig. A2r.

representation of a person or event) to present the reader with a picture of his difficulties at home:¹⁷

Me thinkes I am strong and able to encounter any affection; but hardly haue my thoughts made an ende of this gallant discourse, but in comes a wife or a friend, at whose sight my Armour of defence is broken, and I could weepe with them or be content to laugh at their triuial sports. (5)

Reid Barbour has claimed that '[w]hereas the challenges of fashioning the self fill the pages of Montaigne and early Renaissance writers, Stuart essayists have a penchant for crystallizing the perils that vex the daily pursuit of resolution', but Cornwallis's essays, as here, combine the two; and indeed the former is integral to his exploration of the latter.¹⁸

Moving on from this particular moment of broken resolve, Cornwallis turns to discuss the problems of failing resolve more generally. Just as his whole essay is based around a resolve to better himself – a process, rather than a state already achieved – so his concerns broaden out from current difficulties to the fear of what might be to come:

I am afraid griefes and calamities would ouerthrow me. Nay, I will not be affraid (since it is truth) to confesse that I am more troubled to thinke Disasters should trouble me then of themselues. Yet I am sometimes perswaded not to mistrust my selfee, since I haue already tasted some store of crosses; but they are nothing, no not preparatiues to that I may feelee. (6)

This passage sends us back to the discussion of Cornwallis's use of Homer in the previous chapter. For the lines above are infused with the spirit of the quotation from the Latin translation of the *Odyssey* which Cornwallis incorporates into his text in 'Of Vaine-glory' (1601), in which Ulysses attempts to restore the courage of his men by reminding them of how they overcame past misfortunes (188). As the final line of the above extract shows, however, the remembrance of escaping past troubles is not enough

¹⁷ On *ekphrasis*, see Claire Preston, 'Ekphrasis: painting in words', in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, eds. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 115-129.

¹⁸ Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics*, p. 119.

to comfort Cornwallis: 'they are nothing, no not preparatiues to that I may feele'. Cornwallis has taken up the sentiments expressed in the *Odyssey* into his own language, but the inspiration of the ancient poet only takes him so far, and requires that something else be added:

Not leauing these thoughts thus, I beginne to search into the inventory of my thinges esteemed, and I find not that I haue cause to loue any thing so preciously. I haue a wife, and a very good one; I loue her according to her deserts; but should shee fall into any thing except dishonestie (which her vertue I know will defend her from), I wold not weepe if I could choose nor do any thing more than stand the surer vpon my guard to resist fortune [...] For my parents I owe them voluntarily that which the lawes of God and of Nature exact of all men [...] Yet should they loose their wealth or their liues, I would neither teare my haire nor melt into womanish exclamations. (6)

The missing element which Cornwallis provides here is a turn to the world and people around him. He demonstrates the need actively to combine the past and the present, the ancient wisdom of the poets and his own memories of the past, with current observation of the people and world around him; in other words, the bringing together of the different sources of 'generall' knowledge which were introduced in the first section of the chapter. In this way, then, we see Cornwallis using reading as an active skill which is nonetheless not 'reading for action' in the traditional sense, but rather one part of a bigger process of improving ways of knowing and of being.

This synthesis is developed a few lines later in the essay, when Cornwallis explains that 'Thus I haue beene content to hold you in mine owne example the longer, as taking the opportunitie of recording these honest thoughts; whose will, I hope I shall the better follow since I haue set my hand to their *Booke*' (6-7). In other words, reading, observing, and writing: all must go together. The optimism that accompanies the bringing together of these different forms of action culminates a short time later at the mid-way point of the essay, when Cornwallis begins a new paragraph with the emphatic exclamation: 'Banish these grosse perturbations, all noble spirits!' (7).

In the two paragraphs which follow this, Cornwallis explains that ‘I do not poetically deifie Resolue, neither do I set vp a marke impossible to hit’, thus making explicit the critique of the Stoic ideal which was inferred earlier through his depiction of his own resolve being broken. He states further that: ‘I speake of no impossibilitie; perhaps at the first some little difficultie there belongs so to the basest trades’. The ‘little difficultie’ which comes ‘at the first’ is reflected by the overarching structure of the essay itself, which begins with Cornwallis’s own ‘little difficultie[s]’, and yet travels beyond them, so that by this point he is able boldly to claim that ‘I am my selfe still though the world were turned with the wrong side outward’ (7). He assures the reader that ‘If I loose ground in vertue, I will repent, not wash Handkerchiefs in my teares. Man knowes not himselfe vntill he hath tasted of both fortunes. Euerie milk-sop can endure to swimme in hot bathes’ (8). The ‘troubles’ of the earlier part of the essay have been transformed into opportunities to test and display Cornwallis’s strengthened resolve, and he makes his point even more emphatic by directly addressing the reader: ‘Do you heare my friend?’ At the end of this last paragraph, however, the reader – and Cornwallis – is brought up short with a new confession: ‘I write thus; I thinke thus; and I hope to do thus; but that blessed time is not yet come’ (8). Deflating his grandiosity, as we come towards the final part of the essay, Cornwallis returns to his earlier point that everything is part of a continual process of improvement.

In the final quarter of the essay, Cornwallis moves ‘to particularities’, thus continuing with a theme which has been implicit throughout the essay: the relationship between the individual and the general (such as in the different forms of action which must be combined to form a cohesive whole). He deals first with ‘outward habit’, explaining that in his dress he would ‘conforme my selfe’, for anything else ‘comes too neere singularitie and a desire to be noted’. In the very next sentence, however, he declines to ‘conforme’ to a general opinion, explaining that ‘I am not of their minds that tax *Alexanders* putting

on the habits of the Persians'. But even though he makes his point by failing to 'conforme' with one set of opinions, he 'conformes' instead with Alexander, whose own actions in 'putting on the habits of the Persians' are described as successful in creating further conformity: 'he ioyned them to him by that yeelding' (8). In the same way that Alexander displayed a 'politick intent' by throwing off the costume of his fellows for a greater gain, so too Cornwallis distances himself from the 'conformes' of current opinion and associates himself instead with the established wisdom represented by the success of the 'politick' Alexander to engage in another type of union, between past and present.

Fittingly, the example of Alexander also raises questions 'of particularities' with regards to the bibliographical status of the *Essayes* themselves, for it is one of the pieces of internal evidence which suggests that the collection was intended to be read as exactly that – a collection. For in another discussion of the 'singularitie' of clothes in 'Of Fantasticknesse' (the penultimate essay of the 1600 volume) Cornwallis writes that 'I haue once cleared *Alexander* for his *Persian Attire*; I thinke Fantasticknes lent wisdom pollicie at that time' (70). The reference back to the previous description of this incident in 'Of Resolution' demonstrates that way in which the individual essays need to be understood as contributing to a general whole.

The *Essayes* as a whole are concerned with the relationship between rhetoric, civility, reading, and knowledge, all of which are brought together in the 'generall' conversation of the gentleman in 'Of Discourse'; a 'generall' conversation represented in the *Essayes* by Cornwallis's 'talking stile' (35). As he comes to the end of the first essay in the collection, Cornwallis crystallizes these relationships through a personal anecdote through which he demonstrates that the ethical and rhetorical ideal of the 'generall' knowledge which feeds into the gentleman-essayist's discourse is itself made up from the individual knowledge of many specific things. The ideal of knowledge Cornwallis describes here is an active

one: 'For some actions, if they be not wholly vicious, humanitie and good nature shall make me sociable' (8).

He goes on to explain further that: 'I will hauke with a faulkoner, hunt with hunters, talke of Husbandry with the seruants of Thrift, bee amorous with the Italian, and drinke with the Dutch man'. This flexibility makes him 'sociable' and popular, for by joining in with peoples' favourite activities, 'you shall thereby winne their loues'. The purpose of this is not a selfish one, however, but intended, as all true knowledge should be, for the common good: 'you may with that interest make them honest – a course neglected, but wel-becoming a wise honest man. Your determination being not to put on their imperfections, but to make them perfect'.¹⁹

Cornwallis himself uses a description of 'hawking or dogging fellowes' as a derogatory shorthand only a few paragraphs earlier in this essay, and activities such as hunting and hawking, common among gentlemen, were often perceived as suspect.²⁰ In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton (1577-1640) complained that it was too common for men to 'spend their days in hawking, hunting, etc.' rather than employing themselves in more useful activity, and he used this commonplace to bolster his statement that 'the badge of the gentry is idlenesse'.²¹ As part of an attempt throughout the *Essayes* to rehabilitate the gentleman from accusations of idleness and unprofitability, here, Cornwallis demonstrates that knowledge of such activities can in fact have a practical use in encouraging moral improvement in others. Cornwallis does not disown the traditional association of gentlemen with hunting and hawking, but he does re-situate it, presenting it not as the limits of a gentleman's learning, which precludes any other more useful

¹⁹ For a discussion of the 'wise honest man' which is very relevant in this context, see Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness*, Chapter One.

²⁰ For a discussion of such sports in this context, see Thomas S. Henricks, *Disputed Pleasures: Sport and Society in Preindustrial England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991), esp. pp. 118-22 on hunting and hawking.

²¹ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, eds. Rhonda L. Blair, Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989-2000), II.68.

activity, but rather as an essential part of a more 'general' knowledge which can be put to a practical and moral end.

Moving into the very last phase of his essay, Cornwallis directly confronts the question of whether or not he has treated his subject in a logical manner:

Some may wonder that I haue not yet touched Death, the chiefe. If thou thinkest so, thou art a coward; for in my opinion, all affections are more strong; and though to some it is the chiefe instrument of Feare, I thinke not so. Thou mistakest it; it is past feare, for thou are sure of it. Thou art vnreasonable if thou wilt buy a thing and not pay for it. Thou boughtest life and payest for it with death. (8-9)

Here, then, Cornwallis defends the way in which he has left 'Death, the chiefe', until the end of the essay. Logically, it makes sense, for 'it is past feare', and therefore should be placed after the discussion of fear within the essay. More than that, it is the end of life: 'Thou boughst life and payest for it with death', a phrase which has Biblical connotations: 'The wages of sin are death' (Romans 6:23). But the Biblical verse continues: 'but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord'. The promise of new life therefore looks forward to the rest of the volume of essays, which is beginning even as the first piece in the collection draws to its end.

'To conclude', as Cornwallis states that he will do, is to belie the notion that an essay is a spontaneous outpouring of words without any compositional logic. As he comes into his essay's final two paragraphs, Cornwallis moves away from the generalities of his Biblically inflected prose and returns once more to the personal, acknowledging his own youth – 'my face would hinder me from being thought of Age' (9). The way in which Cornwallis reasserts his presence in the essay at its close is representative of the way in which the essay (and indeed the *Essays* as a collection) is held together by the use of the personal voice.

The prominence of this voice serves two rhetorical purposes. On the one hand, Cornwallis captures the reader's good will (as he does at the beginning of 'Of Resolution') by presenting himself to his readers as a recognizably flawed but ultimately well-intentioned figure. He is then able to use this accumulation of good will to encourage them to follow him through the perturbations of the essay, and, having '[won] their loues', he can 'with that interest make them honest' (8); a course which, as we have seen, he earlier recommends as part of the purpose of shared interests and conversations. But once again, 'mak[ing] them honest' is not a stagnant goal, a pragmatic attempt to persuade his readers to a particular course of action; rather, it forms part of a continual process of improving one's way of being, and is therefore in line with Cornwallis's understanding of the interactive ethical use to which rhetoric should be put.

But the way in which the *Essayes* constantly come back around to Cornwallis's personal voice is also a rhetorical representation of the manner in which all knowledge was understood to stem from self-knowledge. This idea had its roots in antiquity, but held common currency when Cornwallis was writing his essays, as we can see by turning to Thomas Wright's popular treatise *The Passions of the Mind in Generall*. In his 'Preface to the Reader' in the second (authorized) edition of 1601, Wright explained that:

this subiect I intreate of comprehendeth the chief obiect that al the antient Philosophers aimed at, wherein they placed the most of their felicitie, that was, *Nosce teipsum*, know thy selfe.²²

Wright's emphasis on the ancient exhortation to 'know thy selfe' is fundamental to Cornwallis, who states explicitly that self-knowledge is the foundation for all other types of wisdom: 'in himselfe hee must begin and end, for in himselfe is the light of reason,

²² Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in Generall* (London: Valentine Simmes for Walter Burre, 1601), sig. B6^r. A first, unauthorized, edition was published in 1600, as Wright discusses in the dedicatory epistle to the 1601 edition.

that discoureth all things else' (131). Cornwallis develops this theme further in his essay 'Of Sorrow' (1601), when he explains that:

To know himselfe and the appurtenances to himself is the vse of knowledge, and this knowledge vnmaskes his eyes & shews him wonders in himselfe. He becomes in this like vnto God. (166)

Like Wright, Cornwallis draws upon the teachings of the 'antient Philosophers'. Here, he expands upon the striking statement that by knowing oneself, one becomes 'like vnto God', by immediately quoting Plutarch's 'Letter of Consolation to Apollonius'. Or, more specifically, Plutarch's citation from Ion that: 'Not much to say is "Know thyself"; to do | This, Zeus alone of gods doth understand', an example of the interplay between the language and sense of Cornwallis's prose and his quotations which we saw in the first section of this chapter.²³ This quotation follows straight on in Plutarch's 'Letter' from his description of the two most famous of the inscriptions said to have been carved into the wall of Apollo's temple at Delphi: γνῶθι σεαυτόν ('Know thyself') and μηδέν ἄγαν ('Avoid extremes').²⁴ In this conjunction of ancient commands, then, we see the basis for Cornwallis's connection between (self-)knowledge and proportion: '[t]he world is like a Spheare spectiue peece. Knowledge the circle, showing the proportion in this peece truly' (132). We also see the basis for the rhetorical expression of Cornwallis's ideal of the 'generall' knowledge of the gentleman through the medium of the personal voice of the essayist.

2. Rhetoric and the Commonplace in the *Essayes*

²³ Plutarch, *Moralia*, ed. and trans. Frank Cole Babbitt *et al.*, 16 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927-2004), III:183. All translations are from this edition.

²⁴ It is uncertain where these phrases originated, but they occur time and again in classical literature. A particular pertinent example here is perhaps Plato's dialogue *Charmides*. In this, Socrates is debating the meaning of the term σωφροσύνη ('sophrosyne') with the youth Critias, who makes recourse to the Delphic inscription when he suggests that the term conflates 'self-knowledge' with 'temperance'.

As the discussion of ‘Of Resolution’ above demonstrates, Cornwallis’s *Essays* are built around a movement between two different styles of writing: the sententious and the personal. This movement is a version of the compositional practice of leading the reader from a specific example into a general truth, or vice versa, which was discussed in the first section, and which stems from schoolroom techniques. In the same way, the sententious and the personal elements of the individual essays work in tandem together, but this is an interplay which at the same time paradoxically revolves around the fact that they can equally function as independent entities.

Cornwallis uses his striking sentence at the beginning of ‘Of Resolution’ in the same way as he might employ a quotation from another author as an epitaph, using it as a springboard for his more personal discussion in the second paragraph. The sentence even calls to mind Erasmus’s description in the introduction to the *Adagia* of the ‘two things which are peculiar to the character of a proverb, common usage and novelty’, by which he means that it must express a long-established truth, but in a manner which ‘distinguish[es] it from ordinary talk’; it must express this truth through kind of novelty, such as through its inventive use of metaphor. Erasmus adds that ‘we cannot immediately rank in this category everything which has passed into popular speech, or contains an unusual image; it must be recommended by its antiquity and erudition alike’.²⁵ Sentences such as the striking one which opens ‘Of Resolution’ might not then be able immediately to take on the status of a proverb, or its close relative, the aphorism,²⁶ but the relationship between the two is suggestive.

For in sentences such as this one, Cornwallis is in a way looking forward to a time when his own words will have been ‘recommended by [their] antiquity’, even if that ‘antiquity’ is of a rather shorter duration than Erasmus might have had in mind. In a

²⁵ Erasmus, *Collected Works*, XXXI:4-7. All English translations from the *Adagia* are taken from those of Margaret Mann Phillips in this edition.

²⁶ For Erasmus’s discussion of the relationship between the two see *Collected Works*, XXXI:7-8.

culture which, as we have seen, relied upon habits of commonplacing, Cornwallis is in a sense crafting his own commonplaces ready for collection and transmission by others, aware that in such a notebook culture, one of the main ways in which old writers survived was through their words and phrases being taken up piece-meal by later authors.

In order to draw out this implications of this line of thought further, we can turn to the concluding passage of the essay ‘Of Trappes for Fame’ (1601), in which Cornwallis explicitly discusses his possible posthumous reputation. At the end of this essay, he anticipates the charge that by allowing a personal voice to intrude into his writing, he is guilty of an action which could be interpreted as ‘drawing more neere the affectation of Fame’ than of virtue (130). Cornwallis defends himself (and others) from such a vainglorious charge. He first invokes ‘that excellent head of our time, the elder *Scaliger*, [who] though he wrote many things tending to his owne glory and did turne the inside of himselfe outwarde, yet I thinke hee wrote it to spurre on sluggish spirites to the race of Vertue rather than for his owne glorie or memory’.²⁷ Here, the professed aim is not fame, but the use of the self as a kind of *exemplum* to others, mimicking the traditional method of treating historical figures in this way, as Cornwallis does frequently throughout the *Essayes*, as we saw in the previous chapter.²⁸ This way of using their own selves in the same way that they would normally use figures drawn from history or from the writings of past authors mirrors the way that (I have argued) Cornwallis seeks to set up phrases from his own writing to be used as he himself would use sentences from previous

²⁷ Cornwallis refers here to Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), one of the most famous figures in sixteenth-century European scholarship, and the author of the immensely influential *Poetices libri septum* (Lyons, 1561). Scaliger would not now normally be paired with Montaigne and the essayists as an example of an early-modern author consciously concerned with ‘turn[ing] the inside of himselfe outwarde’, so Cornwallis’s citation of him in that context here raises some interesting questions about contemporary views about the nature of literary self-expression, which pertain suggestively to the role of such self-expression in the early-modern essay.

²⁸ On the use of historical *exempla* in early-modern literature, see Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in the Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

writers. For in using themselves as *exempla*, Cornwallis, Montaigne, and Scaliger encourage others to use them in that way too.²⁹

After discussing Scaliger, Cornwallis then turns to ‘*Montania* and my selfe (who in these matters of excuse I may safely ioyne with me)’. He explains that ‘though we doe sometimes mention our selues, yet are wee not to bee suspected of intrapping Fame’. In his and Montaigne’s further defence, Cornwallis then draws a new analogy:

Wee allow men in their liues to builde their Tombes, and wee allow charitie to set the first Letters of their name vpon the Gownes and Coates they giue in almes; shall it not bee lawful then for vs to build our Tombes in our Papers and to weare our names in our labours? Yes, surely it cannot bee denyed vs they are our children, which if they resemble vs, it is not a thing monstrous but pleasing and naturall. (130)

Cornwallis here argues that preserving his likeness in his writing is no more than the equivalent of creating a tomb to preserve his body and his memory after his death; he and Montaigne simply ‘build our Tombes in our Papers’. In other words, it is the inclusion of the personal element of his writing which maintains his posthumous survival. Pursuing the line of argument introduced earlier, however, I would suggest that the more impersonal element of Cornwallis’s writing is directed towards similar ends. But the more aphoristic sentences in his essays are designed to be preserved in the tombs of other people’s papers: in their commonplace books, and in their own writings. Cornwallis’s description of his essays resembling him as a child does their father at the end of the passage even provides an implicit intimation of his words being taken up by another writer, as filial metaphors were significant in early-modern discourses of imitation.³⁰

²⁹ The extent to which essayists are used in this way by their early-modern readers is discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

³⁰ Pigman, ‘Versions of Imitation’, p. 4.

Cornwallis's attempt in this passage to ward off the possibility that a reader might misunderstand his motivations in 'speak[ing] of himself' is part of his larger preoccupation with the dangers of misinterpretation. As we have seen, Cornwallis's choice of a 'plaine' style of writing is motivated by his desire to be 'vnderstood' (37), and his criticisms of writers who obscure their meaning with an overly complex style stem from similar concerns. Once again, however, these dangers are not exclusive to the personal element of Cornwallis's essays, but inherent in his use of aphoristic sentences too, which are more easily taken up and used by others in a new (potentially distorting) context. To follow through the ramifications of these literary concerns, we can once again find an illuminating parallel in early modern theories of discourse, which, as the Chapter One demonstrated, have a shared heritage with contemporary habits of reading and writing.

Anna Bryson has described the increased importance of 'civil conversation' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, demonstrating that 'polite conversation and discourse come to be regarded as a key activity, loaded with implications for the prestige of participants'.³¹ But at the same time, as Lorna Hutson has argued, the increased significance of conversation introduced a fine line 'between conversational opportunity and conversational risk. As profitable occasions to improve manners and style multiply, so do the hazards of having one's words and manners noted down for future circulation'.³² In other words, conversation could be subjected to the same method of commonplacing as could books.³³

³¹ Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 113.

³² Hutson, 'Civility and Virility', p. 12.

³³ A conjunction between books and men in this context can be seen in the growing popularity of the 'table-talk' genre in the period, in which the words and habits of great men were recorded for posterity. On this subject, see Michel Jeanneret, *Des mets et des mots: banquets et propos de table à la Renaissance* (Paris: J. Corti, 1987).

The risk inherent in having ‘one’s words and manners noted down for future circulation’ however, is not something which is usually considered in critical discussions of the habit of literary commonplacing, which is traditionally described only in neutral or positive terms as it leads towards the achievement of the humanistic literary ideal of transformative imitation. If any risks are associated with it, they are the risks taken by the would-be imitator, who might fail in his transformative task; the risks to the original author of his words being transformed by a potentially hostile or at least inept reader in a new context are less commonly considered. In suggesting that Cornwallis deliberately crafted sentences which lent themselves to being taken up by this commonplacing culture, I have so far concentrated only on the benefits – the equivalent to the ‘conversational opportunity’ – of this strategy. But I would now like to suggest that Cornwallis was also aware of the ‘conversational risk’ which this activity concurrently contained within it, and that this risk was something he equally deliberately sought to counter.

This fear of select parts of a work being distorted through transplantation does however have a literary, as well as a conversational, precedent, one which magnifies these concerns by applying them not only to small passages of a work, but to the work as a whole. This is a fear which is voiced in relation to Cornwallis’s *Essayes*, and so it is worth pausing for a moment to consider it here: namely, the possibility of corruption through the unregulated manuscript circulation of texts.

It is a commonplace of dedicatory epistles in this period for authors to disclaim any intention of putting their work into print. The reason they often give for nevertheless taking their work to the printing house is a concern that it will suffer from mis-transcription or some other similarly corruptive misfortune if it remains in manuscript.³⁴ This is the reason for putting the *Essayes* into print given by Henry Olney in his

³⁴ For a discussion of this, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 17.

dedicatory epistle to the Harington ladies at the head of the first volume of the *Essayes*. Claiming that Cornwallis himself would never have printed the collection, Olney explains that he has taken it upon himself to do so, ‘*having in my hands a perfect Copie and being inwardly priuate with his priuatist conceits*’. This action averts the risk inherent in their ultimately uncontrollable manuscript circulation: ‘*many Copies of them being bestowed, by often transcription (as it many times happeneth) they might haue beene by a mercenarie hand fowly corrupted and altered in sence*’ (3).

On the one hand, this is simply another example of the usual commonplace disclaimer, the typical practice of literary *sprezzatura*. But even if part of its function is as a rhetorical display of false modesty, in line with Cornwallis’s own self-deprecatory style in the *Essayes*, that is not to preclude the possibility that it also displays a very real concern with the risks inherent in the increased circulation of material. Cornwallis himself had first-hand experience of such risks: his *Encomium of Richard III*, although not printed until after his death, enjoyed an extensive circulation in manuscript, during which the text underwent various non-authorial transformations which meant that it was severely ‘*altered in sence*’.³⁵ Cornwallis’s words, then, could potentially suffer from being mangled on the macro-level of the essay collection as a whole. In which case we could interpret the decision to secure the essays in print and place them under the protection of the Harington ladies as a display of *sprezzatura* which is not just a literary nonchalance, but rather the literary equivalent of deftly turning ‘conversational risk’ into ‘conversational opportunity’.

On the smaller scale of individual passages and sentences however, another – rhetorical – strategy was necessary to turn ‘risk’ into ‘opportunity’. It is here that the interaction between the two strands of Cornwallis’s affective rhetoric – the sententious and the personal – comes into play.

³⁵ I provide a fuller discussion of this in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Crucially, Cornwallis does not let his aphoristic sentences float free, but rather anchors them in the midst of his more personally inflected discussions. At the beginning of ‘Of Entertainment’ (1600), for example, Cornwallis strikes out with an opening that reads something like a truism: ‘There are but two causes that pull on Ghests: Loue and Businesse’. But he then immediately follows through on this with a personal gloss: ‘I must in good nature make much of the former, and the latter necessitie inforceth me to entertaine. But I like not to dwell vpon these. A short time may satisfie visitation, and busines not hindered by complement cannot last long’ (32). The more impersonal inflection here returns at the end of the passage, but again, it forms part of a longer chain, rather than standing alone.

In this way, Cornwallis’s use of the aphoristic style of sentence differs sharply from its use by the essayist most commonly associated with this way of writing: Sir Francis Bacon. The first edition of Bacon’s *Essayes* (1597) reads as little more than a list of aphorisms which are ultimately freestanding. Cornwallis, on the other hand, although his essays contain comparably sententious phrases, presents these phrases as part of a larger literary organism. Part of the purpose of this is to ensure that he can provide a gloss for the reader, to protect his own sententiae from being misapplied when they are lifted for use by other writers. In other words, he provides a similar interpretative context for his own words as he does for particular quotations from other authors within the *Essayes*, a feature of his writing which I described in Chapter One using the example of his quotations from Tasso in ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’.

But there is another impulse which galvanizes Cornwallis’s interweaving of the personal and the sententious in his essays, and this returns us to the ethical motivation which underpins his use of reading and of rhetoric throughout the *Essayes*. In the Introduction to this chapter I introduced a distinction between Cornwallis’s and Bacon’s interest in affective rhetoric, which suggested that Bacon was more interested in applying

such rhetoric to achieve one particular end result, whereas for Cornwallis, the process of application was in a sense part of the required result. This is then reflected in Cornwallis's conjunction of two rhetorical modes within his *Essayes*. To present the aphoristic sentences on their own would be to reduce the rhetorical process to something purely target-orientated and pragmatic, and therefore remove the moral and ethical dimension which emphasizes the importance of the entire process, rather than just the end result.

* * * * *

This pair of chapters, then, has illustrated the ways in which Cornwallis's *Essayes* emerged out of sixteenth-century humanist practices, drawing upon the some of the same methods of reading and learning as were used in the compiling of commonplace books. At the same time, this second chapter has demonstrated that Cornwallis's *Essayes* display an awareness that this mode of 'active' reading could be put to something other than a pragmatic use, as shown through Cornwallis's reluctance to reduce rhetoric to a simple means of achieving a goal. In the conclusion to this chapter, I would like to further draw out the implications of this by turning finally to Cornwallis's short essay 'Of Sleepe' (1600).

Cornwallis opens this essay by explaining that 'My custome is about this time of day to sleepe; to auoide which now, I choose to write' (58). The essay details Cornwallis's decision to 'put away this sleepy humour' and no longer sleep away his afternoons as is his usual habit, on the grounds that it is a waste of his time: 'I would liken it [sleep] to Death, but that it is more terrible, for it is idlenesse' (58). In presenting himself as composing an essay in order to prevent himself from going to sleep, Cornwallis draws upon an established tradition associating writing with fending off sleep, a tradition which is itself a form of literary sociability: letter writing. One of the earliest English letter-

writing manuals makes this connection explicit in its title: William Fulwood's *The Enemie of Idleness* (1568).³⁶ In the letter to the reader, Fulwood explains his choice of title:

I haue so entituled [the manual], for that as well when vrgent affaires require, as also at vacant tymes when leisure permitteth thee, (for the auoiding of Idlenesse, the capital enimie to all exercise and vertue) thou mayest occupie and practise thy selfe therin, taking pen in hand, and gratifieng thy frende with some conceite or other: whereby thou shalt both purchase frendship, increase in knowledge and also driue away drowsy dumps and fond fansies from thy heauy head.³⁷

Fulwood encourages his readers to use letter writing to 'auoid' idleness by replacing it with something else: the profitable activity of letter writing. He demonstrates the way in which writing could transform 'idleness' into labour. 'Of Sleepe', therefore, could be read as Cornwallis's adaptation of this kind of advice, substituting writing a letter to a friend with writing an essay.³⁸

Composing a letter, however, seeks to remove the writer from the context of 'leisure' which had produced the need to write the letter in the first place, actively turning 'leisure' into 'labour' by choosing a profitable 'conceite' and writing about it with the aim of

³⁶ William Fulwood, *The Enemie of Idlenesse: Teaching the manner and stile how to endite, compose and write all sorts of Epistles and Letters: as well by answer, as otherwise. Denided into foure Bokes, no lesse pleasaunt than profitable. Set forth in English by William Fulwood Marchant, &c.* (London: Leonard Maylard, 1568). Katherine Gee Hornbeak was the first to establish that this manual is 'really nothing more than a faithful translation of *Le Stile et maniere de composer, dicter, et escrire toute sorte d'epistre, ou letters missiues, tant par response, que autrement*, Lyons, 1566'. Hornbeak, 'The complete letter-writer in English, 1568-1800', *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, 15:3-4 (1934): 1-150; p. 3.

³⁷ Fulwood, *Enemie of Idlenesse*, sigs. A5^v-A6^r.

³⁸ This would be in line with a wider sense in which the *Essayes* could be described as an appropriation of humanist traditions of letter writing. Cornwallis's discursive 'talking stile' is suggestive of Seneca's statement in *Epistle* 75 that: I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company or taking walks together, – spontaneous and easy; for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them': Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, II.137. Seneca's description of his ideal epistolary style had already been followed by Erasmus's introduction of the 'familiar' to the three oratorical kinds in *Modus Conscribendi Epistolas* (1522), and then taken into the practice of vernacular letter-writing by Angel Day in *The English Secretorie* (1586), which includes some examples of familiar letters. Similarly, Justus Lipsius's *Epistolica Institutio* (1590) was first adapted to English by John Hoskins in his *Directions for Speech and Style*, written around 1599, which imitated *Epistolica Institutio* in its first section, 'For Penninge of Letters'. Hoskins was himself later adapted by Ben Jonson in *Timber, or Discoveries* (this is first discussed in Louise Osborn, 'Ben Jonson and Hoskyns,' *Times Literary Supplement* (1 May 1930), p. 370). Yet Jonson made an important alteration, for while Hoskins wrote: 'In writing of letters there is...', Jonson changed this to: 'In writing there is...', implying that the Senecan ideals of style associated with letters might be suitable for other forms of writing too. Cornwallis could therefore be seen as making a similar alteration in decorum, transposing humanist theories of letter writing into another type of English prose: the essay.

pleasing a friend and increasing the writer's own knowledge. Cornwallis's essay, however, rather than removing him from his 'idlenesse', instead takes that idleness up into itself. Sleep becomes both the topic of the essay and provides the basis for its style: 'if this bee a drowsie style and sleepily done (yet if it bee not worse then sleepe), I goe not backward, for it serues in sleepe's room' (58). In other words, while writing a letter is a practical way of enabling 'the auoiding of Idlenesse' by engaging in another, profitable activity, Cornwallis's essay turns that idleness itself into something productive, using it as the very subject and form of his essay. In doing so, Cornwallis undermines the distinction between idleness and profitability, between *otium* and *negotium*, and he does so all within a conventional humanistic defence of writing. Cornwallis seems to strip humanism of its pragmatic ends: 'Of Sleepe' uses the humanistic defence that letter writing is a profitable way to spend time and turns this defence itself into a playful, essentially wasteful, celebration of idleness. Here Cornwallis the essayist meets Cornwallis the writer of paradoxes, the form in which humanists from More onwards explored the legitimacy of their own justifications of reading and rhetoric. Although this thesis argues that in general the *Essayes* do emerge from an ethically-inflected humanism, 'Of Sleepe' shows Cornwallis probing at the boundaries of his own project, using the essay form to critique humanism as well as to achieve its ends.

Chapter Three

Cornwallis in Context I: Social Contexts

Introduction.

'I present thee Reader with no excellencies. To doe thee no harme is my Commendations, which if thou countest vnprofitable, beleene it is against my will thou knowest it; for might I haue preuented the coming to thy knowledge, thou shouldest neuer haue knowne me thus. But since a part of me was out, though I trust not to their strength, yet their strength shall be stronger by the rest to liue together and die together, becomming their neerenesse. They shall then goe together, and be all against my will in the power of your disposing. W. C.' (79)

It is in this rather brusque 'To the Reader' that Sir William Cornwallis addresses his general readership in print for the first time. This is the second of two prefatory epistles to Part Two of the *Essayes*, which was printed in 1601. The first, slightly longer letter is directed to the same four noblewomen to whom the first book of essays had been dedicated by Henry Olney in the previous year. By introducing this second letter, however, Cornwallis moves his address beyond the coterie context of these named reader-patrons towards another, wider audience too.

Much has been made in critical writing on the essay genre of the importance of the relationship between friendship and essay writing, something that has been viewed as one of the most stable characteristics of this hard-to-define genre. Kuisma Korhonen, for example, recently described the main goal of the essay from the early modern period through to the twentieth century as being to invite friendship between author and reader.¹ This emphasis on friendship and the creation of an intimate relationship between essayist and reader has informed many of the arguments which comprise the strand of critical response to the essay which privileges the importance of the personal voice: the

¹ Kuisma Korhonen, *Textual Friendship: The Essay as Impossible Encounter from Plato and Montaigne to Levinas and Derrida* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2006). Korhonen describes the 'friendly ethos' which he sees as permeating and informing the development of the essay from the early modern period to the twentieth century. He finds its roots in Plato's use of philosophical dialogue, and suggests that the friendship between author and reader is created through an 'impossible encounter' mediated via, and despite of, the boundary between them created by the text.

strand against which Scott Black positions himself in *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain*, as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.²

The importance of friendship to the essay might also be suggested by the fact that it is actually one of the means by which a bridge can be built between these two critical approaches towards the essay: the one which privileges the personal, and the other which stresses the importance of the essay's background in humanistic commonplace traditions. While the importance of a rhetoric of friendship to the first is obvious, the transmission of commonplaces in the early modern period also held the great potential to be a personal and social activity. The idea that the commonplace could be personal has been discussed by Peter Beal, who reminds us that the compilation of early-modern commonplace books was an inherently individual activity, for 'inevitably, the personality of the writer or compiler will interpose, varying his selection, changing or annotating the text or adding further material'.³

More than this, the personalisation of the commonplace was not simply an activity confined to the bounds of manuscript notebooks, but a pervasive element of early-modern culture and communities more widely. It is also something which highlights the connection between habits of reading and writing and material culture more generally, both in terms of the reader or writer's physical surroundings, and the material means by which knowledge was transmitted or presented. This chapter and the next will together argue that such relationships are integral to Cornwallis's rhetorical strategy in the *Essayes*.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men and women used their reading to personalise not just their notebooks, but their own physical surroundings, such as Lady Anne Clifford's well-documented instructions to her servants to decorate her bedroom with

² The large amount of critical writing on Montaigne and the concept of friendship goes back at least as far as Maurice Riveline, *Montaigne et l'amitié* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1939).

³ Beal, "Notions in Garrison", p. 2.

paper banners decorated with sententiae of her choosing,⁴ or Montaigne's famous collection of classical phrases painted on the ceiling of his study. The way in which the habits of commonplacing are transformed from something purely textual to something which – quite literally, in the case of Lady Anne Clifford – enveloped them in their everyday physical experience and surroundings, returns to my discussion in Chapter Two of Cornwallis's insistence on the place of the wisdom of commonplaces in his use of affective rhetoric: as something which was part of a continual and all-consuming process of being and learning.

Beal's description of the inherently personal nature of the commonplace book lays great emphasis on the individual nature of such an activity, but the process of personalisation was not always a solitary activity, but, at times, a communal one. I discussed in Chapter Two the way in which contemporary conversation could be formed out of the building blocks of sententious phrases: an active demonstration of the sociable qualities of commonplaces. The example of the decoration of Lady Anne Clifford's bedchamber also provides an instance of this process of personalisation as something shared. It involved not only her, but her servants, helping, in other words, to forge not simply an individual identity but a household one. The sociable role of reading in forming the communal identity of Clifford's household is similarly seen in the entries in her diaries which describe her servants reading aloud to her.⁵ In this way, the connection between specifically humanistic habits of reading, commonplacing and sociability begin to emerge. The part of commonplaces in the construction of learned communities of friendship and knowledge is also seen in the northern humanistic tradition of the *liber amicorum*, in which groups of friends would often note down mottoes alongside their

⁴ For an excellent discussion of this in the context of the relationship between reading practices and physical spaces, see Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*, pp. 38-40.

⁵ For the diaries, see both Katherine O. Acheson (ed.), *The Diary of Anne Clifford, 1616-1619* (New York: Garland, 1995) and D. J. H. Clifford (ed.), *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Phoenix Mill, UK: Alan Sutton, 1994).

signatures to act as a record of their friendship towards the album's owner, an activity which John Considine has described as 'a textual summary of the existence of humanistic friendship'.⁶

Just as Lady Anne Clifford turned her bedchamber into something like a physical manifestation of a commonplace book in an act of communal creation of both personal and household identity, the opposite movement of *sententiae* from room to book also emerges as a way of signifying personal friendship on a smaller scale between two people. This is seen in the gift of an illuminated manuscript collection of *sententiae* from the courtier (and father of Sir Francis) Sir Nicholas Bacon (1510-1579) to Lady Jane Lumley (1537-1578). This was made at Lumley's request, and was copied from the *sententiae*, ordered under commonplace headings, which Bacon had had painted onto the walls of the great hall of a new wing of his house, Gorhambury. In this way, we see explicitly the exchange of commonplaces as a form of friendship. More than this, however, it is in a way also an act of appropriation on the part of the receiver, as Lady Jane Lumley is able to take personal ownership over *sententiae* which were first created as a form of gift to a patron: Bacon had built and decorated the great hall in preparation for a visit from Queen Elizabeth.⁷

This demonstrates another way in which commonplaces could be transformed and appropriated through their transmission, and illustrates the importance of context to their meaning and ownership: exactly the kind of concerns which influenced Cornwallis

⁶ Considine, 'Humanistic Antecedents', pp. 18-19. Considine describes the *liber amicorum* of Captain Francis Segar, compiled between 1599 and 1611 and now held at the Huntington Library: this contains entries written by several of Cornwallis's friends and acquaintances, such as Sir Henry Wotton. On the construction of learned communities of friendship and knowledge through such collections, see Jason Harris, 'The Practice of Community: Humanist Friendship During the Dutch Revolt', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 47:4 (2005): 299-325.

⁷ On *sententiae* as matter for both friendly exchange and appropriation, see also Kathy Eden, *Friends hold all things in common: tradition, intellectual property, and the Adages of Erasmus* (New Haven, NJ.: Yale University Press, 2001).

in his rhetorical strategy of combining the personal and the commonplace in the *Essayes*.⁸ I argued in Chapter Two that Cornwallis's combination of the sententious and the personal involved the creation of a form of authorial identity and integrity in the rhetorical presentation of his essayist which is precisely situated in, and attuned to, the humanistic practices of reading and writing of the sixteenth century. But the creation of this particular form of individual identity, as I have begun to suggest here, needs also to be situated in a larger framework of early-modern cultures of community and sociability out of which Cornwallis's *Essayes* and essayist were created.

This then returns us to Cornwallis's letter to the reader at the beginning of Part Two. Rather than deploying a rhetoric of welcome or friendship towards his envisaged wider audience of unknown men and women, in the manner which might be expected if the essay is indeed a genre which relies upon a form of friendship exchange between essayist and reader, he instead states that they '*shouldest neuer haue knowne me thus*', and declares at the first that he offers them '*no excellencies*'. This letter therefore immediately acts to disrupt and challenge the notion of an uncomplicatedly friendly relationship between essayist and reader. It is instead part of a rhetoric of enforcement and anxiety which is present throughout the dedicatory letters and indeed informs much of the essays themselves.

To have more than one prefatory letter was by no means unusual for a book of this period. Rather, it was common practice to have different addresses to different readers (or groups of readers): one, to the carefully selected patron(s) of the text, and another, to the non-specific general reader. Furthermore, there was often an uneasy relationship between the two groups. For in works with more than one letter (or indeed, by implication often in works which solely utilised a dedicatory epistle to a patron) the

⁸ On Bacon's sententiae, see Elizabeth McCutcheon (ed. and trans.), *Sir Nicholas Bacon's Great House Sententiae, English Literary Renaissance Supplements*, 3 (1977).

patron was, in a sense, being asked to act as the protector of the author's work against its potential ill-treatment by the implicitly more ignorant or unsympathetic general reader.⁹ This is one of the motivations behind the request for patronage listed by Henry Olney in his own dedicatory epistle to the noblewomen in the 1600 *Essayes*: '*If then your Ladships shall patronize these Essayes, what venemous tongues shall dare to infect them? If you like, who will dislike them?*' (4).

Although Olney does not include an address to other readers, his reasoning here acknowledges the existence of potential multiple audiences for Cornwallis's printed essays, and this multiplicity is then made explicit when Cornwallis takes overt control of his text in 1601. More than this, he also makes explicit the potentially uneasy or antagonistic relationship between these separate groups of readers through his presentation of '*no excellencies*' to the general audience. According to both Olney and Cornwallis, neither the named, nor the unnamed, readers of the *Essayes* have been chosen by the author. But as this chapter will seek to demonstrate, the existence of different groups of readers – both real and imagined – for the essays is integral to Cornwallis's compositional practices, underlying key aspects of both his essays' rhetorical structure and their content. Furthermore, Cornwallis's concerns about protecting his text, traditional examples of authorial modesty or denial as they are, also connect to the anxieties about the transmission of his work which form such an important part of his compositional and rhetorical practices in the *Essayes*.

Building upon my discussion of the importance of the moral and rhetorical relationship between the essayist and his imagined readers in Chapters One and Two, in this chapter I seek to situate Cornwallis within the micro-cultures and socio-literary

⁹ On this relationship, see Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*, pp. 70-82.

‘networks’ – to take Jason Scott-Warren’s preferred term – of which he was a part.¹⁰ In defending this choice of term, Scott-Warren argues that ‘the open-endedness of the idea [of the network] makes it considerably more relevant to the study of manuscript communities than the alternative terms, which all over-emphasise closure and exclusivity’.¹¹ It is important to note that the term can never be quite as neutral as Scott-Warren suggests, but his distinction is a particularly helpful one in relation to some of the wider networks of influence which offer an important cultural background to Cornwallis’s essays, even if these influences are always channeled via means which necessarily imply the existence of ‘closure and exclusivity’; it is precisely this balance between the ‘exclusive’ context of ‘coterie communities’ and wider ‘networks’ which Cornwallis invokes in the *Essays*.

In this chapter, then, I examine some of the most important networks of influence surrounding Cornwallis and his essays. Chief among these are the literary cultures of the Inns of Court, as well as the circle clustered around first the Earl of Essex and later Prince Henry. I also consider the importance of the literary, cultural, and social interests of the Cornwallis family more widely, and consider the significance of the family’s status as one of the leading Norfolk and Suffolk families, a position which involved them in a web of literary and social local networks. I discuss the choice of the four noblewomen of the extended Harington family as the dedicatees of the *Essays*, and branch out from that to suggest the impact on the early English essay of women as both patrons and intended readers. I am indebted here to Warren Boutcher’s work on the cultural transmission of Montaigne’s essays in England, building upon this to argue for a direct connection

¹⁰ Jason Scott-Warren, ‘Reconstructing manuscript networks: the textual transactions of Sir Stephen Powle’, in *Communities in early modern England: networks, place, rhetoric*, eds. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 18-37.

¹¹ Scott-Warren, ‘Reconstructing manuscript networks’, p. 19.

between the cultures of essay writing and of the private methods of humanistic education in noble households in the period, in which women played an important role.¹²

The importance and value of situating early-modern writers within such communities, particularly in relation to the period's scribal cultures, has been long acknowledged thanks to the pioneering work of scholars such as H. R. Woudhuysen, Harold Love, and Arthur F. Marotti, among others.¹³ Furthermore, the way in which the social and literary qualities peculiar to particular scribal cultures could be invoked or exploited in print – often by publishers – has also been discussed, perhaps most pertinently for the purposes of this thesis by John Considine, in his superb examination of the commercialization of Sir Thomas Overbury's authorial and social identity within supposed coterie scribal communities by the publisher of his *Wife* and other 'Characters', Lawrence Lisle. As Considine has shown, in marketing these texts, Lisle not only made the most of the huge amount of publicity garnered by the scandal surrounding Overbury's supposed murder, but brought added literary and social kudos to his product by claiming to print the private scribal games of Overbury and his courtly friends, apparently offering the ordinary reader a glimpse into a previously sealed off world.¹⁴ In this chapter, then, I describe the most important of Cornwallis's own social contexts, and demonstrate the way in which the shared rhetorical cultures of these communities shaped his *Essayes*.

1. The Inns of Court

¹² See Boutcher, 'Marginal Commentaries' and 'The Origins of Florio's Montaigne'.

¹³ See particularly: Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*; Marotti, *John Donne, coterie poet, and Manuscript, print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Love, *The culture and commerce of texts*.

¹⁴ Considine, 'The Invention of the Literary Circle of Sir Thomas Overbury'. For a more detailed discussion of the same topic in a broader context, see Considine, 'Humanistic Antecedents', Chapter Two.

Sir William Cornwallis did not himself follow the path of many young men in the late sixteenth century to attend one of the universities or the Inns of Court.¹⁵ But the socio-literary culture of the Inns is an important one to the genesis of the early-modern essay in England. The humanistic serio-ludic culture of literary sociability which Michelle O'Callaghan has identified as so important to the Inns was formed around a nexus of interests central to Cornwallis and the early-modern essay.¹⁶ Furthermore, although Cornwallis was not a member of one of the Inns himself, he was nevertheless closely acquainted with many men who were.

From 1602-1603, John Manningham, a young law student at the Middle Temple, kept a record of various events and interests in a manuscript notebook, which has become known today as his *Diary*. When Manningham entered the Middle Temple in 1598, he was bound with the lawyer and poet John Hoskins and, as O'Callaghan notes, therefore gained 'privileged access to Hoskyns' social circle'.¹⁷ Manningham's *Diary* is consequently filled with social and literary references to this circle, which had many overlaps with Cornwallis's own friendship and familial groups. Hoskins knew Cornwallis's uncle, the elder Sir William, and was closely connected with his father, Sir Charles. The latter shared concerns with Hoskins regarding the influence of the Scots on James I, although Sir Charles would later attempt to distance himself from Hoskins after the latter's claims that he was parroting Sir Charles's advice in railing against the Scots became one of the causes of Sir Charles's imprisonment in the Tower of London from 1614-1615.¹⁸ John Donne was another significant shared acquaintance: Manningham's *Diary* is an important

¹⁵ On the unlikely nature of the evidence pointing towards Cornwallis's attendance at Oxford, see Chapter One above.

¹⁶ Michelle O'Callaghan, *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ O'Callaghan, *The English Wits*, p. 10.

¹⁸ In a public letter begging the King for forgiveness, Sir Charles Cornwallis claimed instead that 'He [Hoskins] moved me (I confesse)', and insisted that Hoskins's speech in the Parliament 'concerning the Scotts, [was] such, as neither agreed with myne in forme or matter'. Sir Charles Cornwallis from the Tower of London to King James I, 22 June 1614. I quote from one of the many copies of the letter which survive in manuscript. Bodleian Library: MS. Rawl. C. 929, fol. 21r.

witness to the circulation of Donne's paradoxes among the young men at the Inns, and Donne was a significant figure to Cornwallis in both social and literary terms, as will be discussed shortly. Although I have not yet come across any direct evidence of a personal acquaintance between Manningham and Cornwallis, it is clear that the two men moved in similar groups during the period surrounding the gestation and immediate reception of the *Essayes*, and therefore Manningham's *Diary* offers a useful insight into the literary concerns of these social groups surrounding the Inns of Court. Two of these concerns in particular are relevant to Cornwallis: the translation and reception of Montaigne in English prior to John Florio's 1603 printed translation, and the writing and transmission of literary paradoxes in manuscript.

Manningham's *Diary* is a modified form of the commonplace book, a development of the inherently individualistic nature of such compilations as described by Peter Beal. The references to literary material in Manningham's notebook go beyond the traditional use of a commonplace book to record extracts from reading, and extend into passing some form of critical literary judgement.¹⁹ Furthermore, alongside the references to his reading, Manningham records anecdotes taken from his own life in his notebook, such as amusing incidents which occurred when he visited his cousin.²⁰ On the one hand, this flexibility and modification of the commonplace book means that the *Diary* provides a model for formal comparison with the essay, suggesting that the Inns were a seedbed for this type of experimentation. More than this, however, the content of Manningham's *Diary* is important. For in December 1602, Manningham makes an entry in his book which is of particular relevance to the early life of the essay in England: he refers to

¹⁹ For example, there is a now famous passage in which he describes attending the first performance of *Twelfth Night*, astutely relating the play to one of its sources, Plautus's *Menaechmi*, and singling out the Malvolio storyline for particular praise. John Manningham, *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602-1603*, ed. Robert Parker Sorlien (New Hampshire: UP of New England, 1976), p. 48.

²⁰ See, e.g. Manningham, *Diary*, pp. 43-44.

‘Montagne’, and jots down an extract in English from the essay ‘That the taste of good and evil depends in large part on the opinion we have of them’.²¹

That Montaigne’s *Essais* proved popular reading amongst the young men of the Inns of Court is also suggested by John Florio’s letter to the reader at the beginning of his 1603 published translation. Describing the men who have tried to translate the French writer’s work before him, he writes that ‘Seven or eight of great wit and worth have assayed’ the task,²² and indeed, ‘*The Essais* of Michael Lord of Mountene’ was entered to the printer and bookseller Edward Aggas (fl. 1564-1601) in the *Stationers’ Register* on 20 October 1595, five years before Edward Blount entered Florio’s version.²³ What is suggestive here is that Florio states that these earlier would-be translators were forced to give up their task because they ‘found these Essayes no attempt for French apprentices or Littletonians’.²⁴ R. E. Bennett long ago put forward the idea that Florio’s curious use of ‘Littletonians’ could refer to ‘those with little knowledge of French, but I prefer to take it as students of Littleton, that is, members of the Inns of Court’.²⁵ D. C. Allen answered Bennett by pointing out that his first suggestion was probably correct, as one of the most popular sixteenth-century French grammars was Claude de Sainlien’s *The French Littleton: a most easie, perfect, and absolute way to learn the tongue*, first published in 1566 and reissued eight times by 1630, including an edition in 1597, close to the time Florio would have been making his own translation.²⁶ It is surely possible, however, that Florio intentionally punned upon the dual significance of the word, and that this points towards

²¹ Manningham, *Diary*, p. 232. In the light of Manningham’s enjoyment of Shakespeare, it is tempting to wonder whether this particular essay caught his attention thanks in part to the near-contemporary statement from Hamlet that ‘There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so’ (II.ii).

²² Michel de Montaigne, *The essayes or morall, politike and millitarie discourses of Lo: Michael de Montaigne ... First written by him in French. And now done into English ... by Iohn Florio* (London: Edward Blount, 1603), sig. A6^r.

²³ Aggas published several translations from the French, including some he had himself put into English. As R. E. Bennett has noted, this suggests that the edition of *Les Essais* entered to him, although not specifically marked as such, would also have been a translation. It could even be the case that Aggas himself attempted to translate *Les Essais*: see Bennett, ‘Use of Montaigne’, p. 1080.

²⁴ Montaigne, *Essayes*, sig. A6^r.

²⁵ Bennett, ‘Use of Montaigne’, p. 1080.

²⁶ D. C. Allen, ‘Littletonians’, *PMLA*, 49:3 (1934): 962.

an interest in translating Montaigne at the Inns of Court in the 1590s and early 1600s. In other words, at exactly the time period that Cornwallis was writing his *Essayes*, there was a serious interest at the Inns not only in reading Montaigne, but, significantly, in translating or appropriating him into English.

Cornwallis refers to the French writer at several places within the *Essayes*, and in ‘Of Censuring’ (1600), admits that he has only read his work in English: ‘I haue not been so much beholding to the French as to see [him] in his Originall’, he explains, ‘yet diuers of his peeeces I haue seen translated’ (42).²⁷ This is significant not just because it tells us something about Cornwallis’s linguistic limitations, because it offers evidence of one of the ways in which these early translations of Montaigne were circulated before 1603. Just as Manningham quotes from one essay in isolation, so Cornwallis has only seen ‘diuers peeeces’, reminding us that until the publication of Florio’s translation, Montaigne’s work was only available to English readers who did not have French in a piece-meal format. The French model was therefore not something which could have influenced the way in which Cornwallis shaped his collection as a synthetic whole. This is important to note because (as I have previously demonstrated), internal evidence suggests that Cornwallis intended his *Essayes* to be read as a cohesive, cumulative collection, rather than as individual ‘diuers peeeces’.

Cornwallis goes on to describe the translator of these ‘peeeces’ in riddling tones:

It is done by a fellow lesse beholding to nature for his fortune then witte, yet lesser for his face then fortune. The truth is, he lookes more like a good-fellowe then a wise-man, and yet hee is wise beyond either his fortune or education. (42)

D. C. Allen calls this ‘one of the mysteries of literary history’, noting that ‘the description of the translator by no means fits Florio’ (252), and might therefore be taken to refer to

²⁷ In ‘Use of Montaigne’, Bennett offers an excellent map of those of Montaigne’s essays which it is either certain or almost certain that Cornwallis had read by the time he wrote his own *Essayes*.

someone other than Montaigne's most famous early-modern translator. If Allen's assessment here is correct, it may well be the case that Cornwallis instead had access to one of the earlier translations which emanated from the Inns.²⁸

Cornwallis's own work appears within the scribal culture of Inns of Court: one of the existing manuscript copies of *The Encomium of Richard III* survives as part of a volume compiled by the lawyer Sir Thomas Crewe (1566-1634), a collection mainly comprising political tracts.²⁹ Crewe had been a member of Gray's Inn since 1603, and in the year to which his copy of the *Encomium* is dated on its title page – 1612 – he was elected its Lent reader, so he may well have come across the work through Inns of Court connections.³⁰ Cornwallis's involvement in the literary cultures of the Inns is also witnessed by his friendship with John Donne.

The friendship between Cornwallis and Donne was influentially dismissed by R. C. Bald, who suggested that since no letters or works survive directed from Donne to Cornwallis, but only the other way around, the friendship could not be taken to have existed on any serious level, but was rather a one-sided affair on the part of Cornwallis.³¹ More recently, however, it has begun to be acknowledged that Cornwallis held a not insignificant place in Donne's social circle, as demonstrated by the relatively lengthy entry for Cornwallis in the 'Index' to the recent *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*. While Bald uses as evidence the fact that Donne does not refer to Cornwallis in any of his extant letters, he ignores the mention of Cornwallis in a letter *to* Donne in May 1604 from an unknown correspondent, who names Cornwallis as 'a kind friend of yours',

²⁸ But cf. the different interpretation of Frances Yates in her *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), pp. 168, 213-14.

²⁹ This manuscript is now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.: MS. v. b. 303. The *Encomium* comprises pp. 35-56. There is a microfilm of the manuscript available in the British Library: RP 154.

³⁰ For more details, see Maija Jansson, 'Sir Thomas Crewe (1566-1634)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, January 2008).

³¹ R. C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 118.

showing that the two men were viewed as close friends by at least one contemporary.³² More significant, however, is the nature of the archival remains of Donne and Cornwallis's friendship, which demonstrate it to have been a friendship which existed at least in part as a form of intensely literary sociability.

One of the most important witnesses to Cornwallis's literary activities outside of the printed *Essayes* is a group of four poems preserved as part of MS. Tanner 306.1 in the Bodleian Library. Three of these poems are written in a scribal hand; the fourth is a verse epistle addressed to Donne written in Cornwallis's autograph.³³ This verse epistle, directed to Donne as Cornwallis's 'dear freand, my love', was estimated by Herbert Grierson to date from 1600-01, although more recently, Steven W. May has qualified this to a wider date range of 1598 and the end of 1601.³⁴ That is to say, to the period during which Donne was Secretary to the Lord Keeper, Sir Thomas Egerton, for they are addressed: 'To my ever to be respeckted freand Mr John Done Secretary to my Lord K<e>per giue these'.³⁵ The three other poems were enclosed with the verse epistle: Cornwallis presents them in the opening to the epistle as a form of literary 'sacrifize' to Donne, and they were sent to him at some point during the same years in which Cornwallis's essays were being written and published. May has argued persuasively that Cornwallis 'seems to have crafted [these poems] specifically to allude to Donne's service with Egerton', based on the unusual title of the first of these poems: 'The Contrition of a Conuertite' (fols. 233^r-234^r). May suggests that this was 'Cornwallis's attempt to tailor his gift to Donne's immediate circumstances, alluding to, and purporting to be something of

³² Tobie Matthew, *A Collection of Letters made by Sir Tobie Mathews, Knight* (London: Henry Herringman, 1660). Edmund Gosse conjectured that the writer of the letter was Donne's close friend the politician and poet Christopher Brooke. See Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's*, 2 vols. (London: W. Heinemann, 1899), I.127.

³³ Aside from the verse epistle, none of these poems have been printed. The verse epistle is in Herbert Grierson (ed.), *The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), II.173-174.

³⁴ Steven W. May, 'Donne and Egerton: The Court and Courtship', in Dennis Flynn, Thomas M. Hester, and Jeanne Shami (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 447-459.

³⁵ Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 306.1, fol. 238^v.

a prosopopoeia for, the convertites who occupied Egerton's house': that is, the *Domus Conversorum* or House of Convertites which was founded by Henry III as a home for Jews who had converted to Christianity, and which was under Egerton's jurisdiction in his role as Lord Keeper.³⁶ As well as helping to confirm the extent of the friendship between the two men, and in establishing it as something shaped through a literary sociability, the verse epistle is also useful in indicating the wider cultural milieu in which the two men carried out this friendship in London: Cornwallis suggests to Donne that 'If then, for change, of howers you seem careless, / Agree with me to louse them at the playes' (ll. 15-16).

The verse epistle is also of interest for another reason: the paper on which it is written. Mark Bland has identified this as being English paper, from John Spilman's mill in Dartford, Kent. Bland comments that Spilman's mill 'provided the ordinary paper for Jonson's *Sejanus* (large paper copies were also printed), but there is no evidence for this paper being employed for other printed books, and its appearance in manuscripts is rare'.³⁷ Cornwallis's verse epistle to Donne is the only example he cites, but he also refers to Thomas Churchyard's *A sparke of frendship* (1588), which includes a poem in praise of the opening of Spilman's mill. These connections between Churchyard, Jonson, and Spilman's paper mill are potentially significant ones in the light of Cornwallis's use of this 'rare' paper: both Churchyard and Jonson were part of the London literary and musical circle to which Cornwallis's uncle, the elder Sir William, extended considerable patronage and friendship.³⁸ It is therefore perhaps not overly fanciful to suggest that it was these social and literary links which led Cornwallis to make the unusual choice of Spilman's paper for his verse epistle to Donne.

³⁶ May, 'Donne and Egerton', pp. 454-456.

³⁷ Mark Bland, *A Guide to Early Printed Books and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackman, 2010), p. 29.

³⁸ I discuss the performance of one of Jonson's private entertainments at Sir William the Elder's house later in this chapter. On Churchyard's connection with the household, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 253.

The close friendship between Donne and Cornwallis is further attested by Cornwallis's dedication to Donne of *The Encomium of Richard III*. The earliest extant copy of this text, which survives in a manuscript in the Hardwick collection at Chatsworth, includes a dedicatory letter from Cornwallis to Donne, which the former addresses with the statement that 'our loue now is of some continuance'. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, the *Encomium* dates from the late 1590s. Here, then, is more evidence of the vitality of the relationship between Cornwallis and Donne around the time of the *Essayes*' composition and publication, and once again, here is evidence of friendship as a form of sociability furthered and solidified through literary exchange. Cornwallis's dedication of a literary paradox to Donne is particularly significant in the context of the literary culture of the Inns of Court, where the paradox form became extremely popular in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. As I mentioned above, Donne's paradoxes (not printed until the posthumous edition of *Paradoxes and Problems* in 1633) were circulated among his contemporaries at the Inns, and Rosalie L. Colie has identified the genre as one peculiarly suited to this coterie circulation: 'a sophisticated form, written for a learned and experienced coterie, an audience of men and women in the know'.³⁹

This interest in the paradox is significant on two levels. Firstly, because of the generic links between the paradox and the essay, links which are explicitly invoked in the titles of the posthumously-printed collections of certain of Cornwallis's own paradoxes as *Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes* and *Essayes or rather Encomiums* (both published 1616). Indeed, Cornwallis's essay is a paradoxical creation in as much as its apparent weakness – its inability to 'withstand the sharpest trialls' (190) – is what gives it its strength and identity as an essay, and its apparent lack of definition its defining feature. The essay also shares something of a generic safety-net with the paradox. Part of the appeal of the paradox lay

³⁹ Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, NJ: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 33.

in its intrinsic ability to safe-guard its author against criticism, in as much as a defence of an unpopular subject could always be vindicated with reference to the humanist tradition of paradoxical encomia that could be traced back to at least Erasmus's *Moriae encomium* (1509). Similarly, Cornwallis invokes the tentative nature of the essay as a preemptive defence against any criticism of either style or substance: 'If they prooue nothing but wordes, yet they break not promise with the world, for they say, "But an Essay", like a Scriuenour tryin his Pen before he ingrosseth his worke' (192). Significantly for my discussion of the early-modern essay as emerging out of distinctly humanistic practices of reading and writing, therefore, the paradox provides a close link between the essay and another humanistic form of literary composition.

Secondly, the paradox is an important form in relation to Cornwallis's essays because of its inherently sociable qualities. Like essays, paradoxes frequently grew out of the same group of topics: Cornwallis's verse paradox 'The Prayse of Nothing', for example, is part of a humanistic tradition of paradoxes on this subject, such as the Latin work *Nihil* by the French satirist Jean Passerat (1534-1602). This points to the way too that Cornwallis's paradoxes are part of a larger continental tradition, the roots of which are found in classical writings, but which emerged as a vernacular form in the sixteenth century following the humanist rediscovery of Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, one of Cornwallis's unpublished paradoxes, for example, is based upon the sixteenth paradox of the *Paradossi* (Lyons, 1543) of the Italian humanist Ortensio Lando (c.1510-1558).⁴⁰ This is another way in which the genre lends itself to coterie transmission: a form of literary conversation could be struck up through the exchange of paradoxes on similar themes. Donne and Cornwallis were composing their paradoxes at around the same time, and it is tempting to posit a relationship, for example, between

⁴⁰ On the evidence supporting the argument that Cornwallis must have read Lando in the original Italian, see Chapter One above.

Cornwallis's literary paradoxes offered in witty defence of Stoic ideals, and Donne's offered against them. Here then, we see again a sense of the way in which the exchange of literary commonplaces could be transformed into a movement which was more personally inflected.

Aside from this type of implicit (and potentially actual) literary dialogue, both Donne and Cornwallis did use their paradoxes as an explicit form of literary gift or friendship exchange. Donne sent a letter enclosing some of his paradoxes in 1600, the probable recipient of which has been identified as Sir Henry Wotton, who was also, as I will discuss later in this chapter, a good friend of Cornwallis's. One of Cornwallis's own few surviving letters, now preserved in the Bodleian Library, also bears witness to the circulation of paradoxes in this context. In an undated letter, he writes to his friend and kinsman, Sir John Hobart,⁴¹ enclosing two paradoxes in response to a request in a (now lost) letter from Hobart:

I owe good Cosine, & thinke not my sealf wholly vnhappy since yet possessinge soe accomplished a freande for my Paradoxes, beleve me had I thought they shoulde have bine knowen for myne, I woulde thowght not in them, yet in keepyinge them secreatt have showed some fitfull discretion: I knowe their weaknes to vnmeet obieackts for your syght, <and> for his whear you sawe them: & the inteant whearfore I seant them was only to Paralell Christmas games, or some such sports whervnto that tyme is Commonly much addickt, yet if it Pleaseth you to lyke them, but I thinke rathir me, thowgh neythir the love that is cast away eythir vpon them or me, is love but charity, rathir an almes, then the worse retornead, you desier them, rathir to obay you, then please my sealf I have seant you this week two, if your letters will betray you soe much to desier any more, 2 weekly I will poysone you withall.⁴²

The letter is dated 4 February, and although the year is unknown, this suggests that Cornwallis's reference to 'Christmas games' was not wholly metaphorical: the paradoxes

⁴¹ The Hobarts were another influential Norfolk family. John Hobart was the brother of the Jacobean Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor to Prince Henry, Sir Henry Hobart. Their parents were Thomas Hobart of Plumstead, Norfolk and Audrey, daughter of William Hare of Beeston, Norfolk, while their grandfather, Sir James Hobart, had been Attorney General under Henry VII.

⁴² Sir William Cornwallis to Sir John Hobart, 4 February [unknown year]. Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 283, fol. 204^r.

had presumably been sent as some kind of traditional New Year's gift. Although this straightforward gift exchange is complicated to an extent by the fact that Cornwallis must have sent the paradoxes with some semblance of anonymity, according to his demurrals that he did not think 'they shoulde have bine knowen for myne', it was obviously easy enough for Hobart or his host to guess their authorship. In this way, we see a mirror of Cornwallis's similar demurrals in the printed prefatory letters to his *Essayes*, suggesting that it is too simplistic to denounce the latter as a convention only of printed publication. Furthermore, Cornwallis's concerns are also reflected in the very similar language used by Donne in the letter to Wotton which accompanied manuscripts of his paradoxes, in which he insists that they were written '*rather to deceive time than her daughter Truth*', explaining that they have '*only this advantage to scape from being called ill things, that they are nothings*'.⁴³

A set of four of Cornwallis's paradoxes which survived only in manuscript until the 1930s also points to their use in a sociable context.⁴⁴ These are preserved in MS. Tanner 169 in the Bodleian Library, a volume which has traditionally been described as one of the commonplace books of the administrator Sir Stephen Powle (c. 1553-1630), although Jason Scott-Warren notes that the 'haphazard' organisation of the volumes makes them more correctly 'miscellanies'.⁴⁵ Powle himself had a background at the Inns of Court, lodging for a time with Sir Walter Raleigh during his years at the Middle Temple.⁴⁶ He was also distantly connected to the Cornwallises through the Hobart family, having married Elizabeth Hobart (1556-1590), widow of Miles Hobart, a kinsman of the Cornwallises, in March 1590, only a few months before her death. It is actually through

⁴³ John Donne, *John Donne: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 63-4.

⁴⁴ R.E. Bennett, 'Four Paradoxes by Sir William Cornwallis, the Younger', *Harvard Studies in Philology and Literature* XIII (1931).

⁴⁵ Scott-Warren, 'Constructing manuscript networks', p. 20.

⁴⁶ On Powle, see Virginia F. Stern, *Sir Stephen Powle of Court and Country: Memorabilia of a Government Agent for Queen Elizabeth I, Chancery Official, and English Country Gentleman* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992).

the inclusion of these four paradoxes in Powle's book that Cornwallis's date of birth has been estimated, as in the margin of the page next to the first of the paradoxes, Powle has recorded some biographical details: 'Written by Sir William Cornewaleys the younger knight in the yeere of our Lord Christ 1600 beinge the 22th yeere of his age'.⁴⁷ Moreover, the text which precedes Cornwallis's paradoxes has a note next to it in the margin in Powle's hand, which records that it is 'The L^d of Leycester his common wealth coppied of yonge S^r William Cornwallys written booke by my red heddred madde manne'.⁴⁸ Indeed, in her study of Powle, Virginia F. Stern goes as far as to comment that, 'One is tempted to speculate whether the authorship of this vicious diatribe [*Leicester's Commonwealth*] (originally published in 1584) was in any way connected with a member of the Cornwallis family, who were strong Catholics and would have opposed Leicester's ardent pro-Protestantism',⁴⁹ but tends to favour the findings of the tract's modern editor, Dwight C. Peck, who names Charles Arundel as the author.⁵⁰ The provenance note in Powle's book shows that the young William Cornwallis, at least, had a copy of the tract (the phrase 'written book' might mean the printed text or a another manuscript), but nothing else: *Leicester's Commonwealth* was one of the most commonly copied texts of the time. The way in which Powle records biographical details about Cornwallis and provenance information about his origins of his copy of *Leicester's Commonwealth*, documenting the social connections through which he obtained it, illustrates the

⁴⁷ Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 169, fol. 132r.

⁴⁸ MS. Tanner 169, fol. 92r.

⁴⁹ Stern, *Sir Stephen Powle*, p. 123.

⁵⁰ Of some interest, perhaps, in this context, is a letter from Sir William Cornwallis the elder, the essayist's uncle, which survives in the State Papers Domestic. On 5 August 1594, Sir William wrote to Lord Robert Cecil to clarify his 'familiarity' with Arundel, apparently following some remark about their supposed friendship by the Queen. Cornwallis admits that 'boys we were at school, big boys in Cambridge, and courtiers we met together', but claims that 'for many years last past we have met seldom by choice [...] for though I have found his company wise and pleasant, yet not lucky.' He adds that he and Arundel had recently been due to fight a duel, after the latter 'out of good claret and wine and sugar, [had] given me evil words', but that they were 'made friends' again after Arundel apologized for his overhasty speech. Cornwallis concludes his letter by asking Cecil: 'I beseech you, if occasion at any time bring the scruple of my familiarity or privateness with that man in question with the Queen, discharge me with this discovered truth and plainness to you.' It seems Sir William Cornwallis the younger was not the only member of his family to insist that he spoke 'plainly'.

important literary function of Cornwallis's social networks, in which books and manuscripts were circulated, as well as illuminating something of Cornwallis's own habits of circulating his texts in a way which can be usefully reflected back onto his concerns in the *Essayes*, as I will discuss further in the section on the transmission of *The Encomium of Richard III* in Chapter Four.⁵¹

2. Court connections: the Earl of Essex and Prince Henry

'[Y]et did I once touch at the baye of Armes', Cornwallis states in 'Of Life, and the fashions of Life' (1600). But, he goes on to explain, 'so short was my stay that I trust more to my reading then to my Experience' (42). Cornwallis refers here to his service in Ireland in 1599 under Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565-1601). It was here that Cornwallis became Sir William: he was knighted by Essex at Dublin on the morning of 5 August 1599. The courtier Henry Goodyer (1571-1627) was also knighted alongside him that morning, and it is worth noting that Goodyer would also become a good friend of John Donne's, and was closely connected with groups surrounding the Inns of Court and the famous literary circle of the Mermaid Tavern. Also knighted by Essex that morning were Edward Essex and the politician Richard Lovelace (1564-1634), later 1st Baron Lovelace.⁵² James Shapiro has speculated that it was Cornwallis's disillusionment with the world after returning, 'world-weary and broke', from fighting in Ireland that led

⁵¹ Powle was also the dedicatee of Nicholas Breton's *The Court and Country: A briefe discourse dialogue-wise set downe betweene a courtier and a country-man* (London: John Wright, 1618). MS. Tanner 169 contains poems by Breton, which Powle records in 1617 as being 'made and geaven me' directly by the poet (fol. 173v). Powle also includes a poem purportedly by James I, which he writes in 1606 was 'Geaven me by M^r Britton who had beene (as he sayde) in Scotland with the Kinges maiesty: but I rather thinke they were made by him in the person of the Kinge' (fol. 43). There is no evidence that Powle reciprocated with any literary efforts of his own, acting as a literary custodian, rather than an active partner in a scribal conversational exchange.

⁵² In the afternoon, Edward Morgan, Henry Carew, Richard Morison, and Charles Willmot were all knighted, as were Edward Michelborne, John Haydon, and Francis Merrick at some point on the same day. William A. Shaw, *The Knights of England: a complete record from the earliest time to the present day of the knights of all the orders of chivalry in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Knights Bachelors*, 2 vols. (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1906), II.97.

him to compose his essays.⁵³ I would hesitate to place such emphasis on a possible personal crisis in this way, but Shapiro's suggestion is in a sense in line with what Geoff Baldwin has identified as a tendency of some modern critics to see the early-modern interest in Stoicism as a means of retreat from a corrupt world.⁵⁴ As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, however, Cornwallis understood the unattainable nature of such a retreat from the world, and more than this, that such a retreat was undesirable.

Cornwallis's connections with Essex, and the circle which formed first around the Earl, and then, after his disgrace and execution, around Prince Henry, did however provide him with an important social and intellectual background. Significantly, J. H. M. Salmon, discussing interest in Seneca and Tacitus in early Stuart England, has placed Cornwallis within a much wider social network 'loosely bound by patronage and family, [which] had a common interest' in the ancient authors.⁵⁵ Salmon describes the importance within the group of the Harington and Sidney families, linked by Lucy Sidney (1520-1591), who married Sir James Harington of Exton (*d.* 1592) in around 1540. Three of the noblewomen to whom Cornwallis's *Essayes* were dedicated were daughters of this Sidney-Harington marriage, and the Cornwallises had other long-established and close familial and literary connections to the Sidneys, as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter.

As I have mentioned previously in this thesis, Cornwallis read and praised the Dutch humanist and Senecan interpreter Justus Lipsius: a figure of immense importance to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century neo-Stoic revival. This was by no means an isolated interest, but one which he shared and developed with his close friends, such as Lord William Petre of Ingatestone Hall in Essex.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Cornwallis's grandfather, Sir

⁵³ James Shapiro, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), p. 329.

⁵⁴ Baldwin, 'Individual and Self', p. 356.

⁵⁵ Salmon, 'Seneca and Tacitus', p. 209.

⁵⁶ Richard Abrams, 'Meet the Peters', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 8:2 (2002): 1-39; p. 14.

Thomas Cornwallis, was also an ardent admirer of Lipsius, writing several letters to Sir John Hobart in London requesting him to seek out numerous of Lipsius's works over a period of several years, on the understanding that 'nothyng that passyethe from hys penn cann be but excellent'.⁵⁷ Cornwallis was not writing out of or into a vacuum, but rather as part of an extended social network of shared intellectual interests: a network which both influenced the Neo-Stoic inflection of the *Essayes*, and also perhaps provided some of the text's first readers, emphasising again the way in which the *Essayes* grew out of a very particular period and culture.

Following James I's accession in 1603, attention shifted towards his heir, Prince Henry. The Cornwallis family had been quick to solidify their allegiance to James: Cornwallis had visited the Scottish court in around 1601 and later spent so much money on subsequent attendance to the King that he was driven to sell his lands.⁵⁸ Perhaps as a result of this established loyalty to James, in 1603 Cornwallis was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council.⁵⁹ His position here, and as MP of Orford in Suffolk (in both 1604 and 1614), implies that Cornwallis did not advocate a complete retreat from public life, and certainly confirms that his turn to writing did not mark any such disassociation: in fact, most of Cornwallis's participation in court and parliamentary activity took place after the publication of the *Essayes*. Furthermore, he explicitly combined the political and the literary by demonstrating his continued support of the new King in a tract that argued in favour of the English-Scottish Union, printed jointly in London (by Edward

⁵⁷ Sir Thomas Cornwallis to Sir John Hobart, 14 May 1592. Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 286, fol. 130^r. For a full discussion of Sir Thomas's letters to Hobart, see Jason Scott-Warren, 'News, Sociability, and Bookbuying in Early Modern England: The Letters of Sir Thomas Cornwallis,' *The Library* 1:4 (2000): 381-402.

⁵⁸ Whitt, 'A New Light', p. 162.

⁵⁹ This information is mentioned in a letter from Philip Gawdy (1562-1617) to his brother. The Gawdys were a Norfolk gentry family, and Philip and other members of his family were indebted to the patronage of the Bacon family both at court and in the world of local politics. The letter is printed in I. H. Jeayes (ed.), *Letters of Philip Gawdy, of West Harling, Norfolk, and of London, to Various Members of his Family, 1579-1616* (London: J. B. Nichols and sons, 1906), p. 130. On the Gawdy family and their position within local society, see Percy Millican, *The Gawdys of Norfolk and Suffolk* (Norwich: Goose and Son Ltd., 1939).

Blount) and Edinburgh (by Thomas Finlason) in 1604 as *The miraculous and happy vnion of England and Scotland by how admirable meanes it is effected; how profitable to both nations, and how free of inconuenience either past, present, or to be discerned*. He was also vocal on the matter in Parliament too, according to the letter to Donne from an unknown correspondent which I cited earlier. The writer of this letter bemoaned in May 1604 that:

Sir William Cornwallly hath taken upon him to answer the Objections against the Union, but they are done so lamely; and, although it seem scarce possible, so much worse than his Book, as (if he were not a kind friend of yours) I would expresse that wonder which I have in my heart, how he keeps himself from the coat with long sleeves. It is incredible to think, if it were not true, that such simplicity of conceit could not be joynd in him, with so impudent utterance.⁶⁰

Despite his apparently lacklustre performance in Parliament, however, Cornwallis's court connections are especially significant with regard to his relationship with the circle around Prince Henry. Cornwallis's father, Sir Charles, was appointed Treasurer of Prince Henry's household in 1610, upon his return to England following his years as Ambassador to Madrid; unlike many authors who explicitly sought patronage from Prince Henry, therefore, Cornwallis had a ready-made personal connection. Henry's importance in the literary and cultural world of the early seventeenth century has been well-documented.⁶¹ He holds significance for the early essay in England because Sir Francis Bacon had originally planned to dedicate the 1612 extended edition of his essays to the Prince. He was prevented from doing so thanks to Henry's untimely death, but the intended dedicatory letter survives in a manuscript at the British Library.⁶² More broadly, however, Prince Henry was a particularly well-suited figurehead for a volume of essays

⁶⁰ Cited in Whitt, 'A New Light', pp. 162-3.

⁶¹ See for example Graham Parry, *The Golden Age restor'd: the culture of the Stuart court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), Chapter 3; and Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's lost renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986).

⁶² British Library: MS. Add. 4259, fol. 155r.

thanks to his especial cultural significance in his role as exemplum and patron,⁶³ and because of the civil ‘academy’ which was built up around his household, as described most influentially by Sir Charles Cornwallis in his biographical memoir of the Prince, *The life and death of our late most incomparable and heroique Prince, Henry, Prince of Wales*.⁶⁴

Another author forced to change his dedication of a text following Prince Henry’s death was the courtier Sir Robert Dallington (1561-1637).⁶⁵ Prince Henry was the original dedicatee of Dallington’s *Aphorismes ciuill and militarie amplified with authorities, and exemplified with historie, out of the first quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine*. This was eventually published by Edward Blount in 1613, dedicated to Prince Charles, the new heir. But this printed text is a reworked version of an earlier version, which survives in manuscript at the Northamptonshire Record Office.⁶⁶ This is dedicated to Henry, and was part of Dallington’s bid for patronage from the Prince in 1609: it succeeded, as Dallington became a member of the Prince’s household. Dallington’s book is structured around a system by which he introduces his theme in the form of an aphorism, then gives a list of quotations from various authors which illustrate this theme, and finally describes a moment in history taken from Guicciardini which illustrates it too. In other words, it has much in common with Cornwallis’s habits of reading and writing in the *Essayes* – and, perhaps more particularly, in the *Discourses upon Seneca* – as discussed in Chapter One.

Cornwallis was one of many authors who contributed to one of the volumes of elegies which were produced to mark Prince Henry’s death: his appears in the 1613 third

⁶³ The particular cultural significance of Prince Henry in the context of early-modern exemplarity is discussed in Timothy Wilks (ed.), *Prince Henry revived: image and exemplarity in early modern England* (London: Paul Holberton, 2007).

⁶⁴ This was printed posthumously in London by Thomas Birch in 1641, but circulated extensively in manuscript beforehand.

⁶⁵ On Dallington’s cultural interests more widely, see K. J. Höltgen, ‘Sir Robert Dallington (1561-1637): author, traveler, and pioneer of taste’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 47 (1984): 147-77.

⁶⁶ Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton: Finch Hatton MSS. F. H. 315.

edition of a collection put together by the poet Joshua Sylvester, *Lachrymae Lachrymarum*.⁶⁷ The appearance of Cornwallis's poem in this volume, alongside works by his old friends John Donne and Sir Henry Goodyer among others, acts as a form of collective mourning through literary sociability. With particular reference to posthumous writing about Prince Henry, Michael Ullyot has commented that elegy 'is always a reluctant genre', relying on a topos of inexpressibility and unattainability.⁶⁸ In this way, Cornwallis's poem shows him yet again engaged in a mode of writing – to sit alongside the paradox and the essay – which is infused with a sense of unwillingness, inability, or reluctance of expression and/or circulation.

The impulses of the culture surrounding Henry, of which Cornwallis is, in this volume, an active part, is particularly telling, as it is a culture closely linked with the ethos of his *Essayes*. Cornwallis praises Henry for his 'moderation' and for the fact that his childhood sports prepared him well for the demands of kingship: 'Thus did he vse Tennis, Balloon, and Foiles, / To make a well-breath'd Bodie fit for Toiles' (sig. E4^v). This is reminiscent of the way he describes his own childhood activities and reading as preparing him to make better use of his adult occupations in the *Essayes*. Ullyot has described the way in which both during and after his lifetime, Prince Henry was described by his contemporaries as a kind of text, and explains that after his death, Henry's life was viewed as a kind of abridgement in both a literary and literal sense. As Henry had not lived to perform any heroic acts which might merit an epic, '[o]ne way to measure the implications of Henry's death was to describe its effect on his future exemplarity, its destruction of hopes that his actions would provide heroic material for

⁶⁷ Joshua Sylvester, *Lachrymae Lachrymarum* (London: Humphrey Lowes, 1613). Cornwallis's elegy is on sigs. E3^r-F1^v.

⁶⁸ Michael Ullyot, 'The Life Abridged: Exemplarity, Biography, and the Problem of Metonymy', *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, 3:1 (2011): 58-81; p. 71.

unwritten texts'.⁶⁹ Cornwallis follows this pattern in his elegy, urging Prince Charles to use his brother as an example: 'Take, I beseech you, His, for Map or Text' (sig. F1^v), and emphasises this path further by praising Henry because 'He read Men, in stead of Books; / as Hee must doo, that into Kingdomes looks' (sig. E4^v).

Ulliot notes that one of the most common reasons given in defence of abridgements of texts in the period was that they were a 'profitable' way of gleaning the sense of a large amount of material quickly and without difficulty, meaning that they 'were similar to miscellanies, or compilations of exemplary material from a wide range of different sources'.⁷⁰ In other words, they grow out of the same heritage of methods of reading and writing as do the *Essayes*. More than this, Ulliot discusses Sir Charles Cornwallis's *Life* of Prince Henry, which stresses 'Henry's self-conscious reception and reflection of exemplary qualities',⁷¹ and describes Henry's life as a continuous process of betterment through a combination of reading, physical activity, and civil conversation, infused with a humanistic educative and sociable culture which has much in common with the interests and impulses of Cornwallis's *Essayes*.

3. The Cornwallis Family

The importance of Cornwallis's family has already begun to emerge in the previous two sections, and I shall now draw out some of the particular ways in which Cornwallis's family background and their position within Norfolk and Suffolk society was significant in both specific and general cultural and social terms. Three of his relations are of particular importance to this discussion, each opening up a different significant social and or literary context which illuminates the culture in which Cornwallis's *Essayes* were written and read. His uncle, Sir William Cornwallis the elder, had significant connections

⁶⁹ Ulliot, 'The Life Abridged', p. 70.

⁷⁰ Ulliot, 'The Life Abridged', p. 64.

⁷¹ Ulliot, 'The Life Abridged', p. 59.

with the English literary and wider cultural world around the court in London in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His grandfather, Sir Thomas Cornwallis, provides an insight into the family's book-buying networks both locally and in London, as well as on the continent. Finally, his father, Sir Charles Cornwallis, is again an important figure for Cornwallis's cultural context thanks to his court employments at home and diplomatic appointment abroad, while his own writings, both public and (semi-) private, provide suggestive parallels for those of his son. Furthermore, Sir William the Elder and Sir Thomas (along with Cornwallis's aunt, Lady Elizabeth Kytson) provide connections with Catholic aristocratic circles in London and East Anglia with great significance for the production and circulation of literary manuscripts in this period.

a) Sir William Cornwallis the Elder (c.1551-1611)

Cornwallis's namesake, his uncle Sir William Cornwallis the Elder,⁷² caused much confusion in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discussions of the essayist. As Arthur Kincaid notes in his revised entry for Cornwallis in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, a conflation of the two men 'made nonsense of even recent discussions of his work'.⁷³ But despite this confusion, the situation and interests of Cornwallis's uncle provide an important cultural context for the *Essays*, helping to situate Cornwallis and his family at the heart of some of the most important literary and social networks of early-modern London. The elder Sir William was an important figure in English cultural and literary life of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, if not as an author, then as a patron, while Philip J. Finkelpearl has also suggested that John

⁷² For Sir William Cornwallis the Elder's will, see TNA, PROB 11/118.

⁷³ Kincaid, 'Cornwallis, Sir William, the younger'. On the independent work of R. E. Bennett and P. B. Whitt in the 1930s to clarify the essayist's identity and separate him from his uncle, see the main Introduction to this thesis.

Marston's *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600) is based on Sir William the Elder and his daughters Cornelia and Anne.⁷⁴ In 1588, he purchased the substantial property Fisher's Folly from his friend Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, a house notorious in the period for the extravagance displayed in building it,⁷⁵ and the history of which was recorded by John Stow in his *Survey of London* (1598), with the note that it 'now belongeth to M. Cornewallos'.⁷⁶

Fisher's Folly had already been established as an important site of literary patronage under the Earl of Oxford,⁷⁷ and Sir William the Elder himself engaged in significant literary and musical patronage of men such as the writers Thomas Churchyard and Fulke Greville. The poet and translator Thomas Watson (1555/6-1592) was tutor to his son John in the late 1580s.⁷⁸ Watson was himself connected to several of the most important English cultural and literary figures of the late sixteenth century, including the dramatists Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, and George Peele, and the composer William Byrd.⁷⁹ A particularly significant acquaintance with respect to his time with the Cornwallis family was the musician Thomas Swift, whose sister, Anne, Watson married in 1585. Swift was born in Norwich, indicating an inclination towards local patronage on the part of Sir William the Elder, in whose household Swift worked alongside Watson. In

⁷⁴ Philip J. Finkelpearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), Chapter 8.

⁷⁵ The house became known as Fisher's Folly after its original builder, Jasper Fisher, a Chancery clerk, died insolvent due to the extortionate cost of the property. See Cecil Monro (ed.), *Acta cancellariae; or, Selections from the records of the Court of chancery, remaining in the Office of reports and entries* (London, 1847), p. 343.

⁷⁶ John Stow, *A survey of London. Contayning the originall, antiquity, increase, moderne estate, and description of that cite, written in the yeare 1598 by Iohn Stow citizen of London. Also an apologie (or defence) against the opinion of some men, concerning that cite, the greatnesse thereof* (London: John Wolfe, 1598), p. 128.

⁷⁷ On the Earl of Oxford's time at Fisher's Folly and his role as literary patron, see Alan H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 229-238.

⁷⁸ On Watson, see Dana Sutton (ed.), *The Complete Works of Thomas Watson, 1556-92*, 2 vols. (Lampeter: Edward Mellen Press, 1996).

⁷⁹ Watson's close friendship with Marlowe was first discussed in significant detail in Mark Eccles, *Christopher Marlowe in London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934); more recently, see for example, Charles Nicholls, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992). On Watson's literary circle of acquaintances more widely, see Sutton (ed.), *Works*, Introduction; and Constance Brown Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), Chapter 4.

1589, however, Swift became disgruntled with his employer, and conceived a scheme – in which Watson became embroiled – by which to trick Cornwallis’s fourteen-year-old daughter Frances into a marriage contract through surreptitiously making her sign papers relating to this at the same time as gaining her signature on papers regarding some money he loaned to her.⁸⁰ Sir William the Elder found out about the deception and – drawing upon his family connections to senior court figures – prevailed upon Lord Burghley⁸¹ and brought a case against Swift to the Star Chamber, which he won.⁸²

Another of Sir William the Elder’s daughters, Anne Cornwallis (*d.* 1635) has received significant attention among literary scholars from the nineteenth century onwards thanks to a verse miscellany, now known as the Cornwallis-Lysons manuscript and held at the Folger Shakespeare Library, which she is known to have owned sometime before her marriage in 1610 to Archibald Campbell, 7th Earl of Argyll (1575/6-1638): on the second page is written ‘Anne Cornwaleys her booke’.⁸³ This miscellany of Elizabethan verse, which contains poems by authors such as Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Edward Dyer, and the Earl of Oxford, has received considerable attention not least because it contains a poem attributed to Shakespeare.⁸⁴ Arthur F. Marotti has discussed the cultural significance of this miscellany, noting that even though it is unknown whether the volume was compiled specifically for Anne or by/for someone else, ‘her ownership or appropriation of it not

⁸⁰ Swift’s motivations in the case are described in Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 97, fol. 29.

⁸¹ The long-established friendship between Burghley and Sir William the Elder’s father, Sir Thomas Cornwallis, is discussed in detail in Patrick McGrath and Joy Rowe, ‘The Recusancy of Sir Thomas Cornwallis’, *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* XXVIII (1961): 226-271.

⁸² For the most comprehensive and up-to-date discussion of the case, see Albert Chatterley, ‘Two Sixteenth-Century East Anglian Families at the Court of Star Chamber’, *Norfolk Archaeology*, 44:1 (2002): 119-128. The interrogatories of the Star Chamber case are extant: TNA, STAC A36/5/5/.

⁸³ Folger Shakespeare Library: MS. V.a.89. The manuscript takes its current name from its ownership by first Anne, and later the eighteenth-century antiquary Samuel Lysons. Anne Cornwallis’s identity was first confirmed by the nineteenth-century Shakespearean scholar and collector James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips.

⁸⁴ For an extensive treatment of the manuscript, see Hilton Kelliher, ‘Unrecorded Extracts from Shakespeare, Sidney and Dyer’, *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 2 (1990): 163-87. The miscellany has been discussed with particular reference to transmission of Shakespeare’s poetry in, e.g. Sasha Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare’s Poems in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) and Douglas Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Question of Culture: Early Modern Literature and the Cultural Turn* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

only signals women's involvement in the manuscript system of literary transmission, but also suggests connections between her interests and her family's social environment with the authors and subject matter of the poems it contains'.⁸⁵ H. R. Woudhuysen has traced the manuscript's connections with another associated with Oxford and the Inns of Court, while Laurence Cummings has shown its links with another manuscript associated with the Royal court and Cambridge, demonstrating the importance for the production and transmission of such manuscripts of social links between such public institutions as these and private households concerned with learning and culture such as that of Sir William Cornwallis the Elder.⁸⁶ This is significant when it comes to considering the connections between the *Essayes* and the literary and educative concerns of such households as private institutions of learning.

Marotti argues that these miscellanies demonstrate their roots in a shared literary culture which privileges a 'common language' over 'quirky individualism', and points to the importance of the 'sociological functioning of these poetic texts', through which they demonstrate the cultural values of a 'group rather than the unique point of view of a single person'. Marotti goes on to explain that within this context, 'such poetry might have been composed and received in specific social circumstances that energize their general or typical expressions and they were later used or read by individuals in new contexts, taking on new meanings'.⁸⁷ Placing Anne Cornwallis's miscellany in this context is significant for her cousin the essayist in two ways. Firstly, it helps to solidify the particular and active role played by the Cornwallis family in the transmission of literary manuscripts in this period. Secondly, and more generally, it illuminates the

⁸⁵ Arthur F. Marotti, 'The Cultural and Textual Importance of Folger MS V.a.89', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 11 (2002): 70-92; p. 71.

⁸⁶ The first of these is British Library: MS. Harley 7392, associated with Humphrey Coningsby. See Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 278-86. The second is Bodleian Library: MS. Rawl. poet. 85, associated with John Finet. This has been edited by Laurence Cummings, 'John Finet's Miscellany' (Washington University: Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1960). On these see Kelliher, 'Unrecorded Extracts', pp. 179-82, and Marotti, 'Cultural and Textual Importance', pp. 71-2.

⁸⁷ Marotti, 'Cultural and Textual Significance', p. 87.

importance of the shared cultural and social contexts of such modes of transmission and appropriation. These provide an important material and cultural background against which Cornwallis's compositional and rhetorical practices in his *Essayes* as discussed in Chapter One should be situated.

Sir William the Elder played host to Queen Elizabeth on several occasions, in 1589, 1593, 1594, 1597, and 1601, and he continued this tradition of receiving the monarch after the accession of King James I, frequently at his house in Highgate.⁸⁸ Like Fisher's Folly, this was also a substantial property, and in 1593 the cartographer John Norden (c. 1547-1625) wrote that 'At this place CORNEWALLEYES esquire hath a verie faire house from which he may with great delight beholde the stately Citie of *London, Westminster, Greenwich*, the famous river of *Thamyse*, and the countrey towards the south verie farre'.⁸⁹

May Day 1604 was a significant date for this household, for it marked the performance there of Ben Jonson's *A Private Entertainment at Highgate*, composed in honour of the new King and Queen.⁹⁰ This is the first of a series of such entertainments which provided a 'private' counterpart to Jonson's court masques, and as such, cements the place of Sir William the Elder's household as a significant private and aristocratic institution of learning and letters, and highlighting the importance of such contexts to both Cornwallis's family, and to the wider networks in which he was moving in the period of the *Essayes*' composition and immediate reception.

b) Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19-1604)

⁸⁸ E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923): IV:104, 108, 111, 113. Sir William the Elder's connections with King James and Queen Anne were long-lived, and he is known to have dined with Queen Anne in the very year of his death, 1611: TNA, SP 14/63/33.

⁸⁹ John Norden, *Speculum Britanniae: The first parte an historicall, & chorographicall discription of Middlesex* (London: Eliot's Court Press, 1593), p. 22.

⁹⁰ This has been edited by James Knowles, with a helpful contextual introduction, in David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson (eds.), *The Works of Ben Jonson*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): II.484-500.

Cornwallis's grandfather, Sir Thomas Cornwallis, is a significant figure for the essayist. His surviving letters provide evidence of his learned and sophisticated interest in continental neo-Latin writings and more broadly, the literary culture which infused the family seat at Brome Hall in Suffolk. Cornwallis praises his grandfather's wisdom in 'Of Solitarinesse and Companie' (1601), and acknowledges his influence:

Where wisdom holdes out with age, and memory hath not vnthriftilly spent spent her commings in vpon time, the conuersation of age is the wisest booke. Of these I haue neuer in my life seene any comparable to one, for commonly they are obstinate and morose, and their discourse is mingled with as much bad as good; but contrary is this, hauing the experience & the wisdom of 80 yeares and and vward, and yet a body more healthfull then many of halfe his yeares, so wise and so temperate, so able and so willing to instruct his friends that I am neuer with him but I come from him stronger in vnderstanding then when I went. So doth his aduice moderate my youth; his knowledge melt my ignorance. (171-2)

In this way, then, Cornwallis uses his grandfather as both an exemplum, and as a way of illustrating the way in which he himself held to his own instructions to learn from men, as well as from books.

Sir Thomas's literary interests seem likely to have been influential for Cornwallis. I have already mentioned Sir Thomas's love of Lipsius: one of several continental writers represented in the letters to Hobart now in the Bodleian,⁹¹ and it is perhaps from his grandfather that Cornwallis developed his own admiration of Lipsius. Unfortunately there is no record that Sir Thomas's literary interests were left to Cornwallis in any material sense, for no books are mentioned in Sir Thomas's will.⁹²

That Sir Thomas had a valuable collection of both books and manuscripts which was passed down through the family for at least some time is, however, hinted at by the provenance history of what is known as the Gorleston Psalter, a fourteenth-century

⁹¹ See Scott-Warren, 'News, Sociability, and Bookbuying'.

⁹² TNA, PROB 11/105, sig. 11.

illuminated manuscript which is now in the British Library.⁹³ This bears an ownership inscription stating ‘Thomas Cornwaleys miles’ (fol. 1^v) and a note marking its transfer out of the Cornwallis family in the early nineteenth-century: ‘This Missal originally the property of Sir Thomas Cornwalleyes from whom it descended to the Daughters and Coheiresses of Charles 2nd Marquis Cornwallis was by them presented to the Honble Richard Neville as a token of their regard & affection 1823’, which is signed by Louisa, Jemima, Elizabeth, and Mary Cornwallis, and Jane Neville.⁹⁴ The Psalter had originally been produced for the church at Gorleston-on-Sea near Great Yarmouth in Norfolk, and was passed to Norwich Cathedral Priory some time around 1320-25.⁹⁵ This suggests that it was a relatively local purchase for Sir Thomas, quite probably one he made thanks to the dispersal of books from religious houses which took place during the Reformation.

The letters in the Bodleian bear witness, however, to the fact that Sir Thomas was an avid book collector and reader, with a book-buying network which extended far beyond his local confines, although these networks relied constantly on his regional and familial contacts. Although the presence of the Gorleston Psalter suggests him to have been something of a collector, the fact that he bought books for use, not ornament, is demonstrated not only by his knowledgeable discussions of them in his letters to Hobart, but also by a letter to the latter from Sir Thomas’s brother, Henry Cornwallis. Following a correspondence with Hobart in which he has asked the latter to buy some books at Sir Thomas’s behest, Henry tells Hobart that Sir Thomas ‘further prayeth that you will have care to see theym well bound so as they wyll lye fayr open before hym’. Sir Thomas was, perhaps, keen to stock up on reading matter ready for the Christmas period: Henry further writes that Sir Thomas asks that Hobart also ‘wyll deasyre my cosyn

⁹³ British Library: MS. Add. 49622.

⁹⁴ The Cornwallis and Neville families were originally related thanks to Sir William the Elder’s marriage to his first wife Lucy Neville (*d.* 1608).

⁹⁵ On the Psalter’s significance and early history, see L. F. Sandler, ‘An Early Fourteenth Century English Psalter in the Escorial’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xlii (1979): 65-80.

Gromeporter to send him some dyce against Chrystmas'.⁹⁶ This is an important context in which to place Cornwallis's own attitude towards the place of reading. It demonstrates something of the position of reading as only a part of a wider and more balanced whole in the Cornwallis household at Brome Hall, and also the way in which reading was not a passive or solitary activity for Sir Thomas, associated only with independent contemplation, but rather a way for him to engage with the outside world from his relative isolation in Suffolk.

Like his grandson, Sir Thomas actively engaged in demonstrations of friendship through forms of literary sociability, although unlike Cornwallis, he sent copies of other people's work, rather than his own. In a letter to Hobart dated May 1599, Sir Thomas tells him:

You know I have longe times inquired for A booke written by the cardynall of Verona: ///de recreatione senum///: Henry Hony Will: Cornwaleys man man telleth me that he was *promised* the same by one Tho: Thorpe *servant* to M^r Watkyns bookseller in Paules Churchyard the first shop *within* the gate next Cheapeside. I pray you gett two of them bound up for me, whereof send me the one, and p^{re}sent the other <from me> to my Lo: Lumley who hath made greate inquirye to gett one.⁹⁷

This epistolary episode demonstrates the complexly social nature of Sir Thomas's book-buying habits and transactions. Only the signature of this letter to Hobart is written in Sir Thomas's own hand; the rest is in another, presumably that of a secretary. The latter hand is also the scribe for another, earlier, letter to Hobart (MS. Tanner 286, fol. 132^v), for which only the signature and a short postscript are in Sir Thomas's autograph. Immediately, therefore, Sir Thomas's request for a gift for Lord Lumley has gone through one other person, even before it reaches Hobart. Also involved in the

⁹⁶ Henry Cornwallis to Sir John Hobart, 10 November [no year given]. Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 286, fol. 155^r. On the importance of his book-buying networks for Sir Thomas's acquisition of news, as well as books, see Scott-Warren, 'News, sociability, and bookbuying'.

⁹⁷ Sir Thomas Cornwallis to Sir John Hobart, May 1599. Bodleian Library: MS. Tanner 286, fol. 137^r.

transaction alongside Hobart, either directly or indirectly, are several other men, including servants, family members, and tradesmen: ‘Henry Hony Will: Cornwaleys man telleth me that he was *promised* the same by one Tho: Thorpe, *servant* to M^r Watkyns bookseller’. It is unclear whether Sir Thomas refers to Sir William the Elder or Younger, and although either provides the family with an interesting link to the publisher Thomas Thorpe, this personal connection becomes especially suggestive if it indeed refers to the younger Sir William, thanks to Thorpe’s posthumous publication of some of Cornwallis’s paradoxical writing, as I will discuss more fully at the end of Chapter Four.

The chain of people involved with the supposedly personal gift from Sir Thomas to John first Baron Lumley (c.1533-1609), is such that it is rather appropriate that the clarification that the book should be presented ‘from me’ has had to be inserted above the line. But it remained a deeply personal gift: the two men shared many interests in common: literary, political, and religious. Sir Thomas’s Catholicism had led to his imprisonment in the Tower of London on two occasions (1569-70 and 1588-9),⁹⁸ and Lord Lumley was an important figure among English Catholics, making Cornwallis’s choice of *De bono senectutis* by the Italian cardinal Gabriele Paleotti a significant one.⁹⁹

d) The Cornwallis Family and Catholicism

The links between the recusant community in England and Sir Thomas are important ones. There is no evidence that Sir William Cornwallis the Younger ever entertained leanings towards anything other than Protestantism, and his father, Sir Charles, was also a staunch Protestant. The influence of his recusant father was felt by Sir Charles even

⁹⁸ On this, see McGrath and Rowe, ‘The Recusancy of Sir Thomas Cornwallis’.

⁹⁹ The gift certainly made it into Lumley’s library, listed in his library catalogue as item 1821 in the section ‘Artes Liberales et Philosophi’. See Sears Jayne and Francis R. Johnson, *The Lumley Library: The Catalogue of 1609* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), p. 213. Lumley’s copy may survive among his books now in the British Library, shelfmark 525.f.12, although Jayne and Johnson note that it ‘may have been displaced by the Elizabeth copy’.

after the former's death, however: in 1609, while Ambassador at Madrid, he reported in a letter to Robert Cecil in 1609 that he had argued about religion with a Carmelite friar, who had explained 'that he and many others of the greatest of this Court could not believe, that I, that had descended from such parentes, whatsoever shewe I make in regard of myne Employment and Respect to him I serve, could be inwardly of that Opyinion I professs'd'.¹⁰⁰

The religious tendencies of Sir William the Elder are less certain. In their important discussion of Sir Thomas's recusancy, Patrick McGrath and Joy Rowe have demonstrated that nothing can be proved to show that William was a Catholic, noting that as Sir Thomas's sons were brought up in Elizabeth's reign, he 'may have allowed them to conform', and that certainly neither William nor Charles 'ever caused the government any serious anxiety over matters of religion. They apparently accepted the Church of England without much difficulty'.¹⁰¹ James Knowles, however, has written that Sir William the Elder was either 'a recusant, or had close connections with recusant circles', noting the importance of these connections for the patronage contexts of the performance of Jonson's masque at Cornwallis's house in 1604. He comments that the man who provided the music for the entertainment, Martin Peerson, was indicted alongside Jonson for Catholicism at the Old Bailey on 9 January 1606, and comments that 'Although much of the tone of the entertainment is playful and coloured by bawdy satire, shared musical or religious networks may underlie the entertainment'.¹⁰² I would further suggest that this might be confirmed by the hitherto unnoticed coincidence that Basil Brooke (1576-1646), who has been described as 'one of the leading Roman

¹⁰⁰ Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of affairs of state in the reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*, 3 vols. (London: T. Ward, 1725): III.31.

¹⁰¹ McGrath and Rowe, 'The Recusancy of Sir Thomas Cornwallis', pp. 238-9.

¹⁰² Jonson, *Works*, II.485.

Catholics in England',¹⁰³ and who would become a Royalist conspirator during the Civil War, was knighted by James I at Sir William the Elder's Highgate house on 1 May 1604: in other words, as part of the same occasion as Jonson's entertainment.¹⁰⁴

Certainly, Sir William had extremely close connections to Catholic circles aside from his father: his daughter Anne (whose miscellany was discussed earlier) was such a devout Roman Catholic that her husband, the 7th Earl of Argyll, converted to Catholicism in 1618. His sisters Mary, and Elizabeth (1546/7-1628) were Catholics, and the latter's husband Sir Thomas Kitson (1540-1603), also had Catholic sympathies. Like her brother, Elizabeth Kitson was closely involved with cultural patronage, and she and her husband headed a household at Hengrave Hall in Norfolk in which literature and especially music thrived: they were patrons of the composer and musician John Willbye (*bap.* 1574, *d.* 1638) from 1598 until Elizabeth's death: his first publication, *The First Set of English Madrigals to 3, 4, 5, and 6 Voices* (1598) was dedicated to the Kitson's son-in-law Sir Charles Cavendish, and dated from their London house.¹⁰⁵ Lady Kitson used her long-standing friendship with Sir Philip Sidney to prevail upon Sidney to use his influence in getting her father released from imprisonment in the 1580s:¹⁰⁶ Sidney obliged with a letter begging favour for Sir Thomas on 28 March 1582.¹⁰⁷ McGrath and Rowe note that

¹⁰³ Martyn Bennett, 'Brooke, Sir Basil (1576–1646)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn. 2004).

¹⁰⁴ Shaw, *Knights of England*, II.132.

¹⁰⁵ On the Kitson's patronage of Willbye and other musicians, see M. Ross, 'The Kytsons of Hengrave: a study in musical patronage', (University of London: Unpublished M.Mus. dissertation, 1989). On musical patronage in the period more generally, but including detailed information on these East Anglian and London networks, see David C. Price, *Patrons and Musicians of the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹⁰⁶ The friendship between Sidney and Elizabeth Kitson has been discussed by Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (London: Hamish Hamilton and New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 127; and Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 257-259.

¹⁰⁷ The letter is printed in full in John Gage, *The History and Antiquities of Hengrave, Suffolk* (Bury St Edmund's: John Deck, and London: Samuel Bentley, 1822), pp. 182-3.

Fulke Greville also demonstrated his friendship to the Cornwallis family, writing on the same day to say that he had solicited help for Sir Thomas.¹⁰⁸

e) East Anglian Connections

The significant role played in the transmission of literary manuscripts in the late sixteenth century of the close ties between the Sidneys, Kitsons, and Cornwallises, along with other East Anglian families (often with Catholic sympathies), such as the Petres of Ingatestone Hall in Essex and the Herveys of Ickworth, have been brilliantly documented, most prominently by Hilton Kelliher and H. R. Woudhuysen, who have mapped the dissemination of Sidney's poetry in manuscript miscellanies emanating from such East Anglian families and their associates.¹⁰⁹ The importance of the shared cultural and literary interests of these regional networks of aristocratic families, all of whom had substantial links to the court, London, and the universities, should not be underestimated.

Norfolk and Suffolk were important centres of literary activity in this period, providing an important regional context for Cornwallis's own writing. Indeed, Cornwallis's local networks, and especially his family's relationship with the Sidneys, may actually be important in terms of the practicalities of how the *Essayes* entered print. As has been discussed, the first part of the essays was originally prefaced by a letter from Henry Olney, in which Olney claimed that Cornwallis had not himself intended to print the *Essayes*, something Cornwallis confirms in his own prefatory letters to Part Two. Although this adheres to traditional authorial disclaimers, this exchange should not be viewed in isolation, for there is another occasion on which a Henry Olney was the actual publisher of a text printed without consent: Sir Philip Sidney's *A Defence of Poetry*,

¹⁰⁸ McGrath and Rowe, 'The Recusancy of Sir Thomas Cornwallis', p. 244. The letter is now in Cambridge University Library: MS. Hengrave 88 (2), no. 67.

¹⁰⁹ Kelliher, 'Unrecorded Extracts'; Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 257-266.

published posthumously in 1595. This was entered into the *Stationers' Register* by William Ponsonby on 29 November 1594 as Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie*, but on 12 April 1595, Henry Olney entered it as *An Apologie for Poetrie* without the author's name. Both editions were published, although Olney's was later retracted and reissued with Ponsonby's title page.¹¹⁰ In his letter to the reader, Olney describes the difficulties involved in transferring the text from the private to the public realm, calling his publishing task an 'endeoured hardiment,' for which he would be blamed by those 'great ones, who in themselues haue interr'd this blessed innocent'.¹¹¹

It is uncertain whether the Henry Olney who published the *Defence* and the Henry Olney who apparently pushed the *Essayes* into print are one and the same man. It is also unclear how Olney obtained the *Defence* manuscript. H. R. Woudhuysen suggests that it was actually the printer, James Roberts, who had possession of it and went into partnership with 'the obscure Olney' to publish it, although he does not elaborate as to why Roberts might have undertaken the venture with such an 'obscure' partner.¹¹² The close ties of friendship between the Cornwallis and Sidney families, which might point towards Olney having a close enough connection with the Sidney household through his links with the Cornwallises and other members of the same circle to make it possible for him to access a manuscript, a version of events would thus speculatively unite the two Olneys. If they are indeed the same man, it does perhaps lend credence to the idea that Olney might actually have printed Cornwallis's *Essayes* without consent, a modified form of his actions with the *Defence*. Even if he only acted as a go-between for Cornwallis and Mattes, his publishing connections would surely have come in useful.

That Olney continued in his friendship with the Cornwallis family after the publication of the *Essayes*, and was in fact in Spain with Sir Charles Cornwallis around the

¹¹⁰ See Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 232-3 for further details.

¹¹¹ Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London: Henry Olney, 1595), sigs. A3^r-A3^v.

¹¹² Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 234.

same time that the essayist was there, along with a member of another prominent Norfolk family – the Knyvetts – is also witnessed by a hitherto unnoticed entry in the Cecil Papers from 3 January 1606/7. This records that there was a:

Pass signed by Sir Charles Cornwallis to Edmund Knyvet¹¹³ and Henry Olney, to land and pass forward to London or other parts of England. they came out of England with licence: the one with Cornwallis, the other with Sir Thomas Palmer, who died in this Court.¹¹⁴ – Valladolid, 3 Jan., 1606.¹¹⁵

Regional links also provide another connection between the Olney of the *Defence* and of the *Essayes*: the only other work published by Olney (again printed for him by James Roberts) – Richard Linche’s sonnet sequence *Diella* (1596) – has a dedicatory epistle written by Olney addressed to Lady Anne Glemham (née Sackville), the wife of the politician Sir Henry Glemham (*d.* 1632) of Glemham Hall in Suffolk.¹¹⁶ This gives added substance to the theory that the two men are one and the same: a member of the East Anglian literary and social networks in which Cornwallis and his family moved.

f) Sir Charles Cornwallis (c.1555-1629)

Local East Anglian literary and antiquarian interests have also been vital to the preservation and dissemination of archival material relating to the Cornwallis family, including Sir William Cornwallis the Younger himself.¹¹⁷ The writings of Sir Charles

¹¹³ Edmund Knyvett (*b.* 1566) was at one time Porter of the Mint at the Tower of London. A letter from him written in 1604 records, among other things, his intention of going to Spain with Sir Charles Cornwallis. This is preserved in the Knyvett Correspondence held at the Norfolk Record Office: KNY 633-636 372 x 5.

¹¹⁴ Palmer’s death from small pox is recorded in a letter from Sir Charles Cornwallis to Lord Robert Cecil, 17 July 1605. The letter is printed in Winwood, *Memorials of affairs of state*, II.95. On Palmer’s conversion to Catholicism in Spain shortly before his death, see Sara Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 172.

¹¹⁵ M. S. Giuseppi and D. McN. Lockie (eds.), *Historical Manuscripts Commission 9: Calendars of the manuscripts of the most honourable the Marquess of Salisbury preserved at Hatfield House Hertfordshire. Part XIX (A.D. 1607)* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1965), p. 2.

¹¹⁶ R[ichard] L[inche], *Diella certaine sonnets, adioyned to the amorous poeme of Dom Diego and Gineura* (London: Henry Olney, 1596), sigs. A3^r-A4^v.

¹¹⁷ It is perhaps significant that almost all of the material relating to the Cornwallises in the Bodleian (including Cornwallis’s poems and paradoxes) forms part of the collection of manuscripts donated by the

Cornwallis, in particular, seem to have enjoyed regional popularity. A collection of Sir Charles's writings was sold as lot 33 at Sotheby's on 6 June 1961 as part of the Helmingham Hall Sale.¹¹⁸ Helmingham Hall, in the village of Hemingham in Suffolk, is the ancestral seat of the Tollemache family. Sir Lionel Tollemache (1591-1640) was MP for Orford with Sir Roger Townshend from 1621 to 1622 and again from 1628 to 1629, this time with Sir Charles Legross, who was the grandson of Sir Charles Cornwallis, in other words, Sir William Cornwallis the Younger's nephew. It is highly likely that the collection was obtained due to personal and local interest in the Cornwallis family.

Similarly, a collection of Sir Charles's writings now in the British Library (MS. Add. 39853) demonstrates an interest in the manuscript as part of a familial literary archive, most probably one which was preserved for some time within the family itself. At the head of the volume, it is labelled as 'A Collection of S^r Charles Cornwaleys my fathers Manuscripts', and the first item is 'His letter of direction and advice to mee his sonne' (fol. 1^v). The identity of this son is unknown, but a list written in an eighteenth-century hand at the back of the manuscript, detailing the family's ancestry, suggests that it might have been Sir Charles's son of the same name, as the ancestry traces a particular line of descent: 'The names & births of y^e Children of S^r Francis Cornwaleys K^t, sonne of Charles Cornwaleys of London Esq^r, a younger son to S^r Charles Cornwaleys K^t author of this Manuscript' (fol. 163^v).

antiquarian Thomas Tanner (1674-1735), who had a strong interest in East Anglian history. Tanner's copy of the 1632 edition of Cornwallis's *Essayes* is also now in the Bodleian Library (shelfmark: Tanner 116), signed by him on its title-page. Another printed edition of Cornwallis's works now in the Bodleian has a regional heritage: this is a copy of the 1617 edition of *Essayes, or rather Encomiums*, which was owned by the Norfolk antiquary Thomas Martin (1697-1771) and signed by him on its title-page. Underneath this is the signature 'R. Gough. March 3. 1777': this is the antiquary Richard Gough (1735-1809), who acquired Martin's manuscripts in 1775, at which time he very likely also acquired this book. The book has a handwritten contents page in Martin's hand, and is bound with Donne's *Biathanatos*, his *Iuvenelia: or, Paradoxes and Problems* (1633), and Nashes's *Lenten Stuff, or Description of Yarmouth* (1599). Although the texts obviously have a generic affiliation, the conjunction of texts in the volume also serves to illustrate ties of friendship (between Donne and Cornwallis) and region (between Cornwallis and Nashe's text), and it is in fact the volume's regional provenance which comes to the fore in its library shelfmark: Gough Norfolk 26.

¹¹⁸ *Catalogue of highly important manuscripts & printed books from the library at Helmingham Hall, Suffolk [...] which will be sold by auction by Messrs. Sotheby & Co. [...] Tuesday, June 6th, 1961* (London: Sotheby & Co., 1961).

But Sir Charles Cornwallis's writings were popular far beyond the local networks of his native East Anglia, partly due to his prominent status within Jacobean courtly society: he was the English Ambassador in Madrid from 1604-09, and Treasurer of Prince Henry's household from 1610 until the Prince's death.¹¹⁹ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, his *Life and Death* of Prince Henry enjoyed extensive manuscript circulation before its posthumous publication in 1641, but other writing by Sir Charles was also widely disseminated.¹²⁰ As is common with diplomatic correspondence, his ambassadorial letters from Spain, for example, survive in multiple copies. A letter he wrote to King James from the Tower on 22 June 1614, begging the King's forgiveness, was much copied: sometimes by itself, but frequently alongside other letters or texts by Sir Charles.¹²¹ British Library MS. Harley 1221, for example, which contains a copy of the letter, also includes a copy of another letter which Sir Charles wrote from the Tower, this time to his wife (fols. 96^v-99^r and fols. 99^v-101^r). A copy of this same letter to his wife is also present alongside the letter to James in Bodleian Library MS. Rawl. C. 929 (fols. 19^r-21^v and fols. 26^r-28^v).

The other texts contained within MS. Harley 1221 provide a valuable insight into the social and literary context in which Sir Charles's letters were circulated. The volume also contains poems, including a New Year's gift from John Hoskins to the King in both English and Latin (fols. 76^v-77^v), a collection of characters of figures such as a virgin and a courtier (fols. 65^r-68^v), a character of honesty (fols. 69^r-^v), and Francis Bacon's 'An Essay on a King' (fols. 104^r-105^r). This is significant because it demonstrates Sir Charles's work to be situated by its readers and copiers within a similar literary and social context

¹¹⁹ His writing has also been preserved today in archives far beyond East Anglia. For example, a collection of nine folders containing copies of his letters and tracts (written between 1607 and 1626) is now in the Kenneth Spencer Research Collection at the University of Kansas: MS. D86.

¹²⁰ A group of three manuscript copies of this text, written in the same professional scribal hand, provide an interesting parallel to the manuscript circulation history of Sir William Cornwallis's *Encomium of Richard III*.

¹²¹ A copy of the letter appears in Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock: D258/37/16, for example, and this manuscript does not contain any other texts by Sir Charles Cornwallis.

to that in which his son's found itself, demonstrating the shared cultural sociabilities which existed between them.

MS. Rawl. C. 929 provides a different context for the circulation of copies of Sir Charles's letter to James, for the rest of this volume comprises copies of several of his other letters. These are: another letter to James from the Tower (fols. 25^r-26^r), a letter 'written to a friend of his' (fols. 22^r-25^r), two letters to his grandson, Sir Charles Le Gross (fols. 29^r-30^v and fols. 63^v-66^r), 'Certaine remembrances to Prince Charles written by S^r Charles Cornewaleys during his continewance in the Tower' (fols. 31^r-39^r), a letter to his granddaughter, 'M^{rs} Greene' (fols. 61^v-63^r) and a letter 'to A kinsman of his to Christen A sonne of his the Third daye of Ianuary 1623' (fols. 61^r-61^v).

Copies of Sir Charles's diplomatic correspondence are usually preserved as part of a two-way stream of communication: the letters are copied along with their replies, or the letters which engendered Sir Charles's response. This is the case, for example, in the collection of copies of his ambassadorial correspondence which makes up British Library MS. Harley 1875, and suggests the importance for the letters both in their original context, and when copied, of situating them as part of an ongoing channel of conversation and news-exchange. This is in distinct contrast to the letters copied in MS. Rawl C. 929, and the widely reproduced letter to King James. These letters do not require to be read as part of a chain of correspondence; rather, they are intended to function independently.

Furthermore, even supposedly private letters have an avowedly public function: the letter to his wife, for example, is as much a public request for mercy as that to James, which helps to explain their appearance together in MS. Harley 1221. An exception perhaps is the letter to an unnamed kinsman asking him to become godfather to Sir Charles's newborn son, which includes details such as the information that 'The daye for the same [the christening] is appointed (if God be pleased) vpon Tewsdaye come

Sevenight being the Third of this next Moneth. The place my poore Cottage heere at Beeston' (fol. 60^v). Even this letter, however, has nuggets which have the ability to be transformed from personal comment to more widely applicable wisdom about the state of men and the world, especially when placed alongside Sir Charles's other letters in the volume, such as when he describes his new son: 'A boye soe bigg and soe stronge for these fewe howers that hee hath entred and adbidden in the worlde, as I prognosticate that hee will prove A soldier w^{ch} although in the dayes wee Live in, is none of the best occupacon, yet in those to come may prove a good imploym^t' (fol. 60^v).

The place within this volume of the 'remembrances' to Prince Charles is significant here, for it serves as an indication of the nature and genre of these letters.¹²² These 'remembrances' – precepts and advice on behaviour and learning for the young Prince – are particularly telling when placed alongside the letters to Sir Charles's grandchildren in this volume, and the letter of advice to his son in BL MS. Add. 39853. The letters to Charles Le Gross have much in common with this letter to Sir Charles's son, and indeed, in some places they are identical in the directions they give, despite the disparity in their dates (the first letter to his grandson in MS. Rawl. C. 929 is written during his confinement in the Tower; the letter to his son is written at the very end of his life around fifteen years later). Furthermore, Sir Charles's method in these letters of advice has much in common with his son's practice in the *Essayes*. Just as Cornwallis draws upon the figure of his grandfather, Sir Thomas, as an exemplum, so too does Sir Charles, writing to his own grandson that:

It moves me to remember ~~ha~~ what name and epitheton myne olde and much experienced father was wont to putt vpon people of that Conditon w^{ch} resorted in

¹²² Another manuscript copy of these 'remembrances' can be found in the Inner Temple, as recorded in *A Catalogue of the Printed Books and Manuscripts in the Library of the Inner Temple* (London: T. C. Hansard, 1833), p. 284. A manuscript copy of Sir Charles's *Life and Death of Prince Henry* is also preserved in the Inner Temple Library: MS. 529A.

those date to the full estate and plotters of my brother in Lawe S^r Thomas Kitson when hee came to Hengrave and found any of that sort there, hee would aske S^r Thomas if hee should never find his howse free from that check, resembling those Companions to Rookes, w^{ch} wth there noyse doe awake men out of their sleeps, and wth the heate of their feete doe seare and in tyme wholye destroye the Trees they rest and build in. (fols. 64^r-64^v)

In this way, we can see Sir Thomas Cornwallis's reported speech functioning in a proverbial fashion, which can be applied both by his son and grandson, but also by a much wider audience once this letter has been copied, much as Cornwallis crafts his own aphoristic wisdom and surrounds it with a personal gloss for wider application and readership in his *Essayes*.

The letter to Mrs. Green in MS. Rawl. C. 929 is another letter of advice, this one offered in an attempt to mitigate the 'precipitous' decision of Sir Charles's granddaughter to marry:

Howbeit sithence the stone cast out of hand cannot be recalled: you shall give Leave to A Grandfather that Loveth and careth for you, to recom~~m~~ende vnto you, some duties and observances of A good wife, w^{ch} being carefully accomplished, will make the Life and charge w^{ch} you have soe vnseasonably taken vpon you either more pleasing to yo^{ur}sele and satisfacious to o^{ur} friendes, or at Least Lesse grievous to yo^{ur} owne feelinges and more answerable to the Condidion of A gentlewoman borne and bredd as you have beene. (fols. 61^v-62^r)

In this one volume, therefore, Sir Charles engages with various different established sub-genres of early-modern advice literature: advice to a Prince, advice to a (grand)son, and conduct advice aimed towards gentlewomen and wives in particular. All of these examples are supposedly personal letters or addresses to one person in particular: Prince Charles, Charles Le Gross, Mrs Green, Sir Charles's son. Yet they were all circulated far beyond the hands of their initial reader. The way in which the advice to Sir Charles's son has been preserved in a volume of his writing which passed down, at least for a time, within his family, coupled with the similarities between this text and the letters written by Sir Charles for his own grandson show how the material can be used as fatherly advice

applicable down the generations. It also demonstrates the tenor of the advice which must have been offered by Sir Charles to his elder son, William, and consequently helped to infuse the spirit of his *Essayes*: in ‘Of Censuring’ (1600), Cornwallis wrote that he must ‘register my particular happinesse, who haue parents more carefull of my mynd then of my bodie; whose aduise or example if I will follow, I cannot stray’ (38). But the copying of these letters demonstrates their appeal outside the confines of the family, from other fathers, to other sons. They were appropriated as letters of advice which were more generically applicable, despite their references to people and circumstances particular to the Cornwallises (as is the case with the anecdote about Sir Thomas Cornwallis).

But the fact that these advice letters (and Sir Charles’s public letter to King James) are always (or practically always) attributed in their manuscript copies to Sir Charles, and frequently copied either with other letters by him (as in MS. Rawl. C. 929), or with texts which have socio-literary links to him (as with MS. Harley 1221) illustrates the importance of retaining that individual and personal context. As with the most famous advice to a son of the period, written by Sir Thomas Cornwallis’s friend Lord William Cecil to his son Robert, the identity of the parties concerned has vital rhetorical force.¹²³ This speaks to the same ethical concerns which shape Cornwallis’s use of affective rhetoric in the *Essayes*: the persuasive power of the argument is dependent on the reader’s trust in the character and situation of the writer. Such letters therefore provide an important parallel to the *Essayes*, but the distance between the two genres is also important, as Cornwallis uses his essayistic persona to transform the didactic and pragmatic end-orientated genre of advice literature, so that affective rhetoric is not just a tool used to achieve a goal, but becomes part of an ongoing process of ethical improvement for both him and his readers. This kind of rhetorical transformation, and

¹²³ Louis B. Wright (ed.), *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

the need for a continuous process of improvement is perhaps alluded to by Cornwallis in ‘Of Aemulation’ (1600), in which he himself advises: ‘Parents thus wrap your Aduises, for I neuer beleueed any aduise of mine vntill the application of their speech came to persons knowne and so quickened me vp with an honest Aemulation’ (27).

Sir Charles’s letter to his friend from the Tower, along with a letter to the reader which is preserved in at least three manuscript copies of his *Life and Death* of Prince Henry, also provide a helpful context in which to consider Cornwallis’s *Essayes*, for they demonstrably grow out of the same culture and the same concerns. The opening to the ‘Letter to the Reader’, for example, could have emerged out of one of Cornwallis’s essays:

To live, and to live well, are two things so different in themselves, as Contemplacion and Action: life being only a Common benefitt, w^{ch} even the vilest Creatires, and of the lowest estymation, share equally wth the noblest of that workmanshipp; whose excellency is a witnesse to prove both a God and a Godhead; But a good life is more than a benefit, beyng most properly a blessing, by well employing those facultyes of the Soule, and guiding of Reason (the distinguisher of Soules) wth both acknowledgement and thankfulness, two principall, yet peculiar badges of vertue, and the Crowne of Vertue, Action.¹²⁴

In his letter to a friend in MS. Rawl. C. 929, Sir Charles discusses the way in which he spends his time in the Tower reading history books, from which he learns lessons about mankind: ‘That vayne is the confidence that men repose in the worlde whose greatest darlings & highest raised have comonly had y^e heaviest and the suddaynest downfall. That they arise like dough & goe downe like burbles’ (fol. 23^v). Like his son in the *Essayes*, he uses particular historical figures to illustrate particular conditions: ‘Cesar having through the travaile & peril of so many yeares passed in warres & hazardous

¹²⁴ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: MS. Osborn b431, p.1. The letter to the reader does not appear in the printed edition, but does also survive in at least two other manuscripts: British Library MS. Add. 30075 and National Library of Scotland MS. Adv. 35. 7. 14. Compare this passage with, for example, Cornwallis, *Essayes*, pp. 132-3.

enterprises attained the diadem & Empire hee sought for, wth in a fewe Moneths after Lost both them & his owne Life' (fol. 24^v).

But Sir Charles makes explicit in his letter something which is often only implied by Cornwallis in the *Essayes*: the example of history is only used to confirm the teaching of the Scriptures, which Sir Charles has been reading beforehand: 'From those sacred books I passe to the reading of Histories, the true Recorders of the accidents and passages of this worlde: wherein I finde confirmed what by the other is taught and related' (fol. 23^v). Cornwallis occasionally directly mentions his Christian belief, and the distancing effect this can have on his relationship with his Pagan predecessors (such as his tempered praise of the nobility of suicide), and his understanding of the true purpose and application of learning is infused by spiritual, as well as practical and ethical, considerations (as is discussed perhaps most fully in the 1601 essay 'Of Knowledge'). But he rarely quotes from the Bible – unlike his father, whose letters (including the diplomatic correspondence) are peppered with Scriptural references – and his essays are not directed to specifically religious themes, relating more to secular and civic concerns. But Sir Charles's letter here illuminates a significant underlying context for Cornwallis's general reading practices, his use of history, and his literary enterprise. It is important too that Cornwallis keeps this context as exactly that – context, rather than content – as he establishes his vernacular and secular literary essay, rather than bringing it to the fore as other essayists such as Daniel Tuvill would begin to do, as was discussed in the main Introduction to this thesis.

Not only Sir Charles's written, but also his spoken words were preserved by his contemporaries: William Rawley (c.1588-1667), Francis Bacon's chaplain and amanuensis, recorded several anecdotes both about, and related by, Sir Charles in one of his

manuscript notebooks, now at Lambeth Palace Library.¹²⁵ This places him within the stream of civil conversational exchange and appropriation which was one of the cultural contexts which shaped Cornwallis's rhetorical strategies in the *Essayes*, as discussed in Chapter One. Cornwallis himself also appears in a manuscript jest-book from slightly later in the seventeenth century, where a witticism of his as relayed to Sir Henry Wotton is related:

Sir Will. Co[r]nwallis meeting Sir Henry Wotton one time, askt him where he had beene? he answerd, "faith Will: at a Bawdie house, where I mett with the strangest thing that ever man sawe; a wench that was all haire and No-Thing else; [had Nothing but Hair.] to whom Sir Will: replyde; a Bush and no Wine? downe with the Signe. [Phill: Calthorpe]."¹²⁶

Internal evidence suggests the jest book was owned by Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603-1655) of Hunstanton, Norfolk, son of Sir Hamon Le Strange (1583-1654).¹²⁷ The anecdote about Cornwallis is attributed to 'Phill: Calthorpe', who has been identified as Philip Calthorpe, of Gressenhall, Norfolk (*d.* 1652).¹²⁸

Here then, we see the intersection of the two of Cornwallis's social networks through time, as two local Norfolk men from a generation below Cornwallis exchange a witticism passed between the essayist and his courtly friend Sir Henry Wotton, representing the complex cultural transmission between periods and places, and between speech and text, to which Cornwallis's words could be subject. In this way, too, we see the way in which a joke shared between Cornwallis and his friend could be appropriated and de-personalised

¹²⁵ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2086, fol. 9^r (anecdotes and sayings attributed to Sir Charles) and fol. 11^r (anecdotes about Sir Charles). The manuscript has been digitized by Scriptorium: Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts Online, and is available at:

<http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/images/index.php?ms=Lamb2086&page=1>.

¹²⁶ H. F. Lippincott (ed.), *"Merry Passages and Jeasts": A Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603 – 1655)* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1974), p. 17.

¹²⁷ Lippincott, *"Merry Passages and Jeasts"*, p. 2. Lippincott points to the first identification of the jest book as belonging to Sir Nicholas as being J. G. Nichols, 'Notices of Sir Nicholas Lestrangle, Bart., and his Family Connexions', in *Anecdotes and Traditions illustrative of early English history and literature: derived from MS. sources*, ed. William J. Thoms (London: printed for the Camden Society by J. B. Nicholas, 1839).

¹²⁸ Lippincott, *"Merry Passages and Jeasts"*, p. 206.

through wider transmission, a process of de-personalisation complicated, however, by the fact that the original joke is itself based on a proverb: ‘Good wine needs no bush’, associated with the tavern sign of the bush or sprig of ivy.¹²⁹ Furthermore, the appropriation of Cornwallis’s joke itself is itself born out of the same humanistic culture which engendered Cornwallis’s essays and his rhetorical practices within them, for the jest book, as Anne Lake Prescott has shown, is similarly rooted in serio-ludic humanistic practices of *imitatio*.¹³⁰

4. ‘*The Right Vertuous and most Honorable Ladies*’: Women and the *Essayes*

Cornwallis’s essay ‘Of Concept’ (1601) is dedicated ‘To the Lady Withipoll’, one of his female relatives.¹³¹ This is the only one of the individual essays to have its own dedication, but in addressing it to a noblewoman, it is in line with dedication of the work as a whole to four aristocratic women, three of whom were members of the Harington family. Women, then, are important to the *Essayes* as their named and directed readers.¹³² Furthermore, Cornwallis is not unusual among early-modern essayists in dedicating his essays to women, and even more suggestively, his is not the only volume of essays to be addressed to ladies of the Harington family.

¹²⁹ Lippincott, ‘*Merry Passages and Jeasts*’, p. 169. The original proverb is listed under ‘W’ (no. 462) in 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).

¹³⁰ Anne Lake Prescott, ‘Humanism in the Tudor Jestbook’, *Moreana*, 9, 24:95-96 (1987): 5-16. Lake Prescott points too to the connections between the jest-book and the paradox, noting that they are both forms in which ‘the ludic aspect of humanistic literature coincides with the survival and modification of late scholastic logic’, p. 13.

¹³¹ This is Cornwallis’s cousin Frances (c. 1575-1625), daughter of Sir William Cornwallis the elder: the same Frances Cornwallis who was tricked into signing a marriage contract by Thomas Swift and Thomas Watson, as described earlier in this chapter. In 1595 she married Sir Edmund Withipole (d. 1619) of Suffolk.

¹³² On women as patrons more generally in this period, see James Daybell, ‘Women’s letters of recommendation and the rhetoric of friendship in sixteenth-century England’, in *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, eds. Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 172-190.

The four women to whom Cornwallis's essays were dedicated by Henry Olney and later by Cornwallis are: Lady Sara Hastings (1566-1629),¹³³ Lady Theodosia Dudley (1560-1639/40),¹³⁴ Lady Mary Wingfield (*b.* 1567),¹³⁵ and Lady Marie Dyer (*d.* 1601),¹³⁶ the first three of whom were sisters, daughters of the marriage between of Sir James Harington of Exton and Lucy Sidney which united these two aristocratic families.

The Cornwallises were connected to the Haringtons through friendship networks, specifically their mutual links with the Sidney family. Jason Scott-Warren has also described the literary and social networks which linked Sir Thomas Cornwallis with another member of the Harington family: Sir John Harington (1560-1612), the translator of Ariosto, describing Sir Thomas as 'a near-ideal reader' for Harington's *A New Discourse of a Stale Subiect, called the Metamorphoses of Aiax* (1596). Sir Thomas records reading this in one of his letters to Sir John Hobart, with an approving discussion of the work's treatment of his friends Robert Sheldon and Thomas Markham, and Scott-Warren notes that the book becomes a social tool, as Sir Thomas uses it to 'promote his own relationships among the Catholic gentry'.¹³⁷

In 1603, John Florio also chose women of the extended Harington family as dedicatees of the first book of his translation of Montaigne into English, addressing it to Lady Anne Harington and her daughter Lucy, Countess of Bedford, and describing the latter as having 'commaunded me on' with the translation.¹³⁸ Warren Boutcher has described the way in which this 'probably refers to a situation in which Florio completed

¹³³ Widow of Lord Francis Hastings (*d.* 1596). Later wife of the judge Sir George Kingsmill (*c.* 1539-1606), whom she married on 14 June 1600; Edward de la Zouche, 11th Baron Zouche (1556-1625), whom she married in 1611; and the diplomat Sir Thomas Edmondes (1563-1639), whom she married in 1626.

¹³⁴ Wife of Edward Sutton, Lord Dudley (1567-1643), whom she married in 1581.

¹³⁵ Wife of the courtier and politician Sir Edward Wingfield (*b.* 1562/3).

¹³⁶ This is Mary, née Fitzwilliam, wife to Sir Richard Dyer (*d.* 1605) of Great Stoughton, Huntingdonshire, one of the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber of James I along with Cornwallis. She was connected to the Harington sisters through her mother, Anne Sidney of Penshurst (*d.* 1602).

¹³⁷ Jason Scott-Warren, *Sir John Harington and the Book as Gift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 96-98.

¹³⁸ Montaigne, *Essays*, sig. A1^v.

the manuscript translation of the one chapter at one or more of the Russell/Harington residences and presented it to the Countess and her mother in the hope of attracting the attention of the masters of the house and consolidating his position as a casual gentleman servant in the household'.¹³⁹ Here, then, there is a much more direct and directed patronage relationship between Florio and his dedicatees than is the case with Cornwallis. This is also the case with the third early seventeenth-century collection of essays to be dedicated to a woman of the Harington family: in this case, once again Lady Anne Harington. This was Daniel Tuvill's *Essays Politic and Moral* (1608), and Tuvill was employed by Lady Harington as her secretary, making her a personally apposite patron for his work: he remarks in the dedicatory epistle that the essays have been written in 'such idle hours as remained free to me from your employments'.¹⁴⁰

The earlier choice of Lady Harington by Florio as one of the dedicatees of his translation of Montaigne means, however, that she was also already an established patron of essays, therefore lending her a literary, as well as a personal authority as the work's patron. The wider cultural connotations of addressing a text to the Harington sisters (or indeed to aristocratic women more generally) also help to illuminate the choice of dedicatees for Cornwallis's *Essayes*. This was not the only time the Harington sisters would have a book jointly dedicated to them: John Brinsley's *The fourth part of the true watch* (1624) is dedicated to all three of them, while they are among several aristocratic ladies to whom Robert Cawdrey's *A table alphabeticall* was dedicated in 1604. They were also chosen as independent dedicatees upon occasion: Nicholas Breton dedicated *The Soules Harmony* to Lady Sarah Hastings in 1602, for example, while Lady Theodosia Dudley was the dedicatee for Stephen Denison's *An exposition vpon the first chapter of the second epistle of Peter* (1622). As these titles demonstrate, the texts usually chosen as offerings for the

¹³⁹ Boutcher, 'Florio's Montaigne', pp. 161-2. See also Boutcher, 'The Origins of Florio's Montaigne'.

¹⁴⁰ Tuvill, *Essays Politic and Moral and Essays Moral and Theological*, p. 5.

Harington sisters were devotional or educational, illuminating a specific cultural context of patronage by noblewomen in which they were chosen as suitable dedicatees for the *Essayes*.

Florio's translation originated as a project to translate only one of the chapters in Montaigne's *Essais*: that on the education of a young nobleman, written at the behest of Sir Edward Wotton, as Florio explains in his prefatory letter to Lady Anne Harington and her daughter.¹⁴¹ As Boutcher has demonstrated, his translation of the essays as a whole took place 'as part of a noble household institution that retained the formally institutionalised "core" of humanist rhetorical and dialectical study but informally extended itself across an eclectic Latin-and-vernacular range of languages and studies'; similarly, the translation was read in such a context, as by Lady Anne Clifford, whose tutor Samuel Daniel provided a prefatory poem for the later editions of Florio's translation. In this way, the translation was both created and received within a social context: that of the elite private institution of learning within the noble household.

This is an important cultural and social context for Cornwallis's essays, too, highlighted by the dedication of the volume to noblewomen who – as the topics of the later texts to be dedicated to them suggests – were equally associated with both private learning and civil conversation. The place of literary essays in public institutions of learning later in the period also provides a useful parallel here. The schoolmaster Ralph Johnson recommended Bacon's *Essays* to his students in 1665,¹⁴² while the 'method of study' proposed by Thomas Heywood, a fellow of St John's College, Oxford, and preserved in a manuscript dated 1704, includes 'Bacon's Essays' amongst its recommended reading for the second year of study.¹⁴³ In both of these cases, therefore,

¹⁴¹ Florio, *Essayes*, sig. A2v.

¹⁴² Ralph Johnson, *The Scholars Guide from the Accidence to the University. Or, Short, Plain, and Easie Rules for performing all manner of Exercise in the Grammar School* (London: Thomas Pierrepont, 1665), p. 14.

¹⁴³ Bodleian Library: MS. Rawl. d. 40, p. 5.

the essay form is recommended for use at a fairly formative stage of education, much as is the case with the private institutions of learning described by Boutcher.

The context in which Heywood places the essays is even more telling, however, when considered alongside another, list of recommended reading: 'Dr Merryweathers Directions to a young student in the University', dated May 1710. Heywood puts the essays alongside texts which are the same or similar to those named in this later manuscript 'Directions' as fit for 'Such young Gentlemen as come to university for breeding rather than scholarship'.¹⁴⁴ Although this last group does not contain any essays, it does include texts and genres closely connected to them, such as epigrams, familiar letters, and Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.

This connection between essays and the type of educative reading associated with 'breeding rather than scholarship' sheds further light on the dedications of early essay volumes to noblewomen. Women were necessarily excluded from the academic world of the universities, but were nonetheless part of the civil education system of a private noble household, and Cornwallis acknowledges their importance of their place in such a culture in his *Essayes*. In 'Of Feare' (1601), he dismisses claims that women are less innately intellectually capable than men, commenting that 'I do not thinke wemen are much more faultie in Nature's abilities then men, but they faile in education; they are kept ignorant and fearefull'. Following this, he states that 'I would haue them learned and experienced. Let them know as much as wee know, and then, doubtlesse, they would be as fearelesse as we are' (109). He criticizes the fact that '*Licurgus* ordained the *Laconian* Women the exercise of their limmes; wrasteling, running, and managing weightes and throwing them. It did well doubtlesse for the preparing their issue strong and sturdy; but had he giuen mothers the education of bettering their mindes, hee had done much better' (108), which in itself is reminiscent of his praise of his own parents for being 'more carefull of my

¹⁴⁴ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library: MS. Osborn c581, p. 152.

mynd then of my bodie' (38). He does suggest however that women should even be exposed to battle: 'I am much against that Romane lawe that prohibiteth commander's wives from going to the Warres with their husbands' (109).

In the male-dominated world of civic humanism in which I have so far situated the *Essayes*, Cornwallis's praise of women's intelligence and capacities, and the suggestion that they might profitably be removed from their domestic context might seem surprising.¹⁴⁵ But in fact, this apparent tension is dispersed when Cornwallis explains his reasons for favouring increased education and travel for women: 'all obiections set apart, their commonwealth would haue gained by it; for, doubtlesse, a wench that hath beene in many countries, seene many battailes, and is full of experience is excellent to breede on' (109). In other words, the furthering of women's education and experience is only to improve their ability as 'breede[rs]': mothers and educators of sons to benefit the commonwealth, and thus strengthen the civic bonds which Cornwallis's essayist persona embodies and endorses.

In this way, Cornwallis follows a strand of contemporary thought which argued that women could have a pro-actively beneficial effect on the civil society of men. Jennifer Richards points out, for example, that the conversation between a group of aristocratic men and women in Book 4 of Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* is a dramatization of his suggestion in Book 2 'that women civilize men by engaging them in light-hearted conversation'.¹⁴⁶ Although most of the surviving evidence of the owners of Cornwallis's essays demonstrates them to have been men, women did read and own them: one copy of the 1632 edition now in Oriel College, Oxford, for example, is signed on its title-page

¹⁴⁵ For discussions of the place of women and their domestic and educational situations in the period, see for example Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

¹⁴⁶ Jennifer Richards (ed.), *Early Modern Civil Discourses* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 8.

in a seventeenth-century hand: 'Victoria Sacherverell'.¹⁴⁷ In the same way that Guazzo suggested women could engage in civic society by enabling men to be better practitioners of civic conversation, so too are women readers intended to take from the *Essayes* the kind of knowledge that will enable them to be better 'to breede on', and to help them to provide a better example to their sons, as Cornwallis suggests the Lacemonian women would have been for their children had their minds, as well as their bodies, been improved. In the same fashion, in choosing women as patrons of the essays, both Florio and Cornwallis were participating in a similar form of sexual cultural exchange: the patronage of the women towards the essayists enabling them to better continue their role as practitioners of, and educators in, the shared sociability of civil conversation in a private aristocratic world of humanistic education.

¹⁴⁷ Oriel College, Oxford: 2 B g 27. Women owners of early-modern essays are further discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

Chapter Four

Cornwallis in Context II: Material Contexts

The 1632 edition of Cornwallis's *Essayes* has an engraved title page by the celebrated draughtsman Thomas Cecill (fl. 1625-1640), perhaps most famous for the title page of Sir Francis Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627).¹ The engraving depicts two men, sitting opposite one another at a table: one is reading from a book, a quill and some paper (already partially written on) lying in front of him; the other sits writing. The two men are almost identically dressed, with only a slight difference in their ruffs and the cut and detailing of their robes. D. C. Allen, dismissing the 'long held tradition' that the image is a representation of Cornwallis and his father, Sir Charles, posits that it is instead 'probably an idealization of a man who read and wrote in the reigns of Elizabeth and James as the change of neckwear suggests' (xxi).² I would suggest rather that both men in the picture are not simply 'a man', but representations of Cornwallis himself, and that this dual depiction has more than one purpose. Firstly, to represent the two-part composition process of the *Essayes* which I described in Chapter One: that is to say, the way in which Cornwallis converted his reading (and commonplacing) into written work in the form of the *Essayes*.³ Secondly, the alteration in costume commented upon by D. C. Allen potentially reflects the status of the text as described on the title page: '*Newlie Corrected*'.

¹ On Cecill, see further A. M. Hind, *Engraving in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: a descriptive catalogue with introductions*, 3 vols., eds. Mary Corbett and Michael Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952-1964), pp. 31-47.

² The tradition of identifying the two men as Cornwallis and his father dates back to James Granger, *A Supplement, Consisting of Corrections and Large Additions, to A Biographical History of England ... Communicated by Horace Walpole, to the Author* (London: T. Davies, 1774). Granger describes the engraving as depicting 'two men, sitting and writing, with some probability, meant to represent Sir CHARLES and Sir WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, his son', p. 237. The eagerness with which one of the figures is identified as Sir Charles with absolutely no evidence, coupled with the way in which the description of Cornwallis's essays in the *Supplement* is prefaced with a discussion of Sir Charles's eminent career, demonstrates the continued significance of Cornwallis's father's reputation to the reception of the *Essayes*.

³ Following on from this, the picture may well be meant to concomitantly represent – as Allen suggests – 'an idealization of a man who read and wrote', in the form of one of Cornwallis's readers, who was expected to imitate Cornwallis's example in using his reading to inform his writing (even if that writing was only on the level of a commonplace book). In this way the picture – representing both the essayist and his reader – might symbolize the manner in which Cornwallis could act as a kind of *exemplum* to encourage the type of productive, ethical reader discussed in Chapter Two.

The 1632 edition was published eighteen years after Cornwallis's death, and so these corrections were the work of the printing house, rather than the author. But by depicting the representations of the essayist in the costumes of both eras – the Elizabethan (when the book was first published) and the Jacobean (when this edition was printed) – with the writing man being dressed in the current costume, the text is imbued with an extra air of authority. In other words, the image takes on the secondary implication that Cornwallis made (or at least in some way authorized) the alterations to the text himself.

The pictorial aspects of the title page, showing the essayist in the act of writing, immediately stress the physical process of composition, and in particular, highlight the origins of the *Essayes* in manuscript form. The image also situates the genesis of the *Essayes* in a particular location: the two men sit at a slightly raised table in something like a neo-classical pavilion, with clouds vaguely visible in the background. The scene is calm, quiet, and solitary. In this way, the title page represents not just the manner in which the *Essayes* were composed, but also presents the imagined circumstances in which this composition took place. It is an isolated, refined setting, the architectural detail of which is perhaps meant to suggest the classical nature of the book in the essayist's hands, while the glimpse of the clouds in the background may represent the studied observation of the natural world which Cornwallis describes in the *Essayes* as vital to the accumulation of knowledge. Both reading and writing are here depicted as solitary and productive activities. Cornwallis himself conflates his 'solitarinesse' with his 'conuersing with bookes' in the 1600 essay 'Of Censuring'. But this bookish isolation is not necessarily described in positive terms, as Cornwallis acknowledges that it may be his self-imposed solitariness which has left him bereft of the benefits of profitable companionship, as the full quotation makes clear:

Whether it be solitarinesse or my conuersing with bookes or that my youth hath not beene worthy of graue acquaintance, I know not; but the greatest number (me

thinks) are out of the way – their project, the end they determine at is low and base. (38-39)

Such a statement necessarily qualifies the positive connotations of the essayist seated in splendid isolation as presented by the book's title page. This picture is complicated further when it is placed alongside Cornwallis's representations within the *Essayes* themselves of the physical circumstances surrounding his reading and writing. Like the engraving, these moments remind the reader of the manuscript origins of the *Essayes*, but in so doing they offer a rather different picture of the physical conditions surrounding their gestation and composition.

Although the origins of the *Essayes* in this manuscript culture are inescapably important, this chapter argues that the early-modern essay is above all a transitional genre, the product of the contemporary interplay between print and manuscript cultures. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the way in which Cornwallis invoked implied tensions between the two (and between coterie and wider circulation) as part of his rhetorical strategy. Furthermore, in lieu of any extant manuscript copies of the *Essayes*, a case study of the history of the extensive scribal and print circulation of Cornwallis's important literary paradox, *The Encomium of Richard III*, relates what is known of the manuscript transmission of Cornwallis's work back to my arguments surrounding Cornwallis's concerns about the risks inherent in commonplacing culture in Chapter One. A study of the *Encomium*'s material history suggests that Cornwallis's rhetorical precautions, and Olney's fears that the *Essayes* might be '*fowly corrupted*', were not unfounded.

Considering the essay in this context also sheds some light on the relationship between Cornwallis's essays and the growing importance of the popular vernacular marketplace in early-modern literary England. Henry Olney might have criticized the '*mercenary hand*' that would have published Cornwallis's essays '*for present gain*', but in printing them, Olney enabled the exact commercial literary culture he (and Cornwallis)

claimed to disparage. Cornwallis's *Essayes* are presented by both their author and by other people involved in their printed production and dissemination as in some way bringing the select, coterie world of scribal circulation together with the mass market of print, and the traditions and language of the former are manipulated in order to exploit the commercial potential of the latter: in this way, the ideal of the disinterested, amateur gentleman-essayist articulated by Cornwallis, and the commercial world of mass-market printed popular literature, developed hand in hand.

As part of this treatment, this chapter builds upon my analysis of Cornwallis's reading in Chapter One, and upon my exploration of his social and literary networks in Chapter Three by discussing some Cornwallis's most significant depictions of space and place (both real and imaginary) in the *Essayes*, and their connections with specific habits of reading and composition, both as represented within the *Essayes* themselves, and as they existed more generally in the period. Combining this with the study of Cornwallis's social networks in Chapter Three, I demonstrate the way in which the *Essayes* and Cornwallis's writings more generally are concurrently shaped by the social and material features affecting early-modern habits of writing, circulating, and reading texts in particular communities in both manuscript and print.

1. Circumstances of composition: The Alehouse

Casting an eye down the contents page at the start of the *Essayes*, there is one title that jumps out immediately: 'Of Alehouses'. This is the twenty-second essay of Part One, sandwiched in between 'Of Behaviour' and 'Of Affectation'. Both of the latter titles seem more at home in a collection which, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, has its roots in the commonplace tradition. Shorn of their essayistic prefix, both 'Behaviour' and 'Affectation' might easily provide traditional topics for a commonplace book, as indeed

the original listing of the individual essay titles as ‘The Heads’ suggests.⁴ In line with this background, seventeen of the twenty-five essays of Part One open with sentences that veer more or less towards the aphoristic in nature.⁵ In contrast, ‘Of Alehouses’ has one of the most personally inflected and anecdotal openings of the 1600 and 1601 collections combined, as Cornwallis tells his reader that: ‘I Write this in an Alehouse, into which I am driuen by the night, which would not giue me leaue to finde out an honester harbour’ (67).

The image presented by the 1632 engraved title page of the serene essayist writing alone in his stone pavilion, and the description of the moment of composition offered here by Cornwallis himself, could hardly be more different. Unlike the calm, distant clouds of the picture, the natural world conjured up in this opening sentence is hostile, and Cornwallis’s invocation of it introduces a sense of enforcement which permeates the essay’s opening sentences. The onset of night has ‘driuen’ Cornwallis into the alehouse, and hence into a writing space he would not ordinarily have chosen to inhabit. Similarly, the very act of essay writing itself is presented as something of a last resort, as his second sentence suggests: ‘I am without any company but Inke & Paper, & them I vse in stead of talking to my selfe’.

In a way, this supports the title page by suggesting that isolation is a necessary part of essay writing: if Cornwallis had not been ‘without any company’, this essay would never have been written. But unlike the idealized solitude presented by the engraving, Cornwallis here explicitly suggests that writing is a substitute for company, rather than an actively preferable alternative to it. This suggestion is strengthened by his next sentence, when he explains that, having come into the tavern alone, he first tried talking to the landlord, but to no avail: ‘My Hoste hath already giuen me his knowledge, but I am little bettered; I am now trying whether my selfe be his better in discretion’. It is only when

⁴ Sir William Cornwallis the Younger, *Essays* (London: Edmund Mattes, 1600), sig. A1^v.

⁵ These are numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24.

actual conversation has failed him that Cornwallis turns instead to the ‘talking stile’ of his *Essayes*.

Cornwallis’s rejection of conversation in this moment takes us back to his disappointment at the assembly in ‘Of Discourse’, which I discussed in Chapter One. It is based on the same kind of scruples: a dislike for conversation that has in some way failed as a method of profitable communication, as is the case here when he is ‘little bettered’ by the words ‘giuen’ him by the landlord. His vocabulary here is again complicit with the financial metaphors of exchange he employed to describe conversation in the earlier essay ‘Of the obseruation, and vse of things’, in which he wrote of his conversation with a husbandman: ‘I haue sold him an houre of my time and haue ware for it, good sound principles’ (50). In contrast, the knowledge freely ‘giuen’ to Cornwallis by his host in ‘Of Alehouses’ has left him ‘little bettered’. In this way, the abortive conversational exchange between the pair becomes part of the prevailing tone of enforcement, as Cornwallis is made to listen to whatever is ‘giuen’ to him by ‘My Hoste’, rather than choosing to have profitable ‘ware’ ‘sold’ to him. As a consequence of this, Cornwallis apparently detaches himself from the entire process of exchange: ‘I am now trying whether my selfe be his better in discretion’. As with the rebarbative tone of his letter to the reader which prefaces Part Two, this disengagement complicates the argument that the essay is a genre which revolves around proactive and productive friendly social exchange. Conversely, however, this might also be interpreted as a moment in which Cornwallis privileges literary sociability, depicting himself as choosing rather to engage in a textual, rather than an actual, conversation. But the force of this argument must be qualified by the fact that Cornwallis only privileges it over inadequate conversation, and furthermore, describes it as something more akin to conversing with himself, rather than with an ideal friendly interlocutor.

Cornwallis's statement, coupled with the personally inflected opening of the essay, might therefore suggest an inward turn towards a kind of self-reliance or self-examination, but in fact, 'Of Alehouses' is a prolonged exercise in the transformative digestion of external matter and information. Cornwallis demonstrates the way in which even unpromising material – in this case his physical surroundings – can be made useful through proper processing, just as in 'Of the obseruation, and vse of things', he defended his reading of pamphlets on the grounds that 'any thing good among such store of ill, why that is mine too' (51). In this way, although 'Of Alehouses' depicts writing as emerging out of a retreat into solitude, the type of solitude described here is not inward looking or removed from the world around it. Cornwallis presents himself as writing within the hubbub of the alehouse, and indeed the subject of the essay is sparked by his direct engagement with his physical environment: 'Not a Poste nor a painted cloth in the house but cryes out, "*Feare God*", and yet the Parson of the Town scarce keeps this Instruction'. In this way, the 'head' of Cornwallis's essay – the environment of the alehouse – guides the subject under discussion, much as Erasmus recommends that students choose the headings for a commonplace book and then supply suitable quotations inspired by it: the physical sign of the alehouse is transformed into a textual signpost. Even the presence of the 'host' acts as a kind of literary signpost too, moving the essay along a path dictated by the usual negative literary representations of landlords by Cornwallis's contemporaries, such as in John Marston's play *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605).⁶ The essay is then structured around a binary of interior and exterior: 'euery one speaks well & means naughtily', Cornwallis explains, before moving on to a discussion of inner and outward nobility which leads him finally to remind the reader of his supposed physical location towards the end of the essay: 'to distinguish of places, I am faine to fly to the signe of an Ale-house and to the stately coming in of greater houses' (67).

⁶ The bad 'character' of a host was further confirmed by Francis Osborne in his *Miscellany of sundry Essays, Paradoxes, Problematical Discourses, Letters, and Characters* (London: Richard Royston, 1659), pp. 197-99.

Cornwallis does not provide the reader with any particulars about the specific alehouse in which he has taken refuge: it is not named, nor is it given a precise location within the city. This lack of specificity qualifies the personal opening of the essay, and implies that, rather than offering his readers a privileged glimpse into his day-to-day activities, it is instead the more generalized characteristics associated with the alehouse that Cornwallis seeks to evoke and emphasize through his choice of setting. Such associations would have been easy for his readers to call to mind: alehouses and taverns were a common sight in the London of the 1590s. It is estimated that in 1577 there was a ratio of 1:142 alehouses per head of population in England, and Cornwallis was writing at a time when more and more such establishments were appearing: their popularity increased around the beginning of the seventeenth century, so that between 1612 and 1633, sixty-one new taverns were built in London, bringing the capital's then total to 211.⁷ The German traveller Thomas Platter the Younger (1574-1628), visiting England in 1599 (where he took in *Julius Caesar* at the Globe on 21 September), wrote in his diary that 'I have never seen more taverns and alehouses in my whole life than in London'.⁸ Cornwallis's essay is not about its title subject in the same way that 'Of Resolution' or 'Of Aduice' might be: after he has written that he has entered an alehouse, Cornwallis does not spend the rest of the essay describing it. But it does present the alehouse as producing the topic of the essay in another way, in a manner in some sense akin to that employed in 'Of Sleepe'.

On the one hand, the reputation of the early-modern alehouse was a disreputable one.⁹ Cornwallis was speaking to contemporary concerns when he wrote of his qualms at not being able to find 'an honest harbour' in which to shelter, and James I targeted

⁷ Peter Hale, *The English Pub: A History* (London: Robert Hale, 1994), pp. 58-59.

⁸ Thomas Platter the Younger, *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599*, trans. Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 189.

⁹ On the historical reputation of the English alehouse over time, see Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London: Longman, 1983).

alehouses when he issued the first of four statutes against drunkenness in 1604. When Anthony Bacon moved into a new house on Bishopsgate Street in May 1594, his mother, Lady Anne Bacon, wrote to voice her anxieties about his new neighbour, the Bull Inn, where he might fall into undesirable company. She complained that with its ‘continual interludes [the inn] had even infected the inhabitants there with corrupt and lewd dispositions’.¹⁰ This speaks to a major contemporary fear regarding such places, at least among the Godly: that they might exert a bad and corrupting influence on society. This possibility was particularly worrying since alehouses and inns were freely interspersed among other reputable, private properties. Anthony Bacon’s house was just round the corner from that of Sir William Cornwallis the Elder, and when John Stow described the latter in his *Survey of London*, he commented that Fisher’s Folly was just a couple of doors down from a ‘large Inne for the receipt of trauellers’.¹¹

Among drinking places, however, the alehouse in particular had a lowly reputation even in comparison to taverns and inns. In his character of ‘A Tauerne’ in *Micro-cosmographie* (1628), John Earle allows it to be an establishment ‘a degree, or (if you will) a paire of stayres aboue an Alehouse, where men are drunke with more credit and Apologie’.¹² The alehouse therefore provides a natural and peculiarly fitting setting for Cornwallis’s demonstration of his ability to glean something profitable even from the basest forms of literature or experience: it is the situational equivalent to reading the pamphlets which end up in his privy. In ‘Of Alehouses’, then, Cornwallis adds another rhetorical layer to the practice I described in Chapter Two in my analysis of ‘Of Resolution’, in which the subject of the essay and the self-presentation of the essayist were as one. In this case, Cornwallis invokes a particular location to provide cohesion

¹⁰ Lambeth Palace Library: MS. 650, art. 114. Cited in Alan Stewart, ‘Bacon, Anthony (1558–1601)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan. 2008).

¹¹ Stow, *A survey of London*, p. 128.

¹² John Earle, *Micro-cosmographie, or, A peece of the world discovered in essayes and characters* (London: Edward Blount, 1628), [n.p.].

between the compositional setting of the essay and its thematic structure and effect. The essay is therefore depicted as being born out of these particular physical circumstances of writing.

Cornwallis's presentation of the alehouse as a site of scribal composition is also important, especially when placed alongside his implication at the start of the essay that he had not intended to go to one to write. As Earle's character of a tavern suggests, the alehouse did not necessarily enjoy positive connotations in literature of the period: famously, Shakespeare's Henry IV frets about the amount of time Prince Hal spends socializing in taverns with Falstaff and his friends in *Henry IV Part One* (first printed in 1598). In 1609, the lowly status of the alehouse was invoked by Thomas Dekker in *Lanthorne and candle-light*, a satirical work describing various types of villainous and roguish behaviour, this time in a self-conscious literary context which can be reflected back upon 'Of Alehouses' and Cornwallis's *Essayes* more generally. In the sixth chapter, Dekker describes 'A new and cunning drawing of money from Gentlemen'. This involves the so-called '*Tackes of the Clocke-House*', whose practice is to steal literary compositions from their companions and then present them to a nobleman 'with his Patrons name fairely texted out, in manner of a Dedication'. In so doing, they reap a reward from the recipient, who, thinking it 'a work onely vndertaken for his sake, is bounteous to the giuer, esteeming him a Scholler'. The full extent of the trick is enlarged upon by Dekker's explanation that it is in reality only the work of 'an impudent ignorant fellow, that runnes vp and downe with the Transcripts, and euery Ale-house may haue one of them (hanging in the basest drinking roome) if they will bee but at the charges of writing it out'.¹³

The alehouse, then, is here a site associated with the commercialization of a supposedly elite coterie scribal culture, and it throws into doubt Cornwallis's confident assertion at the beginning of 'Of Resolution' (1600) that manuscripts are 'priuate' in

¹³ Thomas Dekker, *Lanthorne and candle-light. Or, The bell-mans second nights-walke. In which he brings to light, a brood of more strange villanies than ener [sic] were till this yeare discovered* (London: John Busby, 1609), sigs. G^v-G2^r.

comparison to the ‘common’ matter of print (5). While he depicts himself as having entered the alehouse unwillingly, and as writing only as a last resort, at the same time, by deliberately setting himself within the alehouse, Cornwallis also shows the essay to be the direct product of a kind of popular culture, through which the personal is transformed into the general and the general into the personal, as is the case with Dekker’s tricksters and is equally the case with Cornwallis’s essays.

The tavern, however, can also be seen as demonstrably part of the same culture of literary sociability which informed the more elite and educated communities within which I placed the genesis of Cornwallis’s essays in Chapter Two. Part of Lady Anne Bacon’s concerns about the Bull Inn were due to the numerous plays performed there, and inns had been associated with dramatic performance at least since medieval morality plays.¹⁴ Taverns, meanwhile, became increasingly associated with the elite modes of civil and urbane conversation and sociability, especially those of the Inns of Court.¹⁵ As Michelle O’Callaghan has pointed out with particular reference to the famous fraternity of Sireniacal gentlemen, by the 1610s, the tavern ‘constituted a discursive space that was simultaneously distinguished from the public forum, while nonetheless offering an alternative arena where affairs of state and religion could be discussed among friends’.¹⁶ In this way, the tavern provides a form of educative sociability which might be paralleled with the private institutions of learning in noble households which were discussed earlier in Chapter Three, although this time of a male-dominated form.

However, Cornwallis’s choice of the alehouse rather than the tavern for the site of his essay is again important here. As well as the social distinctions indicated by Earle’s character of a tavern, the forms of literary sociability associated with the two held vastly

¹⁴ On the connections between taverns and performance, see Alison Findlay, ‘Theatres of Truth: Drinking and Drama in Early Modern England’, in *A Babel of Bottles: Drinkers and Drinking Places in Literature*, eds. James Nicholls and Susan J. Owen (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 21-39.

¹⁵ On the relationship between the literary sociability of the Inns of Court and the tavern, see O’Callaghan, *The English Wits*, Chapter 3.

¹⁶ O’Callaghan, *The English Wits*, p. 61.

different connotations, as demonstrated by Jonson's distinction between urbane tavern wits and lowly alehouse poets in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).¹⁷ To return to the distinction in Chapter Two between 'conversational opportunity' and 'conversational risk', here, the tavern might be said to represent the former, and the alehouse the latter. By situating the composition of one of his essays within an alehouse, therefore, Cornwallis both acknowledges the way in which the essay grows out of this kind of interaction between different spaces and cultures of sociability, but at the same time, remains alert to its dangers.

2. Material Cultures of Composition

The emphasis in 'Of Alehouses' on the physical origins of the *Essayes* is mirrored by several moments in the collection in which Cornwallis draws attention to the physical practice of manuscript composition and circulation. Cornwallis's recourse to language associated with scribal culture is one of the ways in which he sidesteps any question of the fixity of print, in theory a potentially troubling issue for a text which is not presented as a finished end-product. Recent studies into the material history of texts, however, have begun to demonstrate the way early-modern readers in no way viewed a printed book as a completed object, and in fact the destruction and reformation of the printed text has been discovered to have been at times incorporated into the reading process.¹⁸ The title of Owen Felltham's *Resolves*, like Cornwallis's essay 'Of Resolution', plays upon the dual and paradoxical meaning of the word as something which is both fixed and yet to come. Similarly, his defence against the charge of not having annotated his text with the sources of his quotations – 'I should only have troubled the *Text*, or spotted a *Margent*, which I

¹⁷ On this, see Cedric C. Brown, 'Sons of Beer and Sons of Ben: Drink as a Social Marker in Seventeenth-Century England', in *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Adam Smyth (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 3-20.

¹⁸ See e.g. Sherman, *Used Books*; Adam Smyth, "'Rend and teare in peeces': Textual Fragmentation in Seventeenth-Century England", *The Seventeenth Century*, 19 (2004): 36-52.

always wish to leave free, for the *Comments* of the man that reads'¹⁹ – encourages his readers to view his text as something interactive, a work in progress, as he draws upon contemporary practices of reading to encourage the development and adulteration of the printed text at the readers' own hands.²⁰

As with the way in which the physical circumstances of composition in 'Of Alehouses' encourage the notion that Cornwallis had not initially intended to write anything, his invocation of scribal culture more generally is frequently coupled with a disingenuous rhetoric of deferral or modesty. At the beginning of 'Of Flattery, Dissimulation, and Lying' (1601), for example, he explains that, 'I am fallen into an Inckpot, and that these papers I vse onely to make me cleane' (225). In 'Of Essayes and Bookes' (1601) he compares his own essays to 'a Scriuenour trying his Pen before he ingrosseth his worke', and explains that he 'vse[s] these papers as a Painters boy a board, that is trying to bring his hand and his fancy acquainted' (190). In all of these cases, Cornwallis draws an analogy between essays and the physical process of composition, but the essays are compared to the part of the process which usually comes *before* the main composition: clearing up a mess, trying out a new pen, mixing colours, in a way which draws attention to the French etymology *essayer* as meaning 'to attempt'.

Associating the essay with these preliminary stages means that even the physical writing of the essays becomes part of Cornwallis's presentation of essay-writing as part of a continual process of ethical improvement through reading and writing: the essays are not the finished result of this process, but are themselves part of it. That they are equally not a trivial exercise is seen by the fact that Cornwallis does not associate the essays with the kind of pen trial one might find as a freestanding doodle made by a bored reader in the margin of a book, but with one which is in itself part of a larger process of

¹⁹ Felltham, *Resolues Diuine, morall, politicall*, sig. A2^r.

²⁰ For a discussion of the material history of one of Felltham's other texts within its manuscript circulation, see Kees van Strien, 'Owen Felltham's *A Brief Character of the Low-Countries*: A Survey of the Texts', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-700*, 6 (1997): 132-174.

‘ingrossing’. Cornwallis’s association of his essays with these types of practices is also suggestive in as much as it demonstrates the importance to the gestation of the essay not only of practices such as commonplace-book keeping, but also less formalized writing habits, such as marginal jottings and the use of waste paper: the same kinds of marginal material textual spaces which Adam Smyth has found to be significant in the development of life-writing in the seventeenth century.²¹

Smyth has also commented upon the importance in this context of the financial account book and of the commonplace book: two spaces of material composition which also have connections with the practical, rhetorical, and ethical processes of essay writing.²² Angus Vine has described the way in which Bacon’s habits of commonplace-book keeping grow out of systems associated with financial ledgers and waste-books, explaining that Bacon adapts this double-book method, ‘previously concerned with noting credits and debits, and with the control of stock, the waste-book and ledger, and attempts to fit it to papers, words, and ideas. He shows, in other words, how the waste-book and ledger might have another, more universal application’.²³ Vine argues that Bacon adopted this multi-book system, by which extracts were moved and adapted between notebooks, rather than conforming to the more usual humanist practice of a single commonplace book, because ‘the progression from chaos to order, from the miscellaneous waste-book to the reduced, but more regulated, ledger, finds a parallel in Baconian epistemology’, and provides an ‘active’, rather than ‘passive’ mode of note-keeping.²⁴ Bacon attempts to engage in a system of note-keeping which required the

²¹ Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

²² Smyth, *Autobiography*, Chapters 3 and 4. Alison Calhoun has also suggested in the context of Montaigne that ‘one could argue that the written document that best reveals an uncensored notion of late sixteenth-century French private life remains the rather static and lifeless *livre de raison* or account book’. See, ‘Montaigne and the Comic: Exposing Private Life’, *Philosophy and Literature*, 35:2 (2011): 303-19; p. 304.

²³ Angus Vine, ‘Commercial Commonplacing: Francis Bacon, the Waste-book, and the Ledger’, *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 16 (2011): 197-218; p. 198. On Bacon’s notebooks more generally, see Angus Vine, ‘Francis Bacon’s Composition Books’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 13 (2008): 1-31.

²⁴ Vine, ‘Commercial Commonplacing’, p. 209.

compiler to digest material in the very process of storing it, and in this, it could be argued that his system of commonplace-book keeping has much in common with his mode of essay writing in the 1597 first edition: the essay is in a sense a printed version of the ‘ledger’ or fair copy of the material, which has previously been distilled. The relationship which James A. Aho has described as existing between financial account books and early-modern theories of rhetoric also furthers these connections: Aho notes the importance of ‘the ledger as the final accounting product, the argument, so to say, with which the Renaissance merchant as orator sought to legitimize his actions to the auditor’, so if the ledger has a type of equivalent in Bacon’s earliest essays, in this we might also see a parallel to the importance of *ethos* and the creation of the essayist’s good character.²⁵

This relationship between the commonplace, the financial account book, and the essay also casts a new light upon Cornwallis’s use of financial metaphors in the *Essayes*. In ‘Of Sleepe’, Cornwallis announces:

I will put away this sleepy humour, for it is an extreame spender. When I come at the ende of a weeke to reckon how I haue bestowed it, in that seaven daies I finde nothing, but Item in sleepe, Item in sleepe. And in the end, *Summa totalis*, seuen nights, seuen Afternoones, beside halfe houres and quarters at vnaccustomed times. (58)

Here, Cornwallis uses the vocabulary of the financial account book to ‘reckon’ his own moral shortcomings in over-sleeping.²⁶ The conflation of financial and moral account

²⁵ James A. Aho, ‘Rhetoric and the Invention of Double Entry Bookkeeping’, *Rhetorica*, 3:1 (1985): 21-43.

²⁶ The moral and health problems which a lack of ‘proportion’ in sleep could cause were frequently discussed in medical literature of the period. See e.g. Thomas Newton, *The Touchstone of Complexions: generallye appliable, expedient and profitable for all such, as be desirous & carefull of their bodylye health: containyng most easie rules & ready tokens, whereby every one may perfectly try, and thoroughly know, as well the exacte state, habite, disposition, and constitution, of his owne body outwardly: as also the inclinations, affections, motions, & desires of his mynd inwardly* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1576), fol. 28^v. See also T[homas] W[alkington], *The Opticke Glasse of Humours* (London: Martin Clerke, 1607). A satirical inversion of such advice is in Thomas Dekker’s mock conduct book *The Guls Horne-Booke* (London: R. S., 1609). Chapter Two is entitled ‘The praise of Sleepe and of going naked’, drawing on the tradition of the mock encomium. Dekker’s book is based upon the teachings of the fictional Saint Grobian, the patron saint of vulgar and coarse people, and in particular upon the mid-sixteenth-century Latin poem *Grobianus* by the German theologian and bookseller Friedrich Dedekind. On Grobianism in general, and on the relation of Dekker’s book to it and to conduct literature in particular, see Barbara Correll, *The end of conduct: Grobianus and the Renaissance text of the subject* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).

keeping was an established one. An early English writer on double-entry accounting, James Peele (*d.* 1585),²⁷ published two books on the subject entitled *The Maner & Fourme How to Keep a Perfecte Accompte* (1553) and *The Pathe Waye to Perfectness* (1569).²⁸ The title of the latter (a reworking of the earlier text) calls to mind the titles of sixteenth-century moral and religious conduct-book literature, such as *An ABC to the Christen congregacion or a pathe way to the beauenly habitacion* (1550) or *An exhortation to yonge men: perswading them to walk in the pathe way that leadeth to honestie and goodnes: written to a friend* (1535).²⁹

Similarly, in his Preface, Peele stresses not only the economic benefits of the system he advises, but its wider profit for the social health of the community: ‘there is nothinge more nedefull then perfecte & playne order in reconinge, for it encreaseth friendshippe and amitie, whereas the contrary: procureth great discorde, strife and debate’.³⁰ He further explains the benefits of double-entry account keeping in particular by explaining that it ‘semethe to growe out of an earnest desier, instantlye to make playne and manifest (without prolonginge of tyme) that, which otherwise would be darke and obscure’, and that ‘I haue vsed suche familiar communication as to me semethe mete for instruction’.³¹ Elizabeth Tebeaux has described how this kind of desire for clarity manifested in both the language and page design of sixteenth-century financial manuals as foreshadowing the preoccupations of later seventeenth-century writers,³² but this insistence upon a straightforward style to encourage the easy transmission of knowledge is also in line with

²⁷ He was the father of the dramatist George Peele (1556-1596).

²⁸ See B. S. Yamey, ‘Peele’s two treatises in context’, in James Peele, *The Pathe Way to Perfectnes in th’ accomptes of Debitour and Creditour*, eds. B. S. Yamey and O. Kojima (Kyoto: Daigakudo, 1979), pp. 81-112.

²⁹ These are: Thomas Knell, *An ABC to the Christen congregacion or a pathe way to the beauenly habitacion* (London: Rycharde Kele, 1550); and Thomas Lupsete, *An exhortation to yonge men: perswadinge them to walk in the pathe way that leadeth to honestie and goodness, written to a friend of his* (London: Thomae Berthelet, 1535).

³⁰ Peele, *Pathe Waye to Perfectness*, sig. iii^r.

³¹ Peele, *Pathe Way to Perfectness*, sig. iii^v, sig. iv^r.

³² Elizabeth Tebeaux, ‘Visual Texts: Format and the Evolution of English Accounting Texts, 1100-1700’, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 30:4 (2000): 307-341. See also, Elizabeth Tebeaux, *The Emergence of a Tradition: Technical Writing in the English Renaissance, 1475-1640* (Amityville, NY: Baywood, 1997), esp. Chapters 4-6.

Cornwallis's promise that 'I thinke not of making moralitie full of imbrodery cutworkes, but to cloth her in trueth and plainenesse' (202).

The constant assessment required of financial accounting could also be transplanted to moral use, encouraging the kind of self-assessment which Cornwallis practices in sleep. It has been argued that the way in which writing could help a person to 'take account of [their] profiting' was one of the factors which led to the development of diary writing in the seventeenth century, and the keeping of a kind of spiritual account book was encouraged by the clergyman Richard Rogers in his *Seven Treatises* (1603), a habit he describes as emerging from Pagan poets, who 'wrote, that a man should look backe at the ende of a day; how and in what manner it hath been spent and passed': the very process described by Cornwallis in 'Of Sleepe'.³³ In 'Of Fame', Cornwallis uses financial metaphors and the process of accounting to explain that '[w]riting is the draught of reading, and by this I haue disburthened my head & taken account of my profiting' (74). In this way, he stresses the importance of the physical act of writing his essays in this accounting process, situating this method of moral improvement firmly within its material context.

3. Coterie to Commercial: the material history of *The Encomium of Richard III*

As this chapter has demonstrated, the material circumstances of composition are vitally important to the way in which Cornwallis's essays developed, and yet nothing is known about the history of the *Essayes* themselves in manuscript. Despite this, it is possible to piece together an understanding of the way in which Cornwallis's literary writings were circulated within a scribal culture by looking at the surviving evidence surrounding the transmission of his paradoxes. In Chapter Three, I drew attention to the place of

³³ Richard Rogers, *Seven Treatises, containing such direction as is gathered out of the holie scriptures, leading and guiding to true happines, both in this life, and in the life to come: and may be called the practise of Chritianitie. Profitable for all such as heartily desire the same: in the which, more particularly true Christians may learne how to leade a godly and comfortable existence euery day* (London: Thomas Man and Robert Dexter, 1603), p. 401.

Cornwallis's paradoxes in his participation in acts of literary sociability, and the final part of this chapter will build upon that discussion by turning to the material history of his longest – and, to judge from its extensive circulation, his most popular and controversial – paradoxical essay: *The Encomium of Richard III*. A study of this text reveals the way in which its earliest readers' responses to it were conditioned both by expectations of genre, and by the material circumstances of its circulation. In this way, this case study of the circulation history of the *Encomium* sheds new light on the tension inherent in the *Essayes* between manuscript and print, Cornwallis's concerns about the potential risks of commonplacing culture, and the rhetorical relationship between the commonplace and the personal which Chapter Two argued he developed in the *Essayes* as a way of counteracting that risk.

The *Encomium* provides an excellent opportunity for this kind of study of circulation history because it exists in several copies in manuscript, and also experienced a not completely straightforward entry into print. In 1616, Thomas Thorpe – best known as the controversial publisher of *Shake-speare's Sonnets* (1609)³⁴ – printed a collection of texts (three in prose, one in verse) by an anonymous author under the title *Essayes of Certain Paradoxes*.³⁵ In the same year, his fellow publisher Richard Hawkins printed a further pair of long prose paradoxes: *Essayes or rather, Encomiums, prayses of sadnesse: and of Iulian the Apostata*.³⁶ Only five months after entering his own publication into the Stationers' Register, however, Thorpe assigned it to Hawkins,³⁷ and so in 1617 we find the latter issuing the *Essayes, or rather, Encomiums* again, this time incorporating the four texts from Thorpe's collection, in a '*second impression, Inlarged*'. In so doing, it was revealed that these

³⁴ For discussions of Thorpe and the publication of the *Sonnets*, see Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Was the 1609 *Shake-speares Sonnets* really unauthorized?', *RES*, 34 (1983): 151-71; Leona Rostenberg, 'Thomas Thorpe, publisher of "Shake-speares Sonnets"', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 54 (1960): 16-37.

³⁵ Entered into the Stationers' Register on 10 June 1616. See Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640 AD*, 5 vols. (London: privately printed, 1876), III.272^v.

³⁶ Entered into the Stationers' Register on 23 December 1614. Arber, *Register*, III.257^r.

³⁷ Thorpe assigned the volume to Hawkins on 15 November 1616. Arber, *Register*, III.276^r.

four pieces had been written by the same man whose name had appeared on the title-page of Hawkins' book the previous year: this man was Cornwallis.

There are also eleven extant manuscripts of the text, seven of which were (along with the 1616 printing) collated by A. N. Kincaid and J. A. Ramsden in their 1977 edition of the *Encomium*. Since this edition, however, two further manuscripts have been emerged, and it has also been possible to trace another manuscript copy, mentioned by Kincaid and Ramsden as being discovered too late to be included in their edition, and which was sold to an unknown buyer. All three of these manuscripts are now in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale.³⁸ They join three other manuscripts of the *Encomium* in the United States: one is held at the Huntington Library,³⁹ and two at the Folger Shakespeare Library.⁴⁰ Five copies survive in the UK: two in the British Library;⁴¹ one in St. John's College, Cambridge;⁴² one in the Bodleian Library;⁴³ and finally one in the Devonshire Collection at Chatsworth.⁴⁴ I have personally consulted all of these except those held at the Huntington and Folger libraries, which I have seen on microfilm. This is therefore the first case study of the *Encomium* which is able to take into account all of the surviving manuscripts which are currently known, and it also provides the first discussion of the possible manner by which the text might have entered print two years after Cornwallis's death.

a) Coterie to Commercial: Manuscript Identities

As described by Ramsden and Kincaid and before them, by W. Gordon Zeeveld, the *Encomium* was written around the same time as Cornwallis's *Essayes*: some time during the

³⁸ These are: MS. Osborn b. 34; MS. Osborn fb209; and MS. Osborn b355.

³⁹ Huntington Library, San Marino: MS. HM. 199.

⁴⁰ Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.: MS. v. b. 303 and MS. v. a. 132.

⁴¹ British Library: MS. Add. 29307 and MS. Stowe 268.

⁴² St John's College, Cambridge: MS. I. 33.

⁴³ Bodleian Library: MS. Rawl. D. 718.

⁴⁴ Chatsworth House, Derbyshire: MS. Hardwick 44.

1590s, as internal evidence within the earliest of the extant manuscripts testifies.⁴⁵ This is the Devonshire manuscript held at Chatsworth House. It is the shortest of the extant manuscripts, and lacks a significant amount of material found in all of the other copies, excepting only the Rawlinson manuscript. The most significant of these changes affect the text's stability both in terms of its author and its generic identity, and these changes are directly related to the text's movement between different communities and modes of scribal transmission.

One of the most important changes to the text's identity is its title, which across the several manuscripts is given as variously a paradox, praise, or encomium of Richard. This flexibility is mirrored by the two titles chosen in 1616 by Thorpe and Hawkins, who call their collections *Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes* and *Essayes, or rather, Encomiums*, respectively. In turn, this reflects the way in which the encomium and the paradox are two sides of the same coin, with the first suggesting a serious praise and while the second is not, and R. E. Bennett has pointed out that 'praise of a subject commonly held to be unpraiseworthy could be called a paradox': the praise of an unpopular subject could therefore be vindicated with reference to the humanist tradition of paradoxical encomia of which Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly* (1509) is the most famous example.⁴⁶

The first printed version of the text calls it the 'prayse' of Richard in its title, but there is a reference within the text itself to it as a paradox. This comes right at the very end of the work, in a sentence which reads: 'Yett for all this knowe, I hold this but as a Paradoxe'.⁴⁷ The *Encomium* has defended Richard against his detractors as a 'scandalized and defamed king', and yet this sentence turns it from a serious defence to a paradoxical one: a display of rhetorical skill in defending the indefensible. This is complicated however by the evidence of the Devonshire manuscript at Chatsworth: the earliest

⁴⁵ Cornwallis, *Encomium*, p. iv. See also Zeeveld, 'A Tudor Defense of Richard III', esp. pp. 949-950.

⁴⁶ Bennett, 'Life and Works', p. 291.

⁴⁷ [Sir William Cornwallis the Younger], *Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes* (London: Thomas Thorpe, 1616), sig. E3^r.

witness to the text.⁴⁸ This manuscript differs from the printed version in various ways: the printed text for example has over forty marginal notes glossing names and events, while the Devonshire manuscript includes only nine. But none of these types of alterations change the way in which the text can be read and interpreted.⁴⁹ One difference, however, does affect the way in which the text is read: the sentence describing it as a paradox is not there. In other words, there is nothing to make obvious the fact that the work is a paradoxical, rather than a serious defence of Richard III.

How, when, and why, then, does the line describing the text as a paradox get introduced? The only other manuscript in which it does not appear is Bodleian Library MS. Rawl. D. 718. The earliest manuscript which does include the line is in the British Library: MS. Add. 29307. Significantly, this manuscript introduced not only new material into the text, but a new author. It includes a dedicatory letter to Sir Henry Neville from a ‘Hen: W.’, which also describes the text as ‘a meere Paradoxe’. Kincaid and Ramsden speculated that ‘Hen: W.’ was either Henry Wotton or Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton. Cornwallis was acquainted with both men, suggesting that either one of them might easily have gained access to the text through social connections.⁵⁰ In this context, however, what is more important than ‘Hen: W.’’s actual identity is the fact that he exists as a presence within the text at all: that the *Encomium* was at this stage appropriated by someone else.

⁴⁸ There is no record of how the manuscript entered this collection. The earliest extant record of it here is from the late nineteenth century: *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswood, 1872), p. 43.

⁴⁹ All of the changes to the text between manuscripts and between manuscript and print are treated in detail by Kincaid and Ramsden, and so I do not discuss them here apart when relevant to the circulation history of the copies.

⁵⁰ Cornwallis’s friendship with Wotton is attested primarily through the latter’s correspondence with Sir Charles Cornwallis. Wotton wrote to the latter on 2 October 1605, referring to ‘the honest loue w^hich hath long beene betweene yo^{ur} worthy sonne & mee’, and there are many mentions of the friendship between Wotton and the essayist in this correspondence. British Library: MS. Harley 1875, fol. 169^r. Whitt discusses the acquaintance between Cornwallis and the Earl of Southampton, also mainly witnessed through the latter’s correspondence with Sir Charles, in ‘A New Light’, p. 163.

In the dedicatory letter to Part One of the *Essayes*, Henry Olney states that one of the reasons he has had the essays printed is because they have been duplicated and altered during a process of scribal circulation:

Although I know that worthy Knight, the Author of these Essayes, hateth nothing more than comming in publick, yet many Copies of them being bestowed, by often transcription (as it many times hapneth) they might haue beene by a mercenary hand fowly corrupted and altered in sence. (3)

Olney goes on to stress that as a close friend of Cornwallis, he thought it better to ‘divulge’ the essays in print himself than risk this being done by an unknown ‘mercenary hand’ for ‘present gain’ (3). Much as this is a commonplace of dedicatory material, however,⁵¹ Kincaid and Ramsden suggest that the *Encomium* provides a very real example of Cornwallis’s work being ‘fowly corrupted’ by another writer for their own purposes.⁵² Furthermore, the *Encomium*, along with others of Cornwallis’s paradoxes, did eventually get passed to a publisher; presumably this was done for financial gain to some extent. More than this, the circulation history of the text suggests that it was possibly even used commercially even before it reached print.

The earliest extant manuscript of the *Encomium*, however, situates it within a very particular coterie context. Both the Devonshire and the Rawlinson manuscripts bear witness to Cornwallis’s authorship of the text, in a dedicatory letter which is present only in these two manuscripts. In the Devonshire manuscript, this is addressed from ‘William Cornewaleys’, ‘To his Worthey frende Mr John Donne’. As was discussed in Chapter Three, Donne and Cornwallis were friends, and both were writing paradoxes in the late 1590s. Donne’s *Biathanatos*, *a declaration of that paradoxe or thesis, that selfe-homicide is not so naturally sinne, that it may never be otherwise* was, like the *Encomium*, only published posthumously (1644), but it circulated in manuscript during his lifetime, albeit in a much

⁵¹ Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 17.

⁵² Cornwallis, *Encomium*, p. vii.

more closely controlled circle than Cornwallis's *Encomium* can be seen to have done.⁵³ The gift of the *Encomium* from Cornwallis to Donne would fit neatly within Rosalie L. Colie's paradigm describing the Renaissance paradox as a 'sophisticated form, written for a learned and experienced coterie, an audience of men and women in the know'.⁵⁴ In its earliest incarnation, the *Encomium* seems to have existed as a personal literary gift. This particular circumstance of presentation perhaps suggests why the text was not at this stage marked out as a paradox: the shared literary interests of the two men might mean that this kind of classification was not necessary until it reached a wider audience away from this coterie 'in the know'. There is no evidence that Cornwallis engineered a wider circulation of the *Encomium*. Of the extant manuscripts, only these first two bear the original dedicatory letter and preface, suggesting direct control of its circulation left Cornwallis's hands fairly quickly. Later sources demonstrate that, once removed from its immediate context as a personal gift, this particular manuscript has indeed been read as a serious defence. Arthur Owen Legge, in *The Unpopular King: The Life and Times of Richard III* (1885), provides the first extant reaction to the Devonshire manuscript specifically,⁵⁵ and he employs it as a real defence of Richard, calling Cornwallis 'a reliable contemporary writer'.⁵⁶ Furthermore, in his discussion of the text, Zeeveld also described it as a serious defence, despite his access to self-proclaimed paradoxical versions of the *Encomium*.⁵⁷

⁵³ For further information about the manuscript life of this text, see John Donne, *Biathanatos*, ed. Ernest W. Sullivan II (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), pp. xxxiv-lxxi. For a detailed discussion of *Biathanatos* and its manuscript versions and their circulation, see particularly Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 31-57.

⁵⁴ Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, p. 33.

⁵⁵ Arthur Owen Legge, *The Unpopular King: The Life and Times of Richard III*, 2 vols. (London: Ward and Downey, 1885). In his Preface, Legge claims that 'no former writer has referred' to the Devonshire manuscript (I.x) and to my knowledge he is right.

⁵⁶ Legge, *Unpopular King*, I.277-8.

⁵⁷ This, however, is primarily thanks to his view that Cornwallis was not the original author, but merely the producer of a 'palimpsest through which an earlier [genuine] defence repeatedly appears'. This theory has been convincingly refuted by Kincaid and Ramsden. Cornwallis, *Encomium*, pp. i-vii.

The Rawlinson manuscript, the only other textual witness to include the dedicatory letter from Cornwallis to Donne is directed only to 'J. D.' by 'W. C.': already therefore, the association of the text with its author, and the particular sociability which engendered it, has started growing more indistinct. As Kincaid and Ramsden show, all of the other manuscripts and the printed edition descend from the British Library manuscript (this also holds true for the new Beinecke manuscripts), incorporating the changes introduced there. Significantly, however, while these manuscripts all include the main textual changes which enter in this manuscript, including the definition as a paradox, none of these later manuscripts include the letter from 'Hen: W.' None of them even attribute the text to him, suggesting that once again, this manuscript is closely bound up with the particular circumstances of its composition. Later manuscripts do, however, attribute the *Encomium* to Cornwallis: one of the copies in the Folger – which is dated 1612 – notes that the text is 'by Sr Willm Cornwallis Junr'.⁵⁸ Similarly an eighteenth-century copy also records on its title page that the text is 'said to have been composed by Sir William Cornwallis the younger'.⁵⁹ And of course in print the text is first published anonymously before being reprinted with other Cornwallis texts under his name. So we can see that the identity of the text and its author is unstable both in manuscript and in print: it is Cornwallis's text, with the additions and alterations of others, and yet even after the appropriation of the text by 'Hen: W.' and then again after it has been printed anonymously, Cornwallis's authorial identity is constantly reasserted.

⁵⁸ MS. v. b. 303.

⁵⁹ MS. Stowe 268. This testifies to the way in which print does not necessarily mark the end of a text's life in manuscript. This manuscript's owner, the archivist and book collector Thomas Astle (1735-1803) noted that 'This M. S. was transcribed from the Original formerly in the Library of John Anstis Esquire Garter King at Arms' (fol. 4^r), i.e. Folger: MS. v. a. 132. The original manuscript was sold in a large sale of Anstis's library in 1768, eventually reaching the Folger in 1899. Astle acquired many of his manuscripts from the 1768 Anstis sale, for which see Richard Olney *et al.*, *Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians* (London: TSO, 2003), p. 6. It is therefore quite likely that he at one stage owned what is now MS. v. a. 132 as well.

One copy of the *Encomium* is dated 1608, and another 1612:⁶⁰ rather than enjoying a vogueish popularity for a year or two around the turn of the century, therefore, the text was a consistently popular piece, in repeated manuscript circulation for over a decade. In this, we can see similarities with the transmission of the work of Cornwallis's friend Donne: many of the extant manuscript copies of Donne's poems and paradoxes date from the 1630s and 1640s – well after they were written and also some time after the printed publication of the *Poems* and *Iuvenelia* in 1633.⁶¹ The *Encomium*'s scribal popularity may well have indicated that it would enjoy similar success in print. Moreover, two of the surviving manuscripts provide evidence that the *Encomium* might also have been circulated in a commercial context even before it entered print.

Of these two manuscripts, one is in the Beinecke: MS. Osborn b355; the other is in St John's College, Cambridge: MS. I. 33. These form a pair because they are written in the same hand. The SJC manuscript was at one point owned by the non-juring clergyman and antiquary Thomas Baker (1646-1740), whose ownership is indicated by an inscription proclaiming: 'Tho: Baker dedit. Coll: Jo: Socius ejectus', with which he labelled all his library after being deprived of his fellowship in 1717 following his refusal to take the oath of abjuration.⁶² Before this, the manuscript was owned by the bishop Thomas Wagstaff (1645-1712). Its most intriguing former owner, however, is the notary

⁶⁰ MS. v. b. 303. This is the copy which belonged to the lawyer Sir Thomas Crewe, as discussed in Chapter Three.

⁶¹ See Peter Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts, 1540-1625*, 2 vols. (London: Mansell, 1980), I.243-564; Beal discusses the mid-seventeenth century dissemination of Donne's poetry briefly on page 246.

⁶² Baker was not the only antiquary to own a copy of the *Encomium*. Beinecke MS. Osborn fb. 209 contains marginal annotations by Sir William Dugdale (1605-1686). Dugdale has not reacted favourably to Cornwallis's text. On fol. 8^v, he has written 'Goodman Coxcombe! selfishly, childishly, idly, gracelessly he reasons. I can scarce thinke it possible that any about the yeares of a Corderian schoole boy, would expose such an idle composure to vew and censure'. This comment refers to the works of Mathurin Cordier (c.1480-1564), a French schoolmaster who wrote several books for the education of children. The most famous of these was his *Colloques*, which was used for centuries after his death, and translated into English by John Brinsley in the early seventeenth century as: *Corderius dialogues translated grammatically: for the more speedy attaining to the knowledge of the Latine tongue, for writing and speaking Latine. Done chiefly for the good of schooles, to be used according to the direction set downe in the booke, called Ludus literarius, or The grammar-schoole* (London: Humfrey Lowne for Thomas Man, 1614). In this way Dugdale's choice of comparison is telling for the connection he draws between the paradox and the type of theme written by school children, suggesting their shared background in humanist tools of education.

public Humphrey Dyson (d. 1633), whose 1611 library stamp, proclaiming: ‘HVMFRIDVS DYSON, Notarius publicus me possidet, 1611’, used to mark many items in Dyson’s collection, is found on the title page. The hand in which the manuscript is copied out has been identified as Dyson’s own.⁶³ This would mean that the manuscript sold at Christie’s in 1977 and bought by the Beinecke in another auction in 2000⁶⁴ – MS. Osborn b355 – was also his copy. As Kincaid and Ramsden note: ‘Neither C[ambridge] nor the new manuscript is a copy of the other, but both were obviously copied from the same original. The differences between them are unremarkable; even the division into paragraphs is the same’.⁶⁵

The apparent existence of two copies of the *Encomium* prepared by Dyson is extremely suggestive, both in relation to its transmission in manuscript and its possible route into print. H. R. Woudhuysen has convincingly argued that ‘Dyson must now be considered as probably having played an important part in the copying, publishing, and selling of manuscripts’. He states: ‘the All Souls volume supplies proof that someone was selling manuscripts in one way or another [...] it seems highly likely that this was Dyson’.⁶⁶ In a recent article, Maria Wakely has also demonstrated some of the ways in which Dyson, whom she calls a ‘bibliophile and crafty scrivener’, tapped into various printing networks in early seventeenth-century London, commenting that he is ‘remembered for his part in the reprinting of Elizabethan proclamations in 1618 through

⁶³ St John’s College Library have informed me that Professor Alan Nelson, who is working on Dyson’s library, has identified the text as being in Dyson’s own hand. This would seem to be confirmed by a comparison between this manuscript and a collection of 1630s catalogues in Dyson’s hand in the Codrington Library at All Souls College, Oxford: MS. 117. These are the same catalogues discussed by H. R. Woudhuysen below.

⁶⁴ This is the manuscript described as being sold at the Bloomsbury Book Auctions on 11 May 2000, lot 15, in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700: Volume 10: Decoration and Illustration in Medieval English Manuscripts*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (London: The British Library Record, 2002), p. 229. Although the record here describes the manuscript as being ‘c.1640’, the auction’s sale records show it to be identical with that acquired by Yale on 10 February 2001, which is now catalogued as MS. Osborn b355.

⁶⁵ Cornwallis, *Encomium*, p. xiii.

⁶⁶ Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 178-180.

Norton and Bill, and for his 1610 publication of James I's collected proclamations'.⁶⁷ We might add that, on Wakely's account, he was also a canny double-dealer involved in all sorts of enterprises. If Dyson was involved with copying and selling manuscripts, as Woudhuysen convincingly argues, this would explain why there are two well-presented manuscripts of the *Encomium* either in his hand or connected to him: they are quite possibly commercial copies. Although there is no definitive proof, this is a strong implication that these two manuscripts indicate another stage in the *Encomium*'s scribal circulation: this time, into a commercial context.

In other words, the *Encomium* in its manuscript circulation undergoes a complete transformation from a private, coterie production, into a commercial one: this is a text which moves between the different forms of scribal publication as described by Harold Love.⁶⁸ As such, it goes a long way to suggesting that Cornwallis's fears about his work being taken up into new contexts and reappropriated to new ends was not unfounded. Kincaid and Ramsden have suggested that if the third Earl of Southampton was indeed the 'Hen: W.' of the British Library's dedicatory letter, his appropriation of the *Encomium* was a method of attempting Henry Neville to take an active part in the Essex Plot.⁶⁹ If this is the case, it would further suggest another way in which the *Encomium* was transformed in its journey through different scribal communities: not only did it potentially move from coterie to commercial circulation, but if it was indeed appropriated to political ends, its identity as a humanist text also underwent a significant alteration, changing from a literary gift in the tradition of humanist *serio ludere* to a text imbued with a deeply pragmatic and civic purpose. In other words, it was appropriated into the very strand of goal-oriented humanist culture which this thesis has argued

⁶⁷ Maria Wakely, 'Printing and Double Dealing in Jacobean England: Robert Barker, John Bill, and Bonham Norton', *The Library*, seventh series, 8:2 (2007): 119-153; p. 124.

⁶⁸ Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, esp. pp. 46-54.

⁶⁹ Cornwallis, *Encomium*, p. v-vii.

Cornwallis was critiquing in his *Essayes*, which, I have suggested, were composed in such a way as to protect against this kind of appropriation.

b) From Manuscript to Print

As the first part of this study has sought to suggest, it was not the printing of the *Encomium* which changes its nature, the breadth of its audience, or the stability or otherwise of its authorial attribution. These changes had all already taken place in manuscript, commenting upon the fact that the movement from manuscript to print is not always the most important movement within material cultures of transmission in this period. The *Encomium* does however have different possibly entry routes into the printing house, which illuminate some of the different contexts in which Cornwallis's work might have been being encountered.

Humphrey Dyson's connections to the London book publishing trade, and possible involvement in the commercialisation of the *Encomium* in manuscript makes him a likely candidate for helping it to find its way to Thomas Thorpe in 1616: printing the text, which was still popular in this period, would have been a natural development. Thorpe, however was not a natural choice for the project. Richard Hawkins, on the other hand, would have been. He had been apprenticed for eight years to Edmund Mattes, the original publisher of Cornwallis's *Essayes* and *Discourses upon Seneca*. Mattes died in c.1613, and the last surviving record of him is his assignation of some titles to Hawkins.⁷⁰ It is presumably through his connection with Mattes that Hawkins came into possession of the paradoxes which he published in 1616, but which had entered to him in the Stationers' Register on 23 December 1614 (not long after Cornwallis's death).⁷¹ There is

⁷⁰ R. B. McKerrow *et al* (eds.), *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Foreign Printers of English Books 1557-1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1910), p. 132 and p. 189.

⁷¹ Arber (ed.), *Register*, III.257r.

therefore a two-year gap before he publishes them.⁷² The reasons behind this are unclear, but it is surely likely that he was finally spurred into publishing because of Thorpe's publication of his own edition of Cornwallis's paradoxes (using the same printer as Hawkins: George Purslowe), which he entered into the Stationers' Register on 10 June 1616.⁷³ The fact that Thorpe's anonymous collection was actually by Cornwallis was obviously not hard to discover, and on 15 November 1616, Thorpe assigned his Cornwallis text to Hawkins – only five months after entering it into the Stationers' Register himself.⁷⁴ Hawkins' own eagerness to acquire the text, however, speaks perhaps to a sense of a publisher's interest in collecting together texts by the same, named author. This connects back to the continued attribution of the *Encomium* to Cornwallis even after the intervention of 'Hen: W.', suggesting some level of interest in the collecting works under the Cornwallis name, which might further link too to the continued interest in collecting the writings of Cornwallis's father, discussed in Chapter Three.

How then might Thorpe have acquired his Cornwallis texts? 1616 was a transitional time for him as a publisher, as he began to print fewer books, and to turn to more religious, rather than literary works.⁷⁵ His quickness in selling his rights to Hawkins suggests little investment in Cornwallis's text. One possibility for Thorpe's involvement must come from his well-known connection with one of the most famous publishers of this period: Edward Blount. Blount and Thorpe were close friends: Thorpe took the highly unusual step of dedicating his 1600 publication of Marlowe's translation of the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia* to his fellow stationer Blount, in terms which suggest an already established friendship, and which points towards the fact that printing was also a

⁷² As the 1617 edition is specifically described as the 'second', it does not seem likely that there is a 'lost' edition from between 1614 and 1616.

⁷³ Arber, *Register*, III.272v.

⁷⁴ Arber, *Register*, III.276r.

⁷⁵ Thorpe's only publication of 1615 had been Samuel Walsall's *The Life and Death of Jesus Christ in a sermon; Certaine Paradoxes* was his sole publication of 1616. A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, completed by Katharine F. Pantzer, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640*, 3 vols. (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976-1991), III.168.

personal business: as much and sometimes more so than scribal publication.⁷⁶ Blount assigned titles to Thorpe upon occasion, and the two men obviously had close printing ties.⁷⁷ Thorpe is not known to have had his own shop, and there has been speculation that he might have worked, at least for a time, out of Blount's.⁷⁸ This close connection between the two publishers, coupled with Blount's earlier publication Cornwallis's tract on the English-Scottish union in 1604, could point towards Blount as being one of the missing links in the chain of publication: considering that he published various volumes of essays and essay-like texts in the period (most famously Florio's English translation of Montaigne), he might have been an obvious choice, and he may well have passed the job onto Thorpe.

Furthermore, one of Cornwallis's closest friends, Lord William Petre of Ingatestone Hall, had also had literary dealings with both Blount and Thorpe.⁷⁹ In 1611, Thorpe published an elegy for Petre's murdered cousin of the same name, and it has been suggested that Petre was involved, even if indirectly, with its publication.⁸⁰ His connection with Blount is as a client: an entry in Petre's account book for 12 May 1612 notes a payment of fifteen shillings to Blount for a history of Ethiopia in Spanish.⁸¹ Had

⁷⁶ Christopher Marlowe, *Lucan's First Booke translated line for line by Chr. Marlowe* (London: [Thomas Thorpe], 1600), sigs. Aij^r-Aij^v. The dedication from one stationer to another also perhaps suggests a growing sense of some kind of connoisseurship among members of the profession around this time.

⁷⁷ This can be seen from a snippet of the publishing history of John Healey's translation of *The manuell of Epictetus* from the very year in which Thorpe published *Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes*, when an edition of Epictetus was printed for Blount by George Purslowe, with a dedication by Thorpe to William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke: John Healey, *Epictetvs Mannall. Cebes Table. Theophrastvs Characters* (London: Edward Blount, 1616), sigs. A2^r-A4^v. An edition of this same text had been published by Thorpe in 1610 (using the printer George Eld, another favourite of Blount's), with a dedication by Thorpe to John Florio: John Healey, *Epictetvs his Mannall and Cebes his Table. Out of the Greeke originall* (London: Thomas Thorpe, 1610), sigs. A3^r-A4^v.

⁷⁸ Abrams, 'Meet the Peters', p. 14.

⁷⁹ Cornwallis crops up regularly in the detailed account books kept by Petre over the periods 1597-1610 and 1610-1613. The 1597-1610 account book is now at the Folger, shelfmark: MS. v. a. 334. The 1610-1613 account book is at Essex Record Office, shelfmark: D/DP/A33. Essex Record Office also holds a microfilm of a transcript of the earlier account book, shelfmark: T/A 174/1.

⁸⁰ This elegy, now generally accepted as being by John Ford, has been the subject of some controversy thanks to attempts to associate it with Shakespeare. See Brian Vickers, *Counterfeiting Shakespeare: Evidence, Authorship, and John Ford's Funerall Elegye* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁸¹ See Abrams, 'Meet the Peters', p. 12. Blount did not publish a Spanish history of Ethiopia in 1612; however, as Abrams points out, he did register a work on this topic by Luis de Uretta – published in two volumes in Valencia in 1610-11 – in the Stationers' Register only three days after Petre recorded this

Petre come into possession of some of Cornwallis's works at some point in the years following his friend's death, and decided to publish them, he might have been drawn towards the man who had published his cousin's elegy a few years before, and who had a personal connection with a previous publisher of Cornwallis's work with whom Petre had himself had dealings. If this were indeed the case, it would mean that the *Encomium's* transition into the commercial world of print was in fact through much more personal means than its transition into a commercial world of manuscript circulation via Humphrey Dyson. This chain of events is of course speculative, but it is still valuable in suggesting some of the social and material cultures which could quite easily have led to Cornwallis's writing moving between different modes of publication in both manuscript and print.

* * * * *

This chapter, then, has sought to build upon the previous one by establishing some of the material contexts associated with particular communities and methods of composition out of which and through which Cornwallis's writing emerged and moved. In the final chapter, I will move on to consider another side of the material cultures inherent to early-modern literary transmission, examining the responses to early seventeenth-century essays by contemporary readers.

purchase in his account book. Perhaps Blount originally had the intention of producing a translation, having first acted as a book-buying agent for Petre in securing the book for him from Spain. (Blount's interest in Spanish books and their translation at this time is witnessed by his publication of, amongst other things, Thomas Shelton's translation of the first part of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in 1612).

Chapter Five

Reading Essays in Early-Modern England: Annotating Florio's Montaigne

Introduction.

For profitable Recreation that Noble French Knight, the Lord *de Montaigne*, is most excellent [...] Learned he was and often shoves it, but with such a happinesse as his owne following is not disgraced by his owne reading. Hee speaks freely and yet wisely, censures and determines many things Iudically, and yet forceth you not to attention with a “hem” and a spitting Exordium. In a word – hee hath made Morrall Philosophie speake couragiously, and in steede of her gowne, giuen her an Armour. He hath put Pedanticall Scollerisme out of countenance, and made manifest that learning mingled with Nobilitie shines most clearly. (42)

Here, at the end of a digression about books in his essay ‘Of Censuring’ (1600), Sir William Cornwallis shares with his readers his response to his most famous essayistic forebear: Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). Despite the admiration that Cornwallis expresses for Montaigne, he does not suggest that he is following directly in his footsteps, and indeed, in the opening to ‘Of Essaies and Bookes’ (1601), he states that he does not believe Montaigne’s writings ‘to be rightly tearmed Essayes’ (190). Nevertheless, in praising Montaigne in these terms in ‘Of Censuring’, Cornwallis positions the French writer within similar cultural, social, and ethical contexts to those out of which I have argued so far in this thesis that his own *Essayes* were formed. In other words, the way in which Cornwallis read other people’s essays is closely connected to the way in which he wrote his own: his ‘profitable Recreation’ of reading Montaigne’s essays is mirrored by his equally ‘profitable Recreation’ of writing his. Cornwallis’s essays, as Chapter Three demonstrated, themselves grew out of particular public and private networks and institutions, emerging as a socio-literary product resulting from ‘learning mingled with Nobilitie’, from the knowledge of the gentleman

which ‘ought to be generall’ (36).¹ The first two chapters of this thesis argued for close ties between Cornwallis’s rhetorical practice in his essay-writing and late sixteenth-century humanistic habits of reading and learning, while the third chapter demonstrated the particular communities and places within which the reading, learning, and writing which produced these early essays took place. Having discussed Cornwallis as a reader and as a writer, and the implied relationship between his rhetorical essayistic persona and his readers, this final chapter will now examine the other side of that story, asking who was reading essays in early-modern England, how were they reading them, and how in turn might an increased understanding of this be helpfully reflected back onto Cornwallis’s own compositional practices in the *Essayes*?

This chapter therefore examines the material traces left by seventeenth-century readers of essays, primarily in the form of marginalia and commonplace books. At its heart is a study of around 30% of the extant copies of the three seventeenth-century editions of Florio’s translation of Montaigne (1603, 1613, 1632), over 300 of which survive in libraries worldwide; I have currently examined over 90 copies held in libraries across the UK, Europe, and the USA.² Cornwallis’s discussion of Montaigne in ‘Of

¹ Warren Boutcher has recently provided a compelling argument in favour of Montaigne’s essay ‘Of the institution and education of Children: to the Lady Diana of Foix’ as being the ‘one Chapter’ which Florio was first commissioned to translate into English by Sir Edward Wotton prior to embarking on the translation as a whole. He uses Cornwallis’s response to Montaigne in ‘Of Censuring’ as evidence for the way in which, in England, the French essayist was being ‘understood through the optic provided’ by this essay and the one which comes immediately before it, ‘Of Pedantisme’. See Boutcher, ‘The Origins of Florio’s Montaigne’, p. 25.

² The *English Short Title Catalogue* records 145 copies of the three editions across the USA and Britain. This list has been invaluable augmented by William M. Hamlin, who recorded all extant copies of the *Essayes* in public libraries in the UK, USA, France, and Australasia of which he was aware: in 2010 this stood at 321. Although Hamlin expands the global reach of the *ESTC*, the majority of his additions to it come from the UK and USA. See William M. Hamlin, ‘Florio’s Montaigne and the Tyranny of “Custome”’: Appropriation, Ideology, and Early English Readership of the *Essayes*, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 63:2 (2010): 491-544; pp. 531-41. As Hamlin states, such a list is always ‘a work in progress’, but it is a hugely important resource. In the course of my own research, I have so far uncovered two additional copies of the translation in American libraries unrecorded by either the *ESTC* or Hamlin’s extended list. These are a copy of the 1632 edition at the Houghton Library, Harvard University: HOU GEN TP 2750.5.35 Lobby III.4.12; and a copy of the 1613 edition held at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: Hfb 18 012. I have also examined a copy of the 1632 edition which is unrecorded by either the *ESTC* or Hamlin thanks to its location in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Denmark: 201002132229.

Censuring’ is one of the earliest surviving responses to a Montaigne who ‘speaks now good English’ (42).³ But he was by no means alone in reading Montaigne in England in this period, and many of his fellow readers recorded their responses in the form of annotations or extracts in commonplace books.⁴ Having already discussed the importance of the popularity of Montaigne among the young men of the Inns of Court, this chapter will now place Cornwallis’s own reading of Montaigne into its bigger contemporary context.

The primary focus on the readers of Florio’s translation, rather than on those of Cornwallis himself, comes about in part thanks to the archival landscape as it stands. Far more copies of Florio’s text which survive are annotated in comparison to those of Cornwallis or any other early English essayist: it therefore provides the best resource for a study of readers of essays. On the one hand, this disparity reflects the difference in bibliographic status between Florio’s translation and the other essayists’ works. A lavishly produced folio published by Edward Blount – an important figure in the history of vernacular humanistic literary translation in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England – it is unsurprising that Florio’s text should have survived in higher numbers than the smaller editions produced of the English essayists. Similarly, Montaigne’s text seems to have attracted a more serious readership, thanks to its status as a translated work of a respected and already famous Continental writer, which in turn brings with it a more serious approach to annotation. The Latin notes written in one copy of the 1613 edition

This latter suggests that other European libraries may well provide fertile hunting ground for further copies.

³ See Chapter Three for a brief discussion of the likelihood that it was a portion of Florio’s translation in manuscript which Cornwallis read. The earliest surviving reference to Montaigne in England (although not in English translation) is from 1592: see Caroline Bourland Brown, ‘Gabriel Harvey and the Modern Languages’, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 4 (1940-41): 85-106; p. 96, pp. 103-04. More recently, Warren Boutcher has identified the earliest public reference to Montaigne in England as by Matthew Gwinne, in a series of lectures at Gresham College in 1598 and 1599 – in other words, exactly the same time at which Cornwallis would have been reading the essayist. See Boutcher, ‘Florio’s Montaigne’, p. 202.

⁴ Of the two-thirds of the known surviving copies which he has seen, Hamlin estimates that there are contemporary annotations in 53% of the 1603 edition; 41% of the 1613 edition; and 35% of the 1632 edition. See Hamlin, ‘Florio’s Montaigne and the Tyranny of “Custome”’, p. 504, n. 41.

would have been unlikely to find their way into a copy of Cornwallis, for example.⁵ But although this means that not all of the evidence gleaned from readers of Florio's translation can be extrapolated to the early-modern essay more generally, or to Cornwallis in particular, the readerly response to Florio can still illuminate that to Cornwallis. The two men were – as Chapter Three discussed – part of similar cultural and social networks, and the two works grew out of similar contexts and concerns.

This study builds upon one of the most important recent critical trends in work on Montaigne's *Essais* and Florio's translation. John O'Brien has written recently that the traces left by Florio's readers are now one of the main areas of investigation 'which we can expect to yield further insights into the reception of Montaigne via the *Essayes*',⁶ and it stands to reason that such traces will offer up insights into the early reception and use of the essay genre more generally, too. Two recent articles in particular, however, have demonstrated the potential latent within contemporary readers' responses both to Florio's translation and Montaigne's original *Essais*. William M. Hamlin's 2010 article on early readers' engagement with concepts of 'custome', as witnessed by marginalia in copies of Florio's translation, not only shows the remarkable insights which can be gained from such evidence, but also provides a finding list of the extant seventeenth-century copies of the translation worldwide, an invaluable starting point for subsequent material studies of the work.⁷ Similarly, John O'Brien's 2012 article on copies of French editions of the *Essais* presently held in London libraries is significant both for its annotated bibliography and as a guide to the value of the critical arguments which might result from such a survey.⁸

⁵ Cambridge University Library: Syn.4.61.44.

⁶ John O'Brien, 'Montaigne in Some London Libraries', *Montaigne Studies*, XXIV (2012): 141-162; p. 141.

⁷ Hamlin, 'Florio's Montaigne and the Tyranny of "Custome": 491-544.

⁸ O'Brien, 'Montaigne in Some London Libraries'.

The reception of Montaigne in early-modern England to which this material history contributes is a growing area of study, which itself adds to the substantial existing critical literature on the reception of Montaigne's *Essais* elsewhere. The fate of the *Essais* in France itself has been long discussed,⁹ but work also exists on the reception of Montaigne as far afield as Japan.¹⁰ Within Europe, there has been work on his reception in eighteenth-century Germany,¹¹ while important vernacular translations of the *Essais*, most notably the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italian versions by Girolamo Naselli (an incomplete version from 1590) and Girolamo Canini (published in Venice in 1633) have been written about more than once.¹² An altered and expurgated Spanish translation of essays from the first book, made between 1634 and 1637 by the Carmelite theologian and inquisitor Diego de Cisneros, survives in manuscript in the National Library of Madrid,¹³ and has been written about in detail by Otila Lopez Fanego, while Warren Boutcher has provided further comment on its significance.¹⁴ The transmission, translation, and influence of Montaigne in the Netherlands, hitherto

⁹ See A. M. Boase, *The Fortunes of Montaigne: a history of the Essays in France, 1580-1669* (London: Methuen, 1935). For more recent studies of Montaigne's immediate reception and the early history of the essay in France, see for example: Dudley M. Marchi, *Montaigne Among the Moderns: Receptions of the Essais* (Providence, RI, and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1994), in particular Chapter One, which examines readings of the *Essais* from 1580 to 1950. See also the extracts from and reproductions of French texts containing responses to Montaigne in Olivier Millet, *La Première réception des Essais de Montaigne 1580-1640* (Paris: Champion, 1995).

¹⁰ Hironobu Saito, 'La réception de Montaigne au Japon', *Montaigne Studies*, VII (1995): 213-24.

¹¹ Ullrich Langer, 'Montaigne's "couleuvre": Notes on the Reception of the *Essais* in 18th-Century Germany': 191-202.

¹² For example, Boutcher, 'Florio's Montaigne', Chapter 5. More recently, see Paul van Heck, 'The *Essais* in Italian: The Translation of Girolamo Canini', *Montaigne Studies*, XXVIII (2011): 39-53. The latter volume also discusses translations of Montaigne into languages as diverse as Russian, Hebrew and Korean.

¹³ National Library of Madrid: MS. 5635.

¹⁴ Otila Lopez Fanego, 'Contribución al estudio de la influencia de Montaigne en España', trans. Claude Blum, *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne*, V:22-23 (1977): 73-102. This is a French translation of Fanego's original Spanish. See Boutcher, 'Florio's Montaigne', p. 134. Relating to this manuscript, there has also been work on the censoring of Montaigne's essays in Spanish into the twentieth century. See Juan Durán Luzio, 'Montaigne ante la censura hispanica', *Montaigne Studies*, VII (1995): 203-12, and also his 'Michel de Montaigne: Ante sus censores Hispánicos', *Revista Chilena de Literatura*, 50 (1997): 51-64. The latter article is principally concerned with the long-standing censoring of the essays in Spanish-speaking countries into the twentieth century, paying particular attention to the enormous influence of the nineteenth-century edition of Constantino Román y Salamero: *Ensayos de Montaigne seguidas de todas sus cartas concocidas hasta el día. Traducidos por primera vez en castellano* (Paris: Editorial Garnier Hermanos, 1898).

relatively neglected, has now also begun to be explored.¹⁵ This is proving a particularly fruitful avenue to explore in relation to the emergence of the essay genre in England. The evidence which is emerging from these studies suggesting that Dutch readers and translators of the *Essais* typically conceived them as a form of advice literature provides a suggestive point of comparison with the educational and social contexts out of which this thesis has argued Cornwallis's *Essayes* were formed.¹⁶

The tendency among English writers to borrow from Montaigne in this period became such that in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (first printed in 1607), Lady Politic Would-Be jokes that English writers will soon be able to 'steal' from the Italian author Guarini 'Almost as much as from Montaigni' (III.iv.88-90).¹⁷ The use of Florio's translation by Jacobean dramatists has been well-documented, with a large amount of critical attention being paid to printed allusions or references to Montaigne,¹⁸ most famously the parallel between a passage in 'Of Cannibals' and one of Gonzalo's speeches in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (II.i), something first noted by the literary scholar Edward Capell in 1774.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Paul J. Smith and Karl A. E. Enenkeleds (eds.), *Montaigne and the Low Countries* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Of particular interest here perhaps are the discussions of the ways in which humanists such as Justus Lipsius read Montaigne, which provide a helpful counterpoint to the more usual discussions of the way in which Lipsius might have influenced essayists: see especially Jeanine G. de Landtsheer, 'Michel de Montaigne, Marie de Gournay and Justus Lipsius: Some overlooked particulars preserved at Leiden University Library', pp. 63-78; and Kees Meerhoff, 'Entre Lipse et Scaliger: Bonaventure Vulcanius (1538-1614) et la première réception des *Essais* de Montaigne', pp. 79-118. On Montaigne's Dutch translation and reception, see also Alexander Roose, "'Le bon verrier': Jan Hendrik Glazemaker, traducteur néerlandais de Montaigne', *Montaigne Studies*, XXVIII (2011): 55-65.

¹⁶ Two chapters in *Montaigne and the Low Countries* are of particular interest here: Elmer Kolfin and Marringje Rikken, 'A Very Personal Copy: Pieter van Veen's Illustrations to Montaigne's *Essais*', pp. 247-262; and Warren Boutcher, 'From Father to Son: Van Veen's Montaigne and Van Ravesteyn's *Pieter van Veen, His Son Cornelis and His Clerk Hendrik Borsman*', pp. 263-304. These both discuss a copy of the *Essais* owned by the lawyer and artist Pieter van Veen, now in the British Library: C.28.g.7. Van Veen demonstrably transforms his copy of the *Essais* into a personalized advice manual for his son through the addition of illustrations and annotations, providing a unique insight into the relationship between the essay form and the traditional genre of advice to sons which I have earlier suggested to be an important component of the English essay's heritage.

¹⁷ Ben Jonson, *Volpone, or The Fox*, ed. Brian Parker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 182-83.

¹⁸ Recently, for example, see Peter Mack, 'Marston and Webster's Use of Florio's Montaigne', *Montaigne Studies*, XXIV (2012): 67-82.

¹⁹ Edward Capell, *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, 3 vols. (London, H. Hughs, 1774), II.63. The relationship between Shakespeare and Montaigne has been much studied. For a recent study which goes beyond simply pinpointing allusions to the French author, see Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne*.

Complementary to this, critical attention is now also turning to the theatrical qualities inherent in Florio's translation, which might have encouraged such cross-fertilisation.²⁰ With particular relevance for this next chapter, Warren Boucher has written comprehensively on the cultural and social origins of Florio's translation, and its circulation within noble households in the early seventeenth-century.²¹

Recent interest in readers' responses to Montaigne in England is part of the wider drive towards increasing our understanding of the habits and motivations of early-modern readers and reading which I described in Chapter One. While the critical use of marginalia has its roots in the study of learned texts, more recently scholarly studies have expanded to focus on vernacular writing of the period, particularly poetry. Readers' annotations to, and extracts from, Sidney's *Arcadia* have provided the basis for two of the best such recent case studies, for example.²² The use of such evidence with relation to early-modern essays is, however, still in its infancy. Some previous discussions of the genre have pointed to the link between the essay and commonplace culture which I discuss in Chapter One,²³ although it is still relatively uncommon within this context to find studies of the essay which actually engage with the physical evidence of extant commonplace books themselves, rather than early-modern theories of commonplacing.²⁴

²⁰ William M. Hamlin, 'Florio's Theatrical Montaigne', *Montaigne Studies*, XXIV (2012): 33-52.

²¹ E.g., Boucher, 'Florio's Montaigne'; 'The Origins of Florio's Montaigne'; 'Marginal Commentaries'; 'Montaigne's Legacy'; 'Learning Mingled with Nobility': Directions for Reading Montaigne's *Essais* in their Institutional Context'.

²² Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*, Chapter 4; Fred Schurink, 'Lives and Letters: Three Early Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts with Extracts from Sidney's *Arcadia*', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 16 (2011): 170-96.

²³ Most notably for the English essay, see Black, *Of Essays and Reading*, particularly Chapters 1 and 2. Ann Blair has discussed the influence of commonplace book culture on the composition of Montaigne's essays in an article comparing his practices with that of Jean Bodin, see: 'Bodin, Montaigne, and the role of disciplinary boundaries', in Henry S. Turner (ed.), *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 29-40.

²⁴ On the relationship between Montaigne's own marginal annotations and commonplacing practices and the composition of the *Essais*, see Francis Goyet, 'A propos de "ces pastissages de lieux communs" (le rôle des notes de lecture dans la genèse des *Essais*)', *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne* 5-6 (1986): 11-26 and 7-8 (1987): 9-30.

The evidence of readers' annotations is problematic in two ways. The first potential problem is that the annotation of books, especially the picking out of commonplace phrases or indexing significant topics, is a habit encouraged by humanist education. There might be many kinds of readers' responses to texts – aesthetic pleasure in the beauty of a particular expression – which are likely not to be recorded by such annotations. So annotation is by no means a complete record of readerly experience. The study of annotation does not so much provide a history of reading *per se* as a history of humanistic reading. But the following chapter tries to make a virtue of this limitation. This thesis as a whole concerns the essay's relationship to humanism, and so, in this context, annotation is a key means by which the ways humanist-educated readers processed and absorbed the essay form. Annotation, therefore, gives particular insight into the interconnection between the essay and humanism. The second (and related) problem of this kind of evidence is that much of it dates from later in the seventeenth-century, often sixty or more years after Cornwallis's essays were first published. This is inevitable because such a greater volume of material survives from the later seventeenth-century than the earlier, and because many of the books under discussion (especially in US libraries) only reach their present archival setting after late seventeenth-century readers have worked over them. But again, this chapter tries to make a virtue of this limitation. The pattern of annotation changes over the course of the seventeenth-century. And these changes are both a record and consequence of the ways humanism itself was changing. So the longer time span of this chapter points towards the ways humanism and the essay form developed interactively over the course of the seventeenth century. This chapter, therefore, invites us to ask how the essay form's relationship to humanism transformed over the course of the seventeenth century, and it is this subject to which the thesis's conclusion will be addressed.

1. 'Montaigne speaks now good English': translating readers.

The first two volumes of Montaigne's *Essais* were published in France in 1580, with a new extended edition of these, plus the addition of a new third book, following in 1588. The original publication had already been successful enough to provoke second and third editions in 1582 and 1587.²⁵ John Florio's English translation, first published in 1603, was itself popular enough to be republished twice in the first half of the seventeenth century: in 1613 and in 1632.²⁶ Although Cornwallis explains that 'I haue not been so much beholding to the French as to see [Montaigne] in his Originall' (42), some educated Englishmen were reading Montaigne in French in the years leading up to 1603. Sir Francis Bacon was one of them, possibly coming to the *Essais* (and their title) through his brother, Anthony, who had met Montaigne himself in Bordeaux in November 1583, and remained in correspondence with him into the 1590s.²⁷ Ben Jonson's friend William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649) was another English reader of the French text: his copy of the 1595 Lyons edition, inscribed on the title page 'Gui. Drummond', is now in the Houghton Library at Harvard.²⁸ As the inscription is not dated, it is hard to know whether Drummond – who would have been only eighteen when Florio's translation was published – read the French text before or after the English version was available, but some English readers certainly did continue to use the original after Montaigne had been translated into their own language as well. A copy of a French edition of the *Essais* from 1657, now in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale, is inscribed 'Ex libris Thomas Knyvett' on the front end paper, along with a note on the front board

²⁵ There were many more French editions of the *Essais* to come, perhaps most famously that first edited by Marie de Gournay in 1595. For a helpful discussion of the various editions of the *Essais* edited by de Gournay, see Philip Ford, 'Early Editions of the *Essais* in the Montaigne Library of Gilbert de Botton: The Role of Marie de Gournay', in *Le Livre demeure: Studies in Book History in Honour of Alison Saunders*, eds. Alison Adams and Philip Ford, assisted by Stephen Rawles (Geneva: Droz, 2011), pp. 237-254.

²⁶ Florio's translation was not then reprinted until towards the end of the nineteenth century, when it appeared as *The essayes of Michael lord of Montaigne, tr. by J. Florio*, ed. Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1891).

²⁷ Stewart, 'Bacon, Anthony (1558-1601)', online edn.

²⁸ Houghton Library, Harvard University: HOU GEN TP 2750.5.30.

reading ‘Montaigns Essais letterd’.²⁹ Copies of the French text owned in the late sixteenth- or seventeenth-centuries by English readers which bear significant annotations seem relatively rare,³⁰ although John O’Brien has recently significantly expanded our knowledge of English readers’ responses to the French text via their annotations.³¹

Copies of the English translation too, can however also help to expand our knowledge of early English readers’ familiarity with the original French, as well as illuminating a significant way in which Florio’s book was being approached by its early-modern readers. A copy of the 1603 edition now held at the Beinecke is inscribed ‘Thomas Edwards his Booke 1686’ on the back end paper.³² On the verso of the final page of the Errata table at the end of the book, Edwards has written out a short list, comprising phrases in French from the *Essais*, alongside the pages upon which the equivalent phrase can be found in a French edition of the text.³³ There is then a corresponding page reference for the translation, so that we find, for example, ‘Enfans de cheur 242 Translat 143’. This leads us to a sentence in the forty-second essay of the first book, ‘Of the inequality that is between us’. Donald M. Frame translates the passage in full as: ‘Do we think that choirboys take great pleasure in music? Not so; saietie makes it boring to them’: he renders the original ‘enfants de chœur’ (the phrase picked out by Edwards) as ‘choirboys’.³⁴ Florio, on the other hand, translates the sentence as: ‘Thinke-we, that high-minded men take great pleasure in musicke? The satietie thereof makes it

²⁹ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: 1978 + 152. By ‘letterd’ Kynvett perhaps simply means ‘printed’.

³⁰ This is of course a generalization, based partly on my experience during the course of my research, although Warren Boutcher similarly points to a lack of French copies annotated by English readers in ‘Marginal Commentaries’.

³¹ O’Brien, ‘Montaigne in Some London Libraries’.

³² Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: 1978 + 14.

³³ There are scarcely any markings within the main text of the book itself, and those there are (such as ‘Salust.’ on sig. A2v) are not in Edwards’ hand. Rather, they appear to have been written by a later owner of the book, who inscribed his name on the front end paper: ‘Ex Libris Joannis Leith. E Coll: Ball: Oxon Juniji 1 1732 Londini’.

³⁴ Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, trans. Donald M. Frame (London: Everyman, 2003), p. 234.

rather tedious vnto them'.³⁵ The original 'choirboys', then, have morphed into 'high-minded men'. In this way, it emerges that the list compiled by Thomas Edwards is in fact a list of Florio's translations with which he disagrees. Some of the phrases in Edwards' short list seem to have been pinpointed because – as with the choirboys – Florio's translation distorts the meaning of Montaigne's original text. Elsewhere, Edwards picks up on more subtle nuances of translation, such as when he includes on his list the phrase 'la grande presse', which is from a sentence from the thirteenth and final chapter of the third book, 'Of Experience'. Florio gives an apparently reasonable translation of this phrase as 'so numberlesse a multitude',³⁶ but by including it on his list, Edwards nevertheless marks it out as problematic. Furthermore, by writing out his own list of errors on the back of the printer's Errata list, he adds his own handwritten variation on a printed theme. In this way, he personalizes his copy, but does so within the perimeters laid down by the press. Although Edwards never provides alternative translations of the phrases he singles out for criticism, his list shows him to have a detailed acquaintance with the *Essays* in their original, and to have been interested enough in the text to read it closely in both versions.

Edwards is not Florio's only early reader to critique his translation. A copy of the 1613 edition in the Bodleian Library is inscribed on its title page, 'Joh: Shippon is the only Lawfull owner of this booke'.³⁷ The phrase 'done into English' in the printed text of the title page has been underlined, and next to it Shippon has noted dryly, 'wth mistakes'. Shippon goes one step further than Edwards in his personalization of Florio's text: throughout the book, these 'mistakes' of translation are highlighted, with annotations

³⁵ Florio, *Essays*, p. 143.

³⁶ Florio, *Essays*, p. 653. The complete sentence reads: 'Basely to feare common dangers, that concerne so numberlesse a multitude, and not to dare, whatso many sortes of men dare, yea whole nations together, is onely incident to base, craven and milke-sop hearts'.

³⁷ Bodleian Library: Douce M 421. At some point, however, another member of the Shippon family became the book's owner, as 'Luke Shippon' is inscribed on the front end paper.

providing both the original French text and an alternative English translation.³⁸ Another early reader of the 1603 edition has also left a record of his familiarity with the French text: a copy now in Wadham College, Oxford, includes a marginal note pointing out that something is ‘not in the Original’.³⁹ In this way, it appears that for at least some of these early readers, one of their main interests in Florio’s book lay not necessarily in its status as a member of a new literary genre – the essay – but rather for its importance in an already established literary tradition: the translation.

The interest in Florio’s work as a translation was not restricted to the main part of the text, demonstrating that early readers were often as interested in the words of the authors he quoted as in his own, viewing these as both integral to the main text and as worthy of study in isolation:⁴⁰ an awareness of the relationship between the quotation and the body of the text which, as Chapter Two discussed, was integral to Cornwallis’s rhetorical strategy in his *Essayes*. In his copy of the 1613 edition, Isaac Walton noted that ‘If this Booke twr be reprinted it will not be amisse to observe the Erratas of this Edition wch of many: both in ~~quotations~~ y^e latine verses quoted & in the prose. perhaps the printers fault wholly’.⁴¹ But while Walton pointed merely to possibly printer’s errors in both the English and Latin, other readers went further. Just as John Shippon provided his own alternatives to Florio’s translations from the French, so the owner of a copy of the 1603 edition now in Pembroke College, Cambridge, adapted the Latin quotations within the text.⁴² These alternative translations were made by a reader who bought the book in the year of its publication, as indicated by notes on the title page recording both the date of purchase – ‘May 21: 1603’ – and its price of ‘11^s 8^d’. In several places, where

³⁸ See for example, p. 186, p. 220.

³⁹ Wadham College, Oxford: A 21.9, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Some readers in fact seem to have paid more attention to the quotations than to the main text: in the copy of the 1613 edition which at one point was owned by the antiquary Sir Daniel Fleming (1633-1701), the majority of underlinings are found under the Latin quotations. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale: Hfb 18 012.

⁴¹ Cambridge University Library: Montaigne.2.3.4, sig. A4^v.

⁴² Pembroke College, Cambridge: 12.1.52.

Florio provides English translations of poetry which is only present in Latin in Montaigne's text, this reader has provided an alternative, usually longer, verse translation of the Latin.⁴³ This demonstrates on a grander scale the personal and creative potential inherent even within John Shippon's use of alternative translations as a method of correction, as the reader of the Pembroke College copy becomes a writer themselves in the margins of Florio's text. Such translation activities also however take the reader back to the classroom, to the translation of prose and verse from the classical languages into the vernacular, and vice versa which were an early-modern pedagogical staple.

2. Indexing Readers

One of the things these alternative translations demonstrate is the way in which traces left by readers of Florio's Montaigne frequently exhibit an interest at the micro-level: in individual sentences or passages. Sometimes, as with the translating readers, this interest can reflect both upon the style and the content of the translation. For the main part, however, it is directed towards the content alone, although this way of reading frequently results in an engagement with, or, to be more accurate, a disengagement with the style of the essays. This is perhaps most strikingly demonstrated by the compilation of handwritten indexes by several early-modern readers.

For many readers, Florio's translation of Montaigne was used as a source of information, not about himself, but about the world in general: the essays became a kind of reference book. Although a printed index appeared in only the 1632 edition, manuscript versions exist in several copies of the earlier editions.⁴⁴ The Royalist poet Sir

⁴³ For example, he offers the alternative translation of Lucretius on p. 29 as: 'Then speeches true at length | from lowest breast are cast | And personateing ends | the thing it selfe doth last'; or of Horace on p. 32 as: 'It's past mans skill with eye of quickest glance | In time to ~~shune~~ <shunne> spie next hour's hidden chance'. The visible change of heart from 'shune' to 'shunne' to 'spie' suggesting perhaps some level of extemporization on the reader-translator's part.

⁴⁴ William Hamlin counts eight in copies of the 1603 and 1613 editions: see Hamlin, 'Florio's Montaigne and the Tyranny of "Custome"', p. 495, n. 12.

Thomas Shipman (1632-1680) filled the final page of Book I of his 1603 copy of the essays with an elaborate index for that book which spilled over onto the reverse of the page.⁴⁵ His entries work in tandem with the marginal notes which he has made throughout this first volume (his annotations drop off markedly in the second and third books and he provides no index for those), as his index entries refer back to most (although not all) of the pages upon which he has previously noted down a term in the margin. It is a completely personalized finding aid: Shipman has provided an index which includes only those topics which he himself has previously declared of interest. Shipman further improves the book for reference purposes by identifying stanza and line numbers for many of the passages of poetry quoted within the text for which these had not already been provided.⁴⁶

Readers also personalized the printed index of the 1632 edition by augmenting it by hand. Sometimes these additions are minor: the reader of one copy now in the Cambridge University Library has only inserted a few extra entries under 'M', for example.⁴⁷ In other cases, they are substantial: in a copy at the Houghton Library, the owner has made copious additions for topics which were not originally listed, ranging from named historical figures, through to 'Painters' and 'Children punished'.⁴⁸ A variant on this comes through readers noting down page references for passages of particular interest on the title pages of their copies. The owner of one copy of the 1613 edition also held at the Houghton Library, has for instance written on the title page: 'A maid <of 22 yeares> becoming a Man p. 41'.⁴⁹

The inclusion of an index to the essays – both manuscript and printed – suggests more than just why readers turned to the essays (here, for information), but also implies

⁴⁵ Worcester College, Oxford: LL e.13 + 2.

⁴⁶ See for example, p. 157.

⁴⁷ Cambridge University Library: Montaigne.2.3.6.

⁴⁸ Houghton Library, Harvard: GEN TP 2750.5.35 Lobby III.4.12.

⁴⁹ Houghton Library, Harvard: HOU GEN A 559.5 Lobby III.4.7.

something important about how these essays were being read. Firstly, an index encourages each essay to be treated not as an individual work which could be read in isolation, but as part of a collective whole. On the one hand, this responds to the way in which the essays themselves seem to have been written and intended to be read: as part of a collection (Cornwallis cross-references himself from essay to essay, as does Montaigne), so in many ways the essayists encouraged their work to be read as a synthesized whole. But the introduction of an index also encourages something else which was not necessarily encouraged by the authors, for the finding aid allowed readers to bypass the meandering, discursive essays and find their way instantly to a point of interest: a very different reading experience, and one which threatened to disrupt the ethical and rhetorical relationship between author and reader invoked by Cornwallis in his careful interlocking of the personal and the commonplace.⁵⁰

Alongside their handwritten indexes, essay-readers also created their own contents pages. At times, these were only basic lists of essay titles, such as the seventeenth-century reader who inserted the titles and folio numbers of individual essays at the beginning of their copy of Robert Johnson's *Essaies, or Rather Imperfect Offers* (1601), which is now in the British Library.⁵¹ At other times, however, the contents lists exceed these bounds. In a copy of the 1632 edition in Cambridge University Library, an early owner has re-named some of Montaigne's individual essays in the pre-existing printed contents page.⁵² 'A Custome of the Ile of Cea' is revealed to be 'murthering ymslvs', while, to give just a few of the other examples, 'Of the resemblance betweene children and fathers' becomes 'Against physick & phisitions', 'Vpon some verses of Virgil' becomes 'of loue & women', and 'Of the Art of conferring' is bluntly transformed into 'Of disputing'. 'Of Vanitie' is

⁵⁰ On this topic more generally, see Thomas N. Corns, 'The Early Modern Search Engine: Indices, Title Pages, Marginalia and Contents', in *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge technology in the first age of print*, eds. Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 95-105.

⁵¹ British Library: 16364.

⁵² Cambridge University Library: Hunter.b.63.5.

broken down into three sections – ‘of writing. of chang. of government’ – a contemporary example of a reader breaking the essay down into distinct topical and rhetorical sections in a manner later employed with more or less detail by later critics.⁵³ Furthermore, this reader also points out, in ‘Of Presumption’, ‘he speaks of himself’. The owner of this copy has also made many additions to the printed index.

In breaking down the essays in this fashion, the reader has on the one hand been successful in ferreting out important subjects hidden within Montaigne’s apparently rambling prose, but on the other, by re-naming the essays, he has privileged content over form in a way which ignores the manner in which, for Cornwallis, the two should work in tandem. The indexing reader, then, perhaps most clearly represents the potential dangers to the essay inherent in reading it through humanistic commonplacing methods: even as the essay grows from this culture of reading and writing, so too does that same culture threaten to disintegrate it as a literary form.

3. Commonplacing Readers

The main traces left by early-modern readers of essays are indeed firmly within the commonplace tradition. The vast majority of annotations to Florio’s Montaigne tend to pick out sententiae or historical facts, easily transferable to commonplace books. On the one hand, this is very much the type of reading which is both encouraged by humanistic educational practices, and which is inherently likely to leave material echoes of their readers behind. Nevertheless, such reading habits are suggestive in the way they run counter to many of the modern critical assumptions surrounding early essays. Some of Montaigne’s essays which are considered most popular and idiosyncratic today – such

⁵³ E.g. Richard Sayce breaks the essay down into eleven topics, with four major ones within those, *The Essays of Montaigne: A Critical Exploration* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), pp. 269-70. Peter Mack also breaks the essay down into distinct topical segments: see Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Montaigne*, pp. 68-9.

‘Of the cannibales’ – attract relatively little attention among early readers, while essays which retain their currency today, such as ‘That to Philosophise is to learn how to die’ are not necessarily read with the same priorities. Similarly, Montaigne’s personal voice – now considered his most representative, appealing, and innovative quality, is generally ignored or excised by his first English readers.⁵⁴

The Warwickshire gentleman Edward Pudsey displays what seems to be a particular fondness for the new essay genre in his commonplace book, which he began compiling in 1600: he includes extracts from both volumes of Cornwallis’s essays (and his *Discourses vpon Seneca*),⁵⁵ Bacon’s essays, and those of the lesser-known Robert Johnson.⁵⁶ As he moves through the essayists over time, however, Pudsey alters the manner in which he labels his extracts from them, in a way which has suggestive implications for his understanding of the essay form.

His first extracts come from the first part of Cornwallis’s essays (fols. 27^r-30^v). Pudsey begins here by noting the name of each essay in the left-hand margin of the page. On fol. 27^r, for example, he lists ‘Upon Resolution’, followed by ‘Advice’, ‘Patience’, ‘Love’ and ‘Friendshippe’.⁵⁷ On the recto of the page, where there is a right-hand margin, he records some further clarifying heads: ‘Riches vse’, ‘Society’, ‘Age’, and again, ‘Frendshipp’.

⁵⁴ Although my findings here are based on Florio’s translation, John O’Brien comes to a near-identical conclusion based upon his examination of French copies of the *Essais*. See O’Brien, ‘Montaigne in Some London Libraries’, p. 159.

⁵⁵ I discuss the extracts from the *Discourses* in Chapter One of this thesis.

⁵⁶ Bodleian Library: MS. Eng. poet. d. 3. Further, see Gowan, ‘An edition of Edward Pudsey’s commonplace book (c.1600-1615)’. Considering the general tenor of Pudsey’s commonplace book, Montaigne is perhaps a surprising omission. This is perhaps because most of the book seems to have been compiled around 1601, prior to Florio’s printed translation. Pudsey’s heavy reliance upon translations, and the lack of any material in the manuscript which is not in English (apart from Latin tags contained within English texts, which Pudsey leaves untranslated) suggests that he would not have been able to access Montaigne’s work in its original French. The latest extracts in the book are from Ben Jonson’s play *The Case Is Altered*, which was first printed in 1609, but Pudsey seems to have used his book regularly for only a short period around 1600-1602. He began it in 1600 (it is dated on its first page) and then quotes by and large either from late sixteenth-century publications or from those which were first published in 1600-1601. Florio’s translation, therefore, perhaps came slightly too late to find its way into Pudsey’s book alongside his other essayistic reading, even if we might assume he would have been drawn to it.

⁵⁷ He skips out the fourth essay, ‘Of Suspition’, which he takes nothing from, and contracts the title of the sixth, ‘Of Friendship & Factions’.

Moving on to Bacon's essays (fols. 31^{r-v}), he again puts the essay titles and writes additional topic heads in the right-hand margin of the recto. When Pudsey comes to the second part of Cornwallis's essays (fols. 46^r-51^v), he changes his approach to labeling the extracts. This time he writes the title of the essay in the centre of the page, with the quotations from it underneath, and topic headings in the left-hand margin. This means that he is now able to have the marginal non-title topics on both the recto and verso of the page. However, he follows this pattern only at the beginning of his extracts from this book (fols. 46^{r-v}). After this (fols. 47^r-52^r), he includes only the essay titles in the centre of the page. More specifically, he writes 'Of' in the top left-hand corner of the margin, and then removes the prefix from the titles in the centre of the page, so that we find simply 'Greatness of Mind', 'Words' etc.). When he makes extracts from Robert Johnson's essays (fols. 52^v-55^v), Pudsey changes again. He continues to write down the essay titles in the centre of the page (again with 'Of' in the top left-hand corner), but makes no marginal topical notes. In other words, as he develops his excerpting of essayists, Pudsey moves from noting down the title plus additional topics to the title alone. In other words, it seems that the secondary commonplace gloss becomes increasingly seen as unnecessary: the title is commonplace head enough. Here, then, the essay is being taken back by its reader to its roots in the commonplace book tradition, as the essay title takes the place of the usual commonplace head.

Pudsey's extensive use of essayists within his commonplace book means that it is tempting to speculate that this displays an early interest in the essay as a distinctive literary genre. While this may have been the case for Pudsey, it seems apparent from the way in which he uses these essays that one of his prime interests in them stemmed from the fact that they were prime ground for going digging for commonplaces.⁵⁸ That this

⁵⁸ The word 'essay' becomes associated with the idea of digging for something of worth in a much more practical sense in the following century. In his definitions of the word in his *Dictionary*, first published in

aspect of the essay appears to have interested Pudsey more than the essayists' use of the personal voice is apparent from the extracts he makes from Cornwallis's essay 'Of Alehouses'. This is one of the essays in which Cornwallis's use of the personal voice is at its most striking, as he tells his reader that, 'I Write this in an Alehouse, into which I am driuen by the night, which would not giue me an honest harbour. I am without any company but Inke & Paper, & them I vse in stead of talking to my selfe' (67). As I discussed in Chapter Three, however, Cornwallis's use of the personal voice here is not intended only as a means of sharing information about himself with his readers, but rather as part of a larger rhetorical and moralistic enterprise. Pudsey responds to this: in his extracts from the essay (fol. 30^r), Pudsey collects only the more aphoristic sections of Cornwallis's essay, completely ignoring anything with a personal inflection. This removal of the personal voice in the *Essayes* is something Pudsey does systematically throughout his extracts.

A similar excision of the personal can be seen in the majority of commonplace book extracts made from early-modern essays. Among the early English essayists, Sir Francis Bacon is the most commonly found inside commonplace books of the period, and this is perhaps thanks to the fact that his aphoristic essays are those which are already best pre-packaged for inclusion in a commonplace book. The most usual manner in which the extracts from his essays are recorded is to go through each of his essays systematically and use the essay titles to order the extracts. This is how the antiquary Francis Cherry (*bap.* 1667, *d.* 1713) manages his extracts from Bacon, for example, as does the poet and translator Sir Edward Sherburne (*bap.* 1616, *d.* 1702).⁵⁹ A variant on this method of organization is found in an anonymous manuscript compilation which contains many

1721, the lexicographer Nathan Bailey describes: 'ESSAY *Hatch* [among *Miners*] a Term for a little Trench or Hole, which they dig to search for Ore', *An universal etymological English dictionary*, twenty-fourth edn. (London: J. Buckland *et al.*, 1782) sig. Qq2^v.

⁵⁹ These are both in the British Library: MS. Add. 39314 (fols. 3^r-8^r) and MS. Sloane 836 (fols. 51^r-57^v and fol. 59^r).

copies of political speeches and letters, as well as other related material, mostly dating from the 1620s.⁶⁰ This also includes extracts from Bacon's essays (fols. 41^r-44^v), which are arranged under the titles of the essays from which they have been taken. However, unlike Cherry and Sherburne, who have written out the full title of the essay – 'Of Empire' or 'Of Cunning', etc. – and arranged them in the order in which the essays appeared in print, this last anonymous compiler has arranged his titles alphabetically. More than this, he has removed the prefix 'Of', so that his headings run through from 'Adversity' to 'Customs and Education' (which is where he stops).⁶¹

This way of recording extracts from the essays in turn suggests something about the manner in which the essays were read. Just as the addition of an index to Florio's Montaigne allowed readers to bypass the discursive nature of the essays inside, so too this mode of commonplacing suggests that these readers recorded extracts from essays under their individual titles not because of any particular devotion to preserving the literary integrity of each essay, but rather because the titles provided ready-made commonplace dividers.

The compiler of a commonplace book now in Cambridge University Library – MS. D.d. 2. 43 – has taken disinterest in the essays as individual literary entities to an even greater level, dispensing with essay titles completely and dividing them up simply into those which come from 'Liber I', 'Liber II', and 'Liber III'. Unlike the commonplacing readers discussed above, however, this reader also includes extracts from the essays in which Montaigne talks about himself. According to a signature on the verso of the first leaf, the book belonged to one 'Ed. Revell'.⁶² The manuscript itself is not dated, but

⁶⁰ British Library: MS. Add. 22587.

⁶¹ Another commonplace book which includes extracts from Bacon's essays arranged alphabetically is in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library: MS. Osborn b354.

⁶² I am unable to be completely certain as to the identity of the manuscript's owner, but it is possible that the commonplace book was compiled by the divine Edward Reynell (1612-1663). The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* tells us that the Reynell family also spelled their name as Revell. The tone of Edward Reynell's own publications, such as *Celestial amities: or, A soul sighing for the love of her saviour* (London: Abel

judging from its contents, seems to have been compiled in the late 1650s. The extracts from Florio's translation of Montaigne, come at the start of the volume, covering folios 2r to 15v. Very unusually among commonplacing and annotating readers of the essays, who tend to ignore the prefatory material, these extracts are followed by quotations from Florio's dedicatory verses to the *Essayes* on fol. 16^r.⁶³ The extracts from the essays themselves are taken from various chapters across Books One to Three, although the majority originate in Book Two; again running contrary to the modern critical emphasis which frequently lends greater weight to Book Three.⁶⁴ Unlike Pudsey, this reader has retained Montaigne's personal voice, despite the fact that he is not copying out extracts verbatim, but rather contracting sentences and epitomizing paragraphs. He reduces Montaigne's discussion of the death of Alexander in 'To philosophize is to learn how to die', for example, from 'It is consonant with reason and pietie, to take example by the humanity of *Iesus Christ*, who ended his humane life at three and thirtie yeares. The greatest man that ever was, being no more than a man, I meane *Alexander* the great, ended his dayes, and died also of that age',⁶⁵ to the succinct 'Our Sauour suffered at 33. Alexander dyed at 33'.

The retention of Montaigne's personal voice then, is not due to a strict adherence to the text as it stands, and furthermore, among the extracts included by this reader, some appear to have been chosen purely by virtue of what they reveal about Montaigne's personality, or his personal history. Montaigne's statement from 'Of Friendship' that 'I

Roper, 1660) or *An advice against libertinism shewing the great danger thereof, and exhorting all to zeal of the truth* (London: Abel Roper, 1659), suggests that both the texts and – perhaps more importantly – the nature of the extracts made from many of them, would be compatible with this tentative identification.

⁶³ Only very occasionally do readers mark any of the prefatory material. An example is found in a copy of the 1632 edition in the Houghton Library at Harvard: GEN TP 2750.5.35 Lobby III.4.12. Here, the owner has underlined a few lines in Samuel Daniel's dedicatory poem.

⁶⁴ These cover fols. 4^r-11^v, as opposed to fols. 2^r-3^v for Book One, and fols. 11^v-15^r for Book Three. John O'Brien also notes that in the copies of French editions of the *Essais* he has examined, those essays – 'almost any in Book 3', which we now think of as most representative of Montaigne, 'were not those that attracted immediate attention from early modern readers'. O'Brien, 'Montaigne in Some London Libraries', p. 159.

⁶⁵ Florio, *Essayes*, p. 32.

am not giuen to Melancholy, but rather to dreaming, & sluggishnesse' is included on fol. 3r, for example, devoid of any marginal gloss by the compiler which might lend the sentence a more universal application, although it is worth noting that such a quotation might have been included because of the potential implications of Montaigne's humoral disposition for his understanding of friendship: in other words, it is itself a necessary gloss on the essay more generally.⁶⁶ Most of the extracts from 'Of Friendship' in the commonplace book have an abstract or general application, and are noted in such a way in the margin. One such example is on fol. 5^r: 'The ordinarye sufficiencie of women cannot answer this conference & communication the Nurse of this Sacred Bond: Nor seeme their minds strong enough to endure y^e pulling of a knot so hard, so fast, & durable'. Against this, the compiler draws attention to its general application: 'ffriendshipp – Masculine beyond marriage'. This is followed, however, by a much more personal extract: 'There is beyond all my discourse, & besides what I can particularly respect of it, I know not what inexplicable, & fatal power, a meane & Mediatrix of this indissoluble union' (fol. 5^v). In the margin next to this, the manuscript's owner has written: 'The admirable bond between Lo: Mont:- & between de la Boitie'.

Furthermore, the compiler of this commonplace book has also noted down the detail from the *Essayes* in which Montaigne records his birth: 'I was borne between 11 & 12 y^e last of February 1533. It is but a fortnight since I was 39 yeares old'. This has been marked in the commonplace book's margin with the note 'Montaigne's Birth'. This is not unusual: readers of Florio's translation also noted the date of Montaigne's birth in their copies. The owner of a copy of the 1632 edition now in the Houghton Library wrote on its title page 'p. 32. born last of Feb. 1533', and below this, 'his bth. ib. p. 32'.⁶⁷ Similarly,

⁶⁶ For a discussion of male friendship and discourses of the humours in this period, see Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Chapter 4.

⁶⁷ Houghton Library, Harvard University: GEN TP 2750.5.35. Lobby III.4.12.

on the verso of the errata list in a copy of the 1603 edition, also at the Houghton Library, an early reader has written a long paragraph in Latin, mainly discussing the origins of Montaigne's family name and his noble lineage, but also describing Montaigne's celebration throughout the book of 'Stephano Boëtiano', 'quo et vivum indissolubili amicitia' (by which he also lives through indissoluble friendship).⁶⁸

In his discussion of British Library MS. Sloane 2903, a compilation of 'moral maxims' gathered out of Montaigne which I come to myself later in this chapter, William M. Hamlin has commented that 'the adaptor of these observations sought to minimize their embeddedness in personal, local, and historical contexts, stressing instead their potential for global application'.⁶⁹ This type of depersonalization is, as I discussed earlier, an important characteristic of the majority of commonplace book extracts from both Montaigne and the English essayists. As I have just demonstrated, however, some readers are in fact very much interested in placing the essays within their 'personal, local, and historical contexts': the compiler of CUL MS. Dd. 2. 43 even goes one step further than merely noting Montaigne's date of birth, extrapolating from the information Montaigne gives to record that 'Hee writ this in 1572'. Furthermore, this attention to personal details about Montaigne was not restricted to private readers. The 1602 French edition of the *Essais* included two indexes: one a conventional list of topics, but the other an index of references to events in Montaigne's life, or places in the *Essais* which provide biographical information. This type of recognition by readers of the importance of the personal elements of Montaigne's prose, combined with their interest in establishing the veracity of his family lineage, has important implications relating to Cornwallis's rhetorical strategy in his *Essays*. For it suggests that at least some early-modern readers of essays were approaching them with an understanding of the importance of *ethos*: the

⁶⁸ Houghton Library, Harvard University: HOU F STC 18041 (A).

⁶⁹ William M. Hamlin, 'Montaigne's Moral Maxims: A Collection of Seventeenth-Century English Aphorisms Derived from the *Essays* of Montaigne', *Montaigne Studies* XXI (2009): 209-224; p. 212.

question of whether or not the orator or writer was a man of good character which was so important to Cornwallis's establishment of his own persona in the *Essayes*. The approving way in which Montaigne's 'admirable bond' with Étienne de la Boétie is noted, and the careful analysis of his family tree, both invoke readers who saw the authority of the essays as being intimately bound up with the favourable character of their author. This works in a similar manner to that in which Cornwallis describes his humoral make-up in 'Of Sleepe', claiming to be 'of a drie barraine mould' (58). This provides not simply an intimate fact about the essayist, but adds to his authority as a writer, for, as Mary Floyd-Wilson has pointed out, 'dryness in particular signifies the body's elect status', for as far back as Heraclitus it had been said that 'Dry light = the wisest soul'.⁷⁰

The compiler of the commonplace book in the CUL also includes an excerpt detailing Montaigne's story about his brother's death: 'A brother of mine, called Captaine S^t Martin of 23 yeares, received a blowe with a Tennis ball a little aboue y^e right eare without any appearance of Contusion, bruise, or hurt, dyed within 6 howers after of an Apoplexye which y^e blowe of y^e Ball caused him' (fol. 3^v). The reason for the inclusion of this familial event is however perhaps explained through recourse to an annotation made by another reader of this passage in their copy of the 1603 edition of the *Essayes*. Here, the reader has noted in the margin, 'One dyed by a blow of a ball at tennis', with no mention of the fact that the 'One' was actually Montaigne's brother: he is simply one example among a longer list of bizarre deaths which are equally diligently recorded by the reader at the side of the page.⁷¹

Montaigne uses both his reference to his own birth and to his brother's death as two examples among many, adapting a tradition of using real lives as exemplars that finds its roots in the writings of classical authors such as Plutarch. Montaigne develops this

⁷⁰ Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 70.

⁷¹ Pembroke College, Cambridge: 12.1.52; p. 32.

tradition by using his own example (and the examples of his family members), rather than solely the lives of famous (and infamous) historical figures.⁷² As I discussed in Chapter Two, Cornwallis did the same. In examples such as CUL MS. Dd. 2. 43, then, readers can be seen using Montaigne as he used himself: as an example among other historical examples. Similarly, readers appropriated other personal judgements made by Montaigne on historical figures and events to suit their own purposes. Following the humanist tradition of reading histories for moral *exempla*, drawing from them allegories from the past which illuminate the present, readers of Florio's translation transpose recent historical details from the essays to make similar parallels. In a copy of the 1613 edition of the translation held at Magdalen College, Oxford, an early reader has made his own personal gloss to Montaigne's description of 'the fairest Queene', writing in the margin: 'Mary y^e Scots Queen'.⁷³ In a copy of the 1632 edition now in Cambridge University Library, this same passage has been annotated by a different reader. Here, however, 'the fairest Queene' has been transformed into 'Ann Bullen', demonstrating that this method of reading the essays is always inherently personal, even if this individual engagement between reader and text is not the personal response associated with the rhetorical creation of friendship between reader and essayist.⁷⁴

The way in which readers start to use essayists' lives in their commonplace books and annotations the same way as they used classical examples, is also reflected by changes in the writing of essays in the early part of the seventeenth century, as so slightly later English essay writers began to draw upon earlier examples of the genre in the same way that they cite the classical texts also used by Montaigne and Cornwallis. Daniel Tuvill

⁷² On some of the possible reasons for Montaigne's decision to do this, see Hampton, 'Unreadable Signs'; and, more generally on the problems of the humanist tradition of using historical *exemplars* in moral teaching, Hampton, *Writing From History*.

⁷³ Magdalen College, Oxford: Florio-J (ESS); p. 29.

⁷⁴ Cambridge University Library: Keynes R. 6. 18; p. 29.

does this in his essay collections of 1608 and 1609.⁷⁵ While he turns to much the same classical sources as Cornwallis and Montaigne, Tuvill also draws upon earlier essayists themselves: Bacon (both his *Essayes* and *The Advancement of Learning*);⁷⁶ Cornwallis; and – particularly – Montaigne.⁷⁷ In this way, the first essayists become moral and factual authorities in the manner of their own classical sources.⁷⁸ Citing one another becomes a common feature of essayists' work, something which begins with Cornwallis's own use of Montaigne, and indeed it is the French writer who most commonly appears in later English essays. In a manuscript collection of essays now in the Beinecke, and dated to 1699, the clergyman John Disney (1677-1729/30) makes copious references to Montaigne in his moral essays.⁷⁹ Like Cornwallis, Disney does not always agree with Montaigne's sentiments, such as when he writes that in one of his essays on friendship that: 'Here I can't but smile at y^e remarkable Liberality of *Montaigne* who is so absolute a Leveller amongst ffriends that he will needs have *All things, wills, thoughts, Opinions, Goods, WIVES, CHILDREN, Honours & Lives, in effect common Betwixt y^m*'.⁸⁰ In an anonymous seventeenth-century manuscript essay entitled 'Bookes and friends are better receavd by waight then number', now held in Derbyshire Record Office, the author does not even feel the need to name Montaigne.⁸¹ Instead, he writes simply that: 'Nay they which seeme to respect choice, sometimes erre perniciously which the ffrench man observ'd, whoe maintained his cuntry was much the worse, by old mens studyinge the venim of policy,

⁷⁵ D[aniel] T[uvill], *Essaies Politicke and Morall* (London: Mathew Lownes, 1608); D[aniel] T[uvill], *Essayes Morall and Theologicall* (London: I[ohn] W[indet], 1609).

⁷⁶ For a discussion of the influence of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* on Tuvill's work, see John L. Lievsay, 'Tuvill's Advancement of Bacon's Learning', *Huntington Library Quarterly* IX (1945): 11-31.

⁷⁷ For Montaigne, see e.g., Tuvill, *Essays*, ed. Lievsay, p. 12; for Cornwallis, see e.g. p. 68.

⁷⁸ On Felltham's *Resolves* and other writers, see Jean Robertson, 'The Use Made of Owen Felltham's *Resolves*: A Study in Plagiarism', *Modern Language Notes*, 39:2 (1944): 108-15.

⁷⁹ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library: MS. Osborn b346. See pp. 11, 17, 20, 22, 36.

⁸⁰ MS. Osborn b346, p. 36.

⁸¹ Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock: D258/10/89. There are two essays, both very short (202 and 154 words long) – the one mentioned above and another in the same mid-seventeenth-century hand. The second essay is entitled 'Loue that observes formality is seated rather in the braine than in the hart'. These essays have not been printed to my knowledge.

and youngue mens readinge the dregs of fancie', presumably thinking that in the context of an essay, everyone would know the identity of the 'ffrench man' in question.⁸²

In the cancelled dedication to the 1612 edition of his essays to Prince Henry, Bacon identified classical antecedents for his essays, stating that '*Senecaes Epistles to Lucilius*, yf you marke them well, are but *Essaies*'.⁸³ Just Bacon here places his essays in a long-established literary tradition by drawing attention to their classical antecedents, so later English essayists strengthen the generic status of the vernacular essay by referencing its earliest exponents, and placing themselves within that tradition. When Nicholas Breton published his *Characters vpon Essaies Morall, and Diuine* in 1615, he dedicated the volume to Bacon and placed them in a vernacular tradition represented by his work. This is another example of the way in which the earliest exponents of the vernacular genre became authorities for later essayists, who were able to all but dispense with Bacon's defensive reliance upon classical antecedents.

That Montaigne's essays were being culled for both facts and moral wisdom is witnessed by the traces left by his readers in Florio's translation. An early reader of the 1603 edition now in the Pierpont Morgan Library made only two marginal annotations, on facing pages 84 and 85.⁸⁴ Next to Montaigne's story of how his father arranged for him to be spoken to in Latin, rather than French, as a child, is the marginal note: 'Lattin Tongue'. Opposite this, against Montaigne's description of how, 'We did tosse our declinations, and conjugations to and dro, as they doe, who by way of a certaine game at tables learne both Arithmetike and Geometrie', is written: 'Geom^{try} Arithtik'. Both of these annotations come next to a passage in the *Essayes* providing biographical information about Montaigne, but the nature of the annotations suggests that it was not

⁸² D258/10/89, p. 9.

⁸³ The cancelled dedication can be found in the British Library: MS. Add. 4259, fol. 155^r. The latter has been printed in Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels Civill and Morall*, p. 317.

⁸⁴ Pierpont Morgan Library, New York: W 04 D.

the personal detail which interested this reader, but rather the wider pedagogical points that could be drawn from learning about Montaigne's unorthodox education. Something similar can be seen in a copy of the 1603 edition of Florio's Montaigne at the Houghton Library, which is heavily annotated, sometimes only with manicules, asterisks, and the like, but often with short phrases.⁸⁵ Such annotations are always however directed towards abstract topics or facts of interest: 'Of our dutys to Kings' (6), 'Horses feedinge uppon Serpents' (160), 'fidei Gloria' (253). The longer annotations continue in the same vein: two on page 159 read respectively, 'They imagined that both horse and mann had beene but one creature', and 'A strange Ceremonie used by the Muscovites Embassadors to the Tartarian'. Such annotations are in line with the hunting after sententiae which is inherent to humanistic modes of reading, and complements the indexing habits of the readers discussed earlier in this chapter.

Although it has its roots in an earlier tradition, the idea that Montaigne's essays could be culled for moral wisdom remained pervasive throughout the seventeenth century, pointing to its lasting importance as a way of reading the text. This approach was taken to its extreme by Abraham Hill, (1635-1722), Fellow of the Royal Society, in two manuscripts now in the British Library: MS. Sloane 2901 and MS. Sloane 2903.⁸⁶ As far as I am aware, MS. Sloane 2903 has been written about only once in the context of Montaigne's English reception, and MS. Sloane 2901 not at all.⁸⁷ Folios 2^r-12^r of MS. Sloane 2903 consist of 297 aphorisms in English, concocted out of Florio's translation of

⁸⁵ Houghton Library, Harvard: HOU WIDF HEW 6.11.4.

⁸⁶ Hill was one of the original members of the Royal Society and was one of the twelve men present at its inaugural meeting at Gresham College on 28 November 1660. He was its Secretary from 1673 to 1675, and its Treasurer from 1663 to 1666 and from 1677 to 1699.

⁸⁷ Hamlin, *Montaigne's Moral Maxims*, reproduces the maxims from MS. Sloane 2903 as well as offering an introductory essay upon them.

Montaigne's essays.⁸⁸ The manuscript as a whole contains a wide selection of papers, categorized on fol. 1^r as follows:

Montaigne's moral maxims. Philosophical papers by Sir William Petty, Sir Christopher Wren, Mr Ludowick, Mr Houghton, Mr Gunning, Dr Goddard, Dr Whichcote, Dr Mouret, and others, collected by Abraham Hill.

In the only previous treatment of this manuscript's use of Montaigne, William M. Hamlin mistranscribes 'Hill' as 'Hall', leading him to conclude that 'Who this reader [of Montaigne] was we do not know, although evidence within the manuscript suggests that it may have been Sir William Petty (1623-1687) or one of his intellectual colleagues'.⁸⁹ Petty was in fact just one of the men whose 'Philosophical papers' are found in the same manuscript collection.⁹⁰ The maxims are in fact written in Hill's hand, and that they are his original composition, rather than 'collected' by him along with the other papers, is confirmed by the fact that they are actually the fair copy of a draft version of the maxims also in his hand in MS. Sloane 2901 (fols. 182^r-193^v).⁹¹

As might be expected from their title, the 'moral maxims' condense the moral wisdom which might be gleaned from the essays into single sentences which are aphoristic in style. MS. Sloane 2901 is an obvious rough copy. The sentences are labeled 1 to 262, although sometimes one number covers two sentences which will later become separate in the final version. The maxims in the two versions are fundamentally the same in content, although there are some present in the draft which do not make it into the

⁸⁸ Hamlin argues that the extracts are formed from Florio's translation, rather than Cotton's, although he acknowledges that making such a distinction is complicated by the fact that Cotton's own translation was strongly indebted to Florio. See Hamlin, 'Montaigne's Moral Maxims', pp. 210-11. Hamlin bases his argument upon the fact that at times (e.g. maxims 58 and 96), the manuscript follows Florio's wording exactly, whereas Cotton offers a very different translation. Based on my own reading of the maxims I see no reason to disagree with Hamlin's conclusion; although knowing now that the extracts were compiled by Abraham Hill, we might hope at some point to confirm this by finding a record of whether Hill owned Montaigne in Florio's or Cotton's translation.

⁸⁹ Hamlin, 'Montaigne's Moral Maxims', p. 209.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of these 'philosophical papers', see Rhodri Lewis, *William Petty on the order of nature: an unpublished manuscript treatise* (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), pp. 15-16, pp. 46-7.

⁹¹ MS. Sloane 2901 is not mentioned by Hamlin and I have not seen it referred to in this context elsewhere.

final cut, and Hill also has a tendency to jot down odd words or phrases which suggest subjects he considered, but ultimately rejected. On fol. 182^r, for example, there are possibilities for where to find material relating to possible maxims drawn from Montaigne's references to Socrates which do not appear in the polished version: ~~'Socrates demen 34 fire sene 81 his memorie 24 exemplary, 54'~~. There are also interpolations throughout the draft maxims in a differently coloured ink, suggesting that Hill returned to tinker with them at least once more in rough form before transposing them to the fair copy. By far the largest number of maxims come from Book Three, which in the fair copy provides 154 sentences, as opposed to 70 from Book One and 73 from Book Two. At the end of each sentence, Hill has noted where in the *Essayes* it comes from, so that, for instance, the first maxim reads: 'When Kings are dead let their vices be reported for the honour of those who were good subjects under such princes. 1¹ 3^o' (i.e. Book One, Chapter Three: 'Our affections are transported beyond our selves'). Although in MS. Sloane 2903 Hill marks where in the text the sentences come from, he does not distinguish the individual sections as essays, but retains Montaigne's own use of 'chapter' instead. Similarly, he does not note the title of the chapters or essays, only their number in each Book. In this way, his labeling of them seems more directed to functioning as a finding aid in case of future recourse to the original essays, rather than an acknowledgement of the individual integrity of each essay as a distinct literary object.⁹²

Under the new name 'Montaigne's Moral Maxims', Hill appropriates the *Essayes* and turns them into what is basically a new text. Despite calling them Montaigne's, the maxims are very much Hill's too, as he did more than simply extrapolate or paraphrase

⁹² The version of the maxims in MS. Sloane 2901 displays a different notation system: although some of the maxims (e.g. 1 and 2) include the 'p' and 'c' references we find in MS. Sloane 2903, most of the maxims are distinguished instead by what seem to be chapter and page references, e.g. '13.36' and '16.41', or simply by what appears to be a page reference. Going through all of the editions of the Florio (1603, 1613, 1632) and Cotton (1685-6, 1693, 1700) translations published during Hill's lifetime, however, I have been unable to match Hill's references with the page and chapter numbers in any of them, so these numbers may refer to something else (or indeed to an edition of the French text which I have so far failed to identify).

suitable sentences from Montaigne's text. Hill carefully crafts the maxims, as is demonstrated through his composition process by comparing an example of one of the maxims in its draft and final versions. In MS. Sloane 2903 he includes a maxim saying: 'Childrens play should be reckond their most serious action 1¹ 22^c (fol. 2^v). In its original version in MS. Sloane 2901, this is drafted as: 'Childrens play ~~is~~ <should be ~~be esteemed~~ ~~judged~~ reckon'd> their most serious action 78' (fol. 182^v). The maxim is taken from Montaigne's essay 'Of custome, and how a received law should not easily be changed', and in Florio's translation, the original sentence reads in full: 'I knowe well, because in my youth, I have ever accustomed my selfe to treade a plaine beaten path; and have ever hated to entermeddle any manner of deceit of cosoning, craft, even in my childish sportes (for truly it is to bee noted, that Childrens playes are not sportes, and should be deemed as their most serious actions'.⁹³ Hill's draft demonstrates the way in which he commonly tested out different word options to find the most expressive way of recording the 'moral maxims' he wished to draw out of Montaigne's essays, displaying the extent of his creative process of appropriation.

More than this, however, this example demonstrates the way in which, throughout the maxims, Hill removes practically all traces of Montaigne's own voice, so that the first-person is found in only sixteen of the 297 maxims. In the maxim above, the framing structure provided by Montaigne's personal example is dismissed, with Hill utilizing only the universal truth presented by Montaigne in parenthesis at the end. Similarly, when Montaigne turns to classical stories for his examples, Hill frequently expunges the reference to the ancient authority, as is the case with another example from the same essay. Montaigne describes how: '*Plato* did once chide a childe for playing with nuts, who answered him. *Thou chidest me for a small matter. Custome replied Plato, is no small matter.* I

⁹³ Florio, *Essayes*, p. 47.

finde that our greatest vices, make their first habit in vs, from our infancie'.⁹⁴ Epitomized into a moral maxim by Hill, this becomes in MS Sloane 2903: 'Evil customes in small things are not small faults 1¹22^c (fol. 2^v). This has itself been made more forceful since its draft version, which reads merely 'ill customes in small things are not small faults. 22.77' (fol. 182^v).⁹⁵ Furthermore, when Montaigne writes about his own practices without drawing any implicit moral from them, Hill frequently transforms Montaigne's personal and descriptive sentence into a universal and imperative one. So that, for example, Montaigne's comment that 'Reading serves me especially, to awake my conceite by divers objects; to busie my judgement, not my memorye' becomes 'Read to exercise your judgement, not your memory (fol. 8^r).⁹⁶

As with the introduction of printed and manuscript indexes to the essays, Hill's transformation of them bypasses the rambling nature of Montaigne's text. But whereas the index did this in order to aid improvement of knowledge by making finding facts easier, Hill's aphorisms dispense with Montaigne's discursive style in order to aid improvement of morals. Montaigne is given a didactic impulse which is perhaps implicit in the essays, but which is made absolutely explicit here. Hill removes all the possibility of ambiguity or tentativeness which is provided by the essay form, and Hamlin has noted the way indeed that Hill also at times alters the import of Montaigne's text, such as when he transforms Florio's 'the refining of wits in a common wealth, doth seldome make them the wiser' into 'The refining of wit in a Commonwealth doth not promise obedience'.⁹⁷ Here, then, is perhaps the most extreme example of the way in which reading essays in a pragmatic, directed fashion based upon humanistic methods of

⁹⁴ Florio, *Essayes*, p. 47.

⁹⁵ Hill does occasionally retain the name of the ancient authorities referred to by Montaigne, such as when he has one of his 'maxims' read: 'Socrates to one that surprised him playing with children said Censure me not till you are a father' (fol. 3^v). But this only seems to happen when to remove the anecdotal style completely would remove the full moral force of the sentence.

⁹⁶ Florio, *Essayes*, p. 493.

⁹⁷ Florio, *Essayes*, p. 566 and MS. Sloane 2903, fol. 9^r. See Hamlin, 'Montaignes Moral Maxims', p. 212. Although Hamlin mistranscribes 'promise' as 'promote', his main point remains the same.

commonplacing threatens to destroy the essay as a literary form. In this way, Hill's 'Moral Maxims' also confirms the importance to Cornwallis's conception and configuration of the essay as something reliant upon a rhetorical and synthetic process of reading and writing which could not be reduced to an ineluctable moral endpoint or practical goal. For in stripping the essay down in this way, Hill fundamentally strips away its literary identity, as reflected by the change in genre: these are no longer Montaigne's *essays* but rather, his *moral maxims*.

4. Radical Readers?

The seventeenth-century appropriation of Montaigne to conventional moral and practical use in the way demonstrated by Abraham Hill and other annotating readers of Florio's translation reflects the nature of the sub-titles given to collections of essays in this period. Florio's translation is *The Essayes or Moral, Politike and Millitarie Discourses*, and later editions of Bacon's essays become *Essayes or counsels, civil and moral*. This contrasts with the way in which Montaigne is often discussed in modern criticism in the context of scepticism, or free-thinking or radical thought.⁹⁸

In his native France, the perceived radical element of Montaigne's writing was both enthusiastically co-opted by the so-called *libertins* of the mid seventeenth-century such as Gabriel Naudé (1600-1653) and François de la Mothe le Vayer (1588-1672).⁹⁹ The long history of the censorship of the *Essais* in Spain has already been noted, and the *Essais* were put on the *Liber Index Prohibitorum* in 1676 (not to be removed until 1854). Early English readers of Montaigne in Florio's translation were certainly aware of this vein of French criticism of his work. References to two of the most vehement of Montaigne's

⁹⁸ For a good recent example of this, which also discusses the history of critical approaches to Montaigne's work in this context, see Richard Scholar, *Montaigne and the Art of Free-Thinking* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010).

⁹⁹ On Montaigne in this context, see recently Giovanni Dotoli, *Montaigne et les libertins* (Paris: Champion, 2006) and the articles in *Montaigne Studies*, XIX (2007), which takes as its subject 'Les libertins et Montaigne'.

detractors appear in two separate copies of the 1613 edition of Florio's translation now in the Houghton Library. In one of these, a seventeenth-century reader has noted on the title page: 'Censure des Oeuvres de Montaigne. vid. Recherche de la Verite. Tom 1. Lib. 2. Cap. 5'.¹⁰⁰ This refers to Nicolas Malebranche's 1674-5 publication *De la recherche de la vérité. Où l'on traite de la Nature de l'Esprit de l'homme, et de l'usage qu'il en doit faire pour éviter l'erreur dans les Sciences*, in which Montaigne is held up for particular approbation in the chapter dealing with the errors of the imagination. Similarly, on the front board of the other Houghton Library copy, an early reader has copied out a quotation from one of Montaigne's most famous critics, Blaise Pascal:

Les default de Montaigne sont grands. Il est plein de mots sales et déhonnêtes. Cela ne vaut rien. Ses sentiments sur l'homicide volontaire et sur la mort sont horribles. Il inspire une nonchalance du salut, sans crainte et sans repentir. Son livre n'étant print fait pour porter à la piété, il n'y était pas obligé; mais on est toujours obligé de ne pas en détourner. Quoiqu'on puisse dire pour excuser ses sentiments trop libre sur plusieurs choses, ou ne sauroit excuser en aucune sorte ses sentiments tout païens sur la mort; car il faut rénoncer à toute piété, si on ne veut au moins mourir chrétiennement: or il ne pense qu'à mourir lâchement et mollement par toute son livre.¹⁰¹

Neither of these copies however include annotations later in the book which would illuminate how far the readers may or may not have agreed with the sentiments expressed: they prove only that these readers were aware of the criticism of Montaigne.

A copy of the 1603 edition now in the British Library, however, bears witness to the fact that some English readers themselves picked up on potentially subversive elements in Montaigne's writing.¹⁰² On page 263 of this copy, there is a very long annotation, filling much of the page's blank space. In this, the reader disputes Montaigne's treatment of why humans must wear clothes, arguing that Montaigne has not paid due attention to

¹⁰⁰ Houghton Library, Harvard: HOU GEN Mon 30.2* Lobby III.4.8.

¹⁰¹ Houghton Library, Harvard: HOU GEN A 559.5 Lobby III.4.7.

¹⁰² British Library: C.59.i.18.

the role of the Fall, and he attacks the potentially radical implications of this neglect.¹⁰³ This type of disagreement is however unique among the copies of Florio's translation which have formed the basis for my current survey. When readers do take issue with Montaigne in their margins, it is to correct him on a point of fact, rather than to refute his potentially dangerous ideas, as is the case with a copy of the 1603 edition in the Houghton Library. The annotator points to the use of 'Lourdans' in the main text, commenting that: 'The author is wronge interpreted in this worde it being a scorne cast upon the insulting Danes, callinge them loude Danes after they were expelled'.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, in a heavily underlined copy of the 1613 edition once owned by Sir Thomas Egerton, Montaigne's statement when talking of Alexander the Great that 'this did hee being well stricken in yeares' is underlined, and 'This could not be for Alexander died very young at the age of 30 years' is written in the margin.¹⁰⁵ This same reader also seems to have caught Montaigne – or perhaps his subject – up on matters of decorum, writing 'fye-fye' next to the comment 'let a fart'.¹⁰⁶

The evidence relating to the context in which Montaigne was being read suggests that he was keeping slightly mixed company on his English readers' bookshelves. As a folio, the translation is rarely bound up with other texts, but a copy of the 1632 edition formerly in the possession of Peterborough Cathedral and now in the Cambridge University Library is bound with the 1595 English translation of Machiavelli's *Florentine History* and the 1595 translation from the French entitled *Of the interchangeable covrse, or*

¹⁰³ William Hamlin has discussed this particular early reader's response to Montaigne in the light of wider readings of the *Essays* in relation to 'custom'. See Hamlin, 'Florio's Montaigne and the Tyranny of "Custome"', pp. 504-07. There is a reproduction of the annotated page on p. 506.

¹⁰⁴ Houghton Library, Harvard: HOU WIDF HEW 6.11.4.

¹⁰⁵ Cambridge University Library: Montaigne.2.3.5; p. 415.

¹⁰⁶ Cambridge University Library: Montaigne.2.3.5; p. 329. Other readers responded in the opposite manner, making things explicit when the text is slightly more coy. Next to a passage regarding "Those instruments that serve to discharge the belly" in the main text, Sir Thomas Shipman writes in the margin in his copy, 'Farting'. Worcester College, Oxford: LL e.13 + 2; p. 43.

variety of things in the world.¹⁰⁷ The texts collected alongside Florio's translation in CUL MS. Dd. 2. 43 potentially suggests that he was being read in Protestant context, alongside works such as 'Sleiden's Com[m]entaries Concerninge the State of Religion & y^e Common weale in Germanye from 1518 to 1556'.¹⁰⁸ and 'Collections out of Perkins': this is the puritan minister William Perkins' *The Works of that famous and worthie minister of Christ, in the Vniversitie of Cambridge, M. W. Perkin*,¹⁰⁹ although the extracts are taken only from the first section of the book.¹¹⁰ The commonplace book has further extracts from 'Vocall fforest' (James Howell's *Denrologia Dodona's grove, or, The vocall forest. Englands tears, for the present wars*),¹¹¹ and 'Collections out of D^r Donne's Letters': *Letters to several persons of honour written by John Donne* (1651). It concludes with the only extracts not in English: sentences taken out of 'Marcellus Paling: Sigini Zodiacus' (fols. 61^r-62^v). This work by Marcellus Palingenius¹¹² was translated into English in 1560, when Barnaby Googe published a translation of the first three books, followed by a complete edition in 1565, as *The Zodiac of Life*, but the extracts in this commonplace book are taken from the original Latin.¹¹³ The commonplace book also includes Pierre Charron's *De la sagesse* or *Of Wisdom*: the compiler uses both titles for this text with well-known connections to Montaigne's work, which is often also discussed in a sceptical context. The tenor of the

¹⁰⁷ *Of the interchangeable course, or variety of things in the world; and the concurrence of armes and Learning, through the first and famousst Nations: from the beginning of Ciuility, and Memory of man, to this Present. Moreover, whether it be true or no, that there can be nothing sayd, which hath not bin said heretofore: And that we ought by our owne Inuentions to augment the doctrine of the Auncients; not contenting ourselves with Translations, Expositions, Corrections, and Abridgements of their writings. Written in French by Loys le Roy called Reginus and Translated into English by R.A.* (London: Charles Yetsewert, 1594).

¹⁰⁸ This is the English translation of the *Commentariorum de statu religionis et reipublicae* by Johannes Sleidanus (1506-1556): the German historian and annalist of the Reformation. A marginal note next to the title reads 'London 1560': the date of the English translation and publication of the text by John Day. Day is perhaps most famous for having published John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, three years later in 1563. He published Sleidanus's work under the title: *A Famous Chronicle of our time, called Sleidanus Commentaries, concerning the state of religion and commonwealth*.

¹⁰⁹ This was published in Cambridge by John Legat, Printer to the University, in 1605.

¹¹⁰ The section (beginning on sig. A1^r) entitled '*A golden chaine: Or the Description of Theologie, containing the order of the causes of Salvation and Damnation according to Gods word*'.

¹¹¹ There is a marginal note that the extracts are taken from 'Part 2 1650': the correct publication date.

¹¹² The pen-name of Pier Angelo Manzolli (1500/03-1543).

¹¹³ English editions with further revisions were published in 1576 and 1588. The original Latin version was published at Basel in 1543, and put on the first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* by Pope Paul IV in 1559.

extracts across the commonplace book does not suggest however much interest in radical implications of any of these texts, including Montaigne's, but instead they concentrate on drawing out points of traditional moral values or points of cultural interest.

This ties in with the evidence from other commonplace book extracts from early-modern English essays, such as those mentioned above, or the excerpts made from both Bacon and Montaigne's essays, alongside several classical texts such as Plutarch, in a commonplace book from 1604 now in the British Library;¹¹⁴ the marginal annotations found in copies of Florio's Montaigne also suggest that Montaigne and the essay form were not being read in England as a home for radical thought. The place of essays on seventeenth-century library lists also frequently sets them within a context concerned with civic and moral education, situating them in a similar way to that which I have previously described being advised in seventeenth-century university reading lists.¹¹⁵ Florio's translation also evidently attracted some more learned readers than those students who were advised to read essay-like texts for 'breeding' rather than 'learning': the Bishop of Lichfield, John Hacket (1592-1670) made extensive annotations in Latin in his copy of the 1613 edition,¹¹⁶ and many copies of the translation have formerly had clerical or scholarly owners.¹¹⁷ The essays found an audience too among lawyers,¹¹⁸ and

¹¹⁴ British Library: MS. Royal 12 B V.

¹¹⁵ Examples of this can be found in several manuscripts. In British Library MS. 2983, there is a catalogue of books owned by the lawyer Francis Heath at the time of his death: Bacon's essays are included on a list of books which had been borrowed on not returned, fol. 155^v. British Library MS. Add. 28850 is a library catalogue of three generations of the Birnie family in Scotland: an unnamed Cornwallis text is listed in the index although the page upon which they should appear in the catalogue itself is not in the manuscript, fol. 85^r. In Bodleian Library MS. Don. e. 6, a collection entitled 'Essayes and characters' (perhaps Breton's?) is listed alongside other literary and morally inflected texts such as maxims, history books, and epigrams, fol. 10^v.

¹¹⁶ Cambridge University Library: Syn.4.61.44. See e.g. pp. 395-97.

¹¹⁷ The library catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon scholar William Somner includes both Cornwallis's and Montaigne's essays. British Library: MS. Burney 368, fols. 59^r-60^v. See for example also the copies of Florio's translation formerly owned by Peterborough and Ely Cathedrals, now in Cambridge University Library: Peterborough L. 54 and Ely b. 40.

¹¹⁸ John O'Brien notes in his survey of copies of French editions of the *Essais* that it is hardly surprising that Montaigne should be read among members of the Inns of Court: 'a lawyer among lawyers'. He also

indeed among the papers of the lawyer Francis Heath (*b.* 1622), there are long sections of several of Montaigne's essays from Book One translated in full into English.¹¹⁹

The provenance evidence attached to library lists including essays, as well as annotated copies, also suggests that the Florio's translation, as well as early English essayists such as Cornwallis, were being read by the type of private, educated gentleman this might suggest.¹²⁰ This again helps to situate the essay genre among the type of advice literature aimed at young noblemen and gentlemen such as father-to-son advice letters and conduct manuals such as Henry Peacham the Younger's *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), although the presence of women's names in several of copies of Florio's translation is a reminder of women's importance as readers and patrons of essays, as discussed in Chapter Two.¹²¹

5. Moving Readers

Despite the positioning of essays by both writers and many readers within the context of civic and moral advice literature, not all readers reaped the benefits. On the title page of a copy of the 1603 edition at Pembroke College, Cambridge, one early reader has written 'This Bookes' read over', and beneath this, another hand has responded 'tis good for

notes that it should come as little surprise that the Royal College of Physicians also has a copy of the *Essais*, notwithstanding their author's strictures about the medical profession'. O'Brien, 'Montaigne in Some London Libraries', pp. 158-59. Indeed certain copies of Florio's translation with unidentified owners have been annotated in a way which suggests their owner's particular fascination with medical matters: a large number of the underlinings relate to health and medicine in a copy of the 1632 edition at Pembroke College, Cambridge, for example: shelfmark 3.27.43.

¹¹⁹ William M. Hamlin notes that he is editing these for publication, 'Florio's Theatrical Montaigne', p. 39, n. 20.

¹²⁰ Examples include a copy of the 1613 edition at the Houghton Library, Harvard: HOU F *2004G-87, inscribed 'Ra. Symonds 1622', a copy of the 1632 edition at the Houghton: HOU GEN Nor 1106 Lobby III.4.11, inscribed 'Sir John Franklin', and a copy of the 1632 edition at Balliol College, Oxford: 30 d. 128, inscribed 'John Newman His Booke'.

¹²¹ See for example a copy of the 1632 edition in Pembroke College, Cambridge, which was given as a gift on 18 October 1679 by Rebecca Brouncker, wife of Henry Brouncker, third Viscount of Lyons, to a Martin Folkes: possibly the Martin Folkes (1640-1705) who was a bencher at Gray's Inn. Another copy in Pembroke College, Cambridge, this time of the 1613 edition, is inscribed both 'Thomas Hunt' and 'Mary', as well as 'to my dear friend M^{rs} ~~Hunt~~ H' and 'Theadosia': shelfmark 15.1.30.

very little': a reminder of the necessarily individual nature of all such readers and their responses.¹²²

Just as not all readers saw the moral benefits of essay-reading, so too did some of Montaigne and Cornwallis's earliest English readers begin to exhibit the more personal reactions to the essayists which would become so much associated with them in later centuries. In a copy of the 1600 edition of Cornwallis's essays later owned by the antiquary Anthony Wood and bound by him with Bacon's essays, an earlier reader has responded to Cornwallis's conversational style by answering the essayist's statement in 'Of Censuring' that 'I am done with bookes' with the marginal resolution that 'And: I He. Leighe haue done wth Tobacco / H: L'.¹²³ Even more striking is a marginal note in a copy of the 1603 edition of Florio's translation now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, written next to Montaigne's famous desire that 'if my humours should please or sympathize with some honest man, he would before my death seeke to be acquainted with me'. This elicits the marginal confession from the book's reader that 'this discourse mooved teares in mee'.¹²⁴

Both of these marginal notes point towards the movement towards a more personal way of reading and annotating essays, a movement which would lead Alexander Pope to declare in the margins of his copy of Charles Cotton's translation of Montaigne that the French writer was his 'Alter Ego' and that 'Mutato nomine de me Fabula narratur' (with a change of names this is my own story).¹²⁵ On the inside back board of the third volume of his copy, he has written further: 'This is (in my Opinion) the very best Book for Information of Manners, that has been writ; This Author says nothing but what every

¹²² Pembroke College, Cambridge: 12.1.52.

¹²³ Bodleian Library: Wood 769, sig. H4^v.

¹²⁴ Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: Z Payen 438, p. 587.

¹²⁵ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: Ik P810 Zz685; III.301 and I.300. On Pope and Montaigne, see most recently Christopher Tilmouth, "'Honest Montaigne" from Temple to Pope', *Montaigne Studies* XXIV (2012): 83-104. See also Fred Parker, *Scepticism and literature: An Essay on Pope, Hume, Sterne, and Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 86-137 and James Noggle, *The Skeptical Sublime: Aesthetic Ideology in Pope and the Tory Satirists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

one feels att the Heart: Whoever deny it, are not more Wise than Montaigne, but less honest'. In this way, Pope in some way combines two ways of reading, both remaining rooted in the tradition of reading essays as advice literature ('the very best Book for information of Manners'), while pointing to the way in which essays were at the same time based upon a rhetoric of emotional engagement with the audience ('This Author says nothing but what every one feels att the Heart').

Similarly, the very personal responses offered by the two readers of Cornwallis and Florio's Montaigne described above are also anchored in the model of affective rhetoric which I described in Chapter Two as central to the mode and content of Cornwallis's writing. He. Leighe has been moved by Cornwallis's personal example to make his own resolution to action; while the anonymous reader of Montaigne responds to the essayist's plea for an 'honest man' to meet him in friendship, his 'teares' perhaps reflecting the success of Montaigne's employment of *ethos* in the creation of his own 'honest' persona.

In responding to Montaigne and Cornwallis in this more emotional and personal way, then, these readers are at once reacting to a rhetorical dimension of the essay rooted in the classical literary past, and also looking forward to the increased association of the essay genre with the personal voice over time: the inherently self-divided nature of the essay coming through in the responses of its earliest readers, as well as in the essays themselves.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ In her introduction to *How To Live: A Life of Montaigne in one question and twenty attempts at an answer* (London: Vintage, 2011) – one of the most popular recent books about Montaigne – Sarah Bakewell lists various such responses to the *Essays* in the twentieth century (see pp. 6-7). She concludes that 'The *Essays* is thus much more than a book. It is a centuries-long conversation between Montaigne and all those who have got to know him: a conversation which changes through history, while starting out afresh almost every time with that cry of "How did he know all that about me?"', p. 9.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided the first modern full-length study of Sir William Cornwallis's *Essayes* (1600-01), situating them in their historical, social, literary, and material contexts. It has demonstrated that the *Essayes* emerged out of complex interchanges between late sixteenth-century humanistic habits of thinking and reading, and ethically-infused literary and rhetorical practices of the same period. But this thesis has also shown that at the same time as using the tools of humanism to achieve the ends of humanist teachings, Cornwallis's *Essayes* also probe the limits of those tools, and critique the ends to which they are put. In this way, then, the *Essayes* can be seen as innately self-divided project, both a product of these humanistic practices and struggling against them.

This thesis has also documented how Cornwallis's *Essayes* grew out of particular social and literary networks and made the shared rhetorical and material cultures of those networks their subject. It has partly also sought to demonstrate the importance of these cultures by tracing the ways in which Cornwallis's writing was altered and appropriated once it was removed from them. Exploring the material traces left by the early-modern readers of essays has shown the wide variety of possible responses and interpretations available to those readers. This has revealed that readers' application of some of the 'active' humanist methods of reading which were used to shape commonplace language and topics into rhetorically sophisticated essays in the first place can equally be used to dismantle those rhetorical constructions. In this way, then, neither the essay's relationship with its readers nor the pedagogical tools such as commonplace books which inform its composition, can necessarily be seen as so unproblematically friendly or neutral as they have sometimes been presented.

This relates to the thesis's overall attempt to qualify the two most dominant critical readings of early-modern English essays: that they are 'records of reading' which are little more than commonplace books, and that they are the realistic representation of an essayist's personal voice (improvisational in structure, empirical in content). In fact, in

Chapter Two I suggested that Cornwallis's *Essayes* rely upon the interpenetration of the creative possibilities of both these critical approaches: the braided interpenetration between the writer's personal voice and the commonplace aphorisms and fragments of classical texts out of which his essays are composed. In other words, these two seemingly oppositional forms of criticism are in fact in a sense compatible. The personal and empirical qualities of the essay form are most certainly there from the beginning, but these qualities mean something very different when they are shaped by the culture of early seventeenth-century humanism (Cornwallis's era) than they do in later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century culture, where humanism has been substantially reshaped by many pressures (the increased prominence of scientific epistemologies, the dissemination of learned culture through journals, new understandings of the nature of aesthetic appreciation). So the story of the essay in a way speaks to a larger story about changes in emphasis and priorities in reading and educational practices, about developing debates over the place of writing within society, and about the increasing strength of the idea that literature might be read or written for personal expression or pleasure as well as for profit or utility.

The increased dominance of the personal voice within the essay is reflected by the increasingly privileged role given to personal responses in reading texts. This personal voice is always a hugely important part of the essay, but in Chapter Two, I argued that the reasons for this are not the same as those attributed to it today. Early essayists and readers were alive to the importance of the individual essayist's voice and experiences, as we can see from Francis Osborne's reminiscences in 1659 about Cornwallis and Montaigne, when he discusses the history of the genre in which he now finds himself writing: '*I remember, to have heard from Sir William Cornewallis, (esteemed none of the meanest Witts, in his Time)*', he tells the reader, '*That Mountaign's Essay's, was the likeliest Booke, to*

advance Wisdom: *because, The Authours own Experience, is the Chiefest Argument in it*.¹ Although it is Montaigne's 'own *Experience*' which is stressed here, it is not simply for the insight it gives into the essayist's mind, but rather because it provides '*the* Chiefest Argument' in the text: the use of the personal voice and personal experience is presented explicitly in rhetorical terms. In this way, the very notion of what it might mean to express something personal, and why something personal might in fact be expressed, changes over time, as the line between the private and the public is brought into sharper distinction.²

A similar change in priority can be seen in the critical judgements passed on the perceived lack of order to an essay, the quality which led Samuel Johnson to define it in his *Dictionary* (1755) as 'A loose sally of the mind; an irregular indigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition'. This quality is praised today for the truthfulness with which it expresses the 'messiness' of real life,³ while for the essay's early-modern readers, it might even have suggested the opposite, for it was 'Ordered books' which were 'connected with honesty, reliability'.⁴ In other words, readers notice the same things, but interpret them differently.

In this way, then, Cornwallis's essays are very much of product of a particular moment in time, and a particular culture of composition and interpretation. Chronologies of the essay which seek to chart the transformation of essays like Cornwallis's into periodicals, scientific writing, or novels, suggest less that the specifically early-modern essay develops over the course of the seventeenth-century, but rather that it becomes something unsustainable or unacheivable because it is too much a part of the

¹ Osborne, *Miscellany of sundry essayes*, sig. (a)^v.

² For the very different notions of private spaces in the period, see e.g. Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

³ Smith, *Changing My Mind*.

⁴ Vine, 'Commercial Commonplacing', p. 206.

late sixteenth-century culture which produced it, and must therefore be replaced with another form of writing as that culture declines.

Rather than emphasizing the relationship between the essay and other forms of writing later in the seventeenth century, however, further work on this subject might seek to situate essays like Cornwallis's within the wider literary context in which they were originally created. As the Introduction to this thesis noted, the early-modern essay has frequently been compared to character-writing in the same period. But the place of the essay alongside other literary writing of this time has been less studied, and the way in which Cornwallis probes at the boundaries of his own humanist project might be profitably illuminated by a comparison with literary interrogations of humanism in other genres, such as the 1590s epyllion, situating the essay more exactly within the late sixteenth-century debates about the value of poetry and the status of writing when stripped of its moral use. The essay is an innately marginal form, the inherently tentative qualities which paradoxically lend it its form leaving it on the boundary between the finished and the unfinished. Chapter Three situated these qualities of the essay within the material cultures within which it was written, demonstrating its links with forms of writing usually described as preliminary. In this way, the printed essay becomes a transitional text, the very fact that it can be imagined to exist as a supposedly complete product while at the same time being in a constant state of non-goal-oriented flux becoming a ground for questioning the perceived role of literature and of writing more generally: a questioning which becomes an increasingly urgent function of the essay, but which is present within it right from the start.

The particular demands inherent to the verse essay would be significant in this context, and this points to one of the ways in which this thesis hopes to lay the foundations for future research. By situating Cornwallis within a tight nexus of communities and cultures, this thesis has emphasized the need to understand the earliest

English essays within their immediate contexts, rather than necessarily using them as the starting point for a bigger survey of the essay throughout history. In this way, the approach of this thesis suggests the need now for a broader study of the essay in this formative period, both of its relation to other types of literary writing, and of the various forms the essay itself inhabits in the earlier years of the seventeenth century. Cornwallis's essays are a particularly rich resource to sit at the heart of such a comprehensive study of the essay in this period, because of the unique way in which they contain the various creative and critical directions available to the genre.

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<i>Derbyshire Record Office</i>	
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