

**LOOKING FOR LOVELACE:  
IDENTITY, STYLE AND INHERITANCE IN  
THE POETRY OF THE INTERREGNUM**

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the work of the Cavalier poet Richard Lovelace in two contexts in particular: first, within the political and cultural constraints operating during the period of the English Civil War and the Interregnum; second, against the background provided by the work of contemporary, often obscure, poets whose aesthetic and political attitudes help illuminate Lovelace's own.

The study examines a number of apparent paradoxes in the work and status of poets in Lovelace's *milieu*. The desire to fashion an individual and lasting literary persona in the mould of Ben Jonson, for example, conflicts with the practice of circulating essentially un-authored lyrics within an educated and exclusive male coterie. Lovelace's amatory verse is viewed through the prism of contemporary attitudes towards female constancy, but also through seventeenth-century poets' habitual borrowings from Latin and Greek sources. Lovelace's attempt at a lengthy pastoral partakes of the cultural poetics of nostalgia for a vanished Court and the genres associated with it. His interest in music and the fine arts inspires many poems which comment on contemporary politics while participating in an immemorial debate about art and artificiality versus nature. His prison and drinking songs have earned him a place in anthologies of poetry as a minor classic, but they also crystallize a conjunction of genres peculiar to the years between 1640 and 1660.

The thesis draws on much unpublished material and on rare early books and pamphlets, and hopes to provide an unprecedented sense of Lovelace's creative conditions. Recovering Lovelace's verse as much as possible in the context of his contemporary admirers, imitators, influences, and readers brings to the fore the intense intertextuality of seventeenth-century poetry generally speaking, but also illustrates the ways in which poets transcended those "trans-shifting times" of political and religious unrest.

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# INTRODUCTION

Lovelace's poetic reputation has begun to shift in the past two decades, although he has not been subject to any major re-evaluation or textual revision, and he remains linked with the Cavalier love poets who, as Lawrence Venuti points out, are generally marginalised in literary studies.<sup>1</sup> Reviews of the most recent edition of his selected poems (1989) commented that Lovelace and others "are undeservedly neglected by the majority of modern readers",<sup>2</sup> but the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century consensus that he was both slovenly and obscure has given way to a recognition of Lovelace as an ambitious and politically aware writer.<sup>3</sup> A larger than usual selection of his work has been included in two major anthologies of Cavalier verse from the 1970s, and he has moved towards the front rank of poets writing during the civil wars.<sup>4</sup> The volume of scholarly criticism directed at Lovelace, either singly or in the company of other Cavalier poets with whom he is often associated, has also gained momentum in recent years. Previously he had been joined with the metaphysicals of an earlier generation, or with the neo-classical self-styled "Sons of Ben", or was regarded as one of that "mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease" but with currently unacceptable attitudes towards women. Historical criticism, however, has revealed

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Our Halcyon Days: English Prerevolutionary Texts and Postmodern Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Michael G. Brennan, "Review of Gerald Hammond's *Richard Lovelace: Selected Poems*", *Notes and Queries*, 36: 1 (1989), pp. 105-6.

<sup>3</sup> Generally dismissive comments by Edmund Gosse (in *The English Poets, Vol II: Ben Jonson to Dryden*, ed. Thomas Humphry Ward, (London: Macmillan, 1892), pp. 181-2), Herbert Grierson (in *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of The Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. xxxvi), and W.J. Courthope (in *A History of English Poetry, Vol. III* (London: Macmillan, 1924), pp. 287-91) should be compared with extended treatments in Raymond A. Anselment (*Loyalist Resolve: Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988)), Thomas N. Corns (*Uncloistered Virtue; English Political Literature 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)), James Loxley (*Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)), and L.E. Semler (*The English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998)).

<sup>4</sup> See Hugh MacLean, ed., *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets* (New York: Norton, 1974) and Thomas Clayton, ed., *Cavalier Poets: Selected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

him as writer who confronts the turmoil of his times and articulates the changing dimensions of the Cavalier world.<sup>5</sup>

Lovelace's reception has been varied. In his own time he was not a literary success. Between 1640 and 1660, most publications of verse were a nostalgic act of homage to the vanished court, or tributes to the Royalist dead. Lovelace's two volumes appeared in company with the works of those who were deceased (Carew, Suckling, Cartwright), or exiled (Waller, Heath).<sup>6</sup> Royalist publishers such as Humphrey Moseley encouraged a taste for retrospective delights: an expectation which Lovelace's poetry does not entirely conform to, resisting the trend towards the production of unified volumes of love poetry such as Cowley's *The Mistress* or Nicholas Hookes' *Amanda*. A century later, Samuel Johnson found no room for him in the *Lives of the Poets* (though he did find room for Lovelace's direct contemporary, Abraham Cowley); nor was he rediscovered by inquisitive Romantic critics like Coleridge and Lamb. The first posthumous edition was by W. Singer in 1817. Though another edition, by Hazlitt, appeared in 1864, Lovelace failed to attract heavyweight critical attention, and lived on in anthologies of English verse, becoming almost entombed in faint praise by the end of the nineteenth century. Nor did his fortunes improve in the wake of the seventeenth-century revival led by T.S. Eliot in his essays of the early 1920s, despite new editions and C.H. Wilkinson's more definitive one of 1925. In *Revaluation*, F.R. Leavis elevated Carew and Cowley above Suckling and Lovelace in the "line of wit" that ran from Jonson through Marvell to Pope, and Marius Bewley was the only "Scrutineer" to discuss Lovelace at length. Apart from a discussion of "The Grasshopper" by Cleanth Brooks, Lovelace was also generally overlooked by the American New Critics. His classical heritage was ignored in the many studies of the influence of Latin and Greek poets on seventeenth-century poets: studies which tend to focus on Jonson and Herrick (and Cowley). Despite fitting the categories of her study, Lovelace was relegated to a footnote in Maren Røstvig's *The Happy Man*. A full-length study has not appeared since those by Cyril Hartmann (1925) and Manfred Weidhorn (1970).

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<sup>5</sup> The term "Cavalier", though perhaps not strictly applicable to Suckling and Carew, is still useful and Interregnum poetry refers frequently to "Cavalier", "Puritan" or "Roundhead".

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the contexts of publication during the civil wars and the Interregnum see Warren Cherniak, "Books as Memorials: The Politics of Consolation", *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 21 (1991), pp. 207-17.

More recently, the existence of political elements in the love poetry has been the object of critical interest, and Lovelace's embeddedness in the dislocations of his own times has moved to the centre of scholarly attention. Some poems, like "The Grasshopper", have received exhaustive commentary, and "To Althea, From Prison" and "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" are rarely absent from any mention of Lovelace.<sup>7</sup> This thesis, however, proposes to examine Lovelace's oeuvre within the context of the poetry being read and being written at the time, as well as building on the judgement of previous critics. A.D. Cousins, in an article on Cleveland, writes that Lovelace has become the Cavalier poet, "who most sensitively notes the threats to the courtly order".<sup>8</sup> Graham Parry judges likewise: "The poet who most tellingly registered the effect of political division and war on the leisured and refined society of Stuart England was Richard Lovelace".<sup>9</sup>

But the upheavals registered by Lovelace are not only political: his poetry manifests an awareness that a previously unified culture was breaking into several spheres of aesthetic discourse, and that the hierarchy of cultural artefacts was shifting and fragmenting. The resulting dissolution would include the coming autonomy of poetry and of literature, and become a crucial stage in the emergence of a notion of literary creativity, as Michael McKeon argues.<sup>10</sup>

Against this background, the thesis argues that Lovelace's poetry marks a transition in literary discourse from a poetics of collaboration, assimilation, and imitation, to the individually overseen printed volume; from texts demanding performance and music, to those more suited to private, silent reading; from poetry directed at a patron and a circumscribed élite, to poetry written for an anonymous public and for money; and from an indifference to writing as a marker of identity to the acceptance of a printed text as the author's property. Lovelace's two volumes of poetry record and reflect upon a history no longer entirely within a single discursive sphere, and on the consequent refashioning of the poet's identity. They negotiate with a Puritan culture increasingly represented as a threatening "other", and depict the

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<sup>7</sup> All references to poems by Lovelace are taken from *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. C.H. Wilkinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930); citations appear in parentheses within the text.

<sup>8</sup> A.D. Cousins, "The Cavalier World and John Cleveland", *Studies in Philology*, 78 (1981), pp. 61-86.

<sup>9</sup> Graham Parry, *The Seventeenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1603-1700* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> Michael McKeon, "Politics of Discourses and the Rise of the Aesthetic in Seventeenth-Century England", in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 49.



struggle to appropriate, in outmoded literary forms, a new theory of selfhood – a word first recorded in the year of *Lucasta*'s publication. The detailed examination of Lovelace's work undertaken in this thesis demonstrates the fragility of the authorial self so carefully cultivated by Jonson, and its distance from our own fundamentally Romantic conflation of identity with singularity and originality. As Gerald MacLean notes, the new emphasis of historical criticism in literary history has shown convincingly "the problematic status of the authorial self".<sup>11</sup> Early modern subjectivity is resistant to and fearful of the fixity involved in new modes of cultural aesthetics and new methods of censorship. This is evident in Lovelace's use of his poetic inheritance, his search for a representative style, and his attempt to maintain a conception of himself as soldier, poet and lover against the disintegrating and consuming forces of political and social change: a poetic identity that is nonetheless fluctuating, adaptable and metamorphic.

*Lucasta* appeared in 1649, the best date (according to Kevin Sharpe) to pick in order to understand the profound changes that occurred in ideology and culture which made the end of the seventeenth century "a new intellectual world".<sup>12</sup> In this revised *Weltanschauung* Biblical and classical language ceases to inform political discourse, the cosmos is no longer a model for political harmony, and empiricism separates reason from feeling. These tensions are all inscribed in Lovelace's polyvocal and chromatic poetry, which struggles to define a poetic voice against the outworn conventions of courtly love poetry and within new modes of cultural production. Many of these anxieties are affirmed within the amatory verse towards which this thesis gravitates. Lovelace's poetry seeks both to appropriate the female imagination as muse, and to avoid becoming a mirror image of the objectified woman his poetry deciphers and rewrites. The poet fears becoming another's text: a continual reproduction of a self that can never be "its own". The typically abject and helpless Petrarchan lover is released from bondage by asserting a self that is heroic and chivalric, and one that emerges more forcefully in Lovelace's poetry than that of his contemporaries, who consistently prefer love to war and are content to retire to the country. The image of the art-loving, effeminate and uxorious courtier of pre-war *libertin* poetry is overlayed in Lovelace with that of the lover as warrior, incorporating

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<sup>11</sup> Gerald M. MacLean, *Time's Witness: Historical Representation in English Poetry, 1603-1660* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 17.

those extremes of the images of masculinity provided by Charles I and Cromwell. As Cavalier fortunes waned, however, the image of the former is also conflated with the figure of the woman who is, in Lovelace's poetry, always outside the grates. As Bronwen Price argues, lost meanings and values are associated with a female figure who becomes the site of a lost presence.<sup>13</sup> This figure is, however, also the locus of multivalent perceptions about the nature of the arts. In some poems, such as "La Bella Bona Roba", Lovelace appears to strip away all artifice in a gesture of poetic iconoclasm; in others he adds intensity through the use of religious, often Catholic, images. The Puritan self, helpless within the doctrine of predestination, is affirmed as the courtly lover – re-written and unredeemed.

This study addresses Lovelace's poetry in its socio-literary context, and is concerned with exploring notions of originality, identity and imitation in his work, particularly in the first volume, and in those generally ignored poems in his second volume which continue to negotiate an aesthetics of subjectivity. In the 1640s Lovelace was still involved in a circle of writers who (with the exception of John Hall) shared both literary and political interests and whose textual productions were often collaborative.<sup>14</sup> By the 1650s, however, Lovelace was an isolated figure, whose circumstances remain obscure. Rather than examining collaborative practices, however, the thesis addresses literary transmission and imitation within a cultural climate in which proprietary attitudes towards literature were both discounted and dangerous.

As Mary Hobbs notes when indicating some of Marvell's unnoticed sources: "To a modern, such borrowings are implicitly seen as 'copying' in a derogatory sense. Amongst seventeenth-century writers, however, there was clearly as different attitude."<sup>15</sup> Jonson had eloquently expounded the doctrine of imitation and enshrined

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<sup>12</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 123.

<sup>13</sup> Bronwen Price, "'Th'inwards of th'Abyesse': Questions of the Subject in Lovelace's Poetry", *English*, 43 (1994), p. 134.

<sup>14</sup> These included Stanley, Sherburne, Shirley, Hammond, Brome and Herrick. Stanley's coterie is discussed in Stella P. Revard, "Thomas Stanley and 'A Register of Friends'", in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), pp. 148-73. Mario Praz dismisses borrowing and imitation as valid poetical practices in his "Stanley, Sherburne and Ayres as Translators and Imitators of Italian, Spanish and French Poets, I and II, *Modern Language Review*, 20 (1925), pp. 280-94, 413-419.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Hobbs, "Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies", in Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths, eds., *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), I. p. 186.

it at the heart of Renaissance theories of literature.<sup>16</sup> This weight of tradition, the collective response to personal and social calamity informs and gives authority to the poet's private views, and also defines the sensibilities of a culture. Lovelace is unusual in his synthesis of the common stock of poetic epithets with philosophical explorations of the nature of his art. He is, however, also typical in the imitative, accumulative and allusive way he participates in a common classical inheritance and in the poetry of his time: not necessarily that written by canonical or sub-canonical writers, but the literature that forms a generally ignored, if prolific, cultural substratum in the mid-century. As H.M. Richmond points out, there was only one Milton, but there were hundreds of lyricists whose works were unescapable for their contemporaries. These Stuart poets acted as a catalyst of social sensibility and possessed at the time more influence than individuals now regarded as more imposing.<sup>17</sup> This thesis explores Lovelace's poetry in conjunction with many of these neglected poets of the early seventeenth century: Thomas Randolph; Robert Heath; William Habington; William Strode; as well as his contemporaries now little mentioned or anthologised. These include among others: Sir Francis Wortley, Thomas Weaver, Thomas Jordan, Sir Roger L'Estrange, Eldred Revett, Henry Bold and Hugh Crompton. As Kevin Sharpe points out, the beliefs and attitudes of an age are not encoded exclusively within the great texts, which are "in some respects the least representative".<sup>18</sup> Although author-centered, this study moves towards a more discursively focused analysis of Lovelace, based on the work of Lois Potter, James Turner and James Loxley; and also informed by the theoretical approaches of text-based researchers including Arthur Marotti and Harold Love. My method is that proposed by David Norbrook when he suggests examining poems as they were composed and circulated "In political flux with lesser known contemporaries"<sup>19</sup> Reading Lovelace in this way reveals the complex relationships involved in literary practice in the mid-century: a practice that was more mobile than homogeneous. Harold Love characterises this as an "accumulation of subcultures", in which oral, scribal and visual cultures mixed with the newer print media.<sup>20</sup> James Loxley

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<sup>16</sup> See Richard Jenkyns, *The Legacy of Rome: A New Appraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 178-82.

<sup>17</sup> H.M. Richmond, *The School of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 264.

<sup>18</sup> Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England*, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Harold Love, "Early Modern Print Culture: Assessing the Models", *Parergon*, 20: 1 (2003), p. 51.

summarises this approach as accepting that the appearance of tangible and collective identities in the early 1640s “necessarily involved the discursive modes within which individual writers operated and identities were articulated”.<sup>21</sup>

Although the printed volume has an apparent completeness, signals authorial autonomy, and allows the products of artistic labour to be owned and distributed as a commodity, its very unity threatens a closure unavailable to works circulating orally or in manuscript. As the essential relation of author to text became codified in law, and as the traditional feudal markers of identity become disrupted, the body of the text becomes the articulated body of the poet, now subject to uncontrolled replication through print. This multiplication of selves is articulated by Lovelace as a reduction of self and as a loss of control. It involves conformity and uniformity. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the tales of Echo and Narcissus and the motif of resemblance, resonate so much in Lovelace and in poetry of the mid-century. The self that is made newly visible through the technology of the mirror, and repeated in print, is in danger of being incapable of *inventio*. The parody of creativity in the Narcissus myth inscribes the dilemma of every artist: the potential loss of a capacity for origination. The much circulated “If shadows be a picture’s excellence” is not only a comment on painterly technique, but a recognition that in the new Puritan realism, as in Plato, there is only imitation.

The isolated dis-associated writer is, in many ways, a product of Lovelace’s own time and Lovelace’s first volume appeared during an explosion of printed material.<sup>22</sup> It was not until the Restoration that the single-author edition of lyric poetry, like *Lucasta*, had been established as a familiar phenomenon, and even then some writers, such as Rochester, remained in manuscript.<sup>23</sup> To become a print author is to acquire a new social identity.<sup>24</sup> Although poetry was a small proportion of texts produced, it was still regarded as the apex of literary achievement.<sup>25</sup> The “stigma of

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<sup>21</sup> Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars*, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> James Holstun talks of the polyglot babble of print in this period with over 20,000 publications available, in the introduction to his *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution* (London: Cass, 1992), pp.1-9.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 262-3.

<sup>24</sup> Love, “Early Modern Print Culture”, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 211.

print” and the ”Cavalier contempt for the professional poet”<sup>26</sup> took longer to disappear than the availability of technology might suggest and there were few of Lovelace’s contemporaries who publicly claimed their “fugitive” poems for the press as James Shirley did.<sup>27</sup> Until 1640 there had been a dearth of printed poetry; the manuscript miscellany had been the main vehicle for its transmission,<sup>28</sup> and the analysis of Lovelace’s poetry in this thesis indicates that this earlier mode of circulation affected not only the production, but also the reception of his poetry. Regarded as definitive by current editors, printed volumes of poetry took time to establish their authority. Tracing versions of “To Althea” supports the proposition that readers and writers have resisted the defining and limiting qualities of print.

The first two chapters of the thesis focus on the inception and fate of Lovelace’s most famous two poems, and the formation and dissolution of poetic identity they entail. Between 1640 and 1660 a unique combination of two previously distinct sub-genres or modes, drinking songs and prison poetry, emerged. Lovelace’s “To Althea. From Prison” is the most complete synthesis of a variety of themes occurring in these genres. The prisoner of love is conflated with the soul trapped in the body. Drink, however, offers liberation from physical constraints and an immersion within the convivial circle of staunch Royalists. Lovelace combines Anacreontic jollity with allusions of Stoic seriousness to revive ideas of Jonsonian hospitality within the confines of a gaol; the *locus amoenus* of virtue shifts from the country estate to the overcrowded metropolis. The poem is a collage of familiar elements: Greek *carpe diem* themes, Latin moralising, Petrarchan conceits, theological consolations and loyalist sentiment. The poem was set to music, disseminated in manuscript, re-titled, dismembered and imitated, surviving into the Restoration as a love song. Much of its fame rests on a myth, for which there is no evidence, that Lovelace composed it while imprisoned in London in 1642.

Lovelace’s other prison and drinking lyrics are also positioned within a polemicised context in which Cavalier poets did not hesitate to use popular ballad forms to ensure wider transmission of their own propaganda, and to counter Puritan

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<sup>26</sup> See J.W. Saunders, “The Stigma of Print”, *Essays in Criticism*, 1 (1951), pp. 149-57, and *The Poems of William Habington*, ed. Kenneth Allott (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), p. xxiii.

<sup>27</sup> See “A Postscript to the Reader”, in James Shirley, *Poems 1646 Together with Poems from the Rawlinson Manuscript* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), pp. 79-80.

pamphlets depicting them as roaring (and dangerous) drunks. This absorption upwards of comic techniques such as the use of octosyllabic doggerel and the proliferation of “mock songs”, reflects a new concern with a mass readership made available through the development of cheaper print. In the Renaissance, élite culture had sought to demarcate itself from lower levels of literary cultures on moral grounds.<sup>29</sup> Until the civil wars, the government’s efforts at censorship had been directed towards this élite, but the subsequent proliferation of radical writing shifted the focus to popular literature.<sup>30</sup> Simultaneously, poetry composed by court poets began to assimilate previously marginalised forms.<sup>31</sup> In comparison with some of his contemporaries, in particular Alexander Brome, Lovelace resists this trend, but his most popular poem, “To Althea, From Prison”, nevertheless acquired an autonomy as a popular song. However, the drinking songs of the mid-century, while inclusive of new vocabulary and forms, exclude beer drinkers, Puritans, non-poets and women. Their banishment from this sphere of homosocial activity is consistent with their exclusion from another sphere in Lovelace’s verse, that of the military. The motifs of love and war, and of love *as* war, occur frequently in his poetry and are explored in the next chapter as songs of valediction.

Lovelace has been characterised as the epitome of Cavalier chivalry: a retrograde figure singing the swan-song of a dying caste. As Sharon Seelig notes, “Lovelace has received little recent critical attention, certainly none that would challenge the conventional notion of gallant cavalier and witty lover”.<sup>32</sup> Chapter Two reveals Lovelace as an active poet and soldier, but unwilling to become the new Sidney his admirers expected him to be. Lovelace’s poetry aims to free the subject from amorous encounters, but his heroic attitude is unusual. “To Lucasta. Going to the Warres” sank without trace in his own time. Its subsequent popularity is mostly the

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<sup>28</sup> Hobbs, “Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies and Their Value for Textual Editors”, op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>29</sup> This is argued by Sharon Achinstein, “Audiences and Authors: Ballads and the Making of English Renaissance Literary Culture”, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 22: 3 (1992), pp. 311-26.

<sup>30</sup> See Jonathan Barry, “Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective”, in Tim Harris, ed., *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500–1850* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 88-9.

<sup>31</sup> Previously ridiculed “pot-poets” and “ballad makers” were happily imitated by Royalists who were quick to spot the propaganda value of easily transmitted simple lyric forms. Timothy Raylor points out the contribution made by different literatures to what has been narrowly isolated as Cavalier writing in his *Cavaliers, Clubs, and Literary Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), p.19.

<sup>32</sup> Sharon-Cadmon Seelig, “My Curious Hand or Eye: The Wit of Richard Lovelace”, in Claude J.; Pebworth and Ted-Larry Summers, eds., *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 151.

result of its appeal to the “muscular Christianity” of Victorian editors. Lovelace’s treatments of the theme of absence and loss, and his exploration of the gendered discourse of grief and tears, highlights the tensions surrounding masculinity and identity in this period, and the difficulty of evoking attitudes closer to incipient modernity within the outworn and parodied tropes of Platonic love. Whereas drowning in hyperbolical seas of Canary wine is an acceptable reaction to political defeat, immersion in tears is not to be countenanced. Women are portrayed as leaky unbounded vessels; their ability to overflow boundaries is threatening. Although loosened hair is an attractive and easily read sign of sexual compliance, Lovelace, like Herrick, prefers the artificiality of braids and neatly dressed hair. Women need to be constrained and enclosed so that the illusory stability of the Cavalier self can be maintained.

The inconstancy of women is especially threatening, and this independence of body and mind can be linked with political and economic changes on the land, as an analysis of “The Scrutinie” in Chapter Three demonstrates. This, one of Lovelace’s most celebrated poems, is one of the least original in his corpus. An apparent argument for male promiscuity, it is an effective summation of the economic powerlessness of women, who wait for their value to be increased or their treasure to be rifled. When mobile, women are denigrated; when immovably chaste they acquire the abilities of Medusa. Much of this is encapsulated in poems which feature, in Baroque extravagance, Cupid, “the little Excellence of hearts”, often engaged in scenes of violence and torture. The poet makes no claim like Ovid or Horace for lasting fame but anticipates a future in which he will burn in the letters of Lucasta’s name – not his own. These amatory poems articulate the pose of the careless Cavalier for whom love is nothing more than “a game at tables”, but are also emblematic of the disintegration of the Royalist cause. Images of fragmentation and dissolution dominate these lyrics and are derived not only from the conflict of the civil wars, but from the representation of the individual subject, as well as the body politic as text. The wreckage of the body is the wreckage of the older polity, touched by the gathering crisis of a world newly organised as text.<sup>33</sup>

One of the characteristics of the new print culture, disturbing for poets as well as for those in government, was the speed and profligate nature of its distribution. In

these characteristics it mimicked the worst qualities of whoring, consuming, spendthrift women (a misogynist stereotype promulgated in Renaissance conduct manuals and adhered to by writers across the political spectrum). Lovelace is not the only poet to equate women with texts. The way in which Lovelace deciphers women, using them as material for his own work, forms the subject of the fourth chapter, “Woman as Muse”. Lovelace’s poetic coat – his “garment of style” – is woven from the deceptions and illusions women practice. Sidney had placed poetry firmly in the male domain, and Lovelace concurs. Large numbers of women had been attracted to London in the 1640s, and Lovelace, apparently encountering city prostitutes, produces a discourse in which this artistic hierarchy is maintained. The male poet interprets, lifting veils of deceit, but the woman using fashionable clothes, or make-up, is engaging in unnatural arts.

The poet is also a hoarder, digesting texts and reading women to provide himself with material with which to spin his verse. In supplying himself with a female muse Lovelace follows the elegiac tradition, which demands that poets be faithful to the same woman throughout a single book of poetry. Lovelace expresses his adherence to this tradition by naming his collection of poems for print *Lucasta*. Love, however, proves confining rather than liberating and one way of restoring the self frequently annihilated by an icy Petrarchan mistress is to refigure her in poetry. Like Apollo in Marvell’s “The Garden”, when Lovelace pursues women he does so that he may pluck the green laurel, the crown of poetry itself.

The flux and contingency involved in the creative process resonates with the dominant *leitmotif* of Lovelace’s poetry: metamorphosis. Not only does this theme provide a rich source of fictional narratives it is also a metaphor for the distortions of the times: the transformation of a harmonious “golden age” into one ruled by elements which appear in Lovelace’s poetry as hideous beasts. Metamorphosis is also emblematic of Lovelace’s poetic practice: material is ingested and transformed, and the poet himself, like mythological weavers of words, is also transformed in unexpected ways. In the social sphere, the role and identity of the poet is challenged by the incursion into the literary sphere of women and of writers outside the courtly male coterie. The artist or writer, rather than the abject lover, has the potential to control and assimilate change; he can inhabit any style. One art can change into

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<sup>33</sup> This argument is presented by Francis Barker in an examination of *Hamlet* in *The Tremulous Private*



another, woman can become text, but sameness and repetition, the fate of Echo, imply loss of power, such as that which besets the oft-rejected lover. The penultimate chapter places Lovelace within the context of the painters and musicians he was involved with, and argues for a reading of his poetry that does not remove the performative element which was still so important in the mid-century. As Peter Davidson writes, song lyrics are marginalised by literary standards of judgement which foreground difficulty and argumentation. Yet, “Writing words for music remained a high-status literary activity until the 1670s”.<sup>34</sup> In his poems to painters Lovelace subtly confirms the primacy of poetry. It is still for him a living, changing art, not a commodity in the new culture of private collecting. Lovelace conceives of poetry as existing in a multi-valent relationship with the other arts. Their power to deceive (with its feminine connotations) and their power to evoke a physical response in the reader, viewer or listener are topics of more interest to him than the simple praise of a woman’s portrait or her singing.

Many of Lovelace’s early lyrics were set to music, and numerous poems deal with music as a subject. Contextual recovery of lyrics written as songs may be difficult, but an awareness of the importance of music (which did not disappear during the Interregnum as is often assumed) clarifies the use of different poetic forms. The boom in music publishing which began with Playford in 1651 further removed control of their poems from poets. Playford published mostly re-titled, truncated lyrics of the 1630s with Royalist sympathies, but without always attributing them correctly, if at all. Nevertheless, by keeping these poems in circulation Playford ensured the continuing popularity of lyrics such as “To Althea...” long after the single-author volumes were forgotten. The musical basis of poetry written by Lovelace and others has generally been ignored in literary treatments of poems. Under the Stuarts, poetry had been linked with drama and the beginnings of opera, but these links were loosened during the Commonwealth, and musicians became less interested in shaping the music to bring out the sense of the words. Lovelace stands on the borders of the dissolution of a coherent and unified mode of cultural production, of which the Stuart masque proved the final exemplar.

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*Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), pp. 29-41.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse, 1625-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. lv.

The thesis concludes with what appear to be Lovelace's most retrograde and cavalier productions: his pastoral, "Aramantha", and three other poems in the pastoral mode. These, however, reveal Lovelace as a poet of transition who articulates the instability of the early modern subject and the ultimate failure of the embattled self to reject the triumph of the feminine. The soldier, Alexis, enters a private, feminised imaginative space and is forced to recognise that the necessary boundaries of pastoral, or of any other art are the same dangerous artifices used by women. To release the exclusively masculine self is for Lovelace to establish a new privacy, which is a choice, not a prison. Lovelace's pastorals thus link the imprisoned Royalist of "To Althea" in his first volume with the fly that circles around the glass of burnt claret in the posthumous poems, and in its willingness to give up identity in a potentially dangerous immersion, asserts a genuine spiritual freedom.

Pastoral poetry is commonly judged as escapist, and Stuart pastoral in particular as disguised panegyric. Lovelace's engagement with the genre is unusual, however, and reveals loyalism along with recognition of the changing material conditions for the court poet. Lovelace articulates the uncertainty of poets without a court, aristocratic landowners without land, exiles without a country retreat, and poets without a new language or new poetic form to express the sudden inversion of fixed relations. Whereas dramatists such as Shirley or Davenant could continue to write after 1660 without re-fashioning themselves, poetry mostly turns to satire or to the Pindarics of Cowley. This final chapter argues that Lovelace's "Aramantha", with its Virgilian echoes, represents the faint hope of a resurgence in Royalist fortunes, tempered with the realisation that the consolations of the pastoral genre are a convenient artifice. Lovelace is aware that the magical politics of the Stuart court in which the benevolent influence of the monarch fertilises nature no longer form the basis of a literary discourse or a political consensus.

# 1: PICNICS ON PARNASSUS AND THE LIBERTY OF AN IMPRISONED ROYALIST

“To Althea, From Prison” remains in effect Lovelace’s poetic monument: revered by literary critics and enshrined in anthologies, but also living in the general consciousness. In his time it was the most popular and imitated of Lovelace’s poems. As such it provides a focus for exploring the poetic practice of mid-century poets. In it Lovelace provides the most complete synthesis of two sub-genres that merged for a time in the mid seventeenth-century: the poetry of imprisonment and that of classical drinking songs. This chapter examines Lovelace’s poems that deal with one or both of these themes in their socio-political and literary context. The distinctive elements of Lovelace’s poetry are set against the background of inherited modes, and against the emerging Cavalier awareness of the propaganda potential of poetry that uses popular elements and can be widely disseminated.<sup>35</sup>

“To Althea, From Prison” (78) opens and closes with images of confinement and with assertions of liberty which frame the defiant discourse of conviviality in the middle two stanzas. Lovelace moves from the commonplace of the courtly lover as a willing but metaphorical prisoner of his devotion to the equally over-used trope of enjoying spiritual freedom despite bodily imprisonment. The image of the entrapped lover, often linked with the enchaining properties of women’s hair, is almost ubiquitous in love lyrics of the time, while the free and unconfined soul forms the substance of prison consolations derived from Boethius and St Paul. Lovelace combines them to form a complex meditation on the notion of that “liberty”, poetic

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<sup>35</sup> Robert Ashton notes the rapidity with which the Royalists turned negative images to their advantage in his *The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution, 1603-1649* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), pp. 176-9. See also Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 188, where Sharpe writes that the wars of pamphlets and propaganda were “no less important than the conflict of arms”. The virtues or vices of ale or sack were a popular topic in prose, but the poetry all favours drinkers. A comparison might be made between the uses of poetry and prose during the English revolution, and that occurring a century earlier during the Pilgrimage of Grace when “Much of the propaganda produced by the rebels seeking a restoration of traditional rights ... was in the form of ballads and poems and most produced by the Henrican authorities was in the form of proclamations and tracts”. See Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Politics and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 7.

and literal, with which every stanza of the poem ends.<sup>36</sup> This liberty is linked with the early modern reformulation of subjectivity in which the body is no longer the prison of the soul but the locus of self-expression. As a result, Althea's hair reaches forward to the prisoners of Romantic poetry, and Lovelace retains his pre-eminence as "more than Raleigh or Wilde our chief prison poet".<sup>37</sup> Although prison was experienced by almost every writer during the tumultuous times of the civil wars, it is "To Althea" that embodies this experience most completely, and is responsible for re-inventing prison philosophy as a cavalier convention.<sup>38</sup>

The Interregnum is especially rich in prison lyrics. Imprisonment provides as much of the Cavalier mode as country-house retirement or the enduring association of the King's supporters with wine, women and song, and it is remarkable how many Caroline poets and dramatists were imprisoned between 1640 and 1660. A non-exhaustive list would include Sir Francis Wortley, who published a number of memorials to the Royalist dead and his *Characters and Elegies* of 1646 from the Tower; William Cartwright, whose work re-surfaces in Lovelace's "Vintage to the Dungeon", who was imprisoned in 1642 and died the following year; and the prolific pamphleteer and sometime poet, Sir Roger L'Estrange, who was sentenced to death in 1644 but allowed to escape from Newgate in 1648. In the next decade Thomas Weaver was arrested for treason in 1654 following the publication of his *Songs and Poems of Love and Drollery*, but the judge released him as a "scholar and man of wit". William Davenant, who was responsible for the last of the Stuart masques and narrowly escaped execution, spent 1650-1652 in prison where he finished the last book of *Gondibert*. Abraham Cowley, arrested in connection with a Royalist uprising, prepared his poems for the press in prison in 1656, and Sir Richard Fanshawe worked on his "Selected Parts of Horace" while imprisoned in Whitehall in 1651. Sir Thomas Urquhart translated three books of Rabelais in prison in 1653; John Cleveland, the popular satirist, spent three months in goal in 1655, where his literary output consisted of a letter to the Lord Protector; but James Howell transformed his eight years in the

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<sup>36</sup> Although Lovelace "sings" his loyalty he does not include freedom of the press in his concept of "liberty", and according to the analysis of Frederick Siebert this particular freedom was not won under Parliament. See Frederick S. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776; the Rise and Decline of Government Control* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1965), pp. 183-201.

<sup>37</sup> Gerald Hammond "Richard Lovelace and the Uses of Obscurity", *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London: British Academy, 1985), p. 205.

<sup>38</sup> Douglas Bush goes on to characterise "To Althea" as a Royalist broadside in *The Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1992), p. 122.

Fleet into the “Familiar Letters” — a literary success. Not all these poets wrote out of their experience, and prison poetry was also written by those who did not spend time in gaol: Charles Cotton, Henry Vaughan, Alexander Brome and Thomas Jordan, for example.

In contrast with Lovelace’s layered and multi-vocal poem to Althea, most Cavalier prison lyrics fail to contest the language of Boethian fortitude. “I am no captive I, I find / My soul still free and unconfi’n’d”, writes Thomas Weaver.<sup>39</sup> Mildmay Fane concludes his “De Tristibus. To a Cat bore me company in confinement” with: “For I’ll conclude no storm of Fortune can / Prevail ore Caesar’s barque, an honest Man.”<sup>40</sup> Sir Roger L’Estrange, in his much circulated “The Liberty and Requiem of an imprisoned Royalist”, is equally predictable: “Whilst a good Conscience is my bail, / And Innocence my liberty. / Locks, bars, walls, lonenesse, tho together met, / Make me no prisoner, but an Anchoret.”<sup>41</sup> These all echo Lovelace’s final stanza:

Stone Walls doe not a prison make,  
Nor I’ron bars a Cage;  
Mindes innocent and quiet take  
That for an Hermitage;  
If I have freedome in my Love,  
And in my soule am free;  
Angels alone that sore above,  
Injoy such Liberty.

Lovelace does not appear to have known (or utilised) the work of his predecessors in the genre of prison poetry (such as the Earl of Surrey) in composing his poem, though Mario Praz traces a connection between Voiture and “To Althea”.<sup>42</sup> Charles d’Orleans, in his English prison poems, refers to himself as an anchorite enclosed with “ston”, but the vocabulary of prison poetry in the centuries preceding Lovelace is predictable.<sup>43</sup> This final stanza embodies a problem Lovelace returns to in many kinds of lyrics: that of the reciprocity between historical reality and the literature that forms its counterpart. The use of the prison as an allegorical model for the Cavaliers in

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<sup>39</sup> “A Song in Prison”, in Thomas Weaver, *Songs and Poems of Love and Drollery* (London: 1654), p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Mildmay Fane, *Otia Sacra* (London: 1648), p. 170.

<sup>41</sup> *Parnassus Biceps* (London: 1656), p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> Mario Praz, “A Review of *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. C.H. Wilkinson”, *Modern Language Review*, 21 (1926), pp. 319-22.

defeat, expressed in terms of stock poetic images, is typical of Lovelace's technique. Lovelace does not seek to relate or draw conclusions from his own life experience in a mimetic fashion: his poems instead provide a key to the understanding and interpretation of a historical situation. The metaphorical prison of love establishes a useful pivotal point for defeated Royalists to muse on the fortunes and misfortunes of political life. The closed space is an opportunity for the mind to roam freely, but it is the determined and defiant camaraderie of a group resistant to mourning their defeat that rings through Lovelace's poem. In his refusal to relinquish the very things that make up the Horatian and Epicurean good life – wine, women and song – Lovelace also undermines the philosophical basis of previous prison literature. And as James Loxley argues, the poem's transformation of prison into a hermit's retreat dissolves the punitive intent of the gaolers, while his unconfined "free Soule" can resort to "unconstrained royalist epideictic".<sup>44</sup>

"To Althea" also inscribes a tension between the poetry produced for and by a male coterie, and that written by the solitary individual. This association of prison and poet has become in many ways a Romantic and individualistic conception. Thus Byron's imprisoned poet, Tasso can say; "For I have battled with mine agony, / And made me wings wherewith to overfly / The narrow surface of my dungeon wall."<sup>45</sup> Lovelace, however, was writing at a time when the concept of poetic individuality was shifting. The fellowship of the first person plural in the final stanza "Whilst we have freedom in our love" which occurs in manuscript is replaced by the solitary "I" in the printed poem.<sup>46</sup> Lovelace accepts the communal nature of the drinking ritual but reserves the poet's right to "sing" as an individual and to do so loudly. The interdependent circles of self and society form the basis of a series of inclusions and exclusions: Lovelace's audience is greater than the circumference of his prison cell, but it does not include a public beyond the classically educated male coterie of court poets. Other poets contemporary with Lovelace show an awareness that the loyalist point of view, expressed most forcefully in the prison and drinking poems discussed here, demanded easily recycled form and content that could appeal to a wide range of

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<sup>43</sup> A.C. Spearing, "Prison, Writing, Absence: Representing the Subject in the English Poems of Charles D'Orleans", *Modern Language Quarterly*, 53: 1 (1992), p. 85.

<sup>44</sup> James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil War: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 217.

<sup>45</sup> "The Lament of Tasso", in Byron, *Poetical Works*, ed. Frederick Page (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 367.

<sup>46</sup> See BL Ms Harl. 2127, f. 20.

readers and listeners. Cavalier poems presented the scattered Royalists as an identifiable and unified group, even if the poems celebrating the “roaring boys” sometimes confirmed an unflattering Puritan stereotype. Lovelace avoids this by setting an image of freedom against an awareness dulled by drink or trapped by love. “To Althea” was written and circulated at a time when the Royalist cause was not yet completely defeated, and it attempts to escape from the fetters of courtly and Petrarchan verse which, like the golden curls of so many Cavalier poetic mistresses ensnare the poet and mute the individual voice.

Horace is a presence in the poem’s assertion of both innocence and inner freedom.<sup>47</sup> The development of this theme has led to assumptions of Lovelace’s “festive Stoicism” by Raymond Anselment, though there are only glimpses of the Stoic in this or any other poem by Lovelace.<sup>48</sup> Within the genre of prison poems, Stoicism appears more frequently in poems of consolation to those imprisoned (Felton was a popular addressee), or in those verse epistles that encourage ladies not to weep.<sup>49</sup> Anselment writes of Lovelace’s “Stoic sense of happiness”, or the “Stoic ideal of tranquillity”, but Lovelace does not exhibit the detachment commonly associated with the virtuous person who rises beyond a cyclical and uncontrollable history. Stoicism implies quietism, and (as the discussion of “To Lucasta. Going to the Warres” in Chapter Two demonstrates) Lovelace is singular in his determination to avoid passive acceptance of circumstance, while recognising the limitations of his position. The speaker in “To Althea” never achieves the sort of imaginative excursion Coleridge can make in “This Lime Tree Bower my Prison”: he is spiritually fettered by his devotion to his mistress, and even more so to his King. Lovelace places the King as the ordering centre of his universe, and makes his political involvement clear. The poet might be imprisoned, but the writing of the poem is itself a militant action. As Marvell writes in “Tom May’s Death”:

When the sword glitters o’er the judges’ head,

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<sup>47</sup> Horace, “Carmen XXII, Integer vitae”, in *Q. Horatii Flacci: Carminum Liber I*, ed. T.E. Page (London: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 22-3.

<sup>48</sup> Raymond A. Anselment, *Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988), pp. 97-126.

<sup>49</sup> Stoical advice is most often given by those *not* in prison and takes the form of verse epistles such as “To F. in the Tower” (Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 199, f. 62), or “On a prison” (BL MS Add. 47111, f. 93), dated 1647. Pre-war lyrics expect copious weeping by women. (See Chapter Two.) The amatory, moderated by the political, is found in, “To a fayre lady weeping for her husband” which urges her to limit her grief and finishes ‘If not let one teare be spent / And twin dissolve the Parliament’. (BL MS Harl. 2127, f. 69.)

And fear has coward churchmen silenced,  
Then is the poet's time, 'tis then he draws,  
And single fights forsaken virtue's cause.<sup>50</sup>

The man of the seventeenth century, we are told in an examination of the popular writing of the mid seventeenth-century Stoic Joseph Hall, “associated Stoicism chiefly with three things: first, and most important, suppression of the passions; second, paganism; third, an overweening trust in the efficacy of human reason.”<sup>51</sup> The stoical virtues were prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance. Lovelace, on the contrary, celebrates his mistress, the joys of drinking and a passionate attachment to the monarchy. Imaginative power, not rationality, will lift him above the stone walls and their potential for melancholy, though not above history. As Hugh Crompton, the author of numerous drinking songs, writes on the contrast between Cavalier and Roundhead, “We live by our Melody, he by his mettle”.<sup>52</sup> The Stoic aimed at achieving tranquillity, but the transcendence of immediate miseries in Lovelace's poem relies on more material satisfactions. The prisoner recoups his spiritual resources in the accepted Christian fashion (by retreating to a hermitage and by becoming an anchorite), but only so that he can more loudly and shrilly voice the King's virtues. “To Althea” asserts the Orphic power of poetry, yet makes no claim about Lovelace's own versifying: his identity as poet or lover is subsumed to that of loyal subject.

### 1.1. Lovelace's other prison poems

Imagery of confinement and punishment appears frequently in both volumes of Lovelace's poetry. Sometimes the lover, in the guise of an insect, is trapped by politics (156), sometimes he is bound to his mistress with the same links she uses to tame a bird of prey (103, 142): at others he imagines himself chained for having suggested that Lucasta or Castara were unworthy of the poetic praise they inspire (151). Poems dealing more centrally with the theme of imprisonment are varied, but show no awareness that for other writers the “prison muse” could be a figure of fun as

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<sup>50</sup> Frank Kermode, ed., *Andrew Marvell: Selected Poetry* (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 157.

<sup>51</sup> Audrey Chew, “Joseph Hall and Neo-Stoicism”, *PMLA*, 65 (1950), pp. 1130-45.

<sup>52</sup> Hugh Crompton, *Pierides or the Muses Mount* (London: 1658), p. 141. Cowley ends his ninth anacreontic with his own couplet “Let me alive my pleasures have, / All are Stoicks in the Grave”, David Hopkins and Tom Mason, eds., *Abraham Cowley: Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1994), p. 7.



well as of serious polemic.<sup>53</sup> Poems to imprisoned ladies are scarce and Lovelace apparently addresses “A Guiltlesse Lady imprisoned; after penanced” (84) to a prostitute. One of the few to comment on this poem, Weidhorn sees it as “a series of complimentary paradoxes addressed to a pretty whore.”<sup>54</sup> The woman in this poem reverses her captivity not by a stoic resolve but by capturing the heart of her keeper:

See! That which chaynes you, you chaine here;  
The Prison is the Prisoner;  
How much they Jaylor’s Keeper art,  
He bindes your hands, but you his Heart.

In the poem’s central section Lovelace focuses closely on the pleasures of bondage:

The Gyves to Rase so smooth a skin,  
Are so unto themselves within,  
But blest to kisse so fayre an Arme  
Haste to be happy with that harme.

And play about thy wanton wrist  
As if in them thou so wert drest;  
But if too rough, too hard they presse,  
Oh they but Closely, closely kisse.

Lovelace’s poem on the guiltless lady then moves the focus out by imagining the woman as a public spectacle, a barefoot penitent and wearing a sheet:

And as thy bare feet blesse the Way  
The people doe not mock, but pray,  
And call thee as amas’d they run  
Instead of prostitute, a Nun.

The merry Torch burnes with desire  
To kindle the eternall Fire,  
And lightly daunces in thine eyes  
To tunes of *Epithalamies*

The sheet’s ty’d ever to thy Wast,  
How thankfull to be so imbrac’t!  
And see! Thy very very bands

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<sup>53</sup> See for instance George Wither’s “Of Felo and his Poetry” which suggests that prison provides instant inspiration, and “Newgate is the muses’ habitation”, in John Wardroper, *Love and Drollery* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 125.

<sup>54</sup> Manfred Weidhorn, *Richard Lovelace* (New York: Twayne, 1970), p. 57. Mario Praz comments on possible antecedents: “Without such poems as A.G. Brignole Sale’s on whipped courtesans...giving the lead, Lovelace’s song on a guiltlesse lady would probably never have been written” (“A Review of *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*”, op. cit., p. 321).

Are bound to thee, to binde such Hands.

Lovelace moves in these stanzas towards the ceremonialism noted in Herrick's poems, where the physical is used in the service of the spiritual.<sup>55</sup> The penanced woman is symbolic of a penanced Church, stripped of decoration by the Puritans. She reappears in an epithalamium written for Charles Cotton as a chained lady led prisoner whose simple robe "Made infinite Lay Lovers to adore" (173). The linking of the feminine with the carnal was commonplace, but in promoting the dualism of body and soul the subjection of body to spirit is ambiguous, as Lovelace's poem implies. Bodily delights were linked with carnality and criticised for their inclusion in pagan or Popish rituals, yet martyrdom and torture are welcomed as contributing to a spiritual ecstasy. Lovelace recognises the renewed focus on the body in such visible and sensual chastisement.

In this poem he includes images of both Christian and classical celebrations with ironic references to the wedding ritual. Hymen, the god of marriage is typically represented by a youth bearing a torch and appears more usually in poems such as Herrick's "A Nuptial Song on Sir Clipsby Crew and His Lady" or is lampooned in Suckling's "Ballad upon a Wedding". In comparison with Lovelace's ambiguous allusions other contemporary poems dealing with female prisoners are rhetorical exercises. Davenant's "The Countess of Anglesey led Captive by the Rebels, at the Disforresting of Pewsam" is conventionally Petrarchan: the woman's beauty outdoes the sun and her voice makes the trees dance, though she does wear "Manacles of soft Haire".<sup>56</sup> Whereas Lovelace's pictures the woman's martyrdom, in James Shirley's "To His Mistress Confined"<sup>57</sup> the younger lover imagines entering the woman's prison chamber and suffering immolation in her candle, as does the anxious young man in Samuel Pick's "Sonnet".<sup>58</sup>

Unusually for Lovelace, a chronicle of Parliamentary oppression appears in "To Lucasta. From Prison" (48), a poem which confirms Lovelace's reputation as a "prison poet". In his introduction, Wilkinson notes that this poem: "obviously cannot

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<sup>55</sup> See Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 91.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.337

<sup>57</sup> James Shirley, *Poems 1646. Together with Poems from the Rawlinson Manuscript* (Menston: Scholar Press, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> Samuel Pick, "Sonnet: To His Mistresse Confin'd", in L. Birkett Marshall, ed., *Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1936), p. 165.

have been written during the poet's imprisonment in the Gatehouse in 1642 and there is no evidence that he was again in prison before 1648 when the lines must have been written" (xlix). James Loxley argues that this poem examines the nature of imprisonment while presenting resistance; other commentators focus on the knotty syntax of the first stanza.<sup>59</sup> Gerald Hammond quotes Wilkinson's paraphrase which he then unravels, but finds that it introduces a poem "whose progress from this point is carefully languid".<sup>60</sup>

Lovelace begins his prison invocation to Lucasta with his usual conflation of love with restraint:

Long in thy Shackels, liberty,  
I ask not from these walls, but thee;  
Left for a while anothers Bride  
To fancy all the world beside.

This "Epode" aims to strike a Horatian note with the sub-title and the first stanza of Lovelace's poem borrows from Horace's *Odes* (I. xxii): "Cares harass us", writes Horace, but when these bonds are released a man is at ease. This, however, can also be a time of vulnerability.<sup>61</sup> With this echo Lovelace implies that patient fortitude may not be the most appropriate response to the catalogue of woes that his poem continues with. First, Lovelace characteristically rejects the woman outside the bars so that he can "confine his free Soule" to a worthier object. Then he expresses his disappointments in peace, war, religion and Parliament in turn. Liberty and Property are discounted since "it is knowne / There's nothing you can call your owne". The tenth stanza rejects the "Publick Faith" on which money was borrowed, and which was popularly an object of satire. Cleveland wrote a lengthy poem on this topic which was printed anonymously in a collection of poems and songs published in 1662.<sup>62</sup> "The Publique faith" in Cleveland's poem is an insatiable monster eating up the land and to which greedy merchants have foolishly contributed. Cleveland's poem makes explicit what Lovelace leaves until his final stanzas; lending money to the Public Faith was an action against the King and Cleveland clearly identifies it as on a par with the destruction of organs, stained glass and the book of common prayer.

<sup>59</sup> Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars*, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>60</sup> Hammond, "The Uses of Obscurity", op. cit., p. 212.

<sup>61</sup> *Q. Horatii Flacci: Carminum Liber I*, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> *Rump or an Exact Collection of the Choycest Poems and Songs relating to the Late Times. By the most Eminent Wits from Anno 1639 to Anno 1661*. (London: 1662), pp. 97-101.

Cleveland finishes his poem with a distinct echo of Lovelace's final stanzas by placing those who are against the King as being in "Error" and "Involv'd in Mists of black Rebellious Night". Lovelace ends:

XI

Since then none of these can be  
Fit objects for my Love and me;  
What then remains, but th'only Spring  
Of all our loves and joyes? The KING.

XII

He who being the whole Ball  
Of Day on Earth, lends it to all;  
When seeking to eclipse his right,  
Blinded, we stand in our owne light.

XIII

And now an universall mist  
Of Error is spread or'e each breast,  
With such a fury edg'd, as is  
Not found in th'inwards of th'Abyesse.

XIV

Oh from thy glorious Starry Waine  
Dispense on me one Sacred Beame  
To light me where I soone may see  
How to serve you, and you trust me.

It is clear from these final lines that this poem is not addressed to Lucasta but to the King, who has moreover taken over Lucasta's usual light-dispensing function.

Light as a medium of divinity has sources in Christian and Hermetic doctrine, in Plotinus and in Donne. Lovelace usually relates the King to the sun, but in this poem he seems doubtful as to whether the clouds will be entirely dispersed. As Royalist political fortunes waned, this clichéd image of the King acquired some more shadows.<sup>63</sup> Mildmay Fane's "To Prince Charles in Aprill 1648 Upon the Hopes of his Return", for instance, has: "Seems not the Sun more Glorious in his ray / When as the Cloud that shadowed is blown away."<sup>64</sup> The final four stanzas of Lovelace's epode

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<sup>63</sup> The King, escaping in disguise, appears in a broadsheet poem, "C.R. in a cloud" which advises, "Keep in thy Cloud / And there safe thee Shrewd". Quoted in Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 65.

<sup>64</sup> Mildmay Fane, *Otia Sacra*, op. cit., p. 86.

have attracted some critical attention. Critics concur by finding a world-weariness in Lovelace's anticipation of one fragile beam of light.<sup>65</sup>

In poems where the woman is apostrophised more consistently she becomes a reliable solace and illumination as in Tatham's "*Ostella weeping for my imprisonment*":

Should they Ecclipse my eys the sight  
Of *Day*, and shut me up in *Night*,  
Those *eyes* must then afford me *Light*.<sup>66</sup>

This is the content of "*Night: To Lucasta*" (126) in which Lucasta is able to beat "Night to her proper Hell". Lucasta, like Amarantha loosening her hair, appears to have power over the natural world:

Night! Loathed Jaylor of the lock'd up Sun,  
And Tyrant-turnkey on committed day;  
Bright Eyes lye fettered in the Dungeon,  
And Heaven it self doth they dark Wards obey:  
    Thou dost arise our living Hell,  
    With thee grones, terrors, furies dwell,  
    Untill *Lucasta* doth awake,  
And with her Beams these heavy chains off shake.

Although Lucasta plays the role of the Biblical angel in the first stanza, she is reduced to a conventional Petrarchan mistress by the third, with its images of a world both freezing and burning but liberated to a perpetual dawn.

"*The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret*" (169), dedicated as is "The Grasshopper" to Charles Cotton, has some direct and unusually naturalistic references to imprisonment:

What Fate was mine, when in mine obscure Cave  
(Shut up almost close Prisoner in a Grave)  
Your Beams could reach me through this Vault of Night  
And Canton the dark Dungeon with Light!  
Whence me (as gen'rous *Spahy*'s) you unbound,  
Whilst I now know my self both *Free* and Crown'd.

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<sup>65</sup> See M.L. Donnelly, "Caroline Royalist Panegyric and the Disintegration of a Symbolic Mode", in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., "*The Muses Common-Weale*": *Poetry and Politics in the Seventeenth Century* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), pp. 163-76. See also Bruce King, "Green Ice and a Breast of Proof", *College English*, 27: 7 (1965), pp. 511-5.

<sup>66</sup> John Tatham, *Ostella or the Faction of Love and Beauty Reconciled* (London: 1650), p. 41.

This late poem presents a passive speaker, reliant on circumstance, not the festively defiant prisoner who speaks of Althea. Manfred Weidhorn finds these lines “clearly autobiographical”, although they contradict the lasting image of the Cavalier, quaffing and carelessly scribbling verses even in adversity.<sup>67</sup>

## 1.2. “No such liberty”: Lovelace in prison

The circumstances of Lovelace’s composition of “To Althea” are unclear, but an enduring mythology has been constructed about the poem being written while Lovelace was incarcerated. None of the commendatory poems affixed to the 1649 *Lucasta*, nor the elegies in the posthumous volume, refer to Lovelace as writing while in prison. Only Lovelace’s kinsman, Thomas Stanley, in his 1670s retrospective “Register of Friends”, focuses on what has become accepted history, and he does so using Lovelace’s own words:

Thy boldly-Loyall hand, which durst present  
The first Petition of thy native Kent,  
Wrought its own Chains; well did th’ Usurpers know  
They were not free themselves, while thou wert so,  
But thy unbounded Spirit did elude  
The caution of that guilty Multitude;  
There thou thy Love and Loyalty didst sing,  
The Glories of thy Mistris, and thy King.<sup>68</sup>

There is one mention of Althea, but not of prison, in John Tatham's *Ostella* (1650), in a dedication “Upon my noble friend, Richard Lovelace Esquire”, which concludes:

By thy sweet Althea’s voice  
We conjure thee to return;  
Or we’l rob thee of that choice  
In whose Flames each Heart would burn:  
That inspired by her and Sack  
Such company we will not lack  
That Poets in the Age to come  
Shall write of our Elizeum.<sup>69</sup>

The engraving attached to *Lucasta* (1649) with its six cupids proclaims him as a writer of love lyrics; his companion poets eulogise him as soldier and lover; but it is

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<sup>67</sup> Weidhorn, *Richard Lovelace*, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>68</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1962), p. 360.

<sup>69</sup> *Ostella*, op. cit., pp. 82-3.

as a prison writer that he is most eulogised. In 1642, after presenting the Kentish petition, Lovelace was imprisoned in the Gatehouse at Westminster for two months, and he was again confined, after a period spent overseas (this time in Peterhouse) in 1649 while his first volume of poems languished at the Licensor's.<sup>70</sup> There is no satisfactory evidence that he wrote any poems during either period of detention, despite the eagerness of subsequent editors to assign "To Althea" and also "To Lucasta. From Prison" a contemporaneous date of composition. Victorian editors in particular have found this image of Lovelace, (as long lasting as that of Chatterton in his garret) congenial. In his 1861 volume, *Prison Books and their Authors*, John Langford reprints the last stanza of "To Althea" as his frontispiece and introduces the poem as one "he wrote in the Gatehouse prison, Westminster ... a deathless crown to the memory of Lovelace".<sup>71</sup> A piece on London architecture in *Notes and Queries* of 1869 speaks of Westminster Hospital as the place where Lovelace sang "Stone Walls do not a prison make".<sup>72</sup> H.M. Margoliouth in a review of Wilkinson's edition argues "the poem not only could have been but almost certainly was written during the 1642 imprisonment".<sup>73</sup> In a rather negative introduction to the poems of Lovelace in T.H. Ward's *The English Poets* (1892), Edmund Gosse points out that "To Althea" comes with an extra-textual aura: "The romantic circumstances under which Lovelace wrote these lines have given to them a popular charm."<sup>74</sup>

In 1953 John P. Cutts wrote "we have solid proof that 'To Althea' was written in 1642 during the poet's confinement in the Gatehouse".<sup>75</sup> In his wide-ranging exploration of the Cavalier mode, Earl Miner even seems to be under the impression that Lovelace was under a sentence of death. "When a man can sing his caged linnet notes so sweetly while expecting death, we have to admit the truth of the song."<sup>76</sup> Most recently, in *Literature and Revolution*, Nigel Smith refers to Lovelace "writing poetry in prison".<sup>77</sup> Only Manfred Weidhorn queries in passing whether "To Althea,

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<sup>70</sup> All the biographical details available are in pages xxiv-xl of Wilkinson's edition.

<sup>71</sup> John Langford, *Prison Books and their Authors* (London: William Tegg, 1861), p. 203.

<sup>72</sup> *Notes and Queries*, 3 (April 1869), p. 353.

<sup>73</sup> "The Poems of Richard Lovelace", *Review of English Studies*, 3: 9 (1927), pp. 89-95.

<sup>74</sup> Edmund Gosse, "Richard Lovelace", in *The English Poets*, ed. Thomas Humphry Ward, (London: Macmillan, 1892), II. p. 182.

<sup>75</sup> John P. Cutts, "John Wilson and Lovelace's 'The Rose'", *Notes and Queries* (April 1953), pp. 153-4.

<sup>76</sup> Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 210.

<sup>77</sup> Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 253.

From Prison” grew directly out of Lovelace’s experience.<sup>78</sup> Lovelace’s reputation as a prison poet does not rest entirely on his critics and editors, since two of the manuscript copies of “To Althea” refer specifically to his imprisonment in their titling of the poem.<sup>79</sup> Titles, however were often added or composed by manuscript and anthology compilers and the poetic convention of placing an author as writing “from prison” confirmed readers’ expectations of immediacy and authenticity in the emerging genre of early modern life writing.

### 1.3. “To Althea”: inheritance, imitation and echoes

Lovelace’s poem provides an interesting focus for an examination of the sense of individuality experienced by poets of the mid-century. Their general lack of concern about attribution or plagiarism, their lavish borrowings from authors living and dead, their ventures into simple forms and into the possibly dangerous medium of print are all evident in the poems which respond to aspects of “To Althea”. Lawrence Manley, in discussing the receptivity of early-modern poets to classical influence, suggests that the practice of imitation “was itself a symptom of the seventeenth-century formation of metropolitan character”.<sup>80</sup> The almost formulaic repetition of tropes, vocabulary and allusions, found when Lovelace’s poetry is examined in the context of the many lesser-known poets of his time, was initially stimulated by print culture. Verse collections of the time frequently advertise that they contain material “never before printed”, but these early anthologies mirror in form and content the manuscript collections from which they derive.

“To Althea” fuses language, imagery and conceit found in other poems, but is unusual in its incorporation of usually distinct discourses, and the poem’s movement, as Bronwen Price suggests, is one of continual transformation and dislocation.<sup>81</sup> This complexity sets Lovelace apart from other prison poetry produced in the publishing surge of the 1640s. Roger L’Estrange’s “The Liberty of the Imprisoned Royalist”, which appeared anonymously in 1647 and was once attributed to Lovelace, has more Stoicism than is to be found in “To Althea”, but is also less multi-vocal. L’Estrange compares manacles with a “sweetheart’s favours”, and labours the image of the bird –

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<sup>78</sup> Weidhorn, *Richard Lovelace*, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>79</sup> Wilkinson reprints this manuscript version on p. 277.

<sup>80</sup> Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 488.



in a cage which has become a hermitage. Despite being sometimes titled “Merry Thoughts in a Sad Place” it omits both festivity and communality. The solitary “I” stands alone, but although, like Lovelace, the prisoner sings “Glory to my King”, the narrative voice appropriates the persona of the monarch who was confined to the custody of the Duke of Northumberland at Hampton Court in 1647 and imprisoned at Carisbrooke in 1648. The poem is a disguised consolation to the King, one of many produced around this time.<sup>82</sup> In the same year Sir Francis Wortley published a popular prototype for the many polemicised lyrics which appeared later in the Interregnum: “A loyall song of the royall feast, kept by the prisoners in the Tower in August last, with the names, titles and characters of every prisoner. By Sir F.W. knight and baronet, prisoner”. In comparison with Lovelace’s abstract and universal concerns, Wortley provides a detailed historical account. He lists the hardships suffered by Royalist prisoners who had had their estates confiscated but with no allowance made for their maintenance despite repeated petitions such as his: “A true Relation of the Unparalleled Oppression imposed upon the Gentleman Prisoners in the Tower”(1647). Wortley published his petition in June. In August the King sent the prisoners two fat bucks and this gesture, according to the title matter, “was the origin of the present ballad to be sung to the tune of Chevy Chase”. Making no claims to poetic greatness Wortley acknowledges in the final stanza:

This if you will rhyme dogrell call,  
 (That you please you may name it)  
 One of the loyal traytors here  
 Did for a ballad frame it:  
 Old Chevy Chase was in his mind;  
 If any suit it better  
 All those concerned in the song  
 Will kindly thank the setter.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Bronwen Price, “‘Th’ inwards of th’Abysses’: Questions of the Subject in Lovelace’s Poetry”, *English*, 43 (1994), p. 129.

<sup>82</sup> BL MS Add. 47111, ff 17, 79, 83 has several anonymous prison poems written in the King’s voice and dated 1647. See also Alexander Brome’s “A Copie of verses, said to be composed by his Majestie, Upon His First Imprisonment in the Isle of Wight” (London, s.n., 1648), and “A Royal Lamentation” attributed to King Charles the First” in Richard Chevenix Trench, ed., *A Household Book of English Poetry* (London: Macmillan 1868), pp. 112-3. (The editor does not give a source for this poem.) Some “Verses by King Charles I”, apparently written in Carisbrooke Castle in 1648 are printed in *Percy’s Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. Edward Walford (London: Frederick Warne, 1880), p. 266. Sympathy for the King clearly inspired many prison lyrics. “Kings have a Keeper, so have we” writes the anonymous author of “The Prisoner’s Song”, Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter: The English Parnassus* (London: 1655), pp. 22-3.

<sup>83</sup> I have used the version printed in *Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages* (London: Percy Society, 1841), III. pp. 87-99.

Wortley's twenty-five stanzas give the names and history of his fellow inmates. The ballad opens and closes with a rousing toast to the King and Queen "wee'l drink them o're and o're again" and laments the political and financial disasters which have befallen the King's supporters. There is a reference to the desolation of Goldsmith's Hall where the compounder's committee sat, and the Leveller John Lilburne is democratically included. The eight line stanzas are in traditional ballad metre and despite Wortley's catalogue of woes the poem is jauntily loyalist. Wortley is open about writing a *ballad*; such literature in the Renaissance had been considered "low culture" which might occasionally be consumed but certainly not written by persons of status.<sup>84</sup> The ballad form, with its progression of episodes, limited variation and lack of ornamentation, made it easily adaptable and memorable – especially when attached to a well-known tune.<sup>85</sup> The wide dissemination of ballads throughout the country was an item of continuous annoyance for the Puritans during the Interregnum, but press censorship had also been heavy-handed under Charles I, and not all Royalist supporters were impressed by those "pot-poets" who found their inspiration in liquor.<sup>86</sup>

Lovelace's kinsman Thomas Stanley was a patron of writers who had suffered during the civil wars, and in London he provided a meeting place for amongst others Shirley, Hammond, Hall and possibly Lovelace and Herrick. In 1647 he began to make arrangements to publish his poems privately and two volumes appeared in 1651. These included a short "Song" whose final stanza confirms the lover as a willingly fettered prisoner and whose first two stanzas use Lovelace's tone and rhythm to create a complement to a mistress:

When I lie burning in thine eye,  
Or freezing in thy brest,  
What Martyrs, in wish'd flames that die,  
Are half so pleas'd or blest?<sup>87</sup>

Lovelace writes:

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<sup>84</sup> See Sharon Achinstein "Audiences and Authors: Ballads and the Making of English Renaissance Literary Culture", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 22: 3 (1992), pp. 311-26.

<sup>85</sup> Tunes such as "Chevy Chase" were used continually by balladeers to spread news, as ballad singers appeared anywhere there was a crowd. In broadside ballads the tunes were not printed but alluded to.

<sup>86</sup> Achinstein, "Audiences and Authors", op. cit., p. 318. The concern of the authorities is evident in an Ordinance of September 1649 which orders that all ballad singers have their books and pamphlets seized and be whipped as common rogues at the House of Correction.

When I lye tangled in her haire,  
And fettered to her eye;  
The *Gods* that wanton in the Aire,  
Know no such Liberty.

Stanley's editor remarks that this is an interesting example of Stanley's method of amalgamating conceits from various poems to form a new one, and that he probably saw Lovelace's poem in manuscript. Generally, imitations of "To Althea" retain the poet as prisoner. John Tatham, for instance has a "prison poem" to Ostella which mimics much of Lovelace, but focuses on inner freedom:

Wast not those precious tears for me,  
Since Innocence cannot be free,  
They sin that Live at Liberty.

I boast a freedome more Immense  
Than he that is in ev'ry Sense  
A Pris'ner to his Conscience.<sup>88</sup>

This is also the case with Tom Weaver's "A Song in Prison":

I am no captive, I, I find,  
My soul still free and unconfin'd  
And though my body have the doom,  
To be cag'd up in a close room;  
Yet since my minde is guiltlesse, this  
No bondage, nor no thraldome is.

Let such for captives truly go,  
Whose guilty souls do make them so;  
When num'rous crimes link't and combin'd:  
Like pondrous chains fetter the minde:  
When thoughts are black and gloomy, this  
True bondage, and true thraldome is.

But when a spotlesse Innocence  
Shall witness that no foul offence,  
But Loyalty unto my King  
Caus'd my restraint; who will not bring  
A testimony straight, that this  
No bondage nor no thraldome is.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> Tatham, *Ostella*, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>89</sup> Weaver, *Songs and Poems of Love and Drollery*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Weaver omits the fellowship of drinkers and also Lovelace's contrast of the civilised restraints of love provided by Althea with the uncivilised nature of life under Parliament, stressing instead the innocence of the loyal prisoner. Weaver's song is interesting since the manuscript copies of "To Althea" also have "A spotlesse minde and innocent" in the last stanza for the printed "Mindes innocent and quiet".<sup>90</sup> The former is a strident assertion of guiltlessness, the latter has more of Seneca and Perseus and traces of the medieval *contemptus mundi*. The freedom conveyed by innocence is a commonplace in mid-seventeenth century prison poetry, but Lovelace's "If I have freedom in my Love, / And in my soule am free" is more conditional than Weaver's "testimony". The rhetoric of "If ... then" is popular with Lovelace and signals a wished-for state which may never eventuate.

A more direct echo of "To Althea" is Patherick Jenkyns' "To Amorea, from Prison", which was published in 1661 but appears to have been written earlier (as there is a mention of "Royal Slaves" in the fourth stanza which could be a reference to Cartwright's popular play of the 1630s). Jenkyns begins by addressing Amorea: "Come away and blesse the Grate / With thy all commanding Eye." The king is unmentioned, but the prisoners' noble minds scorn the "tyrannie" that has placed them in chains.<sup>91</sup>

#### 1.4. "I ever will follow / The juice of Apollo": drinking up the ocean

Cavalier drinking, whether in tavern, inn or prison encourages the Bacchic excess that is only implied in "To Althea". Robert Heath's "Song in a Siege" starts typically with the hymnic invocation common to drinking songs: "Fill, fill the goblet". The drink, however, purchases liberty in a situation of defeat and "Wine doth enlarge, and ease our minds / Who freely drinks no thraldome finds".<sup>92</sup> Francis Wortley, meanwhile, is credited with another poem which, like "To Althea", conflates the genres of drinking songs with prison meditation.<sup>93</sup> According to a misleading note to a later reprint of *Choyce Drollery: Songs and Sonnets* (1656) the anonymous "The contented Prisoner

<sup>90</sup> See Wilkinson, p. 284.

<sup>91</sup> Patherick Jenkyns, *Amorea: The Lost Lover* (London: 1661), p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> "Song in a Siege", in *Clarastella* (1650) by Robert Heath, ed. Frederick H. Candelaria (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1970), pp. 22-3.

<sup>93</sup> *Choyce Drollery Songs and Sonnets being a Collection of divers excellent pieces of Poetry of Severall eminent Authors*. (London: 1656), p. 93. This song is reprinted in a different form, with a list of the many collections in which it appeared in Norman Ault, ed., *Seventeenth-Century Lyrics from the Original Texts* (London: Longmans, 1950), pp. 312 -3.

his praise of Sack” written by a person of quality suspected to be Sir Francis Wortley is “the earliest appearance in print, known to us, of this characteristic outburst of Cavalier vivacity.”<sup>94</sup> The regular rhyme scheme, beaten out by the rattling of chains, as in Cartwright’s “Drinking Song” from *The Royal Slave*, disguises the hopelessness of the prisoners who are anxious to “bid all our senses good-night” by drowning the sort of melancholy recorded in some of Howell’s prison letters.<sup>95</sup> Wortley’s prisoner is content with the consolations of sack:

How happy’s that Prisoner  
 That conquers his fates,  
 With silence, and ne’re  
 On bad fortune complains,  
 But carelessly plays  
 With his Keyes on the Grates,  
 And makes a sweet consort  
 With them and his chayns.  
 He drowns care with Sack,  
 When his thoughts are opprest,  
 And makes his heart float,  
 Like a Cork in his Breast.

As with many Cavalier drinking songs, the poet’s affiliations are signalled by references to Aristotle, Copernicus and Diogenes in following stanzas. The speaker is amongst the prisoners himself, and sets off the calls for canary and sack with the observation that those with clear consciences are richer than tyrants who rule with force. The original four verses became six and up to seventeen have been added since. In a period of poverty and political inactivity for Royalist supporters such songs were important in maintaining an appearance of aristocratic indifference to fate. In 1656, however, the book in which the poem above first appeared in print was ordered to be burned.<sup>96</sup> “The contented Prisoner, his praise of Sack” attacks the Puritan ethos of temperance, as do many poems by Alexander Brome which circulated in manuscript until 1661. Especially popular was “The Royalist” written in 1646:

Come pass about the bowl to me,  
 A health to our distressed King;  
 Though we’re in hold, let cups go free,

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<sup>94</sup> *Merry Drollery Compleat*, ed. J.W. Ebsworth (Boston: n.p., 1875), p. 300.

<sup>95</sup> See James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Eliauae* (London: 1650), pp. 44-55.

<sup>96</sup> See Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 268-9.

Birds in a cage may freely sing.<sup>97</sup>

The singing, roistering Cavalier in a cage, is the same image to be found in “To Althea”. Brome’s poem, however, maintains the convivial “we” throughout four stanzas which welcome a poverty equivalent to that of the King’s. The social experience is emphasised as a consolation. The solitary musing of Tudor prison poetry has been replaced with a lyric that is more inclusive in form and content. The last stanza refers to the Cavaliers as a zodiac and to the circular “travels of the glasse”. These images recall circular notions of history and imply the possibility of a restoration of monarchy.<sup>98</sup> They also draw the reader’s attention to the associations of the circle as metaphysical and political ideal, as a symbol of harmony and perfection which no longer exists in the wider polity. Brome’s poem continues as a drinking song and is regarded as a degeneration of Cavalier sentiment by C.V. Wedgwood, but it illustrates the politically engaged and subversive character of such verse in the context in which it was produced, read and disseminated.<sup>99</sup> Brome did not write out of personal experience, but an anonymous Royalist held overnight at the Beare Inn combines the same three elements: drink, prison and loyalty:

Fill my Bowle full, you Rogue.

...

A Health t’our friends

...

How now, who’s drooping there? Who dares be so  
In the King’s Cause, and on the Kings day too?<sup>100</sup>

This poem is dated 1643, but a decade later its themes are even more relevant. Brome’s “The Prisoners. Written when O.C. attempted to be King” encourages the banned drinking of healths:

Come a brimmer (my bullies) drink whole ones or nothing,

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<sup>97</sup> *Alexander Brome: Poems*, ed. Roman R. Dubinski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 117.

<sup>98</sup> See Achsah Guibbory, *The Map of Time: Seventeenth-Century English Literature and Ideas of Pattern in History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 12-30.

<sup>99</sup> C.V. Wedgwood, *Poetry and Politics Under the Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 107. Lawrence Manley also bemoans the decline in poetic quality and blames it not only on the conflict, but also on the absorption upwards of popular serio-comic techniques. (See *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*, op. cit., p. 518.) Literary critics have failed to notice how ubiquitous the trend was, and that it affected musicians as well as poets. Among others, Henry Lawes, celebrated as a composer of masque songs also wrote a number of “ballads”. (See E.F. Hart, “Introduction to Henry Lawes”, *Music and Letters*, 32:3 (1951), 222.)

<sup>100</sup> *The Cambridge Royalist Imprisoned* (London[?]: 1643).

Now healths have been voted down,  
'Tis sack that can heat us, we care not for cloathing,  
A gallon's as warm as a gown.<sup>101</sup>

Drinking to the King had been a contentious issue since Prynne (in his 1628 pamphlet *Health's Sickness*) suggested prayer as a better index of loyalty. However, after the Act prohibiting the proclamation of any person as King, the activity became a collective ritual for politically excluded Royalists, of which "To Althea" proved prescient.<sup>102</sup> Brome's poem suggests that the whole country under Parliament is a prison in which impoverished debtors languish. The only response is to both drink and sing "to our King" and to continue defiant:

Where our ditties still be *give's more drink, give's more drink boyes*,  
Let those that are frugal take care,  
Our Goalers and we will live by our chink boyes,  
While our Creditours live by the air.

Some of this drinking was carried out in the taverns and inns which had served as centres of political activity even before the civil wars, so the association of alcohol and opposition persisted, but few poems mention the names or locations of their "Clubs".<sup>103</sup>

The excessive libations recommended by Brome (in "The Royalist" he writes: "A sorrow dares not shew its face, / When we are ships and sack's the sea") echo the chorus of "How happy's that Prisoner" and imply the literal impossibility of gaining liberty in this manner:

Since we are all Slaves  
That Ilanders be,  
And our Land's a large prison,  
Inclos'd with the Sea:  
Wee'l drink up the Ocean,  
To set our selves free,  
For man is the World's Epitome.

The excessive effort required to gain freedom mirrors the gluttony and disorder of a world ruled by the belly; an image that recurs frequently in ballads and poems of the

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<sup>101</sup> *Alexander Brome: Poems*, op. cit., p. 150.

<sup>102</sup> On 13 February 1649 the Council of State passed an Act to oppose and suppress anyone maintaining "the pretended title of Charles Stuart". *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: HMSO, 1911), II. p. 336.

<sup>103</sup> See Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-43* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 232-4.

1650s.<sup>104</sup> The body politic is reduced to a digestive organ, the Cavaliers to an ever-open throat.

In “To Althea”, looking inwards, a mockery of Puritan introspection, provides the imaginative impetus to soar outwards with the angels, just as Henry Bold can find infinity in a glass while the “State’s brains are addled” and the body politic is reeling disordered:

We sit close at Home,  
Content, with Lipp Room,  
In the Infinite Space,  
Of our Ocean Glasse  
Nere saye to, but Drink the Canaries.<sup>105</sup>

Lovelace’s version of this sentiment is “The Vintage to the Dungeon” (46):

Sing out pent Soules, sing cheerfully!  
Care Shackles you in Liberty,  
Mirth frees you in Captivity:  
Would you double fetters adde?  
Else why so sadde?

*Chorus.*  
Besides your pinion’d armes you’l finde  
Grief too can manakell the minde.

II  
Live then Pris’ners uncontrold;  
Drinke oth’ strong, the Rich, the Old,  
Till Wine too hath your Wits in hold;  
Then if still your Jollitie,  
And Throats are free;

*Chorus.*  
Tryumph in your Bonds and Paines,  
And daunce to th’ Musick of your Chaines.

Wilkinson (265) suggests that this poem dates from the same time as “To Althea” and cannot have been written during the poet’s second confinement since William Lawes, who set it to music, was killed in 1645. Hazlitt notes that it was “Probably composed

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<sup>104</sup> Anthony Low mentions the many images of Puritan greed, such as man-eating sheep, that occur in lyrics of the 1650s. See *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 225.

<sup>105</sup> Henry Bold, “Song XLVIII”, in *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique* (London: 1664), p. 73.



during the poet's confinement in Peterhouse".<sup>106</sup> "The Vintage to the Dungeon" apparently hinges on the dualism of body and soul by contrasting external and internal freedoms. The fetters and manacles of Lovelace's poem, however, are not those bodily parts that torture and that enslave the soul in Marvell's "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body" but are themselves incorporeal. Care and grief can imprison the mind wherever the body is; mirth offers liberation but is itself another prison since it depends on the wine that "hath your Wits in hold". King refers back to the Boethian tradition in which the soul becomes a prisoner by relinquishing reason. Lovelace touches on this double captivity which Henry King's "An Essay on Death and a Prison" makes explicit.<sup>107</sup> King talks of the narrow dungeon of the body and the "Narrower Body which her self enfolds". King's exploration of selfhood offers only the solace of death: the enlargement of the universe promised by drink in much Cavalier verse is missing. But Lovelace's imperatives in his "Vintage to the Dungeon" also promise no imaginative freedom: only a lessening of melancholy through an acceptance of the physical. To triumph in bonds and pains is characteristic of early Christian martyrs and of the prison literature of religious sects, such as the Quakers, persecuted in Lovelace's own time. In this poem individuality is subsumed. The merging of the personal with the communal occurs through chains and the shared song and dance, but the individual voice is unheard. The sense of interconnection between past and present found in "To Althea" is also less evident here, except that the allusion to Cartwright might kindle nostalgia for a time when such images were entertainment and not reality.

Lovelace's poem avoids the libertine bravado of many later Interregnum drinking songs. It reflects back on to the degeneration of drinking rituals which in Herrick's and Jonson's poetry are linked with hospitality, friendship and poetic inspiration. "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton", for instance, describes the host generously pouring wine "As the *Canary* Isles were thine".<sup>108</sup> In Lovelace's poem the source of all the sack is unspecified, and the liberty celebrated in works such as Jonson's "Inviting a Friend to Supper" becomes a metaphorical luxury.<sup>109</sup> Lovelace

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<sup>106</sup> See W. Carew Hazlitt, ed., *Lucasta. The Poems of Richard Lovelace Esq.* (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), p. 99.

<sup>107</sup> *The Poems of Henry King*, ed. Margaret Crum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 139-42.

<sup>108</sup> *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), II. p. 75.

<sup>109</sup> *Ben Jonson*, ed. Ian Donaldson (Oxford Authors series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 259.

does not suggest that the poetic inspiration once to be found in the Helicon is now to be found in a glass, and that those who refuse to drink will also be excluded from communing with the Muses. In her analysis of this poem Willa Evans argues that it derives from dancing scenes and ideas presented in Cartwright's *The Royal Slave* of 1636, and is not the poet's reaction to his own conditions in prison.<sup>110</sup> Ms Evans does not note the reliance of Lovelace's poem on Cartwright's "Drinking Song" from this play of the 1630s:

A pox on our jailor and on his fat jowl.  
There's liberty lies in the bottom o'th bowl.  
A fig for whatever the rascal can do.  
Our dungeon is deep, but so are our cups too.  
Then drink we a round in despite of our foes  
And make our hard irons cry chink in the close.<sup>111</sup>

Cartwright's play, staged by Inigo Jones and Henry Lawes, was performed at Oxford for a Royal visit (on the same occasion that Lovelace was granted his MA.) and was a resounding success. The revival of Cartwright's song in the 1650s indicates the popularity of the sub-genre of prison/drinking songs and its spread outwards from court culture. Although most court plays, such as the *Royal Slave*, were transferred to the public theatres, Laud had requested that the play not be given to the common players,<sup>112</sup> yet Cartwright's song subsequently appears, adapted as a "catch", set by a John Hilton in 1652.<sup>113</sup> John Wardroper notes that Cartwright's song was reprinted in 1661 and 1671 and suggests that "No doubt imprisoned Cavaliers sang it, and remembered it fondly later".<sup>114</sup> It appears again in "Pills to Purge Melancholy" with an additional two lines that evoke ancient and timeless motifs: "Then laugh we, and quaff we, until our rich Noses / Grow Red, and contest with our Chaplets of Roses".<sup>115</sup> These same roses appear in the second stanza of "To Althea":

When flowing Cups run swiftly round  
With no allaying *Thames*,  
Our carelesse heads with Roses bound,

<sup>110</sup> Willa McClung Evans, "Lovelace's Concept of Prison Life in 'The Vintage to the Dungeon'", *Philological Quarterly*, 26 (1947), pp. 62-8.

<sup>111</sup> Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>112</sup> See Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>113</sup> See *Catch that catch can, or, A choice collection of Catches, Rounds and Canons* (London: John Playford, 1652), p. 28.

<sup>114</sup> Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>115</sup> *Wit and Mirth, an antidote against melancholy compounded of ingenious and witty ballads, songs, and catches, and other pleasant and merry poems* (London: 1682), p. 121.

Our hearts with Loyall Flames;  
When thirsty grieve in Wine we steepe,  
When healths and draught go free,  
Fishes that tipple in the Deepe,  
Know no such Libertie.

In both “Vintage to the Dungeon” and “To Althea” Lovelace re-appropriates a tradition dating back to Anacreon and Horace and makes it politically relevant. As Kevin Sharpe points out, classical sources and motifs are specific selections, in dialogue with circumstances, and this culture of imitation and borrowing raises important questions: “Why ... was a pagan culture celebrated in decades of religious passion and division?”<sup>116</sup> Republican apologists focused on Cicero and Lucan: Virgil and Horace were shared, but Anacreon and Ovid were flaunted by the Cavaliers. There is no classical template for combining alcoholic jollity with fortitude in prison and with political reflection. Anacreon’s popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was based on his elegant style and limpid tone, but there are no topical references in the poems known as the *Anacreontea* which advocate an immediate enjoyment of wine, dancing, boys and girls.<sup>117</sup> Anacreon’s “Now with Roses we are crown’d / Let our mirth and cups go round” reverberates in much Cavalier verse, but only Lovelace turns the pagan coronet into a martyr’s crown.<sup>118</sup> Wreaths of flowers had associations of pre-Christian ceremony of the sort abhorred by Prynne and by Puritans opposed to Laud.<sup>119</sup> Lovelace’s reiterated liberty may be religious as well as secular. The drinking of healths from a single bowl parodies the Communion ritual, and focuses attention on the physical act, rather than on the Puritan spiritualised “word”. The exclusivity of the ritual (no water drinkers, women, or the uninspired) reveals nostalgia for hierarchy and order which nevertheless can accommodate the disorder of dancing and singing in Lovelace’s poems. Spiritual purity, and Lovelace’s assertion of a mind quiet and innocent, requires seclusion and the maintenance of boundaries from a materiality that impedes the soul’s ascent. The communal bowl,

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<sup>116</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 79-80.

<sup>117</sup> The “rediscovery” of the poems known as the corpus of Anacreon is summarised in Gordon Braden, *The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 196-207.

<sup>118</sup> I have quoted from *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., p. 77. “Having bound together rosy crowns on our temples...” is no. 43 in Rosenmeyer’s translation of the anacreontic poems. ( See “Appendix C” in Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *The Poetics of Imitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 239-66.) Similar poems on wine and roses can also be found in Heath, Wotton and Sherburne.

however, carries pollution, in that it accepts the feminised, corporeal ceremonial aspects of culture and absorbs its seductive, contaminated and idolatrous power. Althea, as a person, is firmly outside the prison gates; but her presence, inscribed in the text, is within.

### 1.5. Lovelace's Drinking Songs

Anacreon's epigrams link wine with love and with a sensual joy in the moment; many Cavalier drinking songs, however, praise wine as a means of escape from women as well as from politics. In addition to the prison/drinking songs discussed Lovelace has a small number of poems on drinking which do not include the motif of imprisonment. In the first volume, "The Grasse-hopper"(38) and "Sonnet. To General Goring"(81) celebrate the company of friends drinking. In the posthumous volume "A Loose Saraband"(139) and "A Fly about a Glasse of Burnt Claret"(157) present wine more as anodyne: political cares are washed away, but so are the joys associated with women, as loveless mechanical couplings prevail.

Drinking songs of the mid-century, however, cover a wide variety of themes, not all of which proved congenial to Lovelace. The mock debates on ale or beer versus wine, or ale versus beer, which propose a stratification of drinking habits based on class and on new brewing practices, became politicised.<sup>120</sup> Beer drinkers were regarded as Puritans, sack drinkers as loyal to the King.<sup>121</sup> Wine often replaces women as the source of poetic inspiration and provides for the establishment of a circle of wits, or of soldiers that excludes women totally.<sup>122</sup> This world, however, is often embattled, and the drinkers, no longer in the enclosed garden of love or the liberal country house, find themselves in a prison cell where solitude becomes sociability and drinking songs take on the *carpe diem* motifs of classical love poetry. "Then lets not take for tomorrow" is typical as drinking poems record the

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<sup>119</sup> See the discussion of Herrick's ceremonialism in Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton*, op. cit., pp. 84-5.

<sup>120</sup> Compare Roger Boyle's much reprinted "The Excellency of Wine" in Ault, ed., *Seventeenth-Century Lyrics*, op. cit., pp. 288-9, or the many poems of John Taylor, John Cleveland and Thomas Randolph on the joys of drinking with Weaver's "The Compounders Song", which calls for healths to the King and Queen while disparaging Goldsmith's Committee, Anabaptists and Independents. (*Songs and Poems of Love and Drollery*, op. cit., p. 13.)

<sup>121</sup> Ale-brewing was a home based activity; beer-brewing required capital and used newer technology: the result was a stronger, more stable liquor. The techniques had been developed in the Low Countries and were initially resisted as foreign.

<sup>122</sup> "In the Commendation of Sack" begins, "Pox take you, mistress", in Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., p. 111.

impoverishment of the Cavaliers and suggest a response which will irritate the authorities and prove unpalatable. As a commendatory poem to Lovelace suggests “The making of a good song is a bounteous labour / Which not even an age equipped with teeth would be able to consume”.<sup>123</sup> This response is, perhaps unintentionally, a mirror image of the greed and lack of restraint that the new Puritan state is accused of.<sup>124</sup> Drinking songs, including Lovelace’s, are notable for the vast and unlimited quantities of alcohol they recommend. The Anacreontic excess suggests a leakiness without boundaries, a seeping out from the prison cells of words and ideals. Cavalier poets refuse to be circumscribed except by their own choice of vessel, the communal bowl. Drinkers, like Lovelace’s fly, can venture beneath the surface and become conduits for new ideas. The alcoholic flux reflects the social flux, but also the flow of poetic creativity. Wine overcomes the dualism of comic and serious verse, of the poses of prophet or jovial drunk, of the individual poet and his reliance on a community of poets. As in the love poetry, infantile and parasitic elements appear, and the bravado of many poems disguises a masculine sense of lack. The feminine muse that has been emphatically rejected is dissolved in images of wholeness and fullness that pertain to the drinking ritual. Only Thomas Jordan, who had been warning against wine and women since his 1642 *Diurnal of Dangers*, counsels “Quaff no more ... / Drink not the round: / You’ll be drowned / In the source of your sack and your sonnets”.<sup>125</sup>

Lovelace’s drinking poems, however, favour immersion. Lovelace had served in Goring’s regiment during the Scottish expedition of 1639, and his encomium to his commander celebrates both his military victory, and the general’s marriage with copious good fellowship. “In ev’ry hand a Cup be found, / That from all Hearts a health may sound”, Lovelace writes in the first stanza reiterating a theme of many earlier drinking songs: that the ritual requires active participation of all. Each of the

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<sup>123</sup> Villiers Harington, “Hexastich” (6), trans. Dr Robert Woodhouse.

<sup>124</sup> There is a typical litany of complaints about plunder and imprisonment in a poem which circulated widely – “A Mad World, my Masters”. It can be found in W. Walker Wilkins, ed., *Political Ballads of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (London: Longman, 1860), pp. 19-22.

<sup>125</sup> Written in the late 1640s this is an answer poem to Brome’s “Stay, shut the gate” (*Alexander Brome: Poems*, op. cit., p. 122). It is printed in Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., pp. 143-4. A version of Brome’s poem appears in Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 145, f. 136, titled “The Ranter”, which illustrates the popular perception of drinking Cavaliers as allied with “The Joviall Crew” of dissident sects. These groups, including the Levellers and Quakers, used taverns and inns for meetings. See Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London: Longman, 1983), pp. 156-9. Clark also notes that such places were centres for ballad recitals and for the exchange of news, and that aristocratic rituals such as pledges and communal bowls were percolating down the social ladder.

four stanzas ends with a rousing cheer which acts as a refrain and reinforces the endless round of the drinking bowl. Lovelace ends with hyperbole and paradox:

Give me scorching heat, thy heat dry *Sun*,  
That to this payre I may drinke off an Ocean,  
Yet leave my grateful thirst unquencht, undone;  
Or a full Bowle of Heav'nly wine,  
In which dissolved Stars should shine,  
To the Couple! To the Couple! Th'are Divine.

Lovelace gives no indication in this poem that he was aware of Goring's financial or political machinations.<sup>126</sup> This simple panegyric illustrates that in other poems discussed in this chapter Lovelace had developed his capacity to write more than one-dimensional drinking songs of celebration and consolation, a tradition, nevertheless on which the complexities of "The Grasse-hopper" are based.

As in "To Althea", the poem inscribes a tension between individual subjectivity and its submersion in a group. The Horatian elements in the poem are found less in the aspects of country retirement (the theme of happy husbandman did not interest Lovelace), than in the assertion of individual will.<sup>127</sup> As Maren Røstvig points out, Horace appealed to the individualistic temperament of the seventeenth century.<sup>128</sup> This is countered by the classical friendship of Lovelace and Cotton, bounded and secure from intrusion by others. Women are noticeably excluded. The warrior who farewells Lucasta, or invokes Althea does not return to her hearth.

Despite Christian imagery and a tone of opposition to the Puritan ban on festivals, including Christmas, the jollity is mostly pagan. There are vestal flames and classical crowns, tapers (both Catholic and pagan), and floods of wine.<sup>129</sup> Lovelace

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<sup>126</sup> Wilkinson details Goring's changes of allegiance in his notes on p. 289. Goring's reprieve from death, when other Cavalier "turncoats" were executed is discussed in Robert Ashton, *Counter-Revolution: The Second Civil War and its Origins, 1646-8* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 409; Goring's money relations with the Crown in Robert Ashton, *The Crown and the Money Market, 1603-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 104-5.

<sup>127</sup> The Horatian interpretation owes much to D. C. Allen, "An explication of Lovelace's 'The Grasse-hopper'", *Modern Language Quarterly*, 18 (1957), pp. 35-43.

<sup>128</sup> Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphosis of a Classical Ideal* (Oslo: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962), p. 49.

<sup>129</sup> This poem has been universally admired and there are numerous explications. Herbert Grierson treats the poem as an experiment in form from the heroic ode to the lighter Epicurean meditation (*Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. xxxvi). For Leah Marcus it is a "political hieroglyph" (*The Politics of Mirth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 229); Raymond Anselment finds the grasshopper is a Stoic (*Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War*, op. cit., p. 103); and Cleanth Brooks reads it as a document in Lovelace's personal history (*Historical Evidence and the Reading of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), pp. 115-7). The Horatian elements of

begins his poem with the “show’rs of old Greeke” that he invokes companionably in the eighth stanza, making plain his debt to previous grasshoppers in Homer, Hesiod, Meleager and in particular Anacreon, whose Ode 34 has long been recognised as a source for the poem.<sup>130</sup> Lovelace’s insect is an aristocrat, a poet and a musician, living a luxurious and unthreatened lifestyle which recalls the halcyon days of the Stuart court:

Oh thou that swing’st upon the waving haire  
Of some well-filled Oaten Beard,  
Drunke ev’ry night with a Delicious teare  
Dropt thee from Heav’n, where now th’art reard.

Anacreon’s monody maintains this tone throughout. It refers to the cicada as a “sweet prophet of summer” who is a drinker, loves music, sings like a king and is beloved of the muses: qualities that apply to Lovelace himself.<sup>131</sup> In the opening four lines Lovelace has already suggested, with his appeal to the imagination through the senses, that imagination will provide the only refuge when winter comes – when the grasshopper is tucked up in an unlikely acorn.<sup>132</sup> Lovelace, however, develops Anacreon’s short lyric further into the sort of paen to friendship found in Jonson and Herrick. He dedicates the poem to Charles Cotton and moves the focus from the individual to the communal “we”. In doing so Lovelace also shifts from Greek to Latin, from frivolity to a more Horatian acceptance of “this cold Time and frozen Fate”. Lovelace’s final stanza, is an unrecognised tribute to Casimire:

Thus richer then untempted Kings are we,  
That asking Nothing, nothing need:  
Though Lord of all what Seas imbrace; yet he  
That wants himselfe, is poore indeed.

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Lovelace’s poem are also examined by Joanna Martindale (“The Best Master of Virtue and Wisdom: The Horace of Ben Jonson and his Heirs”, in David Hopkins and Charles Martindale, eds., *Horace Made New: Horatian Influences on British Writing from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 73-6). More recently, Erna Kelly stresses the multivalence of the grasshopper image in “Richard Lovelace’s Separate Peace”, in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), pp. 85-9.

<sup>130</sup> See Kathryn McEuen, *Classical Influence Upon the Tribe of Ben* (New York: Octagon Books, 1968), p. 215.

<sup>131</sup> I am using the translation appended to Rosenmeyer, *The Poetics of Imitation*, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>132</sup> J.A.K. Thomson notes in relation to Lovelace’s grasshopper that the Cavalier poets got their natural phenomena mostly wrong, and found refuge, in dangerous times, within accepted patterns of thought, and in poems with a *carpe diem* theme. See his *Classical Influences on English Poetry* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951), pp. 78-82.

Casimire's ode "To Quintus Tiberinus" offers the observation (also using the imagery of light that Lovelace includes in his penultimate stanza), that true wealth and freedom lies within the self:

He's poor that wants himselfe, yet weighs  
Proudly himselfe; in this scale layes

...

Great to himselfe, to others small,  
That never knows himselfe at all.<sup>133</sup>

The echo of Casimire reinforces the identification of the grasshopper not only with a poet, but also with Charles I in Lovelace's poem. There are intimations of unpopular policies and events of the late 1630s. Lovelace refers, for instance, to the "Lord of all what Seas embrace", and ship money had been a cause of much dispute. The poem also has a line about the cropping of "golden ears" which might recall the punishment of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton.<sup>134</sup> However Casimire's lines, within Lovelace's, produce the most radical shift of perspective: from the King's elevated point of view (swinging happily above the earth in the first few lines), to that of his disaffected subjects, for whom he is a diminished creature, a "Poore verdant foole!"

...and now green Ice! Thy Joys  
Large and as lasting as thy Peirch of Grasse,  
Bid us lay 'gainst Winter, Raine, and poize  
Their floods, with an o'reflowing glasse.

The eternal renewal of nature is halted by Lovelace for whom the external world is frozen and static. The summer which the friends will "make" is an internal act of freedom and imagination, with limited power to counter the cold. The warmth which the friends look forward to, when read in conjunction with Casimire, is dependent on a change in the political structure. Casimire's first ode refers to the departure of the "hatefull Thracians" which allows again the flow of "Liberall streames" until the heavens rain down pearls and gold "in showers; / Whilst I with my Prophetique string

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<sup>133</sup> "Ode 34. *Lib.* 4", in Mathias Casimire Sarbiewski, *The Odes of Casimire, Translated by G. Hils* (1646. Los Angeles: The Augustan Reprint Society, 1953), pp. 97-9. Lovelace also echoes Casimir in his poems of farewell (see Chapter Two). Casimir's odes were extremely popular and circulated in miscellanies as well as in Hils' translation. *Miscellany Poems and Translations by Oxford Hands* (London: 1685), for instance, which contains much earlier material has a number of odes "periphrastically translated" and includes Ode 34 on p. 51. This publication also has "To the Grasshopper" attributed as "Casimire Ode 23rd Book 4th" (p. 81), an epigram not included in Hils, which addresses the insect as "Blest Epicure of Race Divine / Who, drunk with Heaven's dewy Wine".



/ Thy Winter Festivalls do sing”.<sup>135</sup> Lovelace reinforces his synthesis of the classical and contemporary with his assertion in the seventh stanza that the north wind (an image of threat to the monarchy) will be consumed by the fire which the friends have created “This *Aetna* in Epitome”. This volcano generally represents division and popular rage in sixteenth and seventeenth-century poetry. Classical mythology (recounted in Claudian’s *De Raptu Proserpina*) assigns the volcano’s origin to Jove’s victory over the rebel giants one of whom is buried beneath it. The volcano thus feeds its flames with the fruit of its own body (an image of ingestion used by Lovelace in his later “beast” fables) and represents the self-destruction of internecine strife.

In contrast, by confining their imitations and translations to the anacreontic only, the “grasshopper” poems of Lovelace’s contemporaries all lack political discourse and remain drinking songs. Thomas Stanley produced a free translation which appeared in 1651 with no reference to his cousin’s poem (except the title), even though he wrote in a circle that relied on collaboration and response.<sup>136</sup> A poem in manuscript attributed to Cleveland opens “So ye shrill grasshopper quaff / In morning draughts ye pearly dew”.<sup>137</sup> Cowley included his grasshopper in the *Anacreontiques* (1656). He extends the original and makes the “happy insect” a carefree Epicurean whom no winter dismays.<sup>138</sup> Only Lovelace allows the incursion of “Dropping *December*” to be countered, not by individual self-satisfaction, but by an overflowing glass in the company of the “best of *Men and Friends*”. Lovelace’s insistence that a “Genuine Summer” can only be created through collaborative and imaginative effort is not only a comment on the poetic practice of the times, but moves the poem away from the quietism of many poems of country-house retirement which advocate withdrawal from the political winter. Henry Vaughan invites a retired friend to Brecknock and suggests:

Come then! And while the slow icicle hangs  
At the stiff thatch, and winter’s frosty pangs  
Benumb the year, blithe (as of old) let us

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<sup>134</sup> See Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 537-98 and 665-708.

<sup>135</sup> Ode 1. *Lib.1.*, *The Odes of Casimir*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>136</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., pp. 94-5. See also Stella P. Revard, “Thomas Stanley and ‘A Register of Friends’”, in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), pp.148-72.

<sup>137</sup> Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 147, f. 103.

<sup>138</sup> *Abraham Cowley: Selected Poems*, op. cit., p. 7.

'Midst noise and war, of peace, and mirth discuss.  
This portion thou wert born for: why should we  
Vex at the time's ridiculous misery?<sup>139</sup>

In his posthumous volume, Lovelace allows Lucasta to laugh in similar terms "At our ridiculous pain; / And at our merry misery" (122), but in "The Grasse-hopper" the possibility of restoration still exists. A further conflagration is foreseen: some small sacred hearth "shall burne eternally", even though the insect who can be drunk every night has not been spared.

The original carefree and pleasure-seeking individual represented by the grasshopper resurfaces in another form in the posthumous volume. Lovelace's "A Loose Saraband"(139) is typical of many Interregnum lyrics that appear to promote only a cynical frivolity. The festive conviviality found in Jonson and Herrick has disappeared, as Royalists are encouraged to forget their debts and the political situation. The final stanza of Lovelace's poem sums up the emotional distance travelled by a Cavalier who once set honour above devotion to his mistress:

Now, is there such a Trifle  
As Honour, the fools Gyant?  
What is there left to rifle,  
When Wine makes all parts plyant?  
Let others Glory follow,  
In their false riches wallow,  
And with their grief be merry;  
Leave me but Love and Sherry.

The song-books and drolleries of the 1650s are full of both lyrics which have topical content, and the mock panegyrics to wine or sack, the production of which peaked between 1640 and 1660.<sup>140</sup> Although they appear defeatist, such drinking songs still carried polemical impact. Elise Jorgens points out in her study of Cavalier song that the message "is not good fellowship and *joie de vivre* but a sadly desperate wish to escape"; however, the context in which these lyrics were written and published

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<sup>139</sup> "To His Retired Friend, an Invitation to Brecknock", *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 79.

<sup>140</sup> Henry Knight Miller mentions some popular and much circulated pieces on drink such as "In praise of Sack" that were reprinted in the miscellanies of the 1650s. See "The Paradoxical Encomium with Special Reference to its Vogue in England, 1600-1800", *Modern Philology*, 53: 3 (1956), pp. 145-78. Many of these poems are University productions, nostalgically republished and full of classical allusions. There are numerous examples in *Parnassus Biceps* (London: 1655).

suggests their oppositional nature.<sup>141</sup> Wine was taxed more heavily after 1650, and the import of wines from France had been prohibited in 1649.<sup>142</sup> The exaggerated quantities of alcohol lauded in these songs suggest the existence of financial and other reserves not fully appropriated by Parliament. Ordinances against drunkenness and the control of public drinking in taverns and alehouses increased as such activities were regarded as related to political conspiracy.<sup>143</sup> Meanwhile the number of licensed and unlicensed premises grew, and the “lord replaced the beggar” as the drunken member of the community.<sup>144</sup> One of Cotton’s burlesques which begins “Come, let us drink away the time” suggests, in terms similar to Lovelace’s, that political disaffection can be masked by such buffoonery:

Fill up the Goblet, let it swim  
In foam, that overlooks the brim,  
Hee that drinks deepest, here’s to him.

Sobrietie, and studie breeds  
Suspition of our thoughts, and deeds;  
The downright drunkard no man heeds.

Let mee have sack, tobacco store,  
A drunken friend, a little whore,  
*Protectour*, I will ask no more.<sup>145</sup>

In 1651 Playford had published the first book of “catches” since 1609. Though his terminology is loose, catches tend to be humorous or bawdy, while drinking catches

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<sup>141</sup> Elise Bickford Jorgens, “Politics and Women in Cavalier Song: A Report from a Collection of Secular Song Manuscripts”, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 15 (1989), pp. 25-48. The political nature of drinking songs – their mimicry, for instance, of the Puritan notion of divine inspiration – is discussed by Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing*, op. cit., pp. 134-40.

<sup>142</sup> *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, op. cit., p. 239-40. George Saintsbury notes that the impost on French wine “seems much to have afflicted the suffering Cavaliers, who were too apt to call in Bacchus as an auxiliary, in their hours of distress and dejection”. In revenge, poets such as Patrick Carey, made merry with Cromwell’s large red nose. (*Minor Poets of the Caroline Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), II. p. 482.)

<sup>143</sup> See Keith Wrightson, “Alehouses, Order and Reformation in Rural England, 1590-1660”, in Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo, eds., *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1981), pp. 1-27, and also Peter Clark, “The Alehouse and the Alternative Society”, in Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas, eds., *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 47-72. A different focus is provided by Alan Everitt, “The English Urban Inn, 1560-1760”, in Alan Everitt, ed., *Perspectives in English Urban History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 91-137.

<sup>144</sup> See Theodore B. Leinwand, “Spongy Plebs, Mighty Lords, and the Dynamics of the Alehouse”, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 19: 2 (1989), pp. 160-1.

<sup>145</sup> *Poems of Charles Cotton*, ed., John Buxton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp. 220-2.

outnumber all others.<sup>146</sup> Many of these catches express disdain for the new regime as they include healths to the King,<sup>147</sup> but many are catalogues of woes (often financial) which wine may alleviate, as in this popular verse:

Why should we [not] laugh and be jolly  
Seeing now all the world grows mad,  
And lull'd in a dull melancholy

...

Whilst we that do traffique and tippie  
Can baffle the Crown and the Sword  
Whose jaws are so hungry and gripple,

...

We laugh at those fools whose endeavours  
Do but fit them for prisons and fines,

...

Then lets not take care for tomorrow,  
But tippie and quaff while we may  
To drive from our hearts all sorrow.<sup>148</sup>

The fourth stanza of “A Loose Saraband” is close to this but it also implies that Lovelace’s political allegiance has not been obliterated by the “wilde Canary” or Rhenish he recommends:

See all the World how’t staggers,  
More ugly drunk than we,  
As if far gone in daggers,  
And blood it seem’d to be:  
We drink our glass of Roses,  
Which nought but sweets discloses,  
Then in our Loyal Chamber,  
Refresh us with Loves Amber.

“A Fly about a Glasse of Burnt Claret” also contains political commentary together with some musings on the changing nature of the poetry of love. In the poetry of the 1630s and 1640s small creatures such as flies, bees or fleas provided the poet/lover with an opportunity for some intimate explorations of his mistress’s body. The metamorphosed lover who ventured too close, like Lovelace’s fly into the warm wine, would be obliterated and transformed again into a patch or a mole. In this poem, however, it is the social not the private sphere which both tempts and destroys the Cavalier:

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<sup>146</sup> See Ian Spink, *English Song, Dowland to Purcell* (London: Batsford, 1974), pp. 134-46.

<sup>147</sup> See for instance those numbered 4, 12, 16, 18 in *Wit and Mirth* (London: 1682), pp. 11-32.

<sup>148</sup> *Wits Interpreter*, op. cit., pp. 61-3.

Noble and brave! Now thou dost know,  
The false prepared decks below,  
Dost thou the fatal licquor sup,  
One drop alas! thy Barque blowes up.

What airy Country hast to save,  
Whose plagues thou'lt bury in they grave?  
For even now thou seemst to us  
On this Gulphs brink a *Curtius*.

And now th'art faln (magnanimous *Fly*)  
In, where thine Ocean doth fry,  
Like the Sun's son who blush'd the flood  
To a complexion of blood.

A heroism both hopeless and legendary is celebrated within conventionally Petrarchan paradoxes and images of fire and ice and burning while drowning, but Lovelace allows for a possible resurrection both for poetry, “when the Boy grows old in his desires, This *Flambeau* doth new light his fires”, and for political action. The fly is redeemed by the poet’s breath and prepares to plunge again into the liquid fire. The lover who constantly courts danger is also the isolated Royalist whose hopes have not been extinguished, and who rejects the detached stoicism of the poem’s “hermit”, or “Vestal”. Lovelace may have known an earlier poem about a wine-pot and a fly by Quevedo, subsequently reworked by Philip Ayres.<sup>149</sup> Ayres’ fly, “an insect of “quality”, chooses to die in wine while buzzing a chorus for the King. The Cavalier writing to Althea, and singing his defiance, reappears as a fly for whom composing poetry is a plunge into the abyss that love had formerly represented. Lovelace’s posthumous volume shows more interest in insects and reptiles than the first *Lucasta*, and in another poem “A Fly Caught in a Cobweb”(155) the former is devoured. The spider, scientifically inclined, represents the new capitalist modernity, but the fly, in both poems, evokes the flight of inspiration and the uncertain, vulnerable nature of poetic creativity. Both the metaphorical fetters of a woman’s hair and the literal grates of prison have become the web of Interregnum politics within which the poet must fashion his identity – an identity that seemed less problematic when Lovelace defined himself as a soldier and a poet in his farewells to *Lucasta*.

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<sup>149</sup> “The Fly”, in Saintsbury, *Minor Poets*, op. cit., pp. 298-300. Entombed insects, including flies, are a popular topic for classical poets, especially Martial, with whom Lovelace was familiar.

## 2: SONGS OF LOVE AND WAR: VALEDICTION, PARTING AND GRIEF

As we have seen in the previous chapter, women are excluded from the convivial round in Cavalier drinking songs and displaced as the central source of poetic inspiration by wine or by politics. In contrast with Jonson and with the “sons of Ben” who favoured drink as a reliable source of poetic inspiration, Lovelace initially calls on Lucasta for political as well as poetic illumination. The final poem in the 1649 volume is a desperate plea, “Calling Lucasta from her Retirement. Ode” (105). This poem is full of metaphors of strife and chaos and envisages that Lucasta, emerging from a black cell where she has been entombed, will calm the noise and dissension that the angels are indifferent to:

Sacred *LUCASTA* like the pow’rfull ray  
Of Heavenly Truth passe this Cimmerian way,  
Whilst all the Standards of your beames display.

It is plain, however, that Lucasta (obedience to whom would result in “No storms, heats, Colds, no soules contentious, / Nor Civill War is found – I meane, to us”) might subsume the political beneath the personal. The martial woman appearing in a chariot during a thunderstorm is portrayed in this poem as a saviour who calms battlefield trumpets, artillery and drums. By 1648, however, when Lovelace’s volume would have been nearing completion, the Cavalier cause was in disarray, and the poem implies that a withdrawal into amatory pursuits would end any engagement with political realities.<sup>150</sup> As her lover, the poet would simply be as anaesthetised to the “Woes and Discords here below” as the inhabitants of heaven. The speaker in this poem is not much removed from the gallant Cavalier who abandons his mistress in “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres” (18). Despite calling on Lucasta, Lovelace will leave her.

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<sup>150</sup> A thorough account of the defeat of the King’s cause and the destruction and misery caused by the fighting is given in Christopher Hibbert, *Cavaliers and Roundheads: The English at War, 1642-1649* (London: Harper Collins, 1993).

Nevertheless, amatory verse looms large in any discussion of Cavalier poetic identity, and Lovelace's poetry is no exception, being dominated by short love lyrics most of which were set to music. Lovelace's reputation as witty lover and gallant soldier sometimes conceals other qualities in his verse, and his own self-construction as a serious poet. The image of the loyal Cavalier who wrote carelessly was put in place by Lovelace's first posthumous editor, and remained unrevised until recently. "His verses which are merely the amusements of an active soldier, are for the most part amatory and are many of them marked with spirit, ease, and elegant fancy... and are of very unequal merit."<sup>151</sup> This assessment was echoed in most anthologies of seventeenth-century verse until some recent re-evaluations of the stature of the Cavalier poets.<sup>152</sup> This point of view derives in part from the fashioning of the poet's identity not only through his verse, but also through the commendatory poems and posthumous elegies which effectively bookend any published collection of verse (or indeed music) in the seventeenth century. These poems stress Lovelace's military adventures, in Britain and on the continent, and often refer to him as Colonel. In addition to being an active soldier, Lovelace's chivalry and gallantry to women, and his poetic powers are frequently celebrated in the poems addressed to him by his fellow poets. Alexander Brome (whose contribution was not printed until 1661) produced a dedicatory poem to Lovelace's 1649 volume in which he writes: "For though you make not stones and trees to move, / Yet men more senceless you provoke to love."<sup>153</sup> In one elegy appended to his Posthume *Poems* Lovelace is mourned as the representative of a passing taste for love lyrics (the production of which seems to peak

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<sup>151</sup> *Lucasta. The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. S.W. Singer (London: 1817), p. vii. Lovelace's reputation reached its nadir in the nineteenth century. In his edition of 1864 Hazlitt finds him inferior to Herrick, Randolph and Suckling, his verse unmusical, his technique indolent. (*Lucasta. The Poems of Richard Lovelace, Esq.* Ed., W. Carew Hazlitt (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.) Robert Chambers complains of "affected wit, ridiculous gallantry and boasted licentiousness." (*Cyclopedia of English Literature* (London: 1847), I. p.144.) Edmund Gosse's critique expounds Lovelace's technical faults, slovenly editing and "radical tastelessness of fancy". ("Richard Lovelace", in Thomas Humphrey Ward, ed., *The English Poets* (London: Macmillan, 1892), II. pp. 181-3.)

<sup>152</sup> In the twentieth century Courthope, Grierson, Saintsbury and Bush effectively repeated Lovelace's nineteenth-century commentators. More recently interest has been focused on Lovelace as a political poet in articles by Raymond Anselment and Gerald Hammond. See also Kevin Sharpe and Steven. N. Zwicker, eds., *Politics of Discourse: the Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Thomas N. Corns, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry: Donne to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); and L.E. Semler, *The English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998).

<sup>153</sup> "To Colonel Lovelace on his Poems", in *Alexander Brome: Poems*, ed. Roman R Dubinski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 289.

in the 1650s):<sup>154</sup> “Henceforth we can expect no Lyrick lay, / But biting Satyres through the world must stray.”<sup>155</sup> Samuel Holland’s “On the Death of My Much Honoured Friend, Colonel Richard Lovelace. An Elegie” presents Lovelace as a type of Philip Sidney, a man who can encompass the desired triumvirate of being simultaneously a noted soldier, lover and poet. It ends with a Latin motto used by both George Gascoigne and Raleigh: “To sum up all, few Men of Fame but know / He was *Tam Marti, quam Mercurio*.”<sup>156</sup> Edward Phillips, Milton’s nephew, wrote of Lovelace as, “an approv’d both souldier, gentleman, and lover, and a fair pretender to the Title of Poet”.<sup>157</sup> Phillips’ description of the “Lover Militant” was echoed by another seventeenth-century commentator, William Winstanley, who also compared Lovelace to Sidney, and Lucasta to Stella.<sup>158</sup>

These roles are evident in the poetry, no doubt, but the persona who speaks to Althea, Ellinda and Lucasta is ultimately more concerned with being a loyal subject than a lover, with developing his poetry than encouraging his mistress, and with fleeing any but the most momentary entanglement. Of the eulogies written on Lovelace only Thomas Stanley’s “Register of Friends” recognises the link between Lovelace’s devotion to a woman and that to his monarch. He writes of Lovelace’s imprisonment, “There thou thy Love and Loyalty didst sing, / The Glories of thy Mistris, and thy King”.<sup>159</sup> Lovelace’s naming of his first volume of poetry after his mistress / muse is misleading, since he provides neither a narrative of courtship as Habington’s *Castara* does, nor a collection of lyrics which are entirely amatory and addressed solely to one woman as is Nicholas Hookes’ *Amanda*. Cowley’s popular collection of lyrics, *The Mistress* (1656), follows a design that traces a hail and farewell to love, but Lovelace’s *Lucasta* opens with a valediction and subordinates

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<sup>154</sup> From 1640 Carew, Waller, Suckling, Shirley, Stanley, Cowley, Cleveland, Herrick, Heath and Cartwright all published works containing a substantial body of love poetry; this list does not include what Parfitt terms “The Silver Poets” of the century, nor the mass of rhymers and balladeers whose output is found in manuscript and in the printed collections of the period.

<sup>155</sup> Sym. Ognell, “On the truly Honourable Coll. *Richard Lovelace*, occasioned by the Publication of his Posthume Poems” (233).

<sup>156</sup> Samuel Holland, “On the death of my much honoured friend. Colonel Richard Lovelace” (London : s.n., 1660) (Cambridge University Library Wing/H2439).

<sup>157</sup> Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum* (London: 1675) II. p. 160.

<sup>158</sup> William Winstanley, *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets, or the Honour of Parnassus* (London: 1687), p. 170.

<sup>159</sup> Stanley wrote his verse tribute, “Register of Friends”, some time in the 1670s, towards the end of his life, although he had given up writing poetry by the time of the Restoration. Lovelace is included among other writers and poets of the mid-century: Sherburne, Shirley and Hammond. See *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 360.



love to political loyalty throughout. The desire to avoid a love experienced as engulfing and debilitating is an impulse common to poems so apparently different in tone as the chivalric “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres”(18) and the libertine “The Scrutinie”(26). In these poems, as in his pastoral, and in the poems of seduction discussed subsequently, Lovelace articulates the problematical nature of masculinity still bounded by Petrarchan conventions. The subtext of much amatory verse is a paradoxical desire to escape the femininity internalised in the role of the abject lover; yet inaccessibility and absence provoke the necessary lyric eloquence. The poems of separation thus shape a secure encampment for the masculine mind: prison or the battlefield replaces the homosocial sphere of the tavern.

The equation of love with war, a classical commonplace principally derived from Sappho and Ovid engaged most of Lovelace’s contemporaries, but Lovelace’s writing career spans almost two decades of violence and political turmoil, and his classical heritage is mingled with loyalist sentiment. Lovelace employs well-worn narratives of seduction, but he expands on the conventional battle of the sexes motif by using his love poetry to record his political allegiance. Ovid, as well as Propertius and Tibullus, prefers love to war; Lovelace desires to vanquish love so that he can engage more fully with the historical moment. In his best-known poem, “To Althea, From Prison”, the poet turns from the woman who is outside the bars, inwards, to find solace in declaring his loyalty to the King. Similarly, in “To Lucasta. From Prison”(48), he appears to address the lady (who disappears entirely after the opening apostrophe), but concludes a catalogue of other objects for devotion. Initially, the poet appears to be asking for release from any involvement with the woman, who is a distraction from the real business of the hero and the poet. The poem, discussed in the previous chapter, is full of historical reference, but the first stanza removes the speaker from any association with the bondage of love, and this is more apparent if it is compared with some similar lines of Davenant:

Soon thus for pride of Liberty  
 I low desires of bondage found;  
 And vanity of being free.  
 Bred the direction to be bound.

But as dull Subjects see too late  
 Their safety in Monarchal Reign,  
 Finding their freedome in a State

Is but proud strutting in a Chaine.<sup>160</sup>

Lovelace, like Davenant, compares the freedom enjoyed by subjects who are bound to the King with the real prison of life under Parliament. He images Parliament as a headless torso and as an unattractive proposition for any bride, and then adds the motif of the tormented lover who complains of, but enjoys, his status.

This layering of roles is typical of Lovelace's poetry; the Petrarchan lover has been subsumed by history but the Petrarchan code remains, emptied out. The conflation of the ideal sovereign with the ideal beloved erases the woman. At the conclusion of the poem Lucasta's light has been outshone by the beams of a monarch whose existence is emblematic of the sun. Despite its title the poem is conducting a dialogue with the King:

Oh from thy glorious Starry Waine  
Dispense on me one sacred Beame  
To light me where I soone may see  
How to serve you, and you trust me.

Thomas N. Corns argues that sensual passion expressed in lyric form brings with it a devotion to the King,<sup>161</sup> but Lovelace actually seems happiest when he can replace the amatory with a declaration of loyalty, and address Lucasta or Althea from the safety of prison or from overseas. Even when cavorting drunkenly in "A loose Saraband" (139) and urging his partner to disrobe and indulge in a variety of drinks, Lovelace cannot resist a bitter comment on the political situation of the mid 1650s:

See all the World how't staggers,  
More ugly drunk than we,  
As if far gone in daggers,  
And blood it seem'd to be:  
...  
Now, is there such a Trifle  
As Honour, the fools Gyant?  
What is there left to rifle,  
When Wine makes all parts plyant?

Not only women, but also political allegiances are disappointingly worthless if they are malleable. In Lovelace's poetry the woman is displaced by politics or drink or her

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<sup>160</sup> "The DREAMER. To Mr. George Porter" in *The Works of Sir William Davenant* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 314.

<sup>161</sup> Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 77.

individuality is masked by Petrarchan commonplaces. Essentially, she is unknown. A collection of sensual surfaces and fashionable accessories, the woman is absent or silent despite the dialogic nature of much of the love poetry. Donne's women are frequently silent but they manifest a presence that Lucasta lacks.

Despite writing a number of 'persuasions to love' which partake of the Royalist subversion of Puritan conjugal ideals, Lovelace had a reputation for honour and chivalry – for "Valour, Vertue, Love, and Loyalty", as Francis Lenton's commendation makes clear (12). This reputation, however, is the result of his determination not to be captivated by women and thus prevented from fighting. Imprisonment is a recurrent theme of the amatory verse, but it is love's fetters which the poet wishes to avoid. When leaving Lucasta Lovelace writes: "To Warre and Armes I flie" (18). This is sometimes modernised as "fly" but an ambiguous sense of fleeing from the woman rather than flying towards something remains.<sup>162</sup>

In his *Amores* Ovid explicitly links love and war, and much seventeenth-century verse deals with relations between the sexes as an ongoing military conflict. Ovid continued to provide inspiration for Cavalier poets and dramatists during their time of political exclusion while the authorities' continued attempts to suppress lascivious publications also provided a spur. Although the theatres had been closed for a number of years, an edition of six new plays by Shirley published in 1653, for example, contains an additional tragi-comedy, "The Amorous Warre" dating from 1648 and stressing its indebtedness to Ovid on the title page. Lovelace was familiar with Ovid, and his uncle, George Sandys had produced the first complete translation of the *Amores* in 1621, of which four further editions appeared before 1660.

The language of love as war is prominent in a small group of poems by Lovelace including "In allusion to the French-Song. *N'entendez vous pas ce language*" (124). In this lyric the speaker is a courtly, feminised lover pleading with his mistress. Tears, obeisance and physical dissolution are proffered, and in the second stanza the usual artillery of women is turned against them:

My Arms did plead my wound,  
Each in the other bound;

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<sup>162</sup> That Lovelace intended "flee" is convincingly argued by Norman Nathan in "Lovelace's 'Flie'", *Notes and Queries*, 500: 12 (1955), pp. 428-9. In her analysis of poetic language Josephine Miles notes that "Lovelace's own special terms" include "the lover's verbs to *fly* and *hasten*", though she does not comment on the direction of this motion. (See *The Primary Language of Poetry in the 1640s* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 54.)

Volleys of Sighs did crowd,  
And ring my griefs alowd;  
Grones, like a Canon Ball,  
Batter'd the Marble Wall,  
That the kind Neighb'ring Grove,  
Did mutiny for Love.

A slightly different emphasis is given to military metaphors in Lovelace's mixture of platonic and pastoral in his "Dialogue. Lucasta, Alexis" (41), which has one such chorus:

Souldiers suspected of their courage goe,  
That Engines, and their Breasts untorne show:  
Love neere his Standard when his Hoste he sets,  
Creates alone fresh-bleeding *Bannerets*.

Only "Valiant Love" (93) in the first volume of poems consistently explores the process of courtship as a military encounter from start to finish. In the first stanza the woman's hatred is simply a spur to conquest. The protagonist, "Love's Duellist", even expects to triumph in the first attempt. Soon the woman is under a protracted siege. which includes some naturalistic details of contemporary warfare:

Let me make my approach when I lye downe  
With counter-wrought and Travers Eyes;  
With Peals of Confidence Batter the Towne:  
Had ever Beggar yet the Keyes?  
No, I will vary stormes with Sun and Winde;  
Be rough, and offer Calme Condition,  
March in (and pray't) or starve the Garrison.  
Let her make sallies hourelly, yet I'le find  
(Though all beat of) shee's to be undermin'd.

The poem ends with an appeal to Cupid and the image of the lover's lance "broke on her Bed".

Lovelace, however, is not as attracted to this aspect of Ovid as his contemporaries and prefers to engage with real battlefields; making his poems not only weapons of seduction but also darts against the prevailing orthodoxy. Lovelace's devotion is to the King and to his own identity as a poet; as a result his appeals and eulogies to a variety of ladies have a detachment which sets them apart from the numerous love lyrics of the period. This stance enables Lovelace to contemplate women as objects with which to furnish material for a rhyme, the cornucopia which will yield the flowers of literary generation. Yet Lovelace's poems apparently found

favour among women, at least on the evidence of male poets. “Him valianst men, and fairest Nymphs approve” writes Marvell in his commendatory poem to Lovelace’s first volume (9), envisaging a flock of undressed ladies rescuing the poet from harsh criticism. Brome also supports this view:

Ladies love  
To kiss those accents; who dares disapprove  
What they stile good? Our lines, our lives, and all,  
By their opinions either rise or fall.<sup>163</sup>

Anthony Wood’s biography of Lovelace describes him as a person of virtue and courtly deportment, “much admired and adored by the female sex.”<sup>164</sup> None of these are singled out, however, and the first volume of *Lucasta* is dedicated to a relation, Anne Lovelace: possibly the same person to whom Lovelace expresses his thanks in “The Lady *A.L. My Asylum in a great extremity*”(62).

Lovelace’s indirection in amorous matters, compared with Carew, Suckling or the many composers of unattributed lyrics to “Chloris” appears to have found favour, yet the prevailing themes of his love poetry are dissatisfaction and separation. “The Scrutinie”, in which the speaker abandons his conquest after one night, was probably his most popular lyric. Logical arguments are advanced for male inconstancy and allow Lovelace to display his fondness for paradox, a form of argumentation that was at the peak of its popularity in the seventeenth century.<sup>165</sup> In “A Paradox” (19) Lovelace argues that the fair can only be appreciated by acquaintance with the foul: “For had the world one face / And Earth been bright as Ayre / We had known neither place”. The aesthetic appreciation of women requires the necessity of leaving them and Jupiter is summoned as a worthy example of such a paradox. The “Sonnet”, “When I by thy faire shape”(44), revokes oaths of love when the woman grows old, while “A forsaken Lady to her false Servant that is disdained by his new Mistris” (35) looks at unrequited love through metaphors of flight. The woman advises her former lover to “Flye on,” but also articulates Lovelace’s underlying fear of sameness: “must we / Run then like spoakes in wheeles eternally / And never overtake?”

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<sup>163</sup> See *Alexander Brome: Poems*, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>164</sup> Wood’s account is summarised in Wilkinson, pp. xxii.

<sup>165</sup> The uses of paradox in the poetry of praise, and its seventeenth-century sense as something contrary to received opinion or belief and often marvellous or incredible, is discussed in Henry Knight Miller, “The Paradoxical Enconium with Special Reference to its Vogue in England, 1600-1800”, *Modern Philology*, 53: 3 (1956), pp. 145-78.

Mutability in love, the ephemeral nature of joy and the necessity of flight, form recurrent themes of Lovelace's poetry. The poems admit that change and inconstancy both animate and thwart desire, and that the impulse to hunt and conquer is often countered by the impulse to flee. There is a constant dialectic between the conventional desire to be imprisoned by love, most often pictured as being fettered in a woman's hair, and the desire to escape:

“Or wilt I fling all at her feet I have?  
My Life, my Love, my very Soule a Slave?  
Tye my free Spirit onely unto her,  
And yeeld up my Affection Prisoner?” (65)

The military impetus to acquire and invade is always accompanied in Lovelace by a fear of engulfment or a loss of boundaries. As a result, poems of seduction are often also poems of valediction. Parting, however, can be poetically explored in a number of ways: it can be an anticipation of the parting that is death; it can allow platonic consolation for physical absence; it can express the requited lover's farewell and it can be a defiant rejection of a cruel mistress. Lovelace's poetry includes all these possibilities.

## **2.1. Poems of Parting**

*Lucasta* (1649) opens with two poems of separation; Lovelace leaves the woman with the gift of a poem rather than of himself. The pleasing uncertainties of the game of love are opposed by the more lasting qualities of poetry in which the mistress can be immured and immortalised. The placing of the two “*Lucasta*” poems at the head of his volume, however, would also have indicated to any potential purchaser or reader, Lovelace's sympathies with the vanished world of the court and the enforced exile of many poets and courtiers.

“To *Lucasta*, Going beyond the Seas” (17) is a poem of valediction offering a Neoplatonic consolation. Lovelace generally shows little interest in this sub-genre, having only two or three poems that might qualify, but occasionally finishing a poem with a Neoplatonic sentiment. For instance, “Calling *Lucasta* from her Retirement” (105), the penultimate work in the 1649 volume, ends with lovers and angels observing the “woes and discords here below”. Lovelace's duet between Alexis and *Lucasta*, “Dialogue” (41), condenses several tropes of valedictory songs. It first presents separation as a foretaste of death:

Tell me *Alexis* what this parting is,  
That so like dying is, but is not it?

Lucasta then eroticises the moment:

But Ah this ling'ring murdring Farewell!  
Death quickly wounds, & wounding cures the ill.

Finally, a chorus offers spiritual reward. The souls of the lovers fly to each other and this comfort proves sufficient. "The Sessions of a Looke, a Kisse, or Smile" may be adjourned, but neither "time nor Fate can part us joynd thus". This unearthly solace also provides the discreet consummation at the conclusion to Lovelace's pastoral, "Aramantha". The poet does not dwell on the physical aspects of reunion, but compares the joy of the lovers to that enjoyed by angels, men returned from hell, or separated minds rejoined.

At the political level, however, Neoplatonism is sometimes seen as offering a convenient retreat from politics and a turning towards the life of *otium* celebrated in many Cavalier country-house poems of retreat.<sup>166</sup> Yet in the poems encountered in his 1649 volume, Lovelace combines platonic sentiments with political commitment. The pose of the courtly Platonic lover fits well with that of the warrior/hero adopted by Lovelace. His poetry articulates an awareness that the hero must continue to be part of a narrative: he loses his momentum and his heroic stature if he becomes entangled in love, even if this is a stasis which is sometimes desired. Mutability in women is derided, but the male lover can control change by being subject to it. The Platonic lover can avoid direct amatory engagement and maintain the narrative impetus required of heroes.

The speaker in "To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas" does not elaborate on the reasons for the "Seas and Land betwixt us both", but reassures the lady that despite a separation their connection is essentially unaltered. Lovelace follows the Latin love elegists in opening the poem with a declaration to his mistress which expresses some resistance on the part of the lover, who speaks in the detached voice of rational deliberation. The tone is Lovelace's usual one of vindicated fickleness: "If to be absent were to be / Away from thee." The argument is conditional, the subjunctive of

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<sup>166</sup> Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Vol. I: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 115.

the first line is mirrored in the conclusion, “Then, might I crave”. While dispensing advice, Lovelace’s grammar articulates his own fears about absence and grief. The same conditional, the same attempt at control, occurs in “To his Deare Brother Colonel F.L.”(86). The plea against immoderate mourning is structured by the sequence of “if”, “but”, “then”. Lovelace’s use of the subjunctive reveals a wish for compliance, but also a consciousness that the attitude he posits towards grief exists only in an unrealised future. In “To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas” the first stanza, reiterating the couple’s closeness by specifically addressing “my Lucasta”, sets up a conceit derived from Donne’s poems of valediction. Though separated physically, the lovers remain spiritually united. The relationship posited between the soul and the body owes little to Christian philosophy (in which the soul is trapped in the body as a result of the Fall) or the Neoplatonic tradition (in which love seeks *quies* beyond desire). The souls of the lovers are not longing for release from the corporeal; the strength of their “faith” and “troth” enables them to overcome time and space in a revival of ancient pagan philosophical notions relating to celestial harmony.

In the third stanza the woman and the poet are able to meet above the highest sphere and “greet as angels greet”. These lines closely parallel Carew’s: “Yet let our boundlesse spirits meet, / And in loves speare each other greet” from his poem of 1640, “To my Mistress in absence”.<sup>167</sup> In Carew’s poem, however, the lovers are already apart, not at the point of separation; they languish with desire while tasting subtle Platonic bliss chiefly to “cheat...the lingring houres” until they meet again. Carew’s poem is a conventional lament for lovers in a temporary separation.

Lovelace’s poem has more immediacy, and is an unusual valedictory poem for its time in its stoic advocacy of *oikeiosis* or like-minded affinity. Cartwright’s “A Valediction”, for instance, consoles the lovers in the final couplet by suggesting that the poet snatches and keeps images of the beloved. “So, by this Art, Fancy shall Fortune Cross; / And Lovers live by thinking on their Loss.”<sup>168</sup>

Cartwright’s poem recognises what this Lovelace poem obscures: that lovers need not presence but absence and that the desire for parting is ultimately a desire for

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<sup>167</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 22. Carew’s editor points out a further resemblance in these lines to the Platonic lover in Montagu’s popular play of the 1630s, *The Shepheard’s Paradise*.

<sup>168</sup> *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. R. Cullis Goffin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p. 66.



death – which passion serves.<sup>169</sup> The departing lover in Lovelace's poem is desirous of a glamorous death which will freeze his virility and youth. Through the convention of chivalry, the farewells to Lucasta both conceal and reveal that the secret object of love is death and annihilation. The speaker of Lovelace's poem avoids waste and debilitation in a woman's arms by identifying with death in a higher military and homosocial sphere. The parting erases the woman, but not the political and power relations that drive them apart.

These relations are seen from the masculine and aristocratic point of view. Interregnum ballads, in contrast, often deal with separation from the female point of view: abandoned mistresses bemoan the departure of their soldier sweethearts as in "Deplorable News from Southwark: Or, the loving Lasses Lamentations for the loss of their Sweet-hearts".<sup>170</sup> In the Henry Lawes manuscript there is an anonymous "Complaint against Cupid" in which the ladies are unhappy that even Mars has become a Cavalier and left them. They threaten to turn Roundhead so that the Cavaliers will rape them.<sup>171</sup> These anonymous texts present voices missing in Lovelace. The abandoned woman is likely to face economic as well as emotional poverty. Moreover, women are not always dismayed by the departure of husbands or lovers. Illustrated pamphlets of the time show a world turned upside down in which a parliament of women enact laws, and the war is presented as an opportunity for cuckoldry.<sup>172</sup>

Essentially Lovelace asserts for himself an emotional freedom of a similar sort to that which the prisoner proclaims in "To Althea, From Prison"(78) or "To Lucasta. From Prison"(48). Historical circumstances cannot affect his inner freedom, or his immutable ability to keep faith and troth with a mistress or with the King. The second stanza of "To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas" is a stoic refusal to be cowed by fate. Lovelace's debts to Horace and Casimir are often discussed with reference to the

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<sup>169</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), pp. 59-71.

<sup>170</sup> Hyder Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan: Ballads and Broad-sides Illustrating the Period of the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660* (New York: New York University Press, 1923), p. 421.

<sup>171</sup> John Wardroper, *Love and Drollery* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 76.

<sup>172</sup> See David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion. Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Between pp. 175-6 a number of illustrations are reproduced which clearly articulate not only fears for the future but a reaction to contemporary events such as the political radicalism of the lower orders and the vocal entry of women into politics and religion. A comprehensive survey of the activities of women, not only in religious speaking and writing, but also in organising petitions and demonstrations is to be found in Stevie Davies, *Unbridled Spirits: Women of the English Revolution 1640-1660* (London: Women's Press, 1998).

longer poems, “The Grass-hopper”(38) and “Advice to my best Brother. Coll: Francis Lovelace”(174), but not in relation to this poem which has attracted comparatively little critical interest.<sup>173</sup> The speaker in “To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas” refuses to express any emotion at parting and maintains his ability to be the “happy man” of Horace’s epodes, whether he goes or stays and whether the sea drowns him or not. In Horace’s Ode II, 16, the poet insists that happiness is internal and movement from one place to another irrelevant. Lovelace’s valediction also has an echo of Casimir’s Ode 3.Lib 4:

Hee that mischance knows how to hide,  
The worst of ills can best abide.  
Hee, though the Sea should everywhere  
Hang up its waves I’th flitting ayre;  
And the rough winds on him, should presse  
Flames mix’d with billowes, nay whole Seas...<sup>174</sup>

Charles Cotton’s memorial poem for Lovelace suggests that in his own life Lovelace withstood: “The ruffling Passions of untamed blood, / Without a wrinkle in thy face to show, / Thy stable Brest could a disturbance know.”<sup>175</sup> Casimir’s ode ends with the reminder that whether sailing in small barks or in gallant ships, the destination – the “Aeternall shore” is common to all.<sup>176</sup> Lovelace’s valedictory poem also moves towards a contemplation of the lovers’ eventual fate – a bodiless Heaven rather than the usual much anticipated earthly re-union. Casimir’s ode is framed as advice to a ruler and its echoes in Lovelace’s poem strengthen the impression that his poem is not a one-dimensional romantic valedictory address to an abandoned mistress, but suggests a specific attitude to be adopted towards the loss of property, country, court and King.

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<sup>173</sup> Manfred Weidhorn quotes it in full but does not explicate it. See *Richard Lovelace*. (New York: Twayne, 1970), p. 91. He notes that Wedgwood, Miles and Williamson have commented on the poem, but that more recent criticism has not found it of especial interest.

<sup>174</sup> Mathias Casimire Sarbiewski, *The Odes of Casimire, Translated by G. Hils* (1646; Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, 1953), p. 57. See also, J.C. Arens, “Sarbiewski’s Ode against Tears Imitated by Lovelace, Yalden and Watts”, *Neophilologus*, 47 (1963), pp. 236-9.

<sup>175</sup> “To the Memory of my worthy Friend, Colonel Richard Lovelace”, in *Poems of Charles Cotton*, ed. John Buxton (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 112.

<sup>176</sup> Poems of Stoic fortitude tend to place the speaker in rural retirement or solitary contemplation. Lovelace’s use of the classics is unusual here.

## 2.2. Expressing Grief: ‘I muse from whence these forward tears should flow’

“To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas” is unconventional for its time in that lovers’ separations, when poetic, tend to be a female concern, whereas Lovelace replaces the lachrymose woman with a male speaker who refuses to shed a single tear or sigh a single sigh. Tears are a frequent component of seventeenth-century imagery, and classical derivatives such as the equation of pearls and tears had become a cliché. The 1647 edition of *The Academy of Complements* has a section, “A misscallaneous present of Similitudes, Comparisons and Examples selected for the Readers discreetest application”. Lines to be used in poetry or letters are provided and these include such tributes as: “The rivulets of tears hang on her cheeks like drops of pearled dew upon the riches of Flora.”<sup>177</sup>

The refusal of a male poet to shed tears is also a refusal to act as the defeated party during the Interregnum. As Henry Vaughan announces: “And who this age a Mourner goes, / Doth with his tears but feed his foes.”<sup>178</sup> Although he consistently recognises the value of tears as equivalent to pearls (as in “Lucasta weeping”(45) ), Lovelace refuses to pay for his separation with a single sacrificial tear. He avoids the contaminating and enervating influence of female tears by recourse to a male poet and a diluted Stoicism. In his constancy against adversity Lovelace, like many others, imitates the odes of Casimir Sarbiewski, the “Polish Horace”. His advice to a ruler, popularly known as the “Ode Against Tears” opens:

If Mournfull eyes could but prevent  
The evils they so much lament  
Sidonian Pearles, or Gems more rare,  
Would be too cheap for ev’ry teare.

And finishes:

What they expell, teares cherish oft;  
Hard things deny to yield to soft.  
Mischance is conquered, when she spies  
A Valiant patience with dry eyes.<sup>179</sup>

In Lovelace’s valedictory poems the speaker maintains this control: there is nothing in his two volumes to compare with the anonymous “A Tear sent his Mistresse” which

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<sup>177</sup> *The Academy of Complements* (London: 1647), p. 40.

<sup>178</sup> “To my worthy friend Master T. Lewes”, in *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp. 94-5.

weighs tears with pearls in every stanza.<sup>180</sup> In the poem whose title rails against “immoderately mourning my Brothers untimely Death at Carmarthen” (86) Lovelace argues that he would only pay a pearl “for each wet bead” if tears could “wash the Ill away”, and moreover that:

Teares fat the Griefe that they should sterve;  
I’ron decress of Destinie  
Are ner’e wipe’t out with a wet Eye.

The “gallant resolve” he throws at fate in this poem is consistent with the attitude to valediction taken in “To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas”. The value of the relationship is heightened by the impossibility of assuaging sorrow with (male) tears. Lovelace reiterates this position, and praises the golden mean, by telling his brother “A breast of proof defies all Shocks of Fate” (176). Death, misfortune and separation are frequent, if not dominating themes of Interregnum poetry; grief is inscribed in elegies, in *carpe diem* poems and in commemorative verse, but the grieving subject is also an object of discourse and the text is read through the medium of tears or their absence.

Lovelace’s valedictory poems to his brothers and to Lucasta represent a moment of transition in early modern subjectivity. The public performance of grief, even if hypocritically lachrymose, is endorsed, but the private Puritan self restrains mourning. The discourse of grief is also gendered: women are expected to weep since they have moist qualities linked with their uncontrollable sexuality, but men are dry. (Writing an elegy on a friend killed at Pontefract in 1648 Henry Vaughan writes “’Tis true, fair *manhood* hath a *female* eye, / And tears are beauteous in a victory”.)<sup>181</sup> Prohibitions against tears represent an anxiety not only about sorrow, but also about elemental female liquidity. Women’s overflowing abundance characterises the uncontrolled and sensual flow of carnival, but women’s secretions are also grotesque and defile the carefully delineated and controlled classical body. Sometimes male writers enter this carnival of grief. The conventional fountain of grief becomes a

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<sup>179</sup> Ode 13. l. 4. *The Odes of Casimire*, op. cit., pp. 71-3.

<sup>180</sup> In Vol II, “Fancies and Fantasticks”, of *Musarum Deliciae: or, The muses recreation, by sr J.M and Ja.S.* (London: 1655), p. 175.

<sup>181</sup> “An Elegy on the Death of Mr R. Hall, Slain at Pontefract, 1648”, in *Vaughan: Complete Poems*, op. cit., p. 91.

stream of urine in a poem that parodies funeral elegies, but more commonly bodily dissolution is suppressed.<sup>182</sup>

The personification of mischance as female reflects the hierarchy of gender relations: the hard, dry male dominates the soft female. According to Aristotle, dryness, a male attribute, was the more desirable physical quality. A damp psyche was an enfeebled one; sleep, wine and erotic indulgence all weaken masculine reason on the personal and political level, as in Lovelace's "A loose Saraband" (1659). Lovelace, after all, praised Lely for a politically charged portrait of Charles I and the Duke of York by writing, "Thou sorrow canst designe without a teare" (58). This attitude indicates a shift from the Renaissance expectation of communal and visible grief. It illustrates what Francis Barker argues is the obliteration of the public body as spectacle in the early modern period and its reappearance in the "fine and private place" of single individuals and authored texts.<sup>183</sup>

Masculine grief, in Lovelace's oeuvre, is acceptable for anchorites, or in the theatre or as a coterie activity, but is also an emotional response closely related to the production of texts.<sup>184</sup> In an elegy on Princess Katherine (29), Lovelace contrasts those that can only weep corporeal tears with writers who express their grief in words: "You that weepe the gladnesse of the spheres, / And pen a Hymne in stead of Inke with teares." Commemorating Lovelace, Eldred Revett suggests that the mourners' tears will be of such volume: "That they a native Epitaph shall weep; / Untill each Letter spelt distinctly lyes, / Cut by the mystick droppings of our eyes."<sup>185</sup> Women, however, weep more copiously and to no literary end.<sup>186</sup> In the 1649 *Lucasta* there are several poems in which Lucasta cries. In "Lucasta Weeping. Song" (45), Lucasta's volume of tears is sufficient to quench the sun; when she smiles again he is rekindled like an ardent lover. Tears are part of women's armoury in love, and the liquid mistress is preferred to one who remains stony, except when some insincerity is detected. William Cartwright compares a woman weeping with nature's fruitful rain

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<sup>182</sup> See Wardoper, *Love and Drollery* op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>183</sup> See Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), especially pp. 73-91.

<sup>184</sup> "But *Anch'rites* pray in teares and sweate" is a mark of Love's true devotion, as Lovelace writes in "To Ellinda, That lately I have not written" (44). In "To Fletcher reviv'd" (60) Lovelace describes the author's power over his audience, causing them to cry and laugh in turn.

<sup>185</sup> "An Elegie, Sacred to the Memory of my late Honoured Friend, Collonell Richard Lovelace" (229).

<sup>186</sup> Marvell, Donne, Carew, Strode, Herbert of Cherbury and especially Crashaw all wrote about tearful women. See Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the Effect of the "New Science" upon Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 69-73.

“In this barren age of ours.”<sup>187</sup> William Habington desires Castara to be more profuse in her weeping,<sup>188</sup> but John Hall’s “Julia Weeping” is stern: “Why weep’st thou? Cause thou cannot be / More hard to mee?”<sup>189</sup> The poet promises a metamorphosis: “And thou shall like thy Corall prove, / Soft under water, hard above.” Lovelace, in contrast, praises the value of Lucasta’s chaste tears in “Lucasta paying her Obsequies to the Chast memory of my dearest Cosin Mrs. Bowes Barne” (77). Nature reflects Lucasta’s sorrow and a star “weepes that she did weepe”. But it is the emotions of *eros* and of fear, rather than of grief, that are particularly watery and in which women are apt to overflow their boundaries.<sup>190</sup>

In Lovelace’s “Amyntor from beyond the Sea to Alexis. A Dialogue”(101), Alexis is drowning in an ocean of tears occasioned by the physical separation of the lovers. Adding to this volume of water are the tears of Lucasta, who advises Alexis against a return to Amyntor’s “watry Land”. Alexis’ own country is also liquefied, but as a result of war it is a “tempestuous Earth / Where blood and dearth / Raigne ’stead of Kings, agen”. The disordered geography of an immersed body politic is made clear in this poem. Lucasta, whose power over nature is consistent in Lovelace’s poetry, is invoked, but Neptune calms the sea “to ravish her”. Land and sea, safety and danger are blurred, and the poetic resolution (the lovers are mysteriously transported away) is unconvincing but expected. In this poem, changing from the element of water to that of fire illustrates the dangerous formlessness of women. The results of unrestrained eroticism are with political chaos, with an unwished-for transformation and with the poet’s inability to exert control.

Lovelace obliterates another pair of watery lovers in his “Clitophon and Lucippe translated” (68), a commendatory poem to Anthony Hodges’ translation of a third century Greek novel by Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Lovelace’s poem gives no indication of the book’s content (rape and abduction) or its tortuous plot; Melite has an adulterous affair with the hero, Clitophon, who is loved by the virginal heroine Lucippe. Melite, accused of sexual misconduct, must step into a

<sup>187</sup> “On One Weeping”, in *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, op. cit., pp. 32-4.

<sup>188</sup> “To CASTARA Weeping”, in *The Poems of William Habington* ed. Kenneth Allott (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), p. 66.

<sup>189</sup> In Peter Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution. An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 84.

<sup>190</sup> Anne Carson, “Putting her in her place: Woman, Dirt and Desire”, in David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 135-69.

stream which will gush up and drown her if she lies. The stream into which she steps is part of another legend: it was formed by the metamorphosis of a little huntress who, struck by the arrows of Eros and yielding to a reciprocated passion, is punished by Artemis. Within the text of the translation Lovelace recommends so strongly to ladies lies a warning about the indulgence of the erotic impulse. Immersion in water provides the metaphor; this is at the core of two poems in which Lucasta bathes, and in which woman, water and tears coalesce. A woman or women bathing was a topic favoured by Lovelace's contemporaries, and derived in part from the story of Actaeon and Diana. The poet takes the point of view of the exploring waters. Cowley's "Bathing in the River", for instance, describes the "amorous waves" that play about his un-named mistress.<sup>191</sup> In "Lucasta, taking the waters at Tunbridge. Ode"(53), Lovelace similarly allows the words to follow the movement of the waters over and into Lucasta's body:

Yee happy floods! That now must passe  
The sacred conduits of her Wombe,  
Smooth and transparent as your face,  
When you are deafe, and windes are dumbe.

Be proud and if your Waters be  
Foul'd with a counterfeyted teare,  
Or some false sigh hath stained yee,  
Haste and be purified there.

Lovelace, in contrasting purification and concealment, appears to be referring to the watery ordeal of Melite (who carefully worded her oath of purity) and comparing Melite with Lucasta. That verbal deceit is involved is indicated by Lovelace's use of "conduit". Jonathan Gil Harris traces the ambiguous use of this term in the seventeenth century.<sup>192</sup> Its dominant sense is "source", but it was also a pipe conveying waste from the body and a word associated with women's unrestrained verbal gushings. Lucasta's immersion is ambivalent: she causes the waters to boil in desire in stanza six, yet she is such a paragon of "Vertue, Honour, Love and Bliss" that she does not need the ritual cleansing of the waters.

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<sup>191</sup> Fanshawe, Carew and John Harington also have such river poems. Cowley's "Bathing in the River" is in *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, ed. Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth and J. Robert King (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), II. pp. 122-4.

<sup>192</sup> Jonathan Gil Harris, "This Is Not a Pipe: Water Supply, Incontinent Sources, and the Leaky Body Politic", in Thomas Healy and Janathan Sawday, eds., *Literature and the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 203-28.

In a later poem, “Lucasta at the Bath”(132), it is her own tears which purify the waters. The opening stanzas of this poem envisage Lucasta in a sort of nuptial bath. According to ancient Greek traditions this was an important transitional moment in which maidenhood and wildness is washed away. Lucasta is cold and chaste, but the floods around her glow with a raging heat and early modern concerns about the physical and moral pollution of women emerge. The pains of love become more than spiritual:

No Sulphur, through whose each blew Vein  
The thick and lazy Currents strein,  
Can cure the Smarting, nor the fell  
Blisters of Love wherewith they swell.

These great Physicians of the Blind,  
The Lame, and fatal Blains of *Inde*,  
In every drop themselves now see  
Speckled with a new Leprosie.

As sick drinks are with old Wine dash’d  
Foul Waters too with Spirits wash’d;  
Thou griev’d, perchance one tear let’s fall,  
Which straight did purifie them all.

In this poem, Lucasta’s grief is identified with the consummation rather than the frustration of desire. Although the waters eventually run clear, the speaker is revealed as an Actaeon anxious to remain whole, a state which only the distance of parting and separation will guarantee.

### **2.3. Platonic illusions and the chivalrous hero**

As a statement of incorporeal affection “To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas” belongs to the versifying of the Stuart court two decades earlier. Neo-Platonic courtship poems had already passed through a stage of popularity followed by a vogue for anti-platonic jests of which Cartwright’s “No Platonique Love” is a useful example:

Tell me no more of minds embracing minds,  
And hearts exchang’d for hearts;  
That Spirits Spirits meet, as Winds do Winds,  
And mix their subt’lest parts;  
That two unbodi’d Essences may kiss,  
And then like Angels, twist and feel one Bliss.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> *Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, op. cit., pp. 67-68.



Lovelace did not indulge in anti-Platonics as such, but his valediction to Lucasta shares its vocabulary with Cartwright's. The next two stanzas of "No Platonique Love" explore the difficulties of ascending from the material to the spiritual, which is the subject of Plato's *Phaedrus*. Cartwright cynically rejects the possibility that spiritual greeting can ever be separate from grosser desires. He concludes his anti-Platonic argument:

Come, I will undeceive thee: they that tread  
 Those vain Aeriall waies,  
 Are like young Heyrs and Alchymists misled  
 To waste their wealth and Daies:  
 For searching thus to be forever Rich,  
 They only find a Med'cine for the Itch.

Cartwright's poem still allows the lovers to maintain a Platonic illusion about their relationship. John Cleveland, a contemporary of Cartwright's, goes further by suggesting that in the planned siege of a woman the Platonic lover is an impotent coward, good at fencing but useless in a real duel, and "Eunuch'd in formality" as the last stanza puts it. Cleveland's "The Antiplatonick" was extremely popular in manuscript miscellanies of the Interregnum, and fourteen editions of his poems were published in the decade after 1651.<sup>194</sup> The poem provides an extreme contrast to Lovelace's restraint:

For shame, thou everlasting Woer,  
 Still saying Grace and ne're fall to her!  
 Love that's in Contemplation plac't,  
 Is *Venus* drawn but to the Wast.  
 Unlesse your Flame confesse its Gender,  
 And your Parley cause surrender,  
 Y'are Salamanders of a cold desire,  
 That live untouch't amid the hottest fire.

There is no indication that Lovelace was a Platonic lover in this parodic vein. As the second poem in *Lucasta* makes plain, he prefers the battlefield to his mistress's arms. In a reversal of Ovid's story of Daphne (constantly reiterated by seventeenth-century poets) it is the poet who flees the attention of the too compliant ladies, having achieved the success denied to Apollo in the *Metamorphoses*. John Tatham addresses

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<sup>194</sup> *The Poems of John Cleveland*, eds. Brian Morris and Eleanor Withington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 54-6.

Lovelace as a reluctant Adonis in his “Upon my Noble friend, Richard Lovelace Esquire, his being in Holland. An Invitation”(xlili). This poem records the dismay of Lovelace’s male and female admirers at his departure overseas, but it also touches some themes which recur in the love poetry of both volumes of Lovelace’s verse. In the second stanza Tatham summarises the poet’s desire to escape from commitment, and to search for variety in mistresses who are regarded as ground to be ploughed or soft and timid animals to be hunted:

Wert thou sated with the Spoil  
Of so many Virgins Hearts,  
And therefore didst change thy Soil,  
To seek fresh in other parts:  
Dangers wait on forreigne Game,  
We have Deer more sound and tame.  
Then lov’d Adonis come away,  
For Venus brooks not thy delay.

Lovelace’s reply is to be found in “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres”, where he admits: “True, a new mistress I now chase, / The first foe in the field.” The field is not necessarily that of the English civil wars as C.J. Wortham suggests, nor is the poem simply an expression of militant loyalism any more than it is an expression of romantic or platonic love.<sup>195</sup>

This poem is unfailingly included wherever selections of Lovelace’s verse have been anthologised. It retains currency as a “famous lyric” in literary competitions.<sup>196</sup> “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres” is often mentioned by editors in the same breath as “To Althea, From Prison”, and these poems were the first Lovelace lyrics to be reprinted.<sup>197</sup> Edmund Gosse, in his introduction to a small selection of Lovelace’s verse published in the nineteenth century, uses epithets that are still current. He praises the heroic language and the gallant phrases and concludes that, ““Going to the Wars’ is Lovelace’s best poem containing nothing which could be

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<sup>195</sup> C.J. Wortham, “Richard Lovelace’s ‘To Lucasta, Going to the Warres’: which Wars?”, *Notes and Queries*, 26 (1979), pp. 430-1.

<sup>196</sup> In 1986 competitors were asked to give Lovelace’s poem a “modern direction using the same metre and rhyme scheme”. Roy Dean’s “Lovelace Bleeding” was published in the *Spectator* in 1986. It opens, “Don’t tell me, sweet, that I’m unkind / Each time I black your eye...”. It can be found in Roy Dean, *Mainly in Fun* (Sussex: The Book Guild, 2002), p. 66.

<sup>197</sup> Wilkinson credits Percy’s 1765 *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* with reviving Lovelace’s reputation (lxv). Percy’s selections and comments continued to be reprinted into the twentieth century. “To Lucasta...” appears in Vol II of the 1906 edition and Vol. III in 1910.

improved”.<sup>198</sup> In a 1904 reprint of Lovelace’s two volumes A.R. Waller writes that Lovelace’s two incomparable lyrics “defy the greatest things of the greatest poets”.<sup>199</sup> An early twentieth century re-issue of Percy’s *Reliques of English Poetry* disputes Percy’s mild censure of Lovelace by pointing to these “exquisite verses” which “have become a world-famed quotation”.<sup>200</sup> R.G. Howarth refers to the grace and quiet strength of “To Althea, From Prison” and “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres”, regarding these poems as the crown of Lovelace’s art and as “splendid and typical Cavalier lyrics.”<sup>201</sup> In his collection of prison authors, J.A. Langford talks about “To Althea...” and then moves on immediately to “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres”, which he regards as “not much inferior” and well known to all lovers of poetry. “Is it not a most elegant thing?” he asks: “The last two lines are worthy of being the motto of every lover, and should be the text a wise maiden would apply to ascertain his worth; for he who values even the possession of his mistress more highly than he values his honour, is not worthy of the love of a true and pure-minded woman.”<sup>202</sup> Lovelace’s most recent editor, Gerald Hammond, comments: “This is the Lovelace which everyone responds to: the effortlessly lyrical statement of elegantly heroic behaviour.”<sup>203</sup> The most interesting editorial comment, however, occurs in an American edition of 1921, which praises Lovelace for exhibiting the traits of the old school of chivalry. Quoting the final couplet of the poem, the editor informs us that these two lines “were cited in a thousand newspaper leading articles during the years 1914-18.”<sup>204</sup> Manfred Weidhorn, in the only book-length study of Lovelace’s poetry, summarises the major work done on this poem by Mark van Doren, Norman Holland, N.H. Pearson and G.F. Jones,<sup>205</sup> and judges the treatment of parting in “To Lucasta...” as “consummate”.<sup>206</sup> An unpublished dissertation refers to the poem as one of Lovelace’s “flawless parting poems.”<sup>207</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Thomas Humphrey Ward, ed., *The English Poets* (London: Macmillan, 1892), II. p. 182.

<sup>199</sup> *Lucasta*, ed., A.R. Waller (London: London Unit Library, 1904).

<sup>200</sup> Thomas Percy and Henry B. Wheatley, eds., *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1910), III. p. 264.

<sup>201</sup> R.G. Howarth, ed., *Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Dent, 1959), p. xvi.

<sup>202</sup> John Alfred Langford, *Prison Books and their Authors* (London: William Tegg, 1861), p. 205.

<sup>203</sup> Gerald Hammond, ed., *Richard Lovelace. Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987), p. 13.

<sup>204</sup> *Lucasta Vol I.* (Chicago: Caxton Club, 1921), introduction by William Lyon Phelps, p. xiii.

<sup>205</sup> Cyril Hughes Hartmann, *The Cavalier Spirit and its Influence on the life and work of Richard Lovelace (1618-1658)*, (London: Routledge, 1925). This focuses on the limited biographical data.

<sup>206</sup> Weidhorn, *Richard Lovelace*, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>207</sup> Michael H. Markel, *Ritual and the Individual vision: The Aesthetic Dilemma of the Caroline Love Poets* (Ann Arbor: Dissertation Abstracts International, 1976), pp. 36, 7439A-40A.

A greater body of criticism focuses on the nature of chivalry and heroism within the poem as reflecting shared cultural values.<sup>208</sup> “His famous lyrics to Lucasta and Althea ... voice...the surviving code of chivalry”, writes Geoffrey Walton.<sup>209</sup> Thomas Corns finds that Lovelace retreats to the feudal ethos; suggesting a civilised single combat in the poem, and distancing himself from the real horrors of battle.<sup>210</sup> G.F. Jones provides the most sustained etymological examination of the concept of honour, and places the speaker of the poem in the pose of the classical hero, torn between duty and a beautiful woman.<sup>211</sup> This pose is, however, somewhat atypical. Since the 1600s chivalry had been an object of satire, but had been redefined by the Caroline court as moral rather than martial heroism, enlivened by wit and grace.<sup>212</sup> This is developed by Lovelace’s poem into the type of ‘muscular Christianity’ which Victorian editors found so congenial.<sup>213</sup> The most recent reference to this poem, by L.E Semler, still finds it “the ideal intimate language of the courtier to his mistress”, in which the argument overcomes the problem of inconstancy.<sup>214</sup>

The relationship of Lovelace’s poem to the manners of the court is problematic. Despite the feudal imagery the tone of the valediction counters the apparent feminisation of a male elite modelled on Castiglione. Lovelace restrains a hubristic manliness so that he can be submissive not, in Neoplatonic fashion, to the lady, but to the King. Readings of this poem as a dialogue between only two parties are rejected by those critics who see some mocking of soldierly values in the poem.<sup>215</sup> Norman Holland suggests that it expresses a fear of affection and a turning from heterosexual love to homosexual competition;<sup>216</sup> Sharon Seelig that the poem

<sup>208</sup> This is the position taken by van Doren, Pearson and H.M. Richmond.

<sup>209</sup> Geoffrey Walton, “The Cavalier Poets”, in Boris Ford, ed., *From Donne to Marvell: New Pelican Guide to English Literature Vol. III* (London: Penguin, 1982), pp. 205-19.

<sup>210</sup> Thomas N. Corns, “Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and Richard Lovelace”, in Corns, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry*, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>211</sup> George Fenwick Jones “Lov’d I Not Honour More: The Durability of a Literary Motif”, *Comparative Literature*, 11 (1959), pp. 131-43.

<sup>212</sup> J.S.A. Adamson, “Chivalry and Political Culture in Caroline England”, in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, eds., *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 165.

<sup>213</sup> Some comments on Kingsley’s formulation of this phrase and its relation to the Protestant Reformation are to be found in Graham Barwell and John Kennedy, “Evangelical Christianity and the Appeal of the Middle Ages: The Case of Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher”, *Parergon*, 18: 3 (2001), pp. 37-57.

<sup>214</sup> L.E. Semler, *The English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts*, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>215</sup> See Bruce King, “Green Ice and a Breast of Proof”, *College English*, 26: 7 (1965), p. 512.

<sup>216</sup> N.H. Holland, “Literary Value: A Psychoanalytic Approach”, *Literature and Psychology*, 14 (1964), p. 50.

articulates an act of male imposition.<sup>217</sup> Seelig points out that the poem uses a series of oppositions, principally that between love and war, but together with other critics she fails to notice that Lovelace's handling of these absolutes is at variance with that of the poets and balladeers of his time. "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" is noteworthy for its economy of sentiment and language. It is also noteworthy, however, for its untypical Royalist militarism. Although the language and imagery of chivalry still had currency in the late 1640s as an element of political culture, it was certainly anachronistic in the literary domain.<sup>218</sup> Reading the poem in the context of the verse circulating in the 1640s reveals that rather than being a quintessential expression of the Royalist spirit, "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" is a very individual production that looks back to the pre-war culture of the court. In its equation of war with the hunt Lovelace is also looking back to a humanist tradition that defined war as the ultimate site for the assertion of masculinity and kept in circulation a metaphor derived from Xenophon.<sup>219</sup> Lovelace wrote his poem as a song, to be performed to music in a closed and sympathetic circle. The nuances of the type of heroism advocated, which might emerge in an aural performance, are unavailable to us. The poem, despite being set by the foremost composer of the day – William Lawes – does not appear to have been popular in its own time.<sup>220</sup> In this, it differs significantly from "To Althea, From Prison" and rather than being bracketed with the latter can be read firstly as a companion piece to the poem to Lucasta which opens Lovelace's 1649 volume, and against the poems on love and war written by Lovelace's contemporaries.

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<sup>217</sup> Sharon-Cadman Seelig, "My Curious Hand or Eye: The Wit of Richard Lovelace", in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), pp. 151-70.

<sup>218</sup> J.S.A. Adamson examines the survival of forms of chivalric literature, the prose romance and the extended verse narrative, during the reign of Charles I, but admits they were already being parodied. He provides an illustration of the 1637 seal of the Earl of Northumberland, which with its armoured knight complete with sword and shield would be a fitting visual counterpart to Lovelace's poem. He argues that chivalry was adapted by both sides after war broke out in 1642, but it seems that after the collapse of the Royalist cause at Naseby in 1645 the chivalric element, even as propaganda is, with few exceptions, conspicuously absent in any form of Royalist literary production. (See Adamson, "Chivalry and Political Culture in Caroline England", op. cit., pp. 161-97.)

<sup>219</sup> Diane Purkiss, "Dismembering and Remembering: The English Civil War and Male Identity", in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *The English Civil Wars in The Literary Imagination* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), p. 225.

<sup>220</sup> "To Althea, From Prison" and "The Scrutiny" appear in the manuscript miscellanies, indicating their popularity amongst readers. These two poems also appear in musical settings. "To Amarantha ..." was printed in Cotgrave, *Wit's Interpreter* of 1654, but "To Lucasta. Going to the Warres" does not exist in any musical, manuscript or early printed version.

When set against the themes of “To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas,” the stoic, neoplatonic and *precieux* elements of “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres” become more prominent. The poet has already suggested that physical parting is unimportant, and has demonstrated his admiration for *virtus* – the principal Stoic deity. As in the popular pre-war court pastoral, *Il Pastor Fido*, true joy will spring from the virtue gained after suffering, rather than from the undelayed fulfilment of love. Consistent with the tradition of poetry brought from the French salons by Henrietta Maria, the lover is represented as courtly, constant and expecting no reward from his mistress. Lovelace applies to the departing soldier the classical dilemma usually reserved for women; how to retain both virtue (chastity/honour) and the affections of suitors. In these two poems Lucasta is portrayed as a mistress who is decidedly chaste, not the *domina* of the Latin love elegists. The woman addressed in these Lovelace poems is consistently idealised in other lyrics in quasi-religious images reminiscent of the “nunnerie” conceit.<sup>221</sup> The speaker in Lovelace’s poem does not mention his return (a standard trope in poems of valediction), but he avoids depicting Lucasta as a type of Dido or Ariadne, enjoyed and then unceremoniously abandoned by a hero with a greater destiny, by making her both distant and saintly. Towards the end of the first volume of poems she is summoned back. In “Calling Lucasta from her Retirement” she is a deity who will perhaps calm the artillery, drums and trumpets of war:

Sacred Lucasta, like the pow’rfull ray  
Of heavenly truth, passe this Cimmerian way,  
Whilst all the standards of your beames display.

The Lucasta in the 1649 volume of poetry is a figure consistently opposed to war. In “Aramantha. A Pastorall”, which concludes that volume, Lucasta re-appears mysteriously in the guise of Aramantha. She turns her soldier lover, who has taken refuge from war in a peaceful grove, into a shepherd who hangs up his weapons on a tree. Through this narrative Lucasta regains the power over a military lover she does not initially possess when the poet states his determination to chase “a different foe”.

In the farewell poems to Lucasta Lovelace playfully overturns the well-worn Ovidian conventions by *not* preferring love to war. In the *Amores* as in the

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<sup>221</sup> Lovelace uses this phrase again in a late poem, “The Duell”, but this time it refers to someone who is resistant to love’s knocking. “Love ... battered the Windows of mine eyes, /And took my heart for one of’s Nunneries”(152).

*Metamorphoses*, Ovid stresses the primacy of *eros* over gods and men, but he also expresses a distinct preference for love over war. Ovid desires to be only and always a lover. He is as contemptuous of soldiers “chasing” their enemies and paying with blood for eternal honour as he is of merchants seeking wealth overseas. He prefers to die in the Renaissance sense (*Amores* II. 10). In Ovid’s love poems the private is exalted over the public, and it is this strain which is found in many seduction poems of the 1640s and 1650s which, though sympathetic to the Royalist cause, express a marked reluctance to leave the lady for the battlefield.<sup>222</sup> Lovelace’s call to arms is more often to be found in the following form – an anonymous poem printed in *Wit’s Interpreter* and a publication whose Royalist sympathies are unimpeachable:

To His Mistress going to the Wars

Here let me war, in these arms let me lie,  
 Here let me parley, batter bleed and die.  
 Thy arms encompass mee, and my arms thee,  
 Thy heart the ransom is, take mine from me.  
 Those wars the ignorant, ours the experienced prove,  
 There men fall always under, here above.  
 There rights are wrongs, here we uprightly lie,  
 There men kill men, we’l get one by and by.  
 Many there are that war don’t undertake,  
 But stay at home, shot, arms and swords to make,  
 Say, prithee tel me, do not we do then  
 More glorious service staying to make men?<sup>223</sup>

There is no mention in this poem of the concept of honour which Christopher Nassaar links with being undefeated in the “gentle war of the sexes.”<sup>224</sup> “For natural harmony in the world of love is for the woman to yield to the man ...his [Lovelace’s] attitude toward sexual love was the normal, accepted one in the seventeenth century.” In the topsy-turvy world of the Interregnum, however, numerous popular lyrics and ballads, like the one above, express a reluctance to take up arms and a lack of shame in being kept away from war by the snares of love. *Wit’s Interpreter* of 1655 has a number of poems populated with reluctant goers such as “A Farewell to his Mistresse, on his going to the Wars”.<sup>225</sup> This sentiment is also found in Hugh Crompton’s “The

<sup>222</sup> Paul H. Hardacre discusses the inclination of many towards neutrality in the early 1640s in his *The Royalists During The Puritan Revolution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956).

<sup>223</sup> Cotgrave, *Wit’s Interpreter*, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>224</sup> Christopher Nassaar, “Lovelace’s ‘To Lucasta, Going to the Wars’”, *Explicator*, 39: 3 (1981), pp. 44-5.

<sup>225</sup> Cotgrave, *Wit’s Interpreter*, op. cit., p. 95.

Souldier and his Mistress”.<sup>226</sup> The latter contains the usual conceits of love as a battle; the woman’s smiles are arrows, her eyes are stratagems. The lady begs him to cling to her arms, and tempts him from duty with love which is conceived as a military encounter. The speaker fails to resist, and the final stanza of eight ends: “Who would not die / In such a battel, such artillery?” Meanwhile, those who have been to fight are eager to return:

What present Hell  
The absent feel:  
When all is well,  
And we have no fires to quell  
But Cavaleers secur’d from low’d Alarmes  
I’le come and quarter in thy peaceful Armes.<sup>227</sup>

Another typical example of Cavalier war songs is provided by Brome’s, “To his Mistres affrighted in the wars”.<sup>228</sup> The speaker is content that “Canons keep roaring” at a distance and that he is conquered by beauty. This lyric expresses no masculine anxiety about feminisation and loss, but rather delights in love’s servitude. As in the example quoted above, military metaphors abound, and there is nothing of Lovelace’s determination to prove his love and loyalty on the battlefield:

I *Venus* serve, a fig for *Mars*,  
Loves arrows may wound, but never kill me;  
Me thinks there’s no pleasure in bloody wars,  
But I long to be wounded and taken by thee.  
    When our bullets are kisses,  
    And our field is a bed,  
And the top of our bliss is  
    A pure maidenhead,  
Both will strive to lose the day,  
And both shall be conquer’d, yet not run away.

More often in Brome’s poetry it is alcohol which provides a convenient alternative to fighting. An untitled song, which is noted as “written in 1648” expresses no desire for glory in blood, and despite loyalty to the King contains a cynical view of the behaviour of all those engaged in the conflict:

’Twixt Square-head and Round-head  
The Land is confounded,

<sup>226</sup> Hugh Crompton, *Pierides, or The Muses Mount[Verses]* (London: 1658), p. 76.

<sup>227</sup> Henry Bold, *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique &C* (London: 1664), p. 55.

<sup>228</sup> Song XXIV, *Alexander Brome: Poems*, op. cit., pp. 94-5.



They care not for fight or battle,  
 But to plunder our goods and cattle.  
     When e're they come to us,  
     They come to undo us,  
     Their chiefest hate  
     Is at our Estate  
     And in sharing of that,  
*Both the Roundheads and Caves* [Cavaliers] *agree*.<sup>229</sup>

The word plunder resonates in many such Interregnum lyrics, which record the devastation of war rather than proposing a romanticised view of battle.<sup>230</sup> Among the poetry appearing during the civil wars and dealing with separation and fighting “To Lucasta, Going to the Warres” is almost solitary in its consistent loyalism. It is best contrasted with a topical lyric, Davenant’s “The Souldier going to the Field”, which, although shunned in modern anthologies of seventeenth-century verse, was undoubtedly the most popular lyric of this kind, appearing in manuscript miscellanies and fashionable printed compendia such as the *Academy of Compliments*.<sup>231</sup> Although the opening imperative is martial and strident in tone, the speaker soon wavers from an unalloyed desire to fight, and after the third stanza the tone and direction falter. The poet’s inability to repudiate his mistress is already present, however, in the valuation of her grief:

Preserve thy sighs, unthrifty Girle!  
     To purify the Ayre;  
 Thy Teares to thrid instead of Pearle,  
     On bracelets of thy Hair.

The Trumpet makes the Eccho hoarse,  
     And wakes the louder Drum;  
 Expence of grief gains no remorse,  
     When sorrow should be dumb.

For I must go where lazy Peace,  
     Will hide her drouzy head;  
 And for the sport of Kings, encrease  
     The number of the Dead.

But first I’le chide they cruel theft:

<sup>229</sup> Alexander Brome: *Poems*, op. cit., pp. 209-11.

<sup>230</sup> My attention was drawn to “plunder” as a verb by Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue*, op. cit., p. 93. The footnote there records that it was associated with Royalist forces, but Brome’s poem shows how it had been transferred to refer to all combatants, thereby removing its edge as Puritan propaganda.

<sup>231</sup> This can be found in *The Academy of Compliments* (London: 1650), p. 234 and in *The Works of Sir William Davenant*, op. cit., pp. 321-2.

Can I in War delight,  
Who being of my heart bereft,  
Can have no heart to fight?

The fifth and sixth stanzas of this poem continue to resort to this commonplace conceit of hearts being stolen and returned, and the poem loses the strong masculine opening. In the valedictory poems considered above, and which seem antithetical to the concerns expressed by Lovelace, it is clear that the passivity not normally considered desirable for a masculine image in the Renaissance, has undergone a metamorphosis. The dangerously feminine quality of allowing sense to overcome reason is presented as an acceptable reaction to the confusion and horror of war. The passivity of death which awaits on the battlefield is replaced by the passivity of dying in the act of love.

Poems apparently celebrating the compelling power of women also make it clear that this power, in line with Biblical exegesis, can be deathly. Poetic mistresses are often static, or even marble; it is the soldier-lover who has the choice of movement. Powerful women transfer this immobility to their lovers by figuratively turning them to stone. Nevertheless it is clear that women's weapons are flimsy, transient and often metaphorical, whereas the hero abandoning a chaste Lucasta or a willing mistress takes up real arms.

In privileging the military over the amatory Lovelace is unusual, as an examination of some poems with close echoes of "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" indicates. Charles Cotton's love poems are almost all concerned with separated lovers. Cotton knew Lovelace, and it was to his father that Lovelace dedicated "The Grasshopper." Cotton's "To Chloris. Ode" (not published till 1689) uses vocabulary very close to Lovelace's celebrated valediction:

Farewell, my Sweete, untill I come,  
Improved in Merritt, for they sake,  
With Characters of honour Home,  
Such, as thou canst not then but take.

To Loyaltie my Love must bow,  
My Honour too calls to the field,  
Where, for a Ladyes buske, I now  
Must keene, and sturdy Iron weild.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> *Poems of Charles Cotton*, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

Cotton's editor notes that these lines, recalling a famous Lovelace poem, may have been written before 1651, and may signify an intention to take up arms for the King. Cotton's poem, however, has four more stanzas and the resolve of the speaker soon falters:

Yet, when I rush into those Armes,  
Where Death, and Danger do combine,  
I shall less subject be to Harmes,  
Than to those killing eyes of thine.

Three more stanzas confirm that the lover's thoughts are with the lady. A more successful attempt to evade female charms and go to war is made by Thomas Jordan in "The Farewell", but even here he falls short of Lovelace's determination:

Fair *Fidelia* leave me now,  
I may no more  
Thy Deity adore,  
Nor offer to thy shrine  
I serve one more divine.<sup>233</sup>

Like Lovelace's poem, this opens with religious images and a reasoned plea to a constant mistress. The speaker is pulled away by the sound of trumpets and the fear that the King might lose. A note of realism creeps in, however, when the first stanza admits that the odds are ten to one against them. Although constantly rallying others, the poet appears unable to break away, and the woman continues to gain power as the sequence of opening lines indicates. The second stanza begins "Tempt no more, I may not yield...Leave off thy wanton tales". The third opens "One kiss more, and then farewell, / Nay now give o're, / I prithee fool no more". James Loxley argues that the Horatian retreat of the Cavaliers to their country estates is countered by the active loyalism of poets such as Lovelace, but the voice of "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" is a solitary one. I have found only one example of verse as militant as Lovelace's poem, and this is sourced as handwritten into a 1679 edition of *Lucasta* (but is so unusual for the times in terms of its prosody and archaisms it may be a Victorian invention):

#### A Cavalier War Song

A steed, a steed, of matchless speed,

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<sup>233</sup> In Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 370-1.

A sword of metal keen;  
 All else to noble hearts is dross,  
 All else on earth is mean.  
 The neighing of the war-horse proud,  
 The rolling of the drum,  
 The clangour of the trumpet loud,  
 Be sounds from heaven that come.  
 And oh! The thundering press of knights,  
 Whenas their war-cries swell,  
 May toll from heaven an angel bright,  
 And rouse a fiend from hell

Then mount, then mount, brave gallants all,  
 And don your helms amain;  
 Death's couriers, Fame and Honour, call  
 Us to the field again.  
 No shrewish tears shall fill our eye,  
 When the sword-hilt's in our hand;  
 Heart-whole we'll part, and no whit sigh  
 For the fairest in the land.  
 Let piping swain and craven wight  
 Thus weep and puling cry;  
 Our business is like men to fight,  
 And, like to heroes, die!<sup>234</sup>

There is no individual woman farewelled here, but weeping and tears are placed firmly in the feminine domain.<sup>235</sup> The last four lines of the second stanza link the "fairest in the land" with the piping swain. This is possibly a derisive reference by the anonymous scribe to those writing amorous pastoral verse rather than taking an active part in the conflict.

## 2.4. The Woman Abandoned

If Lovelace's leave-taking is chivalrous, political and avowedly honourable in the opening poems of his 1649 *Lucasta*, it becomes much less so in those poems of seduction which are also poems of valediction. In these poems love is treated as an appetite, fidelity is scoffed at and the lover departs not for social or economic reasons, but because he wishes to sample the delights of as many other women as possible. The arguments to justify this are found throughout the mid-seventeenth century in

<sup>234</sup> Richard Chevenix Trench, ed., *A Household Book of English Poetry* (London.: Macmillan, 1868), p. 108. In the notes (p. 398) Trench writes, "These spirited lines were found written in an old hand in a copy of Lovelace's *Lucasta* 1679. We have in them no doubt a Cavalier Song of our Civil Wars."

<sup>235</sup> The notes to Cowley's poem provide an extended list of poems in which women weep. See *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, op. cit., II. pp. 291-3.

many coarse and misogynist lyrics: poems reviling old or ugly women; reproachful anti-fruition lyrics; anxious narratives about voracious females; or poems castigating women as inconstant. Lovelace's erotic love poetry reveals the underside of courtly and affected gallantry, in which extravagant adulation disguises resentment towards the domination of women in social circles. The almost idolatrous worship of the poems to Lucasta which often use religious vocabulary, gives way to a contempt for women and to arguments for promiscuity. The repudiation of moral values in the battle of the sexes forms part of the reassessment of early modern masculinity to be encountered in Lovelace's poetry. Lovelace's valediction to Lucasta tries to persuade her that she will approve of his inconstancy, and he conducts this argument through several love lyrics.

One of Lovelace's most popular lyrics, "To Amarantha, That she would dishevell her haire"(20), is least transparent in this regard since most editors disregard the last three stanzas on the grounds of inferior poetic quality. It is the final two stanzas, however, that give the poem a coherent place among his poems of lovers' separations:

*Amarantha* sweet and faire,  
Ah brade no more that shining haire!  
As my curious hand or eye,  
Hovering round thee let it flye.

Let it flye as unconfin'd  
As its calme Ravisher, the winde;  
Who hath left his darling th'East,  
To wanton o're that spicie Neast.

Ev'ry Tresse must be confest  
But neatly tangled at the best;  
Like a Clue of golden thread,  
Most excellently ravelled.

Doe not then winde up that light  
In Ribands, and o're cloud in Night;  
Like the Sun in's early ray,  
But shake your head and scatter day.

See 'tis broke! Within this Grove  
The Bower, and the walkes of Love,  
Weary lye we downe and rest,  
And fanne each others panting breast.

Heere wee'l strippe and coole our fire  
In Creame, below, in milke-baths higher:  
And when all Well's are drawne dry,  
I'le drink a teare out of thine eye.

Which our very Joyes shall leave  
That sorrowes thus we can deceive;  
Or our very sorrowes weepe,  
*That joyes so ripe, so little keepe.*

The poem was set to music by Henry Lawes and appears in Playford's book of "Ayres and Dialogues" (1653), but only as two eight-line verses.<sup>236</sup> Cotgrave *Wit's Interpreter* of 1655 (which may have used Playford's) prints the first four stanzas (untitled) as two but omits the rest.<sup>237</sup> Victorian editors continued this practice. Amongst others, *Specimens of the English Poets* (1790) titles the poem simply "Song", printing only the first four stanzas; *Specimens of the British Poets* (1809) does likewise. "The last three stanzas are wretched stuff" writes another compiler who omits them in 1942.<sup>238</sup> More recent editors print the full poem but critical attention is still diverted to the "sensuous" opening quatrains.<sup>239</sup> Paulina Palmer extends her discussion to include the complete poem, but finds that:

After the linguistic vitality and thematic coherence of the first four verses, the remainder of the lyric degenerates into banality...[Lovelaces's] treatment of the conventional theme of the garden of sensual delights is casual and insipid...moreover, instead of leaving his lovers in their sensual paradise he insists on returning them to a state of rational self-awareness, with a prosy generalisation about the brevity of sexual pleasure.<sup>240</sup>

Read as a whole, however, the poem brings to a conclusion Amarantha's assent to the poet's pleas. The last two stanzas, consistent with poems of valediction, are filled with tears and weeping. Although there is an echo of Carew's "The Rapture" in the reference to cream and milk towards the end of the poem, there is a greater resemblance to some lines from Crashaw's "The Weeper" (the first poem in his *Steps*

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<sup>236</sup> John Playford, *Ayres and Dialogues, For One, Two and three Voyces* (London: 1653), p. 15.

<sup>237</sup> Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter: The English Parnassus* (London: 1655), Part II. p. 50.

<sup>238</sup> H.J. Massingham, ed., *A Treasury of Seventeenth-Century Verse* (London: Macmillan, 1942). This anthology has four verses of "Amarantha" on pp. 159-60. The quote is in the notes, p. 352.

<sup>239</sup> Seelig discusses this poem as one in which the lover is dominant, but she does not quote or discuss the poem's ending. See "My Curious Hand or Eye", op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>240</sup> Paulina Palmer, "Lovelace's Treatment of Some Marinesque Motifs", *Comparative Literature*, 29 (1977), p. 308.

to the Temple published in 1646). Not only is Crashaw's poem about Magdalen, famous for her hair, but the fourth stanza begins:

Upwards thou dost weepe,  
Heavens bosome drinks the gentle streame.  
Where th' milky rivers meet,  
Thine Crawles above and in the Creame.<sup>241</sup>

Magdalen weeps so copiously that in the sixth stanza the angels come, "And draw from these full Eyes of thine, /Their Masters water, their owne Wine".<sup>242</sup>

In Lovelace's poem, the woman with loosened hair immediately consents to a seduction, but the sub-text remains joyless. The game of love serves only as a distraction from the sorrows of everyday existence and creates further disappointment since the lover will not be constant. The final line is consistent with the attitude of the departing lover in "The Scrutinie". The woman who is elevated to divine heights finds the Petrarchan hyperbole ultimately destroyed. The implication in "To Amarantha" seems to be that it is the woman who is ripe, like fruit, and who will be spoiled by the glare of the sun whose beams she herself has unleashed. In numerous Cavalier poems women's hair rather than their presence provides the illumination.<sup>243</sup> Ironically, the name Amarantha refers to a flower which is immortal and cannot fade.<sup>244</sup> Lovelace transfers the care taken by Amarantha in braiding her hair to the care taken by the poet in elaborating his ideal. The Renaissance doctrine articulated by Puttenham, but derived from the Greeks requires that poems come to possess *Enargia* – that they give lustre and light.<sup>245</sup> In "Upon Combing Her Hair", Herbert of Cherbury devotes the entire poem to relating his lady's hair to the sun's beams.<sup>246</sup> The first two stanzas set the scene:

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<sup>241</sup> *The Poems, English, Latin and Greek of Richard Crashaw*, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 79.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>243</sup> Herrick's "To Anthea Lying in Bed", for instance, describes how she turns dawn to day when she rises. *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), I. pp. 56-7.

<sup>244</sup> The name "Amarantha" is not common in seventeenth-century poetry but it is not exclusive to Lovelace, as is Lucasta. Cotgrave's *Wit's Interpreter*, op. cit., has "A Dialogue between Gonzalo and Amarantha" on p. 89, indicating the pastoral associations of the name. It occurs earlier in Sannazaro's popular pastoral, *Arcadia* (Naples: 1504).

<sup>245</sup> Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 29-31.

<sup>246</sup> *The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, ed. John Churton Collins (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), p. 10. Herbert has another poem in which he depicts a woman's hair as a sea of gold, her comb as a boat. "A Vision. A Lady Combing her Hair", p. 37.

Breaking from under that thy cloudy veil,  
Open and shine yet more, shine out more clear,  
Thou glorious golden-beam-darting hair,  
Even till my wonder-strucken sense fail.

Shoot out in light, and shine those rays on far,  
Thou much more fair than is the Queen of Love  
When she doth comb her in the sphere above  
And from a planet turns a blazing star.

Herbert then introduces, like Lovelace, a note of mutability. "Time's rage" will eventually change the golden treasure to silver, so the poet advises the woman to bind up her hair: "set thy radiant head, / And strike out day from thy yet fairer eyes." The motif of a woman's hair generating light remained common. One of Henry Bold's poems on a morning visit to a mistress has: "Her *Locks* (or might I better say) her *Rays* / Might from the *Delphick Poets* purchase *praise* / Rather than *Phoebus* beams, they do but *light* / The *night of day*, but *these* make *day of night*."<sup>247</sup>

Lovelace may have found inspiration for this poem in one of Malleville's 'Fair Beggar' sonnets. Not only do many of these refer to the glorious golden hair of the woman, but a madrigal on this topic begins: "Amaranth riche en beaute, / Mais pauvre des biens de fortune."<sup>248</sup> Hair had long been a commonplace in classical love poetry; Propertius had written about Cynthia's hair, Catullus wrote about the famous locks of Berenice. The printed miscellanies of the 1650s (containing mostly material from the previous two decades) are full of verses describing the beauty and power of women's crowning glory as are the song-books which continued to reprint these lyrics into the Restoration. Curls appear to have been universally admired. Writing about flowing hair, moreover, reveals political sympathies. The "frolic fashion" which caused some dispute between the Presbyterians and Independents refers to the male custom for long hair. Although this style came to be associated with the Cavaliers there is evidence that supporters of Cromwell were not all closely cropped.<sup>249</sup> The debate about hair-styles for men occurs, for instance, in a comic dialogue based on Carew's

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<sup>247</sup> Henry Bold, *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique*, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>248</sup> M.J. O'Regan, "The Fair Beggar – Decline of a Baroque Theme", *Modern Language Review*, 55 (1960), p. 191. The author discusses Lovelace's poem on the topic, but does not mention "To Amarantha".

<sup>249</sup> C.V. Wedgwood, *Poetry and Politics under the Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 93 relates an anecdote in which a Mrs Hutchinson is "slightly shocked" that Colonel Thomas Harrison wore scarlet and curled his hair like any Cavalier. The topic is also covered in Graham Roebuck, "Cavalier", in Peabworth and Summers, eds., *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination*, op. cit., pp. 9-27.



“Aske me no more”, a poem which produced endless imitations and parodies.<sup>250</sup>

When the male speaker suggests that long hair is religious and not a sign of debauchery the female counters that “roarers” having mortgaged their possessions are obliged to hide the poverty of their clothes. Finally the man asks “why hair may be / The expression of gentility”, since it derives its origin from the crown, but the response is slyly political (and has Marvellian tones):

Ask me no more why grass, being grown,  
With greedy sickle is cut down  
Till short and sweet: So ends my song,  
Lest that long hair should grow too long.

Lyrics such as “To Amarantha” place women *outside* of an ongoing political debate. Men’s hair may be contentious but women’s hair only has amatory signification. A typical Interregnum lyric on this topic is “On Her Hair”, in the 1650 *Academy of Complements*, which includes the lines: “In those twining curls Cupid is taken prisoner. / Her hairs, those golden Ensigns, those snares of love.”<sup>251</sup> Such sentiments recur in “To His Mistris on her hair”, in which the anonymous poet describes hair so bright that no captive of it would ever wish to be free: “Chains whose each slender twine is blest / With power to hold all eyes.”<sup>252</sup> This conceit, in which the lover is willingly imprisoned, recurs constantly. Thomas Stanley has some elements of Lovelace’s poem in a single stanza on the theme of hair as chains, within a poem arguing for inconstancy.<sup>253</sup> In “Loves Heretick” he writes:

She whose loosely flowing hair,  
Scatter’d like the beams o’th Morn,  
Playing with the sportive Air,  
Hides the sweets it doth adorn,  
Captive in that net restrains me,  
In those golden fetters chains me.

Possibly a tribute to Lovelace is Eldred Revett’s lengthy “Amarantha” which appeared in his published poems of 1657.<sup>254</sup> In a peaceful rural retreat the sun is setting (“Now radiant Sol with flaring Hair...”) and Amarantha, displaying the

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<sup>250</sup> “A Dialogue Concerning Hair, Between a Man and a Woman” in Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., pp. 158-9.

<sup>251</sup> *Academy of Complements* (London: 1650), p. 112.

<sup>252</sup> In Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter*, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>253</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., pp. 32-34.

<sup>254</sup> *Poems by Eldred Revett. Poems Divine* (London: 1657), pp. 93-5.

powers of a goddess over nature, prepares for sleep. The poem's speaker creeps up to observe her, but immediately:

My Eye-beam's twisted in her hair  
And in the subt'ler net by draughts  
Snare my imperceptible thoughts.  
So fill'd, no momentarie wire  
Knits so but touch'd nor Gossimire;  
Drawn so smal one can't express,  
(Superlatively numberless.)  
One hand here richly manackeld  
The Glories of the head upheld  
While through the curls the fingers play  
Pretiously ringed in the ray;  
And those the bright support had mis'd  
Shed harmless Snakes about her wrist:

Although the poem appears to flatter a sleeping Amarantha, the vocabulary related to her hair – snakes, manacles, wires and nets, suggests that she is alluring but dangerous, a potential Medusa. Poems about hair tend to give curls both prominence and volition.<sup>255</sup> Rarely can the poet resist such enticements:

I will not gaze upon thine eyes,  
Nor wanton with thy hair,  
Lest those should burn me by surprise  
Or these my soul ensnare:  
Nor with those smiling dangers play  
Nor fool my liberty away.<sup>256</sup>

As these poems demonstrate, Lovelace's poem to Amarantha is embedded not in her hair but in a large number of co-existent texts that shape a reader's expectations. Lovelace subverts these in the frequently elided stanzas. The plea for a woman to loosen her hair occurs in a number of poems written by Lovelace's contemporaries and Lovelace's own offering is initially derivative of Herrick's "Upon Julia's Hair, Bundled Up in a Golden Net":

Tell me, what needs those rich deceits,  
These golden Toils, and Trammel-nets,

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<sup>255</sup> The apotheosis of such imagery in the mid-century would be Marvell's request in "Upon Appleton House", when he writes: "Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines: / Curl me about, ye gadding vines, / And O so close your circles lace, / That I may never leave this place." (*Andrew Marvell. Pastoral and Lyric Poems 1681*, ed. David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 2000), p. 259.)

<sup>256</sup> Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter*, op. cit., p. 261.

To take thine hairs when they are known  
 Already tame, and all thine own?  
 'Tis I am wild, and more than hairs  
 Deserve these Mashers and those snares.  
 Set free thy Tresses, let them flow  
 As airs do breathe, or winds do blow:  
 And let such curious Net-works be  
 Less set for them, than spread for me.

Herrick is willing to be entrapped in the “curious” or intricate and subtle nets but in Lovelace’s poem it is the poet to whom the quality of being curious belongs. The conjunction of “curious” with hair predates Herrick.<sup>257</sup> Earlier that century, Sir Francis Kynaston uses the word in “To Cynthia. On Concealment of Her Beauty”:

Do not conceal those tresses fair,  
 The silken snares of they curled hair,  
 Lest finding neither gold nor ore,  
 The curious silk-worm work no more.<sup>258</sup>

A.D. Cousins traces the occurrence of the adjective in some other Cavalier poems (though omitting Lovelace’s) as part of a mannerist aesthetic among these poets, an admiration for structured and complex designs which poets and artists aim at.<sup>259</sup> He fails to observe, however, that the word reveals some slippage in the assessment of female arts: a male poet or musician, can be praised for being “curious”, but a woman only uses such art for entrapment. Suckling and Marvell use the word to picture the design of their own verse. Carew uses it frequently and includes it in “To A.L. *Perswasions to Love*” where he writes: “These curious locks so aptly twind, / Whose every hair a soul doth bind.” Lovelace’s use of “curious” to describe not Amarantha’s locks, but the poet’s art shows how poetic individuality can be created through a simple shift in a common phrase or epithet, amidst the expected imitation and derivation of form and content.

When Lovelace’s Amarantha is at the height of her powers, and is acting like Stanley’s anonymous coquette, he changes the tone of the poem: “See ’tis broke!”

<sup>257</sup> In his autobiography Lord Herbert of Cherbury describes a French beauty he met in 1616 as having hair curled in a way that “a Curious woman would have drest it.” *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury written by himself*, ed. J.M. Shuttleworth (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 79.

<sup>258</sup> Herbert J.C. Grierson, ed. (rev. Alastair Fowler), *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 76-7.

<sup>259</sup> A.D. Cousins, “The Cavalier World and John Cleveland”, *Studies in Philology*, 78 (1981), pp. 61-86.

The illusion created by the glorious hair is shattered and the lovers within the bower of bliss are fallen and “weary”. Amarantha stepping off her pedestal destroys the Petrarchan poem. By letting her hair flow naturally, and acting accordingly, she paradoxically reveals the necessity of artifice and perhaps its superiority to nature in keeping lovers ensnared and poems interesting. Herrick had already made the point that he preferred Julia’s hair done up like a forest on her head: “I must confess, mine eye and heart / Dotes less on nature, than on art”, and Lovelace effectively agrees. The lover who suggests that Amarantha dishevel her hair is not conventionally trapped – it is Amarantha’s desires which are bound tight, and her hair, when loose far from entwining itself around an admirer, is subject to the wind’s rapacious actions. Moreover, a woman with ribbons and braids remains at a distance, and allows the game of love, like that of a “game at tables” to continue.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Attributed to Strode is the popular octet which begins “Love is a game at tables”. This appeared in *Wits Interpreter* (London: 1655), and in *The Harmony of the Muses* (London: 1654).

### 3: “MY MISTRESS IS A SHUTTLECOCK”: CUPID’S GAMES AND THE CONSTANT INCONSTANCY OF WOMAN

Lovelace’s amatory lyrics make paradoxical demands on the women he addresses: they must be heroically constant, but also kind and willing. Either kind of mistress, however, proves destructive to identity if approached too closely. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, songs of seduction tend to be songs of valediction. To create detachment Lovelace uses highly artificial and stylised forms and vocabulary. The greater the hyperbole he heaps on Lucasta the further he is removed from subsuming his identity to hers. In poems such as “The Scrutinie”, Lovelace shelters within an inherited permutation of tropes and commonplaces: in the many poems featuring Cupid, the lover’s body and his torments are highly visible, but decorative mannerist motifs disguise individuality. Lovelace’s appropriation of Catholic imagery has received little comment: it is consistent, however, with his devotion to the visual.<sup>261</sup> The images of the body in the Cupid poems, mixing Puritan, pagan and Catholic codes, are frequently macabre and morbid. Lovelace’s focus on dismemberment and dissolution are not only expressions of anxiety about early modern male subjectivity, but also comments on the physical divisions caused by the “warre intestine”. As Christopher Ricks comments on “The Horatian Ode”: “For the self-divided image flourishes in those unflourishing times when it will have to be said not only of the ignoble man but of the noble man that he: Did thorough his own Side / His fiery way divide.”<sup>262</sup> The volcanoes of both love and war threaten to engulf and annihilate the fixed points of scholar / soldier / lover / on which the poet’s identity is predicated. Lovelace anticipates the loss of both body and soul and the erasure of his name in poems where Lucasta triumphs.

Yet Lovelace maintains a paradoxical attachment to old forms which can be read within the backwash of nostalgia that characterises the publishing of poetry in the

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<sup>261</sup> This style was reinforced by the emblem books popular in the seventeenth century. See Odette de Mourgues, *Metaphysical, Baroque and Precieux Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 78-9.

<sup>262</sup> Christopher Ricks, ““Its own resemblance””, in C.A. Patrides, ed., *Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 130.

1640s and 1650s. His frontispiece to the 1649 *Lucasta* shows several cupids holding a banner: his printed text still mirrors the handwritten one, and the commendatory poems mimic the male group within which poems such as “The Scrutinie” would have been read and imitated. The language of love inherited by Lovelace proved insufficient for new conditions of literary production and reception. With their classical bias and their deeply embedded reliance on Greek and Roman classics, the poems discussed in this chapter are elitist and exclusive, and resist the democratisation of reading which print culture fosters. However, despite relying on conventional tropes, borrowed themes and a high level of intertextuality, Lovelace’s amatory lyrics also contain a subtext of economic and political considerations. Land, property and women, as markers not only of status, but also of identity, all prove distressingly mutable. Lovelace poetry does not obscure these changing conditions, but absorbs the real violence of war, the conflict and irresolution of increasing commodification, and of emerging constructions of the private, inviolate self.

When Lovelace leaves *Lucasta* for the battlefield in his first volume, the contradictory nature of his farewell is revealed by the second poem. In “A Paradox” (19) the poet suggests that even if his mistress is a paragon of beauty – such that he nearly loses his sight by gazing overlong on her – he needs to experience some lesser lights. “The God that constant keepes / Unto his Dieties, / Is poore in Joyes...” Lovelace writes, using Jupiter as an example of great wisdom in deserting Juno, “to love a Beare, or Cow.” Implicit in this poem is the uncontrollable mutability of women, transformed by lust into beasts, or by old age into undesirable crones. Male inconstancy, on the other hand, is cast in the realm of reason, and logical arguments advanced to justify it. This occurs in the “Sonnet” which opens: “When I by thy faire shape did swear” (44). In this poem the lover repudiates his mistress when she grows old, when her ebony eyebrows turn white and her eyes lose their lustre.<sup>263</sup> H.M. Richmond reads this poem as brutal, and it certainly contains a triumphalist strain of victory over convention.<sup>264</sup> Caught and spurned by a chaste and beautiful mistress, the Petrarchan lover exacts his revenge, but not in the usual fashion. Instead of the expected complements the poet details all the woman’s *unattractive* features in a

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<sup>263</sup> The misogynist premise of this poem is found in many others of the period. See “The Deposition”, in *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 31; and Thomas Jordan, “A Gentleman’s deploration...” and “A Paradox”, in *Loves Dialect, or; Poeticall Varieties*, (London: 1646), nos. 4 and 11.

disguised plea for the liberation of love's victims. Poems on this topos, ultimately derived from Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*, were written by most Cavalier poets of Lovelace's generation. The ultimate mockery of the Petrarchan ideal (taking to a negative extreme Shakespeare's Sonnet 130) is represented by Suckling's "Deformed Mistress", with its intimate and graphic catalogue of decayed physical features.<sup>265</sup> These imperfections are, however, generally the result of old age, and serve as a disguised *carpe diem* to the unwilling mistress. Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" is probably the best-known exposition of time's inexorable ravage of the beautiful, but remains evasive in comparison with Suckling's virulence.

In Lovelace's "Sonnet" time acts even more cruelly, since it is a compliant mistress whose lover eventually deserts her. This "Sonnet" (not in conventional sonnet form) is the Cavalier inversion of well-known lyrics of execration on an ageing mistress by Horace and Ronsard. In "Audivere Lyce" (*Odes* IV. 13) Horace addresses with satisfaction a woman who has rejected him in the past, but is now old and disgusting. Ronsard's Sonnet LXXV to Hélène, "Quand vous serez bien vieille", pictures his mistress sitting by the fire in old age wistfully recalling the days when the poet sang her praises and regretting her treatment of him.<sup>266</sup> Ronsard maintains the sort of detachment congenial to Lovelace, but he concludes with a plea to the woman to pluck the roses of life immediately. Having done so, however, she will earn not undying love but contempt. The inevitable marks of time will ensure that she is abandoned, and the lover who once pleaded for her favours now proffers clever arguments for faithlessness. Lovelace's "Sonnet" ends: "Then changed thus, no more I'm bound to you / Than swearing to a Saint that proves untrue." Almost exactly the same sentiment and vocabulary is used by Thomas Stanley in a poem he obsessively revised, "Chang'd, yet Constant".<sup>267</sup> In the manuscript version of this poem Stanley, like Lovelace, "vowd affection to the fairest Saint", but insists that to continue loving her when time or sickness has removed her beauty is illogical and idolatrous. In common with other lyrics which disguise the desire to escape commitment by logic and equivocation, Stanley's poem opens as if it were mid-dialogue with a mistress

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<sup>264</sup> H.M. Richmond, *The School of Love: The Evolution of the Stuart Love Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 143.

<sup>265</sup> *The Works of Sir John Suckling: The Non-Dramatic Works*, ed. Thomas Clayton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 33.

<sup>266</sup> I have used the version in Judy Sproxton, *The Idiom of Love: Love Poetry from the Early Sonnets to the Seventeenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 2000), pp. 70-1.

<sup>267</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., p. 7.

who has initiated debate but is soon to be eclipsed: “Wrong me no more in thy unjust complaint”. This is the exact tone of Lovelace’s “The Scrutinie”, which asks rhetorically in hurt surprise: “Why should’s’t thou swear I am forsworn?”

### 3.1. A choice of mistresses

“The Scrutinie” was extremely popular in his time and inspired several Latin versions and three light-hearted “Answers”, apparently from the female point of view.<sup>268</sup> The poem appears in a musical setting by Thomas Charles in Playford’s *Select Musically Ayres and Dialogues* of 1652 (where it is called a ‘French Ayre’) and again in Playford’s editions of 1653 and 1659. In the latter part of the seventeenth century it reappears as the published work of Henry Bold, who claimed to have translated it into English from manuscripts in Latin.<sup>269</sup> There are ten manuscript versions of this Lovelace poem, which may first have been written as early as 1642.<sup>270</sup> The poem, with antecedents in works by Ovid, Marino and Donne, is essentially authorless.<sup>271</sup> Lovelace’s version uses metaphors derived from Donne, and relies on the same European sources as his contemporaries. From the viewpoint of a twentieth-century psychoanalytic critic the poem might appear sordid if the reader’s focus decontextualises Lovelace’s poetic method, which relies more on imitation than invention.<sup>272</sup> “It is a rather nasty poem”, writes N.H. Holland: “cruel, clever, somehow lacking in real emotion.”<sup>273</sup> In his study of the influence of Catullus on English poetry J.B. Emperor quotes Lovelace’s “Scrutinie” as non-Catullan in its insincerity and cynicism about the fragility of love.<sup>274</sup> This is not the case if one accepts Rosamund Tuve’s analysis of the rhetoric and imagery of early seventeenth-century poetry. She argues that song lyrics in particular are less likely to be personal

<sup>268</sup> BL MS Add. 29396, f. 38; BL MS Add. 31813; BL MS Add. 22603, f. 26. (The latter is not mentioned in Wilkinson.) Another answer is printed in *Oxford Drollery* (London: 1671), pp. 99-100.

<sup>269</sup> Henry Bold, *Latine Songs with their English* (London: 1685), pp. 25-7.

<sup>270</sup> Herbert Berry and E.K. Timings, “Lovelace at Court and a Version of Part of His ‘The Scrutinie’”, *Modern Language Notes*, 69 (1954), pp. 396-8.

<sup>271</sup> Many seventeenth-century poems on the theme of inconstancy are derived from Ovid, *Amores* 2. 4. Examples not quoted in the text include George Wither, “Shall I wasting in Despair”; Herrick, “No Loathsomeness in Love” and “Love Dislikes Nothing”; and Thomas Jordan, “A Gentleman in love with twenty Mistresses”.

<sup>272</sup> N.H. Holland, “Literary Value: A Psychoanalytic Approach”, *Literature and Psychology*, 14 (1964), p. 45.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.

<sup>274</sup> J.B. Emperor, *The Catullan Influence in English Lyric Poetry, circa 1600-1650* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1928), p. 16.



revelations of emotional experience than general statements that praise or dispraise an attitude or an idea.<sup>275</sup>

“The Scrutinie” is a variation on the theme of constancy in love which plays poetic tennis with poems by Brome, Suckling and Stanley amongst others. Within the context of the verse being circulated at the time – though not necessarily the poetry which now comprises the seventeenth-century canon – “The Scrutinie” appears to have grown organically from familiar ideas: the trawl through women whose hair is black, brown or fair; the mining of “treasure” as euphemism for sexual exploration; the shrinking time-span during which the lover’s attention can be caught. Only in the untitled version printed in the 1655 compilation *Wit’s Interpreter* is the lover less than hasty.<sup>276</sup> He has been with the same woman a year rather than a night, and “lov’d...A tedious twelve months space.” This is Lovelace’s poem, subtitled “Song” in the 1649 *Lucasta*:

Why should you sweare I am forsworn,  
Since thine I vow’d to be?  
Lady it is already Morn,  
And ’twas last night I swore to thee  
That fond impossibility.

Have I not lov’d thee much and long,  
A tedious twelve houres space?  
I must all other Beauties wrong,  
And rob thee of a new imbrace;  
Could I still dote upon thy Face.

Not, but all joy in thy browne haire,  
By others may be found;  
But I must search the black and faire  
Like skilful Minerallist’s that sound  
For Treasure in un-plow’d-up ground.

Then, if when I have lov’d my round,  
Thou prov’st the pleasant she;  
With spoyles of meaner Beauties crown’d,  
I laden will returne to thee,  
Ev’n sated with Varietie

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<sup>275</sup> Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 86.

<sup>276</sup> John Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter. The English Parnassus* (London: 1655), p. 208. In his discussion of Lovelace Courthope prints this poem with “A tedious twelve-months’ space” in the second stanza but does not cite a source. W.J. Courthope, *A History of English Poetry, Vol. III. The Intellectual Conflict of the Seventeenth Century. Decadent Influence of the Feudal Monarch, Growth of the National Genius* (London: Macmillan, 1924), p. 269.

This lyric, essentially in the tradition of the learned erotic elegy which dates back to Antimacher in 400 BC,<sup>277</sup> may owe something to the Greek anecdote about Zeuxis painting Helen of Troy as a composite of five beautiful women because he could not find all the components of perfect beauty in a single person.<sup>278</sup> Lovelace's reliance on the classics, as in the drinking poems discussed in the first chapter, helps him to create a circumscribed world in which women are effectively excluded from discourse about them. Lovelace's identity as a poet becomes less dependent on his mistress and more embedded in imitation. Although "The Scrutinie", like many other Lovelace poems, appears to be a dialogue with a female 'other', it is a ludic exchange with other male poets. The eclipsed mistress is, like Lucasta, implicitly bracketed off.

A primary source for the poet's validated roving is Ovid *Amores* II.iv, in which he celebrates his catholic tastes in women. These are further ranging than in Lovelace's poem. Ovid is equally captivated by old and young, tall and short, pale and swarthy but he also lists the non-physical qualities that might appeal; shyness or poise, musical ability, familiarity with contemporary poetry.<sup>279</sup> The theme is taken up by Donne in "The Indifferent". Lovelace's third stanza has an echo of Donne's opening line. "I can love both faire and browne," and Lovelace ends his poem with the "Varietie" which according to Donne is "Loves sweetest Part". Both Alberti and Petrarch name "variety" as a characteristic that allows good art to give pleasure.<sup>280</sup> This variety requires the speaker in Lovelace's poem to wander, can sometimes be found within the same woman. Cowley's poem "Platonick Love" has, "Something *unlike* must in *Loves likeness* be, / His wonder is, *one* and *Varietie*." It is noticeable that the demand for variety in love occurs in conjunction with a mockery of women who, being unconstant, seek this variety for themselves. This division of roles is consistent with attitudes towards women as acceptable subjects for the poet or painter, but not as viewers, collectors or hunters in the game of love. Lovelace is exhibiting his familiarity with an élite culture in which the acquisition and display of aesthetic commodities (gained by voyaging for treasure) includes women, but also one in which

<sup>277</sup> Pauline Aiken, *The Influence of the Latin Love Elegists on English Lyric Poetry, 1600-1650* (Orono: Maine University Press, 1932), p. 13.

<sup>278</sup> Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: the Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 14.

<sup>279</sup> *Ovid in Love*, Guy Lee (trans) with John Ward (London: John Murray, 2000), pp. 50-2.

<sup>280</sup> Norman E. Land, *The Viewer as Poet: The Renaissance Response to Art* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 182.

the single rare object, the “pleasantest she” can nullify possession of the others. The nature of the new consumer culture with its emphasis on repetition and replication (discussed in the next chapter) is, in contrast, overwhelming and annihilating for the poet as lover. In “The Scrutinie” Lovelace paradoxically asserts a demand for a unique individual: he wants to possess the original rather than have the variety.

Whereas Donne’s variations hover between the purely physical and the spiritual by including in his spectrum social and psychological attributes of the women he has seduced, Brome’s “The Indifferent” illustrates the shift of values Lovelace resists by simply vowing:

I am so farr from loving none,  
That I love every one;  
If fair I must, if brown she be,  
She’s lovely.<sup>281</sup>

In the third and final stanza the speaker admits that he can think any woman fair if she is willing, even if she has the ruins of a nose and “skales, not skin”. He even abandons all objective criteria by admitting “There are no rules for beauty, but / ’Tis as our fancies make it.” Distinctions often become unimportant if the woman is willing. As Bold puts it, “The sport’s the same”, and elaborates: “To me the thing’s are one, / Whether of softer wax she be / Or of the Parian stone.”<sup>282</sup> Women are pursued for their individual differences, yet essentially they are indistinguishable once conquered. Possession becomes repetition, and the individuality of each female is subordinate to her availability. Playford’s *The Treasury of Musick*, published in 1669 but containing much material from previous decades, is generally very decorous, but in “A Doubt Resolved” the wavering lover is persuaded that he shall “Love neither Fair, Black, Brown but all”.<sup>283</sup>

Such poems foreground what is subtly present in Lovelace’s version: a dialogue with the imagery of Petrarchan versifying. The speaker in “The Scrutinie” effectively denies the woman the superlative complements of conventional love poetry. He cannot place her on any pedestal until he has empirically proved that she deserves to be there, perhaps in this way flattering her more than by an unthinking

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<sup>281</sup> Alexander Brome, *Poems*, ed. Roman Dubinski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 70-1.

<sup>282</sup> Bold, *Latine Songs*, op. cit., pp. 147-8.

<sup>283</sup> John Playford, *Select Ayres and Dialogues: Book II of The Treasury of Musick* (London: 1669), p. 21. The third book from which I quote is a reissue of Henry Lawes, *Ayres, and Dialogues* of 1658.

couplet casually plucked from the common store. In the final stanza Lovelace throws in a piece of poetic complement probably derived from Wotton's earlier and much circulated "On His Mistris, The Queen of Bohemia", which opens with the line which has come to identify the poem: "You meaner beauties of the night".<sup>284</sup> Wotton asserts the superiority of his lady over the constellations, while Lovelace envisages the lover re-appearing crowned in triumph with these stars, presumably outshone by the one beauty who compels his return. Lovelace's poem is an indication of the shift in amatory verse from hyperbolic complement to Restoration cynicism.

Arguments from nature are also summoned as a logical support for philandering. "To nature those inconstant are, / Who fix their love on one that's faire; / Why did she, but for our delight, / Present such numbers to our sight?" writes John Dancer in "The Variety".<sup>285</sup> Lovelace's logic is more deductive, and resembles that of Brome's "Song VII. To his Mistress."<sup>286</sup> The poet excuses an infidelity he has been caught in by employing the new empirical method:

When all the World I've rang'd about,  
All beauties else to spy,  
And, at the last, can find none out,  
Equal to thee in beauty; I  
Will make thee my sole Deity.

The arithmetic of love has been displaced by an evaluation of competing individuals: a move perhaps towards the bourgeois sensibility emerging in the early-modern period. Empirical evaluation is generally combined with standard tropes, mostly derived from the baroque Italian Marino's "L'Amore incostante" of 1625.<sup>287</sup> Marino's poem of twenty-four stanzas is much longer than the subsequent imitations. In his pursuit of the charms of competing women the speaker is helpless, because each woman tempts him with a new and individual quality which he must sample.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Sir Henry Wotton belonged, like Lovelace, to an old Kentish family. He died in 1639 but this lyric (written in 1620) continued to appear in Interregnum manuscript miscellanies and lived on to be included in the Restoration drolleries. Wotton's verses were not published until 1651, although a corrupt version appeared in *Wits Recreations* (1640). J.B. Leishman has traced the way the poem was modified in transmission in, "'You Meaner Beauties of the Night': a Study in Transmission and Transmogrification", *The Library*, 26 (1945), pp. 99-121.

<sup>285</sup> In Robin Skelton, ed., *The Cavalier Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 107-8.

<sup>286</sup> Alexander Brome, *Poems*, op. cit., pp. 76-7.

<sup>287</sup> Marino is an influence on many poets, including Davenant, Stanley, Crashaw, Carew and Drummond.

<sup>288</sup> Giambattista Marino and Benedetto Croce, *Poesie Varie* (Bari: Laterza, 1913), pp. 55-8.

Marino is listed as a source for Thomas Stanley's "Love's Heretick"<sup>289</sup> and for Carew's "The Tinder".<sup>290</sup> Stanley's poem takes a leisurely tour through the Ovidian route, confessing after several stanzas that "Both the wanton and the coy /Me with equal pleasures move." In the concluding stanza Stanley's alter ego does not promise to return to any of his ladies, who cover the spectrum from a legendary Athenian courtesan to a vestal virgin:

Black, or fair, or tall, or low,  
I alike with all can sport;  
The bold sprightly *Thais* woo,  
Or the frozen Vestal court;  
Every beauty takes my minde,  
Tied to all, to none confin'd.

Stanley's poem expresses without reservation the anxiety implicit in Lovelace's. If the lover judges and ranks his mistresses he might be compelled to choose, and within that choice lies a cessation of further mobility.

When poets seek variety in women hair colouring provides it, though red-heads are not specified. The references to black, brown or fair are consistent, but Lovelace's lyric implies that the scrutiny and comparative evaluation of women is based on pubic hair and to sexual satisfaction. It also makes plain (as in the poems on woman as muse discussed in the next chapter) that the woman can have no resistance to the poet's exploration even of what is normally hidden. In his examination of early-modern erotic writing Ian Moulton quotes a poem in manuscript that classifies women in this way.<sup>291</sup> Those with yellow hair, resembling wire, are insatiable lovers, a woman with brown hair is threatening, but a black haired woman is likely to have a "cunny...moist and cold." These implications, and an awareness that the Latin root of scrutiny is to search through trash, may have led nineteenth-century editors to elide the last half of Lovelace's poem and to re-title it "It is already morn", or simply, "Song".<sup>292</sup>

<sup>289</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., pp. 32-4.

<sup>290</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 266. Dunlap helpfully gives some of Marino's text.

<sup>291</sup> Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 52.

<sup>292</sup> W.H. Dircks, ed., *Cavalier and Courtier Lyrists: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Minor Verse* (London: Walter Scott, 1894), p. 69. The editor seems to have followed the practice of the compilers of

### 3.2. The valuing of women

Even soon after publication the third stanza, with its reference to “treasure in unplow’d up ground”, had provoked some Freudian slips. In Lovelace’s short lyric which opens, “Depose your finger of that Ring” (23), the speaker suggests that the woman will gain more pleasure than the male if she will “inrich me with that Treasure, / Will but increase your store.” If the treasure referred to is a rather transparent metaphor, the ground in which it lies proves a locus for interpretative confusion. Classical authors had used agricultural metaphors for sex to evoke contempt. In Sophocles’ *Antigone* Creon mocks his son’s love by saying that he can plough other fields if Antigone dies. In *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius depicts lovemaking as “Sowing the woman’s field”. George Herbert uses the same image to support marriage as an instance of God’s order compared with man’s disorder, for God has created enclosures and not made all ground common, yet “Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plough”.<sup>293</sup> An anonymous song in one of Playford’s song-books praises a dark mistress as yielding “the richest cropp, the most delight”:

The sandy ground is hot but dry  
The clay is moist but yet is cold  
That state of each good property  
Is only in the blackest mold.<sup>294</sup>

Since violent disputes about enclosure of land had been common since the 1630s, and the demands of the Levellers and the Diggers had revived them, it is interesting that the variations in manuscript and printed versions of Lovelace’s “The Scrutinie” cluster around the line in which Lovelace mentions “ground”. A manuscript version of the poem, otherwise very close to the published one, has “Hidden wealth in unplowd ground”.<sup>295</sup> Cotgrave’s *Wits Interpreter* of 1657 prints Lovelace’s poem (un-attributed) with “treasures in unhidden ground”, while Bold’s 1685 borrowing has “In altogether unknown ground” and an anonymous reply in manuscript refers to foolish mineralists looking in “mistaken ground.”<sup>296</sup> These excisions and revisions point to the poem’s socio-economic pivot: the imagery of the

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the 1809 *Specimens of the British Poets* (London: 1809), p. 107, who print only the first two verses and title them “Song”.

<sup>293</sup> “The Church Porch”(20-4) in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Dent, 1974), p. 33.

<sup>294</sup> Playford, *Select Ayres and Dialogues*, op. cit., p.117.

<sup>295</sup> “Another” in Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 153, f. 18.

<sup>296</sup> BL MS Add. 22603, f. 26.

woman as virgin ground to be tilled, colonised, fertilised or explored. This imagery also links the poem to those erotic pastorals where a woman's body becomes a landscape to be enjoyed, described and exploited.<sup>297</sup> The treasure to be found there is echoed by the spoils which the male speaker will obtain, but which remain undefined. "Who dares so ransack all the hoard / That nature's privy purse affords", laments the anonymous author of "On a Ladye concealed in a Veile".<sup>298</sup> The writer is concerned that "Disclosure may prove robbery" when the gemstone is eventually revealed. The concealed source of value, Donne's "mine of precious stones", will have been reduced if other men have been allowed access. In his account of Cavalier love poetry Lawrence Venuti focuses on the mining metaphor in this poem.<sup>299</sup> The King had been trying to extend the royal monopoly on mining to copper, and Venuti sees the lover in "The Scrutinie" as a bourgeois speculator. However, references to mining occur frequently in the discourse of seventeenth-century love poetry.<sup>300</sup> The narrator of Lovelace's poem is certainly emboldened to seek for treasure, but other poets, for instance, the anonymous writer of "Against Fruition", counsel imaginative consummation only. "Vaile therefore still, while I divine / The Treasure of this hidden Mine, / And make Imagination tell / What wonders doth in Beauty dwell."<sup>301</sup> Carew, in "The Complement", tries to convince the woman that:

I doe not love thee for that belly,  
 Sleeke as satten, soft as jelly,  
 Though within that Christall round  
 Heapes of treasure might be found,  
 So rich that for the least of them,  
 A King might leave his diadem.<sup>302</sup>

The anonymous "Love in a Trance", has a rural couple, Corydon and Chloris, in a setting of Edenic innocence until "his wanton hand does rove / Thro hidden Labyrinths of Love" and "At last he Lov's soft Altar seiz'd, / The Mine where endless

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<sup>297</sup> "The Intayle", in Moulton, *Before Pornography*, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>298</sup> Bod. MS Ash. 47, f. 51, no. 84.

<sup>299</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Our Halcyon Days: English Prerevolutionary Texts and Postmodern Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 236.

<sup>300</sup> This popular conceit occurs in Dowland, Bacon and Sidney. More pertinent to Lovelace's usage are Donne's "Loves Exchange", and "Loves Alchymie".

<sup>301</sup> I have used the version printed in *Choyce Drollery* (London: 1656), p. 61. The poem is sometimes attributed to Suckling. It is reprinted in Peter Quennell, ed., *Aspects of Seventeenth-Century Verse* (London: Home and Van Thal, 1970), p. 143.

<sup>302</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, op. cit, p. 100.

treasures grow.”<sup>303</sup> The analogy between nature and woman (so often found in pastoral poems of the period) exhibits numerous tensions and contraries. Women, like fields, require tillage and improvement from their natural state. Yet they can, like nature, conceal their riches, or by a tempting exterior suggest the value of what is hidden. Prose of this period reveals anxieties that women, in taking on male garb, for instance, may inadvertently reveal “that which should be hidden”, and argues that: “nature...as she hath placed on the surface and superficies of the earth all things needful for man’s sustenance and necessary use...but locked up close in the hidden caverns of the earth all things which pertain to his delight and pleasure (as gold, silver, rich minerals, precious Stones)”.<sup>304</sup> The conquering, voyaging male uses treasure as a euphemism for sexual congress, but women are also made aware that the value of their coinage can be debased.

In Lovelace’s “Against the Love of Great Ones” (74) the aristocratic female declines the love of a boy of lower social origin since consummation might result in “a silver-tinsell race” or “Gold allayd (almost halfe brasse)”. Lovelace places Lucasta’s own treasure coyly and mythically above ground in “To Lucasta. Ode. Lyrick” (55) where he suggests that she let herself “be by Man imrac’t” since this will increase her value. Her un-aristocratic (rather Puritanical) behaviour, “Makes that Royall coyne imbase’t / And this golden Orchard waste”. When he courts Chloe for his friend, Lovelace tells the woman: “It’s use and rate values the Gem, / Pearles in their shells have no esteem” (22). The woman’s value is increased by being shown to the poet, who in turn will allow her to shine in his poetry. Monetary metaphors abound. “Tell me, ye subtill Judges in Loves Treasury” (95) is the opening line of another poem in *Lucasta* (1649). Other writers of the period also equate women with coin and express their anxiety about devaluation. Thomas Beedome counsels against choosing an outwardly attractive woman since “Such gold in melting leave more drosse / Than some unpolish’t pieces share”.<sup>305</sup> These verses illustrate a contrary attitude to women, derived perhaps from an attempt to blend classical *carpe-diem* motifs with a Christian and courtly requirement for chastity. Lovelace demands that women be both inconstant (so that the poet can collect his spoils) and also immovably

<sup>303</sup> *Miscellany Poems and Translations by Oxford Hands* (London: 1685), pp. 97-9.

<sup>304</sup> Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 162.

<sup>305</sup> Thomas Beedome, “The Choyce”, in Robin Skelton, ed., *The Cavalier Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 33-4.



chaste (so that he can validate his return). The woman who resists “tillage” knows that she maintains her value in the market place, but the poet as lover attempts to persuade her that she will increase her desirability by being polished for use like gems or gold.<sup>306</sup>

One possible reading of Lovelace’s treasure metaphor in the third stanza is that the unconstant lover is collecting virginities. One of the anonymous replies to “The Scrutinie” printed in Wilkinson (258) berates the fools “That suffer thee to Plough their Ground / Or their rich virgins Mines to sound.” The equivalence of women with property and the importance of land as a marker of social status adds another dimension to Lovelace’s stanza. The roving lover is implicitly trespassing on another’s ground and threatening the patrilineal heritage by “spoiling” another man’s wife. “The Scrutinie” can be read not as a poem addressed to an early-modern one-night stand, but as a deliberate judicial challenge to other male members of an educated coterie. The challenge is that posed by Giacomo in *Cymbeline* (I. iv) when he wagers his estate against Imogen’s constancy. The contest is not between women who may be fat or thin, black or brown, beautiful or ugly but between those men who have a constant mistress and others whose women are fickle.

Lovelace’s poem partakes of a gendered discourse that focuses on the constancy of women. That a contemporary reader would have been alert to this is indicated by a manuscript version of “The Scrutinie” in which the last stanza reads, “But if when I have lov’d my round / Thou prov’st the constant shee”.<sup>307</sup> The criterion for the man’s return is not the woman’s superlative beauty but her faithfulness. In the manuscript the scribe has made a tentative correction and inserted the word which appears in the published poem: “pleasant”. In this manuscript “The Scrutinie” (titled simply “Songe”) is followed by Cleveland’s “The same done into Latin,” which translates the second line of the last stanza by “si firmam te expectabo”.<sup>308</sup> The adjective applied to the abandoned woman, *firmitas*, is not the equivalent of “pleasant” but of “strong, steadfast, enduring”, or figuratively “firm, fast, immoveable, constant”. As in Donne’s “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”, the woman’s part in the relationship is to remain the “fixed foot” of the compass while the male is the

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<sup>306</sup> This imagery is found not only in Donne, but also in other Renaissance poetry with classical antecedents. In Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, the latter argues persuasively that women are like golden strings which need to be tuned, like vessels of brass that need handling or like rich mines. (I. 229).

<sup>307</sup> Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 147, ff. 135-6.

roaming element. One of the answers to Lovelace's poem also picks up this sub-text by peevishly asserting in the final stanza, "And when that you have lov'd your round / I'll prove no constant shee."<sup>309</sup>

The man's expectation in poems such as "The Scrutinie" is not of enduring beauty but of enduring fidelity, yet according to many mid seventeenth-century lyrics, this is exactly the quality which it is impossible for a woman to have. Women may be different in their physical attributes but their inconstancy is constant. The same volume of *Ayres* in which "The Scrutinie" appears has a song "When thou didst think I did not love thee", which differentiates the honourable love of the male speaker from the expected unkindness of the woman. It concludes: "That though thou play the woman's part and from a friend turn foe / Men doe not soe."<sup>310</sup> In the anonymous "A Rarity" the first stanza clearly sets out the accepted misogynist paradigm:

My Mistress is not common;  
She's a Female but no Woman,  
For you may believe her;  
She's so constant in her Love,  
That the Man must Woman prove,  
That does deceive her.<sup>311</sup>

The impossibility of encountering a woman with the desirable male characteristic of constancy is the subject of another Lovelace poem, "The Apostacy of one, and but one Lady" (94). Lovelace writes that to "Finde such a Woman...She's that fixt Heav'n which never moves", is as likely as finding ice that does not melt, a mirror that keeps one's reflection, plants that don't grow, or the hand of a watch that never stirs.<sup>312</sup> In this poem the paradox of a constant woman is juxtaposed with the movement of the earth and the planets. The "Frantick Errour" of the first line, heliocentrism, is contrasted with a science in which all things are mutable and slippery even if close observation fails to reveal movement. (Since Lovelace often

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<sup>308</sup> Reprinted from manuscript in *The Poems of John Cleveland*, ed. Brian Morris and Eleanor Withington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 71.

<sup>309</sup> Printed as "Her Answer", in *Oxford Drollery* (London: 1671) Part II, p. 100.

<sup>310</sup> John Playford et al., *Select Muscicall Ayres and Dialogue, for one and two voyces* (London: 1652), p. 6.

<sup>311</sup> This poem appears in various editions of Playford and the printed anthologies of the Interregnum. The stanza quoted is from the version in *Wit and Drollery. Jovial Poems* (London: 1682), p. 17.

<sup>312</sup> This poem of Lovelace's may be yet another instant of his closeness to Carew, whose "Song. To My Inconstant Mistress" closes by telling the woman she shall be, "Damned for thy false apostacy", *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, op. cit., p. 15.

uses the sun as an emblem of the King, he may be commenting on the ridiculous and unstable nature of a world in which the sun is not recognised as central.)

Lovlace concludes the poem with an image of woman as ultimately unbounded: “Oh she is Constant as the Winde / That Revels in an Ev’nings Aire!” This assessment of women’s faithlessness and lack of boundaries (discussed in the previous chapter with reference to their propensity for tears) continued to be accepted into the Restoration. There is an echo of Lovlace’s “Apostacy” in a song from a revival of Tasso’s pastoral *Aminta*, “She Inconstant”, in which the woman is expected to be as changeable as the sun, wind and sea: “Your nature ’tis, and should you constant be, / I fear you’d prove unnatural to me.”<sup>313</sup> Reading these lyrics, however, one detects an admiration and an attraction for wild and wayward women, who pose more of a challenge, in their way, than the conventional icy mistress.<sup>314</sup> It is this same inconstancy of women which legitimises the roving lover in a poem now attributed to Suckling:

I am confirm’d a woman can  
Love this or that or any man  
This day her love is melting hot,  
Tomorrow swears she knows you not,  
Let her but a new object find,  
And she is of another mind  
Then hang me Ladies at your doore,  
If e’re I doat upon you more.<sup>315</sup>

The last stanza of three is close to Lovlace’s conclusion in “The Scrutinie”:

I’le give my fancy leave to range  
Through every face to find out change:  
The black, the brown, the fair shall be  
    But objects of variety:  
I’le court you all to serve my turne,  
But with such flames as shall not burne:  
    For hang me Ladies, etc.

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<sup>313</sup> John Dancer, “She Inconstant”, in L. Birkett Marshall, ed., *Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), pp. 46-7.

<sup>314</sup> “Song IV”, in Bold, *Latine Songs*, op. cit., pp. 14-6.

<sup>315</sup> I am using the version from Playford’s *Select Musickall Ayres and Dialogues* which E.F. Hart argues is the least corrupt in his “Caroline Lyrics and Contemporary Song-books” *Library*, (1953), pp. 89-110. I have seen a version of this titled “A Song” in the *Academy of Complements* (London: 1650), p. 219. It is rarely anthologised but appears in Skelton, ed., *The Cavalier Poets*, op. cit., p. 243.

Suckling's song was popular in the printed Interregnum anthologies and the song-books of secular music published by Playford. It illustrates how the careless tone of the controlling "I" shades into censure when the same attitude towards multiple lovers is attributed to an anonymous "she".

The frequency of arguments for inconstancy in Interregnum poems may be an attempt to counter the standard belief that the inability to exercise self-control and reason when faced with overwhelming desire is a feminine trait. In order to avoid this gender trap male writers refuse through logic to be constant to one woman or even to the idea of love. Poems validating male inconstancy sometimes argue that nature is itself changeable, "and to be / *Constant*, in *Nature* were *Inconstancie*."<sup>316</sup> Venturing into the natural world, however, men become not beasts but classically allusive insects (often bees, associated with poets since classical times), as in "The Libertine".<sup>317</sup> Having proclaimed his total liberty from love the speaker compares himself with a bee whose pleasures are not limited to the "ruines of one Maiden-head." Flying from flower to flower there is only one difference between the poet and the insect: "his thighs, / When he abroad doth roame, / Laden with spoils, return, but mine / Come weak and empty home." The insult to the woman who is sampled and discarded, is not softened by the intimate tone of such lyrics.

### 3.3. Cupid's deathly power

Poems on the theme of constancy foreground the woman; poems on the pains of love highlight the specular and often sacramentally violent tribulations of the lover, whose problems have been caused by a classical deity not yet defunct – the little winged archer:

Cupid, I scorn to beg the Art  
From thy imaginary Throne;  
To learn to wound anothers Heart,  
Or how to steal my own.  
If she be coy, My Airy Mind  
Brooks not a Siege: if she be kind,  
She proves my Scorn, that was my Wonder;  
For Towns that yield I hate to plunder.

<sup>316</sup> "Inconstancy", in *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley. Volume 2: Poems (1656), Part I: The Mistress*, ed. Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth and J. Robert King (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), p. 30.

<sup>317</sup> *Sportive Wit* (London: 1656), pp. 40-41. This poem is also in Alexander Brome, *Poems*, op. cit, pp. 78-9.

Love is a Game, Hearts are the Prize,  
 Pride keeps the Stakes, Art throws the Dice:  
     When either's won  
     The Game is done.  
 Love is a coward, hunts the flying Prey;  
 But, when it once stands still, Love runs away.<sup>318</sup>

This poem from a Restoration play summarises much of Lovelace's amatory verse. While it uses Renaissance conceits, and looks back to the *galanterie* of the vanished Stuart court, Lovelace's poetry also looks forward to the age of satire and open cynicism about love.

Lovelace has more poems featuring or mentioning Cupid than might be expected. His frequent personification of love is not unusual: eros was respected as a powerful force that can loosen the chains of soul and body.<sup>319</sup> He consistently refers to the Roman god of love, rather than to "Eros" or even "Amor". His image of Cupid, with torch and arrows, is derived from the Roman love elegy and principally from Propertius. There are five poems in the first, and four in the second volume wholly devoted to the "*Little Excellence of Hearts*", and several more in which Cupid is invoked although not all of the latter might be classed as love poems.<sup>320</sup> Even Lovelace's most celebrated lyric, "To Althea, From Prison", begins with an image of Cupid fluttering outside prison gates: "When Love with unconfined wings".<sup>321</sup> The Cupid that appears in Lovelace's poems, however, is more frequently vanquished than appealed to. With less vehemence than Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost* Lovelace nevertheless resents the domination of:

This Signor Junior, giant dwarf, Dan Cupid,  
 Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms  
 Th'anointed soveriegn of sighs and groans,

<sup>318</sup> Sir Francis Fane, from *Love in the Dark* (1675), quoted in R.C. Bald, ed., *Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 577.

<sup>319</sup> Jean Hagstrum finds that in the seventeenth century Cupid maintains a powerful presence which becomes diluted as he turns into a cherubic rococo decoration. See *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 72.

<sup>320</sup> In the 1649 *Lucasta* Cupid has walk-on roles in: "La Bella Bona Roba" (96), "Princess Löysa Drawing" (27), "To Fletcher reviv'd" (59), "An Elegie. Princess Katherine" (29), and in the 1659 *Posthume Poems* in "The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret" (169), "A Fly about a Glasse of Burnt Claret" (157) and "Courante Monsieur" (139).

<sup>321</sup> If Lovelace was imagining the cherubic winged Cupids of Greek poetry, then the penultimate line of the first stanza, "The Gods that wanton in the Aire", makes more sense. The manuscript versions of "To Althea, From Prison" and most printed versions until quite recently have "birds" instead of "gods". Lovelace's choice of "gods" for his published volume has caused some critical debate. (See Thomas Clayton, "Some Versions, Texts, and Readings of 'To Althea, from Prison'", *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 68 (1974), pp. 225-35.)

Liege of all loiterers and malcontents. (IV. i. 175-8)

Cupid personified is often castigated as cruel or foolish; he is rarely a positive force in love affairs. Sometimes he is questioned, sometimes cynically dismissed, sometimes he appears with Venus in intricate pastoral allegories. With his bow, his quiver and his shafts or darts he fatally wounds unsuspecting lovers, who are scorched or frozen or trapped in nets. In the neo-Latin poetry of the Renaissance, which, via Marino, influenced Lovelace's predecessors and contemporaries, Cupid is requested to unleash his power on a defenceless lover, or to heal him, or even to strike him so that poetry might be created. Lovelace, however, consistently sets himself up in opposition to the god of love. He does not welcome love as the smiling subverter of martial endeavours. The rejection of heroic themes by many of his contemporaries (as we saw in the discussion on poems of love and war) is also a rejection of worldly cares masquerading as Stoicism which Lovelace does not share. In Lovelace's poetry Cupid is often a random force of nature, removing volition from the lovers and effectively negating the lady's charms, since even when she has dazzled with her beauty it is only because she has borrowed Cupid's artillery. The displacement of even stylised mistresses, Lucasta or Ellinda, from these poems renders them external to any narrative of courtship which might be derived from Lovelace's two volumes. As a poet, Lovelace prefers to define his identity against well-known classical formulations for the experience of love, rather than in terms of absolute devotion to a mistress. The typically *subjected* position of the Petrarchan lover, closely defined by the co-ordinates of a limited vocabulary, is used as a means of creating some individuality through the manipulation of a Cupid figure, which is a creation of the poet himself.

In the 1649 *Lucasta*, Cupid's darts rebound from an icy heart, the lover's heart is safe with Lucasta, or Cupid is powerless because the lover has already been obliterated. In the *Posthume Poems* the speaker involves himself in a duel with Cupid, or Cupid is despatched to hell. Lucasta exchanges his darts for ones tipped with innocence, and Lovelace in "Courante Monsieur" (139) addresses a valediction not to Lucasta, but to a god of love personified as a tyrant: "Adieu weak beauteous Tyrant, see! / Thy angry flames meant me, / Retort on thee".

The Renaissance affords more examples of "Cupid" poems than the Interregnum, but although the popularity of personified love was waning, it maintained a hold in the eroticised pastoral lyrics of the printed miscellanies and upon

most Cavalier poets.<sup>322</sup> James Shirley, who addresses Cupid courteously a few times in his *Poems* of 1646, presented a masque, *Cupid and Death*, for Whitefriars in 1653 and 1659. In this piece the arrows of Cupid and those of death are temporarily exchanged.<sup>323</sup> This theme had been popular in the paintings and emblem books of the Renaissance and derives from a story in which Love and Death set out together on a hunt. By mistake, or by Death's design, the arrows are exchanged dooming the young to die and the old to fall in love. Lovelace refers to this in passing in "Cupid Far Gone" (153). When Cupid offers, "To change his Darts with Death" the equivalence of *eros* with *thanatos* in these poems is revealed: an association dated by Aries from the sixteenth century, but increasing in intensity as a manifestation of modern psychic and spiritual malaise, and reaching a climax in Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents*.<sup>324</sup>

In his essay on "Civil War, Madness and the Divided Self" Jonathan Sawday points out that Lovelace's 1659 volume of poems, "abounds in images of self-dissolution, fragmentation, and penetration."<sup>325</sup> He argues that the breaking up of surfaces and selves presents itself as a means of describing the crises of the civil war period, but his analysis is just as pertinent to several poems from the 1649 *Lucasta*. Three poems in the first volume (with Cupid as protagonist) effectively annihilate the lover. In "Love Conquer'd" (31) Cupid's dart rebounds from the heart of a constant mistress:

Now the Prince of fires burnes!  
 Flames in the luster of her eyes;  
 Triumphant she, refuses, scornes;  
 He submits, adores, and mournes,  
 And is his Votresse Sacrifice.

Love itself becomes love's sacrifice, and is badly burned, though not consumed. The poet continues to address the "foolish boy" in the final stanza in which Cupid flies

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<sup>322</sup> Norman Ault's *Elizabethan Lyrics* has far more "Cupids" than his *Seventeenth-Century Lyrics from the Original Texts*. The Douce Catalogue of Ballads in the Bodleian library has nearly fifty songs from 1641-1674, but only one on the topic. This, listed as a pastoral, is "Cupid's cure: or, An answer to Cupids cruelty" to the tune of "Cupid's curtesie". John Wardroper, *Love and Drollery* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), which contains many mid seventeenth-century lyrics, has only eleven in which Cupid features out of nearly 400 songs. Lovelace's fondness for the little god is shared, however, by Habington, Herrick, Heath, Stanley, Sherburne and Crashaw.

<sup>323</sup> In Hugh Maclean, ed., *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets* (New York: Norton, 1974), p. 195.

<sup>324</sup> Aries is quoted in Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), p. 63.

upwards on singed wings. The poem's speaker, in revenging himself on Cupid, takes on the role usually assigned to love's female victims.<sup>326</sup> There is a fluidity about gender roles in these poems which betrays an uncertainty about the nature of desire and an unwillingness to remain forever a *servus amoris*.

In "Sir Thomas Wortley's Sonnet Answered. The Sonnet" (83), the object of love has died and Lovelace bids "adieu to Love" as a result:

Go, go;  
Lay by thy quiver and unbend thy Bow  
Poore sillie Foe,  
Thou spend'st thy shafts but at my breath in Vain.  
Since Death  
My heart hath with a fatall Icie Deart  
Already slain,  
Thou canst not ever hope to warme her wound,  
Or wound it o're againe.

In the companion piece to this poem, "The Answer" (83) pain defines the identity of the lover who is otherwise extinguished:

Againe,  
Thou witty Cruell Wanton now againe,  
Through ev'ry Veine,  
Hurle all your lightning, and strike ev'ry Dart,  
Againe,  
Before I feele this pleasing, pleasing paine,  
I have no Heart,  
Nor can I live but sweetly murder'd with  
So deare, so deare a smart.

This longing for death and death's triumph over love is, according to Denis de Rougemont, the result of a belief that true self-understanding is only reached through death. For Western man, de Rougemont argues, passion means suffering, and love's effulgence must coincide with the self-destruction of the lover.<sup>327</sup> Lovelace's "Song" (149), which buries the lover in his own self, illustrates this. An un-named woman has melted the lover's soul in its scabbard and "now like some pale ghost I walk, / And

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<sup>325</sup> In Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, eds, *Literature and the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 131-3.

<sup>326</sup> There is an illustration of this in Philip Ayres' *Emblems of Love*, reprinted in George Saintsbury, ed., *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), II. pp. 356-7. Cupid is bound to a stake while a maiden stokes the fire.

<sup>327</sup> Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, trans., Montgomery Belgion (New York: Pantheon, 1956), pp. 50-2.



with another's Spirit talk". The poet appears to have suffered a double dissolution: soul from body and soul from self. Whenever Lovelace uses the term "self" as in the poem, quoted above, it is a fragile, threatened construct:

For whilst you fear me Cinders, See! I'm Ice;  
A nummed speaking clod and mine own show,  
My self congeal'd, a Man cut out in Snow.<sup>328</sup>

Sometimes Lovelace retreats from troublesome notions of identity behind the conventional Renaissance pun of the *petit mort*, but the love experienced still disguises a longing for the ultimate risk, and a preference for unhappiness. The rejected lover in "Valiant Love" (93) who apostrophises Cupid expects, "his fair Murdresse shall not gain one groan, / And He expire ev'n in Ovation". In the final stanza the poem's speaker asks Cupid to torture any tearful lover: "That he be branded all Free Beauties slave, / And his own hollow eyes be domb'd his grave". Although de Rougemont finds that this love reaches its flowering in European romanticism, in a literature of impediment and nostalgia, it is already present in these lyrics. Love, in the person of Cupid, is both sought and rejected, and the lover is anxious to be physically and repeatedly marked by suffering. This dynamic, a perversion of courtly love and religious mysticism, is present in all its contradictions in these poems of Lovelace with their well-worn conceits of ice and fire, and their imagery of martyrdom. In a summary of de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World*, Jonathan Dollimore argues that culture both conceals and expresses the fact that "the secret objective of love is death or self-annihilation".<sup>329</sup> Moreover, the myth of passionate love "allows us to live the contradiction without actually confronting it", but Dollimore does not locate an expression of this myth in the various visual and poetic personifications of love as Cupid.

In his volume of posthumous poems, Lovelace's images of annihilation become physically graphic as if the violence of the times finds the language of love quite apposite. Overlaying this sub-text is Lovelace's paradoxical desire both to experience the pains of love and to withdraw into himself like the snail in his poem of that name: "Wise Emblem of our Politick World, / Sage Snayl, within thine own self

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<sup>328</sup> From "The *Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret*" (170). The lover's two conventional fates, burning and freezing, occur frequently in Lovelace, but burning is linked with destructive revelation of the sort which consumed Semele: freezing allows some semblance of identity to remain. See the poems on pp. 22, 36 and 75.

curl'd" (136). The processes of digestion and excretion made specular in poems such as and "The Snayl" and "The Toad and Spyder" (162) provide Lovelace with a metaphor for the situation of the author. The poet absorbs and remakes the works of predecessors and contemporaries, but whereas the pre-war poetic coterie was nourishing, the new Puritan state is a monster and "The body is all but a belly" writes Lovelace in his "A Mock-Song" (154).

Corporeal concerns pervade the love poems, and although apparently flattering to the woman addressed, the lover's dissolution involves a complex renegotiation of masculine identity in which the feminine, as in the following poem, is invaded and appropriated. Lovelace ends a poem in the 1659 volume, "In allusion to the *French-Song. N'entendez vous pas ce language*" (124):

No? Know then I would melt,  
On every Limb I felt,  
And on each naked part  
Spread my expanded Heart,  
That not a Vein of thee,  
But should be fill'd with mee.

Rather than displaying devotion, such poems invite the woman to view the results of her cruelty. In "To Lucasta" (132) the lover is presented as a dying bird (or injured Cupid) whose repose is his grave; "Fluttering I Lye, / Do beat my Self and dye, / But for a Resurrection from your eye." It concludes:

Ah my fair Murdresse! Dost thou cruelly heal,  
With Various pains to make me well?  
Then let me be  
Thy cut Anatomie,  
And in each mangled part my heart you'l see.

Eroticism and violence are revealed as inseparable. This poem, however, pursues the lover even beyond death, an aspect of penal practice in the seventeenth century. In this poem the lover is a transgressor and Lucasta a supreme force exerting judicial torture. Francis Barker points out that the treatment of the bodies of criminals to yield up the last particle in extirpation is an extension of existing power relations beyond history.<sup>329</sup> Lovelace's poem presents a verbal analogy of the scaffold. The

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<sup>329</sup> Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture*, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>330</sup> See Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body. Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), pp. 74-5.

transformation of the privacy of love into a public spectacle also has resonance with the idea of the state as the body politic: a body which has been dismembered by the civil war. “Now the *Thighs* of the Crown, / And the *Arms* are lopp’d down”, Lovelace writes in “A Mock-Song” (154). Neither the lover, nor the poet can foresee a restoration, for such fragmentation was thought to prevent the possibility of rising whole at the Second Coming. “*To Lucasta*” has some similarities with a poem by Thomas Traherne, “The Person”.<sup>331</sup> This opens, “Ye sacred Limbs, / A richer Blazon I will lay / On you than first I found.” In a tone of religious exaltation Traherne seeks to write a poem of praise not by conventional means, which *add* qualities to a person, but by a stripping away beyond nakedness:

Their Worth they then do best reveal  
When we all *Metaphors* remov;  
For, *Metaphors* conceal,  
And only Vapors prov.  
They best are blazon’d when we see  
Th’ Anatomy,  
Survey the Skin, cut up the Flesh, the Veins  
Unfold; the Glory there remains:  
The Muscles, Fibres, Arteries, and Bones,  
Are better far than Artificial Stones.

Lovelace is offering Lucasta such a dissection of himself, but the recurrence of the imagery in his political poems turns the spectacle back onto the perpetrator. The anatomised body reveals the truth of his devotion, unconcealed by any poetic artifice: the crippled body politic, like the King’s body on the scaffold, reveals the benefits of the destroyed regime and the scientific violence of the new.

Unlike the joys “reaped too soon” in consummation, the emotions in Lovelace’s “Cupid” poems are kept at an intense level through a manipulation of two contrasting discourses. Pleasures are maximised by being restricted (a sub-text of sado-masochism runs through many lyrics with antecedents in the *Greek Anthology*), while the tone in which the woman is idealised and left untouched derives from the influence of neo-Platonism brought to the English court by Henrietta Maria. Initially a social movement, refined manners represented a flight from vulgarity. “Grace, wit, and a free but pleasing manner were the touchstones of *precieux* society. The relations between the sexes were reconstructed in terms of a code of behaviour that turned

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<sup>331</sup> *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*, ed. Gladys I. Wade (London: Dobell, 1932), pp. 174-5.

“love” into a mannerly game.”<sup>332</sup> The artificiality, the conventionality, the aristocratic references and the exaltation of feeling over action are *precieux* features that recur in most, but not all, of Lovelace’s “Cupid” poems. Only two, “CUPID *far gone*” (153) and “A Loose Saraband” (32) have received any critical notice.

### 3.4. “Thankes *Cupid*, but the Coach of *Venus* moves / For me too slow”<sup>333</sup>

In “CUPID *far gone*”, the little god has succumbed to madness and uncharacteristic behaviour. Gerald Hammond in a brief commentary on the poem finds that it anticipates the “frenzy” of Restoration poetry, and that the Cupid fiction disguises “a self-portrait of a drunken, sodomising, brawling, self-loathing individual.”<sup>334</sup> He might have added incest or even necrophilia to the list of excesses in the second stanza as the personified Cupid refuses to discriminate against women in any condition. Thomas Clayton also describes Lovelace’s Cupid in this poem as “polymorphous perverse”, but finds the poem comical and playfully blasphemous.<sup>335</sup> Cupid’s bad behaviour continues in the third stanza of five:

Jealous of his chast *Psyche*, raging he,  
Quarrels the Student *Mercurie*;  
And with a proud submissive Breath  
Offers to change his darts with Death.  
He strikes at the bright Eye of Day,  
And *Juno* tumbles in her milky way.

Cupid’s trajectory is from Olympus to the very depths of hell (a fall Hammond suggests reflects Lovelace’s own anxieties about his poetic standing), but it is also one of the many images of vertiginous confusion to occur in Interregnum poetry.<sup>336</sup> Cupid’s failure to dwell peacefully either among gods or humans may be an oblique reference to the increasing disapproval of amorous verse and licentious behaviour shown by the authorities in the 1650s:

The dear Sweet Secrets of the Gods he tells,  
And with loath’d hate lov’d heaven he swells;

<sup>332</sup> Thomas Kaminski, “Edmund Waller, English *Précieux*”, *Philological Quarterly*, 79 (2000), p. 20.

<sup>333</sup> “To Cupid. *Wishing a speedy passage to CASTARA*”, in *The Poems of William Habington*, ed. Kenneth Allott (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), p. 32.

<sup>334</sup> Gerald Hammond, *Fleeting Things: English Poets and Poems 1616-1660*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 250-1.

<sup>335</sup> Thomas Clayton, “Lovelace’s *Cupid Far Gone*”, *Explicator*, 33 (1974), pp. 28-30.

<sup>336</sup> The sentiment was widely expressed. See “The World Turned Upside Down” (1646), sung to the tune of “When the King enjoys his own again” (BL Thomason Tracts 246:669, f.4).

Now like a fury he belies  
Myriads of pure Virginities;  
And swears, with this false frenzy hurl'd,  
There's not a vertuous She in all the World.

*Olympus* he renounces, then descends,  
And makes a friendship with the Fiends;  
Bids *Charon* be no more a slave,  
He *Argos* rigged with Stars shall have;  
And triple *Cerberus* from below  
Must leash'd t' himself with him a hunting go.

The absurdity of Cupid's actions (the little winged archer and the foolish and playful boy of previous poems has vanished) seems fitting in the world turned upside down. Lovelace's "CUPID far gone" makes no overt political allusions, but the poem's tone is one of bitter disillusion with the past as much as the present. From its first lines the poem contains a density of classical reference which signals that its intended audience is an educated male coterie, familiar with Greek myths and classical poetry, and able to appreciate that Cupid is a gentleman who hunts but whose behaviour has degenerated. According to Kathryn McEuen, the source for "Cupid Far Gone" is an ode by Anacreon telling the story of Eros being stung by a bee.<sup>337</sup> Bees had been associated with poets by Homer and Pindar, and Lovelace makes the bee Cupid's fatal enemy in the first stanza of the poem, thus setting the poet against love. Cupid has been severely demoted, so that it is possible to read the poem as the poet's inability or unwillingness to write about love conventionally. The opening stanza also describes how Cupid's "Shackles, nor the Roses bough / Ne'r half so nettled him as now". These details are likely to have been derived from a popular translation of Ausonius by Thomas Stanley, "Cupid Crucified".<sup>338</sup> In this long poem, numerous heroines of unhappy love affairs, some mythical like Ariadne, some actual like Sappho, seize Cupid and each proceeds to devise a different punishment: "Love his hands being tied / Behinde him, his feet bound, on this high tree / Suspended with excessive cruelty / They torture." Venus appears, but feeling guilty for having been caught with Mars does not assist her son: she takes up a wreath of roses with which she whips the boy.

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<sup>337</sup> Kathryn Anderson McEuen, *Classical Influence Upon the Tribe of Ben: A study of Classical Elements in the Non-Dramatic Poetry of Ben Jonson and his Circle* (New York: Octagon Books, 1968), p. 216. Theocritus has a story of Cupid stung by bees which became popular as an emblem. See also Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 163. Eros is stung by a sleeping in the anacreontic poems. See Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *The Poetics of Imitation: Anacreon and the Anacreontic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 254.

<sup>338</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, op. cit., p. 132. (Stanley's poem appeared in 1651.)

This eventually encourages the heroines to plead for Cupid, who is released and flees into the sky. Lovelace reverses the conclusion of this narrative, having made Cupid the protagonist rather than the victim of outrages. The role of Cupid in Lovelace's poem is, however, consistent with his active role as mischief-maker in other poems of the mid-century.

The imagery of such poems is derived from Petrarch, from popular emblems, and from the iconography of martyrdom.<sup>339</sup> Petrarch often provides the context: ice and fire predominate, the lady's eyes are lustrous enough to challenge even the power of the God of love, sometimes the lover is healed but more often he is left powerless in an amatory limbo. The picture of the lover's heart, pierced or inflamed (an icon which still has currency) is derived from emblem books which sometimes mix the conceits of Hellenistic erotic poetry with Catholic imagery so that Cupid becomes "divine love", and the flaming heart becomes the Sacred Heart.<sup>340</sup> A good example of Lovelace's appropriation of religious imagery to describe the annihilation of the lover is the second stanza of "The Answer" (83):

Then flye  
And kindle all your Torches at her eye,  
To make me Dye  
Her martyr, and put on my Roabe of Flame:  
So I  
Advances on my blazing Wings on high,  
In Death became  
Inthron'd a Starre, and Ornament unto  
Her glorious glorious name.

The poem's speaker wishes for an endless repetition of the addictive feeling which Cupid's arrows provoke: paradoxically blissful and torturing. The winged deity is conventional here and appears, as in Latin poetry, with a torch as well as with darts.<sup>341</sup> In the idolatrous confusion of Christian and pagan imagery that pervades these poems, the lover dies a martyr in a robe of flame, but then advances on blazing wings to become a constellation that proclaims his mistress's name. The earnest desire for martyrdom is uttered in the same tone found in many of Crashaw's religious poems

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<sup>339</sup> Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (Roma: Sussidi Eruditi, 1964), pp. 151-2, lists a number of books dealing only with emblems of the heart, which appeared in the 1640s.

<sup>340</sup> Praz finds that the disguising of Petrarchan conceits in religious imagery was part of the propaganda of the Jesuits but much of the graphically masochistic ecstasies found in Lovelace's lyrics echo the language and imagery of the English medieval religious lyric.

where these martyrs expect a heavenly reward. In his elegy on Princes Katherine (29) Lovelace devotes two stanzas to a description of a fiery death which proves an “Ornament”. Religious martyrs, however, are inscribed in the roll of saints and obtain a “name”. Lovelace values only the name of his mistress and reveals a potentially greater devotion, since he is happy to be known only as an adjunct to “Her glorious, glorious Name”. When Lovelace claims to be in Heaven it is only because his mistress has made a firework display of him as in “Another” (150): “So when I once was set on flame, / I burnt all ore the Letters of her Name.” In “The Answer” Lovelace provides the rejected lover the consolation (or punishment) which befalls heroes and heroines of Greek legend who are placed in the heavens as stars: Orion or Cassiopeia. The classical setting allows a temporary suspension of Christian values and implies that actions, or attitudes, especially sensuality can be removed from a Christian sense of sin. However, the intrusion of the language of Catholicism creates an uneasiness lacking in poems by Carew and Herrick, where pagan and pastoral blend seamlessly and the force of love is a harmonising influence. In Lovelace’s poetry abstract or personified love is a divisive, destructive force from which the only pleasures to be derived are masochistic. “I feele t’/expire,/and I am candied Ice” is the conclusion to a lovers’ quarrel (36). “How I grieve that I am well!” writes Lovelace to Ellinda, continuing to exalt a state in which he languished, withered and fainted and appropriated the feminine aspects of being in love (99). Similarly, the fly hovering about the glass of claret (a substitute for the lover/poet in much Cavalier verse) suggests “’tis such a pleasing pain, / Thou would’st be scorch’d, and drown’d again” (157); while the lover who has been buried and dissolved concludes: “But this is such a pleasing pain, / I’m loth to be alive again.” (149)

Sometimes, Cupid can be used to express the vagaries of erotic experience, as in Cartwright’s “A Complaint Against Cupid”.<sup>342</sup> When the poet is unable to find love, Cupid can be petitioned. Ben Jonson and Thomas Stanley wrote on this theme, which continued to be popular into the Interregnum. Thomas Randolph’s, “A Complaint against Cupid, that he never made him in love”, covers some recurring themes. In this poem Randolph, unlike Lovelace, tells Cupid, “I am neglected”.

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<sup>341</sup> See Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 96-7.

<sup>342</sup> Cartwright’s epigrammatic poem comments on the frustration of the lover who when desiring love is never able to find it, but is caught at the first step when he decides to flee. *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. R. Cullis Goffin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 40-1.

Randolph lists all those who have been struck by love while he remains invulnerable, and wonders how it is that poets such as Musaeus, Anacreon, Ovid and Tibullus have been enrolled as troops for Cupid's cause. Finally, Randolph falls into the usual mode of threatening to whip Cupid as if he were a naughty boy, and sending a bee to challenge the boy to a duel. Another light-hearted use of the same motif is found in Henry Bold, who describes Cupid and Venus sporting in a grove. After whipping Cupid with flowers for his "waggish Knavery" Venus makes amends by allowing him (in Dantesque fashion) to use *Celia's* eyebrows for his bow and her glances for his darts. The extravagant complement to a mistress linked with Cupid's activities is also an element of Lovelace's poetry, but these lyrics lack the usual pastoral or Edenic setting and his Cupid is more consistently cruel. In a late poem, "Love Inthron'd" (127), Lovelace describes Cupid as someone who, "has left his apish jigs / and whipping hearts like gigs", which may be derived from Tibullus' "I am driven, like a top spinning on a flat surface, /whipped by an agile boy who knows his business."<sup>343</sup> Lovelace's Cupids lack the humorous appeal of pastorals such as "A Dialogue betwixt Cupid and a Country- Swaine," published in the Royalist anthology *Wit Restored* in 1658.<sup>344</sup> When Cupid is out hunting birds he meets a rustic swain who annoys him by challenging his ability to shoot, and calls him an elf. Cupid retaliates by piercing the speaker's soul. The hunt appears frequently as a metaphor for love in seventeenth-century poems, and reinforces Cupid's aristocratic status.

### 3.5. The "wilde boy" becomes a man

The slightly anachronistic activity of duelling is another pastime associated with love and is the subject of a poem by Lovelace, "The Duell" (152), which Parfitt attributes to the influence of Sidney.<sup>345</sup>

Love drunk the other day, knockt at my brest,  
But I, alas was not within:  
My man, my Ear, told me he came t'attest,  
That without cause h'had boxed him,  
And battered the Windows of mine eyes,

<sup>343</sup> I was alerted to this potential source by Pauline Aiken, *The Influence of the Latin Elegists on English Lyric Poetry, 1600-1650, with Particular Reference to the Works of Robert Herrick* (Orono: Maine University Press, 1932), p. 42. The translation of Tibullus' lines from I. v. 3-4 is from *Tibullus: Elegies*, trans., Guy Lee and Robert Maltby (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), p. 23.

<sup>344</sup> John Mennes and James Smith, *Wit Restor'd in Severall Select Poems Not Formerly Publish't* (London: 1658), pp. 96-7.

<sup>345</sup> George Parfitt, *English Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 33.



And took my heart for one of's Nunneries.

Lovelace turns Donne's three person'd God into an affronted Cavalier. The convention of Eros insisting on a duel with a poet who rejects love derives from Anacreon,<sup>346</sup> and occurs in translations and imitations by Belleau, Ronsard and Marino.<sup>347</sup> Lovelace's poem also has affinities with other contemporary treatments of Cupid visiting poets, but his god of love is not the disingenuous guest of Stanley's "Loves Night Walk" or the snake of Cowley's "Loves Ingratitude". The speaker in "The Duell" is wary of love and seeks to avoid it. He is especially anxious to maintain an inviolable internal self which is imagined architecturally not as a fortress, but as a convent. Unlike other poets he is not deceived by appearances. In Robert Heath's *Clarastella* the poet entertains an exiled youth, not knowing his identity, and Cupid shoots the unsuspecting host.<sup>348</sup> Herrick's "The Cheat of Cupid: or, The ungentle guest" is similar:

One silent night of late,  
When every creature rested,  
Came one unto my gate,  
And knocking, me molested.<sup>349</sup>

Herrick's Cupid is cold and starving but when warmed by the poet's fire he strikes him through the heart and flies away laughing.<sup>350</sup> In all these poems Cupid, as Love, has grown up but his victory is less assured. He now resembles the figure or vision of Amour in medieval romances. As Lovelace presents him he is no longer an infant or a boy but a handsome youth with courtly manners. Lovelace's personification of the god of love as an adolescent may have been derived from Propertius, with whose *Elegies* Lovelace's verse shares many affinities. "Whoever he was who painted Love as a boy, think you not that he had wondrous skill?" asks Propertius, "He was the first

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<sup>346</sup> Anacreon's speaker is defeated when the god of love shoots himself into his antagonist's heart. Lovelace's poem allows Cupid's target more possibility of victory through laughter. See poem no. 13 in the translations of the anacreontic poems appended to Rosenmeyer, *The Poetics of Imitation*, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>347</sup> See Janet Levarie, "Renaissance Anacreontics", *Comparative Literature*, 25 (1975), p. 225.

<sup>348</sup> *Clarastella* (1650) by Robert Heath, ed. Frederick H. Candelaria (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1970), p. 20.

<sup>349</sup> *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed., Alexander B. Grossart (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), I. pp. 43-5.

<sup>350</sup> Herrick has another poem in which Cupid is an unwelcome visitor. In "Upon Cupid", Herrick describes how Love appears as a beggar, but requites the poet's kindness by burning him with a touch. *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, op. cit., III. p. 21.

to see that lovers behave childishly”.<sup>351</sup> It is by turning this comic aspect of Amor back on itself and cutting Cupid down to size that Lovelace hopes to avoid the traditional barbs. “The Duell” is a dense permutation of allusion and reference, imitation and inheritance:

Two darts of equal length and points he sent,  
And nobly gave the choyce to me;  
Which I not weigh’d, young and indifferent;  
Now full of nought but Victorie.  
So we both met in one of’s Mothers Groves,  
The time, at the first murm’ring of her Doves.

The narrator of the contest has himself taken on some of the qualities normally associated with Cupid: the overconfidence of youth and the inability to choose wisely. The duellists meet at dawn in one of Venus’s groves and the poem’s speaker continues to emulate Cupid. He describes the preparations: “I stript my self naked all o’re, as he, / For so I was best arm’d, when bare.” Lovelace is unusual in allowing the duellists some equality. Readers and writers in the mid-century would have been expecting Cupid’s (often underhanded) victory.<sup>352</sup> Lovelace’s unwilling duellist is still at a disadvantage, however, for while the un-named god of love strikes his liver, the poet can touch nothing but a flame. The fragmented body and absent self which gather together to fight Love are a metaphor for the problems of the disordered body politic.<sup>353</sup>

The description of the duel is similar to that in Anacreon’s *Ode* 13 in which a fight between Love and one of his victims is described.<sup>354</sup> The lover is vanquished and his strength dissolved in the Greek ode, but in Lovelace’s poem the poet emerges from the narrative and speaks directly to the reader. The idea of the combat may also have been derived from court shows popular during the time of Prince Henry when questions of love were so decided. Jonson’s *A Challenge at Tilt at a Marriage* (1613) has such a challenge and “Anti-Cupid, the love of Virtue” appears for the woman’s cause in another masque, *Love Restor’d*. Earlier, Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels* (1600)

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<sup>351</sup> Propertius, *Elegies*, trans., C.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 152-3.

<sup>352</sup> The tradition derives from Anacreon. Cowley’s *Anacreontique* no 4, “The Duel” has Cupid emptying his quiver and then shooting himself into the poet’s heart. See *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, op. cit., II. p. 275.

<sup>353</sup> See Jonathan Sawday, “Mysteriously divided: Civil War, Madness and the Divided Self”, in Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, eds., *Literature and the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 127-47.

features challenges and combat with rhetorical weapons such as “the bare accost”. Lovelace’s “A Duell” goes beyond the debates on Platonic love which inform these dramas. With a cynicism found more usually in Suckling, Lovelace concludes his poem by revealing the preoccupation with love as ridiculous:

This, this is Love we daily quarrel so,  
 An idle *Don- Quichoterie*;  
 We whip ourselves with our own twisted wo,  
 And wound the Ayre for a Fly.  
 The only way t’undo this Enemy,  
 Is to laugh at the Boy, and he will cry.

Lovelace attacks the idolatry of Petrarchan love in sentiments close to Sidney’s when he writes: “What we call Cupid’s dart, / An Image is, which for our selves we carve; / And, fooles ... adore in temple of our heart”.<sup>355</sup> This light-hearted victory over the pangs of love is, however, ambiguous. In the third stanza Lovelace mentions two darts which Cupid carries. There exists a myth about Cupid’s two arrows: the sharp golden one which inflicts love, and the leaden one which cures it. In Ovid, Apollo is pierced with a golden dart but Daphne with a lead one. The over-confident youth in Lovelace’s poem who fails to assess the relative weight of the two arrows is struck first. He may have been hit by the lead arrow and rendered immune to love, so that even his indifference to it in the final stanza is still the result of Cupid’s power.

Although the poet cannot always conquer the little god of love, Lucasta is perhaps able to change his whole mode of being. In “*Love Inthron’d. Ode*” (127) Lovelace presents a deity encountered nowhere else, for Lucasta has cleansed his darts of “Falshood, Blood, and Hate”. Pain and the loss of reason are accepted qualities of Cupid’s arrows but Lovelace’s condemnation seems more personal. Cupid has grown up: the “wilde boy” has become a man.<sup>356</sup> In an ideal world love becomes justice, and the arrows of Cupid are tipped with innocence so that the chaste huntress Diana can use them. This particular exchange also occurs in a poem in the 1649 volume, “*To Fletcher reviv’d*” (59) in which the dramatist is praised for presenting a Cupid no longer naked but with Diana’s linen. Lovelace ultimately wants to avoid

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<sup>354</sup> McEuen, *Classical Influence Upon the Tribe of Ben*, op. cit., pp. 215-6.

<sup>355</sup> Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, Sonnet 5.

<sup>356</sup> An unusual metamorphosis for Cupid who appears as a winged infant in Seneca, Apuleius and the Hellenistic epigrams, as a boy (sometimes blindfolded) in the Renaissance, and as a youth in Latin love poetry and in some seventeenth-century verse.

love; and he also wishes to avoid having to make his poetic identity dependent on the poetry of love.

### 3.6. Love's like a game at tables

Another solution to being overwhelmed and disarmed is to treat love as a game, the way Cupid treats lovers' hearts as if they were balls in play. This is the subject of Lovelace's "A Loose Saraband" (320). Lovelace opens with the commonplace conceit of love as a thief, but beneath a childish amusement is a game without rules in which love is dangerous, painful and unpredictable:

Ah me! The little Tyrant Theefe!  
As once my heart was playing,  
He snatcht it up and flew away,  
Laughing at all my praying.

The easy musical lilt of the poem with its feminine endings and the miniaturising of Cupid initially disguise his role as a rather more sinister collector of hearts. Panofsky describes images in which an adolescent Cupid is girded with the stringed hearts of his victims and this image is used by Jonson in "His Discourse with Cupid", which describes "Hearts of slain / Lovers, made into a chain" worn by Venus.<sup>357</sup> Lovelace's poem does not take long to reinstate Cupid in this role. Cupid is a sadist who continues to wound his prize, the already wounded heart: "And now this heart is all his sport, / Which as a Ball he boundeth / From hand to breast, from breast to lip, / And all it's rest confoundeth." In his edition of Lovelace's poems Hazlitt notes that this poem bears some resemblance to Meleager's, "Playing at Hearts" which has love as a tennis player.<sup>358</sup> Anacreon also uses a similar image in a fragment that reduces passion to a game played out of boredom: "Blond Love has aimed and hit me squarely / With his little crimson ball."<sup>359</sup> The sense of life as a pastime without meaning or purpose is strong in this as in the Cavalier poets' adaptations of the theme, but Lovelace adds an unusually naturalistic element of cruelty. In "Love Inthron'd" Lovelace describes Cupid as "whipping Hearts like Gigs" and in the fourth stanza of "A Loose Saraband" the heart has become another toy:

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<sup>357</sup> From *The Underwood*, in *Ben Jonson*, ed. Ian Donaldson (Oxford Authors series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 314.

<sup>358</sup> *Lucasta. The Poems of Richard Lovelace, Esq.*, ed., W. Carew Hazlitt (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), p. xxxv.

Then as a Top he sets it up,  
And pitifully whips it;  
Sometimes he cloathes it gay and fine,  
Then straight againe he strips it.

Sharon Seelig (in a brief commentary on the poem) finds these erotic torments, “emblematic”.<sup>360</sup> She writes: “The experiences of the captive lover’s heart partake both of medieval love allegory and of representations of the sufferings of Christ.” She also points out the intense and sensuous nature of the language as the poem continues to describe how the heart is healed by Lucasta, who washes it in her tears and wraps it in her hair. In the poem Cupid has bestowed the heart to his mother, Venus, who uses it as a pincushion. This repeated piercing is reminiscent of a Jesuit monogram containing a Latin poem in which Jesus continues to pierce a heart with arrows until Profane Love flies away.<sup>361</sup> “A Loose Saraband” also concludes with a defeat for Cupid. One night Venus places the heart near her breast:

There warme it gan to throb and bleed;  
She knew that smart and grieved;  
At length this poore condemned Heart  
With these rich drugges repreeved.

She washt the wound with a fresh teare,  
Which my Lucasta dropped,  
And in the sleeve-silke of her haire,  
'Twas hard bound up and wrapped.

There are now two female figures in the poem, Venus and Lucasta, though the succeeding stanzas make it hard to differentiate between them. Lovelace once again mixes Christian and pagan imagery. The story of Mary Magdalene washing Christ’s feet with her tears and drying them with her hair is combined with the image of Cupid tossing a ball from the *Greek Anthology*. The ointments used by Magdalene become an aromatic balsam distilled by Lucasta from her lover’s veins:

Then prest the Narde in ev’ry veine  
Which from her kisses trilled;

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<sup>359</sup> “Fragment 302”, quoted in W.R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 52.

<sup>360</sup> Sharon-Cadman Seelig, “My Curious Hand or Eye: The Wit of Richard Lovelace”, In Claude J Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 166.

<sup>361</sup> Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, op. cit., p. 152.

And with the balme heald all it's paine  
That from her hand distilled.

Lovelace has interestingly reversed the usual imagery of penetration. In Cleveland's "Fuscarra; or The Bee Errant" the bee's sting results in the secretion of a healing gum:

With *Spanish* pike, he broacht a pore,  
And so both made and heal'd the sore:  
For as in Gummy trees there's found  
A salve to issue at the wound,  
Of this her breach the like was true,  
Hence trickled out a balsam too.<sup>362</sup>

In "A Loose Saraband" it is the lover who suffers similar wounds and becomes feminised like the bleeding lactating Christ of medieval religious lyrics, flanked by the two Marys.<sup>363</sup> The image of the pierced sacred heart from Catholic iconography is combined with a childish ornamental Cupid from the classics and with the Renaissance discourse of the courtly lover.<sup>364</sup> Although the poem ends with an assurance of contentment the lover metonymically represented as a 'bleeding heart' has given up his identity – a comment perhaps on the more usual erosion of female identity in love lyrics:

But yet this heart avoyds me still,  
Will not by me be owned;  
But's fled to it's *Physitians* breast,  
There proudly sits enthroned.

The lover's heart placed in the woman's breast represents the paradox of love for the courtly lover who, like Adonis, flees love only to be destroyed and then metamorphosed. Adonis becomes a flower which Venus plucks and places in her breast. "Adonis is death thus fulfils his implicit longing, not only to refuse the adult role in lovemaking, but to shed entirely his separate self."<sup>365</sup> The poem ends with a peaceful resolution of love's conflict.

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<sup>362</sup> *The Poems of John Cleveland*, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>363</sup> Medieval religious texts can ask the female reader to imagine a mystical communion in which she plays the ardent suitor, anointing Christ's feet and licking his blood. See Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 54.

<sup>364</sup> Lovelace's method of incorporation and transformation of various sources is particularly evident here. This may be part of a process of "Anglicising" popery, but it can also be read as an attempt by Lovelace to insert the language of ecstatic devotion into the stale commonplaces of courtly love poetry.

<sup>365</sup> Susan Snyder, *Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 139.

The saraband Lovelace refers to was a gliding dance with exotic foreign associations, involving finger snapping and castanets.<sup>366</sup> Henrietta Maria is credited with changing its image from something bawdy to a musical form used to herald the appearance of the Queen herself as Divine Beauty. Lawes included only one *sarabande* in his *Royall Consort* written before 1635 but in the next two decades many more appeared.<sup>367</sup> Lovelace's first poem with that title may therefore be a form of courtly compliment to the Queen rather than to Lucasta. Willa Evans' examination of the musical score for this poem revealed a typical saraband pattern and she suggests that the title derives from Lawes and not from the poet.<sup>368</sup> Willa Evans also provides the detailed instructions from Playford's *The English Dancing Master* of 1652 on how the dance was conducted, yet she does not believe that Lovelace had the motions of the dance in mind when writing the poem. Nevertheless the rhythm and tone of this poem strongly suggests that the game of wooing with its intricate moves will, like the moves of the dance, or of a popular game, be repeated, and Cupid will continue to be spiteful and inconsistent from moment to moment. In "A Loose Saraband" Lucasta acts benevolently, but in a later poem Lovelace puts Lucasta into the role usually played by Cupid. "Lucasta Laughing" (122), is full of giddy, spiralling images and presents the world as a "Universal Ball" which is a source of amusement to Lucasta for its "ridiculous pain" and "merry misery". From love as a game and love as a ball it is only a small shift to woman as plaything:

My mistress is a tennis- ball  
                   Composed of leather fine.  
 She's often banged against the wall  
                   And stricken under-line.  
 But he that means to win her will  
 Must hit her in the hazard still.<sup>369</sup>

This, one of the most popular and imitated Interregnum lyrics, illustrates one of two patterns followed by Lovelace's poems to and about women. In a downward trajectory, which mirrors the Fall without the Redemption, desire leads to death or annihilation and beauty bears within it ugliness and decay. But love can also be

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<sup>366</sup> Skiles Howard, *The Politics of Courtly Dancing in Early Modern England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), p. 113.

<sup>367</sup> Christopher D.S. Field, "Consort Music I: Up to 1660" in Ian Spink, ed., *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain. Vol 3: The Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 230-32.

<sup>368</sup> Willa McClung Evans, "Lawes' and Lovelace's *Loose Saraband*", *PMLA*, 14 (1939), pp. 764-7.

circular and regenerative: a courtly social construct, an aristocratic game which can be repeated or even invented anew. Cupid is everywhere in flames, but he rises like the phoenix.

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<sup>369</sup>In Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., p. 199. This song is popular in manuscript and printed miscellanies and has variants such as, “My mistress is a shuttle-cock”, or “My mistress is a tinder box”.



## 4: “THE DEVIL’S LOOKING-GLASSE”: WOMAN AS MUSE

Lovelace is not a conventional poetic lover. The previous two chapters have established how he negotiates the illusory stability of early modern masculinity through the discourse of amatory lyrics. The poet flees the pleasing fetters of love; he is dissatisfied with the mutable nature of women; he treats love as a game with predictable moves; or he distances himself by blaming the “little excellence of hearts” for his predicament. This chapter continues to explore how Lovelace participates in, and contributes to a socio-literary culture in which women are regarded as texts that can be transformed into other texts. In the persona of the abject lover, Lovelace is annihilated either by Lucasta’s icy disdain or by the fire of her regard. The motif of obliteration, often linked with physical or intellectual starvation and with the political situation, recurs in Lovelace’s poems on women. As the observer and the dissector of women’s bodies the poet can pursue a meditation on the nature of his art, its relationship to physical beauty and its ability to unravel the surface deceptions practised by lovers on one another. In these poems Lovelace explores the limits of the early modern discourse about subjectivity and masculinity more insistently than the poets he is most often linked with, Carew and Suckling, who remain within the rhetoric of libertine poetry which had been popular at the Caroline court. The contemplation of women and of their particular arts (such as the use of cosmetics) is threatening to poets of all political and religious persuasions and at every level of literary merit. Lovelace’s solution, particularly in his first volume, is to construct a self which depends on his imaginative projection of desire: a constantly re-figured but consistently chaste Lucasta. She becomes a *means* of developing the artistic imagination rather than its *end*, and in the process she is not revealed but re-shadowed, not made vivid but erased.

Lovelace’s attempt to liberate himself from Petrarchan and masochistic torments of love elides Lucasta from the 1659 volume, so that eventually the poet ceases to address the “fair Murtheresse”. Other, less aristocratic and haughty women appear until Lovelace can directly commune with the Muses, without the need for an

intermediary. In the self-fashioning of a poet, love proves not to be a liberating spiritual force (as devotion to the King is), but a defining and constricting mode of being. Yet to escape the attentions of that “wilful boy”, Cupid, is also to negate the fragile self. As Lovelace puts it in “The Duell” (152): “Love drunk the other day, knockt at my brest, / But I, alas! was not within.”

In supplying himself with a female muse Lovelace follows the elegiac tradition, which demands that poets be faithful to the same woman throughout a single book of poetry. The muse is female, the practitioner is male. Lovelace expresses his adherence to this tradition by naming his collection of poems for print *Lucasta*: a homosocial contract between writer and reader over the feminised text.<sup>370</sup> Lovelace’s fellow poets may have written a significant proportion of poems to particular women (Waller to “Sacharissa”, Herrick to “Anthea”, Carew to “Celia”), but they did not name their collections of verse after them. In imitating the classical love poets Lovelace reassures the educated male coterie among his readers, and also implies that his material attains perfection of expression through more than his own skill. Greek poets frequently liked to assure themselves of the Muses’ sustaining power, whereas Latin poets soon moved to other metaphors for inspiration. Thus Tibullus calls on Nemesis, but Propertius explicitly states that his mistress inspires his genius. In the first elegy of his second book he answers an unspoken question about his ability to write by citing the lady’s silks, hair, music-making, nudity and conversation as the material out of which (from absolutely nothing) he can produce “grand Iliads”.<sup>371</sup>

In using *Lucasta* as a metaphor for his own poetic struggles, Lovelace reveals that the act of writing is an exercise in male control over the woman he is writing about. It is also an absorption of feminine qualities of imagination and creativity into the male persona. The muse is internalised. The chastity of *Lucasta* counters the volatility of other seductive but anxiety-inducing women to be found in the pages of amatory verse produced by Lovelace and his fellow poets. Writing of and to *Lucasta* allows Lovelace to take the masculine position of a specular interpreting subject rather than the feminine position of a disguised entity or text which requires interpretation, and whose hidden treasure awaits the poet’s pen to be valued and

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<sup>370</sup> The naming of books as women reinforces the moment of commodification in which the woman’s cultural standing is domesticated and enclosed. (See Lynette McGrath, *Subjectivity and Women’s Poetry in Early Modern England: Why On the Ridge Should She Desire to Go?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 42.)

<sup>371</sup> Propertius, *Elegies*, ed. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 116-7.

revealed to the world. As an anonymous epigram, “On Women”, in the 1640 poetical miscellany *Wit’s Recreations* puts it:

Women are books and men the readers be,  
In whom oft times they great Errata’s see;  
Here sometimes wee a blot, there wee espy  
A leafe misplac’d, at least a line awry.<sup>372</sup>

Lovelace is not so confident about his own powers of interpretation. A certain detachment in the poetry suggests that he is ultimately unsure about the possibility or even the desirability of penetrating beyond layers of artifice. He prefers to contemplate the hidden, and to leave the task of revelation to painters, or to the readers who must decode his meaning.

In “The Lady *A.L. My Asylum in a great extremity*” (62) Lovelace is typically diffident, imagining that his poetry is unequal to the task he has set himself:

So that when as my future daring Bayes  
Shall bow it selfe in Lawrels to her praise,  
To Crown her Conqu’ring Goodness and proclaime  
The due renowne and Glories of her Name;  
My Wit shall be so wretched and so poore,  
That ’stead of praying, I shal scandal her,  
And leave when with my purest Art I’ve done,  
Scarce the Designe of what she is begunne;

In this poem Lovelace betrays the anxieties he feels about work which is unfinished or which cannot embody the lady’s abstract qualities. Furthermore, he is concerned that the critical appreciation of others will not meet his own demanding standards: “Yet men shal send me home, admir’d, exact, / Proud that I could from Her so well detract.” In this poem the lady’s virtuous qualities can defeat the poet, but an unworthy woman can wither masculinity at its core.

Lovelace begins “To my Lady H. Ode” (95), by praising the woman’s radiance but finishes:

Lovers beware! A certaine, double harme  
Waits your proud hopes, her lookes al killing charm  
Guarded by her as true Victorious Arme.

Thus with her Eyes brave *TAMYRIS* spake dread,

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<sup>372</sup> “On Women”, no. 116 in *Wits Recreations. Selected from the Finest Fancies of Moderne Muses (with a Thousand Outlandish Proverbs)* (London: 1640).

Which when the Kings dull Breast not entered,  
Finding she could not looke, she strook him dead.

The aristocratic lady is compared with a diamond of significant size and clarity and Lovelace opens the poem with a request to the judges in “Loves Treasury”, to choose between these two properties, but finds that the woman’s brightness is overwhelming: “Ah she shines too much!” The “Lady H” is not the easily picked flower or the soft animal of many other Cavalier love lyrics, but an inanimate object that serves to frustrate erotic desire. In the first two stanzas of the poem she takes on the usually masculine attributes of hardness and clarity. She turns her potential lover to stone because she herself is stone. The woman’s fixity represents both her immovable chastity and the gods’ punishment of sexuality.<sup>373</sup> The sub-text of this poem is the story of Medusa (who appears in Ovid, Petrarch and Spenser), but not necessarily a narrative of male victory over dangerous and destructive women.<sup>374</sup> In some Italian Renaissance writing Medusa embodies artful eloquence; she is the power of language to strike an opponent dumb.<sup>375</sup> Lovelace acknowledges that women can inspire but also inhibit his poetry. A fragile masculinity depends on being the see-er not the seen, the writer not the subject, the painter not the sitter. In Lovelace’s poem, as in the myth of Medusa, the victim is male. The poems discussed in this chapter erase the female viewer and lover as they suppress the notion of the female artist. The male delineator also defines the woman as beautiful or as ugly, and the former quality is always associated with light – that illumination which contains harmony, order and proportion, as the best poems do. Lovelace even draws attention to the Latin roots of Lucasta’s name (*lux casta*) – when he calls her “chaste light” (77). The threat posed by woman can, however, be countered by another visual objectification, that of the woman framed in a poem or in a painting. Actaeon’s eventual dismemberment by his own hounds is often deflected in Cavalier love poetry by the fragmentation of the woman into discrete bodily parts which can be admired (as in Carew’s “The Complement”) or derided (as in Suckling’s “The Deformed Mistress”). The woman as

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<sup>373</sup> See the discussion of the Medusa figure in Dorothy Stephens, *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative: Conditional Pleasure from Spenser to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 80-5.

<sup>374</sup> In Ovid, Perseus acts as Pallas’s agent and surrenders to her the Gorgon’s head which she then wears on her armour. The power of Medusa is essentially a militant female power.

<sup>375</sup> This is discussed (with reference to Jonson’s *Masque of Queens*) in Stephen Orgel, “Jonson and the Amazons”, in Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus, eds., *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 130.

commodity is further itemised into woman as consumer of gloves, girdles, fans and rings, in a catalogue which ensures that eventually the woman herself disappears. It is typical of European poetry of the mid-century that “The beloved herself often ceases to be a woman and becomes a picture, as her actions and physical attributes however small... are isolated and transformed (her needle becomes an arrow, her freckles love’s hiding-places) into elegant vignette.”<sup>376</sup>

Such vignettes – sometimes grotesque and absurd, sometimes erotic – form a major part of Lovelace’s amatory verse, while the dialectic of what is hidden or shadowed and what is apparent, continues to engage him and to provide his poems with a “garment of style”<sup>377</sup> The relation between apparel and language was a Renaissance commonplace. Highly rhetorical language may be compared with gaudy apparel, and figurative language is linked to the feminine for its capacity to mislead and misrepresent.<sup>378</sup> Nevertheless, an insistence on the transparency of both language and clothes as signifying media prevailed alongside a corresponding anxiety about misrepresentation. This anxiety often focuses on the deceitfulness of painted women, a trope which finds expression among writers of diverse political and religious opinions and resounds in Pope’s fulminations on beauty’s armaments, “Puffs, powders, patches.”<sup>379</sup>

Lovelace evades the real presence of women in his verse, but he comes closest to being specific about his poetic practice when he has metaphorically stripped the objects of his contemplation. This equivalence of woman, clothing and poem is acknowledged in several of the commendatory verses that appeared in the 1649 *Lucasta*. Norris Jephson’s opens:

How humble is thy Muse (Deare) that can daign  
Such servants as my pen to entertaine?  
When all the sonnes of wit glory to be  
Clad in thy Muses gallant livery? (3)

W. Rudyard is more explicit:

I reade you like my Mistresse, and discry

<sup>376</sup> J.P. Hill and E. Caracciolo-Trejo, eds., *Baroque Poetry* (London: Dent, 1975), p. xiii.

<sup>377</sup> See Rosamond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery: Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth-Century Critics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1947), pp. 61-79.

<sup>378</sup> Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 152.

<sup>379</sup> Alexander Pope, “The Rape of the Lock”, ll. 138-9.

In every line the quicknesse of her eye,  
Her smoothnesse in each syllable, her grace  
To marshall ev'ry word in the right place. (6)

Rudyard reveals an understanding of his friend's poetic practice: the use of a mistress denuded of human qualities to furnish material for a rhyme.

In his posthumous volume Lovelace makes an interesting statement in this regard in a short "Song" (123). He remarks conventionally that the woman has captivated him through "her thin transparent lawn", but suggests that *her* mind cannot be so easily trapped in a tissue of fine garments. Ostensibly advising the reader that a gaudy gilded exterior is nothing, the poem's speaker proposes a transformation for the male gazer that requires the reflection and appropriation of the woman's entire being:

Be truly fine then, and your self dress  
In her fair Souls immac'late glass:  
Then by reflection you may have the bliss  
Perhaps to see what a True fineness is;  
When all your Gawderies will fit  
Those only that are poor in wit:  
She that a *cliquant* outside doth adore,  
Dotes on a gilded *Statue* and no more.

In the second stanza the lover becomes a true reflection of the purity of his mistress and in this way worthy of her. A poet with no inner virtue is an empty monument, but his choice of a mistress will determine how "fine" he can become.

An awareness of Lovelace's reliance on the female form and its coverings is indicated by Marvell in his commendatory poem to Lovelace's first volume, though the tribute is, as Paulina Palmer suggests, equivocal.<sup>380</sup> While praising Lovelace's military and amorous exploits Marvell parodies various poses adopted by Lovelace in the love lyrics. When Lovelace, described in his own terms as the ladies' "deare" (9), is endangered by the times and by the critics, the response is immediate: "they all in mutiny though yet undrest / Sally'd and would in his defence contest." Other Caroline poets also exhibit an interest in the interplay of flesh and coverings. Herrick often focuses on Julia's flowing silks but does not seek to denude her of them; Suckling unclothes his women without any ceremony. Writing on Lady Carlyle walking in Hampton-Court garden Suckling presents the poem as a dialogue between himself and

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<sup>380</sup> Paulina Palmer, "Lovelace's Treatment of Some Marinesque Motifs", *Comparative Literature*, 29 (1977), pp. 300-12.

Carew. As the woman, unaware of her admirers, takes a stroll, Suckling's thoughts roam beneath the surface:

Alas! Tom, I am flesh and blood,  
And was consulting how I could  
In spite of masks and hoods descry  
The parts deni'd unto the eye;  
I was undoing all she wore,  
And had she walkt but one turn more,  
Eve in her first state had not been  
More naked, or more plainly seen.<sup>381</sup>

The relationship between writing poetry and revealing what lies beneath a fashionable surface is a constant theme of mid-century lyric, but it is especially congenial to Lovelace with his interest in clouds, shadows and textures. The poet focuses on veils and masks, and out of this fashions his own covering: a song. Despite his awareness of Graeco-Roman genres Lovelace never produced a formal statement of poetic method or intent, a *recusatio*, but it is possible to borrow one for him from Yeats 1914 volume *Responsibilities*.<sup>382</sup>

I made my song a coat  
Covered with embroideries  
Out of old mythologies  
From heel to throat;  
But the fools caught it,  
Wore it in the world's eyes  
As though they'd wrought it.  
Song, let them take it,  
For there's more enterprise  
In walking Naked.

"A Coat", illustrates the longevity of Renaissance poetic concerns with language as clothing, and the relation of language to the state of the poet's "inner furnishings", to external ornamentation and to a determination to restore poetry to its ancient state of purity — a theme of Jonson's also echoing in Lovelace. Yeats' poem contains an element characteristic of Lovelace's amatory verse: the manipulation of the flesh/clothes conceit to explore the shaping of personal and poetic identity. In a commendatory poem which appeared the year of his death, Lovelace comments on the literary efforts of his friend John Hall in these very terms: "These Sovereign leaves

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<sup>381</sup> *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, ed. Thomas Clayton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.31.

<sup>382</sup> *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 42.

thou left'st us are become / *Sear clothes* against all Times Infection.” (191) Yeats writes, “I made my song a coat”: Lovelace’s career illustrates how he increasingly makes of his songs a clothing for himself, to replace the courtly identity of which historical events had stripped him. At the end he has nothing but the metaphorical nourishment of the muses to sustain him, and to maintain a link with that scattered pre-war mob of gentlemen poets who lived through the Interregnum.

#### 4. 1. “Truth and the Graces best when naked are”: reading women

The problems in interpreting women, whether clothed or unclothed, emerge in Lovelace’s encounter with a supposed prostitute in the poem known as “La Bella Bona Roba”:

I Cannot tell who loves the Skeleton  
Of a poor Marmoset, nought but boan, boan.  
Give me a nakednesse with her clothes on.

Such whose white-sattin upper coat of skin,  
Cut upon Velvet rich Incarnadin,  
Ha’s yet a Body (and of Flesh) within.

Sure it is meant good Husbandry in men,  
Who do incorporate with Aëry leane,  
T’repair their sides, and get their Ribb agen.

Hard hap unto that Huntsman that Decress  
Fat joys for all his swet, when as he sees,  
After his ’Say, nought but his Keepers Fees.

Then Love I beg, when next thou tak’st thy Bow,  
Thy angry shafts, and doth Heart-chasing go,  
Passe *Rascall Deare*, strike me the largest Doe. (96)

The poem’s title may be misleading, since in the 1649 *Lucasta* the Italian phrase heads the previous poem, “To My Lady H.” The term *bona roba* appears to have been used in reference to a woman of any class willing to provide sexual favours – not necessarily for money.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> “Bona Roba”, according to Wilkinson, was a common term for a harlot, and this meaning has attached itself to the poem as it is echoed by the “marmoset” of the first stanza, a colloquial term for a promiscuous or amoral woman. There is a reference to “bona roba” in *2Henry IV*, III. ii. 23: “And I may say to you wee knew where the *Bona-Roba*’s were, and had the best of them all at commandment”. Wilkinson admits that the poem as printed in 1649 was untitled, and that the phrase headed a previous poem, subtitled “To my Lady H. Ode”. The Italian title may be an allusion to one of the Baroque Italian poets Lovelace was familiar with. Hazlitt follows *Lucasta* 1649 by retaining the



Lovelace makes an initial statement disparaging both the thinness and the nudity of the woman before him.<sup>384</sup> The speaker's complaint is that the flesh of the woman inadequately conceals her skeleton. The denotative meaning of *bona roba* is fine garments, but the speaker in the poem expresses a distinct preference for coverings that are rich, sensual and fleshy. This is evident in the tone of disappointment, if not rejection, in the opening query: none of the poet's acquaintance will be attracted by the woman, so why is she offering herself? In an extended note on this poem Marius Bewley argues that Lovelace is asking for a physical love "that doesn't end with decay and death – that has no skeleton within, but which offers profounder fulfilment ... triumphing over the *memento mori* of the opening figure."<sup>385</sup> It is also possible, however, to read the opening stanza as a rejection of spirituality or any sort of refined love and a simple demand for a satisfyingly plump woman who carries no reminders of death and has no interest in the other-worldly. In a Baroque poem by Auvray, "Contre Une Dame Trop Maigre", the speaker describes an uncomfortable encounter with a skinny woman and complains that her hips are like razors and her body like a string of rosary beads.<sup>386</sup> (It is possible that this poem is an unrecognised source for Lovelace's, since the opening line "Non, je ne l'ayme point ceste carcasse d'os," reads "No, I do not love this carcass of bones any more.") In Lovelace's poem the connection between an excess of spiritual concerns and an unattractive thinness is clear. Suckling voices a similar concern more simply — fleshly pleasure conceals only death and sin:

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title for the "Ode" and adds a note: "This word, though generally used in a bad sense by early writers, does not seem to bear in the present any offensive meaning. The late editors of Nares quote a passage from one of Cowley's *Essays*, in which that writer seems to imply by the term merely a fine woman." I have found three other contemporary uses of the term. In a poem listing the pleasures of country as opposed to city life, by Charles Cotton, the sixth stanza of "To My Friend Mr John Anderson. From the Country" asks for the provision of music and mirth: "And, when wee want a Match, for Sisley call / A roba bona." (The notes define this phrase with another quote "as we say good stuffe, that is a good wholesome plum-cheeked wench" from Florio's *Queen Anna's New World of Words*). See *Poems of Charles Cotton*, ed. John Buxton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 47. An anonymous poem, "The Lowse's Peregrination" (in *Musarum Deliciae or, The Muses Recreation By Sr J.M. and Ja:S.* (London: 1655), pp. 30-32), describes the louse behind left behind by a Lord in a bordello: "Where lecherous passages I did discover, / Betwixt *Bonna Roba*, and *Diego* her lover." John Aubrey, in referring to the loose morals of Venetia Digby, says she was "much inclined to a Bona Roba (near altogether)". Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. O.L. Dick (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), p.101.

<sup>384</sup> It seems mistaken of Sharon Seelig to argue that Lovelace prefers a woman with little meat on her bones. See Sharon-Cadman Seelig, "My Curious Hand or Eye: The Wit of Richard Lovelace", in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 153.

<sup>385</sup> Marius Bewley, *Masks and Mirrors: Essays in Criticism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 74.

<sup>386</sup> Hill and Caracciolo-Trejo, eds., *Baroque Poetry*, op. cit., pp. 109-10.

If I gaze now, 'tis but to see  
 What manner of deaths-head 'twill be,  
     When it is free  
 From that fresh upper skin,  
 The gazers Joy, and sin.<sup>387</sup>

A different aspect of the fat/lean antithesis in “La Bella Bona Roba” which has not received attention is the implication that the woman’s virtue, the value which the keeper “assays”, is nevertheless as thin as her body. The frailty of all women is implied in the Biblical reference to Eve as Adam’s rib in the third stanza. Adding Plato’s version of the creation of the species, the woman is an unnecessary adjunct to the self-sufficient hermaphrodite who initially walked in the Garden of Eden. Lovelace uses the biblical “flesh”, found so often in the misogynist language of St Paul. He rejects, for the woman, any duality between the soul and the body as one perfectly expresses the other. Identity is problematically located in the poet’s unmediated perception, but his interest is in the layers of skin, blood, flesh and bone the poet peels back. Despite using the conventional flesh/clothes conceit, Lovelace ignores the Christian concept that the body encloses the soul and that the two as in Marvell’s “A Dialogue between the Soul and Body,” can conflict. The speaker in “La Bella Bona Roba” demands only bodily contact, and in sharp contrast with the traces of Neoplatonic and Hermetic doctrine found in the poems of valediction rejects any communication on another level. His response to the “bona roba” is the wish literally to consume her. The dismissal of dualist anthropology makes it difficult to read this poem as a conventional seventeenth-century *ars moriendi* in which the eventual decay of the body is contemplated in the emblematic skeleton. That these questions were still of interest in the mid-seventeenth century is indicated by a short poem by the Duchess of Newcastle which provides an interesting counterpoint to Lovelace.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> *The Works of Sir John Suckling* op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>388</sup> “The Soul’s Garment” appeared in print in 1653:  
     Great Nature clothes the soul, which is but thin,  
     With fleshly garments, which the Fates do spin;  
     And when these garments are grown old and bare,  
     With sickness torn, Death takes them off with care,  
     And folds them up in peace and quiet rest,  
     And lays them safe within an earthly chest:  
     Then scours them well and makes them sweet and clean,  
     Fit for the soul to wear those clothes again.

(In Norman Ault, ed., *Seventeenth Century Lyrics from the Original Texts*. (London: Longman, 1950), p. 288.)

The vexed questions of material continuity, of victory over decay through the eventual re-embodiment of the spirit are replaced in Lovelace by an architectural concern with surface and the structure that supports it. Smooth skin requires decent padding. More tellingly the woman is *nothing* but bone; like the comical animal she is initially synonymous with or the target for a carnivorous huntsman she becomes, she has no soul. Bones were an integral part in the debates of the early Christian fathers about the ontological separation of body and soul and the continuity of self after the disintegration of the flesh. Because of their resistance to decay the resurrected body was imagined as its constituent bones.<sup>389</sup> The woman whose body is close to this state and who provides the poem's controlling image is likely to be old. She is unable to provide the poet with the 'fat joys' he seeks. Plump young women are described as being the most desirable in many Interregnum erotic lyrics, and this poem concurs. Suckling refers to 'the fat and soft-skinned dame' in his poem on roving women discussed previously, and the bride in his "Ballad Upon a Wedding" is described as plump and juicy. Thomas Randolph demands: "Give me a Venus hardly yet fifteene, / Fresh, plump, and active",<sup>390</sup> as does Robert Heath: "I'll have a young plump amorous Queen, / Ripe though she be not yet fifteen."<sup>391</sup> In contrast John Cleveland imagines a young man objecting to an old woman who is courting him: "I love to weare clothes that are flush, / Not prefacing old rags with plush ... / And just such discord would there be / Betwixt thy Skeleton and me."<sup>392</sup>

In "La Bella Bona Roba" Lovelace plays with the Renaissance theory of ornament, the notion of "style as a garment in the sense that the flesh is the soul's garment, its bodying forth or manifestation."<sup>393</sup> This clothing can be metaphorical ornament or the language of praise. But the thin ageing whore is unable to provide the poet with any inspiration; she has no paint or powder, nothing worth dissecting. There is something plain and colloquial about her, and Lovelace prefers a muse who

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<sup>389</sup> The debate on women having a soul continued into the twelfth century. In *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), Caroline Walker Bynum discusses the gradual acceptance of the idea of the human as a union of body and soul, and the contribution made by Aquinas, Ambrose, Origen and St Paul to the debates about the physical reconstitution of the body after the Last Judgement. Bones were an important aspect of this debate. (See pp. 30-81.)

<sup>390</sup> Thomas Randolph, *The Muses Looking-Glass (with Poems)* (London: 1638), p. 28.

<sup>391</sup> Robert Heath, *Occasional Poems* (London: 1650), p. 26.

<sup>392</sup> *The Poems of John Cleveland*, ed. Brian Morris and Eleanor Withington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 19.

<sup>393</sup> Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, op. cit., p. 61.

provides for something more alluring, fattened with old mythologies, decently clothed in classical allusion and reminiscent of the halcyon pre-war days.

Lovelace's poetic intentions waver in this poem. His censure of the "bona roba" moves through a Donnean metaphysical conceit, through medieval debates about the body, to a final stanza in *précieux* fashion which treats love as game for which the hunt provides a convenient allegory. The space of the wild was, in Greek legend, the domain of the goddess Artemis, yet within the masculine landscape of forests and mountains the woman/wife is pointedly absent. As a space between war and marriage the hunter's terrain becomes a place for marginal sexual behaviour; a liminal place where conventional relations are suspended and where gifts of game animals are exchanged for sexual favours. In Lovelace's poem, dissatisfaction is expressed at the division of the spoils between the male participants. The taking of plunder by both sides in the conflict was becoming an issue; as the Royalist cause suffered defeat, and the parks in which deer were hunted were denuded of forests and game the Puritans become emblematic of a devouring force that nevertheless remained "lean".<sup>394</sup>

In "La Bella Bona Roba" it is the female who has been hunted, but the metaphor of love as chase is multivalent. In three of Suckling's poems in which the link is made it is the male speaker who is hunted and then injured by Love's arrows. The persona in Lovelace's poem seeks to resist this fate by rejecting the thin woman and in a shift of tone in the final stanza apostrophises Cupid and requests "next time" that Cupid's arrow fall upon the "largest doe". The stasis of the opening lines is replaced by the active chase of a variety of "deer" – a homophone often exploited in Lovelace's poetry. The bargaining in the poem and the real dialogue, is not with the woman, but with a conveniently personified god of love. It is the impression left by this final stanza which leads Marius Bewley (in his correspondence with Donald Davie about this poem) to find in it a "radical criticism of the conventionally wanton ethics of love that prevailed at the earlier Stuart court".<sup>395</sup> It is, however, possible to consider this poem, as another sort of response to the changing conditions during the Civil Wars. The poem can be read as a comment on the necessity of maintaining the image of the Cavalier as leisured lover and active hunter, but also as an attempt to avoid both an encounter with the skull beneath the skin, and an acknowledgment of the material and cultural impoverishment suffered.

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<sup>394</sup> Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 224-5.

As we have seen in Lovelace's other erotic lyrics, the poem is literary rather than personal in context. "La Bella Bona Roba" has none of the naturalistic detail found in contemporary poems about prostitutes which delight in criticising their fashions or their spendthrift habits. "Upon the Naked Bedlams and Spotted Beasts at Covent Garden"<sup>396</sup> complains of nakedness "dappled" with black patches, whereas; "The Baseness of Whores" presents them as eager consumers of the latest fashions and foods:

Liquorish Sluts, they feast their guts,  
At Chuss's cost, like Princes.  
Amber Plumes and Mackarumes,  
And costly candy'd Quinces.  
Potato plump, supports the Rump,  
Eringo strengthens nature.  
Viper Wine, so heats the chine,  
They'le gender with a Satyr.<sup>397</sup>

In contrast Lovelace's lyric is mannered, aristocratic and detached. Lovelace's praise of nakedness may have been derived from Propertius (*Elegies* 1. 2 and 2. 15), from Martial, or from Sir John Denham's free re-working of an epigram extolling nudity.<sup>398</sup> The first third of Martial's epigram directly addresses the woman, complaining of her coyness:

Tu tenebris gaudes: me ludere teste lucerna  
Et juvat admissa rumpere luce latus.  
Fascia te tunicaeque obscuraque pallia celant:  
At mihi nulla satis nuda puella jacet.<sup>399</sup>

The Latin speaker is unhappy with a mistress who prefers night-time and shadow; he wishes to play in the light, and he also dislikes her tunic hiding her charms – no girl can ever be naked enough for him. Lovelace reverses the complaint summed up in these four lines. Denham's version of Martial provides an interesting contrast to

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<sup>395</sup> Bewley, *Masks and Mirrors*, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>396</sup> In John Wardroper, *Love and Drollery* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 146-7.

<sup>397</sup> In *Choyce Drollery. Songs and Sonnets* (London: 1656), pp. 90-1.

<sup>398</sup> Martial was as popular as Ovid among the Caroline poets, and had been a great influence on Jonson. Lovelace was familiar with Martial and translations of five of Martial's epigrams were appended to the posthumous volume. "La Bella Bona Roba" shows all the poetic influence bequeathed to the seventeenth century by this Latin poet: "intense verbal cleverness, allusions, silence, paradoxes." See R.M. Ogilvie, *Latin and Greek: A History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 22.

<sup>399</sup> Martial, *The Epigrams*, trans., James Michie (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), pp. 170-1.

Lovelace's reluctance to strip all illusion from the subjects of his voyeuristic probings:

Why so many Bolts and Locks,  
Coats and Smocks,  
And those Drawers with a Pox?  
I could wish, could Nature make it,  
Nakedness, Nakedness  
It self were naked.<sup>400</sup>

This theme is revisited by Lovelace in "The Fair Begger". The poem opens, typically, with a linguistic paradox:

Comanding Asker, if it be  
Pity that you faine would have,  
Then I turn Begger unto thee,  
And aske the thing that thou dost crave;  
I will suffice thy hungry need  
So thou wilt but my fancy feed.

The poem turns on the antithesis of flesh and clothes: that which is deliberately revealed on the surface, and that which is hidden like treasure. The poet addresses a woman whose poverty cannot disguise her beauty, and critics have assumed the woman to be a prostitute. The beggar of the title, however, has none of the conventional attributes of the seventeenth-century prostitute, who was expected to advertise her wares by flamboyant and extravagant costume, as one anonymous poet summarises: "Truth to say, Paint and Array, / Makes them so highly prized."<sup>401</sup> Similarly, "You that use public trade must hang out signs; / Bushes, you think, will vend your naughty wines," an observer of London street life writes in "Upon the Naked Bedlams and Spotted Beasts at Covent Garden".<sup>402</sup> Lovelace is aware of contemporary promotion: "At th'Barrell's head there shines the Vine, / There only relishes the Wine," he writes in the third stanza. In the seventeenth century a bush was the sign indicating a wine-shop.

Apparel was expected to be a transparent sign system, and Lovelace's beggar is only "commanding" in the opening of the poem in that she creates uncertainty by

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<sup>400</sup> Printed in Peter Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 58-9.

<sup>401</sup> "The Baseness of Whores", in *Choyce Drollery* op. cit.

<sup>402</sup> This poem appeared in the 1655 *Wit's Interpreter* and in the *Musarum Deliciae* of the same year. It also exists in manuscript. I have quoted from the version printed in John Wardroper, *Love and Drollery*, op. cit., pp. 146-7.

confusing the association between virtue and rags, vice and luxury. In the second stanza the speaker comments on the appearance of the woman who has asked him for alms:

In all ill yeares, wa'st ever knowne,  
On so much beauty such a dearth?  
Which in that thrice-bequeathed gowne  
Lookes like the Sun Eclipst with Earth,  
Like Gold in Canvas, or with dirt  
Unsoyled Ermins close begirt.

Lovelace shares the same concerns about concealment as the anonymous poet who writes, "On a Ladye conceal in a Veile". The speaker in this poem meditates, "And make imagination tell, / Th wealth that can in Beauty Dwell / Thus yee highly valued ore / Earth's darke exchequer keeps in store".<sup>403</sup> In Lovelace's poem the poverty of the woman's clothing, which clouds rather than displays her beauty, allows the poet his preferred interpretative indirection. If she denies herself to him she will be starving her body not simply of food but of sexual satisfaction. The poet assures her that his covering of her will be equivalent to clothing "above all price" and "both our wants supplied shall be". The male's intellectual needs are placed higher than the woman's basic desires, and they are expressed in metaphors of exploitation. The poet literally feasts on the woman, who is conventionally silent while he congratulates himself on being able to discern the treasure beneath the dirt.

The analogies between sex, nourishment, clothing and poetry are perhaps more bluntly stated in Lovelace's "On Sanazar's being honoured" (192). This bitter diatribe against hack-writers and pot-poets argues that nothing but starvation is to be gained from attempting an epic. The tone of the poem is one of lived experience contrasted with the glory of a privileged youth. Lovelace's satire advises a potential poet to write amatory rather than heroic verse and to clothe his mistress in his own language, "as poor and tattered as her own". These are Lovelace's precepts:

You that do suck for thirst your black quil's blood,  
And chaw your labour'd papers for your food,  
I will inform you how and what to praise,  
Then skin y' in Satin as young Lovelace plaies.  
Beware, as you would your fierce guests, your lice,  
To strip the cloath of gold from cherish'd vice;

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<sup>403</sup> Bod. MS Ash. 47, f. 51, poem no 84.

Rather stand off with awe and reverend fear,  
 Hang a poetick pendant in her Ear.  
 Court her as her adorers do their glass,  
 Though that as much of a true substance has,  
 Whilst all the gall from your wild ink you drain,  
 The beauteous Sweets of Vertues Cheeks to stain;  
 And in your Livery let her be known,  
 As poor and tattered as in her own. (61-74)

In both this poem and “The Faire Begger” the speaker differentiates himself from those whose perceptions are distracted by fashion. “Fooles dote on sattin motions lac’d” writes Lovelace in the third stanza, and “Cheape then are pearle-imbroideries” in the fifth. Like Jonson in “The Picture of the Body”, who claims that the lady’s beauty “Needs nought to cloath it but the ayre”, Lovelace rejects the fripperies which conceal rather than enhance virtue and loveliness. Lovelace’s rejection of ornamentation participates in a common convention: the castigation of females who dressed seductively. It also establishes the anxiety caused by women, whose arts, such as fine dressing, are regarded as deceptive rather than creative. (Lovelace maintains this attitude in his poems to painters: a theme revisited in the next chapter.) This attitude also momentarily links Cavalier and Quaker. In his journal George Fox condemns both males and females who dress colourfully and attract the “lust of the eye”. In the process he gives a description of contemporary fashion in 1654:

Likewise ye women haveinge their gold, their spots on their faces, noses, cheekes, foreheads, haveinge their rings on their fingers, wareinge Gold, haveinge their cuffes dubell under and about like unto a butcher with whit sleeves haveinge their ribons tyed about their hands and three or fower Gold laces about their Clothes...<sup>404</sup>

The females who outrage the leader of the Quaker movement have put their gold on show, but the wealth of Lovelace’s beggar is “eclipt” beneath dirt and “canvas”. The voyeuristic digging for treasure of “The Scrutinie” recurs, together with anxiety about the ability of the female to deceive the male gaze. Renaissance and Stuart conduct manuals tended to castigate women who showed pleasure in conspicuous consumption and resorted to using paint and powder. It was not only Puritan, but also Cavalier, poets who take a uniform stance in condemning such females. “Dr Smiths Ballet,” published in 1655, has sixteen vituperative verses condemning women’s

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<sup>404</sup> *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. Norman Penney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 176.



vanity.<sup>405</sup> Paint and fine clothes are the primary target of indignation, but most annoying is:

Their Faces are besmear'd and pierc'd,  
With severall sorts of Patches,  
As if some Cats their skin had flead  
With Scarres, half Moons and Notches.

In “Upon the Naked Bedlams and Spotted Beasts at Covent Garden”, the anonymous poet complains at length about this fashion for black spots painted or stuck onto the faces of prostitutes. Before its devolution the Caroline court had promoted a fashion among aristocratic ladies for wearing facial patches of silk or velvet cut into diamonds and hearts, and this trend had, been taken up enthusiastically by women of a lower social order. The poem describing these women complains further about a “face powdered ermine” and judges that this is a case of “over-garnishing” the dish although it admits that cosmetics may attract men. The condemnation of women who use artificial means of attraction has a long literary pedigree.<sup>406</sup>

Lovelace’s “A Black Patch on Lucasta’s Face” (129) absolves his muse from such criticism. The speaker in the poem, closely observing Lucasta, supposes that a “Court Fly, /Presum’d so neer her Eye: / When ’twas the ’industrious Bee / Mistook her glorious Face for Paradice.” The nomadic, individualistic bee had symbolised, in classical poetry, the flight of inspiration and the gathering of literary spoils. In the seventeenth century bees came to represent monarchical order and chaste conduct so the bee’s death in Lucasta’s presence casts some doubts on to her purity. The bee draws too close to Lucasta, and the holy flames of her hair cause it to expire:

And that black marble Tablet there  
So neer her either Sphere,  
Was plac’d; nor foyl, nor Ornament,  
But the sweet little Bees large Monument.

Lucasta’s patch is not decorative but a testimony to the destructive and natural power of her beauty, which needs no artificial additions, or dark art. As Robert Heath puts it,

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<sup>405</sup> In *Musarum Deliciae or, The Muses Recreation*, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>406</sup> Drayton, Nashe and Marston had all repudiated cosmetics. Thomas Tuke, a supporter of Charles I who suffered sequestration and imprisonment for his loyalty, had written *A Treatise against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women...Whereunto is added The Picture of a Picture, or, the Character of a Painted Woman*. A decorated and painted face is, according to Tuke, “the devil’s looking-glasse”. See “New Essays: Meditations and Vowes”, in *The Seventeenth-Century Resolve*, ed. John. L. Lievsay (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1980), pp. 47-63.

“Let meaner beauties patch their painted faces / Studying the black art of complexion”.<sup>407</sup> The presumption, and the fate of the bee, is that of the lover who desires too much. The same fear of consuming women is expressed in Thomas Cranley’s purportedly penitential answers of “The reformed Amanda” written in 1636.<sup>408</sup> This courtesan is no supplicant; unlike the fair beggar in Lovelace’s poem she has appropriated a degree of real power. Through disease she can blot out family lines, and meanwhile she can reduce her conquests financially while parading her own gains:

I shifted gallants from their robes to rags  
And chang’d their plush into a Countrey frize,  
...  
So hath my luxury consum’d to nothing  
Rich heires, and made them steale for meat, and clothing.  
How many men have perisht by my fault:  
...  
Nor have I hoarded treasure for my issue,  
But brav’d it out in Jewels, and in Gold,  
In rich Embroider’d Silkes, and cloth of Tissue.

Amanda enjoys flouting her ability to purchase fashionable garments. There is no intimation that she wishes, like Lovelace’s beggar, to conceal any metaphoric riches.

In “The Chronicle. A Ballad”, Abraham Cowley catalogues nearly twenty women with whom the speaker of the poem has been in love, breaking off in the middle:

But should I now to you relate,  
The Strength and riches of their *state*,  
The *Powder*, *Patches* and the *Pins*,  
The *Ribbans*, *Jewels*, and the *Rings*,  
The *Lace*, the *Paint*, and *warlike things*,  
That make up all their *Magazines*:<sup>409</sup>

This light-hearted narrative glosses over the main objections to painted women: that this tampering with the given state of things may be effective but is unnatural.

Lovelace is unusual in not having written the disguised misogynist poem his contemporaries did on the topic, and which found favour in early printed anthologies

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<sup>407</sup> “On a black mole on Clarastella’s faire cheek”, in *Clarastella (1650)* by Robert Heath, ed. Frederick H. Candelaria (Gainesville: Scholars’ Facsimiles, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>408</sup> Thomas Cranley, *Amanda: Or, the Reformed Whore* (London: 1636), pp. 69-74.

<sup>409</sup> In Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 70-3.

of poetry. Brome's plea for avoiding wasteful expenditure on "oyles and paint and druggs" in his "To a Painted Lady" is typical.<sup>410</sup> The poem, like many other Cavalier love lyrics, struggles with the courtly mode of much pre-war versifying. These lyrics express a disturbing cultural inversion. Only the courtesans have taken to heart the physical standards of the Petrarchan spectrum: the red, the white, the coral; the rubies and the pearls of conventional erotic idealism. In doing so they demonstrate the impossibility both of the lover's demands and of his poetic praise. To meet the literal requirements set out in so much amatory verse, including Lovelace's, that facial and bodily parts become immutable jewels, flowers, precious furs, or Arabian gums, it is necessary for the woman to use all the artifice available. In doing so she positions herself as a whore, and unworthy of the praise and persuasion directed at ideal mistresses. The third and final stanza of Brome's poem makes paradoxical male demands explicit:

Nature her self, her own work does  
And hates all needless arts,  
And all your artificial showes  
Disgrace your Nat'ral parts.  
You're flesh and blood and so are we,  
Let flesh and blood alone,  
To Love all compounds hateful be.  
Give me the pure or none.

Lovelace's fair beggar appears closer to this desired state of nature than the painted and expensive ladies of Covent Garden, yet she also appears less naturalistic in the literary sense. Both Sidney and Jonson had personified poetry as a woman needing attention, and like Lovelace's beggar, needing to be stripped of rags and embraced.<sup>411</sup> Poetry's function, as theorised by Jonson in *Timer*, involves revelation of vice or virtue and the conventional view is that vice hides behind luxury. Lovelace subscribes to this in his satire on Sanazaro when he advises poets, "Beware, as you would your fierce guests, your lice, / To strip the cloath of Gold from cherish'd vice" (194). In his poem on the fair beggar, however, Lovelace plays with this dialectic of surface and essence by intimating that vice can possibly be hidden in poor clothing, and that his muse need not always be the unattainable aristocratic Lucasta. The narrator ignores

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<sup>410</sup> Alexander Brome, *Poems*, ed. Roman R. Dubinski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 105-6.

<sup>411</sup> See Richard S. Peterson, *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 72-5.

the degraded aspects of the woman's appearance. He intends to taste the beggar's "whiter skin" to appease not his hunger but his thirst – a medieval metaphor for knowledge – which Lovelace turns into sexual knowledge in the third stanza as he appeals to the woman to disrobe. He makes a classical reference to the pagan pantheon and to the simplicity and innocence of a vanished Golden Age: "The Gods go naked in their blisse".

But Lovelace is also making an attempt to uncover real presences. In his epistle to Selden, Jonson praises literary clarity and links the idea of unadorned verity with the pagan figures of the three Graces: "Truth, and the Graces best, when naked are."<sup>412</sup> The Graces, three linked female figures, were originally portrayed naked to symbolise that they were free of deceit, but there arose a playful controversy about whether or not they should be clothed.<sup>413</sup> "The Fair Begger" gives us glimpses of both by imagining the flesh beneath the clothes. Lovelace's fair beggar can be linked with the Graces through the poem's focus on the three actions which, according to Seneca, intertwine the Graces: giving, receiving, and returning.<sup>414</sup> The speaker turns towards the woman and offers to feed her; she will in return quench his heat: "You'l give for Love, I Charity". He will return her kindness by enhancing her reputation among other men and by writing the poem. "I will suffice thy hungry need / So thou wilt but my Fancy feed" is echoed in the final lines of the poem: "Since all must judge you more unkinde; / I starve your body, you my minde." Lovelace's proposed exchange of poetry for beauty is not unique. Cowley's "The Given Love" echoes Lovelace in its demand:

Bestow thy *Beauty* then on me,  
*Freely*, as *Nature* gave't to *Thee*;  
 ...  
 And those my thankful *Muse* shall pay;  
 The *Body* in my verse enshrin'd,

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<sup>412</sup> "An Epistle to Master John Selden", in *Ben Jonson*, ed. Ian Donaldson (Oxford Authors series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 331. The whole of Lovelace's poem seems to play on public/private embodiments of virtue and vice, and to owe more to Jonson and his views on the poetic art than has been noted. Although vice is conventionally portrayed as luxuriously attired, Asper in Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* vows to "strip the ragged follies of the time / Naked as at their birth." Asper continues to imagine these follies lashed with a whip of steel and there may be an undercurrent of sadism in Lovelace's own unlayering of the fair beggar since if the woman addressed were a prostitute she would be liable to be stripped and whipped in Bridewell.

<sup>413</sup> See Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 30-1.

Shall grow *immortal* as thy *Mind*.<sup>415</sup>

Lovelace shifts the usual conceit of the languishing lover into a self reflexive meditation on the art of writing poetry. The speaker in his poem requires intellectual nourishment, in contrast with amorous beggars in Herrick or Carew.<sup>416</sup> Thomas Carew's "To A.L. *Perswasions to love*" has a male voice trying to persuade a woman to love him by arguing that the female giver benefits more from the exchange by gaining more contentment:

Then me the beggar; Oh then bee  
Kinde to your selfe if not to mee;  
Starve not yourselfe, because you may  
Thereby make me pine away.<sup>417</sup>

The woman is simultaneously a source of poetical and emotional nourishment, and a debilitating vampire. Such infantile anxieties and gendered expectations of feeding surface in Cowley's "Loves Ingratitude" where the poet has fed "Love" at his own breast, allowing him to suck his fill: "With *Idle thoughts* and *Poetrie!* / What ill returns do'st thou allow? / I *fed thee* then, and thou dost *sterve me* now."<sup>418</sup> Lovelace, however, finds the woman most useful as a stimulant for his imagination; she is more muse than prostitute. The structure of giving and receiving in the poem foregrounds the dominance of the male speaker in the exchange, but this does not imply that "The Faire Begger" is a seduction poem or a poorly argued "persuasion to love". It is in some ways more akin to the anti-fruition poems of the Caroline court such as Suckling's "Against Fruition [II]". In this poem, the speaker prefers to avoid the disappointment of sexual congress: "Like waking in a morning, when all night / Our fancy hath been fed with true delight."<sup>419</sup> Lovelace is more interested in the language with which he will clothe the woman's metaphorical nudity than in a passionate engagement with her. The gendered act of writing allows the poet to "cover" (a legal term) the passive female with his own words. In doing so he will not debase her

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<sup>415</sup> *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley, Volume 2: Poems (1656), Part I: The Mistress* ed. Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth and J. Robert King (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), p. 25.

<sup>416</sup> "Shall I a daily Begger be, / For loves sake asking almes of thee?" writes Herrick in "The Begger", *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), III. p. 51.

<sup>417</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 4. This could be yet another instance of Lovelace borrowing from Carew.

<sup>418</sup> "Loves Ingratitude", in *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>419</sup> *The Works of Sir John Suckling*, op. cit., p. 38.

coinage, her hidden gold, but add to her store by increasing her value as a medium of exchange. Lovelace may have known some of the works of Owen Feltham, who in his essay, “Of Poets and Poetrie”, makes it explicit that language “covers” the nakedness of truth:

’Tis but a play which makes words dance in the evennesse of a cadencie; yet without doubt, being a harmonie, it is neerrer to the mind than prose, for that it selfe is a harmonie in height. But the words being rather the drossy part, conceit I take to be the principall. And here, though it digresseth from from truth it flies above her, making her more rare by giving curious rayment to her nakednesse.<sup>420</sup>

The vocabulary (principal, dross, gold) links words, women, and money as does Lovelace’s poem. The woman circulates not as commodity but as a poetic currency and Lovelace has encountered her not on the London streets but in the Italian baroque poets with whom he was familiar. M.J. O’Regan traces the entire heritage of the poem through Quevedo, Achillini, Tristan and Malleville.<sup>421</sup> O’Regan, however, establishes the poem on a physical plane. The poet bargains with a woman whose interest for him is “neither intellectual nor spiritual”. Sharon Seelig’s analysis is similar: the male speaker is using sophistry to obtain sex.<sup>422</sup> For Manfred Weidhorn, “The Faire Begger” is “a seduction poem of a special kind” in which Lovelace “nicely confounds the male’s active role in sexual encounters with the giving of something to the beggar-lady.”<sup>423</sup> Although Lovelace asks the woman to “quench my heat” in the fourth stanza and in the fifth promises her, “Thou shalt be cloath’d above all prise, / If thou wilt promise me inbrac’t”, the poem ends with the speaker concerned about his potential *intellectual* dearth.

Orpheus suffered dismemberment at the hands of dancing women, and Lovelace attempts to avoid this symbolic fate by turning the masculine, specular gaze back onto women and on to articles which serve as a metonymy for body parts. Women can be destructive of both heroic and poetic identity, as we have seen in the previous two chapters. To counter this, the apparently adored mistress can be

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<sup>420</sup> Owen Feltham, “Of Poets and Poetrie”, in Lievsay, ed., *The Seventeenth-Century Resolve*, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>421</sup> M.J. O’Regan “The Fair Beggar – Decline of a Baroque Theme”, *Modern Language Review*, 55 (1960), pp. 188-99.

<sup>422</sup> Seelig, “My Curious Hand or Eye”, op. cit., pp. 162-3.

<sup>423</sup> Manfred Weidhorn, *Richard Lovelace* (New York: Twayne, 1970), p. 109.

displaced by a higher political loyalty, or she can be fragmented and re-assembled in a poem which reinscribes the lover's dominance.

#### 4. 2. "Their mistress glove, her ring, her fanne, her looking glass, her pantofle."

When Waller focuses on girdles or snakes that clasp his mistress he encloses her in his poem of praise.<sup>424</sup> The poet is both the animal, or the article of clothing that can closely embrace the woman, and also the painter and framer of the scene for other masculine eyes. Lovelace's approach is different: it is the layers of identity and their unravelling that interest him. In "Her Muffe" (128), Lovelace focuses the first three stanzas on a contemplation of Lucasta's covered hands, then moves to the beasts Lucasta has caused to be slaughtered, and in the final stanza abruptly shifts to the truly hidden parts of Lucasta's anatomy. This provides a poetic analogy for the inward virtue of women, laid open and displayed in the looking glass poems discussed in the next section. The poet here remains at a distance from that which is concealed, but hints at wildness underneath social convention. The woman's inaccessibility is both mocked and welcomed. The poem begins with a denial of any proposed objection by Lucasta to the interpretation he is making of her fashionable outfit:

'Twas not for some calm blessing to receive,  
Thou didst thy polish'd hands in shagg'd furs weave;  
It were no blessing thus obtain'd,  
Thou rather would'st a curse have gain'd,  
Then let thy warm driven snow be ever stain'd.

Not that you feared the discolo'ring cold,  
Might alchymize their Silver into Gold;  
Nor could your ten white Nuns so sin,  
That you should thus pennance them in  
Each in her course hair smock of Discipline.

Nor *Hero*-like, who on their crest still wore  
A Lyon, Panther, Leopard or a Bore,  
To look their Enemies in their Herse;  
Thou would'st thy hand should deeper pierce,  
And, in its softness rough, appear more fierce.

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<sup>424</sup> See "On a Girdle" and "On a Lady Playing with a Snake", in Edmund Waller, *Poems 1645* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), p. 95.

Lovelace's choice of a fashionable accessory as the topic of a poem is not unusual and had previously provoked Nashe's animus.<sup>425</sup> Such poems, however, tend to be paradoxical encomia as the qualities of the article worn, (the furs or the "coarse smock" in Lovelace's poem) transfer themselves to the qualities of the woman herself. Lucasta's sexuality is entangled with monstrosity, a common metamorphosis for sexually errant women. "A description of Women", for instance, links feminine physical and spiritual attributes to fabrics and furs.<sup>426</sup> Silk, satin, fustian, frieze, leather, canvas, and conny all feature. The final four lines move, like Lovelace's, inwards:

Or if in plainer terms  
Withall you would be dealt,  
Of *bever* are their tender thighs,  
Their things are made of felt.

As slang for the pudenda the term "muff" is little used in mid seventeenth-century poetry,<sup>427</sup> but it does occur as a symbol of sexual triumph in one of Davenant's pre-war masques.<sup>428</sup>

Lovelace's poem is more circumspect, but it mixes religious and profane images to present a devouring woman who is better viewed from a distance. The fifth stanza presents the poet as a "Lay-Lover" who is kept on the threshold. Nevertheless, his imagination wanders almost immediately beneath the surface of the muff, towards the "warm driven snow" of the lady's hands. Her polished fingers are imagined encased in coarse fabric, like a nun's penitential hair shirt. Lucasta's hands are both soft and rough and this provides an analogy for the way she treats her lover: "Thou would'st thy hand should deeper pierce, / And, in its softness rough, appear more fierce." These opposing qualities form part of the poem's dialectic: Lucasta is both warm and cold, she can be saint or beast, vulnerable and feminine, or heroic and

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<sup>425</sup> The section heading is taken from Nashe's comments on Secundus and on the wanton sort of poets that choose these topics. See *Joannes Secundus: The Latin Love Elegy in the Renaissance*, ed. Clifford Endres (Hamden: Archon Books, 1981), p. 215.

<sup>426</sup> "A Description of Women", in *Wit's Interpreter* (London: 1656), pp. 10-11.

<sup>427</sup> In *Fleeting Things: English Poets and Poems 1616-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 308-9, Gerald Hammond argues that Lovelace's use of "muff" is an early example of the slang use of the word. Thomas N. Corns calls the reference "crude and loutish" (*Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 248).

<sup>428</sup> A "grave formal Spanish Lover" is followed in the anti-masque by a jealous Italian, a giddy French, a dull Dutch and finally by: "A furious debauch'd English Lover, who in his habit striving to imitate his Neighbour (the Monsieur) still outdoes his vanity, which his accoutrement doth severally express,



masculine. Her hands can give or receive a “calm blessing” or roughly pierce the “shagg’d furs” in which they hide. Like the fair beggar, Lucasta cannot be easily deciphered from her coverings.

Lovelace is commenting on the role of an elaborate female costume in presenting, “a forbiddingly enclosed image to the world.”<sup>429</sup> The poet attempts to “read” Lucasta’s attire, and gives the reader a variety of potential interpretations for the muff. He is, however, also quick to reject the most obvious: that Lucasta has simply worn a muff from simple vanity, or expedience, to mitigate the “discolo’ring cold”. Lovelace’s use of heraldic terms suggests that the furs symbolise the crests of battles in which the woman has been victorious over a variety of dangerous wild animal, “Lyon, Panther, Leopard or a Bore” (which in Petrarch and Ovid are metamorphosed lovers)<sup>430</sup>. The poet is no longer the hunter, but the hunted and the violence involved reaches its height in the fourth and penultimate stanza where the only apostrophe to Lucasta occurs:

No, no, *Lucasta*, destiny Decreed  
That Beasts to thee a sacrifice should bleed,  
And strip themselves to make you gay;  
For ne’er yet Herald did display,  
A Coat, where *Sables* upon *Ermin* lay.

Lovelace uses heraldic language to point up impossibilities, argent on gold, sables on ermine. Lucasta will not be able to supply herself with a Yeatsian coat of song without the unpleasant side of artistic creativity, the necessary stripping of beast or lover, the concomitant artifice, violence and deception. The imagery of contrasting textures intensifies the identification of the woman with her clothing; the references to heraldry link love with ritualistic and violent activity, battle and hunting. Animals are sacrificed for the sake of fashion; women for the sake of poetry. The acts of reading and writing are by analogy heroic, but do not always conclude in victory. Lovelace’s poem ends with dissatisfaction and expresses a more complex imperative of desire:

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and he hangs in the right ear his Mistress Muffe, in the left her Shoo.” *The Works of Sir William Davenant* (1673) (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1968), p. 399.

<sup>429</sup> Hammond, *Fleeting Things*, op. cit., p. 309.

<sup>430</sup> The women who dismember Orpheus are described in Sandys’ translation of the *Metamorphoses* as wearing spotted skins. See Sandys, *Ovid’s Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologised, and Represented in Figures*, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 497.

one which perhaps moves away from the tradition of the Renaissance love lyric<sup>431</sup> towards the poetry of the Restoration:

But I, in my invention tough,  
Rate not this outward bliss enough,  
But still contemplate must the hidden Muffe.

Language is a skin which the poet or his mistress, can use as a defence or display; dark ink on white parchment, sables on ermine, to reveal or to obfuscate, leaving others to read and interpret and perhaps to penetrate.

In “The Muffe” Lovelace has stripped Lucasta for the purposes of his poem, while she has stripped beasts of their skins, and in doing so has taken on some of their qualities. A predatory female, however, is only a link in the chain of nature and is herself preyed upon. In an earlier poem, “Lucasta’s Fanne, With a Looking glasse in it” (51), Lovelace explores some potential metamorphoses of his muse:

Eastrich! Thou featherd Foole, and easie prey,  
That larger failes to thy broad Vessell needst;  
Snakes through thy gutter-neck hisse all the day,  
Then on thy I’ron Messe at supper feedst.

In this poem the focus is on a lady’s a mirror set in ostrich feathers, but at the poem’s completion Lucasta has herself become the ungainly bird plundered for its finery. The contradictions in a woman who is powerful yet still prey for the masculine gaze are embodied in the analogy with a bird which supposedly feeds on iron (or other metals) and whose indiscriminate voracity is often referred to, yet which is transformed into a frivolous accessory.<sup>432</sup> There is a tone of approbation evident in the opening lines, as the poet addresses not the lady, but the animal which has provided her with the fan: “Eastrich! Thou feathered Foole, and easie prey.” By the second stanza the bird has undergone a “transmigration” and is “Transform’d into a Bird of Paradise”.<sup>433</sup> By the

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<sup>431</sup> See Thomas N. Corns, “Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and Richard Lovelace”, in Corns, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry: Donne to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 200-21.

<sup>432</sup> A poem by Henry King, “Madam Gabrina, or the Ill-Favourd Choice”, admonishes a lover who has chosen a “Dragon” for his mistress: a woman so hard that the lover must enjoy getting contentment from hard objects, “As Estriches from Iron nutriment”. (*The Poems of Henry King*, ed. Margaret Crum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 144-5.)

<sup>433</sup> In “Lovelace: Some Unnoticed Allusions to Carew”, *Notes and Queries*, 14 (1967), p. 97, Paulina Palmer notes that the phrase has been borrowed from Carew, but finds the metaphor, a fly transformed, is lost in Lovelace’s poem. Lovelace’s poem, however, does not focus on the power of the woman’s presence to change the drab into the colourful, but rather on her vanity and on her place in nature’s predatory chain.

third stanza both woman and bird are expensive and artificial, even challenging nature's own colours:

Now doe thy Plumes for hiew and Luster vie  
With th' Arch of heav'n that triumphs o're past wet,  
And in a rich enamel'd pinion lye  
With Saphyres, Amethysts, and Opalls set.

The poem implies that the woman decked out in dyed feathers and jewels is herself easy prey; that she is, like the prostitutes in the previous section, too interested in conspicuous consumption, and that such a self-absorbed female will provide little inspiration for the lover or the poet.<sup>434</sup> Lucasta is using the fan not only to shield herself from the sun but also from her lover:

But whilst a plumy curtaine she doth draw,  
A Chrystall Mirror sparkles in the breast,  
In which her fresh aspect when as she saw,  
And then her Foe retired to the West.

In this Lovelace poem, the ostrich feathers enclose a mirror, and the mirror absorbs Lucasta's attention. This poem belongs to a long tradition of looking glass poems in which the mistress pays more attention to her reflection than to her lover, but which also engage with a gendered discourse of individuality and subjectivity. Lucasta appears to fidget with her fan throughout the day, perhaps reinforcing for contemporary readers the negative aspects associated with women looking in mirrors. (Some writers, Tertullian for example, had accused Eve of inventing the mirror.) A woman busy with her mirror, not content to be simply the reflection of man as man was of God, was likely to be not simply viewing, but also *creating* an image for herself and for the world. Perhaps she is even doing her face in her morning glass as Thomas Randolph complains in "To a Painted Mistress": "How durst you venture that adulterate part, / Belabour'd with your fucus and best art."<sup>435</sup> In his satire on the Italian poet Sannazaro Lovelace proposes that poets who write flattery for money do not look properly at vice but "Court her as her Adorers do their glass, / Though that as

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<sup>434</sup> Robert Heath's "To a Lady wearing a Looking-Glass at her girdle" strengthens this reading of Lovelace by its direct censure of what Lovelace implies. Heath advises his mistress to avoid poring in her glass like Narcissus for this will make her a mermaid, outwardly neat but "Fish or what is worse below"; or like a swan, whose black skin and legs betray the whitest plumes. (*Clarastella* (1650), op. cit., pp. 53-5.)

<sup>435</sup> *Poetical and Dramatic Works of Thomas Randolph*, ed., W. Carew Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, 1875), p. 640.

much of a true Substance has". In contrast, when Aramantha in Lovelace's pastoral of that name simply views and washes her face in a pail of water, she performs an acceptable toilette. Renaissance poems on the subject of women gazing in pools or mirrors tend to be gentle admonishments about the dangers of narcissism, but by the 1630s some become bitter tirades in which the looking glass has supplanted the lover. Underlying these is an anxiety both about identity and about the narcissism of all art. The looking glass theme was popular in plays, pamphlets and ballads, and most of Lovelace's contemporaries produced at least one poem on the subject.<sup>436</sup>

Lovelace inherits from this common store, but his poem is markedly unusual. Its syntax and abrupt changes of point of view make it awkward to follow, so that it enacts the bird's progress through the poem or Lucasta's across a room. The poem also has some elements of pastoral. One of the two characters is called Alexis, and the poem includes a dialogue between the "swain" and his vain mistress, Lucasta. Both of these characters appear together in other poems in the 1649 volume: "Dialogue. Lucasta, Alexis" (41) and "Amyntor from Beyond the Sea to Alexis" (101). They also recur in Lovelace's pastoral, "Aramantha" (107), which closes that volume with an apparently peaceful resolution. "Lucasta's Fanne", however, ends clearly in violence as the putative lover, Alexis, destroys Lucasta's mirror: "Now fall'n the brittle Favourite lyes, and burst! / Amas'd Lucasta weepes, repents, and flies". The destruction of Lucasta's mirror forces her to view herself in her lover's eyes, since a replacement looking glass may not be easily available. The smashing of the glass within the fan is also a commentary on the desire of the poet-lover to free himself at last from the decorative and restricting bounds of a language of courtly love. When language is reduced to such mimesis it serves only to glorify a mistress constructed from conventional tropes, and leaves no room for the image of the poet or his re-making of it.

Lovelace's minor act of vandalism is also culturally directed. The Italians were the foremost producers of glass in Europe, and mirrors were usually a small luxury item. The Venetians had been making larger mirrors since the beginning of the sixteenth century, and maintained their monopoly on technique until the hall of mirrors at Versailles in 1682. Not only mirrors, but also poems on ladies looking into

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<sup>436</sup> In addition to those discussed subsequently Cowley and Kynaston have looking-glass poems, and Milton in *Paradise Lost* (Book IV) has a section where Eve first sees herself in a pool and must be persuaded to leave it so that she can meet Adam, whose true reflection she is.

them came from Italy, and produced some English imitations.<sup>437</sup> The “mirror” sonnet derived ultimately from Ovid, appeared in Petrarch’s *Rime*, and continued to develop and circulate among continental poets and be rendered almost literally by English poets, as an Elizabethan sonnet by Daniel (derived from Desportes) illustrates:

Why dost thou Delia credit so thy glasse,  
 Gazing they beauty deign’d thee by the skies:  
 And doest not rather looke on him (alas)  
 Whose state best shewes the force of murdering eies?  
 The broken tops of lofty trees declare  
 The fury of a mercy-wanting storme;  
 And of what force thy wounding graces are,  
 Upon my self thou best may find the form  
 Then leave thy glasse, and gaze thyself on me,  
 That mirror shewes what power is in thy face:  
 To view your forme too much may danger bee,  
 Narcissus chang’d t’a flower in such a case.  
 And you are chang’d, but not t’a Hiacint;  
 I feare your eye hath turned your heart to flint.<sup>438</sup>

The lover in these poems is a supplicant allowing himself only the mildest censure of the beloved. He simply points out that there are perils in perfection, as the reference to Narcissus underlines. In “To Chariessa, beholding herself in a Glasse”, Lovelace’s kinsman Thomas Stanley is similarly humble:

Cast Chariessa, cast that glasse away,  
 Nor in its crystall face, thine own survey;  
 What can be free from loves imperious laws  
 When painted shadowes real flames can cause?  
 The fires may burn thee from this Mirrour rise,  
 By the reflected beams of thine own eyes;  
 And thus at last fall’n with thy self in love,  
 Thou wilt my Rivall, thine own Martyr prove;  
 But if thou dost desire thy form to view,  
 Look in my heart, where love thy picture drew,  
 And then if pleas’d with thine own shape thou be,  
 Learn how to love thy selfe in loving me.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Marino wrote numerous short poems on this topic. His “La Donna allo Specchio” and “Lo Specchio” were reworked by Randolph, Carew and Stanley. Mario Praz traces the Italian and French influence in his “Stanley, Sherburne and Ayres as Translators and Imitators of Italian, Spanish and French Poets”, *Modern Language Review*, 20 (1925), pp. 419-31. There are more mirror sonnets in Hill and Trejo, eds., *Baroque Poetry*, op. cit., pp. 82-4. For Marino see *Poesie Varie*, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari: Laterza et Figli, 1913), pp. 78-9.

<sup>438</sup> This is quoted from Alfred Upham, *The French Influence in English Literature from the Accession of Elizabeth to the Restoration* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), p. 117, where the original French source may be found.

Stanley's use of an invented name, "Chariessa," puns on the logic of praise he is using. The word recalls the Italian *chariezza*, or perspicuity, so that the woman is already clear and illuminating for the poet-observer. Earlier in the seventeenth century Thomas Randolph's "To one admiring Herself in a Looking-glass" covers similar ground.<sup>440</sup> A woman who is too lovely may be beguiled by her own beauty into rejecting the world entirely. Randolph's poem opens with a flattering description of the un-named woman but counsels against mistaking the shadow for the substance:

When you so much your shadow love,  
Wise Nature would not let your eye  
Look on her own bright majesty,  
Which had you once but gaz'd upon,  
You could, except yourself, love none:

The danger of such inwardness may provide a political subtext for Lovelace's poem as read by Gerald Hammond.<sup>441</sup> Hammond suggests that the poem on Lucasta's fan describes a society which evades contact with the world outside the court and which only a "great smash" will bring to its senses. But Lovelace may also be suggesting that only more destruction will bring necessary change, especially since his world has already been turned upside down.

Using the mirror as a tool for reflection on inner rather than outer qualities relieves the male anxiety evident in mirror poems. Moving from the potential of carnal knowledge to intellectual apprehension, such a poem becomes a homily, as in Shirley's "To a Lady upon a Looking-Glass Sent".<sup>442</sup> The topic was popular in the manuscript miscellanies, and the anonymous "Upon a Looking Glasse sent to a fayre creature" provides a good example:

Within this mirrour, when you chance to view,  
That fayre sweet face so much resembling you:  
This use make of it: thinke, on what a grace  
A pure chast heart would adde to such a face!  
And so these thoughts doe all your actions frame  
So shall you prove a compleate vertuous dame.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 238-9.

<sup>440</sup> *Poetical and Dramatic Works of Thomas Randolph*, op. cit., pp. 600-1.

<sup>441</sup> Hammond, *Fleeting Things* op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>442</sup> James Shirley, *Poems &C.* (London: 1646), p. 45.

<sup>443</sup> Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 153, f. 15.

The Lucasta addressed by Lovelace in his poem has, however, ignored these conventional warnings and requests. Although the woman is generally silent in looking-glass poems, Lucasta addresses her feathered mirror directly. In doing so she looks neither beyond the surface nor beyond the mirror, and demands that the looking glass remain her only companion:

My lively shade thou ever shalt retaine  
In thy inclosed feather-framed galsse,  
And but unto ourselves to all remaine  
Invisible, thou feature of this face!

Marjorie Swann argues that the unsatisfactory nature of this self-regard lies in its implicit rejection by the woman of a definition through male eyes.<sup>444</sup> Certainly the many poems in the tradition of the mirror sonnet seek to turn the woman from autonomy to dependence. Simultaneously, the poet as artist is anxious to be neither the doomed Echo nor the dissolved Narcissus. The plight of Narcissus is that of the artist who deals with imagery and wishes to produce a work that reflects *his* meaning and is not just an echo or a reflection. The pool into which Narcissus gazes can give him back only himself; it is incapable of origination. In its fixity it is a parody of the creative fullness of God. Moreover, the tale of Narcissus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is part of a weaving of stories in which revelation precedes destruction.<sup>445</sup> The story of Narcissus follows that of Zeus and Semele, with that of Tiresias intervening. Semele, whose fate is recounted by Lovelace in "Against the Love of Great Ones" (75), was burnt to ashes when she tried to see her lover as he was. These myths, well known to Lovelace, suggest that falsification rather than replication of the image is necessary for both the lover and the poet to maintain their selfhood.

Such a conclusion appears unacceptable for many Interregnum poets; mirror poems continue to search for the true, essential image of the beloved. Often the lover becomes the genuine mirror, replacing the woman's worldly vanity with self-knowledge. Lovelace reverses the genders of this discourse in his "Song" (123) where he indicates that the vain lover should dress himself: "In her fair Souls immac'late glass: / Then by reflection you may have the bliss / Perhaps to see what a true fineness

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<sup>444</sup> Swann, "Cavalier Love", op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>445</sup> Lovelace's kinsman George Sandys added a commentary to the second (1632) edition of his translation of the *Metamorphoses* in which he devotes more space to the Narcissus story in Book Three including Pausanias' version of the myth, Bacon's commentary, and some sermonising on the dangers of self-love.

is.” The lovers exchange identities so that they can view themselves more clearly. The eyes, and the souls, become mirrors and move from sight to reflection, a movement from vision to understanding. The possibility of distortion in any such exchange is ignored, but the poem engages with the questions of constructing subjectivity. Lovelace posits an ideal spiritual beauty, through which the lover can judge his own shortcomings. This in turn allows the woman to see through his gilded exterior. Lovelace avoids the neo-platonic confusion of image and source which occurs in poems by Carew and Phillipot where the lover is transformed into his rival – the mirror. Carew’s treatment of this theme in “A Looking-Glasse” is the most extreme example:

That flattring Glasse, whose smooth face weares  
Your shadow, which a Sunne appears  
Was once a river of my teares.

About your cold heart, they did make  
A circle, where the brinie lake  
Congeal’d, into a crystal cake.

...  
Be not for ever frozen, coy;  
One beame of love, will soone destroy,  
And melt that yce, to floads of joy.<sup>446</sup>

The poet adds value to his mistress by the volume of his tears, so copious that they form lakes and rivers which the lady’s disdain freezes into a mirror. The Ovidian extremes of ice and fire involve destruction but also rebirth. The lover loses his identity so that the woman may not be destroyed by her own image. D.M. Rosenberg suggests that this a courtly resolution: the lady now finds herself in her ardent lover rather than in a passive glass.<sup>447</sup> However, since the lover now has no shadow of his own, and the woman cannot see herself without him, the neo-Platonic merging of the two represents, ironically, the fate Narcissus tried to avoid by fleeing from Echo. Lovelace plays with this concept in poems where the power of the woman’s gaze is described but the male, though either eliminated or turned into a hard glassy substance is never reduced to the image of his mistress. In “Lucasta’s World. Epode” (89), Lucasta’s displeasure turns the world to winter and the blood of her admirers to rubies. Nature cannot reverse this process, and the sun “Yet warmed not the hearts,

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<sup>446</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, op. cit., p. 19.



her nice / Disdaine had first congeal'd to Ice". Eventually, Lucasta smiles and thaws the cold in an image similar to that concluding Carew's poem. The discourse of transformation and interiority in these poems is permeated with the tropes of courtly love and the sublime subjection of the lover. The self-annihilating subject re-appears in a late poem, "In mine own Monument I lye" (149). The lightning of the woman's eye has "Melted my Soul ith' Scabberd, dead; / And now like some pale ghost I walk, / And with anothers Spirit talk." The emasculated and emptied-out speaker, unlike the lovers pleading to be restored to normality in the poems by Carew and others, is cynical about the power of smiles to unfreeze his condition prefers to enjoy his torment. Bronwen Price reads this poem as a representation of the nostalgia for a monarchic sanctuary in the mind. The marginalised female in this and other Lovelace poems, indicates the anachronistic values of the dissolved Stuart court. The sense of loss and lack, the speaker's desire for displacement is related to the lack of signification suffered by the Cavalier code of values after the execution of the King.<sup>448</sup>

In his *Poems* of 1646 Thomas Philipott has a poem almost identical to Carew's. This is, "To a Gentlewoman viewing her selfe in her glasse":

Cruell faire one, think this Glasse,  
Wherein you now behold your face,  
Was compos'd of one who dyed  
For love of you since he applied  
His liquid and dissolving eyes,  
So long with teares to sacrifice  
To your disdaine, that to relieve  
His bankrupt and impoverish'd grieve  
With a fresh stock of moisture, hee  
Melted to a spring, which see  
The cold, but charitable North  
(Lest a fountaine of such worth  
Should by vulgar lips, be tasted,  
Or profanely be exhausted)  
Congeal'd into a Chrystall Masse,  
Of which was form'd this Looking-glasse:  
And as your Figure faire did rest,  
Within this Lovers living brest,  
So still you see it doth appeare,

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<sup>447</sup> D.M. Rosenberg, "The Cavalier Love Lyric and Milton's *Paradise Lost*", *Genre*, 24: 3 (1991), p. 266.

<sup>448</sup> Bronwen Price, "*Th'inwards of th'Abysses*: Questions of the Subject in Lovelace's Poetry", *English*, 43 (1994), pp. 117-37.

Though turn'd to Chrystall, harbour'd there.<sup>449</sup>

In Carew's poem the glass will be dissolved and the lover and the mistress reunited but in Philpott's the lover remains reified. The tone of this poem contrasts with the more ludic elements in Lovelace's poem on Lucasta's fan. There the lover-as-mirror still exists as a fashionable toy, but in Phillipot's poem the lover is completely erased. The speaker in Lovelace's poem is displeased at being supplanted by the mirror: "Feathers and glasse to outweigh my vertue tryed?" Alexis expects a reward for being a faithful and sad swain. He refuses to return a woman's beauty in verse, or to be himself the victim of a metamorphosis. The repentant Lucasta, using the vocabulary of other mirror poems, looks to a different future and "vowes her self accurst / If hence she dresse herself, but in his eyes". Alexis retrieves his dominance as the "mirror" which will define her. The poet's view of her, as almost literally a "bird-brain", is vindicated. Unlike the other writers of mirror poems discussed here, Lovelace has no desire to portray women as idealised and dominant in the *précieux* fashion of the court's halcyon days. As in "The Scrutinie", he overturns the conventional erotic hierarchy. The poet as supplicant is a rare persona in Lovelace, even when he must turn to the Muses.

#### 4. 2. "I have made my song a coat"

In a more personal posthumous poem, Lovelace continues his exploration of textures, clothing and women as providers of poetic content. "To a Lady with child that ask'd an Old Shirt" (148) turns the poet's gaze back on himself. This begins:

And why an honour'd ragged Shirt, that shows,  
Like tattered Ensigns, all its Bodies blows?  
Should it be swathed in a vest so dire,  
It were enough to set the Child on fire;  
Dishevell'd Queens should strip them of their hair,  
And in it mantle the new rising Heir:

The custom to which Lovelace refers has eluded his editors.<sup>450</sup> He opens with a reference to his own military adventures, but this also signals the Teutonic origin of

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<sup>449</sup> Thomas Philipott, "To a Gentlewoman viewing her selfe in her glasse", in Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 80-1.

<sup>450</sup> There is a note on this poem in Hazlitt which does not appear in Wilkinson. On p. xxxviii Hazlitt notes that there is a reference to the custom and the words, "My blessing in a cloute" in an old morality play of 1570, *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*. Lovelace's poem is printed on p. 183 of Hazlitt's

the legend to which the poem probably refers. The “Shirt of Need”, traditionally woven by young girls, has the image of a soldier and a crown, both of which occur in the poem. The shirt protects its wearer in battle and is cherished by emperors and princes, but also by women in childbirth who wear it to ensure an easier delivery.<sup>451</sup> In Lovelace’s poem the speaker is unable to comply with the request of the title, and the flesh/clothes conceit becomes primary: “Nor do I know ought worth to wrap it in, / Except my parchment upper-coat of skin.” This covering is something not easily given away; it is the surface on which fate has written his story: “That first was rowl’d in Down, now Furs of Bears.” It is all that now remains to the poet for inspiration; he can no longer draw on women of any class.<sup>452</sup> Other than the anonymous woman to whom the poem is addressed as a possible answer, there is only mention of “Dishevell’d Queens”, who are as impoverished as the poet and can only offer their hair as wrapping. This hair, suitable for spinning, is no longer the enchanting golden curls that act as Cupid’s nets in other poems. Once described, in a commendatory poem composed in Greek, as “a guardian of the Muses, A Grace among the Graces” Lovelace now turns to these for their “shreds and ends”.<sup>453</sup>

To the nine Sempstresses, my former friends,  
 I su’d, but they had nought but shreds and ends:  
 At last, the jolli’st of the three times three,  
 Rent th’apron from her smock, and gave it me,  
 ’Twas soft and gentle, subtly spun no doubt;  
 Pardon my boldness, Madam; *Here’s the clout.*

The poet receives some torn fabric from Thalia, the muse of comedy, although comic verse is not his style. Perhaps Lovelace is thinking of the comedy he wrote when still an undergraduate or he is commenting on the difficulties of continuing with old customs; or perhaps he is reflecting on the lack of ease with which he now

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edition, and a note there records that a portion of Lovelace’s poem is quoted in Brand’s *Popular Antiquities* of 1849, but no other illustration of the custom could be found.

<sup>451</sup> This story is recorded in *The German Legends of the Brothers Grimm*, ed. and trans. Donald Ward, (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1981), I. pp. 213-4.

<sup>452</sup> As Gerald Hammond points out, the poem is a rare personal assessment of his poverty, obscurity and their connection with his poetry. See “Richard Lovelace and the Uses of Obscurity”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London: British Academy, 1985), p. 231.

<sup>453</sup> See Jo. Harmarus, “On Himself” (15): “Loulakius is my friend for many reasons / His name is pleasant, so is the way his mind works. / And I love him back as a friend renowned for great deeds / Of valour both of the hand and of a shrewd mind; / One who as a young man sought ought and crammed on tiny pages / A hundred ornaments of the poets. / I love him as a guardian of the muses, chief bee among bees, / A Grace among the Graces, and a honey among singers.” (Trans., Dr Robert Woodhouse, University of Queensland.)

versifies.<sup>454</sup> Lovelace had foreseen his critical reception in “The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret” (174):

And me alone their angers Object call,  
That from my height so miserably did fall;  
And crie out my Invention thin and poor,  
Who have said nought, since I could say no more.

In his poem on an old shirt Lovelace turns back to the Muses for assistance. Referring to the Muses as the “three times three” may be a cynical allusion to the power of women and their ability to do without men. The muses were regarded as virginal. In his play *Epicoene*, Jonson sends Venus to invent new sports with the Graces calling them “thy tribade trine”, a lesbian trio.<sup>455</sup> The harsher tone of the poems in the 1659 *Lucasta* is evident in Lovelace’s reply to the woman requesting a shirt. The poem insists that the production of a poem itself constitutes an acceptable gift, and the equations made between writing and spinning, poetic imitation and borrowed clothing, although conventional, may contain an evaluation of his own work as something not extraordinary but “subtly spun”. In the poem’s concluding lines Lovelace’s reply to the request for a shirt echoes his continuous loyalty to the classics. Callimachus had been told by Apollo to keep his offering fat, but his muse lean. In the *Eclogues* Virgil instructs Tityrus to keep his sheep fat, – but his poetry fine-spun.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> This poem has eluded critical attention except for Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue*, op. cit., p. 250, who also reads it as a reflection on Lovelace’s own artistic integrity.

<sup>455</sup> Stephen Orgel cites Jonson’s usage of the adjective for female homosexuality as the earliest recorded. “Tribadree” appears in a manuscript poem to Donne. See “Jonson and the Amazons”, op. cit., pp. 131-9.

<sup>456</sup> Charles Martindale, “Green Politics: the *Eclogues*”, in Charles Martindale, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 111.

## 5: LOVELACE'S POETRY AND THE SISTER

### ARTS: *ARS EST COELARE ARTEM*

As we have seen, a theme of metamorphosis runs consistently through Lovelace's poetry. The shifting, inconstant nature of females is threatening, but the ability to control and initiate change is empowering for men, especially when art is employed in poetry, painting or music. Men can recreate themselves, and can reinscribe themselves as both cultivator and connoisseur, but the woman who does so is taking "the pencil out of God's hand" as Donne puts it. (Both Cavalier and Puritan writers would have agreed.) The nature of women's artistry and its links with deception and seduction has been explored in the two previous chapters: this chapter turns the focus back on the roles of poet, painter and musician, and the aesthetic and gendered dissolution Lovelace perceives occurring between them. The male artist, in any sphere, can co-exist as author and voyeur, while condemning those arts (fashion or cosmetics) used by women to ensnare the spectator. Lovelace contemplates the limits of creativity in some of the lyrics he addresses to women, and in the poems on paintings and music. These poems provide an imaginative involvement with music or visual art of the same order as that expressed in the classical poetry of Lovelace's inheritance (such as in *Greek Anthology*), and in classical art criticism (filtered through Jonson). Lovelace's engagement with Lely or with the mythical Orpheus, as representative types of the artist, requires a suspension of the ontological distinction between illusion and reality, so that Lovelace can ask his readers to marvel and empathise with Lely's supra-natural ability to portray mind and voice, the miraculous powers of the poet to affect even inanimate nature, or the artistry of a woman whose voice can recreate the harmony of the spheres.

Lovelace's poems on the visual arts, especially his panegyrics to Lely, have attracted critical attention in relation to their political commentary, but they are also contributions to an ongoing discourse about divine order and social harmony, the divisions between nature and the art, and the potentially Orphic and eternal powers of

the artist. The transposition of one art into another, words into pictures, or poetry into music interested Lovelace more than has been acknowledged. His original milieu, a glittering court which paid homage to the power of the image in painting and theatrical spectacle, provides a context for many poems and for a defence of linguistic artifice made subtly within panegyrics to painters or commendatory poems to composers. Lovelace's poetry reflects the slippery nature of art and the confusion about hierarchies within it. In exploring the old analogy between painting and poetry, *ut pictura poesis*, Lovelace provides a critique not only of painting but also of poetry itself. Unlike Jonson, however, Lovelace remains diffident about the power of poetry in relation to the other arts. He leaves no *ars poetica*; he makes no direct statement, in the manner of Horace or Ovid, about the immortality of his own work or that of his friends. Art can be trivial and ornamentative, it can be duplicitous, but it can sometimes transcend nature and physically affect the listener or spectator. At the deepest level it can reveal the Platonic essence, the innermost virtue of the subject it has chosen. When Lovelace contrasts the pen with the brush, with an oblique nod to the vogue for "Instructions to a Painter" poems in the Anacreontic tradition, he is also exploring the freedom of the artist to create novelty *ex nihilo* in a potential contest with the divine "Author". When he sets the beauty of a woman's (cultivated) voice against the God-given natural harmony of her face, he is accepting the inferiority of the human order and its dependence on a mimesis of Platonic forms. When Lovelace likens Lely's toil to the labour involved in the original act of creation in Genesis he is playing with the dialectic of *ars* and *ingenium* and re-examining Horace's dictum that the art is in hiding the art. For Lovelace, there is art involved in artifice itself, in the curtain that hides the picture, in the ambiguity that poetry involves.

### 5. 1. "The picture of the mind in purer verse": Lely and the visual arts

Annabel Patterson argues that political censorship in the Interregnum produced a veiled, ambiguous and difficult discourse.<sup>457</sup> Lovelace often relies on the contrast of light and shadow in his poems, on the sun hidden in clouds, and on the possibility of a sudden metamorphosis: "For tell me how they differ, tell me pray, / A cloudy tempest, and a too fair day".<sup>458</sup> But the imagery of shadows and clouds in Lovelace's poems to

<sup>457</sup> Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 10-18, 197-8.

<sup>458</sup> "Advice to my best Brother. Coll: Francis Lovelace" (174).

painters has as much to do with his appreciation of the visual aesthetic of his time, as with using images to convey political allusions. Clouds as backdrops (and in cloud machines) were a frequent feature of Caroline masques, and William Davenant, Ben Jonson, Aurelian Townsend and William Habington all employed elaborate cloud machines designed by Inigo Jones.<sup>459</sup> Sometimes these clouds parted to reveal complex scenes; sometimes they supported figures of Venus or Divine Poesy.<sup>460</sup> Clouds were used extensively as a symbol for veiled truth in the cultural productions of the Stuart court, not only to parade the technical skill of the artists involved, but also to carry easily deciphered classical allusions.<sup>461</sup> This dialectic of obscurity and revelation occurs frequently in Lovelace's poetry. Lovelace also uses the image of the sun as an emblem for a King who (like Aeneas) needs to emerge from more than metaphorical clouds: "Shadowes no longer then the Sun remaine, / But when his beams that made 'em fly, they fly" (41). In other poems a preference for obscurity over brightness suggests the chiaroscuro technique used by portrait painters such as Isaac Oliver and Anthony van Dyck. Lovelace himself has a preference for surfaces and textures, a fondness for paradox in opening lines and for convoluted conceits that create a poetry which depends on ambiguity for its effects. The name of his mistress suggests lucidity and clarity – Lovelace calls her "that bright Northerne star" (102) – but the poems she inspires are not so transparent. There is a tension between the simple lyrical forms and metres Lovelace uses and his tortuous syntax and classically freighted content.

Unlike some of his contemporaries (especially Stanley and Carew) Lovelace is hesitant about the powers of poetry in relation to those of painting. He avoids poems that give directions to the painter and which require verisimilitude to poetic conventions when portraying the poet's mistress. In "To my Worthy Friend Mr. Peter Lilly: on that excellent Picture of his Majesty, and the Duke of Yorke, drawne by him at Hampton-Court" (57) Lovelace not only indicates the political symbolism underlying the composition but praises the artist for his portrayal of inner qualities. In this poem Lovelace attempts to convey the technique as well as the content of the work of art. Lely's rubies are not just a red blot, but glow with flame. To make paint

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<sup>459</sup> See John Harris, Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *The King's Arcadia: Inigo Jones and the Stuart Court* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1973).

<sup>460</sup> Ibid. pp. 89-91.

<sup>461</sup> There is an extended discussion of this use of cloud imagery in Judith Dundas, *Pencils Rhetorique: Renaissance Poets and the Art of Painting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), pp. 163-76.

resemble blood requires virtuosity, but the poet's language acknowledges that craftsmanship, or artifice, intervenes. The poem is full of the representational friction this involves. Nevertheless it concludes on a note of triumph and envy:

Thou sorrow canst designe without a teare,  
And with the Man his very Hope or Feare;  
So that th'amazed world shall henceforth finde  
None but my Lilly ever drew a Minde.<sup>462</sup>

Lovelace draws attention to the expectation of the spectator that both the inner and outer qualities of the sitter will be made visible. He also involves the viewer in the work of art in a way that both returns to and alters Renaissance ways of seeing. Alastair Fowler points out how new techniques of perspective and new ways of organising space and time removed the spectator as participant from the painting itself.<sup>463</sup> Lovelace takes the point of the view of a connoisseur who is impressed by Lely's ability to represent psychological and moral reality through naturalistic rather than emblematic forms – explicitly rejected in this poem as “*Hieroglyphicks*”. His admiration of Lely provides some evidence of his own poetic aspirations: a work that is conventionally composed, but textured and layered with meaning.

The rivalry between poets and painters revolved not only around the faithful depiction of the physical but also about the capacity of the artist to capture those essences lying beneath the surface. The former had long been a criterion of excellence. Pliny, for example, praises pictures which are deceptive enough to appear living. Lovelace refers to him as “Lord High Treasurer of all” in the first lines of “Peinture” (180). By means of well-known classical conceptions the early modern poet or painter could produce a goal of perfection, unattainable but approachable. This aesthetic end is, however, most often personified as woman, as in the anonymous “To the Painter and his Picture” in the 1650 *Academy of Compliments*:

I could not write before but when I saw  
The quaint perfumer offering to draw  
A piece beyond the richness of his Art,

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<sup>462</sup> The political and historical aspects of this poem, which have supplied the painting with the title of “Clouded Majesty”, have been elucidated by Raymond Anselment in, “*Clouded Majesty*: Richard Lovelace, Sir Peter Lely, and the Royalist Spirit”, *Studies in Philology*, 86: 3 (1989), pp. 367-87. See also Gerald Hammond, “Richard Lovelace and the Uses of Obscurity”, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 71 (1985), pp. 203-34.

<sup>463</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Renaissance Realism: Narrative Images in Literature and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 88.



I was as bold as he, and look't to heart:  
For (if the Author fails not) Poets may  
Dare with their Pens, as with their Pencils they;

... Now let me tell thee truly, what I see,  
Thou maks't the Picture and the piece makes thee.<sup>464</sup>

The writer here is in competition with the painter, but he also acknowledges the importance of the model. He can persuade the woman to sit for him by pointing out that the female subject and her objectification in verse or on canvas are interdependent. Her beauty contributes to the "Picture", but her appearance in a poem or in a painting can also "make her", or help her become known in a society which had acquired an appetite for collections, and which had been moving away from a period of Reformation iconoclasm.

Poems addressed to painters, however, sometimes veer from exploring the nature of imitation into a restatement of conventional misogyny. "A discourse between a Poet and a Painter" is a dialogue in which the anonymous poet requests that the painter fashion the perfect woman.<sup>465</sup> He lists all the physical requirements of this creature and the painter replies:

Yes Sir, Ile draw a feature,  
You shall conclude that art hath out-done nature,  
The Pencill Sir, shall force you to confesse,  
It can more lively than your pen expresse.

The poet's riposte is that the painter also needs to "draw a mind" (the very ability for which Lovelace praises Lely, and which Jonson expects in "On the drawing his Mistris Picture"), but the debate flounders when the painter protests that he cannot produce any version of excellent physical and spiritual qualities without an actual model, concluding: "Find you the woman. And Ile fall to work". This final line of the poem leaves the reader in no doubt that the poet and the painter will be searching in vain. A more usual resolution to this dispute is for the poet to be satisfied that his own perception of the beloved is beyond all art. In "To His Mistress for Her True Picture", Lord Herbert of Cherbury complains that the artist has made the woman too lean and not as attractive as he finds her. He asks "Can pictures have more life / Than the

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<sup>464</sup> *The Academy of Complements* (London: 1650), p. 152.

<sup>465</sup> In *Musarum Deliciae (1655) and Wit Restor'd (1658)*, ed. Tim Raylor (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1985), pp. 118-21.

original?", but decides that he will settle for flesh and blood.<sup>466</sup> In "Divine Love" Herbert goes further and asserts that the ideal Platonic essence of his mistress, Lucinda, renders art "dull" and unable to print off a copy.<sup>467</sup> Thomas Carew shares Herbert's doubts about painters. In "To the Painter" he gives a long list of the painter's faults and presumptions, grumbles about his false colours and decides that if the painting were a success it would create a dangerous object of idolatry. The work of art, then, can not only produce aesthetic pleasure, but can pose a spiritual danger to the viewer, inciting the lust of the eye. Carew follows this logic and asks both reader and artist rhetorically, "Canst thou ... tell how / To paint a vertue?", concluding, "your Artifice hath mist."<sup>468</sup> Nicholas Hookes, in a similar poem, "To Amanda, on her picture drawn with a Lute in her hand", decides that the painter needs to redo his work: "A neat resemblance, yet who e're did do't, / Envi'd my eye and drew a curtain to't."<sup>469</sup> The implication in these poems is that only the lover is capable of keeping the perfect reflection of his mistress, not in a work of art accessible to others, but in his own heart. The effect of the painting on the viewer is inferior to the effect of the woman on the poet. It is this trope which Lovelace often subverts. Unlike the other poets quoted, Lovelace avoids being a client, since being vulnerable to the spectacle of a successful painting is equivalent to being vulnerable to the woman and her arts of seduction. Such feminine agency, as becomes clear in looking at Lovelace's poems, is invariably destructive. (It can sometimes be sidestepped by regarding the woman as a spiritual being whose beauty is beyond the mortal powers of painter or poet.) Lovelace does not wish to be the imitative artist whose effect is ultimately dependent on his subject: nor does he wish to internalise the feminine image that serves as imagination or muse, as we saw in the previous chapter.

In a commendatory poem to Lovelace's first volume, Francis Lenton claims for Lovelace the very facility which Lord Herbert could not find in painters: the ability to portray qualities other than the physical. He starts by reminding readers that there are similarities between the sister arts, but that the poet is the superior:

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<sup>466</sup> *The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, ed. John Churton Collins (London: Chatto and Windus 1881), p. 74.

<sup>467</sup> In R.G. Howarth, ed., *Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Dent, 1959), pp. 62-4.

<sup>468</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 106.

<sup>469</sup> Nicholas Hookes, *Amanda, A Sacrifice to an Unknown Goddess, or a A free-will Offering Of a loving Heart to a Sweet-Heart* (New York: W.A. Gough, 1923), pp. 62-3.

Poets, and Painters have some near relation,  
Compar'd with Fancy and Imagination;  
The one paints shadowed persons (in pure kind,)  
The other points the Picture of the Mind  
In purer Verse (11).

Lovelace also likes to explore the contentions between poets and painters, and occasionally he draws attention to the possibility of reading his poems like paintings. This reading can be visual as well as semiotic. The speaker in a Lovelace poem such as the one on Lucasta's picture or in "Amyntor's Grove" often materialises as the new type of connoisseur, showing something to a friend from his cabinet of curiosities. The "great and powerful hand" in that poem demands admiration for an art that has outdone nature, and has more impact than the paintings it points to, which are not described.

Lovelace had been admitted (together with Lely) into the Company of Painters in October 1647, and has a number of poems directly to do with painting. He promotes the intensified interest of the aristocracy in the visual arts.<sup>470</sup> Although poems on paintings and instructions to painters had been topoi since classical times, the impetus to use art as a poetic subject had been heightened by Marino's vast collection of ekphrases, *La Galeria* (1620), described as the first modern work of its kind.<sup>471</sup> Lovelace was familiar with Marino, but his poems on painting have few of the latter's mannerist motifs. In "Peinture. A Panegyrick to the Last Picture of Friendship Mr Pet. Lily" (180), Lovelace presents to the reader a selection of his friend's pictures. These derive from classical mythology and include not only monsters but also more tellingly the incorporeal nymph Echo, a fading voice that cannot even initiate a discourse:

Who ere yet view'd Airs child invisible,  
A hollow Voice, but in the subtile skill?  
Faint stamm'ring *Eccho*, you so draw, that we  
The very repercussion do see.

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<sup>470</sup> Charles had demonstrated to the whole of Europe the vitality of the new artistic culture in Britain by his acquisition of the collection of the Duke of Mantua in 1627. This coup was alluded to in the court masques. The Muses now resided not in their ancient haunts but in the North. See Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), pp. 214-6.

<sup>471</sup> See Peter Brand and Lino Pertile, eds., *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 306.

Lovelace praises Lely for his ability to elicit an emotional response; for a creative illusion so powerful that the viewer imagines the mimesis itself and finds all his senses engaged. Thus Lovelace, and by implication the reader, responds to Lely's artistry as naturalistic, as an illusion and as a feigned reality that is real in itself. Lely has conquered the art of representing the invisible.

But Lovelace also points out that the greater the skill the greater the artistic deception. The truest poetry or painting is the most feigning. In these lines Lovelace draws on his classical heritage and also on the version of Ovid produced by Sandys. Appended to the posthumous *Lucasta*, in which the panegyric to Lely appears, is Lovelace's translation of a poem by Ausonius:

Vain Painter why dost strive my face to draw,  
With busy hands a Goddesses eyes nere saw?  
Daughter of Air and Wind; I do rejoyce  
In empty shouts (without a mind) a Voice.  
Within your ears shrill echo I rebound,  
And if you'l paint me like, then paint a sound (211).

In his commentary on the third book of the *Metamorphoses*, Sandys draws attention to Ausonius' address to a painter and provides his own version.<sup>472</sup> The myth inspired poets throughout Europe. In Marino's *La Galeria*, no fewer than five poems are devoted to pictures of Echo or Narcissus, with the implication that the viewer can be deceived by the picture as Narcissus was by his belief in the materiality of his own image. Moreover, in the poem to Lely Lovelace stresses "repercussion", which is the punishment allocated to Echo. She has been deprived of her own voice and represents the situation of an artist who can do no more than copy others in an endless replication. Lovelace articulates the anxiety of mid-century poets who are threatened by an infinite reproduction of utterance, just as the courtly lover feels threatened by the perceived ability of the painter to reproduce the image of his mistress. The error of Narcissus is even more of a paradigmatic metaphor for the artist's dilemma. Narcissus mistakes the image for the thing, the sign for the referent. The artist, however, relies on difference not perfection, and separation from the object that inspires him, not merging and annihilation. The original creates meaning and value by being separable from its source and from any copy. A consciousness of difference between the

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<sup>472</sup> George Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologised, and Represented in Figures*, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 157.

medium and the subject matter creates both aesthetic pleasure and value. Endless replication and reflection, the torment of both Echo and Narcissus, is ultimately sterile.

Yet Lovelace praises Lely for achieving the impossible: providing a visual analogy for Echo's voice. This claim ranks painting above writing.<sup>473</sup> Lely awakens an ecstatic response in the viewer: "all that Eyes / And minds can reach, do bow; the Deities / Bold Poets first but feign'd, you do, and make." Lovelace plays on the verb "to feign" which in the early modern period involved practising dissimulation, indulging in fiction, or concealing, but also carried the transitive sense of forming and inventing. While allowing the painter to internalise divine as human creativity, Lovelace implies that poets also perceive and create an unmediated reality. The two arts are separate, but truth to a transcendent realm validates both.

Lely's skills may verge on the miraculous, but there is a hint in the poem that such artistry is not wholly divine. His paintings are "subtle" – a description usually attached to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. (Indeed, he has painted apples so realistically that they are as tempting as those "on the fatal Tree".) Later there is another allusion to Genesis, linked with the speed of Lely's compositions, and his ability to give life to inanimate objects: "Thy Skill doth an'mate the prolifick flood, / And thy red Oyl assimilates to blood." Rather than partaking of the divine order, Lely is perilously close to exhibiting the pride of Lucifer. The pinnacle of Lely's achievement, according to Lovelace, is that he is able to visualise and to illustrate the work of both living poets and ancient writers. Lovelace gives Lely a prominence denied by Jonson to the visual arts as expressed in *Timber: Or Discoveries*, much of which is devoted to the history of painting and to classical writers on that subject:

*Poetry, and Picture, are Arts of a like nature; and both are busy about imitation ... For they both invent, faine, and devise many things, and accommodate all they invent to the use, and service of nature. Yet of the two, the Pen is more noble, then the Pencill. For that can speake to the Understanding; the other, but to the Sense.*<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> In his "To the Painter preparing to draw *M. M.H.*" Shirley points out the difficulties for the painter especially since "like a dull looker on", he fails to provide her with a voice. (*Poems 1646: Together with Poems from the Rawlinson Manuscript*, (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970), pp. 12-4.) The ability of the poet to provide multi-dimensional descriptions often sets him above the painter in this type of poem. Lovelace is unusual in allowing Lely to trespass on the writer's province.

<sup>474</sup> Ben Jonson, *Discoveries 1641: Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden 1619*, ed. G.B. Harrison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), p. 59.

For Jonson, representation of the mind remains the task of the writer rather than that of the painter, and the distinction is maintained in the apologies to his masques and in the poems. Jonson aligns painting and drawing with sense rather than reason, and with the essentially female arts of seduction: art as frippery which contains the seeds of a dangerous metamorphosis. Despite Lovelace's extravagant panegyric on Lely, he also alerts the reader to the connection between painting and sensuality made by Jonson. Through fashion and cosmetics, as discussed in previous chapters, women transform themselves and obtain the power of Medusa to turn their admiring viewers to stone. The provocative nature of their art relies, however, on its surface deceptions, as admitted in Cartwright's "On a Gentlewoman's Silk Hood". The poet contemplates the exact nature of the covering which "may entice, not satisfie the Sight, / Betraying what may cause us to admire, / And kindle only, but not quench desire."<sup>475</sup> Lely's painting mimics the action of a male creator who gives life, as Pygmalion did to Galatea, but in much Cavalier poetry, including Lovelace's, women's power is negative, annihilating the lover and the poet. Lovelace tempers his praise of Lely by pointing out that poets have provided the primary content and the inspiration for his work:

O Sacred *Peincture*! That dost fairly draw  
 What but in Mists deep inward *Poets* saw,  
 'Twixt thee and on Intelligence no ods,  
 That art of privy Council to the Gods...

Although Lely may have expressed his insights as fully as possible, the writer's vision has priority, and the words will outlast the image. In the last sixteen lines of the poem the two friends stroll through a gallery: a device used by Marino and much imitated. Lovelace expresses his approval of Lely's technique and of his choice of material: "Within one shade of thine more substance is / Than all their varnish'd Idol-Mistresses." In the concluding couplet those who fail to appreciate Lely will have their fame blotted out and will not be celebrated in verse: "Whilst no Poetick flower their Herse doth dresse, / But perish they and their Effigies". Despite his hyperbolic praise of Lely, the poet assumes that *poetic* garlands are the true and lasting guardians of fame.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. R. Cullis Goffin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p. 53.

<sup>476</sup> Wilkinson's notes on this poem relate his unsuccessful attempts to find these pictures, pp. 319-21.

## 5. 2. Veils, disguises and reversals

Lovelace is unusual in producing a poem about a female artist, though she is not a professional painter. The tone of “*Princesse LÖYSA drawing*” (27), another poem on the visual arts, is much lighter than that in the two poems to Lely. The princess seeks to redress the damage done by Cupid to mythical heroines by reversing the outcome of their stories, and has the potential to erase a masculine creativity that depends on the pursuit of the unattainable female. Marvell makes a similar point in “The Garden”, where the same pairs of lovers mentioned by Lovelace are presented not as a tragic examples of unconsummated love but as a necessary sacrifice to art:

Apollo hunted Daphne so,  
Only that she might laurel grow,  
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,  
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.<sup>477</sup>

In Lovelace’s poem and in the Princess’s drawing Syrinx and Daphne now run *towards* their pursuers: Ariadne is re-united with Theseus, and Anaxerete with Iphis. The Princess is using Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as a source for her art as much as Lovelace does. His enduring interest in the transformation of identity and the rendering of one art into another surfaces in this neglected poem.

The poem is unusual in having two female speakers: the Princess and Venus. The Princess announces her intentions to “un-God” Cupid, and Venus comments to Cupid on the results: “See heere a Pow’r above the slow / Weake execution of thy bow”. The concluding four lines are detached from the body of the poem and allow the poet to praise the Princess:

See, see! The darts by which we burn’d  
Are bright *Löysa*’s pencils turn’d;  
With which she now enliveth more  
Beauties, then they destroy’d before.

Löysa’s picture is revivifying, but only in the realms of fiction, and she is re-creating beauty from classical models rather than originating it. The Princess has appropriated a power usually limited to men, that of turning the pangs of love, imaged as Cupid’s darts, into words or pictures. Lovelace’s poem is flattering on the surface, but he is

less enthusiastic about women who write poetry. In the satire on Sannazaro in the posthumous volume (192), Lovelace regards women writers as part of a disturbance in the social order which would amaze the masculine spirit of Ben Jonson:

Each snatches the male quill from his faint hand  
And must both nobler write and understand,  
He to her fury the soft plume doth bow,  
O Pen, nere truly justly slit till now!  
Now as her self a Poem she doth dresse,  
And curls a Line as she would do a tresse;  
Powders a Sonnet as she does her hair,  
Then prostitutes them both to publick Aire.  
Nor is't enough that they their faces blind  
With a false dye, but they must paint their mind.

Lovelace expresses in these lines the male poet's own anxiety about the profligate nature of print publication compared with the élitist and controlled circulation of manuscript verse. The closed coterie of courtly male poets loses its boundaries if anyone, including women and hack writers, can publish, and if the material is then available to any purchaser. Much of the bitterness in the satire lies in the repeated references to financial transactions. Lovelace unwillingly recognises that working "with a bankrupt Muse to merchandise" involves submission to a new set of conditions.

In this poem women's cultural products are also aligned with the socially unsanctioned, but clearly demarcated area of cosmetics. Whereas male artists attempt to uncover real essences, women seek to mask the real with the artificial. Their skills may give them the opportunity to disguise not only the ravages of age, but also their lack of intellect or virtue. Even these skills are denigrated: Lovelace intimates that any poems by women will be as careless, decorative and frivolous as their daily *toilette*. Male poets, in contrast, fashioned as powerful speakers in a discourse which counters Petrarchism, must fulfil the demands of veracity. In a late poem, "Ode, You are deceiv'd" (150), the poet refuses to redress the defects of nature:

You are deceiv'd; I sooner may dull fair,  
Seat a dark *Moor* in *Cassiopea's* chair,  
Or on the Glow-worms uselesse Light  
Bestow the watching flames of Night,

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<sup>477</sup> Andrew Marvell, *Pastoral and Lyric Poems 1681*, ed. David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 2000), p. 185.



Or give the Roses breath  
 To executed Death,  
     Ere the bright hiew  
     Of Verse to you;  
 It is just Heaven on Beauty stamps a fame,  
 And we alas! Its Triumphs but proclaim.

In his annoyance that as a poet he might be expected to write an insincere complement, Lovelace admits that verse has the qualities of a varnish, a bright hue that can glamorise. Beauty, however, is God-given and the poet can articulate it in words but not create or even understand it. As in the poems on inconstancy examined in Chapter Three, Lovelace links women with coin. The external Royal “stamp” of approval is a guarantee of inner virtue. The genuine beauty is validated: she is not a counterfeit with a gilded exterior and so the poet refuses to dress the person he speaks to in fine words. Writing odes to faults will only ensure they live longer; the poetic garment of style cannot disguise ugliness and lack of virtue. Lovelace rejects the sugary encomium to a patron, or a powerful figure, as well as to a woman. As a poet, he perceives the unmediated reality, the ugliness and bestiality beneath the cloth of gold, but refuses to make it the subject of poetry, writing instead of the impossibilities of doing so in the poem’s final lines:

But who could soberly behold  
 A wicked Owl in Cloath of Gold?  
     Or the ridiculous *Ape*,  
     In sacred *Vesta*’s shape?  
         So doth agree  
         Just Praise with thee;  
 For since thy birth gave thee no beauty, know  
 No Poets pencil must or can do so.

Lovelace noticeably combines the arts of poetry and painting since “pencil” was used to refer to the artist’s brush. Moreover here, he gives the artist a moral authority and the inability to present ugliness as beauty. In this poem Lovelace veers towards Hellenistic theories of the beautiful soul whose perfection has an outward manifestation in the physical body. The poet’s objections to portraying the monstrous subject as beautiful form part of a moral argument. The bestial appearance of the person addressed is an indication of his/her wickedness (and unrestrained sexuality), and the poet who hides this is participating in it. In this poem, it is not the spectator or the reader who is deceived, but the anonymous “you” of the poem’s title who

imagines that a portrait or a poem can hide faults, or that fine clothes can disguise physical and spiritual qualities. While Charles was in power the court was still “a world in which reality and the representation of reality were not distinct”.<sup>478</sup> This late poem, however, records a shift in perceptions, a resentment about those who are now elevated, and a defensiveness about the role of poets in a new society. The second stanza of the poem records dissatisfaction with the existing state of poetry. Lovelace refers to the heroically chaste mistresses of pre-war days – to his own muse, Lucasta, and also to Waller’s Saccarissa, Habingdon’s Castara and the ubiquitous Chloris – and concludes: “’Tis the same wrong th’ unworthy to inthroned, / As from her proper sphere t’ have vertue thrown”.

Lovelace also reverts to the theoretical guide to poetry published by Scaliger in 1561. Scaliger relates poetry to the Platonic concept of order. Poetry exists in a dual relationship to the things signified and to the audience. In all discourse there is a process of imitation, and through this poetry can present to the mind a picture of the perfect moral order which supplies it with an object worthy of contemplation. Through verse the reader is given an intuition of beauty and of goodness, but pleasure in poetry is only an intermediate end. Poetry also serves as moral instruction.<sup>479</sup> This seems to form the basis of Lovelace’s objection to “bestowing” his poetry on an unworthy object. In the first stanza of the “Ode” the speaker addresses a person who provokes images of darkness and death, in contrast to the redemptive light-giving properties of Lucasta. In the second, the rejected subject is further aligned with carnivalesque images of confusion – an instance of many vertiginous images in Interregnum poetry which comment on the disorderly nature of life under Cromwell.

In another, more optimistic, poem, Lovelace is confident that a portrayal of Lucasta would reveal her fine inner qualities. “Upon the Curtaine of Lucasta’s Picture, it was thus wrought” (85) has the qualities of an epigram, in a development of the “portrait sonnet”, a genre seemingly invented by Petrarch.<sup>480</sup> The title of the poem, however, refers not to the picture but to the curtain covering it. Lovelace alerts the reader to the ancient topos of concealment for expressive purposes. Lovelace is also

<sup>478</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>479</sup> See K.G. Hamilton, *The Two Harmonies: Poetry and Prose in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 77-8.

<sup>480</sup> Norman E. Land, *The Viewer as Poet: The Renaissance Response to Art* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 81. Judith Dundas regards this Lovelace poem as a “capprisquesque” instruction to a portrait viewer. (*Pencils Rhetorique*, op. cit., p. 181.)

referring to a contest between two Greek painters whose work was renowned for their verisimilitude. When Zeuxis challenged his rival Parrhasius, and asked him to display a picture of his behind a linen curtain, he discovered that the curtain was itself a painting and surrendered the prize.<sup>481</sup> (An allusion to this ironic narrative, well-known to seventeenth-century poets, also appears in Francis Lenton's commendatory poem.)<sup>482</sup> The story about Zeuxis encapsulates the rivalry in any artistic enterprise. Challenge and contention can, however, result in a Pyrrhic victory if the artist is too successful as the stories of Marsyas and Arachne indicate. Arachne won the weaving contest with Minerva because her figures were so life-like, but her reward was an undesired metamorphosis. An art that is superlative ends by changing or destroying the artist. Lovelace's poem on Lucasta's picture opens with a warning and a hesitation:

Oh stay that Covetous hand – first turn all Eye,  
All Depth, and minde; then Mystically spye  
Her Soul's faire Picture, her faire Soul, in all  
So truly Copied from th'Originall;  
That you will sweare her Body by this Law,  
Is but it's shadow, as this it's – now draw.

The poem's speaker issues an implicit challenge to the viewer. Lovelace, as so often in his amatory lyrics, enters a dialogue with the reader and viewer.<sup>483</sup> He expects that the picture will reveal Lucasta's true essence: it will be an image of her physical beauty as her body is an image of her soul. This revelation of Lucasta, with the

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<sup>481</sup> See Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts. The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 24.

<sup>482</sup> Commendatory poems are a neglected area of study but provide valuable theoretical insight about poetic practice and biographical information especially about poets such as Marvell or Lovelace where such information is scarce. It is these poems that provide evidence of Lovelace's friendship not only with other Cavalier writers, but also with Puritan sympathisers such as John Hall. Stella Revard also points out that commendatory poems allow for the expression of a wide range of political views and personal feelings. (See Stella P. Revard, "Thomas Stanley and 'A Register of Friends'", in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth eds., *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), pp. 155-6.) Marvell's poem for Lovelace has received increasing critical attention in the last decade. It is one of the few poems printed in Marvell's lifetime, and its inclusion in a volume of Royalist verse provides evidence of Marvell's friendly relations with Royalist poets in the 1640s and adds to the interpretation of a poem such the "Horatian Ode". As Richard Helgerson points out: "Not only was a remarkable amount of commendatory verse produced by the Cavaliers, but such verse held a far higher place compared to the general literary output than it had in previous generations." (Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 190.)

<sup>483</sup> In the triangulation of painting, poet and viewer the woman is silent and static. Moreover, I have not found any seventeenth-century poems on, or to, painters which allow for a *female* viewer. As discussed in Chapter Four, woman is muse or inspiration, but rarely artist and never, it seems, client.

theatrical drawing aside of the curtain, leaves Lucasta no space in which to dissimulate or to resist scrutiny. Everything about her is susceptible to discovery by the male gaze. The Platonic metaphysics parallels Lovelace's anxieties about his own poetry and its abilities to represent outer and inner qualities truthfully. In the *Republic* Plato argues that the artist, who imitates objects in the lower visible world of change (apprehended by the senses) is making only a copy of a copy and is twice removed from the highest order of being (apprehended by reason) and of true knowledge.

L.E. Semler treats this poem as a type of Neoplatonic "Instructions to a Painter", and notes Lovelace's familiarity with the visual arts and his reliance on visual imperatives in other poems.<sup>484</sup> Lovelace frequently urges the reader to "see". However, implicit in the poet's hesitation in both viewing and *drawing* Lucasta is a more corporeal allusion: a reworking of Ovid's account of the death of Actaeon in the *Metamorphoses*. Actaeon is punished for an accidental sighting of the naked Diana bathing: so the female form is read as destructive of masculine identity. Yet the same female body is constituted as something preeminently *seen*: the focus of the male gaze and the subject of the male pen. Actaeon is a hunter, and the equivalence between the game of love and the chase occurs frequently in Cavalier love poetry. (It is noticeably present in Lovelace's "La Bella Bona Roba" and in his valediction to Lucasta: "A new Mistress now I chase / The first foe in the field".) When a woman can turn the male gaze back on itself – masculine identity crumbles.

As in his "Cupid" poems, discussed on Chapter Three, Lovelace mixes pagan with Christian imagery. The poem on Lucasta's picture has undertones of the Catholic practice of covering with cloths pictures and statues of saints during Lent. The puritans of the time opposed this idolatry, but Lovelace's iconic and ekphrastic poems often have the intense religious imagery of the sort found in Crashaw's poetry, and assimilated by Cavalier poets. Robert Heath has a poem about a portrait of Clarastella in which he writes of a gesture especially disliked by Puritans: "Bright Image of my Saint! To thee I'd bow".<sup>485</sup> Lovelace's poem more subtly alludes to a shift in sensibility, from the religious to the secular, by placing Lucasta's picture midway between a religious icon, to be privately worshipped, and a work of art to be shown off to friends.

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<sup>484</sup> L.E. Semler, *The English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts* (London: Associated University Presses. 1998), pp. 173-4.

Despite Puritan iconoclasm (which reached its height in the 1640s) the cultivation of images had prevailed in the pre-war Caroline court. The rise of the humanistic aesthetic and the impulse to acquire collections of art works was also gradually replacing religious with secular art.<sup>486</sup> Lovelace had experienced the court's fondness for masques and other dramatic entertainments, its collections of paintings and statues, the interest of the aristocracy in medals and seals, the survival of emblem books and the retention of pictorial traditions in the production and layout of early printed books. The King's image was an important element of royal power; he was the visible representative of the divine on earth. In a time of tension over the power of images, and the images of power, Lovelace assimilates both the iconic impulse of inherited Roman tradition, and the iconoclastic implications of the more logo-centric Puritans. Iconoclasm was based on the fear that the sign might replace the signifier and that the image would become more important than what it represented. Lovelace takes care to read Lucasta's inner truth in the picture behind the curtain, but he does not criticise her for appearing in a portrait. The poem concludes with a bold directive that speaks not only to the viewer of Lucasta's picture but to anyone who intends to "draw" her in words or images. Lovelace praises the anonymous painter but allows his own artistry to speak for itself.

### 5. 3. Poets, musicians and the making of harmony

From the biographical evidence and from the poetry, it emerges that Lovelace was interested not only in the visual arts, but also in music. He was reputed to be a competent musician, and Anthony Wood describes him as a person, "well vers'd in the Greek and Lat. Poets, in music, whether practical or theoretical, instrumental or vocal, and in other things befitting a gentleman."<sup>487</sup> The contents of many poems by Lovelace allude directly to music or use musical metaphors, and numerous lyrics (not all amatory) were set to music and printed subsequently in Interregnum and Restoration song-books. It is only the first volume of *Lucasta*, however, that contains evidence of musical settings. There the names of Henry Lawes, John Lanier, Dr John Wilson, Thomas Charles, Mr Curtes, John Gamble and William Lawes are recorded

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<sup>485</sup> *Clarastella (1650)* by Robert Heath, ed. Frederick H. Candelaria (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>486</sup> See Michael McKeon, "Politics of Discourses and the Rise of the Aesthetic in Seventeenth-Century England", in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 35-52.

beneath the titles, but there are no poems in the second volume which record their having been passed to a composer. Only one musical setting, by John Cave, has been discovered for a poem in the second volume and Willa Evans argues that “A Mock-Song” (154) had, in fact, been intended for publication the 1649 *Lucasta*.<sup>488</sup>

The first poem in that publication, “To Lucasta, Going beyond the Seas” (17), interposes the composer’s name, Henry Lawes, between the heading “Song” and the title. This use of prefatory material to advertise loyalties and affinities was probably deliberate. Lawes was a court composer and a favourite musician among Caroline poets of all political persuasions and his name appears prominently on the title pages of volumes of poetry as an inducement for purchasers.<sup>489</sup> The aim of Lawes and other exponents of his style was to “shape *Notes* to the *Words* and *Sense*”, and Milton himself praised Lawes for his ability to set poetry in a way that prevented musical structure from dominating.<sup>490</sup> Herrick also rated him above Lanier and Wilson, and Playford built up his music publishing business in the 1650s relying heavily on Lawes’ music. Lawes made a point of setting only those poets he knew, and unlike other musicians named the poets he set. Lovelace appears in the manuscript of songs he compiled between 1630 and 1650 and published in 1653, with a preface which claims accuracy for the verses by alluding to the poets “from whose hands I received them.”<sup>491</sup> Waller appears to have scored a coup in that his volume of *Poems* published in 1645 states “All the Lyrick Poems in this Booke were set by Mr Henry Lawes Gent. Of the Kings Chappell, and one of his Majesties Private Musick.” In the same year *Poems of Mr John Milton, both English and Latin* tells the reader on the title page that, “The Songs were set in Musick by Mr Henry Lawes”, as does John Suckling’s *Poems, &c* of 1646 and Thomas Carew’s 1651 volume of *Poems, with a Maske*. Lovelace’s frontispiece advertises, “Epodes, Odes, Songs, Sonnets &c” without mentioning music, but the placing of a song by Lawes as the first poem gives the 1649 *Lucasta* an air of unmistakable nostalgia for the fashions of the Caroline court in which music played such an important role.

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<sup>487</sup> Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, ed. Philip Bliss (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969), III. p. 463.

<sup>488</sup> Willa Evans, “Richard Lovelace’s ‘Mock-Song’”, *Philological Quarterly*, 24 (1945), p. 325.

<sup>489</sup> See Ian Spink, *English Song, Dowland to Purcell* (London: Batsford, 1974), p. 94.

<sup>490</sup> See John Hollander, *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form* (New York: Oxford University Press 1975), pp. 36-7.

<sup>491</sup> See E.F. Hart, “Caroline Lyrics and Contemporary Song-books”, *Library*, 33 (1953), pp. 89-110.

The Renaissance attempt to reunite vocal music and lyric poetry reached its zenith in the final days of the Caroline court.<sup>492</sup> Not only was the praise of music a popular poetic topic, but it was also prominent as the subject of paintings by Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and Veronese. Lovelace's poetry is illustrative of the productive and interanimating relationship between music and poetry, and one which is more evident at this period "than at any other time in English musical — and literary — history".<sup>493</sup> Between 1600 and 1640 the size of the King's Musick had increased from a staff of 35 to over 55, and among these were musicians known to Lovelace.<sup>494</sup> Henry Lawes was a Gentleman of the Royal Chapel and considered the best musician of his day; William, his brother, killed at the siege of Chester in 1645, set not only some of Lovelace's work but Tatham's "Upon my Noble Friend Richard Lovelace...", which finally appeared in 1659. John Gamble composed over 230 songs, and both Lovelace and his kinsman Thomas Stanley contributed encomiums to him.

The development of opera encouraged the introduction of songs and dialogues into any dramatic entertainment, and the growing popularity of ballad tunes stimulated the production of political and topical rhymes. Caroline masques relied heavily on music, and often the climax of an entertainment such as Cartwright's *The Royal Slave* (performed for the King and Queen in 1636 and known to Lovelace) occurs in a musical scene. The art of solo recitative, introduced from Italy, had become the fashionable method of putting lyrics to music, and a musical setting became increasingly essential for lyrics. Everyday collaboration between poets and musicians (obscured by our anthologising and reading practices) would have been natural to Lovelace, and his involvement with court musicians is important in contextualising his work. An aural performance of a lyric, rather than a manuscript or published version, might be the first time a poem reached its audience, and a successful collaboration between poet and musician could keep the work in circulation for one or more decades. Mary Hobbs has conclusively argued the importance of musical settings for reading seventeenth-century poetry in context. The

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<sup>492</sup> The close connections between musicians and poets in the transmission of verse is discussed in Mary Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992), pp. 105-15.

<sup>493</sup> Jonathan P. Wainwright, "The King's Music", in Thomas N. Corns, ed., *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 170.

<sup>494</sup> See Ian Spink, "Music and Society", in Ian Spink, ed., *The Seventeenth Century: Music in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 58.

title “Sonnet” for a lyric poem, for instance, denotes not the traditional form but that it had been set to music.<sup>495</sup> (Lovelace’s “Sonnet. When I by thy faire shape did swear” (44) is a good example.) Providing musicians with lyrics ensured their circulation even after the court had left London. Musical manuscripts, like verse miscellanies, often circulated among a small group, but provide evidence of close collaboration between poet and composer. Mary Hobbs cites the texts of John Wilson, who set “To Althea, From Prison” and other Lovelace poems.<sup>496</sup> The number of manuscript versions of this poem, and its subsequent and unrivalled popularity in anthologies is probably due to the poem’s existence and dissemination as a song. Although music for the stage lapsed after 1642, the demand for vocal music continued, and unemployed court musicians were to be found at the musical meetings and entertainments (sometimes known as “catch clubs”), that took place in private homes in London and the provinces.<sup>497</sup> Music publishing boomed after 1650 when, after nearly twenty years in which mostly psalms had been published, John Playford began his career providing not only song-books but also instruction books for instrumental playing and for dancing.<sup>498</sup> Material was plentiful, and not only from the pens of court poets and composers: in *The English Dancing Master* of 1651 Playford printed for the first time tunes which had existed only in an oral tradition.<sup>499</sup> In 1652 Playford began

<sup>495</sup> See Mary Hobbs, “Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies”, in Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths, eds., *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), I. pp. 182-210.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid. p. 197. Hobbs mentions Carew, Strode and other pre-civil war poets but does not mention Lovelace.

<sup>497</sup> Histories of seventeenth-century music indicate that the Interregnum was not a period of unmusical silence. Davenant’s operas were performed in the 1650s, as was Shirley’s masque. Flecknoe’s *Ariadne Deserted by Theseus* (1654) and *The Marriage of Oceanus and Brittainia* (1659) were set to music by the author. In his diaries, Anthony Wood refers often to the weekly music meetings he attended in Oxford in the 1650s, and gives details of the many participants. (*The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, Described by Himself. Vol I: 1632-1663*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891).) The enjoyment and practice of music extended well beyond aristocratic circles. See Cyrus Lawrence Day and Eleanore Boswell Murrie, “English Song-Books and their Publishers”, *Library*, 16: 4 (1936), pp. 1-4.

<sup>498</sup> Playford’s *Ayres and Dialogues, For One, Two, and Three Voyces, The Third Book* (London: 1658) includes a full page advertising the music books available at his shop in the Temple. This includes older editions of Wilson, Coleman and Lawes, catches by John Hilton, and Gamble’s *Ayres and Dialogues* of the previous year, as well as technical books on composition and playing such as *The Skill of Musick*, apparently written by the publisher. Beneath the list of musical texts is a section, “Other Books sold at the same place worth Buying”, headed by an account of the King’s trial, his speech on the scaffold and other Royalist texts, clearly announcing Playford’s political affinities and providing a visual as well as literary reminder of the likely sub-text of the lyrics on offer.

<sup>499</sup> The appearance of what was essentially folk music (which had been provided by itinerant fiddlers who ran the risk of being prosecuted as vagabonds) in a fashionable publication, may have encouraged the composition of rhymes to fit material not previously accessible to the gentry, and contributed to what is regarded as the downward trend for much poetry (and even music) in the 1650s. The appropriation of popular tunes by Cavalier poets was discussed in Chapter One.



a series of musical “Ayres and dialogues” which was to run through new editions and enlargements for the next twenty years.<sup>500</sup> The first volume included three songs by Suckling and one by Lovelace – “The Scrutinie” – mistitled “A French Ayre”. Further editions of Playford contain “The Scrutinie”, “To Amarantha, That she would dishevell her haire” and “Dialogue. Lucasta, Alexis”. Lovelace lyrics also appeared in John Gamble’s *Ayres and Dialogues* (1657) and John Wilson’s *Cheerful Ayres and Ballads* (1660). Although Gamble is considered a poor composer in comparison with Lanier, Wilson and the Lawes brothers, he had “obtained a great name”<sup>501</sup> among his contemporaries and it is among his papers that the settings for several Lovelace songs were discovered subsequent to Wilkinson’s edition.<sup>502</sup>

Although Playford was not always accurate in his transcription of texts or acknowledgment of authorship (when given), his volumes gave Caroline poetry an audience in a decade when few poets published their work. They also allowed poems a flexible relationship with their musical setting: the practice of writing poems to fit tunes gained momentum, but poems could also attach themselves to melodies as titles only. The first line of Lovelace’s “To Althea, From Prison” became its title, and eventually “When Love with unconfined wings” came to signify a ballad tune rather than Lovelace’s poem.<sup>503</sup> The continuing demand for musical settings of poems makes it curious that Lovelace does not appear to have given any of the poems which appeared in his posthumous volume to the musicians he knew, especially as there would have been little difficulty in finding them. (John Wilson was appointed to the Oxford Chair of music in 1656.) There is evidence that some of the poems in the first *Lucasta* existed in musical settings before publication in a single author volume, and that they were revised to accommodate the different demands of the reading and the singing voice.<sup>504</sup> The posthumous volume has more allegorical poems and beast fables, which might have been considered less adaptable to music than amatory lyrics

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<sup>500</sup> All Playford’s volumes appeared in three sections: solo songs and duets, pastoral dialogues and ayres or glees, keeping in circulation the poetry popular in pre civil war days, much of it dating from the 1630s.

<sup>501</sup> Wood, *Life and Times*, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>502</sup> Willa Evans discusses these texts and what they reveal about Lovelace’s writing habits in “Lawes’ and Lovelace’s ‘Loose Saraband’”, *PMLA*, 54 (1939), pp. 764-7; “To Amatheia”, *Philological Quarterly*, 23 (1944), pp. 129-34; “An Early Lovelace Text”, *PMLA*, 60 (1945), pp. 382-5; and “‘The Rose’: A Song by Wilson and Lovelace”, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 7 (1946), pp. 269-78.

<sup>503</sup> See B. Pattison, *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance* (London: Methuen, 1948), p. 178.

<sup>504</sup> The case has been supported by Willa Evans’ discoveries of the musical settings of many Lovelace songs (see above). E.F. Hart also argues that versions of poems found in manuscript and printed song-

with stanza forms suited to dance rhythms, yet it also contains many poems which produce the expectation of music. In the 1650s, however, Lovelace was no longer a coterie poet: he was responding as an isolated individual to the defeat of Royalist expectations, no longer able to echo old forms.

Lovelace was also writing lyrics at a time when the relationship between poetry and music was shifting. Although contact between poets and musicians was still strong, individual artistic and authorial presences asserted themselves more strongly. The gulf between poetry and music had begun to widen in the mid-seventeenth century: poets eventually ceased to trouble about the demands of music, while musicians lost interest in moulding the music to bring out the words.<sup>505</sup> Nevertheless, the 1659 *Lucasta* includes a number of poems which seem destined to have musical accompaniments. Samuel Holland's elegy on Lovelace praises the superiority of the verses in the second volume of *Lucasta* for being musical: "So full, so fluent, that they richly sute / With Orpheus, Lire or with Anacreon's Lute." (230) Some of Lovelace's brief lyrics are marked as being a "Song": "In mine own Monument" (149), and "Strive not vain lover" (123). Others, such as "In Allusion to the French-Song" (124) or "A Dialogue. Lute and Voice" (160), indicate their musical affinities. The fashionable dances of the seventeenth century, the volta, coranto and saraband, were all in triple time and encouraged a livelier style which easily fitted to the common iambic metre. Lovelace has "Courante Monsieur" (139) and "A Loose Sarabande" (139) in the second volume, indicating his familiarity with these contemporary dance measures. In the 1649 *Lucasta*, "Sonnet. To General Goring after the Pacification at Berwicke" (81) is subtitled "A La Chabot" – a reference to a French dance tune (as is "A La Bourbon" (97) in the same volume). Poems set to these measures tend to have trochaic feet predominating, and writing lyrics to the newer rhythms would have provided a challenge and a constraint

Lovelace's two volumes indicate the shift that occurred in the Interregnum from poetry that was closely linked as a cultural production with music and the visual arts (the masque as *Gesamtkunstwerk*) towards an independence of forms and a different construction of the author. As is evident from the history of the collaboration between Henry Lawes and the poets of his time, the reading public demanded poetry

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books are earlier drafts of subsequently published works. See Hart, "Caroline Lyrics", op. cit., pp. 89-110.

<sup>505</sup> Pattison, *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance*, op. cit., p 201.

as libretto. *Lucasta* (1659) illustrates that Lovelace retained an attachment to the old courtly forms. Writing about song and dance also allows Lovelace to contrast and compare the art of poetry with music – an art more closely linked with its production than painting. This next section looks in detail at the philosophical and political underpinnings of Lovelace’s poems on this topic.

#### 5. 4. Lovelace’s untuneable times

Although willing to express, in the classical ekphrastic tradition, both admiration for the painter’s skill, and rivalry between painters and poets, Lovelace, unlike many of his contemporaries, avoids addressing composers directly, and prefers to explore performative acts associated with music. “To Lucasta” (131) explicitly connects dance movements with the development of a relationship:

I laugh and sing, but cannot tell  
Whether the folly on’t sounds well;  
                    But then I groan  
                    Methinks in Tune,  
Whilst Grief, Despair, and Fear, dance to the Air  
                    Of my despised Prayer.

A pretty Antick Love does this,  
Then strikes a Galliard with a Kiss;  
                    As in the end  
                    The Chords they rend;  
So you but with a touch from your fair Hand,  
                    Turn all to Saraband.

The lover in the first stanza observes his emotions as if they were figures in a masque while he, conventionally, woos the lady with song. He further detaches himself from the process of loving by invoking Cupid, the “Antick Love” who is to blame for his predicament but who takes the floor with a galliard. This was an elaborate dance regulated by the number five, in which the man played a lively and dominant part. This dance “coded smoothness as feminine and elevation as masculine”.<sup>506</sup> In the galliard, “When a dancer has chosen a damsel he presented himself before her to perform a few passages, turning at will...introducing new passages and displaying his

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<sup>506</sup> Skiles Howard, *The Politics of Courtly Dancing in Early Modern England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), p. 113.

skill until the musicians stopped playing.”<sup>507</sup> A passing reference to this dance in the *Mercurius Britannicus* for 1645, however, reveals that this dance had become associated with Cavalier excess and attachment to:

The old vanities and superstitions of their forefathers, the old necromantic order of prelacy, and the wondrous old heathen customs of Sunday-pipings and dancings, with the meritorious maypoles, garlands, galliards, and jolly Whitsun-ales.<sup>508</sup>

The saraband of the next stanza was apparently more courtly. It was an import popularised by Henrietta Maria, and the magic action of Lucasta’s (or perhaps the Queen’s hand) in the second stanza is an imperious move in the game of love, organising it on the woman’s terms and in a more fashionable mode. The compliment to Lucasta, however, is two-edged, for she turns love into a dance with predictable moves.

“To Lucasta” appeared in the first volume of *Lucasta*, but evidence that Lovelace was still interested in musical developments after the publication of his first volume is provided by the politically charged “A Mock Charon. Dialogue” (161). This links Lovelace with contemporary musical practice since a number of composers he knew, including Hilton and Lawes, wrote “Charon” dialogues in which a supplicant pleads with Charon to ferry him to the underworld.<sup>509</sup> Such dialogues offered scope for a dramatic characterisation using the bass voice (as in the role of Caronte in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*). Lovelace’s poem is operatic in its treatment. A short dialogue is followed by a chorus, and the piece concludes with a “Double Chorus of Divels” welcoming the Parliamentary spirit “to Rape, to Theft, to Perjurie”. Another poem with musical references is that prefixed to Eldred Revett’s *Poems Moral and Divine* of 1657 (184). This has some commonplace musical conceits: the anthems, paeans and hymns harmonise with the heavenly spheres, and his friend’s music-poetry

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<sup>507</sup> Arbeau, quoted in Skiles Howard, “Rival discourses of dancing in early modern England”, *Studies in English Literature*, 36: 1 (1996), p. 54. English dancing masters did not publish instruction manuals, which remained in French until Playford in 1651 started to make them available to a wider public.

<sup>508</sup> Quoted in David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 178.

<sup>509</sup> Lovelace’s poem is almost a reverse image of Herrick’s dialogue between Eucosmeia and Charon in the elegy on Hastings, which was set by Henry Lawes. The dialogue between Charon and the bride is interrupted and concluded by a chorus of angels. “The New Charon, Upon the Death of Henry Lord Hastings”, in *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), III. pp. 110-12. The poem appeared in the *Lachrymae Musarum* of 1649.

affects the listeners with weakness and fainting. Lovelace pays tribute to the expectations of the listener (or viewer of paintings) for reciprocity.

In the previous year Lovelace, with other Royalist sympathisers including Brome, contributed to Gamble's *Ayres and Dialogues* a commendatory poem. "To my noble kinsman T. S. Esq; On his Lyrick Poems composed by Mr. J.G." (186), while ostensibly a poem of praise, allows Lovelace to speculate on the relationship between music, words and politics. Lovelace begins with notions of imbalance, pain instead of pleasure, and broken harmonies:

What means this stately Tablature,  
The Ballance of thy streins?  
Which seems, in stead of sifting pure,  
T'extend and rack thy veins;  
Thy *Odes* first their own Harmony did break,  
For singing troth is but in tune to speak.

This poem is based on contemporary musical theory. According to Boethius, whose writings on music remained canonical in University teaching, music was divided into three categories: *musica mundana*, *musica humana* and *musica instrumentalis*.<sup>510</sup>

These correspond to the order and harmony of the universe, the seasons and the spheres, which earthly music reflects; the music of body and soul united paralleling cosmic music; and the art and science of practical music-making (with its counterpart in the tuning of the soul). Lovelace's first two stanzas comment on the disorder of the 1650s by suggesting that the natural harmonies which music (and poetry) should imitate cannot be heard – the melody is false. The second stanza uses heraldic emblems linked with the deceased King:

Nor thus thy golden Feet and Wings,  
May it be thought False Melody  
T'ascend to heav'n by silver strings,  
This is *Urania's* Heraldry:  
Thy royal Poem now we may extol,  
And truly *Luna* Blazon'd upon *Sol*.

Urania was the muse of astronomy. Lovelace demonstrates his probable knowledge of Gafurius' *Practica Musice* (1496), in which system of musical intervals the note associated with Sol or Apollo is placed in the centre. The highest note of the octave

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<sup>510</sup> Rosamond McGuiness, "Writings about Music", in Ian Spink, ed., *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, Volume 3: The Seventeenth Century*, op. cit., p. 406.

belongs to Urania, who was frequently depicted as turning to gaze at the stars. The spirit of Apollo, however, descends into all the Muses, including Silence, since rests are essential to melody.<sup>511</sup> Lovelace may also have been alluding to Joshua Sylvester's translation of du Bartas, whose Urania is "a shield to innocence" and "the Starre of other States" and states, "Long Live King James / In all Magnificence". The section on Urania finishes with hopes for the future: "that wee may still Conclude, / Our Sunne did set, and yet no Night ensew'd".<sup>512</sup> Lovelace's lines move in the same direction. The sun was a heraldic symbol for the King, "Sol" a sun in splendour with a human face and rays, a "planet formerly used to denote it or in emblazoning royal arms, while the moon "signified argent in emblazoning the arms of the sovereigns".<sup>513</sup> These images appeared on medals, seals and orders. However, the juxtaposition of gold and silver in heraldry was objected to as the colours were difficult to distinguish in the field.<sup>514</sup> Lovelace appears to be inviting the reader to meditate on pre-Interregnum harmony and the subsequent eclipse of royal order, and on the re-creation of that order through appropriate poetry and music. It is the "Royal poem" Lovelace sees fit to extol in his second stanza rather than Gamble's and Stanley's total effort.<sup>515</sup>

In the third stanza, Lovelace adds military to musical metaphor, and rather than to Orpheus refers to Amphion, the legendary builder of Thebes:

As when *Amphion* first did call  
 Each Listning stone from's Den;  
 And with the Lute did form the Wall,  
 But with his words the men;  
 So in your twisted Numbers now, you thus,  
 Not only stocks perswade, but ravish us.

Cromwell appears as Amphion in Marvell's "The First Anniversary of the Government Under His Highness The Lord Protector." (This was one of the few poems published by Marvell during his lifetime, and it appeared anonymously in 1655

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<sup>511</sup> Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), Appendix 6: "Garfurius on the Harmony of the Spheres", pp. 265-70.

<sup>512</sup> *The Complete Works of Joshua Sylvester*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (New York: AMS Press, 1967), I. p. 7.

<sup>513</sup> Willa Evans, "Richard Lovelace's 'Mock-Song'", op. cit. The notes on page 326 quote from manuals and histories of heraldry.

<sup>514</sup> "Care was always taken in English heraldry to avoid the placing of a gold object on silver, or a silver one upon gold." (W.H. St John Hope, *A Grammar of English Heraldry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1913), p. 16.)

<sup>515</sup> Lovelace may have been referring to Thomas Stanley's *Psalterium Carolinum*, a re-write of *Eikon Basilike*, thought to have been written in 1649-50 but not published until 1657 with music by John Wilson.

so it is possible that Lovelace was aware of it). Marvell writes an account of the harmonising of England to the heavenly concord through the creative magic of Cromwell:

While indefatigable *Cromwell* hies,  
And cuts his way still nearer to the Skyes,  
Learning a Musique in the Region clear,  
To tune this lower to that higher Sphere.  
So when *Amphion* did the Lute command,  
...  
No Note he struck, but a new Story lay'd,  
And the great Work ascended while he play'd.<sup>516</sup>

Marvell states plainly: “Such was the wondrous Order and Consent, / When Cromwell tun’d the ruling Instrument.” Lovelace’s poem suggests that this tuning still needs adjustment; many of the poems in the 1659 volume comment on what Herrick had termed in the *Hesperides*, “the untuneable Times”.<sup>517</sup> In the third stanza of Lovelace’s poem Amphion’s lute forms the wall, but his words make men. The persuasive power of “twisted Numbers” in this stanza is perhaps a reference to the Cavalier’s last resort at this time of the Interregnum: words. Even after the royalist collapse, the idea persisted that nations could be ruled and battles won by song.<sup>518</sup> Punning further on the imagery of a siege, and showing his knowledge of musical theory, Lovelace suggests that the music might allow Stanley’s poetry to ascend to heaven “by silver strings” using a scaling ladder:

Thus do your Ayrs Eccho o’re  
The Notes and *Anthems* of the *Sphaeres*,  
And their whole Consort back restore,  
As if Earth too would blesse Heav’ns Ears:  
But yet the Spoakes by which they scal’d so high,  
*Gamble* hath wisely laid of *Ut Re Mi*.

The poem concludes with what John Hollander terms “the cosmological cliché” – one with which Lovelace also likes to close his poems of valediction.<sup>519</sup> Lovelace must

<sup>516</sup> Andrew Marvell, *Complete Poetry*, ed. George de F. Lord (London: Dent, 1984), pp. 94-5.

<sup>517</sup> “To his Friend, on the untuneable Times”, in Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), I. p. 146.

<sup>518</sup> Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*, op. cit., p. 198. Brome had expressed his hopes on the Orphic powers of Lovelace’s poems to counteract the prose of the Puritans in his commendatory poem: “Why mayn’t your verse / Polish those souls, that were fil’d rough by theirs?” (Alexander Brome, *Poems*, ed. Roman R. Dubinski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), I. p. 289.)

<sup>519</sup> John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 351.

have been aware that the Pythagorean myths about the nature of music as a mathematical model of universal order had lost all empirical validity. His poems linking music with love treat it as an epitome of affective rhetoric rather than an emblem of heavenly order. Yet his use of musical imagery plays with the old notion of the state as a musical concord and with Renaissance celebrations of music to posit a possible restoration of the courtly milieu in which such celebrations flourished. This last stanza refers to a consort of musicians. Consort music involved several instrumentalists: a coterie production where co-operation and invention could produce harmony and pleasure. The particular feature of consort music was that it gave individual players a voice but also a perception of the interrelationship of musical lines. It was usually performed with the players facing each other in a ring. In discussing scribal transmission Harold Love points out that “Such music encoded an idealised image of the gentry as a community of equals while...providing release from the tensions of hierarchy in the state and in the family. In refusing a dominant role to any single part it was also asserting – even when played by...royalists – a consensual conception of the ideal state.”<sup>520</sup> This image is embedded in Lovelace’s poem with a sense of regret. His consolation is phrased in the conditional and the poem ultimately posits an awareness of the finite nature of the notes to be combined.<sup>521</sup>

The figure of Orpheus appears frequently in seventeenth-century poetic treatments of music and the Orphic power questioned by Lovelace in his poem to Stanley had provided a constant theme for pre-war commendations of it.<sup>522</sup> These poems tend to be amatory rather than political; they are confident of success in seduction and focus on the praise of women singing or playing, dissected to reflect on the skills of the observing poet. The power of music to affect the listener has always been a literary idea as well as a genuine phenomenon. An independent literary tradition exists around the mythological figures of Apollo, Marsyas and Amphion, but particularly around Orpheus as the model of the poet-musician and the representative

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<sup>520</sup> Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 24.

<sup>521</sup> Thomas Randolph, “A Song”, in *Poetical and Dramatic Works of Thomas Randolph*, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, 1875), p. 587. See also “A Sonnet in praise of Musick” in *The Harmony of the Muses* (London: 1654), pp. 63-4.

<sup>522</sup> A good example would be William Strode’s “In Commendation of Music”, which records the harmonious effects on the soul of listening to music. The poem is entirely concerned with the emotional aspects of music. (Peter Quennell, ed., *Aspects of Seventeenth-Century Verse* (London: Home and Van Thal, 1970), p. 135.)



of eloquence. Orpheus is traditionally associated with the ability to animate nature, but it is also as a creator of deep feeling that he materialises in seventeenth-century verse. In Strode's "Song", for instance, the trees empathise with Orpheus's sorrow at losing Eurydice by dropping amber tears and longing for death.<sup>523</sup> Caroline poets frequently allude to their own Orphic powers. Davenant called himself and his fellow poets "Orpheus sons", who by the beauty of their song moved trees and cities and tamed wild beasts. Waller summons Orpheus in "At Penshurst" [2], where he hopes to move hearts to compassion as Orpheus melted stone.<sup>524</sup> In "On St James's Park, As Lately Improved by His Majesty" he praises the plans of Charles II by saying: "The voice of Orpheus, or Amphion's hand, / In better order could not make them stand."<sup>525</sup> Milton especially aspired to be an Orphic poet. The last image in "L'Allegro" is of Orpheus capable of restoring fallen humanity. In "Il Penseroso" the anticipated vision is of Orpheus, the archetype of the poet.<sup>526</sup>

### 5. 5. Moving trees, moving hearts: Orphic powers and poetry

Lovelace has two short songs alluding to Orpheus in the 1649 *Lucasta*, both set to music by a Mr Curtes. The first is "Orpheus to Beasts" (37):

Here, here, oh here *Euridice*,  
                     Here was she slain;  
 Her soule 'still'd through a vein:  
                     The Gods knew lesse  
 That time Divinitie,  
                     Then ev'n, ev'n these  
                     Of brutishnesse.

Oh could you view the Melodie  
                     Of ev'ry grace,  
 And Musick of her face,  
                     You'd drop a teare,  
 Seeing more Harmonie  
                     In her bright eye,  
                     Then now you heare.

<sup>523</sup> William Strode, "Song", in *The Poetical Works of William Strode (1600-1645)*, ed. Bernard Dobell (London: Ballantyne, 1907), p. 1.

<sup>524</sup> Edmund Waller, *Poems 1645* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1971), p. 23.

<sup>525</sup> Waller, *Poems* (1686), in Hugh Maclean, ed., *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets* (New York: Norton, 1974), pp. 246-50.

<sup>526</sup> Graham Parry, *Seventeenth-Century Poetry: The Social Context* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), pp. 197-203. See also Raymond B. Waddington "Milton among the Carolines", in C.A. Patrides, ed., *The Age of Milton: Backgrounds to Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 348-51.

Speaking as the dead Orpheus, the poet is diffident about his own powers, making Eurydice's beauty the prime mover of emotions, although it is the (unheard) music that the poem on the page attempts to convey to an audience, the woman herself being absent. Lovelace's usual apostrophe to his reader, to "behold" something now becomes a plea to "hear": the homophones opening and closing the poem and recalling Echo's hopeless repetitions. The reflexivity is reinforced by musical structure and Katherine Duncan-Jones has analysed the way the syntax and vocabulary of the lyric work as an aural counterpoint.<sup>527</sup> Lovelace's fondness for paradox is evident in the first stanza, where the gods have less knowledge of their own nature than beasts; and in the second, where Eurydice creates music with her own being; and in the overall vacillation of sight and sound around which the poem turns.

Eurydice's appropriation of poetic power is not uncommon in poems which praise the mistress's musical ability but make it inferior to her beauty, so that nature wins over artistry. When a song is unspecified in a seventeenth-century poem it may well be one composed by the poet himself so that praise of the feminine ultimately becomes praise of the poet who has provided her with lyrics and with a memorial to her beauty.<sup>528</sup> In Nicholas Hookes' "To Amanda, over-hearing her sing", the first twelve lines of the poem comment on Amanda's musical abilities, but the closing octet makes it plain that Amanda has other claims on the world's attention. Beautiful women may be dangerous, but the woman as competent artist is even more threatening:

Sing on sweet *Chauntress* soul of melodie;  
Closely attentive to thy harmonie:  
The Heavens check't and stop't their rumbling spheres  
And all the world turn'd itself into *eares*;  
But if in silence thy face once appear,  
With all those jewels which are treasur'd there,  
And shew that beautie which so farre out-vies  
Thy voice; 'twill quickly change its *eares* for *eyes*.<sup>529</sup>

Lovelace's poem also places visual appreciation above aural. Notions of harmony, derived from classical treatises, commonly provide a means of evaluating the poem as

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<sup>527</sup> Katherine Duncan-Jones, "The Lyric as Song: Lovelace's 'Orpheus to Beasts'", *Critical Survey*, (1966), pp. 52-3.

<sup>528</sup> Waller has a short lyric making this explicit: "To a Lady singing a Song of his composing", in *Poems 1645* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1971), p. 81.

well as the woman performing the music. Harmony (supposedly born from the union of Mars and Venus) involves proportion and scale rather than polyphony. In Platonic fashion, Lovelace's poem asserts that wherever there is harmony, order, or proportion, there is also music. Such natural music requires no volition, so it is consistent that Orpheus has already abdicated his usual role in the first stanza. His reputation as charmer of beasts (Eurydice was bitten by a snake) is in doubt, and rather than singing to them as the title might imply, he is surprised that they are unable to comprehend the higher musical beauty of Eurydice's form. Neither character in the poem is able to exert their power to the full. Eurydice's beauty had not been sufficient to charm the gods into changing her destiny or to subdue the snake, and Orpheus will fail in his attempt to persuade Eurydice to return with him from the underworld. Lovelace expresses an anxiety about the ability of his poetry to imitate beauty accurately and to convey emotion in the required Orphean manner.

In his commentary on Ovid George Sandys has a long section on Orpheus and he expresses a prominent theme of seventeenth-century aesthetic theory: that music works on human affections not in the older tradition of world harmony but in a mechanistic way. John Hollander summarises this as a shift from an interpretation of music as an imitative art, to seeing it as an expressive one where linguistic elements predominate.<sup>529</sup> The equation of poetry as music becomes stronger, but poets seek individuality, not subordination so that the powers which Lovelace assigns to Eurydice in his lyric are more generally attributed to poets themselves.<sup>531</sup> In an elegy for Lovelace Eldred Revett expresses his grief by asking:

Can the Chords move in tune, when thou dost dye  
At once their universal Harmony?  
But where Apollo's harp (with murmur) laid  
Had to the stones a melody convey'd;  
They by some pebble summon'd would reply  
In loud results to every battery;  
Thus do we come unto thy marble room,  
To eccho from the musick of thy tombe (226).

Revett suggests that Lovelace's poetry will reverberate after his death in imitations. Lovelace's own volumes, in contrast, express no overt concern, or confidence about

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<sup>529</sup> Hookes, *Amanda*, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>530</sup> Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, op. cit., pp. 172-4.

his poetic reputation or afterlife. The fate of Orpheus, however, provides an analogy for the fleeing from women so often dramatised in Lovelace's poetry and for the possible echo of his poetry after he has ceased to write. According to legend, Orpheus's head was thrown into the River Hebrus, which carried it home. In the *Georgics*, Virgil depicts Orpheus as nothing but a voice calling "Eurydice", as his head floats down the Hebrus.<sup>532</sup> In his *Eclogues* poets derive inspiration by drinking from this river, *Hebrumque bibamus* (10.65). After he has been dismembered, however, Orpheus acquires those female powers so long resisted by poets, for according to legend, his dead tongue "sighs out sad ditties" and petrifies a snake.<sup>533</sup>

"Orpheus to Beasts" (37) is followed immediately by "Orpheus to Woods" (38) which shifts the focus to the death of Orpheus, rather than that of Eurydice. Orpheus, though dead, is allowed to speak:

Heark! Oh heark! You guilty Trees,  
 In whose gloomy galleries  
 Was the cruell'st murder done,  
 That e're yet eclips'd the Sunne;  
 Be then henceforth in your twigges  
 Blasted e're you sprout to sprigges;  
 Feele no season of the yeere,  
 But what shaves off all your haire,  
 Nor carve any from your wombes  
 Ought but Coffins, and their Tombes.

As in the previous poem, there is an immediate demand to be heard. Traditionally, Orpheus had the ability to give trees and rocks the power of movement. In an ode "On the prayse of Poetry", Cowley describes how all trees leave their native woods to crowd round Orpheus and to give him shade.<sup>534</sup> However, after failing to retrieve Eurydice Orpheus was torn to pieces in a wood by the Maenads, but Lovelace elides the active and violent female element by turning to the (equally guilty) arboreal spectators. These are given female qualities, hair and wombs, then threatened with negations: penitential shaving and the bringing forth of death rather than of life. They

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<sup>531</sup> Hazlitt suggests that by Orpheus we understand Lovelace himself and by Eurydice, Lucasta. He mentions a portrait of Lovelace represented as Orpheus. W. Carew Hazlitt, ed., *Lucasta. The Poems of Richard Lovelace Esq.* (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), pp. 37-8.

<sup>532</sup> Virgil, *The Georgics*, trans., Robert Wells (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1982), p. 94.

<sup>533</sup> Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, op. cit., Book 11, p. 498.

<sup>534</sup> *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, ed., Thomas O Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth and Allan Pritchard (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), I. p. 83. (This is itself an elaboration of Horace, Ode 1. 12.)

represent the punishment meted out by Bacchus to the women who killed Orpheus – they are turned to “hard Oke”.<sup>535</sup> In the poem, Orpheus speaks to the trees the way the disappointed Petrarchan lover speaks to a disdainful mistress, pointing out what she will be like in old age: blasted, thin, cold, infertile – dead wood. Lovelace uses the same tone in “To Lucasta. Ode Lyric”(55) which concludes:

Then receive this equal dombe,  
Virgins strew no teare or bloome,  
No one dig the *Parian* wombe;  
Raise her marble heart ith' roome,  
And tis both her Coarse and Tombe.

Lovelace revenges himself on an uncooperative mistress by imagining her immobile and inanimate: appropriating to himself the powers of Medusa. The misogynist attitude of “Orpheus to Beasts” is consistent with the fabled misogyny of Orpheus himself, who turned away from women after the death of Eurydice. The ritualistic sacrifice of Orpheus links him with Osiris, whose fragments his sister gathered. Lovelace’s poetry has many images of fragmentation and dissolution, but these are caused (not relieved) by women’s attention. Lovelace’s petrification of trees and women is the opposite of Orpheus’s noted talent, the ability to bring movement to the inanimate. Dancing trees feature in most seventeenth-century poems with music as a subject, but wood can also be made to sing when transformed into a musical instrument which itself assumes the life-enhancing powers of Orpheus.

In “A Dialogue. Lute and Voice” (160) the abstract but personified figures of instrumental and vocal music address Laura and are together apostrophised in a final double chorus which pays tribute to the magic of their harmony. The “Dialogue” contains allusions to Orpheus, whose powers are transferred to the personified lute. A reference to a lute or lyre, common in classical poetry often equates the stringed instrument with poetry itself.<sup>536</sup> Lovelace’s address to the lute is a covert invocation of the muse:

*L.* Sing Laura, sing, whilst silent are the Sphears,  
And all the eyes of Heaven are turn'd to Ears.

*V.* Touch thy dead Wood, and make each living tree,  
Unchain its feet, take arms, and follow thee.

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<sup>535</sup> Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, op. cit., Book 11, p. 499.

<sup>536</sup> Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, op. cit., p. 129.

Lovelace appears to privilege hearing over sight, the conventional means by which love operates, and makes the effects of music not only emotional but also miraculous. Unlike Hookes' Amanda, whose beauty stops up hearing, Laura is given some typically male powers.<sup>537</sup> The voice has the power to attract a host of Angels who first hover and then dance. In the third piece of dialogue the voice urges: "Touch thy soft Lute, and in each gentle thread, / The Lyon and the Panther Captive lead." This power over wild beasts is typically Orphic, and in performance can sometimes be appropriated by women.<sup>538</sup>

The animals Lovelace includes have symbolic freight. The panther was associated with lust and also regarded as deceptive and treacherous.<sup>539</sup> The aristocratic Laura, strolling in gardens or in the Tower, singing to her lute, is taming both male (the lion) and female passions, but the subdued panther is also emblematic of the woman. The panther was renowned for its sweet smelling breath and for the ability to sing in a way that lured other beasts to their destruction.<sup>540</sup> The perfumed panther that seduces its prey represents the unruly and deceitful feminine psyche, and the dangers of women's artistry.

Lovelace, having punned on heart-strings and chords that tremble and shake (in accordance with lute-playing instructions) continues to make use of musical imagery. The lute strings become leashes, but whereas the wild animals are captivated the effect of the harmony of lute and voice is to "make Angels wild, / The Devils mild." This overturning of the natural order, which includes giving Orphic powers to a woman, teaches "low Hell to Heav'n to swell" – an image of the world turned upside down which features prominently in the posthumous volume in which this poem appears.

Although writing on music in conventional terms, Lovelace nonetheless inserts himself obliquely into poems that defy the Cavalier stereotype of pretty

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<sup>537</sup> The first two lines of a poem attributed to Strode, "On a Gentlewoman that Sung and Play'd Upon a Lute", are very similar to Lovelace's: "Be silent you still musique of the Sphears, / And every sense make haste to be all ears". This poem appeared in *Parnassus Biceps* (1655) and in the *Wits Interpreter* of the same year. I am quoting from the version printed in *The Poetical Works of William Strode*, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>538</sup> The appreciation for musical talent shown by women may, however, be limited to its expression as a poetic convention. In her memoirs Lucy Hutchinson writes of a music meeting at which a song written by a woman was greeted with incredulity. *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, Governor of Nottingham by his Widow Lucy*, ed. Julian Hutchinson and C.H. Firth (London: Frome, 1906), pp. 31-2.

<sup>539</sup> See P. Ansell Robin, *Animal Lore in English Literature* (London: John Murray, 1932), pp. 53 ff.

complements. A woman singing had been a popular subject for poetry in the 1630s. In the *Hesperides* Herrick praises Julia's voice and also writes, "Upon a Gentlewoman with a sweet Voice." Carew's Celia sings, as does Habington's Castara and Heath's Clarastella. Lucasta, though she is posed laughing, weeping, taking the waters, or paying obsequies, does not appear anywhere in this conventional activity which is left to other ladies (Gratiana or Laura). Lovelace has one long poem on a female singer in the form of an answer "To a Lady that desired me I would beare my part with her in a Song. Madam. A.L." (90). This is full of discords and unflattering comparisons between the music they might make together and "Monkey's Jigs", the serenades of cats at night, or the noise of a pantry maid. He starts by modest disclaimers about his own singing:

What, though 'tis said I have a Voice;  
I know 'tis but that hollow noise  
Which (as it through my pipe doth speed)  
Bitterns do Carol through a Reed.

Later in the poem he insists that his singing is mere howling, even outdoing the legendary Sirens:

ULYSSES Art is now withstood,  
You ravish both with Sweet and Good;  
Saint SYREN sing, for I dare heare,  
But when I Ope', Oh stop your Eare.

In the tenth book of Plato's *Republic* there is a mention of a Pythagorean myth describing the heavenly spheres as bearing on each a siren hymning a single tune or note. These eight sirens, Hollander suggests, were easily adaptable to angelic choirs.<sup>541</sup> Lovelace's labelling of the siren as a saint, and his reference further in the poem to descending an eighth, indicate his familiarity with musical theory and his sly undermining of the woman's confidence, since the whole poem demonstrates his literary and musical superiority. While the pantry maid chants comically, the music which the poem's speaker is capable of is "such / As is beyond all Voice or Touch". Having rejected the possibilities of a duet the singer must rely on music that is within himself, and somehow "above dead sounds of Man". The poet's soul is so full of

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<sup>540</sup> Nashe, Spencer and Jonson have unflattering references to panthers. Robin, *Animal Lore*, op. cit., pp. 51-2.

<sup>541</sup> Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, op. cit., p. 29.

harmony that it can create musical agreement anywhere, the one in unison with the many as in Neoplatonic doctrine.<sup>542</sup> Unfortunately the woman making the request cannot provide inspiration, she is too old and wintry. Their duet is “Not to be Reached with humane Eares”, and Lovelace makes it plain that this is an unsatisfactory (if Platonic) outcome.

## 5. 6. Feminine arts and feminised triumphs

In “Gratiana Singing and Dancing” (25) a poem which has attracted more critical attention than Lovelace’s other ventures into musical arts, he allows the reader and the implied spectators to conclude that a female dancer can outdo musicians of even celestial calibre:

See! With what constant Motion  
Even, and glorious, as the Sunne,  
    *Gratiana* steeres that Noble Frame,  
Soft as her breast, sweet as her voyce  
That gave each winding Law and Poyze,  
    And swifter then the wings of Fame.

She beat the happy Pavement  
By such a Starre made Firmament,  
    Which now no more the roof envies;  
But swells up high with *Atlas* ev’n,  
Bearing the brighter, nobler Heav’n,  
    And in her, all the Deities.

Each step trod out a Lovers thought  
And the ambitious hopes he brought,  
    Chain’d to her brave feet with such arts  
Such sweet command, and gentle awe,  
As when she ceas’d, we sighing saw  
    The floor lay pav’d with broken hearts.

So did she move; so did she sing  
Like the Harmonious spheres that bring  
    Unto their Rounds their musick’s ayd;  
Which she performed such a way,  
As all th’ inamour’d world will say  
    The *Graces* daunced, and *Apollo* play’d.

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<sup>542</sup> An allusion to Orpheus in Proclus’s *Commentary on the Timaeus* infers that the highest mysteries require no eyes or ears since all things are within an all-embracing body. Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, op. cit. pp. 57-8. Lovelace’s singer seems to be taking this otherworldly stance.



Gratiana's skill and charm subdues the pagan pantheon, a convention found in complementary poems well into the Restoration. Lovelace's highly artificialised idealisation of Gratiana removes from her depiction any trace of individuality in a poem which puns throughout on her name. A.D. Cousins suggests that Gratiana epitomises each of the Graces by embodying the individual traits of the triad *pulchritudo*, *voluptas* and *castitas*: beauty, pleasure and purity.<sup>543</sup> The poem, however, exhibits none of the interlocking triadic features of this group, depicted dancing together in literature and art, sometimes under the direction of Apollo.<sup>544</sup> Jonson similarly imagines an audience of male hearts in a song from *Love Restored*, which asks, "Have men beheld the graces dance?"<sup>545</sup> The Graces were attendants of Venus, and Gratiana, treading on the hearts of her admirers, appears to be a type of the goddess. She is also one of Lovelace's consistently destructive females, limiting men's identity to broken hearts, as in the "Cupid" poems discussed in Chapter Three. Cousins reads the last line of the poem, with its reference to Apollo, as an implication that Gratiana is androgynous (incorporating the god's skills into her own performance). But the appropriation of Apollo's famed musicality has mythical precedents. Marsyas, the satyr, having challenged Apollo to a musical contest and lost, was flayed alive. Renaissance typology read this fable as an indication that the poet who wishes to obtain the beloved laurel of the god must pass through great pain. Gratiana's art is apparently free from suffering; instead she inflicts it on everything surrounding her.

Gratiana's solo dance, though presented as courtly, seems unusual in that the dances of the time required couples, with the lead and the variations provided by the male partner. A solo female performer before a male audience had generally been depicted in classical and Renaissance literature as an erotic object. Lovelace's measured and nostalgic tone removes Gratiana from such aspersions. Lucian's dialogue, "The Dance", emphasised its moral and instructional values for dancers and beholders, and it is this aspect of Gratiana's dancing and singing that has interested

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<sup>543</sup> A.D. Cousins, "Lucasta, Gratiana, and the Amatory Wit of Lovelace", *Parergon*, 6A (1988), p.101.

<sup>544</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, op. cit., p. 265.

<sup>545</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 314. In *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* Jonson has another song with similarities to Lovelace's "Gratiana" where he stresses the moral lessons to be learned from the interleaving patterns of the dance: "And when they see the graces meet / Admire the wisdom of your feet". (Ibid. p. 321.)

critics, who see her as a representative of Royalist harmony and order.<sup>546</sup> This reading turns Gratiana into the virtuous woman of hyperbolic elegy, as in a poem by William Cartwright:

She dancing in a cross perplexed thread  
 Could make such Labyrinths, that the guiding thread  
 Would be it self at loss, and yet you'd swear  
 A Star mov'd not so Even in its Sphere;  
 Her Steps stirr'd meditations up, and Sense  
 Resign'd delights to Reason, which were wrought  
 Not to enchant the Eye, but catch the Thought.<sup>547</sup>

Lovelace's poem shows its inheritance of these themes, but his final stanza places the dance in a wistfully recalled past, one that partakes of a world in which Apollo and the Graces still dance. As in his pastoral poems, Lovelace uses conventional and even outmoded forms to subvert their representations of a political reality which has moved into the realms of myth.

The poem is replete with images of heavenly bodies of which Gratiana, though chained to earthly and even earthy concerns, is one. Music and mathematics combined in Pythagorean cosmology, which was based on tonal intervals and ratios.<sup>548</sup> According to this view, music is a mathematical model of universal order and the harmony of the cosmos was reflected in the harmony of the political order and in the human psyche. Ideas of order embedded in this doctrine found their way into theories of poetry. In 1561 Scaliger published a popular guide in which song and poetry can present a picture of the perfect moral order and supply an object worthy of contemplation.<sup>549</sup> In *Orchestra* (1596) John Davies' narrative is interspersed with observations about the significance of the whirl of the planets. Davies reiterates that dancing is a picture of the natural moral order in the universe and that the motions of the planets represent a dance. Everything, in nature, even "Confusion's mother,

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<sup>546</sup> Cousins, "Lucasta, Gratiana, and the Amatory Wit of Lovelace", op. cit., pp. 101-2; see also Manfred Weidhorn, *Richard Lovelace* (New York: Twayne, 1970), p. 90. Weidhorn lists appraisals of this poem prior to 1970.

<sup>547</sup> "The Death of the Most Vertuous Gentlewoman, Mistress Ashford, who dyed in Child-Bed", in *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. R. Cullis Goffin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 146-9.

<sup>548</sup> See Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky*, op. cit., pp. 26-8.

<sup>549</sup> See K.G. Hamilton, *The Two Harmonies: Poetry and Prose in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 77.

headlong Chance” dances.<sup>550</sup> This *Logos* vision (linked with musical and mathematical models of the universe) entirely dominates the *Eros* vision in the poem, since Gratiana is violently triumphant.<sup>551</sup> The brittleness of the hearts she treads on reflects the fragility of the social whirl.<sup>552</sup> Although circular images of perfection and circular theories of history proved comforting in the decade after this poem was published, Gratiana’s dance comes to a definite close. (Her song appears to be a round, as were many Interregnum drinking songs – examined in the first chapter – in which the circularity and circulation of the festive bowl provided comfort and distraction). There is no chorus in the poem, no suggestion of reformation, or of the endless tripartite nature of the dance, which the original Graces perform. Gratiana dominates nature because she has descended to earth from a higher realm; she is unnatural. Lovelace implies that only within a stylised poem, only by playing with conventional conceits, can a woman challenge the existing hierarchy. Moreover Gratiana is dancing in a world which science had already demolished; her ability to transform lovers’ hopes into balletic steps or political disaster into victory is part of a convenient fiction.

The vision of Gratiana presented in the poem lacks the festive joy often associated with dancing. Her movements are rehearsed, codified and devised to control response. They form a dance which is courtly, élitist, and linked with linguistic forms.<sup>553</sup> Gratiana is stately and heavy in her movements, rather like the ostrich in the poem on Lucasta’s fan. (See Chapter Four, above.) She is lawful, orderly and authoritative, in contrast to the ballerina from whom she derives. Paulina Palmer has traced Lovelace’s lyric to one by Sempronio, “La Bella Ballerina.”<sup>554</sup> Sempronio’s sonnet is a light celebration of a coquettish and unfaithful mistress, and Palmer finds Lovelace’s version more pretentious in tone. When read alongside some contemporary poems on women dancing, however, Lovelace’s treatment presents

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<sup>550</sup> Sir John Davies, “Orchestra or A Poem of Dancing” (l. 218), in Emrys Jones, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth-Century Verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 657.

<sup>551</sup> This forms a discussion of the *Eros* and *Logos* visions of poetry in Northrop Frye, *The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 119-39.

<sup>552</sup> Paulina Palmer, “Lovelace: Some Unnoticed Allusions to Carew”, *Notes and Queries*, 14 (March 1967), pp. 96-8, traces the image to a poem by Carew who in his New Year wishes to the King imagines the pavements strewn with heads and hearts.

<sup>553</sup> See Howard, *The Politics of Courtly Dancing in Early Modern England*, op. cit., pp. 22-4.

<sup>554</sup> Paulina Palmer, “Lovelace’s Treatment of Some Marinesque Motifs”, *Comparative Literature*, 29 (1977), pp. 308-10.

more ambiguity and more ambition. Robert Heath's "Seeing Her Dancing" (1650) is not dissimilar in vocabulary and imagery, but is more limited:

Robes loosely flowing, and aspect as free,  
A carelesse carriage deckt with modestie;  
A smiling look, but yet severe:  
Such comely Graces 'bout her were.  
Her steps with such an evenness she wove,  
As shee sould hardly be perceiv'd to move;  
Whilst her silk sailes displaied, shee  
Swam like a ship with Majestie.  
As when with stedfast eies we view the Sun,  
We know it goes though see no motion;  
So undiscern'd she mov'd, that we  
Perceiv'd she stirr'd but did not see.<sup>555</sup>

The lady in the poem moves mysteriously, like the Sun, but has only the attributes of order and grace. Like Gratiana, she is performing for a group who are impressed, at least by her draperies. Heath's poem is narrower in focus: the universe is left unmastered. James Shirley's "Upon His Mistress Dancing" concentrates on the hard-hearted mistress:

I stood and saw my mistress dance  
Silent, and with so fixed an eye  
Some might suppose me in a trance.  
But being asked why,  
By one that knew I was in love  
I could not but impart  
My wonder, to behold her move  
So nimbly with a marble heart.<sup>556</sup>

Shirley's dancer has an audience of one: Lovelace places Gratiana in a social setting and removes much of the personal element of poems on this theme. The reception of Lovelace's poem is unrecorded, but Owen Feltham acknowledged a debt to "Gratiana" by quoting lines 19-21 as an epigraph to his "Upon a Rare Voice":

When I but hear her sing, I fare  
Like one that raised holds his ear  
To some bright star in the supremest round;  
Through which, besides the light that's seen,  
There may be heard, from Heaven within,  
The rests of anthems, that the angels sound.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> *Clarastella* (1650), op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>556</sup> Shirley, *Poems* 1646, op. cit., p. 17.

Unlike those recent critics who have written on “Gratiana”, Feltham is interested in her voice. In Lovelace’s poem, however, Gratiana’s presence is so overwhelming that she raises questions about the ability of the writer adequately to perceive and portray the harmony and perfection she embodies. She also embodies a further anxiety. If Gratiana reproduces the divine harmony of the cosmos, then as an artist she is only an imitator, reaching for the Platonic shadow rather than creating something individual, *ex nihilo*. Perhaps this is why Lovelace’s poem ends in violence and putative martyrdom. The broken fan of “Lucasta’s Muffe” and the anatomised, replaceable lovers’ hearts are emblems for Lovelace’s attempt to reject conventional courtly lyricism that denies the poet any individual subjectivity. The hearts of Gratiana’s admirers have come too close to the sun, to the consuming female, and have disintegrated. The lovers are anatomised and without identity. Ultimately, Gratiana’s art lies less in her rather clumsy movements than in the intricate mosaic she creates on the floor. There are numerous contrasts in the poem between high and low, the firmament and the floor. This art, by implication that of the poet, belongs to the lower, non-divine element. It is strewn on the pavement and it lacks cosmic order. One art has turned into another, and the pattern on the floor is made of fragments, just as poetry involves making a collage of inherited tropes and styles.

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<sup>557</sup> In Robert Cummings, ed., *Seventeenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 220.

## 6: “ARAMANTHA” AND THE POETRY OF PASTORAL

When Lovelace published *Lucasta* in 1649 he concluded the volume with what would be his longest poem, “Aramantha: A Pastoral” (107). This verse pastoral of nearly 400 lines is unique among his contemporaries; none attempted a poem of this kind although it had become almost a rite of passage for English Renaissance poets since Sidney’s *Arcadia*.<sup>558</sup> In her exploration of *Pastoral Process*, Susan Snyder writes that in turning to pastoral poetry “on the threshold of full adulthood, Spenser, Marvell and Milton perhaps obeyed an imperative deeper than the Virgilian career model.”<sup>559</sup> These writers, she argues, use pastoral to express the nostalgia-haunted transition between childhood and adulthood. The genesis of Lovelace’s pastoral is undocumented, but “Aramantha” is an exploration of the possibility of sanctuary from a surrounding “storm of fire and blood” rather than a backward glance at an idealised existence. The meadows and woods in “Aramantha” are mutable rather than pristine, and the encounter of the lovers is awkwardly plotted and staged. Although their retreat has some passive and infantile elements (Lovelace provides an extended description of Aramantha’s breakfast on a heifer’s willing teat) the withdrawal is temporary, not timeless. In Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” the speaker takes refuge in the “Sanctuary of the Wood” which provides a “green, yet growing Ark”. Here, safety involves not only a rejection of the social world, but also a preference for the pre-sexual. Similarly, in Lovelace’s pastoral Alexis and Lucasta choose a spiritual union which has no need to deal with the consequences of more corporeal affection: “No venome-temper’d water’s here, / *Mercury* is banished the Sphere.” (108.)<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> This point is made by Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 218, and by Gerald Hammond in Richard Lovelace, *Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987), p. 8.

<sup>559</sup> Susan Snyder, *Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 147.

<sup>560</sup> Compare the sulphurous waters and the “blisters of love” in “*Lucasta at the Bath*” (132).

When Lovelace introduces Aramantha waking at dawn she appears to be naked. She subsequently relates how when she had found sanctuary the “Lady” of the wood stripped and re-clothed her in “home spunne bayes” teaching her the language of birds and shepherds that are unfamiliar with “guile or courtshiment” (117). Aramantha/Lucasta, and the meadow, wood and grove that shelter her, all exist in a state without lack or desire. The inner sanctum that Alexis and Lucasta retire to also represents the attainment of the object of classical epicurians: *ataraxia*, or freedom from anxiety. This stasis, however, results in an obliteration of identity for Alexis, who exchanges his arms for a crook. In this idyllic escape all artifice, even that of husbandry, has been abandoned. The reunited lovers subsist on fallen fruits, “Upon a dish of Natures cheere / Which both grew drest, and serv’d up there” (117), enjoying a pre-lapsarian picnic in a world where agriculture is unnecessary. The apparently benign Lucasta nonetheless possesses the withering power common to women within whose orbit the poet ventures too closely. In “Aramantha” the world of pastoral is not in a simple dichotomous opposition to the world of fashion or business, but a magic circle within a troubled state. To cross its boundary involves the shedding of those Sidney-like attributes so often given to Lovelace himself, for at the end of the poem Alexis is neither soldier, lover nor poet.

Lovelace’s pastoral privacy is thus an instance of a gendered discourse of retreat.<sup>561</sup> The grove in “Aramantha” is dominated by the feminine principle, yet the male has the ability to cross and perhaps re-cross its boundaries. Men can experience a socially sanctioned withdrawal from active life which may enable them to emerge with more visibility and fame; women are more likely to be trapped, and their sanctuary is liable to interruption and incursion by a male.

The intruder, Alexis, opens the first monologue of the poem with a conventional, classically derived melancholic complaint. The action then moves from garden to meadow, shady grove and cave, in a progression of enclosed spaces away from the classical pastoral’s open fields, to suggest that the pressures of civilisation and history increasingly surround and impinge upon even an imagined poetic space.

Discussions of the pastoral mode during the early and mid seventeenth century tend to focus not on poetry, but on the masque and on its function as both ideological prop and source of criticism of the rule of Charles I. The masque, however, did not

exhaust the varieties of literary pastoral, nor did pastoral drama (attempted by virtually every court poet)<sup>562</sup> exhaust the variety of dramatic productions commissioned and performed.<sup>563</sup> Although the masque may not have survived the civil wars as an art form, pastoral lyrics continued to be written even after 1642, when the theatres were closed, and they re-surfaced after the Restoration.<sup>564</sup> Lovelace's pastoral emerges at a time of transition: from Caroline panegyric to political satire; from the literary landscape of Arcadia to a more naturalistic appropriation of rural scenes; from the courtly Elizabethan eclogue to the surfeited parodies of Rochester. Pastoral becomes an elusive and paradoxical genre eluding definition to the extent that for some critics it appears to vanish entirely. Michael McKeon finds it multi-vocal and unstable, especially after 1650;<sup>565</sup> Frank Kermode argues that the story ends with Marvell, after which the impulse of rustic pastoral "petered out";<sup>566</sup> Robin Sowerby believes that Renaissance eclogues had already lost their connection with a

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<sup>561</sup> See Ronald Huebert, "The Gendering of Privacy", *Seventeenth Century*, 16: 1 (2001), pp. 37-67.

<sup>562</sup> Although Lovelace's first literary efforts were plays, they do not appear to have been specimens of pastoral drama. Bruce King erroneously mentions Lovelace among courtiers, including Suckling and Carew, who followed the fashion established for pastoral and wrote plays and masques. (Bruce King, *Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (New York: Shocken Books, 1982), p. 93.)

<sup>563</sup> Julie Sanders notes the different types of drama enjoyed in *Caroline Drama: The Plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley and Brome* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1999). See also John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre 1558-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). This provides a complete listing of performances at court which shows that pastoral was by no means the only dramatic mode.

<sup>564</sup> Of the Cavalier poets, Cowley and Walton continued to write on pastoral topics. After the Restoration the many reprints of the mid-century drolleries and miscellanies contained numerous love lyrics and laments in rural settings, as in *The Shepherds Garland of Love, Loyalty & Delight* (1682). Thomas Shadwell and Sir George Etherege, amongst other playwrights, continued to use the city/country antithesis. Pastoral funeral elegies were written for Rochester and pastoral poems of celebration for Charles II. Pastoral and rural songs became the property of the Restoration and "Part of the decline of literary taste which began in the reign of Charles II." (Charles Mackay, ed., *The Book of English Songs: from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851), p. 84.)

<sup>565</sup> Michael McKeon, "The Pastoral Revolution", in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 267-89.

<sup>566</sup> Frank Kermode, *English Pastoral Poetry: From the Beginnings to Marvell* (London: George and Harrap, 1952), p. 42.



classical ideal;<sup>567</sup> S.K. Heninger traces pastoral's mutation into satire, allegory or sentiment,<sup>568</sup> while for Earl Miner it survives only in the funeral elegy, the 'pastoral paraphernalia' having been dropped from love poetry by the Cavaliers:

Gone are the sheephooks, fleecing, sheep themselves, reed pipes, country cates and messes and almost all the scenery; gone is the sense of perpetual spring; gone is the immunity from time...the pastoral scene all but vanishes from love poetry or takes on a new character... Even those well-tried, if not always poetically true, pastoral devices such as song-contests are gone.<sup>569</sup>

Pastoral has been subject to modification and transformation, however, since its inception (assigned to Theocritus).<sup>570</sup> Virgil relocated it from Sicily to Arcadia; women, once excluded, returned as nymphs and shepherdesses; the idea of the Golden Age became transposed into the rural idyll; the labour of farming came in and out of focus. In the Renaissance, and especially in Europe, pastoral became almost synonymous with romance and with drama. Theocritus had written his idylls as an alternative to panegyric, patriotism and narratives of military victories by court poetasters; yet Caroline pastoral was able to re-absorb all these elements. In the seventeenth century, pastoral developed into a multitude of forms and sub-genres that continued to flourish in the Interregnum and later. Pastoral was written by both men and women and by writers covering the spectrum of political allegiance.<sup>571</sup> Lovelace's

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<sup>567</sup> Robin Sowerby, *The Classical Legacy in Renaissance Poetry* (London: Longman, 1994), p. 223.

<sup>568</sup> S.K. Heninger, Jr., "The Renaissance Perversion of Pastoral", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 22 (1961), pp. 254-61.

<sup>569</sup> Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 233.

<sup>570</sup> See Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>571</sup> Strode, Marvell and Milton wrote pastoral poetry, as did Margaret Cavendish in her *Poems and Fancies* (London: 1653). In the latter (pp. 142-4) there are two poems, "A Description of Shepherds and Shepherdesses" and "A Shepherds imployment is too Meane an Allegory for Noble Ladies", which take an unflattering look at pastoral reality. Her daughters composed an entertainment "A Pastorall", which deals with the impact of war on the countryside. (See Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp 94-7.) Anne Kemp's one surviving poem, "A Contemplation on Bassets down-Hill", contrasts the choking air of the city with the Virgilian delights of the country. (See Peter Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution. An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp 285-6.) Prynne may have attacked "scurrilous amorous pastorals", but Milton reclaimed the form for Protestants when he wrote *Arcades* for performance in 1632 for the Countess of Derby. (See David Bevington

“Aramantha” rather than being retrograde in form and content, represents the taste of the age with accuracy. “Amyntor’s Grove” (71) is a pastoral poem in the geographical and literary company of country-house poetry established in the first decades of the seventeenth century. It follows the trend established by Aemelia Lanier’s “The Description of Cookham”, Jonson’s “To Penshurst”, the anonymous, “Upon Entertainment at Saxham in Kent”, Carew’s “To Saxham” and Waller’s rural eulogies on Penshurst.<sup>572</sup> “Elinda’s Glove” (58) explores economic relations in the countryside through a lover’s eyes. Eroticised landscapes and pastorals of courtship and consummation in idyllic retreats are numerous in the printed drolleries and the manuscript miscellanies of the period.<sup>573</sup> “Love Made in the first Age: To Chloris” (146) adds Golden Age sexuality. Lovelace also has a number of lyrical dialogues between lovers with pastoral names, as does every poet contemporary with him.<sup>574</sup> Playford, whose publishing career testifies to his ability to assess popular taste over several decades, continued to publish song-books containing such lyrics into the

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and Peter Holbrook, eds., *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).)

<sup>572</sup> Leah Marcus suggests that the first English country-house poem of this era was written by a woman, Aemelia Lanier, whose poem on Cookham, appeared in 1611, though Ben Jonson’s subsequent “To Penshurst” set the form. (Leah S. Marcus, “Politics and Pastoral: Writing the Court on the Countryside”, in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, eds., *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 145-6.) Pastoral love lyrics are common in manuscript miscellanies but country-house poems are rarer. (See “Upon Entertainment at Saxham in Kent”, Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 142, f. 44.)

<sup>573</sup> A small selection from Cotgrave’s *Wits Interpreter* (London: 1655) might include: “A Dialogue Between Two Shepherdesses, Cloris and Amalthea”, p. 53; “A Dialogue between a Shepherd and a Shepherdess, Menacles and Amarillis”, p. 67; “A Pastoral Dialogue”, p. 68; “A Dialogue between Gonzalo and Amarantha”, p. 89; and “A Pastoral Dialogue. Thyrsis and Sylvia”, p. 158. Musical manuscripts of the period are full of tributes to “Chloris”. The song “Amintors Well-a-dying” by a Dr Hughes, which appears in Lawes 1653 collection, was especially popular. Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 65 is a miscellany with an especially large number of short poems, many of which feature Amyntas and Chloris together; Bod. MS Mal. 13 has some short pastoral lyrics; and Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 90 has a number of poems praising solitude and the country life. Some manuscripts testify to pastoral as an initiation into poetry. (See “Battus to Endymion by a young gentleman of 18”, Bod. MS Rawl. Poet. 153, f. 23.)

<sup>574</sup> “To Chloe Courting her for his Friend” (22), “Dialogue. Lucasta, Alexis” (41) and “Amyntor from beyond the Sea to Alexis” (101). Apart from the pastoral names these poems have little trace of the pastoral genre – even loosely defined. Hazlitt and Singer print an additional poem which Wilkinson excludes, “A Dialogue betwixt Cordanus and Amoret, on a Lost Heart”.

1680s. In addition to the sub-categories mentioned, to which Lovelace contributed, seventeenth-century pastoral may also be said to include some allegorical and political Interregnum ballads; the poetry of an emerging ecological consciousness; laments for lost lovers; funeral elegies; poems of rural celebration; the culture of translation; and the rural travelogue.<sup>575</sup> Despite being labelled by their authors as such, much seventeenth-century pastoral poetry, including that of Lovelace, would be excluded from modern definitions of the genre, although his engagement with one or more pastoral tropes is undisputed. In *What is Pastoral?* Paul Alpers defines it initially as “a literary mode based on ... a representative anecdote”.<sup>576</sup> Such anecdotes include the Golden Age, innocent love, and an encounter between courtiers and rustics. Rather than privileging landscape as the key to pastoral, Alpers insists on something more bucolic. To qualify, a literary work must include at least an oblique representation of the poet encountering a representative of the simple life - preferably a shepherd or a herdsman. Alpers also requires pastoral to have a movement towards ‘shared song’ and an inconclusive ending: elements which occur in Lovelace’s pastoral poetry. Alastair Fowler defines pastoral more inclusively as a sphere of interest or a “domain of assumptions”, which allows for Lovelace’s syncretic method.<sup>577</sup>

The stepping stones of Hesiod and Theocritus, Virgil and Tibullus, had been layered and extended by the courtly pastorals of Tasso, Sannazaro, Guarini and their English translators and imitators in the Renaissance. This culminates in the seventeenth century in a poetic of which Lovelace’s is typical: one that is densely intertextual and that embodies all the contradictions and tensions of the social and political climate. Pastoral ostensibly celebrates the countryside, but is a courtly mode, written by poets and playwrights *for* the court.<sup>578</sup> The houses celebrated in country house poems are the residences of those who have been successful at court; the poems are written by aristocratic landowners reluctant to live on the land, despite repeated

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<sup>575</sup> Overlooked in studies of pastoral are poems which seem to pre-date Henry Fielding in their narration of escapades in rural inns and with rural landladies. (See Henry Bold, “The Adventure. August 26 1645” and “Marston Ale-House; April 13<sup>th</sup> 1648”, in *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique* (London: 1664), pp. 129-41.)

<sup>576</sup> Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. ix.

<sup>577</sup> Alastair Fowler, “Georgic and Pastoral: Laws of Genre in the Seventeenth Century”, in Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, eds., *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 82.

Royal proclamations. (Lovelace appears to have had little to do with managing his own estate. He sold his lands in 1643, leased the family home he had inherited in 1644 and having sold it in 1649 he became an urban poet living in London lodgings.) Pastoral celebrates the natural, yet is a highly artificial and sophisticated genre, reliant on classical allusion and concerned above all with its own conventions.<sup>579</sup> It is complacent and conventional yet has the potential to be critical by setting up an ideal in contrast with the real, and by allowing known personages to speak out in the disguise of shepherds. As drama, it relies on costly illusion; as poetry it is often *recitative*, operatic, rather than mimicking the rural tradition of song. Satan, in *Paradise Lost*, is not the only rural wanderer to dislike being pent up in the dirty, populous and noisy city. Although some poetry was written that acknowledged the growing attractions of London, pastoral poetry obscures the city's centrifugal force by the ancient device of setting rural virtues against the vanities of city life. These virtues are themselves multi-faceted. Sometimes nature allows for a pre-Edenic innocence – even a state of Platonic androgyny, as in Marvell's "The Garden". Sometimes a state of chaste consummation is portrayed, as in the ending of "Aramantha" and especially in the many court pastorals celebrating the harmonious marriage of Henrietta Maria and Charles.

Since Tibullus, pastoral has been complicated by the addition of uncomplicated heterosexual love. Sex in Arcadia can encompass the union of nymphs and shepherds, Country swains and their maidens, or even poets and the landladies of rural inns, free from Christian moralising, and providing material for prurient observation. The free availability of women in these fantasies is part of a complex domain of assumptions about the Golden Age that include nature providing freely of her fruits, *sponda sua*, so that labour is unnecessary. This excision of rural labour and the labourer from these enamelled landscapes is seen by some critics as a reflection of aristocratic poets' distance from the source of their wealth, so that eclogue is preferred to georgic until the century has passed.<sup>580</sup> Though set in a countryside producing real wealth in the

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<sup>578</sup> See Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment. The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 9-16.

<sup>579</sup> John Barrell and John Bull, eds., *A Book of English Pastoral Verse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 8.

<sup>580</sup> See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Paladin, 1975), Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) and James Turner, "The Vanishing Swain", in *The Politics of Landscape. Rural*

form of wool, pastoral is the poetry of *otium*, of piscatorial pleasures, retreat, and escapism from the real business of the world, which is relegated to the city. This escape is itself a form of artifice. Despite some paeans to solitude and its potential to improve literary fecundity, the muses are fenced in gardens, clearings and enclosures as the ownership of land becomes more controlled, and as wilderness is yet to be celebrated in poetry. Pretty scenery obscures the technology of husbandry but it is there, like Prospero's acknowledged "thing of darkness", forming yet another complex triangulation within the genre: not only court-city-country but also art-technology-nature. Pastoral may be set in a distant and idealised past, in an apparently timeless zone, or it may look back more immediately, viewing the recent past through a halo of nostalgia: a position adopted by Cavalier poets in the Interregnum. For Annabel Patterson, pastoral was the property of the most privileged class, and "never more so than during their temporary defeat".<sup>581</sup> Similarly, Malcolm Smuts notes that "Under the Protectorate, royalist authors developed the ideal of an innocent, passive life spent in the pursuit of harmless pleasures, with greater consistency than their court predecessors."<sup>582</sup> A poetic mode which had helped to create an illusion of benevolent kingship now promotes the 1630s as having been an actual embodiment of that illusion and despite the disintegration or fragmentation of the pastoral genre it continued to provide a shared discourse for dispersed Royalist supporters.<sup>583</sup>

Lovelace's pastoral, however, turns on yet another dichotomy within the mode: the contrast between war and peace. If pastoral is an act of compensation for what a culture lacks, Lovelace's creation of a haven which explicitly bans arms is topical and logical. However, he does not quite conform to the definition of pastoral put forward by William Empson: that pastoral is a literary convention depending on social contrast, whose principal emotion is nostalgia. Lovelace does not juxtapose two situations in time, or in place (the court versus the country), but two states of being. Lovelace's protagonist is not a country gentleman as described by Walton and Cowley, walking, fishing, conversing and unburdened by political activities, but an

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*Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 153-85.

<sup>581</sup> Annabel Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.139.

<sup>582</sup> R. Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), p. 290.

active soldier. Much of the poetry of retreat in the Cavalier winter is a retreat from the horrors of the civil wars, not simply from urban or court life. In writing a political pastoral Lovelace returns to the Latin roots of English pastoral, which do not obscure the material conditions for rural ease. Lovelace also responds, in an understated way, to the increased resonance of Virgil in mid-century.<sup>584</sup> Even the King, during his sojourn in Oxford, had consulted a copy of Virgil in the Bodleian.<sup>585</sup>

Annabel Patterson argues that as a direct result of Stuart policies, “the Virgilian code and the ideological possibilities it presented passed out of the cabinet of the lone intellectual, isolated and besieged, into the terrain of politics proper and became widely disseminated as a public language.”<sup>586</sup> Translations of Virgil had increased in frequency during the Interregnum, based on earlier efforts. George Sandys had appended to post-1632 editions of his *Metamorphoses* a translation of Book I of the *Aeneid*. Two translations of the eclogues in the 1630s were augmented by John Ogilby’s lavish edition of Virgil in 1648 (revised in 1654). Ogilby had lost his entire wealth in the civil wars. Sidney Godolphin’s translation of the fourth book of the *Aeneid* was continued, after his death, by Waller: Sir Richard Fanshawe produced a version of the same segment in 1648, during Charles’ imprisonment by Parliament. In 1656, at the height of Cromwell’s supremacy, Sir John Denham issued an essay on the second book of the *Aeneid* that he presented as having been written twenty years earlier, and in 1658 the Republican James Harington published his essays on Virgil’s *Eclogues*. Lucy Hutchinson left unpublished her attempt at part of the *Aeneid*.<sup>587</sup> Although it is the fate of the pastoral Virgil in the mid-seventeenth century which has received critical attention, Royalist poets (and others) focused more on translating and commenting on fragments of Virgil’s heroic poem, some echoes of which inform

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<sup>583</sup> Rosemary Gay Laing, *The Disintegration of Pastoral: Studies in Seventeenth Century Theory and Practice* (Oxford: D. Phil Thesis, 1982).

<sup>584</sup> Virgil had become associated with imperial destiny and resistance to the charms of women – elements congenial to Lovelace, as previous chapters have shown. Whereas Royalist poets expressed coded hopes through allusions to and translations of Virgil, Milton is hostile to Virgil’s portrayal of an ambitious, imperial hero. (See Colin Burrow, “Virgils, from Dante to Milton”, in Charles Martindale, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 79-91.)

<sup>585</sup> Charles Martindale, “Introduction: ‘The Classic of all Europe’”, in Martindale ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>586</sup> Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>587</sup> See F. Olivero, “Virgil in XVII and XVIII Century English Literature”, *Poetry Review*, 21 (1930), p. 189.

Lovelace's depiction of his pastoral hero, Alexis. Uncertainty about the King's cause, the departure of many Royalists for the continent and the financially precarious situation of the Royalist gentry and aristocracy is reflected in the mutations and adaptations of pastoral in this period. Mildmay Fane's *Otia Sacra* (1648) expresses undiminished faith in Charles I in two volumes of pastoral verse; Thomas Stanley, Lovelace's kinsman, included Guarini (the author of *Il Pastor Fido*) in his 1651 *Poems and Translations*; in the same year Anna Weamys published *A Continuation of Sir Philip Sydney: Arcadia*. Sir Edward Sherburne included some idylls of Theocritus in his *Poems and Translations* (1651) and John Davies translated Charles Sorel's 'anti-romance' *The Extravagant Shepherd* in 1654.

### 6. 1. "Aramantha" in context.

Had *Lucasta* not been held up at the licensers for over a year, "Aramantha" would have appeared almost contemporaneously with Sir Richard Fanshawe's 1647 translation of Guarini's tragi-comedy *Il Pastor Fido*.<sup>588</sup> Fanshawe's translation of a sixteenth-century play is full of political irony. The work is dedicated to Prince Charles, on whom, as the faithful shepherd, the resolution of the pastoral romance depends. Fanshawe wrote an allegorical preface for his first edition, suggesting parallel interpretations for Guarini's advice to a ruler that could be applied to the current state of the kingdom, but he did not append this to his 1648 edition. He did, however, include his own lyrics in the new format, a new title page which clearly indicates his allegiance, and a translation of two poems of Horace on civil war.<sup>589</sup> Fanshawe, a committed Royalist who was later imprisoned, had provided an unambiguous and partisan context for readers and writers of Cavalier pastoral. Lovelace is more oblique, and in "Aramantha" avoids the common Interregnum identification of the King with a shepherd. Lovelace employs the imagery of the sun, or of the oak tree, but other poets had no reservations about equating Charles I with a good, if careless shepherd, articulating an easily deciphered critique of the state. In the anonymous "King *Charles's* Lament" the poet assumes the voice of the imprisoned

<sup>588</sup> Laurence Lerner denies that Guarini's play is a pastoral because Guarini's shepherd society is complex, hierarchical, and does not provide a contrast to but a transposition of, the court. (See Lerner, *The Uses of Nostalgia* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), p. 38.)

<sup>589</sup> Epode 16 and Ode 24 in *The Poems and Translations of Sir Richard Fanshawe*, ed. Peter Davidson and Roger M. Walker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 130-2.

King.<sup>590</sup> In the penultimate stanza the speaker turns to his people echoing the words of Shakespeare's unhappy Henry IV and Horace's famous lines:

How happy is the Man that labours all the Day  
For little Pay,  
For he at Night may safely go to Rest;  
And he that travails up and down, and takes most Pains  
Receives the Gains,  
And takes his lodging where it likes him best.  
These men have Liberty to labour,  
A sweet and Pleasant Thing;  
And in their Fare more happy are  
Than is a troubled King.  
The Country Swains, the silly Shepherds,  
And Tradesmen eek also,  
Have Liberty, while here I ly  
In Sorrow and in Wo.

Whereas Horace contrasts the life of a rural dweller with that of a city sophisticate, this poem compares two states: the prisoner and the free man; the troubled ruler and the ordinary labourer.

The use of Horatian language in this poem illustrates that the location and identity of Horace's "happy man" is never fixed but varies according to the writer's perspective. Horace's epode, much translated and imitated in the seventeenth century, opens with the famous invocation, *Beatus ille qui procul negotiis* (Happy is he, far from business affairs), but the lines are spoken by an uncharitable money lender. The common people in the anonymous poem pay their way, whereas Charles' predicament was sometimes seen by his contemporaries as being financial in origin: the Crown had borrowed extensively and in the 1640s many loans were left unpaid.<sup>591</sup> Lawrence Venuti's analysis of Lovelace's "To Chloe, Courting her for his Friend" (22) as a pastoral lyric also touches on monetary issues. Venuti finds that the third stanza compares the royal shepherd to an usurer.<sup>592</sup> The iconography of the Royal martyr or Christ-like shepherd who is sacrificed had not yet surfaced, but Thomas Jordan's lyric "The Kingly Complaint. The King Imprison'd at Holmby" (directed to be sung to the

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<sup>590</sup> In Davidson, ed., *Poetry and Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 325-8

<sup>591</sup> See Robert Ashton, *The Crown and the Money Market, 1603-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

<sup>592</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Our Halcyon Days: English Prerevolutionary Texts and Postmodern Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 251.



tune of “In faith I cannot keep my Sheap”) now appears as an ironical prediction.<sup>593</sup> Jordan’s contempt for artisans surfaces in this poem and finds some parallels in Lovelace’s “To Lucasta. From Prison”. Jordan writes: “A *Reformation* next is fought, / *Episcopacy* must go down, / A Tinker’s art must mend the Crown, / By Weavers we may well be taught.” Lovelace has: “A Reformation I would have, / As for our griefes a Sov’raigne salve ... But not a Reformation so, / As to reform were to ore’throw; / Like Watches by unskilfull men / Disjoynted and set ill againe.”<sup>594</sup> This use of the mode reaches its apotheosis in Brome’s “The Pastorall”, subtitled, ‘On the King’s Death’:

When *England’s Damon* us’d to keep,  
                     In peace and awe, his flocks  
 Who fed, not fed upon his sheep,  
 There Wolves and Tygres now do prey,  
 There Sheep are slain, and Goats do sway,  
                     There raigns the subtle Fox  
                     While the poor Lamkins weep.<sup>595</sup>

Charles, who had been celebrated as the chaste lover, the upholder of artistic value and the conqueror of dragons, becomes not only the Good Shepherd but – in the second stanza – a pipe playing poet. Meanwhile the King’s subjects have become cattle in the third stanza, or geese in a manuscript version that explicitly addresses “Poor Charles”.<sup>596</sup> In this pastoral the countryside is simply the country: not an ideal set against a reality but a reality which overturns nature. The poem ends with an image of disorder: “Down skrip and sheephook goes, / When Foxes Shepheards be.”

The political charge of pastoral analogy is not, however, always in the direction of Royalist propaganda. Whereas Brome views the Commonwealth as a perversion of the natural order and one which turns the people into beasts, a ballad of

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<sup>593</sup> Thomas Jordan, *Musick & Poetry mixed in a variety of songs and poems* (London: 1663), p. 9.

<sup>594</sup> Jordan and Lovelace may have had in mind the apprentice riots in London in 1641 and 1642. The contrast between the virtues of the country and the unpleasant nature of life in towns, already common in Renaissance pastoral lyric, can easily appropriate the new division between the King’s docile rural subjects and the troublesome City of London.

<sup>595</sup> Alexander Brome, *Poems*, ed. Roman R. Dubinski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 120.

<sup>596</sup> Bod. MS Ash. 47, f. 146.

1640 praising the Long Parliament looks back to the days of Charles' rule as the time when men *were* sheep:

Like Silly Sheepe they did us daily sheare,  
Like Asses strong our backes were made to beare,  
Intollerable burdens, year by year.<sup>597</sup>

Similarly John Hall's preface to *The Grounds and Reasons for Monarchy* castigates, using a pastoral analogy, those who are credulous and ignorant enough to believe that the King is set over them. Such subjects behave as a herd.<sup>598</sup> For Lovelace, however, it is war that turns men into the lowest forms of animal life undignified by any relation to heraldic creatures or docile farm animals.<sup>599</sup>

Lovelace's pastoral, though it opens and closes with conventional literary depictions of pastoral havens (the fertile garden, the bower of bliss), also contains images of destruction and confusion; as Thomas Corns suggests, war cannot be effectively excluded.<sup>600</sup> Corns also points out that "Aramantha" is full of military vocabulary such as "volunteer" and "recruit", which had recently entered the language. In the poem's first couplet a retreat sounds three times, signalling the vulnerable and temporary nature of the haven in which the wandering soldier, Alexis, finds himself. Alexis brings with him the violent rhetoric of the world he inhabits. He appears surprised that trees can flourish and earth can wear a gay livery, "Not black as her dark entrails be." Ostensibly, Alexis desires Nature to reflect the inner state of the disappointed lover, but the imagery and the tone suggest that the contrast, so necessary to pastoral, is not only between the green and sheltered world, and the world outside, but between the natural world and man's destructive impulses. Alexis summons up familiar elements:

– Rage, Rapine, Force!  
Ye blew-flam'd daughters oth' Abyse,  
Bring all your Snakes, here let them hisse;

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<sup>597</sup> Quoted in C.V. Wedgwood, *Poetry and Politics Under the Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 63.

<sup>598</sup> John Hall and Evan Tyler, *The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy: Considered and Exemplified out of the Scottish History by JH* (Edinburgh: 1651), p.5

<sup>599</sup> In "Aramantha" Hydraphil is a grotesque figure involved in the conflict: in the 1659 volume the "beast" poems on ants, spiders, toads, flies and snails comment on the slyness and treachery of those in power.

<sup>600</sup> Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 78.

Let not a leaf its freshnesse keep;  
Blast all their roots, and as you creepe  
And leave behind your deadly slime,  
Poyson the budding branch in's prime:  
Wast the proud Bowers of the Grove,  
That Fiends may dwell in it, and move  
As in their proper Hell. (113)

The war portrayed in these lines is a war specifically directed at nature's ability to reproduce itself: an quality which has been described in Edenic hyperbole. The devastation extends to poetry itself, as Lovelace alludes to Theocritus, and pastoral's original personae and location:

For safeguard of their proper joyes,  
And Shepheards freedome, each destroyes  
The glory of this Sicilie. (117)

In pre-war drama, masque, romance and poetry, the pastoral paradise had been located within the sunny orbit of the King and Queen. It existed, not as a rural idyll separate from life, but as a construct within the court which mirrored a country maintained in peace and prosperity by a king who had avoided becoming involved in the religious wars on the Continent. Carew had expressed this in his answer poem to Aurelian Townsend:

But let us that in myrtle bowers sit  
Under secure shades, use the benefit  
Of peace and plenty, which the blessed hand  
Of our good King gives this obdurate land.<sup>601</sup>

In his study of court culture, Malcolm Smuts comments on the disparagement of war in the literary productions of the court.<sup>602</sup> The chapter on poems of love and war shows how unusually removed Lovelace's poetry is from this underlying pacifism. Only two epic poems were written at the court and these did not glorify warfare. Pastoral pleasures were regarded as superior to military heroism. Lovelace's "Aramantha" is not simply a continuation of this ideology. Aggression is shown as

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<sup>601</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 74-7. Whereas Carew uses the Virgilian imagery of the protective shade, this shadow becomes in Lovelace's poetry a cloud through which the King may, like Aeneas, emerge victorious.

<sup>602</sup> Smuts, *Court Culture*, op. cit., p. 252.

difficult to avoid and the sanctuary of the wood is a literary artefact. The convoluted narrative is resolved at the moment when Alexis is transformed from a soldier into a shepherd, but an awareness of conflict remains.<sup>603</sup> When Aramantha/Lucasta speaks to him, the “confounded” shepherd, armed with spear and javelin, rushes to reply with more violence:

Now as in warre intestine, where  
Ith’ mist of a black Battell, each  
Layes at his next, then makes a breach  
Through th’ entrayles of another whom  
He sees nor knows when he did come  
Guided alone by Rage and th’ Drumme,  
But stripping and impatient wild,  
He finds too soon his onely child. (116)

In one long sentence Lovelace not only portrays the horrors of close fighting and of civil war, but allows the moment of greatest violence to be the moment of revelation. Lucasta now reveals herself to Alexis, and having put by the weapon with which he means to kill himself, heals him with love. Alexis joins Lucasta in peaceful retirement, and the eventual *otium* of the lovers’ seclusion is marked by the last of an accumulation of anaphora:

His armes hung up and his Sword broke,  
His Engines folded, he betook  
Himself unto the humble Crook. (118)

Thomas Rosenmeyer notes this technique of repetition as one used in pastoral to arrest progress and continuity, to focus on the present.<sup>604</sup> In “Aramantha” the preceding instances of this device always refer to Aramantha/Lucasta, who finally transfers an acceptance of stasis on to Alexis. In leaving aside his military self, Alexis embodies the original meaning of the term *otium*, popularly interpreted in stoic texts of the seventeenth century as country relaxation from city business, but in this case referring to a soldier’s leave from duty: an escape from the business of death.<sup>605</sup> That the escape is possibly only temporary is signalled by the retirement of the couple into a

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<sup>603</sup> Bewildering at first, “Aramantha” shows Lovelace’s inheritance of pastoral conventions. Courtly refugees in rural disguise had been a feature of pastoral romance since Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*, and overheard monologues and the restoration of lost mistresses or lovers are also common narrative devices.

<sup>604</sup> Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet*, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid. pp. 67-8.

peaceful cave, “To make their Bridall-bed and grave.” In Book IV of the *Aeneid*, Dido and Aeneas shelter from a rainstorm in a cave, and enact a consummation of their relationship which Dido believes sanctifies it as a marriage, but which is only an interlude in the hero’s progress through more violence to conquest and victory. The weapons which Alexis carries, the spear and the javelin, are those with which Aeneas fights. They are mythical and iconic rather than weapons of the mid-century. The shelter into which Alexis has stumbled leaves him unmanned, yet these Virgilian echoes in Lovelace suggest that Alexis will eventually leave the cave. A hero may yet emerge for the Royalist cause.

## 6. 2. Woman and metamorphosis

Lovelace’s poetry shows a consistent interest in the idea of metamorphosis, both desired and unwilling, and in the gendered discourse of transformation whereby men, as painters or poets have positive powers of revelation and understanding, but women’s arts involve deception and disguise. In his pastoral, it is Lucasta’s transformative powers that have secured the lovers’ reunion, and Lovelace portrays the woman as a type of the mythological Flora, a deity whose presence both adds to nature and subdues it. Marvell’s Maria Fairfax also has this influence since she bestows beauty on the gardens, straightness to the trees and sweetness on the meadows. She is “the quintessential spirit of the landscape.”<sup>606</sup> Although Aramantha/Lucasta has many of the same qualities, she is a mutable, inconstant nymph with multiple identities and, despite her regal attributes, seems to be differentiated from the mysterious Cælia who rules the wood. When Aramantha passes through the meadow in the first part of the poem she encounters a catalogue of obedient flowers: heliotrope, marigold, violet, tulip and honeysuckle. The flowers have the characteristics of Laud’s reforms in their emphasis on hierarchy, beauty, ritual and obedience. Lucasta makes Alexis a Bishop when she eventually installs him as a shepherd in a “SEE of flow’rs” and then pledges faith which is returned with religion.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> H.M. Richmond, “Rural Lyricism: A Renaissance Mutation of the Pastoral”, *Comparative Literature*, 16: 3 (1964), p. 209.

<sup>607</sup> Marvell’s solitary speaker in “Upon Appleton House” is also dignified by religious office, becoming a “Prelate of the Grove” in an “antic cope” (Stanza 74).

Catalogues of flowers, with un-standardised meanings, had been popular in Renaissance pastoral and Lovelace's list has some affinities with the symbolic use of flowers by poets close to him in time. Thomas Corns notes Marvell's military flowers in stanza 39 of "Upon Appleton House":

See how the flowers, as at parade,  
Under their colours stand displayed:  
Each regiment in order grows,  
That of the tulip, pink and rose.<sup>608</sup>

Aramantha's promenade also has the character of a military inspection. The flowers vie to be noticed, although some will be selected for death – to form Aramantha's pagan coronet. Sir Richard Fanshawe's 1630 ode to the King in response to a proclamation "Commanding the Gentry to reside upon their Estates in the Country", also has a "commonwealth of flowers" whose exact status is specified:

The Lily (Queen), the (Royal) Rose,  
The Gillyflower (Prince of the blood),  
The (Courtier) Tulip (gay in clothes),  
                    The (regal) Bud,  
The Violet (purple Senator).<sup>609</sup>

Like Lovelace's meadow, Fanshawe's garden mocks and parodies the social structure, while complicating any simple juxtaposition of the country against the court, for the latter has been transformed into the former, just as the country itself has been transformed into an elegant and ordered garden. The perversion of the natural is especially evident in Lovelace's inclusion of "The rich robed Tulip, who/Clad all in Tissue close doth woe." Tulips were the fashionable result of hybridisation and commercial speculation, and had become a valuable commodity in the late 1630s.<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>608</sup> Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue*, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>609</sup> Sir Richard Fanshawe, *Shorter Poems and Translations*, ed. N.W. Bawcutt (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964), p. 8.

<sup>610</sup> Christina Malcolmson also points out the political implications of tulips in poems such as Marvell's "The Mower Against Gardens". According to the radical Digger Winstanley the commercialisation of the earth was as inauthentic as the creation of lordships, domains and estates. In this context it is interesting to note the humble and orderly behaviour of the fauna to Aramantha. See Malcolmson's "The Garden Enclosed /The Woman Enclosed: Marvell and the Cavalier Poets", in Richard Burt and John Michael Archer, eds., *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 251-70.

The benevolent and nurturing nature which surrounds and protects Aramantha already contains unnature, greed and the potential for loss.

Aramantha herself is a semi-divine being commonly found in poetry of the period. The fructifying woman is a much-used trope, and is expanded in promenade poems such as Strode's "I saw fair Chloris walk alone" or Cowley's "The Spring".<sup>611</sup> The magical mistress in the flower garden is, according to James Turner, typical of rural poetry in which productive labour is excluded but the gentry have supernatural powers so that the fertility of the land is an attribute of the landlord.<sup>612</sup> Lovelace, however, gives Aramantha quasi-royal status so that the tribute paid to Aramantha/Lucasta in the poem can be read as a possible tribute to Henrietta Maria:

The flowers in their best aray,  
As to their Queen their Tribute pay,  
And freely to her Lap proscribe  
A Daughter out of ev'ry Tribe:

...  
The rest in silken fetters bound,  
By *Crowning* her are *Crown* and *Crown'd*. (109)

In *Chloridia* (1631), a masque of Jonson's based on Ovid, the Queen herself played Chloris as a nymph who could transform the earth and cause Spring to appear.<sup>613</sup> Aramantha's identification with the Queen is more ambiguous, however, for "the loyall golden *Mary*" (also an emblem of the Queen) is subject to Aramantha's whims, and the noble heliotrope "Now turnes to her, and knowes no Sun." Since the sun is emblematic of the King, it seems that the orderly grove houses political factions and that the feminine element rules. In comparison, William Davenant makes the identification of Henrietta Maria and the woman superior to nature quite explicit in his "The Queen returning to London, after a long absence" – a poem Lovelace might have known as it appeared in 1638 and again in 1648:

So when the Rayes of her fair head appear,  
To warm, and guild your clouded Hemispheare,

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<sup>611</sup> H.M. Richmond thoroughly examines the origin of this trope. Originally the tribute was to a fertilising principle or a goddess, not to a mortal's beauty, but the attributes of the immortals became redirected in pastoral. *The School of Love: The Evolution of the Stuart Love Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 160-6.

<sup>612</sup> James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 161.

<sup>613</sup> Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, op. cit., p. 34.

Those Flow'rs which in your narrow Gardens grow,  
... rejoyce upon their stalks.<sup>614</sup>

The theme reappears in Heath's "On Clarastella walking in her Garden" (1650), where Clarastella (like Aramantha) is likened to Flora and then to a Queen guarded by pinks, then greeted with bows and homage by violets, lilies and roses amongst other garden plants and shrubs.<sup>615</sup> Clarastella passes through the garden in triumph, redeeming drooping flowers by her presence and finding that the fruits demand "Come eat me."

As Aramantha walks through the woods, herself the fairest plant, the fauna and flora throng to pay obedience. Soon Aramantha is

Sated in Soul and Appetite;  
Full of the purple plumme and Peare,  
The golden Apple with the faire  
Grape, that mirth fain would have taught her,  
And nuts which Squirrels cracking brought her. (112)

This unforced offering of nature's bounty is characteristic of life in Saturn's golden reign, as described by Tibullus.<sup>616</sup> There is no conflict in this first age because there is no need for trade or agriculture.<sup>617</sup> The oak trees drip honey and the ewes willingly offer milk to any passer-by. The images which Lovelace borrows occur in Tibullus in the same sentence as the line, "Anger and armies and war were not yet known", embedding Lovelace's classical echoes in the contrast between peace and war. However, as Rosenmeyer points out, the animals in pastoral havens tend to be disposable.<sup>618</sup> The heifers offer themselves to Aramantha as sacrifice; the fish are eager to be caught:

What need she other bait or charm  
But look? Or Angle, but her arm?

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<sup>614</sup> *The Works of Sir William Davenant* (1673), (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 231.

<sup>615</sup> *Clarastella* (1650) by Robert Heath, ed. Frederick H. Candelaria (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1970), pp. 42-3.

<sup>616</sup> See Tibullus, *Elegies*, trans. Guy and Robert Maltby (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1995), p. 15.

<sup>617</sup> Productive labour features very little in classical pastoral. Milton is unusual in promoting the dignity of labour, making Adam and Eve gardeners rather than shepherds or herdsmen. Michael speaks of an idyll of justice and equality in *Paradise Lost*, Book 12, 16-22.

<sup>618</sup> Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet*, op. cit., pp. 130-45.



The happy Captive gladly ta'n  
Sues ever to be slave in vaine. (111)

Amarantha is even more skilful and artless than other ladies or gentlemen meeting with obsequious fish, since she requires no tackle. In Waller's "Upon a Lady's Fishing With an Angle", the poet comments, "See how they crowd and thronging wait / Greedy to catch the proffered bait". In Jonson's "To Penshurst" the fat, aged carp and the weary pike swim gladly into the net with a dutifulness that expresses acceptance of the Chain of Being.<sup>619</sup> Thomas Stanley also includes fish in his extended promenade poem, "Sylvia's Park":

And Sylvia angling in the Brook:  
There I beheld the Fishes strife,  
Which first should sacrifice its life,  
To be the Trophey of her Hook,<sup>620</sup>

The beautiful woman can receive nature's bounty, freely given of itself, as in the original Golden Age, because she *is* nature. Lovelace describes his heroine as a "Provance Rose", whose hair is dressed by the wind and who requires no amulets, pomander or perfumes. She is free of fashionable silk gowns that oppress and confine the wearer like an instrument of torture.<sup>621</sup> When Aramantha gazes on a camomile lawn whose bosom is strewn with strawberries, she becomes that lawn. Michael McKeon stresses the traditional association of the male with culture, activity and *negotium*, and the female with nature, retirement and *otium*.<sup>622</sup> The analogy is a complex one, however, since whenever a woman is described as a landscape (as in

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<sup>619</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Conceitful Thought: The Interpretation of English Renaissance Poems* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), p. 127.

<sup>620</sup> *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, ed. Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 159. Crump notes the occurrence of this image in Donne, Lovelace and Marvell.

<sup>621</sup> Lovelace expresses a view common among both Cavalier and Puritan poets and moralists in denouncing paint and artifice in women. (This is explored in more depth in my discussion of "The Faire Begger" in Chapter Four.) In his comments on Marvell's "The Mower Against Gardens" Christopher Wortham notes Marvell's implication that wild flowers are like pure maids but those produced by the gardener's skill are like prostitutes. Lovelace takes care to emphasise the natural elements of Aramantha's toilette; her modest face-washing and hair dressing.

<sup>622</sup> McKeon, "The Pastoral Revolution", op. cit., p. 280.

Carew's "The Complement"),<sup>623</sup> or a landscape becomes a woman's body (Henry Bold's "The Morning Visit on his Mistris"),<sup>624</sup> its contours are invisibly tamed, man-made and essentially removed from a primal state. Christina Malcolmson argues that in these poems (including Marvell's "the Mower Against Gardens"), the bodies of women "become analogous to and emblematic of the property whose ownership and government were in dispute in England during this period."<sup>625</sup> Lovelace's nymph, however, is not the "chaste but generative wife" Malcolmson finds in poems that debate the nature of husbandry. She is a more elusive figure, whose powers extend beyond the benevolent reaping of earth's bounty. As a force of nature Aramantha is embedded in a context of cultural expectations; she is any woman the poet wants to praise by placing her in an outdoor setting which she apparently controls. Like all women walking in palace gardens or London parks, she has aristocratic attributes; but Lovelace's potential equation of the woman with a Queen does not make her uniquely symbolic of Henrietta Maria in the explicit manner of other poets. In Nicholas Hookes' book of love poems, *Amanda* (1653), "To Amanda Walking in the Garden" opens: "And now what monarch would not gardener be."<sup>626</sup> A catalogue of flowers and plants bow and bend as if, "Riding to Parliament, were to be seen / In pomp and state some royal amorous Queen." Disordered nature submits willingly, but not to virtue and good government, for Amanda herself must submit to the poet who follows her progress in order to give her "a green gown". Cleveland is even more emphatically in control. Phillis, walking before sunrise, shrivels flowers and trees with her beauty, bringing in Autumn with Spring.<sup>627</sup> Nature itself introduces a military order:

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<sup>623</sup> Carew moves over the woman's anatomy including "those mountaines / Hill'd with snow, whence milky fountaines, / (Suger'd sweete, as sirropt berries) / Must one day run through pipes of cherries". (*The Poems of Thomas Carew*, op. cit., pp. 99-101.) Henry Glapthorne, in his "Lucinda describ'd", describes a garden of fruits and flowers in which the woman's breasts are pomegranates. (Glapthorne, *POËMS* (London: 1639), pp. 5-6.)

<sup>624</sup> Henry Bold, *Latine Songs, with Their English: And Poems. Collected and Perfected by W. Bold* (London: 1685), p. 181.

<sup>625</sup> Malcolmson, "The Garden Enclosed", op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>626</sup> Nicholas Hookes, *Amanda, A Sacrifice to an Unknown Goddesse, or, A Free-will Offering Of a loving Heart to a Sweet-Heart* (New York: W.A. Gough, 1923), pp. 42-4.

<sup>627</sup> "Upon Phillis walking in a morning before Sun-rising", in *The Poems of John Cleveland*, ed. Brian Morris and Eleanor Withington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 14-5.

The trees like yeomen of her guard,  
Serving more for pomp than ward,  
Rank't on each side with loyall duty,  
Weave branches to inclose her beauty.

The protective branches build a cathedral. The description of a perfect woman in an idealised and orderly landscape inevitably gravitates towards a representation of a sophisticated and hierarchical society.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> Turner, *The Politics of Landscape*, op. cit., p. 96, notes that Aramantha, in her encounters with flowers and trees, displays all the pomp of the court she has supposedly eschewed.

### 6. 3. The grove, the wood and a magical restoration

In the seventeenth century private space was becoming valued, and Lovelace's Aramantha finds privacy as she moves from the garden into a neighbouring wood, "Whose rooffe defies the tell-tale Sunne, / And locks out ev'ry prying beame." She meets her yeomen before she enters a "well-ordered, stately grove" whose elements reveal it to be a court in miniature:

This is the Pallace of the Wood,  
And Court oth' Royall Oake, where stood  
The whole Nobility, the Pine,  
Strait Ash, tall Firre, and wanton Vine;  
The proper Cedar, and the rest;  
Here she her deeper senses blest. (111)

In the Theocritan landscape the oak symbolises primacy and was used by Lovelace's contemporaries as an emblem for the King. In Lovelace's pastoral the oak and its entourage is not yet threatened, but in 1648 Brome published a pamphlet appropriating the voice of the imprisoned King, who asks: "Can they not see when the oakes' cutt down that all / The clamb'ring Ivie downe with it must fall."<sup>629</sup> Lovelace's "stately grove" includes poetic, religious and useful trees. It excludes myrtle, popular in pastoral lyrics and sacred to Venus, includes plantation trees that do not naturally occur together, and echoes Virgil's seventh eclogue: "The Ash is glory of all Timber woods / The Pine, of Orchards ... The Firr is beauty of the Hills so high."<sup>630</sup> The cedar and the pine are familiar inhabitants of the literary *locus amoenus* and are included in Milton's description of Paradise (IV. 139). Lovelace makes no link, however, between the trees and literary fecundity of the sort celebrated by Cowley or bemoaned by Hugh Crompton in the dedication to his *Pierides* (1658).<sup>631</sup> Writing in the 1650s, Cowley and Crompton refer to a situation no longer favouring the production of poetry, and Lovelace anticipates this in his lovers' retreat to a treeless and feminine space. Lovelace has banished labour, even the work of poetry, from his sanctuary: Alexis has neither the necessary solitude, nor the shade of the male coterie to enable him to be a poet as well as a shepherd.

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<sup>629</sup> Alexander Brome, "A Copie of Verses Said to Be Composed by His Majestie, Upon His First Imprisonment in the Isle of Wight" (London:1648).

<sup>630</sup> William Lisle, trans. (1628), in Kermode, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>631</sup> Abraham Cowley, *Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses*, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), pp. 395-7.

There is no intimation in “Aramantha”, however, that the grove is suffering from deforestation – a topic creeping into mid century poetry as a result of a growing awareness of timber shortage.<sup>632</sup> The Puritans were particularly regarded as destroyers of forests for military purposes, as Evelyn records after the Restoration in his *Sylva*. Though disappearing from the land, trees had been flourishing in literature and drama, and several of Inigo Jones’ masques used trees as positive emblems of the rule of Charles I.<sup>633</sup> The expensive recreation of outdoor landscape as indoor theatre had a number of emblematic meanings: an expression of support for ancient ceremonies; a desire to restore ancient church ritual or to recover a universal religion; and a presentation of Charles I as both regal and priestly. The wooded grove in “Aramantha” also represents the protection offered by a ritual order, in contrast with the liberty and the potential threat, of open spaces, as well as the orderliness of the court and the country versus the political turmoil of London. Nevertheless, in Lovelace’s poem, the arboreal elite provides insufficient protection. The lovers find their bower not among the trees, but in a cave. Their withdrawal typifies both the secular trend to a greater privacy and intimacy in aristocratic life and the Laudian distancing of sacred spaces.<sup>634</sup> The seclusion they enjoy is also a public expression of a shift in boundaries caused by technological innovation. Coterie poetry and the circulation of manuscript texts encoded a socially defined sense of privacy and exclusivity: the new social privacy becomes articulated as erotic intimacy.<sup>635</sup>

Lovelace’s meadow and grove are removed from one element of pastoral nostalgia, the ideal commonwealth posited in Ovid, Virgil and Seneca as a feature of the Golden Age; but critics have detected another feature related to the seventeenth-century tradition of Hermetic Druidic works. Douglas Brooks-Davies argues that the

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<sup>632</sup> See Paul H. Hardacre, *The Royalists During the Puritan Revolution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 24-6, which records the tremendous devastation of estates and the drain on timber resources.

<sup>633</sup> See Charles Larson, “Fairfax’s Wood: Marvell and Seventeenth-Century Trees”, *Durham University Journal*, 80: 1 (1987), p. 28.

<sup>634</sup> See Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*, op. cit., p. 18. See also the comments on the privacy and retreat favoured by the King and Queen in Ann Baynes Coiro, “‘A Ball of Strife’: Caroline Poetry and Royal Marriage”, in Thomas N. Corns, ed., *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 26-47.

<sup>635</sup> These observations are made by Wendy Wall and quoted in Dorothy Stephens, *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative: Conditional Pleasure from Spenser to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 9.

political meaning of the poem depends on recognising its links with Egyptian religion.<sup>636</sup> The restoration of the Golden Age in the “yet living Wood” is the result of a magical sacrifice. The sacred heifer that feeds Aramantha is both Io and Isis, and also a double for Aramantha herself, who is regenerated as an archetype of Flora and of Isis.<sup>637</sup>

The episode in which Aramantha meets the snow-white heifer with the “beauteous crescent” who is “Worthy alone the *hallowed knife*” recalls, however, Virgil’s description of Dido in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*. Fanshawe’s translation, “On the Loves of Dido and Aeneas” has these lines:

The Queene her selfe (more beauteous in those Rites)  
Betweene the Crescent of a milke white Cow  
The liquor powres: Or passing in their sights,  
Unto the Gods with rev’rend grace doth bow,  
...  
Which is the sacrifice is offer’d now?<sup>638</sup>

These Virgilian echoes in Lovelace have been overlooked. His identification of Alexis with Aeneas indicates the transient nature of the pastoral haven and also articulates the hope that the Royalists, like Aeneas, will eventually triumph.

This druidic interlude with reference to “BARDs Decrees, and DRUIDS rite”, also allows Lovelace to underline the metapoetical nature of the sanctuary. Rather than alluding to a magical history in which priests and poets ruled Britain, Lovelace incorporates a literary convention in which groves contain the potential for stories and for transformations. In Sir John Denham’s “Cooper’s Hill” the poet approvingly surveys a wide landscape in which the shady wood at the foot of the hill is the locus of ancient legends and of poetic inspiration:

This scene had some bold Greek, or Brittish Bard  
Beheld of old, what stories had we heard,  
Of Fairies, Satyrs, and the Nymphs their Dames,

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<sup>636</sup> Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch: Magical Politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp. 164-5.

<sup>637</sup> Brooks-Davies treats “Upon Appleton House” as a Druidic poem and as a direct answer to “Aramantha”. Charles Larson argues that Lovelace associates Aramantha directly and indirectly with Druidism as she moves through the forest since she is amorous by nature – a capacity belonging to Druids. Leah Marcus reads Alexis and Lucasta as pre-Christian Britons, priests of one of the arcane groves which thrive in Interregnum poetry. (See Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*, op. cit., p. 228.)

<sup>638</sup> *Sir Richard Fanshawe: Shorter Poems*, op. cit., p. 41.

Their feasts, their revels, & their amorous flames:  
'Tis still the same, although their aery shape  
All but a quick Poetick sight escape.  
There *Faunus* and *Sylvanus* keep their Courts.<sup>639</sup>

In “Aramantha”, by contrast, the druidic episode is one in which Alexis bewails a perceived metamorphosis: “They steeped her in the hollowed brooke / Which from her humane nature took”, which is one of the sudden shifts in perspective and plot that Lovelace employs. One version of the perceived inconstancy of woman, a common poetic trope in the Renaissance and among Cavalier poets, is their ability to assume disguises and their uncontrolled tendency to change shape.

The transformations undergone by women, and by poets, provide a constant motif for Lovelace’s poetry, as previous chapters have demonstrated. In “Aramantha” the semi-divine nymph of the title is revealed as Lucasta, but is also identified as Flora, Isis, and as a queen. In addition she has elements of Eve, Mary (“that Virgin-star a Maid”) and Venus, transposed from the myrtle grove of Paphos. The male speaker in the poem, Alexis – a name derived from the Greek erotic epigram as a *puer delicatus*, and from Virgil as the beloved urban slave boy of the *Eclogues* – is first a soldier, then a sad swain such as populate many pastoral laments and finally a shepherd. Having been reunited with her lover, Lucasta narrates how she had fled “chac’d by HYDRAPHIL ... the num’rous foe to PHILANACT.” The many-headed Hydraphil is a lover of the multitude, a republican. Philanact is derived from the Homeric for lover of a prince and is identified with the Royalists. In “Aramantha” both are fighting for the same ends. In the last masque of the reign, William Davenant’s *Salmacida Spolia*, the king had made a personal appearance as Philogenes, lover of the people, and was seen breaking from a cloud and subduing civil strife. Lovelace’s etymology suggests that populism is incompatible with monarchy; that the two impulses are in a conflict which banishes love, poetry and illusion into the furthest recesses of the country.

The platonic privacy which concludes Lovelace’s pastoral has some elements in common with the closing scenes of pre-war pastoral literature: in particular a withdrawal from politics which has led to the identification of Lovelace’s

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<sup>639</sup> Hugh Kenner, ed., *Seventeenth-Century Poetry: The Schools of Donne and Jonson* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 406.

“Aramantha” with a culture of nostalgia and defeat.<sup>640</sup> The love *in vacuo* with which the poem ends was emblematic of pastoral romance, and according to W.W. Greg, contributed to its demise as a genre.<sup>641</sup> Caroline pre-war pastoral had also relied on such resolutions. Montagu’s *Shepherd’s Paradise* (1632) ends in a vale where a select and aristocratic company dwell in chastity. Townsend’s masque *Tempe Restored* (1632) portrays Charles and Henrietta Maria restoring the world to a previous golden age. Thomas Carew’s “Answer of an Elegiacal Letter...” celebrates the peace under which the subjects of Charles I live.<sup>642</sup> If European powers would copy the English king, “They’ll hang their Armes up on the Olive bough, / And dance, and revell then, as we doe now”: lines which are echoed as Alexis breaks his sword and hangs up his arms. However, Lovelace’s exclusion of aggression from his *locus amoenus* is incomplete. “Aramantha” has nothing of the simple contrast found in Benlowes’ *Theophilus* (1652), which sets up the sweetness of retirement specifically against military endeavours: “For fields of combat, fields of corns are here / For trooping ranks, tree-ranks appear; / War steels the heart, but here we melt heart, eye, and ear.”<sup>643</sup> Eulogy, escapism and fantasies of a golden age in nature and society are undermined in “Aramantha”. Like Adam and Eve in their bower, the lovers dine on fruit; but contrary to the eternal springtime of pastoral lyric, or the depictions of the earthly paradise where all seasons co-exist, Lovelace mentions that “frost can take away” the cloth of roses on which the feast is spread. Moreover, after this meal, Alexis is “intranc’t” so that he seems to be walking above the earth before he decides to relinquish his previous way of life. The ambiguous intimation of Lucasta as a type of Circe sets the female domain of love against the male domain of culture and art. Female arts rely on deception and veiling: male arts on revelation. Love, especially the idealised love promoted at the court by the Queen, is shown to be a frail bulwark against political turmoil, but one that depends, like poetry, on deception, disguise, and

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<sup>640</sup> Gerald Hammond regards “Aramantha” as “an ideal, pastoral summation of Lovelace’s neutrality”. (Hammond, “Richard Lovelace and the Uses of Obscurity”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London: British Academy, May 1985), p. 227.)

<sup>641</sup> W.W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama: A Literary Enquiry with Special Reference to the Pre-Reformation Stage in England* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1959), p. 154.

<sup>642</sup> “In answer of an Elegiacall Letter upon the death of the King of Sweden from Aurelian Townsend”, in *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, op. cit., pp. 74-7.

<sup>643</sup> Stanza XLI in Canto XII “The Sweetness of Retirement”, in George Saintsbury, ed., *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), I. p. 448.



malleable identity. The grove or the cave is the creation of the artist or the poet in a repetition of well-used classical forms and figures, a performance it might be possible to re-construct, but one whose artificiality is never in doubt. The final, apparently conventional, image of the lovers is not a paean to Horatian retirement, but an indication that withdrawal from the turmoil of the mid-century is only possible for those who are still bound by poetic consolations that had been outmoded and ridiculed almost since their import from Europe in the previous decades. “Aramantha” already contains the bitterness and disillusion, the equation of civil society with that of insects and reptiles, found in the posthumous poems. Had Lovelace added more naturalistic elements, those of georgic perhaps, he would have placed himself, metaphorically, with those who had compounded, and were obediently sitting out the Cavalier winter on their rural estates.<sup>644</sup>

#### **6. 4. Court, country and city: love in a changing landscape**

In its form and content “Aramantha” confirms the analysis of a number of critics who have found that while “Virgilian pastoral thrives ... true Georgics are hard to find”.<sup>645</sup> Georgics tend to be defined against eclogues as poems which are didactic and prescriptive, containing more references to the rural calendar and to farming than the highly literary courtly pastoral. Alastair Fowler attributes the relative lateness of georgic in England to the aristocracy’s disdain for physical labour.<sup>646</sup> Eventually, as Fowler argues in his explorations of genre, pastoral is displaced by georgic,<sup>647</sup> but in the mid -seventeenth century pastoral is especially multi-vocal and unstable as it enters a period of significant material and cultural change.<sup>648</sup> Although Lovelace has no poems in which husbandry or rural labourers appear, “Elinda’s Glove” is singled out by Raymond Williams as a poem in which “Through the elaboration of the conceit, we see momentarily more of actual seventeenth-century country life than in

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<sup>644</sup> Sequestration of royalist estates began in 1643. Compounding, which somewhat mitigated it, started in 1644.

<sup>645</sup> Turner, *The Politics of Landscape*, op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>646</sup> Alastair Fowler, “Genre and Tradition”, in Thomas N. Corns, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry: Donne to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 87.

<sup>647</sup> Fowler, “Georgic and Pastoral”, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>648</sup> McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution”, op. cit., pp. 271-5.

the poems of retirement.”<sup>649</sup> Subtitled, “Sonnet”, the poem appeared in the 1649

*Lucasta*:

Thou snowy Farme with thy five Tenements!  
Tell thy white Mistris here was one  
That call'd to pay his dayly Rents:  
But she a gathering Flowr's and Hearts is gone,  
And thou left voyd to rude Possession.

But grieve not pretty *Ermin* Cabinet,  
Thy Alablaster Lady will come home;  
If not, what Tenant can there fit  
The slender turnings of thy narrow Roome,  
But must ejected be by his owne dombe?

Then give me leave to leave my Rent with thee;  
Five kisses, one unto a place:  
For though the *Lute's* too high for me;  
Yet Servants knowing Minikin nor Base,  
Are still allow'd to fiddle with the Case.

In Williams' reading of this “strange poem” the lover becomes momentarily a tenant farmer and the alabaster lady a heartless landlord. Lovelace's poem, however, both foregrounds and mystifies the relationship between literature and political economy. The speaker is both an abject Petrarchan lover and a rural servant or labourer; the absent woman is the typically marble mistress, but also a landholder whose position may be as insecure as that of her devoted admirer. The poem's ambiguities express profound anxieties about the changing shape of rural England and the gentry's place in the new economic order, providing an excellent example of the transformation of the pastoral mode in relation to material changes in the countryside. Anthony Low discusses Lovelace's poem as reflecting royalist horror at land expropriations and the new economic order, against which the courtly lover struggles in vain.<sup>650</sup> He also identifies a parallel between the precarious situation of lover and tenant.<sup>651</sup> The tenant in the cramped cottage is in danger of expulsion: the absent landlord may be replaced by another, even by an insubordinate labourer.

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<sup>649</sup> Williams, *The Country and The City*, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>650</sup> Low, *The Georgic Revolution*, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>651</sup> Anthony Low, “Agricultural Reform and the Love Poems of Thomas Carew; with an instance from Lovelace”, in Leslie and Raylor, eds., *Culture and Cultivation*, op. cit., pp. 63-76.

Many writers on pastoral, including Empson, Greg, Williams, Kermode and McKeon, read it as essentially dichotomous: the complex versus the simple, the natural versus the civilised. “Elinda’s Glove”, however, with its three interlocking stanzas, explores the triangular modulations between the court, the city and the country, and the precarious role of the courtly poet amidst shifting values, physical displacement and economic pressures.

At one apex of the triangle is the conventionally abject Petrarchan lover.<sup>652</sup> He accepts his limited role, faithful and devoted in contrast with the sensuously described and amoral Elinda. Lovelace’s choice of a glove as the subject of a poem is not unusual, although this consumer item was less popular than mirrors as a vehicle for writing on the stony nature of women. Poets contemporary with Lovelace also tend to use the glove as a pretty and ribald conceit without any of the complicating georgic aspects found in “Elinda’s Glove”. The 1655 compendium of verse, *Wits Interpreter* for instance has a poem “For a pair of Gloves” in which the lover pleads:

Suffer me to store with kisses  
This empty lodging that now misses  
The pure rosie hand that once wore thee  
Whiter than the kid that bare thee.<sup>653</sup>

“On his Mistresses Glove” is an anonymous epigram which concludes: “circles draw many lines unto your center / And love gives leave for all at last to enter.”<sup>654</sup> John Harington uses the glove as a means to complement and soften the woman towards him in “Fllostella’s Hand in Glove”, as does the anonymous author of “The Wooer, sending his Mistress a pair of white-fringed gloves”.<sup>655</sup> A change of emphasis is found in Thomas Weaver’s “To his Rival, Kissing a Glove which he had got from Sylvia”.<sup>656</sup> In this poem the glove becomes a “Relick”: hated where once it had been

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<sup>652</sup> In her treatment, Paulina Palmer focuses on this particular aspect of the poem, finding the social in the sexual only insofar as the poem presents love urbanely, as a game. (Palmer, “Lovelace’s Treatment Of Some Marinesque Motifs”, *Comparative Literature*, 29 (1977), pp. 301-12.)

<sup>653</sup> John Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter* (London: 1655), p. 307. Though unattributed, the lines are from Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels*, IV. iii. 305-16.

<sup>654</sup> Bod. MS Ash. 47, f. 49.

<sup>655</sup> John Harington, *The History of Polindor and Fllostella with Other Poems* (London: 1651), p. 89; *The Card of Courtship: or, The Language of Love; Fitted to the Humours of all Degrees, Sexes, and Conditions* (London: 1653), p. 30.

<sup>656</sup> Thomas Weaver, *Songs and Poems of Love and Drollery* (London: 1654), p. 87.

adored.<sup>657</sup> Lovelace emphasises the quality of whiteness: the glove, the woman, the farm and the cabinet are all snowy. But the nun-like purity of Elinda is cancelled by her frivolous collecting of flowers and hearts. The abandoned lover has no particular identity and can only revenge himself in coarse jest. Lovelace's concluding couplet is resonant of the many erotic lyrics of the period based on musical metaphors or parodying musical instructions:

Pretty lute, when I am gone  
Tell thy mistress here was one  
That hither came with full intent  
To play upon her instrument.<sup>658</sup>

"Elinda's Glove" enacts, at this level, the redundant nature of the courtly lover and poet, abandoned in the emptied-out countryside as in the erotic pastoral lyric whose very whiteness he fails to write on. While showing his knowledge of musical terms, Lovelace does not present the lover as a skilled musician but a servant, whose feudal obligations are not being reciprocated as they ought. The narrow room of Lovelace's poem exists from the point of view of the aristocratic lover who finds it difficult to manoeuvre in the new economic climate. The rising culture of improvement in this period resulted in a new model of master and servant relations, a trend towards economic individualism within a free market and the emergence of a modern discourse of independent subjectivity.<sup>659</sup> In "Elinda's Glove", however, it is the *woman* who has rejected the format of Petrarchan courtliness and is asserting her economic independence. "Gathering Flowr's and Hearts" is a labour of accumulation rather than cultivation. The marble mistress is acquiring cultural capital, while her lover is excluded from the precious stock of wit which is to be found in the metropolis. After 1640, the regularity and greater length of sessions in Parliament made metropolitan sociability even more necessary, and the fashionable season

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<sup>657</sup> Weaver's identification of the glove as a relic is interesting in that it reveals the commodity fetishism behind the rejected lover's complaint. In *The Scourge* Marston had referred to the commodity as a "relique" with its religious derivation from Catholicism and its apparent idolatry. Fashion and conspicuous consumption, for which women were especially criticised were often likened to idolatry in the early modern period.

<sup>658</sup> "Upon a Courtesan's Lute", in John Wardroper, *Love and Drollery* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 176.

<sup>659</sup> Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, "Introduction", in Leslie and Raylor eds., *Culture and Cultivation*, op. cit., p. 8.

became determined by the start of these sessions. As Peter Clark notes:

“Paradoxically, the Court grew in scale and sociable importance as its political power waned.”<sup>660</sup>

Elinda is absent not because she is necessarily at court –one corner of Lovelace’s triangle which is changing – but because she may have gone shopping to obtain the very items used as conceits by poets and necessary for court. By 1640, the West End and the Inns of Court had become the fashionable national and international centre for the landed élite.<sup>661</sup> Gloves made in France or Spain were part of an expanding market for imported luxury fashion accessories such as girdles, hats and brooches. The large number of gentry converging on the capital encouraged the growth of this trade as did the aping by merchants and lawyers of the gentry’s pattern of consumption. Country bumpkins could be transformed into lords by spending money in the right company, exchanging their hob-nailed boots for suits of velvet.<sup>662</sup> But this individualistic behaviour not only eliminates the feudal land-based props of identity, it can, through excessive consumption, result in the loss of inherited land. Even before the depredations of war, sequestration and expropriation had changed land-holdings, the liquidation of landed capital in order to fund a London lifestyle was not uncommon.

In “Elinda’s Glove” the greatest aporia is in the countryside; the very locus of pastoral is denuded and infertile. The snowy farm is a blank and may be unproductive.<sup>663</sup> When Strode describes the landscape from Westwell Downs, he finds the shepherds learning a “new Geometry” in a barren land.<sup>664</sup> The tenant in Lovelace’s poem finds the manor, in Jonson the hub of country hospitality and custom, empty. The imagery in “Elinda’s Glove” is that of vacancy and dejection. This imagery mirrors the conditions on the land, especially for the minor gentry, who

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<sup>660</sup> Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 39.

<sup>661</sup> Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 484.

<sup>662</sup> See C.J. and John Philips, *Sportive Wit: The Muses Merriment. Collected by a Club of Sparkling Wits, Viz. C.J., B.J.* (London: 1656), p. 47.

<sup>663</sup> Hugh Kearney notes that the civil war resulted in a decline in the numbers of landed gentry. Only the larger proprietors benefitted eventually, but the prosperity of the gentry as a whole declined in the second half of the seventeenth century. (Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 141-2.)

<sup>664</sup> “On Westwell Downes”, in *The Poetical Works of William Strode (1600-1645)*, ed. Bernard Dobell (London: n.p., 1907), pp. 20-1.

suffered most through supporting the King. Not only landless labourers but also the aristocracy were threatened (like Virgil's Melibeus) with eviction. Agriculture had, since the late Renaissance, been a financially precarious enterprise.<sup>665</sup> Rents (mentioned twice by Lovelace in the poem) were raised, but there was also a shrinkage of holdings among the gentry.<sup>666</sup> Royalist landlords who had kept rents low were subsequently disadvantaged when selling or compounding during the Interregnum,<sup>667</sup> and small tenants and labourers often found themselves worse off under the new owners.<sup>668</sup> Peter Clark's survey of English provincial society at this period records the distressed condition of much of the actual countryside.<sup>669</sup> Lovelace's home county, Kent, experienced the problems of poverty and plague in the 1630s, and of impoverished soldiers discharged after the Bishop's Wars (in which Lovelace took part) at the end of the decade, all compounded by a divided gentry and lack of leadership. In 1648, an uprising of cavaliers, seamen, apprentices and peasants which was routed by Fairfax caused more local division and harsh treatment for Kent during the Protectorate. There is little to suggest the Horatian pleasures which might be gained from retreat to that particular county.

### 6. 5. The architecture of retreat: country house as grove

Lovelace's one (disputed) venture into the sub-genre of country-house poetry, "Amyntor's Grove, His Chloris, Arigo and Gratiana", is not an elaboration of the lifestyle of the rural gentry of the 1640s.<sup>670</sup> Lovelace's poem is anomalous. He does

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<sup>665</sup> Mary Ann C. McGuire, "The Cavalier Country-House Poem: Mutations on a Jonsonian Tradition", *Studies in English Literature*, 19 (1979), p. 95.

<sup>666</sup> The complexities of collecting rents under the Commonwealth are thoroughly explored in Hardacre, *The Royalists During The Puritan Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 102-4. Changes in land ownership are detailed on pp. 17-38.

<sup>667</sup> Fees for compounding, fines and taxation took a heavy toll, especially of lesser Royalists during the Protectorate, as most experienced periods in which no rents were received. (Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1961), pp. 146-8.)

<sup>668</sup> Low, *The Georgic Revolution*, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>669</sup> Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977). The impossibility of collecting rents from a distressed and ravaged countryside after 1642 is recorded in David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 149-51.

<sup>670</sup> See G.R. Hibbard, "The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), pp. 159-77.

not provide a moral epistle, nor does his poem's title refer to an actual estate or family, but to a magical sanctuary belonging to a shepherd (familiar to readers of pastoral in all its forms) and a nymph Chloris (ubiquitous in pastoral lyrics). Lovelace's title is indicative of the poem which follows. Alastair Fowler has commented on the generic function of names and their particular importance in pastoral.<sup>671</sup> Conventional names signal allegiance to one or more classics, but are supplemented by partly "nuclear" partly "innovatory names" to signal wit and direction. Lovelace's Amyntor derives from the Theocritan Amyntas. It is not in Fowler's list but occurs frequently in the song-books of the period, as the title of Thomas Randolph's pre-war drama and in verse such as "Amintor's Well-A-Dying" from Lawes 1653 *Book of Ayres*. In manuscript and printed miscellanies Amyntor features in lyrics of pastoral loss when paired with Chloris. In his title, Lovelace announces his appropriation of both classical and popular elements, and also signals that Amyntor's grove is subject to loss and change. The poem is, after all, subtitled "An Elogie". In their country-house poems, Jonson and Carew name specific houses; Marvell writes "Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow. To my Lord Fairfax"; Herrick writes of Sir Lewis Pemberton; Jonson writes on Sir Robert Wroth, but neither topography nor lineage can be discerned in a title full of paradox, which places the ostensible residence of a royal courtier in a pastoral fiction. "Amyntor's Grove" suggests either that previous poets had disguised literary tropes in seemingly naturalistic and georgic fashion, or that the idyllic haven is an ephemeral artifice, an illusion, which can be packed up at any time, like the elaborate props of court masques which history had already discarded. The poem's typically pastoral *adynata* point to the real impossibility of pastoral harmony in the 1640s, except within a self-consciously literary framework, itself the possession of a dispersed and reduced elite.

The family is dressed up in pastoral names and costumes. Ever since Hazlitt identified the inhabitants of the grove as Endymion Porter and his family, this association has been unquestioned, though it proves quite fragile.<sup>672</sup> As in the poems to Lely, Lovelace's hyperbole invites the reader's disbelief. The lady of the house becomes "The gentlest Shepherdesse, / That ever Lawnes and Lambes did blesse",

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<sup>671</sup> Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature. An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 77-9.

and Lovelace adds cherubs and nymphs to give an Arcadian gloss to an apparently acquisitive lifestyle. In the last section of the poem the virtues of the children are particularly exaggerated. The inhabitants of the grove are defined by their possessions, which include children to maintain the lineage. The poet is a visitor and a spectator guided by his host's "great and powerful hand" to view paintings so numerous that they appear as if embroidered with "One continued Tapistris". This is an interesting simile, since tapestries were an earlier form of wall decoration and often portrayed a polyscenic narrative, much as Lovelace's poem does.<sup>673</sup> Lovelace suggests the density of the pictures on the wall, the arrangement itself forming a work of art, and that they illustrate a sequence in time. The contents are not specified, but Titian (named in the poem) had often used scenes from Ovid as inspiration. The mention of embroidery, given Lovelace's evident interest in the *Metamorphoses*, recalls Arachne's tapestry and her subsequent transformation. As in the poems on Lely discussed in Chapter Five Lovelace muses on creativity and its implicit challenge to the gods, to nature or to the divine creator. The poem also shows a sly preference for illusion over reality in this section. Real figures are untouchable, but the shadows may be safely enjoyed "without a blush".

Lovelace's poem characterises the paintings as "Gems so rarely, richly set, / For them we love the Cabinet". These are not the interior furnishings cultivated in Jonson's poetry but a collection of continental works of art by Titian, Raphael and Giorgione. The link between Amyntor and Endymion Porter rests on the latter's role in having purchased paintings for the King, being himself a collector and (in the 1630s) the subject of works by Van Dyke, of whom he was a close friend.<sup>674</sup> Wilkinson notes that there is no evidence that Porter ever owned any paintings by the three artists specified in Lovelace's poem. These artists were, however, part of the King's collection, acquired in a spectacular coup from the Duke of Mantua.<sup>675</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> Leah Marcus writes "The poem was probably written in 1648 – that perilous year for Charles I", yet continues "The Amyntor of the poem was almost certainly Endymion Porter". (See Marcus, "Politics and Pastoral", op. cit., p. 150.)

<sup>673</sup> My attention to this aspect of the poem was drawn by Alastair Fowler's discussion of the visual component of narrative in paintings and tapestry. (See *Renaissance Realism: Narrative Images in Literature and Art*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 85-8.)

<sup>674</sup> Graham Parry, *The Seventeenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1603-1700* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 52.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid. p. 49.



Identifying Amyntor not with Porter but with Charles I provides a more consistent reading of the poem, especially if “Amyntor’s Grove” is set against other poems to Porter and his wife Olivia, none of which bother to disguise their patron’s name.<sup>676</sup> Sir William Davenant, the poet laureate and a protégé of Porter’s, had written numerous verses to the pair. Four poems, all titled, “*To Endimion Porter*”, celebrate his generosity to poets.<sup>677</sup> Others recall a comedy at Whitefriars, a recovery from sickness and a trip to court. Unlike Lovelace, Davenant stresses abstract moral qualities and does not situate Porter in any well-furnished dwelling.

Herrick also praises Porter as a patron of poetry, an attribute entirely missing in “Amyntor’s Grove”. Where Lovelace’s poem catalogues exotic acquisitions, Herrick in “The Country life, to the honoured M. End. Porter, Groome of the Bed-Chamber to his Maj.” mixes Latin pastoral with a list of country sports in a poem whose title seems superfluous.<sup>678</sup> The Virgilian echo of “O happy life! If that their good / The husbandmen but understood!” concludes a list of pastimes which had been the subject of periodic revivals since the 1618 *Book of Sports* and Dover’s Cotswold Games. The generally pagan Mummeries, wakes, Whitsun-ales, maypoles and harvest feasts in Herrick’s poem provide a picture of a contented and well-fed peasantry. These are delighted by their wise master, whose footsteps fertilise every growing thing and whose presence calms the well-fed cattle. Herrick explicitly praises Porter for never having had mercantile dealings overseas to bring back spices, and for being free of envy and ambition and content with his own holdings. In Herrick’s idealisation the shift from landlord to connoisseur, and from feudal lord and liberal host to bourgeois individual, that is evident in Lovelace’s poem is obscured by a drive to record and preserve rapidly eroding country practices.

These poems to Endymion Porter by other poets highlight the way Lovelace avoids direct praise or easy identification of his host. He approaches his subject analytically, setting him in a carefully delineated context (almost a cabinet of curiosities) rather than simply lauding invisible virtues. Lovelace introduces Chloris

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<sup>676</sup> Porter used the money he had made on the East Indian trade to patronise poets and artists. Randolph, Dekker and Bolton wrote tributes to him, as well as Herrick and Davenant, whose poems are discussed.

<sup>677</sup> These were eventually printed in 1672. *The Works of Sir William Davenant*, op. cit., pp. 217, 223, and 233.

<sup>678</sup> *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), II. pp. 212-15.

and Amyntor as if they were part of the display of pictures, before extravagantly describing the children, so that the poem becomes less a panegyric and more a *paragone* between poet and painter.<sup>679</sup> As in his poems on painting discussed in the previous chapter, Lovelace draws the reader's attention to the competing claims of the arts in representing both inner and outer qualities. Whereas in the country house poems of Jonson, Carew and Herrick, land and house are conventionally used to represent the moral qualities of their owner, Lovelace's poem indicates how complex a comparison between outer and inner virtue can become.

In maintaining the paradox of the title Lovelace comments on the unreality of the pastoral convention in court theatricals: the wilderness, landscape or garden expensively recreated indoors, the outdoor natural cave or grotto crafted by Inigo Jones. The family enjoys private pleasures indoors and has nothing to do with nature (either wild or cultivated) which is carefully excluded, or with the business of estate management. While praising the couple's chaste Platonic marriage using the image of the phoenix (so that Amyntor and Chloris take on the qualities celebrated in the Royal marriage in pre-war masques) Lovelace uses tone to convey disapproval of an acquisitive lifestyle where appearance is everything. Arriving at the grove with great delight the poet recalls:

I did begin  
T'observe the curious ordering  
Of every Roome, where'ts hard to know  
Which most excels in *sent* or *show*. (71)

Clearly this is no Penshurst, which Jonson proclaims in the opening line *not* to have been built for "envious show", nor is it Amarantha's haven which has "No Cabinets with curious Washes" (107). With iconic and sensual imagery, Lovelace describes the grove that exists, analogous to Elinda's glove as a consumer article to be exhibited. In its elaboration the poem itself becomes an artefact that a patron might wish to possess.

Lovelace places the family he praises with such hyperbole within a mythical space, a sacred precinct: the habitat of the gods in ancient Greek lyrics, but linked with the Anglican church in Cavalier poetry. After 1641, the aristocratic elite had become concerned about the threat to order posed by opposition to the bishops.

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<sup>679</sup> In *The English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998), p. 169, L.E. Semler suggests that Lovelace has been influenced by Vasari in his description of Porter's gallery.

Charles “became the natural rallying point” for those who felt that episcopacy formed a bulwark protecting stability and property.<sup>680</sup> Amyntor’s grove indulges its guests with vaguely pagan and Catholic ritual in which Leah Marcus identifies the rites of a “wine-drenched communion”.<sup>681</sup> Lovelace includes the convivial passing around of a full bowl in which a grateful and “Loyal Soule” pledges the lady of the house. The wine allows the participants to “drench their oppressing cares” and choke “the wide Jawes of our feares” – an incursion of troubles normally excluded from all modes of pastoral, and by tradition from sacred groves.<sup>682</sup> The traditional grove has an odour of sacrifice, trees smelling of frankincense and orchards bearing golden fruit.<sup>683</sup> In Lovelace, the indoor setting is scented with “*Arabian gummes*” and is a space in which:

the *Indians* richest prize  
Is kindled a glad Sacrifice:  
Cloudes are sent up on wings of Thyme,  
Amber, Pomegranates, Jessemine,  
And through our Earthen Conduicts sore  
Higher than Altars fum’d before. (73)

The grove invites its guests to share in the peace and refreshment that the gods offer as a gift, while conflict is kept at bay by the denseness of the greenery. This was a common topos in the poems of the *Greek Anthology*, and Lovelace uses the Hellenistic motif to distance the family from contemporary events, though a note of melancholy emerges nevertheless. As in Virgil’s eclogues, it is not the struggle with nature that arouses this, but the fragility of the happy scene.<sup>684</sup> In his poem to Wroth, Jonson contrasts the life of country and city from the admiring but detached point of view of the poet. Lovelace places himself within the charmed circle, and intimates that the dichotomy is between indoor civilisation and external danger, which lies

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<sup>680</sup> David L. Smith, “From Petition to Remonstrance”, in David L. Smith, Richard Strier and David Bevington, eds., *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 216-7.

<sup>681</sup> Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*, op. cit., p. 221.

<sup>682</sup> Jonson’s “To Penshurst” also includes wine and a feast, but the focus is on the equality between host and poet in the fare they are served.

<sup>683</sup> Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet*, op. cit., pp. 188-9.

<sup>684</sup> Laurence Lerner, “The Eclogues and the Pastoral Tradition”, in Charles Martindale, ed., *Virgil and his Influence* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1984), p. 195.

outside the convivial group and outside the house, where serpents, frosts and cold winds await.

As in “Aramantha”, Lovelace examines the nature of private space in his society through the language of pastoral withdrawal. The cavalier country house is no longer the centre of a community but a private stronghold, preserving comforts and powers against the world.<sup>685</sup> The social network of mutual obligations and respect for tradition underpinning life at Penshurst or Saxham is invisible in “Amyntor’s Grove”. The family does not stroll through fields or interact with others. Unlike his royal predecessors, Charles had eschewed public appearances, and the initial indifference of many to the King’s cause in the early 1640s can be partly attributed to this lack of contact with his subjects. Amyntor – in contrast to the subjects of previous country house poems – is isolated. The landscape is on the walls, the court has shrunk to a gallery. The portraits on the walls provide “Livelier, nobler Company, / Then if they could or speake, or see”. Opposition is silenced, and the leisurely enjoyment of art, once characteristic of the court, is transferred to a private setting. Lovelace’s poem records what Lawrence Manley points out as a new feature of early seventeenth-century life, “The rise of private collecting and the formation of a rudimentary museum culture.”<sup>686</sup> Lauro Martines also notes that since the Renaissance the houses of the rich had undergone significant changes; the number of private rooms increased while the display of portraits and artworks moved into the more public areas.<sup>687</sup> The King has become a bourgeois gentleman, rather than a country landlord; moreover he is in danger of becoming a museum exhibit himself.

Like Marvell’s “The Mower against Gardens”, Lovelace’s poem engages in the debate between art and nature. The intention of the poem is not to praise rusticity but to remake it and even exclude it. The substructure of pastoral is revealed:

Next the great and powerful hand  
Beckons my thoughts unto a stand  
Of *Titian, Raphael, Georgone*  
Whose *Art* ev’n *Nature* hath out-done;  
For if weake *Nature* only can  
Intend, not perfect what is man,  
These certainly we must prefer,

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<sup>685</sup> McGuire, “The Cavalier Country House Poem”, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>686</sup> Manley, *Literature and Culture*, op. cit., p. 505.

<sup>687</sup> Lauro Martines, *Society and History in English Renaissance Verse* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 147.

Who mended what *She* wrought, and *Her*. (72)

This is no praise of the natural life but a clear preference for the improvement that civilisation has to offer, the return of a primordial paradise in which the environment is mastered. “Amyntor’s Grove” refers to the portraits the poet is shown in religious terms, as if they were enshrined saints, but those privileged enough to view Royal portraits were aware that they served as propaganda, “mending nature” as Lovelace observes, with flattering physical depictions.<sup>688</sup> Moreover, Charles’ patronage of foreign artists was perceived as “innovative, foreign, imperialist and worst of all Catholic”.<sup>689</sup> Lovelace’s privileging of the man-made over the natural has an interesting equivalent in Charles Cotton’s “The Wonders of the Peake”.<sup>690</sup> In this lengthy perambulation the poet comes at last to view a designed and manipulated prospect which has statues, walks and a grove for lovers. These replace an old cherry grove “a barbarous piece of *Art*”. The new terraces and lawns, “with much greater lustre stand, / Toucht up, and finisht by a better hand”.<sup>691</sup> The wonders which Cotton describes are, however, crowned by the “noble mind” of the hospitable, cheerful, honest and truthful owner. Lovelace avoids making this connection between the things the poet admires and the person who has acquired them. Amyntor has lost the ability to tame and fructify nature.<sup>692</sup>

There is no evidence that Porter and Lovelace knew each other, and by the 1640s Lovelace could not have been seeking his patronage. Endymion Porter’s collection was housed not in his country residence but in the Strand, in a house which he left to join the King in 1642. As a result of this gesture he was in financial trouble by 1644.<sup>693</sup> He was exiled in 1645, and lived in very straightened circumstances on the Continent where his family joined him in 1647. Lovelace sent *Lucasta* to the press

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<sup>688</sup> Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

<sup>689</sup> Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>690</sup> *Poems of Charles Cotton*, ed. John Buxton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp. 52-95.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 1451-61.

<sup>692</sup> Stephen Orgel argues that the elegant compliments offered to the King and Queen in masques were often in the form of praising their power over nature. If Charles and Henrietta Maria can tame nature, “there will be no problems about Puritans or Ireland or Ship Money”. (Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 52.)

<sup>693</sup> See Gervas Huxley, *Endymion Porter: The Life of a Courtier 1587-1649* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959).

in 1648 and it seems uncharacteristic that he would retain for publication a poem celebrating a situation that no longer existed.

Lovelace's poem ends with a fourteen line stanza which reveals his country-house poem as a Graeco-Roman hymn.<sup>694</sup> Having invoked the gods with costly incense, Lovelace petitions them for the continuation of the line through the 'Blooming Boy, and blossoming Mayd'. The boy has been described as armed with majesty and Lovelace hopes that no harm will come from the north wind (the Scots, presumably) and that the generations will survive until the end of time. Loyalism is tempered with an awareness that patronage of the arts had created an illusion of harmony in the realm, just as pastoral literature and drama had created an illusion of nature for a secluded court. It is only while "ravisht" with wine and art that the poet can ask rhetorically if Amyntor's grove "were not a Paradice".

## 6. 6. The Golden Age Rejected

The myth of a Golden Age, often inseparable from pastoral poetry and touched on in "Amyntor's Grove", provides the theme for the only pastoral poem in Lovelace's posthumous volume: "Love Made in the First Age: To Chloris" (146). According to Rosenmeyer, nostalgia for the golden age is an aristocratic reaction to political and social developments that threaten the existing hierarchy. Lovelace's poem, however, was written when the threat had become an actuality, and rather than indulging in nostalgia it rejects it. The first line of the poem, "In the Nativity of time", identifies this first age with infancy and with the golden age of Ovid. The *Metamorphoses*, translated by George Sandys relates in the first book how the world was formed:

The *Golden Age* was first; which uncompeld,  
And without rule, in faith and Truth exceld.<sup>695</sup>

Lovelace's poem, however, compresses and then rejects several aspects of Golden Age primitivism, which occur in Ovid, Hesiod, Virgil, Seneca and Tasso. Communal property, a feature of the first age in Ovid (recounted by Gonzales in

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<sup>694</sup> See William H. Race, *Classical Genres and English Poetry* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), pp. 142-79. Race does not mention Lovelace but outlines the principal topics to be found in hymns and points out that praise is the dominant mode.

<sup>695</sup> *Ovid's Metamorphoses Englished, Mythologised, and Represented in Figures by George Sandys*, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p.27.

*The Tempest*), carried in the 1640s an unfortunate resonance with the radical Diggers and the Levellers, whose ideas were feared by Puritan and Royalist alike. In the first age, writes Lovelace, no-one feared “suits of trespass”; but this situation only occurs when there is plenty to be shared: “Wine from the bunch, milk from the nipple.” The rewards of husbandry without labour, another feature of life in classical Edens, merges with the concept of common property and is transposed to that of freely available women: a concept which caused Guarini and Tasso some problems in combining the pagan with the Christian. Lovelace imagines it thus:

Thrice happy was that golden Age,  
 When Complement was constru'd Rage,  
     And fine words in the Center hid;  
 When cursed *No* stained no Maids Blisse,  
 And all discourse was summ'd in *Yes*,  
     And Nought forbad, but to forbid.

Love then unstinted, love did sip,  
 And Cherries pluck'd fresh from the Lip,  
     On Cheeks and Roses free he fed;  
 Lasses like *Autumne* Plums did drop,  
 And Lads, indifferently did crop  
     A Flower, and a Maiden-head.

The sinless but hedonistic and unrestrained pleasures of the golden age were tolerated in pastoral poetry, but sects such as the Ranters, who preached and practised them in actuality, were ridiculed in verse and persecuted in reality. Lovelace's poem recognises the lack of pleasure which such a scheme would entail: the “indifferent cropping”, and the lack of individuality. Possession negates the erotics of desire.

The idea of the Golden Age, while a common classical topos often reworked from Hesiod by Cavalier poets also incorporates the idea of a relentless decay from past glory. Hesiod relates that since the age of gold, man has declined through the ages of silver, brass and iron so that history, as portrayed in Henry Reynolds' *Mythomystes* (1632), is the downward progression of a world subject to inevitable corruption. As Laurence Lerner points out, Genesis is another version of Golden Age mythology, but the implications of its loss are different.<sup>696</sup> Classical paradises are lost through the whims of the gods; the Christian paradise through the fault of man. The association of the King and Queen with a new golden age had been unrelenting in the

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<sup>696</sup> Lerner, *The Uses of Nostalgia*, op. cit., p. 64.

1630s. Townsend's masque *Tempe Restored* (1632) portrayed the queen as displacing Circe, and as a result:

But we most happy that behold  
Two that have turned this age to gold,  
Making old Saturn's reign  
In theirs come back again.<sup>697</sup>

If viewed from this pagan perspective, the golden age "restored" by Henrietta Maria and Charles and celebrated in Jonson's masque of that name, has also been lost through their actions. Lovelace's poem to Chloris points to the changes. In the idealised past lovers were as angels; "Now wee make Love, as all on fire, / Ring retrograde our lowd Desire", and the poem ends by rejecting the woman. Howarth quotes the last stanza of Lovelace's poem approvingly as a description of Lovelace and his own art.<sup>698</sup> This art looks forward to the pastoral parodies of Rochester, and in "Amyntor's Grove" to the enthusiastic encomia focusing on the fine and the new in domestic interiors which characterise late seventeenth century estate poems.<sup>699</sup>

Golden age pastorals commonly refuse history, and Lovelace in turn rejects this panacea of endless nostalgia. He refuses to be the proper husbandman that the woman (emblematic of the land) requires, preferring to cultivate his own poetry.

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<sup>697</sup> Quoted in Corns, *The Cambridge Companion to Poetry*, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>698</sup> R.G. Howarth, *Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Dent, 1959), p. xvi.

<sup>699</sup> William A. McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 175.



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*and Enlarged, and Inriched by the Author, with Additions of Many Witty Poems, and Pleasant Songs. With an Addition of a New School of Love, and a Present of Excellent Similitudes, Comparisons, Fancies, and Devices. The last edition, with two tables; the one expounding the most hard English words: the other resolving the most delightful fictions of the heathen poets* (London: 1664).

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