Strategies of Resistance in Selected Renaissance Writers

by

Ingrid Hotz-Davies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
November, 1992

ISBN 0-315-80175-1

Table of Contents

Abstract

Recent discussions of Renaissance literature and culture, for example in the work of Stephen Greenblatt, Jonathan Goldberg, and Stephen Orgel, have alerted us to the complex issue of power in the Renaissance. Thus we have been taught to see how power is asserted, maintained and disseminated, and how adversarial movements and traditions are contained by powerful agencies. In contrast, this thesis aligns itself with those who have expressed discomfort at such an exclusive emphasis on power and containment. While we have gained valuable insights into the mechanisms of power, such an emphasis is not suited to tell us how resistance "works," and it is the purpose of this thesis to elucidate some of the equally complex mechanisms of resistance in a broad selection of genres, texts, and authors.

The thesis is divided into three sections containing two chapters each, and a conclusion which is also a coda of sorts. Section I focusses on drama and politics, and deals with the critical presentation of repressive sexual morals, the status of authority, and the abuse of power in Marlowe's Edward II, Shakespeare's Richard II, and Jonson's Sejanus. Section II centres on women's attempts to insert themselves into the literary discourses of their time in order to articulate their desire for a less constrictive societal model (Louise Labé's Débat de Folie et d'Amour), or in order to forge a voice suitable for the articulation of female sexual desire (Lady Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus). Section III, finally, deals with the writings of seventeenth-century Quaker women (especially Margaret Fell) and lower-class men (especially Gerrard Winstanley), who tried to break the normative hold of the Bible and provide readings which would support a more authoritative position for their own class and/or sex.

In all cases, a resisting stance is seen as an active engagement with available literary, historical, and religious traditions, while the public expression of such a stance may be expected to cause problems for the authors in a period which does not provide guarantees for free speech and individual freedoms. Here we will find that many authors seek to protect themselves from reprisals and criticism, and the thesis deals with the function of protective devices in these authors' works. Strategies of resistance will thus come to be seen as encoding strategies designed to protect the critical author, and as reading strategies designed to forge a critical position in an engagement with available traditions. The conclusion draws on the notion of protective encoding strategies to show with the help of a modern example that sensitivity to these questions may be a valuable asset not only for our reading of older texts, but also for our dealings with more recent periods.

Note on Spelling

Wherever possible, I have used modern-spelling editions of the texts dealt with. In those cases where I do use old-spelling editions, I have silently modernized Renaissance typographical conventions such as the long s, v for u, etc., but I have not modernized the spelling.

Acknowledgements

My greatest debt in the completion of this thesis goes to my supervisor, Ronald M. Huebert, who supported me with his advice, patience, unobtrusive guidance, and his willingness to let me be myself, and has given me his friendship surely beyond the call of duty. I am further grateful to Anne Higgins and Christina Luckyj, who both gave up their valuable time to read early drafts, and have supplied me with thoughtful critiques of my work. I am also thankful to Michael Klug, who shared with me his vast knowledge of American culture on a number of occasions. My special thanks go to Ina Schabert of Munich University, who has generously read early drafts, and has set me going in the right direction on more than one occasion.

Since even theses do not thrive on love and air alone, I wish to gratefully acknowledge the funding I received for this project: the Dalhousie Graduate Fellowship, the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Fellowship, and a research grant from the Dalhousie Research and Development Fund.

If there is no thesis without money, there very definitely is no life without friends, and I have been particularly fortunate with mine. My heart goes out especially to Gretchen Mosher, Ian McAdam, John Hillis, Dave Courtney, Stavros Stavrou, and Kumar Saywack, who each in their own way have contributed something special to my stay here, to my life, and to this thesis. Finally, some debts are hard to reckon or repay, and mine are to my mother Anita Hotz, whose support, it seems, has no bounds, and to my husband Paul Davies, who has been patient with me beyond imagination.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is a thesis about communication, about reading and writing, both as it was practiced by a selected number of Renaissance writers and their possible audiences, and as it is practiced by us, their twentieth-century readers. What interests me, however, is not just any type of communication, but those cases in which the formation and transmission of ideas may be expected to be problematic, where authors can be expected to be aware of restrictions placed on them by their political and social environment. The most obvious case of such an anticipated restriction is official censorship, an issue which does arise with respect to some of the authors and texts I discuss. However, ideas do not come out of nowhere, and the anticipation of an audience reaction such as the censor's, for example, is only half the story. The other half consists of the author's engagement with pre-existing ideas and given models, with the ideological framework within which he or she is obliged to work. This thesis is therefore also concerned with the reading strategies which allow authors to set up a resisting position of their own in the first place.

My emphasis on communication implies that my own readings will depend on a notion of rhetoric (who is saying what, and to whom, and for what reason?) rather than

aesthetics (is this beautifully said?). This is not to say that these two notions may not be interrelated categories, that the rhetorically useful may not also be the aesthetically satisfying or vice versa. What it does mean is that a critically inclined author working under restrictive conditions will have to face the question of how a message may be safely transmitted more urgently than the question of how it may be rendered aesthetically pleasing.

A focus on resistance further implies the existence of authors who deserve to be listened to for their own individual voices; it implies a subjective, though not an autonomous, space for resistance. I am well aware of the complexities of the notion of the author in the text However, I do wish to retain the notion that it is individual, flesh-and-blood authors who write texts, and that a projection of these authors, though never the "real thing," can be deduced from a careful study of these texts. "Author," therefore, should be taken to mean something like Wayne Booth's "implied author," an author projection which is accessible through the text.[1]

One of the few studies to investigate strategies of representation under difficult circumstances is Annabel Patterson's Censorship and Interpretation (1984), in which she attempts to outline a coherent scheme for what she calls a "hermeneutics of censorship." In doing so, she calls for new reading strategies on our part, which would be designed

to help us in decoding texts written under censorship. Although this book does address many of the problems I am interested in, especially the conviction that we need a politically more sensitive way of approaching these texts, I would like to start thinking about this topic with the theoretical framework developed by a thinker whom Patterson dismisses in her introduction: Leo Strauss.[2]

A German Jewish emigré philosopher, Strauss was, I think, in a singular position to appreciate the problems of speaking one's mind under totalitarian or near totalitarian regimes. For him, the criteria by which many literary critics measure the success of a work--whether it presents a coherent vision, for example--were not convincing when applied to authors of earlier, less liberal periods. He was deeply suspicious of revisionary readings which would transform a hitherto heterodox author into a mouthpiece for the dominant ideology of the period, and he developed a theory to account for apparent contradictions in these authors' works. His starting point is simple:

> If a master of the art of writing commits such blunders as would reasonably shame an intelligent high school boy, it is reasonable to assume that they are intentional, especially if the author discusses, however incidentally, the possibility of intentional blunders in writing.[3]

What Strauss is looking for, then, are ruptures in the text, blatant contradictions, displacements of heterodox views into disreputable or well protected areas of the text, discontinuities in the structure of a work, meaningful

omissions, indeed anything that might give us justifiable reasons for suspecting an author of hiding something. In its emphasis on the importance of textual ruptures, Strauss's model shares some common ground with notions developed in deconstructive literary theory. However, there are marked differences. In a deconstructive reading, textual ruptures would be seen as evidence for the indeterminacy of the signifying process, as a visible result of the problematic nature of the sign and of language in general. Strauss's model is different in that he is at least willing to entertain the notion that such phenomena may be politically motivated and rhetorically useful strategies on the part of the author. When working under the actual or perceived threat of persecution, Strauss's author may therefore be seen to employ a double strategy of voicing heterodox opinions: he or she would produce an orthodox surface text accessible to all readers (and, it seems, especially accessible to us who live in relatively liberal cultures and are used to taking things at face value), and a hidden heterodox subtext accessible only to those readers who are capable of reading "between the lines."[4] Strauss thus proposes two types of writing and by implication two types of reading: the one, which he calls "exoteric" writing, is orthodox and accessible to all, the other "esoteric" and accessible to only a few.

Although Strauss's notion of writing has had little

influence on recent Anglo-American literary criticism, his theory has recently been strengthened and appropriated for literary criticism by Paul Cantor in an exceptionally forceful article to which I am heavily indebted.[5] Cantor accuses us of being inadequate readers if we simply assume that writing and reading must have taken place in earlier times under much the same circumstances as it is now taking place in the Western world, even though under more restricted conditions "we cannot expect authors in the past to have expressed themselves with quite the kind of freedom and openness we have become used to in contemporary writing" (271). He finds that much of contemporary criticism is condescending to the authors it deals with, since it is surreptitiously geared towards showing the intelligence and superior knowledge of the interpreter, who is capable of finding things in a text which the much less enlightened author could not possibly have been aware of. In contrast to this, Cantor finds Strauss's approach refreshingly "humble" (278), since it does not assume a priori that the author must have been less insightful than the interpreter. What Strauss's model amounts to for Cantor in relation to the author is something quite similar to the reflections on which this chapter opened:

> . . . Strauss understood literary questions better than most literary critics in part because he was not content to view them as merely literary . . . . Strauss viewed literature on the model of rhetoric, not art. That is, he viewed a piece of writing . . . as a social act, an attempt by a writer to

> communicate with a specific audience and thus to be analyzed within a larger social and political context. (269)

For Strauss, then, as well as for Cantor, an individual author needs to be read on his or her own terms while taking into consideration the social and political pressures which can be expected to have influenced the shape of a particular work. The special merit of Cantor's essay lies in the fact that in appropriating Strauss's model with generosity and scholarly fairness, Cantor does not reproduce Strauss's elitist ethics as well. Thus, while Strauss implies that esoteric writing is, in a way, a desired quality in all philosophers, which allows them to keep their dangerous knowledge from the world, Cantor sees esoteric writing strictly in a context of persecution as a strategy of resistance which makes it possible to express ideas which could otherwise not be expressed without danger to the author.

The ultimate purpose of reading in both models is to get at an author's intended meaning as it is implied in any given text, a meaning that may be wholly or partly contradictory to the surface meaning displayed in the text. It is here that this theory runs into problems. The first is fairly straightforward and is acknowledged by both Strauss and Cantor. Since esoteric writing is by its very nature a form of camouflage, its existence is notoriously difficult to prove. As Cantor says, "A demonstrably esoteric text is a contradiction in terms" (277). I am not saying that it is

totally impossible to prove esoteric strategies from within an author's collected works, as Cantor's excellent readings of Rousseau, Bacon and Bakhtin show. However, I will not deny the fact that additional data external to the text itself would help greatly to support the suspicion of the presence of an esoteric subtext. This is particularly true in cases where the whole body of an author's work cannot be taken into consideration.

The other problem with Strauss's model is less straightforward and is intimately connected to the fact that he approaches the task of interpretation from a philosopher's point of view (Cantor does not reproduce this problem, but neither does he tackle it). Strauss's reading depends on what might be called a truth model, i.e., his intention is to find out what an author "really" meant, which will then emerge as a philosophic truth of universal validity. The very distinction between esoteric and exoteric writing implies that there is a false or at least misleading meaning as opposed to a true, deeper meaning.[6] Reducing a work to two meanings only seems to me too restrictive a concept, since it replaces a notion of struggle on the part of the author, who is trying to find a rhetorical position to defend his views (possibly not always with the "truth" in mind), with a notion of an author who really knows the truth but is willing to hide it. I would therefore argue that we should think of esoteric strategies strictly as defence mechanisms

which allow an author to set up a critical position without endangering his person or social position.

A similar problem as with Strauss's two meanings can be found in his related notion of the role of the reader. For him, there have to be two projected audiences: bad readers who only catch the exoteric meaning, and good readers who manage to penetrate beyond this smokescreen. I can see why such a distinction should be of value to a philosopher like Strauss, but I am not at all sure that it is an adequate concept for dealing with texts as manifestations of complex encoding and decoding processes. I therefore propose to modify Strauss's concept by replacing his truth model with a model of reader response.

Let me start by addressing this problem with regard to Strauss's two audiences. According to him, there are exactly two types of readers, and they are distinguished precisely by their respective astuteness as readers. In contrast to this view, I believe that the capacity to see esoteric meanings lies not necessarily in the readers' astuteness, but rather in their pre-existing expectations, which will lead them to find what they are looking for. Certainly the authors dealt with in this thesis seem to anticipate partisan or hostile readers rather than good or bad ones. Thus, Louise Labé addresses her Oeuvres not to a good reader but to another woman, obviously hoping for support from the class of educated women;[7] Lady Mary Wroth draws on her many illustrious

forebears to proclaim herself part of a certain aristocratic tradition; Margaret Fell and Gerrard Winstanley seem to expect support from their class or religious community, and Jonson fears the intrusion of hostile readings while clearly hoping for the support of judicious and benevolent readers.

A good case in point is Shakespeare's Richard II. I do not think it can be maintained that a spectator would arrive at a royalist or a feudal reading of the play because he or she is a bad or good reader. Rather, sympathies will sway in accordance with partisan inclinations which may predate a given performance, or which may at the very least be formed during and after the performance as the spectator's beliefs interact with the presentation seen on stage. Therefore, if we have two impulses in Richard II, the two projected types of audience response will in all likelihood be a product of the audience's allegiances to either one--or neither--of the two options.[8]

I do not here wish to contest that a close reader may also be the one most likely to pick up on hidden meanings. What I do mean to suggest, however, is that a close reading itself may be the product of very marked personal interests and inclinations on the part of the reader. This can be most clearly seen with the authors dealt with here in section III, who set out to provide highly partisan readings of the Bible in order to forge a more authoritative position for the community they wish to support. Since every author is

also in a manner of speaking a reader, what is true for audiences is also true for authors: they create their own readings in accordance with their own needs and desires. It is here that a theory of intertextuality may provide a helpful modification of Strauss's model.

One of the best known critics to engage in a discussion of authors as readers is Harold Bloom who, in The Anxiety of Influence, bases a whole poetics on his notion of creative misreading.[9] For the purposes of his book, he claims that post-Renaissance "poetic history . . . is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves" (5). Therefore, Bloom's basic credo concerning "strong" poets is that

> Poetic Influence--when it involves two strong, authentic poets,--always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence . . . is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist. (30; italics his)

For this reason, "the poet confronting his Great Original must find the fault that is not there, and at the heart of all but the highest imaginative virtue" (31). What is taking place, then, in Bloom's vision of the poet at work, is a massive psychological struggle for independence, autonomy, strength, and self-sufficiency, a Freudian "family romance" (8) in which poets will "wrestle with their strong precursors,

even to the death" (5). In this struggle, "to lose freedom . . . is never to forgive, and to learn the dread of threatened autonomy for ever" (30), and as the poet confronts "the terrible splendor of cultural heritage" (31), the way out for him (and her?) is an aggressive strategy of creative misreading or "poetic misprision" (7).

I should say right here that I have some problems with certain aspects of Bloom's model of the creative process, since it presupposes a number of assumptions which I do not share. Thus, for example, Bloom assumes that all poetic creation is necessarily and always a striving for some sense of inviolable autonomy rather than, for example, a striving for community or solidarity. In separating the weaklings from the true strong poets, Bloom seems to suggest that anyone not willing to wrestle "to the death" with a precursor really has nothing at all worthwhile to say to us, which sanctifies certain canonical texts in ways I find unacceptable. More to the point in terms of this thesis, Bloom assumes the existence of a "Tradition" which is really beyond reform, or indeed the need of reform. In his theory, a precursor text can under no circumstances be open to attack because there is actually something wrong with it; the only thing that can happen--and is indeed bound to happen--is a misreading which will allow the successor poet to create faults that are not really there in order to remedy them in his own poetry. This

model is necessarily based on the assumption that poets of all ages at least since the Renaissance must perforce share the same outlook, submit to the same eternal truths, and feel the same needs as their precursors. Thus, poetic misprision is a psychological and to all intents and purposes apolitical battle with powerful fathers, but never an act of socially and politically meaningful and justifiable revisionism. No truly adversarial stance is possible in Bloom's model, very simply because everything has already been achieved, which is precisely the reason why authors are subjected to this enormous anxiety of influence in the first place.

In contrast to Bloom, various reader-response theories developed over the past 20 years have been more generous in according the reader some power in actually creating the text while reading it. Here, however, there seems to be little room for willful and intentional misreading since the reader--at least the expert reader--is expected to fulfil his or her duties along predefined routes which will keep the individual experience in line with established patterns. Stanley Fish, for example, assumes that reading is governed (and ought to be governed) not by the individual reader's desires but by the conventions established in an interpretive community which he or she is part of.[10] Wolfgang Iser sees reading as an experience which is guided by an interplay of stable markers and gaps or fissures in the text, so that the

reader is expected to fill in the gaps while still obeying the guidelines offered by the stable elements of the text.[11] What neither approach seems to allow for is the notion that a reader may decide to resist a text or a tradition on the basis of clearly perceived ideological commitments. It is precisely this notion of a reader (who is also an author) actively resisting a text which is, I think, helpful in Bloom's model of universal poetic misprision--only this time let us assume that an author/reader may have socially or politically significant axes to grind because of his or her gender, sexual orientation, political convictions, or class background.

Such a notion of misreading has recently been put forward by Ina Schabert as an important and rewarding strategy for reading, writing, and teaching literature.[12] She wishes to encourage readers to do what writers and non-academic readers have been doing all along: invent creative misreadings of the text. The development of alternative plots, reversals of a text's gender structures, the invention of alternative endings and beginnings, the application of the text's basic assumptions to alternative settings and situations--all these are here seen as empowering reading strategies which may allow readers to make visible a text's ideological orientation while enabling them to develop independent positions of their own in their conversations with the absent authors. What may come out of such misreadings if the reader is also a writer

are stories like Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea, or more in keeping with the scope of this thesis, a women's or a peasants' Bible, a woman's Petrarchan lyric or praise of folly, a gay perspective on a particular historical event.

As I said before, Leo Strauss's model operates on a notion of true as opposed to feigned meanings, of valuable as opposed to discardable insights. This, however, seems to me an inadequate model to account for the complex processes involved in developing a critical or adversarial stance. Thus, while I am heavily indebted to Strauss's theory and to Cantor's elaboration of it with regard to processes of covert signification, I see the formation of adversarial opinions as the result of a process of partisan readings which induce authors to resist certain traditional assumptions, retain others, choose between rival traditions, or exclude unwanted ones by simply not referring to them. My double focus on strategies of representation as well as on strategies of reading will, I hope, not only show how an author may have arrived at a certain position, but will also provide something of an extratextual frame which should help us identify a resisting stance by measuring it against the traditions it deviates from.

This thesis, then, revolves around two poles: the one concerned with encoding strategies, the other with reading strategies on the part of the authors. As the thesis progresses, these two poles will change places in their relative importance as the centre of my own interpretations.

Thus, chapter 2 is concerned solely with the representational issue, and does not discuss textual misreadings; chapters 3 to 5 are also concerned mainly, though not exclusively, with representation, whereas chapters 6 and 7 deal with particularly aggressive cases of revisionist reading. Obviously, there will be no clear dividing line. It is, in fact, my hope that the two sides of the issue will become fused in a loose and suggestive manner, and that it will become possible to think of them as complementary rather than separate or contradictory activities.

The double focus of this thesis lies at the heart of what is meant by a notion of resistance. In common usage, I suppose that most people would think of resistance as an activity that involves a will to actively oppose an oppressive government or political condition. This could range from conspiratorial meetings to acts of sabotage, or even to guerilla warfare. Certainly, the authors dealt with in the third section of this thesis are on the brink of just this kind of resistance. However, a resisting stance begins earlier, in those acts of critical (mis)reading which this thesis tries to investigate, of evaluating a tradition, a tradition-building text, or a set of socio-political conventions and practices. Much like its opposite, compliance, resistance is therefore an integral part of the way people deal with their environment.

The next step after being a resisting "reader" is being

a resisting author or public speaker, and it is here that a person might be forced to adopt a strategy that is both compliant and resisting: a strategy of camouflage and subterfuge. Strauss and Cantor assume that such strategies are in all cases fully conscious manoeuvres which will grow out of a tradition of esoteric writing. In some cases, this can be assumed with some degree of certainty, but I am not convinced that this is necessarily so. It seems to me more likely that we should assume an interplay between conscious and subconscious feelirgs of unease which will prompt an author to choose one strategy rather than another, that an author may be guided by his or her instinct much as a mountain climber will not plan every single step of his route, even though all steps are designed to prevent a precipitous fall.

There is one word which has so far not been used by me, and which might be expected to turn up in a discussion like the one I am proposing: subversion. A first working title for the thesis actually did contain the word "subversive" but I decided against using it except in very limited contexts. The reasons for this are manifold, and I would like to explain them here. Subversion is a term which has achieved such a wide currency in recent criticism that it seems to be in danger of losing its specific meaning: anything from a critical point of view to a particular discursive practice up to a verifiably revolutionary agenda may be termed

"subversive," and I sympathize with Gerald Graff, who complains that for many critics "'subversive' has become little more than a plus-mark, a gold star awarded to whatever a critic happens to approve of, rather the way an earlier generation of critics used words like 'beautiful' and 'noble.'"[13] While I do not wish to go quite as far as Graff does, there is a semantic instability about the term which I would like to avoid.

The problem seems to rest on the fact that often it does not become clear who or what something may be subversive of. What are the exact targets, and how many are there? Is subversion to be understood as a guerilla tactic which seeks to undermine certain concepts or as a revolutionary tactic which seeks to bring about immediate, tangible social change? Is an implied subversive intent enough or does the term imply concrete action? If the latter, should it be measured by the manifest intentions of the acting person or by the verifiable historical effect of the action? As I said, the concept is a difficult one, and in those cases when I do use it I intend to use it only in either one of two possible contexts: subversion, for the purposes of this study, means either an attempt at undermining specific concepts or discursive practices found in the texts or traditions which the authors are reacting to, or in the sense of "politically subversive" it means something that is intentionally designed to effect the overthrow of the existing political order.

Especially sections II and III will include instances of such subversions.

As a general theoretical term, the word "subversive" also has its problems, since it is one of the players in the containment/subversion debate currently raging in Renaissance studies. Clearly, the issue at stake in this debate is not only whether a concept can be subverted at all, but whether such a subversion could release energies that might not be containable in concrete political terms. I would like to stay out of this debate because the actual effect of a given text is extremely hard to measure and is liable to vary depending on the circumstances of its reading or staging. It is also well beyond the scope of this thesis. What makes the topic even more complex is that no text can have control over partisan misreadings on the part of its readers, so that in a concrete historical situation any text may come to be seen as subversive. A good example for this is a case of attempted containment that occurred in the USA during the McCarthy years. Here, a woman wanted to have Robin Hood banned from the local library because--as everybody knows--he stole from the rich and gave to the poor.[14] Normally, this kind of threat can be contained by simply relegating Robin Hood to a distant past with no ties to the present but, in the frenzied atmosphere of this particular period, Robin Hood may well have seemed like the grandfather of all communists so that only a total suppression could contain the threat. As it turned out, the Sheriff of Nottingham then in office

interceded, and the woman did not succeed with her crusade.

I suspect that the position we will side with in the containment/subversion debate depends largely on our own political beliefs and hopes rather than on a chain of demonstrably successful subversive impacts or conversely a chain of demonstrably successful containments. Personally, I am on the side of those who believe that subversion is possible even though much of it may be containable at any given moment,[15] and in as far as it concerns the Renaissance, I definitely share the worries of James Holstun, who uses radical religious tracts to argue against "a premature totalization of early modern culture on the basis of an immanent analysis of canonical literary texts."[16] This thesis is in part an attempt at counteracting such a totalization through the inclusion of authors who would normally be considered marginal for a number of reasons.

In basing this thesis on a notion of resistance and pressure, I intend to try out an interpretive strategy which is primarily geared towards a pragmatic concern: how to create a space in which individual voices may be heard neither within a fiction of total personal autonomy, nor of total cultural control; how to find an interpretive perspective which will allow us to see and take seriously both the individual effort and external interferences. Here I find myself most in agreement with Patterson's book, but I am also indebted to those marxist and new historicist works

which show an interest in textual areas in which individual needs interact with cultural demands.[17] Clearly, such an interpretive agenda cannot be limited to the Renaissance alone. In fact, it is my conviction that it would yield interesting insights when applied to most periods of world literature. However, there are good reasons for situating such a discussion in the Renaissance.

The manifold cultural and political upheavals that characterize the Renaissance--from the invention of printing and the subsequent increased availability of printed material to the Protestant movement and its attendant climate of religious strife and of a crisis of authority--designate this period as a time governed by an intense multiplication of available and at times hotly contested ideological positions. These available positions, which also include a protracted discussion about the place of women in their society, facilitate a climate of debate and controversy, and in such a climate we can expect that individuals from a wide variety of social backgrounds would try to join the debate, to have their say, to be heard. At the same time, the Renaissance is not a liberal period with guarantees for free speech and individual freedoms. Rather, it offers precisely one of those restrictive environments Strauss and Cantor are interested in. Given these general characteristics, the Renaissance offers a wide variety of texts which would lend themselves to an investigation that stresses both the process of (mis)reading (i.e., of establishing an ideological

position), and of guarded expression (i.e., of avoiding reprisals through protective forms of discourse).

As should be apparent after even a cursory glance at the table of contents, I do not intend to offer anything like a complete and authoritative typology of esoteric writing or revisionist reading. For the Renaissance, this has been attempted by Patterson, who proposes to outline a coherent and more or less complete scheme for her hermeneutics of censorship. I believe that such a definitive stance may be premature, and that we should have a broader and better analysed base to argue from before attempting to fuse our findings into a stable hermeneutics of any sort. The problem is nowhere more apparent than in Patterson's book, where she at one point deduces no less than four basic rules for her hermeneutics from one short letter by John Chamberlain.[18] In contrast to this systematizing approach, I propose to study a limited number of texts in some detail in order to show just how individual authors have faced ideological challenges with various degrees of cunning, daring, and determination.

Together, I hope, these chapters will serve as points of orientation which will help outline possible strategies both within the limits of the individual sections and within a wider context of possible problems and responses. My point here will not be that the strategies found will be unique to the texts discussed, but on the contrary that the individual readings should encourage us to think about similar phenomena in other texts not dealt with in this thesis.

There are other reasons why this is a thesis centred on individual texts rather than on systematizing features of evasive discourse. Like other critics, I am worried about trends in recent criticism which seek to include extensive material from marginalized or non-literary texts while in fact marginalizing them all the more with regard to the great works which they have been generously chosen to elucidate. James Holstun wittily--and not without bitterness--brings the issue into focus when he says with regard to radical Civil War literature:

> Just as an epigraph from Heidegger at the opening of a deconstructive essay augurs an aporia right around the pli, so a longish quotation from an explorative narrative, an Elizabethan diary, or a treatise on rhetoric at the opening of a new historicist essay predicts with fair certainty that an analysis of the perplexities of power in some canonical literary work lies ahead. . . . The pamphlet wars of the 1640s and 1650s are, for all practical purposes, unreconnoitered territory. (192)

Holstun calls this development "neo-Tillyardian" (195), a "high-tech version of the Elizabethan world picture" (199), because it once again assumes a priori that "absolutism is the only game in town. Opposition, if it exists at all, flickers impotently and mutely in a prelinguistic limbo" (197). Instead, Holstum proposes that we should study paradigms of communal self-fashioning to counteract an overly totalitarian view of Renaissance culture, which seems to privilege power over resistance, failed individual self-fashioning over

possibly successful communal self-fashioning, the elite over the supposedly ignorant and purposeless mass of the marginalized, the few over the many.

I am particularly concerned about the degree to which this critical practise actually exploits those "others" we have all been hearing so much about while it pretends to make them heard. This is a concern I share with Carolyn Porter, who proposes a solution on the basis of Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, of "double-voiced" discourse, which allows us "to reexamine both those voices engaged in 'othering' and the voices of those 'othered.'"[19] In this way, she argues, we may come to see that these other voices

> may be understood not as always already neutralized by the ideologies they must speak through in order to be heard, but rather as inflecting, distorting, even appropriating such ideologies, genres, values so as to alter their configuration.[20]

If, therefore, these other voices are seen not as separate, excluded, and hence unimportant manifestations on the fringe of powerful interests, but rather as "belonging to the same heterogeneous discursive field as their dominant opponents, while they may be finally contained, they cannot be denied agency."[21]

While this thesis does not claim to prove the existence of a coherent resistance movement of any sort, I do intend to tackle the problem of marginal voices by a fairly straightforward means: I intend to read some of them with the kind of respect they demand and deserve.

The point of this thesis is that the phenomenon of the resisting reader and author is not one that can be limited to certain kinds of authors only: men, for example, but not women; literary authors but not polemic writers; English authors but not French or Italian ones. Even on a political level it would be wrong to assume that resistance can only come from a broad direction we would now call "left"--which is a dubious concept anyway in as far as it concerns the Renaissance. Conservative authors, too, may find themselves at variance with their environment, and I wished to cover a broad range of backgrounds. This also seemed to be advisable because I wanted to try out my interpretive strategy on the basis of a variety of positions. Thus, the thesis had to cover various genres and had to deal with male as well as female authors, with conservative discontents as well as with radical critics, with literary as well as with non-literary writers.

It also seemed feasible to include at least one author from another country. This author had to be a recognizable member of the international Renaissance, a participant in general European movements, and an author of more than merely local interest, so that the findings would be comparable to similar trends in other national literatures. Louise Labé seemed a convincing candidate because in rewriting Erasmus' Praise of Folly, as well as in participating in Petrarchan and Neoplatonic forms of discourse, she was clearly such a member

of the European Renaissance. The fact that part of her work was translated into English by Robert Greene attests to its appeal to a broader, non-French audience, and also offers one of the few cases in the period where we have a detailed record of a man's reception of a woman's work.

Selecting the texts was not an easy process. On the whole, my criteria for selection were as follows: (a) the texts had to be published works so that it could be assumed that the authors had to anticipate an anonymous public audience and hence a certain degree of uncontrollable exposure to criticism; (b) the texts had to be daring either with regard to their singularity in intent or with regard to the reactions they could and in some cases did produce. Thus, in the field of drama and politics I chose Richard II and Sejanus because these two plays actually did run into problems with the authorities; Edward II was chosen because it is the only dramatic attempt I know of in the Renaissance in which gay issues get dealt with in a serious, differentiated, and sympathetic manner. For the section on women authors I picked writers who chose to take on the very subjects which--in as far as it concerns women--seem to lie at the heart of the misogynist tradition: female sexual desire and the threat of topsy-turvydom. Of all possible targets for revisionist readings, the Bible seemed the most promising text because of its enormous importance in the Renaissance as an argumentative tool, the source of men's and women's ways of thinking about

the world, and the site on which matters of authority and subjection were debated. Among revisionist readings of the Bible, Fell's offers to my knowledge the only sustained attempt by a woman to justify women's preaching, and Winstanley's can count among the most radical readings of the Bible from a peasant position.

Thus, while the three sections in this thesis try to cover a broad range of interests, there is a close connection between the chapters within each section, as well as between the basic challenges encountered by each of these authors as they face a potentially hostile readership and a potentially hostile tradition of previous thought. In general, the thesis can be seen to progress from less intensive engagements with ideological positions to more and more intensive and difficult struggles for speech and the right to reject oppressive social values.

Inevitably, with this kind of project, there were some unwelcome exclusions that had to be made along the way. Some texts like Elizabeth Cary's Tragedy of Mariam and other closet dramas by male authors were excluded because they were not written for public stagings or were not even printed works. Others were excluded because their concerns could be better dealt with through recourse to other texts. Thus, I could only take marginal note of Aemilia Lanier's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, which is situated somewhere between sections II and III: in strategy, Lanier's work is close to the work of

Wroth and Labé, while in its religious revisionism it is closer to Margaret Fell without, however, embracing her kind of radical vision. The fascinating literature of the Ranters was excluded because while certainly being no less radical than Winstanley, these authors were not interested in providing coherent readings of the Bible. The same applies to Margaret Fell's more mystically inclined female contemporaries like the prophet Anna Trapnel. Displacement strategies, which are very common in Renaissance literature, could have been investigated in George Chapman's work, especially in Bussy d'Ambois, or in Massinger's dramas, but Jonson's seemed to be a singularly well-sustained and thorough case. What these exclusions point to is the fact that this approach may be suited for a wide variety of texts, and that more work in this direction would be desirable in the long run, for in my experience every text offers a different set of problems and solutions, so that the findings will have to be tested against other texts before reliable extrapolations can be made with some degree of certainty.

What all of these chapters have in common is my own approach. My readings attempt to do justice to these texts by seeing them as sites for an ongoing struggle on the part of the authors to find a voice, a critical stance, an adversarial position. If all of these texts still show traces of the cultural and political values they try to resist, I see this not as a sign of failure on the part of

the writers but rather as a testimony to the difficulty of their task. In following this interpretive agenda, this thesis is concerned with questions which go beyond the theories of Strauss, Bloom, or Cantor, and I should point out here that these theories are meant to help us think about this topic, to provide a rough frame. In this sense, this thesis is not "about" these theories but is grounded in a commitment to its pragmatic agenda. Here, I am especially indebted to critical influences which are hard to trace back to one origin: the tradition of feminist criticism. Guided by their partisan interest in the achievements of women writers, feminist critics have learned to acknowledge the strains put on these authors as a constitutive force in their writings, and have developed a large array of interpretive strategies designed to render visible both the external pressures put on an author, and the strategies by which women authors try to counter these pressures. I cannot see why women only should be allowed the benefit of this approach. On the contrary, this thesis is also an experiment designed to find a way in which feminist critical practice may be made available as an interpretive tool for the reading of texts in general.

Section I: Politics and the Theatre

"Pace Astrophil," writes Jonathan Dollimore, Renaissance authors "wrote looking not into their hearts but over their shoulders."[1] This pronouncement seems to encapsulate well the problem of art under censorship, for in the context of its utterance, the censor is the one these writers are looking for as they glance over their shoulders. In the case of Renaissance drama, this censorship was carried out mainly by the Master of the Revels, who as a court official was necessarily sensitive to the wishes of the Privy Council and the Crown.[2] For this reason, although the city authorities did try to lobby against the theatre in the interest of public morals and what may be called social hygiene, the main concern of the censor lay with politically sensitive areas:

> . . . indulgence in religious controversy . . . . any kind of sacrilege, and (especially after 1606) the use of oaths containing the name of Christ or God. . . . the realistic portrayal of living kings upon the stage, especially their weaknesses, vices, or policies; dangerously satirical or hostile portrayal of foreign kings or high officials of any country, discussion of foreign politics or international relations; cartooning of real persons of any rank, but especially of noblemen; seditious sentiments, or discussions of facts likely to produce popular discontent or a desire for greater civil liberty or a change of form of government; and excessive indecency, especially if a work were otherwise questionable as well.[3]

Recently Philip Finkenpearl has argued that Renaissance censorship of the drama was actually quite restrained at

least in the Jacobean period,[4] and this is certainly true when it is compared with the more aggressive censorship of non-literary prose. However, the fact remains that we do have a fair number of dramatic texts which ran into trouble or which may have been censored,[5] and we should consider the relationship between the dramatists and their companies on the one hand, and the censor on the other as a fairly precarious truce rather than a comfortable state of laissez faire. Thus, while Annabel Patterson concedes that "'literature' in the early modern period was conceived in part as the way around censorship,"[6] she also advises us to consider these interactions as a kind of joint venture between censor and author, with each observing certain demarcation lines.[7]

If we look back now on Dollimore's notion of the authorial gaze, there is another direction of this gaze to be considered, and it too will not lead inward: it is the direction of the prospective audience who must be attracted, satisfied, and given its money's worth. Exactly how dramatists were affected by the expectations of their target audiences is hard to estimate, but one thing is certain: in a highly competitive business the authors had to provide plays which would sell on stage either to the audiences of the open air theatres or to the coterie audiences of the indoor theatres, and in some cases their plays would also have to be presentable at court. In his Carnival and Theater

(1985), Michael D. Bristol gives an account of just how heterogeneous these audiences were especially in the open air theatres,[8] and these requirements alone may account for much of what A. P. Rossiter has called the "two-eyedness" of Renaissance drama, a strategy of double messages which could help to attract and provide for seemingly irreconcilable audience expectations.[9] In conjunction with pressures from above, what we get is an interesting field of tension between different possible expectations and state of interests:

> The theatre was monitored closely by the state--both companies and plays had to be licensed--and yet its institutional position was complex. On the one hand, it was sometimes summoned to perform at Court and as such may seem a direct extension of royal power . . . on the other hand, it was the mode of cultural production in which market forces were strongest, and as such it was especially exposed to the influence of subordinate and emergent classes.[10]

In such a field of conflicting interests, the desire of a good number of playwrights to push as closely as they could to staging what was just within the liberty accorded to them by the censor need not necessarily reflect a particularly revolutionary frame of mind on the part of the authors (though I do not wish to exclude such a possibility). Instead, it may be closely connected to the market pressures, for the closer the writers came to staging the unsayable, the dangerous, the forbidden, the more fascinating the plays could become.[11]

This is the opinion of Paul Yachnin, who argues that under the influence of an expanding theatre boom in the late Elizabethan and Jacobean period, the dramatists learned to

equivocate in order to survive while presenting dangerous matter to an interested public. For him, this is a double-edged achievement because it seems to rob the theatre of real power, making it less influential as a tool for effecting political change, since double visions, displacements, and equivocations take the place of direct political statements.[12] While direct political influence is hard to trace, I am not so sure that the overall impact of critical drama in those decades could have been all that negligible, and I am inclined to agree with Franco Moretti and David Kastan, who claim that the development of Renaissance tragedy, and the demystifying portrayals of royal power on stage may be intimately connected in a cumulative effect to the eventual removal of the Stuart monarchy.[13] At the same time, I find Yachnin's notion of the practical uses of dramatic equivocation extremely helpful, and I am interested in this kind of equivocation as a protective encoding practice in the context of politically risky statements. The following two chapters will therefore be dedicated to a discussion of esoteric strategies only, and will not deal with subversive misreadings. The target of resistance in these cases will be the socio-political environment of Renaissance England, and the power of the censor to control what may be staged and what may not be staged rather than a hostile precursor tradition.

In order to safeguard themselves against trouble, these authors used protective strategies, and as a rule they were

successful. Occasionally, however, plays did nevertheless run foul of the censor, as for example Sir John van Olden Barnavelt (1619), which tries to stage a discussion of the setbacks and merits of monarchical government in a Dutch setting. The treatment proved to be too contemporary, and the Master of the Revels, George Buc, objected to even the most restrained and uncritical representation of the Prince of Orange on stage.[14] John Day's The Isle of Guls (1606) tried to use an Arcadian romance setting for criticism of James, but the analogies were too obvious and there was a rumor that some arrests had been made because of the play.[15] Jonson, Chapman, and Marston got into trouble over the anti-Scottish satire in Eastward Ho! (1605), and although it is not quite clear how serious the threat was, things seemed to be looking pretty bleak for a while when Jonson and Chapman were imprisoned for the offence.[16]

One of the most spectacular failures to get a play past the censor at all was the anonymous Book of Sir Thomas More (c. 1592-93), which was severely censored by Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels. The manuscript shows no less than seven hands, one by the original scribe, one by Tilney, and the rest reflecting various later additions (one of them possibly by Shakespeare), but is it obvious that the authors or the company must have given up on the attempt at revising the play into an acceptable form.[17] This is not surprising, since the play is practically studded with dangerous matter. There is, of course, the

figure of More himself, who is portrayed positively throughout, although the authors do try to cloud the issue of Henry VIII's divorce and More's refusal to take the Oath of Succession. Even more damaging, there is a detailed and remarkably sympathetic depiction of the uprisings on the bloody Mayday of 1517, a depiction which gives the rebels every opportunity to state their case, and leaves them a good degree of dignity in their plight. Tilney was particularly sensitive to these scenes, in the first act urging the author to "leave out the insurrection wholy & the Cause ther off . . . att your own perilles."[18] It has been suggested that this excessive sensitivity was due to contemporary fears of apprentice riots, and I can see why Tilney should have been particularly nervous about the riots portrayed in The Book of Sir Thomas More: the rioters' grievances are all very realistic (especially the loss of business through French immigrant craftsmen), and their strategy of rebellion clearly enough laid out so as to almost amount to a how-to guide on trouble-making.

The Book of Sir Thomas More, however, is an atypically incautious and unguarded play, and most of the other authors were more careful. In the cases listed, the authors of Barnavelt obviously tried to rely on a displacement into a foreign setting, while Day attempted to couch his criticism in the markedly unrealistic romance genre. Eastward Ho!, on the other hand, tries to defuse some of the poignancy of the anti-Scottish satire by using satirical type characters

as a vehicle. All these strategies are to be found in a list drawn up by Evelyn May Albright, which names a number of possible approaches by which authors tried to distance themselves from their material:

> by intruding a contemporary incident, situation, or problem into a story set in the past; by using type characters of the past to figure characters of their own day; by setting the action in a foreign land, with some hint to apply it to England (often in the prologue); by generalizing a tale into an allegory or morality that required intelligence or special information to interpret rightly or by confusing criticism through the employment of a medley form commingling the purely fantastic with the realistic and contemporary matters thinly veiled.[19]

Most of the plays known to have caused problems with the censor at the time show problems in handling these defence strategies, or an unwillingness of the censor to accept them as sufficient.

In essence, all the devices listed by Albright are strategies of displacement, of shifting sensitive material to a safer distance. I will deal with this kind of "ventriloquism" in chapter 3.[20] But the well-guarded presentation of potentially dangerous material does not necessarily start with these macrotextual structures, or indeed depend on them. What it does absolutely depend on, however, is a careful editing and manipulating of micro-textual aspects: which pieces of information should go where or should maybe be suppressed altogether, how audience sympathies may be swayed independent of ideological strictures, how inherent ambivalences may be exploited, or

how gaps may be created in the text which would incite an audience to supply their own conclusions. It is these microtextual features that are the main concern of the following chapter.

Chapter 2: "And we be quit that caused it to be done": Richard II, Edward II, and the Art of the Theatrical Trompe-l'oeil

The Renaissance history play has long been recognized as a site for ideological debate on such sensitive issues as the nature of kingship, the nature of good government, and the question of lawful rebellion and deposition. All of these questions fall into the category of potentially forbidden political discussion, but as long as E. M. W. Tillyard and his followers asserted the essentially orthodox nature of the Renaissance history play, there could be no serious debate about how authors aligned themselves with regard to conflicting traditions. However, these orthodox assumptions have since come under attack, and have been questioned even on the basis of the theories available to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Holinshed and Hall, the main sources for many history plays, have been shown to be less orthodox than they seem. We have come to consider sceptical writers like Machiavelli as serious influences on Renaissance thought, and even the seemingly insurmountable doctrines of divine providence and absolute obedience can now be seen as an expression of the age's anxieties rather than a universally held belief.[1]

The two plays dealt with in this chapter, Marlowe's Edward II and Shakespeare's Richard II, stand at the

beginning of the development of the history play in the 1590s, and share a number of important characteristics: in dealing with the reigns of Richard II and Edward II, they deal with a period of the past which is anything but harmless with regard to Tudor doctrine, and focus on two of the most important paradigms available to Tudor lawyers for the debate on lawful deposition[2]; both plays focus on a weak king and the origins and nature of baronial opposition, and both show some decidedly unorthodox and therefore potentially dangerous or morally reprehensible features.

But there are also important differences. Shakespeare's Richard II revolves around the question of good or bad kingship, lawful deposition, and baronial disobedience, and pushes it to its final conclusion, the deposition and murder of Richard, the king who insists like no other Renaissance stage king on his divinely ordained status. With this play, as indeed with all of Shakespeare's history plays, there is a long scholarly tradition which saw nothing untoward in this depiction of the fall of Richard. However, the people who paid Shakespeare's company for a special performance of a play on Richard (most likely Shakespeare's) on February 8, 1601 obviously saw something quite different in it. They were members of the Essex conspiracy who ordered this staging on the day before the Essex uprising either to try and prepare the populace for the coup (in which case they must have sadly overestimated the politically subversive powers of drama), or to help them build up their own

courage (in which case it might have worked).[3] I do not wish to argue that, when he wrote Richard II around 1595, Shakespeare did so with the Earl of Essex in mind for the role of Bolingbroke--although such a connection has been debated with regard to John Hayward's censored History of Henry IV.[4] I would rather like to treat this occurrence as an interesting piece of reception history, for one thing is obvious: these conspirators very markedly did not think of Richard II as an orthodox play.

If the behaviour of the Essex supporters suggests a potential instability in Shakespeare's orthodoxy in dealing with the reign of Richard II, there is further external evidence to suggest that Richard II must have caused some anxiety with the authorities. First, there is Elizabeth's own enigmatic and possibly ironic remark "I am Richard II. Know ye not that?" made six months after the Essex uprising.[5] More importantly, there is the vexing question of the deposition scene in the early quartos. Richard II exists in five quarto editions before the first folio: one in 1597, two in 1598, one in 1608, and one in 1615. Those texts that appeared before the death of Elizabeth do not contain the passage in IV.i.154-318, the deposition of Richard II.[6] Following A. W. Pollard, Peter Ure offers an explanation that has been widely accepted:

> This [the deposition scene] is likely to have been performed on stage, but was cut out of the manuscript as sent to the printer, probably because political conditions toward the end of the century

> made the dethronement of an English monarch a dangerous subject for public discussion.[7]

This view has recently been challenged by Jane Clare, who argues that the scene was probably not even acted because she finds it unconvincing that the scene should have been passed by the censor for staging, but not for printing.[8] Whichever was the case, one thing can, I think, be assumed with some certainty: that the anxiety-centre of this play--for the authorities and by implication for the author and the theatre company--lay in the staging of the deposition of Richard. This is not surprising, for Richard's is a special case. A king of impeccable lineage, according to his own claims and according to Tudor doctrine instituted by God, is here put on trial by powerful court factions, deposed on their authority, stripped of his office and his title on the basis of baronial claims to power. Clearly, in staging the reign of Richard II Shakespeare was faced with a difficult task.

On the one hand, he could not easily make Bolingbroke the villain of the piece because the Tudor claim to power rested on Henry VII's Lancastrian connections. On the other hand, the deposition and the attendant legal ramifications had to be handled delicately so as not to interfere with Tudor doctrine on obedience and rebellion. This is the contention of Jeanne T. Newlin, who sees in Richard II a

> dilemma of Tudor Divine Right theory condemning all usurpation on the one hand and Elizabeth's lineage traced back through the Lancastrians to Henry IV

> on the other. To make either Richard or Henry hero or villain had its risks.[9]

One possible answer to such a case of double binds would have been to comply, to acknowledge that this is a possible mine field, and write another play instead. On the other hand, one could still use the story but avoid dramatizing the deposition of Richard--either by writing a play of the aftermath (like Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV), or by not leading up to the deposition (as is the case in the earlier Woodstock, a play clearly hostile to Richard).[10] In Richard II, Shakespeare chooses to do neither, but to confront a sensitive area of Tudor doctrine in its most sensitive aspect. In doing so, Shakespeare could have chosen to raise the issues in order to harmonize them in the end (by having Bolingbroke engage in lengthy and heartfelt shows of repentance, for example). What we get instead is a play in which conflicting personal, political, and social implications are irreconcilably set against each other in an ambivalence that has long been recognized as the play's central characteristic. This, in turn, leads to a precarious balancing act that may well be aesthetically satisfying because it makes all major positions heard, but that is also a visible record of the difficulties of writing--and keeping oneself out of trouble--under restrictive circumstances.

In contrast to Shakespeare's almost exclusively political focus, Marlowe's Edward II tries to profit from the obedience debate while actually focussing on a problem of sexual rather

than state politics. In describing the politics of this play, C. Morris uses a curious phrase to describe its orthodoxy: he suggests that Marlowe's politics were "almost ostentatiously correct."[11] It is certainly true that the primary concern of Edward II is not the agonizing question of whether an anointed king may or may not be deposed. When Edward III emerges at the end as the new king, the political order is restored, rebellion did not pay off, and there is no hint that the new king will run into any more problems with his nobles.

What Marlowe tries to achieve is in a way the exact opposite of Shakespeare's aim. In order to be able to stage a truly ambivalent deposition which cannot be easily condemned, Shakespeare needs to find ways of making his usurper acceptable in spite of injunctions against rebellion. Marlowe, on the other hand, needs to find ways of establishing sympathy and support for his homosexual king.[12] In doing so, he can expect to be dealing not only with the moral convictions of the censor but also with those of the church and of his audience. As one of the earliest examples of such a dramatic effort in Christian times, his approach is uncommonly daring and within allowed parameters uncompromising.[13] If Marlowe seems "ostentatiously" orthodox in political matters, this may be attributed to the fact that his true interests lie with sexual politics instead of state politics, and indeed "ostentatious" might just perfectly describe a political

orthodoxy designed to shield the author from quite a different accusation, that of sexual heresy.

One of the more striking features of the history of Renaissance censorship is the fact that the most ferocious punishments were reserved for offenders outside the dramatic field. Someone like John Stubbs, for example, had his right hand cut off for commenting on Elizabeth's marital options in his Discovery of the Gaping Gulf (1579), and William Prynne was fined, pilloried, imprisoned, and had his ears cut off for criticising the theatre and the court in his Histriomastix (1633). The members of Shakespeare's company, on the other hand, were only questioned about their involvement in the Essex uprising and were then let go.[14] Leeds Barroll suggests that we may be overestimating the fear the authorities had of dramatic activities in London, and that at least as far as the censor was concerned, the real threat lay not with drama but with the infinitely reproducible printed word.[15] I do not find this totally convincing because there is no indication that the printers and playwrights ran any increased risks once a play came to be printed. However, what this comparative safety of dramatic texts may be at least partly a result of is a special quality inherent in the dramatic technique as such. Where Prynne went on a crusade in an argumentative prose text which left hardly any room for equivocation, a dramatic text offers the author the chance just to dramatize contradicting points of view without having

to draw any conclusions.

When faced with contradicting arguments in a play, critics have often tried to neutralize the potential for multivocal uncertainty by privileging one position over the other. A good example for this tendency is Gaunt's rebuke of the Duchess of Gloucester in Richard II, which has often been taken to reflect Shakespeare's orthodox convictions. The Duchess wants Gaunt to take action against Richard for the murder of her husband, but Gaunt declines:

> God's in the quarrel--for God's substitute,
> His deputy anointed in His sight,
> Hath caus's his death; the which if wrongfully,
> Let angry heaven revenge, for I may never lift
> An angry arm against His minister. (I.ii.37-41)[16]

As C. G. Thayer, a decidedly pro-Lancastrian critic, points out, there is no reason why we should actually privilege this position in this scene. He then proceeds to argue that in fact Gaunt's argument is nothing but a safety device, and that the dramatic weight of the Duchess' speeches is designed to make us side with her instead of Gaunt.[17] However, there is no way of telling whom Shakespeare wanted us to side with. The scene itself provides contradicting impulses. On the one hand, the Duchess gets to speak 58 out of 74 lines, and is given a variety of different arguments and impassioned speeches, while Gaunt can only repeat the old stereotypes. This, for example, is what she has to say:

> Call it not patience, Gaunt, it is despair;
> In suff'ring thus thy brother to be slaught'red
> Thou showest the naked pathway to thy life,
> Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee.
> (I.ii.29-32)

While this sense of moral outrage and plain common sense is certainly convincing, one also has to see that the Duchess does end up accepting Gaunt's attitude to rebellion, so that one might say that he manages to convince her if not about the finer points of ideology, at least about her own impotence in implementing her revenge.

What Shakespeare has done, then, is invent a scene which offers enough of an orthodox condemnation of rebellion, while at the same time providing a platform for a long discussion listing some excellent reasons precisely for such a rebellion. Since this conversation between Gaunt and Gloucester's widow is entirely Shakespeare's invention,[18] the whole purpose of the scene seems to be to initiate a discussion not only of the arguments against but also of those for rebellion. Obviously, a censor might just decide that there should be no debate in the first place, but totalitarian control of this kind was not the aim of Renaissance censorship. I think we should also entertain the idea that the special licence afforded dramatic texts may well be a concession to their multivocal nature, an unwillingness on the part of the censor to resolve inherent ambiguities.[19]

Shakespeare chose to bring the central topic of rebellion out in the open early in the play, availing himself of the multivocal nature of the dramatic genre to present conflicting attitudes. He had to, because it was in his interest to initiate a debate about the pros and cons of

disobedience which would facilitate a sympathetic view of the usurper. For Marlowe, the problem in Edward II is exactly the reverse, for in order to gain sympathy for Edward he has to ensure that certain things do not get discussed. For a play overtly concerned with homosexuality, there is therefore little evaluative talk about the more explosive aspects of sexual morals. The characters speak vaguely of Edward's "unnatural" passions, or of a state of "corruption," but apart from this the only tangible information on the subject comes from the unlikely source of the Older Mortimer, one of Edward's opponents. From the mouth of this completely unreprehensible character we are reminded of a whole list of homosexual precedents, drawing our attention to the fact that "the mightiest kings have had their minions" (I.iv.390).[20] In the true spirit of minority-tradition-building there is certainly a strong suggestion that Edward is in good company in his pursuit of those "unnatural" passions.

Even more important than what the Older Mortimer has to say on the subject is what is not being said in the play. The main reason why homosexuality has been penalized in many Christian societies is because, like so many other things, God forbids it. Renaissance England clearly is such a society, for while John Boswell's Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality (1980) finds considerable evidence for a lenient attitude in the Middle Ages, it also describes an increasingly repressive climate in the late

Middle Ages. In his Homosexuality in Renaissance England (1982), Alan Bray, in turn, finds that while homosexuality may not have been seen as a separate vice by many people, there is ample evidence for religious condemnations which would typically link sodomy, sorcery, and heresy. In such an environment it is no exaggeration to say that a condemnation on religious grounds would have been an argument an Elizabethan audience could have expected. In Edward II, this is exactly the argument that is being suppressed.

In their deaths neither Edward nor his lovers have any doubts about being admitted into heaven, and neither do their opponents. The two members of the clergy in the play do not call God's vengeance down on Edward for his evil homosexual ways, and in any case as stage Catholics they are too self-interested to score any points with an Elizabethan audience. By suppressing a central accusation against homosexuality, Marlowe has created a moral climate for his characters which--while not openly advocating gay rights--nevertheless invites us to see the problem in a socio-political light rather than as a moral question. Thus, the case to be made against Edward and his lovers, as well as against homosexuality as such, has been considerably weakened--and yet there is not one passage in the play where Marlowe himself as the author can be said to be openly in favour of his homosexual characters.

If judicious silence on dubious points is a good way for

Marlowe to coax his audience into a more sympathetic attitude towards Edward, Shakespeare employs similar omissions for his own ends in his portrayal of the usurper Bolingbroke. Critics have been troubled by Bolingbroke's silence about his own intentions with regard to Richard's overthrow: one tradition sees Bolingbroke's silence as a sign of his malevolent, Machiavellian, scheming and opportunistic nature, while the other tradition sees him as a more or less innocent tool of fortune, a man who becomes king almost in spite of himself.[21] Both readings are possible basically because Bolingbroke's silence makes our insight into his character extremely limited: we have to guess at what he might think. As Thayer tells us, Bolingbroke is "unique among the great Shakespearean, Jonsonian and Marlowian conspirators" in that he "keeps his motives and decisions to himself, so much so that we might be justified in asking to what extent he is actively engaged in a conspiracy at all."[22] The question is why this particular usurper is so different from all the others.

Bolingbroke's strange silences can be found particularly from his return to England onward, and his first meeting with Richard after this return is as good an example as any. Richard is following Northumberland's invitation to join Bolingbroke in the courtyard, and is already busy anticipating his own downfall:

> Down, down I come, like glist'ring Phaeton,
> Wanting the manage of unruly jades.

> In the base court? Base court, where kings grow base,
> To come at traitors' calls, and do them grace!
> (III.iii.178-81)

The actor learning his lines for Bolingbroke's part, however, would have a hard time deducing a "traitors' call" from the lines he has to speak. Here is what Bolingbroke has to say by way of greeting:

> Stand all apart,
> And show fair duty to his Majesty. (He kneels down.)
> My gracious lord.

"My gracious lord, I come but for mine own" is the answer to Richard's accusation that he is reaching for the crown, and Richard's ironic "I am yours, and all" provokes only the following answer:

> So far be mine, my most redoubted lord,
> As my true service shall deserve your love.

Finally, when Richard quite correctly perceives that he "must what force would have us do" and go to London, all we get from Bolingbroke is "Yea, my good lord" (III.iii.187-209).

It could certainly be argued that Bolingbroke is dishonest, that he just wants to avoid extended recriminations, or prefers not to show his hand at this point for some political reason. My argument is that only a staging could bring this out either way, and that even then his intentions would be difficult to prove. For the censor, this means that it is practically impossible to assess from his speech if Bolingbroke is a dangerously amoral and smooth-talking schemer or a reasonably loyal subject. As far as the written text

goes, therefore, Shakespeare tries everything to keep his usurper out of trouble. Bolingbroke could never say openly "I have come for the crown, give it to me or else . . . " without becoming the villain of the piece. He cannot have any soliloquies in which we may hear about his rebellious plots, because that would make him look more like Richard III than like a responsible and acceptable alternative to Richard II. As long as the play wants to keep open the possibility that it may be a good thing if Richard gets deposed by this man, silence on the part of the successful usurper is at least to some degree a result of the fact that Shakespeare could not have invented any words for Bolingbroke's intentions without upsetting the delicate balance between Bolingbroke the wronged subject, and Richard the incompetent king. A villainous Bolingbroke would once and for all resolve the agonizing question about the lawfulness of rebellion in favour of Richard.

The purpose of Bolingbroke's opaque silence is to keep us guessing, to create a usurper who cannot be easily condemned. Much as with the omission of moral judgments on homosexuality in Edward II, this is a form of authorial damage-control designed to protect a potentially reprehensible character without having to speak openly for him. From the author's position, this strategy may be paraphrased as "you can't see what I don't give you." The difference between Shakespeare and Marlowe is that Marlowe genuinely does not

want us to "see" the religious argument against homosexuality, whereas Shakespeare may well have intended his audience to "see" in the literal sense of the word some of Bolingbroke's intentions either way in the unspoken aspects of the staging. However, since a staging at the Globe cannot be recovered, we are left with the little the text has to offer.

Apart from outright authorial suppression, there is another type of authorial silence in which an omission in some situations is coupled with a systematic exposure in others. An issue is thus sometimes visible, and sometimes not. Here the omission can become an almost audible gap waiting to be filled with what we know should be there. A good example for this kind of technique is the treatment of the murder of Gloucester in Richard II.

Many critics have been puzzled by the fact that Richard seems to be totally oblivious to the fact that he ordered the murder of his uncle, and that he certainly gives no signs of being troubled by any sense of guilt over it. This is particularly surprising because in the first five scenes there is only one in which the murder is not alluded to. The whole argument between Mowbray and Bolingbroke circles around Gloucester's death, and can be seen as an indirect attack on Richard himself. While Gaunt and Gloucester's widow may not agree on whether it is right to revenge oneself upon a king, they leave no doubt that they are both sure about Richard's guilt in the matter. More damaging still, in the

confrontation between the dying Gaunt and Richard we get not just one but three direct accusations: two by Gaunt himself (II.i.104-5 and 125-135), and one by York (II.i.165 and 182). Richard shows no reaction to either of these unequivocal indictments. After that the issue drops out of sight until immediately before the deposition scene. The Gloucester issue is thus a central question which receives high exposure in early parts of the play, drops out of sight, is brought back before the deposition, and then drops out of sight again. Clearly, this is a puzzling state of affairs.

Kristian Smidt offers a number of possible reasons: Shakespeare may have wanted to protect Richard from too much censure; he may have feared a dangerous analogy between the killing of Gloucester and the execution of Mary Stuart; he may have come to realize the "impossibility of presenting Henry Bolingbroke as a divinely sanctioned executioner" as he went along.[23] All of these reasons are offered to account for the fact that the Gloucester issue drops out of sight, but only the last one is obviously correct: a Bolingboke who is indisputably justified in his revenge would amount to an outright justification of rebellion if not regicide. However, had Shakespeare really wanted to defuse the Gloucester issue as Smidt seems to suggest, it would have been quite sufficient to remove or replace I.ii (which is an unhistorical scene anyway), make cuts in Gaunt's and York's speeches in II.i, and remove the scene before the deposition

scene (which is not an important scene for the development of the action). What would remain is a mere shadow of the Gloucester issue in the first act, needed to set the action in motion, to be then forgotten by all people concerned, audience and characters alike.

In retaining the Gloucester issue, Shakespeare chooses to hold on to a dangerous component of the story, for it furnishes the strongest support for a legal stand against Richard: to depose a bad king is one thing, to remove a man who is the murderer of his own relative is another. I believe that this explosive potential is the reason for Shakespeare's cautious handling of the affair, and that he retains it because he wishes to make the deposition legally defensible. However, to make an explicit connection between the deposition of a king and a justfiable accusation of a capital crime would be dangerous indeed, and this is why he is forced to work with a combination of visibility and silence in the deposition scene.

The last mention of Gloucester's death comes in IV.i immediately before the deposition scene. Bolingbroke once again tries to initiate an investigation into "noble Gloucester's death / Who wrought it with the king, and who perform'd / the bloody office" (IV.1.2-5). Bagot then accuses Aumerle, and what follows is a more comic repetition of the challenge in the first act with numerous accusations and counter-accusations, and no less than five gages being

thrown. The scene marks the beginning of an increasing component of comedy in Henry's reign, and it also gives us a good example of Bolingbroke's prospective style of government. It also brings back for the last time the question of Gloucester's death and Richard's involvement in it.

Bolingbroke's inquisition is extremely well positioned to frame and highlight the following deposition scene, which is also an abortive judgment scene, and one in which Richard's crimes are very markedly not alluded to.[24] Richard enters, and eight lines into his first speech he draws his first parallel between himself and Christ. What follows is the famous bucket speech, Richard disanointing himself, and then Northumberland bringing out the indictment against him:

> These accusations, and these grievous crimes
> Committed by your person and your followers
> Against the state and profit of this land;
> That by confessing them, the souls of men
> May deem that you are worthily depos'd. (IV.i.223-7)

In Holinshed, Richard actually subscribes to a list of grievances against him,[25] and in the play too we could think of a good number of items which could be on the list: his disregard for the law in disinheriting Bolingbroke, the infamous blank charters, and of course the unsolved question of his uncle's death. What we get instead is Richard's successful attempt at channeling the accusation away from himself and what he calls not his crimes but his "weav'd up follies" onto the usurpers and their "one heinous article, /

Containing the deposition of a king . . . damned in the book of heaven."

Most viewers, I think, feel quite rightly that Richard carries off the political victory in this scene as he successfully forces on his bystanders his own version of things, and defeats Bolingbroke's implied and Northumberland's declared desire for a show trial. However, this does not necessarily mean that an audience would have to let him off the hook on those criminal charges he so cleverly avoids answering. And it is the gap in which a listing of Richard's crimes is anticipated and then markedly withheld, which allows us another perspective on this king in one of his dramatically most powerful moments. We are forced to ask if Richard really is in a position to talk about other people's sins, and more damaging still whether his saintly pose is not an outrageous blasphemy. Finally, we are forced to ask if the deposition of a criminal may not be a legally justifiable act despite the personal suffering it must cause. This strategy is similar to an effect described by Patterson with regard to King Lear, by which "the institutionally unspeakable makes itself heard inferentially, in the space between what is written or acted and what the audience, knowing what they know, might be expected to read or see."[26] Shakespeare, in turn, has it both ways: he gives Richard every opportunity to appear as the deposed martyr of the "Tudor Myth," while simultaneously letting us see the usurper's

side of the debate.

Shakespeare thus ensures that the deposition scene can be seen as a cruel spectacle (which would support the idea that usurpation is to be rejected), without necessarily affirming that a deposition--then and now--must be perforce illegal. While this refusal to condemn Elizabeth's ancestor is a wise move in as far as it concerns the Tudor lineage, it also clearly offers resistance to the notion that kings may never be deposed. In the context of the Tudor obsession with disobedience, and even more so in the context of ongoing contemporary succession debates, this amounts to a dangerous commentary on the legitimacy of rebellion not only in that particular historical situation but as a general point of doctrine. And this, I believe, is why Elizabethan readers were not allowed to read about it when the play came to be printed.

Up to now the strategies discussed were all concerned with ways of making the audience see or not see facets of the story which is being enacted. Although Marlowe also uses this strategy, it is really Richard II which is largely dominated by this kind of hide-and-seek. Edward II, on the other hand, relies largely on another strategy. Instead of creating intricate nets of revelations and suppressions, Marlowe develops a dramaturgy of contrasts and double visions. This may best be explained by looking at the portrayal of Young Spencer and Baldock, for with these minor characters Marlowe seems to have taken the least trouble to hide the

device.

Hardly anyone ever comments on Baldock and Young Spencer,[27] although they are present in seven out of 24 scenes (as is Gaveston), and together speak about 157 lines and half-lines (Gaveston speaks about 154). They are important because, after all, they are Gaveston's heirs in Edward's affection, and our estimate of the integrity of Edward's inclinations will depend to a large degree on whether the bonds he forms are mutual, sincere and valuable. Yet, the critics' lack of interest is understandable, for I think anyone would have a hard time making sense of these two characters in a psychological or socio-political reading.

Act two, scene one is a scene entirely dedicated to portraying Young Spencer and Baldock as ruthless fortune hunters, and Marlowe goes to some length to show just how dangerous these stage Machiavels are:

> Spencer. Then, Baldock, you must cast the scholar off,
> And learn to court it like a gentleman.
> . . . . . .
> You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute--
> And now and then, stab as occasion serves.
> Baldock. Spencer, thou knowest I hate such formal toys,
> And use them but for hypocrisy.
> . . . . . .
> Though inwardly licentious enough
> And apt for any kind of villainy. (II.i.31-51)

"Proud, bold, pleasant, resolute"--truly an explosive mixture. Surely we are meant to feel more than a little uncomfortable when we see Edward receive these people with open arms. So much the greater is the surprise when Spencer actually proves to be a reliable agent in the king's affairs,

and both emerge as uncompromisingly loyal friends and defenders of their sovereign. In the face of imminent death, where they could be re-stating the Machiavellian principles by which they are supposed to have lived, they unite in a formal lament over Edward, which takes on cosmic significance:

> Spencer. O is he gone! Is noble Edward gone,
> Parted from hence, never to see us more?
> Rent sphere of heaven, and fire forsake thy orb,
> Earth melt to air, gone is my sovereign!
> Gone, gone, alas; never to make return.
> Baldock. Spencer, I see our souls are fleeted hence;
> We are deprived the sunshine of our life.
> Make for a new life, man: throw up thy eyes,
> And heart and hand to heaven's immortal throne.
> (IV.vi.104-12)

I find it impossible to reconcile these last speeches with Baldock's and Spencer's earlier appearance in act two. Their depiction as faithful subjects and loving friends of Edward does not agree with the Machiavellian schemers who coolly weighed their assets earlier on. What we get is an open and unresolved contradiction of character. This contradiction does not grow out of a change of heart in these characters, for I do not think that we are supposed to surmise that somewhere between act two and act four, unknown to us, both men fell hopelessly in love and revised their original plans. Rather, act four represents a complete disregard of act two, which was supposed to have established their standing. Baldock and Spencer are therefore not coherent characters; they are made to look differently in different scenes depending on what Marlowe wants us to think of Edward's friends. While this may be reckless dramaturgy

in terms of dramatic consistency (which Marlowe may not have cared for anyway with these characters), it is an excellent strategy for both eliciting sympathy for Edward and his lovers, and making possible a more negative, exploitative reading.

To a much lesser degree many of the other characters are affected by the same syndrome. Isabella, for example, is allowed to emerge alternately as the loving wife and as the scheming, power-seeking queen. As early as the first act, Marlowe places her in a highly ambiguous position in her endeavours to have Gaveston recalled. She starts by forcefully asserting her love in spite of the treatment she receives from Edward (I.iv.196-7), only to imperceptibly shift her emphasis some 14 lines later:

> Ay Mortimer, for till he be restored
> The angry king hath banished me the court;
> And therefore, as thou lov'st and tendrest me,
> Be thou my advocate unto these peers. (I.iv.109-12)

If her fear here seems to be a loss of access to the source of power rather than of love, her somewhat ambiguous appeal to Mortimer's "love" gets carried over into her secret conversation with him later in the scene. Of course, no one knows what exactly it is she has to offer, but according to the bystanders her earnest pleading at first has no effect on Mortimer, while her smile seems to be immediately effective (I.iv.230-36). How far these "smiles" can be construed as erotic advances would depend on a particular staging. What makes Isabella's role in this scene look particularly shady

is the fact that she has just been accused by Gaveston and Edward of being "too familiar with that Mortimer" (I.iv.154), so that now she is made to look as if there were some truth in these accusations.

I am not trying to portray this scene as showing that Isabella has indeed been "too familiar" with Mortimer all along, but rather the opposite, for there is hardly any evidence at all for such an attachment until a whole three acts later, when we hear from Kent that "Mortimer / And Isabel do kiss while they conspire. / And yet she wears a face of love, forsooth" (IV.v.21-3). As Roma Gill points out, in Holinshed the affair between Mortimer and Isabella is revealed late in the narrative and "has the surprise of a detective novel's last minute revelation."[28] In Marlowe, on the other hand, we are given an early defamation of Isabella's character followed by many images of the wronged and desperate queen, only to find ourselves thrown back later on the unsavoury idea that maybe what we have seen all along is her aptness to put on "a face of love" while following her own desires. Since Isabella is an important focus for a critical view of Edward, this undermining of her character is profoundly unsettling.

Kent is yet another figure who causes similar problems. Unlike Spencer and Baldock, he is a psychologically comprehensible character, but in his case Marlowe goes out of his way to undermine his dramatic function in the text.

Kent's function in Edward II is generally taken to be that of a choric figure, a reliable point of reference guiding our sympathies. And this is certainly true--or would be were it not for the introduction of Old Spencer. Here the timing is extremely telling. Kent decides to side with the barons at the end of II.ii before the murder of Gaveston. Immediately after the murder of Gaveston Marlowe introduces Old Spencer, "an old man . . . with his truncheons and soldiers," who has come "to defend King Edward's royal right," bringing with him dedication, loyalty, battle experience, and a handy 400 soldiers (III.ii.32-37). Old Spencer's death coincides with Kent's reversion to the king's side in IV.v, and his only function as far as I can see lies in supplying Kent's role during his "absence" on the other side. It is almost as if Marlowe, having cast Kent in the role of opinion maker, were reluctant to leave Edward totally without a reliable and positively inclined spokesman in Kent's absence, and therefore decided to introduce an extra character who gets to speak exactly 21 lines in support of Edward only to be hauled off to death on the "return" of Kent.

What Marlowe gains from this kind of fluctuating dramaturgy is a play in which our estimate of the characters, their motives and their actions has to be continually reassessed as we go along: we are forced to make up our minds on the basis of ever-changing evidence. The experience is decidedly schizophrenic, as we are being thrown to and fro

between the following two possible extreme readings of the play:

1. Edward is beset by a company of assorted villains who exploit his unnatural sexual bias for their own good. For the dubious pleasure afforded by these men, Edward sacrifices his lawful wife, who loves him so much that she even helps him at her own disadvantage. It is Edward's constant neglect of her that drives her into the comforting arms of Mortimer. Edward is a danger to his country, and even though he meets a particularly horrifying death, the world of the history play is left cleansed and purified at the end with the emergence of the heterosexual Edward III as the new king.

2. While not being the best of possible kings, Edward is still a character of great integrity, who is prepared to fight at all costs for his right to live according to his own nature. He is surrounded by his friends who love him for his own sake and support him even at the risk of their own lives. Indeed, they are the only ones in whom the king can safely trust, for his peers oppose him, and his wife is in league with Mortimer conspiring against his office and his person. The play is the tragedy of a man trapped in a hostile and treacherous society.

Richard II works with reasonably coherent characters while nevertheless achieving an effect remarkably similar to the double vision of Marlowe. For this end, Shakespeare creates complicated structures of stated and suppressed

material, and he also works with ambiguous notions and images. This produces a highly "ambiguated"[29] ambience in which nothing is necessarily as it seems. In Bolingbroke's case, this means that his language is potentially always double-edged because we never know exactly what is on his mind. Does, for example, "I come but for mine own" only refer to the titles and possessions appropriated by Richard, or are we supposed to hear Bolingbroke develop a notion that the crown, too, is his own? Richard's grand notions about himself and his office, on the other hand, continually get undercut by what we know about the character's guilty secrets and ruthless behaviour. Even the significance of Richard's humiliation at Bolingbroke's coronation progress is open to conjecture:

> York That had not God for some strong purpose, steel'd
> The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
> And barbarism itself have pitied him.
> But heaven hath a hand in these events,
> To whose high will we bound our strong contents.
> To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,
> Whose state and honor I for aye allow. (V.ii.34-40)

If "had not God . . . steel'd/ The hearts of men" meant exactly the same as "heaven hath a hand in these events," this passage would not create any problems at all: it would simply mean that God wished to install Bolingbroke on the throne. However, usually God hardens hearts for a special purpose: in Exodus 7:12, for example, he hardens the hearts of the Egyptians so that they cannot repent and thus escape the pre-ordained plagues he has already planned for them. A hardening of hearts thus prevents remorse and ensures that God's

punishment may be inflicted to the full. In this reading, God "steel'd" the hearts of the spectators at the progress because he is already contemplating his "strong purpose," the long punishment to come, the reading of history we call the "Tudor Myth."

Depending on which decisions we make at crucial points in Richard II, and presupposing that we always decide according to the same ideological bias, this play can also be represented by two contradicting scenarios (as will become clear later, I am not suggesting that these are the only available, or indeed the best readings):

1. Richard is an irresponsible king who acts unwisely but not maliciously. Because the Gloucester issue is not the centre of the play, Richard's involvement in the murder is not clarified and should not be held against him. His opponent is a Machiavellian schemer who purposefully plots his overthrow, and will unleash God's vengeance in the form of endless civil wars. Richard II is a Yorkist play.

2. Richard is dangerously unstable and malicious, and is undoubtedly a murderer. Bolingbroke, on the other hand, has been wronged beyond endurance, and is merely claiming his legal rights. He is a tool of providence, and becomes a usurper almost in spite of himself. The deposition of Richard is legally warranted, and any ensuing disturbances are the result of political causation and not of divine intervention. As a Lancastrian play, Richard II supports the deposition of

kings for adequate reasons.

What emerges from the kind of two-eyedness we have seen in Richard II and Edward II is something like a dramaturgical trompe-l'oeil with contradicting impulses oscillating before our very eyes. I am thinking of one of those optical illusions in which a drawing can be seen either as representing two dark profiles against a bright background or a vase displayed against a dark background; shapes that, according to E. H. Gombrich's paradigm, may be either ducks or rabbits.[30] The advantages of such a double vision within one play as a safe-guard against possible reprisals cannot be emphasised enough, since reduced to their moral messages both plays will allow for at least one (in Shakespeare's case possibly two) orthodox readings. However, an audience viewing this kind of trompe-l'oeil dramaturgy will not necessarily experience it as a set of two plays in one. On the contrary, the contradicting impulses will interact, become separated, and blend together at different stages of the play as the spectator is constantly made to reassess his or her perception of the play: a profoundly unsettling experience which discourages firm judgments, and refers the audience back to their own reading of the events. As we shall see, this is the exact opposite of the strategy Jonson uses in Sejanus, where mutually supportive elements are used to keep a tight control of the audience's commitments.

What probably happens as we decide on one of the two

options ad hoc, from scene to scene and from speech to speech, is that our eventual decision will depend very much on our own seditious, orthodox, or sexually heretical predilections. The Essex conspirators obviously found enough in Richard II to identify it as a vase; Tillyard was convinced it looked like two heads. Such a two-sided reading would be in keeping with Gombrich's notion of the trompe-l'oeil, for his point is that it is impossible to see both options at the same time, that we will always only be able to see either the duck or the rabbit. While this may be true for the visual arts and possibly for Edward II, I am not convinced that it is true for all literary trompe-l'oeils. In the case of Richard II, for example, only ideologically extremely committed readers--like the Essex conspirators--would settle for only one side to the exclusion of the other. In fact, the two sides of the trompe-l'oeil are arranged in a way that encourages us to continually shift focus, so that the play's ambivalence works against our making a definite decision without sacrifices.

Bolingbroke, for example, is made attractive enough to emerge as a serious contender, but in deciding for him, we are forced to deal with Richard's sorrow and death as an inevitable result of his actions. Richard, in turn, is made attractive enough to deserve our pity, but in deciding against the deposition, we are forced to deal with the suggestion that this pathetic king may also be a calculating criminal. The

decision to support either reading of the trompe-l'oeil--and the criticism on Richard II indicates that critics, at any rate, are rarely prepared to let the play stand as an equivocal puzzle where decisions are impossible--is thus made difficult, and it is here that the rhetorically useful merges with the aesthetically satisfying.

I am convinced that Shakespeare could not have written this particular play in any other way without getting himself and his company into trouble: even as it stands, the missing deposition scene in the early quartos suggests that the play's protective devices may not have been totally sufficient. However, what emerges in turn is a sophisticated presentation of a difficult political and moral dilemma which may well be a more satisfying piece of art than, for example, the ideologically more outspoken Woodstock. Shakespeare's act of resistance, then, is really the one that has to precede all other acts of resistance: it attests to an unwillingness to give up in the face of difficult challenges, an unwillingness to offer safe conclusions, and an unwillingness to succumb to outside demands on what may or may not be said. Whether or not Richard II constitutes an esoteric text in Strauss's and Cantor's sense of the word, i.e., whether these devices serve a purpose beyond protection to hide an esoteric meaning, cannot be determined with certainty from within the text. In the context of Shakespeare's oeuvre, and especially in the context of Henry V, I am inclined to think that there

exists a political bias in favour of Bolingbroke, in favour of practical politics, and hence in favour of legally warranted depositions. However, while this may elucidate Shakespeare's political beliefs, the members of an audience watching Richard II without knowledge of the subsequent plays would be faced with a well-balanced trompe-l'oeil in which the decision is really theirs.

In the case of Edward II, we are faced with a slightly different situation, and I will return to this question later. For the moment, there remains the question of whether these authors could have been reasonably aware of any of the strategies I have delineated. Naturally I have no way of knowing for sure, but I suspect that there was actually a high degree of awareness of such protective strategies: the authors depended on them for their and their company's well-being. I do not mean to suggest that every move had to be carefully planned, only that they probably developed a sixth sense, an instinct that would tell them when a play looked "safe." In Edward II, there is evidence for more than just a guess on Marlowe's state of awareness.

I am talking about Marlowe's curious, and usually neglected preoccupation with a certain letter which Mortimer uses to give the order for Edward's death. It shows some interesting features:

> This letter, written by a friend of ours,
> Contains his death yet bids them save his life:
> 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est';
> Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die.
> But read it thus, and that's another sense:
> 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est';
> Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst.
> Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,
> That, being dead, if it chance to be found,
> Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,
> And we be quit that caused it to be done.
> (V.iv.6-16)

If this is not enough, the curious letter is again taken up when Edward's keepers try to unravel its meaning:

> Gurney. What's here? I know not how to conster it.
> Matrev. Gurney, it was left unpointed for the nonce:
> 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere' --
> That's his meaning. (V.v.15-18)

Marlowe did not invent this letter but found it verbatim in Holinshed.[31] However, he seems to have been sufficiently fascinated by this strange and seemingly unimportant detail to dwell on it at some length both from the sender's and the receiver's side of the matter. To me, this obvious pleasure on Marlowe's part to contemplate the uncertainties of communication is strong evidence that he, at least, was quite conscious of the implications and advantages of the two-in-one strategy. What could be more perfect: a sentence containing the most radically seditious message alongside its own opposite; a message which depends for its meaning totally on the receiver's decision to place a comma a little to the right or to the left; a total transfer of responsibility from the author to the reader. A perfect trompe-l'oeil.

While I cannot vouch for Shakespeare, in the case of

Marlowe I am not at all surprised at an exceptionally high degree of awareness as regards the processes of encoding and decoding hidden messages. After all, he is not only the man who spent much of his time in spy circles, but also the playwright who created through Edward's death what to me is the most impressive trompe-l'oeil of all: a scene which very carefully creates both sides of the image, and then tries to force us into rejecting the one utterly in favour of the other, asking us to refuse consciously the vase and accept only the two profiles as valid readings.

In Edward II, it is in Edward's death scene that Marlowe moves most daringly beyond his strategy of simply undermining facile judgments into a more aggressive provocation of responses favouring Edward as a gay man, and condemning the intolerant heterosexual society he lives in. The terrible cruelty of Edward's murder is certainly an important means for arousing the audience's sympathies. Although an Elizabethan audience was used to all sorts of stage horrors, this scene has an immediacy that would guarantee a high degree of pity and compassion for the victim. However, pity does not necessarily bring about a revulsion from the governing principles responsible for the character's predicament, for one may well feel sorry for a character without calling into question the forces that led him to his death.

What makes Edward's death a statement critical of the system itself is Marlowe's skillful use of the dramatic conventions which come with a tragic death scene. Normally,

the convention demands that the death of a tragic hero should be appropriate, in some manner meaningful with regard to the rest of the drama. Marlowe seems to follow this requirement to the letter by having Edward killed on stage through the insertion of a hot spit into his anus.[32] However, Edward's death is a reductio ad absurdum of the stage convention, for in view of the non-criminal nature of his "crime," and under the influence of Marlowe's preceding ambivalent dramaturgy, only the most hard-hearted, the most callous, or indeed the most neurotic can turn away from the play with a satisfied sense of having witnessed a fitting and proper execution. Marlowe destroys the justification of Edward's punishment while at the same time seemingly upholding it in meticulous accordance with the rules. Following William Empson, many critics have been uneasy with the significance of Edward's death, and Nicholas Brooke has put the problematic implications in a nutshell:

> In Edward II no moral whatever is drawn; if it were, it would have to be that Edward's punishment fits the crime with appalling exactitude. It is conspicuous that the barons persistently hold against him, not his weakness as a ruler, but his devotion to his minions, his homosexuality: and the devil's relish is to kill him where he loved. This moral, I said, is not drawn; and it cannot be, it is intolerable. . . . if you see poetic justice as an affirmation of divine order, then this becomes profoundly vile.[33]

The very least Marlowe's insistence on a "fitting" punishment will do is furnish a powerful addition to the other unsettling impulses of the play, leaving the spectator horrified, uncomfortable, and inclined to doubt. As an ideal

result, it may invite the spectator to search for an alternative meaning to neutralize the uncomfortable solution offered by virtue of the dramatic convention. It may make him or her realize that it is not Marlowe who has invented this fitting death to meet dramatic requirements, but that at least according to Holinshed it was invented a lot earlier by the original murderers of the historical Edward II to meet the needs of their own obsession.[34]

Lightborn, the 'Lucifer" invented by Marlowe and conjured up by Mortimer with the formula "Lightborn, come forth" (V.iv.21),[35] will suddenly appear in a different light, and his declaration that "ne'er was there any so finely handled as this king shall be" (IV.v.41-42) will suggest a different aspect of Edward's death: that of a scapegoat killing. However, it is not a sacrifice intended as a re-establishment of a divine order. It is an enactment of the homophobic obsessions of Edward's murderer, of Mortimer as the one who gave the order, and by implication of the society of which Mortimer is an exponent. As such, it is a powerful accusation. It is also an excellent example of Marlowe's esoteric encoding practices, for this is a hidden meaning only accessible through a rejection of the idea of Edward's death as a fitting punishment. If the "vase" in this particular trompe-l'oeil is the suggestion that the manner of Edward's death is satisfying and fitting, then Marlowe wants us to fully see this idea for what it is, and then reject it; cancel it as a valid part of the trompe-l'oeil, and henceforth

look only at the two dark heads.[36] Looking at Marlowe's dramaturgic equivalent of Mortimer's "unpointed" sentence, we are asked to identify both meanings and place our comma not as we please but as Marlowe wants us to place it. In doing so, Marlowe goes beyond Shakespeare's insistence to stage dangerous material into a more aggressive mode of resistance, which seeks to displace oppressive concepts in favour of more tolerant views.

Marlowe's use of the trompe-l'oeil is here used to encode an esoteric message in that it offers an orthodox surface text of such ferocity that the emergence of a sexually unorthodox subtext is made possible. He is clearly not content with merely presenting two aspects (Edward gets exactly what he deserves; he gets what his homophobic persecutors think he deserves) without trying to push us in the direction of the subtext. What is made difficult here is not the process by which we arrive at a difficult conclusion, but rather an outright condemnation of homosexuality. Extreme anti-gay points of view, as they have emerged again and again in the critical reaction to the play,[37] should therefore be attributed to the interpreter's biases rather than to Marlowe's presentation of the issues, and I sympathise with Stephen Guy-Bray, who accuses such readings of being homophobic distortions.[38] By this I do not mean to say that Marlowe will only allow for an unreflected celebration of gay self-fashioning. On the contrary, it is

only once the play has established a climate in which moral condemnation has become difficult that questions about the status of sexual deviance in a specific environment can become serious points of debate.

In staging his discussion of homosexuality, Marlowe avails himself of a known historical event which allows him to establish a precedent to be used for discussion. This is in keeping with general practices of minority-tradition-building, and is in a way only a more complicated version of the Older Mortimer's evocation of a gay tradition. This use of the historical record is one strategy of reading past events which we will meet with often in this thesis as disadvantaged authors seek precedents for their own actions and beliefs, and it is a process that has not come to an end today. Just as Marlowe took up the reign of Edward II to suit his own agenda, modern gay renderings take up Marlowe to get across their own concerns. In doing so, thay may be close to Marlowe's text as is the case in the staging [illegible] by the Royal Shakespeare Company, or they may offer their own partisan misreadings as is the case in Derek Jarman's film Edward II (1992). In all cases, the past is not dead, but is a tool which makes possible a dynamic engagement with the present.

Chapter 3: "Not reaching either prince or prince's parent": Displacement Strategies in Ben Jonson's Sejanus

In the introduction to this section, I referred to Albright's list of evasive tactics, which all centred on some form of temporal, generic, or spatial displacement of the action into safer regions. Edward II shows how morally unconventional subject matter could also be veiled through a strategy of creating contrasting views without definitely resolving the opposition. The strategy most widely used in the Renaissance, however, is not his kind of double vision but precisely the kinds of displacement tactics described by Albright.[1] By relying on these techniques for shifting dangerous material into safer regions, plays often manage to engage in far less ambiguous and at the same time more concrete depictions of corrupt courts, court officials, and even kings, and this chapter will discuss the way in which Jonson makes full use of his historical Roman setting as well as the general characteristics of drama to get his rather uncompromising vision across. What will be discussed here is both the question of how a precursor text may be used to criticise the present, and how such a criticism may be protected against reprisals.

Richard II and Sejanus are two very different plays: where the one centres on a debate of lawful rebellion and deposition without being too specific about the evils of bad

government and court life, the other concentrates almost totally on just such a detailed depiction of the court under Tiberius but does not openly discuss the related topic of what can be done against evil and tyrannous rulers. Since Sejanus does not advocate deposition or rebellion, critics have had problems in locating the dangerous aspects of this play, although it is known that it brought Jonson before the Privy Council after its first staging in 1603. As Jonson told William Drummond of Hawthornden,

> Northampton was his mortal enemy for brawling, on a St George's Day, one of his attenders: he was called before the Council for his Sejanus, and accused both of popery and treason by him.[2]

Of those who think Sejanus essentially harmless reading, Robert E. Knoll is certainly one of the most extreme, since in his Christian reading he can find no reason why anyone would have found the play offensive:

> Though Jonson's monarchs were not tyrants, Jonson got into trouble with the authorities because of this play. . . . When one considers the conservative philosophy of political resignation contained in the play, one can only wonder at Northampton.[3]

Others plead for contemporary applications either to the Essex crisis of 1601 or to Raleigh's treason trial in 1603.[4] I will return to the question of the dangerous potential of Sejanus at the end of the chapter, but would like to point out here that even without contemporary applications the play is outspoken and critical enough.[5] In it, we are invited to observe closely how a whole nation is kept in fear and subjection by a ruthless Machiavellian ruler and his deputies;

how the state is operated through a closely woven network of spies and opportunistic climbers; how all principled opposition is quite literally killed off in a series of show-trials, arrests without trial, false accusations, and illegal entrapments.

The world of Sejanus is a world of horrors presented in their undisguised political nature. There is no displacement of court criticism onto sexual matters, for while Sejanus, Tiberius, and Livia are seen as sexually corrupted or perverted, this is an additional feature of their personalities rather than the source of their political corruption. Thus Jonson insists that the corridors of power have little to do with the convenient construction of lusty tyrants ravishing citizens' wives. If Jonson's drama smacks of men instead of fabulous creatures, as the motto of the 1605 quarto suggests ("Hominem pagina nostra sapit"),[6] these men and women are almost exclusively political creatures driven by their lust for power and preferment, by fear of a reversal in fortune, and by a general need for safety in a completely insecure and slippery environment. How such an undisguised and unflinching depiction of a police state at work was possible at all is the subject of the following pages.

In discussing Jonson's Sejanus many critics have commented on his exceptional, almost obsessive adherence to his sources, especially Tacitus' Annals, Dio Cassius' Roman

History, and Suetonius' life of Tiberius, as well as to a host of additional classical sources.[7] Given this special feature of Jonson's work, I would like to begin by having a look at Jonson as a reader of Tacitus, in order to determine how he uses the tradition he chooses to model himself on. A good example for Jonson's transformation of his source is his treatment of the actions related to the death of Tiberius' son Drusus.

The historical Drusus died poisoned by Sejanus in A.D.23, while the trial of the military leader Silius and his wife Sosia took place in A.D.24 as a result of Sejanus' plotting, and the historian Cordus was not indicted until A.D.25.[8] Jonson fuses these separate occurrences into one sequence of events surrounding and constituting the great Senate scene in Act III. Before Tiberius' appearance in the Senate we have already seen him in private conversation with Sejanus, plotting the overthrow of the Germanican faction (II.163-330), and the Senate scene will see these plans put into execution with regard to Silius, Sosia, and Cordus. In contrast to Tacitus, Jonson has Tiberius already heavily implicated in Sejanus' evil plans, and we have had a chance to observe that the claims of the Germanicans about Tiberius' cruelty, powers of dissimulation and Machiavellian style are not empty slanders but accurate representations of Tiberius' behaviour. Keeping this is mind, let us turn to Tacitus' rendering of the events following Drusus' death, which--

although not strictly necessary to the trials of Silius and Cordus--Jonson retains.

Tacitus decribes how Tiberius had actually been a good if somewhat formidable emperor until the death of his son Drusus, after which things began to deteriorate (50-51; #6-7). During his son's illness and immediately after his death Tiberius continued to attend to his duties in the Senate. During this period, "the consuls, as a sign of mourning, sat on ordinary seats, but the emperor reminded them that their special seats were a sign of their rank." Tacitus continues to give two speeches by Tiberius to the effect (a) that he was well aware that his appearing in public at this time might seem impious, but that he hoped to find consolation in doing his duties, and (b) that Germanicus' sons "represented his only consolation in his present grief," and should be entrusted to the care of the Senate now that their guardian Drusus was dead (52-55; #8-9). Tacitus notes further:

> Tiberius' speech was heard with unrestrained weeping and followed by prayers for future good fortune. Indeed, if he had stopped at that point, he would have left his audience full of pity for him and proud of their new responsibility. But he went on to peddle empty ideas about restoring the Republic and entrusting the government to the consuls or other officials. These ideas had long lost all serious credibility, and only served to make the earlier genuine and honourable sentiments sound hollow. (55; #9)

Act III of Jonson's Sejanus starts with Sejanus instructing Varro and Afer on how to proceed against Silius. Tacitus' factual report on the seating arrangement is retained,

but is transformed into a dialogue sequence in which the ever critical observers comment on the fact and add malicious interpretations of their own:

> Sabinus. Observe,
> They take their places.
> Arruntius. What, so low?
> Gallus. They must be seen to flatter Caesar's grief,
> Though but in sitting. (III.24-7)

While it is true that the passage quoted from Tacitus does not justify Gallus' low estimate of the senators' motives, there is a later passage in which Tacitus notes in connection with Drusus' funeral that "the Senate and the people made a show of grief in their words and facial expressions, but these carried no sincerity, and secretly they were pleased at this revival of fortune for the family of Germanicus" (57; #12). Thus, while Jonson cannot be accused of inventing the senators' hypocrisy outright, it is remarkable that even in such a minor point he should settle for the most negative interpretation possible: Tacitus' senators are at worst self-interested and are guided by their sympathies for the Germanicans, while Jonson's senators display, if Gallus can be believed, nothing more than an opportunistic wish to flatter the sovereign.

After this exchange Silius enters and is informed that there is a charge against him, and it is only at this point that Tiberius himself enters to deliver the two speeches from Tacitus, which Jonson copies faithfully. Due to Jonson's rearrangement of the chronology of events, however, and due

to the fact that he considerably enhances Tiberius' share in Sejanus' plotting, these speeches are suspect from the beginning. In Tacitus, there is a strong possibility that Tiberius was indeed grief-stricken because of his son's death, and there is at least a small chance that he was also sincere with regard to Germanicus' sons at this point. In Jonson, the grief may or may not be sincere, but Tiberius' regard for the sons of Germanicus is totally unbelievable to us, the audience, since we have already seen Tiberius plotting the downfall of the whole Germanican faction. For the oppositional audience within the play, this turn of events is confusing and at first not decipherable:

> Arruntius. By Jove, I am not Oedipus enough
> To understand this Sphinx. (III.64-5)
>
> Arruntius. [Aside] If this were true now! But the space,
> the space
> Between the breast and lips--Tiberius' heart
> Lies a thought farther than another man's.
> (III.96-8)

Arruntius' instincts are correct, of course, and it is here that Jonson enlarges significantly on what is, after all, a mere hint of criticism on Tacitus' part: i.e., that Tiberius himself marred the good impression of his speech by voicing "empty ideas about restoring the Republic," which "only served to make the earlier genuine and honourable sentiments sound hollow."[9] Jonson builds this into a 50 line senatorial debate, which allows us to see exactly the deviousness of Tiberius' mind, and allows Arruntius and his friends to smell a rat:

Tiberius. And now I am the happy witness made
Of your so much desired affections
To this great issue, I could wish my fates
Would here set peaceful period to my days;
. . . . . .
Arruntius. [Aside] Laugh, fathers, laugh! Ha' you no
spleens about you?
Tiberius. The burden is too heavy I sustain
On my unwilling shoulders; and I pray
It may be taken off, and reconferred
Upon the consuls, or some other Roman,
More able, and more worthy.
Arruntius. [Aside] Laugh on, still.
Sabinus. Why, this doth render all the rest suspected!
Gallus. It poisons all.
Arruntius. O, do'you taste it then?
Sabinus. It takes away my faith to anything
He shall hereafter speak. (III.106-21)

The rest is easy: Tiberius insists on his resignation, Sejanus the ever handy yes-man protests that Rome could never do without him (Arruntius. "Ah! Are you there to bring him off?" III.132), Tiberius agrees to give in to Sejanus' plea, and the whole episode is revealed as a staged event, a fake abdication meant to cement Tiberius' power rather than remove it. Following this, there will be two more such fake events, the treason trials of Silius and Cordus, which we watch in the full knowledge that we are watching a well-oiled propaganda machine in action.

What Jonson has done to Tacitus here is far from innocent: he makes Tiberius look guiltier, and the senators more hypocritical; he transforms what might be mere historical coincidence into a coherent scheme of planned manipulation on the part of Tiberius and Sejanus; he fuses the trials of Silius and Cordus into a coherent and carefully staged onslaught on the Germanican faction. Tacitus, the

historian already known for his cynical view of the history of imperial Rome, is here transformed into something even more sinister. In Jonson's anti-establishment reading, Tacitus' critical description of history becomes a clear depiction of a totalitarian state in action, a state in which the rulers control all the action, and the ruled are divided into two clearly delineated camps: those willing to cooperate at the cost of their dignity and integrity, and an opposition of men and women who can only analyze the situation, but cannot effect any changes. It would be fair to say that rather than toning down the republican leanings of his source, Jonson sets out to out-Tacitus Tacitus while essentially adhering to the facts as reported by the historian. What are the advantages of this strategy?

The Senate scene shows a recognizable pattern which can be found in the whole play: most often in this drama, a scene consists of the action and a set of choric commentators who comment on the action as they witness it, and as it evolves before our eyes. In the scene just described, these commentators suffer from a notable deficit of information. It is we, the audience, who are kept fully informed, for we know that Tiberius and Sejanus have designs on the Germanican faction--we have just seen them talk about it. The choric commentators are caught in the situation and have to rely on their suspicious minds to read the situation correctly. What emerges is a structure in which the choric commentators and the action are made to be mutually reinforcing, for after

all the commentators "only" describe what they see, while the action they describe is--in its essentials--warranted by a respectable historian, who in turn may be seen as "only" describing events as they happened. In this way, it cannot be proven that Jonson is guilty of manipulating the appearance of Roman society, for example to comment on contemporary conditions which may share similar characteristics, for changes in the chronology are warranted by a well-established tradition of the history play; chronological changes, Jonson might argue, are necessary to make a drama out of a lengthy historical narrative.

This strategy of mutually reinforcing action and commentary, which I will call Jonson's "describe-and-show" tactic, can be observed as a central characteristic of the fabric of the play.[10] Sometimes we can see the action evolve before we hear the commentary, as in the scene just discussed, and sometimes the commentary precedes the enactment as is the case at the beginning of the play. The play opens with Sabinus and Silius delineating what they are not--courtiers:

> Sabinus. No, Silius, we are no good enginers;
> . . . . . .
> We have no shift of faces, no cleft tongues,
> No soft and glutinous bodies, that can stick,
> Like snails, on painted walls;
> . . . . . .
> We have nor place in court, office in state
> That we can say we owe unto our crimes:
> We burn with no black secrets . . . (I.4-15)

After this, enter Satrius and Natta, who according to Silius and Sabinus are just such creatures, of whom

> . . . it would be found
> A poor and idle sin to which their trunks
> Had not been made fit organs. These can lie,
> Flatter, and swear, forswear, deprave, inform,
> Smile, and betray; make guilty men; then beg
> The forfeit lives, to get the livings; cut
> Men's throats with whisp'rings; sell to gaping suitors
> The empty smoke that flies about the palace;
> Laugh when their patron laughs; sweat when he sweats. (I.22-33)

These particularized and none too savoury depictions are followed by a statement of widening reference, in which it is claimed that "all our consuls," "no little part" of ex-praetors, and "most of Senators" are involved in this kind of boot-licking opportunism and criminal self-interest: in fact, that things are so bad that even Tiberius himself was heard to cry out "O race of men, / Prepared for servitude!" (I.52-3). To top it all off, there is a detailed account of the immediate consequence of this general subjection; the spy system, in which

> Every minist'ring spy
> That will accuse and swear is lord of you,
> Of me, of all, our fortunes, and our lives.
> Our looks are called into question, and our words,
> How innocent soever, are made crimes;
> We shall not shortly dare to tell our dreams,
> Or think, but 'twill be treason. (I.64-70)

At this point in the action, we have no way of telling if these claims are accurate, or if these two characters are only a pair of half-crazed disaffected courtiers in the grip of their own persecution mania. It is at this point that the second element of the "describe-and-show" strategy clicks in, for these claims will be proved right one by one. With the

arrival of Arruntius and Cordus we get a first taste of the spy system as Natta and Latiaris try to evaluate the degree of Cordus' involvement with oppositional views of history, making sure they get the name right: "O. Cordus do you call him?" (I.84). After an excursion into the long-gone virtues of the dead Germanicus, we finally see the chase for offices in action as Sejanus enters, beleaguered by suitors (I.175-95). Here follows the long-awaited introduction of Sejanus through the eyes of the commentators, who voice fears about his ruthless ambition, disgust at his means of rising to the top, and horror at his near-absolute power. Once we have seen Eudemus sell his services to Sejanus, the final proof that all accusations are plausible comes with the arrival of Tiberius himself. Here, for the first time, we can see a whole group of Romans labouring to enact the Germanicans' accusations of flattery before our very eyes.

It would be fruitless to follow the windings of Roman court politics any further at this point, for the pattern is always the same. The Germanicans make claims and the action bears them out--often on the very bodies and lives of the Germanicans themselves. Sometimes the system works the other way around, as in the trial scene, where we have already seen the direction the action will take, and where the commentators merely confirm our estimate of things. This strategy makes possible a displacement of seditious energies and authorial responsibility onto the characters of

the play, for at no point could Jonson himself be said to voice unwarranted criticism of Rome and of courts in general.

The almost air-tight protection this strategy affords can be seen if we think, for example, of the role of the chorus in Shakespeare's Henry V. In this play, the chorus continually opens up gaps between what we see and what the chorus claims for the action. These gaps invite double-visions of the type described with regard to Richard II,[11] and while they too could be said to serve a protective function, they are still traceable to the author who created them. In Jonson, we have an almost impenetrable net of mutually reinforcing action and choric comments. To be sure, Arruntius and his friends do not just describe the situation; they also voice their disgust and despair, but they do not call for any course of political action, and we can hardly take them to task for feeling the way they do since they are proved to be right at every turn. The only possible line of attack for a hostile reader--apart from drawing parallels to living persons--is to point out that Sejanus presents an impertinent and dangerously seditious distortion of the reality of court life. To which Jonson need only reply that it does accurately portray the realities of Tiberian Rome as related by reliable historians, which need not reflect on the present state.

The irony in this character/action displacement is that, in the hands of Jonson, this is also where the greatest threat

lies in the play. There is good evidence for a basically conservative outlook underlying this play, which seems to offer no model for political change except for a nostalgic look backward when princes were still virtuous and counsellors reliable guardians of the commonwealth. However, the dangerous potential of this play lies not in the solutions it may or may not offer, but rather in the sheer realism with which is portrays the evils it cannot solve.[12] The central mode of representation in Sejanus is analysis: a continual attempt as laying open and making intelligible the open and secret motivations which drive its main and even its minor characters; the depiction of complicated interlocking chains of action and causation; the coherent portrayal of complex mechanisms of manipulation and exploitation. Norbert Platz calls this Jonson's "anatomical method, which is one of dissection and explanation."[13]

For the most part, Jonson will not let even minor characters get off the stage without explaining or problematizing (usually with the aid of his choric commentators) some aspect of their actions. As Nero is being led away by one Laco, for example, we find Lepidus and Arruntius at odds with each other about the man's character:

> Lepidus. I fear you wrong him.
> He has the face of an honest Roman.
> Arruntius. And trusted to this office? Lepidus
> I'd sooner trust Greek Sinon than a man
> Our state employs. (IV.357-61)

As it turns out, both Arruntius and Lepidus may be said to

be right, for Laco emerges again and again in very minor roles which confirm that he is a faithful servant of the state--as long as he has clear instructions. Later on, he will be the character to show the greatest anxiety about the meaning of Tiberius' confusing letters (IV.479-515), and later still he will follow Macro's orders, thereby serving Sejanus the same office he did Nero. As commander of the night watches this is, after all, his job.

Such attention to detail, in which one may well detect the satirist's eye for the fabric of real life, can be observed with regard to most of the 45 speaking parts in the play, and the result is a degree of intellectual penetration rarely matched in the staged plays of the Renaissance. This general mood of intellectual investigation can best be seen in the soliloquies given to the central characters. The following, I think, is the kind of soliloquy we have come to recognize as typical for the scheming villains of the period. It comes after Sejanus has succeeded in seducing Livia into poisoning her husband Drusus, when Sejanus boasts:

> Thou lost thyself, child Drusus, when thou thoughtst
> Thou couldst outskip my vengeance.
> . . . . . .
> Adultery? It is the lightest ill
> I will commit. A race of wicked acts
> Shall flow out of my anger, and o'erspread
> The world's wide face, which no posterity
> Shall e'er approve, nor yet keep silent
> . . . . . .
> On then, my soul, and start not in thy course.
> Though heav'n drop sulphur, and hell belch out fire,
> Laugh at the idle terrors. Tell proud Jove,
> Between his power, and thine, there is no odds.

'Twas only fear first in the world made gods.
(II.143-62)

As it stands, this is the kind of soliloquy that might be expected from any Iago, Edmund or Richard: there is the exultation of the satisfied plotter, the vision of unlimited power and control, even the ominous blasphemy of taking on the gods themselves. However, with the notable exception of the soliloquies in Act V, this is not the habitual mode in which Sejanus speaks to himself and his audience. What we get instead are soliloquies which focus on the complex pattern of Sejanus' intentions. Here, for example, we find Sejanus explaining his plans:

The way to put
A prince in blood is to represent the shapes
Of dangers greater than they are, like late
Or early shadows, and, sometimes, to feign
Where there are none, only to make him fear;
His fear will make him cruel; and once entered,
He doth not easily learn to stop, or spare
Where he may doubt. This have I made my rule,
To thrust Tiberius into tyranny,
And make him toil to turn aside those blocks
Which I, alone, could not remove with safety.
Drusus gone, Germanicus' three sons
Would clog my way, whose guards have too much faith
To be corrupted, and their mother known
Of too too unreproved a chastity
To be attempted, as light Livia was.
Work then, my art, on Caesar's fears as they
On those they fear, till all my lets be cleared,
And he in ruins of his house, and hate
Of all his subjects, bury his own state;
When, with my peace and safety, I will rise,
By making him the public sacrifice. (II.383-404)

Sejanus' lengthy declaration of intent serves a number of interrelated purposes: we learn why he is involved in plotting against the Germanicans (to get closer to the throne)

himself); why a simpler course of action like the poisoning of Drusus in not feasible (Agrippina will not sleep with him, and the guards will not betray their masters); how. the time being ripe, he plans to stage the coup; what motive lies behind tyranny and oppression (fear), and that such a fear-inspired tyranny is practically irreversible. Especially the depiction of the effect of fear on the prince is worthy of the clear-sighted listings of cause and effect we have come to associate with Machiavelli.

If statecraft may be regarded as a well-protected secret--then and now-- in Sejanus we find these secrets put in plain sight, as well-informed characters again and again explain to us the workings of the state machine they live in. Jonson's "describe-and-show" tactic is supported by an extensive network of analysis and explanation. And once again it is the characters who bear the responsibility for these dangerously realistic insights into the workings of power. After all, Jonson might say, it isn't his fault if Sejanus knows more than is good for him. The long procession of corpses listed in Tacitus in the wake of Sejanus' actions, as well as Tacitus' own comments on his scheming mind certainly give ample warrant for presenting him as someone who knows how the system works, even though in this particular instance he fails to realize that Tiberius' "fear" may be a double-edged weapon.

If one evil character can be used to clarify fine points

of political manipulation, it is hardly surprising to find another evil character echoing the same point later on, this time almost as a cautionary piece of advice on absolute rule. If Sejanus provided a "how-to" guide on manipulating the prince, Tiberius himself counters with similar instructions--this time directly from Machiavelli himself[14]--on how to remain in power:

> To leave our journey off were sin
> 'Gainst our decreed delights; and would appear
> Doubt--or, what less becomes a prince, low fear.
> Yet, doubt hath law, and fears have their excuse,
> Where princes' states plead necessary use,
> As ours doth now--
> . . . . . .
> Those are the dreadful enemies we raise
> With favours, and make dangerous with praise.
> The injured by us may have will alike,
> But 'tis the favourite hath the power to strike;
> And fury ever boils more high and strong,
> Heat'with ambition, than revenge of wrong.
> 'Tis then a part of supreme skill to grace
> No man too much, but hold a certain space
> Between th'ascender's rise and thine own flat,
> Lest, when all rounds be reached, his aim be that.
> . . . . . .
> Excused
> Are wiser sov'reigns then, that raise one ill
> Against another, and both safely kill. (III. 630-58)

It is surprising and unsettling to hear Tiberius expressing insights which would indeed benefit "wiser sovereigns," for no one in the Renaissance would have contradicted the necessity of guarding against ruthless and powerful courtiers in the interest of a stable and strong monarchy, at least as long as the monarch behaved as he or she should. Tiberius, of course, is the antithesis of a responsible monarch, and I think by the same token no one in

his right mind would have wished for such a monarch with or without powerful minions.[15] What we have, then, is a play in which the audience is obliged to detest the prince and his allies, but is simultaneously invited to entertain the notion that these evil characters may very well be right in much of what they say. More often than not, therefore, Jonson may be said to use even his evil characters as analytic mouthpieces, so that our concept of the choric function of certain characters in the play needs to be extended to include disreputable characters as well.

We have already seen how the "describe-and-show" tactic along with the predominance of analytic reasoning on the part of the characters allow Jonson some protection through the very fabric of his own text. These strategies make it possible for the author to relinquish the dangerous duty of moral evaluation in favour of a seemingly factual presentation, in which the audience themselves are faced with the duty of weighing the evidence, of making up their own minds about the implications of what they have seen, and eventually of deciding what all of this has to do with their own lives.[16] For extremely seditious arguments, however, displacement onto just any character is not enough: only an evil one will do.

As long as Jonson does not seem to endorse any course of revolutionary action, he is fairly safe with his strategy of showing, describing, and analyzing. In a few places in the play, however, the general tone of moral outrage shifts

to include politically more aggressive solutions. Apart from one heavily hedged proposition by Agrippina (IV.36-38), the most startling of these instances occurs in a conversation between Latiaris and Sabinus. Sabinus, we know, is a staunch friend of the Germanican family, and Latiaris is one of the ubiquitous spies sent out to lure Sabinus into some treasonous utterance. As the conversation begins, two more spies are already waiting in the woodwork to emerge as witnesses once Sabinus speaks his mind. However, the best and most closely reasoned defence of civil resistance in the play does not come from Sabinus but from Latiaris, who under the guise of agent provocateur is allowed to indulge in seditious propositions. Within the play he is the only one who provides a coherent doctrine of resistance based on the old republican values and civil virtues:

> Methinks the genius of the Roman race
> Should not be so extinct, but that bright flame
> Of liberty might be revived again,
> . . . . . .
> The cause is public, and the honour, name,
> The immortality of every soul
> That is not bastard or a slave in Rome,
> Therein concerned.
> . . . . . .
> It must be active valour must redeem
> Our loss, or none. The rock and our hard steel
> Should meet, t'enforce those glorious fires again
> Whose splendour cheered the world, and heat gave life
> No less than doth the sun's. (IV.142-161)

With Sabinus, somewhat anachronistically, this vision of republican valour elicits only a statement of absolute subjection to the sovereign--one that is often quoted to show

that Jonson would never condone open rebellion:

> 'Twere better stay
> In lasting darkness, and despair of day.
> No ill should force the subject undertake
> Against the sovereign, more than hell should make
> The gods do wrong. A good man should and must
> Sit rather down with loss, than rise unjust--
> Though, when the Romans first did yield themselves
> To one man's power, they did not mean their lives,
> Their fortunes, and their liberties should be
> His absolute spoil, as purchased by the sword.
> (IV.161-70)

In its entirety--rather than in fragments picked out to promote either a conservative or a progressive Jonson image--this exchange is remarkably complex. On the one hand, Latiaris has the argument which both in terms of historical plausibility and in view of the mounting body-count in the play deserves serious consideration. On the other hand, Latiaris is not only a negative character but is in this particular instance also a character who is manifestly dishonest. After all, his ultimate aim in this scene is not the validation of a patrician revolt, but the exact opposite: to bring about the execution of one who must be feared precisely because he would be a candidate for the use of "active valour." What Jonson presents us with here, therefore, is a fairly complicated example of what can properly be called authorial ventriloquism. Latiaris gets to outline, for Jonson and for us, a plausible course of political action which would be revolutionary within the confines of the play, and seditious within the context of Renaissance absolutist thought. At the same time, however, this model is placed in

a context of pretense and lying, so that ultimately Latiaris is here voicing the opposite of what he might be expected to believe.

As an audience, we are faced with a paradoxical statement, one which is both true and false, and one in which one might suspect Jonson's sympathies but cannot prove them. Added to this, Latiaris is also the one to give us what I think is one of the most shocking and demystifying images of consecrated power available in the Renaissance: a Tiberius who has gone off to "hide his ulcerous and anointed face, / With his bald crown, at Rhodes" (IV.174-5).[17] What makes this outbreak shocking is the lexical instability of "anointed" (i.e. 'treated with skin cream' and 'consecrated with ointment') and of "crown" (i.e. 'top of the head' and 'head dress of the royal sovereign'). Again, however, no one could actually prove that this sentence means more than is warranted by Tacitus: that Tiberius has "an ulcerous face generally variegated with plasters."[18]

If Latiaris' position in this scene is far from simple, Sabinus' often-cited defence of absolute non-resistance is equally problematic. Here we have a good character telling us what might be expected: "No ill should force the subject undertake against the sovereign." However, the case with Sabinus is not as simple as it might look, for he himself seems to offer an important loophole: one should be patient rather than "rise <u>unjust</u>." The question is, what is an

unjust rising, or rather could there be a scenario in which rebellion could be "just"? Sabinus does not answer this question--neither for that matter does the play, understandably enough--but he does offer at least the outline of a potential constitutional argument.[19] The Romans willingly entered into a contract with the emperor, but this contract does not include the violation of certain things: life, fortune, liberty. All these have become the "absolute" spoil of the prince, and this is not warranted by the terms of the contract. As Sabinus voices here a pious protestation of non-resistance, he also implies a possible counter-argument to such a stance.[20] Latiaris and Sabinus together, I think, provide a good enough warrant for rebellion, the one offering the model, the other the reason. That the passage cannot properly be called inflammatory is an immediate result of Jonson's displacement activities: Sabinus' good reasons are counter-balanced by his overtly orthodox outlook, and Latiaris' subversive model is compromised by his position in the scene.

So far in this chapter I have talked about various forms of transference, which allow Jonson to either avoid direct authorial comment through mutually reinforcing patterns of description, action, and analysis, or to complicate reference by ventriloquising through tainted characters. One might argue that this happens whenever drama is employed, since drama perforce must rely on characters to get ideas across--

seditious or otherwise. A comparison with Richard II may help clarify what makes Sejanus different. As we have seen, Richard II is as thoughtful an interrogation of the status of consecrated power as Sejanus is unflinching in its depiction of the evils of court life. The safety device used for Richard II depends on a type of representation in which the audience are allowed to choose between contradicting standpoints. Which of these points of view might be Shakespeare's cannot be said with certainty, unless one takes his creation of such an ambiguous statement as evidence for the existence of unorthodox underlying motives.

In Sejanus, the case is completely different: Tiberian Rome is an evil, dangerous, and inhuman place, a veritable chamber of horrors. While Richard's alleged murder of his uncle is kept delicately in the background, Jonson never hesitates not only to name but also to show the depraved nature of Roman society. Unlike Richard II, Sejanus does not allow for a double response: the only response possible--except, maybe, for a grudging respect for Tiberius' cunning--is one of utter disgust and revulsion at Tiberius, Sejanus, and their followers, and of unqualified sympathy for their victims. I suppose the most likely audience reaction would be either outrage at Jonson's malicious misrepresentation of the world, or a burning desire to see justice done--a desire which the play only partly fulfils. In the Renaissance, the first reaction could prove dangerous

for the author, and the second--no less dangerous for the author--could have been alarming for the state, at least if the audience were to draw parallels to the present time.

Since Jonson does not allow himself the protection of Shakespeare's or Marlowe's double vision, he has to rely on the incontestable accuracy of his presentation: he cannot afford to be proved wrong either in terms of historical accuracy or in terms of dramatic coherence. His own allegiances must remain hidden not as Marlowe's were behind a mirror of double characterizations, but behind the veracity of his characters and their actions. The choric commentators must not be shown to be wrong within the framework of the play, so that they are shielded by the accuracy of their views of the action. The action, in turn, reinforces the justice of their complaints. Jonson is protected through the fact that this is all true to history. For extremely seditious notions he chooses to ventriloquise not only through the history he represents, but through tainted characters within that historical situation. We are therefore back where we started, with Jonson's use of history. Here we arrive at one of the most titillating aspects of the play with regard to early Jacobean England.

When Jonson came to publish his revised version of Sejanus, he had already run into trouble with the play in its first staging in 1603. Not surprisingly, therefore, the 1605 quarto, published in the year of the Gunpowder Plot

under the supervison of Jonson with scrupulous attention to the details of its classicist layout, shows signs of an uncommonly high degree of authorial anxiety. These are in particular Jonson's own extensive marginal notes giving his sources in acknowledged editions of the time, in conjunction with the following disclaimer in his preface "To the Reader":

> The next is, lest in some nostril the quotations might savour affected, I do let you know that I abhor nothing more; and have only done it to show my integrity in the story, and save myself in those common torturers that bring all wit to the rack; whose noses are ever like swine spoiling and rooting up the Muses' gardens, and their whole bodies, like moles, as blindly working under earth to cast any--the least--hills upon virtue. (51)

Although Jonson does not specify how precisely and why "those common torturers . . . bring all wit to the rack," there are passages in a number of dedicatory poems which give a better idea. Hugh Holland, for example, warns:

> Ye great ones, though, whose ends may be the same
> [as Sejanus']
> Know that, however we do flatter kings,
> Their favours (like themselves) are fading things,
> With no less envy had, than lost with shame.
> Nor make yourselves less honest than you are,
> To make the author wiser than he is;
> Ne of such crimes accuse him, which I dare
> By all his muses swear be none of his.
> The men are not, some faults may be these times';
> He acts those men, and they did act these crimes.
> (63-4)

An anonymous "friend" has similar things to say:

> For thou hast given each part so just a style
> That men suppose the action now on file--
> And men suppose who are of best conceit.
> Yet some there be that are not moved hereby,
> And others are so quick that they will spy
> Where later times are in some speech enweaved;

> Those wary simples, and these simple elves:
> They are so dull, they cannot be deceived,
> These so unjust, they will deceive themselves.
> (67-8)

It seems clear that both authors refer to previous reactions to the play. The play received a hostile reception at its first performance in the Globe in 1604, which is what the second poem alludes to when it talks of those who "are not moved," and it is suggested that those who were responsible for Jonson's trouble with the authorities were those who found evidence that "later times are in some speech enweaved." This, of course, is all a mistake if this friend is to be believed. Hugh Holland, in what is both a come-on to make just these connections and a defence of the author's innocence, is more aggressive. Ominously suggesting that the "great ones" may well be pursuing ends similar to Sejanus', he insists that in finding themselves in the play, they only make themselves "less honest," and while admitting that "the times" may show parallel shortcomings, the people in the drama are none other than what they purport to be: enacted versions of verifiable historical personages. Even while denying it, however, the poem encourages a contamination of then and now. "These times" obviously refers to the present, whereas "these crimes" is actually supposed to refer to those crimes, committed by "those men" but brought to life again in the book at hand--or is there a suggestion that "these crimes" are contemporary crimes enacted in the disguise of "those" historical men?[21] Annabel

Patterson draws our attention to the fact that disclaimers of this nature should not be taken as naively sincere, but rather as clever ruses which allow the author to draw attention to topical matter while seeming to deny the accusation.[22] What these disclaimers also point to is the accusation authors had to fear most: that of drawing parallels. Jonson's use of his historical sources is therefore of central importance to a play like Sejanus.

As we have seen in connection with the trial scene, Jonson's use of history can be shown to be less than innocent in major as well as minor matters. Since a really thorough, evaluative comparison of Jonson's text and his sources is still missing, and since it would lead too far to follow here all the ins and outs of transposed sequences, omitted events, and exact reproductions, I will return once more to Tacitus for a fairly simple case: Jonson's depiction of Tiberius. In doing this, it should be noted that the use of Tacitus as a historical model is in itself not as innocent as it might seem. In the Renaissance, Tacitus was the model most favoured by progressive and unorthodox historians, and was considered subversive reading matter.[23]

It would be no understatement to say that Tacitus has an extremely low opinion of Tiberius. However, in contrast to Jonson he does leave him with some positive traits. Thus, he acknowledges that the first half of Tiberius' reign was successful:

> The Senators were encouraged to speak freely, and Tiberius personally stopped any tendency to empty flattery. . . . Consuls and praetors maintained their positions in the state, and the minor magistrates, too kept their functions. The laws were well administered, apart, that is, from the Treason Law. . . . at times of bad harvest or bad weather he spared no effort in trying to help . . . . There were no beatings or confiscations . . . . If ever he found himself in dispute with private citizens, then the issues involved were settled properly in the courts. (51; #6)

While Tacitus does accuse Tiberius of criminal plottings, there are a number of plots in which he is not involved. The plots which form the centre of Jonson's play, i.e., the initiation of the persecution of the Germanicans, are in Tacitus firmly placed on the shoulders of Sejanus (57; #12 and 63; #17).

In Tacitus, Tiberius emerges as a devious, paranoid, and ultimately weak character in the grip of Sejanus' superior manipulative powers. In Jonson, the case is exactly the reverse, for he takes care to implicate Tiberius early on, at first seemingly under the influence of Sejanus, but then acting on his own responsibility:

> We can no longer
> Keep on our mask to thee, our dear Sejanus;
> Thy thoughts are ours, in all. (II.278-80)

Jonson's Tiberius is every bit as guilty as Sejanus, only he is ultimately the better manipulator. While all of Rome--including Sejanus himself--thinks that Tiberius is under the influence of his evil favourite, we as the outside audience know that the reverse is true: Tiberius is the mastermind, employing Sejanus to do his dirty work for him, and finally,

once Sejanus has become too dangerous, replacing him with a more suitable instrument, Macro.

Jonson's treatment of his source here is troubling because it achieves the opposite of what might be expected: instead of building on Tacitus' hints of a better Tiberius to exculpate his sovereign, he actually makes him worse than he is presented in Tacitus. Clearly, therefore, Jonson's is a play about an evil and utterly unassailable ruler at the height of his power rather than a study of the evil influence of cruel advisors. With this shift of focus, the end of the play makes sense, albeit in a particularly horrifying manner. Sejanus is dead, Tiberius lives: the lesser evil has been destroyed for lack of a better target, while the true root of Rome's disease remains safe, and Macro, the new Sejanus, is already getting ready to fill the vacant post. The play shows precisely what an absolute ruler can do as long as he is cunning and ruthless enough--and as long as the majority of his officials follow his every whim for their own private gain. Sejanus, then, is a critique of an amoral absolutism (Machiavelli's type), and tries to demonstrate what a society under such a ruler would be like.

Jonson's focus ensures that Sejanus is indeed a dangerous play in any reign, very simply because any, even the slightest, drawing of parallels between this ruler and a reigning monarch, or between this favourite and existing favourites would be bound to be considered seditious, and not

without reason. It would be tempting to see such a drawing of parallels as the reason for the accusations of "popery and treason" made against Jonson, and Jonathan Goldberg attempts just that, though not without problems:

> . . . how James saw himself clothed on the stage of history . . . was also the spectacle of his power, as Ben Jonson reveals in his representation of Tiberius, the Roman emperor Arthus Wilson said James was perceived to be, dissimulating. Tiberius in Sejanus is no portrait of James, if by that we mean that the real king inspired the fiction; in all likelihood Jonson had written the play before James became England's king. Yet, the play spoke to present concerns; Jonson was called before the Star Chamber for possible treason. Actual history overtook staged history. Causality is not the point. . . . following Foucault, we can point to shared epistemic limits conditioning discourse and actions, onstage and off.[24]

"Causality is not the point." It seems to me, however, that in connection with Jonson's citation before the Council, it is precisely the point. In trying to connect the indictment of Jonson to a parallel between James and Tiberius, Goldberg is forced to make some quite astounding leaps of faith. Although he has to acknowledge that Jonson must have written the play before the accession of James to the English throne, he argues that later perceptions of James as Tiberius prove that Jonson must also have intended this application,[25] and instead of using James analogies to prove that this was the reason for Jonson's indictment, he uses the fact that Jonson was called before the Privy Council to somehow imply that James-Tiberius parallels must have been the reason for it.

I do not find Goldberg's argument at all convincing, even

though I do accept the notion that absolutist ideas were floating around. It is strange that Goldberg does not argue the obvious, i.e., that Jonson could have known about James's absolutist ideas because he could have read his The True Lawe of Free Monarchies (Edinburgh, 1598).[26] But even with this assumption, the connection does not make sense beyond very general similarities, for Tiberius' brand of absolutism is not James's but Machiavelli's, and the doctrine of total obedience as promoted by Sabinus is Elizabethan as much as it is Jacobean. I agree with those critics who remind us that Sejanus is an Elizabethan play.[27]

We do not know when Jonson wrote Sejanus, except for a general agreement that it must have been written during the last and frustrating years of Elizabeth's reign--the monarch, incidentally, who could use dissimulation every bit as well as James thought he could.[28] Thus, Sejanus is an Elizabethan play which was performed for the first time immediately on the accession of James, and I think here lies the secret of its supposed topicality: the play could only have been acted in precisely that transition period when the old queen was gone and the new king only recently installed on the throne. At a time, that is, when the danger of parallel-drawing could be reduced to a minimum, since Elizabeth could not be insulted any more, and James not yet. It may well be that Jonson had waited for just such an ideal and unprecedented occasion to voice his critique of absolutist rule, the year

1603, the year of new beginnings. This, it seems to me, would also explain why the play was such a flop when it was performed in the Globe after the reopening of the theatres in 1604.[29] Most critics assume that the play was hissed off the stage because it was too learned and difficult for the crowd.[30] Another explanation, however, might be that the audience quite literally did not like what they saw: an intensely gloomy picture of a state run on every level by murderers and criminals, and resting firmly on a whole host of opportunistic collaborators. After all, at this point most Englishmen still expected that James would save the show, that now everything would turn to the better. In such a climate, Sejanus must have appeared unduly negative and defeatist in outlook. There is some evidence that indeed the flop of the original staging may have been due to bad timing in an anonymous person's estimate, who "a monst others hissed Seianus of the stage, yet after sate it out, not only patiantly, but with content, & admiration."[31]

We do not know the text of the staged version of the play, since in 1605 Jonson published a text which, as he claims, "in all numbers, is not the same with that which was acted on the public stage" (52). One thing, however, is certain: that the play did cause problems, though hardly because James saw himself in Tiberius. Some parallels, clearly, were drawn. Wikander argues that the tragedy contains a net of loosely connected, and in themselves

contradictory parallels to Essex and his accusers as well as to Raleigh. For him, Essex appears both as Sejanus, the ruthless favourite, and Silius, the wronged military leader. Although Wikander's suggestions may well be true for Jonson's intentions in the composition of the play, I find Ayres' suggestions more credible with regard to what happened in the Privy Council in 1603. Ayres argues that Northampton, who if Jonson is to be believed was responsible for the accusation, saw reflections of the recent treason trial against Raleigh in Silius' trial for the same crime in Sejanus. Whether or not Jonson intended this parallel cannot be proved, but I think it is plausible that Northampton, who was heavily involved against Raleigh, made the connection. What the episode proves is that Jonson's safeguards were not sufficient, for while the year 1603 made any application to a living monarch highly improbable, other parallels could be and probably were drawn.[32]

Jonson himself must have feared the play's promiscuity in terms of engendering parallels when he came to publish it in 1605, at a time when the liminal status of the year 1603 no longer applied. This quarto contains an addition to the "Argument"--omitted in the folio of 1616--which tells us, somewhat surprisingly, how we are to read the play:

> This do we advance as a mark of terror to all traitors and treasons; to show how just the heavens are in pouring and thundering down a weighty vengeance on their unnatural intents, even to the worst princes: much more to those for guard of whose piety and virtue the angels are in continual

watch, and God himself miraculously working. (71)

Contrary to the evidence of Jonson's treatment of Tacitus's Tiberius, he insists here that Sejanus is not a dangerous depiction of the machinations of a corrupt prince, but a harmless piece of orthodox admonition in the de casibus tradition. We can see here the shadow of what might be called a genre displacement: suddenly Sejanus is made to appear like something quite innocent, and we get a critical portrayal of a corrupt court in the guise of a morality play, a wolf in sheep's clothing so to speak. Since the only part of the play where such a moralistic agenda may be traced are the providential aspects of Act V, it would be tempting to assume that Jonson's revisions of the play may have concerned Act V in particular. It is not surprising that Jonson should have taken some genre precautions, since his earlier trouble over the play must have taught him that the drawing of parallels was a real danger with this work. The question now is why this play is so particularly prone to topical readings.

In relying on Tacitus the way he does, Jonson managed to write a play that is both undeniably Roman and dangerously contemporary, for along with the historian's listing of events he also takes over his evaluations of motives, analyses of causes and effects, in short, his portrayal of a realistic political environment. Tacitus provides Jonson with characters who can be as Roman as they

can be English: patricians of old standing, parvenus of the new order, hangers-on eager for an office, willing tools in the service of powerful patrons, factions and counter-factions, spies and counter-spies. This Roman/English two-sidedness can even be detected in Jonson's choice of vocabulary. For example, I have counted no less than 46 occurrences of the word "prince" and its derivatives in the play--as opposed to not a single "king." Of these, many occur in contexts which are markedly post-Machiavellian, as for example when Arruntius comments on Tiberius' powers of dissimulation: "Princelike to the life" (I.395). Yes, one might say, the "prince" Tiberius is definitely a Machiavellian creature, a negative version of that other "prince," "il principe." To this, however, Jonson could answer that he is merely employing the best translation for the word Tacitus favours, "princeps." Tacitus' "princeps" thus becomes Jonson's "prince," a faithful translation as well as a concept of particular relevance to the Renaissance.

Similarly, I think, one would not fault Jonson for calling a Roman senator a "lord," for after all as regards social standing, this would be the closest approximation. However, at times this Roman "lord" begins to look remarkably like a character in one of Jonson's comedies:

> Arruntius. What troops of his officious friends
> Flock to salute my lord! And start before
> My great proud lord, to get a lord-like nod!
> Bring back my lord! Like servile ushers, make
> Way for my lord! Proclaim his idol lordship,
> More than ten criers, or six noise of
> trumpets!

> Make legs, kiss hands, and take a scattered hair
> From my lord's eminent shoulder! (V.446-54)

What has happened here? The senators hastening to the Senate expecting further honours to be heaped on Sejanus--wrongly, as it turns out--are unexpectedly turned into their own seventeenth-century counterparts, and yet they are no walking anachronisms. The Roman/English contamination comes from the fact that a servile Roman patrician may have a lot in common with a similar English gentleman, and the "Senate house" might connote a contemporary English court or parliament. What we have here is an almost inseparable fusion of past and present, of Rome and London, a thing that is definitely Roman and yet looks suspiciously English. This, of course, is the greatest displacement of all: Roman history in Roman garb, which through its very accuracy in factual detail, its political realism, and an occasional congruity with English manners looks remarkably like an analytical depiction of contemporary England. And this, of course, is the reason why Jonson spends so much energy on proving his "integrity in the story," insisting that this is Roman history and nothing else.

Jonson's is a particularly daring example of this kind of historical displacement because he explicitly draws attention to the possibility that an author might ventriloquise through history in the figure of the historian Cordus. Cordus' defence at his trial--he is accused of making treasonous comparisons between past and present--

consists of a long oration translated straight from Tacitus. Drummond of Hawthornden claims that Jonson boasted about the translation:

> In his Sejanus he hath translated a whole oration of Tacitus: the first four books of Tacitus ignorantly done in English.[33]

Drummond places Jonson's utterance in a context which suggests that as a classical scholar he was proud of his translation as opposed to another man's work. However, I think we should rather see this claim in the context of his trouble over the play. His choice of this particular oration seems to be a carefully calculated attempt at protecting through the closest possible adherence to Tacitus the single most exposed passage in the play, that part in which he himself might be said to invite the audience to consider if, like Cordus, he could be ventriloquising through the history he presents to them. It is also the part where Jonson comments, through his choric commentators, in no uncertain terms on the futility and obnoxiousness of state censorship.[34]

Cordus is accused in the Senate in a way which, with a little imagination, might almost anticipate Northampton's unrecorded speech before the Council. In itself, seemingly writing for them the accusations of his adversaries is a remarkably daring move on the part of Jonson:

> Satrius. I do accuse thee, Cremutius Cordus,
> To be a man factious and dangerous,
> A sower of sedition in the state,
> A turbulent and discontented spirit,
> Which I will prove from thine own
> writings, here,

The annals thou hast published. (III.380-84)[35]

Cordus counters, following Tacitus word for word, arguing that: (a) he wrote on things "Not reaching either prince or prince's parent, / The which your law of treason comprehends" (III.409-10),[36] in short that dead persons cannot do present harm (III.445-55); (b)contrary to Afer's negative image of the parricide Brutus, he was right in praising him, and finds himself in accord with his major sources (III.411-33); (c) previous rulers countenanced critical representations of their own reigns and persons (III.414-37); (d) suppression only enhances the impact and validity of a negative depiction (III.437-41); and (e) he himself would be accorded his due by following generations regardless of what would happen in this trial (III.456-60).

After this speech, still closely adhering to Tacitus, this time to Tacitus' own narrative comments, Arruntius and Sabinus round off the argument by commenting on "the Senate's brainless diligence, / Who think they can, with present power, extinguish / The memory of all succeeding times," and pointing out that "the punishment / Of wit doth make th'authority increase," while the infamous burners of books only "purchase to themselves rebuke and shame, / And to the writer an eternal name" (III.471-80). What makes the whole Cordus sequence fascinating is that there can be no doubt, given Cordus's leanings, of his "guilt" by the standards set by the prosecutor. Cordus' defence, therefore,

is just that: a defence of his right to pursue his historical studies in whatever way he chooses. Cordus is not a misunderstood historian, but an oppositional voice who demands the right to be left in peace. The commentators' condemnation of censorship makes essentially the same point: not that Cordus is innocent, but that the trial as such is a breach of the historian's rights.

Obviously, the passage is of immense importance to our understanding of Jonson's awareness of some of the displacement strategies I have talked about in this chapter. We have seen how he uses several of Cordus' strategies in his quarto: like Cordus he claims that he has no interest in present applications but only wishes to show his "integrity in the story" and like him, he studiously points to his sources for proof of his historical accuracy. By translating the passage word for word from Tacitus, however, Jonson can also be seen at his most wary, for these are not words of his invention; they are Tacitus' responsibility, who in turn bases them on the actions of a historical person.[37] If this seems like a fairly lame excuse which anyone can see through (as, I suspect we are meant to), it is nevertheless an air-tight argument. To accuse the author of sedition in connection with Cordus' speech would require a direct command that history should be rewritten, that Jonson should actively falsify the historical record. Jonson himself has done his utmost to guard himself against accusations of creating

contemporary references while seeing to it that just such inferences can be drawn on every level of the text. Firmly enclosed in the historical truth of its characters, its action, and even its speeches, this text can afford to wait for a reader or an audience to make their own connections.

The displacement of dangerous matter into safe regions of the text (e.g. into the speeches of tainted characters) is identified by Strauss and Cantor as one possible strategy of esoteric writing, and while neither deals with the possibility that history as such may be used as a safe area for esoteric concealment, Strauss at any rate seems to be well aware of the possibility of displacement into history, of ventiloquizing through a historical person or narrative.[38] This type of esoteric writing, however, is markedly different from a strategy which hides forbidden messages in rupture in the text. In fact, a play like Jonson's Sejanus does not hide its message but rather places it aggressively on the surface of the text. What is secret or hidden here is not the message of the play, but rather the play's relationship to its contemporary society.

This strategy can be seen as being closely connected to a phenomenon which is typical of satires. Satire is a mode of attack rather than a means of covert representation, and as such it survives by claiming a special license in exchange for not being "serious," and for not being aimed at anyone in particular but only at general shortcomings. It is

essentially this negotiation which allows the satiric mode its special quality of realistic depiction and unflinching denunciation of human absurdities and weaknesses. In his address "To the Reader," John Marston, for example, points to his satiric intentions in writing The Malcontent. He starts with the satirist's typical claim to plain, honest speech, and goes on to defend slight errors in his presentation of the Italian setting as a result of the fact that

> it was my care to write so far from reasonable offence, that even strangers, in whose state I laid my scene, should not from thence draw any disgrace to any, dead or living.

What follows is the familiar argument (reminiscent of Hugh Holland's "Nor make yourselves less honest than you are"), that similarities to living persons should be attributed not to the author's evil intentions but to these individuals themselves; if the shoe fits, wear it:

> . . . to such I protest, that with my free understanding I have not glanced at disgrace of any, but of those whose unquiet studies labour innovation, contempt of holy policy, reverend, comely superiority, and established unity.

Thus, Marston concludes, all was done in such a vein that

> I fear not but unto every worthy mind it will be approved so general and honest as may modestly pass with the freedom of a satire.[39]

In Sejanus, Jonson attempts to replace the "freedom of a satire" with the freedom of historical fact, and proceeds to attack this time not the common weaknesses of ordinary people, but a whole state system run on deceit, opportunism,

greed, manipulation and cruelty--all, he insists, without specific application or "disgrace to any, dead or living," to borrow Marston's words. Under the guise of historical veracity, one of the age's most prolific satirists has thus given us what may be called a tragic satire, a satire gone sour, and as with any satire, he ran the risk that someone would recognize himself in it. The history on which this play depends for its very survival can thus be seen here not as a precursor tradition in need of partisan misreading, but rather as an empowering model with which contemporary shortcomings--actual or perceived--could be attacked. Rather than attack the tradition, therefore, Jonson here uses the tradition to attack the developing absolutist state.

Of the three modes of resistance available in this section, it is Jonson's which is the most aggressive. This may come as some surprise, since Jonson's is clearly a stance coming from a conservative position. What he is afraid of is the erosion of traditional values through a new pragmatic, amoral mode of absolutist politics. To counter this perceived development, he mounts an open attack--displaced into Tiberian Rome--on its results: opportunism, spies, censorship, the stifling of oppositional voices, etc. Thus, where Shakespeare insists on staging politically sensitive material in spite of the danger of reprisals, Marlowe goes one step further in trying to counteract hostile perspectives on homosexuality. Jonson, in his turn, identifies an

impressive number of political abuses and procedes to attack them by making them visible.

Section II: Women and Secular Writing

A man who decided to become a playwright in Renaissance England ran many risks. He would be a member of a profession attacked by many as immoral and reprehensible, filling a social position situated somewhere between the bear-baiting pit and the court.[1] In addition, the competition would be considerable, and if he failed he would be haunted continually by the spectre of poverty and the debtor's prison. The career of Ben Jonson may well attest to the Renaissance dramatist's continual struggle for recognition, respect, and self-respect. On the other hand, Jonson's career also shows that this was one of the few vocations which might lead a man who was not a nobleman and not, strictly speaking, a courtier to the very centre of power itself, the court. In the case of Shakespeare, such a vocation might lead to the acquisition of a coat of arms and to prosperity.

The anxieties of the Renaissance dramatist were essentially those of any professional writer: would the theatre companies offer him employment; would the play attract an appreciative audience; would the authorities interfere; would rival companies and dramatists find more favour, and if so, what could be done about it? There were, however, a whole host of questions--all of them concerning anxieties much more basic than those ennumerated here--which our struggling dramatist would not have to ask in relation to his

art: was it proper for him to write at all; should he expose himself to the public view in this manner; what would his wife think, and would she defend his decision; what and how should he write, seeing that he seems to be the only man ever to have ventured on this path before; was he not overstepping his bounds, and what was to become of his reputation as a chaste and pious son and husband? This list could be continued, but I think the point is clear: there are some questions a Renaissance dramatist would not have thought of asking very simply because as a man, he did not have to worry about them. He could look back on a long tradition of male authors of native and classical models; he would be surrounded by a support group of like-minded individuals, actors, other playwrights, patrons, hangers-on, and ultimately an audience willing to pay to hear what he had to say; publicity, as long as it was not of the seditious, rebellious kind, did not have to worry him, in fact his livelihood depended on it; and, puritan criticism apart, his sexual exploits--real or alleged--were his own business and might enhance his charisma as an artist rather than damage it.

For the aspiring Renaissance woman author, however, these questions--or similar ones-- would be the ones she would have to face if she decided to publish her work. Her anxieties would not, for example, start with the submission of her work to a censor, but with the act of writing itself, at least if these works were designed for the public view. She would be stepping outside the frame of socially sanctioned

employment in a way a male author would not.

Ever since Joan Kelly-Gadol asked the famous question "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" the question has been hotly debated among scholars. While Kelly was, at the time, inclined to answer it in the negative, this view has recently been challenged by Margaret Ezell, who argues that the position of women was a lot better than previously assumed.[2] Ezell argues that a system like patriarchy is not as oppressive as it is often made out to be, since like any other system it, too, depends on the collaboration of the majority of persons concerned, men as well as women, and that the position of the "patriarch's wife" might have room for a considerable degree of independence, authority, and power. While I feel that Ezell's depiction of patriarchy may be too benign at times, disregarding the very real anguish it must cause to some if it is to flourish, her point is well taken, especially with regard to the Renaissance woman writer.[3] Here Ezell can demonstrate that there were a lot more women authors than are usually taken into consideration. Many of them were writers who--like many male aristocrats--circulated their works privately. Others have not been accorded the attention they deserve because they worked outside the literary genres usually dealt with by literary criticism.

Ezell's revision of the canon of women's writings in the Renaissance is borne out by a number of anthologies which

have appeared over the last decade or so,[4] and we now also have a comprehensive study of a phenomenon which one critic once thought an "anachronism," the phenomenon of Renaissance feminism as it was developed by both men and women.[5] However, these findings should not make us too optimistic, for as even a cursory glance at the statistics demonstrates, works by women were far from being the norm. Thus, even Elaine Hobby, who devotes a book-length study to an exceptionally rich period of women's writings in the seventeenth century, and is willing to take into consideration usually neglected genres and texts, advises us not overestimate the scope and impact of women's writings. Although she counted more than 200 women authors between 1649 and 1688, these still amount to less than 1% of the total output of all printed material, which means that 99% of all published texts were still written by men.[6] Since Hobby's count includes in part the extremely explosive civil war years as well as the prolific output of Quaker women, this ratio would look even bleaker for earlier periods. Despite the fact, therefore, that we have more women writers in the Renaissance than is commonly acknowledged, the female author in England was still a decidedly odd creature. Published literary writers like Lady Mary Wroth, who wrote on secular matters, were definitely exceptional guests on the literary market.

In France, where we have such authors as Christine de Pisan, Marguerite de Navarre, Pernette du Guillet, Louise Labé, and Marie de Gournay, the situation seems to have been

somewhat better, but here too the impact of women's writings on the general perception of women should not be overestimated. After all, in France as elsewhere, the many handicaps women faced in terms of religious, medical, and social constructions of gender were still in operation.[7] All in all, authorship seems to have been somewhat easier for Catholic women. As Natalie Zemon Davis notes, in France "there was no Protestant counterpart in the sixteenth century for such an urban poet as Louise Labé":

> . . . the public and independent identity of Louise Labé was based on behaviour that was unacceptable in a modest and brave Reformed woman. The books Louise read and wrote were lascivious; her salons an impure gathering of the sexes; and her literary feminism impudent. She was talked of in Geneva as a lewd female who had corrupted the wife of a Lyon surgeon, persuading her to abandon her Christian husband for the sake of pleasure. In a Protestant poem against the scandalous new fashion of hoop skirts, Louise seemed to have been a model of the libertine.[8]

Thus, while individual women like Louise Labé might successfully attempt to create a literary environment for themselves, especially in areas removed from the religious struggles of the period, even Natalie Zemon Davis has to acknowledge that such achievements were exceptional in sixteenth-century France.[9]

The reasons for the singular position of the woman author are not difficult to find. Even a cursory look at Suzanne Hull's analysis of books written by or for women in Renaissance England shows the enormous hold men had over

women's reading matter. As she points out, "men wrote almost all the women's books printed before 1660." This meant that men "wrote the cookbooks; men wrote the midwifery books; and men . . . put together the first printed needlework books."[10] In their totality, the books evaluated by Hull are a sober reminder of the enormous power of the doctrine that women had to be subject, in theory at least, to their husbands and fathers: obedient, chaste, and silent. Hull summarizes the continual "drip-drip-drip of the message" as follows:

> . . . the tools or weapons used to manage or control the female population in a male-dominated society were powerful. Not the least of them was the power of the press--and the books that were written for a female audience. Religious rules and instruction emanating from men and the church hierarchy proved that the weapon of fear and the promise of solace were other effective disciplinary tools. . . . Women were told over and over and over that they were inferior, that they had lesser minds, that they were unable to handle their own affairs. Reading their books of instruction today, it appears to be power by "put-down" and propaganda, not unlike the situation in a modern totalitarian society.[11]

Under these circumstances it comes as no surprise that while "book <u>reading</u> by women was still frowned on in some circles . . . . Book <u>writing</u> was only for the brave and unconventional."[12]

If, as is the case in the Renaissance, a notion of chastity and modesty is the central metaphor for regulating female conduct, a metaphor that may regulate, by analogy, anything from eye movement to gait and most importantly speech, it is easy to see "how the act of publishing one's work--'publishing one's private thoughts to the world'--

would be seen as a violation of the requirements of modesty."[13] With works which venture beyond the more acceptable scope of pious works and translations, the suspicion of immodesty may easily spill over into a charge of mental prostitution, an overt act of indecency. Thus, Thomas Salter translated an Italian text into English in 1579, which cautioned that women should not read recreational or erotic literature, since

> . . . in such studies as yieldeth recreation . . . . there is . . . daunger, that they will as well learn to be subtile and shameless Lovers, as connying and skilful Writers, of Ditties, Sonnettes, Epigrammes and Ballades. Let them be restrained to the care and government of a familie, and teach them to be envious of following those, that by true vertue have made little accoumpt of those that to the prejudice of their good names, have been desirous to bee reputed Diotimes, Aspaties, Sapphoes and Corinnes.[14]

Apart from the daring decision to write at all, Louise Labé and Lady Mary Wroth infringe on genre restrictions in trying to become something altogether unheard of: women talking at length and in public about love and sexual desire. As Ann Rosalind Jones points out, this leads to a paradoxical situation in which the least public genre may also become one of the most transgressive genres for women to engage in:

> Renaissance gender decorum closed women off from the literary genres most privileged because most publicly oriented: epic, tragedy, political and philosophical theory. But the love lyric, an ostensibly private discourse, an art of the inhouse miniature, could conceivably be allowed them. In practice, however, the ideological matrix that associated open speech with open sexuality in women made love poetry an especially transgressive genre.[15]

The two authors dealt with in this section are precisely such women, who "to the prejudice of their good name, have been desirous to be reputed Diotimes, Aspaties, Sapphoes and Corinnes." Louise Labé makes an explicit connection to her predecessor from Lesbos in her first elegy, when she writes that Apollo, the god of poetry who fills her with his "fureur divine," causes her to sing not of great battles but of "l'Amour Lesbienne."[16] In exchange, Labé's sex-life emerges as a matter of great concern both for her contemporaries and for subsequent critics. While her Oeuvres were accompanied by a substantial collection of commendatory poems by male authors, others like John Calvin, who called her a common whore, a "plebeia meretrix,"[17] were less generous. When Lady Mary Wroth, daughter of Robert Sidney and niece of Sir Philip Sidney and of the Countess of Pembroke, published her The Countess of Montgomery's Urania in 1621, her work made it obvious that she had not only read her uncle's works, but that she was actually trying to step into his shoes. Lord Denny, Baron of Waltham, who claimed that he and his family had been slandered in an episode in the Urania, attacked her person in no uncertain terms:

> Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster
> As by thy words and works all men ma. conster
> Thy wrathfull spite conceived an Idell book
> Brought forth a foole which like the damme doth look
> Wherein thou strikes at some mans noble blood
> Of kinne to thine if thine be counted good
> Whose vaine comparison for want of witt
> Takes up the oystershell to play with it
> Yet common oysters such as thine gape wide

> And take in pearles or worse at every tide
> . . . . . .
> Thus hast thou made thy selfe a lying wonder
> Fooles and their Babes seldome part asunder
> Work o th'Workes leave idle bookes alone
> For wise and worthy women have written none.[18]

What makes Denny's attack striking is that apart from the obvious tactic of calling her a liar and a fool in every conceivable way, Denny relies heavily on Wroth's status as a woman writer. After all, it is not the slanderous nature of her book which makes her a "hermaphrodite" and a "monster," but her act of conceiving, writing, and publishing it in the first place. It takes no special imagination to see what Wroth's "common oyster" might be, and the punchline is clear: "wise and worthy women" do not write books. As it turned out, Wroth countered the poem with a spirited attack of her own, but eventually tried to have her book removed from circulation.[19]

Let us return now to the catalogue of questions a Renaissance dramatist would not need to ask himself. For the two authors dealt with here, some seem to be particularly pertinent. They concern the question of how an existing male tradition such as Petrarchan love poetry or the praise of folly could be made to accommodate female and feminist concerns; how a mode of writing which could expose the authors in an exceptionally high degree to charges of immorality could be handled in an acceptable form; how attempts could be made at challenging or subverting prevalent artistic and socio-political models in order to bring about a more

authoritative position for the authors and--especially in the case of Louise Labé--for women in general. The following chapters will try to find some answers to these questions. In addition, the case of Louise Labé's Débat de Folie et d'Amour affords a singular and exceptional chance at testing a woman's work against the background of the work of a male recipient. The Débat was translated into English in 1587 by Robert Greene in a much altered and shortened version without acknowledgment of its French author.[20] The chapter on Louise Labé will also include a discussion of Greene's translation as a particularly detailed case of a man's reception of a woman's work.

With this section, the thesis moves into a different field of concerns. While Louise Labé's texts use some esoteric strategies, and while both Labé and Wroth are concerned with protective strategies, the focus will come to rest increasingly on these womens' attempts at re-reading existing precursor texts and literary traditions. This shift of emphasis is not merely coincidental, for while men usually may choose from varieties of male traditions--and are thus not forced to re-write their own--women in the Renaissance inevitably have to face male traditions which may not always be suitable for expressing their own needs. Misreading can therefore be seen as a central aspect of Renaissance women's literature.

Chapter 4: "Changer visage mille fois le jour": The Reign of Folly in Louise Labé's Débat de Folie et d'Amour

For a couple of decades in the sixteenth century, the Renaissance in France reached a peak in Lyons, a city situated at the centre of manifold European influences. Here, business was going well for the wealthy middle class; from Italy came vital and important new influences; the printing trade reached an all-time high and, removed from the grip of the Paris state and church apparatus, Lyons developed into a flourishing centre of social, artistic, and cultural freedom. Suddenly many things must have seemed possible, and women certainly were among those who profited most from these developments.[1] Thus, Lyons boasts two notable women writers, Pernette du Guillet and Louise Labé, whose work made it to the printers in this period. However, while the poems of Pernette du Guillet only made their way to the public in a posthumous edition accompanied by the editor's preface in which he defends her against all charges of immodesty and indecency,[2] Labé had her own Oeuvres printed in 1555 with one of the foremost printers of Lyons, having first personally obtained royal permission for publication. The edition bears her full name, and was accompanied by a collection of 24 commendatory poems in various languages.

What makes this accomplishment all the more astonishing

is the fact that Labé, "the one lowborn female poet of sixteenth-century France," came from a family of ropemakers, barber surgeons and butchers, and was herself married to a Lyons ropemaker. Of the women in her family, some were literate, and some--including her own mother--were not.[3]

The work proudly presented as Euvres de Louize Labé lionnoize is a slim volume, particularly when compared to works by her more productive male colleagues, but it makes up for it through an astonishing variety of different genres and modes, and through the exceptional daring with which Labé pursues her vocation. Thus, Labé provides in her dedicatory epistle to Clémence de Bourges a feminist manifesto in which she tries to persuade all women to engage in the sciences and the arts, to finally employ "cette honnête liberté que notre sexe a autrefois tant desirée."[4] In this way, she argues, it will be possible to finally "montrer aux hommes le tort qu'ils nous faisaient en nous privant du bien et de l'honneur qui nous en pouvaient venir" (281). Women, she argues, should no longer disdain the glory ("la gloire") which may come from their writing (281), and they should stick together in their endeavours: "Pour ce, nous faut-il animer l'une l'autre à si louable entreprise" (282).

For men, this manifesto promises a friendly contest with a barely veiled threat to their superiority, as Labé would like to see women "passer ou égaler les hommes" not only in beauty (which seems to be a given), but also "en science et

vertu" (282), and to finally

> faire entendre au monde que si nous ne sommes faites pour commander, si ne devons-nous être dédaignées pour compagnes tant ès affaires domestiques que publiques, de ceux qui gouvernent et se font obéir. Et outre la réputation que notre sexe en recevra, nous aurons valu au public, que les hommes mettront plus de peine et d'étude aux sciences vertueuses, de peur qu'ils n'aient honte de voir les précéder celles, desquelles ils ont prétendu être toujours supérieurs quasi en tout. (282)

"Honneur," "gloire," "faire entendre au monde," "réputation"--all of these are concepts which assert the right of women not only to write, but indeed to do so in a decidedly public context; to be visible in their society; to be respected in both private and public matters if not as rulers, at least as companions. Such a "public" woman, Labé argues, would be well equipped to challenge men's so-called superiority unless men put more effort into their own endeavours.

Louise Labé, then, is not a thinker who would restrict women to certain societally accepted genres and modes of expression, and her own works illustrate how far she was willing to go in exploiting the "honnête liberté" she saw as a right due to her. Thus she repeatedly avails herself of aggressive images of female power as in her third Elegy, where she describes how she took part in a tournament, "en armes," handling her lance and her horse, enmeshed in combat like the Amazonian warrior-women of the romance tradition (363).[5] Elegy II, a spirited attack blaming her lover for his absence and possible betrayal, envisages a contest between

herself and the woman she assumes must have taken her place in his affections. She points to her own renown not only in France but all over Europe, where "gens d'esprit me donnent quelque gloire," openly daring her lover not to reject "le bien que tant d'hommes désirent" (360). What would normally be a dangerous asset for a woman, the admiration of many men, is here turned into a virtue, the visible proof of her worth and accomplishments.

The only thing powerful enough to subdue the fierce independence of her heroines is love, and it is of love that Labé writes in her 3 elegies, 24 sonnets, and in the Débat de Folie et d'Amour. Apart from Veronica Franco, the Italian poet who combined poetry with her work as a high-class courtesan, I can think of no other woman poet in the Renaissance who deals with erotic matters as frankly and sympathetically as Louise Labé. In validating the passions of her female personae, Labé is not afraid to revaluate normally reprehensible characters like the warlike Semiramis, queen of Babylon, who fell incestuously in love with her own son. What could be a cautionary tale about women's propensity to break all taboos when in the grip of passionate delusions [6] is treated sympathetically in the first Elegy, where she laments the queen's loss of power and martial prowess under the influence of her emotions, while the incestuous nature of her love is portrayed as nothing more than a particularly mean trick on the part of "Amour, qui si fort la pressa" (355).

In her sonnets, too, Labé is remarkably frank and assertive. Sonnet 6, for example, confidently claims that her beloved belongs only to her, and that she will subdue him through the power of her eyes (374). Sonnet 7 builds on the notion of a union of body and soul, and demands of her lover that he, the soul, should return to her, the body, thus wittily reproducing available gendered notions of body and soul to her advantage. The union, Labé insists, should be a happy one:

> Mais fais, Ami, que ne soit dangereuse
> Cette rencontre et revue amoureuse,
> L'accompagnant, non de sévérité,
> Non de rigueur: mais de grâce aimable,
> Qui doucement me rende ta beauté,
> Jadis cruelle, à présent favourable. (375)

Her most famous sonnet, "Baise m'encore, rebaise-moi et baise" (#18), playfully makes use of the convention of the lover's kiss to enforce a vision of mutual pleasure and fulfilment, even though this vision is clearly set off as imaginary, as "quelque folie" (386). Sonnet 23, finally, offers a derisive attack, somewhat akin to that found in Elegy II, on the Petrarchan poet-lover's empty phrases and broken promises (391).

To say that Labé has not been accorded praise by her readers would be wrong, and it is mostly her impassioned and highly accomplished poetry that has assured her a following over the centuries both among critics and among later poets. However, it is her prose work that is most seriously in need of revaluation,[7] and I have decided to focus on the <u>Débat</u>

de Folie et d'Amour as a remarkable achievement in its inventive use of existing allegorical concepts, and in its subversive re-reading of the male tradition as established by Brandt, Erasmus, and other mythographers of folly.[8]

Labé's Débat describes in five dramatic scenes of varying length the ramifications of the blinding of Cupid by Folly. The first Discours shows how "Amour" and "Folie" are on their way to a gathering of the Olympic gods, when they get into a quarrel about who is more important and should enter first. In the course of this quarrel, Cupid tries in vain to wound Folly with his arrow. Folly ends up blinding him, and they appeal to Jupiter for legal arbitration. Discours V, of equal length as the preceding four sections taken together, consists of the pleadings by Apollo (as Cupid's advocate) and by Mercury (as Folly's). Labé starts her Débat with a vivid delineation of her main characters "Amour" and "Folie," who engage in a quarrel which is marked from the beginning by a noticeable antagonism between the sexes. Cupid is all one might expect from the anacreontic little god: petulant, arrogant, childish, and fully convinced of his undisputed powers. He accosts Folly, "cette folle" (289), claiming that he is clearly her superior:

> Comment donc fais-tu tant la brave auprès de moi, qui, quelque petit que tu me voies, suis le plus craint et redouté entre les Dieux et les hommes? Et toi femme inconnue, oses-tu te faire plus grande que moi? Ta jeunesse, ton sexe, ta façon de faire

> te démentent assez: mais plus ton ignorance, qui ne te permet connaître le grand degré que je tiens. (290)
>
> Greene: How darest thou then vaunt thy selfe against mee, which how little so ever I be, am the most redoubted of all the gods (translation incomplete).[9]

If Cupid tries to assert his supremacy on the basis of Folly's sex, ignorance, and youth, he severely underestimates his opponent. Folly is no submissive maiden but a brash, self-confident, witty, and assertive female, who is well able to look after herself. To counter Cupid's taunts she asserts that he is just small fry, "étant si jeune et faible," nothing but a "jeune garçonneau" (289) of whom she has nothing to fear. Folly's blinding of Cupid has struck one critic as such a sexually aggressive act that he speaks of the "trauma" of castration, and of Folly as the castrating woman.[10] While I do not find Cottrell's Lacanian reading of the Débat convincing, there is certainly an amount of verbal and in the end physical aggression which could come across as threatening, especially to a critic who might be inclined to identify himself with Cupid.[11]

However, we should remember that these characters serve a double function since they are required to both enact a mythological fable (i.e., how Cupid came to be blinded), and to embody certain character traits. On the first level, Folly's actions can be seen as an allegorical representation of an abstract concept; on the second level, the first Discours establishes a gendered antagonism between two characters who actually have a lot in common, but who are

also engaged in a power struggle. The allegorical message in this scene is clear and not original: that folly and love are intimately connected emotions, and that it may in fact be impossible to make a clear distinction. The blinding of Cupid is therefore a mere enactment of a pre-existing reality, a sign that Folly has always been Cupid's guide ("je te mène et conduis", 294). On the realistic level, however, the scene is not so conventional as Folly emerges as a dangerously eloquent, aggressive, maybe emasculatingly powerful woman, who has shown that she is--in contrast to her name--nobody's fool. Cupid, on the other hand, comes across as rather impotent and at times pathetically naive and muddle-headed, as for example when he expects Folly to tell him if his arrow has hit her, and why it may have missed (292).

If the first Discours serves to establish Folly's character, the second Discours is designed to set her off against the kind of woman she is not: Venus. The scene opens on Cupid's rather comic lamentations over his blindness. His mother Venus, on the other hand, has only one worry: that Cupid now will not be able to see <u>her</u> anymore:

> Ô quelle infortune! Hé moi miserable! Donc tu ne me verras plus, cher enfant? . . . . Et donc Folie, la plus misérable chose du monde, a le pouvoir d'ôter à Vénus le plus grand plaisir qu'elle eût en ce monde: qui était quand son fils Amour la voyait. En ce était son contentement, son désir, sa félicité. . . . . Ô mère désolée! Ô Vénus sans fruit belle! . . . . mon trésor n'est que beauté, de laquelle que chaut-il à un aveugle? (298-9)

> <u>Greene</u>: O dissolute mother, O woeful <u>Venus</u>, who

> seest thy sonne, thy joy, and onlie care, thus cruellie deprived of sight (translation incomplete and inaccurate). (208)

Since both Cox and Greene seem reluctant to translate Venus' incestuous narcissism appropriately,[12] the scene could obviously be perceived as shocking in the late sixteeth as well as in the early twentieth century. On an allegorical level, however, the implications are commonplace: that the love goddess Venus, one of our culture's best known symbols for female seductiveness and erotic wishfulfilment, depends on her bond with Cupid, the god of love. It is on the realistic level of the scene that problems arise, since Venus is also made to represent a certain type of woman: a woman who can do nothing for herself, since her only answer to her son's injury is to complain to her friends, the gods (298); a woman who sees her sole purpose in being the beautiful object of the male gaze, even if it is her own son's; a woman who has nothing to offer but her charms and is, in fact, only of value as a sex object.

What makes Labé's satirical depiction all the more scathing is the fact that this estimate of Venus does not come from any of the men around her, Cupid for example, but that she herself has internalized a system of values which turns her into a sex object, and which makes her totally dependent on men. In later scenes we will see her tearfully implore Jupiter for help, secure in the knowledge that all

the gods--the men at any rate--will be on her side (300-1). Folly, on the other hand, goes out of her way to ensure that she may retain her independence and dignity (329).

In thus depicting two different types of women, Labé takes up again and dramatizes a concern which can also be detected in the dedicatory epistle. There she pleads that women should write and not disdain glory,

> et s'en parer plutôt que de chaînes, anneaux, et somptueux habits: lesquels ne pouvons vraiment estimer nôtres, que par usage. Mais l'honneur que la science nous procurera, sera entièrement nôtre. (281)

While this passage should not be taken to mean that Labé wishes to reject outright the pleasures of fashion and adornment, for example in favour of an ascetic life of studious retirement, it does clarify her notion of the relative merit of these things. What comes first is the woman's duty to develop her own faculties, find a way of expressing her thoughts, and share them with the community. Status symbols like jewelry and expensive clothes, on the other hand, do not represent a personal asset and are not suited to promote the 'glory' of the female sex. As is the case with Venus, beauty without independence of thought and action is meaningless.

If Venus as the traditional supreme love object is being rejected by Labé, there is a similar critique of the love represented by a seeing Cupid. When Cupid laments the effect of his blindness on the world of lovers, he uses a

decidedly political terminology: "tel désordre et mauvais gouvernement" (297). Before his blindness, so he claims, everything was in order, for he would only aim at those who deserve to love: the young, the beautiful, and it must be assumed those of superior standing (297). And indeed, the immediate effect could be felt everywhere as described here by Venus:

> Jupiter a ouï dix mille plaintes de toi d'une infinité d'artisans, gens de labour, esclaves, chambrières, vieillards, vieille édentées, criant tous à Jupiter qu'ils aiment: et en sont les plus apparent fâchés, trouvant mauvais, que tu les aies en cet endroit égalés à ce vil populaire: et que la passion propre aux bons esprits soit aujourd'hui familière et commune aux plus lourds et grossiers. (298)

> Greene: [there were] complaintes which are powred out against thee by sundrie poor artificers, labouring men, pesants, slaves, hand maides, olde men, and toothlesse aged women, crying all unto Iupiter, that they love, thinking themselves greatlie iniured in this respect, that the passion which is proper to worthie and noble men, should be inflicted uppon them which are of the base and vildest sort (translation inaccurate). (207)

Greene's translation of Labé's text brings about an interesting shift in emphasis. In Labé, there are two types of complaints: those made by the people who had hitherto been thought unfit to love and who now complain, presumably because they have been struck by a violent and unfamiliar emotion, and those made by "les plus apparents" (glossed by Berriot as "gens de vue, de condition élevée"). These higher class individuals are enraged because love as an aristocratic pastime has now been made available to the public, because an aristocratic privilege has been made common, and because

they themselves are made equal in this respect with the lower orders In Greene, on the other hand, it is the common people who are made to complain both about their new emotions and about the fact that they are usurping "the passion which is proper to worthie and noble men." Greene's text therefore enforces as appropriate a view which demands that love is to be the privilege of the few, whereas Labé's text lays open a struggle between the different classes of society. Where Greene reinforces a hierarchical model of society, Louise Labé, herself a member of the middle class and thus close to those not deemed worthy of being lovers, shows the equalizing force of Folly's actions: "love for all" might be the slogan, and this might indeed create a society of equals if not with respect to their social standing, at least with respect to their nature as human beings.[13]

The passage demonstrates in a "before-and-after" model how a Cupid independent of Folly is responsible for the hierarchical order of society, whereas Folly's influence proves to have a de-hierarchizing effect. This is in very general terms borne out by the speeches of Apollo and Mercury, who define and defend the workings of Love and Folly. Thus Apollo, the god of music and poetry, who is characterized within the Débat as an aristocratic and idealistic character, paints a recognizably Neoplatonic picture of love. Apollo's position throughout his speech is that love provides the social glue that binds together all

human beings and ensures the continuation of the species (309). Love is the great civilizing force that leads men to perform great deeds, and all achievements, be they in science, art, trade or war, can be ascribed to the influence of love on the individual person as well as on society as a whole. Since "le plus grand plaisir qui soit après amour, c'est d'en parler," love generates poetry and indeed all written utterances on the subject from Homer and Virgil to Ovid, Petrarch, Sappho and Plato (320-1). Women in particular are given special power since it is for love of them that men are willing to improve their behaviour (317-18), and between individuals love ensures happiness in marriage (313). Apollo delineates each of these aspects in great detail, and finally concludes that "l'Amour ne soit cause aux hommes de gloire, honneur, proufit, plaisir: et tel que sans lui ne se peut commodément vivre" (322). In contrast to this, any conjunction between Cupid and Folly would bring about social chaos:

> Les grands qu'Amour contraignait aimer les petits et les sujets qui étaient sous eux, changeront en sorte qu'ils n'aimeront plus que ceux dont ils penseront tirer service. Les petits, qui aimaient leur Princes et Seigneurs, les aimeront seulement pour faire leurs besognes, en espérance de se retirer dès qu'ils seront pleins. . . . Il n'y aura discrétion.. entre noble, paysant, infidèle, ou More, Dame, maîtresse, servante. (322)
>
> Greene: The noble men which loved their inferiours, and the subjects which dutifullie served their Lordes, shall be mervailouslie changed by the meanes of Follie, for the master shall love his servant onlie for his service, and the servant his master onlie for commoditie . . . . There shall bee no

> difference betweene the noble and peasant, betweene the Infidell and the Moore, the Turke and the Jewe: the Ladie, the Mistresse, and the handmaide (translation in essence accurate). (214-15)

Folly's side is represented by Mercury, the god of speech, travellers, thieves, and merchants, who may be characterized in the Débat as the practical-minded, legalistic character, a staunch defender of things as they are. As he proceeds to counter point-by-point Apollo's arguments, he starts by claiming that it is Folly who provides the social glue since only the foolish will tolerate the prevailing power structures as they are. In a satiric vein Erasmus or More would have been proud of, Mercury describes how at some point, because of sheer vanity, someone had himself crowned as king, and since these kings and their entourage found themselves forever searching for more delicate foods and clothes, more precious metals and gems, "leur vivre a été séparé du commun" (330). Finally there emerged as the greatest folly of all the inequality before the law, and indeed a hierarchy made possible only through folly: "Folie a premièrement mis en tête à quelqu'un de se faire craindre: Folie a fait les autres obéir" (331).

If, in contradicting Apollo, Mercury here seems to make Folly responsible for the status quo, this needs to be differentiated. Apollo claims that love ensures social harmony because the upper and the lower classes love and cherish each other since they accept the necessity and appropriateness of these social distinctions. Since in

Apollo's scheme of things these inequalities are based on merit rather than convention (311-12), it would be foolish indeed to withhold reverence where it is due. Mercury replaces this idealistic notion by a satirical depiction of power. It is fear, legal inequality, and a life-style separated from the majority of people which ensures the status quo for the upper class: they rule not by virtue of their special talents, achievements, or usefulness for the society they govern, but by virtue of the fact that power can be maintained through fear. Thus, in Folly's world the different players--the kings, peasants, men and women--are defined by their relative position with regard to each other, but never by any intrinsic good qualities of their own.

If Mercury embarks on his praise of Folly in a decidedly satiric vein, this type of satire, in which the rule of Folly is used to criticize existing inequalities, does not continue through the remainder of his speech. Like Erasmus' Folly, Labé's Folly is a lady of many registers, and as Mercury continues to speak, satire makes way for more and more affirmative celebrations of the rule of Folly. Countering again Apollo, Mercury asserts that it is the foolish who venture to do great things, be they in science, war, or in the discovery of far-away places (331-3). In addition to this, Folly provides recreation for everyone, since it is she who makes people laugh and be merry (334). Apollo's

ideal of great poetry finds its counterpart in the public recreations offered by Folly: spectacles, masks, the theatre, sports (335). Mercury asserts unequivocally that without Folly there would be no pleasure and no life as we know and cherish it:

> En somme, sans cette bonne Dame l'homme sécherait et serait lourd, malplaisant et songeart. Mais Folie lui éveille l'esprit, fait chanter, danser, sauter, habiller en mille façons nouvelles, lesquelles changent de demi-an en demi-an, avec toujours quelque apparence de raison, et pour quelque commodité. (336)
>
> Greene: In fine, without this Goddesse, man shoulde bee carefull, heavie, and wholie drowned in sorrow: whereas Follie quickneth his spirite, maketh him sing, dance, leape, and frame himselfe altogether to pleasure (translation incomplete but in essence accurate). (219)

After this outline of Folly's power and virtues follows the centrepiece of Marcury's argument: that love cannot live in an environment that is not also governed by folly. It is impossible to really do justice here to Mercury's pleadings because his reasoning does not follow the logic of argumentation anymore; rather, what follows is a breathtaking run through individual instances of amorous practice. What we get in page after page are almost empirical[14] descriptions of the actions, desires and schemes of lovers as they plan meetings, adorn themselves, seek to please their mates, play games with each other, and try to achieve that impossible thing, a perfect union between themselves and their loved ones. Enzo Giudici describes Mercury's listings as a novel, "le roman de la vie," in which no

clear boundaries can be drawn because "nous nous trouvons non devant une pensée, une idée, une formule à accepter ou à repousser, mais devant une suite de gestes, de mots, d'impulsions. . ."[15]

Mercury's linguistic register varies considerably from satiric derision as in his attack on Neoplatonic theories of the influence of the beloved's eyes (338) to minute descriptions of the plight of women in love (342-3), and always there are long listings without clear beginning or end, long paratactically aligned periods in which even the hierarchical order of grammar is threatened by the sheer pressure of the simultaneity of lived experience:

> Je vous prie imaginer un jeune homme, n'ayant grand affair, qu'à se faire aimer: peigné, miré, tiré, parfumé: se pensant valoir quelque chose, sortir de sa maison le cerveau embrouillé de mille considerations amoureuses: ayant discouru mille bons heurs . . . suivi de pages et laquais habillés de quelque livrée représentant quelque travail, fermeté, et espérance: et en cette sorte viendra trouver sa Dame à l'Église. . . (339)
>
> Il faudra trouver le moyen de se faire prier d'accompagner sa Dame en quelque Église, aux jeux, et autres assemblés publiques. Et cependant expliquer ses passions par soupirs et paroles tremblantes: redire cent fois une même chose: protester, jurer, promettre à celle qui possible ne s'en soucie, et est tournée ailleurs et promise. Il me semble que serait folie de parler des sottes et plaisantes Amours villageoises: marcher sur le bout du pied, serrer le petit doigt: après que l'on a bien bu, écrire sur le bout de la table avec du vin, et entrelacer son nom et celui de s'amie: la mener première à la danse et la tourmenter tout un jour au Soleil. (340)
>
> Et en tous ces actes, quels traits trouvez-vous que Folie? Avoir le coeur séparé de soi-même, être maintenant en paix, ores en guerre, ores en trêves:

> couvrir et cacher sa douleur: changer visage mille fois le jour: sentir le sang qui rougit la face, y montant: puis soudain s'enfuit, la laissant pâle ainsi que honte, espérance, ou peur, nous gouvernent: chercher ce qui nous tourmente, feignant le fuir. Et néanmoins avoir crainte de le trouver: n'avoir qu'un petit ris entre mille soupirs: se tromper soi-même: brûler de loin, geler de près: un parler interrompu: un silence venant tout à coup: ne sont-ce tous les signes d'un homme aliéné de son entendrement? (344)
>
> Et pensierez-vous, que les amours des femmes soient beaucoup plus sages? . . . . Plus elles ont résisté à Amour, et plus s'en trouvent prises. Elles ferment la porte à la raison. Tout ce qu'elles craignaient, ne le doutent plus. Elles laissent leurs occupations muliebres. Au lieu de filer, coudre, besogner au point, leur étude est de bien parler, promener ès Églises, fêtes, et banquets pour avoir toujours quelque rencontre de ce qu'elles aiment. Elles prennent la plume et le luth en main: écrivent et chantent leurs passions: et enfin croît tant cette rage, qu'elles abandonnent quelquefois père, mère, maris, enfants, et se retirent où est le coeur . . . . Alors les pauvrettes entrent en étranges fantaisies: ne peuvent si aisément se défaire des hommes, comme les hommes des femmes . . . . Elles blâment tous les hommes pour un. Elles appellent folles celles qui aiment. Maudissent le jour que premièrement elles aimèrent. Protestent de jamais n'aimer: mais cela ne leur dure guère. (342-4)

Greene's "translation" is here of little help, since he telescopes Mercury's 10 page discussion into the three final pages of his version of Mercury's speech. Greene clearly has no use for Labé's outrageous redundancies, and he fuses those aspects which seem useful to him into a discussion that shows not the infinite variety of lovers' follies, but how love may prove to be the downfall of many a young man (he does not translate those passages dealing with women in love):

> Consider but a young man which onlie placeth his delight in amorous conceites, decking, dressing, and perfuming himselfe most delicatelie, who passeth out of his lodging, fraught with a thousand sundrie fancies, accompanied with men and Pages, passing to the place where he may have a sight of his Mistresse, obtaining for his travaile no gaine but perhaps some amorous glance, making long sutes, spending his time and his treasure, consuming his wit, and wasting his wealth, and yet reaping nothing but disdaine and discredite. (220)

Where Greene offers a clear image of the dangers of love to men, Labé treats us to long inventories of meetings, sighs, expectations, minutely described habits and interactions, which form the centre of Mercury's argument, and of which the above is but a small fraction. There may be slight variations in tone, as for example in the passages cited, where women seem to be less a target for hostile ironies than men, but the overall effect is always the same: an egalitarian celebration of different actions, protestations, promises, retractions, and changes. The dominant mode of speech here is not the hierarchizing model of subordinate clauses, causal links and conjunctions, but the simultaneity of cascades of paratactically aligned phrases, and a tendency for list-making which defies any attempt at establishing a hierarchical order, and could theoretically be continued ad infinitum.[16] The one grammatical category on which these passages hinge is the verb in all its forms, and there is a dynamic sense of continual change as Labé invokes a wide range of different actions for us, the one chasing the other as we are led to

believe that this, indeed, is the very stuff life is made of, and that this is how it should be.

If Mercury's court satire depends on an implied counter-image, a notion that things could be different and are stupidly arranged the way they are now, the ironies of these later passages cannot be contrasted with their own implied positive counter-images. After all, while it may be silly for a country lad to torment his girl-friend by taking her to a dance , to expose her to the sun all day, this does not imply that it would be better if he did <u>not</u> take her in the first place. Neither, I should add, are the country lad's exploits seen as more foolish than those of his more illustrious counterparts. In fact, one might wonder if taking one's girl to a dance and tracing her name in wine on the table does not make more sense than hanging around for hours in a church to catch a sight of one's beloved. Given Labé's own work and her remarks in the dedicatory episle, the ironic tone with which she describes those women demented enough to take up writing does not imply that they would have been better off with their knitting needles, but rather that, thank God, love and folly oblige them to engage in these unaccustomed pastimes. In Greene, the implied counter-message is clear and is, indeed, presupposed as the better way: don't demean yourselves by falling in love. In Labé, folly is all there is, and there is no better alternative: it is Giudici's "roman de la vie."

One may well ask what this kind of rhetoric can do for a woman author, and especially for a writer of such marked middle-class leanings as Louise Labé.[17] To argue that a de-hierarchization of language or a preference for inventories alone would necessarily imply a desire for fecund topsy-turvydom would be problematic. After all, someone like Robert Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy can use similar techniques to delineate not the liberating anarchy of folly, but the symptoms--minutely described--of a world on the brink of total disintegration. How can we be sure then that Labé did not want us to reject Folly's rule, to recognize it as madness and opt for better things? As we have seen, one answer would be that in such a reading Labé would be made to ask us to reject a number of things which she herself endorses elsewhere: the right of women to love passionately, and more important still, the right of women to write.[18] Labé's work illustrates that she insisted on being allowed to do both. In addition, there are a number of meaningful omissions in Labé's work which allow us to see the de-hierarchized world of Folly as a positive space. Of these, Labé's exclusion of a sense of guilt and sin from her work is the most interesting.

Labé's unwillingness to acknowledge passionate--and extra-marital--love as a sin is indeed remarkable. Elegy III, for example, is an extended defence of her love-life and, by implication, of her writing against the possible criticism of

the "Dames Lionnoises." Labé pleads that they should not "condamner ma simplesse, / Et jeune erreur de ma folle jeunesse," and insists that if, indeed, these were sins ("Et si c'est erreur"), there are worse sins she is not guilty of: envy, avarice, perjury, the sowing of discord, covetousness, and lying (362). If, therefore, "en moi rien y a d'imparfait," one should blame "Amour: c'est lui seul qui l'a fait" (363). The poem ends on the assertion that now, at the age of 29, and 13 years after she first made Amour's acquaintance, she is more than ever afflicted with the 'fire of love,' time having augmented the condition rather than alleviated it (364). If she has any wishes she would like to make, it is not to be freed from the burden, but rather that Amour should grant a reciprocal relationship and make her lover return her affections (365).

In the Débat a similar unwillingness to reject love or, indeed, to blame lovers for their "sin" can be detected, and it is closely connected to Labé's de-hierarchizing strategies. As Giudici notes, in her evaluation of love and folly, Labé is not interested in the Good and the Bad.[19] In the world of the Débat, where everyone is subjected to Folly, the lover and the beloved may change places, the adulteress is no worse off than the adulterer. Thus, as early as the first Discours, Folly refuses to make a difference between the status of husbands and lovers. Talking about a woman who committed suicide after the death of her husband (not lover), she makes a connection to the sufferings of all those women "qui ont

aimé, et regretté leurs maris et leurs amis" (294; emphasis added). Greene, characteristically, defuses the passage by comparing that faithful wife not with women who have grieved over their husbands and lovers, but only with women in general, which in the context implies, of course, that these women are wives (203). If Labé here seems unwilling to make a distinction between husbands and lovers, Apollo, who might be expected to end his oration on a notion of the value of virtuous and married love, in fact ends up pleading for a free interchange between the sexes (not surprisingly, this was not translated by Greene):

> Laisse Amour se réjouir en paix entre les hommes: qu'il soit loisible à chacun de converser privément et domestiquement avec les personnes qu'il aimera, sans que personne en ait crainte ou soupçon: que les nuits ne chassent, sous prétexte des mauvaises langues, l'ami de la maison de s'amie: que l'on puisse mener la femme de son ami, voisin, parent, où bon semblera, en telle seureté que l'honneur de l'un ou l'autre n'en soit en rien offensé. (323)

Without a clear enforcement of a sense of guilt over amorous or foolish exploits, Labé also creates a model in in which there can be no higher authorities to sit in judgment over others. For women, who in numerous tracts and querelles des femmes are put in precisely that position--having their worth and virtue debated, their sins weighed, and their influence on the world of men evaluated-- this is an important liberating step since it tries to deny the authority of those who would sit in judgment and enforce their own system of moral values. This aspect is intensified by the fact that--in contrast to Erasmus, for example-- Labé

refuses to endorse a religious view either of sacred and divine love or of sinful and divine folly. As Jeanne Prine points out, while Labé may be indebted to Latin elegists and to Plato for her notion of the conjunction of love and folly, unlike Plato she "never makes any serious claims for the redemptive nature of love, except insofar as it finds expression in art."[20] Therefore, when Apollo claims that people are improved by love, he does not mean that they will arrive at some higher level of spiritual perfection, but rather that they will become more eloquent, better dressed, less violent, more concerned for the common good--in short more acceptable social beings (311-12 and 317-19).

In a similar way Folly, who makes people act in a thousand different ways (Labé's favorite number in this context), is expressly not linked with that one folly which caused the Fall of man. Again a comparison with Greene's translation may be helpful. In delineating the history of the rule of Folly, Mercury claims that the first beginnings were humble:

> Vrai est qu'au commencement les hommes ne faisaient point de hautes folies, aussi n'avaient-ils encore aucun exemple devant eux. Mais leur folie était à courir l'un après l'autre: à monter sur un arbre pour voir de plus loin: rouler en la vallée: à manger tout leur fruit en un coup: tellement que l'hiver n'avaient que manger. Petit à petit a crû Folie avec le temps. (330)
>
> <u>Greene</u>: I praie you call to rememberaunce how <u>Follie</u> incontinently after man was placed in Paradise, began most imperiouslie to rule, and hath ever since continued in such credite, as never anie Goddesse had the lyke raigning and ruling amongest men . . . (216)

As can be seen, Greene here deviates to such a degree from Labé's text that one might be led to wonder if this is not a translation of a different passage altogether, but I can vouch for it that this is indeed Greene's rendering of Labé's text. His message is unequivocal: the rule of Folly began in Paradise, and although he does not make this connection explicit, this also means that the Fall was the first result of folly--to be followed by many more. Labé, on the other hand, does not mention that the scene is supposed to be set in Paradise. Instead, she almost imperceptibly subverts the myth of Adam, Eve, the tree, and the apple. In her version of the beginnings of humankind, the tree is nothing but a feature of the landscape which can be used to improve one's view of the surrounding areas; the fruit is not one pernicious apple of great metaphorical significance but the food people eat. The worst things that can happen in her early human community are ordinary mishaps and errors; a fall from a tree, a shortage in food supplies. For the remainder, these people (she also does not say how many there are) are free to enjoy themselves playing tag.

If Labé does not offer a Christian or even a religious version of the beginnings of the human race, the like can be said of the existence of a transcendental reality beyond the lives of human beings. The world of the Débat is peopled by characters who claim to be gods and goddesses, but there is no Christian God, no redemption, no salvation. Even Jupiter,

although he is clearly a politically significant character,[21] does not qualify as a stand-in for God, for he is seen primarily in terms of his own foolish amorous exploits among humans, thus being himself subject to Folly, and he is incapable of reaching a clear verdict in the end because he is also subject to the Fates. The "god" who rules this universe is Folly, and in placing her in this position Labé actually manages to exclude God from the worldly affairs of human beings and replace him by that powerful female, Folly. Thus, there is in Labé's Débat no divine authority in the Christian sense, and where there is no religion, there is also no system of values which could be brought to bear on the "foolish" actions described. By this I do not wish to claim that Labé wanted to promote an atheistic point of view, merely that religion is not an issue in the Débat; it is excluded from this particular fiction.[22]

So far we have seen that the world of the Débat consists of a de-hierarchized society of equal fools, who are defined not so much by abstract concepts of wisdom and folly, but by their actions. Without any contradicting authoritative frame of reference such as religion could provide, Labé therefore depicts the world as being governed by the dynamic intercourse between people, by their desires and deeds. In placing the focus thus, Labé clearly privileges matter over mind in a creative and affirmative manner. What comes through again

and again is that ideas are not important. What counts is not love as an abstract concept but individual lovers, love-letters, love-poems, love-song, clandestine meetings, jealous husbands; not the ideal courtier, but only individuals wearing an apparently infinite variety of clothes (318); not music as an idea, but only different songs, different dances (320). In a spectacular inversion, therefore, Labé insists that the spirit is subject to the body for lack of a better outlet:

> Et ainsi en soi n'étant l'esprit à son aise, mais troublé et agité, ne peut être dit sage et posé. Mais encore il fait pis: car il est contraint se découvrir: ce qu'il ne fait que par le ministère et organe du corps et membres d'icelui. (345; not translated by Greene)[23]

Placing her focus thus allows Labé to confer authority on the minutiae of daily life as opposed to the abstract "truths" so often favoured by philosophers. For a woman, this is an empowering move, since it reverses the traditional mind/matter dichotomy in favour of matter, which is usually associated with women. It also validates as important those aspects of life usually thought to be appropriate for women but not for serious men: fashion, dances, the intricate games of love. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar poignantly formulate it, if a tightly knit system of binary oppositions lies at the heart of patriarchal models of reality, "the only female solution to what one learned in school as the 'mind/body' problem is an opting for matter over mind."[24]

Along with a revaluation of matter, the positive

depiction of life under the rule of Folly also occasions a revaluation of the nature and purpose of change which is quite atypical for the Renaissance. While male authors of the period usually fear mutability and change since it entails instability, decay, and death, Labé virtually revels in it. What characterizes those creatures who live the life of folly is continual change, for lovers are never the same from day to day, hour to hour, second to second. In the Débat even those who do not love are depicted not in a state of stasis but of movement, as is the case of the misanthrope, whose life from morning till dawn is presented by Labé with positively Molière-like relish (315-16).

The reason for Labé's extraordinarily positive attitude towards change is not hard to find, since it forms one of the cornerstones on which she builds her defence of women's writing. Starting with the first sentence of her Oeuvres, we are in an environment where change is expected to be a liberator for women:

> Étant le temps venu, Mademoiselle, que les sévères lois des hommes n'empêchent plus les femmes de s'appliquer aux sciences et disciplines . . . (281)

From where Labé was standing, obviously change seemed to be a positive thing, since it might bring about a development for the better in women's lives. But this is not all. Commenting on the possible benefits to be derived from writing, Labé argues that in contrast to other pastimes, writing is not ephemeral because it allows the author to

retrieve past experiences at a later date--not, to be sure, as a safeguard against the passing of time, by which thoughts may be turned into eternal verities, but rather as a means by which experience may be measured, a later self be compared to an earlier one: "le jugment que font nos secondes conceptions des premières, nous rend un singulier contentement" (283). Constance Jordan neatly summarizes the effect of such a poetics of change:

> Nothing could more obscure the image of the ideal woman and wife than this sketch of a literary woman, who through self-representation has gained the power to reflect upon herself, to take note of change, to imagine that she might not be restricted by 'law' from attempting to construct a multi-faceted personality . . . . Such complexity was of course precisely what earlier commentators wanted to discourage . . . . what she testifies to is her delight in the freedom to change . . .[25]

It might be said at this point that my positive reading of Labé's image of Folly distorts the text because it privileges Folly over Cupid, Mercury's list-making over Apollo's idealism. After all, a debate is by its very nature a dialectical set-up in which different sides clash. However, it is exactly in this connection that one of the most interesting phenomena occurs in the Débat, for it is this dialectical opposition which is broken down again and again in the fifth Discours.

It is not surprising to find Mercury, the spokesman of Folly, engage in a style of de-hierarchized list-making--though one might argue that he is being overpowered or invaded by the language of folly rather than being in control of it.[26]

What is truly surprising is what happens to Apollo as he tries to make his case for Cupid. This is the syntactically extremely complex and rhetorically refined opening with which Apollo begins his speech:

> Si onques te fallut songneusement pourvoir à tes affaires, souverain Jupiter, ou quand avec l'aide de Briare tes plus proches te voulaient mettre en leur puissance, ou quand les Géants, fils de la Terre, mettant montaigne sur montaigne, déliberaient nous venir combattre jusques ici, ou quand le Ciel et la Terre cuidèrent brûler: a cette heure, que la licence des fols est venue si grande, que d'outrager devant tes yeux l'un des principaux de ton Empire, tu n'as pas moins d'occasion d'avoir crainte, et ne dois différer à donner prompt remède au mal jà commencé. (307; not translated by Greene)

This almost mind-bogglingly complicated period rests on the primary subordinate clause as the beginning of the sentence and its completion through the main clause at the end: "Si onques te fallut songneusement pourvoir à tes affaires . . . à cette heure . . . tu n'as pas moins d'occasion d'avoir crainte, et ne dois différer . . ." Embedded in this structure are three subordinate clauses depending on "Si onques . . .," and all are introduced by the conjunction "ou," not to mention numerous subordinate clauses both within these three clauses and within the main clause at the end. Apollo's opening sentence is therefore constituted by a set of strict grammatical hierarchies working on no less than four levels: a main clause, and first, second, and third degree subordinate clauses.

From this example it is quite clear what note Apollo

would like to strike. However, this note changes utterly once he gets into his proper subject. On the subject of the civilizing effect of love, for example, Apollo surprisingly engages in what must be one of the period's few apologies of fashion:

> L'homme a toujours même corps, même tête, même bras, jambes et pieds: mais il les diversifie de tant de sortes, qu'il semble tous les jours être renouvelé. Chemises parfumeées de mille et mille sortes d'ouvrages: bonnet à la saison, pourpoint, chausses jointes et serrées, montrant les mouvements du corps bien disposé: mille façons de bottines, brodequins, escarpins, souliers, sayons, casaquins, robes, robons, capes, manteaux . . . . Et que dirons-nous des femmes . . . . Est-il possible de mieux parer une tête, que les Dames font et feront à jamais? avoir cheveux mieux dorés, crêpés, frisés? accoutrement de tête mieux séant, quand elles s'accoutreront à l'Espagnole, à la Françoise, à l'Allemande, à l'Italienne, à la Greque? (318)
>
> Greene. What causeth a man to go brave & fine in apparell, seeking everie daie new fashions, but love? What procureth Gentlewomen to have their hair frizled, crisped, and embrodered with golde, to be dressed after the Spanish, French, or Italian fashion, but love? (212; translation incomplete, especially in the field of men's fashions).

If this is what the civilizing effect of love leads to, Apollo's reasoning is no more elevated when he describes the effects of love, the prime mover of things, in a way which seems to be drawn from the world of comedy rather than Neoplatonic philosophy:

> L'un loue le bon traitement de s'amie: l'autre se plaint de la cruauté de la sienne. Et mille accidents, qui interviennent en amours: lettres découvertes, mauvais rapports, quelque voisine jalouse, quelque mari qui vient plus tôt que l'on ne voudrait: quelquefois s'apercevant de ce qui se fait: quelquefois n'en croyant rien, se fiant sur la prud'homie de sa femme: et à fois, échapper un

> soupir avec une changement de parler: puis forces excuses. (320)
>
> Greene: . . . some praising the curtesie of his Ladie, another condempning his Mistresse crueltie: yea, recounting a thousand mishappes which happen in their loves: as letters disclosed, evill reportes, pitious iealousie, sometimes the husband coming home sooner than either the lover woulde, or the wife doeth wish: sometimes coniecturing without cause, and another whiles beleeving nothing, but trusting upon his wives honestie. (213)

What becomes quite obvious in Apollo's long descriptions is that he does not really have a style of his own, or rather that this style only works when he is not trying to show us exactly what the effects of love are. The moment he starts delineating the exact nature of Cupid's influence, what we get is the style we have come to associate with Mercury: paratactically aligned periods, inventories, a total reliance on material things. Without knowing it, he is already defending Folly's case, and when Mercury finally takes over, Labé's carefully established structure of dialectical oppositions vanishes into thin air.[27] Since now Apollo's and Mercury's positions cannot be clearly set off against each other, as I myself have done it earlier in this chapter, what we get is a continual feeling of déjà vu, as Labé carefully matches every claim made by either advocate with a similar claim made by the other, sometimes creating an opposition (as in the different versions of the origins of social hierarchies), sometimes erasing the opposition (as in both advocates' depictions of the lovers' lives). In the end, Labé's own discourse on love and folly is as

contradictory and unstable as the world of folly she depicts.

One could argue at this point that this is simply evidence that Labé is not in control of her material, and that these two speeches are somehow supposed to be different if only she could have maintained this difference. I do not think so, for in this case it is precisely the dialectical structure that ultimately does not make sense. The character Apollo does not know what Labé has known all along, and what she indeed set out to write about: that Folly's claims are accurate. It is therefore logical that Apollo should be made to fail in his attempt at generating an image of love without folly: indeed, it is imperative.

By now, I think, there can be no question that Labé introduces severe alterations to Erasmus' model for the praise of Folly, for what the Débat de Folie et d'Amour amounts to is nothing less than a total revaluation of folly beyond any point Erasmus would ever have dreamed of--or would have endorsed, for that matter.[28] Where Louise Labé emphasizes the positive side of folly all through her work, Erasmus' praise of Folly continually threatens to break down under the impact of difficult and self-contradictory ironies. As many critics have noted, Erasmus's Praise of Folly can be divided into three parts:

> . . . a long opening section where the most outrageous of women holds forth with the most complex irony; a shorter middle section characterized by severe, straightforward

> invective; and a few concluding pages devoted to Christian folly.[29]

The ironies of the first section of The Praise of Folly are extraordinarily difficult to disentangle because Folly herself continually shifts around from being the scourge of real shortcomings in human beings and societies to being at least seemingly a reliable spokeswoman for the true human condition. A good example for these shifts is her speech on self-love. She starts out by claiming that self-love is essentially a positive trait:

> Now tell me: can a man love anyone who hates himself? can he be in harmony with someone else if he's divided in himself, or bring anyone pleasure if he's only a disagreeable nuisance to himself? [30]

Surely, we are meant to say with Folly: "No." But this is not where it remains, for she continues after a while to add:

> And since for the most part happiness consists in being willing to be what you are, my self-love has provided a short cut to it by ensuring that no one is dissatisfied with his own looks, character, race, position and way of life. And no Irishman would want to change places with an Italian, nor Thracian with an Athenian, nor Scythian with an inhabitant of the Island of the Blest. (95)

By now we are expected to say "how stupid"--not so much because excessive patriotism is idiotic but because the exchanges offered here are good bargains. And again, Folly's metamorphosis does not end here, for pretty soon she gets to the next item on the agenda, showing the result of excessive self-love on a national basis: war. By this stage, it is impossible to see any good come out of Folly's

influence. Thus, while it is true that Labé also occasionally uses Folly to mount a satirical attack, Erasmus here goes beyond that: he systematically builds up Folly's credibility only to then destroy it again, proving that Folly is, after all, perniciously foolish.

Wayne Rebhorn shows that this pattern also holds true for the book as a whole: Erasmus leads us from a deluding concept of Folly as a positive figure (in the first section) to a recognition that hers is a cruel and bestial world (second section), and from there to the recognition that only Christian folly can lead out of this woman's circle of influence. As this happens, Rebhorn argues, "'folly' acquires new meanings, and Folly transforms herself into a different woman."[31] I would suggest that rather than transforming herself, the feminine side gets lost in the process. In fact, the closer the voice of Folly gets to becoming the voice of Erasmus, the less does he remind us that she is a woman--so much so that there is no indication of Folly's sex in the section on Christian folly. What this entails is that for Erasmus, Folly's femininity is not an asset but in fact an early indication that her enticing word games are to be mistrusted at any point.[32] In addition, Erasmus' main concern is essentially conservative in intent. The follies of this world have to be counteracted by the proper, Christian kind of folly, just as the cacophonic chaos generated by Folly will be contained and absorbed by a final hierarchy which is divine, reassuring, and eternal:

"Then the spirit will itself be absorbed by the supreme Mind, which is more powerful than its infinite parts" (207).

For Louise Labé, the potential of folly is exactly the reverse. Like Erasmus, she insists on Folly's femininity from the very start, but unlike him, she insists that this brash and self-confident woman actually embodies all pleasure and variety of life, and that these are in fact the things that matter. Where Erasmus longs for the stability of the final fusion with a transcendental order, Labé excludes such a vision. The Débat does not give us any clues as to what Labé might have thought about heaven and hell, but the point is that within its fictional world these things do not matter. As Labé envisages a world outside of God's control, she also imagines a world where restrictive moral values are unimportant, and where only the here and now counts. For Erasmus, this would have been one of his worst nightmares come true: a life of madness under the rule of the craziest of women, a horror of Bosch-like proportions. For Labé, it allows her to construct a model of reality which makes possible a whole number of liberating aspects: the promise of change; the destruction of fixed hierarchies; the celebration of the material world; the exclusion of restrictive moral and religious concepts; the creative inversion of the mind/matter dichotomy.

That these qualities were thought to be dangerous or undesirable by at least one of her readers, is attested to

by Greene's translation. Greene goes out of his way to defuse the many disruptive impulses of Labé's text in order to restore a model where folly is once again sinful, stupid, and pernicious, and where love shares the same characteristics as long as it is under the influence of folly. Thus, in Greene's version of Labé's work the blinding of Cupid is not an enactment of a pre-existing reality, but a real disaster: the transformation of sacred love into its profane counterpart.[33]

In altering his source, Greene eliminates both politically radical and feminist aspects of the work. Thus, as we have seen, Greene endorses a view which would reserve the right to love to the privileged classes; he shortens Apollo's speech so severely that almost the only thing left in it is Apollo's attack on Folly;[34] he transforms Mercury's heterogeneous inventories into a discourse proving the folly of Folly; he connects Folly to the Fall; he does not translate passages referring to women in love or to women's writing. It would be impossible here to list all of Greene's changes, and I am not even sure it would be worth the trouble, for the message is always the same, and can be summarized by the way in which Greene (but not Labé) ends his exposition of foolish love:

> . . . for if they did see the dreadful dangers, and the fearfull perills wherein they are, how they be deceived and beguiled, they would never honour love as a God, but detest him as a divill, and so should the kingdome of love be destroyed, which is governed by ignorance, carelesnesse, hope &

> blindnesse, which are all the handmaides of folly. (222-3)

I suspect that Greene might have wanted to cash in on the popularity of Dame Folly, and when he found Labé's Débat, it seemed like a text of this tradition which might be worth translating. However, he must have found that Labé's text would not suit his purpose, since it embraces positions he probably did not want to side with. Thus, the text had to be re-written in the process of translation, and it had to be stripped of all disruptive and egalitarian aspects to suit a new and almost reactionary model. In the end, it was published under Greene's name without acknowledgment of the original French woman author.

Since Greene obviously picked up on the un-Erasmian qualities of Labé's text, the question that remains now is how Labé could get away at all with her re-invention of Folly as the ruler of the universe. I have been arguing that the characteristics attributed to Folly's rule have far-reaching implications on a socio-political level, and while Labé certainly does not call for a rush on the Bastille, her ideas do imply a serious threat to any authoritarian ideology. I agree with Ann Rosalind Jones, who finds that Labé was a "radically antihierarchical and utopian poet, though not a revolutionary one."[35] In the face of these findings it seems almost incredible that Enzo Giudici, an eminent Labé critic, should be able to affirm that in her work there is "pas de but moral ni social, pas de subversion révolutionnaire" (45).

To simply say that Giudici must be a bad or inadequate reader would be both inaccurate and of little help. On the contrary, it seems to me that the secret of why Labé gets away with it lies in the fact that Giudici's assessment is possible, and this has everything to do with the literary mode she has chosen for herself.

I think Berriot points us in the right direction when she claims that Labé was getting her message across "A l'abri du caractère intemporel de la fable et de son humeur boufonne" (161). These two qualities can be seen as rather general and unfocussed denotations for two distinct features of Labé's work: her use of the persona of Folly, and her use of allegory. Let me begin with the first. Folly, as a distinct character on the literary scene, can be seen as having been partly conceived to provide a safe mask behind which unorthodox truths could be spoken with impunity. When Lefebvre says in relation to Erasmus's work that Folly always provided one strategy of defence, "Voyez! Ce n'est pas moi qui dis cela. C'est la Folie,"[36] these are actually two strategies combined in one. Folly is a mask both in so far as she is an invented character, a voice separate from the author, and in so far as she is a character defined by her very name as being not serious and foolish, a character not to be held responsible for the errors of her vision.

Mikhail Bakhtin, who as Cantor demonstrates can himself be seen as an esoteric writer, points to this quality when

he claims that fool, rogue, and clown figures share

> a distinctive feature that is as well a privilege--the right to be "other" in this world, the right not to make common cause with any single one of the existing categories that life makes available.[37]

He argues that these

> masks . . . . grant the right not to understand, the right to confuse, to tease, to hyperbolize life; the right to parody others while talking, the right not to be taken literally, not "to be oneself" . . .[38]

In Erasmus' case, this means that he, as the author, is able to say "this is only folly/Folly speaking," and to a degree this is also true for Louise Labé. However, in her case there is an additional distancing device, as for large parts it is Mercury, himself not one of the most respectable of the Olympian gods, who speaks for Folly. Thus, there is a double masking with Mercury "impersonating" Folly as he pleads her case in great detail, while Folly can be denounced as impersonating folly, that "other" state in which many things are allowed. Cupid, in so far as he is also tainted with the charge of folly, and is a notoriously mischievous and disruptive character, shares some of the same characteristics. Together, they provide an effective mask behind which Louise Labé, the author, is hard to pinpoint.

In addition to this privileged space of "foolish" speech, there is Labé's use of allegory. Ever since Quintilian, allegory has been described as a mode which "says one thing and means another."[39] This implies a dichotomy between vehicle and message, and while an allegory may well be

enjoyed on the level of the vehicle only, the dichotomy still assumes that the better, deeper, and more satisfying reading is one which takes into account what is meant on a secondary level. Recently this traditional notion has been challenged by Carolyn van Dyke, who argues that allegorical representation should actually be seen on a vertical scale of interrelated signification. "Universals," i.e., the abstract notions embodied in a concrete narrative, subsume their various "concretions." "If," she argues, "a text says one thing it means that thing . . . . a text that says and means two things must say and mean one complex thing."[40] This model would account for the fact that one abstract concept may be connected to more than one concretion, sometimes even to contradicting concrete embodiments of an abstract reality.[41] Both Fletcher and van Dyke assume that allegory is a mode organized from top to bottom, either because the message is naturally more important than the vehicle, or because the concrete embodiments serve to express a higher reality.

In a way, the Débat conforms to van Dyke's model, for Cupid and Folly do indeed combine to embody a complex reality in which the two are inseparably connected. However, if this were the message of the work, it would be a thoroughly conventional text, for love and folly have been seen as mutually related ever since antiquity. Labé's allegorical message can be decribed as follows, and offers nothing new:

Cupid is blinded as a sign of his pre-existing subordination to Folly, which is only now made visible because Folly's supremacy is being contested: "je te mène et conduis: et ne te servent tes yeux que la lumière à un aveugle" (294); Cupid's irremovable blindfold is provided by the Fates because his allegorical blindness is itself an irremovable feature (295), and his wings "qui te conduiront aussi bien comme moi [i.e. Folly]" (295), are further signs of his dependence on Folly. Jupiter cannot decide the case in favour of Cupid because this would in effect counteract an existing, indisputable reality. Together, Folly and Cupid govern the emotions, the intellect, and the power of perception, as can be seen from the respective targets of their attack: "ainsi qu'Amour tire au coeur, Folie aussi se jette aux yeux et à la tête . . ." (327). The message, in short, is one Robert Greene would have agreed with, though he would not have found it a desirable state of affairs.

As we have already seen to some degree in the confrontation in the first Discours, and in the presentation of Venus' infatuation with her son, the problem in Labé's text arises not at its highest level of the abstract message, but rather at its lowest. The level on which Labé's esoteric strategy operates is that of the vehicle, not the message, and if we form a dichotomy which equates the vehicle with matter, and the message with spirit, we are back at a characteristic privileging of matter over spirit. Since the

message is "harmless" in Labé's text, what remains is the heterogenous nature of the vehicle, its redundancies and doublings, its continual insistence on the pre-eminence of the material world, on change, on the constructedness of social positions. Without an efficient means of bundling these impulses into a complex and stable allegorical message of a profound abstract nature, this is actually an allegory which works from bottom to top, where the "how" is more revealing than the "what." When seen in conjunction with the liberty accorded by Folly as a protective mask, this means that this text has no ideological centre which can be easily pinpointed. Rather, ideological issues are diffused, scattered throughout the text, woven into its very fabric and language. Angus Fletcher points out that allegory may be a mode suited for esoteric discourse "by the very fact that a reigning authority . . . does not see the secondary meaning,"[42] but Labé's work shows that the reverse is equally possible: that a heterodox message may be "hidden" in the primary signifier rather than the secondary signified.

In the end, it is the reader who will have to privilege one aspect of the work rather than another. In this way it is possible for Giudici to see what I have called Labé's de-hierarchizing model as just a particularly charming type of feminine realism, with its wonderful eye for "la réalité des alcôves" (38). What is at stake here is not a question

of more or less subtle readings, but one of viewpoint. By "viewpoint" I mean not just the ideological bias of the reader, but a viewpoint which is practically programmed into the structure of the allegory itself. In other words, the work is constructed so that even the king himself could read it, recognize himself in Jupiter, find that Jupiter seems to be doing an adequate job and that nobody is trying to chase him from his chair, decide that all is well with the allegorical message, and lean back to be entertained by what Apollo and Mercury have to say to each other. By the same token, a woman of Labé's acquaintance could read it and enjoy a secret giggle with a friend about all the wonderful games people can play without their husbands ever finding out about them. Thus, Labé creates for us the framework of a graceful, urbane, and cultured conversation which is stable enough to contain all the unorthodox material she places into it.

Karine Berriot complains that this type of narrative is only a "compensation imaginaire," a case of "le féminin, vaincu dans le réel, s'exhaussant par la fiction" (173), but I think this misses the point. Certainly, Labé is no political agitator, but this does not mean that her work has to be seen as a compensation through fiction: it is, rather, a covert attack on the way we conceptualize the world, and an attempt at unsettling restrictive, authoritarian concepts. As such, it is on a very real level an attempt at challenging

existing models of gender difference and social stratification. In doing so, Labé goes beyond the attempts we have seen in Richard II and Sejanus. Those works were primarily concerned with taking a stand in contemporary debates about politics, and the need for protective devices arose only because these particular stands could have been viewed as undesirable contributions--either, as is the case in Richard II, because of the highly fraught nature of the positions availabe, or in the case of Sejanus because the depiction of the world involved an uncompromising critique of the absolutist state and possibly even of living persons.

In Edward II, we can see something that is more akin to Labé's work, insofar as the play tries to work against hostile ideological positions, and tries to create a climate in which a sympathetic view of its homosexual characters would become possible. This, I think, is a typical feature found in works coming from disadvantaged groups of society. For them, voicing a critical opinion is not enough, they also have to create the discursive space in which their views may be voiced with some degree of authority. For Marlowe, this simply means that he has to try and manipulate his audience's perception without betraying his unconventional bias too openly. Labé's work goes beyond such an attempt as she tries to create a model to counteract intolerance, hierarchical stratifications, and restrictions placed on women. Such a model is subversive in the sense that it tries to undermine existing concepts, and

it involves subversive misreadings of available literary and philosophical traditions. Labé's revision of Erasmus shows that a Bloomian notion of misreading is not sufficient to account for subversive readings from a disadvantaged position: Labé needs to misread Erasmus not because of his overpowering presence as a father-figure, a precursor who causes her to feel anxious, but because his model is disadvantageous to her as a woman. Resistance, in her case, means several interrelated acts of resistance: first a decision to write at all, then resistance to restrictions on what may and what may not be written by her, and finally resistance to existing constructions of the world. The following chapter will also focus on these acts of resistance, and will deal specifically with Lady Mary Wroth's subversion of male traditions of love poetry.

Chapter 5: "Yett love I will": Female Self-Assertion in Lady Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus

While Louise Labé could profit to a certain degree from the progressive ideas of the French Renaissance as they had recently established themselves in Lyons, Lady Mary Wroth's publication of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania in 1621 took place in a less favourable climate.[1] The age of the famous Tudor paragons of learning was over, and the constant debate over the vices and virtues of women had gained in momentum and ferocity.[2] In 1620, King James himself ordered the clergy to take a stand in this debate, which in the eyes of at least one contemporary led to an oppressive climate of overall criticism:

> Our pulpits ring continually of the insolence and impudence of women, and to help the matter forward the players have likewise taken them to task, and so to the ballads and the ballad-singers, so that they can come nowhere but their ears tingle, and if all this will not serve, the King threatens to fall upon their husbands, parents or friends that have or should have power over them, and make them pay for it.[3]

Although it is unlikely that these diatribes were aimed specifically at the impudence of the woman writer, the writing of books did certainly fall into the category of less desirable activities for women. If this were not enough, Wroth decided to enter the literary market with a book that consisted of the two genres which could be seen as being particularly unfit for the woman author: the romance and love

poetry. In doing so, Wroth decided to follow not the safer example of her aunt, the Countess of Pembroke, but that of her uncle Sir Philip Sidney. Sir Edward Denny, who as we have seen resented the book intensely, clearly presents this decision as a disastrous and reprehensible choice:

> But lett your Ladyship take what course yt shall please with me, this shalbee myne with you [that] to ever wish you well and pray that you may repent you of so many ill spent yeares of so vaine a booke and that you may redeeme thy tym with writing as large a volume of heavenly layes and holy love as you have of lascivious tales and amorous toyes that at the last you may follow the rare, and pious example of your vertuous and learned Aunt, who translated so many godly books and especially the holly psalmes of David, that no doubt now shee sings in the quier of Heaven those devine meditations which shee so sweetly tuned here below . . . [4]

While insisting earlier that women should not write at all ("For wise and worthy women have written none"), Denny here tries to play off one model of female writing against another--the one authorized by its religious subject matter, the other made reprehensible by its focus on secular love. Wroth thus stands doubly condemned, first for writing at all, and then for writing about the wrong subject. Wroth's model, on the other hand, the great soldier-courtier-poet Philip Sidney is not invoked by Denny, and I suspect he would not have thought of accusing Sidney of having "ill spent" his time on "lascivious tales and amorous toyes."

Obviously, what may be acceptable in a male author, may be a target for abuse in a woman writer. As discussed earlier, this double standard makes sense in an environment in which female chastity is a much-policed asset which may

be threatened by an indulgence of amorous desires, and more so by a public expression of such desires. As one contemporary saw it, writing about love might actually lead to the development of those very desires and passions:

> The pen must be forbidden them [i.e. women] as the tree of good and evil . . . . It is a pander to a virgin chastity, and betrayeth it, by venting forth those amorous passions that are incidents to hotter bloods, which otherwise, like fire raked up in embers, would peradventure in a little space be utterly consumed.[5]

In marked defiance of such restrictions Wroth insists, like Louise Labé before her, on commenting on the relationships between men and women through her romance, and more transgressive still on "venting forth those amorous passions" in the first person in her sonnet cycle Pamphilia to Amphilanthus.[6]

In writing such love poetry, the woman author is faced with two difficult problems. The first lies in the fact that any portrayal of erotic experience through a female persona would lay her open to the charge of indecently exposing her own sexual appetites. The second is of a different kind, and is a result of the fact that the Petrarchan and Neoplatonic models available to Mary Wroth are part of an exclusively androcentric form of discourse: written by men, expressing male desire, tailored for male needs of self-perception and self-expression, these conventions define the silent woman as love-object and mirror for her lover-poet.[7] Any attempt at adapting this convention for a female voice expressing female concerns will bring radical changes since, as Ann Rosalind

Jones points out, even on a most basic level the very presence of a woman speaker would be enough to ensure a modification of the convention.[8]

While certain assumptions of Petrarchan love poetry may indeed be totally unacceptable to the woman poet (so far, for example, I have never come across a woman addressing her beloved as a superior being with almost trancendental qualities), it would be too easy to say that the whole convention as such may not be adaptable to female needs. When Janet MacArthur suggests, for instance, that the characteristic mythological motifs of Petrarchan poetry as well as the portrayal of erotic desire through the blason may be inaccessible to women writers,[9] this is not convincing. After all, Louise Labé makes extensive use of mythology, and also tackles such difficult issues as the blason and the lover's kiss.[10] As for Mary Wroth, she employs, alongside poems on Venus and Juno, an exceptionally well developed and innovative Cupid mythology. I think it is safe to say that, depending on the poet's ingenuity, any aspect of the convention can potentially be used by the woman author, but that in most cases the convention would have to be adapted.

The subject of this chapter is the strategies developed by Wroth for the expression of female sexual desire, and in dealing with these poems, I will focus on three areas which would be notoriously difficult for the female Renaissance love poet: the problem of asserting a speaking "I" within a convention and in a social environment that does not

anticipate the woman's speech; the portrayal of the male beloved in a convention in which the lover is almost always male and his beloved female; and the expression of sexual desire and erotic experience in spite of the normative demand for women's modesty and chastity.

It may be useful to start the investigation of Wroth's creation of a speaking "I" by comparing two parallel male and female authored passages. Both extracts are the first stanzas of songs, the first by Wroth's father Robert Sidney, the second by herself:

1. O eyes, O lights divine,
   Which in unmatchèd face
   Like two fair suns in clearest heaven do shine,
   And from so glorious place
   Vouchsafe your beams to move
   On humble me to raise my thoughts to love . . .[11]

2. You happy blessed eyes,
   Which in that ruling place
   Have force both to delight, and to disgrace,
   Whose light allures, and ties
   All harts to your command
   O! looke on mee, who doe at mercy stand.[12]

Sidney addresses his beloved in the persona of the Neo-platonic lover, building on an extended metaphor which equates her eyes with two suns sitting in her face, the "clearest heaven." It is the divine light emerging from the beloved's eyes which will lead the lover upwards, "raise" his thoughts to love much as his gaze is directed upwards. Although the speaker makes a conscious effort to "humble" himself, and despite the fact that the poem's spatial semantics place him below and her above, the lover is definitely not in the power of his beloved. On the contrary,

he remains a free agent, secure in his knowledge that the lady has the power to let him ascend, and that she may be inclined to grant his request.

In contrast to Sidney's unproblematic Neoplatonism, Wroth introduces some telling ambiguities in her stanza: are Amphilanthus' eyes "happy and blessed" because they reflect an affinity with the divine, because they reflect Amphilanthus' happy emotions, or because they have the good fortune of being lodged in his face? Who is being disgraced by his look, and how? Does "who doe att mercy stand" merely refer to Pamphilia being in Amphilanthus' power, or are we supposed to hear a hint of "mercy" as a divine agency in the phrase? For Sidney, the relative positions of lover and beloved are clear and their respective duties well defined, but for Wroth it is not so obvious what exactly is the intrinsic value and nature of Amphilanthus' gaze.

Similarly, there is a problem in the power relations between speaker and addressee: Amphilanthus' eyes "force," "allure," "tie," "command," while all that can be said for the speaker is that she is defencelessly at his "mercy." While Sidney's beloved is graciously offering her gaze for the speaker's improvement and convenience, Amphilanthus exerts a positive force with his eyes. The direction of the above/below dynamic which tends upwards in Sidney's stanza definitely weighs downward on the speaker in Wroth's. Paradoxically, Pamphilia does not complain about this subjection but is indeed longing for it. Although she

presumably hopes for delight rather than disgrace, the problem is that she cannot be sure what she will get, and that she seems prepared to accept either or both together if necessary.

This, then, seems to be the rather bleak vision Wroth has to offer as an answer to her father's idealism: a confusion of his clear idea of love and the divine, and a female speaker who longs for the forceful attention of her man--indeed, who wants to be the beloved and not the lover. However, and this is yet another paradox, what Pamphilia wants and what she does is not the same, for after all it is she who forcefully asserts "O! looke on mee, who doe at mercy stand." Where in Sidney's stanza there is an unbroken correspondence between line and syntactical unit, Wroth forces her sentence through two enjambements, and brings it to a spectacular close with an exclamation ("O!"), and a strong imperative ("looke on mee"). Where Sidney's syntax trails off rather weakly to be completed only through a fresh start in the next stanza, Wroth establishes a firm syntactic closure ("You happy blessed eyes . . . . O! looke on mee . . .") which asserts the persona's powerful speech at the precise moment when she most forcefully asserts her own powerlessness.

In many poems, this is Pamphilia's stance: a stance in which the speaker assumes linguistic power in and through the very act of asserting her dependence:

> O strive nott still to heape disdaine on mee
> Nor pleasure take your cruelty to show
> On haples mee, on whom all sorrowes flow,

And byding make: as given, and lost by thee,

Alas; ev'ne griefe is growne to pitty me;
Scorne cries out 'gainst itt self such ill to show,
And would give place for joyes delights to flow;
Yett wretched I, all torturs beare from thee,

Long have I suffer'd, and esteem'd itt deere
Since such thy will; yett grew my paine more neere:
Wish you my end? say soe, you shall itt have;

For all the depth of my hart-held dispaire
Is that for you I feele nott death for care;
Butt now I'le seeke it, since you will nott save.
(P6)

As always, Amphilanthus is as cruel as any inaccessible Petrarchan beauty, but his cruelty lacks the ideological and moral justification Laura or Stella can call on for their indifference, since their chastity is also their raison d'être. Without any paradigms that require a young man to defend his virginity against the honourable advances of a beautiful lady, it is obvious that the man's "disdaine" has no justification. As Jones points out, for a woman poet the indifference of the beloved can only mean that he is "simply not interested."[13]

While the Petrarchan lady's "cruelty" is in a way a necessary evil, in Amphilanthus it is a torment actively inflicted on his helpless victim: he "heaps" disdain, takes "pleasure" in showing his "cruelty," leaving Pamphilia to bear his "torturs." Pamphilia acknowledges that his power over her is absolute, and that she has to bear it almost as a kind of divine disfavour, "since such thy will," but again her gesture of submission bears a striking resemblance

to an act of defiance. Her resolution to embrace death serves both as a final attempt at attracting his attention ("since you will nott save"), and an assertion of her ability to act independently. The seeming self-negation involved in an active death-wish actually entails a move away from the lover into a field of independent experience and decision-making, an assertion of self.

This spirit of submissive defiance becomes particularly visible when it is compared to one of Philip Sidney's depictions of the lover's subjection:

> Stella, whence doth this new assault arise,
> A conquerd, yelden, ransackt heart to winne?
> Whereto long since, through my long battred eyes,
> Whole armies of thy beauties entred in.
> And there long since, Love thy Lieutenant lies,
> My forces razde, thy banners raisd within:
> Of conquest, do not these effects suffice,
> But wilt new warre upon thine owne begin?
> With so sweete voice, and by sweete Nature so,
> In sweetest strength, so sweetly skild withall,
> In all sweete stratagems sweete Arte can show,
> That not my soule, which at thy foot did fall,
> Long since forc'd by thy beames, but stone nor tree
> By Sence's priviledge, can scape from thee.[14]

Sidney here acknowledges a subjection as total as that described by Wroth, since all resistance is seen as futile by someone whose very soul has been invaded, conquered, and subjugated. Apart from the central difference in perspective--that Stella's assault consists of her graces which require adoration, whereas Pamphilia suffers from her beloved's neglect--these poems also have an emotional component in common: both express wonder at the sheer power of the beloved and at the powerlessness of the lover, and neither questions

the source of this inequality between the lovers. However, the strategy used to retain a sense of self-worth is markedly different. Astrophil achnowledges his defeat and justifies his position by constructing a model in which he as well as the whole rest of nature are forced to submit to Stella's inherent superiority. If, therefore, Astrophil has given up his independence, this is no sign of weakness in him but the logical result of Stella's worth. Pamphilia, on the other hand, who cannot justify her subjection through Astrophil's virtue, also acknowledges her subjection but turns her capacity to love and suffer into a stance of independent self-assertion.

As a rule, the Petrarchan model does not allow for Wroth's brand of subjugation because the lady is seen as virtuous, thus providing a reason for the lover's powerlessness. In a case like Shakespeare's, where the lady is not virtuous, love comes to be seen as a disease, and the dependence it entails is heavily resented. Thus Shakespeare tackles, in poem after poem, the paradox of the speaker's enslavement in spite of his better judgment.[15] The closest, I think, we can come to something like Wroth's staging of Pamphilia's subjection is Spenser's sonnet 20 from the <u>Amoretti</u>:

> In vaine I seeke and sew to her for grace,
> and doe myne humble hart before her poure.
> the whiles her foot she in my necke doth place,
> and tread my life downe in the lowly floure.
> . . . . . .
> But she more cruell and more salvage wylde,
> then either Lyon or the Lyonesse:

shames not to be with guiltlesse bloud defylde,
but taketh glory in her cruelnesse.
Fayrer then fayrest, let none ever say,
that ye were blooded in a yeelded pray.[16]

Spenser here describes a situation of total submission, and envisages images of violent subjugation--being trod on, with a strong hint of slavery or defeat in combat, and being devoured by a wild animal. In contrast to Sidney, and in a manner similar to Wroth, the beloved's cruelty is here the source of the speaker's condition, but Spenser's strategy of dealing with it is noticeably different from Wroth's. Instead of turning away from the beloved to achieve a precarious independence through the affirmation of his unconditional love, Spenser actually draws attention to his total surrender in the gesture of a "yeelded pray," which may have connotations uncomfortably close to the postures adopted by animals in their fights. This move then enables him to mount a final plea for mercy--and favour--since she who is "fayrer then fayrest" cannot indulge in this kind of cruelty without creating an open contradiction between her looks and her behaviour.

In staging his own submission, Spenser clearly goes beyond Wroth's stance. However, this is precisely the difference between his position as a male poet and Wroth's position as a female poet. Spencer can, in a way, afford to indulge in such a fantasy of subjection because in the same collection he can also stage fantasies of his own power in a way not accessible to Wroth. Sonnet 28, for

3

example, contains a barely veiled threat of rape as he tells his beloved to remember the fate of Daphne, "that proud maid," who

> . . . scorning Phoebus lovely fyre,
> on the Thessalian shore from him did flie:
> for which the gods in theyr revengefull yre
> did her transforme into a laurell tree.
> Then fly no more fayre love from Phebus chace,
> but in your brest his leafe and love embrace.[17]

At a later stage, in sonnet 71, Spenser takes up the image of the bee and the spider to envisage how his lady may finally be caught--in the literal sense--in a benevolent form of imprisonment, which may foreshadow the final union celebrated in the "Epithalamion." Like the bee, she will be

> . . . caught in cunning snare
> of a deare foe, and thralled to his love:
> in whose streight bands ye now captive are
> So firmely, that ye never may remove.
> . . . . . .
> And thensforth eternall peace shall see,
> betweene the Spyder and the gentle Bee.[18]

In oscillating between dominance and submission Spenser clearly illustrates that his submission is a quasi-voluntary reversal of roles, an aspect of the rhetoric of courtship, and that it can be replaced by the reassertion of his power once the object of his quest has been obtained. As long as the lady refuses his suit, he will adopt a posture of dependence and powerlessness; once she gives in, "thralled in his love," the courtship is over and can be replaced by a notion of loving dominance.

For Wroth, this kind of self-assertion is impossible, since her culture does not provide her with paradigms which

would allow her to see the woman in a dominant position. Clearly, Pamphilia cannot be Phoebus to Amphilanthus' Daphne; the notion is absurd. What she can do, however, is stage her own powerlessness in a way suited to transfer some authority to the power of her emotions. What this leads to is a stance like the one described above, in which her resolution to embrace a lover's death becomes a strategy enabling her to create an independent position of her own. The same also happens in the following poem, which also contains a spirited attack on the beloved quite untypical of the Petrarchan convention:

> Bee you all pleas'd? your pleasures grieve not mee:
> Doe you delight? I envy nott your joy:
> Have you content? contentment with you bee:
> Hope you for bliss? hope still, and still injoye:
>
> Lett sad misfortune, haples mee destroy,
> Leave crosses to rule mee, and still rule free,
> While all delights theyr contrairies imploy
> To keepe good back, and I butt torments see.
>
> Joyes are beereav'd, harmes doe only tarry;
> Dispaire takes place, disdaine hath gott the hand;
> Yett firme love holds my sences in such band
> As since dispis'ed, I with sorrow marry;
>
> Then if with griefe I now must coupled bee
> Sorrow I'le wed: Dispaire thus governs mee. (P10)

In this poem Amphilanthus is as disdainful as ever, and is evidently even having a good time while Pamphilia is oppressed with "misfortune," "crosses," "torments," "harmes," "dispaire," "disdaine," "grief," and "sorrow." But again out of this dreary scene comes a defiant assertion at the end, in which the speaker declares that she will "marry" someone else: she exchanges Amphilanthus, who cannot be married, for grief and

sorrow, whom she marries in his stead. Thus, the threat of deserting him is both voiced defiantly, and neutralized since the new bridegroom is the very emotion she experiences for Amphilanthus' sake.

Wroth's double rhetoric of submission and defiance can be clearly traced in the mirror of her critics' reactions. While most critics agree that the special quality of Wroth's poetry lies in her "austerity,"[19] her "harsh, occasionally cynical attitude,"[20] "a peculiarly brittle, cynical tone,"[21] others--and indeed sometimes the very same critics--have also commented on Wroth's "lachrymose powerlessness and passivity,"[22] her enactment of a "tragic irony" because "women's love is here the relentless discipline of enforced passivity and endless waiting."[23] What connects both attitudes is the sheer anger and frustration inherent in both her exclamatory assertiveness and her portrayal of Pamphilia's passivity. While some of us might prefer it if the first significant English woman poet were less fierce and more in keeping with Virginia Woolf's ideal of serene and dispassionate art,[24] it seems to me that Lady Mary Wroth has found an excellent solution to the problem of the female speaking voice. On the one hand, Amphilanthus' disinterested remoteness sets the scene for his eventual exclusion from the central concerns of the poems, allowing Wroth to focus almost exclusively on Pamphilia's experience of love. On the other hand, her double rhetoric allows Wroth to assert forcefully Pamphilia's character without exposing herself and her persona

to the charge of unwomanly bossiness and lechery.

One result of Wroth's shift in focus can be seen in the way in which many of her poems turn inward. Where Philip Sidney never lets us forget the presence (or absence) of Stella, who functions as both muse and fetish, Mary Wroth never mentions Amphilanthus' name outside the title. Her sonnets do not praise the beloved, and in most cases he is totally excluded while the true focus of the poems rests with Pamphilia's emotions. This feature can best be seen when we compare Wroth's sonnet "Am I thus conquer'd? have I lost the powers" (P16) with Sidney's sonnet 47 from Astrophil and Stella, on which it is modelled. Both sonnets present attempts at resisting love's power, and both show how the speakers try to draw on their desire for freedom to sustain them in their rebellion against their infatuation. In the end, of course, this flight turns out to be futile, and it is here that Wroth departs most significantly from Sidney's model. Having decided that "Beautie but beautie is," Astrophil attempts to break away only to be subdued by the arrival of Stella, whose eye "Doth make my heart give to my tongue the lie."[25] Pamphilia, on the other hand, addresses her poem to Cupid and vows to resist his "babish tricks," only to finally exclaim

> Butt ô my hurt, makes my lost heart confess
> I love and must: So farewell liberty. (P16)

Where in Sidney it is the arrival of Stella which brings about a change of heart, in Wroth it is her own pre-existing emotion which does not allow her to break free, a "hurt" which

is furthermore not seen as a result of Amphilanthus' charms but of Cupid's power over her. This kind of self-centredness is characteristic of the tone of the sequence and can also be seen in the following poem:

> You blessed shades, which give mee silent rest,
> Wittnes butt this when death hath clos'd mine eyes,
> And separated mee from earthly ties,
> Beeing from hence to higher place adrest;
>
> How oft in you have I laine heere oprest,
> And have my miseries in woefull cries
> Deliver'd forth, mounting up to the skies
> Yett helples back returnd to wound my breast,
>
> Which wounds did butt strive how, to breed more harme
> To mee, who, can bee cur'de by noe one charme
> But that of love, which yett may mee releeve;
>
> If nott, lett death my former paines redeeme,
> My trusty freinds, my faith untouch'd esteeme
> And wittnes I could love, who soe could greeve.
> (P34)

Like many of her poems, this too is a death-ridden sonnet, but unlike the ones quoted earlier, the lover is totally absent here. The poem is addressed to the "blessed shades," who are called upon as witnesses. What is most striking is the image in the second quatrain: it evokes a picture of Pamphilia stretched out and "oprest," giving birth to miseries which will mount up only to fall back on her and wound her further. It is interesting to note that the outward signs of these miseries, the "woefull cries," are actually a part of labour rather than a communication from one person to another. Pamphilia's suffering is cyclical, for the cries mount up, return to wound, the wound aggravating the misery, which will be in turn "deliver'd forth." This cycle can

only be broken by love, though the sonnet does not specify whose love would be required for the cure. The poem creates a sense of spacial and emotional enclosure that places Pamphilia inside the shades (which would presuppose some sort of grove or bower), and inside the circle of misery. Although the speaker longs for help from the outside, the poem does not create a sense that there might be anyone out there, and even the "trusty freinds" are reduced to the role of outside observers and witnesses.

The motor that makes this poem and indeed the whole sequence work is the speaker's need to affirm that she can love, and for this the pains of love are absolutely indispensable. Her grief is proof both of her constancy and of her capacity to love. What is important is not whom but that she loves. Throughout the sequence, Pamphilia demonstrates this capacity through the constant pain, anguish, sleeplessness, torments and despair she describes, and it is certainly no coincidence that this is also the note on which the sequence ends. In the last poem, "My muse now hapy, lay thy self to rest," Pamphilia prepares herself for her entrance into another, transcendental kind of love which will be eternal and fulfilling, and will render suffering and poetry superfluous. She ends the poem with a final farewell to art: "And thus leave off, what's past showes you can love, / Now lett your constancy your honor prove, / Pamphilia" (P103, my emphasis). These are her last lines, and they summarize the purpose of the preceding 102 poems. For Wroth, what is

fascinating is not the idealization or even portrayal of a love-object, but the act of loving itself.

It could be said that this is a fairly thin and even selfish concept on which to build a whole sonnet sequence, but that would be missing the point. Mary Wroth focusses on love as a facet of female experience usually missing from male poetry of the period. Female speakers are rare in Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry. In J. William Hebel's and Hoyt H. Hudson's massive anthology Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660, for example, which contains over a thousand poems, I have found exactly 10 poems by female speakers published or written before or around 1621.[26] Of these, Thomas Lodge's "Rosalind's madrigal" (156-7) decribes how Cupid comes to lodge in a shepherdess' bosom, eyes, and breast, a curious device by which a female speaker is made to describe from the inside a state we normally see from the lover's perspective in Petrarchan love poetry. "A sweet lullaby" by Nicholas Bretton shows a woman who has had an illicit love affair and is now remorsefully singing her illegitimate child to sleep (163-4). John Bodenham's song "A nymph's disdain of love" could be seen to contain something of a feminist message since it advocates a single, virginal life away from men's "feigning guiles" (199); a similar rejection is contained in Bartholomew Young's "Melissa, her song in scorn of her shepherd Narcissus" (101-2). Samuel Daniel's long "The complaint of Rosamund" (245-61) is a narrative told by the ghost of a dead girl who describes

how her life came to be ruined by the false seductions of life at court. There is an interesting song by Thomas Campion, which portrays a girl who wants to get married and have children to avoid the "bloodless sickness" brought about by frustrated desire, and because her mother also had children (455). Last but not least, there is John Donne's morning song "Break of Day," which is clearly a counterpart in a woman's voice to his other morning songs (462).

In this sampling, we have a wide variety of different concerns: female rejections of love, poems on the guilt felt by fallen women, a song about a girl wanting to get married, and a song about a woman who is reluctant to let her lover go in the morning. What we do not get in this sampling is a woman's voice talking about what it might feel like to a woman to be in love, to feel desire, to long for sexual union. Of those women who do speak one gets a distinct sense that their speech is, in fact, a function of the male author's wider interests: these speakers may provide warning examples or role models for other women, they may fit into a poetic agenda, or they may be used to comment on certain aspects of male behaviour by reflecting on them. They do not speak the language of female desire. Obviously, this state of things is not surprising, since the invention of a female voice is not a necessary part of male poetic writing (Wroth in her turn also only rarely invents male voices). However, in a world where almost all authors are men, and where all of

these men write from a male perspective, it makes apparent the achievement of someone like Wroth, who invents in poem after poem a voice which has not hitherto existed in poetry: that of a woman asserting her emotional state as an autonomous experience.

The question now is in what way this assertion can be seen as an act of resistance. In the Urania, Pamphilia's character is defined through her constancy, her insistence on remaining faithful to Amphilanthus even though he himself is not faithful (a feature he shares with all the other men in the romance). Elaine Beilin sees this emphasis on the value of constancy as part of the development of Renaissance women authors, who all wanted to "redeem Eve" and create a positive image of virtuous, learned and unimpeachable women.[27] Carolyn Ruth Swift, on the other hand, suggests that Wroth actually wanted to criticize Pamphilia's self-destructive ideal of constancy.[28] I think Maureen Quilligan's essay "Lady Mary Wroth: Female Authority and the Family Romance" offers the most illuminating explanation. She suggests that since it is the traffic in women which stabilizes patriarchal society in the Urania, women's sexual desires must be tightly controlled by brothers and fathers in order to ensure their value as currency: a woman autonomously in love is not easily transferable. Pamphilia's constancy actually becomes an act of "willfulness," a defiant assertion of her desire, and as such a liberation from the hold patriarchy has over her:

> In order to locate an active desire in her female self, she needs it--her own will--to be autonomous. While she appears to depend on Amphilanthus, taking her identity from him, she in fact insists upon her identity as opposed to his. Her constancy is an act of willful self-definition. She "will love though he dispise me."
>
> The willfulness of this position, though melancholy, is highly productive of discourse . . . . she complains of his infidelity and insists in poem after poem on her own constancy. . . . It is an active desire that looks like paralyzed stasis . . . . Wroth has reformulated a potentially transgressive active female desire but dressed it up in a former female virtue, patient female constancy. Out of this maneuver, she creates Pamphilia's authority, institutionalized in the poems of the sonnet cycle to the Urania.[29]

While Quilligan leaves no doubt about the sexual nature of Pamphilia's desire as well as her transgression, this view is by no means self-evident. Beilin, for example, stresses the purity and chastity of Pamphilia's aspirations, in which constancy becomes very much an abstract, asexual concept, a "heroic virtue." Janet MacArthur, on the other hand, seems to be frustrated by Wroth's insistence on propriety: "The sequence lacks the lighter side produced in Astrophil and Stella, for instance, by the comic elements and sexual puns that reveal Astrophil's jouissance." She sees this lack of "jouissance" as a direct result of Wroth's exclusion of Amphilanthus.[30] I agree with MacArthur in so far as Wroth does not convey her "jouissance" through bawdy puns or ecstatic descriptions of Amphilanthus' body. However, there is no reason to suppose that these have to be the only possible expressions of sexual desire, and I would like to find out how Wroth does manage to write about desire without

such devices.

Any discussion of the portrayal of the erotic in a poet who does not talk about love-making as such is faced with the problem that suffused erotic energy is hard to pinpoint or measure: what exactly is an impassioned style, and how can sexual desire get transformed into language which is in itself not overtly erotic? I find one of the most puzzling comments ever made about Wroth's style to be May Nelson Paulissen's repeated suggestion that "Lady Mary's lines are classical, gentle and meditative," that her style is "feminine, gentle, stately, calm, with the attitude of a woman humbly confessing her love and yet demanding the dignity that her high birth commands."[31] What puzzles me about this evaluation is that it is diametrically opposed to my own experience of Wroth's verse. To my ear, one of the distinctive features of her style is the sheer aggressiveness of the constant exclamations, questions, imperatives, and emphatic syntactical inversions that characterize her style.

An evaluation of all first lines in Pamphilia to Amphilanthus reveals that 43 out of 103 poems (that is 42%) start with either an exclamation, a question or an imperative (as opposed to Sidney's 30%), and this does not even take into account other means of linguistic emphasis. Mary Wroth is very markedly a poet of the strong opening, a creator of lingustic aggression and pressure. While this pressure may result from frustrated sexual energy rather than a free-wheeling sense of "jouissance," it can be seen as sexual in

nature nevertheless, often taking the form of an angry or anguished outcry: "Cruell suspition, O! bee now at rest," "Fly hence O! joy noe longer here abide," "Fy tedious Hope, why doe you still rebell?", "O! that no day would ever more appeere," "Sleepe fy possess mee not," "How many nights have I with paine indur'd." To my mind there is no doubt that Wroth's supposed gentleness is a fiction, and that in fact her style is highly impassioned--frequently angry, it is true, but also usually charged with both linguistic and sexual energy.

An excellent example of Wroth's rendering of sexual energy is the following poem, which is also one of the central sonnets of the cycle:

> How like a fire doth love increase in mee,
> The longer that itt lasts, the stronger still,
> The greater purer, brighter, and doth fill
> Noe eye with wunder more, then hopes still bee
>
> Bred in my brest, when fires of love are free
> To use that part to theyr best pleasing will,
> And now impossible itt is to kill
> The heat soe great wher love his strength doth see.
>
> Mine eyes can scarce sustaine the flames my hart
> Doth trust in them my passions to impart,
> And languishingly strive to show my love;
>
> My breath nott able is to breathe least part
> of that increasing fuell of my smart;
> Yett love I will till I but ashes prove. (P55)

What makes this poem startling is its use of the fire imagery to convey Pamphilia's commitment to love. The connection of fire and erotic desire is, of course, not new in Renaissance poetry, but what is new is the extent to which Wroth builds on and dramatizes this convention. The poem

starts out by establishing a careful distinction between love and the image used to describe it (love increases like a fire), but this distinction is subsequently broken down to such a degree that 'love' and 'fire' become synonymous. For a poet who is normally quite prepared to enlarge on the speaker's passive suffering, it is remarkable that in this poem the focus is not on the pain of being burnt but on an almost pyromanic fascination with the sheer size and intensity of the blaze. Fire becomes not an outside agent wounding Pamphilia but a property of her character: Pamphilia consists of flames, she is fire. By locating the fire inside the speaker as an intrinsic part of her emotional state, the boundless and uncontrollable nature of the blast comes to be synonymous with Pamphilia's passions, and it is this connection that provides a channel both for the release and the expression of sexual energy.

As a whole, the poem moves through a series of orgasmic intensifications: the "fire" increases steadily, duration not causing its collapse but rather its further increase, until finally it becomes impossible to "kill the heat." At this point, the "flames" break forth through the speaker's eyes, leaving her speechless (through the intensity of the feeling or because speech would be improper), and finally the fire will exhaust itself in Pamphilia's 'death.' This rising crescendo of heat and flame is accompanied by some interesting ambiguities in the second quatrain centering on "that part," the "best pleasing will," and love's "strength." The syntax

makes it clear that "that part" refers to Pamphilia's "brest," i.e. that the "fires of love" use her "brest." However, "will" can certainly carry sexual connotations, and the free-ranging "fires of love" use "that part" as if making love to it "to theyr best pleasing will." This makes it easy to overlook the syntactic connection between "that part" and "brest." Wroth could just as easily have named "that part" as "my heart," and her refusal to do just that creates a suggestive confusion in which "that part" may well be read as an allusion to the woman's genitals. I am not saying that this is the meaning of the second quartrain, but in a poem of such heat and fire it is certainly a telling confusion. What Pamphilia is saying is something like this: 'Cupid sees his chance to work havoc in my heart, and therefore it is impossible to stifle my loving emotions.' However, the vagueness and ambiguity of the passage is just confusing enough to allow another reading to emerge not as a subtext but rather as a kind of unrealized and possibly subconsious shadow-text: 'Cupid sees his power over me and makes love to me as it pleases his appetite, while I find it impossible to stifle the desire he arouses in me.'

Wroth's poem shows a careful and precarious balancing act in which a common enough message ('I will never stop loving') is expressed through language that suggests sexual stimulation and excitement as well as orgasmic intensity. In order to say the unsayable Wroth here appropriates a stock conceit of Petrarchan poetry, spreads it out, and charges it

this normally harmless and commonplace piece of poetic shorthand with sexual energy--or maybe it would be more accurate to say that she enlarges on and makes use of a sexual charge dormant in the device.

At least one critic, May Nelson Paulissen, has been puzzled by the ecstatic intensity of this poem, and suggests a religious reading.[32] I do not see any reason for assuming this poem to be a religious poem in the metaphysical manner. The sonnet marks the end of the first section of poems in Pamphilia to Amphilanthus, a section totally centred on the experience of a serious but nonetheless worldly love.[33] The poems in the immediate vicinity of the sonnet do not suggest a marked religious interest, and the "Crowne of Sonnets dedicated to Love" (P77-90), in which one does find a new orientation towards transcendental love, does not start until much later in the sequence. What is interesting, however, is that a religious reading is possible depending on what meaning we assign to the fire imagery: is it the fire of zeal or the fire of passion, and to what degree are the two interchangeable? Is it a Donne-like rendering of sex through religion or vice versa? This confusion may have something to do with Wroth's evasive strategy because it makes possible a transference from the openly erotic and transgressive into the spiritual, an area which has been traditionally accepted as being more suitable for the woman writer.

What "How like a fire doth love increase in mee" demonstrates is that erotic experience is not necessarily inexpressible, as Gary Waller suggests when he asks

> As we sense the gaps and frustrations in Wroth's jagged, disruptive text, can we sense the silent inexpressibility of woman's sexuality, never put into words since there are, as yet, no words for it?[34]

While there are certainly "gaps and frustrations" in Wroth's writing, 103 poems are a sign not of silence but of the continual struggle to find speech. It may just be that in tracing the erotic in the writing of Early Modern women authors, we need a different concept of erotic desire: a desire for which the appropriate image is not explosion but implosion; a concept that moves away from the adoring gaze at the sexy love-object to a probing of the inflamed self; masturbation instead of a desire for mastery, and maybe a longing for the pleasurable swoon rather than a Barthesian sense of "jouissance."

One of the reasons for the introverted nature of Wroth's poetry and of her rendering of sexual desire is certainly that the concept of a male beloved creates almost insurmountable obstacles: there is no tradition in secular poetry for the female idealization of a quasi-divine and passive male love-object, and there is no tradition for the active pursuit of such a man by a woman. Besides, retaining the Petrarchan power structure between man and woman would probably lead to an oppressive all too real stasis rather

than any profitable dynamic tension. Astrophil's servitude to Stella presents us with a dynamic inversion of extra-textual reality, in which the woman is quite untypically in power, and the man equally untypically in subjection. For a woman writer, a Petrarchan convention which would place a male beloved above, and a female lover below, would not be a playful inversion but an affirmation of existing power structures. A female speaker's adoration of a man along the lines of Astrophil and Stella would not be a voluntary act of humble courtship but a masochistic adoration of the master. Louise Labé tries to solve this problem by retaining the figure of the beloved while subverting the convention: she tends to stress the equality between the lovers and questions the process of idealization itself. Mary Wroth, on the other hand, employs various other strategies: she may try to separate Pamphilia's loving dependence from the person of Amphilanthus by transforming it into a stance of autonomous despair; she may exclude the beloved altogether and focus instead on the emotions of her speaker; or, as we shall see now, she may simply substitute another beloved.

In connection with this last point, Beilin's findings are particularly revealing:

> Of all the sequences Sidney Lee publishes in Elizabethan Sonnets . . . none approaches the number of references to Cupid in Pamphilia to Amphilanthus--thirty-seven--except Astrophil and Stella with twenty seven.[35]

A possible reason for this untypical proliferation of Cupid figures in Wroth's poetry may be found by simply looking at the variety of different constellations and responses made possible by Cupid: he can be mocked (P8), blamed (P74, P75), belittled (P64), and sympathized with (P38); he can be played off against his mother Venus (P95) and vice versa (P58); he can be mothered and suddenly turn to make his power felt (P96)--in fact, with Cupid almost anything is possible. While the mischievous little god served all of these purposes in a similar manner in Sidney's poetry, there is one use Wroth makes of the figure which was not accessible to Sidney: Cupid can be loved and adored. Thus, while Wroth is no less inventive than Sidney in her use of the Cupid figure, she is most original in the way in which Cupid can come to be a substitute for Amphilanthus, a hypothetical "man" who functions as both lover and muse:

> Like to the Indians, scorched with the sunne,
> The sunne which they doe as theyr God adore
> Soe am I us'd by love, for ever more
> Worship him, less favours have I wunn,
>
> Better are they who thus to blackness runn,
> And soe can only whitenes want deplore
> Then I who pale, and white ame with griefs store,
> Nor can have hope, butt to see hopes undunn;
>
> Beesids theyr sacrifies receavd's in sight
> Of theyr chose sainte: Mine hid as worthles rite;
> Grant mee to see wher I my offrings give,
>
> Then let me weare the marke of Cupids might
> In hart as they in skin of Phoebus light
> Nott ceasing offrings to love while I Live. (P25)

Likening herself to a heathen people of sun-worshippers,

Wroth here builds on a sustained analogy comparing their worship to the speaker's dedication to love. This entails a number of parallels as well as paradoxical reversals. The Indians are dark-skinned because their god, the sun, causes sun-burn as they worship him: the more dedicated the worship, the more pronounced the visible sign not only of their dedications, but also of their god's reciprocal recognition of their efforts. In contrast, Pamphilia, who loves without fulfilment, is white with grief, the visible sign both of her enthralment and the futility of her efforts. Thus, while the Indians are accorded the privilege of being "seen" by their deity, at the cost of the whiteness of their skin, Pamphilia's "worthles rite" is hidden because Amphilanthus, her version of the "chose sainte" of the Indians, is unresponsive and cannot be approached. Like Labé in her third elegy, Pamphilia prays not for a discontinuation of Cupid's attentions, but only for access to her beloved; once this is granted, she will gladly "weare the marke of Cupids might / In hart," her version of the visible sign not only of her devotion to Cupid, but also of his reciprocal imposition of this sign.

By closely connecting the power of Phoebus' "light" to Cupid's "might," Wroth also seems to imply a connection between writing and loving, since Phoebus is the Latin counter-part to Apollo, the god of poetry we have already met in Labé's writings. Clearly, in a collection of sonnets which draw on the emotion of love as an inspiration for poetry, such a fusion is significant, since it also casts

Cupid in the role of the muse, a role usually occupied in male love poetry by the beloved woman. The effect is enhanced by the fact that there is a complicated interrelation between Cupid and Amphilanthus, which tends to blur the distinction between the two.

In theory, there should be a triangular relationship which has as its main component Pamphilia's devotion to Cupid, and Cupid's scorching interest in Pamphilia. Amphilanthus is the medium through which the relationship between Cupid and the worshipper may be realized: by loving Amphilanthus, Pamphilia can give the "offerings" required by Cupid. The fact that Amphilanthus is here replaced in importance by Cupid is mirrored by a characteristic instability of reference in line 4. When Pamphilia says "so ame I us'd by love," she clearly means that Cupid's attentions are as devastating in their effect as the sun's, but when she continues to give the reason, "for ever more / I worship him, less favors have I wunn," it is not clear who she is referring to. If "favors" means attention from Amphilanthus, it is still not clear if the "him" she worships is in fact Amphilanthus (who refuses to return her love), or Cupid (who fails to exert his power on Amphilanthus). What we get, then, is a transference of power from Amphilanthus to Cupid, in which Amphilanthus appears as a mere medium in effecting the connection between Cupid and Pamphilia, and in which Cupid apeears as the true object of desire. On a more abstract

level, this corresponds well with what I have been saying about the sonnet sequence: the important thing is Pamphilia's dedication to love, whereas Amphilanthus' behaviour can only modify whether it is a joyful or sorrowful feeling.

What is startling in Wroth's poem is the extent to which she is willing to identify in a positive manner love with the idolatrous practices of the Indians, thereby aligning herself with one of the most powerful images of otherness available to the age of discovery. While Montaigne did attempt a revaluation of the European estimate of the savage in his essay "Of Cannibals," the most famous "Indian" of the period I can think of is Othello's "base Indian," who "threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe."[36] In the context of Othello's dying speech before his suicide, the "base Indian" is connected to Turks and other infidels, all of whom are used to illustrate Othello's tragic failure to recognize the true sources of good and evil in his environment. The Indian, thus, is an image of misguided error, of a warped perception.

Wroth, on the other hand, presents the Indians as luckier versions of Pamphilia: their dark skin is seen as a sign of their successful union with their god rather than as a sign of their inferiority, while Pamphilia's white skin denotes not her superiority but, in fact, the futility of her desire. In the end Wroth envisages a condition in which Pamphilia is, in a manner of speaking, transformed into an Indian of the

heart. Equally remarkable in this context is Wroth's unwillingness to identify the Indians' heathen practices--and by implication the love of Cupid--as idolatrous. What could easily be a poem in the manner of Sidney's "Leave me, of love which reachest but to dust," i.e. a rejection of idolatrous love by means of the negative implications of the analogy between Indian worship and the rule of Cupid, is in fact no such thing. Instead of rejecting the worship of Cupid, the poem actually embraces it all the more in its concluding lines, and there is no indication to suggest that this may be a misguided decision.

Wroth's refusal to endorse a sense of guilt over misguided sexual desire is what connects her intimately with Louise Labé, who is in many ways a very different sort of poet. This aspect becomes particularly interesting when we remember that the sonnet sequence can be seen in connection with Wroth's love affair with William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, with whom she had two illegitimate children.[37] While Wroth would be an ideal candidate for the fallen woman's lullaby by Nicholas Breton alluded to earlier, she actually refuses to endorse any condemnation of erotic love in her poetry--and, one may assume, in her life. This forms a marked contrast to poems like Philip Sidney's sonnets 5, 19, 34, and 61 in Astrophil and Stella, which focus on the dichotomy between illicit desire and virtuous love.

The question to be asked now is how this curious

absence of guilt in the work of two very different female authors of the Renaissance should be interpreted. I think it is unlikely that their refusal to combine sexuality with guilt is a simple reflection of the fact that they simply did not believe in it. On the contrary, being women, there are a number of arguments they would have been exposed to all of their lives: that Eve was the first woman to entice a man to his doom, and that women have to be subjected to men so that this kind of female erring may be kept in check; that women are naturally more subject to their illicit passions and need to be restrained by more reasonable men; that sexual desire in women--while possibly being more pronounced than in men--needs to be all the more policed because of its disruptive potential. In short, while contemporary religious beliefs clearly cast all human beings in the role of sinners, women are usually the ones who are given an extra share of the burden of sinfulness and, by implication, guilt.

In their lives, Labé and Wroth clearly rejected at least some of these assumptions, but we may never know to what degree the liberation offered by this rejection may have been accompanied by feelings of guilt or remorse. The point is that both authors refuse to thematize such a sense of guilt in their writings. To do so would have been counter-productive. When Astrophil ruminates over the sinfulness of desire, he is really in no danger at all, for the virtuous Stella will not be the temptress to lead him to his doom. When

Shakespeare laments his own enthralment to the dark lady, he is clearly a victim of her seductive powers which force him to remain attracted to her in spite of the fact that she is no virtuous maiden. If he feels guilty, therefore, this is largely due to a sense of failure to do what a reasonable man ought to do, to resist the temptress. If a woman were to thematize her own guilt and sinful status in erotic poetry, the consequences for the connection between her sexuality and her guilt would be devastating: on a very fundamental level, she would be endorsing the very worst of her society's construction of women. If a man is potentially sinful because he is a human being, whereas a woman is potentially sinful because she is both a daughter of Eve and a human being, clearly to connect female sexuality with guilt is a bad move. It would be comparable to Marlowe including a well-reasoned religious condemnation of homosexuality in Edward II. Like Marlowe, therefore, these two women authors avoid the problem by not making it visible.

If Wroth's exclusion of Amphilanthus in favour of Cupid may seem to be of limited use for creating an image of female independence, this decision nevertheless opens up the way for a number of liberating manoeuvres. Thus, while Cupid clearly is a male figure to be adored, he is not a lover in the proper sense of the word but an imaginary creature, an allegorical representation of love and desire, and as such the natural emanation of Wroth's willful assertion of the right to love.

In comparison to Amphilanthus, Cupid also has a number of advantages as a substitute lover/beloved, for if Amphilanthus is absent, Cupid most certainly is not, and many of Wroth's poems capitalize on Cupid's presence and maleness with liberating and poetically satisfying results. In contrast to Amphilanthus, Cupid is the one who may embrace, use, scorch, employ his strength, burn the heart and make his power felt; he is interested in Pamphilia's service, of him she may safely say "Then lett mee weare the marke of Cupids might." The bond with Cupid is real and mutual in a way it never is with Amphilanthus.

In a sequence that denies any happy lovers' union, it is logical that Cupid's attentions should often be painful, and the speaker's refusal to stop loving ensures her subjection here as much as elsewhere in the sequence. However, the poems dealing with Cupid also have their own share of imperative rhetoric on the part of Pamphilia, and the violence of the subjection becomes less marked as the sequence proceeds. This is mainly a result of the fact that Wroth spiritualizes Cupid more and more into a powerful but benevolent and generous king/god. This trend is best reflected in the "Crowne of Sonetts dedicated to Love," to my knowledge the only sequence in English Renaissance literature dedicated solely to a positive Cupid figure. Here,

> Love is the shining starr of blessing light;
> The fervent fire of zeale, the roote of peace,
> The lasting lampe fed with the oyle of right;
> Image of fayth, and wombe for joyes increase. (P78)

The "affections," so troublesome in the rest of the sequence, become "his followers" who

> Governe our harts, and prove his powers gaine
> To taste this pleasing sting seek with all care
> For hapy smarting is itt with small paine,
>
> Such as although, itt pierce your tender hart
> And burne, yett burning you will love the smart.
> (P80)

Here, Wroth can enjoin her readers to

> Please him, and serve him, glory in his might,
> And firme hee'll bee, as innosencye white,
> Cleere as th'ayre, warm as sunn beames, as day light
> Just as truthe, constant as fate, joy'd to requite,
>
> Then love obay, strive to observe his might,
> And bee in his brave court a glorious light. (P79)

The sonnets in the "Crowne" (P77-90) are the best evidence for Elaine Beilin's claim that Pamphilia to Amphilanthus modulates from a destructive concept of worldly love to an ideal of divine love in a Christian sense. However, they are also good evidence for Roberts' contradictory claim that Wroth tries to present an idealized version of worldly love through Cupid as the worthy monarch of the medieval Court of Love tradition.[38] These contradicting readings are, I think, due to the fact that while Wroth certainly alters her concept of Cupid as a personification of love, she retains the erotic nature of love as an emotion. Beilin chooses to ignore this erotic focus in favour of a serene and peaceful love of God, whereas Roberts acknowledges the eroticism but ignores the references to Cupid's divinity. It seems to me, however, that it is precisely this union of

eroticism and spiritual satisfaction that finally allows Wroth to have it both ways:

> No time, noe roome, noe thought, or writing can
> Give rest, or quiett to my loving hart,
> Or can my memory or phantsie scan
> The measure of my still renuing smart,
>
> Yet would I not (deere love) thou shouldst depart
> Butt lett my passions as they first began
> Rule, wounde, and please, itt is thy choysest art
> To give disquiett which seems ease to man;
>
> When all alone, I think upon thy paine
> How thou doest traveile owr best selves to gaine;
> Then howerly thy lessons I doe learne,
>
> Think on thy glory which shall still assend
> Untill the world come to a finall end,
> And then shall wee thy lasting powre deserne.
> (P101)

This sonnet, one of the last in the sequence, falls neatly into two parts with the two quatrains presenting the familiar image of Pamphilia's feelings of love: restlessness, the "renuing smart," the "loving hart," the "passions" which "rule" and "wounde," and Cupid as the origin of this disquiet. However, there is a decidedly new tone, for these tumults now seem easeful, and for once the passions also have the power to "please." The sestet shifts into a decidedly religious diction with Cupid's "paine" and "traveile" echoing Christ's pain, and a transcendental vision envisaging an apocalyptic "finall end," after which there will be a lasting union with the divine.

The purpose of this fusion of the erotic and the spiritual is not a rejection of erotic desire in favour of divine love, for after all Wroth goes out of her way to make

it clear that she is speaking to "deere love" and not to Christ or God. Rather, the different parts of the sonnet serve to validate each other: since the "passions" are a gift of Cupid, they are valid expressions of homage to him, and since Cupid as an abstraction of love comes close to being synonymous with Christ's love, they are not only valid but also good. Erotic passion as an emotion (though not necessarily sexual intercourse) becomes synonymous with receiving a divine favour, as well as with doing proper homage.

Wroth's religious eroticism here capitalizes on the one advantage a female speaker can claim in her relationship with God, for an erotic relationship between a heterosexual male speaker and God[39] is only possible if the speaker is either feminized (as in John Donne's "for I / Except you enthral me, never shall be free, / Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me"), or if the sex of the addressee is altered (as in Donne's reference to the Church of Christ, his "Spouse . . . . Who is most true, and pleasing to thee, then / When she is embrac'd and open to most men").[40] For Wroth, these problems do not exist,and Pamphilia can see her very passions as a kind of divine love-making while looking forward to a final fusion which will offer more of the same: "deere" love's "lasting powre."

As any reading of her poetry can show, Lady Mary Wroth is an extremely tradition-conscious poet. She carefully

models herself on Philip Sidney's works, and the title page of her book draws on all the illustrious members of her family as she identifies herself as the "right honourable the Lady / MARY WROATH / Daughter of the right Noble Robert / Earl of Leicester / And niece to the ever famous and renowned / Sir Phillips Sidney, Knight. And to / The most exelent Lady Mary Countesse of / Pembroke late deceased."[41]

In thus relying on her ancestors, she chooses to remain within the male tradition she inherited from her male predecessors, transforming and subverting it rather than striking out into breathtaking innovations. MacArthur squarely condemns her for this conservative adherence to codes established by male poets, and concludes that it is simply impossible for any woman to write openly and honestly from within the male tradition. However, there is one big problem with this argument, for Lady Mary Wroth did not really have a choice: as yet, the male tradition was the only one available, and unless we assume that an author can find the Archimedean point outside his or her own society in order to create poetry out of nothing, there is really no other way for the Renaissance woman author. In this sense, it is inevitable that "an oppressed or underprivileged class can speak only through the dominant discourse," if they wish "to enter history."[42] Individual voices for those hitherto excluded from public discourse do not just come about but have to be created through practice and the modulation and

modification of existing models: indeed, the beginner cannot do without a pre-existing framework for experimentation. As François Rigolot poignantly puts it, "Il faut poser avant de pouvoir s'opposer."[43] The tradition can thus be seen as both a precursor tradition in need of revision, and an empowering pre-existing structure which makes writing possible in the first place. Waller's notion of the "silent inexpressibility" of women's sexuality under the rule of the male tradition therefore needs to be modified, for both in Labé's avant-garde work and in Wroth's more conservative poetry the woman author finds a vehicle precisely through her creative re-reading of the male tradition.

In their uses of the literary tradition, however, there are noticeable differences between Labé and Wroth. Labé is an author who was an active participant in a lively environment of literary production, and as such she could insert herself into the Petrarchan movement as it was developing in Lyons at the time. If Calvin called her a common whore, there were others, notably the poets responsible for the commendatory poems in her Oeuvres, who were willing to express admiration for her work and for her person. Wroth, on the other hand, while being well connected at court and in the aristocracy, was not an active member of an avant-garde literary movement. Rather, she was confronted with a poetic tradition which was completely developed and even outdated by the time she came to write her poems. When she does attract commendatory

poems, by Jonson and others, it is not always clear if these verses were primarily written to her in her role as a potential patron, or in her role as a fellow poet.[44] In any case, Wroth could not rely on the same degree of artistic support as Labé could secure for herself. Thus, Labé is in many ways the artistically less isolated, and also the less inhibited poet.

In general, Wroth's poetry seeks to establish positions--a speaking "I," a mode for expressing sexual desire, etc.--which are taken for granted in Labé's work. The later poet thus finds herself confronted with more basic problems than the earlier poet. I have no evidence to suggest that Wroth was in any way a more timid person than Labé, and I do not think that we should account for this difference on the basis of their respective personalities. What is different, however, is their social environment, for the intellectual climate of mid-sixteenth-century Lyons seems to have been considerably more favourable to the aspiring woman author than the crisis-ridden period of early seventeenth-century England. This difference in social environment--and hence in the communicative situation faced by these authors--may account for much of the difference in their styles. This can best be seen in the function of the protective encoding strategies employed by both authors.

Labé's positions--her rejection or endorsement of certain types of female behaviour, her attitude to change,

her anti-hierarchical stance, and even her bold appropriation of aggressive, militant female paradigms--all give the strong impression that they embody consciously held beliefs on the part of the author. This becomes particularly obvious when we compare the views uttered in the dedicatory epistle to very similar positions found in her literary work. If, therefore, Labé chooses to employ protective devices like the use of Folly as a mask, or like her use of allegory, these can be seen as esoteric devices designed to get her message across without arousing open hostility. Labé is therefore at least in part an esoteric writer as well as an aggressive creator of alternative models. In contrast, Wroth's protective devices--her assertive-submissive poetic voice, her manipulation or exclusion of the figure of the beloved, her mode of expressing sexual desire--represent not so much esoteric strategies as they are evidence of a high degree of authorial anxiety. The degree to which these devices are conscious decisions on the part of the author, or to which they are actually dictated by the tradition she is working in, and by the social environment she is living in, is hard to estimate. One thing, however, suggests itself: Wroth's strategies are designed to make writing possible in the first place, whereas Labé's are designed to make her writing acceptable. Thus, while both authors are concerned with protecting themselves, Wroth's is not an esoteric stance, and her act of resistance--to write at all, and to write about

love--is actually an attitude which precedes Labé's more socially aggressive stance.

Section III: Partisan Readings of the Bible

The previous chapters have been concerned with more or less hostile interactions between individual authors and the societal pressures they had to face and work against. In this connection the "tradition" could be seen as either a problematic precursor tradition (as is the case of Wroth's poetry) or as an empowering tool for analysing and attacking contemporary conditions (as in Jonson's Sejanus). I would now like to turn to another and maybe the most important tradition of the Renaissance, a tradition which had to be faced by those who wished to resist societally accepted norms of individual behaviour and of social stratification: the Bible and the Christian religion. The Reformation had brought about an unprecedented schism in the Christian church, and the struggles that led to this rift were intimately connected to an equally unprecedented battle for access to the Bible as well as the management of the very church itself. However, as with all great revolutions, this one was faced from the beginning with an unexpected and undesired involvement of those who should have been kept out of the debate: the under-privileged classes of society.

If the learned theologians could wrest power from the Catholic Church, those below them could, by the same token, try to wrest power from the newly established Protestant

authorities. Thus, the rebel Martin Luther suddenly found himself face-to-face with the theology of Thomas Münzer and with the social fact of the Peasants' Revolt. The Church of England was confronted with Anabaptist or Familist as well as with more conservative Puritan movements, and when the Puritans came to power in England they found that they had to combat a whole array of newly emerging radical sects.[1] What distinguishes the social landscape of the Interregnum from earlier phases of the Reformation is the fact that amidst the turmoils of the revolution all state censorship broke down or ceased to be effective,[2] and that as a consequence there was an almost uncontrollable proliferation of radical religious and political literature ranging from single-sheet broadsides to book-length studies: Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, Seekers, Ranters, Diggers, Levellers, Quakers, they all had something to say and this time they were actually going to say it.[3] The extent of this "deluge of pamphlet literature" can be guessed at if we consider that the London bookseller George Thomason managed to collect over 700 publications in 1641, 2000 in 1642, and all in all "some 22,000 items (tracts and news-books) during the Revolution."[4] In 1646, London alone counted no less than 36 separatist churches, and "by the 1670s London Quakers alone probably numbered between 8,000 and 10,000."[5] As Reay puts it, "the lower and middle sort of people entered the political arena to an extent which no one could possibly have anticipated."[6]

In my own experience the reading of these texts is for the most part an exhilarating and liberating experience, and I therefore find it all the more surprising and disappointing that the wealth of this kind of literature has by and large been left unexplored by literary critics. While it is true that we have learned to use this pamphlet literature in order to better understand the mainstream authors of the era,[7] it seems that for the most part we are still quite willing to discuss any minor Royalist poet rather than, say, the highly suggestive prose of Jacob Bauthumeley or Abiezer Coppe.[8] However, a change may be in the air since 1989 saw the publication of Nigel Smith's study Perfection Proclaimed, a book that states unequivocally that "this flourishing of early dissent produced its own culture, literature, and language--usages, as divers, syncretic, and mutually interactive as the radical churches and sects themselves."[9] Smith's book proves that this distinctive culture is well worth studying in its own right, and for my purposes these pamphlets are of particular value since they provide a rare and untypically direct access to the thinking of normally neglected, silent groups of Renaissance society: women and the lower classes.

Apart from an elitist bias on the part of many literary critics, one other reason for the neglect of these pamphlets may well be that we have ceased to take their biblical and religious preoccupations seriously. Symptomatic of this attitude, I think, is C. H. George when he explains à propos of

Gerrard Winstanley's writings why he finds a study of his biblical exegesis unnecessary. Although few would be as honest about it as he is, I suspect many may share his sentiment:

> I must clear away some of the underbrush that has obscured the character of Winstanley's religious thought. Years of reading theology, sermons, and varieties of religious tracts have made me skeptical about even categorizing such mental gymnastics as "thought" in any serious, rational sense. In seventeenth-century England, in particular, the frequent lapses of clerical writers into analogical musings over Scripture, added to the "literal" school which is never literal, and the allegorical commonplaces which defy reasonable imagination, make it very difficult to judge the rational content of most religious writings.[10]

The problem with this attitude is that in our search for the "truth" of a particular work, in our attempt to figure out first if we agree with an idea rather than find out how an author might have arrived at his conclusions, we miss what is actually novel or daring about a particular approach to the Bible: since we do not believe any more in biblical reasoning we suppose that earlier writers whom we cherish could not have been serious about it either. However, I suppose few seventeenth-century authors would have been prepared to view their exegetical endeavours as "mental gymnastics" defying "reasonable imagination."

If George does not wish to take Winstanley's Bible reading seriously, literary critics as a rule are quite prepared to use religion in connection with works which come in a recognizably literary format, whether it be in the plays

of Shakespeare, in Milton's Paradise Lost or in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. In such religion-based interpretations a critic's recourse to scriptural authority usually serves to settle or define the meaning of the work concerned, and tends to control or close an argument through the assumption of a monolithic, unproblematic set of religious beliefs on the part of the authors and their audiences. It seems to me that this approach can also become counter-productive, for this is not how the Bible presented itself to the men and women of the seventeenth century: to them, the Bible was both supreme authority and the site of ideological confrontation. As Christopher Hill points out, "the Bible was the accepted source of all true knowledge. Everybody cites its text to prove an argument." [11] In the seventeenth century, this state of affairs does not imply a comfortable sense of ideological certainty but just its opposite, for as Thomas Metscher reminds us,

> the Bible, translated into the vernacular, and particularly in the use made of it by the sects and by radical Protestantism, certainly functioned as a subversive text. In Münzer, Winstanley--and even right up to Blake's "Everlasting Gospel"--it became the revolutionary handbook of the times . . . . between 1300 and 1700 the major ideological battles were fought in religious form . . . . The first authentic texts of what can with good reasons be called genuine proletarian literature are certainly religious.[12]

In a similar context Micheline Triomphe speaks of "la Bible 'soutteraine,' porteuse de visio heretica,"[13] and in this section I will deal with some aspects of such an 'underground'

Bible.

The two chapters in this section will be concerned with the communist tracts of the Digger Gerrard Winstanley and with the writings of Margaret Fell and other early Quaker women authors. The reasons for this selection should become apparent if we consider, for example, that in 1543 there was an ordinance prohibiting "all women other than gentle and noble women, together with artificers, journeymen, husbandmen, labourers and serving men of and under the degree of yeomen, from reading the Bible in English either privately or to others."[14] The focus here is clear: almost all women and all men of peasant or working-class backgrounds were to be denied the unmediated access to the Bible. Judging by this ordinance it is quite obvious where the greatest threat of unauthorized readings was anticipated. Women and lower-class men had everything to gain by appropriating the Bible for their own ends, and in doing so they were confronted by a long tradition of biblical exegesis which had tended to exclude them from positions of real or even just symbolic power within the family (in the case of women) or within the church and state (in all cases). As a rule, the Bible could be relied on to legitimise existing power structures, confirming first a divinely ordained kingship, later divinely sanctioned magistrates, a divinely ordained ministry, or even just divinely instituted fathers and husbands as heads of the family. In the hands of anti-establishment exegetes, however,

the Bible could also be made to yield quite a different message.

Let me illustrate this struggle with a fairly straightforward example from the Authorized Version of 1611:

> 1 Goe to now, yee rich men, weepe and howle for your miseries that shall come upon you.
> 2 Your riches are corrupted, your garments motheaten:
> 3 Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall bee a witnesse against you, and shall eate your flesh as it were like fire. (James 5:1-3)[15]

This text is essentially the same as the one in the Geneva Bible, and so is the relevant gloss: "Wicked rich men are to feare Gods vengeance" (Authorized Version); "He threateneth the wicked riche men" (Geneva Bible).[16] In both instances, a little word has crept in which points the way to a socially acceptable reading: wicked. Only the wicked rich men will be punished, only they will "howl" and "weep," obviously leaving the upright rich men to go free. However, the Bible passage hardly supports such a reading, for James explicitly addresses himself to an unqualified number of "rich men," who it seems will be punished through the very riches they have accumulated--not because they are wicked but because they are rich. This fits in well with the general anti-establishment tone of the whole epistle and indeed with similar pronouncements elsewhere in the New Testament.[17]

James's emphatic condemnation of wealth is precisely one of those openings where the Bible is suddenly in danger of becoming a politically subversive text, the Bible of the

underground. The Ranter Abiezer Coppe, for example, quotes James no less than six times in his most radical tracts A Fiery Flying Role (1649) and A Second Fiery Flying Role (1649).[18] Because of his highly idiosyncratic style it is hard to provide an outline of Coppe's theology, but one thing is certain: he hated the rich with a passion and prophesied that private property would be destroyed, that all "shall be confounded and plagued into community and universality. And ther's a most glorious design in it: and equality, community, and universall love" (109).[19] James 5 was an ideal tool to drive this message home, as Coppe's repeated references may attest:

> Howle, rich men, for the miseries that are (just now) coming upon you, the rust of your silver is rising up in judgment against you, burning your flesh like fire. (98)
>
> Your gold and silver, though you can't see it, is cankered, the rust of them is a witnesse against you, and suddainly, suddainly, suddainly . . . shall eat your flesh as it were fire, Jam 5.1. to 7. The rust of your silver, I say, shall eat your flesh as it were fire. (100-1)
>
> Once more, Impropriators! Appropriators! go' to, weep and howl, &c. Jam 5.1. to the 7. The rust of your silver shall rise (is rising up) against you, burning your flesh as it were fire. (110)

With visible relish, Coppe uncovers a meaning in James which both the Authorized Version and the Geneva Bible try to hide, and on one level the making of an underground Bible is concerned with just such an activity: discovering politically radical passages and if need be asserting their meaning against evasive establishment readings. As we shall

see in the work of both Margaret Fell and Gerrard Winstanley, this may well be complemented by an attempt at radicalising seemingly innocent passages and concepts, so that what emerges is actually a whole new mythology. In Margaret Fell, this is a mythology of female power and in Winstanley the ideal of a communistic society based on a radicalised version of peasant ethics. The following two chapters will be concerned with finding out how these people read the Bible, how they represent it, and how they deal with an inimical exegetical tradition. It is here that we finally leave the field of protective or esoteric writing strategies, for the authors dealt with here were political activists who did not fear reprisals and were, for the most part, not interested in hiding their views. On the contrary, the polemical nature of their writings demands openly, even aggressively stated points of view, not carefully veiled communications.

Chapter 6: "For action is the life of all": The Radical Theology of Gerrard Winstanley

On April 1, 1649 a small band of people began digging on the commons at St George's Hill in the parish of Walton-on-Thames in Surrey. They were poor and their intention was to plant vegetables and beans on the commons, farming the land together as a communistic enterprise. This was not the first time that this kind of squatting had occurred in England,[1] nor were they the only group engaged in such an undertaking.[2] However, this group was different because they proceeded to publish a sizeable number of tracts and letters defending their digging in a way that was designed to provide an ideological basis for their actions, a kind of rudimentary party programme. The author of these publications was the leader of the group, Gerrard Winstanley, a cloth merchant who had been bankrupted by the civil war, had made a meagre living as a cow-herd, and had already published four tracts of radical theology.

In view of this stream of position papers, declarations, and defences, the Diggers were immediately recognizable as more than just a band of hungry peasants trying to borrow a couple of acres of land: theirs was a deliberate act of assuming ownership of the commons, a visible sign of greater revolutions to come. Not surprisingly, therefore, the

reaction of the local landowners was extremely hostile: law suits were filed, fines pronounced, General Fairfax was called in (though he was reluctant to act), the Diggers were harassed and attacked, their crops destroyed, their cattle driven away, and finally a house pulled down. By March 1650 they had been driven off St George's Hill, but they continued their work on another nearby heath. Here one of their most persistent persecutors, Parson Platt, managed to put an end to it once and for all: their houses were burned, their belongings scattered, and they themselves threatened with death if they tried again.

Winstanley's last Digger pamphlet, An Humble Request, was addressed to the clergy and the lawyers in April 1650 and was, in fact, both a last restatement of Digger beliefs and a grim acceptance of defeat. Nothing is known of the later life of any of the co-signers of the pamphlets, and very little of Winstanley himself. In the autumn of 1650 we find him working as an overseer on the estate of the self-proclaimed prophetess Lady Eleanor Douglas, but there were problems about the book-keeping, and the employment ended in obvious mutual dislike. In 1652 Winstanley's last work, The Law of Freedom in a Platform, was published with a dedication to Oliver Cromwell, and apart from two more court cases the last we hear of him is that he was buried as a Quaker in 1676 in London.[3]

In terms of an immediate impact on the political and

economic landscape of seventeenth-century England, Winstanley's writings and the experience of the Digger experiment can be seen as negligible. In terms of the development of political thought, however, the importance of these documents can hardly be over-emphasized. Although the idea of communism was not new in itself, Winstanley's is the first attempt at formulating a coherent programme for political action based on the abolition of all forms of private property and the establishment of a communist society. It is not surprising, therefore, that Winstanley's thought has loomed large with historians of the Puritan Revolution in this century, and there seems to be a tendency now to also discuss his work from a literary angle.[4]

Amidst all of this enthusiasm for Winstanley as an early communist, however, one should not forget that one of the most influential sources for his thought is the Bible--apart from one passing reference to a legal work the only book he explicitly refers to in his writings. In this chapter, I will try to determine just how Winstanley could transform a traditional tool for maintaining the status quo into a tool for propagating a revolution which would have radically altered the very shape of English society. This chapter is therefore not primarily a systematic investigation of Winstanley's religious beliefs,[5] but an attempt at tracing his interaction with the Bible as a special case of intertextuality and, on the part of the author,

reader-response. In tracing this interaction I do not mean to suggest that the Bible was Winstanley's only source of inspiration. In fact, there is a marked influence of Leveller ideas (especially in his adoption of the notion of the Norman Yoke), and after 1651 possibly of Thomas More's Utopia, which was translated into English in that year, and may have had some influence on The Law of Freedom (1652).

The debate among historians about the origins of Winstanley's radical thought falls into two groups: those who want to see him as an essentially secular political philosopher and activist, a kind of father of Marxist communism, and those who prefer to view him as just another millenarian thinker influenced by the turmoils of the Puritan Revolution.[6] For the first group, Winstanley's use of the Bible reflects nothing more than his willingness to conform to the argumentative practices of his time, while the other group tends to underestimate the unorthodoxy of his reading of the Bible. As a rule, few critics have taken Winstanley's involvement with the Bible seriously, and there is as yet no systematic investigation of this aspect of his thought.[7] My count of Bible citations in the works published by Sabine shows that he cites the Bible some 380 times, not counting innumerable passages in which he comments on the Bible but does not explicitly refer to a specific quotation. About 50% of these citations are found in The New

Law of Righteousness, the first tract to explain Winstanley's new vision of a communist society. Obviously, at this point he was quite eager to amass as much biblical support as he could muster, and although openly declared citations from the Bible decrease in his later works his religious convictions remain essentially stable.[8]

Whether explicitly cited or simply referred to, the one central text on which Winstanley builds his concept of an equal society is the Creation report in Genesis 1:26-29 and the subsequent Fall. For this reason, his first pamphlet defending Digger actions to "the Powers of England, and to All the Powers of the World" opens with a clear statement of equality:

> In the beginning of Time, the great Creator Reason, made the Earth to be a Common Treasury, to preserve Beasts, Birds, Fishes, and Man, the lord that was to govern this creation; for Man had Dominion given to him, over the Beasts, Birds, and Fishes; but not one word was spoken in the beginning, That one branch of mankind should rule over another. (251)

In a similar, though more thorough reading of Genesis he re-states this position in his last Digger pamphlet, An Humble Request:

> In Genesis, God said, Let us make Man: By Man, in the singular number implies Mankind. And let them have dominion: By Them, in the plurall number implies, whole Mankind in all his branches . . . . Then the creating Power, or God, gives 2 Commands more. Ver 27 & 29
>
> First, To subdue the Earth. And this implies, plowing, digging, and all kind of manuring. So then observe. That bare and simple working in the Earth, according to the freedome of the Creation, though it be in the sweat of mans browes, is not the curse.
>
> But for one part of Mankind to be a Task-master,

> and to live Idle; and by the Beast-like power of the sword, does force another part of Mankind to worke as a servant and slave, This is the power of the curse, which makes mankind eat his bread in sorrow by the sweat of his browes.
>
> The Second Commandment from God, was this, to Mankind. <u>That he should have dominion over the Fish, Fowle, Beasts, Hearbs, Plants</u>. And this implies that whole Mankind, spread abroad in variety of bodies . . . . But there is not the least tittle spoken, that one part of Mankind should subdue, and rule in oppression over another, for this came in after the fall. (423-4)

To Winstanley, the message of the creation report is unequivocal: "Man" is to be understood generically as a synonym for mankind, and since Adam and Eve were given dominion over everything it follows that all mankind are meant to be equal co-sharers in both the labour and the profits reaped from the earth. Thus it is oppression and exploitation, not labour which is the curse. In most cases where he renders what he calls the "freedome of the Creation," Winstanley chooses not to tackle God's curse on Adam in Genesis 3:17-19. ". . . cursed <u>is</u> the ground for thy sake: in sorow shalt thou eate of it all the dayes of thy life . . . . In the sweate of thy face shalt thou eate bread, till thou returne unto the ground." In the passage quoted above, however, Winstanley does tackle the curse and dramatically shift its focus. Building on the notion that subduing the earth involves hard work (Winstanley obviously cannot imagine an edenic condition in which agricultural labour is not hard work), Winstanley concludes that the "sweat of his browes" is not the centre of the curse, but

the fact that it is "in sorrow" that humankind will eat their bread. Labour--sweaty or otherwise--is the normal and indeed happy condition, but the sorrow associated with labour under the oppressive task-master is the curse. In following this line of reasoning, Winstanley effects a reversal of prevalent interpretations of the results of the Fall, which usually see the existence of private property and the accompanying hierarchical order as an instrument of damage control after the Fall, a means for containing the disaster of post-lapsarian lawlessness within a controllable social structure.[9]

Winstanley's mythology of the Fall has far-reaching consequences because he does not see the Fall as a quasi-historical master-narrative explaining social inequality, but rather as a metaphor for an oppression he finds continually re-enacted in his environment. This is made possible by the fact that Winstanley sees a number of key narratives of the Old Testament--the Creation, the Fall, Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau--as metaphoric representations of spiritual struggles to be found not in some distant past but within every person since the beginning of time, and within the societies created by these persons. Thus, the loss of the "freedome of the Creation" is not something that happened a long time ago because a man and a woman ate an apple--indeed, Winstanley has only scorn for such a reading:

> Therefore you Preachers, do not you tell the people any more, That a man called Adam, that disobeyed about 6000 years ago, was the man that filled every man with sin and filth, by eating an apple . . . . assure your selves, this Adam is within every man and woman . . . . It is the Lord Esau that stepped before Jacob, and got the birthright. (176)

The apple, far from being a token of some ill-defined disobedience, "is not a single fruit called an Apple, or such like fruit; but it is the objects of the Creation" (177). In grabbing the objects of the creation in a selfish endeavour to possess it all, "man began to fall out of his Maker, and to leave the joy and rest which he had in the spirit of Righteousnesse" (156), and all social evils are the devastating result of this misguided concept of self and ownership. The Fall, continually re-enacted within every human being and within society at large, ceases to be a punishable offence against God alone, and becomes the central image for an ongoing perpetration of crimes against humanity, notably against the dispossessed; it becomes a symbol for a social malaise:

> So that this Adam appears first in every man and woman; but he sits down in the chair of Magistracy, in some above others; for though this climbing power of self-love be in all, yet it rises not to its height in all; but every one that gets an authority into his hands, tyrannizes over others . . . . The first Adam is the wisdome and power of the flesh broke out and sate down in the chair of rule and dominion, in one part of man-kind over another. And this is the beginner of particular interest, buying and selling the earth from one particular hand to another, saying This is mine. (158)

To complement his theory of the nature of the Fall, Winstanley works with a dualistic concept which promises the rise of Christ, the second Adam to counteract the first, and the final overthrow of Esau through Jacob.[10] What is happening, therefore, is a continual struggle in which Adam tries to get "riches and government into his hands" to "suppresse the universall liberty, which is Christ" (158). Since Winstanley works on the assumption that his is the era of the second coming, this state of oppression is on the verge of being overthrown as God moves more and more back into his creation to eventually become one with it. Like the Fall, the second coming does not denote a material occurrence, the bodily reappearance of Christ, but rather that the "Lord Christ" will "spread himself in multiplicities of bodies, making them all of one heart and one mind, acting in the righteousnesse one to another" (182-83). In the process, "this phrase of Mine and Thine shall be swallowed up" (183), and

> the blessing of the earth shall be common to all . . . . There shall be no buying and selling . . . but the whole earth shall be a common treasury for every man. (184)

I think it should be clear by now that in his reading of Genesis as a social transgression and in his view that the restoration will be effected through the abolition of all private property, Winstanley has come a long way from anything that might be called an establishment reading, and one may well ask what gave him the idea that this could really be

a plausible reading of the Bible. Here Winstanley's idea of the status of the Bible as the source of authority is of singular importance. As early as 1648, while defending himself against a charge of blasphemy, Winstanley like so many of his radical co-theologians developed a theology which was based on the assumption of the superior authority of "the Spirit within." He argues that the unlearned can use the Bible as well as the clergy, since the Bible has to be seen not as the word of God, to be meditated upon and glossed, but rather the report of other people's spiritual experiences:

> The Gospel is the Spirit that ruled in the Prophets and the Apostles, which testified to them, that in the later daies the same Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh. Secondly, then their writings is not the Spirit; but a report or declaration of that law and testimony which was within them. (101)

Paul's epistles, for example, as the word of the Gospel are just that: "the word of it, or the report of it; but it is not the thing it selfe" (122).[11] The authority of the Bible is further mitigated by the fact that the textual appearance of the book itself is compromised: there is no proof that the Bible has come down to us in the proper shape, and both the time lapse and the numerous translations make it very doubtful for Winstanley that the book is reliable. If the common people do not know "the originall"--i.e. the Bible in the original language--. neither do the clergy, for "to say this is the originall Scripture you cannot" (99-100).

If the Scriptures are no more than a record of previous

revelations and possibly a corrupted record at that, it follows that their inherent truth can only be ascertained through the "Spirit within" (100), that marvellously democratic source of enlightenment which may dwell in the lowest person and is independent from learning as the traditional tool for understanding the Bible: "it is the Spirit within every man that tries all things: words cannot try all things" (101). If, on the other hand, inspiration is the only reliable source of insight, traditional exegesis is meaningless,[12] since it implies a close textual analysis of an unreliable text in order to establish the exact nature of God's messages. Winstanley calls this 'tearing the Gospel to pieces' (100), an activity which is "imaginary" (101) in the sense that it is grounded on a totally false assumption about the nature of the Gospel and God's will. What makes this activity worse is the fact that it is part of a great conspiracy between the clergy and the rich and powerful to retain control over the poor by deliberately falsifying the Bible in their expositions: the Bible thus becomes a tool for establishment propaganda (e.g. 238-40; 357-8; 387-9). In misappropriating the Bible for their own class needs, the clergy actually expropriate the Bible from those who have a natural claim to it[13]:

> The Scriptures of the Bible were written by the experimentall hand of Shepherds, Husbandmen, Fishermen, and such inferiour men of the world; At the Universitie the learned ones have got these mens writings; and flourishes their plaine language over with their darke interpretation, and glosses,

> as if it were too hard for ordinary men now to understand them; and thereby they deceive the simple, and makes a prey of the poore, and cosens them of the Earth, and of the tenth of their labors. (474-5)

If the clergy base their beliefs on a close analysis of the biblical text--a procedure which is only seemingly objective, since this can be done in as arbitrary and selective a manner as any other form of exegesis-- Winstanley insists that it should be the other way around. Belief or an inspired sense of the truth comes first and is to a degree self-authenticating. The Bible in turn may be used as a valuable record of previous revelations, a kind of parallel text or foil against which to measure the individual experience (128). In order to achieve this it is not necessary to explain the text of the Bible, which is why exegetical passages like the one quoted above on Genesis are extremely rare in Winstanley's writings. It is enough to simply point to relevant texts to show that similar revelations have been received before by inspired individuals, notably the prophets and Apostles, those "Fishermen, Shepherds, Husbandmen" and, of course, "the Carpenters son, who spake and writ . . . from an inward testimony" (238).

Placing his emphasis thus allows Winstanley to find essentially two types of messages in the Bible. The first are metaphorical master-narratives which provide the ideological backbone of God's will and of the shape of human society. These are those key myths Winstanley takes

up again and again, and these must be interpreted typologically in order to yield their true meaning. To Winstanley, the notion that the story of the Fall could actually be telling the historical truth about a man, a woman, and and apple (note that he has no use for the snake in his reading of the myth), is simply absurd. Thus, the apple has to be a symbol for something else, and this for him is not an abstract sense of 'knowledge of good and evil,' but rather the things the apple can be seen to be a natural representative of: the objects of the creation. Once that is settled, the rest is easy: taking possession of the objects of the creation is the Fall, and since this activity is still going on, it must be a misdeed which is still re-enacted today, and for which the biblical narrative is only a metaphor.

If these metaphoric stories serve to illustrate the laws governing the universe, the testimonies of previous inspired individuals serve a different purpose. They are records of cases in which the light of the spirit within has allowed individuals to grasp and decode the message hidden in these myths and in the creation as such. These testimonies, therefore, have to be taken literally since by them these individuals pass on the knowledge which was revealed to them in their privileged state. As we shall see, this applies in particular to the teachings of Christ and to the life of the early Apostolic community.

Winstanley has been repeatedly accused of being "loose" and "cavalier to careless" in his use of the Bible, of producing "vague, general statements signifying nothing" as far as the Bible was concerned.[14] Hill argues that Winstanley uses the Bible to bolster up pre-existing convictions rather than starting from a biblical position. Knott finds that Winstanley tends to incorporate biblical images into his text rather than decoding them, and Sabine argues that for Winstanley the Bible "is at the most an aid, not a substitute."[15] These estimates of his involvement with the Bible are often used to prove that he did not take the Bible seriously at all, that he was merely bowing to the force of custom, trying to muster additional ammunition for the debate with his enemies. What is true is that his handling of the Bible can be extraordinarily loose at times, and that he definitely seems to argue on the basis of pre-existing ideas-- as, I suspect, even traditional exegetes did, as can be seen from the Protestant practice of turning the story of Jacob and Esau into a parable about the Reprobate and the Elect. While Winstanley was obviously aware of the immense legitimizing power of the Bible, and was willing to use it to his advantage, there is, however, no reason to suspect that in handling it in a loose manner Winstanley thought he was using the Bible frivolously. In fact, his exegetical practices are part of his theology, because from <u>The New Law of Righteousness</u> onward

he argues that he did indeed have a clear revelation given to him in a trance. With this revelation to back him up (we will return to the status of the trance later), he does not really have to look anywhere else for proof for his convictions. All he needs to do is comb the Scriptures for evidence that a similar, albeit perhaps less specific revelation, had been granted to earlier visionaries by way of an express command or by way of a millenarian promise. And this he does with indefatigable zest as he embarks on a singularly subversive reading of the Bible to support a concrete course of political action: digging.

Just how dangerously unstable any part of the Bible can become in Winstanley's hands can be seen in his use of the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." As part of one of the central sets of rules for the Old Testament as well as for the Christian faith, this quotation really seems to be one of the most harmless passages in the Bible: it means what it says. Thus it could happen that during the Army Debates in 1647 the prohibition against stealing was used to prove the divine sanction for private property. General Ireton had raised the question of whether universal suffrage would not endanger the institution of private property, and his opponent Rainborough tried to allay his fears by claiming that while suffrage was a civil affair, in regard to property the case was clear: ". . . the law of God says it; else why hath God made that law, <u>Thou shalt not</u>

steal? . . . . God hath set down that thing as to propriety with this law of his, Thou shalt not steal."[16] His argument seems to be absolutely water-tight: if God sees fit to prohibit stealing, this presupposes property and an owner whom it can be stolen from. However, this is exactly the point where Winstanley inserts a new set of presuppositions into the discourse to effect a truly dazzling reversion:

> And that this Civil Propriety is the Curse, is manifest thus, Those that Buy and Sell Land, and are landlords, have got it either by Oppression, or Murther, or Theft; and all landlords live in the breach of the Seventh and Eighth Commandements, Thou shalt not steal, nor kill . . . . all this is but a bloudy and subtile Theevery, countenanced by a Law that Covetousness made . . . . a breach of the Eigth Commandement Thou shalt not steal; but these landlords have thus stoln the Earth from their fellow Creatures, that have an equal share with them, by the Law of Reason and Creation, as well as they. (258)

Obviously, something in the smooth process of biblical communication has gone wrong here, else how can Winstanley simply turn one of the Ten Commandments on its head? What has gone wrong is something inherent in language itself--biblical or otherwise--for rarely except maybe in the most legalistic texts do we find a thorough definition of all parameters implied in a certain utterance. The verb to steal presupposes a rightful owner and a wrongful thief as necessary players: x steals from y. No doubt thinking that it is obvious that x and y are individuals engaged in an illegal transfer of private property, Rainborough--and indeed the Bible itself--sees no need to define who steals from

whom. Winstanley, on the other hand, leaves the prohibition intact but turns it into its own opposite by spelling out and re-defining x and y. X is a clearly defined group of individuals, in this case the landowners, who steal from y, the poor and dispossessed members of society for whom the stolen article--the earth--was actually intended.

If the eighth commandment is really a harmless passage turned upside down, other passages in the Bible are not quite as innocent. Among these, Christ's Sermon on the Mount is a notorious example, and it is therefore not surprising that Winstanley should fasten on Matthew 7:12 as a central cornerstone of his philosophy:

> Our actions and conversation is the very life of the Scripture, and holds forth the true power of God and Christ. For is not the end of all preaching, praying and profession wrapped up in this action, namely, Love your enemies, and doe unto all men, as you would they should do to you, for this is the very Law and the Prophets. This is the New Commandement that Christ left behind him. Now if any seem to say this, and does not do this, but acts contrary, for my part I owne not their wayes, they are members that upholds the curse. (365)

This passage is lifted almost verbatim from the Bible, so that Winstanley cannot be accused of twisting the Bible to his own needs:

> Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should doe to you, doe ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets: (Matthew 7:12, cf. Luke 6:31)

Winstanley is right: by Christ's own declaration, this commandment is the essence of the new Christian doctrine. What is dangerous here is not so much that Winstanley may

turn the message upside down, but that he may actually think it through to its logical conclusion.

The translators of the Geneva Bible, sensitive as ever to ideological implications, seem to sense the danger inherent in Christ's order: they try to limit the scope of the command by declaring that "the whole Law and the Scriptures set forthe unto us, & commende charitie." Obviously, the Geneva Bible feels that Christ went too far here. His complex statement of radical altruism has to be transformed into something less threatening, properly channeled charity and alms-giving. His defiant assertion that the new rule actually "is the Law and the Prophets," which can be read to mean that it encompasses both the Law and the eschatological promises as an ultimate fulfilment, has to be transformed into a general statement saying that the whole Bible commends charitable behaviour. Winstanley, on the other hand, positively revels in the complexity of Christ's injunction. He realizes that doing unto others as one would be done to requires an enormous amount of altruism, since it depends on the fact that one has to slip into someone else's position in order to determine if one would want to be treated in any given manner. But this is not enough, for one is then required to modify one's behaviour in accordance with the insight gained by this imaginary reversal. Thus, for Winstanley it is clear that Christ's order requires the replacement of a sense of self with a

sense of community:

> Sincerity and singelness of heart . . . kils hypocrisie; and love to others, doing as a man would be done unto; and so respecting the publick preservation of all creatures, doth kill self-love. (175)

While Winstanley can often be accused of twisting the Bible around to suit his own ends (as is the case with the eighth commandment), here he actually uncovers an uncomfortable message which establishment commentators try to veil. I have no doubt that in this instance, Wisntanley finds himself closer to the intended meaning of Christ's words than the commentators of the Geneva Bible. For Winstanley, this means that the existing social order is built on the very opposite of Christ's command: doing unto others as one would very definitely not want to be done to oneself. Therefore, the social order has to be changed, and therefore Winstanley can conclude the following passage with an unexplained marginal reference to Matthew 7:12:

> For talking of love is no love, it is acting of love in righteousnesse, which the Spirit Reason, our Father delights in. And this is to relieve the oppressed, to let goe the prisoner, to open bags and barns that the earth may be a common treasury to preserve all without complainings; for the earth was not made for a few to live at ease upon, and to kil such as did not observe the Law of their own making, but it was made for all to live comfortably upon . . . . Mat 7.12. (193)

If Matthew 7:12 proves to be dangerous because of its uncompromising insistence that all behaviour should be grounded on an estimate of other people's needs, other passages in the Bible are dangerous because of their

presentation of the status of the poor in the scheme of salvation. For Winstanley, clearly, the poor are privileged in a special way: they are the recipients of all promises, the true successors of the Apostles and of Christ, the true church, the sole source from which salvation will spread. This is why he starts the preface of The New Law of Righteousness by assuring his "dear brethren" in markedly biblical terms that

> though you have been, and yet are the despised ones of the world, yet the blessing of the most High (your King of Righteousnesse) is in you, and shall spread forth of you to fill the earth. You are the field wherein the treasure hath lien hide; all the dark and cloudy dayes of the Beasts time, times and dividing of time now expiring [cf. Daniel 7:25] . . . . you are the firmament, in whom the Son of righteousnesse will rise up, and from you will declare himself to the whole Creation; for you are Sion whom no man regards, out of whom salvation shall come. (149)

Given Winstanley's ideas about private property as the root of all evil, his estimate of the restorative potential of the dispossessed is not surprising. After all, his concept implies a direct correlation between selfishness, evil and property, as opposed to community, righteousness and poverty. Beyond this predictable effect of Winstanley's economic theory, he also finds some support in the Bible.

The first of these Bible-based arguments depends on an analogous reasoning: because the Apostles were common people and were the first to receive a full revelation, it follows that now, too, the general revelation would begin to take hold of the common people first:

> And the declaration of this law of righteousnesse shal rise out of the dust, out of the poor people that are trod under foot. For, as the declaration of the Son of man was first declared by Fisher-men & men that the learned, covetous Scholars despised: so the declaration of the righteous law shal spring up from the poor, the base and despised ones, and fools of the world. (205)

Like so much else in Winstanley's thought, the notion that the poor are somehow closer to God is not new. What is new, however, is the fact that he sees the very nature of their dispossessed status as the sole reason for their privileged position. The poor are not singled out because they are particularly naive, simple-minded, child-like or honest but because by not owning any property--albeit perforce--they live closest to God's original plan manifested in the creation. The rich, on the other hand, who are the furthest removed from this edenic condition by owning a lot of property are at a disadvantage not because they have committed any specific sins (though these too grow out of their wealth), but because they do not live as they ought to. As a consequence, Christ, "the greatest, first, and the truest Leveller that ever was spoke of in the world" (386), as well as the Apostles may serve as empowering paradigms. The argument here is not that the poor now "begin to receive the Gospel"--one of Winstanley's most widely used slogans--because Christ and the Apostles before them were common people; it is that then as now God reveals himself to his prophets because they are poor and therefore fit to receive his revelation.

If the paradigmatic relevance of the Apostles'

professions is really a matter of emphasis, of uncovering the working-class tradition within the Bible and the Christian church, some of Christ's own sayings, sanctioned as they are by his exalted status, prove an even more dangerous weapon. Chief among these is again the Sermon on the Mount, particularly the following:

> Blessed <u>are</u> the poore in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdome of heaven. (Matthew 5:3)
> Blessed <u>are</u> the meeke: for they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)
> Blessed be yee poore: for yours is the Kingdome of God. (Luke 6:20)
> But woe unto you that are rich: for yee have received your consolation. (Luke 6:24)

The Geneva Bible manages to defuse much of the potential for social explosiveness by interlocking Matthew and Luke: Following Matthew's "poor in spirit," Luke's "poor" is glossed as "they that are humble & submit themselves willingly to obei God." Luke's "rich," on the other hand, is made more acceptable by declaring them to be those "that put your trust in your riches, & forget the life to come." Thus, the poor need not be materially poor, while the rich are not really all rich people but only a certain kind of them.

In contrast to these glosses, Winstanley presents an exactly reverse state of affairs: Matthew's "poor in spirit" are actually those that Christ talks about in Luke: the poor, i.e. those who live in poverty. Thus, it becomes possible for him to say

> We that work most have least comfort in the earth,

> and they that work not at all, enjoy all; contrary to the Scripture which saith, The poor and the meek shall inherit the earth. (388)

In this passage, the biblical quotation is used to show that the earth has been wrongfully kept from the poor, and Christ's blessing therefore functions not as a promise but as a description of society as it ought to be. By contrast, the following two passages employ Christ's blessing as an eschatological promise now to be fulfilled:

> Jacob now must have the blessing, he is blessed, yea and shal be blessed, and Esau shal become his servant; The poor shall inherit the earth. (209)

> For I tell you, and your Preachers, that Scripture which saith, The poor shall inherit the earth, is really and materially to be fulfilled. (389)

What makes Winstanley's use of Christ's blessing interesting is that much like the Geneva Bible he has some of his own interlocking to do in order to come up with the quotation he desires. To begin with, he suppresses the fact that the poor both in Matthew and Luke are promised not the earth but the "Kingdome of heaven" or the "Kingdome of God" respectively. In contrast to this, Matthew offers exactly what he wants, "they shall inherit the earth," but unfortunately this blessing is reserved for the meek. In the examples we have seen, there are essentially two ways of solving this problem. The first is to fuse Luke 6:20 with Matthew 5:5: The poor shall inherit the earth; the second declares "poor" and "meek" to mean the same thing so that Matthew 5:5 may be used in a slightly extended version: The poor and the meek shall inherit the earth.

Winstanley's use of Christ's blessing is not necessarily evidence that he wanted to deliberately falsify the scriptural record. It is very probable that in the heat of the debate Winstanley often worked from memory, and since the Sermon on the Mount is a central part of the Gospel, he may have felt that he could safely trust his memory. However, his fusion of different passages does betray what it was he was looking for in the Bible; it shows how his mind worked. Obviously, Winstanley was neither interested in the transcendental aspects of Christ's promise, nor was he troubled by theological concerns with meekness as a spiritual quality. What he saw was a clear political message: those who do not own any property will come to own the whole earth together.

So far, all our biblical passages have been concerned with a broad sense of right or wrong behaviour, of a good or bad world order. In Winstanley's ideology they occupy an important position in his endeavours to effect a total revaluation of social status and wealth. However, these passages do not call for any specific form of radical action (although they do call for some form of action), and this is after all what Winstanley set out to provide: biblical support for digging on the commons. As might be expected, this is the point where we can see him run into trouble, for to my knowledge there is not a single command in the Bible which requires people to take to squatting on the

commons. For Winstanley, the problem really consists of two separate units: he has to show (a) that communism is the answer, and (b) that manuring the wastelands is the specific action required to bring about this communist ideal. As we shall see, the first is easier to do than the second, and here predictably Winstanley's central text is Acts 4:32-34, which describes the communism of the early Apostolic church.

Winstanley explicitly refers to Acts 4:32 no less than eight times, which makes it one of his favourite Bible passages (183, 184, 191, 194, 201, 204, 261). The reason for this preference should become immediately apparent if we consider what the Bible tells us about this early Christian community:

> And the multitude of them that beleeved, were of one heart, and of one soul: Neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed, was his owne, but they had all things common.
>
> And with great power gave the Apostles witnesse of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.
>
> Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were solde,
>
> And laide them downe at the Apostles feete. And distribution was made unto every man according as he had neede. (Acts 4:32-35)

As can be imagined, this passage presents good reasons for intense anxiety on the part of conservative commentators. In fact, the passage is so problematic that it would lead too far here to disentangle the veritable deluge of glosses it provoked in the Geneva Bible. The gist of these glosses is that the early Christians did not actually have everything in

common, that the whole thing was a private decision anyway, and that this was definitely not a model for general action: "Not that their goods were mingled all together: but such order was observed that everie man frankely relieved anothers necessitie" (Acts 2:45); "The goods were not alike devided amongst all, but as everie man had want, so was his necessitie moderately relieved" (Acts 4:35); "No man was compelled to sel his possessions, nor to put his money to the common use" (Acts 5:4). Clearly, the Geneva Bible is in trouble, and it is not surprising that on a more exposed level, article 38 of the 39 Articles of the Anglican Church explicitly denounces the doctrine of common ownership as an Anabaptist heresy:

> The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.[17]

For Winstanley, the passage offers all he could possibly have hoped for: these people lived in perfect unity (his idea of unity under the influence of Christ rising within everyone), of their own free will they had renounced private property, and the goods seem to have been collected by the Apostles to be re-distributed by them (Winstanley's idea was that all produce should be collected in store-houses to be distributed from there). Most important of all, this new way of life appears as an immediate result of Christ's resurrection and the workings of grace. No wonder, then, that this text looms large in <u>The New Law of Righteousness</u>, where Winstanley sets

out to explain his communist ideas for the first time. He evokes a clear image of early Christian communism as an effect of Christ spreading himself, with a somewhat extended paraphrase of the social conditions this produced (we know, of course, that he thought that this kind of internal resurrection was about to happen in everyone soon):

> And as Christ then began to spread himself in sons and daughters, which are members of his mystical body, they did not rule in slavery one over another; neither did the rich suffer the poor to beg and starve, and imprison them as now they do: But the rich sold their possessions, and gave equality to the poor, and no man said, that any thing that he possessed was his own, for they had all things common Act. 4.32. (204)

What is noticeable about Winstanley's version of the Apostolic community is that it is a lot more specific as to social evils than Acts suggests, including as it does starvation, imprisonment, slavery, and beggary, so that we may suspect that he wished to use the example in a much more specific sense than Acts seems to warrant. Here, for example, is the life such a community might be expected to live:

> When this universall law of equity rises up in every man and woman, then none shall claim to any creature, and say, This is mine, and that is yours, This is my work, that is yours; but every one shall put to their hands to till the earth, and bring up cattle, and the blessing of the earth shall be common to all; when a man hath need of any corn for cattle, take from the next store-house he meets with. Act. 4.32. (184)

In Acts, there is no mention of tilling the earth, bringing up cattle, or resorting to store-houses--in fact,

Acts 4:32-35 does not tell us anything about the occupational habits of the Apostolic community. By filling in the details of an agrarian community, Winstanley actually transforms Acts into something quite new: a paradigm for specific, localized, and socially well-defined action, a miniature Digger manifesto. Clearly, then, Winstanley would like to turn Acts into more than just a general defence of communism; it is also made to serve the function of justifying a particular kind of communism. This brings us to the Digger experiment as the second strand of specific political action which had to be defended. It is here that Winstanley runs into the greatest problems with the Bible, for there is simply no biblical basis from which to deduce that the dispossessed should take to squatting on the commons. Winstanley tries to solve the problem by referring back to the eschatological promises particularly in the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

As a rule, this does not work too well, as for example in The True Levellers Standard Advanced, where Winstanley musters some 16 references ranging from Ezekiel and Isaiah to Daniel and Romans to prove that the final restoration would be brought about soon, and that the Diggers were the first to follow the new rules (260-261). The majority of these citations refers to God's various promises to rescue the scattered tribes of Israel from the diaspora, and the remaining citations are also not very helpful. The

citations certainly show that Winstanley expected some tremendous revolution to come, but they also definitely do not justify digging in any way.[18]

A far more interesting example occurs in a pamphlet entitled An Appeale to all Englishmen (1650). This pamphlet is an invitation for other common people to join in the good work, as well as a note of encouragement to other Digger communities. It promises to show "that the work of digging upon the Commons, is not onely warranted by Scripture, but by the Law of the Common-wealth of England likewise" (407). To say that the short pamphlet does not quite achieve this end would be an understatement. However, there is a rather curious and unexpected call for action courtesy of Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3:

> Come, those that are free within, turn your Swords into Plough-shares, and Speares into pruning-hookes, and take Plow and Spade, and break up the Common Land, build Houses, sow Corne, and take possession of your own Land, which you have recovered out of the hands of the Norman oppressour. (407-8)

The relevant citations in the Bible herald the end of all war, and this is also how Winstanley normally uses the promise. Here, however, he presents the prophecy in a much more startling manner. It is remarkable that the Geneva Bible again with unfailing instinct not only rejects the idea that this is directed "against the use of weapons and lawful warre" (which is predictable), but also insists that the turning of swords into mattocks[19] shows "the frute of peace . . . . that men should do good one to

another" (Isaiah 2:4), and that all people "shal abstaine from all evil doing" (Micah 4:3). It seems that the Geneva Bible is somewhat anxious about the implied agricultural and anti-establishment nature of the image (only gentry and noblemen were allowed to carry weapons), and as usual we can trust Winstanley to once again uncover its most literal meaning: swords into plough-shares is quite literally an image validating agricultural labour: digging instead of fighting. In this instance, therefore, the transformation of swords into plough-shares is not a promise concerning the end of all wars but rather a prophecy concerning the beginning of an agricultural revolution, the beginning of digging.

Although Winstanley manages to cull some support for agricultural labour from these two citations, this is an isolated case which occurred to him late in his career as a Digger. As a rule, we are left with Acts 4:32 as the furthest point Winstanley reached in defending the specific form of Digger communism, and as we have seen this use of Scripture already depends on a fair degree of glossing on Winstanley's part. It is possible that he also was not really interested in pushing this line of argument any further, which would explain why he does not make more use of Ezekiel 36:34-36, and Isaiah 32:15-18, 62:8-9, or 65:21-23, which he refers to but does not build into any sort of coherent argument (426, 213, 196, 533). This negligence in

making the most of his sources may be a result of the fact that Winstanley felt that he did not really have to prove the validity of Digger communism in the light of biblical revelations: he could produce his own.

Let me explain how this works. We have already seen that for Winstanley, the Bible is nothing more than a record of previous revelations, and that contemporary, post-scriptural inspirations should take precedence over the Bible, since they really are the Gospel, whereas the Bible is only the report of it. He also believed in a progression of dispensations starting with Moses and leading through Christ to the New Jerusalem. These dispensations entail a succession of more and more detailed unveilings of the nature of the Spirit, culminating in a final total revelation in the last days (160-4).[20] In this scheme of things it is logical that the Bible cannot possibly contain all relevant messages because it only leads up to the revelations granted to the Apostles. The way is therefore free for subsequent revelations to add whatever was still missing at the time of the Apostles. It is in this connection that Winstanley's trance is of singular importance as a quasi-biblical source of authority.

In The New Law of Righteousness Winstanley describes how he "heard these words" in a trance:

> Worke together. Eat bread together; declare this all abroad. . . . Whosoever it is that labours in the earth, for any person or persons, that lifts up themselves as Lords & Rulers over others, and that

> doth not look upon themselves equal to others in the Creation, The hand of the Lord shall be upon that labourer: I the Lord have spoken it and I will do it; Declare this all abroad. (190)

In The True Levellers Standard Advanced, the first declaration from the Digger colony, Winstanley invokes again the authority of divine inspiration. The message this time is identical with the earlier one, but there has been an addition of two more messages: "Israel shall neither take Hire, nor give Hire" (261), and "Let Israel go free" (264). These two messages are supplemented by a further extension which it is difficult to attribute either to Winstanley or to the "voice":

> But I do not entreat thee, for thou are not to be intreated, but in the Name of the Lord, that hath drawn me forth to speak to thee; I yea I say, I Command thee, to let Israel go Free, and quietly to gather together into the place where I shall appoint; and hold them no longer in bondage. (265)[21]

After this, Winstanley refers to this trance only occasionally and never again as a verbatim transcription.[22]

In Winstanley's argument his trance is of immense importance because it gave him exactly what he wanted, and what he could not find in the Bible: a precise, in parts even legalistically worded outline of the doctrine he was trying to develop. One might say that his trance is extremely convenient, though by that I do not mean to suggest that he invented it. There is no reason to suppose that Winstanley did not have a spiritual experience of some sort, and within the context of seventeenth-century enthusiasm trances, voices, and visions were not uncommon.[23]

However, we should make an endeavour to try and find out how Winstanley came by his trance: as Christopher Hill puts it, "it is pertinent to ask why Winstanley, why in the winter 1648-9, why this particular message?"[24] Luckily we have Winstanley's own account of how he felt in that winter of 1648: he had been subject to extreme states of depression and uncertainty on the one hand, and spells of intensive, almost compulsive writing marked by certainty and comfort on the other. At some point his inspiration left him and he stopped writing altogether (also because he was beginning to fear persecution), until he was hit with yet another installment of "the power of that over-flowing anointing," a sudden clarification so intense it was "as if a man should open a door and carry a light[ed] candle into a dark room."[25] When this happened he started to write again, this time without stopping, and it is in the context of this period of extreme anxiety and probing that we have to situate Winstanley's trance.

The message in the first description of the trance falls into two distinctive parts: the long, precisely formulated command forbidding collaboration with a corrupt and unequal system, and the short, extremely simple commands "Worke together. Eat bread together." The long passage does not seem to present many problems since it may well be explained as a sudden, concentrated insight fusing many different strands in Winstanley's previous thinking about inequality:

what Hill describes as a "sudden mental clarification" of the type all of us are familiar with."[26] The two short commands, however, seem to be in a slightly different league since they suggest a sudden and surprising realization of what all of his previous thinking means in practical terms. It seems to me that it is precisely these deceptively simple commands which may have caused Winstanley to say that he heard a voice telling him something he had never heard before. Or had he?

As early as 1648 in Truth Lifting up its Head above Scandals, Winstanley uses Acts 2:46, which describes how the Apostles were "breaking bread from house to house," and "did eat their meat with gladness and singlenesse of heart" to defend his belief that the holy communion consisted not of external rituals but of living righteously in the community:

> I doe and can break bread, with any in whom I see but the least measure of the Father rising up . . . . for this is to break bread, from house to house, in singlenesse of heart; this is the communion of Saints in particular . . . Act.2.46. (141)

This passage reveals the significance of the otherwise fairly incongruous order to eat bread of all things: living communally as the two commands require is in itself a form of holy communion, and within the Digger concept this is important because the whole experiment--including working and eating--is perceived as an attempt at living in union and accordance with God and the creation. Thus Winstanley seems to have experienced a sudden fusion of his previous thinking

on the nature of the holy communion with his belief in the dignity of the common people and their labour: together these make for a manifesto on communal living which is both intensely political and intensely religious.[27] In a roundabout way, the Bible thus gave to Winstanley the missing link he could not possibly have found in it by ordinary exegetical methods: a justification for taking over the commons to work together, eat together, and have everything in common. Since all of this seemed to fit seamlessly into the remainder of his radical theology,[28] it is not surprising that he may well have stopped looking for any further proof in the Bible. After all, he had what he wanted, and to him it must have seemed eminently convincing. In more ways than one he had quite literally written his own scriptural proof if not in the light of the Bible, then at least in the light of the Gospel, and we know what he thought of the relative validity of both.

In all of his writings, one of the things which never fail to outrage Winstanley about his chief opponents, the hated clergy, is that they "<u>say, and do not</u>" (365, 381). To him, this is the height of hypocrisy, and his own continual battle-cry is action instead of words. When he first relates his trance, for example, he is careful to outline the ways in which he has so far acted on it:

> I have now obeyed the command of the Spirit that bid me declare this all abroad, I have declared it, and wil declare it by word of mouth, I have now declared it by my pen. And when the Lord doth shew

> unto me the place and manner, how he wil save us that are called common people . . . . I will then go forth and declare it in my action, to eat my bread with the sweat of my brows, without either giving or taking hire, looking upon the Land as freely mine as anothers; I have now peace in the Spirit, and I have an inward perswasion that the spirit of the poor shal be drawn forth ere long, to act materially this Law of Righteousnesse. (194-5)

Two months after this proclamation the Diggers appeared on St George's Hill, and by August 1649 we find Winstanley addressing the powers that be in A Watch-Word to the City of London and the Armie confirming his revelation which commanded him to

> declare it all abroad, which I did obey. . . . yet my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and thoughts run in me, that words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing. (315)

Winstanley's emphasis on action over verbal declarations goes hand in hand with a decidedly literal--and for the propertied classes dangerous--reading of selected passages of the Bible as well as with the continual insistence that things should be happening here and now and not in some obscure never-never-land of the beyond. In fact, Winstanley sees the whole apparatus of redemption and damnation as one enormous confidence trick by which the clergy, the "monster who is all tongue and no hand" (567), try to keep all people in subjection by generating in them fear and guilt (568), and by keeping them from what is rightfully theirs:

> So that this divining spiritual Doctrine is a cheat; for while men are gazing up to Heaven, imagining after a happiness, or fearing a Hell after

> they are dead, their eyes are put out, that they see not what is their birthrights, and what is to be done by them here on Earth while they are living. (569)[29]

If the common not-here-not-now argument used by the clergy is unacceptable to Winstanley, so is the other stategy of evasion, the this-is-meant-spiritually argument.[30] As we have seen, Winstanley expected that the Law of Righteousness would be acted "materially," and that by the same token the promise that the poor should inherit the earth did not mean some abstract sense of "the inward satisfaction of mind which the poor shall have," but that the promise "is really and materially to be fulfilled" (388-9).[31]

It is in this materialism and activism that the difference between Winstanley's model and More's model in Utopia are best seen.[32] Winstanley and More share a number of key convictions, most notably the conviction that there exists a conspiracy of the rich against the poor. However, the fact that Winstanley could not have read More's deliberations until 1651, when the Utopia was translated from Latin into English, already points to a profound difference in these authors' agenda. More's analysis looks at the problem from a position of power, and tries to answer simultaneously the question of how a better society may be envisaged, and of how rulers may be influenced in concrete political situations by those closest to them. What emerges is a highly ambiguous work which fuses politically incompatible insights into a paradoxical structure in which

at least two positions are left to modify and contradict each other (that of the character More and that of Hythlodaeus).[33] Thus, while More's book is a subtle portrayal of the complexities of practical politics, it does not call for revolutionary action. In fact, the Utopia discourages any grass-roots appropriation by the very language it uses.

That this may have been a judicious decision becomes visible when we consider those aspects Winstanley does newly develop in his The Law of Fredom in a Platform (1652). Winstanley's idea that the rich exploit the poor and that the clergy are accomplices in this endeavour could have come from anywhere--not least from his own interpretation of the society he lived in. What is new in the Law of Freedom, and what could have come to him via the newly translated Utopia, is the attempt at formulating a law for the "utopian" society he wished to establish. By 1652 the Digger experiment had failed,and it must have been obvious to Winstanley that the social order would, after all, not be reversed through the spreading of Christ at this point. What remained to do was to try and formulate a stable practical framework which might keep the idea alive even after the "experimentall" phase had failed. In this, More's Utopia with its similar attempt at envisaging a coherent alternative society, could come in handy because it could provide just such a practical model. I suspect that More would not have been pleased at this particular reception of his work, and would have been the

first to counteract a programme of political action based on his model of a utopian society; Winstanley, on the other hand, tries to institutionalize just such a model at a point when the possiblity of effecting actual change must have seemed remote.

The question that remains to be asked now is how Winstanley's insistence on action and the here-and-now fits in with the mythological readings this chapter started out with. How could one and the same author insist that eschatological promises had to be taken literally while the story of Jacob and Esau should be read metaphorically, and the story of the Fall had to be read totally against the grain? Indeed, why did he bother developing a mythology at all if only "action is the life of all"? I think the answer is that the one is not possible without the other, that action has to grow out of a set of pre-conceived ideas which make it possible in the first place, a "tradition" which in the case of Winstanley had to be newly developed because the existing tradition of religious thought did not provide for the kind of solution Winstanley was looking for. This estimate is borne out by the fact that Winstanley's mythology predates his communist ideas, so that even in his own thinking the second seems to be a continuation and logical conclusion of the first.

Winstanley was a forerunner in the sense that he did

not have a stable established religious ideology of social change to work from. To be sure, there were the Levellers as well as other radical sectarians with whom Winstanley shares important ideological positions. For the development of an historical notion of the origins of social inequality, for example, the Levellers' historical myth of the Norman Yoke proved particularly fruitful, and Winstanley makes frequent use of it. However, these historical arguments are part of Winstanley's later pamphlets, as he tries to incorporate more and more contemporary ideas into his model. The origin of Winstanley's thinking lies in radical theology, and here he found myths already in place which had a tradition of being used to define eternal truths about God's will and human society: the story of the Fall, the creation myth, the Redemption, the story of Jacob and Esau, of Cain and Abel. These were the models by which many seventeenth-century men and women--both radical and conservative--tried to order their universe, and Winstanley proceeds to re-write these myths to suit his own view of society, and of the purpose of the created world. In doing so, he follows general theological practice, which usually did--and still does-- rely on a fusion of literal and mythological readings. What takes place in Winstanley's writings, therefore, is a fierce battle both over the meaning and concrete social implications of the available myths, and over the question of which biblical positions have to be taken literally.

Thus the Fall, traditionally the ideological base for explaining the necessity of the status quo, becomes its own opposite: an ideological base that demands the overthrow of the status quo. The story of Jacob and Esau, the classic paradigm in predestination theology for explaining the division of humankind into the reprobate and the elect, is turned inside out to portray a continual struggle for social and economic equality. In order to justify organized political action on the part of the dispossessed within a religious framework, Winstanley entered the existing tradition to create a coherent mythology which was to convey the image of a dynamic, precariously destablized society in which political action for the poor would become a way of life. His mythology, therefore, is the basis for his activism, and while Eden, the Fall, and Jacob and Esau are obvious metaphors, they are also real in the sense that Eden is the society which would emerge once private property was abolished, the Fall is the origin of very real oppressions which Winstanley could see all around him, and the subjection of Jacob under Esau is a social fact. Even within this mythology, therefore, Winstanley is remarkably literal and materialist, because all of these myths imply the necessity for change in a real, socially identifiable sense. Winstanley's literal readings of the Bible--Christ's altruism, the role of the poor, the paradigmatic relevance of early Christian communism etc.--are intended to provide the

necessary pragmatic paradigms for concrete action.

I think it should be apparent by now that this is a very different kind of misreading than the types we encountered in the previous two chapters. Labé and Wroth were both concerned with subverting and modifying literary models, and if these modifications entail a corresponding critique of social or political values outside the literary tradition, this is really only possible in a secondary step, insofar as literary models also reproduce available value systems. For this reason, neither Wroth nor Labé can be called politically subversive authors, and their misreadings are not designed to reject or defend openly stated political positions. For Winstanley, the case is different, for he is dealing not with a literary tradition but with a singularly important norm-defining text and the similarly important norm-defining tradition of its exegesis.

In reading and misreading the Bible, Winstanley's aim must be to create a new reading which will, if he is to be successful, be the beginning of a norm-defining tradition of its own. In order to do this, he cannot acknowledge that he may be engaged in a conscious act of misreading--which would be a precondition for Schabert's notion of creative misreading--nor can he give the impression that he is engaged in a Bloomian struggle with a precursor. On the contrary, his objective must be to suggest that his reading is actually the only one to do full justice to the sacred text. Possible misreadings must remain hidden even if the author were aware

that they are distortions, and instead of a playful engagement with the precursor tradition we get heavily fraught ideological battles in which the sacred text is both a tool for an attack on contemporary abuses (Sejanus-style), and the ultimate object of the struggle. A resisting stance can here not be defined by the author's attitude to the Bible, but needs to be seen as an act of open political resistance to a social and political system. The notion of a struggle here implies that the opposing side will use essentially similar strategies to maintain its position, and indeed the glosses of the Geneva Bible suggest that this is true.

With Winstanley, we have clearly left the realm of art--though not necessarily of aesthetic pleasure--and have entered a communicative mode of persuasion and political agitation in which the term "resistance" touches a notion of resistance as it was discussed in the introduction: the resistance of clandestine meetings, civil disobedience, and anti-establishment political action. The difference between Winstanley's stance of resistance and that, for example, of the Geneva Bible glossators, who were themselves committed to a stance of resistance within Catholic society, is therefore a difference in degree, not in kind. Winstanley simply goes further than they would have agreed to go, and thus their Bible, itself a document of Protestant dissent, can become a text in which conservative interests within the Protestant spectrum can be enforced. If Winstanley is more radical than

most of his contemporaries in rethinking existing power structures, it would be wrong to see him as a lone crusader. Rather, within the upheavals of the English Revolution, we should think of him as being one of many voices who all tried to use the Bible to effect social and political change. The strategies used are not going to vary all that much since they are made necessary by a combination of the singular status of the Bible as an authoritative and authorizing text, and the needs of individuals and groups to promote their own interests within their society. As long as these parameters remain stable, and as long as the authority of the Bible is not called into question, Winstanley's endeavours are not going to remain isolated occurrences, but are going to be part of a long line of similar endeavours both before and after his time.

If the Diggers like so many before and after them did not succeed in their endeavours, the reasons for their discontent have, as we know, not disappeared over the past 450 years. With regard to later upheavals, Winstanley is often seen by historians as a forerunner of secular communist thinkers, and depending on the beliefs of the historian in question is either cherished as someone who knew it all way back then, or criticized in the light of later developments for being idealistic, impractical, dogmatic, or downright totalitarian.[34] It seems to me that these fights about whether he was right or not are neither helpful nor fair, since they impose the experiences of the twentieth century

on someone who came, after all, from a very different world than ours. I am also not convinced that Marx is really the thinker Winstanley has most in common with (I suspect his pacifism would, in fact, have rendered Winstanley unsuitable for being a twentieth-century Marxist). In spite of a lot of keen social analysis and a decidedly political agenda, Winstanley was not a secular thinker, and although his religious thought is unorthodox, his view of how people should live together is essentially based on radical Christian ethics rather than our own brand of secularized humanitarian concern.

If the problems of the dispossessed in the Cobham of 1649 have not been solved today, neither has the struggle for control over the Bible come to an end. I am thinking here of the endeavours of the Liberation theologians in Latin America, who seem to be concerned with questions very similar to those which plagued Winstanley: how can the Bible be taken away from those who maintain and support oppressive societies, and how can it be adapted to suit the needs of the disadvantaged within these societies; what does the Christian heritage mean in terms of social responsibility and political action; what exactly do the eschatological promises entail? I think Micheline Triomphe is right when she seems to align Winstanley with the concerns of Liberation Theology rather than secular Marxist thought,[35] and I would like to end this chapter with this analogy. Here, for example, is one of the main spokesmen of Liberation Theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez,

commenting on Isaiah 65:21-22, a verse Winstanley refers to but does not build on. Had he decided to do so, I think despite the difference in style and scholarly parlance this is the kind of argument he would have made:

> The prophets announce the kingdom of peace. But peace presupposes the establishment of justice. . . . . It presupposes the defence of the rights of the poor, punishment of the oppressors, a life free from the fear of being enslaved by others, the liberation of the oppressed. Peace, justice, love and freedom are not private realities . . . . They are social realities, implying a historical liberation. A poorly understood spiritualization has often made us forget the human consequences of the eschatological promises and the power to transform unjust social structures which they imply. The elimination of misery and exploitation is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom. It will become a reality, according to the Book of Isaiah, when . . . "men shall build houses and live to inhabit them, plant vineyards and eat their fruit; they shall not build for others to inhabit nor plant for others to eat . . . . My chosen people shall enjoy the fruit of their labor" . . . [36]

Chapter 7: "Redemption to her whole Seed": How Margaret Fell and her Early Quaker Sisters Read the Bible

When Margaret Fell died at her home at the age of 88, she could look back on a truly remarkable life.[1] Together with George Fox, and with considerable help from her seven daughters and their spouses as well as from her first husband Judge Fell, she had been instrumental in establishing the emerging Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers as they were called by their enemies.[2] Indeed, it is no overstatement to say that in consolidating the new religion she deserves as much credit as the sect's original founder, George Fox. In the course of her life as the "mother of Quakerism,"[3] she spent five years in prison for refusing to swear oaths, undertook ten trips to London usually to visit imprisoned Friends and bargain for their release (the last of these undertaken at the age of 83), went on a 1000 mile tour through England visiting Friends, provided a campaign centre at her home where she received hundreds of letters from Friends all over the world who tried to maintain contact with headquarters, and last but not least wrote 16 discussions on a variety of religious subjects as well as numerous letters to Friends and opponents, to Cromwell, Charles II, to magistrates, judges and eminent courtiers.[4] Nevertheless, Margaret Fell has until recently not received

the scholarly attention she deserves.[5] She shares this fate with almost all of the many women preachers and prophets of the seventeenth century, whose works have never been reprinted, and whose names are generally known only to a small number of specialized historians.[6]

As a publicist, Margaret Fell can be counted among the more moderate exponents of seventeenth-century radical religious thought in the sense that she believed in the reasoned arguments of the preacher rather than in the incendiary calls to action propounded by the millenarian prophets of her age. This does not mean, however, that her views were in any way "conservative" within the Quaker movement,[7] and her Womens Speaking Justified (1666) is among the first extended attempts at a scripture-based defence of women's preaching.[8] She is also one of the few early feminist theologians to move beyond a mere defence of women's status in the church into the creation of a new and partly gynocentric mythology. This chapter will look at the strategies by which Fell and other Quaker women managed to assert themselves against a tradition of misogynist Bible interpretation to wrest from it a more sympathetic model for the position of women.

One problem in studying women's writings of the seventeenth century is that there is such a sudden explosion of texts that it is easy to feel tempted to assume that all barriers had somehow suddenly come down. However, since

99% of all published texts were still written by men, it becomes oppressively clear that the majority of these publications would be either indifferent or hostile to a transfer of power within the church or even within the precepts of the Christian faith. Even the more radical authors need not necessarily have the woman question at heart, as is the case with Gerrard Winstanley's notorious predilection for the sanctity of the patriarchal family.[9] In a sobering article, Anne Laurence even goes so far as to suggest that despite some inroads there was in fact no significant change in the nature of most women's involvement in their churches.[10]

While I do think that Laurence underestimates the achievements of some women particularly in the Quaker church, it is certainly wholesome to listen to what John Bunyan had to say on the subject of women setting up their own meetings as the Quakers had done:

> To appoint Meetings for divine Worship . . . Is an Act of Power: which Power, resideth in the Elders in particular, or in the Church in General. But never in the Women as considered by themselves.[11]

The reasons, to him, are overwhelmingly obvious, and may be deduced from the Fall:

> . . . you should be content to wear this Power, or badge of your inferiority, since the cause thereof, arose at first from yourselves. 'Twas the Woman that at first the Serpent made use of, and by whom he then overthrew the World: wherefore the Woman, to the Worlds end, must wear tokens of her Underlingship in all Matters of Worship. . . . there is her Silence, and shame, and a covering for her face, in token of it . . . Gen 3.16 1 Tim 2.15 1 Cor 11.13 1 Tim 2.9. (325)

In considering Bunyan's position here let us not forget that the issue at stake here was a very tangible one not only in terms of the gendered hierarchy of the social familial order, but also in terms of church government. For Bunyan, to set up separate meetings for women would be a reprehensible and pernicious act of exclusion, and as we shall see in connection with Fell's mythology, Bunyan's anxiety about an exclusion of men may not have been too far-fetched:

> I say, how can it be imagined that the Women should be bound of God to do this in such sort as doth utterly exclude the Elders and all the Men in the Congregation from a possibility of understanding and Judging of what they do? (305)
>
> . . . let her not exclude the Man. But the Man is Excluded by this Womans Meeting from Worship; from Worship, though he be the Head in Worship over the Woman, and by Gods Ordinance appointed to manage it, and this is an Excluding of the worst . . . to cut him off from being the Chief in all Assemblies for Worship, is to Exclude him, and that when he for that in Chief is named. (329)

As can be seen from Bunyan's pronouncements, in tackling the Bible women exegetes had to take on a text of formidable misogynist potential as well as a text which formed the basis for an overpowering tradition of misogynist interpretation. To argue against the authority of the Bible was still an uphill battle even in the turmoils of the Civil War and Interregnum. By the time Margaret Fell got to write her position paper in 1666 everything had changed anyway: the monarchy was back, Quakers were being persecuted everywhere, she herself was in prison, the old order was returning, the

door had shut for the time being. It is against this background that we have to read Fell's defence of "Women's Speaking."

In dealing with these works by early Quaker women authors my primary interest is not a study of the possible influence of earlier or Continental feminist thinkers, for while certain arguments recur (e.g. apologies for Eve), it would be difficult to maintain that they represent clear cases of influence and not, for example, spontaneous (mis)readings brought on by a similar interest on the part of the reader, and by the inherent structure of the biblical master narrative. Thus, while it cannot be proved that Fell and her Quaker colleagues read Agrippa von Nettersheim, it can be proved without doubt that they read the Bible.

In contrast to Winstanley, women are faced with a problem he could disregard: their revisionary Bible interpretations have to remain to some degree within the norms established within their communities. Where Winstanley could devise a whole new religion which would actually separate him and his followers from the rest of Christianity, women usually wanted to extend their field of influence <u>within</u> the communities they belonged to. Unlike Winstanley, therefore, they cannot easily exclude hostile passages by not referring to them, and neither can they attack the status of the biblical record as such independent from the practices of their religious community. Women commentators are thus faced

with a double bind Winstanley did not have to worry about: how to improve the position of women without placing them outside the social environment they wish to be part of. In their endeavours to reinstate women as the co-heirs of Christ's promise and as men's equals in the church, the biggest hurdle to overcome was the Bible itself. Faced with inimical readings of the Bible which affirmed the subjection of women on the basis of Genesis, and which specifically enforced women's silence in the church on the basis of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14, early apologists had essentially two duties to perform: they had to establish counter-readings of the more damaging passages, and they had to reassert the importance of more helpful paradigms found in the Bible.

The second task was easily accomplished by collecting biblical examples of women who did emerge as prophets and leaders in both Testaments. As early as 1655 we therefore find Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole arguing that there was ample evidence in the Bible of women preachers who acted on God's express commands.[12] The most complete catalogue of these female role models was compiled by the Quaker Elizabeth Bathurst in 1683. She highlights 21 such instances in the Old Testament, and stresses Christ's equal treatment of his women followers as well as the role played by women in preaching and promoting the Gospel in the early Christian church.[13] Margaret Fell, who does not concern herself with

Old Testamentary paradigms in the first edition of her Womens Speaking Justified, points to selected examples in the New Testament.

Of particular importance here is the woman of Samaria, who was being instructed by Christ on a one-to-one basis, thereby becoming one of the few to receive direct confirmation from Christ that he was indeed the Messiah:

> . . . you may read in John 4 how he was pleased to preach the Everlasting Gospel to her; and when the woman said unto him, I know that when the Messiah commeth . . . he will tell us all things: Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he; This is more than ever he said in plain words to Man or Woman (that we read of) before he suffered.[14]

Another even more important paradigm is provided by Mary Magdalen and the other women who were first to witness the Resurrection, and who had the express command from Christ to preach the Easter message to the Apostles (John 20; Luke 24; Mark 16; Matthew 28). Fell argues specifically that these women were honoured in this way because they loved Christ the most:

> . . . if their hearts had not been so united and knit unto him in love, that they could not depart as the men did, but sat watching, and waiting, and weeping about the Sepulchre untill the time of his Resurrection, and so were ready to carry his Message, as is manifested, else how should his Disciples have known, who were not there? (7)

In Fell's rendering of the role of women in the transmission of the Gospel, she makes use of Christ's habitual reluctance to proclaim himself the Messiah to argue that in the one instance where he does reveal himself this

honour is given to a woman, who thus becomes privileged beyond Christ's male followers. Likewise the Easter message was first granted to women because their grief and love would not allow them to leave Christ's grave--in contrast to men who seem to have gone back to business as usual after the crucifixion. What we can see here, then, is a surreptitious effort to not only show that Christ took women seriously, but indeed to make women the main receivers of the Gospel to the exclusion of men, who are not present at key events in the life and death of Christ.[15] That this effort to re-establish the important role of women in the early Christian church is part of a battle which is still being fought may be seen from Susanne Heine's 1988 reading of the Resurrection, which apart from a shift of focus from love to courage is remarkably similar to Fell's:

> For a long time courage has been regarded as a cardinal male virtue . . . . The passion narrative shows that women are not interpreted in terms of the cliché of anxiety, and the texts hand down the courage that they in fact showed. As a result the women are the first to receive epiphany and the charge to proclaim the Easter message.[16]

Re-establishing the importance of positive female figures in the Bible is the least problematic aspect of counter-reading the Bible since it requires only a listing and positive evaluation of precedents, and virtually all defenders of women's preaching made use of it. However, for a forceful argument this was not enough as long as misogynist passages and readings were not tackled, and it is here that

the graver interpretive problems arise. There are essentially two basic strategies available. Apart from outright suppression, one could leave a damaging passage intact but shift its impact, narrow its focus or somehow shift its emphasis. On the other hand, one could attack existing hostile readings by arguing that a particular message had been misread and should be read differently. An important example of the first strategy can be seen in Fell's interpretation of the Fall.

In both Womens Speaking Justified and the roughly contemporaneous The Standard of the Lord Revealed (1667), Fell starts out by acknowledging that Eve was the first to give in to the serpent's temptation, and it is in the Standard that she provides the most detailed account of the Fall. Following most apologists, she stresses Eve's inherent innocence and weakness, being as she is "but a part of man"--the part singled out for Satan's snares. She further stresses the serpent's crucial lie ("ye shall not surely die"), and concludes that it was this arch-liar who

> did encounter with weak and innocent woman, and when he lead out her eyes to look upon the tree, she saw it was good and pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, and she took of the fruit thereof to eat, and gave also unto her Husband and he did eat with her: And so here they both came into disobedience and fell from the command of God.[17]

The remarkable thing about Fell's rendering of the Fall is not her emphasis on Eve's weakness and innocence. In fact, that is the weakest and most conventional point of her

argument, since it tries to turn a disadvantage into an advantage by leaving the negative construction of Eve's position intact. Obviously, Fell could not or would not imagine a reason for Eve's action which would not make her appear weak. In general, Fell's treatment here corresponds with that of other Quaker women authors, who as a rule do not seem to be interested in tackling the role of Eve in the Fall. I suspect that this may be due to the fact that all Quakers tended to stress the redemption rather than the transgression because they believed that the redemption had taken place with the birth of Christ, and that they were partakers of it.[18] Elaborate apologies for Eve's actions seem to be the domain of women in traditional churches as can be seen in Aemilia Lanier's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611), which musters a whole array of reasons for Eve's transgression.[19]

What is remarkable about Fell's rendering of the Fall is that a positive strategy in this context is actually to stay as close as possible to the biblical text. Where Milton would invent a whole string of thought processes and motives for both Adam and Eve to elucidate Eve's sole responsibility and Adam's entrapment through his very dependence on Eve, Fell sticks with the biblical text:

> And then the woman saw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she tooke of the fruit thereof, and did eate, and gave also unto her husband with her, and hee did eate.
> And the eyes of both of them were opened.
> (Genesis 3:6-7)

Fell's "interpretation" is, in a manner typical for Quaker exegetical practice, more a re-telling of the Fall than a case of sophisticated biblical exegesis, and in re-telling the story rather than explaining it Fell takes advantage of the sketchiness of the biblical narrative. She neither provides a reason for Adam's action (the Bible does not relate why he took the apple), nor does she provide background information for Eve's action apart from the reasonably sympathetic reasons given in the Bible itself: the apple looked both tasty and pleasant and promised wisdom. As a consequence, the question of relative degrees of guilt is excluded to a large degree, and is actually replaced by a sense of the equal weight of their transgression. Here lies Fell's most significant and almost imperceptible shift of emphasis, for where the Bible stresses a simultaneous emergence of the symptoms of the Fall (both their eyes were opened), Fell stresses the simultaneity of their transgression ("they both came into disobedience and fell from the command of God").

When Paul--or rather the author borrowing Paul's authority[20]--came to interpret the Fall in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 in order to enforce women's silence, he fused a misogynist interpretation of the second creation report with an overly partial account of the Fall:

> Let the woman learne in silence with all subiection:
> But I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurpe authoritie over the man, but to be in silence.
> For Adam was first formed, then Eve:
> And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being

> deceived was in the transgression:
> Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charitie, and holinesse, with sobrietie. (1 Timothy 2:11-15)

Christ himself, on the other hand, had explicitly re-stated the validity of the first creation report in his stand on divorce (Matthew 19:4-5), and Fell uses the conflicting traditions of the two creation reports. She suppresses the second creation report altogether in favour of a clear statement of equality:

> But first let me lay down how God himself hath manifested his Will and Mind concerning women, and unto women.
> And first, when God created Man in his owne Image: in the Image of God created he them, Male and Female: and God blessed them . . . . Here God joyns them together in his own Image, and makes no such distinctions and differences as men do . . . . And God hath put no such difference between the Male and the Female as men would make. (3)

In Fell's reading the first creation report emerges as the sole authority for the origins of humanity, and through it she asserts that both men and women were created in God's image and share the same duties. This creation of equals in God's image implies for her that all differences and distinctions are social constructs, man-made distortions of God's plan. Here for once the inclusive "man" works against men, for while "men" might mean men and women, in a context which rejects the inequality between the sexes "men" clearly carries a strong connotation of "men only." Thus while God intended a condition of equality in his creation, men re-interpreted his intention to their own advantage, and to the

disadvantage of women.

If Genesis could be dealt with by minimizing the guilt question in the story of the Fall and by shifting the emphasis onto the first creation report, other Bible quotations required more radical revisions. Of these the passage from Timothy quoted above and the following pronouncement from Corinthians were by far the most damaging:

> Let your women keepe silence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speake; but <u>they are commanded</u> to bee under obedience: as also saith the Law.
>
> And if they will learne any thing, let them aske their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speake in the church. (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)

One possible way of countering an inimical quotation is always the my-quote-beats-your-quote approach, and indeed the standard repartee to restrictions of women's speech became Joel 2:28 (restated in Acts 2:17), where it is prophesied that in the day of the Lord "it shall come to passe afterward, <u>that</u> I will powre out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sonnes and daughters shall prophecie." In an extended argument, however, quoting the Bible against itself is not enough, since this leaves the opponent's reading intact. Most defenders of women's speech therefore started to look around for more and better ammunition.

Quoting Joel against Paul has the disadvantage that the validity of the opposition depends on whether one accepts that these are indeed the last days in which God's prophecy would come true. One step up from this approach is the

attempt to quote Paul against Paul himself. Here Paul's own regulations concerning women prophesying without having their heads covered as a sign of their inferiority (1 Corinthians 12:3-16) could be used to argue that women did in fact prophesy. More complex still is a strategy which fuses egalitarian biblical statements with a counter-reading of the injunctions to silence. Most authors who tried this fusion opted for an allegorized reading of Corinthians and Timothy in conjunction with passages which stress the equality of all believers in Christ. Among the first to work with such an allegorized reading were Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole in a pamphlet entitled To the Priests and People of England (1655):

> . . . thou tellest the people, Women must not speak in a Church, whereas it is not spoke onely of a Female, for we are all one both male and female in Christ Jesus [cf. Galatians 3:28], but it is weakness that is the woman by Scriptures forbidden, for else thou puttest the Scriptures at a difference in themselves . . . for the Scriptures do say that all the Church may prophesie one by one [cf. 1 Corinthians 14:31], and that women were in the Church, as well as men, do thou judge; and the Scripture saith that a woman may not prophesie with her head uncovered, lest she dishonour her head [cf. 1 Corinthians 11:3-16] . . . . If therefore any speak in Church, whether man or woman, and nothing appear in it but wisdom of man . . . Christ the head is then dishonoured . . . . the woman or weakness whether in male or female, is forbidden to speak in Church. (6-7)

Cotton and Cole here rely on Paul's insistence on the equality of men and women in Christ (re-stated in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, the passage on women wearing veils when prophesying) to argue that a reading which claims that

women were forbidden to speak in church cannot possibly be correct. They then list scriptural evidence for women's preaching for which, paradoxically, Paul's injunction that women should wear veils when prophesying proves extremely helpful. Bunyan uses Paul's pronouncement on women's headgear to show women's inferiority, but he fails to mention that Paul's injunction comes in a context which clearly acknowledges that women did prophesy in church (325). What Paul's injunction entails for Bunyan, therefore, is only the clear subordination of women:

> Let the Men in Prayer be the mouth to God, and the Women lift after with groans and desires. Let the Men stand with open Faces in this Worship, for that they are the image and Glory of God, and let the Women be clothed in modest Apparel, with shamefacedness, in token of the remembraunce of what has been touched afore. (329)

In contrast to this misogynist reading of the passage from Corinthians, Cotton and Cole place all emphasis on the fact that women <u>were</u> allowed to prophesy as long as they wore proper clothing. Thus, if men and women are equal in Christ, and if the Bible provides precedents for women's preaching, these injunctions to silence only make sense if they are read allegorically, so that "men" and "women" become types for certain kinds of people, not notions denoting men and women in a biological sense. This line of argument proved to be highly influential.

If Cotton and Cole argued that the "woman" enjoined by Paul to be silent was in fact weakness in both men and women,

Richard Farnworth argued in the same year that the "woman" represented the flesh and carnal knowledge, and the "man" represented the spirit and the renewed state under the Gospel.[21] Seven years later the Quaker Dorothy White followed the same route by arguing that the "woman" represented the flesh and those who had not yet received the spirit, while the "man" stands for those who had received Christ. However, she goes one step further and pushes the argument to its logical conclusion by placing in her turn the injunction to silence on all those--men and women--who were not true members of the Church of Christ. In this way, one of the centre-pieces of the misogynist tradition of the Bible gets turned around into an argument which separates not men from women but Quakers from non-Quakers:

> . . . and so from the Revelations of God they [i.e. the Apostles] spoke . . . . but all, before they come to this, must come unto silence, and so learn of Christ, the husband, the head of the Woman, which is to keep silence: in the Church all flesh ought to be silenc'd, but her or she that is born of God . . . . but all who speak and not from the power of the living God, ought to keep silence in the Church of Christ.[22]

So far, all attempts at arguing around the Pauline injunctions were concerned with allegorizing the problem or at any rate generalizing it in a way which would hinder an anti-feminist reading. This solution was no doubt helped along by a familiar pattern of biblical exegesis which builds on typlogies of binary oppositions: Cain versus Abel, Esau versus Jacob, the children of the bondwoman versus the children of the free woman (cf. Genesis 21 and Galatians

4:22-26), the seed of the serpent versus the seed of the woman--so why not the "Woman" versus the "Man."[23] However, this is not the only way of getting around a damaging passage, and I suppose that for most modern secular readers it is not even a particularly convincing one. In her Womens Speaking Justified, Margaret Fell tries exactly the opposite avenue with both Timothy and Corinthians: her strategy is to contextualize, historicize, and particularize the injunctions.

Fell starts her attack on the Pauline injunctions by insisting that they had been quoted out of context, and that these readings in fact "wrong the Apostles intentions in these Scriptures" (3). She situates the passage from Corinthians in the context of the Apostle's attempt at establishing order within the early Christian church gatherings, and chapter 14 is indeed concerned with organizing the rights of the individual members to prophesy or to speak in tongues, and with establishing conventions for channeling those who wished to speak into orderly procedures. Having established the general confusion of these early Christian gatherings as the background for Paul's dictum on women's silence, Fell goes on to argue that

> Here the Apostle clearly manifests his intent: for he speaks of women that were under the Law, and in that Transgression as Eve was, and such as were to learn, and not to speak publickly. . . . And it appears clearly, that such women were speaking among the Corinthians, by the Apostles exhorting them. . . (8)

Picking up what in the Bible is clearly an additional justification for Paul's restrictions ("as also saith the law"), Fell transforms it into a tool by which these women can be declared to be individual cases and not women in the generic sense: only those under the law, those who were not converted, had to remain silent. From here it is an easy step to ask the all-important question:"And what is all this to Womens Speaking? that have the Everlasting Gospel to preach, and upon whom the Promise of the Lord is fulfilled, and his Spirit poured upon them according to his word" (9). This, however, is not where the argument ends, for now is the time to bring in the final proof that Paul must have meant it this way, to quote Paul against Paul: "for if he had stopt Womens praying or prophesying, why doth he say . . . every Woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head?" (9)

In countering the passage from Timothy, Fell follows essentially the same strategy, She points out that this passage refers to marital relations and not to women's position within the church, and that even if it did apply to women's preaching it would not matter, since Paul's injunction again has to be seen in context. Taking her cue from verses 9-10, where Paul exhorts his congregation on proper and decent clothing for women, she argues that in fact these particular women were the addressees of his restrictions, and concludes:

> And what is all this to such as have the Power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus poured upon them, and have the Message of the Lord Jesus given unto them? must not they speak the Word of the Lord because of these undecent and unreverent Women that the Apostle speaks of, and to, in these two Scriptures? (9-10)

Fell's strategy here is interesting because in her attempt at defusing the two quotations she is in a problematic double bind. Obviously, the best strategy would be to just throw out the injunctions on the basis of textual corruption, or by simply not referring to them (no doubt this is what Winstanley would--and could--have done). A woman arguing within the tradition, however, cannot adopt this strategy without immediately laying herself open to an attack on the basis of precisely these passages. Thus, the women Paul refers to have to be pronounced special cases, which cannot really be done without putting the blame on some qualities inherent in those women (blaming Paul, another possible avenue, would be out of the question for a seventeenth-century interpreter). This is potentially a double-edged sword since it would depend on excluding some women (those, for example, who do not dress properly) in favour of others.

Fell manages to limit the damaging potential by making sure that she does not play off different types of contemporary women against each other (the godly versus the vain, for example). Instead, she insists that these injunctions have to be seen in their historical context, i.e.,

that they concern women who were contemporaries of Paul and who are, conveniently, dead now. Thus, those under the law, i.e. Jewish women, were excluded from speaking, which means that all Christian women were allowed to speak then and now (I do not think she felt the need to worry about contemporary Jewish women, for in contrast to the early Christian period there were no Jews--men or women--who might speak on behalf of their religion in a congregation in seventeenth-century England). In countering Timothy, where she has to argue on the basis of these women's morals, Fell is also careful not to contrast "undecent and unreverent Women" in general with those who have received the Gospel, which would open the door to contemporary applications, but to contrast only "these . . . Women that the Apostle speaks of, and to" with those who have to deliver Christ's message today.[24] The strategy is essentially one of damage control, in which the potentially negative effect of the argument is displaced onto selected (preferably dead) victims who cannot be harmed any more.[25]

In dealing with Timothy and Corinthians Fell uses a fusion of historicizing readings of the text with effective counter-quotations from other parts of the Bible. However, especially with Timothy she is obviously on shaky ground, for here she also "edits" the text into a shape she is prepared to deal with. While it is true that the Apostle seems concerned primarily with decent female behaviour, he also offers a route to salvation which is suppressed by

Fell: "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing." It is clear why Fell did not wish to tackle this double-edged promise, for to her salvation meant to receive the Spirit and to labour in the Gospel, and while this might be accomplished by men and women in many different ways, the right and even duty to preach is to her a singularly important part of the good work: it is certainly more important than childbearing.[26]

Fell's focus on preaching instead of childbearing or fulfilling one's wifely duties lies at the heart of what concerns practically all of her fellow women preachers. This is not to say that these women could only talk about their own preaching, but that the battle fought by these early feminist theologians was essentially a battle for speech: not the speech of the wifely tutor to her children or even the author of godly conversion narratives, but the speech of the pulpit and of public exhortation. This is the reason why these women feel compelled to return again and again to the same biblical injunctions to silence, to affirm again and again the importance of the same paradigms for women's speech in the Bible. In this connection some of the most important aspects of the Quaker religion were uniquely helpful in establishing new models which could be put to good use by those women Quakers engaged in a battle for speech and authority.

As is the case with Winstanley, the one central piece of early Quaker doctrine is a firm belief in the "inward light,"

in the absolute authority of inspiration: they believed that Christ had come to speak in and through them. The Quakers believed in a conceptual framework which posited God's voice as the ultimate and sole voice of authority as opposed to the waiting silence of his followers, and to this day Quaker services are conducted in silence without a priest or minister as the congregation waits for someone to be "moved" to speak. For early Quakers, this waiting in silence was counter-balanced by the authority of speech once it did come, for a speaker who spoke "in the power," "in the Spirit," or "in Christ Jesus" would necessarily be transmitting what the inner voice had told him--or her, as the case might be, and this is where the concept proves to be singularly liberating for women preachers. The Quaker distribution of voice and silence is helpful for women because it dissociates the right to speak from a gendered concept of authority. Until "moved" to speak, all believers are in basically the same position, the submissive silence traditionally assigned to women only, while the call of God's voice eventually allows all believers to partake of his authority once they do speak. In this way, Quaker women could attach their right to speak to the single most important aspect of early Quaker thought, and were therefore harder to attack from within the Quaker religion.

What the "power" of the inner voice could do for the woman writer can be seen from Sarah Blackborough's conversion

narrative, which she embedded in her The Just and Equall Ballance Discovered (1660). She starts out by describing how she could find no help from the ordained ministers and preachers in her search for spiritual fulfillment, and how she then "returned into the silence out of all babbling talke . . . . and so my mind came to be staid . . . for I began to feel a Teacher in me" (8). Under the promptings of this inner "Teacher" the next step was her conversion to the Quaker religion, and from there to an at first carefully hedged proclamation of her beliefs:

> . . . and my heart was glad, and my love sprung, and still in that I kept which was my teacher in silence, but little did I know when I was here what I had to passe through, and it would be too much for me to bring forth in Paper and Inke, but to the true and faithfull witnesse my mind was still called . . . . and this is my testimony which I beare as I am called thereto, or moved of the Lord. (8-9)

In Sarah Blackborough's case, as indeed in many similar narratives, listening in silence is a precondition for being able to hear the "inward voice," and this spiritual experience in turn leads to the need for communicating the message, if need be "in Paper and Inke": the author can therefore be seen not as an individual seeking recognition but as an instrument in God's plan, a mouthpiece rather than an independent agent.[27] Through this shift in responsibility women acquire both a reason for speaking and an unprecedented sense of authority,[28] and for Sarah Blackborough this new-found authority entails both the assurance of the value of her work, and the firmness necessary to move others--men and women--to return into a

state of attentive silence:

> . . . and my Testimony shall stand forever, and is sealed by that Spirit which hath sealed me unto the Lord forever . . . . And now this is that which I speake again, and lay upon you, and have power so to do, that you return . . . and cease from words, and dwell in silence with that Spirit which calls your mind to hearken to it, that you may be joyned in the power of it. (9)

If in the experience of early Quaker women the inner promptings could lead to power and speech, the same is reflected in the very language they used, for never before had an equally large number of women produced public discourse with quite the same force and conviction. Modelling their style largely on the language of the prophetic books of the Old Testament and on Revelations, and appropriating God's voice for their own ends, they were able to attack even the most powerful groups in society.[29] Listen to what Mary Howgill had to say to Oliver Cromwell in an open letter from 1657:

> When thou wast low, the Lord was thy strength . . . . thou hast chosen the glory of this world, and art as a stinking dunghill in the sight of God . . . . thou hast served thy own glory, and thy own pleasures, and thou art going on in all thy power . . .[30]

Dorothy White also had a decidedly social cause to expostulate:

> . . . for now is the Lord God working his mighty work in the Earth, he is subduing kingdomes, and ruling the Nations with a rod of Iron, he is bringing down Kings from their Thrones; And all you high and loughty ones, you fruitlesse branches, you will the Lord cut down with the sword of his power.[31]

As it turned out, Dorothy White's hopes for a

millenarian reversion did not come true, and we might well ask what all of this has to do with the rather more staid Margaret Fell, who wrote Womens Speaking Justified in prison in 1666, at a time when all millenarian hopes had definitely been put on hold. However, Fell shared her colleagues' firm belief in divine inspiration as the source of all authorized speech, and in her dealings with the authorities she certainly did not mince words either when it came to articulating her point of view. Here, for example, is a typical sample from a letter sent to King Charles in 1666:

> King Charles,
> I desire thee to read this over, which may be for thy satisfaction and profit.
> In the fear of the Lord stand still, and consider, what . . . you have been doing these six years, since the Lord brought you peaceably into this Realm, and made you Rulers over this People. The righteous eye of the Almighty hath been over you, and hath seen all your doings and actions.
> What Lawes have you made or changed, save such as have laid oppression and bondage on the Consciences of Gods People? . . . . I also writ to thee to beware how thou ruled in this Nation, for the people of this Nation was a britle people generally; & besides them the Lord had a people here that was dear unto him.
> And I desired thee not to touch them, nor hurt them; I also desired thee to beware of the Council of Bishops; for if thou hearkened to their Councel, they would be thy ruine; for it was their Councel was the ruine of thy Father . . . . but all was to no purpose, for as long as there was peace in the Land the main business of the Parliament was to invent Lawes to punish and persecute Quakers; but to make Lawes to punish vice, sin and wickedness, and lasciviousness, we had but little of such Lawes.[32]

So far, I have been concerned mainly with seventeenth-century women's attempts at grasping firmly their right to prophesy in church, and by extension--since the church was

everywhere, and everything was religion--to speak about pretty well any issue that came to hand. But there remains one thing to be discussed because apart from the battle over speech these women were also involved in a struggle over images. In its simplest form this struggle can be traced in their attempts at writing a kind of feminist Bible, a Bible in which the female leaders, prophets and disciples of both Testaments would be reinstated in a place which was rightfully theirs. Women in the Bible can be used not only as precedents to prove that women did have and still do have the right to participate actively in their communities and churches. They can also be used to show tnat there is such a thing as a women's church history: that the Bible is not the patriarchal celebration of male supremacy it seems to be. In Womens Speaking Justified, Margaret Fell leaves no doubt that the invisibility of women in the Church is actually one of the symptoms of apostasy:[33]

> But all this opposing and gainsaying of womens speaking hath risen out of the bottomless Pit, and Spirit of Darkness that hath spoken for these many hundred years together in the night of the Apostacy, since the Revelations have ceased and been hid, and so that Spirit hath limited and bound all up with its bond and compass, and so would suffer none to speak, but such as that spirit of Darkness approved of, Man or Woman. (10)

One step up from the revaluation of the role and importance of women in the Bible is the attempt to manipulate the very vocabulary available for conceptualizing religious truths. The basic conceptual danger about many ancient ideas

about God and his creation can be easily demonstrated with regard to the Quaker revaluation of the role of Mary. Quaker writers were generally interested in proving that the Redemption had taken place, and that they were partakers of it. Here they had to rely heavily on God's promise to Eve after the Fall:

> And I will put enmitie betweene thee [i.e. the serpent] and the woman, and betweene thy seed and her seed: it shal bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heele. (Genesis 3:15)

The traditional reading here is that the serpent's "seed" was defeated by the birth of Christ through Mary, and Quakers generally claimed that this promise had been fulfilled. Elizabeth Bathurst put the conclusion in a nutshell:

> Although the Woman was first in the Transgression, which brought in Death; yet was she made by the Power of the Lord, to bring in him who is the Resurrection and the Life. . . . So that it may be said, As by Woman came in the Transgression and Degeneration; So by Woman also came the Reconciliation and Restoration, to wit, Christ, who came of the Womans Seed.[34]

In this rendering a large segment of the Christian road to the last days has already been completed. Original sin, that stronghold of Calvinist doctrine, has already been defeated, and all was accomplished through three players (and with a little help from the serpent): God, Eve, and Mary. In the hands of a male author, obviously, this does not necessarily pose a threat: Eve's transgression can still be dwelt on, and Mary can be degraded to being a mere vessel for God's spirit. In the hands of a feminist author, on the

other hand, these players may provide the first components for a conceptual framework which in fact excludes all men in the scheme of salvation: a woman committed the transgression, another woman redeemed it, and God planned it all. Men--in so far as they are not God--have nothing to do with it. This would have been Bunyan's worst nightmare, and logically enough Quaker men also did not try to develop quite such a gynocentric view of the world. To be fair to her, neither did Elisabeth Bathurst. Margaret Fell, on the other hand, came very close to developing exactly this kind of women-only mythology.

Michael Graves notes that the metaphoric language used by Quaker preachers generally tended to be gender neutral, that is that anyone could relate to a "voice" or "seed" metaphor without having to undergo a mental sex change such as could be required in talking about the church as the bride of Christ.[35] For the majority of writings this already fairly women-friendly phenomenon is certainly true. However, it is fascinating to watch what happens with a supposedly gender-neutral metaphor in the hands of Margaret Fell, or conversely to see how she manipulates highly gendered paradigms such as the Eve-Mary dichotomy or the image of the church as the bride of Christ. Let us therefore first return to Fell's ideas about marriage and husbands in general.

While Fell altogether suppresses the childbirth road to salvation in her discussion of Timothy, she does seem to

leave intact the marital dynamics found both in Corinthians and in Timothy, which re-state the subjection of the wife to her husband. However, it would be mistaken to assume that Fell just silently goes along with these assumptions.[36] On the contrary, in an attempt at defeating these restrictions the marital question gets shifted into a different, ulimately empowering plane of thinking. Fell shares with virtually all her fellow women preachers a strong sense that husbands don't matter when the spirit calls. When she got married to George Fox in 1669, for example, it was to be a marriage of two independent individuals who regarded their work in the Gospel as the single most important aspect of their lives, which is why the couple only spent five or six years actually living together during the 21 years of their married lives.[37] On a practical level, these women were dependent on cooperative husbands. On a conceptual level, however, they could cull a new kind of marital independence from a new kind of marital subjection: if indeed Christ is the "husband" of his church this means that he is also the "head" of all men and women--he therefore out-husbands all husbands.

Fell makes it quite clear that Christ as the ultimate "husband" is also the ultimate teacher. In her repudiation of Corinthians she points to a loophole in Paul's argument, i.e., that not all women have husbands to ask for guidance. The injunction could therefore not refer to women in general, for

> what Husbands have Widows to learn of, but Christ?

> And was not Christ the Husband of Philips four Daughters? [cf. Acts 21:9] And may not they that learn of their husbands speak then? (17)

Barbara Ritter Dailey is of the opinion that this kind of husband-wife imagery is "itself subordinating,"[38] and with regard to Christ and the believer this is certainly true and indeed natural, since equality between God and his creatures is a contradiction in terms. In addition, men had used the concept to argue by way of analogy that women were subject to their husbands just as the church was subject to Christ. In an egalitarian reading, however, in which all are equal before God, and are therefore subjected to Christ in the same degree, the case is significantly altered. Philip's four daughters are allowed to speak precisely because they have learned from their "husband" Christ. When held up against the authority of real life husbands, positing Christ as the ultimate husband can be a liberating move for as long as Christ, the ultimate husband, does all the teaching, real husbands are in fact very much in the position of their wives: brides of Christ.

Apart from being the ideal husband, Christ also happens to be the "seed" of the "woman," and it is in this connection that a seemingly gender-neutral metaphor can take on dangerously gendered connotations. In arguing for the redemptive power of God's promise to Eve Fell claims that women are somehow naturally more opposed to satanic influences than men because God explicitly placed enmity between the woman's seed and the serpent's. This leads to a dazzling

fusion in which woman, the promised seed, and the true church come to be seen as almost synonymous:

> Let this Word of the Lord, which was from the beginning, stop the mouths of all that oppose Womens Speaking in the Power of the Lord; for he hath put enmity between the Woman and the Serpent; and if the Seed of the Woman speak not, the Seed of the Serpent speaks; for God hath put enmity between the two Seeds, and it is manifest, that those that speak against the Woman and her Seeds Speaking, speak out of the enmity of the old Serpents Seed; and God hath fulfilled his Word and his Promise . . . <u>he hath sent forth his Son, made of a woman</u> . . . Gal.4.4,5. (4)

Here we still have the old players--God, the serpent, the woman and their respective seeds--but there is some confusion as to what precisely these seeds are. Clearly, the woman's seed is Christ, who is "made of a woman," but it also seems to be the true church as opposed to the apostate church, for whoever speaks "against the Woman and her Seeds Speaking" belongs to the serpent's side. While the sex of the serpent is open to conjecture, the passage does suggest that the true church descends from the woman and only from her, and it is not even clear anymore whether this woman is Eve, the woman who was promised that there would be enmity between her seed and the serpent's, or if it is Mary, the woman who fulfilled the promise.

Graves points out that the "seed" ranks third in his count of common Quaker metaphors, and he defines three meanings for the metaphor:

> (1) the Seed as the symbol of good or evil, Christ or Satan; (2) the Seed as the Image of the indwelling of good or evil in a person's life; and

> (3) the Seed of the faithful believers, the progeny of Christ, the good seed. (370-71)

In Graves' model, the "seed" used in this way is indeed a gender-neutral metaphor which may include both men and women. Fell's use is not quite as innocent: to her the "seed"--as long as it is a good seed--very often means 'that which comes from the woman, and only from her.' It is Eve's "precious seed" that gets bruised by the serpent, and it is Mary's seed that eventually bruises the serpent's head. Given the continual presence of the "Woman's seed" in Fell's discourse it is at times hard to resist the temptation to read this seed as an independent procreative power inherent in women (and only in them).

While the contamination between the church and the woman's seed may just possibly be coincidental--a case of careless reasoning rather than a meaningful conflation of concepts--this is not an isolated incident. In the following passage Fell creates a similar fusion of concepts. She starts out by amassing biblical proof to show that "the Lord is pleased, when he mentions his Church, to call her by the name of Woman" (4). At the end of the argument, however, there is a characteristic transference from calling the church a woman as a metaphor to saying that she is as woman, and in fact consists of women:[39]

> Thus much may prove that the Church of Christ is a Woman, and those that speak against the womans speaking, speak against the Church of Christ, and the Seed of the Woman, which Seed is Christ; that is to say, Those that speak against the Power of

> the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a woman, simply by reason of her Sex, or because she is a Woman, not regarding the Seed, and Spirit, and Power that speaks in her; such speak against Christ, and his Church, and are of the Seed of the Serpent, wherein logeth the enmity. (5)

In this passage Fell starts out defending her belief that women must be allowed to speak in the church on the basis of an essentially matriarchal mythology. She establishes her initial argument on a common enough assumption: the Church is called a woman. However, in an implied but not openly stated next step she then transforms the allegory to mean that the church is a woman and therefore consists of women. This is the basis on which she can conclude that "those that speak against womans preaching speak against the Church of Christ." Because Christ is the head of the church, the church also takes its origins in "the Woman": those who speak against the church speak against "the seed of the Woman, which seed is Christ," and by a kind of circular logic this means that in suppressing women in the church they speak against both Christ as the product of the woman and the church as a church of his brides.

At this point Fell seems to be suggesting that women <u>are</u> the church precisely because they are women, and she seems to realize that this position excludes men to a degree she may not have wished to endorse. She therefore starts up again ("that is to say . . .") to attack those who would criticize women's speaking on the basis of their sex despite the presence of divine inspiration: these are in fact

reviling "the Seed, and Spirit, and Power that speaks in her." At this point we are in gender-neutral territory because the emphasis on inspiration rather than gender implies that both men and women may be part of the church, and that both might be inspired by God even though it is only the women who get reviled for exercising their Christian duties. This less restrictive attitude does not mean that the original conception has vanished altogether, for it is still present in a submerged form in the reference to the serpent's seed and the old enmity. "Seed" in "not regarding the Seed, and Spirit, and Power" clearly is synonymous with Christ. However, while the "Spirit" and the "Power" are attributes of God, the "Seed" still is a term which insists on Christ's origins rather than his qualities, thus once again tying him firmly to his origins in Mary, the woman whose "seed" he is.

This reluctance to let go of the matriarchal element can also be traced in the submerged implications of the serpent's offspring and their enmity to the woman. Since those who speak against women's preaching speak against the woman, the woman's seed, as well as that other woman, the church, it follows that they must be the offspring of woman's perennial enemy, the serpent. In fact, the serpent is defined not by his (its?) evil deeds but rather by his enmity to both the woman and her "seed" be it Eve's or Mary's: he is the archetypal misogynist, and this gets us back to Fell's belief

that women's silence in the church is a sign of the church's apostasy. Christ derives from the woman and his church--the true church--is a woman; his opponents derive from the serpent, and their church--the apostate church--shares the serpent's misogyny.

Fell's discussion of the church and the "woman's seed" raises two major questions: (1) her conception of the church in terms of gendered image-making, and (2) the mythology she develops around the complex of the Fall and the Redemption. For her, the Fall is a result of Adam's and Eve's combined disobedience, never Eve's alone. In addition, she suppresses God's curse that Eve should be subject to her husband, so that there is subsequently also no mention of Adam's duty to watch over his easily seduced spouse. Instead, she argues that the "enmity" between the serpent and the woman results in a continual opposition between them. In contrast to the Fall, the Redemption is totally in female hands, for if Eve was a partaker of the Fall, she and her counterpart Mary are the sole source for redemption in accordance with God's promise in Genesis 3:15. Adam, on the other hand, who shared fully in the guilt of their transgression, is totally excluded from this process. It is in fact Eve, the "mother of all living" (Genesis 3:21, referred to in Standard 5), who seems to be carrying out the business of procreation all on her own, for although Fell does mention in passing that Adam "knew" his wife Eve (Standard 5), her central image for the

historical development of humankind rests fully on God's promise to Eve. Fell's The Daughter of Sion Awakened (1677) is in fact a detailed depiction of the development of Eve's "seed" under the persecution of the serpent as well as a celebration of how the Redemption has been accomplished by the birth of Christ, the "woman's seed." What Adam and his non-existent "seed" are doing all this while, no one knows. By this I do not mean to suggest that Margaret Fell did not know how children were made (after all, she bore nine children herself), or who begat whom in the Bible. What I do mean to suggest is that humankind as a mythical entity seems to descend from the Fall matrilineally through Eve's "seed" (and her daughters'?) until it finds its great turning point in Mary and her "seed."

In placing her emphasis on the procreative power of the woman, Fell clearly contradicts patriarchal constructions of lineage found in the Bible. Thus, while Matthew 1:1-17 traces Joseph's ancestry through the male line to Abraham, who begat Isaac, who begat Jacob, etc.--and this despite the fact that Joseph is not the father of Christ--Fell traces the descent of all human beings including Christ through Eve's and Mary's line. This reversal is made all the more threatening because of its possible connection with seventeenth-century biological theories of procreation. In contrast to the older notion that women merely provide a vessel for the man's seed, some contemporary authorities believed that both women and men had seeds which had to meet

in the course of conception.[40] Fell's notion of the woman's seed may therefore have disconcerting connotations which attribute to the woman not only an abstract, metaphorical position in bringing about the Redemption, but also a position of biological superiority in the act of procreation. To my knowledge this may well be the first instance in which an attempt is made to privilege women's capacity to bear children over men's capacity to "beget" them.

Margaret Olofson Thickstun points to the fact that male Puritan theologians usually assigned to Mary the role of being the mere vessel for God's higher purpose, little more than a tool to bring about the salvation through the man Jesus Christ.[41] Fell, on the other hand, takes exactly the opposite position in insisting again and again that Christ was "made of a woman" (cf. Galatians 4:4), was her "seed." In one of the few instances where she comes close to describing the Annunciation as the point where God is seen as the actual maker of Christ, the account is closely embedded in statements on women's equality. Rather than stressing Mary's function as a mere vessel, the account reads remarkably like a displaced account of the second creation report--an association which is facilitated through the close proximity of a quotation from the first creation report:

> . . . the Lord God in the Creation, when he made man in his own Image, he made them <u>male</u> and <u>female</u>; and . . . Christ Jesus, as the Apostle saith, was made of a Woman, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and the holy Ghost came upon her, and the holy thing that was born of her, was called the <u>Son of God</u>. (12)

In this vision, rather than being the vessel "filled" with the Lord, Mary seems to be enveloped by God, who then proceeds to 'make' the child of the woman almost as he had 'made' Eve from Adam.

In terms of Fell's view of the Redemption, then, men are not active participants in any meaningful sense of the word: they neither contribute to the great drama as it evolves, nor could they stop it if they wanted to. In fact, they are subsumed within the greater framework of a matriarchal myth in the same way as women are usually subsumed within patriarchal conceptual frameworks. A similar tendency can be found in Fell's allegorical view of the church. In Womens Speaking Justified, she draws on the familiar typology of the apostate church as the City of Babylon (see Revelations 17) in opposition to the true church and Bride of Christ (see Revelations 21). At a first glance, this seems like an extremely problematic move since it endorses the old saint/whore dichotomy. In the hands of someone who wishes to exploit the sexual dynamics of the Whore of Babylon to suggest that evil is an inherently female quality, this is only too true. However, Margaret Fell uses the allegory to quite a different effect, for her vision of the two churches in general, and of the true church in particular ensures the invisibility of men as effectively as her version of the Eve/Mary mythology did.

The glory of the Whore of Babylon lies, as can be expected, not with her charm but rather with the sheer

power of her all-encompassing control:

> . . . this Woman has been arrayed and decked with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; she hath had a golden Cup in her hand, full of Abominations, and hath made all Nations drunk with the Cup of her Fornication . . . . and this woman hath been drunk with the blood of the Saints . . . . and this hath been the woman that hath been speaking and usurping authority for many hundred years together. (10)

In contrast to this, one of the most striking things about Fell's "Bride of Christ"--based as she is on Revelations just like her more daemonic counterpart--is that she is not some chaste and sober damsel but a beautifully adorned and rather amazonian warrior queen. The mere title of the pamphlet in which Fell celebrates her expected arrival reads like and impressive characterization: The Daughter of Sion Awakened, And Putting on Strength, She is Arising, and Shaking her self out of the Dust, and putting on Her Beautiful Garments. In this tract, we can see her arrive in all her glory after centuries "in the wilderness" to shine her light on the "Man of Sin," who represents "Spiritual Darkness":

> And now, in these last dayes, since there has been a falling away, and a Night of Darkness, and a Night of Apostasy . . . . since which time the Woman, that brought forth the Man-child [cf. Revelations 12:1-6], hath been fled into the Wilderness, a place prepared of God for her, and had the two Wings of the great Eagle given to her: But she is now returning out of the Wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved; and the Holy City, New Jerusalem, is coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride for her Husband, having the Glory of God; and her Light is like a Jasper Stone, most precious, clear as Chrystal, which shines forth in its Glory, and clearly makes manifest all the power and body of spiritual Darkness.[42]

In Womens Speaking Justified, where she appears not opposite the Man of Sin, but opposite her more dangerous evil sister, she is even more commanding:

> And this is that free Woman that all the Children of the Promise are born of; not the Children of the bond-woman . . . . but this is the Jerusalem which is free, which is the Mother of us all . . . . now the bond-woman and her Seed is to be cast out [cf. Galatians 4:22-26] . . . . and our Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is coming down from Heaven, and her Light will shine throughout the whole earth, even as a Jasper Stone, clear as Christal [cf. Revelations 21:11], which brings freedom and liberty, and perfect Redemption to her whole Seed; and this is the woman and Image of the Eternal God, that God hath owned, and doth own, and will own for evermore. (11)

Even more than within the framework of the Eve/Mary mythology, one surely has to ask how men fit into Fell's scheme of things. In The Daughter of Sion Awakened, it is true, there is the Man of Sin, but he is only set up to be defeated, and is dispatched in one paragraph. In Womens Speaking Justified, there is not even a male opponent, let alone a male object for identification. In contrast to the City of Babylon, the New Jerusalem is a truly matriarchal church: she gave birth to the "Children of the Promise," and like Eve she is "the Mother of us all." Her struggle is depicted solely in terms of fighting factions of women: Babylon and the seed of the bond-woman versus the New Jerusalem. Her victory is assured, and when she finally comes down from Heaven it is not on the arm of her beloved. Here, even Christ is subsumed by his church as she personally brings "perfect Redemption to her whole Seed," and at this point the

Eve/Mary paradigm of the seed melts into the redemptive function of Christ to form one creature, the woman who is, finally, the sole "image of the Eternal God."

After all of this matriarchal image making, I think it is time to return to our starting point. I started out by showing how Margaret Fell and her contemporaries tried to win first of all their battle for speech in the church. In this struggle they were supported by some of their male colleagues such as Richard Farnworth, George Fox, and George Keith. These men's arguments for women's speech essentially follow patterns similar to the ones delineated for the women authors discussed in this chapter--give or take a few added restrictions or inspired new readings and strategies. However, these authors also had ulterior or at least secondary motives which led them to the defence of women. George Fox's Concerning Sons and Daughters, for example, connected the defence of women's speech with a defence of Quaker speech in general, and protested the imprisonment of women preachers. Richard Farnworth and George Keith were not only interested in defending women preachers but also wanted to attack their--and the women's--most hated opponents, the learned "hireling" clergy. Margaret Fell in her turn also had a secondary motive, and here she differs sharply from her male colleagues, for her aim was also to develop an alternative mythology which would allow women a position equal and, one suspects, even superior to men.

She pursued this aim not only in her most outspoken pamphlets, Womens Speaking Justified and The Daughter of Sion Awakened, but in fact whenever she could fit it into her discourse. What is truly remarkable is that her mythology turned out to be matriarchal to a degree quite untypical for seventeenth-century religious thought--radical or conservative, male or female. How was this possible? I would like to suggest two possible explanations which need not be mutually exclusive.

One explanation might be that there was actually a residual tradition which existed mainly in the oral tradition, and of which different people could partake in differing degrees. I am thinking of something along the lines of the submerged "peasant radicalism" unearthed by Carlo Ginzburg, who recreates the ideas of a sixteenth-century Italian miller who got into trouble with the Inquisition for declaring among other things that the universe had not been created by God.[43] Although I am no specialist in the history of matriarchal thought, I would suggest that there is some evidence for my assumption because of the existence of sectarian movements with matriarchal elements both before and after Fell. Before Margaret Fell there were, for example, the thirteenth-century Guglielmites in Italy, who believed that a female incarnation of the Holy Spirit, Guglielma of Milan, was to establish a new church led by a female pope and female cardinals.[44] In the eighteenth century in America there were the Shakers, who similarly believed that Ann Lee was a female incarnation of

the Holy Spirit and had come to redeem them.[45] It also seems likely that Gnostic ideas of Sophia, the Virgin Wisdom, could have been passed on in the esoteric and apocalyptic tradition (both within the Bible and independent of it) as seems to be the case in the work of the woman mystic Jane Lead, who also helped found the Philadelphia Society in 1694.[46] Finally, it cannot be denied that the Quaker religion itself was conducive to a breaking down of gender divisions in the lives, social practices, and beliefs of its followers.[47]

There is, however, another explanation for Fell's view of the world which can be found much closer to home in her own life. Margaret Fell lived to be 88 years of age, and out of these she spent 61 years "unmarried"--either as a young girl, a widow, or in her rather independent marriage with George Fox. If we do not count the years of her childhood before she got married to Fell, nor the six years during which she actually lived with George Fox, this still leaves us with 38 years during which she was totally her own mistress, presiding both over her own estates and the developing Quaker church. In all of this she was not a lonely person, for she was surrounded by her seven daughters (and their carefully selected Quaker husbands), with whom she kept in close contact even after they got married, and who joined in their mother's belief and commitment. Apart from maintaining contact with practically every major Quaker preacher around, which would also include such imposing matriarchs as Elizabeth Hooton, Fox's first convert and a most dedicated

preacher, Margaret Fell spent most of her later life conducting, maintaining, and sometimes defending the emerging women's meetings. To say that she was surrounded by women would be an understatement, and I believe that she could conceive of matriarchal models because she led a matriarch's life. For Fell, it must have been almost inevitable that she would "forget" every now and then that there were men around who thought that they were the sole crown of the creation, and the consistency with which she tends to privilege images of powerful women in her mythology does suggest that hers may have been a conscious attempt at supplementing the largely patriarchal tradition of the Bible with a matriarchal counter-tradition.

As could be expected, Fell and her colleagues share some important ideological positions with Winstanley (who, it should be remembered, became a Quaker himself after the failure of the Digger experiment). Like him, they rely heavily on the authority of the "inward light," and their rhetorical project is also similar: they, too, try to read the Bible in a way which would allow them a more active role in society, and like Winstanley, they feel that they have been cheated of their birthrights by a long tradition of malicious misrepresentations on the part of the establishment. However, there are also notable differences which go beyond a mere difference of religious beliefs.

In Winstanley, we very rarely find passages in which he feels the need to argue around exegetical arguments he

does not agree with. Instead, we find him severely, even ruthlessly editing the biblical text, omitting whatever is of no use to him, highlighting helpful passages, misrepresenting others. Similarly, while he is clearly enmeshed in a debate over the validity of non-academic and non-clerical points of view, it would be wrong to say that he feels the need to defend his own writing and speaking against forces which would deny these rights as a matter of principle. For the women, this approach is not possible. They cannot simply establish extreme positions outside the parameters set by their community, and they do feel the continual need to tackle and if possible disarm hostile readings. Their position as polemical writers is therefore not so much defined by a confident sense of reclaiming an ancient birthright, as it is governed by a desire to defend hard-won positions. In their endeavours to defend their right to speak and to forge an authoritative voice for themselves, they have more in common with Wroth and Labé than with Winstanley.

Fell's attempt to create new mythological concepts also seems to be closer to Labé's kind of surreptitious revisionism than it is to Winstanley's aggressive reformulation of major Christian myths. Thus, we can say that even within the radical environment of Quaker preaching, the women face the more difficult task as they may be asked to defend their views even within their own congregations.

This atmosphere of social control even within a radical context may account for the fact that we still find traces of esoteric strategies in the works of these women writers. While a defence of women's preaching is a matter of importance to the Quaker church as a whole, and can thus be seen as a polemical project directed at non-Quakers or at the most extremely conservative Quakers, the same is not true, for example, for Fell's matriarchal mythology. Here we have a surreptitious attempt at manipulating the available vocabulary so that it may carry different messages simultaneously. Thus, the victorious church is on the one hand nothing more than a biblically warranted vision of the last days, while on the other hand this same image may also be used to suggest that it is indeed an accurate symbolic representation of the reality of female power and of God's plan in creating his church in his own image. These latter implications are thus esoterically encoded within less aggressive surface positions through a fusion of the metaphoric vehicle and its message. In a way similar to Labé's use of allegory, the disruptive potential here lies not in the stated message but in Fell's handling of the vehicle: to say that the church is like a woman is unproblematic; to say that the metaphor and the message are one, that she is a woman, is a different matter.

Chapter 8: Beyond the Renaissance: Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I made it clear that this was primarily a project which tried to demonstrate a pragmatic interpretive strategy, and that the individual readings would therefore not conform neatly to available theoretical positions. However, I also expressed my hope that the individual chapters and sections would establish connections, telling similarities and differences in a loose and--for the reader--suggestive manner. At this point I would like to show how such connections could be established. What connections we make depends on the interpretive perspective we bring to these texts, and I will start with the author's side, with strategies of resistance. All of the authors dealt with are engaged in some form of resistance. This may be a fairly mild form as is the case in Shakespeare's Richard II, which may be no more than an attempt at resisting the censor's power to dictate what may and what may not be staged; it may be a stance in which the author tries to counteract surreptitiously negative attitudes and restrictions, as is the case in the work of Labé and Wroth, and in Marlowe's Edward II; finally, it may be a revolutionary or politically subversive act of resistance, as is the case in Winstanley's and Fell's polemical writings. Depending on the confrontational level of individual resisting stances (and

different levels may be combined in one text), there are a number of basic strategies which might be worth highlighting.

The first and most basic level is one in which almost all of the authors discussed are involved: it is concerned with what may be called against-the-grain representation. Presenting a gay man "against the grain" in a positive light (Marlowe), or finding a hitherto unavailable way of expressing female sexual desire (Wroth) are acts of resistance. A counterpart to this type of representation is a mode of attack, the open denunciation of oppressive social norms and practices. This, too, may be done in a fairly mild form (Labé's dedicatory epistle), it may come in the shape of a broad and systematic attack (Jonson, Winstanley, Fell), and it may eventually lead to a call for change (Labé, Fell, Winstanley).

Against-the-grain representation is often coupled with an attempt to build alternative traditions, as is the case in Marlowe's vignette on the subject of a collective gay past, in Labé's recourse to the model of Sappho, in Winstanley's view of the role of the poor and in Fell's view of the role of women in the transmission of the Gospel. One step up from these tradition-building endeavours are strategies which try to create alternative models of society or of interpersonal relationships, and it is indeed noticeable that many of the authors dealt with here show a marked interest in

envisaging utopian counter-models. A fairly modest form is Wroth's Cupid mythology, which allows her to posit a muse, an object of desire, and a relationship in which sexual desire becomes a form of worship, of living in harmony with a transcendental reality. Louise Labé's is a more pronounced case which tries to posit a whole new societal model. I have said that her Débat relies on the realistic depiction of the minutiae of everyday life, but the end result is essentially utopian. While listings of men's and women's fashions are realistic enough, the society represented and ruled by Folly--a de-hierarchized society without religious obligations--is not. Fell and Winstanley, finally, provide their own utopian models of a matriarchal church and a communist society respectively. It is with these two authors that an act of resistance through reading and writing leads into the domain of concrete politically subversive action.

As we have seen, in all of these endeavours the historical, religious, or artistic traditions available to the authors played an important role. Thus, different historical views may be played off against each other (Richard II); a historical event may be re-read and represented against the grain (Edward II); History may be used for an outright attack (Sejanus); a literary tradition may be re-read and subverted from within (Labé, Wroth). With the work of Winstanley and Fell, we have a special case in which a tradition of classist or sexist religious notions has to be countered with the help of the very text used in this tradition as a master narrative.

This leads to an intense contest in which the master text, the Bible, has to be read--and at times misread--in a way which turns it into a useful tool to use against the rival tradition.

This special feature, an intense struggle over a central ideological tool, sets off Fell and Winstanley from the rest of the authors dealt with in this thesis, who are all less confrontational. This is also where we can see a major difference in representational strategy. Fell and Winstanley are political activists and are not afraid of reprisals: the Diggers were dispersed by violence and threats, and Fell spent years in prison for an act of civil disobedience. Since they are not afraid of reprisals, these authors are not esoteric writers; they do not hide the unorthodoxy of their views--though one can argue that Fell's matriarchal mythology is hidden in an esoteric manner, which may be explained by the fact that here she had reason to fear hostility from within the Quaker community. The other writers dealt with in this thesis do take precautions designed to make their views acceptable and to make it more difficult to attack them.

Here the responsibility of the author for his or her work is of immense importance, for the purpose of protective and esoteric strategies is intimately connected with authorial responsibility. An author who wishes to protect himself or herself must therefore avoid drawing rationally

argued, definitive conclusions; he or she must avoid unambiguous representations which would allow for only one reading; in many cases the responsibility is placed on the audience or the reader, who must decode transgressive or unorthodox messages while the author may deny such readings as misrepresentations.

In this thesis, we have met with essentially two basic strategies: (a) double visions, double focus, ambiguity (Richard II, Edward II, Wroth's assertive submissiveness, Labé's use of allegory); (b) displacement and ventriloquism (Labé's Folly, historically warranted and tainted characters in Sejanus, the unreprehensible Older Mortimer as spokesman for a gay tradition). Suppression, a third strategy, allows the author not to tackle extremely damaging concepts, and can be used as a tool both in esoteric and in non-esoteric writing (no religion in Marlowe, Labé, and Wroth; no second creation report in Fell). Similarly useful for both purposes is the surreptitious or openly acknowledged revaluation or transformation of existing paradigms, models, and linguistic conventions (Semiramis and Folly in Labé, Wroth's use of the fire imagery, Fell's interpretation of the seed and the Church of Christ).

What should be obvious by now is that these strategies are not separate strategies which are available to norm-challenging authors only. Thus, double visions are not necessarily and always protective devices, and suppressions

may be useful for a defender of the status quo as much as for its challenger. This state of affairs is not surprising as long as language is the medium common to all authors. Resisting writers do not speak a language of their own, and it is really the fear of authorial responsibility or conversely an indication of authorial anxiety which is the feature uniting esoteric writers. Thus, while the tools they use are those that language offers to all--silences, ambiguity, allegory, imagery, the use of mouthpieces, etc.--within a context of demonstrable or probable authorial anxiety, these may come to be read as "functionalized" (Patterson's term) linguistic patterns designed to protect the authors while allowing them to get their message across.

So far, I have been concerned mainly with features that are similar among the authors discussed, but even a cursory glance at these similarities will show that similar strategies may be used to different ends by authors faced with very different challenges. Here, I find it striking that there clearly is a major difference between female and male authors. We have already seen that Winstanley's and Fell's positions are not the same although they are both engaged in a similar project of re-reading the Bible, and this split can be found in the thesis as a whole. This is nowhere more apparent than in the role played by precursor traditions. Here men can usually rely on the fact that even their acts of resistance will be warranted by some tradition: Shakespeare can draw on

existing rival readings of English history to mount a complicated discussion of rebellion and deposition; Jonson finds a whole historical precedent, already well documented by a male forerunner, waiting for him to be applied almost without alterations in his critique of political degeneration. Wroth and Labé, on the other hand, inevitably find themselves faced with literary traditions which need to be modified and remodelled before they can be used, and for them resistance inevitably starts with just such an active engagement with a precursor tradition.

Protective and esoteric strategies also serve different purposes in men's and women's works. In Shakespeare and Jonson, protective devices are usually used to avoid reasonably well-defined, specific injunctions, against open politicizing, for example, or against representing living persons on stage. In these cases, the source of anxiety for the authors is a localized threat against which they are going to protect themselves.[1] For women, the case is different because they find themselves confronted with such broad injunctions of a general validity that nearly everything needs to be hedged and protected: an independent poetic voice, an expression of sexual desire, a desire for a different societal model. Thus, while a male author of the Renaissance need not worry all that much about his writing as long as he steers clear of known trouble areas, it is hard to imagine a woman author who is not continually engaged in

difficult manoeuvres of evasion, challenge, and self-protection. Since this can also be confirmed in the non-literary work of Winstanley and Fell, we may assume that these manoeuvres are not occasioned by the genre used, but are indeed a result of the different communicative positions held by male and female authors.

One exception from the gendered polarization just described is Marlowe's Edward II, which seems to have a lot in common with the work of the women dealt with here. Like them, he is forced to use a historical precedent against the grain; like them, he is not working against localized injunctions but rather against inimical social constructions, constructions which he seeks to subvert or destroy; like them, he has to work against the inclinations of an important segment of his audience, and he has to manipulate his material in a way which will veil, to a degree, the unorthodoxy not of his views but of his artistic project. It would certainly be wrong to conclude from this evidence that a gay man's perspective may be in essence similar to a woman's, as if gay men were really women manquées. On the contrary, I believe that it is a gay man's social position which may be partly (though not wholly) comparable to the position of women, and that it is therefore the communicative situation of the particular author which will influence the necessity for and choice of particular protective strategies. Thus, while the author of Edward II is clearly not a woman or,

indeed, like a woman, this play does move into areas which lie outside the field of available sanctioned male attitudes, and also outside the field of officially acknowledged values. This confronts Marlowe with problems similar to those faced by women authors, and this may also be responsible for a similarity in response.

If this is true, then we have to assume--as, indeed, I do--that reading and encoding strategies are going to be similar depending on the communicative situation of individual authors. I therefore do not think that we will, for example, get specifically French, Italian, German, or English strategies independent of verifiable social differences at specific times (this may, of course, be different once we move outside this space of culturally and linguistically interrelated countries: Japanese strategies may be very different from the ones I have described). Instead, the Italian miller described by Ginzburg seems to have a lot in common with Winstanley, and Labé clearly shares similarities with Wroth. If, indeed, it is specific social conditions which necessitate these strategies, we may also expect to find them in different periods and in different artistic media, and it is here that we return to a basic concern of this thesis.

I said at the beginning that this is also a thesis which tries to demonstrate the value of its critical approach. It is an approach which I find rarely practiced outside the

field of feminist criticism. However, it is my contention that such an approach would also benefit our reading of later works written in oppressive social and artistic environments, right up to our own, supposedly uninhibited times. To explain my intentions, I would first like to return once more to Leo Strauss and to a little fantasy he sketches to illustrate his idea of esoteric writing--and, one might add, of the seduction of bright young men:

> We can easily imagine that a historian living in a totalitarian country . . . might be led by his investigations to doubt the soundness of the government-sponsored interpretation of the history of religion. Nobody would prevent him from publishing a passionate attack on what he would call the liberal view. He would of course have to state the liberal view before attacking it; he would make that statement in that quiet, unspectacular, and somewhat boring manner which would seem to be but natural; he would use many technical terms, give many quotations and attach undue importance to insignificant details. . . . Only when he reached the core of the argument would he write three or four sentences in that terse and lively style which is apt to arrest the attention of young men who love to think. That central passage would state the case of the adversaries more clearly, compellingly, and mercilessly than it had ever been stated in the heyday of liberalism . . . . His reasonable young reader would for the first time catch a glimpse of the forbiden fruit.[2]

I am not familiar enough with Strauss's work to ascertain to what degree Strauss can be seen to practice his own theory,[3] and I am not even convinced I would like the historian he invents for us here. However, I cannot help feeling that there is some significance in the fact that he felt the need to remind us in 1952 of the existence of what he later called a "forgotten" type of writing. 1952 is an interesting

year because it comes at the height of the McCarthy era, a period in which, along with countless other people, academics began to worry about their jobs. In a poll conducted in 1955 among college and university social scientists,

> twenty-seven percent had "wondered" whether a political opinion they had expressed might affect their job security or promotion; 40 percent had worried that a student might pass on a "warped version of what you had said and lead to false ideas about your political views." Twenty-two percent had at times "refrained from expressing an opinion or participating in some activity in order not to embarrass" their institution. Nine percent had "toned down" recent writing to avoid controversy. One teacher said he never expressed his own opinion in class. "I express the recognized and acknowledged point of view." Some instructors no longer assigned The Communist Manifesto.[4]

Although Strauss is certainly no communist thinker, I suspect that he would have been worried by these developments because his philosophy does depend on a notion of the free academic exchange of ideas, especially in the classroom. In any case, regardless of whether he did or did not have his own political reasons for outlining a "forgotten" theory of covert communication in 1952, the problems he raises certainly have been on my mind since I embarked on this venture of my own. For the interesting thing about his little scenario about the boring historian is that I doubt if most of us would know what questions to ask of such a text. To us, this devious historian would probably be just boring, or maybe we would see him as an orthodox propagandist who slips up every now and then, and if we were already committed to an adversarial position, we would probably not be willing to

think very highly of his mode of communication. He would come across as a plain coward, a fat cat too scared to speak up. I do not think we have been trained to ask the questions necessary for reading covert communications: given the assumption that the author wants to stay alive, remain out of prison, continue living in his country, keep his or her job, or maybe just wants to avoid being ostracized, what could he or she have said; what are the possible positions in a given situation; what can we expect from the author, and what do we get; why is this author not more open?

I believe that asking these questions is a skill we cannot afford to lose because we continue to read works written under past and present repressive regimes, and maybe equally important because historical circumstances do change, and we may well be forced at some point to use those skills and our own suspicious minds again in our own best interests. In this light, this thesis is as much concerned with contemporary reading strategies as it is with Margaret Fell's or Gerrard Winstanley's. As a conclusion to this thesis, I would therefore like to suggest, with the help of a final example, that these critical strategies may well benefit us in our own times.

My test case is Fred Zinnemann's film High Noon, and I have chosen this film for a number of reasons: it gets us back to strategies similar to those delineated in section I; it comes out of a highly business-oriented, workman-like

artistic environment, which means that outside pressures can be expected to be at their highest; it is a reasonably well-documented case where outside pressures can be clearly demonstrated; and, finally, it is an extremely recent example. To get into this discussion, it is necessary to return again to the year of 1952, which saw not only the publication of Persecution and the Art of Writing but also the release of that famous western.

In 1951, the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), which had already conducted investigations into the communist affiliations of the Hollywood film industry in 1947, returned once again to Hollywood. Four years earlier, these hearings had led to the conviction for contempt of Congress of the so-called Hollywood Ten, who were given sentences ranging from two months to one year imprisonment.[5] Despite this outcome, however, there was something positive about these hearings because they mobilized a considerable force of well-known actors, actresses, script-writers, and directors who tried to support the Hollywood Ten, and when that became problematic to oppose the developing blacklist.[6] In 1951, the situation was very different precisely because of the experiences of 1947. The blacklisted screen-writer Dalton Trumbo, himself one of the original Hollywood Ten, describes just where the difference lay:

> The Ten were virgins. We went into an unprecedented situation, which had results we could not predict. . . . No one had ever been blacklisted . . . . So we could not be certain we would lose our jobs; neither could we have been certain that we would go to jail; neither could we be certain that we would become so notorious that there would be no way we could clean ourselves up for a decade. Now cut to two years later: Everybody else who comes before the Committee knows exactly what the penalty is. All the people who took the First and Fifth Amendments after us knew something we had not known, namely, that they would not work for years.[7]

What this new situation meant in concrete terms is clear, for a person called before the Committee could be certain of the consequences. He or she could either cooperate, which inevitably entailed demeaning rituals of self-abasement and of naming names, or could resist, which inevitably meant blacklisting. Thus, when faced with a subpoena from HUAC, the decision was far reaching: cooperate or give up everything. To risk blacklisting meant to risk your job, your career, the comfort of your friends and colleagues, and in some cases your health, your family, and even your home country. Victor Navasky puts the case succinctly:

> . . . those called to testify were advised by their attorneys that they had three choices: to invoke the First Amendment, with its guarantee of free speech and association, and risk going to prison for contempt of Congress like the Hollywood Ten; to invoke the Fifth Amendment, with its privilege against self-incrimination, and lose their jobs . . . . or to cooperate with the Committee and name names and hope to continue working. . . . The ground rules for the decade were set.[8]

The strain on blacklisted artists and their families was intense, and in 1951 no one could be certain how long the blacklist would remain in effect. According to Larry Ceplair

and Stephen Englund, 58 out of 110 people subpoenaed in 1951 decided to cooperate. 31 of these 58 were "important" members of the Hollywood industry in the sense that they had at least four screen credits in 1951. These 31 people together denounced 902 alleged communists, which still amounts to over 200 names once overlapping testimonies are taken into account.[9] Thinking back on the atmosphere among liberals and radicals at the time, the blacklisted director Joseph Losey, who went to England never to return, found that

> the most terrifying thing about the atmosphere . . . was seeing people succumb, and seeing all protest disappear. Because if you did protest, you'd had it.[10]

The effect of these hearings was devastating. By the end of the HUAC hearings in 1952, there was a public list of 324 alleged communists, and the American Legion provided another 356 suspects. Most of these people were blacklisted.[11] Many moved to New York, to Mexico, to France, or to England, and many never came back. The breaking down of the blacklist was a laborious process, which took the remainder of the decade, and Ceplair and Englund estimate that once the blacklist broke down in 1960, "in all perhaps 10 per cent of the blacklisted artists managed to recover active professional lives in the film industry" (419).

This, then, is the general climate surrounding <u>High Noon</u>, which was scripted and filmed at the height of HUAC's reign in Hollywood, a climate of unprecedented and understandable fear and paranoia among liberal and radical Hollywood artists.

Moreover, the film was made by people who had every reason to fear HUAC, as will be apparent from the careers of the producer Stanley Kramer, the script-writer Carl Foreman, and the director Fred Zinnemann. Let us start with Zinnemann, who managed to stay out of HUAC's way. An Austrian emigré, this director can point to an impressive track record of socio-politically-oriented movies. He began his directing career in 1935 by co-directing The Wave (Los Redes), which was filmed in Mexico on the invitation of Velasques Chavez, the Secretary of Culture in the then left-wing Mexican government.[12] The Wave describes the revolt of Mexican fishermen against intolerable working conditions, and Zinnemann's contribution consists of his handling of a cast of non-actors in semidocumentary situations. The Men (1950), made at the beginning of the Korean war for the independent Stanley Kramer production company, deals with the plight of war veterans in a hospital for paraplegics. Again, Zinnemann worked in a semidocumentary mode with a large cast of real war paraplegics, to whom this film is dedicated. Semi-documentary traits can also be detected in his other films like The Search (1948), The Nun's Story (1959), and The Day of the Jackal (1973). On the whole, we may say that Zinnemann's hallmark from an early time onward is a differentiated, often semidocumentary approach which manages to take up controversial issues in non-dogmatic ways, elucidating them from unaccustomed angles. With the notable

exception of Oklahoma! (1955), there is indeed a large body of work which shows Zinnemann to be an empathic director with a taste for off-beat topics and perspectives.

Although Zinnemann is a recognizably critical and socio-politically interested director, there is no evidence to suggest that he got into trouble with HUAC.[13] I think it would be fair to say that Zinnemann was mainly interested in humanitarian issues without following a clearly delineated political agenda, and that he may have viewed the plight of his persecuted Hollywood colleagues in this light. Exactly the opposite is true, however, for Carl Foreman, who was under investigation in 1951 while writing the script for High Noon. Foreman was a shareholder in Kramer's production company, and the two had financed a number of films which tried to deal with social issues. Thus, Champion (1949, dir. Mark Robson and starring Kirk Douglas) casts a cynical look at the world of prize boxing. Home of the Brave (1949, dir. Mark Robson) is one of the first Hollywood films to deal with racism against blacks in the army. After that came Zinnemann's The Men. Compared to these films, Cyrano de Bergerac (1950), directed by Michael Gordon and starring José Ferrer, seems to be plain entertainment, and no doubt this is true. However, Ferrer had a hard time clearing himself with the Committee[14] and Michael Gordon refused to cooperate in 1951, was subsequently blacklisted, and finally in 1958 was willing to name names because--understandably--after 7 years it seemed the easier thing to do.[15] When

Foreman himself was finally subpoenaed to appear before the Committee, this partnership broke up, and Kramer bought him out.[16]

All in all, one can say that Kramer, "a programmatically well-intentioned liberal who dominated the 1950s 'problem picture',"[17] managed to stay out of trouble by retreating or keeping a low profile when necessary (as with Foreman),[18] and being more daring when possible as with The Defiant Ones (1958), for which he knowingly hired the blacklisted script-writer Nedrick Young, making clear in an inside joke in the film that he was in fact the script-writer although he was not openly credited with the script.[19] Foreman, on the other hand, was not willing to back down. He had been a member of the Communist Party as early as 1942--9 years, that is, prior to his hearing--and although he had no intention of defending the communist cause in 1951, he also did not want to name any names. His lawyer found a way, the so-called "qualified" Fifth Amendment plea, which would allow Foreman to "deny past membership year by year backward" without "waiving his right to plead the Fifth Amendment on the issue of past membership or the corollary issue of naming names."[20] In this way, Foreman hoped to be able to establish his long dissociation from the party (thus giving Kramer a chance to "ride out the storm" with him), while at the same time refusing to go through the demeaning name-naming ritual.[21]

As it turned out, these hopes were not fulfilled: Foreman was bought out by Kramer and was blacklisted. In

1952, he left for England, where his passport was confiscated by the American authorities on July 4, 1953, which meant that he could not travel anymore and was, to all intents and purposes, a political refugee in London. In 1956, his lawyer managed to get his passport back for him, and later in the same year he found a way for Foreman to return, repent his communist past in a private hearing, and not name any names. The lawyer clearly tried to establish a precedent which would allow others to come back the same way, but as it turned out Foreman was the only one who was allowed to profit from this opportunity. By 1957, therefore, Foreman was cleared, but I am not sure if he ever returned to live in the United States. In 1973, at any rate, he was living in London.[22]

The reason why I have been so thorough in my evocation of the artistic climate surrounding High Noon is because I wanted to demonstrate as well as I could how the hearings affected individual lives, and that this film was made at a time when a decision to resist could cost one's career, when friendships were irretrievably lost, and when someone like Foreman may well have felt that all the world as he knew it had gone over to the other side. Keeping this in mind, therefore, I would now like to return to the question I have been asking all along: given the assumption that Zinnemann, Foreman, and Kramer had every intention of surviving the Hollywood purges, how was it possible to still make a public artistic statement which would allow them to criticize the very oppression they were labouring under?[23]

High Noon charts in minute detail the last 90 minutes before noon in a small western town as its marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) and the townspeople wait for the arrival of Frank Miller on the noon train. Miller used to be the local crime baron and had been arrested five years earlier by Kane. Now, having been released in spite of everyone's expectations by the liberals from the north, Miller is on his way back to reclaim his town and revenge himself on the marshal. As the film opens, we see Miller's three confederates gather outside the town. The marshal is in the process of getting married to his very young Quaker wife (Grace Kelly), for whom he will give up his gun and his job. Meanwhile, Miller's friends are riding into town, the church bells are ringing as the congregation gathers for the service. The barkeeper standing at the door of his saloon seems overjoyed, hoping for a "big day today." The three arrive at the train station, and it is the dispatcher--quite obviously frightened out of his wits by the prospect of Miller's return--who brings the news to Kane.

Suddenly, everybody is quite eager to have Kane leave town, and he finds himself reluctantly pushed onto his wagon. However, as he and his wife are riding along he decides that this is no solution and turns back to face his persecutors and help protect the community. It is 10:50. The barber, who is also the local undertaker, orders more coffins to be made; Kane will embark on an increasingly desperate search for deputies for the upcoming shoot-out; his wife will have

to make a choice between her husband and her own pacifist Quaker principles; the community will fail to combat the approaching and inevitable take-over. An hour later (story time and viewing time), we will see Kane defeat his four adversaries through his cunning and courage, and with the help of his wife, who is, in fact, the only help he has. The film ends with a famous gesture in film history as Cooper takes off his badge and throws it in the dirt, a visible sign that this marshal can see no more dignity in his office, and that this community may not have been worth the trouble of defending it.

The fact that some political intention is implied in High Noon has long been recognized by critics. Looking back from a safe distance in 1968, for example, Pauline Kael suspects--without approval or indeed even a recognition of the problems of critical film making in 1952--that Foreman's "insights are primer sociology," that "the town's cowardice is Q.E.D.," and that "the Western form is being used for a sneak civics lesson."[24] In a more sympathetic vein, the French critic Georges Sadoul lists "Kane's desperate search for support," the "cowardice of the townspeople who let him stand alone," and even the theme song "Do Not Forsake Me" as "obvious pointers to its allegory of the McCarthy era," and assumes that much of Foreman's own sense of bitterness must have been included in the film."[25] Maybe the most intriguing testimony comes from John Wayne, who as a member of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals

had shared the same environment as the makers of High Noon--on the McCarthy side. In an interview with Playboy, Wayne claimed that he had had an active share in running Foreman out of the country, and he admits that he found High Noon to be among the most un-American things he had ever seen. What irked him in particular was the scene described above, "ole Coop putting the United States marshal's badge under his foot and stepping on it."[26] Thus, most critics agree that "some contemporary social comment was intended"[27] in High Noon.

High Noon is a film about two principles of power, the one upheld by Kane promising due legal process, freedom from fear, and peace; the other embodied by Miller promising tyranny, fear, and violence. However, just exactly who is who in this little scenario? Is Kane the true McCarthy hero, a law and order man who is willing to sacrifice all to combat Miller, the ultimate communist who will bring a reign of fear and terror? Such a reading is made possible by a number of scattered references blaming northern liberals for Miller's release. This would make High Noon an anti-liberal film, and if we think of it in connection with the 1947 Hollywood hearings, there could even be a hint that the communists could only come back because the earlier verdicts were not severe enough. On the other hand, Kane could be the embodiment of liberal values, a man of the law rather than a one man vigilante, and Miller could be the McCarthyite who would destroy all civil liberties and rule in terror.

This reading is supported by Kane's scrupulous attention to the rights of individual citizens in their dealings with the law,[28] which would imply a traditionally liberal notion of the law rather than a right-wing concept of order at any price. Moreover, if one knows about the leanings of Kramer, Zinnemann and above all Foreman, this becomes the more plausible reading. However, without such outside information there is enough evidence pointing either way to make this a trompe-l'oeil in which, as one critic argues, there can be no unequivocal decision because Kane, "while he is clearly a lone crusader, could be interpreted with equal justice as a blacklisted screenwriter or as an isolated anti-communist."[29] However, High Noon is not really a second Richard II, because it does try to push us in one direction rather than the other[30] by providing a wide variety of pointers to facilitate an identification of Miller with the McCarthy threat--in spite of its own scattered anti-liberal references.

One such pointer is the fact that the film makes it clear that Miller used to run this town, and is now coming back to it. The classic communist threat tale would normally involve an unprecedented invasion (either clandestine or openly aggressive) as for example in alien invasion or in secret society plots.[31] In High Noon, the case is exactly the opposite of an alien invasion, for here we have a deposed ruler wishing to repossess what he once owned. Thus, while this could just possibly point to a return of the communist in connection with the 1947 hearings, in terms of American

politics in general, this reading is made difficult to maintain: while even the most paranoid of exposers of communist infiltration could not claim that the United States had ever been under communist rule, any liberal could come up with previous right-wing governments and anti-communist scares.[32]

A similar implication is contained in the explanations offered in the film by the judge, who in contrast to Kane is already packing his bags to get out of town when Kane comes looking for deputies. Although he protests that this is "no time for a lesson in civics," he proceeds to provide just that: drawing on an example from ancient Greece, he explains how the citizens of Athens once ousted a tyrant only to welcome him back later with open arms. What makes this story interesting is the fact that it insists that a willingness to succumb to a certain from of tyrannous rule may be endemic to certain societies. Again, any left-wing liberal living in the USA at the time could have been inclined to believe that a longing for a firm conservative or even reactionary government was endemic to American society. Conversely, a staunch anti-communist would have to argue an exactly reverse state of affairs: that communist rule is inherently alien to American social values, that these values can never be the expression of a latent longing for communist rule.

What holds true for the nature of Miller's claim to power also applies to the very quality of fear experienced

by the townspeople: they do not fear that their lives will be changed beyond recognition by the arrival of Miller. On the contrary, they are afraid of what they know only too well, an atmosphere remarkably close to that described by Trumbo earlier on. Those who do not fear Miller--and there are quite a few--do so for the most capitalist reason of all: Miller is good for business. At least, he is good for some kinds of business singled out with some care and a satirist's eye for irony. The saloon owner, the hotel clerk, the barber-undertaker, these are the people who will profit most from Miller's return, as will of course every criminal in town.

High Noon, it should be pointed out, does not make an explicit connection equating Miller with McCarthy politics and Kane with radical or liberal resistance. In fact, the film tells us next to nothing about these two protagonists, so why should anyone make a connection with ongoing political debates outside the world of the movie? It is here that the film employs a clever ruse which virtually dares us to make identifications beyond the confines of the film. The case of Miller is an instructive one. Although Miller clearly dominates people's imagination in the film, he is really a blank, a character who arrives at the end of the movie, a man like any other, only to make his attempt at regaining his position as ruler of this town and be shot in the process. The script does not give him anything significant to say, and in fact the most powerful statement of his

menacing presence is explicitly connected to a blank, an empty chair. Twice in the film we see the chair Miller sat in when he was convicted, and we hear the voice-over as if emanating from this empty chair: "You'll never hang me, I'll come back." Since these shots are flashbacks, it would have been easily possible to have a flashback showing Miller actually sitting in the chair making his threat. Instead, we get an empty seat in a markedly legal environment, as the film asks us to fill it with someone we know. We cannot really be expected to picture Miller in the chair, for we do not get to see Miller until the end of the film. So, whom do we see sitting there, filling the empty space the film created for us?

A similar strategy can be observed in a recurring set of exchanges which equally dare us to make our own identifications. The first of these occurs in Kane's "lesson in civics" with the judge. Trying to get him to leave, the judge asks Kane to remember Miller's nature, "what he's done to people," to recall "what he is." Well, we might ask, what has he done to people, and what is he? The judge offers no answer and what we get instead is the oracle from the chair. Later Kane tries to convince Helen Ramirez, Miller's and his own ex-mistress, to leave because "anything can happen." And here it is again: "But you know how he is"--"I know how he is." By the time Kane approaches the people in the saloon for aid, we have become used to this game as Kane claims that "we all know what Miller's like," and later still as Kane approaches the

church congregation for help, one of the congregation echoes the same sentiment: "We all know who Miller is, and what Miller is." Well, who is he? What is it that everybody in this film knows and we don't? Miller, it seems, is whoever you want to put in his place.

So far, I have been concerned primarily with the implications of the Kane/Miller allegory. As we have seen, the film offers good reasons for identifying Miller with a reactionary threat and Kane with an embattled liberal position, at least within the context of 1952. The film's trompe-l'oeil protection rests on the fact that these implications are nowhere clearly spelled out. However, once these connections have been made, the film yields a surprising number of parallels to the situation in Hollywood in 1951/52. This is particularly obvious in the reaction of the townspeople, who seem to be united only in one thing: they want Kane to leave. In any ordinary western situation involving a criminal on the loose and an officer of the law, this desire would be absurd, since the community has nothing to lose by letting the marshal do his job, especially if he is doing it on his own. In High Noon, Kane is continually told to leave. One member of the church congregation implies that the whole situation is actually Kane's fault, since he attracted the personal fury of Miller; another speaker claims, surprisingly, that it is Kane who will bring down the town through his presence, for if the town becomes known as a

trouble spot because there is a shoot-out, there will be no more investments from the north, which would in turn hurt business. If Kane is not here when Miller comes there will be no fighting, and thus the logical conclusion is for Kane to get out: "better for you, and better for us." This last argument is particularly close to the position implied by the actions of the Hollywood film industry. In contrast to 1947, there were no attempts made in 1951 to oppose the validity of the HUAC hearings on a matter of principle. If an artist got blacklisted that was the end of the story, because no one would risk handling such dangerous property. Films involving blacklisted artists were liable to be picketed, not to mention the danger of attracting the attention of the Committee, and all of it was bad for business. Thus, in a manner remarkably similar to High Noon, instead of attacking the Committee, the Hollywood film community turned on the victims, trying to stay afloat by eliminating anyone who could attract attention.[33]

In High Noon, this forcible expulsion is finally and tangibly brought home in a scene in the livery stable, where Kane's ex-deputy Harvey once again tries to make him leave town. When Kane refuses again to leave--although it is clear by now that he is obviously at the end of his tether--Harvey tries to put him on his horse perforce. What ensues is a ferocious fist-fight with Kane fighting desperately to stay, and Harvey fighting equally desperately to make him

leave. Since this is the only violent exchange of this intensely physical nature in the film, the film thus reserves its single most violent outburst, a confrontation of an almost inexplicable ferocity, for an issue which does not make sense in terms of the western plot, but which does make perfect sense when seen in the context of the behaviour of the Hollywood film community in 1951/52.

A similar case can be made for Kane's motives for staying. At first, the case is clear. Kane explains that he has "never run from anybody before," and that he has friends in town who need his protection. As it becomes more and more apparent that Kane does not really have any reliable friends in town, he is exposed again and again to the same argument. The judge tells him that this is just a small place in the middle of nowhere and is not worth the trouble. The previous marshal, Kane's friend and mentor, reinforces this point advising Kane to leave because the job isn't worth it, and--a devastating explanation for the townspeople's behaviour--because "down deep they don't care." In the end, of course, Kane himself will endorse this view in his final gesture, the one Wayne with unfailing instinct found so despicable.

To the extent that the thankless nature of the job becomes apparent, Kane's motives for staying are stripped of all rational support and are brought down to a level of existential survival. What starts out as something of a boy-scout's maxim reaches its final test in the livery

stable as Kane explains to Harvey that he is afraid, and that he had indeed thought about riding away because he was "tired," but that he can't do it though he can't say why. Clearly, at this point a confident sense of doing the right thing has given way to a sense of the man's endangered self. What is at stake is no longer a community in need but a notion of personal integrity which needs to be kept intact at all costs.

While this type of anguished decision-making is not a prerequisite for just any run-of-the-mill western hero, it is a concern I have come across again and again in statements made by those who had been blacklisted. When it comes right down to it, what was at stake for whose who chose to risk blacklisting rather than to cooperate was precisely a Kane-like notion that if you gave in you had lost yourself, maybe irretrievably. Here, for example, is how the blacklisted script-writer Bess Taffel puts it:

> Cooperation was out of the question. It was not even a matter of protecting anyone; they obviously knew all the names. It was simply that I was viscerally incapable of allying myself with these men whom I considered evil, who were cynically, knowingly destroying innocent people . . . . And I was unwilling to perjure myself as, I was convinced, the cooperative witnesses were doing. The pattern of their testimony bore out my feeling that they were repeating scenarios given to them, providing expected responses involving self-denigration, an admission of having been duped, the spewing out of anti-Communist sentiments, and, of course, the lists to be named.[34]

Carl Foreman, who I suppose knows Kane better than anyone else, put the matter more tersely: "I knew I could not live

with myself as an informer."[35] The terrible irony in Foreman's script is, of course, that for Kane the battle is over once he has killed his enemies and discarded his badge. What lies ahead is a peaceful life with his wife in a marriage that has weathered its first crisis. For Foreman, the true test lay still ahead as the results of his decision had to be lived with on a daily basis.[36] But then, High Noon is not a film about the costs of resistance or, for that matter, of compliance, but a bitter attack on those who uphold oppressive systems through active participation, implied acquiescence, or silence. It is also an impassioned call for integrity and a celebration of those who resist.

Given the signals embedded in the film it is safe to assume that within the context of 1951/52 an alert, politically aware adult member of the audience would have picked up on the political implications of the story. Does this mean that the film inevitably had to be read in this way? The answer is no, for if this were true, I do not think the film would have survived. It would have been picketed, and Zinnemann would not have escaped the blacklist to make From Here to Eternity in 1953. As we have seen, High Noon poses as a duck/rabbit while simultaneously filling only one side of the trompe-l'oeil with meaning. This provides an important protection since it makes it very difficult if not impossible to pinpoint and prove an adversarial political intent. However, it does not really open the door for two opposed readings which are

equally viable. A diversified audience response is made possible by further layers of protective representation, this time similar to the type I have called genre protection.

If High Noon can be a political parable to some spectators, this need not necessarily be true for everyone. On one level, the film is a western like any other and can certainly be enjoyed on that level. We can watch the clock ticking, tension rising, Kane facing a difficult situation, his wife confronting his ex-mistress, and all players getting into place as we approach the anticipated climax. As we see the saloon crowd waiting, the church crowd praying and the women getting ready to catch the noon train, we may admire a middle-aged man's cunning as he outwits an opponent who outnumbers him four to one. Given these features, it would be perverse to insist that only a political reading will yield the highest degree of satisfaction.

Similarly, the film is engaged in a revision of the role of the western hero as such. Gary Cooper, who was actually ill at the time, is made to look his age, and there is a clear sense that this man is really too old for such a challenge. Victory does not come as a matter of course but has to be won by tiring manouevres, and Kane is capable of feeling--and acknowledging--both fear and despair. He desperately needs his wife, and his at times demeaning search for deputies takes place precisely because this man does not want to face four dangerous criminals on his own. Thus, Kane is no super hero but on the contrary a vulnerable, "ordinary"

guy, and this makes High Noon one of a long procession of westerns which tried to demystify the West, and to subvert the western genre--the most recent example of this type of western is Clint Eastwood's Unforgiven (1992).

In addition to these features, there is the love plot involving Kane, Amy, and Helen Ramirez. As the title song proclaims, this is also a film about the old question of "love and duty," about the value of prior commitments, and the necessity for compromises. While the decision at the centre of the film is really Kane's, his wife Amy is every bit as isolated as he is, and she too has to make up her mind about what she is going to do. While her decision to stay with her husband comes as no surprise, the film does make clear that Amy is neither a coward nor a fool, and should be respected for her choice. Helen Ramirez is an independent businesswoman well able to look after herself, and more important still, she is one of the few characters in the film to match Kane for courage and independence of mind. Thus, High Noon provides a pattern of female behaviour which asserts that women are capable of making independent and courageous decisions, and that it is important that they make up their own minds. Obviously this message also has its political implications since women were threatened with blacklisting just as much as men were, and since the wives of blacklisted artists had to live with the consequences just as much as their husbands had to. The point is, however, that

the problems raised in the love plot may similarly apply to a thousand other situations involving a crisis of conscience or a conflict of interests.

As we have seen, High Noon can be seen as an exceptionally well-shielded expression of liberal political discontent: the trompe-l'oeil device makes it impossible to demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt the film's political leanings, while the conventions of the western genre--and its subversion--as well as the love plot make it possible to view the film as a non-political form of entertainment. For my part, I doubt that it could have been done any other way at the time without seriously endangering the careers of all people involved, and a comparison with other films made in Hollywood in 1952 suggests that this admittedly equivocal and ambiguous film is actually one of the few attempts at criticising the new rules from within the Hollywood film industry.

Bruce Kawin, for example, claims that "some" films "like High Noon, offered covert criticism of McCarthyism," but then fails to come up with even one other film to fit this category (599). His essay lists about 700 films (187 alone in the fifties) in a representative sampling of American film history. For the year 1952, he lists 15 films, among them Niagara (dir. Henry Hathaway), The Quiet Man (dir. John Ford), Monkey Business (dir. Howard Hawkes), Singin' in the Rain, Ivanhoe, and Limelight (dir. Charlie Chaplin, who was in exile by that time). While none of these can be seen

to take an anti-McCarthy stand, however covert, Kawin also lists two clearly anti-communist films, My Son John and Red Planet Mars, which is in keeping with the findings of Cogley, who notes a marked increase in anti-communist propaganda films in 1952.[37] The Video Movie Guide 1992, which lists over 11,000 movies available on video, offers about 60 films for the year 1952, but the result is the same. We have Scaramouche, The Snows of Kilimanjaro, two Bob Hope films, another pro-McCarthy film starring John Wayne (Big Jim McClain), only three films in the mystery/suspense genre which had served as such a powerful vehicle in the forties, no less than five musicals, and a film about the impossibility of making a revolution, Viva Zapata (dir. Elia Kazan, one of the period's most famous cooperative witnesses). The only film that attracted my attention as possibly similar to High Noon is a film I have not seen, Deadline USA (dir. Richard Brooks), starring Humphrey Bogart as an embattled news editor who is trying to do his job while simultaneously trying to keep the publisher from closing down the paper because of outside pressures.[38]

Against the background of these findings, High Noon stands out as a daring attempt at offering resistance to political developments at the time, and it is therefore not surprising that we should find the film to be particularly well-protected through interlocking devices ranging from a trompe-l'oeil structure just plausible enough to offer an

escape route, to genre protections offering the possibility of denying political intent, to the creation of blanks which ask the audience to supply their own conclusions. The special climate of Hollywood cinema, subject as it is to an extremely high exposure and to equally strong market pressures (films have to pass pre-screenings designed to assess a representative audience's reactions and, of course, they should make money), and the extreme political pressures of the year 1952 have thus combined to create an environment in which the strategies talked about in section I of this thesis could suddenly come to life. Thus, we may assume that protective encoding strategies are suited for a wide variety of different socio-political environments, genres, and periods. Since these seem to remain comparatively stable in their function, it is really the contents they are designed to protect which can be expected to be different in different environments. Thus, the concrete political situation necessitating these strategies, as well as the concerns voiced in this manner will be period-specific, whereas the strategies themselves will in all likelihood be drawn from a large but not infinite pool of possible approaches.

The same is not necessarily true for the reading strategies I discussed for the Renaissance, for these will depend on an ever-changing pool of available traditions and hermeneutic strategies. Thus, biblical exegesis is today practiced almost exclusively by theologians, and has been pushed to the margin in most western secularized countries.

In addition, biblical exegesis is today practiced differently than it was practiced in the Renaissance. Occult or mystic trends seemed to have almost died out for a while, and are now in the process of resurfacing in our bookstores under the heading "New Age." Women authors writing over the centuries could look back on an ever-growing tradition of female authorship, so that Jean Rhys's revisionist reading of Jane Eyre is actually the result of a situation Renaissance women authors could only have dreamed of with regard to female precursors. However, while the traditions available are subject to change, and while the reading strategies used to rework them may be period-specific, the need for resisting readings is obviously not a thing of the past but part of an ongoing dynamic process. At the same time, as long as oppressive systems exist--and I have no reason to believe that they will die out tomorrow--there will also be a need for covert communication and for readers equipped to decode these messages. But there is another side to it, for functionalized rhetorical strategies can be used for purposes other than resistance. This thesis, therefore, carries in its approach what may be called an unwritten shadow thesis entitled "Strategies of Oppression" or "Strategies of Indoctrination." Maybe our own age with its multi-media onslaught on people's thinking is in particular need of decoding strategies which allow us to ask the old pragmatic questions: who is speaking about what, and to whom, in what way, and to what purpose?

Notes

Notes to chapter 1

[1] See Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961) 71-6. Where a single author may be a problematic concept as in dramatic texts (which were written for theatre companies) or in Gerrard Winstanley's pamphlets (which were written for the Digger community), I am still inclined to operate with the notion of an implied author position even though I do acknowledge that the author may have dealt with considerable input from other people.

[2] My depiction of Strauss's theory will be based on the following books and articles: Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," Persecution and the Art of Writing (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1952) 22-37; "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing," What is Political Philosophy? (New York: Free Press, 1959) 29-53; Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958).

[3] Strauss, "Persecution," 30.

[4] Strauss, "Persecution," 24.

[5] Paul A. Cantor, "Leo Strauss and Contemporary Hermeneutics," Leo Strauss's Thought: Toward a Critical Engagement, ed. Alan Udoff (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1991) 267-314.

[6] This emphasis is particularly obvious in Strauss's "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing."

[7] On the importance of Louise Labé's appeal to the women of Lyons, see François Rigolot, "Louise Labé et les 'Dames Lionnoises': Les ambiguïtés de la censure," Le signe et le texte: Etude sur l'écriture au XVIe siècle en France, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (Lexington: French Forum, 1990) 13-25.

[8] For such a view of audience response in Richard II, see Larry S. Champion, "The noise of the threatening drum":

Dramatic Strategy and Political Ideology in Shakespeare and the English Chronicles (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1990) 12-14 and 99-109, and Paul Yachnin, "The Powerless Theatre," English Literary Renaissance 21 (1991) 66.

[9] Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence (New York: Oxford UP, 1973).

[10] Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1980).

[11] Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose and Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1974) and The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978).

[12] Ina Schabert, "Creative Reading: Vom Erkenntniswert des kreativen Lesens," Wozu Literaturwissenschaft?: Kritik und Perspektiven, ed. Frank Griesheimer and Alois Prinz (Tübingen: Francke, 1991) 233-259.

[13] Gerald Graff, "Co-optation," The New Historicism, ed. Harold Aram Veeser (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989) 173-4.

[14] See Richard M. Fried, Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 34.

[15] For a similar view, see for example Louis Adrian Montrose, "Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History," English Literary Renaissance 16 (1986): 5-12; Jonathan Dollimore, "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism," New Literary History 21 (1990): 471-93; Carolyn Porter, "History and Literature: 'After the New Historicism'," New Literary History 21 (1990):253-72.

[16] James Holstun, "Ranting at the New Historicism," English Literary Renaissance 19 (1989): 192.

[17] Good examples of such works are Stephen Greenblatt's Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980), and Jonathan Dollimore's Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984).

[18] Annabel Patterson, Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984) 44-48. I am not saying that her rules do not apply--in fact, they do--but that they would have to be tested against a larger body of texts.

[19] Porter 268-9.

[20] Porter 268.

[21] Porter 269.

Notes to section I (introduction)

[1] Jonathan Dollimore, Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) 24.

[2] For the mechanics of censorship, see Joseph Quincy Adams, ed., The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-1673 (1917; New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964); Frederick Seaton Siebert, Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776: The Rise and Decline of Government Control (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1952); Donald Thomas, A Long Time Burning: The History of Literary Censorship in England (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969). Richard Dutton's Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1992) appeared too late for me to consult it.

[3] Evelyn May Albright, Dramatic Publication in England, 1580-1640: A Study of Conditions Affecting Content and Form of Drama (1927; New York: Gordian Press, 1971) 94.

[4] Philip J. Finkenpearl, "'The Comedian's Liberty': Censorship of the Jacobean Stage," English Literary Renaissance 16 (1986): 123-38.

[5] Most of these cases are discussed in Albright and in Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve, Government Regulations of Elizabethan Drama (New York: Burt Franklin, 1908). See also Janet Clare, "'Greater Themes for Insurrection's Arguing': Political Censorship of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Stage," Review of English Studies n.s. 38 (1987): 169-83 for possible cases of censorship in history plays of the 1590s.

[6] Annabel Patterson, Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984) 63.

[7] She calls this an "implicit social contract between authors and authorities" (Patterson 17).

[8] See Michael D. Bristol, Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England (New York and London: Methuen, 1985).

[9] A. P. Rossiter, Angel With Horns: Fifteen Lectures on Shakespeare (1961; London and New York: Longmans, 1989) 51. Stephen Mullaney links this "two-eyedness" with the ambivalent, "anamorphic" language of treason and sedition, as well as with the needs of a heterogeneous audience. See his The Place of a Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988) 129.

[10] Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, "History and Ideology: The Instance of Henry V," Alternative Shakespeares, ed. John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985) 211.

[11] Sidney Shanker, in fact, does not believe that an unquestioningly orthodox play would have been very attractive to an audience from the 1590s onward; see his Shakespeare and the Uses of Ideology (The Hague: Mouton, 1975) 59. Franklin Le van Baumer similarly points out that the "cult of authority" had by the 1590s become "to a certain extent an object of ridicule, and was cultivated by only a minority"; see his The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship (1940; New York: Russel & Russel, 1966) 90.

[12] Paul Yachnin, "The Powerless Theatre," English Literary Renaissance 21 (1991): 49-74.

[13] See Franco Moretti, Signs Taken for Wonders (London: Verso, 1983) 42-82; and David Scott Kastan, "'Proud Majesty Made a Subject': Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule," Shakespeare Quarterly 37 (1986): 459-75. In Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), Jerzy Limon offers a carefully researched account of how anti-James forces within the aristocracy tried to use oppositional drama in the 1620s as a tool for their own propaganda. However, if the theatre really could be an immediately effective vehicle for challenging state authority remains open to question, and here I am willing to side with Yachnin and with Leeds Barroll's excellent article "A New History for Shakespeare and His Time," Shakespeare Quarterly 39 (1988): 441-64.

[14] The play has been edited by T. H. Howard-Hill as Sir John van Olden Barnavelt by John Fletcher and Philip Massinger (Oxford: Malone Society Reprints, 1980). See also Gildersleeve 114-18 and Albright 183-87.

[15] See John Day, The Isle of Guls: A Critical Edition, ed.

Raymond S. Burns (New York: Garland, 1980) 2-3.

[16] Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston, Eastward Ho!, ed. C. G. Petter (London: Ernest Benn, 1973). See also Albright 139-148.

[17] The play has been carefully edited so as to show the censoring: The Book of Sir Thomas More, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Malone Society Reprints, 1911). For a close investigation of the play see Albright 128-39 and Clare, "Political Censorship" 170-74.

[18] Thomas More 1.

[19] Albright 104.

[20] I borrow the term "ventriloquism" from Marie Axton, who uses it to describe just this kind of displacement strategy in The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) 50.

Notes to chapter 2

[1] For the traditional view see E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) and Lily B. Campbell, Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy (San Marino: Huntington Library P, 1947). As early as 1928, however, there appeared a more controversial depiction of Renaissance political ideas in John William Allen's extensive History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (1928; London: Methuen, 1977). For short depictions and representations of the problem of obedience and rebellion see van Baumer 85-120, and Robin Headlam Wells, Shakespeare, Politics and the State (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986) 91-115. For a somewhat vitriolic account of real life politics in Renaissance Europe see Gordon Ross Smith, "A Rabble of Princes: Considerations Touching Shakespeare's Political Orthodoxy in the Second Tetralogy," Journal of the History of Ideas 41 (1980): 29-48. Marie Axton, quoted above, develops a sophisticated analysis of ideas on rebellion, the extent of the royal prerogative, and the impact of the succession debate under Elizabeth. Henry A. Kelly, finally, shows that divine providence was used as an argument on both the Lancastrian and the Yorkist side in discussions of the War of the Roses: Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1970). A useful summary of recent trends in the critical debate on Shakespeare's history plays is provided in Robin

Headlam Wells's "The Fortunes of Tillyard: Twentieth Century Critical Debate on Shakespeare's History Plays," English Studies 66 (1985): 391-403.

[2] For the paradigmatic importance of the reigns of Edward II and Richard II, see Campbell 170-94 and Wells, Shakespeare 106.

[3] The most detailed description of the events to date has been offered by Barroll, 442-54.

[4] The issue was debated in a spate of essays in PLMA: Evelyn May Albright, "Shakespeare's Richard II and the Essex Conspiracy," PMLA 42 (1927):686-707, and "Shakespeare's Richard II, Hayward's History of Henry IV and the Essex Conspiracy," PMLA 46 (1931):694-719; Ray Heffner, "Shakespeare, Hayward and Essex," PMLA 45 (1930):754-780, and "Shakespeare, Hayward and Essex Again," PMLA 47 (1932):898-901.

[5] Peter Ure, introduction, King Richard II, by William Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1956) lix.

[6] For a reprint of the text without the deposition scene, see William Shakespeare, Richard the Second 1597, Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles 13 (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1966).

[7] Ure xiv.

[8] See Jane Clare, "The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in Richard II," Review of English Studies 41 (1990):89-94.

[9] Jeanne T. Newlin, introduction, Richard II: Critical Essays, ed. by Jeanne T. Newlin (New York: Garland, 1984) xiv.

[10] The play is available in the following edition: Woodstock, a Moral History, ed. A. P. Rossiter (London: Malone Reprint Society, 1946).

[11] C. Morris, Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker (London: Oxford UP, 1953) 95.

[12] For discussions of the question of homosexuality in the Renaissance, see John Boswell, Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980); Alan Bray, Homosexuality in Renaissance England (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982); Kent

Gerard and Gert Hekma, eds., The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe (New York: The Haworth Press, 1989); James Saslow, "Homosexuality in the Renaissance: Behaviour, Identity and Artistic Expression," Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey jr. (1989; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991) 90-105. I am aware that there are doubts as to whether we can assume the existence of a sense of gay identity in Renaissance men. Bray in particular is reluctant to endorse such a notion. However, this view has been challenged by Saslow, who finds evidence for an emerging gay consciousness in the Renaissance, and at least with regard to Marlowe I am inclined to agree with him. I will therefore be using modern terminology.

[13] For discussions placing homosexuality at the centre of interest in Edward II, see for example Clifford Leech, "Marlowe's Edward II: Power and Suffering," Critical Quarterly 1 (1959): 181-96; Leonora Leet Brodwin, "Edward II, Marlowe's Culminating Treatment of Love," ELH 31 (1964): 139-55; Purvis E. Boyette, "Wanton Humor and Wanton Poets: Homosexuality in Marlowe's Edward II," Tulane Studies in English 22 (1977): 33-50; Constance Brown Kuriyama, Hammer or Anvil: Psychological Patterns in Christopher Marlowe's Plays (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1980); Ronald Huebert, "Tobacco and Boys and Marlowe," Sewanee Review 92 (1984): 209-24; Claude Summers, "Sex, Politics, and Self-Realization in Edward II," "A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker": New Essays on Christopher Marlowe, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988) 221-240; and Stephen Guy-Bray, "Homophobia and the Depoliticising of Edward II," English Studies in Canada 17 (1991): 125-133.

[14] On Stubbs and Prynne as well as other cases of severe punishment, see Patterson 45-46 and 105-107; on Richard II, see Barroll 446-7. Sir John Hayward, the man who wrote a prose history of the reign of Richard II, was not mutilated but was imprisoned in the Tower from 1601 until the accession of James in 1603.

[15] Barroll 463-4.

[16] I will be using the following edition throughout: William Shakespeare, King Richard II, ed. Peter Ure (1956; London: Methuen, 1986).

[17] C. G. Thayer, Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1983) 2.

[18] See Ure's note on the scene, 16.

[19] A similar point is made by Wells, Shakespeare 9. Patterson identifies ambiguity, what she calls "functional ambiguity", as a basic precondition for indirect discourse under censorship (18).

[20] I will be using the following edition throughout: Christopher Marlowe, Edward II, ed. Roma Gill (London: Oxford UP, 1967).

[21] Two typical examples for the first and the second reading respectively are Brents Stirling, "Bolingbroke's 'Decision'," Shakespeare Quarterly 2 (1951): 27-34, and A. L. French, "Who Deposed Richard II?" Essays in Criticism 17 (1967): 411-33.

[22] Thayer 62.

[23] See Kristian Smidt, Unconformities in Shakespeare's History Plays (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982) 94-5 and 101.

[24] There is no way of knowing if the deposition scene had been cut in the early quartos but had been acted on stage, or if the scene was actually written later and inserted into the later quartos. However, it is my contention that the scene is very firmly embedded in the structure of the surrounding text, which makes it likely that the scene is an integral part of the play. In the quarto of 1597, Richard II is actually quite a different play. In that version, York enters with the news that Richard is willing to abdicate, the Bishop of Carlisle gets to say his speech on the illegality of this deposition and the disasters to follow. After his arrest follows Henry's announcement that the coronation will be held the following Wednesday, and the first plot against Henry is immediately set in motion by the group around Aumerle. Without the deposition scene, therefore, there is a clear line of cause and effect with Richard's abdication, Carlisle's prophecy, and the first plot against Henry confirming Carlisle's prognostics almost on the spot. Such a clear linear development between crime and punishment contradicts the characteristic ambivalence at the heart of Richard II.

[25] See Geoffrey Bullough, ed., Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, vol 3 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960) 405-7.

[26] Patterson 60 and 63.

[27] An exception is Kuriyama, who sees instabilities in these characters as devices used to "heighten the king's tragedy" (180).

[28] Edward II, ed. Gill 23.

[29] The term is Patterson's (71).

[30] Norman Rabkin borrows the duck/rabbit paradigm from E. H. Gombrich's Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation (1956; New York: Pantheon Books, 1961). He applies the concept to another famous trompe-l'oeil, Henry V, in his Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981). See 34-5 for a definition of the trompe-l'oeil device in Henry V.

[31] Quoted in Edward II, ed. Gill, 192-3.

[32] Although critics usually point to the fact that the action would be shielded through the table used to hold Edward down, I find this hard to imagine, since by definition Edward has to be exposed to his assassin. The best I can imagine is that Gurney and Matrevis, kneeling on the upended table, would shield the action with their bodies, but even then the poker and the place of its insertion cannot be hidden, as Edward's screams would send a horror not only into his assassins but into the audience as well. The only staging I have seen of Edward II, by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1991, certainly left nothing to the imagination.

[33] Nicholas Brooke, "Marlowe the Dramatist," Elizabethan Theatre, ed. John Russel Brown and Bernhard Harris (London: Arnold, 1966) 103. The view was first expressed by William Empson in a review article entitled "Two Proper Crimes," The Nation 163 (1946): 444-5. Unlike some of his followers in this line of argument, Empson definitely does not suggest that Marlowe actually agreed with the fitting nature of this punishment.

[34] It seems incredible that Guy-Bray actually has to point to this fact in his attempt at countering homophobic readings of Edward II, which would make Marlowe and his diseased mind responsible for the manner of Edward's death (125-6).

[35] On Lightborn as Marlowe's invention, see Edward II, ed. Gill, 32. Harry Levin pointed to the Lucifer/Lightborn translation in The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (London: Faber & Faber, 1854) 124.

[36] I think it is a fascinating coincidence that the Gay Men's Press should have chosen the faces/vase trompe-l'oeil as their logo.

[37] An extreme case of this tendency is for example Matthew N. Proser, "Edward's Perils: Masochism in Marlowe's Suffering King," Literature and Psychology 34 (1988): 17-25.

[38] See Guy-Bray's essay.

Notes to chapter 3

[1] Examples should not be hard to find. The following list of plays which would seem to invite such a reading is neither complete nor representative: Chapman's tragedies, especially the Byron plays and Bussy d'Ambois; Massinger's plays, especially The Maid of Honour, The Bondman, Believe as You List, and The Roman Actor; Italianate tragedies and Roman plays of the period.

[2] "Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden," Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems, ed. George Parfitt (1976; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980) 469.

[3] Robert E. Knoll, Ben Jonson's Plays: An Introduction (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1964) 79. For other, less naive readings of Sejanus as a conservative--though not necessarily compliant--play, see K. W. Evans, "Sejanus and the Ideal Prince Tradition," Studies in English Literature 11 (1971): 249-64; Norbert H. Platz, "'By Oblique Glance of His Licentious Pen': Ben Jonson's Christian Humanist Protest Against the Counter-Renaissance Conception of the State in Sejanus," Recent Research on Ben Jonson, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1978) 71-107.

[4] An indefatigable, though at times too enthusiastic hunter of parallels is Barbara N. DeLuna in Jonson's Romish Plot: A Study of Catiline and its Historical Context (Oxford: Claredon, 1967). Her introduction is particularly helpful and predates many of Patterson's findings by 17 years. She sees Essex in both Sejanus and Silius, and also traces Raleigh in Silius (6-8). Another proponent of the Essex theory is

Matthew H. Wikander in "'Queasy to be Touched': The World of Ben Jonson's Sejanus," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 78 (1979):345-57. Recently Philip Ayres has argued convincingly for a parallel between Silius' treason trial and the trial of Raleigh for the same crime. See Philip Ayres, introduction, Sejanus His Fall, by Ben Jonson (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989) 16-22.

[5] For essays along these lines, see Platz and Richard Dutton, Ben Jonson: To the First Folio (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983) 54-63.

[6] Ben Jonson, Sejanus His Fall, ed. Philip Ayres (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989) 45. I will be using this edition throughout.

[7] For short discussions of Jonson's sources in relation to Sejanus see Ayres 10-16 and Dutton 57-9. For a short critical evaluation of Jonson's accuracy as a historian (or rather lack of it) see Ayres 28-37.

[8] See Cornelius Tacitus, Annals 1-7, ed. and trans. D. C. A. Shotter (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1989) 52-59 (#8-12) for Drusus, 62-67 (#17-20) for Silius and Sosia, and 78-83 (#43-45) for Cordus. All further references to Tacitus will be to this edition and will be given in the text. I will always give both the page numbers and Tacitus' section numbers.

[9] Tacitus' text at this point runs:

> Magno ea fletu et mox precationibus faustis audita; ac si modum orationi posuisset, misericordia sui gloriaque animos audientium impleverat: ad vana et totiens inrisa revolutus, de reddenda re publica utque consules seu quis alius regimen susciperent, vero quoque et honesto fidem dempsit. (54, #9)

[10] John Sweeney also sees the formulation of theories and their subsequent testing through the action as a recurring pattern in Sejanus, but he does not investigate this phenomenon as a politically useful strategy. See John Sweeney, Jonson and the Psychology of the Public Theatre: To Coin the Spirit, Spend the Soul (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985) 52-54. See also Platz 105.

[11] It is not for nothing that Rabkin chooses Henry V for an application of Gombrich's duck-rabbit paradigm.

[12] I think this is the reason why one word keeps cropping up in relation to Sejanus: Realpolitik. See Dollimore, Radical Tragedy 134, and Geoffrey Hill, "'The world's proportion': Jonson's Dramatic Poetry in Sejanus and Catiline," Jacobean Theatre, ed. J. R. Brown and B. Harris (1960; London: Butler and Tanner, 1960) 124.

[13] Platz 105.

[14] See Ayres' note on II.637-42. Here, incidentally, is one major source amid the whole string of classical references which Jonson does not acknowledge in his extensive marginal annotations: Machiavelli. On the influence of Machiavelli on Sejanus see Ayres 12-13 and Daniel C. Boughner, "Sejanus and Machiavelli," Studies in English Literature 1 (1961): 81-100.

[15] I do not agree with Wikander, who claims that something very similar is actually the case in Sejanus, that Jonson's main criticism of Tiberius is not his despotism but his absenteeism, i.e., that Jonson wanted a stronger monarch, not a better one. See Wikander 356-57.

[16] For similar views see Dutton 61-63, who thinks this is "a particularly dramatic technique" (61).

[17] The shocking quality of the conjunction of "ulcerous" and "anointed" has been analysed by Hill, 124.

[18] See Ayres' note on IV.174.

[19] Both this constitutional argument and Sabinus' notion of non-resistance are Renaissance concepts, not Roman ideas. See Ayres 34-35.

[20] This is ultimately also what happens to the dangerous word "absolute" in this context. It is curious that the passage does not say that Tiberius' power is "absolute," but only his "spoil." Thus the word is used in a context discussing the degree of the ruler's power, while at the same time being shifted away from the concept of power onto the concept of gain.

[21] Platz offers precisely this misreading (72).

[22] Patterson 47-48, 50-51, and 57: "Disclaimers of topical intentions are not to be trusted, and are more likely

to be entry codes to precisely that kind of reading they protest against" (57).

[23] See Patterson 53-57 with special reference to Jonson's changing attitudes to Tacitus. On the role of Tacitus in political debate in general, see M. F. Tenney, "Tacitus in the Politics of Early Stuart England," Classical Journal 37 (1941): 151-63.

[24] Jonathan Goldberg, James I and the Politics of Literature (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1983) 176-77.

[25] Patterson makes a similar, though more believable leap of faith when she claims that Jonson's later arrest after the assassination of Buckingham was due to his Sejanus (Buckingham had been compared to Sejanus by John Eliot in Pariament):

> It was almost as if it were believed that, having patented the topicality of the Sejanus story, Jonson was somehow responsible, if only as a prophet, for Buckingham's fate. (57)

However, it is just as possible that his arrest had nothing to do with the Sejanus story but with his involvement with anti-Buckingham circles. That is the well-supported opinion of Anne Barton in Ben Jonson, Dramatist (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984) 315-17.

[26] Platz does make this connection, 82.

[27] See Wikander 345.

[28] Ayres 9.

[29] Ayres 9.

[30] Only Dutton entertains the idea that "it is just likely that the audience took offence at what they deemed to be the play's covert allusions to contemporary political events" (54). I agree that rather than having been too stupid for it, the audience may have genuinely disliked the play's message, though not necessarily because of its supposed topicality.

[31] Ayres 38.

[32] See Wikander and Ayres 16-22.

[33] "Conversations" 478.

[34] For short discussions of the function of the Cordus passages, see Patterson 52-53 and Platz 74-76.

[35] This speech is not based on Tacitus, and "sower of sedition" is a legal term of Renaissance England.

[36] Tacitus reads "sed neque haec in principem aut principis parentem, quos lex maiestatis amplecitur" (80, #35).

[37] It is interesting to note that Tacitus also seems to use Cordus in a similar function, for he too records his speech in a context which suggests the fear of present applications and recriminations.

[38] See Shadia B. Drury, The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988). Drury, who is generally hostile to Strauss's political philosophy, makes a convincing case for Strauss as an esoteric writer, and also shows that Strauss ventriloquises through the personae of past philosophers (27).

[39] John Marston, The Malcontent, ed. Bernhard Harris (London: Ernest Benn, 1967) 5.

Notes to section II (introduction)

[1] For the precarious social position of the theatre in Renaissance London, see Stephen Mullaney, The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988).

[2] Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" Becoming Visible: Women in European History, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977) 137-163: Margaret Ezell, The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1987).

[3] For a condensed version of Ezell's arguments about women writers, see Margaret Ezell, "The Myth of Judith Shakespeare: Creating the Canon for Women's Literature," New Literary History 21 (1990): 579-92.

[4] See Betty Travitsky, ed., The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980); Moira Ferguson, ed., First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578-1799 (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985); Germaine Greer, Susan Hastings, Jeslyn Medoff, and Melinda Sansone, eds., Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse (London: Virago, 1988). An anthology of tracts by sectarian women of the Civil War years, however, is still missing.

[5] For the estimate that feminist ideas are anachronistic in the Renaissance, see Elaine V. Beilin, Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) xvii. For a forceful argument to the contrary, see Constance Jordan, Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990).

[6] Elaine Hobby, Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-1688 (Ann Arbour: U of Michigan P, 1989) 1 and 6.

[7] These notions have been exhaustively described in Ian Maclean's The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980)

[8] Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1975) 85.

[9] Zemon Davis 75.

[10] Suzanne W. Hull, Chaste, Silent & Obedient: Books for Women 1475-1640 (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982) 16 and 17.

[11] Hull 40

[12] Hull 16.

[13] Angeline Goreau, ed., The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth-Century England (Garden City: Dial Press, 1985) 13. For Goreau's discussion of the concept of modesty, see 9-17.

[14] Giovanni Bruto, La institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente (1555; trans. Thomas Salter, 1579). Quoted in Rosalind Jones, "City Women and Their Audiences: Louise Labé and Veronica Franco," Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourse of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, Nancy Vickers, and Catharine Stimpson (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986) 300.

[15] Ann Rosalind Jones, The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620 (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990) 7.

[16] Karine Berriot, Louise Labé: La belle rebelle et le François Nouveau. Essai, suivi des Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1985) 353.

[17] Jeanne Prine, "Poet of Lyon: Louise Labé," Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation, ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1987) 132. Much of the criticism on Labé has been biographical if not at times outright voyeuristic in nature. For two short and reliable accounts of Labé's life, see Prine and Kenneth Varty, "The Life and Legend of Louise Labé," Nottingham Mediaeval Studies 3 (1959): 78-108.

[18] Quoted in Josephine A. Roberts, introduction, The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth, by Lady Mary Wroth (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State UP, 1983) 32-33.

[19] For a description of the whole episode, see Roberts, introduction, 31-35.

[20] The Debate Betweene Follie and Love. Translated out of French by Robert Greene, Maister of Artes (London 1587). The text is reprinted in Robert Greene, The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene, M.A., ed. Alexander B. Grosart, vol. 4 (London : Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1881) 195-223.

Notes to chapter 4

[1] For a discussion of the intellectual climate in Lyons, see I. D. McFarlane, "Humanism and Literature in Lyons During the First Half of the Sixteenth Century," Renaissance France 1470-1589 (London: Ernest Benn, 1974) 147-166; and Zemon Davis 1-16 and 65-96.

[2] Antoine du Moulin's preface is reprinted in Pernette du Guillet, Rymes, ed. Victor E. Graham (Genève: Droz, 1968) 2-4.

[3] Zemon Davis 73-4.

[4] Berriot 281. I will be using this edition throughout. For a translation of the epistle, see Paul J. Antal, trans., "Louise Labé's Dedicatory Epistle to her Complete Works," Allegorica 1 (1976): 151-55.

[5] On the emergent role of Amazons as potentially disruptive "women on top," see Zemon Davis 143-5.

[6] On Semiramis as a usually reviled character, see Jones, Currency 174.

[7] See Enzo Giudici, Louise Labé: Essai (Roma: Edizioni Dell'Ateneo, 1981) 31-45. Most radical in her appraisal of the Débat is Karine Berriot, who accords the work a central position along with Rabelais in the development of the French vernacular (215).

[8] For discussions of the vogue of Folly, see Michel Foucault, "Stultifera Navis," Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House, 1965) 3-37; Joël Lefebvre, Les fols et la folie: étude sur les genres du comique et la création littéraire en Allemagne pendant la Renaissance (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968); and Augustin Redondo and André Rochon, eds., Visages de la Folie 1500-1650, domaine hispano-italien (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1981).

[9] Greene 200. Wherever available, I will supply Greene's translation together with Labé's text, even if these translations are inaccurate or fragmentary. For a more reliable translation, see The Debate Between Folly and Love, trans. Edwin Marion Cox (London: Williams & Norgate, 1925).

[10] See Robert Cottrell, "The Problematics of Opposition in Louise Labé's Débat de Folie et d'Amour," French Forum 12 (1987): 29 and 37-8.

[11] When Folly contemptuously tells Cupid to take his meaningless chatter elsewhere ("Ce n'est à moi à qui tu dois vendre tes coquilles," 290), Julianne Jones Wright and François Rigolot point out that this may well be a euphemistic substitution of "coquilles" ('mussels') for "couilles" ('balls'). See Wright and Rigolot, "Les interruptions de Folie: Fonction idéologique du porte-parole dans les Oeuvres de Louise Labé," L'Esprit Créateur 30 (1990) 83, note 3.

[12] See Cox: "Shall you never see again dear child? . . . . So then Folly . . . has the power to deprive Venus of the greatest pleasure that she ever had! And that she had, when her son Cupid could see" (18-19).

[13] One might add that this democratization of love mirrors Labé's own literary endeavours, since it is she, the ropemaker's daughter, who is trying to usurp a literary genre which had been predominantly a courtly privilege: that of the Petrarchan and Neoplatonic love lyric.

[14] See Françoise Charpentier, "Les voix du désir: Le Débat de Folie et d'Amour de Louise Labé," Le signe et le texte: Etudes sur l'écriture au XVIe siècle en France, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (Lexington: French Forum, 1990) 37: "De façon tout empirique il s'agît maintenant du vécu de l'amour, et non plus de l'ascèse des philosophes."

[15] Giudici 42 and 40.

[16] In this, Labé seems to be closer to Rabelais than to Erasmus. However, her view of the body is quite remote from Rabelais' scatological humour. The question of Rabelais' misogyny has long been a site for scholarly debate, but Wayne Booth has recently mounted a strong and thoughtful discussion which, after considering the various excuses for Rabelais' treatment of women, still holds him responsible for his misogyny. See Wayne Booth, The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 383-420.

[17] Berriot, throughout her essay, argues that Labé constructs a recognizably 'democratic perspective' (74) which should be seen as a result of her exceptional status as both a woman and a middle-class writer.

[18] I differ here from Anne R. Larsen, who uses the dedicatory epistle to argue that the Débat is a rejection of sex and love in favour of women's learning. See her "Louise Labé's 'Débat de Folie et d'Amour': Feminism and the Defence of Learning," Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 2 (1983): 43-55.

[19] Giudici 38-45.

[20] Prine 137.

[21] For possible connections between Jupiter and the king of France, see Berriot 158, 161, and 172-3.

[22] Natalie Zemon Davis claims that Labé was a Catholic all her life (81), and I have no reason to believe that she may have been an atheist.

[23] For a discussion of Labé's notion of the body as "précieuse et élévé," see Charpentier 36.

[24] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Sexual Linguistics: Gender, Language, Sexuality," New Literary History 16 (1985): 518.

[25] Jordan 176-7.

[26] I am reminded here of the idea that gods "invade" their prophets to make them speak in tongues while the will and individuality of the medium are suspended.

[27] See Giudici, who comes to a similar conclusion (40). I am, however, in contradiction to Cottrell and Larsen, who claim that Mercury and Apollo defend clearly delineated opposing positions.

[28] In this I do not agree with Lefebvre, who sees almost no differences--and certainly no ideological clashes--between Erasmus' Praise of Folly and Labé's Débat (268).

[29] Wayne Rebhorn, "The Metamorphoses of Moria: Structure and Meaning in The Praise of Folly," PMLA 89 (1974): 463.

[30] Erasmus of Rotterdam, The Praise of Folly and Letter to Martin Dorp 1515, trans Betty Radice (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971) 94. I will be using this edition throughout.

[31] Rebhorn 463.

[32] This is particularly obvious when Folly addresses the foolish behaviour of her fellow women (see 88-9).

[33] On the notion of a seeing and a blind Cupid as the image of sacred and profane love respectively, see Erwin Panofsky, "Blind Cupid," Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (1939; New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 92-128.

[34] In Berriot's edition, Apollo's speech has about 1070 lines, of which 42 lines are taken up with his depiction of the negative influences of Folly. Greene does not translate 900 lines. Of the remaining 169 lines, he translates all 42 lines of Apollo's invective against Folly. In this way, a passage which takes up about 4% of Apollo's speech in Labé now takes up 40% in Greene's version of the speech.

[35] Jones, Currency 177.

[36] Lefebvre 215.

[37] Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas, 1981) 159.

[38] Bakhtin 163.

[39] See Angus Fletcher, Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1964) 2.

[40] Carolyn van Dyke, The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 39 and 42.

[41] van Dyke 42.

[42] Fletcher 8.

Notes to chapter 5

[1] The Urania is a prose romance with a separately numbered sonnet sequence, Pamphilia to Amphilanthus, appended to it. There are two parts of the romance, the first one published in 1621, and a continuation available only in manuscript. The first part is made available in Paul Salzman, ed., An Anthology of Seventeeth-Century Fiction (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991) 1-208.

[2] See Goreau 67.

[3] From a letter by John Chamberlain, dated February 22, 1620 (see Goreau 91).

[4] From a letter dated 26 February 1621/22. See Roberts, ed., Wroth 239.

[5] From Asylum Veneris, or a Sanctuary for Ladies (London, 1616). See Goreau 9.

[6] I see the sonnet cycle as largely independent from the romance, since it was clearly written earlier (see Roberts, ed., Wroth 19). Roberts conjectures that the "intense, ambivalent passion of Pamphilia for Amphilanthus" in the poems may merely have "furnished the nucleus" for the later prose narrative (Roberts, ed., Wroth 49).

[7] What can happen when the author does give his lady something to say can be seen in Sidney's sonnet 63 from Astrophil and Stella, in which Stella's double "no" is grammatically deconstructed to mean "yes."

[8] Ann Rosalind Jones, "Assimilation With a Difference: Renaissance Women Poets and Literary Influence," Yale French Studies 62 (1981): 136.

[9] Janet MacArthur, "'A Sydney, though unnamed': Lady Mary Wroth and her Poetical Progenitors," English Studies in Canada 15 (1989):12-20. Her essay is primarily an investigation of those Petrarchan conventions she perceives to be absent from Wroth's work.

[10] On Labé's use of myth, see Gillian Jondorf, "Petrarchan Variations in Pernette du Guillet and Louise Labé," Modern Language Review 71 (1976): 771-3; on the blason, see Jones, "Assimilation," 147-52; on the kiss motif, see François Rigolot, "Signature et signification: Les baisers de

Louise Labé," Romantic Review 75 (1984): 10-24.

[11] Robert Sidney, The Poems of Robert Sidney, ed. P. J. Croft (Oxford: Claredon, 1984) 131. Croft also provides a list of possible parallels between Robert Sidney's and Mary Wroth's poetry (342-5).

[12] Roberts, ed., Wroth P42. I will be using this edition throughout. The P in front of the number of the poem refers to Roberts' consecutive numbering of the poems.

[13] Jones, "Assimilation," 149.

[14] Philip Sidney, The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford: Claredon, 1962) 182-3. The poem is number 36 of Astrophil and Stella.

[15] Good examples of this phenomenon are sonnets 137, 138, 141, 148, 149, and 152. See William Shakespeare, The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974) 1774-7.

[16] Edmund Spenser, Spenser: Poetical Works, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (1912; London: Oxford UP, 1969) 565.

[17] Spenser 567. It should be noted that Daphne's transformation is here not seen as an attempt by the gods to protect her, but as their punishment for her flight.

[18] Spenser 574.

[19] Greer et al., 63.

[20] Roberts, ed., Wroth 41.

[21] Gary F. Waller, introduction, Pamphilia to Amphilanthus, by Lady Mary Wroth (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1977) 3.

[22] MacArthur 15. I agree with MacArthur on Pamphilia's passivity, but I am not sure if "lachrymose" is the appropriate adjective to use.

[23] Greer et al., 63.

[24] To my knowledge, Josephine A. Roberts is the only critic trying to claim Woolf's ideal for Wroth; see her "Lady Mary Wroth's Sonnets: A Labyrinth of the Mind," Journal of Women's Studies in Literature 1 (1979): 327.

[25] Philip Sidney 188.

[26] J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson, eds., Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660: Selected from Early Editions and Manuscripts (1929; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957) 156-7, 163-4, 199, 201, 217-8, 247-61, 455, and 462.

[27] See Elaine V. Beilin, "'The Onely Perfect Vertue': Constancy in Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus," Spenser Studies 2 (1981): 229-45, and Redeeming Eve 208-243.

[28] Carolyn Ruth Swift, "Feminine Identity in Lady Mary Wroth's Romance Urania," English Literary Renaissance 14 (1984): 328-46.

[29] Maureen Quilligan, "Lady Mary Wroth: Female Authority and the Family Romance," Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance, ed. George M. Logan and Gordon Teskey (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989) 273-4.

[30] MacArthur 15 and 18.

[31] May Nelson Paulissen, The Love Sonnets of Lady Mary Wroth: A Critical Introduction (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1982) 48 and 36.

[32] Paulissen 192-200. Her interpretation of the poem as both sensual and religious shares some similarities with my interpretation.

[33] For a convincing division of the sequence into four major units, see Josephine A. Roberts, "The Biographical Problem of Pamphilia to Amphilanthus," Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 1 (1982): 50-51.

[34] Gary Waller, English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century (London: Longman, 1986) 268. In an influential essay, Waller has become something of a spokesman on the subject of "silent inexpressibility" in women's poetry of the period. See Gary F. Waller, "Struggling into Discourse: The Emergence of

Renaissance Women's Writing," Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works, ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay (Kent, Ohio: Kent State UP, 1985) 238-56.

[35] Beilin, "'Perfect Vertue'," 244, note 14.

[36] Othello V.ii.347-8; quoted from the Riverside Shakespeare.

[37] For a description of this relationship, see Roberts, ed., Wroth 24-6.

[38] See Beilin, Redeeming Eve 234-43, Roberts, "Labyrinth," 325-6, and Roberts, ed., Wroth 47-8.

[39] A homoerotic bond very similar to Wroth's religio-erotic imagery is possible, and has for example been attempted in Derek Jarman's film Sebastiane (1976).

[40] John Donne, Complete Poems, ed. Hugh I'Anson Fausset (1931; London: Dent, 1974) 254 and 255-6.

[41] The title page has been reproduced in Roberts, ed., Wroth 76.

[42] Waller makes this statement in connection with Mary Wroth in Sixteenth Century Poetry 266.

[43] François Rigolot, "Écrire au féminin à la Renaissance: problèmes et perspectives," L'Esprit Créateur 30 (1990): 8.

[44] For Wroth's role as a patron and for a collection of poems addressed to her, see Roberts, ed., Wroth 10-22.

Notes to section III (introduction)

[1] For an excellent early study of these currents, see John William Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (1928; London: Methuen, 1977). For a more recent overview, see George H. Williams, The Radical Reformation (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962).

[2] For a short discussion of censorship in the period, see Frederick Seaton Siebert, Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776: The Rise and Decline of Government Control (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1952) 163-233.

[3] These radical movements were admirably described in Christopher Hill's The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution (London: Temple Smith, 1972). For further discussions, see Brian Manning, ed., Politics, Religion and the English Civil War (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), and J. F. McGregor and B. Reay, eds., Radical Religion in the English Revolution (London: Oxford UP, 1984).

[4] See B. Reay, "Radicalism and Religion in the English Revolution: An Introduction," Radical Religion in the English Revolution, ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay (London: Oxford UP, 1984) 13.

[5] Reay, "Radicalism," 12.

[6] Reay, "Radicalism," 5.

[7] It is interesting to note that here, too, the impulse seems to come from the historians' corner, as for example in Christopher Hill's Milton and the English Revolution (New York: Viking, 1978).

[8] These authors are usually counted among the Ranters. Some of their extremely radical work is available in Nigel Smith's anthology A Collection of Ranter Writings from the Seventeenth Century (London: Junction Books, 1983). For historical studies on this group, see Arthur Leslie Morton, The World of the Ranters: Religious Radicalism in the English Revolution (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970); Jerome Friedman, Blasphemy, Immorality, and Anarchy: The Ranters and the English Revolution (Athens: Ohio UP, 1987); J. C. Davis, Fear, Myth, and History: The Ranters and the Historians (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986).

[9] Nigel Smith, Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640-1660 (Oxford: Claredon, 1989) 341.

[10] Charles H. George, "Gerrard Winstanley: A Critical Retrospect," The Dissenting Tradition: Essays for Leland H. Carlson, ed. Robert Cole and Michael E. Moody (Athens: Ohio UP, 1975) 211.

[11] Hill, World 75. It seems to me that the status of biblical authority in the Renaissance has a lot in common with our own use of the ambiguous authority of statistics and scientific data.

[12] Thomas Metscher, "Subversive, Radical and Revolutionary Traditions in European Literature between 1300 and the Age of Bunyan: Some Comments," Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik 29 (1981): 15-16.

[13] Micheline Triomphe, "La Bible anglaise et ses lecteurs 'unauthorized': Le cas Winstanley," Recherches Anglaises et Américaines 14 (1981): 26.

[14] Quoted by Triomphe from A. W. Pollard's Record of the English Bible (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911), 29.

[15] The Holy Bible: An Exact Reprint in Roman Type, Page for Page of the Authorized Version Published in the Year 1611 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911). Unless stated otherwise, I will be using this Bible throughout.

[16] The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969).

[17] It seems that the translators of the heavily annotated Geneva Bible were well aware of the problem. See for example their glosses on Matthew 6: 19-34, 19: 20-24, and 10: 9-10; Mark 10: 21 and 6: 8; Luke 6: 20-24 and 9:3.

[18] Both tracts are reprinted in Smith, ed., Ranter Writings 80-116. For references to James 5: 1-7, see 94, 98, 101, 103, 110, and 111.

[19] This stress on community goes hand in hand with the invocation of Acts 2: 44-5, 4: 32-4, and 5: 1-12--the passages dealing with the communism of the early Apostolic community. Coppe was obviously not willing to let go of this particular

concept, for he rephrases and reiterates it even in his recantation which was written in a desperate attempt to get out of prison (145).

Notes to chapter 6

[1] Christopher Hill sees their actions as the culmination of a long history of similar squattings. See Christopher Hill, introduction, The Law of Freedom and Other Writings, by Gerrard Winstanley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 21.

[2] See Hill, introduction, 29-30. In this chapter I will be using the following edition: The Works of Gerrard Winstanley, ed. George H. Sabine (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1941).

[3] For the impact and development of the Digger colony, see David W. Petegorsky, Left-Wing Democracy in the English Civil War (London: Golancz, 1940) 153-76. For a concise biographical sketch, see Hill, introduction, 11-35. The data around Winstanley's death have been conclusively established in James Alsop, "Gerrard Winstanley's Later Life," Past and Present 82 (1979): 73-81.

[4] Many historians, most notably Hill, have commented on the quality of his prose style. A first discussion of his literary qualities was made in J. Max Patrick, "The Literature of the Diggers," University of Toronto Quarterly 12 (1942): 94-110, and recently there have been two studies written primarily from a literary angle: Thomas Wilson Hayes, Winstanley the Digger: A Literary Analysis of Radical Ideas in the English Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1979); Olivier Lutaud, Winstanley: Socialisme et Christianisme sous Cromwell (Paris: Didier, 1976).

[5] The most cogent representation of this issue is, I think, Christopher Hill's The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978). Other good essays are G. E. Aylmer, "The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley," Radical Religion in the English Revolution, ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay (London: Oxford UP, 1984) 91-119, and J. R. Knott, "Gerrard Winstanley's Land of Righteousness," The Sword and the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980) 85-105.

[6] For the first attitude, see George cited above, and George Juretic, "Digger No Millenarian: The Revolutionising of Gerrard Winstanley," Journal of the History of Ideas 36 (1975): 263-80. The second position is

best represented by Lotte Mulligan, John K. Graham, and Judith Richards, "Winstanley: A Case for the Man as He Said He Was," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 28 (1977):57-75. Aylmer rejects this polarization as "sterile and unreal," and stresses that Winstanley's communism and his theology are "literally inseparable"(92 and 93).

[7] Lutaud has a short section devoted to Winstanley's use of the Bible giving a general outline of his preference for Genesis, the prophetic books of the Old Testament, Acts, the Gospel of John, the Pauline epistles, and Revelations (450-53).

[8] See Hill, Religion, 19 and 49.

[9] For a politically radical argument which still operates on this basic assumption, see for example Milton's Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649).

[10] Since the Jacob/Esau paradigm is closely connected to the first and the second Adam, I will not be dealing with it separately.

[11] For an evaluation of the spirit/letter dichotomy as a democratizing and empowering concept, see Triomphe's essay. See also Hayes, 91-2.

[12] Winstanley even goes so far as to suggest that all these exegetical expositions "without doubt . . . varied the copies" (128).

[13] Winstanley also repeatedly establishes a connection between inclosures of land and predestination theology as well as congregational worship, which "hedges in" some but not others (381; 445-6; 530).

[14] Aylmer 95; George 112; Juretic 279.

[15] Hill, Religion 30; Knott 99; Sabine, ed., Works 45.

[16] A. S. P. Woodhouse, ed., Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-9) from the Clarke Manuscripts (1939; London: Dent, 1947) 59. For a close-up view of seventeenth-century democracy in the making I cannot recommend these debates enough.

[17] Edward Harold Browne, An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, 10th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1874) 829.

[18] Although I do not always agree with George's conclusions, I do share his view that these quotations are at best tangential to Winstanley's thought, and do not provide any sort of biblical proof for his actions (see George, 214).

[19] This is one of the few instances where we can say with certainty that Winstanley used the Authorized Version: the Geneva Bible translates plough-shares as mattocks, and pruning-hooks as scythes.

[20] The belief in a set of cumulative revelations through various dispensations bears some resemblance to the teachings of Joachim of Fiore of the twelfth century, and was common among radical theologians. However, Smith argues that these parallels are for the most part not due to direct influence but that in the excited atmosphere of the times "these ideas were circulating spontaneously without any specific connection to Joachim's ideas" (Perfection 232).

[21] Such a fusion of the speaker's and God's voices is quite characteristic of much of the prophetic literature of the period. For a cogent discussion of this phenomenon, see Smith, Perfection 24-5, 59, and 69.

[22] 315, 445, and Hill, ed., Law 156-7.

[23] As can be expected, such trances are hardly ever taken seriously by historians and even less by literary critics. For an intelligent and uncommonly thorough investigation into the phenonenon, see Smith, Perfection 23-103.

[24] Hill, Religion 22.

[25] Winstanley describes all of these circumstances in the preface to his anthology of earlier works, Several Pieces Gathered into one Volume, dated December 20, 1649. The preface is reprinted in Hill's edition (155-57), and the quotations can be found on p. 156.

[26] Hill, introduction, 24.

[27] For similar cases of biblical language or congregational policy influencing the shape of divine communications, see Smith, Perfection, 47-8.

[28] For a listing of the continuities of pre- and post-Digger thought in Winstanley, see Patrick 103-4.

[29] As a matter of belief, it is safe to say that Winstanley believed in a universal salvation here on earth, and did not concern himself with heavenly recompensations: since nobody has ever come back from the dead to talk about it, the existence or non-existence of heaven "matters not much" (462). The idea of hell, on the other hand, was rejected outright by Winstanley as an obscene fiction (e.g. 381).

[30] Abiezer Coppe also seems to have found himself confronted with these lines of counter-argument with regard to James 5:1-3 (see Smith, ed., Ranter Writings, 111).

[31] It should be stressed that if Winstanley's anti-clericalism can hardly be exaggerated, neither can his pacifism. At no point does he advocate an armed revolution, and he in fact repeatedly stresses that the functions of power and not the people exercising it should be removed (e.g. 182-3, 305, 372). The transition from one system to the other was to be effected not by a violent overthrow but by labour withdrawal amounting to a general strike, by passive resistance, and by civil disobedience.

[32] I think it is unlikely that Winstanley could have read More's book in Latin before 1651, though he could, of course, have heard of it.

[33] The double nature of More's vision and life has, I think, been admirably described in Stephen Greenblatt's Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1980) 11-73.

[34] A particularly uncompromising attack on both Winstanley and the Hill school of historians is J. C. Davis' "Gerrard Winstanley and the Restoration of True Magistracy," Past and Present 70 (1976): 76-93.

[35] Triomphe 37.

[36] Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation: History,

Politics and Salvation, trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973) 167-8. I sometimes think that we, who come from highly industrialized, high-tech societies, seem to be singularly unsuited for understanding the world of Renaissance England, and I wish to acknowledge two books here which I have found extremely helpful for bridging this gap, although they could not be brought into the discussion here. The first is a sociological study of small-scale peasant resistance in a Malaysian village, and the second a minute recreation of the life and beliefs of a sixteenth-century Italian miller: James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985); Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980).

Notes to chapter 7

[1] Margaret Fell Askew Fox (1614-1702) was born Askew, later married Thomas Fell, and after that George Fox. I will call her by her first husband's name because that is how she signed her own pamphlets.

[2] For a short autobiographical description of Fell's life, see "A Relation of Margaret Fell" in Margaret Fell, A Collection of Remarkable Passages and Occurences Relating to the Birth, Education, Life, Conversion, Travels, Services, and Deep Sufferings of that Ancient, Eminent, and Faithful Servant of the Lord, Margaret Fell (London: J. Sowles, 1710). This is the first and so far the only edition of Fell's collected works along with excerpts and summaries of letters to Friends and rulers. Excerpts of her works and letters were reprinted in Hugh Barbour, ed., Margaret Fell Speaking, Pendle Hill Pamphlets 5 (Wallingford: Pendle Hill Publications, 1976). The authoritative biography of Fell is Isabel Ross, Margaret Fell: Mother of Quakerism (London: Longmans, 1949). Shorter biographical sketches can be found in Barbare Ritter Dailey, "The Husbands of Margaret Fell: An Essay on Religious Metaphor and Social Change," The Seventeenth Century 17 (1987): 55-71.

[3] This concept started circulating during her own lifetime. For a discussion of her role as "mother" to the movement, see Dailey's essay.

[4] For a summary of biographical data, see Ross 407-12, and for her "headquarter" activities 45-66.

[5] Barry Reay, for example, does not include her in the index of his influential The Quakers and the English Revolution (London: Temple Smith, 1985). Richard T. Vann's equally influential study The Social Development of English Quakerism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1969) dedicates four pages to her. It seems as if William C. Braithwaite's seminal study The Beginnings of Quakerism (1912; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1961) is still among the more generous works in allotting space to Margaret Fell. Symptomatic of this kind of exclusion is the fact that Hugh Barbour's and O. Roberts' large collection of early Quaker writers is almost totally devoid of either Margaret Fell or indeed her many other female Quaker colleagues. See Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973).

[6] This does not mean that no work has been done on the subject. An excellent study of the lives of these early Quaker women preachers is Mabel Richmond Brailsford, Quaker Women 1650-1690 (London: Duckworth, 1915). For women preachers, prophets, and petitioners alike an invaluable study is Elaine Hobby, Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-1688 (Ann Arbour: U of Michigan P, 1989). For further discussions of women preachers and women Quakers, see Mary Maples Dunn, "Saints and Sisters: Congregational and Quaker Women in the Early Colonial Period," American Quarterly 30 (1978): 582-601; Elaine Huber, "A Woman Must Not Speak: Quaker Women in the English Left Wing," Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New Work: Simon and Schuster, 1979): 153-182; Phyllis Mack, "Women as Prophets During the English Civil War," Feminist Studies 8 (1982): 19-45; Judith Scheffler, "Prison Writings of Early Quaker Women: 'We were stronger afterward than before'," Quaker History 73 (1984): 25-37; Dorothy P. Ludlow, "Shaking Patriarchy's Foundations: Sectarian Women in England, 1641-1700," Triumph over Silence: Women in Protestant History, ed. Richard L. Greaves (Westport: Greenwood P, 1985) 93-124; Margaret Hope Bacon, Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986); Mary Anne Schofield, "'Womens Speaking Justified': The Feminine Quaker Voice, 1662-1797," Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 6 (1987): 61-77.

[7] She was, for example, no friend of the evolving Quaker dress code, the "Quaker grey." See a letter to this effect in Barbour, ed. Fell Speaking 31-2.

[8] Previous attempts at tackling the problem in the seventeenth century were Anne Audland, The Saints Testimony (1655); Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole, To the Priests and People of England (1655); Richard Farnworth, A Woman Forbidden

to Speak in Church (1655); George Fox, The Woman Learning in Silence (1656) and Concerning Sons and Daughters and Prophetesses Speaking And Prophecying (1660). The campaign was later joined by George Keith in The Woman-Preacher of Samaria (1674). It should be pointed out that Fox was an ardent defender of both the women's meetings and women's right to preach in general. For Fox's feminism, see Bacon 7-23.

[9] For Winstanley's patriarchal attitudes, see Phyllis Mack, "The Prophet and Her Audience: Gender and Knowledge in the World Turned Upside Down," Reviving the English Revolution: Reflections and Elaborations of the Work of Christopher Hill, ed. Geoff Eley and William Hunt (London: Verso, 1988) 139-51.

[10] Anne Laurence, "A Priesthood of She-Believers: Women and Congregations in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England," Studies in Church History 21 (1990): 345-63.

[11] John Bunyan, A Case of Conscience Resolved (1683); reprinted in The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan, ed. T. L. Underwood, vol. 4 (Oxford: Claredon, 1989) 303. All further references will be to this edition, and will be noted in the text.

[12] Cotton/Cole 7.

[13] Elizabeth Bathurst, The Sayings of Women (1683).

[14] Margaret Fell, Womens Speaking Justified (1667), ed. David Latt, Augustan Reprint Society Publications 194 (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1979). All further references will be to this edition and will be noted in the text.

[15] A similar strategy--albeit from a different angle--can be observed in Aemilia Lanier's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611), where men are presented as being solely responsible for the crime of Christ's crucifixion. The poem was published as The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady, ed. A. L. Rowse (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979).

[16] Susanne Heine, Women and Early Christianity: A Reappraisal, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988) 79-80. In writing this chapter, I have been greatly inspired by Heine's intelligent theological discussion.

[17] Margaret Fell, The Standard of the Lord Revealed (1667) 3. This text will be subsequently cited as Standard.

[18] As Dunn points out, there was a general emphasis "not on guilt or original sin but on regeneration and triumph" (596).

[19] Lanier makes the following claims in a discussion of the Fall which is placed, tellingly, within the context of the crucifixion: (a) Eve was "simply good," of "undescerning ignorance," "harmless" of heart, and she thus only gave to Adam "what she held most dear"; (b) Adam cannot be excused because he was aware of God's prohibition, because he was supposed to be stronger, and because he was not the target of that formidable enemy, the serpent. All taken together, she claims, the crucifixion--perpetrated by men against the better advice of Pilate's wife--is by far the greater evil: "Her sin was small to what you do commit" (Lanier 103-4).

[20] Heine defends the ascetic Paul against the accusation of malicious misogyny, and bases this defence on the fact that "a distinction must be made between the authentic Pauline letters and the 'letters' which are attributed to Paul but do not come from him" (82). Among those "fake" Pauline letters is the first letter to Timothy (134), and Heine argues that the antifeminist passage in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is also a later addition to the original Pauline letter (135). I think she would be pleased to find that our seventeenth-century English Quakers instinctively picked up on this rift, for we continually find them quoting Paul against the "fake" Paul. Since these women were not aware, however, that the Pauline letters were not all written by Paul and did not even come from the same period, I will continue to speak of Paul as the author of all Pauline letters.

[21] Richard Farnworth, A Woman Forbidden to Speak in Church (1655).

[22] Dorothy White, A Call from God out of Egypt by His Son the Light of Life (1662) 6.

[23] This may also have been facilitated by the fact that, as Ian Maclean points out, in the long tradition of theological writings, "'Woman' is a term with strong figurative associations." See Ian Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 7.

[24] Constance Jordan traces this line of argument back to John Aylmer's Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects (1559), and stresses that this move is empowering since it "crucially, gave the hitherto decisive pronouncements of Paul a historical context and so denied their application to general situations." See her Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990) 129-30 and 132.

[25] It is similar to the strategy employed by some of the defendants who appeared as cooperative witnesses before the House Committee on Un-American Activities during the McCarthy years. Since cooperation entailed a naming of names, those who wished to cooperate but did not wish to denounce anyone often tried to name only people who had been named before, thus complying with the Committee's requirements while trying to restrict the damage their testimony could do. In a situation which involves living people and their families, this move proved to be problematic because nobody could be sure about who had been named before.

[26] This aspect is supported by the lives of married Quaker women preachers, who often spent long periods separated from their husbands--through missionary tours or imprisonment-- and who also tried to avoid having children. For a discussion of these unconventional marital arrangements, see Brailsford 133-65.

[27] The argument of their instrumentality is often used by female authors of religious literature in the period. See Ludlow 105; Mack "Women as Preachers," 28-32.

[28] By unprecedented I do not mean to suggest that women never before had this kind of authority, but rather that the combination of a readily available print medium and a period of lively sectarian movements created something quite new in the history of women's writing.

[29] On such appropriations of biblical language, see for example Dailey 55, and Hobby 41-2. It should be noted, however, that not only women made use of biblical language to gain authority for their writings.

[30] Mary Howgill, A Remarkable Letter of Mary Howgill to Oliver Cromwell (1657) 1.

[31] Dorothy White, A Diligent Search Amongst Rulers, Priests, Professors, and People (1659) 2.

[32] Margaret Fell, A Letter Sent to the King (1666) 1-5. The title page indicates that the letter had been delivered to the king on 29 June 1666 by Elizabeth Stubbs, the wife of the Quaker John Stubbs, who was also a close associate of Fell's (see Ross, 61-2).

[33] The same point is made by Dailey, 62-3.

[34] Bathurst 24.

[35] Michael P. Graves, "Functions of Key Metaphors in Early Quaker Sermons, 1671-1700," Quarterly Journal of Speech 69 (1983):377.

[36] This actually seems to be Laurence's position when she claims that "Margaret Fell was at pains to affirm the obedience of a woman to her husband," and then proceeds to designate George Keith's 1674 tract as the first defence of women's preaching. With regard to George Fox, she claims that he had enjoined women to be silent in church, a position for which I can find no evidence in Fox's writings, and for which Laurence provides no textual evidence (360).

[37] For Fell's marriage to Fox, see Dailey 63-6. While many Quaker women engaged in some form of "unwomanly" undertakings, the most spectacular effect of the new self-confidence, I think, can be seen in the enormous distances covered by Quaker women preachers, who travelled within England, to America, to Barbados, and even to Turkey. The good work in the Gospel could at times be quite dangerous since it could entail severe persecutions and often gruesome punishments. For a particularly lively account of these travelling women, see Brailsford and Huber. It should be noted that the most indefatigable travellers often remained unmarried, thus avoiding the problem of real life husbands altogether, and that they often travelled in community with other women preachers.

[38] Dailey 62.

[39] It is interesting to note that Elaine Beilin found a similar tendency in earlier religious women's writings. She describes how these authors tend to transform allegorical "women" such as the foolish and wise virgins into "real" women, thereby reclaiming female mythologies for themselves. See Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) 65. Beilin also notes a tendency in these authors to identify their religious

opponents as enemies of women, and of appropriating God's voice in imperceptible shifts of diction (50 and 51).

[40] See Hilda Smith, "Gynaecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England," Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays, ed. Bernice A. Carroll (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1976) 97-114.

[41] Margaret Olofson Thickstun, Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 8-9.

[42] Margaret Fell, The Daughter of Sion Awakened (1677) 12. The tract is also printed in Fell, Collection, 509-28.

[43] See Ginzburg, cited above.

[44] See Stephen Wessley, "The Thirteenth-Century Guglieimites: Salvation Through Women," Medieval Women, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978) 289-303.

[45] For the role of women in the Shaker religion, see Marjorie Procter-Smith, Women in Shaker Community and Worship: A Feminist Analysis of the Uses of Religious Symbolism (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1985).

[46] See Catherine Smith, "Jane Lead: Mysticism and the Woman Cloathed With the Sun," Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets, ed. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979) 11-25.

[47] For a fascinating discussion of the degree to which both Quaker men and women were willing to employ gendered concepts against the grain, see Phyllis Mack, "Gender and Spirituality in Early Quakerism 1650-1665," Witness for Change: Quaker Women Over Three Centuries, ed. Elizabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1989) 31-63.

Notes to chapter 8 (conclusion)

[1] I have a suspicion that prose texts, which would expose the author in a higher degree to the danger of authorial anxiety than the drama would, might use protective strategies in a broader manner. This could be tested, for example, in the work of Francis Bacon or of Robert Burton.

[2] Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," Persecution and the Art of Writing (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952) 24-5.

[3] Shadia B. Drury certainly makes a good case for Strauss as an esoteric writer, though not necessarily as a writer motivated by the fear of reprisals. See The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988).

[4] Richard M. Fried, Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 162.

[5] For a short summary of these proceedings, see Fried 76-78. For more detailed accounts of both the 1947 and the 1951 hearings, see John Cogley, Report on Blacklisting, 2 vols., vol. 1 (1956; New York: Arno, 1972); Walter Goodman, The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1986) 207-225 and 299-309; Larry Ceplair and Stephen Englund, The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community 1930-1960 (Garden City: Anchor and Doubleday, 1980); Victor Navasky, Naming Names (New York: Viking, 1980).

[6] For valuable primary material on this subject, see Gerald Mast, ed., The Movies in Our Midst: Documents in the Cultural History of Film in America (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1988) 441-588, especially 536-545 on the role of the liberal counter-movement. For more valuable material, see the appendices in Cogley and Ceplair/Englund. Ceplair and Englund also provide a list of key liberal and radical activists in Hollywood in the 30s and 40s (437-8).

[7] Quoted in Navasky 393.

[8] Navasky ix-x.

[9] This group breaks down into 19 screen-writers, 5 actors, 4 directors, 2 composers, and 1 producer. See Ceplair and Englund 372.

[10] Quoted in Ceplair/Englund 364.

[11] See David Manning White and Richard Averson, The Celluloid Weapon: Social Comment in the American Film (Boston: Beacon, 1972) 133.

[12] See Georges Sadoul, Dictionary of Films, trans. and ed. Peter Morris (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1972) 307-8.

[13] He was, however, one of the directors who tried to combat de Mille's attempts at instituting a mandatory loyalty oath in the Screen Directors Guild in 1950 (See Navasky 179-81).

[14] See Cogley 94-5 and 157-8, and Ceplair/Englund 304.

[15] See Navasky 276-81 and 374-5.

[16] The best and most detailed account of the Kramer-Foreman venture, the subsequent quarrel, and Foreman's career in general is provided by Navasky, who had a chance to interview both men on the subject (156-65).

[17] Bruce Kawin, "United States," World Cinema Since 1945, ed. William Luhr (New York: Ungar, 1987) 590. Among Kramer's better known films as a director are The Defiant Ones (1958), On the Beach (1959), Judgment at Nuremberg (1961), and Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? (1967).

[18] An interesting example involves the actress Marsha Hunt, who while being employed by the Kramer company was continually hounded by company officials for evermore far-reaching public declarations of remorse and good faith (she was what is called a "greylisted" person). Kramer himself seems to have kept out of it at least in his dealings with her (though he may just have left the dirty work to others), but at least Marsha Hunt was working (see Cogley 150-55).

[19] See Navasky 159.

[20] See Navasky 157.

[21] See Navasky 157

[22] See Navasky 163.

[23] In working with High Noon, dir. Fred Zinnemann with Gary Cooper, Lloyd Bridges, and Grace Kelly, Stanley Kramer Productions, 1952, I will be quoting from my own notes made from the video print of the film.

[24] Quoted in Stanley Hochman, comp. and ed., A Library of Film Criticism: American Film Directors (New York: Ungar, 1974) 529.

[25] Sadoul 149.

[26] Quoted in White/Averson 168.

[27] White/Averson 168.

[28] There are two instances in the film where Kane gets a chance to define his legal position as he sees it: at one point he acknowledges that he had no right to knock down a man who had provoked him, and at a later stage he points out that he has no legal basis for arresting Miller's three gunmen as long as they have not committed any crimes.

[29] Kawin 599.

[30] Here High Noon seems to have more in common with Edward II than with Richard II, though for a different rhetorical purpose.

[31] Don Siegel's Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956), for example, could offer such a model. If read as a political allegory, the invading seed pods could either be seen as communist infiltrators combatting American individualism, or as McCarthyite reactionaries combatting American liberalism and tolerance. Secret society plots need not, of course, necessarily imply a communist threat as can be seen in John Frankenheimer's The Manchurian Candidate (1962).

[32] I cannot help but feel that it is significant that Miller comes back after five years' absence, which counting from 1952 would bring us back to 1947, the year HUAC first came to Hollywood. I am not saying that an audience is expected to make this connection, but it may well be that Foreman and/or Zinneman did by way of a private joke.

[33] This unwillingness to handle hot property did not keep the studios from employing blacklisted script-writers on the black market, without screen credits and for pitiful payments.

[34] Quoted in Ceplair/Englund 383-4.

[35] Quoted in Navasky 157.

[36] This is how Foreman's ex-wife describes the effects of exile and blacklisting on their family:

> Carl went to England, and when I joined him he was a different man. He suffered terribly and I think he felt at the time that nothing was any use anymore, including loyalty to one's spouse. So he began leading a completely different life. We had a very happy marriage until then. It was quite the reverse afterward. (Quoted in Navasky 357).

[37] Cogley 300-1. Cogley finds 1 film in 1947, 3 in 1948, 6 in 1949, 3 in 1950, 3 in 1951, 13 (!) in 1952, 4 in 1953, and 2 in 1954.

[38] Richard Brooks went on to make such films as Blackboard Jungle (1954), Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958), and In Cold Blood (1967).

Works Cited

1. Primary Texts

Audland, Ann, et al. The Saints Testimony. 1655.

Barbour, Hugh, and Arthur O. Roberts, eds. Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

Bathurst, Elizabeth. The Sayings of Women. 1683.

The Book of Sir Thomas More. Ed. W. W. Greg. Oxford: Malone Society Reprints, 1911.

Bunyan, John. A Case of Conscience Resolved. The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan. Ed. T. L. Underwood. Vol. 4. Oxford: Claredon, 1989. 291-330.

Cotton, Priscilla, and Mary Cole. To The Priests and People of England. 1655.

Day, John. John Day's The Isle of Guls: A Critical Edition. Ed. Raymond S. Burns. New York: Garland, 1980.

Donne, John. Complete Poems. Ed. Hugh I'Anson Fausset. 1931. London: Dent, 1974.

Erasmus of Rotterdam. The Praise of Folly and Letter to Martin Dorp 1515. Trans. Betty Radice. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.

Farnworth, Richard. A Woman Forbidden to Speak in Church. 1655.

Fell, Margaret. A Brief Collection of Remarkable Passages and Occurences Relating to the Birth, Education, Life, Conversion, Travels, Services, and the Deep Sufferings of that Ancient, Eminent, and Faithful Servant of the Lord, Margaret Fell. London: J. Sowle, 1710.

---. The Daughter of Sion Awakened. 1677.

---. A Letter Sent to the King. 1666.

---. Margaret Fell Speaking. Ed. Hugh Barbour. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 206. Wallingford: Pendle Hill Publications, 1976.

---. The Standard of the Lord Advanced. 1667

---. Womens Speaking Justified (1667). Ed. David Latt. Augustan Reprint Society Reprints 194. Los Angeles: U of California, 1979.

Ferguson, Moira, ed. First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578-1799. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.

Fox, George. Concerning Sons and Daughters and Prophetesses Speaking and Prophecying, in the Law and in the Gospel. 1660.

---. The Woman Learning in Silence. 1656.

The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969.

Greene, Robert. The Debate Betweene Follie and Love. Translated out of French by Robert Greene, Maister of Artes. The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene, M.A.. Ed. Alexander B. Grosart. Vol. 4. London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1881. 195-223.

Greer, Germaine, Susan Hastings, Jeslyn Medoff, and Melinda Sansone, eds. Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse. London: Virago, 1988.

Guillet, Pernette du. Rymes. Ed. Victor E. Graham. Genève: Droz, 1968.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation. Trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973.

Hebel, William J. and Hoyt H. Hudson, eds. Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660: Selected from Early Editions and Manuscripts. 1929. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957.

The Holy Bible: An Exact Reprint in Roman Type, Page for Page of the Authorized Version Published in the Year 1611. Introd. Alfred W. Pollard. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911.

Howard-Hill, T. H., ed. Sir John van Olden Barnavelt by John Fletcher and Philip Massinger. Oxford: Malone Society Reprints, 1980.

Howgill, Mary. A Remarkable Letter of Mary Howgill to Oliver Cromwell. 1657.

Jonson, Ben. The Complete Poems. Ed. George Parfitt. 1957. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.

---. Sejanus His Fall. Ed. Philip Ayres. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989.

---, George Chapman and John Marston. Eastward Ho!. Ed. C. G. Petter. London: Ernest Benn, 1973.

Keith, George. The Woman Preacher of Samaria. 1674.

Labé, Louise. Louise Labé: La belle rebelle et le François Nouveau. Essai, suivi des Oeuvres Complètes. Ed. Karine Berriot. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985.

---. "Louise Labé's Dedicatory Epistle to her Complete Works." Trans. Paul J. Antal. Allegorica 1 (1976): 151-155.

---. The Debate Between Folly and Love. Trans. Edwin Marion Cox. London: Williams & Norgate, 1925.

Lanier, Aemilia. The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady. Ed. A. L. Rowse. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979.

Marlowe, Christopher. Edward II. Ed. Roma Gill. London: Oxford UP, 1967.

Marston, John. The Malcontent. Ed. Bernhard Harris. London: Ernest Benn, 1967.

Shakespeare, William. Richard the Second 1597. Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles 13. Oxford: Claredon, 1966.

---. Richard II. Ed. Peter Ure. 1959. London: Methuen, 1986.

---. The Riverside Shakespeare. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974.

Sidney, Philip. The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney. Ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. Oxford: Claredon, 1962.

Sidney, Robert. The Poems of Robert Sidney. Ed. P. J. Croft. Oxford: Claredon, 1984.

Smith, Nigel, ed. A Collection of Ranter Writings from the Seventeenth Century. London: Junction Books, 1983.

Spenser, Edmund. Spenser: Poetical Works. Ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt. 1912. London: Oxford UP, 1969.

Tacitus, Cornelius. Annals IV. Ed. and trans. D. C. A. Schotter. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1989.

Travitsky, Betty, ed. The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980.

White, Dorothy. A Call from God out of Egypt by His Son the Light of Life. 1662.

---. A Diligent Search Amongst Rulers, Priests, Professors, and People. 1659.

Winstanley, Gerrard. The Law of Freedom and Other Writings. Ed. Christopher Hill. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.

---. The Works of Gerrard Winstanley. Ed. George H. Sabine. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1941.

Woodhouse, A. S. P., ed. Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-1649) from the Clarke Manuscripts. 1938. London: Dent, 1974.

Woodstock, a Moral History. Ed. A. P. Rossiter. London: Malone Society Reprints, 1946.

Wroth, Mary. The Countess of Montgomery's Urania. An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Fiction. Ed. Paul Salzman. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991. 1-208.

---. Pamphilia to Amphilanthus by Lady Mary Wroth. Ed. Gary Waller. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1977.

---. The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth. Ed. Josephine A. Roberts. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State UP, 1983.

Zinnemann, Fred, dir. High Noon. With Gary Cooper, Lloyd Bridges, and Grace Kelly. Stanley Kramer Productions, 1952.

2. Secondary Texts

Adams, Joseph Quincy. The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-1673. 1917. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964.

Albright, Evelyn May. Dramatic Publication in England, 1580-1640: A Study of Conditions Affecting Content and Form of Drama. 1927. New York: Gordian Press, 1971.

---. "Shakespeare's Richard II and the Essex Conspiracy." PMLA 42 (1927): 686-707.

---. "Shakespeare's Richard II, Hayward's History of Henry IV and the Essex Conspiracy." PMLA 46 (1931): 694-719.

Allen, John William. A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century. 1928. London: Methuen, 1977.

Alsop, J. "Gerrard Winstanley's Later Life." Past and Present 82 (1979): 73-81.

Axton, Marie. The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession. London: Royal Historical Society, 1977.

Aylmer, G. E. "The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley." Radical Religion in the English Revolution. Ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984. 91-119.

Bacon, Margaret Hope. Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America. San Fransico: Harper & Row, 1986.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. The Dialogic Imagination. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.

Barroll, Leeds. "A New History for Shakespeare and His Time." Shakespeare Quarterly 39 (1988): 441-464.

Barton, Anne. Ben Jonson, Dramatist. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

Baumer, Franklin Le van. The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship. 1940. New York: Russel & Russel, 1966.

Beilin, Elaine V. "'The Onely Perfect Vertue': Constancy in Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus." Spenser Studies 2 (1981): 229-245.

---. Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987.

Bloom, Harold. The Anxiety of Influence. New York: Oxford UP, 1973.

Booth, Wayne C. The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

---. The Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961.

Boswell, John. Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.

Boughner, Daniel C. "Sejanus and Machiavelli." Studies in English Literature 1 (1961): 81-100.

Boyette, Purvis E. "Wanton Humor and Wanton Poets: Homosexuality in Marlowe's Edward II." Tulane Studies in English 22 (1977): 33-50.

Brailsford, Mabel Richmond. Quaker Women 1650-1690. London: Duckworth, 1915.

Braithwaite, William C. The Beginnings of Quakerism. 1912. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1961.

Bray, Alan. Homosexuality in Renaissance England. London: Gay Men's Press, 1982.

Bristol, Michael D. Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England. New York and London: Methuen, 1985.

Brodwin, Leonora Leet. "Edward II, Marlowe's Culminating Treatment of Love." ELH 31 (1964): 139-155.

Brooke, Nicholas. "Marlowe the Dramatist." Elizabethan Theatre. Ed. John Russell Brown and Bernhard Harris. London: Edward Arnold, 1966. 87-105.

Browne, Edward Harold. An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles. 10th ed. London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1874.

Bullough, Geoffrey, ed. Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare. Vol.3 London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964.

Campbell, Lily B. Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1947.

Cantor, Paul A. "Leo Strauss and Contemporary Hermeneutics." Leo Strauss's Thought: Toward a Critical Engagement. Ed. Alan Udoff. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1991. 257-314.

Ceplair, Larry, and Steven Englund. The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community 1930-1960. Garden City: Anchor and Doubleday, 1980.

Champion, Larry S. "The noise of the threatening drum": Dramatic Strategy and Political Ideology in Shakespeare and the English Chronicle Plays. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1990.

Charpentier, Françoise. "Les voix du désir: Le Débat de Folie et d'Amour de Louise Labé." Le signe et le texte: Études sur l'écriture au XVIe siècle en France. Ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman. Lexington: French Forum, 1990. 27-38.

Clare, Janet. "The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in Richard II." Review of English Studies 41 (1990): 89-94.

---. "'Greater Themes for Reason's Arguing': Political Censorship of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Stage." Review of English Studies 38 (1987): 169-183.

Cogley, John. Report on Blacklisting. Vol. 1. 1956. New York: Arno Press, 1972.

Cottrell, Robert. "The Problematics of Opposition in Louise Labé's Débat de Folie et d'Amour." French Forum 12 (1987): 27-42.

Dailey, Barbara Ritter. "The Husbands of Margaret Fell: An Essay on Religious Metaphor and Social Change." The Seventeenth Century 17 (1987): 55-71.

Davis, J. C. Fear, Myth, and History: The Ranters and the Historians. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.

---. "Gerrard Winstanley and the Restoration of True Magistracy." Past and Present 70 (1976): 76-93.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. Society and Culture in Early Modern France. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1975.

DeLuna, Barbara N. Jonson's Romish Plot: A Study of Catiline and its Historical Context. Oxford: Claredon, 1967.

Dollimore, Jonathan. Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

---. "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism, and Marxist Humanism." New Literary History 21 (1990): 471-493.

---, and Alan Sinfield. "History and Ideology: The Instance of Henry V." Alternative Shakespeares. Ed. John Drakakis. London: Methuen, 1985. 206-227.

Drury, Shadia B. The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988.

Dunn, Mary Maples. "Saints and Sisters: Congregational and Quaker Women in the Early Colonial Period." American Quarterly 30 (1978): 582-601.

Dutton, Richard. Ben Jonson: To the First Folio. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.

Dyke, Carolyn van. The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.

Empson, William. "Two Proper Crimes." The Nation 163 (1946): 444-445.

Evans, K. W. "Sejanus and the Ideal Prince Tradition." Studies in English Literature 11 (1971): 249-264.

Ezell, Margaret. "The Myth of Judith Shakespeare: Creating the Canon of Women's Literature." New Literary History 21 (1990): 579-592.

---. The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family. Chapel Hill: U of California P, 1987.

Finkenpearl, Philip J. "'The Comedian's Liberty': Censorship of the Jacobean Stage." English Literary Renaissance 16 (1986): 123-138.

Fish, Stanley. Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1980.

Fletcher, Angus. Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1964.

Forster, Leonard. The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969.

Foucault, Michel. "Stultifera Navis." Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Random House, 1965. 3-37.

French, A. L. "Who Deposed Richard II?" Essays in Criticism 17 (1967): 411-433.

Fried, Richard M. Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective . New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.

Friedman, Jerome. Blasphemy, Immorality, and Anarchy: The Ranters and the English Revolution. Athens: Ohio UP, 1987.

George, Charles C. "Gerrard Winstanley: A Critical Reassessment." The Dissenting Tradition: Essays for Leland H. Carlson. Ed. Robert Cole and Michael E. Moody. Athens: Ohio UP, 1975. 191-225.

Gerard, Kent, and Gert Hekma, eds. The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe. New York: The Haworth Press, 1989.

Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. "Sexual Liguistics: Gender, Language, Sexuality." New Literary History 16 (1985): 515-543.

Gildersleeve, Virginia Crocheron. Government Regulations of Elizabethan Drama. New York: Burt Franklin, 1908.

Ginzburg, Carlo. The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller. Trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.

Giudici, Enzo. Louise Labé: Essai. Roma: Edizioni Dell'Ateneo, 1981.

Goldberg, Jonathan. James I and the Politics of Literature. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1983.

Goreau, Angeline, ed. The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female Writers in Seventeenth-Century England. Garden City: Dial Press, 1985.

Gombrich, E. H. Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. Rev. ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1961.

Goodman, Walter. The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1968.

Graff, Gerald. "Co-optation." The New Historicism. Ed. Harold Aram Veeser. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989. 168-191.

Graves, Michael P. "Functions of Key Metaphors in Early Quaker Sermons." Quarterly Journal of Speech 69 (1983): 364-378.

Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.

Guy-Bray, Stephen. "Homophobia and the Depoliticizing of Edward II." English Studies in Canada 17 (1991): 125-133.

Hayes, Thomas Wilson. Winstanley the Digger: A Literary Analysis of Radical Ideas in the English Revolution. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1979.

Heffner, Ray. "Shakespeare, Hayward and Essex," PMLA 45 (1930): 754-780.

---. "Shakespeare, Hayward and Essex Again." PMLA 47 (1937): 898-901.

Heine, Susanne. Women and Early Christianity: A Reappraisal. Trans. John Bowden. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986.

Hill, Christopher. Milton and the English Revolution. New York: Viking Press, 1978.

---. The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley. Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978.

---. The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution. New York: Viking Press, 1972.

Hill, Geoffrey. "'The world's proportion': Jonson's Dramatic Poetry in Sejanus and Catiline." Jacobean Theatre. Ed. J. R. Brown and B. Harris. 1960. London: Butler & Tanner, 1965. 112-131.

Hobby, Elaine. Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649-1688. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1989.

Hochman, Stanley, comp. and ed. A Library of Film Criticism: American Film Directors. New York: Ungar, 1974.

Holstun, James. "Ranting at the New Historicism." English Literary Renaissance 19 (1989): 189-225.

Huber, Elaine. "A Woman Must Not Speak: Quaker Women in the English Left Wing." Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions. Ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979. 153-182.

Huebert, Ronald. "Tobacco and Boys and Marlowe." Sewanee Review 92 (1984): 206-224.

Hull, Suzanne W. Chaste, Silent and Obedient: Books for Women 1475-1640. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982.

Iser, Wolfgang. The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.

---, The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1974.

Jondorf, Gillian. "Petrarchan Variations in Pernette du Guillet and Louise Labé." Modern Language Review 71 (1976): 766-778.

Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Assimilation With a Difference: Renaissance Women Poets and Literary Influence." Yale French Studies 62 (1981): 135-153.

---, "City Women and Their Audiences: Louise Labé and Veronica Franco." Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourse of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe. Ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, Nancy Vickers, and Catharine Stimpson. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 299-316.

---, The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe 1540-1620. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.

Jordan, Constance. Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.

Juretic, George. "Digger No Millenarian: The Revolutionising of Gerrard Winstanley." Journal of the History of Ideas

36 (1975): 263-280.

Kastan, David Scott. "'Proud Majesty Made a Subject': Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule." Shakespeare Quarterly 37 (1986): 459-475.

Kawin, Bruce. "United States." World Cinema Since 1945. Ed. William Luhr. New York: Ungar, 1987. 587-638.

Kelly, Henry A. Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1970.

Kelly-Gadol, Joan. "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" Becoming Visible: Women in European History. Ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. 137-163.

Knoll, Robert E. Ben Jonson's Plays: An Introduction. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1964.

Knott, J, R, "Gerrard Winstanley's Land of Righteousness." The Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980. 85-105.

Kuriyama, Constance Brown. Hammer or Anvil: Psychological Patterns in Christopher Marlowe's Plays. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1980.

Larsen, Anne R. "Louise Labé's 'Débat de Folie et d'Amour': Feminism and the Defence of Learning." Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 2 (1983): 43-55.

Laurence, Anne. "A Priesthood of She-Believers: Women and Congregations in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England." Studies in Church History 21 (1990): 345-363.

Leech, Clifford. "Marlowe's Edward II: Power and Suffering." Critical Quarterly 1 (1959): 181-196.

Lefebvre, Joël. Les fols et la folie: Etude sur les genres du comique et la création littéraire en Allemagne pendant la Renaissance. Paris: Klincksieck, 1968.

Levin, Harry. The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe. London: Faber and Faber, 1954.

Limon, Jerzy. Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.

Ludlow, Dorothy. "Shaking Patriarchy's Foundations: Sectarian Women in England, 1641-1700." Triumph Over

Silence: Women in Protestant History. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985. 93-124.

Lutaud, Olivier. Winstanley: Socialisme et Christianisme sous Cromwell. Paris: Didier, 1976.

MacArthur, Janet H. "'A Sydney, though unnamed': Lady Mary Wroth and her Poetical Progenitors." English Studies in Canada 15 (1989): 12-20.

Mack, Phyllis. "Gender and Spirituality in Early Quakerism, 1650-1665." Witness for Change: Quaker Women Over Three Centuries. Ed. Elizabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher Stuard. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1989.

---. "The Prophet and Her Audience: Gender and Knowledge in The World Turned Upside Down." Reviving the English Revolution: Reflections and Elaborations of the Work of Christopher Hill. Ed. Geoff Eley and William Hunt. London: Verso, 1988. 139-151.

---. "Women as Prophets During the English Civil War." Feminist Studies 8 (1982): 19-45.

Maclean, Ian. The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Manheim, Michael. The Weak King Dilemma in the Shakespearean History Play. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1973.

Manning, Brian, ed. Politics, Religion, and the English Civil War. London: Edward Arnold, 1973.

Mast, Gerald, ed. The Movies in Our Midst: Documents in the Cultural History of Film in America. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982.

McFarlane, I. D. "Humanism and Literature in Lyons During the First Half of the Sixteenth Century." Renaissance France 1470-1589. London: Ernest Benn, 1974. 147-166.

McGregor, J. F., and B. Reay, eds. Radical Religion in the English Revolution. London: Oxford UP, 1984.

Metscher, Thomas. "Subversive, Radical and Revolutionary Traditions in European Literature Between 1300 and the Age of Bunyan: Some Comments." Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik 29 (1981): 12-20.

Montrose, Louis Adrian. "Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History." English Literary Renaissance 16 (1986): 5-12.

Moretti, Franco. Signs Taken for Wonders. London: Verso, 1983.

Morris, C. Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker. London: Oxford UP, 1953.

Morton, Arthur Leslie. The World of the Ranters: Religious Radicalism in the English Revolution. London. Lawrence and Wishart, 1970.

Mullaney, Stephen. The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.

Mulligan, Lotte, Johne K. Graham, and Judith Richards. "Winstanley: A Case for the Man as He Said He Was." Journal of Ecclesiastical History 28 (1977): 57-75.

Navasky, Victor. Naming Names. New York: Viking Press, 1980.

Newlin, Jeanne T. Introduction. Richard II: Critical Essays. Ed. Jeanne T. Newlin. New York: Garland, 1984. iii-xxiv.

Pangle, Thomas L. Introduction. The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss. Ed. Thomas L. Pangle. Chicago and London: U of Chicago p, 1989. vii-xxxviii.

Panofsky, Erwin. "Blind Cupid." Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance. 1939. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. 95-128.

Parish, Robert James, and Michael Pitts. The Great Western Pictures. Mantuchen: Scarecrow, 1976.

Patrick, J. Max. "The Literature of the Diggers." University of Toronto Quarterly 12 (1942): 95-110.

Patterson, Annabel. Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984.

Paulissen, May Nelson. The Love Sonnets of Lady Mary Wroth: A Critical Introduction. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1982.

Petegorsky, David W. Left-Wing Democracy in the English Civil War: A Study of the Social Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley. London: Victor Golancz, 1940.

Platz, Norbert H. "'By Oblique Glance of His Licentious Pen': Ben Jonson's Christian Humanist Protest Against the Counter-Renaissance Conception of the State in Sejanus." Recent Research on Ben Jonson. Ed. James Hogg. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1978. 71-107.

Porter, Carolyn. "History and Literature: 'After the New Historicism'." New Literary History 21 (1990): 253-272.

Prine, Jeanne. "Poet of Lyon: Louise Labé." Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation. Ed. Katharine M. Wilson. Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1987.

Procter-Smith, Marjorie. Women in Shaker Community and Worship: A Feminist Analysis of the Uses of Religious Symbolism. Lewiston: E. Mellen P, 1985.

Proser, Matthew N. "Edward's Perils: Masochism in Marlowe's Suffering King." Literature and Psychology 34 (1988): 17-25.

Quilligan, Maureen. "Lady Mary Wroth: Female Authority and the Family Romance." Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance. Ed. George M. Logan and Gordon Teskey. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989. 257-280.

Rabkin, Norman. Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981.

Reay, Barry. The Quakers and the English Revolution. London: Temple Smith, 1985.

---. "Radicalism and Religion in the English Revolution: An Introduction." Radical Religion in the English Revolution. Ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay. London: Oxford UP, 1984. 1-21.

Rebhorn, Wayne. "The Metamorphoses of Moria: Structure and Meaning in The Praise of Folly." PMLA 89 (1974): 463-476.

Redondo, Augustin, and André Rochon, eds. Visages de la folie 1500-1650, domaine hispano-italien. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1981.

Rigolot, François. "Ecrire au féminin à la Renaissance: Problèmes et perspectives." L'Esprit Créateur 30 (1990): 3-10.

---. "Louise Labé et les 'Dames Lionnoises': Les ambiguïtés de la censure." Le signe et le texte: Etudes sur l'écriture au XVIe siècle en France. Ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman. Lexington: French Forum, 1990. 13-25.

---. "Signature et signification: Les baisers de Louise Labé." Romanic Review 75 (1984): 10-24.

Roberts, Josephine A. "The Biographical Problem of Pamphilia to Amphilanthus." Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 1 (1982): 43-53.

---. "Lady Mary Wroth's Sonnets: A Labyrinth of the Mind." Journal of Women's Studies in Literature 1 (1979): 319-329.

Ross, Isabel. Margaret Fell, Mother of Quakerism. London: Longmans, 1949.

Rossiter, A. P. Angel With Horns: Fifteen Lectures on Shakespeare. 1961. London: Longmans, 1989.

Sadoul, Georges. Dictionary of Films. Trans. and ed. Peter Morris. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1972.

Saslow, James M. "Homosexuality in the Renaissance: Behaviour, Identity, and Artistic Expression." Hidden from History: Reclaiming a Gay and Lesbian Past. Ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey Jr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991. 90-105.

Schabert, Ina. "Creative Reading: Vom Erkenntniswert des kreativen Lesens." Wozu Literaturwissenschaft?: Kritik und Perspektiven. Ed. Frank Griesheimer and Alois Prinz. Tübingen: Francke, 1991. 233-259.

Scheffler, Judith. "Prison Writings of Early Quaker Women: 'We were stronger afterward than before'." Quaker History 73 (1984): 25-37.

Schofield, Mary Anne. "Womens Speaking Justified': The Feminine Quaker Voice, 1662-1797." Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 6 (1987): 61-77.

Scott, James C. Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.

Shanker, Sidney. Shakespeare and the Uses of Ideology. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Siebert, Frederick Seaton. Freedom of the Press in England,

1476-1776: The Rise and Decline of Government Control. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1952.

Smidt, Kristian. Unconformities in Shakespeare's History Plays. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982.

Smith, Catherine. "Jane Lead: Mysticism and the Woman Cloathed with the Sun." Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets. Ed. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979. 11-25.

Smith, Gordon Ross. "A Rabble of Princes: Considerations Touching Shakespeare's Political Orthodoxy in the Second Tetralogy." Journal of the History of Ideas 41 (1980): 29-48.

Smith, Hilda. "Gynaecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England." Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays. Ed. Bernice A. Carroll. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1976. 97-114.

Smith, Nigel. Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640-1660. Oxford: Claredon, 1989.

Stirling, Brents. "Bolingbroke's 'Decision'." Shakespeare Quarterly 2 (1951): 27-34.

Strauss, Leo. "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing." What is Political Philosophy? New York: The Free Press, 1959. 29-53.

---. "Persecution and the Art of Writing." Persecution and the Art of Writing. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952. 22-37.

---. Thoughts on Machiavelli. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958.

Summers. Claude. "Sex, Politics, and Self-Realization in Edward II." "A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker": New Essays on Christopher Marlowe. Ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama. New York: AMS Press, 1988. 221-240.

Sweeney, John G. Jonson and the Psychology of the Public Theatre: To Coin the Spirit, Spend the Soul. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985.

Swift, Carolyn Ruth. "Feminine Identity in Lady Mary Wroth's Romance Urania." English Literary Renaissance 14 (1984): 328-346.

Tenney, M. F. "Tacitus in the Politics of Early Stuart England." Classical Journal 37 (1941): 151-163.

Thayer, C. G. Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories. Athens: Ohio UP, 1983.

Thickstun, Margaret Olofson. Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

Thomas, Donald. A Long Time Burning: The History of Literary Censorship in England. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969.

Tillyard, E. M. W. Shakespeare's History Plays. 1944. London: Chatto & Windus, 1961.

Triomphe, Micheline. "La Bible anglaise et ses lecteurs 'unauthorized': Le cas Winstanley." Recherches Anglaises et Américaines 14 (1981): 25-37.

Vann, Richard T. The Social Development of English Quakerism, 1655-1755. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1969.

Varty, Kenneth. "The Life and Legend of Louise Labé." Nottingham Mediaeval Studies 3 (1959): 78-108.

Waller, Gary. English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century. London and New York: Longman, 1986.

---. "Struggling into Discourse: The Emergence of Renaissance Women's Writing." Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works. Ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay. Kent: Kent State UP, 1985. 238-256.

Wells, Robin Headlam, "The Fortunes of Tillyard: Twentieth-Century Critical Debate on Shakespeare's History Plays." English Studies 66 (1985): 391-403.

---. Shakespeare, Politics, and the State. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986.

Wesseley, Stephen. "The Thirteenth-Century Guglielmites: Salvation Through Women." Medieval Women. Ed. Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978. 289-303.

White, David Manning, and Richard Averson. The Celluloid Weapon: Social Comment in the American Film. Boston: Beacon, 1972.

Wikander, Matthew J. "'Queasy to be Touched': The World of Ben Jonson's Sejanus." Journal of English and Germanic Philology 78 (1979): 345-357.

Williams, George H. The Radical Reformation. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962.

Wright, Julianne Jones, and François Rigolot. "Les interruptions de Folie: Fonction idéologique du porte-parole dans les Oeuvres de Louise Labé." L'Esprit Créateur 30 (1990): 72-84.

Yachnin, Paul. "The Powerless Theater." English Literary Renassance 21 (1991): 49-74.