

“Drinking a dish of tea with Sapho”: Consumer Spaces / Sapphic Retreats in the poetry and prose of Anne Finch and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Abstract

In a letter to Alexander Dyce in 1830 William Wordsworth wrote:

Could you tell me anything of Lady Mary Wortley Mont: more than is to be learned from Pope's Letters and her own? She seems to have been destined for something much higher and better than she became. A parallel between her genius and character and that of lady Winchelsea her Contemporary (though somewhat prior to her) would be well worth drawing.¹

Although both writers have received much critical commentary and Wordsworth's editing of Finch has been extensively documented, there has not, as yet, been a comparative study of Finch and Montagu. Finch (1660 – 1720) and Montagu (1689-1762) wrote their most popular verse in the same decade, with Pope and Swift as their contemporaries. However, there is no recorded evidence of them having met or having written about each other's work. Indeed, they are two writers who are not usually thought of together: Finch is a staunch Royalist and devoted Anglican who spent much of her writing life in exile in Kent; whereas Montagu comes from a Whig family, wrote a weekly periodical supporting the Whig cause, and spent her adult life in London and in Europe. Montagu is best known for her letters and her assertive and outspoken voice; whereas Finch is usually considered for her modesty and her devotional poetics.

¹ William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce 19 April 1830 in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years Part 2*, 2nd edition ed. by Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 237.

Nevertheless, as Wordsworth suggests, Finch and Montagu are worthy of comparison. They both interrogate the fashionable spaces of London, and perceive such space as negotiating and disciplining sexual subjectivities. In different ways they critique these gendered sites and performances, and envisage new trajectories of Being in retreats where sexuality is configured as fluid. However, I will not be forging strong links and comparisons between Finch and Montagu; so much as exploring how they each negotiate sexualities and the spaces within which these sexualities are inscribed and produced. Rather than replicating over-arching and evolutionary frameworks of a female literary tradition, this study will recognize and celebrate the differences. Finch and Montagu both resist paradigms of feminine gendered performance and heterosexual relations configured through economic change. They both imagine and embellish sexualities and gendered theatrics outside the heterosexual matrix, but they do so in radically diverse and fascinating ways.

“Drinking a dish of tea with Sapho”: Consumer Spaces/ Sapphic Retreats in the Poetry and Prose of Anne Finch and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu



This thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Alison Winch, May 2005.

Abbreviations

AA	Finch, 'The Atheist and the Acorn'
BL	The British Library
Bod.	The Bodleian Library
C	Finch, 'Clarinda's Indifference at Parting with Her Beauty'
CL	<i>The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu</i> ed. by Robert Halsband III vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956)
DP	Montagu, 'The Dean's Provocation for Writing 'The Lady's Dressing Room''
E&P	<i>Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, a Comedy</i> , ed. by Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)
ELH	<i>English Literary History</i>
EP	Swift, 'Epistle to a Lady'
I	Finch, 'Introduction'
ID	Finch, 'An Invitation to Dafnis'
LD	Swift, 'The Lady's Dressing Room'
LMWM	Isobel Grundy, <i>Lady Mary Wortley Montagu</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
MR	Finch, 'Mrs Randolph'
NR	Finch, 'A Nocturnal Reverie'
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
PAR	Finch, 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'
PL	Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i>

RL	Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i>
S	Finch, 'The Spleen'
SE	Montagu, 'Saturday'
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studies in English Literature</i>
T	Montagu, 'Tuesday'

Acknowledgements

My thanks goes primarily to Dr Jill Rudd and Dr Hester Jones who provided support, motivation and inspiration throughout the writing of this thesis.

I am grateful to the English Department at Liverpool University for a full-time bursary, and to the Arts Faculty who provided financial assistance to attend conferences. Much gratitude also goes to the staff of the Sydney Jones Library, the British Library, Northamptonshire Record Office, the Bodleian, and Chawton House.

Illustrations

- Title Page: Francois Boucher, 'Jupiter and Callisto' (1744)
- Fig. 1 'Sappho: Arion' from www.bulfinch.org/fables/bull.html
- Fig. 2 Albrecht Durer, 'St Jerome in his study' (1514)
- Fig. 3 and 4 The Universal Penman (1735)
- Fig. 5 Mr Whitgreave's Study from Mosely Old Hall (National Trust, 1997)
- Fig. 6 Button's Coffee House c. 1660 from www.nwe.ufl.edu/~pcraddoc/places.html
- Fig. 7 William Hogarth, 'Marriage a la Mode' Plate 1V in The National Gallery
- Fig. 8 Jacopo Tintoretto, 'Susannah and the Elders' (c. 1570)
- Fig. 9 Nicolas Poussin, 'Echo and Narcissus' (1650) in The Louvre
- Fig. 10 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 'Turkish Baths' (1862)
- Fig. 11 Jonathan Richardson 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu' (c. 1726) owned by the Earl of Harrowby

Contents

Introduction	1
Consumer Spaces	3
Sapphic Retreats	12
Finch and Sappho	16
Montagu and Sappho	22
Ch. 1 Anne Finch and the gentleman's study	31
“Enclos'd within a lonely Room”	33
“space beyond sexuality”	39
“much lov'd husband”	44
“a happy wife”	49
“faery Cercles”	57
“censure what we cannot reach”	71
‘Adam Pos'd’	74
Ch. 2 Montagu and the coffee house	82
Part 1: ‘I stood ogling of her Grace’: voyeurism, impotency and homosocial bonding	83
“fellowship of coffee houses”	86
“ogling”	89
“male homosocial bonds”	98
“flash in the pan”	102
Part 2: “The nymph grown Furious, roar'd”: Montagu's response to Jonathan Swift's ‘The Lady's Dressing Room’	105
“the Bow'r”	106
“Bursting into pieces”	111
“With Care his Diamond Ring displays”	115
“heighten'd by toupet”	119
“some new Prunella”	121
“roaring girl”	126

Ch. 3 Finch and the dressing room	130
Part 1: "Sappho at her toilet's greasy talk": sexuality and abjection	131
"I hate such parts that we have played today"	136
"brokenness"	142
Part 2: "this glorious empire is just a glorious pain": desire and disease"	147
"no characters at all"	149
"that great Scene of Business"	152
"my cramped numbers fail"	160
Part 3: "Lesbian Sappho's might all hearts beguile": Ardelia's Sapphic Voice	168
"renew our Ancient Claime"	169
"'tis to love as I love you"	177
Ch. 4 Montagu and the dressing room	187
"perpetual Masquerade"	188
"monstrosity of wildly incoherent dress"	196
"with what Pleasure I this Face survey'd"	200
"the Face disfigure"	211
"spectral lesbian"	218
Ch. 5 Finch's Sacred and Sapphic Space	225
Part 1: "clogg'd the Active Soul"	226
"moving Syllables repeat"	233
Part 2: Retreating and retracing in 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'	245
"lost paths"	247
"world may ne'er invade"	253
"All within my easy reach"	255
"Fly those windings, and that shade"	259
Part 3: "to a woman ne'er allowed before": Aemilia Lanyer and triangulations of desire"	264
"redeemed Eden"	267
"joy dilate"	281

Ch. 6 'Tis the Women's Coffee House': Montagu queers space	289
Part 1: "Queerness or Oddities"	290
"enraged at having been formed to wear skirts"	296
"Iphis her wish (however wild) obtained"	300
"in my Study absorbed"	306
"there are men, women, and Herveys"	310
Part 2: "in plain English, Stark Naked": Orlando and 'Oriental Sapphism'	314
"a history so uncommon"	315
"a site for multiple metamorphoses"	323
"process of fabrication"	328
"I am now got into a new World"	338
Bibliography	345

Introduction



Fig. 1: Sappho

In a letter to Alexander Dyce in 1830 William Wordsworth wrote:

Could you tell me anything of Lady Mary Wortley Mont: more than is to be learned from Pope's Letters and her own? She seems to have been destined for something much higher and better than she became. A parallel between her genius and character and that of lady Winchelsea her Contemporary (though somewhat prior to her) would be well worth drawing.¹

¹ William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce, 19 April 1830, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years Part 2*, 2nd edition, ed. by Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 237.

Although both writers have received much critical commentary and Wordsworth's editing of Finch has been extensively documented, there has not, as yet, been a comparative study of Finch and Montagu. Finch (1660 – 1720) and Montagu (1689-1762) wrote their most popular verse in the same decade, with Pope and Swift as their contemporaries. However, there is no recorded evidence of them having met or having written about each other's work. Indeed, they are two writers who are not usually thought of together: Finch is a staunch Royalist and devoted Anglican who spent much of her writing life in exile in Kent; whereas Montagu comes from a Whig family, wrote a weekly periodical supporting the Whig cause, and spent her adult life in London and in Europe. Montagu is best known for her letters and her assertive and outspoken voice; whereas Finch is usually considered for her modesty and her devotional poetics.

Nevertheless, as Wordsworth suggests, Finch and Montagu are worthy of comparison. They both interrogate the fashionable spaces of London, and perceive such space as negotiating and disciplining sexual subjectivities. In different ways they critique these gendered sites and performances, and envisage new trajectories of Being in retreats where sexuality is configured as fluid. However, I will not be forging strong links and comparisons between Finch and Montagu; so much as exploring how they each negotiate sexualities and the spaces within which these sexualities are inscribed and produced. Rather than replicating over-arching and evolutionary frameworks of a female literary tradition, this study will recognize and celebrate the differences. Finch and Montagu both resist paradigms of feminine gendered performance and heterosexual relations configured through economic change. They both imagine and embellish sexualities and gendered theatrics outside the

Although both writers have received much critical commentary, and Windsor
editing of Finch has been extensively documented, there has not as yet been a
comparative study of Finch and Montagu. Finch (1660 - 1720) and Montagu (1680-
1762) wrote their most popular verse in the same decade, with Pope and Swift as their
contemporaries. However, there is no recorded evidence of them having met or
having written about each other's work; indeed, they are two writers who are not
usually thought of together: Finch a staunch Puritan and devoted churchman who
spent much of his writing life in exile in Kent; whereas Montagu was a non-
conformist who wrote a weekly periodical supporting the Whig cause, and spent his adult life
in London and in Europe. Montagu is best known for her letters and her association with
the *London Spectator*; whereas Finch is usually considered for her modest and her
devotional poetry.

Nevertheless, Windsor would suggest, Finch and Montagu are worthy of
comparison. They both interrogate the fashionable fashions of London and perceive
such space as negotiating and disciplining sexual subjectivities in different ways. They
critique these gendered sites and performances and envisage new practices of
being in retreat where sexuality is configured as fluid. However, I will not be forging
strong links and comparisons between Finch and Montagu so much as exploring how
they each negotiate sexualities and the spaces within which these sexualities are
inscribed and produced. Rather than replicating or erasing and evolutionary
frameworks of a female literary tradition, this study will recognize and celebrate the
differences. Finch and Montagu both resist paradigms of feminine gendered
performance and heterosexual relations that attend the eighteenth-century economic changes. They
both imagine and embody sexualities and gendered theatrics outside the

heterosexual matrix, but they do so in radically diverse and fascinating ways.

Exploring and comparing their imaginative worlds of sexual performance and sexual difference is an exciting and exhilarating enterprise.

Consumer Spaces

“Drinking a dish of tea with Sapho” is taken from a letter by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Abbé Conti, dated 31st July 1718. In this letter, Montagu describes her voyage back to Britain from the Turkish empire, in which she travels through Greek islands and maps her own boat journey against the mythological and artistic world of the ancient Greeks:

’tis impossible to imagine any thing more agreable than this Journey would have been between 2 and 3,000 years since, when, after drinking a dish of tea with Sapho, I might have gone the same evening to visit the temple of Homer in Chios, and have pass’d this voyage in takeing plans of magnificent Temples, delineateing miracles of Statuaries and converseing with the most polite and most gay of humankind. Alas! Art is extinct here.²

In this thesis I tentatively explore how Anne Finch and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu imagine Sappho: how Sappho’s fragments and powerful poetic voice inform and influence their work, but also how contemporary myths of Sappho’s transgressive

² *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. by Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), vol. 1, p. 423. All letters cited from this edition, unless otherwise stated. Hereafter cited as *CL*.

sexuality enables a queering of desire in their poetry and letters. Reflecting Finch's and Montagu's fragmented allusions to Sappho, however, my exploration is similarly fluid. Sappho and the sexual and authorial meanings that surround her as a mythical figure move in and out of this thesis as it does in the poetry of Finch and Montagu, and I reach no definitive over-arching conclusion regarding her influence.

The title, "Drinking a dish of tea with Sappho" succinctly demonstrates the juxtaposition within this thesis. Chapters 1 to 4 are located within the consumer spaces of the early eighteenth-century study, coffee house and dressing room, while chapters 5 and 6 explore the notion of 'Sapphic retreats'. It will be my contention that Finch and Montagu (like Mary Astell) understand consumerism as an "ill influence".³ To different degrees, they depict heterosexuality as based on economic exchange and commodification. Focusing on sites that both perpetuate consumer practices and were produced in response to mercantile capitalism, they critique heterosexual relations as monetary relations. To counteract this, Finch and Montagu inscribe alternative sites where sexualities are celebrated and enjoyed outside the heterosexual matrix. Influenced by the homoeroticism and bi-sexualities of ancient Greek and Roman literature, they write 'Sapphic retreats' which blur and subvert the conventional aristocratic performances of London's consumer spaces. For example, Montagu imagines "the Women's coffee house" in the Turkish baths in Sophia, and by doing so she imagines a space that fissures the masculine privilege of the urban coffee house. Similarly, through "drinking a dish of tea with Sappho", Montagu fractures the space of the tea table, that site of feminine docility, and injects it with an unruly erotic and artistic power.

³ Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies: Part I London 1694, Part II London 1697*, ed. by Patricia Springborg (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1997), p.10.

In *Consuming Subjects*, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace discusses the eighteenth-century tea table as “the sign of an ongoing process of the disciplining and normalizing of the upper class female body.”⁴ Building on her work, I examine how Finch and Montagu inscribe the lady’s dressing room, the study and the coffee house as disciplining sites, and how they respond, critique, or disrupt the normalisation of gendered performances that are enacted in these spaces.⁵ However, I depart from Kowaleski-Wallace by investigating, in particular, their interrogation of the naturalisation of heterosexuality. Reading the works of Finch and Montagu through Judith Butler’s framework of sexual subjectivities, in chapters 3 and 4, I read the lady’s dressing room as a locus where the body is contained and managed, and where the individual, in Butler’s words, becomes “girded”. It is a site where the individual “is brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender”, where female sexuality “is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reinforce or contest this naturalized effect”.⁶ It is a site where the body is not only interpellated into gender norms but where the body is normalized and naturalized producing a (hetero) sexed identity.

Furthermore, it is through the processes of the dressing table that the aristocratic individual learns which gestures are forbidden and which are required, or in Foucauldian terms what is ‘inner’ and what is ‘outer’. It is the site where the

⁴ Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 20.

⁵ As aristocrats Finch and Montagu are virulent critics of commerce. Nevertheless, they also critique aristocratic systems of sexual exchange (i.e. marriage) which pre-date mercantile capitalism. As far as possible I demarcate between these systems of exchange and commerce. This is discussed further in chapter 2.

⁶ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7-8.

woman develops an “inspecting gaze” which is internalised to the point that “he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself.”⁷ The “normative feminine practices” produced at the dressing table “train the female body in docility and obedience to cultural demands while at the same time being experienced in terms of power and control.”⁸ Consequently, the site of the lady’s dressing room is a deeply unsettling one for such unconventional and transgressive writers as Finch and Montagu. In chapters 3 and 4 I will examine how Montagu and Finch disrupt the pervasive surveillance and policing of the body in order to open up sites of resistance. In other words, they imagine the woman’s dis-ease in the dressing room by inscribing images of smallpox, aging and melancholia. However, by fissuring this space through tropes of abjection and monstrosity, they expose alternative sexual performances such as autoeroticism and homoeroticism.

I further depart from Kowaleski-Wallace and Butler through examining how space is, in an inversion of Butler’s phrase, “boyed”. In chapter one I will be looking at how Finch negotiates the gentleman’s study, and in chapter 2 how Montagu writes the coffee house as a site of male homosocial bonding. Much recent criticism on the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries has been devoted to “a mapping of the diversity of historical masculinities”.⁹ I will argue that de-centring the category of masculinity, a category which has been “so encoded into the language of the subject that in the eighteenth century it is virtually inseparable from it”, is a project that Montagu and

⁷ Michel Foucault quoted in Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 27. Foucault’s male centred understanding of the history of sexuality – exemplified by the male pronouns in this quotation – renders his theoretical framework limited.

⁸ Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, p.27.

⁹ Tom Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen, ‘Introduction’, in *English Masculinities: 1660-1800*, ed. by Tom Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (London and New York: Longman, 1999), p. 2.

Finch were already engaged in.¹⁰ My explorations of the study and the coffee house reveal Montagu and Finch repeatedly destabilizing the image of the male upper class heterosexual individual. Although there is a proliferation of material on eighteenth-century masculinities there is still much to be interrogated. In particular, I will discuss men's dress and their involvement in the consumer world.

At this point it would be useful to clarify links between twentieth-century theories of subjectivity and sexual identity, and the problematics of applying them in an eighteenth-century context. Although the theories of Butler and Foucault employ the terminology of subjectivity, individuality and identity, their deconstructive project renders their framework valid when examining the works of the early eighteenth century. Rather than perceiving this critical standpoint as anachronistic, I read Finch and Montagu as also writing against the consolidation of the Western male individual. Profoundly influenced by the literature of the Restoration period, Finch and Montagu depict persons in performance, as if acting on a stage. Like Butler, they write as if "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender ... identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results".¹¹

Moreover, in the early eighteenth century gender was seen to be "a predominantly cultural and political phenomenon, necessary to social order, rather than an irreducible scientific fact".¹² Nevertheless, at the beginning of the eighteenth century there was a movement away from this Galenic model of sexuality and sexual difference and "competing ideologies of sexuality and sexual identity beg[a]n to give

¹⁰ Penelope Wilson, 'Classical poetry and the Eighteenth-century reader', in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Isabel Rivers (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), p. 2.

¹¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), p. 25.

¹² Hitchcock and Cohen, 'Introduction', in *English Masculinities*, p. 7.

way to an overriding construct of natural heterosexuality that in its turn depends on men and women who are rhetorically constituted as different from each other.”¹³

Thomas Laqueur describes this change in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*:

[T]he old model, in which men and women were arrayed according to their degree of metaphysical perfection, their vital heat along an axis whose telos was male, gave way by the late eighteenth century to a new model of radical dimorphism, of biological divergence. An anatomy of and physiology of incommensurability replaced a metaphysics of hierarchy in the representation of woman in relation to man.¹⁴

Because Finch and Montagu are aware that these discourses are most powerfully produced and perpetuated by the medical establishment, they critique doctors and physicians in their works. They write against those discourses which sought scientific logic to fix woman as the passive and problematic body as opposed to the active male. Moreover, they are resistant to the reduction of sexual practices into the heterosexual matrix in which woman plays the pliant and weaker partner of man. Because their inscriptions of sexual identity are fluid – are not totally dependent upon biological ‘fact’ - Finch and Montagu exploit and play with sexed roles and conventional sexual behaviours in their poetry and prose. Simultaneously, however, they exploit anxieties

¹³ Todd C. Parker, *Sexing the Text: The Rhetoric of Sexual Difference in British Literature, 1700-1750* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 3.

¹⁴ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp.5-6.

over the leaking and unrestrained woman, as well as manipulating the dangerous potential in fetishising the male scholar.¹⁵

Butler also provides a useful means through which to bypass the humanist accounts of the individual which have obscured readings of both Finch and Montagu. I am indebted to the rigorous scholarship and intellectual dedication of, for example, Barbara McGovern, Isobel Grundy, Ann Messenger, and Carol Barash, who have made writing about Finch and Montagu both possible and stimulating. However, I depart from their evolutionary narratives of women's writing and their humanistic understanding of the individual. Although the application of queer theory to the eighteenth century is often challenged (especially at academic conferences) as anachronistic, producing a coherent and individualised woman author is the greater theoretical tyranny.

That said, however, Butler's critical framework, particularly in the case of Finch, is also limited. Finch's and Montagu's negotiation of the fluidity of selves and sexualities are very different from each other, and consequently demand distinct interpretative readings. For the first half of this thesis Butler provides a valuable lens through which to read their works. However, in the second half, which focuses on 'Sapphic retreats', I move away from the Butler's theoretical framework (see p. 232)

¹⁵ Women were still oppressed by an heterosexual matrix before the emergence of sexual difference as charted here by Laqueur, but they were oppressed in different ways. For the purpose of this thesis I investigate Finch's and Montagu's configuration of sexual performance through Butler's theoretical framework. However, I am avoiding an evolutionary narrative of sexual identity (see discussion on Harriet Andreadis below) and, therefore, do not read Finch's and Montagu's performative gender constructions as 'regressively' influenced by Restoration literature or as looking 'forward' to a Butlerian critique of the Enlightenment Western subject. As far as possible I explore their inscriptions of sexuality outside a linear framework.

and offer a discussion based on close readings of their work, as their inscriptions of sexualities are often blurred and obscured through recent academic criticism.

Because space and sexuality are inextricably linked and influence and produce each other, I also contribute to the growing body of work that critiques the Habermasian dichotomy of public/private spheres.¹⁶ Most of this work has concentrated on women's interaction in the so-called public sphere.¹⁷ I am particularly concerned to suggest that the dichotomy public/private is critically unhelpful. There is no absolute demarcation between public and private, or masculine and feminine in the early eighteenth century. The dressing room, for example, is a site that disciplines both male and female bodies: textual representations of the so-called lady's dressing room always depict a male watcher or commentator, as well as a maid. Moreover, the dressing room is not a site of privacy but a site of display and exhibition. Furthermore, the gentleman's study can be read as the most 'private' but also 'masculine' place in the house, and yet the retreat into the study is a very 'public' gesture that enacts and consolidates a 'public' masculine individuality. In addition, this retreat could also be inhabited by a secretary. Space becomes a complex site where the civilising process cannot be reduced to simply the production of

¹⁶ For more complex understandings of Habermas' theoretical framework and for criticisms of Habermas see John Brewer, 'This, that and the other: public, social and private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries', in *Shifting the Boundaries: Transformations of the Language of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1995), pp. 1-21; Lawrence Klein, 'Gender and the public/private distinction in the eighteenth century: some questions about evidence and analytic procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995): 92-109; Lawrence Klein, 'Gender, conversation and the public sphere in early eighteenth-century England', in *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices*, ed. by Judith Still and Michael Worton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 100-115; Judith S. Lewis, 'Separate spheres: threat or promise?', *Journal of British Studies*, 30, no.1 (1991): 105-115; Amanda Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of women's history', *History Journal*, 36, no. 2 (1993): 383-414.

¹⁷ Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus argue that "the boundaries between 'public' and 'private', or 'social' and 'political' were blurred and permeable." 'Introduction', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Longman, 1997), p. 3.

femininity/masculinity, public/private, but where it “subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity”.¹⁸

As well as focusing on the sites of the study, the dressing room and the coffee house, the literary space of the bower recurs in the works of both Finch and Montagu. Although the bower cannot be easily labelled as a ‘consumer space’, it is often used by Pope, Swift and Gay as a means to comment upon such spaces as the lady’s dressing room. Moreover, it is used in contemporary literature to justify and celebrate male creative powers against the passive feminine principle that is inevitably troped to this site. Because of the bower’s association with heterosexual unions, its links to male artistry and its appearance in the erotic works of Aphra Behn and Katherine Philips (both of whom I will discuss in relation to Montagu and Finch), it offers a powerful site of subversion. Although I do not include a separate chapter on the bower, I focus on Montagu’s configuration of the bower in chapter two, and Finch’s queering of the bower trope in chapter 3. Classical and pastoral echoes resonate throughout the works of Finch and Montagu. Consequently, contemporary consumer spaces and sexualities, as well as their alternative configurations are mapped through pastoral motifs. However, I will argue that the works of Finch and Montagu differ from conventional rewritings of the pastoral through recovering the homoerotic and homosexual encounters and themes which permeate, for example, Virgil’s *Eclogues*.

¹⁸ Henri Lefèbvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 73.

Sapphic Retreats

Finch and Montagu can be situated in a literary tradition of women writers who create female retreats and female communities. This tradition includes Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Mary Astell, and Sarah Scott, among others.¹⁹ Carol Barash in *English Women's Poetry 1649-1714: Politics, Community and Linguistic Authority* (1996), Elaine Hobby in *Virtue of Necessity* (1988), Harriet Andreadis in *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics 1550-1714* (2001), and Felicity Nussbaum in *Torrid Zones* (1995) write excellently and comprehensively about female literary communities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In exploring Montagu and Finch's 'Sapphic retreats' I will be drawing on the work they have undertaken on women's writing in this period. I will build on their contentions that Finch and Montagu trace a female community in their writing that links their poetry to earlier women writers such as Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn.

However, my approach differs from their attempts to write an evolutionary narrative of women's writing. For example, Barash argues that there was a movement away from the political community of women writers to the individual inwardness of the nineteenth-century woman writer, and the poetry of Finch bridges these differences.²⁰ Similarly, Andreadis traces the consolidation of sexual identity from the

¹⁹ For various descriptions of these communities see *Female Communities, 1600-1800: Literary Revisions and Cultural Realities*, ed. by Rebecca D'Monte and Nicole Pohl (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000).

²⁰ Barash states that Finch's writing inscribes "myths of a private female self", and that Finch moves away from the heroic women of Mary of Modena's court and turns these political tropes inward "into patterns of metaphor that were essentially psychological." Political retreat is metamorphosed into emotional retreat, "figuring both the landscape and this turn from public to private worlds itself as authoritatively female." Barash argues that Finch anticipates the negative tropes of nineteenth-century

polymorphous sexual behaviours of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the production of fixed sexual identity in the eighteenth century. Not only are there problems with such evolutionary narratives, not least because they replicate masculine historical systems - systems that many of the women writers that they discuss write *against* - but they offer a misreading of the poetry of, in particular, Finch, as will be discussed in chapters 3 and 5.

This thesis was going to be called 'Consumer Spaces/ Queer Retreats' as queer theory is more conducive to understanding eighteenth-century sexualities than conventional identity politics. The term 'queer' is especially attributable to the works of Montagu who defies sexed identities, heroically slipping between male and female voices, bodies, sexualities. Her textual strategies of parody and masquerade are potently queer. In contrast, the poetry of Anne Finch is less conducive to this framework. Finch's retreats are explicitly female and feminine in both Irigaray's specular and excessive definitions.²¹ There is no celebration of masculinity and maleness in her poetry; rather she inscribes female wanderers who run from "Tyrant-Man"²² and his fixed and dichotomised systems.²³

poets such as Emily Dickinson with her inward looking emotional poetry, "projecting her political alienation onto haunting myths of a female voice cut off from history and from others, alternately fused with the landscape, and desperately but empoweringly alone in both body and mind." See Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry, 1649-1714: Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 271, 260, 273.

²¹ See Luce Irigaray, 'The Power of Discourse', in *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (New York: Ithaca, 1985), pp. 68-85.

²² Finch, 'A Nocturnal Reverie', 38. Hereafter cited as NR. From Myra Reynolds, *The Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903). All citations from Anne Finch's poetry are taken from this edition, unless otherwise stated. Reynold's edition, however, is an inadequate, incomplete and at times incorrect edition of Finch's work. A new and revised edition of Finch's work is urgently needed.

²³ See Susan Jeffereys, *Unpacking Queer Politics: A Lesbian Feminist Perspective* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003) for a critique of the term 'queer'. Jeffereys argues that this term fetishises masculinity and the male body over 'the lesbian vanguard'.

In 'The Vices of Old Rome Revived', Ros Ballaster discusses the impasse in lesbian feminist criticism between what she calls the 'feminocentric account' and the 'homoerotic account'.²⁴ The 'feminocentric account', as propounded by Adrienne Rich and Lillian Faderman, investigates women's oppression by a monolithic 'compulsory heterosexuality' that inhibits a concealed 'lesbian identity'. In 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', Adrienne Rich asks her readers to unearth "a history of female resistance" to the heterosexual norm, and to recover a "lesbian existence".²⁵ She wants to make visible "women's passion for women, women's choice of women as allies, life companions, and community".²⁶ Lillian Faderman uncovers resistance to the heterosexual matrix throughout the eighteenth century, arguing that eighteenth-century romantic friendships between women could today be read as lesbian:

had the romantic friends of other eras lived today, many of them would have been lesbian-feminists; and had the lesbian-feminists of our day lived in other eras, most of them would have been romantic friends.²⁷

In contrast to this feminocentric understanding of a lesbian history, Foucault perceives pre-modern sexuality as a variety of acts. Indeed, since Foucault it has been anachronistic to use categories such as homosexuality to refer to the historical period

²⁴ Ros Ballaster, 'The Vices of Old Rome Revived': Representations of Female Same-Sex Desire in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century England', in *Volcanoes and Pearl Divers: Essays in Lesbian Feminist Studies*, ed. by Suzanne Raitt, (Binghamton: New York: Harrington Park Press, 1995), pp. 3-36.

²⁵ Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (London: Norton, 1993), p. 224.

²⁶ Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', p. 221.

²⁷ Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men* (London: The Women's Press, 1981), p. 20.

that preceded the mid-nineteenth century.²⁸ In following this practice, however, there is the danger of normalizing the past and enacting a cultural and historical “ghosting of the lesbian”.²⁹ Moreover, as Ballaster points out, if we adopt this Foucauldian understanding of sexuality then we have to be complicit with the invisibility of lesbian sexuality as sodomy becomes the defining ‘act’.³⁰ A way out of this impasse, Ballaster suggests, is that rather than recovering a lesbian identity or reading sexuality as a series of acts, we should explore the variety of ways through which women writers subvert Irigaray’s ‘Male Imaginary’ and write desire between women. Ballaster offers the strategies of parody as employed by Katherine Philips as an example of someone who mimics the heterosexual tropes of Donne’s poetry and through this mimicry subverts “the notion of a secure identity for lover and beloved in either heterosexual or same-sex love relations.”³¹

Ballaster also suggests examining the figure of the tribade in the eighteenth century as depicted, for example, in the works of Delariviere Manley:

the tribade’s ‘true’ sexual identity was always already hidden. Her ‘imaginary’, her desire, was ‘different’ from her feminine exterior, her female clothing, but was also realised to be ‘different’ from masculine desire, despite attempts to ‘comprehend’ her within the traditional gender oppositions of heterosexual culture.³²

²⁸ See Valerie Traub, ‘The (In)Significance of Lesbian Desire in Early Modern England’, in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. by Jonathan Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 62 – 83.

²⁹ Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 5.

³⁰ Ballaster, ‘The Vices of Old Rome Revived’, p. 15.

³¹ Ballaster, ‘The Vices of Old Rome Revived’, p. 26.

³² Ballaster, ‘The Vices of Old Rome Revived’, pp. 17-18.

Ballaster's theories are useful in understanding the work of Montagu who also uses parody and mimicry to destabilise gendered behaviour. Moreover, Montagu projects an image of herself as a tribade in her letters to Francesco Algarotti and in some of her letters from the Turkish empire. Eighteenth-century definitions of Sappho imagined her as "a famous Tribas" and sometimes a "Mascula Sappho", and this is a reading that Montagu exploits and celebrates.³³

Finch and Sappho

In contrast to the critical receptions of Montagu which will be discussed below, those of Finch's work are less fraught and, until very recently, Finch's persona has been somewhat oppressively normalised. Harriet Andreadis is the only critic who examines Finch's inscriptions of same-sex love. Andreadis includes sexuality in her discussion of Finch and her female friendships, calling her investigation 'Sapphic erotics'. She outlines her investigative framework:

Because the modern system of binary sexual identities that was to establish heterosexuality and homosexuality as separate and mutually exclusive identities did not become a dominant ideology until sometime during the

³³ From the entry in Pierre Bayle, *An Historical and Critical Dictionary* 1710 (first published in 1695), *Secret Sexualities: A Sourcebook of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Writing*, ed. by Ian McCormick (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 183.

eighteenth century, the historical moments just before its consolidation are an ideal, and challenging, environment in which to examine its emergence.³⁴

Andreadis attempts to trace this evolutionary narrative from the fluid and yet Sapphic erotics as articulated in the seventeenth century. Because of her aristocratic station and the time that she was writing in, Finch cannot (and presumably does not want) to write as overtly as Behn about sexuality. However, Andreadis locates instances of Sapphic eroticism in poems such as 'Friendship', 'Epistle to Mrs Randolph', and Finch's 'The white mouse's petition to Lamira the Right Honble the Lady Ann Tufton now Countess of Salisbury' from her *Wellesley Manuscript*.

In 'The white mouse's petition' Finch veils Ardelia's overt textual seduction through representing her as a "humble" mouse (1), the "first captive" (24) of the Countess of Salisbury.³⁵ In this guise Ardelia is able to exploit the conventions of heroic romance as she sues "to wear Lamira's fetters" (5). She can receive her "soft caresses" and creep "near her lovely tresses" (7-8). It is a tactile and sensuous description in which she depicts Ardelia as sitting in Lamira's bosom so that even a "jealous Lover" will not be able to find her (14). Andreadis argues that Finch projects "her erotic appreciation for her friend" through the safe imaginative ploy of a white (and therefore innocent) mouse of indeterminate sex.³⁶ Andreadis reads Finch's poetry as "a tribute to the elliptical strategies she integrated into her work from the study of Katherine Philips".³⁷ However, Andreadis does not explore further the

³⁴ Harriet Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics 1550-1714* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. xi.

³⁵ *The Anne Finch Wellesley Manuscript Poems: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 62.

³⁶ Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England*, p. 129.

³⁷ Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England*, p. 131.

relation between Finch's and Philips's poetry, and she does not investigate such poems as 'A Nocturnal Reverie' and 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'. Consequently, this thesis will continue where Andreadis leaves off, exploring Finch's dialogue with the lesbian tone of Philips's poetry, as well as her production of her own Sapphic erotics.

In providing an evolutionary framework with which to explore the progress of sexual identity in early modern Britain, Andreadis attempts to project a twentieth-century understanding of sexuality on to a period three hundred years earlier. In doing so, much is lost in understanding how sexuality is being written about and configured in the eighteenth century. Moreover, Finch's expressions of sexuality and sexual identity do not fit neatly into a linear historical framework. Indeed, in Andreadis's narrative, Finch's reworkings of the more explicitly lesbian poetics of Philips would demonstrate a *sliding back* into a more fluid sexual subjectivity. Rather than building upon Philips's tentative lesbian identities, Finch would unhelpfully hinder this progression. Finch's homoerotic poetry is intricately bound up with spirituality and mysticism and so exploring her work through today's notions of sexuality smothers her poetic voice.

In addition, Andreadis discusses the notion of 'genital focus' between women, implying that we cannot call women 'Sapphic' or 'lesbian' unless we can be sure of this genital focus. However, this seems to be an extremely phallogentric means of understanding sexuality - Patch and Silliander in Montagu's 'Tuesday', for example, have 'genital focus'. Not only is reading poetry as autobiographical critically redundant, but reading poetry in this way suggests that if we cannot know these 'real

life' details, then any eroticism which is expressed poetically between women is dismissed or glossed over, and consequently loses its potency and power. Moreover, the question of 'genital focus' does not appear in Finch's heterosexual relationships about which Andreadis writes that Finch's poem to her husband "suggests a certain sexual contentment".³⁸ Finch never had children and this 'genital focus' can never be proved. It seems that within the context of a marriage, the 'genital focus' is never questioned because the sexual relationship between a man and woman is already assumed and therefore validated. On the other hand, the questioning of 'genital focus' between women suggests that women's sexual experience of women is invalid unless otherwise empirically proved.

Nevertheless, the whole notion of 'genital focus' misses the point. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there was not a clear demarcation between different sexualities as we understand them today. In addition, the body was not understood in such compartmentalized and anatomical terms. In other words, sexuality was not solely located or privileged in the genitals. As Finch's writing testifies, the body was intricately associated with the wider cosmos, and sexuality, spirituality, politics and language were inextricably linked. Moreover, because sex was not understood as either non-genital or genital - and, therefore, one supposes 'real' or 'valid' - it is not productive to impose this understanding of sexuality on to seventeenth-century or eighteenth-century women's poetry.

My reading of Finch's eroticism is more in line with that of Emma Donoghue. In her introduction to *Poems Between Women: Four Centuries of Love, Romantic*

³⁸ Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England*, p. 127.

Friendship, and Desire, Emma Donoghue writes that “‘Sappho’ not simply [as] a euphemism for a ‘lesbian’”, but that she uses the word to include women poets who wrote about passionate relations between women even if they apparently lived entirely heterosexual lives:

Poetry seems to have provided a space for such inconsistencies, a stage for those moments that complicate our views of sexuality and friendship.³⁹

Donoghue’s aim is “to push beyond the identity politics of the 1980s and make thought-provoking connections across the boundary lives of sexual orientation history.”⁴⁰ This more fluid understanding of sexuality is conducive to understanding the poetry of Finch and her articulations of love between women. Donoghue goes on to argue:

Many historians use the phrase “romantic friendship” to imply that these extremely common pairings were non-sexual affections that have nothing at all in common with the contemporary concept of lesbianism. But it is hard to tell where these women drew the line between sensuality and sex, given that standard romantic-friend behaviour included sleeping together and pillowing your head on your beloved’s bosom. Romantic friendship can best be thought of, I suggest, not as a particular, sexless kind of love but as a set of literary conventions for expressing love.⁴¹

³⁹ *Poems Between Women: Four Centuries of Love, Romantic Friendship, and Desire*, ed. by Emma Donoghue (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. xxiii.

⁴⁰ Donoghue, *Poems Between Women*, p. xxiii.

⁴¹ Donoghue, *Poems Between Women*, p. xxvi.

In Donoghue's template for understanding erotic inscriptions of love between women, therefore, the notion of whether there was any 'genital focus' becomes redundant. The question is not whether there were autobiographical instances of genital sex between women, but whether women writers explored same sex love in the imaginative space of poetry.

Although the term 'lesbian tone' could not describe Finch's poetry in the way that it usefully does the poetry of Katherine Philips, her focus on woman and on relations between women render her texts sympathetic to the feminocentric accounts of sexuality by Rich and Faderman. In her poetry Finch rejects the institution of marriage and, indeed, relations with men and the town, which she depicts as based on modes of exchange. Instead, she inscribes female retreats set in natural landscapes populated with female friends and feminine imagery. These retreats are devotional and magical, in that nature "imparts" her fruits and food. These feminine sites, which reject any images of penetration, ploughing or tropes of masculine sexuality, are partly influenced by Aphra Behn's 'The Golden Age'. Moreover, Finch rewrites a fragment of Sappho to re-iterate her rejection of consumerism and the model of womanhood that is produced in such consumer sites as the dressing room. She also invokes Sappho to justify "our Ancient Claime" ('To Mrs Randolph' 14) to a female literary tradition of writers "who excell'd of old" ('The Introduction' 22).

What makes Finch particularly radical and what differentiates her from both her male and female contemporaries, is her insistence on re-uniting the body and soul. This has not yet been noted and it is fundamental to understanding Finch's poetry. Although she, like Philips, links friendship with spirituality – "Friendship, like

Devotion clears the mind" ('To Mrs Randolph' 39) - she does not make a demarcation between the physical and the spiritual as her portrayals of female friendship are located in the material and the body. This is not the anatomised body of today's discourse, however, but a body that blends into devotional and natural landscapes. In 'A Nocturnal Reverie' and 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat', Finch represents women who heal, love, merge and identify with one another and with the spiritual landscape. They subversively embody Christ-like powers and are troped through Eucharistic symbolism. I also make tentative links between Finch and Aemelia Lanyer who wrote female love through the image of Christ. Like Lanyer, Finch rejects the image of Adam in favour of communities of women. Like Lanyer, Finch also writes female wanderers who trace, touch and taste the topography through which they stray. Furthermore, Finch writes a meditative space in 'A Nocturnal Reverie' and 'The Petition' which is significantly and subversively feminine. In this meditative space, Finch will trace a mystic trajectory through the bodies of women where the soul and the body are re-united.

Montagu and Sappho

Felicity Nussbaum argues that Montagu's configuration of the Turkish baths in her *Turkish Embassy Letters* is "an erotically charged vision" which has "affinities to homoerotic desire" and "Oriental sapphism".⁴² Lord Hervey and Alexander Pope, among others, called Montagu 'Sappho', and Montagu herself reworked Sappho's

⁴² Felicity Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 140.

fragment 31, and supported the figure of Sappho in her letters.⁴³ Furthermore, the eighteenth-century figure of Sappho was clearly linked to homosexual practices as well as other transgressive sexualities. Montagu did not possess a lesbian *identity* as, Nussbaum argues, “sexuality was not the locus of subjectivity in the early Eighteenth century”.⁴⁴ Recent criticism has begun to allow this image of Montagu as sexually subversive but there remains tension over the correct way to read her Sapphism.

Isobel Grundy, for example, produces an Enlightenment Montagu who is a coherent, autonomous subject. In an attempt to maintain Montagu’s contradictions, Grundy writes of ‘Lady Mary’ the private woman and ‘Montagu’ the writer.⁴⁵ Cynthia Lowenthal, on the other hand, attempts to create a more fluid Montagu by arguing that Montagu’s subjectivity is constructed through performance. Consequently, “the visible, gestural, mannered behaviour presented to others” is what “shapes and fashions a fluid identity”. Reading her letters rather than her poetry, Lowenthal interprets them as revealing Montagu’s “lifelong performance of a series of identities, a constantly evolving presentation of a dramatic and emerging ‘self’, a theatrical recreation of experience, and a specifically fashioned form of conscious artistry.”⁴⁶ Grundy, however, disagrees with this fluid and performative understanding of the figure of Montagu:

I do not believe with Cynthia Lowenthal that Montagu selected the epistolary genre as a vehicle for realizing her literary ambitions. [...] Her letters, though

⁴³ See, for example, *CL*, III. 40.

⁴⁴ Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, p. 141.

⁴⁵ See ‘Introduction’, in *Selected Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. by Isobel Grundy (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1997).

⁴⁶ Cynthia Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), p. 10.

their every paragraph reflects her delight in handling words, were written for their immediate, individual recipients, and were tightly bound up with her quotidian conduct of her life.⁴⁷

In writing this somewhat romantic figure of Montagu who sits in her private room revealing her personal feelings, Grundy has to ignore many of Montagu's inconsistencies and sexual masquerades, and indeed succeeds in giving her readers a woman with a normalised sexuality. Although I agree with Lowenthal's analysis of Montagu's letters, as well as with Srinivas Aravamudan who writes of Montagu's "performative dispersion" of 'self' "into several identificatory positions" I will depart from these critics by investigating Montagu's *sexual* dispersions into mannish or tribadic roles.⁴⁸

Apart from Nussbaum, and to a lesser extent Aravamudan and Donna Landry, critics seem divided over whether Montagu contributes to Oriental discourse or interacts without eroticism with the bathers in the Turkish baths and therefore subverts Orientalist tropes. Lisa Lowe, for example, states that Montagu dissents from dominant colonial discourses through a "rhetoric of likeness".⁴⁹ Similarly, Elizabeth Bohls argues that Montagu rescues these women through the aesthetic signifiers of the nude.⁵⁰ Moreover, like eighteenth-century descriptions of Montagu, twentieth-century critics define Montagu as 'normal' (Grundy, Lowenthal, Bohls, Mary Jo Kietzman) or monstrous (Landry, Meyda Yenegoglu). For example, Landry describes Montagu as:

⁴⁷ Grundy, 'Introduction', in *Selected Letters*, p. xx.

⁴⁸ Srinivas Aravamudan, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the *Hammam*: Masquerade, Womanliness, and Levantinization', *ELH*, 62 (1995): 69 – 104 (p. 69).

⁴⁹ Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 51.

⁵⁰ See Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

An English freak, a globe-trotting, masculinely garbed, cross-gendered voyeur, she offers the women the spectacle of her unwashed horsiness. There was indeed queerness in the hamam that day: Montagu's peculiarly English queerness, cross-dressed and smelling of horse.⁵¹

Aruvamudan and Moira Ferguson all refer to Pope and Walpole's depictions of Montagu's lack of hygiene. However, instead of acknowledging the Juvenalian commonplace of linking women with dirt, they repeat the misogyny through being appalled at imagining Montagu's smell.

I agree with Bohls that Montagu casts the Sophian women as nudes but unlike Bohls, I see this as a strategy of containment.⁵² I agree with Yenegoglu that Montagu "attaches a penis to herself" but I think that she does this to *subvert* Orientalist binarised paradigms.⁵³ Montagu's representations of the Turkish women are complex and I am sympathetic to most of the readings of her letters. She does perpetuate ideologies of Orientalism and she does eroticise the women that surround her. Nevertheless, she does so in such a highly stylized and camp manner, focusing so obviously upon her own subversive masquerade that she deconstructs her representations as fast as she constructs them. Montagu is no 'comet of the

⁵¹ Donna Landry, 'Horsy and persistently queer: imperialism, feminism and bestiality', *Textual Practice*, 15, no. 3 (2001): 467-85 (p. 480).

⁵² See Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

⁵³ Meyda Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 93.

enlightenment', she is more of a spanner in the workings of enlightenment structures.⁵⁴

Montagu certainly adheres to European notions of the "harmonious body" and its racist privileging of whiteness when she praises the Turkish women's skins as "shineingly white".⁵⁵ This inability to look outside standards of beauty as articulated by European discourses of the nude is particularly revealed in Montagu's portrayal of North African women in her letter to Abbé Conti. Unable to write them as "shineingly white", she is horrified by the transgression of European codes of beauty and dismisses them as "baboons"⁵⁶:

We saw under the Trees in many places Companys of the country people, eating, singing, and dancing to their wild music. They are not quite black, but all mulattos, and the most frightful Creatures that can appear in a Human figure.⁵⁷

Although Montagu herself critiques the role of women in English culture and she condemns the confinement of the corset, she still maintains her power within the colonial matrix through subordinating others. Moreover, she is afraid of what she perceives to be transgressions outside the racial Enlightenment binaries of white and black, as well as outside the category of the aristocrat. It is the "not quite black" skin of the North African women, as well as what she perceives to be their inferior rank, that terrifies her. Although she may subvert feminine objectification and woman's

⁵⁴ Some editions of Grundy's biography of Montagu are entitled *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment*, a name which Joseph Spence gave to her.

⁵⁵ *CL*, 1. 314.

⁵⁶ *CL*, 1. 427.

⁵⁷ *CL*, 1. 425.

'stayed' position, she seems to be still locked in the racist class-ridden machine of the early eighteenth century.⁵⁸

Nevertheless this description of the Tunisian women echoes her own autobiographical representation in 'Saturday':

How am I chang'd! Alas, how am I grown
A frightful spectre to myselfe unknown!
Where's my Complexion, where the radiant bloom
That promis'd Happyness for Years to come? ('Saturday' 5-8)⁵⁹

In chapter 4, I will argue that the speaker's loss of complexion is depicted as a positive outcome as it dislocates her from the consumerist fashionable world of London where she has become commodified. Moreover, deformity, monstrosity and in particular facial scarring are employed in 'Saturday' to link the speaker with a community of women's writing and sexual performances outside the heterosexual matrix. I am not arguing that Montagu's descriptions of the Tunisian women are in any way liberating or empowering. But I am arguing that Montagu does not set herself up as a monolithic eye who adheres rigidly to colonial paradigms of whiteness. In offering her own 'broken' and disturbing body, Montagu, to some extent, fissures power structures.

⁵⁸ Roxann Wheeler demonstrates that 'race' is constructed through class and religious difference. See Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

⁵⁹ Montagu, 'Saturday', in *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, a Comedy*, ed. by Isobel Grundy and Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Hereafter cited as SE. All Montagu's poetry is taken from this edition. Hereafter cited as *E&P*.

The key to Montagu's textual strategies and her movements from fetishising "shineingly white" and racist configurations of "Baboons", to her subversive masquerades and self-representations as "frightening", lie in her weekly pamphlet *The Nonsense of Commonsense*.⁶⁰ In one issue Montagu mimics a male Italian who claims to create statues that can 'be' opera singers:

It would be endless to sum up all the Advantages of this Project, for I can give my Statues not only the Shape but the Air and Mien, the Gestures, and even the Queerness or Oddities of any Actor, Male, Female Or Neutral.⁶¹

The image of statues recurs throughout her letters and poetry. She depicts the "shineingly white" bathing women as statues and in her letters to her Italian lover (who is an expert on statues) she represents herself as Pygmalion and *him* as the *female* statue. Montagu mimics the dressed gestures and performances of "Male, Female Or Neutral", emphasising their "Queerness" or "Oddities" - 'odd' in the eighteenth century signifying homosexual practices.⁶² Through writing herself as Pygmalion and consequently "attaching a penis to herself", Montagu complicates her own position of power in the East/West divide. However, she also draws attention to her own 'Pygmalion' position as creator of texts and characters.

⁶⁰ Grundy states that the "title of her paper could have been suggested by an essay in Common Sense (the Opposition paper) on 10 Dec. 1737: 'I am NONSENSE, a Terrestrial Goddess, your avow'd and irreconcilable Foe ... I have the Ladies, the Poetasters, and the M[inistry] on my Side.'" This irresistible conflation of sex, reason and politics must have spurred Montagu to take pleasure in mimicking the authorial male voice of the political newspaper and through this inscribe and mock gender performances. See *E&P*, p. 105.

⁶¹ *The Nonsense of Commonsense Numb. 111*, in *E&P*, p. 116.

⁶² Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 9.

Montagu's letters, which were written and compiled many years after her journeys in the Turkish empire, mock scientific or objective gestures of looking. Her letters are not meant to be read as objective travel description, but are portrayals of herself masquerading in a variety of exotic landscapes, the imagined exoticism of which she refers to when she mocks the ideas of truth and hints that she would add "a few surprizing customs of my own Invention" to make her letters more entertaining.⁶³ Themes of veiling, disguise, spectacles and untruthful descriptions by travel writers are constantly alluded to and inscribed so as to undermine the reader's quest for objective looking. Montagu scoffs at the reader's desire to know things as they 'really are' and, instead of speculating on the landscape around her, she offers the reader a spectacle of herself. Indeed, Montagu's descriptions of the bathing women are highly stylized, and she even refers to her artificial representations when she alludes to male painters and Jervas. Her description of the Turkish baths is camp in its parody of male fantasies of beauty. Furthermore, she disrupts or fissures this fetishisation of beauty through representing herself as a highly unsettling spectacle of woman. What is missing in Ingres' 'Turkish Baths' picture (see Fig. 10) is the sexually and textually subversive figure of Montagu.

In chapter 6 I look primarily at Montagu's letters, exploring, of course, the letters from her travels in the Turkish empire and the much-discussed letter from the Turkish baths. However, I depart from previous readings by reading this letter through Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, arguing that *Orlando* is actually a mock biography of Montagu. This chapter also interrogates Montagu's letters to her Italian lover, Francesco Algarotti. Although these letters have been discussed by Grundy and

⁶³ *CL*, 1. 330.

Lowenthal, they have glossed over or ignored Montagu's radical sexual subversions. Significantly and radically, Montagu repeatedly writes herself as a man and Algarotti as a woman. No one has, as yet, explored this rich and thrilling area.

The overall aim of this thesis is to endorse Wordsworth's assertion that a parallel between Montagu and Finch is, indeed, "well worth drawing" and to reveal how between them they radically wrote and rewrote the female identities available to them. Chapter 1 investigates Finch's attack on the gentleman's study predominantly through her poem 'An Invitation to Dafnis'. Chapter 2 focuses on Montagu's lampooning of the coffee house and the bower as part of her satirical portrayal of male sexuality. In chapter 3 I explore Finch's representation of the lady's dressing room and the diseased female body in 'The Spleen'. I also look at Montagu's deconstruction of the lady's dressing room in chapter 4 and her inscription of the deformed woman. Chapters 5 and 6 will be investigating the theme of 'Sapphic Retreats'. I execute a close reading of Finch's 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' in chapter 5 and discuss her celebration of female same-sex love in meditative and devotional landscapes. Chapter 6 interrogates Montagu's queered Orientalist and operatic spaces.

Chapter 1: Anne Finch and the gentleman's study



Fig. 2: St Jerome in his study

In *Biographica Dramatica; or, A Companion to the Playhouse* (1764), David Erskine Baker states that Phoebe Clinket of the play *Three Hours After Marriage*, was supposed to be Anne Finch. This 1717 farce was known to be the joint work of Pope, Arbuthnot and Gay, and Baker writes that:

Pheobe Clinket was said to be intended for the Countess of Winchilsea, who was so much affected with the itch of versifying that she had implements of writing in every room in the house that she frequented.¹

Anne Finch's most recent biographer, Barbara McGovern, does not give much credence to this anecdote, not least because it does not fit in with her construction of Finch. Nevertheless, this passage is interesting for the anxiety it expresses over the female writer encapsulated in the transgressive and sexualized image of having an "itch" and "implements of writing in every room in the house". It sounds like Finch is a bawd surrounded by the tools of her trade. This fantasy of the promiscuous woman writer who cannot be contained in one place contrasts with the clearly demarcated space of the gentleman in his study. This chapter examines the space of the gentleman's study as it was understood and configured in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I look at how the site of the study interpellates patriarchal and scholarly masculine identities, legitimizing the aristocratic male writer. I investigate how Anne Finch negotiates this masculine space in her poetry, and how it impacts on her own construction of the woman writer.

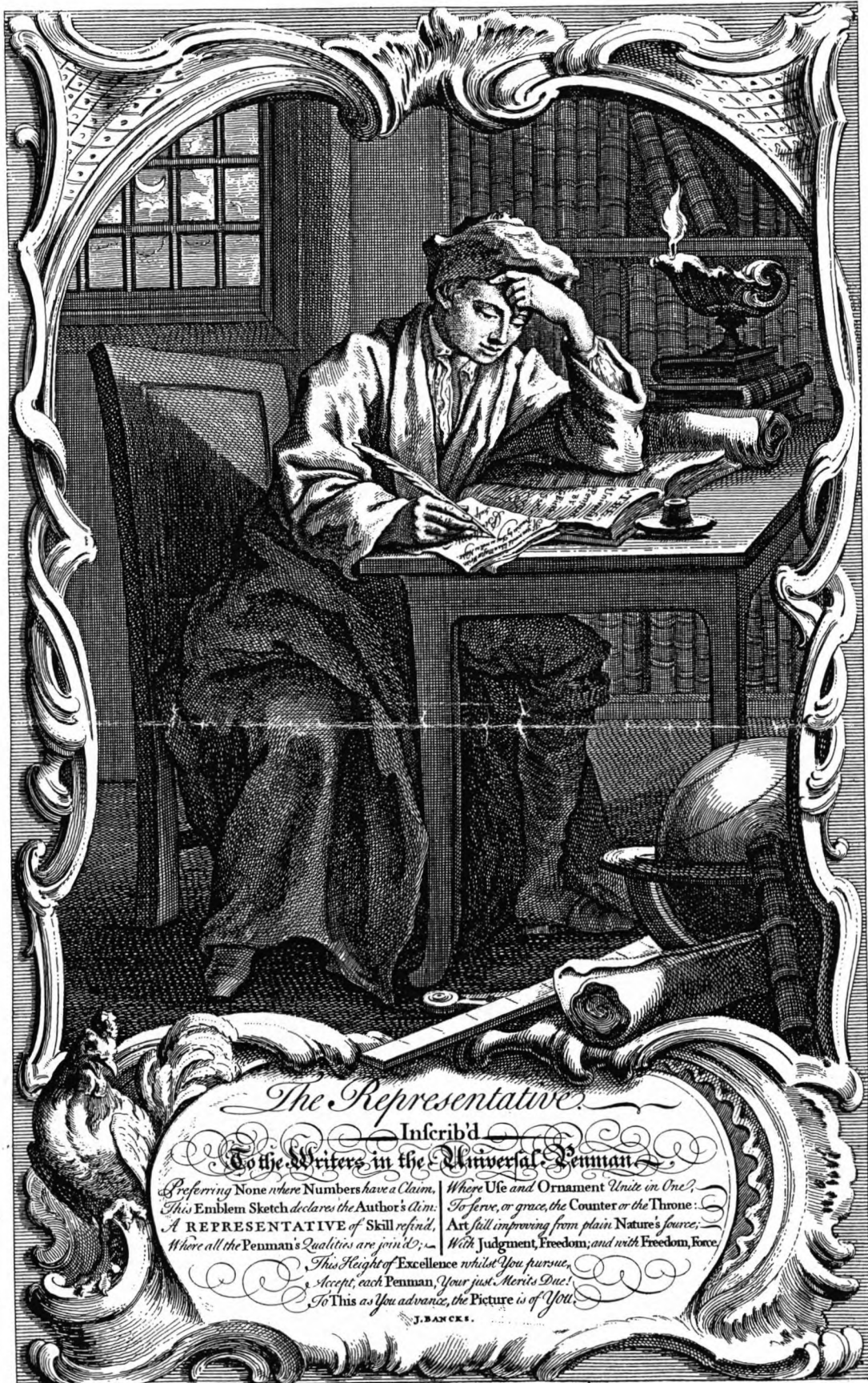
¹ Quoted in Reynolds, *The Poems of Anne*, p. 1xiii. Reynolds tempers this quote by adding "Baker's account did not appear till 1764, forty-seven years after the play, and was based on rather vague rumor."

“Enclos’d within a lonely Room”

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the study is a “A room in a house or other building, furnished with books, and used for private study, reading, writing, or the like. Often applied to “the private room or office of the master of a house, however it may be used” (*Cent. Dict.*)”.² It can also be called a library, room, or cupboard containing books. A ‘study of books’ was also used in the seventeenth century (now obsolete) and was synonymous with a private library. It was specifically a masculine space linked with learning, power and retreat. ‘Study’ is also, of course, a verb signifying mental labour and the application of the mind to a body of learning. Pope in his *Essay on Criticism*, for example, writes “Be Homer’s works your study and delight, / Read them by day, and meditate by night.” (124)³ In *Essay on Man* he states that, “The proper study [1733 The only Science] of mankind is Man.” (II. 2) In troping learning with the site of the study, the acquisition of knowledge and creativity is rendered masculine.

² ‘Study n.’, 8a, *Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³ *The Poems of Alexander Pope, A One Volume Edition of The Twickenham Pope with selected annotations*, ed. by John Butt (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). All citations are taken from this edition.



The Representative
 Inscib'd
 To the Writers in the Universal Penman
 Preferring None where Numbers have a Claim, Where Use and Ornament Unite in One;
 This Emblem Sketch declares the Author's Aim. To serve, or grace, the Counter or the Throne:
 A REPRESENTATIVE of Skill refin'd, Art still improving from plain Nature's source;
 Where all the Penman's Qualities are join'd; With Judgment, Freedom, and with Freedom, Force.
 This Height of Excellence whilst You pursue,
 Accept, each Penman, Your just Merits Due!
 To This as You advance, the Picture is of You.
 J. BANCKS.

H. Gravelot inv. & del. Sold by J. C. Overton at the White Horse without Newgate. London.



By

Printer



31

*The whole Universe is your Library:
Authors, Conversation, & Remarks
upon them, are your best Tutors.*

*There is not a vnder Difference betwixt Man and Beast than betwixt Man
and Man. And to what is this Difference owing, but to the Distinguisht
Improvements of the Mind by Study and Meditation? without these
Helps, no Distinction of Faculties will render us Conspicuous. 1734*

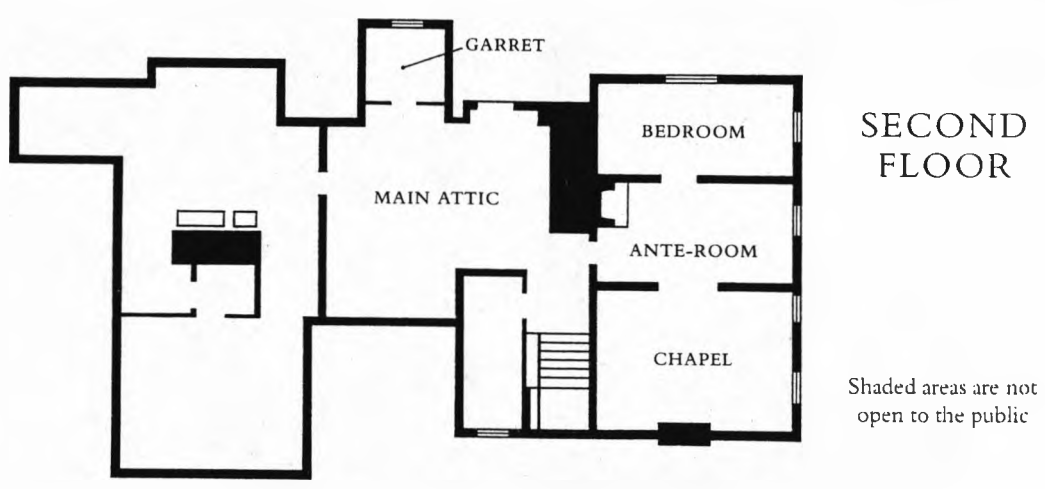
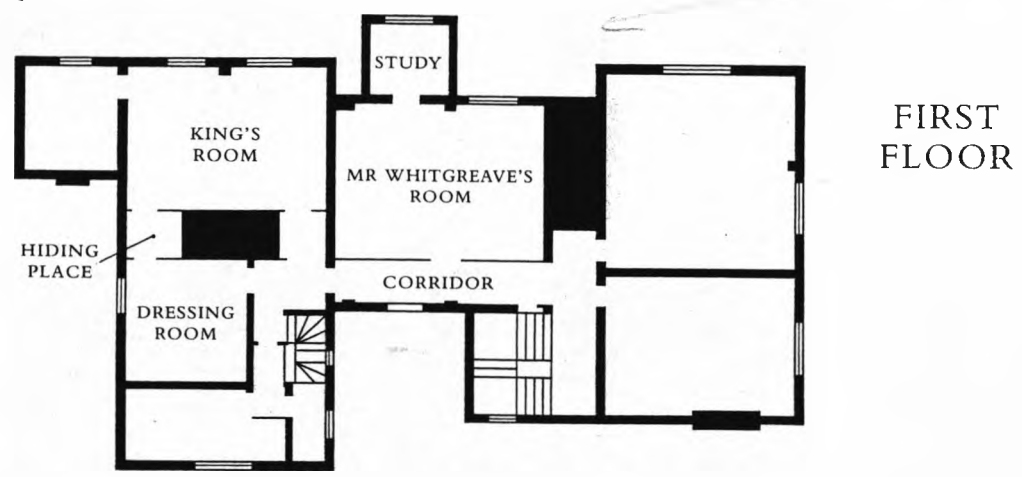
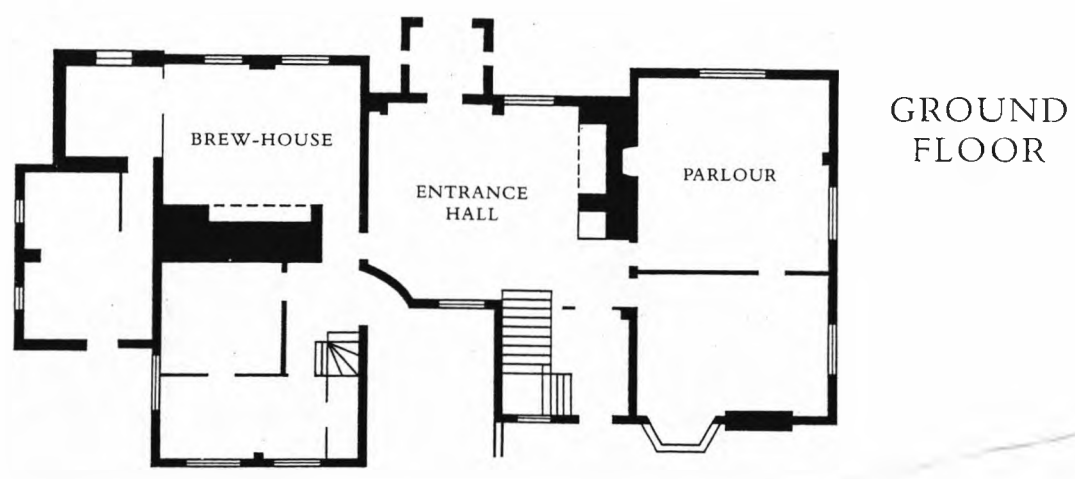
*Study to be Eminent. Mediocrity is below a
brave Soul. Eminency in Knowledge conjunct
with equal Goodness will be to you of all others,
the most commendable Distinction. May. 16.*

B. Whilton scrip^t

*an
bree
say,
ice.*

*ght,
rite.*

*daily
e doc-
, and
me 2.*



Shaded areas are not open to the public

Fig 5

The frontispiece to George Bickham's *The Universal Penman* (1741) (see fig. 3 and 4) depicts a man in his study.⁴ It is a provocative corollary to the image of Anne Finch's implements leaking into every room in the house. In this image, the scholar, wigless and in his nightgown, holds his head in one hand and his pen in the other. In contrast to conventional images of women at their dressing table, there are no mirrors and no pet dogs. Rather than looking at his reflection in the mirror, he is looking at his pen and his words. The reading man is not fully dressed and so not available for public consumption. The commodities that surround him are books, a candle, pen and ink, a globe, paper or parchment or a letter, a ruler and a tape measure. These goods are used to map space, rather than use it transgressively. They are linked to scholarly pursuits as opposed to the luxury products that are represented, for example, on Belinda's dressing table in *The Rape of the Lock*. Moreover, they are in their proper place: these are goods that are inextricably linked to the study and are not, like Finch's implements, polluting other spaces. The penman's legs are stretched confidently around the leg of table and there is no one watching him. Apart from his face and hands, no part of his body is exposed. The viewer is expected to admire his mind and, in particular, his mind's control over the body. The inscription underneath the picture reads, "The whole Universe is your Library", as if all the world can be mapped from this site and from the objects it contains:

Where Use and Ornament Unite in One,

⁴ I am grateful to Paul Baines for showing me these images. The Penman could be a secretary rather than an aristocrat. Nevertheless, this image is relevant because of its representation and celebration of a man alone with his pen. I could find no evidence that Heneage Finch had a secretary and he appears to have scribed his own letters and accounts.

To Serve, or grace, the Counter or the Throne:
 Art still improving from plain Nature's source;
 With Judgement, Freedom; and with Freedom, Force.
 This Height of Excellence whilst you pursue,
 Accept each Penman, your just Merits Due!
 To This as you advance, the Picture is of you.

To regard this picture as a reflection of yourself, therefore, you must be an upper class man. Moreover, a man who has rejected useless luxury ornaments for ideas and concepts such as judgement and freedom.

It is an image that is gently satirized in Finch's 'The Tradesman and the Scholar'. Although the real object of ridicule is the avaricious tradesman, Finch also humorously caricatures the scholar who "left his Book scarce once a day / For sober Coffee, Smoak, or Tea; / Nor spent Money in the Town / Than bought, when need requir'd, a Gown".⁵ The scholar in the poem supposedly rejects all luxury goods and pleasures. All that he does "consume" is "useless Time" (15) as he sits with his books "Enclos'd within a lonely Room" (16). In contrast to the "Blockhead" tradesman (2), the scholar with his "learned Head" (65) is respected and is free to "move [...] from Place to Place" (66). The moral of the poem is revealed at the end of the poem:

*Wit and the Arts, on that Foundation rais'd,
 (Howe'er the Vulgar are with Shows amaz'd)*

⁵ Finch, 'The Tradesman and the Scholar', 5-8.

Is all that recommends, or can be justly prais'd. (68-70)

Despite this moral, however, Finch's poetry as a whole demonstrates a deeply ambivalent attitude to the man in his study and the male monopoly over wit and poetry. The scholar's freedom to read, write, have a "lonely room" – 'a room of one's own' - and to move at liberty from place to place, is one that is denied to women. Finch often decries this double standard in her works. For Finch, the gentleman's study is no deceptively simple "lonely room", but is a seat of masculine power, individuality and privacy.

"space beyond sexuality"

Jürgen Habermas' demarcation of space into public/ private and its corollary of male/ female space have received much recent criticism.⁶ Building on this growing body of work, I would like to link privacy with male power. Privacy, as it came to be configured in the seventeenth century, was produced in response to philosophies of individuality and property; philosophies as written by John Locke, for example. The term 'privacy' was used with reference "to an individual's right to be left alone and in contexts of trespassing in private property."⁷ Consequently, as Fadwa El' Guindi notes, the Western usage of the term is linked to the "Western notion of individualism and

⁶ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). I will discuss this text further in chapter 2.

⁷ Fadwa El'Guindi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), p. 82.

individual rights to property.”⁸ Rather than being about women’s domestic confinement, the early eighteenth-century concept of privacy consolidated masculine subjectivities as individual property-owners. As Mark Wigley argues, “the private individual” as produced through the gestures of the study appears “as a new cultural artifact with more influence over the very public world from which it appears to be withdrawn than those who simply occupy that world.”⁹ The apparent dichotomy between public and private consequently becomes blurred as this new form of privacy could only be “‘occupied,’ when it was inscribed in the public domain.”¹⁰

Indeed, Wigley writes that “[t]he first truly private space was the man’s study” and that it began as a small locked room off the man’s bedroom which no one else could enter. It was “an intellectual space beyond that of sexuality. Such rooms emerged in the fourteenth centuries and gradually became a commonplace in the fifteenth century. They were produced by transforming a piece of furniture in the bedroom – a locked writing desk – into a room, a ‘closet’ off the bedroom.”¹¹ Through its architectural position and the significance attributed to the locus of the study, this room emphasized and consolidated patriarchal power and ownership over the house and its inhabitants. For example, in the figure of Mosely Old Hall built 1600 (fig. 5) it is possible to see Mr Whitgreave’s study as situated off his room on the first floor. It is only accessible through Mr Whitgreave’s room, which makes it the most private room in the house. Moreover, it

⁸ El’Guindi, *Veil*, p. 82.

⁹ Mark Wigley, ‘Untitled: The Housing of Gender’, in *Sexuality & Space*, ed. by Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 327-389 (pp. 348-349).

¹⁰ Wigley, ‘Untitled’, pp. 348-349.

¹¹ Wigley, ‘Untitled’, p. 347.

juts out from the main body of the house and is just above the main entrance so that he was able to see who was coming and going from the house, a bit like a captain of a ship.¹²

Although retiring to such a study is a withdrawal to the most intimate areas of the house, nevertheless, retreating into this site of seclusion was itself a very public gesture; thus blurring the dichotomy of public/ private. The owner of the house may have access to a space in the house that no one else can enter, but this seclusion is the public expression of his authority. Moreover, the study housed all the important documents relating to the house, including financial and genealogical records, which were kept in a locked chest. Through his analysis of the Italian architect and writer Leon Battista Alberti, Wigley argues that :

The whole economy of the household is literally written down at the hidden center of the space it organizes. The image of the house is hidden within it, just as the image of the public space is hidden within the house.¹³

The study, therefore, functions as the centre of management in the house. Nevertheless, these papers are not just stored in this space but they “are literally produced there. The private space is the space of private writing.”¹⁴ The documents, which were produced in the study, were to be passed on to the oldest male child and kept away from the lady of

¹² This house was a Royalist hiding place. Finch’s Royalist politics and the significance of the oak tree (where Charles II hid following his escape in 1651) will be discussed further in chapter 5, part 3 below.

¹³ Wigley, ‘Untitled’, p. 348. See also Leon Battista Alberti, *Della Famiglia*, trans. by Renée Neu Watkins as *The Family in Renaissance Florence* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966); Orest Ranum, ‘The Refuges of Intimacy’ in *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. by Roger Chartier, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 3 of *A History of Private Life* (London: Belknap, 1992), pp. 207-63.

¹⁴ Wigley, ‘Untitled’, pp. 348-9.

the house. The women were relegated to the dressing room, which also housed the young children, girls and nurses. Indeed, the location and privacy of the study serves to emphasise the husband's authority and ownership over the wife and the family:

The study is the true center of the house. This new space marks the internal limit to the woman's authority in the home. She does not command the whole space. Her disciplinary gaze operates between the inner locked door of the study and the outer locked door of the house.¹⁵

The fact that the site of writing is located in one inaccessible room further reveals the chaos of the women writer having implements all over the house. The fact that the proper site of writing is located in the room inaccessible to women further emphasizes, and also explains, the apparent chaos of Clinket's posturing as a woman writer, forced to keep writing implements in every room. There is no single space designated for women's writing, no equivalent of the male counterpart's study.

The study, however, is also a liminal site. Writers such as Christopher Marlowe and Pope configure the study as potentially sinful or transgressive. For example, Faustus is discovered 'in his study' at the beginning and end of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, and Pope imagines the study as an impotent seat of vanity in the description of Timon's Villa in *Epistle to Burlington*.¹⁶ Moreover, in *The Dunciad* Book 1 the poet is

¹⁵ Wigley 'Untitled', p. 348.

¹⁶ Pope had a library in his villa. See Maynard Mack, *The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope, 1731-1743* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

first depicted “*pensive among his Books*” when Dulness enters.¹⁷ He is represented in this site of learning and creativity but it has been improperly used and consequently open to the monstrous female figure of Dulness.

In addition, the study was also recognized to be a melancholic site as the scholar’s sedentary life and mental activity was recognized by Renaissance philosophers to consume the animal spirit and dry up the body.¹⁸ Robert Burton links melancholy to study in *Anatomy on Melancholy* in a chapter entitled ‘*Love of Learning, or overmuch stud. With a Digression of the Misery of Schollers, and why the Muses are Melancholy*’ in which he writes:

how many poore schollers have lost their wits, or become dizards, neglecting all worldly affaires, and their own health, wealthe, *esse & bene esse*, to gain knowledge!¹⁹

Indeed, the *OED* states that in seventeenth century ‘to study’ also meant “a state of mental perplexity or anxious thought” and a “state of reverie or abstraction”. The study, therefore, could be a site of knowledge but also of madness.²⁰ Moreover, it was also associated with sexual transgression as Alan Stewart in ‘The Early Modern Closet

¹⁷ Pope, *The Dunciad* ‘Argument to Book the First’.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the links between melancholy and the study see Lawrence Babb, *Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English literature from 1580-1642* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), pp. 24-26.

¹⁹ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* part 1, section 2, mem. 3, subs. 15, ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 304.

²⁰ Masculinity was recognized to be polarized from sexuality, which is conceived as “an anarchic force constantly besieging the gates of collective order and individual self-control”. The gentleman’s study can be read as a site that both manages and needs this ‘anarchic force’. See Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.1.

Discovered' links the man's study to homosexual practices.²¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that the closet embodies the apparent binary between the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality because it depends on what it excludes – it signifies through what it disavows – and therefore the heteronormative closet relies on and suggests the category of deviant sodomite.²²

“much lov'd husband”

Finch manipulates the ambiguity inherent in the word 'study' to portray male confusion and uncertainty. She exploits the liminal site of the study to ask if men can really own the power to name. Furthermore, because she depicts the male scholar as 'perplexed', she also reveals the arbitrariness of language in fixing the external world. In rupturing the space of the study, Finch fissures the power that is held there, as well as the philosophical and linguistic frameworks that are produced within. Finch is particularly dismissive of attempts to control women and nature through language. For this reason she often writes against the figure of Adam – the first namer. I will return to the figure of Adam in latter part of this chapter when examining 'Adam Pos'd'. First, however, I will focus on 'An Invitation to Dafnis' in which one of the poetic voices of Finch (Ardelia) entreats her husband (Dafnis) to leave his study. In this poem, Finch links the economic and ideological power of the husband with the power of the study. In laying the study under siege, Finch attacks both.

²¹ See Alan Stewart, 'The Early Modern Closet Discovered', *Representations*, 50 (Spring 1995): 76-100.

²² See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990).

Anne Finch's husband, Heneage Finch, was appointed as groom to the bedchamber to the duke of York in 1683. He can therefore be understood, to some extent, through Restoration interpellations of manliness. Indeed, his journal testifies to his hedonistic consumption of luxury goods such as port, chocolate and venison as does his affliction with gout. Nevertheless, he and his wife were exiled to Kent for being non-jurors and he often writes of his life of solitude in his letters. In exile he devoted himself to study and, in particular antiquarianism, as well as husbandry. He also took on the role of Anne Finch's editor and amanuensis, an interesting relationship that I will explore further (see p. 52 below). In many ways, the figure of Heneage Finch is reminiscent of the Restoration diarist, John Evelyn, to whom he alludes in his letters discussing medals – "Mr Evelin in his Book of Medals reminds me of a passage in Dr Burnett's Letters".²³ He appears to share Evelyn's interest in looking, naming and documenting. His country existence, however, limits him to medals, the household and editing the poetry of his wife.

In Heneage Finch's 1723 journal (written after Anne's death) he demonstrates his particular role in the running of the household. In it he keeps accounts of debts and repayments and payments of the servants. He also records where he keeps his important documents:

My Letters of Administration for my Wife are in the Drawer of my Wheel Table –

²³ British Library, Add. 17301. Letter to John Battely of October 1700.

Quarterly Accounts from Mr Wallington are in my Cedar Chest in the new Study.²⁴

His journal has stamped within it 'Notes of Husbandry and Physick' which appear at the beginning of every month. It is an important document because these 'notes' are written for men and in particular men who are interested in running the agricultural household. For each month there is advice on what the "good Husbands" should do with their bodies and with their land. Good husbands should tune into the cycles of the moon and the seasons, as well as days of the weeks. Each day of the week corresponds to a different part of the anatomy, perhaps for bloodletting. This extract is taken from Heneage Finch's journal and the 'Observations on January':

This is the Season for good Husbands to lip and prune superfluous Branches from Fruit-trees, uncover their Roots; set all Kind of Ouxch-fers and Fruit-trees in the New of the Moon. Be sure the Wind be not North nor east; and let set the same Sides to the South and West which grew at the first. Set Beans, Pease, and Parsnips. The Weather mild, and Moon decreasing, dig Gardens, drench weak and sick cattle, kine with Verjuice , Horses with Water and ground Malt, sodden with a little Bran.

IN this Month let not Blood, nor use Physick, unless Necessity constrain thee. Beware of taking cold, for Rheums and Phlegm do much increase this Month. It's hurtful to fast long. To drink White-wine tasting is good. Use Meats

²⁴ Northamptonshire Record Office, Finch-Hatton mss. 282.

that are moderately hot, for the best Physick is warm Diet, warm Clothes, and a merry honest Wife.²⁵

Consequently, if the wife is merry and honest (not, like Anne Finch, suffering from the spleen) she can be a form of physic for the husband like the herbs and plants that he cultivates.

Finch's husband was also known as an antiquarian and scholar. In February 1701 he describes his scholarly life to William Charlton:

But, indeed, Sir, my confinement to a country life, and having given over the usual exercises proper to itt, has made me take delight in the study of Antiquity, which I ever loved, but, which I never had the leisure whilst I lived in the Town, to apply myself to. And now my Books, and a small collection of Medals, help to fill up those vacancys of my Time, which wou'd lye upon my hand ...²⁶

His remaining letters all attest to his interest in medals and other scholarly activities which were probably, if we use evidence of his journal and Finch's poem 'An Invitation to Dafnis', undertaken in the gentleman's study.

His letters to the circle of antiquarians, which included Lord Weymouth and Lord Pembroke, are interesting when compared to Anne Finch's poetry. Although these are

²⁵ Finch-Hatton mss. 282.

²⁶ BL, Sloane ms. 3962, pp. 284-87.

two different textual forms, their comparison is valid because Anne Finch compares their writing in 'An Invitation to Daphnis'. Members of the society were given Druidical names: Finch signs himself 'Cyngetorix' and addresses Stukeley as 'Chyndonax'. It is a group of men bonding through their detailed documenting of medals:

I ask Pardon, for enlarging my Letter with the last account, but confesse,
Alexander Severus has always been my Hero, and I am willing to illustrate his
Character, by as many particulars of this Glorious Action, as I can.²⁷

This quotation is taken from a six page letter which carefully details the weight, measurements, and engravings of the medals. This coterie of men wrote lengthily to each other about medals, discussed military tactics, and celebrated Alexander Severus as "my Hero". It is a group that contrasts markedly with Finch's communities of women as depicted in 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'. If these men corresponded from the site of the study where they also studied the medals, then it offers a powerful image of men bonding through their domestic seclusion and bypassing the bodies of women who inhabit the spaces outside the study door. Images of domesticity or fashionable urban spaces are usually depicted as imprisoning in the works of Anne Finch, and this is because of the patriarchal power that is justified and wielded in this site. In contrast to these interior spaces, Finch celebrates specifically *female* pastoral and natural landscapes which are uncultivated, populated solely by women, and where "Tyrant-*Man* do's sleep"

²⁷ BL, ms. 289, reel 10. I am grateful to the Duke of Northumberland estate for permission to look at this letter.

(NR, 38).²⁸ It is this exterior topography, a topography outside the male gaze and male power, that Finch persuades her husband to enter in 'An Invitation to Dafnis'.

“a happy wife”

Anne Messenger reads 'An Invitation to Dafnis: *To leave his study and usual Employments, - Mathematicks, Paintings, etc. and to take the Pleasures of the fields with Ardelia*' as a “quintessentially pastoral poem” producing “an emblem of a happy marriage”.²⁹ Similarly Barbara McGovern recognizes the poem as “a wife’s playfully luring her husband to partake of country pleasures.”³⁰ Charles Hinnant takes a more sophisticated view of the poem and argues that Finch employs “a derivative pastoral idiom [...] as a denial of the political realities that the poem has tactfully concealed from view.”³¹ Before investigating the political, pastoral and conjugal themes that run through this poem, I would like to comment on the language that Finch’s critics use, and argue that their rhetoric is in fact a hindrance in reading Finch’s poems.

²⁸ Finch’s uncultivated landscapes will be discussed further in chapter chapter 3, part 3. See Donna Landry on how pastoral obscures labour and activity in the countryside in *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting, Walking, and Ecology in English Literature, 1671-1831* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001).

²⁹ Ann Messenger, *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent: Studies in Augustan Poetry* (New York: AMS Press, INC, 2001), p.48.

³⁰ Barbara McGovern, *Anne Finch: A Critical Biography* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), p. 133.

³¹ Charles Hinnant, *The Poetry of Anne Finch: An Essay in Interpretation* (Delaware: Delaware Press, 1994), p. 139.

Messenger, McGovern, Katherine Rogers, and to a lesser extent Hinnant, like to configure a Finch who is 'playful', 'tactful' and, in particular, a loving and devoted wife.

Rogers writes that:

Winchilsea [...] and her husband loved each other deeply – so that she could write to him as passionately as the men did to their mistress. More so, in fact, since the relationship she was celebrating was so much more significant.³²

In a similar vein, McGovern writes that Ardelia is “charmingly seductive in her feminine flaunting” and that “her ‘invitation’ to her husband blends a touch of naughtiness with the reality of their domestic relationship”.³³ McGovern further states that the reader experiences “amused surprise” at the poem’s pastoral deviations, that Ardelia “playfully teases”, and that the poem concludes “with an image of faithful conjugal love and its rewards”.³⁴ As well as using patronizing language to describe this text and its writer, McGovern mis-reads the poem. The poem concludes with a *hospitable* conjugal relationship, rather than *faithful* one, as Anne Finch refers to the myth of Baucis and Philemon. Moreover, the image of the heterosexual union between Ardelia and Dafnis is ambiguous. In order to maintain her image of Finch as a faithful and good-tempered wife, McGovern glosses over many of Finch’s poems such as ‘The Unequal Fetters’ or ignores aspects of poems such as ‘The Petition for an Absolute Retreat’ and ‘The Spleen’ that express anger and frustration at the institution of marriage.

³² Katherine Rogers, ‘Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea: An Augustan Woman Poet’, in *Early Women Writers 1600-1720*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 225-241 (p. 227).

³³ McGovern, *Anne Finch*, p. 133.

³⁴ McGovern, *Anne Finch*, p. 133.

Furthermore, Roger's and McGovern's perception or ideal of Finch's marriage is primarily taken from Finch's 'A Letter to Dafnis', and their reading of this poem becomes their template for understanding Finch and her poetry. Finch's exploration of multiple voices and points of view in her poetry has not been fully investigated as yet, and I think that acknowledging Finch's polyphonic speakers encourages a more complex understanding of her work. Although McGovern is careful to write about 'Ardelia' it seems to be that she often conflates Finch and Ardelia. For example, in McGovern's discussion of Arcadian imagery in 'An Invitation to Dafnis' she writes that: "Dafnis is indeed being asked to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, but his Amaryllis is a real woman, and her 'invitation' to her husband blends a touch of naughtiness with the reality of the domestic relationship."³⁵ However, Ardelia is not a real woman. She is a poetic construct (one of Finch's multiple poetic voices) and, as I will argue later, a nymph with homoerotic desires appropriated from the poetry of Katherine Philips.

Indeed, McGovern's ideological perspective is revealed in her dedication to her husband in the 1992 biography of Finch where she quotes "And to the World, by tend'rest proof discovers/ They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers." Is it too presumptive to argue that McGovern's own hopes and ideals about *her own* marriage as evidenced in this dedication, deeply influences her writing of Finch and Finch's own marriage? The poem from which McGovern takes her evidence for Finch's consistently happy marriage is 'A Letter to Dafnis' (1685) and is worth quoting in full:

³⁵ McGovern, *Anne Finch*, p. 130.

This to the Crown, and blessing of my life,
The much lov'd husband, of a happy wife.
To him, whose constant passion found the art
To win a stubborn, and ungratefull heart;
And to the World, by tend'rest proof discovers
They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers.
With such return of passion, as is due,
Dafnis I love, Dafnis my thoughts persue,
Daphnis, my hopes, my joys, are bounded all in you:
Ev'n I, for Dafnis, and my promise sake,
What I in women censure, undertake.
But this from love, not vanity, proceeds;
You know who writes; and I who 'tis that reads.
Judge not my passion, by my want of skill,
Many love well, though they express itt ill;
And I your censure cou'd with pleasure bear,
Wou'd you but soon return, and speak itt here.

The word 'censure' appears twice in this poem and it specifically appears in reference to Dafnis' criticism of Ardelia's poetry.

This poem was never published but appears in both of Anne Finch's manuscripts.³⁶ Her octavo manuscript in the Northamptonshire Record Office begins with Finch's much quoted proto-feminist poem 'The Introduction' in which Finch laments women's censorship and the scorn that they receive when attempting to write. In this manuscript (the first half of which, including 'A Letter to Dafnis', is written in an unknown hand), the line after "They err, who say that husbands can't be lovers" is scribbled out and "With such return of passion, as is due" is written underneath. In comparison to the poems before it, it is the most fragmented text in the manuscript, and the poem after it is completely and rigorously crossed out. It is possible to make out the title of the crossed-out poem, which reads 'A Letter to Mr Finch from Tunbridge Well August 1685'. The second half of the manuscript is written in the hand of Anne Finch's husband and it is possible to see how he has altered the previous poems by adding commas, altering titles and changing Anne Finch's original poetic name from 'Areta' to 'Ardelia'. Moreover, it is his pen that has crossed out the poem after 'A Letter to Dafnis' and another later poem in the manuscript.

The fact Finch did not write out her own poetry, (McGovern suggests that it is because her handwriting was so bad, others have suggested that her depression hampered her ability to write), adds extra poignancy to the lines:

You know who writes; and I who 'tis that reads.

³⁶ Unfortunately, I was only able to gain access to the octavo manuscript and, therefore, cannot comment upon how the poem is scribed in the folio manuscript.

This line is rendered powerful with a midline caesura which dislocates it from the rest of poem. This, along with the fullstop, gives the reader pause. The directness of the 'I' addressing 'you' creates a personal moment in the poem and resonates like a warning. Moreover, 'you' and 'I' know who it is that writes, but the third reader does not. Because Heneage acts as amanuensis and editor, the role of writing and reading becomes blurred. It suggests that Heneage's role as scribe is a complex one of battle and censure. In addition, the language of the poem is often antagonistic with such words as 'judge', 'bounded', 'stubborn' and 'ungratefull', and the echoes of economic exchange in the phrase 'return of passion, as is due'.

This poem, however, was not written in Heneage's hand which suggests that there was another person implicated in the warning "you know who it is who writes". This writer is unknown. Nevertheless, the fact that Anne Finch clearly used a scribe certainly introduces an ambiguity to the above excerpt. Finch named her poetic persona Areta before she was married, and when Heneage takes over the role of amanuensis and editor he obliterates her old name in the octavo manuscript, changing it to Ardelia. 'Areta' suggests a female version of Ares, Roman god of war, or Arethusa who was a nymph in the train of Diana, to whom Mary of Modena was often compared. It is also similar to the Greek word for virtue, and the Homeric word for manhood and prowess. 'Ardelia' in contrast, is the female form of 'ardelio', Latin for a meddler or busybody. Finch's new pastoral name can, therefore, be read as making concessions to Finch's new role as submissive wife as well as responding to changing discourses of femininity that were constructed after the Restoration period and at the beginning of the new century. If

Heneage became Finch's amanuensis after they were exiled, then it appears that Finch's name was changed to Ardelia in order to depict her as a less rebellious and heroic woman. Nevertheless, this name is more slippery than at first appears and Anne Finch exploits the connotations of meddling and trickery that are signified through it. A discussion of the ambiguity in the name 'Ardelia' will run through this thesis.

What does seem to be certain is that Finch had a more ambivalent attitude towards marriage than has been suggested by McGovern. In 'The Unequal Fetters', for example, Finch joins a tradition of women writers attacking the institution of marriage. In this poem, Finch decries the fate of women who, after they lose youth, are ignored by their husbands who "seek" for "New Faces" (8):

Marriage does but slightly tye Men
 Whilst close Pris'ners we remain
 They the larger Slaves of Hymen
 Still are begging Love again
 At the full length of their chain. (16-20)

Moreover, throughout Finch's poetry she seems to be attacking a patriarchal figure whether it is the "Tyrant-*Man*" of 'A Nocturnal Reverie' or the husband "born to Imperial Sway" (61) in 'The Spleen'. Indeed, Charles Hinnant points out that "care, pain and suffering are experienced in Finch's verse as a submission to a sinister and despotic

father figure.”³⁷ I do not want to make judgements of the marriage between the Finches – something that I cannot know anything about – but I do want to suggest that Finch had a more complex relation to the identity of wife than has previously been discussed.

A recent article by Virginia M. Duff has also attempted to challenge this notion of the ‘happy wife’. Although this article has its limitations (Duff calls Finch a Catholic and bases her argument on a poem called ‘Bird and the Arras’ which was actually created from fragments by Myra Reynolds) it is a very interesting alternative to the conventional and somewhat oppressively pliant portrait of Anne Finch. Through tracing the etymology of the word ‘arras’, Duff states that “the word arras represents not just a tapestry figured with a life-like scene but an interweaving of ideas about earnest money for property, engagement rings, deposits on contracts of sale, pledges, and betrothals.”³⁸ Consequently, Finch intimates through this deceptively simple term that, “like a weaving of a pastoral scene viewed from a distance, marriage may seem lovely and inviting, but when more closely examined, the warp and woof reveal serious flaws.”³⁹ The bird trapped in the house in ‘The Bird and the Arras’ mistakes the tapestry or arras for a shade and is repeatedly dashed to the ground or flutters “in endless circles of dismay” (18). The bird could be a reference to her married name ‘Finch’. Duff argues that the bird “has tried to imitate mythic wives only to find not pastoral peace but domestic discord and a position entailing silence toward and deference to her husband.”⁴⁰ Ostensibly, at least,

³⁷ Charles Hinnant, *An Essay In Interpretation*, p. 35.

³⁸ Virginia M. Duff, “‘Fallen by Mistaken Rules’: Anne Finch’s ‘The Bird and the Arras’”, *Eighteenth Century Women*, 1 (2001): 39-48 (p.43).

³⁹ Duff, ‘Fallen by Mistaken Rules’, p.43.

⁴⁰ Duff, ‘Fallen by Mistaken Rules’, p. 46.

Finch maintains this deference throughout her poetry. Underneath her wifely demeanour, however, Finch depicts heroic and rebellious poetic voices.

“faery Cercles”

‘An Invitation to Dafnis’ employs the literary mode of the pastoral. The pastoral is traditionally a masculine generic form in which shepherds sing and lament, while the nymphs are absent and silent. Indeed, the pastoral is an imaginative masculine retreat arrived at through the intellectual and creative processes undertaken in the study. Pastoral defies fixed labels but it roughly alludes to the poetry of Theocritus and, later, Virgil.⁴¹ It centres around the rural and distinctively homosocial world of shepherds lamenting their lost lovers and tending their goats. They are conventionally positioned outside the city in a rural setting, singing and playing music, milking goats. The pastoral can be read as an imaginative space in which the male poet can immerse his male poetic protagonist in a male literary tradition, a tradition which retains women’s silence and celebrates men’s creative and sexual powers.

In Finch’s version, however, the speaker’s voice is female and the object of seduction is the silent poetic projection of the husband, Dafnis. It is interesting that Finch uses the name Dafnis as he is a somewhat tragic mythological figure who suffers at the

⁴¹ See *Augustan Literature: A Guide to Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature, 1660-1789*, ed. by Eva Simmons (London: Bloomsbury, 1994). See also William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950); Annabel Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

hands of women. The various myths that surround Dafnis portray him as a shepherd in love with a nymph who forced him to swear eternal fidelity to her under pain of going blind. However, intoxicated by Princess Chimaera, Dafnis broke his vow and at once lost his sight. He later committed suicide one day by jumping off a cliff.⁴² In another version inscribed in Theocritus' *Idyll 1*, Dafnis decides to give up love and resist the desiring nymph who searches for him and attempts to seduce him. Nevertheless, as a result of abstention and refusal, he wastes away and dies.⁴³ Although 'An Invitation to Dafnis' has been read as celebrating conjugal pastoral love, the antagonism at the heart of the poem reveals friction in the married state. Moreover, the threat of Theocritus' Dafnis' fate underlies the whole poem: if Finch's Dafnis resists Ardelia's temptations then death may follow. 'An Invitation to Dafnis' is also a variation on the seduction poem and through portraying a mythological figure who is punished for not following the entreating wishes of women, Finch infuses Ardelia's pleas with a threat. Through Dafnis, Finch depicts a victim of women's rage, as well as a man who loses the power of seeing, a power which is located and produced in the study.

Dafnis is also sometimes called the inventor of pastoral poetry, and this has interesting implications if his voice is drowned out by that of Ardelia. Indeed, this poem replicates the pastoral motif of juxtaposing the artifice of culture (Dafnis in the study) with nature (Ardelia in the fields). Messenger states that Finch is "both spokeswoman for nature's claim to be superior to art and an accomplished artist herself, thus presenting

⁴² See *New Larousse Enclyopaedia of Mythology*, ed. by Robert Graves and trans. by Richard Aldington and Deliaro Ames (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1959), p. 163.

⁴³ For an explication of this poem see Michael J. Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art: Studies in the Eclogues* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 350.

both the conflict between these two opposites and a vision of their possible unity.”⁴⁴ Nevertheless, this poem actually dissolves this dichotomy rather than unifies it. Finch traces different versions of art or, more correctly, artifice. The landscape that Ardelia wishes to entice Dafnis into has a magical and almost eery quality to it. Moreover, ‘An Invitation’ critiques the practices undergone in the study exposing them as fantastical, whilst simultaneously depicting an external topography which is unmappable.

The poem can be read as pitting the pastoral of the canonical male tradition signified by Dafnis, against the marginalized foray into this genre by Behn, Philips and Aemelia Lanyer. Significantly, this tradition of women re-writing pastoral landscapes is also a tradition of women writing *homoerotic* retreats and the name ‘Ardelia’ is taken from Philips’s poem where two nymphs “mingle” in a bower. I will explore this further in chapter 3. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this chapter, ‘Ardelia’ is a voice which speaks against marriage. Indeed, Dafnis and Ardelia enact the antagonism in the married state, where the wife’s identity is subsumed under that of the husband. It also plays out the tension in the Finchs’ poet/ scribe relationships where the man’s imaginative acts of naming are legitimized in the site of the study, while versifying women are caricatured as having writing implements in every room; the lack of sanctioned writing space for a woman devalues her output.

In adopting the voice of the seducer and inviting Dafnis to “stray”, Finch writes a woman who articulates desire:

⁴⁴ Messenger, *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent*, p.48.

When such a day, blest the Arcadian plaine,
 Warm without Sun, and shady without rain,
 Fann'd by an air, that scarsly bent the flowers,
 Or wav'd the woodbines, on the summer bowers,
 The Nymphs disorder'd beauty cou'd not fear,
 Nor ruffling winds uncurl'd the Shepherd's hair,
 On the fresh grasse, they trod their measures light,
 And a long Evening made, from noon, to night.
 Come then, my Dafnis, from those cares descend
 Which better may the winter season spend.

Come, and the pleasures of the field survey

And through the groves with your Ardelia stray. (ID, 1-12)⁴⁵

It is Ardelia who speaks throughout the poem and Dafnis is silent. Not only is this very unfeminine behaviour, but in the context of religious discourses on marriage in which the wife should subordinate herself to her husband – “let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness” (1. Timothy: 2. 11-15) - it is subversive.

Ardelia has an assertive and persistent voice throughout the poem. Messenger argues that Finch “is trying to entice a busy man with many occupations to come to the fields and groves, because for her the harmonious rural setting is an emblem of a happy marriage.”⁴⁶ However, this statement betrays Messenger's own veneration of the

⁴⁵ Finch, ‘An Invitation to Daphnis’. Hereafter cited as ‘ID’.

⁴⁶ Messenger, *Pastoral Tradition and Female Talent*, p. 48.

scholarly life, a veneration that Finch, at least in this poem, does not share. This poem actually *trivializes* the occupations that are undertaken in the gentleman's study by mimicking Robert Herrick's 'Corinna's Going A-Maying' through the repetition of 'come':

Come, my *Corinna*, come, coming, marke

How each field turns a street; each street a Parke

Made green, and trimm'd with trees: see how

Devotion gives each House a Bough

Or Branch: Each Porch, each doore, ere this,

An Arke, a Tabernacle is,

Made up of white-thorn neatly enterwove;

As if here were those cooler shades of love. (29-37)⁴⁷

Although Messenger and McGovern have both noted this mimicry, Finch employs this strategy not only to offer a wry comment on male seductive techniques, but also to expose her feelings on the object of seduction who is ensconced in the study. In other words, through mimicking Herrick, Ardelia also elliptically echoes his "Get up, get up for shame" ('Corinna' 1). Indeed, rather than differentiating Dafnis from the "sweet Slug-a-bed" (5) in Herrick's poem, Ardelia *compares* the silent lazy nymph with the silent scholar in his study. By exchanging the woman in bed and at her toilette with the man in his study, Ardelia compares the domestic settings of the two poems. Moreover, by asking

⁴⁷ Robert Herrick, 'Corinna's Going A-Maying', in *Poems*, ed. by L. C. Martin (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965). All citations are taken from this edition.

Dafnis to “from those cares descend”, Finch repeats the word “care” which is used by Herrick to describe the dressing woman: “Take no care/ For Jewels for your Gowne, or Haire” (18) as well as by Swift to describe the nymphs in their dressing rooms.⁴⁸ ‘Spend’ is also a problematic word as it features in Herrick’s ‘Virgin’s Make Much of Time’, a poem which Finch critiques in ‘A dialogue between two shepherdesses’. Finch also uses this word in ‘The Petition for an Absolute Retreat’ to expose male sexual exhaustion and the relationship of economic exchange which occur in heterosexual relationships.

The images of paint in the second stanza further link Dafnis and the site of the study to the dressing nymphs putting cosmetics on their faces:

Reading the softest Poetry, refuse,
 To veiw the subjects of each rural muse;
 Nor lett the busy compasses go round,
 When faery Cercles better mark the ground.
 Rich Colours on the Vellum cease to lay,
 When ev’ry lawne much nobler can display,
 When on the daz’ling poppy may be seen
 A glowing red, exceeding your carmine;
 And for the blew that o’er the Sea is borne,
 A brighter rises in our standing corn.

Come then, my Dafnis, and the feilds survey,

And throo’ the groves, with your Ardelia stray. (ID, 13-24)

⁴⁸ Swift’s dressing room poems and Juvenal’s 6th Satire will be discussed further in chapter 2, part 2.

Like the painting nymphs in the satires of Juvenal, Donne and Swift, we peep (through the eyes of Ardelia) at the painting man in the study.⁴⁹ Through the syntax of this stanza, Dafnis becomes the object of survey as well as the collaborator: the all-seeing eye of the study is ruptured as the implements of the 'poetess' leak into the study. The study gains its power through prohibiting women's presence and, consequently, in detailing the activities undergone in the 'space beyond sexuality', Ardelia undermines its privilege as the unseen centre of the house. Moreover, the displayed lawn, the 'dazzling poppy', 'glowing red', 'brighter' blue, as well as the fairy circles all suggest the gaudy posturing of court nymphs, not a more virtuous and 'golden age' alternative to art and language. Ardelia seems to be sexualizing nature in her temptation of Dafnis, as well as blurring the distinctions between inside/outside and nature/art, feminine/ masculine.

"Cease" challenges male claims to immortality through reason and the mind.

Furthermore, Dafnis' art is trivialized and negated as Ardelia asks him to "cease", hinting that her inscription of art exceeds his: she pits her pastoral against that of the originator. It is a battle over mapping. Indeed, the image of "busy compasses" going round is subordinated to the superior "faery Cercles" of Ardelia's pastoral. These "faery Cercles" indicate trickery and deception (like the name Ardelia). They are marks left by fairies dancing, and they are supposed to disappear if a human enters the circle. In contrast to this magical symbolism where there is no fixed and static point, the "busy compasses" indicate science and objectivity. They also refer to heterosexual relationships such as inscribed in Donne's 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning' where the woman does "in

⁴⁹ Donne's *Satire IV* will be discussed on p. 74 below.

the center sit" (29) and "the other far doth roam" (30).⁵⁰ It reflects the "dull management of a servile home" in 'The Introduction', as well as the "endlesse cercles of dismay" of the trapped bird in 'The Bird and the Arras'. It also echoes stanza 3 of Finch's 'The Unequal Fetters' which critiques the institution of marriage:

Free as Nature's First Intention

Was to make us, I'll be found

Nor by subtle Man's invention

Yield to be in Fetters bound

By one that walks a free round. (11-15)

The liberty of 'subtle Man' is contrasted with the fettering of the wife. Read against this poem, 'An Invitation to Dafnis' can be understood as depicting a woman making a bid to be as 'Free as Nature's First Intention'.

The image of the compasses is also, of course, employed in Katherine Philips' 'Friendship in Emblem, or the Seale, to my dearest Lucasia' in which she reconfigures Donne's heterosexual image to portray love between two women. I briefly want to compare Philips and Finch before returning to 'An Invitation to Dafnis'. Philips's image of the compass is employed to signify love between two women:

The compasses that stand above

⁵⁰ John Donne, 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning', in *Complete English Poems*, ed. by C. A. Patrides (London: Dent, 1994). All citations are taken from this edition

Express this great immortall Love;
 For friends, like them, can prove this true,
 They are, and yet they are not, two.

And in their posture is express'd
 Friendship's exalted interest:
 Each follows where the other Leanes,
 And what each does, the other meanes.

And as when one foot does stand fast,
 And t'other circles seeks to cast,
 The stedy part does regulate
 And make the wanderer's motion streight: (21-32)⁵¹

Philips' compass imagery mimics the sexual dyad of Donne's image:

And as each part so well is knitt,
 That their embraces ever fitt:
 So friends are such by destiny,
 And no Third can the place supply. (53-56)

⁵¹ Katherine Philips, 'Friendship in Emblem, or the Seale, to my dearest Lucasia', in *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*, 3 vols., ed. by Thomas Patrick (Saffron Waldon: Stump Cross Books, 1990). All citations are taken from this edition.

Nevertheless, in Finch's representation of the "busy compasses", she ignores the dyadic sexual trope of both Philips and Donne, and instead opts for "faery Cercles". In this image there is no fixed "foot" or "steddy part" who directs "the wanderer's motion streight." Instead, everyone is wandering, transgressive, magical. Dichotomies are dissolved in Finch's straying and wandering unmapped topographies.

Masculine mapping reappears in stanza three of the poem:

Come, and lett Sansons World, no more engage,
 Altho' he gives a Kingdom in a page;
 O'er all the Vniverse his lines may goe,
 And not a clime, like temp'rate brittan show.

Come then, my Dafnis, and her fields survey,
 And throo' the groves, with your Ardelia stray. (ID, 25-30)

Nicolas Sanson was a seventeenth-century French cartographer who not only scientifically mapped the contemporary world, but also attempted to trace the ancient world. Like *The Universal Penman*, Dafnis is depicted as tracing the whole universe from his study with his "busy compasses". However, the scientific discovered world which is captured and fixed on the map is shown to be deceptive; it may show the rest of the world but not a place like Britain. What seems universal is presented as fantasy. Ardelia suggests that the real known world is found directly, outside the study, not intellectually within it. Moreover, she speaks of the "clime" demonstrating that there is more to

experiencing landscape than solely through the eye. She draws attention to the other senses and the body, including touch. In peeping at the scholar, Ardelia demeans the practice of cartography and suggests alternative ways of tracing landscape. Through her repetition of “stray”, she plays an Eve-like figure tempting her Adam into sexual transgression. Straying suggests a second reactionary movement from the fixed and normalized way. Indeed, in ‘The Spleen’, Finch celebrates Ardelia’s deviation “from the known and common way” (84) where she likes “to trace unusual things” (83). By taking Dafnis out of the site of the study in which his patriarchal power as husband is legitimized, Ardelia disrupts conventional male/female relationships, opening up sites to stray as “free as nature’s first intention”, where the universe is no longer traced through the lines of Sanson’s World.

The balance between the fixed mapping of the eye in the study with the straying nymph reaches a climax in stanza four when the juxtaposition is threatened by Ardelia’s attack on the study. Each stanza builds up to create a more assertive female voice, and underpinning the poem there are images of violence and negativity. It seems that Ardelia is not so submissive after all:

Nor plead that you’re immur’d, and cannot yield,
 That mighty Bastions keep you from the feild,
 Think not, tho’ lodged in Mons, or in Namur,
 You’re from my dangerous attacks secure.
 No, Louis shall his falling Conquests fear,

When by succeeding Courriers he shall hear
 Apollo, and the Muses, are drawn down,
 To storm each fort, and take in ev'ry Town.
 Vauban, the Orphean Lyre, to mind shall call,
 That drew the stones to the old Theban wall,
 And make no doubt, if itt against him play,
 They, from his works, will fly as fast away,
 Which to prevent, he shall to peace persuade,
 Of strong, confederate Syllables, affraid.

Come then, my Dafnis, and the fields survey,
 And throo' the Groves, with your Ardelia stray. (ID, 31-46)

Ardelia exposes Dafnis' use of military campaigns, maps, and masculine aggression in creating a metaphoric fortress within his study, a fortress which keeps him from engaging with the external world. In other words, Dafnis justifies his confinement in the study through these manly activities. Nevertheless, Ardelia attacks them. In retaliation, she storms the study with her own imaginative troops. She fissures domestic and architectural space, rupturing the demarcated and validated space of the male eye and the male word. Ardelia feminises Dafnis, configuring him as pleading and yielding, and she masculinises herself through her declaration of war and her appropriation of the powers of the poet as signified in the figures of Apollo and the muses. It is, in effect, her poetic powers which will succeed in bringing down the masculine activities undergone in the study and, as a consequence, the masculine performance that is produced there.

Ardelia employs her creative powers to fight against the fixed mapper and cartographer in the study. Through imagination and poetry, Ardelia will storm the study and take Dafnis into alternative pastoral landscapes. This scene suggests that poetry provides a space for Finch to inscribe deviant emancipatory spaces. Although Anne Finch may have protected or justified her identity as a woman writer through projecting her husband as editor, the different modes of tracing the landscape may, like in 'An Invitation to Dafnis', have produced hostility. The image of a straying woman outside the architecture of the house and who identifies with "faery Cercles" is a threatening one for the scientific mapper in the study.

The final stanza of 'An Invitation to Dafnis' attempts a reconciliation after the crescendo of battle imagery. In this stanza Ardelia offers the paradigm of the marriage between Baucis and Philemon as one to aspire to:

As Baucis and Philemon spent their lives,
 Of husbands he, the happiest she, of wives,
 When throo' the painted meads, their way they sought,
 Harmlesse in act, and unperplext in thought,
 Let us, my Dafnis, rural joy persue,
 And Courts, or Camps, not ev'n in fancy view.

So, lett us throo' the Groves, my Dafnis, stray,

And so, the pleasures of the feilds, survey. (ID, 59-66)

This myth is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (and perhaps Dryden's translation) in which Baucis and Philemon entertained Jupiter and Mercury thinking them to be travelers. Jupiter and Mercury were so impressed with their hospitality that they transformed their house into a temple. When Baucis and Philemon died they became trees whose branches were linked.⁵² This story is presented by Finch as a compromise for heterosexual unions. In other words, the myth of Dafnis that she employs metamorphoses into that of Baucis and Philemon; Ardelia and Dafnis cannot be reconciled but Baucis and Philemon can. Nevertheless, this harmonious marriage is still depicted as mythological – it is only in myth that they can “rural joy pursue”. Its “painted meads” highlight its fictionality. This heterosexual relationship is also described as “harmless” like the “unmolested” (34) nature of ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’, as well as “unperplexed” which distinguishes it from the scholarly activities of the study. Moreover, Baucis and Philemon are rendered equal as they both become trees. It may not be the spiritual homoerotic unions of ‘The Petition’ and “A Nocturnal Reverie”, and it may not replicate the love between female friends that Finch write elsewhere, but it is better, for example, than the relationship as configured through the architecture of the house.

Nevertheless, the last three lines of this stanza hark back to Ardelia's attacks. The “Courts or Camps” of Dafnis' scholarly pursuits are again alluded to and rejected. That

52 John Dryden, ‘Baucis and Philemon, Out of the Eighth Book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*’, in *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. by James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958). All citations are taken from this edition. See also Jonathan Swift's burlesque, ‘The Story of Baucis & Philemon. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I. 8.’, in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3 vols., ed. by Harold Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937).

they are “in fancy” again devalues the masculine activities of the study. Moreover, after the siege Ardelia has succeeded in taking Daphnis out of the study and into the landscape inscribed with “faery Cercles”. This is signified through the pronoun “us” rather than just “Ardelia”. Significantly, Finch has alternated “stray” and “survey” so that in the last stanza Ardelia and Dafnis “stray” together and through this act of straying they can, at last, “survey” the landscape, presumably through the magical and deviant eyes of Ardelia. This is a different kind of looking than that performed in the study and one that will be explored through the remainder of this thesis.

“censure what we cannot reach”

In attempting to disrupt Dafnis’ representations of the external landscape, Finch also fissures the predominant standards of mimesis that dictated the period’s poetic structures. Mimesis is an “orientation which stresses the order of a universe outside the mind and the obligation of art to capture certain enduring truths within that universe.”⁵³ However, rather than capturing any enduring truths with her pen, Jennifer Keith argues that Finch “accepts the failure of language to represent” and consequently replaces “conventional representation with moments in which the subject attempts to stand in the

⁵³ John L. Mahoney, *The Whole Internal Universe: Imitation and the New Defense of Poetry in British Criticism, 1660-1830* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1985), p. 32.

position of the object or stand in for (in favor of) the position of the object.”⁵⁴ Moreover, as Keith continues, “Finch’s rejection of the powers to objectify is at odds with the predominantly empirical strategies of the Augustan canon, where the identification of, rather than the identification with, nature is precisely that which guarantees the poet’s authority.”⁵⁵ In ‘The Nightingale’, for example, Finch adopts the voice of the male Augustan poet who attempts to mimic the song of the nightingale. Nevertheless, because the muse cannot exactly represent the voice of the bird, Finch depicts the poet as urging the bird to “change thy Note;/ Let division shake thy Throat” (22-23) and to “cease thy Tune” (26). The poem ends with a satirical comment upon this power relation between male poet and nature, subject and object:

Thus we Poets that have Speech,
 Unlike what thy Forests teach,
 If a fluent Vein be shown
 That’s transcendent to our own,
 Criticize, reform, or preach,
 Or censure what we cannot reach. (‘The Nightingale’, 30-35)

I read this poem differently from Keith and Hinnant as I interpret it as Finch’s commentary on men’s dichotomized interactions with nature. For Finch, the conventional male poet does not recognize the divine in nature but must capture it in ‘numbers’. Moreover, he must manipulate the bird for his own inscriptions. The word ‘censure’

⁵⁴ Jennifer Keith, ‘The Poetics of Anne Finch’, *SEL*, 38 (1998): 465-480 (p. 475).

⁵⁵ Keith, ‘The Poetics of Anne Finch’, p. 475.

repeats the editor/ poet relationship of the Finches and again reveals the problems that Anne Finch may have had to encounter against her amanuensis.

The image of man's attempt to control nature is also expressed in 'The Atheist and the Acorn' in which Finch depicts the male philosopher as being polarised from nature and as desiring to dominate it. In 'The Atheist and the Acorn', Finch mocks this desire as "A dull presuming Atheist" is figured lying "beneath a Shade".⁵⁶ Instead of admiring the spiritual beauty of his surroundings, however, his impulse is to critique the landscape and re-arrange it. He decides that the pumpkin which is:

"...large and round
Is held but by a little String,
Which upwards cannot make it spring,
Or bear it from the Ground;" (AA, 7-10)

On the other hand, the acorn, "a Fruit so small, / So disproportion'd, grows" (11-12). To rectify the seemingly incongruous landscape, the atheist proclaims:

"My better Judgment wou'd have hung
That Weight upon a Tree,
And left this Mast, thus slightly strung,
'Mongst things which on the Surface sprung,
And small and feeble be." (AA, 16-20)

⁵⁶ 'The Atheist and the Acorn', 3-4. Hereafter cited as 'AA'.

In retaliation for his inability to see the divine in nature and his philosopher's need tyrannically to control it, Finch's speaker exacts her revenge on "the caviller":

For, as he upwards gazing lay,

An acorn loosened from the Stay

Fell down upon his Eye. (AA, 23-25)

Finch reduces the atheist to a "Fool!" and his judgements on nature as "Whimseys" "kept" in his "Scull". He is associated with his mind rather than his body, and his philosophical speculations are ridiculed. It is this power relation between man and nature that will now be explored in 'Adam Pos'd'. This poem has previously been read by critics as either a satire on court nymphs, or a light-hearted look at the figure of Adam. Nevertheless, there are deeper and angrier sentiments lying in this poem.

'Adam Pos'd'

Two themes run through the etymology of the word 'posed': perplexity and performance. 'To be posed' meant to be perplexed, a state that we have seen is undesirable for Finch in relation to Baucis and Philemon. In this analysis of 'Adam Pos'd', I will explore these themes of confusion and performance, arguing that the scholar has moved outside into the natural landscape. However, even in this previously

unmapped topography he needs to map and to name, and by doing so he conforms to the scholar's masculine performance and the perplexity that is inherent in this performance. The phrase 'Adam Pos'd' mimics John Donne's *Satire IV* in which Donne satirises a court nymph as "A thing which would have pos'd Adam to name" (20).⁵⁷ In echoing this line, Finch refers to a tradition of satires of women, a tradition that she overtly alludes to in her image of the vain fantastic nymph. Indeed, McGovern, Messenger and Hinnant have all noted Finch's own satirical voice.

Nevertheless, in Finch's poem she *inverts* the phrase so that it is Adam *as well as* the vain nymph who is being interrogated or posed as a problem for the reader's gaze. Consequently, 'Adam Pos'd' can be read as a veiled satire on a certain performance of masculinity: that of namer, scholar and husband. Like 'An Invitation to Dafnis' where the dressing room is transmogrified into the study, so the dressing woman of misogynist satires is metamorphosed into 'our first father'. The poem is here cited in full:

Cou'd our First Father, at his toilsome Plough,
 Thorns in his path, and Labour on his Brow,
 Cloath'd only in a rude, unpolish'd Skin,
 Cou'd he a vain Fantastick Nymph have seen,
 In all her Airs, in all her antick Graces,
 Her various Fashions, and more various Faces;
 How had it pos'd that Skill, which late, assign'd
 Just Appellations to Each several Kind!

⁵⁷ John Donne, *Satire IV*.

A right Idea of the Sight to frame;

T'have guest from what New Element she came;

T'have hit the wav'ring Form, or giv'n this Thing a Name.

Adam is represented in a half-mocking tone that is emphasised through the structure and simple a/b rhyming scheme of the poem. The question format undermines Adam's certainty, and it ends with an exclamation mark giving the ostensible impression of triviality. Finch forces us to question this Adamic pose by commencing 'Adam Pos'd' with "Cou'd". This "Cou'd" undermines all our assumptions about Adam - could he be "our First Father", was he at his "toilsome Plough,/ Thorns in his Path, Labour on his Brow"? Furthermore, should we accept the pronoun 'his': are the thorns 'his', is the land he dominates 'his'? Indeed the poem reads as a question or series of questions, even though this is never made explicit through punctuation. Finch poses the figure of Adam for the reader's contemplation, and she also fissures his certainty.

Moreover, Finch undermines misogynist definitions of women such as Donne's 'thing' through using Lockean philosophical tenets.⁵⁸ Finch was writing at a time when empiricism was the predominant philosophical methodology in Britain. The observations

⁵⁸ Teresa Lauretis argues that in the phallic order women are unrepresentable except as representation. Consequently Christa Knellwolf argues that Pope's 'Epistle to a Lady' recognises this unrepresentability: "When Pope claims that women have no characters, he likewise says that there is no adequate representation for women as subjects. What was, at first sight, a devastating judgement of women may be turned back against Pope as author who is attempting to form a judgement and a representation." (p. 34) Knellwolf does not, however, critique Pope's paradigms of beauty and so writes that Martha Blount is described "in the most generous terms imaginable" (p. 28). Finch and Montagu, although they recognize this unrepresentability certainly would not concur with Knellwolf's conclusions. Rather they forge alternative ways to represent feminine performances. See Christa Knellwolf, *A Contradiction Still: Representations of Women in the Poetry of Alexander Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

of natural science investigated by Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle and Thomas Sydenham, all used observational and experimental strategies in order to classify and systematise nature. This objectification of the world is at odds with Finch's own imaginative spaces, and she writes against it in 'The Atheist and the Acorn', as well as in 'The Spleen' which will be explored in chapter 3. Locke uses the methods that Bacon employed in his scientific works and applies them to human knowledge in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690).⁵⁹ For Locke, words signify ideas. Consequently to name something is to impose an idea on to it that will always signify in the minds of those who use it (*Essay*, III. ii. 2). It is because of the power of naming that Adam is here figured just before he names the woman, just as he struggles to form an idea to impose.

Moreover, Locke argues that all knowledge comes from the experience of our senses and the reflections that we make arise from these sensations. No ideas are innate, they all originate from sense experience. In 'Adam Pos'd' Finch uses the terminology of the "Idea" and asks how Adam could have had "the right Idea of the Sight to frame". In other words, if woman is so various and protean, what sensory data could Adam have chosen to reflect upon and label as knowledge in order to name her 'Eve' or "mother of all living". Finch undermines Locke's certainty that we could be sure about our sensory ideas through implying that there can be right and wrong ideas, as well as a variety of ideas that are true. This inconsistency between our perception and our idea is reinforced by the uneasy rhyming couplet of 'Skin' and 'seen'. Finch also asks how misogynistic

⁵⁹ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

writers can claim that woman “has no character at all” and yet can still absorb sensory information about her to reflect and to name her: if man receives so many contradictory and various ideas about these fantastic nymphs than how can he know which “idea of the sight” is ‘woman’?

Finch mocks these philosophical strategies through Lockean terminology such as “assigned”, “just Appellations”, “several Kind”, “Idea of the Sight”, “Element”. She represents Adam as a philosopher and mocks his attempts to classify “this Thing”. Locke argues that we sort essences into kinds, just as Finch mocks Adam's attempt to reduce the vain fantastic nymph “to each several Kind”. However, Locke also admits that we cannot observe real essences and furthermore that we cannot understand their causal influence on our perception. Consequently he is forced to acknowledge that there is a deeper reality that will remain a mystery to ‘knowledge’. This does not stop Locke from desiring knowledge and classifications as he argues that the knowledge that we can gain is good enough. Through alluding to Locke, Finch demonstrates that the true essence of nature is imperceptible to us and we cannot conceive of its ‘reality’. However, rather than agree with Locke and continue the search for the knowledge we can acquire, Finch drops the pursuit of knowledge altogether. Cunningly she uses Lockean tenets to demonstrate her belief that not everything can be classified and defined. After all, what is the point of trying to systematise nature or woman as Adam, Locke and Dafnis attempt to do, when we cannot reach its real essence?

In 'The Appology' Finch again alludes to "our first breach with Heav'n" (19). 'The Appology' is written in the veiled false modesty of 'The Introduction' that critics such as Denys Thompson and Wordsworth take at face value.⁶⁰ In this poem Finch adopts the poetic persona of the female poet scorning her own attempts at creativity and asking to be forgiven and humoured. Underneath this humble persona, however, is an angry voice fighting against her own suppression. Ostensibly, she states that "I write ill" and "Each Woman has her weaknesse; mind [sic] indeed/ Is still to write, tho' hopelesse to succeed." (15-16) However, she also returns to the primal scene of creation and includes men in her critique of creativity. Significantly, Finch includes men in her own apology, not only by demeaning their writing, but also by conflating them with women through using the pronoun "our". She puts male and female writers on the same plane, stating that since "our first breach with Heav'n" both men and women are corrupted and unsuccessful writers. Cunningly, as in 'The Nightingale', Finch changes the focus of the poem in the last four lines. Instead of the subject being the woman writer asking for forgiveness, the poem ends with the woman writer forgiving "the men":

Nor to the Men is this so easy found
 Ev'n in most Works with which the Witts abound
 (So weak are all since our first breach with Heav'n)
 Ther's lesse to be Applauded than forgiven.

(*'The Appology'*, 17 - 20)

⁶⁰ Denys Thompson's and Wordsworth's interpretations of Finch's poetry will be discussed further in chapter 5, part 3.

This is a subversive move that gives Finch the opportunity to dismiss the male word as something “lesse to be Applauded than forgiven.” ‘The Appology’ that this poem actually refers to, therefore, is not that of the poetess but that of the poet.

It is significant that in ‘Adam Pos’d’ Finch represents the scene before ‘Eve’ is named, as this points towards the contingency of her name, offering the reader a point of departure from where the act of naming can be usurped. Indeed, the final line of ‘Adam Posed’ has a violent verb – “hit” - to demonstrate naming. In Genesis, Eve is named twice by Adam, first as woman and then as Eve. This reinforces his dominion over her and, consequently, reinforces her sex or ‘girlness’. If a name connotes identity then Eve's identity is owned by Adam (just as the wife’s name is originally her husband’s).⁶¹ Milton demonstrates the influence of names and the power that the designator can have over its subjects when Adam names the animals. In *Paradise Lost* Milton's God tells Adam:

I bring them to receive
 From thee thir Names, and pay thee fealtie
 With low subjection;

And thus he spake, each Bird and Beast behold
 Approaching two and two, These cow'ring low
 With blandishment, each Bird stoop'd on his wing.
 I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood

⁶¹ For more on Adam and his naming of Eve see Christine Froula, ‘Rewriting Genesis: Gender and Culture in Twentieth-Century Texts’, *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 7, no. 2 (Autumn 1988): 197-220.

Thir Nature

(*PL*, VIII, 343-53)⁶²

The animals are represented as “cow'ring low/ With blandishment” under the domination of the namer. In effect, their “nature” is also appropriated by Adam and he becomes the owner of both the signified and the signifier. The image of the bird “stoop'd on his wing” is especially poignant as Finch often uses the image of the bird to represent her muse and her poetic persona as a woman writer. It is this subordinate and cowering position that she must subvert in order to name herself and the world she imagines. Chapter 5 will return to Finch's dialogue with *Paradise Lost*, whereas chapter 3 will explore the “wavering Nymph's” relation to the Fall and its subsequent introduction of sexual guilt.

⁶² John Milton, *Paradise Lost* in *Milton's Poetical Works*, ed. by Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955). All citations are taken from this edition.

Ch. 2: Montagu and the coffee house



Fig. 6: Buttons Coffee House

Part 1: 'I stood ogling of her Grace': voyeurism, impotency and homosocial bonding

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is usually associated with The Scriblerians. Valerie Rumbold states that she was “almost a Scriblerian” which suggests that Montagu wanted to enter this male-only collective but was marginalized.¹ Indeed, although the Scriblerians supported many women writers individually, including Montagu, “their one literary portrait of a woman writer is that of Pheobe Clinket.”² As Moyra Haslett argues:

Whatever their individual support for women writers then, it was this portrait which would be the more influential.³

Montagu, therefore, must define herself as a writer in relation to this representation of the slatternly sexually transgressive author, whose writing is not validated through a sanctioned writing space such as the study. In contrast to Finch, however, Montagu focuses on the coffee house as a means to attack male censorship. Moreover, she focuses on groups of men rather than the individual scholar. This may be because Finch

¹ Valerie Rumbold, *Woman's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 134.

² Moyra Haslett, *Pope to Burney, 1714-1779: Scriblerians to Bluestockings* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2003), p. 162.

³ Haslett, *Pope to Burney*, p. 162.

acknowledges her editor and amanuensis as playing the role of role of censor, whereas Montagu was both supported and ridiculed by a male urban coterie of writers.

When she first moved to London in 1715 Montagu was initiated into the literary scene by Pope and Gay, and she collaborated with them over the *Eclogues*. However, after her fallout with Pope, Montagu was publicly hostile to both Pope and Swift in a series of satirical poems, including 'The 5th Ode of Horace Imitated' and 'The Dean's Provocation for Writing the Lady's Dressing Room'. Pope himself attacked Montagu as a "greasy Sappho" which was printed in his *Miscellanies*. Significantly, these *Miscellanies* were published with Swift, and Pope said about them that "methinks we look like friends, side by side".⁴ Although their friendship may not live up to Pope's mythologisation of it, Montagu certainly regarded them as working together in an "illustrious Groupe" and homosocially bonding through her humiliated body.⁵ It is this literary relationship between groups of men and the 'ogled' female body that will be traced in this chapter.

Montagu's *Eclogues* were first written within the years 1714-1716 when Montagu "was deep in literary activity" with Alexander Pope and John Gay.⁶ Indeed, there is much controversy over the true author of the *Eclogues*, and Montagu has often been cast as collaborator and disciple to Pope and Gay, rather than an authentic and original *female* poet. John Gay had already written a 'town eclogue' ('Araminta' 1713) and so had Swift

⁴ *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols., ed. by George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), vol. II, p. 426. See also Cynthia Wall, 'Editing Desire: Pope's Correspondence with (and without) Lady Mary', *Philological Quarterly*, 71 (1992): 221-37.

⁵ Grundy, *Selected Letters*, p. 445. For example, when *Gulliver's Travels* appeared, Montagu responded to it with "no very friendly feelings" and believed that it was written by Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot. Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 272. Hereafter cited as *LMWM*.

⁶ *Preface to E&P*, p. x.

(‘A Town Eclogue’ 1713). As Isobel Grundy states, Pope, Swift and Gay “carried with them their poetic reputations, which were to prove enduring”. Moreover, “they were older than Lady Mary by one year and four respectively, and they were male. For these reasons it has always been supposed that they were the leaders in the joint literary enterprise which followed, and she the disciple.”⁷ Montagu struggled to be a writer in her own right and protested her authorship in the writing of the *Eclogues*. For example, in her Harrowby Manuscript Montagu annotated volume 1 with “wrote by me, without the assistance of one Line from any other”.⁸

This chapter will examine the site of the coffee house as Montagu represents it in her eclogue ‘Tuesday’. This poem portrays two gallants in an empty coffee house, and through them Montagu makes wider claims about the processes by which art is produced. In other words, Montagu focuses on a space from which she as a woman is prohibited and yet which is open to male writers including the Scriblerians. The coffee house was often a site of male writing. For example, *The Tatler* – which Montagu describes as “that vile paper” – was written half in the apartment and half in the coffee house.⁹ It is not just the exclusionary nature of this site which Montagu focuses on, however, but also how men relate to each other – and produce art – through the displaced and yet surveyed

⁷ *LMWM*, p. 93.

⁸ Quoted in *Preface to E&P*, p. x. Montagu also included ‘Friday’ as “mine” in Dodsley’s Collection. See *LMWM*, p. 108. See also Ann Messenger, *His and Hers: Essays in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Lexington, Kentucky: the University of Kentucky, 1986).

⁹ *CL*, 1. 18. Donald F. Bond writes that “Accounts of ‘gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment’ were to be dated from White’s chocolate-house, poetry and drama from Will’s coffee-house, and ‘learning’ from the Grecian, while news was to appear from St. James’s coffee-house; ‘and what else I shall on any other Subject offer, shall be dated from my own Apartment’.” See Introduction, in *The Tatler*, 3 vols., ed. by Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), vol. 1, p. x. All citations are taken from this edition.

bodies of women. Montagu locates male writing in the coffee house and through this site she reveals and mocks *how* men write and *what* men write about.

“fellowship of coffee houses”

Mr Spectator famously declared that his intention was to bring “Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses”.¹⁰ ‘Tuesday’ portrays two mock shepherds boasting about their sexual success with women who are located in the dressing room. These shepherds are portrayed in the coffee house. Until recently coffee houses were acknowledged to be “almost exclusively male”.¹¹ According to Aytoun Ellis there were as many as 2000 coffee houses in London and they were predominantly male, homosocial and had “a spirit of fraternity”.¹² Ellis states that “coffee houses grew so popular in London that ‘one did not ask ... where a man lived, but which coffee-house he frequented’.”¹³ Glenn J. Broadhead calls the eighteenth century “a century enthusiastic for the buzzing fellowship of coffee houses”.¹⁴ These male spaces were publicly associated with literary, political and intellectual activity as well as polite Augustan conversation – all encoded as

¹⁰ *The Spectator*, Monday, March 12, 1711, ed. by Donald F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 10, vol. 1, p. 44.

¹¹ *Women and Literature in Britain 1700 – 1800*, ed. by Vivien Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 6.

¹² See Aytoun Ellis, *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee Houses* (London, 1956), pp. xiv, xv-xvi, and pp. 45, 51, 98. See also Edward F. Robinson, *The Early History of the Coffee Houses* (London, 1893); E. Hepple Hall, *Coffee Taverns, Cocoa Houses, and Coffee Palaces* (London, 1883); B. Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963).

¹³ Ellis, *The Penny Universities*, p. 38.

¹⁴ Glenn J. Broadhead, ‘Samuel Johnson and the Rhetoric of Conversation’, *SEL*, 20, 3 (Summer 1980): 461-474, (p. 461). See also Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 231.

masculine. It was a space where “conversation” took place as opposed to gossip, which was a feminine pastime conducted at the teatable. It was “a congenial space free of rowdy argument and warmed by the presence of a friendly and politically like-minded coterie.”¹⁵

The masculinisation of the coffee house has been contested, however. In “Coffee Politicians Does Create’: Coffee Houses and Restoration Political Culture’, Stephen Pincus overturns Habermas’ argument that “their masculine character was the reason why coffee houses were venues for economic and political discussions, in contrast to the literary and artistic interests of the eighteenth-century French *salons* which were “essentially shaped by women””.¹⁶ Following Pincus, Helen Berry argues that women did frequent coffeehouses, but they would have been of a lower social order such as maids:

on the whole custom militated against women speaking in public places, or exhibiting studious habits by reading periodicals on their own in coffee houses. It is likely that more women were present in coffee houses for business than leisure purposes, and that these women would have been of a lower social status.¹⁷

¹⁵ Mack, *Alexander Pope*, p. 231.

¹⁶ Helen Berry, “Nice and Curious Questions’: Coffee Houses and the Representation of Women in John Dunton’s *Athenian Mercury*’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 12, no. 2 (Autumn 1997): 257-276, (p. 261). Citing Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 33. See also Stephen Pincus “Coffee Politicians Does Create’: Coffee Houses and Restoration Political Culture’, *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (December, 1995): 807-34; Markman Elias, ‘Coffee-women, ‘The Spectator’ and the public sphere’, in *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere*, pp. 399-416; Emma J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (London and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

¹⁷ Helen Berry, ‘Nice and Curious Questions’, p. 261.

Indeed, the author of *The Men's Answer to the Women's Petition Against Coffee* (London, 1674) writes that "There being scarce a Coffee-Hut but affords a Tawdry Woman, a wanton Daughter, or a Buxome Maide, to accommodate Customers"¹⁸ According to him, the women who enter the space of the coffee house (like the woman writer) are sexually transgressive. Nevertheless, as Moyra Haslett has pointed out, all of these counter-arguments to Habermas "tend to refine his model rather than challenge it."¹⁹ For the purposes of this chapter, the space of the coffee house will be set up as masculine because it would have been prohibited to an aristocrat like Montagu, and she portrays it as inhabited solely by men.

Like the gentleman's study, the site of the coffee house is also one of anxiety. For example, Addison and Steele use the coffeehouse milieu in their periodical essays "as a sort of virtual stage on which they might expose the foibles and follies of social life in public space."²⁰ *The Spectator* praises the coffee house as a place where "men who have business or good sense in their faces" visit "either to transact affairs or enjoy conversation."²¹ However, as Brian Cowan argues, "[f]ar from championing an easily accessible coffeehouse society, unrestrained newspaper reading, and political debate in the public sphere, *The Spectator* project aimed to reign in and discipline these practices." The Spectatorial public sphere "did not encourage or even condone Habermas' "political public-ness"²² Rather, it sought to "tame it and make it anodyne."²³ The transgressive

¹⁸ 'Well-willer', *The Men's Answer to the Women's Petition Against Coffee* (London, 1674), p. 2.

¹⁹ Haslett, *Pope to Burney*, p. 142.

²⁰ Brian Cowan, 'Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37, no. 3 (2004): 345-366, (p. 348).

²¹ *The Spectator*, 49, 1: 210.

²² Cowan, 'Mr Spectator and the Coffee house Public Sphere', p. 346.

²³ Cowan, 'Mr Spectator and the Coffee house Public Sphere', p. 346.

potential in having men of different ranks mixing together fueled anxieties of chaos and unmanliness. For example, the author of *A Character of Coffee and Coffee-Houses* by M. P. (London, 1661) criticises the coffee house as “mere Chaos” and the “great privilege of equality is only peculiar to the Golden Age, and to a Coffee-house”.²⁴ In her ‘Tuesday’ eclogue, Montagu mimics *The Spectator*’s strategy of employing the coffee house as stage and manipulates fears over men’s unrestrained speech. She writes within a tradition of correcting unmanly Whig behaviour. Nevertheless, she deviates from *The Spectator* through her portrayals of masculinity as de-naturalised performance. Far from seeking to consolidate a regulated manly identity, Montagu parodies it and exploits men’s fears over sexuality and effeminacy. She represents men who are deeply involved in consumerism and display, and who are sexually unmanly.

“ogling”

Montagu explores the performativity of masculinity through presenting the coffee house as if it were the Restoration stage. Isobel Grundy has discussed the influence of the Restoration theatre in her article ‘Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Theatrical Eclogue’.²⁵ Montagu enthusiastically went to the theatre, wrote two plays, read plays and participated in drama criticism when she wrote an analysis of Addison’s *Cato*. Furthermore, according to Cynthia Lowenthal, Montagu observed “social life in England

²⁴ M. P., *A Character of Coffee and Coffee-Houses* (London, 1661). Cited in Stephen B. Dobranski, “Where Men of Differing Judgements Croud’: Milton and the Culture of the Coffee Houses’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 9, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 35-56 (p. 37).

²⁵ Isobel Grundy, ‘Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Theatrical Eclogue’, *Lumen*, ed., by Carol Gibson-Wood and Gordon D. Fulton (Edmonton, Alberta: Academic Printing and Publishing, 1998): 63-75.

as though it were a stage".²⁶ In Montagu's letters she writes of the world and its performances as "a very pretty Farce":

I confess a severe Critic that would examine by ancient Rules might find many defects, but tis ridiculous to judge seriously of a puppet show. Those that can laugh and be diverted with absurditys are the wisest Spectators, be it of writeing, actions, or people.²⁷

It is the court and its 'puppet show' which provide the scenes and the drama of Montagu's *Eclogues*. Montagu depicts the backdrop, clothes, make-up, props as well as elements of disguise and role playing which are typical to Restoration theatre.²⁸ Like the theatre, the textual frame of the coffee house in 'Tuesday' contains briefer scenes, "sharply visualized narratives which function like an inner scene opened at the back of the contemporary stage."²⁹ The backdrop of the poem describes fashionable society dressing for their own appearance as an audience at the opera. Not only do Patch and Silliander fantasise or boast about undressing women, but the characters of 'Tuesday' are defined and sexualized by their dress. Prostitutes are signified by their "tatter'd Riding hoods", (8) "the happier Sinners"(9) by their "Manteaus" which "their Complexions suit" (10) and the Beaux "step home to put fresh Linnen on"(15).

²⁶ Lowenthal, *Familiar Letter*, p. 171.

²⁷ *CL*, III. 89.

²⁸ See Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642-1737* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988); *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. by Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Edward Burns, *Restoration Comedy* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1987).

²⁹ Grundy, 'The Theatrical Eclogue', p. 65.

'Tuesday' is also set against the backdrop of the opera, a rapidly developing fashionable past time:³⁰

The Opera Queens had finish'd halfe their Faces
 And City Dames already taken Places,
 Fops of all kinds to see the Lion run,
 The Beauties wait till the first Act's begun (T, 11-14)³¹

The lion refers to a scene in the Opera of *Hydaspes* by Francesco Mancini which was ridiculed by *The Spectator* as featuring a man dressed as a lion. *The Spectator* derided the tastes of the opera audience as "its pleasures are seen to be trivial and laughable" and John Dennis condemned Italian opera as effeminate and foreign.³² The opera was an exhibition in which men dressed as lions, castrati sang, and where female sopranos were cast as men. In addition, the frequent device of opera plots which dictated that women disguise themselves as men guaranteed that this was a stage "where travesty was a normal rule rather than a perverse exception."³³ Moreover, singers of opera were the origin of a celebrity system, and the actors were just as much revered and sought after as the parts they played.³⁴ Against this contextualized backdrop, 'Tuesday' parodies Restoration theatre, the court of George I, and Italian opera. By doing so it also parodies masculinity, revealing it as a contradictory performance.

³⁰ Derek Alsop, "'Strains of New Beauty': Handel and the Pleasures of Italian Opera, 1711-28", in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), pp. 133-163 (p. 134).

³¹ 'Tuesday' hereafter cited as 'T'.

³² Alsop, 'Strains of New Beauty', p. 148.

³³ Alsop, 'Strains of New Beauty', p. 156.

³⁴ Alsop, 'Strains of New Beauty', p. 141.

This exposition of masculinity as performance is echoed in Montagu's mimicry of the pastoral form. To employ the pastoral genre as a woman writer is to subvert it, as women are traditionally and conventionally absent and silent, and their absence inspires the shepherds to sing. Because of her sensitivity to sexuality and sexed roles, Montagu's mimicry of Virgil's *Eclogues* is not simply a replication of Pope and Gay's "perverted pastoral" satire on contemporary fashionable society.³⁵ In employing the genre of the pastoral Montagu retroactively collaborates with other female poets, such as Finch, who have appropriated the tropes and conventions of the pastoral. Indeed, to articulate the voice of the silenced woman, the woman who has been absent and yet enabled the voice of the male poet, is to subvert the very meaning and production of masculinity. Montagu actually mimics Virgil and Pope in order to politicise and render vulnerable the trope of the individual 'manly' poet. By speaking through the voice of a woman Montagu redefines it. Furthermore, popular translations of Virgil were by men and Montagu owned a copy written by Dryden, as well as Pope's four pastorals which were Virgilian rewritings. This myth of rural masculinity was particularly seductive for Pope in his construction of a heroic manliness or masculinity, and much of his production of the virtuous and heterosexual man draws on the homosocial world of the golden pastoral age. This is a masculinity polarised from effeminacy, from women and from 'effeminate' men.³⁶ The

³⁵ Ann Messenger, *His and Hers*, p. 91.

³⁶ These effeminate men, also known as fops and beaux, are a means to distinguish manly masculinity from such effeminate pursuits as dress, performance, and sex. Effeminacy did not, however, signify homosexuality. See Philip Carter, 'Men about town: representations of foppery and masculinity in early eighteenth-century urban society', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 31-57. Moreover, Carolyn D. Williams argues that Pope singles out the Phaeacians in *The Odyssey* as "feminised foils" to Odysseus' masculinity, to the point of changing certain meanings from the original text. The Phaeacians "sole delight" is "to dress, to dance [...] and love by night" (*Odyssey*, viii, 285-6) – frighteningly unmasculine behaviour which Pope and Broome hastily condemn and contain in their notes. See Carolyn

manly man is associated with classical learning, and can only be recognised by those trained in the classics.³⁷ Therefore, for Montagu to employ pastoral motifs and conventions is for her to simultaneously deconstruct and debase them. Montagu uncovers those unmanly masculinities and lampoons them in every way possible.

Much of the meaning and potency of these *Eclogues* is produced through the economy of gossip, and Montagu certainly exploits the “atmosphere of erotic titillation” which is a result of “gossip’s implicit voyeurism.”³⁸ Montagu wrote for and about the aristocrats of London, and her characters are barely disguised participants in this fashionable urban world. Montagu extracts a scandalous scene (usually sexual) from the aristocratic performances being negotiated at Court, and poetically embellishes it to satirise the sycophantic mechanics at work in fashionable society. For example ‘Tuesday’ is a satirical portrait of John Campbell (c. 1693-1770) who was made Duke of Argyll in 1761, and Algernon Seymour (1684-1750) who was styled Earl of Hertford until he became Duke of Somerset in 1748.³⁹ Patch, the victor, married a wealthy fifteen-year-old heiress in 1715, while Silliander was to marry a Maid of Honour without resources in five years time. ‘Silliander’ is a combination of ‘silly’ and ‘ander’ – ‘ander’ playing on the Greek term ‘aner’, or ‘andros’ meaning ‘man’. Patch means “a paltry fellow”, but read in

D. Williams ‘Breaking decorums: Belinda, Bays and epic effeminacy’, in *Pope: New Contexts*, ed. by David Fairer (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 59-79 (p. 67). Pope and Broome associate the Phaeacians with eighteenth-century women and link them with sexuality and luxury; their preoccupation with dress and the body are clearly inscribed as *not manly*. Significantly Montagu praises them in a letter to Francesco Algarotti 30 December 1756 where she argues that Alcinous is more of a hero than Achilles and exclaims “What an example of true Heroism!”, in Grundy, *Selected Letters*, p. 434.

³⁷ Although Pope was a Catholic and, therefore, excluded from traditional grammar school education in the classics, I am still convinced by Williams’s argument concerning Pope’s celebration of the man trained in the classics; his own exclusion does not detract from his mythologisation of the ‘Homeric man’.

³⁸ Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 11.

³⁹ *E&P*, p. 185.

the context of the metaphors of dress in this eclogue it could also refer to his half-dressed or improperly dressed character, or even the cosmetics fixed on the face.⁴⁰

Montagu complicates the conventional male to male framing of the text, through addressing her verse to a man. Moreover, it is her female eye that peeps into the coffee house and ogles at the men: her eye enters this prohibited space, subverting the convention of the man peeping into the dressing room. Mimicking Virgil's *Eclogue VIII* where:

When *Damon*, stretch'd beneath an Olive Shade,
And wildly staring upwards, thus inveigh'd (T, 21-22)⁴¹

Montagu mockingly reconfigures the olive tree into a toothpick:

And Silliander, that Alert and gay
First pick'd his Teeth and then began to say.

Why all these sighs, ah why so pensive grown?
Some cause there is that thus you sit alone.
Does hopeless Passion all this Sorrow move?
Or dost thou Envy, where the Ladies love? (T, 18-23)

⁴⁰ Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* quoted in Messenger, *His and Hers* p. 101

⁴¹ Dryden, 'The Eighth Pastoral, Or, Pharmaceutria'. Montagu owned Dryden's translations.

Patch retorts by asserting scathingly that:

If whom they love, my envy must persue,
 'Tis sure at least I never envy you. (T, 24-25)

Patch and Silliander are represented as boasting over their violent “ogling” of blushing Silvias, struggling Ladies, flashing Countesses, and undressing Celias. Patch and Silliander compete over who “the Ladies love” and Silliander confronts Patch by asking him if he envies his sexual success, boasting that:

Last Night as I Stood ogling of her Grace,
 Drinking Delicious Poison from her Face,
 The soft Enchantress did that face decline
 Nor ever rais'd her Eyes to meet with mine,
 With sudden art some secret did pretend,
 Lean'd cross two chairs to whisper to a Freind,
 While the stiff whalebone with the motion rose
 And thousand Beauties to my sight expose. (T, 60-67)

The relationship between the shepherds and the women they ogle centres around the exchange of fashionable objects. The goats and panpipes of Virgil's eclogues have metamorphosed into snuffboxes, fans and buckles. Silliander sings:

These Buckles were not forc'd, and halfe a Theft,
 But a young Countess fondly made the Gift. (T, 50-51)

These are not interactive sexual relationships, but are relationships which gain meaning through the giving and receiving of luxury items. Patch argues that "Women are always ready to receive" and boasts of his rape of "A Lady [...] spotless in her Fame" who

With gentle Strugglings let me force this Ring,
 Another Day may give Another Thing. (T, 46 - 47)

Here we can see that this Lady's sexuality is being reduced to a "thing" and a "ring". She is not a person, but has become conflated with commodities. The women's metonymic association with objects is accentuated by the shepherds' insistence on their feminine passivity. Patch boasts to Silliander about his ability to dominate, ridicule, and possess, rather than representing a reciprocal eroticism between him and a lover. Whereas the women he pursues are silent and fetishised, he pulls, presses, seizes, snatches, forces.

Furthermore, the women seem to be more associated with the Virgilian shepherds' goats than with the nymphs, as their relationship is configured through commodities and possession: Patch and Silliander, like the shepherds, tend other men's goats. For example, the breasts or the udders of the women that they fantasise over are

emphasised: there are the “thousand beauties” of the countess as well as her breasts which Patch squeezes in order to grasp her snuff box:

This Snuff box, while I begg'd, she still deny'd,
 And when I strove to snatch it, seem'd to hide,
 She laugh'd, and fled, and as I sought to seize
 With Affectation cramm'd it down her Stays:
 Yet hoped she did not place it there unseen;
 I press'd her Breasts, and pull'd it from between. (T, 54-59)

The pressing of breasts echoes the milking of goats. For example, in Virgil's second Eclogue, Corydon cries:

Besides, two Kids, that in the Valley stray'd,
 I found by chance, and to my fold convey'd:
 They drein two bagging Udders every day;
 And these shall be Companions of thy Play; (51-54)⁴²

Montagu's allusion to goats' udders and men associating women with animals, is also an implicit attack on Pope and Gay who often insulted women through animal symbols, or who represented women as surrounded by domesticated animals in order to highlight their bestial natures. In addition, fans and snuffboxes were popular euphemisms for genitalia. The women being passed between Patch and Silliander do not own their

⁴² Dryden, 'The Second Pastoral, Or, Alexis'.

sexualities; their bodies have instead been fetishised for Patch and Silliander's voyeuristic consumption. The shepherds misogynistically take women as objects and subject them to their controlling and often pornographic gaze. In this commodified position, women become objects of sexual stimulation as well as trophies to reinforce the masculine identities of the shepherds. It is about display rather than action as the shepherds do not appear to want to possess the snuffbox, only to boast about it. The women's objectification by the shepherds and their "susceptibility to processes of fetishisation" as Mary Ann Douane argues, situate the women "in relation of resemblance to the commodity form."⁴³

"male homosocial bonds"

In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that "patriarchal heterosexuality" is achieved through "the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men."⁴⁴ Consequently, we can read the erotic relationship in this poem as being between Patch and Silliander, and their "traffic of women". Just as Silliander desires the women that he meets because he can see them being controlled and dominated, so voyeurism is a means for Patch and Silliander to bond. This 'phallic flexing' between Patch and Silliander is similar to an aggressive

⁴³Mary Ann Douane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 22.

⁴⁴Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 25-26.

courtship, and this game of domination and subordination uses the female body as its battleground.

The last voyeuristic scene takes place when Patch “drunk Bohea in Celia’s dressing room.” This becomes the site where Patch watches her undress:

Warm from her Bed, to me alone within,
 Her Nightgown fasten’d with a single Pin,
 Her Nightcloaths tumbled with resistless Grace (T, 70-72)

Patch then salaciously and triumphantly relates how “Reaching for the Kettle, made her Gown unpin, / She wore no Wastcoat, and her Shift was thin.” (74-74) Her near-naked body and her position as object subjected to Patch’s controlling gaze, reinforces or repeats his identity as masculine, as disembodied mind. However, this scene also induces anxiety for the two shepherds, exemplified by Silliander hastily changing the subject to dressed women in the containment and confines of dress and the public spaces of “the Park” and the “Opera”:

See Titiana driving to the Park,
 Hast, let us follow, ‘tis not yet too Dark,
 In her all the Beauties of the Spring are seen,
 Her Cheeks are rosy, and her mantua Green (T, 76 – 79)

Patch and Silliander strayed too near into the space of the body and of sexuality, and so hastily retreat to more masked and dressed women. Celia produces anxiety in the two shepherds because she is the most undressed and 'unstayed' of all the women, and she is also the most sexually assertive. She is named and her links to tea and the dressing table associate her dangerously with uncontained sexuality.

Indeed, Patch and Silliander hastily recoil from the near-naked woman in the dressing room and discuss a femininity which is inscribed through male signs. Montagu alludes to the artists Titian and Tintoretto through the characters Titiana and Tinteretta. Tintoretto's 'Susannah and the Elders' represents a naked Susannah at her toilette being voyeuristically ogled by men (see Fig. 8, p. 187 below). Like Patch and Silliander, the men relate to each other through their visual possession of the woman's body. It is their inscription of her subordination on to her body and hence their patriarchal authority that bonds them. Sedgwick argues that homosocial desire is characterised by "the compulsory and double-edged involvement of women in all the male homosocial bonds" and "the absence of direct genital contact between men".⁴⁵ This gesture is parodied in 'Tuesday' where Patch and Silliander's courtship violently spars over the bodies of women, rivalling over who is the most masculine of the two. However, they hesitate to draw attention to their own bodies. Their relationship is, as in many Restoration plays, "not that of brotherhood, but of extreme, compulsory, and intensely volatile mastery and subordination."⁴⁶ The violence with which they treat the women only serves to emphasise

⁴⁵ Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p. 66.

⁴⁶ Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p. 66.

their relationship as a power struggle over their masculinity, rather than for women as erotic subjects.

As Sedgwick argues, to be fully a man “requires having obtained the instrumental use of a woman, having *risked* transformation by her.”⁴⁷ Risked transformation, that is, into effeminacy. However, the shepherd’s authenticity is called into question through the rhyming of “truth” and “youth”, implying that no sexual act ever took place. Nothing is really won in the end although Montagu sarcastically states that “After a Conquest so important gain’d / Unrivall’d Patch in ev’ry Ruelle gain’d” (90-91). In addition, through using the name ‘Patch’ she indicates that he is not fully dressed, not fully masculine; or rather, that masculinity, through excluding the body and femininity, can only be half-dressed, patch-like. Montagu refers to their inability to be completely sexually dressed at the start of the eclogue when she states that “No well dress’d Youth in the Coffee House remain’d” (16). Like the mocked lion in the opera, masculinity can only be a ridiculous and unconvincing performance.

The shepherds’ alienation from women and from feminine discourses suggests that Montagu represents them as homosexual lovers. Indeed, she introduces them as “two lovers” – perhaps of each other. Virgil’s *Eclogues*, after all, articulate homoerotic and bisexual experiences and desires.⁴⁸ In her article on sexuality in Virgil’s poetry, Ellen

⁴⁷ Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p. 40.

⁴⁸ See also Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Man’s Press, 1982); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Lane, 1979); Andrew P. Williams, ‘Soft Women and Softer Men: The Libertine Maintenance of Masculine Identity’, in *The Image of Manhood in Early Modern Literature: Viewing the Male*, ed. by Andrew P. Williams (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), pp. 96 – 106.

Oliensis argues that “what counted more” than the object of sexual desire “was the role an individual took in sexual intercourse: ‘penetrating’ or ‘penetrated’, ‘active’ or ‘passive’, ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’.”⁴⁹ She argues that there was great prejudice against men who assumed the ‘woman’s role’ during sex and that Virgil’s *Eclogues* dramatise every level of this ‘passivity’. Consequently in *Eclogue III* Menaclus is accused of positioning himself in a passive feminine position, of being penetrated by another man’s desire, rather than being condemned for his homosexual inclinations. Read in the light of Oliensis’s article, Patch’s and Silliander’s struggle can be understood as a battle over who will take the passive position, and this battle is fought through their supposed mastery over the bodies of women. While Pope constructs manly identities through using Homer and Virgil, Montagu employs Virgil to *lampoon* masculinity. Rather than celebrating heroic, heterosexual and learned men, Montagu is relentless in her exposition of effeminacy, male passivity and sexual deviance.

“flash in the pan”

In 1674 there was a hoax pamphlet entitled *The Women’s Petition against Coffee, Representing to Public Consideration the Grand Inconveniencies accruing to their Sex from the Excessive Use of that Drying, Enfeebling Liquor*. The women of the pamphlet claim that coffee is rendering men sexually incapable. They liken the men to young soldiers, who “when called upon Duty, their *Ammunition* is wanting; peradventure they

⁴⁹ Ellen Oliensis, ‘Sons and Lovers: sexuality and gender in Virgil’s poetry’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp. 294 -311 (pp. 296-297).

Present, but cannot give *Fire*, or at least do but *flash in the Pan*, instead of doing Execution.”⁵⁰ Through locating Patch and Silliander in the coffee house Montagu exploits the association between coffee and male sexual failure when it comes to women. Patch and Silliander are clearly not the virile libertines that they attempt to project.

Montagu further explores scenes of impotency in her satires on Pope and Swift. In ‘Verses Address’d to the Imitator of Horace’ Pope is a “fretful *Porcupine*” (73) who “shoots forth a harmless Quill”. (74) This phallic description of writing actually portrays Pope’s darts and arrows as harmless and therefore impotent and indeed this is how Montagu lampoons him : “But how should’st thou by Beauty’s Force be mov’d,/ No more for loving made, than to be lov’d?”(48-49). The metaphor of impotency is also employed in ‘The Dean’s Provocation for Writing the Lady’s Dressing Room’ which I will now turn to.

Montagu lampoons Patch and Silliander and through them (or in addition to them) Pope and Swift, and she does so in every way possible. In particular, she targets masculine sexuality, fissuring myths of heterosexual virility through portrayals of effeminacy, impotency and sexual passivity. Her critique does not appear to be a consistent and frontal attack, but bawdy and scornful. ‘Masculinity’ is exposed by

⁵⁰ *The Women’s Petition against Coffee, Representing to Public Consideration the Grand Inconveniencies accruing to their Sex from the Excessive Use of that Drying, Enfeebling Liquor*, p. 3. See also *A Character of Coffee and Coffee-Houses* by ‘M.P.’ and published (London, 1661) for another warning on the links between coffee and impotency. Impotency was an “obsession” in seventeenth-century literature. See Roger Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears: A Study of Pornographic, Obscene and Bawdy Works Written or Published in England in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1979), I, p. 105. See also Jessica Munns, “‘But to the touch were soft’: Pleasure, Power and Impotence in ‘The Disappointment’ and ‘The Golden Age’, in *Aphra Behn*, ed. by Janet Todd (Hampshire and London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1999), pp. 85-103.

Montagu as performance and, therefore, one which Montagu could represent herself as doing as well as any man. Moreover, her performance can be more convincing as she adopts male theatrics without risk; she has no maleness to compromise. Montagu's self-representations as male or masculine will be explored briefly in part 2 when she mimics Rochester, and more thoroughly in chapter 6 when her comparison with Pygmalion will be interrogated.

Part 2: "The nymph grown Furious, roar'd": Montagu's response to Jonathan Swift's 'The Lady's Dressing Room'⁵¹

These themes of effeminacy, consumerism, homosociality, and impotency are further explored in my reading of 'The Dean's Provocation for Writing the Lady's Dressing Room, A Poem', a text that has not yet received critical attention.⁵² In this satirical poem, Montagu mimics Swift's voice and turns his self-representations and his paradigms of ideal manliness against him. She parodies Swift's poetic voice through employing such literary Swiftian devices as octosyllabic couplets, blunt diction, digression and animal parallels. In fact, even this strategy of mimicry can be read as Swiftian.⁵³ Although Swift has been rescued from the label of misogynist by feminist critics who have read him as ironising masculinity, Montagu appears to read him as embracing a more feminine manliness. However, this manliness, as lampooned by Montagu, is regarded by her as another form of misogyny.⁵⁴ Moreover, Montagu suggests

⁵¹ A version of this article is published in *Misogynisms* ed. by Britta Zangen (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 71-88.

⁵² It was printed as "The Dean's Provocation for Writing the Lady's Dressing Room, A Poem" on 8 February 1734, two years after Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room." Grundy states that "Lady Mary's draft and fair copy of this work clearly mark her as its author, though its topic and style caused her to exclude it from the album of acknowledged work which she regularly showed around." See *LMWM*, p. 342. I will use the version that was printed by Robert Halsband as "The Lady's Dressing Room' Explicated By A Contemporary", in *The Augustan Milieu*, ed. by Henry Knight Miller, Eric Rothstein, and G.S. Rousseau (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), pp. 225-31.

⁵³ Robert Halsband states that "In her jeu d'esprit Lady Mary very cleverly parodies Swift's own verse style – his octosyllabic couplets, his blunt, unpoetic diction, his digression, animal parallels, sententiae, and even his use of scatological words – as in her concluding lines." See Halsband, "Condemned to Petticoats': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as Feminist and Writer", in *The Dress of Words: Essays on Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature in Honor of Richmond P. Bond*, ed. by Robert B. White, Jr. (Kansas: University of Kansas Libraries, 1978), pp. 35 – 52 (p. 41).

⁵⁴ There is much dispute among literary critics as to whether or not Swift is a misogynist. For example, Katherine M. Rogers wrote *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966) in which she explored Swift's misogyny, while her book *Feminism*

that through celebrating his sexual inadequacies and lack of virility, Swift has weakened his artistic powers.⁵⁵ Montagu who tropes sexual energy with creativity in her works, represents Swift as a dull hack writer because he has denied sexuality. In addition, she describes what really happens when men go into the lady's dressing room, exchanging his peeping eye for her own.

“the Bow’r”

The scene between the impotent Swift and the roaring Betty is enacted in the space of “the Bow’r”. This is a supposedly Golden Age uncorrupted space which is transmogrified into a site of contemporary consumer practices and corrupted sexualities. Like ‘Tuesday’ it is also depicted like a stage with subscenes in the street. Inscribing the bower trope in her satirical attack on Swift’s misogyny, involves alluding to and employing a literary tradition of bower conventions as featured, for example, in Ovid’s *Amores*, the Italian epic tradition, and the works of Spenser and Milton. The bower is typically troped as an enclosed green or ‘natural’ space and is identified with female sexuality, with a passive feminine object or nymph. Heterosexually configured, the bower is conventionally discovered by a questing male poet and the erotic encounter between the male wanderer and feminine principle is represented as sexually and textually

in Eighteenth-Century England (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982) published sixteen years later uses the same textual evidence to celebrate his proto-feminism. See also Louise K Bennett, *Swift’s Poetic Worlds* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1981); Mary Ann Doody, ‘Swift Among the Women’, in *Jonathan Swift*, ed. by Nigel Wood (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 196-224; Ellen Pollak, ‘Comment on Susan Gubar’s ‘The Female Monster in Augustan Satire’’, *Signs*, 3, no. 3 (1978): 728-32.

⁵⁵ For her various disparaging and humorous opinions on Swift articulated especially in the 1750s see *CL*, vol. III, pp. 56, 57, 158. Grundy states that Montagu “always disliked” Swift. *E&P*, p. 273.

reproductive. The bower becomes the site of man's interpellation into a heterosexual masculine subjectivity. He is vested with impregnating powers that realize his poetic potency, his identity as writing subject. This staging of the creative masculine subject and suppression of female potency functions to associate poetic creativity with "the norms of male subjectivity."⁵⁶ This site, which embodies and naturalizes the masculine word and feminine silence, normalizing the heterosexual imperative, is a loaded one for a woman writing queer sexualities. In her attack on Swift's 'The Lady's Dressing Room' Montagu's bower nymph is depicted as roaring through this masquerade where poetic processes are "performed by metaphors which have become so imbued with tradition that they no longer call attention to their own performance."⁵⁷

In the Scriblerians' satirical and bucolic works classical tropes such as the pastoral bower are transmogrified into urban fashionable spaces. The woman's dressing room, in particular, functions as a mock bower space that attempts to expose woman's corruption through luxury. Indeed in slang terminology the bower became a euphemism for female genitalia.⁵⁸ In Swift's 'A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed', his "lovely goddess" is depicted as "climbing to her bower", a bower that has metamorphosed into an eighteenth-century dressing room. Furthermore, the growth of a commodity economy coinciding with London as a "shop window for the whole country" accentuated or highlighted woman's object status and her role in the mechanics of market exchange.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Rachel Crawford, 'Troping the Subject: Behn, Smith, Hemans and the Poetics of the Bower', *Studies in Romanticism*, 38 (Summer 1999): 249 – 279 (p. 254).

⁵⁷ Crawford, 'Troping the Bower', p. 264.

⁵⁸ Crawford, 'Troping the Bower', p. 255.

⁵⁹ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 21.

Like Montagu, Swift can and has been read as sympathizing with woman's artificial and fragmented position, her split self as she constructs her femininity through the mirror and the male gaze. Through contrasting the languishing but innocent nymphs of the bower convention with the harsh realities of woman's position in a patriarchal mercantile society, Montagu and Swift can be read as exposing the female "condition as prostitute".⁶⁰

Nevertheless, in Swift's scatological poems the (un)dressing nymph's femininity, however artificial, still serves as a creative stimulation for the male pen, for male subjectivity. Although the nymph of the bower convention is grotesquely satirized as a pitiful prostitute, the *I* is still emphatically male as *he* muses on how to construct *her* objectified feminine artifice:

But how shall I describe the arts
 To re-collect the scattered parts?
 Or show the anguish, toil, and pain,
 Of gathering up herself again? (66-69)⁶¹

In his scatological poems Swift draws on the rhetorical power inscribed by the misogynist literary tradition of the woman's dressing room and the bower, in order to

⁶⁰ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One* quoted in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, ed. by Isabelle De Courtivron and Elaine Marks, trans. by Claudia Reeder (Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), p. 106.

⁶¹ *Jonathan Swift: The Complete Poems*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Harmondsworth and New Haven: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983) All citations are taken from this edition.

reinforce the controversial impact of his poetry. He explicitly employs the imagery of disease, excrement, bestiality and female duplicity in his portrayal of the feminine space.

In contrast to the often misogynist and overtly sexual masculinity of the Restoration period, Swift configures a softer Augustan manliness. For example, in 'Cadenus and Vanessa', Swift projects a poetic persona who is an older, intellectual and desexualised teacher. Nevertheless, Swift actually rewrites the bower trope so that he can incorporate the ascetic denial of the male body. In other words, the male poet is creative without becoming physically intertwined with the sucking and avaricious feminine principle; artistic reproduction is achieved without the sex. Sexuality, fragmentation and effeminacy are all projected on to the foul body of woman and the artistic eye remains aloof and ironic. Swift represents Strephon as displacing his own fear of male dismemberment on to the dressing and undressing woman, thus configuring a masculinity that appears normal, as denoting humanity. Significantly Swift succeeds (through polarising his poetic voice from Celia) in troping the male body with rationality, not by describing man as necessarily disembodied but by portraying the Other, the excluded sites, the chaotic spectre that haunts masculine identity. Furthermore, because woman is explicitly associated with corruption but also with temptation and sexual arousal she symbolically serves to desexualise man, "to disclaim male ownership of the body and its desires."⁶²

⁶² Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, p. 6. See also Susan Gubar, 'The Female Monster in Augustan Satire', *Signs*, 3, no. 2 (Winter 1977): 380 – 94, in which Gubar argues that Swift creates female monsters and inhibits them from "attempting the pen", p. 393.

Indeed, in 'The Lady's Dressing Room' Celia's dress is innocent becoming tainted by the foul leaking body of Celia as "Things, which must not be exprest":

When plumpt into the reeking Chest;
 Send up an excremental Smell
 To taint the Parts from whence they fell.
 The Pettycoats and Gown perfume,
 Which waft a Stink round every Room. (LD, 524-30)⁶³

By polarizing his textually inscribed masculine I/eye from the sexualised body of the woman at her toilette, Swift aims to extricate his narrative voice from the commodity culture that pervades fashionable society. Swift can be read as portraying woman as masquerade, "as artifactual, gestural, a theatrical creature who can be taken apart and put back together."⁶⁴ Through this polarization, Swift configures a more cerebral and more physically controlled, more ocular masculinity.⁶⁵ The poet's manliness becomes associated with the head - "the Paradise of thought" (DP, 22) - and is primarily configured through the metaphor of the eye and its specular distance from the body and the sexual chaos that it entails. In 'The Lady's Dressing Room', Swift creates "order from confusion sprung", this confusion being the overtly sexualised body.

⁶³ Swift, 'The Lady's Dressing Room', hereafter cited as LD.

⁶⁴ Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), pp. 373-4.

⁶⁵ It can be argued that Strephon actually transfers his experience in sight to smell and, therefore, his sexuality is not primarily located through the eye. However, in Montagu's response she appears to be attacking this cerebral and voyeuristic masculinity.

“Bursting into pieces”

This repudiation of sexual prowess is also expressed in ‘Epistle to a Lady’ where Swift celebrates his impotency (in the eighteenth-century sense of premature ejaculation).

In this poem he compares his penis to artillery:

Have you seen a rocket fly?
 You could swear it pierced the sky:
 It but reached the middle air,
 Bursting into pieces there [...]. (EP, 261-64)⁶⁶

Like this rocket, Swift “should burst and bursting drop” rendering him powerless and feminine in terms of his pen and his penis. However, his premature “fire” is depicted as impregnating the woman’s “frigid brain” in order to

Make you able upon sight
 To decide of wrong and right;
 Talk with sense whate’re you please on;
 Learn to relish truth and reason. (EP, 281-84)

In this poem Swift configures his lack of sexual power as educationally reproductive. Rather than focusing on feminine charms and objectification, Swift encourages women to

⁶⁶ Swift, ‘Epistle to a Lady’ (1733). Hereafter cited as EP.

renounce their vanity and their flesh in order to embrace educative and morally reformatory pursuits. In this way, Swift's disembodied masculinity can also be recognized as a feminine ideal. Indeed, Swift's "protean sensibility" is regarded by many feminist critics as demonstrating "empathic knowledge of what women are like".⁶⁷ Felicity Nussbaum, for example, reads the scatological poems as encouraging men to be released "from passion and its attendant madness"⁶⁸ and Carol Barash finds "Swift's grotesque and disfigured female bodies compelling, even heroic in their dismemberment".⁶⁹ Margaret Anne Doody welcomes Swift as "urging self-respect" in women by encouraging them to focus on their education, thus transcending their traditional conflation with the body.⁷⁰ Moreover, Laura Brown argues that the feminist critic should "pause between the exposure of misogyny in the canon and the discovery of an early ally in the struggle against colonialism".⁷¹

Nevertheless, Judith C. Mueller argues that the ending of 'Epistle to a Lady' represents "a kind of withdrawal or disappointment that dashes expectations Swift has created in the 'Epistle' by departing from the passion, frustration, and emotional chaos of the rest of the piece".⁷² The effect of this withdrawal is that the "hysteric is reabsorbed into the patriarchal family, and Swift finally speaks in one voice, assumes one wisdom".⁷³ He ultimately reaffirms phallic power and it is precisely his lack of sexual prowess, his

⁶⁷ Nora F. Crow, 'Swift and the Woman Scholar', in *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers* ed. by Donald D. Mell (London: Associated UP, 1996), pp. 222-38 (p. 223).

⁶⁸ Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate*, p. 112.

⁶⁹ Carol Barash, 'Review of Carol Houlihan Flynn, *The Body in Swift and Defoe*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27, no. 2 (1993-94): 326-28 (p. 327).

⁷⁰ Doody, 'Swift Among the Women', p. 220.

⁷¹ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 174.

⁷² Judith C. Mueller, 'Imperfect Enjoyment at Market Hill: Impotence, Desire, and Reform in Swift's Poems to Lady Acheson', *ELH*, 66 (1999): 51-70 (p. 66).

⁷³ Mueller, 'Imperfect Enjoyment at Market Hill', p. 66.

inability to perform which gives him educational and cerebral power and serves as “a narcissistic project of self-replication”.⁷⁴ Moreover, in staging his impotency Swift actually draws on a misogynist trope of the Restoration wits – that of ‘imperfect enjoyment’.⁷⁵ The sharing of sexual impotency between men in fact functions to reconcile masculine textual and sexual authority, as the speaker of the imperfect enjoyment poem is usually male thus “establishing a sympathetic bond between the craft of the poetic storyteller and the creative project of the male lover”.⁷⁶

In reality, the staging of phallic failure is yet another means to cement homosocial bonds and consequently maintain masculine hegemonic power. Mark Breitenberg argues that because masculinity “is inherently anxious”, men necessarily need to confirm their identities through staging and anticipating contradictions in the patriarchal systems which support them. This staging simultaneously enables “patriarchy’s reproduction and continuation of itself”.⁷⁷ Men enact these anxieties through “a shared language of suffering and distress”, and through naming a common experience and shared adversary they ultimately cement homosocial bonds and masculine identities.⁷⁸ Moreover, in her discussion of the metaphor of impotency in the French fin de siècle novel, Margaret Waller argues that men’s self-representation as feminine “only *appears* to negate the

⁷⁴ Mueller, ‘Imperfect Enjoyment at Market Hill’, p. 66.

⁷⁵ For discussions of the genre of imperfect enjoyment poems see Richard E. Quaintance, ‘French Sources of the Restoration ‘Imperfect Enjoyment’ Poem’, *Philological Quarterly*, 42, no. 2 (1963): 190-199. Quaintance cites Ovid’s *Amores* and Petronius’ *Satyricon* as possible antecedents to this Restoration theme. See also Carole Fabricant, ‘Rochester’s World of Imperfect Enjoyment’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 73, 3 (1974): 338 – 350.

⁷⁶ Lisa M. Zeitz and Peter Thoms, ‘Power, Gender, and Identity in Aphra Behn’s ‘The Disappointment’’, *SEL*, 37 (1997): 501-516 (p. 511).

⁷⁷ Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, p. 13.

sexual politics of the libertine novels of male prowess".⁷⁹ She states that male writers "adapt the powers of the weak" including refusal and silence (both of which Swift exploits in 'Epistle to a Lady') in order to "shore up power"; that the male writer or protagonist assumes feminine qualities "not in order to praise women but to expel them from the scene".⁸⁰ The fiction of impotence thereby becomes a means of "authorizing of empowerment". As Mueller states in her reading of Swift's *Market Hill* poems, "when Swift seems weak we should be wary".⁸¹

In her poem, Montagu locates the cause of Swift's disgust for woman in the scene of his impotency. However, her exposition of his phallic failure functions differently from that celebrated by Swift in 'Epistle to a Lady'. Instead of troping it with his rational powers, she associates Swift's impotence with his creative weakness. Rather than applauding Swift's more feminine manliness, Montagu lampoons it as a castrated or impotent identity. Furthermore, she exposes it as a hypocritical mask for his repressed rakish appetites and his foppish vanity. Just as Swift condemns the rituals, gestures, and disciplines of femininity as artificial and inconsistent, so Montagu satirises Swift's masculinity as equally performed and fragmented. In effect, Montagu employs Swift's self-representation against him. She does not allow him to recuperate his phallic power, nor his ability to educate, to impregnate anyone's frigid brain. Rather than allowing him to expend his feminine discourse, to exorcise the hysteric, she leaves him feminine. Furthermore, she links misogyny to debility and effeminacy, rather than virility and

⁷⁹ Margaret Waller, *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p. 5.

⁸⁰ Waller, *The Male Malady*, pp. 3, 176, 183.

⁸¹ Mueller, 'Imperfect Enjoyment at Market Hill', p. 66.

manliness, thus exposing the various manifestations through which hatred of woman can be expressed.

The speaker of Montagu's poem is detached from the audience so that rather than descending to Swift's level of self-exaltation, Montagu takes the more complex path of identifying Swift as thoroughly and persistently complying with those symbols of the flesh which he persecutes so relentlessly. These symbols are variously located in the consumerist and effeminate discourses of the early eighteenth century. By laying the blame of luxury and mercantile capitalism at the feet of the avaricious woman, Swift constructs an ideal of masculinity that is exempt from imperial responsibility. It is this paradigm of manliness that Montagu represents as hypocritical and artificial. Through lampooning the figure of Swift, Montagu uncovers the divided, embodied and hysterical being that is subsumed under the normalization and naturalization of masculinity. She reveals that underneath his softer manliness lurks a deep-seated misogyny which rears its head when Swift is at his weakest.

“With Care his Diamond Ring displays”

Focusing on the image of adornment, in particular the ring, the wig, and clerical costume, Montagu reveals Swift as fetishising the avaricious characteristics that he purports to despise. She uses his metaphors of dress against him. Montagu

metamorphoses her textual Swift into the vain feminine consumer that provides the figure of humiliation in his scatological poems:

The Doctor, in a clean starch'd Band,
 A Golden Snuff-box in his Hand,
 With Care his Diamond Ring displays,
 And artful shows its various Rays;
 While grave he stalks down – Street,
 His dearest – to meet. (DP, 1-6)

Montagu commodifies the masculine title of 'Doctor' and the religious apparel of the band, associating them with the artifice of Celia's dressing room. Indeed, the language through which Swift is depicted alludes to his own cruel portrait of Corinna in "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed":

Now, picking out a crystal eye,
 She wipes it *clean*, and lays it by.
 Her eyebrows from a mouse's hide,
 Stuck on with *art* on either side,
 Pulls off with *care*, and first *displays* 'em [...; my italics]⁸²

In contrast to his dressing room nymph, however, it is Swift who engages in public exhibitionism as he "stalks" foppishly and self-consciously through London streets. It is

⁸² Swift, 'A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed', 11-15.

he who is linked to a “various” nature, a nature conventionally attributed to women and their duplicitous characters. Furthermore, the band, snuffbox, ring are all eighteenth-century slang for female genitalia, and contrast with the fashionable props of the cane or the sword. It is Swift’s ring that embodies the masculine symbol of the sun and its penetrating “Rays” rather than his own manly self. By depicting Swift through these images, Montagu reverses the male gaze and objectifies Swift by polarizing him from her narrative ‘I’. Mimicking Strephon’s inventory, Montagu describes Swift’s feminine “to-be-looked-at-ness” as configured through his dress and fashionable adornments.⁸³

Far from distancing himself from the polluted feminine spaces and expressing disdain at the artifice that lurks within, Montagu’s Swift is represented as desperate to enter:

Long had he waited for this Hour,
 Nor gain’d Admittance to the Bow’r;
 Had jok’d, and punn’d, and swore, and writ,
 Try’d all his Gallantry and Wit (DP, 7-10)

However, he is not able to seduce Betty through his manly charm or poetic skill. In a passage laden with innuendoes, Swift is depicted as liaising with Betty’s maid:

⁸³ See Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures: Theories of Representation and Difference* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 19.

Jenny, her Maid, could taste a Rhyme,
 And griev'd to see him lose his time,
 Had kindly whisper'd in his Ear,
 For twice two Pounds you enter here;
 My Lady vows without that Sum,
 It is in vain you write or come. (DP, 15-20)

Swift is depicted as relishing the commodities that adorn his body, but his sexual relations are also represented as being part of the market exchange that he appears to take such pleasure in. Furthermore, this is not the sacred bower of Milton's Adam and Eve, and Swift is no innocent rustic Adam or desexualised Cadenus. Instead, Montagu depicts Swift as paying to enter the lady's dressing room.

As well as embracing feminine adornments, her Swift is also configured through the masculine images of writing, learning, and politics. He is depicted in a "Paradise of Thought" (DP, 22) and repeatedly referred to through his masculine titles of "Dean", "Doctor", "Rev'rand", "Priest". Nevertheless, through the satirical voice of Montagu these masculine attributes sound hollow and narcissistic. When Swift meets his "dearest Betty" Montagu echoes the image of Belinda bowing at her toilette:

The destin'd Off'ring now he brought,
 And in a Paradise of Thought;
 With a low Bow approach'd the Dame. (DP, 21-23)

Swift is unable to 'see' Betty until he pays her and when he does enter her space, he is a "[f]umbler", weak and mole-like, he has "th'impossible in view" and is "with learning blind". He never touches Betty, but only "peeps" (DP, 81, 56, 36, 68).

"heighten'd by toupet"

Just as Swift wishes to expose femininity as constructed through the masquerade of cosmetics and apparel, so Montagu reveals the artifice behind the masquerade of manliness. Echoing lines from Swift's 'The Beasts Confession' which portray "the fine dressed sparks, [...] with what they call toupees on their heads",⁸⁴ Montagu attributes this vanity to Swift himself: "With Admiration oft we see, / Hard Features heighten'd by Toupet" (DP, 41-42). This image of the wig signifies manly learnedness, man's superior education. Nevertheless, Montagu hints that the wig functions as a mask so that: "The Beau affects the Politician, / Wit is the Citizen's Ambition" (DP, 43-44). According to Montagu, underneath the "displays" of masculinity as preached by Pope and Swift, there is "so much rhyme and little reason" (DP, 45-46). Underneath the manly apparel of the toupee, men fail to live up to the ideals they espouse: "But Man, vain Man, who grasps the whole, / Shows in all Heads a Touch of Fool" (DP, 53-54). Just as Swift exposes Celia's femininity as artificially constituted through her dress, so Montagu reveals Swift's manly learnedness as configured sartorially through such props as the wig. Through depicting men whose behaviour contradicts their costume, she implies that

⁸⁴ Swift, 'The Beasts Confession to the Priest', 18-24.

manliness is also a fashionable performance enacted through luxury goods. Swift's masculinity, like women's femininity that he warns his readers against, is a pose disguising a confused and chaotic being.

As hair is a signifier of sexual virility, so the wig connotes feigned prowess. Indeed, as Montagu's Swift approaches his long-awaited union, Montagu bawdily hints at "th'instructive Tale" rhyming it suggestively with "the Wise in some things fail" (DP, 65-66). These images of manly artifice, fragmented identity, and feigned sexuality reach a climax in the scene of Swift's impotence:

The Rev'rend Lover, with surprise,
 Peeps in her Bubbies and her Eyes,
 And kisses both – and tries – and tries –
 The Ev'ning in this hellish Play,
 Besides his Guineas thrown away;
 Provok'd the Priest to that degree,
 He swore, *The Fault is not me.*
 Your damn'd Close-stool so near my Nose,
 Your dirty Smock, and stinking Toes,
 Would make a *Hercules* as tame,
 As any Beau that you can name. (DP, 67-77)

In contrast to Swift's celebration of impotence in 'Epistle to a Lady', Montagu's re-enactment of Swift's phallic failure exposes him as weak and whining. According to Montagu he does not configure Betty's "dirty Smock, and stinking Toes" in order to educate her into renouncing luxury items or to denounce colonialism. In Montagu's eyes, Swift writes 'The Lady's Dressing Room' in revenge for overreaching *his* own appetites. Moreover, Montagu represents Swift's impotency as being out of his control. He despises his sexual weakness and it is his physical inability to live up to his appetites that triggers his misogyny. Montagu's portrayal of Swift reveals a man who has very little respect for women: he pays to have sex with them, only to attack them if his body refuses to conform to his private ideals of a virile sexuality. Nevertheless, her Swift is neither the libertine that he wishes to be, nor the cerebral disembodied man that he pretends to be. Rather he is, like his Celas and Corinnas, a fleshy and corrupted being obscured through male myths, fantasies and dress.

"some new Prunella"

As well as being portrayed through feminine artifice, Swift is also depicted in ecclesiastical costume by Montagu. His band and his gown, as well as his titles, contradict his vain, stalking, rapacious self. This jarring image is conflated in the image of "Prunella" when Betty roars: "For poor four Pounds to roar and bellow, / Why sure you want some new Prunella?" (DP, 88-89). "Prunella" is an invented word for prostitute, but it is also a pun on the worsted cloth used for clergymen's gowns. This word was used

by Pope in *An Essay on Man* to reinforce men's imperative to be judged by actions rather than dress.⁸⁵ Again, Montagu strategically disrupts male homosocial bonding through employing Pope's language against Swift. This pun emphasizes Swift's sexual hypocrisy, the inconsistency between his actions and the morals that he espouses. Betty places Swift's spiritual ideals in the marketplace as she reduces his religious dress and consequently his religious identity to laundry: "I won't give back one single Crown, / To wash your Band, or turn your Gown" (DP, 94-95). Montagu implies, through the voice of Betty, that Swift's devotional purity is merely a performance that he must pay for. Moreover, through troping his dress with the name of a prostitute, Montagu not only comments on Swift's consumerist approach to sex, but suggests that he prostitutes himself; in other words, that the man who "preaches ne're so long" (DP, 47) is not so different from Betty who roars and bellows; that Swift too sells his body for his vocation, only in this case he renounces and denies his flesh in order to be paid as a clergyman.

Montagu implies, like the Restoration wits, that one needs balls to write and that Swift, through castrating himself for his public clerical identity, is like "The Ox" thinking "he's for Saddle fit" (DP, 37), or a "frighted Hare" who "attempts to bear a Gun" (DP, 61-62). Like the foolish men at whom Swift repeatedly jeers, Montagu represents him as feigning his own creative wit, as "mistaking" his "little gentle jerking" (EL, 217) for sex: "And Men their Talents still mistaking, / The Stutterer fancys his is speaking" (DP, 39-40). Linking sexuality with creativity, Montagu implies that Swift's

⁸⁵ "You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow;
The rest is all but leather and prunella." Pope, *Essay on Man*, IV. 201-204, p. 542.

writing suffers as a result of his disembodied subjectivity. Too immersed in a “Paradise of Thought”, Swift has become disassociated with his flesh. Swift’s prudery is not in the service of art; rather it is artless because he has repressed sex. Montagu portrays him as blaming the woman in her dressing room by plaintively crying – “the Fault is not in me” – while simultaneously partaking in consumer practices (DP, 73).

Through portraying Swift as primarily a shopper, including as one who buys women’s bodies, Montagu exposes the fact that “masculinities are not only shaped by the process of imperial expansion, they are active in that process and help to shape it.”⁸⁶ In her poem, Swift is no longer able to hide behind the figure of woman and no longer able to project his own fears of colonial culpability onto her. As well as highlighting Swift’s own commodified status, Montagu also identifies the performance of masculinity with empire in lines that she never worked in to the poem:

The port of universal Trade,
That Anvil where Mankind [?is] Ma<de>.⁸⁷

Here she suggestively exposes man’s role in mercantile capitalism. These lines also mimic the Earl of Rochester and his lines from *Sodom*, as Swivia, referring to the “port” of the prostitutes body, tells Pricket that:

It is the workhowse of ye worlds cheife trade,

⁸⁶ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 185.

⁸⁷ “The margin of the draft bears a couplet never worked into the text” *E&P*, p. 276.

On such soft anvills all mankind was made.⁸⁸

Montagu echoes Rochester again in her portrayal of Swift's impotency and failure in the space of the bower. 'The Disappointment' is now known to be by Aphra Behn but at the time of Montagu's writing she would probably have attributed it to Rochester.⁸⁹ It is significant that Montagu mimics Rochester as she appears to be comparing Swift's hypocritical manliness to that of Rochester, and finding it decidedly lacking. Like Rochester, Montagu links sexual prowess with textual prowess, rendered explicit when Betty scornfully asks Swift:

Perhaps you have no better Luck in
The Knack of Rhyming, than of – (DP, 92-93)

As well as lampooning Swift's sexual commodification through comparing him to literary coquettes, Montagu also disparages him through contrasting his impotent sexuality with that of the supposedly virile Restoration poet. It is precisely Swift's

⁸⁸Rochester, *Sodom III*, III, 17-18, in *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. by Harold Love (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 317.

⁸⁹This poem is now known to be by Aphra Behn but it was attributed to Rochester until 1718 when it was published, 29 years after Behn's death, in 'Familiar Letters of love, Gallantry and Several Occasions' with a letter purportedly from Behn to Hoyle. It also appeared in Behn's anonymous 'Poems on Several Occasions' (1684) but, considering Montagu's thorough knowledge of Rochester, she probably considered it as by him. See *The Works of Aphra Behn*, 7 vols., ed. by Janet Todd (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1992), vol. 1, p. 393. All citations from Behn's poetry are taken from this edition. See also David M. Vieth, *Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's "Poems" of 1680*, Yale Studies in English, 153 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 85, 88-89. In 'Rochester's' version of male imperfect enjoyment, he mockingly depicts the timorous nymph, Chloris, as laying her hand "Upon that fabulous Priapus, / That potent god, as poets feign". However, she is unsuccessful and Lysander becomes furious, blaming her "Whose soft bewitching influence / Had damned him to the Hell of impotence". 'The Disappointment', 105-106, 139-40. Significantly, both poems are enacted in the space of 'the bower.'

“instructive” and learned masculinity that Montagu attacks, and employs against him. Combining the erotic potency of the bower motif with the masculinity of the Restoration wits, Montagu portrays Swift’s sexual lack as artistic lack. Because she perceives Swift as renouncing his sexual flesh, she implies that he has become impotent and this is reflected in his writing. In effect, Montagu attacks Swift through the conventions of the Restoration libertine. Rather than renouncing the sexual appetites of the Restoration period and expounding a cerebral and religious public persona, Montagu embraces an embodied subjectivity. In Montagu’s reply to Swift, his Augustanism fails against the sexual standards of Restoration literature.

Montagu also argues that Swift prostitutes his manly learning and his poetic self through his writing. Betty insults Swift as a hackwriter through associating Swift’s writing when she asks: “What if your Verses have not sold, / Must therefore I return your Gold?” (DP, 90-91) In her manuscript versions of this poem, Montagu uses the title “Reasons that Induced [...]” which was a popular formula for political pamphlets.⁹⁰ Through mimicking this, Montagu demotes Swift’s poem from literature to scandal and she represents Swift’s poetic and sexual potency as being in reality market potency as he relies on the profits from his poetry for his laundry. Armed with aristocratic privilege and self-worth determined through class, Montagu places her Swift in Grub Street, the eighteenth-century world of literary hacks. Moreover, Montagu seems to be implying that Swift’s constant self-portrayals are distasteful, that he is selling a false image of himself in order to sell his poetry. Montagu juxtaposes Swift’s ironising of masculinity against Rochester’s openly embodied and physical masculinity. Through comparing them,

⁹⁰ *LMWM*, p. 343, fn. 55.

Montagu also compares what she perceives as Swift's involvement in commerce and consumer goods with Rochester's aristocratic systems of exchange.

“roaring girl”

In ‘The Dean’s Provocation’ Betty refuses to be the silent impregnated nymph of the bower scene, the gateway to masculine subjectivity and artistic potency. She is monstrous, unnatural, because she does not remain fixed in her polarized position of bower nymph or dressing room narcissist, to be “seen in Private Life alone”.⁹¹ Betty holds no awe for Swift’s manly prowess both of his pen and his penis, she is no woman of “vacant brain”, no pitiful nymph of Swift’s “excremental vision”.⁹² She is the spectre that ‘haunts’ the male ego – a woman “indifferent or resistant to male desire”.⁹³ She plays the “Manly part”⁹⁴, roaring through Swift’s misogyny:

The Nymph grown furious, roar’d, by G-d,
The blame lies all in Sixty odd;
And scornful, pointing to the Door,
Sai’d, *Fumbler see my Face no more.*
With all my Heart, I’ll go away,
But nothing done, I’ll nothing pay;

⁹¹ Pope, *Epistle to a Lady*, 202.

⁹² A widely used phrase in the context of Swift, but also a chapter in John Middleton, *Jonathan Swift, A Critical Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954).

⁹³ Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, pp. 4-5.

⁹⁴ Behn, ‘*To the fair Clarinda, who made Love to me, imagin’d more than Woman*’, 20.

Give back the Money – how, cry'd she,
 Would you palm such a Cheat on me?
 I've lock'd it in the Trunk stands there,
 Go break it open if you dare; (DP, 78-87)

Mimicking Swift's criticisms of women's time wasting and mocking his alleged parsimony, Montagu represents Swift as vengeful; significantly, vengeance in 'The Lady's Dressing Room' is feminised.

Montagu configures a *roaring* nymph in her reply to Swift. According to Terry Castle 'roaring girl' could be a euphemism for a lesbian, and a lesbian "represents threat to patriarchal protocol".⁹⁵ Indeed in the Jacobean play 'The Roaring Girl', the eponymous protagonist is a cross-dresser. Through linking women with images of virility and sexual potency, Montagu rewrites 'femininities' which do not conform to the chaste passivity of the bower nymph, nor the grotesque and narcissistic vanity of the dressing woman. Rather than referring back to man, functioning within his discourse, holding up a mirror, Betty dislocates herself from the bower, roaring through the discourse that fixes her there. She shouts back, seizing the word and marking her "shattering entry into history, which has always been based on her suppression."⁹⁶ Through her roaring, Betty jumbles the

⁹⁵ Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 4-5. See also Julie Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies: A Sexual History of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 219-223.

⁹⁶ Hélène Cixous, 'Le rire de la meduse', trans. by Keith Cohen and Paul Cohen in *New French Feminisms*, p. 250.

order of space, rearranging 'The Furniture of a Woman's Mind', so that Swift's "nonsense"⁹⁷ becomes toilet paper:

I'll be reveng'd [,] you sawcy Quean,
 (Replis the disap[p]ointed Dean)
 I'll so describe your *Dressing-Room*
 The very *Irish* shall not come;
 She answer'd short, I'm glad you'll write,
 You'll furnish Paper when I Sh-e. (DP, 96-100)

Breaking up feminine values and feminine conventions, Montagu represents Betty as eschewing modesty, chastity and virtue. In using Swift's works as toilet paper, Montagu and Betty "perform the gesture that jams sociality", they "puncture the system of couples and opposition".⁹⁸

In a provocative parallel to both 'The Lady's Dressing Room' and Montagu's reply, Montagu ordered her portable commode to be decorated with books by Pope and Swift.⁹⁹ In Venice in 1757/8 she met Francis Hutchinson and she "made ribald joke of her grudge against Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke." She told Hutchinson they were rascals, and "'shew'd him her Commode, with false back of books": their works. This

⁹⁷ Swift satirises women who "take his nonsense all for wit" in 'Furniture of a Woman's Mind', 8.

⁹⁸ Cixous, 'Le rire', p. 258.

⁹⁹ See Robert Halsband, 'New Anecdotes of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu', in *James M. Osborn Festschrift, Evidence in Literary Scholarship*, ed. by Rene Wellek and Alvaro Ribeiro (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) pp, 241-246 (245, 243).

arrangement, she said, gave her “the satisfaction of shitting on them every day”¹⁰⁰. It would be dangerous to identify Montagu too closely with Betty as Montagu defined herself emphatically as aristocratic, especially later in life. Nevertheless, throughout her works Montagu repeatedly inscribes “the performative dispersion” of her ‘self’ “into several identificatory positions”,¹⁰¹ embracing “ambiguous descriptions” of subjectivity “that sustain a drama of imminent disclosure in which she always defers a final or total reading of Other and of self in favor of continued viewing.”¹⁰² Furthermore, Montagu did not put her name to this piece, thus disguising and protecting her aristocratic and female public identity. As Grundy argues, Montagu was “fond of masquerading as her Other” and it is this ability to embrace multiple “selves” that gives Montagu the freedom to transcend normative feminine behaviours.¹⁰³

In her reply to Swift, Montagu sidesteps Swift’s insistent emphasis on the feminine through transcending the conventional masculine/feminine dichotomy and reconciling creativity with sexuality. She re-appropriates the evacuated and haunting Other of the dressing room trope and reunites it with the voice of woman, infusing poetic creativity. Through the voice of Betty, Montagu inscribes a woman who refuses to remain fixed in feminine gendered norms and who roars with laughter at misogyny. Like Finch’s “wavering” and “fantastick” nymph in ‘Adam Pos’d’, she refuses to be named.

¹⁰⁰ *LMWM*, p. 566

¹⁰¹ Aravamudan, ‘Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the *Hamam*’, p. 69.

¹⁰² Mary Jo Kietzman, ‘Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters* and Cultural Dislocation’, *SEL*, 3 (Summer 1998): 537- 551 (p.543).

¹⁰³ *E&P*, p. xiv.

Chapter 3: Finch and the dressing room



Fig. 7: Hogarth, 'Marriage a la Mode'

Part 1: “Sappho at her toilet’s greasy task”: sexuality and abjection

Chapters 3 and 4 investigate Finch and Montagu’s portrayal of the lady’s dressing room. Contextualising this consumer space in the literary tradition of Juvenalian misogynist satire, I argue that Finch and Montagu write the pain of the woman in the dressing room. Nevertheless, they also employ this pain as a site of resistance. Chapter 3 explores Finch’s ‘Clarinda’s Indifference at Parting with her Beauty’, arguing that through exploiting discursive readings of the female aging face, Finch celebrates the emancipatory potential in being revolted or ignored by the male gaze. I take this trope of dis-ease further by reading Finch’s ‘The Spleen’ as a site where the melancholic body can be read as a space for female homoerotic passion. In other words, Finch recovers the potential in moving outside the heterosexual matrix with the abject body and configures alternative sexualities for women. In the second part of chapter 3, I examine the influence of Aphra Behn and Katherine Philips on Finch and, in particular, their inscriptions of homoerotic retreats. Chapter 4 argues that Montagu, like Finch, writes the woman dis-eased in the dressing room. Montagu exposes the woman’s pain in her ‘Saturday’ eclogue and she exploits the grotesque female body to write transgressive sexualities. However, Montagu does this in quite a different way from Finch as she employs the images of mirrors, looking and masquerade. Montagu also links Flavia to tropes of auto-eroticism and a literary tradition of women who have been afflicted or have written about smallpox. First,

however, I focus on the historical and literary background to the dressing room and outline how Finch and Montagu fit into this cultural context.

In 'Epistle to a Lady' Pope expresses his anxiety over Montagu's creativity, both because she is an author and because she produces her feminine body at the dressing table:

As Sappho's diamonds with her greasy smock,
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an ev'ning Mask:
So morning Insects that in muck begun,
Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting-sun.¹

Through Pope, Montagu becomes a "furious Sappho" who "Pox[es] by her Love",² a "Sappho enrag'd", and a "poor Sappho" who grows grey.³ The anxious repetition of 'Sappho' reveals Pope's acute uneasiness over women who write, as well as over women who construct their various feminine bodies at the dressing table,⁴ who perform polymorphous identities at the masquerade, and of course who do not contain their sexuality within the categories of the heterosexual matrix. Isobel Grundy argues that the emphasis on ironic detachment and humour in Swift's 'The Lady's Dressing Room' encouraged the "official line on this poem" to be "not misogynist" as no woman "of real sense or cleanliness" would be offended; she would regard it as a

¹ Pope, 'Epistle II. To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women', 24-28.

² Pope, 'Imitations of Horace, Satires II', I, 83-84.

³ Pope, 'To Ld. Hervey and Lady Mary Wortley', 3, 7.

⁴ See Tassie Gwilliam, 'Cosmetic Poetics: Coloring Faces in the Eighteenth Century', in *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Veronica Kelly and Dorothea E. Von Mücke (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 144-159.

satire on other women, but not herself.⁵ Despite this apparent clarity of judgement, I would suggest that the line demarcating a 'clean' woman from a 'dirty' one is constantly fluctuating, depending on who is doing the demarcating. Montagu herself walks the spectrum from shining Princess⁶ to pox-ridden bleeding Sappho and Pope's image of Sappho at her greasy task is one addressed pointedly to her. In fact to label a woman dirty is to employ the language of one familiar site as object of misogynous sentiment, that of the woman's dressing room.

In the misogynist literary tradition which acknowledges Juvenal's *Sixth Satire* as its precedent, the woman's dressing room is conventionally troped as a grotesque site which explicitly links the female body with an avaricious monstrosity, threatening "physical and spiritual death".⁷ Moreover in much of the literature of the eighteenth century, the figure of the woman became a metaphor for the chaotic appetite that was supposedly responsible for the violence of empire and the proliferation of fashionable goods. Female consumption was represented as requiring "violent acts of appropriation" and was perceived as "a kind of depletion that 'eats up' everything in its path, laying waste to what men would otherwise preserve."⁸ Furthermore, men were represented as emasculated by this rapacious appetite that became, through "a reversal of agent and object" responsible for the horror of colonialism.⁹ The dressing room, as troped through the works of Pope, Swift and Gay, reveals anxieties about the category of femininity. As this is the site where the female body is disciplined and ritualized into femininity, it is also a space for potential transgressions. In returning repeatedly to the image of the woman in her dressing room, these writers attempt to

⁵ *LMWM*, p. 343.

⁶ Pope, 'On Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Portrait', 10.

⁷ Nussbaum, *The Brink Of All We Hate*, p. 108.

⁸ Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, p. 3.

⁹ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 178.

contain and fix sexual identity. Finch and Montagu engage with this misogynist discourse by employing the site of the dressing room to exploit these anxieties.

Dressing rooms began to be included in English architecture in the mid-seventeenth-century.¹⁰ A woman's dressing room was the room "in which she might spend a great part of the day and receive her more intimate friends".¹¹ It would have been furnished with a dressing-table and perhaps a sofa and a writing table. In contrast to the study, the dressing room is frequently represented in seventeenth and eighteenth-century texts. It is portrayed in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, in Swift's scatological poems, in the works of John Gay, in Joseph Thurston's *The Toilette*, and in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*, among others.¹² It is a commonplace of Restoration theatre such as William Congreve's *The Way of the World* and *The Country Wife*. It signifies Dorimant's foppishness in Sir George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* as the play opens with him reading a letter in his dressing room. John Evelyn describes attending the levee of the mistress of Charles "where she was in her morning loose garment, her maides Combing her, newly out of her bed: his Majestie & the Gallants standing about her."¹³ His description is a critical one, condemning her appropriation

¹⁰ As with the gentleman's study, there has been little historical critical commentary on the lady's dressing room.

¹¹ John Fowler and John Cornforth, *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974), pp. 78-79 and pp. 56-60. See also Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 123.

¹² See Nussbaum for contemporary versions of the trope of the dressing table, including Francois Bruys, *The Art of Knowing Women: or, the Female Sex Dissected, in a Faithful Representation of their Virtues and Vices ... Written in French, by the Chevalier Plante-Amor, and by him published at the Hague, 1729* (London, 1730); *Whipping Tom or A Rod for a Proud Lady, Bundled Up in Four Feeling Discourses, Both Serious and Merry*, 4th ed. (London, 1722); *Mundus Muliebris, or the Ladies Dressing Room Unlock'd, and the Toilette Spread. Together with the Fop-Dictionary ...* (London, 1690); Joseph Thurston, *The Toilette* (1730).

¹³ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by John Bowle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 4 October 1683 p. 307.

of luxurious commodities with “vice & dishonour”: Evelyn links the site of the dressing room with sexual activity.¹⁴

In her excellent article, ‘The Dressing Room Unlock’d: Eroticism, Performance, and Privacy from Pepys to the Spectator’, Tita Chico examines the lady’s dressing room as the spatial corollary to the gentleman’s closet, arguing that the authority of privacy offered by the dressing room was a source of anxiety to many writers who attempted to censure women’s private behaviour.¹⁵ On the other hand, the privacy of the dressing room offered a powerful site of resistance to women, and writers such as Mary Astell recognized the intellectual and educational potential in having a ‘room of one’s own’. However, I do not agree with Chico that the dressing room functioned, or was understood, as a corollary to the gentleman’s closet as it was a site that was explicitly ‘seen’. Unlike the study or the closet, in which the man was able to evade the wider gaze of the house, the woman in the dressing room was on continual display. Indeed, Ania Loomba argues that “femininity itself is defined by being gazed upon by men.”¹⁶ Femininity is produced through the gaze, not just the gaze of the mirror but also the policing gaze of the man in his study, as well as the audience who watches the woman dress.¹⁷ The man in his study, although he may not be directly watching the woman, is still subjecting her to his surveillance. His look is internalized in her but it is also internalized in the architecture of the house - her room and her body are his property. Like the documents locked in his chest, her body is locked in

¹⁴ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, p. 307.

¹⁵ See Tita Chico, ‘The Dressing Room Unlock’d: Eroticism, Performance, and Privacy from Pepys to the Spectator’, in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self, and Other in the Enlightenment*, ed. by Laura J. Rosenthal and Mita Choudhury (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002), pp. 45-65.

¹⁶ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 162.

¹⁷ See Fig. 7 which shows that the dressing room, far from being a site of privacy, is a site of exhibition. See also Jean-Francois De Troy’s painting ‘A Lady Showing her Bracelet Miniature’ (1735) in which a woman stares at her reflection in the mirror while her suitor and her maid gaze at her. Montagu’s ‘Friday’ eclogue depicts the dressing room inhabited by Lydia and by her maid.

the dressing room. The explicitly 'seen' character of the dressing room links this site to the stage. Indeed, although Chico recognizes this space as 'private' she argues that it originated in Restoration theatre. It is to themes of performance and theatre that I will now turn.

"I hate such parts as we have played today"

Chico argues that as spaces cut off from the world outside, dressing rooms in the literature and theatre of the period, "were often paradoxically represented through efforts to manage the woman inside, and functioned as an important discursive tool in the eighteenth-century development of heterosexist gender difference".¹⁸ Chico argues persuasively that the dressing room domesticated the eroticism and theatricality associated with the playhouse tiring-room. Restoration theatres had a space backstage called the 'tiring room' in which actresses could consort with privileged male members of the audience. In fact it became a part of the theatre itself, a space where the actresses could display themselves and, according to the experiences of Samuel Pepys, allow themselves to be groped. Like the tiring room, Chico argues, the dressing room "operated as a sort of transit point: it was designed both to prepare for public appearances and to disrobe after them."¹⁹ Moreover, the erotics of the tiring room were transported to the dressing room because spectators were often invited to watch the women dress.

¹⁸ Chico, 'The Dressing Room Unlock'd', p. 46.

¹⁹ Chico, 'The Dressing Room Unlock'd', p. 52.

In Finch and Montagu's representations of the dressing room, the comedic trope of the lone woman at her toilette lamenting the loss of her beauty is appropriated. Finch and Montagu's representations of aristocratic women at the dressing table portray them as Restoration actresses speaking to an audience.²⁰ For example, Finch's 'Clarinda's Indifference at Parting with her Beauty' depicts a conventional comedic character of Restoration theatre – the aging woman at her toilette. She narrates Clarinda's position in front of the mirror before introducing Clarinda's performative voice with "She spake" (13).²¹ Similarly in 'Friday: The Toilette', Montagu depicts Lydia at her dressing table before she begins her monologue:

Reclin'd upon her Arm she pensive sate,
And curst th'Inconstancy of Man, too late. (F, 9-10)²²

Both these excerpts describe the staged setting before the woman speaks, and both excerpts describe the pain of aging woman. No longer identified favourably through the sexual economy, the aging woman is a grotesque and comedic character in seventeenth and eighteenth-century texts.

These textual strategies position the work of Montagu and Finch in the tradition of Restoration theatre. Indeed, both writers wrote mocking epilogues for she-tragedies to be spoken by Anne Oldfield (1683-1730), mistress to Arthur Maynwaring and Charles Churchill. Although neither epilogue was ever used, both are worth brief

²⁰ See J. L. Styan, *Restoration comedy in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), who discusses the visual potential of the dressing tale on the stage.

²¹ 'Clarinda's Indifference at Parting With her Beauty'. Hereafter cited as C.

²² Montagu, 'Friday', hereafter cited as F.

analysis because of their similar treatment of women and beauty. In Montagu's epilogue, written between 1722 and 1725, Montagu employs four lines from the 'Saturday' eclogue which depicts a woman at her toilette:

Monarchs and Beauties rule with equal sway,
 All strive to serve and glory to Obey;
 Alike unpity'd when depos'd they grow,
 Men mock the Idol of their former Vow.

(‘An Epilogue to a new Play of M[ary] Queen of Scots design'd to be spoke by Mrs Oldfield’, 15-18)

Montagu has Oldfield cry “Beauty, what poor Omnipotence hast thou!” (8) and laments the sexual double standard in which woman must rely on her transient beauty in order to gain the transient love of “those Traitors, Men.” (24) Montagu offers an alternative to the beautiful femininity of Mary in the more heroic figure of Queen Elizabeth:

Queen Bess had Wisdom, Councel, Power, and Laws;
 How few espous'd a Wretched Beauty's Cause!
 Learn hence, ye Fair, more solid charms to prize,
 Contemn the Idle Flatterers of your Eyes.

(‘Play of M[ary] Queen of Scots’, 9-12)

Montagu, through the voice of Oldfield, a woman who was herself dependent upon her beauty and her sexual economy, advises women to adopt the mannish features of Eliza who “favour’d oft – but never shar’d her Power.” (26)

In Finch’s epilogue written for Nicholas Rowe in 1713, Finch also explores the sexual double standard in which woman is defined through her beauty which is a fleeting property, while men have the freedom to adopt a multiplicity of subjectivities:

When handsome Ladies, falling to decay,
 Pass thro’ new epithets to smooth the way:
 From *fair* and *young* transportedly confess’d,
 Dwindle to *fine*, *well fashion’d*, and *well dress’d*.
 Thence as their fortitude’s extremest proof,
 To *well as yet*; from *well* to *well enough*;
 Till having on such weak foundation stood,
 Deplorably at last they sink to *good*.

(‘An Epilogue to the Tragedy of Jane Shore: *To be spoken by Mrs. Oldfield the night before the Poet’s Day*’, 29-36)

For men, on the other hand, “a better fate is known”:

The pretty fellow, that has youth outgrown,
 Who nothing knew, but how his clothes did sit,
 Transforms to a *Free-thinker* and a *Wit*;

At Operas becomes a skill'd Musician;
 Ends in a partyman and politician;
 Maintains some figure, while he keeps his breath,
 And is a fop of consequence till death. ('Tragedy of Jane Shore', 40-46)

Finch sympathises with Oldfield's position as mistress and actress as she asserts that the "mistress leads a wretched life, / Who can't insult the Keeper and the wife" (10-11), and she has Oldfield humorously lament the role that she had to play:

I hate such parts as we have plaid today,
 Before I promis'd, had I read the play,
 I wou'd have staid at home, and drank my Tea.

(*'Tragedy of Jane Shore'*, 15-17)

Finch, through the voice of Oldfield, accuses male poets of being unable or unwilling to write alternative or favourable parts for women – "Whate'er he makes us women do or say, / You'll not believe, that he'll go fast and pray." (52-53) She may be referring to Pope who also wrote an epilogue to *Jane Shore* to be spoken by Anne Oldfield. His text, unsurprisingly, contrasts with those by Finch and Montagu as he pits women against women and exposes their hypocrisy. Pope depicts a world where women fight over sexual virtue: "let the modest matrons of the town, / Come here in crowds, and stare the strumpet down."²³ In contrast, Finch and Montagu explore other parts for women to play which do not replicate the conventional and misogynist

²³ Pope, 'Epilogue to *Jane Shore* Design'd for Mrs Oldfield', 48-50.

stereotypes. They both explore other performative strategies for women that are not dependent on the heterosexual male gaze, on being seen, and being on erotic display. In different ways they envisage women who are “lavish, careless, gay and fine” (‘Tragedy of Jane Shore’, 13) and who own a “glorious history” (‘Tragedy of Jane Shore’, 4).

In her article, ‘The Public Life of actresses: prostitutes, or ladies?’ Kimberly Gouch investigates the interactions between actresses and aristocrats arguing that they influenced each other’s fashion and dress and shared many of the same dependencies on display and commodity status. For example, she explores the different uses of the portrait among actresses and aristocratic women. She argues that the aristocratic women’s portrait was on view to the public, much like that of the image of the actress:

That both categories of portraits, those of aristocratic women and of actresses, were intended for and meant to influence a public audience demonstrates another arena in which it becomes difficult to separate the worlds of public and private.²⁴

In addition, Cynthia Lowenthal states that “aristocratic women had to display their difference in order to maintain it”, however, “they found that public display for *all* women had begun to be equated with sexual license”.²⁵ Consequently, in mimicking Restoration tropes in their representations of aristocratic women at their toilette, Montagu and Finch overtly link the position of the aristocrat with that of actress, and

²⁴ Kimberly Gouch, ‘The Public Life of actresses: prostitutes, or ladies?’, in *Gender in the Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 58-78 (p. 74).

²⁵ Lowenthal, *Familiar Letter*, p. 116.

by implication prostitute. Both poets focus on the commodity status of the upper class woman and her dependence on the male economy whether as wife or mistress for livelihood and voice. Before exploring further this association between sex, display and commodification, I will discuss theories of 'brokenness' which will be pertinent to this chapter's argument.

"brokenness"

In a letter from Vienna, Montagu mockingly praises the way in which Viennese women are unrestricted by "the 2 sects that divide our whole nation of Petticoats [...] Here are neither Coquets nor Prudes. No woman dares appear coquet enough to encourage 2 lovers at a time, and I have not seen any such Prudes as to pretend fidelity to their Husbands".²⁶ Satirically echoing misogynist stereotyping of women as prudes and coquettes, Montagu signifies women through "petticoats" and distances herself from these labels through laughing at them. Whereas Pope perpetuates misogynist parts for women and produces female characters who identify with these labels to the extent that they become them, Montagu exposes the pain of women unable to wear the various masks of femininity. Montagu's strategy is to produce women who attempt to perform the labels of coquette, prude, wife, mistress, virgin – categories defined by women's sexual relation to men – but who fail. They oscillate between these various roles, never convincingly performing any of them, never convincingly wearing the costume, remaining half dressed. There is a gap between the contradictory roles being performed and the desires and ways of being

²⁶ *CL*, 1. 270.

which refuse to be contained in these feminine theatrics. It is this gap that I will now explore when looking at Finch's and Montagu's configurations of the woman in her dressing room.

In her recent book, *The Limits of the Human*, Nussbaum argues that "the defect of female difference is the sign of the feminine"²⁷ and that "defect bears a linguistic and cultural equivalency to womanhood."²⁸ Citing Milton on women's "fair defect" and Pope's "Fine by defect, and delicately weak", Nussbaum argues that women's marker of sexual difference was their imperfection and deformity, woman's "non-normal personhood".²⁹ Furthermore, looking at the texts of Eliza Haywood and Aphra Behn, Nussbaum argues that these women writers appropriate this language of deformity and disease to employ "broken, twisted, deformed, compromised, and other anomalous bodies in the service of alternative femininities and masculinities."³⁰

Montagu and Finch also exploit the language of defect. Nevertheless, I will depart from Nussbaum's reading of Behn, Haywood and other women writers by arguing that rather than creating "alternative femininities and masculinities", Finch and Montagu blur the distinctions. Through representing their own fictional bodies in terms of disease, age and melancholy they incorporate the abject into the body of woman thus rupturing the very category of 'woman' and, in particular, the aristocratic woman. The disease and pain that they describe both exemplifies the pain of conforming to the precepts of femininity, but they also appropriate this rhetoric of pain to usurp the performance of femininity through which their subjectivities must be

²⁷ Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 121.

²⁸ Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, p. 24.

²⁹ Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, p. 116.

³⁰ Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, p. 131.

produced. These images of disease, melancholy and deformity are appropriated to create alternative *sexual* configurations and possibilities of desire and pleasure outside the marker of the phallus.

Because I am interested in the sexual possibilities that are developed through incorporating the abject and the foreclosed, I think that there is more subversive potential in the use of parody, perversion and mimicry than Nussbaum allows. Consequently, Finch's and Montagu's tropes of mirroring and echoing are radical strategies. Nussbaum critiques Donna Haraway who suggests that we appropriate the language of "brokenness" and dismemberment to open up possibilities of a nongeneric, feminist, cyborgian humanity. In contrast, Nussbaum argues that this is just a reversal of terms: 'normal' now becomes 'broken'. Nevertheless, the discourse of the normal is so all pervasive that there is emancipatory potential in employing the 'language of horror', and Finch certainly uses it with a potent force. Another way that I depart from Nussbaum is by distancing myself from the problematic use of language of disability that she employs. She, for example, frequently employs the terms 'handicapped'. 'Handicapped' is a term coined after the Boer war in which soldiers who were maimed begged for money 'cap in hand'. It is a word that equates disability with begging. Moreover, she easily moves from words such as 'disability' to 'ugly', to 'horribly maimed'. Although she states that "we are enjoined steadily and carefully to articulate the history and genealogy of disability, defect and deformity in their multiplicity", she relies too heavily on the paradigm of a 'normal' body and the rhetoric of beauty.³¹ It is not clear where she draws the line between the aging woman's face and the term 'ugly', since both are culturally relative and often

³¹ Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, pp. 56-57.

synonymous. Moreover, she easily conflates 'deformity' with 'disability' which is problematic. 'Disability' is a political category which is used in disability studies and among activists as a campaigning tool. To equate this term with 'deformity' is therefore inadvisable as it re-inforces the prejudice that disabled people are 'defective'. I want to use the term 'defect' in a different way. I am not equating it with disability. Rather, in the case of Montagu and Finch, they are exposing what is defective in femininity. In other words, through depicting aristocratic women who are melancholic or diseased they bring the pain of a disciplined femininity to a crisis point, exposing what lies underneath the mask.

In contrast to the texts by Behn and Haywood that Nussbaum investigates, Finch and Montagu 'own' the diseased bodies that they represent. In other words, their textual narratives are autobiographical – the narrator is not divorced from the body of the woman who suffers. In this way, the diseased body is not objectified but is part of the subjectivity of the speaker. In talking of autobiography I do not want to denote the anachronistic notion of the autonomous subject, but I want to suggest that the speaker of the poem identifies with suffering and appeals for sympathy from the audience by employing the first person and refraining from explicit caricature. Eighteenth-century texts repeatedly link luxury to deformity and Montagu and Finch, in different ways, employ this rhetoric of luxurious degeneracy. Nevertheless, they do not inflict this notion of corruption or deformity on to an Other as in the works of Swift, Mandeville and Pope, rather their textual voices 'own' or are responsible for their corruption. Consequently Nussbaum's anxiety over Haraway's reversing of labels and of regarding people who have disabilities as somehow bearing "a special mystical responsibility to bring ordinary folk" closer to truth and enlightenment,

becomes redundant as Montagu and Finch do not starkly polarize the 'normal' from the 'abnormal'.³² The women (and men) that they portray in their works are all defective or hold the potential for deformity. As the works of Finch and Montagu exemplify, there is no such thing as 'normal' and all are defective.

In her inscription of the woman at her dressing table in 'Clarinda's Indifference at Parting with her Beauty', Finch exploits anxieties over changing and aging faces. In 'The Spleen', she suggests that the spleen and the vapours are fashionable ailments, part of the luxury products consumed at the dressing table. Nevertheless, rather than accept the spleen as an inevitable condition of the aristocratic woman, Finch (influenced by Behn) explores its links with the repression of desire. Finch appropriates the spleen in order to write an abject and queer poetess named 'Ardelia'. Similarly (as I show in chapter 4) Montagu's portrays a scarred woman in 'Saturday' and, like Finch, appropriates tropes of disease in order to evade the male gaze and write in 'unseen' spaces. Unlike Finch, however, Montagu represents the pleasure that women experience in dressing and celebrates the pleasure to be found in dressing differently.

³² Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, p. 57.

Part 2: “this glorious empire is just a glorious pain”: desire and disease

Now that the clichés of beauty “Which men that feel and see, can ne’re define” (8) are leaving the eyes and face of Clarinda in Finch’s eponymous poem, she is represented as being able to see more clearly: “Departing beauty now Clarinda spies” (3). Once the “youthfull air” and “morning beams” – allusions to Pope’s *Belinda* – are “dying in her eyes” Clarinda is able to see and to speak. Moreover, Clarinda’s face is leaving the market place and the phrase the “ev’ning shades, began to rise, and spread” (10) suggests that Finch embraces this movement away from the male gaze and into the shade. Like the wanderers of ‘*The Petition*’, Clarinda is leaving the world of urban consumerism and commodification, for more subdued and hidden lighting. Indeed, loss of beauty and of youth is referred to in *The Tatler* as “that State I have often heard you call an After-life”.³³ Finch, through the voice of Clarinda and other women speakers, appropriates this ‘after life’ as a site of resistance.

Like Montagu’s Flavia and Lydia, Clarinda is first depicted in the third person, lamenting the loss of her beauty as if on a stage. Clarinda looks at her reflection in the mirror and is divided from the self that she “spies” (3). Like Flavia in Montagu’s ‘*Saturday*’, she is both the surveyor and the surveyed. She sees and feels her body’s decay, its fluctuating boundaries and watches her body’s changes take place as if

³³ *The Tatler*, Thursday, December 21, 1710, no.226, vol. 3, pp. 342-43.

beauty is something that happened to her, was imposed on her. Furthermore, it is as if she does not own her body. She describes it as made up of fragments that are differentiated from herself: “*that* youthfull air” (5), “*that* unresisted grace” (6), “*those* morning beams” (7) (my italics). She talks to the reflection of her body as if it is a landscape that has been mapped by someone other than herself.

However, Clarinda is no pitiful character of Restoration comedy. On the contrary, Clarinda is given an assertive and rational voice in which she philosophises on the powerlessness and vanity of beauty:

“And what, vain beauty, didst thou ’ere atcheive,

When at thy height, that I thy fall shou’d grieve?” (C, 14-15)

Beauty is seen as something separate from Clarinda, an object that has taken up temporary residence in her face. Indeed, she reflects on the trials and problems that beauty has given her:

“A glorious Empire’s but a glorious pain.

Thou, art indeed, but vanity’s cheife source;

But foyle to witt, to want of witt a curse:” (C, 23-25)

Furthermore, Clarinda celebrates the loss of her beauty:

"I know thee well, but weak thy reign wou'd be
 Did n'one adore, or prize thee more than me.
 I see indeed, thy certain ruine neer,
 But can't afford one parting sigh, or tear,
 Nor rail at Time, nor quarrell with my glasse,
 But unconcern'd, can lett thy glories passe." (C, 30-35)

Clarinda is represented as being relieved at the departure of these markings from her face. In the eighteenth century character was defined through behaviours and physiognomy. Significantly, appearance was a means of defining character. However, as she wrote in her epilogue for *Anne Oldfield*, Finch rejects definitions of women that depend on the way she looks.

"no characters at all"

In the *Oxford English Dictionary* 'character' means "the face or features [or] ... personal appearance", and in the eighteenth century it was defined through behaviours and physiognomy. The ways in which the individual performed and acted, rather than the workings of their interior consciousness – a product of bourgeois discourse – produced an individual's character. These behaviours, furthermore, were intricately linked to the individual's face. Deidre Lynch argues that:

A face indexed character: a social norm, a determinate place on the ethical map where every person had a proper place and where distinction was contained within limits.³⁴

Physiognomy was constructed and employed to fix psychological identities and personalities through the individual's physical characteristics: "Facial features occur as a kind of graphism or writing which in turn is in need of the systematic decoding that physiognomy claimed to provide."³⁵

A woman's face, therefore, determined where she stood in the market place, her value ranging from "*fair and young*" to "*good*". The face is a decaying commodity whose exchange value decreases with time. Moreover, because a woman's face was perceived through the conventions of beauty, her character could be recognized as fluctuating because the markings of youth would change with time. Indeed, "[t]o approach old age is to pass into the category of the uncategorizable: the monstrous, the outré, the deformed."³⁶ The woman's body was a sign to be read by the medical gaze and "incorporated into medical narratives which naturalize and legitimize the privileged position of a masculine elite atop the hierarchies of gender, class and race."³⁷ It was this scientific categorising that succeeded in confining women to the domestic sphere and to the world of the Other, the body.

³⁴ Deidre Lynch, 'Overloaded Portraits: The Excesses of Character and Countenance', in *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 112-143 (pp. 116-117).

³⁵ Juliana Schiesari, 'The Face of Domestication: Physiognomy, Gender Politics, and Humanism's Others', in *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 55-70 (p. 57).

³⁶ Jill Campbell, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the 'Glass Revers'd' of Female Old Age', in *'Defect': Engendering the Modern Body*, ed. by Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 213-251 (p. 230).

³⁷ Desiree Hellegers, "'The Threatening Angel and the Speaking Ass: The Masculine Mismeasure of Madness in Anne Finch's 'The Spleen'", *Genre*, 26 (Summer/Fall, 1993): 199-218 (p. 199). See also Donna Landry and Gerald McLean, 'Of Forceps, Patents and Paternity', *Eighteenth Century Studies*,

Clarinda is a woman whose body becomes clouded and shaded. Nevertheless, in contrast to Enlightenment representations of nature and the body as a passive site on which meanings are to be inscribed, Finch celebrates the body as dynamic. The face is changing, departing, decaying, rising, spreading. It blurs male definitions and maps. Clarinda's face becomes more like nature as defined by Finch; it blends into the language of Finch's feminine retreats. In the shade you cannot see the body so clearly - it is less exposed and less on display. Butler argues that the body is not a "surface" but "a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and matter".³⁸ In this poem, Finch can be read as destabilizing this "process of materialisation"; radically subverting the conventional 'mattering' of the female body. In 'Clarinda' Finch redefines the borders of woman, blocking out masculine rays. Clarinda becomes more like actual nature in that she changes, rather than an artificial and static construct of nature created by human art. The body becomes fluid and unstable and consequently "points to something beyond itself".³⁹

Because identity is associated "with the conspicuous graphic or corporeal signs that make it public knowledge", Finch can appropriate the conventionally grotesque and comedic aging woman to configure new corporeal signs and new ways of behaving as woman.⁴⁰ In other words, through rewriting the text of the face in texts authored by herself, she can blur conventional performances of femininity. Indeed, 'character' also signifies letters and so by changing the character of woman, she also changes the language that describes the world and the people in it. The face, seen "as

23 (1990): 523-43; Londa Schiebinger, 'The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth Century Science', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 23 (1990): 387-405.

³⁸ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p.9.

³⁹ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. ix.

⁴⁰ Lynch, 'Overloaded Portraits', p. 118.

a prototypical sign, an exemplary sort of reading matter”, was supposed to “function as a rigid designator: as a distinct sign belonging to the same distinct person in all possible worlds”.⁴¹ However, Finch disrupts these conventional designators, thus exploiting male anxieties over women’s unreadability, duplicity, and “having no characters at all” (‘Epistle II: To a Lady’, 2). Because personal identity was defined through performance and physiognomy, Finch can write new types of feminine roles. An example of such rewriting is to be found in Finch’s ‘The Spleen’ which configures the spleen as a response to the objectification of women and the sexual disciplining produced through the use of the dressing room as a consumer space.

“that great Scene of Business”

The Spectator calls the dressing room, woman’s “great Scene of Business”: “the right adjusting of their Hair the principal Employment of their Lives. The sorting of a Suit of Ribbons is reckoned a very good Morning’s Work; and if they make an Excursion to a Mercer’s or to a Toy-shop, so great a Fatigue makes them unfit for any thing else all the Day after ... This, I say, is the State of ordinary Women”.⁴² *The Spectator* thus presents the common perception of the dressing room as the site of female ‘business’ and because the spleen was considered a fashionable ailment, it was easily associated with the luxurious feminine practices of dressing such as those

⁴¹ Lynch, ‘Overloaded Portraits’, p. 116. Shaftesbury, *Second Characters, or The language of Forms*, ed. by Benjamin Rand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 99. Furthermore, “Recognizing a face, or putting a name to a face, was thus an allegory for what eighteenth-century philosophy of mind valued as the most basic cognitive operation, that of discriminating and weighing sameness and differences.” (p. 122-3). Consequently, the face became a locus of anxiety in fixing identity. This is clearly exemplified in Pope’s ‘Epistle to a Lady’ where women’s characters *are* their portraits, and his compulsion to fix woman as different from man is repeatedly played out.

⁴² *The Spectator*, Monday, March 12, 1711, no. 10, vol. 1, p. 46.

enumerated here by *The Spectator*. Fashion, luxury and consumerism, thus are located in the dressing room which therefore becomes the inevitable setting of Finch's 'The Spleen'. Desiree Hellegers, Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant have all written excellent articles on Finch's 'The Spleen'. They demonstrate the multiplicity of discourses that Finch interrogates and critiques, and the sophistication with which she writes mental distress. McGovern writes that 'The Spleen' includes "a general analysis of melancholy and its social and personal implications, an expression of Anglican faith and Royalist politics, a satirical criticism of contemporary society, an examination of the function of poetry, a defense of the right of women to become authors, and, finally, a reflection on her own role as a woman poet."⁴³ Because this poem has been extensively discussed I will briefly outline some of the arguments that are pertinent to this essay and then offer my own reading. I will expand on Helleger's point that 'The Spleen' is about the repression of sexuality but will go further to discuss Finch's debt to Aphra Behn's inscription of desire.

In the period in which Finch was writing, the repressed or the abject was commodified into psychosomatic illnesses such as the spleen, melancholia, vapours, and hysteria.⁴⁴ Like glass and cosmetics, mental distress functioned as a fashionable attribute, part of the ritual and disciplining of the sexed body. In addition, 'cures' such as jonquil or hartshorn tea were purchased and became part of the stylish lifestyle of the aristocratic splenetic woman. Finch describes the feminine performances of the coquette, the wife and the aristocratic woman who partake in the rituals of the spleen and "in fading Silks compose":

⁴³ McGovern, *Anne Finch*, pp. 159-160.

⁴⁴ Juliana Schiesari argues that discourses of the heroic melancholic were primarily male dominated and that the position of the talented melancholic was not available to the early modern woman. See *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

Faintly th'inimitable *Rose*,
 Fill up an ill-drawn *Bird*, or paint on Glass
 The *Sov'reign's* blurr'd and undistinguish'd Face,
 The threatening *Angel* and the speaking *Ass*. (S, 85-89)⁴⁵

The cures that women seek to quell the spleen - from the payments to the doctor whose "growing Wealth he sees / Daily increas'd by Ladies fees" (139-140), to jonquil, "the *Indian Leaf*" (130) and "parch'd *Eastern Berry*" (131) are part of the business that the spleen and female melancholia has generated. It is one of the consumer practices undertaken in the feminine site of the dressing room that makes it a 'scene of business' in more ways than that described in *The Spectator*.

Finch describes the fate of women in the early eighteenth century who must take medicines to cure themselves of sexual passions, passions which are prohibited in the objectified site of the dressing room. Finch describes the use of smelling salts or jonquil in prohibiting physical pleasure:⁴⁶

Now the *Jonquille* o'ercomes the feeble Brain;
 We faint beneath the Aromatick Pain,
 Till some offensive Scent thy Pow'rs appease,
 And Pleasure we resign for short, and nauseous Ease. (S, 40-43)

⁴⁵ 'The Spleen' hereafter cited as 'S'.

⁴⁶ Woman's sexuality was punished by smelling salts used to "allay hysteric fits". See *The Meridian Anthology of Early Women Writers: British Literary Women from Aphra Behn to Maria Edgeworth 1660-1800*, ed. by Katharine M. Rogers and William McCarthy (New York and Ontario: Meridian/Penguin, 1987), p. 127.

Moreover, Finch's narrator includes herself in this experience through the pronoun "we". This is no stereotypical coquette as Desiree Hellegers suggests it is, rather this is one of the multiple voices of Finch representing the aristocratic women of the early eighteenth century who are forbidden to experience their own sexuality. In 'To Dr. Waldron: A Fellow of All Souls Colledge in OXFORD, Who in a Letter acknowledged his mistake in having left that Society & the Muses to follow the Practise of Phisick', Finch critiques physicians as "fools" and states that they make a "glittering proffit" out of people's bodies (2). In 'The Spleen', doctors get rich on "ladies fees" and Finch ends the poem imagining the death of one famous physician, Robert Lower.

Finch is not the only writer to link the spleen with sexuality. Montagu, Pope and Robert Burton also make this association, albeit in different ways. For example, Montagu critiques the commodification of the diseased female body and states that "tis in the Power of a surgeon to make an ulcer with the help of a Lancet and Plaister, and of a doctor to Kill by Prescriptions."⁴⁷ In 'Saturday', Montagu critiques the doctors who surrounded Flavia as she suffered from smallpox, calling them "cruel Chymists" (65) and stating "false and triffling is that Art you boast" (67). The doctors who are mentioned by name are ridiculed and are represented as more absorbed in their clothes and luxuries than in curing Flavia. In 'A Receipt to Cure the Vapours' Montagu also tropes the spleen, like Finch, with the dressing room and sexual repression. The speaker tells Delia to relinquish the "Hartshorn Tea" (4), a medicinal solution of ammonia, and to "consult your toilette / In the glass your face review" (9-10). The speaker states:

⁴⁷ Montagu, *A Plain Account of the Inoculating of the Small Pox by a Turkey Merchant*, in *E&P*, pp. 95-97 (p. 97).

I, like you, was born a woman,

Well I know what vapours mean:

The disease, alas! is common;

Single, we have all the spleen. (13-16)

Mocking the killing prescriptions written by the quacks, Montagu's speaker advises a "pretty fellow" for Delia:

Prithee hear him every morning

At the least an hour or two:

Once again at night returning –

I believe the dose will do. (21-24)

The business of the so-called diseased female body was also exploited by scholars such as Thomas Sydenham, Robert Burton and Bernard de Mandeville. They emphasized women's intellectual inferiority and sexual depravity, and therefore their need to be confined to the dressing room. Hellegers argues persuasively that Finch directly engages with the language and rhetoric of Sydenham and his 'Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases' which dichotomises male and female identities, linking man with the mind and woman with the hysterical body. Finch is also in dialogue with Robert Burton's descriptions of melancholy. Burton describes women as suffering from lack of penetrative sex. In the section headed 'Symptoms of Maids', Nuns', and Widows' Melancholy' Burton writes:

Many of them cannot tell how to express themselves in words, or how it holds them; you cannot understand them, or well tell what to make of their sayings; so far gone sometimes, so stupefied and distracted, they think themselves bewitched, they are in despair.⁴⁸

One of the symptoms of this lack of heterosexual sex is chaotic, hysterical and “bewitched” speech.

This quotation by Burton seems to have influenced Pope’s inscription of the ‘Cave of Spleen’. In *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope both trivialises and expresses his fear of female sexuality through the cave of spleen which is configured through female and feminine tropes. It is a space “screen’d in shades” (*RL*, IV, 22) guarded by two “handmaids” - one a hypocritical “ancient maid” filled with prayers and lampoons - the other is ‘Affectation’ another female stereotype who also figures in Finch’s ‘The Spleen’. Pope, like Burton, satirises woman’s speech as he describes the queen of the cave of spleen who:

[...] collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears. (*RL*, 4. 83-86)

⁴⁸ Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* vol. 1, part 1, sec 3, mem. 2, subs 4 (p. 416).

Finch responds directly to Pope's configuration of the female spleen. Although Pope and Finch were friends, Finch appears to have had a somewhat patronizing attitude to Pope as evidenced in her poem 'The Answer: *To Pope's Impromptu*' in which she calls him 'Alexander'.⁴⁹ This poem originated from Finch's reading of *The Rape of the Lock*, and she employs it to critique his portrayal of the spleen. McGovern, who is keen to maintain that there was a good camaraderie between Finch and Pope, reads this poem as gentle chastisement from an older poet to a younger one. Nevertheless, Finch manages to express anger in her veiled and elliptical manner. Just as she does in 'The Invitation', Finch includes an image of violence in the middle of the poem and couches it on either side with humour. She warns Pope of what his fate could be if he continues to write as a misogynist:

And as the Hebrus roll'd his scull,
 And harp besmear'd with blood,
 They clashing as the waves grew full,
 Still harmoniz'd the flood. (21-24)

Finch alludes to Swift through the word "besmear'd" but this time it is not the filthy bodies of the women's dressing room that is the object of disgust. Rather, like the atheist in Finch's 'The Atheist and the Acorn', it is the head and the harp of the male poet.

⁴⁹ McGovern writes "It is doubtful, for example, that Pope would have taken umbrage at Finch's teasing use of the name 'Alexander' in the manuscript version of 'To Mr. Pope' [...] while Finch might disagree with Pope, she certainly admired him and permitted a revised version of 'To Mr. Pope' (with the references to 'Alexander' deleted) to be published alongside his poem to her, now retitled as 'The Impromptu', in Pope's 1717 volume of miscellany poems." See 'Introduction' to *Wellesley Manuscript* pp. xxxvi, xxxvii.

In linking women's melancholia with sexual repression, Finch mimics contemporary discussions of the spleen by male physicians. However, Finch writes female sexual repression in a very different way from that offered by Pope, Sydenham and Burton, as she represents the spleen as being caused by sexual *guilt*. Moreover, in her poems on melancholy and mental distress, Finch dislocates melancholy from its domesticated position, a luxury for aristocratic women to indulge in, and *relishes* in its monstrosity. Just as she contains images of violence in her poems to Pope and to her husband, she maintains the horror of the spleen through linking it to "monstrous *Vision*" (20), "gloomy Terrours" (12), "antick Spectres" (17) and "Panick Fear"(10). Her final description of the death of the doctor is almost gleefully gruesome:

Tho' in the Search, too deep for Humane Thought,
 With unsuccessful Toil he wrought,
 'Till, thinking Thee to've catch'd, Himself by thee was caught,
 Retain'd thy Pris'ner, thy acknowledg'd Slave,
 And sunk beneath thy Chain to a lamented Grave. (S, 146-150)

Finch employs the spleen as a mask which both reveals and conceals her challenge to the heterosexual matrix. In other words, Finch ostensibly writes a female stereotype, but also hints at a sexually deviant woman, consequently opening up sites of resistance and recognition. Furthermore, this passage alludes to 'Adam Pos'd' through the image of "toil". In 'The Spleen' Adam has metamorphosed into a seventeenth-century physician who betrayed the Stuart cause. Like Adam he is troped through images of penetration and language. In 'The Spleen', however, the repressed female body takes her spectral and monstrous revenge.

“my cramped numbers fail”

‘The Spleen’ expresses a ‘schizophrenic’ poetic presence. It is a chaotic, inconsistent, and contradictory poem. The speaker describes herself as only being able to write in “cramped numbers”, and yet simultaneously she is able to “wander in the Muses path and trace delightful things”:

O’er me, alas! thou dost too much prevail:

I feel thy Force, whilst I against thee rail:

I feel my Verse decay, and my cramped Numbers fail.

Thro’ thy black Jaundice I all Objects see,

As Dark, as Terrible as Thee,

My Lines decry’d, and my Employment thought

An useless Folly, or presumptuous Fault:

Whilst in the *Muses* Paths I stray,

Whilst in their Groves, and by their secret Springs

My Hand delights to trace unusual Things,

And deviates from the known, and common way; (S, 74-84)

The word “whilst”, (which is repeated to emphasise the simultaneity of these two voices), juxtaposes these two very different modes of writing which happen concurrently. This divided voice is, in part, the result of writing under the influence of different literary traditions. By employing the form of the Pindaric, Finch writes in the tradition of Abraham Cowley who popularized this poetic form. However, she also

uses a literary form that was utilized by Aphra Behn to write of Royalist politics and sexual desire.

In *'To the Royal Society'*, for example, Cowley celebrates natural philosophy as an exclusively "Male-virtue" (7)⁵⁰ and in *'Ode. Upon Dr Harvey'* he celebrates "Harvey's achievement as emblematic of the progressive control that experimental philosophy will achieve over feminized nature and the body."⁵¹ In his Pindaric *'Upon Liberty'*, Cowley celebrates this open form: "Mine the Pindarique way I'll make: / The Matter shall be grave, the Numbers loose and free" (III, 116-117).⁵² Cowley's easy relation to the free numbers of this form contrasts with Ardelia's angry and "crampt numbers". Under the influence of such a masculine tradition Ardelia feels her "verse decay".

Another influence who writes 'loosely', however, is Aphra Behn. In Finch's *'The Circuit of Apollo'*, Apollo is asked to judge three women writers including Ardelia and Laura (Mary of Modena). Apollo also casts his opinions on Aphra Behn stating that she "did too loosly writt" (14). Although this judgement is spoken through the voice of Apollo, it has been attributed to the prudishness of Finch. However, I would suggest that Finch covertly writes in the tradition of Behn. She shares Behn's Royalist and political sympathies. She, like Behn, writes fables, Pindarics, plays and pastoral songs. Moreover, one can read Finch's lament over her own "crampt numbers" against Behn's loose verse. In other words, although Behn's looseness is attributed to her sexual looseness it also applies to her freedom in writing. Behn,

⁵⁰ *Abraham Cowley: Poems*, ed. by A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905). All citations are taken from this edition.

⁵¹ Hellegers, *Handmaid to Divinity*, p. 143.

⁵² *Abraham Cowley: Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses*, ed. by A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906).

unlike Finch who writes in a more sexually constrained age and has developed a modest poetic persona, is freer to write against conventional femininity and to write female desire.

David Trotter links the Pindaric form to expressions of random sensory experiences, rather than explorations of a preconceived argument.⁵³ Consequently, the Pindaric's link with sensory perception provides an ideal template for the inductive and non-dogmatic practices of the Royal Society, as well as the sexual and sensual poetry of Behn. In the tradition of Cowley, however, Finch must write in the cramped numbers of a woman who is under the scrutiny of the medical gaze. On the other hand, the Pindaric form as inscribed by Behn offers Finch a structure through which to write of sexuality. Susan J. Wiseman examines Behn's 'Pindaric to the Rev. Dr Burnet' and argues that Behn asserts multiple and echoing voices in this Pindaric so that it can be read ironically or as straightforward gratitude to Dr Burnet who switched political allegiances from the Stuarts to William and Mary. The strategy of echo "licenses linguistic fragmentation, ambiguity and double meaning" and so Behn's poem simultaneously remains loyal to the Stuarts as well as being a graceful panegyric to the traitor Burnet.⁵⁴ In addition, Behn's strategies of echoing disrupt the paradigm of an original voice or subject, creating an "hysterical" text. Finch mimics Behn's pro-Stuart articulation of multiple voices in her own Pindarics, as well as the "spooky potential" inherent in these divided and subjectless voices.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, her use of veiled voices also ambiguously echoes Behn. In other words, Finch

⁵³ See David Trotter, *The Poetry of Abraham Cowley* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 113-141.

⁵⁴ Susan J. Wiseman, 'What Echo Says: Echo in Seventeenth-century Women's Poetry', in *Renaissance Configurations: Voices/Bodies/Spaces, 1580-1690*, ed. by Gordon McMullan (London: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 212-233 (p. 226).

⁵⁵ Wiseman, 'What Echo Says', p. 230.

employs Behn's echoing and ironical poetical strategies in order elliptically to echo Behn: we can hear Behn's looseness reigned into the "crampt numbers" of Finch.

In her opening of 'The Spleen', Finch attempts to describe its protean nature:

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

Thou *Proteus* to abus'd Mankind,

Who never yet thy real Cause cou'd find

Or fix thee to remain in one continued Shape.

Still varying thy perplexing Form

Now a Dead Sea thou'lt represent,

A Calm of stupid Discontent,

Then, dashing on the Rocks, wilt rage into a Storm.

Trembling sometimes thou does appear,

Dissolved into Panick Fear; (S, 1-10)

This passage mimics Behn's 'On Desire: A Pindaric':

What Art thou, oh! thou new-found pain?

From what infection dost thou spring?

Tell me ---- oh! Tell me thou enchanting thing,

Thy nature, and thy name;

Inform me by what subtil Art,

What powerful Influence,

You got such vast Dominion in part

Of my unheeded, and unguarded, heart,

That fame and Honour cannot drive yee thence. ('On Desire', 1-9)

Finch's Pindaric is written through images of pain and anguish. Her poem, in contrast to that of Behn, is grotesque and angry and proliferates with monstrous description. Whereas Behn's Pindaric is lightly mocking, humorous, and steady, Finch relinquishes humour for tension and bitterness. Finch's 'The Spleen' is bewildering. Because the spleen is by definition protean, Finch's poem is more confusing and its chaotic and ambiguous structure renders the reader splenetic. Rather than writing overtly about desire, Finch can only write about the pain of chaos, guilt and repression.

However, although 'On Desire' reads more easily, Behn also employs this poem to make serious and important arguments about female sexuality and feminine behaviours. In 'On Desire', Behn's speaker states that women fake their modesty and sexual denial:

[...] your virtu's but a cheat

And Honour but a false disguise,

Your modesty a necessary bait

To gain the dull repute of being wise. (103-106)

In effect Behn critiques the performance of the chaste and modest feminine woman, arguing that it is a subterfuge. She argues that women are sexual, they do experience desire, that Helen was not raped but "from *Theseus* arms she fled, / To charming

Paris yields her heart and Bed." (115-116) Moreover, the female speaker describes how she experiences her own sexuality:

Yes, yes, tormentor, I have found thee now;
 And found to whom thou dost thy being owe:
 'Tis thou the blushes dost impart,
 For thee this languishment I wear,
 'Tis thou that tremblest in my heart
 When the dear Shepherd do's appear,
 I faint, I dye with pleasing pain,
 My words intruding sighing break
 When e'er I touch the charming swain
 When e'er I gaze, when e'er I speak. ('On Desire', 67-76)

The orgasmic pleasure experienced by the speaker is one that she cannot reconcile with being a woman.

It is these themes of sexual shame that Finch repeats, echoes and expands upon in 'The Spleen'. Finch directly interrogates female sexual guilt in the second stanza:

Falsly, the Mortal Part we blame
 Of our deprest, and pond'rous Frame,
 Which, till the First degrading Sin
 Let Thee, its dull Attendant, in,

Still with the Other did comply,
 Nor clogg'd the Active Soul dispos'd to fly
 And range the Mansions of it's native Sky. (S, 26-32)

Finch states that the body should not be blamed for the spleen. Rather, the cleaving of the body and soul after “the First Degrading Sin” has allowed the spleen its “Reign”. Here Finch links the spleen with sexual *guilt*, rather than sex or sexuality itself. In effect, she critiques the *repression* of the body and flesh by religious writings, and condemns sexuality’s divorce from spirituality. Moreover, the tension – “crampt numbers” - that is inscribed in these lines is a contrast to the easy “loose” lines of Aphra Behn, and reflects not only the restraining or ‘reigning’ in of the body, but also Finch’s inability to speak so loosely and so freely about women’s experience of sexuality.

In ‘The Spleen’, Finch disengages Ardelia from her identification with the ‘we’ of the nauseous and sexually repressed women, and configures her as a poetess who “deviates from the known and common way”:

Whilst in the *Muses* Paths I stray,
 Whilst in their Groves, and by their secret Springs
 My Hand delights to trace unusual Things,
 And deviates from the known, and common way; (S, 81-84)

This is an absorbing passage which echoes the pastoral and deviant sites of Aphra Behn’s poetry. Moreover, it makes a stark contrast between the poet’s “secret

Springs” and the *Spectator*’s “their great scene of Business”. In these four lines Finch suggests an alternative to “crampt numbers” and the possibilities of sensuality inherent in secrecy, straying, and deviancy. The image of tracing suggests the re-association between the body and the word, between touch and language. It also implies that the word does not quite fix, but hints or evokes. It is an erotic image of writing that is grounded in the material, but is also ambiguous and unseen. Ardelia is disassociated from the painting and embroidering aristocratic women of the house, and instead is configured as outside, as straying from the norm. In chapter 5 I discuss further this embodied and yet unseen voice through exploring Finch’s use of echoing and mimicry in her devotional writing. Finch re-unites and blends sexuality with spirituality through a sensual and tactile voice, and also by employing the generic forms of the hymn and mystic writing. This sexuality, however, is homoerotic and it is this same-sex love that I explore for the rest of this chapter.

Part 3: “Lesbian Sappho’s might all hearts beguile”: Ardelia’s Sapphic Voice

It is this link between touch and word encapsulated in Finch’s use of “trace”, that constitutes her ‘Sapphic Voice’; a voice that will speak her sacred retreats. I have reservations about the term ‘Sapphic’ as it conjures up twee and tame connotations of girlish adolescent love. It is also a vague and flippant term which offers an overarching label of same-sex love amongst women but without exploring the varieties of ways through which this love can be expressed. In doing so, it renders homoerotic relations apolitical or unworthy of critical interest. Consequently for the remainder of this chapter I will interrogate what I mean by Finch’s Sapphic voice. I have, after all, tyrannically imposed a label upon Finch’s poetic voice – a label she would never employ herself; indeed, her poetry is about breaking down categories. This imposition is justified, however, for two reasons: one is in order to offer a different understanding of Finch’s poetry from the heterosexually and conventionally feminine one that has been produced throughout the 1990s, and so for clarity’s sake, I force myself to employ overarching masculine categories, but ones that can be discarded in the future. The second is that Finch does link some of her poetic voices – especially that of Ardelia - specifically to Sappho and all the sexual connotations that are embedded in this historical and mythological figure. Through teasing out these covert Sapphic links it is possible to read some of Finch’s poetry as homoerotic.

“renew our Ancient Claime”

The themes of beauty and textual excess discussed in part 2 coalesce in Finch’s ‘Melinda on an Insipid Beauty: In Imitation of a fragment of Sappho’s’ cited here in full:

You, when your body, life shall leave
 Must drop entire into the grave;
 Unheeded, unregarded lye,
 And all of you together dye;
 Must hide that fleeting charm, that face in dust,
 Or to some painted cloath, the slighted Immage trust,
 Whilst my fam’d works, shall throo’ all times surprise
 My polish’d thoughts, my bright Ideas rise,
 And to new men be known, still talking to their eyes.

Importantly, Finch’s poetic voice conflates and *identifies* with Sappho’s.⁵⁶ She polarises her Sapphic ‘I’ from the ‘you’ of Melinda who depends upon her beauty and

⁵⁶ It seems to be an imitation of Sappho’s Fragment 24 and Fragment 25:

“Dying, thou shalt die for ever,
 None shall e’er remember thee;
 For in life thou pluckest never
 Roses from Piera’s tree.

But within dark Hades’ portals
 Thou shalt surely be unknown,
 Flitting with the Shades of mortal
 As inglorious as thine own.” (Fragment 24)

“To me the Muses truly gave
 An envied and a happy lot:
 E’en when I lie within the grave,
 I cannot, shall not, be forgot.” (Fragment 25) From *Sappho: The Poems and Fragments*, ed. by C.R. Haines (London: Routledge, 1926)

her objectification. The Sapphic speaker of the poem refuses to be silent and looked upon and, instead, her “polished thoughts” and “bright Ideas” will be in dialogue with men’s eyes. In other words, rather than maintaining the heterosexual polarity of looking male and gazed upon female, Finch represents a woman who talks back. Finch links the face with text in this fragment as she privileges “my fam’d works” over the face of Melinda. However, she reverses the conventional gesture of reading the face to understand character. Instead, she rejects the face altogether and creates her own texts, texts which talk to “new men”. Finch echoes Sappho’s fragment in order to link her anti-dressing room stance to a literary tradition of women writers. Moreover, in order to dislocate her female speakers from the dressing room, Finch identifies them with a woman whose sexuality is not defined solely by the phallus and who moves outside the exchange value of the heterosexual market. She advocates female speech over female object-hood.

The historical figure of Sappho appears again in Finch’s ‘An Epistle: From Ardelia to Mrs Randolph in answer to her Poem upon her Verses’. Very little is known about Mrs Randolph apart from the fact that she wrote a poem comparing Finch to Orinda, a poem which Finch attached to the beginning of her Folio manuscript. Finch – through the voice of Ardelia - writes that she has been persuaded by Mrs Randolph’s literary style “That Lesbian Sapho’s might all hearts beguile” (6). The recognition of “such a genius, in a Female Breast” (10) gives Finch faith in the “New, to justify the old” (12). Moreover, she will use both her own writing and Randolph’s to “renew our Ancient Claime” (14) given to women writers by Sappho.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ ‘To Mrs Randolph’. Hereafter cited as MR.

In other words, they will produce poetry that re-inscribes a literary tradition marked by Sappho, a woman poet with a transgressive sexuality.

Finch then compares female friendship with that of Jonathan and David whose friendship has been both condemned and appropriated as an incidence of homosexual love.⁵⁸:

But, to the love of Jonathan we owe
 The Love, which that of Women did surpasse,
 Of that sweet Elegy, the mournfull grace;
 The Brother Jonathan, peirc'd deeper far
 Then all the Spears of that destructive war. (MR, 44-48)

The allusion to Jonathan and David gestures at spiritual love, but the language of piercing and penetration that Finch employs suggests that of a sexual love “which that of Women did surpasse”. Moreover, Finch will return to this comparison in ‘The Petition’ where Ardelia’s and Arminda’s love is also compared to that of David and Jonathan. Jonathan is described in Samuel 18: 1 as having his soul “knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” Like Jonathan and David, Arminda and Ardelia are depicted as spiritually connected. However, in their case the soul is represented as female. Through the love of Arminda, Ardelia is able to re-join her body with the soul following their separation by ‘fallen man’. Finch can thus be read as exploiting the ambiguity inherent in David and Jonathan’s spiritualized friendship as part of her strategy in locating unspeakable love.

⁵⁸ See Thomas Marland Horner, *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (The Westminster Press, 1978)

Finch also compares Randolph to Katherine Philips:

And whilst Orinda's part you far transcend,
 I proudly bear that of her glorious Friend,
 Who though not equaling her lofty Witt,
 Th'occasion was, of what so well she writt. (MR, 31-34)

Here Ardelia is offered up as a Lucasia or Rosania to Mrs Randolph's poetry.⁵⁹ If we accept that Finch may have also recognised Philips's "clearly lesbian tone", then this is an eroticized and sensual inscription of Ardelia as a Sapphic muse.⁶⁰ It is a representation that she appears to be reluctant to express in her poetry to her husband in which he plays the role of censor or fortress to Ardelia's creative imagination. Ardelia is also portrayed as mimicking Philips when she compares female friendship to spiritual love: "Friendship, like Devotion clears the mind, / Where every thought, is heighten'd and refin'd." (39-40) Through alluding to both Sappho and to Orinda, Finch locates this act of devotion through the homoeroticised bodies of women. Rather than producing what Carol Barash calls "myths of the private self"⁶¹, the voices that speak through Finch's poetry are plural and diverse. In Ardelia Finch does not "invent[...] the poetic psyche", but rather she speaks with a Sapphic voice.⁶²

⁵⁹ 'Lucasia' was Anne Owen to whom Philips addressed many poems on friendship and love. 'Rosania' was Mary Aubrey to whom an important group of poems was addressed between December 1650 and 1653.

⁶⁰ Arlene Stiebel, 'Subversive Sexuality: Masking the Erotic in Poems by Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn', in *Renaissance Discourses of Desire*, ed. by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 223-236 (p. 225 n. 6). See also Elizabeth Wahl, *Invisible Relations: Representations of Female Intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), especially chapter 4.

⁶¹ Barash, *English Women's Poetry*, p. 271.

⁶² Barash, *English Women's Poetry*, p.260. In her pastoral 'Songs' and her fables, Finch writes through a male speaker. Moreover, this is a speaker located in a Restoration milieu. The speakers of her poems

Finch explicitly links Ardelia to Sappho in 'Mrs Randolph's' but also, significantly, the name Ardelia is taken from a poem by Katherine Philips, a poem located in the queered space of the bower. Katherine Philips's 'A retir'd friendship, to Ardelia 23^d Augo 1651' is the only instance when this name appears in Philips' work. In Philips' poem Ardelia is seductively entreated to enter Orinda's bower where they will partake in "innocent" pleasures in shades and retreats away from the world of men. Traditionally the space of the bower is troped as a natural, passive and feminine site that is penetrated by a male questing poet. The heterosexual union between the masculine and feminine principles is conventionally reproductive, resulting in the poet being interpellated into a male subjectivity and artistry. For Philips to appropriate this trope for two women is therefore radically interesting. In Philips' poem it is the silent nymph of the bower who speaks, who has voice, who is the artist. She entreats the questing traveller, who is also female, to enter her potent space where they will indulge in "kindly mingling" and "innocently spend an hour" (2-3). In her bower Philips imagines a relationship between two women that is "unconfin'd" (35) and evades the power dynamics of masculine structures. They will be hidden in shades away from "Apollo's beams" (25) and his "scorching Age" (29), and there will be no "Slavery of State" (8). There is no emphatic 'I' of separation and individuality, rather the emphasis is on an intersubjectivity of 'we' and 'us'.

can also be animals such as in 'The Dog and his Master', and there are also identifications with birds, nature, classical figures and even Christ in her poetry. Moreover, because Finch paraphrases psalms, biblical stories and translates *Aminta of Tasso*, she speaks and appropriates many different voices. Finch collaborates with her friends and presumably with her husband as the drafts and revisions of 'Pindarick upon a Hurricane' in the *Octavo* manuscript indicate. There are also marked differences between the erotic pastoralism of her early verses when she was at Court and the religious verse of her later years. The many epistles that she wrote also indicate that her voice changes to suit her readers. Finch's mimicry of other writers is sometimes explicit such as in 'On Fanscomb Barn *in imitation of Milton*'.

Although Philips' speaker insists in her poem to Ardelia that there will be "no disguise" or "deep conceal'd design" (9-10), there are clearly masks inscribed in order to maintain that the friendship between two women in the erotic site of the bower is innocent. Some of these masks are alluded to in stanza six:

We weare about us such a charme,
 No horroure can be our offence;
 For mischeif's self can doe no harme
 To friendship and to innocence. (21-24)

Philips' charm alludes to spiritual protection, but it also signifies the feminine charm for which both Philips, and later Finch, have been consistently praised. As Philips so straightforwardly points out, the charm of Ardelia and Orinda will protect them from charges of horror - horror in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries being linked to 'unnatural' sexualities, including lesbian practices. Indeed the feminine charm of both Philips and Finch has been so effectively articulated that they were and are marginalised for being too innocent, too delightful, and too charming. Philips' and Finch's insistence on innocence can be read as a mocking commentary on phallogocentric culture which recognizes sexuality only through the penetration of the phallus. The argument goes that if there is no violating penis, then there is no crime. In Finch's retreats, therefore, "*Tyrant-Man*" is conspicuously absent or "do's sleep".

Vivien Jones argues that the pastoral retirement motif is a recurring one in women's writing and is "often set up as an explicit alternative to marriage or to sexual

relationships.”⁶³ I would argue that the space of the pastoral retreat offers Philips, Behn and Finch, not an alternative to sexual relationships, but *heterosexual* ones. In Finch’s own inscriptions of pastoral sites, sexuality becomes as “innocent” as that expressed in Behn’s ‘The Golden Age’ and ‘To the Fair Clarinda’. Purged of the consumerist corruption of the dressing room, the study and the fashionable coach, Finch’s exterior spaces stage love between female friends that is unsullied by the heterosexual power games of the town. Through mimicking Philips’s and Behn’s retreat poetry, Finch situates Ardelia in a tradition of women’s homoerotic retreat poetry. Although Messenger, McGovern and Barash have discussed the tradition of female retreats, they have ignored homoerotic poetics, and although Andreadis has acknowledged the Sapphic erotics of these retreats and the influence of Behn and Philips on Finch, she has not delivered an indepth analysis. Consequently the remainder of this chapter explores Finch’s mimicry of Behn’s and Philip’s homoerotic spaces.

The erasure of consumerism and its inevitable commodified sexualities in Finch’s ‘The Spleen’, ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ and ‘The Petition’ invokes Behn’s ‘The Golden Age’. ‘The Golden Age’ is a translation of Tasso’s *Aminta* (which Finch also translated)⁶⁴ as well as long traditions of classical and libertine evocations of, what Jessica Munns names, ‘soft’ pastorals. As Jessica Munns argues, Behn’s ‘The Golden Age’ offers a solution to sexuality’s implication “in a material and social economy of

⁶³ Vivien Jones, ‘The Seductions of Conduct: Pleasure and Conduct Literature’, in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 108-132 (p. 128). The trope of retreat in much women’s poetry is usually configured as homoerotic and Finch’s appropriation of Philips’s retreat motifs suggests that she was fully aware of Philips’s Sapphic erotics and, indeed, mimicked them. Finch’s appropriation of the name ‘Ardelia’, as well as other imagery that Philips uses, suggests that Finch did have access to Philips’s poetry of female intimacy.

⁶⁴ See Reynolds, *Poems of Anne*, pp. 118-119.

hoarding and spending” and creates a “golden past when issues of power, authority, and wealth were unknown and when sexuality implied only pleasure”.⁶⁵ Behn’s ‘Golden Age’ depicts a space in which the speaker of ‘On Desire: A Pindarick’ is free to experience sexuality as love is no longer “kept in fear of Gods, no fond Religious cause, / Nor in Obedience to the duller Laws” (109-10). Behn’s ‘The Golden Age’ is explicitly a female paradise and celebrates an unrestrained female sexuality where “Trembling and blushing are not marks of shame” (100) and where “Joyes” are “everlasting, ever new”(107). Behn also rejects femininity as configured through the glass and the dressing room, a femininity which “rob’st us of our Gust” (119). Behn envisages the commodification of sexuality in present day London and evacuates it from her paradise.

Similarly, Finch envisages landscapes free from labour, domestic drudgery and the roles and rituals of economic exchange. Just as she exclaims against “the dull mannage of a servile house” in ‘The Introduction’, so she imagines a site where there is:

A table spread, without my care,
 With what the neighbouring fields impart,
 Whose cleanliness be all its art. (PAR, 23-25)

Both Finch and Behn inscribe aristocratic retreats where the female earth regenerates itself without male penetration or a labouring class. In ‘The Golden Age’ “bounteous Nature” (62) reproduces herself “As if within her Teeming Womb,/ All Nature, and

⁶⁵ Munns, ‘To the Touch were soft’, p. 92.

all Sexes lay," (35-6). This is an age when "The stubborn Plough had then, / Made no rude Rapes upon the Virgin Earth" (31-32) and the earth produces "Without the Aids of men" (34). The erasure of labour means that all the "troubling signs that mark the fallen world and which connect sexuality with an economy of power, status and wealth" are erased.⁶⁶ It is a step towards Finch's sacred and Sapphic space.

"tis to love as I love you"

Although Finch mimics the sensuality of Behn's retreats and Behn's inscriptions of female sexuality, her homoerotic poetics are also very much influenced by Philips's friendship poetry. Like Philips, Finch traces displaced devotional topographies inhabited by her Royalist friends who are given pastoral names. Like Philips, Finch constructs narratives and epistolary declarations of these recurring poetic projections of her friends. Both Philips and Finch create a poem called 'Friendship' in which they outline the unspeakability of female love. That Finch writes a poem of the same name, structure and conclusion suggests that Finch's paradigms of female friendship are deeply influenced by that inscribed by Philips. This unspeakability courses through their poetry igniting a multiplicity of ways to write love between women. Finch is deeply influenced by and engages with Philips's construction of a 'Sapphic erotics' but she consciously departs from her influence by creating her own Sapphic voice. I will compare their poems 'Friendship' and then go on to discuss Philips's 'To my excellent Lucasia' and 'To my Lucasia in defence of a declared friendship'.

⁶⁶ Munns, 'But to the Touch were Soft', p. 97. Unlike Montagu, Finch critiques both commerce and systems of exchange as she erases labourers from her landscape.

In examining the works of Anne Finch and her passionate inscriptions of female friendships, I am (like Finch) faced with the dilemma of how to label her relationships with women. This dilemma is rendered more complex as Finch frequently focuses on the failures of discourse to depict her experience, and in particular her experiences of love between women. Finch's own difficulties in speaking female friendship are articulated in her poem 'Friendship *between Ephelia and Ardelia*' which is here quoted in full:

Eph. What Friendship is, Ardelia, show.

Ard. 'Tis to love as I love you.

Eph. This account, so short (though kind)

Suits not my enquiring mind.

Therefore farther now repeat:

What is Friendship now complete?

Ard. 'Tis to share all joy and grief;

'Tis to lend all due relief

From the tongue, the heart, the hand,

'Tis to mortgage house and land;

For a friend to be sold a slave;

'Tis to die upon a grave

If a friend do therein lie.

Eph. This indeed, though carried high;

This, though more than e'er was done

Underneath the rolling sun,

This has all been said before.

Can Ardelia say no more?

Ard. Words indeed no more can show:

But 'tis to love as I love you.

In this poem inscribing female love, Finch speaks through the words of Solomon and Christ. Appropriating Solomon's proverbs concerning friendship: "a friend loveth at all times, not only in prosperity, but also in adversity" (Solomon Proverb:17a), Finch (like Philips) acknowledges her debt to Biblical inscriptions of love and friendship.

Andreadis argues that the final lines of 'Friendship' reveal "the inexpressibility of erotic emotion between women, which can be spoken as self-explanatory". Furthermore, the closing line of this poem "states clearly the nature of erotic ellipsis and the unspeakability of certain affective attachments."⁶⁷ The unspeakability of female same-sex love runs through Finch's friendship poetry and much of its force is exposed in the gaps and lacunae of the text. I have already discussed Finch's acknowledgement of "the failure of language to represent" and this is particularly the case in her inscription of sacred and Sapphic love which is expressed "too high for syllables to speak".⁶⁸ In the poem 'Friendship' by Katherine Philips, Philips runs through eight different similes to find a figure adequate to describe female friendship. However, she abandons the quest as futile and ends the poem by writing:

Free as first agents are true friends, and kind,

⁶⁷ Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England*, p. 127.

⁶⁸ Keith, 'The Poetics of Anne Finch', p. 465.

As but themselves I can no likeness find. (55-56)

Like Finch, Philips brings words to excess only to return to the lovers as a living example of what friendship is.

Paula Loscocco in 'Inventing the English Sappho: Katherine Philips's Donnean Poetry' argues that Philips's 'Friendship' refers to Donne's Sappho who says "the likeness being such/ Why should they not alike in all parts touch?" (II. 47-48). Loscocco argues that Philips brings Donne's erotic "and specifically homoerotic burden into her poem, it also lets her do so without having to speak that burden."⁶⁹ Moreover, Philips speaks this burden right at the end of her poem which suggests that the particular "likeness" that she has in mind "is literally unspeakable, with verbal "likeness" or equivalency." According to Loscocco, Philips uses Donne's 'Sappho to Phileanis' as a "discursive model for a Sapphic (in the particular sense of female and libinal) poetics as expressive of (homoerotic) union."⁷⁰

In 'To my excellent Lucasia', Philips continues this trope of "likeness" in which metaphor is inadequate to describe the love between Orinda and Lucasia. Philips writes "I am not Thine, but Thee" (4) and "I've all the world in thee" (20). As Loscocco states "in the erotic/poetic world of Philips's lyrics, where Orinda and Lucasia are self-identical [...] the possibility for analogy does not exist: nothing "can" be compared to their love because [...] nothing else is." Moreover, Loscocco argues that Philips' text "is above all a poem about speaking (female) union freely" as she can finally "say without a crime" (III 3); and she ends by insisting that "no bold feare"

⁶⁹ Paula Loscocco, 'Inventing the English Sappho: Katherine Philips's Donnean Poetry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 102, no. 1 (January 2003): 59-87 (p. 77).

⁷⁰ Loscocco, 'Inventing the English Sappho', p. 77-8.

will keep her from letting the “flame” of their love “light and shine” for all to see (II 21-22). Loscocco suggests that because Philips is aware of the “enabling opportunity that Sapphic discourse represents for her, she knows she can speak sapphically in ‘Lucasia’ because the poetic world in which she locates herself is a thoroughly homoerotic one”. Consequently, she has “absolute expressive freedom because she has absolute receptive privacy.”⁷¹

In ‘Friendship’ Finch appropriates the freedom of Philips’s Sapphic discourse and in doing so she echoes Philips’s eroticised ‘burden’ as well as the freedom that Philips has discursively drawn, and which Loscocco discusses. So when Finch writes “Words indeed no more can show” she is, like Philips, articulating the inability of metaphor to inscribe Sapphic “likeness”. Nevertheless, I depart from Loscocco’s reading as I think she offers a very limited vision, both in the case of Philips and of Finch, of what ‘sapphic discourse’ can be. As I will argue in chapter 4, Montagu mimics Philips’s articulation of same-sex desire and part of this echoing strategy is to mimic Philips’s parody of heterosexual erotics, of sexual *difference*. Philips’s ‘sapphic discourse’ can convincingly be elucidated by Loscocco’s interpretation of the term, but this limited framework ignores the multiplicity of ways in which Philips writes homoeroticism. Furthermore, Loscocco dismisses many of the metaphors that Philips employs in ‘Friendship’ to describe her love for Lucasia, as unimportant. Because these metaphors stand for difference and test the boundaries of language they are not ‘sapphic’. Nevertheless, even though Philips’s aim in the poem is the insistence on “likeness”, this does not retract from her exploration of what female love can mean – these metaphors can still be true. Just as Ardelia speaks other

⁷¹ Loscocco, ‘Inventing the English Sappho’, pp. 83-84.

metaphors of friendship but ends by saying that words are inadequate, this does not mean that the metaphors she spoke were untrue. They were just not enough.

Interestingly, Finch's echoing of Philips draws on her rhetoric of "likeness" and she even rewrites Philips's more polarised erotic tropes through metaphors of identification. Finch reads Philips in different ways from Montagu. Montagu focuses on Philips's employment of parody and mimicry, while Finch draws on the tropes of identification and merging. For example, as well as repeating Philips's insistence of the unspeakability of female love, she reads "All oppositions" as "contiguous" and rejects marriage relations. Finch also echoes Philips's union of female souls. Philips writes in 'Friendship' that:

For when two soules are chang'd and mixed soe,
It is what they and none but they can doe; (25-26)

This merging of souls is something that Finch will echo in both 'A Nocturnal Reverie' and 'The Petition'. Finch also mimics Philips's celebration of the union of souls in 'To my excellent Lucasia'. Just as Lucasia's "Soule" redeems Orinda's body, enlivening her "Carkasse" (1. 4), so Finch inscribes a female soul descending to the bodies of female friends. Like Philips, Finch believes that friendship is "all the heaven we have here below" ('Friendship', 4).

Furthermore, Philips's "Oh may good heaven but so much vertue lend, / To make me fit to be Lucasia's friend!" ('To My Lucasia' 27-28) is mimicked at the end of the fifth stanza in 'The Petition':

Give then, O indulgent fate!
 Give a friend in that retreat
 (Though withdrawn from all the rest)
 Still a clue to reach my breast.
 Let a friend be still conveyed
 Through those windings and that shade! (PAR, 196 – 201)

The differences and similarities between Philips and Finch can be further elucidated through comparing 'The Petition' with 'To My Lucasia in defence of declared friendship'. In 'To my Lucasia', Philips, like Finch, celebrates the sensual power of words between women. These "transactions through the Ear" (32) are uttered in the shade:

But when that Look is drest in Words, 'tis like
 The mystick pow'r of Musick's unison;
 Which when the finger doth one Viol strike,
 The other's string heaves to reflection. (69-72)

Finch repeats this image of women achieving mystic communion through sound. By echoing Philips, Finch covertly repeats Philips's "lesbian tone". Through subterfuge, she appropriates the deep Sapphic love that Philips expresses, but protects her poetic persona through never writing of this love explicitly.

However, Finch is doing more than hiding behind Philips's more explicit inscriptions of love between women. In fact, Finch's female lovers experience and express desire in a very different way from Orinda and her friends. This difference is encapsulated in the image of a river reaching the sea which is inscribed in both 'The Petition' and 'To my Lucasia'. In 'The Petition' Finch writes "When some river slides away / To increase the boundless sea". Similarly, Philips employs the image of the river running into the sea:

And as a River, when it once hath paid
 The tribute which it to the Ocean owes
 Stops not, but turns, and having curl'd and play'd
 On its own waves, the shore it overflows. (41-44)

Significantly, whereas Finch easily moves into tropes of "boundlessness", Philips's use of the soul is quite different. Philips's river, rather than merging into the "boundless" ocean, comes back to flow against the shore. It is much more of a taut polarised image than that offered by Finch. It is sexual because it is insistent, stroking and caressing, but also because it evokes a dyadic relatedness. In other words, the river plays with the shore and the two are in an erotic tension with each other:

So the soul's motion does not end in bliss,
 But on her self she scatters and dilates,
 And on the Object doubles, till by this
 She finds new joys which that reflux creates. (45-48)

It is an autoerotic image which “captures the rhythms of female sexual passion”⁷² and reaches an “orgasmic peak”.⁷³

Philips is able to exploit such sexual imagery because she repeatedly denies or resists the body, and indeed this resistance creates a tension in her poetry. Philips is influenced by Donne and mimics his erotic paradox. In her mimicry, however, she parodies his heterosexual imagery, thus destabilizing the ‘natural’ original. Nevertheless, although she mimics the sexual power struggles of Donne’s poetry, she insists on the non-carnality of her female friendship. This insistence has both managed to protect her chaste persona, and increase the erotic charge within her poetry because the tension that she creates between the physical and the spiritual is a powerful one. In ‘To my Lucasia’ Philips writes that the soul is “imprison’d by the Flesh we wear” and there’s “no way left that bondage to controul” (30-31), and this denial of the flesh is re-articulated throughout her poetry. Arlene Stiebel argues that this denial is “the disguise that reveals meaning”, and by repressing the body Philips calls our attention to it. Wahl states that the body in the poetry of Philips becomes “a symbol of female powerlessness and a physical barrier to this idealized union of souls”.⁷⁴

In contrast to Philips, Finch depicts the body as a receptacle for the idealised union of souls. Finch departs from Philips because she takes the subversive step of re-introducing taste and touch into both her devotional and her friendship poetry. She does not insist on the purely spiritual nature of her friendships, rather she locates the bodies of her female friends in tactile landscapes in which they identify with nature

⁷² Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England*, p. 40.

⁷³ Wahl, *Invisible Relations*, p. 151.

⁷⁴ Wahl, *Invisible Relations*, p. 50.

and merge bodies and souls. Indeed, in both 'A Nocturnal Reverie' and 'The Petition' Finch depicts the female soul as descending from heaven into the bodies of her female friends. For Finch, religious discourse is no "disguise that reveals meaning"⁷⁵ (although theological language can enable potent Sapphic erotics), neither is it merely mimicry of traditional expressions of ideal friendship by male writers.⁷⁶ Rather devotional love *is* homoerotic love, and love between women (the right women) is devotional. Contemporary academic criticism in the field of sexuality offers a narrow paradigm of what constitutes homoerotics. The work on Katherine Philips, in particular, writes out or denies the spiritual aspects of her work, arguing that she employs religious rhetoric as a foil. Wahl, Andreadis and, in a different context Butler, perpetuate the Enlightenment split between the sex and the soul. Nevertheless, it is this blend of the sacred and the corporeal which Finch inscribes in her description of female love. It is this mystic and homoerotic trajectory that will be explored in chapter 5.

⁷⁵ Stibel, 'Subversive Sexuality', p. 235.

⁷⁶ Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England*, p. 127.

Chapter 4: Montagu and the dressing room

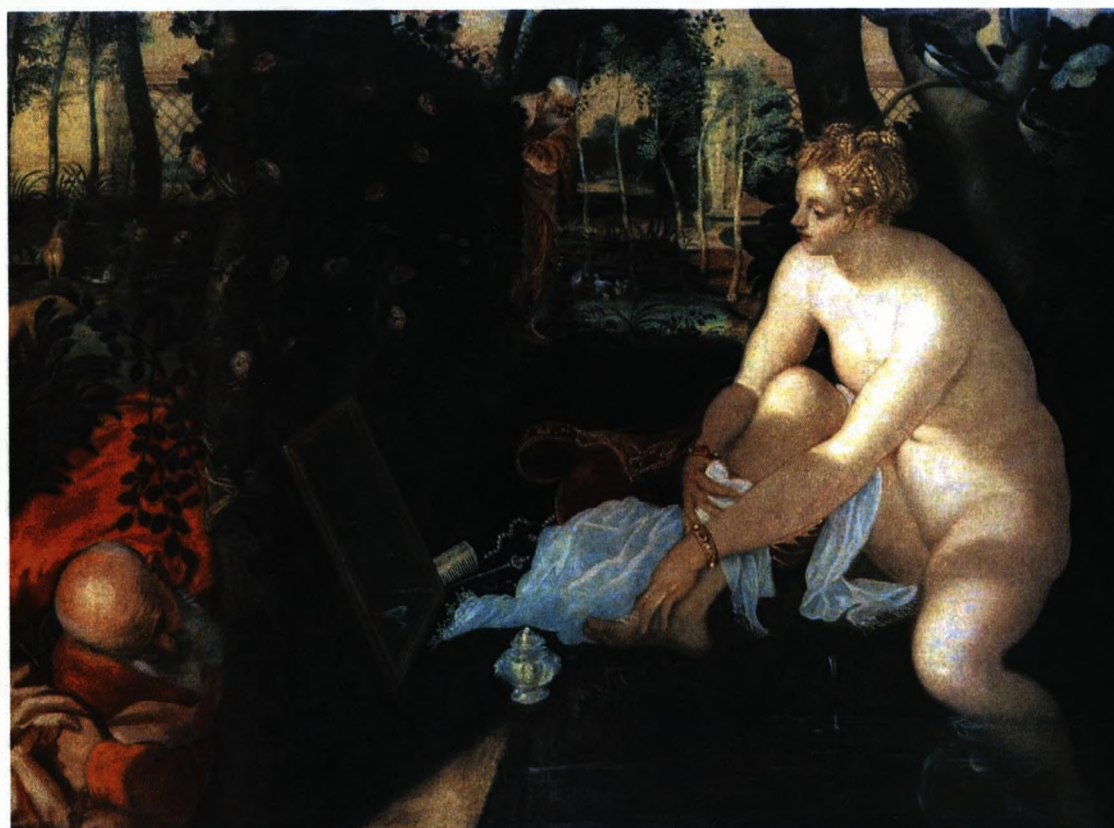


Fig. 8 Tintoretto, 'Susannah and the Elders'

If Finch focuses on the trope of echoing and mimicry, Montagu writes about 'looking'. Montagu explores how women can look: if looking is a "culturally determined activity" is there a space where women can look, can speculate on others?¹ Is there a way for woman to look that does not involve her own subordination as the passive object of male desire? Are there ways to look that do not replicate heterosexual voyeurism and scopophilia? Furthermore, can woman take pleasure in the way that she looks? Can she enjoy the adornment of her body and the surveillance of her face independently of the male gaze? In chapter 2 I read 'Tuesday' as parodying, critiquing and playing with this male fantasy of surveillance. Here I focus on Montagu's 'Saturday' and argue that she explores woman's dis-ease in being an object of surveillance, surveyed both by her own gaze and by the imagined male gaze. However, I also argue that Montagu employs the image of the mirror as a site of perversion which enables woman to see her self autoerotically – where her gaze is opened up to facilitate transgressive sexualities. I explore how Montagu inscribes alternative ways for women to look *at* others and themselves as well as *to* others.

"perpetual masquerade"

In the *Embassy Letters*, Montagu repeatedly describes herself as travelling in some sort of disguise. When she is in Vienna she "walk'd almost all over the Town

¹ Peter de Bolla, 'The charm'd eye', in *Body and Text*, pp. 89 – 111(p. 90). See also John Barrell, 'The Dangerous Goddess': Masculinity, Prestige, and the Aesthetic in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural Critique*, 12 (1989): 101-31.

Yesterday, incognito, in my slippers withough receiving one spot of Dirt".² In Sophia she describes herself as "Designing to go incognito, I hir'd a Turkish Coach" with "wooden Lattices painted and gilded, the inside being painted with baskets and nosegays of Flowers".³ It is this opulent disguise that she also adopts in her textual creations: she moves within the society that she satirises but through her authorship she is able to watch the performance as if displaced from it, as if through the lattices of a "Turkish Coach". As in her travels abroad, Montagu's disguise is still aristocratic: she is very much in her "slippers" with her luxurious entourage. Montagu's textual observer is not one who rejects the society of consumerism and luxury like Finch's wanderer in 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'; rather, she is one who (like Margaret Cavendish) desires celebrity status and admiration, but who resists the fixed status and rigid modes of femininity and feminine sexuality.

In many ways Montagu's authorial voices are reflections of masquerades which she enjoyed attending. Terry Castle argues that through masquerade women could "violate all the cherished imperatives of ordinary feminine sexual decorum" and enjoy the "simulcrum of sexual autonomy".⁴ Because women dressed as men and vice versa, gender boundaries were blurred. The sexual power and freedom that come from adopting these polymorphous positions is fundamental to understanding Montagu's often inconsistent and paradoxical work. Writing gives Montagu the freedom to speak through various sexed voices and sexualities as well as flamboyantly and titillatingly satirising the same society from which she seeks

² *CL*, 1. 249.

³ *CL*, 1. 312.

⁴ Terry Castle, 'The Culture of Travesty: Sexuality and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century England', in *British Literature 1640-1789: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Robert DeMaria Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), pp. 251-270 (p. 261).

applause for her masquerade. Throughout her letters, poems, prose, and plays, the voice is fluid and slippery. Although I have described her as 'being in disguise' and although I repeatedly refer to the authorial signifier of 'Montagu', there is no authentic and stable 'voice of Montagu': she evades the reader's gaze. Consequently, Montagu, the writer and performer, is in "perpetual masquerade" and she is perpetually unveiling.⁵

Linked to the theme of looking is that of dress. The focus on dress is an Augustan motif, and Montagu uses the metaphor of dress, like Pope and Swift, to comment upon contemporary society. Nevertheless, her inscriptions of adornment and consumerism resonate very differently from those of her male contemporaries. For example, both Montagu and Swift comment extensively on contemporary consumer society and the effect that the proliferation of goods and capitalist expansion has on the urban populace, especially women. In particular they write of the pernicious effects of luxury products and women's dress on economic and mercantile realities. In her periodical *The Nonsense of Commonsense*, Montagu (cross dressing into "an Humble Admirer of the Fair sex") advises women to relinquish padua silk for the "warm product of our sheep" in order to boost the British wool trade.⁶ Swift, on the other hand, employs the misogynist association of woman with avarice, and explicitly blames "the vanity and pride, and luxury of women" for the problems of the Irish economy suffering under the colonialist trade restrictions imposed by England.⁷ In

⁵ *CL*, 1. 328.

⁶ *The Nonsense of Commonsense*, in *E&P*, pp. 109-113.

⁷ Swift, 'A Proposal that All the Ladies and Women of Ireland should appear constantly in Irish Manufactures', in *Prose Works*, 14 vols, ed. by Herbert Davis (Oxford: Oxford University, 1951) vol. 12, p. 126.

other words, Montagu explores ways in which women can continue gaining pleasure from dressing, while Swift condemns it.

Neil McKendrick argues that "Clothes were the first mass consumer products to be noticed by contemporary observers".⁸ Consequently, from "Mandeville on special attention was given to the role of clothes in this process of social and economic change."⁹ Dress, according to Beverly Lemire, "was as much a reflection of political, economic and social concerns as it was a matter of fashion." Indeed, Montagu actively takes part in the debates raging over "the question of appropriate attire".¹⁰ Dress was also a metaphor for civilisation and the recurring theme of nakedness in the work of the Scriblerians (and Montagu) "was closely bound up with an anxiety to protect the culture from the menace of some notionally 'naked' pre-civilised or (worse still) post-civilised state."¹¹ Indeed, as Claude Rawson argues, "the Augustan habit of discussing literature in terms of social activities and the social forms, of the dance and the graces of conversation and dress, goes with an actively felt assumption that these social forms represent a high civilised achievement".¹² In the works of Pope and Swift, dressing becomes a metaphor for language. For example, Pope writes that "Expression is the Dress of Thought, and still / Appears more *decent* as more *suitable*".¹³

⁸ McKendrick, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, p. 21.

⁹ McKendrick, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, p. 53.

¹⁰ Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Hampshire: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1997), p. 5.

¹¹ Claude Rawson, *Satire and Sentiment 1660 – 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 142. See also David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1984).

¹² Rawson, *Satire and Sentiment*, pp. 154-5, In relation to Rawson's focus on the metaphor of clothes, his phrase "raises hackles in feminist quarters" is an interesting exposition, if unconscious, of his own image of the naked bestial feminist, clothed only in her pre-civilised fur.

¹³ Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, l.318

Exploring Swift's poetics of dress, Deborah Baker Wyrick argues that since clothes are for Swift transvested words, his "explorations of garments and fashion and their relationships to body, word, and act comment upon his explorations of language and meanings."¹⁴ According to Wyrick, Swift's anxiety over "the de-authorized text, the disobedient word, linguistic corruption and verbal meaninglessness" is conflated with the image of Babel, and "the road to Babel starts with undressing or improper dressing".¹⁵ However (partly because she does not explore eighteenth-century women's writing), Wyrick never questions why it is always a woman who comes to represent this crisis of meaning, who is offered as the site of sin and the containment of that sin. Wyrick easily chastises "[f]eminist critics" stating that "the strength of their personal ideological biases can contaminate the authority of how they read writing by and about women" so that they often tread a precarious line "between forceful conviction and force-fed dogmatism".¹⁶ However, compartmentalising "feminist critics" in such a manner reproduces the convention that examining writing by women is a marginal activity. Ignoring eighteenth-century women's writing is itself an "ideological bias" and not to recognise this is to replicate the traditional "phallogocentric conspiracy" that texts by men have a self-evident value.

In contrast to Wyrick, Laura Brown, employing Marxist and postcolonial theory, specifically investigates Pope's and Swift's obsession with the female figure and places this obsession within a tradition of misogynist writing. Brown analyses Pope and Swift's configuration of the undressing woman as a means to understand the growing alienation and reification brought about by a society increasingly negotiated

¹⁴ Deborah Baker Wyrick, *Jonathan Swift and the Vested Word* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 132.

¹⁵ Wyrick, *Vested Word*, p. 33.

¹⁶ Wyrick, *Vested Word*, p. 192-3.

through the culture of luxury objects. For Pope and Swift the saturation of commodities introduced through the expansion of colonialism intensified their anxiety over truth and essence. Following a tradition of masculine thinking, including the Baconian call to “hunt Nature to her hiding places”, Pope and Swift strove “to uncover some underlying, essential intransmutable female nature” in order to find truths in a world increasingly defined through capitalist tenets.¹⁷ Laura Brown argues that women “become a primary locus for the ideological problem of fetishization” and the search for the lost human essence is translated through “the obsessive and ambiguous dressing and undressing” of woman. Brown reads this as an attempt to “strip away the mystifying ‘clothing’ of the ‘commodity’”.¹⁸ Consequently, “the struggle to know the female body and to understand and control female sexuality is in this sense a corollary to the struggle with the process of alienation imposed by commodification.”¹⁹ Although Brown does acknowledge the sexual tensions involved in undressing the female figure and places this interrogation of the female body within a literary history of misogyny, it is too reductive to read the obsession with undressing woman as a “corollary” to capitalist processes of alienation and fetishisation. Furthermore, it is a grotesque oversimplification to excuse Swift’s cruel attacks on women as “occupy[ing] the place of a critique of mercantile capitalist expansion.”²⁰

It is significant that Pope and Swift chose the figure of *woman* with which to interrogate the infiltration of luxury goods in this period. Neither Brown nor Wyrick examine the works of Montagu who responded directly to Swift’s satire on women in ‘The Dean’s Provocation’. To repress women’s writing and contemporary women’s

¹⁷ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 112.

¹⁸ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 118.

¹⁹ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 133.

²⁰ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 182.

responses to dress, is to reproduce Popeian and Swiftian assertions concerning women's ability to comment critically on cultural manifestations. In her metaphor of dress, Montagu departs from Pope and Swift as she depicts the men who look at undressing women. In 'Tuesday' and 'The Dean's Provocation' Montagu reveals the watching men as equally dressed and adorned, expanding the reader's specular frame to include the voyeuristic and adorned male poet.

In effect, identity and in particular sexed identity is produced through dress as well as the rituals and gestures that accompany that dress. It is the clothes and commodities of the men in Montagu's poetry, as well as the spaces within which they perform, that sex or name their identity as male. Jennifer Craik argues that clothes are "technical devices" which signal the relationship between a body and its lived milieu. Clothes construct a "personal habitus" that "creates a 'face' which positively construct[s] an identity rather than disguising a 'natural' body or 'real' identity."²¹ Indeed an eighteenth-century author remarked:

No man is ignorant that a Taylor is the person that makes our Cloaths; to some he not only makes their Dress, but in some measure, may be said to make themselves.²²

In 'Saturday' Montagu celebrates the gesture of dress making a self. Unlike Pope's Belinda who passively gives way to "awful Beauty" who magically "Repairs her

²¹ Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 4-5. See also *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader*, ed. by Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson (London: Pandora Press, 1992).

²² R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (1747), p.191 quoted in Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, p. 131. See also Francois Boucher, *A History of Costume in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1997) and James Laver, *A Concise History of Costume* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969).

Smiles, awakens ev'ry Grace," (*RL*, I, 141) Flavia is represented as painting and dressing her own body, of taking "up her stance in the textual mode, reflecting on her self in its terms".²³

Flavia is a stronger character than Belinda as she takes pleasure in the creative process of constructing her *own* body. Her face becomes a text or canvas on to which she inscribes her ritualised femininity. This production of femininity induces excitement signified by her exclamation: "what pleasure I this face survey'd!" (9). Flavia is "Charm'd with the view" and a climactic "new Life" is "shot" and "sparkling" from her eyes (11-12). These vibrant verbs and this vigorous scene contrasts with Belinda's "purer" blush (*RL*, I, 143) and her sexual naivety, emphasised by her white robe and white curtains, through which the sun casts its "tim'rous ray" (*RL*, I, 13). Belinda's erotic arousal is something that happens to her "by Degrees" and "Keener Lightnings" quicken *in* her eyes, emphasising her own passive sexuality. On the other hand, Flavia denotes possession of her eyes and of her gaze. Her feminisation is ostensibly an erotic and dynamic activity signified by such words as "survey'd", "rise", "sparkling", "Debate", "fall", and "placed". Unaided by sylphs or male poets, Flavia constructs and becomes her own face and the dynamic metaphors of her construction reflect her own creative enjoyment. It is the act of creating rather than the passive "to-be-looked-at-ness" that stimulates Flavia. This is no "vacant Brain" (*RL*, I, 83), empty except for the sylphs and authorial male eye - without which Belinda would be "presented as a virtual interior void."²⁴ Through

²³ *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. by Leslie G. Ruman, Linda K. Christian Smith with Elizabeth Ellsworth (London: The Falmer Press, 1988), p. 49.

²⁴ Steve Clark in 'Let Blood and Body bear the fault: Pope and misogyny' argues that "the function of the sylphs is not to endow the heroine's mind with a lyrical grace and emotional complexity, but to effect an elaborate displacement of volition which allows it to be presented as a virtual interior void."

Flavia, Montagu anticipates post-feminist critics by representing the delight involved in “the complex decisions and creativity, pleasure and the pain, that negotiating a feminine ‘look’ demands”²⁵ This emphasis on pleasure, performance and “the play with identity, the ability to make ourselves over through fashion” problematises the production of femininity, as Montagu both highlights its constructed ‘nature’ as well as equating it with a pleasurable creative process.²⁶

“monstrosity of wildly incoherent dress”

Montagu’s playful inscriptions of dress and masquerade are deeply provocative and challenge the Enlightenment impulse to classify and fix bodies. Like Pope, Horace Walpole is rendered hysterical at the thought of Montagu and her dressing room. In his letters he depicts her as a pox-ridden, unlaced creature with white plaster stuck on her face. He dwells on her menstrual cycle and what he perceives as her filthy sexuality. In one letter Walpole tropes Montagu’s dress with language:

Her dress, like her languages, is a galimation of several countries; the groundwork, rags; and the embroidery, nastiness. She wears no cap, no handkerchief, no gown, no petticoat, no shoes. An old black laced hood represents the first, the fur of a horseman’s coat, which replaces the third,

See *Pope: New Contexts*, ed. by David Fairer (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 81-101 (p. 91).

²⁵ Joanne Hollows, *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 152.

²⁶ Hollows, *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*, p. 155.

serves for the second; a dimity petticoat is deputy and officiates for the fourth, and slippers act the part of the last.²⁷

Montagu's "monstrosity of wildly incoherent dress" renders her a babbling slatternly devil.

Walpole's portraits of Montagu are perhaps so furiously exaggerated because she was friends with Molly Skerrett, who he felt had alienated his mother's affections. She was, however, also recognised to have been sexually involved with his stepmother, a suggestion that Felicity Nussbaum supports persuasively in *Torrid Zones*:

In the summer of 1721 Montagu spent considerable time with a special female friend while her husband visited Yorkshire. Though the identity of the woman is uncertain, Montagu knew Maria Skerrett, (Sir Robert Walpole's mistress, whom he married in 1737), from 1720 onwards. Skerrett stayed in Twickenham during the summer of 1725 and accompanied Lady Mary to town in the fall: "My fair companion," she reported to her sister, "puts me oft in mind of our Thorseby conversations; we read and walk together, and I am more happy in her than any thing else could make me except your conversation."²⁸

In addition, Grundy and Halsband suggest that the following poem is addressed to

²⁷ Horace Walpole, Feb 2nd, 1762, in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. by W. S. Lewis, 48 vols, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-83), 10: 5.

²⁸ Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, p. 140.

Maria Skerrett:

Sing Gentle Maid, reform my Breast
 And soften all my Care,
 Thus can be some moments blest
 And easy in Despair,
 The Power of Orpheus lives in you,
 The raging Passions of my Soul subdue
 And tame the Lions, and the Tygers there.²⁹

No letters to Skerrett remain, however, so this relationship must remain speculation. Nevertheless, this poem is significant in its depiction of the “Power of Orpheus” living in the body of a “Gentle Maid”, and Montagu’s representation of the female speaker’s “raging Passions”. It is a provocative mixture of masculine and feminine performances.

In a letter from Montagu to James Steuart in October 1758 Montagu links writing with dressing. This letter can be read as a covert reply to Pope’s configuration of her in ‘Epistle to a Lady’. Here, Pope’s anxieties over her writing, her persona, and her sexuality are exploited and playfully employed to titillate her readers. In this letter she flirtatiously reproaches her correspondent for criticising her letters. Montagu seductively sets herself up as a ravaged lady pleading mercy from the barbarous and malicious male reader. In doing so she plays with masculine representations of the woman at her toilette:

²⁹ *E&P*, p. 286.

This is worse than surprising a fine lady just sat down to her toilet. I am content to let you see my mind undressed, but I will not have you so curiously remark the defects in it. To carry on the simile, when a Beauty appears with all her graces and airs adorned for a ball, it is lawful to censure whatever you see amiss in her ornaments, but when you are received to a friendly breakfast, 'tis downright cruelty or (something worse) ingratitude to view too nicely all the disorder you may see.³⁰

It is Montagu who controls the gaze in this letter, and it is she who tells her male reader how to look at her and how to look at women. Montagu also links men reading her texts with men watching her dress. This implies that she constructs her self both through her writing and through her dressing. Moreover, she does not suggest that there is an original essence underneath her dressing, rather there are “defects”. Rather than representing her self as embodying a ‘pure’ femininity or authentic essence, she sardonically embraces her defective and half-dressed body. In doing so, she also mocks attempts to find some authentic or original civilised state. Montagu wrote this letter from Vienna, from a displaced site associated in the English imagination with difference and ‘foreignness’. In troping dressing with writing Montagu mimics an Augustan commonplace – “language is the dress of thought”. However, she employs both dress and text, not to stand for civilisation but to expose and delight in its half-dressed condition. For the remainder of this chapter I will explore Montagu’s portrayal of the half-dressed woman in the liminal site of the dressing room. Montagu’s Flavia (and Lydia) are half-dressed because they are in the dressing room

³⁰ *CL*, III. 182-183.

but also because they are not quite right, not yet civilised, and their femininity or sexuality is defective. Nevertheless, this gap between an idealised femininity and monstrosity is celebrated as a site of parody and subversion.

“with what Pleasure I this Face survey’d”

Because of its links to dressing and therefore dressing differently, the dressing room can be a potentially liberating site. It is, in fact, this potential for refusing the conventional disciplines of femininity that makes this space such a source of anxiety for male writers. This is where I differ from Tita Chico as the dressing room can be a liberating space, not because it is a site of privacy, rather because it is a site of metamorphosis and masquerade. Indeed, Terry Castle states that “masquerading granted women the essential masculine privilege of erotic object-choice” and it is this fear of the transgressive potential of masquerade that fuels the misogynist image of the woman at her dressing table.³¹ Moreover, because this is a site where woman is produced, where she becomes ‘girled’, it is also the site where this feminisation can be parodied and subverted. The woman at the dressing table can dress differently, she can mimic, and she can enable ambiguities of sexual identity. Montagu plays with dress and with its association with defect in order to ridicule the notion of essence and, in particular sexual essence. For Montagu there is no original or natural sexuality.

³¹ Castle ‘The Culture of Travesty’, p. 261.

In 'Saturday', Montagu depicts a woman, 'Flavia', who moves out of the marketplace that consumes her and into alternative modes of desiring and being desired. We are introduced to Flavia in the third person as she lies on her couch with her mirror reversed (the reversed mirror is also indicative of a funeral):

The wretched Flavia, on her Couch reclin'd,
 Thus breath'd the Anguish of a wounded mind.
 A Glass revers'd in her right hand she bore;
 For now she shunn'd the Face she sought before. (SE, 1-4)

The poem then turns into the first person as Flavia laments the change in her face:

How am I chang'd! Alas, how am I grown
 A frightful Spectre to my self unknown! (SE, 5-6)

She laments a time when she enjoyed the construction of femininity in the dressing room:

Then, with what Pleasure I this Face survey'd!
 To look once more, my Visits oft delay'd! (SE, 9-10)

Flavia spends the poem oscillating between her lament for her past beauty and her present deformity:

That Picture, which with Pride I us'd to show,
 The lost resemblance but upbraids me now.
 And thou my Toilette! where I oft have sate,
 While Hours unheeded in deep Debate,
 How curls should fall, or where a Patch to place,
 If Blue or Scarlet best became my Face;
 Now on some happier Nymph thy Aid bestow,
 On Fairer Heads, ye useless Jewells, glow! (SE, 45-52)

As well as reminiscing on her younger self, Flavia remembers her illness:

In tears surrounded by my Friends I lay,
 Masked o're, and trembling at the light of Day, (SE, 69-70)

However, she ends her lament, like Clarinda, resigning herself to her fate:

Ye Operas, Circles, I no more must view!
 My Toilette, Patches, all the Wo<rl>d Adieu! (SE, 95-96)

There are many gazes occurring in this poem. There is Flavia's younger self enjoying her reflection and then there are the many people who focus on Flavia: her lovers, the painter of the portrait, the doctors, her friends, and the public gaze of the audiences at the theatre and opera. However, the beginning and end of the poem depict Flavia as having reversed the mirror, suggesting a movement outside the power of the gaze.

The name 'Flavia' may have been taken from Finch's 'The Appology' in which Finch compares the writing woman with the woman who makes up her aging (and therefore grotesque) face:

Does Flavia cease now at her fortieth year

In every place to let that face be seen

Which all the town rejected at fifteen?

Each woman has her weakness; mine indeed

Is still to write, though hopeless to succeed. (A, 12-16) ³²

Montagu, like Finch, links face to text. Like Finch, she celebrates the changing female face as it rewrites character and self. It moves outside the fetishised gaze of the idealizing male. Moreover, as argued in chapter 1, 'The Appology' covertly justifies women's writing over the writing of men. Consequently, Montagu employs the name 'Flavia' for the same purpose. In other words, like Finch, Montagu begins her poem

³² This poem was unpublished but Montagu owned MS copies of several poems of Finch. See Grundy, 'The Theatrical Eclogue', p. 74 fn. 27.

ostensibly caricaturing a woman. However, she ends her poem rupturing the reader's expectations.

Montagu states on two occasions – “in conversation and by quoting from it in a poem of personal feeling” - that Flavia has an autographical basis.³³ In it she also made use of her juvenile imitation of Virgil's tenth eclogue. This combination of the tenth eclogue and supposed autobiography is an interesting mixture which has not, as yet, been fully explored. Montagu successfully performs as the Other in her texts and, consequently, rather than reading ‘Saturday’ as autobiographical in a humanist sense, it is more productive to read it as one of her performances. Montagu adopts the voice of the Roman poet Virgil (as well as his translator Dryden) through mimicking his narrative voice from *Eclogue X*. Because, as Maynard Mack argues, the pastoral shepherds exist to sing and “maidens exist there – they are seldom present in person – to be longed for and pursued”, in blurring the sexed roles of the pastoral Montagu enacts a subversive linguistic strategy.³⁴

Furthermore, Virgil's patron, Gallus, is bisexual as he is in love with either Phyllis or Amyntas “or any shepherd on the plain”.³⁵ In addition, Michael Putnam suggests that Virgil is in love with Gallus. Consequently, Montagu fragments into three different performances in this poem. She identifies with the authorial power of Virgil as well as with the lamenting Gallus who becomes Flavia, a character whose life experiences are similar to Montagu's. Moreover, Flavia's *reflection* is yet another character as she enacts Gallus's lover, Lycoris. In other words, the “elegist warrior”

³³ *E&P*, p. xi.

³⁴ Mack, *Alexander Pope*, p. 281.

³⁵ Dryden, ‘The Tenth Pastoral. Or, Gallus’, 56.

(as Putnam calls Gallus) is cross-dressed into the lamenting Flavia and his lover Lycoris has metamorphosed into Flavia's mirrored reflection.³⁶ Virgil's "solitudes of Arcadia" are mockingly recontextualised into Flavia's dressing room and the rock that Gallus languishes under is reconfigured into Flavia's couch.³⁷ In this poem, Montagu writes three different female voices or portraits, all of whom are depicted as desiring each other. Through this fragmentation – both textually and sexually – Montagu moves beyond the category of woman or femininity and towards writing performances that defy sexual categorisation.

'Saturday' is the last eclogue and it provides a turning point from the reified sexualities and behaviours that have been satirized in the previous eclogues. In 'Saturday' the silenced woman of the toilette begins to speak. Flavia is continually and assertively inscribing her identity through the repetition of 'my', 'me', or 'I', pronouns which are emphasised through being positioned in the middle of the line, producing a rhythm similar to enjambment. However, although Flavia articulates a strong identity, multiple gendered voices speak through her 'I', thus creating a complex speaker as well as a complex poem. Ostensibly reproducing Pope's satirical gaze on women who are "too conscious of their Face" (*RL*, I, 79) Montagu positions an upper class coquette, vainly lamenting the loss of her beautiful face. Nevertheless, Montagu radically subverts Pope's masculine "hard Words" and "difficult Terms",³⁸ through articulating a female narrator and female poet in the guise of Flavia, as well as her own Virgilian authorial voice. Employing these strategies, Montagu usurps a

³⁶ Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art*, p. 394.

³⁷ Dryden, *Argument*, 'The Tenth Pastoral. or Gallus'.

³⁸ Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* 'To Mrs Arabella Fermor'.

production of masculinity which equates manliness with classical learning.³⁹ Flavia is portrayed as having the masculine property of a “wounded *mind*” (my italics), and men in ‘Saturday’ are intricately involved in consumer culture. This is a wise and knowing Flavia who performs in the first person and in the past tense, in contrast to the (sexually) naïve Belinda who is controlled by the male artist in the continuous present.

Through the voice of Flavia, Montagu recalls Pope’s mythologizing of the toilette and of feminine beauty. In *The Rape of the Lock*, the toilette titillatingly and fantastically becomes “unveil’d” and “stands display’d/ Each Silver Vase in mystic Order laid” (*RL*, I, 121-122). Belinda’s narcissistic and adoring gaze conflates the “Cosmetic Pow’rs” of her dressing table with her own “heav’nly Image in the Glass” (*RL*, I, 124-125). Similarly, in ‘Saturday’, Flavia’s love for her reflected face is equated with her love for the dressing table, signified by the “thou” of desired object as she exclaims:

And thou, my toilette! (*SE*, 47)

Her face actually becomes conflated with the glass and the toilette and beauty as she laments that her “beauty’s fled” (27), as well as her “Faithless Glass” (13). Her human relationships, she “delay’d” in order to “to look once more” (10) and pass “hours unheeded” in “deep debate,” with her mirrored face (48). As with Belinda, Flavia’s commodification stimulates the marketplace: opera tickets pour before her feet and

³⁹ Carolyn D. Williams argues in ‘Breaking decorums’ that Pope’s encounters with epic reveal “a dread of effeminacy as an insidious and protean evil that can crop up in the unlikeliest places” and “a conviction that the most effective way to teach manliness is a classical education, with plenty of Homer and Virgil.”, p. 60.

her suitors buy “Japan” for her eyes (22). Situated at the centre of the consumer world, Flavia is the commodified prize that men “Fir’d by one wish, [...] adore” (39).

However, through her trope of disease, Montagu, like Pope and Swift, expresses ambivalence over the power of consumerism. Belinda’s own conflation of the reflected face with the cosmetics of her dressing table hint at her complicity in her own objectification. The easy movement from the sylphs “set[ting] the Head” to “divid[ing] the Hair”/ to “fold[ing] the Sleeve” to “plait[ing] the Gown” metonymically associates Belinda with the commodities and dress that adorn her (*RL*, I, 146-147). Like the Swiftian undressing nymphs, Pope’s Belinda becomes so identified with her cosmetics that she cannot extricate herself from the products of trade and of empire. Consequently, Belinda is decked “with the glitt’ring Spoil” of “*India’s* glowing Gems” and “all *Arabia*”, as well as being responsible for the violent coupling of the tortoise and elephant which “unite” to produce “Combs” (*RL*, I, 132-136). Brown argues that women’s vanity and narcissistic obsession, as represented by Pope and Swift, means the violent activities and motives of male colonialists “disappear behind the figure of the woman, who is herself subsumed by the products that she wears.”⁴⁰

Similarly, Flavia’s reflection becomes sublimated under her fashionable commodities. In love with her toilette, she would discuss: “How curls should fall, or where a patch to place; / If blue or scarlet best became my face;”(49-50). Through representing Flavia as reflecting on her own commodification, Montagu, like Finch, recognises the limited positions that a femininity, produced through commodities and

⁴⁰ Brown, *Ends of Empire*, p. 118.

experienced as a gazed upon sexual object, offers. Nevertheless, Montagu is not simply replicating satires over the narcissistic consuming woman. It seems to be the power of the male gaze that proves to be so destructive in this poem. For example, the pre-diseased Flavia embodies both the conventional feminine behaviour of beautiful object and the conventional masculine gesture of surveillance and creativity. In the words of John Berger she has come “to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman.”⁴¹ Although Flavia is now alone in the dressing room, the male gaze is omnipresent. It is present in her divided gaze, in the portraits on the wall, in the memory of the men who would watch her dress, and in the gaze of the doctors. Indeed, Flavia’s erotic enjoyment of her face is actually inscribed in phallic terms exemplified by the *shooting* and *sparkling* eyes, her *rising* red, as well as the *surveying* of her body as if it is a landscape.

Moreover, the gaze of Pope lingers in this poem. Pope had a portrait of Montagu dressed as a shepherdess, which had been painted by Jervas, hanging in his house. In a prophetic vision of Pope’s disaffection, Flavia looks at a portrait of herself and cries:

As round the Room I turn my weeping Eyes,
 New unaffected Scenes of Sorrow rise;
 Far from my Sight that killing Picture hear,
 The Face disfigure, or the Canvas tear!
 That Picture, which with Pride I us’d to show,

⁴¹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), p. 46.

The lost resemblance but upbraids me now. (SE, 41 – 46)

Pope wrote a beautiful transcript of Montagu's *Eclogues* which is now in the New York Public Library. In his edition, Pope inscribes the original quotations (as he reads them) on to Montagu's manuscript. He cites his 'Summer' pastoral, Dryden, and Virgil's *Eclogue X*. This gives the impression that he literally and figuratively subsumes her writing under the authority of the male scholar. In other words, he pegs what is a subversive text to his normative interpretations of literary texts. He fixes when Montagu's manuscript gets slippery. Her manuscript becomes the feminine body over which the masculine mind takes control and authorship. Nevertheless, on this transcript, Montagu attempts to rewrite Pope's own omissions and changes. For example, in 'Wednesday' Pope provided an alternative ending which Montagu later struck out so as to insert a new one.⁴² Once Montagu and Pope had fallen out, there were bitter disputes over who actually wrote the original material for the *Eclogues*.

Pope also wrote portraits of Montagu, such as the portrait of Sappho in 'Epistle to a Lady' and the portrait of Montagu that he wrote when they were friends, here cited in full:

The play full smiles around the dimpled mouth
 That happy air of Majesty and Youth.
 So would I draw (but oh, 'tis vain to try
 My narrow Genius does the power deny)
 The Equal Lustre of the Heavenly mind

⁴² See notes in *E&P*, pp. 182-204 and Grundy, 'The Theatrical Eclogue'.

Where every grace with every Virtue's join'd
 Learning not vain, and wisdom not severe
 With Greatness easy, and with wit sincere.
 With Just Description shew the Soul Divine
 And the whole Princesse in my work should shine.⁴³

This poem demonstrates his attempts to contain her in “my work”. The fragments of her face are fetishised into a “dimpled mouth” and “full smiles” and her objectified body is subjected to his assertive and authorial “I draw”. Consequently, Flavia’s reference to the “killing picture” could also be a reference to Pope’s attempts to textually fix her within patriarchal structures.

As discussed earlier, disease was sometimes used as a metaphor for degeneracy of consumerism, and smallpox in this poem reflects Flavia’s own consumption as a commodity. It is the gaze as represented in this poem by Pope – and the portrait that he commissioned - that consumes Flavia. Flavia is depicted as being devoured by the marketplace and commodified by the male gaze to the point of destruction. Montagu articulates the pain of the woman who has been so consumed by her own gaze and the gaze of fashionable society that she has become “chang’d” and “to myself unknown!” (5-6). Reversing the trope of women having the sceptre over the empire of beauty, and by association the sceptre over the products of empire, so Flavia becomes a “frightful *spectre*” (my italics), a grotesque metamorphosis of the consuming woman. Her own objectification signified by her commodification into “that killing picture” (43) by male painters and looked upon by a male audience has

⁴³ Pope, ‘On Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Portrait’.

rotted the paralysed and gazed-upon Flavia. Furthermore, the funeral trope of the reversed mirror indicates that her feminisation through the eighteenth-century dressing table was death-inducing, diseased.

“the Face Disfigure”

Nevertheless, Montagu plays with these images of mirrors, disease and consumption. Like Finch, Montagu expresses pain but she also uses this pain to inscribe alternative configurations. In ‘Glass’ Finch rejects the man-made refractions of glass as it is manipulated into the punchbowl and the mirror. In ‘The Bird and the Arras’ Finch rejects the artifice of the window and in ‘Ardelia to Ephelia’ she represents coach windows as being employed to display women. In ‘Melinda to an Insipid Beauty’ Finch employs a Sapphic fragment in order expose the superficiality and transient nature of the mirror. Similarly, Montagu’s Flavia reverses the mirror. However, rather than, like Finch, rejecting the links between the mirror, distortion and sight, Montagu appropriates the parodic potential inherent in the mirror. In other words, Montagu employs the image of the mirror for transgressive sexual refractions. Like Finch’s use of the echo, Montagu uses the mirror to reflect differently and these alternative reflections reflect upon and parody the original.

Instead of mimicking the instructions of Pope and Swift and encouraging women to become rational beings and transcend their “little unguarded Follies”, Montagu offers a way out of the self-destruction of consumerism whilst still

maintaining the pleasure of the body.⁴⁴ Male anxiety over women's faces and thus over the authenticity of the character is a recurring trope in Montagu's work. In her *Embassy Letters* one of the reasons that she finds the baths so liberating is that it is no longer just the face being read, but also the body. Women wear cosmetics, they attend masquerades, they dress up and they are duplicitous. Furthermore, their faces change: they grow old, they dress differently, they become diseased. 'Saturday', in particular, focuses on the woman's trauma of losing her beauty and youth. Nevertheless, it is more than just losing her good looks, it is losing her way of life and her behaviours and her character. Although this begins as a funeral to Flavia's coquettish identity, it also becomes a rebirth as Flavia is reborn outside the male gaze and its signs.

Jill Campbell argues that Flavia "epitomizes for her male viewers the horrific persistence of the female body after it has been declared socially dead at the end of its reign of beauty. The social illogic of its material persistence defines it as inherently monstrous or deformed."⁴⁵ Campbell also suggests that in reversing the glass, Montagu "compresses both diachronic and synchronic views of Flavia's situation; the possibility of a self in *motion* waits to spring out of the static, emblematic representation it offers of woman's sudden alteration." However, Campbell states that "Flavia never becomes that self within the poem's bounds", only that "she has ceased (for the moment) to seek an image of herself in its reflection in the mirror."⁴⁶ However, Montagu does offer these possibilities within the bounds of the text. Campbell also argues that Flavia shows allegiance to a love object rather than self. Nevertheless, Montagu offers different kinds of sexuality within the boundaries of this poem. As argued earlier, Flavia is represented as enjoying the production of creating a

⁴⁴ Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 'To Mrs Arabella Fermor'.

⁴⁵ Campbell, 'Glass Revers'd', p. 229.

⁴⁶ Campbell, 'Glass Revers'd', p. 238.

feminine self and by doing so she de-naturalises the performance of femininity. Montagu depicts Flavia in this way to parody aristocratic feminine behaviour. In addition, rather than merely refusing to seek an image of herself in the mirror, Flavia actually seeks to do something with the mirror. Fascinated with the trope of reflection, Montagu represents Flavia as queering the mirror.

At the end of 'Saturday', Flavia turns away from her mirror as 'the lost resemblance upbraids me now' and embraces her monstrosity. The culmination of 'Saturday' is similar to 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' where Finch's wanderer rejects "Courtship and applause" (PAR, 285) for the "more extensive joy" (PAR, 291) of "those windings and that shade" (PAR, 293). Like Finch's straying woman who imagines watching her reflection in a fountain, Flavia retreats from the fashionable world of "Plays, Operas, circles [...] toilette, patches" (95) to "hide in shades this Lost inglorious face" (94) and Montagu inscribes "gentle streams" (90) through which to admire her reflection. However, these streams, like the fountain in Finch's retreat, will reflect back a fluid and flowing reflection, a face that cannot be disciplined into the narrow and polarised confines of femininity. Furthermore, Flavia will be in "Distress" (90), dis-dressed or undressed, implying that hers will not be a fixed gendered identity. She exclaims earlier in the poem that "Dress is now no more" (54) suggesting that in this feminine space she will be unconfined by stays, outside the heterosexual matrix where her body is forced into the marketplace of the male economy. Furthermore, Flavia describes this place as an "obscure recess" (89) which alludes to a dangerous chaotic space, perhaps the "native Anarchy" that Pope fears in

The Dunciad where “Dulness o’er all possess’d her ancient right, / Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night”.⁴⁷

Montagu appropriates the image of smallpox to link her poetry to a tradition of women writers. In other words, the image of disease, but in particular smallpox, is appropriated by Montagu as a site of female resistance and authorship. It is a site populated by women writers who have, like her, been afflicted with smallpox: Katherine Philips, Anne Killigrew, and Elizabeth Singer Rowe who wrote ‘Hymn on Recovering from Smallpox’. Although these women writers did not themselves appropriate the image of disease, they also employ pastoral and classical spaces in which to celebrate transgressive sexualities. By reversing the mirror, Flavia exploits the subversive potential of configuring sexuality outside the male gaze. There is an emancipatory possibility in the image of smallpox because it ravages the face and therefore subverts the mapping gaze of the male. Like Melinda in Finch’s imitation of Sappho, Flavia rejects feminine beauty and the glass for the more lasting possibilities of her lament – she will be left talking to men’s eyes. Like Finch’s Clarinda, her face will be fragmented and, therefore, unwritable. Through evading fixation, Montagu multiplies her voices and her sites of resistance as creativity can give her the freedom to explore deviancy and alterity.

Montagu rewrites the trope of beautiful-woman-poet-ravished-by-smallpox that is written by Dryden and Cowley. Cowley represents the beautiful face of Orinda – “The Throne of Empress Beauty”⁴⁸ – as being overcome by the “Lust” of smallpox (10). Disease is configured by him in terms of sexual desire and power. Disease is the

⁴⁷ Pope, *The Dunciad*, I, 11-12, p. 721.

⁴⁸ Cowley, ‘On the death of Mrs. Katherine Philips’, 8, p. 441.

masculine aggressor against the virtuous female body, thus corrupting her. Again the loss of a fetishised face is equated with sexual depravity. Dryden, too, focuses on the “blooming Grace, / The well proportion’d Shape and beauteous Face” of Killigrew.⁴⁹ Her beauty is also depicted as being divine and ravaged by disease which “plunder’d first, and then destroyed./ O double Sacrilege on things Divine, / To rob the Relique, and deface the Shrine!” (159-161). He links Killigrew with Orinda as “Heav’n, by the same Disease, did both translate” (163). Montagu’s ‘Saturday’ can be read as mimicking these elegies against beauty. In doing so, Montagu also echoes Anne Killigrew who depicts woman through her soul and her writing powers, rather than the commodification of her face when she praises Katherine Philips:

Orinda, (Albions and her Sexes Grace)

Ow’d not her Glory to a Beauteous Face,

It was her Radiant Soul that Shon With-in,

Which struck a Luster through her Outward Skin;

That did her Lips and Cheeks with Roses dy,

Advanc’t her Height, and sparkled in her Eye. (47-52)⁵⁰

Killigrew rejects the mapping of woman’s face, focusing instead on Philips’ “Radiant Soul”.

Moreover, Montagu attempts to control the disease of smallpox through introducing inoculation in England and she blurs sexed behaviours through writing

⁴⁹ Dryden, ‘To the Pious Memory Of the Accomplisht Young LADY Mrs Anne Killigrew, Excellent in the two Sister-Arts of Poesie, and Painting. An ODE’, 149-150, p. 344.

⁵⁰ Anne Killigrew, ‘Upon the Saying that my Verses were made by another’, in *Poems* (1686).

about it.⁵¹ In *A Plain Account of the Inoculating of the Small Pox by a Turkey Merchant*, Montagu dismisses British physicians as she pits their “Ignorance” against her truth:

OUT of compassion to the Numbers abus'd and deluded by the Knavery and Ignorance of Physicians, I am determin'd to give a true Account of the Manner of Inoculating the Small Pox.⁵²

Montagu details the inoculation process with a ‘masculine’ confidence and knowledge. She writes with authority of her scientific truth and pits it against the medical establishment. In other words, although Montagu suffered from smallpox, she employs the disease to instigate narrative.

The image of the woman debilitated by smallpox is also one that is appropriated by women writing after Montagu. Sarah Scott in *Millenium Hall* represents a woman who in losing her beauty to smallpox discovers her soul. Esther Lewis (later Clark) contracted small pox and wrote ‘A Mirror for Detractors’ (1754):

That when a woman dares indite,
And seek in print the public sight,
All tongues are presently in motion
About her person, mind, and portion;

⁵¹ For an in depth discussion of Montagu’s experience of smallpox see Grundy, ‘Medical Advance and Female Fame: Inoculation and its After Effects’, *Lumen*, 13 (1994): 13-42; Sarah Fenno, “‘An Experiment Practiced Only by a Few Ignorant Women’: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the Smallpox Inoculation, and the Concept of Enlightenment’, in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason*, pp. 85-109.

⁵² *A Plain Account of the Inoculating of the Small Pox by a Turkey Merchant*, in *E&P*, pp. 95-97 (p. 95).

And every blemish, every fault,
 Unseen before, to light is brought.
 Nay, generously they take the trouble
 Those blemishes and faults to double.⁵³

In addition, Frances Burney's *Camilla* portrays a woman scarred by smallpox.

Nussbaum writes of Burney's Eugenia that:

like the others who possess extraordinary non-normate bodies, [she] represents a "cultural third term," both the "opposite of the masculine figure" and "the antithesis of the normal woman." As a triangulated gender anomaly, her character transforms disability to empower her to escape the usual trivial feminalities.⁵⁴

For Montagu, this "triangulated gender anomaly" offers the potential for sexual transgressions and a movement away from the performances of femininity and masculinity produced in the study, the coffee house and the dressing room.

Appropriating this anomaly, Montagu inscribes spaces dislocated from the luxurious stages of London.

⁵³ Roger Lonsdale, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 226.

⁵⁴ Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, p. 125. Nussbaum cites Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 29.

“spectral lesbian”

In the eighteenth-century monstrosity was a euphemism for ‘lesbian’. It is appropriated by Monique Wittig who suggests “embracing the grotesque” lesbian body as a strategy of empowerment.⁵⁵ Denis Diderot in *La Religieuse* (1760) and Baudelaire (1857) both call lesbians ‘spectres’. In the Salem trials witches were also called spectres and were considered to have a body double who committed witch power. This image of the body double is especially pertinent in the image of Flavia engaging with her reflection in the mirror. Indeed, Montagu writes that Flavia has become “a frightful Spectre, to myself unknown”. Moreover, Terry Castle argues persuasively for “the spectral lesbian” who is subsumed under the heteronormative texts which try to hide her.⁵⁶ Significantly, Montagu depicts the ‘spectral lesbian’ lurking in Flavia’s mirrored refractions, just as she mimics the buried homoeroticism of Virgil’s *Eclogues*. What is also noteworthy about this poem is that it is the only eclogue which is not entitled a consumer space such as ‘Tuesday: The Coffee House’, ‘Thursday: The Tea Table’, ‘Friday: The Dressing Room’. Rather, it is called ‘Smallpox’. This suggests that Montagu has written the diseased body as a space. If ‘Saturday’ provides a move away from the paralysed sexualities of the earlier eclogues, then we can see Montagu moving away from space as it is conventionally understood, in to her own textual and Sapphic spaces, which includes the body.

Another way in which Montagu usurps the heterosexual configurations of the dressing room is through gestures of autoeroticism. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues

⁵⁵ Clare Whatling, ‘Wittig’s monsters: stretching the lesbian reader’, *Textual Practice*, 11, no. 2, (1997): 237-248 (p. 246). See also Monique Wittig, *Across the Acheron*, trans. by D. Le Vay and M. Crosland (London: The Women’s Press, 1989) and *The Lesbian Body*, trans. by D. Le Vay (London: Peter Owen, 1975).

⁵⁶ Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 7

that “the dropping out of sight of the autoerotic term is also part of what falsely naturalizes the heterosexist imposition”.⁵⁷ In her own recovering of “a homoerotic matrix” through mimicking the same-sex desires of *Eclogue X*, Montagu exposes the homoerotic term, which Pope and Dryden in their translations suppressed. Flavia reminisces about a time when she was in love with the reflection in her mirror and her description of this is eroticised. Nevertheless, the Flavia that now speaks is also erotically depicted. Flavia is introduced as languishing on a couch, trembling, wretched, exclaiming, breathing heavily. The frequent exclamation marks and question marks emphasise her shortness of breath:

How am I chang'd! alas! how am I grown
 A frightful spectre, to myself unknown!
 Where's my complexion? where my radiant bloom,
 That promis'd happiness for years to come?
 Then with what pleasure I this face survey'd!
 To look once more, my visits oft delay'd! (SE, 5 – 10)

The rhythm of each stanza quickens as it reaches the end where each time she cries ‘no more’ as if the excitement is too much:

Ah Faithless Glass, my wonted bloom restore!
 Alas I rave! That bloom is now no more! (SE, 13-14)

⁵⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “the European phobia over masturbation came early in the ‘sexualizing’ process described by Foucault, beginning around 1700 with publication of *Onania*, and spreading virulently after the 1750s.” See *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 118.

Flavia reaches the climax of her outpouring through the cry 'Adieu', echoing 'I die' or orgasm. Her autoerotic monologue focuses around her textual subjectivity; she repeats first person pronouns ('I', 'me', 'my') and represents her body as it lies on the couch, sits at her toilette, is displayed in fashionable spaces, as it lies under the doctors' gaze. This dynamic and moving body signifies writhing and a textually inscribed sexuality. Indeed, Sedgwick proposes the link between literary pleasure, critical self-scrutiny, autoeroticism, solitary pleasure and the adventure of writing. She offers masturbation as "a reservoir of potentially utopian metaphors and energies for independence, self-possession, and a rapture".⁵⁸ In an exciting move that escapes the dichotomy between objectified femininity exposed by John Berger and second wave feminists, and the limited feminine behaviours advocated by many post-feminists, Sedgwick and Montagu configure sexuality outside the male gaze of the heterosexual matrix, a sexuality intricately linked to textuality and to creativity. The diseased Flavia discovers a rapture in creating her lament.

'Saturday' is also reminiscent of the anonymous *An Epistle from Sapho to Philenis with the Discovery; or, Paradise Review'd* (London 1728). Although she does not examine this poem in relation to 'Saturday', Nussbaum discusses this poem in *Torrid Zones* in order to demonstrate that women would have been aware of homosexual activities and would have perceived them "to be a seamless part of a multiplicity of sexual practices."⁵⁹ In this bawdy imitation of Donne's 'Sapho to Philaenis' (which is taken from Ovid's *Heroides*) Sappho imagines the presence of Philenis and as she gazes in the mirror she fantasizes making love to her:

⁵⁸ Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, p.111.

⁵⁹ Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, p. 146.

Our *Skins* are white as undissolving Snow,
 Our *Wasts* are slender and our Stature's low.
 Each Part of Me varies from those of You,
 Scarce more than they from one another do.
 Dear other self! the Likeness being such,
 Why may they not alike, and freely touch?
 None *Hand to Hand* or *Lip to Lip* denies;
 Why shou'd thy *Breast to Breast?* or *Th-s to Th-s?*
 [.....]
 My Fancy so is by Resemblance caught,
 Touching my self, Thee, Thee I touch in thought.

Although this description is “filtered through the male pornographic imagination”, there are interesting parallels between ‘Saturday’ and this epistle in terms of erotic language and imagery.⁶⁰ Both poems share the sexual vocabulary of “resemblance”, “sparks”, “heightens”, “view”, “languish”, “renew”, “tremble”, as well as depicting the image of the half-dressed woman gazing erotically at the reflection in the mirror.

Moreover, recent criticism, especially in gay and lesbian theory, has focused on the ability to read in a resistant manner. In other words, rather than reading the history of sexuality as one of containment and oppression, it is possible, as Vivien Jones argues, to “tell the history of femininity as more contested, various and, again, unpredictable.” She argues that “fantasy offers multiple, potentially contradictory, positions of identification [...] meanings and pleasures shift across different reading

⁶⁰ Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, p. 145.

contexts.” Consequently texts that are overtly repressive such as conduct books can also be appropriated by a resistant reader and can “open up spaces of fantasy and female desire which are potentially transgressive.” Therefore, the pornography of the epistle, like Montagu’s ‘Saturday’, offer up such sites of resistance and recognition.⁶¹

Even if Montagu would not have been aware of this epistle when she first wrote ‘Saturday’ (or indeed if she ever was), she would have known Donne’s poem of the same name which was first published in 1635, as well as Ovid’s version. In addition, Montagu would have been aware of Katherine Philips’ system of friends as “each other’s Mirrours” (‘A Friend’, 62) in which she repeats Donne’s erotic depiction of Sappho’s desire for Philaenis. Ros Ballaster argues that Philips’ mimicry of Donne’s heterosexual imagery undermines ‘natural’ sexed relations and gender identity. Ballaster cites Butler:

[T]he parodic or imitative effect of gay identities works neither to copy nor to emulate heterosexuality, but rather, to expose heterosexuality as an incessant and panicked imitation of its own naturalized idealization.⁶²

Consequently both heterosexual and homosexual relations are parodied, infinitely doubling through the image of the mirror. There is no original gendered identity, no natural femininity; just the performance that is produced at the site of the dressing table. Moreover, Montagu does not seem to be focusing on likeness but on difference in sexual identity. The two women in her configuration of homoerotic desire are not

⁶¹ See Jones, ‘The Seductions of Conduct’, pp. 112, 115, 116.

⁶² Judith Butler, ‘Imitation and Gender Insubordination’, in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. by Diana Fuss (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 23. Cited in Ballaster, ‘The Vices of Old Rome’.

alike but enact power struggles. Flavia (like Gallus and Lycoris) recognises her reflection as different from her. Moreover, Flavia is fragmented into both the watcher and watched and so fissures understanding of likeness. This contrasts with Finch's inscription of Sapphic discourse.

Montagu may also have read or known about the anti-masturbatory text *Onania or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and all its frightful Consequences of both Sexes considered* which was first published in 1710 and by 1723 had run into its eighth edition.⁶³ According to Todd C. Parker:

Onania represents masturbation as an essentially parodic and secondary practice that simultaneously imitates and undercuts the primacy of heterosexual intercourse thus appropriating to the individual those pleasures that "naturally" attend only the communal activities of male/female intercourse.⁶⁴

Consequently, through mimicking the woman at her toilette in such theatrical tropes Montagu draws attention to the artifice of femininity. Moreover, through depicting a woman masturbating, Montagu denaturalizes heterosexual relations. The image of the mirror becomes one of perversion and subversion: an alternative space to speculate.

As Parker argues "the masturbating woman who thus isolates herself from heterosexual society so successfully parodies the masculine subject that she both

⁶³ See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979). See also Sander Gilman on masturbation and *Onania* in *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 69-70.

⁶⁴ Parker, *Sexing the Text*, pp. 25-26.

violates that subject and renders “his” difference from “her” meaningless”.⁶⁵ In usurping the penis, Montagu “homosexualises her contact with herself”.⁶⁶ The parodic potential involved in the representation of masturbation is fundamental to the work of Montagu. Through her fragmented reflections, the dressing woman has become a “categorical nightmare”, a nightmare that I shall suggest in chapter 6 is the tribade.⁶⁷ In chapter 6 I explore Montagu’s self-representations as a fluid movement between sexed behaviours and bodies. In her letters to Algarotti, for example, she represents herself as a man and Algarotti as a woman, and in doing so she represents herself as a kind of ‘phallic woman’ who displaces “some element of the heterosexual matrix with the all too similar traits of her multiply sexed body.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Parker, *Sexing the Text*, p. 35.

⁶⁶ Parker, *Sexing the Text*, p. 37.

⁶⁷ Parker, *Sexing the Text*, p. 46. See also Julia Epstein, ‘Either/Or – Neither/ Both: Sexual Ambiguity and the Ideology of Gender’, *Genders*, 7 (1990); Randolph Trumbach, ‘London’s Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture’, in *Bodyguards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), esp. pp. 112-115.

⁶⁸ Parker, *Sexing the Text*, p. 46.

Chapter 5: Finch's Sacred and Sapphic Space



Fig. 8: Nicolas Poussin, 'Echo and Narcissus'

Part 1: “clogg’d the Active Soul”

This chapter offers a close reading of ‘The Petition for an Absolute Retreat *inscribed to the Right Honble Catherine Countess of Thanet, mentioned in the Poem under the name of Arminda*’, and to a lesser extent ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ and ‘The Contemplation’. Although Messenger, McGovern, Hinnant and Barash have offered readings of certain passages of this poem, I give a more detailed analysis of the whole text. The poem is, as Finch herself writes “winding”, and this reading reflects her tracing, echoing and “wandering” style. It is such a rich and far-reaching poem that it is not possible to do justice to it all in this chapter, so I focus on the text’s mystical elements which have not been discussed before, as well as its depictions of same-sex love, both of which will be shown to be connected.

In ‘The Petition’ Finch engages with the partnership between Adam and Eve as represented in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and she configures an alternative to this dyadic union. Through mimicking, repelling and repeating the poetics of Milton, Finch creates a landscape purged of the tyrant man, the phallus, and relations based on economic exchange. Instead, she rewrites a paradise inhabited by women who love and heal each other. Finch also echoes the devotional works of Marvell and Vaughan. Yet, although she traces their mystic influence, her voice repels their rejection of the body and of the feminine. Finch appears to be more influenced by the works of Aemelia Lanyer. Although there is no evidence of Finch having read Lanyer, I put forward a case for this possibility in part 3. Firstly, however, I tie up themes of the

body and Sapphic voice that were explored in chapter 3, arguing that Butler's theoretical framework is inadequate when reading Finch's devotional poetics.

Finch writes that the body is falsely blamed for the spleen. She critiques the influence of religious thinkers who argue that melancholy is a necessary consequence of the fall and the fallibility of the flesh. In 'The Spleen', Finch argues that:

By Thee *Religion*, all we know
 That shou'd enlighten here below,
 Is veil'd in Darkness, and perplex
 With anxious Doubts and endless Scruples vex,
 And some Restraint imply'd from each perverted Text.
 Whilst *Touch* not, *Taste* not, what is freely giv'n,
 Is but thy niggard Voice, disgracing bounteous Heav'n.
 From Speech restrain'd, by thy Deceits abus'd,
 To Deserts banish'd or in Cells reclus'd,
 Mistaken Vot'ries to the Pow'rs Divine,
 While they a purer Sacrifice design,
 Do but the *Spleen* obey, and worship at thy Shrine. (S, 116–127)

Finch states that it is the body's split from the soul, and consequently sexuality from spirituality, nature from the spirit, that is actually responsible for the spleen. The word "restrained" is repeated to emphasise how the body and sexuality are suppressed by contemporary religious thinkers. In 'The Petition' and 'A Nocturnal Reverie' Finch rewrites Biblical poetics by evacuating man from her retreats and re-uniting the body

with the soul. By doing so she writes the female body and female love as having devotional privilege through which The Word can be diffused.

In 'The Spleen' Finch depicts the agony of depression, anger, and insomnia which are a consequence of women's subjection. However, through including the abject, the unfeminine, into the body Finch also destabilises the body's boundaries, and subverts conventional expectations as to what the female body is. Finch links Ardelia to monstrous women who harboured unnatural desires, as lesbian acts were publicly recognized and deemed unnatural and therefore grotesque.¹ Aging, disease, undistinguished sex, and the erasure of the 'I', fissure the boundaries of the livable, known female body. Finch writes Ardelia through codes of abjection, disease and horror and can be read as locating her in what Judith Butler calls the "domain of abject beings".² According to Butler, the normal and ideal body is dependent upon an identity that is repressed or foreclosed. The normal body signifies through what it disavows. Finch, therefore, can be read as exploiting the Other, in order to destabilize the objectified and 'heterosexual' femininity of the aristocratic woman. She tropes Ardelia through codes of monstrosity and melancholy and in doing so she opens up sites of contestation and of ambiguity.

In the preface to *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler explains the difficulty of writing about the body. She writes that she "could not fix bodies as simple objects of thought."³ The problem being that, "bodies tend to indicate a world beyond themselves", and this movement beyond their own boundaries "appeared to be quite

¹ See Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, pp. 139 -149.

² Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 243. See also Hinnant, *An Essay in Interpretation*, p. 198 and Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

³ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. ix.

central to what bodies *are*".⁴ In other words, bodies are partly defined through what they are not: through exclusion, erasure, violent foreclosure, abjection, but also bodies cannot be fully explained, their borders are in flux. This gesture of fixing the body only to find that it points to something beyond itself is central to Finch's poetics and spiritual pilgrimage. However, it is interesting that Butler states that bodies point to a world beyond themselves and yet does not indicate what this world could be.

Butler argues that she is looking for the body, but paradoxically, her writing seems anti-body and anti-sexual; it has all been submerged in discourse and intellectualism. Butler writes from the so-called masculine space of the mind and the symbolic and, like Bacon, attempts to control and penetrate the body. Like Swift she admires the mind and writes out anything that cannot be explained. Butler argues that we cannot understand the inexplicable and moreover the inexplicable was created by the symbolic, so she erases what she cannot understand or does not want to admit into her philosophy. Consequently, like Marvell in his garden, she has written out the body, has written out forces that she cannot control.

Having stated that gender and sex are discursively constructed, Butler believes that she has transcended it. However, she is writing very much within a masculine discourse and, although it could be argued that a woman speaking the masculine is transgressive and therefore promoting 'gender trouble', rather than interrogating her own use of masculine discourse she appears to be promoting the masculine spaces of discourse and writing out 'woman'. The result is that in Butler's writing the identity 'woman' is invalid and, although she argues that 'man' is too, she writes from a very

⁴ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. ix.

male space as if this is the norm - that this is above sex and gender. This is exactly the strategy that has oppressed women: man is the norm and the female abnormal. Butler implies that her discourse is neutral but she is in fact using masculine tools when she states that sex and gender are fictions. This is not to say that there is an essential thing "woman", but that Butler, instead of deconstructing masculinity, has normalized masculinity. For example, she talks of subjects being 'girled' rather than 'boyed'.

Through arguing that we cannot make sense of the body outside discourse, Butler ultimately suppresses and represses it: sex and sexual identity become a political tool, nothing to do with life, desire, love, divinity. Knowingly or unknowingly she has created the paradise that Marvell longed for, a world with no woman and no body. She has created the world that Swift never managed to achieve because women got in the way by embodying the body and its desires. Finch's spirituality, or her connection with nature or the universe, for example, is incommensurate with Butler's politics because it is outside her control. Rather than repressing powers that cannot be understood - the strategies of Locke and Butler - Finch seeks to connect with them. Finch focuses on the body to point to a world beyond the known material. Through destabilising and dissolving the body, Finch opens up a path to her spiritual epiphany. No longer defined by sex or the material, Finch's poetic persona becomes identified with "Something" outside the framework of human thought.

Through re-uniting the body and the soul in her poetic voice, whilst maintaining their inscriptions of same-sex desire, Finch departs from Butler and from contemporary women writers. It is the physicality of Finch's spirituality that signals

her as radically apart from the religious writers who influence her work such as Milton, Marvell and Vaughan, as well as Elizabeth Singer Rowe. For example, In 'The Vision' Singer Rowe enjoys "the close recesses of a shade" (1) which were "for sacred contemplation made" (2). Her pastoral site or "fair delicious bow'r" (4) has the sensuous fittings that Finch's poetry describes. The speaker sings along to a lyre and falls into a dream in which she achieves a vision:

The place was all with heav'nly light o'erflown,
 And glorious with immortal splendor shone;
 When, lo! a bright ethereal youth drew near,
 Ineffable his motions and his air.
 A soft beneficent, expressless grace,
 With life's most florid bloom, adorn'd his face;
 His lovely brows immortal laurels bind,
 And long his radiant hair fell down behind,
 His azure robes hung free, and waving to the wind. (23-31)⁵

In the poetry of Singer Rowe, Christ is a sensual and somewhat objectified male at whom the female speaker gazes. It is a configuration of desire which is very different from Finch's identification and merging. Moreover, although Singer Rowe employs more overtly sexual language, she ultimately rejects the senses.⁶ In 'Seraphic Love', for example, Singer Rowe writes of "pure desires" (3) and "ravish'd soul"(4) as well as "languid beauties" (12) and the "panting heart" (17) – not phrases that Finch would

⁵ Elizabeth Singer Rowe, 'The Vision', in *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse, With Poems on Several Occasions by Mr. Thomas Rowe* (London, 1739).

⁶ As in the poetry of Philips, this tension between eroticism and denial of the flesh creates a highly charged language of desire.

be comfortable using. Ultimately, however, she rejects the flesh – “you flat delights of sense!” (13) and asks to die and leave the earth.⁷ Singer Rowe also employs tropes of light and visions that are antithetical to Finch’s retreats as Finch writes explicitly about the shade and touch or smell rather than sight.

Finch also departs from female devotional writers such as Mary Chudleigh. In the final stanza of ‘The Elevation’, for example, Chudleigh blames the body for the tainted soul:

Souls without Spot, till Flesh they wear,
Which their pure Substance stains:
While they th’ uneasie Burthen bear,
They’re never free from Pains. (21-24)⁸

In contrast, Finch blames the body’s *split* from the soul for the pains of melancholy and the spleen. Whereas Chudleigh blames the “black guilty Thoughts” which “disturb my Sleeps” (‘The Resolve’, 11), Finch would blame the religious insistence on guilt for causing physical and mental suffering. Singer Rowe can be read in the tradition of Chudleigh as well as Katherine Philips as all three writers maintain and sustain the split between body and soul. Moreover, they depict relations between lovers (both sexual and spiritual) in dyadic terms, whereas Finch seeks a oneness.

In many ways Finch’s corporeal and Sapphic devotional poetics can be read through Elizabeth Grosz’s ‘corporeal feminism’. Grosz asks whether “depths, the

⁷ Singer Rowe, ‘Seraphic Love’, in *Miscellaneous Works*.

⁸ Mary Chudleigh, ‘The Elevation’, in *The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh*, ed. by Margaret J. Ezell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). All citations are taken from this edition.

interior, the subjective, and the private instead be seen in terms of surfaces, bodies and material relations?"⁹ Rather than accepting the mind/body dualism, Grosz argues that "[s]ubject and object are series of flows, energies, movements, strata, segments, organs, intensities – fragments capable of being linked together or wavered in potentially infinite ways other than those which congeal them into identities."¹⁰ This is a more conducive framework through which to understand Finch's configuration of the body. Finch employs tropes of movement and fluidity that are material but move beyond duality and fixed identities. Moreover, she reflects her fragmented but corporeal poetics in her textual strategies of echoing, mimicry, diffusion and her use of the shade; textual strategies that I will now turn to.

"moving Syllables repeat"

Finch's poems are often masked, and tropes of revelation and concealment reflect her strategies of subterfuge. Indeed, one must pay as much attention to the gaps and silence, the lacunae, in her poetry as the explicit. 'To The Echo *In a clear night upon Astrop walks*' sketches out her position in the literary tradition:

Say lovely Nymph, where dost thou dwell?

Where is that secret Sylvan seat,

That melancholy, sweet retreat,

From whence, thou doest these notes repell,

And moving Syllables repeat?

⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 160.

¹⁰ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. 167.

Oh lovely Nymph, our joys to swell,
 Thy hollow, leafy mansion tell,
 Or if thou only charm'st the ear,
 And never wilt to sight, appear,
 But doest alone in voice excell,
 Still with it, fix us here.
 Where Cynthia, lends her gentle light,
 Whilst the appeas'd, expanded air,
 A passage for thee, does prepare,
 And Strephon's tuneful voice, invite,
 Thine, a soft part with him to bear.
 Oh pleasure! when thou'dst take a flight,
 Beyond thy common, mortal height,
 When to thy sphere above, thou'dst bless,
 Thy season, be like this, fair Night,
 And Harmony thy dresse. (1-21)

Unlike male writers who usually comment on the dangers of the echo, Finch writes of its beauty. Moreover, the mythological Echo is also presented by Ovid (and Dryden) as a meddling busy body figure:

Echo was then a Maid, of Speech bereft,
 Of wonted Speech; for tho' her Voice was left,
Juno a Curse did on her Tongue impose,
 To sport with ev'ry Sentence in the Close.

Full often when the Goddess might have caught
Jove and her Rivals in the very Fault,
 This Nymph with subtle Stories would delay
 Her Coming, 'till the Lovers slipp'd away.
 The Goddess found out the Deceit in time,
 And then she cry'd, "That Tongue, for this thy Crime,
 "Which could so many subtle Tales produce,
 "Shall be hereafter but of little use.
 Hence 'tis she prattles in a fainter Tone,
 With mimick Sounds, and Accents not her own.¹¹

Finch appropriates the image of the echo to highlight her confined and condemned position as mimicking the male word, and also to expose the rebellious and empowering strategies of echoing. In her poem 'To The Echo', Finch describes the nymph's voice as repelling, repeating, swelling, telling, charming, excelling and harmonizing with the original voice. This practice is sensual and pleasurable – "Oh pleasure!" – and the nymph's song is ultimately superior to the original as the echo rises above "comon, mortal height [...] And men, like Angels, thou woud'st blesse". In other words, by mimicking the male word, the echo produces a superior and more divine music which she will employ to bless men. When Finch echoes the voices of male writers such as Marvell, Milton, Crashaw and Vaughan, she simultaneously repeats and harmonises with them, but she also repels the words and excels them to configure new meanings and crack old ones.

¹¹ Dryden, 'The Transformation of Echo', in *The Poems of John Dryden*, 458-471.

Echo is, in fact, a deviant and mischievous character who likes to deceive her listeners: what she says is not what she means, and this is a rhetorical strategy that Finch adopts. Moreover, echo is confined to a cave and the cave recurs in Finch's poetry such as in 'The Petition' and 'The Prevalence of Custom' in which the speaker is a "Charitable crony" who deceives her husband by pretending to be a "Creature, /With outspread Hair, and ghastly Feature" ('The Prevalence of Custom', 18-19). The cave is a conventional image of female sexuality (see Pope's 'The Cave of Spleen') and this is why Finch appropriates it. The echo is a potent trope because it is both embodied and disembodied. It is grounded in the material as the echo can only be heard inside the natural landscape. Nevertheless, her materiality cannot be fixed, and she cannot be seen or mapped. Like the image of tracing discussed in chapter 3, it is this combination of material and yet unmappable that constitutes Finch's radical Sapphic voice.

Finch's echoing strategy is similar to Irigaray's mimicry, and Irigaray's theories of excessive femininity are useful in elucidating the poetry of Finch. Irigaray's femininity of excess is the necessary outside or Other of discourse, and matter or the body becomes the site at which this feminine is excluded. Irigaray's strategy in exposing this femininity of excess is to mimic the feminine that has been repressed in male philosophical writing. Finch is both the masculine-constructed voice that she writes in, and the repressed feminine outside mimicking it. Finch, in Irigaray's words, seeks to destroy "the cover up of a possible operation of the feminine in language" and through "playful repetition" she uncovers or recovers "what was supposed to

remain invisible” or Othered.¹² Finch too must write in a voice that is not hers, that objectifies her. It is, in fact, the voice that she is writing against. Consequently she is both the masculine-constructed voice that she writes in, and the repressed feminine outside mimicking it. Finch’s language of excess is also homoerotic and her Sapphic voice attempts to uncover the unspeakability of female love.

Ardelia also means meddler. In *The Preface*, (which was never finally attached to her 1713 published manuscript), Finch writes:

But now, having pleaded an irresistible impulse, as my excuse for writing, which was the chief design of this Preface, I must also expresse my hopes of excaping all suspicion of vanity, or affectation of applause from itt; since I have in my introduction, deliver’d my sincere opinion that when a Woman meddles with things of this nature,

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

And, I am besides sensible, that Poetry has been of late so explain’d, the laws of itt being putt into familiar languages, that even those of my sex, (if they will be so presumptuous as to write) are very accountable for their transgressions against them.¹³

¹² Luce Irigaray, ‘The Power of Discourse’, in *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 76. See also Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991).

¹³ ‘The Preface’ in Reynolds, *The Poems of Anne*, p. 9

Finch's references to meddling and transgressions juxtaposed against the 'laws' of poetry are tongue in cheek. Nevertheless, they also signify Finch's poetic tactics: her desire to 'deviate from the known and common way'. Through projecting a poetic persona named 'Ardelia', Finch disguises her voice as merely a female meddler in the affairs of men, a woman writer not to be taken seriously. Simultaneously, however, she reveals her strategic aim to meddle in the word and the Word. Through meddling, mimicking, echoing, transgressing, Ardelia will fissure those poetic laws and masculine structures that keep her as a poetic outsider. Indeed, a meddler hints at rebelliousness and cacophony. Using the name 'Ardelia' indicates the role that Finch wants her poetic persona to play – that of gossip, mimic, trickster. It implies a polyphonic and fluid voice that cannot, like echo, be fully trusted.

As well as tropes of echoing and meddling, Finch frequently inscribes the image of shade. The shade, a recurring trope in much retirement poetry, is echoed and transformed in Finch's poetry, opening up a feminine site of spiritual and homoerotic jouissance. Although Finch's image of the shade can be read as balancing the polarities of light and dark, she also uses this image for more radical purposes. Indeed, Finch's configurations of light are what make her writing particularly subversive. In 'Anne Finch Placed and Displaced', Ruth Salvaggio argues that Finch's trope of shade is "profoundly feminine". Salvaggio echoes Shoshana Felman's use of femininity:

Femininity ... is not the opposite of masculinity but that which subverts the very

opposition of masculinity and femininity.¹⁴

For Salvaggio, shade functions to split the Enlightenment duality between the light of man and the darkness associated with women "from within".¹⁵ Shade blurs the boundaries between light and dark and consequently disrupts the very structures that function to position woman as Other in Enlightenment discourse. Salvaggio writes that Finch displaces herself from the domain of man into the space of woman:

her retreats to the shady, natural world were poetic ways of figuring displacement, as a woman, in and from the Enlightenment world of men. Nature, shade, and woman all become linked in their associations with displacement.¹⁶

It is true that Finch represents her wanderer in 'The Petititon' as running from an Enlightenment sun. Charles Hinnant argues that Finch constructs "an essentially feminized landscape" which is seen as being "menaced by the danger of masculine intrusion."¹⁷ In running from this masculine intrusion, Finch's wanderer escapes the tyrannical figure inherent in the logocentric symbol of the sun:

Whose resplendent Rays to shun,
When they do too fiercely beat,

¹⁴ Shoshana Felman, cited in Ruth Salvaggio, 'Anne Finch Placed and Displaced', in *Early Women Writers: 1600 – 1720*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (London and New York: Longman, 1998), pp. 242-265 (p. 242). See also Kathryn R. King, 'Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 14, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 77-93. See also Dorothy Mermin, 'Women Becoming Poets: Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Anne Finch', *ELH*, 57, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 335-355.

¹⁵ Salvaggio, 'Placed and Displaced', p. 243.

¹⁶ Salvaggio, 'Placed and Displaced', p. 247.

¹⁷ Hinnant, *An Essay In Interpretation*, p. 35.

Let me find some close Retreat
 Where they have no Passage made,
 Thro' those Windings, and that Shade. (PAR, 99 -103)

The language of “fiercely beat” and “passage” suggest images of rape. The last lines of this stanza have no punctuation which gives the impression that Finch's journeyer is running away from these “resplendent rays”.

Nevertheless, Salvaggio still writes in terms of binary structures: woman as opposite from man, displacement as opposite from placement, nature opposed to culture, and therefore, ultimately, shade polarized from light. Furthermore, nature, shade and woman are opposed to “the Enlightenment world of men” and so are still figured in terms of dichotomies. In contrast, Finch's shade is not merely polarized from light because her shade is fragmented and contains a multiplicity of tonal gradations. For example, in ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ she portrays many different subtleties of light. There is the reflected “waving Moon” (10), the “passing Clouds” which “thinly veil the Heav'n's mysterious Face” (7-8). There is the “paler Hue” of the foxglove, the chequered red “dusty brakes”, and the light from the “scattered glow-worms” which are “in twilight fine, / Show trivial beauties watch their hour to shine” (15-18). This light is contrasted with the Countess of Salisbury who stands “the Test of every Light, / In perfect Charms, and perfect Virtue bright” (19-20). There are also the “darken'd Groves their softest Shadows wear” (23), “the Gloom” (25), the “Sunburnt Hills”, and the “lengthen'd Shade” of the horse (31). The light is diffuse and broken up, thus fissuring the polarities of light and dark.

Moreover, in Finch's 'The Introduction' the biblical figure Deborah is depicted as creating song from the space of the shade. Deborah is celebrated as one of the forgotten and silenced:

Women that excell'd of old;
 To whom, by the diffusive hand of Heaven
 Some share of witt, and poetry was given. (I, 22-24)

Deborah is described as triumphing "with a Song" and exalting her wit:

A Woman here, leads fainting Israel on,
 She fights, she wins, she triumphs with a song,
 Devout, Majestick, for the subject fitt,
 And far above her arms, exalts her witt,
 Then, to the peacefull, shady Palm withdraws,
 And rules the rescu'd Nation, with her Laws. (I, 45-50)

Finch then goes on to critique the marginalisation and silencing of women since Deborah:

How are we fal'n, fal'n by mistaken rules?
 And Education's, more than Natur's fools,
 Debarr'd from all improve-ments of the mind,
 And to be dull, expected and designed; (I, 51-54)

In the light of “th’opposing faction” policing female behaviour, Finch’s speaker withdraws to the shade:

Be caution’d then my Muse, and still retir’d;
 Nor be dispis’d, aiming to be admir’d;
 Conscious of wants, still with contracted wing,
 To some few freinds, and to thy sorrows sing;
 For groves of Lawrell, thou wert never meant;
 Be dark enough thy shades, and be thou there content. (I, 59-64)

Although this retreat into the shade has been read as an expression of modesty and humility – both real and disingenuous – what no one has pointed out is that the speaker of the poem withdraws to the site of shade from where Deborah rules. This suggests that Finch’s withdrawal is actually a gesture of proto-feminist empowerment; the shade becomes a site where women writers are linked to female biblical figures and the power of ruling by one’s own laws. Finch rewrites Biblical poetics and, like Deborah, interprets spiritual laws from the displaced site of the shade.¹⁸

Deborah was an Israelite prophetess and a warrior. After an overwhelming victory against the Canaanite army, Deborah sang a triumphal song of praise to God (Judges 4: 1-23). By speaking from this displaced site of shade inhabited by Deborah, Finch’s voice in ‘The Petition’ is infused with heroic and prophetic authority. Moreover, her poetic voice identifies with a woman “that excell’d of old” to whom “the diffusive hand of Heaven” gave some “share of witt, and poetry”. This image of

¹⁸ See also Jean Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958) for a discussion of seventeenth-century heroic women.

diffusion recurs in 'The Petition' when Arminda diffuses her devotional love through Ardelia, and also in 'The Contemplation' where the gospel will be spread through Tufton's "diffusive aid". 'To diffuse' is an interesting verb as it can be understood in abstract and spiritual terms, but its etymology also links it to the material and to fluidity. For example, the *OED* states that to diffuse can mean "to pour out as a fluid with wide dispersion of its molecules" and it also gives the example of Milton's *Samson* where he writes "See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused" (*Samson*, 118).

Finch writes communities of women who are given devotional, prophetic and poetic authority, as well as being located in the material world. Moreover, this prophetic voice inscribes a feminine paradise regained through incorporating the body, Sapphic love, and through flying from male symbolism. In my reading of 'The Petition', I bring together the homoeroticism from chapter 3 and incorporate it in Finch's devotional poetics, the two being intricately connected.¹⁹ Moreover, Finch's rewriting of devotional poetics centres particularly on creating a paradise for women. She also elliptically rewrites the Passion narrative, and is influenced by the Gospel of St John. For example, in 'Friendship' (discussed in chapter 3) Finch writes of female same-sex love, but she also mimics the words of Christ as written in the gospel of St John where he states that friendship involves laying down one's life for a friend. He also explicates the mystical truth of love: "God himself dwells in us if we love one

¹⁹ Finch also uses the form of the hymn which I do not have room to discuss here. However, her hymns offer a link between the sickness or brokenness of 'The Spleen', and Finch's mysticism. The form of the hymn also offers an alternative to Butler's discourse as hymns are 'felt' and 'heard'. It is the sensuality of the act of singing which offers the singer and hearer an alternative mode of experience. Hymns are thought to bring the singer closer to God and because it is linked to the senses the form of the hymn offers Finch a possibility to link the "active soul" with the "mortal part". Moreover, because of the sensuality embodied in the form of the hymn it can be read as part of Finch's Sapphic voice. Like the trope of tracing in 'The Spleen' and the strategy of the echo, the hymns meld the word to matter.

another” (John 4. 12). We can read the final two lines of Finch’s ‘Friendship’ as mimicking Christ’s embodiment of the Word. Through this reading, Finch writes Ardelia as expressing her love for Ephelia through deed. Moreover, her body is depicted as overriding discourse: the flesh fissures the word. In addition, she subverts Pauline and Petrine assertions that women cannot diffuse the Word of God. It is to this Sapphic diffusion of the Word that will now be discussed in relation to ‘The Petition’.

Part 2: Retreating and retracing in 'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat'

'The Petition for an Absolute Retreat' (and 'A Nocturnal Reverie') is, among other things, a mystic text in which Finch traces a meditative space to achieve contemplative states. Louis Martz states that it is through meditative sites that writers are provided with "the possibility of achieving the highest reaches of mystical experience."²⁰ Finch's sacred and Sapphic poetics are reactions to the "*Touch not, Taste not*" (S, 120) of religious discourse that engenders melancholia and the spleen. For Finch, mysticism is not an alternative to sexuality which it embraces, but an alternative to the dichotomies and dualisms of masculinity – dualisms which include the division of sexuality and spirituality, but also heterosexuality. Indeed, the dis-ease in the repressed and heterosexualised space of the dressing room, is healed through the oral and homoerotic devotion of Finch's retreats. Although the epiphanic moment of mysticism cannot be contained in a text, Finch describes the trajectory to this contemplative state. They are retreats inhabited solely by women who celebrate an excessive female speech and claim to a female literary tradition.

'The Petition' follows the five steps leading to mystic experiences that are outlined in Itrat Husain's study of the mystical theology of John Donne. Husain states that a mystic text is comprised of five parts:

1) Various forms of prayer

²⁰ Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1954), p. 18.

- 2)Purification
- 3)Illumination
- 4)The dark night of the soul and
- 5)The Mystical Union²¹

'The Petition' follows these stages, but with the unconventional addition of inscribing female friendship as the bridge between the dark night of the soul and the mystical union. Thus Finch constructs a specifically feminine spirituality and subversively calls this devotional text '*The*' Petition, making sure that it is not understood as a marginal religious poem. Echoing masculine configurations of mystical retreats, Finch meddles with their tropes and images and destabilizes the male monopoly over the Word.

Michel De Certeau links mystic writing with political displacement, especially the transition from a feudal society to "the dawn of modernity" in the seventeenth century. Old systems and traditions are broken down exposing multiple voices and values. Consequently, the "subject is born of exile and disappearance."²² This poem is 'Inscribed to the Right Honble Catharine Countess of Thanet, mention'd in the Poem under the Name of Arminda'. After James II was deposed, Finch and her husband fled London and stayed with various friends and relatives including the Thanets. The Finches and the Thanets share political and religious sympathies which suggest that the inclusion of Arminda in her retreat is a gesture towards political reconciliation and the Royalist coterie of women as celebrated by Philips. It concords with Barash's

²¹ Itrat Husain, *The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1938), p. 120.

²² Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies : Discourse on the Other*, trans. by B. Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 89.

claim that friendship offered a “site of a mythically collective female response to a set of shared political conflicts, and thus a trope of political cohesion and stability.”²³

Moreover, in writing from a site beyond conventional Augustan structure, Finch writes from what Michel De Certeau would call a “a no-place”²⁴ or “siteless site”.²⁵ From this “siteless site”, Finch is able to weave radical subversions of traditional mystic texts.

“lost paths”

The first stanza of ‘The Petition’ outlines the narrator’s journey. It begins as an entreaty, a call, to “indulgent fate”:

Give me O indulgent Fate!
 Give me yet, before I Dye,
 A sweet, but absolute Retreat,
 ’Mongst Paths so lost, and Trees so high,
 That the World may ne’er invade,
 Through such Windings and such Shade,
 My unshaken Liberty. (PAR, 1-7)

This stanza echoes Horatian classical tropes of retreat, thus situating Finch’s poem in

²³ Barash, *English Women's Poetry*, p. 15. Catherine Gallagher argues that in the absence of desired monarchy, Royalist women writers such as Mary Astell and Margaret Cavendish embrace fantastic spaces in which they are both subject and monarch to themselves. See Catherine Gallagher, ‘Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth Century England’, *Genders*, 1, (Spring, 1988): 24-39.

²⁴ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 89.

²⁵ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 89.

a conventionally Augustan framework.²⁶ It also echoes John Pomfret's 'The Choice' which starts with the refrain: "Grant me, indulgent Heav'n, a rural Seat, / Rather contemptible than great;" (1-2).²⁷ Nevertheless, Finch writes against Pomfret's celebration of books, business and privacy - the retreat of the scholar. Hers is not the masculine retreat of the 'serene contemplator' or 'The Happy Man' as celebrated by Pomfret and Milton's scholarly poet-philosophers. Rather, Finch's retreat is deeply affective and rebellious. Finch's retreat reads more ambiguously than that of Pomfret. In contrast to Pomfret's steady and measured request, Finch's desire for a retreat reads sensually.

Hers is a cry of desire, emphasized by the break in the middle of the line which gives force to the erotic shout 'O'. The "yet" and the lack of punctuation renders it languishing, longing, and this is reinforced by the 'die' of climax. The repetition of "so" increases the atmosphere of dreaminess by drawing out the line. The alliteration of 't' and 's' sounds, as well as enjambment, increases the languishing feeling, prolonging the reading of the line. It also gives the impression of hissing sounds - the hissing of serpents and the hissing of silence, sounds that will follow the wanderer and the reader throughout the poem. The phrase 'lost paths' is also a contradictory image, however, as how can paths be lost? William James acknowledges that the "vertigo of self-contradiction" is typical of mystic texts.²⁸ He cites examples such as "dazzling obscurity", "whispering silence", "teeming desert".²⁹ Indeed, Finch's narrator demands such concepts as "things unutterable taught" and "A sweet, yet

²⁶ See Frank Stack, *Imitations of Horace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

²⁷ John Pomfret, 'The Choice', cited in Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal*, 2nd edition (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1962-1971), vol. 1, p. 289-99.

²⁸ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1997), p. 245.

²⁹ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 330.

absolute retreat". In addition, the initial alluring tones disappear in the last line of the stanza where the speaker affirms "My unshaken liberty". This affirmative, possessive and concrete statement is at odds with the narrator's call to get lost. Moreover, a tree can be shaken or a belief can be shaken but liberty is experienced: it is either given or taken away. It is an incongruous statement with a jarring image, creating an uneasy tension in the poem. William James argues that "such self-contradictory phrases [...] prove that not conceptual speech, but music rather, is the element through which we are best spoken to through mystical truth."³⁰

The images of "lost paths" and "unshaken Liberty", link Finch's poem to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, Finch's poem signifies its radical potency when read against Milton's configuration of heterosexual relationships. In 'The Introduction' Finch writes bitterly against those who believe "the dull manage of a servile house / Is held by some our utmost art and use." (I, 19-20) Those "some" explicitly echoes Milton speaking through Adam:

for nothing lovelier can be found
In Woman, then to studie household good,
And good works in her Husband to promote. (*PL*, IX, 232 - 234)

Finch mimics Milton's language in relation to the partnership between Adam and Eve throughout 'The Petition' in order to rupture his ideal of marriage.³¹ In demanding

³⁰ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 330.

³¹ I am not arguing that Finch writes against Milton's portrayal of woman, rather that she subverts his idealisation of the heterosexual paradigm and woman's subjectivity within this. See *Milton and the Idea of Woman*, ed. by Julia M. Walker (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988) and John Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony: A Study of the Divorce Tracts and Paradise Lost* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970).

her “unshaken liberty” Finch’s speaker alludes to Eve’s eating of the apple and her subsequent questioning of her inferiority:

And render me more equal, and perhaps,
 A thing not undesirable, sometime
 Superior; for inferior who is free? (*PL*, IX, 823-825)

The adjective “unshaken” in Finch’s context suggests that her wanderer’s freedom will not be realized after the eating of the tree (later she states that the tree will “not be coveted by me” (*PAR*, 37)) but will be an integral part of her retreat. The heterosexual relationship, which is built on Eve’s inferiority, is echoed but also repelled in Finch’s spiritual retreat.

In writing out Adam and insisting on “my” liberty, Finch departs from readings of Milton by critics who recognize Adam and Eve’s relationship as equal. Diane Kelsey McColley, for example, reads Adam and Eve as “developing individuals who are responsible for their actions because their wills are free”.³² Finch’s denial of heterosexual relationships suggests that woman is defined *against* free will and liberty, and that she must wearily tread ‘those paths’ that are mapped out for her by her husband and writers such as Milton. Finch’s anxiety over allowing a man in her retreat is an anxiety over replicating the unequal relationship of Adam and Eve as represented in *Paradise Lost*. Finch certainly does not want to construct a protagonist who performs the “submissive Charms” of Milton’s Eve (*PL*, IV, 498) to Adam’s “Absolute rule” (*PL*, IV, 301):

³² Diane Kelsey McColley, ‘Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*’, *SEL*, 12, no. 1, The English Renaissance (1972): 103-120 (p. 120).

... though both
 Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd;
 For contemplation hee and valour formd,
 For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
 Hee for God only, shee for God in him; (*PL*, IV, 295-299)

Finch's retreat is "sweet, yet absolute" suggesting that her wanderer has appropriated both Adam's "absolute rule" and Eve's "sweet attractive Grace". In her retreat her wanderer embodies the masculine and feminine parts of Adam and Eve without risking her liberty. Moreover, through ignoring the figure of Adam, Finch consequently blurs the figure of Eve as Eve only has meaning, existence or subjectivity in relation to him. Through evacuating these two primal figures of heterosexual gendered identity, Finch opens a space for new definitions of being woman, being sexual and being feminine. Furthermore, Finch's mystic quest or text searches for a direct union with God, not one which is mediated through the husband. She does not, for example, want to regenerate through "God's grace and Adam's help".³³

Through her phrase "lost paths", Finch also echoes Milton's possibilities for deviation. Her rebellious text manipulates the contradictions and complexities of *Paradise Lost* exploiting Milton's subversive subtext.³⁴ The phrase "lost paths" suggests that there is much room for error in Finch's retreat and this possibility for

³³ Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 218.

³⁴ See William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* 3rd edition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953); Helen Gardener, *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: the Reader in Paradise Lost* (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1967).

transgression is heightened by the image of the tree in the second stanza. However, deviation is explicitly embraced by Finch's wanderers. Finch appropriates or mimics this notion of error, deviation and lost paths from Milton's text in order to meddle with it, but also to provide a means for her own readers to deviate and to get lost. As Stanley Fish states: "everything in the poetry [of Milton] provides the material and the occasion for going down another, disastrous, path".³⁵ Fish reads *Paradise Lost* as a:

world where ways of thinking are constitutive of what can subsequently be thought about, you must be ever on guard against thinking your self into consequences you will 'justly rue'.³⁶

He goes on to argue that the reader is attracted by error and temptation because these are what makes crises and dramatic moments: "Error – deviation from the true path, departure from the saving center – is history, and its attractions are therefore as "natural" as they are fatal to entry into true life."³⁷

Nevertheless, Finch's deviation is different from that set up by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, as she breaks through the polarities of right and wrong. In other words, just as she evacuates the male/female polarity of Adam and Eve, so she fissures the dichotomy between right and wrong paths. Milton's deviant path is the path of the tragic and singular epic hero. Finch's wanderer, however, seems to be just getting lost (not morally lost) and then discovering something through that different state. She follows an unmapped terrain which contains the tree of knowledge and deviant paths.

³⁵ Stanley Fish, *How Milton Works* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 573.

³⁶ Fish, *How Milton Works*, p. 526.

³⁷ Fish, *How Milton Works*, p.572.

De Certeau describes the literature of mysticism as providing a path for those who “ask the way to get lost. No one knows.” It teaches “how not to return”.³⁸ As well as this desire to pass through language, he states that mystic texts “trace in language the indeterminate path of a mode of writing.”³⁹ Or that the writing of the mystic is precisely to exemplify and trace the ambiguous and indeterminate nature of language. The ‘getting lost’ and its destination cannot be mapped, cannot be traced or determined.

“world may ne’er invade”

In the second stanza of ‘The Petition’, Finch’s wanderer rejects the world of urban consumerism in her quest for a pure meditative space:

No Intruders thither come!
 Who visit, but to be from home;
 None who their vain Moments pass,
 Only studious of their Glass,
 News, that charm to listening Ears;
 That false Alarm to Hopes and Fears;
 That common Theme for every Fop,
 From the Statesman to the Shop,
 In those Coverts ne’er be spread,
 Of who’s Deceas’d, or who’s to Wed, (PAR, 8-17)

³⁸ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 80.

³⁹ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 81.

Although this is an 'absolute' retreat, Finch is emphatic in her exclusion of fashionable society. There is a multiplicity of negating words. She states that people in the retreat have to be there totally, have to become completely lost, not just to be there "but to be from home". "Come" and "home" rhyme dissonantly, indicating that coming into the retreat is at odds with thinking from home. It is not just a holiday, but is absolute. Rather than being "[o]nly studious of their glass", Finch's retreating women will reject the vanity of disciplined femininity. Moreover, this will be a femininity which is not signified through a reflecting mirror. It will not be the femininity of the dressing room or of Eve who, when seeing her reflection in a pool, "pin'd with vain desire" (*PL*, IV, 466).

In this displaced space of shade, the narrator looks beyond the gossiping voices to the silence of a "midnight thought":

Be no Tidings thither brought,
 But Silent, as a Midnight Thought,
 Where the World may ne'er invade,
 Be those Windings, and that Shade! (*PAR*, 18-21)

It is this midnight thought that the wandering Ardelia will attempt to attain through her straying and getting lost. The oppressive back-stabbing and policing chatter of urban socialites encapsulated in the whispering alliteration of "who's Deceas'd, or who's to Wed" is appropriated and transformed into the affirmative "[w]here the World may ne'er invade". Moreover the possessive pronouns associated with the

consumer world are dropped in Finch's retreat. Finch's landscape is purged of the Court and urban consumerism, and is transmogrified in to a meditative topography.

I discussed Behn's influence on 'The Petition' in chapter 3, and particularly her influence on this stanza. In Finch's own inscriptions of pastoral sites sexuality becomes as "innocent" as that expressed in Behn's 'The Golden Age' and 'To the Fair Clarinda'. Purged of the consumerist corruption of the dressing room, the study and the fashionable coach, Finch's exterior spaces stage love between female friends that is unsullied by the heterosexual power games of the town. Influenced by Behn, Finch rejects all forms of labouring. This further evacuates the Miltonic Adam from her retreat as "the neighbouring fields" will "impart" rather than being farmed. Finch is emphatic about the lack of toil and domestic drudgery. There will be no toiling Adam of 'Adam Pos'd', nor a celebration of the technical knowledge of husbandry as praised in book VIII of *Paradise Lost*, as well as in Hineage Finch's journal.⁴⁰

"All within my easy reach"

In the next stanza of 'The Petition' Finch mimics Behn's sensuality through the wanderer's eating of fruits:

Fruits indeed (wou'd heaven bestow)

All, that did in *Eden* grow

All, but the *Forbidden Tree*,

⁴⁰ See Hellegers, *Handmaid to Divinity*, p. 122. See also Richard J. DuRocher, 'Careful Plowing: Culture and Agriculture in *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 31 (1994): 91-107.

Wou'd be coveted by me;
 Grapes, with Juice so crouded up,
 As breaking thro' the native Cup;
 Figs (yet growing) candy'd o'er,
 By the Sun's attracting Pow'r;
 Cherries, with the downy Peach,
 All within my easie Reach;
 Whilst creeping near the humble Ground,
 Shou'd the Strawberry be found
 Springing whereso'er I stray'd,
 Thro' those Windings and that Shade. (PAR, 34-47)

Like the rhythm and language of the poem, this description of the fruits is a very corporeal one. It contrasts starkly with the "*Touch not, Taste not*" of 'The Spleen' and with the images of passive women taking smelling salts to allay their pleasures. It also ruptures Eve's statement that: "But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch" (*PL*, IX 651) and concords with Satan's boast that "All other Beasts that saw, with like desire/ Longing and envying stood, but *could not reach*" (*PL*, IX, 591-3, my italics). I argued in chapter 3 that the image of tracing is one in which the word and touch becomes meshed, and this conflation is again employed in the description of eating fruits, where tactile and consuming pleasures are subversively described.

Finch depicts Ardelia actively pursuing, reaching, touching and enjoying the "Grapes, with Juice so crouded up, / As breaking thro' the native Cup", as well as the growing figs, the cherries and the "downy Peach". All these fruits can and have been

read as female sexual symbols and, moreover, they are leaking, dynamic and excessive. Furthermore, although Finch writes that Ardelia will ignore the fruits of the "Forbidden Tree": "All, but the Forbidden Tree/ Would be coveted by me", Finch rhymes "Tree" with "me" and insists twice through enjambment that Ardelia will reach for "all" the fruits. Finch also takes the image of Eve who "Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint" (*PL*, IX, 791) and brings it to excess: she discovers a fissured moment in this patriarchal text and exploits it without moral judgement. Finch increases the sensuous atmosphere through depicting strawberries satanically "creeping near the humble Ground" and Ardelia's very improper straying and wandering in shades. Similarly, in 'The Petition' urban artificial femininity is rejected for a femininity that is defined through identification with the smells and textures of nature:

Cloath me, Fate, tho' not so Gay;
 Cloath me light, and fresh as *May*:
 In the Fountains let me view
 All my Habit cheap and new;
 Such as, when sweet *Zephyrs* fly,
 With their Motions may comply,
 Gently waving, to express
 Unaffected Carelessness:
 No Perfumes have there a Part,
 Borrow'd from the *Chymists* Art;
 But such as rise from flow'ry Beds,
 Or the falling *Jasmin* sheds! (PAR, 65-75)

The description of fruits has often been compared to Andrew Marvell's 'The Garden'.⁴¹ However, unlike Marvell, Finch's wanderer is depicted as reaching for the fruits – they are "All within my easy reach". Marvell, in contrast, represents the fruits as "Into my hand themselves to reach" (38).⁴² The fruits are presented as forcing their consumption upon him, so that he can be absolved of sexual responsibility:

What wond'rous Life is this I lead!
 Ripe Apples drop about my head;
 The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
 Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine;
 The Nectaren and curious Peach,
 Into my hand themselves to reach;
 Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,
 Insnar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass. (33-40)

Ultimately, however, Marvell evacuates the feminine and the sexual from his retreat. As Maren-Sofie Røstvig argues, Marvell rejects the world of sense which is associated with woman and the body. Marvell's spirituality, according to Røstvig, is opposed to erotic passion.⁴³ Furthermore, in Marvell's retreat the body, mind and

⁴¹ See McGovern, *Anne Finch*, p. 84 and Germaine Greer, *Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London: Viking, 1995), pp. 245-246.

⁴² Marvell, 'The Garden', *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell* vol. 1, ed. by H. M. Margoliouth 3rd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) All citations are taken from this edition. See also Ruth Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950); *Andrew Marvell* ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989); Donald M., Friedman *Marvell's Pastoral Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970).

⁴³ Røstvig, *The Happy Man*, p. 166.

soul are split as part of his process of purification and illumination:

Here at the Fountains sliding foot,
 Or at some Fruit-trees mossy root,
 Casting the Bodies Vest aside,
 My Soul into the boughs does glide:
 There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
 Then whets, and combs its silver Wings;
 And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
 Waves in its Plumes the various Light. (49-56)

This contrasts with Finch's attempt to *re-unite* the body and soul in her mystic experience. Moreover, Finch's retreat is figured through labyrinthine and unstructured windings and shade, whereas Marvell's mind is successful in "Annihilating all that's made/ To a green thought in a green shade." (47-48) His poem is not only tinged with irony and mockery, but it is contained and measured. Whereas Marvell's speaker is depicted as being reached by the sensual and the material, Finch's wanderer actively reaches for it.

"Fly those Windings, and that Shade!"

In the next stanza, however, Finch's wanderer runs straight into a male partner. This scene is deeply ambivalent and the partner is ultimately rejected for a woman friend. Finch mimics Milton's parentheses:

Give me there (since Heaven has shown

It was not Good to be alone)

A *Partner* suited to my Mind,

Solitary, pleas'd and kind;

Who, partially, may something see

Prefer'd to all the World in me;

[...]

Spent their own, and Nature's Prime,

In Love; that only Passion given

To perfect Man, whilst Friends with Heaven.

Rage and Jealousie, and Hate,

Transports of his fallen State,

(When by *Satan's* Wiles betray'd)

Fly those Windings, and that Shade! (PAR, 104- 109, 118-125)

This stanza is situated in the middle of the poem and is the shortest and most uneasy, being peppered with commas, semi colons, and brackets giving the impression of fragmentation. The lines are ruptured through frequent commas - more commas than in any other stanza - and a colon in the middle of the line. The proliferation of punctuation gives the impression of gaps that destabilise what is being asserted. This impression is heightened through words such as "partially" and "slighting" and "humble", alluding to the subordinate position of Milton's Eve. Indeed, Finch is careful to associate their relationship with the mind, rather than the body as Ardelia asks for a "Partner suited to my Mind".

Images of commodities and consumerism also proliferate as if to emphasise the importance of the market place and exchange value in marriage and heterosexual unions. The word “spent” is repeated and emphasized at the beginning of two lines, implying that their relationship was financially dependent, finite, exhausted of sexual energy, and in the past tense. The fragmented and staccato nature of this verse implies that they are not joined but are separate. Similarly, the state of being “In love” which is emphasised by the colon in the middle of the line is ambiguous. They are not being in love but are spending or wasting time in love, which is hardly a relishing of the activity. As Germaine Greer argues “In love, as in pain, in shock, in trouble. This love is a state, presumably a temporary state, an aberration from the norm.”⁴⁴ In Ardelia's relationship with Arminda, Arminda gives love but they are not depicted as being “in” love. Furthermore, love is needed to “perfect” man, implying that he is flawed. Indeed, Ardelia's later connection with Arminda diverges significantly from that of her male partner (who remains unnamed), not least because the lines are generally unbroken, reflecting a smoother interaction. Moreover, this stanza reflects the sensuality of the fruits rather than the anxious interaction through the mind between the wanderer and the male partner. The excessive and overflowing ‘cordial cup’ - which is concentrated fruit juice - as well as the images of fertility and life link the healed Ardelia to the earlier celebration of fruits. In this stanza Ardelia is more embodied and there are references to her heart and breast as opposed to just her mind.

Finally, contrasted with the creeping strawberries, the Satan of this stanza is overt and destructive. Finch tropes this partnership with “rage, jealousy and hate”

⁴⁴ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 169.

which will signify Adam's inevitable "fallen state" when he is no longer "friends with heaven". Rather than delighting in the winds and shades, this is the only stanza in which Ardelia is advised to "Fly those windings, and that Shade!" Finch implies that this unequal relationship can only produce hate and rage, as exemplified when Adam condemns Eve and instills guilt in her for not following his "words":

Would thou hadst heark'nd to my words, and staid
 With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
 Desire of wandring this unhappie Morn,
 I know not whence possessed thee; we had then
 Remaind still happie, not as now, despoild
 Of all our good, sham'd, naked, miserable. (*PL*, IX, 1134 - 1139)

This situation of "mutual accusation", "vain contest" and "fruitless hours" is antithetical to Finch's imagined retreat (*PL*, IX, 1187 - 1189). And so, of course, is the "hearkening" to the male word. Finch configures a woman who enjoys "that strange/ Desire of wandring" and has no intention of being the obedient spouse. In the beginning of the stanza, there is a strong "me", "my", which then turns into a "they" and then a "him" and a "his" and the narrator's subjectivity has disappeared. In the last five lines Finch only uses the masculine pronoun and does not figure her protagonist. Even in her paradise she cannot envision a relationship between a man and a woman which does not replicate Eve's subordination to Adam.

Just as Finch draws on the repressed images of sexuality in 'The Garden', so she expands on Eve's small moments of rebellion. In Book IV Eve compares her

“smooth wat’ry image” (*PL*, IV, 480) with that of Adam and flies from him. Adam shouts to her:

Whom fli'st thou? whom thou fli'st, of him thou art,
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
 Out of my side to thee, neerest my heart
 Substantial Life, to have thee by my side (*PL*, IV, 482 - 485)

In response, Eve offers her “meek surrender” (*PL*, IV, 494). In ‘The Petition’, however, Finch has the luxury of constructing a woman who just keeps flying. This is the only stanza in the poem where she cries: “Fly those windings, and that shade!”. Finch takes the rebellious aspect of Eve such as her curiosity, her wandering and her subversive dreams and creates a journeyer who flies from Adam and his naming impulses. She both “swells” and “repels” the echoes of Milton.

Part 3: “to woman ne’er allowed before”: Aemilia Lanyer and triangulations of desire

Erasing Adam from her feminocentric landscape repeats a conventional trope of much mystic discourse. Finch’s poetry is influenced by Henry Vaughan - “a mystic of the Anglican Church”.⁴⁵ In ‘The Men of War’, for example, Vaughan prays for humility and contentment, and in ‘Retirement’ he turns to nature and solitude. In ‘Day of Judgement’ he purges the old Adam in order to achieve God’s grace:

Prepare, prepare me then, O God!

And let me now begin

To feele my loving fathers Rod

Killing the man of sinne.⁴⁶

Like Marvell and Vaughan, Finch purges her retreats of “the man of Sinne”.

However, she does not replace him with another man. Rather, she inscribes the new cleansed man as a woman, as a female friend. Because Finch is a woman writer with an acute sense of sexual identity, her repetition or appropriation of Vaughan’s

“Killing the man of Sinne” resonates differently in her poetry. She kills him like

Marvell and Vaughan in order to create new ways of being, but these new ways of

⁴⁵ Itrat Husain, *The Mystical Element in the Metaphysical Poets of the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1948), p. 22.

⁴⁶ Henry Vaughan, ‘Day of Judgement’, in *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, ed. by L. C. Martin 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 29-32. Another writer who echoes Vaughan is Katherine Philips and Philips’s ‘Upon the engraving. K. P: on a Tree in the short walke at Barn=Elms (poem 91, p. 208) appears to have influenced Finch’s exile poetry. However, I will not be pursuing these similarities in the course of this thesis. Comparing the poetry of Finch with that of Sarah Fyge would also be fruitful but, unfortunately, cannot be explored here.

being erase old sexual identities, replacing them with communities of women who write and who love each other.

Another woman writer who excises Adam from her topographies is Aemelia Lanyer (1569-1645). In 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum', Lanyer accuses Adam of bringing "us all in danger and disgrace." (791-792)⁴⁷ On the other hand, Eve's

... fault was onely too much love,
 Which made her give this present to her Deare,
 That what shee tasted, he likewise might prove,
 Whereby his knowledge might become more cleare (801-804)

Like Finch, Lanyer lists heroic Biblical women such as Deborah and Hester and she also attempts to resurrect women "of old" to justify "the new"; women who have been repressed or castigated since St Jerome and St Augustine. No one has as yet compared Lanyer and Finch and I think that their subversion of heterosexual tropes as well as their feminocentric Biblical poetics engender fruitful comparison. I have been unable to ascertain whether Finch read Lanyer. Unlike Milton, Lanyer was largely ignored and her only text, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, was just published in 1611. It is conceivable that Finch could have read a copy of *Salve Deus* but there is no evidence of this. Nevertheless, exploring the parallels between these authors illuminates the poetry of Finch. Moreover, Lanyer's 'Cooke-ham' provides a more productive template for reading Finch's landscape poetry than Ben Jonson's 'Penshurst', as it is

⁴⁷ Aemelia Lanyer, 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum', in *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. by Danielle Clarke (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000). All citations are taken from this edition. 'Salve Deus' was only published in 1611 and there are no known later editions.

more woman-centred. I will first compare Lanyer's and Finch's devotional topographies as described in 'A Nocturnal Reverie' and 'Cooke-ham', and then go on to offer a reading of their female communities and their portrayal of Christ. Even though the parallels may just be coincidental, they are sometimes startling.

Like Milton, Aemelia Lanyer refashions Biblical poetics through grounding herself in Scripture and engendering claims of prophetic authority.⁴⁸ Both Milton and Lanyer take abstract biblical principles and apply them to contemporary political arrangements. Like Milton, Lanyer chooses to transgress from conventional interpretations of the Scriptures, knowing that she risks disaster. However, Lanyer departs significantly from Milton in her feminocentric account of the Scriptures and her unsettling of "the balance of a metaphorically heterosexual partnership" between writer and muse, bride and bridegroom.⁴⁹ Although Kari Boyd McBride and John C. Ulreich state that Milton and Lanyer "achieved analogous Biblical styles", I would argue that Lanyer's destabilising of heterosexual relations differentiates the two writers.⁵⁰ For example, although Milton and Lanyer subvert the misogynist implications of Eve's eating of the tree, Lanyer explicitly focuses on woman-centred liberation.

Suzanne Woods also favourably compares Lanyer and Milton through the trope of liberty. Woods argues that for Lanyer "libertie" is more than "a gendered

⁴⁸ Kari Boyd McBride and John C Ulreich, 'Answerable styles: Biblical poetics and biblical politics in the poetry of Lanyer and Milton', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 100, no. 3 (July 2001): 333-354 (p. 333).

⁴⁹ Helen Wilcox, "'Whom the Lord with love affecteth': Gender and the Religious Poet, 1590-1633", in *This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 2000), pp. 185-207 (p. 207).

⁵⁰ See Kari Boyd McBride and John C. Ulreich, "'Eves Apologie': Agrippa, Lanyer, and Milton", in *All in All: Unity, Diversity, and the Miltonic Perspective*, ed. by Charles W. Durham and Kristin A. Pruitt (Cranbury, NJ: Susquehanna University Press, 1999), pp. 100-111.

emancipation from masculine tyranny” as the idea of liberty underlies the entire poem “and is implicitly connected with her advocacy of true beauty as the virtue which chooses the right lover (Christ) and the right course of action.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, this “right” lover is an explicitly feminised Christ who functions as a mutual object of desire fuelling and illuminating relations between the female poet and her female patrons.

“redeemed Eden”

In ‘The Description of Cooke-ham’ Lanyer traces a landscape inhabited by three women: herself, the Countess of Cumberland (her patron or prospective patron) and Cumberland’s daughter. The landscape that they wander through is described in classical and pastoral images in the tradition of Virgil’s first eclogue and the *beatus ille*.⁵² Like Finch, Lanyer inscribes a female community separated from male society and its evils. Philomela sings with her “sundry leyes” (31) and the “gentle Windes did take delight to bee/ Among those woods that were so grac’d by thee.” (39-40) It is also a quintessentially English and aristocratic landscape, however, where the topography – free from labourers – recognises its hierarchical place in regards to the Countess:

The swelling Bankes deliver'd all their pride,
When such a *Phoenix* once they had espide.

⁵¹ Suzanne Woods, *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 161.

⁵² See Barbara Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 235.

Each Arbor, Banke, each Seate, each stately Tree,
Thought themselves honor'd in supporting thee. (43-46)

It is, as Beilin argues, a “redeemed Eden”, inhabited solely by virtuous and dutiful women.⁵³ Moreover, it is a shaded and fertile space:

The Trees with leaves, with fruits, with flowers clad,
Embrac'd each other, seeming to be glad,
Turning themselves to beauteous Canopies,
To shade the Sunne from your brighter eies: (23-26)

Similarly ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ is situated in the grounds of an aristocratic country house. Like ‘Cooke-ham’ (and unlike ‘Penshurst’) it is only situated outside and is not concerned with domesticity or the woman’s role within the household. In ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ Philomel also sings and the wind “Is to its distant Cavern safe confin’d;/ And only gentle *Zephyr* fans his Wings” (2-3). In this shaded site inhabited only by women, everything is also in its proper hierarchical place according to rank:

When in some River, overhung with Green,
The waving Moon and trembling Leaves are seen;
When freshen'd Grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool Banks to pleasing Rest invite, (NR, 9 -12)

⁵³ Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 202.

Both writers inscribe their landscape through biblical metaphors. Moreover, their pleasure in the feminocentric landscape is short-lived. For Lanyer, Cumberland's absence is caused by her errant husband and the creditors, while for Finch the "Jubilee" (37) is only possible when "Tyrant-*Man* do's sleep" (38). For both writers, however, these are spiritual spaces offering insights into God and the soul.

However, in 'A Nocturnal Reverie', Lanyer's explicit eulogies to the Countess and to Christ become as veiled and clouded as "the Heav'n's mysterious Face" (8). As with her echoes of Behn, so Finch resembles Lanyer in a suppressed, concealed and elliptical manner. Lady Salisbury, unlike the Countess of Cumberland, only makes an appearance in two lines:

Whilst *Salisb'ry* stands the Test of every Light,

In perfect Charms, and perfect Virtue bright: (NR, 19-20)

The poetic speaker and her friend blend into the divine environment becoming part of the shade, the tapestry, and the long sentence which makes up 'A Nocturnal Reverie'. Indeed, the epistolary reference is so brief that Wordsworth advised Alexander Dyce to excise lines 17-20 in anthologizing the poem, and omitted them from his own manuscript collection of *Poems and Extracts* by women writers which he prepared for Lady Mary Lowther.⁵⁴ The two lines referring to Salisbury are also omitted from Denys Thompson's collection of Finch's poetry and even Charles Hinnant accepts that Wordsworth's judgment "may not have been misplaced".⁵⁵ However, it *is* misplaced

⁵⁴ See Donald Lane Patey, 'Anne Finch, John Dyer, and the Georgic Syntax of Nature', in *Augustan Subjects: Essays in Honor of Martin C. Battestin*, ed. by Albert J. Rivero (Newark: Delaware, 1997), pp. 29-46 (p. 37) and McGovern, *Anne Finch*, pp. 82-83.

⁵⁵ Hinnant, *An Essay in Interpretation*, pp. 152-54.

and deleting these two lines changes the meaning of the whole poem. Finch is not the pre-Romantic that Wordsworth produced, rather she is the Royalist, devotional and homoerotic writer in a literary tradition (consciously or not) of Aemelia Lanyer. Consequently, these four lines, right in the centre of the poem, provide 'A Nocturnal's Reverie's' centrifugal force – its focal point. The poem is a eulogy to female friendship and virtuous femininity.

Donald Lane Patey reads 'A Nocturnal Reverie' in the context of Virgil's *Georgics* and as a 'survey poem' in the tradition of 'Grongar Hill'. Consequently he reads the reference to Lady Salisbury as indispensable to Finch's articulation of aristocratic rank and hierarchy. I agree with Patey's reading, but I would like to go further and suggest that Finch includes this reference to Salisbury because she echoes Lanyer's privileging of women's healing and devotional powers. In *Salve Deus* Lanyer juxtaposes the men who misinterpret and kill Christ with the women who incarnate, understand and defend him. Critics have argued that this interpretation of Christ's death dismantles Pauline and Petrine assertions about women's silence and subjection, and calls for a refounding of "political and social relations".⁵⁶ Finch follows Lanyer's privileging of female Christ-centred devotion and, like Lanyer, she encourages women to "identify with the gestures of Biblical women, rather than with those of the male disciples, and to see themselves as inheritors of the women's healing gifts".⁵⁷

Like 'The Petition', 'Cooke-ham' collapses historical time so that Cumberland

⁵⁶ Janel Mueller, 'The Feminist Politics of Aemelia Lanyer's 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum'', in *Feminist Measures: Sounding in Poetry and Theory*, ed. by Lynn Keller and Christianne Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 208-236 (p. 229).

⁵⁷ Micheline White, 'Woman with Saint Peter's Keys? Aemelia Lanyer's 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum' (1611) and the Priestly Gifts of Women', *Criticism*, 45, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 323 – 342 (p. 333).

walks with Christ and his Apostles, Moses, David and Joseph. The site inscribed for this compression of space and time is the oak tree which is depicted as embracing and being embraced by the Countess of Cumberland. Micheline White argues that the oak tree in 'Cooke-ham' "marks the place where the profane world intersects with the divine, and while the oak remains subject to temporal corruption, it reveals sacred realities."⁵⁸ Furthermore, the oak signifies a space that is "at once an idyllic knoll on an estate and a sacred space that, like a church, looks back to Eden, Jerusalem, and Golgotha and forward to the New Jerusalem".⁵⁹ The oak is also the site where this triangulation of women did read "many a learned Booke" (161) and where "taking me by the hand, / You did repeat the pleasures which had past, / Seeming to grieve that could no longer last. / And with a chaste, yet loving kisse took leave, / Of which sweet kisse I did it soon bereave:" (162-166). The oak is a space of women's education, speech and female physical love.

When Cumberland leaves the estate, however, the landscape shrivels and dies.

The trees "cast their leaves away" (141):

Their frozen tops like Ages hoarie haire,
Shows their disasters, languishing in feares:
A swarthy ryne all over spread,
Their dying bodies halfe alive, halfe dead. (143-146)

Even "Delightful Eccho wanted to reply / To our last words, did now for sorrowe die"

(199-200). Nevertheless, Cookeham does remain alive in Lanyer's text:

⁵⁸ White, 'Woman with Saint Peter's Keys?', p. 330.

⁵⁹ White, 'Woman with Saint Peter's Keys?', p. 330.

This last farewell to *Cooke-ham* here I give,
 When I am dead thy name in this may live, (205-206)

Finch resurrects these dying words through echoing Lanyer's text in 'The Petition'.

In 'The Petition', Finch echoes Lanyer's images of a dying landscape when she describes Ardelia's grief, comparing it to an oak:

Whilst a lonely stubborn Oak,
 Which no Breezes can provoke,
 No less Gusts persuade to move,
 [...]
 Rivell'd the distorted Trunk,
 Sapless Limbs all bent, and shrunk, (PAR, 143-144, 148-149)

Like the oak in 'Cooke-ham', the oak in 'The Petition' is symbolized as a regenerative site where Arminda is sent by Heaven to heal Ardelia. The English landscape moves into sacred space as heaven delivers a friend to Ardelia's retreat. Moreover, the oak is "a prominent symbol of the Stuart dynasty" and the "one poor guest" is Charles II who hid in an oak tree following his escape after the battle of Worcester in 1651.⁶⁰ It is in context of the political and physical Royalist upheavals that the name Ardelia is first alluded to. 'Ardelia' is intimately bound up with and, indeed, gains meaning within a Royalist context. Rather than being a private self,

⁶⁰ McGovern, *Wellesley Manuscript*, p. xxii.

Ardelia is invoked through tropes of war, politics and religion.

The dying topography of 'Cooke-ham' is further paralleled when Ardelia is compared to a vine:

When a helpless Vine is found,
 Unsupported on the Ground,
 Careless all the Branches spread,
 Subject to each haughty Tread,
 Bearing neither Leaves, nor Fruit,
 Living only in the Root;
 Back reflecting let me say
 So the sad *Ardelia* lay;
 Blasted by the Storm of Fate,
 Felt thro' all the *British* State;
 Fallen, neglected, lost, forgot,
 Dark Oblivion all her Lot; (PAR, 152-163)

Ardelia is "Fallen, neglected, lost, forgot," because of political exile and displacement which have shattered her privileged place in the hierarchy, not just of Britain but of the religious cosmos. It suggests that Finch perceives the deposing of the Stuarts as a second Fall. However, this passage reads as if this is Ardelia's 'dark night of the soul', a necessary step in mystic texts as outlined by Husein. Indeed, Evelyn Underhill argues that "the mystic recognizes in this break-up of his old universe as an essential

part of the Great Work".⁶¹ Political upheaval and displacement are now transformed into a necessary step enabling communities of speaking women and sites of devotional contemplation.

Like Lanyer's 'Cooke-ham' the site of the oak becomes a site of female friendship and spiritual privilege. Consequently, although "the storm of fate" dislocates Ardelia from the harmonious ranks of a feudal Britain, it also provides a space from which Ardelia can experience a woman's wit "To a woman ne'er allowed before" (175). Ardelia is described as

Faded till *Arminda's* love
 (Guided by the Pow'rs above)
 Warm'd anew her drooping Heart
 And Life diffus'd thro' every Part;
 Mixing words of wise Discourse,
 Of such Weight and wond'rous Force,
 As could all her Sorrows charm,
 And transitory Ills disarm;
 Chearing the delightful Day,
 When dispos'd to be more Gay,
 With Wit from an unmeasured Store,
 To Woman ne're allow'd before.
 What nature, or refining Art,
 All that Fortune could impart,

⁶¹ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), 12th edition , p. 201.

Heaven did to *Arminda* send,
 Then gave her for *Ardelia's* friend:
 To her Cares the Cordial drop,
 Which else had overflow'd the Cup. (PAR, 165-181)

Like the regenerative, creative and spiritual relationship between Lanyer and the Countess of Cumberland, the connection between *Ardelia* and *Arminda* is troped through the healing power of a woman's wit. This wit, for both Lanyer and Finch, is mediated through heaven and is explicitly female. Both writers celebrate the qualities of extraordinary learning, devotion to the Muses and high poetic achievement in the women that they inscribe. Moreover, both writers locate this specifically female art in nature. This justifies their revision or resurrection of a feminocentric biblical poetics, a poetics where the traditional heterosexual configurations of male scribe and female muse, bride and bridegroom are broken down.

In 'Salve Deus' Lanyer gives the Countess of Cumberland the healing powers of the *Maries*, the mother of Jesus and *Mary Magdalene*, and she then makes the extraordinary and subversive move of giving the Countess of Cumberland *St Peter's* keys. Cumberland becomes the spiritual heir of the daughters of Jerusalem and the *Maries*, and a spiritual mediator between Christ and the world. Like Cumberland, *Arminda* is given heavenly healing powers to warm "anew" the "drooping heart" of *Ardelia*. Life from *Arminda* is "diffus'd thro' every Part". I do not want to suggest that Finch compares *Arminda* to Cumberland or even *St Peter*. However, when read against *Salve Deus* the encounter between *Arminda* and *Ardelia* at the site of the oak takes on a radical significance. Indeed, I want to argue that the meeting between

Arminda and Ardelia (like that between the speaker and Lady Salisbury in 'A Nocturnal Reverie') is the focus point of the poem and worthy of greater exploration than has been previously given. In particular, Lanyer's Christological symbolism is suffused though 'The Petition' and itself deserves more attention, especially in relation to Finch.

Lanyer's depiction of Christ's passion has been given various readings. Lanyer's Christ is read to be both "androgynous"⁶² and "feminised"⁶³, and an eroticised object of desire.⁶⁴ Women are recognised to be "Christ's truest apostles and followers", they identify with him and they embody him.⁶⁵ As Danielle Clarke points out, none of these inscriptions of Christ are new. Indeed, Carol Bynum Walker has explored the feminisation and eroticisation of Christ and argues that it is historically part of mystical discourse.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Lanyer does, at least, resurrect this non-dominant discursive reading of Christ, a reading that is shared by Finch. The two critics who read Lanyer's Christological inscription most closely to mine are Helen Wilcox and Michael Morgan Holmes. I will discuss their critical readings of Lanyer before going on to discuss how this relates to Finch.

Wilcox discusses the embodied presence of women in Lanyer's text.⁶⁷ She argues that Cumberland's soul "which is both metaphorically female and in a real

⁶² See Randall Martin, *Women Writers in Renaissance England* (London: Longman, 1997).

⁶³ Lynette McGrath, 'Let Us Have Our Libertie Againe': Amelia Lanier's 17th-Century Feminist Voice', *Women's Studies*, 20 (1992): 331-48; Lynette McGrath, 'Metaphoric Subversions: Feasts and Mirrors in Amelia Lanier's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*', *LIT*, 3 (1991): 101-13. However, McGrath separates the eroticised Christ from the feminised Christ. See also Lorna Hutson, 'Why the Lady's Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun', in *Women, Text and Histories 1575-1760*, ed. by Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 13-38.

⁶⁴ Clarke, intro to *Renaissance Women Poets*, p. xxxiii.

⁶⁵ Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, p. 241.

⁶⁶ See Carol Bynum Walker, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982).

⁶⁷ Wilcox, 'Whom the Lord with love affecteth', p. 198.

female body” is introduced to us before we meet the “husband”.⁶⁸ Consequently, as Wilcox argues, “the patriarchal priority of male to female, bridegroom to bride, is – temporarily – destabilised.”⁶⁹ These gendered opposites are further subverted in the repeated emphasis of “women’s wit” which inscribes “a precise reversal of the conventional relationship of the male poet inspired by a female muse.”⁷⁰ Finch, too, destabilises this heterosexual partnership through depicting the soul as female, as inhabiting female bodies, and moreover, depicting one woman as suffusing life, fertility and creativity into another. The two women in ‘The Petition’ are embodied. They touch, smell, see, hear, eat and “diffuse life thro’ every part”. Reversing the bower trope and the marriage of bride and bridegroom in the meeting of Ardelia and Arminda, Finch depicts a woman being healed by another woman.

Michael Morgan Holmes takes Lanyer’s woman-centred rewriting of the Scriptures even further and convincingly suggests that “Lanyer presents homoerotic affection as a way for women to overcome the ravages of men’s proprietary claims and as a positive ground for real-world communities.”⁷¹ Holmes argues that Lanyer employs classical references as “literate and culturally-sanctioned expressions of same-gender desire”.⁷² However, “Christianity’s antiwordly orientation” also “empowered her to think beyond immediate social and ideological restrictions to a condition Saint Paul describes when he says that all sex and gender identities vanish in Christ (Gal 3: 28).”⁷³ Holmes then goes on to explore Lanyer’s feminisation of

⁶⁸ Wilcox ‘Whom the Lord with love affecteth’, p. 199.

⁶⁹ Wilcox, ‘Whom the Lord with love affecteth’, p. 199.

⁷⁰ Wilcox, ‘Whom the Lord with love affecteth’, p. 199.

⁷¹ Michael Morgan Holmes, ‘The Love of Other Women: Rich Chains and Sweet Kisses’, in *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Canon*, ed. by Marshall Grossman. (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1998), pp. 167-90 (p. 167).

⁷² Holmes, ‘The Love of Other Women’, p. 173.

⁷³ Holmes, ‘The Love of Other Women’, p. 173.

Christ and her appropriation of the erotic tropes of *Song of Songs* to capture the fervour of devotion. By feminising Christ and inscribing women's eroticised love for him, Lanyer imagines Christ "as the locus of triangulated eroticism between women and themselves."⁷⁴ Lanyer depicts Cumberland as housing Christ, as having imbibed Christ and through routing her desire for Christ through the body of Cumberland, Lanyer and Cumberland are "now primed to discover and enjoy the fruits of homoerotic love and devotion."⁷⁵ Finch, too, inscribes women who have imbibed Christ and, in a much more veiled and elliptical configuration, she describes homoerotic intimacy through Christological symbolism.

As Ardelia waits for Arminda's love, Finch compares Ardelia to a vine. Significantly, as Røstvig points out "woodbines and the vines are traditional symbols of love, the twining vine often symbolizing the mystic wedding of the soul to Christ."⁷⁶ Indeed, in St John's Gospel, Christ states: "I am the true vine and God is the husbandman." If Ardelia is compared to Christ through this image, then the husbandman becomes Arminda and the bride/groom relation is homoeroticised. Indeed, the vine also appears in Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' where the narrator articulates religio-erotic fantasies:

Bind me ye Woodbines in your twines,
Curle me about ye gadding Vines (II, 609-610)

Interestingly, 'Upon Appleton House' is also the site of an homoerotic female community of nuns. Whether or not Finch is alluding to this seductive community of

⁷⁴ Holmes, 'The Love of Other Women', p. 180.

⁷⁵ Holmes, 'The Love of Other Women', p. 181.

⁷⁶ Røstvig, *The Happy Man*, p. 185.

women, she does depict Arminda as “diffusing life through every part”. It is a mystical image suffused with Sapphic Scriptural symbolism. Hinnant suggests that the vine is a Royalist symbol of France and the oak and the vine celebrate a merging of British and Continental Royalist politics. This, too, works. Nevertheless, the marriage is still between two women.

Reading ‘The Petition’ in this way casts a different light over the speaker’s earlier eating of the fruits of the tree. Read through St John’s telling of Christ’s Passion, Ardelia’s eating of fruits can be read as imbibing a feminised Christ’s flesh. Indeed, in Finch’s ‘A Supplication of the Joys of Heaven’, the speaker invokes Jesus as the “kind dispenser of the Gospell grace” (32) and imagines her retreat “Fast by the tree of life [...] / Whose leaves are Med’cin and whose fruit is meat / Heal’d by the first and by the last renew’d” (35-37). Reversing the “*Taste not, Touch not*” of the ‘The Spleen’, Ardelia pleasures herself with fruits and with her friends in the devotional act of taste and consumption. Indeed, the consumption of fruits can be read as the privileging of a different kind of consuming than that offered by the court and London – the consuming of the body of Christ. Moreover, Arminda is described as giving to Ardelia’s “Cares the Cordial drop, / Which else had overflow’d the Cup.” Again, Arminda gives Ardelia flesh to drink. In allowing Christ’s body to permeate these two women, Finch writes a very physical and Sapphic form of Eucharistic devotion. The bodies of the women are not denied or repressed, but seem to have expanded and absorbed the divine.

As Louis Martz argues, a mystical state is also known as a contemplative state. Consequently, Finch’s ‘The Contemplation’ is usefully read in parallel to ‘The

Petition' as Finch internalises or covertly writes in 'The Petition' what is more overtly stated in 'A Contemplation' from *The Wellesley Manuscript*. In 'The Contemplation' (like 'Written after a violent and dangerous fit of sicknesse in the Year 1715' and 'The Fragment') Finch tropes Jesus as bridegroom. She writes that the "balmy Odours shall disperse / As from the Bridegroom's pores" (33-34) and his beloved. Following this image, Finch's speaker identifies her melancholic position with Christ and Charles I, thus troping her martyred position as displaced woman within Royalist and religious paradigms:

With Christ's there Charles's Crown shall meet

Which Martirdom adorns

And prostrate lye beneath his feet

My Coronet of Thorns. (45-48)⁷⁷

This triangular relationship is then mirrored through Ardelia and her relationship with the Tuftons. 'The Contemplation' eulogises the mother of Anne Tufton who is Lamira in 'The White Mouse's Petition' and 'On the Death of the Queen'.⁷⁸ Tufton will "Equally be Crown'd" (68) and through her identification with Christ she will forgive, feed and "In Her the Church shall own" (76) as she expresses her devotion and duty through "deed" (72). The Gospel will be spread through Tufton's "diffusive aid" (78).

⁷⁷ The focus on the heart and love can also be read as part of the Anglican tradition and is perhaps an allusion to Bishop Ken's *The Practice of Divine Love, Being an Exposition of The Church Catechism* (1685); Finch identified with Ken and praised him in 'Ode to a Hurricane'. Although Finch's focus on mysticism, Christ and the Eucharist are part of the Anglican tradition, they are unconventional and can be interpreted as teetering dangerously close to Catholic discourses. Bishop Ken, after all, was accused of Catholic sympathies because of his interest in mystical theology. Indeed, letters to Finch from Thomas Brett, a nonjuring clergyman, reveal her interest in the literality of the Eucharist. Although Finch's half of the correspondence no longer exists, Heneage sent Brett a copy of her published poems. See Bod. MS Eng.Th.c. 25, fos. 98b-99 and Eng. Th. c. 38, fos. 263-6 and 273-5.

⁷⁸ This poem is interesting as it depicts a triangulation of desire between Ardelia, Lamira and Mary of Modena. Ardelia is represented as blushing in sight of Mary of Modena and telling Lamira that "From her to whom my self I had resign'd / The Sovereign Mistress of my vanquish't mind."

Moreover, “her supporting Love” will uphold the speaker’s heart and:

From Gratitude what graces flow
 What endlesse pleasures spring
 From Prayers whilst we remain below
 Above while Praise we Sing. (85-88)

Through Tufton’s love, the speaker is able to enjoy and relish in life on earth and, as in ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ and ‘The Petition’, the speaker relinquishes death for a mystical experience with her body of her female friend:

Whilst to this Heav’n my Soul Aspires
 All Suff’rings here are light
 He travells pleas’d who but desires
 A Sweet Repose at Night (93-96)

The configuration of Tufton’s virtue and duty to Christ which enables Finch’s speaker to write of love, startlingly parallels the homoerotic and scriptural poetics of Aemelia Lanyer.

“joy dilate”

In the penultimate stanza of ‘The Petition’ Ardelia is represented (in a continuing identification with Christ’s Passion) as waiting for Arminda in a cave.

Although the image of the cave is reminiscent of the resurrection, it also inscribes feminocentric symbolism. The story of Crassus acts, like the canopy over the cave, as a veil for Finch's exploration of the sensual and feminine image of the cave. The cave is a mythological feminine symbol housing such transgressive women as Medusa, Lamia, Circe, as well as the goddess who gave her oracles to Orinda in 'Articles of Friendship'. The cave also appears in 'The Echo' and in 'The Prevalence of Custom' as a site of duplicity and disguise, inhabited by a 'charitable crony'. As well as being a sanctuary, a cave can be a place of rebirth. In 'Allelujah', Finch writes that we have sinned from the womb – a conventional Anglican belief – and this image of the cave can be read as a new womb from which the speaker will be reborn, free of sin.

In her description of the cave, Finch mimics Plutarch's life of Crassus as translated by John Dryden. She states in her notes of the 1713 manuscript edition of 'The Petition' that "The Description of this Cave, is exactly taken from Plutarch in the Life of Crassus." According to Plutarch, Crassus "hid himself in a large cave which was by the sea shore".⁷⁹ The cave, acts for Crassus like a sanctuary. Nevertheless, Finch's description of the cave is a much more sensual one than Dryden's. Finch describes her "commodious, ample" cave as being "Formed in a divided rock, / By some mighty earthquake's shock". This cave is a place where "joy dilate[s]", it has "beds of moss" and is "canopied with ivy o'er". The "lonely wondrous" cave is linked with the fluid, straying imagery that has characterised the pilgrimage and the body of the pilgrim as reflected in the fountain: it has "rising springs" that "played" and "strayed". It signifies a joyful place characterised by fluidity and playfulness. It is here that "Peace and rest", like the strawberries and Ardelia, are "found".

⁷⁹ Winchilsea, Anne (Kingsmill) Finch, Countess of. *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London, 1713), pp. 33-49.

Again, Irigaray is useful here in making links between spirituality, sexuality and language. In *Speculum of the Other Woman* she writes:

But as the eye is already guardian to the reason, the first necessity is to slip away unseen. And in fact without seeing much either. In a blind breaching of the philosopher's closed chamber, from the matrix of speculation in which he has cloistered himself in order to consider everything clearly. The 'soul' escapes outside herself, opening up a crack in the cave (une antr'ouverture) so that she may penetrate herself once more. The walls of her prison are broken, the distinction between inside/ outside transgressed. In such ex-stasies, she risks losing herself or at least seeing the assurance of her self-identity-as-same fade away.⁸⁰

The cave functions for both Irigaray and Finch as a means to escape the scholar's eye. In the fluid and labyrinthine space, inside and outside becomes blurred. For Irigaray it is an ecstatic space, a space where identity is dissolved; for Finch (in the disguise of Crassus) the cave is a space where "joy dilate".⁸¹

Moreover, this movement beyond inside/ outside is reminiscent of Ryan Netzley's understanding of Crashaw. Netzely discusses Crashaw's trope of 'eating inwardly' which "rejects the organization of bodies primarily into insides and

⁸⁰ Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 192.

⁸¹ It is perhaps significant that Finch employs Dryden's image of a cave, as her wanderer breaks out of Dryden's linguistic configurations where he 'cloistered himself in order to consider everything clearly'. The cave, of course, also refers to the vagina and it anticipates the excessive flowing and liquid imagery of Montagu's description of the Turkish baths in Sophia.

outsides".⁸² Although Finch's poetry is never as explicitly physical or "tasteless" as that of Crashaw, she is influenced by his poetry. Because she depicts Christ through the bodies of women, she is influenced by his feminization of the bridegroom.⁸³ Ryan Netzley argues that Crashaw's lyrics "demand and enact an attention to the physical properties of the elements [...] that translate the doctrine of transubstantiation in to the realm of individual devotional conversion."⁸⁴ Netzley goes on to discuss the phenomenon of "eating inwardly":

Eating inwardly produces a body that is finally a mode of action without substrate, an adverbial phrase or state without subtending subject or object.⁸⁵

Finch repeats Crashaw's division and dissolution of body and Self through her union between Ardelia and Arminda. Ardelia's body, although never overtly mentioned, is doing all the touching, seeing, flying, straying, tasting, consuming, moving. The imaginative space is felt and seen through her moving body, and eventually her spiritual experience is encountered in the earth of which she becomes a part. The body of Ardelia has imbibed the love and healing powers of Arminda, as well as the Eucharistic offering of the fruits. Like the cave, her body defies inside/ outside, self/ other.

⁸² Ryan Netzley, 'Oral devotion: Eucharistic theology and Richard Crashaw's religious lyrics', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 44, 3 (Fall 2002): 247-273 (p. 264).

⁸³ See Maureen Sabine, *Feminine Engendered Faith: The Poetry of John Donne and Richard Crashaw* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992); Paul Parrish, 'Writing About Mother: Richard Crashaw and the Maternal Body', in *Performance for a Lifetime: A Festschrift Honoring Dorothy Harrell Brown: Essays on Women, Religion, and the Renaissance*, ed. by Barbara C. Ewell and Mary A. McCay (New Orleans: Loyola University New Orleans Press, 1997), pp. 223-38; Paul Parrish, "'O Sweet Contest': Gender and Value in 'The Weeper'", in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. by John R. Roberts (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 127-39; Stella P. Revard, 'Crashaw and the Diva: The Tradition of the Neo-Latin Hymn to the Goddess', in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, pp. 80-98.

⁸⁴ Netzley, 'Oral devotion', p. 264.

⁸⁵ Netzley, 'Oral devotion', p. 264.

To insist on the mystic experience as taking place in the body is a subversive move on Finch's part. Not only does she rewrite the divisions which tormented St Augustine and St Paul but also the many mystic writers who practiced ascetism.⁸⁶

But as those, who Stars wou'd trace
 From a subterranean Place,
 Through some Engine lift their Eyes
 To the outward, glorious Skies;
 So th'immortal Spirit may,
 When descended to our Clay,
 From a rightly govern'd Frame
 View the Height from whence she came;
 To her Paradise be caught,
 And things unutterable taught. (PAR, 270-279)

The "immortal spirit" "descend[s]" to "our clay". "[O]ur clay" is the "rightly governed frame" of the bodies of Ardelia and Arminda who have joined bodies through Christ to receive the soul.

Being "caught" in paradise is a strange and jarring image, as is "things unutterable taught". These strange images and inconsistencies are symptomatic of Finch's strategies: her tracing of the indeterminate path of language and saying what

⁸⁶ For example St John of the Cross advocated renouncing every pleasure; a variety of fourteenth-century German mystics disciplined and imprisoned the body through hairshirts and bonds and self-torture; Jesuit Rodriguez delighted in the physical anguish of poverty; and Saint Peter of Alcantara for forty years never slept for more than one and half hours a day. See James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 245, 246, 285.

cannot be said through exposing the gaps and slippages in language. In 'The Petition' Finch teaches "unutterable things" through her labyrinthine and elliptical linguistic structures. This religious experience has the attributes of ineffability that William James argues is fundamental to personal religious experience, and this experience he also argues "has its root and centre in mystical states of consciousness."⁸⁷ For William James, subjects of mystical states "immediately say that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It follows from this that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others. In this peculiarity mystical states are more like states of feeling than like states of intellect."⁸⁸ This is why Finch's spiritual inscriptions are unutterable and "too high to speak" and why she insists on the sensual throughout 'The Petition'.

This sensuality and reaching beyond language is also evident in 'A Nocturnal Reverie':

But silent Musings urge the Mind to seek
 Something, too high for Syllables to speak;
 Till the free Soul to a compos'dness charm'd,
 Finding the Elements of Rage disarm'd
 O'er all below a solemn Quiet grown,
 Joys in th'inferiour World, and thinks it like her Own: (NR, 41-46)

As in 'The Petition', there is no 'I' of identity in the culmination of the journey, and spiritual illumination is achieved in the shade, away from 'fierce light'. There is also

⁸⁷ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 299.

⁸⁸ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 300.

the image of “finding” which has been a trope traced throughout ‘The Petition’. Line 39 is ambiguous, meaning both that the spirit itself “feels” a “sedate content” and that the spirit senses a sedate content in the body that it will enter. This ambiguity works to expose the false polarity between the spirit and the body: they become each other. The “Something” is emphasised through enjambment, a capital letter and the comma which follows it. We cannot know it as it is “too high for Syllables to speak”. It is, like Ardelia’s love for Ephelia, unspeakable. Moreover, the verb “Joys” emphasises jouissance in this unitary experience. In her poem, Finch has united what religious and philosophical writers, as well as a literary tradition of women writers, have insisted on cleaving. She has healed the suffering woman of ‘The Spleen’.

By the end of ‘The Petition’ the speaker has been completely absorbed into the earth but also into the Other of the dialogue. The subject of ‘The Petition’ and to a lesser extent ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’ came into being through desire for dialogue, but essentially a desire for nothingness because the Other cannot be explained or defined. St. Teresa, when discussing the crystal-castle that is the soul, speaks of “a disappearance (ecstasy) or death that constitutes the subject as pleasure (jouissance) in the other.”⁸⁹ Similarly, in ‘The Petition’ the centre of utterance has become uncentred and a “different mode of utterance” is created.⁹⁰ Finch’s strategy throughout ‘The Petition’ has been to lure the reader into her walk and to encourage the reader to “repeat its movements” or feel the poem - its rhythm and its gaps.⁹¹ In this way, the poem teaches “the way to get lost (even if it is only the way to lose a form of knowledge)”.⁹² The path to this nothingness space is deeply feminine, both in terms of

⁸⁹ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 96.

⁹⁰ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 83.

⁹¹ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 83.

⁹² de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 88.

its conventional feminine landscape of nature but also through the excessive femininity when the specular begins to speak.

Finch eschews the heterosexual imagery of the study from 'The Invitation'. Rather than parody it like Philips or like Montagu, Finch diffuses it, implodes it, circles round it, loses it and disappears into it. The question of lesbian tone or genital focus falls limp because there is no focus, rather everything becomes unfocused and too high, too lost for language to penetrate or fix. Just as Arminda is given clues to reach and recognize the abject body of Ardelia, so the reader of Finch must read through the subterfuge that disguises Ardelia's unspeakable sexual and spiritual Sapphism. Moreover, it is through this fissuring of the normal, through testing the boundaries of the word, that discursive gaps and lacunae are exposed. Finch's queering of desire can be read as the embodied part of a spiritual trajectory in which mystic ecstasy can be achieved, an ecstasy that is "too high for Syllables to speak".

Chapter 6

“Tis the Women’s Coffee House”: Montagu

queers space



Part 1: “Queerness or Oddities”

In her letters to Francesco Algarotti, Montagu writes of sexual metamorphoses. These metamorphoses are associated with Montagu’s descriptions of the female body in pain or, rather, Montagu’s pain at having a female body and the female identity that this body entails. In her letters and poems to Algarotti, Montagu writes of the female body as something from which she is dislocated. She also inscribes sexual metamorphoses by which the anguish of womanhood is transformed into a passion that is pleasurable. In so doing, she moves outside the metaphors of looking and the gaze that dominate her *Eclogues*. Instead, she asks her lover to “forget my Face” and its fixed physiological inscriptions, gesturing towards spaces beyond her immediate body. These spaces are influenced by the sexual transformations of Ovid, as well as representations of the Sapphic body as a site of pleasure, and so become arenas of sexual vacillation. Montagu writes eroticism outside scientific discourse. She writes of womanish men, of masculine women and of forms that defy sexual categorisation. She offers the heart and orgasm as alternatives to the scopophilic sexuality that she describes as both titillating and debilitating in her *Eclogues*.

In the light of these letters it is not tenable to maintain Grundy’s normalised image of Montagu. In contrast to twentieth-century academic criticism concerning Montagu, I suggest reading the *Turkish Embassy Letters* through Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, here

presented as a depiction of Montagu rather than the more usual reading of Orlando as Vita Sackville-West. In a letter to Violet Dickinson in July 1908, Virginia Woolf wrote that “I am probably to write about Ly. May Montagu” and I suggest that she did this in *Orlando*.¹ As will be shown in part 2 of this chapter, *Orlando* is a text that can manage Montagu’s contradictions and ambiguities in a non-judgemental framework. Moreover, Montagu and Algarotti’s epistolary relationship demonstrates startling similarities with the encounter between Orlando and Shel.

In 1736 Montagu met Francesco Algarotti, an Italian bi-sexual, with whom she fell in love.² In 1739 Montagu followed Algarotti to Italy and, although he never joined her, she stayed in Italy and Southern France until she returned to London in 1762 and died in the same year. Montagu’s relationship to Algarotti is dismissed by Lowenthal as a “midlife infatuation”³ and Grundy relegates Montagu’s epistolary declarations of love to a section entitled ‘mid-life crisis’ in her *Selected Letters*. Not only is ‘mid-life crisis’ an anachronism, but the focus on Algarotti’s youth and Montagu’s age - “this man half her age”⁴ – betrays Grundy’s and Lowenthal’s prejudices surrounding older women and sexuality, precisely the prejudices that Montagu critiques. Moreover, both Grundy and Lowenthal gloss over the male positions that Montagu adopts and in particular they ignore Montagu’s self-representation as male and Algarotti as female.

¹ *The Flight of the Mind: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 1 1888-1912*, 6 vols., ed. by Nigel Nicholson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), p. 337.

² Letters to Algarotti in Bodleian library Dan. C. 56; BLMS Eg. 23; Murray MSS (John Murray publishers). They were not published until *CL* in 1965-7. Some of her poems to Algarotti, however, were in the Harrowby MS.

³ Lowenthal, *Familiar Letter*, p. 65.

⁴ Lowenthal, *Familiar Letter*, p. 65.

Montagu's letters to Algarotti engage in what Lowenthal terms the "language of operatic excess".⁵ Montagu uses Algarotti to inscribe sexual passion. In marked contrast to the cynicism and vain posturing of her *Eclogues*, the speaker of Montagu's letters and poems to Algarotti appears to be sincere in her love and desire. She writes that she gives Algarotti "the faithful picture of a woman's Heart" and "the accurate dissection of a female Soul".⁶ She extravagantly portrays herself as Penelope⁷, Cleopatra⁸ and Dido⁹. She transcribes *Aeneid* 4.522-32 and calls Algarotti her "little Aeneas".¹⁰ The combination of opera and excess, and the prejudices surrounding Italy including 'foreignness' and 'effeminacy' provide Montagu with a site within which to inscribe queer desire. For example, in *Reasons for the Growth of Sodomy* (1749) the Italian opera is blamed for the fact that "our men are grown insensibly more and more *effeminate*" and "*womanish*".¹¹ The urban spaces which have been influenced by Italian opera are associated with the degenerate site of Rome which "likewise sank in honour and success, as it rose in luxury and effeminacy; they had women singers and eunuchs from Asia, at a vast price: which so softened their youth, they quite lost the spirit of manhood, and with it their empire."¹² For the writer of this text the English theatre has been turned into a pantomime by Italian opera:

⁵ Lowenthal, *Familiar Letter*, p. 65.

⁶ *CL*, II. 106 (503). Many of Montagu's letters were written in French. I indicate the page reference for the English translation in *CL* in brackets in my citations below.

⁷ *CL*, II. 116 (504).

⁸ *CL*, II. 116 (504).

⁹ *CL*, II. 103 (501).

¹⁰ *CL*, II. 104 (501).

¹¹ 'The Italian OPERAS, and the Corruption of the English Stage, and other Public Diversions', in *Reasons for the Growth of Sodomy* (1749), in *Secret Sexualities: A Sourcebook of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Writing*, ed. by Ian McCormick (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 141.

¹² *Reasons for the Growth of Sodomy*, p. 141.

In these pantomime entertainments, there is neither head nor tail, meaning or connection: Gods, harlequins, priests, and sailors, are all jumbled together, even in temples, in the most incoherent manner, ten times more extravagant than the most extravagant dream that was ever yet dreamt [.]¹³

For Montagu, however, these extravagant and jumbled dreams of womanish men and harlequins are enormously pleasurable, and are repeatedly inscribed in her letters. Moving away from a position of mocking the failure of virility in Whig men during the 1710s (in 'Tuesday' discussed in chapter 2), by the 1730s Montagu takes pleasure in the performance of perverse positions. Having already mocked and parodied masculinity, she easily moves into masquerading manliness.

Montagu portrays herself as, like Dido, having "thrown myself at the head of a foreigner".¹⁴ This foreigner inspires Montagu to write of a passion through Catholic iconography. Exploiting contemporary prejudices against Catholicism and the foreign in general, Montagu brings this religious discourse to excess through troping it with sexual transgression. She tells Algarotti that "I have a devotion for you more zealous than any of the admirers of the Virgin ever had for her."¹⁵ She writes of "my pilgrimage",¹⁶ "sweet contemplation"¹⁷ and when she leaves for Italy she states that: "At last I depart tomorrow with the Resolution of *a man* well persuaded of *his Religion*" (my italics).¹⁸ She uses

¹³ McCormick, *Reasons for the Growth of Sodomy*, p. 142.

¹⁴ *CL*, II. 104 (501).

¹⁵ *CL*, II. 104 (501).

¹⁶ *CL*, II. 139 (507).

¹⁷ *CL*, II. 147 (508).

¹⁸ *CL*, II. 140 (508).

language, not to signify conventional discursive meanings, but to laugh at them. She employs the “embroidery of words”¹⁹ to write “sweet illusion”²⁰ and “chimaeras”.²¹ In her letters to Algarotti, language is used to construct new spaces which parody the original.

In her textual metamorphoses Montagu is deeply influenced by Ovid. She is influenced by his convention of poetic letter-writing from his *Heroides*, which relaxed earlier conventions and provided opportunity for a wider range of subject matter and mood.²² She is influenced by his tales of the divided heart, the conflicting passions and of heroic love that the *Heroides* depict, but also by his *Metamorphoses*. Dryden says of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* that “he pictures Nature in disorder”.²³ Ovid’s bodies, which can be “mangled, maimed and disintegrated”, provide Montagu with a template within which to disintegrate her own body and that of her lover.²⁴ Like Dryden, she derives “pleasure in the distinctively Ovidian handling of violence and pain”²⁵ as well as writing the “grotesque”.²⁶

¹⁹ *CL*, II. 139 (507).

²⁰ *CL*, II. 115 (504).

²¹ *CL*, II. 132 (506).

²² Rachel Trickett, ‘The Heroides and the English Augustans’, in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian influences on literature and art from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 191-204 (p. 200).

²³ Dryden, *Poems*, I. 80.

²⁴ Brooks Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 281. See also Hermann Ferdinand Frankel, *Ovid: a Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956), p. 232; Lancelot Patrick Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 168.

²⁵ David Hopkins, ‘Dryden and Ovid’s ‘Wit Out of Season’’, in *Ovid Renewed*, pp. 167-190 (p. 170).

²⁶ Brooks Otis and R. Coleman, ‘Structure and Intention in the Metamorphoses’, *Classical Quarterly*, 21 (1971): 461-77.

In the introduction I quoted from Montagu's *The Nonsense of Commonsense* in which she satirically mimics a male Italian who claims that "I can give my Statues not only the Shape but the Air and the Mien, the Gestures, and even the Queerness or Oddities of any Actor, Male, Female, or Neutral."²⁷ 'Oddities' was another term for homosexual and this impacts on Montagu's presentation of herself as Iphis and Pygmalion, and Algarotti as a female statue. Because we do not have Algarotti's epistolary replies and Montagu's letters are constantly full of reproaches, her letters often feel as if they resound in a void, as if Algarotti does not exist. Indeed, at one point Montagu describes her self as Don Quixote and Algarotti as Dulcinea as if she is aware that she uses him for her own epistolary and poetic fantasies. Algarotti appears to be a muse - "You, Lovely Youth, shall my Apollo prove, /Adorn my Verse, and tune my soul to Love."²⁸ Significantly, she writes *my* Apollo. Apollo is recognised to be a male bisexual and Finch represents him as effeminate in 'Apollo Outwitted'. Algarotti is a feminine object of fascination and desire, and Montagu uses him to explore possibilities of erotic inscription and sexual vacillation. Not only does she employ his figure to explore ways of writing him female, but also to portray her self as male. Algarotti's country of origin, his sexual orientation and his feminine demeanour offer Montagu a site from which she can exploit the xenophobic constructions of Italy discussed above. Moreover, the textual possibilities that he offers are overwhelmingly pleasurable, as she tells him that writing to him "is the only pleasure which is left to me."²⁹

²⁷ *The Nonsense of Commonsense* Numb. 111, in *E&P*, p. 116.

²⁸ *CL*, II. 115.

²⁹ *CL*, II. 104 (502).

“enraged at having been formed to wear skirts”

In her letters to Algarotti, Montagu repeatedly voices her dislocation from her female body and her consequent female identity. Her womanhood is, as she expresses in ‘Saturday’, a source of pain. In *The Nonsense of Commonsense*, Montagu speaks through a ventriloquised male voice and mimics his trivialisation of women and his conflation of women to their dress. For example, she labels women as “the Ornamental halfe of Mankind”.³⁰ In other letters she writes women as “Petticoats”.³¹ Although this can be read as mimicking a satirical and misogynist male voice, there seems to be an unease expressed over her female identity. In one letter to Algarotti, Montagu decries the fact that she must write in women’s clothing:

you possess in me the most perfect friend and the most passionate lover. I should have been delighted if nature permitted me to limit myself to the first title; I am enraged at having been formed to wear skirts.³²

Montagu expresses rage over her sex. In another letter, Montagu laments her female body and dreams of pleasure in a manly form:

Why was my haughty Soul to Woman joyn’d

Why this soft sex impos’d upon my Mind?

³⁰ *E&P*, p. 111.

³¹ *CL*, I. 270.

³² *CL*, II. 104 (502).

Even this extravagance which now I send
 Were meritorious in the name of Freind.
 There I might follow, thee my Lovely Guide,
 Charm'd with thy voice, and ever by thy side,
 Nor Land, nor sea, our common way divide.

How much these golden Wishes are in Vain!

I dream to pleasure, but I wake to pain.³³

Through this fragmentation of the soul, sex, and mind, Montagu speaks a voice that has no fixed gender but that struggles with the gender that has been imposed on it through dress and the body. Moreover, her dreams of sexual vacillation are pleasurable but the reality of her body is painful.

Montagu writes Algarotti an imitation of Sappho's fragment 31, here cited in full:

The Gods are not so blest as she
 Whose ravish'd Eyes are fix'd on thee
 Who listens to the soothing sounds
 Of that soft voice which gently wounds
 And sees with more than Human Grace
 Sweet smiles adorn thy Angel Face.

But when you tenderly approach

³³ *CL*, II. 106.

Panting and breathless at your touch
 I can't support with dazzled sight
 Th' impetuous torrent of Delight
 My Heart beats thick, my senses fail,
 Disorder'd, blushing, cold, and pale,
 I sink beneath the powerfull Joy,
 I faint, I tremble and I dye.³⁴

In Sappho's original the female speaker expresses jealousy over a man's sexual possession of her *female* object of desire. This fragment, which had already been translated by Ambrose Phillips and was published in *The Spectator* (22 November 1711) reads, according to Emma Donoghue, "like an expression of passion between women".³⁵ In Montagu's reworking of this fragment, however, she changes the only stated pronoun from 'he' to 'she' so that it is Algarotti's seduction by another woman that provokes jealousy in the speaker.

Nevertheless, the woman that the speaker gazes at *is* the speaker. Again, we see Montagu dislocating the textual voice from the female body, and blurring the sexed identities of the poem's protagonists. She puts the female body in the third person, a strategy that she employed in 'Saturday'. As in 'Saturday', Montagu sets up a triangulation of desire but then ends the poem with an assertive 'I'. The erotics of the first

³⁴ *E&P*, p. 382.

³⁵ Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture, 1668-1801* (New York Harper Collins, 1995), p. 247. Another link with Sappho is that Sappho was supposed to have herself by throwing herself off a cliff for love of the young man, Phaon.

stanza are based on looking. It is the woman's "ravish'd Eyes" who "sees". In the second stanza, however, this voyeuristic sexuality is turned into a tactile and physical pleasure that she "can't support with dazl'd sight". Her "senses fail" and she succumbs to orgasm. Instead of being about jealousy or desire, the poem becomes an expression of sexual fulfilment, a fulfilment located in the "I", which eventually dissolves into an ecstatic death.

The eighteenth century imagined Sappho as "a famous Tribas" and sometimes a "Mascula Sappho".³⁶ This is how Montagu reads Sappho and, at times, identifies with her. Because Algarotti was "too much interested in men", Montagu often represents herself as a man in her correspondence to him.³⁷ In the Sapphic fragment above, the speaker dissociates herself from the female body that is understood through the gaze. She offers an alternative to this mapping of the body through inscribing a pleasure that is overwhelmingly pleasurable but that is located outside the gestures of looking. This pleasure is one that defies male and female sex, and is tribadic. In another poem to Algarotti, Montagu writes:

This outward Form submits to Nature's power,
 Thus far can Fortune, but she can no more;
 Unchang'd my Heart retains the living Fire
 Which only can with the last breath expire.³⁸

³⁶ From the entry in Pierre Bayle, *An Historical and Critical Dictionary* 1710 (first published in 1695), in McCormick, *Secret Sexualities*, p. 183.

³⁷ Halsband, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 192.

³⁸ *CL*, II. 117.

Again, Montagu dissociates herself from the “outward Form” but she inscribes another form that is orgasmic. The image of the heart in both the Sapphic fragment and the verse just cited, is an image that Montagu appropriates throughout her correspondence with Algarotti as alternative to sexual categories.

“Iphis her wish (however wild) obtained”

Montagu sent a poem to Algarotti entitled ‘This Once Was Me’, a poem that was sent along with a portrait of herself. In this poem, Montagu mimics ‘Saturday’. She repeats Flavia’s lost empire, her lost objectification and the image of scarring and deformity through her allusion to the “killing picture”:

This once was me, thus my complexion fair,
 My cheek, thus blooming, and thus uncurl’d my Hair,
 This picture which with pride I us’d to show
 The lost resemblance [sic] but upbraids me now,
 Yet all these charms I only would renew
 To make a mistresse less unworthy you. (1-6)³⁹

Jill Campbell argues that this poem “dizzily conflates both past and present selves and self and other”.⁴⁰ Campbell suggests that Montagu looks at how the Other - the aging

³⁹ *E&P*, p. 381.

woman – may encompass more than the caricature of the older face found in the glass. Moreover, as Campbell points out, Montagu echoes Pope's "If to her share some Female Errors fall, /Look on her Face, and you'll forget 'em all" (*RL*, II. 17-18) in the last line of her poem:

A Heart like mine is not below your care,
Artless and Honest, tender and sincere,
Where no mean thought has ever found a place
Look on my Heart, and you'll forget my Face. (23-26)

I agree with Campbell's reading of this poem. However, using themes explored in chapter 4, it is possible to take her analysis further in order to explore Montagu's sexual vacillations.

In telling Algarotti to forget her face, Montagu not only dismisses Pope's fetishisation of female beauty but she asks him to forget her physiognomy, her character, her fixed place in scientific discourse. The speaker is radically differentiated from the female body in the picture. The speaker states that the woman in the picture "once was me". She asks him to look on the heart which has no mapped meaning and no sex, and, moreover, cannot be seen. It is a space that Cixous celebrates as she writes "not-seeing-oneself is a thing of peace" as one never has "has to suffer her own face".⁴¹ Cixous imagines giving "the loved face for a face, not that she didn't have one, but she did not

⁴⁰ Campbell, "The Glass Revers'd", p. 239.

⁴¹ Hélène Cixous, 'Savoir', in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (Stanford, California : Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 3-16 (p. 12).

see it.”⁴² She imagines “the great liberty of self-effacement” when one does not see oneself being seen.⁴³ Montagu erases the face and incorporates the “Lov’d Form” (21) of Algarotti. Just as in her Sapphic fragment, her poem ends with an amalgamation or blend of the two sexes so as to create a new and alternative unspeakable form. Algarotti becomes a form that “does at once unite/ All that can raise Esteem, or give delight” (21-22). It is a form that incorporates the respect commanded by men as well as the delight or pleasure conventionally expected from woman. The speaker also blurs the self through being distanced from the fixed sex of the portrait and then rejecting the seen and read characteristics of the face. Instead, the speaker asks Algarotti to “Look” upon the “Artless” heart. Montagu has dislocated her and Algarotti’s projected selves into a space of sexual metamorphosis.

Indeed, after describing the fixed form of the portrait, Montagu offers the possibility of sexual metamorphosis through introducing the figures of Iphis and Pygmalion:

’Tis said, the Gods by ardent Vows are gain’d,
 Iphis her wish (however wild) obtain’d,
 Pygmalion warm’d to life his Ivory maid,
 Will no kind power resolve my charms decay’d? (7-10)

⁴² Cixous, ‘Savoir’, p. 12.

⁴³ Cixous, ‘Savoir’, p. 12.

Alluding to Ovid's tales of sexual subversion, Montagu employs classical myths to expose her frustrations over her sexual subjectivity. Ovid's Iphis was a girl who was brought up as a boy; in particular, she was dressed as a boy. However, she fell in love with another woman and on her marriage night, Iphis metamorphoses into a man. This is a metamorphosis that Montagu is also able to create in her letters.

Montagu also writes herself as Pygmalion. Pygmalion creates a female statue and brings her to life with his passion. This is, partly, an ironic comment upon Montagu's relationship with Algarotti because she creates him in her letters and poems, and she also gives him money and patronage. The story of Pygmalion offers a metaphor for the creative process: the artist creates a perfect work of art which then comes to life.⁴⁴ Moreover, Pygmalion, like Montagu, rejects "nature's women and creates his own ideal out of ivory."⁴⁵ This myth, as written by both Ovid and Dryden, is a potently sexual one, and a heterosexual one at that. In Dryden's interpretation, Pygmalion is the masculine sexual predator of the the beautifully feminine and blushing statue. In referring to this myth, Montagu brings this erotic charge into her epistolary relationship with Algarotti. However, she reverses conventional roles through depicting herself as the virile man and Algarotti as the passive woman. Moreover, Montagu draws attention to her own portraits as she acknowledges her inevitable role as Pygmalion when creating people. In other words, she recognises her authorship in portraying others (including herself) like statues. They no longer exist objectively but must be distorted and dispersed through her eyes, her pen and her text. Nevertheless, she also uses this image to reveal the erotic pleasure in

⁴⁴ See Jane Miller, 'Some versions of Pygmalion', in *Ovid Renewed*, pp. 205-214 (p. 206).

⁴⁵ Miller, 'Some versions of Pygmalion', p. 206.

writing other people and in writing herself. Just as the people that she represents must become statues manipulated by her, so she can also manipulate her own textual representations and become the ardent male lover, Pygmalion.

In another letter Montagu tells Algarotti that:

I find you so different from the rest of mankind (who yet have the insolence to think themselves of the same species) that it does not surprise me that you have inspired sentiments which until now have not been inspired in anybody.⁴⁶

Montagu describes herself as “the absurdity” that Algarotti’s *difference* from the rest of mankind has “brought into being”.⁴⁷ In her letters Algarotti becomes “the perplexity of my own Imaginations”.⁴⁸ Montagu highlights tropes of parody, mimicry, wit, irony, illusion and artifice. Not just to comment upon the illusory nature of their relationship (although it is this too) but to highlight the limitations and restrictions of language and of the body that language brings to matter. Montagu’s epistolary masquerade might be elucidated through the aesthetics of camp and, in particular, the butch/femme queer aesthetic as propounded by Sue Ellen Case and June L. Reich.⁴⁹ In their theoretical understanding of queer sexualities, they consider sexual performance that parodies the penis. Butch-femme roles, according to Reich moves “masquerade to the base of

⁴⁶ *CL*, II. 104 (502).

⁴⁷ *CL*, II. 103 (501).

⁴⁸ *CL*, II. 108.

⁴⁹ In Susan Sontag’s definition: “the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration.” It is “something of a private code”. See Sontag, ‘Notes on Camp’, in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 53-65 (p. 53).

performance and no narrative net can catch them or hold them, as they wriggle into a variety of characters and plots.”⁵⁰ This is conducive to an understanding of Montagu’s inscription of her relationship with Algarotti as they move through Ovidian and operatic roles, never remaining fixed in any particular sexed narrative. Reich argues that in “recuperating the space of seduction, the butch-femme couple can, through their own agency, move through a field of symbols, like tiptoeing through the two lips (as Irigaray would have us believe), playfully inhabiting the camp space of irony and wit, free from biological determinism, elitest essentialism, and the heterosexist cleavage of sexual difference.”⁵¹ Because the sexed identities that Montagu and Algarotti perform in her letters are blurred or vacillating and both play the role of woman and man, this camp space seems particularly appropriate. Like Reich’s configuration of this camp aesthetic Montagu celebrates irony and wit in a sexual masquerade that pokes fun at biological determinism and the physician’s gaze.

In a poem written before 10 May 1739 Montagu writes Algarotti a very beautiful and erotic poem in which he plays an eroticised love object, portrayed as a female statue:

Between your sheets you soundly sleep
 Nor dream of Vigils that we Lovers keep
 While all the night, I waking sigh your name
 The tender sound does every nerve inflame,
 Imagination shows me all your charms,

⁵⁰ June L. Reich, ‘Genderfuck: The Law of the Dildo’, in *Camp*, pp. 254-265 (p. 196). See also Sue-Ellen Case, ‘Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic’, in *Camp*, pp. 185–201.

⁵¹ Reich, ‘Genderfuck’, pp. 197-8.

The plenteous silken hair, and waxen Arms,
 The well turn'd neck, and snowy rising breast
 And all the Beauties that supinely rest

between your sheets (1-9)⁵²

“Imagination” offers the speaker the possibility of casting Algarotti as having a female body, a body written as a statue with its “snowy rising breast”. However, the Pygmalion-like speaker cannot explicitly reveal his/her desire as “every Metaphor must render less / And yet (methinks) which I could well express / between your sheets” (15-17). Like Finch and Philips in their poems ‘Friendship’, Montagu replaces word with deed, the figurative with the flesh. She writes sexuality that cannot be spoken. In her configurations of love “words, indeed, no more can show” (Finch, ‘Friendship’). Words become the sheets or veils underneath which she can express her sexuality.

“in my Study absorbed”

In her letters to Algarotti, Montagu sometimes represents herself as sitting in her study contemplating him. It is as if she is dissecting masculinity through parodying the scholar. However, through mimicking the scholar she fissures the scholar’s privilege over naming and looking, a privilege discussed in chapter 1. She writes that “I spend whole hours in my Study absorbed in the contemplation of your perfections.”⁵³ And that “I

⁵² *E&P*, p. 296.

⁵³ *CL*, II. 104 (502).

prefer my closet meditations to all the amusements of a populous Town or crowded Court.”⁵⁴ However, Montagu expresses frustration over her own performance as male gazer. In an extraordinary letter to Algarotti, Montagu compares herself to Newton and exposes the failure of objective looking:

I have studied you, and studied you so well, that Sir [Isaac] Newton did not dissect the rays of the sun with more exactness than I have deciphered the sentiments of your soul. Your eyes served me as a Prism to discern the Ideas of your mind. I watched it with such great Intensity that I almost went blind (for these prisms are very dazzling). I saw that your soul is filled with a thousand beautiful fancies but all together makes up only indifference. It is true that separately – divide that Indifference (for example) into seven parts, on some objects at certain distances – one would see the most lively taste, the most refined sentiments, the most delicate imagination etc. Each one of these qualities is really yours. About manuscripts, statues, Pictures, poetry, wine, conversation, you always show taste, Delicacy, and vivacity. Why then do I find only churlishness and indifference? Because I am dull enough to arouse nothing better, and I see so clearly the nature of your soul that I am as much in Despair of touching it as Mr. Newton was of enlarging his discoveries by means of Telescopes, which by their own Powers dissipate and change the Light rays.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *CL*, II. 111.

⁵⁵ *CL*, II. 237 (514).

Just as Pope objectifies the eyes of Montagu (as stated in chapter 4), so Montagu feminises Algarotti by representing his eyes as something to be looked at. In contrast, it is Montagu's eyes that are depicted as embodying the power of looking. Nevertheless, Montagu's role as male gazer is a complex one. Although she plays this part she simultaneously critiques it as she represents her own inability to see: like Newton she cannot look objectively.

Grundy states that Montagu builds her argument out of Algarotti's *Newtonianismo*:

Using his eyes as her prism, she tells Algarotti, she has dissected the ideas of his soul. She has found him full of the finest and most brilliant taste, delicacy, and imagination on all kinds of dilettante topics. But when he directs those faculties at her, they flow together into bland and lumpish indifference. She is calibrated wrongly, or she stands at the wrong distance, to draw out his brilliance.⁵⁶

Grundy goes on to argue that Montagu "develops these images somewhat less logically than I have done here, but with force and passion."⁵⁷ This is crucial: Montagu does eschew logic for passion and this is her strategy throughout her epistolary relationship to Algarotti. Significantly, she appropriates images and arguments that he attempts to outline logically in his *Newtonianismo* and plays with them to reveal the impossibility of the objective gaze.

⁵⁶ *LMWM*, p. 439.

⁵⁷ *LMWM*, p. 439.

In Lowenthal's reading of this letter, she suggests that Algarotti shrinks "from his mythic stature" and becomes "grotesque and even monstrous":

Algarotti's charms dissipate because, like the telescope, the instrument of Lady Mary's inquiry – the language of passion and the heart – actually distorts the thing it views.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Montagu dismisses the idea of looking altogether *in favour of* the language of passion and the heart. Like men's coffee-house ogling and like the painter, the scientist philosopher can only look in a distorted fashion. Moreover, Montagu employs the figure of Algarotti as someone to identify *with* as she adopts his texts as analytical tools, but she also attempts to *identify him* through these tools. There are many gestures being enacted in this letter. Ultimately, however, Montagu rejects the scientific search for objectivity and truth for the queered pleasure of the heart. It is the passion and force that comes through this letter, crushing the scientific logic that she puts into play, that is celebrated. In one letter to Abbé Conti in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*, Montagu rejects looking for pleasure when she asks: "is there any study so beneficial as the study of present pleasure?"⁵⁹ She goes on to state that "I had rather be a rich effendi with all his ignorance than Sir Isaac Newton with all his knowledge".⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Lowenthal, *Familiar Letter*, p. 78.

⁵⁹ *CL*, I. 415.

⁶⁰ *CL*, I. 415.

“there are men, women and Herveys”

Finally, I would like to look at a poem written together by Montagu and Hervey. They were both attracted to Algarotti and appear to compete over his affections; Hervey certainly was unkind about Montagu in his letters to Algarotti. They both wrote this poem around the summer of 1736 when Montagu first met Algarotti and was trying to find out whether he was in London. Although both were writing to Algarotti at this time, neither mentioned this verse to him. Grundy and Halsband describe the making of this poem:

In a note dated ‘Saturday’ Hervey offered to call on her that evening or ‘next Saturday’. Two days later she wrote to Algarotti of her intention of seeing Hervey. After the painful meeting, she sent another anxious note to Hervey, who mentioned in his reply his promise to ‘behave and to write to – as if Tuesday and Saturday had never been and that the last week had but five Days in it ... as for the first Part of the Dialogue I have it not here but will write it out as well as I can from my Memory’.⁶¹

Like Patch and Silliander, Hervey and Montagu dialogue over an absent object of fascination through verse. However, this absent object is troped through ellipsis, secrecy and silence. It is a “secret”, a thing that cannot be named. Hervey states:

You may perhaps this wary Silence blame,

⁶¹ *E&P*, p. 286.

But won't you chide me more if I should name? (17-18)⁶²

In this dialogue, Hervey and Montagu parody male and female performances. Hervey plays the head and Montagu the heart. Hervey talks of reason, reality, understanding through nature, and Montagu of passion and fiction. Hervey writes that her thoughts:

are not from Nature but a Book,
 Into our Conduct, not our Writings look,
 There Men and Women equally you'll see,
 Form'd by Receipts you've heard explain'd by me,
 I tell you what they are, You what they ought to be. (59-63)

The recourse to nature's receipts and men and women is highly mocking as Hervey was a well known bisexual who defied and parodied the categories of male and female - Montagu famously said of him that "there are men, women and Herveys"⁶³ and Pope lampooned him in *Epistle to Arbuthnot*:

Fop at the Toilet, Flatt'rer at the Board,
 Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.⁶⁴

⁶² *E&P*, pp. 286-289.

⁶³ Lady Louisa Stuart, *Biographical Anecdotes of Lady M. W. Montagu*, in *E&P*, pp. 6-54 (p. 39).

⁶⁴ Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 332-333.

The absent object is never named, only circled around, as Hervey conflates nature and art in his mocking attempt to elude fixing:

Cautious the winding Precipice I tread,
 I combate Nature, have recourse to Art
 And rack my Head that I may spare your Heart.
 Like Rivers turn'd my Numbers useless grow,
 So shall they in their nat'ral Channel flow? (25-29)

Truth, nature and 'men and women' are all ridiculed as they dance around the unspeakable. Only once does Montagu allude to the 'secret' when she states that she desires to meet a "second lovely of the Kind" (58). The sexual ambiguity of the figure Algarotti provides an extraordinary power with which Montagu can destabilize rigid categories of sex and sexual performance. His image offers a potent site for Montagu's exploration of parody and sexual vacillation. Through her letters and poems to him, Montagu explores the pleasures of writing which avoid the fixed discourse of looking and naming. This poem by Hervey and Montagu is overtly multiply authored. Part of it is written from memory but most of it seems extemporaneous. Part of it is battled over as Montagu blotted out Hervey's last two lines, and there are many intertextual allusions to other myths, stories and commonplaces.

Its celebration of the polyphonic form exploits the anxieties of writers who search for truths in their writings. For example, it mocks Pope's desire to impose original sources on

to Montagu's *Eclogues*. Although Hervey and Montagu disagreed over the final two lines, there is no fighting over an original source or essence as evidenced in Pope's transcript. No longer connecting through the exchange of women, their parody of sex ruptures the homosocial bonding of Patch and Sillander. Moreover, their imaginings of Algarotti provide a trajectory out of the coffee house homosociality and the female objectification in the dressing room. This poem was written in Hervey's London house. In contrast to the image of the individual poet in his study or the exclusively male creative process of the coffee house, this poem is explicitly written by a man and woman who parody sexed behaviours: Montagu and Hervey use the domestic site of the town house within which to inscribe queer alterities. Acting as if "Tuesday and Saturday had never been", Montagu and Hervey produce their own songs in consumer spaces that mimic and fissure conventional performances of male and female.

Part 2: “in plain English, Stark Naked”: *Orlando* and ‘Oriental
Sapphism’⁶⁵



Fig. 11 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

⁶⁵ A version of this paper will be published in *Critical Survey* in 2006 as part of a special journal issue entitled *A Past of Her Own: History and the Modernist Woman Writer*, ed. by Anne Heilmann and Mark Lewellyn.

“a History so uncommon”

In an autobiographical piece, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu promises her audience that:

I AM going to write a History so uncommon that in how plain a manner so ever I relate it, IT will have the Air of Romance, tho there shall be not a sillable feign'd in it except those of the Names, which I cannot resolve to set down at length.⁶⁶

Despite her claims to truth and plainness, however, Montagu's autobiographical account is embellished, feigned and fragmented. She rewrites herself as a precocious fourteen year old as opposed to nineteen, and the related events and emotions do not always correspond with those outlined in her letters. In failing to write in so “plain a manner”, Montagu gestures at the inevitable fabrication involved in writing the self and in writing history. In particular, she exposes the difficulty of portraying a protagonist who “had a way of thinking very different from that of other Girls” (79), of inscribing a person who defies the fixed gendered categories of ‘plain English’. The problematics of depicting history and conforming to that powerful dictator ‘reputation’ are further evident in Montagu's ‘History of her Own Times’ which she reportedly destroyed “as fast as she finished it, in a sustained, heroic act of self-censorship”.⁶⁷ Indeed, the contradictory impulse to write the life of Montagu and to write it according to the policing gaze of what Woolf terms “Chastity, Modesty and Purity” plagues Montagu's self-

⁶⁶ ‘Autobiographical romance: fragment’, in *E&P*, p. 77-81.

⁶⁷ Grundy, *Preface to E&P*, p. vii.

representations, as well as those of the critics who attempt to write and edit her life for future readers.⁶⁸

The inevitable process of manipulation and distortion that occurs when portraying a person's life is explored in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography*. *Orlando* mimics biographical strategies only to expose these rituals of history and biography as produced through masculine power; a power sustained through the containment and silencing of woman. In *Orlando*, Woolf performs the identity of a scholarly biographer, mocking the production of history through defining it as "picking our way among burnt papers and little bits of tape as best we may".⁶⁹ She acknowledges the phantasmic and fictional process of squeezing an individual's life into the linear narrative of a biography, a narrative predicated on the category of the "horrid den" of truth.⁷⁰ Woolf's narrator gestures at the rituals of looking at historical evidence through pretending to look at manuscripts in the record office, but she ultimately exposes this evidence as fictional, biased, prejudiced, stating that in writing *Orlando* "often it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to use the imagination."⁷¹

Woolf weaves the life of Orlando out of "charred fragments".⁷² I want to argue that these fragmented narratives are partly taken from the imagined and inscribed life of

⁶⁸Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1998), p. 81.

⁶⁹ *Orlando*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ *Orlando*, p. 80.

⁷¹ *Orlando*, p. 70.

⁷² *Orlando*, p. 70.

Montagu.⁷³ Orlando's narrator asserts that "there was a hole in the manuscript big enough to put your finger through", and I read Woolf as fingering through the holes of 'his' story and reappropriating Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's veiled textual moments.⁷⁴ These fractured narratives and "odds and ends" are "stitched together" by Woolf to form a novel.⁷⁵ In a letter to Violet Dickinson in July 1908, Virginia Woolf wrote that "I am probably to write about Ly. May Montagu."⁷⁶ Nevertheless, even in *A Room of One's Own* where lesser known eighteenth and seventeenth-century writers such as Anne Finch and Margaret Cavendish are discussed, Montagu does not get a mention. Woolf does include the image of a Sofian dome, however, alluding to Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* in which Montagu inscribes a homoerotic gaze in the Turkish baths of Sophia, configuring the domes as female. Montagu's sexuality, her manipulation of language, and her veiled inscription of a Turkish space where her transgressive sexuality is explored, could not be contained in a critical and scholarly reading of Montagu's work; a critical reading employing the categories of Leslie Stephen, for example, whose history of the eighteenth century ignored the existence of women writers.

In her re-writing or de-writing of history, Woolf re-articulates and mimics both marginalized and canonized texts. Although the voices from alterity are predominantly female, *Orlando* is not so much about women, as about that which has been suppressed and silenced in order to produce heterosexual masculinity as a normalised and naturalised category: in other words, the construction of gender as performance, the cultural

⁷³ Speculative links have been made between *Orlando* and Montagu by Grundy, *LMWM*, pp. 153-154 and Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 313.

⁷⁴ *Orlando*, p. 70.

⁷⁵ *Orlando*, p. 47.

⁷⁶ *Flight of the Mind*, p. 337.

production of sex, as well as sexualities that do not conform to the heterosexual matrix. *Orlando* is no conventional biography, instead it is an elucidation, a re-enactment, an imitation, using Montagu's texts as sources or prototypes. It is a queer and playful reading that dispenses with the phallogocentric tropes of containment and reduction such as naming, dating, and factualising.

Terry Castle argues that "virtually every distinguished woman suspected of homosexuality has had her biography sanitized at one point or another in the interest of order and public safety."⁷⁷ This erasure is prevalent in the case of Sappho whose sexuality is continually reconfigured and debated, but this ghosting or 'spectring' of the lesbian is also enacted in the biographies of Montagu and Woolf. Montagu's homoerotic sexuality is dismissed as "speculation" and divorced from the public and political "historical fact" by Elizabeth Bohls. Bohls states that the "most painful, deeply repressed, inarticulate and virtually inarticulable longings of eighteenth-century British women were, I suspect, not sexual but finally political."⁷⁸ Nevertheless, this demarcation between political and sexual spheres is not valid. Isobel Grundy argues that "Today it would be risky [...] to chastise or admire Lady Mary as a lesbian: her orientation towards men seems well established."⁷⁹ As I hope to have demonstrated throughout this thesis, Montagu's sexual orientation is anything but established. The "rumours, legends, anecdotes of a floating and unauthenticated kind"⁸⁰ that surround Orlando in

⁷⁷ Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 5.

⁷⁸ Bohls, *Women Travel Writers*, p. 45.

⁷⁹ *LMWM*, p. 346.

⁸⁰ *Orlando*, p. 74.

Constantinople are also attributable to the historical figure of Montagu, and these rumours and anecdotes will be explored below.

Woolf herself hesitates to define herself as a lesbian, and perhaps this silence over articulating an overtly lesbian identity is linked to Woolf's resistance in naming Montagu. Perhaps Montagu is too close to Vita Sackville-West in terms of class, sexuality, and travelling for Woolf to be objective in inscribing her. Indeed, *Orlando* also includes fragments from the life of Vita, and "derives its energy" from "Woolf's Sapphic (or roughly lesbian) desire" for her.⁸¹ Sherron E. Knopp argues that Woolf and Sackville-West preferred the term 'sapphist' when expressing their sexuality. For example, Woolf describes Vita as a "pronounced Sapphist" and "My aristocrat ... [who] is violently Sapphic".⁸² Furthermore, in her description of 'The Jessamy Brides' which was later rewritten to become part of *Orlando*, Woolf writes that "Sapphism is to be suggested. Satire is to be the main note – satire and wildness. The ladies are to have Constantinople in view. Dreams of golden domes."⁸³

But how much of Montagu's work and reputation would have been known by Woolf? Montagu's letters from her visits to the Turkish empire were first published in 1763 and were repeatedly printed through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1837 the Wharncliffe manuscript of Montagu's letters and works were published and this

⁸¹ See George Piggford "Who's That Girl? Annie Lennox, Woolf's *Orlando*, and Female Camp Androgyny", in *Camp*, ed. by Cleto, pp. 283 – 299 (p. 295). See also Suzanne Raitt, *Vita and Virginia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

⁸² Woolf, *Letters* vol. 3, p. 155.

⁸³ Virginia Woolf, *Diary* vol. 3, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1978), p. 131.

includes Lady Louisa Stuart's interesting and valuable 'Introductory Anecdotes' which alludes to Montagu's statement that "this world consisted of men, women and Herveys". Montagu's 'Impromptu to a young Lady Singing', apparently to Maria Skerret who may have been her lover, was also printed in this edition. The most scholarly edition of her letters and works was printed in 1861 and reprinted in 1887 and 1893. In 1906 an Everyman selection of her letters were published. If Woolf was thinking of writing about Montagu in 1908 it would be inconceivable that she had not read Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, her most wellknown and available work. Furthermore, a biography was published in 1907 by Emily Morse Symmonds, which included previously unpublished material such as the autobiographical fragment that was cited earlier.⁸⁴ Byron had also discovered Montagu's letters to Algarotti in Italy and he sent these to his publisher. Some of these were published and others subsequently given to the Bodleian. There were also fragments of her letters and poems to Algarotti in her Harrowby manuscript. There was a biography of Algarotti published in 1913.

Moreover, Woolf would certainly have been aware of Montagu's Sapphic reputation as inscribed by Pope who "more than anyone else, was responsible for a marked decline in Sappho's reputation".⁸⁵ Reading the letters and works of both Montagu and Pope, Woolf would have acknowledged the huge discrepancy in fame and veneration that history had paid the two writers; of Pope's canonisation as a "monstrous growth" and

⁸⁴ The biography was written under the pseudonym George Paston. Montagu's critique of Addison's *Cato*, new letters to Pope and her fairy tale *Carabosse* were printed, among other texts, for the first time in this biography, although Symmonds does not fully explore Montagu's originality. See also Ida Treat, *Franscesco Algarotti*, 1913. One letter was listed and a verse printed in R. B. Adam Library (1929, iii, 174).

⁸⁵ Margaret Reynolds, *The Sappho Companion* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 127.

Montagu's comparative marginalisation.⁸⁶ Woolf appropriates Pope's satirical attacks in *Orlando* through defining Swift by his "fine Malacca cane" and linking "men of genius" with so-called feminine and trivial pursuits:

Addison, Pope, Swift proved, she found, to be fond of tea. They liked
 arbours. They collected little bits of coloured glass. They adored grottos.
 Rank was not distasteful to them. Praise was delightful. They wore plum-coloured
 suits one day and grey another. Addison scented his handkerchiefs. Mr
 Pope suffered with his head. A piece of gossip did not come amiss.⁸⁷

Moreover she reverses the dichotomising of civilisation, intellect and mind against the construction of feminised 'barbaric' countries, through portraying intellect as a cannibal.⁸⁸ Echoing Montagu's depiction of Pope's "wretched little Carcass" and his lack of love,⁸⁹ Woolf condemns Pope's worshipping of the mind:

the intellect, divine as it is, and all worshipful, has a habit of lodging in the
 most seedy of carcasses, and often, alas, acts the cannibal among the other
 faculties so that often, where the Mind is biggest, the Heart, the Senses,
 Magnanimity, Charity, Tolerance, Kindliness, and the rest of them scarcely
 have room to breathe.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ *Orlando*, p. 120.

⁸⁷ *Orlando*, p. 119.

⁸⁸ For an explanation of the myth of cannibalism see Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁸⁹ 'Verses Address'd to the Imitator of Horace', in *E&P*, 70.

⁹⁰ *Orlando*, p. 122.

Both Montagu and Woolf mimic Pope's misogynist focus on the dirty monstrous female body through configuring his own male body as grotesque. Exploiting and reifying definitions of the 'able' body, they attack Pope through textually producing his body as disabled and, through his disabilities, insulting him. Woolf sinisterly represents Pope as a "some squat reptile set with a burning topaz in its forehead".⁹¹ He has a "lean misshapen frame" which is "shaken by a variety of emotions. Darts of malice, rage, triumph, wit and terror (he was shaking like a leaf) shot from his eyes".⁹² This attack echoes Montagu's characterisation of him in 'Verses Address'd to the Imitator of Horace' as a "fretful *Porcupine*" (73) and "angry little Monster" (76) who rages, hates, is hysterical and who shoots poisonous darts: "with rancorous Will,/ From mounted Back shoots forth a harmless Quill" (73-74). This phallic description of writing actually portrays Pope's darts and arrows as harmless and therefore impotent and indeed this is how Montagu lampoons him: "But how should'st thou by Beauty's Force be mov'd,/ No more for loving made, than to be lov'd?" (48-49) This image of Pope as impotent plays on and exploits male anxieties over sexuality. Whereas Pope is reduced to an impotent man whose works are as sterile as his sexual energy; Montagu's women and Orlando embrace an abundant and flowing sexuality as represented in their imaginative spaces of the Turkish empire.

⁹¹ *Orlando*, p. 116.

⁹² *Orlando*, p. 116.

“site for multiple metamorphoses”

It is their Orientalist imaginative space which is the most striking parallel between Montagu's works and *Orlando*. In this space both Montagu and Woolf explore “a highly fantasmic place of liberation from gender norms” which becomes “the site for multiple metamorphoses.”⁹³ However, this transgressive space configured in the Turkish empire can and has been seen as replicating Orientalist discourse.⁹⁴ Montagu's letters have been both criticised for perpetuating Orientalism and celebrated for sustaining “a drama of imminent disclosure in which [Montagu] always defers a final or total reading of Other and of self in favour of continued viewing.”⁹⁵ Nevertheless, perhaps the queerness of Montagu's and Woolf's configuration of this space complicates a totalising Orientalist gesture. In other words, their imaginative representation both recuperates and confirms the masculine systems on which Orientalism is predicated through eroticising and exoticising the Other for their own sexual expression, but this sexual expression also deconstructs and subverts the Occidental eye. Moreover, it is only by deconstructing the monolithic construction of the heterosexual phallogentric Occident as well as recuperating silenced Turkish voices, that Orientalism itself can be broken down.

⁹³ D. A. Boxwell, '(Dis)orienting Spectacle: The Politics of Orlando's Sapphic Camp', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 44, 3 (Autumn 1998): 306-327 (p. 312). See also Karen Lawrence, 'Orlando's Voyage Out', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 38, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 253-277.

⁹⁴ Bohls writes that: “The Orient is discursively feminised and eroticised; West stands to East in a relation of proto-colonial domination that takes on a seemingly inevitable sexual character. Oriental women carry a disproportional symbolic burden in this discourse. Doubly other and doubly erotic, they become a synecdoche for the Orient itself. Their supposedly insatiable sexual appetites offer and excuse for the sexualized domination that these travelogues underwrite.” See Bohls, *Women Travel Writers*, pp. 27-8.

⁹⁵ Kietzman, 'Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*', p. 543.

Meyda Yegenoglu implicates Montagu's text within Orientalist discourse by associating it with Ingres' Turkish baths painting which he claims is influenced by Montagu's letters. Yegenoglu states that Orientalism's "textual universe is constituted by an endless series of representations, each text taking the other as its referent" in a "backward forward movement" and consequently the phallic Orientalism of Ingres' painting implicates Montagu's letters in its Orientalism.⁹⁶ However, this does not take into account different interpretations of texts. It would be extremely reductive to analyse Montagu's letters purely through the painting by Ingres. Moreover, if it is *readings* of a text which reflect the text's original meaning, then we could also look at Janet Flanner's lesbian reading of Ingres's painting which she claims was the "major pleasurable event of the year".⁹⁷

"isolated, splendid female nude, seated on a carpet and fully displaying that superb naked, idle, woman back – that perfectly fleshed view, with averted face".⁹⁸

If we include this reading in the "backward forward movement", then Montagu's text is Orientalist but it is also queer, and this already begins to complicate the Orient/Occident binary.

Yegenoglu also argues that Montagu "attaches a penis to herself" and penetrates a "feminized" East.⁹⁹ In other words, that she adopts a male gaze and a male identity when

⁹⁶ Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 91.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 197.

⁹⁸ Janet Flanner quoted in Ethel Smyth, *Impressions That Remained* (New York: Knopf, 1946), p. 80.

in the Turkish baths. This is an interesting image as Montagu represents herself in a riding dress and her gaze towards women is erotic. Moreover, when read against the sexual vacillation of Orlando whose penis is removed and attached at the whim of the author, the image of Montagu's attachable penis does not replicate the male/ female, West/ East dichotomy, but laughs at it. In chapter 2 I argued that Montagu exploits anxieties over the commodification of the penis and in chapters 4 and 6 I have explored Montagu's fissuring of the female body. I suggest that Montagu does attach a penis to herself, a penis which has been commodified and fragmented to the point that it has lost its naturalised sexual signification.

In her letter from the Turkish baths, Montagu describes the baths as "the women's coffee house". The liminal site of 'the women's coffee house' is a new dimension of space, a space which enables gestures of same sex erotics. In describing the Turkish baths as the coffee house, Montagu evokes the homosocial literary and sexual privileges of the men that she depicts in 'Tuesday'. In portraying the coffee house as populated by naked women and a woman in stays, Montagu further mocks and disrupts this masculine site. If the coffee house offers a space for men to boast about commodifying women and to constitute manly subjectivities through subjecting women to their gaze, then depicting the naked women and the woman in her stays *in* this disciplining locus, is a disruptive textual movement. Through calling the Turkish baths 'the woman's coffee house' Montagu

⁹⁹ Yenegoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 93.

parodies the London male equivalent and in doing so she attempts to denaturalize manliness and the spaces that produce it.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, because Montagu perceives the configuration of space in the Turkish empire differently from those of London, she represents them as enabling a plurality of sexual masquerades. Linda Sciana argues that “[t]he most important, and socially revealing, aspect of the world’s development in English is the formation of the noun ‘privacy’”.¹⁰¹ As a noun it does not have a parallel in Latin, and Arabic does not have an equivalent word for privacy.¹⁰² Consequently the dichotomy of public/private which began to be produced in Europe does not signify in the same way in communities where Arabic is spoken.¹⁰³ Montagu describes the architecture in the Turkish empire as defying the so-called public/private, seeing/ being seen demarcations of the fashionable and domestic spaces of the *Eclogues*. For example, she compares buildings to cabinets in a letter to Lady Bristol:

gardens, pine and Cyprus trees, palaces, mosques and public buildings, [are]
 raised one above another with as much beauty and appearance of symmetry as
 your ladyship ever saw in a cabinet adorned by the most skilful hands, jars

¹⁰⁰ See Leslie P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) on how the seraglio is a social/ political space.

¹⁰¹ Lidia Sciana finds privacy to be “indefinite, problematic and contradictory”. See Sciana, ‘The problem of privacy in Mediterranean Anthropology’, in *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps* ed. by Shirley Ardener (Oxford and Providence, RI: Berg, 1993), pp. 87-111 (p. 91).

¹⁰² See El’ Guindi, *Veil* and Carla Mahklouf, *Changing Veils: Women and Modernisation in North Yemen* (Austin Texas: University of Texas Press, 1979).

¹⁰³ El’ Guindi, *Veil*, p. 8. She also argues that “the modesty-based code – modesty-shame-seclusion-represents an ethnocentric imposition on Arabo-Islamic culture.” (p 83).

showing themselves above jars, mixed with canisters, babies and candlesticks.

This is a very odd comparison, but it gives me an exact image of the thing.¹⁰⁴

This 'odd' and unnatural comparison also indicates how Montagu perceives spaces in her exotic imaginative inscriptions of the Turkish empire.

This fluidity of space where inside and outside, public/ private open into new dimensions enables a similar development in sexual performance. In her *Eclogues* Montagu exposes the body as disciplined into sexual performances at the tea table, coffee house, drawing room and dressing room. Subsequently, in the alternative configurations of space in the Turkish empire, Montagu explores different sexual masquerades which are unconstrained by London's social parameters. This is not to say that historically 'real' Turkish women were able to adopt fluid sexualities, but rather that Montagu exploits her perception or vision of Turkish space to enable polymorphous sexualities in her writing. In a letter to her sister, Montagu hints at her exotic manipulation of the site of the Turkish empire:

Perhaps it would be more entertaining to add a few surprising customs of my own invention, but nothing seems to me so agreeable as truth, and I believe nothing so acceptable to you.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *CL*, I. 397.

¹⁰⁵ *CL*, I. 330.

Montagu's mocking statement reveals her playful tracing of the topography of the Constantinople, Adrianople, and St Sophia within which she 'invents' exotic surprises. Moreover, in this statement one can recognise Montagu's influence on Woolf's arch voice as demonstrated in *Orlando*.

"process of fabrication"

In Montagu's work and in Woolf's *Orlando*, sex and gender are represented as being in a continual "process of fabrication".¹⁰⁶ Montagu's performative and dressed configuration of gender and sex signifies women as "Petticoats" and represents the imprisonment of a female identity through the stays and skirts. Moreover, Montagu represents herself as entering the baths in her "rideing dress" which, according to Addison, signifies a 'mannish woman'.¹⁰⁷ Montagu enjoys the liberatory potential of Turkish dress, dress which "though entirely feminine, is also virtually identical to the items worn by men".¹⁰⁸

The gendered ambiguities of dress are also true for Orlando: "It is a strange fact but a true one, that up to this moment she had scarcely given her sex a thought. Perhaps

¹⁰⁶ *Orlando*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁷ See Susan C. Shapiro, 'The Mannish New Woman, Punch and Its Precursors', *The Review of English Studies*, 42, no. 168 (1991): 510-520. On Montagu's mannish dress see Marcia Pointon, 'Killing Pictures', in *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, ed. by John Barrell (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 39-72 (p. 64).

¹⁰⁸ Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 312. See fig. 11 for a portrait of Montagu. In the distance it is possible to see domes signifying a Turkish landscape and Montagu is portrayed in Turkish style dress. The black servant in this picture reinforces Montagu's whiteness. Moreover, if identity is constituted by what one consumes, then Montagu's servant functions to further her exotic celebrity status.

the Turkish trousers which she had hitherto worn had done something to distract her thoughts.”¹⁰⁹ Woolf mimics the sexual fluidity offered by Montagu’s understanding of Turkish dress. Woolf depicts a protagonist who exchanges “the probity of breeches” for “the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally”.¹¹⁰ Woolf blurs the body’s boundaries and the normalisation of sex in the first sentence of *Orlando* where the narrator states that “He – for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it”.¹¹¹ This startling assertion questions our very assumptions about sexed identity. Identity, as Judith Butler argues, gains meaning through being sexed; the body comes to matter through being repeatedly ‘boyed’ or ‘girled’. One of the interpellations of this ‘boying’ or ‘girling’ is through dress. Indeed, in *Orlando*, Woolf writes:

In every human being a vacillation from one to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above.¹¹²

Dress performs and naturalises our sexed identity: “it is clothes that wear us and not we them”,¹¹³ and because Orlando is not confined within certain gendered theatrics, s/he forgets the “consciousness of her sex”.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ *Orlando*, p. 82.

¹¹⁰ *Orlando*, p. 126.

¹¹¹ *Orlando*, p. 11.

¹¹² *Orlando*, p. 109.

¹¹³ *Orlando*, p. 108.

¹¹⁴ *Orlando*, p. 103.

This rupturing of dress and of space reflects a rupturing in Woolf and Montagu's employment of language. Like Pope, Swift, and Walpole who were discussed in chapter 4 in relation to clothes and civilisation, Montagu and Woolf link dress to language. Nevertheless, Montagu and Woolf embrace Walpole's fear of the "monstrosity of wildly incoherent dress" and its consequent babbling speech. Orlando finds English "too frank, too candid" and longs for "another landscape, and another tongue" with which to express his desire for Sasha.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Montagu finds English inadequate in expressing sexuality. In one letter from the Turkish empire, Montagu claims that she is in "great danger of loseing my English"¹¹⁶:

As I prefer English to all the rest, I am extremely mortify'd at the daily decay of it in my head, where I'll assure you (with grieffe of heart) it is reduc'd to such a small number of Words.¹¹⁷

Moreover, in a letter to Alexander Pope Montagu laments that "Neither do I think our English proper to express such violence of passion, which is very seldom felt amongst us; and we want those compound words which are very frequent and strong in the Turkish Language."¹¹⁸ In the same letter she offers translations of Turkish love poems in which she speaks through the voice of a Turkish male lover.¹¹⁹ The "daily decay" of the English

¹¹⁵ *Orlando*, p. 32.

¹¹⁶ *CL*, 1. 390.

¹¹⁷ *CL*, 1. 390-391.

¹¹⁸ *CL*, 1. 331.

¹¹⁹ "Much Islamic poetry of the classical and medieval periods, whether written in Baghdad, Istanbul, Fez or Seville, celebrates homoerotic passion, and Persian poetry was appearing in English translation in the eighteenth century for the first time. The scholars who brought these Eastern poems to Western eyes were often disparaging about their moral 'depravities' [...] Thus in English translation the love objects of these

language is juxtaposed with the “Tower of Babel” and the multiplicity of languages spoken and heard in Pera. Montagu represents herself as being “unable to recollect any tolerable phrase to conclude my Letter” and her “Mother tongue” becomes subsumed by the plurality of languages in her “site of multiple metamorphoses”.¹²⁰ However, Montagu configures an alternative way to speak through her representation of Turkish love letters.

Montagu’s most intimate and sensual letters describing female interiors, dress, and the Turkish baths are addressed to women and, in particular, an unnamed woman. These letters were rewritten for publication by Montagu, and so are for the public gaze as well as the specifically female gaze embodied in the blank (but female) addressee. In one letter to this unnamed lady, Montagu describes the private language of flowers employed among Turkish lovers. In this code of desire there “is no colour, no flower, no weed, no fruit, herb, pebble, or feather, that has not a verse belonging to it”.¹²¹ This poetic language is called *selam* and can, according to Srivinas Aravamudan, be “a crypto-lesbian mode of communication when circulating in the harem of the bathhouse.”¹²² It can be read as a queer language cutting through heteronarratives, and is appropriated by Montagu when she tells her female friend: “I have got for you, as you desire, a Turkish Love letter, which I have put in a little Box”.¹²³ Just as she will describe the women in the Turkish baths to this unnamed woman, so she ‘writes’ to her through this Sapphic code: “The first piece you should pull out of the purse is a little pearl, which is in Turkish

poems were subject to bowdlerization – were, in effect, transsexualised.” Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 317. This is an area rich for further research.

¹²⁰ *CL*, 1. 390-391.

¹²¹ *CL*, 1. 389.

¹²² Aravamudan, ‘LMWM in the *Hamman*’, p. 78.

¹²³ *CL*, 1. 388.

called ingi".¹²⁴ Boxes and purses are typical euphemisms for vaginas, and Montagu's use of the pearl is provocatively sexual.

Orlando can also be read as a gift, a love letter to Sackville-West. Indeed, Nigel Nicolson states that *Orlando* is the "longest and most charming love letter in literature".¹²⁵ I suggest that Montagu's eroticised letters from the Turkish empire are also love letters to an anonymous woman. For the next few pages I discuss Montagu's letters concerning dress and the female gaze, before returning to *Orlando*. Exploiting the "crypto-lesbian mode of communication" which is linked to the Turkish love letter, Montagu also applies this to her sartorial representations, offering up her Sapphic body to the female recipient.

In her letters and poems Montagu repeatedly conflates stays with boxes. For example, in 1741 Montagu told Joseph Spence about one Turkish woman who, on seeing Occidental stays, believed that "the Husbands in England were much worse than in the East; for that they ty'd up their Wives in little Boxes of the shape of their bodies".¹²⁶ Through troping stays with boxes owned by husbands, Montagu highlights her own lack of control in the heterosexual matrix of desire. Nevertheless, through masquerading her body in the box of her stays, Montagu offers herself as gift to the female recipient.

¹²⁴ *CL*, 1. 388.

¹²⁵ Nigel Nicolson, *Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Athenaeum, 1973), p. 202.

¹²⁶ Quoted by Grundy, *Selected Letters*, p. 149 n. 7. Moreover, travellers such as Jean de Thevenot and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, whom Montagu had clearly read, describe how Persian harem women are made to be put in boxes to be carried across water when they travel so that they will not be looked upon by other men.

Stays, for Montagu, literally and figuratively signify women's imperative *to stay* under heterosexual male surveillance.¹²⁷ They discipline and force the body into an ideal figure of Occidental beauty. A woman's beauty in the eighteenth century was read through Renaissance configurations of the ideal body, an ideal which revolved around the trope of control. Agnolo Firenzuola (1493-1543), for example, argues that a woman should adhere to the principal of elegance where "no movement and no action is performed without rule, method, measure or design, but is, as this law dictates, well-ordered, composed, regulated and graceful."¹²⁸ Stays instil order and regulation on to the woman's body and the woman laced up soothed anxieties over sexual excess, chaos and leakage. Patriarchal authority was literally inscribed on the woman as stays were made by men and bought by men; it would have been the money of the husband or the father that procured the lingerie to lace the woman's body into a desired shape (in contrast, Montagu represents veils as being made by women). Stays signified sexuality under male control, as Reverend Wilkes advised:

Never appear in company without your stays. Make it your general rule to lace in the morning ... The neglect of this is liable to the censure of indolence,

¹²⁷ Recently stays have been rescued from their berated position as an instrument of patriarchal oppression and critics have argued that they played a fundamental role in asserting woman's "erotic subjectivity". See Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001). Stays offer pleasure and exhibit class privilege as well as maintaining woman's "good temper and good manners." See Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits; The Evolution of Modern Dress* (Brinkworth, Wilts: Claridge Press, 1994), p. 136.

¹²⁸ Firenzuola quoted in Catherine MacLeod and Julia Marciari Alexander, *Painted Ladies: women at the court of Charles II* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2001), p. 27. Firenzuola asks that a woman's hair must be long, thick and curly and ideally, blonde; her shoulders were to be soft and ample, her fingers long and slender, tapering lightly and her chin and neck would appear even more beautiful if there was a little swelling of extra flesh below the chin itself.

supineness of thought, sluttishness and very often worse: The negligence of loose attire: May oft invite loose desire.¹²⁹

Indeed, women who neglected their stays were deemed to be prostitutes. In 'Tuesday', stays feature to commodify the women's body under the mock Virgilian shepherds' 'ogling' male gaze. Patch salaciously and pornographically boasts of his peeping at the half dressed teasing body of a "Countess" who, with "Affectation", crams a snuffbox "down her Stays":

Yet hoped she did not place it there unseen;

I press'd her Breasts, and pull'd it from between. (T, 54-59)

Similarly, in Montagu's 'Thursday' and 'Friday' eclogues, stays signify older women's sexual jealousy, as their sexual commodification has been usurped by younger women. Lydia, for example, attempts to undermine her rival (who is in fact *the wife* of her lover) by imagining her without stays: "I own her taper Shape is form'd to please, / But don't you see her unconfin'd by Stays?" (F, 47-48). In her letter to the anonymous woman Montagu represents herself in her stays and in doing so Montagu brings this patriarchal apparel into her 'women's coffee house'. Consequently, she ruptures the conventional codes, rituals and dress of the consumer spaces of the male coffee house and the dressing room. Moreover, in linking stays with boxes and depicting the boxes of

¹²⁹ Revd Mr. Wettenhall Wilkes, 'A Letter of Genteel and Moral advice to a Young Lady', 1740 cited in *Eighteenth-Century Women: An Anthology* ed. by Bridget Hill (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 18-19.

her Turkish love letters, Montagu plays with the snuffbox image which provides such a comic (and grotesque) moment in 'Tuesday'. Montagu exposes women's commodification through boxes (snuffboxes and stays) and she explodes this commodification as she masquerades in her stays and sends her female recipient pearls in Turkish love letters. Like the mirror's multiple reflections, boxes are represented as opening up, revealing endless possibilities of subversion.

Juxtaposed against the stays is Montagu's reading of the veil. Montagu writes that the "asmak, or Turkish vail, is become not only very easy but agreeable to me, and if it was not, I would be content to endure some inconveniency to content a passion so powerfull with me as Curiosity."¹³⁰ Here Montagu tropes veiling with seeing and speculating. It enables Montagu to cross public topographies and engage in looking out without being looked at. Moreover, as configured by Montagu, the veil allows women sexual freedoms unavailable to women in Britain:

Tis very easy to see they have more Liberty than we have, no Woman of what rank so ever being permitted to in the streets without 2 muslins, one that covers her face all but her Eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head and hangs halfe way down her back; and their Shapes are wholly conceal'd by a thing they call a Ferigee, which no Woman of any sort appears without. This has strait sleeves that reaches to their fingers ends and it laps all round 'em, not unlike a rideing hood. In Winter 'tis of Cloth, and in Summer, plain stuff of silk. You may guess how

¹³⁰ *CL*, I. 397. See also Nandini Bhattacharya on Montagu's veiling in *Reading the Splendid Body: Gender and Consumerism in British Writing on India* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 140-141.

effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great Lady from her Slave, and 'tis impossible for the most jealous Husband to know his Wife when he meets her, and no Man dare either touch or follow a Woman in the Street.¹³¹

For Montagu, the veil offers the possibility of “perpetual Masquerade”, a masquerade that Montagu enacts in her famous letter describing the Turkish baths in Sophia.¹³²

Teresa Heffernan states that Montagu blurs the Orientalist dichotomy between East/West through “intentionally misreading the purpose of veiling”.¹³³ However, in her ethnographic study of the veil, Fadwa El'Guindi argues that in examining various ethnographic accounts of veiling behaviour patterns a “theme emerges – the veil as symbol of power.”¹³⁴ Indeed in reading recent analyses of the veil I am struck by the same themes of looking and space that recur in Montagu's work. Just as Montagu links space and seeing, so the gestures of the veil control how women are seen, and where. For example, Michael Gilsenan makes a distinction between ‘being seen’ and ‘being visible’.¹³⁵ He perceives “seeing” in Islamic culture as a marked activity and cross-sex seeing is linked to respect and must be regulated. Because Montagu is so fascinated with

¹³¹ *CL*, 1. 328.

¹³² *CL*, 1. 328.

¹³³ Teresa Heffernan, ‘Feminism against the East/West Divide: Lady Mary's *Turkish Embassy Letters*’, *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 33, 2 (1999-00): 210-215 (p. 213).

¹³⁴ El'Guindi, *Veil*, p. 126. Although there are many ethnographic and historical accounts of the veil, I have not found any focusing on the early eighteenth century in the Turkish empire. Therefore in analyzing what the veil ‘means’ in Islamic culture and ignoring the social and cultural context of what the veil signified in this historical period means that my interpretation is ahistorical. Although El'Guindi writes that in eighteenth-century Egypt “veiling the face and covering the body in public was considered a mark of women's high rank, respectability and inaccessibility”, this does not necessarily mean that this was true for the Turkish empire, even though Montagu's perception of the veil accords to this view. See El'Guindi, *Veil*, p. 104.

¹³⁵ Michael Gilsenan discusses these themes throughout *Recognising Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

the idea of looking and how men and women look at each other, the veil offers her an exciting alternative to the male ogling and female objectification that dominated her *Eclogues*.

Confined in stays the body succumbs to form, but Montagu exposes the fluidity of constraints and in fact uses them for this purpose in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*. Just as Montagu exploits the limits of the epistolary form, so she plays with the image of stays, bringing the image to excess. In troping stays with boxes, Montagu writes stays as imprisoning machines, but in using the image of the box, Montagu also alludes to the image of opening up. Indeed, boxes can be liberating, a means to escape the binaries and imprisonment of space:

Chests, especially small caskets, over which we have more complete mastery, are objects that may be opened. When a casket is closed, it is returned to the general community of objects; it takes its place in exterior space. But it opens! [...] From the moment the casket is opened the dialectics of inside and outside no longer exist. The outside is effaced with one stroke, an atmosphere of novelty and surprise reigns. And, quite paradoxically, even cubic dimensions have no more meaning, for the reason that a new dimension has just opened up.¹³⁶

In metonymically associating stays with boxes, Montagu configures them as forms of imprisonment - they are like coffins. However, boxes are also spaces of rebirth. The box

¹³⁶ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (New York: Orion, 1964), quoted in Laura Mulvey, 'Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity', in *Sexuality and Space*, pp. 52-71.

blurs the public/ private, inside/ outside, masculine/ feminine dichotomies of space. The box (and therefore stays) can also open up new dimensions of space. Through exploiting these tropes of stays, boxes and veils, Montagu will represent herself as a sexualised love letter in the box of her stays for the anonymous woman's gaze. Like her play with the mirror and light refractions of the prism and telescope, Montagu expresses excitement in the play with multiplicity.

“I am now got into a new World”

In her letter representing the *hammam*, Montagu tells her female recipient that “I am now got into a new World”.¹³⁷ She represents herself as travelling incognito to the Turkish baths in Sophia and *peeping* “through the Lattices”¹³⁸ of her coach – another box, laced with flowers. When she arrives at the baths, Montagu announces in a short and striking sentence: “It was already full of Women.”¹³⁹ The baths are represented sensually with domes, subdued lighting, streams and fountains. She admires the women who are in “plain English, stark naked”¹⁴⁰ and states teasingly that “it, twas impossible to stay there with one's Cloths on.”¹⁴¹ Of the women in the baths, Montagu writes:

They Walk'd and mov'd with the same majestic Grace which Milton describes of
our General Mother. There were many amongst them as proportion'd as ever any

¹³⁷ *CL*, 1. 313.

¹³⁸ *CL*, 1. 313.

¹³⁹ *CL*, 1. 313.

¹⁴⁰ *CL*, 1. 313.

¹⁴¹ *CL*, 1. 313.

Goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian, and most of their skins shineingly white, only adorn'd by their Beautifull Hair divided into many tresses hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or riband, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces.¹⁴²

Montagu tells her female recipient that “the Ladys with the finest skins and most delicate shapes had the greatest share of my admiration” and then in a confiding tone, as if sharing a joke, she tells her:

To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr Gervase could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improv'd his art to see so many fine Women naked in different postures,¹⁴³

She then describes what appears to be a seduction scene as the bathers ‘force’ Montagu to undress:

I excus'd my selfe with some difficulty, they being all so earnest in perswading me. I was at last forc'd to open my skirt and shew them my stays, which satisfy'd 'em very well, for I saw they beleiv'd I was so lock'd up in that machine that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my Husband.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² *CL*, I. 313-4

¹⁴³ *CL*, I. 314

¹⁴⁴ *CL*, I. 314.

Montagu peppers her homoerotic letter with intimate reproaches and a flirtatious sharing of sensual female spaces circulating around Montagu's teasing body:

Adeiu, Madam, I am sure I have now entertaind you with an Account of such a sight as you never saw in your Life and what no book of travels could inform you of.¹⁴⁵

This "Account" includes Montagu's playing with her reader's expectations as to whether she will undress herself. The focus on her dress, and the sensuality of the scene all demonstrate Montagu's depiction of *herself* as erotically appealing, stripteasing for the reader, seductively flaunting herself as "such a sight as you never saw" for the anonymous woman's gaze.

The excessive sumptuousness of Montagu's description of the Turkish baths contrasts strikingly with her self-portrayal as "lock'd up" in a "machine", and she ends her letter by stating that "I was charm'd with their Civillity and Beauty and should have been very glad to pass more time with them".¹⁴⁶ However, her husband is in a hurry to leave and "I was in haste to see the ruins of Justinian's church, which did not afford me so agreeable a prospect as I had left, being little more than a heap of stones."¹⁴⁷ Here we see Montagu's imaginative transgressive space and sensual marble domes being, by a process of metonymy, reduced to "a heap of stones". A 'heap of stones' that is

¹⁴⁵ *CL*, I. 315.

¹⁴⁶ *CL*, I. 315.

¹⁴⁷ *CL*, I. 315.

resurrected by Woolf into a sensual and fantastic Orientalist world where Montagu has the freedom to stand, like Orlando, “stark naked”.

Srinivas Aravamudan argues that Montagu in the Turkish baths is “masquerading in the same costume for two audiences simultaneously.”¹⁴⁸ She is in a ‘machine’ for the bathing women and expressing modesty for the English readers. However, Montagu is also masquerading for a third audience, those searching for Sapphic connections. Although her stays symbolize her own confinement in marriage, in a heterosexual union, she has appropriated them to signify multiple meanings. The stays reinforce Montagu’s ‘chastity, modesty and purity’, but they also signify and critique this imprisonment, functioning as a private joke. Furthermore, because stays are underwear barely concealing her own naked body, they titillate the reader, pointing towards what they purport to disguise. Aravamudan suggests that a “more fanciful reader” might recognize these letters as articulating “lesbian desire”.¹⁴⁹ Woolf was one of these ‘fanciful readers’.

In the imaginative space of Turkey, Orlando wakes up one morning and discovers that “he was a woman”:

Orlando stood stark naked. No human being, since the world began, has ever looked more ravishing. His form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman’s grace. As he stood there, the silver trumpets prolonged their note, as if reluctant to leave the lovely sight which their blast had called forth; and Chastity,

¹⁴⁸ Aravamudan, ‘LMWM in the *Hammam*’, p. 84.

¹⁴⁹ Aravamudan, ‘LMWM in the *Hammam*’, p. 78.

Purity and Modesty, inspired no doubt, by Curiosity, peeped in at the door and threw a garment like a towel at the naked form which, unfortunately, fell short by several inches. Orlando looked himself up and down in a long looking-glass, without showing any signs of discomposure, and went, presumably, to his bath.¹⁵⁰

This image is, as D.A.Boxwell argues, echoing Susan Sontag, “almost ineffably camp”.¹⁵¹ In her mocking over-stylised description of the naked Orlando, Woolf mimics Montagu’s own excessive image of the Sofian women and, in fact, Orlando even supercedes Montagu’s comparisons with Milton’s Eve as “No human being, since the world began, has ever looked more ravishing”. In Woolf’s camped up re-enactment, however, the “Imitation is more excessive than the Original”.¹⁵²

In Woolf’s rewritten Turkish space, Orlando is liberated from the confines of the male gaze, from the imprisoning gendered performance of dress, and the heterosexual categories of modesty. Unlike Montagu, Orlando enjoys the political privileges of being an ambassador, being unstayed and unmarried – free to spend as long as ‘he’ likes where he likes. Because he used to perform masculinity, Orlando is not policed or disciplined through the internalised categories “Chastity, Purity, and Modesty”. Consequently Orlando can enjoy greater freedoms than Montagu, including representing and enjoying his/her own nakedness “without showing any signs of discomposure”. Indeed, Orlando contemplates the rituals and rules governing feminine behaviour as she muses to herself: ““women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex) obedient, chaste,

¹⁵⁰ *Orlando*, p. 81.

¹⁵¹ Boxwell, ‘(Dis)orienting Spectacle’, p. 323.

¹⁵² *CL*, 1. 280.

scented, and exquisitely appareled by nature. They can only attain these graces, without which they may enjoy the delights of life, by the most tedious discipline.”¹⁵³

Repeating and reclaiming Montagu’s Sapphic connections, Orlando also writes and desires women:

though she herself was still a woman, it was still a woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had had as a man.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, just as Montagu erotically maps the bodies of the bathing women as well as her own; so in the writing of *Orlando*, Woolf traces the body of Vita. In a letter she tells her: “I make it up in bed at night, as I walk the streets, everywhere. I want to see you in the lamplight, in your emeralds.”¹⁵⁵ Replicating Montagu’s own intimate Sapphic letter, *Orlando*, is a “loving gesture” expressing “homoerotic desire” as well as being an “invitation to female autoeroticism”.¹⁵⁶

Through the cross-dressing sexually transgressive figure of Orlando, Montagu is both mimicked and rescued from her stayed and veiled position as a woman in a heterosexual world, a woman confined through literary gendered norms and conventions. Woolf engages in dialogue with Montagu’s texts, recognizing, revealing and answering

¹⁵³ *Orlando*, p.91.

¹⁵⁴ *Orlando*, p. 94.

¹⁵⁵ Woolf, *Letters*, vol. III, p. 430.

¹⁵⁶ Lawrence, ‘Orlando’s Voyage Out’, p. 261.

the codes behind the 'plain English'. Perhaps Woolf sees herself as stripping Montagu of the "rough and ready made clothes that the male writer has had perforce to clap upon [her] shoulders", and aspires to probe the ambiguities of Montagu's veiled language.¹⁵⁷ She fissures the normalizing of Montagu that has been handed down through biographies and histories. Through thinking back through Montagu, through cracking her queer signs, Woolf demonstrates that "[s]ometimes women do like women" and that these women "are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh."¹⁵⁸ Through reclaiming Sapphic connections, Woolf appropriates fragments from Montagu's work and, just as they seem "on the point of dissolution" she sharpens them "to animation."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1945), p. 88.

¹⁵⁸ *A Room of One's Own*, p. 81, 112.

¹⁵⁹ *Orlando*, p. 123.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts

British Library, Harleian MS. 7316 (14 of Finch's poems)

BL, Northumberland MS. 289 (letter from Heneage Finch to Stukeley)

BL, Sloane MS. 3962 (letter from Heneage Finch to William Charlton)

BL, MS Add. 17301 (letter from Heneage Finch to John Battely)

BL, MS Eg. 23 (correspondence from Montagu to Algarotti)

Bodleian. Dan. c. 56. (correspondence from Montagu to Algarotti)

Bod. . Eng.Th.c. 25, ff. 98b-99 (correspondence from Finch to Thomas Brett)

Bod. Eng. Th. c. 38, f. 263-6 and 273-5 (correspondence from Finch to Thomas Brett)

Northamptonshire Record Office, Finch-Hatton MSS. 258 (Finch's Octavo manuscript)

NRO, Finch-Hatton MSS. 282 (Heneage Finch's journal)

NRO, Finch-Hatton MSS. 283 (Finch's poems)

NRO, Finch-Hatton MSS. 1140 (Kingsmill's inventory)

Primary Sources

Anon, *The Women's Petition against Coffee, Representing to Public Consideration the Grand Inconveniencies accruing to their Sex from the Excessive Use of that Drying, Enfeebling Liquor* (London, 1674)

Anon, *An Epistle from Sapho to Philenis with the Discovery; or, Paradise Review'd* (London, 1728)

Alberti, Leon Battista, *Della Famiglia*, trans. by Renée Neu Watkins as *The Family in Renaissance Florence* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966)

Astell, Mary, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies: Part I London 1694, Part II London 1697*, ed. by Patricia Springborg (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1997)

Behn, Aphra, *The Works of Aphra Behn, 7 vols.*, ed. by Janet Todd (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1992)

Bruys, Francois, *The Art of Knowing Women: or, the Female Sex Dissected, in a Faithful Representation of their Virtues and Vices ... Written in French, by the Chevalier Plante-Amor, and by him published at the Hague, 1729* (London, 1730)

Burton, Robert, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling and Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Chudleigh, Mary, *The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh*, ed. by Margaret J. Ezell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Lanyer, Aemelia, *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. by Danielle Clarke (London: Penguin, 2000)

Cowley, Abraham, *Abraham Cowley: Poems*, ed. by A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905)

Cowley, Abraham, *Abraham Cowley: Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses*, ed. by A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906)

Crashaw, Richard, *The Poems English, Latin and Greek of Richard Crashaw*, ed. by L. C. Martin, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)

Donne, John, *Complete English Poems*, ed. by C. A. Patrides (London: Dent, 1994)

Dryden, John, *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. by James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958)

Evelyn, John, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by John Bowle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

Finch, Anne, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (London, 1713)

Finch, Anne, *The Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*, ed. by Myra Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903)

Finch, Anne, *Selected Poems of Anne Finch Countess of Winchilsea*, ed. by Denys Thompson (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987)

Finch, Anne, *The Anne Finch Wellesley Manuscript Poems*, ed. by Barbara McGovern and Charles Hinnant (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1998)

Gay, John, *John Gay: Selected Poems*, ed. by Marcus Walsh (Manchester: Fyfield Books, 1979)

Herbert, George, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Tobin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991)

Herrick, Robert, *Poems*, ed. by L. C. Martin (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965)

Juvenal, *The Satires of Juvenal*, trans. by Niall Rudd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)

Killigrew, Anne, *Poems* (London, 1686)

Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

Lonsdale, Roger, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

M.P., *A Character of Coffee and Coffee-Houses* (London, 1661)

Mandeville, Bernard, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. by Philip Harth (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970)

Manley, Delarivier, *The New Atlantis*, ed. by Ros Ballaster (London: Penguin, 1992)

Marvell, Andrew, *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell* vol. 1 ed. by H. M. Margoliouth 3rd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)

Marvell, Andrew, *The Metaphysical Poets*, ed. by Helen Gardener, 3rd edition (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972)

- Milton, John, *Milton's Poetical Works*, ed. by Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955)
- Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. by Robert Halsband, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965)
- Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, a Comedy*, ed. by Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)
- Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, *Romance Writings*, ed. by Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)
- Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Selected Letters*, ed. by Isobel Grundy (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1997)
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary M. Innes (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986)
- Philips, Katherine, *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*, 3 vols., ed. by Thomas Patrick (Saffron Waldon: Stump Cross Books, 1990)
- Pope, Alexander, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. by George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956)
- Pope, Alexander, *The Poems of Alexander Pope, A One Volume Edition of The Twickenham Pope with selected annotations*, ed. by John Butt (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Sappho, *Sappho: The Poems and Fragments*, ed. by C.R. Haines (London: Routledge, 1926)
- Shaftesbury, *Second Characters, or The language of Forms*, ed. by Benjamin Rand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914)
- Singer Rowe, Elizabeth, *Philomela: or Poems by Mrs. ELIZABETH SINGER (Now Rowe) of Frome Somersetshire*, 2nd edition (London, 1737)
- Singer Rowe, Elizabeth, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse, With Poems on Several Occasions by Mr. Thomas Rowe* (London, 1739)
- The Spectator*, ed. by Donald F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965)
- Swift, Jonathan, *Prose Works*, 14 vols, ed. by Herbert Davis (Oxford: Oxford University, 1951)

Swift, Jonathan, *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3 vols., ed. by Harold Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937)

Swift, Jonathan, *Jonathan Swift: The Complete Poems*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Harmondsworth and New Haven: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983)

The Tatler, 3 vols., ed. and intro. by Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)

Thurston, Joseph, *The Toilette* (1730)

Vaughan, Henry, *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, ed. by L. C. Martin, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)

Virgil, *Virgil in English*, ed. by K. W. Gransden (London: Penguin, 1996)

Walpole, Horace, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. by W. S. Lewis, 48 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-83)

'Well-willer', *The Men's Answer to the Women's Petition Against Coffee* (London, 1674)

Wilmot, John, *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* ed. by David M. Viet (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968)

Wilmot, John, *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. by Harold Love (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1945)

Woolf, Virginia, *The Flight of the Mind: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 1 1888-1912*, 6 vols., ed. by Nigel Nicholson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975)

Woolf, Virginia, *Diary vol. 3*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNellie (New York: Harcourt, 1978)

Woolf, Virginia, *Orlando: A Biography*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1998)

Wordsworth, William, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years Part 2*, ed. by Alan G. Hill, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979)

Secondary Sources

Alsop, Derek, "Strains of New Beauty": Handel and the Pleasures of Italian Opera, 1711-28', in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), pp. 133-163

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

Aravamudan, Srinivas, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the *Hamam*: Masquerade, Womanliness, and Levantinization', *ELH*, 62 (1995): 69 – 104

Armstrong, Isobel and Virginia Blaine, eds., *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820* (London: Macmillan, 1999)

Ash, Juliet and Elizabeth Wilson, eds., *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader* (London: Pandora Press, 1992)

Babb, Lawrence, *Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580-1642* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951)

Ballaster, Ros, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction 1684-1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Ballaster, Ros, "The Vices of Old Rome Revived": Representations of Female Same-Sex Desire in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century England', in *Volcanoes and Pearl Divers: Essays in Lesbian Feminist Studies*, ed. by Suzanne Raitt (Binghamton, New York: Harrington Park Press, 1995), pp. 3-36

Barash, Carol, 'Review of Carol Houlihan Flynn, *The Body in Swift and Defoe*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27, no. 2 (Winter 1993-94): 326 – 8

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

Barrell, John, "The Dangerous Goddess": Masculinity, Prestige, and the Aesthetic in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural Critique*, 12 (1989): 101-31

Barker, Hannah and Elaine Chalus, eds., *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London and New York: Longman, 1997)

Beilin, Elaine V., *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987)

Bennett, Louise K., *Swift's Poetic Worlds* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1981)

Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972)

Berry, Helen, 'Nice and Curious Questions': Coffee Houses and the Representation of Women in John Dunton's Athenian Mercury', *The Seventeenth Century*, 12, no. 2 (Autumn 1997): 257-276

Bhattacharya, Nandini, *Reading the Splendid Body: Gender and Consumerism in British Writing on India* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998)

Bloom, Harold, ed., *Andrew Marvell* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989)

Bohls, Elizabeth, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Bordo, Susan, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993)

Boucher, Francois, *A History of Costume in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1997)

Boxwell, D.A, '(Dis)orienting Spectacle: The Politics of Orlando's Sapphic Camp', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 44, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 306-327

Brashear, Lucy, 'The Bird and the Arras', *The Explicator*, 39 (1981): 21-22

Bray, Alan, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Man's Press, 1982)

Breitenberg, Mark, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Breward, Christopher, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)

Brewer, Daniel, 'Lights in Space', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37, no. 2 (2004): 171-186

Brewer, John, 'This, that and the other: Public, Social and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries', in *Shifting the Boundaries: Transformations of the Language of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1995), pp. 1-21

Broadhead, Glenn J., 'Samuel Johnson and the Rhetoric of Conversation', *SEL*, 20, 3 (Summer 1980): 461-474

- Brown, Laura, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993)
- Burns, Edward, *Restoration Comedy* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1987)
- Butler, Judith, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. by Diana Fuss (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 13-31.
- Butler, Judith, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993)
- Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edition (New York and London: Routledge, 1999)
- Campbell, Jill, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the 'Glass Revers'd' of Female Old Age', in *'Defect': Engendering the Modern Body*, ed. by Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 213-251
- Carter, Philip, 'Men about town: representations of foppery and masculinity in early eighteenth-century urban society', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 31-57
- Case, Sue-Ellen, 'Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 185 -201
- Castle, Terry, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)
- Castle, Terry, 'The Culture of Travesty: Sexuality and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century England', in *British Literature 1640-1789: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Robert DeMaria JR. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), pp. 251-270
- Chedgzoy, Kate, Melanie Hansen and Suzanne Trill eds., *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998)
- Chico, Tita, "'The Dressing Room Unlock'd': Eroticism, Performance, and Privacy from Pepys to the Spectator", in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self, and Other in the Enlightenment*, ed. by Laura J. Rosenthal and Mita Choudhury (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002), pp. 45-65
- Cixous, Hélène and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (Stanford, California : Stanford University Press, 2001)

- Clark, Steve, 'Let Blood and Body bear the fault: Pope and misogyny', in *Pope: New Contexts*, ed. by David Fairer (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 81-101
- Clery, Emma J., *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (London and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004)
- Colomina, Beatriz, ed., *Sexuality & Space* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992)
- Connell, R.W., *Masculinities* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995)
- Conway, Alice, *Private Interests: Women, Portraiture, and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709-1791* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001)
- Cowan, Brian, 'Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 37, no. 3 (2004): 345-366
- Craik, Jennifer, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)
- Crawford, Rachel, 'Troping the Subject: Behn, Smith, Hemans and the Poetics of the Bower', *Studies in Romanticism*, 38 (Summer 1999): 249-279
- Crow, Nora F., 'Swift and the Woman Scholar', in *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers* ed. by Donald C. Mell (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp. 222-238
- D'Monte, Rebecca and Nicole Pohl, eds., *Female Communities, 1600-1800: Literary Revisions and Cultural Realities* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)
- De Bolla, Peter, 'The charm'd eye', in *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Veronica Kelly and Dorothea E. Von Mücke (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 89-111
- De Courtivron, Isabelle and Elaine Marks, eds., *New French Feminisms: An Anthology* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1980)
- De Certeau, Michel, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. by B. Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986)
- DeMaria, Robert, Jr., ed., *British Literature, 1640-1789: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999)
- Dobranski, Stephen B., "'Where Men of Differing Judgements Croud': Milton and the Culture of the Coffee Houses", *The Seventeenth Century*, 9, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 35-56

Donoghue, Emma, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture, 1668-1801* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995)

Donoghue, Emma, ed., *Poems Between Women: Four Centuries of Love, Romantic Friendship, and Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Doody, Margaret Anne, 'Swift Among the Women', in *Jonathan Swift*, ed. by Nigel Wood (London and New York: Longman, 1999), pp.196-224

Douane, Mary Ann, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987)

Duff, Virginia M., "'Fallen by Mistaken Rules": Anne Finch's 'The Bird and the Arras'', *Eighteenth Century Women*, 1 (2001): 39-48

DuRocher, Richard J., 'Careful Plowing: Culture and Agriculture in *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 31 (1994): 91-107

Ehrenpreis, Irvin, *The Personality of Jonathan Swift* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969)

El'Guindi, Fadwa, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999)

Elias, Markman, 'Coffee-women, 'The Spectator' and the public sphere', in *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830*, ed. by Elizabeth Eger et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 399-416

Ellis, Aytoun, *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee Houses* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1956)

Empson, William, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950)

Empson, William, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 3rd edition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953)

Epstein, Julia, 'Either/Or – Neither/ Both: Sexual Ambiguity and the Ideology of Gender', *Genders*, 7 (1990): 99-142

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

Ezell, Margaret J. M., *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)

- Faderman, Lillian *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Morrow Quill, 1981)
- Fenno, Sarah, 'An Experiment Practiced Only by a Few Ignorant Women': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the Smallpox Inoculation, and the Concept of Enlightenment', in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self, and Other in the Enlightenment*, ed. by Laura J. Rosenthal and Mita Choudhury (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), pp. 85-109
- Fish, Stanley, *Surprised by Sin: the Reader in Paradise Lost* (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1967)
- Fish, Stanley, *How Milton Works* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001)
- Fisk, Deborah Payne, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Fletcher, Anthony, *Gender, Sex & Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995)
- Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Lane, 1979)
- Fowler, John, and John Cornforth, *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974)
- Frankel, Hermann Ferdinand, *Ovid: a Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1956)
- Friedman, Donald M., *Marvell's Pastoral Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970)
- Froula, Christine, 'Rewriting Genesis: Gender and Culture in Twentieth-Century Texts', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 7, no. 2 (Autumn 1988): 197-220
- Gallagher, Catherine, 'Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth Century England', *Genders*, 1 (Spring 1988): 24-39
- Garber, Marjorie, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Penguin Books, 1993)
- Gardener, Helen, *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965)
- Garland Thomson, Rosemarie, *Extraordinary Bodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

- Gifford, Terry, *Pastoral* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)
- Gilsenan, Michael, *Recognising Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982)
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979)
- Gilman, Sander, *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988)
- Girouard, Mark, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978)
- Gosse, Edmund, 'Lady Winchilsea's Poems', *Gossip in a Library*, 1891; rpt. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp 121-32
- Gouch, Kimberly, 'The Public Life of actresses: prostitutes, or ladies?', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 58-78
- Graves, Robert and Felix Guirard, eds., *New Larousse Enclyopaedia of Mythology*, trans. by Richard Aldington and Deliaro Ames (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1959)
- Graves, Robert, ed., *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, 7th edition (London: Hamlyn, 1983)
- Greer, Germaine, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971)
- Greer, Germaine, *Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London: Viking, 1995)
- Grosz, Elizabeth, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)
- Grosz, Elizabeth, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 2001)
- Grundy, Isobel and Susan Wiseman, eds., *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740* (London: BT. Batsford Ltd., 1992)
- Grundy, Isobel, 'Medical Advance and Female Fame: Inoculation and its After Effects', *Lumen*, 13 (1994): 13-42.

Grundy, Isobel, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Theatrical Eclogue', in *Lumen*, ed. by Carol Gibson-Wood and Gordon D. Fulton (Edmonton, Alberta: Academic Printing and Publishing, 1998): 63-75

Grundy, Isobel, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Grundy, Isobel, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her daughter: the changing use of manuscripts', in *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800*, ed. by George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 182-200

Gubar, Susan, 'The Female Monster in Augustan Satire', *Signs*, 3, no. 2 (Winter 1977): 380-94

Gwilliam, Tassie, 'Cosmetic Poetics: Coloring Faces in the Eighteenth Century', in *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Veronica Kelly and Dorothea E. Von Mücke (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 144-159

Habermas, Jürgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Hagstrum, Jean, *The Sister Arts* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958)

Halkett, John, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony: A Study of the Divorce Tracts and Paradise Lost* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970)

Halsband, Robert, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956)

Halsband, Robert, 'The Lady's Dressing Room,' Explicated By A Contemporary', in *The Augustan Milieu*, ed. by Henry Knight Miller, Eric Rothstein, G. S. Rousseau (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 225-231

Halsband, Robert, 'Condemned to Petticoats': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as Feminist and Writer', in *The Dress of Words: Essays on Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature in Honor of Richmond P. Bond*, ed. by Robert B. White, Jr. (Kansas: University of Kansas Libraries, 1978), pp. 35 - 52

Halsband, Robert 'New Anecdotes of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu', in *James M. Osborn Festschrift, Evidence in Literary Scholarship*, ed. by René Wellek and Alvaro Ribeiro (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 241-246

Haslett, Moyra, *Pope to Burney, 1714-1779: Scriblerians to Bluestockings* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2003)

- Heffernan, Teresa, 'Feminism against the East/West Divide: Lady Mary's *Turkish Embassy Letters*', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 33, no. 2 (1999-00): 210-215
- Hellegers, Desiree, 'The Threatening Angel and the Speaking Ass': The Masculine Mismeasure of Madness in Anne Finch's 'The Spleen', *Genre*, 26 (Summer/Fall, 1993): 199-218
- Hellegers, Desiree, *Handmaid to Divinity: Natural Philosophy, Poetry and Gender in Seventeenth-Century England* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000)
- Hendricks, Margo and Patricia Parker, eds., *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)
- Hepple Hall, E., *Coffee Taverns, Cocoa Houses, and Coffee Palaces* (London, 1883)
- Hill, Bridget, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Women: An Anthology* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987)
- Hinnant, Charles, *The Poetry of Anne Finch: An Essay in Interpretation* (Delaware: Delaware Press, 1994)
- Hitchcock, Tom, and Michèle Cohen, eds., *English Masculinities: 1660-1800* (London and New York: Longman, 1999)
- Hobby, Elaine, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1646-1688* (London: Virago, 1988)
- Hollander, Anne, *Sex and Suits; The Evolution of Modern Dress* (Brinkworth, Wilts: Claridge Press, 1994)
- Hollows, Joanne, *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Holmes, Michael Morgan, 'The Love of Other Women: Rich Chains and Sweet Kisses', in *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Canon*, ed. by Marshall Grossman (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1998), pp. 167-90
- Hopkins, David, 'Dryden and Ovid's 'Wit Out of Season'', in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth century*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 167-190
- How, James, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003)
- Hulme, Peter, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)

Husain, Itrat, *The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938)

Husain, Itrat, *The Mystical Element in the Metaphysical Poets of the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1948)

Hutson, Lorna, 'Why the Lady's Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun', in *Women, Text and Histories 1575-1760*, ed. by Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 13-38

Irigaray, Luce, 'The Power of Discourse', *This Sex Which is Not One* trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 68-85

Irigaray, Luce, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985)

James, William, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1997)

Jasper, David, *The New Testament and the Literary Imagination* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987)

Jasper, David and Stephen Prickett, eds., *The Bible and Literature: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)

Jeffereys, Sheila, *Unpacking Queer Politics: A Lesbian Feminist Perspective* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003)

Jones, Vivien, 'The Seductions of Conduct: Pleasure and Conduct Literature', in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), pp. 108-132

Jones, Vivien, *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700 – 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Keith, Jennifer, 'The Poetics of Anne Finch', *SEL*, 38 (1998): 465-480

Kelley, Mark R., Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross eds., *Milton and the Grounds of Contention* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2003)

Kietzman, Mary Jo, 'Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* and Cultural Dislocation', *SEL* (Summer 1998): 537- 551

King, Kathryn R., 'Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 14, no. 1(Spring 1995): 77-93

Klein, Lawrence, 'Gender, conversation and the public sphere in early eighteenth-century England', in *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices*, ed. by Judith Still and Michael Worton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 100-115

Klein, Lawrence, 'Gender and the public/private distinction in the eighteenth century: some questions about evidence and analytic procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995): 92-109

Knellwolf, Christa, *A Contradiction Still: Representations of Women in the Poetry of Alexander Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

Kowaleski-Wallace, Elizabeth, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Kristeva, Julia, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

Landry, Donna and Gerald McLean, 'Of Forceps, Patents and Paternity', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 23 (1990): 523-43

Landry, Donna, *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting, Walking, and Ecology in English Literature, 1671-1831* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001)

Landry, Donna, 'Horsy and persistently queer: imperialism, feminism and bestiality', *Textual Practice*, 15, no. 3 (2001): 467-85

Laqueur, Thomas, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990)

Laver, James, *A Concise History of Costume* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969)

Lawrence, Karen, 'Orlando's Voyage Out', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 38, no.1 (Spring 1992): 253-277

Léfebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, trans. by D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)

Lemire, Beverly, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Hampshire: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1997)

Levine, Laura, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Lewalski, Barbara, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993)

- Lewis, Jane Elizabeth, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996)
- Lewis, Judith S., 'Separate spheres: threat or promise?', *Journal of British Studies*, 30, no. 1 (1991): 105-115
- Lillywhite, Bryant, *London Coffee Houses* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1963)
- Loomba, Ania, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998)
- Loscocco, Paula, 'Inventing the English Sappho: Katherine Philips's Donnean Poetry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 102, no. 1 (January 2003): 59-87
- Lowe, Lisa, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)
- Lowenthal, Cynthia, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994)
- Lynch, Deirdre, 'Overloaded Portraits: The Excesses of Character and Countenance', in *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Veronica Kelly and Dorothea E. Von Mücke (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 112-143
- McBride, Kari Boyd and John C. Ulreich, "'Eves Apologie': Agrippa, Lanyer, and Milton', in *'All in All': Unity, Diversity, and the Miltonic Perspective*, ed. by Charles W. Durham and Kristin A. Pruitt (Cranbury, NJ: Susquehanna University Press, 1999), pp. 100-111
- McBride, Kari Boyd and John C. Ulreich, 'Answerable styles: Biblical poetics and biblical politics in the poetry of Lanyer and Milton', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 100, no. 3 (July 2001): 333-354
- McColley, Diane Kelsey, 'Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*'. *SEL*, 12, no. 1, *The English Renaissance* (1972): 103-120
- McColley, Diane Kelsey, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983)
- McCormick, Ian, ed., *Secret Sexualities: A Sourcebook of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)
- McDonald, Helen, *Erotic Ambiguities: The Female Nude in Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001)

- McGovern, Barbara, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry: A Critical Biography* (Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 1992)
- McGovern, Barbara, 'Finch, Pope, and Swift: The Bond of Displacement', in *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. by Donald Mell (Newark and London: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp. 105-24
- McGrath, Lynette, 'Metaphoric Subversions: Feasts and Mirrors in Amelia Lanier's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*' *LIT*, 3 (1991): 101-13
- McGrath, Lynette, "'Let Us Have Our Libertie Againe': Amelia Lanier's 17th-Century Feminist Voice' *Women's Studies*, 20 (1992): 331-48
- McKendrick, Neil, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982)
- McMullan, Gordon, ed., *Renaissance Configurations: Voices/Bodies/Spaces, 1580-1690* (London: Palgrave, 2001)
- Mack, Maynard, *The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope, 1731-1743* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969)
- Mack, Maynard, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985)
- Mackie, Erin, *Market à la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in The Tatler and The Spectator* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002)
- MacLeod, Catherine, and Julia Marciari Alexander, eds., *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2001)
- Mahklouf, Carla, *Changing Veils: Women and Modernisation in North Yemen* (Austin Texas: University of Texas Press, 1979)
- Mahoney, John L., *The Whole Internal Universe: Imitation and the New Defense of Poetry in British Criticism, 1660-1830* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1985)
- Mallinson, Jean, 'Anne Finch: A Woman Poet and the Tradition', in *Gender at Work: Four Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Ann Messenger (Detroit: Wayne St University Press, 1990), pp 34-76
- Marland Horner, Thomas, *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1978)
- Martin, Randall, *Women Writers in Renaissance England* (London: Longman, 1997)

- Martindale, Charles, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986)
- Martindale, Charles, ed., *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art From the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Martz, Louis, *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954)
- Mermin, Dorothy, 'Women Becoming Poets: Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Anne Finch', *ELH*, 57, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 335-355
- Messenger, Ann, 'Adam Pos'd': Metaphysical and Augustan Satire', *West Coast Review*, 8 (1974): 10-11
- Messenger, Ann, *His and Hers: Essays in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Lexington, Kentucky: the University of Kentucky, 1986)
- Messenger, Ann, *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent: Studies in Augustan Poetry* (New York: AMS Press, INC, 2001)
- Middleton, John, *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954)
- Miller, Jane, 'Some versions of Pygmalion', in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 205-214
- Mueller, Janel, 'The Feminist Politics of Aemilia Lanyer's 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum'', in *Feminist Measures: Sounding in Poetry and Theory*, ed. by Lynn Keller and Christianne Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 208-236
- Mueller, Judith C., 'Imperfect Enjoyment at Market Hill: Impotence, Desire, and Reform in Swift's Poems to Lady Acheson', *ELH*, 66 (1999): 51-70
- Mulvey, Laura, *Visual and Other Pleasures: Theories of Representation and Difference* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989)
- Munns, Jessica, "'But to the touch were soft': Pleasure, Power and Impotence in 'The Disappointment' and 'The Golden Age'", in *Aphra Behn*, ed. by Janet Todd (Hampshire and London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1999), pp. 85-103
- Netzey, Ryan, 'Oral devotion: Eucharistic theology and Richard Crashaw's religious lyrics', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 44, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 247-273
- Nicolson, Nigel, *Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Athenaeum, 1973)

Nokes, David, *Jonathan Swift, A Hypocrite Reversed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Norbrook, David, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1984)

Nussbaum, Felicity, *The Brink of all We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1984)

Nussbaum, Felicity, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995)

Nussbaum, Felicity, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Oliensis, Ellen, 'Sons and Lovers: sexuality and gender in Virgil's poetry', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 294-311

Otis, Brooks, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970)

Otis, Brooks and R. Coleman, 'Structure and Intention in the Metamorphoses', *Classical Quarterly*, 21 (1971): 461-77

Parker, Rozsika and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981)

Parker, Todd C., *Sexing the Text: The Rhetoric of Sexual Difference in British Literature, 1700-1750* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000)

Parrish, Paul, 'Writing About Mother: Richard Crashaw and the Maternal Body', in *Performance for a Lifetime: A Festschrift Honoring Dorothy Harrell Brown: Essays on Women, Religion, and the Renaissance*, ed. by Barbara C. Ewell and Mary A. McCay (New Orleans: Loyola University New Orleans Press, 1997), pp. 223-38

Parrish, Paul, "'O Sweet Contest': Gender and Value in 'The Weeper'", in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. by John R. Roberts (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 127-39

Patey, Douglas Lane, 'Anne Finch, John Dyer, and the Georgic Syntax of Nature', in *Augustan Subjects: Essays in Honor of Martin C. Battestin*, ed. by Albert J. Rivero (Newark: Delaware, 1997), pp. 29-46

- Patterson, Annabel, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987)
- Peakman, Julie, *Lascivious Bodies: A Sexual History of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004)
- Pearson, Jacqueline, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642-1737* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988)
- Pierce, Leslie P., *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)
- Piggford, George, "'Who's That Girl?' Annie Lennox, Woolf's *Orlando*, and Female Camp Androgyny', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 283-299
- Pincus, Stephen, 'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffee Houses and Restoration Political Culture', *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (December, 1995): 807-34
- Pointon, Marcia, 'Killing Pictures', in *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, ed. by John Barrell (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 39-72
- Pollak, Ellen, 'Comment on Susan Gubar's 'The Female Monster in Augustan Satire'', *Signs*, 3 (Spring 1978): 728-32
- Pollak, Ellen, *The Politics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985)
- Prickett, Stephen, *Words and The Word: Language, Poetics and Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)
- Putnam, Michael J., *Virgil's Pastoral Art: Studies in the Eclogues* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970)
- Quaintance, Richard E., 'French Sources of the Restoration 'Imperfect Enjoyment' Poem', *Philological Quarterly*, 42, no. 2 (1963): 190-199
- Raitt, Suzanne, *Vita and Virginia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)
- Ranum, Orest, 'The Refuges of Intimacy', in *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. by Roger Chartier, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 3 of *A History of Private Life* (London: Belknap, 1992), pp. 207-63
- Rawson, Claude, *Satire and Sentiment 1660-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

- Reich, June L., 'Genderfuck: The Law of the Dildo', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 254-265
- Rendell, Jane, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London* (London: The Athlone Press, 2002)
- Revard, Stella P., 'Crashaw and the Diva: The Tradition of the Neo-Latin Hymn to the Goddess', in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. by John R. Roberts (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 80-98
- Reynolds, Margaret, *The Sappho Companion* (London: Vintage, 2001)
- Rich, Adrienne, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (London: Norton, 1993)
- Ricks, Christopher, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)
- Robinson, Edward F., *The Early History of the Coffee Houses* (London: K. Paul Trench Truebner & Co. Ltd., 1893)
- Rogers, Katherine M., *The Troublesome Helpmate, A History of Misogyny in Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966)
- Rogers, Katherine M., *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982)
- Rogers, Katherine M., and William McCarthy, eds., *The Meridian Anthology of Early Women Writers: British Literary Women from Aphra Behn to Maria Edgeworth 1660-1800* (New York and Ontario: Meridian/Penguin, 1987)
- Rogers, Katherine M., 'Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea: An Augustan Woman Poet', in *Early Women Writers 1600-1720*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 225-241
- Røstvig, Maren Sofie, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal*, 2nd edition (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1962-1971)
- Ruman, Leslie G., Linda K. Christian Smith with Elizabeth Ellsworth, eds., *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture* (London: The Falmer Press, 1988)
- Rumbold, Valerie, *Woman's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Sabine, Maurine, *Feminine Engendered Faith: The Poetry of John Donne and Richard Crashaw* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992)

Salvaggio, Ruth, 'Anne Finch Placed and Displaced', in *Early Women Writers: 1600 – 1720*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (London and New York: Longman, 1998), pp. 242-265

Schiebinger, Londa, 'The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth Century Science', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 23 (1990): 387-405

Schiesari, Juliana, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992)

Schiesari, Juliana 'The Face of Domestication: physiognomy, gender politics, and humanism's others', in *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 55-70

Sciana, Lidia, 'The Problem of Privacy in Mediterranean Anthropology', in *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, ed. by Shirley Ardener (Oxford and Providence, RI: Berg, 1993), pp. 87-111

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Epistemology of the Closet* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990)

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Sena, John F., 'Melancholy in Anne Finch and Elizabeth Carter: The Ambivalence of an Idea', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 1 (1971): 108-119

Shapiro, Susan C., 'The Mannish New Woman, Punch and Its Precursors', *The Review of English Studies*, 42, no. 168 (1991): 510-520

Simmons, Eva, ed., *Augustan Literature: A Guide to Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature, 1660-1789* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994)

Smyth, Ethel, *Impressions That Remained* (New York: Knopf, 1946)

Sontag, Susan, 'Notes on Camp', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 53-65

Sorge, Lynn, 'Eighteenth-Century Stays: Their Origins and Creators', *Costume*, 32 (1998): 18-32

- Spacks, Patricia Meyer, *Gossip* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986)
- Stack, Frank, *Imitations of Horace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)
- Steele, Valerie, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2001)
- Stewart, Alan, 'The Early Modern Closet Discovered', *Representations*, 50 (Spring 1995): 76-100
- Stiebel, Arlene, 'Subversive Sexuality: Masking the Erotic in Poems by Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn', in *Renaissance Discourses of Desire*, ed. by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 223-236
- Stone, Lawrence, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979)
- Styan, J.L., *Restoration comedy in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)
- Thompson, Roger, *Unfit for Modest Ears: A Study of Pornographic, Obscene and Bawdy Works Written or Published in England in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1979)
- Todd, Janet, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London: Virago, 1989)
- Traub, Valerie, 'The (In)Significance of Lesbian Desire in Early Modern England', in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. by Jonathan Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 62-83
- Trickett, Rachel, 'The Heroides and the English Augustans', in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian influences on literature and art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth century*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 191-204
- Trotter, David, *The Poetry of Abraham Cowley* (London: Macmillan, 1979)
- Trumbach, Randolph, 'London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture', in *Bodyguards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 111-136
- Underhill, Evelyn, *Mysticism*, 12th edition (New York: Meridian Books, 1955)
- Vickery, Amanda, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of women's history', *History Journal*, 36, no. 2 (1993): 383-414

- Vieth, David M., *Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's "Poems" of 1680*, Yale Studies in English, 153 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963)
- Wahl, Elizabeth, *Invisible Relations: Representations of Female Intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999)
- Walker, Julia M., ed., *Milton and the Idea of Woman* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988)
- Wall, Cynthia 'Editing Desire: Pope's Correspondence with (and without) Lady Mary', *Philological Quarterly*, 71 (1992): 221-37
- Waller, Margaret *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993)
- Walker, Carol Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982)
- Wallerstein, Ruth, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950)
- Whatling, Clare, 'Wittig's monsters: stretching the lesbian reader', *Textual Practice*, 11, no. 2 (1997): 237-248
- Wheeler, Roxann, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000)
- White, Micheline, 'Woman with Saint Peter's Keys?: Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611) and the Priestly Gifts of Women', *Criticism*, 45, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 323 - 342
- Whitford, Margaret, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Wigley, Mark, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender', in *Sexuality & Space*, ed. by Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 327-389
- Wilcox, Helen, "'Whom the Lord with love affecteth' Gender and the Religious Poet, 1590-1633", in *'This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 2000), pp. 185-207
- Wilkinson, Patrick Lancelot, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955)

- Williams, Andrew P., ed., *The Image of Manhood in Early Modern Literature: Viewing the Male* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999)
- Williams, Carolyn D., 'Breaking decorums: Belinda, Bays and epic effeminacy', in *Pope: New Contexts*, ed. by David Fairer (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 59-79
- Williams, Carolyn D., *Pope, Homer and Manliness: Some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Classical Learning* (London: Routledge, 1993)
- Wilson, Michael I., *The English Country House and its Furnishings* (London: Batsford, 1977)
- Wilson, Penelope, 'Classical Poetry and the Eighteenth-Century Reader', in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Isabel Rivers (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 69-96
- Wiseman, Susan J., 'What Echo Says: Echo in Seventeenth-century Women's Poetry', in *Renaissance Configurations: Voices/Bodies/Spaces, 1580-1690*, ed. by Gordon McMullan (London: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 212-233
- Wittig, Monique, *The Lesbian Body*, trans. by D. Le Vay (London: Peter Owen, 1975)
- Wittig, Monique, *Across the Acheron*, trans. by D. Le Vay and M. Crosland (London: The Women's Press, 1989)
- Woods, Suzanne, *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Wyrick, Deborah Baker, *Jonathan Swift and the Vested Word* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988)
- Yegenoglu, Meyda, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Zangen, Britta, ed., *Misogynisms* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004)
- Zeitz, Lisa M., and Peter Thoms, 'Power, Gender, and Identity in Aphra Behn's 'The Disappointment'', *SEL*, 37 (1997): 501-506

